

**STATE SHINTO IN MICRONESIA
DURING JAPANESE RULE, 1914-1945***

by Donald R. Shuster

The establishment of State Shinto in Japan's Pacific island mandate derives from the Meiji Government's (1868-1912) adoption of a secular worship that upheld the ideals of national unity and superiority. State Shinto can be dated from the promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education of 1890 to its disestablishment in 1945 under American occupation. During this brief half century, State Shinto helped perpetuate the notions of "a noble past rich in great traditions, a superior racial stock destined to endure as an eternal national family, and a matchless state headed by an unbroken, inviolable, divinely descended imperial dynasty."¹

Japanese historians have reconstructed the stages by which the ancient indigenous stream of Shinto myths and practices, long coexisting with Buddhist and Confucian beliefs, were elevated by Japan's Meiji leaders in their efforts to build a "theocratic state based on the supra-religious cult of Shinto."² This enterprise was not entirely successful and required numerous compromises during the late nineteenth century. Because of the difficulty the Meiji government experienced in controlling the various long extant sects of Shinto, in 1882 two broad categories were established: State (*Kokka*) Shinto and Sect (*Shūha*) Shinto.³

The shrines of the former were given exclusive right to the name *jinja* (assembly place for the gods) and were financed and managed by national, prefectural, local, or colonial governments.⁴ In contrast to the many brands of Sect Shinto, which based their faith and activities on their historical founders, State Shinto "claimed to perpetuate the authentic and traditional beliefs of the Japanese [Yamato] race and declared that it had developed spontaneously in the national life without the aid of individual historical founders."⁵ This was a very important distinction for it allowed State Shinto to be elevated to a supra-religious position. Throughout the period 1868 until the disestablishment of State Shinto under American occupation in 1945, Japanese officials claimed that State Shinto was not a religion. In one sense they were right, but in another sense State Shinto, as one noted Japanese scholar put it, was "in reality nothing short of evidence of a religion interwoven into the very texture of the original beliefs

and national organization of the people, camouflaged though it may be as a mere code of national ethics and state rituals, and as such apparently entitled only to secular respect.”⁶

The document which elevated State Shinto to preeminence among Japan’s religions was the Imperial Rescript on Education issued in 1890. This rescript and supporting documents called for loyalty to the emperor and enjoined respect for the “way of the gods.” Additionally, it prohibited religious instruction in the schools. In place of such instruction “definite techniques of reverence for the emperor and national deities, such as shrine attendance and obeisance before the imperial portrait” were introduced.⁷ Thus, during the transition to the twentieth century, a time of rapid social change in Japan, Meiji leaders had found a way to create social cohesion, nationalism and social control. The traditional value system of “ancestor worship and nature worship was transformed, and partly accepted the imported Confucian morality, into the political ideology of modern Japan--national Shinto.”⁸

This control was codified and further strengthened by the Religious Bodies Law promulgated in 1939 and enforced from April 1940 as part of the general escalation toward total rule that pervaded many social institutions, Shinto in particular. Hence, in Japan’s Pacific colony the stage was set for construction and dedication of the Kampei Taisha Nanyo Jinja (government-sponsored great shrine in the South Seas) in Palau.

After Japan seized the Micronesian islands in late 1914, German officials and traders were expelled immediately while the deportation of German missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, followed a few years later. To help fill this gap, authorities allowed a Buddhist missionary, the Reverend Shinryu Kobayashi, of the East Hongwanji Temple of Shinshu Sect, Kyoto, to establish a temple on Saipan in 1919.⁹ In 1920 the Protestant *Nanyo Dendo Dan* (South Seas Mission) sent out four Japanese missionaries, two to Truk and two to Ponape, while successful arrangements with the Vatican brought the-return of Spanish missionaries a year later.¹⁰ This Jesuit mission grew rapidly to ten priests and ten brothers distributed throughout all the major administrative centers. As the *Nanyo Dendo Dan* was quite small, German Protestants of the Liebenzell mission were also allowed to resume their work in 1927. A second Buddhist mission “principally for the benefit of Japanese believers” was established on Koror, Palau, in 1926. Three years later a Tenrikyo representative, the Reverend Yoshio Shimizu, came to Palau “for the purpose of missionary work and research.”¹¹ Tenrikyo, a branch of Shinto, had been very successful in overseas mission work as judged by thousands of Korean converts. The South Seas Government (*Nanyo-cho*) Annual Report of 1929 noted that

600 Palauans had taken up Buddhism and 120 were converts to Shinto, indicating some sympathy, no matter how superficial, for the newly introduced religions.¹² Intimately linked to the Spencerian notion of social evolution, which claimed a natural and necessary progressive moment from a savage to a barbarian to a civilized state, was the attitude that the islands were a ripe field for a civilizing mission. According to the South Seas Bureau, though, the Chamorros of the Marianas appeared earnest in their Catholic faith:

it seemed doubtful whether many of the Kanaka converts really understand the religion they profess to believe in. In fact, there are indications that they attend church services more for recreation than for faith.¹³

In the Japanese view, the natural and necessary progress from savagery and barbarism to civilization was to be mediated by Japanese acculturation, mission work and schooling. Thus, by 1929, some seven years after the establishment of full civilian rule under a League of Nations mandate,¹⁴ Micronesia exhibited a great diversity of religious callings--Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, Shinto, Tenrikyo, and indigenous belief systems such as the *Modekngei* in Palau.¹⁵

While Buddhism spread to Ponape and Truk, Shinto went further afield. Sometime in the late 1920s and early 1930s at least fifteen State Shinto shrines were established throughout the mandated islands, which Japan in 1938 declared a territory following her full withdrawal from the League of Nations. Though there are very few published records concerning the development of Shinto in Micronesia, the outlines can be sketched.

Beginning in the 1930s, all Shinto shrines in Japan, as well as those in Nanyo-gunto, became active in promoting nationalistic aims. The theocratic state envisioned by the Meiji leaders came close to a reality in the hands of the ultra-nationalists and militarists of the 1930s. Shrines in the overseas territories were ordered to assist in the acculturation of indigenous peoples. This was obviously a new and more ambitious goal than ministering to the needs of Japanese government officials, immigrant farmers and town workers. As stated by a Shinto authority in 1939:

Shinto is broad. It includes humanitarianism and righteousness. The Spirit of Shinto, which is the fundamental directive principle of our national life, must be utilized for the purpose of *elevating the races of neighboring territories* where the national relation-

ships are complicated. Indeed, by means of this spirit of Shinto *foreign peoples must also be evangelized*.¹⁶ [emphasis added].

