

ON THE TRUTH:

A STUDY CONSIDERING THE RELIGIOUS
BEHAVIOR CONCERNING MT. FUJI

It will be interesting to listen to the personal beliefs concerning "Truth" as revealed in the studies of different scholars in different countries. But how will such a collection of beliefs contribute to the seeking of truth itself when we want to attribute to the word truth one of the adjectives: "absolute," or "universal"?

We, as human beings coexisting with other creatures, are only following our life from an unknown past to the conjectured future. There is no existence in an indefinite space and time. We can, of course, create an "absolute existence of truth" as an idea. Yet, if truth exists only as an idea in our mind, it can be of no meaning to this world. There is, however, much

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human behaviour which is motivated by a belief in an absolute truth. There are also many kinds of behaviour from which we might derive a special standard, for the idea of truth. Those kinds of behaviour are, of course, expressed in phenomena. That is, the phenomena of the so-called absolute truth are no more absolute, but relative. The truth which we perceive in the universe can only be a kind of "relative truth."

Where I may join a symposium about truth is only in the common place where we can talk without placing any value judgement on the relative truth of the historical or social reality. The absolute truth of the present day will easily lose its meaning when judged by the coming generations.

I settle here on one mountain as a space in Japan in order to limit the scope of our discussion. The mountain is Mount Fuji. The mountain itself is always the same and has never changed as a natural phenomenon from ancient times until now. But the beliefs of the people concerning Mt. Fuji have changed and continue to change from generation to generation. Every generation looked at the same shape, wrote much literature, composed many poems, painted numerous pictures, and constructed numberless works of art in Japan. There were also people who did not only look at or adore Mt. Fuji from a distance, but came and tried to climb the mountain. For almost all of the mountaineers today the climbing itself is perhaps their sole purpose. However, there was at one time a completely different kind of person. He went there to die for the realization of his religious ideas. Still others visited to see the original ancestor gods or to gain supernatural powers.

People were searching for something in these various ways. As we perceive it today it might have been beauty, reality, magical power, divinity or truth. If we do not confine our subject to one time or to one person, we might not be able to discover a single idea among them. Therefore, I would like to discuss here only the limited area of religious activities concerning Mt. Fuji and demonstrate how religious people through these activities have searched for the absolute being whose dwelling place was thought to be on the mountain. It is enough for me to show the changing realities of the absolute truth in each new situation and in each new generation. I have no intention of introducing the reader to the unconditional truth.

The oldest document concerning Mt. Fuji is "*Hitachi no kuni no fudoki*," which was compiled in about 718 A.D. by an Imperial order. It sets down the natural products, soil, origin of geographical designation and tradition in the land of Hitachi. It describes an oral tradition of how Mt. Tsukuba is blessed by *Oyagami* (*oya*: parents, *gami* < *kami*: deity or deities), because the *kami* of Mt. Tsukuba broke a taboo and gave the *Oyagami* shelter on the night of *Niiname* (a kind of harvest festival), while Mt. Fuji is under a curse for keeping the taboo concerning the night of *Niiname*. That was why Mt. Fuji is always covered by snow and nobody visited there, while Mt. Tsukuba was the place of recreation for the people. From this description we find the old but very intimate naming of the Japanese *kami*, "*Oyagami*."

An unknown poet, upon seeing Mt. Fuji, composed this poem in the 8th century:

... In the land of Yamato, originating from the Sun, lo!
the Goddess resides dominating and maintaining peace; and
the Mountain has been born as the sacred treasure of the land!
Oh, lofty peak of Fuji in Suruga, though I look and look, I
cannot be satiated! (*The Manyōshū*, Vol. III, translated by J. L.
Pierson Jr., Leyden 1933).

The mentioning of the Goddess of Mt. Fuji might be only a poetical expression, but we also have a record of a common illusion of two celestial nymphs dancing on the summit of the Mountain on the 5th of November, 875, while the people were celebrating the annual festival ("*Fujisanki*" by Miyako no Yoshika). The author notes that the people thought them to be the *Asame-no-Ohkami* which had been enshrined in Sengen (another reading for the Chinese character *Asama*) Shrine at the foot of the mountain.

