

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

Part 2 The Illusion of “State Shinto”

Chapter5 Who needs the 'illusion'?

***Sencyūha* who cannot be objective about their own experiences**

“How is it possible that such a deception has continued for more than sixty years after the war?”

“I wonder why the illusion has not disappeared.”

This is my honest feeling after writing all this.

I wanted to find out the reason. It is true that there are some researchers who are not interested in getting to the accurate historical understanding through empirical research methods, and who are content to simply condemn the Emperor and Shinto. It is also true that there are many scholars who are able to conduct detailed researches but lack the insight and courage to use them to paint a new overall picture, and that no matter how many new documents and facts they discover, in the end all they can do is squeeze them into their "old leather bag".

However, with regard to the issue of "Arahitogami" and "State Shinto", I feel that there are other peculiar circumstances lurking. One of them is the existence of those who cannot objectify their own experiences, who are called "*Sencyūha*" (people who were children or young men during the war). In particular, it seems that the generation that was educated during the war, but never actually went to the battlefields, is full of people with such a mental structure. To me, Umehara Takeshi seems to be a prime example.

As I mentioned at the beginning of Part I of this book, in his article opposing the revision of the Fundamental Law of Education, Umehara wrote: “the spirit of the Imperial Rescript on Education, after all, aimed to make the emperor the absolute God, to establish dying for the sake of the emperor as the fundamental morality, and to make other morals subordinate to this fundamental one” (*Asahi*

Shimbun, November 17, 2002). This is a complete misrepresentation of the facts, which I have already said many times and am sick of repeating. Rather, it is more accurately described as a malicious demagoguery.

Umehara has done a lot of work on ancient times and pre-ancient times, but not a single empirical work on modernity. A scholar of Umehara's stature would have enough common sense to understand that "before making a statement about an unknown field, one should at least examine the previous researches." What this demagoguery represents, then, is not "mere ignorance" but his "intense will to ignorance", which will never to empirically examine the times he had lived in.

What is the origin of his rigid attitude to knowledge of modernity? As I began to think about it, I suddenly recalled the bizarre feeling I had when I finished reading Umehara's book, "*Tennōke no 'Furusato' Hyūga wo yuku* [The Journey to *Hyūga*: 'the Cradle' of the Emperor's Family (Tokyo:Shincyōsya, 2000)]". In Japanese mythology, the ancestors of the Imperial Family were said to have been in *Hyūga* [The southeastern region of *Kyūsyū*] from the time of the *Tenson-Kōrin* [The descent of Amaterasu's grandson, Ninigi, to earth from the heavenly realm] to the *Jinmu-Tōsei* [The events which the first emperor Jimmu established a capital in *Yamato*, present *Nara* Prefecture, and ascended to the Emperor's throne]. This book attempts to retrace the footsteps of Ninigi, his son Hikohohodemi, his son Ugayafukiaezu and his son Kamuyamatoiwarebiko (Jinmu), all of whom are said to have been in *Hyūga*, on the assumption that mythological stories of the Chronicles [*Kojiki* and *Nihonsyoki*] would reflect the historical facts. Towards the end of the trip, a huge pagoda in *Miyazaki* with the words "Hakkō-Ichiū" carved on it and the *Chiran* Kamikaze base came into sharp focus. Then, Umehara's calm analysis and light-hearted reasoning up to that point were suddenly disrupted, and his writing became extremely emotional.

Umehara began to talk about how his adoptive mother had taught him that he should never become a soldier because killing people was their business. He went on to describe how, despite his anti-war beliefs, he had lost hope for the future and had taken the examination to become a special pilot's apprentice, and how he had failed because he could not name a Japanese fighter plane

and had been called 'unpatriotic' by the examiner. He said that if he had passed the test, his picture might have been displayed in the memorial hall in *Chiran* as a war dead. He criticizes the Japanese military for not stopping the unwinnable war sooner, so that the *Kamikaze*-attack, the battle of *Okinawa* and the atomic bombings of *Hiroshima* and *Nagasaki* would not have happened. Even the most elementary question is not considered here: could Japan alone have stopped the fighting unilaterally, while the American President insisted on an "unconditional surrender"?

