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Marginalized Myths and Modern Japan

The Interpretive History of *Doroumi kōki* and *Reikai monogatari*

This article examines the process by which two marginalized religions, Tenrikyo and Omoto, negotiated their relationship with the modern Japanese state through their mythmaking projects in the early twentieth century. Previous studies have framed the relationship between national myths and the myths of the so-called "new religions" in terms of a dichotomy between orthodoxy and heresy. This approach is too essentialist and static to account for the complexity of modern myths, as these myths took on diverse characteristics and meanings as they were revised and retold within the shifting political and social contexts of modern Japan. The myths of new religions were not only the outcome of the members' religious imaginations, but also highly political texts that served as the grounds for engaging with the modern Japanese state and the official national mythology that legitimized it. Through a comparative study of Tenrikyo's *Doroumi kōki* and Omoto's *Reikai monogatari*, I argue that through their efforts to defend the legitimacy of their own myths under adverse circumstances, these marginalized religions became deeply entangled in the logic of modern Japanese nationalism. Rather than constituting a challenge to the state and its foundational myths, these marginalized religions developed hybrid discourses that I call "popular religious nationalism."

KEYWORDS: mythology—new religions—*Doroumi kōki*—*Reikai monogatari*—popular religious nationalism—Tenrikyo—Omoto

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Myth is a mirror that reflects our minds and our society. Where some may believe in myth as a universal truth, others condemn it as a false narrative or deride it as ridiculous fiction. Individual attitudes toward myth partly arise from one's personal disposition, but they are also the product of complex political and social dynamics. For example, the *Kojiki* 古事記 and *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (hereafter collectively referred to as the *Kiki* 記紀) are well-known as two mytho-historical texts compiled in the eighth century that were key sources of legitimacy for the rule of both the premodern imperial court and the modern Japanese state. Regardless of how many people sincerely believed in the creation narrative and the lineage of emperors as descendants of the kami Amaterasu as recorded in the *Kiki*, the prewar Japanese state did not allow its citizens to openly deny their veracity. The state promoted the sacredness of the emperor and the *Kiki* as the religious basis for the emperor's authority among its citizens through a variety of means, including the repetition of imperial tours during the Meiji period, the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education, and the creation of national textbooks. Although scholars debate the extent to which "State Shinto" dominated prewar Japanese society as the national religion, it is undeniable that this state mythology significantly influenced people's religious imagination, expressions, and behavior.

The myths of Japan's so-called "new religions" are often discussed in opposition to national myths. In particular, Tenrikyo, Omoto, Nyoraikyō 如来教, and Shinsei Ryūjinkai 神政龍神会 promoted their own fully-fledged mythological narratives. That the myths held by these religious movements had to coexist with the national myths raised various questions about their relationship. If there are multiple myths, can only one of them be true and the rest false? Is there a hierarchical structure, with the narrative constituting a master myth and the others subordinate myths? Do these seemingly distinct myths in fact represent the same essential truth in different ways? Or are the multiple myths completely unrelated to each other? The answers to these questions were of interest to not only the marginalized religious groups concerned but also the government, police, journalists, and intellectuals. Moreover, they had significant theological, political, and social ramifications.

Postwar Japanese historians have often characterized the relationship between state-approved religions and new religions and their respective mythologies in terms of the binary of orthodoxy versus heresy. Murakami Shigeyoshi (1970, 1) proposed the term "popular religion" (*minshū shūkyō* 民衆宗教) to refer

to new religious movements in the 1950s, as he considered popular religions to be in opposition to "State Shinto" as a "national religion created by the modern imperial state" and evaluated them as bearers of ideas and practices that were independent of the state. Many scholars consider the myths of these religious groups to directly challenge the national mythology as constructed in the *Kiki* and thus, by extension, the religious authority of the emperor state (Murakami 1974, 40–41). As such, these myths constituted impiety and heresy.

For example, Murakami argued that although Tenrikyo's *Doroumi kōki*—a human creation myth told by founder Nakayama Miki 中山みき—promotes a certain kind of Japan-centered nationalism, it is ultimately a this-worldly and humanistic narrative in line with Tenrikyo's aim toward the salvation of the people and at odds with the national polity (*kokutai* 国体). Thus, Murakami emphasizes the conflict between "State Shinto" and "popular religions" to denounce *Doroumi kōki* as a "heretical" myth. Similarly, Hara Takeshi (1996) considers *Reikai monogatari*—the mythical narrative of Omoto composed by Deguchi Onisaburō 出口王仁三郎—as heretical because it regards Susanoo no Mikoto 素戔嗚尊, the central figure of the Izumo myth, as superior to Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大神, the ancestral deity of the emperor given primacy by the Japanese state and Ise Jingū 伊勢神宮. Repeated state interference in and suppression of popular religions and their myths seem to prove the plausibility of such critiques.

However, this analytical framework is too simplistic as it plays into essentialist narratives promoted by the very same Japanese state and fails to account for the ways in which new religions explicitly engaged with, and often incorporated, the national mythology in their own processes of mythmaking. In this article, I examine the complex process of negotiation that took place between two representative new religions, Tenrikyo and Omoto, and the modern Japanese nation and the impact it had on their mythmaking projects. I argue that through their efforts to defend the legitimacy of their own myths under adverse circumstances, these marginalized religions became inextricably entangled in the logic of modern Japanese nationalism. The result was the emergence of hybrid discourses that I call "popular religious nationalism."

Scholars have contrasted Tenrikyo and Omoto in terms of their position within the state religious system and the direction and methods of their activities (Murakami 2007; Katsurajima 2015). A comparative analysis is necessary to understand how these differences were closely tied to the content and form of their myths and influenced their relationship to the state. Through an iterative process of revision and retelling, these myths took on diverse characteristics and meanings within the shifting political and social contexts of modern Japan. On the one hand, *Doroumi kōki* and *Reikai monogatari* presented the worldview of the groups that constructed them, provided the basis for salvation, and served as the foundation for the groups' identity. On the other hand, they were also

condemned and derided by the majority of society as vulgar, immature, and ridiculous narratives. The adherents of popular religions faced the difficult task of maintaining what made their myths distinct and fundamental to their religious life while positioning themselves to gain recognition of their legitimacy by the state and the public. In this process, there was a phase in which the myths of the state and the myths of marginalized religions became intertwined. Marginalized religions oftentimes did not simply accept or reject the myths of the state, but instead restructured and expanded upon them. In this process of trial and error, the members of marginalized religions inscribed their experiences of a torn subjectivity, leaving clues for how we might reconsider fundamental categories and dynamics in the study of modern Japanese religion.

