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The Globalization of a Japanese New Religion – Ethnohistory of Seichō no Ie

The religious philosophy developed by Taniguchi Masaharu in his leadership of Seichō no Ie can be understood on two intertwining levels: the personal experience of the founder, and the national mood including the intellectual underpinnings of the state as outlined by Kakehi Katsuhiko. In the prewar and Occupation periods, at home and among overseas communities of Japanese immigrants, the picture of Japan's holy war emerges as a template for the theology of a nation, and for Seichō no Ie. The historical roots of globalization for this new religion can be traced, ultimately, to Japan's wartime expansion.

Keywords: Seichō no Ie – globalization – ethnohistory – Taniguchi Masaharu – emperor worship – *kachigumi*

Introduction

Despite its international organization (see Reichl 1998/99), the Japanese new religion Seichō no Ie 生長の家 has retained much symbolic content that is Japanese. Founded in 1930, it is one of the new religions in Japan that managed to restyle itself as a Shinto sect in order to continue to exist throughout the war and, at least outside of Brazil, its worldwide membership has been largely people of Japanese ancestry. Its ritual in Hawaii, which includes bowing from the waist, continues to have a strong flavor of Japanese culture. Nonetheless, the overwhelming growth of membership in Brazil,[1] and waning membership in Japan and North America have each, in their own way, forced a crisis of globalization upon this international organization. The former has led to a high level of awareness in Japan of Brazilian membership, and the latter has led to efforts to change ritual in North America so that it is less Japanese and more attractive to westerners.

Recent scholarship has offered a means to reinterpret the ideological history of the Japanese state from the late nineteenth through the middle of the twentieth centuries.[2] These were formative times for Taniguchi Masaharu 谷口雅春 and

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1. This was noted decades earlier by Numata (1988: 188).
2. Skya 2009; Tansman 2009; Schattschneider 2009; Torrance 2009.

Seichō no Ie, during which "government attempted to rationalize all aspects of life … How one nurtured the spirit (in worship) … would reflect the directives of centralized organizations." (Tansman 2009: 1) A number of new religions were persecuted, including Jiu 璽宇 and Ōmoto 大本. (Dorman 2004)

Skya (2009: 12) argues that radical but fundamentalist religious ideas were used by extreme nationalists to take control of the state, including the intellectual theorist Kakehi Katsuhiko 筧克彦 (1872-1961) who advanced Shinto theology toward an emperor-centered theocracy. Nevertheless, contemporary American, and to a certain extent Japanese academics as well, have avoided the topic of Shinto nationalism, perhaps because they view it as subintellectual or even "incomprehensible." (Skya 2009: 2) Harootunian (2006: 107) writes that "intellectual and literary activity immediately after the war seemed bent on … effacing the experience of the war … and that of the preceding decades." Because Seichō no Ie was in a formative period during this time, and because it was a religion that promoted veneration of the emperor, this perspective is important in understanding Seichō no Ie in historical and cultural context.

This recent scholarship may also enable us to understand Taniguchi Masaharu on a second level, by placing such sociocultural context beneath the accounts of his personal experience, in such a way as to see their articulation. On one level we see the shaping of his theology that resulted from personal experience with illness and struggles within and without Ōmoto-kyō's organization, and on the underlying level his existence in a state that attempted to validate its overseas ambition with universalist theoretical underpinnings and emperor worship.

This research is based on field ethnography, with reference to participant observation by the author at Seichō no Ie gatherings in the State of São Paulo, Brazil, in Hawaii, and in Japan, some as early as the 1990s and some as recently as this decade. Fieldwork on the islands of Hawaii and Oahu began in Spring 1996 and continued for two years, resuming a decade later for one additional year. Ethnohistoric data was collected during trips to the National Diet Library in Tokyo, from 2008 through 2010. I have attempted to minimize the subjectivity of interview data, favoring instead writings by the group and public announcements.

