

THE IZUNOME CROSS
SACRED SYMBOL FOR THE AGE OF LIGHT

An excerpt from

THE TOTALITY OF GOD
AND THE IZUNOME CROSS



Unlocking the Secret to the Riddle of the Ages

Al Leone

© 1999

FIRST VERSE

THE IZUNOME CROSS: SACRED SYMBOL FOR THE AGE OF LIGHT

Every person is another aspect in ***The Totality Of God***; for, within the soul of a single human being is contained the spark of God's Divinity. It exists so that for a brief moment in the vastness of time that is called eternity, God can come to this Earth in a physical form, as us, to do His work.

However, no two people on this great planet see God in exactly the same way – just as no two people have the same fingerprints. Everybody's beliefs are different. As a matter of fact, the Truth of God is so immense that throughout time no single system of spiritual philosophy could accommodate its enormity. For this reason, as Humanity evolved on Earth, so did four unique but wonderfully compatible views – or **Pathways to Divine Light and Universal Truth** – of His existence. And yet, the truly amazing thing is that just as all of an ocean's potential is present in a single wave, so is all of God's magnificence in any of His parts. As a result, any one path born of Light and Truth in and of itself will lead to the God of *your* understanding, but to get the best view of His panorama you should look at all of them. This *concept* of a unified worldview follows from the opening *principle* of ***The Totality Of God***.

My inspiration for it came while reflecting on the image of the ***Izunome Cross***. *Izunome* (pronounced ǐz'-ōō-nō'-mā) is a Japanese word for *balance*; and the design is based on a balanced cross, which is found in many ancient traditions. This unique configuration was created by Mokichi Okada, the founder of *Sekai Kyusei Kyo* – an international spiritual movement dedicated to advancing his teachings. He designed it about 50 years ago to represent an underlying truth in his ministry: the belief that the world and all its inhabitants could not heal until they were brought into balance spiritually and physically. For him, this meant the East and the West must eventually unite through a common understanding to accomplish a greater planetary purpose – the creation of a *Paradise on Earth*. To this end he taught and practiced a philosophy of balance, the *Izunome Principle*, and detailed its application in numerous writings. I'll offer my own definition: *The perfect balance of two sides is the point where they meet, from which either side can be favored – at the time and to the degree needed – depending on circumstances.*

Mokichi Okada's views easily incorporate into what I've come to understand to be the evolution of human spirituality as it occurred over the course of our existence as sentient beings. As I like to describe it, from the cultures of the East and West had grown two main *theistic* belief systems. These had sought to account for our spiritual nature in the context of some eternal **Presence** or human-like **Personification**. However, such an accounting had also been pursued in two ways not specifically addressed in his original vision, perhaps because from his perspective in pre- and post-war Japan the conflict truly did seem to be between the East and the West. From my perspective in America, with the entire world beginning to embark on a new, technology-driven millennium, the bigger picture needing to find balance is becoming clear. That is the one between Religion and Science, forces that have been at odds since Humanity first became aware of the difference between the principles of spiritual and physical, positive and negative. To accomplish this needed planetary healing, the East and West must also seek to balance with what I refer to as the North and South. They are the *deistic* traditions that had simultaneously evolved around the exploration

of human spirituality as manifest in our intellectual and physical natures. In other words, it's the integration of *Spirit, Mind and Body* – God's own three Divine aspects – into the Universe's four energetic alignments – *East, West, North, and South*.

Mr. Okada was an atheist prior to his awakening, a well-respected businessman and gifted artisan with several patents for jewelry design. His ***Izunome Cross***, therefore, had the refined look of a piece of beautiful jewelry, while serving perfectly to represent the truths he wished to share with Humanity. It is interesting, though, that he seems to have left much room to interpret what deeper meaning might be applied to the design as a whole, as well as each specific part of it.