The first historical event concerning Mt. Fuji was its eruption on the 6th of July, 781 A.D. On the occurrence of the eruption in 802, the provincial governors of Suruga and Sagami informed the central government in Kyoto. To ascertain a meaning of this event, it was referred to the divination office. The reply was that it was an omen of "an epidemic." They commanded, "let both

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of the provinces read *sutras*¹ for the conciliation of the *kami* and in order to prevent a calamity” (*Nihonkiriyaku*). The official treatment of the natural event was at that time, first to ask the divine will by means of divination with tortoiseshells and then to apologize to *kami* for some faults of the people.

On the occurrence of the 4th eruption, following the Imperial history under the article of the 5th of July, 853, the holy title of *Myōjin* (which means prominent *kami*. *Jin* is another reading of *kami*) was conferred on the *Asama-no-kami* in Suruga. On the 13th of July of that year, the *kami* received the second grade of the third rank of honor (*Montokujiitsuroku*, Vol. 5). In 864 there was a 5th eruption. The conclusion, reached by means of divination with tortoise-shells, was announced officially: “The priests of *Sengen* (or *Asama*) *Myōjin* are not serving with purified and reverent bodies and minds. The reason why propitiation should be offered (to *kami*) must be acknowledged by the country and offerings should be dedicated for the conciliation.” (*Sandaijiitsuroku*, May 25, 864).

The volcanic activity of Mt. Fuji ended with a tenth eruption in November, 1707. Today we find fifteen great Asama Shrines: eight in Shizuoka, four in Yamanashi, one in Tokyo, one in Saitama and one in Aichi. They were not only the result of the natural activities of Mt. Fuji, but also the result of the great activities of religious people who climbed Mt. Fuji and assiduously practiced austerities. They created the characteristic teachings of the nature of Mt. Fuji, the *kami* of Mt. Fuji and his relationship with man. They also greatly influenced the society of that day. They organized a great number of *kō* or fraternities. Their contribution to the new buildings of the Asama Shrines was, of course, great. The oldest remaining religious relic on the mountain is a gong bearing the date of the 1st of June in the 2nd year of Chōkyū (1041 A.D.) (*Kaikokushi*). After the middle of the 16th century, the documents record that a continuous stream of pilgrims ascended the mountain. Refer to the note concerning Harunaga-*bō*, one of the five *bō* or lodges for the pilgrims on the Ohmiya ascent way. It recorded that 401 people visited there during the 19 days from the opening of the climbing

¹ Buddhism was officially transmitted in 538 through Korea and it was consistent with Shintoism, the national religion.

season of June 1st. The mountain was closed on July 27. In total, then, the five lodges would have been visited by about 5,000 pilgrims. In addition there were also five other routes to the mountain.

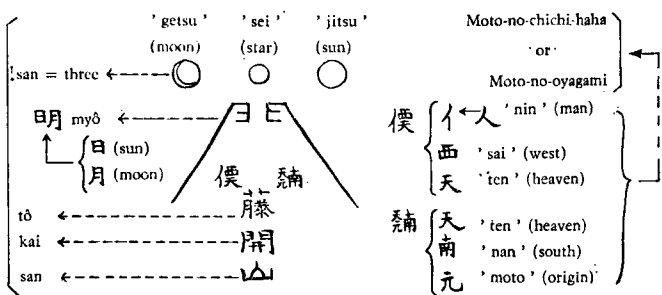
In regard to the pilgrims' practice of climbing Mt. Fuji, we must consider these reasons: 1) The belief in the existence of another world on the mountain as the residence of ancestor spirits; 2) The magico-religious belief of climbing a mountain in order to gain contact with ancestor spirits by lying and sleeping there; 3) The expectation of these magico-religious persons of gaining supernatural power. The traditional/historical person of this background was En-no-Ozunu. He was exiled to an island of Izu by an Imperial order but came flying back every night to Mt. Fuji for the practice of austerities (*Nihonryōiki*, compiled in 822 A.D.).