Awareness of Overseas Adherents in Seichō no Ie

One regular part of ritual in Seichō no Ie is the memorial service, conducted once monthly at the Hilo, Hawaii branch, in which the names of the deceased are read aloud and prayed over. Similarly, at the autumn memorial service held at the Tokyo headquarters on 23 September 2008, one hundred and sixty-six names of deceased missionaries were read. Of those, one quarter was the names of Brazilians. In an address during the service, Taniguchi Masanobu 谷口雅宣 spoke of the numerical and symbolic importance of these overseas members.

To put this international success in perspective, it should be noted that as of the early 1990s, Sōka Gakkai 創価学会 had attracted the largest number of non-Japanese adherents, followed by Sūkyō Mahikari 崇教真光, Perfect Liberty Kyōdan ピーエル教団, Sekai Kyūsei-kyō 世界救世教, and Tenri-kyō 天理教, with Seichō no Ie in last place. (Inoue 1991: 20) As early as the 1970s, the membership of Seichō no Ie was estimated at 2,414,950 (Hori et al. 1972: 262), but it remains difficult to get reliable numbers of adherents in Japan and overseas, especially over time. For example, Seichō no Ie claimed to have 60,000 Brazilian followers as early as 1964. (Norbeck 1970: 216) Maeyama (1983: 187) provides the lower estimate of 15,000 that had been given in 1967.

Brazil has long been an arena of support for Seichō no Ie. (Inoue 2007: 127) Missionary work started in 1932, with emphasis in the Noroeste and Alta Paulista regions where Japanese were most numerous. Taniguchi Masaharu (1985:12-13) boasts that the mere appearance of one of his books led to religious awakenings in Brazil. In 1933, the farmer Matsuda Daijirō 松田大次郎 experienced "a 'miraculous divine salvation' from amoebic dysentery by simply reading a volume of *Seimei no Jissō* 生命の實相, the prime work of Taniguchi." (Maeyama 1983: 202) Competitors in Brazil are PL Kyōdan and Sekai Kyūsei-kyō. (Inoue 2007: 127) Of a sample of six newcomer immigrant Japanese families in Brazil in the 1980s, one family was approached by Seichō no Ie missionaries during their first year in Brazil. (Reichl 1988: 105) As Japan's largest overseas community and more recent donor of Nikkei-jin immigrants, Japanese in Brazil turned to the new religions of Japan only after *kachigumi* 勝組 (victory group, see further below) influence and the emperor worship it entailed were dissipated, years after the war had ended. The emotional attachment with homeland was strong, and if anything, it exhibited greater intensity overseas. For Japanese at home during these years, regular, public emperor worship was mandatory only for children in school. For Japanese in Brazil it was mandatory, under threat of community ostracism, called *mura hachibu* 村八分, for children and all adults. (Maeyama 1972; 1979: 594)

History of the Founder, Taniguchi Masaharu

The biography of Taniguchi Masaharu that is approved by Seichō no Ie emerged in English in 1970. (Davis 1970) It has recently been replaced by another approved version with a slightly different title, written by the same author. (Davis 2008) Neither book mentions Taniguchi's wartime activity, his experience with other religions such as Ittōen 一燈園 (see Hori et al., 1972: 226) and Ōmoto-kyō (Hori 1983) before his creation of Seichō no Ie, his complicated personal history of romance and marriage, or his failure to finish his studies at Waseda University, though both mention the intellectual influences he experienced there. A notable influence on Taniguchi is Fenwick L. Holmes (1921), pointed out by McFarland

(1967: 247-8). A better account of the development and evolution of Taniguchi's philosophy, one that does not simply repeat the names Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, Poe, Baudelaire, Tolstoy, and Oscar Wilde, is contained in Shimada (2007: 68-85). The two books by Davis are essentially edited to contain only positive aspects of the life of the founder. A more frank account of his romantic and occupational life is presented in Numata (1988: 183-188).

