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## State Shinto in the Lives of the People

The Establishment of Emperor Worship,  
Modern Nationalism, and Shrine Shinto in Late Meiji

Taking the lead from Helen Hardacre's scholarship as well as recent post-colonial theory, this article seeks to delineate new terms in the longstanding debate over State Shinto. It traces the historical process by which State Shinto penetrated the lives of the people, focusing especially on the period from 1890 through 1910. During this time, conceptions of the national polity and reverence for the emperor were crucial in familiarizing the people with State Shinto. Concerned primarily with how the people were drawn into and embraced broader discourses, this article looks at the development of three systems critical to this process: (1) the ritual system for emperor worship; (2) education and propagation system for notions of the national polity; and (3) the training system for Shrine priests.

KEYWORDS: State Shinto—*kokutai*—emperor worship—Shrine Shinto—Imperial Rescript on Education—*Kōgakkan*—*Kōten Kōkyūsho*—*saiseikyō itchi*

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**H**ELEN HARDACRE, whose scholarship covers a wide range of topics, has made an enormous contribution to the research on modern Japanese religious history. All of her writings look at the religious lives of people and try to grasp Japanese religion at a deep level, but *Shinto and the State, 1868–1988* (1989) is of special import: it links these concerns with political history, presenting a discussion that relates to the whole of people's lives.

Starting from World War II and up to the present, the relationship between the state and Shinto has been a subject of major political contention. Scholars within Japan continue to discuss how this relationship should be understood, taking either the perspective of the history of religion or of the history of Shinto. This complex debate remains confusing even now, mired as it is in political points of view. Starting with SAKAMOTO Koremaru's work on *Kokka Shintō* (1994), scholars from the Shrine Shinto side have produced works that examine huge numbers of sources. Scholars of history and religion, however, have remained stalled. In an effort to break through this impasse, I have grappled with research on State Shinto since 2001, but I continue to encounter various obstacles.

Hardacre's *Shinto and the State* (1989) provides an excellent and unique view of the many problems in this continuing debate. While attending to comparative points of reference, its analysis abundantly reveals perspectives on the relationship between the state and religion that researchers in Japan did not even notice. How did the term "Shinto" come to be used so frequently? How did the introduction of the concept of "religion" further contribute to confusion over this term? Such questions remain provocative even today.

This landmark study reveals State Shinto to be not only something the government imposed on the people but also something that the people actively embraced. This perspective is missing in MURAKAMI Shigeyoshi's *Kokka Shintō* (1970), which still represents the position of mainstream research literature. In her book, Hardacre showed first and most forcibly that, by participating in State Shinto, people sought to gain influence in a society largely dominated by the state. Inspired by Hardacre's insights, I will try to delineate new terms in this long-standing controversy over the identity of State Shinto.

### *The Historical Contours of State Shinto*

It is easy to become confused when trying to understand "State Shinto" (SHIMAZONO 2001a, 2006a, 2006b). We may begin by asking how the history of State Shinto has been described up until now.

Sketching a concise overview of State Shinto, MURAKAMI, to whom I will refer often, divides the history of State Shinto from the Meiji Restoration through 1945 into four periods: “the formative period,” “the period of the completion of doctrine,” “the period of completion of the system,” and “the period of the fascist state religion.” Although Murakami insists that characteristics of the “formative period”—from the Meiji Restoration (1868) through Meiji 20 (late 1880)—tended to “remain fluid,” he suggests that it had three main traits: the treatment of shrines as national institutions separate from religion, the consolidation of palace rituals, and the reorganization of all shrines around Ise Jingū 伊勢神宮. In the next period, “the period of completion of the doctrine,” which lasted from the Promulgation of the Imperial Constitution (*Teikoku kenpō happu* 帝国憲法発布, 1889) through the Russo-Japanese War (1905), State Shinto became a supra-religious national ritual system under the Imperial Constitution, which was ostensibly compatible with freedom of religion, but in actuality dominated the principal official religions of Shinto and Buddhism. The doctrine of State Shinto was formulated definitively with the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education (*Kyōiku chokugo* 教育勅語) that adopted State Shinto as its ideological foundation.

Murakami suggests that during the third period, “the period of the completion of the system,” which lasted from the end of the Meiji 30s (the early 1900s) through the beginning of Shōwa (1930s), the state strengthened its control and economic support for shrines and mobilized shrines as an ideological base, causing increased tension between various religions. In the last period, “the period of fascist state religion,” which lasted from the Manchurian Incident (1931) through the end of World War II (1945), State Shinto found a secure place as the state religion and the government tightened control over the various religions as they were mobilized for the war effort. Murakami explains that the doctrine of State Shinto, the “Kokutai discourse” or “discourse on the national polity” (*kokutai-ron* 国体論), supported the foreign military ventures through the concept of the world as a single family.

The four time periods refer to temporal divisions in Japanese and world history more generally. They are generally accurate in pointing to the various phenomena related to the changes in the shrine system, the political system, and in the influence of Kokutai thought. However, when discussing the special characteristics of each period, Murakami’s account presents a number of problems, for two major reasons:

(1) State Shinto is viewed, on the one hand, in its relation to Shrine Shinto, which in turn is discussed in relation to other religions; and on the other hand, it is viewed as it relates to Court Shinto and the Kokutai doctrine. None of these relationships, however, is made clear. Murakami’s other work, *Tennō no saishi* 天皇の祭祀 (1977), describes in detail what was called “Court Shinto” in his *Kokka*

*Shintō*, but it does not discuss the relationship of Court Shinto to Kokutai ideology and Shrine Shinto, nor does it explain how Court Shinto extended its influence into people's lives. Moreover, it provides little discussion of the significance of the Kokutai doctrine as a critical element of State Shinto that extended its roots into people's lives.

(2) Murakami understands State Shinto in terms of total government compulsion and does not explore the role of people as participants in it. He used the term "State Shinto" mainly to refer to "Shinto forced upon and spread among the people when they became subjects," but this term also encompasses the following meaning: "Shinto that centers on the belief in the sacredness of nation and emperor, who was himself a subject of the nation." In this second meaning of the term, people at all levels of society can be viewed as active participants in State Shinto, supporting and rallying around it. Murakami does not try to touch upon this perspective. This omission is closely related to his failure to clarify how "Court Shinto" and the "Kokutai Doctrine" influenced the lives of the people, as noted above (1).

Murakami's interpretation of State Shinto leads to a perspective that greatly overestimates the power and influence of shrine priests. It implies that because Shrine Shinto was supported by the state, shrine priests were thereby the main agents of the Kokutai doctrine, militarism, and the policy of aggression. He views State Shinto as having controlled Japanese people spiritually over an eighty-year period from the very start of the Meiji Restoration through the defeat of Japan in World War II (MURAKAMI 1970, 1). In other words, he sees it as having an immensely mesmerizing power over a long period of time going back to the very beginning of the modern period.

Strongly offended by this interpretation, postwar scholars affiliated with Shrine Shinto who are active even now, such as Ashizu Uzuhiko, Sakamoto Koremaru, and Nitta Hitoshi have tried to draw a different picture based on the historical evolution of State Shinto (ASHIZU 1987; SAKAMOTO 1993, 1994, and 2005; NITTA 1997 and 2003). These scholars suggest that Shrine Shinto was not always allied with the militarist, expansionist, and totalitarian ideologues who advocated the Kokutai discourse. Dividing Shrine Shinto from the practice system based on the Kokutai discourse and emperor worship, they emphasize certain events that reveal that Shrine Shinto was not consistently treated well by the state.

Pursuing the historical study of Shrine Shinto and related religious systems, Sakamoto Koremaru suggests that the history of State Shinto was more limited. He argues that the "State Shinto System," in the complete ideological sense of the term, only existed for a few years (SAKAMOTO 1993, 1994). According to Sakamoto, the system of State Shinto was formed when the Ministry of Home Affairs (*naimushō* 内務省) established the Bureau of Shrines (*jinjakyoku* 神社局) in 1900 and what had been the Bureau of Shrines and Temples (*shajikyoku*

社寺局) became the Bureau of Religions (*shūkyōkyoku* 宗教局). With shrines in a different section of the state administration from other religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Sect Shinto), the government initiated a system in which it directly controlled “non-religious” shrines. Thereafter, the Bureau of Shrines and the supporters of the country’s shrines strove in various ways both to improve the position of shrines and to enhance their power vis-à-vis other interest groups. State Shinto was the part of Shrine Shinto that was placed under the administration of the Bureau of Shrines. Indeed, this administrative framework became the premise for the term “State Shinto,” as it was used in this system.