The real founder of *Fuji-kō* was Kakugyō Hasegawa. He was born in 1541 in Nagasaki and came to the Hitoana grotto at Fuji's western foot for a religious practice. There he created the teachings related to the Sengen (Goddess). His teachings are recorded in the "*Ominuki*," an inscribed scroll for worship. He also composed "*Gomonku*," a kind of hymn which celebrated the love and merit of the nature of Sengen *dai-bosatsu*, the great Bodhi-sattva.² He also made "*Ofusegi*," or charms to ward off diseases and accidents. His teachings, hymn and charms were passed down from generation to generation, by the *Fuji-kō* and some subsequently developed religious bodies.

As depicted in figures 1 and 2,³ in the center of the *Ominuki* there is, written with brush and Chinese ink, a shape of Mt. Fuji. We can read there two Chinese characters: Sun and Moon. Above the mountain there are drawn three shapes. A round star is drawn in the middle, the moon is drawn on the left and the sun is drawn on the right. They signify the combination of sun and moon to form the universe. The star symbolizes the unity of both functions. In the middle of the mountain there is written from top to bottom "*Tō-kai-san*" in three Chinese characters. "*Tō*" means wisteria and has the additional reading,

² The naming of *kami* in Shinto with the title of "Bosatsu" from Buddhism was a general syncretism at that time.

³ See p. 114 and p. 115.





心 'kokoro' (mind)

參 san
 明 myō
 藤 tō
 関 kai
 山 san

天 teri
 下 ka
 恭 tai
 平 hei

'matsu' (pine tree)
 'nō' (farmer)



This is a seal symbolizing the founder

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“*fuji*.” “*Kai*” means to open or create and “*san*” means mountain. We can read these drawings and characters as “*San-myô-tô-kai-san*.” “*San*” is “three” and refers to the sun, moon and star on the mountain. “*Myô*” is the combined character for “sun” and “moon” and is drawn in the shape of Mt. Fuji. “*Myô*” means to be light. “*Sanmyôtôkaisen*” signifies then such a holy mountain, which was created by the three *kami* of the sun, moon and star. As a result of the unity of the “sun” and “moon,” all the rest of the universe was created.

On the upper left side of the “*Tôkaisen*” of the *Ominuki*, there is a curious character formed by the combination of the characters for “Man,” “West” and “Heaven.” On the right there is another character, formed by combining the characters for “Heaven,” “South” and “Origin.” These were made by Kakugyô and do not exist in the correct form of Chinese characters. Beneath the left character there is a comment: “The long light of sun and moon shines from the East and enters into the Western land.” Beneath the right one: “Sengen Dainichi (Great Sun-Goddess Sengen) creates the Southern heaven and enters into the Northern land.” Following the oral tradition from Kakugyô, the former signifies the function of “Father” and the latter of “Mother.” The followers of Kakugyô’s teachings gave the reading of “*Moto-no-chichi-haba*,” meaning of original father and mother. They called their *kami* then generally “*Moto-nochichihaba*” or “*Moto-no-oyagami*” (the original parent deities). The idea of *kami* in Kakugyo is divided into the two functions of father and mother or male and female but forming one concept as in the old belief of *Oyagami* or parents (See p. 2 of this article). However, this idea comes from the oldest literature in Japan, the *Kojiki*, compiled in 712 A.D. Kakugyô notes the name *Izanagi-no-mikoto*, for the drawing of the moon and *Izanami-no-mikoto* for the sun. They appear in Japanese mythology as the creators in the forms of male and female gods. Between the gods there stands the name *Amenominakanushi* on the star, which literally means a master in a central heaven. They are originally, of course, not the sun, moon and star, but only the male and female gods and a unity god which might have been created by the influence of accepting the Chinese philosophy, Confucianism.

The idea of *Motonochichihaba* in Kakugyô seems to have

existed on Mt. Fuji or at least outside of the human body as understood from this particular viewpoint. But he explains, "When you plant a seed of rice, it grows a grain of rice by uniting the sun and moon. In another word the grain of rice is the *Bosatsu* (fruit of Sengen). It was born from my body (which refers to Mt. Fuji). And the origin of the people of the world is the rice of *Bosatsu*. For the thanks of his love and virtue you should climb the mountain with prayer for a profound peace to encompass the realm under heaven." In his belief, the mountain is the body of *Sengen Bosatsu* or *Oyagami*, the unity of the function of male and female. The rice grows up there by the grace of the love and virtue of the sun and moon. We live by eating the rice. Consequently he reaches the conviction: "*Kami* and Buddha are one in our body. It exists as one nowhere else." (*Kakugyô Tôbutsu-ki*, compiled in the latter half of 18th century).

