

The Formation of Emperor Worship
in the New Religions
—The Case of Fujidō—

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In modern Japan, particularly prior to Japan's defeat in the Pacific war, an exceedingly strong feeling of veneration for the emperor was widespread among the Japanese people, and this provided the foundation for the emperor system, a political system whereby the state had made the emperor the ultimate source of authority. Although the political system changed as a result of defeat in the war, respect and affection for the emperor and the imperial household can be found among a considerably large proportion of the nation even to the present day. Whence come these feelings towards the emperor held by the people of modern Japan? The notion that governments of the modern period have succeeded in producing such feelings where no such feelings had existed before is, surely, as unrealistic as the notion that the common people of pre-modern times already entertained the concept of a "line of emperors from ages eternal." There must be both continuity and discontinuity in the evolution of the thought and attitudes of the common people with regard to the emperor from the premodern to the modern period. How did these thoughts and attitudes evolve? This essay will

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investigate how the idea of the emperor and the way of perceiving Japan as a country evolved, or changed, within new religions that had come into being among the common people, during the period of the Restoration.

“New Religions” are religious movements that grew up among the general populace towards the end of the Tokugawa period or later. The doctrines and movements in the New Religions, arising as they did among the populace and supported by the populace, reflect the life experiences and social awareness of the general populace of those particular times and periods. Conversely, the New Religions exercised a considerable influence on the consciousness of a large number of the common people involved in them. Accordingly, it should be possible, by studying the doctrines and movements in the New Religions, to deduce general trends in the attitudes and thought of the common people. Particularly when one tries to ascertain the attitudes and thought of the common people in Tokugawa and early modern times (who only very rarely gave any systematic expression to their own thoughts), it often happens that one can discover valuable material in the New Religions that one cannot obtain elsewhere (INOUE 1981).

During the single period from the end of the Tokugawa period through to early Meiji, there arose in rapid succession a large number of New Religions, each with its own distinct characteristics: Kurozumikyō 黒住教, Maruyamakyō 丸山教, Tenrikyō 天理教, and Konkōkyō 金光教, to name a few. Each of them originated in traditional folk religion, but in the process of maturing as a religion they each reached the stage where, with universal salvation as their goals, they questioned the way society as a whole was going and frequently expressed their own views about even the emperor and Japan (MURAKAMI 1972; YASUMARU and HIROTA 1966). Within the lifetime of the founders of these New Religions, or within that of the second- or third-generation leaders, these New Religions had to face policies promoted by the new Meiji government whose purpose was to unify people's attitudes in order to strengthen their sense of nationhood, in particular a series of religious policies aimed at the formation of State Shinto. This ideological system, whose core was emperor worship and loyalty to the state, two ideas that the government tried to instill into the people by means of these policies, included elements that contradicted this or that doctrine in each of the New Religions. The reactions of the New Religions at the time

varied from religion to religion, from meek submission to defiant opposition, but by the beginning of the twentieth century almost all the New Religions that had arisen in the late Tokugawa or early Meiji period had adopted emperor worship and patriotic and nationalistic doctrines, and had come to assume their roles as Sectarian Shinto in the "religious section" of State Shinto (MURAKAMI 1982).

What course did these New Religions follow, then, in altering their original views on the emperor and Japan and adapting to the doctrinal system of State Shinto? Pressure from government authorities was, of course, an extremely important external factor, but it alone cannot explain fully how each of the religions was able to make such turnabouts without loss of its own identity. By following the internal process of turnabout within each individual New Religion, and by examining how its original concept about the emperor and Japan developed (or changed) and finally conformed to the State Shinto system, we can gain an insight into the developments in the attitudes and thoughts of the populace as a whole with regard to the emperor.¹

In this essay I shall analyze Fujidō 不二道, a religion that already had a sort of doctrinal system by the end of the Tokugawa period. Compared to other late Tokugawa or early Meiji New Religions such as Kurozumikyō, Maruyamakyō, Konkōkyō, and Tenrikyō, Fujidō came into being slightly earlier, in the early nineteenth century. The source from which it derived, the Miroku sect of Fujikō 富士講身祿派, was already in existence in the first half of the eighteenth century.² Still, in at least three respects it has features in common with the New Religions of late Tokugawa and early Meiji: 1) the founder, Jikigyō Miroku, coming from the class of commoners, who, while basing his movements on popular beliefs such as those of Maitreya (in Japanese, Maitreya) and the grain spirits (*kokurei* 穀霊) and on the folk religion Fujikō (a mountain religion in the Shugendō tradition), preached new doctrines as well; 2) organizational support by widespread spontaneous groupings of common people that transcended regional and social classes and occupations; 3) a goal of universal salvation of mankind and the reform of society, and the realization of a utopian society on earth. Also, as I shall

¹ KATSURAJIMA 1983 is an example of early research done from this viewpoint.

² On Fujikō, see INOBE 1928 and IWASHINA 1983; on Fujidō, see WATANABE 1942 and OKADA 1984, 1976–1985.

touch upon again later, the Miroku sect of Fujikō and the Fujidō both had at the heart of their doctrine a belief in monotheism, a life-affirming view of the universe, and an insistence on the essential equality of human beings. All these features are common to the great majority of New Religions that arose between the late Tokugawa period and the present day (TSUSHIMA et al. 1979). For all these reasons, it is possible to uncover general tendencies in the attitudes of at least a considerable proportion of the common people, by following leads taken from the doctrines and movements in Miroku Fujikō and Fujidō.

Fujikō and Fujidō during the Tokugawa Period

Fujikō is a folk religion based on devotion to Mt Fuji. Kakugyō Tōbutsu 角行藤仏, an ascetic in the Shugendō tradition who was most active from the late 16th to early 17th centuries, is considered its founder. Kakugyō is said to have undertaken a variety of voluntary austerities for the sake of bringing universal relief to all those suffering from the civil wars and epidemics then raging, and in the course of his austerities, ways to relieve these sufferings were revealed to him through the light of the sun and the moon.³ The sixth-generation leader of Fujikō, Jikigyō Miroku 食行身祿, travelled from his mountain village in Ise to Edo and on his own made a successful career as an oil merchant. In 1688 he was given a revelation that the world would be transformed to an ideal "Age of Miroku." From this time on, devoting himself to spreading devotion to Mt Fuji, he wrote such works as *Ichijifusetsu no maki* 一字不説之巻, *Osoegaki* 御添書, and *Gosōshi* 御双紙, and dictated the contents of his dying legacy, *Sanjūichinichi no maki* 三十一日之巻 (Scroll record of thirty-one days).⁴ In 1733, alarmed at the state of the country over the past year, with famine and rice shortages, tyrannical rule under the shogun, Yoshimune, and the repeated peasant uprisings with their widespread destruction, and praying for the advent of the Age of Miroku, he starved himself to death at Eboshi Rock on the side of Mt Fuji.

³ Kakugyō's handwritten memorandum, found in IWASHINA 1983, p. 56.

⁴ The *Ichijifusetsu no maki*, *Osoegaki*, and *Gosōshi* are published in Collection 4 (hereafter, H IV) of OKADA 1976–1985. *Sanjūichinichi no maki* is published in MITAMURA 1915, also in MURAKAMI and YASUMARU 1971.

