

Hawayo Takata and the Circulatory Development of Reiki in the Twentieth Century North Pacific

by

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Centre for Diaspora and Transnational Studies
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Abstract

Scholarly literature on religion in contemporary North America and Europe has taken Reiki, a form of spiritual healing, to be indicative of broader trends in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. These works generally assume Reiki is either a form of American unorthodox medicine in Oriental trappings or a form of Japanese religious practice that has found a place in Western biomedical settings. This dissertation avoids such characterizations by foregrounding transnational exchange instead of national culture. It argues Reiki is best understood as a product of the twentieth century North Pacific (specifically Japan, Hawaii, and North America). It proposes an analytical framework of “circulatory development” to understand Reiki’s movement through transnational networks. Circulatory development describes how the movement of practices transforms both the practices (as they are adapted for new audiences) and the people who encounter them (by embedding them in new social and spiritual relationships). This dissertation also proposes a category of “spiritual medicine” for practices that transcend the assumed differentiation of religious and medical spheres.

Usui Mikao (1865–1926) fashioned Reiki’s earliest forms from a mix of elements in 1920s Japan, including some with long local histories and some that had been recently imported from North America. Since the mid twentieth century, Reiki’s most prevalent forms have been reconfigurations of Usui’s practice adapted for audiences in Hawaii and North America by a second-generation Japanese American named Hawayo Takata (1900–1980). Using archival materials and oral history interviews, this dissertation analyzes how Takata creatively transformed Reiki practice from the 1930s through the 1970s. It focuses on the relation between her gendered racialization as a Japanese American woman, her development of spiritual capital in social networks, and shifts in the meanings assigned to Japanese religion in Territorial Hawaii and mainland North America. It concludes that Takata’s innovations to Reiki practice both accommodated and resisted elements of North American cultural hegemony by gradually introducing practices intended to: 1) professionalize Reiki as a practice of spiritual medicine; 2) transmit “Japanese” values to her students, and 3) establish a form of “particular universalism” that valorized Japan while promoting Reiki as a “universal” practice.

Acknowledgements

Researching and writing this work took countless hours of solitary labour, but it also relied on the assistance of countless individuals. In the following pages I would like to acknowledge the contributions of a few dozen people to whom I am particularly indebted, but there are necessarily many more whom I am leaving out.

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practice of Reiki. Many of these names come up repeatedly in the chapters that follow, but I would particularly like to thank a few who answered my questions for hours, replied to my ceaseless emails and phone calls trying clarify information, and granted follow-up interviews after I was lost data when robbed during my fieldwork. Ichita Takahashi, the Yajimas, the Nagao-Kimuras, the Yudas, the Ventos, Shannon Mackler, Vivian Kimura, the Twans, Chelsea Van Koughnett, and Rick Bockner have unceasingly stunned me with their generosity. Paul Guillory and Walter Quan have also been tremendously generous and encouraging over the last few years and I offer them a heartfelt *gasshō*.

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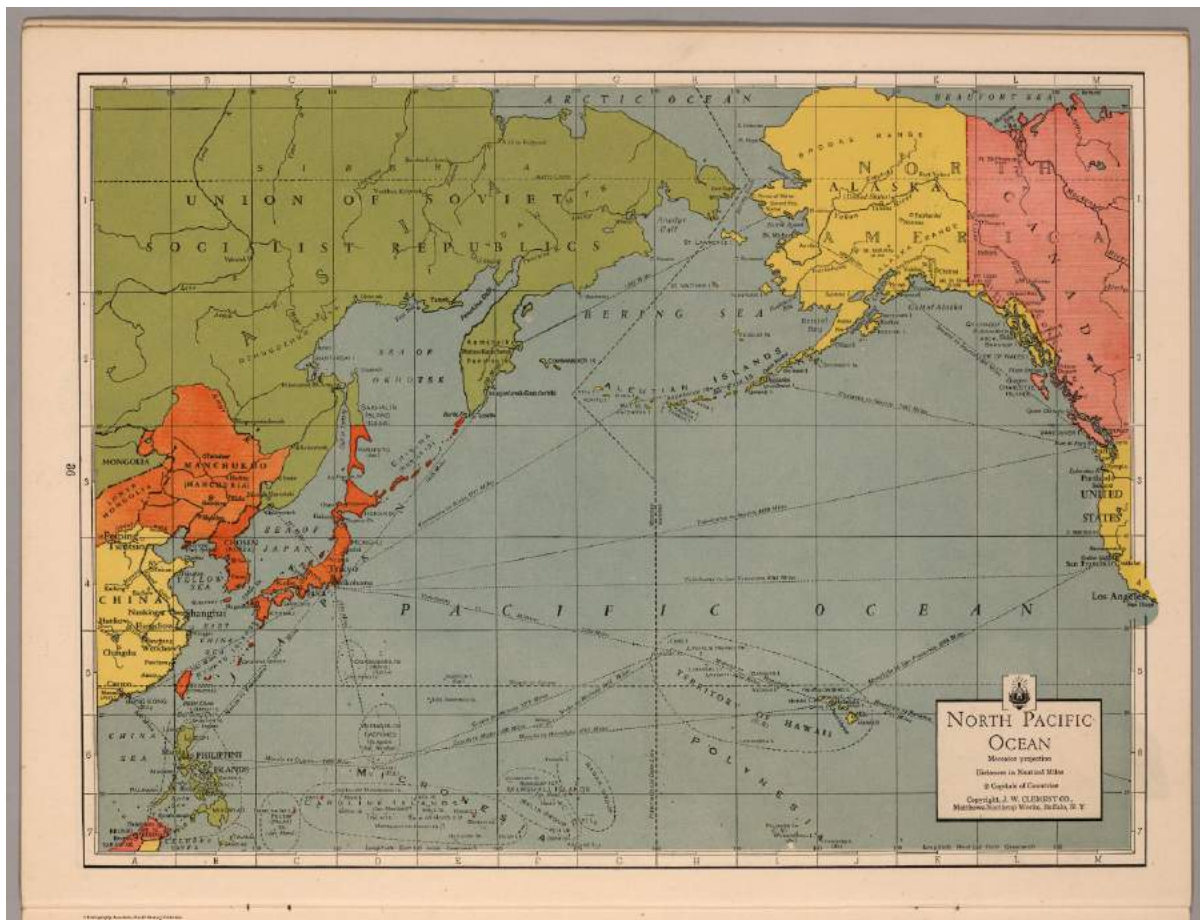
Notes on Orthography

All names are written as given names first and family names last. Although this does not conform to Japanese practice, this work includes the names of both Japanese nationals and Japanese Americans and I have decided to follow the Western convention to create consistency.

Romanization of Japanese terms follows the modified Hepburn system (with exceptions for terms that commonly use older forms of Romanization in Hawaii, e.g., Hongwanji instead of Honganji, and words in common use in English that omit macrons, e.g., judo instead of *judō*). A separate glossary contains the kanji for all Japanese names and terms.

For Hawaiian language names and words, I use the *okina* (') and other diacritics signifying long vowels for the name of the Kingdom, names of islands and towns, and other words and names where they are more commonly used. I follow the conventional spelling of the Territory and subsequent State of Hawaii that omits the *okina* punctuation.

Introduction



On Friday, October 10, 1980, at the opening of Thanksgiving Day weekend, dozens of tree planters, farmers, and “back-to-the-land hippie draft dodgers” journeyed from around the southern British Columbia interior to the Grey Creek Hall, a large log building on the forested shore of Kootenay Lake.¹ Those who had come from hours away set up teepees and tents and got settled for the long weekend. Many brought fresh, homegrown produce for a potluck feast. Some brought their kids. One couple brought their goats, which needed daily milking. All had come to receive teachings and initiations from a seventy-nine-year-old second-generation Japanese American from Hawaii named Hawayo Takata. For most present, this was the first time they had ever met Takata, but nearly all had first-hand experiences with the healing method she practiced and taught.

This method, called Reiki, primarily worked through the laying-on-of-hands. It could dispel an acute pain within minutes and cure chronic problems with regular treatment. It had been introduced to the region in 1975, when an old prospector interested in yoga and alternative health who had read of Takata invited her to the Okanagan Valley to teach. Over the next five years, hundreds of people in this rural, mountainous region, most of whom lived simply and frugally, scrounged up the considerable fee of \$125 USD for the First Degree class: four days of instruction, including an initiation ritual each day, that gave anyone the power to heal with their hands. Mrs. Takata explained that Reiki worked via a “universal life energy” (also called Reiki) in which we are constantly awash,

¹ The story told in these opening pages are based on my interview of Rick Bockner, Whaletown, BC, July 22, 2013; letter from Rick Bockner to Hawayo Takata dated August 20, 1980, Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara; interview of Rick Bockner by Phyllis Furumoto, November 27, 2008, “Reiki: Balancing Form and Essence,” <http://www.reikitalkshow.com/files/shows/20081127.mp3>; and interview of Inger Droog by Phyllis Furumoto, December 4, 2008, “Reiki: Balancing Form and Essence,” <http://www.reikitalkshow.com/files/shows/20081204.mp3>.

like radio waves. She likened herself to a radio technician and the initiation to raising the student's antenna, so that they, too, can channel Reiki to heal.

About forty students came to Grey Creek Hall for the First Degree class, held for two hours every evening over the long weekend, and another fifteen had come for the Second Degree. These individuals had already taken the First Degree with Takata or with one of the four instructors (called Reiki Masters) whom she had initiated in the BC Interior over the last couple of years. The Second Degree was a substantial investment, costing \$500 USD (roughly \$1,500 in 2017 dollars), but it represented a major step up in abilities, as Second Degree students receive three symbols that enhance Reiki practice in certain ways.

According to Reiki training, these symbols are traced with the hand or visualized in the mind's eye, and activated by quietly saying a mantra-like phrase three times. One symbol focuses Reiki in a particular spot, increasing the power of the treatment; a second treats mental or emotional disturbances; and a third empowers the "distance treatment" of people not physically present. These symbols must not be revealed to the uninitiated or even written down; Takata taught that Reiki was an oral tradition, generally prohibiting note-taking in her classes. On that first night at Grey Creek, she gave Second Degree students photocopied handouts of these three symbols, instructing them not to show them to anyone else, to memorize them overnight, and to return the papers to her the following day before she administered the initiation that authorized their use. This was no mean feat, particularly for the twenty-two stroke "distance symbol," based on Japanese characters.

When Takata took the front of the room Friday night to tell the story of Reiki's origin and how she came to find this healing practice, among the sixty-odd people in the

crowd, one was particularly filled with gratitude. Richard “Rick” Bockner (b. 1948) was a guitarist, carpenter, and tree planter living “off the grid” in Argenta, about two hours to the north. He had taken his First and Second Degree classes with Takata the year prior and felt the Reiki initiations had set in motion other changes in his life. As he said in a letter to Takata, he had been “walking a knife edge between despair and hope” after a divorce, but Reiki “saved my life and [gave] me a purpose and task to be done.”² He wanted to become a Reiki Master and open a healing center and educational facility, but he didn’t know how he was going to raise the \$10,000 USD to pay Takata for the training. He had made about \$8,000 tree planting that summer, but he and his new wife were living in a teepee and building a house, with a baby on the way. He and Takata worked out a deal where he would give her \$5,000 and organize a large class for her to teach: she would apply those students’ tuition toward his training fee. He mailed seventy-five letters to people he knew, telling them about his remarkable experiences with Takata and Reiki. Fifty-six of them signed up, more than enough to pay his balance, and, together with a few of Takata’s Master students, including her granddaughter Phyllis Furumoto (b. 1948), who Takata was training as her successor,³ they sat together in the log hall that October evening, listening intently to the stories this elderly teacher told in her accented diction inflected by Hawaiian Creole English (Images 1–2).⁴

² Letter from Rick Bockner to Hawayo Takata, February 7, 1980, Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara.

³ Takata had previously asked other Master students to be her successor, which led to a dispute following her death, but correspondence with her granddaughter makes clear that, as of early 1980, she planned to “turn over to [her] on a silver platter” the title of “#1 Reiki Master” (later called Grand Master). Letter from Hawayo Takata to Phyllis Furumoto dated February 1, 1980, Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara.

⁴ This is the technical name for the language more commonly called “pidgin” in Hawaii.

This class, among the largest Takata ever taught, was also among her last. After most of the grateful students returned home, ready to practice their new healing powers, Takata spent some time in the area visiting hot springs with a few students and teaching with Furumoto. In mid November, Takata traveled to Orcas Island, on the U.S. side of the Salish Sea that runs between Vancouver Island and Washington State. There, her student Helen Haberly (1928–1999) was transcribing audiotapes on which Takata had dictated the basis of her autobiography, *Reiki is God Power*, which she had been eager to publish for years. While in Washington, however, Takata suffered a heart attack. She was hospitalized in Seattle in late November and was thought to be in stable condition, and was transferred to Keosauqua, Iowa, where her daughter lived. Takata died there, December 12, less than two weeks shy of her eightieth birthday. Reiki has continued to evolve in the decades since Takata's death, but the form of practice she taught in her last years, the period in which she began initiating other Masters, is the template for the healing methods today practiced by millions in the Americas, Europe, Oceania, and much of Asia, especially Russia, Kazakhstan, India, and Japan.⁵

Since the early 1990s, scholarly literature on religion in North America and Europe has taken Reiki to be indicative of broader trends in the late twentieth and early

⁵ With no centralized record-keeping organization, it is impossible to know how many worldwide have received Reiki initiations. The most widely cited estimates are by William Lee Rand, founder and president of the International Center for Reiki Training, that there were at least one million Reiki practitioners in the U.S. in the late 1990s with another million practitioners in India (1998: 58; "Reiki in India"). Around the same time, the Japanese Reiki teacher Mochizuki Toshitaka claimed there were approximately five million Reiki practitioners in 121 countries worldwide (1997: 14). These estimates cannot be accepted at face value, but worldwide interest in Reiki is supported by its substantial, multilingual internet presence: a June 2017 search for "Reiki" on google.com yielded over fifty-six million hits, the Cyrillic "Рэйки" yielded almost eleven million hits, and the Japanese *katakana* "レイキ" yielded another ten million hits. The most empirical data comes from studies by the U.S. National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (renamed the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health in 2014) beginning in 2002 that found over one million Americans annually receive "energy healing therapy/Reiki" (Barnes et. al. 2008: 12) or "energy healing therapy" (Clarke et. al. 2015: 10). While this response on the survey instrument focuses on patients rather than providers and includes non-Reiki modalities of "energy healing," it is notable that both reports mention Reiki as the best-known example of this kind of therapy in the U.S.

twenty-first century. These works generally present Reiki with one of two characterizations: 1) a form of American unorthodox medicine or Western esotericism which adopted the trappings of Eastern religion to gain authority through association with Oriental religion and medicine; or 2) a Japanese religious practice that has taken root in varied settings in the modern West, from Christian monasteries to the ostensibly secular spaces of biomedicine to the sacred circles of hippie festivals.⁶ This dissertation challenges these dual characterizations in two ways. First, it argues Reiki is best understood neither as essentially Japanese or American but rather as a product of interactions within transnational networks in the North Pacific (specifically Japan, Hawaii, and North America) in the middle decades of the twentieth century (roughly 1920 to 1980). Second, it avoids the assumed differentiation of religious and medical spheres by describing Reiki as “spiritual medicine”: a category of practice that diagnoses physical disease as having non-physical causes that are treatable with ritualized practices, often understood by its practitioners to be guided by a transpersonal intelligence. The social imaginaries that shape the understanding of concepts such as “Japanese” and “religion” have been essential to the way Reiki students have understood and performed their practice; thus, this study also considers the relationship between changes to Reiki practice in the mid twentieth century and shifts in how Reiki practitioners’ conceive of these categories.

In order to examine Reiki’s transnational development in the middle decades of the twentieth century, the dissertation focuses on the Hawaii-born Japanese American Hawayo Takata (1900–1980), the woman who brought Reiki out of Japan and adapted it

⁶ For examples of the former, see Albanese 1991, 2007; Hammer 2004; for examples of the latter, see Brown 2013, 2015; Garrett 2001; Graham 2014; Klassen 2005, 2011.

for non-Japanese audiences. Despite this framework, this dissertation is not Takata's biography. After an opening chapter that presents Takata's early life in the context of Japanese Americans in the U.S. Territory of Hawaii, each chapter focuses less on documenting Takata's life and more on how Reiki was practiced, understood, and disseminated in a particular time and place, from her training in interwar Japan (1930s) to her teaching in transwar Hawaii (1930s–1950s) and in Cold War North America (1950s–1970s). This genealogy examines the successive ways Takata adapted Reiki for different audiences over her forty-five years of practicing and teaching and analyzes how these adaptations responded to changing structural conditions and social contexts, including the ongoing processes of racial formation and racial rearticulation in the twentieth century United States. It shows that Takata's adaptations were not simply reactions to structural forces, but also ways she (and subsequent Reiki Masters) actively constructed social and spiritual capital to build networks of patients and clients. It examines the gradual professionalization of Reiki practice, arguing that the emergence of Reiki as a possible professional vocation was tied to its self-sufficiency as a spiritual practice. Finally, it argues the changing roles Japan played in the Reiki cultures of transwar Hawaii and postwar North America encapsulate ambivalent tensions between universalism and national-cultural exceptionalism in the mid twentieth century North Pacific.

This dissertation contributes to larger scholarly investigations in the field of religious studies in the twentieth century North Pacific. It follows a recent wave of scholarship that focuses on the religious creativity stemming from Japan-U.S. cultural exchange, implicitly or explicitly calling into question the exceptionalist discourses that can be said to characterize much of the study of religious culture in both countries.⁷

⁷ See Hardacre 1998; Mohr 2014; Moriya 2000; Sharf 1993, 1995; Snodgrass 2003, 2007, 2009; Thomas

However, little of that recent scholarship examines the role of Japanese Americans in the development of these trans-Pacific religious cultures.⁸ By focusing on the contributions of Hawayo Takata to Reiki's development, this study adds to the scholarship on Japanese American religion, which also tends to be attuned to transnational connections.⁹ This dissertation contributes to these fields with its attention to a Japanese American's production of a spiritual medical practice for North Americans of Japanese and European descent. Its multi-sited approach in the North Pacific responds to calls in religious studies and Japanese American studies to take part in a broader refiguring of area studies around transoceanic connections (Matory 2005, Takezawa and Okihiro 2016). Furthermore, by demonstrating the ties between Reiki's decades-long evolution and its movement in distinct, emplaced networks, this dissertation contributes to broader conversations on the relationship between cultural production and cultural circulation.

As a work of religious studies, at the intersection of history, cultural studies, and social science, this study's primary concerns are with what Reiki's development, circulation, and appeal can tell us about religious trends in the twentieth century North Pacific. It focuses on how twentieth-century Reiki practitioners in Japan, Hawaii, and North America shaped and reshaped their spiritual-medical practice in relation to multiple authorities, including ways that gendered and racialized hierarchies affected their lived experiences. These experiences have social, cultural, political, economic, and spiritual dimensions, which cannot be fully teased apart, but this study attempts to

forthcoming; Tweed 2005; Yoshinaga 2015.

⁸ A notable exception is Moriya 2000.

⁹ For example, Ama 2011, Esaki 2016, Hayashi 1995, Iwamura 2009, Masatsugu 2008, Moriya 2001, Pereira and Matsuoka 2007, Pierce 2001, Williams and Moriya 2010, Yoo 2000.

understand what forces combined to drive Reiki's evolution.

This study is not concerned with establishing any given aspect of Reiki practice as more or less authentic or authoritative, nor is it the one and only authoritative version of Reiki's history. This is but one telling of Reiki history and doubtless contains some inaccuracies and many omissions. Its incompleteness illustrates the fragility inherent to human endeavour. Put poetically by historian Jill Lepore, "history's written from what can be found; what isn't saved is lost, sunken and rotted, eaten by earth" (2013: n.p.). This is the most detailed history of Reiki yet compiled, based on dozens of original oral histories, hundreds of documents, and years of ethnography, but at many times during my research I felt the regret of being informed that the materials I sought had been consigned to landfills. After several unsuccessful attempts to reach the daughter of one of North America's first Reiki Masters, I finally got her on the phone only to be told, "Oh, I just cleaned out mom's stuff last year." Even Hawayo Takata's granddaughter, Phyllis Lei Furumoto, who dutifully retained a dozen boxes of her grandmother's papers and possessions for decades—a trove that greatly informs this work and will form the core of an archive at the University of California, Santa Barbara—remembers throwing out a box of her grandmother's letters long ago. As sometimes a single letter could lead to important revelations in my research, I have often dreamed of what testimonies and research leads that box contained. These losses occur on the mental plane in addition to the physical one. When interviewing elderly Reiki practitioners in Hilo, Hawaii, I was frequently told, "If you came a few years ago, I would remember more." Other historic practitioners whom I contacted were beyond the point of remembering anything. This

telling is thus circumscribed by the limits of memory and mortality, the impressions that remain in elders' recollections and dusty boxes retained in storage.

What is Reiki?

Like anything practiced by millions of people across the planet, Reiki is not one thing, but many. It is perhaps more accurate to speak of *Reikis* in the plural, rather than the singular. Yet, to make a generalization, the practice that has constituted Reiki's core for most of its history is a gentle laying-on of hands. As such, physical touch is at the heart of much of what Reiki practitioners "do" and how they themselves represent their practice—for example, the quarterly magazine published by the UK-based The Reiki Association is called *Touch*. Because of this I have grown increasingly curious why many people in Canada and the U.S., upon hearing the subject of my doctoral research, reply, "Ah, Reiki, that's the one where you don't touch, right?" implicitly contrasting it with other forms of bodywork that require physical contact. Even seemingly definitive sources reinforce this idea. An article on healing and medicine in the *Encyclopedia of Religion* says, "Reiki healing is a good example of nonphysical touch," "done on the astral or energetic level rather than through direct contact with the patient's skin" (Sullivan and Sered 2005: 3813), and a Getty Images photo used in an informational pamphlet from the U.S. National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine shows hands about two inches above the recipient's body (Image 3).

I have wondered where this perception comes from, as light touch is the central practice for the vast majority of the hundreds of Reiki practitioners I have encountered in my years of fieldwork. One factor may be the common assertion that Reiki practitioners'

hands can even enact physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual changes at a distance of an inch or two from the recipient's body. Indeed, Takata's students from the late 1970s told me she said that if there was a reason not to touch the body (for example, in the case of a severe burn, where to touch would be painful), one can treat in this way. There is, however, a more recent development (i.e., post-1980) in which some practitioners primarily place their hands in the aura of the recipient rather than physically touching the body. This may come from practitioners wishing to reassure patients that Reiki is effective even without touch, particularly as those who are apprehensive of intimacy may feel uncomfortable with the patient's vulnerability in the toucher-touched dyadic setting of the typical Reiki treatment. Whatever the reason, the ethereality of the "hands-off" approach seems partly responsible for the numerous people who, upon learning of the subject of my research, have told me they prefer massage or other manipulative bodywork to Reiki as they find its light touch, even lack of touch, to be insufficiently physical.

Early forms of Reiki actually employed more vigorous forms of touch. In the *Reiki Therapy Handbook*, first published circa 1922, the founder Mikao Usui (1865–1922) describes the therapy's manual component as "stroking, rubbing, and tapping with the hands" (*Reiki Ryōhō Hikkei*). The hands of Kino Yuda (1902–2002), an early Reiki student on 'the Big Island' of Hawai'i, vibrated so vigorously during her treatments that I could hear them rhythmically slapping the body of her patient on an audiotape her family played for me. As will become clear in later chapters, Reiki underwent changes in the postwar U.S. that positioned it closer to laying-on-of-hands than massage so that, as

practiced today, Reiki's basic form is a type of ritualized bodily intimacy: gently laying hands on various parts of the body.

Many practitioners integrate Reiki into their everyday lives, regularly treating themselves and others, but it is likely that many more received the initiations but do not regularly practice. As a scholar-practitioner, I know the ebb and flow of practice in my own life, and many of my interlocutors have affirmed the normalcy of my experience. I received my first Reiki initiations in November 2001 in McCleod Ganj, in northern India, for participant-observation research for a postgraduate research project on various forms of energy healing. In the months and years that followed, I went through irregular phases of performing self-treatments, whether a "full treatment," approximating one hour and completing a formalized series of hand positions on the head, chest, abdomen, and back, or just a short treatment focused on a particular area that was bothering me. I sometimes offered treatments to friends and family members who suffered some malady, whether acute or chronic, and some have found the treatments therapeutic and profound. Although, partly because of my research, I now practice a form closer to what was taught in the 1970s, for a period I developed my own hand positions that I found to feel natural and effective, highlighting the way practitioners negotiate multiple authorities, including self-authority (Wood 2009). As I and those I treated generally enjoyed sensations of relief, release, deep relaxation, and well-being, Reiki became an element of my *habitus*, the embodied dispositions that shape how we perceive the world and react to it. However, there were certainly periods of time in which I was a Reiki practitioner more in the sense of an identity or potentiality than in the sense of regular practice. Similarly, it is likely

that only a fraction of the estimated millions who have received the initiations that authorize Reiki practice actually do practice on a regular basis.

While it is likely that Reiki is most commonly practiced in informal settings such as self-treatments or treatments of family and friends, it appears most conspicuously in professional therapeutic settings, including private clinics, spas, and hospitals. Hospitals have particular cultural cachet, as they represent the definitive spaces of professional medicine. A significant number of U.S. hospitals host Reiki programs, including all of the nation's top seven hospitals as ranked by *U.S. News and World Report* in 2015.¹⁰

Reiki practitioners cite hospitals' Reiki programs as evidence that mainstream medicine acknowledges Reiki's benefits, but hospitals do not necessarily offer Reiki and other forms of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) because of evidence of efficacy.¹¹ In one widely-cited study of hospitals that offer CAM, far and away the top-reported reason for doing so is "patient demand," chosen by 84% of respondents; "clinically effective" came in second at 67% (Ananth 2008: 9). Matt Fink, former CEO of

¹⁰ In order, these are Massachusetts General Hospital, Mayo Clinic, Johns Hopkins Hospital, UCLA Medical Center, Cleveland Clinic, Brigham and Women's Hospital, and New York-Presbyterian University Hospital of Columbia and Cornell. <http://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals/rankings>, accessed October 31, 2015. After 2015, *US News & World Report* stopped giving rankings for best hospitals overall and began ranking them by specialty.

¹¹ Reiki professionals often cite a study conducted by an affiliate of the American Hospitals Association (Ananth 2008) to claim that Reiki is practiced in fifteen percent of U.S. hospitals, commonly estimated as roughly eight hundred hospitals nationwide. (See <http://www.centerforreikiresearch.org/>, http://www.integrative-healthcare.org/mt/archives/2012/01/hospital_based.html, <http://www.macmhp.org/pdfs/rwrarys.pdf>, <http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/blog/?p=922>, and <http://www.lifesolutions-coaching.com/>)

However, this statistic is misleading. The survey instrument was distributed to 6,439 hospitals, 748 (11.6%) of which responded, with 280 (37.4%) reporting offering CAM and fifteen percent of those hospitals offering Reiki (Ananth 2008: 3). That suggests a little over four percent of U.S. hospitals offered Reiki when the survey was conducted in 2007; applied to the number surveyed, this would have been a little over two hundred and fifty hospitals nationwide at that time, and that number has likely increased over the last decade. Regardless, the inaccurate "fifteen percent of U.S. hospitals offer Reiki" claim has gained currency in emic narratives, which are then reproduced by medical researchers (see Vandergrift 2013: 228).

Boston's Beth Israel Hospital, whose cancer center hosts a Reiki program, agrees, telling the PBS series *Frontline*: "If hospitals don't get involved in these kinds of programs they will lose patients because patients will go elsewhere" (quoted in Brown 2015: 464).

However, patient demand and efficacy are not the only reasons hospitals offer Reiki and other CAM services. Sita Ananth (2008: 9) comments that, as many hospitals include statements about "holistic health" in their mission statements or have "religious affiliations that already offer pastoral care services and have spiritual foundations, the natural next step is offering services that tend to the whole person—body, mind and spirit"; indeed, hospitals that participated in her study chose "reflects organizational mission" as the third highest response (57%) to why they offer CAM services.

Reiki's fit with this organizational mission for holism depends on its position as a practice of spiritual medicine. In an article in the peer-reviewed *Alternative Therapies in Health and Medicine*, Robert Schiller, chair of family medicine at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York, called Reiki "perhaps the best introduction to patients of the therapeutic effects of Integrative Medicine... Perhaps more than any of the other energy healing discipline [sic], Reiki training can combine the 'felt experience' with concepts of theory and an application of the spirit." "Application of the spirit" may seem like a phrase better suiting a revival tent than a medical journal, but Schiller emphasizes that Reiki's spiritual aspects are essential to its efficacy. He continues, "using Reiki only as a healing technique without developing its spiritual component through regular self-practice limits Reiki's full therapeutic potential" (Schiller 2003: 20–21). Thus, the rise of Reiki's tentative acceptance by professionals in prestigious American medical centers has been at least partly mediated through its categorization as a spiritual practice, although this

depends on site-specific institutional culture, as at least one hospital explicitly prohibits its chaplains from performing Reiki, massage, or exorcism (Cadge 2012: 113).

Like the category of religion more broadly, what counts as “spiritual” is not a *sui generis* category, but is rather a discursive formation that is continually being reshaped and contested. From the 1920s, some practitioners have argued that, despite the therapy’s name, which could literally denote something “spiritual” in Japanese, there is nothing inherently spiritual about Reiki.¹² However, dominant voices, from the founder Mikao Usui to Hawayo Takata, have also emphasized that one’s healing ability was linked to a self-cultivation ethos that aligns the individual to the cosmic power called Reiki. Experienced practitioners “listen to their hands,” letting Reiki guide them to the spots that will be most therapeutic for the recipient, and novice practitioners are encouraged to develop this capability. These interconnected beliefs—that practitioners mediate between “universal life energy” and their treatments’ recipients, that their ability to do so is predicated on their cultivation of certain moral qualities, and that their practice is guided by a kind of transpersonal force—underlie my use of the term “spiritual medicine.”

This phrase, which I use to describe a sphere of activity that cannot be neatly distinguished as either religious or medical, is an emic term in some Reiki cultures. It translates the Japanese word *reiyaku*, which the founder Mikao Usui (1865–1926) used to describe his therapy. All Reiki practitioners trace their initiation lineage to Usui, and nearly all do so via Usui’s disciple Chūjirō Hayashi (1880–1940), who taught Takata in

¹² The character *rei* in the word *reiki* can literally denote a spirit and was used prominently in the vocabulary of a number of spiritual practices, including healing, in interwar Japan. See Matsui 1928, who writes, “As the name Reiki Therapy indicates, it can be considered a spiritual thing, but if I were speak from my experience of having treated over a hundred people to date, I think it is a physical thing. Some people think it is equal to the way that Christ and the historical Buddha miraculously relieved people’s illnesses, but I am not a great man like them, and I also do not have great character [yet I can heal]” (my translation, published in Fueston 2017: 253). Matsui’s article is analyzed at greater length in Chapter Two.

the 1930s. As will be described in Chapter Two, little is definitively known about Usui and Hayashi, partly because of the practice of “secret transmission” (*hiden*) that structures many Japanese arts. Usui’s legacy is accordingly disputed, but one brief text called “the five precepts” (*gokai*) is broadly accepted as written by Usui himself.¹³

The contents and use of the five precepts (later called the Reiki Ideals) have changed over the years through the process of Reiki’s translation and adaptation, but have served as a kind of moral foundation for Reiki practice since Usui’s time. The original text written in his calligraphic hand opens with two poetic lines: *shōfuku no hihō, manbyō no reiyaku* (Image 4). Since the discovery of this text by Western Reiki community in the late 1990s, this phrase has often been translated as “the secret method of inviting happiness, the spiritual medicine for all illness.”¹⁴ Indeed, from its origins, Reiki has exhibited characteristics considered more in the realm of religion than that of medicine. Usui reportedly acquired the practice after three weeks of fasting and meditation on a sacred mountain. His therapy makes use of secret symbols and empowerment rituals, and these rituals, coupled with various meditative bodily practices, authorize a ritualized laying-on-of-hands said to channel an immeasurable force with incomparable powers. Despite the aforementioned contestation of Reiki’s designation as “spiritual,” dominant discourses, from a 1920s text attributed to Usui to Takata’s 1970s parables, have long

¹³ However even this text is based by an earlier work by another author. See Chapter Two and Hirano 2016.

¹⁴ Although the earliest print version I can find actually translates *manbyō no reiyaku* as “the wonderful medicine for all diseases (of body and soul)” (Petter 1998: 29), the UK Reiki Master Chris Marsh who was a leading figure in defining “traditional Japanese Reiki” on the Internet in the late 1990s translated it as “the spiritual medicine for all illness” (Stiene and Stiene 2003: 66). The translation of *reiyaku* as “spiritual medicine” is, admittedly, a little problematic. The two characters in *reiyaku* each denote “spirit” and “medicine,” but the word is used in a manner akin to the English expression “wonder drug”; while we might colloquially call aspirin “miraculous” or “a godsend,” we do not typically consider it to be a spiritual phenomenon. The *rei* in *reiyaku* is the same as the *rei* in *reiki*, and similar ambiguity regarding the “spirituality” of this character is described at greater length in Chapter Two.

said that Reiki is not simply intended to cure physical maladies but also something akin to spiritual transformation (*Reiki Ryōhō Hikkei*, Fueston 2016: 47).

One enacts this spiritual transformation by embodying the values expressed in the five precepts or Reiki Ideals. Takata taught different versions of these over the years, but they are all based on Usui's original: "Just for today, do not anger, do not worry, be grateful, fulfill your duty, be kind to people." By controlling negative emotions and cultivating gratitude, diligence, and kindness, the Reiki practitioner leads a life of health and happiness and is able to channel the healing energies of the universe to heal others. Hence, Reiki holds health (and the ability to heal) to be a moral value.¹⁵

At the same time, Reiki shies from the extreme idealism of Christian Science, which holds that matter itself is "error" or unreal, and that all disease can ultimately be overcome with right thinking. Reiki works well with the 'complementary and alternative medicine' model, as it happily co-exists with conventional medical treatment, helping expedite postoperative healing or mitigate the side effects of chemotherapy while replacing biomedical treatments for more minor maladies. One woman who grew up with Reiki recalled her family staying with her aunt as a teenager and her sister remarking to her, "wow, did you know there's a pill you can take to get rid of headaches!" as she had never known of any remedy aside from putting one's hands on the head.¹⁶ Reiki is also increasingly used in settings where biomedicine reaches its therapeutic limits, as in

¹⁵ Lears (1981), Foucault (1988), and others have argued that this moralization of health is a defining characteristic of modernity.

¹⁶ Interview with Anneli Twan, July 25, 2013. Twan's mother Wanja became a Reiki Master under Takata and she and her sister both were initiated by Takata as children.

hospice settings.¹⁷ Reiki thus offers a spiritual intervention (in the sense of its claims to mediate between the individual and the cosmos) in health issues from the momentous (palliative care) to the mundane (a headache).

Existing Scholarship on Reiki

The majority of scholarly publications on Reiki appear in journals of nursing or CAM.¹⁸ These medical researchers generally present Reiki in their articles' introductions as an exotic Eastern import, although it resembles (and was influenced by) therapies developed in nineteenth-century North America, including magnetic healing and New Thought (Hirano 2016). These and other contemporary unorthodox therapies, like homeopathy, chiropractic, osteopathy, and hydrotherapy, employed spiritual elements inherited from European sources like Swedenborgianism and Mesmerism (Fuller 1989; Albanese 1992, 2007). This sphere of spiritual medicine was condemned as unscientific (along with other practices such as naturopathy and physical therapy) by Abraham Flexner (1866–1959) in his influential 1910 report on medical education that resulted in the closing of the vast majority of U.S. programs teaching these therapies; Flexner pejoratively called these non-biomedical treatments “medical sects,” as they required that “the student effect a compromise between science and revelation,” abandoning scientific findings if they contradict the sect’s “sacred” dogma (Flexner 1910: 158–159; Stahnisch and Verhoef 2012). The very title of Louis Schultz Reed’s *The Healing Cults* (1932) demonstrates that

¹⁷ See Coakley and Barron 2012; Vandergrift 2013; Thrane, Maurer, and Ren 2016; Conner and Anandarajah 2017.

¹⁸ The phrase complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) arose in the late twentieth century to denote what earlier eras called irregular, sectarian, or unorthodox medicine, but is becoming replaced in the early twenty-first century by the more inclusive integrative medicine. See Bivins 2008, Fuller and Stein 2015.

the charge of unorthodox medicine being inappropriately religious continued for decades; this report denounced “medical cultists” for “[clinging] to their particular beliefs with a fervor more characteristic of an evangelistic than a scientific group” (quoted in Whorton 2001). However, as shown in the previous section, healthcare professionals in the early twenty-first century have a growing appreciation for the therapeutic value of spiritual medicine and much of this literature offers tentative support for Reiki’s therapeutic benefits and encourages additional research into this practice.¹⁹

Bracketing questions of its therapeutic efficacy, Reiki has become a key practice for scholars of religion to think through the intersection between religion and unorthodox medicine. It first appeared in religious studies literature with two texts, both published in 1990: J. Gordon Melton’s *New Age Encyclopedia* and Catherine L. Albanese’s *Nature Religion in America: From the Algonkian Indians to the New Age*. Melton’s encyclopedia includes two brief articles on Reiki and the splinter practice The Radiance Technique, and he would go on to author and co-author several other texts on Reiki.²⁰ Albanese’s more extensive analysis explicitly frames Reiki as emblematic of broader trends in

¹⁹ E.g., Hulse, Stuart-Shor, and Russo 2010; Fleischer, et. al. 2014; Rosada, et. al. 2015; Midilli and Gunduzoglu 2016; Thrane, Maurer, and Ren 2016; Conner and Anandarajah 2017.

²⁰ Melton’s familiarity with Reiki began with personal experiences with Takata and some of her Master students through his time at the Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship (SFF), a spiritualist organization that helped mediate Reiki’s establishment in the Chicago area. From 1971 to 1974, Melton was the SFF’s national field director, and he personally knew Virginia Samdahl and Ethel Lombardi, two of the first Reiki Masters in North America. See Chapter Five, Chryssides (2012: 231), and Melton (2001: 77). He seems to have introduced Albanese to Reiki in the 1980s when he moved his Institute for the Study of American Religion to Santa Barbara, California, where she taught at the University of California (“J. Gordon Melton”).

In addition to the *New Age Encyclopedia* articles (1990), Melton gave a conference paper included in the edited volume *New Age Religion and Globalization* (Melton 2001), and co-authored a chapter on Japanese New Religions in the U.S. that discusses Reiki and an Italian language monograph on Reiki (Melton and Jones 1994, Menegotto and Melton 2005). These texts tend to conflate inaccurate, apocryphal, or fraudulent emic narratives with historical fact, even when recognizing these narratives as “relativizing” the mythic Reiki origin story told by Takata (e.g., Melton 2001). For an analysis of some of these emic narratives, see Stein 2009.

American religion. Albanese presciently describes Reiki as a “recapitulation” of nineteenth-century American mesmeric healing model “of blockages, of energy to remove obstructions, [and] of power and vibration moving within us” (1990: 189–190), connecting the two without knowing of the influence that American mesmerism, in translation, had on the development of similar therapies in early twentieth-century Japan (Hirano 2016, Yoshinaga 2015). While recognizing the influence of twentieth-century scientific concepts on Reiki practitioners’ discourse that “all things are energy and the essence of energy is *light*,” Albanese ultimately concludes that Reiki, like other forms of “nature religion” in late twentieth century America, from macrobiotic practitioners to “New Age Indians,” essentially “recapitulates” practices from the time of the spiritualist and magnetic healer Andrew Jackson Davis (1826–1910): “[They] speak a similar language ... of centering and connection, of energy vibration and flow” (1990: 196–197). Two decades later, Albanese (2007) developed this concept of nature religion into “metaphysical religion,” which she posits as the third major stream of American religion (alongside the evangelical and the mainstream-denominational). Through the lens of this more developed work, Reiki could be reconceived as a practice of “metaphysical Asia,” like the teaching of Vivekananda or Yogananda, which Albanese portrays as American metaphysical religion in Oriental garb, posing as the spiritual insights of a mystical East to U.S. audiences who appreciated this blend of foreignness and familiarity.

While Albanese was attuned to Reiki’s analytic potential by 1990, a decade later Reiki had become a common example to illustrate religious trends in contemporary North America and Europe. Wade Clark Roof cites an “eclectic seeker” completing a Reiki workshop as an example of how she “shops around” for meaning and spirituality;

significantly, he provides no explanation of what Reiki is, assuming his North American readers are familiar with the practice (Roof 1999: 31). Reiki appears throughout Olaf Hammer's study of non-rationality in late modern Western esotericism as a case of how practitioners justify "seemingly pre-Enlightenment beliefs," including "beliefs about cosmic energies and non-physical aspects of human physiology," with "relatively modern, post-Enlightenment legitimizing reasons" (Hammer 2004: 1–2, 55–56). Steven Sutcliffe examines a Reiki workshop in the UK, concluding that Reiki is "a self-contained spiritual system" for New Age seekers, containing "not just a therapeutic technique but a pragmatic theology and accessible cosmology" (2003: 184–186). Pamela Klassen (2005, 2011, 2014) places Reiki alongside yoga and Buddhist meditation in her analysis of how and why liberal North American Protestants appropriate Asian religious practices in a cosmopolitan "postbiomedical" political economy, where non-Christian spiritual therapies are employed in conjunction with biomedical care and Christian practices. And Candy Gunther Brown (2013, 2015) groups Reiki with mindfulness and martial arts to argue that some CAM modalities are religious practices masquerading as medical ones, a deceit that she contends has serious moral, legal, and possibly spiritual consequences.²¹

A growing number of social scientific studies have focused more specifically on one or another aspect of Reiki culture in contemporary North America and Britain. Tekla Eichhorn's (2002) Master's thesis may be the earliest such monograph on Reiki, combining participant-observation, interviews, and literature analysis to argue that Reiki in North America is a sub-cultural ritual practice that provides a sense of embodied personhood that both resists and reinforces elements of the dominant culture. In his

²¹ Courtney Bender (2014) offers an incisive critique on the assumptions Brown makes about religion in her 2013 monograph that is equally applicable to the 2015 article.

sociological study of New Age channeling, Matthew Wood (2007: 129–136) uses Reiki as an example of what he calls “nonformativeness,” that is, that the Reiki practitioner’s experiences are shaped in relation to multiple authorities who neither attempt nor achieve exclusive control over that process, leaving them with an indistinct habitus. Dori Beeler (2013, 2015) built on Wood’s theory in her analysis of fourteen months of participant-observation ethnographic fieldwork on Reiki in Britain, concluding that Reiki is a nonformative, subjective, and commoditized spiritual practice. Esala and Del Rosso (2011), analyzing their participant observation in a U.S. Reiki training course, describe Reiki energy as a “significant interactant” in participants’ experience, showing that the way it was perceived as resisting human intention supported theoretical claims for humans “doing mind” to nonhuman objects. And Graham (2014) argues that, on a phenomenological level, Reiki’s place in U.S. medicine represents a blurring of the barriers between magic and modern bioscience, as it inhabits spaces of professional medicine despite being fundamentally experiential, unable to be empirically verifiable, and practiced by virtue of secret initiation rituals.

Some more historically-minded works in the field of religious studies have foregrounded Reiki’s identity as a spiritual practice of Japanese origin with international appeal. J. Gordon Melton (2001: 75, 91) represents Reiki as a “global movement” that “appears on its way to becoming a complete religion,” in a book chapter that was the first scholarly publication to comment on Reiki’s diachronic changes as it was adapted for the Western world. Ulrich Dehn (2002) described Reiki in Europe as a healing movement stemming from a broadly defined “Japanese spirituality” that, like Japanese martial arts and secularized forms of Zen meditation, appeals to Westerners. And Jojan Jonker (2016)

provides a sweeping account of what he calls Reiki's "transmigration" by tracking changes to a discrete number of "characteristic elements" from Reiki's pre-origins in the nineteenth century, through a Japanese new religious movement in the early twentieth century, to a globalized "holistic spirituality" by the turn of the millennium.

The present work builds on these prior studies but differs from them in three interrelated ways. First, the vast majority of prior work on Reiki uncritically reproduces certain inaccurate or unsubstantiated emic narratives regarding Reiki's founders, provides mistranslations of Japanese terms (particularly *rei*, often said to mean "universal" due to Takata's explanation of *reiki* as "universal life-force energy"), and/or makes unfounded speculations about connections between early Reiki and contemporaneous healing movements. This is largely due to a difficulty of transnational studies, namely, the need to be versed in multiple languages and broad historical contexts. To my knowledge, the only English-language study of Reiki history published by a scholar with command of Japanese language and history is my collaborator Naoko Hirano's (2016) article on influences of American metaphysical religious practices on Usui and other spiritual therapists in early twentieth-century Japan. Other notable works on Reiki by scholars of Japan include Mark Hosak's (2014) German-language doctoral thesis on the use of Siddham (a kind of stylized Sanskrit) in Japanese religious healing rituals (as a forerunner of one of the Reiki symbols) and Liam Horowitz's (2015) Hebrew-language Master's thesis on the connection between the *kanjō* ritual in Japanese esoteric Buddhism and the *reiju* ceremony that developed into the Reiki initiation. But the present work is the first piece of reviewed scholarship in any language that describes Reiki's trajectory

from Japan to North America authored by someone who can comprehend Japanese-language materials.

Second, this study pays unprecedented attention to Takata's racial and gendered formation as a Japanese American woman during the transwar period (extending from the interwar through the Pacific War and into the Cold War). These middle decades of the twentieth century were volatile for U.S.-Japan relations and a period of repeated "racial rearticulation" in the U.S. (Cheah 2011, Omi and Winant 1994), which impacted Reiki's development in this period. Prior studies have a sizable lacuna between 1938, when Takata's teacher Hayashi recognized her as a "Reiki Master" (probably the first time this now-standard English phrase was ever used), and the mid 1970s, when an account of Takata in the book *We Are All Healers* (Hammond 1973) sparked the most prolific teaching period of her life. The two biographies of Takata written by her students contain hardly any information from this thirty-five year period (Brown 1992, Haberly 1990). Scholarly accounts of Reiki history contain little, if any, information about her practice in 1930s to 1950s Hawaii and are unaware that Takata began teaching on the North American mainland by at least 1951. This study uses original oral histories and recently uncovered archival materials to consider how shifts in Takata's racial and gendered formation in the transwar period impacted her authority, the development of her teaching networks, and the way Reiki is practiced.

Third, unlike prior works that identify cultural practices as essentially American or Japanese, this work considers these national identities to be political, historical, and contested "purifications" of a North Pacific "intersystem" (Drummond 1980, Latour

1993).²² Claims that, as a Japanese practice, Reiki is exempt from dualistic Western divisions between mind/spirit and body/matter, unwittingly reproduce a narrative of Japanese exceptionalism that can be traced to prominent twentieth century interpreters of Japanese culture. The Zen philosophers D.T. Suzuki (1870–1966) and Kitarō Nishida (1870–1945) both promoted “theories of Japanese people” (*nihonjinron*) that the Japanese are more inclined to experience the world directly than people of other nations, and these concepts circulated more broadly in Japan and abroad (Sharf 1993).²³ This study takes care to avoid such essentialist claims regarding Japaneseness by following Stephan Palmié’s argument about Africanity, in which he argues that the category of “African” is not a “natural kind,” that is, a self-evident, static entity, but rather an “interactive kind,” a dynamic category that encodes complex bodies of contextually variable knowledge that powerfully transforms the realities that it ostensibly represents (Palmié 2008: 11). Thus, this work treats the marker “Japanese” as less of a second-order abstraction than a first-order category, used for political ends.

In sum, scholars at the turn of the twenty-first century have productively interrogated Reiki to understand sociocultural developments in North America and Europe. This study differs from prior scholarship in its focus on Reiki’s movement and transformation in networks spanning Japan, Hawaii, and North America in the middle

²² The North Pacific intersystem of Japan, Hawaii, and North America is clearly embedded in other networks, loops, and rivalries. For example, Japan also defines itself in relation to, but distinction from, Korea, China, and other nations on the Asian mainland, whereas the U.S. historically saw itself in relation to Europe or, in the Cold War, to the Soviet Union. This dissertation brackets those in its focus on the movement of a cultural practice along North Pacific routes. However, the complexity of these admixtures is one reason I avoid the terminology of “hybrid” that Latour (1993) employs.

²³ Claims that Reiki’s Japaneseness allows it to transcend mind/body dualism (see Graham 2014: 27), resemble the logic of Hashida Kunihiro, professor of medicine at Tokyo Imperial University, who in 1936 claimed that Japanese scientists assumed “things and the mind are one” (*bushhi ichinyo*, a line from the Zen patriarch Dōgen also cited by Nishida), and thus made different types of observations than Western scientists who, in contrast, inhabited a world of Cartesian dualism. Mizuno 2009: 114–116.

decades of the twentieth century (from its earliest known systematization by Mikao Usui in 1922 to the 1980 death of Hawayo Takata). More broadly, its sustained focus on the life work of Takata, who first adapted Reiki practice for audiences outside of Japan and audiences not of Japanese descent, provides an opportunity to re-think the relationship between ethnoracial formation, cultural production, and networks of cultural circulation.

Theorizing Reiki's "Circulatory Development"

Part of the difficulty in precisely defining Reiki stems from its being "between worlds," constructed from trans-Pacific connections in the interstices of religion and medicine. While Reiki's historical development and circulation could offer any number of contributions to broader studies of religion, medicine, society, and culture, this work foregrounds Reiki's utility for thinking about cultural production as a relational and iterative process based on alterity. Change is, at its heart, about difference. This difference can be moralized as restoration or decline, opportunity or crisis. Difference is a kind of double-edged blade: a value so honed that it is capable of surgery as well as violence. Michael Taussig describes how indigenous people in the northern Amazon consider the darker-skinned people of the south to be "inferior," "savages," even "not people," but at the same time regard them as "gifted sorcerers" possessing powerful healing magic. European colonists exhibited similar ambivalence, wantonly murdering native Amazonians while also seeking out their shamans for healing, and Taussig concludes, "going to the Indians for their healing power and killing them for their wildness... are not only intertwined but are codependent" (1987: 44–45, 100).

The ambivalent power of otherness can also be seen in the mixed reception Reiki has received throughout its history. A text attributed to Mikao Usui written in the early 1920s says his Reiki Therapy bears no resemblance to other therapies, directly contrasting it with Chinese medicine (*kanpō*) and biomedicine, which it implies are inferior in comparison (*Reiki Ryōhō Hikkei*: 2ff.). Such grandiose claims may have attracted some followers out of curiosity or dissatisfaction with other medical systems, but they appear to have provoked skepticism as well: an anonymous author, surprised to feel effects from Usui Reiki Therapy, which he had assumed was a scam, remarked that Usui was “said to be one of Japan’s three fraudulent wizards” (*nihon san’yamashi no hitori to iwareta*), along with two better-known figures: a clairvoyant political advisor and a spiritual therapist with many tens of thousands of followers.²⁴

Reiki’s difference continued to mark it as potentially salvific or damned as it was adopted in North American settings. Shortly after receiving their Reiki initiations in 1951, Clara Mackler (1897–1980) of Canton, Ohio wrote an acquaintance that she and her husband Thomas (1898–1973) had a “strong conviction that an opportunity such as Dr. Takata only comes once in a life time [sic]. She is surely a messenger to humanity.” This feeling eventually inverted; in 1965, Thomas wrote a memoir-like “testimony” in which he and Clara repented for having ever practiced Reiki, saying that sometime thereafter, “the Lord [opened their] eyes to how foolish we had been... as the power Dr. Takato [sic] used was not covered by the Blood of Jesus, but an evil power which had a strange way

²⁴ Asaki 1928. This passage is examined in more detail in Chapter Two.

of drawing people to her.²⁵ In the intervening years, the Macklers had converted to a Pentecostal faith that made Reiki appear as an intolerable kind of otherness.

Takata's claims of Reiki's Buddhist origins and potential for spiritual transformation gave it authority and appeal for certain audiences and made it off-limits to others. Some are drawn to Reiki as a "Buddhist secret" (Hammond 1973: 264) or because of a more general "spiritual component" (Schiller 2003: 21). At the same time, however, these qualities are also cited in a 2009 statement from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Doctrine that concludes "the worldview that undergirds Reiki theory [contains central] elements that belong neither to Christian faith nor to natural science," and on that basis recommends Reiki be barred from Catholic institutions such as hospitals and retreat centers (Committee on Doctrine 2009: 5–6). In the aftermath of that statement, a Catholic exorcist wrote that Reiki Masters have no connection "with the true God," but rather that their "esoteric 'spirit guides' ... are demons disguised as 'angels of the light' (2 Cor. 11:14)" (Euteneuer 2010). Like Taussig's Amazonian example, the power of Reiki's otherness is tied up with its potential to be both therapeutic and dangerous.

Reiki's alterity is not only found in contrasts between it and other therapeutic and spiritual practices, but also in its internal diachronic and synchronic variegation. Reiki is a product of transnational dialogue, continually formed and reformed at distinct sites for diverse audiences, chiefly organized through teaching lineages that exhibit significant diversity due to little formal oversight. This internal heterogeneity ties in with a larger problem in transnational studies about how to theorize difference. On one hand, the

²⁵ Clara Mackler, letter to Elsa Kane, postmarked September 18, 1951, personal collection of Phyllis Furumoto; Thomas P. Mackler, "Testimony," unpublished document, 1965, personal collection of Shannon E. D. Mackler.

identification of particular ideas and practices as specific to a particular group or place can reinforce the kind of national (and, by extension, ethnic or racial) essentialism that the field of transnational studies strives to overcome. For example, is Reiki an “Asian” or a “Japanese” healing art if it bears American influences, as much from its origins in a cosmopolitan era in Japanese history as from the Japanese American responsible for many of its most distinctive features? On the other hand, effacing connections between a cultural practice and a particular group or place, particularly in conjunction with a history of domination, can be part of the violence of cultural appropriation.

One response to these difficulties is to resist the standard boundaries of area studies that can reinforce the exceptionalist narratives that have long been a hallmark of American studies and Japan studies approaches, and instead circumscribe transnational configurations that “split the horns” of the apparent dilemma of nationalist essentialism on one hand and a global homogenization approach on the other (Fluck, Pease, and Rowe 2011; Kaplan 2004; Tsing 2000). This approach can help avoid nationalist-exceptionalist discourses by foregrounding how actors strategically deploy narratives of inclusion and exclusion, an approach Paul Gilroy describes as “anti-anti-essentialism.” For example, in his study of popular music in the Afro-Atlantic diaspora, Gilroy presents blackness as a set of values and practices that continue to bear the legacy of slavery but that are also repeatedly negotiated through the process of their transmission. This approach sees “the reproduction of cultural traditions not in the unproblematic transmission of a fixed essence through time but in the breaks and interruptions which suggest that the invocation of tradition may itself be a distinct, though covert, response to the destabilizing flux of the post-contemporary world” (Gilroy 1993: 99–102). In other words,

anti-anti-essentialism recognizes that identity is partly fluid, but that this fluidity is often denied (both from within and without) to gain political leverage.

Following Gilroy, this study dissolves the assumption that Reiki is a fixed product of particular provenance and authorship transmitted from a discrete East to a discrete West, but rather takes a process-oriented approach that considers Reiki as a genre of practice formed and transformed through circulation in a complex web of asymmetrical power relations that designate certain narratives and practices as “Eastern” and “Western.” This approach presents a particular synthesis of flow and network: two of the most common metaphors to discuss the relational movement of people, materials, capital, information, ideas, narratives, institutions, technologies, artifacts, and practices. Models of flow foreground fluidity and movement, while network analysis focuses on enduring relations between individual and institutional nodes in the form of ties. Putting these two types of models in tandem with one another can help capture the interplay of structure and agency as cultural practices and products move through space and across borders (Stein forthcoming). For example, flows of one type—say the movement of labourers to a new work site—can create new subnetworks of social, material, and institutional relations that, in turn, facilitate or impede new flows. And Ebaugh and Chafetz demonstrate that analyzing networks’ density and institutionalization can yield insight into the direction, reciprocity, and intensity of resource flows (2002: 165ff.)

However, models of both flow and network can occlude important differences. It is tempting to imagine the practice of Reiki trickling from its headwaters in Japan to Hawaii, gradually upwelling as it cascaded into North America, whence it surged around the world, including countercurrents back to Japan. This metaphor would neatly parallel

the description by Reiki practitioners of a flow of “universal life energy” through their bodies, but the flow model would obscure how Reiki’s practices have been adapted to facilitate their movements across junctures of space, time, nation, language, gender, class, ethnicity, generation, etc. It also makes movement seem like a purely structural force, concealing the role of individual agents in carving the channels to permit (or the dikes to limit) movement. Network models can complement flow’s impersonality by highlighting the relationality between nodes, which can represent individuals, institutions, and other actors that structure movement, introducing a dimension of diversity missing from most uses of flow. Networks can illustrate dimensions of power relations (including spiritual authority, as in Reiki’s initiation lineages) through the degree of symmetry or asymmetry exhibited by their ties. However, network models, like those of flow, have difficulty conceptualizing how cultural practices change as they circulate within networked communities.

One approach to imagine transformation through transmission is in terms of information science: the study of how patterns are produced, processed, stored, accessed, and reproduced. In culture, no less than in biology or digital computing, the reproduction process is a critical juncture in which information—whether in the form of texts, bodily practices, or chains of nucleic acids—is particularly susceptible to additions, deletions, and substitutions. Often changes go unnoticed, but sometimes a particular change can impact the ability of that arrangement to be reproduced again in a particular environment, a quality evolutionary biology calls fitness. A sufficiently deleterious impact on fitness might lead to a particular change not being passed on. However, occasionally changes improve fitness, in which case they are called adaptations. Through processes of selection,

populations that possess adaptations proliferate relative to those that do not. It is crucial to note that this process is ateleological and context-sensitive; in contrast to popular notions of “survival of the fittest,” adaptations do not make an organism or cultural practice better in any absolute sense, but rather *better at* reproducing in a particular environment.

The term “adaptation” also evokes the literary meaning of making a particular cultural product suitable for a new medium or a new audience. As in a beloved book’s adaptation into a Hollywood blockbuster, cultural adaptation evokes anxieties about authenticity and identity. Does the creativity inherent in this process imply that the adapted form is no longer the same practice? If we heed Lawrence Venuti’s call to render the act of translation “visible” (2008), does it make sense to consider a translation to be a distinct work and, perhaps, translation as a distinct genre? Similarly, when the performance of a practice changes over the course of its circulation, should we identify it with its point of origin, the site of its adaptation, or (perhaps with greater conceptual difficulty) with the entirety of the course it has taken? James Clifford agrees with the final suggestion in his call to focus on *routes* rather than *roots*, so that “practices of displacement might emerge as *constitutive* of cultural meanings rather than as their simple transfer or extension” (Clifford 1997: 2–3, emphasis in original). To foreground translation or movement is to emphasize the process *as* product, which helps avoid the problems that arise from the assumption of static identities.

Toward the further theorization of Clifford’s “assumption of movement,” this project introduces a model of *circulatory development*. This phrase has two meanings, each highlighting a distinct side of a dialectical process. First, it calls attention to the fact

that the cultural products and practices are not simply “portable practices” that “travel well” (Csordas 2009), but that their successful transit can depend on dynamic development (i.e., adaptation or translation) during networked circulation. In this sense, the process of circulation can depend on the development of the circulating product or practice through its adaptation by networked agents.²⁶ Equally importantly, “circulatory development” also references the process by which the movement of ideas, practices, and values across boundaries of race, ethnicity, and geography can strengthen the “weak ties” that serve as “local bridges,” connecting otherwise distant subnetworks (Granovetter 1983). By reinforcing local bridges, circulation can cause structural change within networks. In this sense, the circulation process impacts the development of the network through which the product or practice moves, creating structures that can ensure its own continuation. Thus, there is bidirectional influence between the product or practice being circulating and those agents involved in its circulation.

