

The illusion of Living God “Arahitogami” and “State Shinto”: What invoke Absolute God?

Part 2 The Illusion of “State Shinto”

Chapter3 How an 'atmosphere of impossibility to refuse to visit shrines' was created

There were no "official shrines" to force people to visit

There are many who argue that before the war, people were forced to visit shrines. However, I have never seen any book or historical document which described such a fact about the Meiji Era. In the Taisyō Era, I know that there was a controversy called the "Shrine Problem" around the visit to shrines in elementary schools (It is not compulsory for the general public to visit shrines). This is probably not because of my lack of study, but because in the Meiji Era, visiting shrines in elementary schools would be rarely conducted. The reason for this is that in most areas there were no "official shrines" to be visited.

Some people might say “I don't agree with your explanation. There were many shrines in the villages.” Certainly, many shrines existed. Most of them, however, were not "official shrines" until the Taisyō Era. "There were many shrines, but they were not official", what does that mean? Let me try to explain the mean by following the changes in the government's shrine policy since the early Meiji period.

It was in 1871 that the Meiji government embarked on a drastic reform of the Shinto shrine system. In January of the same year, the government issued a decree to confiscate and nationalize all the land that had been the most important economic base of the Shinto shrines and temples, with the exception of the land within their precincts [*Syajiryō-agechi-rei*]. As a result of this policy, some 872,000,000 square meters of shrine's land and 528,000,000 square meters of temple's land were confiscated, and shrines and temples lost their economic base that they had had since the Middle Ages, which was the application of the policy as called “*Hanseki-Hōkan* [The policy of switching the land and people from being ruled by feudal lords to being ruled by the state] ” to the shrines and temples. Of

course, if the government left the situation as it was, all the shrines and temples would have been destroyed, so the government decided to pay about half of the existing income (this was called "*Hanso-Kyūyo*") until a clear treatment policy on the confiscated shrine's and temple's land was decided, and this emergency measure was continued until 1874.

Furthermore, in April 1871, the government declared that Shinto shrines were "*Kokka no Sōshi*" (i.e., public ritual facilities), prohibited the heredity of Shinto priests, established *Syakaku* (i.e., the rank determined by the government) and the official rank of shrines, defined the professional duties of Shinto priests, and paid their expenses and salaries from public funds. On the grounds that the shrines were public institutions and not the private property of the priest, all the priests were dismissed from their posts and only the necessary number were appointed again. It is said that about 20,000 Shinto priests were driven out of their shrines by this order.

This order was very severe, both for the Shinto priests and for the shrines. However, the Shinto priests had no choice but to endure this order, as it was made on the pretext of recognizing all shrines as "*Kokka no Sōshi* [public ritual facilities] " and creating the appropriate Shrine system in accordance with the Meiji government's doctrine of "*Saiseicchi* [The unity of Shinto rituals and government policies] " in the first year of the Meiji Era.

However, as early as the 6th year of Meiji (1873), there was a movement within the government to revise the policy of "*Saiseicchi*," which regarded all shrines as "*Kokka no Sōshi*". In May 1871, a new system of shrine rankings was introduced, dividing shrines into two groups: *Kankokuheiya* (97 shrines at the time of the establishment of shrine rankings), which were higher-ranking shrines, and *Hukensya and Gōsonsyā* [prefectural and village shrines] (more than 123,600 shrines as of January 1873), which were lower-ranking shrines. However, the Ministry of Finance began to insist that shrines below the prefectural level, which made up the majority of shrines, belonged to "private shrines". This insistence was based on the practical judgment that it was impossible for the government to financially support all the shrines. The Ministry of Finance's argument was accepted. In February 1873, the public salaries of the Shinto priests of *Gōsonsyā* were abolished, in July 1873, the public salaries of the priests of *Hukensya* were

abolished and switched to the private salaries based on the faith of the people (Sakamoto Koremaru, *Kokka Shinto Keisei Katei no Kenkyū* [A Study of the Formation Process of State Shinto], Tokyo: Iwanamisyoten, p.128 and following).

Furthermore, according to the final policy for dealing with the problem which confiscated and nationalized the land of the shrines and temples, decided in September of the 7th year, the salaries of the Shinto priests and the running costs of the shrines of *Kankokuheisya* were to be paid out of government funds - although this was not a sufficient amount-. In contrast, *Hukensya and Gōsonsya* were subject to the same system of *Teigen-rokusei* [a system of gradually reducing government spending] as temples. Under this system, a quarter of the amount traditionally regarded as income for shrines and temples, *Kokudaka* [Rice harvest per year], is regarded as real income and half of this amount is paid by the government to the shrines and temples in the first year. After that, the amount should be reduced by a tenth each year, and after ten years, public funding is abolished. It is needless to say that this system was a harsher policy for shrines than for temples. Because temples had established the *Danka* system [In order to prevent Christianity from invading Japan, the system required all Japanese families to belong to a Buddhist temple of some kind] in Edo Era, which had a monopoly on funerals and graves, on the contrary, shrines did not have them. In the 12th year of Meiji (1879), the government abolished the official status of Shinto priests at *Hukensya and Gōsonsya*, and issued a notice stating that their status should be the same as that of priests at temples. In this way, *Hukensya and Gōsonsya* lost their official status as "*Kokka no Sōshi*" (public ritual facilities) in both name and reality.

In Chapter 2 of Part I, I briefly mentioned "The Lesson of the Pantheon Dispute [*Saijin Ronsō*]" that arose during the Meiji 10s and its consequences. As a result of this controversy, in 1882 the government banned the practice of mission and funeral rites at the higher levels Shinto shrines [*Kankoku heisya*], but allowed the practice of them at prefectural shrines and below [*Hukensya-ika*] for the time being. The reason for this was that the *Satsuma* people, who had abolished all the temples in the feudal lords' territory at the beginning of the Meiji period, were fiercely opposed to the idea of forbidding the funerals of all the Shinto priests, as there would be no one left to conduct them. However, even if the *Satsuma* people had not objected, it would have been

impossible for the government to order the Shinto priests of prefectural shrines and below, who had been deprived of their lands as a source of income and whose financial support from the government was due to be cut off in 1884. To impose such a ban would be tantamount to declaring those shrines to be destroyed. In fact, many of the Shinto priests opposed the government's policy of distinguishing shrines from religions by banning the practice of mission and funeral rites (Hujii Sadafuni, "Izumotasyakyō Seiritsu no Katei [The process of the establishment of Izumotasyakyō]", *IzumogakuronIzumotasyakyō*, ed. Shinto Gakkai, p.482). In any case, this policy made a decisive difference between the higher levels of Shinto shrines [*Kankoku heisya*] and the prefectural shrines and below [*Hukensya-ika*].

It is not true, then, that the government protected the higher levels of Shinto shrines [*Kankokuheisya*], which were forced by government order to cease the practice of mission and funeral rites. Surprisingly, the government had also decided to end public support for them in the future, stating that it should be left to the faith of the people to decide whether they should continue.

