Transmission, Inheritance, Emulation 25 by Peter Goldsbury

INTERLUDE:
XI: To Bow or not to Bow?
Morihei Ueshiba and his Gods: Cultural Logic, Religion and Aikido
Part 3: A Phenomenology of Morihei Ueshiba's Religion

This is the third part of an essay on aikido and religion. In this part I offer a more detailed examination of the cultural and intellectual background to Morihei Ueshiba's own religious beliefs and practices. The major background elements to be discussed here are Shinto and the 'new' Omoto religion, with other established religions, such the *Mikkyo* variant of Buddhism, discussed only to the extent that Morihei Ueshiba espoused some adherence, or that Onisaburo Deguchi used these in constructing Omoto theology (Omoto theology being the main vehicle for Morihei Ueshiba's discourses). This examination of Ueshiba's religious background takes place in the light of the discussions and arguments in the two previous parts of this essay: Takie Sugiyama Lebra's arguments on opposition logic compared with contingency logic; the discussions of Thomas Kasulis on the 'recursive cultural orientations' of 'intimacy' and 'integrity'; and the account of Japanese 'common religion' given by Ian Reader and George Tanabe Jr. I have taken this rather expansive approach because the scholars mentioned represent an attempt to interpret in a constructive way Japanese culture as a whole, and then to place Japanese religious culture in this wider context. This is especially important when considering the 'new-style' religions (*shin-kou shuu-kyou* [新興宗教]), which appeared in Japan during the period that began towards the end of the Tokugawa era and continued through the Meiji Restoration until the postwar period. Morihei Ueshiba embraced the Omoto religion and was a close disciple of Onisaburo Deguchi. Ueshiba is sometimes presented primarily as a martial artist obsessed with his own personal training, with the religious aspects added on, or primarily as a religious man engaged in a spiritual mission, with the martial arts training added on. Seeing Ueshiba's religious beliefs and practices and his martial training as one seamless whole is rather more difficult, since it requires a greater effort to understand his religious world view on its own terms. This might be difficult for those who have been brought up according to the tenets of traditional Christianity and was especially difficult for the present writer, having the religious background of Roman Catholicism, but a more extreme version, including the theological and mystical traditions as practiced by the Jesuit order.

The aim of the essay is clarification of Morihei Ueshiba's religious beliefs and practices, with his training regimen considered part and parcel of these. There is much evidence that Ueshiba saw his training in religious terms, but there is also a major problem when considering Morihei Ueshiba's training. Ueshiba often punctuated his training with lengthy discourses and even those who were apparently close disciples often confessed that they understood virtually nothing of the discourses he gave. It is therefore highly possible that they missed any essential connections that Ueshiba himself perceived between the discourses he gave and the training methods he pursued. A consequence is that when present-day students approach Morihei Ueshiba and his training, the discourses are forgotten and there is a tendency —usually on the basis of film and videos of Ueshiba's aikido training, and also of second-hand or third-hand reports of those who took *ukemi*—to describe or explain what he was doing without any reference to them. The descriptions are based on a whole variety of factors, but include the training methods that the students have learned from their own teachers. However, connecting Ueshiba's training with his discourses is not nearly so easy as it seems, as I hope to suggest in some detail by what follows.

Preliminaries (1): The Groundwork of Phenomenology
I use the term 'phenomenology' quite often in this essay and the intended meaning should not be misunderstood. Phenomenology is a philosophical movement and a philosophical method espoused by thinkers like Husserl, Sartre and Heidegger. However, I mean something more general, namely, a way of looking at the *phainomena*—that which is given, that which appears—with as few preconditions as possible. (I acknowledge the lead of Ellis Amdur here, who uses the term in the article introducing his "It Had to be Felt" series on *AikiWeb*.) Following this approach is one way of attempting to avoid controversies about belief, experience and ethics that always seem to accompany the examination of religious matters. Accordingly, this essay does not take up any position about phenomenology as a type of philosophy and is not concerned with religion as a force for good or evil in the world, or with arguments for or against its 'validity' as a system of belief or practice.

Experiences…
Discussions of phenomenology usually start from experiences and this is probably a good place to begin when considering Japanese religion in general and also Morihei Ueshiba's view of aikido as religious practice. In his book on Shinto (to be considered below), Thomas Kasulis describes Shinto largely in terms of experiences and in his published discourses Ueshiba sometimes discusses his religious practice in terms of experiences that could be considered significant or unusual, and the question would then arise how these significant or unusual experiences relate to his religious practice considered as a whole.

David Woodruff Smith gives some examples of experiences in his article published in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. The examples are intended as an "elementary exercise in phenomenology" and are "typical experiences one might have in everyday life, characterized by the first person." Many of them are not usually verbalized. I have modified Woodruff Smith's examples in order make them more relevant to aikido and religious issues.

1. I walk carefully round the broken shards on the *tatami*.
2. I see two people training at the far end of the dojo after practice one evening.
3. I hear the sound of the *bokken* as it whistles through the air.
4. I wish that I could do *ukemi* as quietly as he does.
5. When I did *kaiten-nage* I held his head like I usually do.
6. I intend to finish preparing for my grading test tomorrow.
7. As I watched him, I found myself thinking that *aiki* differs from internal power.
8. As I was walking round the shrine last night I had a strange experience: I felt as if I had been there before.
9. I am sure I imagined Morihei Ueshiba in a dream last night.
10. I am searching for the words to explain my idea of the difference between God and *kami*.

One can make several points about these examples. The first point is that Woodruff Smith has defined the term ‘experiences' very broadly, so as to include the entire contents of a subject's relationship with the world. Others give a narrower meaning to the term and distinguish experiences from, for example, thoughts or feelings.

The second point is that as first-person reports the examples are intended to be uncontroversial: they can be considered simply as reports of what someone was doing or thinking at a certain point. As reports, they are readily accepted by others, in spite of the fact that they are reports made from a comparatively privileged position. We can know that a person has experiences only through communication or by inference from the person's behavior, but the knowledge we have as a result of the reports can be considered sufficient for practical purposes. If it is not, we can ask questions to clarify what the person meant. Some philosophers, however, have made much of this distinction between the first person and the third person and used it as the basis for three main philosophical standpoints concerning the nature of our knowledge of the world, which have been called skeptical, reductive, or heroic. Briefly, skeptical theories create an unbridgeable gap between our ordinary or scientific beliefs about the world and the grounds we have for these beliefs; reductive theories attempt to lessen the gap by reducing beliefs about the world as it is to beliefs about the world as it appears; heroic theories acknowledge the gap, but aim to leap over it without narrowing it, the consequence being that the chasm below is "littered with epistemological corpses," such as the Theory of Forms or a-priori proofs of the existence of a non-deceiving god (details in Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, pp. 68-69). Regardless of these standpoints, however, the experiences and the world are still there, to be described in some way, even if they are not explained to the satisfaction of everyone. The present aim is to discuss experiences in general—and certain religious experiences in particular—in such a way as to avoid as much as possible having to take up any positions about the philosophical issues.

The third point, which is made by Woodruff Smith, is that phenomenology regards all these experiences as intentional, in the sense that they are all experiences of something. The content of the experience is expressed—with varying degrees of success—in words and even if the expression in words fails to communicate accurately, the fact remains that the experience is never simply an experience, with nothing else to be said. The experience is always qualified as the experience of something.

In their book on the phenomenology of mind, Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi make the same point as Woodruff Smith.

> "*Intentionality is a ubiquitous character of consciousness, and ... it means that all consciousness is* about *or* of *something. In that sense experience is never an isolated or elemental process. It always involves reference to the* world*, taking that term in a very wide sense to include not just the physical environment, but the social and cultural world, which may include things that do not exist in a physical way.*" (Gallagher & Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind*, p. 7.)

‘Intentional' is being used here as a neutral term and the qualification made by Gallagher and Zahavi is important, since both the leaders of the Omoto religion and also Morihei Ueshiba sometimes reported highly unusual experiences, which would be termed ‘spiritual', ‘religious', or even ‘mystical'. The English language allows experiences to be both experiences *of*something, the content being conveyed by the descriptions in the above examples, but also to be experiences qualified by attributive adjectives, as in Example 8, above. In fact, this example involves at least a double experience: the memory of walking through the grounds of the shrine, as reported in the general statement, and the feeling of having been there before. Some might argue that there is also a third experience, which is conveyed by the attributive adjective. However, in English at least, the range of adjectives that can qualify experiences is limited. Experiences can be spiritual, strange, pleasant, but not red, blue, or heavy. Furthermore, the admission of suitable

adjectives does not change the point made by Gallagher and Zahavi in the quotation above that the experiences are intentional: an experience is called ‘spiritual' in virtue of the fact that it is an experience of something that would be thought of as spiritual by the experiencing subject and—though this is not mentioned by Gallagher and Zahavi—possibly by those to whom they recounted their experiences. The point they make, however, raises a major issue about language, to be discussed below.

The example chosen by Gallagher and Zahavi is driving home in one's own car at the end of a typical working day. This clearly works as an example of a complex intentional activity and the important point they wish to make is that not all the aspects of the activity, not all the experiences involved, are conscious in the same sense. After leaving the workplace, we do not, usually, frame the explicit intention of driving home at the end of the day before we get in the car, nor do we control the activity of driving by using intent, explicitly directed by our minds. On the other hand, nor is the activity unintentional. We are conscious of some aspects, could remember other aspects if asked, but are also vaguely and intuitively aware—without going through any process of reasoning—that ‘I' -- the subject -- am involved in the whole complex activity in a way that other persons cannot be. Description is a crucial aspect of the problem here and there is a need for clarification of some core concepts, especially those clustered round the terms *intent*, *intention*, *intentional* and *intentionality*. In my opinion, the Anglo-Saxon philosophical tradition of linguistic analysis offers a step in the right direction here, but only a step.

… Spiritual Experiences …

Moreover, the experience of driving home would not usually be called a ‘spiritual' experience unless the content was considered unusual in some way. This term exhibits a similar range of variations as ‘intent' (‘spirit', ‘spiritual', ‘spirituality'—and also ‘spiritualism') and is discussed by Thomas Kasulis at the beginning of his book on Shinto. Kasulis gives the term a wide meaning and initially makes two points: he cautions against taking the term (1) to mean personal religion over and against institutional religion, or (2) to mean anything transcendental.

> "*Reflection shows that spirituality is seldom a strictly private affair. Felt as an inner resonance, spirituality is not an external phenomenon we can study simply by looking at it. Its character emerges only through the intimation of those who share their intimate experience with us. The neophyte internalizes spirituality by doing what others do and talking how others talk. To express one's own spirituality, one must first be impressed by the spirituality of others. Even the Buddhist or Christian hermit, alone in an isolated cave or cell, sits in the lotus position or kneels in prayer. The hermit did not invent these postures but learned them from someone else. Even in solitude, the hermit reflects a communal context. We must not overlook this vital communal dimension in even the most personal expressions of the spiritual.*" (Thomas Kasulis,*Shinto: The Way Home*, p. 2.)

If having a spiritual experience is something learned, Kasulis also cautions against assuming that spiritual experiences are essentially transcendental. He likens "the spiritual" to the "most quotidian of human experiences", such as our awareness of light.

> "*We might experience it as a blinding, all-encompassing flash or as the medium through which we see the configuration and coloration of our ordinary world. It is the difference between a flashbulb going off near our faces in a darkened room and our being engrossed in the luminescent nuances of an Ansel Adams photograph. Both are experiences of light. Indeed the light of the flashbulb and the highlights of the misty peak of El Capitan* [the famous granite monolith in Yosemite Valley, USA] *are in some respects the same thing—light. Yet the different contexts make for a different kind of experience. So, too, for spirituality. It may appear so intensely and abruptly that it obliterates everything else. Or it may be reflected off or refracted through the most mundane events.*" (Kasulis, *op.cit.*, pp. 2-3.)

Kasulis will argue that the spirituality of Shinto predominantly displays the latter alternative and consists largely of ‘mundane' events and this might well be true also of martial arts like aikido, which purports to offer a combination of physical-psycho-spiritual training, not all the elements of which are experienced directly or in the same way. The ten examples adapted from Woodruff-Smith's article might provide some evidence for the ‘inclusive' view held by Kasulis.

On the other hand, the founders of many of Japan's ‘new' religions also underwent allegedly striking, life-changing, experiences and the reports of these experiences have become part of the lore and history of each religion. This is certainly true of Nao and Onisaburo Deguchi, as will be shown later, and a number of unusual experiences have also been recorded about Morihei Ueshiba, Deguchi's most famous disciple. One celebrated and oft-quoted example—which coincidentally is directly relevant to the analogy of light given by Kasulis—is the ‘golden light' experience of 1925. The account given in Kisshomaru Ueshiba's biography is a mixture of a first-person account, later given by Morihei Ueshiba to his son Kisshomaru (who would have been four years old at the time), and a third-person report made by Kisshomaru himself, but clearly made on the basis of what he was told by Morihei Ueshiba. Kisshomaru, however, combines the account with his own interpretation and this

must be recognized for what it is. I give the Japanese text with the published English translation.

「さて、じつはこの将校との手合わせの直後、開祖はさらに驚くべき自己体験をしたのである。

"*Immediately after his encounter with the naval officer, O Sensei had an amazing experience.*

道場を出て、井戸端でひとり静かに流れる汗をぬぐいおわり、庭を横切って、柿の古木のあるあたりまで歩んできた開祖は、突然、全身がおのずからすく みきって、一歩もその場から動けない状態に陥った。金縛りというか、神縛りというか、とにかくただ無心・無身の感じで立ちすくむのみ。

He walked out of the dojo and quietly washed off his sweat at the well nearby. Then as he walked back across the garden, just by an old persimmon tree, suddenly his whole body seemed to freeze in place—he couldn't even move a step, but just stood there like a statue without any thoughts or sensations at all.

すると、足もとの大地がゆるゆると揺れはじめ、周囲に、天から目もくらむばかりの無数の金線が降りそそぐのを開祖は視た。寂とした虚空にいま、この 世ならぬ荘厳の後光が充ちはじめた。しかもやがて大地からも、黄金の気が湧きいでて、あたたかく、やわらかにと己れの全身につつみはじめたのである。」

The ground started to tremble and he saw thousands of dazzling golden rays falling from the sky. A glorious and unearthly light welled up to fill the air. Then he felt soft, golden ki *rising up out of the earth to embrace him.*"

Clearly, more things were going on here than simply the "blinding, all-encompassing flash" of light noted by Kasulis. There was certainly the light, but in rays rather than one blinding flash, and this was then followed by a different kind of light. The other features described fit the intentional nature of the experience as noted by Gallagher and Zahavi: the freezing of the body in one place and shaking of the ground, but also the黄金の気, which is more problematic.

Then the account moves to Morihei Ueshiba's own description of what was happening to him.

「黄金体に化す！」と開祖はこころに叫んだ。開祖は、現身の己れを超えたいまひとりの、黄金体の己れが顕出された不思議と歓喜にひたっていた。

その黄金体は、みるみるうちにふくらんで、宇宙いっぱいにまで充ちひろがったかのようにおもわれた。

O Sensei exulted inside: 'This is a divine transformation!' Awestruck and ecstatic, he seemed to see his body becoming golden, as the universe itself was transformed.

それとともに心身ともに軽やかになり、耳に小鳥や虫のかそけき鳴き音が流れ込み、眼には木の葉のさやぎから、風の流れまでもがはっきり映るようになったのである。空にして 有。**いわゆる中有なる、幽顕一如の境とでもいうべきか**。たくまずして自然そのもののありようが判然とし、大宇宙に己れをまったく移入し得たと直覚した。

He could hear, distantly, the almost inaudible sounds of birds and insects; he could see leaves moving on the trees, and the direction of the wind. Within emptiness, existence was still manifest. ***This state is known as* Chu-u, *the boundary of* yuken-ichinyo, *where the visible and invisible meet****. Suddenly, all of nature lay open to be seen, and O Sensei felt as if his small self could merge completely with the larger universe.*

This direct reporting of the experience is 'edited' by Kisshomaru Ueshiba, who adds a note (in bold type) about what he appears to think was happening to his father. It followed by more measured comments, more obviously made as a result of considered reflection on the experience.

「とうとうわしは、己れ自身、わが全能をのみもって、〝神を視たー〟」と、開祖は、あの時ほど己れいとおしく、かつ誇らしくおもえたことはなかったとのちに語 っている。

O Sensei recalled later that there was no other time in his life when he held himself so dear, or felt so proud, as that moment, when finally, he himself with all his power 'encountered God.'

開祖はまた、

「わしは直後、はッと悟り得たように思う。勝とうとして、気を張っては何も視えんのじゃ。愛をもってすべてをつつみ、気をもってすべてを流れるにま かすとき、はじめて自他一体の気・心・体の動きの世界が展開し、より悟り得た者がおのずから、いわゆる勝ちをおさめている。勝たずして勝つ————正しく 勝ち、吾に勝ち、しかもそれは一瞬の機のうちに速やかに勝ち、つまりは自他一体、神人一如、宇宙即我なる愛の産霊そのものの勝利となる。すなわち、己れ一 個の勝ち敗けははるかに超越した、武産の神の絶対の勝ちがそれであり、武の道とはそこに到達することをもって至上とする。まあそのようなことなどを感得し たのではなかろうかな」

ざっと右のような意味の述懐をもらしていた。

As he himself described this moment:

'Immediately afterwards, I felt as if I was enlightened. Anyone who contracted himself and became smaller by thinking about the achievement of victory would see nothing. But the person who embraced all things with love and affection, who let ki *govern the flow of events, could open a space of becoming one with the opponent, in* ki*, in mind, and in the movements of the body. The one who was enlightened would be, as we call it, the winner. But this would be victory without 'winning'—real victory, winning over one's self. This would be the victory of merging with one's opponent, of humans becoming one with God, of the universe becoming part of love's creative energy. It would surpass the mere victory or defeat of individuals. It would be absolute victory of the God of Takemusu, and this is the supreme objective of the path of* Bu*, the martial way. These things are what I understood.'*

That is a summary of what O Sensei said."

What is important here is that in his explanation Morihei Ueshiba immediately ties the whole experience of 'enlightenment' to a specific understanding of human relationships, expressed in terms of Omoto theology, but also expressed in judgments that are tied to a precise view of martial encounters. These judgments were perhaps made as a direct result of his immediately previous experience with the naval officer, but they are expressed as the 'content' of the experience of 'enlightenment'. Finally, after quoting some of Morihei Ueshiba's*douka,* which are assumed to be directly connected to what has gone before—but without the connection being explained specifically, Kisshomaru Ueshiba gives his own opinion about the general significance of the experience, in terms that Morihei Ueshiba himself did not use.

我が合気道、大正十四年、この日をもって、すなわち開祖が黄金体と化した日をもってその一歩を踏み出したものであると、私は断じたい。

"*I believe that from this day in 1925, the day O Sensei underwent his divine transformation, our Aikido took its first steps forward*".

(All the above quotations are taken from植芝吉祥丸, 『合気道開祖植芝盛平伝』, pp. 171-172, and the English translation by Kei Izawa and Mary Fuller: Kisshomaru Ueshiba, *A Life in Aikido*, pp. 178-180.)
One might respond with the cliché, 'Well, he would, wouldn't he?' Kisshomaru was Morihei Ueshiba's son and heir, and he also wanted to present the life of his father in a particular way. However, the way in which Kisshomaru handles his father's religious experiences has a subtlety that the cliché does not convey. On the one hand, he does not dismiss the experiences as untrue, but on the other hand, he does not give them any significance, either, other than as an ingredient in the Founder's overall creation of the art that he, Kisshomaru, inherited. As religious experiences they were intensely personal, but were also entirely confined within the scope of the Founder's individual pursuits and were not regarded as an essential ingredient of the art itself. In this respect, Kisshomaru treats Morihei Ueshiba's spiritual experiences in the same way that he treats *kotodama* in his book *Aikido Shinkei*. (For those who wish to read the details, the source is Chapter III, "Ki and Takemusu", pp. 74-76 of the translation by John Stevens, entitled *The Art of Aikido*.) They were important for Morihei Ueshiba, but only as steps that he himself took to create an art that can be practiced with success without having to resort to such experiences.

In fact, Kisshomaru is doing what others have done when faced with accounts of religious-cum-mystical experiences undergone by the founders of 'new' religions, such as Nao and Onisaburo Deguchi, and also by Morihei Ueshiba, who did not found a religion—at least not in the sense usually understood by this term. He incorporates the accounts of the experiences into his own cognitive, ideational and ideological framework. Onisaburo Deguchi did this with Nao Deguchi's *kamigakari* experiences and Morihei Ueshiba also did this with Deguchi's own *chinkon-kishin* experiences. So what Kisshomaru Ueshiba was doing was not particularly new, nor was it considered particularly dishonest or undesirable. The issue for aikido students is whether Kisshomaru actually had a clear and accurate idea of his father's religious experiences, but for his own reasons chose to give them a different significance.

… Religious Experiences
In his book on Shinto, cited above, Kasulis talks of having a 'religious experience' and William James wrote a whole book on the subject. It is a relevant question whether the 'golden light' episode discussed above qualifies as a 'religious' experience. For Morihei Ueshiba himself, to the extent that he understood the experience, it clearly did, for he talks of 'directly seeing the *kami*'. James discusses religious experiences in general and then lists four features of a 'mystical' experience—of which the 'golden light' episode is also an example. One feature listed by James is that the experience is ineffable: one who has the experience cannot describe it in words. However, this canonical account has been disputed by those who regard such experiences as quite amenable to description in language—which Morihei Ueshiba himself does in the passage quoted, and who also regard the first-person descriptions and the third-person reports as fundamentally connected, since both in fact have to rely on language to make any sense at all. As Thomas Nagel puts it,

"*While experiential concepts are applied in the first person from within, not on the basis of behavioral, circumstantial or any other kind of evidence, they also*

> *require outward criteria. To mean anything in application to oneself in the first person, they must also be applicable to oneself and others on behavioral and circumstantial grounds that are not just privately available.*"

The necessity for such applicability was

> "*a consequence of a general condition of publicity that must be met by all concepts, which in turn derives from a condition that must be met by any rule of whatever kind: that there must be an objective distinction between following it and breaking it, which can be made* ***only*** *if it is possible to compare one's own practice with that of one's community.*" (Nagel, *The View from Nowhere*, p. 22.)

A fundamental question is how much sense is to be made by relying on language, and Nagel questions the importance of the final '***only***' in the quoted sentence (in bold), on the grounds that the general severity of the condition might be too narrowly interpreted. He is at pains to point out that the issue of comparing one's own practice with that of the community should not be interpreted in too restrictive a fashion. Nagel's questioning is relevant to the matter of religious experiences and we will return to this point below.

