

MATSUOKA Hideaki 松岡秀明

Landscape as Doctrinal Representation The Sacred Place of Shūyōdan Hōseikai

The sacred place is significant since it reflects important doctrinal features of the religion. Some Japanese new religions have built huge sacred places that feature natural settings that support their emphasis on nature. Shūyōdan Hōseikai (Association for Self-cultivation and Sincerity), a religion founded in 1941 in Tokyo, has constructed such a sacred place. Kamisato or God's Home, occupies twenty-five acres on the Izu Peninsula in Shizuoka Prefecture and commands a view of Suruga Bay and Mt. Fuji. An examination of Kamisato, which can be considered a tapestry of both traditional and innovative elements in Japanese religiosity in terms of spatial structure, reveals two aspects of Shūyōdan Hōseikai: One, as a self-cultivation group that encourages its members to reflect themselves by confronting the sea and mountain and; two, as a religion that regards its founder as a transcendental being.

KEYWORDS: landscape – sacred place – Mt. Fuji – Japanese new religion – self-cultivation

Matsuoka Hideaki is an anthropologist and a professor currently teaching in the International Studies Department, Shukutoku University.

FOR A RELIGION, a sacred place can be as equally significant as a central church, headquarters, or churchyard because these facilities not only serve to represent the religion but also reflect its worldview. A sacred place is built as a message both for followers and outsiders. We can analyze it through examination of spatial structure, symbolism of constructions, and the meaning of its location, or by interviewing those who designed it. On the other hand, visitors to a sacred place both experience and attribute meaning to it. Thus, it is the locus where the intent of a religion's followers and other visitors' interpretations intermingle. A sacred place may maintain the meaning intended by those who planned it, and/or it may assume another meaning (that may be unexpected by the planners) by those who visit. And meaning may change as time goes by. In this sense, a sacred place is where meaning emerges, permeates, and transforms. It is a key to understanding religion, and therefore has been an important subject in the study of religion.

Some Japanese new religions have acquired a generally unsavory reputation, especially in the mass media, and are occasionally portrayed as money gathering machines, evil religions that confuse the minds of the people, and so forth.¹ Some are famous for the vast grounds of their sacred places featuring innovative, sometimes bizarre, buildings and structures. One of the motivations for building a sacred place is to confirm a sense of identity and put on a show of dignity in the face of a bad reputation. Examination of these sacred places is significant, since it can reveal how religions consider their own identities and construct nobility. It is remarkable that the sacred places of Japanese new religions, which in one way or another are crucial for the understanding of these religions, have not been the subject of sustained analysis by scholars of religion.²

This article investigates the sacred place of Shūyōdan Hōseikai 修養団捧誠会 (Association of Self-cultivation and Sincerity) focusing on its landscape. I will elucidate the reason why the religion built the sacred place and the doctrinal representations of its landscape, that is, the role the landscape plays in explicating the religion's doctrine. I will, therefore, examine the message that Shūyōdan Hōseikai intends to convey to the followers through the landscape of its sacred place.

1. Along with TSUSHIMA et al. (1979, p. 140, note 1), I define the term "Japanese new religions" as religious movements that emerged in Japan after the first decades of the 1800s, by and among "the people themselves independent of the tradition of established religions."

2. Architecture historian Igarashi Tarō has published two important books on the sacred places of Japanese new religions (IGARASHI 2001, 2002). These works, however, focus on architecture and not on landscape, which is the key concept for this article.

Landscape has been studied by a substantial number of scholars involved in the study of religion. There is a discipline called the “geography of religion,” and in Germany, geography has a long history of studying religion. An influential article by Paul Fickeler pointed out fundamental issues in the geographical study of religion, and triggered the establishment of the geography of religion and consequently many geographers interested in religion appeared (FICKELER 1962).³ Among them, Heinz-Gerhard Zimpel has pointed out the relationship between religion and landscape (ZIMPEL 1975, pp. 373–80). On the other hand, American geographers of religion have produced significant achievements since the early 1960s (PARK 1994, pp. 17–18); David Sopher’s (1967) discussion of “religious landscape” is one of them.

It was only in the 1990s that anthropologists started paying attention to landscape.⁴ Volumes edited by BENDER (1993), HIRSCH and O’HANLON (1995), BENDER and WINER (2001), and STEWART and STRATHERN (2003) have shed light on this subject. These studies have revealed that landscape is a cultural process, practice, or product. In other words, landscape is constructed through mass media, art, ritual, the practice of everyday life, and so forth. Nevertheless, despite these works, within the anthropology of religion, the study of landscape, unlike spirit possession, ritual, and other concepts that have been central to the discipline, has yet to attract great attention.

What is landscape? Landscape is defined as the portion of land that human beings can comprehend, and it is represented and/or reproduced in various discourses such as literature, pictures, and so forth. Thus the study of landscape should focus not only what has been considered as “nature” (forest, mountain, sea, and so on), and artificial structures such as building, park, and tower, but also meanings given to them and the mechanism that creates these meanings.