This policy was drawn up by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which had jurisdiction over shrines, and the Ministry of Finance, which was in charge of state finances, and was named "*Jinja Kaisei no Ken* [A Proposal for Reform of the Shrine System]." In this proposal, only *Ise Shrine* was considered to be a "*Kokka no Sōshi*" [a public ritual facility] and it was proposed to increase the amount of government funds for it. On the other hand, the proposal raised the policy of switching to "*Hozonkin Seido*", stating that the "operating costs of *Kankokuheisya* should not continue to come from the state in perpetuity." The system was based on the idea that the government would fix period of government funding for operating cost of *Kankokuheisya*, and that they would be forced to save half of what they received in a year, so that they could support themselves on the interest they earned. This proposal was adopted as a national policy, and in 1887, "*Kankoku Heisya Hozonkin Seido*" was launched, in which half of the annual amount of funds provided by the government was should be saved for a period of 15 years.

This policy seemed reasonable, but since the annual amount of the fund was, in the first place, the same as the public expenditure which had been paid by

the state up to that time, the switch to the system, which forced a half of the annual amount saving, was equivalent to a sudden reduction in annual income by half for the shrines, and their management fell into crisis. Therefore, in 1899, the proportion of savings was reduced, that is, the proportion of funds available for use was increased. This naturally meant that it would take more time to save the principal, so a modification was made to extend the period of payment to 30 years (until 1907).

Murakami Shigeyoshi called the period when the Imperial Constitution and the Imperial Rescript on Education were established "The Completion Period of Doctrine" of State Shinto. However, the government's position at this time was that the *Ise* shrine alone was sufficient for "*Kokka no Sōshi*" [a public ritual facility], that is, the imperial rituals alone were sufficient for "*Saiseiicchi*" [unity of Shinto rituals and government], and that the existence of shrines should be left to the faith of the people (the only exception was the *Yasukuni* shrine, which was under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Army and Navy). Despite the hype of "The Completion Period of Doctrine" of State Shinto, the furthest distance between the government and the shrines in modern Japan was when the Imperial Constitution and the Imperial Rescript on Education were issued.

To the Restoration of "*Kokka no Sōshi*"

After the promulgation of the Imperial Constitution in 1889, a rumor circulated in shrine circles that the government intended to enact a religious ordinance before the Constitution came into force, which would include shrines below the prefectural level. This was only a rumor, but the government's policy up to that time had been sufficient to make the Shinto priests believe it. In order to restore the status of the shrines as "*Kokka no Sōshi*", a group of Shinto priests mainly below the prefectural level shrines stood up. They believed that in order to restore the status of the shrines as "*Kokka no Sōshi*", it was necessary to revive *Jingikan* [It was re-established in the 2nd year of Meiji (1872) as a governmental agency which had jurisdiction over shrines: in the ancient government as equal status to the Cabinet, but was downgraded and reorganized in the 4th year of Meiji (1871) into *Jingisyō* under the Cabinet], and they lobbied the Imperial Diet with the restoration as their goal. This movement was called the "*Jingikan Kōhuku Undō*".

However, the government, which considered the revision of the Treaty of Inequality with Western powers to be its highest priority, would not easily accept a proposal to revive the *Jingikan*, which would have provoked a reaction from the Western powers who believed in Christianity. The Shinto priests had to come up with a plan. This was as follows: Shrines below the prefectural level also voluntarily renounced missionary and funerals to make a clear distinction between them and religions, and accepting the logic of "shrines as non-religion". Since shrines would no longer be religious, special treatment for them would not be a religious issue. Therefore, the government should adhere to the declaration of 1871 and reaffirm that shrines are the "*Kokka no Sōshi*" [public ritual facilities] ."

It took a long time for this movement to bear fruit. In 1896, after the Sino-Japanese War, when public interest in Shinto shrines increased, the 9th Imperial Diet finally passed a proposal to revive the *Jingikan*. It was not until February 1900 that the government adopted a policy in accordance with the proposal of the Imperial Diet. As a result of this policy, the Department of Shrines and Temples [*Syajikyoku*] of the Ministry of Interior, which had jurisdiction over both shrines and temples, was separated into the Department of Shrines [*Jinjakyoku*] , which specialized in shrines, and the Department of Religious Affairs [*Syūkyōkyoku*] , which specialized in religious affairs.

The establishment of *Jinjakyoku* as a department in the Ministry of Home Affairs, was a far from satisfaction for the Shinto priests, who had hoped to reestablish *Jingikan* that stood alongside the cabinet. However, in the sense that it forced the government to confirm the non-religious nature of the shrines, it was an achievement of their movement. Indeed, as we shall see later, it was big significant that the government recognized the logic of the "non-religiousness of shrines" in the form of a governmental system.

However, the intention of the Ministry of the Interior itself at that time seems to be not to reform the system "for the sake of shrines". Rather, it is said that the Ministry of the Interior was merely trying to "please the Diet" (Sakamoto Koremaru, *Kokka Shinto Keiseikatei no Kenkyū* [A Research on the Formation Process of State Shinto] , p.309), or that the Treaty of Commerce and

Navigation between the United Kingdom and Japan (concluded in 1897), which came into effect in 1899, marked the beginning of foreigners living outside the settlement in Japan, and it was expected that Christianity would spread throughout the country in earnest. In order to cope with such a situation, the government had to officially make Christianity the subject of its religious administration, and the name of the department in charge, "the Department of Shrines and Temples", was inappropriate, so it was necessary to reconsider the name and the content of its work." (Yamaguchi Teruomi, *Meiji Kokka to Syūkyō* [The Meiji State and Religion] , Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, p. 264). In other words, he says, the main objective of the Ministry of the Interior was to set up "the Department of Religious Affairs." Incidentally, "the Department of Religious Affairs" was transferred to the Ministry of Education by Imperial Ordinance No.173 of June 13, 1913.

In the midst of "*Jingikan Kōhuku Undō*", "*Zenkoku Shinsyoku Kai*", the first national organization of Shinto priests, was formed in the 31st year of Meiji(1898). After the establishment of *Jinjakyoku*, *Zenkoku Shinsyoku Kai* shifted the focus of its campaign for the restoration of status of Shinto shrines as "*Kokka no Sōshi*" [public ritual facilities] to the realization of "the restoration of the expenses of *Kankokuheisya* [higher-ranking shrines] (abolition of *Kankokuheisya Hozonkin Seido*)" and "the expenditure of public funds on prefectural shrines and below". The newly established *Jinjakyoku* was so small and powerless that it was nicknamed the "Third Class Bureau". However, unlike *Syajikyoku*, which had to take into account the interests of both the Buddhist and Shinto communities, the new Bureau only had to consider the interests of the Shinto community. In this environment, in January 1905, Mizuno Rentarō, who was unusually keen to solve the problems of shrines among the successive directors of *Jinjakyoku*, appeared on the scene and started to solve the two problems in response to the requests of the Shinto community.

With regard to "the restoration of the expenses of *Kankokuheisya*", Mizuno first overcame the opposition of the Ministry of the Interior by talking directly to the Minister of the Interior. He then overcame the opposition of the Ministry of Finance on the condition that the total amount of government expenditure on the shrines should be the same as that for *Kankokuheisya Hozonkin Seido*. Finally, after overcoming the opposition of the Cabinet Legislation Bureau, the

restoration was finally realized on April 7, 1899 [*Kankokuheisya Kokko Kyōshinkin Seido*] .

