

# Japanese Journal for the Study of Esotericism

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## Editorial

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I am pleased that we published the first issue of our electronic journal thanks to the dedication and efforts of our managing editor, Ioannis Gaitanidis.

We have a short history in a way, and a long history in another. It was in 2015 at Heidelberg that Prof. Boaz Huss and Prof. Wouter J. Hanegraaff kindly advised me to form a research group affiliated to ESSWE. I agreed with them but it seemed not an easy task. Though research of esotericism in traditional Buddhism and Shintoism is well established in Japanese academia, modern transformations or offshoots of esotericism have not been paid due attention. Nor were the influences of Western esotericism on Japanese culture, religion and politics. Yet, there have been a few researchers of modern esotericism. So we had to start with a modest plan of setting up a network of researchers from several disciplines and, if possible, a journal. So it is more than I expected that our journal is published. This might reflect the recent increase of interests in this field

However, as I wrote, we have a long history in a way. The historical descriptions of occultism started in Japan in the latter half of the 1970s, when interest in occultism arose, influenced by the vogue of occultism and the New Age in the western world. But, even at the time, it was rather surprising that Takeda Yoichi (now Takeda Sugun), an editor and publisher, started publishing the journal *Fukkan Chikyū Roman* (meaning Global Roman New Series) for six issues as early as in 1976. It lasted for only a year, and he went on to publish another journal dedicated to the history of occultism titled *Meikyū* (Labyrinth) for three issues from 1979 to 1980. These two journals did not have a commercial success, but they made a breakthrough by showing the possibility of a historical approach. Stimulated by these journals, students at Kyoto University formed a group which jokingly called themselves “Kindai Piramidō Kyōkai” (Modern Pyramid Society). They published five issues of a small magazine on the history of occultism, which was titled *Piramiddo no tomo* (lit. Pyramid Companion), from 1977 to 1980. Most members were influenced by academic authors like Frances Yates, C. G. Jung or Mircea Eliade and also by British writers such as Francis King, Ellic Howe, and James Webb. Some were interested in 18<sup>th</sup> century esotericism through the works of Viatte and Faivre.

The members of the Modern Pyramid Society published three books within the next decade. First the late Imura Kōji wrote, *Reijutsu-ka no kyōen* (Shinkōsha, 1984). This book uncovered the long forgotten boom of “reijutsu” in the 1910s and 1920s. “Reijutsu” could be

translated as “excellent technique” or “spiritual technique”, approximately corresponding to “mind cure” in the contemporary US. Secondly, the group edited a collection of papers, titled *Okaruto mūbumento* (Occults Movement, Sōrinsha, 1986). In this book, Yokoyama Shigeo wrote an introductory history of 19<sup>th</sup> century Western occultism, Yoshinaga Shin’ichi a paper on the early history of the Theosophical Society, the late Tanaka Yoshihiro wrote about Fabre D’Olivet, Saint-Yves D’Alveydre, and Rene Guenon. Next, Yokoyama Shigeo published *Seibetsu sareta nikutai* (Body Sanctified, Shoshi kaze no bara, 1990), which dealt with the race theories of occultism and the Nazis, discussing Guido von List and *völkisch* occultists and Japanese ultra-nationalistic occultists. These books caused some reaction but to a limited extent. Imura’s book inspired some sociologists of religion, including Nishiyama Shigeru (Toyo University), to look at the occult boom between the world wars. Ichianagi Hirota (Yokohama National University), a professor of Japanese literature, followed Imura with books on occultism in Japan like “*Kokkuri san*” to “*senrigan*” (Kokkuri divination and clairvoyants, Kodansha, 1994). However, it cannot be said that these books opened the door wide to such research, as not many follow-ups appeared during 1990s.

Things have been changing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The influence of Theosophy on Japanese Buddhism during 1880s, which had been ignored by historians of modern Buddhism, came to be given attention. And New Age movements and the vogue of spiritual/spirituality came to be studied by leading historians of religion, like Shimazono Susumu. Of course, it will take some more years to have the research of modern esotericism fully established in academia. But I believe that this is surely a small but good first step towards it.



# A Shinto Religion, Commune, and Conspiracy Theory: 70 Years of the *Hitsuki Shinji*

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## A Shinto Religion, Commune, and Conspiracy Theory: 70 Years of the *Hitsuki Shinji*

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### Abstract

The *Hitsuki Shinji* is a large work of automatic writing which has been used in various ways since the first sections of it were composed in 1944. Drawing on the spiritual visions of Swedenborg, it shows some resemblances to Western esotericism while maintaining an independent, Japan-centric message. I examine the major branches of interpretation of the text, showing that it was used to provide authority to a religious group, commune, and conspiracy theory during different periods of time, and I offer some thoughts on how these interpretations reflected the eras in which they flourished.

### Keywords

Oomoto movement, new religious movements, religion and media, global conspiracy, twentieth century

### Introduction

A survey of postwar Shinto movements does not initially appear to show any overlap with Western esotericism. One notable text, however, is the *Hitsuki Shinji* (日月神示, meaning “Sun-Moon Revelation”), a 39-volume work of automatic writing. Linked to the theology of Swedenborg, it is presented in present-day occult literature as a repository of rejected, spiritual knowledge. Herein I examine the tumultuous history of the text in order to show how this “rejected knowledge” was applied, both successfully and unsuccessfully, to postwar Japanese society.

Transcribed for over a decade starting in 1944, the *Hitsuki Shinji* takes the form of a revelation from the god Hitsuku-no-kami 一ニ神 to the esotericist Tenmei Okamoto (岡本天明, 1897–1963). Tenmei founded a religious group around himself and his text, which had a brief rise and fall, being reduced to a handful of people after his death. Thereafter the group

took a new direction, ruptured, and collapsed, and his text went missing. But in a most inexplicable development, in 1990 a completely unrelated freelance journalist named Shin'ichi Nakaya (中矢伸一, b. 1961) heard about the forgotten text almost randomly and turned it into the centerpiece of a new type of spiritual movement.

Why did the text virtually disappear for 40 years before reappearing in 1990? This study proposes that this puzzle can be solved with two scholarly tools: placing the *Hitsuki Shinji* within the history of modern Japanese religions, and recognizing some links to and similarities with Western esotericism. I am not suggesting that the text has inherited some “esoteric tradition” from earlier eras of Japanese history— this assumes that Japanese society would have had a use for classifying some kinds of knowledge in that way. Instead, I am using “esoteric” to show the parallels between the *Hitsuki Shinji's* postwar applications and similar countercultural beliefs and practices in the modern-day West.

Faced with the spirit-matter duality imposed by the Enlightenment, Western religionists offered several different and contradictory suggestions about how spiritual matters might become known.<sup>1</sup> Despite being mutually exclusive, these epistemologies are considered equally esoteric in the modern West, because they endorse a method of accessing a type of perfect knowledge which is generally agreed to be inaccessible. Kocku von Stuckrad has offered the following generic description of how such attempts at renegotiating modernity become esoteric:

What makes a discourse esoteric is the rhetoric of a hidden truth, which can be unveiled in a specific way and established contrary to other interpretations of the universe and history—often that of the institutionalized majority.<sup>2</sup>

As Colin Campbell noted in his definition of the “cultic milieu,”<sup>3</sup> one might expect such discourse and practice to flourish in liminal spaces and times, when the predominant worldview seems to be losing credibility and explanatory power: for example, the Enlightenment in Europe, the late 19th century science wars in America, and possibly in 21st century Japan, as we will see from the history of the text discussed in this report.

It is crucial to keep in mind that this definition of “esoteric” is relevant only to a world where some kinds of knowledge are believed to be available only to a select few. Just as this definition does not apply to the classical source material for much modern esoteric literature in the West, much of the *Hitsuki Shinji's* synecdoche of spiritual knowledge has its origins in material that is not “esoteric” in von Stuckrad’s sense. Indeed, as a society generally unfamiliar with monotheism, Japan has a very different conception of “rejected knowledge.” As I intend to argue in future research, it is unlikely that “esotericism” is a universal concept, and Japan is a particularly good example of a nation that developed modern thought without an accompanying idea of esotericism.

But that does not mean that Western esotericism was entirely ignored by Japanese religionists, nor that ideas considered esoteric in the West were found uninteresting or useless by Japanese society. In particular, the historical reception of the *Hitsuki Shinji* shows

that the Swedenborgian idea of access to spiritual realms is one that has carried weight with small segments of Japanese society. In this report, I focus on how such an “esoteric” message of hidden knowledge found a place (or failed to) in different periods of Japanese modernity.

### Prehistory of the *Hitsuki Shinji*: “Great Origin,” 1892–1944

Throughout Japanese history, susceptible people, often women, have been possessed by spirits, an occurrence known as *kamigakari*. The 20th century religious group Oomoto (大本, meaning “Great Origin”) was founded by a woman named Nao Deguchi 出口なお who became possessed after years of abusive relationships, family troubles, and abject poverty.<sup>4</sup> She was soon joined by an itinerant spiritualist named Deguchi Onisaburō 出口王仁三郎, and together they created a highly popular movement. Nao brought her followers together in pilgrimages to distant islands, where she performed arcane rituals to summon the ancient gods. Onisaburō developed an agrarian commune and a system of vocational education as well as a spiritual poetics.<sup>5</sup> A prolific artist himself, he publicly and frequently advocated for the reunion of Japanese religion with creative and beautiful art.<sup>6</sup> Onisaburō’s Oomoto produced widely watched feature films, promoted Esperanto, adventured in Mongolia, founded an international relief organization with over 1000 branches worldwide, and made alliances with foreign religious groups, including the Chinese Red Swastika Society 紅社会, known for practicing a type of planchette divination called *fuji* 乩示, in which Chinese and Japanese characters were traced out by participants moving a planchette over a sand basin.<sup>7</sup> Onisaburō played with and renegotiated the spirit-matter duality imported to Japan during its rapid Westernization, and his call for remaking Japan as a “spiritual civilization” found many willing listeners.

In 1920, a spiritually minded artist named Tenmei Okamoto stepped into this milieu. Hailed as a prodigy from a young age, Tenmei had quickly progressed to one of the best art departments in the country, but ended up dropping out due to his frequent spiritual experiences, which apparently were seen poorly by fine art society. He spent some time hitchhiking around the country before showing up at the offices of the “Taisho Daily News” (*Taishō nichinichi shinbun* 大正日日新聞), a major newspaper which Oomoto had purchased to promote its perspective on world affairs, and asking to join their staff as an arts reporter. He was admitted, and alongside arts reporting, the newspaper ended up reporting on his regular possessions by various low levels of trickster and malicious spirits.<sup>8</sup>

In 1921, Oomoto was suppressed by the Japanese government for supposedly encouraging seditious beliefs, and in 1935 there was a much harsher crackdown that led to the destruction of most Oomoto property. While this reads like straightforward religious persecution to the modern eye, in fact another reading is possible based on the weakness of the prewar Japanese state. Oomoto had amassed so much power, including high-level government and military support, that it has been argued that it was seen not simply as a religious movement but as a nationwide “heresy” with considerable persuasive power, which

threatened to become the new political “orthodoxy” and supplant the authority of government entirely.<sup>9</sup>

In any case, the 1935 crackdown put Tenmei out of work, and as Japan entered the Pacific War he had returned to being an itinerant spiritualist, with an interest in alternative histories of the nation, a genre of Japanese literature which I have discussed elsewhere.<sup>10</sup> In order to understand some of the unclear points of these alternate histories, in 1944 Tenmei and his friends decided to ask the gods directly through the *fuji* divination technique learned from the Red Swastika Society. But when they asked who was speaking to them, the sand table simply responded with variations on the phrase “Ame-no-Hitsuku 天のヒツク,” which meant nothing to anyone present. Two months later, Tenmei was told by a friend that a brewer-priest of sacred sake would like to offer him some. His address was near a place called Ame-no-Hitsuku Shrine 天日津久神社.<sup>11</sup> When he stopped by this shrine out of curiosity, Tenmei’s hand trembled and he began to experience automatic writing, channeling a god called Hitsuku-no-kami. This was the beginning of an enormous text called the *Hitsuki Shinji*.

