

Ioannis GAITANIDIS

Spiritual Therapies in Japan

As the media-driven “spiritual boom” that hit Japan in the last decade starts to fade away, the therapies that this phenomenon popularized among fans of everything termed “spiritual” continue to be carried out in small circles of practitioners and their most fervent clients. This article places these “spiritual therapies” within the long history of healing rites in Japan by showing that their current appeal can be explained by two factors. First, these therapies are conspicuously similar to techniques used by New Religious Movements in Japan. Secondly, the cultural criticism promoted by these therapies remains characteristic of modern occult theories and practices and has only been readapted today to suit the peculiar symbolic vacuum of post-Aum Japanese society. Finally, the author focuses on the self-cultivation element that remains central in Japanese healing methods, and argues that spiritual therapies seem to have simplified self-cultivation to such an extent that they reinforce a generalized discourse about ethnicity and about whose way of life (Japanese or American) is best suited to a Japanese clientèle.

KEYWORDS: spiritual—healing—new religions—*nihonjinron*—self-cultivation—Ehara Hiroyuki

Ioannis GAITANIDIS is a postdoctoral researcher at Kokugakuin University and an associate researcher at the White Rose East Asia Centre (Universities of Leeds and Sheffield).

ONE DAY in August 2009, I found myself in Enoshima,¹ sharing an afternoon coffee with an eclectic group of eight people. The setting was almost perfect for the discussion that was to follow. The Italian restaurant where we all met offers an isolated space in its backyard patio composed of three tables protected from the sun by a large wooden roof. The summer heat, the smell of freshly-made pizza, and the shrilling of the cicadas brought back personal memories of summers spent in Southern Europe, but for the rest of the group the location was probably giving rise to different sensations. Considered to be one of Eastern Japan's most famous "power spots," our visit to Enoshima was also meant, I was later informed, to regenerate our "vital energies."

The encounter had not occurred by chance. It had been, in fact, the idea of one of those present that day, Ms. Momoyama,² to invite me to one of her meetings with three fellow spiritual therapists (all women in their thirties) and their most regular clients (two women, one in her early forties and one in her fifties, and one man who was in his late twenties). The plan was to allow me to follow up on my interview with Ms. Momoyama and her sister, Ms. Chikamatsu (both in their forties), who run a healing salon together in central Tokyo, and peer deeper into the workings of the spiritual business in Japan.

A description of some of the people present that day should clarify what I mean by "spiritual therapies." Two of the participants of this debate were students at Theta Healing Japan, a newly established school, acting as the Japanese branch of the Idaho-based Theta Healing Institute of Knowledge. On the official website of Theta Healing, practitioners are said to be using "a technique that connects their own theta, or meditation brainwaves, with universal healing

* I would like to thank Ian Reader and the anonymous reviewers of the *JJRS* for their valuable comments. I also would like to express my gratitude to my doctoral thesis supervisors in the UK, Victor King and Mark Williams at the University of Leeds, for their constant support. Fieldwork for this research was funded by the Japan Foundation. The support of the UK's Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is gratefully acknowledged. This work was undertaken at the White Rose East Asia Centre (WREAC).

1. Enoshima is a small island south of Tokyo and a popular resort area, as the nearby beaches are the closest to the capital.

2. All names that are preceded by Ms. or Mr. are pseudonyms of informants.

energy to create physical, emotional, and spiritual healing.”³ The official blog of the same institution describes a typical session of theta healing as follows:

A typical session will begin with the healer discussing your issue with you. They will then use muscle testing⁴ to identify limiting beliefs hidden within your subconscious mind—the kind of beliefs that could be preventing you from achieving your goals. If you are willing to change these beliefs, the healer will hold your hand and do the “energy work.” Most clients report feeling calm and relaxed during a healing and many experience instant relief from their physical pain or symptoms. Some begin to view their lives from a whole new perspective. Sessions are generally an hour long and the theta healer can work on physical healing, changing beliefs, instilling positive new thoughts and emotions, clearing spaces, angel readings, and much more.⁵

The third therapist was a reconnection healer specializing in a therapy that its inventor Eric Pearl, originally a chiropractor from Los Angeles, is said to have discovered inadvertently after a gypsy reconnected his “body’s meridian lines to the grid lines on the planet.”⁶ He subsequently realized that he could “heal” people by holding his hands near their bodies without ever touching them. The therapy has been particularly popular in the last decade around the world and in Japan since 2006, when Eric Pearl’s seminars began to be offered. According to the most recent data, there are currently one hundred and fifteen officially registered reconnection practitioners in the country, twenty-six of whom are based in Tokyo.⁷

Besides the two sisters who invited me to this debate and who practice a variety of therapies, from “raindrop” (a type of oil massage) to spiritual counseling (see Ehara Hiroyuki’s sessions below) and past-life reading (a type of hypno-

3. <http://www.thetahealing.com/about-thetahealing.html> (accessed 2 March 2012).

4. This muscle testing is the “bi-digital o-ring test,” an interesting example of the flow of occult practices in and out of Japan. This patented method of illness “diagnosis” was invented by a Japanese doctor named Omura Yoshiaki who believes that the body of the patient can give hints towards the presence of illness through the relative ease with which the patient’s two fingers forming an “O” are pulled apart when the doctor probes the patient’s body. It is interesting to note that this technique, allegedly invented in 1981, only became popular among New Age circles of therapists after Omura moved to the United States at the beginning of the 1990s. Since then, it has reentered Japan and only a few therapists in Japan know that it is of Japanese origin.

5. <http://www.thetahealing.com/blog/help-with-healing-in-womans-day-magazine.html> (accessed 22 July 2012).

6. Lisa Suhay, IN PERSON; Prophet or Profiteer, This Doctor’s In Now. *The New York Times*, 1 April 2001. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/01/nyregion/in-person-prophet-or-profiteer-this-doctor-s-in-now.html?pagewanted=4&src=pm> (accessed 22 July 2012).

7. See <http://www.naturalspirit.co.jp/Reconnection/herodb/herodb.cgi?table=directory> (accessed 22 July 2012).

therapy), the remaining three participants, although introduced as just longtime “clients,” seemed to be well versed in the vocabulary used in spiritual therapy circles.

The discussion lasted for about three hours and most of it concerned opinions about famous spiritual therapists or techniques that have influenced the practice and worldview of those attending. The atmosphere resembled that of a meeting between booksellers talking about their favorite novels or dissecting recent trade trends, subjects that probably remain of little interest to regular book readers.

Consider the following excerpt of a discussion from that afternoon. The young man admitted that for a long time he had been very unhappy with his life and particularly with his job as a systems engineer.⁸ This particular job is infamous in Japan for the stress, the long hours, and the lack of career opportunities that it entails.

Man: I was depressed when I arrived at Ms. Momoyama’s salon for the first time. But at that first session, I woke up [*mezameta* 目覚めた] and realized that I could face the issues at my workplace differently, because I was different.

Ms. Momoyama: Yes, you are different. We are different. Let’s hope that slowly all of humanity will also wake up. [She turns to me] What do you think of the Ascension that is supposed to happen in 2012?⁹

Me: Err... I am not sure. I hear a lot of theories. [Turning to everyone else] What do you think?

The bulk of my fieldwork research in Japan was mostly spent in Tokyo in 2009 interviewing nearly seventy of these practitioners whom I have been calling “spiritual therapists.” The location was chosen because of it being evidently the center of this type of business: a look at one of the online inventories of spiritual therapists that I used to contact my informants at the time listed two hundred and thirty-seven practitioners in the Tokyo area corresponding to approximately one-fifth of the total of listed salons (GAITANIDIS 2011, 204, footnote 5). Interviews lasted for two to three hours and were semi-structured around three basic questions: “Who are these people?”; “What are they doing?”; and “To whom are

8. The occupation of systems engineer is similar to that of programmers, IT consultants, and IT project managers. The job is popular in Japan because, as two women holding this profession at two different companies have explained to me, Japanese systems engineers are not necessarily required to have an engineering degree or have technical knowledge. Their duties involve negotiating under strict rules and deadlines with both the client side and the programmers side, and finding solutions to problems that arise with the software and network systems that their company sells. The fact that both of these women had a background in foreign languages (one held a degree in Portuguese studies and the other a degree in English studies) supports their evaluation of their respective jobs.

9. For a detailed analysis of the beliefs around the coming of a New Age of consciousness (often referred to as “ascension”) and the significance of the year 2012, see GELFER 2011.

they doing it?” From there, depending on the willingness of the therapist to discuss these questions, my interviews covered several aspects of Japanese spiritual therapies: from information on the practitioner him/herself (life history, beliefs regarding alternative therapies), to the details of the business side of his/her activities (pricing, advertisements, and so on) and finally to opinions about the clients and the popularity of these practices in Japan.

Considering that the majority of my informants opened their salons at the beginning of the new millennium (with half of them having started business from 2005 onwards), my research confirmed the existence of a sudden interest, if not also popularity, of these spiritual therapies in contemporary Japan. To explain this phenomenon, I have in the past (GAITANIDIS 2010) chosen to build my argument on the changing socioeconomic conditions of Japan during the span of years that my informants reported to have been involved with such therapies. Hence, I distinguished three generations¹⁰ of therapists. The first generation was composed of those who, during the economic bubble of the late 1980s, spent their relatively easily-earned income on such “alternative” hobbies in order to escape a stable but alienating routine. The second group corresponded to those who, having suffered from the post-bubble economic crisis, saw in their hobbies an opportunity to earn an additional income. Finally, the third group of fans/practitioners, I suggested, grew up in a new organizational setting (what I called a “spiritual *ba*,” adapting Mary C. BRINTON’s term [2008]) in which entering the “spiritual business” seemed a legitimate option and led in some cases to a relatively good living.

