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WAR, PEACE AND RELIGION: Metamorphosis of Shintō Goddess Jingū

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Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to analyze the way Empress Jingū, the goddess of the Japanese national religion Shintō, was re-examined and used as an ideology of the Japanese Empire during the Japanese colonial era in both Korea and Japan. Jingū, enshrined in Hachiman Shrine, is famous for the legend of the conquest of the Korean Peninsula with the help of other gods. During the Japanese colonial era, the Japanese Empire justified its rule by using the myth of Jingū, whose lineage had been forgotten for a long time, arguing that the goddess was of Korean descent. This was an instance of the subversion of religion for imperial expansion. Japanese Empire, in particular, promoted Jingū as a symbol of the union of blood between Korea and Japan in colonized Korea and constructed State Shintō Shrine, which enshrines Jingū. The intensified apotheosization of Jingū was used for Japan's war of aggression, subverting Shinto's original purpose of promoting life and peace. By doing so, the Japanese Empire attempted to religiously integrate Korea and the Korean people into the State Shintō system, thereby enabling itself to exploit human and material resources for wars under the guise of development and peace in East Asia.

Keywords: Blood bond, Colonial policy, Empress Jingū, Puyŏ Shrine, State Shintō.

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1. Introduction

The current state of global climate change poses serious threats to human life. Studies are being conducted worldwide to find the origin of the current crisis in the legacy of the colonial period, alongside the criticism that industrialization and modernization have destroyed ecosystems. Like other Western Imperialist countries, Japan waged wars in the name of 'modern development and peace in East Asia,' destroyed the nature of the colony, and seized resources. It should not be overlooked that, to date, these actions continue to affect Korea's human, social, and ecological environments, which was once a Japanese colony (Yang 383-412).

On 3 November 1938, the imperial government of Japan announced 'The Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' as a state propaganda, whose purpose was to urge the Asian states to become united under its leadership to secure freedom and promote modernization so that Asia could take advantage of integrated politico-economic coexistence and co-prosperity free from Western imperialism. Under this propaganda, the Japanese rationalized its invasion of the Asian continent. In particular, one of the key characteristics of 'modern development and peace in East-Asia' led by the Japanese Empire was that it actively used religion, the most important spiritual culture of humans, to justify and encourage war and the 'development' followed by it.

Shintō, an indigenous belief system in Japan that has been passed down from ancient times, is based on the animism that spirits reside in all nature, from mountains and streams, rocks, fire, the Sun, moon, stars, rain, and to animals, and it is a religion wherein the spirit of ancestor worship is incorporated. Shintō is basically a religion founded on the spiritual belief in the coexistence of nature and humans in peace. However, in modern times, the Japanese Meiji government altered Shintō into State Shintō. Many shrines were built in Japan and in colonial Korea, to enforce State Shintō as part of Japanese expansion policies. In particular, Empress Jingū, enshrined as a goddess in Hachiman Shrine, was used as a propaganda tool for a new interpretation of Empress Jingū and building a shrine to worship her in Korea.

Japan threatened peace in East Asia in the name of promoting 'modern development' through war, controlling the spirit of the Korean people, and robbing resources through religious schemes.

From this point of view, this paper investigates how religion was used in the process of imperialization and modernization and how it consequently induced changes to human and the planet's environments and affected the development and peace of East Asia by examining how Empress Jingū was reinterpreted and utilized during the Japanese colonial era.

2. National Religion in Japan – Shintō and Empress Jingū

Shintō was part of Japanese history and evolved throughout the centuries, and it is a living religion that has influenced the lives of Japanese people from ancient times to the present day. Shintō's character, which respects nature and aims for coexistence with nature, is drawing attention today as the importance of sustainable global development is emphasized.

