

# STATE SHINTŌ PROJECT FOR SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL COMMON GOOD

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**Abstract:** In modern Japan, Shintō was defined as a culture rather than a religion to align the freedom of religion with the ideas of the nation-state, making it possible for Shintō to be presented to the public as an obligatory public moral and ritual guide. Katsuhiko Kakei, a professor of Constitutional Law at the Tōkyō Imperial University, incorporated the spiritual tendency to depend on the Absolute into Shintō and changed it into a state-religion. The purpose of his project was to restore the spiritual common good of the Japanese, expand it into the social common good, and thereby pursue integral human development and prosperity. This research contributes to rethinking the religious power to promote sustainable prosperity.

**Keywords:** *Arahitogami*, Emperor Worship, Fukko Shintō, *Kami* Worship, Katsuhiko Kakei, Ko-Shinto, Meiji Era.

## 1. Introduction

Daniel Holtom, who studied modern religion in Japan, defined the Shintō religion as a distinct feature of Japanese civilisation (3-4). The literal meaning of Shintō is “The Way of the *Kami*.” The *Kami* had already been the object of worship by the Japanese even before the Western concept of ‘God’ was introduced to Japan. At the heart of the *Kami* worship was the belief in gods who created the universe, and the Japanese people descended from those gods. This indigenous religion functioned as the ideological basis that

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supported modern Japan's nation-state idea and imperialism from ancient times to the mid-20th century.

The Meiji régimes (1868~1912), promoting modernisation, officially defined Shintō as traditional culture, not religion. This was a compromise solution for Japan, which has a history of persecution of Christians, to establish nationalism internally while declaring religious freedom externally. As a traditional culture, the Meiji government tried to impose compulsory morality on the public through Shintō.

In this environment, Katsuhiko Kakei (1872-1961), a professor of Constitutional Law at Tōkyō Imperial University at that time, incorporated the spiritual tendency to depend on the Absolute into Shintō and tried to redefine it as a national religion, not just traditional culture. He envisioned establishing a religious system combined with the ideology of emperor worship and the protection of the national polity. These are the concepts of *Ko-Shintō* (The Ancient Shintō)' and '*Kannagara no Michi* (the way that exactly follows the will of gods)' (Nishida 6). His argument was well-received by many students and young bureaucrats at the time (*Tokyo Asahi Shimbun* 2) because it was an explanation method that mixed history, Japanese mythology, and religious theories with a rigid legal theory. On the other hand, his unique argument was criticised by experts at the time, such as lawyers, philosophers, and religious scholars (Yamamoto 30; Nakajima 121). It was not easy to accept at that time to invade the realm of interdisciplinary fields.

To date, studies on Kakei's idea have focused on the influencing relationship between German philosophy and German law in the early 20th century as it relates to his political philosophy linking the state and religion. As a result, his idea was mainly criticised for being overly inclined to glorify the Emperor as a god.<sup>1</sup> In turn, a counterargument from the Japanese Shintō academic circles against such unilateral criticism of Kakei emerged.<sup>2</sup> There were also attempts to fully illuminate his views from multiple perspectives,

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<sup>1</sup>So far, Kakei's ideology has been critically studied by Toshikazu Takeda (2001), Takashi Tachibana (2005), Sadami Suzuki (2007), Walter Skya (2009), Kenji Ishikawa (2009), and Taku Morimoto (2016).

<sup>2</sup>Gōichi Nakamichi (2015) is a typical study from this point of view.

such as studies evaluating the aspects of his idea overcoming Western modernism and investigating his idea's impact on the Japanese imperial family.<sup>3</sup> However, the general impression of his Shintō idea is still not far away from that of a 'fanatic' because the idea is connected to the modern Japanese imperial system, which tended to be transnational. In other words, Shintō has been evaluated as an example of extreme religious nationalism. Before criticising the fanatical appearance, it is necessary first to examine the process through which he came to this ideological conclusion. This is because Kakei's re-establishment of national Shinto (State Shintō Project) placed great importance on the combination of individual religious consciousness and national consciousness. The role of religion for the positive changes of humanity includes the cultivation of moral and ethical consciousness for equality, human rights, and mutual understanding between peoples.

Therefore, this paper focuses on the process by which Kakei sought to restore the spiritual common good of the Japanese people through the re-establishment of Shintō and promote sustainable prosperity while expanding it into the social common good. And we will discuss all these processes under the name of Kakei's State Shintō Project for the common good.