Circulatory development provides an alternative way to think about what Fernando Ortiz (1995 [1947]) called *transculturation*: the processes by which cultural products are generated, abandoned, and transformed through intercultural interaction. Transcultural models would describe Reiki as generated in an “intercultural contact zone” (Pratt 2008) between two distinct cultures: Japanese and American. However, this study demonstrates that Reiki’s cultural translation took place as gradual series of iterative, interrelated events as it circulated within social networks that span a range of cultural identities and values. My analysis of Reiki’s gradual development over a period of decades through interactions among Japanese, Japanese Americans, and white Americans,

²⁶ Like ecological adaptations, the trajectory of this development is ateleological, more like the drift of a community’s phenotype over time due to environmental conditions than the development of an individual organism into a phenotype coded by its genes.

supports untethering culture from nationality. It proposes understanding Reiki as a practice emerging from a North Pacific intersystem where “Japanese” and “American” are imposed signifiers whose meanings are continually being re-negotiated.²⁷ By treating nations and cultures as always-already “intersystems,” the circulatory development model helps overcome the assumptions of distinct, pure, and uniform cultures tacitly embedded in the language of cultural contact. As neither “Japan” nor “America” is a homogenous, bounded, or static entity, this project avoids reifying cultural practices and values as essentially Japanese or American. Instead, it presents an interactional history that focuses on how local and translocal communities of practice identify particular values as essential to their group identity in imaginative acts that “purify” messy grays into clearer blacks and whites.²⁸

As Reiki’s circulatory development not only transformed the manner in which it was practiced, but also helped introduce cultural values historically coded as ‘Japanese’ or ‘American’ to new audiences, it drew nodes and subnetworks into new positions along the North Pacific cultural continuum. Examining how circulatory developments span constructed boundaries (and when they are denied such crossings) can help draw our attention to how such movements reinforce, destabilize, or re-draw those boundaries and the meanings they are assigned. This project’s foundation on transnational connection rather than nationalist distinctions brings into relief the way such distinctions are mobilized in emic discourse, as modes of building or strengthening connections and as

²⁷ As a significant portion of the dissertation examines this development in the U.S. Territory of Hawaii during the its ongoing colonization by settlers from both sides of the Pacific, it also considers to some extent how these national signifiers have been imposed violently on people and place that actively resist them.

²⁸ Anderson 1983, Befu 2008, Clifford 1997, Drummond 1980, Gilroy 1993, Latour 1993, van der Veer 2001.

modes of exclusion. Its transnational approach also allows a multi-scalar perspective that emphasizes bidirectional influences between the social differences generated out of social relations and the process of cultural production.

About this Research

In the final year of my undergraduate education, I applied for and was awarded a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship to conduct twelve months of participant-observation fieldwork on the commodification of energy healing. That project, which I carried out in 2001–2002, built on experiences I had with healing-centred new religious movements in the U.S. and Japan. My Watson proposal did not include Japan, but in light of U.S. State Department travel warnings and other anxiety-inducing developments after the attacks of September 11, 2001, I changed my research focus to largely examine practices of Japanese origin. My ethnographic field sites included new religious movements that practiced *jōrei*, a purification method believed to channel “God’s light” through a raised hand, in Japan and Thailand, and *okiyome*, a similar practice that exorcises maleficent spirits, in Japan and Australia, as well as Reiki practitioners in the U.K., France, India, and Japan. This research showed me that these practices were meaningful to their practitioners beyond their perceived ability to provide physical healing. Many described healing as a point of departure for a deeper spiritual practice, which they understood symbolically as restoring wholeness and balance to their bodies, minds, spirits, societies, and planet (Stein 2012).

One thing that stuck with me throughout my study was that Reiki, by far the most widespread of any of the practices I examined, had a largely unknown history, allowing fictions to masquerade as fact. Until the late 1990s, the only information readily available

outside of Japan about Reiki's origins came from the oral history passed down by Hawayo Takata: an archetypical "hero's journey" (Campbell 2008) about Usui as a Christian minister turned Buddhist monk questing to learn the secret of Jesus and Buddha's healing powers that seemed roughly equal parts fact and fantasy. Beginning in the 1980s, practitioners ascribed Reiki's origins to ancient civilizations in Egypt and Tibet, the lost civilizations of Atlantis and Lemuria, and possibly extraterrestrials. Multiple people claimed to have uncovered the true, original forms of Reiki, including an explicitly esoteric Buddhist version purportedly based on historical documents, which attracted prominent supporters until the documents were revealed to be channeled texts.

The initial foundation for a more empirically-verifiable history of Reiki was by a German Reiki Master living in Japan named Frank Arjava Petter (b. 1960), who published a series of books that revealed historical information about Reiki prior to it leaving Japan, including translations of early texts by Usui and Hayashi.²⁹ Adding to the impact of Petter's publications was a series of conferences held between 1999 and 2003 called Usui Reiki Ryoho International, organized via the internet by Reiki Masters from Japan, North America, and Europe. These conferences promoted new histories based on unverifiable claims to have encountered Usui's surviving elderly students (see King 2006). Like Petter's work, these conferences and their promoters advanced a "traditional Japanese Reiki" that contrasted with the practices taught by Takata, which they cast as inauthentic by comparison.

My Master's thesis addressed the narratives produced in the gap between Reiki practitioners' thirst for information about the origins of their practice and the general lack

²⁹ Petter 1997, 1998, 2012; Petter and Usui 1999; Lübeck, Petter, and Rand 2001; Petter, Yamaguchi, and Hayashi 2003.

of verifiable data. It took a historiographic approach to stories told about Usui by various Reiki Masters: from the memorial written by Usui's successor in 1927, to the story Takata told her students in the late 1970s, to the New Age mythos published in the 1980s, to the account of him as an esoteric Buddhist adept in the 1990s, and the "traditional Japanese Reiki" narratives that proliferated in the 2000s. It concluded that these conflicting "founder narratives" were means for teachers to identify themselves as authentic and authoritative substitutes for the absent original master and to provide mythic maps for their students' journeys to healing (Stein 2009).

Both my Master's thesis and this work are historical studies informed by social scientific theory and years of ethnographic fieldwork, and in both I have had to face difficult decisions about how much to write about the details of Reiki practice. Reiki, like other initiation-based organizations, is marked by conventions of secrecy, including an absent or intentionally limited print culture.³⁰ This prohibition is sometimes enforced formally, as when, in the spring of 2014, on becoming a member of the organization founded by Usui in the 1920s, the Shinshin Kaizen Usui Reiki Ryōhō Gakkai, I had to sign an agreement not to describe their practices or recount the events of their meetings to non-members. It is sometimes enforced structurally, through practices of omission. For example, while I have received permission to include translations of excerpts of that organization's handbook, it is a text that includes little information about how to perform Usui Reiki Therapy, emphasizing the importance of a direct master-student relationship. In places, this balance between disclosure and self-censorship limits the scope of my analysis, but I consider this to be one of the balancing acts of research ethics.

³⁰ Teeuwen (2006: 9) and Bodiford (2006: 309–310) both relate the explosion of printing technologies with the decline of initiations in religious and artistic systems in early modern Japan.

Reiki practitioners tend to express a particular distaste, even rancor, for books and websites that reproduce the symbols that are not taught until one is initiated to the advanced levels. A prominent discourse says that disseminating these symbols to uninitiated eyes desacralizes them, and some claim that it even reduces their power. One practitioner in Hawaii who looked at my Master's thesis said my regrettable decision to include the symbols (which at the time I thought was defensible given their proliferation on the internet and potential interest to religious studies) was "gut-wrenching" to her, "beyond disrespectful," and analogous to "digging up the bones of your ancestors,"³¹ a powerful comparison to make in a place where the disinterment of ancestral remains is a potent issue (Ayau 2000). Reiki's secrecy practice has since become part of my habitus: while conducting fieldwork in the summer of 2016, I was on a public bus with a Reiki Master whom I wanted to show an historical document that contained the symbols in Takata's hand; as the file opened on my laptop, we both involuntarily flinched and reached to tilt the screen to make sure others could not see. Out of respect for this culture, this work will not reveal any information explicitly unintended for the uninitiated, such as the form of the Reiki symbols or the procedure by which initiations are performed.

As a practitioner-scholar, I am at the intersection of two initiation lineages, two fictive kinships, that each train me to mediate between the embodied and the intangible. My "Doktormutter" and doctoral committee have pushed me to move more adeptly between data and theory in the study of religion; my training under various Reiki Masters has urged me to tune into subtle bodily sensations for spiritual cultivation. The one connects me to legendary anthropologists, sociologists, and historians, the other to Reiki's Grand Masters—Usui, Hayashi, Takata, and Furumoto. In the decade since I

³¹ Personal email to the author dated August 13, 2009.

began my Master's program, I have spent so much time with these figures they have begun to feel almost like family members. Other scholars also report this air of kin-like proximity with historical subjects and ethnographic interlocutors, and the experience of feeling familial bonds to the initiation lineage is also common in the Reiki world. My interlocutors sometimes refer to the Masters who initiated them as their Reiki parents and others who received initiations from the same Master as their Reiki brothers or sisters. This phenomenon is unsurprising, as the Buddhist monastic communities that developed the ceremonies on which the Reiki initiations are patterned, share this fictive kinship structure (Wilson 2013). Still, the feeling of familial relation adds a somewhat uncanny dimension to my genealogical work.

The fact that I spent a few exquisite years in Hawaii adds to the nostalgic sense I feel when poring over photographs of Reiki classes held in Buddhist churches in the pre-war Islands, an imagined connection to a time I never knew, somewhat akin to the feeling seeing photos of my grandparents as young folks in pre-war New York. Yet I know that being a white male accords me with privileges denied to Takata and the vast majority of her students in the strongly patriarchal, white supremacist society of Territorial Hawaii, particularly in the wartime years when they were threatened with incarceration simply because of their Japanese ancestry. Complicating matters, the same Orientalist forces that helped structure my initial interest in Buddhism also served Takata's authority teaching a "Japanese healing art" in the decades after the war, when interest in religious and medical practices of Asian origin rose. Her gendered position as a widow, especially combined with the elder status she possessed near the end of her career, posed other limitations but also structured her authority in complex ways. These factors leave me with a pronounced

and peculiar sense of being both insider and outsider in the narration of Takata's life and Reiki's history. My ability to read Japanese and my years of studying Reiki's origins in Japan and Hawaii give an authority that can feel uneasy when talking with elders who became Reiki Masters before I was even born. This unease can be particularly pronounced when working with Furumoto, Takata's granddaughter, and I find myself teaching her about aspects of her own family's history.

This authority that stems from my status as practitioner-scholar, bridging the worlds of insiders and outsiders, is particularly noticeable when I speak to practitioner audiences about the history of their practices. While I encounter occasional resistance to my findings or analysis, these moments are the exceptions that prove the rule, as I am generally overwhelmed by expressions of awe and gratitude from my audiences who invariably ask me, "When is the book coming out?" These experiences make me exceedingly conscious of the role that my research plays in Reiki's ongoing circulatory development as communities become aware of the processes behind their own formation. With these emic audiences, I always explicitly state that it is not my intention to authorize or discredit any particular forms of practice, and I think the facts that I have not undergone training as a Reiki Master and do not practice professionally help emphasize that I do not have my own particular form of practice to promote.

Yet at the same time, my research could be seen as something of a corrective to revisionist histories that disparaged Takata's contributions by explicitly celebrating earlier practices as traditional or original. As a kind of cultural translator, Takata's role is subject to the same kind of marginality that Lawrence Venuti (2008) describes in the work of literary translators. Promoters of so-called "traditional Japanese Reiki" aspire to

what Venuti calls “transparent” translations by ostensibly revealing the foreign author’s “personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text—the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the ‘original.’” Giving primacy to “the translator’s invisibility,” Venuti continues, is a mystification that “at once enacts and masks an insidious domestication of foreign texts,” while also contributing to the marginality of the translator, whose indispensable role is subjugated to that of the foreign author. Just as Venuti calls for translations to be read “as translations, as texts in their own right, permitting transparency to be demystified, seen as one discursive effect among others,” I foreground Takata’s translation work throughout the study, recognizing her creativity in interpreting practices she learned in mid-1930s Tokyo for diverse audiences in Hawaii and North America (Venuti 2008: 1–13).

Yet while I hope the following chapters do something to rehabilitate Takata’s creative genius for those who have criticized the changes she made to the practice as adulterating or “Westernizing” Reiki, I equally hope they stop short of overly romanticizing her life work. Translation, like other creative pursuits, involves an element of violence. Difference, as said before, is a double-edged blade; however deftly a surgeon wields a scalpel, it still slashes. In the case of Takata, this can be seen both in her making unacknowledged changes to her teacher’s practices and in her passing off of parable-like stories about her teacher and his teacher as historical occurrences. The following pages contain some revelations that may upset “true believers” who take the system of Reiki that Takata presented in the final years of her life at face value. At the same time, I see these adaptations and inventions as part and parcel of her work as cultural translator. While I try to maintain impartiality in telling Takata’s story, I must admit great

admiration of her rise from humble origins to inspire countless students to heal themselves and those around them. Takata's forty-five years of championing Reiki are ultimately responsible for a practice that millions consider meaningful and therapeutic. Without her, Reiki would be one of the thousands of scarcely remembered spiritual therapies that thrived in pre-war Japan but never left that archipelago. Telling the story of the life work of a great woman, arguably under-recognized even within the community she helped create, is a considerable responsibility and in this work I strive to do it justice.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter One briefly describes Hawayo Takata's early life, from her birth in 1900 to the untimely death of her husband in 1930, in the context of the Nikkei (i.e., persons of Japanese descent) community in the U.S. Territory of Hawaii. It provides a sense of her life prior to Reiki training based on English- and Japanese-language archival information collected in Kaua'i and O'ahu and a series of autobiographical recordings made by Takata in 1979. As befits the purposes of this thesis, it particularly focuses on the issues of her early religious views and her relative social mobility considering the racial and gendered formation of Nikkei in early twentieth century Hawaii, themes that are extended in the chapters that follow.

Chapter Two presents the events that led to the beginning of Takata's Reiki training in Japan in 1935, and provides sociocultural context for the early circulatory development of Reiki, then called Usui Reiki Therapy (Usui Reiki Ryōhō), in the 1920s and 1930s. This context includes how Japan's rapid modernization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century impacted the development of spiritual medicine in this period,

leading to a spate of novel therapies including Usui Reiki Therapy. It also provides information about Reiki's founder Mikao Usui, his disciple Chūjirō Hayashi, and the changes Reiki had already undergone at the time of Takata's training. This chapter draws on Takata's diary from this trip and the few Japanese-language documents about Reiki from this time, as well as Takata's later recorded recollections. It demonstrates that, even prior to leaving Japan, Reiki was a North Pacific practice that bore the influences of methods imported from the U.S. and underwent circulatory development as Hayashi innovated upon Usui's method.

Chapter Three follows Usui Reiki Ryōhō's circulatory development in Hawaii's Nikkei community as Takata and Hayashi taught there during the transwar period from the late 1930s into the 1950s. It describes ways that Takata adapted Reiki in this period in response to environmental influences, including the wartime criminalization of Japanese Buddhism and the increased professionalization of medical care in the mid-century U.S. This chapter draws on English- and Japanese-language archival information, oral histories conducted in O'ahu and the "Big Island" of Hawai'i with students of Takata from this period and their families, and Takata's autobiographical writings and recordings. It presents tensions between how Takata's predominantly Nikkei Buddhist students understood their practice and her increasing professionalization of Reiki.

Chapter Four examines how, in the early Cold War period (c. 1948–1970), Takata networked among (chiefly white Christian) Americans on the U.S. mainland to gain students, how she adapted Reiki in response to these interactions, and how these students' understandings of Takata and their Reiki practice differed from those of Nikkei, largely Buddhist students in Territorial Hawaii. It examines her involvement with students of

varied class backgrounds, from working-class immigrants to Hollywood stars, the impact her membership in esoteric fraternal organizations had on Reiki's circulatory development, and how the rearticulation of "Asianness" (and particularly Japanese American) in the postwar U.S. impacted her teaching practice. The data for this chapter, which describes a period of Reiki's history about which little was previously known, largely comes from Takata's personal papers, especially correspondence with her students, and phone interviews with the families of these students. This period saw the beginning of Takata's dual "Orientalization" and "universalization" of Reiki that would further develop in the 1970s.

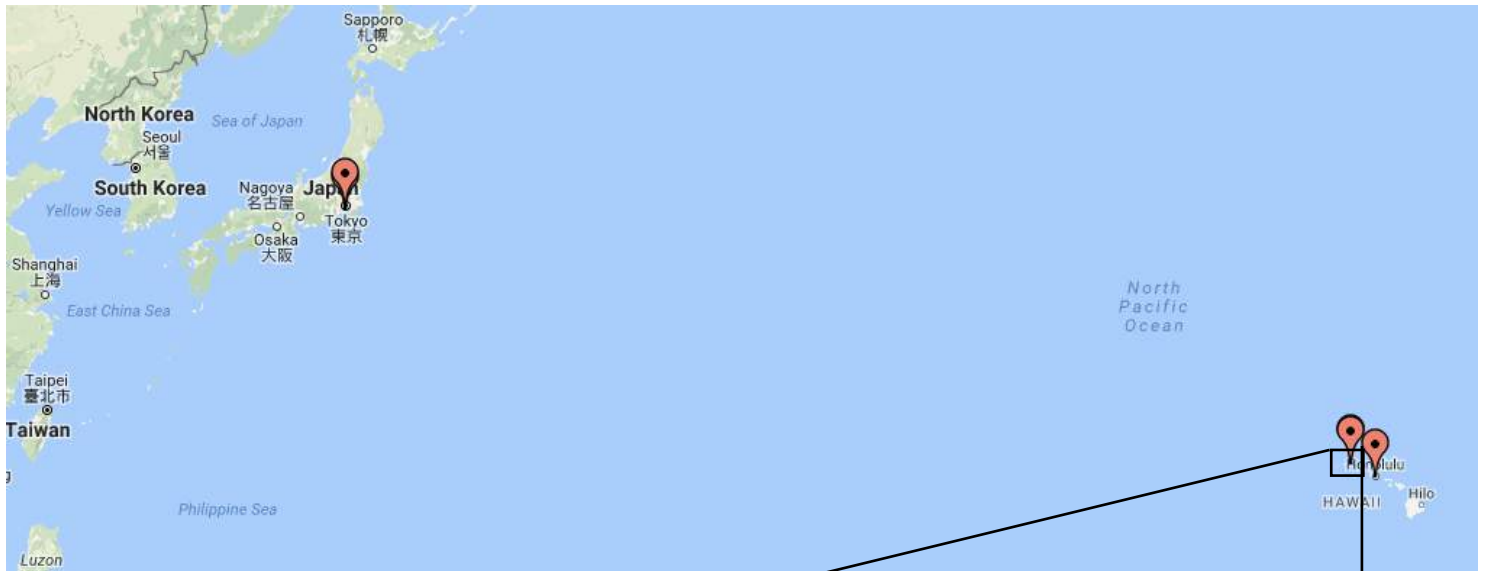
Chapter Five looks at the systematization of Reiki as Takata taught over the last eight years of her life—the most prolific period in her long teaching career. It examines how Takata made use of print media and religious networks while constructing new narratives and practices that built on perennialist and Orientalist trends prevalent within the communities where she taught. It pays particular attention to three networks that formed the core of her teaching activities in these years—the suburbs of San Francisco and Chicago, and the rural interior of British Columbia—particularly as she trained the next generation of Reiki Masters. It also considers how Takata's authority grew in these years as she became a charismatic elder seen in light of cultural tropes about aged Asian spiritual masters. The data for this chapter is based on a combination of archival material, including letters, class logs, receipt books, and publications, memoirs and other accounts written by Takata's students, as well as original oral histories. It shows that a major factor in Reiki's circulatory development in this period was caused by Takata trying to socialize her students with certain "Japanese values" that she saw as essential for Reiki's efficacy.

It also examines how students negotiate the relationship between Reiki's commodification and its spirituality, concluding that its potential as a professional vocation actually helped practitioners consider it as a self-sufficient spiritual practice.

The conclusion reviews the study's findings, highlighting its salience for religious trends in the twentieth century North Pacific and clarifying the benefits of the circulatory development model to make sense of this and other transnational phenomena. It emphasizes the growth of a narrative of "particular universalism" that combines perennialist and Orientalist themes to bolster the authority of North Pacific spiritual medicine by attributing it to Asian origins. It also reflects on the entanglement of this research with the construction of the Hawayo Takata Archive as the juncture of another pivotal moment in Reiki's history: Reiki communities developing a new dimension to their historical consciousness concurrently with Takata's granddaughter working out her own succession plans.

Chapter One: Early Years

Hawaii, 1900-1930



As the sun rose over the rippled hills of eastern Kaua‘i on December 24, 1900, Hatsu Kawamura (1873–unknown) gave birth to her third child, a baby girl, in the plantation shack in which she lived with her husband Otogoro (1866–unknown) and their three-year-old son Kazuo (1897–1920). Hatsu and Otogoro’s firstborn, a baby girl they named Kawayo after the island where the Kawamuras worked in the cane fields, had died after only ten days. In a plea for their second daughter to have the strength to survive, they named her Hawayo after the “Big Island” of Hawai‘i (and the namesake of the U.S. Territory of Hawaii established earlier that year), hoping this name would imbue her with the power of that considerable island, as Kawayo’s name “was too small, that is why she did not live long,” as Hawayo Hiromi Kawamura Takata reminisced nearly eight decades later. She reported that her parents transferred the high expectations they had for Kawayo’s success onto her, and her mother told the midwife, “please, give her a bath, wrap her on a new blanket, and face her the sun [sic]. And then I want you to initiate her by putting your hand on top of her head and say, ‘I name you Hawayo.’ And say it three times. And after that, she said ‘success.’ ‘Success and success.’ ... So, this was my initiation to the world.” (Takata 1981, tape 1, pp. 1–2).¹

Takata was a storyteller and her stories were gradually refined through iterative tellings, with slight variations, to countless students and clients over nearly half a century. This version of her birth story is taken from the 1979 recordings made by her student Barbara Weber, which Takata intended to be the basis for her autobiography. This

¹ Throughout this work, when citing the recordings Takata made in December 1979 for her autobiography, I cite the corresponding pages in the unpublished transcript completed in 1981, although I sometimes change the wording to make it better accord with the actual recordings.

repository of her late life storytelling is filled with similar examples in which she framed her life in mythic fashion, helping establish her spiritual authority to her audiences. The core elements of this version resemble those of another version she told a reporter for the *Honolulu Advertiser* five years prior, in which the attending midwife patted her newborn head three times and “predicted she would be a success” (Matsuura 1974). Both emphasize her receiving a ritualized initiation immediately following her birth; the hand on her head and repetition of three are common elements of ritual that appear in the Reiki initiations and the use of the Reiki symbols. Holding up a newborn child in the rays of the rising sun is not only cinematic but also evokes iconography associated with Japan (the land of the rising sun), popular understandings of Shinto (with its sun goddess), and Reiki’s cosmic source. She and her students also consciously foreshadow her spiritual calling with their emphasis of her birth on Christmas Eve (see Haberly 1990: 11). Despite being a lifelong Buddhist, Takata’s comfort with and predilection for Christian references served her later in life as she built connections to white Christians, who would ultimately make up the majority of her Reiki students.

This chapter examines the first three decades of Hawayo Takata’s life in order to contextualize dimensions of her socialization—particularly regarding her religious life, ethnoracialization as “Japanese,” and relative social mobility—that later proved important in her career as a practitioner and teacher of a form of spiritual medicine attributed to Japan. As part of this contextualization, it provides some history of the sugar plantation economy that shaped both Hawaii’s colonization and her early life, some description of the position of Nisei (second-generation immigrants of Japanese descent) in Hawaii, and describes her and her husband’s Saichi’s professional advancement and

community involvement: experiences that facilitated her ability to gain powerful white patrons in later decades.

1.1 Nikkei Labour and the Kaua‘i Sugar Industry

The Kawamuras’ social status in the nascent Territory of Hawaii was linked to broader developments in the North Pacific region. At the time of Hawai‘i’s birth, sugar dominated the Hawaiian economy: approximately twenty percent of Kaua‘i’s landmass—the vast majority of its arable land—was planted with cane in 1900 (Kauai Sugar Plantations). While sugar was grown in the Islands prior to colonization, the vast majority of these fields had been planted in the last fifty years as investments by American capitalists and it was a desire to ensure the profitability of those investments that led to the colonization of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i.

The Kawamura family home in Hanama‘ulu was owned by the Lihue Plantation Company (LPC). Founded in 1849 by three American investors who would each play an important role in the late years of the Kingdom of Hawai‘i,² within thirty years the LPC would become the Kingdom’s “best financed, most modern, and most costly” plantation (Feher 1969: 263). They built a large mill in Līhu‘e in 1851, helping establish it as the centre of industry on Kaua‘i, and five years later completed the ten-mile irrigation ditch

² These investors were Charles Reed Bishop (1822-1915), who married into the royal family, became a Hawaiian citizen, and would later found the Kingdom’s first chartered bank and serve as the Kingdom’s Foreign Minister; William Little Lee (1821-1857), a lawyer who became first Chief Justice of the Kingdom’s Supreme Court; and Henry A. Peirce (1808-1885), a merchant who became the U.S. Minister to the Kingdom.

that allowed them to expand operations to Hanama‘ulu in the northeast. Improvements to the irrigation system made the plantation profitable, and this expansion was completed once the plantation’s manager bought the Hanama‘ulu *ahupua‘a* (a traditional Hawaiian land division roughly corresponding to a watershed) following the death of the local monarch (*ali‘i*) in 1870. The LPC built a second mill in Hanama‘ulu in 1877, allowing them to further expand their production there (“Lihue Plantation Company History”; Lo 2005). During the period of this expansion, the Reciprocity Treaty of 1875 gave Hawai‘i planters free access to U.S. markets—the final factor marking the shift of the Kingdom’s chief industry from whaling to sugar—and over the next two decades, sugar production in Hawai‘i increased twenty-fold (Conroy 1949: 14–15; Glenn 2002: 192; “Kauai Sugar Plantations”).

In order to expand planting and production, American investors in Hawaiian sugar required imported labour. They first looked to China, bringing in the first five hundred labourers in 1865 with five-year contracts. Two decades later, over twenty-two percent of the Kingdom’s population was Chinese (Daniels 1999: 5). Labour recruiters illegally gave contracts to one hundred and fifty Japanese in the port city of Yokohama in 1868 (the first year of the Meiji state, which rapidly modernized and internationalized Japan), and smuggled them to the Hawaiian Islands; disagreements over working conditions led many of them to quickly return to Japan (Spickard 2009: 11, Irwin and Conroy 1972: 47–48). As Chinese residents of Hawai‘i began to establish their own commercial establishments and demand higher wages, the Kingdom began negotiating with Japan to officially sponsor contract labour immigration and undercut local Chinese labour interests.

Beginning in 1885, when Japan lifted the ban on such migration, Robert Irwin, the

Kingdom of Hawai‘i’s acting consul general in Japan, privately organized shiploads of migrant labourers to the Kingdom, each bearing roughly one thousand Japanese labourers. Unlike the failed 1868 experiment, which employed labourers with no farming experience from urban Yokohama, Irwin largely recruited farmers from four rural prefectures (Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Kumamoto, and Fukuoka) in western Japan. These prefectures had all suffered greatly from the Meiji land reforms that privatized land ownership, setting the stage for the institution of a cash-based taxation system and the development of a capitalist economy. Imported cotton depressed the value of silk textiles, vast areas of rice land were seized in mortgage foreclosures, and farmer riots over land taxes were rampant. The labour migration was not only a source of agricultural labour for American planters in Hawai‘i, but also a convenient way for the Japanese state to deal with domestic unrest in the impoverished western region (Irwin and Conroy 1972: 49–51, Spickard 2009: 12–13).

The Kawamuras were part of this labour diaspora from western Japan to the Hawaiian Islands. Hawayo’s father Otogoro emigrated from Kumage District, Yamaguchi, in 1892 and her mother Hatsu Tamashima came from Aki District, Hiroshima, in 1894.³ American-funded importation of agricultural labour from western Japan developed trans-Pacific social networks linking this region to Territorial Hawaii and, eventually, the U.S. mainland, so these prefectures continued to be the main sites for

³ 1910 United States Federal Census, Hanamaulu, Kauai, Hawaii Territory, enumeration district 0005, page 9B; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 20, 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication T624; FHL microfilm 1375765. Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Honolulu, Hawaii, compiled 02/13/1900 - 12/30/1953; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 20, 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication A3422, roll 167; *Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787 – 2004* (record group number: RG 85).

Japanese American immigration into the first decade of the twentieth century (Daniels 1999: 5–6, Kimura 1988: 5–6, Spickard 2009: 14). At the time of the Immigration Act of 1924, which virtually prohibited further Asian immigration to the U.S. and its territories, nearly ninety percent of Hawaii's Nikkei population traced their ancestry to these four western provinces plus Okinawa, an archipelago in Japan's southwest that the Meiji state annexed in the 1870s (Kimura 1988: 22).

In January 1893, a few months after Otagoro Kamamura arrived and a few months before the Japanese government sent their first state-sponsored ships of contract labourers to the Kingdom of Hawai'i, a group called the Citizen's Committee of Public Safety overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy. The thirteen men who made up this committee were largely U.S. nationals and naturalized Hawaiian citizens of U.S. background and plotted this overthrow as a step toward the full U.S. annexation of the Islands. A large part of their motivation was to benefit the local sugar industry. The McKinley Tariff of 1890, effectively a subsidy for beet sugar grown on the U.S. mainland, caused the value of Hawaiian sugar to drop by nearly half; annexation, the argument went, would eliminate the tariff for Hawaiian sugar in the American market and make it competitive again. The 1898 annexation ultimately had varied effects on the Hawaiian sugar industry, though. As a U.S. Territory, protectionist federal subsidies were extended to Hawaii's sugar planters, but the Hawaiian Organic Act of 1900 also extended U.S. laws to the Islands, putting an end to the contract system and causing labour costs to rise accordingly (Ayala 1999: 54–55; Kuykendall 1967: 532ff.).

These political developments led to dramatic changes in Hawaii's demographics. In the five years leading up to 1890, Nikkei went from being hardly present in the Islands

to becoming over 42% of Hawaii's plantation workforce. In 1902, four years after the U.S. annexed the Islands, over 73% of plantation workers were Nikkei (Asato 2006: 2). In January 1902, the Hanama'ulu payroll of the Lihue Plantation Company was roughly 70% Nikkei, including Otogoro Kawamura, although within a few decades, most of these workers would be replaced by cheaper labourers from the Philippines,⁴ also colonized by the U.S. at the turn of the century. Labourers emigrating from China, Japan, and the Philippines to Territorial Hawaii in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century generally assumed they would return to their lands of origin after making money working in the profitable U.S. sugar industry, but for a variety of reasons, enough ended up staying and raising families that the the population of the Territory of Hawaii became over half of Chinese and Japanese descent by 1910 nearly two-thirds of Asian descent (thirty-eight percent Nikkei) by 1930 (Schmitt 1977: 25).

These immigrants and their children were subjects of American white supremacist colonial capitalism, which extended its frontier to the Pacific under Presidents McKinley and Roosevelt, but also settlers participating in the colonization of a recently sovereign nation (Fujikane and Okamura 2008). They lived in a society economically and culturally dominated by whites, but the second-generation Nikkei in Hawaii, called Nisei, were able to achieve "considerable educational and occupational mobility... rearticulating dominant concepts and values to assert their identities as simultaneously 'Japanese' *and* 'American'" (Glenn 2002: 194–195, italics in original). The Nisei Hawayo Kawamura left school after the sixth grade to help provide for her family, but she exhibited social

⁴ Lihue Plantation Company, "Hanamaulu Labor Statements - 1902," Hawaiian Sugar Planters' Association Plantation Archives, 42/3, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library. As one continues to read through the archived payroll records, Filipino names gradually supplant the Japanese ones.

ambition even as a young woman and made use of her dual identity in her adult life to achieve remarkable social mobility.

1.2 The Childhood of Hawayo Hiromi Kawamura

Like some ninety percent of Nisei children in the Territory at the time, Hawayo attended both Japanese school at a religious institution and the so-called “normal school,” taught in English. This dual education system ensured that she would learn the fundamentals of both the Japanese and English languages, but it was also used in the “Americanization” campaigns of the 1920s to argue that Nisei were being indoctrinated into worship of the Japanese emperor and would never be loyal Americans (Asato 2006). Such xenophobic concerns notwithstanding, Hawayo (nicknamed Hawa) was such a good student in the Hanama‘ulu “normal” school that, in Grade Six, she won an essay contest to have her composition about a class trip to the seashore published in the local English-language paper (Kawamura 1912). However, in the relative backwaters of Kaua‘i, she was not exposed to the same “finishing school” mentality that tied Nisei femininity and social uplift to developing Standard English oratory that prevailed in Honolulu (Yano 2006: 42, Imai 2010: 77–80). As a result, her spoken language included some of the grammatical structures of Hawaiian Creole English (commonly called pidgin) that would mark her as of lower-class origins (Reinecke 1969: 183–184).

As the Kawamuras were Honpa Hongwanji (the “Western” branch of Jōdo Shinshū Buddhism, also called Shin Buddhism), Hawayo probably first attended Japanese school at the Lihue Hongwanji Mission (founded 1900) near the Hanama‘ulu plantation, and, after they moved to the Keālia plantation a few miles to the northeast, at

the Kealia Hongwanji Mission (founded 1910, Images 1.1–1.2). In addition to her Shin Buddhist upbringing, she seems to have felt at ease with non-Buddhist religious traditions as well. Speaking to her biographer in 1979, she recalled how, as a petite twelve-year-old who suffered through her first summer cutting cane seedlings in Keālia, at the end of the final day, before getting on the train that took them out of the fields, she got on her knees and prayed that God might provide her better things to do with her hands than that strenuous and dangerous job, bowing three times and kissing the ground. For this show of piety, her schoolmates teased, “Oh, you just prayed to Allah. And so you believe in Allah. Allah is your God. Alright, your name shall be Allah from now on,” and she recounts that they made this her new nickname (Takata 1981, tape one: 2–5). By relating how foreign her prostrations seemed to her classmates, Hawayo Kawamura set herself apart from her peers as someone devoutly dedicated to a world beyond the physical and her reference to “doing better things with my hands” foreshadows her work with Reiki healing. The strangeness of her religious expression to her ostensibly Nikkei classmates is particularly remarkable given the acceptance of “multiple religious belonging” generally attributed to Japanese culture (van Bragt 2002).

Takata’s late-life recollections of her childhood project the image of an early religious devotion not bounded by her Buddhist education, a kind of liberal eclecticism that may have informed her later perennialism. Her usage of the word God in describing her childhood religious beliefs and her memories of her unusual nickname “Allah” suggest an early relationship with non-Buddhist traditions. It is difficult to say where working-class Nisei children growing up on rural sugar plantation would have encountered descriptions of Islam—I have been unable to find records of any Muslims in

Territorial Hawaii (in contrast to Fiji, where British colonists imported indentured labour from India)—but certainly some of her Nisei peers would have been Christians. A small number of Issei (first-generation Japanese immigrants) were already Christians before immigrating to Hawaii, some converted after immigration and raised their children Christian, and some Nisei were converted because their parents sent them to Japanese Christian church schools to keep them “away from bad company” or as an active means of assimilation (Spickard 2009: 60–61, Tamura 1992: 207–208). As will be described in Chapter Five, Takata employed Christian practices later in life and was ordained in a metaphysical church in the 1970s. However, her continued close relationship with Buddhist institutions from the 1930s into the 1970s and her lifelong maintenance of a Buddhist home altar (*butsudan*) suggests that she maintained a Buddhist identity in her private life. Her description of her childhood prayers to “God” may have been a way to translate to her white American Christian biographer a devotion to conceptions of deities (*kami-sama*) her parents or priests brought from Japan or it may reveal monotheistic influences in her childhood. Either way, the anomalous story of her schoolmates teasing her as “Allah” for her prostrations, doubly-exoticized as both non-Japanese and non-Christian, suggests to her audience that a fervent religiosity set her apart at an early age.

Hawayo’s slight build precluded her from being a productive field hand, but she needed to contribute to the household, so she moved out of her parents’ home at age thirteen (after finishing grade six) and into a “church boarding school” (most likely the Kealia Hongwanji Church where she had attended Japanese school), where she worked as a substitute first grade teacher. This paid her keep plus a little extra, which she gave to her family. The following year, she got another job at the soda fountain at the Lihue Store,

a fancy department store known as “Kauai’s Emporium” that opened to great fanfare in late 1913 because of its elevator, high ceilings, and spacious cold-storage department (Image 1.3).⁵ So, after she finished her school duties at eight A.M., when her students left for the English-language “normal school,” Hawayo walked the seven miles from Keālia to Līhu‘e to wash dishes and serve ice cream.⁶ She recalls eventually taking on a third job “in my spare time” doing paperwork in the store’s office (Takata 1981, tape one: 5–6, 8–9, 12). Working multiple jobs in her early teenage years indicates her diligence and working-class status, but also something of her social ambition. Service industry positions like education, retail, and domestic labour were some of the only professional opportunities available for Nisei women, and wherever she worked, young Hawayo seems to have dedicated herself, networked, and progressively taken on greater responsibilities.

Working at this prestigious department store also provided her new opportunities. While working at the Lihue Store, Hawayo developed a relationship with a regular customer named Julia Makee Spalding (1876–1949), whom she called “the Countess.”⁷ For decades, the Spalding family had owned the Makee Sugar Company, where Hawayo’s father Otogoro worked at the time, and Julia’s brother James Makee Spalding

⁵ Soboleski 2007; “‘Kauai’s Emporium’ Modernized Lihu‘e Shopping,” *The Garden Island*, November 12, 2010.

⁶ The distance between Kealia Hongwanji Church and the Lihue Store seems to have been closer to ten miles (neither building still stands). If she actually walked both ways, it would likely have taken about four hours’ roundtrip.

⁷ Julia Spalding and her four siblings were born in Hawaii, but lived in Europe as young adults and the three Spalding girls all married Italian men. Julia married the Italian Count Senni in 1900, from whom she reportedly separated soon after because of his cocaine use; she returned to Kaua‘i a few years later. Stoddard 1991; “An Italian Nobleman,” *The Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, September 17, 1903, p. 8.

(1880–1954) continued to be the company president and manager at their Keālia plantation for years after the family sold a controlling interest to Lihue Plantation Company in 1910.⁸ At sixteen, Hawayo joined the household staff of the Valley House, the Spalding family’s sumptuous Victorian estate atop the Keālia ridge that slopes down to the Pacific Ocean, carpeted at that time with Makee Sugar canefields (Image 1.4).⁹

At the Valley House, Hawayo served the Spaldings and worked her way up from waitress to pantry girl to head housekeeper, eventually supervising twenty-one servants and managing their payroll using the bookkeeping skills she acquired at Emporium. While working there, she wore an “elegant” kimono and obi provided by Julia Spalding, who apparently enjoyed having her Nikkei staff dressed in Japanese style (Takata 1981: tape one, 9–13). One of Takata’s students remembers her saying that the outfit she wore at work “made her look like a living Japanese doll” (Brown 1992: 18). This aestheticization of Takata’s racialized body was apparently part of a broader Orientalist aesthetic for the Spaldings, evident in their collection of Egyptian-influenced décor and their hosting of the sumptuous Oriental-themed parties (Marley 2012, Image 1.5). Yet, despite the “feudal character” of relations between mistresses and female domestic workers in this period (Glenn 2002: 214), Julia Spalding seems to have come to see Hawayo as more than just “a living Japanese doll” or even an employee in the roughly

⁸ Lihue Plantation Company, “Makee Sugar, Payroll Book Bonus – 1916” and “Makee Sugar, Payroll Book Bonus, 1917-1932,” Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association Plantation Archives, v.114-115, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Library; “Lihue Plantation Company History”; “Hawi Plantation to Make Fuel Alcohol,” *The Garden Island*, October 12, 1920, p. 7.

⁹ The Valley House was built in the early 1880s by Julia’s father, Zephaniah Swift Spalding (1837-1927), a Civil War colonel for the Union army who was sent to Hawaii in the late 1860s as an agent of the U.S. government. He married the daughter of James Makee (1813-1879), one of the early American sugar planters in Hawaii, developed the Keālia plantation with financing from Makee and King David Kalākaua (1836-1891), and bought out their interests after Makee’s death. Marley 2012, Young 2015.

two decades that she worked for her; the fact that Julia, divorced and childless, later financed Hawayo's enrollment in naturopathy classes on the mainland (see Chapter Three) suggests she took on the role of patron, even adopted mother, and Hawayo seemed to remember her fondly. As a young Nikkei woman, Hawayo would have been in demand for domestic work due to Hawaii's "scarcity of subordinate-group women," causing the majority of domestic workers were men until the late 1920s, a unique situation in early twentieth century America (Glenn 2002: 209). Even at an early age, Hawayo may have begun to see how a strategic framing of her positionality as a "Japanese" woman could help her achieve some level of social advancement, while also posing a limitation in the white supremacist and patriarchal society of Territorial Hawaii.

1.3 Hawayo and Saichi Takata's Social Aspirations

Not long after Hawayo began working at the Valley House, Julia introduced her to Saichi Takata (1895–1930), a Makee Sugar employee who would attain an unusually high status for a Nikkei of his generation in Territorial Hawaii. Hawayo married Saichi on March 10, 1917, about one year after she began working for the Spaldings, and they would have two daughters, Julia Sayako (1919–1970) and Alice Emiko (1925–2013). Julia was named after Julia Spalding, who was delighted when Takata's firstborn was born on her own birthday (Takata 1981, tape one: 14). Takata remembered Saichi to her students as the plantation's bookkeeper (Haberly 1990: 15; Takata 1981: tape one, 14), but he worked most of his adult life at the plantation store that stood at the intersection of the plantation's main road and the coastal highway, working his way up from the entry-level position of clerk to the store's bookkeeper before being promoted to "superintendent of

the company's general supply warehouse" in 1928.¹⁰ As men of European descent disproportionately held these types of superintendencies (Glenn 2002: 195–196), Saichi's promotion is a testament to his diligence, intelligence, and ability to cultivate relationships. These positions also demanded that Saichi be able to mediate between English and Japanese in professional settings and have had a strong command over written English.¹¹

In addition to his work for Makee Sugar, Saichi was active in business and in his community. His obituary called him a "well known citizen" and the article outlines his work in the private and public sectors, as a stock agent for a local brokerage,¹² auditor for an ice and soda works, and an appointment to read meters and collect bills for the Kawaihau District Waterworks. It also describes him as the organizer of an organization called the American Citizens of Japanese Ancestry of Kauai (ACJAK) and an important figure in the local Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA). "Due to his untiring community spirit," it adds, the Territorial Governor, Wallace Farrington, appointed Saichi to the county child welfare board.¹³ As such, he was among the first to represent

¹⁰ "Well Known Citizen Dies of Heart Attack at Home in Kealia," *The Garden Island*, October 14, 1930. *Polk-Husted's Directory of Honolulu and the Territory of Hawaii* (Honolulu: Polk-Husted Directory Company) lists Saichi as an employee of the Makee Plantation Store, a.k.a. the Kealia Store, for every volume I could find between 1914 and 1931. He is listed as a clerk (1914, 1916, 1918, 1920), assistant bookkeeper (1915), bookkeeper (1921, 1924), cashier and bookkeeper (1923), cashier (1927), and "whseman" (1930-1931).

¹¹ Personal communication with Chris Faye, Kauai Museum, June 20, 2013.

¹² The Takatas seem to have invested in stocks through this connection: Hawayo's diary from the period lists the purchase and sales of shares in various local companies, including mills, between 1920 and 1926. The thousands of dollars involved, at a time when a Nikkei labourer's day wages was between one and two dollars, suggest that they were agents for wealthy white investors or community funds.

¹³ "Well Known Citizen Dies," *op. cit.*

Hawaii's large Nikkei demographic in local government. Hawayo remembers him as "the first Oriental to be appointed by the governor to be on the welfare [board]... and so therefore he was a very liked man in the community." As she recalls, he negotiated with the managers of local plantations to pay the wages of the Buddhist priests who ministered to their workers, which decreased the financial burden on the Nikkei workers and increased the regard for plantation administration in their eyes (Takata 1981, tape one: 15). These accounts portray Saichi as one of the early Nisei (second-generation Nikkei) who negotiated between the demands of Nikkei labour and those of the white elites.

His involvement in Nikkei social organizations gives some hints to his political leanings. In the 1920s, the YMBA had a reputation for labour activism due to their involvement in the 1919 higher-wage movement by plantation workers, which led to the formation of the Federation of Japanese Labor, a major player in the strike of 1920, and "yellow peril"-style anti-Buddhist rhetoric by white supremacist politicians and newspaper editorials (Okihiro 1992: 67–80, 130–131). However, it is doubtful Saichi was such an agitator. The ACJAK that Saichi organized was likely similar to California's Japanese American Citizens League, which James Spickard (2009: 98) describes as "in some ways an institutional expression of the cultural imperatives of the Nisei: conservative, hardworking, devotedly pro-American, doggedly accepting of whatever crumbs White America offered, quietly persevering in the attempt to win a place for the Nisei in the United States." Saichi's government appointment by Governor Farrington is telling: Farrington's governance is synonymous with white suspicion of Nikkei demographic preponderance (termed "the Japanese menace") after the 1920 strike. In a public letter in 1922, Farrington wrote that Hawaii's "racial elements are out of balance

and are seriously in need of adjustment” to ensure “permanent American strength in the future” (quoted in Okihiro 1992: 93). The fact that Saichi received an appointment from Governor Farrington in a period where the federal Hawaii Emergency Labor Commission concluded “*the necessity to curtail the domination of the alien Japanese in every phase of the Hawaiian life is more important than all the other [labour] problems combined*” (quoted in Okihiro 1992: 95, italics in original), suggests that white elites probably considered Saichi considered something of a token who would placate the push for Nikkei representation in politics while not threatening their interests.

In another indicator of Saichi’s ability to enter white elite social settings, a 1921 newspaper article lists him as winning second place at the inaugural golf tournament at Wailua Golf Club.¹⁴ Out of the eleven competitors, Saichi was the only one without a European surname. The fact that he received a handicap of eighteen strokes while four other competitors had handicaps of twenty-four indicates that he had sufficient leisure time to have sufficiently improved at the game to not be considered a complete beginner. The other competitors in the competition included the Wailua Golf Course’s four founders, among them the plantation manager James Spalding (Soboleski 2013). Saichi’s success on the links is another index of his relative social mobility and recognition by the ruling elite. However, despite Saichi’s relative prestige for a Nikkei man in 1920s Hawaii, the Makee Sugar Company payroll registers list him as a “store boy,” and while he may have been compensated more than the Nikkei clerks in the same office, it was a fraction

¹⁴ “Wailua Golf Club Holds First Tournament.” *The Garden Island*, November 8, 1921, p. 3.

of the earnings of employees with European surnames.¹⁵ While a small number of second-generation immigrants of colour were able to attain a certain level of social privilege in the racial hierarchy of the colonial Territory, white elites largely controlled its wealth and politics.

Hawayo joined Saichi in gaining patronage positions. Almost certainly through her husband, she became active in the Republican Party; after his untimely death in 1930, she received his appointment as meter reader and bill collector for the local waterworks. This lasted until 1934, when the Democratic president Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed a new governor, who apparently shuffled the political appointments to reward Democrats; without this second job, she picked up side work collecting money for *Star-Bulletin* newspaper subscriptions and worked as a “sub-agent” for an insurance company (Takata 1981, tape one: 9–14). As the Republicans had been the party of the white elite and dominated Territorial politics since the overthrow of the monarchy, while the Democratic Party became the unofficial party of Hawaii’s Nikkei population (Cooper and Daws 1990: 1–6, 42–43), the Takatas’ politics were closer to those of the white planters than those of their working class parents and neighbors. Hawayo’s pride in her appointment is legible in the archive; in the ship’s manifest for her first voyage to mainland North America, a 1932 trip to California with the Young Men’s and Women’s Buddhist Association, under “occupation,” she listed her part-time job as “water collector” rather

¹⁵ Lihue Plantation Company, “Makee Sugar, P, Payroll Book Bonus – 1917-1932,” “Makee Sugar Register of Employees – 1922-1925,” Hawaiian Sugar Planters’ Association Plantation Archives, V.115, 120, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Library.

than her full-time position of housekeeper.¹⁶

Saichi and Hawayo Takata seem to have experienced some of the complex of issues that Japanese Americans in the pre-war period described as “the Nisei problem.” The circumstances of their birth granted them the American citizenship denied their parents, but they faced a glass ceiling limiting their professional and social advancement as white supremacist structures kept them from attaining the education, training, and opportunities to join the professional classes. Sociologists of the period, following the groundbreaking theorist of ethnicity Robert Park, framed the Nisei problem in terms of incomplete assimilation, but this ignored the racial exclusion experienced by Nikkei Americans (Azuma 2005: 112–113). The Takatas arguably took on “middleman minority” roles in their petit bourgeois supervisory positions that mediated between white power and working class people of colour, but they did not fit the model of “social separateness” in the “ethnic economy” described as an ideal type of Nisei enterprise (Bonacich and Modell 1980). Rather, they networked within white-dominated power structures, working with local stockbrokers to recruit investors, becoming proficient at golf, actively participating in the Republican Party, and even receiving positions of political patronage. Hawayo Takata’s ability to develop relationships with white elites despite her racialization and unpolished diction would serve her in her career as a practitioner and teacher of spiritual medicine.

¹⁶ Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Honolulu, Hawaii, compiled 02/13/1900 - 12/30/1953; digital images; *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 20, 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication A3422, roll 125; *Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787 – 2004* (record group number: RG 85).

1.4 Saichi's "Transition"

The Takatas had relatively important roles working for the Spalding family and in the community at large, but they were given time off to attend to Saichi's poor health. He suffered from a lung condition, diagnosed as pleurisy. Nikkei in Hawaii at that time had limited access to medical care, and the petit bourgeois typically traveled to Japan for advanced care. In 1923, Hawayo and Saichi took what seems to be their first trip to their parents' homeland; they probably left four year old Julia with her parents, took a ferry to Honolulu, a steamer to Yokohama, and then a train to Tokyo. There, Saichi had two ribs removed by the prestigious doctor Tomosuke Maeda (1887–1975), who at that time was teaching orthopedic surgery at Keio University Medical School (Image 1.6).¹⁷ In his early thirties, Saichi and Hawayo made two more trips to Japan in 1928 and 1929 to receive further treatment, possibly for lung cancer, at Maeda's new clinic in Akasaka, Tokyo.¹⁸ Despite their best efforts, Saichi died at home in Keālia on October 8, 1930, at the age of thirty-four.¹⁹

On the tapes Takata made of her life story in 1979, she told one particular story

¹⁷ The trip is documented in a photo album with notes written by their daughter Alice Takata Furumoto. Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara. Maeda's biography is from 「前田友助」 ("Maeda Tomosuke"), デジタル版日本人名大辞典 (*Japanese Name Dictionary Digital Version*), 講談社 Kodansha, 2009, <https://kotobank.jp/word/%E5%89%8D%E7%94%B0%E5%8F%8B%E5%8A%A9-1109165>, accessed August 23, 2015.

¹⁸ Maeda opened his eponymous surgical clinic (Maeda Geka Byōin) in 1927. "Maeda Tomosuke," *op. cit.*

¹⁹ Saichi's obituary attributes the cause of death to a heart attack and Hawayo later said this to a reporter as well ("Well Known Citizen Dies," *op. cit.*, Straub 1974), but she seems to have told her students from the late 1970s that he died of a lung condition. Fran Brown cited lung cancer in her biography of Takata (1992: 18), Rick Bockner remembered it was tuberculosis (cited in Fueston 2017: 76), and Phyllis Furumoto said she thought it was pleurisy (personal communication, July 2014). It may have ultimately been some combination of factors.

twice. Three days before Saichi “went into transition,” she said, he spoke to her about how to deal with the event of his death. In the first version, he says:

“When we are born, this is a universal law. You are a church-going [Buddhist] woman and I am, too, and we have to understand that everything that is born and mature [sic],” he said, “there will come a time of great change which we call ‘transition.’ And transition, some people say death, but in our religion we do not say death and this is the end. No. With the law of evolution,” he said, “everything goes through a change, and in the human life,” he said, “when the time comes, no one can stop and we are going. Only whether you go first or I go first,” he said, “we do not know. And so therefore,” he says, “when I go, which I think will be soon,” he said, “please, do not grieve over it. And I do not want to be buried here in Keālia. So there shall be no grave.” Then I said, “What shall I do?” He said, “wrap it up in a clean sheet, take it over the pier, dump it in the ocean, and the sharks will enjoy it, but I am not there.” He said, “the minute you think I am gone,” he said, “look up and smile.” And he said, “if you look up and smile, then I will understand that you, also, understood religion” (Takata 1981: tape one, 16–17).

This story was recorded nearly fifty years after the actual event, and it is unclear to what degree elements of its telling changed over the years, but it presents a vision of the impermanence of physical forms but the persistence of the spirit. This vision, informed by the Takatas’ Shin Buddhist socialization in their families and at the Kealia Hongwanji Church, would also impact her teaching career in the second half of her life.

Saichi’s farewell words suggest human life is part of a grander reality that does not end at the limits of the human body but, rather, what we know as death is actually a “transition” to another state of existence. This concept, expressed by Hawayo Takata, has left a lasting impression on Reiki culture; indeed, many if not most Reiki communities continue to use this language of “making one’s transition” when speaking of death.²⁰ In

²⁰ The vision of death as “transition” is present in the discourse of Reiki Masters from both of the two major organizations following Takata’s death (the Reiki Alliance and the Radiance Technique), as well as by one of the chief promoters of “Traditional Japanese Reiki.” See Haberly 1990: 16, 41, 44; Petter 1997: 46, 94-95, Morris 1999: 11-13, 15, 29, 31, 67, 69, 93; Fueston 2017: 19, 105, 145. As many of these examples illustrate, it is chiefly introduced to new students when telling stories of the Masters in the initiation lineage, but then gets extended to discuss treating those who are dying as a way to affirm that a

relating this story, Takata affirmed her husband's claim that recognition of humanity's extra-physical nature is the essence of religion. By tying this inevitable transition from life to "the law of evolution," they draw on scientific authority to validate their spiritual assertions. Further research would be needed to know to what degree Buddhist priests in Hawaii made use of evolutionist thought, but such rhetoric was a major trend in the Buddhist modernism of the turn of the twentieth century (McMahan 2008).

In talking about Reiki, Hawayo Takata often related this concept of universal law to the concept of "cause and effect." Reiki, she would say, treated the cause of illness; remove the cause, and there will be no effect. For someone who attended and taught at Kealia Hongwanji Church (and likely regularly attended this Shin Buddhist institution into her adult life), these concepts of universal law and cause and effect would resonate with the concepts of Dharma (*hō*) and karma (*gō*). As Saichi and Hawayo were likely familiar with these basic concepts of Shin Buddhism, when Saichi says in the second version of the story, "the law of the universe is change" (Takata 1981: tape 22, 3), he invokes the Buddha-dharma of the impermanence of all things. Similarly, Buddhist modernists in this period commonly translated karma as a universal law of causation to cast Buddhist doctrine as rational and scientific (McMahan 2008).

The idea that the interconnected world of matter and spirit obeys a universal law of flux, which guarantees both our mortality and our "transition" into another state of being, also resembles aspects of ancestor veneration as practiced in Japan and Japanese diasporas. The practice of daily prayer at a home Buddhist altar (*butsudan*) is an act of

patient's death is not to be considered a failure of Reiki treatment, but rather that treatment can help ease the dying into making a more gentle "transition."

memorializing and pacifying the spirits of departed relatives (Rowe 2011: 117–119), and it is likely part of the reason Hawayo kept a Buddhist altar throughout her life was to have an anchor for Saichi’s spirit. This recognition of his presence appears in the second version of the story when Saichi tells her to “leave one chair open” at his memorial dinner because “I will be there” (Takata 1981: tape 22, 3).²¹

Yet while he assures Hawayo his spirit will survive his physical death, he specifically tells her to feed his body to the sharks, so nothing will tie her to Keālia. “If there is a grave here,” he says, “you would be stuck, and you are very young, and ... the world is yours [sic]... Since you are born on this earth plane... [it] is yours to walk and to travel and to work and also to improve yourself and to live... And you make your own life and not worry about the grave in that hill or that piece of dirt” (Takata 1981, tape one: 16–17). Here, Saichi evokes the words of Shinran (1173–1263), the founder of Shin Buddhism, who told his followers to feed his body to the fish in the Kamo River rather than building him a gravesite, a story with which he and Hawayo would have been familiar from their Shin education.²² Yet this story not only links Saichi to the virtue of Shinran, but also represents his giving his blessing to Hawayo taking on a peripatetic life, which would be necessary to dedicate herself to spreading Reiki. When Wanja Twan, a

²¹ These instructions seem to reflect a canonical Buddhist concern for the doctrine of non-harm. In saying that they could “serve a little meat,” but not to “butcher anything for that purpose,” he echoes the monastic rules in the *Vinaya-piṭaka* that permit monks to eat meat if it is donated by a layperson and they do not know or suspect it was specifically killed for them. Stewart 2010: 110.

²² Thank you to Mark Rowe for pointing out this connection. Also, like Shinran, Saichi’s request was ignored and at least some of his ashes were interred with Shinran’s at the Ōtani mausoleum in Kyoto. This practice of bringing the deceased’s ashes to Kyoto, called “meeting together in one place” (*kue issho*) is supposed to help ensure a rebirth in the Pure Land. See Chapter Two and Blum 2000. It also anticipates a late twentieth-century Japanese movement called the Grave-Free Promotion Society, which similarly argues against ancestral graves in favour of “natural funerals” (Kawano 2010, Rowe 2011: 152ff.),

Master student of Takata's in the 1970s informed Takata that she and her husband were breaking up, Takata replied saying something like, "Good, you can't travel to teach Reiki if you have a husband."²³ While losing Saichi was heartbreaking for Hawayo, she recognized that her loss created a space in her life that she would dedicate to her healing and teaching. If he had recovered and lived a longer life, Reiki would not likely have taken the path it did, if it would have left Japan at all.

Finally, Takata emphasized that Saichi gave her guidance and inspiration throughout her life. After he said his piece, she replied:

"When you go ... I need your help. I need you every single minute. I want you by my side and teach me. Give me guidance, give me courage, and I shall not fail." And so he said, "Yes, it is possible. Nothing is impossible and I know you will try very hard." And I said yes, and I kept my word. I tried very hard so that I would be financially able and capable of taking care of my family, and then I was never, never lazy. But he was by my side whenever I needed him so badly, when I was stuck against the wall, such as illness (Takata 1981: tape one, 17 – tape two, 1).