It was this curious mix of idealism and ethnocentrism which forged a tool of significant social control in the decade leading up to the Pacific War.

While government annual reports do not list Shinto shrines or the number of indigenous followers in island areas other than the Marianas and Palau, it is clear both existed. Jabwor Island in Jaluit Atoll, the center of Japanese activity in the Marshall Islands, boasted the easternmost Shinto shrine in the Japanese Empire. During special festivals such as the anniversary date of the founding of the Japanese nation, men danced their way from house to house carrying a *mikoshi* (sacred palanquin) and generating a contagious euphoria.¹⁷ Even on distant Kosrae (formerly Kusaie), a Shinto shrine was constructed in the late 1930s or early 1940s after the heavy influx of Japanese military.¹⁸

Dublon Island in Truk Lagoon served as the command headquarters for the Imperial Navy during most of the Pacific War, and a Shinto shrine was dedicated there in the mid-1930s while Ponape also had a small but impressive shrine (*see Plate 1*). These shrines were destroyed during intensive American bombing raids in February and March 1944.

The Shinto shrine in Yap was located on a scenic rise complete with sanctuary, fence, torii, (a gateway separating the secular and sacred worlds) and lanterns. Yapese, dressed in loincloths and carrying their ubiquitous baskets, paid homage to the Shinto pantheon (*see Plate 2*). Perhaps the smallest shrine of all was located on the idyllic atoll of Lamotrek west of Truk. The tiny .24 square mile main island had, according to a 1930 Japanese census, 165 islanders. By the end of the decade the island had a small Japanese community whose members manned the meteorological station and seaplane base.²⁰ The shrine, complete with torii and miniature sanctuary building, was secluded in a grove of towering palms.

By 1936 there were nearly 41,000 Japanese in the Mariana Islands. Over the years, six Buddhist temples and seven Shinto shrines were established to meet the religious needs of the Japanese. There was one shrine on Rota Island, three on Tinian (home for 15,300 sugar farmers and factory workers) and three on Saipan. The largest of these was in central Garapantown (*see Plate 3*). Mountains have always been symbols of beauty and majesty for the Japanese. Thus Saipan's two other shrines were beautifully sequestered away in quite mountainous areas distant from the busy town. One of these has recently been partially restored by visiting Shintoists from Japan.



PLATE 1 The Ponape Shrine, Ponape Island, late 1930s. Source: Japan, *South Seas Bureau*, Tokyo, p. 15.



PLATE 2 Yapese in loincloths paying homage at the Yap shrine, 1930s. Source: Kosuge, Teruo. *Micronesia: Past and Present*, Japan 1978, p. 64.

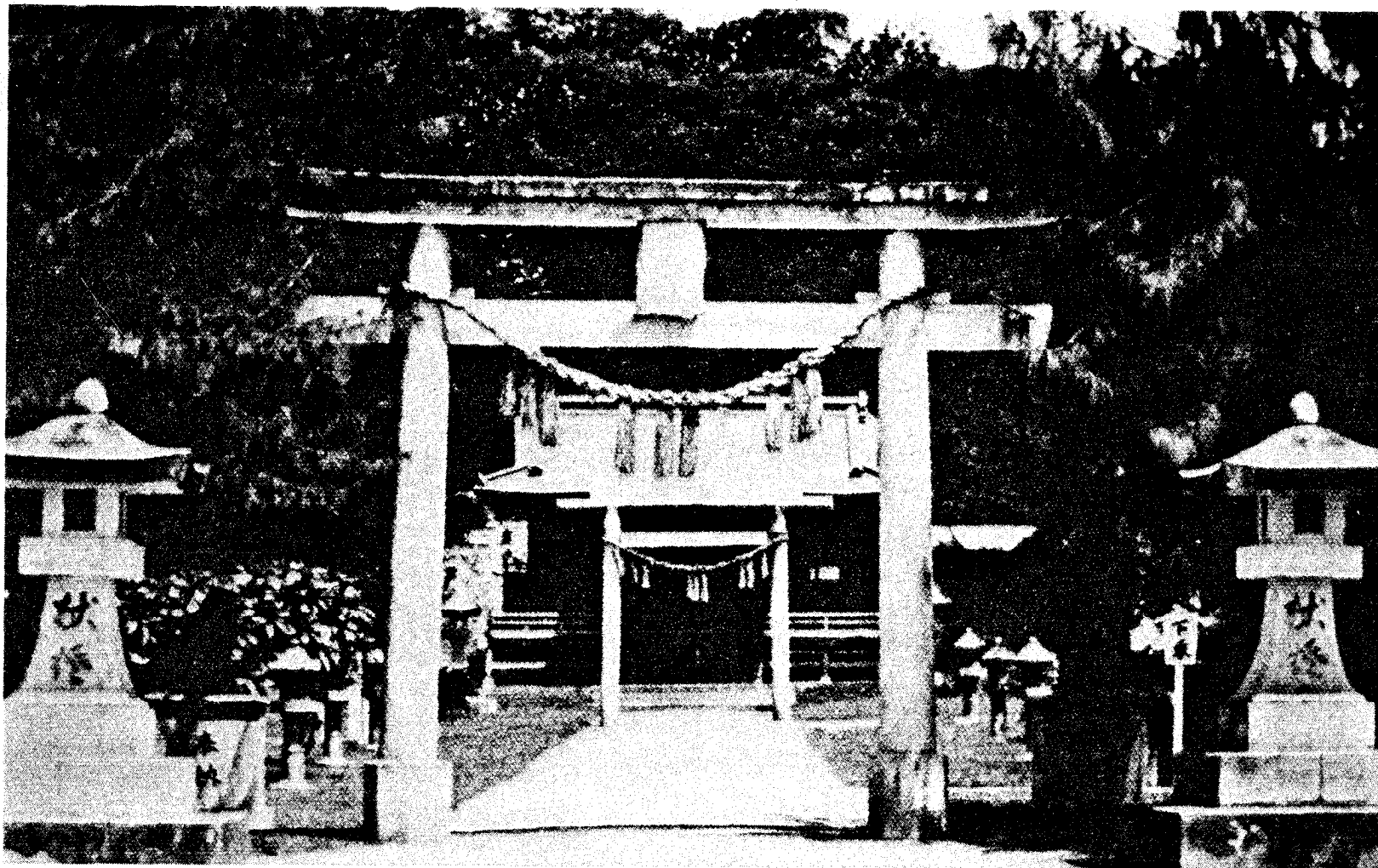


PLATE 3 The impressive Saipan Shrine in Garapan Town, Saipan. Except for the concrete torii, this shrine was completely destroyed during the fight for Saipan. Source: Kosuge, Teruo. *Micronesia: Past and Present*, Japan, Shinpan, 1977, p. 70.