Although Taniguchi's experience with venereal disease has often been noted (see Numata 1988: 183-184), it has rarely been connected to Seichō no Ie theology. The Seichō no Ie tenet that illness is not real might be an adaptive denial of an embarrassing condition. Taniguchi's suffering demeanor was described by his nickname while at Ōmoto-kyō, the St. Francis of Ōmoto. (McFarland 1967: 149; Numata 1988: 184) Deguchi Onisaburō 出口王仁三郎, co-founder of Ōmoto-kyō, attended his subsequent wedding to Teruko 照子 in 1920, but his "loyalty to the sect itself seems never to have been very strong." (McFarland 1967: 150) His relation with his stepmother (his aunt), who impacted his romantic and occupational life, might be the subject of a psychosocial annalysis. This woman cut off his financial support while at Waseda University because he at first refused her request that he end his "love affair with a seventeen-year-old daughter of a stevedore." (McFarland 1967: 148) This is a man experiencing powerlessness on multiple levels, and being socially marginalized. Hori (1983: 250) emphasizes that Taniguchi's interest in religion "resulted from frustration, disappointment, and experiences in which [he was] completely helpless. These conditions were caused by social, political, economic, cultural, or socio-psychological instability which were keenly felt."

McFarland (1967: 149) does draw a connection between the tenet of Seichō no Ie that illness is not real and Taniguchi's experience with illness. In 1914, at age 21, Taniguchi left Waseda University and found work in a textile company. He began affairs with a niece of his company supervisor and with a prostitute from whom he contracted a venereal disease. He attempted a cure by hypnosis but ultimately required surgery and other medical treatment. Because of guilt that he might have transmitted the disease to the niece "he began to study spiritual healing in the hope that, without her being aware of it, he could heal her also." (McFarland 1967: 149) McFarland (1967) reasons that Taniguchi's denial of contagion led him to think illness is illusory. In a subsequent experience with illness after marriage to Teruko in 1920, their daughter became ill but they could not afford medical attention so Taniguchi prayed her back to health "with unanticipated success." (McFarland 1967: 151) Here we see the validation of Taniguchi's theology, and of his personal empowerment.

These stressful life experiences influenced a theology that was also produced in the context of the national mood. Here we must consider Taniguchi "as an opportunist," and Seichō no Ie "ready to assume almost any configuration that will

enable it to flourish." (McFarland 1967: 151, 158) Taniguchi's wartime activity included organized support for troops in Manchuria and Korea. To commemorate ten years of nation building in Manchuria, Taniguchi organized commemorative gatherings and visited troops in Korea and Manchuria. (Numata 1988: 185) He proclaimed that the Pacific war was a holy war. (Shimada 2007: 83) He firmly rejected reconciliation with England and America and even scolded the Minister of Education for being too lenient on the issue. (Shimada 2007: 83) Wartime shortages of paper, as well as Occupation fiat, meant that Seichō no Ie could not publish any books or magazines for some time. After the war Taniguchi maintained that Japan had not lost, but that the fight of the false or unreal Japan had ended. (Shimada 2007: 83) Thus, the parallel is maintained between Taniguchi's thought and the illusory, at the personal and national levels.

In the overseas communities of Japanese at the time, victory group (*kachigumi*) activity shows another dimension of the ideological fervor.[3] The victory group comprised secret societies of Japanese nationalists who insisted on Japanese military victory. This revitalization movement, in which many Japanese Brazilians continued to insist Japan had won the war and expected a ship to come from Japan and take them to their positions as overseers in Japan's new postwar empire, can also be viewed as a mass delusion, but enforced by acts of terror (Handa 1970: 660-3), meted out by a divine punishment unit. During dissertation research with Japanese in Brazil, one consultant was a second generation (*nisei*) Japanese Brazilian woman who had lived with her parents, members of the secret society Shindō Renmei 臣道連盟, in a tent on the docks at Santos for several months waiting for the ship from Japan that never arrived. (Reichl 1988: 152) On a daily basis they marched in ranks on the docks, carrying the Japanese flag, at a time when the war had already ended. During an interview with "Japanese Olympic swimming champion Masanori Yusa" in Brazil in early 1950, members of his group "expressed shock when presented with the idea that Japan had *won* the war." (Lesser 2002: 49) Shindō Renmei then claimed the swimmers were not Japanese.

