

## Summarizing a Career of Research on "State Shinto": An Awareness of Its Necessity and a Perspective on Summarizing It

NITTA Hitoshi

### □Summary

This article describes how I have come to aware the necessity to summarize a career of research on "State Shinto" and how I have obtained a perspective to do so. I will summarize my published books, articles, essays and add them commentary. This article covered are "Kōkka Shinto Ron Yoteki [ 'State Shinto' Research Drops ]" (Kōgakkan University Shinto Research Institute Report No. 40, December 1990), "Kōkka Shinto to Shinto-Shirei [State Shinto and the Shinto Directive]" ( 'Nihon「Jinja」Sōran [Encyclopedia of Japanese "Shrine"] ' January 1991, Shin-Jinbutsu-ōrai-sya), "W・P・Woodard no 「Kōkka Shinto」 Hihan nitsuite [On the interpretation of W. P. Woodards criticism of 'State Shinto']" (Kōgakkan Daigaku Shint Kenkyūjo Syohō [Kōgakkan University Shinto Research Institute Report] No. 46, January 1994), "W・P・Woodard 「Senryō to Jinja Shinto」 no Genbun to Honyaku [Original and translated Text by W.P. Woodard 'Occupation and Shrine Shinto']" (Kōgakkan Ronsō [Treatise or Essay Collection of Kōgakka] Vol. 27, No. 4, August 1994), and "W・P・Woodard no 「Kokutai Kyōshin Syugi」 Ron [W. P. Woodards 'Kokutai Cult' theory]" ' Tani Shego Sensei Taisyoku Kinen Shinto-gaku Ronbunshū [Professor Tani Sheigos retirement commemorative collection of articles on Shinto study]' (Tokyo: Kokusyo-kankō-kai, July 1995).

### □Keyword

State Shinto, W. P. Woodard, World War II, Occupation of Japan, Shinto Directive

### Introduction

This article is mainly an attempt to sort out the my research process, which has examined the pros and cons of discussing modern Shinto based on the term "State Shinto". Specifically, I will describe how I came to aware the necessity to summarize a career of research "State Shinto" and how I acquired a perspective to do so. My articles mentioned in this article will be included in "Kōgakkan University Academic Repository" in order. I would very much appreciate reading them in light of this one (1).

### 1. An awareness of the necessity to summarize a career of research on "State Shinto"

I was assigned to the Kōgakkan University Shinto Research Institute in April 1988. Looking back on the research environment at that time in 2003, I wrote the following:

When I started studying the relationship between politics and religion in modern Japan (2), there were many unclear points in this field, but on the other hand, arguments that were clearly wrong were rampant, which affected even the trial. In any case, I devoted myself to reading the original historical materials in order to correct the errors by clarifying the facts. However, it took a lot of work and time to correct just a small part of a huge amount of lies and falsehoods, and I was often impatient.

In 1988 I got a job at Kōgakkan University and left Tokyo. As a result, I could not use the method of going easily to the reference libraries to search for facts. While I could commute to there in Tokyo with 500 yen in transportation expenses, I occasionally had to pay 25000 yen from Ise. While wondering whether it would be impossible to study modern history in rural areas, after repeated trial and error, I came to the method of carefully reading existing material collections and publications of those days, and finally I was able to get out of my slump (3).

As a graduate student in Tokyo, My research hubs were the National Archives of Japan, the National Diet Librarys constitutional reference room, and the Waseda University Library. Therefore, I could search for original historical materials such as K ōbunruisan (『公文類纂』) K ōbunroku (『公文録』) and K ōbunbetsuroku (『公文別録』) and abun dant book collections, and try to clarify the problems of the "State Shinto" theory with historical materials unseen by the academic world. However, after I was assigned to Ise, the constraint of distance as well as time precluded me from using a method of research in which I could read as much as I wanted despite being overwhelmed by a large amount of materials. I can only read certain materials over and over in a limited amount of time. A trial given by chance. Now that I think about it, it was good.

Publicly published collections of researchers works and materials are available for anyone to read, but in fact, not many people, except the author or the editor, are familiar with the contents. Realizing this, I decided to make a fresh start by carefully reading and analyzing the present and past articles, books and historical materials.