Here, she provides an interactive view of how Saichi provided for her in the period following his death. On the one hand, she says he was always there for her in her times of need, but on the other, she suggests that his presence also relied on her own persistent hard work. This implies that at least part of the way in which Saichi's spirit aided her was in the way he inspired her to be diligent. Yet in the second version, she added,

After his transition, I heard his voice whenever I had to make a crucial decision or if I felt I could not decide. If I meditated, I always got the answer. Therefore, [when] ... I have been led to the proper road to find, it was through his guidance. He showed me the way and all the years after that, when I needed help and I could not turn to any other source, I sit [sic] in deep meditation and he gave me the answer, for which I was very fortunate. And therefore, I believe that meditation is very important, and also to have faith in your religion. I found out the more

²³ Interview with Wanja Twan, Sidney, BC, August 21, 2016.

experience I have had, the Reiki is not only for physical but also for spiritual [sic] (Takata 1981: tape twenty-two, 3–4).

In this version, which she told her student Barbara Weber to use for the biography's preface, she asserts that Saichi's presence was a more external force, but one that she accessed through quieting her inner world. She explicitly ties this access to religious faith and to the spiritual benefits of practicing both meditation and Reiki. We shall see in the next chapter that disembodied voices appeared to her at two crucial junctures leading her to Reiki and, although she did not say so when telling those parts of the story, this passage implies that she attributed those voices to her departed husband. Thus, when she told a newspaper reporter, "I owe my good fortune to my late husband, Saichi, who was a guiding light until his death in 1930" (Matsuura 1974), she omits that she actually considered him to guide her for many years afterwards, including to bring her to the practice of Reiki.

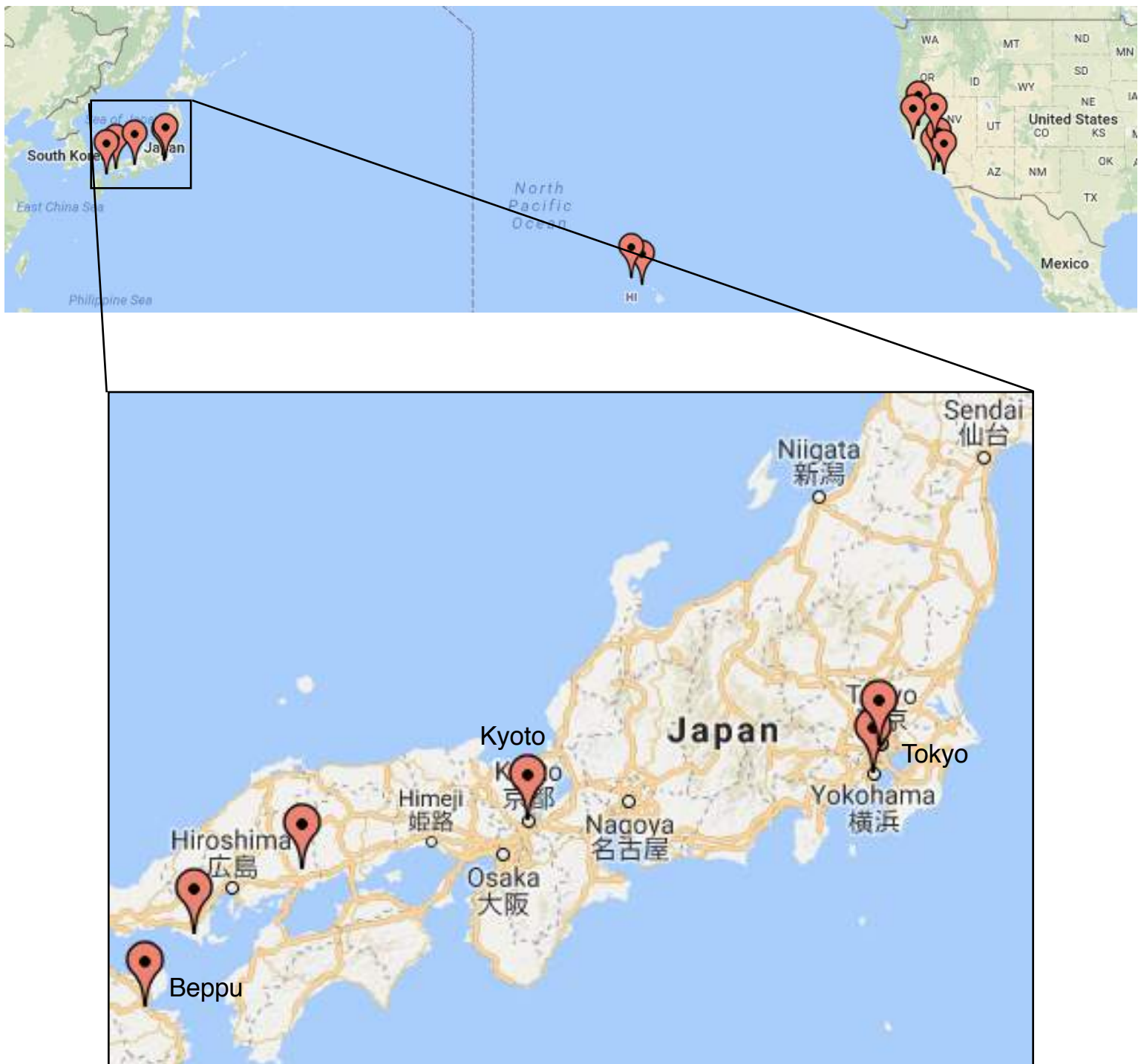
1.5 Conclusion

The circumstances leading to Hawayo Kawamura Takata's birth in Hanama'ulu are entangled with broad geopolitical and economical trends at the turn of the twentieth century. America's empire expanded into the Pacific contemporaneously with Japan's rapid modernization, and the Hawaiian Islands became tied to both developments. The Kingdom, and later Republic and Territory, of Hawai'i became a site of settler colonialism, as U.S. capitalists built profitable industries using migrant labourers from Asia whom the state denied the possibility of naturalization under a racial logic that reserved that right for whites. However, the children of these labourers were American

citizens by *jus soli*, that is, for having being born on land the U.S. had seized from its sovereign rulers. As such, from the moment the midwife held infant Hawayo's body up to the rays of the sun rising over the mountain ridge of eastern Kaua'i, she was already caught in complex North Pacific currents.

Thirty years later, she was the widowed mother of two daughters and the head housekeeper for a wealthy plantation family's opulent estate. Her late husband had been a Nisei community leader who, it seems, did his best to negotiate between the interests of Nikkei labour and white employers, and was reportedly responsible for an historic agreement to have plantation capital fund Buddhist institutions. He seems to have been a religious Shin Buddhist, perhaps partly because, as a gravely ill young man, he sought the reassurance that there was something beyond this earthly existence. She tried to follow in his footsteps by remaining industrious in a number of fields. She worked long hours at the Valley House and in other jobs, continuing to build relationships with white elites and participate in the Republican Party. She also cultivated her spiritual dimension through meditation so that, even though Saichi was physically gone, he could remain her "guiding light." All of these factors helped shape the contours of the next fifty years of her professional and religious life and, by extension, the circulatory development of the spiritual medical practice she would soon encounter.

Chapter Two: Training Japan, 1935-1937



In early October 1935, Hawayo Takata boarded a ferry in Kaua‘i’s Nawiliwili Harbor with her youngest daughter, nine-year-old Alice. She was gravely ill, with severe abdominal pains, and the local doctors did not know how to treat her. She and Alice were bound for Honolulu, where they would buy two third-class tickets for the eight-day voyage to Japan.¹ She carried the ashes of her late husband Saichi, who had traveled to Japan three times for medical treatment to no avail: he died at thirty-four, the same age she was at this time. She must have wondered if she would survive the trip and, if not, what would become of her two daughters.

One year later, she was back in Kaua‘i, not only in perfect health, but operating a clinic where she treated patients with a method called Usui Reiki Therapy (Usui Reiki Ryōhō). She advertised this therapy in the local English-language newspaper as “ABSOLUTELY DRUGLESS” with “Special Treatments for Stomach and Internal Ailments; Nervous Diseases and General Debility” (Image 2.1). This ad explicitly contrasted Reiki Therapy with biomedical treatment and claimed its efficacy for disorders that the biomedicine of the time had difficulty treating, as she knew all too well from personal experience. That she held office hours in the late afternoon and evening on weekdays and in the mornings on Saturdays suggests that this was a second job for her in addition to her responsibilities as head housekeeper at the palatial Valley House, but the fact that she returned to Japan for further training in the summer of 1937 suggests she

¹ They left Honolulu Harbor for Yokohama on October 8, 1935, on the Asama Maru. Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving or Departing at Honolulu, Hawaii, compiled 02/13/1900 – 12/30/1953; digital images; *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 20, 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication *A3510*, roll 110; *Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787 – 2004* (record group number: RG 85).

saw it as more than just a sideline. Rather, her transformation in late 1935 from patient to therapist evokes the archetype that Jung, drawing on Greek mythology and his own reflections on psychotherapy, memorably dubbed the wounded physician. “It is his own hurt,” Jung wrote, “that gives the measure of his power to heal” (1993: 116, quoted in Merchant 2012: 5). The narrative Takata told of her path to Usui Reiki Therapy frames her illness as a professional calling, but more importantly, as an opportunity for spiritual growth. As she said regarding her feeling that Saichi guided her to this practice from beyond the grave: “I found out the more experience I have had, the Reiki is not only for the physical but also for spiritual (Takata 1981, tape twenty-two, 4). Such stories, which Takata frequently told to her clients and students, helped shape their understanding of Reiki and their expectations of what it would provide for them (Selberg 1995).

This chapter examines Takata’s treatment with and subsequent training in Usui Reiki Therapy in the mid 1930s but, to properly contextualize this encounter, it devotes ample space to the development of this therapy prior to her training. It describes factors in early twentieth century Japan that led to a boom in novel forms of spiritual medicine, the life and works of Mikao Usui (1865–1926), creator of his eponymous Reiki Therapy, and the adaptations Hayashi made prior to Takata’s arrival at his clinic in 1935. These sections establish Usui Reiki Therapy as an always-already North Pacific practice, composed of elements imported from the U.S. and localized for Japanese audiences in the combined with elements with a much longer history in Japan. They also show that Usui Reiki Therapy was already undergoing adaptations in Japan prior to Takata’s encounter of the practice, setting up subsequent chapters’ analysis of the further changes Takata made for audiences in decades to come.

2.1 Guided to Hayashi's Clinic

In the early 1930s, the widowed Hawayo Takata continued working as the housekeeper of the Valley House, supervising the estate for Julia Spalding, who went to California to care for her dying father (Takata 1981, tape one: 13). Takata worked long hours to support her two children and suffered serious depression following Saichi's death. She later recounted, "they [i.e., her children] alone kept me from suicide" (Graham 1975). Perhaps as a needed respite, Takata traveled to California without her daughters in the summer of 1932 to attend a conference of the Young Men's and Women's Buddhist Association, a transnational organization that linked Shin Buddhist youth in Hawaii with those in Japan and North America (Image 2.2). In her five weeks of travel, she enjoyed the maiden voyage of the luxury liner S.S. Monterey, traveled to sites across California, including San Francisco, Yosemite National Park, Marysville, Bakersville, Santa Barbara, and Los Angeles (where she attended events in the Summer Olympics), and made many friends with Nikkei Buddhists from other Hawaiian islands and California. The camaraderie and pleasure of this tour is palpable in her photographs and her souvenir autograph book, but the fact that she and her companions were racialized second-class American citizens is visible in the ship manifest, which lists the permits they were issued in Honolulu in order to travel between the Islands and the U.S. mainland.²

In 1935, Takata was alone in Keālia with her youngest daughter, Alice. She had

² The passenger records reveal that, on the way to San Francisco, Takata rode cabin class (between third class and first class) on the maiden voyage of the luxury liner S.S. Monterey, leaving Honolulu on July 14, 1932. Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving or Departing at Honolulu, Hawaii, compiled 02/13/1900 – 12/30/1953; digital images; *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 20, 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication *A3510*, roll 094; *Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787 – 2004* (record group number: RG 85). Takata's autograph book and photographs from this trip are in the private collection of Phyllis Furumoto.

sent her older daughter Julia to attend high school in Japan, a fairly common practice at the time, and, after forty years of working in Kauaian cane fields, her parents had taken a one-year sabbatical to return to the Kawamura family home in Yamaguchi prefecture. As recalled in Chapter One, she had lost her second job as the meter reader and bill collector for the local waterworks due to the political turnover, so she picked up extra work for a newspaper and an insurance company, probably in part to help pay the tuition of Julia's boarding school. Takata recalls that her overwork caused her to suffer nervous breakdowns, terrible abdominal pains, and terrible difficulties breathing. She sought medical attention, but the local doctors said they could not operate for fear of killing her.

Around this time her younger sister Fusae died from tetanus, and Takata felt on the verge of giving up. In her autobiographical recordings, she said she began nightly meditations in which she prayed to God for guidance. Again, it is difficult to know whether she actually was praying to a Christian-inflected God or whether this was a way to translate to white Christian audiences whatever concept of divinity she received in her Nikkei Buddhist socialization. She recalls:

And through this meditation one night when it was so dark, dark, there was not even a star, then I heard out of the clear sky a voice just as plain and ... [it said,] the first thing for you to do is to have health.... If you have health, you shall have wealth, because you can work and you can earn. But if you have poor health, you shall have poverty and you shall have worries, and therefore nothing but sorrows and sorrows [sic] and unhappiness (Takata 1981, tape two: 3).

As we saw in Chapter One, she later attributed this voice to Saichi, but this telling of the story suggests God replied to her prayers by telling her to attend to her health. This story, which she sometimes included in her free lectures to promote Reiki, also reinforced to potential clients and students that the substantial fees for Reiki treatments or courses was money well spent, as the dividends from investing in health are priceless.

Based on this message, she took leave of her job and traveled to Japan with nine-year-old Alice to check into the Maeda Surgical Clinic where she had traveled with Saichi, although it would be well over a month before she actually received any treatment. The journey to Japan required first traveling to Honolulu, where she and Alice boarded the Asama Maru on October 8 for the ten-day voyage to Yokohama. Takata's first destination was rural Yamaguchi, in western Japan, where she would inform her parents of Fusae's death and leave Alice with them (Takata 1981, tape two: 4). As Hawayo was unfamiliar with the logistics of journeying to Yamaguchi, she traveled with her sister-in-law Katsuyo Takata, who had immigrated to Hawaii from the adjoining Hiroshima Prefecture, and two of Katsuyo's children, Hanako (seventeen) and Wilfred (five).³

The final member of her entourage was Saichi, whose ashes Hawayo brought on the ship to Japan. Despite what he had said about feeding his body to the sharks, it seems she cremated his body in the typical Japanese Buddhist fashion. She planned to make arrangements for "a second funeral" for him at the Ōtani-ha temple in Kyoto and inter his ashes there.⁴ Fortuitously, on the boat to Yokohama she met a priest who was returning from Kona to the Ōtani-ha head temple. They made arrangements that he would take Saichi's ashes to Kyoto and that they would hold a funeral there in a few months' time. Hawayo, Katsuyo, and the children spent time with the Kawamuras in Yamaguchi, held a memorial service for Fusae at the family temple there, visited Hawayo's maternal

³ Passenger Lists of Vessels Departing from Honolulu, Hawaii, compiled 06/1900 – 11/1954; digital images; *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 20, 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication *A3510*, roll 110; *Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787 – 2004* (record group number: RG 85).

⁴ This indicates that Saichi's family had belonged to the Higashi Hongwanji (Eastern branch of Jōdo Shinshū) in Japan, which was less well represented in Hawaii than the Nishi Hongwanji.

grandmother in Hiroshima, and relaxed at the spas in Beppu. Takata then left Alice with her parents and traveled to Tokyo, where she was admitted to the Maeda Surgical Clinic.

Before Dr. Maeda would examine her, she recalls, he insisted she have three weeks' bed rest (a common treatment in Japan) to relax and gain some weight on a diet prescribed by the clinic's dietician, his older sister, Mrs. Shimura (Takata 1981, tape two: 6–11). Although Takata never says as much in her life story, the trip to Japan and her treatment at the Maeda clinic must have been a tremendous financial burden for this woman who was, after all, a domestic servant. After three weeks, Takata had gained a few pounds and her breathing had improved. Dr. Maeda conducted an examination, including a series of X-rays. He diagnosed Takata with a uterine tumor, gallstones, and appendicitis, and scheduled her for surgery the following morning. What follows is the turning point in the narrative she told in her introductory classes, and thus a story she honed through hundreds of repetitions to thousands of students. As she lay on the operating table, a disembodied voice spoke to her, echoing the one she had heard in Keālia telling her to take care of her health. It told her the surgery was not necessary and urged her to ask Dr. Maeda for an alternative. Maeda asked how long she could stay in Japan; she replied that she had years if necessary. Pleased, he sent Takata with Mrs. Shimura to “a studio where they were taking people to give them drugless and bloodless treatments,” where Shimura herself had experienced a miraculous recovery from a dysentery-induced coma some years prior (Takata 1981: tape two, 11–15; tape three, 6–7). This “studio” in Shinanomachi, not far from Maeda's clinic, was the headquarters of the Hayashi Reiki Research Association (Hayashi Reiki Kenkyūkai, hereafter “the Hayashi

Reiki Society”), where they practiced a form of spiritual medicine called Usui Reiki Therapy.

3.2 Mikao Usui (1865–1926) and his Reiki Therapy

Usui Reiki Therapy (Usui Reiki Ryōhō) was one of hundreds of distinct “spiritual therapies” (*seishin ryōhō* or *reijutsu*) taught by tens of thousands of practitioners in Japan in the 1920s and 1930s.⁵ The intense interest in these therapies in this period can be attributed to a number of factors. First, people turned to these therapies due to the limits of biomedicine in this period.⁶ State policies enacted during Japan’s Meiji period (1868–1912) set up conditions for epidemic disease during the subsequent Taishō period (1912–1926); in many cities the mortality rate surpassed the birthrate, inspiring historical

⁵ A 1928 book describes hundreds of such therapies and estimated some thirty thousand therapists at the time (Reikai Kakusei Dōshikai 1928, cited in Hirano 2016: 70, n.4). The terms *seishin ryōhō* and *reijutsu* encapsulate the positions these therapies occupied between the religious and the medical/psychological at a time in Japan when the categories of the “physical,” “mental,” and “spiritual” in the modern sense were still being worked out (Wu 2012: 131). In the early twentieth century, the terms *seishin* and *rei* were used interchangeably to denote something like the word “psyche,” meaning the non-physical aspects of human existence, including what we would call the mind, emotions, spirit, and soul. Thus, while the term *seishin ryōhō* in postwar Japan has come to be restricted to psychotherapy, in prewar Japan it was used for a broader range of therapies including the practices for spiritual growth or the healing practices of new religious movements. As the term *rei* can refer to a personal spirit, it is tempting to translate it as a prefix to mean “spiritual” (rendering *reiki* “spiritual *ki*”), but it can also mean “miraculous” (as in the term *reiyaku*, meaning “wonder drug”) or “mysterious” (as in the expression *yama no reiki*, meaning “the mysterious atmosphere of the mountains”). Previous scholarship in English has chosen to downplay the spirituality of these practices in their translations. In his choice to translate *reijutsu* as “excellent art,” Shin’ichi Yoshinaga suggests the term *rei* was used so extensively in this period that it came to simply mean “excellent” (2015: 76). In the same text, he emphasizes congruities between these therapies and those of the nineteenth-century U.S. New Thought movement by translating *seishin ryōhō* as “mind cure” (Yoshinaga 2015). Yu-Chuan Wu similarly chooses to translate *seishin ryōhō* as “mental therapies.” Such translations elide the fact (that both authors point out) that practices they describe like Okada-style Quiet Sitting Method (Okada-shiki Seizahō) and Belly-Centred Medicine (Haradō Igaku) have explicitly spiritual or religious aspects. In contrast, my chosen category of spiritual medicine or spiritual therapy emphasizes that these practices occupy a space at the intersection of the religious and the therapeutic, but downplays their psychological aspects.

⁶ Hirano 2016: 73, Imura 1996: 300–301, Wu 2012: 30.

demographers to call this period “the Taishō mortality crisis.”⁷ In addition to contagious disease, the period saw one of the great natural disasters of the twentieth century: the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923, which caused firestorms that swept through the capital region, killing nearly 130,000, injuring many more, and leaving about 60% of Tokyo and 90% of Yokohama homeless. For those whom biomedicine was unable to help, whether due to cost, access, or its own limitations, spiritual medicine was a natural place to turn, but the state had outlawed many of the practices that had flourished in the nineteenth century in anti-superstition campaigns.⁸

This modernist suspicion of superstition pushed new spiritual therapies, like the period’s “new Buddhism,” to appropriate scientific language in support of their claims to rationality. Forms of spiritualism and hypnotism imported from the West became

⁷ Meiji regulations on medical practice, intended to create a strong nation through a biopolitical policy of “hygiene” (*eisei*, a neologism adapted from Daoism), inadvertently limited Japanese citizens’ access to medical treatment by disbarring practitioners who had not attended government-regulated institutions (Josephson 2013; Rogaski 2004). Even those able to receive biomedical care experienced mixed results against the diseases that ravaged the young nation. Japan opened its ports to foreign sailors concurrent with profound demographic shifts, as land reform efforts produced unintended consequences of widespread poverty and rapid urbanization. Crowded factory dormitories and inadequate waste treatment in Japan’s swelling cities accelerated the spread of devastating outbreaks of cholera, dysentery, smallpox, tuberculosis, and typhoid (Chemoulli 2004; Hayami and Kojima 2004: 105; Saito 1996: 313). From the 1910s, tuberculosis killed over one million Japanese in every decade in the first half of the twentieth century, and the ongoing search for a remedy for its choking scourge in this period may have contributed to the popularity of healing methods emphasizing breathing techniques (Artemko 2015: 142–143; Johnston 1995: 4). Along with such perennial killers, the Spanish influenza outbreak of 1918–1920 killed roughly 400,000–500,000 Japanese, nearly one percent of the national population, leading to the phenomenon described as the “Taishō mortality crisis” (Hayami and Kojima 2004: 117–119, 145; Nishimura and Ohkusa 2016).

⁸ Practices banned by the Meiji state included fortune telling, divination, spirit mediumship, exorcistic healing prayer rituals, incantation, the production of talismans and charms, particularly when obstructing biomedical treatment, and Shugendō, an order of mountain asceticism largely based on esoteric Buddhism (Josephson 2012: 237, 245; Josephson 2013: 130–131; Maxey 2014: 121; Staemmler 2009: 98). Major targets were rituals called *yose kaji* (“gathering healing”) or *kaji kitō* (“healing prayer”), in which a female shrine maiden enters a trance possession and is interrogated by a male mountain ascetic (Hardacre 1994: 145–148; Hori 1968: 203–204; Jansen 2000: 220). The 1920s and 1930s saw similar crusades by the state against Ōmoto, a new religious movement whose *chinkon kishin* (“pacify spirits, return the gods”) and *miteshiro otoritsugi* (“convey through a hand substitute”) healing practices were modeled on earlier *yose kaji* and *kaji kitō* rituals (Garon 1997: 60–87; Josephson 2012: 238–240; Staemmler 2009).

particularly popular in the late Meiji period (late 1880s to 1912), and their methods involving abdominal breathing, laying-on-of-hands, and automatic bodily movements heavily influenced the spiritual therapies of the 1920s and 1930s.⁹ These latter therapies were modern phenomena not only due to their appropriation of scientific vocabulary, but also because of their claims to treat ills specific to modernity. Many spiritual therapies touted their effectiveness in treating neurasthenia, “a disease of exhaustion resulting from modern civilization making excessive demands on the brain or nervous energy” that plagued Japan at the turn of the twentieth century no less than Europe and North America (Wu 2012: 38, 128ff.). Modernity was not just physically exhausting, but also a source of moral pollution. Modern cities were thought to breed vices thought to degrade Japan’s national spirit and traditional values.¹⁰ Promoters of spiritual therapies emphasized that they were not simply means to enact physical healing but also a way to “correct the vices” of modernity, benefitting both the individual and society at large (Hirano 2016). Thus, spiritual therapists in early twentieth century Japan resembled early modern self-cultivation movements by representing bodies as sites for moral development (Sawada 2004), but also framed themselves as responses to the alienation of modern urban life.

While many came to spiritual medicine to heal disease or to assuage modernity’s ills, others likely engaged with it as a novel curiosity. The education reforms of Meiji brought unprecedentedly high literacy rates, fueling an explosion of Japan’s publishing

⁹ Hardacre 1998; Hirano 2015: 32; Imura 1996; Wu 2012: 128ff.; Yoshinaga 2015.

¹⁰ Cities were seen as breeding grounds for “viral” criminal and barbarous elements, capable of infecting society at large, and urban culture was seen as fostering decadence and laxity in habits like drinking, smoking, consumerism, and pursuit of new fashions imported from the West. Ambaras 2006: 30–31, Harootunian 2002, Silverberg 2009.

industry.¹¹ Print media helped facilitate interest in hypnotism in the first decade of the twentieth century,¹² and many spiritual therapies in subsequent decades similarly spread through inexpensive pamphlets and volumes. Undoubtedly, some readers of these texts never directly experienced the therapies they described but nevertheless enjoyed pondering their possibilities. While certain spiritual therapies developed more mass appeal,¹³ the trend as a whole seems to have predominantly appealed to Japan's growing class of educated, white-collar urbanites. This was partly because learning these methods was expensive, but also because some contained complex philosophies in abstruse prose, requiring the equivalent of a post-secondary education to be read and understood. Also, the flourishing of translated texts in this period allowed the creators of spiritual therapies to draw on similar practices from distant lands (Hirano 2016: 74–75).

Thus, the success of the Japanese hypnotic healers of the early 1900s and the spiritual therapists of the following decades can be understood as truly modern, linked to turn-of-the-century trends in imperialism, epidemiology, technology, morality, education, print culture, leisure, and transnationalism. They linked the vocabularies, worldviews, and practices of local traditions with those adapted from practices like mesmerism and New Thought (Yoshinaga 2015: 79; Hirano 2016), creating novel forms of what I am calling North Pacific spiritual medicine. This is the context in which Mikao Usui taught his eponymous Reiki Therapy from 1922 until his death in 1926.

¹¹ Between ninety-seven and ninety-nine percent of Japan's adult male population was literate by 1920 (Nishimura and Ohkusa 2016: 16).

¹² Over 100 books were published on hypnotism between 1903 and 1912 (Hirano 2016: 68).

¹³ Perhaps the largest was the Taireidō founded by Morihei Tanaka (1884–1928), which a 1917 newspaper article estimated as having over one hundred thousand followers (cited in Yoshinaga 2008: 40)

Usui was born in rural Gifu prefecture in 1865, just before the Meiji restoration that rapidly modernized Japan. His father Uzaemon was a successful merchant and the village headman, and his grandfather had owned a sake brewery (Petter 2012: 31–33). Usui, like the other youth of his village born to non-farming families, probably attended the temple school at the local Pure Land (Jōdoshū) temple Zendōji for part of his childhood, although in 1872, when Usui was about seven years old, the state issued the Educational System Order abolishing temple schools in favour of Western-style public schools. The new elementary schools and the disruption they (by design) presented to traditional social patterns were not enthusiastically taken up in rural Japan (B. Duke 2009: 160ff.), but it is likely that at some point Usui's education transitioned from Buddhist to public administration.

Usui's memorial stele (Image 2.3) describes him as a man of unusual diligence and broad interests, travelling to China and the West to deepen his studies, which included medicine, psychology, physiognomy, history, Christian and Buddhist scripture, Daoist geomancy, incantation, and divination (Okada 1927). Usui seems to have worked a variety of jobs. Fukuoka (1974: 8) claims Usui worked as a missionary, a Buddhist prison chaplain, a public servant, and a private businessman, and Petter (2012: 42–44) cites a former president of the organization Usui founded in 1922 to say that Usui worked as “a journalist ... a prison counselor, a social worker, a company employee, and as a Shinto missionary,” as well as the private secretary of the Meiji statesman Shinpei Gotō (1857–1929).¹⁴ Connections with a man of Gotō's stature in Japan's expanding empire

¹⁴ Fukuoka's text claims to be published by the Shinshin Kaizen Usui Reiki Ryōhō Gakkai (hereafter Usui Reiki Society) and has an introduction signed by the fifth Usui Reiki Society president, Hōichi Wanami.

would support claims of Usui's privilege to study and travel internationally and reports of the state's recognition of Usui's service in the aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake.¹⁵ However, requests to the Gotō Shinpei Organization have been unable to find any mention of Usui's name in Gotō's papers.¹⁶

Usui's memorial stele recounts that he endured a period of poverty that hardened his resolve to train his body and mind (Okada 1927). Around 1919, Usui seems to have suffered from the failure of his business and took up devout spiritual practice in Kyoto; he is said to have "entered the gate of Zen," suggesting a semi-monastic practice (Fukuoka 1974: 8; Petter 2012: 44–51). Photos of Usui from the mid 1920s invariably show him in dark, simple robes, possibly evoking this period of Buddhist practice (Image 2.4). In March 1922, Usui went to Mt. Kurama, northeast of Kyoto, to perform "severe austerities and difficult training," including fasting (Okada 1927). As Mt. Kurama was long associated with religious austerities such as meditating under bone-chilling waterfalls to attain spiritual power, it is likely that Usui engaged in similar practices there.

Usui and his followers consider his experience on Kurama to be the source of his therapeutic potency that he would eventually teach in Tokyo. "On the morning of the

However, the current Usui Reiki Society president told me that the organization does not consider it an authorized text and that he heard Fukuoka used Wanami's name without permission. Email from Ichita Takahashi dated September 24, 2016. However, due to a dearth of biographical materials on Usui, I have chosen to selectively cite this apocryphal text anyway. The text Petter cites is the memoir of Kimiko Koyama (1906–1999), the sixth Usui Reiki Society president. Takai (1986) also recounts the alleged Gotō connection, based on her interview with another Usui Reiki Society member named Fumio Ogawa.

¹⁵ Gotō had been Civilian Governor of Taiwan, President of the South Manchurian Railway Company, Director of Japan's Colonization Bureau, Mayor of Tokyo, Foreign Minister, and Home Minister. He was Home Minister at the time of the Great Kantō Earthquake and dedicated himself to Tokyo's recovery efforts (Schencking 2013: 159–165, 178–180). They would also have shared a passion for medicine; Gotō's initial background was as Chancellor of Nagoya Medical School and he initiated public health initiatives at home and in Japan's colonies (Lynteris 2011).

¹⁶ Thank you to Naoko Hirano for sharing the results of her inquiries.

twenty-first day [on Kurama],” his memorial stele reads, Usui “suddenly felt a great *reiki* overhead and he instantly acquired Reiki Therapy” (Okada 1927).” In the handbook of the organization Usui founded in 1922 (the Mind-Body Improvement Usui Reiki Therapy Study Society, or Shinshin Kaizen Usui Reiki Ryōhō Gakkai, hereafter Usui Reiki Society), he explains he acquired his healing powers when “mysteriously inspired after being touched by the ether during a fast”; thus, “although I am the founder of this method, even I cannot clearly explain [its operations]” (*Reiki Ryōhō Hikkei*: 8).¹⁷ In addition to Reiki’s origin as the culmination of ascetic mountain practice, both accounts also emphasize Usui’s feeling that his Reiki Therapy could not be kept a private treasure within his own family, but must be shared with the broader world, so he developed a way to pass it to others. The memorial stele recounts how Usui moved to Tokyo in April 1922, where he founded a dojo, or training facility, in the neighborhood of Harajuku. In the approximately four years between the establishment of this dojo and his untimely death in March 1926, it says, Usui taught his Reiki Therapy to over two thousand students and healed many more. It recounts how the entrance to Usui’s dojo was constantly filled with the shoes of the patients and students inside. He was particularly active in the aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake of September 1923, and the memorial implies his relief efforts in this time helped him to gain national renown (Okada 1927).

¹⁷ This passage is difficult to translate, particularly the crucial phrase 大気に触れて不可思議に靈感し、治病の靈能を得た. I have previously argued it could refer to being touched by “a great *ki*” (*daiki*) rather than the standard reading “atmosphere” (*taiki*), especially as Usui’s memorial stone describes the same event as: 一大靈氣ノ頭上ニ感シ (*ichidai reiki no zujō ni kanji*), or “[Usui] felt a great *reiki* over his head” (Okada 1927, Stein 2014). However, Takahashi Ichita and Kondō Masaki (the current and former Usui Reiki Society presidents) have advised me that *taiki* is the proper reading and that it refers to “a cosmic air.” Personal communication, August 2016. Thus, here, I have chosen to translate *taiki* as “the ether,” meant to correlate to the concept of *uchū* (cosmos), a key concept in Usui’s cosmology.

A photo dated January 16, 1926, less than two months before Usui's death, suggests he trained twenty students to the highest level, Master (*shihan*, Image 2.5). These top students were all men and at least six seem to have been high-ranking military officers, including four from the Imperial Navy.¹⁸ Several high-profile Japanese Reiki instructors have reflected on this connection between Usui Reiki Therapy and the Navy. Kimiko Koyama, the sixth Usui Reiki Society president who studied under Usui's disciple Rear Admiral Kan'ichi Taketomi, said naval officers found it "convenient" to be able to treat sailors on their warships with Reiki.¹⁹ Another practitioner whose mother studied under Captain Hayashi, writes, "The Navy adopted Reiki because it was useful on long voyages. On warships space was very limited so they used Reiki instead of other more cumbersome medical equipment" (Yamaguchi 2007: 66). Yet these explanations do not reflect on how naval officers first became interested in Usui Reiki Therapy; it may have to do with the new religious movement Ōmoto, which had a significant naval following and similar healing practices, but suffered state suppression in the early 1920s.²⁰

¹⁸ These were Rear Admirals Jūzaburō Ushida (1865–1935) and Kan'ichi Taketomi (1878–1960), who served as the Usui Reiki Society's second and third presidents, Hōichi Wanami (1883–1975), the Usui Reiki Society's fifth president who was a captain during Usui's lifetime but retired in 1935 as a vice admiral (Petter 2012: 79), and Captain Chūjirō Hayashi (1880–1940), founder of the Hayashi Reiki Research Association.

¹⁹ Personal email from Takahashi Ichita dated October 2, 2016.

²⁰ Ōmoto gained hundreds of thousands of followers in the Taishō period with its democratized form of spirit interrogation called *chinkon kishin*, also used for healing. This following included high-ranking naval officers such as Vice Admiral Saneyuki Akiyama, a renowned strategist of the Russo-Japanese War. After the so-called "first Ōmoto incident" of 1921, in which leaders were imprisoned for lèse-majesté and other charges, "intellectual members" such as former naval academy instructor Wasaburō Asano (1874–1937) distanced themselves from the group. Shortly before the 1921 incident, Ōmoto replaced *chinkon kishin* with a new healing practice called *miteshiro otoritsugi* that, in turn, inspired other healing practices that use a hand to direct a spiritual force for healing, like the *jōrei* practice of Mokichi Okada and the similar *okiyome*

In addition to the naval officers who led the Usui Reiki Society and the Hayashi Reiki Society, Usui's other top disciples also seem to have also been disproportionately social elites from the military, the arts, and private industry. A memoir cited by Petter (2012: 72–78) describes the professions of eight Masters of Usui Reiki Therapy from the pre-war period: in addition to the three naval officers already mentioned, there were a “high official in the imperial army,” a “high military official,” a scientist, a professional musician, and a master of tea ceremony; another of Usui's Masters was the chemical magnate Gizō Tomabechi (1880–1959), who became a prominent politician after the war.

The Usui Reiki Society's elite membership may be partly due to the organization's recruitment through word-of-mouth in social networks, which tends to follow the sociological principle of homophily: that is, the more similar two people are when compared to their surrounding populations, the more likely they are to make a connection. This “birds of a feather” principle facilitates individuals to form connections with others who share values and attitudes as well as who share status, both “ascribed (e.g., age, race, sex) or acquired (e.g., marital status, education, occupation)” (Kadushin 2012: 19). However other factors likely played a role. The organization was said to charge high fees for membership, causing a bias for those who could afford it, and Usui and his Masters may have advanced elites to the top ranks more quickly than people of lower social status, whether as a strategic means to promote the organization among elite circles or as an unconscious “halo effect,” where positive evaluations of one aspect of an

technique of Mahikari (Hardacre 1999: 146–147; Staemmler 2009: 261–274). Jonker (2016: 331) suggests Usui's *reiju* ritual is also an adapted form of *chinkon kishin* or *miteshiro otoritsugi*, but even if there is no such direct connection, the close timing of Ōmoto's early 1920s decline and Usui's rise, coupled with their naval connections, suggests that some of Usui's disciples from the Imperial Navy were primed for his Reiki Therapy either through membership in or knowledge of Ōmoto and its healing practices (Stein 2011).

individual can impact the way her other attributes are assessed (Nisbett and Wilson 1977); in this case, the aura produced by these individuals' success in their respective fields may have impacted perceptions of their therapeutic abilities.

Despite Usui Reiki Therapy's prestigious followers, the general public seems to have perceived it as a fraud and Usui as a quack. In an extended testimonial, an anonymous journalist wrote in 1928 of the cognitive dissonance he felt when an Usui Reiki Therapy treatment, given jointly by three practitioners, had unexpected results: "From under the piled hands, my stomach grumbled like ice needles melting and crumbling. Perhaps it was the sound of blood stagnation dissolving. It was creepy. [And yet,] at that time, I recalled the founder of this therapy, who is said to be one of Japan's three fraudulent wizards, together with Kichisaburō Iino and Taireidō."²¹ Clearly this author's impression of Usui and his followers was quite negative before experiencing Usui Reiki Therapy, but his experience led him to tentatively rethink his skepticism.

Mikao Usui was largely forgotten in Japan within a few years of his passing, but his Reiki Therapy, in adapted forms, has attracted millions of advocates around the world, while those of his more renowned contemporaries largely faded away. It was one of a group of therapies that claimed to treat physical and mental illness by manipulating or channeling a force that pervades the cosmos and governs health. Usui and some other

²¹ Asaki-sei 1928. My translation of this article and Hirano Naoko's transliteration in postwar characters is in Fueston (2017: 276–287). Kichisaburō Iino (1867–1944), known as "Japan's Rasputin," had become famous for being a wealthy spiritual advisor. His psychic powers were said to have helped the Meiji state win crucial battles in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), but he gained notoriety in the mid-1920s for a series of scandals, some involving his new religion, the Great Japan Psycho-Spiritual Association (Dai Nippon Seishin-dan). Taireidō, founded by Morihei Tanaka, was one of the largest of the spiritual therapies of the Taishō era. Hirano (2014) discusses the possibility of connections between Taireidō and Usui Reiki Therapy, ultimately concluding that Usui probably knew of Taireidō but, despite some similarities, there is no evidence of a direct connection.

contemporaries called this force by the Japanese name *reiki*, capturing something of their longer continuity with East Asian folk religion and, indeed, manipulating a vital, cosmic force with the hands, gaze, or breath resemble some elements of East Asian spiritual medicine prior to Japan's late nineteenth century modernization.²²

Despite these local precedents, these practices even more closely resemble the “yogic” healing practices of a prolific American New Thought author named William Walker Atkinson (1862–1932) who, under the Indic pen name Yogi Ramacharaka, gained a worldwide audience from his Chicago-based Yogi Publication Society and translation into many languages, including Japanese. Usui Reiki Therapy and a number of contemporaneous spiritual therapies all include techniques that closely resemble those described in Ramacharaka's texts, such as meditations, techniques for purification (of the body and of objects) and diagnosis, healing methods that channel prana or *reiki* through touch, breath, and the gaze, as well as methods to heal at a distance, through photographs or visualization.²³ Atkinson's influence, whether direct or indirect, on Usui and other

²² The Japanese word *reiki* is derived from the Chinese *língqì*, traditionally understood as the “pneuma” or the “soul of life,” and used in Chinese folk religion to denote the “magical energy” associated with a deity's active presence. Gu 2009: 29, Zavidovskaya 2012: 184. Usui Reiki Therapy was just one of several *reiki* therapies of its time, necessitating affixing the name of the founder to distinguish it from that of Matsuji Kawakami, who published *Reiki Therapy and its Effects* (*Reiki Ryōhō to sono Kōka*) in 1919, Koyo Watanabe, who founded the Reiki Restoration Treatment Center (Reiki Kangen Ryōin), and Hidesuke Takagi, who taught his Human Aura Reiki Techniques (Jintai Aura Reiki-jutsu) in the 1920s. Doi 2005: 76; Hirano 2016: 81; Mochizuki 1995: 23; Takagi 1925. Medical *qigong*, a field of practice developed in China but distributed throughout the Sinitic sphere, treats illness through the application of “humane *qì*” (*rénqì*) through the hands, eyes, or breath. Stein 2012: 130. Esoteric Buddhist practices of “healing prayer” (*kaji kitō*) also used similar means to ritually empower objects with healing properties in nineteenth century Japan but were outlawed by the state. Josephson 2013.

²³ Hirano (2014, 2016) illustrates numerous such similarities between Usui Reiki Therapy, the Human Aura Reiki Techniques taught by Hidesuke Takagi, and the Prana Therapy (Purana Ryōhō) of pioneering Japanese osteopath Shin'ichi Yamada, proposing that all three are localized versions of therapies promoted by Yogi Ramacharaka. Japanese-language translations and summaries of Atkinson's works, including *The Hindu-Yogi Science of Breath* (Ramacharaka 1904), *The Science of Psychic Healing* (Ramacharaka 1906), and *Vril, or Vital Magnetism* (Atkinson 1911), can be found in Nukariya 1913; Ramacharaka 1915, 1916,

spiritual therapists emphasizes that their practices are produced out of circulatory development in North Pacific networks.

Some of these Japanese therapies share another technique that bears the influence of a practice imported from North America: a recitation practice said to purify the heart-mind (*kokoro*), which would enhance one's ability to work with *reiki*. Usui and at least one other contemporaneous *reiki* therapist taught a method involving the recitation of a short composition that Usui and his followers called the "five precepts" (*gokai*), a term that ordinarily refers to the five precepts that guide the conduct of Buddhist laypeople. Usui's version of the text reads: "The secret method to summon good fortune, the wonder drug (*reiyaku*) for all disease: today only, do not anger, do not worry, be grateful, fulfill duty, be kind to people. Morning and evening, put hands in prayer, keep these words in your heart-mind, and recite them with your mouth" (*Reiki Ryōhō Hikkei* n.d.: 4). His memorial states that it is the simplicity and efficacy of this recitation practice that makes so many seek out Usui's excellent method (*reihō*): "it is not difficult: sit quietly with palms pressed together, meditating and chanting [the precepts], and you will cultivate a pure, healthy heart-mind" (Okada 1927). The text of the five precepts, written in Usui's calligraphic hand (Image 4), likely hung in his dojos; it was reproduced in the opening pages of his organization's handbook and on the large memorial stone they erected for him at a Buddhist temple in Tokyo; however, it does not seem to be an original text. Rather, it (and the essentially similar text by the other *reiki* therapist) appears to be based on a 1914 book by a doctor of American philosophy who taught a spiritual therapy

1924; and Andō 1922. My gratitude to Shin'ichi Yoshinaga for his guidance on this subject (and many others). Ramacharaka's works also gained broad readership in the Russian language and made up a substantial amount of the literature on yoga available in the Soviet Union. Deslippe 2015.

inspired by Christian Science.²⁴ Thus, the practices taught by Usui and other *reiki* therapists of his time cannot be understood as distinctively Japanese, but created at a particular juncture of North Pacific influences.

Of course, some of these influences come from religious traditions local to Japan, and the incorporation of three such practices distinguished Usui Reiki Therapy from other similar spiritual therapies in the North Pacific. The first is the ceremony that he called *reiju* (“spirit bestowal”), used to connect the practitioner to the cosmic source of *reiki*. *Reiju* is derived from an esoteric Buddhist initiation (Jp., *kanjō*, Skt. *abhisekha*) that Usui likely learned in connection to his practice on Mt. Kurama, where (at that time) the main temple was of the Tendai sect, which performs this ritual (Horowitz 2015). In both rituals, recipients sit with palms together in front of the chest, eyes closed, while the facilitator(s) use light touch and forceful, directed breath on their heads and hands to impart them with power. In *kanjō*, the initiate is linked to the cosmic Buddha (Dainichi Nyorai), but in *reiju* he or she seems to be linked with the cosmic source of *reiki*. Thus, this ritual essentially re-enacts Usui’s experience on Mt. Kurama in which he was “mysteriously inspired after being touched by the ether during a fast” and received the “wonderful ability to heal”

²⁴ Hirano (2016: 81) reproduces Usui’s text side-by-side with the relevant excerpts of Bizan 1914 and Takagi 1925, demonstrating how close they are. The Health Philosophy (Kenzen Tetsugaku) of Bizan Suzuki (given name Seijirō Suzuki) claims to cure physical disease by correcting the heart-mind, synthesizing Japanese self-cultivation practices that were prevalent in the nineteenth century with American teachings about the power of the mind and New Thought practices like affirmation and visualization. Suzuki cites Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy as an inspiration and, in turn, was cited by many psycho-spiritual therapists of his time. Due to his use of widespread newspaper advertisements and numerous publications, Suzuki was among the best-known spiritual therapists of his time and was associated with the importation of New Thought. A 1919 guide to spiritual therapies lists Suzuki as the progenitor of “philosophic principles therapies” (*tetsuri ryōhō*) in Japan (Furuya 1919: 209–210) and a famous lawyer, after reading both Suzuki’s work and *Principles of Health*, described Suzuki as “the Japanization of Mrs. Eddy” (Yamazaki 1921: 67). While Christian Science’s theology is distinct from, but indebted to, mainstream New Thought, Bizan emphasize Eddy’s teachings on the power of the psyche (*seishin*), which closely resemble that of New Thought.

(Okada 1927). However, while Usui had a single transformative experience, *reiju* was given regularly at meetings of the Usui Reiki Society and Hayashi Reiki Society, sometimes called “*reiju* meetings” (*reijukai*); these organizations kept careful records of how many times their members received *reiju* through the use of stamps in a receipt book (Petter 2012: 252, 269; Takai 1986: 142; Yamaguchi 2007: 29, 67–69). Historic precedents remain obscure, but the contemporary Usui Reiki Society requires members to attend a certain number of meetings to be eligible for advancement.²⁵ Performing this ceremony, normally reserved for Buddhist monastics, on laypeople can be understood as a democratized “reinvention” of an older ritual form for modern, urban audiences, a broader trend in Japan’s new religious movements (Hardacre 1994).

The second practice that distinguishes Usui Reiki Therapy from other similar *reiki* and *prana* therapies is the recitation of poems by the late Meiji Emperor (1852–1912) to cultivate the heart-mind; like the five precepts, these poems (called *gyosei*), were to be recited in a kneeling position with the hands held in prayer position, with palms pressed together (Image 2.6). The Usui Reiki Society handbook includes a collection of 125 of these Imperial poems, 100 of which the Hayashi Reiki Society reproduced in a booklet for use in their meetings (*Reiki Ryōhō Hikkei*; Yamaguchi 2007: 83). These poems are on a variety of topics, but many valorize determined self-cultivation.²⁶ As Usui’s memorial states that those who want to teach Usui’s method must first “humbly receive and observe the Meiji Emperor’s teachings” but does not specify which teachings, it is possible that

²⁵ Personal conversation with Takahashi Ichita, current Usui Reiki Society president, June 3, 2015.

²⁶ A representative example is: “Even the jewel without the slightest flaw can lose its sparkle from dust.”

the early Usui Reiki Society ritually engaged with other imperial writings as well.²⁷

While writings by the late Meiji Emperor surely contain the potential for spiritual inspiration, it would also have been politically expedient for Usui and his students to develop practices that emphasized their veneration of the imperial house in an age that persecuted non-medical healers and new religious movements that performed healing (Stein 2011, 2016).

The third practice differentiating Usui Reiki Therapy from similar spiritual therapies of its time is the advanced practitioners' use of symbols. After moving up through a series of ranks collectively called "first transmissions" (*shoden*), Usui Reiki Therapy practitioners entered more advanced stages called "inner transmissions" (*okuden*). These students learned techniques to cure bad habits (*seiheki chiryō*) and send "distance treatments" (*enkaku chiryō*).²⁸ In order to perform these techniques, advanced students are taught three graphic symbols not to be revealed to non-initiates. Each of these symbols is to be traced and/or visualized during the practice while invoking a corresponding short phrase to activate the power of the symbol.²⁹

²⁷ Ritualized recitations of other writings by the Meiji Emperor would have already been ingrained in the *habitus* of Usui's students. Since 1890, teachers and schoolchildren read daily the Imperial Rescript on Education, calling for obedience to the Emperor and the state; copies of this document hung alongside the Emperor's portrait in all schoolhouses and failure to bow to them was punishable by law (Garon 1997: 8, 64; Tsunoda and de Bary 1958: 646). Also relevant for Usui's students is the 1882 Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors, a lengthy text all naval cadets had to learn by heart; it also called on subjects' obedience, asked for their cultivation of a "sincere heart" and declared itself to be "the 'Grand Way' of Heaven and Earth and the universal law of humanity" (Tsunoda and de Bary 1958: 707).

²⁸ Because a photograph was often used to send the distance treatment, it was also called "photograph therapy" (*shashin ryōhō*).

²⁹ This practice resembles elements of the esoteric Buddhist practice of *kaji* (Skt. *adhiṣṭhāna*), "a powerful benediction or blessing" in which the recipient is placed into direct relation with Dainichi Nyorai, the cosmic Great Sun Buddha, with whom "they mutually exchange their perfect and potential enlightenment" (Winfield 2005: 109–110). Like *kaji*, the use of symbols by advanced Usui Reiki Therapy practitioners

The first symbol is a somewhat generic form that appears in cultures around the world, but the second symbol, used for curing bad habits, and the third symbol, used for distance treatments, both have Buddhist referents.³⁰ Members of the Usui Reiki Society seem somewhat aware of the connections between Usui Reiki Therapy's symbols and older forms of Japanese religious practice: in a 1997 interview, Usui Reiki Society member Fumio Ogawa recognized the second symbol as Sanskrit, generally associated with esoteric Buddhism, and called the third symbol "a shortened conglomeration of five characters, a *jumon* (magic formula)" (Petter 2012: 262). Such connections somewhat undermine Usui's claims in his organization's handbook that his method is an "original therapy," an "unprecedented original, the likes of which the world has never known" (*Reiki Ryōhō Hikkei* n.d.: 2). They also casts doubt on claims that he "instantly acquired

combine the "three mysteries" (*sanmitsu*) of body, speech, and mind, by physically tracing the symbols, activating them with ritualized enunciations and visualizations. While the hands-on-healing techniques (*teate ryōhō*) taught to beginner students of Usui Reiki Therapy share some of the functions of *kaji*, such as diagnosing and healing illness as well as empowering objects or spaces, the symbols are said to enhance these abilities. This resembles the logic of esoteric Buddhism, which says that exoteric healing rites are a necessary step toward the more efficacious esoteric ones (Winfield 2005: 117–118).

The activating phrases recited in the lineage brought to the West by Hawayo Takata (which today constitute probably over 90% of Reiki practitioners worldwide) are also used as names for the symbols (often in acronym form, especially in print or among non-initiates, so as not to diminish the power of these sacralized words). According to Tadao Yamaguchi, this was a misunderstanding by Takata and in fact these names are not to be recited, but a different "mantra" or incantation (*jumon*) is recited instead (Yamaguchi 2007: 140–141).

³⁰ The second is a stylized form of *kiriku* (Skt., *hṛīh*), a Sanskrit syllable associated with Amida Butsu (Skt., Amitābha). Amida devotion was historically important at the Tendai temple on Mt. Kurama and a large Amida is one of the temple's central icons (Hori 1958: 218; Inoue and Tsukamoto 1978). As Usui grew up in the Jōdo-shū (Pure Land) sect of Buddhism, centered on Amida, such devotion would have come naturally to him, although he would not have learned use of Sanskrit at his home temple, but rather through instruction in esoteric Tendai (*taimitsu*). The third symbol is a condensation of five characters into a kind of talisman inherited from Chinese traditions and used by religious professionals in many forms of Japanese religion, but prominently in esoteric Buddhism. It contains the characters for "right mindfulness" (*shōnen*, Skt. *sammā-sati*), the penultimate step on the Eightfold Path taught by the historical Buddha, and in its entirety can be interpreted as "our original nature is right mindfulness." This message resonates with the theme of self-identification with the cosmic Buddha (*nyūga gan'yū*) that is the foundation of *kaji* practice (Winfield 2005: 110), as well as the "the universe is me and I am the universe" (*uchū soku ware, ware soku uchū*) cosmology of many spiritual therapies in early twentieth-century Japan.

Reiki Therapy” as a result of his austerities on Mt. Kurama, without having received instruction from anyone or studied anything to gain “the wondrous ability to heal” (Okada 1927, *Reiki Ryōhō Hikkei* n.d.: 7). As we have seen, Usui’s creative genius was a combinatory one, incorporating practices derived from esoteric Buddhism and veneration of the late Meiji Emperor into contemporary spiritual therapies, many of which were localizations of mesmeric healing and New Thought mind cure, developed in the U.S. and imported through Japan through translated texts and adapted to local needs and sensibilities.

2.3 Chūjirō Hayashi (1880–1940) and the Hayashi Reiki Research Association

At some point in the mid 1920s, Chūjirō Hayashi, a retired naval captain who appears to have had some medical background, possibly in Sino-Japanese medicine (*kanpō*),³¹ broke away from the Usui Reiki Society to form his own organization to practice and teach Usui Reiki Therapy. Hayashi’s inclusion in a January 1926 group photograph (Image 2.5) of all those authorized to perform *reiju*, indicates he had already reached the Usui Reiki Society’s highest rank of “mystery transmissions” (*shinpiden*), which imparted the knowledge of how to perform this ceremony central to the practice and transmission of

³¹ Takata associated Hayashi with biomedicine by consistently referring to him as “Dr. Hayashi” and claiming that he was a retired naval surgeon. For example, see 「靈氣療法の林忠次郎氏来布 在郷海軍々医大佐 十二月まで滞在」 (“Reiki Therapy’s Mr. Hayashi Chūjirō Arrived in Hawaii — Ex-Naval Surgeon and Captain — Will Stay Until December”), *Hawaii Hochi*, October 2, 1937. However, he does not seem to have attended the Imperial Naval Medical School; Naoko Hirano’s inspection of their records held in the National Archives of Japan did not find Hayashi’s name among their graduates. Personal communication, December 7, 2012. Yet, Hayashi’s tax records reportedly list his occupation as doctor. Nishina 2017b: 87. Robert Fueston, a Reiki historian and Chinese medical practitioner, argues that, although the biomedical detail in the diagnoses and hand positions of the Hayashi Reiki Society handbook suggest he was familiar with Western anatomy, some of the hand positions also suggest Hayashi was trained in Sino-Japanese medicine (*kanpō*). Fueston 2017: 70–71.

Usui Reiki Therapy. In the decade between Usui's death in 1926 and Takata's arrival at the Hayashi Reiki Society headquarters in 1935, Hayashi seems to have enacted several changes to the practice. These changes are part of Reiki's circulatory development that is still not well understood, but this section will examine what we do know.

The pedagogy of the Usui Reiki Society is based on an initiation-based form of gradated knowledge transmission known in Japan as "secret transmission" (*hiden*). This practice derived from esoteric Buddhism but diffused into non-religious settings; since the medieval period (twelfth to sixteenth century) secret transmission has been a common element of Japanese arts from poetry to carpentry, although it is especially prevalent in systems of "somatic knowledge," such as theatre and swordsmanship (Morinaga 2005: 1–6; Teeuwen 2006: 8–9). Organizations employing secret transmission are structured in a hierarchical mode of social organization in familial lineage. Practitioners receive a series of initiations that induct them to a particular lineage and mark their advancement through a series of ranks. Their organizational rank and the prestige of the teachers under whom they have studied help define their status in the organization. Advancement could be dependent on practitioners' ability to perform specific tasks in practical examinations. As in the modern martial arts developed in the period between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (including judo, karate, and aikido), use of the secret transmission model helped legitimate Usui's innovative Reiki Therapy and its instructors by connecting them to traditional modes of knowledge transmission based on hierarchical authority.³² Although some of Usui's advanced students, like Toshihiro Eguchi (1873–

³² As one of the only two known photos of Usui with his students seems to include the founder of judo, Jigorō Kanō (1860–1938), there may have been a direct influence of that martial art on the development of

1946) and Kaiji Tomita (dates unknown), went on to found their own forms of practice derived from those taught by Usui, the secret transmission model also limits outsiders' ability to spin off imitative forms by demanding intensive investments of time, money, and practice before one learns the full system.

In place of the system by which students gradually advanced through the ranks of the Usui Reiki Society, Hayashi introduced an intensive five-day training course to allow students to rapidly progress through the beginning and intermediate levels of Usui Reiki Therapy. Chiyoko Yamaguchi (1921–2003) took this course in 1938, in Daishōji, Ishikawa (present day Kaga City); she recalls that Hayashi developed these courses for outlying regions without local Masters (*shihan*) to oversee students' progress (Yamaguchi 2007: 27–30). This course seems to have included daily *reiju* ceremonies as well as instruction in the various recitation, meditation, and healing practices. Hayashi and his Masters also seem to have taught their students basic anatomy, probably to aid in diagnosis and treatment. The Hayashi Reiki Society treatment manual uses moderately detailed anatomical terms in its description of ailments and in hand positions (Petter, Yamaguchi, and Hayashi 2003), and Takata and another Nikkei student from Hawaii both returned home with anatomical charts they ostensibly received during their study of Usui Reiki Therapy.³³ The courses also contained practical training in which the students experienced giving and receiving treatments (Yamaguchi 2007: 33). At the completion of the five-day course, students received certificates attesting to their completion of the

Usui Reiki Therapy (Image 2.6). Thank you to Richard Rivard for first calling this to my attention.

³³ Takata's charts are in the Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara. The other Hayashi Reiki Society student, Tatsuji Nagao (1892–1988), is described in Chapter Three. The information about the anatomical charts came from an interview with his daughter, Yoshie Kimura, and family, June 12, 2012.

“first transmissions” and “inner transmissions” courses. The course was very expensive: Yamaguchi remembers it costing fifty yen, roughly a month’s salary for the average worker (Yamaguchi 2007: 30). Thus, members of the Daishōji branch of the Hayashi Reiki Society “were wealthy. There were business people, housewives (from wealthy families) and midwives,” who apparently would use Usui Reiki Therapy in their line of work (Petter 2012: 272). This largely upper-class composition of Hayashi Reiki Society membership seems to be a point of similarity with the Usui Reiki Society, but the introduction of the training course was a major innovation.

Another apparent shift between Usui and Hayashi’s teaching is a possible reversal in the predominant gender of their students. Surviving photographs of Usui and Hayashi with their students suggest that the majority of Usui’s students were male and the majority of Hayashi’s were female (Images 2.5, 2.7–2.9). This reversal could be linked to Hayashi’s creation of training courses as opposed to the Usui Reiki Society’s more gradual advancement. Possibly the upper-class women who seem to have filled Hayashi’s classes could make time for a two-day workshop but the commitment of regularly attending enough *reijukai* over longer periods of time was difficult to manage with their responsibilities to be “good wives and wise mothers,” a state slogan meant to encapsulate a woman’s patriotic duty in Imperial Japan. Given the very small sample size, it could also be a kind of selection bias. Both photos from the Hayashi Reiki Society show students from training courses at a branch of the organization in the aforementioned Daishōji (Ishikawa), a small town in a somewhat remote province, and may not be representative of trends in other regions. There may also have been more women at the lower levels of the Usui Reiki Society, but the surviving photos are of advanced students,

thus showing more men. As the Hayashi Reiki Society photos are later than the Usui Reiki Society ones, it could also be a broader diachronic change, where men were disproportionately early adopters and women came to it over time. However, the succession of leadership after the deaths of the founders supports the theory that there was a difference in female participation in these two organizations. Two sources say Hayashi chose Hawayo Takata as his successor to run the Japanese branches of the Hayashi Reiki Society, but she deferred that responsibility to his widow Chie.³⁴ In contrast, the Usui Reiki Society did not have a female president until the 1970s (Stein 2016).