The Mythic Origins of Tenrikyo and Omoto

In order to examine the history of the marginalized religions' mythmaking and participation in discourses of popular religious nationalism, let us first trace the origins of *Doroumi kōki* and *Reikai monogatari*. Tenrikyo foundress Nakayama Miki wrote her major works, *Mikagura uta* みかぐらうた and *Ofudesaki* おふでさき, during the nineteenth century. During the last years of her life, she told her main adherents the story of the beginning of the world and the creation of human beings and had them record it in writing. *Ofudesaki* also contains a fragmentary section with similar themes (Nakayama 1957). In Tenrikyo, these narratives were collectively called *Doroumi kōki* and were respected as a unique creation myth.[1]

As its name suggests, *Doroumi kōki* tells the story of God's creation of human beings in a muddy ocean and is composed of narratives concerning male-female sexual relations, rice farming rituals, and anthropomorphic animal imagery (Nakayama 1957, 108–140). The story incorporates the names of established kami and buddhas to represent the "instruments" (*tohashira no kamina* 十柱の神名) that were used to create human beings. These ten deities are identified as: (1) Kunitokotachi no Mikoto, (2) Omotari no Mikoto, (3) Kunisazuchi no Mikoto, (4) Tsukiyomi no Mikoto, (5) Kumoyomi no Mikoto, (6) Kashikone no Mikoto, (7) Taishokuten no Mikoto, (8) Ōtonobe no Mikoto, (9) Izanagi no Mikoto, and (10) Izanami no Mikoto (Tenrikyō Kyōkai Honbu 1952, 1232–1233).[2] Of these sacred names, all but Taishokuten and Kumoyomi no Mikoto are similar to those

1. After World War II, the story came to be called *Moto no ri* 元の理 and *Moto hajimari no hanashi* 元初まりの話. The name *Doroumi kōki* was not officially adopted. See Watanabe (2021) for the interpretive history of *Doroumi kōki*.

2. This term "instruments" refers to the sacred names given to the ten aspects of the complete providence of God. In keeping with the language of the rest of the document, these names are written in *hiragana*, not *kanji*.

that appear in the *Kiki*. Taishokuten is said to be related to the Buddhist deity Taishakuten 帝釈天, while Kumoyomi no Mikoto does not correspond with deities from other sources.

Despite any apparent similarities, the attributes of the sacred names in *Doroumi kōki* have little to do with their counterparts in the *Kiki* or Buddhism. According to *Doroumi kōki,* Izanagi no Mikoto 伊弉諾尊 and Izanami no Mikoto 伊弉冉命 are described as a fish and a serpent, respectively; no such description appears in the *Kiki*. Originally, Miki's myth of human creation was unconcerned with the modern nation's developing divine order, in which Amaterasu and Ise Jingū were positioned at the top of the hierarchy. However, as Tenrikyo became more deeply involved in negotiations with state power and broader Japanese society, the superficial similarities between *Doroumi kōki* and the myths of the *Kiki* took on complex meanings.

The process of the formation of Omoto mythology is somewhat complicated. The founder of this religious group, Deguchi Nao 出口なお, wrote on sheets of paper the words of Ushitora no Konjin 艮の金神 while possessed by the deity and left behind an enormous collection of writings known as the *Fudesaki* 筆先. In the *Fudesaki*, passages speak of the coming and role of the gods. The god of justice, Ushitora no Konjin, incurred the displeasure of the other gods because he was too stubborn in his mission to rule the world; thus, for a long time he was forced to reside in the supposedly inauspicious direction of the northeast (*ushitora* 艮) and was feared as a possessed god (Yasumaru 2013, 133–134). As a result, the world as it should be descended into disorder. The major framework of the story of *Fudesaki* is that through Nao, Ushitora no Konjin will be revealed and fundamentally reform the disturbed world. Omoto refers to this fundamental transformation of the world as "rebuilding and renewal" (*tatekae tatenaoshi* 立替え立直し). It is an eschatological ideology that rejects modern Japanese society for being dominated by the greed and selfishness of Western material civilization, and it predicts the arrival of a new world after a great catastrophe. In the early twentieth century, Deguchi Onisaburō, Nao's close collaborator, published the *Fudesaki* in the Omoto institutional journal, and the concept of rebuilding and renewal caused a great sensation.

Because the social criticism in the *Fudesaki* extended to the emperor as a symbol of Japanese civilization, Onisaburō and fellow executives were arrested in 1921 on charges of impiety and other crimes in what is now known as the First Omoto Incident. Following these events, Onisaburō began to dictate *Reikai monogatari* as a new canonical replacement for the *Fudesaki.* According to the author's testimony, Onisaburō at times spoke in a "state of being possessed" by a divine spirit, in a normal "human state of consciousness," and at other times arranged and dictated his past spiritual experiences as guided by his inspirations (Ōmoto Nanajū Nenshi Hensankai 1964, 649). Onisaburō recommended his

followers to read *Reikai monogatari* as a method to open their spirituality, and so they held group readings of *Reikai monogatari* and sometimes performed the book as a play or film (Stalker 2008, 101). There were also tales of spiritual experiences in which illnesses were cured by reading this story. The text was accepted as a sacred book which contained the charisma of Onisaburō (Kawamura 2017, 377).

It is difficult to summarize the entirety of this lengthy work, but the explanation given at the beginning of the first volume foreshadows the development of a narrative that draws on the *Kiki* myths interwoven with the myths recorded in the *Fudesaki* and Onisaburō's own "exploration of the spiritual world" (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 1: 39). The story also incorporates elements of Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, Swedenborgism, communist thought, and the political events of the time to construct a unique world in which ancient and modern trends coexist.

Onisaburō began his work on *Reikai monogatari* about forty years after the compilation of *Doroumi kōki*. By this time, the sacredness of the emperor and the myths of the *Kiki* as its religious basis had already deeply penetrated the public consciousness through diverse channels such as repeated imperial pilgrimages, the Imperial Rescript on Education, and national textbooks published and circulated during the Meiji period, as well as through historical events such as the Russo-Japanese War, the death of Emperor Meiji, and the High Treason Incident (Taigyaku Jiken 大逆事件) (Fujitani 1986; Hirayama 2015; Shimazono 2019). Having systematically studied the *Kiki* at a Shinto priesthood training institute toward the end of the Meiji period, Onisaburō made considerable use of his knowledge in interpreting the *Fudesaki*. In this sense, the historical context in which the *Reikai monogatari* was composed is quite different from that of *Doroumi kōki* in that from the beginning the former was inscribed with the national mythology in mind.

The Languages of Marginalized Religions

In our consideration of the historical context of the myths of Omoto and Tenrikyo, it is important to note their linguistic characteristics in addition to their contents. Sociologist Kurihara Akira points out that Deguchi Onisaburō's writings, including *Reikai monogatari*, consist of two types of language or styles of writing: the language of the national polity (*kokutai gengo* 国体言語) and the language of daily life (*seikatsu gengo* 生活言語). He explains that the former is the language of "posturing and of empty words painted with 'respect for the gods, the emperor, and patriotism,'" while the latter is a language that "flexibly conveys the movement of one's thoughts and feelings with a rich message" (Kurihara 1982, 192). For example, in *Reikai monogatari*, we see a mixture of mythological,

religious, autobiographical, fictional, and critical elements as well as allusions to the dignity of the national body. It is clear at a glance that a variety of languages are used in the text, from essays to poetry and narrative texts with a mix of dialogue. Kurihara suggests that Onisaburō used these different languages depending on the content of the message he sought to convey and his intended audience.

As for *Doroumi kōki*, the story conveyed by Nakayama Miki and transcribed by her followers is written in the "language of daily life." A similar language may be found in *Mikagura uta* and *Ofudesaki*, which Miki wrote herself, as well as in the *waka* 和歌 poetic style in the dialect of the Yamato region at the time. Neither Miki nor her adherents were educated in classical Japanese or Chinese literature, so it was natural for them to use a language more closely related to their own experience of daily life. Moreover, many of the sacred texts of the early new religions are written in the "language of daily life," such as *Okyōsama* お経様, which records the sermons of Kino 喜之 of Nyoraikyō; *Konkō Daijin on oboegaki* 金光大神御覚書, the religious autobiography of Akazawa Bunji 赤沢文治 of Konkōkyō 金光教; and *Fudesaki* by Deguchi Nao.