There are many gods in Shintō, indicating that there are numerous Shintō scriptures as well. Among the various scriptures, the respected canon is the myth in *Kojiki* (712) and the *Nihonshoki* (720), written by the imperial family. These documents systematically record myths, chronicling the creation of heaven and earth, leading to the birth of eight million gods, the mountain ranges and streams, the human race, and the Japanese imperial family. Such narrative records continue to exert absolute authority as Shintō's canon. The expression 'eight million gods' has been prevalent in Japan since ancient times. Symbolically, 'eight million' refers to an infinite number, indicating Shintō's polytheistic nature, based on animism that worships nature and ancestor worship. For example, Amaterasu-Ōmikami, the noblest god in Shintō, is known as an ancestor of the Japanese imperial family and as the goddess of the Sun who rules over the eight million gods in Japan.

The *Kojiki* and the *Nihonshoki* are the major early literature which narrates the story of Empress Jingū. According to *Nihonshoki,* when Emperor Chūai suddenly passed away due to the anger of God in the early third century, his wife Empress Jingū crossed the sea and conquered *Silla*, a region in the southern

part of the Korean Peninsula, to make it a tributary state according to God's will. This is a well-known myth about the Samhan[1] conquest. Aside from the myth of Samhan conquest, *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki* contain many stories about Jingū, such as Jingū's ancestor Ame-no-hiboko in chronological order. However, in Japan, the myth of Jingū is centred around the Samhan conquest story, and other stories are rarely discussed.

The popularity of the Samhan conquest myth also led to Jingū becoming the goddess of the Hachiman Shrine, which is known for having the most shrines in Japan. Shintō enshrines nature gods, ancestor gods, and great heroes after their deaths. Hachiman Shrine was originally known for its protection of imperial houses and the spirit of fortune in wars; therefore, Jingū, who conquered Samhan, joined as a goddess of war. Moreover, the fact that her son Ōjin was already a part of the Hachiman Shrine played an important role in Jingū being accepted. The Shintō tradition, based on faith in ancestors, typically honoured the blood relatives of gods, so it was natural that Jingū, commonly known as Ōjin mother, was also enshrined in the Hachiman Shrine through the myth of the Samhan conquest.

3. The Divine Land Thoughts and Empress Jingū

Jingū's Samhan conquest myth, which attributed the victory to divine revelation and protection, has become a symbol of 'The Divine Land Thoughts,' a belief that Japan is a sacred country protected by gods, and gradually increased its influence both culturally and politically. According to *Nihonshoki*, Jingū crosses the sea under divine revelation and gets her hands on a country

[1]Samhan (三韓, the Three Han) is a term that encompasses three countries in the south-central part of the Korean Peninsula before the Three Kingdoms of Korea: Mahan, Chinhan, and Pyŏnhan. However, Samhan in the legend of Jingū refers to Silla, Koguryŏ, and Paekche as the Three Kingdoms of Korea. The section of *Nihonshoki* that mentions Jingū says the following: "Silla, Koguryŏ, Paekche are so-called Samhan" (432), and this is how the term has been used ever since. For this reason, this paper refers to the Samhan that Jingū conquered in the legend as the Three Kingdoms.

rich in gold and silver, namely Samhan. The gods of Japan, gods of wind creating winds, gods of the sea creating waves, and even large fish aiding the ship's smooth sailing, helped Jingū in this process. The king of Silla called Japan 'the Divine Land' after surrendering. 'The Divine Land Thoughts' is the foundation of Jingū's story, a belief that everything in Japan is created and protected by gods (Tamura 55-80). There was an opportunity for 'The Divine Land Thoughts' to grow even more in the late 13th century. Japan defeated the Mongol-Koryŏ allied forces twice with the help of the typhoon. Japanese people called these typhoons *Kamikaze*, which means the wind caused by gods, and developed the belief that gods protected Japan. This resulted in the deepening of the belief in Jingū, the symbolic existence of the Divine Land Thoughts, and the legend of Samhan's conquest was rewritten.