Umehara goes on to say. He speculates that the idea of the *Kamikaze*-attack was conceived because, for the military, schoolboys and pre-military cadets were "insignificant people", and that "especially with schoolboys, I feel there was a secret emotion of punishment for intellectuals who were not considered to be sincerely helping the war effort". After the writings that "I believe that no matter how many times Lieutenant General Ōnishi Takijirō, who is credited with coming up with the idea, and General Tōjō Hideki, who adopted it as a national policy, die would not be enough", He concludes his chapter with the following words: "I do not think that the country of Japan should ever again produce an ogre or a devil who thinks like the idea. If it has been produced through the interpretation of Japanese myths, the error of such interpretation must never be repeated." (pp. 194-198)

It is clear from these writings that Umehara's personal experiences and resentments have been left in a closed and dark place, without any objective examination. This is exactly what Takeyama Michio lamented when he said, "There are many judgments that have been overwhelmed by the harsh impressions of those days, and have lost their calm sense of history because of their resentment against them" (*Syōwa no Seishinshi*, p.19).

At the beginning of his book: *Arahitogami no Sōsakusyatachi* [The Creators of the Living God] , Yamamoto Hichihei stresses the power of the spell brought about by the lack of recognition to the process of the formation of one's own thought and explains the necessity of adding an objective examination to it and rethinking it as a single thought. The fact that he chose the thoughts of Edo period as the object of his examination as the "*Arahitogami*" only showed that he himself was still under the spell of the thoughts of *Syōwa* period. However,

apart from his failure of examine it, I believe that his perception of the spell itself was correct. Indeed, "ignorance only makes the spell definitive, it is never the way out of it" (p.11).

Kobayashi Hideo said, "History resembles the enormous resentment of mankind" ("History and Literature"). The resentment he was referring to was 'mixed feelings of affection and grief', but in Umehara's case it seems to be literally 'resentment'.

"What if Umehara's seemingly rational theory is actually the product of a huge personal resentment?"

"And what if the resentment is the song that echoes in the depths of his thought?"

Umehara's longing for the *Jyōmon* period before the formation of the state, his sympathy for the *Ainu*, *Okinawa* as remote areas of Japan, and his negative view of the Shinto of the *Ritsuryō* Shinto [the Shinto after the formation of the centralized state in ancient times in Japan] and modern Shinto - these claims must be re-examined in the 'light of reason'.

The '*Arahitogami*' as a projection of the belief in the living Buddha

Along with the many *Sencyūha* who cannot be objective about their own experiences, there is another reason why the illusion of State Shinto has not disappeared. Apparently, there are people who do not want the illusion to disappear, who think they will be in trouble if it disappears, and who continue to work hard to be creating it.

I have been researching the history of modern Shinto and the relationship between politics and religion in modern Japan for more than thirty years now, and in the course of my research I have become increasingly suspicious of one fact. In the course of my research into State Shinto, I have come across many people who are associated with the *Jyōdo Shinsyū* sect. First of all, when we look into the theory of "Shrine Shinto as non-religion", which is an important pillar of the theory of "State Shinto", we find that it originated in the passionate advocacy of Shimaji Mukurai and other *Jyōdo Shinsyū* priests. The "State Shinto" illusion began with Katō Genchi, who was also the creator of the "*Arahitogami*". He was born in *Asakusa*, Tokyo, the eldest son of Katō Gentoku,

a chief priest of *Syōnenji* Temple of the *Takada* sect of *Jyōdo Shinsyū*. Fujitani Toshio, who expanded the illusion of State Shinto after the war, was the abbot of *Sokugenji* Temple in the *Ōtani* sect of *Jyōdo Shinsyū*. Yasumaru Yoshio, a critical scholar of State Shinto, was also born in the areas of *Toyama* Prefecture where *Jyōdo Shinsyū* is popular. The father of Yamaori Tetsuo, mentioned at the beginning of this book, was an overseas missionary of *Jyōdo Shinsyū* (However, Murakami Shigeyoshi is a former member of the Communist Party and a Christian).