## **2. Kakei's Approach to Religion**

After graduating from the Tokyo Imperial University School of Law with a top degree in 1897, Kakei passed the Higher Civilian Examination and entered graduate school. In 1898, he was ordered by the Ministry of Education to leave for Germany for three years to study administrative law under the guidance of Otto von Gierke at the University of Berlin. He also learned Philosophy from Adolf von Harnack and Wilhelm Dilthey during this time. His motivation for studying abroad was related to the educational system, but what captivated him while studying abroad was the role of religion and, more specifically, the spirit underlying the secular system. Even after completing the 3-year government-funded study

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<sup>3</sup>Studies on the exchange between Kakei and Empress Teimei include Takeshi Hara (2015) and Masako Katanō (2003).

program, he extended his study period in Germany by three years at his own expense to tackle this problem. He perused the Bible and attended church services every Sunday, contemplating “the unconstrained faith of what Jesus Christ would have done if he had been born in Japan” (Yasuhiko 39-40). In Germany, he realised that religion significantly contributed to the unity of people in Western countries, and he believed that it was necessary for people to be independently motivated from the heart to achieve unity among a community organically. Kakei considered religion to be an essential tool for national integration and prosperity. He was convinced that religious beliefs matter for national development and prosperity.

After Kakei returned to his country, the domestic situation in Japan further amplified his thoughts. After the Russo-Japanese War, the Meiji government’s “national prosperity and strengthening of the armed forces” policy was almost at its peak. Victory in wars and the acquisition of colonies seemed to enhance the country’s prosperity greatly. The development of the heavy and chemical industry and the promotion of capitalism in the wake of the war seemed to promise material and economic prosperity. However, the price to be paid for this was also very high. The scars and burdens caused by the war, the dead, the wounded, and increased taxes were passed on to the public. Wealth concentrated only in entrepreneurs and shareholders went against the common good and prosperity for all, leading to economic turmoil among the people accompanied by riots. After Emperor Meiji’s death, elder statesmen’s retirement continued, and there were also attempts to solve a bunch of problems through changes in the secular system by expanding the structure of political participation (Arima 134-142). However, the suggestion of a secular solution was not enough. As people experienced the limitations of material prosperity, they came to look back on religion to promote personal and social peace. Accordingly, many new religious forms were created, including Zen meditation, ritual ablutions, and mind cultivation (Kurita 473-480). The so-called ‘religious revival’ era has arrived, starting with the successive boom of Tolstoy’s literature

and various religious literature gaining popularity (Suzuki, *Modern Transcendence*, 196-209).

In response to this turmoil from below, movements that supported embracing the people's democratic desires with the national polity emerged among the societal elite. Within this elite, there were also discussions about the goals of people who sought mental and physical stability through religion in connection with the state theory.<sup>4</sup> It was no coincidence that Kakei began to discuss the national polity theory based on religion. As a constitutional scholar who explores the basic law of the state, he pondered on the integration of state theory and religion. As a result of such deliberation, Kakei envisioned a structure in which individuals gain freedom through religion, and such freedom will naturally lead to contributions to the community and the state. As introduced in previous studies, this argument has been criticised for using religion as a tool and sinking into nationalism. However, we first need to go a step deeper to examine how this logical structure was established.

### 3. To Secure the Spiritual Common Good

When Japan first adopted the Western concept of religion, the word for religion was translated along two lines of thought: One is belief, which refers to a conceptualised belief system such as *Kyōhō* (doctrine), and the other is practice, which refers to a non-verbal customary action such as *Syūshi* (mission). Then, under the influence of Protestantism, the word was unified as *Syūkyō* (religion) in 1877 while prioritising 'belief' (Isomae 35-37). It is also important in the development of Kakei's discussion that the concept of religion in Japan implies these two meanings: belief and practice. As a doctrine supporting the national polity theory, he organised these two lines with *Ko-Shintō* and *Kannagara no Michi* as beliefs and awareness of customs as practices. That is, he established the necessary national religion for Japan. In particular,

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<sup>4</sup>Nichirenist Tanaka Chigaku (1861-1939)'s *The National Polity Theory*, Shimizu Ryōzan (186-1928)'s *The National Polity of Japan and Nichiren Jojin* (1911), and Yamada Takao (1875-1958)'s *The National Polity Theory of Great Japan* (1910) are good examples of this kind of discussion.

when Kakei was planning such a project of religionisation of Shintō, it was important to combine individual religious consciousness and national consciousness.

