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The Vision of Asia in Ōmoto's *Ofudesaki*

[*abstract]

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Abstract

This paper re-examines Ōmoto's *Ofudesaki* as a textual example of how a prominent religious movement in modern Japan conceptualized Japan's relationship to Asia and the world. Although the *Ofudesaki* has been primarily associated with the xenophobic attitude of the founder, Deguchi Nao, it dedicates a significant amount of space to discussing Japan's positionality in the world. This paper starts by analyzing the language associated with "foreign countries" in the *Ofudesaki*, with a particular focus on the ways in which "Asia" (or Asian countries) is delineated. The paper also considers how Deguchi Onisaburō built upon the *Ofudesaki* to articulate his own vision of world affairs. A main objective of this paper is to explore the doctrinal foundation of Ōmoto's seemingly contradictory attitude on the relationship between Japan and the world. On the one hand, there is a clear ethnocentric tendency in both the *Ofudesaki* and Onisaburō's writings; on the other hand, there are passages that emphasize spiritual egalitarianism among all peoples. The paper tentatively suggests that this tension was reconciled in part through Ōmoto's vision of Japan as the "spiritual caretaker" of the world, whose responsibility was to lead "foreign countries" and "Asia" back to the "righteous way of kami."