The basic principles of the ***Izunome Cross*** were set by Mr. Okada in several key teachings. (1) In summary, he stated that the **Horizontal** pole embodied the ideals of the West, which had advanced the growth of civilization through materialism, while the **Vertical** pole symbolized the East, which had concentrated, rather, on the advancement of civilization through spiritual means. This philosophy was drawn from his understanding of Japanese principles of life – **Daijo** (inclusive, flexible) and **Shojo** (exclusive, rigid) – likewise associable with the West and East. Moreover, he said that generally speaking, Christianity, prevailing in the West, is also Daijo, and Buddhism, predominant in the East, is Shojo. So, even for him the West and East represented different things, from physical vs. spiritual cultural natures, philosophic life-principles and great world religions, to planar alignments vs. points on a compass. He affirmed that cultural and philosophic discrimination, which had been the case throughout what he referred to as the **Age of Night**, must now disappear for Humanity to advance into the **Age of Light** – something he believed was already starting to take place.

It makes sense, then, that he knew his spiritual roadmap, the ***Izunome Cross***, must also expand to accommodate these changes in human growth and awareness. For example, by the time he died in 1955, the East (most specifically Japan) had yet to realize the full materialistic potential it would eventually achieve. And the West was still to discover that the technology it had so actively advanced during the **Age of Night** could actually be used in the **Age of Light** to offer proof of the existence of God. It is possible that Mr. Okada didn't understand the full significance of what he had designed at the time. However, I feel he sensed it but realized that the world and its collective awareness still had to evolve a bit more before we would be ready to accept it – and then use it. At the dawn of this new millennium, with the world perched on the potential brink of destruction from without *and* within, I believe he feels the right time is *right now*. We are the ones who will get to decide the direction in which the scales will tip their balance: *Armageddon, or Paradise on Earth!*

One of the things common to any universal message is its simplicity. So it is with the ***Izunome Cross***, a design that's so beautifully simple, and yet it remains a perfect roadmap to all that *is* in God's Great Plan. The truths inherent in the ***Izunome Cross*** are like the petals of a rose that, as it blossoms, peel back to reveal the sweet nectar inside – with each petal meant to be experienced and enjoyed for its own perfect beauty. The original concepts outlined by Mokichi Okada in his design become the outermost petals of our rose. We need to look to the petals within to see

1 *Most notably*: Mokichi Okada, "Izunome, The Balanced Cross," in *Teachings of Meishu-sama, Volume Two* (Atami, Japan: Sekai Kyusei Kyo, 1968);

and: Mokichi Okada, "Daijo, Shojo, Izunome," in *Fragments from the Teachings of Meishu-sama* (Atami, Japan: Sekai Kyusei Kyo, 1965).

the width and depth of truth uncovered in Mankind's exploration of its own spiritual nature as embodied by the whole design.

One of the most striking features of the **Izunome Cross** is that it is more than just a cross. Its four magnificent green branches, with their connecting white sections, are encased in three concentric circles: two broad circles, red and gold, on the inside, and a thin gold circle surrounding their extremities. Mr. Okada chose these colors to represent the three aspects of universal life energy as he understood them: fire (red/sun), water (white/moon) and earth (green), with gold signifying Divine Light. He used a balanced cross inside a circle as a symbol for God, Creator of the Universe, its uniform branches representing the perfect balance of **Yin** and **Yang** – which join and merge to create energy. That red *spirit of fire* energy of the Sun has within it a gold circle at the center of the horizontal and vertical lines. This is Su, the real spirit of the Sun – the soul of God. (2)

Now, we can begin to see how the **Izunome Cross** can be used to develop a modern, symbolic construct for human spiritual development. The four perpendicular green branches of the cross combine with the gold diagonal lines to indicate the eight directions, which in Japan represent the whole world. By integrating that relationship with the spiritual symbolism of the colors and circles, the greater implication is made of Earth as the physical manifestation of God's energy. This recognition is essential to the analysis that the remainder of this book contains. However, a final realization must also now be brought to light: that all of us alike experience God's Divinity as our own in three distinct ways, not just two (physical power and spiritual energy). Our construct must also take into account God's infinite, unconditional love.