Nichigyô Nichigan, one of Kakugyô's disciples who succeeded him as the second leader, died in a calm contemplation at the Shiraito waterfall in 1652. The fifth leader, Gatsugyô (1643-1717), wrote the book, *Ichiji Fusetsu Miroku no Yo* (Unexplainable Miroku's Reign), and dedicated it to the chief adviser to the Emperor. "I am a prayer," he said, "of the Fuji. Until now I slept in the fields and mountains and was assiduous in practicing austerities. I climbed the sacred mountain Fuji eighty times and offered my heartfelt thanks to *Namu*⁴ *Chichihaba*, *Namu Sengen Daibosatsu* and *Namu chô Nichi Getsu Sei* (great eternal Sun, Moon and Star). I was ordered to accomplish the mission of *miroku's reign*. ... As you would sincerely introduce the *miroku's* reign, I brought to you here an unexplainable holy book. Please receive it." His wish was not realized, and he sat in front of the office for five days without any success. The next year he visited again, but the results were the same. He himself performed religious rituals in the city of Kyoto in order to prevent a great thunder, storm, wind, fire, earthquake, etc. from happening and thereafter departed (*Ichiji Fusetsu no Maki* by Miroku in 1729).

I would like to call attention to the idea of "*miroku's reign*." In Buddhism there is a belief in the Bodhi-sattva *miroku* (< "Maitreya" in Sanskrit. It is the name of a Bodhisattva now in the Tushita heaven who is to be the next Buddha), but the

⁴ "*Namu*" is the honorific title used when addressing a *kami* or Buddha.

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late Professor Kunio Yanagita (1875-1962), the founder of Japanese folklore, showed another native background for the belief in *miroku* in Japan from the precise comparative study of the folkbeliefs and folksongs about *miroku*. He suggested that there was the pre-Buddhistic belief in Japan about another *miroku's world* in the Eastern sea where the creator is living and from which he sends a *ship of miroku* fully loaded with rice. In former times, an allowance of rice was paid to *Samurai*, warriors, by their feudal lord and it was called *roku*. *Mi-* is an honorific title in Japanese. The term *miroku's reign*, had already been used by Kakugyô. It is said that he met Shôgun Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616) and advised the Shôgun to rule the realm by taking *roku* or rice, which Kakugyô believed to be Sengen Daibosatsu, with an honest mind. As a result, the Shôgun would be able to reign with the blessing of the Heavenly Mind, which is the *kami* itself.

Kakugyô's teachings about *miroku's reign* were traced by an apothecary from Edo,⁵ Ihei Itô (1671-1733), who believed that *miroku's reign* was of great importance. He divided his property between his head clerk and shop assistants. The most valuable thing for him was a true heart. He changed his life-style and became completely ascetic, receiving only a little profit from the peddling of oil. The main purpose of his life was to teach man the real way of life. He chose for himself the ascetic name Miroku.

In the year of 1733, when Miroku was 63 years old, he received a teaching from *Sengen Daibosatsu* in a dream and decided to enter nirvana in a calm meditation at Mt. Fuji. He climbed the mountain with his disciple Jurôemon Tanabe, the master of a *bô* on the Yoshida ascent way, on the 12th of June of that year. At the Eboshi rock at the seventh station he set up a small shrine and undertook the fasting practice. During a period of 31 days, as he foretold, he dictated his teachings and ordered his follower to write them down. He breathed his last on the 17th of July.

The ideas of the ascetic Miroku, who was the sixth leader after Kakugyô, can be found precisely recorded in the book *31 Nichi no Maki* (the Volume of 31 days), although the original ideas

⁵ Edo is the old name of Tokyo.

and the real life history of Kakufyô were and still are obscured by the traditional veil of his adherents. Through the hands of Miroku, the *ominuki* of Kakugyô was simplified, developing the thought of the fifth ascetic leader, Gasshin. Miroku, in contrast to Kakugyô, wrote clearly the title of *Sanmyôtôkaisan* and *Moto-nochichibaba* by means of the combination of characters on the top of the *ominuki*. The drawings of the mountain and the three lights in the heaven were omitted. There still were many magical words below them, which had been created by Kakugyô, but yet the whole meaning was still not completely clear.