In other words, I suggested that this spiritual business was becoming a “proper profession.” I have offered a detailed analysis elsewhere (GAITANIDIS 2011), drawing a general picture of the structure of and the costs involved in the stages that a therapist must go through to earn his/her income. In my conclusion, I borrowed well-known concepts from the discipline of religious studies in order to argue that the spiritual business in Japan can be considered—as the commercialization of the experience of therapy—as something sacred. I thus saw the spiritual business as an activity of receiving a this-worldly benefit comparable, for example, to the purchase of an *omamori* (protective talisman) that assures good health or good exam results. This argument hinted at the idea that spiritual therapies can be placed in the long legacy of healing rites that populate the Japanese religious landscape.

Considering the recent appearance of the aforementioned spiritual therapists and the lack of research on the subject, the objective of this article is to examine their practices and place them within the long history of faith-based healing rites in Japan. For this purpose, and considering the influence of Western

10. For what I mean by “generation” see GAITANIDIS 2010, 158, footnote 7.

esoteric ideas on the development of Japanese healing rites since the modern period, I will identify a common feature of modern and contemporary popularized forms of esotericism such as nineteenth-century spiritualism, the New Age Movement, and the recent “spiritual boom” in Japan. This common feature is the cultural criticism that these forms express through localized discourse and practices. I will eventually demonstrate that spiritual therapies, while sharing many of the features characterizing healing techniques in modern and contemporary Japan, also express countercultural ideas using concepts and nuances that resonate with today’s Japanese society and which may explain why these spiritual therapies *seem* new.

The first section of this article explains the complex nuances of the term “spiritual” (*supirichuaru*, スピリチュアル), which has become a major buzz word in post-Aum Japan. I will argue that the word represents attempts to talk about what might previously have been discussed under the rubric of religion, but as “religion” became a problematic topic after the Aum Shinrikyō incident of March 1995, new terminologies were brought in to replace it. In other words, considered against the religious background of post-Aum Japan, *supirichuaru* expresses both “religiosity” and a “counter-religious” sentiment, its second meaning bearing more value among spiritual therapists. The second section of the article shows that spiritual therapies fit well with how New Religious Movements (from hereon NRMs) have developed in the twentieth century in terms of their countercultural characteristics, their healing practices, and in terms of the commercialization of those practices. My discussion could have stopped at this point, but I would have then ignored the voices of the spiritual therapists themselves. In the third section I show that, as hinted by Ms. Momoyama in the conversation above, spiritual therapists claim to be different and superior to other magico-religious practitioners and even to other people. I highlight their mixture of nationalistic nostalgia for a Japanese “innate” spirituality together with a naive longing for what they see as the advantages of American individualism. By placing these beliefs both within the counterculture discourse of occult practitioners and within similar ideas advanced by much earlier proponents of Japanese spiritualism, I explain that such claims do not ultimately set these practitioners apart from other faith-based healers. Finally, in the last section, I suggest that if spiritual therapies are different from other healing rites in Japan, it is in the way they have reduced self-cultivation to mean “getting in contact with the inner self,” without providing models or ethical directives other than “positive thinking.” This, I suggest, may account for the use of *nihonjinron* theories promoting the combination of a unique Japanese spirituality with the individualistic values of the West, in order to fill the symbolic vacuum that is characteristic of post-Aum Japan.

Spiritual Therapies in Contemporary Japan

It is now generally accepted among researchers of Japanese society and culture that the Aum attack on the Tokyo subway and the ensuing and indiscriminate media bashing of religious groups in Japan marked a turning point in contemporary Japanese history (BAFFELLI and READER 2012). Indeed, as Matsudo has argued, the Aum affair caused a great sociocultural shock by bringing to light several social issues, such as “incompetent police work, irresponsible media activity, a loss of credibility of religious scholars, dubious ethical training in the education system, [and] an increased level of violence under the influence of comics and video games” (MATSUDO 2001, 164). Yet recent research on the Japanese religious landscape shows that although the Japanese public has demonstrated an aversion towards the use of the term *shūkyō* (religion) since 1995 (SHIMAZONO 2004, 23), an interest in spiritualistic and occult phenomena did not fade away as one might have imagined.

For example, in a study of religion and television in Japan, Ishii Kenji concluded that in 1993 and 1994 television shows centered on *reinōsha* 靈能者 (“a person with spiritual abilities”) and other individuals claiming supernatural abilities had numbered twenty-seven and twenty-three respectively. Such shows continued to be broadcast until the official announcement that Aum’s leader, Asahara, was caught by the police, two months *after* the sarin gas attack perpetrated by the movement. Thereafter, these programs briefly disappeared from the small screen, only to reappear in the following year (ISHII 2008, 40–42). Slowly, famous fortune-tellers and spiritualists such as Gibo Aiko 宜保愛子 and Hosoki Kazuko 細木数子 reappeared on television and went on, as Benjamin Dorman has shown, to extract concepts such as “ancestor worship” from the religious vocabulary and present them as “a common sense that should be perfectly natural to Japanese people” (DORMAN 2007, 34; AMBROS 2010). It is in terms of this increased media coverage of the Japanese “nonreligious religiosity” (to borrow the words from Ama Toshimaro’s popular book) that the use of the word “spiritual” needs to be understood.

At the beginning of the new millennium, together with the aforementioned *terebi reinōsha*, another figure succeeded in reaching media stardom by appealing to the Japanese audience’s interest in “healing.” This was Ehara Hiroyuki 江原啓之, a licensed Shinto priest who in the late 1980s went to London to study at the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain. There he met one of the most famous British psychics of the past century, Doris Collins (1918–2003). Collins, Ehara claims, advised him as follows: “Like me in the UK, be the pioneer who will transmit the truth to the people of Japan” (EHARA 2003, 213). Back in Japan, in 1989 Ehara opened a “Research Center on Spiritualism,” where, as a *reinōsha*, he offered sessions to clients. From the early 1990s he started writing fortune-telling columns

in women's magazines (KOIKE 2007, 20–21). He then did some brief televised appearances in 2003, before “making a break” as a *supirichuaru kaunserā* (スピリチュアル・カウンセラー, spiritual counselor) in two television shows: “Letters from Heaven” (Tengoku kara no tegami, 天国からの手紙), broadcast intermittently on Fuji TV between 2004 and 2007, and “The Fountain of Aura” (Ōra no izumi, オーラの泉), broadcast weekly on Asahi TV between 2005 and 2009.

Ehara's charisma launched a “spiritual boom” (WATANABE et al. 2008), in which the “spiritual,” written in katakana and attached to words such as “education,” “food,” or even “sex,”¹¹ attempts to strip religious activity from its distrusted connection with membership to a religious organization (HORIE 2009). Summarizing Ehara's thought, Koike Yasushi writes that according to Ehara,

Humans die, but their soul is eternal; we are all protected by a guardian spirit and are meant to learn the spiritual principles that will allow us to reach the state of gods. Religions are no more than human-made cover-ups.

(KOIKE 2007, 22)

Ehara expresses a cosmology familiar to the literature of the New Age Movement and its affiliated trends such as the Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) social movement (GOLDNER 2004, 11). In an introductory volume to the New Age Movement, Sarah Pike notes that New Agers “believe that salvation comes through the discovery and cultivation of a divine inner self with the help of techniques that can be learned from books and workshops as well as spiritual teachers” (PIKE 2004, 23). Such techniques and the spiritual therapies, including Ehara's spiritual counseling, can be also thought of as “mind and body medicine.” This is a category of CAM described on the website of the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) in the United States, as practices that “focus on the interactions among the brain, mind, body, and behavior, with the intent to use the mind to affect physical functioning and promote health.”¹²

Despite the arbitrariness of NCCAM's categorization (which groups under its fourth type of “other CAM practices” more techniques than in the first three types), and the debate over such an ill-defined phenomenon as the New Age Movement, Japanese spiritual therapists discussed in this article are, on a technical level, no different from those one can most easily meet in mind-body-spirit festivals held regularly in Western countries,¹³ and they certainly express opinions typical of New Age circles.

11. One has to just flip through the pages of “Trinity,” the most popular magazine in this genre, to observe this phenomenon; see <http://www.el-aura.com/subscription/> (accessed 22 July 2012).

12. See <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/whaticam/#types> (accessed 22 July 2012).

13. See the website of Pathways Network for a regularly updated calendar of such events in the United Kingdom. <http://www.pathwaysnetwork.co.uk/exhibitions.htm> (accessed 2 March 2012).

In more general terms, however, what seems to have happened is that Ehara, by criticizing “religion” for having become an empty shell and arguing that individual spiritual experiences are the only “real thing,” has managed to link the post-Aum Japanese uneasiness towards “religion” to the most fundamental characteristic of occult thought: cultural criticism. And it is in this general conceptualization that I place my understanding of the New Age and the spiritual therapy phenomenon in Japan.

The New Age Movement in the West and the spiritual boom in Japan are polemically constructed vernacular expressions that borrow popularly invented terms available at the time to identify ever-present beliefs that are critical of established sociocultural norms. Such beliefs are usually the subject of controversies that have populated the printed media since the early nineteenth century. In a recent extensive and in-depth overview of the treatment of Western Esoteric traditions in academia, Wouter J. HANEGRAAFF (2012, 373–74) argues that the boundaries of the domain of “esoteric spiritualities” are vaguely defined and hard to pin down historically because they, in a sense, only become visible when they are attacked by the two pillars of modern culture: doctrinal faith and rational knowledge.