The grandest shrine of all, however, was in Palau. Beginning in the 1930s the Japanese population in Palau began to expand rapidly in response to the enormously successful exploitation of phosphate and the area's rich marine products industry. Palau was also the headquarters for the South Seas Government and therefore had the greatest number of government officials. As photographs and oral histories of older Palauans vividly attest, Koror at this time was a booming and outwardly attractive Japanese town. Its palm-fringed main street was clean and uncluttered, while its stores and residential areas were tidy and peaceful. Koror-town of 1940 had its more raucous side, too, with 56 liquor dealers, 42 lower class restaurants, 77 geisha (double that of Garapan, Saipan), 155 bar maids, 9 waitresses, numerous businesses, and nearly 2,000 commercial fishermen.²¹

It was on the outskirts of this bustling town that the Kampei Taisha Nanyo Jinja was built and officially dedicated in 1940.²² The spirit of the times is captured well by the official Japanese publication which described the event:

It was on February 11th in the 15th year of the Showa Era (1940) on the auspicious occasion of the 2600th anniversary of our gracious and glorious imperial era, that on the Arumizu Plateau in the Palauan Archipelago there was established the Kampei Taisha Nanyo Jinja. At this time the sun goddess, Amaterasu Omikami, was proclaimed to fulfill the yearning of our native countrymen resident there for already 30 years and surpassing 80,000, for a shrine in which to center their piety. Viewed as a step forward in the sacred task of constructing the New East Asian Order, with the importance of the south seas islands increasing all the more due to growing tensions in international relations in the Pacific in regard to the national policy of establishing the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, the people, on receiving the imperial command that autumn, were all moved to inexpressible joy especially the officials and citizens of the locality, whereupon the Kampei Taisha Nanyo Jinja Support Association was formed, and work began forthwith upon the construction of the shrine hall. On November 1st of that year, in the august presence of the imperial messenger, the sacred enshrinement was held.²³

This statement is indicative of several important developments. First, it suggests that the islands were becoming Japanese in spirit as well as

physical fact. Second, the very high ranking (*Kampe*) of the shrine was to assist in establishment of an Asian-dominated “New Order,” which was a longstanding Japanese ideal and response to a half century of Western imperialism. Less obvious is the importance Japan attached to its south seas islands as part of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Daitoakyoeiken*). The utopian vision behind this grand design was to create an economically self-sufficient sphere and raise standards of living by excluding the predatory Western powers from Asia and South East Asia. According to the plan, Japan would serve as the industrial center to process raw materials and deliver manufactured goods. She would also take the lead in cultural and linguistic affairs. This vision of Asians cooperating for their mutual benefit received wide exposure in the Japanese press during late 1941 and early 1942. Serving as a rallying cry for the Pacific War, it captured the imagination of intellectuals and the public alike. State Shinto helped reinforce this vision by the uncritical conjunction of the ideal with the real.

Prior to the dedication of the grand Palau shrine, small shrines had been set up by Japanese farmers in the several agricultural colonies on central Babeldaob (Palau’s largest island of 153 square miles). Koror-town had two small concrete shrines containing genuine portraits of the Emperor. One of these was located near the *Nanyo-cho* headquarters building and the other was near the Japanese student primary school.²⁴

Teiichi Domoto, an important *Nanyo-cho* official, worked vigorously to have a high-ranking shrine established in Palau. On August 4, 1939, he attended a meeting in Tokyo with members of the Association for the Dedication of Overseas Shrines. Included were officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Colonial Affairs, Imperial Household Agency, Institute of History of the Imperial Family, and priests from five important shrines including Ise, Meiji, and Yasukuni.²⁵ The group decided that Palau, as headquarters of the important south seas territory, should have a high-ranking jinja and suggested that a research committee be established under the direction of Mr. Yoshida Shigeru (later Japan’s first post-war prime minister) to decide what gods should be enshrined for protection of the territory. Shigeru’s committee was guided in its work by the 1938 instructions which systematized procedures for establishing overseas shrines. It was ordered that Amaterasu Omikami be enshrined and worshipped as the chief diety, that the sanctuary buildings be constructed in a particular style, and that the priests (*kannushi*) be Japanese Shintoists with an understanding of national polity.²⁶ Concerning this last requirement, several priests destined for Palau attended a special two month school in early 1940 for overseas shrine supervision. Instruction was given

by officials of the Ministry of Colonial Affairs, officers from the Navy and Hisakatsu Hijikata, an expert on Palauan culture and the Japanese living in Palau.

Yet before the establishment of the grand shrine, a 1937 statistical survey listed only 111 Shinto believers in Palau--27 Japanese and 84 Palauans. As there had been Shinto priests in Palau since 1929 "mainly engaged in preaching among the natives," these figures seem unusually low. Other than the vision of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Daitoakyoeiken*) of which the jinja was an important symbol, what justified such a splendid shrine? Prior to the Meiji government's reconceptualization of Shinto, this indigenous polythesistic faith had developed over the centuries as a community-centered belief system and thus became deeply embedded in Japanese culture. Accordingly, all residents within the area of a shrine were covered under its protection.²⁷ In essence then, all of Micronesia's ethnic Japanese, "yearning for a shrine in which to center their piety," were properly considered Shintoists. Presumably this applied to Palau's 6,000 indigenous residents as well, given the 1939 statement calling for elevation of the natives through Shinto evangelization.