Dorman (2004: 108) explains that religious groups had two methods by which to demonstrate their support for the government's wartime ambitions: to become affiliated with a sectarian Shinto group as Tenri-kyō and others did, or to support expansionist policies by helping to organize support for Japanese troops in the occupied territories of China, Taiwan, and Korea. Deguchi Onisaburō of Ōmoto-kyō supported organizations in China to demonstrate his pro-government stance. Taniguchi Masaharu of Seichō no Ie used both methods, supporting imperialist goals overseas and affiliating with State Shinto at home. The Special Higher Police (*tokkō keisatsu* 特高警察), who investigated and prosecuted the unorthodox, were feared for good reason.

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3. Reichl 1995; Masterson 2004; Stephan 1984: 172-173.

It is instructive to note that conditions were similar for those in the performing arts. Actors and theatre companies were under surveillance at home for the ideological content of their work, and under pressure to entertain the troops in the occupied territories. (Fukushima 2009: 336-338) In fact, in fighting at the front in China in 1937, "the playwright, Kikuya, was killed" (Fukushima 2009: 337), likely for his support of anti-war activity: his draft had been suspiciously quick and his assignment conspicuously dangerous – in the heart of the fighting. Kikuya Sakae 菊谷栄 was the favored playwright of the famous Enomoto Kenichi 榎本健一 (1904-1970). Popularly called Enoken, in Japan he staged war propaganda plays. Censorship of theatre continued after the war under the Occupation. (Fukushima 2011; Jortner 2009) These two areas of sociocultural life, religion and the theatre, attract similar treatment from Japanese and American authorities, probably due to their ability to present symbolic and ideological content to the masses. That is, for their ability to influence the national mood, the attitude of the masses.

Change of Ritual in North America

Members of the Seichō no Ie Dōjō 生長の家道場 in Hilo, Hawaii received an English language mailing from Reverend Abe Tetsuya 阿部哲也, Acting Chief of SNI Hawaii Missionary Area, during May of 2008. In the circular, it is written that "the rituals and ceremonies at SNI events ... are strongly associated with the Japanese culture, especially Shintoism" and urges overseas branches to modify their ritual, while maintaining the spirit or intent of it, in order to increase the attractiveness of Seichō no Ie to foreigners. (Abe 2008: 1-7) A number of suggestions for the conduct of ritual are outlined, including omission of the vocalizations made after the names of the deceased are read aloud and of the Japanese-style bowing. (Abe 2008: 5)

At the Hilo Dōjō, where almost all members have Japanese ancestry, no changes in ritual have been made because members like the Japanese elements of the ritual, comprising two full bows, two hand claps, and one half bow, performed at the beginning and end of each service. However, in a meeting of members to determine how to increase membership, it was said that there is a willingness to change if non-Japanese membership increases.

There are members who feel threatened by the changes. While admitting that no changes have been made locally (i.e., in the Hilo Dōjō) one member complained bitterly of the changes that are imagined to have been made in branches in New York. Although they themselves are Japanese Americans, these members lament the passing of Japanese ritual and resent the foreign influence that has brought it about. A few may resent non-ethnic members, although localism cloaks that possibility. These are ripples that emanate from the splash of Seichō no Ie's past, and they recall a time of greater ethnocentrism, often preserved among Japanese overseas.

