

East Asian UFO Religiosity

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24.1 Introduction

Drawing on my definition put forth in the *Handbook of East Asian New Religious Movements* (Pokorny and Winter 2018: 4–6), East Asia is taken to comprise China/Taiwan, the Koreas, Japan, and Vietnam. UFO religiosity here is not limited to the belief in aliens-cum-spacecraft but may also involve extraterrestrial entities in the absence of related vehicles and vice versa. This chapter is a first tour d’horizon of a subject hitherto not systematically researched by scholars of East Asian religions. Several movements of East Asian origin (Japan, China/Taiwan, South Korea) are introduced with a focus on their ufological aspects. Particular emphasis is given to the Japanese context where UFO religiosity thus far has taken its most expressive form.

East Asian ethnic UFO religiosity aside, a number of western UFO groups are visibly active in the region, such as most sizeably Scientology (operating branches in Japan: *Saientorōjī* サイエントロジー, <https://www.scientology.jp/>; South Korea: *Saiōnt’ollojigyo* 사이언톨로지교; Taiwan: *Shāndáji Jiàohuì* 山達基教會, <https://www.scientology.org.tw/>; and Vietnam: *Khoa luận giáo*) and Raelism (present in Japan: *Raerian Mūbumento* ラエリアンムーブメント, <https://www.raelianjapan.jp/>; South Korea: *Raellian Mubūmōnt’ū* 라엘리안 무브먼트, <http://www.raelian.co.kr/>; Taiwan: *Léiěr Yūndòng* 雷爾運動, <https://tw.rael.org/>; and Vietnam: *Phong trào Rael*, <https://vi.rael.org/>) with both having several hundreds to thousands of adherents altogether. Smaller groups with local followings going into the dozens comprise, among others, Benjamin Creme’s (1922–2016) Share International (Japan: *Shea Intānashonaru* シェア インターナショナル, <http://www.sjsh.co.jp/>); allegedly also being active in South Korea and Taiwan); Eduard Albert “Billy” Meier’s (b. 1937) FIGU or Freie Interessengemeinschaft für Grenz- und Geisteswissenschaften und Ufologiestudien (Japan: *Figu Randesuguruppe Yāpan* フィグ ランデスグルッペ ヤーパン, <http://jp.figu.org/>); and George King’s (1919–1997) Aetherius Society (Japan: *Aseriasu Sosaetī* アセリアス・ソサエティー, <https://www.aetherius.org/jp/>). The presence of these movements—and especially that of Raelism¹—

1 The history of Raelism in South Korea, for instance, goes back to the early 1980s (Mun 2013).

added to the unfolding UFO discourse in East Asia. This discourse was created by and large due to the globalisation of the New Age current (C. *xīnshídài* 新時代; J. *nyūeiji* ニューエイジ; K. *nyueiji* 뉴에이시), which has been spreading markedly via a surge of book translations from the 1970s, and again gaining pace since the 1990s through the internet and related film and TV productions.

24.2 Movements of East Asian Origin

24.2.1 *Japan*

Japan is the hub of UFO religiosity in East Asia. A key discursive role was played in particular by GLA (*Jī Eru Ē* ジーエルエー), short for God Light Association founded in 1968 by Takahashi Shinji 高橋信次 (1927–1976). As of 2018, the Tōkyō-based movement claims nearly 55,000 members—half of which being a more reasonable estimate. Next to small branches in Australia, Brazil, and the United States, GLA also maintains a limited following in South Korea. Starting out as a largely Buddhist-minded medium increasingly sympathetic vis-à-vis Christian ideas, late in his life Takahashi introduced an ancient astronaut episode in his teachings to shed light on the dawn of humanity (Whelan 2007). According to Takahashi, some 365 million years ago, hailing from the star Beta (*Bēta hoshi* ベータ星) a fleet of “anti-gravity photon spacecraft” (*hanjūryoku kōshi uchūsen* 反重力光子宇宙船) landed in the eastern Nile valley in what is present-day Egypt. Aboard the ship were several thousand people—who were to become humankind’s ancestors—alongside seven archangels (*daiten-shi* 大天使) led by Michael (*Mikaeru* ミカエル) as well as an individual named El Ranty (*Eru Ranti* エル・ランティ). The latter is deemed a most exalted spirit being second only to the Great Divine Spirit of the Great Cosmos (*Daiūchū daishinrei* 大宇宙大神靈) or God. This Great Consciousness (*daiishiki* 大意識) charged the True Messiah (*Sin no Meshiya* 真のメシヤ) or El Ranty, whose modern-day incarnation is Takahashi Shinji, to oversee Earth’s development. Spiritual components of El Ranty are thought to have later taken shape, among others, as Moses, Jesus, and Śākyamuni Buddha. The lands first occupied by the space settlers were named El Qantara (*Eru Kantarā* エル・カンタラー), later to be known as Garden of Eden (*Eden no sono* エデンの園), a paradise on Earth. However, the arrival of a second fleet of Beta spacecraft was to incite disharmony. While, at the time, El Ranty had already moved to the Heavenly Realm (*tenshōkai* 天上界), his aide, the Archangel Michael had remained behind. Ultimately, the rising conflict had Michael also leave for the Heavenly Realm taking with him the virtuous portion of humankind. Thereafter, hell materialised through the Fall of the Archangel Lucifer (*Rushiferu* ルシフェル)