Afterwards, his children and disciples formed several Fujikō groups and expanded the organization, so that through such activities as climbing Mt Fuji, faith-healing prayers, and the enshrining of models of Mt Fuji they were able to gain a large number of believers from among the common people in Edo and its surrounding regions. But the branch formed by Miroku's daughter Hana and then carried on by a silversmith named Sangyō Rokuō [or Rikuō] 参行六王 stressed the practice of Miroku's teachings and rejected the idea of gaining followers by means of prayers, etc. Perhaps for this reason they did not succeed in gaining many supporters, and for a long time remained isolated from the prosperity of the other branches. Finally, in 1808, the aging Sangyō Rokuō happened to meet a proprietor of a malt shop, Kotani Shōbei 小谷庄兵衛 by name, in Hatogaya (in present-day Saitama Prefecture). Kotani, a Fuji ascetic who agreed with the aims of Sangyō's religious teachings, received from the latter the name Rokugyō Sanshi 禄行三志 and was appointed his successor. Sanshi and his followers called Jikigyō Miroku their founding father and organized religious groups that embraced his teachings. This was the beginning of what was later known as Fujidō.⁵

As a result of energetic propagation by Sanshi and his followers, by the 1860s Fujidō had come to have the largest organization of religious followers of all the New Religions then in existence. According to records from 1863, the distribution of believers ranged over 995 villages in eighteen provinces⁶ from the Kantō area to northern Kyūshū. It has been impossible to determine quantitatively the distribution of believers according to social class, but as far as can be judged from what is found in the records, a large proportion of believers were farmers and merchants. But towards the 1860s believers included some court nobles and samurai, though admittedly they were few in number.

The doctrines and activities of Jikigyō Miroku, Sangyō Rokuō, and Fujidō can be gathered from the enormous amount of documents kept by the descendants of believers. These doctrines, while based on the teachings of Jikigyō Miroku, also incorporate the

⁵ At first the religious group that Sanshi led did not have its own name; the name Fujidō was decided upon in 1838.

⁶ Musashi, Kazusa, Shimōsa, Hitachi, Kōzuke, Shimotsuke, Kai, Shinano, Suruga, Tōtōmi, Mikawa, Owari, Ise, Ōmi, Yamashiro, Yamato, Settsu, and Hizen.

interpretations and commentaries of Sangyō Rokuō, Sanshi, and their followers. Both Sangyō and Sanshi were cultured gentlemen for their times; Sangyō's writings contain explanations which refer to the theories of yin-yang and the five elements, and Sanshi is said to have been influenced by the Shingaku scholar Nakazawa Dōni 中沢道二 and others.⁷ As a result, Fujidō doctrine has come to include teachings and theories derived from a variety of sources. Still, because the writings of Jikigyō Miroku have been transcribed many times and passed on from believer to believer, and also because believers have been constantly urged to return to the teachings of Jikigyō and to think in terms of them,⁸ at least until the Meiji Restoration Fujidō doctrine was kept free of any great deviation from the teachings first expounded by Jikigyō Miroku.

The Teachings of Jikigyō Miroku

What sort of doctrine, then, did Jikigyō Miroku and his successor, the Fujidō, inculcate? I shall describe only the main points (MIYAZAKI 1977, 1980).

Jikigyō Miroku and the Fujidō believed that the creation of all things in this world as well as the progress of the four seasons are all presided over by the original father and mother.⁹ The original father and mother were considered the same as the sun and moon, and in both Fujikō and Fujidō they were worshipped as the only absolute beings. Because human beings were all produced by the original father and mother, their hearts are by nature meant to be "united with Heaven." With one's own heart providing the clues, the goal of belief should be knowledge of the mind of the original father and mother, the creators of the universe, and the devoting of one's energies to peace and fertility in this world. In concrete, this meant diligence in the family occupation, matrimonial harmony, mutual support, and the practice of such ordinary virtues and ser-

⁷ Sangyō's works can be found in H IV. For the relationship between Sanshi and Shingaku, see OKADA 1976-1985, the commentaries on Collection 9.

⁸ There were many branches of the Fujikō where the writings of Jikigyō Miroku were treated as secret; Fujidō, however, urged its members to read his works. Often *furigana* were added not only to Jikigyō's writings but to anything doctrinal in nature, thus making it possible for people who did not know Chinese characters to read them.

⁹ In Fujikō they used the made-up characters 彌 and 僕 for "original father" and "original mother," while in Fujidō they used 練 and 僕.

vices as the maintenance and repair of roads, embankments, irrigation works, and other such public installations. To this extent, then, except for its belief in one divine couple (the original father and mother), it did not go beyond the confines of the popular morality that Tokugawa authorities had taught to the general populace.

In their view of society, however, Jikigyō Miroku and Fujidō held extremely original ideas. One of these was their stress on the equality of the four social classes (warriors, farmers, artisans, and tradesmen) in the country and the equality of the sexes. Because they thought that all human beings were born from the same original father and mother, and that humans were reborn into this world any number of times, sometimes into different walks of life and different social levels, the difference between high and low birth or occupation was not recognized as an essential distinction. On the basis of this idea, some leaders did, in fact, criticize the overbearing attitude of warriors and the servility of commoners. Also, because Fujidō had a strong interest in conception and birth and the fruitfulness of farm products, it put a high value on yin-yang and male-female harmony, and as a result strove to abolish from families and from society the custom of treating women as inferior to men. One expression of this belief can be seen in the way Sanshi challenged the generally accepted religious idea that women were impure, by having one of the women believers stand on the top of Mt Fuji, where the presence of women had been prohibited.¹⁰

Another feature was the idea of *furikawari* ぶりかわり, the concept of a revolution of the whole of society. I mentioned earlier that Jikigyō Miroku received a revelation that the world would be renewed and an ideal world, the Age of Miroku, would come; now, both his successor, Sangyō Rokuō, and the Fujidō believed that in the not too distant future this contradiction-filled present world would be completely renewed and be followed by the arrival of the "Age of Miroku." The eager expectation of an ideal world called the Age of Miroku originates in the Buddhist belief that Maitreya will descend to this world in order to save all human beings. Blending with the traditional pattern of thinking of the Japanese, this idea has appeared in a variety of forms within popular beliefs; most of them portray, and yearn for the arrival of, an age of Miroku in which the common people's desires will be fulfilled directly in this

¹⁰ See the commentaries in Collection 9 of OKADA 1976-1985.

world, for example, a world of plentiful crops, or a world of abundant monetary riches (MIYATA 1975).

While the Age of Miroku proclaimed by Jikigyō Miroku also derived from this popular belief, in his case it was predicated upon a criticism of the contradictions to be found in the society of his time—on the one hand a high-handed government “wringing tears from the people” and on the other hand the selfish and shortsighted mentality of the people: “just intent on taking all they can from others with no thought to the future” (*Ichijifusetsu no maki*)—and was conceived as a world in which such contradictions would be resolved. Hence his Age of Miroku had an element that went beyond the age-of-Miroku concept of popular belief.¹¹ For he depicted it as a society in which there would not only be plentiful harvests, but people would also assist one another while devoting themselves assiduously to their family occupations, and those in authority would not fail to distribute among everyone both money and rice and would not punish people excessively. Accordingly, for the Age of Miroku preached by Jikigyō Miroku to be realized, it was absolutely necessary for both the common people and those in power to consciously alter their attitudes in their everyday lives and in their manner of governing. And since, according to the revelation he received from Heaven, the end of this world and the switch to the Age of Miroku had been decided upon by the creator of this world beforehand, the Age of Miroku would be sure to be actualized upon earth as long as, and as soon as, the conditions on the side of human beings were fulfilled. I think it is safe to say that such a concept of the Age of Miroku, inasmuch as it made reform of the world and the actualization of the ideal world a responsibility of human beings, was clearly different from the concept of the age of Miroku in popular belief, according to which one had to wait in yearning for a dream world whose arrival could not be predicted.

