

Benjamin DORMAN

## SCAP's Scapegoat?

### The Authorities, New Religions, and a Postwar Taboo

This article considers the issue of how the authorities have dealt with the question of guaranteeing religious freedom during the postwar period at the same time as dealing effectively with groups that compromise, or are widely rumored to compromise, public safety. While the various circumstances surrounding Aum Shinrikyō are clearly relevant to this area, in order to make sense of what happened in the wake of Aum, it is necessary to look at the period of the Allied Occupation (1945–1952). By examining the case of Jiu, one of the first new religions after the surrender that ran into trouble with the authorities, we can develop a better picture of the contemporary religious scene.

**KEYWORDS:** Allied Occupation – SCAP – police – Jiu – Aum Shinrikyō – public safety

Benjamin Dorman received his PhD from the Australian National University in 2003. He is currently Associate Editor of the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*.

SINCE JAPAN'S DEFEAT in 1945 and the introduction of wide-sweeping reforms by the Allied Occupation forces, collectively known as SCAP,<sup>1</sup> state authorities have had to contend with a complex dilemma: how to balance the need to protect the rights and freedoms of religious groups guaranteed in the Constitution at the same time as dealing effectively with groups that compromise, or are widely rumored to compromise, public safety. This article will investigate these issues through considering the case of Jiu 璽宇,<sup>2</sup> a new religious movement whose growth was quelled by the authorities in early 1947 after the highly publicized arrests of its leaders. I will argue that this incident had significant impact on the development of a kind of taboo whereby Japanese authorities appeared to be extremely reluctant to investigate the activities of religious groups for most of the postwar period until, of course, the Aum Shinrikyō affair.<sup>3</sup>

### *Aum and a Postwar Taboo*

In the wake of the horrific sarin gas attack of 1995, the police and Japanese state security institutions were criticized for doing too little too late to stop Aum criminal activities and violence. A number of viewpoints have been offered concerning the failure of the police to investigate and deal adequately with Aum before it committed a series of heinous crimes. Takagi Hiroo, one of the first Japanese scholars of religion to study new religious movements seriously in the postwar period, raised the notion of a postwar taboo, arguing in the *Nikkei Weekly* (22 May 1995) that government authorities had become loath to investigate religious groups because they might be accused of official interference. In the pre-1945 years of the Peace Preservation Law and the investigations of the feared Special Higher Police (*tokkō keisatsu* 特高警察), religious groups that were

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1. SCAP, a general term for the Allied Occupation infrastructure, stands for "Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers," which was also used to refer to General Douglas MacArthur.

2. One explanation of the name "Jiu" was offered to a SCAP official by members of Jiu during an interview. They stated that "ji" (璽) meant emperor's seal, which is a symbol of the throne, and "u" (宇) referred to house in this context. Jiu therefore can be read to mean palace or imperial shrine. See SCAP 1.

3. For a comprehensive account of Aum and its subsequent path to violence, see READER 2000. The articles in KISALA and MULLINS 2001 provide a variety of perspectives on Aum-related issues.

deemed to deviate from the official State Shinto-based orthodoxy were persecuted. Yet with the advent of the Allied Occupation and the introduction of freedom of religion, ostensibly the Japanese authorities could no longer investigate religious groups as they had in the past. Similarly, HARDACRE (2003, p. 145) states that the police feared accusations of persecuting religion if they investigated Aum too vigorously. Journalists KAPLAN and MARSHALL (1996, p. 64) hold that Japanese law enforcement authorities “simply did not want to interfere with a religious group” whereas HUGHES argues that the main reason is that the institutions were designed to deal with Cold War terrorism and “were virtually blind to, or disinterested in, the possibility that a religious group such as Aum could initiate terrorist acts” (2001, p. 62). These views reflect the central claim put forward by Maki Tarō 牧太郎 recently in the *Asahi Shinbun* (24 January 2004, “Tabū hihan osoreruna” タブー批判恐れるな [Don’t be afraid of breaking taboos], p. 13). He argues that in the postwar period both the police and the mass media feared the accusation of persecuting religious groups, and that criticism of groups by the media became taboo. Maki was editor of the *Mainichi Shinbun’s Sunday Mainichi* weekly magazine in 1989 when it first broke the story of Aum, which triggered the initial investigations into the group’s activities. Certainly Maki’s statement regarding the reluctance of the “mass media” to deal with religious groups requires substantial qualification and deserves further treatment.<sup>4</sup> However, the purpose of this paper is to concentrate on the role of the authorities, rather than the media, in the postwar period vis-à-vis new religions.

These views indicate a general trend in the way Japanese authorities dealt (or did not deal) with religious movements in the postwar period, that is, up until the Aum incident. Yet the use of the term “postwar” in this context should not be misconstrued to mean that this “taboo” began to operate immediately after Japan’s surrender in 1945 with the introduction of unprecedented freedom of religion. By focusing on the Occupation period (1945–1952) in particular, we can gain insights into the way the Japanese authorities had to deal with the new rules under new masters, the various SCAP authorities. Investigating the case of one of the first groups that appeared during the febrile period well-known as the “rush hour of the gods” provides insights into the current situation regarding relations between the state and religious movements.

### *The Prewar State and New Religions*

Before 1945, the government authorities persecuted and suppressed a number of new religions that had developed outside the state-sanctioned religious hierarchy. From the 1920s until the end of World War Two, an unprecedented number of

4. MORIOKA 1994 and DORMAN 2003 deal with media-generated campaigns against different new religions in the immediate postwar period.

new religions espousing millennial renewal appeared and made a great impact, despite the danger of suppression by the authorities. TSUSHIMA (1991b, pp. 80–81) holds that many new religions of the early Showa period developed concepts of world renewal (*yonaooshi* 世直し), which appeared to resemble classical myths that related to the emperor, the imperial line, and the nation. These concepts tended to reflect the values of direct imperial lineage where the people were viewed as playing a crucial role in the nation's development under the emperor. Most of the new religions of the prewar period were not directly critical of the emperor, and they were more inclined to place great hopes in him as the leader of world renewal and restoration.

But it was not so much the questioning of state-supported myths that invited trouble from the authorities for new religious movements. As GARON suggests, what ultimately sealed the fate of some of these groups was their ability to develop outside the official state-sponsored religious hierarchy (1997, p. 83) and to gather a significant amount of public support, as in the case of Ōmotokyō. Its leaders, including the flamboyant Deguchi Ōnisaburō, were arrested in 1921 for *lèse majesté* and violating newspaper laws (after publishing millennial predictions) but released shortly after. The group then began rebuilding itself under Deguchi's command and expanded its activities into China, forming ties with Kōmanjikai Dōin 紅卍字会道院 (Red Swastika Society), a popular philanthropic and religious association that enjoyed the support of influential politicians in China at the time.

Deguchi, after being released from prison in 1922, decided to attempt international expansion, forming an association with Kōmanjikai Dōin in 1923. YOUNG suggests that this may have been an attempt by him to ameliorate the repercussions of his past crimes (1988, p. 273). Ōmotokyō and Kōmanjikai Dōin were in a dangerous political and cultural climate because the Sino-Japanese relationship was becoming problematic. By establishing links with Chinese groups, Deguchi could be viewed by the authorities as supporting the national policy of international expansion. Instead of seeking to affiliate with a sectarian Shinto group, as Renmonkyō and Tenrikyō had done in the past, he could be seen to be acting in the interests of the state by connecting with a powerful group on the Chinese mainland. On the other hand, Kōmanjikai Dōin wanted to ensure its survival in a climate in which other similar China-based groups had vanished. The relationship was ostensibly formed after a delegation from Kōmanjikai Dōin arrived in Japan in 1923 to provide humanitarian aid and financial assistance in the wake of the Great Kantō Earthquake. However, both parties had been courting their relationship some time before this disaster. The earthquake may have provided an opportunity for the two groups to show the Japanese government their mutual support for its expansionist policies. On 3 November the delegation visited Ōmotokyō's headquarters in Ayabe. Dōin established temple-branches in Kobe, Ayabe, Kameoka and Tokyo. Deguchi also

attempted to travel through Mongolia in 1924. This was an ill-fated trip that saw him and members of his group kidnapped. However, his exploits apparently caused his personal popularity in Japan to rise.