who turned into Satan (サタン) and vice became abundant on Earth, being frequently antagonised on a larger scale, albeit only temporarily, by incarnations of El Ranty et al. Hence, humankind entered the cycle of civilisational rise and decay as can be seen most strikingly in the fates of the Mū civilisation and the Atlanteans. Shortly before his death, Takahashi Shinji is claimed to have recognised his daughter, Keiko 高橋佳子 (b. 1956), as an incarnation of the Archangel Michael, spiritually inaugurating her as heir. With her father's passing, she resumed to spread the True Law (*shōhō* 正法), aiming to break this cyclical deadlock by directing humankind to the way towards enlightenment and concomitantly restoring Utopia (*yūtopia* ユートピア), that is, the original Eden. In anger and disbelief several high-ranking members turned away, some branching off with their own groups.

An important splinter movement that has been launched following the demise of Takahashi is Chino Shōhō 千乃正法 (Chino's True Law). Established by former GLA sympathiser and medium Chino Yūko 千乃裕子 (née Masuyama Hidemi 増山英美; 1934–2006), it became the most visible native representative of UFO religiosity in the early 2000s claiming up to 2,000 members, and attracted international attention under the name “Pana-Wave Laboratory,” a reference to a sub-organisation within the group. As a consequence of the negative 2003 media coverage (Dorman 2005) and the death of Chino, membership numbers plummeted with only a few remaining today. Chino likewise rejected Takahashi Keiko's legitimacy and also became very critical of Takahashi Shinji. She claimed to be the actual incarnation of the Archangel Michael, which would render her the true successor to pass on the True Law—hence the name of the group. Guided by GLA's ancient astronaut account, Chino divulged her own origin version (Chino 1977). 365 million years ago, a group of extraterrestrial scientists from the Star Veh-erde (*Bē erude hoshi* ベー・エルデ星), including, among others, seven archangels, landed in the Nile valley. They called the place El Qantara, which was later given the name Garden of Erden [*sic*] (*Eruden no sono* エルデンの園). The exploration party was led by Count El Shalrea Cantareh (Eru Sharurea Kantāre エル・シャルレア・カンターレ) alias El Lantie (=El Ranty; *Eru Ranti* エル・ランティ), a famed professor of physics and inventor of a gravity-reversing spacecraft that allowed for superluminal travel. Two additional teams of researchers arrived in quick succession. Among the latter group were individuals that would later spiritually augment (or co-incarnate as) Moses, Buddha, and Jesus—all being cousins of El Lantie.² Earth was previously chosen by El Lantie for its fitting and flourishing biosphere in

2 The spirit co-incarnating as Jesus, for example, is held to be that of a former Prince of the Pleiades, who was later adopted by the King of Veh-erde, El Lantie's uncle.

order to expand the territory of the Solar Federation, a coalition of star systems spanning thousands of light years³—M45 or the Pleiades located in the constellation of Taurus; M35 or NGC 2168 located in the constellation of Gemini; M36 or NGC 1960 located in the constellation of Auriga; and Veh-erde whose exact location remained undisclosed by Chino. The four civilisations had been at war with each other in the distant past and so decided to politically unite establishing the Solar Federation, with the aim of jointly creating Utopia, that is, implementing the True Law. The Federation's millenarian project was already well progressed with Veh-erde at the vanguard when Earth became part of its dominion. By now the four solar systems had successfully raised Utopia.

El Lantie passed away and ascended to the Heavenly Realm at the age of 55, four years after his arrival on Earth. Thenceforth wielding the highest authority in the Heavenly Realm, his spirit became known to humankind under various names such as, most prominently, Jehovah (*Ehoba* エホバ). He was to retire from this most exalted position as Great King (*daiō* 大王) only recently (in 1977), being succeeded by the Archangel Michael. Since then both spirits reside in the highest, that is, the tenth dimension of Heaven—the Cosmic World (*uchūkai* 宇宙界)—alongside the spirits of Moses, the Buddha, and Jesus.