Sakamoto emphasizes that economic support for those shrines that functioned as national institutions was weak even after the establishment of the Bureau of Shrines. A movement arose in the local shrine world to elevate the position of the shrines by establishing the Office of Divinity (*jingikan* 神祇官) as a higher office, but its full realization would have to wait until the establishment of the Wartime Shrine Board (*jingiin* 神祇院) in November 1940. The Wartime Shrine Board’s first priority and principal responsibility was “spreading the reverence for the *kami*.” Up until then, Sakamoto contends, Shrine Shinto stayed clear of the ideas and ideology of the national sphere. When the Wartime Shrine Board was established, it became possible for the first time to understand State Shinto ideologically, as the absolute system and organization described in the so-called Shinto Directive (*Shintō shirei* 神道指令, 1945). Even so, he says that the Wartime Shrine Board itself was systemically extremely weak (SAKAMOTO 1993, 193).

According to Sakamoto, the history of State Shinto consists of the forty-five years starting from 1900, but for the majority of that time, it was ineffective and did not participate in ideology. “The original form of State Shinto as a *system* consisted of shrine officials on the Wartime Shrine Board and the Bureau of Shrines who could not do anything outside of maintaining the shrines and carrying out rituals” (SAKAMOTO 1993, 195). The history of ideological State Shinto lasted only about four years, during which time it remained an ineffectual system. “There was not even one person from the Wartime Shrine Board bureaucracy or among the shrine priests who sought public office. This fact is proof,” he says, “of the fragility of the connection between the various ideologies of militarism, expansionism, and supernationalism and State Shinto as a system” (SAKAMOTO 1993, 195).

Ashizu, Sakamoto, and Nitta insist that if one were to use the term “State Shinto,” it should be in a specific historical context: that is, the place of Shrine Shinto within the state system. In contrast to Ashizu and Nitta, Sakamoto acknowledges that one must consider the ideological side of State Shinto, but until that can be adequately accomplished he emphasizes the importance of careful research of State Shinto as a system. This way of thinking assumes that Shrine Shinto was an important bearer of State Shinto; it reflects the historical understanding of postwar scholars of Shrine Shinto who saw local shrine priests

as its main proponents. The premise of this way of thinking is that mainstream Shinto is made up of local shrines, shrine priests, and their descendents, and that the history of modern Shinto's close connection with the state is above all the history of Shrine Shinto.

Though it may appear strange at first glance, Murakami Shigeyoshi actually agrees that Shrine Shinto was the main component of State Shinto. He understands Shinto as a Japanese “popular religion” dating from the dawn of time that grew into Shrine Shinto and became the core of State Shinto in the modern period. And he sees modern Shinto as existing on the historical continuum of Shrine Shinto. In this view, if there were something called “State Shinto,” then Shrine Shinto would necessarily have been a central component of it. This type of understanding of Shinto and State Shinto was accepted by historians such as Yasumaru Yoshio, Miyachi Masato, and Nakajima Michio in the Marxist-modernist-deconstructivist line (in a broad sense it might be termed “Enlightenment history”; see YASUMARU and MIYACHI 1988; NAKAJIMA 1972).

Recently, along with new interpretations of “the nation” (*minzoku*), “Shinto” has also been refigured, no longer considered to be something inherited from an ancient or archeological period. There are many who think it developed from groups believing in Japanese gods that formed in the medieval period and that later developed into Shrine Shinto and State Shinto (INOUE 2006). Riding the wave of deconstructivist approaches, these scholars have exposed the “invention of tradition” in modern times, showing that things which have been taken as remnants of popular culture from antiquity were in fact newly created under the guise of ancient tradition. They agree that Shrine Shinto forms the core of Shinto without even considering court rituals (Court Shinto), a crucial expression of Shinto that should not be omitted in a history of Shinto (SHIMAZONO 2006b).

We have now introduced several perspectives for understanding State Shinto. Whether developed by those in Shinto Studies or by those in historical studies, these perspectives share the premise that Shinto consisted centrally of a unique religious framework of shrine priests and shrines. It is important to note that there is a tendency to ignore court ritual (Court Shinto) when using the term “Shinto.” Even Murakami, who understood the relevance of Court Shinto, was not entirely free of this tendency, and could not do justice to its importance.

The acceptance of the premise that “religion” refers to a cultural system containing a distinct outline of doctrine and religious social organizations has led to the dominance of a view of Shinto that centers on Shrine Shinto. “Religion,” thus, was regarded as a unique systemic sphere, distinguished from other social fields. But the understanding that finds specialists and ritualists (clergy and religionists) at the center reflects Christian premises and conceptual frameworks of religious systems that have been imported from the modern West.

All religious traditions, however, whether Islam, Judaism, or Hinduism, have

many aspects that do not fit into this understanding of religion. In such religious cultures, the realms of religion and other systems are mutually interpenetrating; “religious institutions” are not coextensive with religion. Of course, Shinto is also close to them. To think of Shinto as being confined within a religious organization is to force it into a Christian mold and into conceptual frameworks from the Christian cultural sphere. Furthermore, it has been largely ignored that the evolution of the Shinto organization was not based on doctrinal lineages or scholarly schools, but on the dictates of the developing modern state with Shrine Shinto and local shrines as its constituents. Unfortunately, scholars who study Shinto and Enlightenment history try to depict State Shinto without any awareness of the ambiguities involved in the modern concept of “religion” (SHIMAZONO and TSURUOKA 2004; FUKASAWA 2006; ASAD 2004 and 2006).

How should “Shinto” and “State Shinto” be viewed in order to more accurately capture their historical mutations? The term “religion” is generally thought to refer to concepts of the sacred and practices related to it. Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Daoism, and Shinto are all understood as representative units of religion—practice systems and religious ideas with a coherence distinct from other fields of activity. Likewise, Shinto might be understood as a somewhat coherent system of practices and religious ideas united in the belief in the *kami* of the Japanese land. “State Shinto” was formed when those conceptual systems and practices that related to the state, found in part of Shinto, acquired a new coherence.

To a great extent, Shinto finds its source in the court rituals that appeared by the end of the seventh century (SHIMAZONO 2006b). Gradually, in response to Buddhist stimulus, the popular rites of the *kami* acquired a different form, becoming a distinct entity. In the medieval period, with the continued influence of Buddhism, religious groups in society brought together the rituals and ideas related to practices of ancient court. With a basis in the ancient court rituals and the ideas of these medieval groups, the idea gained momentum in the Edo period of making the Shinto of court rituals the backbone for national rites. While strongly influenced by Confucianism, a politically-oriented movement gradually imbued court rituals and the Kokutai ideal with weighty significance. Kokugaku 国学, Mitogaku 水戸学 and bearers of the discourse on the Kokutai-constructed State Shinto so that it could compete with the Christianity of the West. Ultimately, in the late Edo period the idea of the unity of politics and rituals assumed a place at the center of the “movement to revere the emperor and expel the barbarians” (*sonnō jōi undō* 尊皇攘夷運動).

With the revitalization of the nation that came with the Meiji Restoration, the concept of a nation with a unified politics and rituals was accepted as the core of the modern Japanese state. The Meiji reformers believed that they were establishing an ideal nation in which the people and the sacred emperor main-

tained a spiritual union, and where the emperor himself performed rituals for the gods and ruled under the protection of the spirits of historical emperors and the progenitor Amaterasu. The Promulgation of the Unity of Politics and Rituals (*Saisei itchi no fukoku* 祭政一致の布告, 1868), the Inquiry into the Prosperity of the Imperial Way (*Kōdō kōryū no gokamon* 皇道興隆の御下問, 1869), and the announcement of the Promulgation Campaign of Great Teaching (*Taikyō senpu no shō* 大教宣布の詔, 1870) proclaimed these ideas and served as precedents for later edicts. During the Meiji Restoration, the aim of embodying the idea of the nation through popular reverence for the emperor intensified. Although terms such as “Great Teaching” (*taikyō* 大教) and “Imperial Way” (*kōdō* 皇道) were used, they refer to a system that had largely the same content as State Shinto (SHIMAZONO 2001b and 2007).

The system of beliefs and practices in State Shinto sought to protect the nation, which was envisioned as having existed since Emperor Jinmu 神武天皇 and which centered around reverence for the emperor, whose ancestor, Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照皇太神, occupied a central position among the gods. Shinto, then, is the belief in gods that are tied to the land of Japan; State Shinto is the Shinto that had at its core the idea of the nation and reverence for the emperor. An important moment in the formation and establishment of State Shinto occurred when shrines were incorporated into the Shrine Shinto organization. However, it is also necessary to view State Shinto (with the Kokutai ideal and reverence for the emperor at its center) from the perspective of the influence of Court Shinto on people’s lives and the evolution and popularization of the Kokutai ideal and emperor worship. In this sense, by assembling the various traditional beliefs and cultures related to the gods of the Japanese land, Shrine Shinto was a critically constructive element for State Shinto in the Meiji Restoration. However, Shrine Shinto cannot be understood as the sole representative of State Shinto.