To clarify the formation process and structure of thought by reading the works of key persons or researchers in the order of year of publication. Then, based on this, I gradually built up a systematic research history by combining them. During this process, important

historical materials are identified, their interpretation is examined, and efforts are made to discover new historical materials. Based on the understanding of specific fields that gradually became clear in this way, I developed my own views on the background and the whole modern history of Japan, which served as a premise of them. In addition, I would further clarify my views on the entire modern history of Japan, while keeping in mind the consistency of my views on specific fields. In this way, my research style, which I call "inductive method" has gradually developed. I forgot who said "Necessity is the mother of invention. Coincidence is the father of invention." but it is true.

The starting point for such research was ""State Shinto" Research Drops" published in the 40 issue of Kōgakkan University Shinto Research Institute Report published in December 1990. There are three main points to be made here.

- ① I came to realize the necessity to organize the history of interpretation of modern religious administration, in other words, the history of research on "State Shinto".
- ② It is questionable whether the view that "State Shinto as the main culprit of war" which has been an obvious premise since the "Shinto Directive" is really "obviousness".
- ③ There are doubts about the correctness of the view that Shigeyoshi MURAKAMI stated that the "State Shinto" reached its peak in and after 1930 and the Public Order Law and the Religious Organizations Law are typical components of this.

I cited Takeyama Michios The spiritual history of the Showa period (4) and Hayashi Fusao's Dai-tōa-sensō Kōtei Ron [Affirmation of the Greater East Asia War] (5) as grounds for my doubt of ②. In contrast to Shigeyoshi Murakami, who said that the war ideology was the cause of the war, the two writers believed that the external crisis was the cause of the war ideology that was born and spread.

After that, I had no further discussion about Hayashi Fusao. However, Takeyama Michios argument was mentioned in various situations and became my guide.

The expansion of the field of view mentioned here, that is, the perspective of considering and positioning the "State Shinto" in relation to the understanding and evaluation of Japan's entire modern history, gradually occupies a central position in my research since 1998.

Regarding ③, I pointed out that both the Maintenance of Public Order Law and the Religious Organizations Law were abolished by the "human rights directive" (October 4, 1945) which issued at a time when GHQ was not aware of the dissolution of the "State Shinto" and questioned the simple inclusion of both in the "State Shinto".

In recent years, new researches on "Kōkoku Shikan" has been attempted. One of researchers points out that there was little discussion in previous studies in terms of why such an ideology of "Kōkoku Shikan" was formed (6). It is worth remembering, I think, that Takeyama and Hayashi raised issues from this perspective in the early postwar period.

## **2. Obtaining a perspective for organizing research history**

The question of whether it was appropriate to consider "State Shinto" as the "main culprit" of war as the axiomatic truth based on "Shinto Directive" developed into two questions: what was the content of "Shinto Directive" in the first place, and whether it had been correctly understood by the people after that? To answer this question, I studied the precise interpretation of William P. Woodard's claims.

The conclusion of the study was the first to be published in the "③ Problems" which is a part of "State Shinto and the Shinto Directive" section of Overview of Japanese "shrine" (Shin-Jinbutsu-ōrai-sya, January 1991). In that part, I wrote the following.

The Shinto Directive defines "State Shinto" as "a branch of Shinto classified as a secular national service" but its prohibitions go far beyond this. However, the problem of terminology was not thought out until the correct wording was reached, as the attention of the directives authors was focused on the practical task of removing militarism and ultra-nationalism from religion and education. Therefore, after that, "State Shinto" has given rise to various interpretations as to when it was compiled and what it actually was, and it has not been settled yet. For example, W. P. Woodard, a former research staff member of the Religious Affairs Division of CIE, says that the Shinto Directive targeted "Kokutai Cult" and distinguishes it from "State Shinto" which refers to the state management of Shrine Shinto since the Meiji period, and "Kokutai Shinto" which preaches that the Emperor, the land, and the people are sacred and indivisible based on mythology and based on the principle of unity of rituals and state. According to him, "Kokutai Cult" is an interpretation of "national polity" by militarists and ultra-nationalists in the 1930s and early 1940s, and refers to the doctrines and practices of "national polity" which were forced by the power of the police power upon the Japanese people as a cult. It is said that although it incorporated various elements of Shinto myths and thoughts and utilized facilities and events of Shinto, it was not a form of Shinto and was an independent phenomenon that was clearly distinguished from Shinto (p.335).