I understand “spiritual therapies” in their “alternative” character of attempting to find a third way to therapy—countering “religion” and “science” taken individually—but based on an ideal combination of both these elements. For the Japanese public living in the post-Aum era, *supirichuaru* therefore may be another word for “religiosity” (as Horie has argued). In spiritual therapy circles, moreover, *supirichuaru* is significant for its countercultural use, namely its role in criticizing organized religious traditions, all of which came to be seen through the prism of Aum Shinrikyō after the latter’s sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway.

Continuity Between Japanese NRMs and Spiritual Therapies

Despite their claims to the contrary, contemporary Japanese spiritual therapists share many characteristics with Japanese NRMs. This section looks into existing research for elements that demonstrate the continuity between NRMs and the *supirichuaru* in at least three interconnected aspects: counterculturalism, healing rites, and commercialization.

COUNTERCULTURALISM IN NRMS

Since their first appearance in the early- to mid-nineteenth century, Japanese NRMs have been characterized by their dependence on the leadership of charismatic founders “whose authority emerges from their ability to attract followers through spiritual healing, revelation of new teachings, and serving as intermediaries between the lay membership and spiritual realms” (READER 2005, 88).

Hence, what was particularly new about the NRMS was the rather modern development in which lay individuals found themselves publicly bestowed with the “healing powers” that had until then officially been the monopoly of the “professionals” of established religious traditions. Janine Sawada describes this change as follows:

In the late Edo period, people played an increasingly active role in creating and controlling their own religious lives.... The gradual spread of ways of thinking that emphasized the moral autonomy of the individual and the value of communalism, whether mediated by Confucian-inspired educators, rural nativists, or divinely inspired leaders of new religions... marked a rising discomfort with clerical and scholastic restrictions on religious knowledge... ordinary family life and work were often depicted in popular discourse of the time as the ideal context for personal and social improvement. (SAWADA 2004, 7)

Sawada argues, however, that these changes did not immediately translate into an “ant clerical spirit” but at first led to a reinterpretation by the clerical and lay sectors of their mutual relation (SAWADA 2004, 7). Yet, as Japanese politicians and intellectuals sought to “modernize” Japan by, for example, adopting western notions and practices of “religion” and “scientific medicine,” NRMS came to be slowly labeled as groups of charlatans promoting superstitious beliefs. Levi McLaughlin in fact argues that a “distinct pattern of repeated scapegoating of new religions punctuates the history of modern and contemporary Japan, and a cycle of lashing-out against emergent religious groups has shaped the contours of prevailing distinctions maintained between ‘traditional’ and ‘new’ religions” (MCLAUGHLIN 2012, 55).

This scapegoating intensified in the twentieth century with the famous suppression of Oomoto in the Taishō period and the cases of two NRMS, Jiu and Tenshō Kōtai Jingū Kyō, in the immediate postwar years. Benjamin Dorman notes that

As psychology from the early Taishō period was developing as a method for treating all kinds of disorders, attacking groups that promoted healing practices and espoused personal and societal change through spiritual means was one way to justify their claims. On the other hand, groups such as the New Buddhists and other sectarian organizations were also keen to distinguish and define new religions as antisocial in order to strengthen their own social standing.

(DORMAN 2012, 64)

Dorman further argues that in the postwar period “prewar critics that raised concerns of superstitions and irrational thought were reformulated to fit in with the new era of democracy” (DORMAN 2012, 119). Jiu was, for example, psychologically diagnosed as “a socio-pathological phenomenon centered on a person presumed to have certain pathological tendencies” (Akimoto Haruo [1947], quoted in DORMAN 2012, 147) and Tenshō Kōtai Jingū Kyō’s critics argued that

the group targeted “followers who were not able to discern ‘true’ religions from ‘false’ ones” (DORMAN 2012, 175).

Mirroring the theory described in the previous section, the counterculturalism of new religions in Japan was largely brought to the surface in response to the mostly media-driven attacks from the modern institutions of “traditional” religion and rational science. This does not mean that the “alternative” character of these groups was/is not real. Looking at the ideas that both NRMS and spiritual therapists promote in terms of healing, as discussed in the following section, we could hardly label these phenomena as mainstream. But it is important to understand that their counterculturalism is constructed and defined against what is perceived and believed to be “traditional” or “mainstream” ways of life and beliefs. Again, as Hanegraaff argues in the case of Western esotericism,

Whereas anti-apologetic polemicists and their kindred spirits tend to suspect the existence of a subversive pagan agenda, and try to expose it by bringing its basic “doctrines” to light, esoteric spiritualities are mostly creatures of compromise: their enemies try to sharply exclude them as “Other,” but their representatives or sympathizers usually try to remain included.

(HANEGRAAFF 2012, 373)

Of course not all groups are “creatures of compromise,” and Aum was one of these organizations. Although, as McLaughlin argues, the Aum affair may have “introduced nothing entirely new to discourses on ‘new religions’ in Japan” (McLAUGHLIN 2012, 71), for many people, and particularly for the spiritual therapists and their regular clients, the event contributed to the mainstreaming of new religions. In other words, as a form of “organized religion,” NRMS consist—for spiritual therapists—of just another example of what is bad about religion and, in contrast, what is good about the *supirichuaru*.

Consider, for example, two of the theories that the three therapists participating in the debate in Enoshima seemed to espouse. One theory is that of Eric Pearl, the inventor of the previously-mentioned “reconnection,” who claims that “there’s no such thing as evil. There are no entities whose purpose for existence is to hang around and play havoc with your life” (PEARL 2001, 132). And he adds:

We no longer need to throw salt to the four corners, smudge with sage, or call in entities for protection.... We need not use our conscious minds in an attempt to determine what is “wrong” with a person so that we know how to “treat” them. We may now allow ourselves to simply *be* [italics in the original]—be with the person and understand that the uncertainty will be taken care of.

(PEARL 2001, 116)

Both religion and science, interpreted here by Eric Pearl as “superstition” and “thinking with our conscious mind” respectively, are thus rejected in the

classic cultural criticism trend of occult thought. Although different in practice, theta healing, the other spiritual therapy that was mentioned in my meeting at Enoshima and which has been very popular in recent years in Japan, expresses the same concerns. Its inventor, Vianna Stibal (a former naturopath, massage therapist, and intuitive reader) claims, according to her website, to have healed herself from a cancer that both conventional and alternative medicines (notice here the criticism of “fellow” practitioners) had failed to subdue.

Such arguments place Japanese spiritual therapists in an interesting position. While they can be said to be contributing to the scapegoating of NRMS through their critique of organized religion, they have inherited the NRMS’ countercultural elements in terms of healing methods and criticism of mainstream society. Such a paradoxical position underlies, as I argue below, the lack of “effects” in the practice of spiritual therapy.

THE LEGACY OF HEALING RITES IN JAPANESE NRMS

The continuity with Japanese NRMS does not stop at the countercultural level. The appeal of spiritual therapies itself is undoubtedly due to their strong similarities with the healing practices popularized by NRMS during the last century. According to Helen Hardacre, these modern healing rites share elements from the Japanese shamanistic tradition (HARDACRE 1996, 206). The variants of a key shamanistic rite called *yorigitō* has formed the basis of many modern healing rituals, and its original form was described in Carmen Blacker’s seminal account of Japanese shamanistic folklore as follows:

In the rituals known as *yorigitō* the task of making contact with the world of spirits is accomplished by the combined efforts of the *miko* and the ascetic. The *miko* no longer by her dancing and music summons the spiritual beings to approach and take possession of her. She is now a mere passive vessel through whom the spirit speaks. The active task of invoking the spirit, interrogating it, and finally sending it back to its own world is now accomplished by the ascetic. (BLACKER 1999, 252)

The Japanese NRM that eventually developed the most influential modern form of *yorigitō* is surely Oomoto (founded in 1892) with its technique of *chinkon kishin*. STAEMMLER (2002, 30) calls *chinkon kishin* a “mediated spirit possession” and explains that the ritual consists of one person who induces spirit possession in another, then conducts a dialogue with the spirit before sending it back to “the other world.” The legacy of the earlier shamanistic ritual is obvious here and the link to earlier forms of healing is identified as one of the reasons why, according to Nancy K. STALKER (2008, 77–78), *chinkon kishin* became the engine of success of Oomoto’s growth in the first decades of the twentieth century. Besides the astute use of the mass media to popularize this practice, Stalker considers as the

second factor behind the popularity of Oomoto's version of the old *yorigitō*, "the public's passionate interest in spiritualism." This argument is particularly relevant for tracing the origins of the recent Japanese fad with spiritual therapies.

As Stalker describes, modern spiritualism (namely, the belief in and practice of communication with spirits) had appeared in 1848 in the United States and, by the 1860s, had become a fixture of the American and European popular cultural landscapes. It inspired novels,¹⁴ gave rise to both secularist and religious organizations (the most famous is probably The Theosophical Society), and reached the Eastern colonies, where it blended with local practices to produce "combinatory new religions with strong spiritualist tenets" (STALKER 2008, 78–79). Oomoto can be seen as one of these movements, and by adopting the theosophical ideology described below, the cofounder Deguchi Onisaburō expressed "the need for the verification of his teachings through 'progressive' Occidental knowledge" (GEBHARDT 2004, 393), much in the same way that contemporary spiritual therapists do today.