State Shinto, in this sense, began to take form as the beliefs and practices of a small number of people starting in the early part of the Meiji Restoration; at first, it existed as an objective, a vision of the ideal state. In addition to forming a modern state, the Meiji reformers helped the government to successfully steer society toward the realization of State Shinto, despite the initial discrepancy between their vision of a modern state and the State Shinto they conceived. While passing through many twists and turns, the various systems of State Shinto assumed a mature form, and the idea of State Shinto took root widely among the people. The history of State Shinto should be written with attention to these shifts.

#### *The Establishment of a Ritual System for the Reverence of Emperor and Court*

Apart from a small change in the transition from the second to the third period from 1905 to 1910, I generally follow Murakami Shigeyoshi’s temporal divisions.

However, I differ greatly on the names and characteristics of the various periods. The designation of the first period (1868–1890) as the “formative period of State Shinto” is acceptable, but I consider the terms for the second, third, and fourth periods to be substantively deficient and inaccurate as he formulated them: “period of completion of doctrine,” “period of completion of system,” and “period of a fascist state religion,” respectively. I would like to suggest that the second period (1890–1910) be called the “establishment period,” the third period (1910–1931) the “penetration period,” and the fourth period (1931–1945) the “fascist period.” This article considers the characteristics of the first through the third periods. It looks with special care at the second period because I believe the second period is crucial in sketching the historical contours of State Shinto.

The first period is called “the formative period” because it was during this time that the broad framework of State Shinto was determined and the cornerstones were laid to make it a reality. Court Shinto became more elaborate and a foundation was established for employing shrines as agents of the nation. However, there were still many bumps in the road in finding a place for Shinto within the state system and only in the end was it determined that these “rituals of the state” should remain separate from religion. To the extent that State Shinto still functioned through the mediation of shrines, it had not yet achieved much influence in the lives of the people.

The ideal of the *Kokutai* and reverence for the emperor secured the loyalty of the people, who saw the emperor as sacred by reason of mythical symbols, and also set a broad framework for making the formation of the nation a reality. However, it was not immediately clear how these ideals could be realized in the lives of the people and adapted to the needs of the modern state. In the process of the promulgation of the Imperial Constitution (1889) and the Rescript on Education (1890), the *Kokutai* ideal and reverence for emperor came to be seen as inseparable from the consolidation of a popular nation state.

From hereon in I will mainly discuss the second period. By calling the second period the “establishment period,” I wish to indicate that it witnessed the appearance of (1) a new ritual system relating to reverence for the court and the sacred emperor, (2) the early formulation of mythical symbols that allowed *Kokutai* thought to take root in the lives of the people through an education and propagation system, and (3) a cooperative organization and training program for shrine priests, which enabled Shrine Shinto to become a powerful constructive element of State Shinto. With these innovations, State Shinto became part of the thought and practice of the people and enjoyed a surge in popularity across every level of the population. When we enter the third period, which I have called the “penetration period,” the government, national elites, and popular movements dedicated to State Shinto enlisted social pressure to compel participation in activities

promoting a more strongly unified people (regarding the popular movements, see SHIMAZONO 2002).

School events provided a model for the ritual system directed at reverence for the emperor and the court. Based on their excellent research, YAMAMOTO Nobuyoshi and KONNO Toshihiko (1973 and 1976) described these events as “rituals of the emperor system.” They recount that the first initiatives to stage school events devoted to revering the emperor began in the second half of the 1880s. Then, in 1891, these events assumed a standardized form with the promulgation of Rules Related to the Rituals of Holidays and Festivals at Elementary Schools (*Shōgakkō ni okeru shukujitsu taisaijitsu no gishiki ni kansuru kitei* 小学校に於ける祝日大祭日の儀式に関する規程). The first section of the rules prescribed:

On the days of the *Kigensetsu* 紀元節, *Tenchōsetsu* 天長節, *Genshisai* 元始祭, *Kannamesai* 神嘗祭, *Shinjōsai* (*Niinamesai* 新嘗祭), school principals, teachers, and students assemble together in the auditorium and perform the following ritual. (1) Students, teachers, and the principals bow deeply facing the image of the emperor and empress and pray for the long life of both. Schools that have not yet posted these images should omit this rite. (2) The principal or a teacher reads the Imperial Rescript on Education. (3) The principal and teachers work to cultivate in the students the resolution to love one’s country and be loyal to one’s lord by respectfully elucidating the sacred intent underlying the Imperial Rescript on Education, or by narrating the great affairs of the first emperor and the virtue of the historical emperors or by telling of the origin of the festivals and holidays or by delivering lectures that correspond to these festival or holidays. (4) Principals, teachers, and students sing songs that relate to these festival and prayer days. (YAMAMOTO and KONNO 1973, 81)

Here, “holiday” refers to days when important rituals related to Court Shinto were performed. For example, the following songs would be sung at these occasions for the *Tenchōsetsu* and *Kannamesai*.

*Tenchōsetsu*: This auspicious day is the blessed day of the birth of the emperor. This auspicious day is the blessed day of the extension of his brilliance. Together with the people, celebrate the life of the emperor of vast brilliance. Together with the people, celebrate the life of the emperor of vast blessings. (lyrics by Kurokawa Mayori 黒川真頼, music by Oku Yoshiisa 奥好義).

*Kannamesai*: Tonight present the autumn crops before the Inner Shrine at Ise (*Isuzu no miya*). In tomorrow’s morning light to which we pray, the waving flag, too, is glowing. Give praise to the rulers. (lyrics by Kimura Masakoto 木村正辞, music by Tsuji Takamichi 辻高節). (YAMAMOTO and KONNO 1973, 79)

The performance of this kind of ritual involved use of the imperial images, the Rescript on Education, and the song, “*Kimigayo*” 君が代, all of which were

new at the time. The imperial image was first presented in 1882; its distribution to the schools in the provinces of the country started from 1888, and most elementary schools had received one by the end of the 1890s (YAMAMOTO and KONNO 1973, 73). The Imperial Rescript on Education was promulgated on the Twenty-third Day of October 1890 when a service for its acceptance and reading was performed at schools across the country. The Thirtieth Day of October was made the anniversary of the official announcement of the Rescript and, until the end of Meiji, there was a ceremony on that day for its reading. “Kimigayo” was first performed in 1878 and was recognized as the national anthem beginning in 1888. During this time period, one also finds a variety of holiday songs sung at ritual occasions (YAMAMOTO and KONNO 1973, 71–80). It appears to have taken quite a while for everyone to sing it.

Prior to 1868, school rituals at provincial schools consisted mainly of the Sekiten 稊奠, the festival that celebrates Confucius, while temple schools featured Tenjin rituals 天神講 that celebrated Sugawara Michizane 菅原道真, and Monju rituals 文殊講. At the beginning of the Meiji period, it was unclear which rituals were to be performed on festival days; there are many examples of school staff visiting local shrines or public offices, but not many of school events. School events related to reverence for the emperor and State Shinto began to flourish through the influence of Mori Arinori 森有礼 (1847–1889), who was installed as of the Minister of Education (*Monbudaijin* 文部大臣) in 1885 and assassinated on the day of the promulgation of the constitution on the eleventh day of February 1889 (YAMAMOTO and KONNO 1973, 67). During the 1880s, schools were increasingly viewed as places for learning ethics, a perspective that led to the spread and codification of school events devoted to reverence for the emperor and State Shinto.

The protocol for invoking the imperial image and Rescript became gradually stricter as they were invested with a sacred character. From the 1890s, each prefecture created rules for their storage, called *For the Storage of Copies of the Imperial Image and the Rescript on Education* (*Gyoei narabini chokugo tōhon hōzō kitei* 御影並勅語謄本奉藏規程). In addition, their enshrinement altar became a sacred place and an increasing number of provinces posted staff near it in order to protect it. Eventually, it came to be seen as something to protect even at the expense of one’s life. Attendance for festivals other than the *Kigensetsu* and *Tenchōsetsu* is recorded as not having been particularly high (YAMAMOTO and KONNO 1973, 99–107). However, school events increasingly became a reality and, after 1900, these rituals exhibited a high level of standardization.

The role of State Shinto and reverence for the court and emperor in school events gained prominence from the second to the third periods (YAMAMOTO and KONNO 1976). I offer examples from the third period because they reveal the significance of the developments of the second period.

A. Visiting Shrines, School Trips, Visiting the Palace

The following item appears in the regulations of an elementary school in Tochigi Prefecture in 1928.