The Hachiman Shrine, which enshrined Jingū as a goddess, led to the re-creation of the myth. *Hachiman Gudōkun*[2] appeared in the 14th century, which recorded new stories of the Hachiman Shrine, including a new chapter about gods of Hachiman Shrine helping the Japanese force win the battle against allied Mongol-Koryŏ forces. *Hachiman Gudōkun* embellished and recreated both the legends of the Samhan conquest and the battle against Mongol-Koryŏ allied forces. Jingū's bravery and sacredness were emphasized with the introduction of new characters and events, such as the dragon king lending sacred weapons, the dramatic battle scenes of the dragon swallowing Silla's army, and the scenes depicting Silla's humiliating surrender (Kim Youngju B 175-193). The version of the Samhan conquest myth reinterpreted through *Hachiman Gudōkun* spread throughout Japan with the spread of *Hachiman* faith (Kim Young-ju A 188-201).

4. State Shintō and Empress Jingū

During the modern era, Japan has reorganized and institutionalized Shintō into State Shintō to use it as the basis of

[2]The author and writing period are unknown. It is presumed to have been written by an official at Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine in the 14th century. (Shinjō 62-73).

national ideology and to incorporate it into imperialization policies. State Shintō is Imperial Japan's ideological use of the Japanese folk religion and traditions of Shintō. It began in 1868 when the Meiji government proclaimed as its goal "the unity of religious ritual and government administration." That is, the Ise Grand Shrine, which enshrines many ancestors of the emperor, including Amaterasu-Ōmikami, was designated as the head shrine and the State Shinto's shrine, making it the official religious institution of Japan. It was a religious and political move to establish a theocracy system that served the emperor as a living god. Through State Shintō, existing religious activities that had previously been conducted voluntarily around shrines and believers were expanded to include the entire public, who were forced to participate in various religious rituals. The educational system played a major role in integrating State Shintō into the daily lives of the people through rituals, such as the worship of shrines and singing of the national anthem KimiGaYo (君が代), while also offering active ideological education (Shimazono 1-29). State Shintō revered the ancestors of the Japanese imperial family as the most dignified gods. One of them was Empress Jingū, a goddess enshrined in the Hachiman Shrine throughout Japan. Given her popularity, she was an ideal candidate to be used, as she could have a powerful religious influence on the Japanese people and had many stories to use. Consequently, Japan actively used her stories from political, cultural, and educational perspectives.

Jingu appeared every time Japan faced an external crisis and served as the ideology behind Japan's external expansion, national prestige, and national policy (Yeon 255). Particularly, from the Imjin War, the invasions of Korea from 1592–1598 through the Edo period, Jingū was used to legitimize the dominance over the Korean Peninsula and justify its invasion. Additionally, it served as the ideological basis for the Japan-Korea Annexation in 1910. For instance, in 1870, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposed three strategies to the *Dajō-kan* (The Grand Council of State), the top administrative office in Japan, for punishing Korea for rudeness and concluding a treaty in favour

of Japan. It was argued that these strategies were essential for continuing the great achievements of Empress Jingū (Research Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs 144-145). That is, the Meiji government of Japan interpreted the legend of Jingū as a historical fact, stipulated it as a feat that the Japanese people must inherit, and thereby used it to establish national policies. Jingū has been used frequently not only in such national policies but also in cultural and educational aspects. In 1878, a portrait of Jingū was used on Japan's first banknote issued to build a modern nation-state (Uemura 22). To the Meiji government, the selection of Jingū as the portrait figure for its first note, which declared a return to the glory days depicted in *Kojiki* and *Nihonsyoki*, was an expression of its willingness to invade Korea (Kang 14). For this reason, many history textbooks and appended maps published in Japan during that period contained illustrations of Jingū, and most of them show scenes of the Silla king kneeling in front of Jingū, surrendering or offering treasures as tribute (Yeon 289).

As Japan began to rule Korea as a colony, its leaders propagated the legend of Jingū's conquest of the Three Kingdoms and taught it as a historical fact, but Koreans perceived it as a legend, not a history. This is because there is no mention of the story of Jingū anywhere in Korean documents (Yun Pyŏnggu 1, I Tongch'o 43, Taehan Maeil Sinbo B 1, Pyŏlgŏngon 43, etc.). Accordingly, some observed that the legend of Jingū, which had been turned into history during the colonial period, resulted from Japan's use of it as a political device to inspire the consciousness of its own people (Taehan Maeil Sinbo A 1).