Ōmotokyō and Kōmanjikai Dōin shared a number of characteristics, such as voluntary membership, lay leadership, and certain texts and practices. During the early 1930s Ōmotokyō had re-established itself as a well-organized movement, and its newspaper, the *Jinrui Aizen Shinbun* 人類愛善新聞, had achieved sales surpassing one million units (INOUE 1996, p. 111). But together with its phenomenal growth came rumors in the press concerning the development of a political movement from within the group (SAKAMOTO 1994, p. 483). On 8 December 1935 the authorities suddenly raided the group's headquarters, arresting the leaders and destroying buildings within the grounds. Charges were laid under the provisions of the 1925 Peace Preservation Law, a highly repressive legal instrument designed to punish groups who attempted to “bring about radical changes in the national polity” (*kokutai no henkaku* 国体の変革). As ALDOUS notes, before 1945 police brutality “was mainly directed at those who undermined national unity and mobilization—those who voiced reservations concerning the soundness of government policies or advocated a radical political agenda” (1997, p. 31). Following the Ōmotokyō case, a number of other new religions were also persecuted by the authorities. By the early 1940s, questioning the official state orthodoxy was a highly dangerous path for religions to pursue. It was in this environment that Jiu first appeared.

### *Jiu—In the Service of the Emperor*

Jiu formed in 1941 and was the product of two separate entities, Kōdō Daikyō 皇道大教 and the above-mentioned Kōmanjikai Dōin. Kōdō Daikyō, a Shinto-based circle that was not affiliated with an officially-recognized sect, was founded by Minemura Kyōhei 峰村恭平, a businessman with mining development and farming interests. Kōdō Daikyō apparently emphasized unity with the emperor and service toward him, and followers worshipped the sun goddess, Amaterasu Ōmikami. The main spiritual inspiration came in the form of oracles (*shinji* 神示) received by Minemura's brother-in-law Mitsuo (TSUSHIMA 1991a, pp. 339–40). Kōmanjikai Dōin, which was already highly popular in China, had been attempting to expand overseas to Japan in the same way as Ōmotokyō had attempted to do in China. One of its members was the Chinese-born Go Seigen 吳清源, arguably the greatest *i go* 囲碁 (Japanese chess) player of the twentieth century. Go, who left China to play *go* in Japan in 1928, was approached in 1938 by two influential Japanese figures in Kōmanjikai Dōin (who both had links to Ōmotokyō) to help establish a chapter of the group in Japan. The Japanese government refused their requests to establish a Japanese branch on the grounds that it was not possible for a Chinese religion to be introduced to Japan (Go 1984, p. 101). The supporters of Kōdō

Daikyō and Kōmanjikai Dōin happened to live in the same area of Tokyo. Personal relationships formed but because of Kōmanjikai Dōin's past associations with Ōmotokyō, its supporters in Tokyo were in a precarious position vis à vis the authorities. After some negotiation, it was agreed that they would enshrine their object of worship at Kōdō Daikyō's base (TSUSHIMA 1991a, pp. 340–41).

Sometime in 1941, the name Kōdō Daikyō was changed to Jiu. During this year Nagaoka Nagako 長岡良子, a woman who became known as Jikōson 璽光尊 found her way into the group. Through her association with Jiu members, Nagaoka developed elaborate theories of world renewal, similar to some of those promoted by Ōmotokyō before the second persecution in 1935 (MURAKAMI 1985, p. 83). Eventually she took over the leadership of Jiu, a position she held until her death in 1984. Nagaoka had dabbled in various religious practices, including Zen austerities, from around 1927. She fell ill and this experience marked the beginning of her religious career (AKIMOTO 1947a). She began to suffer intense fevers after which she would fall into a trance-like state and make various pronouncements and predictions. A defining moment occurred on 20 September 1934 when, as she later claimed, she received a revelation and met “the supreme goddess,” who told her to “teach the eternal unchanging truth, save the people and work for the nation in a time of dire need” (SCAP 1). From this point she became convinced she was endowed with a special mission to save the nation from calamity, and began to attract a small circle of followers. She firmly believed in the religious authority of the emperor and participated in rituals involving emperor worship. She shared with other members of Jiu the conviction that Japan had a special mission to save the world through the emperor.

Nagaoka lived with some of her followers in a house in Yokohama. The police were aware of Jiu's existence, and they knew that world renewal comprised part of the group's beliefs. They had been carrying out a secret investigation for some time to determine whether Jiu had any significant social influence. Yet membership was not large and the police determined that Jiu's influence was minimal (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 345). However, an investigation was launched into Mine-mura's business activities, particularly those relating to mining. Police raided the house in Yokohama on 8 February 1945, looking for evidence of corrupt business practices. During the raid they found a copy of a pamphlet published in 1943 called *Makoto no hito* 真の人 (“A True Person”), which contained references calling for “cooperation in the realization of imperial ideals” and “the end of the holy war.” Despite the fact that there were no direct references indicating blatant disrespect toward the emperor, Nagaoka was immediately arrested and imprisoned.<sup>5</sup> She was eventually released on 3 March 1945 and sent to hospital after coughing up blood while in detention (TSUSHIMA 1991a, pp. 344–46). She

5. DOWER (1999, p. 303) notes that police files logged towards the end of the war reveal “a mounting concern that incidents of lese majesty were increasing as the situation deteriorated.”

then returned to the house in Yokohama. Katsuki Tokujirō 勝木徳二郎, an indefatigable supporter of Nagaoka and her eventual successor, claimed when I interviewed him at Jiu's "headquarters" in Yokohama on 28 February 1999 that from that time on Jiu became the target of fairly constant police surveillance. Soon after Nagaoka's release, the Allied air raids hit Tokyo and Minemura's house was destroyed. The group split up with Katsuki, Go Seigen, and other key members remaining at Nagaoka's side (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 344).

On 31 May Nagaoka delivered an oracle that was to have a significant effect on the group's future: it essentially declared the beginning of a new era for Jiu.<sup>6</sup> Calling for members to take her message of world renewal into the outside world, the oracle signaled major changes for the group and marked the beginning of an intense period of tensions both within Jiu itself and between the group and the outside world. Until that time, apart from Minemura's business activities, Jiu had remained extremely insular and eschewed contact with those who were not in their circle.

Virtually all courses of action and activities Jiu attempted from 31 May 1945 onwards were based primarily on the oracles. Jiu's philosophy concentrated on restructuring the current social systems and world renewal. It did not recommend overthrowing the emperor but rather reaffirmed the importance of imperial rule. The sun goddess played the main role in the achievement and administration of world renewal, whereas various buddhas and bodhisattvas had the task of saving people and cleansing spirits. The group also chanted *tenji shōmyō* 天璽照妙, a phrase which was translated by a SCAP Religions Division officer as "The Celestial Jewel Shines Mysteriously" (SCAP 1). When Nagaoka took over the leadership, oracles became the dominant part of Jiu's spiritual activities and direction. The members believed they were imbued with infallible authority and everyone, including Nagaoka herself, was compelled to follow their dictates. Apparently Nagaoka herself would express surprise and shock at the types of activities Jiu was required to perform by the deities.<sup>7</sup> Oracles, which contained commands relating to the group's next moves, were consulted daily. Apart from delivering important messages regarding blueprints for world renewal such as a

6. The transmission of the oracles from this point followed a fairly regular pattern. Nagaoka first offered prayers in front of the shrine to various Shinto and Buddhist deities. Then Go's wife Kazuko and her sister would act as mediums and transmit the messages or guidance from the deities. Kazuko entered into a state of possession and, after emitting high-pitched sounds, would then fall into a trance-like state and receive messages from the deities. Her younger sister Kanako then held out a pen and paper, and Kazuko wrote down the messages or instructions from the deities. On other occasions Kanako would record the messages, or Kazuko would write them down without her help (Katsuki Tokujirō, interview with author, Yokohama 28 February 1999). Although Nagaoka never verbalized or recorded the messages herself, she always took spiritual leadership because it was she who called forth the deities (TSUSHIMA 1991a, pp. 347–48).