How are we to interpret these facts? I am not convinced by the following scheme, which has been advocated by leftist scholars of *Jyōdo Shinsyū* such as Futaba Kenkō and Fukushima Kanryū: the confrontation between "Shinto as national religion in favor of the state" and " *Jyōdo Shinsyū* as world religion (universal religion) critical to the state": the confrontation between "Shinto as oppressor" and " *Jyōdo Shinsyū* as oppressed and resister".

It has been said that the theory of the "Shrine Shinto as 'non-religion'" was the logic used to justify "State Shinto". In reality, however, it was the *Jyōdo Shinsyū* that forced the government to approve it, overcoming the concerns and opposition of many Shinto priests, with political power. Let us examine the following two passages.

“It is needless to say that Shinto [神道] means rituals expressing that Amaterasu has established the Emperor's throne, and that the reason they are called "to [道;Way] " is that the government performs the rituals. What citizen does not respect the rituals? It is nothing less than the duty of the people to respect them.”

“They [Christians] describe the rituals at our shrines as a sin against the true God and a delusion against the truth. In reality, they do not participate in the celebrations of their local shrines and refuse to contribute to them. In extreme cases, they have even come to the ceremony of a Shinto shrine and arrogantly speak in abusive language - last September, at a memorial service for a certain person at *Kusunoki* shrine in Kobe, the American missionary Atkinson made a speech denigrating the service - and boldly attempt to abolish the ancient rituals of our country. If they were allowed to preach freely, they would not be satisfied until they had abolished from the Ise Grand Shrine to all the local shrines. As a result, all the rituals honoring the ancestors would die out and not be able to be

revived. From the point of view of respect for our ancestors, how can we ignore such events? How can such attempts to disrupt the order, to undermine and destroy the moral character of the people have nothing to do with our National Polity or with The Emperor System?"

What would be the answer of many people if they were asked, without naming the persons who wrote the two foregoing sentences, what persons wrote them and for what purpose? Probably they would say that the former was written by an ardent, or worse, fanatical Shintoist to force the people to perform the imperial ritual, and that the latter was written by a person in a similar position of the former, in order to discourage Christianity. However, the former is a passage in a petition submitted to Matsukata Masayoshi, the Minister of Interior, by Atsumi Keien and Suzuki Keijun of the *Jyōdo Shinsyū Ōtani* sect [*Higashi Honganji*] in March 1877 (Fujii Sadafumi, "Izumo-taisya-kyō Seiritsu no Kenkyū [A Study of the Establishment of Izumo-taisya-kyō", pp.477-478). The latter is a passage from an article entitled "Kono Kokka Zinmin wo Ikan sen [What should we do with our country and our people?]" written by Shimaji Mukurai in *Reichikai Zasshi* [Magazine of Reichikai] in July 1887 (*Shimaji Mukurai Zensyū* [The Complete Works of Shimaji Mukurai], Vol.4, p.61).

The theory of the "Arahitogami" was first advocated by Katō Genchi, who believed it was insufficient that the polytheistic theory that the emperors are "divine descendants" based on mythology. It was the image of the emperor as seen through the beliefs of *Jyōdo Shinsyū* that believes in monotheistic devotion to the Amida Buddha, where the highest-ranking monk of the sect was regarded as a "living Buddha" and even held the power of life and death over his followers during the Warring States period. In other words, his image of the emperor was not based on Japanese myth, but a projection of the *Jyōdo Shinsyū* faith. That is why the intellectuals who were influenced by the *Jyōdo Shinsyū* faith were able to accept the "illusion" of the emperor as an absolute God before the war, without question.