It may seem that Deguchi Onisaburō's *Reikai monogatari* provides a unique example of a "bilingual" composition that mixes the "language of the national polity" with the "language of daily life." However, if we consider the writings of founders as texts open to new interpretations and revision, it becomes clear that the myths of marginalized religions in modern Japan were bilingual. As we will see below, marginalized religions were pressured to engage in a subtle negotiation with nationalist discourses and to translate their religious ideals into the "language of the national polity" in order to survive in modern society. At the same time, these groups never gave up the "language of daily life," as it was an integral part of their identity. In other words, it may be said that a bilingual approach characterizes the modern experience of marginalized religions. This experience may be shared with those of colonized intellectuals who were torn between the languages of their mother tongue and that of the suzerain state (Kwon 2015; Nagaoka 2021). Thus, it is necessary to read the myths of Omoto and Tenrikyo in a way that does not fall into a simple dichotomy of the "language of the national polity" versus the "language of daily life" but rather acknowledges the bilingual nature of discourses of popular religious nationalism.

The Modernity of Doroumi kōki

Doroumi kōki played an important role in Tenrikyo faith. For example, in his 1928 commentary *Doroumi kōki: Fu chūshaku*, Iwai Takahito 岩井尊人 writes:

> *Doroumi kōki* is the fundamental set of texts from which Tenrikyo originated. It is the source of Tenrikyo and the driving force behind its development. There

> is not a follower of the path who has not heard of *Doroumi kōki*. A person who is a Tenrikyo member but does not know *Doroumi kōki* is not a follower of the path. (*Doroumi kōki*, 1)

Doroumi kōki is not only the "source of Tenrikyo" that explains the process of human creation and the privileged status of the *jiba* ぢば, the place of origin; it also represents the basis for salvation by God. Each of the aforementioned *tohashira no kamina* represents a function of God the Parent who protects human beings. For example, Kunitokotachi no Mikoto represents the function of protecting the moisture of the eyes, and Omotari no Mikoto protects the warmth of the body. This story was given as the doctrinal basis for curing disease and was the "driving force" behind the development of Tenrikyo according to Iwai. The interpretation of the stories also relied on folk knowledge related to Buddhism and Shinto and seems to have been popular among followers (Ishizaki 1997, 15–18).

For those critical of Tenrikyo, however, the subtle relationship between *Doroumi kōki* and the national mythology was a prime target for attack. After Nakayama Miki's death in 1887, Tenrikyo dramatically expanded in size. The organization legalized its activities by joining an officially recognized Shinto sect by the name of Shintō Honkyoku 神道本局, and their energetic missionary efforts focused on curing illness are said to have helped the group gain as many as three million adherents throughout Japan by the end of the nineteenth century (Tsujii 1995, 35). As Tenrikyo grew, so too did the surge of books and newspaper articles that criticized the emergent group. Many of those who published critical books were Buddhist and Shinto priests, and it is said that their writing was fueled by their sense of crisis over the rapid expansion of Tenrikyo (Tenri Daigaku Fuzoku Oyasato Kenkyūjo 2018, 810–811).

These critical documents ridiculed *Doroumi kōki* as a baseless and dubious fabrication, and the content was criticized for being both heretical and unpatriotic. One critic writes, "It is extremely impious to refer to the imperial ancestors as an insect or fish" (Haneda 1893, 17). That is, it is an act of impiety to equate Izanagi no Mikoto and Izanami no Mikoto—who are the parents of Amaterasu, the emperor's divine ancestor—with a fish and a serpent. Other major criticisms of the group ran the gamut, including slander against Nakayama Miki and the leaders of the group, questions of how Tenrikyo could preach a mixture of Shinto and Buddhist teachings while calling itself a Shinto organization, and allegations that Tenrikyo activities constituted public disorder, obstruction of medical care, and exploitation of property (Takano 1963, 136–137). In the eyes of these critics, Tenrikyo was a group of "fools" who blasphemed the emperor's lineage with dubious myths and opposed the modern pursuits of rationalization and civilization.

In response to these attacks, Tenrikyo chose to adapt to modern society by transforming its own doctrines and activities rather than refute these criticisms directly. This attitude is demonstrated by *Tenrikyo kyōten*, more commonly known as *Meiji kyōten*. Tenrikyo drafted *Meiji kyōten* with the aim of gaining recognition as an independent sect (Matsumura 1950). Its final version, officially adopted in 1903, took on a strong nationalistic character after the organization accepted the government's requests for revision during the compilation process.

Meiji kyōten mentions the creation of the land in the first few chapters. This rendition follows the standard national mythology drawn from the *Kiki* and aligns with the official nationalist position. It begins with the emergence of the heavenly deities and goes on to recount the creation of the land by Izanagi and Izanami as the ancestors of all things and the descent of the imperial descendants to the earthly realm. As the continuation of this divine lineage, the imperial family receives legitimacy to rule, divine help, and the fateful charge to secure the land. Descriptions of Nakayama Miki portray her as a person who reveres the emperor and has a patriotic heart. She is recorded as saying, "We should be convinced that our emperor is the sovereign appointed by heaven and be loyal to the imperial family with the same supreme love as repaying god's grace to god" (*Meiji kyōten*, 5). *Meiji kyōten* makes no mention of the elements of criticism of those in power found in *Ofudesaki*.

The myth of human creation at the heart of *Doroumi kōki* does not appear in *Meiji kyōten*. It is unclear whether the "time when heaven and earth were not yet divided" based on *Nihon shoki* that appears in *Meiji kyōten* and the time of the beginning when "all was a muddy ocean" from *Doroumi kōki* are the same. It seems that there was an awareness of the differences between the Tenrikyo myths and the *Kiki* among the early adherents. A transcribed document from 1888 and apparent variant of *Doroumi kōki* states, "Imperial Japan has had a scribe since the time of the emperor, but we do not know the source of the efforts of God the Parent, from whom human beings began."[3] This comment suggests the author saw the content of the creation story in *Doroumi kōki* as older and more fundamental than that of the *Kiki*. Among Miki's teachings, those that could challenge or relativize the structure of the *Kiki* mythology were eliminated from *Meiji kyōten*.

Although this section of *Meiji kyōten* was clearly composed with the national mythos in mind, Miki's teachings did not completely vanish. Of all the deities generated by Izanagi and Izanami, those "most notable for their virtues and works" are called *tohashira no kami*, and the virtues and works of the gods of heaven and earth are collectively worshiped as Tenri Ōgami 天理大神 (*Meiji*

3. "Kami no kogoki," quoted in Yasui (2004, 166).

kyōten, 1). And though some of the original *tohashira no kamina* were changed in the process of negotiations with the government, Tenrikyo clearly attempted to combine Miki's teachings with the official narrative.

In actual missionary work settings, the *Meiji kyōten*—written in the rigid "language of the national polity"—was rarely used. Rather, as Iwai argues, the stories of *Doroumi kōki* told in the "language of daily life" sustained the Tenrikyo faith until the 1930s (*Doroumi kōki*, 1). Still, this does not mean that the Tenrikyo faith was totally incompatible with "official nationalism" (Anderson 2006, 88) and operated without any connection to it. Members found other approaches to connect the founder's teachings with official nationalism.