During his fourth day on the holy mountain Fuji, Miroku dictated, "All things came from water. The holy mountain is the body of the moon. The moon is the origin of water and we pray to the mountain from the North as the front side. The reason is not my opinion. In the north all water is concentrated (note: eight lakes are situated at the northern foot). What forms in the human body is originally a round dewdrop. When this dewdrop solidifies, it becomes a man. Therefore, the origin of man is the *Sengen Daibosatsu*. The holy seed is the same for one Buddha and one body (of man). Following this reasoning, all people should clearly understand." He also taught that filial piety is the way to confirm one's faith in the *Sengen*.

The remarkable thoughts of Miroku concern the equality of the sexes. Contrary to Buddhist thought, he taught that women, although originally sinful, could be saved if they continually did good deeds. Likewise, a man although originally good, could lose salvation by doing bad deeds. He concluded, therefore that there is no difference between man and woman (the teachings of the 12th day). Furthermore, all people originated from the same ancestor, *Sengen*. From this conviction he asserted that neither noble descent nor social strata should exist (the teachings of the 14th day). These were amazing teachings considering that they were propagated in the highly controlled feudal times of the Tokugawa Bakufu. The citizens of Edo were informed of the death of Miroku by a tile engraving, a kind of newspaper. As far as we have followed his teachings, they seem to be a very spiritualistic or highly internal religion. But we cannot overlook the fact that he might also have been obliged to practice magical rites and to distribute magical things or medicine which were handed down from Kakugyô or the elder ascetics of Mt. Fuji.

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For example, divination by means of the smoke of an incense stick or *Homa*, a holy fire for invocation, and medicines made of roots and red clay from the Hitoana grotto. Water from the snow on the summit was also highly regarded. It was called "golden- or silver-water."

There were also pieces of paper, received from Kakugyô, on which he had written the Chinese character "three," derived from the characters for sun, moon and star. The followers would cut off a small piece of paper with one character on it and swallow it along with the sacred water. Sangyô Itô (1746-1809), one of the spiritual successors of Miroku, elucidated the religious function of the *Fuji-kô* critically: "Generally people wanted only to be free from diseases and disasters." When they received divine favors, "they appreciated and were grateful to the mountain. It is very rare to find people who found the real sanctity of this faith and concentrated on the belief." (*Shimin no Maki*).

In 1742, during the rule of Yoshimune, the eighth Shôgun of the Tokugawa *bakufu*, the magical performances and the organization of the *Fuji-kô* were forbidden officially by the *bakufu* for the first time. But their activities were continued unofficially even though the official notices were issued several times. Remarkably, there were two direct petitions to the *bakufu* for the authorization of the religion. The first was filed by the wife of a samurai and the second by a merchant, who stood proxy for a farmer (1847). The persons concerned in both cases climbed Mt. Fuji and were praying, while their plea was being heard. Their plea was denied and they received severe official notices after a long judicial deliberation. The main points of prohibition were: 1) No layman should teach a new doctrine which is neither Shintoism nor Buddhism, the official religions; 2) no enormous *kô*'s should be organized; 3) climbing Mt. Fuji wearing a curious costume and carrying a bell should cease; 4) no magical performances should be practiced. While under investigation by the Administrative Department for Temples and Shrines, they were accused by the magistrate of being insolent and audacious because they worried themselves about the matters of the Emperor and country, a matter above their stations.

It will also be noticed that the new sect of Sangyô Itô had not been excluded from this prohibition of the *Fuji-kô*; they were accepted by the *bakufu* as the same fellows. However, the

religious activities of the *Fuji-kô* had not been uprooted by the oppressive measures of the *bakufu*. Among the people of the Fuji faith, it became fashionable to build small replicas of Mt. Fuji in Edo. They satisfied their religious desires visiting the Fuji mound and climbing for a prayer. They often visited the seven mounds and seven Sengen shrines by following different courses through the city. At that time, it was a custom to visit several famous temples during a single trip.