(See Reichl 1995: 49) This parallels the linguistic situation: Japanese language from earlier epochs is preserved among Japanese overseas. (Asai and Reichl 2002) As a smaller new village breaks off from a larger old village, linguists expect language change in the new village to be much slower than language change at home. (Roberts 2008: 373-374) Globalization and the increased ability of old and new villages to communicate worldwide, however, cloud this pattern.

Internet Organization

Inoue (1991: 14) noted increasing use of "new information media" by the new religions of Japan. During a visit to the Hilo, Hawaii branch of Seichō no Ie, the president of Seichō no Ie in the United States announced that beginning in 1996, an internet homepage would enhance worldwide efforts at proselytization, with interested parties clicking on programs that promote health, prosperity and so forth. Inoue (1991:15) cautions that "modern technological media tend to be used for delivering messages to the already converted," but computer access in Brazil has become widespread as a result of economic growth.

The passing of Reverend Taniguchi Seichō 谷口生長, President of Seichō no Ie, on 28 October 2008, provides a measure of the effectiveness of its internet organization. Within twenty-four hours members worldwide were contacted by email and a simultaneous prayer was organized. Members worldwide read the Holy Sutra Nectrean (sic) Holy Doctrines in their homes at an appointed hour to mark the passing of Taniguchi Seichō, adopted son-in-law of the founder.

On 1 March 2009, Reverend Taniguchi Masanobu was inaugurated as the new President of Seichō no Ie. The inauguration took place at the main temple in Nagasaki. Masanobu is clearly of a different generation than many of the adherents of Seichō no Ie, but there are no indications that any question his patrilineally-based legitimacy. (See Taniguchi Masanobu 2008) This recalls the advocacy by many for absolute imperial power by an "infallible god-emperor" at the same time that the Taishō emperor was thought to be mentally unfit. (Skya 2009: 186)

Ijun: Child of Seichō no Ie

Seichō no Ie has had experience with group fission. The head of Seichō no Ie in Okinawa, Takayasu Rokurō 高安六郎, broke away from the group taking adherents with him when he founded Ijun 龍泉 in 1973. (Reichl 1998/99) Parallels between the two groups include key concepts, elements of ritual, a universalist philosophy, an emphasis on meditation, and even overlap of some prayer content. (Reichl 1998/99: 128-135) A more notable point in common is the prolific nature of the founder as writer, and his free employment of concepts from philosophy and science. (See Takayasu 1991; Davis 1970; 2008) Facts from psychology, physics

and so on are given a religious interpretation that is "often ludicrous" but succeeds in "creating a curious tone of eccentric, untutored modernity." (Norbeck 1970: 214) Despite the fact that both groups emerge from similar cultural milieu and so could be expected to have similarities, Ijun is arguably a child of Seichō no Ie.[4] We know very little of the extent to which Japanese new religions have impacted each other in this manner, due to the secrecy and unreliable nature of self-counts of numbers of adherents by religious groups, especially over time.

The Wartime Ghost of Seichō no Ie

All of the new religions in Japan faced difficulties from Japanese authorities before and during the war, and some faced the same from American authorities during the Occupation. In the prewar and wartime eras, most of the groups adapted by seeking to be recognized as Shinto sects or attached themselves to Shinto sects. Tenri-kyō, for example, was recognized officially as sectarian Shinto as early as 1908 (Inoue 1991: 18), although postwar it reverted to its status as a new religion. The Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP 1948) lists thirteen groups under the category of sectarian Shinto, and others had passed as such. In this process, the groups were pulled into support for the war, and Seichō no Ie was no exception. In doing so it survived but also planted the seeds of postwar problems for itself.

In 1939 Japan promulgated the Religious Body Law (*shūkyō dantai hō* 宗教団体法), identified as Law No. 77. It required that all religious groups in Japan register and provide certain information to the government. This then allowed the government to monitor and control all of the religious groups in the country. Any that questioned, or even snubbed, emperor worship were persecuted.