7. Katsuki Tokujirō, interview with author, Yokohama 28 February 1999.

new political structure under the emperor, they also directed the group's physical movements (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 348).<sup>8</sup>

The members of the group felt a sense of great apprehension because the oracles required each member to participate in activities that often broke boundaries of social convention and defied common sense. They were constantly torn between the fear of repercussions that might occur because of the demands placed upon them, and their great hope of achieving world renewal and eternal peace (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 349). On the one hand, there was a sense that the messages were coming directly from deities who were directing them to carry out a holy mission that only they were qualified for. This inspired them greatly and gave them a strong sense of belonging and self-worth. On the other hand, they could not predict what sort of commands the deities would give them, and there was always the possibility that the oracles would call on the believers to perform actions that would cause friction between the group and the world outside. Furthermore, Nagaoka was highly sensitive and would experience extreme physical distress if she felt the presence of malignant spirits around her.<sup>9</sup> Her reaction would then trigger off a sense of desperation and fear among other members of Jiu. They would interpret Nagaoka's suffering as a warning from a powerful god that they should personally reform and strengthen their resolve to carry out their assigned tasks for the cause of world renewal (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 347).

The feelings they shared were also intensified by their communal lifestyle. Many of them had been living together for an extended period, and they had to endure together evacuation and relocation after the fire-bombings in Yokohama and Tokyo. When the headquarters was reestablished in Tokyo, there were between ten to thirty people living in the same house.<sup>10</sup> As the community strengthened, it also isolated itself from the world outside. The members saw their headquarters as being a model of the original imperial palace, a pure holy world that had to be completely separated from the corrupt society outside and the secular world. According to Go, the lifestyle was one of monastic stoicism, and no contact with the outside world was permitted for the believers (Go 1984, p. 128). Any unavoidable contact that had to be made was done with great care, and Nagaoka in particular would not permit casual visits or grant an audience (*hai etsu* 拜謁)<sup>11</sup> with

8. Jiu members lived an itinerant existence, and they "relocated the palace" (*sengū* 遷宮) over a dozen times from August 1945 up until July 1948, when they finally settled down in Yokohama.

9. It is not unusual for leaders of new religious movements to become ill, and for their followers to react to this illness. This occurred with Asahara Shōkō of Aum, as well as Jim Jones of the People's Temple and Joe DiMambro of Solar Temple (READER 2000, pp. 171–73).

10. Not all believers lived with the core group and, in fact, the total number of believers of Jiu teachings is difficult to ascertain. The SCAP record of interviews with Go Seigen and Jikōson (SCAP 1) stated that at one ceremony SCAP officials observed in 1946, there were about a hundred people participating.

11. This word usually means "an imperial audience."

outsiders such as landlords (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 349–50). This isolationism contributed to inevitable conflicts with landlords and neighbors.

In the last months before Japan's surrender, Jiu members maintained hope that the emperor would take the lead in the holy mission of world renewal. Nagaoka was convinced that she was sent to act as assistant to the current emperor in order to fulfill the wishes of the sun goddess to bring about a "restoration of imperial power" (*kōi ishin* 皇威維新). Included in a series of oracles received in June 1945 was one that first mentioned the word *Jikō* 璽光, which was an indication to the members that Nagaoka was no longer a leader in the mundane, human world: she had now become a deity sent to save the world. An oracle, delivered and recorded on 12 July 1945, held that *Jikō* was the representative of Amaterasu Ōmikami sent to assist the emperor. To *Jikōson* the emperor was not only a living god, but also the rightful ruler of Japan and the entire world (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 352). Consequently, the group's activities became focused on the imperial family. Jiu saw Japan's worsening domestic situation toward the end of the war as a sign of punishment from the gods. The members believed that the gods had abandoned the nation and that the destruction surrounding them indicated that the time for world renewal had arrived. They equated the bombings of Tokyo and Yokohama with an intensification of "holy war." By the time of the surrender, they clung onto these beliefs, and felt ready to launch into a second phase of activities toward world reform. When the Occupation troops arrived, Jiu still believed in the idea of emperor-centered world renewal. Rather than accepting that Japan had been defeated, the members became more daring and reckless in their attempts to influence society in order to realize its self-appointed mission.

### *A New Regime*

After Japan's surrender, the agenda of the Allied Occupation was demilitarization and democratization—a combination of hard-line controls and idealism.<sup>12</sup> In the field of religion, SCAP's primary mission was the establishment of religious freedom and the elimination of ultranationalistic and militaristic ideas. Its secondary mission was to encourage the Japanese people "to develop a desire for freedom of religion" (WOODARD 1972, p. 179). The main targets toward this end were the Japanese Home Ministry and the Education Ministry. In order to dismantle what WOODARD terms the "kokutai cult," which was a system of officially imposed teachings, rites, and practices that centered on the notion that the emperor and the state formed one entity and that the emperor was divine (1972, pp. 9–10), SCAP issued a series of directives. These included the Civil Liberties Directive of

12. The term "Allied Occupation," as DOWER (1999, p. 73) points out, is a misnomer because "from start to finish, the United States alone determined basic policy and exercised decisive command over all aspects of the occupation."

4 October 1945 and Shinto Directive of 15 December 1945 whereby State Shinto was dismantled and the Peace Preservation Law abrogated. Government bodies that had control of religious affairs, such as the powerful wartime Shrine Board and the Special Higher Police, were abolished. Furthermore, the official recognition system that was administered through the Religious Organizations Law of 1939 by the Education Ministry was removed.<sup>13</sup>

Occupation policy required SCAP to establish offices parallel to those within the Japanese government. On 2 October 1945, the Civil Information and Education section (CI&E) was established as a special civil staff section of SCAP. This section had primary responsibility for advising the Supreme Commander on policies relating to religion, as well as public information, education, and other social problems. CI&E's tasks were to make recommendations that would expedite freedom of religion, to liaise with religious organizations to insure that they understood SCAP's objectives, and to make recommendations on matters concerning religious articles and buildings (SCAP 1948, p. 123). SCAP's Religions Division was set up within CI&E as a counterpart to the Education Ministry's Religious Affairs Section on 28 November 1945.

Another area of the enormous Occupation structure that played a major part in the story of Jiu was G-2, the intelligence branch that was to become the most powerful agency within MacArthur's headquarters. G-2's chief, Major General Charles A. Willoughby, was staunchly anti-Communist and an open admirer of fascist leaders like Mussolini and Franco. His influence was very significant in many areas of the Occupation until he left Japan after MacArthur was recalled in 1951. Willoughby balked at reforms promoted by civil staff groups like CI&E, including its draft of the Civil Liberties Directive (TAKEMAE 2002, pp. 161–63). He was also opposed to police decentralization. A Civil Affairs Guide, "The Japanese Police System under Allied Occupation," published in September 1945, ran counter to Willoughby's agenda to a certain extent, and recommended that in order to create a force that served the people, not the state, police authority be limited, ultranationalist elements purged, and police powers decentralized, among other issues. Despite these recommendations, the chief of the Public Safety Division, which was part of the Civil Intelligence Section that had been absorbed by G-2 in May 1946 (and became G-2's central surveillance organ), and Willoughby tried to push forward a plan to the Yoshida cabinet in the latter part

13. This law provided state recognition for certain religious organizations, but it also gave the state authority to interfere with religious affairs. Under this law the fifty-six existing Buddhist sects were forcibly merged into twenty-eight. In the process of amalgamation, the traditions and differences between the various groups were ignored. The Indoctrination Bureau (*Kyōgaku kyoku* 教学局) within the Ministry was responsible for the "supervision and guidance" of religious organizations through its Religions Section (*Shūkyōka* 宗教課). "Supervision and guidance," according to SCAP's interpretation, meant that the religious bodies that were officially recognized under the Religious Organizations Law were subject to government control in their operations.