Heres my summary of Woodards point.

- ① What "Shinto Directive" tried to eliminate was "Kokutai Cult".
- ② "Kokutai Cult", as "independent phenomenon", should be distinguished from "State Shinto" "Kokutai Shinto" and other "Shinto".
- ③ The three main points of the "Kokutai Cult"

\*This is the interpretation of "national polity (Kokutai)" by militarists and ultra-nationalists during the limited period of the 1930s and early 40s.

\*The subject of coercion was the police.

\*What the people were forced to do was the doctrine and practice of "national polity" should be called a cult.

By the way, in recent years, research on "national polity" has become active, and in the midst of such research trends, the view that the theory of "national polity" has changed even in modern Japan seems to be gaining support (7). But how many of these researchers are aware that such views have been presented by Woodard since as early as 1965?

The author paid attention to Woodard because he was the first researcher who researched systematically utilizing internal materials on the process of drafting and implementing "Shinto Directive" and at the same time, he was the first researcher who critically examined "Shinto Directive". In the first place, what was the content of "Shinto Directive" and has the content been correctly understood by the people after that? As I was trying to ask them, he was a perfect subject for me to study.

The first thing I noticed when I started reading articles about him was that their understandings of his claims were subtly different. While Ōhara Yasuo understood that "Woodard says the definition of the Shinto Directive, which equates State Shinto with Shrine Shinto, is wrong.", W. K. Bunce, the author of "Shinto Directive", wrote that "Woodard advocates the distinction between Kokutai Cult and State Shinto ". If Woodard's interest was in the clarification of the concept, this difference could not be ignored.

Therefore, I obtained the English manuscript presented at the Blaisdell Institute in Claremont, the United States, in September 1965, which was the first publication of his thesis, and compared it with the translation by the Institute of Japanese Culture, Kokugakuin University. The result is the "Interpretation of W. P. Woodards criticism of "State Shinto "" published in January 1994 Kōgakkan University Shinto Institute Office News No. 46. The main points of this article are the following three.

- (1) Woodard's intention was to distinguish between "State Cult" and "State Shinto".
- (2) Based on the understanding that State Shinto was "Worship of shrines and Shrine Shinto during the period when shrines were nationalized", he said that "in effect, both had exactly the same meaning at the time". Therefore, the distinction between "State Shinto" and "Shrine Shinto" is not so controversial.
- (3) His biggest contribution to the study of the State Shinto was that he set "State Cult, or Kokutai Cult" as a term to catch the whole prohibited objects of the Shinto Directive and insisted that "State Shinto" was only a part of it (Or part of it overlaps with State Cult).

At the time of writing this article, I assumed that the English text on which I relied was distributed by Woodard on the day of its publication. However, when I subsequently interviewed the participants, I found out that the translation of the Kokugakuin Institute for Japanese Culture was a translation of a paper distributed on the day, and that the English text I relied on might have been edited and distributed to the participants at a later date by Blaisdel Institute. In any case, he thought it necessary to keep this English text open to the public and add as much explanation as possible, so I published "Original text and translation by W. P. Woodard "Occupation and Shrine Shinto"", which appeared in the fourth of volume 27 of *Kōgakkan Ronsō* in August, 1994. In this reprint, the author decided to use the word <Kokutai Kyōshin Syugi 国体狂信主義> in order to express Woodard's intention more clearly, rather than the word "Kokutai Raisen Syugi 国体礼賛主義" used by the preceding researcher, Abe Yoshiya, for the word <State Cult> which Woodard used - later he started to use <Kokutai Cult>.

The researches on Woodard that have been accumulated through the aforementioned process was compiled in "W.P. Woodard's "Kokutai Cult" theory", included in the Professor Tani Sheigos retirement commemorative collection of articles about Shinto (*Kokusyo -kankō-kai*) published in July 1995 in (8).

In "Introduction", I first state my view that Woodard's research should be positioned as the starting point of the postwar history of "State Shinto" research.

Then, in the first section, I introduce his bio. After that, I examine the contents of his main works in three sections.

First, in the second section, I explain the contents of aforementioned "The Occupation and **Shrine Shinto**"(1965) based on English text. The main points of his argument in this presentation are as follows:.