This teaching of Jikigyō Miroku's, that men are able to bring about the ideal world through their own efforts, became the most important belief, the cornerstone, of the Fujidō doctrinal system. It also appealed very strongly to Fujidō believers. The immediate reaction of the majority of believers was to work hard at the practical

¹¹ Jikigyō Miroku explained the meaning of “Miroku” as making “one’s place in life fairly well off.” Because the word *roku* has the meanings “happiness” and “undistorted,” he seems to have taken “Miroku” to mean “keeping oneself straight and coming into happiness.”

morality described earlier, with a view to doing their share, along with those around them, toward first making their manner of living suited to the "Age of Miroku." Some of them, hoping to inform the emperor and the shogun of their doctrine and thus gain official recognition of Fujidō so as to speed up the actualization of the Age of Miroku, had recourse to the Bakufu (MIYAZAKI 1985b).

As a result of this direct appeal, however, Fujidō was banned by the Bakufu in 1849. Instead of being destroyed by the decree, it continued to grow even stronger under its ninth-generation leader, Gyōga 行雅 (Sangyō Sansoku), the chief priest of Daigosan Rishō-in who succeeded Sanshi after the latter's death. Particularly after the opening of the country in 1854, when political, economic, and social unrest was breaking out and when, in addition, there were frequent large-scale natural disasters such as the Great Ansei Earthquake (1855), there spread among the general populace a vague sense of crisis. Fujidō believers spoke frequently that "this is it, the time for men to be converted, for the world to be renewed," and concluded that the time was at hand for Jikigyō Miroku's predictions to be fulfilled. On the basis of this assessment of events, from about 1854 till 1868, Fujidō was extremely active, for its followers were convinced that the world was at a crossroads: either the world would be renewed and become the Age of Miroku, or human beings would end up unable to satisfy the wishes of the original father and mother and would meet with catastrophe (MIYAZAKI 1984). Among their activities were a mass pilgrimage to Mt Fuji when the Boshin war (between the daimyo supporting the emperor and the Tokugawa Bakufu) broke out in 1868; the *owabi no gyō* 御詫の行 (religious austerities as atonement) by the entire organization when fears increased that an attack on Edo by the military forces of the daimyo was imminent; and Gyōga's attempt to present a memorial to the imperial court urging the official adoption of Fujidō.

One can only wonder what the effect was on the Fujidō faithful when, following the Meiji Restoration the new government came into being and installed the Meiji emperor, given their extremely heightened consciousness of crisis, their practices of religious austerity, and their prayers that catastrophe be averted and the Age of Miroku arrive—all of which they had maintained for more than a decade. From the fact that a sense of imminent crisis is no longer found in letters exchanged between believers, it can be inferred that they uniformly felt that the world had escaped the danger of catas-

trophe. Nobody could foresee, it is true, exactly what kind of world the new Meiji world would be. Still, it is not too farfetched to suppose that Fujidō members, believing as they did in the prophecy of Jikigyō, could not help but hope that they were seeing the beginning of the "Age of Miroku."¹² And this psychological tendency seems not to have been peculiar to Fujidō, but to a certain extent to have been shared by those commoners whose expectation of a world renewal led them into the frenzied "*ee ja nai ka*" celebrations in 1867, or those common folk who experienced the terrors of the Chōshū wars (1864–1865) and Boshin war (1868). If I may be so bold as to say so, perhaps the social unrest at the end of the Tokugawa period actuated a consciousness of a "world renewal" and the expectation of a "new order" that were immanent in the traditional religious consciousness of the common people, as a consequence of which they came to think of the latter half of the first year of Meiji, by which time the political and social confusion had more or less been sorted out, as the beginning of a new age following upon a "world renewal."

The New Religions and State Policies to Educate the People

After gaining political power on Keiō 3.12.9 (January 1868), the Meiji government issued a series of imperial decrees and written instructions that gave the impression that a new age had arrived. Early examples of this were the *Ōsei fukko no daigōrei* 王政復古の大号令, with its "we do everything according to the way Emperor Jinmu did in the beginning," or the *Bakufu shinsei no mikotonori* 幕府親征の詔, with its "today the whole land is undergoing a complete renewal." At this stage, however, the imperial court had gained, legally speaking, only the political authority the Tokugawa Bakufu had held as the commander of all the military regional lords (daimyo), and the court clearly lacked real power to control all the daimyo effectively. The court, which is to say the new Meiji government immediately after its inauguration, brought in the concept of "government under direct administration of the emperor" in order

¹² In early Meiji, Fujidō split over the adoption of doctrines and rituals that were State Shinto in character. Even the group that was opposed to adoption of these matters made much of the idea that all levels of society were equal, of the removal of restrictions on communication and distribution, and of imperial tours of inspection, which were held to be in accord with the concrete conditions to be expected in the "Age of Miroku" described by Jikigyō Miroku.

to counteract these weaknesses and in order to prop up from an ideological aspect the new government's power to unify the nation. And in order to elevate the value of "government under direct administration of the emperor" and show that the emperor's sovereignty was something inherent in the emperor and not something transferred to him from the shogun, the government propounded a mythical interpretation to the effect that the emperor's sovereignty derived from an oracle from Amaterasu-ōmikami to her descendants (ISHII 1982).

In this way, the Meiji government's concept of "government under direct administration of the emperor was not originally shaped with the enlightenment of the populace in mind. Still, the new government repeated this concept in a slightly milder form in "official instructions to the people" aimed at settling unrest among the people in various locales and calling upon them to trust the new government. Thus, for example, in an early 1868 official instruction from the Nagasaki law court to the commoners in the town, the arrival of a new age, a government under direct administration of the emperor, and the emperor's divinity being derived from the fact that he is a descendant of Amaterasu-ōmikami are all mentioned in a way easily understood by the general populace:

In this country of Japan we have this person the "son of Heaven" whose blood line goes back in a continuous line to Tenshō Daijingu [another name for Amaterasu-ōmikami] and this person has been the lord of this country Japan without change ever since ancient times. It is exactly the same as the sun being in the sky. . . . In this age of restoration it is the same as in ancient times: the Son of Heaven now governs. If we compare it to a daybreak, the present moment is shortly before the hour of six, when one can almost make out a person's face. But since daylight is bound to come soon, since the sun is very soon going to come out and the world will become bright, all of you would do well to rejoice over your good fortune to be born to see these good times, and devote your energies to your family occupations.

This kind of claim on the part of the government, announcing as it did the arrival of a new era painted in tones of religious authority, certainly had the power to appeal to the expectations of a "world renewal" or "world reform" that had been aroused in the minds of the general populace shortly before.

This does not mean, however, that the people complied with every

measure of the government. The peasant uprisings that, if anything, increased in frequency after the Restoration are a proof of that. Even though the new government tried education and propaganda to unify people's attitudes and draw them into a submissiveness to the government, because most of the populace were under the rule of daimyo, and because the concept of governmental administration itself was still quite fluid except in regard to adopting a legalistic *ritsuryō*-type system of direct imperial administration, the government's efforts were mostly ineffective. With the abolition of autonomous daimyo domains and the establishment of prefectures under the direct control of the government in 1871, however, the new government came to administer the populace directly and not through the mediation of daimyo and the like, and it was forced to put greater stress on education policies. In the immediate post-Restoration stage, though, there were some regions in which the people were not fully aware, even, of who the "Son of Heaven" was. To explain who the "Son of Heaven" was, in the official instruction to the people of Ōu of Keiō 4 (1868).2.20, the officials had to refer to Tenshō Daijingu, who was comparatively well known to the common people through the Ise Shrine confraternities, and to the official ranks of the gods in the local shrines: "The son of Heaven is a descendant of Tenshō Daijingu and the lord of Japan from the beginning of this world; even the gods of the first rank to be found in various provinces are all granted their rank by the Son of Heaven. . . ." This shows fairly well what the level of awareness of the emperor was in the minds of the people in this region. Hence the government had first of all to instill into the general populace an awareness of the emperor's existence and a feeling that they belonged to a nation, Japan, over which the emperor was ruler.

