DEGUCHI NAO: MODERNIZATION AND NEW RELIGIONS

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
Department of Religious Studies

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
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The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date April 29th, 1988
ABSTRACT

Japan experienced drastic economic, political, and social changes during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Her modernization process has many notable characteristics. In this paper, I discuss an ideology which governed all aspects of the Japanese people’s lives between 1868 and 1945 and the people’s reaction to it. This ideology, which is now called Tennōsei ideology (the ideology of the Tennō system), was based on the myth that emphasized the divinity of the Tennō (emperor). The Meiji government developed and cultivated Tennō-sei ideology as the theoretical backbone of the government’s modernization policy. When one studies the problems of modernization in Japan, Tennōsei ideology and the people’s reaction to it should not be overlooked. However, it is quite difficult to know how common people, especially those of the lower social strata, reacted to the changes in their lives which were caused by modernization.

During the period between the late Tokugawa era and the late Meiji era, many new religious movements were born. Most founders’ of those new religions experienced many difficulties firsthand and expressed critical views of modernization. They attracted people who suffered from the economic, political, social, and religious changes occurring during the rapid modernization process. This paper focuses on examining the religious teachings of Deguchi Nao, the founder of Ōmoto-kyō, because her writings, called Ofudesaki (Tip of A Writing Brush), contain the sharpest criticism against the Meiji government’s policies and the Tennō.
I examine religious currents in the late nineteenth century to find out why a large number of new religious movements developed during this period. Also the background of the Tennō-sei ideology and how the Meiji government systematically made the ideology penetrate into Japanese people's minds are discussed in Chapter One.

In Chapter Two, Deguchi Nao's life experiences as the background of her religious teachings are examined. For the purpose of clarifying Nao's religious ideas, I analyze her early Ofudesaki in chapter three. Through Ofudesaki, the Kami, Ushitora-no-Konjin, warned the people that the present world would be demolished unless they repented their sins quickly. Nao used only simple and unsophisticated expressions when she wrote Ofudesaki, but in it one can find her original mythology and view on salvation.

In 1899, a man named Ueda Kisaburō (later changed his name to Deguchi Onisaburō) joined Nao's group. Although Onisaburō is considered by present Ōmoto-kyō followers as a co-founder of the organization, there were fundamental differences between Nao and him. Onisburō's religious and social background are discussed in chapter four.

In chapter five, those ofudesaki written between 1896 and 1899 are analyzed, especially focusing on a series of pilgrimages, called Shussū, led by Nao. I also discuss whether it is appropriate to categorize Nao's religious group as a millenarian movement.
Since the Meiji government was maintained by the myth of a ‘divine’ Tennō, the existence of a new religion which held an independent mythology could be considered a serious threat to the Tennō and his government. In conclusion, I re-examine the struggle between the Meiji government and the new religious movements as an important element of Japan’s modernization process.
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ABBREVIATIONS

1. O.C. The Ōmoto-kyō library in Kameoka has numerous photocopies of articles which mention Ōmoto-kyō. Unfortunately, the part which shows the page numbers of the original article is excluded from these photocopies. Thus, O.C. p. 3, means page number 3 of the photocopy, not of the original.

2. O.N. Ōmoto Nanajūnen-shi.


4. Ofudesaki means Deguchi Nao's writings as a whole. The word ofudesaki without the uppercase “O” signifies one piece of Nao's writing distinguished by the date when it was written, i.e., (ofudesaki, Jan. 1, 1899).
EXPLANATORY NOTE

1. Words written in italics are Japanese words.

2. Those Japanese words which have been adopted into English are not written in italics.

3. Japanese proper nouns other than the names of kami are not written in italics.

4. All Japanese texts have been translated by the author unless otherwise attributed.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My interest in the subject of this thesis was first aroused four years ago by Professor William Nicholls and Doctor Moshe Amon who told me about the concepts of modernity and modernization. I have been fortunate enough to be able to explore my interest in the relationship between modernization processes and religious movements under the guidance of Professors Daniel Overmyer, John Howes, and Shōtarō Iida. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to them for their kindness and patience.

I must thank those friends who have in so many ways given me invaluable support. Dr. Benjamin Davis for convincing me that I was not too old to become a graduate student. Messrs. C. H. Neroutsos and Gordon R. Kadota for giving me wise advice on life. Ms. Donna Brandon, Mrs. Yūko Yasutake, Ms. Constance Lim, Mr. Len Hart, Ms. Michelle Fracheboud, and Mrs. Keiko Tanaka for their friendship. I am also deeply obliged to the people who proof-read the manuscript.

To my husband and my parents, I dedicate this thesis in token of my gratitude.
I. INTRODUCTION

Japan went through an extended period of economic, political and social changes in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which culminated, in many ways, in the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Aspects of this modernization included industrialization, political centralization, an increasing proportion of landless peasantry and the imposition of Tennō (emperor) rule upon the Japanese people. Many groups within Japanese society, including the very poor, reacted against this modernization. The development of new forms of religion was one of the ways the common people reacted. Ōmoto-kyō is one of these new religions that began largely as a reaction to these economic, political and social changes.

In 1639, the Tokugawa Bakufu established the Sakoku (national isolation) policy, and close the doors of Japan to Western trade and travel until the late nineteenth century with a few exceptions, such as well controlled trade with China and the Dutch. During the period of Sakoku, numerous aspects of Japanese society evolved rapidly. Especially after the 1770’s, the Japanese economy and society began to modernize. The development of Rangaku (Dutch Studies) is one example of this. Through a tiny window opening towards the Netherlands many people, such as a medical doctor Maeno Ryōtaku (1723-1803) and the astronomer Shiba Kōkan (1738-1818), studied Western science with a high level of comprehension. Not only Rangaku students but also a great number of scholars developed positive and rational forms of thought. This wave of

1 Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) unified Japan by military conquest. He was appointed Sei-taishogun (Barbarian Subduing Generalissimo) by the Tennō (Emperor) in 1603, and established the Bakufu (Shogunate government). Theoretically, the Tennō entrusted Ieyasu to rule the country, but Ieyasu had almost complete power regardless of the emperor.
rationalism had wide effects on the population, including merchants and farmers. However, it is important to notice that Japanese "rationalism" is not the same as Western modern rationalism. Sha Seiki aptly pointed out that Japanese rationalism attaches importance to "how to make harmony with nature" rather than "how to manage all by reasons". One can find typical examples of Japanese rationalism in the dialectic philosophy of Miura Baien (1730-1801), and in the physics of Yamagata Bantô (1748-1821).

Japanese artists and writers sang in praise of the liberation of humanity. For example, Ukiyoe was at its zenith of prosperity in the late eighteenth century, and expressed the beauty of human beings. Economic development was also remarkable. Small manufacturing, like cotton textile production, became common in most rural areas. Active inter-regional trade provided merchants with good opportunities to make a profit.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Japanese modernization had pushed into a new phase. The forces came from within the country as well as from outside. Even though the Tokugawa Bakufu apparently still controlled all the Han (semi-independent feudal domains) through its centralized authority, its foundation had been rapidly weakening mainly as a result of a financial crisis. The Bakufu's economic system that centered on the payment of taxes in kind could not adapt to the changing economic situation, such as the rapid growth of

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3As John W. Hall has pointed out it is not yet clear that the concept of "feudalism" can be applied to Japan. Thus, all English terms relating to "feudalism" are used in a very broad sense in this paper.
merchant power based on massive holdings of commercial capital.

Threats from outside Japan also threatened the Bakufu’s authority. The Western countries, especially the United States, sought new markets at this time. In 1853, a mission led by Commodore Perry of the United States Navy arrived at Japan and tried to make Japan open her doors to trade. Perry’s arrival with two steam frigates created an immediate fear among both the people and the Bakufu officials, because they knew the Western powers could take military actions against Japan, as the British had done in China during the so-called First Opium War (1840-1842). The Bakufu could not produce an effective response to this situation, and the authority of the Shogun was attacked by scholars, beauracrats and some feudal lords. His authority was also questioned on theoretical grounds by people who were influenced by the schools of Kokugaku (National Learning) that stressed the concept of Sai-sei-itchi (the unity of rites and government). Kokugaku originally developed as the study of Japanese classics, such as the Shinto classic, Kojiki, and Kokugaku scholars came to believe that both spiritual and temporal power should be held by the Tennō, and especially, at the time when Japan is in crisis, the original authority of the state must be restored. Their argument became the foundation of a political movement aiming to overthrow the Tokugawa Bakufu.

The restoration movement expanded, and several Han joined the forefront of it. Those Han, such as Satsuma and Chōshū, had adapted to the changing economy and paid for Western-style military modernization. Finally, on January 3, 1868,

Shinto is Japan’s indigenous religion, and is a loosely structured set of practices, creeds and attitudes held among Japanese people.
after a short military struggle, an “imperial restoration” known as the Meiji Restoration was proclaimed, with samurai from the anti-Tokugawa Han in key positions.

The government of Meiji Tennō (1852-1912) had a very weak financial and military foundation at its start. The government therefore had to emphasize the Tennō’s religious authority in order to justify its political power. As a first step, the government revived the Department of Shinto as one of the highest government bodies, following the ancient court organization. After that, the government kept creating new methods to elevate the Tennō’s religious authority. Shinto was systematized and centralized, and its myth was crystallized to provide the Tennō with an unchanging fixed source of authority to rule over his people. This myth became the most powerful ideological tool held by the government for swaying the people.

Ironically, while building the Tennō myth, the government eagerly pursued the industrialization and modernization of Japan with the slogan of Bummei-Kaika (culture and enlightenment). Modern Japan was thus intentionally built upon an “irrational” Tennō myth. This is an important key to understanding the modernization of Japan.

Japanese people in the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century experienced rapid and complicated changes in all aspects of their society under the name of modernization. However, it is not easy to know how common people reacted to modernization, mainly because the common people did not have many
opportunities to express their views. Studying new religions which emerged during this period, such as Maruyama-kyō, Tenri-kyō, and Ōmoto-kyō, is an effective way to examine the common people’s reaction to modernization. Leaders of these religions, who were usually poor, often expressed critical views of modernization and attracted followers who suffered from the economic, political, social and religious changes occurring during this rapid modernization.

This paper will examine the Ōmoto-kyō because its sacred book called the Ofudesaki (The Tip of A Writing Brush) contains the sharpest criticism of any of the new religions against the government’s modernization policies, and points out the fundamental “defects” of modernization. The mythology in the Ofudesaki clearly clashes with the government-supported Tennō myth, and, consequently, questions the Tennō’s divinity. Naturally, the government regarded Ōmoto-kyō as a serious threat to its rule. The Ōmoto-kyō was founded at Ayabe, Kyoto prefecture, in 1892 when the founder Deguchi Nao (1837-1918) suddenly entered into a possessed state. Nao was a middle-aged widow who had been suffering severe poverty and other predicaments for most of her life. The Kami who possessed her called himself Ushitora-no-Konjin (the Metal Kami of the North-west). Although Nao was illiterate, she began to write a collection of oracles called ofudesaki about one and a half years after her first possession experience. In the Ofudesaki, Ushitora-no-Konjin declared that he had reappeared in the world to reconstruct the whole world. He harshly criticized evils in society

5 Ōmoto-kyō organizers changed the name of their religious organization many times. Presently they call it Ōmoto (The Great Source), but Ōmoto-kyō is the most widely used name in scholarly works.

6 Kami (pl. Kami-gami) refers to the Shinto concept of god or deity.

7 Each oracle is also called ofudesaki. Usually a ofudesaki is distinguished from other ofudesaki by the date when the ofudesaki was written.
and in people's minds, and warned people that the present world would be demolished unless people repented their sins quickly. Nao soon won a small but zealous following.

In 1899, Ueda Kisaburō (who later changed his name to Deguchi Onisaburō, 1871-1948) joined Nao's group. He had basic knowledge of many religious ideologies and practices, especially of syncretistic Shinto, and was a gifted organizer. Nao's group expanded rapidly. Even though Nao welcomed and recognized his merit, there were fundamental differences between Nao's and Onisaburō's teachings. A typical example of this was that Onisaburō never challenged the Tennō's absolute divinity, but Nao clearly recognized the Tennō as a human. There were also power struggles between Onisaburō and other principal adherents over doctrine and the administration of the group. By the 1910's Onisaburō firmly established his position as the leader of the Ōmoto-kyō. Many important theological developments occurred under Onisaburō's influence. A more detailed study of the Ofudesaki and his influence will be discussed later. The most significant one was the "Miroku belief". Starting about 1915, many passages relating to Miroku began to appear in the Ofudesaki.

The Ōmoto-kyō grew to be a mass organization with wealth and many followers from all social classes by effectively using the mass media to spread its teachings. It advocated the "Restoration" which sought to restore more complete and spiritual Sai-sei-itchi (the unity of rites and office) to the Tennō; it even

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8The Maitreya(Miroku) belief is faith in Maitreya-bodhisattava, who, according to Buddhist teaching, will reappear into this world 5,670 million years after the time of Sakyamuni Buddha.
prophesied that Ayabe, where Ōmoto-kyō was born, would become the seat of
the Kami's future government. Such teachings inevitably attracted government
suppression. Three years after the death of Nao, the first so-called "Ōmoto
incident" took place. The government accused the leaders of Ōmoto-kyō of the
crime of lèse majesté, a crime against the Tennō.

After the first incident, Onisaburō wrote the eighty-one-volume Reikai-Monogatari
(The Tale of the Spiritual World) to establish an "official" interpretation of the
Ofudesaki. He carried on many colorful activities, including attempting to create a
separate state in Mongolia as an actual government of Kami. In 1935, the
government attacked Ōmoto-kyō again. As a result of the severe persecution,
Ōmoto-kyō's religious activities were almost completely halted until the end of
World War II.

The most fundamental material for examining Ōmoto-kyō's roots is, needless to
say, the Ofudesaki. All of the Ofudesaki were written in Hiragana (Japanese
syllabic script) and in a colloquial style. Later, Onisaburō edited the Ofudesaki
and added Kanji (Chinese ideographs) to it. As each Hiragana character has no
explicit meaning and there are numerous homonyms in the Japanese language,
applying Kanji, where each character has an exact meaning, unavoidably limited
the meaning of the words in the original Ofudesaki. Unfortunately the original
Ofudesaki was lost or destroyed when the Ōmoto incidents took place. However,
three volumes of Ōmoto Shiryō-Shūsei (edited by Ikeda Akira, Tokyo:
San'ichishobō) were published in 1982, and the corrected Ofudesaki are believed
to be rather close to the original. This compilation includes writings by Onisaburō and other Ōmoto theologians, and even police investigation reports on Ōmoto-kyō during the first and second Ōmoto incidents. Thus, this compilation may be the most useful for studying the Ōmoto-kyō before World War II.

The sect has attracted a great deal of attention not only from religious studies specialists, but also from social historians, sociologists and political scientists. The majority of these studies focus on Ōmoto-kyō under the leadership of Onisaburō. There are few detailed studies on Nao’s religious ideology and its background. Murakami Shigeyoshi’s Japanese Religion in the Modern Century (translated by Byron Earhart, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1980) is a rare work available in English that refers to the relationship between modern religious and political, economic, and social conditions in Japan. Murakami mentions the sect in the book as one of the most important religions in the history of modern Japan. Murakami’s Kindai Minshū-shuyō-shi no Kenkyū (A Study of the History of Japanese Modern Folk Religions) (Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1972) is focused on Nao’s religious teachings.

Thomas Nadolski’s The Socio-political Background of the 1921 and 1935 Ōmoto Suppression in Japan (Ph. D. dissertation for University of Pennsylvania, 1975) is focused on the political background of the Ōmoto incidents, and Ulrich Lins displayed similar interest in his book Die Ōmoto-Bewegung (The Ōmoto-kyō)

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9According to Yasumaru Yoshio ofudesaki compiled in Ōmoto Nenpyō are the most similar to the original. Ōmoto Shiryō Shūsei contains many of the ofudesaki from Ōmoto Nenpyō (edited by Ōmoto-kyō headquarters, Ayabe: 1924, unpublished to the public). Yasumaru, Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, p. 109.
(München: Oldernbourg Verlag, 1976). Miyata Noboru regards Ōmoto-kyō as a modern offspring of the tradition of faith in the descent of Miroku. 10 Kojima Shin'ichi refers to Nao as a typical shaman working in modern Japan. 11 Emily Groszos-Ooms defines Nao's religious group as a typical millenarian cult. 12

The main interest of this paper is the first stage of Ōmoto-kyō's evolution, from Nao's first possession to her loss of power within the growing organization in the 1910's. During this period, Ōmoto-kyō was small, and the teachings based on the Ofudesaki were not refined. However, it offered salvation to people who were struggling with a life full of sufferings in the lowest stratum of society. The Ofudesaki represented their cry and had the power to expose the real causes of human sufferings as seen by poor, rural Japanese during this period.

The most detailed biographical study on Nao is that by Yasumaru Yoshio in his book Deguchi Nao (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbun-sha, 1977). Nao's biographical data in this paper will be cited from Yasumaru's book or The Ōmoto Nanajūnen-shi (The seventy years' history of Ōmoto) compiled by the Ōmoto-kyō organization. The organization's headquarters commissioned a group of first class scholars 13 to write a comprehensive history of Ōmoto-kyō in 1964 (Yasumaru worked for this project as a researcher). Though the content of Ōmoto Nanajūnen-shi is not entirely objective or accurate, I feel it to be a satisfactory secondary source.

13 The main writers are Sagi Akio, Matsushima Eiichi, Ueda Masaaki, and Murakami Shigeyoshi.
II. RELIGIOUS CURRENTS FROM THE 1840'S TO THE 1890'S

A. INTRODUCTION

When Japanese society went through a period of swift transformation in the mid-nineteenth century, economic, political and social changes were clearly reflected in religious change. Throughout Japanese history rulers have recognized that religion could be a vital support of their rule or a great force against them. Therefore, controlling religion has always been an important task for rulers. The Tokugawa Bakufu established a well structured system to control religions. It is important to notice that the Tokugawa Bakufu used religious organizations, especially Buddhist ones, as a part of its governing system, but it did not use religion as a basis of its authority. In other words, the Bakufu was fundamentally based on secular power, and was independent of religious authority. As Yamamoto Shichihei pointed out, the separation of religion and politics was an established tradition among samurai rulers from the thirteenth century on. Whenever the Tokugawa Bakufu regarded a religious movement as a threat to social and/or political stability, it suppressed the movement promptly. However, in principle, the Bakufu took a non-interventionist policy towards people's "personal" faith. This attitude is in sharp contrast to the Meiji government's religious policy that used religion as the source of its authority and interfered in all aspects of the Japanese people's lives.

B. RELIGIOUS POLICIES OF THE TOKUGAWA BAKUFU

The persecution of Christianity was the most important religious policy of the Tokugawa Bakufu. After Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598) succeeded to Japan's military leadership in 1582, he reversed the policy of Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) who allowed Christian missionary work, and began persecuting Christians in 1587. There were many reasons behind the policy reversal, but one of the main reasons was that Hideyoshi suspected that the Catholic priests were conspiring to take over Japan. The persecution against Christianity began mildly, but became more severe after Tokugawa Ieyasu became the ruler of Japan. In 1614, the Tokugawa Bakufu began to expell all foreign missionaries and some leading Japanese Christians from Japan. The Shimabara Revolt of 1637-38 made the Bakufu determined to exterminate Christianity completely. The Shimabara Revolt was the largest peasant uprising in Japanese history. It was not primarily a religious uprising, but a protest against heavy taxation. However, because some leaders of the revolt were Christian samurai and a majority of the rebels had Christian backgrounds, the Bakufu was convinced that Christianity was a great threat to its rule. Not only Christianity but some Buddhist sects such as Ikkō-shū and Nichiren-shū Fuju-fuse-ha were also persecuted because the

15Christianity was introduced into Japan in 1549 by Roman Catholic missionaries. The missionary work, chiefly carried on by Portuguese Jesuits, had been expanding rapidly with the growth of trade between Japan and Europe.

16Ikkō-Shū (Single-minded sect) is another name for the Jōdo Shin sect of Buddhism. This sect was founded by Shinran (1173-1263) and became a major form of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan. Large-scale uprisings were carried out by adherents of Ikkō-Shū in the late 15th and 16th century. During the Tokugawa period the Bakufu always exercised precautions when dealing with the sect.

17Nichiren-shū was founded by Nichiren (1222-1282) in 1253. Its teaching is based on exclusive faith in the Lotus Sutra. Fuju-fuse-ha founded by Nichiō (1565-1630) in 1595 is a branch of Nichiren-shū. It teaches that the true believer of Nichiren-shū should neither receive offerings from nonbelievers nor give
Bakufu regarded these movements as threats to its rule and to social stability.

The Tokugawa Bakufu used Buddhist organizations as agents to enforce the ban on Christianity. Every family had to belong to a Buddhist temple and had to prove that all members of the family were Buddhists, not Christians. Each person's birth and death had to be registered at a temple, and the records were used by the Bakufu as the basis for a national census. The temples played many practical roles in the community such as conducting funerals, and educating people. In return, the Bakufu gave support to Buddhist organizations such as financial assistance to build temples, but it carefully eliminated any possibilities that Buddhists would gain secular power to stand against the Bakufu. Although theological studies progressed among Buddhist monk-scholars, monks in local temples lost their religious vitality and generally fell into mere formalism. The Tokugawa Bakufu also patronized Neo-Confucianism. Although there were some Confucianists such as Arai Hakuseki (1657-1725) and Yamazaki Ansai (1618-1682) who emphasized the religious aspects in Neo-Confucianism, the Bakufu mainly interested itself in Neo-Confucianism as a philosophy and code of ethics for stabilizing and ordering the state. Confucianism was introduced into Japan in the seventh century, and was kept alive mainly within the Buddhist tradition. Shinto and other folk religions also received some influences from it, such as the Confucian idea of cosmology. Neo-Confucianism is a general term for the interpretation of Confucianism popular in the Sung Dynasty (960-1279) in China. It is a well-unified system of thought including cosmology, humanistic

17(cont'd) them to nonbelievers. The Tokugawa Bakufu persecuted the sect repeatedly from 1608.
ethics and political philosophy to interpret all aspects of the world, society and man. There were several schools of Neo-Confucianism, but the one founded by Chu Hsi (1130-1200) (Shushi in Japanese) became dominant in Japan. 19 Neo-Confucianism was introduced into Japan and grew in popularity during the Ashikaga period (1392-1573) and reached its zenith as a tradition separate from other religions during the Tokugawa period. The Bakufu established an official school for samurai named Seidō-sho in 1630 to teach Neo-Confucianism and encouraged feudal lords to establish similar schools in their Han (domains).

Neo-Confucianism also spread among merchants and farmers. By the end of the Tokugawa period, more than half of the schools established by the local lords became open to non-samurai classes. 20 There were many private schools, most of them located in Buddhist temples, to teach the basic Confucian teachings, as well as language skills and abacus use.

Shingaku (the Mind Learning) founded by Ishida Baigan (1685-1744) was the most influential Neo-Confucianism related movement among common people. Baigan was born as the son of a peasant but became a merchant in Kyoto. In addition to his hard work at the shop, Baigan devoted himself to seeking “the model way for human beings.” He tried to integrate Confucianism, Shinto and Buddhism, and established his own teachings which provided a new system of ethics for common people. Shingaku was not merely an ideology, but also a

19 The Shushi school in the Tokugawa period was established by Hayashi Razan (1583-1657). About this school, see Minamoto Ryōen’s Tokugawa Shisō Shōshi (The Historical Outline of Ideology in the Tokugawa period) Tokyo: Chū Kōron, 1973.
20 Sha, Seiki, ibid., p. 97.
practical movement attempting to solve social problems. However, Baigan and his disciples never criticized the Tokugawa Bakufu, nor paid much attention to the causes of social injustice. Consequently, many local lords, such as the lord Kuchiki of Fukuchiyama (where Deguchi Nao was born) supported and used the Shingaku movement as a tool to make people industrious at work and loyal to their lords.

Shinto was not an exception, and the Bakufu exercised surveillance over it. The faith arose out of the prehistoric religious practices in Japan. Early Shinto was a series of religious practices that focused on fertility through methods such as praying to Kami-gami for harvests and having thanksgiving for harvests in a village community. However, in the course of history, Shinto became a more complex phenomena, ranging from the complicated rites conducted by the Tennō at his court to worshipping the Kami of rice fields enshrined in a tiny shrine in a village. Shinto received heavy influences from Buddhism, Confucianism and religious Taoism. For example, one Buddhist theory called *Honji-Suijaku* (literally, original substance manifests traces) is an important theological base of Buddhist-Shinto syncretism. According to this theory, Japanese Kami-gami are the “manifest traces” of certain Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. This theory became widespread after the Tendai and Shingon sect of Buddhism were introduced into Japan in the ninth century. Buddhist-Shinto admixture has developed further since

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21 Shingaku followers put their efforts into welfare works, such as feeding the poor in Kyoto. About their activities, see Minamoto Ryōen, ibid. (1973), p. 116.
22 Religious Taoism was introduced into Japan around the seventh century and developed into a system of belief called *Ommyō-dō* (literally, the Way of Yin and Yang). *Ommyō-dō* includes many magical practices and divinations.
23 Shingon-shu was established by Kūkai (774-835) after he studied at the Chen-yen Buddhist school. Saichō (767-822) also went to China to study at the T’ien-t’al school of Buddhism and founded Tendai-shu after he returned to Japan.
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then. Many Shinto shrines co-existed with Buddhist temples known as Jingū-ji (shrine-temples) where Buddhist priests could chant Buddhist sutras for Kami-gami.

In the Tokugawa period, both Buddhist and Shinto affairs were under the jurisdiction of the Jisha-bugyō (the Commissioner of temples and shrines), but the office usually interfered in only secular matters, such as a financial problem or a criminal case, related to a temple or shrine. Most large Shinto shrines were under the control of hereditary religious authorities. From the middle of the twelfth century on, the Shirakawa family was appointed to head the Office of Shinto in the Tennō’s court, but after the fifteenth century, the Yoshida family became a dominant force in medieval Shinto. The Tokugawa Bakufu gave the Yoshidas official control of Shinto Shrines in 1682. The Shirakawas’ authority was also recognized by the Bakufu, but that family’s influence was much smaller than the Yoshida’s. Needless to say, the root of the Yoshida’s and of the Shirakawa’s religious authorities was the Tennō who has been seen as the highest Shinto priest. However, the Tennōs had lost most of their direct relationships with shrines by the fifteenth century. Even Shinto rites in the court declined in the Muromachi period (1393-1575) because the Tennō had lost power and could not get enough funding to perform such rites.

The Tokugawa Bakufu established a system to control the Tennō and his court in 1615 based on the Kinchū Narabini Kuge Sho-hatto (The Ordinances for the Emperor and the Court Nobles). This law regulated the emperor and the nobles’ activities, and restricted their political activities. On the other hand, the Bakufu
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gave financial support to the Tennō to revive some religious rites in his court.
For example, the *Niiname-sai* (the thanksgiving for rice harvest), the most important rite in the emperor's court, was revived in 1688 after 225 years of absence. Basically, glorifying the Tennō's religious authority was useful to the Bakufu to strengthen its political authority as the Shogun was formally appointed by the him. 24

Folk Shinto activities were very active in the Tokugawa period. For example, many people joined *Kō* (confraternities) and made pilgrimmages to the Ise shrine, Mount Fuji and other sacred places. Peasants kept their village's annual agricultural and other ceremonial cycle active every year. In the large cities like Edo (present Tokyo) and Osaka, merchants paid to make Shinto festivals larger and more pompous. Fujitani Toshio points out that the Tokugawa Bakufu did not suppress such tendencies but encouraged them and used those festivals as vents for people's frustrations with daily life. 25

C. THE RISE OF RESTORATION SHINTO

As mentioned before, Shinto was long overshadowed by foreign traditions such as Buddhism and Confucianism. However, there always had been movements to improve Shinto's inferior role amongst Japanese religions. For example, Kitabatake Chikafusa (1294-1354) wrote *Jinnō Shōtō-ki* (The Legitimacy of the Tennō Line)

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and tried to establish the theological basis for defending the legitimacy of the Tennō’s rule and for the supremacy of Shinto. Another example is the theory called Han-Honji Suijaku (Reverse Honji Suijaku) advocated by Yoshida Kanetomo (1435-1511). He asserted that Japanese Kami-gami were the Honji (original substance), and Buddhism and Confucianism were the flowers and branches of Shinto.

In the Tokugawa period, the rise of Neo-Confucianism stimulated the theological development of Shinto. In order to gain their independence from Buddhism, Neo-Confucianists such as Fujiwara Seika (1561-1619) and Hayashi Razan (1583-1657) attacked Buddhism and favoured Shinto. 26 In addition, Shinto traditionally emphasized “pureness” and “honesty.” These concepts were useful for Neo-Confucianists whose goal was to support the Japanese tradition and its political system. 27 Stimulation from Neo-Confucianism eventually led Shinto scholars to develop Shinto’s own theologies which rejected all foreign influences, even its former ties with Neo-Confucianism.

The Kokugaku (National Learning) movement emerged in the early eighteenth century. The father of this movement is Keichū (1640-1701) who tried to revive and reinterpret Japanese classics focusing on Manyō-shū (Collection of a Miriad Leaves), an anthology of Japanese poetry compiled in the eighth century. The instigators of the Kokugaku movement such as Kada Harumitsu (1669-1736) and Kamo Mabuchi (1697-1769) were seeking the true sentiments of the Japanese of antiquity through classical literature. Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), generally

recognized as the chief architect of the movement, devoted himself to studying the *Kojiki* (The Record of Ancient Matters) compiled in 712 by the Tennō’s order. The *Kojiki* tells how Kami-gami, the land of Japan, the Japanese people and the Tennō came into existence. Norinaga showed that the Japanese people of antiquity were ruled by the emperor who purportedly embodied the pure, natural and spontaneous Way of Kami. He asserted that “the Way of Kami” was vividly alive in his day, because the tradition had been inherited through the unbroken lineage of the Tennō. 28 Norinaga wanted to restore “true” Japanese spirit, but his ideology did not necessarily demand the restoration of the Tennō’s political power directly. 29 Norinaga’s posthumous disciple Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843) led the *Kokugaku* movement more deeply into the religious realm connected with politics. He established a new Shinto theory called *Fukko Shintō* (Restoration Shinto). He asserted the superiority of Shinto and of Japan in general, and that those who created the world and all things on the earth were the Japanese Kami-gami. Thus, there is a difference of kind, rather than of degree, between Japan, the land of Kami-gami, and other countries according to Atsutane. Amaterasu-Ômikami was entrusted by Kami-gami to rule Japan. Therefore, the emperor, who is a descendant of the Kami, is the legitimate ruler of Japan. 30 Restoration Shinto became the basis of *Sonno-ron* (the theology of reverence to the Tennō) which later became the rationale for overthrowing the Tokugawa Bakufu.

28About Motoori Norinaga’s view on the Tennō, see Motoori Norinaga’s “*Naobi no Mi-tama*” (The True Way of *Mi-tama*) *Motoori Norinaga Zenshū* vol.14, pp. 119-134, Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1968.
30See Hirata Atsutane’s *Tama no Ma-hashira* (The Pillar of Tama), Tokyo: Yûhôdô, 1931.
Even though the emperor lost actual control of Japan after the ninth century, special respect for the Tennō long continued as a potent force among the populace. Many historians, such as Wakamori Tarō pointed out that the Japanese people traditionally have had strong faith in Kishu (high birth). \(^{31}\) The degree of Kishu depends on how close a person or family is to the Tennō in his pedigree. Even samurai leaders felt they had to prove that they were a part of Kishu to make people follow them. For example, the Tairas, the first samurai clan who gained power over Japan in 1159, stressed that they had a blood relationship with Kammu Tennō (773-806). Such connections with Kishu have been seen as a very important qualification to be a leader of many areas even to a certain extent in modern Japanese society.

Another example of special respect for the emperor related to faith in Mi-tama, and the belief that the Tennō had powerful Mi-tama even if they did not have secular power. Mi is an honorific and respectful prefix, and Tama is believed to be something in man which survives the death of his body and continues to live. Tama is sometimes translated as soul. Tama, it is believed, often exerts a strong influence upon other people. For example, a Tennō who dies with resentment may become an extremely strong “force” working a curse upon the people. On the other hand, strong Mi-tama can be a great “force” against evils such as an epidemic. Therefore, people enshrine the Mi-tama of those who die in tragic circumstances to avoid curses and to seek help from the Mi-tama. The Tennō had great Mi-tama potential. This type of faith is called Go-ryō Shinkō and was

wide spread among the people in the Tokugawa period.\textsuperscript{32}

The third example is the popular worship of Amaterasu Ōmikami \textsuperscript{33} which started in the fourteenth or fifteenth century. \textsuperscript{34} The pilgrimage to the grand shrine of Ise where Amaterasu-Ōmikami is enshrined attracted many common people. Rashes of spontaneous group pilgrimages known as Okagemairi happened about ten times during the Tokugawa period. The largest one occurred in 1830, and nearly five million people (about 16 per cent of the population of Japan at that time) went to the shrine within the period of four months. \textsuperscript{35} However, Kinugasa Yoshiki argued that the faith in the Ise shrine did not directly relate to the worship of the Tennō as the ruler of Japan, because, for common people, the Ise shrine was the one where the guardian Kami-gami of agriculture were enshrined. \textsuperscript{36} Amaterasu Ōmikami was worshipped as the Sun Goddess, not the Tennō's ancestor, and Toyouke Ōkami who was enshrined in the outer shrine of Ise was worshipped as the chief Kami of agriculture.

There are decisive differences between the above mentioned "folk" Sonnō-ron among the masses and the Sonnō-ron held by people who were influenced by the

\textsuperscript{32} The cult of Go-Daigo Tennō (1288-139) is the most famous example of Go-ryō Shinkō. Go-Daigo Tennō tried to overthrow the Kamakura Shogunate to restore the Tennō's direct rule. He was defeated and died in exile. It is believed that this Tennō vowed to revenge himself upon his enemies on his death bed. His Mi-tama is enshrined in many shrines, such as Go-Daigo Jinja in Okayama prefecture.

\textsuperscript{33} Amaterasu-Ōmikami is believed to be the Sun Goddess, the most important Kami in Shinto mythology and who is believed to be the ancestor of the Tennō.

\textsuperscript{34} Kishimoto, Hideo, ibid. (1956), p. 29.


\textsuperscript{36} Kinugasa, Yasuki, ibid. (1976), p. 103.
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Kokugaku movement, especially Atsutane’s ideology. Surely, this latent faith in the Tennō among common people was a supportive condition of the restoration of imperial rule, although it played a very minor role because it seldom connected with concrete political movements. Even the enormous energy behind Okage-mairi was not transformed into a politically revolutionary force. The Kokugaku scholars paid almost no attention to Okage-mairi, and they were not interested in leading this mass movement into a revolutionary movement. 37 It is actually not surprising that the Kokugaku scholars took these attitudes, because the majority of them belonged to different social groups than those who joined Okage-mairi, the lowest segment of farmers, merchants or artisans. The scholars were samurai, rich village officials or rich merchants. The Kokugaku movement would not therefore produce the leaders who spoke for the oppressed masses, but prepared the way for the samurai who sought to build a state under the Tennō’s rule.