In one of his teachings, **Man's Spiritual Being**, he further explains the spiritual significance of the three concentric circles: "Created to receive God's will for the whole person, the soul is the innermost core. It is enclosed by the heart, which receives orders from the soul and so becomes, figuratively, a workplace for the soul. The heart is also the locus of any conflict between conscience and evil influences in the individual. The spiritual body system, on the other hand, envelops both the soul and the heart and pervades the physical system, taking a shape identical to the physical body." (3) This teaching provides us with symbolism more in tune to a culturally Western perspective: the Soul is like God's *Port Of Entry*, the Heart His *Processing Center*, Mind and Body His *Worldly Interface*. In a colorfully symbolic metaphor, Mr. Okada uses the green and white sections surrounding the inner circles to together stand for our individual bodies, physical and etheric (or God's manifestation in a temporal form as us). The red and gold then stand for Divine **Love** and **Wisdom**, the aspects of God's consciousness (4), or *Eternal Spirit*, inside us.

As we continue to search within these petals, we can see that the three concentric circles also serve to further clarify the **Truth of the Triune God** – Wisdom,

2 (These additional insights on Eastern symbolism in the **Izunome Cross** were provided by Rev. Henry Ajiki, a **Johrei** minister, during a lecture given in January, 1996. Please realize that these references to a Triune-like nature in universal life energy came from the philosophic traditions Mokichi Okada had been taught. Thus, they differ from symbolic choices that perhaps a Hindu might make based on the spiritual and cultural traditions he or she would be raised with, or a Christian would attribute to God as the Holy Trinity.)

3 Mokichi Okada, "Man's Spiritual Being," in *Johrei; Divine Light of Salvation* (Kyoto, Japan: Society of Johrei, 1984), pp. 45-46.

Love and Power. The outer one represents the point at which the infinite power of God, our Creator and giver of life beyond the circle, touches Man, His physical manifestation on this planet. The fine gold diagonal lines, or spiritual cords (to borrow a phrase from Mr. Okada), connect the Infinite God to the two inner circles, the red and gold, His **Heart** and **Soul, Conscience** and **Will, Emotion** and **Intuition** – the Divinity of God within us. Once this foundation has been laid, a new construct can begin to evolve that not only remains true to his original intent, which was founded on a balance of Christian and Buddhist spiritual truths, but also incorporates the physical laws that Humanity has learned govern our experience of life.

So, let us now focus our attention on the next set of petals to be savored – the area of the design between the Infinite God and the God within. Herein lie the four branches of the cross itself, as well as the pie shaped slices between them. As we have seen, specific colors were chosen for both the branches of the cross and the connecting spaces; since, together they represent the sum of Man's human experience of God, either in the tangible, physical world or in the intangible, spiritual one. The branches of the cross are appropriately green, because green is the color most closely associated with life on this planet. The whole process of photosynthesis that supports all organic life could not take place without the masses of vegetation covering our Earth. Interestingly, the spaces between the branches were not white by chance (i.e., merely the absence of some other color, or the result of drawing on a white background), but rather were deliberately chosen white; the symbol of purity, white is also most closely associated with *Spirit*. (5) The gold rays – God's spiritual cords separating the green and white sections – actually become the force that binds them, connecting the physical and etheric body of Man both to God's Divinity and to its own.

With green now representing the sum total of Man's tangible experience of God, we are then free to separate those experiences according to type, two essentially physical and two spiritual in nature, as the separate branches of the cross would indicate. These are the four paths referred to at the top of this *VERSE*; their defining characteristics, interrelationships and symbolic meanings will be examined throughout my work.

You may question why it's necessary to do this if, as I stated at the start, any one truthful path is sufficient for a spiritually fulfilled life. I realize some traditional religious philosophies may argue if that's true, preferring to believe that theirs is the only way; and they will be armed with the appropriate scriptures to defend their point of view. However, as I said at the end of my *OVERTURE*, I won't challenge any of it. (6) Yet before you finish this book, I believe you will know why I don't feel I have to. All relative reflections of Absolute Truth are true! *They are not mutually exclusive.* And I also believe I'll be able to show you why.