### Brief Summary of the Text

The *Hitsuki Shinji* is an immense and obscure work of automatic writing. It contains Swedenborgian, conspiratorial, mythological, prophetic, and seemingly Taoist elements. The world of the *Hitsuki Shinji* is one where war and peace begins in a separate divine world, proceeds into a spirit world, and then finally appears in the material world. The text denounces the division of the world into good and evil, but it also describes a spiritual elect, identified with Japan, that will soon be persecuted by the spiritually ignorant, the “99%”. As in Oomoto, this final catastrophe, a battle when the entire world will rise up and seem to defeat Japan, will precede a golden age when all human selfishness will be extinguished and the entire world will be run by a single son of Heaven, or “Tenshi-sama” てんし様. In order to prepare for this golden age, the hearts of the Japanese must be cleansed of impurities.

A full interpretation of the *Hitsuki Shinji* is well beyond the scope of this study as it has no objective reading in any sense of the word. The original automatic writing, a mixture of letters, numbers, and oblique symbols, evaded decipherment for over a month even when Tenmei tried to read it, and at one point the received<sup>12</sup> text tells us it can be interpreted in eight different ways.<sup>13</sup> One of its chapters, the “Chapter of Earthquakes” (*Jishin no maki*), has no text at all but is only a collection of drawings. Okamoto included interpretations for these drawings, but did not explain the method he used to interpret them.<sup>14</sup> Even the name of the text is not clear, as it has also been called *Hitsuku Shinsho*, *Hitsukuni Seiten*, *Hitsugu Shinji*, *Hifumi*, and even *Fude*.

In this paper, four periods of the *Hitsuki Shinji*’s usage will be discussed. Okamoto Tenmei focused on the practical aspects of the document that he interpreted as ritual instruction, as well as its prophecies of imminent catastrophe and World War III. Yoshio Kawabata (川端善雄, 1914–after 1988) was most interested in the text’s nondualism and

what he saw as a new kind of political system described in its pages. Tenmei's widow, Minori Okamoto (岡本三典, 1917–2009) was enamored with the aesthetics of the text and its use of numerology and wordplay. Finally, Shin'ichi Nakaya is most concerned by the text's attempt to lay out a vast, multidimensional conspiracy against Japan, and how Japan might overcome this to usher in a new age. It is not really the task of the religious studies scholar to judge whether any of these interpretations are "right", but these vast differences in interpretative focus should be taken into account.

### Japan in Liminal Time: "Church of Light," 1945–1963

During the war, Tenmei made no efforts to proselytize,<sup>15</sup> but in August 1945, Japan surrendered to the Allies and became totally controlled by a foreign power. Emerging as if from a long nightmare into a destroyed urban landscape, the Japanese people found themselves in a sort of liminal time, famously dubbed the "rush hour of the gods": old beliefs had become irrelevant, and American administration was directing the nation into an unclear future. Hundreds of new religious groups took off, and even though God had originally instructed Tenmei not to found a church, the Creator now reversed himself and told him to found an organization that came to be called "Church of Light" (ひかり教会, *Hikari Kyōkai*).<sup>16</sup>

Towards the end of this religious boom, a group of scholars noted that many of the Occupation-era religious movements actually "had their basis in the wartime years." As mainstream religions demanded total self-sacrifice and even mass suicide in the early 1940s, prophets like Tenmei Okamoto had forecast a peaceful end to the war and offered an alternative message of salvation. After Japan lost the war, their messages "extended into the postwar years, because they matched the Occupation state of affairs quite well."<sup>17</sup>

Hikari Kyōkai fits this general pattern perfectly. Throughout the Occupation years its membership and funding grew steadily, and by 1949 it was able to produce a crisp, professional newspaper, like the *Taisho Daily News* of Tenmei's youth. The radical openness of this paper towards foreign participation deserves attention. Large parts of the paper were translated into English by an anonymous church member, and translations of the *Hitsuki Shinji* into English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and Esperanto were also planned.<sup>18</sup> The preliminary issue introduces the *Shinji* to Westerners in an English-language article, with deference both to Judeo-Christian ideas of revelation and to Tenmei's favorite Western writer, Swedenborg.

Jehova revealed Himself to those elects of old Judea in the times when He felt that it is necessary to do so. Books of Moses were written like that and those books of prophets the same. However, if we limit that such a revelation could be given only to them, St. John's revelation as the last and never afterward, doesn't it sound unreasonable? Why can't Jehova have any elects among those nations which are not Jews? Isn't [i]t also thinkable that God is willing to reveal Himself to the Asiatic nations sometimes?

Swedenb[or]g had to explain exactly the same sort of thing while he was working hard to write down what the Lord has shown him in 18th century. Zeal of these notes is to introduce that we have the same sort of case which has taken place here in Japan since June of 1944.<sup>19</sup>

As this announcement suggests, Tenmei believed that God speaks through select prophets from around the world, like Christ, Buddha, Laozi, Swedenborg and himself, but the vast majority of revelations come from trickster spirits and are not to be trusted. The *Shinji* states that “99.9% of spirits called to this world are evil spirits.”<sup>20</sup> Tenmei was not strict about this epistemology and indeed continued to promote the use of *fuji* divination, even while warning that most spirits were evil and all apparent miracles were hoaxes caused by malicious spirits.<sup>21</sup>

Directly below this announcement, another article offers to English speakers “a painting to a newly born baby with prayer to grow up as a world citizen, blessed by God. Please send us notice whenever you get tidings of a stork's visit.”<sup>22</sup> Despite the *Hitsuki Shinji's* antagonism towards anti-Japanese forces and its message of immanent apocalypse, Tenmei clearly had a strong vision of a large and multilingual community of believers, not standing in opposition to the ugliness of modernity, but embracing it and awakening it to spirituality. This had also been the conviction of Onisaburō during Oomoto's prewar heyday.

Here and elsewhere, the Church of Light adopted strategies for implementing Tenmei's revelations that resembled Shinto and Oomoto ceremonies, as well as Oomoto's focus on news media and art. Like Onisaburō, Tenmei was attempting to renegotiate the systems of authority offered by postwar modernity. He pushed for his artwork to be exhibited in America and Israel as a way of communicating postwar Japan's spirit of peace.<sup>23</sup> Rather than ignoring the American presence, he welcomed them as equal world citizens soon to be united under a World Emperor. He asserted the Japanese to be one of the tribes of Israel, and late in his life he published an article in an American religious newsletter proposing such a link.<sup>24</sup>

Naturally, bold assertions such as these seemed most plausible in a political situation that had already turned all of Japanese history on its head. Church of Light thrived during the Occupation. At one point a young Yukio Mishima, later to become one of the major novelists of 20th century Japan, joined Tenmei in a Shinto ritual, which he then caricatured derisively in a national newspaper.<sup>25</sup> After Japan reverted to local control in 1952 and the political situation became less apocalyptic,<sup>26</sup> Church of Light shrank as quickly as it had grown, and everyday operations were removed from Tokyo to a distant rural settlement, “Tenmei Lodge” (天明居 *Tenmei-kyo*). Although Tenmei continued receiving revelations, including a supplement to the *Hitsuki Shinji* called *Ise Revelations* (伊勢黙示録 *Ise Mokushiroku*), by 1960 he had only a handful of followers left, and he regretted having organized his faith at all due to the spiritually damaged people it had attracted.<sup>27</sup> After his death in 1963, his widow Minori was on the verge of dissolving his church.<sup>28</sup>

## Cultification and Its Discontents: “House of Truth,” 1963–1970

The general attitude of mourning in the now leaderless Hikari Kyōkai was interrupted by the arrival of a stranger named Yoshio Kawabata, who by his own report had spent the Pacific War doing ascetic training in the mountains, then bounced between various religious and political groups for some years. Some months after arriving at Tenmei Lodge, he and another lodger shared a simultaneous, complex visionary dream involving having a man identified as Tenmei deliver a fragile package to him. The package was empty: Kawabata interpreted this as Buddhist emptiness, implying nondualism, implying Mount Fuji (through the wordplay of *fu-ji* 不二 “not-two”), implying he had received a mandate from God.<sup>29</sup> He quickly declared himself Tenmei’s successor and took over publication of the church organ, *The New Sun* (新しき太陽 *Atarashiki taiyō*).

At this point, the Church of Light seemed to be in a stage of transition between two charismatic leaders. In the pages of *The New Sun*, Kawabata continued to quote the *Hitsuki Shinji* at length and offer interpretations, but also printed his own poetry, long conversations with himself, and manifestos about a complex socio-political structure called the “*kyōdō-shinen-tai* 共同思念体, roughly translatable as “Communal Idea Body”, a phrase he had apparently had a strong affinity for. While Kawabata continued to support the Shinto ceremonies and *fuji* divination at Tenmei Lodge, he identified the Communal Idea Body as the true message of the *Hitsuki Shinji*. and apparently saw his pacifist politics as the natural completion of Tenmei’s religious activities.

But Kawabata had a stumbling block, in the person of Minori Okamoto. Minori was also writing for *The New Sun*, but her articles were exclusively about her late husband. In a 1967 article entitled “The *Hitsuki Shinji* and Tenmei Okamoto,” published in the occult magazine *Tama* たま, she focused on the two topics of the title and only briefly mentioned that Tenmei had a successor who was being guided by God to promote the Communal Idea Body.<sup>30</sup> The text itself, and the memory of its big-hearted scribe, evidently took on a much larger role for Minori than Kawabata’s ambitions, and she never granted him formal control over the Church of Light organization.

In 1967, Kawabata founded his own religious group called Makoto no Ie, or literally, “House of Truth,” which did not include Minori but continued to operate from Tenmei Lodge, likely due to their shared poverty. In July 1969, the public face of harmony finally broke down when Minori secretly had the text of the *Hitsuki Shinji* removed from the lodge, after which she fled to an undisclosed location. In response, Kawabata excommunicated Minori from the pages of *The New Sun* and devoted an issue to mercilessly shaming the people involved in this “theft” of “property,”<sup>31</sup> but by the end of the year, Minori’s right to Tenmei’s estate had apparently been legally confirmed, as Kawabata was expelled from Tenmei Lodge in January 1970 and moved to a cabin in a remote “sacred” location with two followers.<sup>32</sup>

Despite his dream of a “world without conflict,” there is no evidence that Kawabata ever attempted to reconcile with Minori. Perhaps the split was a Godsend in disguise for

him, since it allowed him to gather his followers at a new location and consolidate his power and his cult of personality. “House of Truth” persisted as a tiny new religious group through the 1980s, and a visiting journalist observed the following in 1974:

The *Hitsuki Shinji* was their hymnal in 1970, but now every morning and evening, when the Wayfriends come forward to offer ritual prayers, they come together to sing “Coomuuuunalllll Ideaaa Bodyyy”. This “rare case” of making a mantra out of a sociological term might be said to indicate the reification of Yoshio Kawabata’s intentions for a prosperous people and nation.<sup>33</sup>

The tumultuous seven years between Tenmei’s death and Minori’s eviction of Kawabata are a microcosm of Japanese society at the time. The 1960s saw a political turn in Japan that inspired radical theories and grand, utopian ideas, and things came to a head in 1968–9 not only at the Tenmei Lodge but also at Japan’s great universities, where leftist protesters temporarily shut down and barricaded campuses across the country.<sup>34</sup> While Kawabata’s group remained small and obscure, his political means of implementing an occult text matched the beat of the times. Here, as before, interpretation and implementation of the *Hitsuki Shinji* was driven by the needs of its era.