D. NEW RELIGIONS IN THE LATE TOKUGAWA PERIOD

On the surface, political power transferred from the Tokugawa Bakufu to the Meiji government through a coup d’état led by the samurai of Satsuma, Chōshū, Tosa and Hizen han. However, as Hani Gorō and many other scholars stress, subtle resistance movements against the Tokugawa Bakufu carried out by the masses contributed to the demolition of the Tokugawa Bakufu. 38 The numerous peasant rebellions were a typical example of this. According to Aoki Kōji’s

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estimate, there were over 2,800 uprisings during the Tokugawa period. Especially after the Tenmmei famine (1782-1787), peasant rebellions became more common, and a demand for Yonaoshi (the total renewal of the world) was the common aspect of them.

Another example of mass movements conflicting with the Bakufu were the rising new religions which sought the fundamental change of the world. These religions provided the masses with new Kami-gami who possessed great power to bring about the renewal and salvation of the entire world. Representative of these movements are Kurozumi-kyo, Tenri-kyo and Konkō-kyo.

The forerunner of these new religions was Fuji-kō. Since antiquity Mount Fuji had been an object of worship as one of Japan’s most sacred mountains. In the early Tokugawa period, Hasegawa Kakugyō (1541-1646) formed a cult called Fuji-kō which emphasized climbing Mount Fuji as a religious act. Fuji-kō’s sixth leader Jikigyō Miroku (1671-1733) called himself Miroku Bosatsu (Maitreya-bodhisattva) and foretold the advent of the new world, the world of Miroku. He asserted that people must reform their hearts and behaviour, because the “renewal of man” was the premise of the realization of the world of Miroku. Fuji-kō divided into many sects, but the number of followers grew in the early nineteenth century. According to Murakami Shigeyoshi there were over 400 branches and 70,000 followers in the capital, Edo, in 1841. In the teachings of Fuji-kō, there were few anti-authoritarian elements; rather, the faith urged

people to pay special respect to the Tennō and Shogun. However, Fuji-kō did not teach followers to obey these authorities blindly. For example, its eighth leader, Itō Sangyō (1746-1809), clearly asserted in his writing *Shimin no Maki* (A Volume for People of the Four Classes, 1808) that all men were equal in the sight of the Kami, *Sengen Dainichi*. This view directly conflicted with Bakufu social class policy which strictly divided people into four classes, samurai as the top followed by farmers, artisans and merchants as the lowest.

In 1847, Fuji-kō followers appealed to the Bakufu to recognize that the Miroku's descent was imminent and to make the Tennō accept Jikigyō Miroku's teachings. This action led the Bakufu to begin suppressing the movement. Two years after the appeal, the Bakufu banned Fuji-kō's nation-wide missionary works completely, though Fuji-kō's teaching focused on moralism, diligence and mutual aid which did not basically conflict with the Bakufu's policies. The Bakufu attached importance to the potential power of Fuji-kō followers which could have become a threat to the state.

Another forerunner of these new religions was Nyorai-kyō, founded by a woman named Kino (1756-1826), a farmer of Owari (presently Nagoya) in 1802. She said she was possessed by the Kami of *Kompira Gongen*, and that this Kami would preach the teachings of Shaka-nyorai, the saviour Kami of the world.  

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44 Kompira Gongen is a Buddhist-Shinto syncretic Kami that has its origins in the Indian crocodile god of the Ganges, Kumbhira. The Kotohira Shrine where this is enshrined enjoyed great popularity during the Tokugawa period.
Kino's teachings were based on a belief in one central Kami and contained a creation myth. Fujitani Toshio mentioned the possibility of Christian influences on Kino. Kino emphasized the equality of all men, and said Shaka-nyorai would save the poor first. In 1858, Kino's missionary work was banned by the government of Owari domain as a hidden Christian cult.

Kurozumi-kyō was the first new mass religious movement to establish itself as a firm religious organization. The founder of Kurozumi-kyō, Kurozumi Munetada (1780-1850), was a low-ranking Shinto priest in Bizen domain (presently Okayama prefecture). In 1812, he lost his parents. As a result of this loss, Munetada was deeply depressed and began suffering from a severe case of pulmonary tuberculosis. Two years later, his condition turned for the worst, but one day he experienced a mystical unity with the Kami of the sun, Amaterasu-Ōmikami. After the experience, he recovered from the illness and realized the special quality of his soul. He eventually came to believe that he himself was Iki-gami (a living kami) identical with the Kami of the sun. According to Munetada, Amaterasu-Ōmikami was the creator of the universe, and if people kept away from egotism and entrusted everything to the Kami they would unite with the Kami and would receive this-worldly benefits and protection from the Kami. Kurozumi-kyō first spread among samurai of the Okayama domain and gradually attracted rich farmers and merchants. By the end of the Tokugawa period, the number of followers reached two hundred thousand.

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44(cont'd) Nyorai (SK: tathagata) is an epithet for a Buddha.
Murakami Shigeyoshi regards the doctrine of Kurozumi-kyō as a theory which "gave all-out support to the feudal control system" and which "did not directly reflect the suffering of the people." On the other hand, Funitani Toshio asserts that Kurozumi-kyō taught that all men were equals as children of Kami, and also sought the emancipation of human nature from the Bakufu's moral controls. Even if Munetada did not intend to confront the Bakufu, the formation of a new religious movement which spread a new ideal was seen as a criticism against the Bakufu. As soon as Kurozumi-kyō became a visible movement in the 1840s, the government of Okayama domain began oppressing the religion, and in 1848 samurai belonging to the domain were prohibited from joining it.

This wave of new religions produced unique and powerful Kami-gami. The Kami who possessed Nakayama Miki (1798-1887) was the most representative of them. Miki was the wife of a rich farmer in Yamato (presently Nara prefecture), and was a long-time devotee of the Jodo (Pure Land) Buddhist sect. After a long period of self-sacrifice for her husband and family, Miki began being possessed by the Kami later called Tenri-Ō-no-Mikoto (Heavenly Wisdom King Lord). The Kami made Miki write a collection of auto-written oracles called Ofudesaki (A Tip of Writing Brush), and gave people a strong message of Yonaori (world reform). The Kami of Tenri-kyō was believed to be the Oyagami (the Parent Kami), the most fundamental and true Kami of the world. Tenri-kyō's doctrine has a monotheistic tendency. This monotheistic Kami came into Miki's body to bring

about the total salvation of the world. The salvation would take place in this world, if people cleaned up the eight “dusts” (evil thoughts), such as envy, anger, greed, and if people realized that everything including one’s own body was actually a borrowed thing from the Kami. Then people would be able to live Yōki-gurashi (a joyous life).

Miki clearly noticed that people had been suffering from ill treatment by the Bakufu, and furiously the inequality among people. She called people who possessed power and money Takayama (the high mountain), and the masses were described as Tanizoko (the valley bottom). The Kami insisted that people must once go down to the Tanizoko to receive salvation. Miki herself experienced the complete material loss of her family property. She understood the experience as the will of Kami.  

Tenri-kyō gradually spread among farmers in Yamato area through miracle healing of illness and aid in safe births. After 1864, Tenri-kyō expanded rapidly and began developing its systematic doctrine. Tenri-kyō’s missionary works were not much suppressed by the Bakufu, but were repeatedly disturbed by the people who followed the mountain ascetics and also performed miracle healings.  

Later, Tenri-kyō became one of the prime subjects of religious oppression under the Meiji government because its doctrine fundamentally contradicted Tennō worship, and its strong anti-authoritarian sentiment was seen as an obstacle to the Tennō’s rule.

51 The mountain ascetics are followers of Shugen-dō. This religion is syncretic, combining Shinto belief in mountains as holy places with esoteric Buddhist practices. It emerged in the end of the twelfth century and was quite popular during the Tokugawa period. The ascetics were believed to possess magic power to heal illness and to bring other benefits to believers.
The Kami of Konkō-kyō also had unique characteristics, and the faith's doctrine contained the embryos of a modern mass religion. Konkō-kyō was founded in 1859 by Kawate Bunjirō (1814-1883) who was born in Bittchū domain (presently Okayama prefecture). Bunjirō, a pious man from his youth, especially feared the curse of Konjin. Konjin is one of the Kami-gami venerated by believers in Ommyō-dō, a widespread folk religion derived from Japanized Taoism. Followers believed that Konjin inflicts severe punishment on anyone who violated the direction in which he was dwelling. Bunjirō's life was filled with misfortunes, and he believed that these were caused by Konjin. However, after he was possessed by the Kami, he realized that Konjin was actually the parent Kami of the universe, later called the Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami. This understanding of Konjin is in sharp contrast to the Kami of popular belief. Bunjirō then awakened to a totally different view of the world through his reverse image of Konjin. 52

Among new religions founded in the nineteenth century, Konkō-kyō's Kami posessed the most clear monotheistic character. 53 Bunjirō asserted:

Izanagi and Izanami-no-Mikoto 54 are human beings. Amaterasu Ōmikami is also human and the Tennō who are descendants of her are naturally human . . . . The Tenchi-Kane-no-Kami is the superior Kami, the Kami of Kami-gami. 55

52Regarding the life and religious ideology of Kawate Bunjirō, see Murakami Shigeyoshi's Konkō Daijin no Shōgai (The Life of Konkō-Daijin), Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1972.
54According to Kojiki, Izanagi and Izanami were commanded by the heavenly Kami-gami to give birth to the land of Japan. Amaterasu Ōmikami was born was Izanagi washed his left eye.
Bunjirō also asserted that all persons were equal since all of them were the parishioners and children of Konjin. He emphasized that people could receive *Okage* (this-worldly benefits) from Konjin if they believed in the Kami sincerely and respectfully. He promised healing of illness but recommended receiving medical attention at the same time. Superstitious folk beliefs, such as auspicious and inauspicious days and directions, were criticized by Bunjirō. Konkō-kyō did not call for total renewal of the world, but man's inner salvation. 56

After the 1860s Konkō-kyō spread throughout Okayama domain where many Kurozumi-kyō followers dwelled. Konkō-kyō attracted people who belonged to a lower social stratum than Kurozumi-kyō followers. Like Tenri-kyō, Konkō-kyō was suppressed by the mountain ascetics who accused Bunjirō of teaching a heresy. After being oppressed by the government of Okayama domain in 1863, Konkō-kyō sought affiliation with the Shirakawa school of Shinto as an official Shinto sect.

These new religions of the late Tokugawa period were mainly products of the unstable social conditions and the Bakufu's collapsing control of society. The masses intensely longed for the renewal of the world and for powerful Kami to protect them. New Kami-gami were created, and some of them survived despite severe suppression from the Bakufu, established religious organizations and other enemies. Not one became a leading ideology for overthrowing the Tokugawa Bakufu, but they surely eroded the foundation of the Bakufu's rule. New religions continued to represent the cry of the masses after the Meiji Restoration.

Eventually, all of them had to confront State Shinto produced by the Meiji government.

E. BUILDING THE TENNO SYSTEM AND STATE SHINTO

On January 3, 1868, the proclamation of the Restoration of Imperial Government was issued in the name of Meiji Tennō, then a boy of 14. The architects of the new government were well aware that the power of the government rested on a flimsy foundation. The new leaders, especially Iwakura Tomomi (1825-1883), believed that it was essential to establish the Tennō's religious authority in order to secure the government's ruling power. Therefore, the government tried numerous means to elevate his religious authority along with establishing State Shinto. The Tennō's religious authority became the foundation of the ruling system known as Tennō-sei (the Tennō system) that governed all aspects of the Japanese people's lives until 1945.

In antiquity, the Tennō's authority originally sprang from his (or her) religious function as the highest chief priest who worshipped Amaterasu-Ōmikami and other Kami-gami, and thanked them for rice fertility on behalf of all people in the Japanese islands. At the same time, the Tennō himself became the Arahito-gami (the kami appearing as man) through special rites. The most important one was the Ōnahe-no-Matsuri (now called the Daijō-sai, the Great Tasting Festival). Even today, the content of the rite is not fully revealed to the public, but scholars have deduced that it is an intimate communion in the course of which the Tennō tastes rice along with his divine ancestress,
Amaterasu-Ômikami, and they became one. Thus, he obtains his religious authority as the chief priest as well as Arahito-gami. 57

During the seventh century, religious affairs and politics were firmly united in the hand of the Tennô, and he ruled over Japan as the priest-Kami-ruler. However, he lost his actual ruling power after the ninth century, though he kept “nominal” authority. After the sixteenth century, the Tennô could not perform even Shinto rites properly, mainly because of financial difficulties. During the Tokugawa period, the tenno’s existence had almost no connection with common people’s lives. Although vague respect to the Tennô had always existed in the bottom of the Japanese people’s minds, it was not an easy task for the Meiji government to “sell” the Tennô’s new politico-religious authority to the masses.

Immediately after the revival of the Tennô’s rule took place, the government set up the three basic policies in order to establish the system of Saisei-itchi (unity of rites and government) and to transform Shinto into a national religion. First of all, the government revived the Department of Shinto as the highest government body, following the ancient court organization. The second policy was to continue the Tokugawa Bakufu’s ban on Christianity. The third policy was the separation of Shinto and Buddhism to re-establish Shinto’s autonomy from other religions. With a small number of exceptions, Shinto shrines had been heavily influenced by Buddhism. The government ordered the elimination of syncretistic elements, such as separation of Kami-gami from Bodhisattvas or using Buddhist

ritual tools, from Shinto shrines. The government also developed policies to remove Buddhism from its previously privileged position under the Tokugawa Bakufu. For example, it confiscated all Buddhist temples’ lands in February, 1871. These policies were designed to cut the old tie between Buddhist temples and the people which was cultivated during the Tokugawa period.  

On April 6, 1868, *The Five Articles of the Charter Oath*, which stated the general principles of the new government was proclaimed. Despite the fact that the Oath contains apparently “democratic” statements, such as:

> Article 2: All classes, high and low, shall unite in vigorously carrying out the administration of affairs of state.  

strengthening the Tennō’s rule is the fundamental purpose of the Oath. The Tennō made the Oath to various Kami-gami, not to the people. In other words, the Tennō vowed to take responsibility to Kami-gami, not to the people. Then, the Tennō’s officials came forward to the Kami-gami and the Tennō, and signed their names to a written oath to the emperor. This type of Shinto rite was unprecedented, and was the first time that a Shinto rite directly symbolized the government’s political policy.

The government strove to make the masses understand who and what the Tennō was. *Gyōkō* (literally, the imperial outing) was one of the most effective propaganda methods. Before the Meiji Restoration, the emperor seldom went out

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from his palace in Kyoto. There were only three exceptions during the Tokugawa period, but during the Meiji period (1868-1911) the Tennō did Gyōkō more than 102 times and visited numerous places throughout Japan. Through Gyōkō, the government propagated the belief that the Tennō had been the legitimate ruler of Japan since she was created. Also, the imperial “divine nature” was systematically cultivated through Gyōkō. For example, every place the Tennō rested during Gyōkō was later preserved as a holy site. As Miyata Noboru points out, Gyōkō has strong ties with traditional folk faith in Maroudo-gami (The Visitor Kami). 61 Maroudo-gami usually does not live in a community but occasionally this Kami visits the community and brings blessings to the people. This type of faith helped to spread the Tennō’s “divine image” among the masses during the Meiji period. For example, some people scrambled to get pebbles saying that “If we get the pebbles from the road where the Tennō walked, we will be blessed for a good harvest and have peace in our home.” 62 The government cleverly used popular psychology to cultivate the faith in the imperial divinity. At the beginning of the Meiji period, people were allowed to see the Tennō marching through their community without any special preparations, but after the middle of the Meiji period the government set a strict standard governing the proper manner of seeing the emperor. 63 This included dressing formally and cleaning the road impeccably. The Tennō’s “divinization” developed quickly. After the 1890’s, the number of Gyōkō decreased, but the government encouraged the worship of the Tennō’s photographs. In other words,

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61 Miyata, Noboru, “Minkan-Shinkō to Tennō Shinkō” (Folk religions and Tennō Worship) Dentō to Gendai No.29, Tokyo: Dentō to Gendai-sha, 1974, p. 120.
the emperor became too "divine" to walk among common people.

In order to develop the Tennō’s religious authority, Shinto was systematized and centralized. In March, 1869, the Meiji Tennō visited the Grand Shrine of Ise. Although the shrine and the Tennō clan had had a close relationship since approximately the fifth century, the Tennō had never visited the shrine by himself since the time of Jito Tennō (645-697). For the Meiji Tennō’s visit to the Ise shrine, the special term Shin'etsu (literally, the Tennō’s audience) was used instead of Sampai (worship), because the emperor himself was Arahito-gami and had the same divine authority as those Kami-gami enshrined in the Ise shrine, according to the government officials. Through this visit, a strong continuing relationship was established, and the Ise shrine became the highest shrine in the Shinto shrines hierarchy. All Shinto shrines were placed under government control, and by July of 1871 all shrines were categorized into seven ranks from the Ise shrine as the tutelary shrine of the state to numerous tiny shrines labelled as Mukaku-sha (shrines with no rank).

Originally, there were many shrines where Kami-gami who did not have specific relations with the Kami-gami revered in Restoration Shinto were enshrined, but the government forced those shrines to enshrine Kami-gami based on Restoration Shinto mythology. The government also established many new large shrines. It began with the establishment of the Tokyo shrine (later called Yasukuni shrine, the national shrine for war dead) where those soldiers who fought with the pro-Tennō side and died in the Meiji Restoration battles were enshrined. Yanagida

Kunio pointed out that enshrining a person's Mi-tama (soul) in a "national" shrine was a new religious phenomenon. Other examples of the new shrines are the Heian-jingu (enshrining the Mi-tama of Kōmei Tennō, 1831-1866) and the Yoshino-jingū (enshrining the Mi-tama of Go-Daigo Tennō, 1288-1339).

In January 1870, the imperial decree propagating the Great Teaching was issued. The Great Teaching was the "official" Shinto doctrine centered around Tennō worship. In accordance with this doctrine new Shinto festivals were created. There were thirteen important festivals performed directly by the emperor in his court, but all of them were established after the Meiji Restoration. These new festivals mainly symbolized the legitimacy of the Tennō's rule. Eventually, the unbroken lineage from Amaterasu-Ōmikami to the first emperor of Jimmu to the present Tennō was asserted to be the unquestionable "truth", and worship of past successive Tennō was strongly emphasized by the government.

The government thrust these new festivals into annual religious activities held by the masses, and gradually eliminated traditional folk religious activities from daily life. New religions such as Tenri-kyō and Maruyama-Kyō (a derivative sect from Fuji-kō) began receiving severe persecution from the government, much worse than under the Tokugawa Bakufu.

In the first years of the Meiji period, radical attempts to establish Shinto as the only Japanese religion had been developed, but the government gradually turned

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away from those who were influenced by Restoration Shinto. There were two basic reasons for the change. First, radical Shinto revivalism included strong exclusionism which fundamentally contradicted the government's slogan "Culture and Enlightenment." Foreign spokesmen also pressured the Meiji government to eliminate the ban on Christianity, saying all enlightened countries assured religious freedom and separation of religion and government. The second reason was the revitalization of Japanese Buddhism. Buddhist organizations sought the government's official recognition, and the government realized that it was wise to avoid confrontation with Buddhist organizations which still had a strong following.

In September of 1871, the Department of Shinto was lowered in status to the Shinto Ministry, which was under the jurisdiction of the Council of State. The ban against Christianity was lifted in 1873. Apparently, the government's attitude toward religion shifted, but the Tenno's religious authority became more and more strongly emphasized. The Ministry of Religious Education was established after the abolition of the Shinto Ministry in 1872. The propagation of the Great Teaching continued through organized national education to implant Tennō worship among the Japanese people.

As voices calling for religious freedom and for separation of religion and government grew among Japanese intellectuals, such as Mori Arinori (1847-1889) and Nishi Amane (1829-1897), the government realized that it was neither wise nor practical to transform Shinto into the national religion. As a result, from about 1881 the government began asserting that Shinto was not a religion but the state ritual. After 1882 thirteen religious groups, such as Kurozumi-kyō,
Tenri-kyō, and Konko-kyō, whose doctrines were based on Shinto in a broad sense, were officially recognized as independent religions. These sects were called Kyō-ha Shintō (sect shinto). By this policy, Shinto was divided into State Shinto (non-religious state ritual) and Sect Shinto (religion). State Shinto was, needless to say, given a position higher than Sect Shinto, or Buddhist or Christian sects. All religious groups were supervised by the Bureau of Religions within the Department of Education, and were forced to take part in implanting Tennō worship into the minds of the masses. Any new religion during this period had to become a sub-sect of a Sect Shinto, otherwise its religious activity was seen as illegal and was suppressed by the government.

The establishment of “non-religious” State Shinto was of great convenience to the government. On one hand, the government could keep its original slogan Sansei Itchi (Unity of Rites and Government). On the other hand, it could assert that Japanese people were enjoying religious freedom. Moreover, State Shinto could be used as a powerful tool to cultivate patriotic support of the state in the minds of the Japanese people. The Meiji Constitution of 1889 guarantees religious freedom; Article 28 says:

Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief.

However, this Constitution itself is based on a specific religious belief. For example, Article One says:
The Empire of Japan shall be ruled over by Emperors of the dynasty, which has reigned in an unbroken line of descent for ages past.

And Article 3 emphasizes:

The person of the Emperor is sacred and inviolable. 67

The Tennō's religious authority was legally established by this constitution. Naturally, the religious freedom guaranteed by this constitution is a very limited right.

In 1890, the Imperial Rescript on Education was issued. This rescript became the most important basis for education and the actual “scripture” of State Shinto. It emphasized Shinto and Confucian principles which would cultivate the people's loyalty to the state. In schools, especially in elementary schools, students were taught Shinto mythology written in Kojiki and Nihongi as an unquestionable historical truth. Through education, the government tried to convince people that the Tennō had been the legitimate and only ruler of Japan since Amaterasu-Ômikami, and that Japan was sacred because the Tennō, who was Arahito-gami, ruled it. Any mythologies which contradicted the official interpretation were severely suppressed.

After the 1890's, State Shinto rapidly grew and became the ideological basis of Japanese ultra-nationalistic militarism. The government relentlessly eliminated any possible resistance to State Shinto, considering it a serious threat to *Kokutai* (national polity). The Japanese people were becoming involved in wars, justified with State Shinto.

The Meiji government made every effort to establish the state around the Tennō. They used mythology, religion, education and many other means. However, it is questionable if the masses completely accepted this belief in the Tennō. Despite heavy suppression from the government, various resistance movements against the government appeared in the Meiji period. Ómoto-kyō was one of those movements, and most clearly voiced doubts about the Tennō and the government.
III. DEGUCHI NAO'S LIFE BEFORE HER FIRST POSSESSION

A. INTRODUCTION

Deguchi Nao, who was to become the foundress of Ōmoto-kyō, was born in 1837 as a daughter of a poor carpenter in the town of Fukuchiyama in the province of Tamba (present-day Kyoto prefecture). Her family was desperately poor. She was therefore forced into domestic work while only ten years old. At the age of nineteen Nao married a carpenter, but this marriage only brought increased misery into Nao's life. In short, Nao had no end to hardships due mainly to poverty. Endurance was the only thing which sustained Nao's life. She suppressed her feelings and endured all pain silently.

Nao's early life was not an exceptional one. Rather, her life was typical of people who dwelt in the lower strata of society and could receive no benefit, only distress, from Japan's modernization. It is difficult to know how those people felt about their lives, because most of them lived silently.

However, there were some poor people who broke the silence. Nao became one such exception when she was fifty-four years old. On the lunar New Year's day of 1892, Nao entered into a possessed state. The Kami who possessed her gave His name as Ushitora-no-Konjin. This possession changed a humble and reticent woman completely. While in a possessed state Nao told and wrote the Kami's words, full of confidence and authority. Through Nao, the Kami revealed the "meaning" of the distressful lives of Nao and her fellows, and showed people an
image of an ideal world sharply different from the society which the Meiji government was trying to build.

Examining Nao’s life is very useful for viewing how people in lower social strata went through Japan’s modernization process. The record of her life is one of a few exceptional documents which has remained until today. Most of those people did not have any means of recording their lives as a result of a limited vocabulary to express their feelings with, or total illiteracy. At the time only a few literate people were interested in observing poor people’s individual lives, because the masses have tended to be treated as a crowd. However, one can hear Nao’s sonorous voice telling of the poor people’s lives in Japan’s transitional period between the end of the Tokugawa Bakufu and the rise of the modern state.

This chapter discusses Nao’s life experiences and her religious-intellectual background until her first possession, as well as her socio-political environment. These elements are the most important basis of Nao’s religious ideas and teachings.

B. NAO’S LIFE EXPERIENCES

1. Her Childhood

In 1837, the year when Nao was born, most parts of Japan suffered a terrible famine. This disaster caused irrecoverable damage to the already collapsing
Tokugawa Bakufu. Japan was entering socio-political chaos.

Like many of their neighbors, the Kirimuras had been on the verge of starvation when Nao was born into the family. Nao’s father, Kirimura Gorosaburō was a poor and incompetent carpenter. Gorosaburō’s father as well as his grandfather were known as skillful carpenters and established a good business, but Gorosaburō could not keep the family business going. His negligence of the job due to his dissipation ruined the Kirimura family. To survive, Gorosaburō had to sell houses and other property which he inherited from his father.

Nao grew up in a poor artisan’s district in the castle town of Fukuchiyama. Family members included Nao’s parents, Gorosaburō and Soyo, her step-grandmother, Take, her elder brother, Seibe, Nao, and her younger sister, Ryō. Gorosaburō was an alcoholic and often became violent when drunk. Nao was battered by him repeatedly. For example, one winter when Nao was only two Gorosaburō lost his temper and threw her into the back garden covered with snow. On the other hand, Nao’s mother Soyo was a model woman in the society of the Edo period. She sacrificed herself to serve her husband and to maintain her impoverished family. Undoubtedly, Nao’s personality was greatly influenced by the upbringing she received from her mother.

Mainly because of Gorosaburō’s indolent habits, his family’s financial circumstances grew worse and worse. He could not continue his work as a carpenter, and became a street vendor when Nao was six years old. Finally, Gorosaburo died of cholera. As a result, Nao had to begin serving an
apprenticeship as a nursemaid when she was ten.

Until she was sixteen years old, Nao worked for several merchants in Fukuchiyama, one after another. Therefore, Nao did not receive any formal education. Consequently, she could not develop her reading and writing, though she learned through her job some practical skills such as spinning and making sweet cake. In particular, her skill at spinning reached an advanced level. All of Nao's masters greatly appreciated her diligence and faithfulness. She also earned a good name by her filial piety. Nao saved most of her salary for her mother. Her devotion to her mother drew wide attention, even at the office of the fief of Fukuchiyama. As a result, Nao was rewarded by the lord when she was eleven. It can be said that Nao made every effort to follow the ideal example of a young worker, which was based on the way of thought of her masters and other members of the ruling class.

2. Nao's Marriage and Her Children

When she was seventeen years old, Nao left her work in Fukuchiyama's merchant district and returned home. Soon after that, Nao was adopted by her maternal aunt, Deguchi Yuri, because Yuri did not have any children who could continue the family name. However, Nao did not get along with her aunt Yuri, and went back home again after half a year. Yuri kept asking Nao to return to the Deguchi family. One day in 1854, Yuri visited Nao and entreated her to serve the Deguchi family's ancestral spirits. Immediately after the visit, Yuri committed suicide. After this tragedy, Nao was often haunted by Yuri's spirit,
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and as a result suffered a severe illness. Nao took these experiences very seriously and decided to obey Yuri's last wish.

In 1855, when she was eighteen, Nao married a young carpenter, Shikata Toyosuke. Toyosuke was also adopted into the Deguchi family and he changed his name to Deguchi Masagorō. Nao and Masagorō settled in the village of Tsubouchi (later called Hongū) outside the castle town of Ayabe. The fief of Ayabe was adjacent to the fief of Fukuchiyama, but, compared with Fukuchiyama, it was much smaller and poorer. Both its agriculture and industry were underdeveloped and therefore many of the people there had to work away from home.

Masagorō was a highly skilled carpenter, but was easily deceived by people. He often mismanaged his business and lost money. Moreover, he never worked when he was not inclined to do so. Consequently, the Deguchis' petty property dwindled and eventually Masagorō had to borrow money from usurers. However, Masagorō was a very light-hearted fellow. He even joked about the poverty of his family, loved drinking sake and enjoyed the performances given by strolling players. Nao's personality was in striking contrast to Masagorō's. Nao tried to shoulder all the troubles in her family and made no complaints against her husband. Although Nao was an obedient wife to Masagorō, their relationship was not a harmonious one. Consequently, disappointment and dissatisfaction kept growing in the depth of Nao's mind.

The financial condition of the Deguchis grew worse as the number of children in
the family increased. Nao had her first child, Yone, the year after her marriage. After that she bore ten more children during twenty-five years of marriage. Her youngest daughter Sumi, who later became the second Kyōshū (a spiritual leader) of Omoto-kyō, was born in 1883 when Nao was forty-six.

Nao's first daughter, Yone, married a farmer when she was nineteen. Less than half a year later, however, Yone was taken away from the farmer's house by a gambler named Otsuki Shikazo. Then Yone became his common-law wife. Nao felt utterly humiliated by the incident and was enraged at Yone. As a result, Nao kept Yone away from her house. Although Otsuki Shikazō was not a respectable man, he was gifted as a businessman. He opened the first meat shop in Ayabe and was successful. Yone also began her own business as a hair stylist and attracted many customers. Consequently, Shikazō and Yone became relatively rich and lived in a showy manner. It should be noted that eating beef was a newly introduced Western custom for Japanese people at that time. Therefore, a meat shop was a typical business of the modern era. Naturally, Nao disliked Yone's way of life. She felt Shikazō and Yone were earning money improperly through illegitimate businesses.

In 1885 when Nao was forty-eight years old, Masagorō was seriously injured falling from the roof of a house he was repairing. He was also attacked by palsy and could not leave his bed for over two years. During this period Nao had to take care of another injured person, her first son Takezō. He had been bound as an apprentice to a carpenter but became sick of his profession and attempted suicide. The attempt was unsuccessful, but he had to be laid up
beside his father. Immediately after his wound was cured, Takezō ran away from home.

While Masagorō was out of work, Nao had to bear all of the Deguchis’ problems. The medical expenses for Masagorō and Takezō were especially difficult. She tried to make money selling sweet cakes, but could not continue due to a lack of money with which to buy ingredients. Eventually, Nao began collecting rags and wastepaper. This hard and grubby job was common among the most destitute women. Nao had to walk around villages not only near Ayabe but also in the Fukuchiyama and Miyatsube areas.

In March 1887, Masagorō passed away at the age of sixty. The only thing he left to his fifty-three year old widow was debt and two small children still at home. Nao could not expect help from people around her because they themselves lived on a hand-to-mouth basis. Nao’s first daughter Yone could have helped Nao since she was the only person around Nao who had money to spare, but, as mentioned before, Yone and Nao had been on bad terms with each other. Yone often tried to manipulate Nao by offering money, and Nao hated Yone’s attitude towards her. Consequently, she had to keep working as a ragpicker. During the summer, Nao sometimes could get a silk spinning job. Since she was a good spinner, she could have earned a large amount of money from the job, but the chances of getting such jobs became smaller and smaller after silk spinning machines were introduced into the Ayabe area.
3. The Beginning of Nao’s Possession

In 1890 Nao’s third daughter, Hisa, who had been married to a rich shaman named Fukushima Toranosuke, became mentally deranged after childbirth. Her derangement was understood as a kami possession; therefore, Toranosuke invited a missionary from the Konkō-kyō church to perform an exorcism. The missionary succeeded in calming Hisa down. After this experience, Hisa and Toranosuke became zealous followers of Konkō-kyō which had been founded in 1859 by Kawate Bunjirō. The faith entered Tamba in the 1880’s and quickly grew to be the most popular new religion in the area. Nao was deeply shocked by Hisa’s possession and was quite impressed by the Konkō-kyō missionary’s work on Hisa. Nao brought the goshin-mai (blessed rice, which is a religious object in Konkō-kyō) back to her home and enshrined it in her family altar. With this as a start, Nao began to have contact with Konkō-kyō. It is often pointed out that the influence of Konkō-kyō is clearly seen in Ōmoto-kyō’s teachings.

At the end of 1891, a year after Hisa’s possession, Yone began to show signs of insanity. She became very violent and broke furniture. Moreover, Yone shouted and ordered her husband to repent of his misdeeds. According to the Ofudesaki (L. Jan. 5, 1902), Yone’s insanity was destined by Kami for the purpose of making Shikazō reform.

Yone’s possession gave another severe shock to Nao. Shortly after the incident began, Nao had a series of dreams in which she went into the divine world.

68 Yasumaru Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, p. 77.
Then, on the lunar New Year 1892, she was suddenly possessed by an invisible being. Ōmoto-kyō followers recognize this possession, Nao’s first, as the birth of the faith.

C. SOCIO-POLITICAL BACKGROUND

From the day of her birth Nao was obliged to experience a miserable life, mainly caused by extreme poverty. She grew up in a period of socio-political confusion and changes. Even after the Meiji Restoration took place, the condition of the people in the lower social strata, like Nao, did not improve; rather the new government brought them greater hardship and suffering. The rapid growth of a capitalist economy and industrialization in Japan was realized at the sacrifice of the lives and labor of these poor people.

The fief of Fukuchiyama in which Nao was born was a relatively large one in the Tamba area. The fief had been ruled by the Kuchiki clan since 1669. When Nao was born in the castle town of Fukuchiyama it was surrounded by rice and mulberry fields.

At that time, the town had a population of three thousand to four thousand. The majority of people were merchants, because Fukuchiyama was flourishing as

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69 Fukuchiyama's expected revenue was thirty-two thousand koku of rice per year. One koku is equal to 4.96 imperial bushels, in theory enough to feed one adult for one year.
70 Mulberry is food for silkworms. The fief was famous for the silk-raising and the silk manufacturing industry.
a trading port on the bank of the Yura River. However, the government of Fukuchiyama was facing financial difficulties, and it borrowed large sums of money from money lenders in Osaka. Consequently, the government imposed higher taxation upon the people. Economic pressure upon the people became much worse after 1842 when the government of Fukuchiyama introduced a retrenchment policy. For example, the government banned buying and selling luxurious articles such as silk kimonos and jewellery. Natural conditions did not help people either. Similar to the other parts of Japan, the Fukuchiyama area had been hit by continuous bad weather since the beginning of 1830. Consequently, peasants had had a very poor crop year after year. The worst famine occurred from 1836 to 1837, the year when Nao was born. The government of Fukuchiyama could not introduce any effective policy to solve its financial difficulty other than squeezing taxes from already starving people. Eventually, a large-scale riot by peasants arose in 1860. Although Nao's family's poverty was caused mainly by her husband's dissipation, in large measure the family's circumstances also reflected the social and economic disorder around the family.