Based on the above reasoning, I agree with the following thoughts of Hishiki Masaru of the Ōtani sect of *Jyōdo Shinsyū*.
"I assume that the belief in the "Arahitogami" is a reworking of the belief in the highest-ranking monk as a "living Buddha". The two believes are very similar, and

the belief in the "living Buddha" was established earlier than the belief in the "Arahitogami" (*Jyōdo Shinsyū no Sensō Sekinin* [The War Responsibility of *Jyōdo Shinsyū*], Tokyo:Iwanami-syoten, p.33).

“State Shinto” was *Jyōdo Shinsyū* !

Until a certain point in my life, I was satisfied with the above understanding. However, one day, I have begun to think that this understanding was still insufficient. It was when I read the opinion of Sugawara RyūKen, a priest of the *Honganji* sect of the *Jyōdo Shinsyū*, who was a plaintiff in the "Case for Confirmation of Unconstitutionality of *Yasukuni* Shrine Visitation by The Prime Minister" filed in November 2001.

In condemning Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to *Yasukuni* Shrine, Sugawara wrote as follows: “To honor and thank as 'heroes' the war dead who were forced to die as victims of the state and perpetrators of the war of aggression is to use them to justify the war crimes of the state and to avoid responsibility for them, and it is to erase them once again.” “At *Yasukuni* Shrine, the spirit of the State Shinto, which was used to plunder and destroy the spirit of the Asian people during colonial rule, is still alive.” “The power of the state is not only to rule the people by law, but also to use the gods as a backstop to gain stability for itself and to plunder the people's inner life, which is the traditional structure of power in our country until today.” “The essence of *Yasukuni* Shrine is to justify such inhuman acts as the backdrop of the state, and the doctrine to such justification is State Shinto.”

For Sugawara, "State Shinto" is, in essence, a religious war ideology and an institution for its propagation. If such is the definition of "State Shinto", then *Jyōdo Shinsyū* deserves to be called "State Shinto". The reason is that the words "State Shinto" and "*Yasukuni* Shrine" in his statement can be replaced by "*Jyōdo Shinsyū*", the word "gods" by "Amida Buddha", and the words "state" and "the power of state" by "*Jyōdo Shinsyū* sect". In fact, we can understand the essence of the matter better when we replace them. Why is this so? We can find out by tracing the relationship between the war and *Jyōdo Shinsyū*.

There is an interesting story in *The Complete Works of Shimaji Mokurai*. The

story goes that in 1888, a soldier came to Mokurai and said that in order for soldiers to fight well, they should have a firm belief of life and death, but that he had been too busy with his military training to study religion. Apparently, the soldier would not have been prepared to accept the belief of life and death in accordance with what Murakami Shigeyoshi called "the doctrine of national polity = the doctrine of State Shinto". So Mokurai replied that *Jyōdo Shinsyū* was the most suitable teaching for the army, because it taught the way to become a loyal subject in life and to be able to go to paradise in death (Vol.4, "Gunjin Hōwa 〈Bukkyō Tai〉 [A Buddhist sermon for a soldier 〈Outline of Buddhism〉"]). Indeed, in the light of history, it is easy to see why *Jyōdo Shinsyū* is the most appropriate religion for the army. In the Warring States period, *Jyōdo Shinsyū* troubled many warlords by urging the peasants to "fight or you should go down to hell", furthermore even ruled some countries. In terms of historical combat experience, Shinto is not even close to *Jyōdo Shinsyū*.