Because the historicization and propaganda of Jingū, the heroine known for conquering the Three Kingdoms, was directly linked to the ideology of the Japanese empire, historians at the time focused, among other things, on whether Jingū actually existed. Recent researchers focused on how the story of the conquest of the Three Kingdoms went through and created a sense of superiority in the Japanese over Koreans (Tsukahara 819-851) or on attempts to reveal how Japan historicized the story of Jingū and supported its legitimacy while colonizing the Korean Peninsula (Yeon 253-296, Uemura 22).

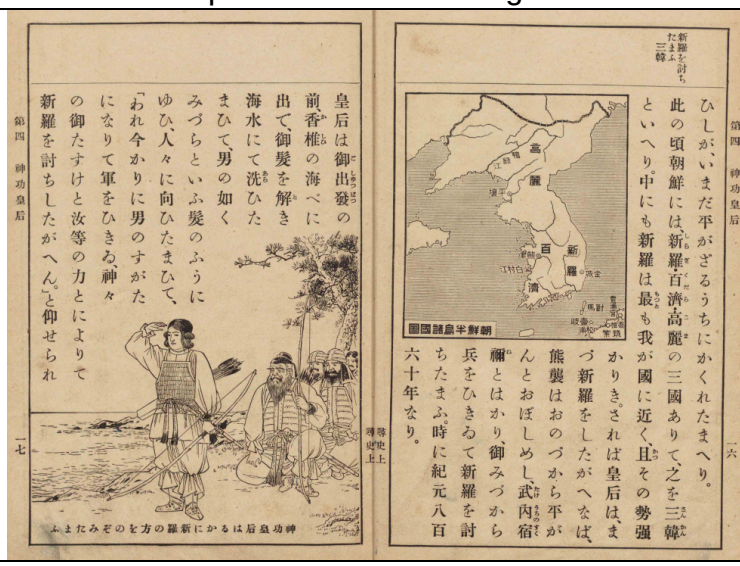
Nonetheless, very few studies have analyzed the actual and specific circumstances wherein Jingū was utilized in colonial Korea after the Annexation of Korea. Specifically, no study has taken into consideration the changes to the symbol of Jingū that occurred according to the trends of colonial policy, Japan's attempt to use it as a religious object in Korea, and how that impacted the society and the environment at the time. But even during the colonial period, that representation changed significantly over time. Some opinions supported enshrining Jingū as a goddess at Chosŏn Shrine, for which construction began in 1920 and was completed in 1925. It was considered that Koreans would not accept her for worship because she showed courage but did no good deeds after sending soldiers to the Korean Peninsula (Goto 270). However, construction on Puyŏ Shrine began in 1939 and Jingū was enshrined as a goddess there. Japan built both shrines for political purposes, but Jingū was excluded from Chosŏn Shrine but enshrined at Puyŏ. The representation and use of Jingū in colonial Korea have not been consistent. Japan also attempted to use Jingū in a religious aspect in Korea through the construction of Puyŏ Shrine and the deification of Jingū. Consequently, Japan, together with coercing State Shintō, continued to modify the meaning of Jingū's symbol and used it to serve cultural, political and religious purposes.