Hiroike Chikurō 廣池千九郎, who contributed to the formation of Tenrikyo's doctrine in the early twentieth century, also foregrounds Miki as a patriot, but his argument is distinct from that found in *Meiji kyōten* in that it is based on the language of the *Ofudesaki*. He makes a clear connection between Miki's words written in the "language of daily life" and modern nationalism. Several songs in *Ofudesaki* explain the superiority of *Nihon* over *Kara* (that is, China), and Hiroike comments, "The founder was a passionate patriot.... These are songs of praise and lamentation in which the founder praised her homeland, and she saw Japan as the root of the world" (*Sankyō kaidō to Tenrikyō*, 52). Yet the Meiji government repeatedly suppressed Miki's religious activities, and in *Ofudesaki* she also includes a series of criticisms of *takayama* 高山 (mountain top), which is thought to refer to the authorities and is opposed to *tanisoko* 谷底 (valley floor, that is, the common people). This suggests a strong undercurrent of discord and conflict in the relationship between Miki and the modern state. However, Hiroike does not touch on these points and only emphasizes Miki's praise for the "homeland." Thus, Tenrikyo promoted discourses of popular religious nationalism by combining modern official nationalism with the writings and teachings of its founder.

Under these circumstances, intellectuals within Tenrikyo took on the difficult task of explaining the similarities and gaps between *Doroumi kōki* and the national mythology. For example, Iwai notes that because the *tohashira no kami* in *Doroumi kōki* overlap with the names of the deities of "ancient Japanese Shinto," there are people both inside and outside of Tenrikyo who confuse the two: "This *Doroumi kōki* is about the creation by the God—or the foundress—independent of the 'ancient Japanese Shinto' (*koshintō* 古神道), as well as of all other indigenous thoughts, religions, myths, stories, and so forth. It must be remembered that there is no plot or compositional relationship between them" (*Doroumi kōki*, 5).

Let us focus on Izanagi no Mikoto as an example. In *Doroumi kōki*, Izanagi is said to take the form of a fish and at the same time represent the principle of a man/father. Though the name is the same, Iwai argues that this divine name,

which belongs to Tenri mythology, has "no contact with the ancient Japanese Shinto" figure of Izanagi (*Doroumi kōki*, 35). However, the following line from *Doroumi kōki* seems to contradict Iwai's argument: "[Izanagi no Mikoto] appears as the principle of the Inner Shrine of Ise in Japan [Amaterasu]" (*Doroumi kōki*, 37). Here, Izanagi and the Inner Shrine of Ise—that is, Amaterasu—are equated. In the national myths, Amaterasu, the ancestral deity of the emperor, is generally regarded as a goddess and the daughter of Izanagi. If Izanagi in *Doroumi kōki* is interpreted as the Izanagi in the *Kiki*, then *Doroumi kōki* contradicts the received description of the deity in the national mythos. Though he denies that any "contact" between the two would seem the simple solution, Iwai dares to try to bridge the gap between the two as follows:

> It would be strange to say that the Inner Shrine of Ise represents a male deity's principle to protect the human species, but it is in fact a manifestation of natural reason. According to ancient Japanese Shinto, [Amaterasu] is born from the eyes of Izanagi no Mikoto. That is, since she has received the principle of the Father and has become the supreme ruler of the universe, her female body is the embodiment of the calm spirit (*nigitama* 大和魂) rather than a definite gender.… Thus, she became the head of Japan's (in fact, the world's) main family, and her legitimate heirs continued the imperial lineage. Thus, there is no mistaking that Amaterasu is the expression of the truth of the father, the origin and the seed of humankind. (*Doroumi kōki*, 36–37)

Iwai thus argues that since Amaterasu inherited the "principle of the father" from Izanagi and should be called the father of humankind, the description in *Doroumi kōki* aligns with the intention of the national myths. It is interesting to note that while Iwai explains that Tenri mythology and "ancient Japanese Shinto" should be understood separately, he desires to join the two without contradiction. This dilemma reflects the difficult position of marginalized religions, in which they are forced to defend themselves against the majority while aspiring to pursue their own vision of the world as an independent religion.

Ueda Yoshinari tried to resolve this issue in another way: "Since it is awe-inspiring to mention the name of Kōtaijingū 皇大神宮 (The Inner Shrine of Ise, that is, Amaterasu), the founder indirectly reveals her intention to revere Kōtaijingū by praising the name of the deity who is its parent" (Ueda 1937, 16). In other words, *Doroumi kōki* refers to Izanagi no Mikoto in relation to the Inner Shrine of Ise out of profound reverence for Amaterasu, the ancestral deity of the emperor; thus, the reference to Izanagi no Mikoto here is in fact a reference to Amaterasu. The passage then is evidence of Tenrikyo's "spirit of loyalty and retribution to the state" (Ueda 1937, 14). As will be discussed later, police surveillance and control of religions was strengthened during this period, and Tenrikyo was forced to emphasize its loyalty to the state even more clearly than before. We may thus understand

Ueda's argument as a somewhat acrobatic attempt to reinterpret the contradiction between *Doroumi kōki* and the national myths as a manifestation of Tenrikyo's nationalism in response to government pressure.

Although the general evaluation of *Doroumi kōki* outside Tenrikyo was that it was a wild fiction, there were attempts to counter the national mythology by tying its legitimacy to modern scientific theories from the West. Marginalized religions also desired to be recognized as bearers of modern values, even if their arguments proved unconvincing to the government and the general public. For example, Kinoshita Matsutarō (1922, 4) claimed that the story of *Doroumi kōki* was compatible with the theory of evolution and that Tenrikyo was "the most advanced, ideal new religion." He argued that *Doroumi kōki* is more scientific and rational compared to the biblical book of Genesis, as the former explains the process of God's gradual creation of the heaven and the earth as well as the gradual evolution from primitive creatures to human beings, whereas the latter claims that God created the heavens and the earth in a few days and humans in a single day. He also points out that the *Kiki* are only a compilation of ancient folklore and have little credibility as ancient history, while *Doroumi kōki* contains the "gist of the facts" thanks to direct divine revelation (Kinoshita 1922, 48). According to Kinoshita, *Doroumi kōki* was superior to the *Kiki* in terms of its value as a historical text describing the beginnings of the world and humankind.

The most radical confrontation between *Doroumi kōki* and the national mythology was instigated by Tenri Kenkyūkai 天理研究会, a group led by Ōnishi Aijirō 大西愛治郎. While working as a Tenrikyo missionary, Ōnishi had a mystical experience of receiving the will of God, and in 1913 he realized that he was a revelator who should succeed Nakayama Miki. Ōnishi appealed to various figures within Tenrikyo to validate the revelation, but they did not accept his assertions; in 1924 he was expelled from Tenrikyo. In 1928, Tenri Kenkyūkai compiled a doctrinal document called *Kenkyū shiryo* 研究資料. Murakami Shigeyoshi (1972, 106) argues that, in this document, Ōnishi and others "deny the records of the divine era of Japan (the *Kiki* myths) and clearly make a statement that the divine era is not historical fact and that the emperor on this ground is, of course, not a god and is not qualified to rule Japan." To be more precise, in their interpretation of *Doroumi kōki*, Ōnishi and others argued that the *Kiki* were not historical records but rather texts that predicted future events. The prophecy then converged with the idea that Ōnishi, who had inherited Nakayama Miki's will, would become the central leader for the unification of all nations. Tenrikyo could accept neither the proposal that Ōnishi was Nakayama Miki's successor nor the doctrine that denies the rule of the nation by the emperor. As a result, the leadership issued a statement to the outside world that Tenri Kenkyūkai was a completely unrelated organization. Nevertheless, the activities of Ōnishi

and his members illustrate how managing the potential tension between their mythology and the *Kiki* was of critical concern for marginalized religions.

