

Embracing Ritual Healing: The Case of *Sazuke* in Tenrikyo in Contemporary Taiwan

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Abstract This paper will explore how the practice of ritual healing (*sazuke*) has played a prominent part in the propagation of a Japanese new religious movement (Tenrikyo) in Taiwan. The author firstly unravels the mystery of Tenrikyo's healing ritual (*sazuke*) and its role in enabling Taiwanese followers' potential to re-establish their relationship with the world. The author points out that *sazuke* is similar to Taiwanese folk therapy and fits into Taiwan's multi-medical systems. The author also examines the features of Tenrikyo's healing practice in Taiwan and discusses the evolution of *sazuke* from a non-institutionalised practice to a bureaucratised one. The author then advances to a more widely theoretical consideration by discussing how *sazuke* became a force that enabled Taiwanese people to respond to the changing world and how it facilitated peoples' transformation when they were confronted by daily troubles and difficulties.

Keywords Tenrikyo · Japanese new religious movement · Inculturation · *Sazuke* · Ritual healing · Taiwan

Introduction

Tenrikyo is a new religious movement originating from divine revelations given to a Japanese woman called Nakayama Miki (1798–1887) in 1838. Having first emerged in Tenri City, Japan, in 1838, this 'original place of human beings' in Tenrikyo is called *jiba*, where the central authority of the Tenrikyo administrative system, the headquarters, is situated and which serves as a focal point for pilgrimage. In Tenri City, as elsewhere, Tenrikyo followers can experience the power of religion by witnessing the religious efficacy of *sazuke* (healing), another main characteristic of this new religious movement.

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Tenri City now has a reputation for being a city of faith in Japan, as it has a number of huge Tenrikyo-affiliated edifices, such as sanctuaries, facilities and dormitories and millions of annual visitors and pilgrims from all over the world. Tenrikyo has spread overseas to Taiwan, South Korea and Brazil, where a number of local churches have been established in rural and urban areas (Morii 2008). One Tenrikyo-affiliated academic resource shows that from 1998 to 2004, Tenrikyo appeared to do well in terms of its number of churches and followers around the world (see 'Appendix' and Morii 2008). According to the Tenrikyo Newsletter in 2010, it had 17,136 churches and 18,300 mission stations around the world (Tenrikyo 2011).

Although Tenrikyo has some challenges ahead as illustrated below, its propagation appears to have been successful in Taiwan, with some 8238 followers in that country as of 2004 (Morii 2008). This paper will focus on the practice of *sazuke* among Tenrikyo adherents in contemporary Taiwan. As mentioned above, despite its positive outreach across Japan and overseas, Tenrikyo is encountering some challenges in the contemporary world. Firstly, Taiwanese people have very pragmatic attitudes towards religion, and this may prompt them to stop visiting their local Tenrikyo churches or even convert to other Japanese new religions in Taiwan such as Mahikari (Chang 2001). Secondly, the ethnic composition of Tenrikyo in Taiwan is mostly the Hokkien people, with less success in expanding to the other three main ethnic groups (the Hakka, the Mainlanders and the Indigenous peoples). Thirdly, the demographic composition of Tenrikyo in Taiwan, which the author observed in his fieldwork study, is predominantly elderly and female, meaning that it continually encounters the problem of human resources, particularly within the younger generation. At the same time, however, the author's research suggests several things that could help sustain Taiwanese Tenrikyo in the future.

Tenrikyo has developed a number of survival strategies, such as making ritual healing (*sazuke*) more accessible to the general populace in Taiwan. *Sazuke* is usually associated with Tenrikyo's other religious activities such as pilgrimage to Church Headquarters in Japan, combining this religious journey with tourism in the context of transnational touristic consumerism in Japan. *Sazuke*, along with other religious practices, has served as an enhancement to the growth of Tenrikyo. *Sazuke* is a ritual that concentrates on people's needs, and ministers of *sazuke* empathise with the followers and give great weight to their perspectives while asking the help of a transcendental power. However, most studies concerning *sazuke* seem to be clouded by the tradition of healing, ritual and theological discourse (Becker 1986; Huang 1993; Tenri University Press 1999), and attention is mostly given to descriptions of administering treatment.

In this article, the author will explore many aspects of *sazuke* in Tenrikyo and show why this healing practice has come to assume such a prominent place in Tenrikyo, sustaining Tenrikyo's position and helping followers to respond to a constantly changing world in Taiwan. In other words, on the basis of this investigation, the author will show that *sazuke* is successful in Taiwan for three reasons: it involves the historical and structural link between Tenrikyo and Taiwan; it is compatible with the local religious system; and it has been refashioned in a bureaucratic and hierarchical form that makes it desirable for Hokkien followers to embark on a new career by attending the *sazuke* training programme and establishing their own home-based mission stations.

Background

In contemporary anthropology, there are a number of relevant debates on ritual healing. The first concerns the relationship between shamanic healing and modernity, indicating that modernity does not lead to a decline of shamanic healing but rather gives rise to its increasing anthropological relevance. Luhrmann (1989, 340–344) argues that magic in England is the logical conclusion of modern individualism, making magic a triumph of modernity with its emphasis on individual freedom and its denial of the authority found in traditional belief. For Hori (1975) and Yumiyama (1995), shamanic healing in Japan persists by taking new forms in response to the changing world. Valley (2002, 568) argues that the orthodox ethics of Jainism in India—non-violence, self-control and renunciation—are refined by the Jains of the diaspora in North America in ways that are reflective of, and enable them to adapt to, their foreign land. Ritual healing is considered to be the means of personal transformation and negotiation within society, and personal representation between societies (Csordas 1999, 19).

