

SHRINE SHINTO LOOKS TOWARDS THE FUTURE

Excerpts from a symposium held on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the establishment of the Jinja Honchō (Association of Shinto Shrines)

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman: Thank you very much for participating today in this symposium on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Jinja Honchō. If it is true that "ten years make an epoch", as the expression goes, then thirty years means certainly quite a lapse of time. For you it means probably half, or even more, of the life that you have spent in the service of the shrines. It has been a stormy period. Thirty years ago, because of the Shinto Directive — that single notification from the American Occupation Authorities — Shinto was forced to make a new start. It meant the transition from the prewar State Shinto into a kind of religion of the people. It is in such a troublesome situation, in that big turning-point in Shinto history, that you were put, and that every one of you in your own place has fulfilled a function of leadership. When we meet here today, however, it is not so much to speak about the past but about tomorrow, about your own aspirations for the future of Shrine Shinto, drawing lessons though from what happened in the past.

Honma: Congratulations on the occasion of this anniversary. Actually, I myself am not directly connected with Shrine Shinto. Only...in my childhood I used to play on the shrine grounds and, in the morning, the shrine was also the place where we children gathered together before going to school. Once or twice a month I helped clean the shrine precincts. It is a sweet memory of how all pupils of the primary school went together to the shrine carrying a big broom on their shoulders. At the festival in May I climbed on the float and beat the big drum! And then, the torchrace at the fire festival, the local sumo tournament at the O-Bon festival,.... all of them events that had a close connection with the shrine...! I think that Shrine Shinto is deeply, although latently, rooted in the soil of Japan and in the heart of the Japanese, as matsuri, as customs of life.

As we reflect upon Japan's history, we see that Buddhism — which is a system of thought introduced from abroad — and Shinto have often opposed each other and even fought each other. Think for example of the struggle between the Soga and the Mononobe. But later on insofar as my limited knowledge goes — there have been no violent clashes between both until the appearance of Hirata Shinto at the end of the Tokugawa Era and the haibutsu-kishaku movement at the beginning of the Meiji Era. In other words, Shrine Shinto and Buddhism have in general peacefully coexisted. It has always belonged to the specific nature of Shrine Shinto to tolerate this coexistence with other religions.

It is in the essence of religion to look upon itself as

being the only and absolute truth. Hence it directs its activities towards the salvation of all unfortunate people through its unique and supreme teachings. If one should say that another religion is also very good or that another faith is also outstanding, this could hardly be called real religion or real faith. Can't we say that in this respect Shinto differs from the essence of religion taken in such a sense?

Since Meiji, Shrine Shinto became nationalized as State Shinto and was used by the State in its course of nationalism and militarism. The standpoint that the kami are the fundamental reality and the Buddhas their manifestations, was linked to the State power. As a result of this, Japan lost the war, the country was in ruin, and the Occupation Authorities published the Shinto Directive. Shrine Shinto was divorced from the State and became treated as a religious group in the framework of the Religious Juridical Persons Law.

Shrine Shinto can be called the national religion that arose spontaneously on the Japanese archipelago. When it takes the posture of trying to stand above world religions like Buddhism or Christianity and to oppress them, this wielding of power, especially when linked with the power of the State and the nation, leads certainly to failure. This is what history has proved, because it means going against the trend of the times. It is the main characteristic of Shrine Shinto that it possesses the tolerance which makes coexistence with other religions possible. Speaking from the standpoint of Buddhism, the world religion which has the closest connection with our country and the East, Shrine Shinto cannot perform its historical function if it does not develop in the direction of the position that the Buddha is the ultimate reality and the kami its manifestations. This, in conclusion, is my personal opinion.

SHINTO AND THE FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Chairman: As Mr. Honma has pointed out, the Jinja Honchō has entered a new era in these last 30 years. I am sure that all of you are very much aware of this. Could I ask its President, Mr. Shinoda, to be the first to let us know some of his feelings on this occasion.

Shinoda: Though unnecessary to repeat, through an act of the Occupation Authorities Shinto was all of a sudden transferred from the status of State Shinto into the framework of an ordinary religion. Of course, this was a matter of much surprise, not to say of much pain; what would happen to Shinto in the future? But immediately after, and with much enthusiasm, our predecessors established the Jinja Honchō. For sure, there were many discussions about its nature, and we may say that,

fortunately, these thirty years have passed without any major mistakes, and that they have brought us to a situation which has bright prospects for the future. We pay homage to the toils of these our seniors.