### **The Silence of the New Age: Minori Okamoto, 1970–1990**

By 1970 Minori had ownership of her late husband’s text and had started her own newsletter to promote it. In what would seem to be a lucky coincidence, the 1970s and 80s saw a great wave of interest in occult materials in Japan, beginning with a bestselling book about Nostradamus’ prophecies of apocalypse in 1973. But significantly, even though the *Hitsuki Shinji* was known to the most serious occultists, and even though it was a similarly apocalyptic document, there was virtually no interest in it at all. A great example of this is a 1974 round-table talk in the occult journal *Sasura さすら*, where the *Shinji* is mentioned twice over the course of a 70-page discussion, but only in passing as part of the phenomena surrounding Oomoto.<sup>35</sup> The *Shinji* did make the pages of *Sasura* and similar underground publications like *Tama*, but only occasionally and with apparent editorial disinterest. No book about it found a publisher.

These messages had found a willing audience during the Occupation period, and under Kawabata they had served as good fodder for creating a small cult, but apparently they did not inspire the general public in the 1970s in the same way that Nostradamus did. With the benefit of hindsight, Shin’ichi Nakaya believes that Minori’s personality drove away potential readers at this time. She had become exceedingly stubborn and selective in her trust, and revised the *Shinji*’s text to her liking, refusing access to Tenmei’s earlier translations. Her newsletter betrays her rocky relationship even with publishers: in some months, it was reduced to a single, handwritten postcard. It also contains frequent,

impenetrable references to the cosmology of a numerologist named Sanae Odano 小田野早秧, used to bolster obscure ideas about the power of numbers and language.<sup>36</sup>

But the majority of the newsletter simply consists of excerpts from the *Shinji* or stories about Tenmei's life. Minori constantly reminded her readers of Tenmei's sometime international renown, and appealed to them to learn more about him. It is highly unlikely that the *Hitsuki Shinji* could have achieved its present-day success without her, since if she had not been around in the 1960s, Kawabata would have been able to seize the text without dissent. It is difficult for me to believe that her prickly personality alone dissuaded interested readers; it seems much more likely that outsiders in the 1970s and 80s were simply not very interested in the first place.

Books about Nostradamus and UFOs are simple in their mysteriousness; Nostradamus never said where he got his predictions. The *Hitsuki Shinji* is a far more esoteric document epistemologically. It presents itself as suppressed knowledge from a superhuman realm, and presumably appeals to a more serious sense of dispossession and suspicion of secular authority. It is bound up with claims to have access to spiritual realms, and claims of understanding the higher truths behind Japanese mythology and world history. In short, its primary appeal is to those whose desire more than just idle speculation about a new age, and want to hear very firm-sounding claims of access to higher truth. Such desires should presumably be heightened when mainstream claims to truth are losing power, such as 1940s Japan, and lose power when the mainstream narrative seems obvious, such as in 1970s Japan which was in the middle of one of the largest economic booms in world history.

In any case, lacking an interested audience and having never shown much interest in moneymaking, Minori became very poor. At some point, she was actually forced to sell the original text she had worked so hard to save from Kawabata's cult, as well as her collection of Tenmei's artwork.<sup>37</sup> But her newsletter shows remarkable persistence in wanting to tell the world about the inherent value of the *Hitsuki Shinji* and of her late husband's spiritual and artistic abilities. Eventually, another writer would grant her wish.

### **The End of History: Shin'ichi Nakaya, 1991–Present**

In 1991, an English teacher named Shin'ichi Nakaya happened to hear about the *Hitsuki Shinji* when he was doing some translation work about UFOs at a small publishing house. Nakaya had been drawn into spiritual circles by an interest in mysticism and prophecy, which had included a former connection with the Oomoto-inspired group Sukyo Mahikari 崇教真光 in the 1980s.<sup>38</sup> The *Hitsuki Shinji*, which attributes modernity to a great occult conspiracy, was well suited to his own beliefs and, as it turned out, a devoted readership: his first book on the subject sold 100,000 copies, and as he put out sequels with the same title, his fame grew accordingly. He has now written over 60 books and holds regular lectures for select audiences.<sup>39</sup> The *Hitsuki Shinji* has thus been given an unexpected new life, in a period of time that has recently been associated with the rise of "conspirituality," a synthesis of New Age and conspiratorial beliefs.

The “conspirituality” thesis was proposed by Charlotte Ward and David Voas in 2011, suggesting that this synthesis is a novel late modern phenomenon. Egil Asprem and Asbjørn Dyrendal have attempted to reframe the original concept, noting that the rejection of knowledge that makes a discourse esoteric inherently implies some kind of hidden rejecting force at work, and esotericists have shown an awareness of this for many decades.<sup>40</sup> In support of the concept as reanalyzed, the *Hitsuki Shinji* attests to both the age of conspiratorial ideas in the occult world and to the novelty of late modern conspirituality. It cannot be overemphasized that the year 1991, marking the end of the Japanese housing bubble, the end of the Cold War, the dawn of a “new world order” per George H. W. Bush, and the “end of history” per Francis Fukuyama, was also the year in which a totally forgotten esoteric text was suddenly revived with a new focus. In the first half of that decade, there were several independent writers pushing for such a revival of the *Hitsuki Shinji*, but Nakaya’s choice of writing style and subject matter eventually won out.

For the early interpreters of the *Shinji*, the battle between God’s message and the rejecting force could be better described as an “occult war” in which there was an accessible method of counterattack. Even though Tenmei warned that evil spirits were working to create future disasters and war, a path of meaningful collective practice was obvious to both him and Kawabata. In contrast, while Nakaya’s early writing resembled Tenmei’s Swedenborgian and apocalyptic tone, his ritual practices have always been personal and private, aimed mostly towards readers with a similar “alternative” outlook and not towards the general public. From his very first publication, he compared the *Hitsuki Shinji* to the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.<sup>41</sup> His goal was not to encourage racial hatred (indeed, in later books he protested that he had nothing against Jews<sup>42</sup>), but to portray a vast, global conspiracy that rendered collective action meaningless. This naive importation of anti-Semitic tropes into a country with virtually no Jews used to be fairly common in Japanese conspiracy theories.<sup>43</sup>

Early issues of Nakaya’s monthly publication *Genuine Japan* (真正日本 *Shinsei Nihon*) featured regular articles pushing an almost paranoid amount of criticism towards religious groups and New Age teachings which are accused of perverting and corrupting the Japanese spirit. This conspiratorial shift has persisted to the present day, although he has moderated his criticism and expanded into anti-establishment proposals on politics and nuclear energy.

Nakaya doubts that collective practice could have world-changing implications, because of the completeness of systemic control by hidden elites. In sharp contrast with all pre-1991 interpreters, he emphasizes a suspicion towards mainstream culture and foreign powers. In his most widely read book, he writes that “Japan, which was once called the ‘land of the gods,’ is being polluted by the arrival of devils and demons. As a result, 99% of Japanese people have had their spirits dimmed, their bones broken, and like the foreign nations they will eventually become a nation and people ruled by demons.”<sup>44</sup>

The intent of this passage, again, is not to encourage xenophobia but to add a higher dimension to the world-encompassing conspiracy. The *Hitsuki Shinji* defines the term

*Nihon*, or “Japan” not as a racial term, but as based in geographic and spiritual boundaries. Nakaya prefers to focus on the presence of evil in the spiritual world and how it affects our lives in the corporeal world. He envisions a dark presence with human puppets, called “masons” (イシヤ *ishiya*), as well as demonic overlords. As Nakaya explains above, their control over the rest of the world is complete, and at last even “Japan,” the spiritual center, is in the process of falling under their sway. This teaching is found in Oomoto as well, but it was not emphasized by earlier interpreters of the *Shinji*.

In Nakaya’s apocalyptic vision we find both similarities and differences from the past. Like Tenmei and other interpreters, he believes that a final cataclysm will be followed by the arrival of a new golden age called “the age of Miroku.” The skeptic Minoru Harada has pointed out that in a 1992 book, Nakaya interpreted the *Shinji* as predicting 1996 as the year of total upheaval, with the final arrival of the golden age in 2000; he has since offered *Shinji*-based timelines correcting his earlier work. The same themes were on Tenmei’s mind, and Harada suggests that the original date implied by the text was 1948.<sup>45</sup> But while Nakaya shares an imminent eschatology with Tenmei, for him the practices implied by this belief are completely different.

At no point does Nakaya feel an urgent need to conduct group Shinto rites as Tenmei did, and his desire to spread the word abroad is tempered by a realism about the *Shinji*’s complexity. Despite claiming that Japan will suffer another devastating war, he does not tell people to organize politically to alert the country. Rather, he simply advises his 1% to prepare themselves for suffering, which will come to all people without exception. He says that the only way to survive the future chaos is by sinking below the surface and “polishing your soul.” The collapse of fame-seeking, “self-righteous” politics will accompany the discovery of true goodness and God within ourselves.<sup>46</sup>

Nakaya is insistent that the *Shinji* is anti-dogmatic and does not mandate any kind of common practice. The text must be read by each practitioner and lived out within everyday life; internal states come before any external behaviors.<sup>47</sup> That is not to say that Nakaya has had no recommendations whatsoever for external behavior. For several decades he has emphasized a vegetarian, organic diet and quoted passages in the *Shinji* that equate meat-eating with “cannibalism.”<sup>48</sup> His early magazine *Genuine Japan* carried dark suspicions about meat and processed and manufactured foods, and a regular column by a believer named Kazuo Gunji 郡司和夫 placed doubts on virtually all foods sold in supermarkets, up to and including fresh fruits and vegetables. In response, other articles reviewed organic, vegetarian restaurants and investigated various methods of backyard farming. Recently, Nakaya has moderated his vegetarian views, again falling back on individual freedom of interpretation, and proposing that the *Shinji* passages might have been directed solely at Tenmei.<sup>49</sup> Regardless, reader letters in *Genuine Japan* show that a fair number of his readers are vegetarian.

Nakaya’s esotericism may seem especially “reasonable” to us, but this is in fact the point: his message meets the needs of present day seekers, just as Onisaburō and Tenmei’s practices fit their respective eras. Where Tenmei’s group fit in among the new religions of

the postwar period, Nakaya's group is part of the "new spirituality movements and culture" of the 21st century. As Susumu Shimazono has written, participants in these movements "are satisfied with feeling that their inner self changes through participation, and dislike acting with others or assuming a position of responsibility for colleagues or others."<sup>50</sup>

What needs do Nakaya's books and lectures fulfill, if not the basic need for community? Ward and Voas suggest that conspirituality may be "a means by which political cynicism is tempered with spiritual optimism,"<sup>51</sup> and the folklorist Yoshiyuki Iikura 飯倉義之 has pointed to conspiracy theories as a way for cosmopolitans to restore "imagination" to a postmodern world that has lost its "grand narrative,"<sup>52</sup> which echoes Michael Barkun's idea that global conspiracy offers an explanation to those who believe in an apocalyptic battle between good and evil for why the general public is not aware of the fight.<sup>53</sup> Another possible appeal is the simple gnostic excitement of knowing the hidden narrative behind the apparent confusion of world events. But all three of these interpretations have in common a way to offer assurances of beauty and truth in an increasingly uncertain and inexplicable world.

### **Conclusion: Rejected Knowledge in Japan**

The cultural acceptance and implementation of the *Hitsuki Shinji* has generally reflected the times in which it was read. Tenmei Okamoto's original church closely fit the pattern of Occupation-era millenarian movements, and collapsed with the end of the Occupation. Yoshio Kawabata politicized the text in a political era, and Minori Okamoto read it spiritually in a spiritual era. The rediscovery of the text by Shin'ichi Nakaya coincides perfectly with the late modern reinvigoration of conspirituality. It is not unnatural to wonder what value the text has to these various players in enabling their respective practices.