Seichō no Ie was successful in this process, which involved taking a pro-war stance. It organized emperor worship and support for troops in Manchuria. The emperor worship was retained and even strengthened after the war, creating something of an association in the minds of Japanese between the war and Seichō no Ie. Founder Taniguchi Masaharu placed protective talismans (*o-mamori* お守り) into Japanese naval vessels and prayed for Japan's success. He also sent and encouraged others to send negative vibrations called waves (of prayer) to annihilate

4. Ijun, first called Okinawa Original in Hawaii, no longer exists as a formally constituted religious organization. After several decades in which it sometimes prospered (see Reichl 2003, 2005), and sometimes foundered (see Reichl 1993), it has dissolved under economic stress. Attempts to contact the group in 2008 were met by a recorded message however, affirming the existence of a skeleton core, Cult Ijun カルト龍泉. Whether or not some of Ijun's former adherents have returned to Seichō no Ie is unknown.

Chinese troops. (Shimada 2007: 83) Taniguchi Masaharu is quoted as having said that "all religion emanates from the Emperor" (*subete shūkyō wa Tennō yori hassuru nari* すべて宗教は天皇より発するなり). (Shimada 2007: 82) Some time after the war Seichō no Ie may have tried to weaken its emperor worship component, after first strengthening it, but there is no question that its wartime stance helped its growth during that period. (Numata 1988: 185) This stance was also consistent with Kakehi Katsuhiko's theory of the Japanese state, and was based on a theology that was a far cry from the Shinto of Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠. (Maruyama 1974: 69-76)

To put Seichō no Ie's wartime activity into perspective, it should be noted that other new religions (Miyazaki 1990), Buddhist groups (Hur 1999) and Christian groups (Mullins 1994) accommodated the Japanese government and the demands of State Shinto. To not do so was to risk one's identity as a Japanese person (Mullins 1994: 263), in some sense making the war a clash of civilizations. From the 1930s, everyone in Japan was required to support Japanese military expansion and the rituals of State Shinto, including what was called *kokumin no girei* 国民の儀礼, ritual bowing in the direction of the Imperial Palace. (Mullins 1994: 266) In Korea, the Japanese Sōtō 曹洞 sect of Buddhism became "more and more involved in assisting the cause of Japanese military imperialism" during the 1930s and 1940s. (Hur 1999: 111) The largest Protestant church in Japan, the United Church of Christ in Japan (Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan 日本キリスト教団), "carried out virtually all its activities in accordance with government directives." (Mullins 1994: 265) Activities included fund raising for the military. Prayers and hymn books were edited and the government dictated the "themes for sermon topics." (Mullins 1994: 266) From this perspective, the wartime activities of Seichō no Ie were not distinctive. Rather, they were relatively conservative. (See also Miyazaki 1990)

The Religious Body Law was struck down by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, in an effort to promote religious freedom. However, SCAP retained the right to dissolve any organization it felt was ultranationalistic or involved in emperor worship. In March of 1948, SCAP reported that it had already ordered the dissolution of Kannagara Renmei and Jiu-kyō (i.e., Jiu).[5] As pointed out first by Ōishi (1964: 58) in his review of the book by Harry Thomsen entitled *The New Religions of Japan*, Jiu was never banned although SCAP (1948) erroneously claimed that it had been.

5. SCAP 1948: 139. To access greater sociocultural context, the annotated bibliography edited by Robert E. Ward and Frank Joseph Shulman (1974: 694-705) lists Western language materials, including those on religion, concerning Japan's occupation.

In SCAP's report entitled *Religions in Japan* (1948), Seichō no Ie is not singled out for disapproval. It is listed as one of the "New Sects" of the "General Monotheistic Type." (SCAP 1948: 117) Pointing out that not Seichō no Ie but "Tenri-kyō is at present one of the most active religious organizations in Japan" (SCAP 1948: 93), the report nonetheless notes that Seichō no Ie had 2,004 "installations" and 1,000,000 adherents.