Section 6

Visiting Shrines

1. On festivals such as the New Year and Shinjōsai 新嘗祭, according to the regulations, one must have the students visit tutelary shrines and cultivate reverence for the gods and ancestors;
2. When it is time for entering new schools in the fourth month, students who are enrolled in regular elementary schools together with those in higher levels should pay their respects, announce their entrance to a new school, pray for peace and security, and ask for help with their studies;
3. On the day of the graduation ceremony in the third month, lead the students together to announce their graduation and express their gratitude. In addition, use visits on special occasions as opportunities to cultivate sincere views. (YAMAMOTO and KONNO 1976, 285)

The significance attached to the school trip of the Miyoshi Girls High School in Tokushima Prefecture is described as follows:

School trips, as an extension of teaching by direct observation,<sup>1</sup> are by far the most important aspect of school education. Especially for the students of women's schools, who will be the mothers of the future, school trips are necessary in order to directly examine the many items that cannot be taken in hand at the school and, by touching these directly, to deepen their knowledge of the culture of the three cities, the imperial castle in Tokyo, together with Osaka, Kyoto, and of course the Ise Jingū. This experience will enable them to broadly see the various time periods. Describing school trips as one of the most important of school events at the parent association of Taisho 5 when the school was established, parents were asked to donate one yen toward them every month.

(YAMAMOTO and KONNO 1976, 373)

B. Rituals Related to the War, such as Prayers for Victory, Great Festivals for Special Occasions at Yasukuni Shrine, Festivals for Inviting the Spirits of the Dead in Various Locales (example abbreviated).

C. Participating in Court Events such as Imperial Funeral Ceremonies, Coronations, and Marriages (example abbreviated).

D. New Year's Festival, Morning Assembly, Paying Homage from a Distance

1. Here "direct observation" alludes to the educational theory of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746–1827), whose ideas were introduced beginning in the Meiji period.

I quote the introduction of the “Morning Assembly” from the regulations of Muya Elementary School in Tokushima Prefecture.

#### Morning Assembly

Morning assembling is performed in order to cultivate and practice the spirit of revering the emperor and protecting the country. Boys, every Monday, and girls, every Thursday, line up in the hallway where the imperial image is placed. Bowing deeply to the image, they pray for the fortune of the imperial house and, reading the imperial words and Rescript via the portable handbook, “Mi no mamori,” they come to understand its import. (YAMAMOTO and KONNO 1976, 347)

#### E. The Welcoming and Sending Off of the Court for Imperial Outings and Events

The celebration of court activities increased over time, but it was limited to large events in the Shōwa period when Emperor Taishō 大正 died early and there was no longer any crown prince (HARA 2001). The example below is from the *Records of Sentiment at the Imperial Inspection* (*Goshin'etsu kangekiroku* 御親閲感激録) edited by Hiroshima Prefecture (1930).

#### Students Honored to Be Inspected by the Emperor

##### Third of November of the Fifth Year of Shōwa

For the representatives of the boys and girls youth groups, the rural servicemen, and the lower level students of the three provinces of Hiroshima, Okayama, and Yamaguchi, the inspection by the emperor brought great honor. About 50,000 people had the privilege of participating in this spectacular ritual through the three provinces, including a total of 12,740 people from Hiroshima, consisting of 9,120 boys and 3,620 girls. The marching of the boys and the singing of the girls expressed sincerity and loyalty; it was truly a sight to cause tears to see their spirit and devotion. The deep and boundless blessing of the emperor's kindness was extremely moving and awe-inspiring. The people gathered on the occasion, who bathed in his radiance, submitted reflections of their impressions of the imperial inspection.

(YAMAMOTO and KONNO 1976, 128)

As this last example shows, the state rituals promoting reverence for the emperor at school events also drew participation from local populations. The activities described above in B, C, and E, performed at schools after 1880 involved popular participation in rituals of State Shinto and reverence for the emperor. Takashi FUJITANI (1994, 91–93) argues that these events reflected the period of international ritual competitions. As David Cannadine discusses, the period from 1870–1914 witnessed the expanding influence of state rituals that centered on the head of the state and the court in all the great powers of the West (FUJITANI 1994, 91–93).

The Japanese government sensed this trend, and, viewing it as a strategy for national unity, remade Tokyo into a great ritual space comparable to Kyoto, fully prepared for demonstrations of mass national rituals for the empire. These goals were realized in the second half of the 1880s. The image of the sacred emperor was burned into the consciousness of the people through great pageants that took place in large cities. A precursor to these events was the ceremony for the promulgation of the constitution, which was held on the anniversary of the founding of the empire (*kigensetsu*). Dressed in traditional clothing and carrying a sacred sprig around the Palace Sanctuary (*kashikodokoro* 賢所) and the Hall of Imperial Spirits (*kōreiden* 皇靈殿), the emperor read the constitution and passed it to the Prime Minister. The emperor then followed the procession and moved from the palace to the Aoyama military training grounds. The emperor and empress rode in a new carriage made in Britain with a phoenix decorating the roof. As they advanced, children, at the behest of the Ministry of Education (*Monbushō* 文部省) and the Tokyo City Education Department (*Tōkyō fuchō gakumuka* 東京府庁学務課), sang in unison the “Kimigayo,” which had become the anniversary song of the founding of the empire. At the Aoyama training grounds, where representatives of the parade sat in a row, the emperor inspected more than 12,000 servicemen.

This was followed by the silver wedding anniversary of Emperor Meiji (1852–1912) in 1894 and the marriage ceremony of Emperor Taishō (1879–1926) in 1900. The Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War also opened new ritual spaces. In 1879, the Tokyo Shōkonsha shrine had already become the Yasukuni Shrine; in 1882, the Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors (*Gunjin chokuyu* 軍人勅諭) was issued and the military museum, *Yūshūkan* 遊就館, was built. The Great Torii was constructed in 1888, and a bronze statue of Ōmura Masujirō 大村益次郎 (1825–1869) was crafted in 1893, becoming one of Tokyo’s famous tourist sites (MURAKAMI 1974). The end of the Sino-Japanese war in 1895 prompted prayers for the safe return of the emperor, who was at the command center in Hiroshima. In Hibiya, the emperor returned in a triumphant parade through a huge arcade constructed for the occasion. An even bigger event, lasting almost a week, marked the triumphant return of the military from the Russo-Japanese War in the April 1906. These were the Japanese versions of the widespread national rituals seen in modern nations. Although they were not necessarily heavily flavored with either Shinto or State Shinto, they displayed a reverence for the emperor and the court that was a critical element in the scheme of State Shinto.

The two succession ceremonies, the Great Imperial Funeral (*gotaisō* 御大葬) and the Great Imperial Festival (*gotaiten* 御大典), and visits to Yasukuni Shrine, were national rituals with conspicuous Shinto characteristics and overwhelming religious significance. Here, I will discuss only the emperor’s visits to Yasukuni Shrine. About 14,000 Japanese died in the Sino-Japanese war, the great majority

from diseases contracted at the front. The emperor himself visited special festivals in order to enshrine these soldiers together in 1895 and 1898 (the 1898 ceremony was for those who had died of illness at the front). For the over 88,000 who died in the Russo-Japanese War, two special festivals and imperial visits took place in May 1905 and May 1906. According to the participating coastal military cadres, there was public worship after a parade and a ceremony celebrating their triumphant return. These days of public worship later became the great spring and autumn festival days at Yasukuni Shrine. Such rites for inviting and pacifying the spirits, imperial funerals, and the enshrinement of the war dead to honor deaths for the country were the most solemn rituals of State Shinto. Yasukuni Shrine was under the jurisdiction of the navy and the army, with no organizational affiliation with Shrine Shinto, which was controlled by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

The above-mentioned special rituals related to the people occurred once every few years. However, the enrichment of this kind of ritual space is closely related to the perennial holidays of State Shinto and to the sacredness of urban space. Special rituals encouraged the penetration of sacred space and time into the lives of the people. Through exceptional days of mourning and prayer, as well as through the usual anniversaries and annual events, the people lived within an order of sacred space and time related to State Shinto and reverence for the emperor.

*The Establishment of the Kokutai Concept  
and its System of Education and Diffusion*

The post-Meiji Restoration government hoped to develop Kokutai thought into a form that would be effective in the political sphere of the modern nation and would establish roots in people's lives as a system of reverence for the emperor. This was the "doctrinal" aspect of the "unity of ritual, politics, and doctrine" (*saiseikyō itchi* 祭政教一致) and the aim of the Promulgation Campaign of Great Teaching of 1870. We discussed above the "ritual" aspect of the trinity; here, we move on to the doctrinal side. At the beginning of the Meiji period, it was thought that religious groups should take the lead in bringing reverence for the emperor, Kokutai thought, and Enlightenment concepts within the fold of an encompassing doctrine. The Ministry of Doctrine (*Kyōbushō* 教部省) oversaw a campaign by the Great Teaching Institute (*Daikyōin* 大教院), the Middle Teaching Institute (*Chūkyōin* 中教院) and the Lower Teaching Institute (*Shōkyōin* 小教院) to implement a policy of Shinto as the national doctrine through the cooperative propagation of Shinto and Buddhism.