In the fall and rise of the text, the most important change in its implementation is in the nature of the organizations that have grown up around it: a tight-knit new religious movement under Tenmei, as opposed to an atomized "new spirituality movement" under Nakaya. The best explanation for this is to be found not in the whims of these two proponents but in the expectations of wider society. Nao Deguchi's original Oomoto revelations were filled with pleas to come to her village and join the divine work. Tenmei's *Hitsuki Shinji* has no such specific pleas, but a group formed around him regardless. Regarding a text as divinely inspired seems to have implied forming a community to both of these prophets. More recently, though, writers have begun to consider the reading of sacred texts in much more individualized terms. In his work on Islam, Toshihiko Izutsu cites Jacques Derrida's language of *écriture* to propose that sacred text, unlike speech, offers the believer a liberty of interpretation. This hermeneutic freedom is restricted only by the awareness of other readings and acceptance of the authority attributed to them.<sup>54</sup> Where previous interpreters may have attempted to press various kinds of authority onto readers, Nakaya can see himself as offering freedom of belief, because his books primarily point to the

text, promoting individualistic and liberating *écriture* over institutional or traditional authority. (The extent to which such ideas of authority can actually be rejected is unclear.)

At the same time, though, the content of the text is not completely irrelevant to its cultural reception. Without assuming that there was in any sense an “esoteric tradition” in Japan, we can see that the Swedenborgian bent to the *Hitsuki Shinji* seems to have had an influence on its popularity or lack thereof during various periods. The “new spirituality movements and culture” that Susumu Shimazono has linked to the 1980s,<sup>55</sup> with their broad mass appeal, did not translate into a boost in popularity for the *Shinji*. It was only in the 1990s that a message from the Occupation-era “rush hour of the gods” found its new popularity. This suggests to me that while Shimazono’s theory carries more weight with local researchers than a direct adaption of the Western concepts of the “esoteric” and “new age,” there is still at least some place for Western esotericism in the postwar history of Japanese religions.

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- <sup>1</sup> Egil Aspem, *The Problem of Disenchantment* (New York: Brill, 2014), 418 and *passim*.
- <sup>2</sup> Kocku von Stuckrad, *Western Esotericism: A Brief History of Secret Knowledge* (Routledge, 2005), 10.
- <sup>3</sup> Colin Campbell, “The Cult, the Cultic Milieu and Secularization,” in Michael Hill (ed.), *A Sociological Yearbook of Religion in Britain* 5 (London: SCM Press, 1972), 119–136.
- <sup>4</sup> Yasumaru Yoshio, *Deguchi Nao* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun-sha, 1977), 21-77; and Emily Grosz Ooms, *Women and Millenarian Protest in Meiji Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell East Asia Series, 1993), 21-31.
- <sup>5</sup> Nancy K. Stalker, *Prophet Motive: Deguchi Onisaburō, Oomoto, and the Rise of New Religions in Imperial Japan*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2008), 69-70.
- <sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, 112-113.
- <sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 153.
- <sup>8</sup> Okamoto Minori. “Jidai ga kawaru... Okamoto Tenmei no *Hifumi*,” [“The times change... Okamoto Tenmei’s *Hifumi*”] in *Shintō ronri taikai*, eds. Wadō Kōsaka and Kashima Noboru (Tokyo: Shinkokumin-sha, 1984), 45.
- <sup>9</sup> Yasumaru Yoshio. *Ikki/kangoku/cosmology: shūensei no rekishigaku* [“Revolt/prison/cosmology: a historiography of the margins”] (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun-sha, 1999).
- <sup>10</sup> c.f. Avery Morrow, “Divine Scripts and Lost Histories in Japanese Esoterica,” *Innovative Research in Japanese Studies* 1 (2014); and Jean-Pierre Berthon, “Production et utilisation d’apocryphes à caractère religieux dans le Japon du XXe siècle,” *Extrême-Orient Extrême-Occident* 32 (2010), 89-114.
- <sup>11</sup> Okamoto, “Jidai ga kawaru,” 46.
- <sup>12</sup> The “received text” which can be found in bookstores comes in two volumes, the second of which was extensively rewritten by Minori: Nakaya Shin’ichi, ed., *Hitsuki shinji (kan’yaku)*, in 2 vols. (Tokyo: Hikaru Land, 2011). Tenmei’s original translation is exceedingly rare, although a partial copy is accessible at the National Diet Library: Okamoto Tenmei, ed., *Hitsuku shinji (Kogane no maki, Shirokane no maki, Kurokane no maki)* (Komono-cho, Chiba: Hikari Kyōkai, 1951). NDL 8362329.
- <sup>13</sup> Nakaya, *Hitsuki shinji*, 1:451 (Umi no maki, v. 15).
- <sup>14</sup> Nakaya, *Hitsuki shinji*, 1:305-372 (Jishin no maki); Asuka Akio and Nakaya Shin’ichi, “*Hitsuki shinji*” *taidan* [“Roundtable on the Hitsuki Shinji”] (Tokyo: Gakken, 2015), 72; and Agō Kiyohiko, *Nihon jindai moji kenkyū genten* [“Sourcebook for study of the ancient characters of Japan”] (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu Ōraisha, 1996), 455
- <sup>15</sup> Okamoto Minori was always pleased to tell of how her elder brother allegedly talked about the *Shinji* with Prince Mikasa. See Kurokawa Yutsuki, *Okamoto Tenmei-den* [“Life of Tenmei Okamoto”] (Tokyo: Hikaru Land, 2012), 242-3.
- <sup>16</sup> Nakaya Shin’ichi et al., *Fuji wa bakuhatsu suru zo! Hitsuki shinji ga kataru ima kono toki* [“Mount Fuji will explode! Hitsuki Shinji talks of the here and now”] (Tokyo: Hikaru Land, 2013), 127-8.
- <sup>17</sup> Shisō no kagaku kenkyūkai, *Après-guerre no kenkyū: Après-guerre no jittai kiroku* [“Study of the postwar: An actual record of the postwar”] (Tanbai-chō, Nara: Yotokusha, 1951), 99-100. Quoted by Nagaoka Takashi at his presentation “Minshū shūkyō to 1940-nendai” [“Popular religions in the 1940s”], “Shūkyō to Shakai” Gakkai, June 14, 2015.
- <sup>18</sup> [Nakano Yūdo], “Shinkō shūkyō Hikari Kyōkai.” [“The new religion Church of Light”] *Shūkyō kōron* 21.10 (1951), 34-37
- <sup>19</sup> *Sanzensekai* “Yokokuhen” (April 8, 1949), 2. George W. Prange Collection, National Diet Library.
- <sup>20</sup> Nakaya, *Hitsuki shinji*, 2:30 (Kogane no Maki, v. 50).
- <sup>21</sup> Okamoto Tenmei, *Reikai kōryū to saniwa hiden* [“Communication with the spirit world and secret record of spirit interpreters”] (1954), excerpted in Okamoto Minori, *Hitsuki shinji wa naze Okamoto Tenmei ni orita ka* [“Why was the Hitsuki Shinji conveyed to Tenmei Okamoto?”] (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1996), 168. See also Nakaya, *Hitsuki shinji*, 1:349 (Jishin no Maki, v. 13).
- <sup>22</sup> *ibid.*

- <sup>23</sup> Tenmei's work was exhibited in New York in November 1959, and in Israel afterwards. Okamoto, *Hitsuki shinji wa naze*, 105; Kurokawa, *Okamoto Tenmei-den*, 345.
- <sup>24</sup> The newsletter in question was published by the United Israel World Union, an organization that attempted to spread a universalist vision of Judaism throughout the world. Tenmei's article, entitled "The Link Between the Japanese and the Jews," appeared in their summer 1960 issue. Communication with United Israel World Union President Ralph Buntyn, May 13, 2015.
- <sup>25</sup> Mishima Yukio, "Jakyō." *Sunday Mainichi*, 18 April 1948. Quoted in Kurokawa, *Okamoto Tenmei-den*, 208.
- <sup>26</sup> Although the political situation was far from normal, apocalyptic religious groups gave way to radical political groups. See for example William Andrews, *Dissenting Japan: A History of Japanese Radicalism and Counterculture from 1945 to Fukushima* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2016), 20ff.
- <sup>27</sup> Nakaya et al., *Fuji wa bakuhatu*, 125-7; Kurokawa, *Okamoto Tenmei-den*, 410.
- <sup>28</sup> Okamoto, *Hitsuki shinji wa naze*, 120.
- <sup>29</sup> Umehara Masaki, "Keisei-saimin e no shikō: Makoto no Ie" ["Aiming at a prosperous people and nation: The House of Truth"], *Dentō to gendai* 25 (January 1974), 188-198
- <sup>30</sup> Okamoto Tae [Minoru], "[Maruchon] Shinji to Okamoto Tenmei" ["The [circumpunct] Shinji and Tenmei Okamoto"], *Tama* 4 (January 1967), 27-30.
- <sup>31</sup> *Atarashiki taiyō*, August 1969, 11-15ff. National Diet Library.
- <sup>32</sup> Umehara, "Keisei-saimin," 198.
- <sup>33</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>34</sup> Andrews, *Dissenting Japan*, 84ff.
- <sup>35</sup> "Hōdankai" ["Free talk"], *Sasura* 7.6 (June 1976), 4-74. Harvard-Yenching Library.
- <sup>36</sup> See Okamoto, "Jidai ga kawaru," as well as most of the issues of *Shion tsūshin* available at the National Diet Library. Nakaya's take was offered to me over several discussions in 2015.
- <sup>37</sup> Kurokawa Yutsuki in discussion with Nakaya Shin'ichi and the author, May 16, 2015. Kurokawa has a theory about who purchased the original text, but Nakaya has given up looking for it and believes it to be lost. See Asuka and Nakaya, "*Hitsuki shinji*" *taidan*, 88.
- <sup>38</sup> Nakaya Shin'ichi, "Watashi wa naze *Hitsuki shinji* o yo ni daseta ka (zenhen)" ["Why did I bring the Hitsuki Shinji to the world? (1/2)"]. *Shinsei Nihon* 35 (June 1997), 35-44. Collection of the author.
- <sup>39</sup> Asuka and Nakaya, "*Hitsuki shinji*" *taidan*, 96-105.
- <sup>40</sup> Egil Aspren and Asbjørn Dyrendal, "Conspirituality Reconsidered: How surprising and how new is the confluence of spirituality and conspiracy theory?" *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 30.3 (2015).
- <sup>41</sup> Nakaya Shin'ichi, *Hitsuki shinji: Uchū ishi yori jinrui e saishū no daiyogen* ["Hitsuki Shinji: The last great prophecy from the cosmic will to humanity"] (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1991).
- <sup>42</sup> Nakaya Shin'ichi, *Hitsuki shinji: Todome no ikusa* ["Hitsuki Shinji: The final battle"] (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1993).
- <sup>43</sup> On the use of anti-Semitic archetypes in Japanese conspiracy theory, see Tsuji Ryotarō, *Sekai no inbōron o yomitoku* ["Explaining conspiracy theories of the world"] (Kodansha, 2012).
- <sup>44</sup> Nakaya Shin'ichi, *Hitsuki shinji: Kanzen guide & navigation* ["Hitsuki Shinji: Complete guide and navigation"] (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 2005), 78.
- <sup>45</sup> Harada Minoru, "Okamoto Tenmei no *Hitsuki shinji*," in Association for Skeptical Investigation of Paranormal (eds.), *Nazo toki chojōgenshō III* ["Solving the puzzles of paranormal phenomena 3"] (Tokyo: Saizusha, 2012), 47-56.
- <sup>46</sup> Nakaya, *Kanzen guide*, 260-1.
- <sup>47</sup> Nakaya Shin'ichi, *Uchū no chokuryū: <Seiyaku> Hitsuki shinji* ["The cosmic direct current: Hitsuki Shinji — the true interpretation"] (Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1995), 35.
- <sup>48</sup> e.g. Nakaya, *Kanzen guide*, 267-318.
- <sup>49</sup> Nakaya et al., *Fuji wa bakuhatu*, 117.

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<sup>50</sup> Shimazono Susumu, *From Salvation to Spirituality: Popular Religious Movements in Japan* (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2004), 298.