5. Revisiting and Educating about Empress Jingū's lineage

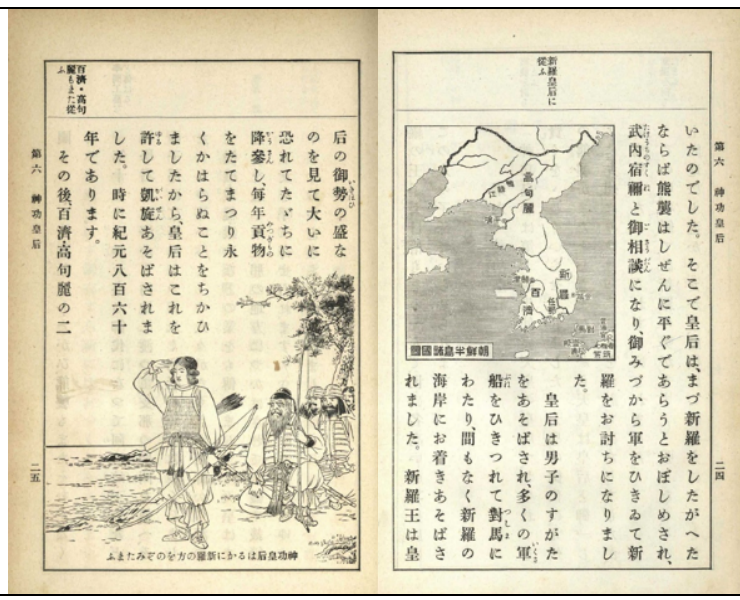
In State Shintō, which revolves around the emperor, the blood relationship with the emperor supports its sacredness. Jingū is described as an ancestor of the current emperor and the heir to the bloodline of the Korean Peninsula in Shintō's canon, making her a valuable tool for controlling Korea. Therefore, Japan stressed through education that Korean blood is in Jingū.

History textbooks in Japan often include stories about Empress Jingū; after Korea became a Japanese colony, similar stories were featured in Korean textbooks. The Government-General of Korea, which was in charge of producing textbooks during the colonial period, often edited Japanese textbooks for use in Korea, considering Korea's circumstances (Jang 61). For

example, *Jinjyō Syōgaku Kokukshi* (1927), a Japanese elementary school history textbook, and *Pot'ong hakkyo kuksa* (1930), a Korean elementary school history textbook, depict Jingū as the protagonist of the conquest of the Three Kingdoms.



Jinjyō Syōgaku Kokukshi



Pot'ong hakkyo kuksa

As the figures show, the plot development, the map and the illustrations of the Korean Peninsula were almost identical,

though there were some differences between the Korean and Japanese books. In the Korean textbook, the chapter called "Ancient Korea" came before the chapter "Empress Jingū" and ended by introducing the topic of ancient Korea-Japan exchanges with the following sentences: "As such, Korea has had a close relationship with Japan since ancient times whereupon many Korean people became naturalized Japanese. Ame-no-hiboko, the prince of Silla, was one of them. The famous Empress Jingū was his descendant" (20-21). The Korean textbook emphasizes Jingū as a person with a close relationship with Korea by introducing the Prince of Silla, Ame-no-hiboko, and this ending makes an effective transition to the chapter about Empress Jingū. Specifically, the distinction is that the Korean elementary school history textbook, even though it was based on the Japanese textbook, taught Jingū as a descendant of Silla, which was not the case in Japan.

This trend was also evident in the secondary education textbook. During the colonial period, Japanese was the designated national language of Korea. *Chūtō kyōiku kokubun tokuhon*, a Japanese textbook, issued by the Government-General of Korea in 1930, was written based on Japan's secondary education textbook, and the two shared a great deal of content (Kim Hyosook A 87-112, Kim Hyosook B 195-212). Jingū was featured in the chapter "Korean and Japanese of Ancient Times:"

> According to Korean history, there was a Japanese who once became a minister in Korea in the early *Silla* Dynasty. Therefore, farmers, fishermen, and great people went to Korea. And evidence supports the fact that Koreans came to Japan and became naturalized. During the reign of Ōkuninushi-no-mikoto, Ame-no-hiboko, the prince of *Silla*, became a naturalized Japanese and lived in Tajima, where he became a nobleman. The mother of Empress Jingū is a descendant of Ame-no-hiboko (96-97).

This chapter, along with the exchanges between ancient Korea and Japan, stresses that Jingū is a determinant of bilateral exchanges.