The various textual interpretations examined above demonstrate the complex and multifarious nature of the relationship between the myths of Tenrikyo and the modern Japanese state. It is clear from a close reading of these texts that Tenrikyo actively constructed its own forms of popular religious nationalism that did not directly challenge the national mythos. Rather, Tenrikyo authors more often took considered and conciliatory approaches toward mythmaking ranging from adoption and integration to elision and equivocation, each of which created a somewhat different vision for Tenrikyo's identity and significance in the world.

Reikai monogatari as a Myth of Reconciliation and Reformation

While actors within Tenrikyo worked to clarify the relationship between *Doroumi kōki* and the national mythology, Deguchi Onisaburō engaged in a similar project but took a different approach. According to Onisaburō, classics such as the *Kiki* are valuable as "treasure books that should resolve the truth of the universe," but there were no thinkers at the time who could properly understand their truth (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 7: 160). In contrast, *Reikai monogatari* is said to have been "dictated and compiled at god's command to fill in the gaps in the classics and myths of the East and the West" as well as to reveal "some of the truths of the universe." For Onisaburō, who advocated the proclamation of the Imperial Way (*kōdō* 皇道), the *Kiki* were privileged as the textual "legacy of the Imperial Fathers," but they required supplementation by his *Reikai monogatari* (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 7: 527, 160).

Onisaburō and his followers sought to build a similar complementary relationship between themselves and the state. In his study, Kurihara attempted to clarify Onisaburō's worldview and its view of the state by delving into the plot of *Reikai monogatari* and connecting it to Onisaburō's biography and his movement's development. According to Kurihara (1982, 200, 203), the essential vision of the *Reikai monogatari* is accomplishing the rebirth of the autonomous and self-existent hometowns (*sato* 郷) as local, egalitarian communities or the construction of "heaven on earth" through the cooperation of missionaries—as extensions of Susanoo no Mikoto—and the indigenous people. However, Onisaburō did not depict hometowns as some flawless ideal. Rather, he presented them as crucibles "filled with contradictions that could be subverted into a society dominated by power at any time without the people's conscious activity." Thus, the main focus of *Reikai monogatari* is to "activate people in their daily lives toward the construction of such an unrealized hometown, to utilize

the hometown in their bodies, and in this sense, to subjectify the hometown" (Kurihara 1982, 202).

Yet the fact that Onisaburō's writings, including *Reikai monogatari*, are accompanied by his advocacy for protection of the emperor system and expansionist policies, seem to contradict the idea of rebuilding an autonomous and self-existing hometown. Regarding this point, Kurihara categorizes discourses that use the "language of the national polity"—which talks about the protection of the emperor system and expansionist policies—as "Sector A," and those that use the "language of daily life"—which speaks about the rebuilding of "hometowns" and cosmopolitanism—as "Sector B." He goes on to say that "the Omoto myth of the deity once expelled by Amaterasu appearing for the rebuilding and renewal of the universe contains a logic that reverses the myth of the emperor system. Therefore, Sector B is fundamentally opposed to Sector A." However, Kurihara points out that Onisaburō sought the survival of Sector B by incorporating Sector A as a "preventive device" and envisioned "a path of rebellion and salvation that is neither a total identification with the national polity nor a criticism of it from the outside, but an attempt to subvert it from within while being associated with it" (Kurihara 1982, 206–207). Kurihara notes that Onisaburō "carefully composed the Omoto mythology centered on the myth of *kunitsukami* 国つ神 (earthly deities) as opposed to the emperor system mythology centered on the *amatsukami* 天つ神 (heavenly deities)" while "trying to hide himself with the language of the national polity" (Kurihara 1982, 193–194). Kurihara thus regards *Reikai monogatari* as heresy. Such a view is made possible by de-essentializing the discourse of Sector A as the "ostensible and empty language of the national polity" (Kurihara 1982, 192). Therefore, Kurihara does not seriously discuss the nationalistic discourses belonging to Sector A in *Reikai monogatari*.[4]

Did Onisaburō himself make such a strict distinction between the myths of the state and of Omoto and between the "language of the national polity" and the "language of daily life"? In reading the text of *Reikai monogatari*, we must consider the point at which Kurihara's assumed dichotomy becomes dysfunctional. In so doing, we can better understand the complex modern experience of those who attempted to create new myths in modern Japan that cannot be neatly categorized as either orthodoxy or heresy (Nagaoka 2023, 159).

To illustrate the necessity of analyzing new religions' mythmaking in terms of popular religious nationalism, let us examine volume twelve of *Reikai monogatari* entitled "Ama no Iwato biraki" 天岩戸開. It is based on the *Kojiki* narrative

4. Kurihara (1982, 192) also mentions that the idea of Omoto was sidestepped into the "natural world based on the emperor system" by intellectual followers excited by Onisaburō's language of the national polity, but that this is a development "beyond the control of Onisaburō" and is detached from Onisaburō's own intentions.

of the same name, particularly the scenes featuring the casting out of Susanoo by Izanagi, the pledge between Amaterasu and Susanoo, Susanoo's wicked acts in Takamanohara 高天原, and Amaterasu's hiding in Ama no Iwato.

It is worth noting that prior to the composition of *Reikai monogatari*, Deguchi Nao had engaged with the Ama no Iwato myth in *Fudesaki*. She denied the legitimacy of the opening of Ama no Iwato in the *Kiki*, claiming that the world had been ruled by evil gods as a result of the "deceptive opening of Iwato" by Ame no Uzume no Mikoto 天宇受売命 and others, and that the "second opening of Iwato," that is, the rebuilding and renewal, was necessary (Yasumaru 2013, 147–148).

Almost twenty years later, in the aftermath of the severe government repression campaign known as the First Omoto Incident in 1921, Onisaburō boldly took up the Ama no Iwato tale once again to depict the confrontation between Amaterasu, who occupied an absolute position in the national mythology, and Susanoo, who is positioned as the chief deity of salvation in *Reikai monogatari*. I read this text as Onisaburō's attempt to construct a site of negotiation, or a contact zone, with the modern emperor state. As a marginalized mythmaker, Onisaburō had the difficult task of adjusting Omoto's strained relationship with the state and establishing a mythic basis for his new activities. In rereading this text with this situation in mind, moments emerge that disturb the supposed binary of orthodoxy versus heresy.