<sup>51</sup> Charlotte Ward and David Voas, “The Emergence of Conspirituality,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 26:1 (2011), 103-121.

<sup>52</sup> Iikura Yoshiyuki, “Toshi densetsuka suru ‘sōzōryoku’ : ‘ōkina monogatari no sōshitsu’ to inbōron-teki sōzōryoku” [“Imagination made urban legend: ‘loss of great narrative’ and the conspiratorial imagination”] *Hikaku Nihon bunka kenkyū* 15 (2012), 53-63.

<sup>53</sup> Michael Barkun, *A Culture of Conspiracy* (University of California Press, 2003), 3.

<sup>54</sup> Izutsu Toshihiko, “Islam bunka” [“Islamic culture”] and “Koran o yomu” [“Reading the Quran”], in *Izutsu Toshihiko zenshū*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Keio University Press, 2014). See pp. 35-7 and 276-8.

<sup>55</sup> Shimazono, *From Salvation to Spirituality*, 275-7.



# Usui Reiki Ryōhō: An Annotated Bibliography (Part One: 1914–1980)

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## Usui Reiki Ryōhō: An Annotated Bibliography (Part One: 1914–1980)

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### Introduction

Usui Reiki Ryōhō 臼井靈氣療法 (Usui Reiki Therapy) is a spiritual healing practice first developed in 1920s Japan that has reached worldwide recognition—particularly since the 1990s—under the abbreviated name Reiki. This practice includes several methods to improve physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. The basic practice is a laying-on-of-hands, while advanced practitioners use symbols (drawn with a finger or visualized) in a variety of methods, including healing at a distance. These practices are passed from master to disciple in a pedagogical method involving a “bestowal of spirit” (*reiju* 靈授) ceremony that many Reiki communities understand as an initiation. Usui Reiki Ryōhō (also sometimes called Usui-shiki Reiki Ryōhō or Usui Shiki Ryōhō) is attributed to its eponymous founder, Usui Mikao 臼井甕男 (1865-1926), said to have first attained healing powers following a twenty-one-day period of fasting and meditation on Mt. Kurama, outside Kyoto. However, the majority of Reiki’s present forms result from Usui’s methods being further systematized and adapted by his disciple Hayashi Chūjirō 林忠次郎 (1880-1940); Hayashi’s disciple, the Hawaii-born Japanese American Hawayo Takata (1900-1980); as well as successive generations of Reiki instructors, generally called *shihan* in Japanese and “Reiki Masters” in English.

Although practitioners emphasize that the practice is to be passed directly from master to disciple in what is sometimes understood as a self-described “oral tradition,” enough texts have been published about Reiki to make an annotated bibliography a worthwhile enterprise for scholars and others interested in Reiki’s historical development, circulation, and diversification. The first half of this bibliography, presented here, covers texts published up to Takata’s 1980 death. The second half, to be published in the following issue, will cover the period afterwards, including etic scholarship on Reiki from religious history and the social sciences.

This bibliography is far from comprehensive, as hundreds, if not thousands, of distinct publications have been printed about Reiki in a variety of languages, particularly since the 1990s. The inclusion of a text here is not an endorsement and an exclusion of another does

not mean practitioners would not find it worthy or significant. Rather, this bibliography focuses on emic sources that I consider the most historically significant, particularly some lesser-known archival materials chronicling the crucial period when Reiki was primarily practiced in the Hawaiian Islands, the site of Takata's primary teaching activities until the 1970s. Many of the following sources were discovered during my research for my doctoral thesis, *Hawayo Takata and the Circulatory Development of Reiki in the Twentieth Century* (University of Toronto, 2017), which I am currently revising for a book manuscript, and several of these will be included in a Hawayo Takata Archive that I helped organize, to be hosted at the American Religions Collection at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

I have grouped the (predominantly English- and Japanese-language) sources into subsections by region, each organized in chronological order based on date of publication. The rationale behind this organization is that the thematic grouping will clarify the types of texts to those previously unfamiliar with this literature and the chronological order will render visible other patterns in Reiki's historical development.

Special thanks to Naoko Hirano and Masaki Nishina for their help locating some of these sources, as well as to Phyllis Furumoto for opening up her grandmother's papers to an inquisitive researcher and bequeathing them to the University of California for future generations. Despite my indebtedness to others in my research, any mistakes below are my own.

Following naming conventions, names of Japanese in Japan begin with the family name whereas names of Japanese Americans (including first-generation immigrants) begin with the given name.

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### A. Sources from Japan, 1914 to 1974

The sources below either describe Usui Reiki Therapy as practiced by the organizations founded by Usui and Hayashi, or closely related practices. While they are all published prior to the return of so-called “Western Reiki” from the U.S. to Japan in 1986, Takata did teach a few classes in postwar Japan, so it is possible her teachings had some influence on the final text.

Suzuki Bizan 鈴木美山. *Kenzen no Genri* 健全の原理 [Principles of Health]. Tokyo: Teikoku Kenzen Tetsugaku-kan, 1914.

This text outlines Suzuki’s Health Philosophy (Kenzen Tetsugaku), which, influenced by Christian Science, teaches that illness has no reality outside the mind and can be cured by correcting the heart-mind (kokoro). The book ends with a “song of conduct” (shosei no uta) that resembles a New Thought affirmation: “Today only, do not anger, do not fear, be honest, fulfill duties, be kind to people.” This text is nearly identical to the “five precepts” (gokai) that Usui would teach as part of his Reiki Therapy.

No author. *Reiki Ryōhō Hikkei* 靈氣療法必携 [Reiki Therapy Handbook]. Tokyo: Shinshin Kaizen Usui Reiki Ryōhō Gakkai, 1922.

This is the handbook distributed by the Usui Reiki Therapy Society for Improvement of Mind and Body (Shinshin Kaizen Usui Reiki Ryōhō Gakkai). It has gone through many editions since the first edition in 1922 and it is unclear whether the contents changed over time, but extant printings consist of four sections: Five Precepts (Gokai), apparently based on Suzuki 1914; Public Explanation of Instruction (Kōkai Denju Setsume), a brief text attributed to Usui followed by a question-and-answer section in which he answers questions about his therapy; Therapy Guidelines (Ryōhō Shishin), a series of medical diagnoses followed by places on the body one should treat for those illnesses; and Meiji Emperor’s Poems (Meiji Tennō Gyosei), a collection of 125 *waka* poems written by the late Meiji Emperor. Sections of this handbook have been translated and are available online and in print, most extensively in the writings of Frank Arjava Petter (described in Part Two of this bibliography).

Takagi Hidesuke 高木秀輔. *Danjikihō no Reikijutsu Kōgi* 断食法及靈氣術講義 [Lectures on Fasting Methods and Reiki Techniques]. Yamaguchi City: Reidō Kyūsei-kai, 1925.

This book by the founder of a healing practice called Human Aura Reiki Techniques describes a set of practices that closely resemble aspects of Usui Reiki Therapy, including use of the hands, the breath, and the eyes to manipulate an invisible force

(which Takagi interchangeably calls *aura* and *reiki*) in order to perform in-person healings, as well as techniques to heal at a distance. Furthermore, Takagi includes his own version of five precepts that also closely resemble those of Suzuki 1914. See Naoko Hirano, “The Birth of Reiki and Psycho-spiritual Therapy in 1920’s-1930’s Japan: The Influence of ‘American Metaphysical Religion.’” *Japanese Religions* 40-1/2 (2016): 65-83.

Okada Masayuki 岡田正之. “*Reihō Chōso Usui Sensei Kudoku no Hi*” 靈法肇祖臼井先生功德之碑 [Memorial of the Merit of Usui-sensei, Founder of the Spiritual Method]. 1927.

Available at: <http://okojo.b.la9.jp/kudokuhi.htm>, accessed February 7, 2018.

This text of approximately 1500 characters is inscribed on a stele, approximately three meters tall and over one meter wide, that stands at Usui’s tomb at Saihōji in Umezato, Suginami Ward, Tokyo. It is probably the first account ever written of Usui’s life and the only detailed account written by someone who knew him personally. The author, a literature professor from University of Tokyo, describes Usui in literary Japanese (*bungo*) as a man of great learning, virtue, and compassion who developed his Reiki Therapy as a way to pass onto others the healing powers he attained on Mt. Kurama. The stele was commissioned by the Usui Reiki Therapy Society and refers to some of Usui’s teachings contained in their handbook, such as recitation of the five precepts and the Meiji Emperor’s works. It is translated into several languages and is available in print and online.

Matsui Shōō 松居松翁. “*Sekishu Manbyō o Ji suru Ryōhō*” 隻手萬病を治する療法 [A Therapy that Heals Disease with One Hand]. *Sunday Mainichi* サンデー毎日, March 4, Showa 3 [1928], 14–15. Available at: <http://okojo.b.la9.jp/sekisyu.htm>, accessed February 7, 2018.

Asaki (pseudonym) あさき生. “*Sekishu Ryōhō Jiken no tame – Mizukara Kanja to naru no Ki*” 隻手療法実験のため 自ら患者となるの記 [For the Sake of Testing Single-Hand Therapy: A Personal Account of Becoming a Patient]. *Sunday Mainichi* サンデー毎日, March 4, Shōwa 3 [1928], 15–16. Available at: <http://okojo.b.la9.jp/kanja.htm>, accessed February 7, 2018.

These two articles published by Matsui—a prolific playwright who had studied with Usui’s disciple Hayashi—and an anonymous patient who received treatments from Matsui, his wife, and a nurse, are the most detailed accounts of Usui Reiki Therapy in prewar Japan. Matsui explains that Usui, Hayashi, and their students don’t like advertising their therapy, but he felt a “duty to humanity to promote it.” The anonymous patient was initially skeptical, but was amazed by their experience. My full translation of this article is printed (alongside Hirano Naoko’s transliteration of it

into postwar characters), in Robert Fueston, *Reiki: Transmissions of Light, Volume 1 – The History and System of Usui Shiki Reiki Ryoho* (Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Press, 2017), 246–287.

Mitsui Kōshi. 三井甲之. *Te-no-Hira Ryōji* 手のひら療治 [Palm-Healing Treatment]. Tokyo: Arusu, 1930.

This book describes a healing practice developed by Usui's student Eguchi Toshihiro (1873–1946) called Palm-Healing Treatment (Te-no-Hira Ryōji). Reportedly, Eguchi felt Usui's practice was powerful but balked at the high membership fees charged by the Usui Reiki Therapy Society, so he formed his own practice that he taught around Japan, including in the utopian community Ittōen. The book's author, the ultra-nationalist thinker Mitsui Kōshi (1883–1953), studied under Eguchi in the late 1920s and seems to have helped systematize his teacher's practices. This book contains practical and theoretical information about Eguchi's healing method, which incorporates elements of Usui's practice, like the recitation of the Meiji Emperor's poetry to purify the heart that enables the practitioners' hands to emit a healing power. However, likely due to Mitsui's influence, it is far more nationalistic than any text by Usui or his society, explicitly describing the emperor and his poetry as divine. It contains many photographs of the practice and was recently republished (Tokyo: Vorutekkusu [Vortex] Yūgen Kaisha, 2003).

Tomita Kaiji 富田魁二. *Reiki to Jinjutsu – Tomita-ryū Teate Ryōhō* 霊気と仁術—富田流手あて療法 [Reiki and Benevolent Healing: Tomita-style Healing Method]. Osaka: Teate Ryōhōkai, 1933.

This book is by a student of Usui's who went on to form his own school, but his teachings appear to bear many similarities to Usui Reiki Therapy. In particular, his “heart-purification method” (*jōshin-hō*), which prepares one to emit spirit from the hands (*hatsurei-hō*), involves kneeling with palms pressed together in front of the chest while silently reciting one of the Meiji Emperor's poems. The book contains numerous photographs and diagrams explaining how to perform the techniques, and their physiological operations and effects. It was reprinted in 1999 (Tokyo: BAB Japan Publishing).