4 (Please note that a distinction will be made throughout this text between *Consciousness* and *Awareness*, words that are often considered synonymous. **Microsoft Bookshelf** does note, however, that *conscious* emphasizes the recognition of something sensed or felt, while *aware* implies knowledge gained through one's own perceptions. Therefore, I've chosen to let these words express the energetic range of values and the difference between *Intangible Spiritual Wisdom* and *Tangible Physical Understanding* – *Soul's Intuition* vs. *Mind's Perception*. Hopefully, the context in which they're used will make that clear. Nonetheless, I felt this explanation was necessary to avoid confusion, especially among those readers accustomed to their metaphysical or psychoanalytic usage – such as *unconscious* vs. *conscious*.)

For the time being, all I can say is that the reason for this is simple. There really is only one way: God's way! That way was determined long before any human ever attempted to search for it. Each path is merely a different reflection of it, dependent on its point of view. Not only that, but their existence all serve specific and necessary purposes. You may not share my conviction now. But keep an open mind and maybe together we'll be able to change the world; because, anything that fosters separation for a counterproductive purpose can have no place in the 21st century if there's ever to be any hope of creating a *Paradise on Earth*.

Examining and learning from all beliefs will bring a richness and dimension to our lives that will only serve to strengthen the roots of our faith, not diminish or threaten them. Once we see that there are common principles underlying the four different views and that each has something valid to offer us, from them we can then incorporate into ourselves what serves us best and find our own unique balance in **The Totality Of God**.

In the next *VERSE*, I will explain how this concept evolved and support it with some fundamental scientific principles.

5 *(Spirit is a broadly applied term that is often used when etheric body would be more correct. I've chosen to refer to these white spaces as the etheric body (which Mokichi Okada called the spiritual body system), so as not to confuse it with Spirit in the context of God's aspects. Henceforth in this study, Spirit will refer to the combined energetic aspects of Soul and Heart – be it God's or Man's – rather than an energetic aura or ghostly presence. When I'm not being more specific, the term Body refers to both physical and etheric, since the latter is essentially the life force of the former – and, while one is alive, as such are inseparable. Material will later be used to represent the combination of Mind and Body, with Mind being not just the function of and memory stored within the brain, but the energetic imprint of our daily lives registered in our body's cellular memory. While the American Heritage Dictionary points out some include Mind as an aspect of Soul – and near the end of this work we will explore a logical construct where this relationship is maintained – Mind is the energetic balance to Body in a triune context with Spirit. Thus, the dualistic balance of Spirit and Material correlate to the quadralitic balance of Soul and Heart, Mind and Body.)*

6 *(It doesn't make sense to debate a subject that can have no absolute answer. After all, while most scholars accept the existence of Jesus, few but the most theologically biased can agree on the extent of the literal accuracy of the Gospels. Throughout the history of what is often referred to as the Jesus Movement, popular texts or the events retold in them were at times dramatized, modified, or even omitted by the author, translator, or Church council to serve either a religious or social end. Many feel these choices were themselves divinely guided to insure the faith's survival against those who would destroy it. But this, I believe, can help explain the apparent inconsistencies found and expounded by critics. Therefore, rather than question it, I have chosen to accept and refer to the contemporary biblical version as the expression of the Divine Will of God that any Christian would profess it to be. Such acknowledgements are universally found: by Buddhists for their historical record of Gautama Buddha, Hindus for the traditional recounting of Krishna, etc. [Today, without the benefit of a video crew to document it, the truth in any report would be relative. And even a video can be misinterpreted, altered or edited!] The question of absolute vs. relative truth will be an important one here, and the Bible is a great example. I personally feel that even if considered as a relative record of events, it will still have a sound absolute value. It is this point that critics often overlook.)*