Kakei envisioned the integration of people's minds using religion in earnest, and his original academic task was to construct a theory that could integrate individual consciousness within the state (Kakei, *The Essence of Law*, 818). In other words, it is to secure the spiritual common good. He explained that if a person digs up his or her ego, it will expand into the nation and that the freedom of the individual is the same as the freedom of the nation (Kakei, *Ancient thoughts*, 19). In other words, he saw it as religion's function to unite national and individual consciousness into one.

When he returned to Japan, the first religion that Kakei considered was Buddhism. His interest in Buddhism was influenced by Naojirō Miyata, a friend of his father and a government official, who was a disciple of a monk, well versed in Zen Buddhism. In conversation with him, Kakei became convinced that Buddhism was very close to what he had learned in Germany and thus focused his study on Buddhist scriptures (Yasuhiko 42). Compared to Shintō, "the ancient religion of Japan," he thought Buddhism was "the grandest and most liberal and comprehensive development in doctrine" (Kakei, *Ancient Thoughts*, 37).

However, his interest shifted to Shintō in 1912. Buddhism, he saw, is a religion that does not have *Svabhava* (intrinsic nature) and does not have an unchanging core for establishing its teachings. Another problem with Buddhism was that it was difficult for the public to understand because it was excessively noble, profound, and downplayed secular life (Kakei, *The Nature* no.9, 44). In other words, he saw Buddhism as a religion separated from the world. Therefore, he envisioned the integration of the national consciousness through Shintō instead. Of course, Kakei's argument can be seen as a narrow-minded interpretation of Buddhism. In the end, Buddhism was disparaged in order to value Shinto, Japan's own national religion.

The first article in which Kakei discussed Shintō in earnest is "The Nature of Ko-Shintō." There is a term similar to Ko-Shintō, called Fukko Shintō, which was used by scholars of the Edo period.

Fukko Shintō was the idea of exploring pure Shintō before it was influenced by Confucianism and Buddhism and identifying the unique spirit of the Japanese people. However, Kakei tried to distinguish Ko-Shintō from Fukko Shintō (Kakei, *The Nature* no. 8, 62). Kakei believed that Shintō, from the beginning, was a fusion of elements of Confucianism, Buddhism, and the indigenous beliefs of the Japanese. He highly valued Shintō's attitude of inclusiveness and wanted to expand Shintō as a universal religion for all humankind beyond the beliefs of the Japanese people. That was his concept of Ko-Shintō.

In particular, he envisioned the character of Ko-Shintō in a way that supplemented the limitations of other religions. First, he argued that it is difficult for the public to understand Buddhism because it does not have subjectivity as a religion, is excessively noble, and takes the world lightly. Therefore, he explained that Ko-Shintō should secure a common good based on daily life. Second, he dismissed Confucianism as an ambiguous religion that did not penetrate to the very bottom of people's minds because it places too much importance on discipline. Therefore, he argued that Ko-Shintō should secure individual spontaneity, not external discipline (Kakei, *The Nature* no. 9, 44). He even compared it to Christianity. He argued that the relationship between the present life and the afterlife in Christianity was not stable because Christianity positions the Messiah as a general manager of faith, while there is no manager in the real world. Therefore, in Ko-Shintō, the Emperor appears as a general manager of the real world (Kakei, *The Nature* no. 8, 71). In this way, he tried to secure universality by including all the strengths and weaknesses of all religions in Ko-Shintō. Therefore, according to his argument, the high Shinto have a more tolerant and superior character than any other religion.

Securing the common good means being based on social principles and ethical norms that everyone can relate to. In addition, individual spontaneity, not external discipline, is important because individual interests are inextricably linked with social interests. This means that members of a community should voluntarily pursue common values and goals. In other words, Kakei intends to make Shintō the basis of securing the spiritual

common good through individual conversion. The existence of the Emperor is set as a medium that connects individuals and communities. This is an important point for the Emperor to give Shintō a religious character beyond the secular institutional existence.