- (1) What the Occupation Forces intended to abolish by "Shinto Directive" was "Kokutai Cult" and it should be considered separately from "State Shinto" and "Shrine Shinto" which were

part of it.

(2) "Kokutai Cult" is "derived mainly from the Ministry of Education and not from the Jingiin (Ministry of Shinto), existed by specific laws requiring acceptance of special ideologies and observance of certain well-formed practices". It was the same as "Kokutai Shinto" preached by Katō Genchi.

(3) "State Shinto" refers to the state where shrines were nationalized, and "State Shinto" and "Shrine Shinto" were exactly the same during that period.

(4) "Kokutai Cult" was a practice which had gradually developed since the Meiji Restoration, and the first stage was the nationalization of shrines, the second stage was the promulgation of the Imperial Constitution which stated "The Emperor is sacred and inviolable." and the third stage was the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education.

In Section 3, I explain the content of "Allied Occupation and Japanese Religion" published in International Religious News No.5.6 (1972) by the International Institute of Religious Research. The main points of his argument in this paper are as follows.

(1) The appearance of "Kokutai Cult" came to be regarded as the result of a deviant growth of "Fukko Shinto" to "Kokutai Shinto" and next "Kokutai Shinto" to "Kokutai Cult". As a result, the view that "Kokutai Shinto" = "Kokutai Cult" was discarded.

(2) Although all of the aforementioned Shinto regarded the Emperor as absolute, "Fukko Shinto" had both religious and political aspects, and especially until Hirata Atsutane, it remained in a religious position and had the possibility of developing as a pure religion.

(3) "Kokutai Shinto" is a political doctrine which was transformed by the successors of Fukko Shinto, and the national system of *Ikkun Banmin* (all the people under one monarch) was established by it. And it was then administered by the Education Ministry's School Education Bureau and represented by the words "Imperial Rescript to Soldiers" and "Imperial Rescript on Education".

(4) "Kokutai Cult" emerged when the "Kokutai Shinto" was compelled to affect all citizens by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the police, especially through the Peace Preservation Act of 1926. In other words, from the latter half of the 1920s to the 1930s, the "Kokutai Shinto" achieved a deviant growth in pursuit of the "Kokutai Cult" which then dominated Japan in the first half of the 1940s and drove people to the war.

In Section 4, I took up The Allied Occupation of Japan 1945 -1952 and Japanese Religions (1972), which was a compilation of his studies on "Shinto Directive" published in the year before his death, and explained its contents. In this book, descriptions of "Kokutai Cult" are considerably shortened, and the main points are as follows.

① "Kokutai Cult" is an independent phenomenon that should be distinguished from "Shinto" "Shrine Shinto" "State Shinto" "Kokutai Shinto" and "Sect Shinto".

② "Kokutai Cult" emerged from the coercion of the Japanese people by the power of the police state, centered on the interpretations that radical ultra-nationalists and militarists gave to the concept of national polity (Kokutai) in the 1930s and early 1940s. The Ministry of Home Affairs played a central role (9).

In "Conclusion" of this article, I summarized the following three points of Woodards argument to be considered in future research.

(1) "Kokutai Cult" is not a form of "Shinto".

(2) Therefore, the term "State Shinto" should not be used for "Kokutai Cult".

(3) "Kokutai Cult" is a limited phenomenon from the late 1920s (Or in the 1930s) to the early 1940s.

After this summary, I points out: "It seems to be an important point whether to view the relationship between politics and religion in modern Japan as a basically homogeneous process that can be grasped with a single term [State Shinto] or as a heterogeneous stepwise process that requires the use of multiple terms." (10).

To sum it up again, by learning Woodards point of view, I have been able to have the following perspective.

① "Shinto Directive" contains a number of prohibitions that are different from the "State Shinto" defined by the directive itself (11).

② If you try to capture the Directive as a whole, you need a different term from "State Shinto".

③ In the case of discussing modern Shinto, it is necessary to be aware of the fact that there is a different level of Shinto that can be described as "deviant growth".

However, as symbolized by the total omission of Woodards argument, it was common at that time to call everything prohibited by "Shinto Directive" "State Shinto", and the trend was difficult to overcome. If I used a term unrelated to "State Shinto", it would be likely to be ignored.