Incidentally, the excerpt quoted above is actually from *Dokushi*

no syumi (Hobby to Read History Books), a book published in Japan in 1915 by Hagino Yoshiyuki (1860-1924), a Japanese historian and a professor at *Tōkyō* Imperial University. In *Dokushi no syumi*, the quotation above was followed by this: "In the process of conquering Korea, Jingū would also have borrowed the power of his mother's family in Korea. After Empress Jingū conquered Korea in this way, most of the Korean territory fell into the Japanese sphere of influence" (Hagino 325). The Japanese book also described Jingū as a descendant of Silla, but it emphasized her great achievement of conquering Korea.

In brief, although textbooks issued in Korea during colonial times were based on textbooks issued in Japan, Japanese books emphasized Jingū as the "conqueror who devoured Korea," whereas, in Korea, textbooks emphasized a long-forgotten ancient narrative that had been rediscovered in Korea and that described her as a descendant of Ame-no-hiboko, the prince of Silla. Specifically, unlike textbooks issued in Japan, textbooks issued in Korea emphasized that she inherited the blood of Korean descent and that she embodied exchanges between Korea and Japan.

In this way, Japan portrayed that Jingū inherited the blood of Koreans in Korean textbooks, which made Koreans accept Jingū as their ancestor and induced a sense of connection in them. These textbook descriptions were written to make State Shintō naturally permeate the colony by convincing Koreans to accept the State Shintō's goddess, Jingū. In other words, with Jingū presented at the forefront, Japan attempted to lay the foundation for Koreans to embrace State Shintō by taking advantage of the fact that religions touch the deepest part of the human spirit.

6. The Bond of Blood, Embodiment of State Shintō

Apart from education, Japan introduced Jingū to Koreans through various ways so that State Shintō would take root in the colony. When a marriage of convenience took place between a Korean prince and a woman of a Japanese royal family, Japan widely proclaimed that the couple was the result of the union of blood between Korea and Japan and that it was the reproduction of the goddess Jingū in the real world.

In 1921, before and after the enactment and enforcement of the

Government-General of Korea Ordinance No. 99, the Act on the Procedure of Marriage between Korean and Japanese, the Government-General began to advocate intermarriage as both a result and a means of assimilation (Lee 174). Meanwhile, the Japanese government insisted on assimilationism on the grounds that the Japanese and Korean were similar in race and history, and because winning the support of the Korean population became a paramount goal of governance, the Government-General of Korea made Korea-Japan intermarriage a symbol of Korea-Japan harmonization whereby Korean and Japanese become one with "love" (Lee 183). The most significant symbol of Korea-Japan harmonization through intermarriage was the marriage of Yi Un, the last crown prince of Korea, to Masako, a member of the Japanese royal family. The marriage was decided in 1916, but after two postponements, it was held on 28 April 1920 to win the hearts of the Korean people. The Japanese empire highly acclaimed the marriage as a permanent companionship between Japan and Korea and praised the couple as a lasting and good example of the assimilation of Japan and Korea.

What is important here is that it was the legend of Jingū that underwrote the legitimacy of the marriage of Yi Un and Masako, praised as a lasting example of assimilation policy. *Maeil Sinbo*, the official newspaper of the Government-General of Korea, insisted on the following:

> Japan and Korea are now distinguished as different ethnic groups, but if you trace their origins, the two are completely the same people. ... In addition, the Japanese royal family is already mixed with Korean blood by virtue of the inheritance of Korean blood by Empress Jingū. Therefore, the marriage of Korean Prince Yi Un and princess Masako is no wonder at all. It is also a great happiness for Japan and Korea are one. (Maeil Sinbo C 1)

As mentioned above, the Government-General of Korea actively used the pedigree of Jingū to justify Korea-Japan marriage with a full-fledged propaganda goal of positively portraying and encouraging Korea-Japan intermarriage in the 1920s. The fact that Jingū's pedigree was highlighted in this way

is closely related to the kinship nationalism that was widespread in Japanese society at the time.