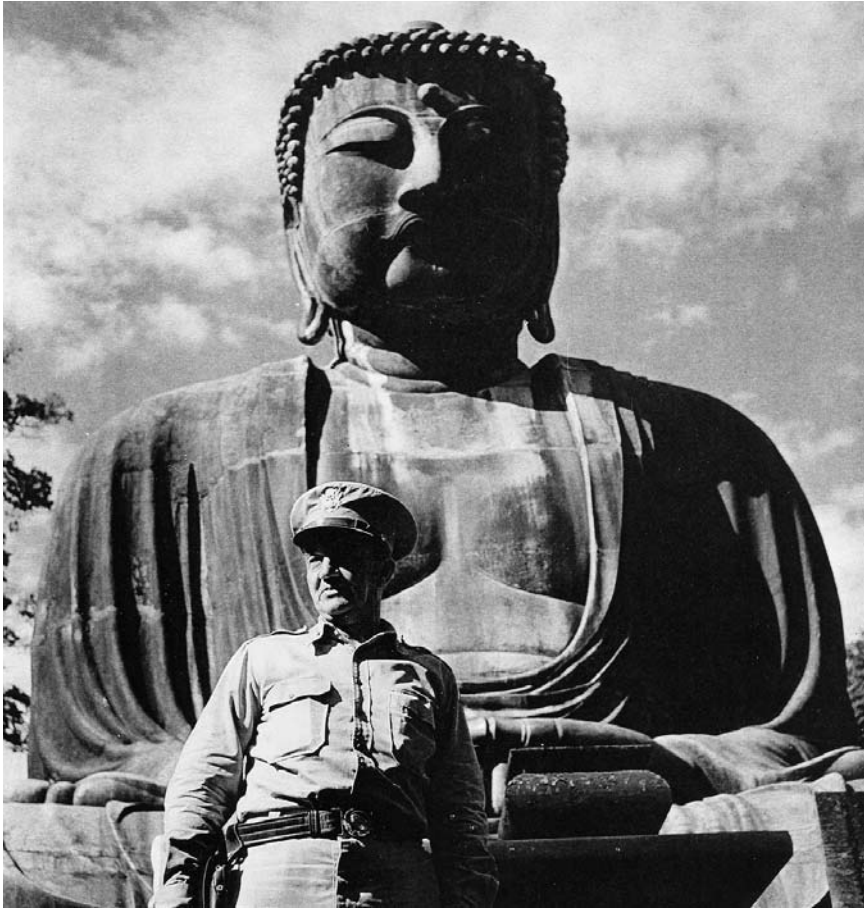


FIGURE 1: Lt. Robert L. Eichelberger, Commanding General of the Eighth US Army, and Occupation forces in the Tokyo area stands in front of the statue of the Buddha at Kamakura. 9/12/45. (Official US Navy Photograph No. 208-PU-58E; Still Picture Research Room; National Archives at College Park, MD.)

of 1946 that retained some centralized aspects of the police force. Although this plan did not work and decentralization was eventually introduced in 1948, post-Occupation reforms introduced in 1954 recentralized the police chain of command (TAKEMAE 2002, pp. 297–99, 517).

Thus, there were conflicting elements within SCAP itself, separated to a certain extent by ideological boundaries. On the one hand, Willoughby, who has been called SCAP’s “intelligence tsar,” decried the “leftist infiltration” of the civil sections and was ironically described by two British writers as “the kind of militarist the Occupation was dedicated to destroying in Japan” (cited in TAKEMAE 2002, p. 161). On the other hand, the first CI&E chief, Brigadier General Kermit (“Ken”) Dyke

who, during his short tenure that ended in May 1946, helped free political prisoners, disbanded the Special Higher Police, drafted the emperor's speech renouncing his divinity, and oversaw the introduction of the Shinto Directive, was labeled "that damned pink" by conservatives within SCAP. His successor, Lieutenant Donald R. Nugent, was, however, a strong conservative who coordinated assaults on Communists in schools, the media, and the labor movement, which culminated in the Red Purge of 1949–1950 (TAKEMAE 2002, p. 181). These two organizations within the Occupation structure and the personalities that shaped their policies and activities reflect the kinds of issues that continue to influence Japanese society in terms of relations between the state and religions.

### *Imperial Salvation and a "Cabinet" for World Renewal*

When Jikōson was first arrested in early 1945, the police had authority to investigate groups suspected of violating the tenets of State Shinto and promoting practices and ideas not officially condoned by the state. After SCAP dismantled the structures of State Shinto, the police no longer had the legal means to investigate groups on religious grounds. However, under the new regime, the police were required to maintain surveillance over any groups they suspected of disturbing the public peace or threatening public order. Also, the decision to engage in an indirect Occupation "meant that the police were indispensable to the Americans, and ensured that the institution would not be radically altered until other reforms had been successfully pushed through" (ALDOUS 1997, p. 43). Yet fundamentally the US policy was ambiguous—on the one hand, the Japanese people were encouraged to actively promote civil liberties, and on the other, the traditional civil police system was permitted to continue, albeit with certain restrictions.

Despite the emperor's broadcast admitting defeat, Jikōson and her followers remained firm in their conviction that Japan was sacred and indestructible, and that world renewal centering on the emperor was possible. Furthermore, they believed the emperor's involvement in Jiu's world renewal activities would naturally encourage his subjects to join in (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 347). If world renewal did not occur, they believed that calamities would befall those who did not take up Jikōson's teachings. Part of the purpose of the Shinto Directive issued by SCAP was "to prevent a recurrence of the perversion of Shinto theory and beliefs into militaristic and ultra-nationalistic propaganda designed to delude the people and lead them into wars of aggression" (SCAP 1949, Appendix B, p. 467). Jiu's ideas may have been construed as promoting an ultranationalistic agenda, thus contravening SCAP's rules. However, despite later police accounts which held that Jiu members were arrested because they promoted such ideas, the SCAP authorities themselves were not concerned with this. Their main concern was whether Jiu presented a threat to public safety, a concern that was stirred up to

a large extent by the information supplied by the police as a result of their investigations.

Through living a cloistered existence, Jiu members had little concept of what was happening in society outside their “palace.” Yet they refused to compromise their beliefs about world renewal. This had two effects: it served to solidify the bonds shared between the members and reinforce their increasing sense of alienation from the outside world; it also triggered a series of remarkable events that led to Jiu’s downfall.

The group fully expected that the emperor or members of the imperial family would soon contact them to begin world renewal activities. They had received no word by December 1945, however, and gradually they began to feel that the task of world renewal would fall on their shoulders alone. A series of oracles in late November and early December indicated that rather than relying on the imperial family, Jiu must take sole responsibility for world renewal. An oracle received on 8 December 1945 announced that Jiu’s headquarters was the imperial palace and the headquarters of salvation (*kyūsei no sōhonbu* 救世の総本部). The oracles indicated that Jiu should establish guidelines for the structure and operation of world renewal, rather than wait for the imperial family to announce that they were ready to take up the call for world renewal (TSUSHIMA 1991a, pp. 357–58).

On 23 January 1946 Jikōson received an important oracle that proposed the establishment of a “cabinet” (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 358). Subsequent oracles listed a total of thirty potential candidates, including the emperor, General MacArthur, and Yoshida Shigeru, who was to become prime minister in May 1946. Jiu leaders such as Katsuki and Go Seigen were also chosen as members of the cabinet (SCAP 1). The “cabinet oracles” heralded a great change for Jiu. Jikōson began to send messages to famous and influential people from various fields, ordering them to pay a visit to the “palace” (MURAKAMI 1985, p. 85). This was a method of proselytization she continued to use for some time, with widely varying degrees of success.

Although Jiu’s ultimate goal was to attract the people listed in the “cabinet” and other luminaries to their cause, its members also made efforts to attract ordinary people. Possibly influenced by the philanthropic activities of the Kōmanjikai Dōin, Jiu began to hold public ceremonies where an image of Kannon would be worshipped. The first such ceremony was held on 18 February 1946 and attendees were fed rice gruel (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 355; 358–59). Jiu members also encouraged people to make offerings to Jikōson, telling them that they would survive the forthcoming calamities associated with world renewal if they did so. The fact that Jiu encouraged people to make offerings of food, and the fact that they stockpiled food was used in the case against them by the police in Kanazawa.