Because of this situation, the only measures the government was able to put into effect in the early Meiji years were those involving the education and control of the people's attitudes through religious leaders and organizations, and imperial tours of inspection.¹³ Let us consider the former, first. After the policies aimed at educating all citizens to accept a Shinto state—policies that had been promoted by restorationist National Learning (*kokugaku*) followers of Hirata

¹³ The things that played an important part in unifying the attitudes of the people—primary school education and education of the military, and the direct and indirect propaganda through newspapers and printed media—were still not functioning in the early stages of Meiji.

and Ōkuni—collapsed without much success, the government began, from Meiji 5 (1872) and under the newly constituted Ministry of Education and Religion, more forceful policies to educate the people. To carry these out they appointed Shinto and Buddhist priests throughout the country to serve as unpaid National Evangelists (*kyō-dōshoku* 教導職). All National Evangelists were given the “Three Rules for Teaching”: “Bearing in mind the principle of respect for the gods, love of country,” “Explaining the laws of heaven and the way of man,” and “Leading others to accept the emperor as ruler and to obey the will of the court.” Acting on these principles, they were to preach emperor worship and loyalty to the state to adults throughout the land (BUNKACHŌ 1983).

The imperial tours of inspection likewise assumed a religious character in a wide sense. Wherever the emperor stopped for a rest, there was a display of the crops of that region, but the manner of doing it is reported to have been similar to the setting out of banquets for visiting gods. And wherever the emperor stayed for the night, the rooms he stayed in were afterwards made off limits to everyone, and ceremonies to worship the emperor were also frequently held in those places (MIYATA 1970). Examples of this kind show that the imperial tours of inspection had the power, at a religious level, to appeal to the general public’s consciousness.

It seems that to a certain extent there certainly did exist, in the traditional religious consciousness of the general public at that time, an inclination to accept the religious authority of the emperor. First of all, in the Tokugawa period the emperor’s primary function was that of worshipping the gods, and from the point of view of the general populace, he was a religious being who lived an extremely unusual life. Secondly, there existed within popular religion the possibilities for worshipping the emperor as a god, or at least as someone who was near to being a god, given such beliefs as the grain-spirit (*kokurei*) belief woven around the emperor, the conflation of the legend of a traveling emperor with the belief about the mysterious visitor, and the fusion of the Deva King who drives away evil spirits (Gozu Tennō 牛頭天王) with the emperor (MIYATA 1970; IKEDA 1971). In the early Meiji years, therefore, when other institutions for unifying the people’s attitudes at the state level (such as school education and military conscription) were still inoperative, these influences on the religious side of people’s consciousness were, it seems, about the only possible effective means. It is probably for

this very reason that the new Meiji government consistently promoted emperor worship in its religious dimensions as the mainstay of the government's policies to educate the people, even after restorationist National Learning scholars lost power within the government.¹⁴

What influence, then, did these early measures to educate the people, developed as they were mainly on the religious side, have upon the New Religions the people followed? From 1870 to 1873, the Meiji government prohibited or abolished, either as being superstitions opposed to their policies of "civilization and enlightenment" or as opposed to their policy of the "separation of Shinto and Buddhism," such folk beliefs as the Tensha 天社 Shinto of the Tsuchimikado family, the sixty-six pilgrimage sites, the Fuke Sect 普化宗, Shugen Sect 修験宗, sorceresses, devil-possession prayers, and "fox-clearing" incantation. It also prohibited preaching by anyone who was not either a National Evangelist or a trainee National Evangelist. This resulted in a great restriction of popular religious activities. At the same time the government issued the "Outline for Churches" (*Kyōkai taii* 教会大意), with ten articles incorporating obedience to the "Three Great Teachings," elimination of heterodoxy and heresy, and esteem for the family occupation, and decided to give official recognition as a "church" to any religious group that was certified as conforming to these criteria and complying with the aims of the policies for educating the people. To achieve these aims, from 1874 the government began to approve of the establishment of religious confraternities (*kōsha* 講社), and the way was opened for volunteers other than Shinto or Buddhist priests to become National Evangelists provided they were recommended by local officials and passed an examination. These steps may seem at first to contradict the regulations laid down for popular religious activities; given the fact that the government-organized educational campaign was not having the desired results because of conflict between the Evangelists of Shinto background and those of Buddhist background,

¹⁴ Attitudes antagonistic to Christianity can be found abundantly in some thinkers within the National Learning and Mito Learning schools, but this seems to have carried a decisive weight in government policy decisions only until about 1873. The policy of the Meiji government to promote emperor worship, which was carried out at least through the first ten years of the Meiji era, might have been aimed at deterring the spread of Christianity among the populace until 1873. However, the deterrence of Christianity could not have been the major purpose of the policy, at least after 1873. See SUZUKI 1977.

the scarcity of funds, and the general populace's lack of interest, hopes were now placed on the vitality and fund-raising abilities of popular religious groups.

These two-sided religious policies of the government left the New Religions in a state of anxiety and tension. Their leaders were faced with two possibilities: either prove their usefulness in the campaign to educate the people and thus gain official recognition, or else be looked upon as dangerous and thus incur suppression. Furthermore, they did not know how their group's beliefs would be assessed by the authorities.¹⁵ About this time (1873–1874), as a matter of fact, the founders of Maruyamakyō and Tenrikyō were arrested, while the founder of Konkōkyō was ordered to cease preaching. The Fujidō leaders, on the other hand, eliminated from their doctrines and rituals those things that were Shinto–Buddhist blends and that had a strong popular-religion flavor to them, and introduced doctrines and rituals that were in harmony with the Shinto doctrines propagated by the restorationist National Learning scholars. They even changed the name of their organization to Jikkōsha 実行社, and did their best to comply with the aims of the policies for educating the people. As a result, Jikkōsha succeeded in sending out several National Evangelists from among its ranks, in 1878 gained official recognition as a religious confraternity under the Office of Shinto Affairs, and in 1882 became independent as the Shinto Jikkōkyō, one of the thirteen recognized Shinto sects.¹⁶ In this way were solved simultaneously the proselytization problems Fujidō had experienced since Tokugawa times: oppression by political authorities, and the possibility of interference from established religions.

Among the New Religions of late Tokugawa and early Meiji, the Kurozumikyō preceded Fujidō in accommodating to the national education campaign. The Tenrikyō, Konkōkyō, and Maruyamakyō were not to take this direction until the early 1890s, but once their founders were dead and new leaders had taken over, and against

¹⁵ The ninth-generation leader of Fujidō, Gyōga, made frequent changes to rituals after the Restoration, "so as not to act against the wishes of the court," but even so, every time he was summoned by government officials, he expressed anxiety about being cross-examined. (*On'aratame goonrei ojikisatoshi* 御改御恩礼御直諭, preserved by Mr Saitō Fumihisa, a descendant of one of the leading members of Fujidō, in Misugi-mura, Isshū-gun, Mie Prefecture.)

¹⁶ Groups of believers in the Kantō area opposed this "Shinto-izing" and broke with the Jikkōkyō. These groups later called themselves the Fujidō Kōshinkō (Faithful Fujidō Confraternity), and for a while maintained their vitality, but gradually they became non-religious in character.

the background of the wars with China and Russia, these religions also made haste to insert doctrines that fitted in with State Shinto, to proclaim worship of the emperor, and to cooperate positively with the government's education campaign. Within the groups themselves these changes were, it is said, interpreted affirmatively rather than as capitulation to pressure: as ways to change the old social view of them as heretical, diabolical religions and to gain social acceptance for themselves (KŌMOTO 1981).