In 1853, the year when Nao was adopted by the Deguchi family, Commodore Perry (1794-1858) of the U.S. Navy arrived off Japan and demanded that the Bakufu open the doors of Japan to trade. Five years later Japan signed commercial treaties with the United States and five other European countries. The beginning of foreign trade had a deleterious effect on Japan's economy. First of all, the excessive demand for articles to be exported, such as silk and tea,

\[71\] Itô Eizō, Ōmote, p. 21.
created a serious inflation in prices in domestic markets. For example, between 1862 and 1866 the price of rice increased six-fold; those of tea, silk and cotton doubled, tripled and quadrupled respectively. 72 The outflow of gold through foreign trade also aggravated the disorder of Japan’s economy.

The long-term developments which would lead to the overthrow the Tokugawa government was entering its final stage at the close of 1857. Japanese society was thrown into an uproar. Riots by hungry farmers or frenzied religious mass movements such as *Eejanaika* dancing 73 occurred very frequently. Nao spent the last years of the Tokugawa period in Ayabe where she settled with her husband after their wedding. The fief of Ayabe was small and its lord did not have direct relations with the leaders who played major roles in politics at that time. Therefore, Ayabe did not take any part in the transformation from the Tokugawa Bakufu to the Meiji government. Right after the establishment of the new Meiji government, the lord of Ayabe returned his land registers to the Tennō, the symbolic act which signified the acceptance of the new political dispensation, in 1868.

The government brought fundamental change into Japanese society. As its first step, the government took over all land and people hitherto controlled by the *Daimyo* (feudal lords) in 1869. For the purpose of creating a powerful, wealthy, and autonomous Japanese nation, the Meiji government declared new policies one

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72 Borton, Hugh, *Japan’s Modern Century*, p. 66.
73 Around 1876, a great number of people in Kyoto and Osaka suddenly joined together and began to dance frantically after they saw miraculous signs, such as paper amulets of the Ise Shrine falling from the sky. They sang clamorous songs with the refrain “*Eejanaika*” (It doesn’t matter, does it?) in ecstasy.
after another. Among their new policies the establishment of a land-tax system, a conscription system and a compulsory education system were most significant because they constitute the indispensible base for newly introduced modern capitalism. The government made efforts to show the people a bright picture of a “new Japan.” Unfortunately, people soon realized that the bright “new Japan” was an illusion, because the condition of life for the masses, especially for poor peasants, deteriorated after the abolition of the Tokugawa Bakufu.

The government’s program of establishing “modern Japan” inevitably required massive expenses, and the government depended on the revenue from the agrarian sector during the first half of the Meiji period, because neither light or heavy industry had yet become major sources of revenue. Consequently a large number of peasants as well as middle- and small-scale farm owners fell into debt due to the heavy taxes imposed upon them. Eventually, the latter lost their lands and became tenant farmers who suffered by paying excessively high agricultural rent to their landlords. Military conscription, introduced in 1873, was also a burden for the masses, because it meant not only forced labor, but a loss of manpower on the land. Moreover, the compulsory education system did not give much benefit to most people in the lower social strata because they could not afford to pay school expenses for their children.

These grievances drove the peasants to riot. During the first ten years of the Meiji period, 674 incidents took place at a rate “considerably higher than the

74 Landlords payed only the land tax and imposed all other farming expenses upon their tenants as a part of the rent. Thus, rents became exorbitant.
rate for almost any decade during the Tokugawa period.” Some of the incidents were on a large scale. For example, a riot which took place in 1873 in Fukoka prefecture involved three hundred thousand people incensed by the high price of rice. In the same year, two thousand peasants rioted in Ayabe, protesting against the new policies introduced by the Meiji government such as military conscription. These rioters also showed their strong anti-westernization sentiment by doing such things as protesting against the ban on the traditional topknot hair style imposed by the government. Although Nao never mentioned her views on this riot, her criticism of the Meiji government’s policies shown in the Ofudesaki has something in common with the rioters’ remonstrances.

During the Edo period both agriculture and industry in the Ayabe area were underdeveloped and very unstable. Cotton and low-quality silk were produced, but they could not bring enough benefit to the people to keep them from poverty. Even after the Meiji Restoration, people’s lives in Ayabe changed only slowly. Nao’s living conditions were not drastically affected by the change in government, but continued to worsen.

Nao’s house was located in the village of Tsubouchi (later called Hongu). Those who lived in the village were petty farmers, ruined ex-samurai, peddlars and petty artisans. Nao’s daughter Sumi later described her home village as “the

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77 Yasumaru, Yoshio, *Deguchi Nao*, p. 64.
village where there were so many unhappy people." According to Sumi, there were an unusually high number of ex-criminals, disabled and mentally-disturbed people in her neighbourhood. Some of them ruined their lives by gambling and dissipation. Tsubouchi village was a drift of victims of depressed economic condition and failures who could not go with the tide of the times. Nao's family was not an exception. Unfortunately, these impoverished people treated each other harshly. In one ofudesaki (Feb. 8, 1894), Nao condemned her neighbour's selfishness and warned that the village would be called "the village of evil villains" when the New World began, unless the people reformed themselves. The author of Omoto Nanajūnenshi emphasizes that Nao was repeatedly forced to see the ugly side of human nature through her life in the village.

When Nao was adopted into the Deguchi family, it owned some houses and small farm lands. Although it was rather rich among its neighbours, the Deguchis went to ruin rapidly. The main cause of the ruin was Nao's husband's dissipation, but Nao seemed to feel that her family was exploited by her relatives and other people around her. Eventually, the Deguchis lost all their property and failed in 1884. The family had to borrow some money from relatives, leaders of the village and a bank to pay taxes and daily expenses. Nao suffered every year from pressure to pay debts. The Deguchi's bankruptcy occurred during a period of dramatic deflation. As the Japanese capitalistic system developed, inflation became a more and more serious problem every year.

78 Yasumaru, Yoshio, ibid., p. 61.
79 Deguchi, Sumi, Tsukinu Omoide (Unforgettable Memories), quoted in O.N., p. 55.
80 O.S., P.18.
81 O.N., p. 55.
Especially when the government issued bonds and paper money to cover military expenditures incurred by the 1877 civil war in Kyushu, the Satsuma Rebellion. Japan's currency system collapsed into a crisis. Stringent monetary reforms and tax increases were undertaken by Finance Minister Matsukata Masayoshi (1835-1914) in 1881. Matsukata established a tight-money policy and withdrew massive amounts of currency from the market. This drastic deflationary policy led to a great fall in crop prices, and was a hard blow to small farmers. Lower class town people like Nao also received a blow because of higher taxes. Finally, Japan experienced its first genuine capitalistic depression and panic in 1890. 82

After her husband was injured in 1885, Nao supported her family by selling sweet cakes or collecting rags. During the summer she sometimes worked as a silk-spinner. The silk industries in Ikaruga county in which Ayabe was located had been developing much slower than those in the prefectures around Tokyo, but after silk looms were introduced into Ikaruga in 1882 the speed of development quickened. Then, in 1885, the Ikaruga silk industries entered a turning point, because the government of Kyoto prefecture 83 decided to encourage the growth of silk industries. The yield of raw silk jumped 65 per cent between the years of 1890 and 1891. The number of silk-spinning factories also grew quickly after 1886. Silk processing was no longer a cottage industry; it was based in management-controlled factories full of machines. Naturally, traditional silk-spinners like Nao lost their jobs, and their lives were completely

83 Ikaruga county belongs to Kyoto prefecture.
disrupted. It should be noted that 28 people in the Ikaruga county became insane in 1891. Two of Nao's daughters, Hisa and Yone, also became insane around that year. There may be some link between industrial development and the number of mentally disturbed persons, because the sudden advent of the machine age might have shaken people's life patterns to the bottom and driven them to deep anxiety.

Nao's social environment was filled with numerous disadvantages from the very beginning of her life. She was continuously suffering from severe poverty caused by the successive economic crises of the early Meiji period. People like Nao received very little or no benefit from "modern" reforms introduced by the Meiji government; industrialization, for example, took jobs away from Nao and other silk-spinners. Education is another example. The government set the compulsory education system, but none of Nao's children received a proper education because the expenses were too high. These facts are important in understanding the back-ground of the anti-modernization ideas which are found in her Ofudesaki.

D. NAO'S RELIGIOUS AND INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND

Until Nao was possessed by Usútorâ-no-Konjin, she had seldom or never expressed herself. However, her "ideas", which later became the basis of the Ōmoto-kyō teachings, had been formed slowly in Nao's mind. Although Nao received neither education in school nor systematic religious training from any institutional religion, she learned many facts of life through her struggle against

84 Yasumaro, Yoshio, ibid., p. 59.
extreme poverty and other difficulties. These are the most important factors that cultivated Nao's "ideas". Another important element which influenced them came from new religions, especially from Konkō-kyō and Tenri-kyō, which were quite active at that time in the province of Tamba. Nao's natural disposition, upbringing and the vocational training she received from her employers, as well as the cultural environment of Tamba, these elements were also reflected in her ideas and teachings after her first posession.

1. Tamba -- the Womb of Shamans

As Kojima Shin'ichi and many other scholars have pointed out, Deguchi Nao manifested shamanistic attributes when she was in the possessed state. Also she performed prophecy and faith healing. Those are usually considered shamanistic activities.

Various types of shamanistic traditions are found in many parts of the world, particularly in northeastern Asia and the central Asia steppe area. Shamanism has also become deeply rooted in Japan since antiquity. Shamans were always a part of common people's lives. Shamans solved people's anxieties and gave direction to their lives, especially when Japanese society became very unstable.

85 About these new religions that arose at the end of the Tokugawa period, see chapter one.
86 Fukchiyama and Ayabe were parts of this province.
Shamans played a more active role among people and attracted a large number of followers. It is noteworthy that particularly strong shamanistic traditions have existed in the Tamba area since the end of the Yayoi period (around the third century A.D.). According to recent archeological studies, the Tamba area was strongly influenced by “Izumo” culture.  

The province of Izumo (present-day Shimane prefecture) was located on the northern coast of Japan, facing the eastern side of the Korean peninsula in which another shamanistic tradition has flourished. The Izumo culture is deeply related to Shinto. Roughly speaking, Shinto mythology can be divided into two streams, namely the Ise line and the Izumo line. The former began with Amaterasu-Omikami, the Sun-goddess who is believed to be the direct ancestor of the Tennō clan. The latter began with Okuninushi-no-Mikoto, the mythical ruler of the nether world and Izumo province. When the Tennō clan took political power in Japan around the sixth century, the Ise line became dominant in Shinto. In Shinto documents such as the Kojiki and Nihongi, which were compiled by the Tennō’s order, those kami-gami who belonged to the Izumo line played rather minor roles and were eventually absorbed into the pantheon of the Ise line.

However, Kojima Shin’ichi notes that the Izumo Shinto tradition survived in certain areas such as Tamba and Tajima, and the mythology about the kami-gami of Izumo was orally transmitted by the people. Around the third century, the Tamba area was under the influence of the Wani clan that was known as the shaman-priesthood lineage of the Izumo line of Shinto. Interestingly, the area where Nakayama Miki, the foundress of Tenri-kyō, was

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90 Kojima, Shin’ichi, ibid., p. 262.
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born was also under the control of the Wani clan in the fourth century. Kojima speculates that the ancient shamanistic tradition in those areas was the “womb” of modern shamans like Nao and Miki. 91

There are several episodes from her early life which may indicate Nao's shamanistic disposition. However, most of these episodes resemble legends for which there is almost no concrete evidence. Even so, some episodes are still worth consideration. For example, when Nao was in her early teens she would sometimes disappear from her master's home for several days. When she came back she seemed to be distracted, and she told people that she had been on a mountain for ascetic exercises. 92 This “legend” suggests that Nao was gifted with the qualities of a shaman. Murakami Shigeyoshi interpreted this legend in a different manner: through these “disappearances”, Nao must have gained a strong impression that an action authorized by Kami would relieve her from her master's authority, and make her free from hard labour. 93 Another legend says that young Nao often made predictions. Even at the age of six, she foretold that the world of Miroku would come. 94 Moreover, there is another episode in which Nao was repeatedly haunted by her aunt Yuri's spirit. This episode clearly shows that Nao had unusually sensitive nerves. As has been mentioned before, Nao's maternal aunt Yuri committed suicide after she entreated Nao to become an adopted heir of the Deguchis. Nao was deeply shocked by this tragedy. Nao believed that Yuri's spirit repeatedly haunted her, and as a result suffered a

93 Murakami, Shigeyoshi, Kindai Minshū-shūkyō-shi no Kenkyū, p. 201.
severe illness. Nao's extreme physical and mental reaction to this tragedy is another sign that Nao had the potential to become a shaman.

Nao's shamanistic disposition had been growing on the soil of the Tamba culture. The influence from the Izumo religious tradition that survived in Tamba is found in the mythological stories of Nao's Ofudesaki. Detailed analysis of this mythology belongs in later chapters.

2. Nao's Upbringing and Shingaku

Nao's biographies, which are written by Ōmoto-kyo followers such as Deguchi Eiji and Itō Eizō, emphasize that Nao had been very religious from childhood. Unfortunately, there is virtually no information available about the religious background of Nao's parents except that they were parishioners of the Fukuchiyama Ikkyū-jinja Shinto shrine, and of the Hoshu-ji temple which belonged to Pure Land Buddhism. However, it would be safe to assume that Nao was familiar with folk religion, which was composed of Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism, and many other magico-religious beliefs, but that she had almost no chance to study the religious practices of institutionalized religions. Besides folk religion, there was a form of philosophical thought which might have influenced Nao's view of life. It was called Shingaku, and was very popular among the people of the urban classes in the Tamba area.

96 About Shingaku, see chapter one, section A.
Since the middle of the eighteenth century, the Tokugawa Bakufu began falling into serious financial difficulty. The instability of the Bakufu’s rule affected most local fiefs, including Fukuchiyama, whose government had a close relationship with the Tokugawa Bakufu. The Fukuchiyama government was well aware that the government’s control over people was weakened. Therefore, the sief’s government changed its ideological policy. The new policy focused on the economy and education. The government made contracts with influential merchants in Fukuchiyama, and tried to monopolize trade. It also made an effort to educate people to be obedient. Actually, this education policy had been developing since 1802 when the lord of Fukuchiyama, Kuchiki Michitsuna, wrote an essay named “Kunjō” (Admonitions) which emphasized Confucian ethics such as loyalty and filial piety.

From 1802 on, lecturers sent by the lord walked throughout his fief and propagated “Kunjō” to the people. As part of the propagation, the lord rewarded “model people” like Nao. “Kunjō” spread without much difficulty, mainly because its teaching was not totally unfamiliar to the common people. The essay was deeply influenced by the Sekimon Shingaku school’s interpretation of Confucian ethics. The school was founded by Ishida Baigan who belonged to the merchant class and had played an important role in popular moral culture since the latter half of the eighteenth century. As mentioned in chapter one, Ishida Baigan was born in 1685 in the same province of Tamba where Nao was born. He devoted himself to seeking “the model way for human beings” through studying Shinto theology, Confucianism and Zen Buddhism. Baigan had the experience of enlightenment when he was around forty years old. He felt that
his heart synchronized with the Heart of Nature, and he gained a completely calm state of

Baigan taught people that in order to gain a joyful and calm life it is essential to know one's "heart" and "nature." According to Baigan, human nature is originally good and is united with the hearts of heaven and earth. However, human desires and selfishness darken this nature; thus man has lost his heart. If a person is enlightened as to his own nature, there will be no "selfish heart" and then his true heart will become like the sky. Nothing will bother him any longer: He can enjoy a perfect, calm state of mind, and can live an ethically faultless life with no difficulty. Baigan called this state of living Anraku (comfort). Moreover, Baigan set forth clear and plain ethics for the common people and encouraged them (especially the merchants) to work hard at their occupations. Merchants welcomed Baigan's teachings mainly because it showed that there was no contradiction between their practising an ethical life-style and their receiving gain from their trades.

Nao's mother, Soyo, practiced faithfully what Lord Kuchiki's Kunjō and Shingaku set out. She bore all her family's difficulties on her shoulders without complaint and was always obedient to her indolent husband. Soyo's attitude towards her life deeply affected Nao. Nao learned how to endure hardships from her mother, and tried to follow Soyo's way of living.97

After Nao began working for merchants she was more influenced by Shingaku.

97 Yasumaru Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, pp. 22-26.
teachings. She made every endeavor to become a model worker: one who was honest, diligent and obedient to his masters. When she was twelve years old, Nao was commended by the Fukuchiyama government as a model dutiful daughter.

Nao’s ideas (after she was possessed by Ushitora-no-Konjin) are fundamentally different from Baigan’s Shingaku, though the former is strongly influenced by the latter in the following respects: both see honesty and frugality as essential to their teachings. Moreover, they are deeply concerned with Shinto values such as obedience and purity. The most striking difference between the two is of social ideology. Baigan never criticized the Tokugawa government, nor mentioned social injustice. On the other hand, Nao was not as optimistic as Baigan. For a great many people, even if they did live as honestly as young Nao or Soyo, there would not be “Anraku,” because severe poverty cannot be overcome by honesty and diligence alone. Nao had a firm belief that Kami’s deeds were essential to solving people’s problems, and for Nao, concern with political issues was unavoidable.

3. Influence from New Religions

Even after Nao became an adult her attitude toward life did not change. She did not belong to any religious organizations, but she was quite pious to the spirits of her ancestors, many kami-gami and bodhisattvas. Itō Eizō, an Ōmoto-kyō follower, stresses that Nao always kept a Shinto family altar and a
household Buddhist altar even though she could not easily afford them. Taciturnity was another aspect of Nao’s unchanged personality. She always suppressed her feelings of anger and frustration. Until the day when Nao began to be possessed by *Ushitora-no-Konjin* perserverance was the only way for her to get through the miserable conditions of her life. Actually such an attitude towards life was not unusual; rather it was a typical attitude in Japanese society at that time. Even today, perseverance and self-sacrifice for the family are often seen as the most important virtues for women.

Most of Nao’s contemporaries did not express their true feelings, and passed away in silence. However, there were some women who opened their mouths and criticized society and human conditions. They claimed that their words were not their own, but that they came directly from Kami. Those people were called *Ikigami* (living kami). As was mentioned in chapter one, hundreds of *Ikigami* appeared between the end of the Edo period and the middle of the Meiji period. The life stories of *Ikigami* have many common features such as poverty, illness, selfish family members and acquaintances along with troublesome children. Many *Ikigami* tried to find meaning in their miserable lives. Some saw life as religious training in preparation for their divine mission. Others saw it as a test set by Kami-gami. Nao described her life by saying “There is no hardship in life as severe as the one I experienced.” She, like other *Ikigami*, tried to find special meanings in the severities of her life. Her experiences are understood not only as a process of cleansing her body and spirit for her divine mission, but also as

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98 Itō, Eizō, *Ômoto*, p. 35.
the Kata (prototype) of universal events. Nao seemed to believe that all events that occurred in her life are the Kata of what would happen in the process of world renewal by Ushitora-no-Konjin. For example, according to the Ofudesaki, each of her children (except the three who died in infancy) played important roles in showing a Kata. Most of her children brought Nao more trouble than happiness, but such trouble was inevitable because their actions were predestined by Kami and they were Kata of those difficulties which would occur in the process of world renewal. The concept of Kata is one of the most important keys to understanding Nao's Ofudesaki and her religious practices.

As mentioned in chapter one, a great number of new religions had risen from the chaotic society at the end of the Edo period. Despite persecution from the Tokugawa Bakufu, and later from the Meiji government, many new religions such as Tenri-kyō, Konkō-kyō, and Kurozumi-kyō, were expanding their influence among the unfortunate people in the late nineteenth century. Kurozumi-kyō sent their missionaries to the Tamba area as early as 1860. Tenri-kyō and Konkō-kyō missionary work in the area began in the 1880's.

There is no clear evidence that indicates when Nao began having contact with such new religions, but according to Jitsuden Onao and Onisaburō (True Life Stories of Nao and Onisaburō) Nao began making frequent visits to the

\[100\] (Ofudesaki, May, 1916), quoted by Yasumaru Yoshio in Deguchi Nao, p. 152.
\[101\] About new religions that arose in the late Tokugawa period see chapter one, section three.
\[102\] O.N., p. 52.
\[103\] Murakami, Shigeyoshi, Kindai Minshū-shakkyō-shi no kenkyū, p. 200.
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Tenri-kyō church in Fukuchiyama after she became a rag picker in the late 1880's. Unfortunately, this book is not a scholarly work, and does not provide any concrete basis for its story. Most scholars, such as Murakami Shigeyoshi, infer that Nao came into contact with Tenri-kyō in Kyoto after she was possessed by Ushitora-no-Konjin. However, it is much more reasonable to believe that Nao had relations with Tenri-kyō before she began to be possessed, because even in her "divine roar" (before she began writing the Ofudesaki, Nao just shouted the words from the Kami) one can find strong influences from the teachings of Tenri-kyō. In the Ofudesaki, Tenri-kyō is seen as one of the Sakibashiri (the forerunners) of Omoto-kyō. Nao obviously shares anti-authoritarian sentiment with Miki. The idea of Yonaori is an especially important key to understanding Nao's idea of Tatekae (world reconstruction).

Nao's relationship with Konkō-kyō began when Hisa (Nao's third daughter) became mentally deranged after childbirth. Her derangement was understood as a kami possession; therefore Hisa's husband, Fukushima Toranosuke, invited a missionary from the Konkō-kyō church to perform an exorcism. The missionary succeeded in calming Hisa down. After this experience, Hisa and Toranosuke became zealous followers of Konkō-kyō, which, after its founding in 1859 by Kawate Bunjirō, entered the Tamba area in the 1880s and quickly grew to be the most popular new religion in the area.

As was mentioned before, Nao was deeply shocked by Hisa's possession and was quite impressed by the Konkō-kyō missionary's work with Hisa. With this as a

start, Nao began to have contact with Konkō-kyō. It is often pointed out that the influence of Konkō-kyō is clearly seen in Omoto-kyō’s teachings. Above all, the “reverse” image of Konjin is important. According to a widespread folk religious practice called Ommyō-dō, Konjin had been believed to be a minor kami who visited misfortune upon people. However, the founder of Konkō-kyō, Kawate Bunjirō, realized that Konjin was actually the parent Kami of the universe. Although Nao’s conclusion is different from Bunjirō’s, this idea of “reverse” inspired Nao to realize a new view of Kami-gami and of the world. In later chapters, the influence of Tenri-kyō and Konkō-kyō upon Nao’s teachings will be discussed in detail.

At the end of 1891, a year after Hisa’s possession, Yone, Nao’s first daughter, began to show signs of insanity. It is believed that Yone was possessed by Myoken, originally a bohisattva in Buddhism. Yone’s possession gave another severe shock to Nao. Shortly after the incident began, Nao had a series of dreams in which she went into the divine world. Then, on the lunar New Year 1892, she was suddenly possessed by an invisible being. After this first possession, people around Nao invited several exorcists to help her. Nao herself eagerly wanted to know who possessed her, and visited Konkō-kyō churches in the Tamba area to seek a satisfactory interpretation of her experiences.

106 O.N., p. 79.
E. THE DIVINE ROAR

Nao’s initial inspired trance continued for thirteen days after the Lunar New Year, 1892. On the first day, Nao was suddenly possessed by an invisible being. She began shouting and awakened her two youngest daughters, Sumi and Ryō, “Go to your sister Yone’s house in Nishi-machi! Tell her to light thirty-six candles for her repentance.” Nao ordered them with a very powerful voice, which was far from her usual gentle way of speaking. After this, the invisible being entered and left her at intervals. When the invisible being was in her, Nao roared in a voice which was quite unlike her own, and her body moved without intention.

In the beginning she had difficulty in dealing with what was happening to her. She only wished to get rid of the invisible being. Nao’s neighbors wondered if Nao had become insane. Nao, when she was not in a trance, felt deeply ashamed of being viewed as “a crazy old woman”. It is important to notice that Nao clearly recognized the invisible being as an intruder who was totally different from herself. Therefore, Nao did not think that her own person had been changed. Nao’s Keireki-no-Shinyu (revelation on [Nao’s] Life Story) tells us that Nao and the invisible being had many dialogues until she was convinced that the invisible being was a Kami she should follow. A typical dialogue was like the following:

Nao: “Who are you?”

107 O.N. p. 81.
108 During the years between 1901 and 1902, Nao wrote some ofudesaki which related her life’s experiences. Those ofudesaki are called Keireki-no-Shinyu (Revelation on [Nao’s] Life Story) by Ōmoto-kyō followers.
Invisible being: "I am a Kami named *Ushitora-no-Konjin.*"

Nao: "You are trying to deceive me, aren't you?"

Invisible being: "I am a Kami. Kami never lie."

Nao: "Are you really such a great Kami?"

Invisible being: "I am neither a fox nor a badger. I am the Kami who will re-construct the world. This Three-Thousand-World will burst into full bloom like plum blossoms do. The time for *Ushitora-no-Konjin* finally has come. Without me this world will never be re-constructed. Tenri, Konkō, Kurozumi, Myōrei are the fore runners. *Ushitora-no-Konjin* appeared as the last one for cleansing the Three-Thousand-World. Though it may be a high ambition, I will make every endeavour to make this world become the eternal divine one."

Nao: "Is it true what you are saying?"

Invisible being: "If it is not true, I would not have gone through such hardships all those years." 109

A person falling into a possessed state was not uncommon at that time. Many mentally disturbed people were believed to be possessed by kami-gami or spirits. In the dialogue above, Nao asked the invisible being: "Aren't you a fox or badger?" because it was believed that a fox and a badger were the manifestation of low spirits which often possessed people and made them act insanely. Naturally, possession by such low spirits was considered shameful. Although the invisible being declared that he was not a low spirit but the Kami who will re-construct the world, Nao had great difficulty accepting that the great Kami would choose an ordinary person like herself to be His messenger.

People around Nao invited several exorcists to calm her down, but all of their efforts failed. Nao herself visited some exorcists in order to identify what was

109 Yasumaru, Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, pp. 83-84.
possessing her. One fortune teller told Nao that she was possessed by “something great.” On the other hand, a Konkō-kyō missionary named Aoki Matsunosuke, whom Nao had greatly respected, slapped Nao in the face and said she was possessed by a badger. Neither could stop Nao’s possession. After these unsuccessful attempts to exorcise the the invisible being from Nao, she gradually made up her mind to follow the Kami’s orders. The Kami possessed Nao intermittently. Whenever He was inside of her, Nao roared the Kami’s words in a loud voice. Nao’s neighbors were convinced that Nao had lost her senses. As a matter of course, nobody took Nao’s “divine roar” seriously.

In June, 1872, Nao went to Kameoka \textsuperscript{110} to work as a silk spinner and visited the Konkō-kyō church in the town every night. After she came back to Ayabe in September, Nao again fell into an intensely possessed state for ten days, and in March of the next year Nao was continuously possessed for seventy-five days. About this time in Ayabe there were frequent outbreaks of arson. In April, when a lumber merchant’s store in Senda-machi burnt to the ground, Nao was arrested as an arson suspect because she had been heard crying:

There will be good signs for waking you up and also bad signs. So you should look carefully at what will happen in this world and reform yourself. If you don’t reform in time there is no telling where the sparks will fly. \textsuperscript{111}

The real culprit was found the next day and Nao was released. However, Ōtsuki Shikazō, Nao’s son-in-law, had the police order Nao’s neighbors to make a small cell for the “crazy woman” where Nao was confined for forty days. She

\textsuperscript{110} Kameoka is another small castle town in the province of Tamba. It is about 60 kilometres south-east of Ayabe.
\textsuperscript{111} O.N. p. 88.
naturally felt deeply mortified by this treatment and even contemplated suicide. During this time the invisible being again began to talk to Nao and emphasized that her suffering was indispensable for her special task. Nao replied, "If I keep roaring in a loud voice people will only think me insane and, besides, it's painful to shout so loud. Would you please find some other way to make people know your august will?" In answer the invisible being commanded Nao to take up a writing brush. Nao, however, hesitated to obey this order as she could not write even one word. The invisible being encouraged Nao by saying: "It is not you who will do the writing. It is the Kami who will make you write. So take up a brush and don't doubt my words." Of course there were no writing tools in the cell, but Nao found a nail. It is said that Nao's hand began moving without her volition and scratched some words on a pillar. This was the beginning of Ofudesaki. From then on whenever Nao was possessed by Kami she wrote ofudesaki instead of roaring. She kept writing them until the very last moment of her life. According to Itō Eizō, Nao did not perform any special rituals when she wrote an ofudesaki, but cleansed herself with water and changed her clothes before sitting at the desk. She usually wrote ofudesaki in her small private room.

There are a few important points in the content of Nao's "divine roar." First of all, the name of the invisible being is noteworthy. The invisible being called himself Ushitora-no-Konjin. The books Kojiki and Nihongi do not mention this

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112 Itō Eizō, Ómoto, p. 56.
113 Itō Eizō, Ómoto, p. 61.
Kami. In other words, this Kami is not part of the Restoration Shinto pantheon.

Later the Kami called Himself by many names depending on the circumstances. One of the many names He used is *Kunitokotachi-no-Mikoto*. Interestingly, this is the name of an important Kami in the Restoration Shinto pantheon. The reasons for assuming the name of a Restoration Shinto Kami will be examined later.

Ushitora-no-Konjin, the “Metal-kami of the north-east,” originated in the teachings of Ommyō-dō. According to folk belief, *Ushitora* (the north-east) is called *Kimon*, the demon gate, and is the most ill-omened direction because the power of *Yin* is concentrated there. There are many *konjin* in this world and they move around in every direction on a fixed schedule. When a *Konjin* appears in *Ushitora*, he becomes wrathful and the severest misfortunes fall upon those who violate the *Konjin’s* laws. The *Ushitora-no-Konjin* who possessed Nao was totally opposite to the popular belief about this Kami. He was not a Kami of misfortune but the great Kami who would reconstruct the world for the purpose of saving mankind and all other beings. This reversed image of *Konjin* is similar to the *Konjin* of Konkō-kyō. Therefore many scholars discern strong Konkō-kyō influences on Nao. It is undeniable that Nao was influenced by Konkō-kyō since she she had been familiar with the religion since her third daughter Hisa became insane.

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114 About Restoration Shinto, see chapter one, section two.
115 Ommyō-dō is Japanized, religious Taoism. See chapter one, section one.
The second important point in the “mightiness” of the Kami who possessed Nao was that from the very beginning, Nao’s *Ushitora-no-Konjin* appeared full of authority and dignity. The Kami displayed a strong will to bring about the fundamental renewal of the world. This is an essential difference between Nao’s *Konjin* and that of Konkō-kyō. The *Konjin* that possessed Nao declared that He had appeared for the reconstruction of the world. On the other hand, the *Konjin* of Konkō-kyō never mentioned this fundamental renewal of the world. Unlike Konkō-kyō’s *Konjin*, Nao’s *Konjin* showed quite strong anti-authoritarian sentiments. For example, when she was arrested as an arson suspect, Nao entered into a trance and roared at the blindness and corruption of the police. After Nao was freed from the cell in which she was confined for forty days, she stayed in the house of her third daughter, Hisa, because Ōtsuki Shikazō had sold Nao’s house and almost all her belongings to raise money to pay Nao’s debts. Nao continued working as a rag picker, but began some religious acativities such as faith healing and offering prayers, as well as writing *ofudesaki*. 
IV. THE EARLIEST OFUDESAKI AND NAO’S RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

A. INTRODUCTION

After she was released from detention on May 30, 1893, Nao gradually began attracting people’s attention as a faith healer. When Nao visited a house for buying rags or waste paper she often went into the room where the family altar was enshrined and voluntarily cleaned it. Some people were impressed by such pious deeds and began asking her to pray to the Kami to heal the sick in their family. Nao gradually came to be known as Ayabe-no-Konjin-san (the Konjin of Ayabe). As a result, she gained about 40 followers between the winter of 1893 and the spring of 1894. Meanwhile, Nao kept writing ofudesaki with a cheap small brush on poor quality paper.

Nao had almost no philosophical vocabulary, and was not familiar with traditional Shinto or Buddhist terms. However, even in the earliest ofudesaki, Nao clearly expressed her religious ideas in an emphatic tone, using her daily vocabulary. For example:

The Three-Thousand-World shall burst at once into full bloom like plum blossoms do. The time for Me, Ushitora-no-Konjin, to reign has come at last! This means the World opened like plum-blossoms shall be Heaven-ruled as evergreen pine trees. Japan is the land of Shinto where things shall never go well without Kami’s care. Foreign lands are the world of beasts, the stronger preying upon the weaker—quite devilish. Japan is also becoming the world of beasts. You are so cheated by foreigners as to be quite unconscious of truth. A dark world! If things are left as they go now, order shall never prevail in this land. Therefore, through the manifestation of the Kami’s power,

117 Yasumaru, Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, p. 110.
The Earliest Ofudesaki and Nao’s Religious Activities / 73

the Three-Thousand-World shall be reconstructed. Be prepared! This world shall be transformed into an entirely New World.”  
(Shohatsu-no-Shinyu)

This is the opening passage of the so-called Shohatsu-no-Shinyu (The First Divine Revelation). This ofudesaki is dated New Year’s Day 1892, but was actually composed much later. Deguchi Onisaburō edited extracts from the early parts of the Ofudesaki and applied Kanji (Chinese ideographs) to the words which were originally written in Hiragana (Japanese syllabic script). In April 1917, Onisaburō put the above ofudesaki, re-written with Kanji, into an Ōmoto-kyō missionary magazine called Shinrei-kai (The World of Divine Soul).

The following ofudesaki is believed to be one of the earliest; it was probably written in 1893 or 1894. Provisionally, I will call this E-ofudesaki. The exact date when Nao began writing ofudesaki on paper is not known, but it was probably after the fall of 1893. Among the extant ofudesaki that are dated, the one dated April 8, 1894 is the earliest.

The Three-Thousand-World shall burst at once into full bloom like plum blossoms do. The time for me, Kimon-no-Konjin, to reign has come at last! The Three-Thousand-World shall open simultaneously. I, Ushitora-no-Konjin, sitting on Mount Shumisen, shall care for the world. It has been known since a long long time ago that the time would come. The world shall be in a woeful predicament. The world shall change... I, Ushitora-no-Konjin, have been waiting eagerly for this moment to come from time immemorial. The world of evergreen pine trees has come. The world shall be delightful. Japan shall be the land of Kami. Meat shall not be eaten in Japan. There has been no Kami in this world because it has been spiritually polluted. People all over the world, do repent what you have done!

119 Kasai, Yasuo, ibid., O.C., p. 7.
120 Deguchi, Yasuaki, Daichi no Haha (Mother Earth), quoted by Yasumaru Yoshio in Deguchi Nao, p. 102.
The world shall return to the origin. You shall be very surprised! \(^{121}\)

(E-Ofudesaki)

Shohatsu-no-Shinyu and E-Ofudesaki are two representative pieces of the earliest ofudesaki. Interestingly, there are distinctive differences between the two. In this chapter, Nao’s earliest ofudesaki, especially Shohatsu-no-Shinyu and E-Ofudesaki, will be examined to clarify the essence of Nao’s ideas and teachings. How such ofudesaki were reflected in Nao’s early religious activities will also be discussed.