As you know, Shrine Shinto became, according to the law, a Religious Juridical Person. Yet, does this mean that it is all right for Shinto to deviate all of a sudden from its original traditional line? Could we call this respect for tradition? Anyhow, the unchangeable elements that have deeply sunk into the national essence of Japan should not be changed. On the other hand there are elements in Shinto, e.g. in its policies, that can be changed to a certain extent according to the signs of the times. There exist religions which cling stubbornly to their teachings and which, consequently, get stuck in a shell not adapted to the times. In this respect Shinto possesses an extraordinary flexibility. It is this aspect that we have to develop.

It is said that also Shinto should direct its activities according to an evangelization policy similar to that of the other religions. Among younger Shinto people there exists the opinion — stimulated by a feeling of uneasiness and under the impulse of the vigorous action of other religions (particularly of the New Religions) — that Shrine Shinto should also engage in more active religious activities. I myself also think that we should earnestly rethink our policies and attitudes. We just heard about the so-called multi-layeredness of the faith of the Japanese and about the spontaneous origin of Shrine Shinto. When we therefore compare this peculiarity of ours with the other religions, we understand that this is really something very special. If I may be allowed to use a somewhat strong expression, couldn't we ask the question whether all this fits into the category of Western-style freedom of religion? Shinto originated spontaneously in the cultural climate of Japan and is inseparable from the national character of Japan. It is therefore questionable whether it can be included within the framework of "religious freedom" like other religions. It is somehow different from them. If we think about the right development of Japan in the future, Shinto has a great role to fulfill and not to be restricted because of having been put into the category of "freedom of religion" like the other religions. Admittedly, in considering these matters, we have to take a very cautious attitude. It is with such thoughts that I want to look to the future.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE JINJA HONCHŌ

Chairman: At the beginning of the book "A history of ten years Jinja Honchō" there was an old picture of the people who had been active in the establishment of the Jinja Honchō. Of

those people only Mr. Date is still alive. At that time he was the executive director of the Dai-Nippon-Jingikai. In this sense, thirty years must mean a long time, doesn't it?

Date: Am I really the only one still alive? When I remember these days, my heart is full of deep emotion. Postwar Japan made a new start after the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, didn't it? In that declaration "freedom of religion" was stipulated. This was to become the basic principle for the management of postwar Japan, particularly if we consider the direction of Shinto which had been a State religion. In the Shinto world there were quite hot discussions about this..

Should we make Shinto into a religion or not? That was the basic question. If we do not become a religion, how can we survive within the framework of freedom of religion? In such an atmosphere, as a kind of policy to be taken, the thought of a "Shrine Religion" (Jinja-kyō) once came up. Yet, several people objected to this: "We are opposed to making Shinto into a religion. Was the standpoint of Shinto until now mistaken? Was it a fraud?" No, it was not. And therefore a Jinja-kyō is contrary to the essence of Shinto. This was the conclusion.

Well, we had a lot of trouble with that. But finally we came gradually to the opinion that we had to be a Religious Juridical Person. Because of the Religious Juridical Persons Ordinance we could not sit idle any longer. Finally, we settled on becoming the Jinja-chō (Shrine Board) in the countryside and the Jinja Honchō (Association of Shinto Shrines) centrally. And so the Shrines had to become religious juridical persons. Actually we did it very reluctantly. The Shinto world tried to do the impossible in accordance with the trend of the times. Even if there are many vicissitudes, Shinto faith is deeply connected with the history of Japan and, consequently, departing from this history goes against the essence of Shinto. But there was no other way under the occupation than to take on the status of a religion as a religious juridical person. If not, there was the danger of being ordered to dissolve.

Shinoda: If we were just an ideological group, we would have been dissolved; if a religion, not. That was it.

Date: That is the situation we were forced into. Therefore, what kind of institutional form is really appropriate, is as yet an unsolved question, because we were actually forced into the present situation.... Well, I would think that religion is religion, but you have religions which take the individual person as their basis: personal religions. However, Shinto is different. Although also catering to the individual, it is a community religion, because it is the

religion of a people; it is a community religion, because it is a national religion. To separate this religion from the Japanese people simply does not work. It is the basis of the community life, of the local community. At the same time, because the individual is the basic element building up this community, it also has a relationship to the individual. Shrine Shinto possesses both of these aspects. Because of this nature I think that nowadays this is a problem that has to be taken into consideration when we speak of freedom of religion.