Soon after this first public event, Jiu members made their first major attempt to directly contact the imperial family. According to police records, on 6 March

1946 a number of them marched solemnly around the Imperial Palace, the Yasukuni Shrine, and the Meiji Shrine with flags bearing the phrase *tenji shōmyō*, which they chanted. However, despite continuing this activity for some weeks, by the middle of April they had received no response from the emperor. The situation presented them with a potential crisis in terms of their beliefs. Failure to make meaningful contact with the emperor meant that the spiritual authority of the oracles, and also Jikōson, would be brought into question. Fortunately for them this pressure was alleviated with an oracle received on 1 May 1946 that declared the beginning of a new “era of the spirits” (*reiju* 靈寿). This oracle effectively placed Jikōson on an equal position to the emperor, thus heralding a radical change in doctrine. Another oracle on 8 May stated that in times of great crisis when the emperor was unable to take the lead in world renewal, a person who was not necessarily a direct imperial descendant but actually held the same spiritual authority as the emperor (that is, Jikōson) could take his place in protecting the imperial line. As Jiu viewed the current situation facing the world as a time of great danger, Jikōson could legitimately assume leadership in the task of world renewal. In spite of this new revelation, the members did not give up in their quest to establish contact with imperial family members. They placed their hopes in the crown prince, the next direct imperial descendant. From June 1946, members of Jiu began to visit the palace to make offerings of white rice and also ask palace guards to arrange meetings with the crown prince. Although a meeting never took place, Jiu felt an increasing sense of confidence that the initial stages of their plans had been successful (TSUSHIMA 1991a, pp. 359–60).

### *The Police and the General*

Despite their apparent failure to reach the emperor or the imperial family, Jiu’s efforts were not completely ignored. The Japanese police had been recording Jiu’s movements around the imperial grounds and other areas of the city. Jiu’s attempts to meet the crown prince were noted in a police report that stated that although a meeting with the crown prince was refused, the group was allowed to pass through part of the grounds (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 360). The centralized wartime system of police networks was still in operation and information about Jiu had circulated through the police network. According to a SCAP Religions Division report, after the police arrested Jikōson on suspicions of *lèse majesté* in February 1945, they continued to keep a close watch on Jiu’s activities (SCAP 2). This confirms the testimonies of Jiu members Go (1984, p. 134) and Katsuki. Katsuki claims that the police continually harassed the members wherever they moved. The reason for this, he argues, is that the police were angry because Jikōson and other members of Jiu including himself had escaped prosecution and conviction during the war. He holds that the police pursued the group and

looked for every opportunity to arrest them or pin trumped-up charges on them.<sup>14</sup>

Spurred by a new sense of confidence, Jiu attempted to contact a number of well-known individuals, apart from members of the imperial family, to take part in world renewal. The most spectacular attempt involved the Supreme Commander himself, General Douglas MacArthur. Some Japanese saw MacArthur as playing a special spiritual function in the post-war years. People wrote to him, praising his “exalted and godlike benevolence,” and called him a “living savior” (DOWER 1999, p. 229). Other groups and individuals placed great hopes in MacArthur in their own quests to save the world.<sup>15</sup> He had little direct contact with ordinary Japanese people during his stay in Japan, which lasted from 30 August 1945 to 16 April 1951. This makes the fact that Jiu members actually managed to pass a message directly to him quite remarkable. Enlisting his support was for Jiu members a reaction to the increasing disappointment they felt towards the imperial family, and they eventually interpreted the activities of the Occupation forces as representing the will of the kami. In their conception, the Japanese people were clearly unwilling to carry out world reform. As MacArthur was leading the Occupation forces in dismantling the previous wartime structure and revolutionizing society, Jiu believed his role in world renewal was also the will of the kami (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 361).

The actual details of Jiu’s contact with MacArthur are found in the recollections of three Jiu members—Jikōson, Go, and Katsuki—and in the records of the oracles. The stories conflict to a certain extent but according to the SCAP records, Jikōson received an oracle that commanded Jiu to contact MacArthur personally and pass him a message demanding that he visit Jiu’s “palace” and meet Jikōson (SCAP 1). Then two members of Jiu took the message to the American embassy and managed to pass it to MacArthur through his car window as he was leaving. The story is rather fantastic and certain details are somewhat difficult to accept given that MacArthur was such a highly inaccessible figure. Yet there is no doubt that after contact was made with MacArthur the relationship

14. Katsuki Tokujirō, interview with author, Yokohama, 28 February 1999. Katsuki can hardly be considered a disinterested observer given that he had a number of brushes with the police. His perspective is perhaps somewhat skewed because he paints himself and Jikōson as the victims of constant harassment by the police. But at the same time, his comments should be considered in terms of the claims made by other new religions, such as Tenri Honmichi, during the occupation period regarding police attitudes and actions against them. See WOODARD, 1972, pp. 181–82.

15. One story in SCAP’s Religions Division records describes a disturbed individual who, having left his wife and young child to fend for themselves in the street, dropped off a letter written in his own blood exhorting the general to join him in his self-proclaimed mission. The report reads, in part: “Mr. Shimuzu signed himself Spiritual King of the East, and the Second Christ of the Last Ages. He was persuaded (by CI&E staff member William Kerr) to change these titles to Servant of Christ, and to return home and try to change his own surroundings before starting on the task of converting the world.” See SCAP 4.

between Jiu and the Japanese and SCAP authorities intensified and became more problematic. Jiu considered its mission to inform MacArthur of its plans to be a resounding success. It is quite possible that they interpreted contact with the General as indicative of his interest or even tacit approval for their activities. Flushed with the success of their accomplishments, they decided to take even bolder actions.

Immediately after this incident, the police increased their surveillance of Jiu. This is verified by a copy of a Public Safety Division report in the files of the Religions Division (SCAP 2), which backs up the testimonies of KATSUKI (1970, p. 24; my numbering), who holds that the police maintained constant surveillance on Jiu's "palace" in Suginami ward. Furthermore, Go states that whenever Jiu members ventured outside, plain clothes detectives would follow them, taking notes in similar style to the prewar Special Higher Police (Go 1984, p. 133). Jiu carried out more ceremonies at the "palace" in Suginami, opening its doors to the public. These events did not go unnoticed by the Japanese authorities either: the police filed official reports to the Home Ministry that these activities occurred twice in June 1946 (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 359).

The success of the MacArthur mission changed the way in which Jiu members reacted to the outside world. Their moves became quite audacious, even rash. In response to the increased surveillance, they took the offensive and began to issue a number of direct challenges to the police. On 22 June, an oracle with a message specifically for the superintendent-general of the Tokyo Metropolitan Police was recorded, followed by another the next day. These were addressed to the head of the local police precinct in Suginami, whose two subordinates were watching Jiu's "palace." The contents of the messages were clear and provocative. They contained demands for a meeting between the two policemen staking out the house and Jikōson, and an order for the police force to show more respect to Jikōson and her followers. According to Katsuki, a Jiu member went to the Metropolitan Police headquarters to deliver the message to the superintendent-general but was, for some unspecified reason, unable to carry out his mission. KATSUKI admits that this behavior served to anger the police and exacerbate tensions (1970, pp. 25–27). In this manner, Jiu's own activities actually goaded the police to intensify their efforts to suppress the group.

#### *SCAP Moves In*

While there may be some truth to Katsuki's claim that the police were angry with the group's actions, there is another side to the story which he is unlikely to have been privy to at the time—the involvement of SCAP's intelligence agencies and its Religions Division. The police were required to report any incidents that were perpetrated by "suspicious groups" to SCAP's Public Safety Division. The prewar police networks remained, and the Division's officers relied on the information

and the judgment of the police. Having gathered a substantial amount of evidence about Jiu and their activities, the police contacted the Public Safety Division. The police indicated that they were concerned Jiu might present a threat to public safety, and that their doctrines appeared “suspect” with possible ultranationalist tendencies. In response to this, Brigadier General Ferrin of the Provost Marshall, which was connected to the Public Safety Division, agreed with their assessment and issued an order on 19 June 1946 for the Japanese police to carry out surveillance on the group (SCAP 2). As the order was issued about one month after the contact with MacArthur, this indicates that SCAP’s intelligence network became involved because of what the police were reporting. Thus the police continued their investigations into the group with the full support of their SCAP overseers.