B. THE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

Firstly, there are notable differences in style between Shohatsu-no-Shinyu and E-Ofudesaki. The structure of the former is well-arranged and thus it is not hard to follow. However, the ideas and images in the latter are often disconnected and some of the sentences are even incomplete. The Hiragana words are difficult to define because they are often homonymous. However, these apparent weaknesses do not make the E-Ofudesaki inferior to the Shohatsu-no-Shinyu. On the contrary, the E-Ofudesaki seems to have more power to move people. Both the Shohatsu-no-Shinyu and the E-Ofudesaki are written in colloquial language, but the words in the latter are more natural and related to Nao’s daily life with some exceptions such as Jinmin (people). \(^{122}\)


\(^{122}\) Jinmin: a word for ‘people’ introduced into the Japanese lexicon in connection with early democratic thought. In Nao’s time, the word was usually used among the supporters of the Freedom and People’s Rights Movement. The relationship between Nao and the movement will be discussed later.
In daily conservations, we often lose the structure of our discussion; sometimes a sentence is left incomplete. We tend to repeat a specific word or sentence more than necessary and to make grammatical mistakes. We use familiar usage and metaphors frequently. These characteristics are similar to those of E-ôfudesaki. As Nao wrote down the words as she had heard them, some words in E-ôfudesaki do not fit with standard notation. Even if we treat E-ôfudesaki as a record of Nao's thoughts, and not a divine revelation, it is still one of the most important records of language and thought among the common people in late-nineteenth-century Japan.

It is important to note that the ideas in E-ôfudesaki were formed by Nao's own experience. Although we do find outside influences such as Shingaku, Tenri-kyô and Konkô-kyô, Nao re-interpreted them in her own way. As far as E-ôfudesaki was concerned, Nao did not "borrow" any ideas or words to lend authority to her writings, but could dignify them with simple, commonly used words. The sentences usually end with a combination of particles such as zo-yo, za-do, and za-zo-yo, shown below:

"Ushitora-no-Konjin no yo ni narita zo-yo."
(The time for Me, Ushitora-no-Konjin, to reign has come at last!]
(Shohatsu-no-Shinyu)

"Sekai wo tatekai itasu Kami za-zo-yo."
[I am the Kami who will reconstruct this world!]
(ofudesaki, April 16, 1896)

These particles, usually called final particles, are used to indicate the speaker's attitude towards the content of a sentence. More specifically, they are used to
indicate the speaker's strong assertion, as in the case with English expressions such as the one emphasized in the sentence below:

He is all right, I am telling you!

Note that as in the above English sentence, Nao's examples are still grammatical without the final particles, but they lose the flavor of strong assertion.

The Ushitora-no-Konjin's revelation is exceedingly powerful and unequivocal. There is almost no other revelation of the time as conclusive as Nao's Ofudesaki. For example, the tone of Nakayama Miki's Ofudesaki is much softer than Nao's, even though the Kami of Tenri-kyō promised Yonaori, world renewal. The following words are a part of Miki's Ofudesaki. The Kami, Tenri-o-no-Mikoto, approaches men much more gently than does Ushitora-no-Konjin.

"Though I work through Truth, I have no intention of disciplining you by force. Nor shall I smite you with the sword of My tongue, but I will admonish you with the tip of My pen." (I, 22-23) 123

"If you want to hear, come unto Me to inquire. I will tell you the details of the original cause of all beings." (I, 6) 124

Nao's style of hand writing is unique and rather illegible. We can find almost no progress or change in her handwriting from the earliest Ofudesaki till the last one. It is said that Nao wrote every Ofudesaki very quickly and with great force. Is Ofudesaki in reality automatic writing? The most ready and seemingly

124 Nakayama, Miki, Ofudesaki (I,6). Quoted in Tenri-kyō, p. 150.
rational answer is that Nao knew and could write Hiragana and a few simple Kanji; Ōmoto-kyō followers made up the myth of her inability to write for the purpose of making the Ofudesaki look miraculous. Another answer is that Nao believed herself illiterate but she had unconsciously acquired the knowledge of writing during her various work experiences. The third answer is that the Ofudesaki was written miraculously by an illiterate woman. It is difficult to form a conclusion because the first and second answers lack evidence; it is impossible to prove the third answer because it rests on a religious conviction.

C. THE KAMI AND THE PURPOSE OF HIS REAPPEARANCE

The most noticeable differences between Shohatsu-no-Shinyu and E-ōfudesaki are the names of the Kami-gami and their characters. In E-ōfudesaki the Kami-gami’s names are mentioned as Ushitora-no-Konjin, Kimon-no-Konjin, Kane-no-Kami and Nokorazu-no-Konjin. All of these are other names of Konjin. Ushitora means the direction of the Northeast. This direction is called Kimon (the demon gate) because it is believed that demons are constantly passing through the Northeast where the power of Yin is concentrated. Konjin is written in Kanji as . Kane-no-Kami is simply another way to pronounce these Kanji. Noko-razu means “without exception.” There are numerous Konjins in this world and they are everywhere “without exception.” Therefore Konjin is often called Nokorazu-no-Konjin.

The names of two other Kami-gami are mentioned in E-ōfudesaki, namely Tsuki-no-Kami, the Kami of the Moon, and Hi-no-Kami, the Kami of the Sun.
The relationship between Konjin and the two Kami-gami is not clear in the ofudesaki. The sun and the moon had been important objects of worship in both Shinto and folk religions. This tradition must have affected Nao. Moreover, Tenri-kyō's Kami often calls himself Tsuki-Hi (moon-sun) when He wants to manifest His concern in man through giving light and warmth. This image of Kami might have been adopted by Nao.

In Shohatsu-no-Shinyu, the Kami calls Himself Ushitora-no-Konjin, Kami, and Kunitokotachi-no-Mikoto. According to Ōmoto-kyō's theology, which was established under Deguchi Onisaburō's influence, Ushitora-no-Konjin was originally Kunitokotachi-no-Mikoto. The Kami had been forced to conceal Himself in the Northeast, therefore He was called Ushitora-no-Konjin. As mentioned earlier, the Kami-gami in the E-ofudesaki are not related to orthodox Shinto nor to Restoration Shinto, but Kunitokotachi-no-Mikoto holds an important position in Restoration Shinto mythology. According to the Kojiki and Nihongi, He is one of the three first Kami-gami who sprung out of the primeval chaos. The name of Kunitokotachi indicates that He is the original and eternal ruler of the land. Through this Kami, the Ofudesaki forms a theological connection with Kojiki and Nihongi. It is probable that the concept of Kunitokotachi-no-Mikoto was inserted into Shohatsu-no-Shinyu after the Ōmoto-kyō organization was formed under the leadership of Onisaburō.

According to Yasumaru Yoshio, these ofudesaki originally collected in

125 Ito, Eizo, Ōmoto, p. 63.
126 Deguchi Nao, Ofudesaki (May 5, 1900), O.S. Vol., p. 99.
Ōmoto-Nempyō (The Chronology of Ōmoto) are the closest ones to the original.\textsuperscript{127} Ofudesaki in Ōmoto-Nempyō dated before 1899 (the year when Onisaburō joined Nao’s group) do not contain the name of Kunitokotachi-no-Mikoto. Thus, it is obvious that someone, probably Onisaburo, intentionally linked the Ofudesaki with the mythology related to the Kojiki and Nihongi for the purpose of giving legitimacy and authority to Ōmoto-kyō and to avoid giving the impression to the government that Ōmoto-kyō’s mythology contradicted Restoration Shinto mythology which was the basis of the State Shinto.

The Kami appeared for the reconstruction of the world, because the world had been dark and full of evil. The world reconstruction must begin by reforming man’s soul, which has been polluted by the beastly way of thinking. It is important to notice that both E-ofudesaki and Shohatsu-no-Shinyu stress “return to the origin.” The ideal world existed before the present evil world began, and the Kami shall make the world return to its original state. This indicates a basic idea of Ōmoto-kyō’s cosmology, the cyclical movement of Time and the Universe.

Japanese people at that time were familiar with this view of time through Buddhism. However, Buddhism does not necessarily see “the olden days” as ideal. Shinto also does not see the original world as perfect. Actually, the beginning of the world is unknown, though there is the beginning of Kami-gami. Time began with the birth of Kami-gami, and it has gone in one direction since then. “The

\textsuperscript{127} Yasumaru, Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, p. 108. The original Ōmoto Nenpyō was compiled around 1923-24 by several leaders of Ōmoto-kyō, not including Onisaburō. A large part of Ōmoto Nenpyō is re-corrected in Ōmoto Shiryō Shūsei Vol.1.
world is progressing and becoming closer to being perfect forever.” 128 Shinto does not have the idea of “End.” Ōmoto-kyō’s image of “return to the origin” is, therefore, based on folk traditions. People have handed down stories about “Utopias” from generation to generation. Buddhism, Shintoism and other folk religions indeed had strong influences upon these “Utopias”, but people have imagined their own “Utopias” through their experiences. Miroku-no-yo (the world of Miroku) 129 and Tokoyo-no-kuni (the world of eternity) 130 are a few examples of folk utopias. Images of those utopias are colorful and diversified, but people’s hopes for rich harvests are reflected in almost all images of Japanese utopias.

_Ushitora-no-Konjin_ strongly demands that man reform himself. The Kami appeared as “the Enma of this world.” The belief in the King Enma is derived from folk Buddhism. When man dies, his soul has to go to the court of the great King Enma. Enma examines all of the man’s thoughts and deeds in his whole life and judges whether he should go to Gokuraku (Buddhist Paradise) or Jigoku (Buddhist Hell). The popular conception of King Enma is very fearful. It is believed that Enma’s judgement is severe; if a man tells a lie to Enma, his tongue will be pulled out as punishment. _Ushitora-no-Konjin_ examines man’s thoughts and deeds as King Enma does, and His judgement will be as severe as the King’s. The Kami declared that He would vanquish all evils with “shocks of

128 Ueda, Kanji, in his lectures on Shinto held at the University of Alberta in January, 1985.
129 There are many version of Miroku-no-yo, see Miyata, Noboru, Miroku Shinkō no Kenkyū, Tokyo: Mirai-sha, 1975.
130 Tokoyo-no-Kuni is believed to be beyond the sea. Folklore related to this utopia range from along the Pacific coast in the north of Honshu (the main island) to Okinawa island. See Yasunaga Toshinobu, Nihon no Utopia-shisō (Utopian Ideas in Japan), Tokyo: Hosei-Daigaku Shuppan, 1971, pp. 15-64.
earthquakes and thunder, or showers of fireballs” in Shohatsu-no-Shinyu.

Ushitora-no-Konjin in the earliest ofudesaki is characterized by His strong intention to reconstruct the world. His dignified words inspire people with awe and His burning anger toward evil urges people to repent their thoughts and deeds. As compared with the Kami-gami of other new religions, the Kami of Ōmoto-kyō is exceptionally powerful and uncompromising. Whenever the government persecuted Ōmoto-kyō, they attacked the idea of Tetakae (world reconstruction). The idea was seen as extremely dangerous to the government.

D. RULERS AND JINMIN (PEOPLE)

The above mentioned part of E-ofudesaki is a typical example of many ofudesaki which show a strong anti-authoritarian sentiment and awareness of a society unfairly divided into “the high” and “the low.” Jiyū-Minken-Undō (the Freedom and People’s Right Movement) might have had some influence on Nao’s view of “the high” and “the low.”

Ueda Masaaki presumes that there was a possible link between Nao and Jiyū-Minken-Undō. The basis of his assertion is that Nao used a special word, jinmin (people) when she was in a possessed state. Nao was using this word as early as her first possession. Jinmin is not a traditional or common word for describing people. The concept of jinmin is based on liberalism and

socialism which emphasize the inherent rights of man. At that time, the word was usually used among people who supported the Jiyū-Minken-Undō, a nation-wide political movement that developed in the 1870s.

The root of Jiyū-Minken-Undō can be found in a power struggle within the Meiji government. In 1873, the government split over the issue of Japan's policy toward Korea. The so-called Korean Debate ended in favour of the non-expansionists (who asserted a hands-off-Korea foreign policy) and the losers, such as Itagaki Taisuke and Gotō Shōjirō, resigned from the government. Itagaki and Gotō then organized local political parties; they began to campaign for democratic rights and the establishment of an elected assembly. Those who joined the movement were mainly former samurai and middle class commoners. Jean Jacques Rousseau's Social Contract (1762) and Herbert Spencer's Social Statistics (1850) were very popular books among these people.

Many of the Jiyū-Minken-Undō supporters expressed their critical views about the Tennō. The most radical of these was Ueki Emori (1857-1892) who furiously denied the Tennō's sacred authority. Ueki's ideal goal was to establish a republican system of government. 132 Nakase Toshikazu asserts that it was still possible to express one's views freely about the Tennō in the late 1870s and early 1880s. 133 However, after, the Jiyū-Minken-Undō began declining in the late 1880s, it became extremely difficult to express one's views about the Tennō

because of the pressure from the government.

The movement had spread quite quickly and by 1880 as many as 150 local societies existed. In 1881, the first national political party, the *Jiyū-tō* (Liberal party), was born out of this movement on the strength of the Meiji government’s promise to establish a National Diet in 1890. In Tamba, over 200 people belonged to the *Rikken-seitō*, which was a brother party of *Jiyū-tō*. Their campaign was very active despite suppression by the authorities. *Jiyū-Minken-Undō* became more radical and attracted many new people, especially poor farmers.

Since the term *jinmin* was an uncommon word for describing people and was not used in any writings of Tenri-kyō or Konkō-kyō, Nao may have heard *Jiyū-Minken-Undō* speeches and acquired some words and ideas from the campaign of the movement. Needless to say, this does not necessarily mean that Nao fully understood the ideas of the movement, or agreed with them. For example, one of the specific aims of *Jiyū-Minken-Undō* was the opening of the Diet. However, in *Shohatsu-no-Shinyu*, *Ushitora-no-Konjin* asserts that the opening of the Diet cannot be brought about by *jinmin* and that He intends to open it Himself. The Diet actually opened in 1890 before the Kami’s reappearance, but it was obvious the Diet system hardly reflected the people’s voice, because the right to vote was given to only property owners who were heavily taxed, approximately 1.1 per cent of the total population. Nao was sensitive enough to notice such unfairness concerning the Diet.  

134 About the relationship between *Jiyū-Minken-Undō* and the Diet system, see *Nihon no Rekishi* (History of Japan) Vol.25, written by Nagai Hideo, Tokyo:
Whenever Nao used the word *jinmin*, it is clear that she used the word as the opposite of “the high” (the governing or rulers). Nao condemned the unfair division of people in society. Nakayama Miki of Tenri-kyō also saw that two divisions existed within society, namely *Taka-yama* (the high mountain) and *Tani-zoko* (the bottom of a valley). She strongly criticized those who belonged to *Taka-yama* making the people who dwelt in *Tani-zoko* miserable. 135

In the *Ofudesaki*, *Ushitora-no-Konjin* repeatedly promises that He will reconstruct this world and make *jinmin* and rulers equal. This longing for equality amongst Japanese people can also be found in the teachings of other new religions founded in the late 19th century, including Konkō-kyō and Tenri-kyō. Thus, it is likely that the concept of *jinmin* in Nao’s *ofudesaki* was influenced not only by the Freedom and People’s Right Movement but also by these other new religions.

**E. FAITH HEALING**

Almost without exception, the New Religions considered sickness the most basic evil in human life. Therefore, physical healings through faith play an important, often essential, role in these religions. The doctrines of the New Religions define the causes of sickness and show how to remove them. Although they rarely deny that some sicknesses may have a physical cause, they regard physical factors as secondary. Roughly speaking, sickness is seen as a product of a deluded or clouded mind. Miki Nakayama’s *Mikaguraauta* (Sacred Songs) clearly shows a typical view of the causes of sickness:

134 (cont’d) Shōgakukan, 1976, pp. 360-65.
"All suffering comes from man’s mind, blame yourself and not others." "Now at last it is revealed: the source of disease is in the mind." (Mikagurauta section 10: 7 and 10)

This view deeply connects with her idea of salvation:

"In this broad world, there must be many places of salvation." "Yet, here is the place granting you mysterious and wonderful salvation. I grant you safe childbirth and healing of smallpox." (Mikagurauta section 5: 1 and 2)  

In the beginning, Miki became known through her miraculous power to grant women safe childbirth. Most of Miki’s early followers were those she saved from their illnesses. Although Miki was aware that total renewal of the world was necessary, she put her strongest emphasis on faith healing as the entrance to salvation.

Konkō-kyō also stresses that recovering from sickness depends on human faith in Kami and the condition of the mind:

For those who are ill or for those who have endured hardships for generation after generation, the receiving of Kami favour is like that of cleaning a well. . . . If faith goes only part of the way, the roots of sickness and affliction cannot be cut. Until the water in the well becomes pure and until the root of sickness and affliction are severed, have faith with whole-hearted devotion and you will regain your health and your prosperity. (Gorikai 28) 

At the first stage of Konkō-kyō, Kawate Bunjirō won his followers through faith

137 Kawate Bunjirō’s Gorikai, quoted from Fujitani Toshio, Shinto-shinkō to Minshu Tennō-sei, p. 158.
healing, especially of small pox. He denied superstitious healing practices such as spells and magical ceremonies, and encouraged people to pray for Kami's favour along with taking proper medication and enough rest. Bunjirō acted as the mediator communicating the problems of the believers to Kami, and passing the Kami's favors on to people. Receiving okage (a kami's favour) is the central point in the teachings of Konkō-kyō. Their idea of salvation is directly connected with okage.

Unlike the above mentioned two religions and many other New Religions, Deguchi Nao did not attach weight to faith healing. Although Nao prayed for sick people and made them receive the Konjin's okage, she repeatedly wrote in the ofudesaki that giving physical healing was not the aim of the Konjin's reappearance. The Konjin declares:

This Kami is the Kami Who takes care of the world, not a mere Kami of healing sickness. However, for this Kami it is not difficult at all to heal sickness. If you pray with pure heart like a crystal to Me, I will give you great favours.”
(ofudesaki 1896) 138

This Kami is not a Kami of healing sickness, but the Kami of healing man's soul . . . Those who have a faithful soul do not need to be afraid of sickness.
(ofudesaki 29 June, 1897) 139

The Konjin demands that people repent their sins and reform their mind, because He is willing to give faithful people His favours, which are much greater than physical healing. He promises that He will bring the whole new world into

138 O.S. p. 19.
139 O.S. p. 35.
existence if people reform their mind and follow him faithfully.

If you wash your heart and follow the Kami, you are certainly given okage. Since this Kami is the One Who gives greater okage, things will be different from before. (ofudesaki 29 September, 1896) 140

Nao clearly thought that world renewal was much more important than solving people's personal problems. In other words, Nao believed that personal problems would be solved anyways when the present world turned into the new, ideal world. Therefore she did not pay much attention to the causes of sickness in the earliest ofudesaki. In the ofudesaki of 26 May, 1897, Nao wrote that people with faithful hearts will be guarded by the good guardian Kami-gami but those who have unfaithful hearts will be possessed by evil spirits. This may suggest that Nao regarded evil spirits as the cause of sickness and other problems.

Some ofudesaki written after Onisaburō joined Ōmoto-kyō give more detailed explanations of sickness. According to the ofudesaki of 1 July, 1899, if one's heart is polluted by the evil spirit, the physical body becomes a vessel of sickness and eventually one is possessed by the evil spirit of sickness. Therefore, if one's heart becomes as pure as crystal, the evil spirit of sickness feels insecure and eventually flees.

Nao strongly emphasized the necessity of reforming the human heart. If people do not reform themselves soon, Kami will force them to do so with disasters or other misfortunes:

140 O.S. pp. 20-21.
If you do not reform your kokoro I will force you to do so. If people cannot reform themselves the number of people will be decreased by seventy per cent, but if they reform themselves, Kami will help them. (ofudesaki 22 November, 1896)  

F. JAPAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN WAR AND NAO'S PREDICTIONS

According to the Kōan Ōmoto-Kyōso-den: Kaiso-no-Maki (The Biography of the Founders of Ōmoto: Volume of the Kaiso (Deguchi Nao)), Nao predicted the Sino-Japanese war about a year before the war began. Nao also predicted that there would be another war immediately after the Sino-Japanese War. Her prediction came true when Japan entered the war with Russia in 1904. Even the earliest ofudesaki clearly show that Nao was sensitive to possible social crises, especially wars. She repeatedly stressed that wars would be serious warnings from Kami to Jinmin (people). It is difficult to believe that Nao could find relevant information about the political and economic conditions of the time. However, she appears to have been aware that Japan was facing a critical situation.

1. Nao's Predictions and the pre-war atmosphere

Nao's predictions of wars reflected the tense pre-war atmosphere. The following is an outline of the way to war, the process Japan had been going through from

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141 O.S. pp. 21-22. (Ōmoto Shinyu, Vol.1)
142 After 1897, Nao sometimes talked about her life experiences in her ofudesaki. Those ofudesaki were later collected and edited as the Kōan Ōmoto-Kyōso-den: Kaiso-no-maki, first printed part by part in a magazine called Kami-no-Kuni (The Land of Kami), published by the Ōmoto-kyō headquarters between 1923 and 1926.
143 Quoted by Kasai Yasuo in Kindai Nihon Ryōi-Jitsuroku (O.C. p. 10).
the beginning of the Meiji period until the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War.

Japan had to modernize herself in order to survive in the modern world; likewise imperialistic expansion and domination were, at least in the eyes of the Meiji leaders, inevitable when Japan had to stand up against threats from Western imperialism. Moreover, rapidly growing Japanese capitalism desperately sought new markets. Japan began to prepare herself for war against foreign countries as if it was a part of her modernization program.

Territorial issues in the Meiji period began with the problem of the Ryūkyū Islands. Even though the "King of the Liuchius" considered himself the independent ruler of the islands, both China and Japan asserted their sovereignty over Ryūkyū. Naturally the relationship went from bad to worse when the question of Korean independence arose. Japan had harbored territorial ambitions over Korea from the early Meiji period. Korea's geographic situation is like a land bridge between Japan and the Asian continent. In 1875, Japan menacingly sent her naval force to Korea and pressed Korea to open its ports. Eventually Korea accepted an unfair treaty, the Treaty of Kanghwa of 1876, and granted partial extraterritorial rights to Japanese subjects. This was quite similar to Japan's situation when Commodore Perry came to Japan with the American naval force in 1853.

Japan's opening of Korea deepened the tension between Japan and China, which insisted on suzerainty over Korea. After that the tension between China and Japan continuously increased and reached a peak when the Tonghak (Eastern
Learning), a popular religious group with strong anti-foreign sentiment, revolted in Southern Korea in May 1894. China immediately sent troops in response to the request of the Korean queen Min-bi (1851-1895). Japan also sent a larger force and demanded that the Korean government adopt a pro-Japanese policy. From this point on, hostilities between China and Japan developed rapidly, and finally declared war against China on August 1 of the same year.

As the possibility of war increased, the Meiji government tried to force the people to support its foreign policy. In February 1889, the Tennō promulgated the Meiji constitution. Under this constitution, the state interests were considered more important than the individual's rights. Although basic human rights, such as freedom of speech and of religion were granted, they were strictly limited.

As is discussed in chapter one, the government tried to establish the idea of Tennō worship and State Shinto among the masses from the beginning of the Meiji period on. The Tennō worship and State Shinto were developed rapidly during the 1890's, because they were the government's tools to unify people's thinking and to justify militarism. The government's efforts seemed to obtain steady results. Consequently, when the Sino-Japanese War broke out, the majority of Japanese people supported the government's military actions as if they were blinded by the false hope that a war would bring prosperity to their lives. 144

The Japanese government effectively used the outbreak of the war for turning

people's eyes away from internal problems. The opposition acted as if it had no differences with the government. In February 1895, Japan gained a total victory over China. The Japanese people were wildly excited by the victory. Through the Sino-Japanese war, the supposed advantages of military expansionism achieved a deep hold on people's minds. The government easily won support for military. Criticism of the war did not get much attention. However, there certainly existed tragedies because of the war. The families of the war dead often faced serious poverty, because of losing the major providers of their households. Military growth inevitably brought higher taxes and higher commodity prices. The war bereaved were hard hit by the increasing cost of living. Nao herself lost her second son, Seikichi, in a military action when Japan sent an occupation army to Taiwan after the war.

The victory's excitement did not last long because the Western powers began to interfere with Japan's activities. The Western powers were apprehensive that Japan had acquired rich colonial territories and other special privileges in China. Right after the Treaty of Shimonoseki was announced on 17 April, 1895, Russia, Germany and France intervened between China and Japan. They forced Japan to refrain from occupying the Liaotung Peninsula. In November 1895, the treaty was revised and Japan gave up Liaotung. The triple Intervention caused fury amongst the Japanese. The Japanese government stirred up public indignation against these European countries, especially Russia, which later acquired Liaotung for herself. The bitter relationship between Russia and Japan was later aggravated and ended in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905.
Through the experience of the Triple Intervention, the Japanese government strengthened its policy of *Fukoku-Kyōhei* (enrich the country and strengthen the army). As previously stated, the expansion of military power required heavier taxation, notably a rise in the land tax in 1898, which had a severe influence upon the living conditions of the masses. Because of the increased land tax, landowners raised the farm rents. Naturally, poor landed peasants fell into more distressful living conditions. Consequently, many of them left their home villages and drifted into slums in cities. Factory workers also suffered from the government's *Fukoku-Kyōhei* policy. The manufacturing industries, especially heavy industries related to armaments such as shipbuilding, showed remarkable growth but working conditions became increasingly worse. Labor disputes and organized walkouts appeared as new social phenomena after 1896.  

The Sino-Japanese war definitely accelerated the development of Japanese capitalism, but large and rapid growth also produced "new capitalistic problems" such as the so-called "war between capitalists and workers." Poverty, anxiety, sickness related to poor working conditions; these problems bore down hard on the poor. Many of them sought religious guidance which could reduce their pain. In 1893, Nao received *Konjin*'s order to go to *Kara* (China). She did not even have accurate knowledge of the geographic location of China, but she decided to obey Konjin's order. Nao began walking in the direction of Kyoto. It is important to notice that Nao's departure happened shortly after the revolt of the *Tonghak*. Nao's action reflected the strained social circumstances of that time.

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146 *Kara* is a traditional Japanese word for China and Cathay, but was often used for describing foreign countries in general during Nao's time.
On the way to Kara, Nao went to a Konkō-kyō church at Kawaramachi in Kyoto. She showed her Ofudesaki to seven Tenri-kyō teachers, but no one could read them. Nao fell into a possessed state in front of the teachers and Konjin cried through Nao, “Take Me to the war!” However, the Tenri-kyō teachers denied that Nao was possessed by Konjin. After that Konjin ordered Nao to go home. He said that His order to go to China was a test of her loyalty to the Kami.

Nao’s prediction of a war came true with the Sino-Japanese War. While many Japanese were drunk with victory, Nao realized that people would suffer more from the government’s Fukoku-Kyōhei policy. Evidently people’s sufferings affected Nao’s ofudesaki. Nao predicted the Russo-Japanese War in the following way:

When the war calmed down, the war actually did not end. If the war had continued Japan surely would have collapse. Therefore I gave you a little rest. As I told you, the next war will be caused by Russia. Everything I have told you through Deguchi’s mouth and hands will become reality.  
(ofudesaki, June 1895)  

Because I, the Kami, want to save people, I have been going through hardships. If people in this world do not reform themselves soon enough, something which forces people to be reformed will happen. Therefore, I, the Kami have possessed Nao and I told you everything that will happen in the future.  
(ofudesaki, 17 September, 1897)  

These ofudesaki contain two important points. Even though Konjin warns that the world is going to be in a woeful predicament, the Kami does not want to bring
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mankind the total destruction of the world. He stressed that people’s Kaishin (reforming one’s mind) can prevent the final disasters. The second ofudesaki shows that the subject of Konjin’s salvation is not only the Japanese but people in the whole world. Although Japanese people have a special task to be Kata (the prototype), i.e. the model of people for the whole world, the Kami does not exclude non-Japanese people from His salvation. Nao is sometimes seen as a narrow-minded nationalist. 149 but the above mentioned ofudesaki indicate that Nao’s ideas of salvation is beyond simple exclusive nationalism. An ofudesaki of lunar May, 1898 is another example that shows Nao’s sympathy for the foreigners who were affected by wars with Japan:

Once a country appears to be weak, (Japanese rulers) try to deprive that country with a strong hand. People in the country cannot say anything, even though they suffer severely from cruel treatment by (Japanese rulers). Those people are also children of Kami. Thus, treating them in such a cruel way is more heartless than the way of beasts.
(ofudesaki, fifth month, 1898) 150

In the above mentioned ofudesaki, Nao clearly criticized Japan’s aggressive policy. Her attitude contrasts with those of other religious organizations which had been making compromises with the government to avoid persecution. For example, Tenri-kyō headquarters contributed 10,000 yen to the government right after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War for the purpose of showing their loyalty to

149 For example Thomas Nadolski sees that Nao held anti-foreigner beliefs caused by “a combination of antimodernism and Japanese fundamentalism.” Nadolski, The Socio-political Background of the 1921 and 1935 Ōmoto Suppression in Japan, p. 31.
150 Quoted by Murakami Shigeyoshi in Kindai Minshūshūkyō-shi no kenkyū, p. 211.
2. Nao's First Followers

After Nao's prediction about the Sino-Japanese War came true, her spiritual power quickly began attracting wider attention in the Ayabe area. In the autumn of 1894, Nao cured a man named Nishimura Bun'emon who had suffered from depressive insanity. Nishimura was grateful to Nao and asked her to take him to the Konjin's shrine in order to offer thanks. His request embarrassed Nao because there was no shrine, not even an altar, for the Konjin at that time. This incident shows that Nao had paid little attention to creating religious services or religious symbols for the Konjin. Nao eventually suggested to Nishimura that they go to a Konkō-kyō church together, as the Konjin was enshrined there. Thus they visited the Konkō-kyō church in Kameoka. Kamejirō Ohashi, a priest of the Kameoka Konkō-kyō church, welcomed their visit because he had heard about Nao's healing powers and had been considering recruiting her to spread the teaching of Konkō-kyō. He dispatched another priest, Sadajirō Okumura, to Ayabe. Okumura invited Nao to stay at his house and enshrined Konkō-kyō's Konjin and Nao's Konjin together. This tie with Konkō-kyō was important to Nao's religious development.

As mentioned in chapter one, the Meiji government tried to control religion. Thus, any religious activity without official recognition became the object of severe government persecution. After a long battle against government pressures

and much compromising with it, Konkō-kyō finally received official recognition as an independent religious sect in 1900. Since Nao did not have official recognition, her formal religious activities had to be conducted under the name of Konkō-kyō.  

Nao's followers grew in number as her reputation spread. However, Okumura treated Nao like a housekeeper and did not take her Ofudesaki seriously. Naturally, Nao felt deeply frustrated and repeatedly told her followers that their Kami, Ushitora-no-Konjin, should not be second to the Kami of Konkō-kyō, and that Konkō-kyō's Kami was a Kami for Japan, while their Kami was a Kami for the world. Another important source of friction between Nao and Konkō-kyō was the emphasis she put on Tatekae (world reconstruction) in sharp contrast to Konkō-kyō's emphasis on basic moral teachings oriented towards ordinary daily living. The probability is that Konkō-kyō was using Nao for her charismatic appeal, and ignoring the content of her message, and this likely became increasingly apparent to Nao, especially around 1896 when she felt that the time for world-renewal was imminent. An ofudesaki from that time says:

There is washing yet to be done in this world! It is a very great washing to be done. I shall change the world by this washing. The world will move! The world will be flipped upside down!
(ofudesaki, 25 October 1896)  

Another ofudesaki also urges:

The Kami of Izumo Taisha will take care of the world. The world will change in the year of Meiji 29 or 30 (1896, 1897) . . .
(ofudesaki, 13 January, 1897)

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152 O.S. p. 21 (Omoto Shinyu, Vol.1)  
153 O.S. p. 24 (Omoto Nenpyō, No.1, 117-155.)
These frustrations were compounded by Nao's dislike of the very business-like manner in which Konkō-kyō operated and profited financially. However, despite Nala's frustration, she had to maintain her association with Konkō-kyō since her religious activities were prohibited outside of Konkō-kyō.

Nao's following kept growing in number; by April 1895 she had 360 followers. During this time, Nao asked Shikata Heizo to decipher her Ofudesaki, and he began reading it little by little. The tension between Okumura and Nao reached its peak during the summer of 1895, and she left the church. Konkō-kyō sent another priest, Masanobu Adachi, to convince Nao to rejoin, but after more difficulties in 1897 Nao left Konkō-kyō for good. In April 1897 she set up her own small church, but the church was repeatedly disturbed by the police who insisted that these religious gatherings were illegal since Nao's group was not officially recognized. Consequently, Nao's group could not practice their religion openly. They longed for someone who could make Ushitora-no-Konjin widely known. Then, in October 1898, Nao was visited by a peculiar-looking young man. The young man, Kisaburō Ueda, later became the co-founder of Ōmoto-kyō.
A. INTRODUCTION

Ueda Kisaburo (later renamed Deguchi Onisaburo) was a highly ambitious young man who had a small following of his own. One day in the summer of 1889, he happened to read some of Deguchi Nao's *ofudesaki* and decided to visit Nao in October of that year. At the time Onisaburo met Nao, he had received a certain amount of religious training, and his aspirations for religious power were growing. In looking back, it is quite clear that without the immense influence of this man, the small group of Nao's followers would never have grown into the organization which once attracted a few million followers during the Taisho period (1912-1925). It was Onisaburo who gave the religious organization its present orientation, relegating Nao's central ideas, such as strong criticisms of "modernization" which the Meiji government was pursuing and a fervent hope for the world renewal led by *Ushitora-no-Konjin*, to relative obscurity.

Onisaburo was born in 1871 into a poor peasant family in Anao, a small hamlet four kilometers west of Kameoka. According to the lunar calendar, the date of his birth was the twelveth of July. As with most religious figures, there are many legends surrounding the life of Onisaburo. In an attempt to piece together a plausible history, I have mainly used his autobiographical writing *Honkyo Sosei-ki* (The Creation of Our Religion) (1972) and *Kokyō no Nijūhachinen*.

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B. ONISABURÔ'S LIFE EXPERIENCE

The Ueda family into which Onisaburô was born was rather unique in Anao. Although extremely poor peasants, the family was of good lineage, giving the Uedas a pride disproportionate to their circumstances. Also, while the majority of the villagers were followers of Zen Buddhism, the Ueda family were ardent Shintoists. Onisaburô's maternal grandmother, Uno, in particular, was instrumental in the young Onisaburô's Shinto education. Uno was born in 1848 in Yagi-no-shima, Tamba. One of her brothers, Nakamura Takamichi, was a famous scholar of genrei-gaku (a study of kotodama). Genrei-gaku is an esoteric tradition which teaches that words have souls (kotodama) and if you pronounce a word properly the soul of the word opens the door for understanding the “real”

meaning of the word. Through her brother, Uno acquired knowledge of *genrei-gaku* and other subjects, including the classics and Shinto theology. It is safe to say that Uno was an unusually cultured woman for a poor farmer's wife in the late Tokugawa era.