Nicholas GOODRICK-CLARKE (2008, 211, 226) argues that Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's Theosophy,¹⁵ by adapting contemporary scientific ideas of evolution, restored dignity and purpose to humankind's earthly life within a cosmic context—one in which consciousness worked as a force of spiritual evolution through countless worlds and eras. Theosophy, indeed, went further than the simplicity of spiritualism's suggestion that there is life after death, and that we could experience this through various types of séances. Blavatsky popularized ideas of reincarnation and karma, Secret Masters and Tibet, and built a coherent doctrine blending Buddhist and Hindu concepts, which to the ears of Onisaburō probably sounded at the same time familiar and new in the way they were being used.

Chinkon (the purification of one's spirit) and *kishin* (the possession by a spirit) were originally two central pillars of Ancient Shinto (Koshintō), a nineteenth-century school of thought inspired by Hirata Atsutane's school of Nativism and Restoration Shinto (STALKER 2008, 90). Onisaburō, however, reinterpreted these practices into a combination of spiritualist beliefs with theosophical ideologies about spiritual evolution, leading to the two basic elements of the NRMS' healing rites: magic and self-cultivation (BRODER 2008, 340 and 346). As noted earlier, a practical interpretation of Neo-Confucian self-cultivation (SAWADA 2004, 80) was emphasized among the first wave of Japanese NRMS. This came to be seen, after the advent of spiritualism, as inseparable from the magical element expressed in the

14. For a fascinating study of the influence of occult thought and spiritualism on the Western literary world, see LACHMAN 2005.

15. The Theosophical Society was founded in New York, in 1875, by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott. As an association of like-minded individuals, inspired by the nineteenth century's popularization of Spiritualism, the Theosophical Society became the most influential player of the modern occult revival in the West. For its influence in Japan, see KASAI (2012).

following waves of NRMS who placed importance on the spirit world's ability to impact on individual health and cause personal misfortune.¹⁶ Nagai Mikiko's analysis of Shinnyo-en's *sesshin* clearly shows the significance of that combination and also the emphasis on the magical element that is often applied by NRMS in Japan.

In *sesshin* the self-disciplinary actions of reflection and reform are supported by the magical activity of accepting guidance from the spiritual world through the intermediary of a spiritual medium. The teachings emphasize self-cultivation, but the authority of the teachings is based on an acceptance of the magical function of the founders' family. (NAGAI 1995, 316)

Here it would not be an exaggeration to argue that the influence of Western spiritualism and the visits to Japan of influential personalities such as the co-founder of the Theosophical Society, Colonel Henry S. Olcott,¹⁷ have inspired the continuing changes undergone by religious healing rites to this day. Indeed, the last wave of new religions demonstrated renewed interest in spiritualistic and occult phenomena to such an extent that this characteristic is considered as defining for the NRMS that appeared in the late 1970s/beginning of the 1980s in Japan.

In this respect, Helen Hardacre has made the following observations about the fourth wave of Japanese NRMS:

Besides techniques such as divination and geomancy, both founders and congregants emphasize the development of spiritual faculties [*reikan* 靈感, *reinō* 靈能, and other terms]. Techniques for identifying and communicating with individual "protective spirits" [守護神 and other terms] provide a central focus for group activity and individual devotion. Believers apparently hope that direct insight into the spirit world, sometimes aided by helping spirits, can, like astrology and so on, provide a hedge against uncertainty.

(HARDACRE 1996, 204)

Sources for such ideologies often come from translations of foreign books written by representatives of Western occultism. "Book after book by Edgar Cayce, Rudolf Steiner, Krishnamurti, Gurdjieff, and various Western gurus line the shelves in Japanese translation," noted MULLINS (1992, 239). And FUJITA's (1992) photo book includes, among reports on NRMS such as Aum Shinrikyō, testimonies from a Japanese housewife who could channel Bashar,¹⁸ and from a man who was believed

16. The emergence of the magical element has been described as a shift of emphasis from *kokoro* to *rei* (TANABE et al. 1999, 201; STALKER 2008, 85).

17. Olcott is said to have visited Japan twice, in 1889 and in 1891, and to have met the prime minister (WASHINGTON 1995, 106–7).

18. Bashar is a "multi-dimensional entity" popularized by self-proclaimed American channeler Daryl Anka. See www.bashar.org (accessed 22 July 2012). Daryl Anka is said to have arrived in Japan for the first time in May 1987 when he spoke in front of a thousand fans.

to be using hand-healing powers given to him by extraterrestrial beings that he had met on a UFO (FUJITA 1992, 71–82 and 91–102). More recently Ugo Dessi drew attention to the nativistic interpretations of Rosicrucian and Theosophist theories of lost continents and Great Masters in *Kōfuku no Kagaku*'s doctrines (DESSI 2012).

These observations indicate that occultural globalization among spiritual therapists is far from being a new phenomenon. These practitioners, indeed, can be said to correspond to the latest variations of healers who share commonalities across Japanese NRMS and across time since the beginning of the twentieth century and the rise of Japanese spiritualism. For example, theta healing could very well be seen as a genre of *chinkon kishin* and “reconnection” as a type of *tekazashi* (手かざし, “laying on of hands” or “raising the hand”) practiced by members of a NRM belonging to the Oomoto lineage, Mahikari (DAVIS 1980; BRODER 2008).

The link between the New Age Movement and the spiritual boom can be observed in the katakana term *supirichuariti* (スピリチュアリティ, spirituality) that came to define a field of studies related to the “spiritual boom” in Japan, and was first introduced and used through the Japanese translations of works belonging to the Human Potential Movement and its psychological theoretical wing of “Transpersonal Psychology” (HORIE 2003, 15–17). Abraham Maslow, who is said to have coined the term “human potential,” or Ken Wilber (who has since dissociated himself from the discipline), had been proponents since the 1960s of ideas that became central pillars of the New Age Movement. They essentially suggested the existence of a therapeutic value in the experience of transcendental (“transpersonal”) realms through altered states of consciousness (HANEGRAAFF 1998, 50). Such renewed emphasis on personal experience contributed significantly to the continuous importance of self-cultivation in Japanese spiritual therapies, and also perhaps to its changing meaning, as I discuss later in this article.

THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF HEALING IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

In recent times, the explicitly market-based format of spiritual therapies has attracted much attention and criticism (SAKURAI 2009). Yet this feature is also not new among these practices, but has rather become more prominent. In urban centers the shamanistic tradition has clearly broken out of “the old structures of sectarian ordination or ascetic validation and taking a more ‘entrepreneurial’ approach, often identifying a target ‘market’ narrowly and then ‘marketing’ the religious services most directly relevant to the social and economic circumstances of that market” (HARDACRE 1996, 207). In this respect, too, spiritual therapies can be thought of as just one aspect of the yet more intense entrepreneurial development resulting from the urbanization of healing rites observed by Hardacre.

In a previous article (GAITANIDIS 2011) I showed that processes of professionalization and standardization are central to the practice of spiritual therapy.



FIGURE 1. Divination booths in a shopping center (photo taken by the author).







<p> オーラリーディング <第1チャクラ～第7チャクラまでリーディング+過去世></p> <p style="text-align: right;">¥10,000-/60分 ¥15,000-/90分</p>
<p> ヒプノセラピー <遊行催眠(インナーチャイルド・前世療法など)></p> <p style="text-align: right;">¥15,000-/90分 ¥20,000-/120分 ※90分・120分どちらもオーラリーディング付</p>
<p> レイキ <宇宙エネルギーを使ったハンドヒーリング></p> <p> レイキヒーリング ¥6,000-/45分</p> <p> アチューンメント(第1、第2&第3、第4の各シンボル伝授 レクチャー付)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ・1stディグリー(レイキヒーリング付) ¥40,000-/約4時間 ・2ndディグリー(オーラリーディング付) ¥30,000-/約3時間 ・3rdディグリー(オーラリーディング付) ¥30,000-/約3時間 ・再受講(アチューンメント&カウンセリング) 各¥10,000-/各1時間
<p> マクロビオティック カウンセリング <伝統食事療法による体質改善の指導></p> <p style="text-align: right;">¥10,000-/2時間 ※レクチャー付</p>

FIGURE 2. Menu of a spiritual salon taken from an informant's website: http://www.soultree-sn.com/01/06_pricelist.html (accessed 3 October 2012).

The diplomas offered by schools such as the Rocky Mountain Mystery School or Theta Healing Japan have become a must-have for a practitioner who wishes to open a credible and competitive business. This matter was clearly stated by the two students of Theta Healing at Enoshima. They had both been thinking of turning their interest in spiritual therapies into a full-time job but they needed credentials to practice. According to Theta Healing Japan's official webpage there are currently five hundred and seventy-five officially recognized theta healers around the country.¹⁹

Such professionalization and commercialization does not however consist of a characteristic unique to the spiritual therapies. Despite the statements of spiritual therapists expressing a general dismissal of fortune-tellers as simple statisticians, for several decades divination in Japan has been a very profitable business. The first department store²⁰ specializing in all types of fortune-telling services opened its doors in 1982 (SHŪKYŌ SHAKAIGAKU NO KAI 1999, 191) and since then divination booths can be found almost everywhere in Japan's big cities.