Shinoda: The statement that Shrine Shinto does not fit into the framework of "freedom of religion" based upon Western concepts might invite misunderstandings. I am not saying that we should refute directly this clause of the present Constitution, which is one of its basic principles, and ask for special treatment for Shinto. Shinto has always been closely linked to the standards of life of both the State and the individual. What I want to say is that for this reason it cannot be treated on the same level as the other religions. Though Shinto pays respect to the State, this does not mean that it sacrifices the individual. It is rather that when the individual realizes more and more his own life, this is linked to the creative evolution of the nation as a whole, and vice versa. This brings new life to the individual. That is what I wanted to say.

In the life of man there is no possibility to lead a life disregarding the community of fate which is the Nation.

Date: Another point is that ancestor worship is at the core of Shinto. We cannot freely choose our ancestors. They are the basis which decided our fate. Therefore, we cannot say that we are free in this respect. For example, we are not free in choosing our own parents. Thus one of the essential principles of Shrine Shinto is that we are determined by fate and cannot choose freely the object of our faith. But, as concerns the other religions, we do not exclude them. We are free to accept them as "teaching parents". I interpret it in this way: we should distinguish between one's real, natural parents and one's teaching parents. The Japanese honor their parents as parents, but with respect to teachings, it is possible, I think, to accept ample teachings from different sides. Isn't this a characteristic of Shrine Shinto?

ISE SHRINE

Chairman: Mr. Sugitani, at the end of the war you were at the Ise Shrine, weren't you?

Sugitani: Yes, I was manager of the secretariat.

Chairman: At the time, the establishment of the Jinja Honchō presented big problems, but even more, it was a big problem how to deal with the Ise Shrine. If one was not careful, it could become a question of life or death for the shrine. As you were there at that time, you must have been very much aware of this. Could you tell us more about that?

Sugitani: Well, as manager of the secretariat I had to do the actual work. As just said, all of a sudden by order of the Occupation Authorities the Shrine was disestablished from the State and became a religious juridical person. If not, we were not allowed to exist any longer. Before that, however, the situation was still much more serious because it was said that the Shrine should be abolished. In the beginning it was McArthur's policy to do away with the Emperor system. But when it became clear that the Emperor could not be eliminated, at least the Ise Shrine had to be abolished. Why? When the Emperor declared that he was an ordinary human being, it was supposed that by this he lost his sacred character. But, insofar as Amaterasu-Ōmikami is the ancestor of the Emperor, his sacred character would not disappear. Therefore, to do away, by all means, with this sacred character, the Ise Shrine had to be abolished. That was the first policy. But as this became difficult to carry out, it was decided to leave the Shrine. Yet, in this case, the idea was not liked that Amaterasu, the kami worshiped at the Shrine, was the ancestor of the Emperor. It seems that, as long as McArthur's administration lasted, this way of thinking did not change. They held obstinately to this. But I did not yield at all.

At that time, talk was going on about the establishment of the Jinja Honchō, and Mr. Date, Mr. Miyakawa and others often came to see me. To me the survival of the Shrine was a question of life or death importance. Together with Mr. Nogami, chief of ceremonies (a very gifted man) we staked everything on the preservation of the Shrine. We literally staked our life on this and accordingly contacted McArthur's headquarters. What we obtained was that at least the principle was accepted that Ise was the place where the Emperor worshiped. And this, the worship at the Shrine — the worship by the Emperor — has been preserved.

What I worried about at that time was this. If the Shrine became a religious juridical person, whose possession does it become? Ultimately, it is the possession of the Emperor. And because, since its establishment, the Shrine has always invariably been the place where the Emperor worships, at least this fact had to be maintained by all means. So I entered into direct negotiations with Mr. Bunce,

head of the Religious Affairs Section. He said at that time that also the Emperor himself was supposed to have freedom of religion. "I respect the faith of the Emperor" he said. Of course, there is a difference of feeling about this. For them there is a distinction between the Emperor in his official capacity and the Emperor as a private person. As a private person the Emperor must be free in matters of faith, and in this sense there is nothing against the Ise Shrine as being his place of worship.

Even now, all ceremonies held within the sacred precincts are ceremonies of the Emperor. Nothing has changed. I would like that also those employed at the Shrine should be proud of this. But recently this way of thinking has grown somewhat thin. Then the problem came up: how will the Shrine be able to make a living, and whether we should not depend more upon the faithful, upon so-called religious acts. Yet, prayers and the like are all held at the Kagura-den. The ceremonies held at the Kagura-den, the ceremonies of the Shrine itself so to say, are absolutely not performed inside the sacred precincts. Even now this policy is carried through in principle.