I will first give a synopsis of Onisaburō's version of the Ama no Iwato myth. A group of missionaries of Ananaikyō 三五教—a teaching based on the principle of *reishu taijū* 霊主体従 (spirit over matter) and Omoto's functional equivalent in *Reikai monogatari*, headed by Susanoo, Takamitsuhiko 高光彦, Tamamitsuhiko 玉光彦, and Kunimitsuhiko 国光彦—travel from the city of Iho in Egypt to the Nile River and around the Mediterranean Sea to do the divine work of salvation. At this time, the power of Urarukyō ウラル教—a teaching based on the opposing principle of *taishu reijū* 体主霊従 (body over spirit) and hostile to Ananaikyō—is spreading on the earth, causing it to fall to darkness and demons. In Iho, the Urarukyō adherents "drank alcohol without working and clouded the world with their selfishness, as a result of which evil spirits were generated all over the earth, the mountains withered, the rivers dried up, the grain did not ripen, the fruits were not mature, and the light of the sun and moon was obscured by black clouds" (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 633).

Susanoo and his fellows attempt to convert people, pacify demons with the power of words, and restore the world. Missionary Katoriwake 蚊取別 and Hatsuko 初公, a chivalrous man, join the party and the group proceeds with their adventure under the guidance of Hinode no kami 日の出の神. They succeed in exterminating the evil serpent infesting the Shirase River, and "the world that had been shut in darkness for a hundred days and a hundred nights" shines "as

brightly as the dawn of day" (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 675).[5] They then board a ship and sail through the Mediterranean, converting the other passengers along the way. Each of the three islands in the sea had three goddesses, all daughters of Susanoo.

One daughter, Miyukihime 深雪姫 (that is, Tagirihime 多紀理姫命), prepares to conquer a demon by gathering many strong deities on her island. Far away on Mt. Tenkyō 天教 (that is, Mt. Fuji), Amaterasu hears the voices of the warrior deities practicing and suspects that "the reason they are making weapons and practicing martial arts is probably because of the dirty mind of my brother Susanoo, who wants to occupy Takamanohara" (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 694). Under the command of Amaterasu, Amenohohi 天菩比命 leads an army to attack the island. Miyukihime responds, "We have many weapons and soldiers, but they are not meant for killing the enemy," and she orders her men to "not antagonize them with arms but to correct their mistakes with good and beautiful words" (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 696). Amenohohi, understanding the true intentions of Miyukihime, disarms his army, and the "beautiful heart of Susanoo" becomes clear (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 702). Meanwhile, Amaterasu also sends Amatsuhikonekami 天津彦根神 and his army to another island where Akizukihime 秋月姫 (that is, Ichikishimahime 市杵島姫命) resides. However, when Amatsuhikone and his men hear Akizukihime recite *Amatsu norito* 天津祝詞, they abandon their weapons and "[dance] around like mad, forgetting the distinction between friends and foes"; in this way, "the suspicion against Susanoo was completely cleared" (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 709–710).

The first half of the Ama no Iwato tale in *Reikai monogatari* seems to have no direct relation to the story of the *Kojiki*, but it describes how the Ananaikyō (that is, Omoto) missionaries open the "rock door of the heart" (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 625) through their activities. The "Ama no Iwato biraki" of *Reikai monogatari* does not simply imitate the *Kojiki* narrative but transforms it into a narrative of religious conversion and salvation. The latter half deals more directly with the confrontation between Amaterasu and Susanoo found in the national mythology. However, these sibling deities do not appear together in the scene. Instead, the missionaries learn from the conversations of those aboard the ship that the pledges of the two gods were being made. The converts thus play the role of witnesses to the divine drama unfolding on the islands of the Mediterranean. They criticize Amaterasu's invasion, remarking that even though all the earthly continents are assigned to be under Susanoo's rule, Amaterasu is scheming to make everything her own.

5. The evil serpent in the Shirase River is a reference to the eight-headed serpent Yamata no Orochi 八岐大蛇 that Susanoo defeats in the *Kiki* version of the myth.

This passage associates the relationship between Amaterasu and Susanoo to those between Deguchi Nao and Onisaburō and the government/public and Onisaburō. The speaker describes the characters of the two deities as follows:

> The sister goddess looks like a goddess of love as clear and transparent as a jade, but her spirit is that of *henjō nanshi* 変性男子, and she is a very fierce and egotistical god. The younger brother god was born from the spirit of a terrible, sharp sword, but his spirit is that of the goddess of infinite benevolence and mercy, *zuirei* 瑞霊, or spirit of goodness.
>
> (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 706)

Amaterasu is understood according to Omoto's concept of *henjō nanshi* (female body, male spirit), while Susanoo is *henjō nyoshi* 変性女子 (male body, female spirit). Later in *Reikai monogatari*, this language returns in a section titled "Comments on the *Kojiki*," which touches on the narrative of the *Kojiki* from the birth of the three noble gods to the Ama no Iwato tale.[6] Here, Onisaburō relates the fearful and reactionary Amaterasu with Nao and Susanoo with himself:

> [Nao was] very oppressive to the actions of *henjō nyoshi* [Onisaburō], saying that he would come to Takamanohara and crush it. Also, it appears in *Fude-saki* that *henjō nyoshi* are destroying the entire Omoto.… [We are] working day and night for the sake of this imperial country, following the teachings of the founder [Nao], by preaching the divine teachings of *reishu taijū*. However, since the founder also possesses the spirit of *henjō nanshi*, she is still highly suspicious. Amaterasu was suspicious of her brother's beautiful heart and wondered if he had come with a bad heart. The founder, likewise, has a model of the divine world of *henjō nanshi*.
>
> (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 723)

As is well known, Onisaburō joined Nao's group at the end of the nineteenth century. Though he distinguished himself with his abundant knowledge of *kokugaku* 国学 (national classic studies) and *reigaku* 霊学 (spiritual studies), as well as his spiritual powers and excellent business sense, he repeatedly clashed with Nao and his old adherents over the direction of their activities (Ōmoto Nanajū Nenshi Hensankai 1964; Kawamura 2017). In this way, Onisaburō alludes to this tension and the righteousness of his actions through his rendition of the Ama no Iwato myth.

Furthermore, Onisaburō broadens his critique by commenting, "It is the same as how today's public, newspaper and magazine reporters, established religious leaders, and scholars are wondering if Omoto is thinking about something suspicious" (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 723–724), linking

6. This section is a record of a lecture given in 1920, before the First Omoto Incident, but it seems to have been inserted as a supplemental reading for the main narrative.

Amaterasu's suspicion to the way society looked at Omoto on the eve of the First Omoto Incident. Thus, the confrontation between Amaterasu and Susanoo is not only a common motif in the mythological world of the *Kojiki* and *Reikai monogatari* but also symbolizes the unbalanced relationship between the national myths and the myth of Omoto (at the religious or political level), between Nao and Onisaburō (at the group level), and between society and Omoto (at the societal level). The "beautiful heart" of Susanoo/Onisaburō/Omoto is not understood by the overly skeptical Amaterasu/Nao/the nation and society.