The relationship between the military or war and *Jyōdo Shinsyū* seems to have been an important theme for Momurai. The Vol.4 of his *Complete Works*, in addition to "Gunjin Hōwa", " include "Shinsyū to Gunjin [Shinsyū and Soldiers] " (1879), "Jūgun Hukyō no Yōten [Essentials of Military Missions] " (1895), "Gunjin Hōwa 〈Issai Syujō Shitsuyō Bussyō, Nyorai Jōjū Muyū Heneki no Ge〉 [A Buddhist sermon for a soldier 〈An explanation of the Buddha nature dwelling in all people, the constant presence of the Buddha and the fact that all things change〉 " (1902), "Sensō to Bukkyō 〈Syōsen Gunjin Imon Kōwa〉 [The War and Buddhism 〈Lectures for Wounded Soldiers〉] " (December 1904) , and "Shinsyū Anjin to Gunjin no Kakugo [The Salvation through *Jyōdo Shinsyū* and the beliefs of the soldiers] " (1905). "Sensō to Bukkyō" and "Shinsyū Anjin to Gunjin no Kakugo" are two of the lectures that Mokurai gave in various places during the Russo-Japanese War. In the latter he expresses his views so clearly that I shall quote from it:

"We surrender our bodies and minds to the Buddha in the same way that filial children obey their parents and loyal subjects serve their sovereigns, in order to respond to their parents' compassion and to reassure the Emperor. This sentiment is consistent with the intention of the ancient *Waka* poem, 'Whether we died fighting on the sea or in the mountains, our souls would stay by the Emperor's side to protect him, and not in the sea or the mountains'. If this is so,

then the followers of *Jyōdo Shinsyū*, who have already entrusted their bodies and minds to the Buddha's compassion and have been enlightened by the Buddha's light, should not use their bodies and minds for selfish purposes, but should devote themselves solely to repaying the Buddha's kindness and virtue, reciting the *Nembutsu*, correcting their words and deeds, working hard at their duties, and serving their country to repay the Emperor's sacred favor. Then you, the soldiers of the army and navy, will be at peace in life and will not be disturbed by death. Believing that the Buddha has assured us that we will go to Paradise after death, we should stabilize our minds, be enlightened by the light of the Buddha while we are still alive, recite the *Nembutsu*, and bravely serve our country. (p. 651)

後の世は弥陀の教へにまかせつゝ

いのちをやすく君にさしげよ

Nochinoyo wa Mida no Oshie ni makasetsutsu

Inochi wo yasuku Kimi ni sasageyo

[Trust in the teachings of the Buddha as to what happens after death.

And give your life lightly to the Emperor]

This is a *Waka* poem given to the soldiers by the leaders of the *Jyōdo Shinsyū* Order during the Sino-Japanese War. Based on this doctrine, both the East and West schools of *Jyōdo Shinsyū* actively promoted overseas missionary work and military missionary work. The reason for this was that on February 7, 1904, just before the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, the Ministry of the Army issued a notice to all divisional commanders stating that monks of Buddhism and teachers of Sectarian Shinto could accompany them to war zones in times of war or war-related incidents. However, this order did not include priests of Shrine Shinto, because according to a Ministry of Interior ordinance of 1882, they were prohibited from proselytizing and conducting funerals. It was not until August 14, 1939, that this ban was lifted and Shrine Shinto priests were allowed to serve the military missionary work, but in the end only two served before the war was lost. In other words, it was Buddhism and Sectarian Shinto, especially the monks of *Jyōdo Shinsyū*, who inspired the soldiers on the battlefield.

According to Hishiki Masaharu, "The temples of *Jyōdo Shinsyū* were not Buddhism Order but educational institutions that educated colonials to become Japanese," (*Jyōdo Shinsyū no Sensō Sekinin*, p.55). And, as of 1918, the number

of branch temples and mission stations in Korea was "fifty-eight for the *Ōtani* school of *Jyōdo Shinsyū* and thirty-four for the *Honganji* school of *Jyōdo Shinsyū*" (ibid. p.54). As mentioned earlier, Shinto shrines were 36 and small shrines were 41 in Korea only at that time.