This plan by Kakei to make Shintō a religion and a state religion was contrary to the view expressed by the Japanese government that Shintō was the ancestral worship of the imperial family, not a religion, in 1882. The Meiji government and various Japanese intellectuals siding with the government argued that Shintō was not a religion but a part of the historical culture of Japan. Although contents emphasising the Emperor's inviolability and sacredness were included in the *Imperial Rescript to Soldiers and Sailors* (1882), Article 3 of the *Meiji Constitution* (1889), and the *Imperial Rescript on Education* (1890), the Meiji government officially excluded the religiosity of State Shintō until the 1920s.<sup>5</sup>

There was a legal problem informing the position of the Meiji government that State Shintō was not a religion. The Meiji Constitution mimicked the Western constitutions and advocated the separation of state and religion and freedom of religion. Therefore, if the government argued that Shintō was a religion, it would be a violation of the Constitution. Consequently, the Meiji government argued that Shintō was not a religion and that there was no conflict with the Constitution.

In addition, the idea of not establishing a state religion can be found in the national conception of Hirobumi Itō (1841-1909), who promoted Japan's constitutionalisation before the legal interpretation problem. Rudolf von Gneist (1816-1895), a consultant in the enactment of the *Meiji Constitution*, advised Itō to "teach

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<sup>5</sup>*Kokutaironshi* (*The History of National Polity*, 1921) published by the Ministry of Home Affairs Shrine Bureau, argued that "Myth should be most respected in the ideal and spirit of the people, but it is dangerous to try to explain our national polity based on this" and "There are a lot of people who want to establish our national polity with the oracle of the Descent of the Heavenly Son, but this is wrong" (Kiyohara 373-379). As such, the official position of the Japanese government at that time was far from Kakei's conception to make Shintō a national religion.



morality and connect the public sentiment through religion" (*Seitetsu-Yumemonogatari* 56); however, as Itō conceived the image of the Emperor as one excluding religious connotations, he adopted a form of a national system excluding the option of a state religion.

Because Itō considered the role of religions insignificant in running the country, Itō stated that neither Buddhism nor Shintō could be "an axis of Japan," but that only the imperial family could be the axis (Yamaguchi 150). For Itō, who valued rational national design, religion had to be considered separate from state management (Takii 256-257). Itō believed that only traditional Emperor authority would suffice for national unity. He was concerned about the mythological elements of Shintō.

Therefore, Itō envisioned the image of the Emperor as a symbol of national unity while excluding mysticism and spirituality as much as possible. By contrast, Kakei tried to consider the option excluded by Itō and redefine it, which led to Kakei's idea to make Shintō a state religion.

#### **4. To Expand the Social Common Good**

In *Ko-Shintō Taigi* (The Great Principles of Ancient Shintō), Kakei describes the relationship between the Emperor and the Japanese as sustaining each other, stating, "The Emperor cannot exist without everyone" and "Neither the Japanese people nor anyone can exist without the Emperor. Gratefully, they all got their life from the Emperor. Without the Emperor, they would not have been able to truly be born, and there is no such thing as a Japanese people" (Kakei, *Ko-Shintō Taigi*, 10-12).

First, *Ko-Shintō Taigi* explains the religiosity of Ko-Shintō as follows. *Ko-Shintō* is a name given for convenience, which refers to *Kami no michi* that has existed since the early days of the establishment of Japan, and which continues to be developed. It also refers to what is the universal basis of 'Shintō' over different sects or eras of Shintō (Kakei, *Ko-Shintō Taigi*, 2-3). Further, it is stated that this is the basis for the existence of *Isshin Dōtai* (One Heart, Same Body) of the Japanese people and the Japanese state, that it is a 'living religion' that creates a relationship between the Emperor and all people based on each other, and that it is the

fundamental norm of daily activities. Therefore, Kakei emphasised that *Ko-Shintō* becomes a “universal ideal of the Japanese people” and a “universal ideal of the world” (Kakei, *Ko-Shintō Taigi*, 10-11).

Moreover, he argues that Shintō needs to be reconstructed as the basis of ‘unity of the people,’ which goes back further than Fukko Shintō of the Edo period, and that the spirit of ‘Shintō’ institutionalised in the Meiji era “needs to be cultivated in the minds of people” (Kakei, *Ko-Shintō Taigi*, 84-85). The reason that *Ko-Shintō*’s religiosity is emphasised here is to argue that *Ko-Shintō* is the fundamental religion of the state. Here, he saw that the religiosity of the individuals was enhanced by the teachings of the Absolute, the Emperor. Although this view could conflict with that of the government that Shintō is not a religion, it provides us with a glimpse into Kakei’s plan to distinguish State Shintō from other religions and place it above them, thus reviving it.