In Japan, blood has traditionally been one of the objects of *kegare* (impurity). For example, the word "blood" in *Heike monogatari* (13th century), a classic Japanese work of literature, hinted at the danger of life. From the beginning of the Edo period, blood changed gradually in meaning, symbolizing biological bonds; the phrase "brother by blood," which signified being a family member, came to be used. In addition, amid the widespread perception that the bond between family members is based on sharing blood became a keyword that symbolized a sense of belonging and racial connection.

Entering the modern age, bonds based on the continuity of blood became more crucial. In 1889, the Former Imperial House Law, which was the basic code for the Japanese royal family, was enacted along with the Constitution of the Empire of Japan. The terms of succession to the throne applied the following: *Dankei no danshi* (The Imperial Throne should be succeeded by male members of the Imperial family). In response, the adoption system was banned, and the reason for this was that although the Japanese people traditionally had enough children to allow them to succeed the family, only the royal family was recognized as *Banseiikkei* (the unbroken Imperial line), the purest pedigree (Nishida 285).

This context has led the Japanese royal family to view pedigree as closely bound to the ideology of the Japanese empire. In the Japanese Empire, the core ideology centred around *Kokuta,*[3] which was the basic ideology calling for a family state wherein the emperor ruled as a father over a crowd and the colonies supported the emperor as the head of the family. Therefore, Japan tried to incorporate its colonies into the family state. Toward that end, through archaeological excavations and blood typing in

[3] *Kokutai* is a unique and highly ambiguous concept, many researchers are still attempting new interpretations and translating differently as "national body," "national community," "national character," "national essence," "national substance," "state structure," and "national polity"(Kitagawa 209)

colonies, Japan scientifically and empirically historicized the blood continuity between itself and the colonies (Mun 30). The logic underlying Japan's colonial policy of kinship nationalism (Komagome 84-85) required presenting the common bloodline if the Empire of Japan was going to embrace Korea, and what the colonizing nation actively used was Jingū as a descendant of Silla.

Accordingly, Jingū, as a goddess of Japanese and Korean descent, served to justify the marriage between the Korean crown prince and the Japanese female of the royal family and to prove that Korea and Japan are indeed one nation. The use of Jingū in this massive propaganda campaign aimed to declare that the Korean crown prince became a member of the Japanese imperial family, while also demonstrating that Korea was incorporated into the sphere of influence of State Shintō.

7. Empress Jingū, Who Became the Goddess of Puyŏ Shrine

Imperial Japan used Empress Jingū as a propaganda tool for education and social policy in colonial Korea, portraying her as a goddess who inherited the Korean bloodline. When the Pacific War loomed, Japan went even further in strengthening her religious status by actually building a State Shintō shrine dedicated to Jingū.

Japan, which started the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, promulgated the National Mobilization Law, a decree for mobilizing human and material resources from the colonies to wage war the following year. Later, in March 1939, the Government-General of Korea announced that it would build a shrine in Puyŏ, "the spiritual ground that strengthens the Unity of Korea and Japan" (Chosŏn Ilbo A 2). Within the shrine, a total of four Japanese emperors and empresses were enshrined as gods who were said to have had a deep exchange with the Korean Peninsula: Emperor Ōjin, Empress Saimei, Emperor Tenji, and Empress Jingū. Puyŏ Shrine was a shrine bestowed with special status by the Japanese imperial family, a State Shintō (Chosŏn Ilbo A 2). In a government bulletin published on 19 April 1939, Governor-General Minami said that the loyalty of Koreans was very high, but greater efforts were needed to deepen the unity of

Korea and Japan; he also emphasized the need to establish a shrine and increase the number of volunteers to put this into practice. Toward this end, Governor-General Minami revealed that he would establish a shrine in Puyŏ to enshrine Jingū and others because it was essential for the "raising of the people's thoughts" to worship the heroic spirits of those who chose death by giving their lives as gods:

> It is a very beautiful aspect of our *Kokutai* to worship those who sacrificed themselves for the emperor and the country, namely the souls who have devoted their allegiance by death as gods. ... A system for *Gokoku* Shrine has now been established. I am glad that it allowed the heroic spirits to be enshrined in the shrine even in Korea (Chosŏn Ilbo A 2)

The specific purpose of constructing Puyŏ Shrine was to recruit Koreans for the Pacific War.