Around this time, SCAP’s Religions Division also became involved in the case. Staff invited Go Seigen and his wife to the divisional office on 16 and 17 September 1946 and held interviews with them.<sup>16</sup> One staff member mentioned in the report that he first found out about Jiu through a magazine article describing how Go had given up his playing career temporarily in order to follow Jikōson (SCAP 1). A few days later staff members went to Jiu’s “palace” in Suginami ward to interview Jikōson: at that time she claimed to be able to communicate with Amaterasu Ōmikami and the souls of all deceased persons, including Buddha, Jesus, Kannon, and the emperors Jimmu and Meiji. In the report, the staff members did mention that the fact that a piece of paper bearing the katakana characters for Christ underneath the group’s Shinto altar may have been a ploy to curry favor with the Occupation authorities.<sup>17</sup> Given that one of the tasks of the Religions Division was “to maintain vigilance to see that militaristic and ultranationalist organizations and movements did not hide behind the cloak of religion” (SCAP

16. The report does not give reasons why Go and his wife were actually asked to meet the Religions Division staff in the first place. There is no record that the police contacted the Religions Division at this time regarding Jiu. It is possible that information came from the Public Safety Division, or even from the media.

17. One of the results of the Occupation was a great interest in things American, and Christianity was widely perceived to be the religion of the conquerors. Certainly Christianity was experiencing a brief “boom” at that time (SHINSHŪREN CHŌSA SHITSU 1963, pp. 149–50) and there were a number of groups that tried to take advantage of this by claiming that their activities were sanctioned by SCAP. Despite the efforts of the staff of CIA&E and the Religions Division to show that the Occupation did not favor Christianity over other faiths, these were thwarted by the official statements of MacArthur himself, who not only frequently commended Christianity during the first years of occupation but made disparaging remarks about Buddhism and Shinto. Although he ceased releasing official statements mentioning Christianity after New Year’s Day, 1948, this did little to quell the widespread perception that his motive was to “Christianize the country.” WOODARD, who worked within the Religions Division, states, somewhat bitterly, that despite the fact that part of the Division’s function was to advise MacArthur on policies related to religion, “there was practically no prior consultation on any subject related to religion... [and]...as far as helping to keep the General informed on current religious developments, the Division might just as well not have existed” (1972, p. 241–2).

1949, p. 123), it is significant that the report made no mention of concern about Jiu's doctrines based on their interviews and investigations.

A number of articles about Jiu began to appear in the press during September 1946. On 29 September, the *Mainichi Shinbun* published an article, based on information from "police sources," which argued that an "eccentric religious organization" was causing problems for the authorities. The "problems" essentially meant that the authorities could not simply investigate religious groups as they had in the past. According to the article, the problem was that legal restrictions on "eccentric organizations" did not exist. Because the Japanese authorities could not deal with such groups adequately, it implied, they were effectively rendered impotent. It is not likely that "the authorities" here refers to SCAP, because direct references to the Occupation or its policies, as well as outright criticisms, could have been grounds for censorship at that time. However, the article may be seen as covert criticism of the SCAP policies because it indicates that the law leaves the Japanese police with few options. Clearly, according to the article, the problem is a lack of appropriate legal restrictions on "eccentric religious organizations" that engage in "questionable practices," as well as the impotence of the police and "the authorities" in such cases. It is hard to determine the standard by which eccentricity or "questionable practices" were judged.

Staff members of the Religions Division knew that the Japanese authorities were continuing to investigate Jiu (SCAP 8).<sup>18</sup> The Division requested information from the police regarding their investigations into the group's movements. In response to a rumor that Jikōson had been arrested on 4 November 1946, the assistant police inspector of the Metropolitan Police Board was called into the Religions Division office to answer questions regarding the recent actions of the police. He stated that although the rumor was groundless, officers from the Ogikubo police station were continuing surveillance on the group in accordance with the Public Safety Division's directive of 19 June 1946. He also indicated that Jikōson was calling on her followers to not deliver the required rice quota to the authorities, nor to "believe in the value of the currency." In other words, the police officer was indicating that Jikōson was continuing to encourage her followers to commit crimes. He added that he was apprehensive about Jikōson and her group because they might disturb the public peace (SCAP 2); he made no mention about possible concerns about Jiu's doctrines being ultranationalistic. The police continued to inform the Religions Division about their surveillance activities. On 7 December 1946, a letter from the Chief of the Criminal Section of the Metropolitan Police Board addressed to William Bunce, the

18. Part of this report read: "The Japanese public authorities are perplexed, not knowing how to handle the members of Jiu when they seek access to the General in extraordinary ways. It is believed the above authorities are in possession of an amount of data concerning the visits of the Jiu members to the General."

chief of the Religions Division, informing him that Jikōson was a “suspicious woman who has a habit of writing letters to SCAP [referring to, in this case, MacArthur].”

The pressure on Jiu was becoming intense by this stage. The Japanese authorities were constantly on the watch, journalists were pestering them, and their landlord, who did not appreciate the attention, was demanding that they vacate the premises (KATSUKI 1970, pp. 26–28). The fact that they had not paid the rent for some time probably contributed to his negative attitude toward them (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 363). Furthermore, the oracles were predicting that world renewal would occur soon, and as the predictions of future calamities became more drastic, Jikōson’s physical condition worsened. In addition to experiencing fevers and blackouts she also developed an extremely painful toothache. The members believed that these ailments reflected the dangers faced by the nation, and her suffering increasing the shared tensions within the group. She had a number of frightening visions relating to the predicted calamities, and other people in the group also went through unusual experiences at that time (KATSUKI 1970, pp. 39–40).

Jiu was forced to act quickly. Faced with no other choice, the members turned to the oracles for assistance. The group was instructed by the kami to “move the palace” to an unspecified northern region. Bound to follow the commands of the oracles, the members decided to go to Kanazawa, where some of Jikōson’s followers were based. It was at this critical juncture that Futabayama 双葉山, one of the sumo wrestling greats of the twentieth century, appeared at Jiu’s “palace” on the evening of 27 November 1946.

#### *A Champion Joins the Ranks*

Futabayama, the thirty-fifth *yokozuna* 横綱 (Grand Champion) of professional sumo, had just retired from a stellar career—his record of sixty-nine consecutive winning bouts remains unequalled. During the war, he had been an ardent nationalist and a fervent emperor worshipper. He was a serious individual who was not only devastated after Japan’s defeat (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 364), he also sensed his wrestling career was coming to an end. He chose to retire from active competition on 19 November 1946, thus bringing to an end “the age of Futabayama” (ISHII 1980, pp. 119–20). The Sumo Association (Sumō Kyōkai 相撲協会) held high hopes for his future as a sumo stable master, and there were concrete plans for him start training some sixty young disciples in Kyushu.

Futabayama became involved in Jiu after meeting a member during a trip to a country area. On 27 November 1946, eight days after his retirement from active competition, Futabayama visited Jiu’s headquarters. Although Jikōson rarely met people the first time they appeared, Futabayama was “granted an audience” with her. This preferential treatment could certainly be interpreted

as a cynical ploy by Jiu to use his status for its own means: this is certainly how most of the print media portrayed the situation later. But whether this was the case or not, Futabayama was, according to Katsuki, quite moved by Jikōson. As he sat in front of the altar during his meeting with Jikōson, Futabayama fell into a violent fit while praying and became “touched by spirits” (*setsurei* 接霊) (KATSUKI 1970, pp. 34–36). He decided that Jikōson was imbued with great powers and would be able to save the world from disaster. Three days after this meeting, Jikōson and a group of Jiu members moved to Kanazawa. Meanwhile Futabayama traveled back to Kyushu to inform his family of his decision to join Jiu. He met up again with Jiu members in Kanazawa on 15 December 1946.

Life in Kanazawa for Jiu was quite hectic. According to Katsuki, “we had no time to write down memos, and we couldn’t even sort out our luggage. We would simply follow the oracles, which appeared one after the other, and march up and down the streets with banners bearing the characters for *tenji shōmyō*” (cited in TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 364).<sup>19</sup> Jiu’s main messages to the local residents, who were stunned to see the two famous stars, Futabayama and Go Seigen, leading a small group of marchers, warned them of impending disasters and urged them to follow Jikōson in order to save themselves. Unsurprisingly, Jiu’s presence in the town had an immediate impact. News of Jikōson’s predictions of natural disasters spread quickly. The oracles predicted that a major earthquake would strike Tokyo on 15 January 1947.