If I may add something to this: what the Occupation Authorities feared most of all was the problem of the Emperor system and, together with this, the question of Shrine Shinto. In other words, the unity of the Japanese people, that was their biggest fear. The worship of the ujigami ("local tutelary deity") is the symbol of the unity of the local community, and likewise, the fact that Shrine Shinto is regarded as a national religion expresses the unity of the whole nation. This they feared most of all, and it was their purpose to break this. Nowadays we must think about this just from the reverse direction. When we see that Japan at this moment is divided in all aspects, then it is clear what for the Japanese is the most important thing to do. It is nothing else than this that the Allied Forces feared most of all: the continuance of the Emperor system and what existed before (I don't know whether it is State Shinto as such, but anyhow), the old idea of Shinto as the symbol of the unity of the Japanese people. I am more and more convinced that this is at present the most necessary thing for Japan. Without the Emperor system Shrine Shinto cannot exist, cannot be thought of... This is my opinion.

THE LOCAL SHRINES

Chairman: How was the situation of the lower local shrines (minsha) at the end of the war? When the Shrine world was dissolved, what did the local shrines think of that? Of course...both feelings of uneasiness and of hope for the

future, I guess..!

Hanawa: All of you, as I see, belonged to the State shrines. I alone to the lower local shrines. For us, there has been no change during the war, after the war, and now. It is through the ujigami that the local community comes into being. However, there are in this community some people who joined other religions. Yet, whether they are Christians or Buddhists, they are all ujiko ("parishioners"). Some baptized Christians are the only ones who complain about this. They do not contribute to the expenses of the ujigami festival, although they live in the area. Well, some grumble, but the majority pays. Because it is the town block association (chōkai) which collects the donations.

That is one point. Another one is this. My place is a shrine for sūkeisha. (As you know, there are two types of shrines: one with ujiko or parishioners who worship the local tutelary deity, and another type where sūkeisha worship.) My shrine has no ujiko but only sūkeisha. However, because it is a religious juridical person, I have to define the area in order to elect the representatives of the juridical person. Well, we call them ujiko too. Formerly, all people living in a certain area were ujiko and all shared in the expenses of the festival. Nowadays, some people refuse to pay saying that their religion is different. Well, maybe that's about five or six persons per hundred. When all things went well, all contributed without complaining. But, like immediately after the war when life was quite full of hardships, they started to grumble and were not so eager to fulfill their duties as ujiko. However, generally speaking, most people contribute. Therefore, from our standpoint, the number of sūkeisha as well as the amount of money is the same as before: before the war, after the war, and now. However, the value of money has changed and in this sense also the amount. It is ten times more than before... I don't know, but it has increased. Anyhow, there is no change in the faith for the ujigami.

Chairman: Was there no uneasiness about the future at the end of the war?

Hanawa: No, there wasn't. Of course, neither later on. Only, in shrines like ours, we receive more money as its value has changed. In shrines, however,—(should we call them ordinary shrines?)—which existed relying only upon the former system and where there exists no special faith, the situation is different and they found themselves in monetary difficulties. Even today this is the case, and it is a problem how to overcome this. In the case of minsha the number of ujiko did not change.

EMPEROR, SHINTO AND THE NATION INSEPARABLE

Chairman: Mr. Miyanishi, at the end of the war you were chief priest of the Shijō-Nawate Shrine. If I be allowed to say this, it was one of the shrines which, because of its connection with militarism, appeared the most before the spotlight.

Miyanishi: That's right! At that time I was not in Tokyo, but at my post in Osaka. I was filled with indignation. In the periodical of a nationalistic organization, a symposium, similar to this one here, has been published. Priests of the Ise Shrine, Meiji Shrine, and Yasukuni Shrine said very valuable things there. I was deeply touched by it. They stated there frankly what I myself would have liked to say. Mr. Sugitani was one of the participants. They spoke really very frankly...and it is clear how they have suffered in the fulfilling of their duties. When we look back at the thirty years of the Jinja Honchō, I think, it is not only the history of the Honchō, but the history of Japan itself which has been written there.

Hanawa: That's right. Even amidst this violent suppression by the Occupation Forces the shrines of the whole country have never discontinued their ceremonies. And what concerns the establishment of the Honchō, we cannot but admire and thank our predecessors. In the midst of all the oppression they really did a wonderful job. I cannot but call it the traditional power that the Shrine world has always possessed.

Miyanishi: Indeed, the most fundamental thing that the Japanese in their long tradition have had is Shinto.