At the same time, the proposal for "the expenditure of public funds on prefectural shrines and below" was reduced to a very small amount, the "*Shinsen Heihakuryō*" (the cost of one of the most important rituals of the year), rather than the large amount of so-called "*Keihi*" (the operating costs of the shrines). He also compromised on the idea of allowing municipalities to bear the cost of the rituals, rather than requiring them to do so. In this way, he won the agreement of *Chihōkyoku* [the Local Bureau] within the Ministry of the Interior, which had opposed Mizuno's proposal on the grounds of the financial difficulties of the municipalities. In addition, Mizuno proposed a policy of reducing the number of shrines of below the prefectural level (i.e., *Jinjagōshi*) in order to facilitate the expenditure of public funds and at the same time to strengthen the economic base of the shrines and make them more suitable for "*Kokka no Sōshi*". Thus, on April 30, 1964, it became possible for the municipalities to pay "Shinsen Heihakuryō" to the prefectural shrines and below [Fukensyaika Shinsen Heihakuryō Kyōshin Seido] . At the same time, a storm of "*Jinjagōshi* [The Movement to reduce the number of shrines by combining smaller ones] " broke out all over the country (*Jinjakyoku Jidai wo Kataru* [Talking about the Period of *Jinjakyoku*] , ed. *Jingiin*, 1942).

When the municipal system was amended in 1907, Mizuno's efforts was a cause of a clause added to the amendment to allow for the expenditure of funds, "*Keihi*" (the operating costs of the shrines), to prefectural shrines and below. Furthermore, in April 1913, "*Kankokuheisya ika Jinja Shinsyoku Hōmu Kisoku* [The Rules for the Service of Shinto Priests at *Kankokuheisya* and Below] " was enacted, in which the work of Shinto priests at prefectural shrines and below was also prescribed to be service to "*Kokka no Sōshi*". Thus, at last, the official way of all shrines as "*Kokka no Sōshi*" was restored.

As is clear from the above facts, until the end of the Meiji period, the only "official shrine" was, strictly speaking, *Ise Grand Shrine*, and even if taken broadly, there were only a hundred or so *Kankokuheisya*. *Hukengōsonsyō Shinkan Hōmukisoku* [The Rules for the Service of Shinto Priests at Prefectures, Towns and Villages] , enacted in July 1894, only stipulated that

"Shinto priests must respect and revere Kami and perform rituals with sincerity", and did not give the name of " *Kokka no Sōshi* " to the prefectural shrines and below. In contrast, *Kankokuheisya Shinsyoku Hōmu Kisoku* [the Rules for the Service of Shinto Priests at Shrines supported by the Government] , enacted in August of the same year, stipulated that "Shinto priests at shrines supported by the Government shall be engaged in *Kokka no Sōshi*", i.e. *Kankokuheisya* were given the name of " *Kokka no Sōshi* " (public ritual facilities).

The words of Mizuno Rentarō in his lecture "About shrines" at the Administrative Research Association [*Gyōsei Kenkyūkai*] also proves the correctness of my interpretation. According to him, "Until now, prefectural shrines have nothing to do with prefectures. The same is true of town or village shrines". He went on to say that with the expenditure of " *Shinsen Heihakuryō* ", "for the first time a relationship between the public organizations and the local shrines was born" (*Jinja Kyōkai Zasshi* [*Jinja Association Magazine*] , 7th year, No.4, April 1909).

With only a hundred or so shrines in the country, at the most, authorized by the government through the expenditure of public funds, there was no reason why elementary schools throughout the country should conduct shrine visits and, in the first place, it was numerically impossible. Even if there are many shrines in every villages, if they are not the "public shrines", they cannot be used for national education, and moreover, it cannot be forced to visit them. In fact, it was only after the resumption of public funding of prefectural shrines and below that the "shrine problem" was confirmed in historical records. However, the 'shrine problem' did not arise simply because there became enough official shrines to ensure that elementary schools across the country could visit them. The more essential reason was a change in the government's view of Shinto shrines. To understand this, we need to go back once more to the period after the Russo-Japanese War.

It all started after the Russo-Japanese War!

The Russo-Japanese War was a great war in which the fate of the Japanese nation was at stake, and it required enormous war expenditure, about seven times the Japanese national budget at the time (about 1.7 billion yen). The

government met the emergency with public debt (which accounted for about 80% of the war budget, in which about 52% was foreign debt) and a huge temporary tax hike. Although Japan won the war, but did not win reparations. Therefore, post-war Japan had to repay its enormous debts, rebuild its damaged army and navy, and improve its social capital in preparation for the international economic competition expected after the war. In order to do so, the government was forced to continue after the war the massive tax hikes imposed on the people during the war. In other words, even though the war was over, the Japanese people had to work, develop industry and pay taxes with the same determination as during the war. The people had to help themselves, improve their abilities and be more loyal to the government than they had been during the war.

At this time, one of the policies put forward by the government to improve the loyalty and ability of the people was the enhancement of national education. Specifically, in 1907, the government extended the schooling period for primary schools from four to six years, and also made efforts to promote supplementary education and night schooling after graduation of primary schools. This policy meant a further increase in public expenditure, but it was to be borne not by the central government, but by the "administrative towns and villages." Thus, it was an inevitable task to implement this policy to strengthen the "administrative towns and villages", and the Regional Bureau [*Chihō Kyoku*] of the Ministry of the Interior advocated and led the so-called "*Chihō Kairyō Undō* [The local improvement movement]".

In order to understand the reasons and contents of "*Chihō Kairyō Undō*", we have to go back further in time to the time of the promulgation of the "*Chyō Son Sei* [The town and village system]" in 1891. This system was designed to reorganize the about 70,000 traditional "village communities [*Buraku*]" that had existed up to that time into about 13,000 "administrative towns and villages [*Gyōsei Chyō Son*]", and to transform the "*Buraku*" into "*Ooaza*" within the administrative towns and villages, in order to improve and strengthen the terminal administrative organization. However, as the traditional sense of belonging of the people was based on the "*Buraku*" and the attempt to destroy it all at once would have caused great confusion, for this reason, some compromises were made. One of the compromises was to allow the survival of the young men's groups [*Wakasyūgumi*] based on "*Buraku*", and another was to allow the survival of

the forests owned by “*Buraku*” [*Iriaichi*] . As a result, the transition to 'administrative towns and villages' was relatively smooth, but instead the foundations of the 'administrative towns and villages' were unstable, both mentally and economically.

The "*Chihō Kairyō Undō*" was an attempt to resolve this instability in the administrative towns and villages. Specifically, the movement aimed to (1) strengthen the spiritual bonds of the administrative towns and villages by reorganizing the young men's groups [*Wakasyōgumi*] into the youth associations [*Seinenkai* or *Seinendan*] for each administrative town and village, and (2) strengthen the financial base of the administrative towns and villages by transferring the forests owned by “*Buraku*” [*Iriaichi*] to the forests owned by the administrative towns and village. The main promoter of this movement was the Regional Bureau of the Ministry of the Interior, and the people who were expected to play a leading role in the administrative towns and villages were mayors of towns and villages, primary schools teachers, Shinto priests, Buddhist monks, and *Hōtokusya* [Organisations formed to carry on the teachings of Ninomiya Sontoku, who contributed to the self-revival of farming communities in the Edo period] (Miyachi Masato, *Nichiro Sensō-go no Seijishi no Kenkyū* [A Study of Political History after the Russo-Japanese War] , Tokyo: Tōkyōdaigaku-syuppankai).