Fujii (2007b, 171–195) published an article relevant to this research, albeit his focus being on Tenrikyo's expansion to Manchuria during Japanese military Imperialism (1910–1945).¹ He explored Manchuria's colonial encounter with Japan and the effect it had on the heavy presence of Tenrikyo in Northeast China and revealed Tenrikyo's involvement in Japanese imperialist expansion through the following three aspects: Tenrikyo's services for Japan's imperial army and immigrants; a commitment to proselytise Chinese people; and the task of undertaking universal salvation. Fujii suggests two key pillars of Tenrikyo's propagation policy in Manchuria. The first is *sazuke*, by which Tenrikyo followers receive healing not only through language (cognitive activity) but also through bodily movement (physical experiences). The second is what Watanabe (2001) terms a 'laity-focused propagation model' or what Inoue (1994, 192) terms 'the broad reproductive type of missionary activities' or 'ten thousand-based missionary principle' (*bazinbukyoshugi*), by which Tenrikyo followers can rely on their circles of family members, friends and colleagues to promote organisational growth.

Tenrikyo hold regular *sazuke* training programmes in its Church Headquarters (Jiba), with anyone completing the course able to become a minister (*yoboku*). *Yoboku* are entitled to engage in a saving mission by administering *sazuke* for both Tenrikyo followers and non-Tenrikyo followers. The adherents in training that the author met in Taiwan were already members of Tenrikyo and awaited the next part of the programme held in Jiba with keen anticipation. They expected that their role in Tenrikyo's missionary activities would be more influential if they completed the *sazuke* training programme in Jiba, received a certificate to become a *yoboku* and obtained formal permission to establish home-based units and administer *sazuke*. As Wilson (1990, 208–209) points out, the availability of therapy to a wider public, along with the link between therapy and (spiritual) mobility,² is one of the characteristics of new religious movements. During *sazuke* training sessions, initiates are instructed to recognise the ultimate power of God the Parent, the transcendent

¹ Manchuria refers to the geographical region in Northeast Asia that covers modern China (Heilongjiang, Jilin and Liaoning provinces), Inner Mongolia and Russia.

² Spiritual mobility in Tenrikyo refers to the transition of one's spiritual and organisational position (status) from lower to higher (or from junior to senior). For instance, positions in Tenrikyo from lower to higher status rank as follows: initiate, minister (*yoboku*), the head of a mission station, the head of a branch church and the head of a grand church, with the leader of Tenrikyo (*shinbashira*) at the apex of the administrative system.

divinity who creates Tenrikyo's history, who is seen as the source of joy and inspiration and whom all Tenrikyo followers venerate in their daily lives. For Taiwanese adherents, being a *yoboku* not only gives a person the authority to administer *sazuke* in a certain missionary jurisdiction but also confers the entitlement to set up a home-based unit (called a home shrine) accredited by the relevant authority.

Methods

In his fieldwork, the author adopted ethnographic observation and interviews, coupled with literature analysis and field notes. He visited Tenrikyo churches in the countryside of Chiayi County in the southern region of Taiwan and engaged in long-term ethnographic observation as a way of showing endeavour and commitment to close interaction with the members of the Tenrikyo community. Interviews were carried out in various languages such as Mandarin, Taiwanese Hokkien, English and Japanese. During his long-term involvement in Tenrikyo's yearly schedule, the author conducted semi-structured, flexible interviews, using open-ended questions he had designed. In analysing his data, the author provided several ethnographic accounts in relation to the practice of *sazuke* in Taiwan and revealed the reasons why *sazuke* is significant to Taiwanese followers' ordinary lives as well as to the organisational growth of Tenrikyo itself. For instance, the actual process between ethnographic descriptions and their subsequent analysis involves referring to research participants' perspectives (interviews) and intense observations of how *sazuke* fitted into the local religious system.

Tenrikyo and *Sazuke*

Nakayama Miki—known as The Founder—lived for almost 90 years (1798–1887). On 26 October 1838, at the age of 41, Tenrikyo followers claim that Miki's husband offered her as a spiritual medium to an unknown supernatural power, a god termed in Tenrikyo as *Tenri-O-no-Mikoto* ('God the Parent') (Tenrikyo Church Headquarters 1996).

Sazuke was originally a magical power devised and performed by Miki for healing those suffering from very serious illnesses. The initial administration of *sazuke* dates back to 5 November 1854, when Miki administered a religious examination and successful treatment for her daughter who was in labour (Tenrikyo Church Headquarters 1996, 28). Tales of Miki spread from one village to another and acted as a catalyst for encouraging the local populace's attention. Miki widened Tenrikyo's scope of activity through the force of healing in childbirth and other matters, but her influence extended beyond women and children. *Sazuke* plays an important part in facilitating Tenrikyo's propagation, raising its profile from within the rural areas and giving it strength in neighbouring villages and into metropolitan districts in Japan and eventually extending its influence overseas (Fujii 2006; Hori 1975; Kaneko 1996; Shimazono 1979). It has since been updated for today's society. For instance, Tenrikyo has now developed a *sazuke* training programme and refashioned it in a bureaucratic and institutional form in order to cultivate more prospective ministers.