The reason I focus on landscape in studying the vast ground of sacred places of Japanese new religions is because these sacred places reflect attempts to create identity and dignity on the part of these religions. Landscape is a key to elucidate these elements. Furthermore, some of these feature *shakkei* 借景, literally “borrowed scenery,” which incorporates elements of a distant landscape into the composition of a garden. They make use of the surrounding landscape, such as mountains, seas, or rivers, in the design of sacred places. Thus landscape as a concept allows us to consider sacred place and its surroundings as continuity, and sets these into a larger framework.

This article consists of three parts. In the first part I will point out the common elements of the sacred places of Japanese traditional religions: the Bud-

3. For the development of the geography of religion in Germany, see SCHWIND 1975, pp. 1–30, and PARK 1994, pp. 16–17.

4. When anthropologist Eric HIRSCH wrote the introduction to *The Anthropology of Landscape*, he remarked that “landscape has received little overt anthropological treatment (1995, p. 1). This book is one of the pioneering anthropological studies of landscape.

dhist temple and Shinto shrine. Then I will turn to the sacred places of Japanese new religions and examine some of their features. In the second part I will turn to Kamisato 神里 (God's Home), the sacred place of Shūyōdan Hōseikai. After a brief introduction to Shūyōdan Hōseikai, I will examine why the religion established its sacred place in 1977. The third part examines the message of Shūyōdan Hōseikai by analyzing its special structure and dramaturgy of the sacred place. I will also examine how Shūyōdan Hōseikai has considered Mt. Fuji, and what motivated it to construct its own sacred place on the Izu Peninsula.

Sacred Places of Japanese Traditional Religion

Designating Shinto and Buddhism as “Japanese traditional religions,” I will focus on spatial features associated with these religions. Architect Maki Fumihiko 槇文彦 has discussed the significance of *oku* 奥 [the inner part] (MAKI 1980). According to Maki, the pass to a temple or shrine is generally winding and accompanied by trees and/or a slight difference in altitude. The pass offers a spatial experience including the process of time (p. 221).

The Japanese philosopher Tada Michitarō 多田道太郎 has also examined the arrangement of Japanese religious construction focusing on the inner part. Based on his impression of Seifa Utaki 齋場御嶽, the most important sacred place of the ancient Ryūkyū 琉球 kingdom in Okinawa, Tada argues that sacred places in Okinawa and also in Japan offer “the feeling of getting into the inner part” to the people who visit there.⁵ He describes this movement into the inner sanctum of the holy site as “a special ritual” (TADA 1983, p. 425). Though Tada's generalization from a single example might be criticized for taking a leap in logic, I think that the concept “the feeling of getting into the inner part” aptly grasps the spatial structure of the sacred places of Japanese traditional religions.

Two features of Japanese sacred place that Augustin Berque points out suggest why “the feeling of getting into the inner part” is generated (BERQUE 1995, pp. 95–96). The first feature is woods. Japanese Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines are, in general, surrounded by woods. In large cities such as Tokyo, this principle is not necessarily maintained, but it is not difficult to find some temples and shrines with woods even in urban areas. In Japanese spatial representation, the inner space surrounded by woods is the sacred place. At Buddhist temples or Shinto shrines there are paths called *sandō* 参道 (approach to the

5. Okinawa, consisting of several islands, has a rich and complex history. In the fifteenth century, the Ryūkyū kingdom emerged, and became a tributary of Japan in the eighteenth century. Okinawa was occupied by the United States from 1945 to 1972. Although Japanese culture is different in many ways from that of Okinawa, prominent Japanese folklorists, such as Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男 and Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫, believe that the origin of Japanese culture is found in the culture of Okinawa. See, for example, MURAI 1992.

place of worship). Those who visit must walk on the *sandō* in order to reach the principal religious facility.

Another significant element in Japanese sacred places is the presence of a slope. Mountain beliefs, which are believed to have existed before Buddhism was introduced to Japan in the sixth century, continue up until the present day.⁶ According to mountain belief traditions, there is a dichotomy between mountains and plains, in which mountains are sacred and plains secular. We can more vividly recognize this contrast in Buddhist temples than in Shinto shrines, as the Chinese character for “mountain” 山 can also be used to mean “Buddhist temple.” In fact, many important Buddhist temples are located in the mountains. Temples in flat areas tend to be built on a steep hill that symbolically signifies a mountain, and the *sandō* on the slope bridges the plain and the mountain, the secular and the sacred.

Gigantic Mimicry or Innovation on a Large Scale?

PL (Perfect Liberty) パーフェクト・リバテイ, Seichō-no-Ie 生長の家, Sekai Mahikari Bunmei Kyōdan 世界真光文明教団, Sekai Kyūseikyō 世界救世教, Tenrikyō 天理教 are examples of Japanese new religions that are famous for their vast grounds of sacred places featuring innovative, sometimes bizarre, buildings and structures. These groups are among the Japanese new religions that have constructed vast grounds of sacred places scattered with typical elements found in Japanese traditional sacred places, and also with constellations of innovative structures. For example, the sacred place of Sekai Mahikari Bunmei Kyōdan, built in the forest on Izu highland, occupies a space of two million square meters and has a massive golden shrine over sixty-five meters tall. Perfect Liberty’s sacred place in Osaka seems like a city of its own. On the premises of almost eleven million square meters, there exist several halls including luxurious halls for guests, a one-hundred-and-ten-meter tower commemorating the dead of World War II, a hospital, schools (junior high and high school), and even a golf course. They also incorporate several elements of traditional religious space, such as *kirizumazukuri* 切妻造り and *chigi* 千木 in shrines, and *tō* 塔 and *kawarayane* 瓦屋根 in temples. Thus I would call them a weave, or fabric, of citations and innovations. By citations I mean the appropriation of spatial and architectural styles of traditional religions, whilst by innovations I indicate creations of novel styles. Kamisato, the sacred place of Shūyōdan Hōseikai, is no exception; it is a mixture of tradition and the new.