By the late 1930s, the Hayashi Reiki Society had branches around the country and estimated its membership to be somewhere between four and five thousand members.³⁵ Its main branch was in Shinanomachi, Tokyo, across from the renowned Keio University Hospital, which had opened in 1920 and where Maeda taught in the medical school; it was also near Maeda's clinic where the disembodied voice urged Hawayo Takata to seek

³⁴ Takata told this story to her students. See Haberly 1990: 42–43, Fueston 2017: 89. Tadao Yamaguchi, whose mother and uncle studied with Hayashi, told me he was able to confirm this story based on an interview he conducted in Kaga City, Ishikawa (formerly Daishōji town) with an elder who remembers a visit by Hawayo Takata and Chie Hayashi. Interview with Tadao Yamaguchi, May 28, 2015.

³⁵ An article on the Hayashi Reiki Society opening a branch in Honolulu says they had about four thousand members and their biggest branch was in Osaka, and then Kyoto, Nagoya, Daishōji (Ishikawa), Chichibu (Saitama), Sendai, Morioka (Iwate), and Aomori. About half of these branches are in small towns and cities in somewhat remote parts of Honshu (Japan's main island), particularly the northeast. This list of branches (*shibu*) seems to intentionally omit the headquarters (*honbu*) in Tokyo, which isn't mentioned. It also mentions that Hayashi has approved of thirteen Masters (*shihan*), of whom Mrs. Takata is the only one outside of Japan. 「靈気療法の支部 昨夜組織、役員も選定」 (“Branch of Reiki Therapy – Organized Last Night – Officers Selected”), *Hawaii Hochi*, January 11, 1938. In Hayashi's farewell address, about a month later, he cited five thousand members. 「皆様の御厚情に衷心より感謝す 林氏の告別放送」 (“I Appreciate Everyone's Kindness from the Bottom of My Heart – Mr. Hayashi's Farewell Address”), *Hawaii Hochi*, February 22, 1938, p. 8. My translation of this article is printed alongside Naoko Hirano's transliteration of it into postwar characters in Fueston 2017: 293–296.

an alternative to the surgery that she awaited. Hayashi's centre hosted a morning clinic, where he and his students paired up to treat patients; with eight beds, up to sixteen practitioners could treat at once. In the afternoon, Hayashi, aided by his wife Chie and other top disciples, met with students while more students went out to treat patients who were hospitalized or required home visits. This is where Mrs. Shimura brought Takata that morning in late 1935.

2.4 Getting Treated at Hayashi's Clinic

Takata lay on one of the beds, where Hayashi's students examined her. Simply placing their hands on her body and feeling "vibrations," they were able to make the same diagnoses as Dr. Maeda had from his x-rays. Takata was initially skeptical of the intense heat and vibrations she felt coming from their hands and she inspected the sleeves of their kimonos for hidden wires or mechanisms. This made them laugh, attracting Hayashi's attention. When he came over, she told him she was looking for a machine, as "the hands, they were working, and I could feel the vibration [sic]. They were not ordinary hands, but I said he must have some kind of connection with some kind of a force or power."

Hayashi explained to her that this power was "not any kind of electricity," but *reiki*. He said that he had learned English in preparation for his numerous travels to the U.S. and Australia as a naval cadet, and that "in English [*reiki*] is called 'Universal Life Energy'":

He said it comes from the sun, from the space, from the moon ... this is universal... and he said the only thing that is different between you and me [and my students]: we have the contact, you don't... [My students] are filling your body with life energy. And this is too, too big. We cannot measure it. Too, too deep. Deeper than the ocean. We cannot fathom it. Therefore, in Japanese, we call it Reiki... You don't know how [radio works] because you are not a radio technician, nor am I, but the principles are the same. It goes through space without wire. Therefore, he said, you have to accept that this great force can be

contacted. And when you have the contact, then it is automatic, universal... limitless, unlimited power, when you have the switch on. And when you want to stop, all you have to do is take your hands off. Hands off, he says, and it just stops. So therefore it is very simple. (Takata 1981, tape two: 16–17; tape three: 1–3).

Naturally, this 1979 recollection is an amalgam of memory and countless iterations of cultural translation and storytelling to Euro American audiences, but it resembles what we know of the teachings of the Usui Reiki Society where Hayashi studied. As we saw earlier, Usui Reiki Therapy practitioners in 1920s Japan largely considered the origins and operations of *reiki* and Reiki Therapy to be mysterious. While Takata's telling effaces the literal meaning of *rei* as "spirit," and her explanation elsewhere that *rei* means "universal" is somewhat misleading, the translation of *reiki* as "universal life energy" is not far off from its historical linkage to the "universe" (*uchū*) in Usui Reiki Therapy.

The few extant teachings of Hayashi's master, Reiki's founder Mikao Usui, made frequent use of the term universe, as when he said that his Reiki therapy is "based on a mysterious [or spiritual] ability (*reinō*) that permeates the universe" (*Reiki Ryōhō Hikkei*). Usui's memorial stone similarly says that his "method of improving mind and body is based on the *reiki* of the universe" (Okada 1927). These connections between macrocosm and microcosm do not only resemble the doctrines of Usui's contemporary spiritual therapists in Japan who emphasized the limitless power of mind or spirit, but also the doctrines of correspondence and influx that characterize American metaphysical religion (Albanese 2007, Hirano 2014, 2015, 2016; Kurita 2015). Again, this is tied to the fact that Japanese therapists used the word *reiki* as a localizing translation for foreign terms like "vital energy" and "prana," imported from the U.S. through translated texts. Thus, explaining *reiki* with the English "universal life energy" is a "reverse translation" from the Japanese term used to localize a nebulous, trans-local concept.

Whereas Usui claimed that the mystery of Reiki “cannot be decided by modern science, though of course it will in the age to come” (*Reiki Ryōhō Hikkei*), Hayashi seemed to imply that this day had already come. When he explained Usui Reiki Therapy to Takata as universal and strongly causal, verging on mechanistic, he was marshalling scientific authority. Takata’s diary from the period of her training under Hayashi suggests he taught her in terms of “energy,” which has a more scientific connotation than the Japanese *ki*, inherited from the intersecting fields of Sino-Japanese medicine (*kanpō*) and Neo-Confucian philosophy.³⁶ This emphasis on “energy” can be seen in both of Takata’s explicit references to *reiki* in her diary. First, on December 10, 1935, she wrote of the “‘Leiki’ Energy within oneself,” situated a couple of inches below the navel.³⁷ Then, in an entry from May 1936, near the end of her time in Tokyo, she wrote that Hayashi will teach her “the utmost secret in the Energy Science,” suggesting that, by the mid 1930s, Hayashi used a similar Japanese phrase to explicitly frame Usui Reiki Therapy as an esoteric “energy science.” This scientific discourse implies that the nature and operations

³⁶ *Kanpō* theorists, often influenced by Daoist philosophy and longevity practices, had long divided *ki* into innumerable varieties corresponding with *yin-yang* theory, Five Phases theory, and physiological conceptions of the body and its functions, but Usui’s monist portrayal of a universal *reiki* underlying all phenomena resembles the “one *ki* stagnation theory” (*ikki tairyū-setsu*) of disease. This etiology, pioneered by the influential early modern medical scholar Gotō Konzan (1653–1733), considers health to be the result of *ki*’s harmonious balance in the body, and thus all disease to be rooted in the obstruction of *ki*; it became foundational to a school of medical thought known as *Koihō* (Ancient Medicine), associated with the traditionalist Neo-Confucian school of *Kogaku* (Ancient Learning). Although Usui’s understanding of *ki* seems influenced by this etiology, his emphasis on connections between morality and health could also be the influence of the other chief medical school, the *Goseihō* (Latter-Day Medicine), associated with a rival branch of Neo-Confucianism (Deal 2006: 234–235; Hanawa 1995; Winfield 2012).

³⁷ The Japanese “r” sound is sometimes transliterated as “l,” hence “Leiki.” See also Kono 1954. James Deacon (n.d.) has argued that Hayashi and Takata’s reference here to an internal repository of *reiki*, corresponding to the *hara* or *seika tanden* centre in the lower abdomen, exists in some tension with Takata’s later teaching that Reiki is a universal energy channeled by the practitioner. However, Fueston (2017: 116–119) cites an audio recording of a 1980 First Degree class to argue that Takata taught the universal source recharges a “battery” in the abdomen, which is the proximate source of the energy for Reiki treatments.

of *reiki* are presently understood, which is in tension with Usui's location of such knowledge in a future time and with Takata's recollection that Hayashi taught that *reiki* is immeasurable and its operations are mysterious.

These tensions between present and future, scientific measurability and spiritual boundlessness are part of a broader characteristic of techno-scientific visions for spiritual medicine in the early twentieth-century North Pacific. In North America, spiritualists, mesmerists, and Theosophists all used the language of "spiritual science" to describe their practices, many of whom said that "animal magnetism" or "human electricity" were limited manifestations of a limitless sea of divine energy (Albanese 2007, Yoshinaga 2015). In British Columbia, Anglican Archbishop Frederick Du Vernet (1860–1924) theorized about "radio mind" or "spiritual radio," a form of telepathy that he ascribed to the Holy Spirit and considered capable of mental healing (Klassen 2011, forthcoming). Meanwhile in Japan, Usui's contemporary spiritual therapists also made ample use of scientific terminologies to describe the powerful energies underlying their healing practices, as is clear in the names of Morihei Tanaka's Spirit Particle Technique (Reishijutsu) and Chiwaki Matsumoto's Human Body Radiation-ability Therapy (Jintai Hōshanō Ryōhō). Thus, Takata's recollection of Hayashi's use of mechanistic metaphors—explaining *reiki* traveling like radio waves and the hands of Reiki Therapy practitioners in terms of flipping a switch and closing a circuit—despite the infiniteness and unknowability of cosmic source of these healing powers was in some sense befitting of the era.

After three further weeks of resting at the Maeda clinic and receiving daily Reiki treatments, both at Hayashi Reiki Society headquarters, where she went every day after

breakfast, and from Mrs. Shimura, who was a Reiki Therapy practitioner herself, Takata's ailments healed completely, although she said she continued to receive treatments from Hayashi and his students "every day for one year."³⁸ Amazed by her recovery, she felt that she had "found [her] life" in Reiki Therapy and, following the archetypal narrative of the wounded physician, who comes to her healing practice through a health crisis of her own, Takata was determined to learn the practice and bring it back to Hawaii. Unfortunately, Shimura told her, it was simply not possible, as Takata was not Japanese. "She said, 'We have given many, many cultures to the outside world. We have given kendo, judo, karate, tea arrangement [sic], flower arrangement, these are all cultures. But Reiki, no. We guarding [sic] it with a fence around it and it shall not get out of Japan'" (Takata 1981, tape 3: 7). This national-culturally essentialist narrative frames Usui Reiki Therapy as an "Japanese" art akin to other cultural practices that had gained international renown, but also set it apart as something precious and inaccessible to the outside world.

The exact objection to teaching Reiki to foreigners is not clear. It may be tied to a cultural chauvinism that resisted instructing foreigners in a practice that they would be unable to properly learn, because there is something essentially Japanese in the practice of Reiki. The mystical abilities to sense vibrations in the patient's body with the hands to diagnose the issue and then channel invisible cosmic energies to heal could easily have been tied to "theories of the Japanese people" (*nihonjinron*) that set them apart as uniquely capable of intuiting spiritual truths. Alternatively, there could also have been

³⁸ Takata 1981: tape three, 13. This period was probably closer to eight months (October 1935–June 1936).

practical concerns about teaching Usui Reiki Therapy to someone who primarily resided outside of Japan. Even with Hayashi's innovative training course, membership in the Hayashi Reiki Society required practice and advancement through regular attendance of meetings, where one could regularly receive *reiju* and obtain feedback on the quality of one's practice. This sort of long-term social relationship to one's teacher and to other practitioners would be difficult, if not impossible, overseas.

Shimura's refusal may also be linked specifically to Takata's American identity. Earlier, she had chastised Takata for her inquisitiveness in searching the practitioner's kimono for an electrical device, prompting Hayashi to explain the nature of Reiki to Takata. Afterwards, Takata relates:

[Hayashi] told his practitioners, "Mrs. Takata is an American. She looks Japanese, has a Japanese name, but is an American, born in Hawaii [as an] American citizen, and therefore what she have [sic] just expressed is democracy. That's how all Americans are: very open, very frank. And so, in Hawaii, this is nothing strange or not even rude. But in Japan, the ladies are very silent and they restrain from expressing themselves, and the law of the Japanese philosophy is ladies do not display emotions in the public... [A Japanese lady] will not dare come here and open her mouth... So therefore you find a difference between a Japanese and the Americans... They express their opinion: they want to know, they say it." (Takata 1981, tape 3: 4–5).

While Takata was pleased that Hayashi understood her inquisitive nature and explained it to his students, Shimura told her, "if you have any questions about Reiki... please do not open your mouth there, but keep it to yourself" as she would answer all of Takata's questions in private (Takata 1981, tape 3: 5). Shimura's remark may stem from female avoidance of assertiveness in Japan's public sphere (as Shimura herself seems to have been rather frank in private), but could also be an insight into the reluctance to teach Reiki to an American. In Japan, Reiki was taught in a hierarchical structure based on initiation, seniority, and formalized assessment. The leadership of the Hayashi Reiki

Society may have considered “democratic” Americans unfit to learn such a practice. As a Japanese American in the early twentieth century, Takata was “between two empires” (Azuma 2005), and experienced two distinct forms of “double consciousness,” as she would have been considered an outsider, with varied meanings projected onto her by members of the dominant ethnicities, both in the U.S. and in Japan.

After much meditation and prayer, Takata recalled, she petitioned Dr. Maeda as “the greatest humanitarian” to help convince Hayashi to take her on and bring Usui Reiki Therapy back to Hawaii for her family and her community, which had suffered much disease and untimely deaths. She said she would sell her house to raise the money for her training. Impressed by her commitment, he composed a handwritten letter to Hayashi on a calligraphic scroll. Upon receiving this letter from the great doctor, Hayashi and his disciples agreed to take on Takata as an “honorary member” (Takata 1981, tape 3: 9–12).

2.5 Takata’s Initial Training and Practice

Takata seems to have taken the intensive five-day training course with Hayashi at the Hayashi Reiki Society headquarters, as her “first transmissions” (*shoden*) and “inner transmissions” (*okuden*) certificates both bear the date December 13, 1935, which corresponds to her dated notes in the back of her copy of the Hayashi Reiki Society handbook.³⁹ This contradicts her recollection to her biographer that she initially only took the “first degree” class, offered monthly (Takata 1981, tape 3: 12), as well as the

³⁹ Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

recollections of Hayashi's student Chiyoko Yamaguchi that Hayashi's main centres in Tokyo and Osaka practiced the same mode of gradual advancement through multiple ranks as the Usui Reiki Society, and that he only gave the five-day seminars in outlying regions without local instructors (Yamaguchi 2007: 27–30). Despite studying at the Hayashi Reiki Society's Tokyo headquarters, the archival evidence indicates Takata enrolled in one of these five-day intensives.

Takata recuperated at the Maeda Surgical Clinic until late March 1936, when she traveled to Kyoto for Saichi's memorial service at the Ōtani Honbyō, the mausoleum of Shinran (1173–1253), founder of the Jōdo Shin sect. It is not clear whether or how frequently Takata practiced Usui Reiki Therapy before this time, but in her journal, she mentions "curing" a family member's child during her Kyoto trip as well as a fellow traveler at her hotel. Upon her return to Tokyo, and after her parents and her daughter Alice left for Kaua'i in early April, the Hayashis invited Takata and her older daughter Julia to move in with them.⁴⁰ As such, Takata became an *uchideshi* (literally, "inside student"), a great honor traditionally reserved for students of great potential, potentially the successor to the master (Deacon 2015 [2011]). Her diary reflects this transition, as an entry dated April 2 states, "This must have been my real lucky day as I come to think, I have gained so much knowledge in line of my treatments that I found myself taking patients naturally [sic]."⁴¹ Takata's words reflect her pride in receiving recognition from her master Hayashi and in the advancement she saw in her treatment abilities.

⁴⁰ Takata 1981, tape 3: 12–13; Diary entry dated March 28 [1936], Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

⁴¹ Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

In the months that followed, Takata increased the frequency of the treatments. Subsequent diary entries marked “May” state: “went to cure the 2 girls of Baron Taku 2 days and they were cured, Mrs Hanazawa at Keio Hospital, every night at 7:30 pm – Treatment for after operation – finds it very good and fast recovery. At the home office patients began to increase ever since I came to to [sic] them, it makes me feel good & very encouraging – today is the 21st and it reached to 20 patients.” She recalls Hayashi later revealing that this period of apprenticeship was a kind of examination, as he timed how long it took her to travel to and from her patient and followed up with the patient to see how long she treated to see whether she got lost or whether Reiki would guide her. “You did not know Tokyo,” he said, “but you never came back one time and said you lost direction. You see, you were following Reiki. Reiki gave you the lead” (Takata 1981: tape three, p. 14). His pleasure with her progress overjoyed her. She wrote in her diary:

“Mr. Hayashi has granted to bestow upon me the secret of ShinpeDen [sic]... Know one [sic] can imagine my happiness to think that I have the honor & respect to be trusted with this gift – a gift of a life time [sic] & I promised within me to do my utmost in regard to this beautiful & wonderful teaching that I just received – I shall promise to do what is right thru sincereness & kindness and shall regard and respect the teaching and its teacher with utmost reverence and respect.”⁴²

After receiving the “mystery transmissions” (*shinpiden*) that authorizes an Usui Reiki Therapy practitioner to give *reiju* and instruct others to perform Reiki, Takata returned to

⁴² Diary entries dated ~~April 1936~~ May 1936 [striketrough in original] and May 21, 1936 (on subsequent pages), Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara. Her *shinpiden* certificate, dated October 1, 1936, states that Takata practiced treatment at the Hayashi Reiki Society from December 10, 1935, to May 8, 1936 (currently in the private collection of Phyllis Furumoto but to be donated to the Hawayo Takata Archive). It is not clear why this latter date does not correspond with the date of May 21 from Takata’s diary or why the certificate itself is dated in October, four months after Takata had already returned to Hawaii. It is possible that Hayashi dated the certificate once he received the payment for the *shinpiden* training, something Takata did later in her teaching career as well. Fueston 2017: 84–85. Also, the fact that Takata writes “Mr. Hayashi” (instead of Dr. Hayashi) here seems to be a unique occurrence in the archive.

Hawaii, sailing out of Yokohama June 2, 1936, arriving in Honolulu eight days later.⁴³

From there, she returned home to Keālia, the first Reiki Master outside of Japan.⁴⁴

In Kaua‘i, Takata began to treat patients and initiated her first students, enabling them to practice Reiki themselves.⁴⁵ An ad from *The Garden Island* in October 1936 says she practiced from four to eight p.m. daily in Kapa‘a, the town just south of Keālia (Image 2.1). Her office was in “Ota Cottage,” likely a small, freestanding structure that she rented from an Ota family on whose property it stood. It also states that she held a free weekly clinic for infants on Saturday mornings. The times of these treatments indicate that her clientele likely could not take off work to receive treatments and that she herself probably went back to work at the Valley House at this time. This latter hypothesis is supported by a recollection by Rufus P. Spalding, Jr. (1910–c.1995), a nephew of Julia Spalding, as told to a chronicler of the family:

There was a young Japanese, spotted by Rufus' Aunt Dudu [Julia Makee Spalding] as a barefoot girl on the plantation; seeing that she was very bright, Dudu installed her as "majordomo" at Valley House, and later helped her to get to the Mainland for medical training, so that she became a doctor. When Rufus was first married, he wanted to bring his bride out to Valley House, which had been unoccupied for some time. He called, or wrote to this Japanese doctor, and she arranged everything — opened up the place, installed cook and servants, saw that everything was clean and tidy. Before leaving, they held the last of many luaus at

⁴³ Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving at Honolulu, Hawaii, compiled 02/13/1900 – 12/30/1953; digital images; *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 20, 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication A3422, roll 169; *Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787 – 2004* (record group number: RG 85).

⁴⁴ I use here the English term Reiki Master as a translation of the Japanese *shihan*, although it is not clear whether Takata was a full *shihan* at this point, authorized to teach all levels of the practice, or a kind of “teacher-in-training” (referred to in some Japanese Reiki lineages as *shihan-kaku*), authorized to teach just the beginner classes. See Nishina 2017a. Another possibility is that she was authorized to teach the beginner and intermediate classes, but only a Grand Master (*dai-shihan*) was authorized to make other Masters and she did not receive this status until February 1938. See Fueston 2017: 86–87.

⁴⁵ “Hayashi’s Farewell Address,” op. cit.

Valley House. The dining room table alone seated 30 to 40 people... they had houseguests, and all the neighbors came. It was a great feast, and they had 'music, of course...' This was in 1936 (Stoddard 1991).

While Takata did not actually become a doctor (the reference to her mainland training probably refers to classes she took at a naturopathy college in Chicago, detailed in Chapter Three), this fascinating reference not only establishes that Takata continued to work for the Spaldings after returning from Japan but gives unique insight into Julia Spalding's perspective as her benefactor; while Takata's story emphasizes her cultivation of a relationship with an important customer of the esteemed Lihue Store, where she was both working on the floor and doing basic bookkeeping, Spalding's take reinforces her benevolence in plucking up this "barefoot girl" and giving her professional opportunities, first as the head of her domestic staff, but then as an actual professional. The slippage between the two accounts attests to the Islands' gross racial inequality at the time as well as to Spalding's seeing Takata as both a charity case and quite capable.

After teaching over fifty students in Kaua'i, Takata returned to Japan in the summer of 1937 to receive further training from Hayashi.⁴⁶ At this time that she invited Hayashi to the Hawaiian Islands, described in the following chapter.

⁴⁶ "Hayashi's Farewell Address," op. cit. She left Honolulu June 29, and returned on September 24, 1937. Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving or Departing at Honolulu, Hawaii, 1900–1954; digital images; *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 20, 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication A3422, roll unknown and roll 186; *Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787 – 2004* (record group number: RG 85).

2.6 Conclusion

As Takata's encounter with Usui Reiki Therapy demonstrates, medicine in prewar Japan was a complex system awash in influences from the American side of the North Pacific, including those of biomedicine and spiritual medicine. A sickly patient in 1930s Tokyo may have consulted practitioners of biomedicine, Sino-Japanese medicine, folk therapies (many of which were officially proscribed), a healing-focused new religious movement, or one of the innovative spiritual therapies that combined democratized "reinventions" of older Japanese spiritual therapeutics with practices recently imported from North America. Modern, urban audiences seem to have often turned to these innovative spiritual therapies, like Usui Reiki Therapy, after other forms of medicine proved ineffective. Matsui Shōō, a student of Hayashi's, lists numerous examples of patients he healed with Usui Reiki Therapy after biomedical doctors pronounced them incurable (Matsui 1928). Matsui's claims that Usui Reiki Therapy's diagnostic technique could detect physiological sources of disease invisible to biomedical practitioners illustrates how spiritual therapies were promoted as "no less, and perhaps even more, scientific and empirical than the orthodox medical treatments" (Wu 2012: 11). Usui also says as much when he cites "well-known European medical doctors" who have "severely criticized medicine" and names Japanese doctors who decry biomedical ignorance of the psyche, castigate "the narrow-mindedness" of colleagues who reject the potentials of spiritual therapy, and foretell a coming "great revolution" of medicine by those with "spiritual knowledge" (*reichi*). He concludes this section by saying, "Clearly, doctors of medicine, pharmacists, etc., are acknowledging the efficacy [of spiritual therapies such as Usui Reiki Therapy] and are learning them for themselves" (*Reiki Ryōhō Hikkei*). This implies

that Usui Reiki Therapy provides therapeutic benefits that biomedicine cannot, an argument familiar in today's rhetoric of integrative medicine cited in the Introduction.

Usui and his followers seem to have promoted the idea, common among spiritual therapists of the time, that their therapy contained spiritual Oriental curative powers absent from materialist Occidental biomedicine (Wu 2012: 139). This illustrates what Bernard Faure calls "second-degree Orientalism": namely, Asian internalization of Western idealizations of Oriental otherness such that, even when resisting the West, Asians employ its categories (Faure 2000: 5). In this, the rhetoric of Usui and other spiritual therapists bears affinities with contemporaneous cases of Japanese Buddhist reformers such as Shaku Sōen (1860–1919) and his student Suzuki Daisetsu (D.T. Suzuki, 1870–1966) who made strategic use of American interest in Buddhism to advance their "Buddhist modernist" agendas (Ketelaar 1991; McMahan 2008; Snodgrass 2003, 2007). Spiritual therapists and Buddhist modernists alike insisted that their practices' efficacy was entirely scientific and empirical, but also attributed this efficacy to their descent from longstanding, essentially Eastern, Asian, or Japanese wisdom traditions.

Despite this self-Orientalization, Usui Reiki Therapy and other spiritual therapies (as with Buddhist modernism), were clearly embedded in trans-Pacific circuits that blurred boundaries of East and West. We have seen how Usui and his contemporaries made use of elements of spiritual medicine imported from the U.S. like Ramacharaka's pranic therapy and forms of New Thought affirmation, whether directly or through contemporary localizations of these practices. Usui can be said to have employed a particularly "domesticating" translation strategy that emphasized continuities with local

practices in contrast to others that “foreignized” their practices by deliberately retaining elements that break local conventions (Venuti 2008). These complementary translation strategies would have appealed to different desires in those in search of healing. The use of practices derived from esoteric Buddhism—the pedagogical system of “secret transmission”; the use of symbol, incantation, and visualization derived from benedictions (*kaji*); and the *reiju* ceremony derived from initiations (*kanjō*)—all embed Usui, his teachings, and his students in the authority of local traditions (despite claims to his therapy’s originality). Recitation practices meant to purify the heart-mind and dispel disease, performed while kneeling on the floor, hands in prayer position, also bear the imprint of earlier local practices as well as of the trans-local New Thought movement. Shin’ichi Yamada’s Prana Therapy, based on an American yogic practice, is a particularly striking example of this ostensibly Indian therapy’s North Pacific character.

The interplay between Usui Reiki Therapy’s “Japanization” or “Orientalization” and its North Pacific identity impacted its subsequent uptake in Hawaii, North America, and beyond (eventually under the abbreviated name Reiki). In Hawaii, Takata would excise elements of the therapy with explicitly Japanese cultural markers, such as the meditations with hands in prayer position and the Japanese-language recitation practices, during the Pacific War, when being a Nikkei religious professional was means for incarceration. Yet in the Cold War U.S., when Japan’s new status as an ally in the fight to contain Asian Communism, the framing of Reiki as a “Japanese art” (as in Takata’s story of Hayashi’s reluctance to take her on as a student) would dovetail with broader interest in Japanese spiritual practices, particularly Zen. Finally, Reiki’s “always-already” North Pacific character helped mediate its uptake by North American audiences in the 1970s, as

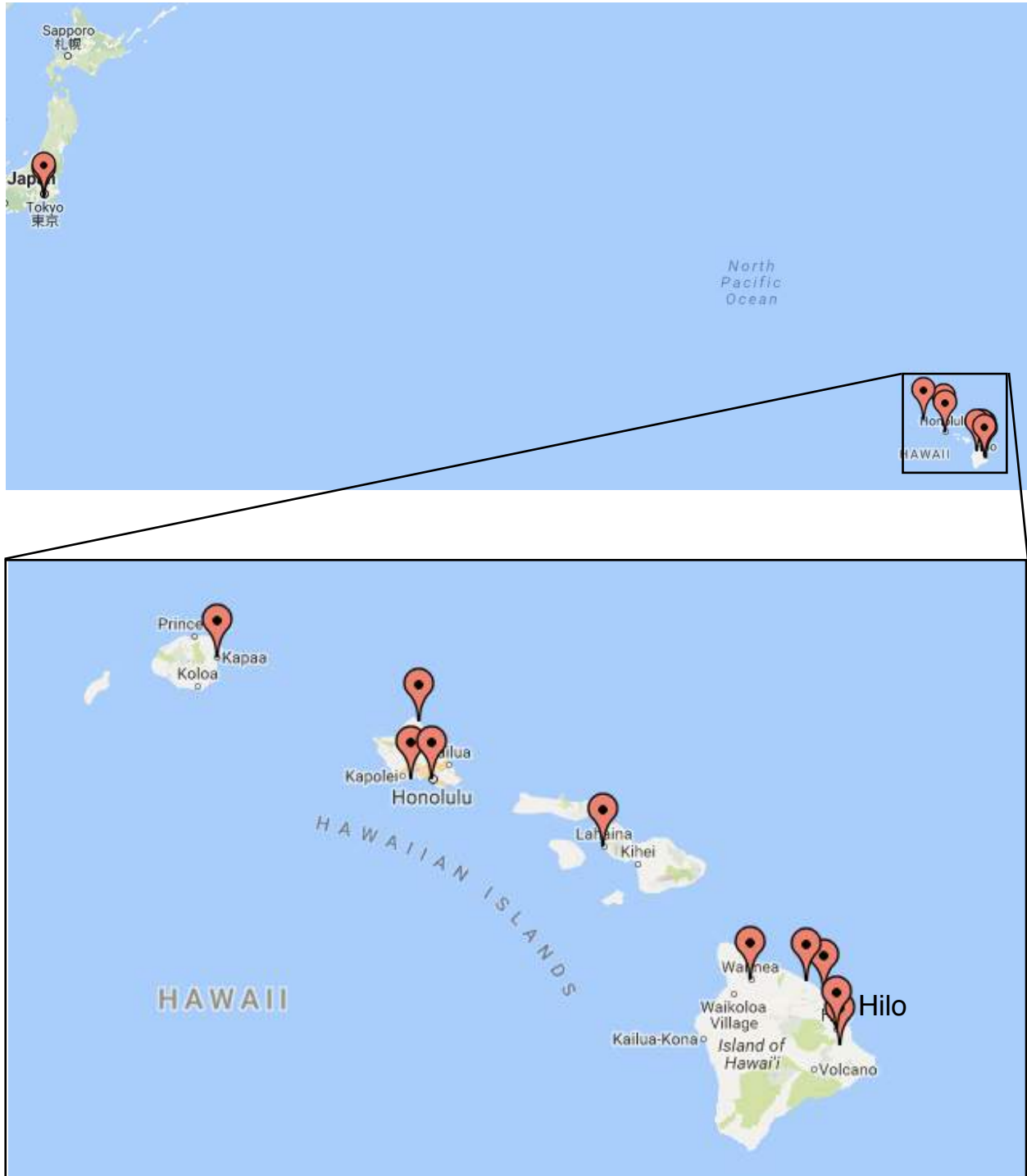
students' familiarity with vitalistic worldviews and laying-on-of-hands practices harmonized with the perennialism that marked the liberal religious sensibilities of both suburban housewives and youth countercultures.

Reiki's esotericist initiation structure was another aspect that facilitated its postwar success overseas. Just as Usui's use of "secret transmission" helped legitimize Usui Reiki Therapy for his followers while also slowing its early growth and limiting the printed materials about the practice, part of Reiki's appeal to Takata's students in postwar North America was that its initiations linked them into a lineage stretching back to Usui, an authentic Japanese master. Through Takata's involvement in initiation-based fraternal organizations on the U.S. mainland, Reiki's esotericism took on new meanings as it was introduced to and practiced within new communities.

Thus, in multiple ways—Usui's engagement in second-degree Orientalism; his fusion of elements derived from New Thought and those derived from esoteric Buddhism; the changing significance of Usui Reiki Therapy's initiation lineage and other practices that can denote "Asianness"—linkages between Usui Reiki Therapy's movement and its evolution illustrate circulatory development. Like other North Pacific spiritual therapies, the introduction of Usui Reiki Therapy to new audiences was tied to the repeated refiguring of its practices and their meanings. This process of circulation also created enduring ties that facilitated successive iterations of transmission, as the social networks of Takata's clients and students became new potential audiences. Furthermore, some touched by Reiki also experienced transformations of other values, whether an enhanced sense of connection to a spiritual reality, a feeling of connection to Japanese culture, or the association of Japan with spirituality.

When Mikao Usui began promoting his Reiki Therapy in Tokyo in 1922, he was one of thousands of therapists in the modern capital promoting an innovative healing technique that drew on trans-Pacific sources. Usui's students memorialized him as the creator of an original method to perfect mind and body, thus resembling the "sages, philosophers, geniuses, and great men of ancient times, as well as the founders of religions" (Okada 1927). As most of the spiritual therapies of prewar Japan disappeared in the period between the buildup to the Second World War and its aftermath, and as an emphasis on "secret transmission" limits the production of written records, it is difficult to know whether other therapists similarly mixed esoteric Buddhist rites and practices verging on emperor worship with imported practices from the West such as "pranic healing" and affirmation recitation. However, Hawayo Takata's training in forms of Usui Reiki Therapy adapted by Usui's disciple Hayashi, and her continued adaptation of this form of spiritual medicine for communities at different sites around the North Pacific, demonstrate the sustained appeal of this genre of spiritual medicine.

Chapter Three: Teaching Hawaii, 1937-1948



On the morning of Sunday, February 20, 1938, the retired naval captain Hayashi Chūjirō (1880–1940) addressed a crowd of approximately two hundred people who filled the second floor of Shunchōrō, a large teahouse in Honolulu’s Alewa Heights overlooking the harbour and Punchbowl Crater (Image 3.1). Local radio station KGMB simultaneously broadcast this address, delivered in Hayashi’s native Japanese, and the Japanese-language newspaper *The Hawaii Hochi* later published a transcript in its entirety. The crowd included many students who had studied Usui Reiki Therapy (Usui Reiki Ryōhō) under Hayashi and his disciple, Kaua‘i-born Hawayo Takata (1900–1980). Hayashi recounted how, since his arrival in October, he and Takata gave fourteen training courses to approximately three hundred and fifty people including “whites, Hawaiians, and Chinese who understand absolutely no Japanese language.” At each training course, Hayashi related, “many new members attended, they understood [the teachings] well, and, of course, they painlessly healed the diseases of their close relatives and were grateful for the happiness of health.”¹ Hayashi’s grateful students sent him home with four hundred pounds of Hawaiian sugar and other Hawaiian specialties including Kona coffee, koa wood bowls, cases of oranges, pineapples, and olives, as well as so many leis he could not wear them all (Image 3.2).² They may have chosen to express their gratitude to their

¹ 「皆様の御厚情に衷心より感謝す 林氏の告別放送」 (“Grateful from the Bottom of My Heart for Everyone’s Kindness: Hayashi’s Farewell Broadcast”), *Hawaii Hochi*, February 22, 1938, p. 8. My translation of this article is printed (along with Hirano Naoko’s transliteration of it into postwar kanji) in Fueston 2017: 292–296. They also taught two courses on Kaua‘i, for a total of sixteen. From November to February, they held a class every week, with a two-week break for the holidays, a schedule Takata maintained for a month after Hayashi’s departure. See Nishina 2017a for a helpful analysis of this schedule.

² Takata seems to have collected the money for these gifts: her diary from that time, under the heading “Senbetsu” (“farewell gifts”), lists fifty-three names who each donated between one and ten dollars for a total of \$110 (nearly \$2000 in 2017 dollars). The minimum daily wage for a plantation labourer in 1939

teacher by showering him with material objects in part because this former officer in the Japanese military could not work in the U.S. at a time of rising tension between these two Pacific empires, so lavish gifts could have taken the place of cash payments.

Less than four years later and about eight miles to the west of Shunchōrō, hundreds of Japanese aircraft bombarded the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor in one of several simultaneous Japanese offensives that launched the Pacific War. For roughly the next three years, the U.S. Territory of Hawaii was under martial law. The Counter Intelligence Corps of the U.S. Army immediately began to investigate the Nikkei, or persons of Japanese descent, residing in Hawaii to assess their threat to national security. Roughly half of the ten thousand individuals under investigation were *kibei*, or local Nikkei whose parents sent them to Japan for schooling (Ogawa and Fox, Jr. 2008: 32). As Takata sent her elder daughter Julia (1919–1970) to Japan for high school, it is likely that her family was under investigation by the CIC.³

Takata's decision to have her daughter educated in her parents' homeland was not the only reason she may have been under suspicion in wartime Hawaii. She had traveled to Japan five times in the 1920s and 30s: three times to accompany her dying husband as he received medical treatment and two longer trips during which she studied Usui Reiki Therapy under Hayashi. Several of the numerous newspaper articles about Hayashi and Takata's collaborative teaching of Usui Reiki Therapy cited his status as an officer in the Japanese Imperial Navy, which could also have endangered Takata if American military

was \$1.40 for a man and \$1.05 for a woman. Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara; Shoemaker 1940: 40.

³ However, my inquiries to the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration have not been able to locate files for either Hawayo or Julia Takata.

intelligence monitored local Japanese-language media. Moreover, many of the Nikkei incarcerated in Hawaii were leaders of religious organizations and Japanese language schools, considered to foster Japanese nationalism; almost all Buddhist priests were incarcerated, including hundreds arrested the day after the Pearl Harbor attacks (Hunter 1971: 186, 189; Ogawa and Fox, Jr. 2008). If the CIC knew that a chief practice of Reiki had been to recite the poems of the Meiji Emperor, Takata would likely have joined them.

While Takata was not one of the approximately 1,250 Nikkei incarcerated in Hawaii during the war,⁴ her fear of being suspected of ties with Japan is plainly legible in the sign that hung outside her home-clinic in Hilo (Image 3.3). Its palimpsestic layers reveal the changing times of 1940s Hawaii. The main text, from top to bottom, originally read “REIKI MASSAGE / SWEDISH MASSAGE / [illegible] / H. TAKATA.” Below that were Japanese characters advertising the Takata Reiki Treatment Center (*Takata Reiki Chiryōin*) and vertically, on the right hand side it spelled out Takata’s name in Japanese style. Her decision to paint over this sign, to remove the Japanese characters, to decrease the size of her Japanese name, and to come up with such a technological gloss for Reiki as “nerve-gland-short wave treatments,” clearly reflects anxieties about appearing too Japanese in a time when that ancestry was a liability.

This chapter examines the circulatory development of Usui Reiki Therapy in the Nikkei community of Territorial Hawaii from the late 1930s to the late 1950s, the locus of the vast majority of practitioners outside of Japan prior to the mid to late 1970s. This “transwar period” spanning the Pacific War (1941–1945) has been shown to contain

⁴ This was less than one percent of Hawaii’s roughly 150,000 Nikkei, a different situation from the U.S. west coast, where the federal government incarcerated nearly all Nikkei in concentration camps (Ogawa and Fox, Jr. 2008). For the importance of using the terms “incarceration” and “concentration camp” rather than the more anodyne “internment” and “internment camp” see Daniels (2005).

broader continuities in Japan and the U.S. that would be occluded by periodizations that choose the war's beginning or completion as endpoints (Abel 2015, Fujitani 2011). This is not to say that the war did not present an important break in the lives of Hawaii's Nikkei. Wartime discrimination certainly built on earlier "yellow peril" rhetoric regarding Nikkei Americans' unassimilability and the presumption that their loyalties were divided between the U.S. and Japan, but wartime propaganda cast these U.S. residents and citizens as unprecedented alien threats to American sovereignty and the imposition of martial law in the Territory in December 1941 made suspicion sufficient cause for incarceration. This chapter balances sensitivity to these wartime discontinuities with attention to other continuities in the circulatory development of Usui Reiki Therapy (soon shortened to Reiki) in Territorial Hawaii's Nikkei community in the transwar period. It is the first of three chapters to focus on Takata's teaching and so, like the two chapters that follow, offers brief profiles of a few of Takata's students to help illustrate the types of individuals who were drawn to Reiki in this place and time. As it also documents a time when Takata began to professionalize Reiki practice, it presents tensions within this early Reiki community (that have played out in different ways ever since) about how compatible spiritual medicine is with a fee-for-service model.

3.1 Hayashi's Teaching in Hawaii and Early Supporters in Honolulu

One marked difference between Usui Reiki Therapy's circulation in Japan and in Hawaii began even prior to Hayashi's arrival in Honolulu. Takata left Yokohama one week before him and seems to have started promoting his visit right away. The *Hawaii Hochi*,

one of Honolulu's major Japanese-language daily newspapers, ran an article announcing Hayashi's imminent arrival two days prior to his landing, and on the day he arrived they ran a second article with a photo of him and his daughter Kiyoe, his traveling companion during the five months he was in the Islands (Image 3.4).⁵ This media coverage sharply contrasted with Usui and Hayashi's policies in Japan, which discouraged publicity or advertising. Seemingly the only author to talk about Reiki in a public forum, Hayashi's student and prolific playwright Matsui Shōō (1870–1933), wrote in a 1928 newspaper article: "For some reason, Usui especially disliked making [his therapy] public, so those trained in his schools also still avoid advertising." Matsui continued by saying that he knew others in the organization oppose his publicizing the therapy, but he justified it, asking, "If any truth contributes to human happiness, isn't our duty to humanity to promote it?"⁶ The reasons for Usui's aversion to promotion are unknown, but are

⁵ 「靈氣療法の林忠次郎氏来布 令嬢キヨエさん同伴 土曜日秩父丸で」 ("Reiki Ryōhō's Hayashi Chūjirō Comes to Hawaii – Accompanied by his Daughter Kiyoe – Arrives Saturday on the Chichibu Maru"), *Hawaii Hōchi*, September 30, 1937, p. 7; 「靈氣療法の林忠次郎氏来布 在郷海軍々医大佐十二月まで滞在」 ("Reiki Therapy's Mr. Hayashi Chūjirō Arrived in Hawaii — Ex-Naval Surgeon and Captain — Will Stay Until December"), *Hawaii Hōchi*, October 2, 1937, p. 8. Coverage of Kiyoe invariably described her as an adept of tea ceremony and ikebana and said she would instruct interested students.

The *Hōchi* was published by Fred Kinzaburō Makino (1877–1953), an immigration and labour rights activist who was at the forefront of numerous political issues facing the Nikkei community; he and Takata seem to have grown friendly through the period of Hayashi's stay and he was an advocate for her and for Usui Reiki Therapy. See Nakamura 2017a; Takata 1981: tape five, 4; tape six, 1–4. In the five months of Hayashi's stay, the *Hōchi* published dozens of articles about Usui Reiki Therapy and advertisements for Hayashi and Takata's lectures and training courses. I am indebted to Naoko Hirano of Waseda University for initially locating roughly three dozen of these articles and ads and transcribing the faded microfilm into postwar characters for me and to Masaki Nishina for locating even more and hosting them on his website.

Beginning in the fall of 1937, ads for their treatments and courses referenced "Usui-style Reiki Therapy" (Usui-shiki Reiki Ryōhō, as opposed to simply Usui Reiki Ryōhō); this period is likely the origin of this phrase, which lives on in Usui Shiki Ryoho, the name given to the practice of the Reiki Alliance, one of the major lineages that consolidated in the 1980s following Takata's death. Nishina 2017a.

⁶ Matsui 1928: 14, reprinted in Fueston 2017: 246–249.

probably linked to his use of “secret transmission,” and possibly due to caution of attracting state suspicion in a time when other organizations promoting spiritual medicine were being suppressed, notably the “Ōmoto incident” of 1921. Takata does not seem to have had these concerns in 1937 Hawaii and Hayashi at least tacitly agreed to the press coverage, as it continued consistently throughout his stay.

Takata and the Hayashis traveled together to Kaua‘i for a brief visit, teaching two classes, before the two of them (and their respective daughters, Julia and Chiyoe, who were about the same age and seem to have grown friendly in Japan) settled in Honolulu. After some initial difficulty at a couple of hotels downtown, they settled into two “cottages” in a boarding house called the Grove Hotel at 1633 Nuuanu Avenue, just above School Street (Image 3.5). The Grove was on the quiet *mauka* (mountain-ward) edge of the Honolulu neighborhood then called Chūō Rengō (Central Business District), dominated by Nikkei commercial activity (Imai 2010: 6), and was about one block from the enormous Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin, the headquarters for Jōdo Shinshū in the Territory (Image 3.6).⁷ The majority of Hayashi and Takata’s fourteen training courses in O‘ahu were held at the Grove Hotel and averaged between ten and fifteen students, although the final course before the Hayashis’ return to Japan, held in the nearby activity hall of the Young Men’s Buddhist Association, shows approximately one hundred and twenty-five in attendance (Image 3.7).⁸ These courses were each held over

⁷ As described in Chapter One, Jōdo Shinshū is by far the most common Buddhist sect among Nikkei Americans and is the sect with which Takata affiliated.

⁸ In “Hayashi’s Farewell Address,” op. cit., he says there were three hundred and fifty practitioners in the Hawaiian Islands and that Takata taught “over fifty” before his arrival. As the photograph of the final course at the YMBA Hall shows about one hundred and twenty-five in attendance, the other fifteen courses he taught on Kaua‘i and O‘ahu may have had a total of roughly one hundred and seventy-five students, averaging out to about twelve per class. On the other hand, some of those in attendance at the final class

five consecutive weekday evenings, from seven to nine PM, so they likely resembled the ones he taught in Japan, contained the training for the “first transmissions” (*shoden*) and “inner transmissions,” so that students completing the full course would know the Reiki symbols used in advanced techniques, including distance treatment.

Although Hayashi recounted that these courses included “whites, Hawaiians, and Chinese who understand absolutely no Japanese language,”⁹ surviving photos and other records suggest these early students were almost entirely Nikkei and courses were likely taught in Japanese. Despite Hayashi having apparently received instruction in English as a naval cadet (see Chapter Two), his fluency was probably not sufficient to teach in English. Takata tells a story of him being interviewed by U.S. immigration officials, and she insisted they have an interpreter so there would be no misunderstandings (Takata 1981: tape five, 6). Teaching in Japanese would not have significantly limited their class sizes: in 1930, the Nikkei population was approximately 140,000, almost forty percent of the Territory population (Schmitt 1977: 25) and, as many Issei spoke quite limited English, most Nisei were conversationally proficient in Japanese even if their literacy was limited. Their students also seem to have been predominantly women. Out of eighty portraits in an album of students from Hayashi’s trip, with handwritten captions indicating the students’ names, addresses, and which of the fourteen classes they attended,

may have been returning students bidding farewell to Hayashi, in which case the earlier classes would have been larger.

⁹ “Hayashi’s Farewell Address,” op. cit.

fifty-one (almost sixty-four percent) are of women.¹⁰ All the students in this album have Japanese surnames, and all save one have their names written in Japanese characters in the same handwriting; the one exception, Samuel Osamu Inouye (1915–2004) of Ewa, may have had a non-Nikkei, probably a Native Hawaiian, parent (Image 3.8).

Some photos in this album show their subjects in pastoral settings, but most of these early students seem to have been from the upper segments of Nikkei society. It is unclear exactly what the fees for these classes were, but we know that the fees Hayashi charged in Japan were more than a month's salary for the average worker, and the fees Takata charged a few years later on the island of Hawai'i were similar. One article explicitly extols Hayashi for "devoting all his energies bringing the health preservation therapy (*hoken chiryō*) to men and women of all ages and from every social class," but goes on to boast how among them are "doctors, soldiers, high-ranking officials, the very wealthy, and scholars."¹¹ From what we know of those who became involved in Honolulu, a disproportionate number were in the petit bourgeois class of the Nikkei community called "middleman minorities" by sociologists (e.g., Bonacich and Modell 1980).

One important early supporter of Usui Reiki Therapy in Honolulu was Alice Sae Teshima Noda (1894–1964), among the most prominent and successful figures in Hawaii's Nikkei community. Alice came to Hawaii at age five, the eldest daughter of two immigrants who were able to accumulate sufficient capital working in O'ahu's

¹⁰ Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara. Two photos fell out of the album but the names in the caption seem male; if it was actually fifty-one women out of eighty-two total students, the ratio is actually closer to sixty-two percent female.

¹¹ 「保健治病の福音 靈氣療法講演会 来る廿四日午後七時 講演者林忠次郎氏」 ("The Gospel of Preserving Health and Healing Disease—Reiki Therapy Lecture—The Coming 24th, 7 PM—Lecturer Mr. Hayashi Chūjirō"), *Hawaii Hochi*, November 20, 1937, p. 5.

plantations that they could buy land in Wahiawa and start their own pineapple plantation.¹² At age eighteen, Alice married Steere Gikaku Noda (1892–1986), a local baseball star who went into law and became the first Nisei to work in Hawaii’s courts; after the war he became a successful politician. After raising four children with Steere, Alice first went into dental hygiene, rising to become head of the local dental hygiene college and president of the local hygienists’ association, and then into “beauty culture,” studying on the mainland and becoming the examiner for the Territorial Board and president of the local hairdresser and cosmetological associations. She built a chain of four salons on O‘ahu, one in Tokyo’s posh Ginza shopping district, and wrote a column on beauty and Western etiquette that became syndicated in Japanese-language newspapers and magazines in Hawaii and Japan. For Japanese and Nikkei women in the North Pacific, Noda represented the heights of class and glamour to which they too might rise with proper attention to beauty and etiquette.

Noda greatly helped Usui Reiki Therapy in its early days in Hawaii. She seems to have first learned about it when she happened to meet Takata on the steamship from Yokohama to Honolulu in September 1937. A week after returning home to Honolulu, she and her husband accompanied Takata to the harbour to meet the Hayashis when they arrived October 2, and they all went together to the offices of the *Hawaii Hochi*, where the Hayashis had their photo taken for the newspaper to promote the upcoming classes (Image 3.4).¹³ Noda then accompanied Takata and the Hayashis to Kaua‘i a few days

¹² This biography of Alice Sae Noda is based on Peterson 1984, Imai 2010; phone interview with Lillian Emiko Noda Yajima, May 23, 2017; and email from Lenny Yajima Andrew, September 10, 2017.

¹³ The newspaper article (“Reiki Ryōhō’s Hayashi Chūjirō Comes to Hawaii,” op. cit.) says Mrs. Noda was on the same ship as the Hayashis, but the ship’s registries tell a different story: it seems Noda actually

later (for her first trip to that island), possibly enrolling in one of the courses they held there.¹⁴ By the end of the month, ads for Hayashi's first Honolulu course listed Noda's name, along with the address and phone number of her Cherry Beauty Salon, as a contact for registration; prior to Hayashi's departure in February 1938, Noda's salons advertised free Reiki treatments, offering separate spaces for men and women (Image 3.8).¹⁵

The strength of Noda's renown in the Nikkei community and the publicization of her early support for an unknown therapy in a popular newspaper must have combined to help draw students to Hayashi and Takata. Furthermore, the association of Reiki with Noda probably played into its disproportionate appeal to women. Not only was Alice Sae Noda's name synonymous with beauty culture in Hawaii's prewar Nikkei community, but the ad for free treatments in her Honolulu salons framed Reiki as both "the new therapy to restore one's health" and "the latest technique to return one's beauty to the way it was formerly."¹⁶ She also promoted Reiki to women's groups alongside beauty tips; in a talk at the monthly meeting of Shufu-no-kai (Housewives Club) at the Honolulu YWCA, Noda spoke on "'Personal Appearance' and the 'Reiki Treatment and its

sailed on the Taiyo Maru with Takata a week prior, leaving Yokohama on September 15 and arriving September 24, while the Hayashis traveled on the Chichibu Maru, leaving Yokohama on September 24 and arriving October 2. Passenger Lists of Vessels Arriving or Departing at Honolulu, Hawaii, 1900–1954; digital images; *Ancestry.com* (<http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed June 20, 2014); citing NARA microfilm publication A3422, rolls 186–187; *Records of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 1787 – 2004* (record group number: RG 85).

¹⁴ 「靈氣療法の大家 林忠次郎氏来島 ワイメアとカパアでの講習会日取決定」 ("The Master of Reiki Therapy – Mr. Hayashi Chūjirō Arrives on Island – Waimea and Kapaa Seminar Dates Decided"), *Hawaii Hochi*, October 7, 1937, p. 6. The article suggests Noda was accompanying Hayashi's daughter, Kiyoe, so it is also possible she wanted to learn tea ceremony or ikebana, in which Kiyoe was skilled.

¹⁵ Advertisements in *Hawaii Hochi*, October 29, 1937, p. 5; February 5, 1938, p. 2.

¹⁶ Advertisement in *Hawaii Hochi*, February 5, 1938, p. 2.

Effect.”¹⁷ This was probably an infrequent occurrence as Noda does not seem to have mentioned Reiki in her regular beauty column. Moreover, when I spoke with Alice Noda’s daughter Lillian Yajima (b. 1920), she did not remember her mother giving many treatments in the salons, so this too was probably a short-term development; Yajima did say, however, that her mother became known for the quality of her Reiki treatments and was often asked to make house calls, even to travel to the “neighbour islands” to treat friends and acquaintances who were unwell.¹⁸ Such travels must be responsible for an article that credits Mr. and Mrs. Noda’s practice of Reiki Therapy for making Maui residents think, “if they received a treatment from [the Nodas’] teacher Mrs. Takata, the blind would see and the mute would begin to sing.”¹⁹ Thus, while Usui Reiki Therapy’s appearance in Mrs. Noda’s salons may have been brief, the visibility of her early support for this novel therapy probably helped establish it in the Islands, and her continued practice helped introduce Takata and Reiki to many more for years to come.²⁰

Another example of an early petit bourgeois supporter of Usui Reiki Ryōhō in Honolulu is the owner of the Grove Hotel, Bunki Aoyama (1885–unknown), who became Takata’s second-in-command after Hayashi’s departure.²¹ Aoyama moved to Hawaii in

¹⁷ “Mrs. Steere Noda to Address Members of Shufu-no-Kai Sunday,” *Nippu Jiji*, April 6, 1940, p. 2.

¹⁸ Phone interview with Lillian Emiko Noda Yajima, May 23, 2017.

¹⁹ Untitled, undated (circa summer 1938) clipping of a Japanese-language magazine from Hawaii, p. 32. Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

²⁰ Indeed, it is even possible that Noda introduced Takata and Reiki to one of their most important patrons: the wealthy heiress Doris Duke, described in Chapter Four. Lillian Yajima recalled her mother holding events for the Girl Scouts at Doris Duke’s Honolulu estate in the prewar period. Phone interview, May 23, 2017.

²¹ 「靈氣療法の支部 昨夜組織、役員も選定」 (“Branch of Reiki Therapy—Organized Last Night, Officers Selected”), *Hawaii Hōchi*, January 11, 1938, p. 6; “Hayashi’s Farewell Broadcast,” op. cit; 「靈氣

1906 from Kumamoto, on Japan's southern island Kyūshū, and seems to have quickly generated sufficient income to invest in a succession of small businesses, including dyeing textiles and owning a laundry and a restaurant, before being a landlord in 1937.²² He traveled frequently between Hawaii and Japan, making at least five such trips between his emigration and the beginning of the Pacific War. Aoyama also was an enthusiastic host of the Japanese Imperial Navy when they visited Hawaii; he served as head of the committee that gave Japanese sailors a tour of O'ahu, which a local publication called the most important aspect of the Navy's visit to the island.²³ This connection to the Imperial Navy was likely a bond between Aoyama and Hayashi, a retired Captain; this is emphasized by their joint visit, before Hayashi's departure, to a Japanese naval cemetery in Honolulu that dates to the nineteenth century (Image 3.9).

Aoyama was noted for his adaptability, intellect, enthusiasm, and throaty voice, all of which made him a skilled master of ceremonies at the fleet receptions (although not loquacious in his everyday life); this experience seems to have led to him emceeing the meetings of the Hawaii chapter of the Hayashi Reiki Research Association (Hayashi

研究会 昨夜例会盛況 出席者百五十餘名」(“Reiki Research Group – Last Night's Regular Meeting a Success – Over 150 in Attendance”), *Hawaii Hōchi*, March 15, 1938, p. 7.

²² First, in 1913, he bought a property on Fort and Kukui, in downtown Honolulu, and did construction there, but in 1914 this property seems to have been seized for failure to pay. “Real Estate Transactions,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, March 10, 1913, p. 11 and November 21, 1913, p. 3; “High Sheriff's Sales Notice,” *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, April 27, 1914, p. 5. Honolulu City Directories from 1928 to 1931 list him as a clothes cleaner, and 1932–1933 as a restaurateur, and 1937–1942 as renting furnished rooms at the Nuuanu address where Takata and Hayashi stayed.

²³ 「帝国艦隊奉仕者 青山文記氏と其家庭」(“Imperial Fleet Volunteer – Mr. Bunki Aoyama and his Family.”), *Jitsugyo-no-Hawaii*, June 1, 1936, p. 12. My gratitude to Aoyama's granddaughter Karen Kikukawa for this source.

Reiki Kenkyūkai, a.k.a. Hayashi Reiki Society) and Hayashi's farewell banquet.²⁴ By the time of the banquet, Aoyama had become Takata's right hand: he was included in a number of farewell photo opportunities with her and the Hayashis (Images 3.9–3.10), Hayashi's farewell address urged listeners "who want instruction or are troubled by illness [to] please consult Mrs. Takata or the treatment manager Bunki Aoyama," and Aoyama continued to go by the titles "treatment manager" (*chiryō shunin*) and "executive secretary" (*kanji*, a term that could also mean emcee) in descriptions of the Hayashi Reiki Society Hawaii branch after Hayashi's departure.²⁵

Having her landlord invested in her organization was clearly helpful for Takata, as Aoyama may have provided her and Hayashi with rent reduction or reduced rates for the spaces where they treated clients and held classes, but Aoyama must also have been a dedicated practitioner to have been named the branch's "treatment manager" after only a few months of practice. His enthusiasm for the Japanese military, seen in his volunteer work with the visiting Imperial Navy and in his eldest son's enlistment in the Imperial Army,²⁶ may have influenced his dedication to this therapy, which had a significant military following in Japan. Thus, Noda and Aoyama show how Usui Reiki Therapy's meaning was flexible enough to appeal to opposite gendered ideals in Hawaii's Nikkei

²⁴ "Imperial Fleet Volunteer," op. cit.; 「靈氣療法の研究会組織さる 昨夜林氏送別会席上 講習生一同によって」 ("Reiki Therapy Study Group is Organized — At Mr. Hayashi's Farewell Party Last Night — By All the Students from the Training Courses"), *Hawaii Hōchi*, December 14, 1937, p. 7; "Hayashi's Farewell Address," op. cit.

²⁵ "Hayashi's Farewell Address," op. cit., "Branch of Reiki Therapy," op. cit.; 「靈氣講習会の主催者に就て」 ("About Sponsors of Reiki Seminars"), *Hawaii Hōchi*, February 28, 1938, p. 8; "Last Night's Regular Meeting a Success," op. cit.

²⁶ "Imperial Fleet Volunteer," op. cit.

community, from the hyper-feminine beautician to the hyper-masculine military buff.

Although a visitor to Chūō Rengō in the late 1930s would be forgiven for the impression that Hawaii's thriving Nikkei community was an extension of Japan's growing empire, U.S. state power flexed its authority there as well. In her autobiographical recordings, Takata told of running into difficulty with Hayashi's immigration status, as he was a Japanese national who appeared to be conducting business in the U.S. Territory of Hawaii without proper paperwork. In her story, her ties to Hawaii's Republican Party helped get them out of trouble. As "immigration is federal," she said, the investigation went all the way to Washington D.C., where she was able to contact Hawaii's Congressional delegate, the Republican Samuel Wilder King, to seek his help. Reportedly, he took an interest in the dispute and, at its resolution, personally informed her via phone and telegram: "Takata won the case" (Takata 1981: tape five, 9–10). It is not clear to what extent the story is true, but it certainly situates Takata as a connected Nikkei entrepreneur, who rose from humble roots to considerable influence.