Kampei Taisha Nanyo Jinja was thus seen as all important to the Japanese in Micronesia. To sanctify it, a symbol of the imperial spirit possessing the invisible force was brought from Japan by an imperial messenger, Prince *Chokushi Koshiyaku* Ito Hakufei (meaning, person receiving a direct order from the Emperor). An account of this, though never published in English, speaks of the enshrinement of the imperial spirit and the related events of ceremony and celebrations.²⁸

Prince Ito, sailing from Japan in the company of the symbol of the imperial spirit, was greeted by officials of the South Seas Government, civilians, and the resident Shinto priests at Malakal Harbor, Palau. As *chokushi*, the Prince was the Emperor's personal representative. A cortege of nine large, American-made black sedans transported the symbol of the imperial spirit, the imperial messenger, and the visiting dignitaries through Koror's streets where large numbers of solemn, respectful citizens lined the roads. Dogs living along Koror's main street had been exterminated by government order to prevent any disturbance during the procession.²⁹ Palauans who recall standing along the roadside say they saw little of the procession; their heads were bowed too low. After the cortege arrived at the shrine, the initial rites of purification, ceremonies of dedication, and other Shinto rituals were carried out by the priests in the privacy of the upper shrine sanctuary (*honoden* style). In the lower divine hall (*haiganden* style) additional rituals were performed with twenty of the most important civil and military officials in attendance. Hundreds of

other officials, including Palau's local chiefs, were waiting outside on a lower level of the shrine compound, and when the enshrinement ceremonies moved outside, a general purification rite was performed on the lower level by the officiating priests. An onlooker reported that the grandeur of the occasion was clearly written on the faces of the participants.

After this general rite, the chief priest and assistant priests moved in solemn procession back to the upper level of the shrine compound. Following them came the Minister of Colonial Affairs, the South Seas governor, civilian and military officials in order of rank. Next, in Shinto robes, came the imperial messenger escorting the symbol of the imperial spirit and other offerings which were contained in two large sacred boxes. They were followed by eight attendants (Plate 4). Reaching the-divine hall on the upper level, the *kami*,³⁰ associated with the imperial spirit entered the divine hall and the enshrinement events continued. The sacred boxes were opened and the South Seas Governor presented the *tamagushi*, the spirit force, to the chief priest. The final enshrinement ceremonies were conducted and the spirit force, the sun goddess Amaterasu Omikami, now resided in the shrine and its grounds.

With the conclusion of the enshrinement ceremonies, the Minister of Colonial Affairs read a congratulatory message, and all the assembled dignitaries, including four island chiefs, drank a toast of celebration (*naorai*, literally "to eat together with the *kami*"). The representative of the Minister of the Navy then read a final congratulatory message and the dignitaries departed.

Throughout the remainder of the day, members of the general public and large groups of Japanese and Palauan students made their way to the upper level of the shrine. They bowed reverently and prayed before the divine hall. These visitors, it was reported, were filled with unparalleled joy. Thus ended the first day of ceremonies.

The second day of the enshrinement of the gods at Kampei Taisha Nanyo Jinja was devoted to ceremonies in service to the gods, solemn music, and dance. The photographic record shows only Japanese officials in attendance.

On the third day a parade of over one hundred of the faithful, in appropriate dress, escorted the sacred palanquin (*mikoshi*) which contained a symbol of the shrine *kami*. This crowd moved from the shrine over the sacred bridge and along the main road toward Koror-town. As the procession moved, it enlarged with devoted followers, some carrying smaller palanquins from each of the town's hamlets. Many onlookers stood along the roadside encouraging the procession members. Much to the delight of the island children, men masked as goblins also appeared along the road. The

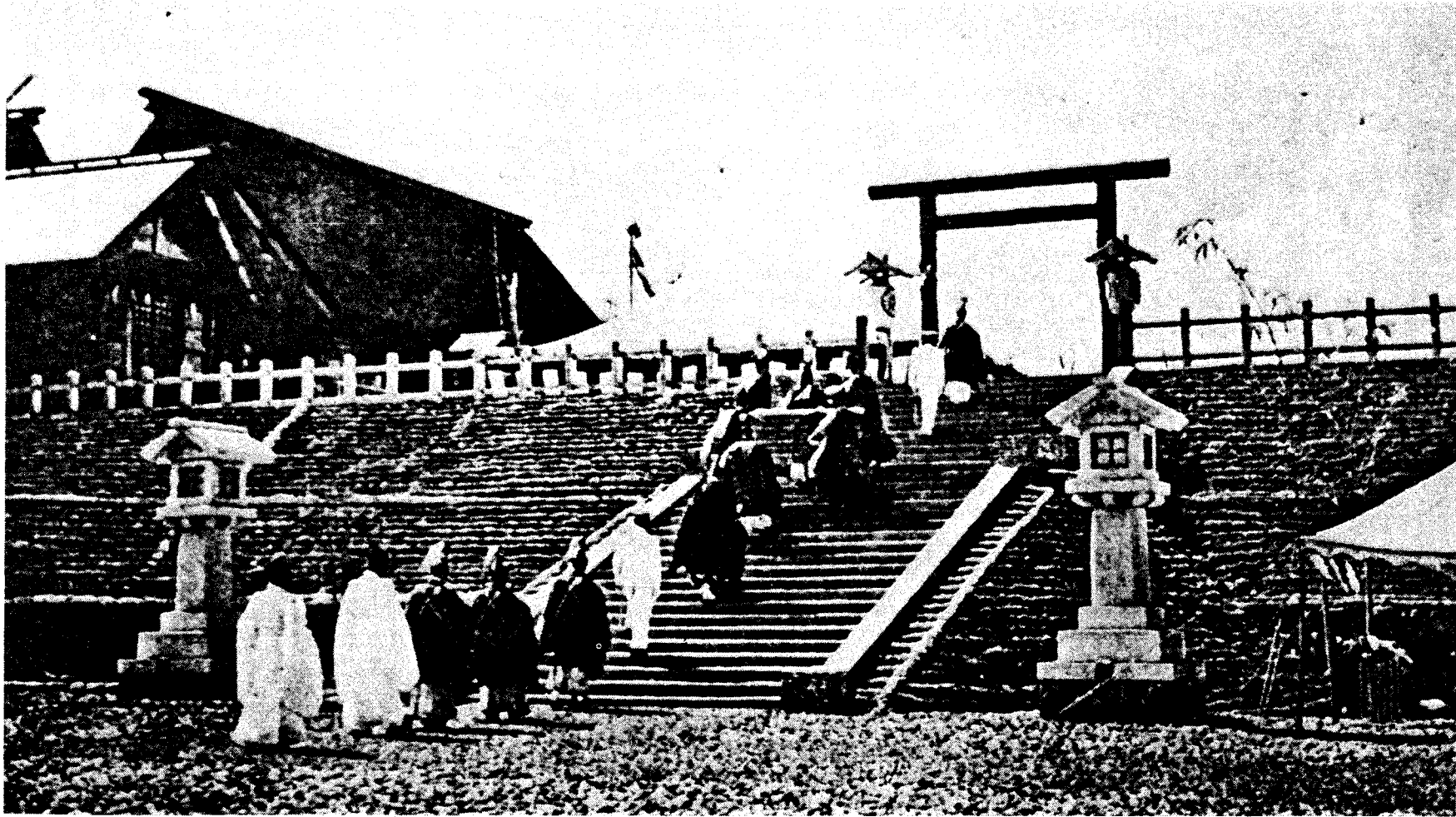


PLATE 4 Imperial messenger (top of stairs) escorting the symbol of the imperial spirit and other offerings contained in two sacred boxes each carried by two men. Attendants following. Great Nan'yo Kampei Shrine, Koror, Palau, 1940. Source: Japan *Kampei Taisha Nan'yo Jinja Hosankai*, Tokyo, 1941, p. 12.