However, making Shinto the national doctrine quickly proved impossible due to the difficulties of enlisting diverse religious groups in the task of pub-

lic instruction. Early efforts collapsed because of Buddhist opposition, which insisted on freedom of belief (as seen in the influence of Shimaji Mokurai 島地黙雷 (1838–1911) on the defection of Shinshū from the Ministry of Education), and the lack of unity within Shinto (as seen in the “pantheon debate,” *saijin ronsō* 祭神論争). Only some Shinto groups, with limited organizational capabilities, remained as religious organizations that could be mobilized for the national diffusion of emperor worship and the propagation of Kokutai thought.

In contrast, the restoration government introduced and quickly consolidated a modern public educational system, which was beyond the imagination of the Edo-period followers of Mitogaku, Kokugaku, Confucianism, or proponents of revering the emperor and expelling the barbarians. These schools, vehicles for introducing modern Enlightenment concepts and Western systems, came to be considered a means for the propagation and diffusion of Kokutai thought and reverence for the emperor. It took time to develop an appropriate educational philosophy based on the Kokutai ideal for a modern nation that would bring together the deeply Confucian philosophy of education that existed in Japan up until the Bakumatsu period, and the modern Western Enlightenment philosophy of education. The promulgation of the Rescript on Education ended this process in 1889 and thereafter educational programs in ethics, history, and national morality introduced the emperor’s “doctrine” and the ideals of the Rescript to the people.

The history of ethics education provides a good example for understanding this process. The introduction of the modern education system started with the promulgation of the School System in 1872, which sought fundamentally to follow the Western model. The curriculum of elementary schools at the time (four years of elementary, four years of middle school) included self-cultivation influenced by Confucian ideas. The contemporary French educational system observed a distinction at the elementary school level between “religion” and “self-cultivation,” and the new Japanese government described one aim of elementary school to be “instilling loyalty and filial piety through storytelling and discussions about the nation.” It appears that self-cultivation and ethics were considered more appropriate subjects than “religion” (KATSUBE and SHIBUKAWA 1984, 14–16). A movement arose in France around this time to introduce ethics education in the place of religious education, further differentiating its policy from that of the rest of Europe (TEDO 2002 and 2004). Participants in the Restoration government, acutely aware of this movement, thought to bring it into the Japanese educational system.

When they tried to delineate the contents of an ethics curriculum, however, they found themselves at a loss. The reading of Chinese classics had been central to the self-cultivation, ethics, and conceptions of the polity, but it was ill suited for teaching the entire population. The new textbooks cobbled together

several sources, including Edo-period school books such as the *Biographies of Upstanding Youth in Recent Times* (*Kinsei kōshiden* 近世孝子伝) as well as primers for women, translations from English by Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉 (1835–1901), Nakamura Masanao's 中村正直 (1832–1891) *Saigoku risshihen* 西国立志編 (a translation of Samuel Smiles's *Self Help*), and adaptations from the Chinese such as *Wago inshitsuroku* 和語陰騭録. Other approaches regarded as suitable included Buddhist ideas of cause and effect, morality tales, and Shingaku lectures. The textbook *Minka dōmōkai* 民家童蒙解 took up the tradition of oral ethical lectures and moral lectures from the West. In other words, decoupled from the concept of the Kokutai, ethics education appeared to have lost its direction, as Nishimura Shigeki (1828–1902) regretted (KATSUBE and SHIBUKAWA 1984, 24–25). These same questions over religion and ethics education persist today.

Giving the Kokutai ideal a prominent place in the discussion of ethics education brought this confused groping to a resolution. It was hoped that the emperor would elucidate the essence of the “doctrinal” aspect of “unity of ritual, politics, and doctrine,” and a support system for the emperor was developed that consisted of the Imperial Tutor (*jikō* 侍講; 1871) and the tutor's assistant (*jiho* 侍補; 1878) (INADA 1971, 31–54; KAIGO 1981, 93–123). Ultimately, Takasaki Masakaze 高崎正風 (1836–1912), Sasaki Takayuki 佐々木高行 (1830–1910), Hijikata Hisamoto 土方久元 (1833–1918), and Yoshii Tomozane 吉井友実 (1828–1891) joined Motoda Nagazane 元田永孚 (1818–1891) in planning and putting together an ethics education based on the Kokutai idea. Of these five proponents, three—Takasaki, Sasaki, and Hijikata—contributed to the development of Kokugakuin 國學院 and the Kōten Kōkyūsho 皇典講究所, which functioned as means by which Shrine Shinto priests were educated, as discussed below (KOKUGAKUIN DAIGAKU NIHON BUNKA KENKYŪJO 1999).

In trying to make the emperor's new government a reality, Motoda regarded doctrinal principles as necessary to the revelation of the fundamental spirit of governance. Without relating it to all aspects of governance, he saw “doctrine” in the spiritual sense of “study” and “education,” and sought to create a system of knowledge based on a sacred national principle that could guide the people. Motoda produced a draft of the *Aims of Imperial Education* (*Seishi kyōgaku taishi* 聖旨教学大旨), and after discussing it with Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841–1909), finalized the *Imperial Thoughts on Education* (*Kyōgaku seishi* 教学聖旨), which was promulgated in 1879. The 1881 *Outline for Elementary School Rules* (*Shōgakko kyōsoku kōryō* 小学校教則綱領) reiterated an ethics education that embraced the ideas of the *Imperial Thoughts on Education* and elevated “loyalty to the court and love of the country.”

With the distribution in 1882 of Motoda's *Essentials for Childhood Education* (*Yōgaku kōyō* 幼学綱要) to all schools in Japan, the Kokutai concept became the core of ethics education (KATSUBE and SHIBUKAWA 1984, 30–38). In the second

half of the 1880s, a tug of war took place between Motoda's group, which envisioned ethics as a unique Japanese national doctrine, and those like Itō Hirobumi, Fukuzawa Yukichi, and Mori Arinori who insisted that ethics should be based on restraint and practicality. At the Regional Chief's Meeting of 1890, Motoda's draft of the Rescript on Education was recognized as accurately reflecting the intent of the Meiji emperor on the importance of moral education.

The Rescript on Education enjoyed enormous authority when it was disseminated throughout Japan. It was considered the sacred principle of education revealed by the emperor, and as such, was the center of ethics education. The first section of the Fundamental Principles of Elementary School Rules (Shōgakkō kyōsoku taikō 小学校教則大綱), which was promulgated in 1891, states that "cultivation of ethics is the highest purpose of education." The second section states, "Based on the aims of the Rescript on Education, the goal of education is to promote goodness in children and the cultivation of virtuosity, and transmit to them methods of practicing the way to be human." I abbreviate the development of ethics education after this point but wish to underscore that the goals of reverence for the emperor, Kokutai thought, and loyalty to lord and love of country, held an important place in the section of the national textbook devoted to ethics starting from 1904. First-year students were already taught:

Emperor Meiji 明治 was the son of Emperor Kōmei 孝明; his name was Mutsuhito; he took the throne at age sixteen and is currently fifty-three; he governs from the Imperial Palace and cherishes the people dearly. As the recipients of the emperor's great blessing, the people bow deeply before his image.... In their second year, students were directed to discuss the emperor's role as the head of the army.... When they became fourth-year students, the textbook, under the heading, "The Great Empire of Japan" included topics on the divine imperial descent (the three imperial regalia and Amaterasu's Divine Order), the enthronement of Emperor Jinmu, and the unbroken line of emperors ruling the nation, along with a discussion of the Kokutai—giving them the sense of being united as a people. In the first year of upper-level classes, national holidays were explained in a section entitled "Twenty-seven: Holidays and Festivals"... The Teachers Edition instructed: "Have the students understand the significance of the holidays. On holidays, explain that when the emperor performs solemn rituals, the people should practice restraint, express reverence and bring to mind the way of loyalty to lord and love of country."

(KATSUBE and SHIBUKAWA 1984, 93–94)

Kokutai thought does not appear to have been fundamental to history education in the early Meiji period (KAIGO 1981). Even in textbooks from the 1870s, "the period of the gods was emphasized as the source of the Kokutai but [at the same time] it was excluded from history" (KAIGO 1981, 86–95). Fukuzawa Yukichi and Taguchi Ukichi 田口卯吉 (1855–1905) took the position that only

those after Emperor Jinmu were the objects of historical narrative. The *Upper Level Elementary History* (*Kōtō shōgakkō rekishi* 高等小学歴史), published by the Ministry of Education in 1881, taught that the idea of “respecting the sovereign and loving the country,” reflected the ideas of the emperor himself but, here, too, the historical narrative starts after Emperor Jinmu. These texts show evidence of the progress in academic research on archaeology and historical studies of the time. The 1891 Fundamental Principles of Elementary School Rules promulgated a new narrative:

The study of Japanese history makes known the great affairs of our country and aims thereby to cultivate the minds of the people. When one adds Japanese history to the curriculum of the Regular Elementary Schools, students gain an outline of the origins of our culture, the bravery of our people, the achievements of loyalty, goodness, wisdom, and philosophy, the successes of the historical emperors, and the eternity of the imperial line. Starting from a historical discussion of various regions up through the unification of the land, they will learn of the great historical affairs from the beginning of this country through contemporary times. (KAIGO 1981, 86–95)

The import of this sentiment, which was stimulated by the Sino-Japanese War, was taken quite literally, and from the latter part of the 1890s, the discussion of the three imperial regalia and the divine command of the ancestors were added to history textbooks. For example, under the section on Amaterasu in the *Discussion of the History of the Empire: New Edition* published in 1899, it is written: “This god, an ancestor of the emperor, enabled the people to live comfortably by teaching agriculture, the raising of silkworms, and the making of clothing.” This is followed by sections on the “three imperial regalia” and the “descent of the imperial line.” Subsequently, all history textbooks included discussions of these topics (KAIGO 1981, 86–95).