The Veh-erdens created the first humans. Throughout history and, notably, in the past 10,000 years various highly cultivated spirits of the “star people” (*seijin* 星人) co-incarnated many a time as important historical (or mythical) figures to further beacon humankind towards Utopia, the Solar Federation's ideal encapsulating the True Law, which is the expression of the divine. They taught them—by means of religion, because scientific reasoning vis-à-vis the ancients was not deemed feasible—how to live in accordance with nature. The first verbalisation of the True Law is rooted in the 3,500 years old teachings of Apollo (*Aporo* アポロ) of Delos, a co-incarnation of Michael and son of Zeus (*Zeusu* ゼウス), who in turn was a co-incarnation of El Lantie.

Chino was believed to be in contact with all these guiding spirits, for she herself is a co-incarnation of Michael. Having learnt about her identity, in 1977, both Takahashi Keiko, the leader of GLA, who had been possessed by Satan, as well as her father, Shinji, attempted to murder Chino and her protectors, the seven archangels. The battle that ensued eventually brought the destruction of Satan and Takahashi Shinji (Chino 1978).⁴ Another attack was launched in the early 1990s by communist forces secretly targeting Chino using harmful

3 How these distances could have been travelled in the pre-superluminal age is not explained by Chino.

4 Satan is believed to have been co-incarnated at the time of the Garden of Erden as El Lantie's twin brother.

“scalar waves” in an attempt to slowly electromagnetically poison her. Chino’s death would have enabled the communists to unopposedly achieve dominion over the East Asian region. Sensing the threat that would come to fruition at some point, already in the early 1950s a group of Venusians headed by the Archangel Thor (*Tōru* トール) approached the United States government, offering the President their help, which was refused. Thor remained on Earth alongside other spirits such as El Lantie, later closely watching over Chino. In 1994, Chino took matters in her own hands to stop the growing environmental and societal hazards elicited by scalar wave weapons. Members were therefore tasked to commence investigations into the nature of scalar waves and explore means of protection. This mobile task force of devotees engaging full-time in research was named Pana-Wave Laboratory (*Pana Wēbu Kenkyūjo* パナウェーブ研究所). In 2003, a van procession drove across Honshū to search for an electromagnetically unpolluted area, which drew the attention of the media. What spiked additional interest was a doomsday prediction by Chino set for 15 May of the same year. Like with her previous predictions regarding Japan’s destruction, this as well as a re-dated (22 May) one failed. In this case disaster was allegedly either averted due to a force field created by a Venusian UFO fleet protecting earth, or, more trivially, a simple miscalculation on Chino’s part. In 2004, another prediction transpired anticipating the catastrophe to occur probably at some point in 2005. In mid-December, Chino reported that the entire UFO fleet orbiting earth had crashed and that the Pana-Wave Laboratory would now commence the construction of its own spacecraft in order to escape Earth’s imminent destruction. Assembling the materials needed for building the ship turned out to be more difficult than expected, which led Chino to devise a new plan to save the faithful. In April 2005, she indicated that a rescue mission by another UFO fleet was on its way and that members would be moved to “Planet A” after a six-month space journey while earth was to be annihilated. The construction of a spacecraft landing area began to facilitate the rescue. Ultimately, in late October 2006, Chino passed away due to cancer, apparently the consequence of long-time scalar wave poisoning. The UFO fleet did not materialise for Chino’s doomsday prediction was obviously miscalculated once again (Jimenez Murguía 2011).

The presently most notable Japanese religious movement that saliently cherishes UFO beliefs is *Kōfuku no Kagaku* 幸福の科学 (Science of Happiness; international label: Happy Science; henceforth: KnK). Founded by Ōkawa Ryūhō 大川隆法 (b. 1956 as Nakagawa Takashi 中川隆) in 1986, the Tōkyō-based KnK today variously claims a well-overstated between some ten to fifteen million members. Notwithstanding this exaggerated figure that must be reduced to a more sober 200,000 to 400,000 adherents, KnK enjoys sizeable public

visibility, particularly owing to Ōkawa's veritable "publication frenzy" that has produced more than 3,000 books to date. Ōkawa's books belong to the standard inventory of virtually every esoteric bookshop and reading corner in Japan. In Taiwan (starting in 2005) and South Korea (2007), KnK operates two branches each, as well as one branch in Hong Kong. There is no formal branch in Vietnam nor in the People's Republic of China (PRC); yet, according to a personal memo from the KnK Headquarters, there seems to be an avid readership in both countries.

The early cornerstones of KnK's doctrine are founded upon the teachings of Takahashi Shinji. GLA's formative influence was readily acknowledged until the early 1990s in relation to Ōkawa's mediumistic interviewer, his father, Nakagawa Tadayoshi 中川忠義 (1921–2003), himself a former high-ranked member of GLA (Winter 2012: 45–53, 191–199). Later, the KnK universe has been greatly expanded thereby reducing the GLA impact. Whereas KnK's ufological dimension always had a firm place, specifically within emic historiography, since 2010 the number of related talks and publications skyrocketed, contriving an increasingly intricate narrative (cf. Ōkawa 2015).