Tenrikyo developed in the dual context of old religions and new religions in Japan. There are a number of theories about the influences and contextual background of Tenrikyo. Japanese folk religion is assumed to provide the bedrock principles of the movement's magico-religious rituals (Hori 1968), with Buddhism providing inspiration

(Miyake 1987), as well as Shinto, notably from the Tokugawa, Meiji and Showa periods (Ellwood 1982). Popular Buddhism such as Jodo-shu (a branch of Pure Land Buddhism) played an important part in the spiritual life of the general populace as well as the background of Tenrikyo. Tenrikyo Doyusha (1993) indicates that Miki's family were influential members of a local Jodo-shu temple. At the age of 16, Miki was a devotee of Buddhism, preoccupied by her passionate spiritual quest. Aged 19, she joined 18 other lay followers attending a five-stage intensive training programme, *gojusoden* (fivefold transmission) in the Zenpuku Temple (see Fig. 1) and, in recognition of her spiritual maturity at such an early age, an honorary certificate of spiritual maturation was conferred on Miki in the ordination ceremony thereafter.

In addition to Japan's existing cultural and philosophical resources, changing social circumstances in Japan since the late Tokugawa period (1603–1868) also played a very significant role in encouraging the birth and growth of a new breed of religious group (Astley 2006; Gordon 2003; McFarland 1967). For instance, the impoverishment of the peasantry, the dismantling of the old status hierarchy and its replacement with a modern and national state gave rise to many new cults in the nineteenth century. Also, social hardships brought about by key events such as World War II and oil shock fed into the growth of new religions such as Tenrikyo.

The expansion of Tenrikyo to Taiwan is linked to this religion's development in Japan. In Japan, Tenrikyo's ambition to become a nationally recognised organisation was thwarted by other religious groups' harassment and official suppression. For instance, the original Miki-led religious movement arose due to a vast number of followers flowing from various regions into its 'holy site' (Tenri City in Nara prefecture), but herein lay another problem; pilgrims inextricably incurred the envy of local Shinto, Buddhist, Shugendo and medical practitioners, and particularly the wrath of the Meiji government which had transformed State Shinto from a religious body into a secular one, with a view to making Shinto a powerful ideological tool for controlling the Japanese people (Murakami 1990). Miki had been almost routinely harassed by local Shinto priests, Buddhist monks and practitioners of Shugendo since 1864 (Tenrikyo Doyusha 1993).

It has been suggested that a strict policy on religion in the early Meiji period (1870s) constituted an underlying cause for the overseas spread of new religions such as Tenrikyo (Huang 1991, 29; Inoue et al. 1990, 23; Kaneko 1996, 116). Tenrikyo was granted the right



Fig. 1 The Zenpuku Temple. Photographed on 24/01/12

to be an independent organisation in 1908, but still under the sway of the authorities, and this situation continued until the end of World War II (Kaneko 2000, 144–147). In Taiwan, Tenrikyo has been spread, prohibited and re-established through different historical stages. As the Japanese colonial government took power in 1895, Japanese Tenrikyo missionaries arrived in Taiwan and gradually found ways of reaching prospective followers in this new territory. However, Tenrikyo underwent a post-war period of stagnation in Taiwan (1945–1968), during which Japanese religions were heavily suppressed by the Nationalist Party-led government as the order of martial law came into force in 1949. With the lifting of martial law and the passage of the Bill of Civil Organisation in 1987, releasing the suppression of religious groups campaigning for greater democracy and liberation, new religious movements in Taiwan began to thrive, including Tenrikyo (Chang 2001, 13; Chiu 2006b, 1). In the English material, there is a fair amount of literature on the subject of Japanese new religious movements expanding overseas. However, what scanty evidence I have collected on the subject of Taiwan can only be seen in the works by Clarke (2006), Ellwood (1982) and Shimazono (1991). Ellwood has provided very little information about Tenrikyo's overseas missions to Taiwan. In addition, it should be noted that Shimazono presented a little information about Tenrikyo's general condition in Taiwan, but he relied heavily on a published Japanese source of Huang's (1989) early ethnographic work on changing worship at a local Tenrikyo church in post-war Taiwan. Clarke described some new religious movements emerging in Taiwan, but none of these were Japanese-based communities. In Japanese materials, the written sources published by Huang (1989) and three Japanese researchers, Fujii (2006, 2007a), Inoue (2007) and Morii (2008), are the sources I utilised to study development of Japan's new religions in Taiwan.

As Tenrikyo has expanded, so the nature of *sazuke* has changed. Firstly, *sazuke* can now be administered by Tenrikyo devotees, rather than by the Founder herself alone, as was the case initially. Miki decreed that she had God's permission to bestow on Tenrikyo followers the divine right to administer *sazuke*, but that this privilege must be obtained by completing a set of spiritual development courses called *Shuyoka*, or a set of nine lectures called *Besseki*, in Tenrikyo's Church Headquarters. Secondly, people exercising *sazuke* can heal not only serious afflictions, but also a wide range of symptoms resulting from stress, anxiety and loneliness. This also indicates that *sazuke* fitted in with different social settings and times because it took different shapes and forms through a complex articulation of the daily life of followers.