No author. *Ryōhō Shishin* 療法指針 [Therapy Guidelines]. Tokyo: Hayashi Reiki Kenkyūkai. No date, but first edition was at least by 1935.

This unsigned pamphlet, about forty pages in length, contains a series of medical diagnoses along with suggested hand positions to treat each condition with Reiki.

Some hand positions suggest Hayashi had training in Chinese medicine (Fueston 2017: 71). The copy Hawayo Takata received in her December 1935 class has text on the cover that indicates it is not for sale. Copies distributed in Hawaii during Hayashi's teaching tour in 1937–1938 have text on the cover indicating they were especially printed for American students, as well as pronunciation guides (*furigana*) printed in the main text, likely out of concern that Japanese Americans would have had difficulty reading *kanji*.

Taniguchi Masaharu 谷口雅春. *Seimei no Jissō – Daisankan – Seirei-hen / Jisshō-hen* 生命の真相—第三卷—聖霊篇・実証篇 [The Truth of Life, Vol. 3: The Holy Spirit and Concrete Evidence]. Tokyo: Nippon Kyōbunsha, 1935.

This book is the third in a twenty-volume series by the founder of the New Thought-inspired Japanese new religion Seichō no Ie (House of Growth), which would grow to forty volumes in the postwar period. In this volume, Taniguchi repeatedly uses Eguchi Toshihiro's above-mentioned Palm Healing Treatment as a foil for his own method of curing disease by correcting the deluded thinking at the root of illness. In one section, he writes that Eguchi's Treatment is based on Usui Reiki Therapy and recounts a brief history of Usui Mikao's acquiring his healing powers following a fast in the mountains. Following Eguchi, Taniguchi criticizes the high fees Usui charged for training in his methods and notes that Eguchi popularized this technique by decreasing the fees, but ultimately writes off both for relying on physical *ki* rather than a purely mental approach.

Tomabechi Gizō 苔米地義三 and Nagasawa Genkō 長沢玄光. *Tomabechi Gizō Kaikoroku* 苔米地義三回顧録 [Tomabechi Gizō Memoirs]. Tokyo: Asada Shoten, 1951.

Tomabechi Gizō 苔米地義三. *Hito o Minuku-hō* 人を見抜く法 [How to See Through People]. Tokyo: Daidō Publishing, 1952.

Tomabechi, a chemical magnate before the war and a politician afterwards, was among Usui's top disciples. In one section of his 1951 memoirs, he recounts stories about Usui and provides a synopsis of some of Usui Reiki Therapy's thought and practices. He lists chanting of the five precepts in the morning and evening (and incorporating them into one's life) as the first in a series of health methods he recommends. The relevant excerpt is translated in Frank Arjava Petter, *This Is Reiki* (Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Press, 2012), 254–256. Tomabechi's 1952 book on physiognomy also briefly mentions Usui Reiki Therapy and includes a photo of him practicing Reiki Therapy in a chapter called "Efforts to perfect [one's] character."

Fukuoka Kōshirō 福岡甲旨郎. *Reiki Ryōhō no Shiori* 霊気療法のしおり [Reiki Therapy Guidebook]. Tokyo: Shinshin Kaizen Usui Reiki Ryōhō Gakkai, 1974.

At over a hundred pages, this is the most substantial text attributed to the Usui Reiki Society. It includes an introduction signed by Wanami Hōichi 和波豊一 (1883–1975), the Society’s fifth president, historical information about Usui that is not available elsewhere, and detailed explanations of some practices of Reiki Therapy. However, the contemporary Usui Reiki Therapy Society repudiates this publication, disputing some of its contents and alleging that Fukuoka may have used Wanami’s name without permission.

## B. Sources from Hawaii, 1936–1970s

The following sources are mostly articles from the *Hawaii Hochi*, one of Honolulu’s leading Japanese-language newspapers in the prewar period, but they also include a few English-language publications as well as unpublished archival sources describing Reiki as practiced in the Hawaiian islands in the transwar period from the 1930s to the 1950s, as well as several unpublished drafts of an autobiography.

No author. “Reiki Sanitarium Treatments [advertisement].” *The Garden Island*. October 13, 1936, 7.

This advertisement in the English language newspaper of the island of Kaua‘i promotes Takata’s Reiki practice in the town of Kapa‘a shortly after her return from five months studying Usui Reiki Therapy under Hayashi in Tokyo. It describes Reiki as “absolutely drugless” and specifies that she held “special free clinics” for infants, suggesting that she charged set fees for other patients. It seems to be the first mention of Reiki Therapy in English.

No author. “Reiki Ryōhō no Hayashi Chūjirō-shi Raiha – Reijō Kiyoe-san Dōhan – Doyōbi Chichibu Maru de” 霊気療法の林忠次郎氏来布 令嬢キヨエさん同伴 土曜日秩父丸で [Reiki Ryōhō’s Hayashi Chūjirō Comes to Hawaii – Accompanied by his Daughter Kiyoe – Arrives Saturday on the Chichibu Maru]. *Hawaii Hochi*. September 30, 1937, 7.

This article is the first in a series that documents Hayashi’s five-month teaching tour on the Hawaiian Islands of O‘ahu and Kaua‘i. Ensuring media coverage prior to his arrival testifies to Takata’s savvy. This article tells of three people who practiced Usui Reiki therapy in Hawaii prior to Takata: Higuchi Kan, minister of the Hilo Japanese Christian Church; his wife, Tsuya Higuchi; and a Mr. Tahara, who seems to have been

Tahara Hiroshi, principal of the Papaikou Japanese School on the Papaikou plantation near Hilo. It says that Takata recently returned from a second training course at Hayashi's Tokyo center. It also says that Usui taught that Reiki is a form of "energy" (enerugii) essential to living things, as well as a "mysterious ability" (reinō) that can be used practically to treat disease. My full translation of this article is printed (alongside Hirano Naoko's transliteration of it into postwar characters), in Robert Fueston, *Reiki: Transmissions of Light, Volume 1 – The History and System of Usui Shiki Reiki Ryoho*, Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Press, 2017, 293–296.

No author. "Reiki Ryōhō no Hayashi Chūjirō-shi Raiha – Zaigō Kaigun Gun'i Taisa – Jūnigatsu made Taisai" 霊気療法の林忠次郎氏来布 在郷海軍々医大佐 十二月まで滞在 [Reiki Therapy's Mr. Hayashi Chūjirō Arrived in Hawaii — Ex-Naval Surgeon and Captain — Will Stay Until December]. *Hawaii Hochi*. October 2, 1937, 8.

This article recounts how Hayashi and his daughter Kiyoe were brought to the newspaper's office by a well-known couple in Honolulu's Japanese community: Steere Gikaku Noda, a former baseball player who became a prominent lawyer and would be a politician after the war, and Alice Sae Teshima Noda, owner of a chain of beauty salons in Hawaii and Japan and author of a syndicated Japanese-language beauty column. The article notably refers to Hayashi as a retired naval surgeon and captain, although, it adds, Reiki works completely without the use of medicine. This is significant because research by Naoko Hirano suggests Hayashi may not have attended the navy's medical college, which would have been standard for naval surgeons. The article also says that Hayashi intends to go to the U.S. mainland but for now is focusing on treating patients in Hawaii.

No author. "Reiki Ryōhō no Taika – Hayashi Chūjirō-shi Raijima – Waimea to Kapa'a de no Kōshūkai Hidori Kettei" 霊気療法の大家 林忠次郎氏来島 ワイメアとカパアでの講習会日取決定 [The Master of Reiki Therapy – Mr. Hayashi Chūjirō Arrives on Island – Waimea and Kapa'a Seminar Dates Decided]. *Hawaii Hochi*, October 7, 1937, 6.

This article, attributed to the newspaper's Kaua'i branch office, describes the state of Reiki on that island about one year after Takata began practicing and teaching there. It refers to the idea that Reiki Therapy as "well known by now," suggesting that Takata had already promoted it extensively within the Nikkei community there. The article implies that Hayashi had originally not planned to hold seminars on Kaua'i but due to demand, he held two seminars: one of three days and one of four days. As these are shorter than the five days seminars he held in Japan and would hold on O'ahu, it is possible they were condensed intensives or contained less content, either

omitting advanced techniques or intermediate classes intended for those students Takata had previously taught.

No author. “Usui-shiki Reiki Ryōhō – Kawai Shibukai Tanjō – Honoruru ni okeru Nikai-me Kōshūkai wa Myōban Owaru” 臼井式霊気療法 加哇支部会誕生 ホノルルに於ける二回目講習会は明晩終る [Usui-style Reiki Therapy—Kauai Branch Born—Second Honolulu Seminar Ends Tomorrow Night]. *Hawaii Hochi*, November 18, 1937, 6.

This article provides more information about the early students of Takata and Hayashi on Kaua‘i and O‘ahu. It says that in their first seminars, held in Waimea and Kapa‘a (on Kaua‘i), there were a total of 44 students, who, according to a letter received by Hayashi, are now establishing a Kauai Reiki chapter under Ōe Hōji, a Buddhist priest in Waimea. These students seem to have largely come from two pre-existing organizations: a Kauai Way of Living Society (Kauai Seidō-kai) and a Meditation Society (Meisō-kai). Among the attendees were two non-Japanese students, one of whom, Joe Baffee (or Buffy?), is a dairy farmer who reports his surprise at Reiki’s efficacy in improving his yield. He is currently finishing the second seminar in Honolulu, which has ten students.

No author. “Hoken Jibyō no Fukuin – Reiki Ryōhō Kōenkai – Kuru Nijūyon-nichi Gogo Shichi-ji – Kōensha Hayashi Chūjirō-shi” 保健治病の福音 霊気療法講演会 来る廿四日午後七時 講演者林忠次郎氏 [The Gospel of Preserving Health and Healing Disease—Reiki Therapy Lecture—The Coming 24<sup>th</sup>, 7 PM—Lecturer Mr. Hayashi Chūjirō]. *Hawaii Hochi*, November 20, 1937, 5.

This article, printed alongside a photo of Hayashi and Takata, describes Usui Reiki Therapy in religious terminology, saying that Takata invited Hayashi to the Islands “to spread the gospel of preserving health and healing disease among the people” and that those who have been healed by Hayashi have been “born again.” Moreover, it describes “the marvelous miracle” of Reiki Therapy as founded by Usui Mikao, who was “extolled to the point of being a living god” in his day for giving free medical treatments. It also appeals to science, saying that, in the roughly ten years since Usui’s time, “learned people have extolled its miraculous effects as thoroughly tested facts.” It also promotes an upcoming free lecture by Hayashi at the activity hall of the Young Men’s Buddhist Association, at the Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin, the headquarters of Jōdo Shin Buddhism in the U.S. Territory of Hawaii.

No author. “Reiki Ryōhō Kōen – Tadaï no Kanmei Atau – Chōshū Nihyaku-yomei no Seikyō” 霊気療法講演 多大の感銘与う 聴衆二百余名の盛況 [Reiki Therapy Lecture Leaves a

Big Impression — A Great Success with Over 200 Attending]. *Hawaii Hochi*, November 27, 1937, 4.

This article describes the lecture promoted in the previous one. Despite rain, the lecture drew a large crowd of over two hundred and the whole event lasted over three hours. The sponsor was Rev. Hōun Tamayose, minister of the McCully Higashi Hongwanji Church, and the emcee was Takata. Hayashi told the story of Usui and explained the principles of his Reiki Therapy. He emphasized that Reiki Therapy was exceptionally rational, as opposed to psycho-spiritual therapies (seishin ryōhō), prayer therapies (kitō ryōhō), magical charms (majinai), or quackery (inchiki). Hayashi told many stories of patients who were skeptical or disbelievers but experienced complete recoveries from a single treatment. It ends by promoting Hayashi's healing practice and his upcoming class.