The discourse on ethics was able to present Kokutai thought in a form that was palatable for adults but only after State Shinto came to be taught directly in schools. Inoue Tetsujirō first pointed to this framework in his *Detailed Explanation of the Rescript* (*Chokugo engi* 勅語衍義, 1891) but the more mature published version appeared in the *Introduction to National Ethics* (*Kokumin dōtoku gai-ron* 国民道德概論, 1912). Unable to make educated adults swallow unvarnished mythical concepts, these works wove together a theory that had a degree of persuasiveness and supported the discourse on the Kokutai.

Of course, Inoue Tetsujirō (1855–1944) was not Kokutai thought’s only ideologue. Tanaka Chigaku 田中智学 (1861–1939), who sought to refine Nichiren doctrine to meet modern national standards, strongly and completely embraced Kokutai discourse in his 1903 lecture, “The Founding of the Empire and the Honke Teaching” (published in 1904–1905 as *Sekai tōitsu no tenjyō* 世界統一の天

業; see ŌTANI 2001, 120–128). Deguchi Onisaburō 出口王仁三郎 (1871–1948), who agreed with the reformulated message of Deguchi Nao 出口なお (1836–1918), the founder of Ōmotokyō, broke from Nao's group of disciples in 1906 and entered the Kōten Kōkyūsho, resolving to realize the imperial way at this academy (YASUMARU 1977). In the latter half of the second period of State Shinto, people from many intellectual lineages and diverse religious traditions seeking to protect the country steered toward a closer relationship with State Shinto, emperor worship, and Kokutai thought.

### *The Establishment of the Shrine Priest Training System and Shrine Shinto*

Setting up the foundation for the penetration of State Shinto into the lives of the people entailed the establishment of the ritual systems of State Shinto and emperor worship (section two); and the formation and propagation of a system in which Kokutai thought bolstered popular reverence for the emperor (as discussed above). It was strengthened, however, by incorporating as part of State Shinto the ritual system found in Shrine Shinto that conformed to the Kokutai and supported the state.

The effort to make the ritual system of Shinto one wing of State Shinto proceeded on two levels: the organization of shrines throughout the country, and the enhancement of the role of palace rituals and core shrines such as Ise Jingū 伊勢神宮, Atsuta Jingū 熱田神宮, and Yasukuni Jinja 靖国神社 (Tokyo Shōkonsha 東京招魂社). Palace rituals improved remarkably during the first period of State Shinto. Three halls were built within the palace modeled after Ise Jingū and the annual events of Court Shinto were greatly elaborated and tied to holidays. These changes reflected Ise Jingū's importance as the central institution of state ritual.

In this first period, the separation of Buddhas and *kami* (*shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離) transformed sacred places that had originally been an amalgamation of *kami* and Buddhist worship under the control of Buddhist organizations into facilities for Shrine Shinto, which emphasized emperor worship. In addition, new shrines were built, including Minatogawa Jinja 湊川神社 dedicated to Kusunoki Masashige 楠木正成 (1872), Yasukuni Shrine (Tokyo Shōkonsha, 1869, renamed 1879), Toyokuni Jinja 豊国神社 (1880), Tōkyō Daijingū 東京大神宮 (Kōtai Jingū branch shrine 皇大神宮遙拜所 1880), Abeno Jinja 阿部野神社 dedicated to Kitabatake Chikafusa 北畠親房 (1882), and Kashihara Jingū 橿原神宮 dedicated to Emperor Jinmu (1889). All of these shrines were involved in emperor worship and were deeply colored by State Shinto.

But the process of organizing all of the country's shrines around Ise Jingū—in other words, of reorganizing the shrine system under the control of the ancestor gods of the emperor—did not proceed easily. In 1869, the restoration government set up the Department of Divinity (*Jingikan*) as a means for guiding the

shrines and shrine priests throughout the country. However, the Department of Divinity was not able to exert much power and it was demoted to Ministry of Divinity (*Jingishō* 神祇省) in 1871. The Ministry of Divinity was also ineffective and the administration of the shrines passed to the Ministry of Education in 1872, under which shrines received the same treatment as the various religions. Plans had proceeded smoothly for registering all people, unifying rituals and instituting the shrine-rank system (*shakaku seido* 社格制度), but this was a far cry from the realization of the ideal of Shinto as a national doctrine. In addition, many shrines were hit hard by the Precincts Law (*Keidaichi no agechirei* 境内地の令) and did not feel the favor of the Meiji government. The many small- and medium-sized shrines that were supposed to be one wing of the concept of a unified ritual received little more than a marginal position among the various religions in the Promulgation of the Great Doctrine.

At the same time, a self-assertive movement emerged for employing shrine power as an element of the foundation of State Shinto and for energizing the tepid support of the restoration government. This effort to organize shrine power as a nationally unified system developed from another movement to establish the training of shrine priests. The first organization was the Bureau of Shinto Affairs (*Shintō jimukyoku* 神道事務局), which was established in 1875 as an organization of Shinto priests and national evangelists (*Shintō kyōdōshoku* 神道教導職). But the Bureau of Shinto Affairs was soon afflicted with internal troubles arising from the pantheon dispute about whether the gods venerated at the *kami* altar should consist of the four gods—the three creation gods, Amanominakanushi no kami 天之御中主神, Takamimusuhi no kami 高皇產靈神, Kamimusuhi no kami 神皇產靈神, plus Amaterasu 天照大神—or if other prominent gods of the country should be added. As a result of this debate, the Ise sect assumed prominence, and the Izumo sect was relegated to obscurity. The Bureau of Shinto Affairs ceased to be an organization made up of shrine priests and became a division of Sect Shinto with the 1882 ordinance to separate Shinto priests from national evangelists and the subsequent 1884 disenfranchisement of the Shinto and Buddhist national evangelists.

Government oversight of shrines was placed under the Ministry of Home Affairs from 1877 to 1900, but the poor treatment of the shrines did not change. Religious activities of the shrines was restricted after the 1882 designation of shrines as ritual—rather than religious—spaces. The Shrine Reformation Measure (*Jinja kaisei no ken* 神社改正の件), proposed in 1885 and enacted in 1887, discontinued disbursements even for expenses of the *kanpeisha* 官幣社 (Imperial shrines; shrines entitled to receive visits from imperial messengers). Among the shrines regarded as *kokuheisha* 国幣社 (national shrines) were some that continued to receive favored treatment, but many provincial shrines were not accorded the status of state institutions, and they were left hanging, unable to even perform religious activities.

The state began to invest shrines with the status of vehicles for national initiatives in the latter half of the first decade of the 1900s. In 1906, the economic treatment of shrines greatly improved; *kanpeisha* and *kokuheisha* received government funds, and prefectural shrines received material donations. In 1913, the first section of the *Rules for Shrine Priests at Kanpeisha, Kokuheisha and other Shrines* (*Kankokuheisha ika jinja shinshoku hōmu kisoku* 官国幣社以下神社神職奉務規則) stipulated that “Shrine priests have a duty to observe festivals conforming to the rituals of the state.” For the first time, these priests were given administrative positions as the bearers of State Shinto (SAKAMOTO 1993, 1994). Shrines that received financial support from and gained a recognized position as vehicles for the state were empowered as effective agents of State Shinto beginning in 1910, the start of the third period (the penetration period) of State Shinto.

It should not be inferred, however, that the great number of shrines that did not receive financial support did not join the campaign of shrines and shrine priests in support of State Shinto. Indeed, organizations supporting emperor reverence and State Shinto from below emerged through the cooperation of shrine priests and devotees of obscure shrines in local society. In tracing this process, it is necessary to understand the formative and developmental process of cooperative organizations of shrine priests, the program for training shrine priests, and the appearance of a reform movement to improve the position of shrines that united shrine clientele in local society and power holders in the capital. This process embraced the development and formation of the Shrine Administration Organization (*Jinja gyōsei soshiki* 神社行政組織), the Shrine Priest Collaboration Organization (*Shinshoku kyōdō soshiki* 神職協同組織), and the Shrine Priest Training Organization (*Shinshoku yōsei soshiki* 神職養成組織), all of which adopted the principles of emperor worship and the Kokutai discourse and took form during the 1880s and 1890s.