Still, as can be imagined from what I described of Fujidō doctrines in the first section of this essay, the original Fujidō included elements that differed essentially from restorationist National Learning, Mito Learning, and all similar thought forming the basic ideology of the policies for educating the people. And of course the Tenrikyō, Konkōkyō, and Maruyamakyō also contained a great deal that was incompatible with those policies, as their oppression in the early Meiji years shows. How, then, did these New Religions undergo a metamorphosis so as to fit in with the government's education policies?

Fujidō's View of the Emperor

Granted that the reformation of Fujidō doctrine and rituals took place against a background of pressure from the policies on educating the people, it still was based on spontaneous action within Fujidō. Let us examine how it was prepared for and put into practice within Fujidō itself. Towards the end of the Tokugawa period, there had been within Fujidō frequent attempts at adding to or revising their doctrines and rituals; this was due to Bakufu decrees banning their activities and to the social unrest at the time. As far as I can tell, attempts at addition or revision had been made by Gyōga, the ninth-generation leader; by the farmer from Tagoshi village 手越村 in Hitachi province, Hisa Sen'emon 檜佐泉右衛門, who was the theoretical leader of the believer group in the Kantō area, in particular in the birthplace of Fujidō, Hatogaya; and by Shibata Hanamori 柴田花守, the first-generation superintendent priest of the Jikkōkyō, who had been born into the family of a Hizen Ogi *han* samurai. But it was the attempt of Shibata Hanamori that became the foundation for doctrinal reform after the Meiji Restoration.

The main thrust of Hanamori's revisions was, as he himself said later ("I explained the traditional teaching in an imperial-country fashion"), an attempt to re-interpret Fujidō doctrine in accordance

with National Learning.¹⁷ Hanamori had joined Fujidō at the age of eighteen; it is believed that, being influenced by the Hirata line of National Learning, he probably tried to harmonize the two doctrines. This should not seem strange when one considers that National Learning itself had, at the end of the Tokugawa period, not a few elements that overlapped with the New Religions; for example, the concept of Ame-no-minakanushi-no-kami, who has a universal-god nature, the importance attached to the benevolence of the *musubi* spirits 産靈, who are closely linked with the folk beliefs of fecundity and fertility, and the insistence on the practice of everyday virtues. But Hanamori himself admits that his theories were not very well known within Fujidō before the Meiji Restoration.¹⁸

Once the new Meiji government set in place its policies for educating the people, however, Hanamori's ideas suddenly came to be taken seriously within the Fujidō organization. He is reputed to have had social connections with royalist supporters even before the Restoration, and this may explain why he had acquaintances among councillors and other local officials in the Osaka government and among people connected with the Ministry of Education and Religion, and why Gyōga and other believers, who were encountering so many difficulties in dealing with the education policies, came to rely upon him.¹⁹ Adopting Hanamori's opinions wholesale, Gyōga revised the old doctrines and rituals, reorganized Fujidō into the Jikkōsha, and adapted it to the national education policies. Thus, at least in the case of Fujidō, the way in which it underwent metamorphosis was that, under the very special circumstances of government policies to educate the people, one of the members with National Learning tendencies who earlier had had little influence within the organization, developed into the leading theorist. In other words, Fujidō's metamorphosis retained the form of a more or less spontaneous, or self-generated, reform.

The next question we can ask is, "In this process, how did their view of the emperor change?" Let us analyze, compare, and discuss

¹⁷ *Jikkō kyōso Shibata Hanamori shōden* 実行教祖柴田花守小伝 [Biographical sketch of Shibata Hanamori, founder of Jikkōkyō], in INOBE 1928.

¹⁸ See the same biographical sketch in INOBE 1928.

¹⁹ Shibata Hanamori himself became a National Evangelist, and he campaigned to have other believers appointed teachers. Also, having added to and revised the writings of Sangyō Rokuō, he received permission from the governor of Osaka to have them printed.

the attitudes towards the emperor found in the teachings of Jikigyō Miroku and Sangyō Rokuō, and then in those of Hanamori.

Jikigyō Miroku and his successors thought that the necessity for the Son of Heaven and the shogun was the same as the necessity for the four classes of warrior, peasant, artisan, and tradesman: They were indispensable for human society. In *Ichijifusetsu no maki* Jikigyō Miroku says: "According to the oracle I received, from now on the Son of Heaven (the emperor), the shogun, and all of us are each to carry on with contentment the family profession that falls to our lot." Therefore, being the emperor is recognized as a profession in the same way as being a farmer or a merchant is. And Sangyō's *Shimin no maki* 四民之巻, which spells out his view of society clearly, says that in a proper society the emperor and the shogun are in the center, and the emperor tends his people with care, while the shogun looks after good and evil, and both cooperate in efforts to maintain tranquillity in society; the four classes of subjects, meanwhile, through their professions give mutual help in daily living and at the same time support both the emperor and the shogun from four directions, as it were. This way of thinking does not deny the existence of the various stations in life in Tokugawa times, but because it interprets each station in life as a sort of social specialization and does not admit any difference in value between different stations, it is an original idea. Sangyō stated that if any of the parts were absent—the emperor, the shogun, or any of the four classes of subjects—then the lives of the others would become impossible, and that neither emperor, nor shogun, nor warrior, peasant, artisan, or merchant, "when you go back to origins, is a way of life that ought to be superior or inferior" (*Shimin no maki*). They were essentially equal, he insisted. And Sangyō, writing about the *Teigyō hinobe no otsutae* 定業日延の御伝あ, a secret prayer for the longevity of the emperor and the shogun transmitted to Fujidō from Jikigyō Miroku, says:

It is a prayer to use when the land would become impossible to rule in tranquillity if the ruler did not live for one more year, or when he happens to become indisposed in health. Therefore it is not a prayer to be used by the emperor or the shogun when he wants to prolong his life for his own sake. It is a prayer to be used when the emperor or the shogun desires to save all his subjects and to fulfill his duty as emperor or shogun.²⁰

²⁰ *Shichihajō no otsutae* 七ヶ条のお伝あ, in H IV.

Thus he is saying that this secret prayer was to be used only at times when the emperor and shogun have determined to fulfill their functions, even at the cost of their lives, to save their subjects. From materials such as these one can gather the idea that the emperor and the shogun bore the social roles of saving the people and preserving tranquillity, and they were to be respected to the extent that they fulfilled those roles. Hence what is missing from these materials is the idea that the emperor's existence *per se* was something unconditionally exalted.

What, then, was the specific role of the emperor? Opportunities for people in Tokugawa times to know concretely what tasks the emperor was actually carrying out seem to have been extremely limited, for references to the emperor's role are much fewer than references to the shogun's role in the writings of Jikigyō Miroku, Sangyō Rokuō, and their followers. Still, Jikigyō Miroku, in several of whose doctrinal writings we can find some interesting expressions, has this to say in his *Ichijifusetsu no maki*:

The role of the Son of Heaven is, when there are long periods of rain, long periods of drought, disasters by fire or water, bad sicknesses, and poor harvests of the five grains, to tell the servants of heaven and earth: "If I have been in the wrong, take my life, but let there be peace in heaven and on earth."

The "servants of heaven and earth" mentioned here are thought to signify the spirit-like beings who rule over phenomena that are beyond the powers of human beings, such as the weather, the ripening of crops, epidemic sicknesses, and the like. But the "role of the Son of Heaven" was to control these spirits by offering his life so that his subjects would escape from such misfortunes as natural disasters and poor harvests.