PLATE 5 Shrine identification beside the sacred bridge, "The Great Nanyo Kampei Shrine." And on the back side, "15th year 11th month," Koror, Palau. (Photo by Donald R. Shuster, 1976.)

photographic record shows that the procession became larger and larger and the participants more and more spirited. It was a great privilege for them to transport the divine *kami* throughout the entire community for all to be honored. Even drum and flute groups joined the procession to increase the excitement of the parade. The photographic record shows a few Palauans in the street celebration.

In addition to the street procession, there was an exhibition of local crafts and artifacts from all island groups of the territory and a more ominous photographic display of soldiers, war planes, battleships, submarines, and aircraft carriers. Japan had been immersed in an undeclared war with China for three years. Reference was made on display posters to the American military presence in the Philippines. On a map of South East Asia was superimposed information on Japanese naval strength. All this gave the impression of unmatched Japanese military might; while in another assembly hall, a demonstration of martial arts--judo, sword fighting, and archery--was held for military officials, an active complement to the photographic display of armed might.

On several sports fields in Koror there were athletic competitions for adults and entertaining events for children, the majority of participants being Japanese. At the Japanese-constructed tidal swimming pool, a swimming and spearing contest was held. Some of the participants representing their villages were young Palauan men known for their athletic prowess. Baseball, introduced by enthusiastic Japanese players in the mid 1920s had become very popular among Japanese and islanders alike. A Keio University baseball team came to Palau on an exhibition tour. However, Keio was not scheduled to play the leading Palauan team which the Japanese regarded as unbeatable. Neither the Keio team nor the Japanese rulers could afford to lose face during the important dedication ceremony for the new state jinja.³¹ Instead, Keio played a team composed of local Japanese which was easily defeated 24 to 0.

The record of the Shinto shrine dedication includes photographs of some of the people who donated their time and labor to landscape the shrine compound. Included were Japanese hamlet supervisors and representatives, women of the shrine support association, primary school children and, allegedly, the Ibedul (high chief of southern Palau) leading women in hand work.³² It is doubtful, though, that the person leading the women in hand work was in fact Ibedul Mariur, for at the time he was an elderly and frail man. The person identified as the Ibedul was probably a Palauan hamlet leader since it would have been an insult indeed to require the high chief of southern Palau to do menial hand work with women.

Elderly Palauans remember the Shinto shrine dedication and celebration as a monumental event--the greatest and grandest ever held in Palau. When it took place in 1940, the Japanese population in Palau exceeded 20,000 people. Immigrants had been flooding in since the late 1920s when the great richness of Palau's marine resources, mining, and agricultural potential was fully recognized and being exploited.

Notwithstanding the significance of these events of 1940, Japan's cultural hegemony in Palau was not without indigenous challenge. Only two years prior to the dedication of Kampei Taisha Nanyo Jinja, an anti-Japanese revitalization movement known as *Modekngei* (still a force in Palauan life) had reached a climax of power and prestige. *Modekngei* is a religious-political movement that originated during the late German and early Japanese Administrations. The movement's first leader was a Palauan man named Temedad who was believed to be a spokesman of the Choll village god, Ngiromokuul.³³ In 1906 Palau's German rulers, with the aid of missionaries and a sympathetic Ibedul (high chief), attempted to crush the indigenous religion by destroying all the village god houses, and priests' temples and imprisoning the menacing *korongs* (shamans) at German headquarters on Yap. Temedad, a constable during German rule, attracted three disciples, Ongesii, Wasii, and Rnguul, who functioned as the movement's administrators and interpreters to the common people, thus acting as counterweights to Temedad's charismatic authority. It seems that *Modekngei* was originally an attempt by inspired leaders to respond to foreign cultural pressure by combining old local religio-medical beliefs and practices with new Christian ones in order to evolve a viable synthesis that would revitalize and reintegrate Palauan perceptions of the world, a cultural phenomenon more familiar in Melanesia and Polynesia than in Micronesia. In a thrust against Japanese naval rule (in force from 1914-1920) Temedad ordered the destruction of a rural government school and the dissolution of marriages in which husbands were employed by the Japanese authorities.³⁴ It was these men with a stake in the foreign system who alerted the Japanese naval administrator to Temedad's growing power. Using intelligence supplied by this anti-*Modekngei* faction, the government jailed Temedad, Wasii, and Ongesii for three years on the island of Angaur. In the 1930s a Shinto shrine, also enshrining Amaterasu Omikami, was established there in a grove of trees on the top of a hill just 400 meters from the large phosphate processing facility which the Japanese had inherited from the previous colonial administration.

Modekngei leaders were released in 1922 but, with Rnguul, were reimprisoned in 1924. Soon after, Temedad died. Ongesii, from the time of his release in 1925 until the second Japanese purge in 1938, worked un-

derground by rebuilding the power and prestige of the new religion. Under his leadership the movement took on a stronger anti-Japanese orientation. The Japanese authorities, with the advice and assistance of the pro-foreign Palauan faction, were making reforms in the valuation of Palauan money, land distribution and ownership, and reciprocity customs, all of which the *Modekngnei* vigorously resisted. Further, the movement opposed all Japanese institutions established to serve the islander including the school, hospital and health care, labor conscription, and subsidized religion. Ongesii proclaimed that the Palauan world and Japanese world were poles apart, "that dark-skinned Palauans were a different kind of men from the light-skinned peoples, and that their destinies must be different. . . . They each walked different roads which could never meet."³⁵