Consider the photo of a divination booth in a shopping mall in Shibuya (FIGURE 1). The names of sessions and prices are fixed and extra costs due to overtime or special requests are clearly indicated. Similar observations have been made by Laura Miller in her recent study of tarot in Japan:

Divination booths... are found in shopping malls in major urban centers. Most of the booths are operated by corporations who employ a stable of divination experts who rotate between them on different days of the week. Clients consult schedules to determine what day and time they can visit a selected site for a preferred divination service.... Each booth seats one to three diviners, and there is a standardized price structure based on time; this practice has helped expand their business because it alleviates customer anxiety about being overcharged or cheated. (MILLER 2011, 80)

And a recent article in the *The Japan Times* reported that “Zappalas Inc., which operates Japan's largest network of fortune-telling websites and mobile content, said membership on its fortune-telling sites has been steadily increasing over the years, reaching 1.47 million as of January,” with the mobile fortune-telling market having increased from ¥10.3 billion in 2004 to ¥18.2 billion in 2007 (MARTIN 2009). A look at the internet pages advertising the services of spiritual therapists reveals no difference with fortune-telling price lists (FIGURE 2).

Aside from the higher prices (compared to fortune-telling sessions), many therapists have managed to standardize their practices to a level at which they

19. See http://thetajapan.com/new/home/thetajapan_inst_list?r=#kana1 (accessed 22 July 2012). The total number increased from two hundred and fifty in July 2011 to five hundred and seventy-five as of 3 October 2012.

20. See <http://www.jemkiss.com> (accessed 22 July 2012).

can compete with other professionals who specialize in solving “problems of the heart” (*kokoro no mondai*). And as MILLER (2011, 80) observes, the clients of divination booths may approach the activity as a type of light entertainment or as a serious attempt to seek advice—a behavior that also applies to spiritual therapies—because individuals who regularly seek these specialists of the heart seldom make a difference (other than the cost) between the type of practitioner they seek advice from. Nearly every one of the therapists interviewed reported that their most regular clients tend to use all types of spiritual businesses without discrimination.

Despite spiritual therapies fitting perfectly, cosmologically, and practically within the development of faith-based healing techniques found in the Japanese NRMS and in the growing entrepreneurial endeavors that have characterized such practices in recent decades, Japanese spiritual therapists insist that they are different from the rest of the magico-religious practitioners. This is in fact a universally-observed phenomenon, best summarized by cultural psychiatrist Laurence J. Kirmayer as follows:

When healing practices are divorced from the local communities or cultural systems in which they developed, the communal methods of regulating the authority and practice of the healer are replaced by the dynamics of the marketplace or by struggles for power among professional guilds.

(KIRMAYER 2004, 45)

In the next section I look closer into the discourse of the difference and superiority of spiritual therapists stemming from this increased entrepreneurship of their practices.

The Spiritual Therapists' Discourse of Superiority

The competitiveness in the spiritual market as described above is bound to lead to discourse “showing” the spiritual therapists’ exalted position within an imagined scale of magico-religious practitioners, and within a hierarchy of human beings who are often categorized according to their ethnicity. Below, I provide representative testimonials from my interviews with spiritual therapists in which this “spirit of competition,” produced by the commodification and commercialization of these practices, is amply expressed and finds itself combined with the previously-mentioned feature of cultural criticism.

For example, Ms. Chikamatsu and Ms. Momoyama believe that traditional magico-religious practitioners such as the blind mediums known as *itako* (イタコ; they have become famous through their presence at the summer festival in Mt. Osore [FACKLER 2009]), occupy a lower level on the hierarchy and use the two “simple” techniques of exorcism and communication with the spirits of the dead. The sisters placed Ehara Hiroyuki, the famous “spiritual counselor,” at the middle level. According to the sisters, he demonstrated a spiritual awakening on the indi-

vidual level that allowed him to see people's auras, in addition to practicing traditional shamanistic techniques. Finally, having awakened to a "spiritual world" (*supirichuaru sekai* スピリチュアル世界), the two sisters argued that they had joined the top of the hierarchy of spiritual therapists who were gifted with a completely different vision of the cosmos and were in possession of the power to heal.

Ms. Fujimura, another of my informants, provided a similar image of this hierarchy, this time placing Ehara at the top of a smaller scale encompassing all *reinōsha*. This scale ranged from the regular folk, who are unable to see or hear the dead, to the shamanistic practitioners who can communicate with the spirits, and then to Ehara Hiroyuki, who as a spiritual counselor is able to guide his clients using the same spiritual powers. Ms. Fujimura claimed that she was a "spiritual teacher," someone who acts above the level of the *reinōsha*, and who, like the sisters previously mentioned, has gained full knowledge of the workings of the universe and of the methods to fix every one of her clients' issues. It became clear from these accounts that the term *reinōsha* not only refers to the popular category of old (*itako*) and new (spiritual counselor) versions of practitioners who specialize in some type of communication with the dead, but also that it has become obsolete, a remnant of the past, and such practitioners are now seen as having had limited awareness and thus limited powers. The criticism of *reinōsha* did not end with an evaluation of their alleged abilities—it also included strictures upon the way *reinōsha* conduct their sessions.

Ms. Sakura, for example, claimed in an interview that she was descended from a family of *reinōsha*, but only decided to follow her ancestors' path after realizing that the profession does not have to be about scaring people by telling them that misfortune will befall them if they do not listen to what the spirits of the dead or gods have to say. In these criticisms, the example of Hosoki Kazuko—infamous for her harsh comments to celebrity guests on her television show—was often brought up as a bad example and to be contrasted to Ehara Hiroyuki's more "gentle" approach to therapy. Ehara himself has undoubtedly fueled such comparisons by widening the gap between himself and his predecessors, whom he accuses of seeking materialistic wealth by scaring their clients with religious doctrines and making them dependent on their sessions by only providing temporary solutions (EHARA 2003, 225–28).

The spiritual therapists also had something to say about fortune-tellers: because they rely on a series of often numerical constants, fortune-tellers—from hand-readers to *feng shui* masters—were classified by spiritual therapists in the category of "regular" human beings, and referred to as practitioners of statistical studies (*tōkei gaku* 統計学). For Ms. Suzuki, for example, the fortune-tellers' ability merely consists of helping people to feel part of a group that is believed to share the same set of life patterns. And feeling the need to be part of a group was seen as negative, a "defect" of contemporary Japanese culture. Indeed, as the

following testimonies show, a lack of self-confidence, a lack of communication with family and relatives, repetition of the same mistakes and, above all, a self-imposed repression were often linked to being Japanese.

The spiritual advisor Mr. Suzuki, for example, summarized this reasoning during our second encounter as follows: “Everyone wants to have an average life (*heikinteki na jinsei*) according to Japanese standards. You know how many women come complaining that they are not married and saying ‘I’m already 30! (*mō 30 da shi!*)?’” An aura therapist, Ms. Fukuda, expressed similar ideas: “Japanese do not show their true self; they repress it, repress it until it becomes unbearable (*nihonjin wa hontō no jibun o dasanaide, osaete, osaete, tsuraku natte kita* [sic] *made*).” The sisters Ms. Chikamatsu and Ms. Momoyama also repeated the same idea by characterizing Japan as a nation of *gaman* (endurance). “It (life) was not meant to be like that! (*sonna hazu ja nakatta!*)” are the words metaphysiotherapist Ms. Kimura often hears from her “typically Japanese” clients.

The existence of this self-criticism, which identifies nationality as the cause of distress for the majority of clients, is undoubtedly a result of the strong influx of Western (mainly American) ideas originating from the translations of New Age books and talks by foreign “spiritual teachers,” as noted above. And, as for fiction and nonfiction literature in general, “Japan has been a country of excessive importation, not excessive exportation” (TATSUMI 2000, 229). Indeed, it is mainly foreign authors who are read and remembered—such as WILLIAMSON (1992); MACLAINE (1983); REDFIELD (1996); WALSCH (1997); WEISS (1988)—by the spiritual therapists, and even though Ehara Hiroyuki’s publications are extremely popular, they are never valued as highly as the spiritualist theories of the West. In fact, Ehara himself reinforces this Western superiority by saying that his “spiritualism” is based on the code of the Spiritualist Association of Great Britain which he had to “make simpler if he wanted Japanese people to understand it” (EHARA 2007a, 11).

Many of the spiritual therapists I interviewed embodied this criticism of their lifestyles. Most claim to maintain a strong relationship with their Western tutors through a continuous involvement in the events organized by their “spiritual academies.” The two aspiring theta healers in Enoshima were planning to continue their course in the United States after completing what the Japanese branch had to offer. Others rushed to demonstrate their “nonconformity to Japanese values” by talking about their own decisions to seek their “spiritual freedom.” For example, after contact with spiritual therapies, Ms. Kayama divorced; Ms. Hirayama left her parents’ home and her job as a civil servant; Ms. Mitani left her job and spends six months a year on the small island of Miyako, 2,500 km away from her husband (who lives in Sapporo); Mr. Takahashi left his job and has never gone back to see his parents.

Some spiritual therapists, like Ms. Saeda, however, seemed to simultaneously notice what they considered to be the detrimental effects of such a blind focus on the individual self.

Foreign teachers say “remove your ego,” “concentrate on the heart, not the head,” but Japanese should do exactly the opposite. They need to think about themselves, and they need also to stop respecting those teachers without questioning them. The problem with the Japanese is their extreme dependence which pushes them to do exactly what they are told to do in the spiritualist books and seminars.