During the Meiji restoration (about 1841-'77), the upheaval from the last days of the Tokugawa Government until the refounding of an Emperor form of government, the people of the Fuji faith had another opportunity to reconstruct their groups. In 1873, Nakaba Shishino (1844-1884), an officer of the Department of Affairs of Shintoism and Buddhism, organized many *Fuji-kô* and in 1883 was authorized a new sectarian Shinto called *Fusôkyô*. He was also a Japanese classical scholar and he replaced the main *kami*, *Ameno-minakanushino-kami* with the *Motono-chichi-baba*, the traditional name. The god was accompanied by *Takamimusubino-kami* and *Kamimusubino-kami* recorded in the *Kojiki* to be the three *kami* of creation. After the death of Shishino in 1884, the *Fusôkyô* declined in importance because the greatest sect, *Maruyamakô*, had remained independent from *Fusokyo*.

Development of the spiritual or rather moral aspect of Miroku's teachings was planned by the eleventh ascetic leader following Kakugyô, Shôgyô Shibata (1809-'90). Shôgyô founded a new sect, *Jikkô-kyô*, as another sectarian Shinto in 1893 and became the first head of this sect. The second head of *Jikkô-kyô*, Reiichi Shibata, read a paper at the International Congress of Religions in Chicago in 1893. He introduced their main doctrine which was that they do not indulge in academic controversies but live their principles in everyday life. The god in which they believe is only one, *Ameno-minakanushino-kami*. He created the universe and exists endlessly. This original great spirit developed himself and became two gods which had the moral characters of both male and female. These are called *Takamimusubino-kami* and *Kamimusubino-kami*. They are two functions of the one real god and exist as only one. He is called the three gods of creation or *Motono-chichi-baba*. This god exists on Mt. Fuji, which is the brain of the earth. Our men partake of the divided spirits of the

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real god and have the same standard as the god. That is, they should make endeavors for their own moral improvement, taking Mt. Fuji as a standard of perfectness, purity and equality from all viewpoints.

The last prominent person who climbed Mt. Fuji following the traditional teachings of Miroku was Rokurobei Itô (1829-'94). He was born in the small village of Noborito near Tokyo as the sixth child of a farmer. He was adopted by the family of Itô. When he was 25 years old, he had the special experience of being cured through the devotions of the leader of *Maruyama-kô*, which belonged to the *Fuji-kô*. He began to decipher the *ominuki* which was used in the case of those devotions. When he became 41 years old, he often heard the voices of *kami*. Following the orders of the *kami*, he was assiduous in practicing austerities. He fasted for a 21 day period in order to become one with the *kami* of heaven and earth. He also practiced walking on tiptoes for the relief of thousands of people. On the last day of his fast, he was commanded to call himself "*Chino-kami-issbingyôja*," which literally means "the *kami* on earth (and) the one mind ascetic." He was to engage in one ascetic practice after another as an obedient oracle of *kami*.

The name of the living *kami* in Noborito became very famous and many people came to pray. He was arrested twice by the police for the reason that he was not diligent in his business, seduced the public and disturbed the public peace. His family and relatives tried many times to make him stop his escetic practices. In 1873 he decided to die on Mt. Fuji because, when he tried to stop his ascetic practices, he often sunk into a catatonic stupor as a punishment. Moreover the continuance of his practices would make the social situation of his relatives more difficult. On the 19th of September of that year, he arrived at a cell of the eighth station of Mt. Fuji in the face of a snowstorm. There he began the fast. On the seventh morning he found many measuring worms creeping on his body. He wanted to drive them away but he called to mind that the purpose for which he started his ascetic practices was to save all creatures. He stopped his hand from sweeping them away. At that moment, all the worms disappeared and he heard the voice of *kami* saying that the *measuring-worms* (*shakutori-mushi*) would be driven away and that a one *measure* large (*shaku* is about 30 cm) sundisk would

be granted to him. Suddenly, the sundisk appeared on the northern door of the cell. It was as warm to him as a spring sun. It is for this reason that a sundisk is drawn at about the eighth station of Mt. Fuji on the *ominuki* of *Maruyama-kyô*.