KnK's story of creation (Ōkawa 2011c) begins some one-hundred billion years ago with the Primordial Buddha [or God] of the Great Universe (*Daiuchū no konpon butsu* [shin] 大宇宙の根本仏 [神]) starting a sixty-billion years long cosmogonic planning stage, which resulted in the inception of the three-dimensional world. God spiritually animated the cosmos and chief celestial constellations and bodies by incrementally scaling down his consciousness qua independent spirit projections. The eleventh-dimensional stellar consciousness of our solar system, one of billions guided by the twelfth-dimensional galactic consciousness, that is, the Spirit of the Milky Way, was born some ten billion years ago, giving way to the first tenth-dimensional planetary consciousness three billion years later in the form of Mercury. However, Mercury could not support life. So another one billion years later (i.e., six billion years ago), Venus was formed and half a billion years thereafter Venus' consciousness projected down to the ninth dimension manifesting in a spirit being named El Miore (*Eru Miōre* エル・ミオーレ), who went on to create life on the planet. After some experimentation with plants and animals, he created a humanoid species cultivating them for over a billion years. The Venusian race was human-like yet ultimately vested with far superior cognitive and physical traits. Under El Miore's guidance, they succeeded in establishing Utopia and handling interstellar travel. Eventually, Venus was to become uninhabitable due to forces of nature, but before suffering extinction, the Venusians spread to other planets while some stayed behind in highly evolved spiritual forms assisting El Miore's unfolding quest on earth. At the time, the three higher dimensional consciousnesses

(Sun, Earth, and Moon) responsible for Earth commenced to create basal life on the planet. El Miore, who acted as advisor, was finally invited some 600 million years ago to craft more complex life based on his Venusian experience. 200 million years later the creation process of humankind started and El Miore took on the name El Cantare (*Eru Kantāre* エル・カンターレ), becoming the Great Spirit (*tairei* 大霊) of Earth. Greatly elevated Venusian life energy was part of El Cantare's creational recipe. After the creation of 770 million individuals, El Cantare sought to introduce lesser lifeforms from other planets (*chikyūgai seibutsu* 地球外生物) to allow humankind to gain leadership experience. He thus turned to other ninth-dimensional spirits who then joined the terrestrial spirit group under El Cantare's lead—Therabim (*Serabimu* セラビム) from the constellation Cygnus who would be later incarnated, among others, as Confucius; Moria (*Mōriya* モーリヤ) from Cancer of which Moses is an incarnation; and Amor (*Amōru* アモール), presently El Cantare's deputy, from Sagittarius of which Jesus is an incarnation. The high spirits decided to invite extraterrestrial immigrants to further populate the planet. First, a Reptilian race (*reputarian* レプタリアン) from the star Zeta (*Zēta hoshi* ゼータ星), also known as Beta, in the Magellanic Clouds arrived in their spacecraft (*uchūsen* 宇宙船) over 300 million years ago led by the ninth-dimensional being Enlil (*Enriru* エンリル), who later became venerated among ancient Mesopotamian civilisations.⁵ One of his lieutenants, a fellow spiritually evolved Reptilian, was Lucifer, who incarnated as Satan 120 million years ago and created Hell.⁶ The Zeta Reptilians were a belligerent people and soon conflict with humans arose, putting Earth at the brink of a world war. El Cantare then for the first time incarnated as an individual named Alpha (*Arufa* アルファ) in the region

5 KnK holds that most deities worshipped in past and present are actually highly cultivated extraterrestrials. Similarly, the chief religions of old, alive or extinct, have been founded by extraterrestrials, such as by the various incarnations of the ninth-dimensional spirits overseeing Earth. Overall, aliens are viewed as cultural heroes and bringers of civilisation, but also, occasionally, as agents of destruction. Enlil, for instance, is thought to have, among others, unleashed the great Deluge of biblical times.

6 Lucifer (*Rushifā* ルシファー) or Luciel (*Rushieru* ルシエル) was a staunch advocate of Reptilian philosophy, desiring that El Cantare would adopt it for Earth in order to speed up spiritual evolution. This would have entailed faster technologisation—the attainment of a certain level of advanced technology representing the threshold for joining the Cosmic Federation (*uchū rengō* 宇宙連合) (Ōkawa 2011a). Lucifer's proposal was rejected by El Cantare and other ninth-dimensional spirits because the Reptilian Machiavellianism-like “Might Is Right” ideology was deemed archaic and going against the very principle of love that gives (see note 7). Lucifer therefore rebelled and was slain by his angelic twin, the Archangel Michael. Unwilling to accept his failure, he incarnated on earth and was again defeated by Michael. His spirit transmigrated to the lowest part of the spirit world where he raised the domain of Hell under his reign.