"In the temples of *Ōtani* school, "*Tenpai* [天牌]" was placed in the main hall next to the Amida Buddha and a stone pillar was erected in front of the gate with the inscription '*Tenpai Hōanjo* [天牌奉安所]'. "*Tenpai*" is short for "*Tennō-Sonpi* [天皇尊牌]", which is a kind of tablet with inscriptions such as "*Kinjō-Tennō Seikyū Banzai* [今上天皇聖躬万歳 May the present Emperor be in good health forever]" and "*Meiji-Tennō Songi* [明治天皇尊儀 Meiji Emperor's Honor]". "Almost all the branch temples and mission stations in the colonies and abroad have these tablets." "These were devices to make people worship the Emperor in the garb of Buddhism." (ibid. p.55)

To conclude the history of the relationship between the war and *Jyōdo Shinsyū*, I would like to quote some statements made by the affiliate peoples from 1935 to 1945.

"We, the people of Japan, must show our heartfelt gratitude and respect to the heroic spirits of the nation who sacrificed their precious lives for the nation and died with honor in the war" (Makifuji Tetsuzō, *Yasukuni-Jinja no Sūkei* [The worship at Yasukuni Shrine], June 1939, in *Senji-Kyōgaku to Shinsyū* [The Doctrine of Shinsyū during The War] Vol.3, ed. Senji Kyōgaku Kenkyūkai, Kyoto: Nagata-Bunsyōdō, p.3).

"Needless to say, Japan's war is right because it is conducted under the Emperor's authority. It is a holy war. This is the belief of our people, and indeed the fundamental character of Japan. This is the basis of the Japanese view of war, and consistent with the spirit of Mahayana Buddhism" (Umehara Shinryū, *Kōa no Seishin to Bukkyō* "The Spirit of Developing Asia and Buddhism", July 1939, in *Senji-Kyōgaku to Shinsyū* Vol.2, p.303).

"We are now striving to fulfill the essence of our Japanese founding spirit and to carry on the sacred work of developing Asia. This holy battle [the Sino-Japanese Incident] has already passed its fourth year, a new Sino-government is expected to be established soon under the authority of His Majesty the Emperor and we are finally approaching the realization of the great ideal of *Hakkō-Ichiu* (Honda Keiryū, Office Policy at *Nishi-Honganji* sect's 88th General Meeting on January 25, 1940, in *Senji-Kyōgaku to Shinsyū* Vol.1, p.395).

"We the people of our country believe that the Emperor is *Arahitogami* and that he rules the country according to the will of the heavenly gods. This belief inevitably gives rise to a sentiment of absolute obedience to the Emperor and absolute trust in the National Polity" (Fugen Daien, "Kannagara-no-Michi to *Jyōdo Shinsyū* [Shinto and *Jyōdo Shinsyū*] ", October 1941, listed in Ikeda Yukinobu, *Shinsyū Kyōdan no Shisō to Kōdō* [The thought and action of the Shinsyū Order] Kyoto: Hōzōkan, p.135).

I am not aware of any mass martyrdom of *Jyōdo Shinsyū* from 1935 to 1945 as a result of government repression. Rather, "when the Sino-Japanese War [1937] began and the mobilization of the whole country started, the leaders of the *Jyōdo Shinsyū* Order, as if they were waiting for a request for cooperation from the state, made a concerted effort to realize the active support for the war by the believers and the people" (Fukushima Kanryū, "Hashigaki [The Introduction] "of *Senji-Kyōgaku to Shinsyū* Vol.1, p.2). If this is the case, then they were making full use of the aforementioned discourse without feeling any contradiction with the belief of *Ikkō-Sennen* (the belief in Amida Buddha alone). It was not only the monks. "It seems that most of the believers of *Jyōdo Shinsyū* did not feel the least bit uncomfortable about it" (ibid.p.5).

As the result of tracing the relationship between wars and *Jyōdo Shinsyū* in the modern era, I am forced to conclude that "if we focus on the relationship with wars, "State Shinto" is really *Jyōdo Shinsyū*. If you want to know more about what *Jyōdo Shinsyū* said and did from 1935 to 1945, I recommend you read following books: *Senji-Kyōgaku to Shinsyū* Vol.1 to 3 (Kyoto:Nagata-Bunshyōdō), edited by the "Wartime Teaching" Study Group; Hishiki Masaharu, *Jyōdo Shinsyū no Sensō Sekinin* (Tokyo:Iwamami-syoten); and Ōnishi Osamu, *Senji-Kyōgaku to Jyōdo Shinsyū* [The Wartime Teaching and *Jyōdo Shinsyū*] (Tokyo:Syakai Hyōronsha).