At the same time as the Regional Department [*Chihōkyoku*] of the Ministry of interior were promoting "*Chihō Kairyō Undō*", Mizuno Rentarō, Director General of the Department of Shrines [*Jinjakyoku*] , was negotiating with the Regional Department to achieve the "restoration of the expenses for *Kankokuheisya* " and the "expenditure of public funds on prefectural shrines and below". It was not surprising that the Regional Bureau were initially opposed to the *Jinjakyoku*'s proposals, which would have led to further increases in municipal expenditure. Mizuno, who like the bureaucrats of the Regional Bureau was also a bureaucrat in the Ministry of the Interior, probably did not think that he could overcome the opposition of the Regional Bureau by simply explaining the traditional significance of shrines. He therefore devised a policy of "repositioning shrines as central institutions of local governments". In other words, he proposed that the shrines should be included in the "*Chihō Kairyō Undō*".

In the opening pages of the *Jinja Kyōkai Zasshi* (Journal of the Jinja Association [which secretariat was located in the *Jinjakyoku*]) (No. 7 of the 6th year) of July 1907, an unsigned article entitled "Jinja wo Cyūshin to seru Chihō jichi [The Local Autonomy with a Focus on Shrines] " appeared. The fact that it was unsigned may be taken to mean that it was the official position of the Shrine Bureau. It argued as follows: "Considering that shrines have been the center of national events and social intercourse as well as performing rituals since ancient times, they should be developed as public halls and national ceremonies halls as soon as possible. All ceremonies, from the official rites of the state to the private rites of the people, should be performed at shrines if there are no problems." (p. 1).

At the end of the article, the village of *Inahashi* in *Kitashidara* County, Aichi Prefecture, which has a remarkable record of self-government, is described as follows: "The village shrine is the center of the village, where a joyous festival is held to give thanks for the year's harvest and to confirm the village's achievements for the year. In other words, the head of the village reads the family register in reverence before Kami and informs the villagers of the increase or decrease in population, thus revealing the increase or decrease in the strength of the people's power of the village. After the head of the village, the headmaster of the primary school reports on the state of education. Farmers pile up their harvested grain and vegetables in front of the worship hall and poets recite their poems. Since the village administration has been carried out in this way, the atmosphere in the village has improved enormously and the industries have developed remarkably" (p.6).

In a speech to the Administrative Research Association [*Gyōsei Kenkyūkai*] in 1908, which we have already referred to, Mizuno, Director of the Shrine Bureau ,said the following: "I believe that in order to link the shrines in the prefecture with the public bodies it is necessary to reduce the number of shrines and to make the public bodies bear the expenses of the shrines. We are already in the process of doing this, but we will consolidate as far as possible those shrines whose history is not known, whose management cannot be maintained, and whose worshippers are not present. It would be good for the shrines and for the community to link these shrines with the municipalities and the prefecture. The fewer the number of shrines, the lower the cost. Then it would not be

impossible for one town or village to run one shrine." (*Jinja Kyōkai Zasshi*, No. 4, Year 7, p. 6)

Director Mizuno was not satisfied with only the realization of the public expenditure of "*Shinsen Heihakuryō*" (the cost of one of the most important rituals of the year) to prefectural shrines and below, but was also considering "the expenditure of public funds on prefectural shrines and below". In order to achieve this, he thought it would be ideal to reduce the number of shrines, so that there would be only one shrine in a town or village. This would have been a natural idea in view of the link with "*Chihō Kairyō Undō* [the local improvement movement] ". If the shrines would be repositioned as the center of spiritual unity in the towns and villages, it would be better to have a single center. In accordance with Mizuno's idea, the government strongly encouraged the idea of "*Ichicyōson Issya* [every town or village, one shrine only] " in the form of precepts. Thus, in 1908 and 1909, at the end of the term of Mizuno who was the most favorable to the shrines of all the directors of the Shrine Bureau, the "*Jinja Gōshi* [the Merger of Shrines] ", which has continued to be criticized until today, reached its peak (Morioka Kiyomi, *Kindai Syūroku Jinja to Kokka Tōsei* [The Modern Community Shrines and State Control] , Tokyo: Yoshikawakōbunkan). I would not be the only one who feels the irony of history here.

Mizuno's policy of emphasizing the significance of Shinto shrines in local autonomy and developing them into suitable entities for the municipalities was gradually accepted by bureaucrats outside the Shrine Bureau. For example, Hamano Torakichi, an official of the Tokyo Prefectural Government, wrote in an article entitled "*Jinja to Syōgakkō no Kankei* [The Relationship between Shrines and Elementary Schools] " (*Jinja Kyōkai Zasshi*, July 1909) as follows: "I want to bring the relationship between school education and the shrine closer. I think it would be wonderful if in the future it would be possible flexibly for the priests of the shrine to educate the pupils of the primary school, and conversely for the teachers of the primary school to work in the shrines. Today this is not yet possible, but in time we hope to move in that direction, so that primary schools teachers will be able to educate the people in a way that will deepen their understanding of Kami."

Among the above changes in thinking in public institutions, what had a

particularly great impact was that the Regional Bureau [*Chihō Kyoku*] of the Ministry of the Interior, which was one of the two major departments of the Ministry of the Interior along with the Police Bureau [*Keiho Kyoku*] and had jurisdiction over local administration, started to make use of shrines. It is symbolized by the fact that Inoue Tomoichi succeeded Mizuno as Director of the Shrine Bureau in July 1909, while holding the post as Subdirector of the Regional Bureau. Moreover, as soon as he took office, Inoue announced "*Jinja Cyūshin no Setsu* [*theory of placing shrines at the center of local administration*]".

In his opening address at the completion of the training course for Shinto priests, Inoue said as follows: "the idea that shrines should be at the heart of local communities is one that former Director Mizuno was a keen advocate of. I think this is a very appropriate idea and I completely agree with him." He went on to give a number of examples of towns and villages that had achieved success by making their shrines the center of their affairs. Then, he concluded his address as follows: "In short, if we are to achieve great things in local government, it is of the utmost importance to unite the minds of the people, and especially in our own country, where the reverence for Kami is so strong, it is very important to unite the minds of the people around the shrines." (*Zenkoku Shinsyokukai Kaihō* [*The Magazine of National Organization of Shinto Priests*], No.122, December 1909). In this way, the fusion of "*Chihō Kairyō Undō* [*the local improvement movement*]" and shrine administration was realized. It inevitably meant that elementary schools and youth groups would be linked to shrines, and that shrine visits would be actively practiced in these groups.