In these cases, Japanese people and spiritual therapists were seen as special because they were Japanese. Ms. Ueda claimed that “Japan is a fundamentally spiritual culture because the essence of the Shinto religion is a blend of polytheism and animism.” The same type of argument can be also found in the writings of popular authors. Ehara Hiroyuki argues that Japan is a country that ranks high on a spiritual level because the belief in an “invisible world” is part of the Japanese national character (*kokuminsei* 国民性). Ehara continues by saying that the Japanese people used to value the power of nature and the supernatural, but that the consumerism introduced in the postwar period made them reject their roots (EHARA 2007b, 160–1). Kondō Kazuo, one of the most prolific translators of English spiritualist and New Age books,²¹ places the particularity of the Japanese people in their physiology and especially their brain, which, he argues, does not distinguish between reason and natural instincts, as does the Western brain (KONDŌ 2006, 81).

Unsurprisingly, such connections made between the superiority of Japanese spiritual therapists and the Japanese “race” are not uncommon among Japanese spiritualists. Ancient Shinto, to which I traced the origin of *chinkon kishin* earlier in this article, professed many theories about the uniqueness, homogeneity, and superiority of the Japanese.²² Some of these claims are that the Japanese gods created the entire human race, that the geography of Japan and the nomenclature of its regions mirror the map of the world, and that a “decoding” of the *Kojiki* will reveal the secrets of humanity (TOYOSHIMA 1994, 141–68). Such theories were eventually inserted into the nationalistic and imperialistic ideology of warring Japan, before joining the *nihonjinron* literature popularized in the postwar period.²³ *Nihonjinron* writings “share a singular objective: to demonstrate

21. Kondō has translated at least fifty publications, including the twelve volumes of the texts that were dictated to Maurice Barbanell, famous spiritualist and founding editor of the weekly British newspaper *Psychic News*, by his Indian spirit guide, the three-thousand-year-old Silver Birch.

22. Michael COMO notes that *chinkon* (spirit-quieting) rites, which most probably were imported from the Korean peninsula, were already serving in the seventh century “both to guarantee the political authority of rulers and to pacify the spirits of the numerous submitting lineages” (2009, 171). By the early Heian period, such rites came to be understood as a reenactment of the Heavenly Grotto myth (COMO 2009, 60), one of the most famous mythological accounts placed at the origin of the Japanese nation and identity.

23. TSUKADA Hotaka (2012) has demonstrated that similar nationalistic statements also contributed to the rise of neo-new religions (the last wave of new religions) in Japan in the 1980s.

unique qualities of Japanese culture, Japanese society, and the Japanese people” (BEFU 2001, 4). The author argues that the postwar appeal of such theories “has moved in to occupy the identity space vacated by tainted symbols of dubious credibility” (BEFU 2001, 100), by which he refers to the controversy-struck symbols of the emperor, the national flag, and Yasukuni shrine. As Ian Reader has noted in a review of Befu’s work, in addition to the fact that other countries face the same problem of contested symbols, in Japan, “even if *nihonjinron* fills a symbolic vacuum, it does so with a mode of discourse that is itself innately unsettling and symbolic of unease and contention” (READER 2003, 110).

Unease and contention have been on the rise since the mid-1990s, and the same is mentioned by Reader, noting that Befu had ignored the impact of the Great Hanshin Earthquake and of the Aum affair on today’s Japanese society. Looking at the *nihonjinron*-type reactions praising, for example, the “groupism” of the Japanese people who survived the earthquake that hit Kobe in January 1995 (MCCAFFERTY 2002) or the post-March 1995 media criticism of the “alienated” Japanese youth who joined Aum Shinrikyō, we find that the seemingly paradoxical discourse of the Japanese spiritual therapists—holding both positive and negative views about their fellow citizens—is neither new to explanatory models used in healing practices nor unique to this specific community. It is not even paradoxical, considering that Japanese are seen as superior and unique, only *in the past*, before the modernization of the country (see Ehara’s comments on page 373 of this article).

Furthermore, nationalistic ideologies are not characteristic of Japanese spiritual therapists alone. In addition to being a fundamental feature of New Age practices in South Korea (see WOO 2008), these ideologies also seem to occupy the minds of the foreign “spiritual teachers” who work in Japan. Lack of hard data prevents me from making too general a statement, but it is worth mentioning that Ms. Smith, channeler and resident of Japan since the mid-1980s, noted that despite the hundreds of Japanese students she had trained, no Japanese will ever be able to reach the level of American channelers, even the *yuta* (shamanistic practitioners in Okinawa) whose ability she had allegedly once sought to test.

In summary, the individuals who compose my sample have so far been considered kinds of Japanese magico-religious practitioners who offer mostly Western-imported therapies that seem to have been consumed on the same grounds as other types of faith-based activities. The highly commercialized aspect of this profession is worthy of note for the competitiveness that it engenders (with the ensuing discourse on hierarchy among magico-religious practitioners), but ultimately the situation does not differ from what has been happening in other sectors of the Japanese economy, where the objective is to provide a combination of entertainment and temporary feelings of hope and relief. Yet spiritual therapists, expressing their countercultural ideals, still claim to be not only better

than all other types of traditional practitioners such as the *reinōsha*, fortune-tellers, and so on, but also better at knowing what is best for the Japanese people, who are either criticized for *being* Japanese or blamed for having forgotten their true Japaneseness. Again, such cultural criticism, although typical of occult thought and practices, is neither new in the history of magico-religious practitioners in Japan, nor novel in its appeal to the symbolic vacuum which seems to ail post-Aum Japan. In fact, I finish my discussion on spiritual therapies in Japan by arguing that the simplification by spiritual therapists of the self-cultivation factor, which has been so important in both countercultural arguments and faith-based healing in Japan, exacerbates this symbolic vacuum by providing no other ideal model than the self.

Changing Concepts of Self-Cultivation in Spiritual Therapies

TANABE et al (1999, 275) consider self-cultivation to have formed the ideological basis of all “alternative” healing movements that arose in modern Japan. Before the Meiji period, self-cultivation constituted an essential element of Neo-Confucianism, a school of thought that has significantly influenced Japanese culture and society since its proliferation in the discourse of the Tokugawa period’s military government, which was concerned “with the achievement and maintenance of a stable and harmonious society” (NOSCO 1997, 7). Mary Evelyn Tucker has shown how major thinkers of that period such as Yamazaki Ansai and Kaibara Ekken managed to reach a syncretism between Confucianism and Shinto and Buddhist ideas through the use of the dialectic of cosmology and cultivation: self-cultivation was a means to harmonize the self with the changes of the universe (TUCKER 1998, 15–17). Eventually this syncretism led to the transformation of early ascetic, *miko*, and divination magical rites into acts of self-cultivation (HARDACRE 1994, 158; HAYASHI 1994) and ultimately inspired the nineteenth century’s new social movements, some of which came to be known as new religions (SAWADA 2004).

What about self-cultivation in spiritual therapies? Some studies have argued that Ehara’s spiritual counseling borrows elements from psychotherapy. As Koike explains, the format of Ehara’s most popular show, “The Fountain of Aura,” always followed the same pattern: the celebrity guest’s life-course is interpreted by Ehara using three techniques. Reading the color of the aura²⁴ of the guest to find out about their personality (a red aura, for example, means a stressful yet passionate person), “seeing” the guest’s past life to explain their current life (skillful singers, for example, tend to have been musicians in their previous existences), and finally listening to or seeing the messages of the spirits among

24. Walter J. Kilner (1847–1920) is usually associated with “discovering” and analyzing the structure of the “human atmosphere” (see the homonym title of his study) or “aura,” the energy field that he believed surrounds every human being and yet is individually distinct. This part of Ehara’s televised session was discontinued from 2006.

which sometimes appears the guest's guardian spirit (*shugorei* 守護霊) to transmit moral messages such as “nothing occurs by chance,” “hardships become lessons,” “you like your job because you were meant to,” or “those who protected you during your life continue to look after you beyond death” (KOIKE 2007, 14–17). According to Horie, Ehara's session follows a psychotherapeutic format that can be distinguished in four steps: building a relationship of trust using the ability to see spirits (*rapport*), seeking reasons for present problems in the past (trauma), changing the perspective on present issues revealing thus the good aspects of one's life (reframing), and reassuring the client of their protection by guardian spirits and of the location of the ultimate solution within themselves (empowerment) (HORIE 2006, 245).

If psychological theory can be used to analyze Ehara's spiritual therapy, it could also inform our understanding of a session of Shinnyo-en's *sesshin*, which is in the long line of *chinkon kishin*-type of rituals. In this respect, Nagai notes that “the counsel given during *sesshin* may concern the follower's spiritual affairs [in effect, *influence from ghosts of angry relatives or friends*], practice, mental attitude, or personality” (NAGAI 1995, 306). This magical, formal aspect of *sesshin*, as Nagai identifies it, does not seem different from Ehara's attempt to build a relationship of trust based on his alleged “spiritual powers,” a belief that is assumed among Shinnyo-en's followers who ask advice to the organization's *reinōsha*. What is interesting and could be said to have been transformed in the passage from NRMs to today's “boom” in spiritual therapies is the self-cultivation element of these healing rites.

Nagai notes that Shinnyo-en's self-cultivation and the informal aspect of *sesshin* provides a two-layered model for one's self-cultivation: the Buddha(s) and the founder's family, through the traditional Mahayana Buddhist teaching of the ten good actions of mind, word, and body, augmented by the “Seventeen Regulations for Women,” which were compiled by the founder Itō Tomoji and said to be also used by male followers (NAGAI 1995, 307–8). The “empowerment” here is therefore expressed in the reassurance that diligent self-reflection and self-polishing according to those precepts and by means of the “Three Activities”²⁵ will guarantee good results. On the one hand, Ehara's session is also composed of a self-cultivation factor expressed by the empowering advice that marks the end of it. Spiritual counseling may be said to include both elements of the “traditional” Japanese magico-religious rites. On the other hand, this self-cultivation part of Ehara's session, and particularly of the spiritual therapies, is rather simplified. The hint on how this is done lies in the oft-heard sentence, “the solution is in yourself.”