The next morning, some mountain carriers came to fetch him, as the *kami* had told him the day before. He was commanded to descend from the mountain in order to save many more people by instructing them to follow the advice of *kami*. He continued his ascetic practices with the assistance of Shishino, who had kindly sent the mountain carriers to him. Shishino managed to secure the great magico-religious powers of Rokurobei and organized a new sectarian Shinto. Shishino gave full play to his administrative ability.

After his descent from Mt. Fuji, Rokurobei undertook many ascetic practices, such as cold water ablutions, sitting in smoke, keeping silence, fasting and writing some traditional prayer words from *Kakugyô*. During these practices, he received a great many people who had physical or mental diseases. He told them of the way of life, of faith in *Oyagami*, of criticism of the other religions and politics, of the origin and history of many social matters and so on. Many people were restored and deeply impressed by his religious personality. He died in 1894 at the age of 65. The total number of adherents to his new independent sectarian Shinto, *Maruyama-kyô*, were 1.7 million people at that time.

The teachings of Rokurobei are not logical in our day but they strongly influenced the people of his day, especially the farmers. His diary covering the period from 1887 to 1894, was transcribed daily and passed from one believer to another. There are also some notes of his religious speeches remaining today. They are very great volumes but only a few of them are published. The characteristic teachings of *Maruyama-kyô* are the following ideologies and beliefs:

- 1) *Tenmeikaiten*, a kind of sutra, is the shortest but the most important prayer. Literally, it means "ten," heaven, "mei," clear, "kai," sea and again "ten," heaven. The heaven is the mind of *Oyagami*. The sea is the mind of man. When our mind is not clear, the clear mind of *Oyagami*, symbolized in sun, will not reflect on it as it is. Originally, everybody has a small part of the mind of *Oyagami*. Reciting the prayer we should

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endeavor to keep our mind mirror-like until it reflects perfectly the mind of the *Oyagami*. The ideal mind of *Oyagami* is symbolized in a large sundisk of one *shaku*, the same as Rokurobei received on Mt. Fuji. The ideal state is for *kami* and man to become one.

2) *Hinode ni matsu no miyo* or “The reign of rising sun on pine-trees.” This is the most ideal landscape or world for the Japanese. At that time, they feel the most peaceful, pure, glorious, happy, fresh and are filled with hope. It is generally used as a symbol on New Year’s cards. The word “matsu” (pine-tree) has another meaning: wait. Rokurobei taught that the form of a pine needle is the same as the Chinese character “man” and that the relationship between the sun and the pine-tree is the situation of the *waiting* people and their *Oyagami*. In order to realize such an ideal world the believers should set pine trees in vases on both sides of the *ominuki* and pray for the grand peace of all the world by repeating the “*Tenmaikaiten*.” As depicted in a drawing, at the top of the *ominuki* of this sect, Mt. Fuji is drawn by using the Chinese character for mind. In the position of the eighth station, there stands a large red sundisk. Just below and in the center of it we see the words *Sanmyôtókaisan*, the name of *Oyagami*, written from top to bottom and flanked on both sides by “*Tenka taihei*.” It means the perfect peace of the universe.

The ideal of “*Tenmeikaiten*” is a unification of *kami* and man. The prayer, “*Hinode ni matsu no miyo*,” is a universal one. Through the individual unity with *Oyagami*, world peace should be realized by means of repeating “*Tenmeikaiten*.” It becomes clear, however, after the death of this founder how the teachings had been understood and practiced by the second, third and fourth generations. The most interesting point of these teachings for a great deal of followers was to utilize the repeated prayer “*Tenmeikaiten*” as a means to obtain some miraculous healing or success in business. They showed very little understanding of the concept of unity with *Oyagami* itself. Their prayer was also not universal but very individual, while the greatest purpose of their founder was to realize the perfect peace of the world. Following the practical explanation of Rokurobei the individual problems of illness, poverty, family trouble, business and so forth should naturally be solved by the process of unification with *Oyagami*. The greatest desires of the people centered only on their personal

needs and they were satisfied to stay on some miraculously granted level of their wishes. They did not elevate themselves to a more ideal state.