of today's Africa in order to instruct the people and accordingly alleviate crisis. To balance sensitivities, he invited a further one billion people from Orion who arrived in a massive space fleet. Along with the new immigrants, three ninth-dimensional spirits came to Earth: Kaitron (*Kaitoron* カイトロン) or the theosophical Koot Hoomi (*Kūtohūmi* クートフーミ), whose later incarnations included Archimedes and Isaac Newton; Orgon (*Orugon* オルゴン) or Maitrayer [*sic*] (*Maitorēyā* マイトレーヤー); and Achemene (*Akemēne* アケメーネ), considered the Manu of Hindu mythology. Roughly 150 million years ago, El Cantare incarnated as Elohim (*Erohīmu* エロヒム) in today's Middle Eastern region to teach yet again countering false religions that were legion. Twenty million years later, upon El Cantare's invitation a last wave of extraterrestrial immigration began. This time two billion people arrived from Pegasus, among them the last two ninth-dimensional spirits completing El Cantare's advisory board: Theoria (*Seoriya* セオリヤ) who incarnated as Zeus, and Samatria (*Samatoriya* サマトリヤ) who incarnated as Zoroaster and Mani. Extraterrestrial migration from and to Earth continues up to the present, albeit in far smaller numbers. Their superior spiritual and technological achievements notwithstanding, aliens are apparently especially intrigued by humankind, for its accomplishments in the realms of culture, religion, and politics are perceived to eclipse that of most space civilisations. Immigration and temporary site visits of the space people (*uchūjin* 宇宙人) are held to be on the rise following the dawn of the nuclear and space ages, which is also why the number of UFO sightings is surging since the mid-twentieth century. In fact, the past influx of extraterrestrials rendered between thirty to forty per cent of humans part of an alien lineage. Moreover, human races are effectively taken to derive from the diversity of alien races. The Anglo-Saxons, for example, are a people of Reptilian ancestry, which would explain their imperialistic penchant.

The creation of Hell and the subsequent spread of evil prompted El Cantare to let his consciousness incarnate seven more times at crucial junctures in humankind's history over the past 17,000 years in an attempt to re-anchor the pursuit of Utopia in people's minds.⁷ El Cantare's current incarnation is Ōkawa Ryūhō, who once again is slated to avert disaster while teaching the Law (Pokorny 2020). More so than at the time of one of his previous incarnations some 7,000 years ago—as Rient Arl Croud (*Riento Āru Kuraudo* リエント・アール・クラウド in an ancient Inca Kingdom—El Cantare has to cope with deceitful machinations of extraterrestrials, specifically, evil Zeta Reptilians

7 KnK's Utopia or Buddha Land (*butsu kokudo* 仏国土) is envisioned as a world of happiness grounded in love that gives (*ataeru ai* 与える愛); a substantialisation of God's will, that is, the Law (*hō* 法).

(Ōkawa 2010). Presently, aliens belonging to more than twenty different species are residing on Earth. They possess a variety of forms, corporeal and occasionally incorporeal. The bodily forms oft-times resemble the depictions of aliens in mythology, fiction, and Hollywood movies. For instance, the Dogons are veritable lookalikes of the Na'vi from James Cameron's *Avatar* universe;⁸ some Martians look like human-faced pegasi, who came to Earth in a pyramidal spacecraft when their culture went into decline and exerted a particular influence on the ancient Egyptians; many of the Star Wars aliens, most prominently the Wookie Chewbacca and Yoda, but also Japan's monstrous cinematic favourites Godzilla and King Kong, are modelled on actual extraterrestrials dwelling on Earth. The reason being that writers and filmmakers have, if only subconsciously, already spotted specimen of these aliens in real life. The two extraterrestrial civilisations most significant for Earth's development are the Pleiadeans and their even more ancient peers, the Vegans, two space races who have realised Utopia on their home worlds. They are believed to be predominantly of Venusian origin and appear as beautiful, remarkably cultivated humans with a Nordic physiognomy. Vega is home to the Cosmic Federation's (also called the Federation of Planets; *wakusei rengō* 惑星連合) headquarters, a coalition of eight advanced spacefaring civilisations that aim at safeguarding the Cosmic Treaty (*uchū kyōtei* 宇宙協定), which shall ensure balance between civilisations in the universe. That is to say, aliens must not intervene into the affairs of other planetary civilisations, specifically with Earth (*chikyū bunmei fukainyū* 地球文明不介入). However, this Cosmic Rule (*uchū no ruru* 宇宙のルール) is being continuously undermined, most notoriously by the Zeta Reptilians and their cyborg (*saibōgu* サイボーグ) servants, the Greys (*gurei* グレイ) (Ōkawa 2011b). The Greys are the most populous alien "species" found on Earth, maintaining operation bases throughout the solar system with the largest one located on the "tenth" planet Nibiru. They are tasked by their Reptilian lords to carry out their evil machinations, which, among others, involves the abduction (*abudakushon* アブダクション) of humans, apparently happening millions of times for experimental and physically engineering purposes. Frequently, the abductees are cloned to enable alien spirits to "walk-in" (*wōkuin* ウォークイン), that is, take possession of the bodies; something that