“State Shinto” as a masking ideology

In his written statement, Sugawara Ryūken also writes:

"My father is recorded in the list of *Yasukuni* Shrine as having died of 'war illness' in New Britain Island of the New Guinea Islands. For several years I have been visiting *Yasukuni* Shrine to demand it to remove my father's name from the list. I

think it would have been a great shame for my father to have been both a monk and a fighter. In the list, my father is named as 'Ryūon no Mikoto [龍音命]'. I am deeply humiliated that my father is enshrined as a deity in the *Yasukuni Shrine*."

Sugawara's father was a *Jyōdo Shinsyū* priest and a soldier. The fact that he was a priest of the *Jyōdo Shinsyū* sect at the time suggests that he was not opposed to the sect's policy of advocating 'the Wartime Teaching'. Rather, it is more likely that he was inspiring other soldiers on the battlefield with 'the Wartime Teaching'. If so, he himself should have been satisfied with his enshrinement at *Yasukuni Shrine*. Therefore, it should be said that Sugawara's legal action is a great act of filial piety. I have never met Sugawara, but I do not believe that he is lying and exploiting his father's death for his own ideological gain. If my guess is right, he is doing this clownish action out of the goodness of his heart. How can such a thing happen? This seems to be due to the post-war history of the left wing group of the *Jyōdo Shinsyū* Order.

Statements and actions of *Jyōdo Shinsyū* Order from 1935 to 1945, are incompatible with the anti-war and peace climate of post-war Japan. So it have been very hard for *Jyōdo Shinsyū* Order to face the facts of the past head on. It have been especially true for the members of left wing group in the *Jyōdo Shinsyū* Order (also known as Shinran fundamentalists) who have been steeped in post-war values. If they faced at the facts, they would inevitably be forced to deny the *Jyōdo Shinsyū* Order for the crimes it had committed, and to deny themselves belonging to it.

In order to cover up the contradiction between their Order's past actions and their present position, they have invented a "trick". It is super-historical and super-realistic thesis that "The essence of *Jyōdo Shinsyū* is a world religion, which in principle is incompatible with Shinto, a national religion. The problems with *Jyōdo Shinsyū*'s past actions were due to the 'distortion' forced upon it by Shinto". In other words, the desire to escape guilt led to the creation of a fictitious concept and the claim that it was the essence of *Jyōdo Shinsyū*, so that no matter how much reality was confronted, they could be excused as merely a distortion of the essence. This theory of *Jyōdo Shinsyū*'s left, which uses the super-historical idea of "essence" to deny or dodge reality, is curiously, or rightly, in line with Katō Genchi's theory of "State Shinto".

They not only invented a fictitious notion, but also took three actions in order to completely conceal the facts by the notion. The first was to forcefully portray the history of "the state and Shinto as oppressors" versus " *Jyōdo Shinsyū* as oppressed and resisters". In short, they tried to make it look like "this notion is correct in the light of history". For example, articles such as Futaba Kenkō's "Shimaji Mokurai: His Status in the History of Japanese Buddhist Thought" (Commentary, *The Complete Works of Shimaji Mokurai*, Vol.1) and Fukushima Kanryū's "The Establishment of the Modern Imperial State and the Development of the Theory of Religious Freedom" (Commentary, *The Complete Works of Shimaji Mokurai*, Vol. 2).

The second has been to eradicate folk beliefs (especially ancestor worship) within *Jyōdo Shinsyū*, and the third has been to antagonize Shinto (especially *Yasukuni Shrine*), propagating its sins about wars and promoting to the world their position to correct it. By these three means, they sought to present *Jyōdo Shinsyū* as the critics against Shinto, a folk religion, and thereby to convince themselves and the world that the pre-war regime and *Jyōdo Shinsyū* were incompatible.