What should I do? It was Momochi Akiras theory that inspired me. Momochi emphasized the necessity of dividing concept of "separation of state and religion" into the concept "separation of religion and state in a broad sense" and the concept of "separation of religion and state in a narrow sense ("Political and religious relations in Western countries" In the book of Between states and religions: the idea and the reality of the separation of church and state published in 1989 11, Nihon-kyōbun-sya). According to him, "Separation of religion and state in a broad sense" is "separation of politics and religion as a thought or idea" and "

separation of religion and state in a narrow sense" is "a system of political and religious relationship that is comparable to a state religion system or eclectic system" "separation of religion and state as a system" (pp.115-116).

From his argument, I came up with the idea of using "State Shinto in a broad sense" to include everything banned by "Shinto Directive" and "State Shinto in a narrow sense" to refer to "a branch of Shinto which has been classified anon-religious national cult" as defined by "Shinto Directive". Based on this distinction, I decided to organize the history of research "State Shinto".

In retrospect, it became a seed of my opinion that I encountered Woodards assertion that "Kokutai Cult" is not a form of "Shinto" and that the term "State Shinto" should not be used for "Kokutai Cult." And from the seed, buds sprouted through the dispute with Susumu SHIMAZONO who insists on the term "State Shinto." At last, the buds grew into trees as my assertions that "national polity" should be distinguished from "Shinto", "national polity" should be regarded as "compound thoughts" and the distress of modern Japan should be understood in the dispute around "National Polity."

#### **Note**

(1) There are some typographical errors in these essays, and I want to correct them from today's point of view, but I emphasize the fact that they were recorded at that time and leave them as they were.

(2) After I entered Waseda University's Graduate School of Political Science in April 1982, I began to seriously study the relationship between politics and religion in modern Japan.

(3) "Afterword" from *The Illusion of Living God "Arahitogami" and "State Shinto": What did invoke Absolute God?* (February 2003, PHP Institute), pp. 265 -266.

(4) First, it was serialized in the magazine *Kokoro* under the title of "Jyūnengo ni -Arewa Nandatta no darō [10 years later, what was that?]" (August – December in 1955), and then it was published under the title of *Syōwa no Seishin-shi* [The spiritual history of the Syōwa period] by Shincyō-sya (May 1956), and then it was recorded in the *Kōdan-sya Academic Library* under the same title (July 1985).

(5) First, it was serialized in a magazine *Ch ūōkōron* under the same title (1963-40), and then published in two books of the same name by Ban-cyō- syobō (In 1964 and 40).

(6) Hasegawa Ryōichi 「*Kōkoku Shikan*」 toyū Mondai—Jyūgonen Sensō-ki niokeru Monbusyō no Syūshi Jigyō to Shisō-tōse-saku [The Problem of "Kōkoku Shikan": Historical Projects Conducted by the Ministry of Education and Policies for Controlling Thought during

the 15years War] , Hakutaku -sya, 2008, p. 2.

(7) Konno Nobuyuki Kindai Nihon no Kokutai Ron—<Kōkoku Shikan>Saikō [National Polity Theory of modern Japan: Rethinking <Kōkoku Shikan> ] Perikan -sya, January 2008. Konno Nobuyuki "Kindai Nihon niokeru Mashuri to Sei—Kokumin no Syutaika womegutte [Rituals and Politics in Modern Japan: On the subjectivization of the People] " Nihonshi Kenkyū [Study of Japanese History] No.571, 2010. Konno Nobuyuki "Nihon Syugi no Keihu—Kindai Shinto Ron no Tenkai wo Cyūshin ni [Genealogy of Japanism: Focusing on the development of modern Shinto]] " Nihon no Shisō [Thoughts of Japan] Vol.1—「Nihon」 to Shisō ["Japan" and Thoughts] , Iwanami -syoten, April 2013. Konno Nobuyuki "Nihon Syugi to Kōkoku Shikan [Japanism and Kōkoku Shikan] " Nihon Shisō-shi Kōza 4 – Kindai [Lecture on the History of Japanese Thought 4: Modern] , Perikan-sya, June 2013. Incidentally, the *Merkmal* of the transformation of modern Japan in the Konno's claim is "the subjectivization of the People".

(8) This is included in Kindai Seikyō Kankei no Kisoteki Kenkyū [A basic study of modern political and religious relations] (Taimei-dō, April 1997) as Chapter 10.