Another family member who had an important effect on the young Onisaburō was his grandfather, Kichimatsu, who had died a half year after he was born. On his deathbed, Kichimatsu called Onisaburō and his parents to his bedside and told them, “Every seven generations a great man appears in our Ueda family. Kisaburō is the seventh generation from Maruyama Ōkyo 156 therefore he will surely come to be known in the world. After I die I will become a spirit and protect Kisaburō.” 157 After Kichimatsu passed away, Uno repeatedly told the young boy these last words. As a result, Onisaburō was frequently haunted by apparitions of Kichimatsu, and came to believe in the existence of the world of spirits.

Despite his family's high expectations, health was delicate as a child. He could not attend school until the age of ten because of Kisaburō's poor health. While the growing boy stayed home, Uno taught him basic reading and writing. As a result, Onisaburō's reading ability was probably better than that of other children of his age when he finally entered elementary school in 1880.

156 Maruyama Ōkyo (1733-1795), painter and founder of the Maruyama School of paintings. He studied painting with the Kano school in Kyoto. Ōkyo is famous for many large-scale screen and wall paintings including the one for the Imperial Palace in Kyoto.
At the age of 14, Onisaburō became a teacher's assistant at his elementary school, but shortly after he was forced to leave the school mainly because of poor relations with his fellow teachers. He had to work at various menial jobs. Due to the sudden switch to a full-scale capitalistic economy, by the late 1870's the social and economic life of farming villages had been destabilized more than ever before. Small farm owners and tenant farmers like the Ueda family, found themselves in increasingly unfavorable financial circumstances. By the 1880's, the Ueda family could no longer afford to pay Onisaburō's educational fees. Thus he was forced into hard labour such as drawing heavy carts and working for a landowner as a menial labourer. *Honkyō-Sōseiki* vividly tells us of young Onisaburō's frustration:

"The most piteous people in the world are the poor... Because they have to fight to get food, clothing and shelter they do not have enough time for religious practice although they are granted freedom of religion. They poor have to suffer the fate of a horse or a cow, despite the fact of being born as a man... The causes of poverty are the imperfect nature of society and unfairness in distribution of wealth. Anybody who has blood and tears should not cease striving until he attains the goal of saving the world."¹⁵⁸

Even though he was busy earning his family's daily food, Onisaburō did not end his studies. He attended night classes at Kongōji temple, learning to read sutras and Chinese classics. According to *Ômoto Nanajūnen-shi*, Onisaburō studied the *Nihongi* and *Nihon-gaishi* under the guidance of his private tutor, a certain Yajima, at that time.¹⁵⁹ This fact shows that young Onisaburō's circumstances were difficult, but much better than those of Nao's youth. This difference may

¹⁵⁹ O.N. p. 123. *Nihon-gaishi* (Unofficial History of Japan) was written by Rai Sanyō (1781-1832) in 1844.
account for their different views on world-renewal and other topics.

In 1893, at the age of 22, Onisaburō left home to study veterinary medicine under his cousin Inoue Naokichi in Sonobe, Tamba. Inoue owned a small dairy farm and worked hard at milking and caring for the cows. Although he had limited private time, he arranged and continued to study Japanese classics under a noted *Kokugaku* (The National Learning) scholar, Okada Korehira (1820?-1908).

In 1895 Onisaburō gave up his goal to become a veterinarian, but shrewdly used the experience he gained on Inoue's farm. The next year, with financial support from some of his friends, he established a small company named *Seinyu-Kan* for producing and distributing milk in Anao. Drinking milk was a new custom for the Japanese in the Meiji era. The price of milk was very high. Onisaburō's enterprise grew rapidly in step with the rising tide of modernization sweeping over Japan. This experience is another important key to understanding the differences between Nao and Onisaburō. In contrast to Nao's extremely harsh life, Onisaburō's financial circumstances were not adversely effected by modernization. Therefore, anti-modernization sentiments did not flourish in his heart.

Onisaburō's business gave him financial security and he began spending money on his hobbies, such as traditional Japanese music (including *Jōruri* and *Nagauta*) and dancing. However, this prosperity marked the beginning of a crisis period in Onisaburō's life. His father, Kichimatsu, fell seriously ill in 1896. Onisaburō visited several local religious organizations such as *Myōrei-kyōkai*, *Himorogi-kyōkai*
and Taigen-kyōkai, seeking the help of Kami for his father. As a result of this difficulty, his interest in religion increased. However, Yoshimatsu’s condition deteriorated and he passed away at the age of fifty-three. Onisaburō was deeply shaken by his father’s death. Some people told him that his father’s death had occurred because he had cut down a tree standing in the direction of Ushitora (the northwest). Onisaburo took their words to heart and suffered deep remorse. He visited many ascetics and religious organizations such as Myōrei-kyōkai, Himorogi-kyōkai and Taigen-kyōkai. However their teachings were unable to answer his questions.

Gradually, Onisaburō lost faith in Kami-gami and interest in his work; he spent his time drinking, chasing women, and fighting. Finally, he was beaten by three village gamblers in a dispute involving a woman. He barely escaped with his life. This incident marked the turning point in his life.

When Onisaburō’s grandmother and mother found him in his house, they deplored his misconduct. He was deeply moved by their words, and began praying to Kami. In Feb.9, 1898 (the lunar calendar), the day following the attack, Onisaburō left his village and stayed on Mount Takakuma for a week. Later Onisaburō claimed that he attained spiritual enlightenment by this experience. The present Omoto-kyō calls this event Takakuma-yama Shugyō (the ascetic practices at Mount Takakuma) and sees it as one of the most important religious events.

These three religious organizations are syncretistic new religions and had their churches in Kameoka.

Mount Takakuma is a small mountain near Anao. According to a local legend, an imperial prince, Anao-no-Miko, had once taken refuge from the court in the mountain during the reign of Buretsu Tennō (499-506). The mountain was seen as a sacred place by local people.
After the return from Mount Takakuma, he tried to make his “marvellous experience on Mount Takakuma” known among his fellow villagers. He lost his interest in the dairy business and decided to begin his religious mission. He took his friend, Saitō Chūichi into partnership to establish a religious group. He convinced his friend that if they established a new religion they could get much profit. Eventually, Onisaburō opened his own church at Saitō's house. At that time Saitō suggested to Onisaburō that Onisaburō should engage in faith-healing to show people his religious authority. Although many of his fellow villagers had suspicions about Onisaburō's religious authority, he gradually gained fame as a faith-healer. According to Omoto-Nanajūnen-shi, many of his early followers were mentally disturbed people or those who were believed to be possessed by spirits.

In the Spring of 1898, a man named Mitsuya Kiemon visited Onisaburō. The man belonged to Inari Kōsha (Inari religious association) in Shizuoka prefecture, and he advised Onisaburō to meet Nagasawa Katsutoshi (1858-1940), the founder of Inari Kōsha. Onisaburō set out for Shizuoka in April 1898. Meeting with Nagasawa had a great influence upon Onisaburō.

In May 1891, Onisaburō finished his study at Inari Kōsha and returned to his home. In the history of Omoto-kyō.

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162 O.N. pp. 144-151.
165 Inari-kōsha is a syncretistic new religion established by Nagasawa Katsutoshi in 1892. The teachings of this sect will be discussed in the next section.
home. Then he established centers in Sonobe and Kameoka areas for the study of the Inari-Kosha's teachings called Rei-Gakkai (Spirit Study Association). At those centres Onisaburō and his followers practiced an esoteric meditation called Yū-sai (mysterious worship) which he learnt from Nagasawa Katsutoshi. Through the meditation Yū-sai Onisaburō induced a participant of and he judged what kind of Kami or spirit possessed the participant. Onisaburō's followers sometimes fell into a mass trance together while practicing Yu-sai. These religious activities invited suspicion and hostility from relatives and acquaintances of Onisaburō. Consequently, he could not increase the number of his followers and his association was unstable.

According to Itō Eizō, who is a modern Ōmoto-kyō follower, Onisaburō received a revelation from a kami named Komatsu-bayashi-no-Mikoto at this time. The Kami told Onisaburō “Go to the direction of the Ushitora (northwest) as soon as possible. There is a person waiting for you.” Onisaburō obeyed the Kami's order and began to travel. When he stopped at Yagi for tea, about eight kilometres from his home, he met Nao's third daughter, Hisa. She showed Onisaburō some of Nao's ofudesaki and told him that her mother had been possessed for six years. He replied that he could judge what possessed Nao and accepted her entreaty to visit her mother. Obviously, the above mentioned story is a dramatized version of Onisaburō's first encounter with Nao and her followers.

Onisaburō was a highly enterprising person who sought ways to make his

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166 Itō, Eizo, Ōmoto, p. 100.
religious group grow. Nao's powerful ofudesaki seemed to attract him. He visited Nao on Oct. 8, 1898. The first meeting between Nao and Onisaburō was unproductive. Nao was not impressed by the peculiar looking young man with blackened teeth, who wore an old-fashioned cape and carried a large valise. When Onisaburō told Nao that he belonged to Inari-Kōsha, Nao seemed to misunderstand him as a mere fox worshipper. Onisaburō spent only two days with Nao and went back to Sobobe where he was then living.

Although the first meeting seemingly did not form any tie between the two, Nao did not forget Onisaburō mainly because he told her he could judge what kind of Kami of spirit possessed a person. At that time Nao was desperately seeking someone who recognized the true divinity of her Konjin, because she had been deeply frustrated by missionairies who neglected her Kami. Moreover, Nao needed someone who could organize her followers and help them become independant of Konkō-kyō. It is believed by that Ushitora-no-Konjin kept insisting in Nao's ofudesaki that Onisaburō was "the very one." 167 Four months later Onisaburō sent a letter to Nao stating that they should work together.

On July 1, 1899, Nao sent one of her close followers Shikata Heizō to ask Onisaburō to come back to Ayabe. The second meeting took place two days later, when Nao was sixty-two years old and Onisaburō was 27.

167 O.N. pp. 175-176.
Although Onisaburō received only three years of official schooling, he had many opportunities to cultivate his knowledge. He also acquired many diverse religious experiences. Onisaburō’s inquisitive disposition made him interested in various subjects, from Genrei-gaku to veterinary science. Among them, the Restoration Shinto ideas of the Hirata school had a great influence upon him.

Despite his family’s poverty, Onisaburō learned to read at a young age. As mentioned in the previous section, his grandmother, Uno, taught him reading and writing skills with zeal. Uno also put the idea of “existence of spirits” into his mind firmly. Consequently, Onisaburō had a great interest in religious phenomena. An important incident which inspired his interest religious phenomena occurred when Onisaburō was 13; one of his aunts went insane. It was believed that she was possessed by a fox. Onisaburō often went to her house delivering medicine and witnessed her frantic actions. The aunt died two years later. Murakami Shigeyoshi suggests that she died because of the severe exorcisms she underwent.

During this period, a missionary from Myōrei-Kyōkai, named Kishimoto Yūsuke, visited Onisaburō’s home regularly. Kishimoto noticed Onisaburō’s disposition and interest in the world of gods and spirits. Onisaburō’s Honkyō-Sōseki begins with Kishimoto’s words telling Onisaburō: “You are a very rare person. You are a man and at the same time you are a woman. You were born to be destined to become a saviour. So why don’t you work with

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168 Murakami, Shigeyoshi, Deguchi Onisaburō, p. 22.
Kishimoto taught Onisaburō fundamental Shinto prayers such as Misogi-harai (purification for daily worship) and Ōhari (purification for a semiannual special service). Onisaburō established a close relationship with Myōrei-kyōkai and his interest in Shinto and other religious phenomena increased.

Myōrei-Kyōkai was a syncretistic Shinto sect founded by Yamanouchi Seishi. The sect worshipped mainly Amano-no-Minakanushi-no-Kami, Takamimusubi-no-Kami, and Kammusubi-no-Kami. These three Kami-gami and Amaterasu-Ōmikami were the main Kami-gami in State Shinto. Myōrei-kyōkai was quite supportive of State Shinto. The sect was also influenced by belief in The Lotus Sutra (Skt: Saddharmapundarikasutra), one of the most important Mahayana Buddhist sutras. This sutra teaches the doctrine of the eternal formless aspect of Buddhahood, the dharmakaya, and the absolute truth. It also contains the concept of Shigan Jōdo (The Pure Land on Earth).

As a teenager, Onisaburō had studied The Lotus Sutra at a night class offered by monks belonging to the Kongō-ji temple (Rinzai Zen Buddhist Sect) near his home. As his study progressed, he sometimes gave lectures on the sutra at the temple. Although he never mentioned The Lotus Sutra as a basis for his thoughts, the influence of the sutra on Onisaburō’s thought, especially his idea of nationalism, should not be discounted. We should note the traditional relationship between the message of The Lotus Sutra and Japanese nationalism. The sutra

170 On The Lotus Sutra, see Tamura Yoshio’s (Thoughts of Buddhism) Vol.5, Tokyo: Kadokawa-shoten, 1968.
171 Tokoro Shigemoto’s “Henkaku-shisō to Shiteno Hokekyō” (Hokekyō as the Revolutionary Ideology), Chuokoron, No.1011, July, 1971.
172 Murakami, Shigeyoshi, p. 32.
has been influential among Japanese Buddhists from an early date. The most famous Japanese follower of the sutra is Nichiren (1222-1282), the founder of the Nichiren Buddhist sect. In the thirteenth century at Kamakura, the capital of the Hōjō government, Nichiren, responding to social unrest and an unusually high number of natural disasters, first expostulated on the doctrine of Risshō Ankoku, which means "Establish true Buddhism and on this basis reform the country and make it secure." He believed that "true Buddhism" was only found in The Lotus Sutra. Modern nationalism was growing after the Meiji Restoration and Nichiren's teachings became popular among ultra-nationalists such as Kita Ikki (1883-1937) and Tanaka Chigaku (1861-1939). Religious groups other than the Nichiren sect also believed in The Lotus Sutra, and these groups tended to hold strong nationalistic views.

Onisaburō's nationalistic thoughts were cultivated farther by his tutors who were influenced by Koku-gaku (The National Learning); studying Nihon-gaishi (Unofficial History of Japan) is one example of this. Onisaburō became familiar with this book when he was a teenager. Nihon-gaishi was written in 1844 by Rei Sanyō (1781-1832). Rei Sanyō narrated the history of Japan under the rule of different military houses from the twelfth century to the beginning of the Tokugawa Bakufu, and strongly emphasized that the Tennō should rule Japan directly. Rai did not agitate for the overthrow of the Tokugawa Bakufu, but Nihon-gaishi became the "Bible" of the Meiji Restoration movement. Even after the Restoration, the book was popular among ultra-loyalists of the Tennō.

The influence of Koku-gaku upon Onisaburō was intensified by studying under
Okada Korehira during the period when Onisaburō was working for his cousin, who was a veterinarian in Sonobe. Okada stayed in the Nanyo-ji temple (Sōtō Zen Buddhist sect) in Sonobe and taught fifteen to sixteen students privately. Okada was a specialist in koka (classic 31-syllable poems). Onisaburō studied koka and could also learn about the Kojiki and the Nihon-gaishi. Unfortunately, Okada left Sonobe and went back to his hometown in Settsu (present Osaka prefecture) in 1894. Okada’s teaching stimulated Onisaburō to study Kannagara-no-michi (The Pure Way of the Kami).

While Onisaburō was living in Sonobe, he became a follower of Myōrei-kyōkai because his toothache was healed by a prayer of Myōrei-kyōkai. On the other hand, Onisaburō became familiar with scientific ideas through studying veterinary medicine. After he failed the examination in 1895, he gave up studying to become a veterinarian. However, the study left him with basic knowledge of biology, chemistry, physiology and so forth.

His father’s death in 1897 stimulated Onisaburō’s interest in religion. He visited several religious groups such as Myōrei-kyōkai and Himorogi-kyōkai. However, none of these religious teachings satisfied him. He was wandering about until early 1898 when he shut himself in a cave on Mount Takakuma. In Onisaburō’s earliest writings such as Honkyō Sōseiki, he describes the event simply: “I spent one week on Mount Takakuma for my religious practices.” Later he gives us more dramatic descriptions. There are several versions, but the following is the most common one:

The night of February ninth, a stranger came to Onisaburō’s hut. The man was wearing western clothes. He gave his name as Matsuba-Tengu. Matsuba-Tengu told Onisaburō to take him to Mount Fuji, and covered his head with a cloth wrapper. Then Onisaburō lost his senses. When he came to himself, he was in Mount Takakuma. He stayed there for a week and was spiritually awakened and, upon returning to his village, began exhibiting his miraculous powers.¹⁷⁴

Mount Takakuma is a small mountain near Anao. Staying on a mountain as an ascetic practice is an important form of religious practice in Japan since antiquity. Even in the Izumo-Fudoki (the Izumo Chronicles, 733?), there is a story of an ascetic who shut himself in a mountain cave and experienced a trip to the world of Kami-gami. This tradition has been succeeded by the Japanese mountain religions such as Shugendō. Onisaburō’s “enlightenment” story was, therefore, not an unusual phenomenon in Japanese religious tradition.

Onisaburō began practicing as the leader of a small religious group after his return from Mount Takakuma, and met the founder of Inari-Kōsha, Nagasawa Katsutoshi, who had a great influence upon Onisaburō’s religious thoughts.

Nagasawa was born in 1848 in Suruga (present-day Shizuoka prefecture). He entered a school when he was twelve and studied, mainly the Chinese classics. Later, after the Meiji government was established, he studied Shinto and came under the influence of the thoughts of Motoori Norinaga and Hirata Atsutane. Nagasawa was a student of Honda Chikaatsu (1823-1887) who had studied under teachers belonging to the Mito Koku-gaku school and Hirata’s Restoration school. The most significant basis of Onisaburō’s religious thought originated in the

scholarly lineage of Hirata, Honda, Nagasawa. For example, we can find a significant similarity between Onisaburō's and Hirata's attitude toward foreign (especially Western) thought and technology, and their views on the superiority of Japan.

All of Koku-gaku followers took a strong stand against Buddhism and Confucianism because they believed that these two teachings "stained" the true expression of Japanese feelings and culture. Consequently, the Japanese mind was worsened and confused. However, Hirata Atsutane did not hesitate to study or to take an interest in foreign thought and technology. On the other hand, other Koku-gaku scholars like Motoori Norinaga had a strong tendency towards unconditional antipathy against foreign, especially Western, ideas and technology.

Hirata's attitude was based on his firm belief in the superiority of Shinto. He stated in his book Shizu no Iwaya (The Rock Cave of Tranquility) (1811) as follows:

The art of medicine, though introduced to Japan from abroad, appears originally to have been taught to foreign countries by our own great gods. Later, because of the special needs it meets, this art came to be widely practiced in Japan, and though it may be said to have once been of foreign origins, we are not obliged to dislike it for that reason. 175

Hirata examined Chinese and Indian legends and those of some other countries to find proof that many of those legends originally came from Japan. In his

Kōdō Taii (The Elements of the Ancient Way) (1811), Hirata wrote:

In the ancient Indian legends the god Musubi is called Brahma, the Creator... Thus, in all countries, as if by common consent, there are traditions of a divine being who dwells in Heaven and who created all things. These traditions have sometimes become distorted, but when we examine them they afford proof of the authenticity of the ancient traditions of the Imperial Land. There are many gods, but this god stands at the center of them and is holiest of all.

Hirata attempted to prove the superiority of Shinto and of Japan in general. He asserted that the Kami-gami who created the world and all things on the earth were born in Japan. Japan is, therefore, the country of Kami-gami and her inhabitants are the descendants of Kami-gami. Consequently, there is a difference of kind, rather than of degree, between Japan and other countries. This assertion is based on Hirata’s theory of creation.

His theory apparently has many characteristics in common with Christianity. Therefore some scholars such as Muraoka Noritsugu and Haga Noboru have pointed out that Hirata was influenced, to a certain extent, by Christianity.

Although Christianity was severely banned by the Tokugawa Bakufu, Hirata somehow managed to get Chinese translations of the Bible and some other literature written by Christian missionaries such as the Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci. As a matter of course, it is debatable how deeply Hirata was influenced by Christianity, but he often borrowed ideas from his “enemies” like Buddhism.

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176 Takami-musubi and Kami-musubi; Hirata usually regards these two Kami-gami as two aspects of one Creator Kami.
and Confucianism when he needed additional support for his assertions. Christian concepts of the Creation, Judgement after death, Salvation and so forth might have been useful for Hirata, because he could not find good supporting evidence for his Creation theory in the Kojiki and Nihongi, both of which lack a clear story of “the beginning.”

Hirata’s teaching is not really convincing. It is filled with far-fetched assertions, but has strongly appealed to the Japanese people’s emotions, especially when they felt that their country was in crisis. Therefore many ultra-nationalists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries followed Hirata’s teaching. Onisaburō should be considered as one of them. He used quite similar “logic” to prove the superiority of Japan over other countries and of the Tennō. His attitude toward Western thought and technology strongly resembled Hirata’s. On the other hand, Nao did not receive any influence from Hirata or other Koku-gaku scholars. This difference is essential. Their views on the Tennō are incompatible with each other mainly because of this difference. After Onisaburō joined Nao’s religious group, there was a long theological conflict between the two.
VI. DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE OFUDESAKI

A. INTRODUCTION

In July 1899, Onisaburō joined Nao's group. Afterwards he put a lot of effort into amalgamating his religious ideas and Nao's. Onisaburō believed that in order to exists as a religious group, the Ofudesaki should not conflict with the tenets of State Shinto. He therefore tried to connect the Kami-gami mentioned in the Ofudesaki with those Kami-gami in Kojiki or Nihongi. As a result, there are essential differences between ofudesaki written before 1900 and afterwards. Those ofudesaki written between 1896 and 1899 are, therefore, very important for examining Nao's original teachings and her world view. Even though the words used in these ofudesaki are simple and unrefined, Ushitora-no-Konjin's severe criticism of contemporary society and the impurity of human minds, as well as his strong desire for world renewal, are very obvious in them.

Onisaburō later realized the deep gap between early ofudesaki and those written after his participation in Nao's group, and he rewrote many of Nao's early ofudesaki to smooth out the gap. Consequently, it is difficult to find which ofudesaki really shows us Nao's original teachings. Fortunately, those ofudesaki that were recorded in the Omoto-Nenpyō are believed to be little altered by Onisaburō. 179

As was mentioned before, during the period from 1896 to 1899, Nao was deeply

179 Onisaburō did not join the work of collecting and editing of Omoto-nenpyō. See O.S. p. 714.

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frustrated by the irreconcilable conflict with the Konkō-kyō teachers who refused to recognize the true authority of Nao’s *Ushitora-no-Konjin*.

Immediately after Onisaburō joined Nao’s group, Nao decided to make a definitive break from Konkō-kyō. They organized a new group named Kimmei-Reigakkai (The Golden Bright Spirit Study Association). However they could not function as an independent religious organization without the government’s official recognition. Kimmei-Reigakkai, therefore, became an affiliate of Inari-Kōsha as its branch organization. Onisaburō drew up the regulations of the group which emphasized that the movement was particularly devoted to the worship of the Tennō and did not contradict State Shinto.

Although Nao recognized the merit of establishing of Kimmei-Reigakkai, she felt from the very beginning the underlying dissonance between Onisaburō and herself. Also there was heavy opposition to Onisaburō among Nao’s original followers. The relationship between Onisaburō and Nao would not be calm for the next eight years.

Onisaburō introduced new religious knowledge and rituals to Nao and her followers. Among them *Chinkon-Kishin* 180 (a method of spirit possession and revelation) is the most notable. As mentioned in chapter four, Onisaburō learnt this method of inducing trances from Nagasawa Katsutoshi of Inari-Kōsha. Onisaburō persuaded Kimmei-Reigakkai followers to practice *Chinkon-Kishin*. Many of them fell into a trance. It was believed that spirits spoke through the people.

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180 Direct translation: “pacifying the soul and return to divinity.”
when they fell into a revelatory trance.

In the beginning Nao believed that through Chinkon-Kishin Ushitora-no-Konjin's fellow Kami-gami were given an opportunity to reveal themselves and could be freed from their fallen states. ¹⁸¹ Nao was particularly pleased to hear that Onisaburō claimed to be able to clarify the true identity of Nao's Ushitora-no-Konjin through Chinkon-Kishin. However, she soon came to feel a sense of incongruity with Chinkon-Kishin, because people often showed insane and unconrollable actions and made senseless utterances when they fell into a trance. Onisaburō also used the ritual for curing illness. Nao criticized Onisaburō's overuse of Chinkon-Kishin in a loud voice when she was possessed by Ushitora-no-Konjin. ¹⁸²

Nao was also very critical about Onisaburō attaching too much importance to knowledge. Ushitora-no-Konjin repeatedly warns that the world renewal will not be able to be achieved by knowledge. Knowledge is seen as opposed to faith. At the same time, knowledge is seen as a symbol of "modernization" which Nao furiously rejected.

During the period between 1900 and 1903, Nao wrote an immense number of ofudesaki. She developed an unsophisticated but unique mythology about Ushitora-no-Konjin and His fellow Kami-gami. Since Nao did not have well polished communication skills to share her religious views with people, she decided to take "actions" to make her followers understand Ushitora-no-Konjin's

¹⁸¹ Ofudesaki dated Aug. 14, 1899 (O.S. p. 82).
¹⁸² Murakami, Shigeyoshi, Deguchi Onisaburō, p. 82.
admonitions to human beings. A series of religious actions, mainly pilgrimmages, that were intended to embody the ōfudesaki's mythical system were undertaken by Nao and her closest followers, called Shusshū. Through Shusshū, Nao showed her followers the central tenets of the Ofudesaki and the urgent warning from Ushitora-no-Konjin saying that total catastrophe was imminent.

Such messages from Ushitora-no-Konjin expressed by the Ofudesaki and Shusshū reflected the tense social, economic and political circumstances of this period, especially an ominous foreboding of another war.

B. THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Sino-Japanese War produced many remarkable effects on the Japanese people and society. For example, feudalistic localism was finally broken down when the Japanese people were awakened to their first "national" crisis. The war united the people into a patriotic body under the name of the Tennō. Then the victory over China gave confidence to the Japanese people that Japan's modernization had been successful and that she had become qualified to be treated as a first class, civilized nation.

Since ancient times, Japan had been under the shadow of "great" China. Japanese philosophy and its social order had depended heavily on Chinese guidance, but Japan now emerged from this long historical inferiority complex toward China. Naturally, the people came to feel superior as a result of the

Shusshū can be translated as "pilgrimages and religious training." It is an original term of Ōmoto-kyō.
victory over China. However, this uplifted national pride was heavily damaged by
the Triple Intervention. The Japanese people, including their government, were
forced to realize that their country still had diplomatic and cultural weaknesses.
This bizarre combination of a superiority and inferiority complex in dealing with
foreign countries cultivated an exclusive nationalism among Japanese people.

This growth of nationalism was strongly related to fear that there was a serious
danger of a foreign military invasion. As a result, increasing military power
became the first aim of the Japanese government. For example, the government
invested all the indemnity received from China as part of the Treaty of
Shimonoseki into the military. Military expenditures tripled in the decade from
1893 to 1903. To support such expanding military preparedness, the government
decided to promote industrialization, and it took the initiative of accumulating
industrial capital for establishing heavy industry. Light industry, especially the
textile industry, progressed quite quickly.

As Kenneth Pyle points out, "Agriculture played a critical part in making
possible the emergence of an industrial society in Japan." First of all the
government filled the expanded national budget by increasing the land tax. Many
farmers had more difficulty than ever before paying a fixed annual tax. Even
after losing their lands by foreclosure, those farmers, now tenants, groaned under

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184 By the Treaty of Shimonoseki, signed April 17, 1895, China ceded the
Pescadores, Taiwan and the Liaotung Peninsula to Japan. However, within a
week of the signing, Germany, Russia and France demanded that the Japanese
government renounce possession of the Liaotung Peninsula. This incident is known
as the Triple Intervention.
the burden of farm rent. Consequently, they or their families had to work in other industrial sectors. Farmers were, therefore, the major source of workers for factories. Most of these factory workers were working in extremely poor working conditions. Nao, through her own experiences, was aware of how severely those workers suffered from the hardships of life. Rapid industrial development began making Japan face "the problems of industrial society," such as clashes between capitalists and labourers. After the Sino-Japanese War, economic activities boomed but higher commodity prices threatened poor factory workers. As a result, strikes began occurring frequently after 1896. Some of the workers were influenced by European socialism and tried to organize craft unions. The government, however, reacted quickly against such movement by passing the Peace Preservation Law of 1900. Strikes and other primary activities of labour unions were banned by this law. Yet, a small number of socialists such as Kōtoku Shūsui (1871-1911) and Sakai Toshihiko (1870-1933) kept arguing through newspapers, such as the Heimin Shinbun (The Newspaper for the Common People), against militarism, capitalism and imperialism, despite frequent harassment by the government.

As mentioned in chapter three, Nao clearly noticed that the apparent prosperity of post Sino-Japanese War Japan would not last long. She strongly felt that the victory over China was not the end of war, but that Japan would be involved in even more serious wars. This indicates that Nao had her eyes open to the reality of Japan in spite of the fact that many Japanese at that time were blindly excited over the military and economic growth of their country. Nao's view of social conditions will be discussed in detail in later sections of this chapter.
The tension between Japan and Russia was growing rapidly when the so-called Boxers became active in northern China. The Boxer movement was a semi-religious movement which was anti-Western and anti-Christian. They attacked the foreign legations in Peking from 20 June to 14 August 1900. Eight countries, including England and France, sent their soldiers to repress the uprising, but Japan and Russia were the only countries which could supply troops speedily. Japan’s move was seen with jealous and suspicious eyes by the Western powers. On the other hand, Japan suspected that the powers, especially Russia, would take the opportunity to expand their territories in the Far East. The likelihood of war became real to Japan.

On July 30, 1902, Japan signed the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which was the first military pact on equal terms between a Western and a non-Western nation. In this treaty, England and Japan promised to help each other protect their special interests in China. By this treaty Japan came to be fully involved in the struggle among the world’s imperial powers and became an imperialistic nation herself.

Nao foresaw the coming war. After 1900, Nao wrote many ofudesaki that showed her strong sense of an impending war which would be the beginning of the world renewal led by Ushitora-no-Konjin.

In February 1904, negotiations between Japan and Russia over their interests in Korea and Manchuria failed, and Japan declared war against Russia. From the

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very beginning, Japanese leaders realized that Japan’s economic base was not yet strong enough to sustain the war, especially as it was difficult to raise nearly half of the military’s expenditures by selling foreign bonds. Naturally the debts became a long-term burden on the Japanese people.

On May 27, 1905, two days after Nao came back from her last Shusshū on Meshima island, the Japanese people were overjoyed by the news that the Japanese navy had defeated the Russian Baltic fleet in the Battle of the Japan Sea. At this point many Japanese got drunk with the smell of victory and could not see that heavy taxation, inflation and a depression would hit them soon. However, the Ofudesaki kept warning people that such catastrophes were imminent. Consequently, many of Nao’s followers who hoped that world renewal would begin with the Russo-Japanese War left the Kimmei-Reigakkai after the war.

C. OFUDESAKI WRITTEN BETWEEN 1896 AND 1899

As examined in chapter three, Nao showed her simple but clear world view and theological concepts even in the earliest ofudesaki. Without much influence from outside Nao succeeded in developing her original system of religious teaching in a relatively short period. One can see the conceptual development in those ofudesaki written during the period between 1896 and 1899. Such ofudesaki written during the period represent Nao’s unrefined but powerful message of salvation, as well as her world view, cosmology and concept of Kami-gami. The contents of these ofudesaki are, therefore, Nao’s most fundamental teaching which later would be
overshadowed by Onisaburō's religious ideas.

1. The Condition of the Present World

As stated in E-ofudesaki and Shohatsu-no-Shinyu, Nao sees that the present world is dark and thoroughly under the sway of evil spirits, and that society has been turned "upside-down" over the last three thousand years. For example, the legitimate ruler of this world, namely Ushitora-no-Konjin, has been regarded as an evil Kami. Many evil deeds have been recognized as good, and many honest people have suffered from social injustice.

In those ofudesaki written during 1896-1899, Nao set forth her views on the condition of the present world in detail. She also explains why this world has been "upside-down," as well as warning that total extinction is imminent. The following are two typical ofudesaki concerning the condition of the present world.

This country was originally a good country because it was the land of Kami-gami. However, since Shaka-Nyorai (Shakyamuni) came to this country to spread Buddhism, this country has been growing worse. If Japan leaves the matter as it is now, she will be led by the nose by Gaikoku (foreign countries). Then, Japan will become like Gaikoku . . . Japanese people are so greedy. Therefore they cannot see the true Light. Under the present conditions, Japan is no longer worthy of being called the land of Kami-gami.
(ofudesaki, 23 May, 1898)  

People in the present world only adorn themselves. Apparently they look even more magnificent than Kami-gami. However, in the eyes of real Kami who created the base of this world, those people are

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187 See chapter three about E-ofudesaki and Shohatsu-no-Shinyu.
188 O.S. p. 55, Ōmoto Nenpyō, (2:105-107)
nothing but quadruped beasts with horns on their heads and tails on their hips. This world has become the dark place in which very arrogant monsters dwell. Beasts like tigers or wolves are content as long as there is enough food, but human beings are worse than such beasts: their greed is limitless. They are never satisfied no matter how much they get. Their souls become like Oni (demons) or huge serpents. They then will try to invade other countries or to rob other person's belongings. All these evil phenomena are due to evil Kami-gami who dwell in Russia . . . Wareyoshi-no-Jinmin (selfish people) will have a hard time . . . Although, the Kami has been warning people, His sincere words did not go into people's ears because their ears were filled with "intelligence and knowledge." They imitate the foreign beast, eating meat and wearing Western clothes. They do not humble themselves to Kami-gami. They always talk about money, believing that money is the most important matter of the world.

(ofudesaki, 23 June, 1898) 189

Here we can see Nao's strong anti-foreign sentiment. Buddhism is the symbol of foreign civilization before the Meiji era. Then during the Meiji era Western civilization was brought into Japan. As a result, according to Nao, Japan entered the worst stage of its long process of decline. The Meiji government made a desperate effort to accept Western civilization and the people were swallowed up in the wave of imported civilization. However, Nao perceived its dark side, namely, "greed." Imported Western civilization was based on capitalism, which emphasized the importance of money and stimulated greed. Without any theoretical studies, Nao realized that "immature" capitalism inevitably required exploitation of weak people and weak countries. Greed made people selfish. Wareyoshi (selfishness) was seen by Nao as the dirtiest stain on the human soul. Although Japan was originally the land of Kami-gami, now this country had lost its prestige because it was filled with Wareyoshi.