The Phenomenology of Enlightenment

In the quotation above, Morihei Ueshiba makes a statement about being enlightened (qualified by the astonishment implied by *hatto* and also by the softening expressed by -- *youni*: "*as if*"). The term is part of the title of a recent translation of discourses made by Kanshu Sunadomari, one of Ueshiba's earlier disciples, entitled *Enlightenment through Aikido*, but it is not clear from the title or contents whether Ueshiba and Sunadomari are referring to the same state. In any case, we need to place this term in a cultural context so that it is not misunderstood. It was a common phenomenon for the creators of Japan's 'new' religions to undergo allegedly profound and life-changing experiences, in which they saw themselves as directly connected to or part of 'the universe', however this is conceived. It is this belief that they saw the universe 'as it really is', and their own (usually extremely important) place within it, that was commonly understood as enlightenment.

Morihei Ueshiba also claims to have seen an analogous connection, "of humans becoming one with God", but he expressed this in terms of winning and losing. It is not clear from the discourses of Kanshu Sunadomari whether Sunadomari thought that he himself was enlightened, and was gratuitously enlightened as a result of his aikido training —a sudden flash of light, or whether what he terms 'enlightenment' arises, or can arise, in a series of glimmers of light from the process of aikido training as a matter of course. Nor is it clear what this 'enlightenment' means in actual practice. One could answer that IHBTE (*It Has To Be Experienced*) or IHBTF (*It Has To Be Felt*), but all this does is add another problem, analogous to explaining in words just what the correct 'experience' or correct 'feeling' consists in.

The Phenomenology of IHTBF

The concept of phenomenology as I am using the term here is of some relevance to what has become almost a mantra in certain types of martial arts training: *It Has To Be Felt* (IHBTF). There are two aspects involved. One is of vocabulary, especially the meaning of the general terms used to describe and explain the experiences involved. A common term here is 'intent' and the similarities and differences in meaning between *intent* and *intentional* (as this term has been used earlier in this essay) should be noted. The other is the description of the experiences themselves. The passage quoted from Thomas Nagel, above, and the subsequent discussion of language are also relevant here. In this discussion, the focus is the feeling, or experience, itself and how this is expressed in words.

The following opinions were expressed recently on *AikiWeb* and I believe they illustrate the issues quite clearly. My comments follow directly after each quotation.

> "*It's about bringing the ground to various part of your body through intent. It's about balancing forces in your body through intent. It's about changing your body microscopically to deal with external forces through intent. It's about* dantien *movement through intent. It's about moving lots of stuffs without moving. It's about using breath to condition for full body connectivity.*"

COMMENT: 'Intent' is mentioned four times in this passage, but the term is not defined. It seems to be assumed that the meaning will become clear through experiencing what this is, but it is not obvious that going through the motions of 'experiencing intent' by doing such things as 'balancing forces' in 'the body' is any different from participating in a ceremony, of the sort described by Wittgenstein in his *Philosophical Investigations* (but with 'intent', 'intention', 'experience' or 'balancing forces' substituted for 'sensation'). Wittgenstein's description is in the form of a conversation with an imaginary interlocutor.

> "*Let's imagine the following case. I want to keep a diary about the recurrence of a certain sensation. To this end I associate it with the sign "S" and write this sign in a calendar for every day on which I have the sensation. — I want first to observe that a definition of the sign cannot be formulated. — But all the same, I can give one to myself as a kind of ostensive definition! — How? Can I point to the sensation? — Not in the ordinary sense. But I speak, or write the sign down, and at the same time I concentrate my attention on the sensation -- and so, as it were, point to it inwardly. — But what is*

> *this ceremony for? For that is all it seems to be! A definition serves to lay down the meaning of a sign, doesn't it? — Well, that is done precisely by concentrating my attention; for in this way I commit to memory the connection between the sign and the sensation. — But "I commit to memory" can only mean: this process brings it about that I remember the connection correctly in the future. But in the present case I have no criterion of correctness. One would like to say: whatever is going to seem correct to me is correct. And that only means that here we can't talk about 'correct'.*" (Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Fourth Edition, Paragraph 258.)

Another example involves the mundane activity of drinking coffee. The following quotation is from a discussion on *AikiWeb* concerning *zanshin* and six directions.

> "*It's more the wordless willfulness that precedes any action. When you reach for the cup of coffee, it's intent that initiates and drives the event, from the time you desire a sip of coffee, to the moment the cup is at your lips. Desire fires intent, intent initiates and effects action.*"

COMMENT: 'Intent' here is preceded by another experience, or other experiences, namely the 'wordless willfulness' and / or 'desire' that 'fires' the intent. The crucial question here is what is actually going on when, having reached for the coffee, you do not actually drink it.

On the other hand, in the following quotation the term 'intent' is also used of an inanimate object -- with a timely reminder of the limits of analogies. The context is a discussion about the sense in which Morihei Ueshiba used the term 'lead' in aikido.

> "*Quite correct. I imagine that for the statue to emerge from the stone, the sculptor must first imagine it (the statue's intent, so-to-speak) in there somewhere trying to get out, and start chiseling to reveal it ... Again, extending the analogy to Aikido, nage moves based on uke's intent, before uke even moves, so nage is actually not "leading" uke; nage is just where he needs to be to reveal/expose uke's attack, and apply what technique is appropriate. ... Of course, analogies have their limits ... perhaps I am pushing this one, but it helped me put this idea into perspective.*"

COMMENT: Again, it is assumed that the meaning of 'intent' is clear and that the term does not need any specific definition. The description of the statue is reminiscent of the notion of formal explanation as used by Aristotle, but Aristotle would suggest the nature of the material offers one type of explanation, the form being in the mind of the sculptor. However, defining intent—and, in cases where the intent is followed by an action, the consequent relationship of the intention and the action / non-action—is too important a matter to be left to analogies or metaphors without further precision. There is, however, a reference to the terms used in IHTBF in the following statements.

> "*There's a growing body of individuals who are training in* aiki *and learning very specific body methods. There is a vocabulary and a physical, technical curriculum that is quite focused. For those of us who have been practicing* aiki *for 15 years or longer, and have some skills and understanding, it's frustrating to read descriptions of* aiki *that only tangentially touch on it and lead the would-be student in the wrong direction, away from any glimmer of understanding.*"

COMMENT: This is an advance on the previous statements, for there is mention of a 'focused' vocabulary and specific body methods, but neither is explained. Nor is there any clarification about the difference between the 'tangential touches' and the 'focused vocabulary'. The entire paragraph rests on a prior connection between an undefined *aiki*, specific body methods, and a 'focused' physical & technical curriculum, which the writer believes is firmly established, since it has led in the writer's own case to 'some skills and understanding'. It is suggested that relying on the 'tangential touches' alone will actually lead the student away from any 'glimmer of understanding' and there seems to be no recourse other than to rely on IHTBF itself to illuminate the difference —and thereby to show the connection between the 'focused vocabulary' and the 'skills & understanding'—and also the validity of IHTBF.

> "*You can make up all the philosophy/mythology/mental models you want; you don't get to make up the physics you want. This thread now has elements that appear to the layperson, knowledgeable relative to physics. They do not represent the depth or nuance of the actual subject, they are not described in the language of physics (mathematics); they are a layperson's simplification and some statements are downright wrong.*
>
> *Quantum is the new black; people who have no business using that word, are in fact using it to describe everything from conscienceless to face cream. A doctorate in the right branches of physics allows you to partake in this discussion; years of post-doctoral research allow you to propose additions, modifications or other alterations to the science. All of those require replication and peer review to begin to be taken seriously. ...*
>
> *Mental models that describe certain physical sensations and mindsets, that allow people to train and eventually acquire the complex mechanical reality that is expert/ master level martial arts, does not require rewriting the fundamental processes that govern the universe. We are*

> *not that powerful we are not that important. That we exist at all in our everyday complexity is amazing and requires no magic, neither does* randori."

COMMENT: These comments need to be read in conjunction with arguments against scientific reductionism of the sort espoused by scholars like Daniel Dennett and Richard Dawkins. It might well be true that 'mental models that describe physical sensations and mindsets' do not require a rewriting of the universe's fundamental processes. However, the issue is not one of rewriting these processes, other than updating them as language develops; it is rather one of finding the language to express the mental models without necessarily making the assumptions either of scientific reductionism or of a theism based on monotheistic concepts.

I have discussed the issues concerning IHTBF in order to give some concrete context to Morihei Ueshiba's discourses on his religious experiences, as he saw these. These religious experiences have the same status as the experiences that supposedly can be understood only by recourse to the IHTBF trope. Moreover, in the case of experiences that arise from, or are termed, *chinkon kishin*, which are tied to specific rituals and require more than one participant if they are to be performed correctly, these are also closely connected with specific training methods, just like the experiences that HTBF.

The Problem of Language

The point that Nagel makes (quoted above) and the opinions quoted from *AikiWeb* discussions, are closely connected with the problem of the limits of language used in the first-person descriptions of experiences and in the third-person reports of such experiences—reports that are necessarily made by those who did not have the experiences being described. To understand Nagel's point, we can present the issue in terms of two extremes, as suggested by Sugiyama Lebra's view of oppositional logic or the orientations of Thomas Kasulis of integrity and intimacy: (1) The experience is self-validating and is true for the person who has it and therefore the first-person reports of the experiences can be accepted by the hearers, such as Kisshomaru Ueshiba, even if these reports cannot adequately convey the content of the experience and, as a result, Kisshomaru cannot directly identify them as being directly analogous to his own experiences; (2) The experience is not by itself self-validating and both its genuineness and the truth of the first-person reports need to be judged according to criteria that are not part of the experience. The problem for the researcher of new religions like Omoto, and also for students of Morihei Ueshiba's discourses, is that both (1) and (2) can be true and that it is therefore a mistake to see the experiences necessarily in terms of two opposing extremes.

Another way of stating this in different terms is to quote Nagel, once again.

> "[Wittgenstein] *observed that while experiential concepts are applied in the first person from within, not on the basis of behavioral, circumstantial or any other kind of evidence, they also requite outward criteria. To mean anything in application to oneself in the first person, they must also be applicable to oneself and others on circumstantial and behavioral grounds that are not just privately available. ... Thus, his view that the conditions of first- and third-person ascription of an experience are inextricably bound together in a single public concept seems to be correct, with regard to the ordinary case.*" (Nagel, *op.cit.*, p. 22.)

The problem for Nagel is to determine whether the concept of experience can be extended beyond the 'ordinary case' without losing all content. He gives the example of an innocuous English sentence, but adds a context that seemingly deprives it of meaning. The example is from Wittgenstein's discussion on pain.

> "*"But if I suppose that someone has a pain, then I am simply supposing that he has just the same as I have so often had." — But that gets us no further. It is as if I were to say, 'You surely know what "It's five o'clock here" means; so you also know what "It's five o'clock on the sun" means. It means simply that it is just the same time there as is it is here when it is 5 o'clock.' — The exclamation by means of* sameness *does not work here. For I know well enough that one can call 5 o'clock here and 5 o'clock there 'the same time', but do not know in what cases one is to speak of its being the same time here and there.*" (Wittgenstein, *op.cit.*, Paragraph 350.)

Wittgenstein has been discussing the intelligibility of ascribing pain to physical objects, such as a hot stove, but Nagel makes the important point that not all cases that are out of the ordinary are like the case that Wittgenstein cites. Wittgenstein's case introduces a major contradiction to the conditions that determine the time of day, which is the position on the surface of the earth relative to the sun.

> "*But the generalization of the concept of experience beyond our capacity to apply it does not* contradict *the condition of the application that it tries to transcend, even if some examples, like the ascription of pain to a stove, do pass the limits of intelligibility.*" (Nagel, *op.cit.*, p. 23.)

Nagel primarily has in mind animals and small children, who can be argued to have experiences but lack the means to verbalize them. He believes that ascribing experiences to animals and small babies is based on an 'ordinary pre-philosophical concept of experience.' On the basis of this "natural idea shared by most human beings about what sorts of things occupy the world around them," Nagel hopes that we can include other specific experiences that cannot be represented by mental concepts of which we have a first-

person understanding. He has one important proviso, that these are still regarded as subjective experiences and not reduced to behavioral dispositions or functional states. A consequence of this proviso is the need for a very careful description of these subjective experiences, which does not, in the language chosen to describe them, reduce them to behavioral dispositions or functional states. The description will be ‘phenomenological' in the general sense understood in this essay.

In many places, Nagel argues for a project that Morihei Ueshiba would probably have accepted if it had been explained in his own terms. The project involves extending the boundaries of what is normally conceived as the ‘physical', the ‘mental' and the ‘spiritual'—understood as three aspects of the same thing, the underlying assumption being that explanations involving certain types of reductionism—reducing one to the others or reducing one to ways of talking about the others—are unacceptable.

Nagel would probably resist including experiences like Morihei Ueshiba's ‘golden light' experience of 1925, on the grounds that they invoke an external source like a deity—the existence of which he denies for other reasons, and would almost certainly exclude the various spiritual beings, activities, states and performances that inhabited the world of Nao and Onisaburo Deguchi. However, the experiences that form the subject of IHTBF discussions would certainly need to be included in any project of the sort that Nagel recommends and the role of language here is crucial. Issues involved relating to language are already a major problem in *AikiWeb* discussion threads, for describing concepts such as *aiki*, internal power, internal skills, the cognate experiences and the processes necessary to have these experiences and acquire the skills—inevitably experiences and processes that HTBF, needs a language that can also be understood by those who do not have the concepts, have not had the experiences, and do not possess the skills. Simply repeating the IHTBF formula, as I think that the above discussion has shown, is not an acceptable option here.

Preliminaries (2): Framing the Evidence

One important point that also needs to be noted here is the importance of the contemporary cultural context of the 19th century in Japan and a major issue for this column is to relate the modern preoccupation with aikido and religious practice to this contemporary cultural context. The careful presentation of evidence is especially important with regard to Morihei Ueshiba, who is separated from present-day aikido practitioners by a major gulf. The size of the gulf is a matter of some argument. It is not so much a temporal gulf, since Ueshiba died as recently as 1969 and there are people alive who were his direct students. It is more a cultural and intellectual gulf, which is especially important with respect to religious matters. The tendency to over-simplify or over-classify, mentioned in an earlier essay in connection with Takie Sugiyama Lebra, Thomas Kasulis and others who have written about Japanese culture, is a particular problem with Morihei Ueshiba, especially concerning his membership of Omoto and his role in the postwar development of aikido.

It is sometimes left unrecognized that the Omoto religion did not just happen by chance. Omoto was part of a general trend of new religions that began towards the end of the Tokugawa era, the circumstances surrounding the rise of individual religions being sufficiently similar to suggest a specific trend. The evidence has been conveniently assembled in one place by Inoue Nobutaka, in his massive dictionary of new religions [『新宗教辞典』: See Further Reading]. There is a founder, or in some important cases a foundress, born in somewhat unfortunate circumstances, who undergoes certain experiences and thereby achieves ‘enlightenment'. The evidence for the enlightenment usually consists in the activities, such as healing or fortune telling, that are performed as a result. The founder or foundress attracts followers, for whom the fact of the religion and the activities involved with the religion fill a gap in their lives and so they become ‘believers'. The new religion has a mission of some kind, usually to bring about substantial spiritual and/or political change in the world, with the members of the religion becoming the spearhead of the change. The mission springs from an ideology, or theology—even a complete cosmology—that explains the world exclusively in terms of a contrast between the undesirable situation before the religion was established and the dramatic, utopian, change that the new religion will bring. The mission is usually expressed in discourses or scriptures, which also need to be interpreted ‘correctly', in order that their ‘true' significance can be ‘discovered' or ‘revealed'.

The Meiji Restoration of 1868, the Second World War and the events leading up to it brought about a major change in attitudes, including the writing of history. The fact of the Second World War, with Japan's defeat, rendered it necessary to present Japan in a new, peaceful, light and this was especially true of the Omoto religion, which began its resurrection after the end of the war. Along with members of his family, Onisaburo Deguchi had been imprisoned after the Second Omoto Suppression in 1935. The need for resurrection was also true of Japanese *budo* and aikido had a special role here. Aikido, especially, was presented as a ‘peaceful' art by those who wanted to have the Aikikai re-incorporated as a legal entity in 1948 and his postwar interpreters have presented a picture of Morihei Ueshiba that conforms to the peaceful image of the art. They have presented Morihei Ueshiba—who is quite likely to have been a right-wing nationalist and cultist of a deeply conservative kind, contemplating in his Iwama hiding place Japan's bitterly humiliating defeat and still maintaining contact with the prewar nationalists like Okawa Shumei—as a saintly figure, with only a distant and notional membership of the prewar Omoto religious organization, who remained aloof

and isolated from the political crises affecting Japan in the first half of the twentieth century, who in 1942 deliberately repudiated his early connections with Japan's military war machine, and who bequeathed to the world a timeless spiritual gift. It may well be correct to suggest that he bequeathed to the world a 'martial way' of unusual depth and scope, which has indeed turned out to be a 'timeless gift', but this view is certainly debatable and in any case also needs to be related to the historical evidence available.

Morihei Ueshiba was seven years old when the Meiji constitution was promulgated in November 1890, giving freedom of religion. In fact, the freedom actually given was very carefully circumscribed and, since there was not even a common Japanese word for 'religion' or religious 'freedom', new terms had to be coined. As mentioned in the previous column, the term chosen for 'religion' was *shuukyou* [宗教: しゅうきょう], which was a composite word made up of two characters, read, respectively, as *SHUU* [宗: sect, religious denomination] and*KYOU* [教: teaching]. This new freedom was especially seized upon by the Omoto religion, which espoused a strong form of religious globalism and made contact with other religions outside Japan. Morihei Ueshiba would certainly have been aware of this globalism and, in fact, the establishment of a universal 'kingdom of heaven' on earth was, in Deguchi's own words (東亜の天地を精神的に統一し、次に世界を統一する心算なり、事の成否は天の時なり、煩慮を要せず、王仁三十年の夢今や正に醒めんとす), the ostensible reason for his abortive trip to Mongolia in 1924, with Morihei Ueshiba in tow as a bodyguard. In his discourses, however, Ueshiba also uses the old term for 'religion', which was 惟神の道 [かむながらのみち: *kamu nagara no michi*], which could be translated as 'the way of the deities as we actually experience or come into contact with them.'

I stress these points because a preliminary reading of the work of Kasulis, and also Sugiyama Lebra, might suggest that they are primarily concerned with cultural differences that can be applied to the more relaxed contemporary—that is, postwar—Japanese culture, including religious culture, rather than the more volatile culture of the Meiji, Taisho and Showa periods, in which Morihei Ueshiba lived and flourished. In the first part of this essay, I mentioned the 'smooth postwar narrative' that presented Japan in terms of 'western democracy—but democracy with a difference,' the implication being that times have indeed changed and that the prewar Shinto nationalism is no longer an entirely valid way of approaching Japanese culture or religion. This reading overlooks several important items. One is that the transformation to western democracy was never completed. The second is that the prewar Shinto nationalism is still very much alive and active in postwar Japan. In the latter part of her analysis, Lebra specifically applies her argument to general religious issues, but without any specific time frame. The only time frame she recognizes is the appearance in the Japanese 'self' of oppositional logic, which she believes coincides with western influences that are largely postwar. Kasulis, also, has structured his analysis of the cultural orientations of intimacy and integrity in such a way that the orientation of intimacy applies to Japanese culture within a very wide time frame. As we shall see below, Kasulis uses the general philosophical distinctions he made earlier as a conceptual tool for examining Shinto, also without any specific time frame, beyond the time frame generally accepted for the evolution of Shinto in all its various guises.

Preliminaries (3): Japanese 'Common Religion'

The concept of 'common religion' is rather more specific to its subject than the more general concepts of 'contingency logic' or 'intimacy' vs. 'integrity' and the arguments of Ian Reader and George Tanabe Jr., introduced and briefly discussed earlier, are particularly relevant to Morihei Ueshiba. According to Reader and Tanabe, the concept of 'common religion' applies equally to the established religions such as Buddhism and Shinto and to the 'new' religions such as Omoto. Ueshiba embraced Shingon Buddhism as a youth and would also have been exposed to the Shinto practices of the Kii region where he was born. He is reputed to have heard about Omoto during his sojourn in Hokkaido and was sufficiently interested in this religion to have made a detour to the Omoto headquarters, on his way back to Tanabe to see his ailing father—risking severe family censure in doing so. Thus, one might think that the notion of Japanese 'common religion' is especially suitable for placing Morihei Ueshiba's religious beliefs and practices in a general cultural context. The concept was defined in some detail in the previous column, but it will be of some use to recapitulate the main elements here. Reader and Tanabe discuss the notion in great detail, with many examples, and for the purpose of this essay, it is more convenient to focus on the few basic questions posed earlier:

Does the notion of 'common religion' have any value when applied to Japanese religions, such as Buddhism, Shinto and Omoto-kyou?

Reader and Tanabe very much stress an affirmative answer. The concept provides a core framework that is applicable to all of Japanese religious beliefs and practices.

Do the elements of 'common religion' in Japan mark it off substantially from any elements common to religions like Christianity, Islam, Mormonism?

This will depend on the credence given to arguments like those of Thomas Kasulis, to the effect that religions, like all other forms of culture, display the orientations of 'intimacy' and 'integrity'. Takie Sugiyama Lebra would argue that Japanese 'common religion' displays the marks of unitary contingency logic, in which the subject and object could become indistinguishable. Another scholar, Nancy K Stalker, suggests that what marks off common religion as Japanese is not sufficient to mark off the notion from other examples of

'common religion'. In other words, what is 'common' about Japanese common religion is common to other religions, too.

Does the 'common religion' in Japan contain elements of training?

Training is seen as a crucial element in Japanese 'common religion' and enlightenment is brought about as much by one's own efforts as by the intervention of transcendental forces.

Could the 'common religion' of Japan accommodate elements of martial arts training?

In the extract from the biography, quoted above, Morihei Ueshiba refers to the "absolute victory of the God of Takemusu", which is Omoto theology couched in martial terms. Although religion and warfare are not intrinsically connected, in the sense that one is not defined in terms of the other, there has been a very strong practical connection, as the histories of chivalry, crusading, and *bushido* will attest. Moreover, the concept of common religion does not sharply distinguish the physical, the mental and the spiritual [気心体一] and nor, it seems, did Morihei Ueshiba. Even at a relatively young age, well before he encountered Onisaburo Deguchi and Omoto, Ueshiba joined the army and went off to participate in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, to which, to judge from his writings quoted in a previous column, Deguchi was strongly opposed. Before his departure, Ueshiba participated in a *goma* fire ritual and received the spirit of a deity associated with victory over enemies. To the extent that warfare has a firm religious or spiritual base, martial training would have, also.