No author. “Reiki Ryōhō no Kenkyūkai Soshiki saru – Sakuya Hayashi-shi Sōbetsukai Sekijō – Kōshūsei Ichidō ni yotte” 霊気療法の研究会組織さる 昨夜林氏送別会席上 講習生一同によって [Reiki Therapy Study Group is Organized — At Mr. Hayashi's Farewell Party Last Night — By All the Students from the Training Courses]. *Hawaii Hochi*. December 14, 1937, 7.

This article describes the formation of a committee to start a local Reiki group at what was supposed to be Hayashi's farewell dinner at a Japanese bathhouse in Waikiki. Hayashi had planned to return to Japan in mid December but due to protests by his students, he decided to delay his return.

M.U. [pseudonym, probably Masaichi Ueda]. “Kōkai Rondan – Reiki Ryōhō ni tsuite” 公開論壇 霊気療法に就て [Public Opinion: Regarding Reiki Therapy]. *Hawaii Hochi*. December 24, 1937, 6.

The author of this article, who seems to be a retired medical doctor, recounts his experiences taking Hayashi's course. He considers Reiki to be distinct from other folk remedies due to its efficacy and the rapidity of its effects, which is why he thinks it could be part of the future of medicine. Regarding this, he recounts a story by the former Hongwanji Bishop Yemyō Imamura (1867–1932) to say that it is necessary both to be open to new technologies and to use discernment “to distinguish gems from stones.” Thus, the author writes, one should combine modern medicine with treatments like Reiki, which is “a therapy equal to that of the immortals [i.e., Daoist wizards]” and is, he hopes, a contribution that the Japanese will have made to the Hawaiian Islands. In the conclusion, the author writes “Reiki” in the *katakana* syllabary to make it a “proper noun” and distinguish it from chiropractic, which

Anglo Americans use as a catchall for alternative medicine; this may be the first appearance of Reiki in katakana.

No author. “Reiki Ryōhō no Shibu – Sakuya Soshiki, Yakuin mo Sentei” 霊気療法の支部昨夜組織、役員も選定 [Branch of Reiki Therapy – Organized Last Night, Officers Selected]. *Hawaii Hochi*. January 11, 1938.

This article recounts the New Year’s banquet held by the twelve members of the new Usui-style Reiki Therapy Research Society (Usui-shiki Reiki Ryōhō Kenkyūkai). The association was to be headed by Takata and headquartered at Honolulu’s Grove Hotel [where Hayashi and Takata stayed, taught, and ran a clinic], where they would hold monthly meetings. Its executive secretary was Bunki Aoyama (owner of the Grove), secretary was the aforementioned Hōun Tamayose, and treasurer was Masashi Ueda. Hayashi congratulated them and spoke of the Japanese branches of the Society. It ends by saying that Takata is the only one of the thirteen instructors trained by Hayashi who is outside Japan.

No author. “Reiki Ryōhō Kaishi [advertisement]” 霊気療法開始 [Reiki Therapy Starts]. *Hawaii Hochi*, February 5, 1938, 2.

This advertisement announces that two Honolulu beauty salons owned by the aforementioned Alice Sae Noda—Cherry Beauty Solon [sic] and Ace Beauty Shoppe—would begin to give free Reiki treatments, with separate spaces for men and women. It emphasizes Reiki’s novelty and its applications for both health and beauty, calling it “the new therapy to restore one’s health” and “the latest technique to return one’s beauty to the way it was formerly.” As the Cherry Beauty Salon had been listed in ads going back to October 1937 as a contact to register for classes, Noda must have been an important local contact.

No author. “Mina-sama no Gokōjō ni Chūshin yori Kansha su – Hayashi-shi no Kokubetsu Hōsō” 皆様の御厚情に衷心より感謝す 林氏の告別放送 [I Appreciate Everyone’s Kindness from the Bottom of My Heart – Mr. Hayashi’s Farewell Address]. *Hawaii Hochi*, February 22, 1938, 8.

This is the transcript of Hayashi’s farewell address, given at Shunchōrō teahouse in Honolulu and broadcast on the Japanese radio station KGMB. He describes Reiki Therapy as a method for healing disease and correcting personality that uses “a power called Reiki that naturally gushes forth from the body.” He says that three hundred and fifty people in Hawaii, “including whites, Hawaiians, and Chinese who understand absolutely no Japanese language,” have undergone the training, which

lasts usually five to six days, three hours per day. He says that after he leaves, Takata will be the only instructor remaining in Hawaii and North America and recounts her extensive training. He recounts the excellent results of his students in Hawaii and thanks them for their kindness. My full translation of this article is printed (alongside Hirano Naoko's transliteration of it into postwar characters), in Robert Fueston, *Reiki: Transmissions of Light, Volume 1 – The History and System of Usui Shiki Reiki Ryoho*, Twin Lakes, WI: Lotus Press, 2017, 293–296.

No author. “Reiki Kenkyūkai – Sakuya Reikai Seikyō – Shussekishu Hyakugojū-yomei” 霊気研究会 昨夜例会盛況 出席者百五十餘名 [Reiki Research Group – Last Night's Regular Meeting a Success – About 150 in Attendance]. *Hawaii Hochi*. March 15, 1938, 7.

This article describing the second meeting of the Hawaii branch of the Reiki Research Society indicates that they continued to hold large meetings in the Young Men's Buddhist Association Hall on Fort Street in the period immediately following Hayashi's return to Japan. (The fourteenth and final class in February 1938 was also held there and a well-circulated photograph of that meeting shows approximately one hundred and twenty five in attendance.) Bunki Aoyama emceed the meeting and members gave reports. Research by Nishina Masaki indicates that one of these members, Suekuma Takaki, may have been the former president of a newspaper in Busan, Korea, then a colony of Japan.

No author. “Reiki Ryōhō no Takata Joshi Torai – Beijin Fujintō no Shōsei ni te” 霊気療法の高田女史渡来 米人婦人等の招請にて [The Visit of Reiki Therapy's Mrs. Takata – Invited by American Women and Others]. *Hawaii Hochi*, April 16, 1938, 12.

This article reports Takata's departure for a roughly two-month trip to the U.S. mainland. It says she will leave her clinic to six of her advanced disciples, who will continue treating and holding seminars in her absence. In California, she would meet two (ostensibly white) women who wanted to learn Reiki Therapy—one was a Los Angeles pianist interested in Buddhism whom Takata met in Kyoto the previous year, and the other was a French baroness. She was also traveling with the Jōdo-shū (Buddhist) bishop Kyokujo Kubokawa, whom she was accompanying to California as an interpreter. The article ran with a photo of Takata wearing numerous flower leis.

No author. “Reiki Ryōhō no Takata Fujin – Beitairiku no Tabi kara Kihai – Shikago de Ōi ni Nihon o Senden” 霊気療法の高田夫人 米大陸の旅から歸布 市俄古で大いに日本を宣伝 [Reiki Therapy's Mrs. Takata Returns to Hawaii From the U.S. Mainland – Greatly Publicized Japan in Chicago]. *Hawaii Hochi*, July 2, 1938.

This lengthy article outlines Takata's three-month trip to Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Chicago, as well as Indiana and Ohio. While Takata studied at the National College of Drugless Physicians in Chicago, she was interviewed on the Chicago WLS radio station and gave a broadcast lecture on Japan that deeply impressed listeners and won her the support of the city's small Nikkei community, who had suffered following negative coverage of Japan's conduct in the ongoing Second Sino-Japanese War. It also describes two groups in Chicago currently researching phenomena related to Reiki who were interested in Takata's therapy: a medical laboratory researching effects of electromagnetism and a chapter of the I Am Movement. Takata told the latter group they would have to learn about Japanese Buddhism to understand Reiki and provided them with materials about Zen, after which they began sitting meditation to prepare for her lessons.

No author. No title. Clipping from an unknown Japanese-language magazine, p. 32. Circa summer 1938. Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

This news item regarding Takata's trip to the mainland appears to have run in a Honolulu-published Japanese language magazine. It is accompanied by a photo of her in a kimono, being interviewed by a white woman on the Chicago WLS radio station. It says that while Takata went to the mainland, she left the Honolulu branch in the care of her "beloved daughter," while her disciples Mrs. [Alice] Noda and Mr. Mizuta Kin'ichi took charge of [treatments on] Maui and Hawai'i Island, respectively, where Reiki Therapy has been very successful. It adds that Takata is a heroine for not only telling mainland whites of Reiki's greatness, but also for clearing up their misunderstanding of "the China incident" and telling them of Japan's goodness.

A Reporter 一記者. "Shinshin Kaizen Reiki Ryōhō ni tsuite – Kōshi Takata Fujin o Otanau" 心身改善靈氣療法に就て 講師高田夫人を訪ふ [Regarding Usui Reiki Therapy to Improve Mind and Body: Visiting with Lecturer Mrs. Hawayo Takata]. *Hawaii Shogyo*, November 15, 1938, 6.

This anonymous article in a Hilo-based newspaper is the first record of Reiki on the Big Island of Hawai'i, where Takata would live for most of the 1940s. Its author mistakes Hayashi for Usui throughout the article, and regrets having missed his visit to the Islands. The author does not doubt that Usui and others are capable of remarkable healings with this technique, but doubts that everyone is capable of learning it and clearly regards the fifty-dollar initiation fee as exorbitant. However, the author also remarks that Takata does not seem to be money-oriented because, despite the many patients in Honolulu seeking treatments, she decided to tour the

other [less-populated] islands to treat unfortunate people there and combat misconceptions of the therapy.

Mizuta Kin'ichi 水田謹一. "Shōfuku no Hihō Manbyō no Reiyaku – Reikijutsu Chiryō Gaiyō," 招福の秘法萬病の靈藥 靈氣術治療概要 [The Secret Method of Inviting Happiness, the Miracle Drug for All Disease: An Outline of the Art of Reiki Treatment]. Possibly self-published or newspaper clipping, circa 1939. Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

This flier or newspaper clipping from a scrapbook in the Takata archive is among the most detailed descriptions of Usui Reiki Therapy in print prior to the 1970s. Although neither Usui nor Takata are mentioned in the article, the main headline is a phrase that Usui used to describe his Reiki Therapy, so it seems that the author (probably Mizuta, listed at the end of the text as the head of the Hilo Reiki Therapy Society) was a student of Takata's. The article describes *reiki* as a form of energy (*enerugi*) akin to vitality (*seiki* 精氣) or life force (*seiki* 生氣), which is very subtle and in all people. Reiki Therapy practitioners, by laying a hand on the patient, can find the affected area through an indescribable sensation in their hand called *byōsen* 病腺 ("sick gland"). It lists three locations in Hilo where one could sign up for seminars on the "art of Reiki" (Reiki-jutsu), which were given in the Matano Hotel.

Takata, Hawayo. "The Art of Healing." Unpublished essay, 1948. Original manuscript in Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Available at <http://www.threshold.ca/reiki/Handouts/Threshold-Reiki-Takata-Diary.pdf>, accessed February 10, 2018.

This is a uniquely valuable source, as it is the most extensive exposition on the nature of Reiki in Takata's words and one of the few records of this middle period of her career. As substantiated by her archived correspondence, Takata typed this five-page essay as a requirement to receive a Doctor of Naturopathy degree from a Rosicrucian-affiliate organization called the Indian Association of America. It describes Reiki as "One Supreme Being," an "unfathomable, immeasurable ... universal life force ... incomprehensible to man." It uses perennialist and scientific language to explain Reiki in terms influenced by U.S. Christianity, Rosicrucianism, the pan-Indian movement, radionics, etc. It includes descriptions of treatment methods, vegetarianism and other dietary practices, and (like Usui and Hayashi's manuals) a catalog of ailments along with the appropriate treatments. It also has a version of "The Ideals" written in King Jamesian language (i.e., "Thou Shalt not Anger"). It was reprinted in various sources to be described in Part Two of this bibliography, including "the Gray Book" (Furumoto 1982) and "the Blue Book" (Mitchell 1985).