Shinoda: Society is constantly changing. But, within society, tradition is there as a universal and fundamental spiritual element. It is this element which links ancestors and descendants together. In his declaration after the war the Emperor said that "he was a human being and not a kami". But nobody of the Japanese had ever thought that the Emperor was not biologically a human being. What the question is, is that the Emperor in his traditional position in the nation is sacred.

Date: It differs from the idea of a living Buddha as in Tibet.

Hanawa: It's a problem of political philosophy, isn't it? The Occupation Forces were all too ignorant about the Japanese. Anyhow, it was a terrible time.

Miyanishi: In those circumstances everybody's thoughts went to

what would become of Japan in that critical moment. When we think of that national crisis we are reminded how, beyond the problem of whether the shrines are a religion or not, in times of trial our forebears have always respected and preserved the shrines, and how this meant preserving Japan itself. That was their fundamental way of thinking. It is something transcending religion; it is the supreme ethics. Certainly, at present the Jinja Honchō embraces under its wings many shrines which are religious juridical persons, and this is a real problem. But Shinto has no doctrine or sacred writ, and also no founder. When we were put in the same category as other religions — together with the era of democracy — and we made up our minds to cope firmly with this situation, the indomitable resolve of the Shinto people was really something like a blood seal. It was not a service because of "job consciousness", but the preservation of a genuine vocation. Looking back at those thirty years now, I believe that therein lies its fullest significance. If we say that we ought to do it because it is our job, then work in the service of the shrines is impossible. Its value lies in a service which is based upon the consciousness that being a Shrine priest is a vocation.

Yoshida: In respect to the present Constitution, it is a Constitution which we have passively received. The becoming religious juridical person is also something we "received". And in this framework of religious juridical persons, there are elements which do not fit the essence of Shrine Shinto. As a result, there exists now in Shinto this aspect, I mean, the aspect of having become a religious juridical person, and therein the aspect of personal religious freedom. But, the country and the people of Japan, and then the Emperor... in the feeling of the foreigners these can be separated from it. Yet, in Japan this is not the case.

Therefore, the main problem now is that, according to leftist theories, the myths of Japan did not arise spontaneously but were made up on purpose. They are said to be a political evil with the purpose of maintaining the Emperor system forever. Thus, if politics and religion are thought of as being apart, the conclusion is that politics have used Shinto. And Shinto has clung to this. In other words, they think in terms of opposition between the two. It is this aspect of Shinto, the aspect of the State, of the Emperor, of politics, which, in the present religious juridical persons, is denied. And it is only under its personal aspect that Shinto is considered. They think about Shinto like they think about foreign religions. Emperor, Shinto, people, State, are all separable from each other. Yet, even if Shrine Shinto is at present under the Religious Juridical Persons Law, the essence of Shinto has not changed. In this

sense, the shrine where I am at is said to be a shrine where nationalistic ideas are very strong. Of course, the personal aspect also exists, but, according to this conviction of mine, I have always put emphasis upon the nurturing of the divine virtues.

SHINTO AND THE COMMON PEOPLE

Chairman: Mr. Sakurai, you were head of the administrative division at the time of the 60th rebuilding of the Ise Shrine and one of the chief personalities at that event. Since the transition period after the defeat, the life of the people has now certainly become very prosperous and also the shrines have entered a period of great prosperity. It is said that the essence of Shinto has not changed, but what is the secret for the present flourishing of the shrines? Especially significant is the fact that Ise Shrine, separated from the hands of the State, has accomplished this rebuilding by its own strength. What do you think about this?

Sakurai: Well, it seems paradoxical, but shouldn't we say that it is thanks to the mission activities of the Jinja Honchō? It was a good thing that the Shrines did not become like religious institutions, but preserved their original nature. The shrines had to become, willy nilly, religious juridical persons, and the priests religious functionaries. If we would have done this in a clumsy way, we would have been confined in a narrow shell. But we didn't. Therefore, it has become a good lesson also for the future.

In his address at the commemoration ceremony of the Jinja Honchō's 30th anniversary, Prince Takamatsu expressed the wish that the shrines should be closely linked to the local community and the focus of a living sense of reverence. Well, in the years after the war the Jinja Honchō, while being called a religious institution, has not deviated from this basic line. This has been proved at the time of the rebuilding of Ise Shrine. Its success was due, of course to the efforts and leadership of you all, but ultimately because all the shrines of the country, whether affiliated to the Jinja Honchō or not, and all the ujiko around these shrines, have acted in unison. Their common effort has produced magnificent results. It would be a mistake to think that this happened because each individual Japanese is personally and directly linked to the Ise Shrine, making abstraction of the different organizations of ujiko and shrines. And another thing, as Mr. Yoshida pointed out already, it is the symbol which expresses the unity of the nation. Indeed, we have the unity centered upon the shrines in the local community, and above this union stands the so-called unity of the nation.