(9) From this point of view, when we discuss "State Shinto", it is essential to analyze the thoughts and actions of the police. However, there is not much discussion about it. In the past, I know only my two papers about that. The one is that Ashizu Uzuhiko discussed "Keisatsuhan Syobaturai 警察犯処罰令 [Rules for Punishing Petty Criminals] " in "Shin-syūkō eno Kansyō no Hōri [Legal Theory of Interference with New Religions" which is Chapter VII of "Teikoku Kenpō Jidai no Jinja to Syūkō [Shinto Shrines and Religions in the Era of the Imperial Constitution] " ( Meijiishin Shinto Hyakunenshi [The100 Years History of Shinto from Meiji Restoration] Volume 2, pp.245-251, edited by Shinto-bunka-kai, April 1966) . The other one is that Itō Takashi speculated the reason why Tokkō Keisatsu 特高警察 [the Special Higher Police] changed its subject of crackdown from the Communist Party to the Religious Organizations in Syōwa no Seiji [Politics of the Syōwa period] ( published by Yamakawa-syuppan-sya, August 1983, Page 352).At last in the twenties of Heisei Era, a series of discussions and considerations by Kojima Nobuyuki appeared, and it became clear that the understanding that various religions were oppressed by "State Shinto" was a misleading view, which overlooked the transformation of Empire of Japan around 1938 and the accompanying dramatic changes in the subjects of crackdown by the Special Higher Police("Tokubetsu-Kōtō-Keisatsu niyoro Shinkyō-Jiyū Seigen no Ronri [On the Logic of the Restriction of Religious Freedom by the Special Higher Police] " Syūkyō to Syakai [Religion and Society] No.14, June 2008. "Jiyūken · Minsyusei to Tokubetsu-Kōtō-Keisatsu—『Tokkō Kyōho』 wo Daizai toshite [Freedom, Democracy and the Special High Police: Through analysis of The Textbooks of the Special Higher Police] " Syūkyōhō [Religious Kaw] No.29, September

2010).

Incidentally, if "State Shinto" is to be considered the culprit of the war, it is essential to analyze the thought and behavior of the military concerning Shinto. However, there was no such thing. It was only in November 2014 that Shimazono Susumu, who started to "revise the broad usage of State Shinto", finally began to discuss the military (*Taisyō* · *Syōwa-ki no Kōdō-undō to Kokka Shinto—Gun no Tennō-sūkei no Syūkōsei—* [Kōdō Movement and State Shinto in the *Taisyō* and *Syōwa* Periods: Religious Nature of the Reverence for the Emperor in the Army, *Meiji Seitoku Kinen Gakkai Kiyō*, Vol.51). In other words, matters that should be considered and verified first have been left as axiom. As I will explain later in detail, what I call the axiom of the "State Shinto" theory and the oppression on free and diverse ideas in study clearly appear.

(10) Foregoing the Tani Sheigo Sensei Taisyoku Kinen Shinto-gaku Ronbunshū p. 719. And A basic study of modern political and religious relations p. 337.

(11) On this point, before me, Maeda Takakazu pointed out in the "State Shinto" section of *Shinto-Yōgosyū*, *Syūkō-Hen 2* [Glossary of Shinto Terms: Religion part 2] (April 1986: Institute for Japanese Cultural Studies, Kokugakuin University) as follows.

The definition of "State Shinto" in "Shinto Directive" is as follows:

The term State Shinto within the meaning of this directive will refer to that branch of Shinto (*Kokka Shinto* or *Jinja Shinto*) which by official acts of the Japanese Government has been differential from the religion of Sect Shinto (*Syūha Shinto* or *Kyōha Shinto*) and has been classified as non-religious national cult commonly known as State Shinto, National Shinto or Shrine Shinto

It is said that "State Shinto" = "Shrine Shinto" = "a non-religious national cult." – (Sentences in the middle omitted)–. The other is the "State Shinto" as ideology. It is the source of militarism and ultra-nationalism which the Allies sought to eliminate in order to prevent Japan from becoming a threat to the Allies. – (Sentences in the middle omitted)–. As "Shinto Directive" referred to the dual nature of "State Shinto", it made the mistake of causing confusion, especially in that only the ideological aspect is emphasized and conveyed to future generations.