Did Morihei Ueshiba have any view or assumptions about Japanese 'common religion' and did this have any effect on his own training practices?

Though he never specifically uses the term, some aspects of 'common religion' dominate his whole outlook and he also conceived the martial art he created in similar terms: aikido is a vehicle for achieving the same range of benefits—but derived from one crucial element: the more intense physical and spiritual activities entailed in martial arts training—as common religion achieves from religion in general and Omoto derives from its particular form. The only feature of 'common religion' that is lacking in Morihei Ueshiba's religious outlook is its availability for all, for he had a narrow, elitist view of his art and imposed strict conditions on who could practice it. However, Ueshiba's restrictive view of who could embrace his art was quietly forgotten as a result of World War II and Kisshomaru Ueshiba not only made the art available to anyone who wished to train, but he also changed the way it is practiced, in order to make it more accommodating to all comers.

Preliminaries (4): Religious Beliefs, Japanese 'Common Religion' and Ethics

Some people find handling Morihei Ueshiba's religious beliefs and practices problematic, since they find his concept of spirituality hard to understand. They find it easier to ground Ueshiba's aikido training in his ethical beliefs. The following is a recent contribution to an *AikiWeb* discussion forum.

> "*I see the spirituality of O Sensei … as finding concrete form in the ethics of Aikido. Whether you believe he achieved enlightenment, or whether one can achieve enlightenment through Aikido, O Sensei's personal beliefs and philosophy formed the ethical basis of his Aikido and it is one of his most enduring legacies to the art. Rather than trying to speak in terms of 'spirituality', which is a matter of semantics in many respects, I think speaking 'ethically' is far more constructive in this particular instance.*"

The author of the quotation does not explain the content of the 'ethical basis' of Ueshiba's aikido, but we might assume that it is related to peace and not harming one's opponent. On the other hand, one could argue that ethics is just as 'interpretive' a term as spirituality and so the focus on ethics is a major red herring, for, this simply pushes the problem one stage further back. In any case, Morihei Ueshiba was a man of his time and this is as true for his ethical beliefs as it is for his spiritual beliefs.

The arguments of Thomas Kasulis concerning the cultural orientations of 'intimacy' and 'integrity' have been discussed in earlier parts of this essay. What has not been discussed so far is their relevance to ethics and politics. Kasulis argues that the cultural orientation of 'intimacy' is especially displayed in Japanese ethics and politics and so it will be instructive to apply these arguments to the ethical views that have been attributed in the above quotation to Morihei Ueshiba.

In his book, *Intimacy or Integrity*, Kasulis employed his usual technique of contrasting the two ethical models, but it is quite difficult to relate his general discussion to people as complex as Nao Deguchi, Onisaburo Deguchi, or even Morihei Ueshiba. To see this more clearly, consider an important tension between two extremes. At one extreme Kasulis finds that the cultural orientation of 'integrity' yields an ethics based on formal principles, such as Kant's categorical imperative, or the theories of John Rawls concerning justice as fairness.

> "*From integrity's standpoint, the most important norm is that the relations* [between people] *should recognize and preserve the integrity of all the individuals involved.*" (Kasulis, *Intimacy or Integrity*, p. 117.)

However, this extreme [focusing on preserving the integrity of the individual] is represented quite adequately by religious founders like Nao Deguchi or an avatar like Morihei Ueshiba, based as it is on the unique status of these individuals. The fulminations of Nao Deguchi against the Meiji government and the local political activities of Morihei

Ueshiba, as he campaigned in the fisheries dispute in Tanabe, would fit the model of integrity quite well. In fact, these founders have the added advantage of having become enlightened, and thus living*kami*, and so can be considered as going beyond the scope of accepted ethical behavior. Since Ueshiba believed he was stationed permanently on the Floating Bridge of Heaven, ethical behavior was not something he would have needed to worry about very much.

At the other extreme is the cultural orientation based on ‘intimacy' and from this position Ueshiba would have preached a doctrine of aikido as love, which Kasulis sees as the central focus of an ethics based on ‘intimacy'. In this orientation ethical behavior is primarily one of empathy, based on an acute perception of the shared oneness of humanity and nature. Kasulis states this quite clearly.

> "*Rather than abstracting general principles that would apply to any person in the same circumstances, intimacy involves us in the particularities of the overlap with the other. When acting morally according to this model, I enter—at least in part—into the situation of the other. Thus the ethics is ‘situational' as well as guided by love. So there is a natural transition from intimately knowing another person's plight to empathizing with it in a responsive manner. There need be no recourse to evaluating abstract or general moral principles. Intimacy's ethics and epistemology are, therefore, inescapably linked.*" (Kasulis, *op.cit.*, pp. 118-119.)

Kasulis restates this argument in other terms a little later on.

> "*In the integrity orientation ethics is primarily a morality of principles; in the intimacy orientation, however, ethics is a morality of love. Integrity's moral demand is to be* fair*to the other person; intimacy's is to* be there for *the other person. Integrity generates a morality of responsibility, whereas intimacy generates a morality of responsiveness.*" (Kasulis, *op.cit.*, pp. 120-121.)

This seems a fine distinction, if a little too neat, and Kasulis actually has to fudge the distinction slightly with his qualification "*—at least in part—*" in the earlier paragraph quoted. However, a serious problem arises when the cultural orientation of intimacy is applied to Morihei Ueshiba's ethical behavior. To recall the statement in the *Aikiweb* discussion,

> "*O Sensei's personal beliefs and philosophy formed the ethical basis of his Aikido and it is one of his most enduring legacies to the art.*"

This seems fine and, in many respects, quite right. However, some sharp distinctions have to be drawn between (1) Ueshiba's personal beliefs and philosophy [which this series of essays is devoted to clarifying], (2) the ethical basis of his aikido [which appears to be based on both ‘intimacy' or ‘integrity', as Kasulis analyzes these cultural orientations], and (3) Ueshiba's own ethical and political conduct [which reveals an uncomfortable and questionable gap between the supposed ethics and the conduct]. It is by no means obvious that the connection between these three: Ueshiba's personal beliefs, the ethical basis of aikido, and Ueshiba's own conduct, is as close and transparent as the writer assumes.

Kasulis uses his exposition of the cultural basis of intimacy to explain the behavior of the Japanese in World War II. The idea of individual ethical and political responsibility is deemphasized and so it was difficult to assign any individual responsibility for the atrocities committed by the military in World War II or any individual duty to protest about the rise of fascism in the 1930s. By following the holographic model, which Kasulis uses to explain Shinto (see below), everyone shared the blame, but the holographic model is different from the integrity-based model, which is a model of individuals being exhorted to act from a sense of duty, as a result of making a collective agreement to work together.

> "*The exhortation is generally, first of all, not to go outside the self but to look deeper within—to find the internal relation that holographically reiterates the whole. The appeal is to an affective, dark core of connectedness that is not publicly analyzed into external contractual principles. (In the militaristic jargon of the war years, this idea is often articulated in terms of the* ‘Yamato-damashii'*, the spirit of ancient Japan in the hearts of all true Japanese.) This can often take the form of ethnicity—the notion that there is some distinctive spirit which surges through our bloodline making us intrinsically, not extrinsically, already part of a whole.*" (Kasulis, *op.cit.*, pp. 129-130.)

Morihei Ueshiba's writings that appeared in this period, *Budo Renshu*, *Budo* and the articles published in the magazine of the *Dai Nippon Budo Senyoukai* [大日本武道宣揚会], quite clearly reflect this "appeal to an affective dark core of connectedness" and also articulate this in terms of ‘*Yamato-damashii*'. The suggestion in one English translation of the 1938 *Budo*volume, that this term is "nowadays best interpreted as the manifestation of all that is good and true in human nature," is clearly an attempt to present Morihei Ueshiba in a sanitized, postwar fashion, that covers over the darker aspects of the cultural orientation of intimacy, as Kasulis applies this to Japanese ethics and politics. As a consequence, to focus on Ueshiba's specifically ethical beliefs and conduct, in contrast to the whole spectrum of his religious beliefs, practices and training, is to ignore the forest by focusing on one tree.

The concept of Japanese ‘common religion' is rather more specific to its subject than these more general concepts ‘intimacy' vs. ‘integrity', and so the arguments of Ian Reader

and George Tanabe Jr. focus more specifically on Japanese religion. Ethical theories as such do not play a major part at all in the discussion, since ethics is not considered as a separate moral discipline, over and above the beliefs and activities that would qualify as 'religious'. Since Aristotle, 'ethics' has been considered as a separate subject, like 'rhetoric', but in other intellectual traditions it does not have this general status.

Elements of Morihei Ueshiba's Japanese Religion:
A major problem in discussing Morihei Ueshiba's religious beliefs and practices is that they need to be seen as a vast whole, comprising elements from Taoism, *Onmyoudou* [陰陽道: the 'Way of Yin & Yang'], Shinto, Buddhism, *Shugendo*, all blended together under the vast syncretistic umbrella known as Omoto [大本: the 'Great Origin']. So it should be understood that any attempt to isolate particular elements, despite being a necessary conceptual strategy, is to some extent artificial. Thus one could present Morihei Ueshiba's religious beliefs and practices as 'basically' Taoist, but mixed with all the other elements, or as 'basically' Shinto, but mixed with all the other elements, and so on and so on. Since Shinto and Omoto are the belief systems with which I am most familiar—and perhaps most striking to one schooled in traditional Christianity, they form the main components of the discussion that follows. However, I am uncomfortably aware that this approach also has limitations that should not be forgotten.

1. Shinto
A major part of a previous column was a discussion of Shinto considered as a political entity, which was the basis for the state worship of the Japanese Emperor. In this column Shinto is considered more as a personal religious phenomenon, with a much longer history, but for some Japanese aikido teachers, it is hard to make such a distinction between the political and the personal aspects of Shinto. Nevertheless, even as a specifically religious term, Shinto puts a very wide spectrum of experience into one box, so much so that some have questioned whether Shinto really is a 'religion'. The assumption here is that religion has a precise definition and we have seen in an earlier part of this essay that scholars like Edwin Reischauer and Marius Jansen had a very specific concept of what constitutes a religion and that in the light of this concept they found Japanese religion lacking in many respects. However, I think that George Tanabe Jr. and Ian Reader responded quite effectively to the opinions of Reischauer and Jansen in their discussion of Japanese 'common religion.'

Kasulis on Shinto
Earlier, I discussed the theories of 'cultural logic' expounded by Takie Sugiyama Lebra and the theories of Thomas Kasulis on the two orientations of human relationships conveyed by the terms 'intimacy' and 'integrity'. Kasulis builds on this discussion in another book, specifically on Shinto. Although he does not include Lebra's book in his bibliography, the account of Shinto sketched out in his book, *Shinto: The Way Home*, is analogous to Lebra's account of 'cultural logic'. Whereas Lebra gives an account of 'contingency' logic, which will allow *X* to be *p* and *q* and *r* simultaneously in different ways and in which she grounds the Japanese 'self', Kasulis is looking for a new way to express what he believes are important truths about connectedness: the way human beings relate to each other and to the world at large. Since he also wants these connections to be as inclusive as possible, he makes some very similar distinctions to Lebra's classification of oppositional and contingent logic. He applies the cultural orientations of 'integrity' and 'intimacy', discussed in his earlier book, to Shinto. Given his admitted bias for 'intimacy', it should come as no surprise that Kasulis regards Shinto, as a religion that quintessentially manifests the connectedness of everything, with the orientation of 'intimacy', as against 'integrity' as he sees this. The picture that Kasulis paints of Shinto is quite attractive, for his account contains the essential elements of Shinto that were used by Onisaburo Deguchi to construct his theology of Omoto. There is no space to give a detailed account and so I will simply select some important points of his discussion.

Existential vs. Essentialist Shinto
Kasulis begins by making use of an old-established—and also quite controversial—distinction between essence and existence, which, when applied to Shinto, is quite plausible. However, the distinction could also apply to other religions and, indeed, other practices, besides Shinto.

> "*We ... distinguish two kinds of spirituality: existential and essentialist. The first proceeds by finding an appropriate label for what a person values, believes, and does. 'Because I believe or feel in such-and-such a way, I am Shinto,' for example. We can call this an 'existential' Shinto spirituality. It is a self-identity that arises from naming a particular way of living: the patterns of one's existence in the world. The second type of spirituality arises from an intuition about an inner core of one's being—one's essence, soul, or innate character—that defines and drives one's values, beliefs and actions. 'Because I am Shinto, I behave and feel in such-and-such a way.' We call this an 'essentialist' Shinto spirituality because one's identity as Shinto precedes and determines (rather than merely names) one's pattern of religious behavior.*" (Kasulis,*op.cit.*, pp. 4-5.)

The distinction seems clear on the surface, but the clarity diminishes on deeper examination. On the one hand, the distinction is stated to be 'subtle' and that people who identify with Shinto in either of the two ways might be indistinguishable. On the other hand, the distinction is based on a use of everyday language that is assumed to be clear. We can say of someone who pursues an activity with some

frequency, ‘X often does y.' Or we can make a wider generalization and say of this person, ‘X is a y-er' or ‘X is a y-ist.' Kasulis gives the example of (1) ‘X often tells jokes' and (2) ‘X is a comedian'. In one case people call X a comedian to classify X's behavior and in this case being a comedian describes how X frequently acts. This is a case of existential identity. It is important to see here that for Kasulis people use the name ‘comedian' merely as a convenient and conventional description of how X acts. In the other case, X is ‘by nature' a comedian and therefore thinks and feels in a certain way: being a comedian is a case of essentialist identity and explains why X behaves in a certain way. In this case being a comedian is more than simply a conventional name: it defines X's basic nature and defines the nature and scope of X's behavior. Kasulis alleges that there is a causal connection between (1) and (2), which can work either way and is reversed in the two cases. Kasulis regards this distinction as a distinction between ‘modalities' and notes that they generate different expectations of X's behavior. He then applies this distinction to Shinto.

> "*When people say they are ‘Shinto', are they giving a conventional name for how they happen to think, feel, and act? Or are they designating an essential part of themselves that* leads them *to think, feel and act in a certain way? If the former (the existential identification with Shinto), the connection with the religion is ad hoc and flexible. Their Shinto identity would then be a conventional name applying to some of their typical ideas, values and practices. To change such an existential identity would be akin to a change in preference, taste and habit. If, by contrast, the identification with Shinto spirituality is of the essentialist form, the situation is more prescriptive than descriptive. Insofar as the essentialist identity is based on people's true nature, they* must *(or should) behave in certain specified ways. The essentialist Shinto spirituality determines and prescribes, rather than simply describes, their thoughts, values and actions. ... Shinto's development as an institution through Japanese history is a tension between these two forms of spirituality.*" (Kasulis, *op.cit.*, p. 6.)

There are several problems with the descriptions given above. The first problem is that the whole distinction as expounded by Kasulis appears to rest on grammatical features of the English language that do not apply in all cases. The distinction between ‘X often tells jokes' and ‘X is a comedian' works with jokes and comedians, but does not work in other cases, such as ‘X often sleeps': ‘X is a sleeper, or ‘X often dreams': ‘X is a dreamer.' This is unfortunate, since the distinction between ‘essentialist' and ‘existential' Shinto is of some value in illuminating how the government combined Shinto with nationalism in the 1930s. An issue for this essay is to what extent Morihei Ueshiba, also, saw his religious beliefs and practices in such terms, especially during the 1920s and 1930s.

The second problem is that Kasulis intends the distinction to apply to a complex and multifaceted practice like Shinto—and the distinction works quite well in this case, but as such it would apply equally to any religion: it does not mark off any unique features of Shinto, describing which is the overall aim of his book.

The third problem is that in his discussion of Shinto, Kasulis often uses the phrase ‘I am Shinto' or ‘I feel Shinto' and clearly intends the phrases to indicate some kind of identification with Shinto. However, I have never heard these phrases used by any Japanese person during the 30-plus years I have been living here. For 28 of these years I have been teaching courses on religious beliefs to Japanese university students and so have discussed Shinto and Buddhism with many generations of students, some of whom are now married with children, who have also been brought up in a cultural orientation of what Reader and Tanabe call Japanese ‘common religion.' If it is based on what people say, then such a self-identification with Shinto does not feature at all in this cultural orientation. Of course, this does not mean that people do not actually believe in the deep connectedness that Kasulis argues is a crucial mark of Shinto; it means that the belief is not often expressed in words.

Shinto Spirituality

So far, Kasulis has discussed two factors involving spirituality and also kinds of Shinto spirituality, but has not yet explained what he means by the term. Basically, he connects spirituality as seen in Shinto with the experience or feeling of awe and wonder, which usually occurs at fairly specific locations, and with the sense of connectedness that can be experienced more intensely at these locations. The advantage of this emphasis on connectedness and specific locations is that it enables Kasulis to connect the sense of awe with other aspects of Shinto, such as purification and *kotodama*, and it also enables practitioners of aikido to understand more clearly why Morihei Ueshiba conceived of aikido in these terms.

Feeling Shinto

Kasulis begins by making a distinction that is relevant to the earlier discussions in this essay on experience and IHTBF. He distinguishes between *what* is experienced and *how* it is experienced and gives the example of "having a favourite food." He suggests that what we prefer may well be different, but that how we "crave and savor" our favorite food may be alike. Either way, the experiences can be regarded as intentional in the sense understood by Gallagher and Zahavi: they are experiences of something and the experiencing itself is the constant element of consciousness that defines them as experiences.

Kasulis continues his explanation of Shinto spirituality by describing certain encounters.

> "*When we spiritually encounter mystery, it is inseparably about something (the inexplicable) and how we respond to that something (with wonder). As an object, the mysterious may sometimes seem a potency that is always present but often unnoticed or forgotten. It is like the advice to 'stop and smell the roses.' We know the roses are blooming, but we may be too busy to appreciate their fragrance. If we take the time to stop and smell them, however, we are reminded of what has been there all along. Sometimes the mysterious is like that forgotten presence. At other times, though, mysterious may be something new that seems to come forward from beyond the horizons of ordinary experience, calling attention to itself. The mysterious can beckon or even demand out attention. In such cases we are* struck *by it. In either form the mysterious stirs a reaction: an 'ah!' This 'ah!' is not an 'ah ha!' or 'Eureka!'—that is, an exclamation of discovering an answer. The 'ah!' venerates something we do not (perhaps cannot) fully understand. Shinto spirituality treasures the mysterious as something awesome. ...*
>
> *Most people acknowledge having had such powerful encounters in their lives. The experiences intrigue, startle, or frighten. Shinto spirituality is about learning to feel at home with them—feeling we belong with them and them with us—even if we do not fully understand why. Indeed, going too far in trying to explain them becomes a way of explaining them away, robbing them of their initial power. Shinto has names for such awe-inspiring presences—whether natural or humanly made, whether associated with joy and fear, whether a site, a personage, or an event: 'kami'.*" (Kasulis, *op.cit.*, pp. 10-11.)

This explanation is important, for the frightening aspect should not be underestimated, especially the frightening aspect of such events as the recent Fukushima earthquake and consequent tsunami for those who experienced them. In the light of these events, some might take issue with the suggestion that too much explanation removes the 'initial power.'

Kasulis has little to say about typhoons, earthquakes or tidal waves and his examples of natural *kami* are generally static, such as mountains or trees, but the comments made in the previous part of this essay on connectedness and the cultural orientations of intimacy and integrity would apply particularly to his treatment of Shinto. The example he uses are the two 'husband and wife' rocks at Futami, near Ise. The rocks are a short distance from the shore and the smaller rock ('the 'wife') is connected to the larger 'husband' by means of a woven*shimenawa* [注連縄] rope. On the larger rock a *torii* [鳥居] is visible and there is another *torii* on the mainland beach opposite the rocks. Kasulis uses the example to show the two levels of connectedness that he has explained in his earlier book. He also uses the example to show the different Japanese concepts of the soul.

On one level, the rocks and rope are externally connected: if the *shimenawa* and *torii* were not there, the rocks would simply be two tiny islands, like the 2,000-odd islands in the Seto Inland Sea. On another level, the connection between the rocks and rope is internal or inherent: they are in a relationship that is more than a simple connection. Kasulis accepts that Shinto allows for both levels of connectedness, but wants to emphasize the deeper level: the rocks and rope always were connected and the rope and gate symbolize, rather than create, the connection. As we shall see, it is this internal or intrinsic notion of connectedness that is especially relevant to Omoto and Morihei Ueshiba. Kasulis is here making a similar distinction to the distinction he made earlier between integrity and intimacy. Shinto is quintessentially a religion of intimacy and the connectedness it stresses is one of internal relationships. One could plausibly go further and connect intimacy with existential Shinto and integrity with essentialist Shinto, but Kasulis does not do use the distinction in this way. Instead, he uses the concept of 'holographic' connection, to explain his view of Shinto as intimacy, but this connection is true of those who see, feel, or are, Shinto in both an existentialist and an essentialist mode. The connection would work for the militarist assassins of the 1930s just as much as for the victims of their assassinations and the rest of the Japanese population.

Holographic Connections

To illustrate his arguments about connectedness, Kasulis employs the Venn-type diagrams he used in his earlier book, *Intimacy or Integrity*. Two circles, *a* and *b*, are in an external relationship *R* and the circles remain intact if the relationship ceases to exist. In an internal relationship, on the other hand, the circles are interconnected and if the relationship is broken, the circles cease to be complete circles and become like two gibbous moons. Things become more complicated if the number of circles is increased, for in the internal relationship all the circles are in a relationship with each other. In his earlier book the circles were meant to symbolize the self and the extent of the overlapping between the circles determined the nature of the self during the relationship. In the present book Kasulis uses the diagrams to explain the Shinto concept of the interconnectedness of everything: the connectedness within human beings themselves and the connectedness of human beings with everything else. The final diagram (Fig. 5 on p. 22) shows clusters of hundreds of circles, all connected in what he calls a 'holographic whole'. Though it cannot show this clearly, the point of the diagram is to illustrate the thesis that every circle is connected to some degree with every other circle. Kasulis uses the example of DNA.

> "*Ordinarily a strand of hair is just a part of what a person is. In a forensic investigation, however, this single strand of hair reveals the whole pattern of a person's genetic constitution. All of the physical body—not only hair but also eye color, height, body shape, blood type, and even susceptibility to certain diseases—is blueprinted in every single cell of the person, including the cells of that strand of hair. The part reflects the whole; the whole is in every part. To see this form of connectedness, the vantage point is not at a distance, but through close examination of a single piece of evidence. This bit functions as a holographic entry point opening a grasp of the whole.*"

The discussion of interconnectedness leads Kasulis to consider another crucial aspect of Shinto: *kami* [神] and *tama* [魂], usually translated as 'deity' and 'soul', respectively. Unlike in monotheistic religions, in Shinto the *kami* are 八百万 in number. The characters mean 8, 100, and 10,000, but the unusual reading here is やおよろず [*ya-o-yorozu*] and the meaning is 'unlimited in number'. Simply expressed, there are an infinite number of *kami* and everything has a *tama* of some kind.