8 The Dogon people in West Africa would originally hail from a star system carrying the same name. The Maya civilisation largely comes from the neighbouring Sirius system but also consisted of incarnated Dogons, which later formed the Aztec civilisation. The Dogons are thought to be an insidious and weak people, which is why both civilisations were eventually conquered. Notably, KnK traces former United States President Barack Obama's (b. 1961) spiritual ancestry back to the Dogons. It is thus reasoned that his "feeble" presidency (2009–2017), if it had continued, would have led to the fall of the United States.

may occur to non-cloned humans as well, for it would allow the alien spirits to enter the reincarnation cycle of the terrestrial spirit group.⁹ Alien impact is deemed all-pervading. A striking example would be the catastrophe that wiped out the dinosaurs, which was indeed an alien attack. Likewise, modern technology is to a great extent believed to come from aliens, specifically the Reptilians who, in return, receive permission by the political authorities to infiltrate human civilisation and conduct abductions. Moreover, in doing so they already managed to indirectly control parts of the world's elite, pitting the various political actors against each other. While it has been the Reptilians that helped the United States achieve military and economic dominion in the past two centuries, starting with the Dèng Xiǎopíng (1904–1997) era (1978–1989), several alien species turned their attention to the PRC. Lately, the PRC has successfully forged close relationships with the aliens, being supplied with new technologies and weaponry and, in return, allowing the aliens to use secret military bases on their soil. KnK cautions that the Reptilian influence may very well propel the PRC's aggressive militarism, which will result in escalating conflicts and, eventually, World War III (Ōkawa 2012). Furthermore, the rising level of evil in the world will soon be viewed by some alien races as an invitation to bring destruction upon billions of those deemed not to follow the teachings of El Cantare. However, KnK is keen to antagonise this grim future scenario, thereby also paving the way for advanced space travel technology (*uchū kōkō no gjutsu* 宇宙航行の技術), of which humankind is only one step away. Faster than light journeys will then be made possible, among others, by utilising natural spacetime warping processes and, at some point later, through matter-antimatter spirit world travelling.

These examples of fully-fledged UFO religions aside, ufological elements can also be traced elsewhere, such as, most notably, in Kurama Kōkyō 鞍馬弘教, a Tendai Buddhist-derived movement launched in 1947 by Shigaraki Kōun 信楽香雲 (1895–1972) and operating from Kurama Temple (*Kuramadera* 鞍馬寺) near Kyōto. It is the place where Usui Mikao 臼井甕男 (1865–1926), the founder of Reiki 靈氣, is traditionally held to have achieved enlightenment in 1922. Kurama Kōkyō envisages a triune deity named *Sonten* 尊天 that consists of Bishamonten 毘沙門天 (Skt. Vaiśravaṇa), the 1,000-armed Kanzeon 觀世音 (Skt. Avalokiteśvara), and, outstandingly, Gohō Maōson 護法魔王尊—the three respectively representing light, love, and power. Gohō Maōson is venerated

9 In this respect, it is held, for instance, that the elite of the Spanish Empire were actually Reptilians, who walked-in, many later reincarnating as Spaniards and thus expediting colonial expansion.

as the conqueror of evil and Spirit of the Earth. He is variously believed to have flown with his wings, navigated a vessel, or travelled on or alongside a meteorite from Venus to Earth some six million years ago, where he henceforth oversaw evolution and salvation of humankind in particular. In Japanese Theosophist circles Gohō Maōson is occasionally identified as Sanat Kumara (Sanato Kumāra サナト クマーラ).

24.2.2 *China/Taiwan*

Two key exponents of East Asian UFO religiosity originating outside of Japan are Fǎlún Gōng 法輪功 (Practice of the Law Wheel) or Fǎlún Dàfǎ 法輪大法 (Great Law of the Law Wheel), and Zhēndào Jiàohuì 真道教會 (True Way Church; commonly rendered as Chen Tao). Founded by Lǐ Hóngzhì 李洪志 (b. 1951/52) in 1992, Fǎlún Gōng emerged as a result of the *qìgōng* boom of the 1980s and 1990s in the PRC. Until the authorities cracked down on it in 1999, the number of Fǎlún Gōng practitioners reportedly went into the tens of millions. Today, Fǎlún Gōng has spread globally, with a sizeable followership in East Asia. Figures provided by the group speak of several thousands to tens of thousands of practitioners in Vietnam starting with only a handful in 2000; more than 300,000 in Taiwan; and figures in-between these two for South Korea (*P'arun'gung* 파룬궁; *Pōmnyun'gong* 범륜궁) and Japan (*Fārungon* ファールンゴン; *Hōrinkō* 法輪功). Although mostly marginalised or ignored even by core practitioners, ufological elements play indeed an important systemic part in Fǎlún Gōng doctrine. Lǐ addressed the subject especially in the mid- to late 1990s in his publications, talks, and interviews.