I have pointed out that for these religions, confirming identity and displaying

6. Ernest Tuveson argues that in the West “[i]t was precisely in this period—the later seventeenth century—that men began to ‘wonder at the heights of the mountains, and the mighty waves of the sea,’ in a deeply religious sense” (TUVESON 1972, p. 102). If his argument is correct, there exists a sharp contrast between Western and Japanese sensitivities toward the mountain as a religious object.

dignity in the face of a bad reputation is one motivation to build a sacred place. But why have some religions constructed such huge sacred places?

First, the vast ground of the sacred place represents an effort to emphasize the groups' religious authority and to consolidate the community of the followers. It allows followers to gather in tens of thousands, or even in hundreds of thousands when a special ceremony is held, and encourages them to recognize a sense of community. Second, these religions seem to be trying to gain authenticity for themselves by utilizing or appropriating traditional religious elements on a huge scale. The *sandō* and slope, for example, are incorporated in several huge sacred places. The sacred places of Sekai Kyuseikyō, Sekai Mahikari Bunmei Kyōdan, and Shūyōdan Hōseikai, are located on hills or small mountains. Visitors must climb upwards to reach their destination. Third, these sacred places feature innovative structures that indicate their originality. The trilogy of vast land, citation, and innovation eloquently lays claim to their own identity.

Kamisato, The Sacred Place of Shūyōdan Hōseikai

DEVELOPMENT OF SHŪYŌDAN HŌSEIKAI

Idei Seitarō 出居清太郎, the founder of Shūyōdan Hōseikai, was born in a poor family in Ibaragi Prefecture on 3 December 1899.⁷ After finishing elementary school, Idei started working. In 1915, at the age of seventeen, Idei moved to Tokyo and became acquainted with Tenrikyō followers and began following this religion.⁸ By the middle of the 1920s, Idei became a devoted follower of Tenrikyō Kenkyūkai 天理教研究会, a religion that became independent from Tenrikyō.⁹ In 1928, the group was suppressed on suspicion of lese majesty, as the group claimed that its leader would reign over Japan, replacing the emperor. More than five hundred followers were arrested and Idei was one of them.

Idei was released from prison in 1929 and married to Imaizumi Kikuno 今泉菊の (1903–1997). Around 1934, Idei started to establish his own religious group. Though he was arrested three times (in 1935, 1937, and 1939), Idei did not stop proselytizing and finally managed to establish his own group, Shūyōdan Hōseikai, not as a religion but as a lay foundation in 1941.¹⁰ The religion then

7. I have summarized Idei's life referring to two bibliographies written individually by Shūyōdan Hōseikai followers, based on their interviews with the founder (Iwai 1953, Idei 1965–1967). It goes without saying that a biography of a religion's founder written by a follower may idealize him or her, and include moving episodes that did not occur in reality. The founder's life in a biography authorized by the religion itself is what the followers are supposed to believe, and in this point it is a "story" or "hagiography." On the other hand, Shimazono offers Idei's biography from the viewpoint of religious studies (1992, 1998).

8. Tenrikyō is one of the significant Japanese new religions in terms of the number of followers, and also its doctrinal influence on other Japanese new religions.

9. This religion changed its name to Tenri Honmichi 天理本道, and then simply Honmichi.

10. It was almost impossible to establish a religion under pre-war militarism. The authorities would quickly move to ban such groups.

developed slowly but steadily. In 1952, the religion acquired authorization as a religious corporation. Idei bought land in Toshima ward, on the east side of Tokyo, and completed the headquarters named, Honbu Heiwakyō 本部平和郷, in 1960. According to SHIMAZONO (1992, p. 18), the period of early development came to an end around this time. Idei died on 23 August 1983 and his wife Kikuno became the leader. As of the end of 2002, Shūyōdan Hōseikai had 99 branches and claimed 8,738 followers (BUNKACHŌ 2004, pp. 58–9).

As indicated by the fact that the word *shūyō* 修養 (self-cultivation) is featured in the name of the group, Shūyōdan Hōseikai considers self-cultivation as the most important element in its doctrine, though it does not deny the occurrence miracles through belief. The object of worship is a mirror, which indicates that this religion is influenced by Shinto ideas.

THE PURPOSE AND PROCESS OF BUILDING A SACRED PLACE

I have mentioned reasons why some Japanese new religions have built vast grounds for their sacred places. In Shūyōdan Hōseikai, there is another purpose which I have not mentioned: The revitalization of the group. In the late 1950s, the followers became less religiously active. There emerged a tendency for them to seek salvation only when they were in trouble, without studying the doctrines or making efforts toward self-cultivation. This resulted in the founder giving the following sermon to his followers in 1961: “Do not depend only on me. Stand on your own feet by studying doctrine by yourself” (SHŪYŌDAN HŌSEIKAI 1999 [henceforth KK], p. 3). The tendency of dependence on the founder, however, did not change.