Because the unit-organization for this, or the organizational body which is its basis, is nothing else than the ujiko-group, we cannot think, either of Shinto or of Japan itself, without taking this into consideration.

Hanawa: Indeed, the reverence towards the shrines is, as was said above, to be found mainly in the countryside. It has not changed at all. If we look at the number of sacred amulets issued from the Shrine, this becomes clearer. They say it is roughly 60 percent. During the war it was 100 percent. But if one would think that now only 60 percent of the people worship, he would be mistaken. The remaining 40 percent means only that the distribution of the amulets does not reach that far. The number of ujiko itself did not change. If the amulets are given to the people, almost everybody accepts them. So we can say that there are many places where 100 percent are ujiko. Where this number decreases is in the cities. But even in the cities, if efforts are made, 100 percent is not a dream.

Date: That the basis of Shinto, as Mr. Sakurai pointed out, lies with the common people, is something very important. The shrines did not come into being because some special people made up and propagated some special teachings. The common people living in the local communities were spiritually awakened from within their daily lives, and so the shrines arose naturally. They developed and became little by little organized into a kind of political unity. Also the fact that Ise Shrine is at the top, and that all the others are its children, has developed in a natural way. It is not a faith that has been made by institutions but from within life itself by the common people.

Take the Meiji Shrine as an example. It might seem as if it was a government manufacture. But that was not the case. When Emperor Meiji passed away, voices from all over the country arose asking to build a shrine in his honor. The government responded to these petitions and built the shrine. It was the crystallization of the devotion of the people towards Emperor Meiji. The same thing can be said about the local shrines. Maybe there are shrines where some special people worship, but generally speaking it is the people as a whole who worship. Therefore, even if the structures or forms change, the essence does not change.

THE PROBLEM OF SUCCESSORS

Sugitani: I am retired now. You know, all Shinto priests have to die...But, there are no successors... What do we do about this problem? I myself have been connected more or less

with the administration of the shrines, and I must say that when ex-schoolteachers became priests this was a good thing both for the shrine activities and for the preservice of the shrine. But now, when a priest dies, we have to look for a new priest at once because otherwise the religious juridical person is withdrawn. Therefore in many cases we ask a priest who is already in charge of a shrine to take an additional post. This is of course possible, but sometimes one priest gets in charge of ten or even twenty different shrines. And because this becomes part of his income, he does not want to lease this job to newcomers. I feel there is a contradiction in this. I hear from several sides that in this way, compared to functionaries of other religions, the quality of the priests becomes rather bad. But...better this way than none... In Ise there is somebody who is in charge of more than ten shrines. If he dies, who will take his place? It becomes a big hole at once....

Date: There is also a financial aspect to this. If we do not consider this... Maybe it is a secondary problem, but yet... And still another thing. Since Meiji, we Shinto priests were government officials, and trained as such. But this is no longer true. This is quite a big change. Formerly, because Shrine priests were government officials, everybody could become one, maybe even Christians, because — to express it somewhat in the extreme — faith and official duties were separated. But nowadays we have to educate them as shrine priests and a pro forma education alone does not suffice. In a word, in the cities, as different from the country-side, local ties and blood ties have become weak. Mobility is too great. So, what do we have to do? Create a relationship of the heart. To create a link between the people and the shrines, that is now the main duty of the priests. This is also true for the Meiji Shrine, you know. Our job is to link the heart of the people to Emperor Meiji. It is this that we must ask from our successors and wherefor we must exert all efforts. And there are ways to do this. There are writings and prayers. But the most important are the ceremonies. These must be at the center. The training of successors has become first of all a question of the heart. I think that there is still too little understanding on this point.