The core of their post-war "efforts" was the "State Shinto" as a masking ideology to hide the true nature of the pre-war *Jyōdo Shinsyū*. As long as the mask was placed over Shinto, the old evils of *Jyōdo Shinsyū* could be exposed and denounced without anxiety. Therefore, it needed to be presented and shown again and again, through speeches and litigations. Herein lies the reason why the "illusion of State Shinto" have not disappear.

However, it is not true to say that the only reason for the survival of the "illusion of State Shinto" is that *Jyōdo Shinsyū* left has needed "State Shinto" as a scapegoat to satisfy its sense of atonement. Many religious groups, though not as many as *Jyōdo Shinsyū*, cooperated in the war effort. There is no doubt that the same psychological need for the illusion has been at work in them as in *Jyōdo Shinsyū*.

Moreover, for the Shrine Shinto community, which seemingly have stood at the opposite end of the spectrum to these religious groups, 'State Shinto' also have

been a necessary masking ideology. Whereas for *Jyōdo Shinsyū* or others the need for it is rooted in a sense of guilt for having been too complicit in the war, the Shrine Shinto community's need for it is rooted in a sense of inferiority for having, to borrow Harada Toshiaki's harsh expression, "done nothing" or, to put it a little gently, for having failed to contribute to the nation as openly as those involved in *Jyōdo Shinsyū* and *Nichirensyū*. For the pre-war Shinto priests who were bound by the thesis of "Shrine Shinto as non-religion", the only thing they could do other than carry out their rituals in a strict manner was to engage in a battle for the post of chief priest of the official national shrines between the *Kokugakuin* and *Kōgakkan* factions of the universities from which they came (Sakamoto Koremaru, "Kindai no Kōshitsu Saigi to Kokka Shinto [Modern Imperial Rituals and State Shinto] ," pp.304-305 in *Kokka to Syūkyō no Aida: Seikyō-bunri no Shisō to Genjitsu [The Between State and Religion: The Thought and Reality of Separation of Politics and Religion]* , Tokyo: Nihon-Kyōbunsha).

It was not until after the war that the Shinto priests were able to free themselves from the restraints of the thesis and engage in political activism. Here are some examples: Campaigns to restore the holiday celebrating the accession to the throne of the first emperor Jinmu as the founding of Japan, which was abolished by the occupation policy; Campaigns to revive the practice of having the regalia symbolizing the Emperor's throne move with him when he moves, which had been discontinued during the occupation; Campaigns to return *Yasukuni* Shrine, which had become a private religious organization after the war, to state control; Campaigns to restore the practice which changes the chronological name of Japan with the change of the Emperor, because of removed the article governing the practice from the Imperial Household Law revised after the defeat: The activities of the shrine community against the many lawsuits brought against the practices of the shrines in relation to the government. Perhaps the projection of these post-war activities of the shrine community onto the pre-war period is one of the reasons for the illusion of "State Shinto".

Researchers would be supposed to be independent of the practical and psychological needs of the religious communities, but they have been swallowed up by the post-war academic climate, and the term "State Shinto" has prevented them from carrying out detailed empirical studies of the relationship between government and religions based on free and diverse ideas. As long as the term

"State Shinto" was assumed, their researches should be inevitably limited to the relationship between the state and Shinto shrines, and the relationship between the government and other religions should be either ignored or studied only as the relationship between oppressors and oppressed or resistant. It is because of the oppressive nature of the term "State Shinto" against rich and diverse ideas that I have long argued that it "should not be used", or more precisely, "should not be assumed", in the study of the relationship between the government and religions.

The reason why "State Shinto" as a masking ideology has survived is that the "Sencyūha", the *Jyōdo Shinsyū* left (and other religious groups), the Shrine Shinto community, and researchers all wanted it from their own standpoints. In other words, I conclude that "State Shinto" has been a "common illusion" that everyone have wanted.