At the end of 1964, Idei announced to his followers that he would die in 1970 (KK, p. 2). This alert was followed by the guideline entitled “towards the crisis of 1970” issued on New Year’s Day, 1965. This guideline consisted of five practices that the followers should carry out (KK, pp. 2–3). Until 1964, the annual guideline consisted of just one practice, so the 1965 guideline was unusual. Idei urged followers to establish an autonomous faith. In the following year, 1966, Idei established the *Kyōgakuin* 教学院 [The Institute of Teachings] that focused on doctrinal study. Idei Shigeru 出井茂 (1929–), the adopted son of the founder, and a mathematician who studied at the University of Tokyo and was teaching at Waseda University at the time, was nominated the head of the Institute (KK, p. 3).¹¹ Through these reformations, we can imagine Idei’s anxiety over the religious indifference among his followers.

The creation of the sacred place followed the establishment of the *Kyōgakuin* to revitalize the followers. On 6 December 1968 Idei decided to establish a sacred place. On 6 January 1969 he left for Izu Peninsula, Shizuoka Prefecture,

11. Idei Shigeru became the third leader of Shūyōdan Hōseikai in 1997, after the death of the second leader, Idei Kikuno.

FIGURE 1 Aerial view of Kamisato. Goreisho is on the top left.
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TABLE 1 Process of sacred place construction (Source, ㊦㊦)

Year	Date	Idei's activities and process of construction
1968	Dec. 6	Decides to build a sacred place on Izu Peninsula
1969	Jan. 6	Travels to Izu peninsula for an inspection tour
	Jan. 9	Visits Daruma yama 達磨山 (Mt. Daruma)
	Jan. 15	Urges followers to save 100 yen per day each, in order to save 30,000 yen within 3 years, with goal of to obtaining 3000 <i>tsubo</i> 坪 of land
	Mar. 1	Preaches idea for the sacred place to followers
1972	Mar. 1	Shūyōdan Hosekai purchases 30,000 <i>tsubo</i> of land at Mt. Dharmā
1973	Jul. 20	Receives revelation at a mosque in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, regarding the basic design for sacred place
1974	Jan. 1	Names sacred place Yūkyū Sekai Heiwakyō 悠久世界平和郷
	Nov. 4	Receives revelation for basic plan of sacred place
1975	Mar. 1	Construction begins
1977	Oct. 9	Inauguration ceremony for special guests (around 170 attend)
	Oct. 10	Inauguration ceremony; 4,750 followers gather

and visited the land where Kamisato would eventually be established. On 15 January he declared publicly that the group would concentrate on this project and that he decided to save three hundred million yen (approximately 2.8 million US dollars), and to buy 30,000 *tsubo* (approximately 99,180 square meters) of land. Table I shows the steps Idei and Shūyōdan Hōseikai took in establishing a sacred place. In 1974, Idei spoke about the sacred place during its construction:

Mt. Daruma is the sacred place. The sacred place is indispensable. It is where good ideas flash into one's mind; not selfish ideas but a kind of revelation that urges us to work for other people and society. (KK, p. 24)

This statement clearly shows us that Idei considered the sacred place to be an apparatus to awaken the religious consciousness of his followers.

In 1977 the group completed the sacred place, which has two names, Kamisato and Yūkyū Sekai Heiwa Kyō 悠久世界平和郷 [The land for eternal world peace], in an area on the Izu Peninsula “blessed by sea and mountains” (KK, p. 38). From downtown Shuzenji, a tourist district famous for its hot springs, it takes around thirty minutes by car to the entrance of the sacred place. Figures 1 and 2 show aerial views of Kamisato. As we see, the sacred place is surrounded by forest and overlooks Mt. Fuji across Suruga Bay. According to the doctrine of the group, sea represents “mother” and mountain signifies “father.”

OVERVIEW OF KAMISATO

In Kamisato, the buildings and structures are scattered throughout the forest. In *Tenchi shizen no hōsoku* 天地自然の法則 [The rule of nature, heaven, and earth], it is taught that human beings should be grateful to nature for allowing them to live in its grace. Shūyōdan Hōseikai attaches significance to nature, which plays a central role in their doctrine. It is said that during the construction, which started in 1974, trees that were obstacles to the construction were transplanted to some other place (KK, p. 17). As a result, no tree was cut down.¹²

As Kamisato is located on the slope of Mt. Daruma, buildings scattered in the forest are built on three different levels. The chapel is on the lower level, accommodation and the fountain on the middle level, and the rest on the upper level. I will present these briefly one by one.

- Yūkyū Ryō and the Lodge: Accommodation

Those visiting Kamisato must first go to Yūkyū Ryō 悠久寮 [Eternity House]. Built on a slope, the exterior and interior of this two-story building, which is comprised of a first floor and basement, have little religious flavor, if any. Since the exterior does not contain any religious ornaments, symbols, and style on

12. There is a similar anecdote in The Church of World Messianity's construction of its Brazilian sacred place in São Paulo.



FIGURE 2 Goreisho, Suruga Bay, and Mt. Fuji

its outside, it might be difficult to recognize that this is a building in the sacred place of a religious group by its appearance.