SHINTO AND THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE

Honma: All religious institutions are in distress about the problem of successors. But let us change our viewpoint and look at the present situation of the religious world in Japan. Through the defeat we came into a period with an un-

precedented freedom of religion. One of the most powerful aspects of the free democratic society is the law that the weak become the victim of the strong, and that of natural selection. Also as concerns freedom of religion, the existence and missionary work of all kinds of religions have been permitted. Within these principles of competition and natural selection, some of the religions became stagnant or went backward, some were wrecked or became hollow or disappeared altogether, others grew all of a sudden and made big leaps forward. The internal struggle in the Higashi Honganji Sect is a symbol indicating future trends in the world of established Buddhism. The phase of the last degenerate period of history (mappō) in the Buddhist world and in society in general is fully apparent in present reality. Japan and Japan's religious world are in for a period of basic reshuffle. The tempo of this change is quite fast and unprecedented in Japan's history up to now.

This is rather a matter of course as our world is gradually becoming one. The development of wars has come to a stage which has made wars more and more impossible, and the development of the states goes in the direction of dismantling the states as such. We are in the era of spaceship earth, and we can say that now is the period of world citizens and of world federation. The first chapter of man's history has ended and we are in for the century that will begin to write the second chapter. It is something foretold by the Buddhist Scriptures, by the Bible, by Marx, Toynbee and so many others. Will there arise a religion which will give leadership to man's history, which will rise above the various national cultures, ideologies and religions, and which will be able to create a new human culture appropriate to the era of a spaceship world? The struggle between capitalism and communism, the deadlock of technical civilization, the limits of democracy.... all these are indications, it is said, of the breakdown of Western ideas and religion.

It is common knowledge that many people contend that the wisdom of the East offers an opening for the future of mankind and that particularly in Eastern Buddhism the key thereto is to be found. But in the East, Buddhism has perished both in India and China, and frankly speaking, also in the Small Vehicle Buddhism of South Asia. I do not think that Buddhism has the power that can conquer or rise above the highly developed civilization of the contemporary Western world.

In Japan, this country at the edge of the East, the culture of the continent came ashore and developed into a peculiar form of Great Vehicle Buddhism. In the Meiji period Western civilization was introduced and interacted creatively with the original Japanese and Oriental values. From this crucible of freedom of religion, unprecedented

in history, will there arise a new religion which develops through a process of competition and selection and which would become the basis for transcending both Eastern and Western civilization, building up a new culture of humanity? If such a strong religion should appear from Japan, how will this Japanese-born world religion, spread all over the world, and the world of Shrine Shinto enter into relations of co-existence? Will the kami of Japan be unknown in such a future world and not in some respect contribute to the happiness of human race?

Hanawa: It is the problem of cooperation and harmony with the established religions, isn't it? In this point Shrine Shinto has been very much misunderstood. It has never denounced the other religions. Admittedly, before the war some Christian students were forbidden to worship at the Yasukuni Shrine by the government. But the Yasukuni Shrine itself never said that they could not worship. This is also true for the other shrines. And then, that Shinto stirred up the war and is not a religion of peace.... Also such misunderstandings exist. During the war - of course, when it comes to war, one has to cooperate in order to win, and it is possible that one is used for that purpose. But there is no truth in it at all that we willingly waged war ourselves. When the Shrines start to prosper, people begin speaking about their connection with the war; when the Emperor officially worships at the Yasukuni Shrine, also this is connected with the war... Also as concerns the Yasukuni Shrine problem, misunderstandings create new misunderstandings.

Yoshida: With regard to the relationship with other religions, there is no contradiction at all in what Mr. Honma told us. I mean, Shinto is not a religion which was founded by somebody. It is the common wish and way of thinking of the Japanese people, naturally arising among the people. In scientific terms, it is the greatest common measure of thinking. Therefore, it is not like the other religions that some religious genius appeared, spread his thoughts and beliefs, and gradually built up an institution. In Shrine Shinto there is no such institutional nature. It is the way of thinking common to all people. The name Shinto was first used when Buddhism was introduced. The broad faith living among the people at that time was called Shinto. Therefore, if we apply this to the Yasukuni Shrine, the kami worshiped there are as well for believers in Shinto as for Buddhist faithful or even for persons without religion. The people's gratitude towards those who sacrificed their lives for the country is concentrated there. There is no contradiction in this. It shows Shrine Shinto's comprehensive nature. I, for example, have seen members of the Communist Party coming

to worship at the shrine. These Party members brought their children with them and made them worship. When one sees this, one feels that Shinto is the very heart itself of the Japanese, of the true-born Japanese. It is the same for Buddhists. Here there is no difference between Shinto and Buddhism. If it would be Christianity, that wouldn't be the case, I guess.... That is precisely the main characteristic of Shinto, that it has such a comprehensive power. It is very broad and encompasses even beliefs and ideas which are very personal. When persons of other religions come to the shrine, they also are ujiko.