25. The “Three Activities” are *kangi* (歡喜, joyful giving), *otasukete* (お助け, lit. helping, actually proselytization), and *gohōshi* (ご奉仕, service) (NAGAI 1995, 308–9).

Indeed, contrary to the founders of NRMS, Ehara does not provide models of self-cultivation and is the first to claim, in his first best-selling book, that “he is not special; he just found himself with this ability to see things invisible to others” (EHARA 2001, 4). There is a lack of both biographical details and allusions to specific religious doctrines in his writings; rather, he focuses on expanding the different ways to come in contact with one’s “spirit” (*supiritto* スピリット), commonly known in New Age circles as the Higher Self. Wouter J. Hanegraaff defines the Higher Self as “the mediating link between man and God... it is more personal than God yet more universal than man... it is our real identity... [C]onscious connection with one’s Higher Self leads to increased insight, spirituality, love, balance and health” (HANEGRAAFF 1998, 211). According to Ehara, this connection can be achieved by maintaining a healthy life and by thinking, conversing with others, and acting positively. There is no evil, Ehara argues, but nothing occurs by chance (EHARA 2001, 17, 205, 216). If people are willing to listen to themselves they will find the answer to their problems, because the answer is already there. This is, in brief, Ehara’s message.

Ehara’s comments mirror the opinions of Eric Pearl (page 363 of this article) and Vianna Stibal (page 364 of this article). All that Pearl’s reconnection was meant to allow is “to simply be... [B]e with the person and understand that the uncertainty will be taken care of” (PEARL 2001, 116). Theta healing claims similar effects. The technique that Stibal used was something she apparently was already doing in her reading sessions, but which she could not understand.

Curious to understand why the technique was working, Vianna solicited the help of a physicist and with an electroencephalograph discovered that the simple technique tapped Theta waves. Over many years of practicing the technique, Vianna believes the technique utilizes a Theta wave to achieve an instant healing. Through thousands of clients she discovered not only an amazing way to connect with the creative energy that moves in all things, but that this energy could change instantly Beliefs and Feelings that are linked to sickness.²⁶

Again, what transpires from such claims is the belief in the hidden potential that humans will realize they already possess if they free their minds from what are seen as “superficial” concerns. And if, indeed, some of these techniques recognize the existence of some kind of supernatural, transcendental power or being, such as angels, guardian spirits, or the Creator Of All That Is (which in theta healing is believed to be the original initiator of the client’s healing abilities), they take second stage in spiritual therapies’ sessions. It is the individual that occupies center stage and that ultimately is supposed to be the instigator of his/her own healing.

26. <http://www.thetahealing.com/about-thetahealing.html> (accessed 3 October 2012).

Although for some clients, such “follow your heart/think positively”-type of messages may sound like they validate their intuition regarding the best solution to the problem they were facing, leading them thus to be more assertive and confident when taking future decisions (whether these reveal themselves as good or bad), this type of advice does not really seem to help those who have no clue as to what they should be doing with the troubles in their life. For this second group of clients, as for the spiritual therapists themselves, ideals of an innate Japanese spirituality coupled with the fairly candidly interpreted “advantages” of American individualism may offer some support and (possibly) solutions for their issues. Yet, considering the consuming patterns of the majority of clients, who often seem to be no more than fans of occult theories, spiritual therapies have yet to provide a new method for dealing with contemporary problems. I am reminded of an acquaintance’s comments regarding her frequent visit to fortune-tellers, *reimōsha*, and all types of practitioners of spiritual therapy: “I don’t care for their advice. I just want to hear them interpreting my life using spiritual theories.”

The Fading Away of Spiritual Therapies

In this article I have focused on the most prominent aspect of the last decade’s “spiritual boom” phenomenon in Japan, namely spiritual therapies. The object of inquiry was a common countercultural discourse used by spiritual therapists in which organized religions, including NRMS, have been demonized and the contemporary Japanese way of life has been contrasted with the “new” and “better” *supirichuaru* ways. I have, however, sought to demonstrate that spiritual therapies are a continuation of faith-based healing practices that have developed in Japan since the nineteenth century and that this may have been the cause of their popularity, even if temporary. Like their predecessors, spiritual therapies construct their counterculturalism against modern notions of religion and scientific rationalism, while also presenting both of the elements of magic and self-cultivation that have characterized the healing rites of NRMS. As for the professionalization and entrepreneurship that spiritual therapists demonstrate, these have been in development at least since the 1970s and are probably much better handled by the fortune-telling business of which my informants were so critical.

I identified two aspects in the discourse of spiritual therapists that have prevented their customers from discovering the “unique value” of these therapies and probably led to the end of “the spiritual boom.” First I argued that the therapists’ narratives of superiority that originated from practical issues of competitiveness with other magico-religious practitioners ultimately expanded to simply include everyone who is not a Japanese spiritual therapist. The paradoxical discourse that surfaced was countercultural in its eclectic criticism of Japaneseness

and/or non-Japaneseness, but it did not differ from mainstream, *nihonjinron*-type arguments that have sought to fill up a post-Aum symbolic vacuum.

Secondly, I observed that the self-cultivation element of spiritual therapies differs from their predecessors in terms of the lack of role models and concrete techniques that clients are supposed to be inspired from and practice in order to solve their issues. In that sense, the symbolic vacuum is exacerbated instead of being satiated.

In a recent exchange with Horie Norichika²⁷ about the end of the “spiritual boom,” Horie noted that since the beginning of 2012, *supirichuaru* seems to have lost its genre-defining narrow meaning and has been fragmenting into various sections of Japanese sub-culture. It is probably too early to reach a conclusion about this phenomenon, but one of the reasons for the “fall of the *supirichuaru*” may be found in the argument developed in this article. Spiritual therapies may have seemed new because of their obvious and highly publicized borrowing of Western ideas and practices, and they may have looked attractive due to their cultural criticism, whose expression has been adapted to suit the concerns of the contemporary, post-Aum Japanese clientele. In essence, however, they remained within the long tradition of Japanese healing rites, victims of the same marketization that has led to competitiveness-based discourses of superiority, and which has provoked today an even more simplified, albeit lacking-in-effect approach to therapy. Perhaps this approach, combined with competitiveness, provoked the fragmentation of the genre that Horie has observed. Perhaps, also, the *supirichuaru* never left the territory of the sub-cultural. In other words, the *supirichuaru* should just be seen as an artificially and temporarily constructed amalgam of various occultural phenomena—one that attracted media interest as a consequence of the spotlight thrown upon noninstitutional, popular religion in the immediate aftermath of the Aum affair.

27. An e-mail to the author dated 21 July 2012.

REFERENCES

- AMA Toshimaro
 2005 *Why are the Japanese Non-Religious? Japanese Spirituality: Being Non-Religious in a Religious Culture*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.
- AMBROS, Barbara
 2010 Vengeful spirits or loving spiritual companions? Changing notions of animal spirits in contemporary Japan. *Asian Ethnology* 69: 35–67.
- BAFFELLI, Erica, and Ian READER
 2012 Editors' Introduction. Impact and ramifications: The aftermath of the Aum Affair in the Japanese religious context. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 39: 1–28.
- BEFU, Harumi
 2001 *Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of "Nihonjinron."* Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press.
- BLACKER, Carmen
 1999 *The Catalpa Bow: A Study of Shamanic Practices in Japan*. London: RoutledgeCurzon. (Third edition)
- BRINTON, Mary C.
 2008 *Ushinawareta ba o sagashite: Rosuto jenerēshon no shakaigaku* 失われた場を探して—ロストジェネレーションの社会学. Tokyo: NTT Publishing.
- BRODER, Anne
 2008 Mahikari in context: *Kamigakari, chinkon kishin*, and psychical investigation in Ōmoto-lineage religions. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 35: 331–62.
- COMO, Michael
 2009 *Weaving and Binding: Immigrant Gods and Female Immortals in Ancient Japan*. University of Hawai'i Press.
- DAVIS, Winston
 1980 *Dojo: Magic and Exorcism in Modern Japan*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- DESSI, Ugo
 2012 Religion, hybrid forms, and cultural chauvinism in Japan. *Journal of Religion in Japan* 1: 168–87.
- DORMAN, Benjamin
 2007 Representing ancestor worship as “non-religious”: Hosoki Kazuko's divination in the post-Aum era. *Nova Religio* 10: 32–53.
 2012 *Celebrity Gods: New Religions, Media, and Authority in Occupied Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

EHARA Hiroyuki 江原啓之

- 2001 *Kōun o hikiyoseru supirichuaru bukku* 幸運を引きよせるスピリチュアル・ブック. Tokyo: Mikasashobō.
- 2003 *Supirichuaru na jinsei ni mezameru tame ni: Kokoro ni "jinsei no chizu" o motsu* スピリチュアルな人生に目覚めるために一心に「人生の地図」を持つ. Tokyo: Shinchō Bunko.
- 2007a *Anata no tame no supirichuaru kaunseringu* あなたのためのスピリチュアルカウンセリング. Tokyo: Chūōkōronsha.
- 2007b *Nihon no ōra: Tengoku kara no shiten* 日本のオーラー天国からの視点. Tokyo: Shinchōsha.