After passing through the first floor entrance, one comes to a lobby and reception area. At reception, one can purchase the group's journal, entitled *Fuyu no ari* 冬の蟻, doctrinal books, and PET plastic bottles to hold sacred water (see below). These are among the few items that remind outsiders that they are in a religious space. At the back of this floor there is a dining room that can hold one hundred people. This room becomes very crowded when special ceremonies are held. In the basement, which resembles a hotel, there are two large Japanese-style rooms. Yūkyū Ryō can accommodate forty guests in these rooms.

The other accommodation facility, the Lodge, is more private and has virtually no religious atmosphere at all compared with Yūkyū Ryō. There are ten small lodges of eighteen square meters, each of which can accommodate up to three guests. Each room has three small desks for the guests, as the Lodge can be used for study camp by both followers and others.

- Banrei Banbustu Son'ai Dō

The chapel, Banrei Banbustu Son'ai Dō 万靈万物尊愛堂 [the Hall for respect toward every spirit and every being], which is on the basement level of Yūkyū Ryō, is a small hall with plain features. It can only hold around one hundred and fifty people. I will discuss the Hall in detail in the following section.

- Goshinsui

After passing through the Hall to the back, one comes across a fountain that holds water called Goshinsui 御神水 [divine water], which is believed by followers to have supernatural powers. Some place this water into PET bottles, which they either brought with them or purchased at the reception desk, in order to carry it home.

- The Sandō

The Sandō 参道 bridges the middle and upper levels. As we have seen, *sandō* means an approach to a place of worship. Generally a *sandō* leads us to a shrine or temple, but in this case it leads visitors to a tomb. There are two *sandō*, and the visitors have to climb a hill to reach the following structures located on the higher level.

- Saiji Hiroba

When visitors finish climbing the *sandō*, the Saiji Hiroba 祭事広場 [Place of celebration] appears. This area faces Mt. Fuji and Suruga Bay, and visitors can enjoy the view.

- Keireitō

The Keireitō 敬靈塔 [The tower of respect for spirits] is on the righthand corner (as seen from the Goreisho) of the Saiji Hiroba. It was built by Sekine Nobuo 関根伸夫 (1942–), a prominent sculptor.

- Goreisho

The Goreisho 御靈所 [Place for spirits] is the tomb of the founder and his wife.¹³ I will discuss this structure in detail below.

Tapestry of Innovation and Citation

THE SACRED PLACE AS UTOPIA

Several vast grounds of sacred places belonging to Japanese new religions have been constructed as a model of the ideal world based on their religious doctrines. In other words, these sacred places are built as utopias or models for utopia. This idea is expressed most explicitly in the name of the sacred places of Seikai Kyūseikyō 世界救世教 in Japan, Brazil, and Thailand; Chijō Tengoku 地上天国 [Heaven on Earth].¹⁴ In a similar manner, Kamisato is also built as the embodiment of Shūyōdan Hōseikai's teachings. On 10 October 1977, at the inauguration ceremony of Kamisato, Idei preached:

This Kamisato is not only for Shūyōdan Hōseikai. Kamisato is where people in the world are able to communicate spiritually with the transcendental being. People in the world, despite the differences in race, nationality and belief, open the doors of their mind and promote mutual friendship here. Then they vow to pursue the establishment of perpetual world peace. (KK, p. 1)

Up to this point I have described the sacred places of Japanese new religions and also provided a general view of traditional Japanese sacred places. Michel de CERTEAU discusses the nature of the city, which considers city as a type of discourse and language system (1984, pp. 91–110). He does not attempt to portray a specific city, such as New York or Bangkok, but rather an ideal city on an abstract level, which has the characteristics of Utopia. His three rules of a city based on utopian or city planning discourse are suggestive in considering the vast grounds of sacred places of Japanese new religions in general.¹⁵ Kamisato is no exception. Therefore I use de Certeau's argument as a reference point in

13. Many Japanese new religions place great importance on ancestor worship, but Shūyōdan Hōseikai does not stress this as much as other groups.

14. I have elucidated some features of Guarapiranga, the Brazilian sacred place of The Church of World Messianity, comparing it with these of PL Kyōdan and Seichō-no-Ie (MATSUOKA 2004, Chapter 7).

15. De Certeau was inspired by Françoise CHOY's (1973) article, which discusses utopian characteristics of the city.

order to grasp the characteristics of this sacred place. He states that the “city,” by utopian and urbanistic discourse, is defined by the possibility of a threefold operation: (1) The city is a rational organization, in that it represses physical, mental, and political pollutants that would compromise it; (2) The city shapes itself as a universal and anonymous subject; (3) The city eliminates what is called “tradition” and creates a synchronic system. City planning is an effort to create an atemporal object (the city), by instantly arranging such entities as buildings, roads, and parks, while simultaneously attempting to exclude irrational obstructions. According to de CERTEAU, however, this trial will never be realized completely because “the city is left prey to contradictory movements that counter-balance and combine themselves outside the reach of panoptic power” (1984, p. 95). As architecture theoretician Christopher ALEXANDER aptly expresses it, a city is not a tree (1972). By this metaphorical expression, Alexander points out that a city is not structured in the manner of a branch diagram. I agree with Alexander and think that a city rather more closely resembles a rhizome, with roots entwined into each other (see also DELEUZE and GUATTARI 1976). In reality, a city includes spaces that deviate from a rational planning mode. For example, in the heart of Tokyo, within a mile of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government Office, there is an (in)famous area where sex industries and bars mainly run by Japanese yakuza gangs flourish, youngsters trade drugs, and “illegally staying aliens” commit crimes. Thus it can be said that this city, and perhaps all cities, fails the test of utopian planning.