Shinoda: True believers, it is said, believe in only one religion and exclude the other ones. They consider only their own religion as absolute. Such a religious attitude I can understand, but... I feel that it is not very sensible and healthy, though.... Maybe one will call such an opinion dogmatically or philosophically insufficient...?

Yoshida: The so-called world religions are not necessarily the highest religions. Geographical spreading and genuine value are two different things. If, also on the level of a nation, a religion nurtures a high spirit and a right life, and contributes greatly to the welfare and happiness of humanity, isn't that a high religion? I think that in the future the human race, awakening to human and social values, will be guided by a religion of which the nature is comprehensive and realistic.

CONCLUSION

Chairman: Would you be so kind as to conclude, Mr.Date?

Date: Well, a conclusion is difficult, though... Since Meiji the shrines became public offices, didn't they. Thus the official shrines were separated from the mass of the people. The lower local shrines did better. As Mr.Hanawa pointed out, it is on that level that the heart of the people and the shrines are closely linked to each other and the shrines are the spiritual center of the so-called life community. For this we have to exert more efforts.

And then another thing is, of course, the training of priests. The development of Shinto depends ultimately upon the quality of the priests. What we have to consider very earnestly in this respect is an international perspective. As we live in a time in which international relations are rapidly increasing, we have to administer the shrines from a perspective which is world-wide.

Hanawa: I would like to emphasize once more the unity between work inside and outside the shrine. This means, neither to confine oneself in the shrine and to fulfill one's duties there, nor to go out for active work and neglect the shrine functions. I expect from the younger priests that they do both, without inclining towards only one aspect. And then another thing. The policies of the Jinja Honchō do not reach sufficiently the shrines in the country side. There are many priests of local shrines who cannot come to us. So we have to go to them and listen to their aspirations.

Shinoda: Hearing all your valuable opinions, I myself am more and more aware of the importance of the mission of Shinto. We can say that the origin of Shinto lies at the origin of the Japanese nation itself. Shinto has ever since prayed to the kami for the welfare of the country and shared its fate. It is but natural, then, that it is closely linked to the State and its polity. I think that in this sense the principle of unity of government and worship (saisei-itchi) belongs to its very essence and that therefore Shinto must be called a very peculiar religion. It does not neglect the aspect of personal salvation, that basic mission of all religion. But this concerns people who obstruct the progress of the nation, people whose purity of heart has been stained by filth and corruption and who have lost the heart of a true Japanese.

In order that there be no such unfortunate people, Shinto has always tried to purify the hearts by means of purification ceremonies and to make the people conscious of their duties as Japanese. It is only in this respect that personal salvation finds a place in Shinto.

And on the other hand, we need to turn our eyes towards the world and pray for world peace and the welfare of mankind. Contacts and harmony with other religions then becomes possible. It is particularly in this direction that, from now on, we must channel our activities.

(Excerpted and translated from Chūgainippō)

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The journal ASIAN FOLKLORE STUDIES was started in 1942 under the auspices of the Museum of Oriental Ethnology at Fujen University in Peking. After seven annual volumes had been issued, the Editorial Office, due to political circumstances, moved to Tokyo where subsequent volumes were published. The original plan was to limit the scope of the publication to China and Japan — countries having a rich cultural heritage which invites serious research and study. However, when China had become inaccessible and fieldwork had been made impossible there, the Philippines were added to our concern. Favorable contacts were established with competent scholars at the Eighth Pacific Science Congress and the Fourth Prehistory Congress held in Manila in 1953. In 1964 at the suggestion of Professor Dr. Richard M. Dorson, distinguished Director of the Folklore Institute at Indiana University, Bloomington, U.S.A., our scope was further extended to include the other Asian countries, India and Pakistan, and Israel, Turkey and Iran. Later we even reached out to the Pacific areas and published papers on New Guinea and Micronesia.

The ASIAN FOLKLORE STUDIES focuses on the lore, life, and traditional art of the many different peoples in the above mentioned countries and islands. The term "folk" takes on a culturally and sociologically different meaning among the numerous peoples within the large area of our concern. What, for instance, the young journal Ethnologia Scandinavica is doing in the Occident, we want to do in the Orient.

A strong element — we might even say a basic element — of all traditional cultures is religion. Hence, articles dealing with religion will continue to play a prominent role in the pages of the journal as they did in the past. At present the journal has a home in the halls of the Institute of Religion and Culture, founded at Nanzan University in Nagoya in 1975, and it is one of the publication activities of the Institute.