Jiu’s arrival in Kanazawa instigated a flurry of activity from SCAP officials, the media, and the Japanese police. According to the testimony of Dr Akimoto Haruo 秋元春夫, who was at that time a young psychologist from Kanazawa Medical University, SCAP’s intelligence agencies were closely involved in its own investigations of Jiu in Kanazawa (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 369; AKIMOTO 1947b). Akimoto states that he was approached in early December 1946 by the commanding officer of SCAP’s regional Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) unit, which was part of the G-2 intelligence network. The officer asked him to conduct a psychological examination on Jikōson and other members of the group. The results of Akimoto’s survey, which was conducted between 27 December 1946 and 6 January 1947, found that the group was “a socio-pathological phenomenon centered on a person presumed to have certain pathological tendencies.” He recommended that a fuller psychological examination be made and the result publicized in order to avoid further confusion within the local community. Akimoto holds that SCAP’s CIC unit in Kanazawa believed that Jiu’s activities, such as claiming that disasters were imminent, could pose certain problems for the public. The CIC

19. Go also recalls a chaotic lifestyle, and according to his account world renewal activities in Kanazawa were extremely draining. They would arise at five in the morning, pray, chant, march, and then finally sleep at one the following morning. His main task was to preach to those who had come to pay their respects to Jikōson (Go 1984, p. 144).

commander felt that in order to stop any hysteria, conducting a psychological profile of the central figure and making an official announcement would be sufficient to halt Jiu's progress (cited in TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 369; see also AKIMOTO 1947a).

### *A Media "Spy"*

Reports about Jiu's activities in Kanazawa began to appear in the national papers in early January 1947 and the group suddenly became a major news item. From the time the group arrived in the town, an endless procession of journalists appeared at the new "headquarters of world renewal." An *Asahi Shinbun* reporter, Fujii Tsuneo, who covered sumo and had strong connections with the Sumo Association, managed to actually join the group for a couple of days because Futabayama, with whom he was acquainted, had vouched for him as a decent fellow. Jikōson's eventual successor, Katsuki Tokujirō, maintains that he felt suspicious about Fujii's motives as soon as he met him. He holds that Fujii was contacted directly by the Sumo Association and asked to do whatever he could to discredit the group and to bring one of its major stars back into the world of sumo.<sup>20</sup>

Katsuki's suspicions about Fujii proved correct. Fujii stayed with the group for a few days, interviewing not just members but also Jikōson. He wrote his experiences and interpretations in the *Asahi Shinbun* in a series of articles that appeared in late January. The articles were highly damaging to Jiu, and included a personal plea by Fujii to Futabayama for him return to the normal world of "human beings." The details of Fujii's story were repeated in other articles published in the *Yomiuri Shinbun* and the *Mainichi Shinbun*, as well as numerous magazines. But Fujii also claims that he went to the police to file a report on the situation within the new Jiu "palace." He met with a police official who was visiting from Tokyo for the specific purpose of investigating the potential public safety issues concerning Jiu. Apparently the official indicated to Fujii that the police wanted to arrest Jiu in order to prove to the public that Jikōson was a fraud. However, the problem, the official explained, was that they lacked evidence. The intrepid reporter claims that he listed a number of possible areas of illegality, including the stockpiling of rice (a violation of the food control laws) and possession of a number of military swords (a violation of a ban on holding weapons). After receiving his information, Fujii holds, the police began their operation to quell Jiu's influence in earnest (ISHII 1980, pp. 138–39).

Whether Fujii's claims are, in fact, true or not, they are worth considering in light of the prewar collusion between the media and the authorities in the cases of new religions, as is mentioned by MORIOKA (1994, p. 309). He argues that the prewar press would print the fabricated charges of the police against new religions,

20. Interview, Yokohama, 28 February 1999.

such as Ōmotokyō, to profit from the stories. In this way the media helped justify the government's actions in its promotion of State Shinto. It was easier for the public to accept the idea that certain groups were offensive and threatened public safety because of the collusion between the media and the authorities. In the case of Jiu, however, the roles of the police and journalists changed somewhat. Although the police had continued their surveillance of Jiu and received sanction from SCAP's Public Safety to do so, they were unable simply to make arrests in the manner of their prewar counterparts because of the new rules imposed by SCAP. Clearly Jiu had become an annoyance to the police and the group's recalcitrant attitude reflected poorly on their ability to control movements during a time of social upheaval. On the other hand, Fujii's agenda, if we are to accept his testimony at face value, was to get Futabayama away from the group and salvage the former wrestler's career. He was also possibly motivated by the desire to play a leading hand in one of the first "scoops" of the year—playing a major role in saving a former sumo great and national hero from the clutches of an unscrupulous *ikigami* 生き神 ("living god") and her cronies. Both Fujii and the police stood to gain something from negative press reports about Jiu. Their mutual aim was to generate a story to ensure that the public would support both the idea of having the former champion back to "normal," and the actions of the authorities in preventing any further progress by Jiu.

### *The Police Actions*

After issuing a number of warnings to Jiu to cease their activities, the police launched a raid on 21 January. Some twenty officers marched into the headquarters and arrested a number of people, including Futabayama. It is clear that reporters and the police were in close communication prior to the arrests. When the police raided Jiu's headquarters, journalists and cameramen were on hand to cover the events. The dramatic scenes at the house, which included a tussle between Futabayama and several policemen, were faithfully recorded for the public. The police initially gave three reasons given for this raid: first, they had suspicions that Jiu was violating SCAP's prohibition on ultranationalism and that the group was advocating world control centering on Japan; second, they were concerned that Jiu was creating a public nuisance because of the predictions of natural disasters; and third, they needed to investigate the rumors that Jiu was extorting money and goods from believers. These reasons were all reported in the *Yomiuri Shinbun* on the day of the raid. The article reported the Ishikawa Prefectural Police Chief as saying, people are "free to believe any kind of religion, but strict control must be kept over any which may disturb the social order. Jiu aims to reorganize the world under the control of the emperor. This is against the Potsdam Declaration. That is why we started this investigation." According to MURAKAMI, the police used this method of gathering evidence and making

claims of ultranationalism so that they could avoid being accused of religious persecution but at the same time scotch the activities of a troublesome group (1985, p. 87). Neither SCAP's Religions Division nor any of G-2's intelligence agencies made such a claim.

The police also arranged to have Akimoto present at the station to carry out psychological tests on Jikōson and other Jiu leaders. Akimoto had already reached his conclusions for the CIC branch commander, so the tests at the station were merely a formality (Tsushima 1991a, p. 365). The results of Akimoto's examinations on Jikōson and other Jiu members were published in the national newspapers. In the *Yomiuri Shinbun* on 22 January it was reported that "three hours of examination proved that the two mediums have abnormal mentality. When they could not answer a question, they hypnotized themselves and had convulsions. Judging from their actions, Jikōson must be mentally abnormal herself according to Dr Akimoto." However, although he found that Jikōson was suffering from mental delusions, he stated that she did not present any physical danger to the public.

Despite the intense buildup leading to the arrests, Jikōson, who was named as the major figurehead in the whole affair, was released from police custody without charge on the evening of 23 January. Although Katsuki and two others were held on suspicions of fraud and embezzlement, they were released on 30 January. On the other hand, Futabayama remained in the cells for just one night. Katsuki claims he heard the voices of Fujii and another associate of Futabayama, who was actually a representative of the Sumo Association, talking in hushed tones to the distraught wrestler. Both men told Futabayama that Jikōson had cheated him, that Jiu was an evil religion and that he should give up his faith in Jikōson. Futabayama left the police station with these two men early the next morning (Katsuki 1970, pp. 73–75). The wrestler was not charged with any crime and was led away by Fujii and his associate from the Sumo Association. On 25 January Futabayama announced at a press conference that he had left Jiu.<sup>21</sup> Despite the remarkable publicity surrounding this incident and the police announcements of long investigations, all those arrested were released without being charged.