After Hayashi's departure in February 1938, Takata stayed at the Grove Hotel for about two more months, where she continued to operate a Reiki clinic. She held four more training courses there and at the large YMBA Hall nearby. At this time, she was invited by Kyokujō Kubokawa (1874–unknown), Bishop of the Jōdo Mission of Hawaii, as the interpreter for him and a group of priests on a trip to California.²⁷ She had also

²⁷ Jōdo is another sect of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism that predates the Jōdo Shinshū sect that Takata followed. She said Kubokawa had been in retirement in Japan for seven years because he had lost his voice from laryngitis until Hayashi treated him; apparently she also traveled to Kamakura to treat him while she was in Japan and so when he recovered and was assigned to be the Bishop of the Jōdo Mission of Hawaii, he remembered her and asked her to join them on their trip to California. Takata 1981: tape six, 2. Indeed, in 1934, Kubokawa had been abbot of Kōmyōji, an important Jōdo temple in Kamakura. Ives 1999: 87 n.18. Kubokawa was incarcerated on the day of the Pearl Harbor attacks and may have been transferred to a

received invitations from multiple white women in California—a pianist and writer from L.A., whom she met in Kyoto, and a French baroness living in San Francisco who wrote her three times, asking her to come and teach Reiki Therapy—so this would allow her to see them as well.²⁸ Thus, in mid-April she left the Honolulu branch of the Hayashi Reiki Society under the supervision of her “beloved daughter” and set sail for Los Angeles.²⁹ She would ultimately spend three months on the U.S. mainland, traveling to Chicago where she would enroll in naturopathy classes that would contribute to Reiki’s gradual professionalization over the next few decades, impacting the course of its circulatory development in several ways outlined in the following sections.

3.2 Transforming Reiki in Transwar Hawaii

The bombing of Pearl Harbor and immediately subsequent incarceration of Japanese Buddhist clergy and other Nikkei community leaders intensely ruptured the everyday lives of Hawaii’s Nikkei community, including how Reiki was taught and practiced. However, as Takata had begun altering what she learned from Hayashi shortly after returning from Japan to Kaua‘i in 1936, the rupture of the war was just one of several

mainland concentration camp, as others in his group were. “Interview with Shirley Ozu Iwatani” 2014: 393ff.

²⁸ 「靈氣療法の高田女史渡来 米人婦人等の招請にて」 (“The Visit of Reiki Therapy’s Mrs. Takata – Invited by American Women and Others”), *Hawaii Hochi*, April 16, 1938, p. 12; 「靈氣療法の高田夫人 米大陸の旅から歸布 市俄古で大いに日本を宣伝」 (“Reiki Therapy’s Mrs. Takata Returns to Hawaii From the U.S. Mainland – Greatly Publicized Japan in Chicago”), *Hawaii Hochi*, July 2, 1938; Nishina 2017a.

²⁹ Untitled, undated (circa summer 1938) clipping of a Japanese-language magazine from Hawaii, p. 32. Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

factors impacting Reiki's circulatory development in the 1930s and 1940s. This section details changes Takata made to Reiki in these years, including adding methods she learned in her naturopathy training, making changes to professionalize and standardize treatments, (re-)instituting a more pronounced gradation of training by removing the advanced techniques from the initial training, and removing techniques that could be read as "Japanese religion" at a time when that category was imbued with danger.

Around May of 1938, after touring California with the Jōdo priests, Takata traveled to Chicago, where she took classes at the National College of Drugless Physicians, part of the National College of Chiropractic. She seems to have planned this months in advance: Julia Spalding's nephew recalls her funding Takata's "medical training" on the mainland, suggesting this was not a spur of the moment decision (Stoddard 1991). Takata remembers applying for and being accepted to this naturopathy program even prior to Bishop Kubokawa asking her to join his group, telling Fred Makino, publisher of the *Hawaii Hochi*, that the classes would "improve my technique and myself" (Takata 1981: tape six, 3). In this phrase, Takata demonstrates an experimentalist and progressivist ethos that posits what she received from her teacher is capable of being improved upon. In much the same way that Hayashi seems to have incorporated elements of Sino-Japanese medicine into the hand positions he taught to treat certain ailments (Fueston 2017: 70–71), Takata was determined to make her own contributions to Usui Reiki Therapy to make it as efficacious as possible.

In Chicago, Takata reports having studied Swedish massage, colonics, hydrotherapy, electrotherapy, and other forms of naturopathic medicine.³⁰ She does not

³⁰ "Reiki Therapy's Mrs. Takata Returns to Hawaii From the U.S. Mainland," op. cit.; Takata 1981: tape

seem to have acquired a certificate there. She felt her naturopathy coursework complimented her experiences with Usui Reiki Therapy. “I came back with confidence,” she said, as she felt her courses would “help me to get more established much better because now I [knew] much more about the physical and the technical [sic] of the human body” (Takata 1981, tape six: 6). In other words, Takata felt that learning physiology and allied therapies helped her establish herself as a health professional in Hawaii and improved the quality of her treatments. It also helped establish her authority: Michiko Kitagawa studied Reiki in 1945 with her family and, despite her skepticism of Reiki’s efficacy, considered Takata an intelligent woman, in part because she was “familiar with the physiological make up of the human body and its functions” (Kitagawa 1948).

One direct contribution of the naturopathy courses to Takata’s work as a health professional is her forty-plus years of promoting the value of fresh fruit and vegetable juices. The majority of those who studied Reiki in transwar Hawaii (or had parents or grandparents who did) with whom I spoke purchased expensive blenders on Takata’s advice, and to the end of her life Takata promoted “Reiki juice,” made from vegetables including beets, carrots, and celery (Streich 2007). For cases as diverse as arthritis, tuberculosis, and leukemia, she prescribed a fresh vegetable juice of watercress, carrots, beets, and celery, that she called “an excellent blood builder which energized the whole body.”³¹ In the 1970s, Takata claimed this practice came from Hayashi’s clinic, where she was prescribed “special diets” including “red beet juice” (Graham 1975), but as beets remain uncommon in Japan even with today’s globalized food industry, it is much more

six, 4

³¹ Haberly 1990: 46; Takata 1981: tape fifteen, 2; tape sixteen, 12–13; tape twenty-one, 7.

likely that she encountered juicing in Chicago.

Takata's training in massage therapy also impacted how she practiced and taught Reiki. She may have done massage prior to Chicago; in her autobiographical recordings, she says she obtained a massage license in the fall of 1937 from the Honolulu City Attorney.³² As such official licensure was chiefly a strategic means to avoid legal difficulties, it is unclear how much massage experience she had by this time; she explicitly said he gave her this license to "frame it and put it in the room for everyone to see" for legal protection, so it may not have been an actual massage license (Takata 1981: tape five, 10–11). Eventually, however, she learned enough to become a "certified massagist" with a license from the Territory of Hawaii Board of Massage, and a number of other directory listings and advertisements listed Takata as a massage therapist.³³ Apparently this precaution to gain licensure was justified. Harue Kanemitsu (b. 1937), a Nisei from Lahaina, Maui who studied Reiki with Takata in British Columbia in the late 1970s, told me Takata had been "run out" of Maui County (which also includes the islands of Moloka'i and Lāna'i) for laying hands without a license.³⁴ And in a 1948

³² This attorney was Wilfred Tsukiyama (1897–1966), a local Nisei, World War I veteran, and University of Chicago Law School graduate who was among the first Nikkei attorneys and public officials in Hawaii. Nakamura 2017b, Takata 1981: tape five, 10–11. On the tape she just said "a license" but a handwritten note on the transcript corrects that it was a massage license.

³³ Her earliest extant massage license, issued by the Territory of Hawaii Board of Massage, is dated September 22, 1947. Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara. However, she seems to have been professionally practicing since the late 1930s: from 1938 to 1942, Hawayo Takata was listed in the Honolulu City Directory as "massage"; in 1942 her listing changed from Honolulu to Hilo. See also Images 3.3 and 3.13.

³⁴ Some women from that interrupted class later studied Johrei, the spiritual healing technique developed by Usui's contemporary Okada Mokichi (mentioned in Chapter Two, note 19), which treats by projecting "God's light" from a raised hand without touch. Kanemitsu dates this story prior to Takata's Chicago naturopathy course, which would place it in early 1938, and speculates it may be related to a story Takata often told of treating a policeman from the West Maui town of Lahaina of a carbuncle, who may have told a colleague who took offense to an unlicensed healer laying hands. However, as Takata claims that healing

interview with a University of Hawai‘i student researching “faith healing,” a “public health nurse” (presumably in Honolulu) said: “There’s a Japanese woman in Hilo who gives this [Reiki] course for \$50. We (The Board of Health) wanted to pin her down with the law, but there’s nothing we could do about it. You see the Board of Health can step in only if these practitioners prescribed drugs or administered injections. But as it is, they do no harm and they don’t prescribe drugs. All they do is cure by their electrical power which they claim they possess” (Tatsuyama 1948: 1–2). Thus, Reiki being an “absolutely drugless” therapy (in the words of Takata’s 1936 ad for her Kapa‘a clinic) situated her in a legal safe zone as word-of-mouth could attract state suspicion as well as potential clients. Although she was careful to distinguish Reiki from massage, massage also provided a means by which to publicize her practice and protect herself legally.

She also advised students to obtain massage licenses in order to avoid any legal difficulties from their Reiki practice, particularly a method she learned from Hayashi, known in Japan as the “blood exchange method” (*ketsueki kōkan-hō*) or the “blood purification method” (*ketsueki jōka-hō*), but redubbed the “nerve stroke” or “Reiki stroke” by Takata. This method, applied at the end of a treatment, involves applying light pressure to the muscles on either side of the spine and rubbing downward from the shoulders to the end of the spinal cord. According to an essay she wrote in 1948 on the “Art of Healing” to receive a Doctor of Naturopathy (N.D.) diploma from the Indian Association of America (described at length in Chapter Four), this technique is supposed to “adjust the circulation,” and, prior to performing it, she would “apply on the skin a few

the policeman caused “Reiki to spread on the Island of Maui” (1981, tape twenty-one, 16–17), it is also possible that she treated the policeman years later, once she was more established and had her massage license. Personal conversation with Kanemitsu in August 2016 and follow-up emails in January 2017.

drops of sesame oil or any pure vegetable oil” (Takata 1948). This seems to be a radically new development, as it would involve clients baring their torsos as one does when receiving a Swedish massage, but no students I interviewed mentioned practicing this way. Additionally, Takata instructed some students, prior to the “nerve stroke,” to raise the foot at a right angle, then “massage foot, ankles; rub calf towards heart, down and hard. Make a ring with both hands around the ankle and shake it” (Kanemitsu, n.d.: 3). Again, there seems to be no precedent for this technique in her training with Hayashi, but it is something she added based on her massage training and experience. Thus, she seems to have considered Reiki’s therapeutic value as capable of being enhanced with the addition of certain massage techniques.

Takata’s experience as a massage therapist may not only have been a source of new somatic techniques, but also an influence on her decision to standardize Reiki sessions to sixty or ninety minutes. After returning to Honolulu from the mainland in the summer of 1938, Takata moved her clinic out of the Grove Hotel and opened a new clinic half a block from Queen’s Hospital, a fact that she mentioned in her advertisement.³⁵ The possibility that she was inspired to pick this location by its proximity to this prestigious hospital, by far the largest in the Islands, is strengthened by the fact that Hayashi’s clinic in Tokyo was close to Keiō University Hospital. These locales would have had practical and symbolic benefits: they were conveniently located for treating the hospital’s patients, and they may have acquired authority by being within the “aura” of these well-regarded medical centres.

In this period while Takata was establishing her new Honolulu clinic, she seems

³⁵ Advertisement in *Hawaii Hochi*, June 22, 1938, p. 2. The address where Takata’s clinic was is now the site of the Hawaii State Capitol.

to have curtailed her teaching, although she taught a handful of classes in Buddhist “churches” in plantation communities around Kaua‘i, O‘ahu, and Hawai‘i, beginning in October 1938.³⁶ Tatsuji Nagao (1892–1988) attended Takata’s very first class on Hawai‘i, at the Kurtistown Jodo Mission outside Hilo that December (Image 3.11). Nagao had learned tinsmithery before emigrating from Hiroshima Prefecture to Hawaii in 1910, and made enough money making metal containers to buy his own canefields.³⁷ Nagao had studied other forms of spiritual medicine before, but he became a renowned healer on Hawai‘i for his Reiki practice, which took several hours per treatment, sometimes focused on a single spot. It is possible that Nagao’s practice was influenced by the forms of healing he had studied before or by his continued study of Usui Reiki Therapy with Hayashi’s widow in Tokyo after the war. However, the resemblance between Nagao’s practice and that of Kino Yuda (1902–2002) another Hilo practitioner who “got Reiki” (*reiki o uketa*) from Takata circa 1939 and became locally well-known, suggests that the practice underwent significant change during the 1940s, leading up to the development of the “foundation treatment” Takata describes in that 1948 “Art of Healing” essay.

Takata seems to have standardized her treatments over a period of years, and made exceptions for extraordinary cases that needed longer treatments, but by around the time she established her new home-clinic in Hilo in December 1940 (Image 3.12), she

³⁶ Class photos are in the Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California Santa Barbara. They each have the time and place listed and I have tried to determine what churches they were held at. To the best of my knowledge, the classes were held at Waimea Hongwanji Mission on Kaua‘i (October 7, 1938), Kahuku Hongwanji Mission on O‘ahu (October 23, 1938, and January 19, 1939), Kurtistown Jodo Mission on Hawai‘i (December 26, 1938), Ōkala Jodo Mission (January 30, 1939), and Ninole Hongwanji Mission (May 19, 1939).

³⁷ The information about Tatsuji Nagao in this paragraph comes from interviews with Yoshie, Art, and Rene Kimura in Hilo in June 2012 and June 2013, Robert Nagao in Hawaii Kai in January 2013, and an unpublished, undated essay by Yoshie Kimura called “Memories of Jitchan.”

seems to have set treatment times at sixty to ninety minutes. This standardization seems to have been tied to her practice of charging set fees for treatments. The oral histories I collected suggest some early students on the Big Island resented Reiki's standardization and commoditization. When I met Mr. Nagao's eldest daughter, Yoshie Kimura (1920–2015), who had studied with Takata around 1940, in June 2012 at Hilo Meishoin, a Jōdo church just a mile from Takata's old home-clinic, she was very grateful to Takata for Reiki, which she had been practicing nearly daily for about seventy years, but was critical of her professional approach to treating patients. "Mrs. Takata," she told me, "that was her business, so one hour, each patient, and she stops already. But my father, sometimes for hours he'd stay with the patient." When I met with Mrs. Yuda's family, including her elderly daughter and her grandchildren, in Hilo in June 2013, they also expressed negative opinions about contemporary Reiki practitioners, whom they considered as "commercial—one hour and they're done."

In contrast, Takata's students in Hawaii from this period like Nagao and Yuda treated for hours at a time without charge. Ruth Fujimoto (1918–2012), who also learned under Takata circa 1939, said she used Reiki "as a friend," and her memoirs recall her shock when a friend of hers, after giving her a treatment, asked for seventy-five dollars in payment (Fujimoto 2012: 56). Similarly, Yoshie Kimura laughed when I told her that Mrs. Takata instructed her students in the 1970s that Reiki would not work if the practitioner treated for free (a narrative analyzed in Chapter Five); she said, "That's something – my father used to say that if he charges, it's not going to work," recounting a Japanese saying of his, "if they hang a sign, it doesn't work" (*kanban kaketara, kikanai*). Kimura and her younger brother Robert Nagao (b. 1939) both recalled how, during the

cane's growing season, when Tatsuji and his family had more free time, he accepted inpatients who would come from all over the island and stay with the family for weeks while receiving care. While he did not charge, his patients, almost entirely Nikkei, customarily reciprocated with presents of gratitude called *orei*: sometimes things they had grown, such as fruits and flowers, other times commercial goods they purchased. Robert, in his home in Hawaii Kai in January 2013, recalled that some grateful patients continued to bring his father *orei* for years; "Sometimes my father would say, 'Enough already!'"

This community's resentment of Takata's commodification of Reiki treatment stems from their consideration of treatment as a "gift" whose bestowal was a moral act that created an "obligation to reciprocate" and establishes social relationships that endured after the kindness was repaid (Mauss 1990). This gift exchange model seems to more closely resemble earlier forms of Reiki practice, both in Japan and in Honolulu in 1937–1938. A paucity of data makes it difficult to say exactly what the practices of Usui and his organization were, but it seems that, despite their high fees for training, that they treated illness on a by-donation basis (Stein 2017). Hayashi's immigration case in Hawaii hinged on whether he was accepting money for his treatments and his workshops, which he was not allowed to do on a tourist visa; Takata's political connections notwithstanding, he was reportedly let off based on the fact that he charged his clients nothing for treatments (Takata 1981: tape five, 6–10). Alice Noda's Honolulu salons also advertised "free treatments" (*seriyō*) in 1938 (Image 3.8). Thus, Takata's fee-for-service model appears to be an innovation in Reiki history.

Takata had an entrepreneurial motive with her Reiki treatments from the time she

opened her first clinic in Kapa‘a in 1936; her advertisement of “special free clinics for children under six months” for two hours on Saturday mornings implies her treatments during regular hours were paid. Her commoditization of Reiki practice in the late 1930s can be understood in the context of her vision of Reiki as both a professional and a spiritual calling. She was largely unable to successfully express this vision to her students until the 1970s, but this did not hinder her professional success: less than a year after establishing the Kapa‘a clinic she left her job at the Valley House and became a full-time practitioner and teacher of Reiki, which led to her financial independence. This must be understood in the context of her as a young widow with a multi-generational family to support; part of her consideration about taking the large house where she moved on the outskirts of Hilo in 1940 had to do with the fact that it had room for her aging parents as well as for a Reiki clinic (Takata 1981: tape six, 8).

Within a decade, Takata’s practice and teaching seem to have generated a substantial income. A young woman from Hilo wrote about Takata and Reiki in an assignment for her sociology class at the University of Hawai‘i – Mānoa (hereafter, UH – Mānoa), calling her “a good business woman” and “definitely financially well off,” citing her frequent travel between Hilo and Honolulu and her recent sale of her share of the Waimea Hotel, a property in “upcountry” Hawai‘i in which she had invested circa the mid 1940s (Kitagawa 1948). Takata also invested in property on O‘ahu at this time, buying a ten-unit apartment building in a new Honolulu development just across the Ala Wai Canal from Waikiki. She renovated and furnished the apartments in 1946, and collected rental income for decades; the property generated significant income in the 1960s, when a twelve-story condominium building with roughly eighty units was built on

the property.³⁸

Related to her establishment of set fees for sixty- or ninety-minute treatments, Takata also created a standardized series of hand positions she called “the foundation treatment” at some point in the 1940s. Hayashi and Takata both taught that sensations in practitioners’ hands served as indications of the locations in the body that were the cause of the problem; Hayashi’s students called these spots the “disease source” (*byōgen*, see Matsui 1928) or “sick glands” (*byōsen*, see Yamaguchi 2007: 73–75) whereas Takata’s students called them the “root of the fever” (*shin’netsu*) or the “root of the pain.”³⁹ Learning to locate these points was an essential bodily technique in becoming an effective practitioner, as these “roots” or the “sources” of the person’s illness were sometimes at a point distant from the most evident symptoms.

In addition to this sensitivity to invisible “vibrations” Hayashi and Takata each also taught other modes of diagnosis and treatment. Hayashi’s handbook prescribes specific series of hand positions to treat hundreds of distinct medical conditions, which Takata includes in abbreviated and adapted form in her 1948 essay on the “Art of Healing.” However, in that essay, Takata also presents a series of hand positions that provides a comprehensive treatment of the head and torso; over time this developed into a standard series of twelve hand positions to serve as initial treatments for any condition (Gray and Gray 2002: 93; Streich 2007: 12–14). This became tied to an ethic of holism, as one of her students recalls her saying, “the body is a complete unit, so whenever

³⁸ Financial records for 623 Pumehana Street and 620 McCully Street, Honolulu, in Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara; advertisement for “Open House ... Ala Wai Manor,” *Honolulu Advertiser*, June 26, 1965. These buildings would be Takata’s primary residences beginning in the 1950s, when she sold the Hilo house to her sister and moved back to Honolulu.

³⁹ Interviews with Robert Nagao in Hawaii Kai, January 2013, and the Yuda family in Hilo, June 2013.

possible, treat it completely” (Haberly 1990: 57). Takata never fully excised the teaching about developing a sensitivity with the hands to find the cause of disease—one of her most remembered sayings by later students was, “listen to your hands”—but the gradual formalization of the foundation treatment was another of Takata’s innovations that contributed to the standardization of Reiki practice. Like the sixty- or ninety-minute treatment and the fee-for-service structure, this was part of her professionalization of the role of Reiki therapist likely influenced by her massage training.

In addition to the addition of naturopathic techniques and the standardization of treatment, another apparent change after Hayashi’s departure was Takata’s separation of the “first transmissions” (*shoden*) and “inner transmissions” (*okuden*) initiations into two separate classes, which she continued to call by their Japanese names at this time but would eventually call “First Degree” and “Second Degree.” The First Degree (*shoden*) class focused on hands-on-treatment (*teate ryōhō*) and was held over four days, with an initiation performed each day (the *reiju* ceremony described in Chapter Two). The night before a four-day class, Takata often gave a free informational lecture about Reiki and its origins and demonstrations of Reiki on some of the attendees: a means to attract students to the paid class. This could explain why Takata’s classes remained five days, whereas Hayashi’s five-day course included the Second Degree (*okuden*) class, such as the three sacred symbols used to perform advanced techniques, including distance treatments. When I met with Mrs. Yuda’s family, they told me she had studied under Takata in the late 1930s, but when I asked them about the distance treatment, they associated it with Johrei, another Japanese spiritual healing practice that came to Hawaii in the 1950s, suggesting that it was not included in Yuda’s training.

A series of archived papers written by young Nikkei women from Hilo for undergraduate sociology classes at UH – Mānoa confirm that Takata taught the beginner and intermediate classes separately and suggest she experimented with different ways to teach the introductory class. A report by an anonymous Sansei (third generation Nikkei American) whose mother and grandparents were plantation labourers who “acquired” Reiki in the 1940s, said Takata charged fifty dollars for the introductory course and “she can also endow people with Okuden, but for a much larger fee.”⁴⁰ Another student took Reiki with seven other members of her family in 1945; it cost fifty dollars per person for the five-day class (Kitagawa 1948). A third student, writing based on interviews with friends, regarding classes likely held in the late 1940s, said Takata transferred the “leiki” in sessions that cost twenty-five dollars per person, per day, “and since there were at least fifteen to twenty people who attended the three night sessions she made a nice sum of money” (Kono 1954). This last account is an outlier both in terms of duration and cost, but my oral histories provide other examples of experimental class formats.

Most of Takata’s prewar courses had approximately twenty students and ran five days, resembling Hayashi’s training courses, but I spoke with one woman whom Takata taught in a two-person class in a private home in Hilo in 1948. I met “Mrs. B” (b. 1930) who asked to remain anonymous, in June 2013 at a Sunday service at Honpa Hongwanji Hilo Betsuin: the head Nishi Hongwanji institution on the Big Island, the church Takata attended while living in Hilo from roughly 1940 to 1950, and a key site for her networking. As a high school student, B. received Reiki from a neighbor to ease the pain

⁴⁰ “‘Reiki’—A Healing System” (May 1953), Romanzo Adams Social Research Laboratory Records, Journals J-3, Folder 14, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Library. To “get” or “acquire” Reiki were common phrases for Takata’s Hilo students and their families to describe having received the initiations; it was a translation of the Japanese phrase “*reiki o ukeru*.”

of severe menstrual cramps and, once she was accepted to a mainland university, her mother thought it would be best for her to learn Reiki herself. Takata initiated B. and another woman in a one-day “crash course” that, to the best of B.’s memory, included little instruction, basically just saying, “Put your hands where it hurts.” “After that,” B. recalls, “whenever I had any stomachache or any other muscle ache, I pressed my hands on the affected area. I could feel the heat coming from my hands and the pain went away.”

This is a radically condensed form of Usui Reiki Therapy, but even students taking the full five-day class did not learn several practices that a prior generation had considered central. It is unclear whether Hayashi and Takata taught the earliest students in Hawaii to recite the poetry of the Meiji Emperor as a means to purify the heart-mind. As described in Chapter Two, this had been a fundamental practice of the Usui Reiki Society, with these poems making up a substantial portion of the Usui Reiki Society handbook and the recitation practice mentioned on Usui’s memorial stele. Tadao Yamaguchi, whose mother studied with Hayashi in 1938, claims the Hayashi Reiki Society reproduced 100 of the late Emperor’s poems in a booklet for use in their meetings (2007: 83), but Takata seems either to not have received one of these booklets in her 1935–1937 training or to have destroyed it, possibly to avoid charges of being a “Mikadoist” (i.e., one who worships the Japanese Emperor as a god) during the war. As my interlocutors in Hilo told me of destroying Buddhist literature and other Japanese-language materials after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, this is entirely possible. Either way, I have found no evidence that Takata or her students ever engaged in recitation of the Imperial poetry.

During the late 1930s or 40s, Takata stopped teaching what had been a key

component of Usui Reiki Therapy in Japan: the morning and evening meditation described in Chapter Two, in which practitioners place their palms together and recite the “five precepts” described in Chapter Two, which Takata later called the Reiki Ideals. None of my interlocutors remembered learning this practice, but Tatsuji Nagao hung a scroll of the Reiki precepts written by Hayashi beside the family altar or *butsudan*. Every morning and evening, his son remembers, he stood before the altar with his hands in prayer position and “mentally” recited the precepts. His daughter, in an unpublished essay about her father, provides a translation of Hayashi’s scroll that hangs next to a photo of Nagao kneeling before the altar; it ends, “Every morning and evening, join your hands in prayer.” However, as Tatsuji Nagao traveled to Tokyo after the war and became a Master under Hayashi’s widow, Chie, he may have learned this practice there.

Either way, the five precepts meditation, like the calligraphic scroll which hangs prominently in all prewar class photos (see Images 3.7 and 3.11), was a cultural marker easily seen as a Japanese religious practice, and its omission was likely a strategic move by Takata at a time when being a religious leader in her community was cause for persecution by state authorities. My interlocutors in Hilo recalled that those from their community who were sent to the concentration camps were chiefly Buddhist ministers and teachers at Japanese-language schools. Making Reiki less overtly religious and Japanese could only have helped Takata’s odds of not arousing state suspicion. This tactic can be clearly seen on the palimpsestic sign posted outside of Takata’s home clinic described in this chapter’s opening (Image 3.3). That she re-painted this sign in reaction to wartime anti-Japanese sentiment is supported by the fact that, in a classified ad from the *Hilo Tribune-Herald*, she was comfortable openly publicizing her Reiki treatments

under the Japanese name nine months prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor (Image 3.13).

Thus, Takata changed Reiki in a number of ways in the transwar period between her completion of her apprenticeship at the Hayashi Reiki Society's Tokyo headquarters in 1936 and her penning the "Art of Healing" essay for a mainland organization in 1948. In this momentous dozen years, she adopted naturopathic methods, strove to professionalize and standardize treatments, distinguished the beginner and the intermediate class, and removed meditative recitation techniques that employed discursive content and bodily forms that could be read as markers of Japanese religiosity.

These moves betray multiple motives. Her additions of nutritional and massage techniques reveal a progressivist approach that ventured to improve on the system she received from her teacher, as he had likely done before her. Both with these additions and with her development of the foundation treatment and a fee-for-service model, she took on elements of dominant systems of healthcare in order to build Reiki's credibility and make a good living. Her students criticized her for commoditizing a practice they considered a gift and skeptics considered her (as they had Usui in the 1920s) as a quack. As she generated sufficient income in this period to invest in multiple properties, including one in Honolulu that would make her financially stable for the rest of her life, it would be easy to write Takata off as an opportunist. If one wanted to establish a simple dichotomy between Reiki as a selfless spiritual practice and Reiki as a means to make money, this cynical reading could be reinforced with the interpretation of Takata's elimination of precept recitation, arguably one of Usui Reiki Therapy's most religious aspects, as a secularizing move. However, the next section and conclusion will show that Takata's students in Hawaii primarily saw Reiki as an outgrowth of spiritual values, not

necessarily a means to cultivate them, a view that Takata herself did not share. It will also show the role of New Thought-type “mind power” as a potent undercurrent in the way Takata and her students encountered Reiki and consider the possible intersection of Reiki and new religious movements. Then, in the following chapters, but particularly Chapter Five, I will show how Takata eventually got her students to link Reiki’s potential as a professional calling to its potential for spiritual transformation.

3.3 Reiki and Religion in the Transwar North Pacific.

Like Hawaii’s Nikkei population more generally, Reiki students in 1930s to 1940s Hawaii were overwhelmingly of Buddhist, specifically Jōdo Shinshū, background and their practice was tied up with Buddhist elements. Both Tatsuji Nagao and Kino Yuda were devout Shin Buddhists who regularly recited the name of Amida Butsu, the Buddha of Infinite Light (*nenbutsu*), to affirm their gratitude to him, and performed veneration at their home altars (*butsudan*). Their families attribute some of their efficacy as Reiki practitioners to their regular Buddhist practice. Nagao’s daughter Yoshie told me that the key to Reiki, as in Shin Buddhism, is “gratitude for everything,” and his son Robert indirectly related the Reiki precept of “do not anger” to the Buddhist ideal of right speech. He also said he and his father would perform “*shashin reiki*” (literally, “picture Reiki,” i.e. distance Reiki using a photograph) while kneeling in front of the *butsudan*, with the photo between his hands in prayer position, suggesting Tatsuji Nagao may have connected his veneration of Amida and ancestors at the *butsudan* to the efficacy of his treatment. Yuda’s family similarly attributed the strength of her Reiki treatments to her Buddhist spirituality, manifested in her frequent chanting, charity work, and combination

of selflessness and self-confidence. They felt her Reiki practice, along with frequent donations of food and handmade crafts to the temple, epitomized the virtue of *dāna* (generosity), as she gave so much to others without expecting anything in return.

Moreover, even through the “dark valley” of the war years (Abel 2015), in which Nikkei Buddhist churches were shut down and their leaders incarcerated, Buddhist communities provided important resources to Reiki’s circulation in Hawaii. While Takata does not appear to have taught at Buddhist churches in postwar Hawaii as she did in the prewar period, Buddhist spaces continued to facilitate the word-of-mouth networks on which Reiki’s spread depended. Even during the war, social networks formed through social organizations including the church, women’s groups (*fujinkai*), prefectural associations (*kenjinkai*), and other voluntary mutual aid societies (*kumiai*) helped structure the word-of-mouth means by which Takata recruited students. One UH – Mānoa student writes that she “first became acquainted with Reiki during the early part of the war years,” through her grandmother, who “was a fervent Buddhist, and ... learned of Reiki through her church friends.”⁴¹ And Yuda’s granddaughter told me “all the Reiki ladies” were Buddhist and they formed a kind of “support group,” telling Buddhist stories to the patient and to each other during practice to reinforce moral values. Thus, Buddhist church communities, particularly networks of women, helped provide frameworks both for the social relationships that helped Reiki spread and for the meaning-making entangled with the confrontation of illness and the process of healing (Kleinman 1988).

Takata’s few non-Buddhist clients and students in the Hawaiian Islands seem to

⁴¹ “‘Reiki’—A Healing System” (May 1953), Romanzo Adams Social Research Laboratory Records, Journals J-3, Folder 14, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Library.

have also associated their practice with spiritual potency. In 1943, a Pacific Islander nurse at Honolulu's Queen's Hospital named Esther Kekela (1908–1985) mailed Takata a letter along with a money order to finish paying for her class.⁴² She wrote:

I would like to thank you a million times for your kokua [assistance]. It certainly helped me. I have been promoted, & with a raise in salary next month. Every thing has turned out for the best. Have pressed on Kujoko and a few of my friends outside the Hospital. Of course, am continuing the treatment on myself.

Gee! Mrs. Takata, I am sure grateful – to think that there is such a wonderful thing as Leiki.⁴³

As it is unlikely Kekela is attributing her promotion to her successful Reiki treatment of colleagues or patients at the hospital, the most prestigious in the Pacific, it seems her gratitude is related to Takata's claim that daily Reiki practice can help one fulfill all of one's life goals. For example, in her English-language "Art of Healing" essay, she wrote:

God gave us this body, a place to dwell, and our daily bread. We were put into this world for some purpose, therefore, we should have health and happiness. It was God's plan so he provides us with everything. He gave us hands to use them to apply and heal, to retain physical health and mental balance, to free ourselves from ignorance, and live in an enlightened world, to live in harmony with yourself and others, to love all beings. When these rules are applied daily, the body shall respond and all we wish and desire to attain in this world is within our reach. Health, happiness and [handwritten note: security] the road to longevity, which we all seek – I call this Perfection (Takata 1948).

⁴² Census records list Kekela as "Asiatic Hawaiian," but the same census lists her father James, a police officer, as Pacific Islander from Tahiti, and her mother, Mary, as "Asiatic Hawaiian," so it seems that most of her ancestry was Pacific Islander. U.S. Census Bureau, "1930 United States Federal Census, Hilo, Hawaii, Hawaii Territory"; "1930 United States Federal Census, Honolulu, Hawaii, Hawaii Territory," *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930* (Washington: National Archives and Records Administration, 1930). <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed August 12, 2014).

⁴³ Esther Kekela, letter to Hawayo Takata postmarked June 16, 1943, Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Takata's words reflect ideas that in the postwar U.S. would come to be known as prosperity theology, namely that God wishes the devout to be healthy, happy, and successful; this is because she and early prosperity evangelists like Kenneth E. Hagin (1917–2003) and Granville Oral Roberts (1918–2009) were both heir to the legacy of New Thought mind power (Bowler 2013).

Unlike Hagin or Roberts however, Takata was probably chiefly exposed to New Thought during her time in Japan. This was not only through the influence of New Thought affirmation and Christian Science idealism on the recitation practices of Usui Reiki Therapy (Chapter Two). Takata's diary contains notes from a series of lectures she attended in January 1936 at a Tokyo group that combined New Thought teachings with elements of Buddhism and Confucianism. She writes, "it is the supreme 'Truth' & the middle path and when put into practice, one will attain success and happiness." Here, prosperity language is combined with the Buddhist "middle path." In another passage, she writes "in order to have a peaceful world, one must possess a peacefull [sic] mind," below which someone wrote a saying in Sino-Japanese (*kanbun*) from the Confucian scholar Mencius about the relationship between the nobility of heaven and the nobility of humans (Image 2.9). It is clear whatever lectures she attended were from a group that actively syncretized elements from across the North Pacific regarding the power of the mind to harmonize the microcosm and the macrocosm for personal success, but it is unclear what group it was.

It is possible that it was a meeting of the new religious movement Seichō no Ie (House of Growth), founded in 1930 by Masaharu Taniguchi (1893–1985). Taniguchi was directly influenced by the American New Thought leader Fenwicke Holmes (1883–

1973), founder of the Religious Science organization. He translated Holmes' works into Japanese and collaborated with him on his own writing, which claimed to show the unity of all religions. In addition to New Thought, Seichō no Ie drew on Freud, Buddhism, neo-Confucianism, Christianity, and emphasized cultivating a positive mind, characterized by gratitude (Staemmler 2013). Intriguingly, Taniguchi's name and address are also written in Takata's diary, just below some of her musings on the Law of Karma, suggesting she may have even met him (Image 3.15).

Takata's work as a cultural translator, mediating Reiki for local audiences in Hawaii and North America, is thus not a simple matter of adapting the performance and meaning of Japanese practices for American audiences. The practices to which she was exposed in Japan, including Usui Reiki Therapy and Buddhist doctrines, were not themselves purely Japanese, but products of North Pacific circulatory development. Her diary entries, especially the tantalizing inclusion of Taniguchi's contact information, suggest that Takata received New Thought philosophy regarding the material benefits of mental clarity and affirmation practice in much the same way that she received elements of mesmerism: in Japan, through localized receptions of practices originally developed in her native United States. Then, she unwittingly completed their North Pacific circuit by bringing Usui Reiki Ryōhō, inflected with elements of mesmerism and New Thought, to American audiences as the teachings of the spiritual East. As such, Takata is an intriguing example of what Wendy Cadge (2005: 10) calls a "reverse messenger"—an American who travels to Asia and returns with teachings—but Takata's teachings cannot be said to be "purely" Asian but rather those reflecting a Japanese hub in a broader North Pacific network.

3.4 Conclusion

In the 1948 paper *Faith Healing in Hawaii*, a group project written for an undergraduate UH–Mānoa sociology class, the Reiki (or Leiki) practice of Takata and her students appears prominently among a litany of other therapies, including native Hawaiian “Kahunaism,” healing prayers of Chinese and Japanese Buddhists, Shinto purification rites, the holy water of Portuguese Catholics, practices of “faith healing cults” such as Christian Science and Seichō no Ie, as well as less obviously spiritual remedies such as moxibustion, herbal medicine, and bloodletting. Two of the twelve chapters are dedicated to Reiki and it appears in two others as well (Wong et. al. 1948). Reiki was so prevalent in the minds of this report’s authors and interviewees despite one of its authors’ assertions that “the fad for [Reiki] declined during the post-war period,” after having “swept most of the Japanese population’s interest” in the wartime years (Kitagawa 1948). While Takata’s teaching may have peaked among Hilo’s Nikkei population in the wartime years—one of my oral history interviewees told me it was “the talk of the town” in the early 1940s—it did not die out, but rather began to enter other social circles. Another UH–Mānoa sociology student from Hilo, writing five years later, said, “You will be surprised to see that haoles—the most ‘high-class’ haoles believe in it, even teachers and nurses.”⁴⁴

⁴⁴ “1654J” (May 1953), Romanzo Adams Social Research Laboratory Records, Journals J-3, Folder 12, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Library.

As the next chapter will explore, Takata had local “haole” (the Hawaiian word for people of European ancestry) patients and students by the early 1940s and taught whites on the North American mainland by 1950, and Reiki underwent further adaptations as it was introduced to these communities. But she began adapting Usui Reiki Therapy for American audiences even while her clientele was predominantly Nikkei. In the years immediately after Hayashi’s departure in early 1938, Takata formalized a three-step training system. It was based on Hayashi’s intensive courses in which students receive *reiju* on successive days as a form of initiation, but she separated the material he taught in five days into two separate classes, making the first one a little more affordable than his (relatively, based on average wages in both places), but charging a much higher fee for the intermediate *okuden* class with advanced techniques. In a gesture toward professionalization, possibly influenced by her training at a naturopathy college in Chicago, she standardized her Reiki treatments and charged set fees for hour-long sessions at her Hilo clinic while her earlier students in the area like Tatsuji Nagao and Kino Yuda continued treating for hours on end, until the “fever” broke or the vibrations stopped, for no set fee, as Hayashi’s students did in Japan. Takata’s integration of massage techniques and her prescription of fruit and vegetable juices are even clearer examples of her naturopathy training influencing her practices.

While Takata maintained the earlier, Japanese custom of charging high fees for training, effectively limiting Reiki practice to the elites of Hawaii’s Nikkei community, these students differed greatly from the military officers, intellectuals, and business magnates who studied with Usui and the wealthy housewives who studied with Hayashi. The relatively well-off Nikkei who studied Usui Reiki Ryōhō with Takata in transwar

Hawaii generally made their money through entrepreneurial activities that supplemented their wages as plantation workers and, after years of working a double shift, invested their surplus in land or commercial enterprises. Tatsuji Nagao was a tinsmith who made bento boxes, lanterns, and containers for water and molasses for farmers and farm labourers, Kino Yuda and her husband grew vegetables they sold from a cart, and others I spoke with ran import businesses. The “American Dream” of social mobility appealed to these immigrants although their opportunities were limited by their racialization, particularly during the war years. Although they typically did not charge money for their Reiki treatments, their roles as healers helped them acquire social capital, evidenced by the countless *orei* heaped upon them by grateful former patients. Reiki’s setting in a largely agricultural community is evident when one reads through Takata’s healing stories from this time, which include many accounts of treating injuries sustained on farms as well as Reiki’s benefits for crops and livestock.

But these “middleman minorities” who established businesses within the local “ethnic economy” resented Takata’s treating patients on a fee-for-service model. Their attitude that Reiki treatments were not amenable to commoditization is a tension that continues to this day in Reiki communities. However, at the same time that they criticized Takata for charging money for treatments, they seem to have not to have seen Reiki as a practice capable of being spiritually transformative on its own, but more of a remarkable healing technique that complemented and benefitted from Buddhist elements of their habitus. My interviews indicated Nikkei Shin Buddhists who learned Reiki in the 1930s and 1940s tended to believe Reiki operated by an “invisible power” (*mienai chikara*) that could produce dramatic healings, clairvoyance, and other paranormal phenomena, and

conceded that the Reiki precepts were valuable spiritual lessons that fit their religious morals about the value of controlling one's emotions and cultivating gratitude, diligence, and kindness. In contrast, the letter from Esther Kekela attributing her raise at work to her Reiki practice, although a limited data point, is more indicative of the kind of faith in Reiki's power to transform every aspect of one's life that becomes more prominent in Reiki in later decades, particularly as the possibility of being a Reiki professional became more tenable in the mid 1970s when Takata began initiating other Masters.

Takata's role as the singular agent by which Usui Reiki Therapy entered Territorial Hawaii, where it took on the abbreviated name Reiki, is at a nexus of agency, multiple scales of structure, and considerable contingency. Certainly, Reiki's proliferation in Hawaii in the decade between Hayashi's farewell speech and the writing of *Faith Healing in Hawaii* is a testament to the determination of this therapy's sole teacher there. Yet her unique status as the only Reiki Master in a majority-Nikkei U.S. Territory was also made possible by the exclusivity of both Japanese organizations and American immigration policies. As an unusually upwardly-mobile Nisei, Takata possessed a unique set of attributes allowing her to generate sufficient financial and social capital (both in Hawaii and in Japan) to enable trans-oceanic travel, acquire permission to study an exclusively elitist practice, and spend the better part of a year apprenticing with her master. This intersectional position, combined with her great efforts, allowed her to become the first Reiki Master outside of Japan, but the prohibition of Asian immigration to the U.S. from 1924 to 1965, the rupture in Japan-U.S. cultural exchange following Pearl Harbor, the Usui Reiki Society's postwar insularity, and the

Hayashi Reiki Society's postwar decline are among multiple factors that made it unlikely that anyone would follow in her footsteps.

The elements Takata added in the period after Hayashi's 1937–1938 visit—the three-step training system, standardized hand positions, and one-hour treatments—were all present by the time that Takata began teaching on the North American mainland around 1951. In these new settings, examined in Chapters Four and Five, she used the same strategy of interfacing with non-exclusivist religious organizations that valued spiritual medicine as she had in Hawaii but, on the mainland, Takata's Japaneseness became a point of difference, not commonality, between her and the majority of her students. Thus, she found herself in a situation where she had to further adapt Reiki to transmit this “Japanese healing art” to non-Nikkei students socialized with quite different values. Reiki's success on the postwar mainland was about Takata's negotiation of the cultural hegemony of white Christianity, on the one hand, and the codification of Reiki's “Japaneseness” and its concomitant values, on the other. She ultimately finds this balance in a blend of universalism and particularism that dominated the Orientalist discourses of the mid twentieth-century North Pacific.

Chapter Four: Networking U.S. Mainland, 1948-1970



In July 2014, I helped Phyllis Furumoto move about a dozen boxes from her storage unit into the back of her red SUV. She lives in southern Arizona, about forty miles north of the Mexico border, but we started early in anticipation of the desert heat. Phyllis' mother, Alice Takata Furumoto, had packed these boxes more than three decades earlier with the papers and possessions of Phyllis' grandmother: Hawayo Takata, the woman who transmitted Reiki from Japan to Hawaii and North America, adapting it along the way to make it intelligible to non-Japanese. Unpacking and organizing their contents in a *casita* Phyllis had rented for that purpose, we became overwhelmed, not only by the sheer amount of material but also by the powerful stories these artifacts told of Takata. Some of these stories were contained in letters or other texts, others were evoked by photographs, and others still silently resonated in objects that held echoes of events long past.

Among Takata's letters, photographs, and personal effects, Phyllis and I came across two nondescript, sandy brown, imitation leather folding cases containing 7" x 8.5" gelatin-silver prints (Image 4.1). One tri-fold case contained photographs of the three Japanese-language certificates Takata received from the Tokyo-based Hayashi Reiki Research Society (Hayashi Reiki Kenkyūkai), signed and sealed by her master, Hayashi Chūjirō. These certificates authorized Takata as a practitioner and an instructor of Usui Reiki Therapy to Improve Mind and Body (Shinshin Kaizen Usui Reiki Ryōhō). Of these three, the first two, briefer, certificates, were both dated December 13, Shōwa 10 [1935]. They recognize Takata as having received the introductory and advanced ranks (*shoden* and *okuden*, respectively). Although they reproduced handwritten calligraphy, these certificates were generic templates on which Hayashi wrote Takata's name, the date, and his own name as the one who performed the initiations (*reijusha*) before stamping the

certificate with two seals: one for his own name and one for his organization. The third certificate, dated October 1, Shōwa 11 [1936], recognizes Takata as having reached the organization's highest level (*shinpiden*); it is a lengthy, handwritten account by Hayashi describing Takata's rapid progress in the Reiki Therapy system, her efficacy in diagnosis and treatment, and his decision to make her what would later be called a Reiki Master.

The second case, a bi-fold, contained photographs of two other certificates. The first, a diploma issued by The Indian Association of America, Inc., reads:

To the friends and patrons of science and to whom it may concern: greetings:
Be it known that Hawayo Kawamura Takata-Wild Flower-Na-do-na,
having completed the prescribed Course of Study in Nature Healing and
Herbology, given by The Indian Association of America, Inc., and having
satisfactorily passed the required Examination, is hereby awarded the Degree of
Doctor of Naturopathy—Nature Healer, N. D. and Granted This Diploma: With
all rights, privileges, and immunities thereunto pertaining.

The second, a typewritten document on the letterhead of the “American Indian Church Temple and Indian Missions in communion with Ecumenical Eastern Orthodox Churches,” declares:

In the name of Father, The Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen!
To all the faithful in Christ Jesus – Apostolic Benediction [sic]
This is to certify that: - Reverend Hawayo Kawamura Takata – Wild Flow [sic] –
Na-Do-Na Is an ordained Licentiate Minister of the American Indian Mayan
Church and Indian Missions, having the right to Christian [sic], perform
Marriages, to Teach, to pray for the sick, and Divine Healing, and to buried [sic]
the Departed, and hold Services, and to hold classes for Spiritual Science in the
Art of Nature Healing.

Both certificates are dated November 21, 1948 (although the former one also contains an alternative dating system of “Beaver Moon, 21 suns, 1948 great suns”), and are signed by the Venerable Reverend Barnabas Sa-Hiuhushu (Red Fox), Ph.D., D.D., N.D.: Great Sachem & Chief Executive of the Indian Association of America (IAA) and Apostolic

Administrator of the American Indian Church Temple (AICT). At the time Phyllis and I first came across these certificates, we knew nothing about this man (hereafter, Red Fox), but Phyllis linked him to a story her grandmother had told of staying in the same hotel as a conference of “Indian chiefs” to whom she demonstrated her healing powers.

In discussing which of Takata’s materials to digitize and photograph before sending the originals to be archived at the University of California, Santa Barbara, Phyllis questioned my interest in these two folding document cases. She argued that photographing the cases and digitizing their contents would redundantly reproduce mere reproductions, as we had already photographed the original certificates, which she had removed from the boxes and framed years earlier. Reflecting on this conversation, I sympathize with her perspective that the value of the original certificate rendered documenting the print unnecessary; it seems to echo Walter Benjamin’s (1969) famous contestation that reproductions reduce the aura of the original. Indeed, the very materials of the traveling cases themselves, textured imitation leather and warped vinyl, were products of America’s postwar plastics industry and registered as ersatz and disposable. Yet, I replied, although these portfolios may hold mechanical reproductions, they were nonetheless powerful objects that helped us understand an aspect of Takata’s early teaching tours, about which little was known.

These cases must have held great potency for Takata as an itinerant practitioner and teacher of an unorthodox, practically unknown form of spiritual medicine on the U.S. mainland. She was a Nikkei woman traveling alone in a land that had just a few years prior incarcerated its citizens who shared her ancestry. As she traveled from city to city, teaching Reiki in private homes or spa retreats, these photographs of her certificates

materialized her training, her lineage, and her authority as a practitioner of spiritual medicine for interested parties. Even for people for whom the Japanese was illegible, Hayashi's certificates supported her claim to being the only living disciple of her Japanese master. The IAA and AICT certificates proclaiming her to be a doctor of naturopathy and licentiate minister could only have strengthened her claims to be able to diagnose illness and lay hands, even though their issuing organizations were likely as unknown as the Reiki method Takata practiced and promoted.

The certificates reproduced in these cases, like the "massage license" given her by Honolulu's sympathetic City Attorney in 1936 for her to frame and hang in her clinic "for everyone to see" (described in Chapter Three), performed the kind of bureaucratic authority that Weber described "at the root of the modern Western state" and essential to the operations of modern capitalism (1978: 223–224). Their potency was based in engendering trust in the powers that produced their stamps and embossed seals. However, the professional identities performed by these pieces of paper must also have been haunted by the possibility that they were issued by suspect organizations, particularly the IAA and AICT licenses, which Takata received by mail order from an obscure organization. To adopt a phrase from David Chidester (2005), these latter licenses were "authentic fakes," objects of suspect pedigree whose authority depended on how convinced an audience was by their performance. That Takata carried these dubious licenses alongside those that verified her actual training under Hayashi speaks volumes about the precariousness of her authority on the U.S. mainland in the early postwar period.

This chapter analyzes Takata's work in the early postwar period to extend her network of patients and students to include white Christian audiences on the U.S.

mainland and the impacts of her interactions with these audiences on Reiki's practice and meanings. Almost nothing has previously been known about Reiki on the mainland pre-1970, and it has been long assumed that Takata never taught in North America until that decade (see Gray and Gray 2002: 71). However, the 1950s was a crucial period in her career when she first brought Reiki to mainland audiences socialized with largely different cultural values from those prevalent in the interwar Tokyo where she trained in the mid 1930s (Chapter Two) and in the transwar Hawaii where she had practiced and taught since 1936 (Chapter Three).

Takata's authority for mainland students, as substantiated in her traveling certificate cases, stood at the intersection of different social fields, including an initiation lineage extending to prewar Japan and attempts to establish relationships with religious and medical organizations in postwar America. Her authority as a practitioner and teacher of spiritual medicine was also tied to cultural meanings assigned to her position as a late-midlife Nikkei widow from Hawaii. The contours of her authority, which grew with age and life experience, dovetailed with new meanings of Japaneseness (and Asianness more broadly) in the U.S. Shortly after the war's end, Japanese Americans went from being considered threats to national security to emblems of the American Dream, just as America's burgeoning political engagements in Asia helped give rise to new forms of Orientalism, including interest in Zen Buddhism. However, structures of white supremacy continued to exclude people of colour from social spaces throughout the period, reinforcing tendencies for self-segregation. Thus, depending on her audience, Takata's racialized difference could have been either burden or boon.

To some extent, she was able to mitigate negative impacts of her racialization by

cultivating “weak ties” of social acquaintances to form “local bridges” connecting otherwise distant parts of social networks (Granovetter 1973, 1983). Once she successfully recruited a new client or student, that tie could transform from a social connection into a stronger, spiritualized, asymmetrical relationship between healer and healed or master and disciple. This kind of snowball effect helped Takata quickly cultivate relationships across vast swaths of the country, as seen in her far-reaching 1951 teaching tour and her movement among circles of elite socialites and Hollywood stars. Word-of-mouth helped Takata recruit clients and students without recourse to advertising or print media appearances, which she had used to great effect in prewar Hawaii. However, she also told students to maintain an ethic of secrecy about their Reiki practice, a limiting factor on Reiki’s spread that seems to have been a holdover from wartime precautions and could be related to an affinity between Reiki’s initiation structure and those of esoteric fraternal orders she joined at this time. Thus, this chapter examines the complex ways that Takata built bridges in this period through social and institutional networks, considers the impact of structural forces on Takata’s social position, and looks at how Reiki took on new meanings in this period as it was taken up by new audiences.

4.1 Class-Segregated Social Networks and Reiki’s Movement to the Mainland

Takata brought Reiki to the postwar mainland through word-of-mouth references. In 1936–1941 Hawaii, she used Japanese- and English-language print media to advertise her clinic and her courses, which were held in Buddhist churches, but this ended with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. As a result of Nikkei Americans facing incarceration, Takata stopped promoting her practice in print and moved her courses into private homes. These

changes inadvertently restored the general avoidance of advertising that had been a hallmark of Usui Reiki Therapy in prewar Japan (Matsui 1928). At the same time, my interlocutors in Hilo's Nikkei community told me Reiki was "the talk of the town," and a 1948 source asserted it peaked there during the war (Kitagawa 1948), so Reiki could be said to be something of an "open secret" during this time. This continued as Reiki moved to the mainland in the postwar decades. Takata told students not to tell others about their Reiki practice; however, as an itinerant healer and teacher, she relied on social encounters and word-of-mouth introductions to recruit clients and students in new locales.

Two of Takata's initial ties to the mainland were through white women whom she met in Hawaii in the early 1940s and with whom she would maintain communication for the rest of her life: the wealthy heiress Doris Duke, who introduced Takata to a network celebrities and socialites with its centre in Los Angeles, and middle-class housewife Esther Vento, who introduced Takata to a network of her friends and family based in Bremerton, Washington, a Navy port outside of Seattle. This class divide in Takata's networks continued eastward in her 1951 teaching tour (probably her first on the mainland), in which she treated and taught individuals organized in class-based networks across the country, from the West Coast to Texas to Ohio to New York.

Doris Duke (1912–1993) came to the Hawaiian Islands around the same time as Reiki and was likely one of its first white practitioners. Duke was the only child of James Buchanan Duke (1856–1925), owner of the American Tobacco Company, and as a young woman inherited his vast fortune. She fell in love with Hawaii while honeymooning there with her first husband in 1935 (Image 4.2), and in 1937 began constructing an Islamic-

themed estate, Shangri La, on Diamond Head's dramatic coastline.¹ As Duke became estranged from her husband, Shangri La became her prime residence. Duke conceived a child in 1940, probably with her surfing instructor, Olympic gold medal swimmer and Honolulu sheriff Duke Kahanamoku (1890–1968), but she went into labor three months prematurely, giving birth to a baby girl at Honolulu's Queens Hospital on July 11. A friend reported that, when the infant died a day later, Doris desperately tried to lay hands on the baby to heal her, but hospital staff prevented her from doing so (Mansfield 1992: 161, 202–203). This suggests Takata may have already initiated Duke by 1940.²

Duke was certainly a Reiki student by April 1952, when she wrote to Takata to politely defer funding a project, calling the proposal “a bit unformulated.” Duke ended the letter saying, “I am looking forward to seeing you this summer and taking my second degree” (i.e., the “advanced” class, formerly called *okuden*).³ Despite Duke's initial reluctance to back Takata's project, three years later she invested \$75,000 in the Springboard Farms resort in La Quinta, California (near Palm Springs), where Takata planned to open a Reiki clinic.⁴ Takata received Duke's largesse again in 1957 when she

¹ The name was inspired by the lavishly-produced Frank Capra film *Lost Horizon*, which came out the same year (based on the 1933 novel of the same name) and depicted an idyllic lamasery in the Himalaya whose residents live to be hundreds of years old. Its faux-Tibetan name underscores Duke's goal to create an idealized Oriental setting by mixing architecture and decor from across the Muslim world (filled with elements from Morocco, Turkey, Syria, Iran, and India); Karlins (2009) argues she was as inspired by opulent “Moorish homes” in New York as she was by sites she'd visited in India.

² They could have met in 1938-1940 through their mutual connection Alice Saeko Noda. See Chapter Three.

³ Doris Duke, letter to Hawayo Takata dated April 28, 1952. Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

⁴ Takata founded Springboard Farms with dietician and physiotherapist Dr. Charles Benson in 1955, but by the summer of 1956, Takata wanted out of the deal and Duke's lawyers demanded Benson repay this money in full. Letter from T. L. Perkins to Dr. Charles W. Benson dated July 30, 1956, box 95, folder 1, Doris Duke Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University. Thank you to Robert Fueston and Elayne Crystal for their photographs from this archive.

accompanied her on an extensive trip to Asia. As Takata told the story two decades later, Takata was giving Duke daily Reiki treatments for a broken wrist; bored in Honolulu, Duke proposed a “shopping trip” to the Philippines, Hong Kong, Thailand, Ceylon, India, Burma, and Japan (probably to acquire Eastern art, which Duke avidly collected). They traveled together for about ten weeks and, upon arriving in Japan, Takata won a wager that the wrist would be fully healed in this time; as a reward, Duke paid for her “one month’s bonus” stay, during which Takata was able to visit Hayashi’s widow Chie.⁵

Duke was not only Takata’s patron and friend, but also provided her access to elite social contacts that would have otherwise been difficult or impossible to access due to racist and classist structures. Through Duke, Takata became friendly with Barbara Hutton (1912–1979), heiress to the Woolworth fortune whom the popular press often paired with Duke as “the Gold Dust Twins”; treated Rosanna Seaborn Todd (1912–2009), a Montreal stage actress and producer who had been friends with Duke since finishing school; and reportedly initiated Aldous Huxley (1894–1963), the famous British author who lived in Southern California, whom Duke likely knew through their mutual interest in yogic meditation and parapsychology.⁶ Such introductions helped Takata establish a clientele of other elites. For example, in a 1961 letter, Sylvia Fine Kaye—songwriter, producer, and manager of her actor husband, Danny Kaye—told Takata she had persuaded musician Eddie Fisher to have Takata come and treat his wife, actress Elizabeth Taylor, but Taylor was resistant to the idea; Kaye had also given Takata’s

⁵ Takata 1981: tape 21, pp. 11-14. Takata left Honolulu February 25 and returned June 14, 1957.

⁶ The Hawayo Takata Archive at the University of California, Santa Barbara, contains correspondence from Hutton and Todd; the Huxley connection is less substantiated but is reported in Morris 1999: 13, who attributes two students of Takata’s in 1950s Los Angeles, where Duke and Huxley socialized.

contact information to *Vogue*'s features editor, Allene Talmey Plaut, who was recovering from a fall. Finally, Kaye offered to pay for Takata's travel to California so Kaye could receive treatments "for a few weeks" in her Beverly Hills home.⁷

Takata name-dropped her connections with these wealthy socialites and Hollywood actors to build social capital for herself and for Reiki.⁸ Kray (2016) argues that name-dropping can establish trust with strangers in two ways: by legitimating the actor to their audience through a demonstration of their social and cultural capital, and by orienting the audience to the actor's relative position in a social field. By recounting her connections to well-known celebrities like Doris Duke and Danny Kaye, Takata motioned to prospective clients and students that she was trustworthy and that Reiki was effective. This strategy would have been effective among people from all walks of life, who (for a considerable fee) could occupy the same relational position (patient or student) to Takata as these figures from newspaper headlines and movie screens. Wealthy and influential clients such as Duke and Kaye helped Takata develop symbolic and financial capital, making possible teaching trips among the middle-class mainland students who would ultimately be her largest clientele.