At some time after the 1948 report was issued, SCAP ordered the dissolution of Seichō no Ie, probably after learning of its wartime past or for its continued practices of emperor worship. This was mentioned by a visiting Seichō no Ie lecturer in Hilo in 2008 to explain the need for the pro-peace stance later taken by Taniguchi Seichō, son-in-law of the founder and second leader of the group. Additional ethnohistoric research is needed to establish the chain of these events. Norbeck (1970: 211) writes that "Taniguchi was purged for several years by authorities of the Occupation because of his nationalistic writings" but does not give any additional detail such as a time reference. (See also Dorman 2004)

Ethnohistoric research by Dorman (2004) improves our picture of Seichō no Ie's wartime history, by showing the consequences to groups that attracted the surveillance and persecution of the police. Dorman (2004: 108) points out that groups might be persecuted if they questioned state-supported myths, as Jiu-kyō did at times, or if they merely gained lots of public support, as Ōmoto-kyō had done. Seichō no Ie may have been under the radar on both counts despite its size. However, at some point SCAP must have noticed Seichō no Ie's rituals of imperial veneration, something SCAP opposed on principle.

According to McFarland (1967: 156-158), the Occupation authorities purged Taniguchi and some of his staff. However, this barred them not from religious organization but from publishing. As a result Taniguchi was able to continue a religious movement, called Seichō no Ie Kyōdan 生長の家教団, throughout the Occupation, first under the Religious Corporations Ordinance of 1945 and then under the Religious Juridical Persons Law of 1951. (McFarland 1967: 156) The term *kyōdan* means teaching group, making it seem less like a religious group. When the Occupation ended in 1952, the term *kyōdan* was dropped and Seichō no Ie withdrew from the Union of New Religious Organizations (Shinshūren 新宗連). By dropping the term *kyōdan*, Seichō no Ie signaled that it considered itself more a truth movement than a religious movement (McFarland 1967: 156-157), and showed a tendency toward globalization by highlighting universalist principle that attempted to transcend Japanese culture, while remaining consistent with it.

Taniguchi Masaharu's experience with Ōmoto-kyō has been widely discussed. However, Ōmoto-kyō's experience with Japanese authority has not been linked to Taniguchi's accommodationism. The leaders of Ōmoto-kyō, and by extension adherents themselves, were put on trial in two separate incidents referred to as the First Ōmoto Incident and the Second Ōmoto Incident. In both the group

was accused of treasonous behavior, lèse majesté, such as the riding of an almost white horse by the leader when doing so was a privilege reserved for the Japanese Emperor. In the first incident charges were eventually dropped, but soon after this incident in 1921 Taniguchi left Ōmoto-kyō, probably to avoid persecution. (McFarland 1967: 150) In the Second Ōmoto Incident, in 1935, land owned by Ōmoto-kyō was seized, its buildings were destroyed, and its leaders were jailed. Such persecution of Ōmoto-kyō leaders continued throughout the war. (McFarland 1967: 63; See also Dorman 2004: 108) Both of these incidents must have held important lessons for Taniguchi. More importantly, when compared to other religions in Japan at the time, including Christian and Buddhist groups, Seichō no Ie's stance was not distinctive. And, Taniguchi Masaharu's personal experience in Ōmoto-kyō was part of this greater civilizational context, in which Taniguchi and all were subject to both carrot and stick.