The "Shrine Problem" and the government's attitude

In November 1913, Christians met with Okuda Yoshito, Minister of Education in the first Yamamoto Gonbei cabinet and they pointed out to him that the visits to shrines led by primary school teachers involved religious beliefs and demanded that the nature of the shrines should be clarified. This was the beginning of a series of frictions known as the "Shrine Problem [*Jinja Mondai*]". In October 1994, the 30th General Assembly of the Christian Church in Japan passed a resolution to the following effect: "The majority of the Japanese people understand the government's promotion of veneration for Shinto shrines to be a

form of religious worship. In August of this year, when Japan entered World War I, the government ordered shrines to conduct rituals to report on the war and pray for victory to Kami, which is a religious act and an obstacle to the propagation of Christianity. We will examine how this situation might be dealt with."

In November 1915, the accession ceremony of Emperor Taisyō was held. At this time, several prefectures ordered that each family put up *Shimenawa* [Shinto-style ropes representing sacred places] , set up a Shinto altar and visit shrines. The orders caused protests by *Jyōdo Shinsyū* [True Pure Land Sect of Buddhism] . In December of the year, a member of the House of Representatives, Tatsuguchi Ryōshin, a former priest of *Nishi Honganji* (One of True Pure Land Sect of Buddhism), questioned the government's position on this incident in the Imperial Diet, and the "Shrine Problem" became a serious matter.

The argument of the majority of Christian and *Jyōdo Shinsyū* on this issue was not an absolute rejection of the veneration of shrines, but the removal of religious elements (sermons, funeral rites, prayers, amulets, etc.) from shrines (especially those below prefectural shrines) and their de-religionization (monumentalization). From this point onwards, whenever an issue of shrines arise, Christians and *Jyōdo Shinsyū* repeated the argument and pressed the government to implement it. The bureaucrats of the Bureau of Shrines at that time called this argument the "*Jinja Rinrika Undō* [the movement for the ethicization of shrines] " (*Jinja Kyoku Jidai wo Kataru* [Talking about the period of the Bureau of Shrines] , p.176).

What, then, was the government's response to this problem? Tsukamoto Seiji, then Director of the Shrine Bureau, gave the following reply in the Imperial Diet: "The government wants the people to venerate the shrines. For this reason, we encourage and instruct the people to venerate shrines. However, it is not true that the government has ever forced the people to venerate or visit shrines" (*Zenkoku Shinsyokukai Kaihō* [The Magazine of National Organization of Shinto Priests] , No.209, March 1916, pp.248-249).

In an article entitled "Jinja ni kansuru Chyūi [Notes on Shrines] ", which he contributed to *Zenkoku Shinsyokukai Kaihō*, the February 1916 (No. 208), Tsukamoto, Director of the Shrine Bureau, wrote: "Reverence for Kami is a spirit which should be possessed by all our people in general, and therefore does not

conflict with religious belief.”“ It is needless to say that religious belief is a freedom of the people, guaranteed by the Constitution. However, the spirit of veneration for Kami is a national moral principle which all Japanese subjects should possess. Of course, it is not compulsory to visit shrines. However, we believe that the wonderful spirit and custom of reverence for Kami and visiting shrines should be encouraged" (p.153).

From the above, we can see that it was the basic policy of the government in the Taisyō period to "encourage but not force" the veneration for Kami and visiting shrines to the subject.

Later, when, for some reason or other, it became necessary to take a policy of spiritual unity among the people, the encouragement of visits to shrines, the distribution of *Jingū-taima* [Amulets of Ise Grand Shrine] , and the installation of *Kamidana* [Household altars of Shinto] , were included in the policy. For example, (1) *Minryoku Kanyō Undō* [The Movement for the Cultivation of the People's Power] , which was proposed by Tokonami Takejirō, the Minister of the Interior, and led by the Regional Bureau, to cope with the social unrest after the First World War, (2) the movement planned based on the "*Kokumin Seishin Sakkō ni kansuru Syōsyō* [The Imperial Rescript on the Revitalization of the National Spirit] " of November 1923, which was Issued with the aim of recovering from *Kantō Daishinsai* [the Great Earthquake at Kantō Region] , (3) *Kyōka Sōdōin* [The Movement to Focus Educational Activities on a Single Objective] , which the *Minseitō* party cabinet advocated , centered on the newly established Social Education Bureau within the Ministry of Education, in order to cope with the "*Shisō Kokunan* [The National Crisis of Thought] " that followed the 3.15 Incident. In the course of these movements, there were some cases of coercion policies in some areas (Akazawa Shirō, *Kindai Nihon no Shisōdōin to Syūkyō Tōsei* [The Political Use of Ideas and Religious Control in Modern Japan] , Tokyo: Azekura Syobō).

The Intense debate at “*Syūkyō Seido Cyōsa Kai*”

From the end of the Meiji period to the Taisyō period, new religions such as *Ōmoto-kyō* grew to become a major force, and the government felt the need to enact a unified religious law that would encompass new religions in addition to Shinto, Buddhism and Christianity. Therefore, in May 1926, the government

established “*Syūkyō Seido Cyōsa Kai* [The Meeting to discuss Institutions of Religions] ” and appointed representatives of the major religions and religious scholars as commissioners of the meeting to deliberate on “*Syūkyō-hō-an* [The Religion Bill drafted by The Government] ”. The deliberations began on June 1st of the year and ended on October 16th (The draft was submitted to the House of Peers in January 1927, but was not approved due to lack of discussion).

During the deliberations of the Meeting, the question of the scope of "religion" covered by the Religion Bill arose, and it led to a debate on whether shrines should be regarded as religions or not. Thus, for the first time, the issue of shrines was discussed intensively in an official forum. Here, Hanada Ryōun (a monk of the *Honganji* School of the True Pure Land Sect) and religious scholar Anezaki Masaharu gave concrete examples of charms, prayers and Shinto funerals conducted by prefectural shrines and below, and argued that the theory of "shrines as non-religion" was a fiction.

The government's response to their harsh criticism was: "Ordinary citizens are free to visit shrines, and the government has no intention of forcing them to do so, but group visits to the shrine in elementary schools were only for the purpose of "training" in the "veneration of the shrine" as described in the textbooks, and not for the purpose of forcing students in schools above primary schools or the general public to visit the shrine." (1926, June 4, 3rd General Assembly of the Meeting).

Although this Government response merely reiterates its previous assertions, it is worth noting that in the course of the debate in this Meeting, the following opinion came to be expressed by a member: "The principle of separation of church and state is not strictly enforced even in European countries. It is not necessarily inconsistent with the provision of the present Constitution to clearly define Shrine Shinto as a religion and give it different legal status from other religions. Rather, it is a necessary measure for the solution of the Shinto shrine problem" (Ono Seiichirō, "Syūkyōhōan no Hōriteki Hihan [A Legal Critique of the Religion Bill] ", *Chūōkōron*, September 1926. See, Akazawa, *Kindai Nihon no Shisōdōin to Syūkyō Tōsei*, p.131). In other words, the opinion was that, the government should abandon the theory of 'Shrine Shinto as a non-religion', designate it as an official religion and give it special treatment, then even if it

adopted such a policy, it would not be a violation of the Constitution in the light of the actual situation in European countries.