As noted above, most Tenrikyo followers in Taiwan belong to the Hokkien group, which mirrors Fujii's previous observations (Fujii 2006, 70).³ For some Taiwanese, notably among the Hokkien group, Japan is seen as a model to be emulated, even as a mother country (Gates 1981, 253; Huang 2003, 310; Suzuki 2001, 268). Gates (ibid.) has explained that some Taiwanese, notably the upper classes, look up to Japanese people as a way of claiming their superiority or of making a distinction between themselves and the 'Mainlanders' in Taiwan. By contrast, the 'Mainlanders' tend to boast that they are direct descendents of the Han homeland (Mainland China) and have an identification with China rather than Japan. In addition, the colonial education policy resulted in an increase in the literacy among the Hokkien in Taiwan, which in return helped them, despite the majority

³ The demographical composition of Taiwan includes five main groups: the earliest Chinese immigrants (the Hokkien and Hakka), the 'Mainlanders', new immigrants and indigenous peoples. The Hokkien group is ranked the highest in terms of their ethnic population (68 %), followed by the Hakka group (14 %), the Mainlanders (7 %), new immigrants (2 %) and indigenous people (1.8 %) (Hakka Affairs Council 2011, 174).

being of the older generation, to be familiar with Japanese new religions (Fuji 2007a, 120). This point is useful in understanding Taiwanese attitudes towards Japan as well as their preference for Japanese-related cultural forces such as Tenrikyo. In addition, the author has discovered that Hokkien Tenrikyo followers tend to associate *sazuke* with ritual practice that can bring them practical benefits (healing effects). The following section presents the practice of *sazuke* in a contemporary Tenrikyo church in rural Taiwan. The information is based on ethnographical materials collected during the author's field studies in two Tenrikyo local churches in Chiayi City and County in Taiwan in 2009 and 2011: Tenrikyo Chiayi Dong-Men Church and Tenrikyo Dong-Men Church.

Ethnographic Account of *Sazuke* in Chiayi, Rural Taiwan

In Chiayi, Southwest Taiwan, receiving *sazuke* is accessible to ordinary Hokkien-speaking people (both members and non-members of Tenrikyo). This accessibility appears to appeal to people in the area and attracts some to the Tenrikyo Chiayi Dong-Men Church, to join the *Mikagura Uta* ('Songs for the Service') and receive a *sazuke*.⁴ In the pictures below, several features of the healing practice can be seen. Firstly, the locals could only receive *sazuke* after purifying themselves through singing and performing the *Mikagura Uta* which normally lasts 2 h. Secondly, in the worship hall where the shrine is located, the giver and receiver of *sazuke* sit on chairs or on the floor facing one another, with the female minister (*yoboku*) having her back to the shrine and performing the healing (see Figs. 2 and 3). Below is the life story of one elderly local woman, which the author collected during his fieldwork in Chiayi, showing how *sazuke* is of great significance to her life.

I usually came to visit the church to ask God's help, particularly to receive a *sazuke*. One day I felt down when I was doing my chores. This was followed by back pain. I visited local healing practitioners, but I still felt the pains. I turned to a Tenrikyo minister for help. I was told that *sazuke* is similar to a local healing practice, *shoukyu*, and I decided to receive a *sazuke*. To my surprise, I felt better, so I continue to come to the church for God's protection. Today my back pain seems to have gone.

In Taiwan, *sazuke* is usually performed according to the following basic pattern: (1) the performance of a preparatory greeting between the minister and the client; (2) the calling of the deity, *Tenri-O-no-Mikoto* (God the Parent), to descend and produce a particular effect on the relevant parts of the client's body; and (3) the concluding greetings such as thanks between the minister and the client. Kanbara Masaaki, a Japanese man aged 55, and his Taiwanese wife Yoneko live in the outskirts of Taichung City. They provide *sazuke* on demand for the locals. Mr Kanbara told the author in detail how he performs *sazuke* in this locality. 'When I am summoned to heal the afflicted, I usually perform *sazuke* for a person once a day and the time for healing probably lasts ten minutes'. However, there are occasionally cases where people are in critical condition. On these occasions, Mr Kanbara

⁴ *Mikagura Uta* is commonly known as The Sacred Dance (or The Songs for the Service) in Tenrikyo. It is one of three major teachings of Tenrikyo. The sacred dance is deemed normative since it was composed by the Founder (Miki) during her preachings from 1866 to 1875. It can be divided into two main parts: *Suwari Tsutome* (the seated service) and *teodori* (hand movement). It was drawn from Miki's interpretation of her revelations at various times and written accordingly in the form of lyrics to be accompanied by melody and hand movements.



Fig. 2 Sazuke 1. Photographed on 13/12/11



Fig. 3 Sazuke 2. Photographed on 13/12/11

will perform *sazuke* three times a day, each time lasting for about an hour. He also noted that when he is performing the *sazuke*, he places his left hand on the aching part of the receiver's body and repeats '*ashiki o harote tasuke tamae, Tenri-O-no-Mikoto*' (「あし気をはろうてたすけたまへてんりわうのみこと」, 'Sweeping away evils, please save us, *Tenri-O-no-Mikoto*') in a low and resolute voice. Lastly, he reminded the author that performing *sazuke* needs to consider gender, that is, a male minister normally provides *sazuke* for men and a female for women, in order to avoid controversy.