Her first such trip, in 1951, began with a class in Bremerton, Washington composed of the friends and family of another contact from Hawaii, Esther Opsata Vento (1910–1987), who, along with her son Ted (b. 1932), was possibly the first to regularly practice Reiki in North America (Image 4.3). At nineteen, Esther married James Joseph Vento (1903–1972), a sailor stationed at the Navy Yard Puget Sound in Bremerton; a few

⁷ Sylvia Frier Kaye, letter to Hawayo Takata dated August 9, 1961, Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

⁸ See Hammond 1973: 263; Klatt 2006: 71; Matsuura 1974; Morris 1999: 13; Stiene and Stiene 2003: 149.

years later they were transferred to Virginia, where Ted was born, and then again in 1937 to Pearl Harbor. In early December 1941, James was at sea on the heavy cruiser USS *Pensacola* when Esther left nine-year-old Ted with a neighbor, traveling to Hilo on the Big Island of Hawai‘i, with two-year-old Steven, where they stayed with a friend. As she had been recently diagnosed with leukemia, this trip seems to have specifically been to receive Reiki treatments from Takata. Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, inter-island ferries were interrupted and Esther could not return to Honolulu. Takata closed her office, probably to maintain a low profile as a prominent member of Hilo’s Nikkei community, and Esther received her full attention. Takata recalled that Esther “responded very well to the treatments,” and probably encouraged her to take the First Degree class so she could continue treating herself. After the ferries began to run again around the New Year, Esther returned to Honolulu and helped organize a January 1942 class at the Honolulu home of her Swiss friend Elizabeth Abplanalp (1904–1994); it was there that Esther and Ted took Takata’s five-day course and received their Reiki initiations.⁹ In March, with the U.S. going to total war, Esther got passage for herself and her two children to California, and they returned to Bremerton to live near her family.

During the war years, Ted remembers, they lived in a beachside cabin where his mother, “alone and isolated like that ... really got into her Reiki stuff and other spiritual

⁹ This story relies on a phone interview with Ted Vento, June 15, 2015, and an early typewritten draft of Takata’s autobiography, Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara. Ted was ten years old, which is about as young as Takata would initiate anyone. Larisa Stow (b. 1968) attended a class around 1979 where Takata declined to initiate her 11-year-old friend because after “scanning” the two of them, she decided her friend’s “energetic system wasn’t fully developed” and it could harm her to take the class. Robert Fueston, a Reiki historian and licensed practitioner of Chinese medicine, connects this story to Hayashi’s statement in his farewell speech that anyone can learn Usui Reiki Therapy “from the age of twelve or thirteen,” as the *ki* meridians of Sino-Japanese medicine (*kanpō*) are only fully developed in “the teen years.” However, in 1979, Takata initiated Anneli Twan (b. 1968) at age ten and Kristina Twan (b. 1970) at age nine. Stow n.d.; Fueston 2017: 294; interview with Anneli Twan, Nanaimo, BC, July 25, 2013 and email July 9, 2017.

thoughts.” He assisted Esther with treatments, and word of the Ventos’ healing practice inspired demand for Reiki instruction in Esther’s social network. Letters from Esther to Takata in 1942 report successful treatments, particularly on her aging parents, ask for advice on chronic ailments, and encourage her to travel to the mainland to teach classes once the war ended and Japanese Americans regained the right to freely travel.

We are kept quite busy giving treatments and the results have made so many people interested in your classes. There are even people back East now who have written me about it. Of course such things will have to wait for the duration – but I want you to know that we are all waiting to see you when... The other day I had a letter from a woman in Tennessee [where Esther was born] who said she would like to write you. Her interest is very intense and no doubt you could tell her better about this than I.¹⁰

This initial demand for Reiki on the U.S. mainland occurred contemporaneously with the incarceration of approximately 120,000 Japanese Americans and the promulgation of virulent depictions of Japanese in both state-sponsored and commercial propaganda. Yet Vento’s letters suggest that the desire for Reiki within her social network transcended any mistrust of Takata due to her background; even James, fighting the Japanese in the Pacific, “wants lessons too of course as soon as possible.”¹¹ These letters illustrate how proximate social connections allowed some mainland whites to transcend the distancing effects of anti-Japanese sentiment and express interest in learning spiritual medicine attributed to Japan from a Japanese American teacher even during the Pacific War.

Their first chance came in 1951, when Takata taught a First Degree class at Esther’s home in Bremerton to Esther’s family and friends, including her parents, her

¹⁰ Esther Vento, letter to Hawayo Takata postmarked August 4, 1942, Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

¹¹ Esther Vento, letter to Hawayo Takata postmarked August 4, 1942, personal collection of Phyllis Furumoto.

brothers, and their wives (Image 4.4). In a book of thank-yous that commemorates this trip, many expressed their eager anticipation of this visit and report being profoundly impacted by their initiations. In one example, Esther's sister-in-law Neva Opsata (1905–1996) wrote, “Since the time Esther first came home and told us about your wonderful work, I have hoped and prayed that someday, somehow, I would be able to meet you and take the lessons. Now that it has come to pass, I count this as the greatest experience of my life. I hope I shall be worthy of it.”¹² Thus, Takata's initial connection with Esther Vento in Hilo, made via the contingencies of her husband James' naval assignment, Esther's illness, and a word-of-mouth reference, led to cultivating powerful connections with mainland whites and their initiation into a spiritual lineage that spanned the same North Pacific that James Vento patrolled a few years prior.

As Reiki initiations follow the social narratives of lineage, Takata inducted these grateful students into para-genealogical connections of fictive kinship, strengthening her authority as a parental figure for her students. These asymmetric bonds of transmission from master to disciple are modeled on other initiatory practices, notably those of Buddhist monasticism, which “draw on the affective powers of sibling and parental relationships to maintain communal bonds” (Wilson 2014: 188). Entering late middle age doubtlessly facilitated Takata's ability to fulfill this role for students. Even when the housewives she taught were only a few years younger than herself, being in her fifties and having adult daughters gave Takata a more matronly air that bolstered her teaching authority. Moreover, by 1951, the pedagogical and rhetorical strategies Takata had developed over fifteen years' experience teaching Reiki also informed her authority. She

¹² Entries in *Guest Log*: Stephen Opsata, dated August 14, 1951; Edwin and Neva Opsata, undated. Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

illustrated her explanations of Reiki practice with liberal examples from her training in Japan and her experience as a healer in Hawaii.

The way social connections enabled Takata's students to overcome vicious anti-Japanese propaganda and find meaning in Reiki illustrates the "strength of weak ties." This classic insight of network theory states that acquaintances (in contrast to friends and family) create "low-density networks" that "bridge" otherwise-distant parts of social networks (Granovetter 1973). Such bridges are essential to the spread of ideas and practices between sub-networks "separated by race, ethnicity, geography, or other characteristics" (Granovetter 1983: 202). Esther Vento's initial introduction to Reiki in 1941 came through a friend's reference who likely knew of Takata through word-of-mouth in Hilo. The weak ties linking Vento and Takata are a kind of mirror image of the introductions by the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce that convinced Takata to treat certain servicemen during wartime; they vouched for the trustworthiness of these military personnel not to report this Japanese American spiritual healer to their superiors for surveillance or incarceration. Conversely, the weak ties that connected Esther to Takata allowed her to develop trust in her healer and teacher, subsequently helping her friends and family, even her husband who was actively fighting the Japanese, overcome wartime prejudices and seek out Reiki treatment and instruction.

Esther's bridge was consequential for the introduction of Reiki to mainland communities as Takata used a kind of "snowball effect" to accrue financial, as well as social, capital. The income Takata gained from her first Reiki class in Bremerton, attended by roughly a dozen people, helped finance further travels in the summer and fall of 1951 to Texas, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York. The fees for the Bremerton class

are unclear, but by September, Takata charged \$150 per person for the First Degree class, a fee that remained for decades to come. Even considering that Takata often taught the elderly for free or at a discounted rate in her classes in Hawaii, it is likely she made \$1500 on the Bremerton class, a sum worth nearly ten times that amount in 2017 dollars.

In addition to collecting fees for treatments and courses, Takata also fundraised for a real estate project, likely a spa with a Reiki clinic. She sought out investors of all backgrounds, from the extravagantly wealthy Doris Duke to middle-class Americans. Thomas Mackler (1898–1973), head of an insurance agency, and his wife Clara (1897–1980), a teacher, met Takata in the summer of 1951 at an Adventist service held at a Pennsylvania health resort they called “The Ranch.” Impressed by the results Takata claimed in treating doctors and successful businesspeople, the Macklers invited her to their home in Canton, Ohio, so they and Clara’s sister could receive the First Degree initiations. In a document titled “Testimony” written some fifteen years later after converting to the Pentecostal church Assemblies of God (AOG), Thomas denounced his and Clara’s dalliance with Reiki. He recounted how Takata’s authority convinced him to invest “over \$10,000.00 cold cash” in a real estate project, but he later “found that Dr. Takato [sic] went all over the country more or less mystifying people to supply her financial needs abundantly.” His confession of having succumbed to Takata’s Reiki, “an evil power which had a strange way of drawing people to her,” suggested that their desire to heal was mixed up with a desire to make money, which they later realized to be sinful because, although “God wants us to be shrewd in business... best He will provide the need.” Mackler attributes this experience to God’s working “in mysterious ways to get us to come to Him,” as in their repentance for following Takata, they ended up joining

AOG.¹³ This unique document shows that some white Christian students on the mainland were as troubled by Takata's commodization of spiritual medicine as were the Nikkei Buddhists of Hawaii described in Chapter Three, but also testifies to Takata's remarkable ability to inspire middle-class Americans to invest huge sums in her projects.

Although she attracted clients, students, and financial backers across class divides, Takata's contacts in New York on her 1951 trip illustrate how her networks clustered in groups of elites and non-elites. Prospective clients and students hoping to meet her while she was in New York wrote to her care of at least two individuals: Hugh S. Gibson (1883–1954), an American diplomat working to avert famine in postwar Europe, and Elsa Kane (1897–1996), a Hungarian immigrant who sewed for designer Elizabeth Arden. At 277 Park Avenue, Gibson's prestigious midtown Manhattan address, Takata received a letter from Isabel Carden Griffin (c. 1892–1954), daughter of a Dallas banker and wife of William Vincent Griffin, vice chairman of the board for Time, Inc. On stationery from her room at the Plaza Hotel, Griffin said she had heard of Takata through a Mrs. Obermer, and requested treatment for her insomnia when Takata returned to New York, providing dates when she would be in the city and when she would be at her New Jersey farm.¹⁴

Along with Doris Duke, the connections between Takata, Obermer, Gibson, and Griffin provide another example of Honolulu elites introducing Takata to mainland contacts.

In contrast, Takata received correspondence from non-elites at another address,

¹³ Thomas Mackler, "Testimony," unpublished document, c. 1965, p. 2. This is also the source of the information about the \$150 fee and the Macklers' meeting of Takata. Thank you to Shannon Mackler for sharing this document with me.

¹⁴ Isabel Carden Griffin, letter to Hawayo Takata postmarked October 8, 1951, Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara. Obermer is likely Ernestine "Nesta" Sawyer Obermer (1893-1984) of Honolulu, wife of a wealthy British playwright and philanthropist nearly three decades her elder, chiefly remembered as the lover and muse for the British painter Hannah Gluckstein, a.k.a Gluck. Lockard 2004; Souhami 2010.

far uptown: the Hungarian seamstress Elsa Kane's apartment in Hamilton Heights, a residential West Harlem neighborhood that became predominantly African American in the 1930s and 1940s (Gitelman and Cronin 2010). Kane's daughter told me her mother "didn't have much faith in doctors," and, like Duke, was a lifelong advocate of unorthodox medical practices. "She believed our bodies could heal ourselves" and was fond of fresh vegetable and fruit juices, one of Takata's top recommendations.¹⁵ Takata probably met the working-class Kane over the summer at the same Pennsylvania health resort where she met the middle class Macklers as, shortly afterward, Clara Mackler wrote Elsa about their mutual connection: "Am only writing to you because of our strong conviction that an opportunity such as Dr. Takata only comes once in a life time [sic]. She is surely a messenger to humanity."¹⁶ Takata received mail from other middle-class Americans at Kane's address, like one marked "very urgent!!" from Mae Thompson Pool (1898–1973), a devout Mormon middle-class housewife who hosted Takata at her home in McAllen, Texas (on the Mexican border at the southern tip of the state). Her letter said she and her husband were driving the nearly two thousand miles to New York with another couple who had all been impressed by Takata, and they all hoped to try and "take the lectures while there."¹⁷ Again, Takata had an incredible ability to inspire Americans from all walks of life, all over the country, to make great sacrifices to learn Reiki.

In New York, Hugh Gibson and Elsa Kane served as hubs that linked Takata to

¹⁵ Phone conversation with Irene Kane Mable, August 25, 2014.

¹⁶ Clara Mackler, letter to Elsa Kane, postmarked September 18, 1951, Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

¹⁷ Mae T. Pool, letter to Hawayo Takata dated September 22, 1951, Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara; personal emails with Carol Pool, August 2014 and May 2017.

networks of others of the same or similar race, ethnicity, age, and social status, a trend that sociologists call *homophily*. Idiomatically known as “birds of a feather flock together,” homophily helped and hampered Takata in different ways. On the one hand, homophilic social networks helped ensure her contacts would know others with common interests to organize classes of sufficient students to finance Takata’s teaching travel. Duke had connections with many other wealthy European Americans with interests in Asia, spiritual development, paranormal ability, and unorthodox medicine, and it was Kane’s interest in unorthodox medicine that drew her to the alternative health retreat where she met Takata and others. Takata’s racialization and accented Hawaiian Creole vernacular probably lent her authority for students with interest in Asian spiritual medicine, who would see her as foreign and exotic. However, Takata’s working-class background, racialization, diction, and accent, could also make forging connections in middle- and upper-class Euro American social networks something of an uphill struggle. In a review article on homophily in social networks, McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook concluded that “race and ethnicity are clearly the biggest divide in social networks today in the United States” (2001: 420), a trend that was doubtless even stronger in the mid twentieth century. Yet Takata was able to overcome this divide by cultivating relationships with a small number of white students in Hawaii who became hubs for her mainland networks. Furthermore, Takata snowballed weak ties into local bridges in new locales, such as Gibson and Kane in New York. It’s not clear how she made all of these connections, but some were likely through her involvement with esoteric fraternal orders in this period.

4.2 Hawayo Takata and Esoteric Fraternal Orders on the U.S. Mainland

The power of formalized institutions, increasingly racially integrated in the postwar decades, helped strengthen, supplement, and structure Takata's informal social networks. People who identify as "spiritual but not religious" tend to emphasize their freedom from institutions, but spiritual practitioners and teachers often gain legitimacy through institutional interactions, which also help to shape and circulate their ostensibly individualized practices, ideas, and experiences (Bender 2010). From the beginning, Hawayo Takata's career depended on institutions to legitimize and promote Reiki, including the Tokyo-based Hayashi Reiki Society, the naturopathy college she attended in Chicago, and the Buddhist churches where she taught on O'ahu and Hawai'i. Wartime exigencies, however, demanded she and other Nikkei in Territorial Hawaii withdraw from public or community organizations. In postwar decades, Takata created ties to new, majority-white institutions, as whites grew more accepting of Japanese Americans and interested in "Oriental" modes of religion and medicine.

In the traveling certificate cases described at the chapter's start, Takata carried documents issued by the Indian Association of America (IAA) that certified her as a minister and a naturopathic doctor, hoping to bolster her legitimacy for potential students and authorities alike. The IAA was founded by an enigmatic figure named Red Fox and grew out of the earlier Tipi Order of America (TOA) that Red Fox had co-founded.¹⁸ The

¹⁸ The biography of Red Fox (b. circa 1890) is obscure, but he claimed to be Blackfoot and was involved in Pan-Indian rights organizations and movements in the early twentieth century, including the Society of American Indians. In 1914 he traveled the U.S. on horseback collecting signatures on a petition to gain signatures from political and cultural elites on a petition for full citizenship for Native Americans and a national holiday for American Indian Day; he delivered this to President Wilson with significant press coverage. He went by a number of names through his life, including Francis St. James, Chief Red Fox Skiuhushu, and Dr. Barnabas Sa-Hiuhushu, but I will call him Red Fox throughout this chapter as that seems to be his most common name. "Chief Red Fox Skiuhushu," Richard Henry Pratt Papers, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University; Hertzberg 1971: 213ff., Seward 1998.

TOA started as a Boy Scouts-inspired association for white and Native American youth to engage in romanticized Native-style activities, but became an esoteric fraternal order in which mostly white men performed “Indian Occult Rituals” resembling Masonic rites in Native trappings. Influenced by pan-Indian organizations as well as other initiatory fraternal societies whose members “played Indian,” these organizations bequeathed initiation names, recounted Indian lore, and engaged in Indian rights activism.¹⁹

Takata likely discovered Red Fox and the IAA through their mutual involvement in Rosicrucian fraternal societies. Their correspondence in the fall of 1948 suggests Takata had been initiated into a group called the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (AMORC) by that time, and she appears in a group photo of AMORC’s annual international convention held at their Supreme Temple in San Jose, California, in July 1951 (Image 4.5). AMORC developed in the early twentieth century as a fraternal order teaching a Christian-inflected *philosophia perennis* ascribed to Eastern mystery schools, particularly Egypt, that contains teachings about reincarnation and karma influenced by Theosophy and Anthroposophy (Wilson 2014). To this day, AMORC members study these secret teachings to advance through a series of levels; mastery of one level qualifies one for initiation into the next. After the death of the founder, H. Spencer Lewis (1883–1939), his son Ralph M. Lewis (1904–1987) became AMORC’s second Imperator (ritual leader) and oversaw an expansion of the organization fueled by a correspondence system of study, advertised in the pages of national magazines (Wilson 2014: 79; Image 4.6). As AMORC directories include no Lodges or Chapters in Hawaii at this time and there is no evidence that Takata traveled to the mainland between 1938 and 1951, she probably

¹⁹ Adele and Webb 2015: 44-47; Deloria 1998; Ewen and Wollock 2014; Hertzberg 1971: 213ff.

underwent a distance initiation to join the organization sometime prior to the fall of 1948.

Red Fox had had strong connections to Rosicrucian organizations since at least 1925, when George Winslow Plummer (1876–1944), Imperator and Supreme Magus of the Societas Rosicruciana in America, ordained him a deacon of the Anglican Universal Church of Christ, a church Plummer led and co-founded.²⁰ Red Fox also seems to have cultivated relations with AMORC’s top leadership shortly before its founder’s death. In response to an inquiry from Takata about IAA membership, he wrote, “We have a great many Rosicrucians who are members,” adding, “P.S. Mr. Ralph M. Lewis & wife have been members of our Association for past 10 years. The late Dr. H. Spencer Lewis was a member also” [underlining in original]. Red Fox’s name-dropping of the Lewis family and assurance of the commonness of Rosicrucian membership among IAA members imply Takata mentioned her AMORC membership in her initial letter.²¹

Takata used the AMORC and the IAA to expand her social networks, a crucial activity for gaining new clients and students. Membership in fraternal orders had declined from the turn of the twentieth century, when an estimated forty percent of U.S. adult males were members of at least one order (Moore 2011: vii), but these organizations remained important social institutions and valuable ways to meet new people. Many of the contacts that fill the address book Takata used on her 1951 trip may have been people she met at the AMORC conference in San Jose or contacts given her by fellow attendees.

²⁰ “Red Fox, Lecturer, to Become Priest,” *New York Times*, December 28, 1925, p. 4; “George Winslow Plummer,” *Societas Rosicruciana in America*, <http://www.sria.org/george-winslow-plummer/>. This church may be the “Ecumenical Eastern Orthodox Churches” referenced on Takata’s ministerial certificate.

²¹ “Dr. Ralph M. Lewis, Ph.D., F.R.C. (Strong Beaver)” is also listed on the IAA letterhead among their National Councilors & Advisors. Letters to Hawayo Takata from Dr. B. Sa-Hiuhushu – Red Fox, dated October 16 – December 14, 1948, Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

It contains addresses and phone numbers of people from across North America, including prominent figures like the spiritualist Arthur Ford (1896–1971) and Columbia University professor Ryusaku Tsunoda (1877–1964). It includes Dr. Charles Benson of Los Angeles (dates unknown), the dietician with whom Takata opened the short-lived, Duke-funded Springboard Farms spa, and a number of health resorts in the Los Angeles area, possible sites for her practice or teaching. It also lists Margaret Holder (b. 1925?) of Brooklyn, New York, below whose address and telephone number Takata wrote, “colored people met at Rosicr. wants to know about class.” While AMORC was a majority-white institution and the conference was likely disproportionately attended by Californians, it offered Takata an opportunity to meet racially- and geographically-diverse contacts.

Takata’s membership in AMORC and the IAA left lasting impressions on how she presented Reiki to her students in the postwar period. First, AMORC’s emphasis on secrecy may have encouraged her to frame Reiki similarly. Phyllis and Sidney Krystal, who studied with Takata in 1950s Los Angeles, recalled, “Students at this time were told never to tell anyone that they had Reiki. This was sacred knowledge that Takata felt must be kept secret; she felt the time was not yet right for the world to know about Reiki” (Morris 1999: 13). However, Takata’s secrecy may also have been related to lingering anti-Japanese discrimination in the immediate postwar period. When I asked Ted Vento, initiated with his mother Esther in Honolulu in 1942 and attendee of a refresher course in Bremerton in 1951, about anti-Japanese sentiment in postwar Washington State, where the Japanese population had been dispossessed and incarcerated just a few years prior, he told me, “there was none in my family... [and] it wasn’t like [Takata] was out in the public. Her marketing was very personal, with friends and their family... [Reiki] wasn’t

something that you just talked about, and I never have, only with people who are close.”²² This hesitance to discuss Reiki contrasts strongly with it being “the talk of the town” in prewar Hilo, where Takata hung a sign advertising Reiki treatments outside her home-clinic and promoted her practice in the newspaper’s classified section.

Another way AMORC may have influenced the way Takata presented Reiki is in its perennial philosophy that synthesized religion, medicine, and science. Both of the extant texts containing Takata’s descriptions of Reiki between the 1940s and the 1970s make use of language similar to that found in Rosicrucian publications.²³ In both she refers to Reiki as a “cosmic wave” or “cosmic energy,” and many of AMORC’s teachings at this time use similar language of cosmic vibrations involved in healing.²⁴ Both also compare Reiki to a “radionic wave,” a reference to the work of Albert Abrams (1864–1924); an article on “electronic medicine” in the May 1948 *Rosicrucian Digest* (Hotten 1948) references Abrams’ theories, which Takata may have read shortly before writing the “Art of Healing” essay she sent Red Fox.

The “Art of Healing” essay implies that Reiki is not only universal in the sense that it comes from the cosmos, but also in the sense that it is known to peoples from around the world under different names and is available to all. “Being a universal force from the Great Divine Spirit,” she writes, “it belongs to all who seek and a desire [sic] to

²² Phone interview with Ted Vento, June 15, 2015.

²³ These are Takata 1948 and “Statement of Mrs. Hawayo Hiromi Takata, Senior Citizen,” in *Problems of the Aging: Hearings Before The Subcommittee on Federal and State Activities of the Special Committee on Aging. United States Senate Eighty-Seventh Congress, First Session. Part 12.—Hilo, Hawaii, December 1, 1961*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1962, 1601-1603.

²⁴ C.f. “The ‘Cathedral of the Soul’ is a Cosmic meeting place for all minds of the most highly developed and spiritually advanced members and workers of the Rosicrucian fraternity. It is the focal point of Cosmic radiations and thought waves from which radiate vibrations of health, peace, happiness, and inner awakening.” “Cathedral Contacts,” *Rosicrucian Digest* (May 1948), p. 153.

learn the art of healing. It knows no color, nor creed, old or young” (Takata 1948). Takata’s repeated use of the Native American term Great Spirit in this essay for admission to the IAA appeals to the sensibilities of an organization based on the appropriation of Native culture (although its founder identified as Blackfoot) while claiming a universalist ethos. The IAA and AMORC were by no means the only places Takata might have encountered the perennial philosophy, but it was central to both groups. For example, the IAA’s National Councilor wrote a *Rosicrucian Digest* article on the Golden Rule in nine of the “world’s religions,” concluding, “there exists an underlying brotherhood of religions... religious oneness and universality” (Palazzotto 1949). The circumstances of the “Art of Healing” essay’s authorship and its juxtaposition of the cosmic-universal and the perennial-universal make it likely that her involvement with the IAA and AMORC helped shape her mid-century discourse about Reiki.

These fraternal organizations impacted Takata’s practices on a material level as well as on the discursive one. It is not clear when Takata began issuing Reiki certificates to her students on the North American mainland, but when she did they more closely resembled those of the IAA than those of her Reiki teacher. In contrast with the intimacy conveyed by Hayashi’s handwritten certificates, particularly the highly personalized Master level (*shinpiden*) certificate, the IAA and AICT certificates bear institutional and legal trappings: they are each professionally-formatted with graphic symbols that appropriate Native American themes; they each bear embossed gold seals; they each reference their respective organization being “life chartered under the laws” of particular U.S. states; and they each bear the names of four executive officers, each of whom have both English and “Indian” initiation names as well as professional titles. The certificates

Takata eventually issued in the 1970s are somewhat hybridized, bearing two Japanese-style *hanko* seals in red ink (one with her family name and one for her institution) along with a gold seal embossed with the formal name she adopted for the practice – Usui Shiki Ryoho, meaning Usui-style Therapy (Image 4.7). The cursive font resembles handwriting, somewhat reminiscent of Hayashi’s blank certificate, but the rest of the formatting more closely resembles the certificates from Red Fox’s organizations.

Finally, similarities between Reiki and secret fraternal societies like AMORC could have increased Reiki’s appeal to mainland whites in the postwar period. Like many fraternal societies, Reiki offered a series of initiations that conferred sequential degrees of increasing status, in which one gradually learns secret knowledge of universal laws and efficacious techniques based on those laws. AMORC taught healing techniques influenced by mesmeric and New Thought practices similar to those that influenced spiritual therapies, including Usui Reiki Therapy, in early twentieth century Japan; the sixth of its seven degrees is “devoted entirely to the functioning of the body and the maintenance of health through applying techniques that promote proper breathing, harness ‘the healing Forces of the Universe’ and cause ‘rapid changes in serious conditions’” (Wilson 2014: 82). Thus, its members would have been primed to be interested in practices like Reiki. Also, many of these societies, like AMORC, ascribed their esoteric lore and rituals to the mystic East, strengthening Takata’s authority as an “authentic Oriental” representing a direct transmission to Japan. Even for non-members, knowledge of these societies may have helped some feel more familiar with the idea of undergoing an initiation to receive their Reiki “degree” and the secret practices that accompanied it.

Finally, in some ways, Reiki's Japaneseness functioned something like the IAA's Indianness in the setting of the postwar U.S. mainland. Takata, like Red Fox, offered white Christian Americans an opportunity to consume alterity through ritualized practices. Through initiations, they both mediated connections to ostensibly ancient traditions containing timeless wisdom capable of redeeming the problems that plagued modern Americans. Ironically, despite the resonance of such discourses with those of anti-modern Romanticism, which tends to critique commercial motives (Lears 1981), Takata and Red Fox offered initiations for monetized fees. Finally, as examined in the following section, the rearticulation of racial categories in the mid century U.S. brought Asians and Native Americans closer to the category of whiteness as racial categories became consolidated and a new black/white binary came to dominate American racial imaginations (Jacobson 1998). While there are important differences between the two cases, as the appropriation of Native American spiritual practice perpetuates colonial patterns and co-exists with the continued material disenfranchisement of North America's Indigenous peoples (Owen 2008) and the IAA was just one example of a longer tradition of "playing Indian" (Deloria 1998), Red Fox and Takata were both people of colour able to marshal claims to cultural heritage as assets authorizing their initiation of white Americans into lineages, instruction of "authentic" practices, and issuance of certificates, all for substantial fees.

4.3 Takata's Postwar Positionality

Reiki's success in the postwar U.S. is inextricably bound up with Hawayo Takata's intersectional position. Her gender, race, ethnicity, religion, class, life stage, widowhood, and institutional affiliations all informed the types of relationships she formed with others

around the North Pacific. As she entered the second decade of her career as a Reiki Master in the late 1940s, her status changed due to a number of factors, including her move toward white Christian audiences, her advancing age and experience, and the protean meanings of Japaneseness in postwar America. On the one hand, as American society privileged (and continues to privilege) whiteness, maleness, and Christianness in a variety of ways, both implicit and explicit, Takata's position as a Buddhist woman of colour was an obstacle to promoting an unorthodox, little-known spiritual healing practice. On the other, new stereotypes about Asia and Asian Americans became assets for Takata in building authority as a healer and teacher of a practice she learned in Japan, a development that would develop further in the 1970s (Chapter Five).

Although Takata gradually made inroads with white students like Duke and Vento, the vast majority of Takata's clients and students in transwar Territorial Hawaii were from the Nikkei community. This was not only due to the tendency toward what sociologists call "inbreeding homophily": the cultivation of relationships with others of the same race, ethnicity, religion, social status, et cetera. Anti-Japanese discrimination was not as violent as it was on the mainland, but white supremacist attitudes and policies discouraged or excluded Japanese Americans from white spaces in Territorial Hawaii, particularly in the prewar and wartime periods (Samuels 1970: 112–113; Tamura 1994: 189–192). Historian Jonathan Okamura argues "Japanese Americans were the most despised group in [prewar] Hawaii" (2000: 135). Even in the more integrated postwar period, few Nikkei in Hawaii socialized in majority white settings; a 1971 survey of 477 Honolulu Nikkei showed that only two percent reported belonging to organizations with many members not at least partly of Nikkei descent (Suzuki, et. al. 1984: 13).

However, Takata's strong drive for upward mobility from an early age brought her into successively higher status positions in white-dominated spaces, moving from fieldhand to head of staff for a palatial estate over the course of her teenage years. Other Nisei women in 1920s Hawaii intentionally took domestic work in white households as a means to acculturation (Tamura 1994: 175), and Takata may have made that tactical decision as well. Her late husband's social mobility facilitated her involvement in white-dominated social organizations, including the local Republican Party, which helped her achieve unusually high status positions for a Japanese American woman in pre-war Hawaii. She held a political appointment as the waterworks' bill collector, received funding from the Spaldings to study naturopathy in Chicago, and learned golf, an overwhelmingly upper-class white sport that she played regularly for the rest of her life and may have proven a helpful activity for networking on the postwar mainland.

During the 1940s, American attitudes towards Japanese and Japanese Americans underwent two radical transformations in quick succession. First, after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, popular media and social scientists alike reworked earlier racist portrayals previously applied indiscriminately to persons of East Asian descent to cast the Japanese as "a uniquely contemptible and formidable foe who deserved no mercy and virtually demanded extermination" (Dower 1986: 9). Cartoonists, animators, advertisers, and journalists in wartime America drew on "yellow peril" tropes to portray Japanese as sinister and subhuman, and "Jap hunting licenses" circulated throughout the country (Boggs 2004). Social scientists produced expert knowledge describing the Japanese "national character" as fanatical, and scientific racism was reproduced in popular media targeting Nikkei Americans (Janssens 2015: 135–136). Public opinion quickly turned

against Japanese Americans. In a poll conducted in December 1942 in the western U.S., ninety-seven percent of those questioned approved of Nikkei internment and a majority expressed they would be unwilling to hire Nikkei servants or frequent Nikkei-owned businesses after the war; in a second poll conducted in December 1944, thirteen percent polled favored the extermination of all Japanese people after the war (Feraru 1950: 101).

This dehumanizing hostility radically softened within a few years of the war's conclusion. An April 1949 poll found that thirty-four percent of Americans questioned felt "friendly" toward the Japanese, and among those with college education, that number rose to fifty percent (Feraru 1950: 103). Attitudes toward Japanese Americans continued to change in the Cold War era as, for the first time in U.S. history, Asian immigrants were granted the same rights as European immigrants. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 abolished racial restrictions to naturalization, and the subsequent Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 eliminated the national origins quota system that had virtually prohibited Asian immigration since 1924. As Klein writes, "as the social structures organizing Asian people within the United States changed, the meaning of Asianness did as well" (2003: 226). New portrayals of Asian Americans as hardworking immigrants overtook earlier yellow peril motifs in the public consciousness.

This development was tied to broader rearticulations of race in the transwar U.S. In the 1920s, scientific racism's three human races of the Caucasian, Negroid, and Mongoloid became enshrined in court cases such as the 1922 *Ozawa vs. United States* (which unanimously defined "free white persons" as "members of the Caucasian race," denying naturalization to Japanese immigrants) and legislation including the Immigration Act of 1924 (which essentially ended non-European immigration to the U.S.). Thus,

scientific racism essentially “consolidated” various groups previously considered distinct. For example, this racial rearticulation consolidated various so-called “white ethnics,” that is, non-Protestant immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, a story at the centre of arguably the most widely read assessment of U.S. religion in the mid twentieth century: Will Herberg’s 1955 *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (Jacobson 1998: 96–98, 234–236). At the same time that Asian Americans were used as a foil for white consolidation, they were also contrasted with African Americans in a racial hierarchy where “the yellow race” approached, but remained distinct from whiteness; this both extended limited improvements to Asian Americans and reinforced white supremacist hegemony (Cheah 2011, Omi and Winant 2014). David Yoo (1999: 6–7) says that, in the late twentieth century, Asian Americans remained “perpetual foreigners” who provided a proximate “Other” for “Americans seeking to reinvent themselves through the exotic and mysterious traditions of the Orient.” All of these developments formed a background for Takata’s entry to white networks as a “bridge figure” between white students and the Reiki practice she learned in Japan (Iwamura 2011).

By the 1950s and 1960s, Takata’s racialized difference, which government documents from pre-war Hawaii described in terms of “Japanese nationality” (despite her being a citizen of the U.S., not Japan) and wartime propaganda characterized as sinister or subhuman, began to give way to an ethnic identity that situated her as a hard-working middle-class American with deep ties to a homeland considered mysterious and profound. This transformation is tied to the rise of two “positive stereotypes” about Asians and Asian Americans: the myth of the “model minority” and the image of the “wise Oriental.” These stereotypes that helped facilitate Takata’s success with white mainland audiences

are entangled with America's postwar rise as a global superpower.

The myth of the model minority was established in the immediate postwar period, as Japanese Americans leaving the concentration camps achieved “rapid social mobility and general acceptance” in cities like Chicago (Omi 2016: 43), but the phrase came to prominence in American imaginations in 1966 with a *New York Times* article by Berkeley sociologist William Petersen. At the height of the Civil Rights movement, Petersen argues that, as Japanese Americans enjoyed economic and social integration in the U.S. despite having possibly been “subjected to the most discrimination and the worst injustices” of any ethnic minorities, America was indeed a land of opportunity for those who possess “achievement orientation.” Echoing Robert Bellah (1957) writing on early modern Japan, Petersen concludes that Nikkei achievements result from an “almost religious” devotion to diligence and frugality that he compares to Weber’s “Protestant ethic.” He also extols “meaningful links with an alien culture,” which provides Nikkei Americans with “pride in their heritage and shame for any reduction in its only partly legendary glory.” In both their work ethic and their ethnic pride, Petersen explicitly contrasted Nikkei-Americans’ success with African Americans’ struggle.

Petersen’s pro-Japanese, anti-black analysis is an example of what Klein calls “Cold War Orientalism”: portrayals of Asians and Asian Americans in the postwar U.S. that operated “through a logic of affiliation as well as through one of difference,” as “the domestic project of integrating Asian and African Americans within the United States was intimately bound up with the international project of integrating the decolonizing nations into the capitalist ‘free world’ order” (2003: 16, 226). The transformation of the role of the Japanese in American imaginations from a subhuman, fanatical race to the

United States' most important ally in Asian democracy and capitalism was inseparable from the construction of Japanese Americans as a model minority. Americans in the postwar decades cast Japanese and Japanese Americans as an “almost, but not quite White” younger sibling, able to modernize and succeed because of cultural values of diligence and frugality, and ultimately “deployed as the new model for aspiring peoples of color throughout the world” (Fujitani 2011: 210–211, 230–231).

Takata's students drew on elements of the model minority to position her as a hard-working ethnic minority trying to provide for her family. I asked Ted Vento about a statement his younger sister had made that their aunt had felt that Takata was “a bit pushy trying to get people to take her class.” He responded: “Well, she might have been. If you stop and think about it, she's all alone in the world and this is her business. And if being pushy got her the business... you know, Oriental people are inherently, pretty strong, I would use the word strong rather than pushy..., and I believe that [Takata] *was* a strong person, but she accomplished what she did because of that.”²⁵ This attribution of diligence as an inherently Oriental trait is linked to the myth of the model minority.

Takata's position as a Hawaii-born Nisei woman in the postwar period may have benefitted from association with mass media portrayals of Hawaii-born Nisei men who served in the segregated 100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd Infantry Regiment of the U.S. Army, famed for their heroic front-line combat against the Germans in France and Italy. Stories of the 100th and 442nd captured Americans' imaginations in the transwar period, as they were portrayed in wartime newsreels, honored with a 1946 reception by President Truman, and dramatized in the 1951 film *Go For Broke!* and in James Michener's

²⁵ Phone interviews with Lani Vento, March 10, 2015, and Ted Vento, June 15, 2015.

bestselling 1959 novel *Hawaii*, popular cultural works that likely served as reference points for many of Takata's mainland students to conceive of Hawaii's Nikkei culture.

The masculine 'model minority' heroism of the Nisei soldier propelled the postwar success of veterans like Hawaii Governor George Ariyoshi (b. 1926), Senator Daniel Inouye (1924–2012), and Representative Spark Matsunaga (1916–1990), but Japanese American women advanced more slowly both symbolically and materially. Nikkei men were actually overrepresented in Hawaii's professional classes by 1930 and, despite losing ground during the war years, regained a normal proportion by 1960; Nikkei women, in contrast, show a gradual decade-by-decade increase in professional employment over the course of the twentieth century, but were still significantly underrepresented in 1960, especially compared with white and Chinese American women (Tamura 1994: 222). For Nisei men and women, teaching was "an important avenue of upward mobility," and the other major profession Nisei women pursued was nursing (Tamura 1994: 232). Takata's role as a healer and teacher combined the two primary occupations available to upwardly mobile Nisei women at the time she came of age.

Ted Vento's statement about Takata being an accomplished businesswoman who was "all alone in the world" references her position as a late middle-age widow. Takata was conscious that her widowhood provided the independence she needed to be an itinerant healer and teacher; as mentioned in Chapter One, when one of her Master students from the 1970s told Takata that she and her husband were breaking up, the reply was, "Good, you can't travel to teach Reiki with a husband."²⁶ Takata's students' accounts combine stereotypes about powerful women, from the tough-as-nails "iron

²⁶ Interview with Wanja Twan, Sidney, BC, August 21, 2016.

maiden” (Kanter 1977: 236) to the “wise woman” or “crone” (Conway 1994). With increasing strength, this latter stereotype of the wise woman also intersected in the postwar period with a second so-called “positive stereotype” about Asians and Asian Americans: the wise Oriental.

With precedents in earlier Orientalist examples, the “icon of the Oriental Monk” became an American popular media trope by the mid 1950s. Jane Iwamura (2011) traces this icon to mass media portrayals of the Zen apologist D. T. Suzuki (1870–1966) that marked “Eastern spirituality as a ‘stylized religion’ and consumable object.” Suzuki, she says, became the paradigmatic aged Asian male who transmits “oriental wisdom and spiritual insight” to a “bridge figure,” a young, Euro American disciple whose destiny is to preserve this authentic tradition of an East in decline and bring it to the dominant West, where it will prove the salvation to the crisis of alienation (20–21). In 1956 and 1957, *Vogue*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, *The Saturday Review*, and *The New Yorker* published photo-driven articles about Suzuki and his white students, including John Cage (1912–1992), Alan Watts (1915–1973), and Jack Kerouac (1922–1969). These mediations and publications by Watts and Kerouac, helped create a “Zen craze” that still plays out today, from the marketplace for Zen-themed commodities to the popularity of “mindfulness.”

Takata’s career strongly resonates with Iwamura’s Oriental Monk icon in certain ways. Her false claim that Reiki had died out in Japan and only survived in the West (Graham 1975) closely follows the discourse Iwamura highlights that present Eastern religions as no longer practiced authentically in their homelands, requiring Western intervention for their survival. Alan Watts argued, regarding Zen, “the spiritual species could only be saved if transplanted into new soil and cross-fertilized in just the right way”

(quoted in Iwamura 2010: 56). It is easy to imagine how Takata's students must have seen themselves to some degree as the protectors of this Japanese healing art that their teacher told them had vanished in its land of origin.

However, Takata also complicates Iwamura's icon. Her femininity counters Iwamura's claim that our ability to recognize the Oriental Monk is based on "his conformity to general features that are paradigmatically encapsulated in the icon of the Oriental Monk: his spiritual commitment, his calm demeanor, his Asian face, his manner of dress and—most obviously—his peculiar gendered character" (2000: 6). To some extent, Takata projects the Oriental Monk icon onto the mythologized versions of Usui and Hayashi she developed in postwar decades (presented in depth in Chapter Five), and casts herself as a mediating figure between the masculine Japanese masters and her mostly European American students. Yet Takata's students had no difficulty recognizing her as a powerful spiritual teacher herself regardless of her female gender.

Another, deeper difficulty that Takata presents for Iwamura's schema is the peripheral role to which Iwamura sees Asian Americans relegated in representations of Asian religion in America. Iwamura writes that Japanese Americans are relegated to minor roles as "able caretakers providing a comfortable environment for more authentic Buddhist representatives from Asia... In the narrative of the Oriental Monk, the character of the Japanese American will always be relegated to the supporting cast *if* she appears at all" (60). Iwamura genders the Japanese American as female, partly because her specific example is of Mihoko Okamura (b. 1934), Suzuki's personal secretary in the 1950s and 60s, and partly because of her characterization of the Japanese American as a "supporting cast" member to the star monk in patriarchal society. Takata offers a compelling

counterexample of a Japanese American woman to whom students attributed spiritual authenticity and potency. These inconsistencies between Iwamura's mediated Oriental Monk figure and Takata's flesh-and-blood case of a successful Asian American spiritual teacher provoke a reconsideration of the interplay between race, gender, and spiritual authority in spiritual practices coded as Asian in the postwar U.S.

4.4 Reframing Reiki for White Audiences on the Postwar U.S. Mainland

When Hawayo Takata arrived in Los Angeles in July 1951 to attend AMORC's annual international conference, the U.S., particularly L.A., was awash in divine healing energies. A new generation of Christian ministers from Norman Vincent Peale (1898–1993) to Granville Oral Roberts (1918–2009) gained national audiences in the immediate postwar period with radio broadcasts that featured dramatic healings through the influx of God's power, often described in terms of energy. In his best-selling *The Power of Positive Thinking*, released the following year, Peale promised readers "a never ceasing flow of energy" if they opened up to God, "the source of all energy," and described his experiences healing illness by channeling God's power through his hand (1952: 3, 30, 33). Roberts described the presence of the Holy Spirit as "pure energy ... an invisible spiritual force that comes upon you and you feel it ... like electricity," a force he first experienced in 1935 and one he began channeling through laying on of hands when he began his healing ministry in 1947 (quoted in Harrell, Jr. 1985: 479).

The genre of broadcast evangelism, crucial to the rise of Peale, Roberts, and others, was established a generation prior by Aimee Semple McPherson (1890–1944),

who rose to national prominence in the early 1920s by performing dramatic healings through laying on of hands. McPherson spoke of the healing power of God being like “a shock of electricity... [that] flowed through my whole body” (quoted in Sutton 2007: 16) and, like recipients of Reiki, those she touched reported perspiring from the tremendous heat emitted by her hands (Epstein 1993: 181–193). Reiki’s promoters may have exhibited more liberal views than Christian evangelicals about the nature of their healing energy, but they shared powerful experiences of divine healing through laying-on-of-hands, which they experienced and described in terms of heat, electricity, and energy.

The postwar years also saw growing interest in yogis who expressed divinity in terms of healing energy. Paramhansa Yogananda’s (1893–1952) *Autobiography of a Yogi*, published in 1946 and in its third edition by the time Takata came to LA in 1951, brought his devotional Kriya Yoga to broad American audiences. The rise of Yogananda’s Self Realization Fellowship (SRF) occurred alongside that of evangelical Christian healing; his followers built the SRF headquarters on Los Angeles’ Mount Washington in 1925, a few miles to the northeast of the Angelus Temple megachurch McPherson had built two years prior. Yogananda was a master of combining Indian spiritual practices “with an American language of science that circled New Thought and theosophical themes and that coexisted comfortably with liberal versions of Christianity” (Albanese 2007: 370). Like the evangelicals, Yogananda taught in a 1947 lecture in Hollywood that “God’s omnipresent divine power” was a “universal life energy” capable of healing all disease, and that those who experience this power are “charged with electric current, life energy, not from food, but from God” (Yogananda 1985: 81, 88–89). Of course, evangelical conservatism disagreed with Yogananda’s mystical teachings that Jesus and Krishna were

both manifestations of Christ Consciousness who enabled humanity to reach union with God (Yogananda 1985: 294–307). But Yogananda’s combinative perennialism, like that of AMORC, may have been a model for Takata’s similar rhetoric.

Possibly through the influence of Doris Duke, Takata was interested in yoga as a healing tradition from which she could learn and as another authorizing Orientalist discourse. Duke was an active SRF member, practicing daily meditation at its Los Angeles centre in the early 1950s and helping them build a new headquarters shortly before Yogananda’s death (Mansfield 1992: 233, 259). Takata recalled seeking out gurus on her 1957 trip to India with Duke, as she had heard of gifted Indian healers and thought she could improve Reiki through learning yoga; unfortunately, she reports, Duke’s friends in India told her that the yogis were all up in the mountains until the monsoon season (Takata 1981: tape 21, pp. 12–13). In an October 1957 talk to the Honolulu Lions Club, however, Takata claimed to have “researched yoga” while in India.²⁷ Thus, Takata used yoga not only as an inspiration but also as a means of bolstering her authority.

Her interest in yoga dates back to at least her 1951 trip: the address book from that trip contains the names, authors, and publishing information of several books on yoga by prominent names in yogic healing (Image 4.8) It includes *Yoga and Self Culture* (1947) by Sri Deva Ram Sukul, a name that entered the public consciousness two decades prior when Hollywood star Mae West claimed he healed her of chronic abdominal pain by laying his hands on the afflicted area (Watts 2001: 115). Also in the book was *The Science of Psychic Healing* (1906) by Yogi Ramacharaka, (the Indian pen

²⁷ 「高田はわよ夫人 霊気療法を語る」 (“Mrs. Hawayo Takata Discusses Reiki Therapy”), *Hawaii Hochi*, October 17, 1957.

name of New Thought William Walker Atkinson), whose books (in translation) had been influential on vitalistic spiritual healing practices in early twentieth century Japan, including Usui Reiki Therapy (see Chapter Two).

Like Yogananda and the leaders of AMORC, Takata used perennialist language to frame Reiki as but one means to access a universal phenomenon. This is particularly visible in the earliest detailed description of Reiki in the English language: the two-thousand-word essay Takata wrote on “The Art of Healing” in the autumn of 1948 as the “examination” for her Doctor of Naturopathy diploma from the IAA. Its opening states,

I believe there exists one Supreme Being – the Absolute Infinite – a Dynamic Force that governs the world and universe. It is an unseen spiritual power that vibrates and all other powers fade into insignificance beside it. So, therefore, it is Absolute. This power is unfathomable, immeasurable, and being a universal life force, it is incomprehensible to man. Yet, every single living being is receiving its blessings daily, awake or asleep. Different teachers and masters call Him The Great Spirit; The Universal Life Force; Life Energy, because when applied it vitalizes the whole system; Ether Wave, because it soothes pain and puts you into deep slumber as if under an anesthetic, and The Cosmic Wave, because it radiates vibrations of exultant feeling and lifts you into harmony. I shall call it “Reiki” because I studied it under that expression.²⁸

This essay’s perennialist universalism was surely deliberate. Takata’s command of formal diction and writing mechanics are impressive for an author who left school after the sixth grade. She (or another) typed this essay in triplicate, as she submitted one copy to Red Fox and Phyllis and I found two copies in the boxes: the original top-sheet with some handwritten corrections and a carbon copy on vellum. It thus represents a conscious crafting of her ideas, specifically targeting a mainland audience.

The four references to “the Great Spirit,” including calling Reiki “the way of the Great Spirit,” are explained by the fact that this essay was written for Red Fox of the

²⁸ Hawayo Takata Archives, American Religions Collection, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Indian Association of America, but Takata also makes use of a number of Christian markers. Although she avoids the term God, she refers to the “one Supreme Being” with the masculine pronoun, which strongly connotes the Heavenly Father for Christian Americans. Later, she translated Usui’s five precepts into distinctly King Jamesian language:

Just for today—Thou Shalt not Anger
 Just for today—Thou Shalt not Worry
 Thou shall be grateful for thy many blessings
 Earn thy livelihood with honest labor
 Be kind to thy neighbors (Takata 1948).

She would more explicitly tie Reiki to Christianity in the last decade of her life, describing Usui as a Christian minister in search of the secrets of Jesus’ healing powers, but this essay represents an early reframing of Reiki in Christian hegemonic language.

Takata’s students and their acquaintances clearly understood Reiki and Takata in terms of their Christian faith. In a 1949 letter, Gertrude Kilgore of Bay City, Michigan, wrote to Esther Vento (of this chapter’s introduction) regarding her stories of Reiki:

I think that what you say about Mrs. Takata is about the most wonderful thing I know. One can read a lot of wonderful things in books about people and what they have done, but to come into this close contact with one of them is another side to the story. I feel in a way that I already know Mrs. Takata and I hope that feeling will truly materialize some day when the Lord is ready for us to meet.

It is the greatest desire of my life to become a healer, one like she is: one that can truly do the healing.²⁹

Although Kilgore does not explicitly reference Biblical healings, her contrast between reading about miracles and personally experiencing them recalls charismatic Christian

²⁹ Gertrude Underwood Kilgore, letter to Esther [Vento] dated September 8, 1949, Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara.

rhetoric. Furthermore, she is confident the opportunity to meet Takata and learn Reiki would be ordained by God and would lead to the fulfillment of her life's purpose. It resembles the earlier-cited example of Clara Mackler's "strong conviction that an opportunity such as Dr. Takata only comes once in a life time [sic]. She is surely a messenger to humanity."³⁰ Again, while Mackler does not explicitly mention God, a conversation with her son confirmed his mother's strong Christian faith would have prompted his mother to understand Takata in those terms.³¹

The way Takata herself conceived the relationship between Reiki, Christianity, and biomedicine is clarified by a story she often told students about a 1954 interaction with the president of the American Medical Association, living in Hawaii. Takata said an acquaintance of hers told her the A.M.A. president "wanted to have a forum" to find out about Reiki, so they set up a dinner with Takata and "this famous doctor, very kind and very noted M.D." The three retired to her friend's fancy suite after dinner, where Takata was shocked to find forty-three of her students and patients sitting on the carpet. They said they had heard of the "forum" and came to provide moral support. Takata calmly answered the doctor's questions for what seemed like a couple of hours, but when she checked her watch it was 1:30 AM (Takata 1981: tape 18, 8–9).

She was shocked and tried to excuse herself, but the doctor said he would like to ask two final questions. First, he asked, "Do you think that all the M.D.'s in Honolulu should learn Reiki?" She replied "Yes, doctor, and not only the doctors but also the ministers." Surprised, he asked, "Why the ministers?" and Takata replied:

³⁰ Clara Mackler, letter to Elsa Kane, postmarked September 18, 1951, Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

³¹ Phone interview with Shannon Mackler, August 7, 2014.

Doctor, I shall be very, very happy if all the M.D.'s understood Reiki and took Reiki and used it to add to their profession. It will be a great service for mankind and community [sic]. On the other hand... if the ministers did Monday to Friday Reiki, Reiki and helped all their friends and members of the church who were seeking better health, better mental attitudes, with the sermons on Saturdays or Sundays you would make them a complete whole.

According to Takata's reminiscence, the doctor remained quiet for a number of seconds and then rushed Takata and shook her hand, exclaiming, "You have said the truth! This is absolutely truth!" He then asked Takata to find the location of his backaches, which she quickly did by feeling vibrations with her hand. He asked how to treat it and she replied that, as a chronic condition, it required regular treatments, so it would be best to teach his wife Reiki so she could treat him nightly. She was willing, so Takata told her to gather a group of her friends and their friends to create a class (Takata 1981: tape 18, 10–12).

This story, which Takata related to clients and students for decades (cf. Hammond 1973: 262), locates Reiki as fulfilling an essential, yet missing, element of both religion and medicine: two spheres of activity that mainstream culture generally considered separate in the ostensibly secular postwar U.S. Like other religious healers of the time who employed narratives of the spirit's therapeutic power winning over physicians in this time,³² Takata's flair for storytelling made the most of this showdown. In contrast to her stories about being a naïve "country mouse" in her early days in Honolulu in the 1930s, Takata comes off as much more sophisticated in this story, down to the orchid corsage she recalls wearing to dinner in the fancy Royal Hawaiian dining room. The doctor's

³² For example, the cover story of the March 1952 issue of Oral Roberts' *Healing Waters* magazine showed "three great medical doctors congratulating" the Pentecostal faith healer; similar to Takata's story of the anonymous A.M.A. president, it claimed one of these men was an "outstanding medical doctor and president of a medical society of over 20,000 physicians," although a critic of Roberts was unable to substantiate that man's existence (Harrell, Jr. 1985: 163). A disciple of Yogananda's also recalls how, when "Master conversed with medical doctors... the others there obviously accepted him as one of their own" (Swami Kriyananda 2004: 270-271).

response clearly indicates his respect for Takata and Reiki, and she won him over with her attitude to Reiki's role in both medicine and religion: a prescient emphasis on the rhetoric of interconnectedness that would come to be known as "body, mind, and spirit."

4.5 Conclusion

When Hawayo Takata arrived on the U.S. mainland in 1951, she occupied multiple, complex positions in relation to the white Christian Americans who made up the vast majority of her potential clients and students. As a Hawaii-born Buddhist Nisei widow in her early fifties, she presented as an exotic figure but also as a hardworking fellow American: a proximate Other. Students saw her not only as having spiritual authority as a practitioner and teacher of a ritual healing technique with spiritual elements, but also as a "messenger to humanity," somewhat in line with the devotion inspired by other religious healers of the time, from conservative Christian evangelists to mystical Indian yogis. Her authority was a product of her talent at building social capital through networking as well as the transformation of the cultural capital of Japaneseness in the mid-century U.S.

Through her travels in the summer and fall of 1951, which took her across the continental U.S., from Los Angeles up to Puget Sound in the northwest, from a small town in the southern tip of Texas up to New York City, Takata carried the folding certificate cases described in this chapter's introduction. These two cases each represent a separate bridge Takata built from the Hawaiian Islands and a different form of legitimacy for potential students or clients in the postwar U.S. mainland. The first, with her certificates from the Hayashi Reiki Society, represents an initiation lineage that extends to the mystical Orient and authorizes Takata to initiate others, even white Christian

Americans into that lineage for a considerable fee. The other, with her certificates from the Indian Association of America, performed her acceptance by mainland institutions, and identified her as a minister and doctor of naturopathy. While she received these latter certificates through the mail by submitting an application form, twelve dollars (\$2 entrance fee and four years' of membership fees at \$2.50/year), and a two-thousand-word essay,³³ they had the form of professional legitimacy in postwar America: signatories with letters behind their names and embossed seals.

Takata's membership in mainland, majority-white social institutions like the IAA and AMORC gave her access to new social connections, strengthened her authority for prospective clients and students, and helped shape the way she presented Reiki in the postwar period. Her networking practices are legible in her address book, where listings are often followed by others with a note that s/he is a friend of the first contact. Even to people to whom she did not have direct social connections, her embeddedness in these networks allowed her to build the trust of strangers through name-dropping, particularly the names of celebrities and medical professionals who received Reiki treatments and initiations. The presentation of Reiki in this period as the Japanese form of a universal practice was influenced by the perennialism of the period, from her alleged student Aldous Huxley's *The Perennial Philosophy* (1945) to the teachings of spiritual leaders like the Self-Realization Fellowship's Yogananda and AMORC's H. Spencer Lewis. Her reinstatement of Reiki as a "secret" practice and development of her own certificates were also likely influenced by her membership in these esoteric fraternal orders. Finally, like AMORC in particular, her brand of perennialism took on Christian inflections in this

³³ Letters to Hawayo Takata from Dr. B. Sa-Huihushu dated October 16, 1948, November 20, 1948, and December 11, 1948. Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

period, which would become even more explicit in the 1970s.

The process of Reiki's circulation on the U.S. mainland not only transformed the practice, but also developed new social networks to facilitate its circulation and transformed the lives and values of the people embedded in these networks. By taking the Reiki class with Takata, her students could transform financial capital into spiritual capital, gaining membership in an initiatory lineage that crossed the Pacific. They may have been discouraged from overtly publicizing their Reiki practice, but to themselves and those with whom they shared their healing practice, they became "bridge figures" (Iwamura 2011) able to heal the ills of the materialist West by taking on the spiritual practices of the mystic Orient, which had died out in their land of origin. Connections to Takata, whether as clients or as students, also created social connections between otherwise strangers, particularly those who served as hubs, receiving mail for her or helping to organize classes. Although Takata's weak ties helped her transcend divides of race and ethnicity between herself and her students, homophilic tendencies created clustered subnetworks on either side of a social class divide between elites and non-elites.

There are not many extant accounts of Reiki in this period, and as with Takata's archived materials more generally there is a selection bias for the most enthusiastic of her students, but the data that survived includes proclamations of the profundity of Reiki initiation. As the Ohio schoolteacher Clara Mackler wrote to the Hungarian immigrant seamstress Elsa Kane, "since [receiving the Reiki initiations] last summer I am already a enlightened person and not to boast but feel very confident with my hands... I feel like I did when I was very young that I was put on the earth for a special purpose, now I truly feel that Ive [sic] suffered enough to go thru the channel to meet life's problems an [sic]

help folks in the way I should.”³⁴ Reiki initiations and practice clearly provoked a turning point in this woman’s life akin to a conversion experience. Of course, as her husband Thomas’ “Testimony” written after their conversion to the Assemblies of God attests, some of these profound experiences with Reiki were but one stop on Takata’s students’ evolving spiritual paths.

While many made sense of their experiences using the framework of their Christian background, Reiki practice drew others to the Orient, such as two California psychiatrists who were “thinking longingly of the pilgrimage we may make with [Takata] to Japan.”³⁵ It is difficult to say this definitively without further reports from this period, but learning Reiki most likely inculcated broader interest in Japan as a locus of spiritual wisdom for Takata’s students in this period as it would for her students in the 1970s. As such, it probably also provoked a similar revaluation of cultural traits in regards to their purported Japaneseness, as we will see in the following chapter. Thus, Reiki’s circulatory development in the postwar decades provoked changes in the practice and in those whom Takata touched, creating new patterns of sociality and prompting transformations in the values and worldviews of her clients and students.

³⁴ Clara Mackler, letter to Elsa Kane, postmarked September 18, 1951, Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

³⁵ Margaret A. Paul, letter to Hawayo Takata postmarked October 17, 1961, Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

Chapter Five: Making Masters North America, 1972-1980



For practices with spiritual and therapeutic applications that developed through so-called “East-West” interplay, including Reiki, yoga, and meditation movements, 1970s North America was a time and place of movement from underground to mainstream, as participants in the 1960s counterculture strengthened their access to institutional power. These practices increasingly interfaced with social fields of cultural cachet and appeared with more frequency in the public sphere, including popular cultural media and public institutions, where they sometimes appeared alongside more local forms of spiritual healing.