According to reports by *Chosŏn Ilbo* and *Tonga Ilbo* published on 29 June of the same year, Governor Minami said this regarding constructing the Puyŏ Shrine:

> It is the most beautiful tradition in our country to enshrine the spirits of those who sacrificed themselves for the sake of the country in the shrine and honor them. There are already Korean spirits enshrined in the *Yasukuni* Shrine due to the recent Sino-Japanese War. In addition, it is truly meaningful that the volunteers have already joined the military and have become national shields and castles for the nation on the continent (Chosŏn Ilbo B 1, Tonga Ilbo 1).

Yasukuni Shrine was constructed by Emperor Meiji of Japan in 1869 to enshrine the spirits of those who died in the war; Japan mobilized soldiers while promoting that those who died fighting for the Japanese emperor would be enshrined as gods. As such, Yasukuni Shrine is not only a place where Class A war criminals are enshrined but also a symbol of the emperor worship and militarism of the Japanese empire. However, one result of Japan's efforts is that even today, in the postcolonial era, visits by Japanese politicians to Yasukuni Shrine cause diplomatic friction with South Korea and other Asian countries. Puyŏ Shrine was planned to play the same role, demonstrating the legitimacy of

mobilizing Koreans to war by making Jingū, who was said to be of Korean descent, a goddess.

The Puyŏ shrine was not completed because Japan was defeated in 1945, but even before that, Japan had already used the shrine to promote the empire's colonial policy by having Korean volunteers worship and forcing construction labour (Maeil Sinbo D 3).

In this way, Japan, which had been trying to establish State Shintō in the hearts of Korean people by using Jingū in various ways, had also tried to build a shrine that served her as a goddess to make her the object of faith, as the Pacific War loomed. It must be noted that the Pacific War was just around the corner when Jingū was enshrined as a goddess at the Puyŏ shrine, strengthening her presence as a god in Korea. During the war, Japan held Korea as a military base and exploited its human and natural resources as much as possible. This resulted in the loss of thousands of human lives, along with the destruction of forests and the loss of biodiversity. The coercion of religious faith for Jingū is a classic example of the misuse of religion to exploit resources for war.

8. Conclusion

The Hachiman Shrine, where Jingū is enshrined as a goddess, currently holds a life-release ritual every year. In its original form, the life-release is a Buddhist religious ritual reflecting on life through releasing fish and animals caught by humans, but it has been merged into Shintō through the syncretism of Shintō and Buddhism. The Hachiman Shrine's life release ceremony began in the 8th century to atone for the sin of taking lives during wars. These examples show that Jingū was more than just a goddess of war; she was also a guardian deity who respected life. However, during the Japanese colonial era, Japan gradually defined and strengthened religious policies to establish the empire by using Jingū to promote State Shintō in educational and societal aspects and actually building Puyŏ shrine.

Shintō's most fundamental and central belief is the human mind's inclination to worship nature and preserve peace. Despite

this, in the name of 'modern development and peace in East Asia,' Japan artificially transformed it into State Shintō and used it to conquer colonies and expand wars. Japan justified resource exploitation and environmental destruction, directing human minds toward war by utilizing State Shintō. Due to Japanese imperialism, the original purpose of religion to save humans and nature was abused and distorted. State Shintō has not been able to function as a religion; hence, it is widely criticized today.

Shintō is originally based on respect for nature and humans. But religious beliefs are so powerful that they cloud logical judgments and make people obsessed with false beliefs. Therefore, ironically under the name of religion, it also shows a contradictory appearance that destroys life and peace. When religion, which is necessary to save humanity, is distorted by human desires, its significance disappears as a religion altogether. In light of the destructive impacts caused by Japanese colonialism's distorted view of religion, efforts should be made to restore the original meaning of religion and pursue coexistence between nature and humans in peace, thereby fulfilling the responsibility of building a sustainable future-oriented society.

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