The author witnessed his first *sazuke* while conducting fieldwork in Chiayi County. The following is the author's description of the way *sazuke* was exercised on that occasion:

It is five o'clock on a typical sultry May afternoon, and deep within the walls of the local Tenrikyo church, a flock of followers is about to perform the Sacred Dance...

As the author is approaching his motorbike and getting ready to leave, a woman in her eighties named Mrs Cheng comes to ask if he could give her a lift home. Without

hesitation the author nods and she jumps up and sits behind the author... Mrs Cheng descends and ushers the author into her house. Then she greets another woman of her generation already sitting on a bamboo chair against the wall of the living room awaiting the arrival of Mrs Cheng..

At one point, Mrs Cheng wanders off the subject of her conversation, her right hand gently touching the right knee of the elderly visitor, rubbing it up and down, and suddenly she is lost in the contemplation of her hand for a moment. To assuage her guest's knee pain, Mrs Cheng explains in theological terms that all the pains result from a contaminated mind, and the only way to cure this illness is to purify the mind by performing the *Mikagura Uta* and receiving a *sazuke*. A moment later, the afflicted woman is requested to sit in a relaxed posture, to close her eyes and bend her head down a little, to concentrate her mind fully, and truly rely on divine intervention.

Sitting in front of her visitor, Mrs Cheng starts by chanting *Mikagura Uta*, accompanied by the performance of a typical Tenrikyo Seated Service—the hand movements. At the same time, Mrs Cheng urges her visitor to follow her body motions—not performing it would show lack of sincerity, and this would lessen its effectiveness. Throughout the healing process, Mrs Cheng lays her hands on the affected part of the visitor's body at intervals and when she does, she acts as a medium between a transcendental entity and her visitor, beseeching God the Parent to channel the energy that would cure the illness. Taking part, her visitor performs her mind-purifying movements in front of Mrs Cheng. 'Do you feel better?' asks Mrs Cheng after finishing her healing task. The elderly visitor replies positively.

In this event, both Mrs Cheng and her ailing visitor were attentive and mindful, believing that every movement formed part of the whole practice and that any distraction would potentially disturb the complexity of the interaction between them. Frivolous motions would signify insincerity. They both also accepted the idea that in *sazuke* healing, a contaminated mind as the source of illness can be purified by an external energy from above.

Rather than being a 'quack', Mrs Cheng, like other Tenrikyo *yoboku*, sees the provision of *sazuke* to those with medical needs as central to the establishment of the Tenrikyo enterprise in her locality. Such a view may explain why she feels the need to perform a daily sacred dance in the worship sanctuary herself to purify her soul and make a plea before the shrine.

Ethnographic Accounts of *Sazuke* in Urban Taiwan

For a comparative ethnography, the author selected a church located in New Taipei City, a prosperous city in North Taiwan with the largest number of citizens as a result of rapid urbanisation during the past decades. The Church is named Tenrikyo Taipei Banqiao An-Le church and operates under a grand church (called Yamana *daikyokai*). In many respects, the church belongs to a small mission station. After making contact with the heads of the two churches, the author was able to gain access to the mission station and participate in regular activities among the local followers on several occasions.

The small mission station is a typical home-based unit without Tenrikyo's architectural style in its appearance. With approval from the parent church, Yamana *daikyokai*, the

mission station was set up on 26 February 1998. The current leader is Mr Wang. The establishment of this station results from not only the effect of industrialisation but also Mr Wang's sincere commitment to mission. He shared with the author his motive in moving from his hometown in southern Taiwan to the city in the north of the country:

I came from a rural area in Yun-Lin County. My mother was a Tenrikyo adherent. In 1957, I was in absolute agony when my mother and eldest son passed away one after another. To make matters worse, I suffered from severe heart disease which nearly ended my life. I turned to Tenrikyo Beigan church, seeking help from the minister who administered a *sazuke* to me. Then I began to join religious activities. Six months later, I came through my illness. In 1969, I made a pilgrimage to Jiba and attended a three-month training course. After undergoing initiation, I was awarded certification and returned to Taiwan. Seeing large numbers of villagers flowing from my hometown to Taipei as a consequence of industrialisation, I seized the opportunity to start a venture in a distant and unfamiliar place—Taipei—where I embarked upon several new careers as a herb-seller, a waste-picker and a Tenrikyo minister able to help other people by administering *sazuke*.

Today, Mr Wang has a steady number of followers, with an average of 30 people attending the monthly service, some of the attendants being his descendants. Mr Wang once received special coverage of his propagation story in a monthly magazine issued by Tenrikyo Toyosha in recognition of his contributions to the religion.