One such setting was a series of symposia at UCLA and Stanford University called “Dimensions of Healing” hosted by The Academy of Parapsychology and Medicine (APM) in the autumn of 1972. Each symposium ran for three days and featured lectures and panel discussions by a variety of spiritual healers, as well as medical doctors and scientists who conducted research into unorthodox practices. Sally Hammond (1916–1993) was engrossed in the talks. She had taken a leave of absence from the *New York Post*, where she had been a features reporter since 1957, to research a book about spiritual healing. Sally’s sister Marcelle was hospitalized, receiving treatment for bone cancer, and in terrible pain. Sally was desperate to help Marcelle and frustrated with conventional medical care. She had previously had some unexplainable experiences with spiritual healers and hoped that, in researching the world of spiritual healing, she would be able to find someone who could cure her beloved sister.¹ As she later reflected that the APM conference was more “designed for physicians and other interested professionals

¹ Sally Hammond (1973) and Hammond, letter to Hawayo Takata posmarked November 10, 1972.

rather than the general public,” it is easy to imagine that she had hoped it would be more practically oriented (1973: 238). Despite this initial disappointment, Sally would have a conversation at this symposium that, articulated in prose and disseminated through far-reaching print media networks, led to countless individuals’ discipleship under an elderly Japanese American healer, and gave Sally and Marcelle hope for Marcelle’s recovery.

One of the many lectures Hammond attended at the APM conference was by a spiritual healer named Olga Worrall (1906–1985), who performed laying-on-of-hands at the New Life Clinic she directed at Mount Washington Methodist Church in Baltimore (“Worrall, Olga Nathalie Ripich”). Worrall’s lecture addressed a “healing power” that healers have channeled through their hands since ancient Egypt and China; “it flows strictly in accordance with Immutable Law,” she said, and “the majority of people call [its] source ‘God’” (Worrall 1972: 24). Just as Worrall finished, Hammond recalled,

I was suddenly aware of a crackling bundle of energy in the seat beside me—a small, black-haired woman, who appeared to be Japanese... Her name was Hawayo Hiromi Takata, and she wore fire-engine red slacks, a tunic splashed with tropical flowers and her hair very short and straight... Mrs. Takata could hardly contain her admiration. ‘She really knows what she is talking about,’ she said to me, eyes sparkling. Then she quickly mentioned that she, too, was a healer and practiced in Waikiki. I quickly made a date with her for lunch (Hammond 1973: 261).

Hammond’s recollection of her encounter with Takata appears near the end of her best-selling account about her year researching spiritual healing, *We Are All Healers*. After describing dozens of others who perform and teach healing, Hammond presents Takata as uniquely possessing a technique to facilitate the development of her students’ healing abilities: “I give my pupils the contact with the great universal life force that does the healing—I have the secret of how to tune into it!” Hammond closes this section with the lament: “Since my chance encounter with this dynamic little Hawaiian healer I’ve wished

many times that I had a ‘quicker’ way of making contact with the healing power, that I knew the old Buddhist secret for speeding up my development as a healer” (1973: 261, 264).

Neither Hammond nor Takata saw any conflict between Takata’s “Buddhist secret” and Worrell’s Christian laying-on-of hands, and there is no indication they considered the speakers’ religious testimonial narratives to conflict with the academic university setting. Rather, Worrell and Takata’s claims to channel a “universal energy” actively effaced such distinctions by suggesting an empirically verifiable force underlies all healing, a force that supports the fundamental unity of all religions. However, Takata tacitly endorsed this universalism while also distinguishing herself as “the only living master” of a distinctly Japanese system. She told Hammond, “I studied in Japan under a great master... the chosen disciple of Mikao Usui, founder of the Usui system... [Reiki] is a method Usui revived from the Buddhist scriptures, a way of tuning into the *reiki*—that’s the Japanese word for ‘universal force’” (Hammond 1973: 261–262). Here, Takata implies a form of “particular universalism” that posits one culture has a kind of privileged access to the shared reality toward which all cultures are situated. Bruno Latour (1993: 104–106) coined this phrase to explain the chauvinistic assumption of Western scientific objectivity, but it works equally well to describe a kind of twentieth-century Orientalism that asserts both a liberal universalist paradigm and a kind of exceptionalism that considers Asian religious traditions to have uniquely valid insights into the nature of reality. This example of particular universalism appears alongside the earliest record of Takata extolling Reiki’s Buddhist roots, which reflects the rising stock of Buddhism in the 1970s U.S. and foreshadows her “master narrative” of Usui that reached fruition in

this decade (Stein 2009).

Takata's presentation of Reiki in this encounter (mediated by Hammond) encapsulates four interrelated factors that characterized the final years of Takata's career and helped make them her most productive, facilitating her initiation of thousands of students and at least twenty-three teachers, whom she would call Reiki Masters, allowing the practice to live on.² First, by the 1970s, Takata felt comfortable enough on the mainland to depart from the secrecy she advocated in the 1950s and 1960s, resuming her promotion of Reiki through print media and institutional affiliations as she had in pre-war Hawaii. This allowed her to greatly widen Reiki's spread but also impacted how she framed its practice. Second, the growing popularity of spiritual medical forms derived from or attributed to Asia primed 1970s North Americans to be open to Reiki and helped pattern how they saw Takata and their practice. Third, by this period, Takata had creatively reshaped Reiki practice to encode it with values she (and her students) understood as specifically linked to Japan, Buddhism, or Asia, while continuing to maintain (as she had since at least 1948, in her "Art of Healing" essay addressed to non-Nikkei Americans) that Reiki was a universal practice open to all, regardless of one's racioethnic background or religious adherence. Thus, through a number of innovations, Takata "Japanized" Reiki in certain ways to ensure her students (and, increasingly, their students) held certain attitudes toward their practice that she considered inherent to Reiki's efficacy but deficient in her North American students. Takata strategically tempered this "foreignizing translation" by couching Reiki in Christian rhetoric and

² My use of the word "initiation" for Reiki Masters here and throughout this chapter is in the sense of authorization; Fueston's research (2017: 142–156) indicates it was only in 1979 that Takata began performing the ceremony now called the "Master initiation," so the majority of her Masters may not have received an "initiation" as such.

casting it as a professional vocation, providing “domestic” points of entry for her mostly white and Christian students (Venuti 2008). Lastly, Takata’s charisma and spiritual authority grew in this period as she became an elderly master, one or two generations senior to most of her students, telling stories she had honed over decades. Takata’s advanced age also increased the urgency to study under her and opened the possibility of training as a Reiki Master, as the transience of her embodied, charismatic presence became increasingly clear in her final years.

These four factors—interest in Asian spiritual medicine, promotion of Reiki through print media and institutions, the “Japanization” of Reiki in Christian and professional contexts, and Takata’s rise in status with age and experience—interplayed in the expansion of Reiki’s socio-spiritual networks in the years leading up to Takata’s death in 1980. In tracing these trends, this chapter demonstrates that Takata’s students in her final years understood Reiki practice as a calling, both in the sense of spiritually transformative and as a professional opportunity, in ways that earlier generations of her students did not, suggesting linkages between spiritual and professional identities.

5.1 Institutional Networking: Print Media, Religious Organizations, and Public Universities

Takata and her students effectively promoted Reiki and expanded their healing and teaching networks through print media, religious organizations, and public universities in the 1970s. These promotional activities contrast with Takata’s eschewal of publicity in the 1950s and 1960s, when she told students on the U.S. mainland to keep their practice secret because “the time was not yet right for the world to know about Reiki” (Morris

1999: 13).³ Her tendency toward secrecy in the immediate postwar period limited the word-of-mouth networking by which she found new clients and students and was probably influenced by her experience in wartime Hawaii as well as her moving into an unfamiliar environment that had been even more hostile toward Japanese Americans. But, in the early 1970s, Takata returned to methods she had used effectively in pre-war Hawaii: organizing classes through print media and religious networks.

Takata's appearance in Sally Hammond's bestselling *We Are All Healers* (1973), her first in English-language commercial media since the pre-war period, introduced Takata to thousands of readers in geographically-diverse audiences, many of whom sought out Takata's "old Buddhist secret." *Healers* provided no contact information for Takata other than that she lived in Honolulu and practiced in Waikiki, but some readers found her address through directories or writing to Sally Hammond's publisher, while enough others simply wrote to "Hawayo Takata / Waikiki / Honolulu, HI" that the post office began marking them with Takata's address and delivering them to her apartment building, no mean feat in a sizable city (Image 5.1).⁴ Takata's surviving correspondence contains letters from twenty individuals from across the U.S. and Canada and even England and South Africa, who read about her in *Healers* and wanted to travel to Hawaii

³ Morris based this on personal communication with Phyllis and Sidney Kristal who studied with Takata in 1950s L.A.

⁴ The 1970 census reports Honolulu population as 324,871. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of the Population: 1970*, vol. 1, pt. 13 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office): 7. In Takata's final years, they began forwarding this correspondence to Keosauqua, Iowa, where she spent much of the year when she wasn't traveling, being cared for by her younger daughter Alice Takata Furumoto.

to take her class.⁵ When researching Reiki practitioners who studied in the 1970s, the account of encountering Takata in this book is a common refrain, and several such stories are reproduced in this chapter. Print networks distributed Hammond's account of her encounter with Takata, supplementing and accelerating the word-of-mouth and the weak ties of diffuse social networks that served Takata in earlier eras.

Hammond's account of her encounter with Takata is enmeshed with a number of networked institutional fields. Hammond's ability to publish this book with the major New York publisher Harper & Row (as well as a smaller publisher, Turnstone, in London), which gave her resources for promotional travel, depended on a belief that market trends would support a project on spiritual healing, buoyed by the nascent New Age movement. The book's distribution and sales were equally dependent on networks of bookstores and customers willing to devote shelf space, dollars, and leisure time to it. That a few pages near the end of a book inspired readers on at least three continents to contact Takata within a few years of her encounter with Hammond testifies to the potential for print media to mobilize audiences to action. By scaling up demand for Reiki, *We Are All Healers* established opportunities for Takata to scale up her teaching as well.

Appearances in print media helped Takata and her students promote Reiki without taking out paid advertisements, a practice Takata continued to avoid and discouraged among her students in the 1970s. This tendency is illustrated in the story of Reiki's spread to Canada, where Takata's teaching was centered in the rural British Columbia (BC) Interior. Takata's initial trip there was in 1975, spurred by an old prospector named

⁵ Hawayo Takata Archive, American Religions Collection, University of California, Santa Barbara. Many more must have either been marked as undeliverable or been lost somewhere between Honolulu and Green Valley, Arizona, where we unpacked, organized, and archived these letters four decades later.

Hubert “Hugh” Gibbs (c. 1895–n.d.) living in the Okanagan Valley, who wrote Takata after reading a secondhand copy of *We Are All Healers*. She told him to organize a class of at least ten students without advertising; unable to find enough students through word of mouth, Gibbs arranged for the local *Penticton Herald* to write an article about Takata’s coming visit. Barbara Brown (c. 1915–2000) was pushed to attend the class by her husband, who had learned about it from the *Herald* article. She was somewhat reluctant to attend, especially considering the cost, but she was amazed when, after the first day of the class, a chronic vision problem she had suffered had disappeared. Brown went on to organize subsequent classes for Takata and became a Reiki Master herself in 1979 (Twan 2005: 17–22). Hammond’s book and this article about Hugh Gibbs (Bone 1975) are links in a causal chain (along, of course, with the considerable labours of Takata and her students) responsible for the thousands of Reiki students who trace their lineage to Barbara Brown and the four other Masters Takata trained in the BC Interior between 1978 and 1980.

As in her in-person networking, Takata ensured her print appearances connected her to other authorities. Hammond’s section on Takata derives some of its power from its co-option of biomedical authority. In the setting of an academic conference, Hammond highlighted Takata’s stories of teaching “many doctors and their wives,” particularly her “forum” with the American Medical Association president (1973: 263). A front-page article on Takata in the *Maui News* similarly reports her having given a miraculous treatment to “a well-known surgeon,” that her upcoming mainland teaching tour will “include associations of doctors,” and that “doctors have often been among her students” (Nickerson 1974). These stories of prominent physicians recognizing Reiki’s potency

must have helped inspire readers to search it out. Takata also used print media to publicize her ties to social elites. She told Hammond her students included “a famous American heiress but made me promise to keep it confidential” (1973: 263), but shortly thereafter, the *Honolulu Advertiser* reported, “during the 39 years of practicing Reiki in Hawaii, she acquired students from all corners of the globe, including Barbara Hutton and Doris Duke” (Matsuura 1974). Takata’s face-to-face citation of social connections to doctors and celebrities wielded a certain level of discursive power, but the mediation of the printed page allowed them to take on new levels of authority and dissemination.

Another institutional field Takata employed to extend her networks to new audiences was that of metaphysical religious organizations (Albanese 2007). Whereas in pre-war Hawaii, Takata taught Reiki in Buddhist churches of Jōdo and Jōdo Shinshū (Pure Land) affiliations, the most dominant religious organizations in a marginalized community, in 1970s North America, she taught in what might be considered the marginal religious organizations of the dominant community: new religious movements with largely white, middle-class memberships. These organizations ranged in scale, but they gave Takata access to spaces to teach and advertised her classes in their newsletters. That she began her involvement with four such organizations between late 1973 and mid 1974 suggests a strategic effort to use them as networking tools. Two of these organizations only led to a handful of classes,⁶ but the other two provided social

⁶ The first of these organizations was The Louis Foundation, a non-profit organization led by Louis Gitter (dates unknown) at the Overlook Inn on Orcas Island, Washington. Gitter (who generally went by the mononym “Louis”) channeled wisdom from “The Source” (Steiger 1975). The Foundation’s secretary, Helen J. Haberly (1928–1999), became close with Takata in her final years and was one of two individuals (the other being Marta Getty) whom Takata intended to train as a Master at the time of her death (Fueston 2017: 100). Haberly transcribed the December 1979 audio recordings that were to be the basis of Takata’s (yet unpublished) autobiography (Takata 1981) and ended up writing the first biography of Takata (Haberly 1990). The second organization was a Bay Area-centred personal development group called Creative

networks that proved crucial to Reiki's eventual spread across the U.S. and beyond.

The Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship (SFF) mediated Reiki's success in the Chicago area for Takata and for the first two widely recognized Reiki Masters she trained.⁷

Founded in 1956 as a nondenominational group of Protestant ministers interested in spiritualism and psychical research, the SFF shifted focus in the 1970s to "mystical prayer and spiritual healing" (Rauscher 1970, "Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship (SFF)"). In the mid 1970s, Virginia Samdahl (1918–1994) was well-known in the SFF for her healing, psychic and spirit communication abilities. As part of a series of psychically-foretold events, which including her discovery of Takata in *We Are All Healers*, Samdahl enrolled in what may have been Takata's first Midwest class, held in Kewanee, Illinois, in August 1974. The following month, Samdahl invited Takata to stay with her family in the prototypical postwar middle-class American suburb of Park Forest, and Takata completed the twenty-hour seminar on experimental parapsychology and extrasensory development Samdahl offered through her American College of Psychic Studies.⁸

Samdahl invited Takata to teach at the SFF's national headquarters, in Evanston, Illinois. The Chicago-area SFF chapters, including the main Evanston one, held their programs, including Takata's visits, in local mainline Protestant churches and advertised them through newsletters and other mailings to the roughly five thousand SFF members

Consciousness, headed by Nick Buchanan, who had also been an instructor with the human potential training group Lifespring. Takata taught classes the Louis Foundation's centre at Orcas Island and at the homes of Creative Consciousness members in California and New Jersey, and both organizations published notices about her classes and testimonials about Reiki in their newsletters. Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara.

⁷ Takata had made her sister Kay Yamashita a Master the previous year (Fueston 2017: 209), and may have trained other Masters earlier. See note 44.

⁸ Lugenbeel 1984: 1–2; "1974–1975 Mainland Class Lists #2," "Certificate of Merit," letter from Virginia Samdahl to Hawayo Takata postmarked September 7, 1974, Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara.

in the Chicago metropolitan area.⁹ As she did elsewhere, Takata gave a free introductory lecture and demonstration to advertise her four-day First Degree class. After receiving Reiki initiations, SFF members began to charge set fees for healing services, which they had previously performed without charge or by donation.¹⁰ Thus, Reiki training standardized, professionalized and commodified SFF's healing practices.

The U.S. bicentennial year of 1976 ushered in a new era of Reiki, as Takata announced the creation of new Reiki masters: Samdahl and Ethel Lombardi (1923–2009), another Chicago-area spiritual healer associated with SFF (Image 5.2). Out of the dozens, if not hundreds, of Second Degree students Takata initiated in the mid 1970s, Samdahl and Lombardi were among the first with sufficient motivation to teach Reiki that they agreed to pay Takata \$10,000 (over \$45,000 in 2017 dollars) to make them Masters.¹¹ This development was essential to the continuation of Reiki beyond Takata's approaching mortality. Multiple Masters, each able to initiate practitioners and (eventually) other Masters, eventually allowed Reiki to grow exponentially to a worldwide phenomenon.¹²

Besides the SFF, the other religious organization that significantly shaped Reiki

⁹ This number represented about one-third of SFF's national membership, which peaked in the mid-1970s. Shortly after Takata's first visit, the headquarters moved to Kansas City. J. Gordon Melton, email message to author, September 25, 2009.

¹⁰ J. Gordon Melton, email message to author, September 25, 2009.

¹¹ Section 5.4 describes how Takata made at least two Masters before Samdahl, who claimed to be "the first occidental to obtain the rank of Reiki Master in [Reiki's] 2500 years" (Bartges 1979).

¹² This new generation of Masters and those they initiated also adapted Reiki in new ways and for new audiences. Lombardi was particularly innovative, teaching over a hundred students at once, employing multiple Masters to give the initiations (Fueston 2017: 213). Upset by the contested succession following Takata's death (which largely falls outside the scope of this thesis), Lombardi also created one of the first "breakaway" forms of Reiki in 1983: a Christian form called Mari-El that combined the name of Jesus' mother with a Hebrew name for God.

networks in the 1970s and beyond was the Trinity Metaphysical Center of Redwood City, California, a South Bay suburb of San Francisco. Trinity's founder, Rev. Beth Gray (1918–2008), was a minister of a metaphysical Christian organization called the Universal Church of the Master (UCM), who took over and renamed this Redwood City UCM chapter in November 1973. UCM valued spiritual healing and Trinity held weekly healing meditations, but they lacked a systematic practice and her husband, John Harvey Gray (1917–2011) remembers them as ineffective and chaotic (Gray and Gray 2002: 27–28). In 1974, a number of UCM members, including Beth and John, attended Takata's classes in the home of a local airline pilot who studied under Takata in Honolulu after his wife read about her in *We Are All Healers*.¹³ Beth saw great potential in Reiki and eventually required participants in Trinity's healing service to have Reiki training, as she found this improved the effectiveness of the healing treatments ("John Harvey Gray"). Trinity eventually established a space that not only served as the first Reiki clinic in North America, but was likely the largest such center in Reiki's history.¹⁴ At Takata's suggestion, Trinity does not seem to have charged set fees for treatments but rather provided recipients with donation envelopes with the words "Thanks to Reiki" printed on them (Gray and Gray 2002: 31).¹⁵

¹³ Beth Gray and some other Trinity members attended Takata's First Degree class at the home of Wally and Jenny Richardson, in Woodside, California, June 2–7, 1974. At Beth's recommendation, John Harvey Gray and more Trinity members attended a second class at the Richardsons', held June 12–16. Phone interview with Jenny Richardson, June 12, 2017; "Book #1, Mainland, U.S.A., Reiki Class – June 2nd to Sept. 16th 1974," Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara.

¹⁴ With two sessions and ten beds, up to thirty-five practitioners treated up to twenty patients every Sunday before the evening services (Gray and Gray 2002: 31). While Trinity only offered treatments weekly instead of daily, their capacity was larger than the Hayashi Reiki Society's Tokyo headquarters, which hosted eight beds and sixteen practitioners (Takata 1981: tape 2, p. 15).

¹⁵ This practice of donation envelopes resembles that of *jōrei*, a form of hands-based healing with divine energy that also formed in pre-war Japan and spread to the U.S. in the postwar period (Stein 2012: 120).

Trinity gave Reiki an institutional base in the San Francisco area, a locale strongly attuned to spiritual medicine and Asian imports, providing Takata with resources to promote her teaching and a community that honored her as a great teacher (Image 5.3). The Grays would go on to become important promoters of Reiki in the period of its rapid growth in the decades after Takata's death. Takata made John Harvey Gray the third publicly-recognized Reiki Master in 1976, a few months after Samdahl and Lombardi. In 1979, after quitting his job and separating from Beth, he devoted himself to teaching Reiki full-time; in his thirty-six years of teaching, Gray conducted over nine hundred courses in forty-eight of the fifty U. S. states, claims to have introduced Reiki to the New England region, where he settled in 1985, and to have taught about fifteen thousand students ("John Harvey Gray"). Beth Gray became a Master in 1978, taught Reiki in northern California for decades, and her students credit her with introducing Reiki to Australia in the 1980s and initiating thousands there (Howlett 2008). Takata made a third Master of Trinity's regulars: Fran Brown (1924–2009) of San Mateo, who went on to teach many students and write a short biography of Takata based on her stories (Brown 1992). Thus, as with the SFF, Takata's interactions with Trinity formatively impacted Reiki's spread.

Furthermore, Takata's interactions with the UCM (and possibly the SFF) likely influenced her taking on the language of metaphysical Christianity to talk about Reiki. Prior to the mid 1970s, Takata does not seem to have spoken much of God or Jesus, even as her clientele became more and more Christian. Sally Okura Lee (b. 1949), along with her parents and three siblings, received Reiki initiation from Takata around 1960 in her home in Honomu, about ten miles up the Hamakua coast from Hilo on the island of

Hawai‘i. The Okuras were strongly Mormon, among the only Japanese members of Honomu’s Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but Sally does not remember Takata using any religious terminology—Buddhist or Christian—in describing Reiki to her family, but simply describing it in terms of energy. However, Lee explained,

I think that if you don’t have that spiritual element, and you only try to deal with that energy in the physical sense, that a component would be missing. Like when you’re healing somebody, this is a concept I got from my mother... you’re doing something so good and service-oriented, that you’re doing something that would be pleasing to God to do that, that you have to have a component of caring and love.

Lee not only feels that Reiki is an opportunity to cultivate Christian values, but also feels that Reiki employs same divine energy that Christ used in his healings. “I really believe that Christ had a priesthood: the power of God, given to man. And with the power of the priesthood, he healed people. He healed the blind and the sick, and I believe that is that same energy.... you know, that power of the priesthood that heals, it’s that same power that’s like energy for Reiki.”¹⁶ While Lee and her family made sense of Takata and Reiki practice through their Mormon faith, she had no idea that in the 1970s, Takata described Usui as a Christian minister seeking the secret of Jesus’ healing powers and, moreover, that she herself became a minister and used the title Reverend. “What?” she exclaimed. “I never linked [Takata] with Christianity. Oh my goodness.”¹⁷

Despite Lee’s surprise, by the 1970s Takata’s descriptions of Reiki resounded with Christian language and, after becoming ordained as a UCM minister in 1975, she used the title Reverend to bolster her authority (Image 5.4). In contrast to her prior

¹⁶ The Mormon concept of priesthood Lee draws on here is not a clerical title, but a mediational role between God and humanity open to any person in the proper relationship with God. Andersen 2013.

¹⁷ Interview with Sally Okura Lee, Honolulu, HI, July 12, 2013.

ministerial license from the Indian Association of America, which she got by mailing a fee to the church's founder, the UCM ordination required an examination on material from a minister's guide and service book. Among Takata's archived papers is an extensive exam that appears to have served as a kind of catechism, with fifty short-answer questions and one-hundred-and-fifty true/false questions on the nature of the church, its predecessors (including Spiritualism and Theosophy), and the spiritual world. The final essay question asked the potential minister to "explain in your own words your relationship with Christ."¹⁸ Thus, despite a lifelong affiliation with Buddhism, expressed in daily veneration at her Buddhist altar (when at home) and her attendance of Buddhist services at the Hilo Honpa Hongwanji Betsuin and the Pearl City Risshō Kōsei-kai, Takata also learned to express her spiritual beliefs using Christian language late in life.

Takata's training for the UCM ministry influenced her expression of Reiki in increasingly Christian ways. Class notes attributed to a 1975 First Degree workshop read:

It is advisable, good, and practical for two or more REIKI healers to work together, to heal each other, to strengthen their mutual faith, exchange experiences, and gain confidence. Furthermore 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them.' Since 'REIKI' means universal power and wisdom, the above quote is applicable. Jesus was not talking of Himself, but of Universal Love and Wisdom, with which He declared Himself to be one.¹⁹

Records from this period suggest this class was taught at the Grays' home in Woodside, strengthening the possibility that her citation of Matthew 18:20 as support for her

¹⁸ "Universal Church of the Master Test Questionnaire for Ordained Minister," Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara.

¹⁹ These notes have circulated in a number of Reiki teaching manuals and are reproduced in Deacon 2010: 18. Their original source has yet to be confirmed, but students of Takata's have told me they seem consistent with Takata's language at the time, although they do not recall her citing Bible verses per se.

teaching practice was influenced by her connection to the UCM.²⁰

Such Christian translations spoke to some students in ways that Takata's earlier modes of explaining Reiki did not. Paul Mitchell (b. 1946), who joined Furumoto in the Office of the Grand Master in 1993, was teaching religion and working as a youth minister at a Catholic boys' high school when he first studied under Takata in 1978. He recalls, "When [Takata] defined Reiki, she defined it as universal life energy or God-power. And she referred to a Creator or God, often. So, universal life energy didn't connect anyplace with me but God-power did." Mitchell says he felt a "power of presence" in Takata that inspired him to practice daily, although in the first few weeks he could not feel the Reiki energy. "The first time that I had this really clear sensation, what went through my mind was, 'This is divine energy.'" Takata's use of the term "God-power," he clarifies, spoke to a "greater reality" that he could "relate easily to the 'greater than' experiences manifested through my practice of Reiki.""²¹ Thus, Takata's borrowing of Christian language that she learned, at least in part, through her training for the UCM ministry, helped Reiki make sense to new audiences. Just as Takata's Shin Buddhist students in transwar Hawaii connected their Reiki practice to their Buddhist practices and values, Reiki was meaningful to Takata's predominantly Christian mainland students in ways that aligned with their habitus.

The SFF and UCM provided Takata with other resources that helped propagate Reiki to largely white, middle-class audiences in the suburbs of San Francisco and

²⁰ The notes are dated August 29, 1975, which does not correlate with any class in Takata's notebook of class lists, but it includes classes just before and just after that date in Woodside, CA. "Mainland Reiki Class May 12th 1975 to [sic]." Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara.

²¹ Interview with Paul Mitchell, Green Valley, AZ, July 28, 2014; email from Susan Mitchell, September 10, 2017.

Chicago. J. Gordon Melton (b. 1942), a scholar of religious studies who was SFF's field director while Takata, Samdahl, and Lombardi taught Reiki in conjunction with that organization, likens the way SFF provided Reiki Masters with access to pre-established social networks, mailing lists, and spaces for classes (including in mainline Protestant churches) to the ways that the Theosophical Society facilitated the introduction of Indian yogis and other gurus to the U.S.²² Like the Theosophical Society, the SFF and UCM were not only integral in arranging the physical logistics of attracting and lodging guest instructors, finding venues for their lectures and workshops, and recruiting audiences, but also in maintaining the social fields and the discursive and physical spaces that facilitated these audiences' reproduction and adaption of those teachers' practices after their departures. Furthermore, they supported Reiki's outreach into their broader local communities, as newspapers in the suburbs around the SFF and Trinity covered Takata's practice and classes (Straub 1974, Graham 1975).

Metaphysical religious organizations were not the only institutional settings where Takata taught Reiki in the 1970s. From 1974 to 1976, she taught Reiki through the Bureau of Student Activities at the University of Hawai'i – Mānoa in Honolulu. She taught this class at a tremendous discount: her seminar, usually \$125 per person, was offered for \$20.²³ She may have justified this as a public service to her community, but these classes also paid in prestige, as she and her students consistently mentioned Takata's teaching at the university during interviews, although attendees of her classes

²² J. Gordon Melton, email message to author, September 25, 2009.

²³ "1976 University of Hawaii Paystubs and Class Register." Hawayo Takata Archives. University of California, Santa Barbara.

there were not necessarily university students.²⁴ Another university connection was through her student George Araki (1932–2006), a biologist at San Francisco State University who was the founding director of their Center for Interdisciplinary Science. Araki learned about Takata through a graduate student of his who was a Trinity member, and began studying Reiki in 1978.²⁵ That spring, Takata began giving guest lectures in Araki's seminars on holistic health, in which she recruited students for her Reiki classes offered at his home that summer. Araki's SFSU class is where Paul Mitchell discovered Takata; Paul and his wife Susan regularly attended the Thursday evening "Reiki circle" at the Arakis' home and Paul and George became Masters the following year.²⁶ Thus, not only were universities another institutional setting for Takata's accretion of cultural capital but the fact that she recruited students to a spiritual practice in the classrooms of American public universities, which largely eliminated offering credit for Bible classes over the middle decades of the twentieth century (Marsden 1994), also shows that her framing of Reiki as a therapeutic practice helped it be seen as appropriate for ostensibly secular educational settings.²⁷

Takata strategically used connections to media, religious, and educational institutions to extend her social networks and establish Reiki's legitimacy. Her UCM ordination provided her with a Christian vocabulary that allowed her to make inroads

²⁴ Interview with Vivian Kimura, Honolulu, HI, December 20, 2014. For examples of Takata citing teaching at UH – Mānoa, see Matsuura 1974, Nickerson 1974, Straub 1974, Bone 1975.

²⁵ Phone interview with Harlan Mittag, June 12, 2017; letter from George Araki to Hawayo Takata, May 9, 1978, Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara

²⁶ Interview with Paul Mitchell, July 28, 2014; phone interview with Nancy Araki, July 17, 2015.

²⁷ Transcendental Meditation, a Hindu-inspired meditation movement (Williamson 2011), is currently engaged in a similar therapeutization process to get into public schools. See Wendt, et. al. 2015.

with certain audiences, and the Reverend title that she used in communications with students. But religious affiliation was a double-edged sword. In her media appearances, religious claims like Reiki “is God, the power he makes available to his children who seek it” would be unfailingly be paired with the assertion that “it is not a religion” (Graham 1975), crucial to Reiki’s ability to enter secular spaces like the public university classroom. Universities provided Takata with places to recruit and teach, but more importantly, affiliations she could cite to gain the trust of new audiences in the same way that she name-dropped connections to medical professionals and celebrities. Print media networks disseminated and amplified these claims to authority with scales of magnitude greater than her word-of-mouth network could in the postwar decades, when she abided by a stronger code of secrecy.

5.2 Spiritual Medicine of Asian Descent in 1970s North America

Reiki’s growth in the 1970s, when the number of practitioners on the North American mainland went from the dozens to the thousands, benefited from and was partly shaped by broader interest in other practices of Asian descent.²⁸ The final third of the twentieth century saw a tremendous rise in the prevalence and prestige of spiritual medical practices in North America attributed to Asian origin, including acupuncture, yoga, and meditation. Their North American presence was not entirely new: religious and medical practices of Asian origin have been in North America at least since the beginning of

²⁸ I use this language of descent rather than identity (i.e., “Asian religion”) to highlight how practices like Reiki, postural yoga, and modern meditation movements were products of Asians’ engagement with practices developed in the North Atlantic and continued to develop during their circulation outside of Asia. Braun 2013, Scharf 1993, Singleton 2010, Strauss 2005.

widescale Asian immigration in the mid nineteenth century, and extend to the early days of the American Republic in Orientalist practices and imaginations (Altman 2016). But political and cultural shifts in the second half of the 1960s caused an upswell in said practices and their gradual movement from fringe to mainstream.

The late 1960s was a turning point in the history of Asian-descent spiritual medicine in the U.S. The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 changed the racist quota system instituted in the early 1920s that effectively prohibited Asian immigration to a system where each nation was assigned an equal quota (Hing 2004: 93–96). Increased numbers of Asian Americans meant increased presence of Asian cultural practices. These political and demographic shifts coincided with a period of social unrest, during which mistrust of dominant medical and religious institutions swelled, a phenomenon that has been called the end of biomedicine’s “golden age” and the rise of “a generation of seekers” looking for holistic healing and spiritual fulfillment (Burnham 1982; Roof 1993).

By the 1970s, trends sparked by the youth counterculture of the 1960s entered the mainstream, as the popular television show *Kung Fu* (1972–1975) brought spiritual wisdom and powers attributed to the mystic East, hybridized with the genre conventions of the television Western, into American living rooms every Thursday night (Iwamura 2010). *Kung Fu* was just one of many Orientalist depictions of Asian monks and gurus in the period’s mass media, but its vivid portrayal of young Caine’s discipleship under his profound and potent Shaolin masters is particularly relevant to the case of Reiki. Takata’s students in the 1970s were not all avid viewers of this program, but its popularity meant that the concept of the novice submitting to an aged, inscrutable Asian master would have

been stronger in their consciousness than in earlier eras.

Master Kan teaches Caine about *qi*, the Chinese conception of vital force that underlies much of East Asian medical and religious beliefs (in Japanese, it is the *ki* of *reiki*), and Americans in the early 1970s were curious about healing applications of *qi*. Demand for Chinese medicine in the U.S. surged following a 1971 front page story in the *New York Times* in which a reporter making an historic trip to the People's Republic of China described the efficacy of acupuncture and moxibustion as postoperative care following the removal of his appendix (Reston 1971). Inspired by his story and other media coverage of acupuncture during President Nixon's trip to China the following year, busloads of Americans traveled hundreds of miles to urban Chinatowns seeking treatment. During this "acupuncture craze," many Chinese Americans traveled to Hong Kong to take brief acupuncture courses so they could set up clinics back in the U.S., where Chinese medical practice was completely unregulated (Li 2014).

Media coverage of Takata in the mid 1970s explicitly connected her Reiki practice to this acupuncture boom. In an interview, Takata told the *Maui Times* that "she credits President Nixon with much of America's present awareness of natural healing powers, because he opened up China where everyone could see millions of people living in health, not because there are so many doctors but because there are other forms of medicine available, acupuncture among them" (Nickerson 1974). Another article in a Chicago-area newspaper titled "Reiki: Japanese method of healing could spark public interest similar to Chinese acupuncture" predicted, "Reiki may prove to create as many problems for the medical profession as the Chinese art of acupuncture" (Straub 1974). Its author, a student of Takata's named Mary Straub (1929–2009), does not explicitly link

these two practices as *qi* phenomena, but rather as imports from East Asia that challenge Western biomedical hegemony through their mysterious efficacy.

Straub (channeling Takata) contrasts Reiki with biomedicine, often considered to over-emphasize physical factors and overlook psychological and spiritual health, by associating Reiki with the profundity of Eastern religion and the potency of cosmic vibrations. She writes, “Reiki’s origin is Zen Buddhism, its secret key was gleaned from the Sutras (an Eastern philosophical format) by Buddhist monk, Dr. Usui, its first master [sic].” Here, Straub and Takata draw on American interest in Zen to imply that Reiki students are initiated into a lineage that extends to the Japanese monastery. Straub calls Reiki a “national art” of Japan, suggesting it is a practical companion to other Japanese arts, from swordsmanship to tea ceremony, linked to Zen in the postwar period by promoters such as D.T Suzuki in his popular *Zen and Japanese Culture* (1959). Indeed, Takata often mentioned Reiki in the same breath with other Japanese exports like karate and *ikebana* flower arrangement (Nickerson 1974, Gray and Gray 2002: 66).

Straub does not mention *qi* as such, but quotes Takata as calling Reiki a “cosmic energy,” continuing, “The diseased organs literally drink up the Reiki that is in the hands of the healer, the vibrations penetrating deep into areas that need it, Mrs. Takata explains. Often we’re not even aware of where our trouble actually lies until the reaction is felt beneath the healer’s touch.” This suggests that Reiki mediates the mystical and the material, revealing and removing the unseen causes of physical ailments in ways unavailable to other medical practices. Based on these factors, Straub concludes, “Reiki could be the importation of the century,” again stressing its foreignness, but now also suggesting its superiority over other Asian imports such as acupuncture, martial arts, and

meditation, due to the efficacy of its treatments.

While some Reiki practitioners in the 1970s understood Takata and her practice in light of Christian commitments, others came to her out of involvement in other Asia-derived practices like meditation, yoga, and guru devotion. John Harvey Gray, Takata's third recognized Master, discovered Transcendental Meditation (TM), the meditation movement that gained renown through the Beatles' involvement in the late 1960s, while a systems programmer at Stanford Research Institute in 1973; Gray credits TM with having saved his life by introducing him to the existence of other states of consciousness, leading to him leaving his job and following his "soul path" of a spiritual healer and teacher (Gray and Gray 2002: 27, 51). His involvement in this movement with roots in India helped provided him with resources to make sense of Takata and her stories. For example, Takata told of her teacher Hayashi's foreknowledge of his death date, assembling his students to say goodbye and naming her as his successor before consciously stopping his heart; Gray interpreted his ability to do this as evidence that Hayashi was "an enlightened human being," a phrase Takata never used herself in this context (Gray and Gray 2002: 70). Takata herself may have drawn on miracle stories of Asian holy men in her hagiographies of Usui and Hayashi, but her students' familiarity with that genre added to their value. It was also common to describe one's experience with Reiki in terms of the chakra system derived from Indic traditions; one student told Takata in a letter that, in their class, she felt Takata "[sending] charges of electrical energy through the crown chakra and throughout the body... a most profound experience."²⁹

²⁹ Showing the tendency among American metaphysicals to combine Asian-descent practices with Christian referents, the same author, apparently having received word of Takata's intention to retire, also says she can no more believe that Takata would retire "from the use of one of God's greatest gifts ... than I

A third example comes from Argenta, a remote small town in the rural Kootenay region of southeastern British Columbia, where Rick Bockner (b. 1948), a musician and woodworker, was living a back-to-the-land lifestyle among conscientious objectors to the Vietnam War. In 1978, Bockner attended a yoga retreat held by Baba Hari Dass (b. 1923), an Indian yogi and early promoter of Ayurveda in North America. At the retreat, Bockner saw an advertisement on the bulletin board for a Reiki healing class and a friend urged him to take the course; he and his wife were interested, as they were having difficulty conceiving a child, but they were unable to connect with Takata on that visit. A year later, they had divorced and he was despondent. A friend told him Takata had returned to teach again and although he was reluctant in his depressed state, she paid his tuition and forced him to attend. He was not fully engaged in the class until a moment when Takata did something that sparked a memory of a “shockingly powerful” dream he’d had about four years earlier and had been the basis for a song he wrote.

In the dream, Bockner was in a burned out forest when he encountered a large grizzly bear; it stood up on its hind legs and terrifyingly reached its paws into the sky, shocking him “with an Oriental human face.” Frozen, he was surprised when the bear came down from this stance and led him and about twelve others to a cabin in the forest, where five “subtly powerful” older women gave them tea and cookies. Years later, at the Reiki class in a little house in the woods, he was wondering what he was doing there until Takata suddenly turned to him, reached her hands into the air as the bear had done, and said in a forceful voice, “Reiki very powerful!” “All of a sudden,” Bockner recalled,

could imagine Jesus giving up on his healing work.” Letter from Patricia Elders to Takata dated April 12, 1978, Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

my hair started to tingle and my spine started the *kundalini* reactions and, oh man, I knew that this was momentous... If it hadn't been for that dream, I wouldn't be here [as a Reiki Master] today... because I also had a very strong Jewish, middle-class, leftist cynicism about things spiritual and things relating to authority, so it was very easy for me to put something down and not fully embrace it.³⁰

In this dream, Bockner was in the moment of despair when he encountered the power of nature, mediated through a teacher with an Asian countenance. Despite her small stature, Takata was able to convey the power of the grizzly, which Bockner experienced in an embodied habitus developed through yogic meditation on the *kundalini* energy that follows the spine. This experience shocked Bockner out of his skepticism and into a state of devotion to a spiritual teacher. When he told Takata about his experience, she offered to teach him First and Second Degree back-to-back, something Bockner said she reserved for “people she felt were receptive.” This mystical example demonstrates how prior experiences with practices of Asian spiritual medicine helped structure the unconscious minds of Takata's students in the 1970s, making them more amenable to accepting the authority of this Japanese American and her healing art, ascribed to Japan. It also shows how these individuals narrativized their encounters with Takata to help them make sense (to themselves and to others) of their discipleship to her and their dedication to Reiki. Such narratives are part of a broader connection between Reiki as a spiritual calling and Reiki as a professional vocation that the next section examines in detail.

³⁰ Interview with Rick Bockner, Whaletown, BC, July 22, 2013.

5.3 The “Japanization” of Reiki in 1970s North America

Takata’s approach in the 1970s, which laid the foundation for the dominant forms of Reiki worldwide in following decades, was based on an ambivalent form of universalism. At the same time that she described Reiki as “universal life energy” and its practice as available to all, regardless of religious or ethnoracial background, she also believed elements of Japanese culture were essential to its efficacious functioning. This belief exceeded the Orientalization at work in her claims that Reiki “is spoken of in the ancient history of Japan” and Reiki’s “formula” came from a Buddhist sutra that Usui discovered while studying at a Zen temple (Graham 1975). Rather, Takata desired that her students internalize aspects of Japanese culture. She expressed this desire explicitly, assigning her students books on Japanese Buddhism to improve their Reiki practice,³¹ and implicitly, changing Reiki instruction and practice in the 1970s to inculcate certain “Japanese values” into her students, including reverence of secret knowledge, authority, and reciprocity. Yet, at the same time that Takata used Oriental markers to exoticize Reiki’s history and made changes to “Japanize” Reiki practice for her largely white students, she also incorporated hegemonic elements of Christian and professional culture to make Reiki more accessible and attractive to her audiences. In the terms of translation theory, Takata simultaneously “foreignized” Reiki as a practice derived from Japanese Buddhism and “domesticated” it with the discourses of Christianity and professionalism (Venuti 2008).

One innovation Takata instilled in her students in the 1970s was the idea that Reiki is “an oral tradition,” to be passed directly from teacher to student without taking notes. This was particularly stressed regarding the symbols she taught in the Second

³¹ Interview with Phyllis Furumoto, Green Valley, AZ, July 21, 2014.

Degree and Master training: any scrap of paper on which they were written during training was to be burned. In the decades following Takata's death the written word has held an understandably contested position in Reiki communities, with many practitioners taking particular exception to books and websites that publish the symbols. However, as Takata took notes in her training, received copies of Hayashi's printed handbook (which she distributed in Hawaii), and received a book in which Hayashi wrote the Second Degree symbols using a calligraphic brush, she must have, to some extent, consciously invented this emphasis on oral tradition.³²

Takata's invention of this discourse of oral tradition had multiple motivations and effects, but one way to understand it is as a way of translating the practice of "secret transmission" (*hiden*) common to Japanese arts, with roots in esoteric Buddhism (*mikkyō*). As described in Chapter Two, this practice was professionalized in early modern Japan, where "secret teachings were commodified and made ready for retail" (Morinaga 2005: 6). Usui Reiki Therapy incorporated different aspects of secret transmission, including the idea that mastery could only be transmitted through physical practice, not writing, and that "abuse of words" could have catastrophic consequences (Morinaga 2005: 6–7). The pedagogy and epistemology of secret transmission were local practices in pre-war Japan, where Takata trained, and Usui and Hayashi's handbooks made no mention of the practice of "bestowing spirit" (*reiju*) crucial to Reiki practice or the advanced symbols. Still, by prohibiting note-taking or the retention of the written symbols, Takata exceeded the proscriptions of her forebears to compensate for her North American students'

³² The book with the symbols is in the Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara.

relative unfamiliarity with protocols around the treatment of secret knowledge.³³

Takata's emphasis of oral tradition was but one of several changes she made in this period that strengthened her authority as "the only teacher of the Usui system of Reiki in the world today" (Bone 1975, Graham 1975). Around 1976 Takata made the most significant of many changes she made to Usui's five precepts (or the "Reiki Ideals," as she called them), adding: "Honor your parents, teachers, and elders."³⁴ This Ideal, still used by Reiki lineages today, combines the Mosaic "honor your father and mother" with Confucian reverence for hierarchical relations. Like Takata's emphasis on the direct transmission of oral culture, this ideal told Takata's students to listen closely to her words and to accept her teachings without question. Takata's predominantly first- and second-generation Nikkei students in Hawaii, socialized in families with Confucian heritage, seem to not have needed this lesson, which she only developed after teaching on the mainland.³⁵ With this new Reiki Ideal, Takata creatively combined foreignizing and domesticating elements to inculcate her predominantly white North American students with another "Japanese" value.

³³ The culture of oral tradition Takata created has spawned anxieties within the Reiki community about the proper relationship between orality and writing that continue to the present day. Takata's successor and granddaughter, Phyllis Furumoto, told me that for years she resented any book on Reiki for undermining the direct relationship between master and disciple. Interview in Green Valley, AZ, July 21, 2014. This mistrust of the written word was related to Furumoto's decision to privately retain the over twelve hours of recordings that Takata made in December 1979 in preparation for her autobiography, which she planned to call *Reiki Is God-Power*. Takata 1981. After more than thirty-five years (and partly due to the archiving of Takata's personal papers, a process coupled with my dissertation research), Furumoto is currently working on publishing this book, indicating another shift in the relationship between Reiki and the written word.

³⁴ This new "Ideal" sometimes replaced an older one and was sometimes combined with one of them, as Takata experimented with different versions over the last five years of her life. Thank you to Robert Fueston for helping date this addition. Jonker (2016: 355–357) provides examples of various forms of the Ideals over time.

³⁵ The Reiki Ideals contained in the 1948 "Art of Healing" essay analyzed in Chapter Four are an intermediate step toward this innovation, containing self-consciously King Jamesian language (e.g., "Thou Shalt not Anger"), but not the line about honoring one's elders.

A third example of Takata's creative compensation for cultural difference is her development of the explanation of Reiki's operation via an "exchange of energies." She enshrined this value of reciprocity in a parable she told of the founder's charitable use of Reiki in a beggar's community. After developing Reiki Therapy, she said, Usui spent seven years healing the afflictions of the indigent so they could be productive members of society. When those he had healed eventually returned to begging, Usui was devastated. He realized "the spiritual is number one," that is, that the beggars lacked the gratitude necessary for their true healing because they gave nothing in exchange. She reinforced this story with an account of her experience teaching Reiki for free to her in-laws after returning to Hawaii from Japan but, because they learned it for free, they never valued their initiations and took their children to her for treatments rather than treating them themselves. After that, she said, she charged everyone, even her own sisters, because that allowed them the spiritual gratitude to make their initiations and treatments effective.³⁶

Takata developed these parables at some point in the postwar period. As described in Chapter Three, when I recounted them to Takata's early Nikkei students in Hilo, they were dumbfounded. Nikkei patients were culturally primed to give gifts of gratitude called *orei* after receiving treatments and several interlocutors recounted how these gifts, whether money, homegrown fruit and flowers, or store-bought items, could continue for years. Hence, among other motivations (such as the justification of her commoditization of Reiki practice) the rhetoric of an "exchange of energies" was a way for Takata to codify an ethic of reciprocity for her later, non-Nikkei students that went

³⁶ Both of these stories were staples of the free lecture and demonstration Takata gave to recruit students for her subsequent four-day classes. It is recounted in several sources, but Fueston includes a full transcript of a recorded talk from August 24, 1979 (2017: 35–51).

unsaid among her earlier, Nikkei ones.

It is tempting to read Takata's general refusal to allow students to document her words, her presentation of respect for one's teacher as a moral imperative, and her rhetoric of an "exchange of energies" to cultivate gratitude as moves to strengthen her authority and justify Reiki training's high fees.³⁷ However, despite the instrumentality of establishing absolute deference to her authority and sacralizing monetary payments, Takata's inculcation of her students with respect for secrecy, hierarchy, and reciprocity seems at least partly rooted in anxiety about transmitting a "Japanese" healing art to non-Nikkei students socialized with quite different values, especially given the 1970s' countercultural values of questioning authority and sharing freely. Thus, Takata's adaptations of Reiki added elements she understood to engender her predominantly white students with cultural values she associated with Japaneseness, and they resist neat interpretations of instrumentality and Westernization.

This said, Takata's adaptations and her students' uptake of Reiki practice accommodated cultural forces local to the time and place. As seen in the 1948 "Art of Healing" essay analyzed in Chapter Four, she took on perennialist language in the immediate postwar period and, by the 1970s, had begun to interpret Reiki with Christian terminology, translating Reiki as "God power" and referencing the Gospel of Matthew to explain why one would want to practice Reiki with others. These framings of Reiki in Christian terms exist in tension with her accounts of its Buddhist origin and its accessibility to people of all religions. As with her explanation of the "exchange of energies," Takata's chief tool to navigate this tension was the parable.

³⁷ Typically \$125 for first degree, \$500 for second degree, and \$10,000 for the Master degree, but there were exceptions See note 32.

By the mid 1970s, Takata had fully developed the “master narrative” of Usui’s biography (Stein 2009). In this story, Usui was a minister and educator at a Christian university in Kyoto in the late 1800s. He was sent into crisis by a student’s questions about how Jesus was able to perform healing and why the church no longer practiced this gift. He traveled “to study Christianity in a Christian country,” enrolling at the University of Chicago but to no avail, as there too the secrets of this healing power seem to have been forgotten. Learning that the Buddha had also been a great healer, he returned to Kyoto to see if any temple retained his healing methods. He traveled to all of Kyoto’s temples to no avail, so he entered a Zen monastery to study scripture. The Japanese versions yielded nothing, so he learned and studied the original Chinese; stymied again, he learned and studied the original Sanskrit. In a nameless Sanskrit sutra, he discovered Reiki’s “formula” and decided he had to test it. He retreated to the mountains outside the city, fasting and meditating for twenty-one days. On the dawn of the final morning, a great light came out of the sky and struck him in the head, knocking him unconscious. When he came to and descended from the mountain, he discovered he had healing powers when he laid his hands on the injured and ill. He devoted his life to healing others and teaching his method to his disciples. Usui’s successor, Hayashi, named Takata as his successor and she was the world’s sole remaining teacher of Usui’s Reiki system.³⁸

This remarkable story combines the icon of the Oriental Monk with a logic of particular universalism. As described by Jane Iwamura (2011: 20) the Oriental Monk is an aged Asian figure who transmits the spiritual wisdom of the ancient East to a “bridge

³⁸ A transcribed recording of Takata telling this story is included in Deacon 2010 and Fueston 2017: 35–51. I provide an extended analysis of it in Stein 2009. Even articles that cite more historically-accurate tellings of Usui’s biography continue to cite discredited elements of this story. See Coakley and Barron 2012.

figure”—a Western disciple in tension with the dominant culture— a transmission that represents the “future salvation of the dominant culture.” While Orientalism has long influenced American perceptions and appropriations of traditions ascribed to Asia, baby boomers’ “seeker spirituality” particularly sought “personal experience and transformation” in “Asian religions... [and] their enigmatic teachers, who seemed to provide the discipline and attention without the stifling structures of church or synagogue” (Iwamura 2011: 20). Takata’s narrative does not precisely follow Iwamura’s template, as she forms an intermediate bridge to the absent Oriental Monk of Usui, but many of her students found Reiki practice to fulfill a need for spiritual transformation, even one of which they were previously unaware.

Takata’s assertion that Reiki was a “universal” practice that underlay the healing powers of both Jesus and Buddha, uncovered by Usui from an ancient Sanskrit sutra, presents a Theosophical-style vision of Asia as a treasure-house preserving a once-universal wisdom tradition. At the same time, her “Japanization” of Reiki is not purely perennialist, but rather a form of particular universalism, in which one culture is considered to have privileged access to the reality toward which all cultures are oriented. This model can be productively applied to the type of Japanese exceptionalism promoted in the postwar U.S. by Zen apologist D. T. Suzuki (among others). Suzuki explained Zen as an ostensibly uniquely Japanese “‘spiritual technology’ capable of inculcating the mystical experience that lay at the source of all authentic religious insight,” and his American disciples took it as a therapeutic for the ills of Western modernity (Sharf 1993: 39). When Takata told a narrative of Usui discovering “a formula” in a Buddhist sutra in a Zen monastery, actualizing that formula with austerities atop a sacred mountain, and

passing down the boon he achieved through an initiation lineage, she framed Reiki as a path to gain the privileged access to the ground of Being—whether one calls it universal life energy or God power—that the Japanese have uniquely retained from time immemorial.

By casting Usui as a Christian minister seeking the secret of Jesus' healing powers, which he was unable to find either within his own church or in his scholarly pursuit of Christian studies, Takata made him into a flexible and relatable hero figure for her North American audiences onto whom they could project their own frustrations with perceived limitations of Christianity. The fact that Buddhist monastics had also long forgotten the art of healing but preserved it within their sutras allowed Reiki to draw on Buddhism's cultural cachet without making students nervous that their initiation was a conversion to a foreign religion.

Particularly in the second half of the 1970s, Takata's ministerial status and Christianized language of Reiki as "God power" worked in tandem with her racialized features and heavy accent to reinforce "the logic of affiliation as well as difference" that Klein identifies at the core of Cold War Orientalism (2003: 16). For example, Paul Mitchell told me he never felt any conflict about Reiki's foreignness when he took his First Degree in 1978: "it was just like one of God's gifts, one of His blessings coming through this [practice]... there's certain gifts of the Holy Spirit and one of them is healing." He sensed the Reiki initiation was a sacrament, in addition to the seven of Catholicism, a sense reinforced the following year, during his Master training, when he asked Takata the meaning of the *kanji* of the Master symbol. She replied, "for the Protestants it's like the Great Light, and for Catholics it would be the Holy Ghost, and for

me it was like, oh yeah! So for me, it really is this universal practice.”³⁹ Thus, Takata’s addition of original practices to Reiki—practices she considered to help North American students internalize Japanese cultural values that she considered essential to Reiki’s efficacy—took place in a matrix of Christian hegemony.

Takata’s development of the rhetoric of an “exchange of energies,” symbolized in her parables and concretized in her significant fees for treatment and training, took another element of hegemonic culture to translate the value of reciprocity she considered lacking in her students. In this case, rather than Christianity, she borrowed from the fee structure of professionalized services. Her translation of Usui’s precept *gyō o hage*me (“fulfill your duty”) into the Reiki Ideal “Earn your living honestly,” was tied up with a new vision of Reiki therapist as a professional vocation. She advised students in this period to set fees for Reiki treatments by finding out what local massage therapists charged and charging slightly more, “because Reiki is more than massage,” which operates strictly on the physical level. Reiki was of the utmost value, she taught, because “health is number one,” as without good health, nothing else is possible. The metaphysics of exchange suggested that the act of giving up something of value cultivated the gratitude needed to render a healing or initiation effective. Her class lists and financial records indicate that she often shared a portion of her proceeds with her local organizers and made sizable donations to churches that hosted her classes; Reiki was never exactly a multi-level marketing organization, but these types of professional exchanges between the itinerant master and her local disciples, concretized in cash and symbolized as gratitude, add another dimension to Reiki’s evolution.

³⁹ Interview with Paul Mitchell, July 28, 2014.

That said, while perusal of any holistic health clinic in contemporary North America will probably reveal at least one professional Reiki therapist, Reiki is probably most often practiced without a cash fee. Self-treatment, of course, involves no exchange. Practitioners often treat friends and family without expectation of a particular exchange, justified by the fact that people in intimate relationships are always doing acts of service for one another. “Reiki circles” are sites where treatments are mutually exchanged, sometimes with a small fee going to defray the host’s costs. And counter-cultural communities who consciously chose to reject modern consumerism, like Takata’s back-to-the-land students in the BC interior, seem to have most often given Reiki treatments, even initiations, on the barter system. Even Takata had exceptions to her fee structure.⁴⁰

But Takata was often insistent on fees, which, in language reminiscent of Prosperity theology, she insisted would be returned many times over, not only by saving on doctors’ bills, but also in other forms of material success. In the conclusion of her free lecture to recruit students for upcoming classes, she recounted how her sister, whom she charged for the Reiki class, “is a very, very successful woman. She has not failed in her business. She has her own business.” In contrast, those whom she taught for free, “not one of them is a success. Not even in business nor in their health. And therefore my teachers were right, they were absolutely right” (Fueston 2017: 51). Thus, she encouraged students to make whatever financial sacrifices were necessary in order to pay the fees for training, as they would be rewarded in time. Takata combined this

⁴⁰ Her archived class lists record discounted or free instruction to the elderly or children, and one family is marked as having received free instruction because someone had cancer. Furthermore, she sometimes allowed Master students to arrange classes for her and count those students’ tuitions against their \$10,000 fee. Wanja Twan paid the entirety of her Master’s training through organizing classes for Takata in the rural BC Interior. Takata wanted payments in U.S. cash, which the tree planters and farmers in these classes had difficulty locating, as local banks didn’t carry it; Wanja recalled piles of crumpled bills scrounged from friends, gas stations, and restaurants. Interview in Sidney, BC, August 21, 2016.

metaphysical rhetoric with aspects of professionalization—such as the re-instatement of certificates (Image 4.7), absent from her teaching from the late 1930s to the mid 1970s—as characteristic of her insistence, in her later years, that her students consider Reiki as a possible professional vocation as well as a path for holistic healing and spiritual development. And, again, as Takata’s teaching in the late 1970s was the foundation of what Reiki would become in subsequent decades, the entanglement that emerged at this time between its potential as profession and as spiritual practice continues today.

5.4 Takata as an Elder

In addition to the other factors that facilitated Takata’s tremendous productivity in the last years of her career, in which she taught thousands of students and grossed hundreds of thousands of dollars, one must consider her embodied charisma as a wise and powerful elder. Every one of my interlocutors who studied with her in this late period spoke reverentially of her possessing “a presence” or an “energy” that was qualitatively different than the descriptions by those who studied with her in Hawaii decades prior, few of whom spoke of her in this manner. The emergence of Takata’s strong charisma in her final years resulted from an intersection of exogenous and endogenous factors, including meanings her students projected onto her aging body and the bearing that comes from decades of experience as a teacher and practitioner of spiritual medicine.

Takata already inspired adoration by the time of her 1951 trip to the U.S. mainland; proclamations that one is “surely a messenger to humanity” do not come

easily.⁴¹ But her students increasingly commented on her charisma as she increased in age and experience. Describing her visits to BC in her late seventies, Rick Bockner said, “she carried Reiki with her like a neon sign, without saying anything. Really, people would see her coming down the street when we were going somewhere and they would just stop... they picked up on her energy.”⁴² While he claimed this was unrelated to being an elderly Asian American with a predilection for brightly-colored outfits in a predominantly working-class white region dominated by timber and agriculture, Takata’s diminutive stature, hairdos, elegant bearing, and striking clothing choices were often commented on by my other interlocutors and in her print appearances.

Like Bockner’s experience of Takata re-enacting his prophetic dream of the bear, several other students from this period reported paranormal occurrences in conjunction with their first meeting of Takata. Bockner’s friend, Wanja Twan (b. 1934), took the Reiki course in 1978 after understanding herself as having been led to Takata through a series of paranormal experiences. Twan’s experiences (like Samdahl’s) involved *We Are All Healers*, and (like Bockner’s) they encouraged her to fight through an inner resistance to taking the course. When Twan finally walked into the home where the course was being offered, she said, Takata was descending the stairs in a fine gown, looked her in the eye, and said, “I knew you would come,” causing her hair to stand on end and her to be filled with a deep trust of this teacher. Wanja had Takata come teach classes in her home, including to her two daughters. Anneli Twan (b. 1968) remembers, “when I met Takata, there was something with her presence. Like you know when you meet an Indian, like a

⁴¹ Letter from Clara Mackler to Elsa Kane, postmarked September 18, 1951. Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara

⁴² Interview in Whaletown, BC, July 22, 2013.

guru, and there's something that strikes you that there's something with them... I could just see this huge white light around Takata and just the strength that she carried.”⁴³

Anneli's memory is interpreted through later encounters with Indian gurus, but includes an immediate impression of Takata's bright aura, indicating to this ten-year-old child that this elderly lady was special and possessed profound strength despite her frail stature.