The major difference between the account in the *Kojiki* and in *Reikai monogatari* is that in the latter, Amaterasu, driven by unjust suspicion, orders a violent and unwarranted attack on the innocent followers of Susanoo. In response to the invasion, Miyukihime and Akizukihime ask whether the aggressor is "the devil army of Uraruhiko ウラル彦 [Urarukyō]" or "the divine army of the great imperial deity [Amaterasu] who appears on Mt. Tenkyō" (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 696). The goddesses clarify the distinction that the true enemies of Susanoo and his followers are the forces that uphold the principles of "body over spirit" and of "power over spirit." Amaterasu was never Susanoo's enemy in the first place; rather, Susanoo and Amaterasu are called upon to work together to rebuild the wayward world. Susanoo's dictum to "correct their mistakes with good and beautiful words" moves the attacker's mind, and the adversarial relationship between the two sides turns into a festive scene of "forgetting the distinction between friends and foes" (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 709) At this point, too, the story is revised from the plot of the *Kojiki*, in which Susanoo unilaterally declares his victory in the pledge and is then expelled from Takamanohara after the opening of Ama no Iwato. In other words, the story of Ama no Iwato in *Reikai monogatari* is ultimately one of the reconciliations of Susanoo/Onisaburō/Omoto with Amaterasu/Nao/the state and society. It exemplifies the convoluted attempts of a minority religion seeking to gain recognition and resist marginalization by the ruling class and mainstream society (Nagaoka 2023, 164).

Hereticization of Marginalized Myths

While dictating *Reikai monogatari* in the 1920s, Deguchi Onisaburō took advantage of the spirit of international cooperation that followed the conclusion of World War I to intensify the international activities of Omoto. However, in the 1930s, especially after the Manchurian Incident, Omoto once again took on a more nationalistic character. Onisaburō advocated for Japan's expansionist continental policy, including the establishment of Manchukuo, and emphasized the

need for national defense.[7] In 1934, as *Nihonshūgi* 日本主義 discourse gained popularity, Onisaburō founded Shōwa Shinseikai 昭和神聖会 and energetically campaigned for the elimination of the theory that the emperor was an organ of the government (*tennō kikan setsu* 天皇機関説), the abolition of the London Naval Treaty, and the relief of farming villages. Shōwa Shinseikai had many right-wing and military members and supporters and attracted attention as an influential nationalistic organization.

The remarkable expansion of Omoto under Onisaburō was forcibly ended on 8 December 1935 by a massive crackdown by the police known as the Second Omoto Incident. The Special Higher Police had conducted a clandestine investigation, and many senior officials and laymen, including Onisaburō, were arrested on charges of impiety and violating the Peace Preservation Law. Under this law, Omoto was banned and ordered to dissolve, and its headquarters in Ayabe 綾部 and Kameoka 亀岡, as well as its branches throughout Japan, were destroyed before the trial.

The interpretation of *Reikai monogatari* was a key point of contention in the trial against Onisaburō. Based on the police investigation, the preliminary hearing conclusion recapitulated the doctrines of Omoto, centered on *Reikai monogatari*, in a mythological narrative consisting of three layers (*Ōmoto shiryō shūsei*, 342–343). Each of these three layers deals with different deities and temporalities, but all of them are consistent in their recognition that the original rulers of the earth have been forced from their positions and that this has led to the continuation of the "age of the survival of the fittest, the world of *shura* 修羅" (*Ōmoto shiryō shūsei*, 343). For example, the first layer is outlined as follows:

> Kunitokotachi no Mikoto, who was once entrusted by Tsuki no Ōkami 撞の大神 with sovereignty over the earth, was forced to retreat due to the animosity of his subordinate deities and was replaced by Banko Daijin 盤古大神 or Ninigi no Mikoto 瓊瓊杵尊, who came to Japan. His descendants, the "present imperial lineage," ruled over the earth. But the result is a society governed by the principle of body over spirit, riddled with guilt and iniquity, and a disastrous situation in which the strong oppress the weak. In order to rebuild and renew the chaotic world of today and make it a world of supreme benevolence and love, Onisaburō should abolish the current imperial lineage and become the ruler of Japan as the "spiritual representative" of Kunitokotachi no Mikoto, his wife Toyokumono no Mikoto 豊雲野尊, and Tsuki no Ōkami.
>
> (*Ōmoto shiryō shūsei*, 342–343)

7. Onisaburō developed a wide range of activities, including the establishment of the Jinrui Aizenkai 人類愛善会 (Humanity Love Society), whose slogan was "humanity compatriotism" and "all religions are derived from the same root"; exchanges with Daoyuan of China, Poch'ŏn'gyo in Korea, and the Bahá'í faith of Iranian origin; and expeditions to Mongolia and campaigns to spread the Esperanto language.

Taking the place of Kunitokotachi no Mikoto, Banko Daijin is equated with the ancestral deity of the emperor, Ninigi no Mikoto, and rule by the imperial lineage is made to correspond to the "state of confusion" of the world. The report assumes Onisaburō to be the spiritual representative of the gods who had gone into hiding and will save this world. According to such an interpretation, Omoto's doctrine would be considered impious in that it states that the rule by the imperial lineage has failed. It would also be considered as having the intention to change the national polity in that it claims to follow the Imperial Way but seeks to abolish the imperial lineage and make Onisaburō the ruler.

In a similar fashion to Kurihara, this document divides *Reikai monogatari* into the "surface" religious expression and the "hidden" political intention of usurping the throne. It interprets the former as a disguise to deceive the state and adherents while the latter is the original purpose of Omoto. The nuances of the negotiation that Onisaburō attempted with the state and the majority in *Reikai monogatari* are erased, and the myth is judged to be heretical by the violent logic of the dichotomy of orthodoxy and heresy.

In the trial, Onisaburō denied the charges, mainly arguing that: (1) the understanding of *Reikai monogatari* in the preliminary hearing conclusion was fatally erroneous; (2) *Reikai monogatari* is a story about the spiritual and psychic worlds and not "about the actual world, as politicians say"; and (3) Onisaburō and Omoto were "imperialists." Onisaburō said that "it is disgusting to read" the report, and "it is terrible to even think about such a thing [that he should replace the emperor]." When he remained unrefuted, he said, "I can't help but get angry" (*Ōmoto shiryō shūsei*, 390, 411, 384, 374–375, 368), revealing his resentment toward the detectives and the preliminary judge who conducted the interrogation with prejudice.

It may be tempting to view Onisaburō's affective utterances as an evasive performance of the language of the national polity along the lines of Kurihara's argument. However, Onisaburō's attitude here echoes the account of Susanoo's ravaging of Takamanohara after the pledge in "Comments on the *Kojiki*." According to Onisaburō, Susanoo did not become arrogant; rather, he became desperate because he was uncomfortable with being told that he was wrong, even though the innocence of his heart should have been obvious (Reikai Monogatari Kankōkai 2004, 2: 727). Viewed together, Onisaburō's anger and lamentation at his trial appear to be genuine emotions that arose from the rejection and crushing of the vision of rebuilding and renewal through reconciliation and joint struggle. Here, real events resonate with the mythology of *Reikai monogatari*, but Onisaburō and his mythmaking project fail to resolve the tensions between Omoto and the state.

The Second Omoto Incident led to a much stricter control of various religions by the police. The state made a sharp distinction between religions as friends and

enemies of the total war system and imposed severe repression on those judged to be the latter. As for Tenrikyo, the police could not easily touch the organization due to its status as an officially recognized religion under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education and its size. However, the state, in the form of a "request" from the Ministry of Education, forced Tenrikyo to reform its doctrine and organization (*kakushin* 革新) to fit into the wartime system. The report submitted to the Minister of Education by Nakayama Shōzen 中山正善, the leader of Tenrikyo at the time, lists the specific contents of the reform: "We will focus on two points concerning doctrines and rituals: (1) All doctrines, rituals, and events shall be based on *Meiji kyōten* and shall not be contrary to it, and (2) no teachings related to *Doroumi kōki* or the story of the origin shall be used thereafter" (*Shakai undō no jōkyō* 11: 1101).