Even before 1882, when the distinction between shrine priests and national evangelists was promulgated, training programs for national evangelists foreshadowed the later system for training shrine priests.<sup>2</sup> The Main Education Hall at Ise Jingū (*Jingū Honkyōkan* 神宮本教館) was built in 1873 at the education wing attached to Ise Jingū, and a student dorm was built at the Bureau of Shinto Affairs (*Shintō jimukyoku* 神道事務局) in Tokyo in 1876. These were to be completed more fully at some point in the future, but the need to do so became urgent when shrine priests and national evangelists were separated in 1882. Shrines gained the status of organizations distinct from religion that performed rituals that conformed to Kokutai thought and supported emperor worship; toward this end, a vehicle for

2. This discussion of the Kōgakkan (Imperial Learning Hall University), Kōten Kōkyūsho, and Kokugakuin relies on KAMATA 1966 and KOKUGAKUIN DAIGAKU HACHIJŪGO NENSHI HEN-SAN 1970.

the training of shrine priests became necessary. This facility, known as the Kōten Kōkyūsho 皇典講究所, was meant to realize the dreams of a new educational system by conforming to the Kokutai ideas entertained by advocates of Koku-gaku and Kogaku (Ancient Learning) since the Meiji Restoration. An application to build the Kōten Kōkyūsho in Tokyo was submitted to the Home Minister (*Naimukyō* 内務卿) in 1881. Prince Arisugawa no miya Takahito, who was the head of Shinto priests and national evangelists, was appointed as the facility's director by an imperial order transmitted by Yamada Akiyoshi 山田顕義 (1844–1892) in the second month of 1882. In the eleventh month of the same year, the prince sent the following message to the opening ceremony of a school in Iida town:

In general, a strong foundation is critical to all academic endeavors; likewise, elucidate the Kokutai to provide a foundation for establishing the state. That the duty of human life is fulfilled through training in virtue is a truth that does not change in one hundred generations. But since the world is blind to this, the establishment of schools is necessary.

(KOKUGAKUIN DAIGAKU HACHIJŪGO NENSHI HENSAN 1970, 29)

The Kōten Kōkyūsho's secretary, Shishino Nakaba 宍野半, invited students who were moving from the old student dorms to the newly built accommodation to his house, and is said to have admonished them as follows: "For the next five years, consider not all the affairs of the world; focus on training the heart, entrust one's body to the state. Think not of yourself, clarify the truth of the imperial way, and, after completing education, put all your effort toward supporting the state" (KOKUGAKUIN DAIGAKU HACHIJŪGO NENSHI HENSAN 1970, 31).

The Kōten Kōkyūsho was thus regarded as an institution that should teach the imperial way and the idea of the Kokutai, with the aim of training people who would expend themselves for the sake of the state and the emperor. The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Department of the Imperial Household (*Kunaishō* 宮内省) were the behind-the-scenes supporters of the school's establishment, but the government had no intention of spending excessive amounts on the project, and the Kōten Kōkyūsho had to rely on donations from various shrines for its management funds.

Ise witnessed a different series of developments (GAKKŌ HŌJIN KŌGAKKAN DAIGAKU 1972). In 1875, the prince was appointed to the position of Chief of Matsuri at Ise Jingū. He was appointed "to shoulder the nation's hopes" based on "the exceptional trust of Emperor Meiji." (*Jingū saishu* 神宮祭主; GAKKŌ HŌJIN KŌGAKKAN DAIGAKU 1972, 27). The Chief of Matsuri was traditionally an official dispatched from the palace who took charge of state affairs at Ise Jingū; living either in Kyoto or at Ise, he held a great amount of power. These officials originally came from the Nakatomi 中臣 family, but in the Edo period, the Fujinami 藤波 family held the position. With the Meiji Restoration reforms, members of

the imperial family were assigned to the position, which became a largely symbolic one that mediated between the court in Kyoto and Ise Jingū.

Prince Kuni no miya Asahiko 久邇宮朝彦親王 (1824–1891) instituted a study group (*kōkyūkai* 講究会) at the Education Hall at Ise Jingū in 1878. He also held one at his house, assembling shrine priests every month to study the Shinto scriptures. In an unprecedented act, the Osaka Kokugaku scholar Shikida Toshiharu 敷田年治 (1817–1902) was invited to the Kyoto study group. After the division of shrine priests from national evangelists, Prince Kuni no miya Asahiko, together with Shikida, endeavored to establish the Kōgakkan 皇學館 (also called Jingū Kōgakkan 神宮皇學館) as a new institution for the training of shrine priests. Prince Kuni no miya Asahiko entrusted the education of his son to Shikida Toshiharu, and his son resided at Ise from 1882. The Chief of Matsuri at Ise Jingū, Kuni no miya Asahiko, ordered the establishment of the Kōgakkan in the May 1882, just after permission had been given for the establishment of the Kōten Kōkyūsho. A contemporary document relating to the establishment of the Kōgakkan states that it would “clarify all the ancient records related to the Jingū.” This reveals that the planned training regimen for shrine priests revolved more around the history of Ise Jingū than of other shrines in the country.

Thus, under the leadership of the imperial family, the organization of a vehicle for the training of shrine priests at Ise proceeded independently of activities in Tokyo. Those at the Kōgakkan wondered whether they should be under the jurisdiction of the Kōten Kōkyūsho, but in 1883, the Ministry of Home Affairs gave permission for its establishment as an independent school. In 1887, it was fairly small scale, with around forty students, including those in special or preparatory courses. The Jingū Kōgakkan Regulations (*jingū kōgakkan kisoku* 神宮皇學館規則) of this year state that “imperial studies” (*kōgaku* 皇学) was to be the focus: “Those at the Kōgakkan should deliberate on the system for establishing our country and encourage the cultivation of virtue based on the great principle of the relationship between sovereign and subject” (GAKKŌ HŌJIN KŌGAKKAN DAIGAKU 1972, 30). At first, school authorities considered also including “jingū studies” (*jingūgaku* 神宮学), but in the end it was omitted. Shinto, especially as it related to the Kokutai, was the subject of study at both the Kōten Kōkyūsho and the Kōgakkan.

Subsequently, the Kōten Kōkyūsho established branch offices in each of the country’s prefectures, following the model of the Bureau of Shinto Affairs, which also had separate offices. In 1890, Kokugakuin was organized as a center of study for higher-level research and education. Kōten Kōkyūsho was plagued by financial worries at this time. The original management policy called for contributions from Ise Jingū and the departments of the *kanpeisha* and *kokuheisha*, as well as donations from the court. But the contributions from these departments fell behind because the government had set a limit on assistance to the *kanpeisha*

and *kokuheisha*, and the Kōten Kōkyūsho could not secure sufficient donations. Plans for joint programs and for nationalization failed to materialize.

After the deaths of director Prince Arisugawa no miya Takahito 有栖川宮熾仁親王 總裁 (1812–1886) and assistant director Kuga Tatemichi 久我建通副總裁 (1815–1903), Yamada Akiyoshi 山田顯義 (1844–1892), an early Minister of Justice, became director of the Kōten Kōkyūsho in 1889. After him came Sasaki Takayuki 佐々木高行 (1830–1910). These leaders, pillars of the Kōten Kōkyūsho in the early period, all had difficulty procuring management funds. Indeed, Prince Arisugawa no miya Taruhito 有栖川宮熾人親王 (1835–1895), the son of Prince Arisugawa no miya Takahito, did not accept a request to assume the office of director. The Jingū Kōgakkān, on the other hand, did not have financial worries, though it did experience some difficulty bringing capable people together at their location. Most likely, a plan to combine the two institutions did not materialize because of the difficulty in balancing the distinct problems each faced. The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Department of the Imperial Household, both of which had close relations to the emperor, favored the Kōgakkān where the Chief of Matsuri was a member of the imperial family. Following a policy in which they supported the shrine world as much as possible, the Kokugakuin and Kōten Kōkyūsho tended to fall between the cracks (KOKUGAKUIN DAIGAKU HACHIJŪGO NENSHI HENSAN I'INKAI 1970, 268–279).