FACKLER, Martin

- 2009 As Japan's mediums die, ancient tradition fades. *The New York Times*, 20 August. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/21/world/asia/21japan.html> (accessed 22 July 2012).

FUJITA Shōichi 藤田庄市

- 1992 *Reinō no higi: Hito wa ikani sukuwareru no ka* 霊能の秘儀—人はいかに救われるのか. Tokyo: Fusōsha.

GAITANIDIS, Ioannis

- 2010 Socio-economic aspects of the “spiritual business” in Japan: A survey of professional spiritual therapists. *Shūkyō to shakai* 16: 143–60.
- 2011 At the forefront of a “spiritual business”: Independent professional spiritual therapists in Japan. *Japan Forum* 23: 185–206.

GEHARDT, Lisette

- 2004 The “other world” in the light of a new science: Spiritism in modern Japan. In *Practicing the Afterlife: Perspectives from Japan*, Susanne Formanek and William LaFleur, eds., 383–96. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

GELFER, Joseph

- 2011 *2012: Decoding the Countercultural Apocalypse*. London: Equinox.

GOLDNER, Melinda

- 2004 Consumption as activism: An examination of CAM as part of the consumer movement in health. In *The Mainstreaming of Complementary and Alternative Medicine: Studies in Social Context*, Philip Tovey, Gary Easthope, and Jon Adams, eds., 11–24. London: Routledge.

GOODRICK-CLARKE, Nicholas

- 2008 *The Western Esoteric Traditions: A Historical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

HANEGRAAFF, Wouter J.

- 1998 *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought*. New York: SUNY Press.

- 2012 *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

HARDACRE, Helen

- 1994 Conflict between Shugendō and the new religions of Bakumatsu Japan. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21: 138–66.
- 1996 Shinmeiaishinkai and the study of Shamanism in contemporary Japanese life. In *Religion in Japan: Arrows to Heaven and Earth*, Peter F. Kornicki and Ian J. McMullen, eds., 198–219. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

HAYASHI, Makoto

- 1994 Tokugawa Period disputes between Shugen organizations and Onmyōji over rights to practice divination. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21: 167–88.

HORIE Norichika 堀江宗正

- 2003 Reisei kara supirichuariti e 霊性からスピリチュアリティへ. *Newsletter of the International Institute for the Study of Religions* 38: 14–22.
- 2006 Media no naka no “supirichuaru” メディアのなかの「スピリチュアル」. *Sekai* 759: 242–50.
- 2009 Spirituality and the spiritual in Japan: Translation and transformation. *Journal of Alternative Spiritualities and New Age Studies* 5. <http://www.asanac.org.uk/files/005Horie.pdf> (accessed 22 July 2012).

ISHII Kenji 石井研士

- 2008 *Terebi to shūkyō: Aum igo o toinaosu* テレビと宗教—オウム以後を問い直す. Tokyo: Chūokōron Shinsha.

KASAI, Kenta

- 2012 Theosophy and related movements in Japan. In *Handbook of Contemporary Japanese Religions*, Inken Prohl and John Nelson, eds., 433–57. Leiden: Brill.

KIRMAYER, Laurence J.

- 2004 The cultural diversity of healing: Meaning, metaphor and mechanism. *British Medical Bulletin* 69: 33–48.

KOIKE Yasushi 小池 靖

- 2007 *Terebi reinōsha o kiru: Media to supirichuaru no mitsugetsu* テレビ霊能者を斬る—メディアとスピリチュアルの蜜月. Tokyo: Softbank Shinsho.

KONDŌ Kazuo 近藤千雄

- 2006 *Nihonjin no kokoro no furusato “kannagara” to kindai no reikongaku “supirichuarizumu”* 日本人の心のふるさと“かんながら”と近代の霊魂学“スピリチュアリズム”. Tokyo: Cosmos Library.

LACHMAN, Gary

- 2005 *A Dark Muse: A History of the Occult*. New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press.

MACLAINE, Shirley

1983 *Out on a Limb*. Toronto and New York: Bantam Books.

MARTIN, Alex

2009 The past, present and future of fortunetelling. *Japan Times*, 21 April. <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20090421i.html> (accessed 22 July 2012).

MATSUDO, Yukio

2001 Back to invented tradition: A Nativist response to a national crisis. In *Religion and Social Crisis in Japan: Understanding Japanese Society through the Aum Affair*, Robert J. Kisala and Mark R. Mullins, eds., 163–77. Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan.

MCCAFFERTY, Eamon

2002 The Great Hanshin Earthquake: The Japanese response. In *Exploring Japaneseness: On Japanese Enactments of Culture and Consciousness*. Ed. Ray T. Donahue, 137–46. Westport, Connecticut: Ablex.

MCLAUGHLIN, Levi

2012 Did Aum change everything? What Soka Gakkai before, during, and after the Aum Shinrikyō Affair tells us about the persistent “otherness” of New Religions in Japan. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 39: 51–75.

MILLER, Laura

2011 Tantalizing tarot and cute cartomancy in Japan. *Japanese Studies* 31: 73–91.

MULLINS, Mark R.

1992 Japan's New Age and Neo-New Religions: Sociological interpretations. In *Perspectives on the New Age*, James R. Lewis and J. Gordon Melton, eds., 232–46. Albany: State University of New York.

NAGAI, Mikiko

1995 Magic and self-cultivation in a new religion: The case of Shinnyoen. *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 22: 301–20.

NOSCO, Peter

1997 Introduction. In *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, ed. Peter Nosco, 3–26. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

PEARL, Eric

2001 *The Reconnection: Heal Others, Heal Yourself*. London: Hay House.

PIKE, Sarah M.

2004 *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*. New York: Columbia University Press.

READER, Ian

2003 Identity, *nihonjinron*, and academic (dis)honesty. *Monumenta Nipponica* 58: 103–16.

2005 Chronologies, commonalities and alternative status in Japanese new reli-

gious movements: Defining NRMS outside the Western cul-de-sac. *Nova Religio* 9: 84–96.

REDFIELD, James

1996 *The Celestine Prophecy: An adventure*. New York: Warner Treasures.

SAKURAI Yoshihide 櫻井義秀

2009 *Rei to kane: Supirichuaru bijinesu no kōzō* 霊と金—スピリチュアルビジネスの構造. Tokyo: Shinchosha

SAWADA, Janine Anderson

2004 *Practical Pursuits: Religion, Politics, and Personal Cultivation in Nineteenth-Century Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

SHIMAZONO, Susumu

2004 *From Salvation to Spirituality: Popular Religious Movements in Modern Japan*. Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press.

SHŪKYŌ SHAKAIGAKU NO KAI 宗教社会学の会

1999 *Kamigamiyadorishimachi: Sezokutoshi no shūkyōshakagaku* 神々宿りし都市(まち)—世俗都市の宗教社会学. Tokyo: Sōgensha.

STAEMMLER, Birgit

2002 Chinkon Kishin: Mediated Spirit Possession in Japanese New Religions. PhD Thesis, University of Tübingen.

STALKER, Nancy K.

2008 *Prophet Motive: Deguchi Onisaburō, Oomoto, and the Rise of New Religions in Imperial Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

TANABE Shintarō 田邊信太郎, SHIMAZONO Susumu 島蘭 進, and YUMIYAMA

Tatsuya 弓山達也, eds.

1999 *Iyashi o ikita hitobito: Kindaichi no orutanatibu* 癒しを生きた人々—近代知のオルタナティブ. Tokyo: Senshūgaku.

TATSUMI, Takayuki

2000 Waiting for Godzilla: Chaotic negotiations between post-Orientalism and hyper-Occidentalism. In *Transactions, Transgressions, Transformations: American Culture in Western Europe and Japan*, Heidi Fehrenbach and Uta G. Poiger, eds., 224–36. New York: Berghahn Books.

TOYOSHIMA Yasukuni 豊島泰国

1994 Hikyōteki nihonron 秘教的日本論. In *Koshinto no hon: Yomigaeru taikoshin to hikyōreigaku no zenbō* 古神道の本—甦る太古神と秘教霊学の全貌, 141–68. Tokyo: Gakushūkenkyūsha.

TSUKADA Hotaka 塚田穂高

2012 Cultural nationalism in Japanese neo-new religions: A comparative study of Mahikari and Kōfuku no Kagaku. *Monumenta Nipponica* 67: 133–57.

TUCKER, Mary Evelyn

- 1998 Religious dimensions of Confucianism: Cosmology and cultivation. *Philosophy East and West* 48: 5–45.

WALSCH, Neale Donald

- 1997 *Conversations with God: An Uncommon Dialogue*. New York: Berkley Books

WASHINGTON, Peter

- 1995 *Madame Blavatsky's Baboon: A History of the Mystics, Mediums, and Misfits Who Brought Spiritualism to America*. New York: Schocken.

WATANABE Naoki 渡邊直樹, SHIMAZONO Susumu 島蘭進, and

MIYAZAKI Tetsuya 宮崎哲弥

- 2008 Masu media to supirichuaru būmu マスメディアとスピリチュアル・ブーム. In *Media ga umidasu kamigami* メディアが生み出す神々, ed. 国際宗教研究所, 1–39. Tokyo: Akiyama Shoten.

WEISS, Brian

- 1988 *Many Lives, Many Masters*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

WILLIAMSON, Marianne

- 1992 *A Course in Miracles*. New York: HarperCollins.

WOO, Hai-Ran

- 2008 New Age in South Korea. *Journal of Alternative Spiritualities and New Age Studies* 5. <http://www.asanas.org.uk/files/woo%20advance%20publication.pdf> (accessed 22 July 2012).