Kakei’s thoughts on religion were greatly influenced by the religious ideas of Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834) (Suzuki, *Modern Transcendence*, 242-245). Kakei changed the concept of religion by including a desire to be united with the gods in Japanese mythology and with the ‘Emperor’ of their ‘expressor’, and then applied this concept to his Shintō theory. This allows the gods of the myth and the Emperor to become absolute, and it leads to the ideology and historicity of a spiritual community that assures the experience of momentary unity with the infinite being replaced by the ideology and historicity of *Isshin Dōtai* of the Japanese people. Kakei’s *The Great Principles of Ancient Shintō* is developed by combining Schleiermacher’s theory of God’s humanisation to Jesus with the traditional Japanese idea of the Emperor as an *Arahitogami* (divine Emperor) in Japanese mythology and history.<sup>6</sup> He ties the theory that regards a desire to return to the infinite as the essence of religion with the theory of national religion that supports the universal God, preached by Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) (Katusrajima 66-68), and he defines it as the spirit underlying the imperial Constitution.

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<sup>6</sup> The idea of considering the emperor as an *Arahitogami* in “Emperor Keikō 40 Years,” *Nihon Shoki*, Vol. 7, and “March 2nd Year of Kashō,” *Shoku Nihon Koki*, Vol. 19.

In *Zoku- Ko-Shintō Taigi* (The Great Principles of Ancient Shintō Sequel), there is a proposition that "the only and absolute great life and its expressor is considered as a god in Ko-Shintō" (Kakei, *Zoku-Ko-Shintō Taigi*, 629). This "only and absolute great life" is also explained as "the great life of the universe" and "the great life of the world" (Kakei, *Zoku- Ko-Shintō Taigi*, 737). Here, the notion of "the great life of the universe," emerges, which replaced "the infinite" in Christian theology with the "great life". Accordingly, this ensures seamless continuity with everything on Earth.

Kakei explains that there are two main types of gods in Ko-Shindō: The first is *Ame-no-Minakanushi* (the great life of all universes), the omnipresent in all things and encompasses the world. The second is all the deities/gods, which serve as the 'expressor' of *Ame-no-Minakanushi* (Kakei, *Kokka no Kenkyu*, 119). *Ame-no-Minakanushi* reminds one of the transcendent absolute God in Christianity, but Kakei posits it as the 'life' that embraces even God in Christianity; that is, the existence that corresponds to the creative power of the universe. This is because he tried to reconstruct Japanese Shintō as a universal principle by referring to German idealism and Christian theology.

However, although *Ame-no-Minakanushi* is the great life of the universe, it is rarely revealed, thus indicating the existence of a god that represents the very action of the great life of the universe to advance. The High Creators, *Takamimusubi* and *Kamimusubi*, are responsible for creating and nurturing the world. Kakei does not consider *Takamimusubi*, who is in charge of activity, and *Kamimusubi*, who is in charge of passivity, as a male god and a female goddess, respectively. They always respond to each other and look over everything by becoming one *Mimusubi*. Therefore, *Ame-no-Minakanushi*, which is difficult to identify as the origin of the grand universe, is revealed through *Mimusubi's* activities. In addition, *Amaterasu's* existence, which transforms all things into truth, goodness, and beauty, and that of the Emperor, *Arahitogami*, are highlighted (Kakei, *Kokka no Kenkyu*, 120-130).

Appearing at the forefront of Kakei's idea is *Mimusubi*, who represents the correct functioning of the entire universe, rather than *Ame-no-Minakanushi*, the god of the entire universe. Kakei urges

people to become aware that each individual's life is connected to the world in the action of the great life of the universe that leads to the Emperor, who is heavenly *Amaterasu* and earthly *Arahitogami* by emphasising the right action according to *Mimusubi*. This is also his worldview that allows the individual life to connect to the state, the world, and the great life of the universe (Nishida 75-76).

Kakei interprets the notion of the great life of the universe and the notion that the gods in Japanese mythology and the Emperor is equivalent to *Arahitogami* as a German-style 'expression' theory and then connect it to the constitutional provision that the Emperor 'superintends' the people. Further, he argues that "the human beings of the world and the Japanese people also have the great life, and they have a relationship that cannot be separated from the Emperor who is the expressor of the great life" (Kakei, *Zoku- Ko-Shintō Taigi*, 751). The notions of the 'great life' of human beings and the 'great life' of the Japanese people clearly appear here. He also arranges the relationship between the human beings of the world and the Japanese people by defining the 'Emperor,' who is "the master of the universe in which Mimusubi and Amaterasu are united," as the "Emperor of the human world," not merely one to be monopolised by the Japanese people (Kakei, *Zoku- Ko-Shintō Taigi*, 700).