In a similar vein Sanshi's disciple, Hisa Sen'emon, said: "All the regular annual functions, and the special court banquets and other ceremonies the Son of Heaven performs to help all peoples on earth, all of these are his virtuous acts of great sacrifice for our sakes."²¹ In Fujikō usage, it seems, "great sacrifice" refers to a religious austerity performed for the purpose of obtaining universal salvation; thus the role of the emperor was thought of in this case as one of practicing asceticism for this purpose. This view of the

²¹ *Fujidō bengiroku* 不二道弁疑録, a Kuroda Family document stored in the Hatogaya City Kyōdo Shiryōkan (local history museum).

emperor has features in common with that of the king in ancient northeastern Asia, as seen in the *Gishi Fuyo den* 魏志夫餘伝: "The ancient Fuyo people, in times of floods and droughts and when the grain crops did not ripen, ascribed this to the king. Then they would say the king must be changed, or they would say the king must be killed" (MIYATA 1970), as well as with the models of the king found in *The Golden Bough*, where the king bears responsibility for regulating the movements of nature for the sake of the welfare of his subjects (FRAZER 1949). I do not know whether this view of the emperor existed in Japanese folk tradition from the very beginning, or whether traditions from overseas spread among the people in Japan in some form or other, but in either case what seems certain is that, for the people of pre-Meiji times who were members of the Fujikō and Fujidō, the emperor was thought of as someone who put his own life at risk to influence the supernatural beings and avert natural calamities "to help all peoples on earth" and "for our sakes." For this reason and this reason alone was the emperor respected.

It was on the basis of this view of the emperor that Jikigyō Miroku and his successors examined and judged whether the contemporary emperor was fulfilling his role correctly or not. The *Osoegaki* says: "The Son of Heaven does not even know his own duties; instead, he makes all kinds of new things, he gives money stipends to this official and that, he takes money, he lets all these officials he has appointed take things from the ordinary people, he lets them wring tears from his subjects." In other words he is criticizing the emperor for giving high ranks and offices to unsuitable people, as a result of which the ordinary people were suffering from poor government. This was considered a way of conduct opposed to the "duties of the Son of Heaven," which were supposed to be for the relief of his subjects.²² It could not have been an easy thing for a commoner to criticize the emperor; still, it was not only someone like Jikigyō Miroku, who thought of himself as a religious leader working for the salvation of the world, who could say things like that, for we

²² Jikigyō Miroku interpreted Ieyasu's establishment in Kantō of Rinnō-ji, the head priest of which was to be appointed from among imperial princes, as a "precautionary move for the sake of the people" so that another emperor could be chosen in case the rule of the current one was bad (*Osoegaki*). Perhaps this was a case of a mistaken understanding on Miroku's part, but at least it shows his view that the welfare of the people was more important than the position of emperor.

find Hisa Sen'emon, an ordinary believer, who felt authorized by a religious authority that transcended the present order, able to criticize the emperor and the shogun in these words: "Even though they are the Son of Heaven and the shogun, when they have opposed the will of Heaven, they might suffer from calamities."²³

Next let us examine what Jikigyō Miroku and his successors thought about the lineage of the emperor. Needless to say, for people raised in feudal society like Jikigyō Miroku and the others, the institution of hereditary family occupations was taken for granted, so it was a self-evident truth that people born into the imperial family would inherit the emperor's throne. Yet they held the view that when human beings died they would be born again and re-appear somewhere in this world, and this need not be a rebirth into the same family they were in before, so it was entirely possible for someone from another family to be reborn as a member of the imperial family. Thus Miroku believed, for example, that his teacher, the ascetic Getsugyō Sōjū 月行齋仲, was reborn into the imperial family, and he also said of Tokugawa Muneharu, who had been purged by Yoshimune, that, because of his magnanimous government, "he should not be born lower than the Son of Heaven." In view of their belief in this sort of transmigration, it was only natural that no importance was attached to the emperor's lineage by Miroku and his successors.²⁴

What was thought, then, about the role of Amaterasu-ōmikami, who is such an essential figure in emperor worship in modern times? Jikigyō Miroku, Sangyō Rokuō, and Fujidō believers held a view of history according to which, for the first 6,000 years of human history, the world was governed by the original father and mother, the next 12,000 years were the "age of the gods," and the following 30,000 years would be the "Age of Miroku," and the period they were living in was a transition period from the "age of the gods" to the "Age of Miroku" (MIYAZAKI 1980). Of these three ages, they prized the first and the last as being ages when societies were and will be actualized, in which people did and would live uprightly in peace and abundance under the original father and mother, the

²³ *Fujidō taii* 不二道大意, kept in the Kōno Collection of Kokugakuin University Library.

²⁴ This sort of view of life and death can be found throughout Japan's folk community. Hence it is necessary to reexamine the extent to which the ordinary Tokugawa populace was aware of and how they assessed the continuity of the emperor's lineage.

creators and the overseers of heaven and earth. They considered the middle period, the "age of the gods," when the creators did not rule directly, human beings became self-seeking, and social harmony was in disarray, an inferior period. Amaterasu-ōmikami, as the following sources show, was thought to have been entrusted with government during the "age of the gods" in the role of child of the sun and moon, the original father and mother. "In the first six thousand years of this world the [original] father and mother governed, after that it became the country of the gods under Amaterasu-ōmikami" (*Ichijufusetsu no maki*); "At this point the capital at Osaka and Tenshō Daijingu [the shrine dedicated to Amaterasu-ōmikami] were founded at the same time, and Tenshō Daijingu [Amaterasu-ōmikami] was called the child of the sun and moon" (*Osoegaki*); "From that time [the beginning of the *furikawari* of the 'Age of Miroku' in 1688] Tenshō Daijingu's role was taken away from her" (*Osoegaki*). In general the concept of a supreme god in Japan's non-Buddhist New Religions is said to have the aspect of a sun god as well as the aspect of an ancestral god (TSUSHIMA 1981), and to that extent both Fujikō and Fujidō were no exceptions when they considered the original father and mother to be the sun and moon. However, whereas in several New Religions Amaterasu-ōmikami was linked to the sun god to be transformed into the supreme god, the fact that this did not happen in Fujikō and Fujidō is a distinctive characteristic.²⁵ On the contrary, Amaterasu-ōmikami was thought of as a supervisory god who was supposed to leave the scene as soon as the Age of Miroku arrived.

Next let us take up the works of Shibata Hanamori, who played an important part in the conversion of Fujidō into sectarian Shinto, and examine his views of the emperor.

Already in 1863, Hanamori was speaking of "the emperor, descendant of Tenshō Daijingu, also called Utsushigami [man-god]. . ." (*Nishu ichiyawa* 二首一夜話) and

The reason all the nations of the West respect Japan as the best nation in the whole world is that it is the land of a most august emperor descended without any upheavals in a single line of emperors from ages eternal, heir to a throne wherein he combines the correct principles of heaven and earth, sun and moon (*Nishu ichiyawa*),

²⁵ In Fujikō and Fujidō the sun and moon have a close relationship, not with Ise Jingū, but with the sacred site of Mt Fuji.

and by 1870 he was saying

In foreign countries their rulers change often and even their names are not permanent. But only in our land of Toyoashihara no Mizuhonokuni, in fulfilment of the divine oracle from Amaterasu-ōmikami that the prosperity of the Throne will be as infinite as the heavens and the earth, has there never, from the beginning of the world to the present day, been any instance of anyone else inheriting the throne or of any subject becoming the ruler. It is this land where propriety between lord and subject is kept faithfully, where the manifest Great Way exists (*Honkyō daiki*).²⁶

In other words, Hanamori is proclaiming that the emperor is exalted because he is a descendant of Amaterasu-ōmikami, Japan is exalted because such a ruler reigns over it continuously, without change. He goes on to say that, "Even if he is still a child, when he ascends the throne, he becomes the imperial Son of Heaven" (*Honkyō daiki*). This shows he recognizes value in the person of the emperor himself, regardless of what the emperor does or can do.