In December 1929, the government established *Jinja Seido Cyōsakai* [The Committee to study the Shrine Shinto System]. After the achievement of the restoration of the expenses for *Kankokuheisya* and the expenditure of public funds on prefectural shrines and below, *Zenkokushinsyokukai* had, as its next goal, the establishment of special government offices [Rikken Undō]. On the other hand, Christianity and the *Jyōdo Shinshū* sects demanded the government to solve the "Shrine Problem" [Jinja Rinrika Undō]. The establishment of *Jinja Seido Cyōsakai* was a response to both movements by the government. In January 1930, shortly after the establishment of the Committee, *Shinsyū Kakuha Kyōwakai* [A coalition of *Jyōdo Shinshū* sects] issued a statement entitled "Hiken [Our Views]", and in May of the same year, 55 Christian organizations issued a statement entitled "A Proposal on the Shrine Problem." Both statements called for legal action to prohibit religious practices at shrines.

It has already been mentioned in the previous chapter that, at the same time, the constitutional scholar Minobe Tatsukichi published his own theory in *Cyūgai Nippō*, arguing that the people could not be forced to believe in or visit shrines. It was in this environment that in meeting of *Jinja Seido Cyōsakai* naturally the "Shrine Problem" was discussed. Later Katō Genchi, reflecting on the situation at the time, said as follows:

“The government is determined to maintain the theory of ‘Shrine Shinto as a non-religion’. The opponents then take advantage of the contradictions and say, ‘Then we want the government to make the theory a reality, as it claims, and ban charms from shrines immediately.’ Thus, Shinto shrines will be gradually castrated, fading into obscurity, and finally on the verge of extinction. Then, there will be no room for shrines to survive. This situation is unbearable for Shinto shrines. The government, in its attempt to protect the position of the shrines, has had the bad effect of putting them in a precarious position. In this way, the government's policy towards shrines and religion was on the verge of bankruptcy” (*Jinja Mondai no Saikentō* [The Review of the Shrine Problem], pp. 185-186).

The religious community began to demand that the government thoroughly implement the theory of “Shrine Shinto as a non-religion”, and it became clear

that its implementation would turn shrines into monuments and make them obsolete. Thus, at last, a review of the theory, which had been the Immovable official position since the establishment of the Bureau of Shrines, began to be considered. In other words, a theory and legislation began to be devised which recognized shrines as religions and still could allow them for special treatment by the government.

A Secret Amendment

A religious organization called the *Jinja Honcyō* [The Headquarters of the Shrine Shinto] , which encompasses most of today's Shinto shrines, has in its possession a valuable collection of materials relating to *Jinja Seido Cyōsakai* [The Committee to study the Shrine Shinto System] . Among these materials is a document entitled "Kenpō Dai Nijūhachijō no Iwayuru Sinmintaru no Gimu to Jinja tonō Kankei [The Relationship between Duties of Subjects, which set out in Article 28 of the Constitution, and Shrines] ", which was agreed upon at a meeting of the Executive Committee of *Jinja Seido Cyōsakai* held on February 10, 1930. It is a rather long document, but it has never been introduced before, so let me quote it in full.

【Secret】

The Relationship between Shrines and Duties of Subjects which set out in Article 28 of the Constitution

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Committee to study the Shrine Shinto System, held on February 10, 1930, the issue of the above was discussed, and it was agreed that the following is the general consensus.

If we accepted that the substance of the veneration of shrines has a religious content in the relationship between shrines and individual citizens, we should interpret the so-called freedom of religion provided for in Article 28 of the Constitution to apply to shrines as well. However, the principle of freedom of religion does not necessarily mean that all religions should be accorded equal status. Shinto shrines are, on the one hand, objects of veneration for individual citizens (the private aspect of shrines) and, on the other hand, they

are inseparable from the National Polity and have the character of "*Kokka no Sōshi* [public ritual facilities] " (the public aspect of shrines). It is, therefore, part of the duty of loyalty of the people to the State to show due respect to the shrines, and must be interpreted as an unwritten duty attached to the status of a subject. In this sense, Shinto shrines are completely different from other religions, even under the principle of religious freedom. In summary, it should be said that, on the basis of its special nature as "*Kokka no Sōshi*" (the special nature of shrines), shrines have a superior status to other religions even under the principle of religious freedom (the superiority of shrines).

(Even if it is the duty of the subjects to show due respect to the shrines, the duty cannot be regarded as a legal obligation of subjects to religion, since the shrines are institutionally placed outside the sphere of religion in general on account of their peculiarity).

Therefore, the provision of Article 28 of the Constitution should be interpreted as meaning that subjects have freedom of religion as long as they pay due respect to shrines. The scope of due respect for shrines can only be determined in each specific case. In determining the scope of such respect by law, the limits of the obligation may be clarified by specifying the nature of the superiority of the shrine over other religions.

We will now illustrate the scope of due respect for shrines by assuming some specific problems.

- 1) At present, acts of disrespect to temples and other religious institutions are punishable only when they are committed publicly, as a crime against the social order. However, acts of disrespect to shrines should be regarded as equivalent to crimes against the imperial family and the national polity, and should be punished in the same way as crimes of disrespect to the imperial family or the Ise Grand Shrines under the current Penal Code, even if they are not committed publicly.
- 2) The determination of what acts constitute acts of disrespect to a shrine should also be made on a case-by-case basis. For example, refusal to participate in a shrine ritual cannot be regarded as an act of disrespect. However, refusing to worship in violation of the rules of the Shinto ritual, even though you have participated in the ritual, is considered to be an act of disrespect. Nor should it be regarded as disrespectful to say that one does not believe in the immortality of the soul. However, if a person publicly

denies the existence of the spirit of a shrine, it can be considered as disrespectful to that shrine.

3) Whether or not a person has charms from Shinto shrines belongs to the freedom of subjects, and not having them is not a lack of due respect for the shrine. The same applies to whether or not an individual requests prayers from shrines. However, when a person obstructs the aforementioned acts, even if it would be not a crime of disrespect to a shrine, but it belongs to the same category as obstructing sermons or funerals conducted by religious groups, and should be a crime of disturbing social order.

4) Whether or not a primary school teacher leads his or her pupils to visit a shrine is at the teacher's disposal, as long as the teacher does not violate the orders of his or her superiors. The reason for this is that explaining to the pupils the reasons why shrines are so precious and teaching them the way of salute in the shrine is to teach them the peculiarities of shrines, not to teach them the doctrines of religion and have them perform the religious rituals. It is not so-called religious education. In such a case, even if a child who refuses to visit a shrine is disciplined for not obeying the school's educational policy, it does not constitute an infringement of religious freedom.

The secretaries of the Executive Committee of *Jinja Seido Cyōsakai* were Adachi Osamu, Irie Toshirō, Hoshino Teruoki, Ikeda Kiyoshi, Inuma Kazumi and Miyaji Naokazu. They hoped that the report of the committee would force the Ministry of Interior to change its attitude of insistence on the "non-religious" nature of shrines. On the background of the secretariat's internal intentions, from February 28, 1930 to October 11, 1932, whether or not shrines were religions was debated in *Jinja Seido Cyōsakai*. The main advocate of 'Shinto as non-religion' was Shimizu Tōru, a jurist who had advised Emperor Syōwa on law and constitution, while the main advocate of 'Shinto as religion' was Kakei Katsuhiko also a jurist. Kakei's arguments are almost identical to those of Minobe Tatsukichi in 1930, but I would like to introduce some of his interesting points.