Kasulis uses *tama* as a general term for several different ideas. *Tama* is written as魂 and has the Chinese reading of *KON*. It corresponds to another term, *HAKU* [魄] and both terms are commonly used by Morihei Ueshiba. For example, when he states that aikido does not allow competition, he uses the term *shiai* [試合], which denotes the type of competition seen in sports matches and tournaments. Ueshiba states that western sports aim to nourish the *HAKU*, but not the *KON*. Aikido training, on the other hand, has as its central aim the cultivation of both *KON* and HAKU, for the two are *onmyoudou* [陰陽道: yin-yang] concepts and cannot be separated. Translations of Ueshiba's writings here tend to use 'spirit' for *HAKU* and 'body' for *KON*, but it is important to note that both terms denote 'soul' or 'spirit' and this is the definition usually given in the dictionary. We will return to this subject in the discussion of Omoto, below.

The DNA example allows Kasulis to explain the significance of the many places in Japan, like the Futami rocks, guarded by a *torii* or adorned with *shimenawa*, which are markers.

> "*The* torii *frame such holographic entry points. Insofar as the whole world is* kami-*filled or* tama-*charged, of course, every single thing in our world in some way reflects the wondrously mystic power of* kami*. Yet Shinto uses markers to designate specific sites where the holographic nature of the* kami *is easier to sense. These sites, often set off by* torii *and* shimenawa*, somehow manifest the presence of* kami *more explicitly than to other sites. Thus the significance of Mount Fujii, the married rocks at Futami, even the emperor himself, is not that they are merely isolated sites of* kami*—to the contrary, they are holographic entry points for experiencing* kami *everywhere. By entering the specific, the person's holographic relation to all reality becomes manifest.*" (Quotations from Kasulis, *op.cit.*, pp. 22-23.)

The above explanation struck a chord with the present writer. When I first experienced aikido, it was presented as an art closely related to Shinto, which in turn was presented as a worldview in which *kami*, beings like one's own parents, family and ancestors, and even the Japanese emperor, played a prominent role. To one strictly brought up in what Kasulis calls the cultural orientation of integrity, this picture seemed highly unusual, to say the least.

The dojo was also regarded as a special place and the correct disposition to have in the dojo was one of benevolent gratitude, though this needed to be combined with a certain toughness of character, seen in a readiness to take the rough with the smooth. The appropriate Japanese term suggested for the correct attitude to training was *makoto no kokoro* or*magokoro* [真心] and this is the term used by Kasulis to denote the responsiveness of a 'mindful heart', required to recognize a sacred place in Shinto as a 'holographic entry-point.' Kasulis cites the thinking of Motoori Norinaga for further clarification of *makoto no kokoro*.

> "*First, given the overlap between materiality and spirituality in Shinto, it is not surprising that Norinaga assumed that objects not just persons have* kokoro*. After all, if physical existence is also spiritual existence, if the world consists of ...* kami*, there must be the* kokoro *of things. ... Secondly, human beings have* kokoro *as well, but because we have intentionality we can defile its reflective quality. The mirror might be so covered with the dust of everyday worries that it ceases to reflect the* tama.[Morihei Ueshiba used the expression *kasu-tori*, removing the sediment that occurs in brewing sake, as a metaphor for training in aikido *waza*.] *… Third, along with the*kokoro *of things, Norinaga drew on classical Japanese poetics to add yet another strand to the* kokoro *nexus: the* kokoro *in words. Norinaga maintained that in ancient Japanese words—that is, the language before Chinese and Korean literary influences—there was not only sound but also an accompanying spiritual dimension. That is: words have* tama*:* kotodama*. This is the* tama *of words.*" (Kasulis, *op.cit.*, p. 26.)

The account given by Kasulis affords a coherent religious background for Morihei Ueshiba's view of the dojo as a sacred place, where *kotodama*, which is one of his preferred terms for describing aikido training, takes place. This religious background is seen in the clearest way in Iwama, the dojo-shrine where Ueshiba did most of his training during and after World War II, but Kisshomaru Ueshiba writes in his biography of his father that he also saw the Tokyo dojo,

where aikido actually originated, in Shinto terms. The Tokyo dojo was the *kaiden*, or public hall, of a shrine, in contrast to the *honden*, in Iwama, where the *kami* resided.

Kasulis then proceeds to illustrate (and in so doing to make an implicit justification of) his thesis with an account of Japan's religious history. His account of the earliest Japanese myths sees a foundation for both orientations outlined above, after which one or other mode has tended to dominate. However, he believes that the mode that was especially dominant during the period from 1801 to 1945, which was the time when the Omoto religion was founded, was the 'essentialist' mode, when the Japanese people and their total behavior were defined by their government in 'Shinto' terms. Kasulis does not discuss the 'new' religions, but an important question is whether Ueshiba's relation with Omoto and his membership of the Omoto religion can be seen in analogous terms: existential or essentialist.

The Many Functions of the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* (*Nihon Shoki*) Myths

Christianity makes extensive use of the Bible, especially the New Testament, and discussions of Shinto invariably point to the founding myths of Japan. We have seen from previous columns that many uses have been made of Japan's myths about creation and early history. The main collections of these myths are the *Kojiki* [『古事記』: Records of Ancient Matters] and *Nihongi* / *Nihon Shoki* [『日本紀』 / 『日本書紀』: Japan Chronicles / Japan Written Chronicles: both are titles of the same work]. These collections—written collections of much earlier myths—can be considered as repositories of events that allegedly illustrate important aspects of religion and the martial arts and have been ransacked by the founders of religions and martial arts, in order to give to the religion or art an illustrious pedigree. Connecting the events with the religion or the art sometimes requires much creative ingenuity and one example will suffice to illustrate the problems of interpretation involved. The example involves the supposed creation of a martial art as a result of an encounter of two deities.

It is argued by many that Daito-ryu is the parent art of aikido and so it should come as no surprise that the origins of Daito-ryu are indeed recorded in the *Kojiki*, specifically in a martial contest between two deities. Contests are actually a regular pastime of deities in the *Kojiki* and this particular contest featured the well-known martial activity of 'grabbing the wrists.'

The earthly deity Take-mi-na-kata-no-kami was upset by the appearance of a 'stranger' in his land and immediately challenged him to a contest. The earthly deity happened to be carrying a huge ("one-thousand person") boulder with his finger tips and this might have prevented him from seeing that the stranger was in fact a heavenly deity, named Take-mika-zuchi-no-kami, who had been commanded by none other than the Sun Goddess herself to come down from the high plain of heaven to take over the land. When they began the contest, the earthly deity took the arm of the heavenly deity and it became column of ice and then a sword blade. Then the heavenly deity took the arm of the earthly deity, as if he were taking hold of a young reed. He grasped it, crushed it and threw it to one side. This and some other actions had the desired effect and the earthly deity offered to surrender the land, which was, in fact, Japan.

In modern Japanese editions of the *Kojiki*, there is the bare *kanbun* text, which purports to give the original characters, but this is always edited, with unusual readings explained, and is usually accompanied by a 'translation' into modern Japanese. All the texts are actually based on the collective judgment of scholars about how to read the *kanbun* original. In this particular case, the issues concern one short section (part of which is given in bold type in the extracts below). In one authoritative modern Japanese translation this reads:

> そうして、今度は健御雷神が健御名方神の手を取ろうと思って、求め寄せて手を取ったところ、**若い葦を取るようにやすやすと取り押しつぶして投げ飛ばした**ので、健御名方神はただちに逃げ去った。そこで、健御雷神が追って行き。
>
> 信濃国の諏訪湖にまで追り着いて、殺そうとした時に、健御名方神は、「恐れ多いことです。私を殺さないでください。この場所以外、他の所には行きま せん。また、私の父大国主神の仰せには背きません。八重事代主神の言葉には背きません。この葦原の中国は、天つ神である御子の仰せのままに献りましょう」と申した。*(『古事記』, 1997,* 小学館,日本古典文学全集*, pp. 109-110.)*

This translation is actually a reasonable interpretation of the Japanese *kanbun* text and a verbal translation of the part in bold type would be: **Like taking a young reed, without any difficulty he took and crushed [the hand / arm] and flung [it] away.** The canonical, but rather quaint, English translation of the section, made in 1882 by Basil Hall Chamberlain, reads:

> "*Then on the Brave-Awful-Possessing-Male-Deity wishing to take the hand of the Deity Brave-August-Name-Firm, and asking permission to take it in return,* ***he grasped it and crushed it as if it were taking a young reed****, and cast it aside, upon which [the Deity Brave-August-Name-Firm] fled away. So when the Brave-Awful-Possessing-Male-Deity pursuing after him, came up with him in the sea of Suha in the land of Shinanu, and was about to slay him, the Deity-Brave-August-Firm said: 'I will obey. Slay me not. I will go to no other place but this, neither will I go against the command of my father, the Deity-Master-of-the-Great-Land. I will not go against the words of the Deity-Eight-*

> *Fold-Thing-Sign-Master. I will yield up the Central Land of Reed-Plains according to the command of the august child of the Heavenly Deities.'*
> " (Chamberlain,*Kojiki*, 1981, Tuttle, pp. 122-123.)

Donald Philippi retains the Japanese names of the deities, but gives the older transliteration:

> "*Then [Take-mika-duti-nö-kamï], in his turn, demanded [the right] to take hold of the arm of Take-Mi-Na-Kata-Nö-Kamï.* ***When he took it, it was like taking hold of a young reed; he grasped it and crushed it, throwing it to one side.*** *Immediately he ran away.*
>
> *They pursued him, and caught up with him by the lake of Supa in the land of Sinano; as they were about to kill him, Take-Mina-Kata-Nö-Kamï said:*
>
> *'Pray do not kill me. I will go to no other place. Also I will not disobey the commands of my father Opo-Kuni-Nushi-Nö-Kamï, and will not disobey the words of Ya-Pe-Kötö-Sirö-Nusi-nö-Kamï. I will yield this Central Land of the Reed Plains in accordance with the commands of the offspring of the heavenly deities.'*
> " (Philippi, *Kojiki*, Tokyo U P, p. 133.

This episode has been used in many ways. On the English website of the Japan Sumo Association, it is claimed that the contest was a legendary sumo match that determined the supremacy of the Japanese people on the Japanese islands, for the heavenly deity defeated the leader of a 'rival tribe'. A scholar suggests that this defeated tribe was in fact from Izumo and the winners were from the Yamato tribe. This point is of some importance, since this particular episode is not recorded in the *Nihongi* / *Nihon Shoki*, but only in the *Kojiki*, which devotes much more space than the other compilation to the conflicts between the Yamato tribe, and their deities like the Sun Goddess, and other tribes. Another scholar, Donald Philippi, also suggests that the contest was of *sumapi*, an antecedent of modern sumo, which was originally a religious ritual performed to discover the divine will (*Kojiki*, p. 132), or to pray for a good harvest, or as a way of litigation that was similar to the *ukehi* ceremony, discussed in an earlier column. Tokimune Takeda suggests that the contest was a very early display of *tegoi*, another antecedent of modern sumo, and that the deity was actually displaying an early version of *aiki*, the highly prized and sought after skill that was the foundation of Daito-ryu.

Compared with the extensive discussion on the significance of the contest as whole and what religious ceremonies or martial arts it foreshadowed, there is hardly any scholarly comment on the circumstances of the contest itself or the reference to the grasping of the young reed. Only one scholar mentions the reference and he simply makes a comparison with two other texts. These are not from the *Kojiki*, but from a collection of Buddhist folk tales made in the Heian period and called the *Konjaku Monogatarishu*. Again, for the benefit of *AikiWeb*students of classical Japanese, here is the quoted text as printed in the edition of the *Kojiki*, with the *okurigana* written in *katakana*. (There is other version of the latter story, in which the main elements are presented in slightly different terms, in the 岩波文庫 series.)

> 若い葦を摑むように摑みつぶして。今昔物語集巻二十三の第十八話と第二十四話に、女の強力譚が載せられているが、前者には「此女が強キ事人ニ不レ似 ズ。呉竹ヲ取砕ク事、練糸ヲ取ルガ如シ。」とあり、後者には「例ノ女ノ様ニ思ヒデ、質ニ取リ奉リテ候ツルニ、大キナル箭語篠ノ節ノ程ヲ、朽木ナドヲ砕ク様 ニ手ヲ以テ押砕キ給ツルヲ見給ヘツレバ」とある。*(*倉野憲司, 武田祐吉, 『古事記　祝詞』, *1993,* 岩波文店, 日本古典文学大系新装版, *p. 122.)*

Thomas Kasulis, too, gives an account of the ancient myths of the *Kojiki* in his book on Shinto and he also interprets these myths to make them fit his own idea about Shinto. Since the*Kojiki* myths are regarded as canonical Shinto texts, all the varieties of Shinto have made differing use of these myths. For example, Kakehi Katsuhiko, who was the academic high priest of State Shinto, used the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*, in order to ground his doctrine of Shinto in Japan's ancient myths. The result of investigations such as Kakehi's can be seen in the primer of Japanese nationalism called *Kokutai no Hongi* [『國體の本義』: Fundamental Principles of the Nation Body]. Kakehi was following in a tradition started by Motoori Norinaga, who also grounded his *kokugaku* [国学: nativist studies] on a close, but speculative, reading of the *Kojiki*.

Onisaburo Deguchi, in his turn, liberally interpreted the myths in the *Kojiki* and the later *Nihon Shoki*, in order to have a respectable grounding for his Omoto theology. His interpretations were quite radical, for he decided that the Great Universal Deity, of which all other gods and deities were merely manifestations, was in fact the deity Ushitora-no-Konjin, the feared spirit that featured in the revelations given to Nao Deguchi. In the *Kojiki* / *Nihongi* texts, Deguchi identified this deity, not with the sun goddess Amaterasu, but with one (or two) much more obscure deities, who basically did nothing at all after their initial mention in the opening paragraphs of the *Kojiki* beyond coming into existence. In fact, the fact that they did nothing at all was actually used by Deguchi as evidence that they resigned from office, or were pushed out of office by the other deities at a meeting, the major effect of which was to lead the world into the chaos caused by the opening of Japan to foreign influences, which in turn led to the Meiji Restoration and its aftermath. Divine order would be restored by restoring to their rightful places in the pantheon not only this obscure deity, or deities, but also Susa-no-o, the wayward brother of the sun goddess, and the earthly deity named Okuninushi no mikoto, who had

surrendered the land to the Imperial Grandchild (largely as a result of the contest with Take-mika-zuchi-no-kami, discussed above). After the first suppression of Omoto in 1921, Deguchi skillfully revised this theology and restored the Imperial Grandchild, the descendant of the sun goddess and ancestor of the Japanese emperor, to his rightful place as the source, center and guardian of the new world order.

In using the *Kojiki* / *Nihongi* to ground his theology, Deguchi was doing what the founders of religions have done with sacred texts like the Bible for many centuries. However, compared to with the complex edifice that he recorded (or created) in his vast *Reikai Monogatari*, the interpretations that Deguchi made of the *Kojiki* / *Nihongi* texts for his theology were only mildly speculative and Deguchi followed an example set by others, such as Honda Chikaatsu. Honda, for example, grounded his doctrine of *chinkon* and *kishin* in *Kojiki* / *Nihongi* texts. Examples he used included the lewd dance performed by the deity Ame no Uzume, to entice the sun goddess Amaterasu to come out of the rock cave. (This famous episode was also used by Deguchi as the motif of his *Budo* magazine for the Dai Nippon Budo Senyoukai: on the front cover there is a more modest illustration of a deity heaving the rock aside.)

An example that more appropriately matched Honda's purpose was the spirit possession of the Empress Jingu, also known as Okinaga Tarashi Hime no Mikoto, which is recorded in the second book of the *Kojiki* (The Japanese text with annotations is given on pp. 228-229 of the Iwanami *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei* edition and the English version appears on p. 257 of the Philppi translation). Of interest for Honda was the appearance of the term *saniwa* [here written as砂庭], which was the place where a certain high-ranking official lived. The scholarly notes indicate that this long-serving court official served as interpreter of the will of the deities, in this case the deity that took possession of the empress, and that the term *saniwa*came to refer to this person, also. As we shall see below, this is the general meaning of the term in the Omoto religion. The point of the story in the *Kojiki* is that the Emperor Chuai denied the validity of the deity allegedly possessing the empress and died as a result.

Morihei Ueshiba was also one who used the *Kojiki* as a sourcebook of ideas and also as a vehicle for his martial variant of Omoto cosmology. All his published discourses are peppered with allusions and references, so much so that one translator has edited them out, on the grounds that they make it too difficult for a modern reader to understand what Ueshiba actually means. There are major problems with ‘adapting' the thought of Morihei Ueshiba for the modern reader, since such adaptations involve making choices about what Ueshiba ‘really' meant. However, this is a literary version of putting words into his mouth, or—since the preferred interpretation is usually ‘thinner' in content than the original, of taking words out of it. I was once assured by a respected shihan from the Aikikai Hombu, who learned the art directly from Morihei Ueshiba, that Ueshiba had his own interpretation of the *Kojiki*, and also *kotodama*, which was not ‘orthodox'. In other words, the shihan's opinion was very similar to that of Kisshomaru Ueshiba, discussed above. If this is the case, there are three courses open to the serious student of aikido: one is to leave Morihei Ueshiba's interpretation of the *Kojiki* and *kotodama* where it originated —with Morihei Ueshiba—and get on with training under a chosen instructor. The other is to study the interpretation much further by examining the *kotodama* texts that Ueshiba studied, together with his own discourses, and reaching a conclusion as strictly as possible on the basis of the evidence. Or, of course, as the hero stated in a famous movie, "You can do combinations."

Elements of Morihei Ueshiba's Japanese Religion:
2. Shingon Buddhism: *Mikkyou* [密教]

We have already mentioned that a major problem in discussing Shinto is to agree about what the term actually means and how much of an invented tradition it is. Shinto is often defined as ‘Japan's indigenous religion' and this is further assumed to denote what was already there, before all the other religions came along from outside Japan. The problem here is that after their arrival, a blending with the new elements almost immediately took place, so that specifying with any precision what was already there is a very difficult task. Shingon / Mikkyou Buddhism was one of the earlier varieties of Buddhism to arrive in Japan and it was quickly blended with the so-called ‘folk beliefs', assumed to be there beforehand. The importance of Shingon Buddhism is its doctrine of *soku-shin-jou-butsu* [即身成仏: becoming Buddha in one's present body] and its reliance on the esoteric trio of *sanmitsu* [三密: mantra, mudra, mandala], in order to achieve this.

Some idea of this problem can be seen in the comments made by Kisshomaru Ueshiba, in his biography of Morihei Ueshiba. Kisshomaru states this biography that the Buddhism embraced by Morihei Ueshiba when he was in Tanabe was Shingon Buddhism and Kisshomaru goes into some detail about the various Shingon temples in the vicinity of his home. Shingon [真言宗] is often identified with *Mikkyou* [密教], but Kisshomaru's explanation suggests that matters were not so simple.

According to Kisshomaru Ueshiba, who was told by his aunt, his father was taught the *Shisho Gokyo* [四書五経: the Chinese Confucian Classics] at a school attached to a temple. Kisshomaru believed that this temple was a Jizo temple. He notes that some of the Shingon temples in Tanabe were originally associated with Shotoku Taishi (573-621) and also visited by Kobo Daishi (a.k.a. Kukai). He adds that

> "*the Kumano area was full of temples carrying on the traditional training of Shingon Mikkyou Buddhism and in the mountains can also be found practitioners of the*shugendo *style of training started by En-no-Ozunu. ... The Jizo temples have a somewhat different origin. They are based on the Ryobu Shinto branch of Shinto, which incorporates some of the major teachings of Shingon Mikkyou Buddhism (the Kongo and Taizo scriptures) along with some older Shinto beliefs. ... Perhaps for this reason, the Jizo temple trained students in Goma as well as Shisho Gokyo.*" (Kisshomaru Ueshiba, *A Life in Aikido*, pp. 55-56.)

The *goma* fire ritual is discussed at great length in Carmen Blacker's study of shamanism and is of interest here because of Morihei Ueshiba's participation in a *goma* fire ritual shortly before he left to serve in the army during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905.

> *"When O Sensei was about to enter the army, Master Mitsuji Fujimoto of the Jizo temple (who had taught the Shisho Gokyo to O sensei when he was young) performed aGoma fire ritual on his behalf. He did all the ceremonies prescribed in Shingon Mikkyo, and presented O Sensei with an Inkyo (a certificate of enlightenment). Master Fujimoto also installed in O Sensei's hara (or center) the spirit of Daigensui Myo [a deity assimilated into Shingon Buddhism and associated with the protection of the country and the defeat of enemies] as his guardian deity. In later days, O Sensei always spoke of this with pride." (Kisshomaru Ueshiba, op.cit., pp. 66-67.)*

Kisshomaru's discussion of Shingon Buddhism occurs in the earlier pages of his biography and thereafter Buddhism appears very rarely and usually in discussions about Omoto. The main happening was the connection in Kisshomaru's mind of Shingon Buddhism with Omoto and his references to Morihei Ueshiba's Buddhism are always connected with Omoto. It is clear that for Kisshomaru there was little to choose between them.

A Note on Zen

Though there is evidence that he talked to D T Suzuki, the purveyor of the view that Zen is the essence of Japanese martial culture, there is no evidence that Morihei Ueshiba ever practiced Zen meditation or embraced the Zen version of Buddhism. Some of his students practiced Zen, however, especially those younger disciples like Kazuo Chiba, who were exposed to Japan's postwar educational system, as revised by the American Occupation.

Elements of Morihei Ueshiba's Japanese Religion:
3. The Enigma of the *Great Origin*

Morihei Ueshiba first encountered Onisaburo Deguchi in 1915 and became an associate of Deguchi's until at least 1935, which was the year of the second suppression of Omoto. Even after the war, Ueshiba never severed his connection with Deguchi, as he did with Takeda Sokaku. Morihei Ueshiba's involvement with the Omoto religion is therefore crucial to any understanding of his religious beliefs and practices. However, there is an issue that must be dealt with at the outset, which is an issue of sources. This is somewhat ironic, given that the Chinese characters for Omoto are 大本 [おおもと: *oomoto*] and the most common translation is 'Great Origin'.