By 1938 these diametrically opposed systems of social control were in direct confrontation. *Modekngnei* had captured the loyalty of Palau's traditional leaders and was dedicated to overcoming foreign dominance. This activity reached its peak in late 1937 when every district and village chief in Palau was a *Modekngnei* member, a fact which gave the movement "complete control of all indigenous political power in Palau."³⁶ At the same time Japan was fully committed to war in China and was determined to make Palau an economic asset through tight control of labor, production and consumption. Conflict was inevitable. Again members of the persistent pro-Japanese indigenous faction aided government authorities in investigating Ongesii and twenty-eight of his followers. He alone was found guilty of false prophecy and of impoverishing and demoralizing the people by directing their attention away from productive labor.³⁷ Ongesii was sentenced to seven years in jail and shipped off to Saipan.³⁸

By the time the Kampei Taisha Nanyo Jinja was dedicated in 1940, the *Modekngnei* had been thoroughly repressed and Japanese authority was firmly entrenched. However, throughout the Pacific War period (1941-1945), the *Modekngnei* made yet another comeback under Rnguul's imaginative leadership. This exemplifies the important stabilizing role *Modekngnei* had come to play in revitalizing a Palauan world view. Adjusting opportunistically to the new situation, Rnguul, with canny insight, took on the function of predicting events of the war. It is said that he predicted U.S. entry into the war, the first bombing of Palau in March 1944, and war's end in August 1945.³⁹ The war was a period of great crisis in Palau. Both before and after American forces took Peleliu in September 1944, bombing raids were launched on Koror and Babeldaob to neutralize these by-passed islands which held 25,000 fully equipped Japanese troops. During this terrifying time, Japanese organizational efficiency and social control broke down. *Modekngnei* resumed its activities in response to deep

crisis. Positive pronouncements, accurate predictions, and magical charms designed to give individuals supernatural protection and to frighten the fighter planes away were concrete evidence of the efficacy of Palauan cultural continuities. The revitalized indigenous system provided a reassuring “psychological response to a confused and unknowable world.”⁴⁰

Today the overgrown and unrecognizable ruins of Micronesia’s Shinto shrines are the only material witness to an uncertain evangelistic thrust into the Pacific. A 1938 photographic booklet on Nanyo-Gunto shows four separate groups of Yapese carrying palanquins during a Shinto festival celebration. The accompanying caption claims that Japanese “let Micronesians pay homage at shrines and gradually had them adopt their religion.”⁴¹ However, most older Palauans agree that while Tenrikyo and Buddhism actively sought converts, State Shinto remained aloof. The chiefess of Peleliu, Balang Singeo, said, “Though we were allowed to visit Kampei Taisha Nanyo Jinja, it was for the Japanese only.”⁴²

Those few shrines that survived the war were later dismantled by the Islanders for building materials, or left to decay in the humid island environment. Only in the case of the Garapan and Yap shrines have torii survived the ravages of war and the elements. Sometime soon after WW II the concrete torii and five pair of lanterns were moved from the ruins of the Garapan jinja to the Mount Carmel cemetery (*see Plate 6*). The Catholics had taken over the site of the former Japanese sugar refinery for their new cathedral and cemetery. Today, Japanese tourists have the awesome ecumenical experience of looking through a Shinto torii to Christ on the cross. The main torii of the Yap shrine was moved in the early 1950s to grace the entrance of the Yap Legislature building.

Being on the outskirts of Koror-town, Kampei Taisha Nanyo Jinja was not destroyed by American bombing raids. The shrine’s *goshintai* (sacred symbols) were removed in late 1944 and transported to Japan by submarine.⁴³ In October 1945, Commander Byrholdt, United States Navy, established his headquarters on the shrine site. A few years later government offices were moved to the former Japanese communication station which is now the Palau National Congress building. At that time, Mrs. Emamelei Bismark persuaded Lieutenant Stille to let the Ngaræk Women’s Club remove the jinja’s two handsome guardian lions to the women’s new clubhouse (*Bai Raek*).⁴⁴ This building, much of which was made of materials from the grand jinja, later became the Air Micronesia office. In 1978 it burned to the ground leaving the guardian lions incongruously alone (*see Plate 7*). Thus, in terms of devoted followers and places of worship, time and circumstance were not ripe for State Shinto to take root in the soil of Micronesian culture.