"In other countries, freedom of religion is respected, but religion is taught in schools without reservation. In Japan, the government encourages the general public to visit shrines, while refraining from teaching about the beliefs of the shrines and only teaching superficial knowledge. This has led to the ridiculous situation where some people falsely claim that shrines are not essentially about the belief in Kami. There are many different ways of expressing respect for the

shrine, such as visiting or praying, but it is important that each visit is voluntary and sincerely desired. Therefore, people should be free to decide whether or not to visit a shrine. However, since there is a close relationship between Shinto shrines and education, it is necessary to cultivate the spirit of voluntary visit to Shinto shrines through education." (The Minutes of the Twenty-fourth Special Committee Meeting of the *Jinja Seido Cyōsakai*, October 11, 1932)

The *Jinja Seido Cyōsakai* spent about two years and eight months discussing this issue. In my opinion, if the same social conditions had continued for a while longer, it could well have been that the government would have abandoned its position of "Shrine Shinto as non-religion" and recognized it as religion, and changed the system to the Public Recognized Religious System similar to that which existed in Europe at that time (a system which allowed the people freedom of religion, but gave protection and control to certain sects). However, in the discussions of the *Jinja Seido Cyōsakai* after 25 October 1932, this issue was no longer dealt with and the focus shifted to other matters.

The cause of this was the sudden change in the climate of the times, the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident or, in the words of Mizoguchi Komazō, "the power of the trumpet blown by the army". The Sophia University affair, in particular, made the issue a solved matter that no longer needed to be discussed. In the next section we shall see what the Sophia University affair was and what effect it had on the following years.

Before discussing the Sophia University affair, I would like to take a short detour and explain the issue of "disrespect" for Shinto shrines, which was mentioned in the previously quoted "1)" in the document of the Executive Committee of *Jinja Seido Cyōsakai*. The reason is that this issue is a powerful rebuttal to Murakami Shigeyoshi's theory of "State Shinto", which states that "State Shinto was formed by directly connecting Shrine Shinto and Imperial Shinto". The "crime of disrespect" (Articles 74 and 76) in the old Penal Code (1899) was originally limited to the emperor, the imperial family, and the graves of the emperor's family, but the Penal Code was amended in 1907 to include Ise Grand Shrine. However, shrines other than Ise Grand Shrine were not subject to the "crime of disrespect", and were only protected in the same way as temples and graves of ordinary people under Article 88 of the Penal Code. This amendment was intended to

change this situation and to treat shrines in the same way as Imperial Shinto under the Penal Code, but in the end it was never implemented (Ashizu Uzuhiko, "Teikoku Kenpō Jidai no Jinja to Syūkyō [Shrines and Religion in the Age of the Imperial Constitution] "). In other words, general shrines were not equated with the Imperial Shinto, but rather with temples and the graves of ordinary people.

The Sophia University affair which changed the whole atmosphere of the “Shrine Problem”

As mentioned in the first part of this article, as a result of the disarmament measures taken by Minister of Army, Ugaki, a system was put in place from 1924 onwards whereby officers on active service were assigned to schools above junior high school level to give military training to students. This system was not compulsory for universities and private schools, which had to apply for making use of it voluntarily. However, while in peacetime the period of military service for ordinary people without school training was two years, those who had passed the school training course were entitled to short the period to ten months. Therefore, especially for private institutions of higher education, gaining the privilege of a shorter period of military service was a serious problem for the recruitment of students and the survival of the schools. Thus, in spite of the many criticisms of this system, such as "militaristic aggression against education", many higher education institutions applied for the assignment of active duty officers as soon as it came into effect. And after the Manchurian Incident in September 1931, this system became the cause of a major problem that shook the world of education.

In May 1932, an active duty officer assigned to Sophia University for military training led his students to visit *Yasukuni* Shrine, but several of them refused to do so because of their Catholic faith. This was the beginning of the affair. The Ministry of Army took the refusal to visit *Yasukuni* Shrine, which was under its jurisdiction, very seriously and notified the Ministry of Education to suspend the assignment of the officer to Sophia University. The Papal Nuncio to Japan and the Archbishop of Tokyo, who attached great importance to the situation, asked the Minister of Education on September 22 to give an official reply on whether the students' and children's salute to the shrine was an expression of patriotism and loyalty. In response, the Ministry of Education replied on 30 September that "the salute required to the students' and children's groups is intended to express

patriotism and loyalty". After receiving this official reply, the Archbishop of Tokyo, Alexis Chabon, notified all Catholic schools in Japan of the Ministry's reply on October 17th, and informed them that "from now on, Catholic students and pupils must participate in group visit to shrines" (Kubo Gizō, *Syōwa Kyōikushi · Jyō* [The History of Education in the Syōwa Era, I] , p.142 and following).

Immediately after the resolution of the Sophia University affair, in December 1932, the Ministry of Education issued a directive of "The Extra-curricular Guidance for Pupils" (Ministry of Education Instruction No. 22), which officially established the following as part of extra-curricular activities at elementary and junior high schools: worship Ise Shrine and the Imperial Palace from afar, visits to Shinto shrines, cleaning of shrine grounds, and cleaning and worship of monuments to the loyal dead, the war dead, filial children, and chaste wives. In this way, shrine visits, which had been limited to elementary schools before the Manchurian Incident, spread to senior schools.

By the way, in spite of this friction with *Yasukuni Shrine*, after the war, when General MacArthur, who occupied Japan, asked them for their opinion about the abolition of *Yasukuni Shrine*, the Catholic priests (Father Byrne of the Maryknoll and Father Bitter of the Jesuits) opposed it. Their reasons were said to be as follows.

"The question of whether to abolish *Yasukuni Shrine* is of the essence and has nothing to do with whether this war was right or wrong. It is the duty and right of every citizen to pay respect and gratitude to those who have given their lives for their country. Therefore, we pay our respects to the tombstones of the war dead, even if they are enemy nationals. *Yasukuni Shrine* is not just a Shinto mausoleum, but a monument of national respect. Because there, the heroic spirits of all war dead are enshrined equally, irrespective of whether the war dead believed in Shintoism, Buddhism, Christianity or any other religion. Therefore, to abolish such a facility would be to deny the important duties and rights of the people" (Shimura Tatsuya, *Kyōkai Hiwa — Taiheiyō Sensō wo megutte-* [The Secret Story of the Church: Concerning the Pacific War] , Nagasaki: Seibo-Bunko, pp.204-205).

From this post-war speech and action, it seems that the Archbishop's decision in the Sophia University affair was not "a compromise of the Catholic Faith in the face of military pressure". Incidentally, on May 26, 1936, the bishops of the Japanese Empire were instructed by the Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide of the Curia, "The Service of the Faithful to the Fatherland," that they "should teach that Catholics are permitted to participate in and to behave like other citizens" with regard to rituals performed at Shinto Shrines (*Rekishī kara Nani wo Manabu bekika-Katorikku Kyōkai no Sensō Kyōryoku · Jinja Sanpai* [What We Can Learn from History: The Catholic Church's War Cooperation and Shrine Visitation] ,ed. *Katorikku Cyūkyōgikai Hukuin Senkyō Kenkyūsisu* [The Office for the Study of the Evangelical Mission of the Catholic Central Council of Japan] ,Tokyo: Shinseisya, March 1999, pp.134-135). The instruction still hasn't been revoked.