Returning to the Sources

It is unfortunate that many accounts and discussions of Omoto tend to present the religion in terms of the opposition logic discussed by Takie Sugiyama Lebra. Books written in Japanese specifically about Omoto tend to be either severely critical or severely adulatory and it is rare to find a neutral position. In English, there is an edited translation of *The Great Onisaburo Deguchi*, written by Kyotaro Deguchi, but this needs to be read in conjunction with the critical doctoral thesis written by Thomas Nadolski (cited and quoted in previous columns), who gives a sharp and caustic analysis of Deguchi's involvement with ultra-nationalists in the 1930s. There is also a perceptive study of Omoto by Frederick Franck. Franck is a Dutch artist who visited the Omoto headquarters and his book appears to have the support of Omoto. To give the postwar religious foundation due credit, Omoto has also supported and encouraged the publication of much scholarly work, including the massive, but uneven, 70-year history of the religion and more neutral scholarly studies. These include *Women and Millenarian Protest in Meiji Japan*, written by Emily Groszos Ooms and Nancy Stalker's *Prophet Motive*. Stalker presents a detailed account of the Deguchi family and the rise and fall of Omoto, including the contribution made by Honda Chikaatsu and his study of *chinkon kishin*. Stalker cites a complex and detailed study by Birgit Staemmler, entitled *Chinkon Kishin: Mediated Spirit Possession in Japan's New Religions*. Staemmler focuses on a particular form of *chinkon kishin*, namely mediated spirit possession. Omoto is discussed in passing by many other scholars, such as Ichiro Hori, a Japanese pioneer of studies in Japanese folk religion, but there are relatively few scholarly works of any quality—in Japanese or English.

Omoto and 'Common Religion'

In his book on Omoto, Frederick Franck follows the example of other scholars and gives a list of the main features of 'new' religions. Ichiro Hori lists twelve features (in a long footnote in*Folk Religion in Japan*, pp. 223-225), Birgit Staemmler gives five (*Chinkon Kishin*, pp. 91-96), and Franck lists eight, all of which can be seen in Omoto. It will be useful to summarize and comment on one of these and I have chosen Franck's discussion as an example. One can also in passing consider to what extent the features that Franck summarizes can be seen in aikido.

1. There is a founder or foundress, whose charisma is based on shamanistic practices or occult powers and who is regarded as a living god or *kami*. As such, the founder or foundress has absolute power over disciples. Franck notes the problem of translating *kami* as ‘god'.

> "*Kami and man stand in a direct and intimate give-and-take relationship. If the word kami points at transcendence at all, it is a non-dualistic transcendence and one that it not in contradiction with immanence. One might speak of a "horizontal transcendence" that is almost inconceivable for Westerners, for whom transcendence is always conceived spatially, as somehow vertical. Vertical transcendence however seems to be foreign to the Oriental Mind, for which the Wholly Other is realized primarily on the deepest level of man's own inwardness.*" (Frederick Franck, *An Encounter with Oomoto: The Great Origin*, pp. 10-11.)

Three points may be made here. First, the fact that Omoto had a foundress and that women have been leaders of the religion is often lost sight of in discussions about Morihei Ueshiba and Onisaburo Deguchi. Secondly, there is a problem of language here. Even though Franck may well be correct in stating that ‘Westerners' conceive transcendence in spatial and vertical terms, the same cannot be said of Franck's metaphor of the Wholly Other. Even a cursory examination of the western mystical tradition shows that realizing the Wholly Other ‘on the deepest level of man's own inwardness' is not an exclusive preserve of the ‘Oriental Mind', whatever this may mean. Thirdly, the designation ‘living *kami*' entails that the founder or foundress is ‘enlightened'—which is, in effect, the ascription of a permanent state by the believers. We will see this later in the cases of Nao and Onisaburo Deguchi and it is similarly true for Morihei Ueshiba. As ‘O Sensei' he was thought to be in a permanent state of ‘enlightenment' and this is one important reason why it was considered reasonable for the *uchi-deshi*who looked after him to be in attendance for 24 hours each day: such was the length of the learning process for them.

2. The new religions emphasize the benefits available to believers here and now, rather than in the world to come. Franck adds that Omoto is ‘modest' about such claims, "preferring to stress man's vocation to ‘reconstruct' society according to God's will." (*ibid.*) However, Franck appears to have that view that the benefits called *genze ryaku* have little value for Omoto, for he construes Omoto modesty as somehow opposed to the emphasis of the new religions on such practical benefits. This seems to contradict the point he made above, however, that transcendence can also be immanent: *genze ryaku* can be material and spiritual at the same time. The way in which Morihei Ueshiba describes aikido also clearly suggests that the benefits accruing are material and spiritual at the same time. We have seen that the Shinto view of the spiritual, as expounded by Thomas Kasulis, places this in a relationship with the material that he terms internal. It can be distinguished, but not really separated. Omoto took over the Shinto view of spirituality and made of it something beneficial and achievable right now, and not only in the next world. There is little about the world to come in Ueshiba's discourses, but very much on the ‘psycho-physical-spiritual' value of training.

3. The new religions combine folk beliefs, Buddhism and Shinto into one large whole. Omoto transforms Ushitora no Konjin, a feared folk deity, into the ‘God of the Beginning and the End', of which all other gods are manifestations. So the *ya-o-yorozu kami* of Shinto, the various transformations of the Buddha and the monotheistic God of the Bible, are all manifestations of the ‘great universal deity' and the entire universe, including those who live in it, is also a part, or manifestation, of this deity. The term *bunrei* [分霊] is used to denote a fraction of the spirit of a deity that can live in an object or another person. This term does not have the negative connotations for Omoto that it had for J K Rowling, for example, from her treatment of horcruxes [the Japanese term is 分霊箱: fractioned-soul-container] in the later Harry Potter stories.

4. Man is not only perfectible but will indeed be perfected at some point. In Omoto, the optimism of the new religions is seen in the call for renewal attributed to Ushitora-no-Konjin, for the reconstruction of society that will herald the new beginning of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is important to note that the Kingdom of Heaven forecast by Nao Deguchi is thoroughly millenarian and fundamentally different from the present. Onisaburo Deguchi, on the other hand, toned down Nao's fundamentalism considerably and his view of Omoto was rather more attractive to those disciples who desired a more confortable relationship with the present than Nao Deguchi prescribed. Those disciples included Morihei Ueshiba.

5. The new religions usually focus on means to release hidden powers, which will help people to cope with the dehumanized world. These can take the form of prayers, mantra, gestures, or specific techniques. As part of the optimism, there is a strong conviction that the quality of their awareness is instrumental in releasing the hidden potential of their own nature. Omoto especially uses the disciplines of traditional Japanese arts as tool in this process of self-development. These arts include the tea ceremony, aikido, kendo, *No* drama, ceramics and calligraphy. The relationship is mutual, for Omoto sees aikido training in spiritual terms and the leaders of postwar aikido at the Aikikai, certainly, stress the benefits of aikido training as a way of coping with the stresses of modern living.

6. The new religions offer a very strong sense of community, which would appeal particularly to isolated, urbanized people

who have been torn away from their families or clan. They cater not only for religious concerns, but also more mundane problems of illness, unemployment and domestic relations. In fact, most new religions exhibit all the signs of a cult and Omoto is no exception. The question to what extent aikido, as a martial art grounded by its founder in Omoto theology and cosmology, also exhibits some of the signs of a cult is also relevant, but somewhat controversial.

7. The new religions have a social centre of pilgrimage, which they regard as the sacred centre of the world. For Omoto believers, Kameoka and Ayabe are the counterparts of Rome, Mecca and Jerusalem for Catholics, Muslims and Jews. Believers converge on these centers in their thousands and hold lavish ceremonies there, which impart a sense of reassurance and of belonging to a larger whole. For aikido, the dojo that Morihei Ueshiba established in the Ushigome district of Tokyo still exists and is the headquarters of the Aikikai Foundation. As the place where aikido is believed to have originated, the Hombu Dojo is certainly regarded as a place of pilgrimage and group photographs, usually with Doshu in front of the*shoumen*, are a common occurrence. Opinions are mixed about the kind of aikido training that is the norm at the Aikikai Hombu, but it is commonly believed that there is an unbroken tradition within the Ueshiba family, with the ‘essence' of aikido being handed down through the *iemoto* [家元], who is the aikido Doshu [道主]. Unlike in Omoto, where the spiritual leader who inherits the tradition is always female, the Doshu of aikido has so far been male.

8. The theology of the new religions is highly eclectic, borrowing a variety of concepts and terminologies from Japanese cultural tradition, western philosophies, Confucian ethics, Shinto and Buddhist ritual magic, political activism, ancestor worship and shamanism. As Franck puts it,

> "*In Omoto, the main components are an archaic folk god, originally feared as malevolent, but who reveals himself as a benevolent ‘God of the Beginning and the End', animistic elements, life affirmation and rituals adopted from Shinto, and an eschatology strongly coloured by Mahayana Buddhist insights.*" (Franck, *op.cit.*, p. 12.)

The eclectic theology of Omoto did indeed find its way into Morihei Ueshiba's ‘martial religion', but its presence both in prewar Aiki-budo and in modern postwar aikido is much more open to question.

Franck concludes his sketch of the ‘new' religions with a note on shamans and shamanism, but does not make any comments other than to state that Nao and Onisaburo Deguchi were shamans and leave it at that. The connection with shamanism is discussed in more detail below.

Omoto, Buddhism and Shinto

The eclectic nature the Omoto religion has been discussed above, but the division of Japanese religions into specific groups masks the eclectic nature of the ‘traditional' religions, also. We have briefly discussed two ways of regarding Shinto, as expounded by Thomas Kasulis. Starting from his view of the holographic connectedness of everything, Kasulis regards Shinto as quintessentially manifesting his cultural orientation of intimacy, as against that of integrity, and as a way of being that can be seen as essentialist or existentialist. Whichever way Shinto is regarded, the tem itself is nevertheless a label, a general name, comparatively recently coined to denote a general quasi-religious *pot-pourri*, a stew to which was added various ingredients and seasoning and which gradually developed in flavor over the centuries. The original ingredients of the stew are regarded as animistic folk beliefs that predated the appearance of Buddhism in Japan, during the early centuries of the Common Era (CE). However, the Buddhism that found its way to Japan was also a similar stew, with powerful ingredients like Taoism and Ying-Yang beliefs and this Buddhism also evolved over centuries. After considering an aspect of Omoto that straddles the Buddhist-Shinto divide, which is the connection between Omoto and shamanism, we will consider role in Omoto of *misogi* and *kotodama*.

Omoto and Shamanism:

Onisaburo Deguchi has been called a shaman and this epithet has also been applied to Morihei Ueshiba, also. Shamanism has a long history in Japan and, to judge from contemporary studies like Carmen Blacker's *The Catalpa Bow*, first published in 1975, various traditions still continue. The main focus of the discussion here is the extent to which the beliefs and activities of a shaman can be incorporated into a mass religion like Omoto and, subsequently, into a martial practice like Ueshiba's *aiki-budo*, with its training ideology and spiritual underpinnings based on Omoto theology. The issue is quite important, since there are differing opinions on the role of the shaman in Japanese religion and especially in the ‘new' religions like Omoto. In his book, *Folk Religion in Japan: Continuity and Change*, Ichiro Hori presents evidence that shamanism is an essential element in Japanese ‘folk religion', which he regards as an accretion of Shinto, Buddhism, Taoism, *Onmyoudou* [陰陽道: the way of *yin* and *yang*], and other, magical, ingredients, which flourished in Japan contemporaneously with the ‘established' religions from which it borrowed. However, Hori seems to regard folk religion as one single entity, with a given set of characteristics, rather like some scholars regard Shinto as the ‘indigenous religion' of Japan, and he does not really clarify the actual role of the shaman in creating and developing the religion.

One of the problems with Hori's account of shamanism is that it is ‘timeless'; he never firmly roots his discussion in a particular period and so it is very difficult to judge from his account the extent to which the phenomena he describes

actually exist in contemporary Japan. Carmen Blacker rectifies this lack to some extent. Blacker, whose book is now in its third edition (1999), followed the tradition set by some Japanese scholars, like Sakurai Tokutaro, in doing extensive fieldwork in Japan. However, Blacker, also, after accepting the general distinction made by Hori and others between the 'lone' shamans who displayed 'arctic hysteria' and the quasi-shamans who were respectable members of the communities they served, does not do much more than note the shaman's pathological state and also her position as the founder of the 'new' religion.

Shamanism is of some importance because of its essential connection with the phenomenon of spirit possession and the rituals and training considered necessary to induce spirit possession. Another Japanese scholar, named Tsushiro Hirofumi, who has extensively researched Japanese religion, regards all rituals of *chinkon*, including the *misogi* practices of Kawatsura Bonji, as examples of shamanism (in 『鎮魂行方論』, especially Chapter 4). However, this view has been criticized on the grounds that not all examples of spirit possession are examples of shamanism. Taking shamanism as a general umbrella term for a variety of phenomena, a few examples will be discussed here: the uncompromising *kamigakari* of Nao Deguchi, the *chinkon* and *kishin* of Honda Chikaatsu, the more accommodating practices of Onisaburo Deguchi, and the analogous practices of Deguchi's principal disciple, Morihei Ueshiba. An important issue in this connection is whether Morihei Ueshiba's religious beliefs and practices—especially *chinkon kishin* as he practiced this —qualify as shamanism in any sense.

Spirit Possession and *Chinkon Kishin* [鎮魂帰神]
As a preamble to the following discussion of *chinkon* and *kishin*, it necessary to set out some important points concerning spirit possession. Birgit Staemmler gives the following explanation.

> "*Essential to* chinkon *and* kishin *is belief in the existence of a universe consisting of the earth and many layers each of heaven and hell.* [For a popular contemporary treatment of this—usually hell, the novels of Dan Brown make entertaining reading.] *These layers were believed to be animated with various deities ranging from high-ranking deities to lowly spirits in the service of these deities. Additionally, the universe was believed to contain not only the multi-layered world of true spirits, but also a parallel multi-layered world of false and often malevolent deities and spirits which had not been part of the traditional pantheons. Most of the supernatural beings related to*chinkon *and* kishin *are deities mentioned in the* Kojiki *and* Nihon shoki. ...
>
> *Similar to practices and beliefs of spirit possession in general, practitioners of* chinkon *and* kishin *believed that any of these deities were able to take possession of a human being. The higher the rank of a deity, the more desirable possession through it was valued to be.*" (Staemmler, *op.cit.*, pp. 124-125.)

The fact of these beliefs was brought home to the present writer in a striking way. Two years ago, I used to go to a doctor for *shiatsu* and I discovered that his wife, who was also expert in shiatsu, was a believer in *chinkon kishin*. I did not know this, but when I asked her if she knew about it, she was astonished that I had heard of it. Believing that I intended to practice it, she warned me that it had to be done very carefully, with full attention to all the details of the ritual. If not, there was a strong likelihood that the wrong kind of spirit, like the spirit of a fox, would possess the person. I had previously dismissed such beliefs as old-fashioned folk tales no longer taken seriously. Yet here was someone in postwar Japan who not only believed in spirit possession, but also used it with her own clients.

Staemmler has previously given an account of 'spirit' that should be compared with the earlier treatment by Thomas Kasulis of the notion of the spiritual as a source of awe and mystery. Kasulis confines himself to general statements and does not really discuss the nature of the *kami* he regards as the source of the awe and the mystery

> *"A spirit is a minor supernatural force normally dwelling outside a person's body. Souls of ancestors or other deceased people -- sorei* 祖霊*, shirei* 死霊*, yuurei* 幽霊*, mitama* 御魂*, onryou* 怨霊 *are frequent Japanese expressions -- are generally referred to as spirits; they are believed to be protective unless they are unhappy, enraged or dissatisfied. [The most prominent example, also mentioned by Staemmler, is the vengeful spirit of Sugawara no Michizane, now enshrined as the deity Tenjin and a frequent target of the prayers of Japanese students who are about to take entrance examinations to schools and universities.] Other spirits may well be malicious and can be distinguished from deities through their lack of a positive communal task. Typical Japanese examples would be spirits of foxes or other animals." (Staemmler, op.cit., p. 31.)*

Although the main contact in Omoto for Morihei Ueshiba was Onisaburo Deguchi, it is important to note that the founder of Omoto was Nao Deguchi and that her message was far more radical—revolutionary even,—than that proclaimed by either Onisaburo Deguchi or Morihei Ueshiba. Furthermore, the principal impetus for Nao Deguchi and her creation of Omoto as a new religion was that she saw it as a response to herexperiences of spirit possession. Later, Onisaburo Deguchi had his own experiences and as a result modified Nao's extreme view of the religion quite drastically. It will be instructive to see how these experiences were handled by Omoto believers and incorporated into Omoto lore. This discussion should be compared with the earlier

discussion on Morihei Ueshiba's religious experiences and how Kisshomaru Ueshiba dealt with them.

***Kamigakari* [神懸かり, 神憑り]:**
Nao Deguchi's *Kamigakari*
Kamigakari is a general term, used by Emily Groszos-Ooms in her study of Nao Deguchi and explained as possession by a being such as a *tsukimono* [憑き物], which need not necessarily be a deity. In January 1892 Nao Deguchi found herself possessed by a malevolent spirit called Ushitora-no-Konjin [丑寅野今人, 艮の金神]. Konjin is the name of a malevolent spirit related to *Onmyoudou*, the Yin-Yang practices that came to Japan along with Shingon and Tendai Buddhism. The violent spirit could be called up, with devastating consequences, if decisions about timing, aspect and direction were not correctly made. So Nao Deguchi initially doubted that the spirit could be Konjin and it was not until the spirit announced that it was really the benevolent creator god who had come to save the world from chaos and had chosen Nao as its mouthpiece that she began to accept the fact of*kamigakari*. At the same time, the trances became less violent and unpredictable and the spirit's message became clearer. In other words, Nao Deguchi had learned to control her*kamigakari* visitations and put them to productive use. Emily Groszos Ooms makes the following points, which are of some importance when one considers Omoto and its role for Morihei Ueshiba.

> "Kamigakari *represented a broad category of psychological and religious experience which was theoretically open to anyone: shamanistic roles were not hereditary. Within its parameters there was room for almost unlimited variation. ... As a result of this 'open-endedness', the value and meaning assigned to a particular incident of* kamigakari*derived almost entirely from social consensus rooted in specific religious traditions and cultural expectations. Clearly, the presence of absence of this element of 'control' was the standard the community used to distinguish a newly initiated shaman from a mentally deranged individual. ... Once 'controlled', self-induced* kamigakari *becomes the shaman's particular technique for mediating between gods and humans.*" (Emily Groszos-Ooms, *Women and Millenarian Protest in Meiji Japan*, p. 12.)

This important point leads Groszos-Ooms to argue that Ichiro Hori and Carmen Blacker fail to appreciate the crucial way in which the role of the founder of a new religion differed from that of a traditional shaman. Their argument that the founders of new religions are manifestations of the shamanistic tradition characteristic of Japanese folk religion is valid, but too limited in scope, for the initial *kamigakari* experiences had to be adapted to fit the particular circumstances of the religion.

> "*The initial adoption of a traditional shamanistic role was only the first phase of a founder's career as a religious practitioner. The benefits provided by such customary status were soon outweighed by the constraints it placed on the founders' efforts to achieve their religious goals. Eventually, they were forced to expand their beliefs and practices far beyond those of a traditional shaman. If we are to understand the dynamic character and creative potential of the founder's role, we must look more closely at the ways in which it differed from that of a traditional shaman. The major source of these differences lies in a characteristic of* kamigakari *which is generally overlooked by scholars of Japanese religion: as a religious experience,* kamigakari *is not only a mode of behavior associated with the release of formerly repressed emotions; it is also a cognitive process through which prevailing modes of reality may be expressed or new ones constructed.*" (Groszos-Ooms, *ibid*.)

There are two consequences of this transformation of the shaman / founder's role. First, the fact that the initial raw *kamigakari* experiences were followed by a return to normal behavior was acknowledged by their communities as ability to control the power manifested by these *kamigakari* experiences. Nao Deguchi's credibility certainly derived from the violent and unpredictable character of the initial trance states, but also from her eventual ability to control both the timing of the states and the power manifested in them. The ready transformation from trace states to normal behavior to trance states also reinforced the founder's claims to spiritual power and actually obscured the distinction between the waking states and trance states. A consequence was the popular belief that the founder was thought to exist in a constant state of divine inspiration and was thus a 'living *kami*' -- in a permanent state of enlightenment.

The second consequence was a much greater emphasis placed on the new vision of reality that had been discovered in the *kamigakari* states and this new, publicly accessible, vision directly relates to the points made earlier in this essay about Kisshomaru Ueshiba's handling of his father's 'golden light' and other similar experiences. It also relates to the emphasis placed by philosophers such as Shaun Gallagher on the 'intentional' character of such experiences and by Thomas Nagel on the role of language in assessing the public criteria for articulating them.

> "*If* kamigakari *is seen as a dialectical, cognitive process in which private experience is made meaningful through symbols that are inherently public, but which in turn are given new connotations, new significance, in the context of that private experience, then this link is no longer problematic -- the experience of* kamigakari *itself, as a creative symbolic process, is a form of mediation between an individual and a culture. This approach thus*

> *leads us from a consideration of the life of a unique individual to an analysis of the broader cultural and social implications of the world view which is projected.*" (Groszos-Ooms, *op.cit.*, p. 14.)

This second consequence, summarized by Emily Groszos-Ooms in the last quotation, has two sides: *omote* and *ura*, so to speak. We can deal with the *ura* aspect first.

Nao Deguchi developed a reputation as a powerful faith healer and this became the preferred means of showing to believers and disciples that her power was genuine and that her message was also of fundamental importance. So her faith-healing activities became the means of proselytization. In other words, her faith healing was proclaimed as efficacious because the healer had access to sacred power, but it also demonstrated the truth of the revelations. The connection between the healing and the message—and the obligation of those who had been healed to heed the message—therefore became fundamental.