Planning a sacred place means not only planning the structures that will occupy the space, where to construct sacred place, planning the layout of gardens, and other tangible considerations. The overseers of this operation must also create a scheme according to which the followers who visit the sacred place perceive, feel, and experience its sacred qualities. The aim of a sacred place includes improving and reinforcing the quality of the believers’ faith. A sacred place is a tool that is implemented to instill a religion’s worldview in its followers through the non-verbal communication of symbols and metaphors. Like the city, a sacred place tries to exclude factors that may pollute the installation of the viewpoint of the religion. That which is excluded may be otherwise considered rational in a secular context.

Let us consider how de Certeau’s three operations may or may not fit with Kamisato. First, has Kamisato repressed pollution? As I mentioned earlier, not only the followers but non-followers have stayed in its lodging for as long as it has been open to the public. As an official leaflet puts it:

Yūkyū Sekai Heiwa Kyō is not a hotel. So, we hope you would mind your manners. There are no rigorous regulations. However, we would like to ask you all; keeping the aim of construction of this sacred place, that is “establishing a



FIGURE 3 Mt. Fuji as seen through the huge glass in the Hall

peaceful place,” in your mind, so please do not cause other guests annoyance. Party and drinking are allowed only in a limited time.

According to the religion, there have not been any immoral and/or criminal acts reported. I do not want to address the veracity of this claim here. What is important is the fact that Shūyōdan Hōseikai has declared that the sacred place is “where followers away from everyday life, pray to Mt. Fuji and merge into the transcendental being.” “In this sacred and solemn circumstance, the followers should purify their souls by reflecting on themselves” (KK, p. 81). Thus Kamisato, unlike the city, seems to succeed in excluding pollution. Also it should be noted that Kamisato does not suppress pollution as the city does. Instead, the religion considers Kamisato to be a sacred place that encourages visitors to refrain from bad (polluting) behavior.

In terms of de Certeau’s second rule, does Kamisato shape itself into an anonymous entity? When compared to the sacred places of Sekai Mahikari Bunmei Kyōdan and Perfect Liberty, Kamisato is relatively small, since it occupies only a hundred thousand square meters. Nevertheless, by including Mt. Fuji and Suruga Bay into its landscape, Kamisato succeeds in creating a much wider space beyond its own domain, consequently making it “gigantic.” Its spatial structure allows the visitors to perceive “infinity, exteriority, the public, and the overt nature” that are presented by “the gigantic,” as STEWART (1993, p. 70) points out. The structures and landscape are also enchanting commodities that are extraordinary features that can be seen and experienced only in Kamisato. Stewart points out that “authentic experience becomes both elusive and allusive as it is placed beyond the horizon of present lived experience, the beyond in which the antique, the pastoral, the exotic, and other fictive domains are articulated” (STEWART 1993, p. 133). Kamisato is not anonymous. On the contrary, it is a place with a name and speaks eloquently of its sacredness. And this subject

offers matrix, model, and mold for followers to create narratives on their experience of the sacred place.

RENOVATION, INNOVATION, AND LANDSCAPE

Unlike the city, Kamisato does not exclude what is called “tradition.” Rather, it emphasizes or even exaggerates this in its spatial structure. Located on a mountain and having a slope and surrounding forest, Kamisato shares such elements with Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, and offers “the feeling of getting the inner part.” This may allow visitors to perceive a diachronic continuity between Shūyōdan Hōseikai and traditional religions. On the other hand, through Kamisato the group utilizes or appropriates a traditional icon and gives it religious meaning (or revitalizes its religious meaning) via the landscape of the sacred place. Kamisato, however, is not merely a large-scale reproduction of the spatial features of traditional Japanese religions. In this section, I will discuss innovative structures and traditional elements featured in the Hall and Goreisho.

The exterior of the Hall, as mentioned earlier, is plain and its uniqueness can be realized only when visitors enter the space where prayer is conducted. They must pass through its narrow concreted entrance and take off their shoes, and then walk toward the right on the carpeted floor to go inside. Once there, the innovative interior is revealed.

In general, religions have an object of worship—for example, a statue of Christ in Christianity, a mirror in Shinto, or a calligraphic scroll in some Japanese new religions—that is often enshrined at the back of a room or hall on an altar. In Kamisato, at the end of the Hall (where an altar might usually be placed), there is a huge glass window through which Mt. Fuji can be seen if the sky is clear (Figure 3). This structure, which takes people by surprise, clearly demonstrates the founder’s intention to abolish idolatry. In Kamisato, there is no mirror enshrined, even though it is Shūyōdan Hōseikai’s object of worship.

Idei writes:

Kamisato is the place where we break down idolatry, purify our blemished souls by setting ourselves spiritual mountain Fuji as our goal, and build perpetual world peace. (KK, p. 86)

Idei clearly denies idolatry in Kamisato. He claimed receiving a revelation regarding the basic plan for the sacred place at a mosque in Johor Bahru, Malaysia, on 20 July 1973.