Humans were once Buddhas, Daos, and Gods (*fú, dào, shén* 佛、道、神), that is, enlightened beings wielding tremendous powers. However, misdirected interaction had them gradually spiritually deteriorate. If it were for the all-balancing and all-permeating Law (*fǎ* 法), these karmically rotten beings would have been completely annihilated; yet, owing to the utmost compassion of their still enlightened peers of old, they were saved and thus capacitated to “return to the origin” (*huánběn* 还本); that is, to cultivate themselves and ultimately once again embrace their original enlightened nature. Based on the principle of *fǎ*-rectification (*zhèngfǎ* 正法), when earthly civilisations would reach a critical mass of moral transgressions, a purification process would be triggered (Pokorny 2020). The ensuing destruction would eradicate all those acting contrary to the Law; something that apparently occurred on Earth eighty-one times so far and which is very soon to happen once again. Every time practitioners of the Law would survive and live on in a reset world—like many Chinese alongside a few others did during the last Great Catastrophe

(*dà jié nàn* 大劫难), a deluge—or be transferred to other planets.¹⁰ Those who settled on new planets would likely evolve technologically but not always equally in spiritual terms, which resulted in wars between some spacefaring civilisations. Not necessarily all of the “space people” (*wàixīng rén* 外星人) are former earthlings; in fact, every star and planet is inhabited—the multidimensional cosmos harbours virtually infinite life. Whereas Earth has not yet become involved in those larger scale galactic conflicts, extraterrestrials have very well secretively launched infiltration operations with the ultimate goal to effectively replace humankind, for they are envious of the human body and spiritual potential. Aliens, which are variously shaped like ghosts or humans with a nose “made of bone” (cited in Penny 2012: 131), have dwelled on Earth since the early nineteenth century, journeying inside UFOs (*fēidíé* 飞碟), capable of apparently superluminal as well as interdimensional travel. Lǐ Hóngzhì argues that most technologies developed since that time have been given to us by the alien visitors in order to make humankind vitally dependent on them. Technology and science would virtually zombify humans and allow the greedy and lust-driven aliens to execute their evil master plan, that is, clone them, nest into the doppelgängers, and take on their identities. Eventually natural human reproduction will be declared illegal once the aliens have taken over substantial parts of the ruling elite. A few countries have been especially targeted, rendering them crucibles for misguiding technology (Japan), culture (United States), machinery (England), and “race-mixing” (*hùnzá rénrzhǒng* 混杂人种) (Spain), which will unroot humans (Lǐ 1998; cf. Chang 2004: 69–72).

Zhēndào Jiàohuì, alternatively Shàngdì Jiùshúhuì 上帝救贖會 (God's Redemption Association) or, formally, Shàngdì Zhěngjiù Dìqiú Fēidíéhuì 上帝拯救地球飛碟會 (God Saving the Earth Flying Saucer Association) was founded in 1993 in Běipǔ 北埔 in North-western Taiwan by the then College professor Chén Héngmíng 陳恆明 (b. 1955). Informed by Buddhist, Daoist, Christian, and ufological themes, Chén espoused a decidedly catastrophic millenarian worldview that led him and some 140 members to move in 1997 to the “Pure Land of God” (cited in Prather 1999: 2), that is, the United States. Relocation was deemed necessary for East Asia was predicted to become the epicentre of an impending cataclysm consisting of both manmade and natural disasters. Concretely, a prophesied military blockade of Taiwan by the PRC in January 1999 was held to herald imminent destruction, in quick succession expressing itself most saliently through a new Korean War, a great flood ravaging the East Asian region, and Taiwan's self-inflicted nuclear devastation. Ultimately, an

10 In this respect, for example, former Earth civilisations created the moon to illuminate the night, and developed nuclear plants, of which traces are still extant.