This close connection between the *kamigakari* experiences of the founder and the message that was proclaimed had the effect of ensuring that the *kamigakari* experience was essentially restrictive, since only the *kamigakari* experiences of the founder were strictly relevant. Nao Deguchi's claim to be the founder of Omoto was fundamentally based on her own*kamigakari* experiences, but since these experiences revealed that Ushitora-no-Konjin had chosen Omoto and the revelation of its founder as the principal means of salvation for her followers, similar *kamigakari* experiences for these followers no longer became possible. For them salvation lay, not in direct communication with Ushitora-no-Konjin, but in repentance and obedience to his will, as articulated by Nao Deguchi, his chosen mouthpiece. Such private communication was no longer necessary and could also be dangerous. The truth had already been revealed to Nao Deguchi and, since her own *kamigakari* experiences were thus unique and absolute, the *kamigakari* of others could reveal only falsehoods. Consequently, after Onisaburo Deguchi came on the scene and established himself as the *de facto* co-founder, Nao was caught in a dilemma. She needed Onisaburo because his activities ensured the promotion of Omoto and the vital message of Ushitora-no-Konjin. On the other hand, she became extremely disconcerted by his activities in promoting the practice of *chinkon kishin*among Omoto believers. In her view, *kamigakari* had ceased to be purely a matter of individual communication between a shaman and his or her chosen deity, but had taken on a new role, as the source of a new and radical view of the cosmos and the individual's role within it. The connection here between Founder and Avatar is not hard to discern, for it follows that the fundamental role of the shaman / founder was to be an avatar: the medium of the message and the sole means of intercourse between the sacred and the secular, or, to put it in Morihei Ueshiba's preferred terms, to ‘stand on the floating bridge of heaven' and ensure constant and fruitful communication between the human world and the divine.

The *omote* aspect of the link between the *kamigakari* experience and the message conveyed relates more to the content of the message. From 1892 until her death in 1918, Nao Deguchi wrote down her revelations in the form of *Ofudesaki* [お筆先: *tip of the brush*], which was automatic writing -- "a calm, trance-like state in which the medium records the thoughts of a controlling spirit" (Groszos-Ooms, *op.cit.*, p. 9). It should be emphasized, however, that Nao Deguchi was not the only founder of a ‘new' religion to exhibit *kamigakari* in this way.

Nao Deguchi's new vision of reality was fundamentally revolutionary and uncompromising. The new world would be peopled by agrarian communities, dedicated to a life of thrift, if not severe parsimony, and shorn of the harmful influences of ‘western' logical thinking, including academic works such as this one, money—even morality, since in the new world everyone would know without being told how they should live.

As a consequence of her emphasis on the new world to come, Nao Deguchi predicted that the present world would end and the date she gave was 1904.

> "*Nao predicted that there would be a great war and devastating earthquakes. For three days the sun would not shine and it would rain fire. Even Tokyo would be attacked, leaving nothing but a field of pampas grass.*" (Groszos-Ooms, *op.cit.*, p. 64.)

Emily Groszos-Ooms adds a footnote, to the effect that these prophecies have been subject to reinterpretation and some Omoto followers believe that Nao predicted the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. There is, therefore, an important precedent within the Omoto religion for the suggestion made in the *Takemusu Aiki* discourses that Morihei Ueshiba actually ‘foresaw' the atomic bombing.

When the Russo-Japanese War broke out in 1904, Nao Deguchi predicted that Japan would lose and that this defeat would mark the beginning of the end of the world. Omoto lost quite a few supporters when this did not happen. They were not convinced by Nao's explanation that Ushitora-no-Konjin had changed his mind at the last minute, in order to give people more time for repentance. Nao saw the world in black and white—usually black—and so for her this was only a minor setback. However, it was this harshness and uncompromising nature of her new vision of reality that was the cause of the disagreements with Onisaburo. As Groszos-Ooms puts it,

> "*Although Onisaburo remained with the group, ... he strongly opposed the eschatological and anti-modern and eschatological aspect of Nao's doctrine. He viewed Nao's condemnation of all things modern and western in origin as absurd superstitions and ultimately detrimental to Japanese progress. He believed that the adoption of foreign ideas and practices was in fact necessary for the development and future prosperity of the Japanese nation*." (Groszos-Ooms, *ibid.*)

Onisaburo Deguchi took over the organization and doctrinal development of Omoto and became Nao's successor in 1910, when he took over leadership of the Deguchi household.

Onisaburo Deguchi's *Kamigakari*:
From *Chinkon* [鎮魂] and *Kishin* [帰神] to *Chinkon Kishin* [鎮魂帰神]

As stated above, *Kamigakari* is usually translated as spirit possession, possession by a *tsukimono* [憑き物], which need not necessarily be a deity. However, Deguchi Onisaburo never used this term, preferring instead expressions like *yuusai* [幽斎] and, especially, *chinkon kishin*. Onisaburo Deguchi almost certainly borrowed the practice of *chinkon kishin* from his teachers, Honda Chikaatsu and Nagasawa Katsutate. Honda regarded *chinkon* and *kishin* as two distinct activities, but Onisaburo Deguchi combined them into one practice. We need to discuss the provenance of *chinkon* and *kishin* in some detail and the following account is based on Birgit Staemmler's detailed analysis in her doctoral research. A clear advantage of considering Staemmler's account is that she has no discussion either of Morihei Ueshiba or of aikido and so there is no trace of the 'washback' thinking that tends to occur in biographies of Ueshiba. Her only reference to Morihei Ueshiba is to state that he, too, practiced *chinkon kishin*, along with members of the armed forces and intellectuals, when he moved to Ayabe in 1920.

Honda Chikaatsu

Honda Chikaatsu based his ideas of *chinkon* on certain texts from the *Kojiki* and from a practice called the *Chinkonsai* [鎮魂祭], which was a court ritual intended to pacify and strengthen the soul of an emperor. In this connection, *chinkonsai* is also read as *mitama furi no matsuri* [soul-shaking ritual] and *mitama shizume no matsuri* [soul-calming ritual]. He also used the explanation of *chinkon*, given in two commentaries on this ritual, which were found in legal codes written in the seventh century.

> "Chin [鎮] *means 'secure'. A person's spiritual essence* [陽気: youki] *is called spirit* [魂: kon]. *The spirit follows the heavenly way* [運: un]. *That is, one invites the separated and roaming* [離遊: riyuu] *heavenly guided spirit. One secures it in the middle region* [中府: chuufu] *of the body. Therefore it is called* 'chinkon'." (Quoted by Staemmler,*op.cit.*, pp. 50-51.)

Honda used this explanation in his own justification of *chinkon*. Briefly, the supreme god Ame no Minakanushi created human souls out of one spiritual guide and four essences. The spiritual guide [*naobi*: 直霊] is the imperishable fraction [*bunrei*: 分霊] of the supreme deity that every human being received before birth. ('Spiritual guide' is the term used by Staemmler as the translation of *naobi*, but the term is also used by Onisaburo Deguchi and plays a major role in the thinking of Kawatsura Bonji, to be discussed below.) The four essences are the rough essence [*aramitama*: 荒魂], the harmonious essence [*nigimitama*: 和霊], the wondrous essence [*kushimitama*: 奇魂], and the prosperous essence [*sakimitama*: 幸魂]. They evoke courage, intimacy, wisdom and love, respectively, and are therefore responsible for effects such as progress, peace, skills and profit. To fulfill the perfect way [*michi*: 道] -- which is essentially the same for heaven, earth, and humans, it is essential that these four essences should be in perfect balance. It is the spiritual guide's mission to govern these essences accordingly. The supreme deity also created the human body out of the three aggregate states [*santai*: 三体] -- hard [*gou*: 剛], soft [*juu*: 柔] and liquid [*ryuu*: 流] -- and their power out of the eight forces [*hachiriki*: 八力] -- move [*dou*: 動] and keep still [*sei*: 静], tighten [*in*: 引] and loosen [*shi*: 弛], harden [*gyou*: 凝] and soften [*kai*: 解], divide [*bun*: 分] and unite [*gou*: 合]. These concepts were used by Onisaburo Deguchi in Omoto theology and also by Morihei Ueshiba in the explanations of his art, especially in his explanations of the opposed 'psycho-physico-spiritual' powers and forces within the human person and how these were to be handled in training. (Staemmler, *op.cit.*, pp. 150-151.)

There is one more crucial component of Honda's thinking that found its way into Omoto theology and Morihei Ueshiba's training methodology, for want of a better term. Staemmler notes that Honda strongly believed in the power of words and numbers, as may be indicated by the importance for him of *one* spiritual guide, *four* essences, *three* aggregate states and *eight*powers. She does not discuss, however, the Chinese influences on the *Kojiki* and the creation myths that it contains—and the numerical references are certainly not unique to Japan.*Kotodama* is an old and established concept, but Honda also used *kazudama* [数霊] and the *Ame no kazuuta* [天之数歌] as a spell or invocation in his *chinkon* and *kishin* practices. Staemmler cites the ninth century *Kujiki* [旧事記] as the probable source of the *ame no kazuuta*. The context is the commission given by the sun goddess Amaterasu to Ninigi [邇邇芸], the Imperial Grandchild, to rule the world.

> "*After handing him ten divine treasures, she then instructed him, saying: 'In case of ailment, say to these ten treasures,* 'Hi, fu, mi, yo, itsu, mu, nana, ya, ko, to,' *and shake them yura-yura. If thou dost so, the dead will*

> *come back to life again'*." (Staemmler, *op.cit.*, pp. 151-152.)

The importance of *chinkon* for Honda is the central role given to inviting the spirit of a deity into a human being or other receptacle. We have seen from the explanation of Shinto given by Thomas Kasulis, in terms of holographic connections between things in a world that is *kami*-filled and *tama*-charged, that certain items were regarded as 'holographic entry-points' to a more acute discernment of the essential interconnectedness of things. Like Onisaburo Deguchi, Honda regarded the infinite number of *kami* as elements of the one great deity, but the*chinkon* ritual would certainly qualify as a specific locus for manifesting a person's 'holographic relation to all reality.'

The method of *kishin* would especially qualify as a 'holographic entry-point.' Staemmler quotes part of an account given by Honda Chikaatsu in his *Reigakusho* [霊学抄].

> "*The method of* kishin *is called the method of the imperceptible ceremony [*yuusai no hou*:* 幽斎ノ法*]. ... The imperceptible ceremony is for unity with the universe's ruler and for coming into close contact with the eight hundred myriads of deities. What one may attain through practising this is that which is largest with nothing outside of it, which is smallest with nothing inside of it, which is not near or far, not big or small, not wide or narrow, not bright or dark. Whether past present or future, there will not be one thing one cannot grasp Precisely this is the mysterious way of the deities [*kannagara*:* 惟神*]*." (Staemmler, *op.cit.*, p. 156-157.)

Honda goes on to emphasize the important points to be borne in mind when conducting the method of *kishin*, including: the need to be aware of the many levels of true and false deities; the importance of having a 'true mind' [*seishin*: 精神]; and the need to be aware that the soul is a fraction of the divine soul. He then distinguishes the many levels of *kishin*, based on the kinds of deities and the kind of practice. (We will discuss this briefly below.) The one thing stressed by Honda when one practices *kishin* is the need for a *saniwa*, or mediator, who is expert at determining the levels of deities and the types of spirit possession that are possible.

There are several ways of writing the term *saniwa* [砂庭, 左爾波, 審神者], which can also denote the place where the activity is performed, the person who performs the activity, or the activity itself. Honda used the term to denote the mediator in a ritual of mediated spirit possession and wrote it as 審神者 [meaning: a person ascertaining / knowing the deity], but in Omoto the term is also used as a compound verb denoting the activity of the *saniwa*. The activity can also be self-referential and also has a wider, derived, meaning.

This is the sense used by Asano Wasaburo when he described how Onisaburo Deguchi did this on Mount Takakuma.

> "*It is a characteristic of spirit possession [*kamigakari, 神懸*], as opposed to hypnosis, that one's mind becomes increasingly clear. One's mind, in its very depths, criticizes and judges that which appears before one's eyes and is spoken by one's mouth. This is so-called* saniwa-*ing oneself, which preserves one's competence so one is surely not led astray by a possessing deity.*" (Quoted by Staemmler, *op.cit.*, pp. 123-124.)

Morihei Ueshiba seems to have used the term in this way in a discourse printed in the *Budo* magazine of the Dai Nippon Budo Senyoukai. The issue is for July, 1934 and Ueshiba uses the term *saniwa* (written in *katakana* as サニハ) three times, twice in one sentence. Here is one example.

> 武の神より見れば靈界とか現界とかの區別はないのである。靈界現界を一つにしたのが神の御姿御心であります、武は之れで無ければならぬ、萬事惟神の道に依りて**サニハ**したならば武術の眞理はよく判るのであります。*(*「惟神の術」會長植芝大先生御講話*,* 『武道』*,* 七月*, 10.)*
>
> "*Bu no kami yori mireba reikai toka genkai toka no kubetsu wa nai no de aru. Reikai genkai wo hitotsu ni shita no ga kami no misugata mikokoro de arimasu. Bu wa kore de nakereba naranu, banji kamunagara no michi ni yorite* ***saniwa*** *shita naraba bujutsu no shinri wa yoku wakaru no de arimasu.*" ("'Kamunagara no Jutsu' Kaichou Ueshiba Dai Sensei Go Kouwa," *Budo*, July 1934, p. 10.)

Morihei Ueshiba is being gloriously nationalistic here and the immediate context for his use of the term is that for budo deities there is no separation of the spirit world and the human world in the eyes of the martial deity and that carefully following the universal Way of the Gods affords a clear perception of true budo.

After quoting Asano, above, Staemmler adds that only experienced practitioners of mediated spirit possession were in a position to '*saniwa*' themselves and the clarity and competence spoken of by Asano is clearly assumed to be based on the ability to distinguish between benevolent and malevolent deities. Asano wrote this explanation in 1918, but Morihei Ueshiba's remarks were made over fifteen years later, after the practice of *chinkon kishin* had changed substantially.

To conclude this account of Honda's thinking, it is clear that Honda sharply distinguished between *chinkon* and *kishin*. *Chinkon* was primarily a method of strengthening or protecting: of securing a deity within an object, such as imperial regalia, a *chinkon* stone, a shrine's object of worship, or within oneself, in order to strengthen the human

being by the presence of the deity within the object close to that human being. *Kishin*, on the other hand, was intended as a means of communication or unity between humans and deities—a means of acquiring information from divine sources. Since the aim was to acquire knowledge, it was crucial that the practitioner, especially the *saniwa*, was able to grasp the different levels of the divine worlds and thus to know which information to trust and which to reject as false or misleading.

Nagasawa Katsutate

Onisaburo Deguchi's link with Honda Chikaatsu is through Honda's student, Nagasawa Katsutate. Space does not permit a detailed account of Nagasawa's ideas and in any case his thinking about *chinkon* and *kishin* did not differ markedly from those of Honda Chikaatsu, discussed above. Nagasawa is noteworthy for having taught the techniques of *chinkon* and*kishin* to Onisaburo Deguchi and for having testified on Deguchi's behalf during the latter's court appearances in 1927 and 1940, after the first and second suppressions of Omoto. On these occasions Nagasawa testified to Deguchi's extraordinary ability as a *saniwa*. Deguchi visited Nagasawa on several occasions and always practiced *chinkon kishin* with Nagasawa as *saniwa*. Nagasawa at some point identified the deity who had taken possession of Deguchi as Komatsubayashi, which was a fraction [*bunrei*: 分霊] of the spirit of the deity Susa-no-o. On another occasion, Deguchi learned from Nagasawa that the spirit that had taught him (Deguchi) on Mount Takakuma was none other than Kotodamahiko, which was the name for the spirit of Honda Chikaatsu himself.

Onisaburo Deguchi

The distinction made by Honda between *chinkon* and *kishin* is of some importance, since, despite the fact that Deguchi combined the two in one practice, it was commonly recognized in Omoto that mediated spirit possession was only one type of *chinkon kishin*. (1) Before 1921, what was referred to as *chinkon* was meditative training practiced by individuals as a means of calming the soul and without entering a trance. However, such practice was permitted only to qualified members who had previously practiced with an expert *saniwa*. This was to ensure that unmediated spirit possession would not occur, or if it did, it could be handled appropriately by the *saniwa*. However, (2) *chinkon kishin* was also performed as a means of spirit possession, either in private sessions, where the *saniwa* mediated the possession of one single subject, called a spirit medium [*kannushi*], or in groups, where several *saniwa*looked after numbers of *kannushi*. The problem here, of course, is that the distinction cannot be completely rigid, for Type (2) assumes the cooperation of one or more deities or spirits, which may or may not occur. Even with Type (1), the meditator had to be on guard against intrusive, and therefore potentially unmediated, spirit possession, as I myself had been warned by the wife of my Japanese shiatsu doctor.

Method

In the heyday of *chinkon kishin* as practiced in the Omoto religion, which was between 1908 and 1921, there was a distinct method of practice. For the practice of mediated spirit possession, there were several steps. The first step was ritual purification, almost certainly using water, and the reciting of *norito* prayers. This was followed by calling the deity and inducing a state of trance, usually by blowing a flute, shouting sounds that a deity would be expected to understand, and reciting the *Ame no kazuuta* several times. The central part of*chinkon kishin* was the dialogue with the possessing deity, which was conducted by the *saniwa*, after which the session ended with the deity being sent back to the spirit world, either by means of a polite request or by exorcism. There was a special seating position prescribed for the participants, which was *seiza*, with the left big toe under the right, and the hands joined together with the fingers folded into the space between the hands, the thumbs crossed and the index fingers pointing straight upwards. The eyes of the *kannushi* had to be tightly closed, but the *saniwa* had to keep his (in Omoto, virtually never her) eyes open, in order to watch the *kannushi* carefully. An accepted sign of the presence of a possessing deity was the onset of a trance, in which the hands would move, or other more violent activity would occur.

Abolition

The increasing popularity of Omoto led to a major increase of these group sessions and also alarmed the authorities, since the group sessions were much more difficult to control and caused numbers of *kannushi* to wander around the streets of Ayabe in a state of trance, with consequent loss of consciousness and control. The *saniwa*, also, were powerful and potentially independent means of contact with the spirit world and were also difficult to control. What started as a private religious activity among a few individuals became a mass movement and Onisaburo experienced the same organizational problems with Asano Wasaburo as he himself had previously caused for Nao Deguchi. To head off any action by the authorities, Onisaburo Deguchi issued directives banning the practice of *chinkon kishin*, understood as mediated spirit possession. The abolition was actually begun in 1919, but Deguchi was still explaining to Omoto members as late as 1933 why *chinkon kishin* had been discontinued. This suggests that the directives were not particularly effective.

The period from 1919 to 1935 coincides exactly with Morihei Ueshiba's direct contact with Onisaburo Deguchi and his enthusiastic involvement with the Omoto religion. Kisshomaru Ueshiba is somewhat circumspect about his father's practice of *chinkon kishin*, but Morihei Ueshiba constantly refers to such practice in his discourses. The latest example known to me is a lecture that was published by a Japanese company called Quest. The DVD is entitled

Ueshiba Morihei: Aikido no Shinri and, together with three demonstrations given by Ueshiba late in his life, it contains two recorded lectures on the nature of aikido. Of course, Ueshiba is speaking in Japanese, but there are subtitles in English. The DVD is part of an archive of material collected by the late Arikawa Sadateru Shihan and is the first of a series.

Morihei Ueshiba's *Chinkon Kishin*:
Since Kisshomaru Ueshiba was largely responsible for resurrection and growth of aikido after World War II, his understanding of *chinkon kishin* is of some importance. He briefly discusses the concept in his biography of Morihei Ueshiba.

> "*Onisaburo went on [after spending seven days in a remote cave on Mount Takakuma] to do extensive ascetic training and began to win followers. In particular he studied the technique of Kishin or Kamigakari, meaning 'divine possession.' ...*

It is said that in Chinkon Kishin there are three methods (Shinkan, Jikan and Takan) with three hundred sixty-two variations. Briefly, Chinkon Kishin might be described as a rigorous method of mental concentration and unification of body and mind, which seeks to pierce the delusion of physical existence and achieve union with the divine. In its lower forms, as practiced by certain miko, or pythonesses, it is not much more than a form of spirit possession. Authentic practitioners have mastered the three hundred sixty two methods systematically, to such an extent that at any time or in any circumstances they can conduct Chinkon Kishin and place themselves in communication with the spirit world. Such an ability reflects an advanced stage of practice, achieved after many years of difficult ascetic training." (Kisshomaru Ueshiba,*op.cit.*, p. 124.)
It is unfortunate that Kisshomaru Ueshiba was not more forthcoming about his own view of the methods and variations. A detailed explanation of the methods was given by Honda Chikaatsu and the variations depended on the type of spirit possession and the levels of deity involved. Honda broadly stated that the worlds of 'true deities' and of 'obscure and bewitching deities' had 181 levels, respectively, which would yield the number mentioned by Kisshomaru. Honda also distinguished the three 'methods', but they were in fact types of spirit possession. The methods mentioned by Kisshomaru are in fact different types of *kishin*. The first type, *Shinkanhou* [神感法], was considered divinely inspired, with the possession received or engagement acquired without any human interaction. The second type, *Jikanhou* [自感法], was unity with the divine or revelations from deities or spirits, acquired or received as a result of extensive training. Staemmler quotes Honda's directions for using this method.

> "*1. One should clean and purify one's body and clothing.*
> *2. One should select a sequestered place or a quite and secluded house.*
> *3. One should prepare one's body and sit down on one's heels with one's eyes closed.*
> *4. One should absolutely eliminate all distracting thoughts.*
> *5. One should fully employ one's senses and extinguish thoughts and volition.*
> *6. Having made one's mind [心神] pure and serene one should strive not to disturb it through sensations (from without).*
> *7. One should concentrate and pray silently that one's soul [霊魂] may reach the realm of the great deity Ame no Minakanushi.*"
> *(Honda, Reigakusho, quoted by Staemmler, op.cit., p. 159.)*

The third form, *Takanhou* [他感法], was *kishin* inspired from without and involved a *kannushi* spirit medium and a *saniwa*. It involved the use of a flute and the mental recitation of *ame no kazuuta*. For beginners the *saniwa* had to blowing and recite continuously, at least one hundred times, and the practice repeated morning and evening for several days.

The only other information Kisshomaru gives is that when Kisaburo Ueda, the man who later became Onisaburo Deguchi, visited Nao Deguchi for the first time, in 1898, he was a 'full-fledged' *saniwa*.

In the passage from his biography, quoted above, Kisshomaru Ueshiba treats spirit possession with a certain disparagement, considering it the preserve of 'pythonesses'. However, as we have seen, the creators of *chinkon* and *kishin*, Honda Chikaatsu and Nagasawa Katsutate—and certainly Onisaburo Deguchi, saw spirit possession as the central core of the practice. Kisshomaru was not, of course, the first to disparage the practice of *chinkon kishin*, for at the trial of Onisaburo Deguchi after the first suppression of Omoto, a psychologist named Nakamura Kokyou pooh-poohed the practice as nothing more than an elaborate form of hypnotism. However, the fact that Nakamura was in the pay of the police reinforces the impression that he was not entirely unbiased.