Taniguchi Masaharu was succeeded by his adopted son-in-law (*muko yōshi* 婿養子) Taniguchi Seichō. The family name is taken by adopted son-in-laws in Japan as a matter of course, and the given name, Seichō, is a fortunate coincidence. Taniguchi Seichō felt it necessary to apologize and renounce the group's wartime stance. He stressed the ideals of harmony and peace. Nonetheless, the public retained an association between Seichō no Ie and the war, and has remained cool to the group despite its postwar pro-peace ideology. Overseas, Seichō no Ie was involved at some level in Victory Group (*kachigumi*) activity in Brazil and elsewhere in South America and, reportedly, in Hawaii. (See Stephan 1984: 172-173) There is ethnohistoric work to be done in this area. Victory Group secret societies in Brazil such as Shindō Remmei terrorized any who dared to suggest that Japan had lost the war. (Masterson 2004: 134-139) The stagnant if not falling membership of Seichō no Ie in Japan in present times is partly a result of the difficulty a group faces in enacting the change from pro-war to pro-peace without a stumble. The passing of Taniguchi Seichō in 2008 left leadership in the hands of Taniguchi Masanobu, grandson of the founder. Masanobu has continued Seichō's message of world peace and the value of a positive outlook. (Taniguchi Masanobu 2008) He has also attempted to introduce some basic teachings of Islam to his followers in an attempt to defuse global misunderstanding.

In Brazil, where Seichō no Ie's wartime history is largely unknown by Brazilians, despite *kachigumi* activity, membership has grown mightily, probably based on good missionary work and also on a perception that the Japanese gods must be powerful given the economic success of Japan. Brazilians, however, have balked at the idea that Taniguchi Masaharu was a living god and that he is worshipped as a deity after death, admittedly an idea that Seichō no Ie does not convey explicitly, in the same way that people in Japan's occupied territories overseas resisted the notion of imperial divinity. (Skya 2009: 322-324)

Vestiges of the Empire: Japanese New Religions in Taiwan

Another aspect of Seichō no Ie's globalization is the membership in Taiwan and places where missionary work followed the extent of Japan's former empire. Seichō no Ie began missionary work in Taiwan after its occupation in 1895. Postwar activity was restarted in 1955, and it was estimated in 1996 that there were 2,700 adherents in Taiwan. (Fujī 1990)

To put this into perspective, Tenri-kyō also has a presence in Taiwan, begun in 1897, just two years after Japan occupied Taiwan. Postwar activity restarted in 1967, and it was estimated in 1991 that there were 10,000 adherents in Taiwan. Other new religions with adherents in Taiwan include Sōka Gakkai (35,000), Shin-nyō En 真如苑 (1,000 'singles' and 1,000 households), Sekai Kyūsei-kyō (4,200), Risshō Kōsei-kai 立正佼成会 (1,000 households) and Reiyū-kai 霊友会 (6,000). (Fujī 1990)

Terada's sample of Seichō no Ie adherents on Taiwan includes three that are between 62 and 65 years of age, eleven who are between 66 and 70, seven who are between 71 and 75, six who are between 75 and 80, and 2 who are 81 and above. A majority was born in the Taiwanese city of Taipei. Most were born into families that were connected to the Japanese occupation of Taiwan. The future here is to be empirically determined, but the demographics from even this small sample are those of doubt.

Conclusion

This paper shows that Seichō no Ie's wartime ghost, the legacy of its support for the war, is not an unusual heritage for a Japanese religion, even though it was thrust precipitously into early globalization within the empire. Almost all religious groups in Japan joined in what was a holy war, a clash of civilizations, in which failure to support overseas activity was tantamount to treason. During the early months of the war when news of Japan's military victory was constant, people became enraptured with Japan. This victory disease (*senshō byō* 戦勝病), described by Stephan (1984: 124-125), led Japan to think of its civilization, its indigenous religion, and its highest god, as the future salvation of all mankind. In this atmosphere did Taniguchi Masaharu create a world religion. Not surprisingly, it was replete with foreign ideas and universal principles, but probably also came from a mindset in which the only legitimate world ruler could be the Japanese Emperor, due to his heavenly origins, as Kakehi Katsuhiko and others had argued. (Skya 2009: 207) We can be sure that, as pervasive as it was, Shinto nationalism had a massive impact on Japanese during the first half of the twentieth century, and on Taniguchi Masaharu in particular. Personal experience had further strengthened his need for the theologies he authored.

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