atomic war would lay waste the whole devilish world (*mójiè* 魔界), save for North America, which will be transplanted to Mars in 2043 when utter global annihilation would be complete, after which a new world-cycle would commence.¹¹ In fact, the previous world-cycle envisioned by the adherents was apparently authentically captured by film director Luc Besson (b. 1959) in his 1997 movie *The Fifth Element* (Wright and Greil 2011: 166). Prior to the grim events of 1999, Jesus—whose physical father Joseph had been a previous incarnation of Chén—was believed to descend to Earth on a spacecraft (i.e., God's Aircraft; *shàngdì de fēixíngqì* 上帝的飛行器) on March 31, 1998, following a TV proclamation on Dallas, Texas's Channel 18 six days earlier. He would take on the shape of Chén talking freely to the people in all the languages of the world. In the future, the surviving humans would gain access to the “divine science and technology,” an example of which are flying saucers (*fēidié* 飛碟), imagined by Chén variously as material objects and light spheres (Cook 2003: 305). When Jesus was not broadcasted on March 25, the prophecy of the Second Advent was adjusted; God would have indeed “landed,” descending into every human being. Failing to materialise in early 1999, the cataclysm was repeatedly postponed. Eventually, the group, which had attracted enormous media attention, went silent and gradually dissolved.

24.2.3 South Korea

An interest in UFOs (also *yuep'o* 유에프오; *mihwagin pihaengmulch'ae* 미확인비행물체; or flying saucer, *pihaeng chōpsi* 비행접시) slowly emerged in South Korea from the 1970s, going hand in hand with a rising number of UFO sightings (UFO *mokkyōk* 목격), some since then even being reported in the national media. The New Age boom of the 1980s gradually popularised ufological elements for the wider religious discourse, leading some news outlets to speak of a veritable “UFO craze” (*UFO yōlp'ung* 열풍) already in the 1990s. Although there are as yet no larger-scale religions of Korean origin that draw their self-identity on UFO mythology, a few notable movements utilise ufological themes. For example, in Yōngsaenggyo Hananim'ui Sōnghoe 영생교하나님의성회 (Religion of Eternal Life Holy Society of God; alternatively: Victory Altar, Sūngni Chedan 승리제단), founded in 1981 by Cho Hŭi-sōng 조희성 (1931–2004) and presently comprising several tens of thousands of adherents, flying saucers frequently to be seen in the skies are deemed emanations of the Spirit of God (*Hananim'ui yōng* 하나님의영); in the same vein those

11 Upon the outbreak of the global war, to ensure survival those living in North America might either be led underground or spend their time in a UFO, the latter for which members had already started their preparatory training.

achieving salvation would metamorphise into such UFO-like immortal subjects of radiant light (Cho 2008). Another case is Chŭngsando 증산도 (Way of Chŭngsan), established by An Se-ch'an [Unsan] 안세찬 [운산] (1922–2012) in 1974, which is comparable in size to Yōngsaenggyo. An eminent international (overseas specifically in the United States and Japan) representative of the Chŭngsan cluster of religions (Pokorny 2018), Chŭngsando has likewise become a key actor within South Korea's esoteric current (cf. Baker 2009: 221). Hence, since the 1990s, Chŭngsando scholars attempted to reconcile UFO beliefs with Chŭngsando doctrines, claiming that confirmations of extraterrestrial life are in fact already found in its scripture—the *Tojŏn* 도전 (Statutes of the Way). In spite of some alien civilisation's (*woegye munmyŏng* 외계문명) advanced technology, God has allegedly assigned to our planetary civilisation the key role in His cosmic salvific concert. Extraterrestrials are held to be in contact with people on Earth since ancient times. These days communication with these extraterrestrial intelligences (*oegye chisŏngch'e* 외계지성체) is maintained largely through various channelling (*ch'aenŏlling* 채널링) techniques, such as automatic writing or speaking. In the messages received from various alien astronauts (*oegye ujuin* 외계우주인), such as from the Pleiades, the teachings of Chŭngsando are emphatically confirmed, for they would possess cosmic validity. The disasters that are to befall humankind in the near future (Pokorny 2020) would effectively similarly occur throughout the universe. Notably, extraterrestrial envoys would have reported that Earth was entering the Photon Belt (*kwangjadae* 광자대) in 1998, speeding up humanity's spiritual evolution and, accordingly, its technical progress. Earth would thus soon rise phoenix-like as a galactic civilisation—following initial catastrophe.

24.3 Conclusion

The western esoteric current has left its imprint on East Asia's new religious developments, specifically since the 1970s. This New Age informed discourse evolving over the past decades in East Asia—most echoingly dubbed by Japanese and South Korean scholars the “New Spirituality Movement” (*shin-reisei undō* 新靈性運動 and *sinyŏngsŏng undong* 신영성운동, respectively)—does not fall short of a growingly important ufological dimension. Its most eminent institutionalised crystallisations have been summarily addressed in this chapter. What is evident even from this succinct outline is that while East Asian UFO religiosity naturally engages the conventional tapestry of narratives, the specific religio-cultural canvas creates much contextual leeway for conspicuously new doctrinal avenues. That is to say, East Asian UFO religiosity weds two variegated discourses and thus articulates in a strikingly creative

panoply of novel mindscapes; mindscapes that await much more in-depth investigations.

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