In addition to the explanation given by Kisshomaru Ueshiba, there are other discussions, with or without photographs, of Morihei Ueshiba practicing *chinkon kishin*. One is a brief description in a collection of photographs recording the life of Morihei Ueshiba and his son Kisshomaru, published by the Aikikai in 1983 to mark the centenary of Morihei Ueshiba's birth. Another is an article by Dan Penrod published on the website of the Jionjuku Academy of the Warrior Spirit, accessible online at http://theaikidodojo.com/history/chin-kon-ki-shin/. Penrod is a student of Mitsugi

Saotome and his definition of *chinkon kishin* is a quotation from Saotome's book, *The Principles of Aikido* (p. 221). Yet another is the book in English on aikido preparatory exercises written by Morito Suganuma, mentioned in an earlier part of this essay.

A more exhaustive and academically rigorous treatment of *chinkon kishin* is to be found in the Ph.D. thesis written by Birgit Staemmler, discussed and cited above. The value of Staemmler's research lies not only in its detailed treatment of the history of the concept, based on extensive research in Omoto and contemporary sources, but also in her analysis of the continuing practice of *chinkon kishin* in some of Japan's new religions, especially the modern offshoots of Omoto. She gives all the sources, so it is possible to trace the academic path that she herself took and test the validity of her arguments and conclusions. This is a feature of academic research that is, unfortunately, extremely rare when the subject is Morihei Ueshiba and aikido.

On Page 28 of『合気道開祖　植芝盛平誕生百年』, there is a photograph of Morihei Ueshiba in a standing position holding a *jo*. His eyes are closed and he appears to be in a trance and possibly chanting. The caption below the photograph is: 「鎮魂帰神——昭和42 年　84歳」: (*Chinkon Kishin*: *Shouwa 42* [1967]: *Aged 84*). To the left of the photograph appears the following short explanation.

> 「鎮魂帰神」とは精神を統一集中して神と一体化することを念ずる行法。開祖は道場において、稽古に先立つとときを神前に正座して気を鎮め、気を統 べ、新たなる神気を泉のごとく溢れさせる心づくりをおこなうのが常であった。また稽古ののちはふたたび神前に正座して、気を修め、気を整え、さらに気を正 常に持続さすべく三昧することをも欠かさなかった。

> Chinkon kishin *is a method that focuses on bringing together the powers of the spirit and on becoming one with the kami. In the dojo, the Founder used to spend time before training sitting in seiza before the kami and calm his ki* [鎮める: shizumeru is the Japanese *kun* reading of the *CHIN* in *chinkon*]*, control his ki and prepare his spirit to be filled to overflowing with divine ki. In addition, after training had ended he would not fail to sit in seiza before the kami and focus his attention on governing his ki, putting in order his ki, and bringing back his ki to a 'normal' state.*

What is distinctive about the explanation is its emphasis on the special circumstances of the training experience, from the fact that it required special preparation and also special exercises after the training had finished. Morihei Ueshiba was 84 years old when the picture was taken and in the opinion of the writer of the caption clearly practiced what was considered to be *chinkon kishin*, even at this later time of his life.

This photograph should be compared with one of the photographs what appear as part of the article by Dan Penrod, cited above. The photograph is of Morihei Ueshiba and an unnamed Omoto follower sitting in *seiza* and "with their hands folded into various *mudra* or hand gestures." Penrose gives no date to the photograph, but it was actually taken in 1924, during Ueshiba's expedition to Mongolia as the bodyguard of Onisaburo Deguchi. The photograph is of interest for several reasons: one is that, as we have seen, Deguchi virtually banned the practice of *chinkon kishin* a few years before 1924, for the practice had become extremely popular among Omoto adherents and had aroused the interest of the government authorities and the police. Deguchi was rightly worried about the adverse effects of the practice and, in fact, the popularity of *chinkon kishin* was one reason for the first suppression of Omoto in 1921. Another reason is that Ueshiba is shown with his eyes closed, seated in the prescribed position for *chinkon kishin* to occur. He is directly adjacent to another person and so the question arises whether either was acting as a *saniwa* [砂庭, 左爾波, 審神者] or mediator and whether the *chinkon kishin* being practiced was actually mediated spirit possession.

The discussion of Morito Suganuma has been discussed in an earlier part of this essay, in connection with the practice of *ame-no-kazuuta*, briefly discussed above. Suganuma Shihan correctly regards this practice as a version of *kotodama*, but Birgit Staemmler gives a more detailed account of the practice and its early history. It is clear from Staemmler's account that the *ame-no-kazu-uta* was used by Honda Chikaatsu as an essential component of both *chinkon* and *kishin*. The counting was not merely a preparatory exercise for something else, as Suganuma Shihan suggests that it would now be in aikido.

Omoto and *Misogi*

There is some lack of clarity about *misogi* [禊]. The *misogi* training of Kawatsura Bonji is regarded by one scholar, Tsushiro Hirofumi, as a type of *chinkon* practice. (The discussion occurs in Chapter 4 of his book *Chinkon Gyouuron* [鎮魂行方論], pp. 241-293.) Hiroshi Tada, too, appears to regard Morihei Ueshiba's behavior during his pre-training exercises as*misogi*, whereas it could also be described in other terms, certainly as *chinkon kishin*.

> "*O-Sensei's Misogi is the same. Before training O-Sensei would chant Norito (Shinto prayers) for a long time. It was really tough! He would forget that the students were sitting there behind him. Many times he would chant continuously from 6:30 all the way to 7:30. When Sensei was chanting he would fall into a trance and continuously create new prayers.*" (Hiroshi Tada, Yashimata Lectures, Part 5, accessed through http://

www.aikidosangenkai.org/blog/...himata-part-5/. The context of Tada Shihan's reference to *misogi* is given in earlier parts of the lecture.)

It is important, therefore, to make a clear distinction between the activities / rituals themselves and the physical/mental/spiritual states they were intended to bring about. Tada Shihan used the term ‘trance' and this state appears to be a central element of *chinkon kishin*, understood as spirit possession. Trance, which is not necessarily mystical or religious, is an ‘altered state of consciousness', which might be triggered by various factors and explained in various ways. There are two possible religious interpretations of trance, the first of which is ecstasy. Mircea Eliade, for example, believed that it was essential for a shaman to experience ecstasy, interpreted as a journey.

> "*Nous avons pu constater que l'élément spécifique du chamanisme est ... l'extase provoquée par l'ascension au Ciel ou par la descente aux Enfer.*" (Eliade, *Le Chamanisme et les Techniques Archaïques de l'Exstace*, p. 388.)

The second religious interpretation of trance is spirit possession, with or without a medium or mediator (*saniwa*).

> "*Generally speaking, interpretations of spirit possession presuppose belief in spirits or deities who are able to enter into a human being's body, whereas ecstasy requires the concept of one or more souls capable of leaving the body in which they usually reside.*" (Staemmler, *op.cit.*, p. 21.)

With respect to the activities and rituals, the meaning of *chinkon* and *kishin* has been explained earlier. The *locus classicus* for *misogi* is the ritual of purification undertaken by the deity Izanagi no Mikoto after his return from the underworld, Yomi no Kuni. The episode is described in the first book of the *Kojiki* and every detail has long been exhaustively analyzed and discussed. In his discourses Morihei Ueshiba constantly refers to the early parts of the *Kojiki* and his references and their interpretation rely very much on his view of *kotodama*. However, Ueshiba was just one of many people, including scholars as well as religious leaders, to study the *Kojiki* and, like the Bible, the myths recorded therein can be interpreted in many ways.

A Note on Kawatsura Bonji: 川面凡児

The great importance of purification using water as part of the practice of *chinkon kishin* in Omoto has been mentioned above. However, it is commonly accepted that Morihei Ueshiba also owed much of his thinking about *misogi* to Kawatsura Bonji (1862-1929). It was stated by Abe Seiseki in an interview with Haruo Matsuoka that O Sensei saw Kawatsura Bonji several times and if this is so, it would have been in the years between Ueshiba's sojourn in Ayabe with Onisaburo Deguchi and his early residence in Tokyo, before he opened the Kobukan Dojo, the point being that he would already have been doing extensive practice of *chinkon kishin*, both under Deguchi's direction and probably also by himself. (The interview is entitled "Kojiki: The Inspiration for Aikido lies within the Kojiki", *Aikido Journal*.) Kawatsura is mentioned in an article entitled "CHINKON KISHIN NO HO: la méthod pour calmer l'âme," this time written by Gerard Blaize, who is a senior student of the late Hikitsuchi Michio. In the opening paragraphs of the article, Blaize is concerned with the exercises that precede aikido practice and poses some important questions.

> "*La plupart des practiquants d'aïkido débutent encore leurs cours en effectuant des exercises combinant des mouvements du corps, la pronunciation de noms, des respirations associées à des visualisations, semblables à ceux que pratiquait le fondateur de I'aikido.*
>
> *Ces exercises sont au Japon désignés sous le terme de CHINKON KISHIN NO HO, c'est-à-dire la méthode pour calmer l'âme. Cette définition surprendra beaucoup de practiquants d'aikido qui ne se doutaient certainement pas du but de ces exercises.*
>
> *Mais ces exercises, quells sont-ils? D'ou viennent-ils? Comment sont-ils encore pratiqués aujourd'hui? Quelle en est leur utilité?*" (Blaize, *op.cit.*)

Blaize's comments about training in Japan might well have been true of his own training in the dojo(s) associated with Michio Hikitsuchi, but do not represent anything like a norm, at least according to the experience of the present writer.

Both the Abe interview and the Blaize article are freely available on the Internet and are clearly based on conversations between the two disciples of Morihei Ueshiba himself and his two disciples, but the article by Blaize focuses almost entirely on the series of exercises developed by Kawatsura Bonji and makes no mention at all of the *chinkon* and *kishin* of Honda Chikaatsu or Nagasawa Katsutate. Blaize's discussion is best understood in the light of the work of scholars like Tsushiro Hirofumi, who is one of the few scholars to have done major research on Kawatsura and put the latter's thinking in a proper context. Tsushiro sets out the two lines of *chinkon* and *kishin* theory and practice. The main line, which still continues, starts with Honda Chikaatsu and is represented by Nagazawa Katsutate and Onisaburo Deguchi, and Deguchi's own disciples in Omoto. Another line starts with Miyaji Tokiwa (1819-1890). Kawatsura Bonji is independent of these two lines and it is fortuitous that Kawatsura's disciples either trained with Morihei Ueshiba or had disciples who did, which led Ueshiba to meet Kawatsura and study his writings. Tsushiro does not mention Morihei Ueshiba, but goes into great detail about Kawatsura's theory of the soul and how the exercises listed by Blaize are intended to achieve *chinkon* and *kishin*.

Tsushiro lists all but two of the exercises mentioned by Blaize. They are *harai* [祓] , *misogi* [禊], *furutama* [振玉], *otakebi* [雄健],*okorobi* [雄詰], and *ibuki* [伊吹]. The exercises omitted by Tsushiro are an exercise called *ikubi ni ho* and *ame no torifune*. The first seems very similar to *ibuki*, as Tsushiro describes it, and the second, known to the vast majority of aikido practitioners as the rowing exercise, figures prominently in the explanations given in various places by Abe Seiseki.

Blaize mentions that the *otakebi* exercise is also practiced in sumo. The exercise consists of two persons facing each other and raising the legs one after the other and bringing them down to the ground. This is followed by *okorobi*, which is the shouting of prescribed sounds. He adds that in Shinto mythology it is the exercise performed by Amaterasu O mikami when she received an unexpected visit from her brother Susa no o no mikoto. This is another example of a liberal and ingenious interpretation of the *Kojiki*, discussed earlier, but it has to be stated at the outset that the episode is extremely obscure—so liberal and ingenious interpretations are perhaps all that is possible. This episode is also cited by Tsushiro, quoting Kawatsura, and he adds other examples from the *Kojiki*, including the use of the *nuboko* spear by Izanagi and Izanami when they created Japan.

Two final points can be made about the theories of Kawatsura Bonji. First, they are all regarded by Tsushiro as *chinkon* and *kishin* (like Honda Chikaatsu, he regards these as separate) and thus as a form of shamanistic practice. Secondly, the discussion of Tsushiro suggests that Kawatsura regarded these exercises as rituals with a fairly specific purpose, based on his elaborate theory of the soul and the relationship of the multiple souls of human beings with the divine soul. The interviews with Matsuoka and Blaize suggest that the Morihei Ueshiba incorporated these rituals into his own Omoto religious cosmology and the training / rituals that were a part of this. The interviews with Matsuoka and Blaize and their interpretation of comments by Abe Seiseki and Hikitsuchi Michio suggest that Ueshiba revealed aspects of his own personal training to these two disciples, but did not reveal exactly the same aspects to both. The comments made by Abe and Hikitsuchi should be compared with those made in various places by Shirata Rinjiro, Shioda Gozo, Saito Morihiro and Terry Dobson, who trained under Ueshiba's direction at different times in the latter's life. They reveal a complex—and evolving—system of religious practices and personal training that was much larger than the sum total of the insights and glimpses that he offered to a number of his disciples.

Omoto and *Kotodama*

The writings of Yamaguchi Shido have recently been reprinted and published by Hachiman Shoten, under the title 『言霊秘書・山口志道言霊学全集』. Along with Deguchi's vast *Reikai Monogatari*, this is required reading for anyone who wishes to study *kotodama* in any depth. *Kotodama* appears prominently in *Reiki Monogatari* and Deguchi also wrote more specifically on *kotodama gaku* [言霊学]. If we follow intellectual pioneers like Aristotle or Wilhelm von Humboldt, the addition of the Japanese *-gaku* [学] suffix indicates that it is considered as a subject of study in its own right, with an internal structure and methodology. However, it is very difficult to see from Deguchi's writings, and also from those of Morihei Ueshiba, what this internal structure or methodology actually consists in.

Onisaburo Deguchi produced two works specifically on *kotodama gaku*, both handwritten with a writing brush. One, *Oomoto Kotodama Gaku Baika-hen* [『大本言霊学　梅花篇』: Omoto Study of Word-Soul -- Plum Blossom Edition], is undated and is simply reproduced and bound in the traditional Japanese way, like the original edition of Morihei Ueshiba's *Budo Renshu*. The other, entitled *Oomoto Kotodama Gaku* [『大本言霊学』], has been edited by Omiya Shiro, a scholar of ancient Japanese esoteric texts and a student of one version of *Daito-ryu Aiki-jujutsu*. Omiya has added an index and brief summary, with an explanation of *kotodama-gaku* and its development, including Onisaburo Deguchi's contribution.

The issues have been discussed in earlier columns. Basically, kotodama-gaku is concerned with the alternative meanings one can give to each of the syllables of the Japanese language, it being understood that each syllable has several possible meanings: the conventional meaning, according to which the syllable is conventionally understood, and the '*kotodama*' meaning, which is quite different and is also considered to be the essential or core meaning of the syllable. Since syllables are also phonological units, they can be uttered in speech. When specific utterances are made in a certain way, for example, in the form of *norito* prayers, they are believed to carry additional significance, of a spiritual nature, due to the presence of the *tama* [霊] in the phonological / semantic syllable.

In her book, *Prophet Motive*, Nancy Stalker states the problem of *kotodama* methodology in the following terms.

> "*The development of esoteric* kotodama *studies is difficult to trace. They 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 in nineteenth century* kotodama *studies, like Yamaguchi Shido and Nakamura Kodo, Onisaburo's great-grandfather, published widely circulated texts, but the transmission of their esoteric knowledge was reportedly often oral and haphazard.*" (Nancy Stalker, *Prophet Motive*, p. 55.)

However, transmission of knowledge sketched by Nancy Stalker almost exactly followed the cultural orientation of intimacy, described by Thomas Kasulis and discussed in an earlier part of this essay. Stalker's discussion relies on contemporary Japanese scholarship, which also reveals a certain ambivalence on the part of Onisaburo Deguchi towards such esoteric knowledge. She quotes a short section from one of Deguchi's works on *Reikai Monogatari*, which is one of the main Omoto canonical texts and was studied by Morihei Ueshiba. In Stalker's view it reveals a "commonsensical view of the esoteric practice." Her translation should be compared with the original Japanese text quoted by Nakamura Minato in his book,*Kotodama to Gekai*.

> "*If we carry the weapons of* kotodama*, of virtuous and clever words, we will be resolved not to turn to false teachings. Although your enemies may be many, you will never be caught off guard. With one skillful word, that is, relying on the good sense of* kotodama*, your enemies will instantly become your allies. And though you may have many friends, with a single explosive word, they will turn into your sworn enemy. This is the essence of this book, the* Reikai Monogatari*, to indicate the need for discretion and caution in using* kotodama." (Stalker, *op.cit.*, p. 57.)
>
> 「この世を造りし神直日、心も広き大直日、唯何事も人の世は、直日に見直せ聞き直せ、身の過ちは宜り直せ」と、吾人は夜この神示を楯として、ひしひ しと押し寄せ来たる激浪怒濤を浴びながら、善言美辞の言霊の武器を以て凡ての外道を言向和す覚悟である。何程多勢の敵と雖も驚くには及ばない。只一言の善 辞、即ち言霊の善用に依りて強敵は忽ち化して強き味方となり、又多数の味方と雖も、唯一の悪言暴語に依って直ちに怨敵となる。言霊の尤も慎む可きを明示し たのは、本書『霊界物語』を通じての大眼目であります。*(*中村湊*,『言霊と他界』. p. 223.)*

Stalker's suggests that Onisaburo Deguchi had a wide and flexible view of *kotodama* and was happy to include under its umbrella strictly religious *haraekotoba* and *norito* prayers, scholarly explanations and editing of Nao Deguchi's *Ofudesaki* prophecies, but also jokes, puns, and *iroha* rhymes. However, this flexible, playful and 'commonsensical view of the esoteric practice' is less easy to discern in the discourses of Morihei Ueshiba.

It we sum up the last three sections, it is noteworthy that Morihei Ueshiba preferred Onisaburo Deguchi's much more accommodating shamanism to Nao Deguchi's austere 'take-no-prisoners' approach. It is also noteworthy that all three of Deguchi's central pillars of Omoto doctrine and practice discussed above were used by Ueshiba as defining features of aikido: he often talked of Aikido in terms of *misogi* and *kotodama* and his own version of the techniques of *chinkon kishin* formed a crucial part of the training. One could also suggest that Ueshiba also followed in the tradition of his shaman predecessors with his reputation as a 'faith healer', only in his case the healing was achieved not by the laying on of hands—at least not specifically, but by what might facetiously be termed as the grabbing of wrists. And people emerged from their experience of 'hands-on' contact with Ueshiba, also, as 'true believers'.

Religious Beliefs & Practices and the Development of Aiki-budo and Aikido:

1. Prewar: Morihei Ueshiba's Religion and Religious Practices

Morihei Ueshiba stated that aikido was not a religion, that one did not have to be religious in order to practice aikido and this is probably acceptable to many postwar aikido practitioners, who regard their training and any religious pursuits as completely separate. However, Ueshiba did not actually practice what he himself preached and also added the further—much more controversial—statement that aikido training 'completed' religious practice. The context of his statement suggests that he had in mind established religions and that he believed that his own *aiki-budo* and aikido training was quite different. Unpacking these statements alone requires some acquaintance with the cultural background of Meiji, Taisho and early Showa Japan. In addition, even a cursory glance at postwar aikido—including all the flavors, from Yoseikan to Korindo, shows an almost complete absence of anything resembling religious practice. Even the practice of bowing before portraits of Morihei Ueshiba and other aikido luminaries has been explained in non-religious terms.

The religious aspects of Ueshiba's training are too prominent to be missed, even in a most cursory reading of his discourses. I think there are several crucial facets to this, which can be distinguished, but not really separated.
The first is Ueshiba's own religious activities. These comprised a wide spectrum of beliefs and activities, beginning with Shingon Mikkyou and including all the Omoto religious practices, including *chinkon kishin*. In this respect, Morihei Ueshiba can be compared with his friend Goi Masahisa, the founder of a religious group called the Byakko Shinko-kai. Goi was originally a student of Taniguchi Masaharu, who broke away from Omoto to establish his own religion, called Seicho-no-Ie. By comparison with Goi's 'atmospheric' cosmology and Kawatsura Bonji's theory of multiple souls, Morihei Ueshiba represents Omoto orthodoxy.
The second is the entire spectrum of Ueshiba's actual training, the religious aspects included. To the core religious beliefs and practices need to be added all the solo training: chanting, breathing and complex exercises with weapons like the spear, the *jo* and the sword. The main focus of this training has to be on the period starting from his meeting

with Onisaburo Deguchi in Ayabe and his opening of the Ueshiba Dojo there.
The third is Ueshiba's initial awareness of his own training, expressed, for example, in his writings during the period from around 1930 to 1942, when he retired to Iwama. The ideas expressed here have a very strong nationalistic bias and it is pointless to deny that this exists, or to explain it away. *Budo Renshu* and *Budo*, and also the shorter items in the *Budo*magazine of the Dai Nippon Budo Senyoukai, show this bias very clearly
The fourth is what we might call Ueshiba's later awareness of his own training, as seen from his postwar writings—or rather, the writings attributed to Ueshiba that were published after World War II—and from the way in which he chose to express this awareness to the world at large. A major problem here is that Morihei Ueshiba did not follow the example of Yamaguchi Shido, Onisaburo Deguchi, or even Kawatsura Bonji, and write a detailed account of his thinking.

Religious Beliefs & Practices and the Development of Aiki-budo and Aikido
2. The Postwar Divorce:
I have devoted much of this essay to giving an as detailed an explanation as space permits of the Omoto religion, including the theory and practice of *chinkon* and *kishin*, as understood by those exponents whose views influenced Morihei Ueshiba: Honda Chikaatsu, Nagasawa Katsutate, Onisaburo Deguchi and Kawatsura Bonji. If the religious views of Morihei Ueshiba are considered in a contemporary cultural context—as I believe they have to be, the huge gap between these views and postwar aikido, based as it is on the culture of postwar Japan, is especially striking. Gone is the Omoto theology, with its liberal borrowings from other established religious systems, and gone is the practice of *chinkon kishin* considered as mediated spirit possession. This is as true of the rituals found in the present-day successors of the Omoto religion as it is of the traces of the practice found in the aikido exercises that are considered as a preparation for training in *waza* [技, 業]. The nature, duration, and purpose of these exercises, mentioned by Gerard Blaize in his discussion of *chinkon kishin*, now admit of wide variation and are usually left to the individual instructor. A good example would be the preparatory exercises of Morito Suganuma, which are practiced in all his affiliated dojos. Rinjiro Shirata, Shigenobu Okumura, Morihiro Saito, and Hiroshi Tada all evolved their own sets of exercises, which are somewhat different.