Similarly, in another urban setting in Great Taichung City, the third largest metropolis of Taiwan, the author interviewed a local housewife who was also a patient. The interviewee remarked on how Tenrikyo's healing and ritual performances had changed her life:

I was seriously ill with systemic lupus erythematosus (or SLE) when I was studying in secondary school. It was thanks to my mum's friend who was a Tenrikyo follower that I was able to visit [the Tenrikyo church], worship [God] and ask for help. Because of [my illness], I had to seek help from medical practitioners or priests. I felt a bit better after visiting the church, despite the fact that I wasn't healed. But I had a special experience at that time. Tenrikyo has rituals, and I started receiving *sazuke* from time to time ... When I was performing the hand movements, I felt great and actually enjoyed it. A long time ago a teacher told me a story about the *Mikagura Uta*, saying that there is a seventy-year-old woman who contracted cancer. The old lady managed to recover her health by practicing hand movements. In Tenrikyo, this sacred dance is a fundamental basis for world salvation. When you dance and immerse yourself in the music and song, your body, mind and spirit become one. This was what I felt at that moment.

***Sazuke*: The Healing That Develops in Taiwanese Religious Life**

Sazuke, created by Tenrikyo's founder and modelled on earlier types of folk healing in Japan, is a relevant ritual for many Hokkien people, both adherents of Tenrikyo and not. A number of scholars have pointed out that Taiwan is a place where folk medicine maintains its dominant position, despite the country's evolution into a capitalised and modernised system (Chang 1996, 427–455; Chiu 2006a, 61–98; Lin 2000). According to a decade-long (1985–1995) survey study by Chiu, a number of folk healing practices such as *shoukyu*

(‘recalling the frightened soul’, explained below) remain some of the most popular religious activities in local life (Chiu 2006a, 79).

In traditional Taiwanese thought, every human consists of a body and a soul. The Chinese believe that when the soul is frightened by unknown external forces, it may exit from the body. The dislocation of the soul from the body would have a detrimental effect on the body, causing affliction with various forms of illness. This unbalanced body/soul status is the source of sickness, which needs to be rooted out through ritual performance such as *shoukyo*. Through performing *shoukyo*, the soul is able to return to its place and the body/soul relation can resume its status of equilibrium (Liu 1974, 314). *Shoukyo* is usually performed by a local shamanic healer. The manner of performing *shoukyo* may vary in its form, from an incantation to a rice-based ritual. The seekers of healing are expected to visit the healer in the daytime—auspicious times being 11:20 in the morning and 9:30 at night, which the local people term *yang* and which the Chinese usually associated with day, sun and vitality (Chen 2008, 24; 58).

According to Kleinman’s (1980) fieldwork study in Taiwan in the 1970s, there is a distinction in healing between Western (or Chinese) medicine and folk medicine, with the former emphasising the aetiology of a ‘disease’ and the medical way to cure it, but usually overlooking the context in which patients understand and live with the disease. On the other hand, folk medicine stresses these factors of a disease, paying attention to other dimensions of the patient’s problem which include family and social relationships. Kleinman also found that in the context of Taiwanese popular culture, Taiwanese people tend to seek help from the Western-trained medical doctor for relief from light or severe diseases, from Chinese herbal doctors for chronic disease and from folk (religious) practitioners for somatisation or neurosis. The reason why folk healing is still popular in the local setting, said Kleinman, was that the practitioner and the locals had a shared cosmology. In other words, both held the same world view. In addition, Chiu (2006a, 64) reveals that one key feature of popular religion in Taiwan is that the Taiwanese emphasise the efficacy of god. They can turn to any god who can provide an answer to their problems.

Chang (1996, 427–428) suggests that during the development of modernisation and globalisation, Taiwan developed a multi-medical system that combines Western medicine, Chinese herbal medicine and folk medicine. She found that the Taiwanese people are fascinated with a number of folk therapy activities or shamanic practices such as *shoukyo*. Chang also argues that while both Western and Chinese medicine explain the cause of disease to the afflicted, they cannot provide an answer to the question of why a person is afflicted by one illness and not another (or indeed why he or she is afflicted, instead of others). By contrast, folk therapy such as *shou-kyo* in Taiwan draws our attention to Taiwanese peoples’ understanding of the aetiology of illness and provides a structural and explanatory frame of reference by which Taiwanese followers understand the reasons why a person is ill and how his or her soul was out of the body as a result of influence from a known or unknown force.

The fact that *sazuke*’s persuasive power overcomes local Taiwanese objections lies in its religious efficacy in healing. The efficacy of *sazuke* is not simply a matter of pathology, but fundamentally a matter of experience (of the patient). For the patients, the occurrence of, as well as the healing of, an illness is palpable: when they feel ill, illness occurs; when they feel better, healing occurs. In other words, the patient’s subjective experience plays a decisive role in judging the mysterious and healing power of *sazuke*. Medical science, by contrast, appears to be relatively irrelevant here. McGuire (1983, 232–234) pointed out that patients’ (higher) expectations of being healed act as a contributing factor in their ability to deal with illness. According to McGuire, such expectations usually arise from a situation in

which patients see themselves as powerless and healers powerful, which prompts the patients to conjoin the healer or something else with transcendental power—thereby strengthening the healer.

Sazuke initiation has been refashioned in a bureaucratic and hierarchical form that makes it possible for Taiwanese Tenrikyo followers to hold authority over its sub-organisations and to expand this religious enterprise. Ellwood (1982, 76–78) suggested that one needs to look at several aspects of the bureaucratic form of *sazuke*. For instance, Tenrikyo provides two streams through which applicants aged 17 or older may secure a place on the spiritual development course. The two streams are monthly events and self-funded, with one stream designed as a three-month fixed pattern programme and the other being a more elastic package of nine one-day lectures that can be completed either in 9 months or, in exceptional circumstances, in just 1 month.