When we compare Hanamori's view of the emperor with that of Jikigyō Miroku and his successors, even though we find a broad agreement in regard to the emperor's existence being indispensable to human society and the fact that the emperor is invested with religious authority, in other points there are great differences. Whereas Jikigyō Miroku and his successors assumed a religious supreme being that transcends the emperor's and Amaterasu-ōmikami's authority, namely the original father and mother (the sun and moon), for Hanamori the authority of the emperor was viewed as absolute. Again, whereas the former placed value on the rule of the emperor only to the extent of his efforts for the universal relief of his subjects, the latter unconditionally recognized the goodness of the emperor's rule, the reason being that, for Hanamori, the existence of the emperor was necessary as the foundation on which to establish the uniqueness and worth of the Japanese nation. This position of Hanamori's was shared in common with the reverent-emperor and national-polity positions of National Learning and Mito Learning, and was extremely close to the Meiji government's policies for educating the nation.

Now, how was a continuous evolution possible between the views on the emperor of Jikigyō Miroku and his successors and those of

²⁶ In *Kinnō Bunko*, vol. 2 (DAINIPPON MEIDŌKAI, 1919-1921).

Hanamori, or, in other words, between the views of the Fujikō and Fujidō in Tokugawa times and the views of the Jikkōsha and Jikkōkyō of Meiji times, despite the fact that they differed so widely? Three conditions are thought to have served as intermediates in the evolution. The first is the fact that Rokukyō Sanshi, seeking contacts with the court and court nobles, made almost annual trips to the capital in the latter half of his life, taking some of his disciples with him. Motivating him, it seems, was Jikigyō Miroku's charge to later believers in his last testament to proselytize the emperor and the shogun,²⁷ the desire of Sanshi and the others to have the protection of the court in order to avert friction with the established religions, and the frequent appearance in Miroku's own writings of an expression of his desire to visit the Shishinden (Hall for State Ceremonies). It is doubtful, though, that any sentiments of the kind later styled "royalist" were involved.²⁸ Still, it is quite conceivable that, as Sanshi and his companions had opportunities to speak with court nobles and others in the imperial court and were allowed to observe the *daijōsai* and other ceremonies, they felt a greater attraction to and sense of intimacy with the Imperial Family and the religious events connected with it.²⁹ Also, Sanshi had converted Gyōga of the Rishō-in Temple; the latter was a son of the Minister of the Right, Tokudaiji Saneyuki, and also had a close relationship with the court through prayer services, and later Sanshi was to have him take over as leader. Through Gyōga Fujidō's sense of intimacy with the emperor and the court was strengthened even more.

The second condition was the fact that, from Sanshi's time a consciousness of Japan's indigenous culture came to be frequently expressed within the Fujidō. Sanshi and others proclaimed that Fujidō was a "pure Japanese" teaching, and attempted to sweep away

²⁷ *Jikigyō Miroku-kū homare no monjo* 食行身禄 仰誉文書, in H IV.

²⁸ In a doctrinal debate with Gyōga, Sanshi referred to the tablet "Shōmeimon" at the entrance of the Imperial Palace and said: "He says he hung up this tablet on which the words 'in obedience to what the sun and moon says' are written, and yet he says he won't listen to what Heaven says! How unreasonable! Then what he should do is take down that tablet" (*Ki no yo no oshie* 氣乃世の教, document in the Suzuki Family of Ichi no wari). The statement shows that Sanshi also held the same view of the emperor as Jikigyō Miroku did.

²⁹ For example, in Hisa Sen'emon's *Gojōkyō zuishinki* 御上京隨身記, in Collection 8 of *Hatogayashi no komonjo*, it is written that he was moved when, having gone to the capital with Sanshi, he heard, at the presentation of an honorary title of *dajō tennō* to the retiring emperor, that it was the custom for the retiring emperor to say to the new emperor, "Instead of bestowing the title on me, may you grant blessings to your people."

all Buddhist elements. What caused this? As can be seen in the words of his disciple, Hisa Sen'emon,

Until now the Japanese have followed the ways of China and India when they set up moral codes, and as a result all those who are called wise, scholars, noted priests, and the learned are people who carry out the ways of China and India. This is a cause of regret for the people of Japan" (*Fujidō bengiroku*).

Behind the insistence on the "pure Japanese" teaching there was a reaction against the "ways of China and India," in other words against Confucianism and Buddhism. So the next question is, why did Fujidō believers oppose Confucianism and Buddhism?

Sen'emon writes,

The more Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism grow influential, the more they all become haughty and the more they look down upon and despise people; as a natural result, the hearts of the people become base, they lose compassion and kindness, they become avaricious and want only to amass for the present gold, silver, rice, and coins, and thus live a life of luxury. . . (*Fujidō bengiroku*),

saying that because the three big religions considered the ordinary people inferior, they drove ordinary people to pursue selfish desires. In other words, as an ordinary person himself, he is indignant that these religions and learnedness keep ordinary people at arm's length. This, it seems, formed the basis for the opposition to the three big religions. As against this, when it comes to Fujidō teachings, "though all the teachings Jikigyō left us outwardly were quite illiterate writings, when you go to their innermost meanings, the right principles of heaven and earth, of sun and moon, are grasped and taught, hence they are profound and lofty."³⁰ They may have been proclaimed by unlearned commoners, but they contained the truth. When one considers the significance of the stress on "pure Japanese" against this kind of background, one can understand the contrasts made between the combination of "scholars and the wise, established religions and learning, and the ways of China and India" and the combination of "illiterate commoners, Fujidō, and pure Japanese teaching." That is, the stress on the "pure Japanese" in Fujidō was a logic aimed at overcoming the feeling of alienation felt by the common people because of the monopoly of cultural values held

³⁰ From *Eboshi iwa otsutaegaki* ゑぼし岩御つたゑがき, in H IV.

by the upper classes in society.³¹ The Fujidō stress on Japanese purity thus originated from a position completely different from that of the national-polity theory and its stress on Japan's originality, and in the beginning it had no connection with emperor worship, but in effect paved the way for the acceptance of the national-polity and revere-the-emperor theories after the Meiji Restoration.

The third condition is the concept of *fukko* 復古 that spread among Fujidō believers in the late Tokugawa period. Jikigyō Miroku saw history as a sequence of three ages, and this idea had been accepted widely among Fujidō believers. Up to the late Tokugawa period the Age of Miroku was thought of as the ideal age of the future, and was not thought of as the second advent of the first age (MIYAZAKI 1980).³¹ But towards the end of the Tokugawa period the arrival of the Age of Miroku came to be thought of as a return to the age that had existed in the beginning, and Gyōga re-interpreted *furikawari*, which meant a renewal of society, to *furikaeri* 復古り [going back to ancient times]. Why did Fujidō believers of the time proclaim *fukko*? The first reason that comes to mind is the influence of National Learning on some of the believers. Yet even those who were not being influenced by National Learning were preaching *fukko* at this time. One of them, Hisa Sen'emon, for example, speaking about the proscription of Fujidō on the charge of being a "new interpretation, heretical teaching," said:

The teaching of this way does not adhere to any of the three ways of Shinto, Confucianism, or Buddhism, but it is the teaching of the Great Way based on the most fundamental principle from the beginning of heaven and earth, that leads to the root origin of Japan, to the world of spiritual value. From the viewpoint of those who adhere to the three ways, who are aggressive, this teaching must be seen as a new interpretation and a heretical teaching.³²

³¹ In Japanese history, the most advanced overseas civilization has almost always been imported and given preference by those in central authority, thus using it to support their own cultural superiority in the country. The general populace is generally thought to embrace a desire for the culture of those in the center (i.e. for foreign culture), but when feelings of alienation become too strong, the result is, on the contrary, hostility. Fujidō's stress on "Japanese purity" seems to stem from just such a psychological trend. Furthermore, several of the New Religions resisted "enlightenment and civilization" in early modern times, and simultaneously entertained both anti-government trends as well as nationalistic trends. Even in these cases the psychological factors can be thought to be similar. (Of course, the opposition to "enlightenment and civilization" could also have been based on a desire to protect their own livelihoods.)