Some Conclusions
In this and the two previous parts of this essay I have attempted to present a detailed analysis of the cultural background to the religious views of Morihei Ueshiba. These views need to be considered on their own terms, but also with some reference to contemporary thinking. The reflections of Takie Sugiyama Lebra on Japanese culture and the discussions of Thomas Kasulis on general cultural orientations, of intimacy and integrity, both provided some essential contemporary cultural background for a description of Morihei Ueshiba's religious thinking that was largely phenomenological in approach—in the general sense that I have understood this term. Expressed in contemporary philosophical terms, such as those used by Thomas Nagel, Ueshiba's thinking can be seen as a kind of neutral monism. It is certainly not theistic in the narrow sense entailed by a monotheistic religion like Christianity, but nor is it scientific in any narrow sense. What science there is, seems to be the kind of science espoused by Japanese *kokugakusha* like Motoori Norinaga, which flourished before the wholesale importation of western scientific thinking that followed the Meiji Restoration and can best be seen in the *kotodama-gaku* theories espoused by *kokugaku* scholars like Yamaguchi Shido, which were in turn taken over by Onisaburo Deguchi and Morihei Ueshiba.

To turn to a completely different aspect of religion, an interview has recently been circulating on the Internet, in which a bishop compares religion as usually understood and certainly represented by traditional Christianity, with its distinction between heaven and hell, its injunctions to be born again, and its sacramental rituals like baptism, as an elaborate control mechanism, intended to keep people from becoming fully ‘human'. The question can be asked—and, given the interview, probably has to be asked: in what way is the religion of Morihei Ueshiba any different? In fact, one central feature of Japanese ‘common religion' that has not been stated by Reader and Tanabe, and has probably been overlooked by them, is the great scope offered by Japanese religion for social control by those in authority, be they government officials, religious leaders or *budo* teachers. Despite the dire predictions made by Nao Deguchi as a result of her *kamigakari*, and the revolutionary nature of her new utopia, she offered little beyond a life of thrift and being a good Japanese: a life summed up nowadays by the common word 頑張る [*gambaru*: to make the very best of any situation in which one finds oneself].

Further Reading
The ground covered in this essay is very similar in extent to that explored by Margaret Greenhalgh in a Master's thesis accepted by the University of Durham and later published as a book. There are, however, some major differences of emphasis: Margaret Greenhalgh, *Aikido and Spirituality: Japanese Religious Influences in a Martial Art*, 2003, Durham University Dissertation, 2010, VDM Verlag.
Another fundamental text is Helen Hardacres's analysis of the postwar development of Japanese studies in the USA. Her own chapter is of some value for religious studies, but John Dower's chapter is fundamental: John Dower, "Sizing Up (and Breaking Down) Japan", Helen Hardacre, "The Postwar Development of Studies of Japanese Religion," in Helen Hardacre (ed.), *The Postwar Development of Japanese*

Studies in the United States, 1998, Brill, pp. 1 -- 36; pp. 195 -- 226.

Sourcebooks of general texts are also of value here and the ones I have used for these columns are part of the "Introduction to Asian Civilizations" series, published by Columbia U P: Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom (and many others), *Sources of Chinese Tradition, Volume 1, From the Earliest Times to 1600*, Second Edition, 1999; Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano (and many others), *Sources of Chinese Tradition, Volume 2, From 1600 through the Twentieth Century*, Second Edition, 2000; Wm. Theodore de Bary, Donald Keene, George Tanabe, and Paul Varley (eds), *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume One, From the Earliest Times to 1600*, Second Edition, 2001; Wm. Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E Tiedemann (eds), *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume Two, 1600 to 2000*, Second Edition, 2005; Peter H Lee and Wm. Theodore de Bary (eds.), *Sources of Korean Tradition, Volume One, From the Earliest Times Through the Sixteenth Century*, 1997.

There is also a sourcebook of Japanese texts: David J Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History*, *Volume 1, The Dawn of History to the Late Tokugawa Period*; V*olume 2, The Late Tokugawa Period to the Present*, 1997, M E Sharpe.

The title of this essay mentions phenomenology and it is important to have some understanding of this term. A clear explanation is given by David Woodruff Smith: Smith, David Woodruff, "Phenomenology", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/f...phenomenology/. Smith adds a bibliography, which includes primary sources and a few secondary works. An introductory treatment of issues relating to the mind and mental training can be found in Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science*, 2008, Routledge. This book also includes an extensive bibliography. Another work is the result of collaboration between a philosopher and a neuroscientist: M R Bennett and P M S Hacker, *Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience*, 2003, Blackwell. A student of Thomas Kasulis, who also trained in aikido with Koichi Tohei, has written about Japanese culture from a phenomenological viewpoint: David Shaner, *The Bodymind Experience in Japanese Buddhism: A Phenomenological Perspective of Kukai and Dogen*, 1985, SUNY Press; *Science and Comparative Philosophy: Introducing Yuasa Yasuo*, 1989, Brill. The work of Yasuo Yuasa has been mentioned in previous columns and is relevant to any discussion of body-mind relationships and Japanese religion. The English translations are the work of Thomas Kasulis and others, but do not in fact translate all the Japanese text, for Yuasa himself decided to ‘edit' his works for ‘western' consumption. This needs to be understood by those who regard the English text of some works as direct translations of the Japanese originals. The English translations and the Japanese originals are listed below. Yasuo Yuasa, *The Body: Towards an Eastern Mind-Body Theory*, 1987, SUNY Press. This is a translation of 湯浅泰雄, 『身体論　東洋的心身論の試み』, first published in 1977. After the English translation was published, Yuasa revised the Japanese original and published it with a slightly different title: 『身体論　東洋的心身論と現代』, 1990. Yasuo Yuasa, *The Body, Self-Cultivation and Ki-Energy,* 1993, SUNY Press. This is a translation of 湯浅泰雄, 『気・修行・身体』, 1986. Yuasa published another study of *ki* in 1991, 湯浅泰雄, 『気とは何か　人体が発するエネルギー』As far as I know, this has not been translated. For those with a background in analytical traditions of philosophy, the essays of Thomas Nagel provide another entrance to the topics discussed about the mind: Thomas Nagel, *Mortal Questions*, 1979, Cambridge U P; *The View from Nowhere*, 1986, Oxford U P; *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False*, 2012, Oxford U P. This last book presents a general view of the world that has some interesting parallels with the thinking of Morihei Ueshiba.

Woodruff Smith's article for the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* can profitably be balanced by others from the same source: Van Gulick, Robert, "Consciousness", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/s...consciousness/; Webb, Mark, "Religious Experience", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2011 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/w...us-experience/; Goodman, Russell, "William James", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL: http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/s...entries/james/.

Japanese Religion

In addition to the book by Ian Reader and George Tanabe Jr., discussed in the previous column, there are a number of essential works on Japanese religion, covering a wide variety of topics: Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli (Eds.), *Buddhas and Kami in Japan:* Honji Suijaku *as a combinatory paradigm*, 2003. Routledge-Curzon; Bernhard Scheid and Mark Teeuwen (Eds.), *The Culture of Secrecy in Japanese Religion*, 2006, Routledge; Brian Bocking, *The Oracle of the Three Shrines: Windows on Japanese Religion*, 2001, Curzon; Satsuki Kawano,*Ritual Practice in Modern Japan*, 2005, Hawai‘i U P; Susumu Shimazono, *From Salvation to Spirituality: Popular Religious Movements in Modern Japan*, 2004, Trans Pacific.

Shamanism

Of value for shamanism is a pioneering work: Ichiro Hori, *Folk Religion in Japan*, 1968, Chicago U P. Essential reading is Carmen Blacker's study, written some years ago, but still unsurpassed: Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanistic Practices in Japan*, Third edition, 1999, Routledge-Curzon. A fundamental work in Japanese is a detailed study of Japanese shamanism by Tokutarou Sakurai:

桜井徳太郎, 日本のシャーマニズム, 1974, 1977, 吉川弘文館.

Shinto

There is a vast bibliography in English concerning Shinto. In fact, many of the writers discussed or mentioned in these columns cite works on Shinto in conformity with their own ideas about what they think Shinto is or should be. So, to begin with, it is important to find a general basis: a balanced, even-handed, flexible picture of Shinto, but one that is comprehensive enough to place the more quirky interpretations in context. For this kind of picture, a combination of the historical approach with the 'phenomenological' approach is probably the best, so a good place to start is an introductory book like the one discussed in this essay. Written by Thomas Kasulis, the book reveals both the advantages and the problems in writing about the 'phenomenology' of Shinto (Thomas P Kasulis, *Shinto: The Way Home*, 2004, Hawai'i U P). This book can be supplemented by two books by John Nelson (John K Nelson: *A Year in the Life of a Shinto Shrine*, 1996, U of Washington Press; John K Nelson, *Enduring Identities: The Guise of Shinto in Modern Japan*, 2000, Hawai'i U P). The later historical developments of Shinto are fundamental for understanding Morihei Ueshiba and a good picture is provided by a collection of essays edited by Nobutaka Inoue: Inoue Nobutaka [editor], Ito Satoshi, Endo Jun, Mori Mizue, *Shinto -- a Short History*, 2003, Routledge Curzon. After this it is important to read another history of Shinto that is 'revisionist'. *A New History of Shinto* was written with the intention of showing what was defective in the previous histories and cannot really be understood fully without some acquaintance with these earlier works: John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto*, 2010, Wiley-Blackwell.

Having obtained a basic understanding of the general framework, one is better equipped to probe more deeply and also consider how the writers themselves view their subject. Although long out of print and despite a damning review by Carmen Blacker, a weighty book by Jean Herbert is a good place to begin a detailed survey of Shinto practices and myths: Jean Herbert, *Shinto: At the Fountain-head of Japan*, 1967, Allen & Unwin. This book is a heavily-edited English translation, combined into one large volume, of two original works written in French: Jean Herbert, *Aux sources du Japan -- le Shinto*, 1964, Editions Albin Michel; and *Les Dieux Nationaux du Japon*, 1965, Editions Albin Michel. Herbert is somewhat uncritical and this is part of the reason for Blacker's scathing review. The review forms Chapter 35 in her collected essays, the first part of which is devoted to religion, myth and folklore: Carmen Blacker, *Collected Writings*, 2000, Routledge-Curzon.

Two classic early works by D C Holtom on State Shinto were often cited in previous columns. Both the titles and the dates of publication convey some idea of how wartime State Shinto was generally regarded by the Japanese: D C Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan: A Study in Modern Shinto*, 1938, 1995, Kegan Paul International; *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, 1943, revised in 1947, Chicago U P. Another classic early work presents a picture of Shinto from a completely different viewpoint to that of Holtom: J W T Mason, *The Meaning of Shinto*, 1935, 2002, Tenchi Press. There are individual chapters in the multi-volume *Cambridge History of Japan*, but these do not make one continuous narrative of Shinto.

Helen Hardacre has written on the new religions (details below) but her book on Shinto deals more with state Shinto than with the religious aspects: Helen Hardacre, *Shinto and the State 1868-1988*, 1989, Princeton U P. Indispensable for those who wish to delve more deeply is a collection of essays: John Breen and Mark Teeuwen (Eds.), *Shinto in History: Ways of the Kami*, 2000, Curzon. The articles of Kuroda Toshio are scattered over a number of academic journals, but the article that was most controversial when it appeared is "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion" and it can be found in a collection of articles: Mark R Mullins, Shimazono Susumu, Paul L Swanson (eds.), *Religion and Society in Modern Japan*, 1993, Asian Humanities Press.

It is difficult to read the main Shinto texts in Japanese, but there are various scholarly editions of the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*, with the *kanbun* text, modern translations into Japanese, and scholarly notes. The best Japanese edition is the volume in Iwanami's *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei*: 倉野憲司, 武田祐吉, 『古事記　祝詞』, 1958, 日本古典文学大系, 岩波書店. As the title indicates, this edition contains both the *Kojiki* and the *Norito* from the *Engi-shiki*. The level of difficulty can be indicated by the fact that some of my Japanese graduate students cannot easily read even the modern translations, let alone the *kanbun* text. W G Aston and Basil Hall Chamberlain have translated these works into English, but Aston's translation of the *Nihongi* is far superior to Chamberlain's translation of the *Kojiki*. For the *Kojiki*, the translation by Donald Philippi is indispensible. Unfortunately, this is out of print and now rare; even used copies are quite expensive: *Kojiki*: Donald Philippi, 1956, University of Tokyo Press. An accessible resource in English is the online *Digital Museum* published by Kokugakuin University, in Tokyo: http://k-amc.kokugakuin.ac.jp/DM/dbT...s_name=col_eos.

It has been stated that Morihei Ueshiba interpreted the *Kojiki* via kotodama. An example of this thinking can been seen in an interview with Abe Seiseki that appears on the Doshinkai website: http://www.doshinokai.com/Articles_files/Kojiki.pdf

Buddhism

Depending on how the latter is defined, Buddhism in Japan has a longer history than Shinto: Richard Bowring, *The Religious Traditions of Japan, 500-1600*, 2005, Cambridge U P.

The 'phenomenological' counterpart of Nelson's *A Year in the Life of a Shinto Shrine* for Buddhism would probably be a work on the famous cluster of Shingon Buddhist temples in Wakayama Prefecture, Japan: Philip L Nicoloff, *Sacred Koyasan*, 2008, State U of New York P. After this, there are

many books to choose from and the following is a very small selection of what I myself have read:
Duncan Ryuken Williams, *The Other Side of Zen: A Social History of Soto Zen Buddhism in Tokugawa Japan*, 2005, Princeton U P; Ian Reader, *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku*, 2005, Hawai'i U P; Jacqueline I Stone and Mariko Namba Walter (eds.), *Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism*, 2008, Hawai'i U P.
Though controversial, the thinking of D T Suzuki needs to be looked at, and also the books by Brian Victoria. The books in question are *The Method of Zen*, *Zen and Japanese Culture*,*Zen at War*, *Zen War Stories*. The best place to look for discussions is the Internet archive maintained by Matthew Ciolek: http://www.ciolek.com/WWWVL-Zen.html, called the *Zen Buddhist Virtual Library*.
The research of Bernhard Faure is required reading: *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan / Zen Buddhism*, 1991; *Chan Insights and Oversights: An Epistemological Critique of the Chan Tradition*, 1993; *Visions of Power: Imagining Medieval Japanese Buddhism*, 1996, all published by Princeton U P; *Unmasking Buddhism*, 2009, Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Shugendo

Hitoshi Miyake had written extensively on Shugendo and some of his essays have been translated into English: Hitoshi Miyake, *The Mandala of the Mountain: Shugendo and Folk Religion*, 2005, Keio U P. Two years later, Miyake published a larger work in Japanese: 宮家準, 2007, 『神道と修験道民俗教思想の展開』, 春秋社.

New Religions

For those who wish to study Japan's new religions in depth, there are two indispensable works. One, in English, is an annotated bibliography: Peter B Clarke, *A Bibliography of Japanese New Religions / Religious Movements*, 1999, Japan Library. The other is a massive volume in Japanese edited by Inoue Nobutaka and others: 井上順孝, 孝本貢, 対馬路人, 中牧弘允, 西山茂, 『新宗教辞典』, 1990, 弘文堂. Inoue has written many other books on the new religions of Japan and has also translated the study of Deguchi and Omoto-kyo written by Nancy Stalker, which was discussed in earlier columns. Various aspects of Japan's new religions are discussed in the following books: Robert Kisala, *Prophets of Peace: Pacifism and Cultural Identity in Japan*, 1999, Hawai'i U P; Peter B Clarke, *Japanese New Religions in Global Perspective*, 2000, Curzon; Susumu Shimazono, *From Salvation to Spirituality: Popular Religious Movements in Modern Japan*, 2004, Trans Pacific Press; Sven Saaler and J Victor Koschmann (eds.), *Pan-Asianism in Modern Japanese History: Colonialism, Regionalism and Borders*, 2007, Routledge; Helen Hardacre, *Kurozumikyo and the New Religions of Japan*, 1986, Princeton U P; Emily Groszos Ooms, *Women and Millenarian Protest in Meiji Japan*, 1993, Cornell East Asia Program; Birgit Staemmler, *Chinkon Kishin: Mediated Spirit Possession in Japanese New Religions*, 2009, LIT Verlag. Staemmler's study is highly relevant to Omoto and provides essential background for any study of *chinkon kishin* as practiced by Morihei Ueshiba. The following other works (additional to those cited in the previous column) are also relevant: 安丸良夫, 『出口なお女性教祖と救済思想』, 1977, 2013, 岩波現代文庫, Frederick Franck, *An Encounter with Omoto*, 1975, Cross Currents. Birgit Staemmler's research on *chinkon kishin* is partly based on the few studies available in Japanese, which she discusses in detail. I have used one of these for this essay: 津城寛文,『鎮魂行論——近代神道世界の霊魂と神体論』, 1990, 春秋社. Tsushiro also discusses the theories and rituals of Kawatsura Bonji, who also strongly influenced Morihei Ueshiba's practice of *torifune* or*funakogi*.

Kotodama

I also believe that a study of Onisaburo Deguchi's *Reikai Monogatari* 『霊界物語』 is of great importance for studying Morihei Ueshiba's religious beliefs and practices, but this is a major undertaking. For those who cannot cope with the 81-volume book version, there is a disc version published by Hachiman Shoten. As far as I know, there are no English translations. There is, however, a convenient guide to the work, containing a summary of each volume and a comprehensive index of names. This, too, is written in Japanese: 木庭次守,『霊界物語ガイドブック』, 2010, 八幡書店.
I have cited Nancy Stalker's work before: Nancy K Stalker, *Prophet Motive: Deguchi Onisaburo, Oomoto, and the Rise of New Religions in Imperial Japan*, 2008, Hawai'i U P. She makes use of the research of two Japanese scholars of *kotodama*: 川村湊, 『言霊と他界』, 1990, 講談社, 2002, 講談社学術文庫; 豊田国夫, 『日本人の言霊思想』, 1980, 講談社学術文庫; 『言霊信仰その源流と史的展開』, 1985, 八幡書店. Hachiman Shoten is also the publisher of the two books on *Kotodama-gaku* written by Onisaburo Deguchi and discussed in the essay. The publisher's website is: http://www.hachiman.com/index.html

Morihei Ueshiba

The staple diet of books on Morihei Ueshiba has been cited in previous columns. They include the following groups and a thorough study of Ueshiba's religious beliefs and practices really requires a close study of all of these:
(1) The biographies written by Kanemoto Sunadomari and Kisshomaru Ueshiba.
(2) Ueshiba's own early technical and spiritual works, issued between 1933 and 1938. These include *Budo Renshu* and *Budo*, and the articles written for Omoto publications. Among the latter are the issues of the magazine entitled *Budo* [『武道』]. This was the magazine of the Dai Nippon Budo Senyoukai [大日本武道宣揚会] and contains articles by Onisaburo Deguchi and Morihei Ueshiba, among others. Facsimiles of some issues have been published by Hachiman Shoten.
(3) The series of discourses, given between 1958 and 1962 and published in 1976 under the title of 『武産合気』 *Takemusu Aiki*, with a translation of parts into English by *Aikido Journal*and John Stevens. A translation of the whole text into French is in progress: Ueshiba Morihei, Takahashi

Hideo, *Takemusu Aiki: Traduction, Annotations et Textes Introductifs*, Kurihara Seiichi, Régnier Pierre, Traversi Bruno, Volume I, 2006, Volume II, 2008, Volume III, 2011, Editions du Cenacle.
(4) Ueshiba's other discourses, also published after World War II, some of which have been translated by John Stevens.
(5) Tapes and DVDs of Morihei Ueshiba's aikido demonstrations, including lectures recorded on tape. Stanley Pranin has published a large number of these, but the latest collection known to me is 「有川定輝顕彰シリーズ」, published by Quest, Japan.
(6) Kisshomaru Ueshiba's other works.
(7) Biographies, autobiographies, technical manuals, reminiscences and other materials, including instructional tapes and DVDs, produced by Ueshiba's students (apart from his son Kisshomaru). One example was discussed in this essay: Kanshu Sunadomari, *Enlightenment through Aikido*, 2004, North Atlantic Books. Another example are the two books written by Shioda Gozo: The latest work of this kind comes from the lineage of the Kumano-Juku, founded by the late Michio Hikitsuchi: Linda Holiday, J*ourney to the Heart of Aikido: The Teachings of Motomichi Anno Sensei*, 2013, Blue Snake Books.
(8) The collection of interviews published by Stanley Pranin at *Aikido Journal*.
(9) For those who can read Japanese, there are a number of works about Morihei Ueshiba himself and also about his early students that have not been translated.
Two works, by Shimizu Yutaka, deal with esoteric aspects of Ueshiba's thinking: 清水豊, 『古事記と植芝盛平　合気道と神道の世界』, 2006, ビイング・ネット・プレス; 清水豊, 『神仙道と植芝盛平　合気道と太極拳をつなぐ道教の世界』　, 2008, ビイング・ネット・プレス.
Several works by Yoshimaru Keisetsu also touch on some aspects of Ueshiba's earlier Daito-ryu training. They are all published by *Baseball Magazine* [ベースボール・マガジン社]: 吉丸慶雪, 『合気道の科学』, 1990; 『合気道極意の秘密』, 2005, 『合気之術の科学』, 2011.
There is also a new collection of interviews with Morihei Ueshiba's students, entitled,『開祖の横顔』, produced by the editorial department of the monthly magazine 『秘伝』 [*Hiden*] and published in 2009 by BAB Japan. Christopher Li has been translating some of these (and other) interviews in the blog of the Sangenkai Dojo (http://www.aikidosangenkai.org/), which has become an important source of material on Morihei Ueshiba and personal training.
The writer Kozo Kaku has also produced two collections of essays previously published elsewhere: 加来耕三, 『戦後合気道　世界の合気道を創った男たち』, 2008, 出版芸術社 (containing interviews previously published in 『秘伝』 the *Hiden* magazine); 加来耕三, 『昭和武闘伝　現代日本武道の掛け橋となった男たち』, 2009, 出版芸術社 (containing two essays on, respectively, Aritoshi Murashige and Rinjiro Shirata, previously published in 『合気道探求』 *Aikido Tankyuu*, a bi-annual magazine produced by the Aikikai).

Peter Goldsbury (b. 28 April 1944). Aikido 7th dan Aikikai, Emeritus Professor of Hiroshima University, specializing in 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, 8th 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, which is now independent and directly affiliated to the Aikikai Hombu. Instructed at Aiki Expo 2002 in Las Vegas, Nevada.