In 1898, the Kōten Kōkyūsho became a nonprofit foundation under civil law, and in 1903, Jingū Kōgakkān became a specialized national school under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs. It appears that the Diet considered providing the Kokugakuin with government subsidies even though it was a private school. *Kokugakuin Daigaku hachijūgo nenshi* 國學院大學八十五年史 records that the government did not put this plan in action, even though it was repeatedly approved (KOKUGAKUIN DAIGAKU HACHIJŪGO NENSHI HENSAN I'INKAI 1970, 260). The Kōten Kōkyūsho and the Kokugakuin finally became financially stable in 1906 after the *kanpeisha* and *kokuheisha* received government subsidies and the prefectural shrines received material donations. In the same year (1906), Prince Takeda no miya Tsunehisa 竹田宮恒久王 (1882–1919) assumed the position of director of Kōten Kōkyūsho; in the 1910s, Kokugakuin University entered a period of expansion when their financial situation improved. The securing of the financial foundations of the Kōten Kōkyūsho and Kokugakuin elevated the position of the shrines and gave rise to a sense of solidarity among all parties concerned.

Early on the local population, indignant at the poor treatment of Shinto priests and provincial shrines, had organized a movement for improving their status. In 1889, a group known as the Organization of Like-minded Shrine Priests (*Shinkan dōshikai* 神官同志会) was formed. It vociferously pressured the Diet to convert the government office related to the gods of heaven and earth into a high

status Office of Divinity (*Jingikan*). The 1898 Nationwide Shrine Priest Assembly was an achievement of this movement (ZENKOKU SHINSHOKUKAI 1935). The subsequent movement to establish a special government office to revive the ancient Office of Divinity (*Jingikan*) had three constituents: those people who attended the Nationwide Shrine Priest Assembly, Diet members who valued Shinto, and provincial power-holders. This movement propelled Shrine Shinto, which consisted of shrine priests and local confraternities, to national influence as a pillar of State Shinto. Shrine Shinto was also a critical player in rituals related to imperial funerals and major ceremonies, the Russo-Japanese war, and the establishment of the Meiji Shrine during the Taishō period (1912–1926).

In the third period of State Shinto, the penetration period, Shrine Shinto came to fulfill a significant role as an organization supporting State Shinto in local society. The government and the bureaucrats of the Ministry of Home Affairs had high hopes that the shrines could help unify the people. However, the active participation of the state in the shrines did not always prove advantageous. In exchange for gaining power as an arm of the state, shrines became increasingly vulnerable to criticism by other religions with respect to their religious life. The participation of the Ministry of Home Affairs led to the suppression of belief in some gods. This phenomenon was apparent in the combining of shrines that began in 1906 when financial support received by provincial shrines began to be limited to carefully selected shrines (MORIOKA 1987). The bureaucrats of the Ministry of Home Affairs hoped that by compelling small scale shrines to do joint ceremonies with large shrines, only the magnificent well-maintained shrines receiving support would survive. Depending on the district, this policy had both positive and negative reactions, but as a result, the number of shrines nationwide decreased from 200,000 to 120,000 in 1914. This aggressive administrative measure ignored the traditional spiritual beliefs and aroused the emotions of the local people, who often worked to rebuild disposed shrines (SAKURAI 1992).

The number of shrine priests at the time was about 15,000 (SAKAMOTO 1993, 172). Despite respect for State Shinto, shrine priests did not receive treatment appropriate to their status as government officials; in fact, their situation was a far cry from economic affluence. However, it was not at all contradictory that the Meiji government aimed at once to fortify the foundation of the modern state and at the same time employed State Shinto to support Kokutai thought, strengthen reverence for the emperor, advocate for the national significance of the gods and shrines, and advance the building of the country. Taking a broader view, the realization of the coercive potential of State Shinto entailed, on the one hand, the government's support of shrines as a vehicle for the unification of the people and, on the other hand, the shrine world's advocacy of Kokutai thought and allegiance to the government.

Thus, Shrine Shinto was shaped by the advocacy of State Shinto under the post-Meiji Restoration government. The expressed aim in the developmental stages of organizing shrines and the training of shrine priests was the spreading of reverence for the emperor and court, and respect for the national polity among the people. More than anything, shrines came to be understood as places of realizing the imperial way. Thus, Shrine Shinto did not develop out of a league devoted to traditional local gods, but from the active participation of the Meiji emperor and the court. In this way, the understanding of Shrine Shinto as the arm of the court spread. As State Shinto acquired support from local society, it gave concrete form to the plans laid out by the Restoration government.

Knowing the proclivities of local shrines and shrine priests, the Meiji government implicitly supported this conflation of shrines and the state. But it provided only halfhearted economic support. Indeed, local society and shrine priests voluntarily sought to develop Shrine Shinto into a power supporting the state under the guidance of Kokutai discourse. Responding to Buddhist opinion, the government actually kept in check the self-assertive claims of Shrine Shinto priests to be the representative advocates of State Shinto. Aware of a possible contradiction between strengthening State Shinto and advancing the development of the modern state, the government often tended to rein in the demands of Shrine Shinto power in the second and third periods (AKAZAWA 1985).

However, by the end of the second period of State Shinto in 1910, local shrines and shrine priests were already providing strong support for State Shinto from below. Shrines gradually came to hold significance as places for expressing an elevated consciousness of the state and emperor worship. Starting in elementary school, people—whether eagerly or halfheartedly—went to visit shrines with increasing frequency precisely because of evolution of Shrine Shinto into a strong advocate for State Shinto at the instigation of the state. Understanding the development of Shrine Shinto as a cornerstone of State Shinto is also critical for grasping postwar developments (SHIMAZONO 2006a).

### *Conclusion*

In this article, I placed particular emphasis on the second period of State Shinto—the establishment period extending from 1890 to 1910—in examining the historical contours of State Shinto. Earlier, during the time of the Meiji Restoration and in the formative period (1868–1890), State Shinto was formulated around the concepts of “unification of rites and politics,” “the imperial way,” and “imperial studies,” with strategic moves bringing it closer to a role that would answer the various demands encountered by the developing modern nation. Entering the second period, the period of establishment, it took a form that adapted to the modern nation with a ritual and conceptual system that aimed at familiarizing

the people with the idea of the Kokutai and reverence for the emperor. In this article, I examined this development from three perspectives: (1) the ritual system for revering of the sacred emperor and the imperial house; (2) the system of education and propagation of Kokutai thought, which took root in the life space of the people; and (3) the training system for Shrine Shinto and shrine priests.

During this second period of State Shinto, (1) the ritual system for revering the emperor and court took the form of school events and imperial pageants, laying the groundwork for spreading its influence widely. And, (2) after the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education, the idea of the Kokutai and reverence for the emperor was widely recognized as a central principle of school education, which was officially fixed in the curriculum of ethics and history; in the adult world it acquired the status of a sacred formal doctrine. Further, (3) a program for training shrine priests to revere the emperor and Kokutai thought was established, and local proponents of Shrine Shinto and shrine priests rose up in support of State Shinto from below. When we enter the third period, the penetration period (1910–1931), State Shinto took on a strongly popular character in the lives of the people, as seen by the widespread movement to construct the Meiji Jingū 明治神宮 (YAMAGUCHI 2005). The state, which was veering toward imperial expansion and thus distrustful of movements that threatened the establishment, gradually abandoned its commitment to the international standards of modern nations, and it became difficult to oppose those who supported the orthodox vision of State Shinto. Religious groups and movements caved in to State Shinto and the imperial way (ŌTANI 2001, SHIMAZONO 2002). Reform movements that sought to avert crisis contributed to the further strengthening of the voice of State Shinto orthodoxy, leading to the fascist period.

This historical sketch of State Shinto draws from a perspective that attends to historical shifts and to thought and practices embedded in the lives of the people. Looking at history from the viewpoint of religion, one naturally comes to focus on the thought and practices of the people. This method differs somewhat from the perspective of intellectual history.

I have heard the criticism that, when addressing the importance of reverence for the emperor in extending government control, one should use the term “imperial ideology” and not employ the concept of “State Shinto.” However, this perspective, which is tied to the emperor system and its ideology, concentrates too much on events relating to governmental institutions and the discourse and behavior of leaders and elites in the cultural and educational spheres. For example, the analysis of the emperor system by Maruyama Masao and the Maruyama school largely ignores State Shinto and the question of people’s religious consciousness.

To understand occurrences in modern Japanese society, it is of course extremely important to have a nuanced understanding of elite discourses, the

political process, and the history of social systems. However, studying people at various levels of society is also of much interest in deepening our understanding of the situation: specifically, how they took up official ideas and sentiments in the course of their lives, and with which rituals and practices they became familiar. The perspective of State Shinto allows us to look again at modern history from the grassroots level of social life.

Today, when it is becoming difficult to gain fundamental agreement on values or cognitive frameworks, what do such words such as “religion,” “Shinto,” and “State Shinto” specifically mean? It is certainly not easy to gain consensus on their definition. However, such terms are helpful in tracing the history of ideas, sentiments, and practices if care is taken in universalizing them. The use of such general words as “religion,” “Shinto,” and “State Shinto” is probably necessary to gain a comparative understanding of a spiritual culture that developed over a long period of time and to apply them to various problems in contemporary situations.

[Translated by Regan E. Murphy]

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