The place where Yūkyū Sekai Heiwa Kyō will be built looks over everywhere and looks up Mt. Fuji. The land itself unites with nature. And Kamisato is the divine mirror, the earth, and the universe. We have enshrined a mirror. But we will not do so in Yūkyū Sekai Heiwa Kyō according to this revelation.

(KK, p. 78)

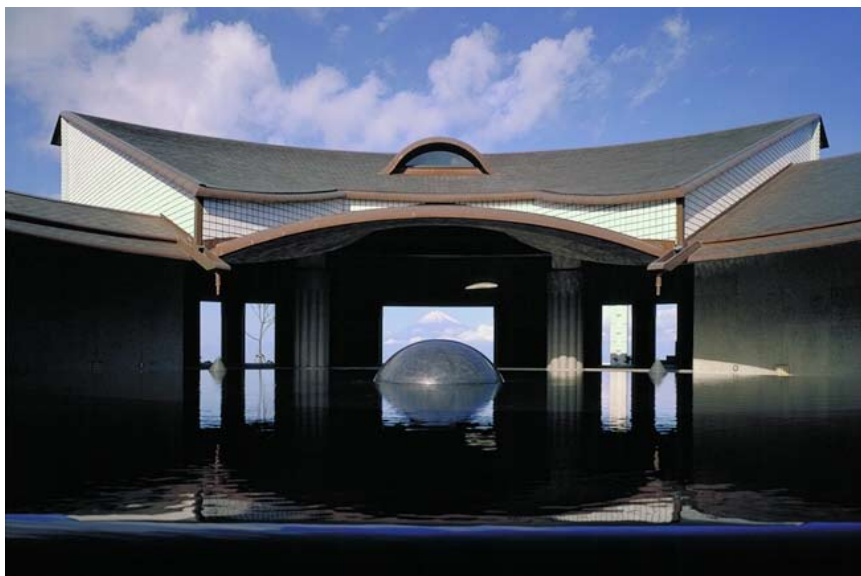


FIGURE 4 Round Pond at Goreisho with Mt Fuji in the distance as seen from the gates

Architect Ōmura Yoshimi 大村吉美, who designed the Hall, Yūkyū Ryo, and the Lodge, recalls that the founder expected that the Hall “would match the surrounding nature.” To plan the Hall, Ōmura began studying Shūyōdan Hōseikai’s teachings himself. Simultaneously he made plans and held discussions over twenty times with Idei Shigeru, the head of the *Kyōgakuin* at that time. Ōmura deliberated over how he should combine significant elements in the doctrine: nature, air (that is, sky), water (Suruga Bay), and mountain (Mt. Fuji). Then the idea of using a huge piece of glass came to him. When the founder entered the Hall right after its completion, he was very satisfied with the end result as he thought it represented the essence of the doctrine.

According to Idei, the Hall is “the place where members should make their confessions to the transcendental being, to reflect on themselves, and to show their respect to the transcendental being” (KK, p. 80). The founder also claims that the Hall is “the place where we realize our responsibility to purify our souls, and where we swear to devote sincerity to everything in this world” (KK, p. 135).

Some followers accurately receive the message from those who planned this hall. A female who has followed the religion for seventeen years defines the Hall as a “divine place where I put my hands together naturally.” In many cultures, putting hands together signifies praying to something transcendental; Japanese culture is no exception. But to what does she pray? Her answer was “to something divine” (*nanika kōgōshii mono e* なにか神々しいものへ) reveals obscurity of the transcendental being in Shūyōdan Hōseikai. Even if we read Idei’s teachings thoroughly, we cannot grasp it in detail. It remains ambiguous. The point

here is, however, that she felt something divine. Whether it be Mt. Fuji, Suruga Bay, or the whole landscape that can be seen through the big glass window, she felt divinity in the landscape. Another woman in her sixties, who has followed Shūyōdan Hōseikai since she was fifteen, mentions that “(when in the Hall) I feel that I’m confronting Mt. Fuji.” Idei’s goal is attained by letting the followers perceive something divine in Kamisato. Landscape is a vehicle that conveys doctrine to the followers and in this sense landscape is doctrinal representation.

In terms of doctrinal presentation through landscape, Goreisho is another significant apparatus. Located on the highest spot in the sacred place (654 meters above sea level), Goreisho or “the Place for the Spirit” (Figure 4) is another significant structure. Goreisho is the tombs of the founder and his wife. Idei planned to construct his tomb while he was alive, and in 1982 asked Uchii Shōzō 内井昭藏 (1933–2002) to plan the structure. Though Idei attended the ceremony which celebrated the start of construction in April 1983, he was unable to see its completion in September 1984, as he died on 23 August 1983 at the age of eighty-three.