³² *Taijin bengiroku* 侍尋弁疑録, in the personal library of Saitō Fumihisa.

One gathers from this that Fujidō is a far older teaching than Shinto, Confucianism, or Buddhism, one that goes back to the creation of heaven and earth, and its suppression on the grounds of being a new interpretation and a heretical teaching is unreasonable. It is probably the insistence on this point that brought the concept of *fukko* into Fujidō. One can also imagine that, given the uneasy psychological state of the believers at a time when they were experiencing firsthand severe social upheaval, they would be fonder of the idea that there would be a return to an age they knew about than the idea that they would face a completely unknown age.

As we have seen above, the Fujidō concept of *fukko* originally had nothing to do with the concept of *ōsei* 王政 *fukko*, or restoration of imperial rule. But it does seem in effect to have made it easier to accept the Meiji government's affirmation of *ōsei fukko* and government under the direct administration of the emperor.

None of the things touched on above—the close contact with the emperor and the court, the seeing of value in “Japanese purity,” the concept of *fukko*—were formed in connection with a certain idea about the emperor. Still, through the mediation of these things, Fujidō's idea of the emperor apparently underwent continuous evolution and changed into a view that fitted in with the policies to educate the people and the doctrine of State Shinto. As a result of such a seemingly continuous change in the doctrine, it was possible to present doctrines preached for the first time after Meiji as if they had their origins in the distant past. Thus, for example, Hanamori attached the following interpretation to Jikigyō Miroku's prophecy of the “*furikawari* of the age of Miroku”:

“Miroku” signifies the heavenly benefits that can be received by each individual. In the past only high pedigree was revered and lowly people were treated like flies and insects, but since the Restoration it has become possible for people to advance in accordance with each one's abilities, even to the extent of having dealings with members of the court. “*Furikawari*” 復古 means going back to the world in which the august virtue of His Majesty the Emperor was prosperous.³³

Here Jikigyō Miroku's prophecy is re-interpreted so that it agrees with post-Restoration government and society. For ordinary believers,

³³ *Keishin yogen ryakkai* 敬信予言略解, in Nagano Prefecture Shimo Ina Kyōikukai Ichimura Bunko.

especially those who knew nothing of older generations, it surely would have been increasingly difficult at the time to notice that new practices involving emperor worship were actually opposed to their traditional teaching.

Finally, let us make a quick survey of how the post-Restoration evolution of the idea of the emperor affected the whole body of Fujidō thought. First of all, because the emperor's rule was absolutized by being linked with religious authority, it became impossible to criticize, on religious authority, contemporary government or the social order. As a result, this religion had to be involved in society by cooperating in the stabilizing of the social order of that time. A symbolic example of this occurred at the time of the construction of the Imperial Palace in 1886, when the Shinto Jikkōkyō contributed the services of over 3,800 construction workers and received official commendation from the Department of the Imperial Household (INOBE 1928). Secondly, because the idea of renewal that once had formed the core of its doctrine, "the renewal of the world, the reform of man," involved some contradiction with the new doctrine of revering the rule of an emperor descended "without any upheavals in a single line of emperors from ages eternal," this idea stopped being preached after the Restoration. As a result of this change, the yearning for the future ideal world, the Age of Miroku, disappeared. At the same time, activities of planning a new social order to prepare for the Age of Miroku also suddenly decreased in number.

Conclusion

In this essay I have chosen, from among those religions that arose among the people in Tokugawa times, the Miroku sect of Fujikō and its descendant, the Fujidō, and have examined the process by which these religions, under the Meiji government's policies to educate the people, spontaneously changed their traditional views of the emperor, going so far as to put emperor worship into their doctrine.

Among the general populace in Tokugawa times there was a large variety of ways, and levels, of perceiving the emperor. In some regions, it is thought, the people hardly even knew of the existence of an emperor. Nevertheless, throughout much of the land there existed elements in traditional attitudes that would act as a foundation, or intermediary, when the time came to accept emperor

worship. For Jikigyō Miroku and his successors, the emperor was, as it were, a king invested with a religious nature, a being who dealt with the weather and crops and such fundamental conditions controlling the lives of the human race in general. This view of the emperor is thought to have formed one of the assumptions when emperor worship was introduced in the Meiji period. Still, there were great differences between Jikigyō Miroku's idea, based on his monotheism, that the authority of the emperor and the shogun are relative, and his criticism of an emperor who did not fulfill his whole *raison d'être*, namely the saving of the whole nation, and, on the other hand, the views of the emperor held after the Meiji Restoration.

With the Restoration came the central government's strong emphasis on the idea of government directly administered by the emperor, and on the oracle from Amaterasu-ōmikami that they used to support the idea. In order to get the people to accept direct rule by the central government when the daimyo domains were abolished and prefectures established in their stead, the central government mobilized Shinto and Buddhist religious leaders and put a great deal of effort into implanting in people's religious consciousness both emperor worship and the idea that the nation ruled by the emperor was sacred. For the government at that time this was practically the only possible method to unify the attitudes of the people and get them to accept the rule of the central government submissively. Because the government gave primacy to education of the people in the religious dimension, every one of the religions were greatly affected. For the New Religions that had not been officially recognized, the only way they could propagate their teachings legitimately was by volunteering to play a part in educating the people. Once they were recognized as useful for carrying out the education policies, their religious activities would be guaranteed under official recognition by the government and the need to fear interference from the established religions would disappear. As a result, the New Religions were able to gain an advantage they had never held before.

It is for this reason that the New Religions, Fujidō included, submitted to the policies of the government vis-à-vis religions, and included the key points in the education of the people (emperor worship and the sacredness of the state) into their respective doctrinal systems—some as early as five or six years after the Restoration, or the slowest to react, by the third decade of the Meiji period.

In each of the New Religions this involved a process in which leaders tried their best to readjust doctrines while minimizing the contradictions and malaise felt between the views of the emperor and of the state demanded by the government, and the beliefs of their religions as well as the traditional perceptions of the people. In the case of Fujidō, the image of the emperor as a religious lord, an image held from the time of Jikigyō Miroku; the closer contacts with the court, the consciousness of the value of things Japanese, and the concept of *fukko* from the time of Rokugyō Sanshi; and the affirmative interpretation of the Meiji Restoration on the basis of the prediction of a renewal to the age of Miroku—all such things facilitated the adoption of new views of the emperor and of the state. It is believed that the same is substantially true of the other New Religions as well. Kurozumikyō and Tenrikyō, for example, had their own sun-god beliefs, which originally were beliefs in a universal supreme god that had no connection with emperor worship. But when doctrines of a State Shinto character were created later, these sun-god beliefs provided the opportunity to introduce emperor worship, using Amaterasu-ōmikami as intermediary.

In this way, it is believed, the spontaneous efforts of the New Religions to insert emperor worship into their traditional doctrines proved to be far more effective in making the emperor's sacredness take hold in the people's religious consciousness than if the government had uniformly forced emperor worship on them. For the less malaise that resulted when emperor worship entered into people's religious consciousness, the easier it was for people to think emperor worship had existed already for a long time. In this way, in one or two generations, memories of the past were revised and the idea of worship of an emperor who comes in a line from ages eternal, which at first should have struck people as strange and artificial, ended up occupying a special position in people's hearts as if it were something natural and rooted in tradition.

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