The emergence of an atmosphere in which it is impossible to refuse a visit to the shrine

The rapid development of the situation as the intervention of the military in the administration of Shinto shrines and education, and the acceptance by the Catholic Church, the largest religious organization in the world, of the "non-religiousness" of Shinto shrine rituals, has enabled the government to insist on the "non-religiousness" of Shinto shrines and to formulate policies based on it without any hesitation. This situation become led to an atmosphere in which it was no longer possible to criticize the unconstitutional actions of the government against the general public. Here is a list of the main developments since then.

Since the outbreak of the Great Depression in October 1929, the devastation of rural areas has been remarkable. The Ministry of the Interior drew up *Kokumin Kōsei Undō Yōkō* [The Outline of the National Rehabilitation Movement Plan] in August 1932, and in October of the same year the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry presented *Nōsanson Keizai Kōsei Keikaku Juritsu Jikkō Hōsin* [The Policy for the Establishment and Implementation of the Rural and Mountain Village Economic Rehabilitation Plan] to prefectural governors. In addition, the Ministry of Education published *Kyōiku Yōkō* [The Educational Guidelines] which included spiritual education. All these movements were aimed at promoting self-reliance and rehabilitation in rural communities. And at the start of the

movements, *Jiriki Kōsei Sai* [Shinto Rituals for Self-rehabilitation] were held in various parts of the country, and the leaders of the movements visited shrines to vow to rebuild their villages.

In May 1935, the Cabinet of Okada Keisuke issued an "*Senkyo Syukusei linkai Rei* [The Order to Establish The Committee for Correct Election]" and began a campaign to eliminate electoral fraud, which had been a long-standing problem. In some prefectures, resignation letters for the commissioners were issued at shrines, or Amaterasu was enshrined in front of polling stations so that voters were obliged to worship her before casting their ballots.

In response to the outbreak of the China Incident in July 1937, the Konoe Cabinet decided on "*Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Jisshi Yōkō* [The Outline of the Implementation of the Total Mobilization of the National Spirit]" in August the following year in response to the Incident and in order to turn national life into a wartime regime. Then, in September Prime Minister Konoe issued a cabinet notice entitled "*Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin ni kansuru Ken* [On the Total Mobilization of the National Spirit]", which launched *Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Undō* [A Campaign of Total Mobilization of the National Spirit]. As part of this campaign, prefectural government employees were encouraged to visit the shrines, and factory workers were encouraged to visit the shrines. It was also decided that all people should observe a minute's silence pray at the time of the Emperor's visit to the *Yasukuni* Shrine for the spring and autumn big rituals, using sirens as a signal.

Shimizu Ikutarō introduces a short column he wrote for the *Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* [news paper] on October 8, 1939, entitled "Keishin no Shisō [On The Idea of Respect for Kami]" in his book "Ronbun no Kakikata [How to Write Theses]" (Tokyo:Iwanami-Shinsyo). In it, he wrote the following sentence." As part of this movement [the Movement of Total Mobilization of the National Spirit], it was compulsory for all pedestrians and people in trains to salute shrines when they passed by them. I wrote here a small irony about this totally ridiculous custom enforced by state. (pp. 13-14).

The image of the pre-war government forcing people to visit shrines can be said to be an adaptation of the situation after the Movement of Total Mobilization of the National Spirit back to the Meiji Era.

In February 1938, Nishio Kōtarō, a member of the board of trustees of Dōsyisya University, was summoned by the *Kempeitai* [military police] to answer questions about his comments at a speech by the Japanese Union Christian Association. This led to questions about Christianity being sent to the *Kempeitai* from the people of various regions. In March, the Chief of the Ōsaka *Kempeitai* sent a letter to Christian teachers and educators in the city of Ōsaka with a list of thirteen questions from the people, including questions about their views on the eight million Kami and the relationship between the Emperor and the Christian God. In April, he sent a letter to Christian teachers and educators requesting them to persuade their believers to accept and enshrine the Jingū-Taima [a symbol of Ise Garnd Shrine] as a way of cooperating with the Movement of Total Mobilization of the National Spirit (Tagawa Daikichirō, *Kokka to Syūkyō* [The State and Religion] , August 1938).

We have already described the seventy-fourth session of the Diet in 1939, which debated the third Religious Organizations Bill (promulgated in April 1939 and enacted in April 1940). During the deliberations, the Minister of Education, Araki Sadao, made it clear that religious organizations and religious teachers who refused to visit shrines would be punished under the Law. In other words, such religious teachers would be suspended from their operations, such religious organizations would have their licenses revoked, and, if the punishment was not complied with, they would be punishable by imprisonment for up to six months or a fine of up to 500 yen. For individual subjects, visiting a shrine was a moral obligation, not a legal one, and there was no law to punish their no actions. For religious groups and teachers, however, the Religious Organizations Law made it a legal obligation to visit shrines. Here, we can say that freedom of religion had been denied both de facto and legally.

Let us summarize and itemize the above facts which we have been trying to establish.

- 1) Throughout the whole of modern Japan, there was no legal compulsion for individual citizens to visit shrines.
- 2) There were almost no public shrines in the Meiji period, so it was impossible to force people to visit shrines.
- 3) From the beginning of the Taisyō Era, "Shrine Problem" occurred regarding

the visit to shrines in elementary schools and so on. The government's position at this time was that it would encourage the people to respect shrines and honor Kami, but would not force them to visit shrines, and that it would provide visiting to shrines as training of ways revering shrines in elementary schools, but not in junior high schools and above. This view was maintained throughout the Taisyō period. However, at the level of local administration, there were some acts that were tantamount to coercion.

4) "*Jinja Rinrika Undō* [the movement for the ethicization of shrines] ", promoted by Christianity and the *Jyōdo Shinsyū* sect, gained momentum in the late Taisyō and early Syōwa periods. Because of the sense of crisis that Shinto shrines would be transformed into a mere skeleton if things continued as they were, a secret abandonment of the "non-religious" theory of Shinto shrines was considered at *Jinja Seido Cyōsakai* [The Committee to study the Shrine Shinto System] . In the discussion, it was even said that worshipping shrines and visiting shrines were the freedom of individuals.

5) As a result of the Sophia University affair after the Manchurian Incident, Catholics admitted that shrine visiting and venerating was a non-religious act, so there was no need to abandon the "non-religious" theory of Shinto shrines for the government, and shrine visiting and venerating spread to schools above primary schools.

6) Due to the national indoctrination policy promoted by the government after the Sophia University affair, the military's intervention in the administration of shrines, religions and education, and *Kokumin Seishin Sōdōin Undō* [A Campaign of Total Mobilization of the National Spirit, it became practically difficult to refuse to visit and venerate shrines in the 1940s. Finally, when the third Religious Organizations Bill was debated, the interpretation that religious organizations and religious teachers who refused to visit and venerate shrines would be punished was authorized. At this point, the Article 28 of the Constitution became an empty sentence.