189 O.S. p. 57 (Shinreikai, June 1917).
In the *Ofudesaki* the term *Gaikoku* (foreign countries) is often used as a symbol of evil. However, this does not necessarily mean that only Japan is a good country and the rest of the world is evil. *Ushitora-no-Konjin* clearly points out that Japan also had collapsed, and He has the will to save the whole world, not only Japan, saying:

"*Konjin* is the Kami who protects the whole world."

*(ofudesaki, 13 July, 1897).*

However, in the above mentioned *ofudesaki* of 23 June, 1898, the *Konjin* blames the evil Kami-gami in Russia for having influence upon Japan. It is rather unusual that the *Konjin* points out the name of a particular country. This sentence gives the impression of an evil Russia attacking a good Japan. This may reflect the tense relationship between Japan and Russia at that time. Another possible cause is that Onisaburō portrayed this nationalistic image of Japan versus Russia when he rewrote the original *ofudesaki* and printed them in a magazine called *Shinrei-kai* (The World of Divine Spirits). In the same *ofudesaki*, *Ushitora-no-Konjin* accuses those who tried to avoid conscription or ignored the nation's crisis. Moreover, the Konjin urges people to be grateful to the Tennō. Such patriotic messages are not common in early *ofudesaki* compiled in the *Omoto-nenpyō* which received a little or no influence from

Despite the apparent prosperity, *Ushitora-no-Konjin* Onisaburō repeatedly points out how weak Japan is:

Japan is originally the land of Kami-gami. Therefore, without

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190 O.S. p. 58, *Omoto Nenpyō*, (2:139-188).
Kami-gami’s help, Japan cannot survive even for a short while.
(ofudesaki, 29 Dec., 1897)\textsuperscript{191}

Through her own experiences, Nao became aware that Japan’s rapid growth lacked a firm base. Naturally, Japan, to Nao’s eyes, does not have much power of resistance to aggressors.

Originally Japan was a good country. It was given a part of Kami-gami’s spirits. However, such a good spirit of this country became dusky. Now Japan is just like the foreign countries. Foreign countries are trying to take over Japan. If Konjin does not appear to help Japan, Kami-gami who are protecting this country now will be defeated easily.
(ofudesaki, 29 Oct., 1897)\textsuperscript{192}

War is seen as the most important warning that the world renewal is imminent. Actually, the Konjin tells people that war is the first step of the renewal.

"The world nearly became a mere muddy tract, but, because I begged Tenchi-no-Onkami-sama (The Great Kami of Heaven and Earth), the overturning of the world will begin with war."
(ofudesaki, 1896)\textsuperscript{193}

Nao strongly felt that the victory over China in 1895 was not the end of war but that Japan would be involved in even more serious wars. This indicates that Nao could open her eyes to the reality of Japan in spite of the fact that many Japanese were blindly excited over the military and economical growth of their country.

\textsuperscript{191} O.S. p. 50, Ōmoto Nenpyō, (No. unknown).
\textsuperscript{192} O.S. p. 46 (No. unknown).
\textsuperscript{193} O.S. p. 28. Ōmoto Nenpyō, (1:67-96).
Ushitora-no-Konjin also gives warning to people not only by war but in many other ways.

“I have shown many mysterious and unusual things as my warnings to people, but people are still doubtful and do not repent of their deeds. If people keep doubting my warnings, I must warn you by natural disasters. Such warnings will be very terrible.”
(ofudesaki, 4 June, 1898) 194

Ushitora-no-Konjin often uses very strong and fearful expressions when he warns people that the world renewal is imminent.

“There will be great confusion this year. I have warned you since the year of Meiji 25 (1892). The conflagration will burst soon.”
(ofudesaki, 6 March, 1898) 195

“When an over-all cleansing of the world begins the people in the high places will be smashed to pieces.”
(ofudesaki, 30 Nov., 1898) 196

However, destroying the world is not the Konjin’s aim. In the earliest of ofudesaki such as E-ofudesaki, the Konjin is more frightful and less sympathetic to the people. Nevertheless, in ofudesaki of this period (1896-1899) Ushitora-no-Konjin seems to show his mercy to people more often. For example:

“This year, Meiji 30 (1897), was to be the year the population of the world would be decreased by two thirds. But I begged Tenchi-no-Onkami-sama to replace the great disaster with a smaller difficulty, yet people are not grateful to Me at all. Therefore My patience will possibly be exhausted.”
(ofudesaki, 29 Sept., 1897) 197

194 O.S. p. 56 (2:117-128).
196 O.S. p. 68 (Shinrei-kai, Oct. 1917)
197 O.S. p. 42 (Ômoto-nenpyô, No. unknown).
“All things in the world are changing day by day. The world will grow worse, but with the Kami-gami’s help it will get better again gradually.”
(ofudesaki, Jan. 1898). 198

The above mentioned ofudesaki of 1897 indicates that Ushitora-no-Konjin is not the highest Kami. He works for the superlative Kami, Tenchi-no-Onkamisama (The Great Kami of Heaven and Earth). This superlative Kami still has a plan to change the world drastically by turning the world into a muddy sea, for example. However Ushitora-no-Konjin has been begging the Kami to postpone the plan. There is an interesting difference between ofudesaki which are in Ōmoto-nenpyō and those in Shinrei-kai and Ōmoto-Shinyu. In former groups of ofudesaki, Ushitora-no-Konjin tries to prevent the superlative Kami’s plan from being put into action. However the Konjin is obviously frustrated because people do not try to repent and to cleanse their souls. The Konjin hints that there is still a possibility of the total destruction of the world. On the other hand, Ushitora-no-Konjin in the latter group of ofudesaki seems to be more optimistic. He promises that the world will be better without total destruction. It is not clear if such an optimistic view in Shinrei-kai and Ōmoto-Shinyu is based on Onisaburō’s influence. However, it is noteworthy that ofudesaki in Ōmoto-nenpyō hold more radical views of the suffering and evil of the present world and people, as well as more radical images of world renewal.

198 O.S. p. 62 (Shinrei-kai, Jan. 1919).
2. The Concept of Kami-gami

Ofudesakis of this period (1896-1899) show some theological developments concerning the attributes of Kami-gami in Nao’s mind. The concept of Kami-gami is still very simple, but its originality is remarkable.

As mentioned in chapter three, Ushitora-no-Konjin had been exiled and confined in the direction of Ushitora (north-west). People misunderstood him as evil and feared his curses. Only through Nao’s Ofudesaki does Ushitora-no-Konjin reveal His real nature.

The reason why even Tenshi (Tennō) lost his proper position is that the Konjin, Fudō, the Otohime of the Dragon Palace, the Kami of rock, the Kami of rain, the Kami of wind, the Kami of Are and the Kami of earthquakes have fallen into the lower world. Those Kami-gami were prosperous at the Old Kami-yo (the Age of Kami-gami). Because those Kami-gami have been forced to be in the lower world, this world has not worked as people expected. Among those Kami-gami, Ushitora-no-Konjin was most glorious, therefore He was confined in the direction of Ushitora (north-west) by evil Kami-gami. I, Ushitora-no-Konjin, have felt mortified at the neglect of those Kami-gami. I was given only a small place to live. (ofudesaki, 24 June, 1897) 189

This Konjin tried to persuade other Kami-gami of His way of practicing goodness. Even though His intention was right, His way was too egotistic and forceful. Thus He was confined by other Kami-gami.
(ofudesaki, 20 Oct., 1899) 200

The above mentioned ofudesaki explained the reason why Ushitora-no-Konjin was confined. Ga (ego) is the key word. During the old Kami-yo (The Age of Kami-gami) Ushitora-no-Konjin was powerful and glorious. He worked very hard

189 O.S. p. 34 (Omoto Nenpyo, No. unknown).
200 O.S. p. 85 (Omoto Shinyū, Vol.1).
for the sake of goodness and righteousness, but became conceited about His way and His ego was puffed up. When he lost his humility, Kami-gami who could not bear the Konjin's way decided to confine Him in the Ushitora. At the same time the Konjin's fellow Kami-gami such as Otohime (the young princess) of the Dragon Palace and the Kami of rain were forced down to a very low rank. Since then those Kami-gami have been despised or been looked at as malevolent.

The problem of Ga is a very important factor when we examine the traditional Japanese way of thinking (we can find a typical example in Ishida Baigan's Shin-gaku). It sees "ego" or "self" as the cause of evil thinking and the problem of man's life. To extinguish an individual ego is seen as an ideal state of mind. On the other hand modern thought and living demand that people establish a strong "I."

Those people who brought the predawn light of modernization into the world, like Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and Benedict de Spinoza (1632-1677) stressed the realization of the individual "I" and emphasized that self-preservation was good. This seventeenth century "egoism" was an important basis of modernization, especially for the growth of capitalism. However, in Ushitora-no-Konjin's eyes, "egoism" meant selfishness. To Nao "egosim" was directly related to avarice and was associated with capitalism, Westernization militarism and other "modern" ideas she did not support.

The *Ofudesaki* clearly criticizes the growth of the modern *Ga*, stating that people try to further their own welfare and profit without considering others. It emphasizes that even though the *Konjin* tried to do the right things, His egoistic and inconsiderate way was unacceptable. In other words, if one selfishly fails to consider the welfare and feeling of others when he carries forward his "right" project, he actually disobeys the rules of Heaven. Therefore the *Konjin* had to go through extreme hardships for 3000 years to understand the problem of His *Ga* and to become the true guardian Kami of the world filled with love and compassion.

All good Kami-gami in the *Ofudesaki* are fallen Kami-gami and suffering Kami-gami. These Kami-gami's images directly reflect the lives of Nao and poor people around her who have "fallen" into lower strata of society and suffer from living difficulties.

There are deep differences between those who have good fortune and those who are out of luck. Kami-gami cannot overlook such inequality. Therefore the *Konjin* appeared and will turn over the world.

(ofudesaki, 1896) 202

I, *Ushitora-no-Konjin*, received instruction from *Tsuki-Hi-sama* (The Kami of the Sun and Moon) to change the world. I was appointed to take care of all matters in this world.

(ofudesaki, 13 July, 1898) 203

*Izumo-no-Taisha-sama* will take care of Japan. I will change the world in the years of Meiji twenty-nine and thirty (1896 and 1897). At this transition stage, great works will be done. One more war will take place. When the battle begins, *Ten-Chi-no-Onkami-sama*,

203 O.S. p. 59 (*Ômoto Nenpyô*, NO.2: 139-188)
Daichi-no-Konjin-sama, Nokorazu-no-Konjin-sama and I, Ushitiora-no-Konjin, will appear into the world. The living Kami, Konko-Daijin-dono, will take care of the great place for worship. Uji-gami(s) will take care of each local community. When all Kami-gami appear, will be my assistant. (ofudesaki, 13 Jan., 1897)  

The above mentioned three ofudesaki tell us the reason of the Konjin's reappearance in this world. He reappeared in this world to solve inequality and to call for a more equitable social order. The Konjin was appointed for this task by Tsuki-Hi-sama. There is no explanation about the attributes of this Kami. We can only see that this Kami is superior to the Konjin. Some other ofudesaki mention another superior Kami named Ten-Chi-no-Onkami-sama (The Kami of the Heaven and of the Earth). It is not clear whether these two Kami-gami are actually four separate Kami-gami. There are often used interchangeably in the ofudesaki.

Yasumaru Yoshio points out that Tsuki-Hi-sama are seen as the supreme Kami(-gami) in many Japanese folk religious traditions. also call their supreme Kami-gami the Kami of Sun and Moon. Moreover, the central Kami in Ise is believed to be the Kami of the sun. However, Yasumaru asserts that Nao's Tsuki-Hi-sama and Amaterasu-Omikami are not necessarily connected. One ofudesaki written in 1896 says that Nao's soul is a manifestation of Amaterasu-Omikami's younger sister. This indicates that Nao held naive respect towards the Tennō like many other common people at that time. However, this does not necessarily mean that Nao believed in Amaterasu-Omikami

205 Yasumaru, Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, p. 143.  
206 O.S. p. 29 (Omoto Nenpyô, No.1: 67-96).
as the ancestor of the Tennō and that she was willing to accept State Shinto’s mythology.

For example, in the above mentioned ofudesaki of Jan. 13, 1898, Ushitora-no-konjin declares that “Jingū-Kōgō-sama will be my assistant.” Jingū-Kōgō-sama is a legendary nonreigning empress who was the consort of Chuai Tennō. According to the Nihon-Shoki (720) she lived in the late fourth to fifth century. The legend tells us that after her husband’s death she subjugated the Kumaso people who had strongly resisted the Tennō’s rule. Then she sailed to Korea to defeat the forces of the state of Silla. This legend depicts the Tennō as the hero who is always in the front protecting Japan from foreign forces. However, in this ofudesaki, Ushitora-no-Konjin is the hero and Jingū-kōgō is His assistant. This can be interpreted that the present Tennō as a descendant of Jingū-Kōgō, is also the mere assistant of the Konjin. This view was extremely bold for the social and political conditions of that time. It could easily have invited heavy persecutions from the Meiji government.

It is also important to notice that the names of the Kami-gami are in the Ise Shinto tradition or State Shinto mythology. Especially noteworthy is the fact that Uji-gami is included in those names. Uji means clan or lineage group. Early Japanese society was composed of many Uji. Members of each Uji worshipped their deified ancestor, who was believed to look after the Uji’s interests and general well-being. The Ise shrine, for example, was originally the family’s Uji-gami. After the Uji system began to decline in the medieval period (the

²⁰⁷ ofudesaki, July 29, 1897 (O.S. p. 39, (Ômoto Nenpyō, No. unknown.)
thirteenth to sixteenth centuries), the term *Uji-gami* was used increasingly to refer to a local Kami, *Ubusuna-gami*, who protected all the inhabitants of a particular region. Therefore, *Uji-gami* were the closest Kami-gami to the daily life of the common people before the Meiji government compelled observance of State Shinto. In 1871 the Meiji government ordered all *Uji-gami* shrines to set a special place in each shrine to worship the Ise shrine. Regardless of whether an *Uji-gami* had connection with the Ise pantheon or not, the local Kami was inserted under the Ise hierarchy. Therefore, to Nao's eyes, *Uji-gami* were also the Kami-gami who had been "confined" and neglected. These examples indicate that Nao's religious ideas at this point were still free from the "spell" of State Shinto and strongly criticized it.

*Ushitora-no-Konjin* has another important task when He reappears in this world. Namely, He has to "lift" those Kami-gami who have fallen into this world from the higher world. If the *Konjin* loses the chance to lift them, those fallen Kami-gami will never be able to be free from their fallen state. Some Kami-gami such as the Kami of *Are* (commonly known as *Kōjin*) have been treated merely as the Kami of the kitchen fire of guardians of other small matters. Some other Kami-gami such as *Fudō* have fallen into the Buddhist pantheon. *Fudō* is considered to be the incarnation of the cosmic Buddha in Esoteric Buddhism. However, in the *Ofudesaki* the Buddhist pantheon is seen as a lower world than the Kami-gami's world. Therefore, *Fudō* is seen as an exiled Kami. All of these Kami-gami do not have any connection with the Ise tradition but they have taken firm root in the life of the common people.

The time has come. Even Kami (*Ushitora-no-Konjin*) cannot cross
without a bridge. Because (people) built a bridge I could reappear in this world.  

(ofudesaki, 6 Aug. 1897)

The time is the most awesome matter. When the time has come anything can be done. Even Kami-gami cannot withstand the time.  

(ofudesaki, 27 Sept., 1897)

These two ofudesaki show that Ushitora-no-Konjin is not omnipotent. He needs man's help. Without Nao’s hand He cannot reveal Himself. The Konjin eagerly seeks people’s recognition. If people recognize the Konjin as the guardian of the world and as the Kami who will renew this world to the Suishō-no-yo (The Crystal World), He can stop the destruction of the world and execute His great tasks.

Only humans can build the “bridge” for Ushitora-no-Konjin to cross into the world. Not only the Konjin but also other fallen Kami-gami need people's recognition. As long as people do not realize the true divinity of those Kami-gami, they cannot “rise” to their original states. At the same time people need the Kami-gami's help to avoid the destruction of the world. Such an idea of interdependence between Kami-gami and people constitutes a characteristic feature of Nao’s religious teaching.

Another important factor conerning the concept of Kami is the “time.” The time is seen as something beyond Kami’s hands. If it is not the right time, no Kami can carry out His plan. People, especially farmers, may easily understand the

208 O.S. p. 39 (Omoto Nenpyō, No. Unknown).
209 O.S. p. 43 (Omoto Nenpyō, NO. unknown).
importance of the time through their life experiences such as the right time for seeding or harvest. This idea is actually convenient for a prophecy of the world renewal. The Ofudesaki often predicts a specific date as the beginning of the world renewal. Even though such a prediction fails, there are many excuses. For example, the Konjin begged Tsuki-Hi-sama to put off the plan, or the Konjin wanted to help more people so he decided to wait till more people repented of their sins. The "time" also can be used as a reasonable excuse, because even the Konjin cannot withstand the time. As long as the believers accept such excuses, the prophecy of world renewal keeps its hold on them. In the case of Nao's followers in this period (1896-1899), they held more and more radical expectations of world renewal as the date was delayed.

3. The Salvation

As Tsushima Michihito and some other scholars point out, the views of salvation of Japanese new religions have not been studied sufficiently "primarily because it was usually thought that the religious goal of the New Religions was only to acquire worldly benefit (genzeriyaku), and that this goal had nothing to do with salvation." However Tsushima argues that Japanese new religions do have a concept of salvation. Actually, according to him, their view of salvation is the common underlying structure of all the new religions.

Roughly speaking, these religious teachings regard the cosmos as a living body or

a life force with eternal fertility. The bad or negative state is one in which the cosmos and all things in it lose their vitality and harmony. To attain salvation, people must repent and recover harmonious relationships with the cosmos (the original life). When people realize, with their purified hearts, fertility and vitality in their lives, they enter the state of salvation and live joyfully in unity with the deities. 211

This idea of salvation is based on a strongly optimistic belief, that the cosmos always has the power of self-restoration from a negative state since it is the eternal source of life. Consequently, it is seen that salvation can be achieved relatively easily without radical negation or rejection of the present human condition. In other words, this vitalistic conception of salvation is drastically different from “Eschatological Fundamentalism.”

According to Tsushima’s definition, “Eschatological Fundamentalism holds a pesimistic view of the world and emphasizes a dualistic confrontation between right and wrong . . . The world and human beings are seen as fundamentally evil.” 212 He mentions the Unification Church and the Watchtower movement as examples of “Eschatological Fundamentalism.” 213

Tsushima notes that Nao’s Ofudesaki contains the concept of “awaiting the millennium.” He argues, however, that the concept of vitalism is is clearly

presented in Nao’s portrayal of the coming world. 214 Tsushima does not
categorize Ōmoto-kyō as a religion of “Eschatological Fundamentalism.” 215

Some scholars have views of Ōmoto-kyō entirely opposite from Tsushima’s. Emily
Groszos-Ooms is a typical example of these scholars. She asserts that Nao’s
world view is essentially Millenarian and “Nao’s cult as it developed between
1892 and 1905 represents the only case of a full-blown millenarian movement
216 in Japanese history.” 217

Her definition of “millenarian movement” is based on the definition of Norman
Cohn, E.J. Hobsawn and several other scholars. Norman Cohn defines millenarian
movements as follows:

1. *Collective*, in the sense that it is to be enjoyed by the faithful
   as a collectivity;
2. *Terrestrial*, in the sense that it is to be realized on this earth;
3. *Imminent*, in the sense that it is to come both soon and
   suddenly;
4. *Total*, in the sense that it is utterly to transform life on earth
   so that the new dispensation will be no mere improvement on
   the present, but perfection itself;
5. *Miraculous*, in the sense that it is to be accomplished by, or
   with the help of, supernatural agencies. 218

E.J. Hobsbawn argues that millenarian movements represent “a profound total

216 Groszos-Ooms’ definition of a “millenarian movement” is, roughly speaking,
similar to Tsushima’s definition of “Eschatological Fundamentalism."
217 Groszos-Ooms, Emily, *Deguchi Nao*, M.A. thesis for the University of Chicago,
1984, p. 113.
218 Cohn, Norman, *The Pursuit of the Millenium*, London: Secker and Warburg,
1957, p. 15.
rejection of the present, evil world and a passionate longing for another, better one." 219 In other words, they expect radical transformation, not improvements of world conditions. He also points out that millenarian movements often occurred when an agrarian society was undergoing rapid socio-economic change due to “irruption” of capitalism into it. 220

Groszos-Ooms stresses that the above mentioned definitions of millenarian movements fit Nao’s teachings and religious activities, and she considers millenarianism as a conceptual paradigm which plays a central role in Nao’s thinking. The paradigm, according to her, focuses on the fundamental duality of good and evil. It rejects a hierarchically organized social order and stresses the horizontal equality among human beings. This paradigm also involves “a notion of sacred authority and divine righteousness which transcends existing authority structures.” 221

In recent years the term “millenarian” has been used by anthropologists, historians and other specialists in a very broad sense. It is indeed a “convenient” label but sometimes this label makes people overlook important factors of a religious teaching and movement.

The following are passages from Nao’s ofudesaki written between 1896 and 1899 which are seemingly applicable to general definitions of millenarianism.

221 Groszos-Ooms, Emily, ibid. (1984), pp. 113-114.
This *Konjin* is not the Kami for healing sickness. I (*Ushitora-no-Konjin*) will turn whole the Three-Thousand-Worlds upside-down to make them better.

(ofudesaki, Sept. 1, 1898)  222

This world has become the world of beasts . . . *Jinmin’s* (people’s) souls are so full of evil. Thus, in the Kami’s view, this world is totally dark. But the world will be better after a great laudering. Repent and reform yourself quickly!

(ofudesaki, Aug. 17, 1896)  223

The world will be changed in the years of Meiji 29 and 30 (1896-97). At the turning point, great things will happen. There will be one more war.

(ofudesaki, Jan. 13, 1897)  224

I have been persuading the Japanese People to reform themselves. If they do not obey me after all, some of them will have to be thinned out.

(ofudesaki, Oct. 29, 1897)  225

When the world will be changed, it [the new world] will become like crystal.

(ofudesaki, Oct. 16, 1897)  226

Ayabe will become the capital . . . If people reform their souls, they will be given even rain as they wish. Everything in the world will go well with you . . . When the world of Kami-gami is established, the span of life will be longer . . . The world will be levelled and there will be no inequality among people. . . People will live in high spirits . . . People will not be steeped in vice. So you will not need to lock even the door of your house.
These ofudesaki, as well as Shohatsu-no-Shinyu and E-ofudesaki, clearly show that Nao saw the present world as dark and evil, and that it should be drastically changed. The change, in Nao’s eyes, is imminent. A Kami named Ushitora-no-Konjin appeared to make this world renewal. It will be very dangerous for people to undergo the period of change unless they reform themselves and obey Ushitora-no-Konjin. If they do not listen to the Kami’s words revealed through Nao’s ofudesaki, nor see His warnings through disasters, the population of the world will be reduced by two-thirds by catastrophic events, and eventually the world will become a muddy ocean. On the other hand, if people accept the Kami’s words and reform their minds, the world will be renewed to become the world of crystal where people can live in harmony and enjoy modest but ideal agriculturally centered lives.

The above mentioned scenario seems to fit into the millenarian paradigm. Yasumaru Yoshio, Murakami Shigeyoshi, Ozawa Hiroshi and many other scholars agree that among the religious teachings of the time, Nao’s ofudesaki contains the sharpest criticisms against Meiji government policies, and the strongest rage against “modernization.” The ofudesaki also shows unique views of world renewal which are much more drastic than those of other new religions. However, there are other passages in Nao’s Ofudesaki that do not fit within definitions of millenarianism and differ from the millenarian paradigm which Groszos-Ooms sets.

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228 See Yasumaru Yoshio, Deguchi Nao; Murakami Shigeyoshi Kindai Minshû-shi no Kenkyû; Ozawa Hiroshi “Bunmei-Kaisha to Dento” Nihon-Minshu no Rekishi, Vol.6.
First of all, it is questionable whether Nao held an idea of a duality between good and evil. It is true that those Kami-gami Who presently hold sway over the world are called by Nao Aku-gami (evil Kami-gami) and Ushitora-no-Konjin and His fellow Kami-gami Who had fallen and been exiled for three thousand years are called Kekko-na-Kami (good Kami-gami). However, there is no image like the “war between the sons of light and the sons of darkness” in Nao's Ofudesaki. As mentioned in the previous section, The Exile Kami-gami, Ushitora-no-Konjin, was confined because of his Ga. Nao repeatedly wrote that He was confined by “other Kami-gami” or by Yao-yorozu-no-Kami-gami (myriads of Kami-gami), but she never said that Ushitora-no-Konjin was confined by “evil Kami-gami.”

Those Who confined Ushitora-no-Konjin became Aku-gami, because they have “illegitimately” ruled the world and have not remained in their proper roles. Thus the world has been upside-down and everything in it has been inharmonious. Ushitora-no-Konjin seems to have no intention of annihilating these Aku-gami, saying:

Those Kami-gami Who have been in higher places will step down. And those Who have fallen into lower places will rise to the world. Because of these ascents and descents, confusions will be “flowing” into the world.

(ofudesaki, April, 1899) 229

229 O.S. p. 77 (Omoto Shinyu, Vol.1)
But eventually:

Those Kami-gami Who now dwell on the earth will ascend to the Heaven, and those Who now dwell in the Heaven will descend to the earth to protect and take care of people.
(ofudesaki, July 1, 1897) 230

It is clear that these two groups of Kami-gami are not “absolute enemies,” but once they are restored to their original proper roles all of them will be the guarding Kami-gami for the people. This scenario is quite close to Tsushima Michihiko’s “vitalistic conception of salvation.”

It is not surprising that Nao does not hold a clear conception of dualism, because, generally speaking, the Japanese have rejected sharp dichotomies between any subjects, such as God and human beings, absolute and relative, good and evil. As Ruth Benedict points out, in the Japanese mind, the universe, and human life as well, are not “a battlefield between good and evil.” 231

Groszos-Ooms argues that Nao’s vision of reality is based on a dualistic notion of purity and pollution. “Nao’s affirmation of the new world to come as a perfectly ordered, good and pure state of existence logically rests on her concomittant rejection of the present world as a completely chaotic, evil and polluted place.” 232 Thus Groszos-Ooms assumes that Nao divided the world into two opposing categories: pure (order, good) and polluted (chaos, evil). Her argument overlooks the fact that, according to the Shinto view of reality,

230 O.S. p. 36 (Ômoto Nenpyô, No. Unknown)
232 Groszos-Ooms, Emily. Deguchi Nao, p. 139.
pollution is a secondary accretion not fundamentally antagonistic to purity. The cosmos and any beings in it are originally pure and essentially unaffected, therefore a negative entity, pollution, can be removed by purification. Since Nao repeatedly uses the expression "laundering the world," her notion of purity does not exactly fit into the millenial vision of the search for purity.

Another factor which seems to be difficult to fit into the millenarian paradigm is Nao's view of an "eschatological" process of world renewal. Nao indeed mentioned in her ofudesaki horrifying visions of destroying the present world, but she differs from many European millenarian movements such as the Sabbatian movements that began in the seventeenth century, in that Nao does not see the catastrophe as an inevitable "prelude" to eternal bliss. The Ofudesaki tells us as follows:

The whole world was about to become a muddy ocean, but I (Ushitora-no-Konjin) begged Ten-Chi-no-Ôgami-sama's pardon for people. I will change the world before it is destroyed that much. (ofudesaki, Dec. 26, 1896)

The people's souls are so evil. Therefore I will make many mysterious things happen in the world for the purpose of letting people reform themselves. Some good things will happen as a sign: also some bad things will happen as a warning.

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234 About the millennial notions of purity and pollution, see Mary Douglas' Purity and Danger. New York: Frederick A. Pranger Publishers, 1966, pp. 162 171.
236 O.S. p. 23 (Ômoto Shinyu Vol.1)
If people do not listen to Ushitora-no-Konjin's warnings, they will experience the catastrophe. People who followed Nao in this period (1896-99) seriously considered that the reformation of people's souls was progressing only a little. Thus, they believed that the world was about to enter a period of catastrophe. 238

However, such catastrophes can be avoided if they repent of their greed and other evil thoughts and reform themselves. The Crystal World can come without total and sudden destruction of the present world.

Moreover, we can find many "reformistic" passages in Nao's Ofudesaki. Kuki Hisao focuses his attention on such passages and asserts that "the change which Japanese new religions seek is never an 180° change but no more than 20-30° change . . . It is not a total revolution but a partial change, an amendment to the reality of the present world." 239 Kuki further argues that Ōmoto-kyō's vision of the world to come is also broad and shapeless despite its "showy" expressions like "The Three-Thousand-Worlds burst into full bloom."

Kuki notes that Nao repeatedly mentioned the concept of Shusse (success in life) in her Ofudesaki. The following are some of those examples:

If people in the world put effort into purifying their souls, good flowers will bloom for them. I (Ushitora-no-Konjin) will make you

237 O.S. p. 22 (Ōmoto Shinyu, Vol.1)
238 Yasumaru Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, p. 114-125.
Shusse depending on the pureness of each of your souls.
(ofudesaki, July 26, 1897) ²⁴⁰

The world began changing. I (Ushitora-no-Konjin) will make even women Shusse from now on.
(ofudesaki, Nov. 8, 1897) ²⁴¹

Kuki argues that such an emphasis on Shusse is actually similar in mentality to the Meiji government’s philosophical basis, namely the cult of Shusse. ²⁴² Since the government was established, it had been trying desperately to increase “national” advancement. First of all, the government made every effort to change Japan into a civilized country measured by “Western standards.” Accumulating money and military power were essential to Japan which wanted to play an important role on an international stage. Japan wanted to Shusse, but Kuki asserts that Nao’s vision of world renewal has very little substance. At most, she promised to make people Shusse. ²⁴³

Kuki also points out that the process of the realization of world renewal is very vague in Nao’s teaching, although Nao repeatedly warned of the imminence of world renewal. The only thing people can do for realization of the world renewal is Kaishin (repent and reform one’s soul).

Kuki’s above mentioned two points are indeed noteworthy but he is judging Nao’s idea only by modern political criteria. At the end of his essay “Shinkō-Shākyō no

²⁴⁰ O.S. p. 38 (Omoto Shinyu, Vol.1)
²⁴¹ O.S. p. 48 (Omoto Shinyu, Vol.1)
²⁴² Kuki, Sahio. ibid. (1968) (O.C. p. 3).
²⁴³ Kuki, Sachio. ibid, (1968) (O.C. p. 3).
Yonaoshi-shiso” (The Ideas of World Renewal in New Religions), Kuki writes as follows:

Today, there have been many proposals based on scientific studies concerning political revolution or reform, and more than a few of them have been put to the test again and again. Now, it is obvious to everyone that the cry for a Utopian political movement based on religion is nothing but anachronistic. 244

It is clear that Kuki sees Nao’s idea of world renewal as a “non-scientific” political theory with little to offer. Kuki completely disregards the idea of “spiritual” world renewal. Nao’s Ofudesaki tells us that renewal begins in the world of Kami-gami, and that reforming one’s soul is the most important key to world renewal. This “spiritual” world renewal idea clearly clashed with the Tennō system more strongly than with mundane political ideas, because the Tennō system was based on mythology, and any ideas which challenged the myth were considered to be a serious threat to the government.

Kuki also criticizes her vision of the world to come in the ofudesaki, saying that the vision is unimaginative, poor and vague like the shimmer of air. Then, Kuki asserts that the ideas of world renewal held by Japanese new religions are nothing but a “sham” revolutionism, and Nao’s teaching is not an exception. 245

It is true that the image of a changing world in Nao’s ofudesaki is far less dramatic than millenarian movements which are influenced by the Christian

244 Kuki, Sachio, ibid. (1968) (O.C. p. 6).
Doctrinal Development in the Ofudesaki / 148

Apocalypse, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses' vision,\textsuperscript{246} and the image of the world to come is also much less colourful. However, this is a rather natural result of Nao's life experiences in which she totally lacked opportunities to become familiar with established religious images like the Christian Apocalypse and the descent of the future Buddha Maitreya which can be found in some Buddhist sutras such as \textit{Mi le hsia sheng cheng Fo ching} and the twenty-sixth Sutra of the \textit{Digha-Nikāya}. \textsuperscript{247}

Nao might have failed to display a dynamic "millenarian" image of the renewed world but she expressed her search for world renewal in her own words, as stated in chapter two, section D, and chapter three, section B. It is true that Nao's images of the future world are very vague, and there was not much development in this period (1896-99) between the earliest ofudesaki such as \textit{E-ôfudesaki}. The following are typical examples of this period:

"Ayabe will become a capital city."

"The world will change and all people will be equal."

"When the world becomes the world of Kami-gami, people will live much longer."

"If people reform their souls rain will fall down whenever needed; everything will happen as wished."


\textsuperscript{247} After Onisaburō joined Ōmoto-kyō, the idea of Miroku (Maitreya) came to play an important role in the Ofudesaki, and eventually Onisaburō began to be seen as the manifestation of Miroku. Ōmoto-kyō's official history says that the world of Miroku would come (\textit{Ōmoto Nanajunen-shi}, p. 40). However, Yasumaru Yoshio asserts that the idea of Miroku was brought into Ōmoto-kyō by Onisaburō. (Yasumaru. \textit{Deguchi Nao}, p. 212.) about the Miroku belief, see Miyata Noboru's \textit{Miroku Shinkō no Kenkyū} (A Study of the Miroku Belief), Tokyo: Miraisha, 1975
If you ask for help from Ryūgū-sama (the princess of the Dragon Palace), she will give you clothing, food and spending money.”

And in the ofudesaki of December 13, 1898, Nao stresses that people will live in pious dependence on Kami-gami and Nature. People must respect the fruits of the earth, and this is the first step of faith in Ushitora-no-Konjin. When the world is renewed no one will eat meat.

Like the descriptions in earlier ofudesaki, Nao’s ideal world is one where everyone would live in harmony and comfort. Society would be based on agriculture. It would be simple and frugal, but people would enjoy their lives free from suffering. The Ofudesaki seldom mentions concrete promises made by Ushitora-no-Konjin, but the following ofudesaki contains two concrete promises.

When Ushitora-no-Konjin comes out to the world, first of all, I will eradicate Geishas and prostitutes. I will not allow you to gamble.

The growth of Japan’s capitalism could not be realized without the burden that agrarian society was bearing in the process of industrialization. Especially after the Sino-Japanese War, the burden was increased because of heavier taxes. Agrarian society was a source of cheap labor for factories. Many people from

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248 O.S. p. 27-29 (Ômoto Nenpyô, No. unknown)
249 O.S. p. 43 (Ômoto-nenpyô No. Unknown)
250 O.S. p. 70 (Ômoto-nenpyô, No.2:463-466).
251 See chapter two, D and chapter three, C.
252 O.S. p. 81 (Shinrei-Kai, June, 1917).
villages worked under extremely poor conditions.