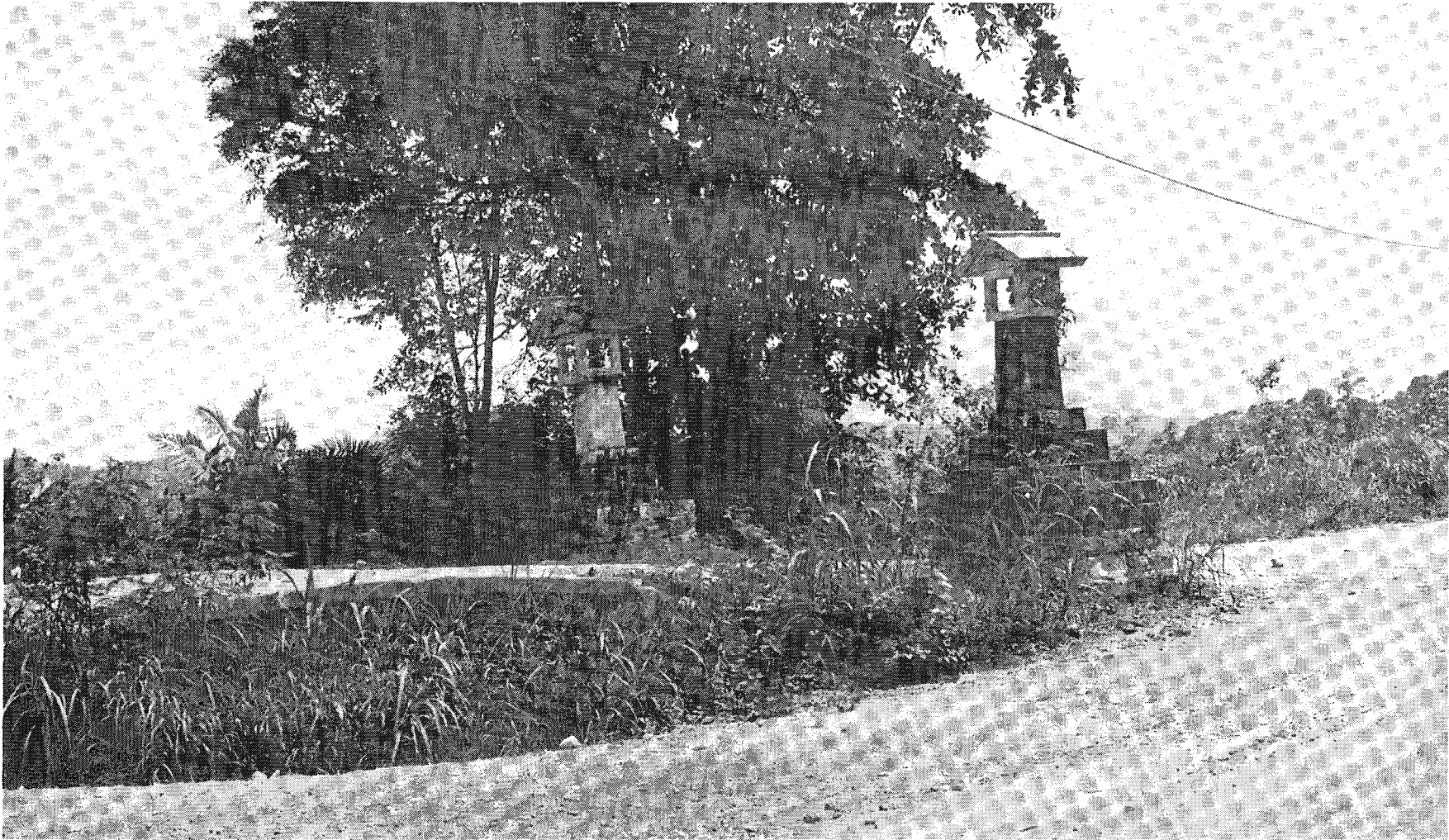


PLATE 6 Lanterns on each side of the divine bridge at the entrance to the great Nanyo Kampei Shinto Shrine now in ruins, Koror, Palau. (Photo by Donald R. Shuster, 1976.)

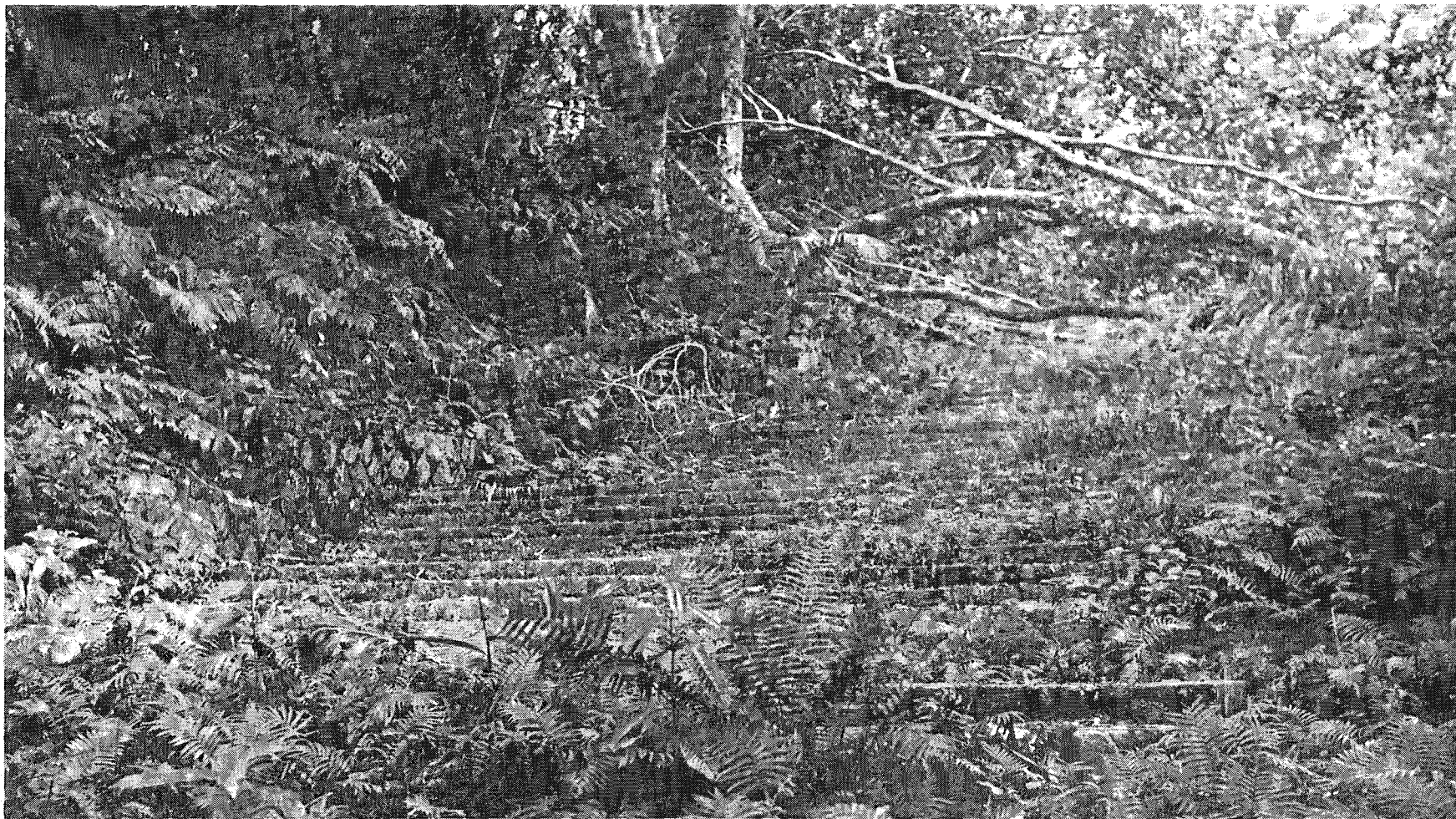


PLATE 7 Ferns, grasses, and fallen trees cover the ruins of the once grand staircase leading up to the first level of the Nan'yo Kampei Jinja, Koror, Palau. Two guardian lions and a torii gate at the top of these stairs separated the secular and sacred worlds for a brief period in the early 1940s. (Photo by Donald R. Shuster, 1976.)