This might seem like a very fanatical form of 'emperoralism.'<sup>7</sup> However, it should be noted that the role of an 'expressor' of the great life of the universe is not limited to the gods in myth and the Emperor, and ordinary citizens can also become 'living gods' and 'expressor' of the great life of the universe. The way to do it is to be absorbed fully in one's work related to the community. If a person can reach the state of 'self-effacement', then 'god' dwells in that person while they work, and the person becomes an 'expressor' who embodies the community to which the person belongs, a god.

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<sup>7</sup>As such, the idea that the Emperor is 'the supreme and only god of the universe, the supreme god of the universe rule' and is equivalent to *Arahitogami* was not widely accepted in Japan in the early 20th century. Among intellectuals, the 'Emperor Institutional Theory', a state organicism, advocated by Tatsukichi Minobe (1873-1948), was supported (Suzuki, *Exploration of the View of Life*, 466).

However, since people cannot always focus on their work, they are humble and so do not claim to be gods even when they are gods. However, to become an 'expressor' of the great life of the universe, it is important to always put a heart and act for the community (Kakei, *Ko-Shintō Taigi*, 350-351). This logical structure can be understood by confirming Kakei's reflection on the self within the individual.

According to Kakei, our inner world consists of three dimensions: the individual self, the universal self, and the infinite self. The individual self refers to the subject of an individual's activity. The infinite self refers to a vast divine being, such as the universe, that exists in the mind of all the individual selves and oversees them. That is why "the individual self's worship of God amounts to the individual self's worship of itself." The infinite self, which is a divine being, influences the individual self as an "eternal ideal"(Kakei, "Introduction" no.6, 751-771). The universal self, which exists below the infinite self, exists between the infinite self and the individual self. The universal self is "the social self" that idealises the infinite self and is utilised when each individual forms a realistically possible community. It can be said that the universal self, which works by the "psychology accompanying various activities in which the individual self exists and develops while respecting each other", is the foundation of the "social state" (Kakei, Introduction no.8, 1122). Aiming for the universal self is the same as participating in the construction of the universal self as it serves as an opportunity to extend the individual self to others.

The individual self instinctively pursues the infinite self, which is the "eternal ideal." In this way, the spiritual common good is secured, but for the spiritual common good to be perfected, it must go through the process of the universal self. In other words, it is impossible to advance to the infinite self without realising the social self. This shows the mechanism by which an individual can achieve spiritual perfection through social common good.

## 5. Conclusion

Kakei's attempt was to overcome the conflicts between religions and to find hope for the common good and prosperity under each

religion. It was also an effort to seek harmonious integration between the individual and the community by giving religious values to the secular system.

This is also a matter of how religion will intervene and form relationships in our society. As we can see from Kakei's Shintō initiative, religion becomes the basis for discussions about human prosperity through the unity of the people and the coexistence of other religions. It was confirmed that Kakei's project had a concrete system of action to reform society and the state. And Kakei stressed 'tolerance' based on the nature of Ko-Shintō, which means that Ko-Shintō did not reject other religions. Such Kakei's interpretation of Shintō was not for narrow ultranationalism but for national prosperity through the harmony of religions. In other words, to him, Ko-Shintō was an expression compatible with the hopes for prosperity and the common good, which lie equally on the deep foundations of different religions. Therefore, he predicted that what is called Ko-Shintō would lead to universality in the world as Confucianism and Buddhism coexist and the Christian spirit also harmonises. He calls this spirit 'pacifism in action,' adding that it does not mean 'aggression' or 'regression' (Kakei, *Zoku- Ko-Shintō Taigi*, 753).

Kakei's conception was understood mostly as an ultra-nationalist ideology by the Japanese society at the time - imperialism and wars of aggression. Unfortunately, regardless of Kakei's intentions, it is true that his Shinto ideas were used as an ideology to mobilise the people in war. It is possible to criticise his plan to have religion intervene in the framework of the nation, including the Constitution, as a violation of the principle of separation of state and religion.

However, his conception of understanding the spiritual and social common good as complementary is still important today. His project was to seek alternatives at the level of civilisational history to pursue the value of life together beyond the fragmented individual in an unstable reality. In addition, the common good he advocated was to overcome the barriers of understanding between religions and to overcome formal doctrinal frameworks so that our society could live together.

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