Especially the daughters of poor peasants had to bear miserable lives. Most of them were given a choice only between becoming a factory worker or a prostitute. The number of prostitutes who belonged to the licensed quarters increased drastically after the Sino-Japanese War. In 1899, about fifty-two thousand women worked as legalized prostitutes. Miki Tamio estimated that there were more than 150,000 women working as prostitutes, including Geishas and unauthorized women related to prostitutes.⁵⁵³ There were laws which guaranteed a woman's freedom to quit being a prostitute, but these laws did not free these women from related debts.⁵⁵⁴ Therefore, in reality, for prostitutes there was almost no way of escaping from the licensed quarters except through death. Under such social circumstances, Ushitora-no-Konjin's promise of eradicating prostitutes had to have strong appeal to people in the lower social strata.

Gambling was also a typical source of trouble in poor people's lives. Nao was well aware of this problem through her own experiences. For example, her daughter Yone's common-law husband, Otsuki Shikazō was a professional gambler. Ushitora-no-Konjin gave people the hope that they would be able to live with peace of mind and high spirits, and not have to rely on the vain dreams produced by gambling. The Kami tells the people that they need not worry about food, clothing or other material matters, because Ushitora-no-Konjin's fellow

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⁵⁵⁴ For example: 1) ordinance No.22 issued by the Ministry of Justice in 1872; and, 2) ordinance No.44 issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1900.
Kami, Otohime of the Dragon Palace, will supply the people with these things.255

These two concrete changes are actually adjustments to Nao’s existing world as they change aspects of it, but not its very essence. In this way Nao remains within the vitalistic conception of salvation, although she is the most radical of the new religious leaders.

Mainly because of Nao’s life experiences, her despair with the present world is much deeper than that of other leaders of new religions at that time, and she sought a more radical renewal of the world. However, Nao’s Ofudesaki shows other elements of her view of salvation. Even though Nao strongly rejected the conditions of the present world, world renewal does not necessarily mean “destroying” the foundation or source of life, or “battling” irredeemable evils. This salvation will be attained basically through Kaishin (repenting and reforming one’s soul). The images of the salvaged state of the world and of the people’s minds are not glorious but modest and easily understood by people who suffered from living difficulties like those of Nao herself.

Though Nao’s Ofudesaki seem to contain aspects of an anthropological definition of millenarianism, she remains firmly within the Japanese folk religious tradition which is based on the vitalistic conception of salvation.

255 ofudesaki dated August 23, 1897; O.S. p. 40 (Shinrei-kai, August 1920).
D. OFUDESAKI WRITTEN BETWEEN 1900 AND 1905

As soon as Onisaburō joined Nao’s group, Nao began writing ofudesaki in much larger quantity than before. About one third of the ofudesaki compiled in Ōmoto-nenpyō were written between 1900 and and 1903. The ofudesaki written in this period show many doctrinal developments in Nao’s mind. First of all, Ushitora-no-Konjin’s name was changed. In the ofudesaki of November 13, 1899, Nao wrote with a joyful tone “... Ushitora-no-Konjin was given the name Kumitakehiko-no-Mikoto and by that I (Ushitora-no-Konjin) could come out into the open.” Onisaburō fulfilled Nao’s long hope that someone would recognize Ushitora-no-Konjin’s real nature and authority. He claimed that he had the ability to “judge” what kind of Kami-spirit possessed a person. Onisaburō “judged” Ushitora-no-Konjin’s true nature and “found” his true name, Kunitakehiko-no-Mikoto. By this, Onisaburō’s “authoritative” recognition, the Kami could ascend from his fallen state. It is noticeable that even though the name Kunitakehiko-no-Mikoto sounds much more solemn than Ushitora-no-Konjin, this name also has no connection with the names of Kami-gami mentioned in Kojiki and Nihongi. This means that that Nao’s religious ideas were still growing outside of State Shinto.

Secondly, some new concepts appeared in the ofudesaki after 1900. Most of them

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256 Yasumaru Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, p. 169.
257 O.S. p. 88 (Ōmoto Shinyu Vol.1).
258 Later, after 1905, as the result of Onisaburo’s efforts to minimize the differences between the mythology of the Ofudesaki and of State Shinto, Ushitora-no-Konjin was believed to be the manifestation of Kumitokotachi-no-Mikoto who appeared in Kojiki and Nihongi as one of three Kami-gami who created the world.
related to the explanation of the relationship between Nao and Onisaburō and of the roles of the two in the course of world renewal. The concept of *Henjo-Nanshi* (male spirit manifested as female) and *Henjō-Nyoshi* (female spirit manifested as male) is one of these.

Thirdly, those *ofudesaki* written in this period (1900-1905) reflect the power struggle in the Kimmei-Reigakkai (the name of Nao's group at that time). Large numbers of Nao's original followers defied Onisaburō, who came from outside and had taken an important position in the group. Nao saw the power struggle between them as *Kata* (the prototype) of what would happen in the world later, namely the power struggle between nations. There also was a long and intense struggle between Nao and Onisaburō. In *ofudesaki*, Onisaburō was seen as the representation of *Chie* (knowledge) and *Gaku* (learning), and Nao represented faith. This struggle was also understood as *Kata*.

To prove that *Chie* and *Gaku* could not bring about the world renewal, Nao took a series of *Shusshu* (pilgrimages). Through such religious actions Nao endeavored to assist Ushitora-no-Konjin to actualize world renewal. Many *ofudesaki* in this period explain the real meaning of these *Shusshū*.

Nao was convinced that the world was about to be drastically changed. *Shusshū* were the essential preparation for the world renewal. Total catastrophe was imminent if people would not repent and obey *Ushitora-no-Konjin*. Nao clearly sensed that another war that would be much more serious than the Sino-Japanese War would break out soon. Naturally, Nao criticized the present
world and the people who control it more strongly than ever before. Many ofudesaki suggest that Nao held a strongly critical view of the Tennō. Her attitude toward the Tennō was extremely bold considering the pressure from the government at that time. Such critical views of the Tennō quickly disappeared from the Ofudesaki after 1905 when Onisaburō established his leadership over Kimmei-Reigakkai.

1. Henjō-nanshi and Henjō-nyoshi

As mentioned before, as soon as he accepted Nao’s invitation to join her, Onisaburō began organizing Nao’s followers. Establishing the Kimmei-Reigakkai was his first step. However, many of Nao’s original followers had an antipathy to this newcomer. Although the number of Nao’s followers at that time was less than 200, there was a power struggle between the principal members. Onisaburō’s joining made these struggles more serious. His new religious ideas and rituals, such as Chinkon-Kishin (a method of spirit possession and revelation) which Onisaburō introduced into Nao’s group, also repelled many members.

On the other hand, Onisaburō showed clearly his talent as an organizer. He attracted new members to the Kimmei-Reigakkai through mainly Chinkon-Kishin and faith healing. Nao’s ofudesaki of this period (late 1899 to 1902) often tell of Onisaburō’s “true” role for Ushitora-no-Konjin’s project of the world renewal.

From now on, I will have the two, Deguchi Nao and Ueda Kisaburō (Onisaburō), work for renewing the world. The Kami will put Nao and Ueda to use. Ushitora-no-Konjin and all other Kami-gami will possess

259 Murakami Shigeyoshi, Deguchi Onisaburō, p. 80.
From the beginning Nao recognized the importance of Onisaburō and considered him as her partner. This new partnership was reflected in Ofudesaki. Ushitora-no-Konjin’s partner also began appearing in the Ofudesaki. The Ofudesaki of September 25, 1899 tells us that Ushitora-no-Konjin has a wife named Hitujisaru-no-Konjin (the Konjin of the Southwest). The reason why the world renewal had not been progressing quickly was that Ushitora-no-Konjin and Hitujisaru-no-Konjin had been confined separately. Through Nao and Onisaburō, these two Kami-gami became free of confinement and began working together.

It is noteworthy that Nao and Onisaburō are not “equal” partners. Nao is the reflection of Ushitora-no-Konjin, and Onisaburō is the reflection of Hitujisaru-no-Konjin. The wife Kami is indispensable but at most an assistant of her husband Kami. We can find other new concepts in Ofudesaki written in this period relating to this new concept of the partner Kami-gami, namely Henjō-nanshi and Henjō-nyoshi. Henjō-nanshi means that a male spirit manifests itself as a female, and Henjō-nyoshi is the manifestation of a female spirit as a male.

The basic idea of Henjō-nanshi and Henjō-nyoshi was not totally foreign to the

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260 O.S. p. 80 (Ômoto Nenpyô 2:561).
261 O.S. p. 80 Ômoto Nenpyô 2:581-582
262 The word Henjō-nanshi is well-known. According to the Lotus Sutra, a woman is incapable of practising the Buddhist path properly. Thus to seek to attain buddhahood she must be transformed into a man with aid from bodhisattvas; then she will be able to attain buddhahood.
Japanese people. There are many examples in Japanese mythology of a female disguising herself as a male and vice versa at the time of a crisis when a person needed to intensify her/his spiritual power. For example, according to the Nihongi, one day Susanō-no-Mikoto, the younger brother of Amaterasu-Ōmikami, visited his sister’s heavenly domain, but his behaviour was exceedingly rude. Amaterasu-Ōmikami disguised herself as a male Kami and went to stop her brother from desecrating much of her property. Amaterasu-Ōmikami said to herself:

"Is my younger brother coming with good intentions? I think it must be his purpose to rob my kingdom ..." So she bound up her hair into knots and tied up her skirts into the form of trousers. (Nihongi: The Chapter of the Age of Kami-gami)  

There is another example in the Nihongi in which Prince Yamato-Takeru (4th century A.D.?) was sent to subdue rebels and borrowed clothes from his aunt, Yamato-Hime, who was high priestess at the grand shrine of Ise, in order to disguise himself as a young woman. The story presented in Nihongi is as follows:

"Yamato-dake no Mikoto (Yamato-takeru-no-Mikoto) was sent to attack the Kumaso. ... Now the Kumaso had a leader named Torishi-Kaya, also called the Brave of Kahakami, who assembled all his relations in order to give them a banquet. Hereupon Yamato-dake no Mikoto let down his hair, and disguising himself as a young girl, secretly waited until the banquet should be given by the Brave of Kahakami. (Nihongi: The Chapter of the Keikō Tennō)  

According to the Ofudesaki, Henjō-nanshi takes the role of receiving the message

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263 See the Nihongi translated by William George Aston, London: Allen & Unwin, 1956, p. 34.
from Kami-gami, and *Henjō-nyoshi* deciphers the message and carries the orders of Kami-gami into effect. As Kojima Shin'ichi points out, such partnerships between a shaman and an assistant have been a part of the Japanese religio-politico tradition since antiquity. For example, the *Wei Chi* (The History of the Kingdom of Wei, c. A.D. 297) mentions the ruler of Wa (Japan) named Pimiko (Himiko in Japanese) as follows:

She (Himiko) occupied herself with magic and sorcery, bewitching the people. Though mature in age, she remained unmarried. She had a younger brother who assisted her in ruling the country. After she became the ruler, there were few who saw her.

The relationship between Suiko Tennō (first female Tennō, 554-662) and her nephew Prince Shōtoku (574-622) is another famous example.

In many Japanese new religions we can find similar female spiritual leaders (a shamanistic figure) and a male assistant (organizer) combinations. For example, Tenri-kyō's religious activities began in earnest after Iburi Izō (1823-1907) converted to Tenri-kyō in 1864. Iburi worked with the founder Nakayama Miki for the rest of his life and established the foundations of the Tenri-kyō organization.

Another typical example is Risshō-Kōseikai. This Buddhist new religion was established in 1938 by two founders. Niwano Nikkyō (1906- ) studied Nichiren's teachings and the *Lotus Sutra* and created new teachings that stress the
importance of ancestor worship. His partner Naganuma Myōkō (1889-1957) showed a strong shamanistic disposition. It is said that Naganuma was possessed by *Shichimen-Daimyōjin*, who is believed by Risshō-Kōsei-kai followers to be the guardian Kami of the *Lotus Sutra*.  

This “dual leadership” system in a religious organization usually does not last long. When a religious group becomes an established religious organization, the power of the shaman often fades away, and after the shaman’s death the “assistant” often begins monopolizing the position of leader of the religious organization. In the case of Tenri-kyō, Iburi Izō tried to play two roles, one as shaman and one as an organizer after Miki’s death in 1887. Then after Iburi’s death in 1907, Miki’s grandson Shinjirō took over the leadership and tried to establish a refined doctrine, but there was no longer a shamanistic partner for him. Actually, there was a woman named Ueda Naraito whom Miki might have considered as her shamanistic successor. Naraito was adopted by Miki when she was fourteen and was always serving Miki closely. Then, when Miki died, some of the followers expected that *Tenriō-no-Mikoto* (the Kami of Tenri-kyō) would possess Naraito, but it is said that Naraito was never possessed by the Kami after all. However, even if she was possessed she could be ignored by the people organizing the religion as it became a structured organization without the need of a shaman to perpetuate itself. Those people who attached great importance to shamanistic leadership or revelations through a shaman were eventually driven out of “established” religious organizations, and they often

formed new spin-off groups. Hommichi is the most famous religious group which developed from Tenri-kyō. The founder, Ōnishi Aijirō (1881-1958) claimed that he was the real successor of Tenri-kyō because he received Tenriō-no-Mikoto’s revelation directly. 269

After Onisaburō joined Nao, the small religious group that gathered around Nao inevitably began changing its character. First of all, Onisaburō put effort into “organizing” the followers into an organization that could “legally” carry out its activities. Onisaburō did not hesitate to make the Kimmei-Reigakkai a branch organization of Inari-Kōsha in order to get government permission for religious activities. He also wrote the articles of Kimmei-Reigakkai whose contents agreed with the Meiji government’s policies, such as emphasizing loyalty to the Tennō. He also eagerly practised faith healing despite the fact that Nao had been asserting that Ushitora-no-Konjin was not a mere Kami for healing sickness. Moreover, Nao was not fully free of doubts about the Rei-gaku (studies about spirits) which Onisaburō introduced into Kimmei-Reigakkai, and about Chinkon-Kishin.

Nao realized that her followers were becoming too involved with Chinkon-Kishin and Rei-gaku. As a result they tended to neglect the faith in the Ofudesaki. Nao stressed this as follows in the Ofudesaki.

(I) drew Ueda Kisaburō [Onisaburō] toward here on purpose. (I) made him become a chief, but he should be more calm and stable since the

conditions in the world are very important now. This Hiroma (church) cannot be kept up by Chie (intelligence) and Gaku (knowledge).
(ofudesaki, Dec. 27, 1899) 271

E. SHUSSU

According to the Ōmoto-nanajūnen-shi, Ushitora-no-konjin gave a special order to Nao through an ofudesaki written in June, 1900 (by the lunar calender); saying: “For this second reconstruction of the world, please go and worship at Oshima.” Apparently, Nao did not know about this island called Oshima, and asked her followers to find out about it. Then, a certain Tatebe brought her the information about a small uninhabited island located off the coast of Tango Peninsula in the Sea of Japan. 272 Interestingly, this island is in the direction of Ushitora (Northeast) from Ayabe.

On July 4, 1900 (June 8th by the lunar calender) Nao set out from Ayabe for Oshima. She took her daughter Sumi, Onisaburō Shikato Heizo (a close follower of Nao) and Kinoshita Keitarō (Nao’s other daughter Ryou’s husband) with her for this pilgrimage. Visiting Oshima was the first part of a series of Shussū conducted between 1900 and 1905. The word Shussū is not commonly used by

270 As mentioned in chapter two, Nao believed events in her religious group would reflect on the world’s future, because the group was Kata (the prototype) of the world. Therefore, if Onisaburō did not set down to his religious task, his actions would reflect themselves in unsteady world conditions.
271 O.S. p. 88 (Ōmoto-Nenpyō No.2:601)
272 O.N. pp. 207-208.
Japanese people. A direct translation of this word may be “go out and practice.”

From the beginning of 1900, Nao had written many ofudesaki which strongly emphasized that Tatebae (reconstructing the world) was imminent. The following ofudesaki show that Nao believed the world renewal would begin with a large-scale war and natural disasters:

If this great world will have to become a muddy sea, I have to reconstruct it from scratch again. Therefore, by all means, I would like to make people Kaishin (reform one's mind) and to turn this world into a better one.
(ofudesaki, March 23, 1900) 274

During the next great war, people will be hit by serious natural disaster. This is not a bluff, but I am giving you a true warning.
(ofudesaki, April 27, 1900) 275

The plan has been suspended because I want to save as many people as possible. However, this year, I will carry out Tatebae (reconstructing the world). Through Deguchi, I have been persuading people to prepare for the world renewal, but that is not enough to make them reform their souls. Consequently some natural disasters may occur (as a warning from Kami-gami). Be prepared!
(ofudesaki, March 15, 1900) 276

Next the world will be involved in a large-scale war.
(ofudesaki, May 4, 1900) 277

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273 See the list of Japanese terms in the appendix.
274 O.S. p. 96 (Ômoto-nenpyô, No.3: 55-56).
275 O.S. p. 98 Ômoto-nenpyô, No 3: 85-87)
276 O.S. p. 95 (Ômoto-nenpyô, No.3: 37-43)
277 O.S. p. 98 (Ômoto-nenpyô, No.3:89)
As discussed in chapter three, although *Ushitora-no-Konjin* warns people that the world may become a muddy sea, He by all means wants to avoid the destruction of the world. He intends to renew this world through the *Kaishin* of the faithful. Recovering harmony and right order in the world of Kami-gami is also an inevitable part of world renewal. Kami-gami need collaboration from human beings to pursue this task.

Nao believed that *Shusshū* was an indispensable step for world renewal. It is important to notice that Nao tried to show people her religious teaching through symbolic “actions.” Such “actions” stood opposed to the “theories” which Onisaburō brought into Nao’s group. She had repeatedly stated that world renewal would not be actualized by *Gaku* (knowledge) and *Chie* (intelligence). Thus, when Onisaburō began “polishing” the teachings of Kommei-reigakkai (the name of Nao’s group at that time) through his knowledge based on Restoration Shinto, Nao attempted to “materialize” the mythology of her *Ofudesaki* by religious actions. Her actions are not only criticisms of Onisaburō but also of modernization and the Tennō-system. The Meiji government’s policy of modernizing Japan had been focusing on technological development. In other words, the government tried to build a modern Japan based on *Gaku* and *Chie*. The Tennō system also had been building on *Chie* and *Gaku*. As mentioned in chapter one, the government made every effort to re-organize old religious customs and communities in order to introduce a government supported “new religion,” namely the worship of the Tennō. (For example, the government decreed in 1868 the complete removal of Buddhist influence from Shinto shrines.) The Tennō worship was promoted by many ways but mainly through education. In other words, the
government "planted" the idea of the "divine" Tennō through Gaku (knowledge). Therefore, stating, especially through "actions," an original myth which fundamentally differed from the Tennō myth constituted a strong protest against the Tennō system and the government.

Oshima is four kilometres in circumference, and is thirty km away from the coast. There was a small shrine called Obito-jima Jinjya (The shrine for old sages) on this island. Local people had believed that a man may make the pilgrimage here once in his life, as a kind of coming-of-age ritual, but should not try to make a second visit. Women were absolutely forbidden to set foot on Oshima. 278 Nao persuaded local ferrymen who were hesitant to depart from the port of Maizuru to the island mainly because of bad weather. Nao cried defiantly: "This is a divine command! We are not to delay even a single hour." 279 Nao and her followers finally reached a tiny beach on Oshima. They purified themselves at the beach, and then paid their respects at the Obito-jima Jinjya. After these religious activities were completed, the party returned to Ayabe.

However, as soon as she returned from Oshima, Nao received another order from Ushitora-no-Konjin. The Kami ordered her to another island called Meshima. The island is located close to Oshima, but is smaller and much less accessible than Oshima.

On August 2, 1900, Nao, Onisaburō, Sumi and six other followers left Ayabe

279 Ōmoto Foundation edit., Nao Deguchi, Kameoka: Ōmoto Foundation, 1982, p. 34.
for Meshima, a desolate rocky island. The shore around it was all sheer cliffs. Consequently, the party had a hard time finding a landing place. Again, Nao showed her strong will to complete her task. After a long period of attempting to land, finally, the party finally was able to disembark from the boat. Nao conducted purification rituals and built a shrine for *Ushitora-no-Konjin*, the Princess of the Dragon Palace and other Kami-gami.

The following *ofudesaki* explain the purpose and meaning of these two acts of *Shussū*:

> In this world, the only places where Kami-gami have been dwelling are the hills in Meshima and Oshima . . . I have told Deguchi Nao that Oshima is the entrance to the Dragon Palace.
> (*ofudesaki*, July 4, 1900) 280

> The reason why I let you go to Meshima and Oshima was to make you carry through the great task of opening the (new) world.
> (*ofudesaki*, July 6, 1900) 281

> This Kami who has undergone all sorts of hardships created the world. This suffering Kami is the One Who protects the world. This guardian Kami is the One Who had been dwelling in Meshima . . .
> (*ofudesaki*, Aug. 29, 1900) 282

According to Nao’s teaching, Meshima is the very place where *Ushitora-no-konjin* had been confined for three thousand years, and the princess of the Dragon Palace and other Kami-gami had fallen down to Oshima. By acts of *Shussū*, Oshima and Meshima were “opened” and *Ushitora-no-Konjin* and His fellow

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280 O.S. p. 103 (*Omoto Nenpyō*, No. unknown)
281 O.S. p. 104 (*Omoto-Shinyu*, Vol.2)
282 O.S. p. 113 (*Omoto Nenpyō*, No. 3: 187-197)
Kami-gami became free from their exile. Consequently, the opening of Meshima and Oshima was viewed as the beginning of the world renewal.

After the opening of Meshima and Oshima, Nao produced immense numbers of ofudesaki which clearly showed Nao’s conviction that the process of world renewal would be quickened. On October 1, 1900, Nao carried out another Shusshū. Ushitora-no-Konjin ordered her to go to “the Dragon Palace on land,” but Nao actually did not know where her final destination would be. 283 Nao asked Onisaburō, Sumi and Shikata Haruzō to come with her for this Shusshū.

Yasumaru Yoshio interprets the purpose of this Shusshū as Nao wanting Onisaburō, Sumi and Haruzō to do Kaishin (reforming one’s mind) and Wagō (being harmonious). 284 The power struggle between Onisaburō and the old principal members had been intensified since the opening of Meshima and Oshima. Nineteen-year-old Haruzō had shown his shamanistic disposition and was used as a symbolic leader by those who were conducting a campaign to oust Onisaburō from Nao’s group. It is interesting to notice why Nao regarded young Haruzō as an important member of her group. The key factor was Haruzō’s shamanistic disposition. Onisaburō introduced into Nao’s group Chinkon-Kishin (artificially inducing trance technique) but he himself never fell into a possessed state. He was just a Saniwa (the authority who can judge what kind of kami or spirit is possessing the possessed person) who works with his gaku (knowledge). Nao, on the other hand, was possessed by Ushitora-no-Konjin without anyone’s help or any rituals. Nao might seen a strong shamanistic potential in Haruzō,

283 Yasumaru, Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, p. 174.
284 Yasumaru, Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, p. 175.
and attached great importance to his potential to balance a tendency to overestimate knowledge in her group. According to the ofudesaki of September 18, 1900, Nao attached great importance to bringing about harmony between her followers. Since all the incidents in Nao's group were the Kata (prototype) of world events, in Nao's eyes, harmonizing the principal members was vital to world renewal to produce a harmonious new world.

At first Nao and her companions went to Fukushima Toranosuke's (Nao's son-in-law's) house in Yagi. Next day, it is said that Onisaburō became possessed and revealed that their destination should be Mount Kurama, north of Kyoto. The mountain is famous as the place where the Kurama Temple is situated. The temple was founded in 770, and was originally associated with the Tendai sect of Buddhism which emphasizes esoteric practices. Nao's party arrived at the mountain and practiced an all-night vigil before an inner shrine of the Kurama Temple where Mao-son (Demon King) is enshrined.

According to Ōmoto-Kyō's official history, Haruzō confessed that he had a terrifying experience during the night, and became completely downcast after the experience. He never spoke in detail of what he had experienced. A month later, on November 13, 1900, he died from sickness. Unfortunately, Ōmoto-kyō's official history does not tell much about Haruzō's death but hints that he showed neurotic symptoms after having a “terrifying experience” at Mount Kurama. After

285 O.S. p. 127 (Ōmoto Nenpyō No.3: 465-471)
286 The Ōmoto Foundation ed., Deguchi Nao, p. 175.
287 Mao-son is a powerful Kami who has come to Earth from the planet Venus 6,500,000 years ago.
288 O.N., p. 222.
his death, anti-Onisaburō members became quiet for a while.

It should be noticed that this Shusshū to Kurama was particularly important in establishing Onisaburō's position in the Kimmei-Reigakkai. First of all, the final destination was chosen by Onisaburō, not Nao. This fact indicates that Onisaburō took the initiative in the Shusshū to Mount Kurama. Secondly, the death of Haruzō was advantageous to Onisaburō and shook people who had criticized Onisaburō.

A biography of Nao published by the present Ōmoto-kyō tells an interesting story related to this Shusshū. On the way to Mount Kurama, Nao and her followers stopped at Kitano Shrine where Sugawara-no-Michizane (845-903) is enshrined. At the shrine Nao became sad, thinking of the long time Ushitora-no-Konjin had been confined in the northeast with no one to build a shrine to him or worship him, where there were magnificent shrines such as this dedicated to mere humans. Unfortunately, there is no evidence of Nao actually saying this. However, if it is true, the words show that Nao was clearly aware of a fundamental difference between a Kami and a Hito-gami (a man enshrined as a kami), and she makes much more a kami than of a Hito-gami. This view relates to her attitude towards the Tennō. The Tennō is nothing but a typical example of Hito-gami, and, naturally to Nao's eyes, Ushitora-no-Konjin should have a dominant position over the Tennō. Needless to say, holding such a view was extremely risky at that time and made her vulnerable to government

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289 Sugawara-no-Michizane was a scholar in the Heian period, and, after he died, he became revered as a Kami of learning.

prosecution.

After the Shusshū to Mount Kurama, Nao shut herself up in a room for 100 days and kept writing ofudesaki which demanded that members of Kimmei-Reigakkai reform their minds and do Tatekae (reconstruction of the world) for the group. 291 Then, in the spring of 1901, Nao carried out another Shusshū that revealed clearly Nao's idea of the world renewal process, namely “cleansing” the world. On the second month 2, 1901 (lunar calendar), Nao received an order from Ushitora-no-Konjin, saying “Finally, this year is the absolute year of Tatekae. Thus you must visit the Moto-Ise shrine in Tango.” This shrine is located thirty-two kilometres north of Ayabe. According to Nihongi: Sujin Tennō section, Amaterasu-Ōmikami was worshipped within the Tennō's Great Hall, but the Sujin Tennō (early third century) dreaded the power of Kami and did not feel secure with their dwelling in the Great Hall. Thus, the Tennō entrusted Amaterasu-ōmikami to Toyosuki-iri-bime-no-Mikoto to be worshipped at the village of Kasanuhi in Yamato. 292 Then Sujin’s successor, Suinin Tennō (late third century?), ordered Yamato-hime-no-Mikoto to transfer Amaterasu-Ōmikami from Kasanuhi to somewhere else. Yamato-hime-no-Mikoto examined several places and finally selected a shrine for Amaterasu-Ōmikami in the province of Ise. 293 The local tradition surrounding the Moto-Ise shrine says that on the way to Ise from Kasanuhi, Amaterasu-Ōmikami was temporarily enshrined in the Moto-Ise shrine.

On April 26, 1901, Nao left Ayabe with Onisaburō, Sumi and thirty-nine

291 Murakami, Shigeyoshi, Deguchi Onisaburō, p. 86.
followers for the Moto-Ise shrine. Before their departure, Ushitora-no-Konjin revealed the purpose of this Shusshū as follows:

The crystal water of Ubudarai and Ubugama (two wells in the Celestial Rock Cave) of Moto-Ise was holy and pure, and from ancient times nobody could approach it. Concerning the present Tatekæ of the world, I have assigned an important task to people fated to go to Moto-Ise from Omoto of Ayabe to fetch the crystal water unchanged from ancient times in order to accomplish this Tatekæ of the world.

(ofudesaki, lunar March 7, 1901)

The drawing of the water from Ubugama and Ubudari had been prohibited and there was a priest on guard to keep everyone away from the sacred water. However, Nao insisted that Ushitora-no-Konjin gave permission to obtain the water. Finally two of her followers succeeded in reaching the cave and returned to Nao with bamboo joints filled with the sacred water. The water was first offered on the altar of Ushitora-no-Konjin. Then followers passed one cylinder around and took a sip each. The remainder was poured into a well on the site of Kimmei-Reigakkai’s headquarters in Ayabe. Later this well was named Kimmeisui (golden bright water). In May, Nao went to Meshima again with thirty-five followers, and poured the water from Ubugama and Ubudari mixed with that of Kimmeisui into the sea between Oshima and Meshima. According to Ōmoto-kyō’s official biography, Nao prayed as follows when she was pouring the water into the sea:

Ushitora-no-Konjin, we humbly beseech you, with your power, wide as the Pacific Ocean and deep as the Sea of Japan, to make this pure water from Moto-Ise encircle the sea of the world, turning to clouds,

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294 Around this period, the word Ōmoto began to be used to describe Nao’s group.
295 O.N. p. 224.
turning to rain, snow and hail, washing away impurities, and building a paradise on earth. 296

It is said that Nao also made a remark concerning the water poured into the sea, “In three years this water will go around the whole world, and then the world will begin to move. Meanwhile people whose destiny it is to serve the divine plan will begin to gather here. 297

There are two significant points related to this Shusshū at Moto-Ise. First of all, it became clear that, in Nao’s mind, the Tatekae is carried out through purification. The world is impure like a muddy sea. Thus the sacred pure water from Moto-Ise will go around the world to purify it. Purification by clean water has been a long tradition in Japan. Not only Shinto, but Japanese Buddhism and folk religions use water for their purification rituals. As discussed in section B in this chapter, Ushitora-no-Konjin does not really intend to destroy this world. He wants to renew this world through purifying people’s minds, the polluted order of the human world and of the kami-gami’s world. The world will become pure and harmonious again after purification.

The second point is a relationship developed between the Moto-Ise shrine and Nao’s group. Moto means origin. Nao transferred traditional sacred water from “original” Ise to Ayabe. This can be interpreted that Nao declared that her group succeeded to the “tradition” from the Moto-Ise. Before and after these Shusshū, Nao repeatedly wrote that Amaterasu-Ōmikami no longer dwell in the

296 The Omoto Foundation, Nao Deguchi, p. 51.
297 The Omoto Foundation, Nao Deguchi, p. 51.
Grand Shrine of Ise, because the land of Ise had become polluted. Consequently, Nao's group was the "real" successor of the Ise tradition, and Ayabe became the only pure place where Kami-gami could get together.

Just before Nao and her party set out for Moto-Ise, Nao received another order from Ushitora-no-Konjin. The Kami said:

If you go to Izumo again, I will show you the function of the journey and will level the world—both the things above and the things below. If you fail to complete this mission, you can never comprehend this coming great event. However, once you achieve this understanding, everything will progress quickly.

Then, on July 1, 1901, Nao, Onisaburō, Sumi and twelve followers left Ayabe for Izumo on foot. On the eleventh day, they reached the Grand Shrine of Izumo. They asked a special favor of the shrine priests, and received the sacred fire, said to have been kept alight since the Age of Kami-gami. They also brought some water from the well and some earth from the shrine precincts back to Ayabe.

As mentioned in chapter two, the province of Tamba where Nao was born and lived until her death had deep relations with the Izumo religious tradition. The Izumo line of Shinto tradition has many characteristic myths and rituals which are incompatible with the Ise Shinto tradition. It is important to notice that Nao chose to relate herself to Izumo combined with "original" Ise. Receiving traditional sacred fire from Izumo symbolized Nao's declaration that her group had become

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298 Yasumaru Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, pp. 143-144.
the true successor of the sacred fire.\(^{300}\) Ayabe, therefore, became New Izumo as well as New Ise. In other words, Ayabe became the new sacred capital of the world where the Kami-gami Who were working for world renewal assembled.

**F. AYABE AS THE SACRED CAPITAL**

Soon after her return from Izumo, Nao sent three pairs of her followers to various places around Ayabe to spread the soil which she brought back from Izumo. The purpose of this mission was to set up the boundaries of a shrine territory. \(^{301}\)

Even in early *ofudesaki* written around 1896, *Ushitora-no-Konjin* predicted that Ayabe would become “the capital,” and that the grand shrine for the Kami would be built there. The Kami also foretold through many *ofudesaki* that the Grand Shrine of Izumo would move to Ayabe. The following are some examples which state that Ayabe is going to be the new sacred shrine-capital:

Ayabe will become the capital. It will return to the original state of the world. The shrine for *Ushitora-no-Konjin* will be built.

*(ofudesaki, April 25, 1896)* \(^{302}\)

The shrine for the *Konjin* of Heaven and Earth will be built within the premises of Deguchi Takezō \(^{303}\) and Nao in Hongū-Machi, Ayabe, Ikaruga county. The shrine for *Ushitora-no-Konjin* will be built. Then, eventually, the Great Kami of Izumo will move into (Ayabe).

\(^{300}\) Murakami, Shigeyoshi, *Deguchi Onisaburō*.

\(^{301}\) O.N., p. 231.

\(^{302}\) O.S., p. 19 *(Omoto Shinyu, Vol.1)*

\(^{303}\) Takezō is Nao’s first son, and was an official head of the Deguchi family. Thus, the house theoretically belonged to him.
I will make Ayabe become the capital and build the shrine for the Konjin. I will make people visit and worship at Ayabe from Tokyo and even from overseas. (ofudesaki 1896) 305

All premises within ten Ri (about 40 kilometres) around belong to the shrine precinct. Ayabe is the center of it. (ofudesaki, Jan. 24, 1900) 306

According to a legend related to the Great Shrine of Izumo, all Kami-gami get together and hold a meeting once a year in October in Izumo. 307 However, Nao taught her followers that Kami-gami had decided to have the gathering in Ayabe in 1892, the year when Nao began to be possessed. It was clear in Nao’s mind that Ayabe would become the sacred capital of the world after the five Shusshû were completed.