Takata's age inspired reverence as an index of her life experience and her impending mortality. Sally Hammond asked Takata in 1972 about the initiation process and “if there was any danger of the secret dying with her”; Takata replied, “before I die I want to teach as many people as I can, spread it to as many people as possible and create many teachers” (Hammond 1973: 263–264). Takata seems to have made her first Master, Eulalia Atkinson (1920–1997, Image 5.5), in 1973, but Atkinson may not have initiated any students due to struggles with alcoholism.⁴⁴ Following Atkinson, Takata made a total of twenty-two Masters between her first heart attack in 1975 and a second, fatal one in December 1980. With two notable exceptions, these Masters primarily resided in four locales: Hawaii, Northern California, Chicago, and the BC Interior (Image 5.6).⁴⁵

The sense that Takata was nearing the end of life gave an urgency to the process of training Masters, both for her and for her students. John Harvey Gray recalls that her

⁴³ Interview with Wanja Twan in Victoria, BC, July 24, 2013; interview with Anneli Twan in Nanaimo, BC, July 25, 2013.

⁴⁴ Letter from Eulalia Atkinson to Hawayo Takata dated July 14, 1973, Hawyo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara; phone interview with Atkinson's daughter, Teri Apodaca, June 2016. It is possible Takata trained Masters prior to the 1970s. Ted Vento (Chapter Four) told me Takata offered to make him a Master in 1951, when he was nineteen years old and moving to Alaska, but he turned her down; this suggests she may have trained others who never gained renown. Phone interview, June 15, 2015.

⁴⁵ The two outliers, Phyllis Furumoto of Winter Park, Colorado, and Barbara Weber, of Atlanta, Georgia, would become the two main claimants to be Takata's successor after her death. At least two more Master students were waiting to finish training at the time of her death, two weeks before her eightieth birthday (Fueston 2017: 100).

decision to train a number of Masters was spurred by her 1975 heart attack. She immediately taught the initiation method to her sister, Setsuko “Kay” Kawamura Hamamoto Yamashita (1912–1987), and told North American Master students in subsequent years that they could travel to Hawaii to complete their training with Yamashita in case she died prematurely (Gray and Gray 2002: 178). In late 1976, Takata sent out a “Seasons Greetings” notice to her students to announce her retirement and the continuation of her work by John Gray, Virginia Samdahl, and Ethel Lombardi (Image 5.6). However, she never fully retired and continued traveling and teaching up until her death. In these final years, concerned about her legacy, she privately asked several individuals to be her successor, contributing to contestation in the 1980s about who would follow Takata as Reiki’s fourth “Grand Master” (Fueston 2017: 100ff.). Takata could have averted this “succession crisis” with a public announcement about her chosen successor prior to her death (Melton 1991), and it is likely she planned to do something like that but faded unexpectedly quickly.

The deep reverence Takata’s students showed her in her final years demonstrate how her advanced age and deepened experience helped her fulfill certain expectations students have of a spiritual teacher. The nature of these expectations appears differently from different perspectives. Emic narratives might attribute her growth in charisma to her strengthened connection to the cosmic source of Reiki’s energy as she entered her fifth decade of practice and “transitioned” out of the physical realm altogether, but etic ones could explain them as a growth in symbolic power, as she further refined the techniques she used to establish authority and her time became an increasingly limited commodity.

5.5 Conclusion

Sally Hammond, whose story opens this chapter, does not seem to have ever learned Reiki and may never have seen Takata after their one fateful meeting in fall 1972. They corresponded for a couple of years, with Takata sending distance treatments to Hammond's sister, Marcelle (who showed remarkable recovery through a combination of chemotherapy and holistic interventions), and Sally showing great interest in organizing classes for Takata in New York. However, it is not clear these classes ever came to fruition (Hammond returned a check Takata sent her in advance as a thank you), and about a year later Marcelle's cancer returned; she ultimately succumbed to it in 1976. Based on Takata's surviving correspondence, the letters from the Hammond sisters seem to have dwindled as Marcelle's condition waned and it is possible that their faith in Reiki declined with her health.

One bias built into studying the history of a movement like Reiki is that the majority of the data—promotional media accounts, testimonials from grateful clients and students, interviews with longtime practitioners—will highlight its successes. Its failings are mostly legible through negative spaces: gaps in the historical record, a sudden end to a robust exchange of letters. This is compounded by another bias for recentness. Both in terms of archived materials and finding subjects for oral history interviews, I tended to find more numerous and robust accounts of Reiki's later years, with the exception of the brief and intense media coverage of Reiki in Honolulu's Japanese-language press during Hayashi's 1937–1938 visit.

Yet, even considering these biases, Takata's successes with Reiki in the 1970s substantially exceeded those in prior decades both in their quantitative reach and in their

qualitative depth of connection. Many of those whom I interviewed who studied Reiki in this period considered it a life-changing spiritual practice and, like Takata before them, dedicated their lives to its practice and teaching. Few in earlier generations had this long-term zeal. Even the most accomplished Reiki healers from transwar Hawaii, such as Hilo's Tatsuji Nagao and Kino Yuda, pursued it as a service they were happy to provide to others (and one that gained them local renown and social status), but their Reiki practice supplemented other spiritual and professional pursuits rather than forming the core of their identity. Thus, Reiki's professionalization by the 1970s went hand-in-hand with its shift from a spiritual healing technique to a system of spiritual medical practice to which one might dedicate one's life. Takata's translation of the Reiki Ideal "Earn your living honestly" spiritualized labour for her postwar audiences, and her 1970s discourse of an "exchange of energies" tied payment for services to another of Reiki's core spiritual practices: the cultivation of gratitude. Together, the potential to make one's living as a Reiki professional, whether one invested the substantial money to train as a Master and teach or simply as a paid practitioner, deepened the sense in which Reiki functioned as a complete system for Takata's students, particularly in a capitalist society that often equates professional and personal identity.

This connection between Reiki's potential as a professional and a spiritual vocation both supports and complicates claims that the cultural forms identified as "spirituality" in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century function as the "opiate of the bourgeoisie," helping the middle class adjust psychologically to late capitalism through sacralizing quietism and spiritualizing labour (Martin 2014). Reiki, as taught in this period, works well with aspects of capitalist logics and systems, but also offers

critique of commodification. In explaining why coverage of Reiki in commercial print media is compatible with Reiki as an “oral tradition” whereas advertising is not, Phyllis Furumoto told me newspaper articles are an extension of word-of-mouth, while advertising reduces Reiki to “a product.” Paul Mitchell agreed, adding that advertising promises a product will fulfill a consumer’s need, whereas Takata and journalists told stories that allowed “prospective students to have a connection with the energy.”⁴⁶ Thus, Takata not only withdrew from her prewar practice of advertising her treatments and classes in print media, but trained her students in the 1970s to feel antipathy toward this practice as overly commodifying, while, at the same time, considering the exchange of money to be capable of concretizing the spiritual value of gratitude.

In this, emic perspectives might describe the exchange of a treatment or initiation for cash as more closely resembling gift exchange than commodity exchange, as it comes from an “obligation to reciprocate” that establishes social relationships that can endure after the payment (Gregory 1982; Mauss 1990). The asymmetrical relationship between therapist and patient or master and disciple can be mapped onto the capitalist relations of producer and consumer, but that does not exhaust their significance. It is unclear whether Reiki is actually a co-option of cultural critique by capitalist relations or whether it at least holds the possibility of translating sacramental relationships in a society dominated by fee-for-service relationships. Examining Reiki’s practice in localized communities that tended toward barter economy and other cashless forms of exchange opens the possibility for its economies to be counter-hegemonic. Wanja Twan and others who practiced Reiki in the rural BC Interior describe the treatments in their homes and the healing circle in

⁴⁶ Email communication with Furumoto and Mitchell, June 9, 2017.

ways that more closely resemble the unspoken assumption of reciprocity seen in earlier generations of Reiki practitioners than the explicit exchange of money by more professionalized practitioners.

Finally, Takata's simultaneous foreignization and domestication of Reiki further complicates a simple understanding in terms of hegemony and counter-hegemony. For example, her innovative addition to Usui's precepts ("Honor your parents, teachers, and elders") may have been couched in the language of the Ten Commandments, but it was an attempt to instill her non-Nikkei students with the reverence of authority socialized in Japanese families. This works to reinforce a kind of quietism that serves the interest of the status quo and critiques the anti-authority values of North American counterculture. But it also assigns a privileged position to values associated with Japan for those who desire to channel "universal energy," a mode that I call particular universalism. Her narrative of Usui finding the "formula" of Jesus' healing powers in an ancient Buddhist sutra, manifesting those powers through mountaintop austerities, and initiating students to similarly cultivate these powers, inherits Orientalist critiques of Occidental modernity as suffering from spiritual malaise due to its over-emphasis on materialism. This follows a broader pattern of ambivalence regarding dominant cultural authorities in Takata's rhetoric that continues in Reiki and other spiritual medical practices today. Takata called upon multiple authorities from the spheres of religion and biomedicine to help authorize her unorthodox practice for new audiences while also engaging in the rhetoric of cultural critique. This ambivalence can be related to the ambivalence to capitalist relations described earlier. Ultimately, the forms of Reiki that Takata taught in the 1970s gained symbolic capital in relation to but also in distinction from dominant systems.

This chapter has shown how the unprecedented success as a teacher that Hawayo Takata enjoyed in the final years of her life was related to a number of developments both within and without her control. Broader social, cultural, and political developments led to shifts in the meanings of Japaneseness in postwar North America, and the 1970s saw growing interest in spiritual medical practices ascribed to Asia. These factors, combined with broader interest in spiritual medicine as part of the growing movement that would come to be known as the New Age, helped facilitate Takata's use of print media, religious organizations, and universities to extend networks and build authority. Her innovations drew on the allure of Japanese culture, the familiarity of Christian rhetoric, and the professionalization of health services, situating Reiki in ambivalent relationships with cultural authorities that attracted middle class audiences both enmeshed in and critical of mainstream culture. Finally, as a woman in her seventies entering her fifth decade of teaching in spiritual medicine, her authority grew with her mastery of her medium of storytelling and, as she became an elder nearing her mortal end, her spiritual capital became a palpable presence for many she encountered.

Conclusion



Contrary to the assumptions of earlier scholarship, Reiki is neither an American practice in Eastern trappings nor a Japanese practice that successfully adapted to meet the needs of Western practitioners. Instead, it is a practice that arose out of a genealogy of North Pacific interactions between Japanese and Americans, repeatedly re-imagined at different junctures of social forces and embodied agencies. After a chapter that presented the early life of Hawayo Takata, the woman whose life work provided a frame for tracing this genealogy, this dissertation traced Reiki's path from 1) a circle of social elites in 1920s–1930s Japan, where Japanese ethnoracial nationalism was bound up with its imperial projects; to 2) the Japanese labour diaspora in 1930s–1950s Hawaii, where settler colonists from both sides of the Pacific operated under a racial hierarchy dominated by white supremacist U.S. nationalism; to 3) the white mainland of the 1950s–1970s, where the Cold War Orientalism of white society rearticulated the place of the Asian (and Asian American) Other in the racial hierarchy, creating opportunities for religious virtuosi like Takata to build networks and followings among middle-class and elite white Americans.

Reiki underwent circulatory development in these settings, as it was adapted to local needs and values while concomitantly introducing its students and recipients to new forms of socio-spiritual connection. This became particularly pronounced after Reiki crossed the ethnoracial divide between Nikkei and white Americans. Takata did her best to inculcate her white students with “Japanese” values of respect for secrecy, hierarchy, and reciprocity that she considered essential to Reiki practice, while also borrowing from Christian language to frame this “Japanization” in terms of North America's hegemonic religion. But Reiki practice also introduced students across the North Pacific, going back to the 1920s, to the elective kinship relations of lineage via a ceremony adapted from

Buddhist monastic initiations. Thus, although I categorize Reiki as a form of spiritual medicine rather than a religion, it is another example of “democratized” ritual practice that earlier scholarship has identified as characteristic of the new religions of modern Japan, including the popularization of laity practicing *zazen*, the seated meditation practice of Zen Buddhism (Hardacre 1994, Sharf 1995).

Reiki shares other attributes with other transnational forms of body-oriented spiritual practice that grew out of so-called “East-West” interactions. Like various forms of yoga and meditation practice (like Vipassana, *zazen*, Transcendental Meditation [hereafter TM], and “mindfulness”), Reiki has been “universalized” in a number of ways. First, from the time of its founder Usui, Reiki’s promoters have claimed that this therapy is based on a cosmic (and thus “universal”) power. This claim is related to its second “universalism,” which it acquired as it moved into the diverse society of Hawaii: a rhetoric of being accessible to all, regardless of nationality, racioethnicity, gender, religion, etc. Takata concisely combines these two elements in her statement that, “being a universal force from the Great Divine Spirit, it belongs to all who seek and a desire [sic] to learn the art of healing. It knows no color, nor creed, old or young [sic]” (Takata 1948). A third way it has been “universalized” is through a process that transnational studies calls “deterritorialization”: that is, the excision of elements that were culturally-specific to Japanese audiences (like the recitation of the poetry of the Meiji Emperor), which made it more accessible for people outside Japan (even if that was not the motivation behind that excision). These three interconnected forms of universalization have helped facilitate the transnational growth of Reiki as they have for yoga and meditation.

Yet, at the same time that Reiki, yoga, and meditation have undergone varied

degrees of universalization, they also posit (again, to varying degrees) a lineage that extends to an Asian source that possesses a kind of privileged access to the universal reality toward which all cultures are oriented. To describe this tension between the particularist celebration of the culture where the practice originated and the universalism to which the practice aspires, I use the concept of “particular universalism,” which Bruno Latour (1993: 104–106) coined to describe the Western chauvinism inscribed in epistemologies that hold scientific knowledge to be a uniquely objective form of understanding the world. Takata’s form of particular universalism, which distinguished Reiki from other forms of spiritual medicine by stressing its initiation lineage stretching back to Usui, identifies Japan as its potent site of origin. Her veneration of Japan and codification of values she identified as Japanese in Reiki practice helped solidify her own authority for North American students as a mediator to the authentic original, lost to time and the ravages of war. In various ways, similar strains of particular universalism, valorizing an Asian source while emphasizing a global accessibility, can be seen in the Vipassana of Goenka, the TM of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the Zen of D.T. Suzuki and others, and many different forms of yoga.

Another important dimension of Reiki’s circulatory development in this period is its changing relationship with capitalism. Reiki underwent a gradual process of commoditization over the course of the twentieth century. Within a couple of years of Usui’s death in 1926, his disciple Hayashi introduced five-day training seminars in his Hayashi Reiki Society, so students paid for an initiation course that granted them certificates rather than learning the practice over a longer time and being awarded the certificates for passing practical examinations. It is not known whether Hayashi’s

organization charged for treatments, but Takata appears to have done so shortly after completing her training, when she opened her first clinic in Kapa‘a in 1936. The professionalization of Reiki, which took some decades for Takata’s students to accept, happened simultaneously with the growing recognition that Reiki could be a self-sufficient spiritual practice. Practitioners who studied with Takata in 1930s and 1940s Hawaii complained about Reiki’s commodification, but they also treated it more as a spiritual medical *technique* that supplemented their Shin Buddhist practice or manifested values cultivated through their Buddhism. In contrast, Takata’s students in North America drawn to becoming a full-time Reiki therapist and/or teacher also found Reiki to be more of a self-sufficient *practice*, capable of spiritual transformation entirely on its own. Thus, not only does Reiki’s professionalization seem to have not jeopardized its spiritual potential for North American audiences, but (at least by the 1970s) the two were deeply entangled. Since Takata’s death in 1980, Reiki has spread around the world, disproportionately among middle-class women, and has become even more entangled with global market forces as Masters form professional organizations, take out liability insurance, network and self-promote online, and even offer distance initiations that are paid for and performed online.

The rapid diversification that happened in Reiki practice since Takata’s “transition” in 1980 was perhaps inevitable once there were multiple Masters, each capable of creating others, with no central organization uniting them. It is also partly attributable to the fact that she never publicly named a successor, a factor compounded by her apparent informing of multiple Masters that she wanted them to succeed her as Grand Master.¹ Helen Haberly, in the conclusion to the biography she wrote about a

¹ In addition to Phyllis Furumoto and Barbara Weber, who had a notable dispute over who was Reiki’s

decade after transcribing the recordings of the late Grand Master's reminiscences, reflected on this split in the 1980s. "During [Takata's] time Reiki was brought from East to West, and through her, it flowed like a river, a single channel deep and broad... [but after her death] the river of Reiki which was a single channel in Mrs. Takata now flowed in two major streams" (Haberly 1990: 111). Haberly also describes some Masters who "work independently, without connection to any group" (112), trickles off the two major streams, if one extends her metaphor.

Such claims that Reiki was unified prior to 1980 and that the practice "flowed" through Takata like the universe's energy is believed to flow through the practitioner's hands, are founded on the belief that the practice remained the same over Takata's forty-five years teaching. As we have seen throughout this dissertation, many forms of Reiki were being practiced across the North Pacific in 1980. The Usui Reiki Society and Hayashi Reiki Society survived the war, albeit in reduced capacity, and had hundreds if not thousands of members; the Usui Reiki Society continues to this day and new Reiki lineages have been founded based on the practice of a Hayashi Reiki Society member (see Stein 2016). Takata's students in Hawaii practiced forms of Reiki based on what they learned in the 1930s for many decades, treating with a single hand in a single position for hours on end and rejecting the idea that Reiki treatment could be a commercial enterprise. And even though the forms Takata taught for the last three decades of her life do not appear to have changed much, Reiki practice takes on different meanings from venue to venue, whether it takes place on massage tables in rented spaces or clients' homes for set fees; in the massive Sunday evening sessions in the ten-bed

fourth Grand Master after Usui, Hayashi, and Takata, Takata apparently told Eulalia Atkinson (mentioned in Chapter Five as possibly Takata's first Master student) that she wanted her to be her successor, suggesting there may have been even more. Interview with Teri Apodaca, June 2016.

treatment area of the Trinity Metaphysical Center in the San Francisco suburbs, where donations were placed in envelopes for the church; in friends and neighbors exchanging treatments or doing treatments for barter in the rural British Columbia Interior; or in practitioners disregarding Takata's "exchange of energies" dictum to do volunteer in-patient treatments in hospital programs. If these all existed in "a single channel, deep and broad," they must be at least understood as distinct currents within that channel.

The focus on networks in this work is an attempt to resist some of the assumptions of uniformity in this model and make sense of the structures that shape practice. Latour puts it poetically when he says that networks of practice are "an Ariadne's thread that would allow us to pass with continuity from the local to the global" as they constitute "lines of force" that connect the micro-interactions of interpersonal contact to the macro-systems of the state, economy, society, and culture; indeed, he concludes, "the Leviathan is a skein of networks" (1993: 120–122). As Latour indicates, network models allow scholars to examine interplays of agency and structure at different scales as individuals and organizations respond to and help constitute broader societal trends. In this way, networks function something like Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus*, which he famously (and opaquely) defined as "structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (1990: 53); that is, networks, like systems of embodied dispositions, are created out of practice while also setting the possibilities for future practice.

On the one hand, the structural frameworks of a socio-spiritual network's sociocultural environment impact that network's dynamics. For example, the fact that the quotas of U.S. immigration policy largely refused Japanese immigrants between 1924

and 1965 reinforced Takata's status as the only public teacher of Reiki outside of Japan until she began initiating Masters in the 1970s. This example illustrates the phenomenon Anna Tsing (2005) calls *friction*: an encounter where tension between unequal parties produces motion, like the rubbing between a spinning tire and the road. Friction can both reinforce and contest hegemony; it is employed by oppressor and oppressed alike. To wit, while Takata's racialized difference as a Japanese American limited her social mobility in the pre-war and wartime Territory of Hawaii, as well as her physical mobility during the war, it also authorized her as an authoritative spiritual teacher in the postwar decades, particularly as she grew older and as American interest in "Oriental" medicine and spirituality grew.

On the other hand, agentic choices made within those structural frameworks and applied within networks of influence help form new network ties and have lasting impact on the habitus of other agents within that network. This is particularly true when ties in the network describe asymmetrical power relationships, as those between teachers and their students. Takata's influence on Reiki practice long outlasted her physical presence as her teaching decisions continue to shape the values and possibilities inherited by subsequent generations. One student of Takata's, who did her Master training with Wanja Twan, one of Takata's Master students in British Columbia, recalls a lesson Wanja taught about making changes to the system they received: "When you have the idea that something would be added to the class... picture Takata in the class and say, would she be joyfully happy that you're doing this? ... When people say, 'What would Jesus say about this?' ... Well we would say, 'What would Takata say about this?'"² Thus, Takata's

² Inger Droog, "Reiki: Balancing Form and Essence, with Phyllis Lei Furumoto," December 4, 2008, <http://www.reikitalkshow.com/files/shows/20081204.mp3>

choices, say to develop the rhetoric of an “exchange of energies” to teach her students the value of reciprocity, have had significant consequences for generations that followed.

The Reiki community is now at a similar place as it was at the moment described at the opening of this dissertation, when Takata “made her transition.” Phyllis Furumoto, Takata’s granddaughter whom the majority of practitioners consider to be Takata’s successor, was diagnosed with cancer in 2009 and metastases of that cancer in 2013. She is currently engaged with a team of Reiki Masters from around the world to determine how to work out her own succession and what the future of leadership in her Reiki community will look like. Part of Furumoto’s dealing with her legacy in which I have been personally engaged, is the bequeathing of Hawayo Takata’s personal papers to the American Religions Collection at the University of California, Santa Barbara. My involvement began in 2013, when I contacted Furumoto for an oral history interview and has since produced four trips to her home in Arizona, where we (along with a number of other Reiki Masters described in the dissertation’s acknowledgements section) organized and digitized the contents of a dozen boxes containing Takata’s correspondence, photographs, and other personal effects. After unsuccessful attempts to find a home for these materials at two resource centers for Japanese American history, I suggested the UCSB library, which had undergone a recent expansion that has allowed them to make new acquisitions, and already houses a tremendous collection of American metaphysical religion compiled by J. Gordon Melton in the 1970s and 1980s.

The fact that Takata’s papers, which I anticipate will be visited over the years by scores of Reiki practitioners eager to strengthen their connection to this departed Grand Master, will be housed in a collection of materials categorized as “religious” is one way

that my research has already impacted the ongoing circulatory development of Reiki. Another is through my growing relationship with Furumoto, which has developed over the years that I have conducted the research for this dissertation. I think it is safe to say that our interactions have helped transform the way that each of us thinks about Reiki practice and the life of Hawayo Takata, whom she is often quick to point out was both her grandmother and her Reiki Master.

In addition to our numerous conversations through the archiving process, Furumoto attended the World Congress of the International Association for the History of Religions in Erfurt, Germany, in the summer of 2015, where she attended a presentation I gave on Takata's work in transwar Hawaii and postwar North America as well as many other papers on religious studies, chiefly on Japan. Following that experience, she gave a webinar titled "Reiki as a Spiritual Practice" (which currently has over four thousand views) in which she explains how my research and the conference in general has challenged her previous conceptions of Reiki but has also placed it in a larger context. She said that her experiences at the conference made her realize that she had previously been confused about the connection between religion and spirituality. To clarify the difference between the two, she cites the definitions of religion and spirituality given on their respective Wikipedia pages, as well as conversations she had with scholars of religion at the conference, to state definitively that "Reiki is not a religion, but a spiritual movement" (Furumoto 2015). To fully unpack the conceptions of religion, spirituality, and Reiki in this talk exceeds the aims of this section, but clearly the academic study of religion is already making an impact on the way that prominent Masters and their students are making sense of their practice. The research and arguments presented in this

dissertation and the ensuing book project will further contribute to this process of Reiki's circulatory development in the twenty-first century.

Glossary of Japanese Names and Terms

Note: In the text of the dissertation, Japanese names are written given name first, family name last, to avoid confusion for English-language audiences. Here names are written in the Japanese style, with family name first. Also, the kanji used here are the simplified, postwar characters, even for terms from the prewar period.

Aoyama Bunki	青山文記
Asano Wasaburō	浅野和三郎
butsudan	仏壇
byōgen	病源
byōsen	病腺
chinkon kishin	鎮魂帰神
chiryō shunin	治療主任
Dainichi Nyorai	大日如来
Dai Nippon Seishin-dan	大日本精神団
dai-shihan	大師範
Eguchi Toshihiro	江口俊博
enkaku chiryō	遠隔治療
fujinkai	婦人会
gō	業
gokai	五戒
goseihō	後世方
Gotō Konzan	後藤艮山
Gotō Shinpei	後藤新平
gyosei	御製
hara	腹
<i>Hawai Hōchi</i>	布哇報知
Hayashi Chie	林知恵
Hayashi Chūjirō	林忠次郎
Hayashi Reiki Kenkyūkai	林靈氣研究会
hiden	秘伝
hō	法
Iino Kichisaburō	飯野吉三郎
ikki tairyū-setsu	一氣滞留説

Jintai Aura Reiki-jutsu	人体アウラ靈氣術
Jintai Hōshanō Ryōhō	人体放射能療法
Jōdo-shū	浄土宗
Jōdo Shinshū	浄土真宗
jōrei	浄靈`
jumon	呪文
kaji	加持
kaji kitō	加持祈祷
kanji	幹事
kanjō	灌頂
Kanō Jigarō	嘉納治五郎
kanpō	漢方
Kawakami Matsuji	川上又次
kenjinkai	県人会
ketsueki jōka-hō	血液浄化方
ketsueki kōkan-hō	血液交換法
kibei	帰米
Kogaku	古学
Koihō	古医方
kokoro	心
Kōmyōji	光明寺
Kondō Masaki	近藤正毅
Koyama Kimiko	小山君子
Kubokawa Kyokujō	窪川旭丈
kue issho	俱会一緒
Maeda Tomosuke	前田友助
Maeda Geka Byōin	前田外科病院
Matsui Shōō	松井松翁
Matsumoto Chiwaki	松本道別
miteshiro otoritsugi	み手代お取次
Nagao Tatsuji	長尾辰二
nenbutsu	念仏
nihonjinron	日本人論

Noda Gikaku	野田義角
Noda Sae	野田サエ
Ogawa Fumio	小川二三夫
Okada Mokichi	岡田茂吉
okiyome	お浄め
okuden	奥伝
Ōmoto	大本
Ōtani Honbyō	大谷本廟
reichi	霊知
reihō	霊法
reiju	霊授
reijukai	霊授会
reijusha	霊授者
reijutsu	霊術
reiki	霊気
reinō	霊能
reishijutsu	霊子術
reiyaku	霊薬
Reiki Kangen Ryōin	霊気還元療院
sanmitsu	三密
Seichō no ie	成長の家
seiheki chiryō	性癖治療
seika tanden	臍下丹田
seishin ryōhō	精神療法
seryō	施療
Shaku Sōen	釈宗演
shashin ryōhō	写真療法
shihan	師範
shihan-kaku	師範格
shin'netsu	芯熱
shinpiden	神秘伝
Shinshin Kaizen Usui	
Reiki Ryōhō Gakkai	心身改善臼井霊気療法学会

shoden	初伝
shōnen	正念
Shunchōrō	春潮楼
Suzuki Bizan	鈴木美山
Suzuki Daisetsu	鈴木大拙
taimitsu	台密
Taireidō	太靈道
Takahashi Ichita	高橋一太
Takagi Hidesuke	高木秀輔
Takata Hawayo	高田ハワヨ
Takata Reiki Chiryōin	高田靈氣治療院
Taketomi Kan'ichi	竹富咸一
Tanaka Morihei	田中守平
Taniguchi Masaharu	谷口雅春
teate ryōhō	手当療法
Tomabechi Gizō	苫米地義三
Tomita Kaiji	富田魁二
uchideshi	内弟子
uchū	宇宙
Ushida Juzaburō	牛田従三郎
Usui Mikao	臼井甕男
Usui Reiki Ryōhō	臼井靈氣療法
Usui Reiki Ryōhō Gakkai	臼井靈氣療法学会
Wanami Hōichi	和波豊一
Watanabe Koyo	渡辺浩洋
Yamaguchi Chiyoko	山口千代子
Yamada Shin'ichi	山田信一
yose kaji	寄加持
Zendōji	善導寺



Image 1

Hawayo Takata (centre) with Rick Bockner (left)

Grey Creek Hall, Grey Creek, BC, October 1980

Photo taken by Ametist Summanen

Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 2

(l to r) Phyllis Furumoto, Hawayo Takata, Wanja Twan
Grey Creek Hall, Grey Creek, BC, October 1980

Photo taken by Ametist Summanen
Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara

backgrounder

Reiki: An Introduction



© Getty Images

Reiki is a complementary health practice in which practitioners place their hands lightly on or just above the person, with the goal of facilitating the person's own healing response. There is a lack of high-quality research in this field. However, this fact sheet provides basic information about Reiki and suggests sources for additional information.

Key Points

- Do not use Reiki to replace proven conventional medical care or to postpone seeing a health care provider about a medical problem.
- Overall there is a lack of high-quality research on Reiki, and studies that have been done show conflicting results.
- Training and certification for Reiki practitioners are not formally regulated.
- Tell all your health care providers about any complementary health practices you use. Give them a full picture of what you do to manage your health. This will help ensure coordinated and safe care.

Overview

Reiki is based on an Eastern belief in an energy that supports the body's innate or natural healing abilities. However, there is no scientific evidence that such an energy exists. Research on Reiki has generally focused on symptom management or well-being.

Use in the United States

According to the 2007 National Health Interview Survey, which included a comprehensive survey of the use of complementary health practices by Americans, more than 1.2 million adults—0.5 percent of the U.S. general adult population—had used an energy healing therapy, such as Reiki, in the previous year.

Image 3

From National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (2012)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health
National Center for Complementary
and Alternative Medicine



NCAM

招福の秘法
 萬病の靈藥
 今日又けは怒るな
 心配すな感謝して
 業をばけめ人に親切に
 朝夕合掌と心に念じ
 口に唱へよ
 心身
 改善 臼井靈氣療法
 隆祖
 臼井靈男

Image 4

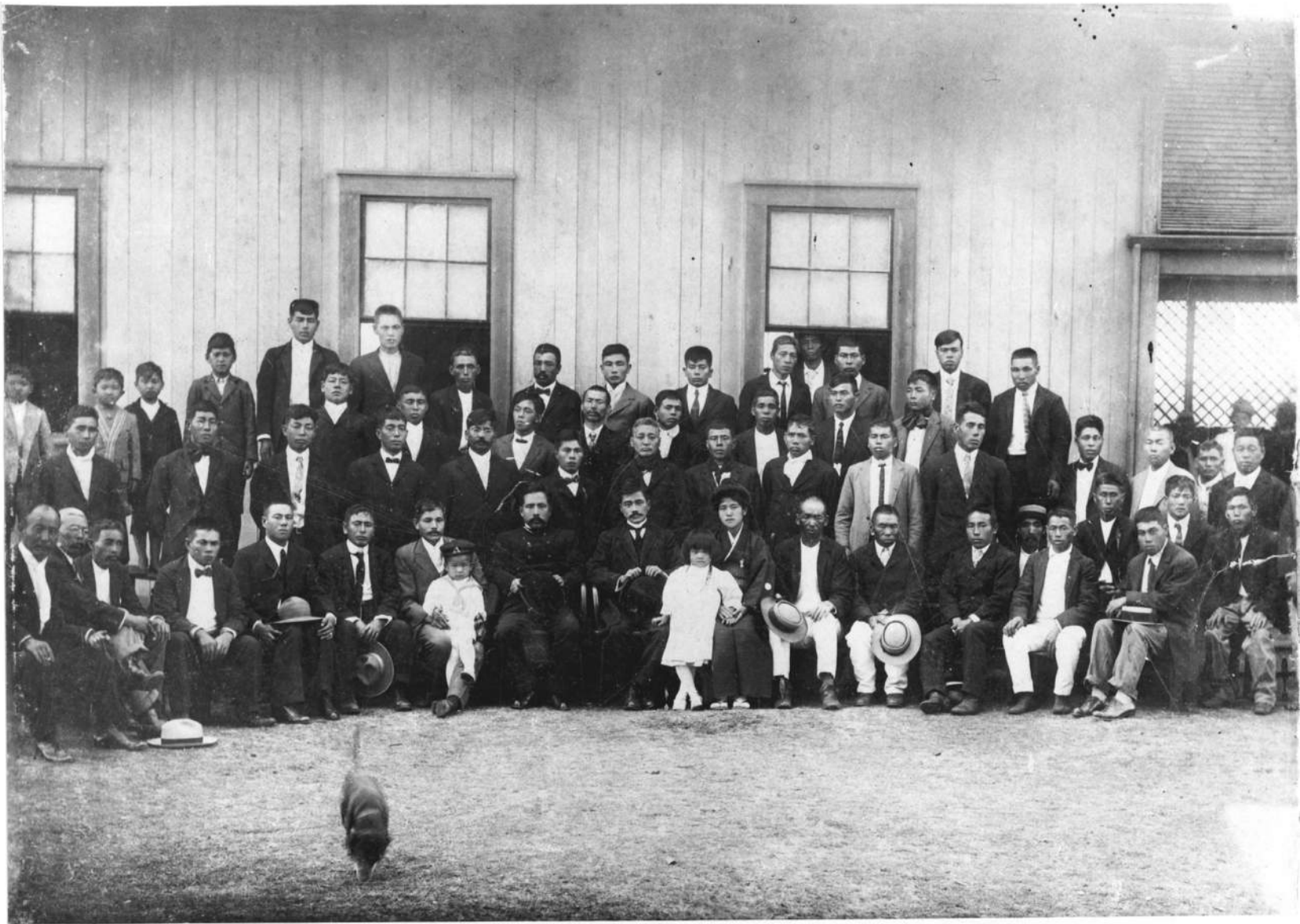
Reproduction of the calligraphy of the "Five Precepts" (*gyosei*) by Mikao Usui, c. 1922
 Private collection of the author



Image 1.1

Keālia, HI, 1924

Makee Sugar plantation, workers' barracks, "cane train," mill, and the plantation store and warehouses
Property of the Kauai Historical Society - no reproduction without written permission



TAKEN IN 1913 OR 1914

KEALIA JAPANESE SCHOOL SPONSORS
(MOSTLY ^{MALE} PARENTS OF CHILDREN)

Image 1.2

Kealia Hongwanji Church, Keālia, HI, c. 1913-1914

Property of the Kauai Historical Society - no reproduction without written permission

THE GARDEN ISLAND, TUESDAY, AUGUST 25, 1914

The Coolest Place in Town



Lihue Store Soda Fountain

Image 1.3

Advertisement for Lihue Store Soda Fountain
The Garden Island, August 25, 1914



Image 1.4

Spalding Family, Valley House, Keālia, HI, c.1900

Property of the Kauai Historical Society - no reproduction without written permission



Image 1.5
Costume Party at the Valley House, Kealia, HI, c. 1920s
Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 1.6

Page from Photo Album Depicting 1923 Tokyo Trip for Saichi Takata's Treatment
with Handwritten Notes by Alice Takata Furumoto
Tomosuke Maeda (center), Saichi and Hawayo Takata (right)
Hawayo Takata Archives, University of California, Santa Barbara

Reiki Sanitarium
Treatments

ABSOLUTELY DRUGLESS

Special Treatments for Stomach and Internal
Ailments; Nervous Diseases and
General Debility

Office Hours: 4:00 to 8:00 p. m.
Office Located at Ota Cottage
Haunalea St., Kapa'a, Kauai

Special Free Clinics for Children
Under Six Months Every Saturday
8:00 to 10 a. m.

MRS. HAWAYO
TAKATA
PRACTITIONER

Image 2.1

Advertisement for Takata's Kapa'a Clinic
The Garden Island, October 13, 1936



Image 2.2

Hawayo Takata (second from right) with other members of the
Hawaii Young Men's and Women's Buddhist Association
en route to a conference in California, July 1932
Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 2.3

Memorial Stele of Mikao Usui, Saihōji, Umezato, Suginami-ku, Tokyo
 Heading reads “Memorial of the Merit and Virtue of Usui-sensei, Founder of the Spiritual Method”
 Photo courtesy of Dorna Revie



Image 2.4

Portrait of Mikao Usui owned by Hawayo Takata
Caption reads "Usui Reiki Ryōhō Founder Usui-sensei"
Hawayo Takata Archive
University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 2.5

Usui Mikao with his *Shihan* Students

Caption: "All who can give the Mind-Body Improvement Usui Reiki Therapy *reiju*, January 16, 1926"

Back row, far left, Wanami Hōichi (5th Usui-kai President); third from left, Taketomi Kan'ichi (3rd Usui-kai President)

Second row, third from left, Usui Mikao; fourth from left, Ushida Juzaburō (2nd Usui-kai President)

Front row, far left, Hayashi Chūjirō; Inset, far right, Tomabechi Gizō

From Petter 2012: 73

第二輯 靈療法の體得

六一



(第一輯 靜比合掌の奏參)

Image 2.6

Reciting the Meiji Emperor's poems (*gyosei*)
From Tomita (1999 [1933]: 61)



Image 2.7

Mikao Usui (seated, seventh from left) seemingly with students and possibly Jigorō Kanō (standing, far right)
From Mochizuki (2009: 29)



Image 2.8

Chūjirō Hayashi (seated, third from right), teaching in Daishōji, Ishikawa, 1935
Seated, far left, is Chiyoko Yamaguchi's elder sister Katsue
From Yamaguchi 2007: 28



Image 2.9

Chūjirō Hayashi (top row, center), teaching in Daishōji, Ishikawa, 1938

Chiyoko Yamaguchi is in the second row, fifth from the right

From Yamaguchi 2007: 32



Image 3.1

Chūjirō Hayashi's Farewell Banquet (Hayashi is standing on left)
 Shunchōrō Teahouse, Honolulu, February 20, 1938
 Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 3.2

The departure of Chūjirō Hayashi and
his daughter Kiyoe (both wearing leis)

Chichibu Maru, Honolulu Harbor, February 22, 1938

Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 3.3

Sign for Hawayo Takata's Hilo Clinic
Image taken by author

靈氣療法の
林忠次郎氏來布
 在郷海軍々醫大佐
 十二月まで滞在



一昨日の本紙上に紹介した通り、靈氣療法の林忠次郎氏が愛媛清枝園同伴、今朝は港の秋父で來布し野田義角氏夫人夫妻の案内で挨拶のため本社を訪問した。野田サエ子夫人は林氏を同船で歸省したものである。林

Image 3.4

“Reiki Therapy’s Mr. Hayashi Chūjirō Arrived in Hawaii — Ex-Naval Surgeon and Captain — Will Stay Until December”
Hawaii Hochi, October 2, 1937, p. 8



Image 3.5
Bungalows at the Grove Hotel, Honolulu
Photo courtesy of Karen Kikukawa

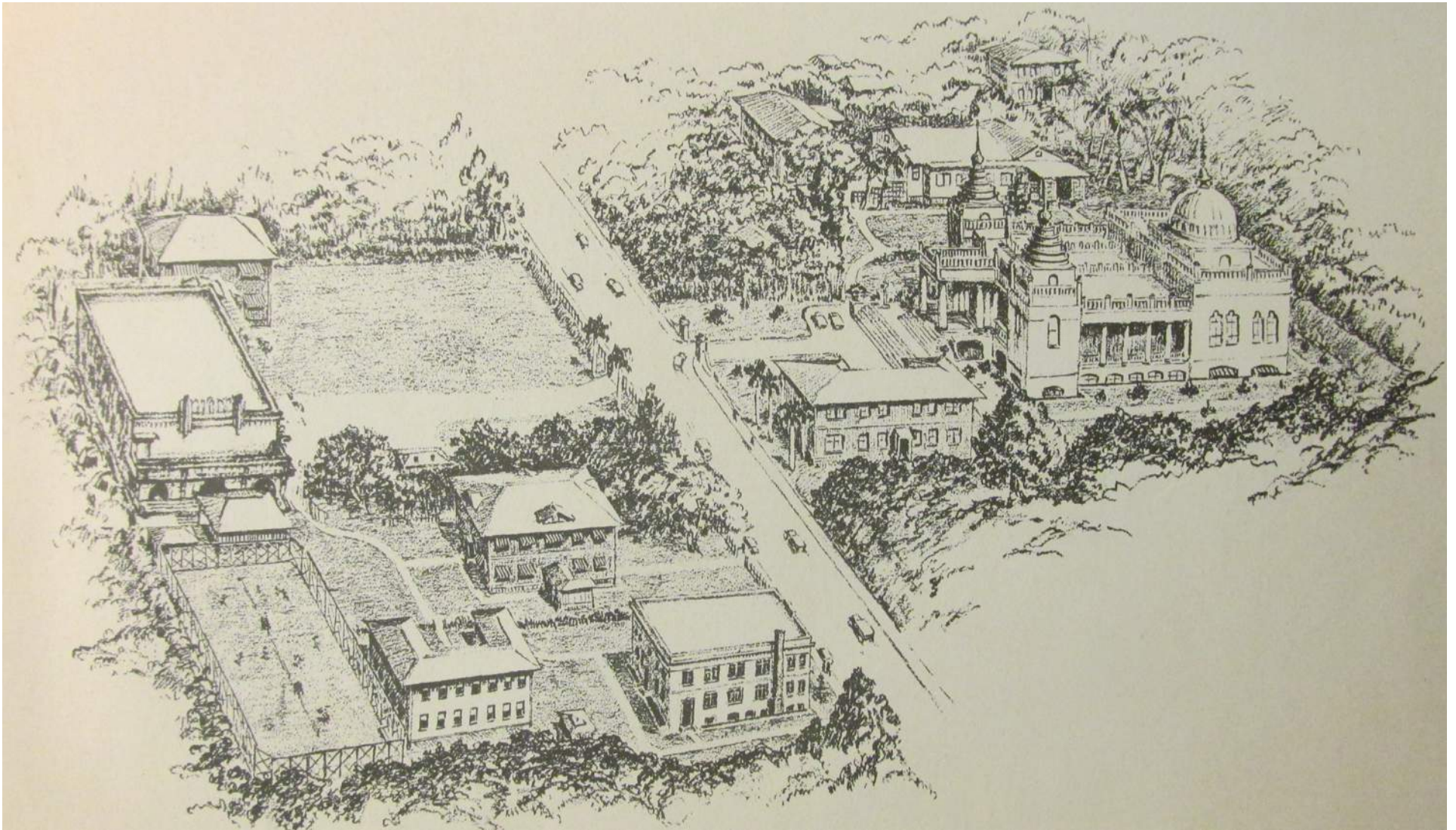


Image 3.6

Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii Betsuin, c. 1924

Fort Street, Honolulu

Main Hall (*hondō*), top right

YMBA Hall (*busseidō*), bottom centre

From Imamura (1927: n.p.)



Image 3.7

14th Reiki Therapy Training Course

Hawayo Takata seated, center,

Hayashi Chūjirō seated to the left of the hanging scroll

Young Men's Buddhist Association Hall

Honolulu, HI, February 1938

Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 3.7

c. 1937-1938 album of early Reiki students in Hawaii
 Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara

靈氣療法開始

●二月七日(マンデー)から

▲今回フオート街サニリー美容院の内部を改装致し靈氣療法部を設けました

▲新設の靈氣療法部は男子部と婦人部と別々になつて居ります

▲待合室も双方に設けて居ります

▲日々のお仕事で肩が凝り、氣合が通らず、身体がだるく、大抵精神が元氣のない方々は早速お出で下さい

施療——日曜を除き毎日

時間——午前九時より午後五時まで

▲靈氣療法は一寸の治療で健康を回復させる新療法です

▲尚美容部は従前通り最新の技術を以つて親切、丁寧に奉仕致します

フオート街二一三五 電話三一三一

チエリー美容院

北キング街二一九 電話三五五三

エース美容院

野田サエ子

Cherry Beauty Solon

Ace Beauty Shoppe

1135 Fort St. Phone 3131 119 N. King St. Phone 3553

Image 3.8

Advertisement for free Reiki treatments at Alice Saeko Noda's beauty salons, Honolulu
Hawaii Hochi, February 5, 1938, p. 2



Image 3.9

(l to r) Bunki Aoyama, Chūjirō Hayashi, Hawayo Takata, Kiyoe Hayashi
Makiki Cemetery, Honolulu

Hawaii Hochi, February 23, 1938, p. 6



Image 3.10

(l to r) Bunki Aoyama, Kiyoe Hayashi, Hawayo Takata, Chūjirō Hayashi
Probably at Grove Hotel, Honolulu, February 22, 1938
Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 3.11

“Usui-style Reiki Therapy Course at Kurtistown [Jodo Mission], Hawaii Island, December 26, 1938”

Standing, far left, is Tatsuji Nagao

Standing, sixth from left, is Hawayo Takata

Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 3.12
Hawayo Takata
Hilo Home-Clinic, c. 1940
Hawayo Takata Archive
University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 3.13

Classified ad for Reiki
Hilo Tribune-Herald, March 3, 1941

Jan. 9 ~~th~~ 1936 -

continued

Mr Nakada

Being a miser or a spend thrift, his heart
or a low brow, worker or a hobo, comes
from being self selfishness. The
center is always self - the right & the
middle path is to work & to contribute
to the need. We all need a system of
thought and to put them into system.

5 minutes recess } Impression :
Lecture very interesting. It is the
expression "Truth" & the middle path
and when put into practice, one will
attain success & happiness.

#3 Prof. Hiroike - Son in law - to Prof.
Explanation of Morality - American
Kant, Confucius, Shaka, Christ &
Socrates, combined

Jan 10 - 1:30 p.m. Mr Nakada

In order to be successful one must
work with heart & soul, not only

Jan 10 - 1936 -

the outward expression, but inner truth
as aim.

Mr Kagawa: - If you want to better your
tomorrow, one must live right today - Your
today - see the right and see what you reap
Your past, present & future. We all "struggle
for existence" - *shimaga to me ni doriyoku an*
- all things ^{with life} are subject to change. one must
sacrifice in order to create a better surrounding.

Jan 11 - 9 a.m. - Mr Kagawa - #6

same as yesterday - #6

Jan 11 - 10: A.M. - Lecture - #7

Jan 11 - 2:30 p.m. Lecture by Mr Kagawa.

Impression: - Self sacrifice!

Jan 12. 5:00 - 10 A.M. -

In order to have a peaceful world
one must have a peaceful mind. 天無爵而人爵從之

Image 3.14

Excerpt from Takata's diary, January 1936
Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 4.1

Folding Travel Certificate Cases (l to r)
 American Indian Church Temple and Indian Missions Minister License
 Indian Association of America Doctor of Naturopathy Certificate
 Hayashi Reiki Kenkyūkai Okuden Certificate
 Hayashi Reiki Kenkyūkai Shinpiden Certificate
 Hayashi Reiki Kenkyūkai Shoden Certificate
 Photograph courtesy of Phyllis Furumoto



Image 4.2

Doris Duke with first husband James Cromwell, Hawaii 1935

Photo from *The Design Daredevil*

<http://thedesigndaredevil.com/2014/05/shangri-la/>



Image 4.3

The Vento family c. 1942, Bremerton, WA
(*clockwise from left*), James Theodore "Ted" Vento,
Esther Opsata Vento, Steven Vento, and Lani Joy
Vento. (not pictured: James Joseph Vento)
Photo courtesy of Steven Vento



Image 4.4

Hawayo Takata, Margaret Opsata, and unidentified Opsata child
digging for clams during Takata's 1951 mainland teaching tour
Hood Canal, WA, July 1951
Private collection of Phyllis Furumoto



Image 4.5

Annual International Convention, Rosicrucian Order (AMORC)
 San Jose, California, July 1951 (photo cropped)
 (Hawayo Takata seated, second from right, second row from bottom)
 Hawayo Takata Archive, American Religions Collection
 University of California, Santa Barbara



...IS MIND POWER REAL?

HAVE YOU READ volumes on the power of thought? Perhaps you have listened to lengthy theoretical addresses on the forces of mind. You may have wondered if these same writers and lecturers on mind power know how to use it. How many mountains of personal obstacles—everyday trials and tribulations—have *they* moved? What are these subtle principles whereby man can skillfully remove the barriers that impede his progress? How can *you* displace the obstructions and hindrances to *your* goal...the mountains in *your* life? Can practical information about inner power be reduced to mere words...words for public dissemination? Or, is there a secret method especially and uniquely preserved for the worthy seeker...practicable only under ideal circumstances? If so, who has the secret method? Where can it be found?

Investigate the Rosicrucians (NOT a religion), the oldest *practical* philosophical fraternity on earth. See if they cannot show you a method for attainment such as you may not have dreamed possible. Thousands of men and women today are enjoying mental mastery...realization of ideals...the attainment of their objectives. They *know* the secret methods for converting mountains of personal problems into green valleys of achievement.

ACCEPT THIS OFFER

A FREE book, *The Mastery of Life*, is yours for the asking. It explains how easily you may enter upon the path of attainment. Fill in and send coupon *today!*

SCRIBE J. J. W.
THE ROSICRUCIANS (AMORC)
San Jose, California

Please send me the book, *The Mastery of Life*, which explains how I may learn to use my faculties and powers of mind.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
Zone Number _____ State _____

The
ROSICRUCIANS (AMORC) San Jose, California



What Strange Powers Did The Ancients Possess?

EVERY important discovery relating to mind power, sound thinking and cause and effect, as applied to self-advancement, was known centuries ago, before the masses could read and write.

Much has been written about the wise men of old. A popular fallacy has it that their secrets of personal power and successful living were lost to the world. Knowledge of nature's laws, accumulated through the ages, is never lost. At times the great truths possessed by the sages were hidden from unscrupulous men in high places, but never destroyed.

Why Were Their Secrets Closely Guarded?

Only recently, as time is measured; not more than twenty generations ago, less than 1/100th of 1% of the earth's people were thought capable of receiving basic knowledge about the laws of life, for it is an elementary truism that knowledge is power and that power cannot be entrusted to the ignorant and the unworthy. Wisdom is not readily attainable by the general public; nor recognized when right within reach. The average person absorbs a multitude of details about things, but goes through life without ever knowing where and how to acquire mastery of the fundamentals of the inner mind—that mysterious silent something which “whispers” to you from within.

Fundamental Laws of Nature

Your habits, accomplishments and weaknesses are the effects of causes. Your thoughts and actions are governed by fundamental laws. Example: The law of compensation is as funda-

mental as the laws of breathing, eating and sleeping. All fixed laws of nature are as fascinating to study as they are vital to understand for success in life.

You can learn to find and follow every basic law of life. You can begin at any time to discover a whole new world of interesting truths. You can start at once to awaken your inner powers of self-understanding and self-advancement. You can learn from one of the world's oldest institutions, first known in America in 1694. Enjoying the high regard of hundreds of leaders, thinkers and teachers, the order is known as the Rosicrucian Brotherhood. Its complete name is the “Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis,” abbreviated by the initials “AMORC.” The teachings of the Order are not sold, for it is not a commercial organization, nor is it a religious sect. It is a non-profit fraternity, a brotherhood in the true sense.

Not For General Distribution

Sincere men and women, in search of the truth—those who wish to fit in with the ways of the world—are invited to write for a complimentary copy of the sealed booklet, “The Mastery of Life.” It tells how to contact the librarian of the archives of AMORC for this rare knowledge. This booklet is not intended for general distribution; nor is it sent without request. It is therefore suggested that you write for your copy to Scribe J.P.E.

The **ROSICRUCIANS**
[AMORC]
San Jose California

Image 4.6

AMORC Magazine Advertisements from the late 1940s
left, *Popular Mechanics* 88:6 (December 1947), p. 6
right, *Popular Mechanics* 89:5 (May 1948), p. 6



Image 4.7

Blank Certificate of Takata's
Hawayo Takata Archive, American Religions Collection
University of California, Santa Barbara

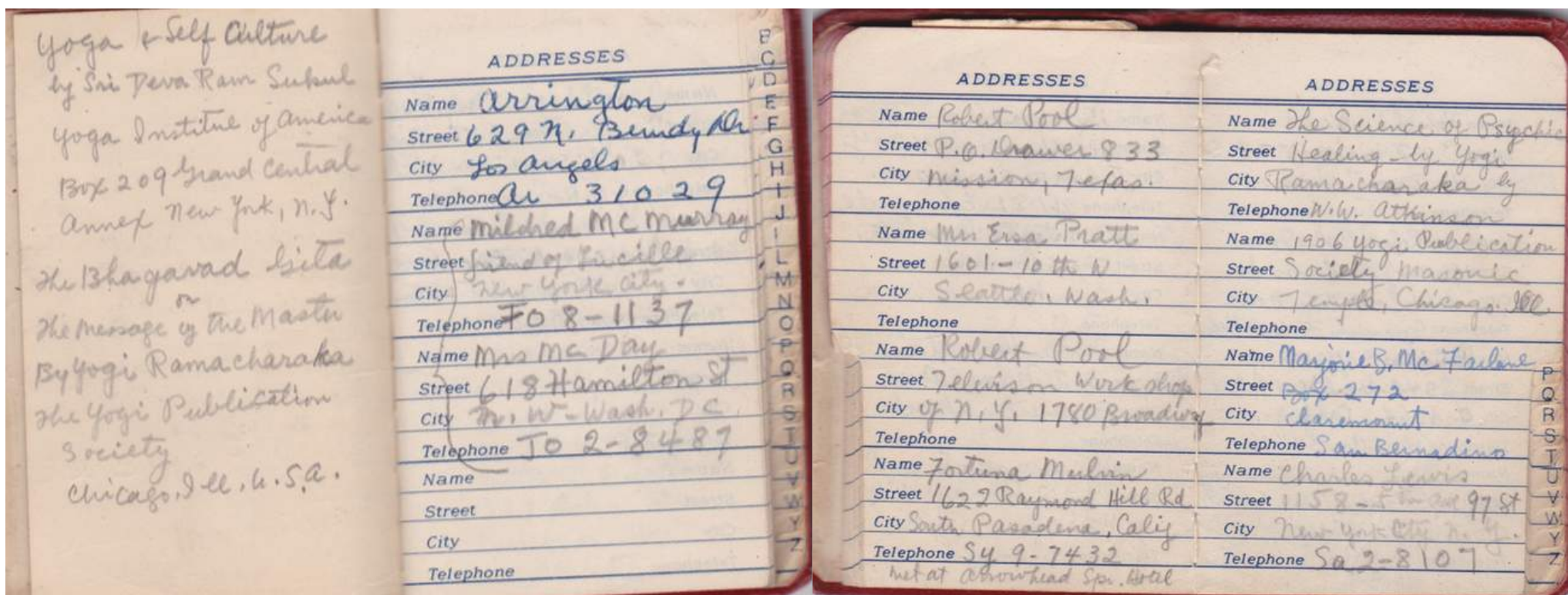


Image 4.8

References to Yoga Books in Takata's Address Book c. 1951
Hawayo Takata Archive, American Religions Collection
University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 5.1

Letters to Hawayo Takata, Waikiki, Honolulu, inspired by Sally Hammond's *We Are All Healers* (1973)
 Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 5.2

Hawayo Takata (front row, second from left) and Ethel Lombardi (front row, third from left) with a class
Probably Chicago area, c. 1978
Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 5.3

Beth Gray (front row, second from left) and Hawayo Takata (center)
Trinity Metaphysical Center, Redwood City, California, c. 1979
Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara

UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF THE MASTER

TEST QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LICENTIATE OR HEALING OR ORDAINED MINISTER
from a "NEW TEXT OF SPIRITUAL PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION"

Name of Applicant	Address
Name of Sponsoring Minister	Date of Test

PLEASE CIRCLE CORRECT ANSWER: Questions NOT answered will be considered wrong.

1. Man is by nature a spiritual being.	TRUE FALSE
2. Man, a spiritual entity, an individualized segment of the World Soul, is seeking his God.	TRUE FALSE
3. Ignorance is the origin of seeming sin.	TRUE FALSE
4. Christianity centers its teachings upon the life of Jesus.	TRUE FALSE
5. Jesus clairaudiently perceived Daniel under a distant fig tree.	TRUE FALSE
6. After the crucifixion and death of Jesus, He first appeared to Mary and asked her to touch him.	TRUE FALSE
7. Queen Victoria could not contact Prince Albert through a Medium.	TRUE FALSE
8. The beginning date of the strange rappings at the Fox farm in Hydesville, N. Y. was November 31, 1748.	TRUE FALSE
9. The Fox sisters were the first mediums.	TRUE FALSE
10. Abraham Lincoln consulted the Etheric World on many occasions.	TRUE FALSE
11. Stanford University was founded on advice from the Spirit World.	TRUE FALSE
12. Andrew Jackson Davis was a believer of Spiritualism.	TRUE FALSE
13. In the mid 19th century, thousands of people, from all walks of life gained evidence of the continuity of life.	TRUE FALSE
14. Sir William Crooks, through the mediumship of D. D. Home, established negative findings in his investigation of spiritual phenomena.	TRUE FALSE
15. Stainton Moses, an Anglican clergyman, produced both mental and physical phenomena.	TRUE FALSE
16. Neither Mrs. Leonore E. Piper or Mrs. Chenoweth were inspired by the famed Imperator Group.	TRUE FALSE

9-0

MINISTER'S MEMBERSHIP CARD NO. _____

Universal Church of the Master
National Headquarters, Oakland, California
♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

This is to Certify that

REV. HAWAYO TAKATA

holds Certificate No. 1422

and is in good standing until December 31, 197 5

H. W. Margrave L. L. Divine
President Secretary

Signature Hawayo Takata

Image 5.4
Universal Church of the Master Ordination Exam (excerpt)
and Minister's License, 1975
Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California, Santa Barbara



Image 5.5

Hawayo Takata, Eulalia Atkinson, Teri Atkinson Apodaca, and Christine Gröte,
San Jose, California, c. 1974

Personal collection of Teri Apodaca



Image 5.6
Map showing the Residences and Training Dates of
Hawayo Takata's Twenty-Two Publicly-Confirmed Master Students

Seasons Greetings for a Happy Prosperous 1977.

I wish to thank you all for the many kindness given me, with gifts, bouquets, invitations to your lovely homes to share the feasts you so kindly prepared with Love and Reiki Hands.

It is with gratitude and Aloha to you all, that I write this letter to say "Thank You," to let you know that time has come for me to retire this year. I have gained many friends and students during my Reiki Tours, these past years. They were a great joy, Inspiring receiving knowledge and Wisdom.

Wishing you the Best of Health, Happiness, to have Security and prepare for Longevity, Peace of mind and Success!!!

I remain, most gratefully yours,

Rev. Hawayo Takata

I have created 3 Reiki Masters to carry on this noble work. They are trusting, Capable, kind and with humility serve God and mankind. They are :-

Master John Gray, 227 Highland Terrace, Woodside
Calif. 94062 - phone 415-851-2887 - 851-7404

Master Virginia Sandahl - 419 Winnemac St
Park Forest Ill. 60466 - ph. 312-7486639

Master Ethel Lombardi - 93 Spring Creek Rd. Rt # 5
Lockport, Ill - 60441 - ph 815-83882

Image 5.7

Hawayo Takata's Retirement Announcement

December 1976

Hawayo Takata Archive, University of California,
Santa Barbara

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