Wong, Dorothy; Tatsuyama, Tamiko; Kitagawa, Michiko; Komatsubara, Tomiye; Greaves, Bobbe; Morigaki, June; Miyashiro, Sadao; Uesato, George. *Faith Healing in Hawaii*. Unpublished undergraduate report, 1948. Romanzo Adams Social Research Laboratory Records, Box A-6, Folder 25. University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library.

No author. "Reiki' – A Healing System." Unpublished undergraduate report, 1953. Romanzo Adams Social Research Laboratory Records, Journals J-3, Folder 14. University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library.

Kono, Emiko. "Practice of Leiki Among the Japanese." Unpublished undergraduate report, 1954. Romanzo Adams Social Research Laboratory Records, Journals J-4, Folder 26. University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library.

No author. "A Delinquent Youth." Unpublished undergraduate report, no date. Romanzo Adams Social Research Laboratory Records, Journals J-3, Folder 12. University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library.

No author. "Reiki." Unpublished undergraduate report, no date. Romanzo Adams Social Research Laboratory Records, Journals J-2, Folder RASRL 3-44. University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library.

These five papers describe Reiki from the perspective of undergraduate students taking sociology courses at the University of Hawai'i – Mānoa. The authors of the first four are all Nikkeijin who knew about Reiki from growing up in the Hilo area in the 1940s and early 1950s; the final one is written by someone who first encountered Reiki in the UH dormitory. The first report, a group project on the subject of faith healing, contains two students' (Kitagawa and Morigaki) personal experiences with Reiki, as well as an interview with a public health nurse who says the Territorial Board of Health wanted to prosecute Takata for teaching Reiki, but since she neither prescribed drugs nor administered injections, it wasn't technically illegal. The rest of the texts are journal entries between one and three pages in length relating personal experiences with Reiki. They largely take skeptical attitudes toward the practice, taking note of the credulity of the practitioners, the power of the mind to convince the body it is well and the amount of money Takata charges for classes. However, a few of these authors are sympathetic, wondering if there could be scientific explanations for the practice's apparent efficacy.

No author. "Takata Hawayo Fujin – Reiki Ryōhō o Kataru" 高田はわよ夫人 霊気療法を語る [Mrs. Hawayo Takata Discusses Reiki Therapy]. *Hawaii Hochi*, circa October 17, 1957.

This article recounts a talk Takata gave to the Honolulu Lions Club on October 15, 1957 in which she discussed Reiki therapy and a recent four-month trip she took to Asia. She recounts studying yoga in India, where she was asked to stay for years to teach Reiki there. She also recounts having run a clinic in Palm Beach for two years before recently opening a new clinic in Honolulu. The article was run with a photo with Takata alongside the current and former Lions Club presidents.

“Statement of Mrs. Hawayo Hiromi Takata, Senior Citizen.” *Problems of the Aging: Hearings Before The Subcommittee on Federal and State Activities of the Special Committee on Aging. United States Senate Eighty-Seventh Congress, First Session. Part 12.—Hilo, Hawaii, December 1, 1961.* Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962, 1601-1603.

This transcript from a government hearing on problems facing elderly Americans is the only known record of Reiki in Takata’s own words in a period of more than two decades following her 1948 “Art of Healing” essay. In it, Takata makes an appeal to the government to fund a program to train retirees in the art of healing. She also makes a statement about her “strictly scientific” healing practice, which uses “cosmic energy... using the hands as electrodes.” Its “vital energy is the great life force—radiating from the sun.” Her scientific description of Reiki in this text resembles that of the “Art of Healing” essay, but (perhaps because of her audience) makes no reference to religious elements, as she did in the prior essay.

Takata, Hawayo. Untitled drafts for an unpublished autobiography, circa 1973–1979. Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

The archived papers of Hawaii Takata contain four separate groups of material meant to go into an autobiography that was never published. It is difficult to date them precisely, but as one of the most rudimentary ones begins with her looking back at her life from 1973 and as she made a series of audio recordings in December 1979, it seems they were written between those dates. They tell stories from her life, including her travels to Japan in 1935–1937 in which she trained in Usui Reiki Therapy, her experiences teaching with Hayashi in Honolulu in 1937–1938, and her experiences treating patients in Hawaii in the 1930s and 1940s. They include some details that are not present in the 1979 recordings that are the basis of a 1981 transcript (Takata 1981, described in Part Two of this bibliography).

### C. Sources from North America, 1973-1980

The following sources from the U.S., Canada, and Puerto Rico, describe Reiki prior to the death of Hawayo Takata in December 1980. With the exception of two Spanish-language newspaper articles covering Takata's trip to Puerto Rico, they are all in English.

Hammond, Sally. 1973. *We Are All Healers*. New York: Harper & Row.

This was a bestselling book by a journalist who spent a year traveling the U.S. researching spiritual healing. In the final chapter, after describing dozens of others who perform and teach healing, Hammond spends four pages describing her encounter with Takata, who uniquely possesses an "old Buddhist secret" to facilitate the development of her students' healing abilities: the ability to "tune into... the great universal life force that does the healing." Many of Takata's chief teaching networks in 1970s North America (including in the suburbs of San Francisco and Chicago, as well as in British Columbia) began from people contacting Takata after reading Hammond's account.

Matsuura, Patsy. "Mrs. Takata and Reiki Power." *Honolulu Advertiser*, February 25, 1974, p. B-2.

This article in Hawaii's largest newspaper became one of three articles about Takata that Reiki communities reproduced and circulated in subsequent decades. It is the first English-language source to link her to the famous heiress Doris Duke, an important patron, and cites Takata as "lecturing at the University of Hawaii," taking part in a healing festival in Indonesia, and writing a book titled "Look Younger, Feel Stronger, and a Way to Longevity." This book was never completed, but materials indicate it was likely the project that transformed into her unpublished autobiography (Takata 1981). This article ran with a photo in which Takata holds her hands together in front of her face and appears to have an aura around her head; the caption reads, "Mrs. Takata: 'A cosmic energy to heal the ill.'"

Nickerson, Roy. "She is Gentle Healer." *Maui News*, circa May 1974.

This little-known article has information about the history of Reiki on Maui as well as some excellent quotes from Takata attributing the power of Reiki to God but distinguishing Reiki from contemporary forms of faith healing. She also credits President Nixon with the present interest in natural healing, as his opening China to the West made the power of Chinese medicine visible to the world. It also details plans to open a healing center on the Big Island in 1978. It ran with a close-up photo of Takata's face.

Straub, Mary. "Reiki: Japanese method of healing could spark public interest similar to Chinese acupuncture." *Tinley Park (IL) Times Herald*, November 13, 1974, 13.

This article from a local paper in a Chicago suburb near Park Forest, where Takata often taught in this period, is the second of three articles about Takata that Reiki communities reproduced and circulated in subsequent decades. It compares Reiki to acupuncture in that it may similarly create problems for Western medicine in its growing popularity. It attributes Reiki's origin to Zen Buddhism and says that Usui discovered it in Buddhist sutras. It describes Takata's California health spa in the 1950s and says she plans to open another in Hawaii when she retires in 1978. The article ran with a photo of Takata.

Bone, Sonni. "Are We All Healers? Yes, Says Reiki Teacher." *The Penticton Herald*, August 27, 1975, 5.

This article from a newspaper in the British Columbia Interior details Takata's upcoming trip to that area, her first, although she would return many times over the next five years. The article title references the book *We Are All Healers* (Hammond 1973), which is how the local man Hubert Gibbs, an elderly yoga practitioner, discovered Takata. The article summarizes some of the information from Hammond's book, including the idea that it goes back "at least 2500 years" and that it is mentioned in the Buddhist sutras and promotes Takata's upcoming class at Gibbs' home. The article ran alongside a photo of Gibbs.

Graham, Vera. "Mrs. Takata Opens Minds to 'Reiki'." *The Times* (San Mateo, CA), May 17, 1975.

This article from a paper in a Bay Area suburb near Redwood City, where Takata often taught in this period, is the third of three articles about Takata that Reiki communities reproduced and circulated in subsequent decades. It includes extended quotes from Takata about the nature of Reiki energy, which refers to God and wavelengths, and its inclusion in ancient histories of Japan and Buddhist sutras. It also includes stories of her coming to Reiki in Tokyo and training under "Dr. Hiyashi [sic]." The author cites Takata as saying she has a contract to teach Reiki at the University of Hawaii and that the American Medical Association of Hawaii approved Reiki for use in hospitals. Three photos ran with the article; in all of them Takata has her hands up, palms facing each other, in front of her chest.

Krull, Sheila. "Natural Healings Taught in Homes." *South Minneapolis Sun*, October 25, 1978, A1, A5.

This article describes how four homes in the Minneapolis–St. Paul area were hosting Reiki clinics where people could come for treatment. The author largely focuses on Ethel Lombardi, a Chicago-area Reiki Master and one of six whom Takata was known to have trained by this time. It says that Reiki “is claimed to be the healing method used by Jesus Christ” and says that Usui was “a Japanese Christian theology teacher” who re-discovered Reiki more than a century ago “in ancient Sanskrit.” The article ran on the front page and was accompanied with three photos: one of Lombardi; one of a local “Reiki healer,” Barbara Brandt, treating her mother; and one of a Wisconsin-based Reiki Master, Barbara McCullough, giving a demonstration in a Minneapolis class.

South, John. “Faith Healer Ends Years of Agony in Hour.” *National Enquirer*, January 16, 1979, 50.

Although it does not contain the word Reiki, this brief article describes a dramatic healing of a woman suffering from bone tumors as a result of a treatment from Reiki Master Ethel Lombardi in her physician’s office. It seems a Dr. Dean Wintermute in Texas was testing Lombardi’s healing powers by having her treat some of his most difficult patients. In this case, Lombardi’s treatment was apparently extraordinarily effective. The article ran with two photos: one of Lombardi and one of Dr. Wintermute and his patient, Rose Thomas.

Bartges, Jonna R. “Reiki: An Ancient Art.” *Psychic Dimensions*, January 1979, 32–33, 36.

This article is based on an interview with Virginia Samdahl, one of the first Reiki Masters Takata initiated, who described herself as “the first occidental to obtain the rank of Reiki Master in 2,500 years.” It describes the “law of exchange,” which Takata developed to justify charging for Reiki treatments and ascribed to Usui in a parable reproduced here. Samdahl, an ordained minister in the Ministry of Christ church, describes the relationship between Reiki and the Christian God, as well as the role of Reiki in her church. It says she initiated about four thousand students in her first two years of being a Reiki Master. It includes a photo of Samdahl.

Cabrera, Alba Raquel. “Hawayana Dará Conferencias sobre Energía Positiva y Sanación” (“Hawaiian will give Lectures on Positive Energy and Health”). *El Mundo* (San Juan, PR), July 20, 1979, 7-B.

No author. “Sanadora’ Hawaiana Explica sus Métodos” (“Hawaiian ‘healer’ Explains her Methods”). *El Vocero* (San Juan, PR), July 20, 1979, 20ff.

No author. "Mrs. Takata Opens Door to Japanese Healing Art." *The San Juan Star*, July 20, 1979.

These three articles appeared on the same day in three different newspapers in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to advertise free lectures Takata was giving to promote Reiki workshops she would give the following week. They each remark that she has taught in various universities and that the American Medical Association has allowed Reiki to be practiced in Hawaii's hospitals. They all include quotes from Takata ascribing Reiki to God and the one in *Vocero* comments that, despite Takata's reliance on Christian tenets, Reiki is not a religion. The *Mundo* article mentions that Takata is accompanied by her granddaughter, Phyllis Furumoto, who hopes to follow in her footsteps, and that they are the guests of the Puerto Rico Association for the Disabled and Elderly. The *Vocero* and *Star* articles feature photos; in the *Vocero* one, she is showing the newspaper staff her certificates that "accredit her as a professional healer."