As Mircea Eliade has pointed out, the idea of the sacred “center” can be found in many different myths, rites and beliefs. In his The Sacred and the Profane, Eliade says:

For religious man, space is not homogeneous; he experiences interruptions, breaks in it; some parts of space are qualitatively different from others . . . For it is the break effected in space that allows the world to be constituted, because it reveals the fixed point,

304 O.S. p. 21 (Ômoto Nenpyô: No.1, 113)
305 O.S. p. 30 (Ômoto Nenpyô: No.1, 67-96)
306 O.S. p. 89 (Ômoto Shinyû: Vol. No.1)
307 On 11-17 October (lunar calendar), the Kamiari Matsuri (the Kami-gami being present festival) is held at Izumo Shrine. The ancient name for October was Kannazuki (the month without Kami-gami), because all Kami-gami went to Izumo in October.
Among Japanese religions, we can find many examples that fit Eliade's definition of the "sacred center." Mountains such as Mount Fuji and Mount Hakusan have been seen as sacred space and as the central source of power affecting nature and human lives. Tenri-kyō, for example, holds a typical idea of "the sacred center." The founder of Tenri-kyō, Nakayama Miki, taught that the Nakayamas' premises where Miki became possessed by the Kami, Tenriō-no-Mikoto, was the place where the Creation took place. This "sacred center" is called Ji-ba (the original birthplace of man), and Miki called on all human beings to "return" to the Ji-ba to cleanse their souls and to revitalize their lives.

Nao's idea of "sacred" Ayabe was not simply of a "sacred center." Ayabe was, in her mind, the capital of a theocracy ruled by Ushitora-no-Konjin. However, Japan at that time already had "the sacred capital" under the rule of the Tennō. As discussed in chapter one, the Meiji government had made a systematic effort to establish Japan as a "modern nation" based on the Tennō myth. Tokyo was, therefore, not only Japan's political center, but also the "sacred center" of Japan where the Tennō who held sacred authority was seated. Naturally, calling Ayabe "capital" was a bold challenge against the Tennō.

In the ofudesaki of January 28, 1902, Nao called Tokyo a Susuki (Japanese

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pampas grass) which flowers a lot but never has any fruits.\textsuperscript{310} She saw clearly that Japan's "flowery" prosperity was actually only an appearance. Yasumaru Yoshio pointed out that Nao's criticism of the Tennō was very uncompromising. He quoted the \textit{ofudesaki} of Feb. 29, 1903 in his book \textit{Deguchi Nao} to show us Nao's critical view of the Tennō:

\begin{quote}

The world all belongs to the Kami. This \textit{Tatekae} (the reconstruction of the world) will take place, and the Tennō will be ill at ease, but he actually deserves all he will get. Like commoners, he could not do anything to prevent foreigners from trampling this beloved country, Japan, under foot . . . Tennō, you must decamp! \textsuperscript{311}
\end{quote}

Yasumaru asserts that the above mentioned \textit{ofudesaki} is faithful to the original \textit{ofudesaki}. \textsuperscript{312} Some other \textit{ofudesaki} contain some strong messages which obviously criticize the Tennō. Most of them are collected in the \textit{Omoto Nenpyō} which is believed to have received the least influence from Onisaburō. For example, in the \textit{ofudesaki} of August 30, 1900, Nao sharply criticized the Tennō, saying:

\begin{quote}

Japan's \textit{Taishō} (head) must have been worried . . . Do you think that Japan could win the last war and the previous one only by her own efforts! If you are such a \textit{Taishō}, who cannot see the truth about the wars, I will not tolerate you. \textsuperscript{313}
\end{quote}

There is a blank space after "Japan's \textit{Taishō}.” The editor of \textit{Omoto Shirōshüsei}, Ikeda Akira assumed that the word Tennō-Heika (His Majesty the Tennō) was in the space. \textsuperscript{314} It is obvious that the word Taishō is an allusion to the Tennō in

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{310} O.S. p. 158 (\textit{Omoto Nenpyō} No.4:133) \\
\textsuperscript{311} Yasumaru Yoshio, \textit{Deguchi Nao}, p. 201. \\
\textsuperscript{312} Yasumaru Yoshio, \textit{Deguchi Nao}, p. 201. \\
\textsuperscript{313} O.S. p. 114 (\textit{Omoto Nenpyō} No.3: 205-206) \\
\textsuperscript{314} O.S. p. 114.
\end{footnotes}
Nao sharply called the Tennō to account for making Japan’s condition worse. The Tennō was, to Nao’s eyes, not “a sacred ruler of Japan” but a person who had been deceived by evil spirits and imitated foreign ways, such as wearing Western clothing and eating meat. From the time the earliest ofudesaki were written, Nao had been criticizing the Tennō’s way of ruling Japan and of conducting the nation’s affairs, saying “As long as (the Tennō) is taking a prowl dressed in western clothes, Japan will not be settled.” 315 She wrote more radical criticisms against the Tennō during the period between the first Shusshū (July 1900) and the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war (Feb. 1904).

However, it is very difficult to get Nao’s view on the Tennō and the system as a whole, because most of the ofudesaki mentioning the Tennō was destroyed by the government when Ōmoto-kyō was charged with lèse majesté in 1911 and 1935, or had their contents altered by Onisaburō to avoid government persecution or to accommodate Onisaburō’s own ideas. The present Ōmoto-kyō organization still keeps some ofudesaki from the public.

As discussed in chapter four, there is a fundamental difference between Nao’s and Onisaburō’s views on the Tennō. Onisaburō was never free from Restoration Shinto’s view of the emperor which sees the position as the ideal divine ruler of Japan and the world. On the other hand, in Nao’s mind, Ushitora-no-Konjin is the ruler of the world, and the emperor had blindly associated himself with the

315 O.S. p. 13 (Shohatsu-no-Shinyu).
Kami-gami Who had illegitimately ruled for the last three thousand years and made the world become the world of beasts. \(^{316}\) The following are typical examples of how Onisaburō might have altered Nao's ofudesaki:

(a) “As long as there are seven or eight kings ruling over the world, disputations among those kings will never cease to exist. Therefore, I, Ushitora-no-Konjin, am laying out the plan that (the world) will be ruled by one king.”
(ofudesaki, June 6, 1903) \(^{317}\)

(b) “As long as there are seven or eight kings ruling over the world, disputations among those kings will never cease to exist. Therefore there is a plan that (the world) will be by the one king of the divine land of Japan.”
(ofudesaki 1893) \(^{318}\)

The ofudesaki (a) is collected from Ōmoto-nenpyō and (b) from Shinrei-Kai published in 1917, right after the first Ōmoto incident. Yasumaru Yoshio argues that it is doubtful if the words “the one king of the divine land of Japan” were a part of Nao's original writing. \(^{319}\) Yasumaru's argument can be supported by the fact that there are no words in ofudesaki collected in Ōmoto-Nenpyō which indicate that Ushitora-no-Konjin would choose the Tennō as the future ruler when He would finish His world renewal. On the other hand, in those ofudesaki collected in publications edited by Onisaburō and his followers, there are many phrases hinting that the Tennō is the divine ruler of the world. Moreover, in Onisaburō's own writings he clearly states:

Our land of the Sun, Japan, is located in the center of the world . . . The Tennō of Japan is the living Kami and the ruler

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\(^{316}\) See the (ofudesaki of September 9, 1900) as a typical example which shows Nao's view on the Tennō. O.S. p. 121 (Ōmoto Nenpyō, No.3: 373-379)

\(^{317}\) O.S. p. 213 (Ōmoto Nenpyō, No.5: 259-296).

\(^{318}\) O.S. p. 17 (Shinrei-Kai, May 1917 issue).

\(^{319}\) Yasumaru Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, p. 200.
As Onisaburō was gaining more control over the Ōmoto-kyō organization, he fully developed his views about the "divine" Tennō as the future world ruler. At that point, when he inserted ofudesaki in Ōmoto-kyō publications such as Shinrei-kai (first published in 1917), he intentionally twisted some words in original ofudesaki for the purpose of filling deep gaps between the message of original ofudesaki and his ideas about the emperor and his rule.

As Nao had been revealing her own system of religious thought through ofudesaki and Shusshū, confrontation between Nao and Onisaburō intensified. First of all, Nao did not accept Onisaburō's attitude of compromise with the government.

After 1901, the police began strongly pressuring the Kimmei-reigakkai, saying that the group did not have official recognition from the government. Thus they were not allowed to carry on with any religious activities. Nao asserted that "no matter what the police tell us, just ignore them." However, Onisaburō believed that in order to make the Kimmei-Reigakkai survive, he should incorporate the organization as a subsidiary of the Inari-Kōsha which was officially recognized by the government. On October 15, 1901, Onisaburō went to Sizuoka to visit Nagasawa without telling Nao. Nao became extremely angry at

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320 O.S. p. 499 (Shinrei-kai, July 1918). Ura-no-shinyu means the reverse side Shinyu. Onisaburō called Nao's Ofudesaki the Omote-no-Shinyu (the front side Shinyu), and asserted his shinyu and Nao's shinyu are a pair.
322 Onisaburō studied about Chinkon-Kishin under the leader of Inari-Kōsha, Nagasawa Katsutoshi in 1898. See chapter four.
him and went into seclusion in a shrine on Mount Misen, a mountain located twelve kilometres northeast of Ayabe. The seclusion on Mount Misen was understood by anti-Onisaburō people around Nao as the the definite breach between Nao and Onisaburō, while she explained, in the Ofudesaki, that the confrontation between them was the Kata (proto-type) of a “strength contest” between Kami-gami and knowledge and of the war between Japan and foreign countries.  

Nao’s rage at Onisaburō is reflected in her ofudesaki as follows:

If you think the Woof can carry out the task by itself alone, ignoring the Warp, try to do that! At the beginning a lot of people may come around, but truly sincere people will never join you ... Ushitora-no-Konjin cannot be a subsidiary of Inari-Kōsha, thus we will establish our group independently. 
(ofudesaki, May 13, 1902)  

The Woof symbolized Onisaburō’s task and the Warp symbolized Nao’s. At first, Nao had expected the Woof and the Warp would work harmoniously for Ushitora-no-Konjin. However, the above mentioned ofudesaki indicate that Nao felt Onisaburō neglected her and the ofudesaki.

In the same ofudesaki, Nao also criticized Onisaburō’s “selfish and carefree” lifestyle. Even Ōmoto-kyō’s official biography of Nao recognizes the differences in their lifestyles. For example, even in winter Nao refused to warm herself, saying “it was disgraceful to think of one’s own comfort while engaging in divine

affairs,” while Onisaburō did not hesitate to care for his own comfort. To Onisaburō’s eyes, Nao’s self-discipline was “unreasonable.”

In his early writings, Onisaburō often openly criticized Nao and her close followers as illogical or unreasonable. For example, in his *Michi-no-Ōmoto* (1905) (The Great Source of the Way), he explicitly stated that she and close followers around her were superstitionists and heretics who did not hold proper knowledge of Shintō. 

At that time, many followers around Nao were practicing everything the Ofudesaki told them literally. For example, they refused to use western things such as western clothes, lamps and matches. Some of them even used a lantern during the daytime because the ofudesaki says “the world is in the dark.”

As the onset of another war approached, Nao and her close followers had a stronger and stronger sense that the critical moment of world renewal was coming. Nao warned her followers that they should lead a more frugal life, because many problems such as food shortages would occur in the course of Tatekae. Nao’s group was becoming alienated from society as time went by between 1901 and 1904. The group quickly fell into financial difficulty, so that even buying paper for writing ofudesaki was a burden for them.

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325 The Omoto Foundation, *Deguchi Nao*, p. 60.
The expulsion agitation against Onisaburō became stronger. In 1903 and 1905 Onisaburō's written works were burnt by some anti-Onisaburō leaders. Ōmoto Nanajūnen-shi recorded that there was even an attempt to assassinate Onisaburō. Finally in 1906, Onisaburō left Ayabe and went to Kyoto where he attended the Köten-Kōkyōsho (The School and Research Institute for the Japanese Classics and Shinto Theology).

Meanwhile, Nao's religious activities intensified when the Russo-Japanese War broke out in 1904. On May 14, 1905, when Japan was in disquiet in anticipation of the arrival of the Baltic Fleet, Nao made another Shusshū to Meshima. Nao believed that this one was the "final" Shusshū, and that world renewal would begin at long last. Ōmoto-kyō's official history interpreted this Shusshū as Nao going to Meshima to pray for peace. However, Yasumaru Yoshio argues that Nao's action was based on her expectation of the beginning of Tatekae. In her mind, according to Yasumaru, there was an "eschatological" schema of Japan's defeat leading to "the end of the present world, and to the beginning of Tatekae." In her ofudesaki, however, Nao only said that the second Shusshū to Meshima was the final Shusshū for the task of "lifting up" those Kami-gami who had fallen into exile. Thus it is not fully clear if she

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331 The Ōmoto Foundation, Nao Deguchi, p. 62.
332 Yasumaru Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, p. 220. Yasumaru’s definition of "eschatological" is similar to so-called “Apocalyptic eschatology.” As we can find in the Old Testament’s Daniel and Isaiah, a schema of the process of ending old worlds and beginning new worlds is as follows: Step one -- war or other disasters and, eventually, a cosmic catastrophe. Step two -- the end of the old world; in other words, the end of old aeon. Step three -- a new world of absolute and perfect salvation will appear.
333 See ofudesaki of May 26, 1905, O.S. pp. 312-13 (Ōmoto Nenpyō, No.7, 223-231) 12 an example.
held a typical exchatological schema, but it is certain that Nao and her followers believed that the Russo-Japanese War would be the beginning of a great change in the world.

Their expectations reached a high point, but ended in total disappointment when Japan defeated Russia and the Meiji government bolstered its ruling power over the Japanese people. Most of the followers left Kimmei-Reigakkai and the group fell into an extreme decline with serious financial difficulties. Nao did not stop writing ofudesaki, but kept warning people that the victory over Russia would not make society stable. However, it was obvious that Nao’s cry was no longer reaching people’s ears.

G. THE DEATH OF THE SHAMAN

In 1908, Onisaburō went back to Ayabe. At this point the leadership of the Kimmei-Reigakkai switched from Nao and her close followers to Onisaburō. He moved quickly and made significant changes in the organization. First of all, he re-organized it into Dai-Nihon-Shūsai-Kai (The Great Japan Purification Society) which, Onisaburō asserted, was not a religious organization but a research organization into “pure shinto.”

Onisaburō was developing his own nationalistic ideas which emphasized a theocratic society ruled by the divine Tennō. He also developed teachings which established “connections” between the ofudesaki’s mythology and the myths told in

334 Yasumaru Yoshio, Deguchi Nao, p. 220.
He used every means, including publishing magazines and sending missionary groups around the Tamba area and beyond, to make his new organization grow. By 1911, Dai-Nihon-Shūsai-Kai became a religious group attracting people from all over Japan.  

In the spring of 1916, Onisaburō claimed that he saw an island through his “spiritual eyes.” Onisaburō sent two followers to search for this island. On June 25, 1916, Onisaburō left Ayabe to open the island of Kami-Shima. This Shusshū was done under the full leadership of Onisaburō. This was a clear declaration of Onisaburō’s spiritual equality with Nao, if not his superiority over her. From this point on, many ofudesaki mentioned that Onisaburō’s spirit was the spirit of Miroku, the savior who will usher in the world to come.

Nao, on the other hand, kept herself from public view. She even stopped writing ofudesaki around 1917. Then, on November 6, 1918, she passed quietly away.

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335 Murakami Shigeyoshi, Deguchi Onisaburō, pp. 100-108.
VII. SOME PROBLEMS AND CONCLUSIONS

Although a typological study regarding a modernization process has been developed by historians, sociologists, anthropologists and others, each society has been going through its own way of modernization. In the case of Japan, for example, her experiences with industrialization, urbanization and other modernization processes have many characteristics in common with countries such as England and France. On the other hand, Japan’s modernization process has elements which fundamentally differ from what other societies have experienced.

Speed is one of the notable characteristics of Japan’s modernization. If we focus on several elements of modernization, such as industrialization, economic growth and militarization, Japan made rapid strides along the road which industrially advanced western countries had been travelling for four hundred years. She caught up to countries like England and France within a half century. Her “speed” was much faster than that of other modernization late-comers, such as Russia, which began her “modernization process” in the 1860s. 336

On the other hand, some argue that Japan’s modernization did not make much progress until the end of World War II. Mikiso Hane is one of them. He states, “As late as the 1930s, in the famines that struck the northern villages, similar tragedies [starvation, infanticide, abortion, and selling of daughters into prostitution] beset the peasants. All of which leaves one to ask: How modern

was 'modern' Japan?" Those elements of modernization which I tentatively call "modernity," such as the growth of human rights, democratic thought and equality among all men, made extremely slow progress.

There are many possible causes, conditions, and circumstances which made Japan enter her modernization process. Some scholars, such as John Hall and Marius Jansen, have examined "modern" elements in Japanese society in the Tokugawa Period (1604-1868). Others such as Yamazaki Kōzō focus on the development of Capitalism in Japan and the world. In this paper, we have discussed an ideology which governed all aspects of the Japanese people's lives between the late 19th century and 1945. This ideology at that time was the basis for political unification, the source of nationalism and the justification of expansionism. At other times, it was used by the government as a weapon to suppress a human rights movement and other movements seeking the development of "modernity." In other words, this ideology was developed and cultivated by the Meiji government to be the theoretical backbone of the government's modernization policy. It was based on the myth which emphasized the divinity of the Tennō. This "religious" ideology is called Tennō-sei ideology (the ideology of the Tennō system). Tennō-sei and the Japanese people's reaction to it are the factors which should not be overlooked when one studies the problems of modernization in Japan.

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As discussed in chapter one, when the Meiji government was established it did not have a firm base for its power. However, its architects were aware that they had to unify the country as soon as possible in order to resist pressure from Western countries. Establishing a system which related to the external, physical aspects of people's lives, such as the central bureaucratic system, was rather easy compared with centralizing peoples' minds around the new ruler, namely the Tennō. The Tennō, in reality, had very weak foundations supporting his authority as a ruler. The architects of the new government moved quickly to establish the religious authority of the Tennō in order to ensure the legitimacy of the government. The government used all possible means to spread the Tennō myth among the people. The following is the basic concept of the myth: the Heavenly Kami-gami and the Great Ancestress, Amaterasu-Omikami, established the throne and made the succession secure. The line of Tennō in unbroken succession entered into possession thereof and handed it on. The Tennō by means of Shinto ceremonies became one with the divine imperial ancestors. Shinto ceremonies and government were one and the same.

The Tennō's right to be the ruler of Japan lies in the "historical fact" that the present Tennō relates directly through and unbroken blood line with those Kami-gami who created Japan and with the founder of the Japanese dynasty. This "anti-modern" myth became the fundamental ideology of "modern" Japan. Sometimes we can find in modern societies a charismatic ruler who is surrounded by "mystical" stories. For example, James M. Rhodes argues that Hitler's National Socialism was a secular apocalyptic movement and Nazis intentionally built up a quasi-religious "apocalyptic" image, such as the chosen one who would
eliminate evil from the face of the earth, upon Hitler. However, there is no modern society other than Japan that had such a strong and actual connection between mythology and politics, mainly because in many European societies modernization began with separation of the king’s political power from the religious authority of the Christian Church. It is ironic that separation of religion and state was established in Japan much earlier than in many European countries. For example, the Jōei shikimoku (basic law code of the Kamakura Shogunate issued in 1232) clearly stated the Kamakura government had no connection with any religious organizations and did not care to which religious organization people belonged.

In other words, the Kamakura Shogunate government did not need support from religious “authority” to establish its power over Japan. Since then religion has basically been regarded as a personal matter, even though all of the shogunate governments were cautious of a religious movement which had the potential to grow into a political movement. However, the “modern” Meiji government actually reversed this tradition. Religion and politics were more tightly connected than ever before. Religious freedom was shattered.

Although the Meiji government emphasized that the Tennō’s power was “restored” to the way originally practiced in ancient Japan, actually the entire Tennō system based on his politico-religious authority was nothing but a modern invention. For example, according to modern Tennō-sei ideology, the Tennō is a

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“sacred and inviolable” living Kami. However, in the course of history until the Meiji era, the Tennō had always been the highest priest, and not a Kami himself. He could unite with Kami-gami through ceremonies, but essentially he was a human. Murakami Shigeyoshi argues that the “absolutely divine Tennō” image is essentially different from the traditional Japanese image of the Tennō.

In chapter one, the process of fabricating the divine Tennō is discussed, but more detailed examination is necessary to clarify why “divinization” of the Tennō progressed in such a short period, and who planned it.

Once the divine Tennō was “restored,” the government used the Tennō’s religious authority fully, as a useful instrument to control people. For instance, faith in the divine Tennō effectively checked radicalism and revolutionary sentiment as follows: since the Tennō is a direct descendant of the Kami who created Japan and of the Kami who founded the Dynasty, it is “natural” and “inevitable” that the Tennō holds the ruler’s seat. Therefore, any revolutionary sentiments are distractions from “natural” events and hold no legitimate right to overthrow the Tennō’s government.

Tennō-sei ideology emphasized the “traditional” virtues such as obedience, submissiveness and humility. On the other hand, the Tennō was presented as a model of “modern” man. The bulletins which told the people that the Tennō ate beef or wore western clothes were nothing but the government’s modernization propaganda. The Tennō also played an important role in promoting the utilization of electricity, trains, and other “new” things. However, the most effective usage

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of Tennō-sei ideology was for Japan’s foreign policy, called *Hakkō Ichi-u* (The Whole World Under One Roof). The basic idea was as follows: it was the great timeless mission of Japanese people to unite all the races of the world under one roof governed by the divine ruler, the Tennō, who would bring everlasting happiness to mankind.

Apparently, the Japanese people believed in the government’s modernization policy and marched into the tragic wars with fife music being played by the divine Tennō. We can rather easily discover how “intellectual” people considered the government’s modernization policy.

Fukuzawa Yukichi (1834-1901), Kitamura Tōkoku (1868-1894), and Uchimura Kanzō (1861-1930) are representative of those who criticized modernization policies at that time, saying Japan’s modernization was superficial and taking an inappropriate course. However, it is difficult to know how the masses, especially those who were in the lower social strata, regarded modernization and the government’s modernization policy. Studying new religions is one of the few means of listening to the voices of those people. Since the Meiji government was maintained by the Tennō myth, the existence of a new religion which held its own mythology could be a serious criticism of the Tennō and his government, because such an “unofficial myth” might deny the fundamental right of the Tennō to rule Japan.

Deguchi Nao’s *Ofudesaki* raised fundamental questions about Japan’s

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modernization, as well as the Tennō's rule over Japan. She sharply criticized modernization, saying it would not bring people happiness, but rather would destroy the world.

Nao was born into the lowest stratum in Japanese society and struggled against severe difficulties through most of her life. However, she committed herself wholeheartedly to following the moral code which Yasumaru Yoshio calls *Tsūzoku-Dōtoku*. 344

*Tsūzoku-Dōtoku* is a system of conventional morality which was widespread in the late 19th century through religious or ethical movements such as Shin-gaku and Fuji-kō. This moral code taught the importance of loyalty, obedience, sincerity, filial piety and so on, and stressed selfless devotion to family and one's social superiors. It also told that one's diligent labor and righteous behaviour would surely be rewarded. Nao carried out a model life according to *Tsūzoku-Dōtoku*.

However, when the new government was established, things actually became worse. Political and economic changes introduced into Japanese society by the new government eliminated the rewards promised by *Tsūzokū-Dōtoku*. As for hard work, self-discipline, sacrificing one's personal needs and so on, Nao upheld these virtues, but the only things she got in return were more difficulties. Nao learnt from her painful experiences that Japan was going the wrong direction. Then one day, Nao changed all the stigmas she had accumulated into charisma. When she was possessed by *Ushitora-no-Konjin*, she suddenly understood the real

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344 Yasumaru Yoshio, *Deguchi Nao*, p. 70.
meaning of the suffering she had gone through.

She also discovered why her virtuous attitude and hard work did not bring her happiness. The world had been ruled by the wrong rulers, and naturally the world itself had become dark and twisted. The mythological story of *Ushitora-no-Konjin* and His fellow Kami-gami's exile in Nao's *ofudesaki* strikes against the core of the Tennō-sei ideology. Nao could criticize the government's modernization policy and the Tennō who, to Nao's eyes, had been blindly worsening the condition of Japan, because she was supported by the authority of *Ushitora-no-Konjin* which, she believed, was much higher and stronger than that of the Tennō. Nao's criticisms were on firm ground, established by her own experiences and confirmed by *Ushitora-no-Konjin*. She asserted that the present world was filled with greed and *Ware-yoshi* (selfishness). One may say that Nao saw into the essential character of capitalistic society. Nao showed in the *ofudesaki* the ideal world where people would be able to live a plain but quiet and anxiety-free life.

The Kami who was a higher authority than the Tennō, the Creation myth which differs from the story of the Tennō's ancestors, the image of the ideal world which differs from the one the government had presented as the goal . . . these new religions which held the above mentioned three beliefs had the potential to shake the foundations of the Tennō's government. Maruyama-kyō, Tenri-kyō, Konkō-kyō and Ōmoto-kyō's histories tell us that Japanese people by no means blindly accepted the government's modernization policy. They saw essential "defects" in modernization and sought alternative ways to build and
ideal world.

However, none of those new religions could grow into a full-scale anti-government or "actual" world-renewal movement. Sooner or later all of the above mentioned new religions compromised with the government and accepted the worship of the Tennō as a central part of their teachings.

In the case of Tenri-kyō, the founder Nakayama Miki finished writing her original creation myth named Doroumi-Kōki (Ancient Story of Muddy Sea) in 1883. The stories in this book are completely different from those in Kojiki and Nihongi. Soon after Miki's death in 1887 Tenri-kyō took copies of Doroumi-Kōki from followers and discarded them.

In the case of Omoto-kyō, after Onisaburō won the leadership of the group, he put effort into making connections between the Ofudesaki, Kojiki and Nihongi. He did not hesitate to re-write ofudesaki in order to fill the great gaps between Nao's teachings and Tennō-sei ideology. Later, Onisaburō developed his own ideal image of divine Tennō. Ironically, the government did not tolerate this "private" Tennō-sei ideology and severely suppressed it in 1921 and 1935.

Why did all these religions lose their powers of resistance against the government so quickly? The common answer for this question is that the pressure from the government was unbearably strong and compromise with Tennō worship was the only manner of surviving. Indeed, the government was well aware that controlling religions was essential to stabilizing its rule. Government
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leaders knew that new religions had the potential to hit the weakest point of the Tennō’s ruling system, namely the mythological base of its authority as the ruler of Japan. However, it should be noticed that there were almost no religious groups that fought uncompromisingly against Tennō worship. One notable exception is Hommichi. This small religious group is an offshoot from Tenri-kyō, led by Ōnishi Aijirō (1881-1958). Ōnishi clearly stated that the Tennō was nothing but a spurious Kami and criticized the Tennō-sei ideology exhaustively. The government violently suppressed Hommichi twice in 1928 and 1938. Ōnishi and most of his followers were arrested in 1938 and Ōnishi received a life sentence. Ōnishi did not accept Tennō worship at all and the majority of his followers did not turn from their belief in Ōnishi’s teachings. The interesting characteristic of Hommichi was that Ōnishi was a shaman and was not interested in establishing a religious organization. Ōnishi realized the dangers involved in becoming a religious organization. He began teaching his religious ideas but did not allow a permanent church to be formed. His followers offered meeting places in turn. 345

After the death of Nakayama Miki, Tenri-kyō gradually removed shamanistic elements from its teachings. Miki’s grandson Shinnosuke took control of the Tenri-kyō and tried to shape its creed and to establish Tenri-kyō as a religious organization. Since Shinnosuke, the leadership has always been held by a descendant of Shinnosuke. Interestingly enough, just as in the case of the Tennō, the blood line from Miki became a qualification to be the leader of the Tenri-kyō.

345 Umehara Masaki, Hommichi, pp. 112-140.
Onishi had doubts about monopolizing religious authority within the Namakyama family. He believed that Tenri-kyō should be led by a person who was chosen by Kami to receive revelations from the Kami. Eventually, Onishi realized that he was the true successor of Miki and could receive revelations from the Kami as Miki had done.  

In the case of Omoto-kyō, we can see a similar pattern. When Nao was active as a shaman Omoto-kyō was small but had a strong will to resist the Tennō-sei ideology, but after the failure of her revelation about Japan’s tragic defeat in the war against Russia she lost her charisma as a shaman. Onisaburō, an organizer, came into the power and established the Omoto-kyō religious organization. In order to preserve the organization, coping with the Tennō ideology was almost inevitable. Shamanistic elements faded away; even Nao’s Ofudesaki began to be treated like a secondary source of Omoto-kyō’s teachings.

The relationship between a shaman and an organizer in a new religion needs more comparative study in order to find out why most new Japanese religions lost their vitality and why religious leaders often become “mini” Tennōs after the shamanistic founders die. For further study, the shaman-organizer relationship can be used as a paradigm. We find this characteristic not only within new Japanese religions, but also in the histories of many other religious organizations in the world. Bryan Wilson shows us the transformation process of a sect becoming a denomination. According to Wilson, “sects are movements of religious protest . . . They rejected the authority of orthodox religious leaders and often,

also, of the secular government.” 347 However, many sects soon moved from a position of protest and members lost their distinctive religious identity. Wilson says that through this process they “denominationalise.” 348 He studied mainly Christian sects in North America such as the Seventh Day Adventists and the Mormons. Denominationalization deeply relates to the loss of the prophet-leader of a sect. When a prophet-leader loses his charisma (or he dies), the next leader, often an organizer, takes the sect and makes it become an established stable religious movement. The sect will be denominationalized. The relationship between Nao and Onisaburō can be studied in this light.

As discussed in chapter five, some of Nao’s teachings satisfy the definitions of millenarian movements which was set by Norman Cohn and other scholars. Still, there are fundamental problems to be solved before we will be able to define Ōmoto-kyō as a millenarian movement. First of all, in Nao’s Ofudesaki, there is no image of an all-out war between the sons of light and the sons of darkness. Nao urged those who illegitimately rule this world to Kaishin (reform one’s mind/soul), but never tried to eliminate the “evil” kami-gami & “evil” people. It is still a questionable assertion that a millenarian movement can occur within a culture that does not have a strong sense of dichotomy. 349

New religions established during the late 19th century and the early 20th century are evidence of the Japanese Jinmin’s (people’s) consciousness. They opened their eyes to see the change in their own country and the world. They

might not know sophisticated words, but they pointed to the dark side of the "glorious" Japanese empire and of modernization. They even showed that there was another path Japan could follow.

A tiny humble woman, Deguchi Nao, was one of them, and her message of world-renewal still has the power to appeal to modern people who are seeking a path towards a better world.
VIII. GLOSSARY OF SELECTED JAPANESE WORDS

Akugami 惡神
Amaterasu-Ômikami 天照大御神
Ameno-Minakanushi-no-Kami 天御中主
Anraku 安楽
Arahito-gami 現人神
Ayabe 絨部
Bunmei-kaika 文明開化
Chie 知恵
Chinkon-Kishin 鎮魂帰神
Dainihon-Shusai-kai 大日本修斎会
Daijô-sai 大嘗祭
Deguchi Nao 出口なお
Deguchi Onisaburô 出口王仁三郎
Eejanaika エジャナ伝
Fuji-ko 富士講
Fudo 不動
Fukko-Shinto 復古神道
Fukoku-Kyôhei 富国強兵
Fukuchiyama 福知山
Ga 我
Gaikoku 外国
Genrei-gaku (Kototama-gaku) 言霊学
Genzeriyaku 現世利益
Gokuraku 極楽
Goryō-shinkō 御霊信仰
Goshinmai 御神来
Gyōkō 行幸
Hakkō-Ichiu 八経一宇
Henjō-nanshi 変性男子（Omoto-Kyō's term）変成男子（Buddhist's term）
Henjō-nyoshi 夢性女子
Hito-gami 人神
Hitujisaru-no-Konjin 坤の金神
Hirata Atutane 平田篤胤
Honji-suijaku 本地垂迹
Iki-gami 生き神
Inari-kōsha 稲荷講社
Ise-jingu 伊勢神宮
Izumo 出雲
Jiba 地場
Izumo-taisha 出雲大社
Jigoku 地狱
Jingū-Kōgō 神功皇后
Jingū-ji 神宮寺
Jinnō-shōtō-ki 神皇正統記
Jisha-bugyō 寺社奉行
Jiyū-minken-Undō 自由民権運動
Jiyū-tō 自由党
Kaishin 改心
kami 神
Kami-gami 神々
Kami-shima 神島
Kamimusubi-no-kami 神皇産霊神
Kami-yo 神世
Kannagara-no-michi 唯神の道
Kata 型
Kawate Bunjiro 川文右郎
Kekkō-na-Kami 結談な神
Kimon 鬼門
Kimmei-Reigakkai 金明霊学会
Kishu 貴種
Kokka Shinto 国家神道
Kokutai 固体
Kojiki 古事記
Kōjin 壮神
Konjin 金神
Konkō-Daijin 金光大神
Konko-kyō 金光教
Kotodama (Kototama) 言霊
Kunitokotachi-no-Mikoto 国常立命
Kumaso 熊襲
Kunjō 訓条
Kurama-yama 鞍馬山
Kurozumi-kyō 黒住教
Kurozumi Munetada 黒住宗忠
Kyōha-Shinto 教派神道
Kyōshu 教主
Manyō-shū 万葉集
Mao-son 魔王尊
Marudo-gami 客人神
Maruyama-kyō 丸山故
Meiji 明治
Meshima 県島
Miroku 弥勒
Misen-san 弥仙山
Misogi-harai 祝祓
Miura Baien 三浦梅園
Mukaku-sha 無格社
Nakayama Miki 中山みき
Nichiren-shū Fuju-fuse-ha 日蓮宗不動不施浄
Nihongi (Nihonshoki) 日本書紀
Niiname-sai 新嘗祭
Nokorazu-no-Konjin 残らずの金神
Nyorai-kyō 如来教
Ofudesaki お筆先
Oharai 大祓
Okage お陰
Okage-mairi お陰参り
Ókuninishi-no-Mikoto 大國主命
Ómoto-kyō 大本教
Glossary of Selected Japanese Words

Oni
Onishi Aijirō
Onmyō-do
Oshima
Rangaku
Reigaku
Risshō-ankoku
Ryūgū-no Otōhime
Sakibashiri
Saisei-itci
Sanbiwa
Sanpai
Sanzen-sekai
Seii-taishogun
Shigan-jōdo
Sinetsu
Shingaku
Singon-shu
Shinto
Shohatu-no-shinyu
Shusse
shusshū
Sonnō-son
Suichō-no-Mikoto
Taishō
Takakuma-yama 高熊山
Takami-musubi-ni-Kami 高皇産霊神
Takayama 高山
Tamba 丹波
Tanizoko 谷底
Tatekae 建て替
Tenchi-no-Onkami-sama 天地の御神様
Tendai-shu 天台宗
Tennō 天皇
Tennō-sei 天皇制
Tenrikyō 天理教
Tenriō-no-Mikoto 天理王命
Tokoyono-kuni 常世の国
Tokugawa-bakufu 徳川幕府
Tokugawa Ieyasu 徳川家康
Tsukihi-sama 月日様
Ubusuna-gami 生産神
Uji-gami 氏神
Ushitora-no-Konjin 良の金神
Wagō 知合
Ware-yoshi 救良し
Yao-yorozu-no-Kami-gami 八百万の神々
Yonaoshi 世直し
Yoki-gurashi 陰気暮し
Yonaori 世直り
Yūsai

Yūsai
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