Those who visit Goreisho from the Hall have to climb choosing one of two *sandō*s: 470 stairs on the steep Otokozaaka 男坂 (Men’s Slope) or the relatively gentle pass of Onnazaka 女坂 (Women’s Slope). As Uchii puts that “I tried to realize the following. As one who passes along the *sandō* comes closer to Goreisho, s/he feels a more dense atmosphere of divinity” (UCHII 1985, p. 155), he tried to let perceive “the feeling of getting into the inner part.” Goreisho consists of several components: a circular corridor that features the statues of the founder and his wife, a round pond that has a ball in its center (seen as hemisphere above the surface), and a gathering room.¹⁶

In Kamisato, a ceremony called Shūtōkushiki 崇徳式 (Ceremony for admiring the founder’s virtue) has been held monthly on the twenty-third of each month. The program is as follows. The followers gather at the entrance to Goreisho. Then they start walking up the circular corridor one by one. Every follower stops in front of the statues of Idei and his wife and makes a bow to them. When they do so, some kneel and others stay standing. But everyone touches the stone ball on a short stone pillar, on which their posthumous names are engraved. After all the participants have completed this action, they all drink from a *sakazuki* 盃, or glass of sake, together and the ceremony ends. The most significant part of this ceremony is touching the stone. This action is similar to paying respect for the dead in Japanese Buddhism, that is, putting one’s hands together in front of a gravestone. I have pointed out earlier that Shūyōdan Hōseikai is influenced by Shinto. But it also inherits aspects of ancestor worship from Japanese Buddhism. When Idei was still alive, he told the followers that his spirit would stay in Goreisho (KK, p. 122). Thus Goreisho is where the followers feel the existence of Idei and his wife’s spirits. Yet Goreisho is not only the place where the

16. In 1986, Uchii received the Mainichi Art Award for his creation of Goreisho.

followers recall the founder. Here, too, landscape plays a significant role in letting the followers perceive the doctrine. Behind the tomb, there is a space where statues of the founder (on the right) and his wife (on the left) are placed. This space is separated from the outside by folding double doors that open when a ceremony is held. Across the pond, on the opposite side of this shrine, there are two gates that divide the inside and the outside. When the gates are opened, one can look over the forest, Suruga Bay, and Mt. Fuji. The statues of the founder and his wife, the ball in the round pond, and Mt. Fuji are all placed on a line. Like the Hall, the view of outside from the inside is also featured here. This feature is no mere coincidence. Uchii explains his motive for planning Goreisho.

This Goreisho is a foundation for the belief of all the followers. In other words, it should be the symbol of the religion. For that, I needed to show its ideal and doctrine in the architectural form. Then I wanted to put not only the architecture itself but also all the environments of Mt. Daruma into an order.

(UCHII 1985, p. 155).

For Uchii, who considered that Mt. Fuji's view from Kamisato "would be the best," it is quite natural to taking Mt. Fuji's view into the plan for Goreisho.

Conclusion

The landscape of Kamisato includes not only buildings, structures, and woods on the premises but also nature beyond it, forest surrounding the sacred place, the sea of Suruga Bay, and Mt. Fuji. Among these, the most important is Mt. Fuji. It is a medium for expressing meaning, for communication between human beings and nature, and a bridge between human beings and supernatural beings.

It goes without saying that Shūyōdan Hōseikai is not alone in giving specific meaning to Mt. Fuji. After Japan was opened to the Westerners in 1854, Mt. Fuji gradually turned to an icon or a symbol of Japan. Preceding this international iconization, Mt. Fuji became popular among Japanese through the development of mass media, such as *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 in the eighteenth century. The significance of Mt. Fuji, however, has not been limited to the secular domain. The mountain has maintained its significance for more than a thousand years in Japanese religiosity; Mt. Fuji has been the object of worship since at least the ninth century. And in the beginning of the Edo period, there emerged a group that worshipped Mt. Fuji as a sacred mountain. We can also find expressions, such as *reihō Fuji* 霊峰富士 (spiritual peak) or *reizan Fuji* 霊山富士 (spiritual mountain), that express this sentiment.¹⁷

Idei choose the current location to construct the sacred place because it has an excellent view of Mt. Fuji. As Idei writes, "I have respected and admired Mt. Fuji since my childhood" (KK, p. 47), and Mt. Fuji had special meaning for him.

17. Regarding the process whereby Mt. Fuji became a national symbol, see KANŌ 1994, pp. 42–63.

And we can easily find his reference to Mt. Fuji in his writings and interviews. It is said that an inspiration came to Idei in 1923 (who established Shūyōdan Hōseikai in 1931) to construct a sacred place that had a view of Mt. Fuji (KK, p. 38). The Izu Peninsula is also significant for Idei, since he considered it “the most spiritual place” (KK, p. 43). In 1939, after wandering around the Peninsula, Idei swore that he would realize his dream in the future (KK, p. 41).

Kamisato is conservative in taking a traditional icon (Mt. Fuji) and spatial structure (*sandō*) into its landscape. Thus, it is through Kamisato that Shūyōdan Hōseikai claims its authenticity. But at the same time Kamisato is innovative in giving its own meaning to Mt. Fuji. The transcendental being in Shūyōdan Hōseikai is ambiguous. Taikyoku 太極 (the Absolute Pole) refers to the transcendental being, but is still obscure since no detailed description of its nature is offered. Idei writes that “Taikyoku is represented by Mt. Fuji” (KK, p. 90). A concept difficult to grasp is represented by Mt. Fuji. Letting “followers get out of everyday life, pray to Mt. Fuji, and merge into the transcendental being” (KK, p. 81), the landscape vitalizes them to internalize the doctrine.

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