The head office of *Maruyama-kyō* ought to have taken the responsibility for the advancement of believers to a level above their own earthly desires. When a fanatic propaganda was winning a great number of believers in Nagano Prefecture about ten years after 1877, the responsible person could not directly orientate them to the attainment of a high-level ideal. The method of propagandizing was very interesting. Some missionaries gave suggestions that if the people would throw away their belief in Buddhism and change to *Maruyama-kyō* now, they would become *daimyō*, feudal lords, in the day of "obiraki," world alternation. In this teaching, we can easily see that the idea is the same as that of the *miroku's* reign, while the "*Hinode ni matsu no miyo*" was more refined.

The unreasonable administration of this sect brought about disastrous results. The many followers of *Maruyama-kyō*, even the first generation who had met Rokurobei, were leaving this sect when they confronted reality; this was because their convictions contained some misunderstanding. In spite of many efforts of the sect, the total of their believers decreased and is still decreasing today. Some of the descendants of these believers have changed to other, more practical or more profitable new religions. Some of them have returned to Buddhism in order to obtain easily a burial ground which the temples have traditionally held.

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We have traced the main movements of the religious activities concerning Mt. Fuji. The belief that Mt. Fuji is a holy mountain, the dwelling place of *Oyagami* or parent gods, is rather old and it might be called the native belief of Japan. The intimate and awe-filled feeling toward an ancestor god is very popular in that country. For this reason the reconstructed belief of *Oyagami* was so naturally accepted. The idea of climbing Mt. Fuji to meet the original father and mother was not such a heterogeneous custom, but rather a natural rite, which we can observe taking place at

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many other holy mountains in Japan. Shintoism, as a folk religion does not have any founder or doctrine but the people feel and practice it in everyday life. Buddhism had also been syncretized in the heart and soul of the people of Japan.

When some of the religious or rather magical nature of the persons who founded the new teachings concerning Mt. Fuji appeared, the mountain was hidden by a veil of their religious ideas. When the interests of the people focused on their magical powers, the teachings of these religious people were relegated to secondary position. When the people concentrated on their personal worship, the doctrine and the mountain itself lost their original brilliancy. When the powerful leader died leaving the followers with an insufficient religious administration, the formal successors of that founder could only confirm to themselves that they had nothing to teach or offer the remaining believers. When these religions came to this point, it was extremely difficult to recapture their previous vitality.

In the case of *Maruyama-kyō*, the religious successors and administrative person contributed to maintain the great number of believers by means of their magical practices, which had been handed down traditionally through their founder. It seems the *Jikkō-kyō* there was never a great effort to reform the old fashioned system of their moral doctrine. The *Fusō-kyō* originally had the character of a religious office which united the small sects of *Fuji-kō*. The death of the organizer and the independence of the greatest power, *Maruyama-kyō*, had been disastrous and greatly disrupted the foundation of this organization.

Mt. Fuji stands today as well as in the old days. The splendid shrines dedicated to *Asama-no-kami* are located at the main places from where the ascent is made. We sometimes find the memorial stones of *Fuji-kō* and the small Fuji mounds in the precincts of shrines or temples around Mt. Fuji. Today a few groups of the *Fuji-kō* are still visiting the mountain wearing white *kimonos* and carrying sticks in the traditional way. There are, however, very few of the professional leaders of the *Fuji-kō* or the sectarian Shinto groups active today. In order to save the glorious honor of the religious bodies, they have to engage in remunerative side lines, such as directing kindergartens, school, halls for marriage ceremonies, etc.

Many people, who hold no belief, visit Mt. Fuji each summer.

They go to the fifth station by bus and from there may easily reach the summit for recreation.

That was and is the reality concerning Mt. Fuji and the activities of people, especially in the religious field. If we wish to call the idea of their *Oyagami*, for example, the "truth" or reality, nobody can confirm it, but can only recognize the results or phenomenon of their various behaviours. These realities may be some aspects of the real truth that man are seeking or might perhaps be concluded one day by the broad reach of comparative studies. Otherwise this article would have no value.

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