During the present phase of modernisation and globalisation in Taiwan, *sazuke* appears to be an enhancement of the power of Tenrikyo's members. For instance, since *sazuke* fits into existing patterns of local cultural and religious life, notably into the multi-medical systems, there has been a high demand for this healing practice in Taiwan. Taiwanese Tenrikyo followers perceive *sazuke* as a local folk therapy similar to *shoukyu*. The Taiwanese consider that *sazuke* brings a wide range of benefits, from considerable relief from pain, to an enhancement in belief and power, to access to an emotional anchor providing advice on how to live and so forth. *Sazuke* is seen as a magico-religious means for alleviating pains and curing long-term disease, an alternative to today's medical science and technology in Taiwan.

In addition, *sazuke* not only reinforces hierarchy and authority at the centre of Tenrikyo, but it can also stimulate pilgrimage to the Founder's birthplace. *Sazuke* in Tenrikyo in Japan and *shoukyu* in popular religion in Taiwan lie in the different institutional structures in which each religion is practised. Initiation into *sazuke* relies on a belief in superior beings, entails a closed institutional structure and involves initiates' strong ties and allegiances to their affiliated grand churches. In other words, *sazuke* initiation is concerned with the transition from heterogeneity to homogeneity, stressing that the inherent vitality of all humankind needs to resume its originally pure state. Its ultimate purpose does not rest so much on establishing a fundamental line institutionalising difference, as on creating a passage through which 'the Otherness' in human beings is removed. In Jiba, although followers are expected to develop strong ties and allegiance to their affiliated grand church, the division between different Tenrikyo subgroup systems is not supposed to occur.

Conclusion

During the author's field study, there were a number of opportunities to conduct participant observation of *sazuke*, eliciting Taiwanese peoples' views on this religious practice. Perhaps the most important aspect of *sazuke* is that it can bring practical benefits (*genze riyaku*) to the followers, which is not only a vital part of Tenrikyo but also an essential feature of popular religion in Chiayi, Taiwan. The fact that *sazuke* parallels local religious practices—the emphasis on practical benefits and bodily experience—among the Hokkien group in Chiayi may explain why *sazuke* can transcend cultural and language barriers and fit into the other Hokkien-based regions in Taiwan.

In addition, *sazuke* serves as a tool for consolidating the central authority of Tenrikyo as well as a stimulus to Tenrikyo pilgrimage. Over the course of *sazuke* initiation, the

institutional lines of Tenrikyo's subgroups were less discernible within the precincts of Jiba. In Tenrikyo Church Headquarters, perhaps explicit in the process of policy formulation and the implementation of the *sazuke* training programme, was the centralisation of bureaucracy—being ambitious to control and produce a vast number of missionary forces in order to extend its world influence. *Sazuke* as a form of spiritual mobility appeals to the Taiwanese people—whether or not Tenrikyo members—and encourages them to make a pilgrimage to Jiba. This was what made *sazuke* so appealing to the Taiwanese. The Taiwanese people linked *sazuke* with *yoboku* (*sazuke* practitioners). *Yoboku* is a privileged status as well as a symbolic capital that empowers initiates to establish home-based units, spread Tenrikyo's teachings and exercise healing services for ill people. Following this, the practice of *sazuke* suggests, perhaps emphatically, that the healing process involves not only faith within but also beyond. In other words, Tenrikyo followers would believe that it is the divine who exercises this mysterious power (Tenrikyo 2010). The ethnographic accounts of other research participants suggest a mysterious power at work relying upon the human or, more precisely, upon not only human but also healing ritual, which helps the Tenrikyo followers to reframe the world in a new aspect and empower themselves (Davis 1980, 151–160; Offner and Straelen 1963, 237–238).

The Church Headquarters in Jiba has managed to maintain its status as the sole institution of the dissemination of knowledge of healing within Tenrikyo, due mainly to the fact that only senior figures at that sacred site have access to *sazuke* knowledge and its transmission. In Hawaii, Takahashi (2008, 35) points out that the religious journey to Tenrikyo Church Headquarters, *ojibagaeri*, to attend a *sazuke* training course, plays an important role in consolidating Japanese Tenrikyo followers' allegiance to Japan's cultural and religious unity. *Ojibagaeri* can help the younger Japanese generation overseas to increase their religious awareness and ethnic identity and prevent them from being affected by Christianity and American culture. Healing skills have been institutionalised in the form of *Besseki* lectures held in Jiba, transmitted from a senior *yoboku* to a prospective one. Meanwhile, Church Headquarters shows no sign of overt hostility to medical science, indeed they established the Tenri Hospital where formal medical training in accordance with Tenrikyo's interests may be pursued. Tenrikyo followers publicly encourage the practical application of the medical science they learn in daily life and believe that knowledge of medicine and surgery is a necessary complement to spiritual healing.