Tenrikyo remained under scrutiny as it began this reformation. For example, the police record the words of missionaries who opposed the reforms. They expressed their dissatisfaction with the prohibition of *Doroumi kōki* and other documents they had used in their missionary activities, as well as the forced use of *Meiji kyōten*, which directly expresses nationalistic ideology. One missionary commented that because *Doroumi kōki* tells of "the beginning of human beings," which is an element not found in the myths of the *Kiki*, the text would someday enjoy a resurgence, while others frankly complained that *Meiji kyōten* is "so difficult to understand and lacking in religious appeal" that "it is impossible for these ignorant people to simply bring up such a difficult book" (*Shakai undō no jōkyō* 11: 1122). One missionary even went so far as to say, "I have never given a single glance to *Meiji kyōten*" (*Shakai undō no jōkyō* 12: 396). Despite members' criticisms, under pressure from the state, Tenrikyo abandoned its claim to its own cosmology in *Doroumi kōki* and devoted itself solely to the total war system.[8]

Conclusion

In this article, I have examined the mythmaking projects of marginalized religions in modern Japan through the texts of Tenrikyo and Omoto and the process of their reinterpretation. Myths were not only the product of the religious and inner imagination of religious groups but also highly political texts that became the grounds for negotiation and confrontation with the modern Japanese state and the official national mythology that legitimized it.

The marginalized religions of the first half of the twentieth century constructed their mythic texts using both the "language of the national polity" and the "language of daily life." If we look at Tenrikyo, it is clear that the "language

8. Tenrikyo contributed greatly to the nation as a source of manpower to support the production of materials that were in short supply in villages, factories, coal mines, and other areas (Nagaoka 2015).

of the national polity" in *Meiji kyōten* was perceived as alien to the adherents. However, members engaged in the discourse of popular religious nationalism by combining official nationalism with texts written in the more familiar "language of daily life" such as *Doroumi kōki* and *Ofudesaki*. As a leader of Omoto, Deguchi Onisaburō also wove his own interpretation of the *Kojiki* into texts narrated in the vivid "language of daily life" in *Reikai monogatari*.

Tenrikyo's *Doroumi kōki* had little to do with modern nationalism, but it did incorporate folk knowledge about the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. As the organization grew, Tenrikyo faced the difficult task of explaining the differences between *Doroumi kōki* and the national myths, both of which drew on the *Kiki*. Several parties took different approaches. Those in charge of compiling Tenrikyo's official doctrine in *Meiji kyōten* chose to remain silent about *Doroumi kōki*, which might conflict with the myth of the state. Attempts to explain that the *Kiki* and *Doroumi kōki* were unrelated despite some apparent similarities in the names of deities, as in the case of Iwai Takahito, struggled to follow a consistent logic. Ōnishi Aijirō and his Tenri Kenkyūkai denied the legitimacy of the emperor's rule based on the *Kiki* by assuming the infallibility of the *Doroumi kōki* and became the target of exclusion and suppression from both Tenrikyo and the state. Finally, Ueda sought to devise a logic that could resolve the contradiction between the two mythologies in order to gain recognition of Tenrikyo as a sectarian Shinto organization loyal to official nationalism. Regardless of the approach, Tenrikyo as a marginalized religion was torn between two contradictory goals: the pursuit of its own unique values and the identification with dominant values.

In the case of Omoto as well, there was no element of modern nationalism in the mythical story written in *Fudesaki* by its founder, Deguchi Nao, but in Deguchi Onisaburō's process of reinterpretation and the development of *Reikai monogatari*, Omoto found its mythology in a complicated relationship with the official mythology of the state. While emphasizing the importance of the *Kiki*, Onisaburō believed that the texts needed to be supplemented by *Reikai monogatari*. This text, which he dictated in the aftermath of the First Omoto Incident, reflects this tension with the state, but it cannot be reduced to opposition. In *Reikai monogatari*, Onisaburō altered the plot of the *Kojiki* to construct a story in which Omoto reconciles with the state through its "beautiful heart," and together they work hand in hand to rebuild and renew the world.

However, after the Second Omoto Incident in 1935, agents of the state erased the nuance that Onisaburō had put into his texts. They interpreted *Reikai monogatari* as an evil heretical myth written with the intention of disguising a plot to usurp the throne behind their claim to follow the "beautiful name of the Imperial Way." Following the crackdown on Omoto, the state turned its gaze to Tenrikyo and its mythology. Both parties claimed that there was no connection between *Doroumi kōki* and the *Kiki*, and the reform movement recognized *Meiji kyōten*

as Tenrikyo's official text and precluded the use of *Doroumi kōki*. Thus, previous efforts to reconcile without contradiction Tenrikyo's original mythology with the mythology of the nation were invalidated. In the total war system of the mid-1930s and beyond, there was no place left for the myths of marginalized religions.

The state tolerated marginalized religions' popular religious nationalism to a certain extent. For example, there was an obvious gap between the content of Tenrikyo's *Meiji kyōten* and the teachings actually preached by missionaries. Though there were external criticisms of this practice, the government and police did not see this as a major problem before the reformation.[9] For the state, a large religious organization such as Tenrikyo—which had accumulated abundant economic power, a nationwide network of local branches, and the know-how to mobilize the spiritual power and labor force of its adherents—had great utility, and there was no need to unnecessarily suppress its popular religious nationalism. Many criticized Omoto—which was not an officially recognized religion—as an "evil cult" after the First Omoto Incident, and the state strictly monitored its activities, as evidenced by the banning of some volumes of *Reikai monogatari*. Nevertheless, Ōnisaburō remained active in speech right up to the Second Omoto Incident, and his advocacy of the Imperial Way and insistence on social change attracted many supporters. Marginalized religions struggled to create their own place in society while enduring oscillations between exclusion and recognition by the state and majority society.

Understanding the relationship between the myths of the state and those of popular religions in terms of the dichotomy of orthodoxy versus heresy is an overgeneralization of the specific circumstances of the period, a time when the modern Japanese state tightened its control over religions in the process of building the total war system and strictly prohibited any deviation from the official theory of national polity. As we have seen, such generalizations at the time had dangerous consequences for the marginalized religions involved. Moreover, the orthodoxy/heresy binary is a violent logic that continues to play out in postwar historiographies of modern Japanese religion. Jolyon Baraka Thomas (2019) argues that in postwar Japan, the idea that religious leaders must essentially win and defend their religious freedom against the state became prevalent, and that this was instilled by the occupiers. The formation of the image of popular religions as standing in opposition to state power was also greatly influenced by Marxism, which, after prewar suppression, gained power in postwar Japanese academia (Nagaoka 2020). The composition of the state-religion conflict, narrated through the lens of postwar values, renders invisible the complex process of negotiation between the state and marginalized religions. Scholars of Japanese

9. However, this does not mean that regulations did not exist, as was the case when Iwai's *Doroumi kōki: Fu chūshaku* was banned.

religion must carefully reconsider these received narratives and take seriously the experiences of marginalized people on their own terms. In so doing, we will gain a better understanding of marginalized religions' goals and efforts to navigate unbalanced power relations with the state and majority society, and how these interactions shaped their religious world.

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