NOTES

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1. Sakamaki Shunzō, "Shinto: Japanese Ethnocentrism," in *The Japanese Mind*, Charles A. Moore (ed.), (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1967), p. 31.
2. William K. Bunce, *Religions in Japan*, (Tokyo: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1948), p. 27.
3. Dr. Sokyō Ono has identified numerous types of Shinto: Popular Shinto, Domestic Shinto, Sectarian Shinto, Imperial Household Shinto, Shrine Shinto, and State Shinto. See his book, *Shinto The Kami Way*, (Tokyo: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1962), 12-15. This paper deals with only one of these types, viz., State Shinto.
4. Sakamaki Shunzō, "Shinto: Japanese Ethnocentrism," in *The Japanese Mind*, edited by Charles A. Moore, (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1967), p. 30.
5. William K. Bunce, *Religions in Japan*, (Tokyo: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1948), p. 30.
6. Genchi Katō, *A Study of Shinto, the Religion of the Japanese Nation*, (Tokyo: Meiji-Japan Society, 1926), p. 2.
7. William K. Bunce, *Religions in Japan*, (Tokyo: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1948), p. 31.
8. Iwao Munakata, "Paradox of Modernization in Japan," *Peace Research in Japan*, (1969), pp. 77-93.
9. Japan. South Seas Bureau, *Annual Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of the South Seas Islands Under Japanese Mandate for the Year 1925*, Tokyo, p. 22.
10. Japanese authorities established administrative centers throughout their huge Micronesian holdings at Jaluit Atoll in the Marshalls, Saipan in the Marianas, Ponape and Truk in the Eastern Carolines, and Yap and Palau in the Western Carolines.
11. Tenrikyō monument inscription (English version), Koror, Palau.
12. Japan. South Seas Bureau, *Annual Report to the League of Nations on the Administration of the South Seas Islands Under Japanese Mandate for the Year 1929*, Tokyo, p. 22.
13. Japan South Seas Bureau, *Annual Report to the League of Nations*, 1924, p. 10.
14. Micronesia--along with Western Samoa, Nauru, former German New Guinea and Southwest Africa (today known as Namibia)--was designated a "C" mandate by the League of Nations. This meant that these areas were geographically isolated and regarded as economically and socially undeveloped and were therefore unable to "stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world."
15. *Modekngai* is a Palauan resistance movement of a political religious nature that originated in the early years of Japanese rule. Its roots may even stretch to 1906 when German authorities imprisoned menacing shamans.
16. Hidea Horie, "The Shinto Shrine Problem Overseas," in *Yearbook of Religion*, quoted in Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), p. 158.
17. Jack A. Tobin with photos by Hajime Hirata, "Jabwor: Former Capitol of the Marshall Islands," *Micronesian Reporter*, 18, No. 4 (1970), p. 26.

18. John Sigrah of Kosrae via Albert Snyder, personal communication, 11 February, 1980.
19. Since State Shinto was built on a deep reservoir of traditional beliefs and practices, the elements of a shrine--torii, guardian statues, lanterns, memorial tablets--have a complex cultural history of their own. See Sokyo Ono, *Shinto The Kami Way*, (Tokyo: C. E. Tuttle Co., 1962).
20. William H. Alkire, *Lamotrek Atoll and Inter-island Socioeconomic Ties*, (Urbana: Illinois Studies in Anthropology, 1965), p. 150.
21. South Seas Government, *Nan'yo-cho tokei nankan* (South Seas Government Statistical Yearbook), Tokyo, 1938, (translated by Human Relations Area Files, Yale University, 1944), p. 152.
22. Shinto shrines were classified into seven grades. The *Jingu* or the Great Shrine of Ise was at the pinnacle of the hierarchy. The *kampei* or state shrines and the *kokuhei* or national shrines were ranked second and third respectively. The first was financed by a department within the Imperial Household and the second by the national treasury. It was a very significant fact that Palau, the headquarters for the South Seas territory, was chosen for a *kampei* level shrine. The four lesser grades of shrines supported by local communities were less elaborate and smaller in size.
23. *Kampei Taisha Nan'yō Jinja Hōsankai*, Tokyo, 1941, p. 1.
24. David Ramarui, personal communication, Koror, Palau, October 26, 1980.
25. The Grand Shrine of Ise is generally regarded as standing at the apex of all shrines. The beautiful Meiji Shrine is dedicated to the Emperor Meiji and Yasukuni Jinja was established by Imperial command in 1869 for the worship of the divine spirits of those who gave their lives in the defense of Japan.
26. D. C. Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, (New York: Paragon Book Corp., 1963), p. 169.
27. John Hall and Richard Beardsley, *Twelve Doors to Japan* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953), p. 321.
28. *The Kampei Taisha Nan'yō Jinja Hōsankai* photograph booklet was translated privately by Charles Dewolf formerly of the Linguistics Department, University of Hawaii. Dr. Dewolf's translation served as an outline for my description and explanation of the enshrinement events.
29. Joseph Tellei, personal communication, Koror, Palau, November 16, 1980. Mr. Tellei, now 80 years old, was for many years chief of the Palauan Police branch during the Japanese Administration. He is therefore known locally as the expert on Japanese times in Palau.
30. The most common meaning of the term "*kami*" is noble and sacred local deities or spirits. It expresses adoration for their virtue and authority. *Kami* are the objects of reverence and worship in Shinto.
31. E. J. Kahn, *A Reporter in Micronesia*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1966), p. 278.
32. *Kampei Taisha Nan'yō Jinja Hōsankai*, Tokyo, 1941, p. 30.

33. Arthur Vidich, "The Political Impact of Colonial Administration," Diss. Harvard University 1953, p. 229.
34. Arthur J. Vidich, *Political Factionalism in Palau: Its Rise and Development*, Coordinated Investigation of Micronesian Anthropology, No. 23. (Washington, D.C.: Pacific Science Board, 1949), p. 86.
35. Homer Barnett, *Being A Palauan*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 84.
36. Arthur J. Vidich, *Political Factionalism in Palau: Its Rise and Development*, (Washington, D.C.: Pacific Science Board, 1949), p. 87.
37. Homer Barnett, *Being A Palauan*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 84.
38. Arthur J. Vidich, *Political Factionalism in Palau: Its Rise and Development*, (Washington, D.C.: Pacific Science Board, 1949), p. 91.
39. Vidich. *Political Factionalism in Palau: Its Rise and Development*, p. 91.
40. Vidich, *Political Factionalism in Palau: Its Rise and Development*, p. 92.
41. Teruo Kosuge, *Photographs of Micronesia's Yesterday*, 2nd ed., (1938: report. Japan: South Seas Government), p. 57.
42. Balang Toyomi Singao, personal communication, Koror, Palau, 28 Jan. 1981.
43. Joseph Tellei, personal communication, Koror, Palau, 19 July 1981.
44. In exchange for the lions, the Ngaraek Club planted flame trees along Koror's then barren main road. (Kloteraol Takeo Yano, personal communication, Koror, Palau, 9 February, 1981).

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