Appendix

See Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 The number of Tenrikyo Churches (C.) and home-based units (H.) around the world from 1998 to 2004

Regions	Countries	1998		2001		2004	
		C.	H.	C.	H.	C.	H.
East Asia	<i>Korea</i>	80	70	89	88	90	94
	Taiwan	19	60	20	65	20	67
	Hong Kong	0	1	0	1	1	2
Southeast Asia	Thailand	0	7	0	7	0	7
	Laos	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Malaysia	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Singapore	0	3	0	3	0	3
	Indonesia	0	7	0	7	0	7
	The Philippines	0	4	0	4	0	5
	<i>Australia</i>	1	3	1	5	2	4
	New Zealand	0	1	0	1	0	1
	American Samoa	0	1	0	1	0	1
	South Asia	<i>India</i>	1	1	1	1	1
Nepal		0	1	0	1	0	1
Africa	<i>Congo</i>	1	2	1	2	1	2
	Guinea	0	0	0	1	0	1
	Uganda	0	0	0	0	0	1
	South Africa	0	0	0	0	0	1
Eastern Europe	Slovenia	0	1	0	1	0	1
Western Europe	UK	0	2	0	3	0	4
	Switzerland	0	1	0	1	2	2
	<i>France</i>	1	3	1	4	1	4
	Singapore	0	3	0	3	0	3
	Italy	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Spain	0	2	0	2	0	2
North America	<i>USA</i>	59	65	59	67	59	66
	Canada	4	10	4	10	4	10
	Mexico	2	6	2	5	2	8
Pacific Islands	<i>Hawaii</i>	37	37	37	37	37	37
South America	Martinique	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Argentina	0	11	0	13	1	13
	Chile	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Paraguay	3	4	3	4	3	4
	Peru	1	3	1	3	1	3
	Ecuador	0	1	0	1	0	1
	Columbia	0	5	1	5	2	4
	<i>Brazil</i>	78	307	81	305	82	307
Venezuela	0	1	0	1	0	1	

Source: Morii (2008). *Tenrikyo no kaigai-ten-to*. pp. 841–842. Tokyo: *San-bon-sha*

The rows italics indicate the highest concentration of Tenrikyo followers in each region

Table 2 The number of Tenrikyo overseas followers around the world

Regions	Countries	1998	2001	2004
East Asia	Korea	5169	5930	6316
	North Korea	3	4	4
	China	198	246	353
	<i>Taiwan</i>	<i>7300</i>	<i>741</i>	<i>8238</i>
	Hong Kong	134	124	121
	Macau	1	1	1
Southeast Asia	Vietnam	2	0	1
	Myanmar	3	3	4
	Cambodia	2	1	0
	<i>Thailand</i>	<i>719</i>	<i>806</i>	<i>1004</i>
	Laos	11	11	11
	Malaysia	191	196	196
	Singapore	103	96	107
	Indonesia	138	224	329
	The Philippines	154	157	127
	Australia	76	79	114
South Asia	New Zealand	12	11	13
	Bangladesh	1	1	5
	India	141	140	138
	<i>Nepal</i>	<i>154</i>	<i>177</i>	<i>187</i>
	Sri Lanka	2	10	9
Middle East	Maldives	0	1	1
	Iran	1	0	0
	Turkey	1	0	0
	Saudi Arabia	0	1	0
	<i>Palestine</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>0</i>
Africa	Egypt	2	0	1
	Algeria	1	1	0
	Ethiopia	3	2	3
	Ghana	2	2	2
	Nigeria	1	1	1
	Congo	19	28	20
	<i>Guinea</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>34</i>
	Uganda	0	0	3
	Tanzania	1	1	1
	Madagascar	2	2	2
South Africa	0	0	1	

Table 2 continued

Regions	Countries	1998	2001	2004
Eastern Europe	Ukraine	2	2	2
	Kazakhstan	4	8	8
	Slovakia	0	1	0
	Estonia	1	0	0
	Bulgaria	1	6	6
	Yugoslavia	0	1	0
	Serbia and Montenegro	0	0	1
	Slovenia	0	0	1
	Romania	0	0	1
	<i>Russia</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>10</i>
Western Europe	Sweden		1	1
	Norway	2	3	3
	Ireland	2	1	2
	UK	32	37	41
	Austria	0	4	9
	Holland	5	12	14
	Switzerland	22	24	23
	Denmark	0	1	5
	Germany	32	29	35
	<i>France</i>	<i>163</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>188</i>
	Belgium	0	9	11
	Italy	17	13	11
	Greece	2	2	2
North America	Spain	4	4	15
	Portugal	0	1	3
	<i>America</i>	<i>1805</i>	<i>1661</i>	<i>1703</i>
Pacific Islands	Canada	187	188	216
	<i>Hawaii</i>	<i>1121</i>	<i>1023</i>	<i>1520</i>
South America	Mexico	162	170	217
	Puerto Rico	2	0	0
	Panama	1	0	0
	Costa Rica	2	2	2
	Bahamas	0	0	1
	Argentina	72	74	89
	Uruguay	1	1	1
	Chile	6	9	12
	Paraguay	63	62	100
	Peru	49	58	53
	Ecuador	9	11	12
South America	Columbia	89	122	131
	<i>Brazil</i>	<i>5373</i>	<i>5833</i>	<i>6169</i>
	Venezuela	6	9	12

Source: Morii (2008). *Tenrikyo no kaigai-ten-to*. pp. 843–846. Tokyo: *San-bon-sha*

The rows italics indicate the highest concentration of Tenrikyo followers in each region

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