For approximately ten days in January, the "Kanazawa incident" was covered in the *Asahi*, *Mainichi*, and *Yomiuri* papers and their subsidiaries, as well as numerous smaller publications. Most of the coverage was related to the involvement of the two stars, Futabayama and Go. The *Asahi Shinbun* ran eight separate articles on the Jiu story throughout January 1947. This is a considerable volume of space considering the shortage of paper at the time and the fact that newspapers generally printed only two pages. An investigation of the press coverage, which generally found that Jiu posed a great danger that was averted by

21. Katsuki attempted to contact Futabayama on a number of occasions after the "Kanazawa incident." However, he never received any reply.

the actions of the Japanese authorities, reveals significant gaps between the claims of reporters and the actions of Jiu members. A dominant theme of the press reports was that the group had swindled rice from ignorant people and broke food control laws (see, for example, *Jiji Shimpō* 18 January 1947 and *Yomiuri Shinbun* 21 January 1947). Another theme was related to the psychological conditions of Jikōson and her close associates and the panic they had caused within the local community. Closely connected to this was the idea that despite of the emperor's "declaration of humanity," Jikōson and Jiu were intent on creating a religious state through world renewal, and they were therefore accused of spreading ultranationalistic thought. The results of Akimoto's tests, published in many of the papers, were that Jikōson was delusional but did not pose a physical threat. The *Mainichi Shinbun* of 24 January reported that Jikōson was "clearly mad" (*akiraka ni kichigai* 明らか<sup>か</sup>に<sup>か</sup>気<sup>き</sup>違<sup>違</sup>い). However, while Akimoto's report provided some evidence of psychological instability, the charges of ultranationalism were based on spurious grounds. A report on 25 January in the English-language *Nippon Times*, which was based on a report from *Jiji Shimpō*, described details of how wartime military leaders in the last months of the war turned to Jikōson for spiritual advice. Based on wildly inaccurate information provided by "an informant," the article carried titillating details of how Jikōson used to massage the troubled military men, "applying her nimble fingers to the bodies of her devotees." The references to ultranationalism, wartime leaders, and licentiousness contributed to the notion that Jiu was an odious group that had close connections with members of the discredited military regime.

It seems likely that the police, however, realized that their former claims about ultranationalism could not be supported by the available evidence. Nor would SCAP's intelligence agencies step in to help support this claim. SCAP's *Religions in Japan* report (SCAP 1948, p. 139), which was produced by the Religions Division, stated mistakenly that the Home Ministry ordered the dissolution of Jiu sometime in February 1947 on the basis that its doctrines were ultranationalistic and militaristic. Furthermore, a Religions Division report in 1947 (SCAP 9) also claimed that the Japanese police actually dissolved Jiu in Kanazawa. As ŌISHI notes, this was, in fact, incorrect (1964, p. 58). While Jiu may have been the subject of investigations, it was never officially forced to disband by SCAP or the Japanese authorities. The fact that the Religions Division circulated this misinformation and published it as part of the official record is indicative of the lack of communication between SCAP agencies in this case.

On 6 February 1947, the *Jiji Shimpō* reported that the new Chief of the Metropolitan Police, Hirooka Ken'ichi (who Fujii claims to have tipped off about Jiu) said, "Jikōson's arrest was not a case of religious control. We put her through a psychological test to establish her as a lunatic; for we believed that by doing so people would cease to believe credulously in her." Previously, the police had announced in the press that they conducted their investigations

because Jiu was an ultranationalistic group. However, this charge vanished completely and was replaced by a claim that could apparently be justified through medical findings, that of lunacy. Thus by announcing that Jikōson's mental condition was the real cause of the investigation, the police sidestepped the potential problems associated with the charge of ultranationalism.

### *Scapegoats or "Scammers"?*

There are a number of explanations concerning the incident in Kanazawa and why it occurred, but they essentially fall into two categories: (1) Jiu members were effectively scapegoats, to a greater or lesser degree, of the police and/or the SCAP authorities; (2) some or all of them tried to pull off a series of "scams" at the expense of gullible believers. The scapegoat theory, unsurprisingly, is championed by current and former Jiu members. Katsuki argues that the police were mainly responsible for causing the incident and claims that they grew increasingly angry because Jiu members had managed to escape prosecution and were behaving impudently toward them. He holds that the police, who treated Jiu's actions toward their authority as an affront to their dignity, had a bone to pick with the group since before the surrender. On the other hand, MYŌGAN (1957) places responsibility with the Occupation authorities by arguing that SCAP, in pursuing its policy of removing ultranationalistic groups, used the police to carry out a campaign against Jiu. He argues that Jiu was SCAP's prime suspect because its doctrines of world renewal and attitudes toward the emperor provoked its suspicions. It is true that SCAP did investigate some religious groups suspected of ultranationalistic tendencies. Tenri Honmichi was placed under suspicion of the Occupation authorities in 1950 but not disbanded, whereas Tentsūkyō was actually dissolved on the basis of its doctrines. He also claims that MacArthur, greatly angered after being approached by Jiu members, ordered the group's dissolution. According to TSUSHIMA (1991a, p. 367), Myōgan's story is imaginative but quite problematic because of inconsistencies such as dates that do not match with other records and other details. Taking this criticism further, if the SCAP authorities intended to eradicate Jiu because of ultranationalistic tendencies, it seems likely that the Religions Division would have been involved in the process of advising other divisions months before the incident in Kanazawa. If that had been the case, it would have kept some record of the issue. However, the records show that Jiu did continue after the incident, and that no such investigation took place.

Go Seigen (1984, p. 145), on the other hand, argues that the incident was part of a plan, perpetrated by Fujii Tsuneo, the journalist from the *Asahi Shinbun*, to "recapture" Futabayama and "return" him to the world of sumo. Go claims that it was Fujii's friendship with Futabayama and his commitment to seeing him return to his sumo career that drove him to get the wrestler away from the influence of Jikōson and Jiu. Tsushima, however, questions whether this was

the true reason for the incident, but does acknowledge its explanatory merits. Taking the views of the psychologist Akimoto into account, he holds that SCAP was not completely opposed to weakening Jiu's potential influence on the public (TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 368–69). SCAP, in this instance, refers to the intelligence agencies involved in the case. The Public Safety Division had accepted the evidence of the police after the MacArthur incident, and the CIC unit commander in Kanazawa basically agreed with the police and recognized that Jiu's activities could pose some problems for public safety, especially during that particular time of public upheaval. Thus, he arranged to have a medical professional conduct a psychological profile of the central figure with the aim to release the results to the public in order to curb any potential public hysteria breaking out over predictions of calamities. Akimoto also states that the CIC commander realized that the actions the police were taking against the group could be interpreted as religious persecution. As such, by allowing Akimoto's results to be publicized, the CIC commander felt that publishing the test results conducted by a medical professional would substantially damage Jiu's reputation and stave off possible criticism over police actions (cited in TSUSHIMA 1991a, p. 369). This would seem to be in line with the idea that after the heavy-handed nature of the arrests, SCAP stepped in to ensure that the authorities would not be accused of religious persecution.

Although it seems unlikely that the SCAP authorities intended to eradicate Jiu because of alleged ultranationalism, the Religions Division's position did seem to change once the group arrived in Kanazawa. The question of censoring newspapers with regard to the "Kanazawa incident" was raised within the Religions Division soon after the arrests of Jiu's leaders. SCAP's Civil Censorship Division (CCD), which was in charge of newspaper and magazine censorship, contacted the Religions Division regarding its views on censoring some aspects of the press coverage, and in particular the manner in which the police were questioning Jikōson. It was mainly concerned with whether the police actions constituted a violation of freedom of religion and whether the media reports were biased in favor of the official police line that Jiu needed to be controlled. The CCD received a verbal communication from the Religions Division on 22 January indicating that it saw no problem with the reports being published as they were. The next day the Religions Division chief, William Kenneth Bunce, signed a statement confirming his division's position that censorship was unnecessary (SCAP 5). The evidence from the SCAP records suggests that the Religions Division basically agreed with the idea that Jiu presented a threat to public safety, although the nature of that threat remained unclear. This idea overrode their officers' previous concerns over police persecution and shows that Bunce basically accepted the police position in Kanazawa.<sup>22</sup> The Religions

22. The Religions Division requested a report on the case from the Japanese police. Although this report did eventually find its way through to the Division, it had to pass through a number of hoops.

Division appeared to accept the position that Jiu was creating trouble for the other authorities involved and for the public in general. In addition to allowing media coverage of the incident to be disseminated, the division did not make any recommendations at the time to quell the actions of the Japanese police.

The view that Jiu was simply a group of swindlers and charlatans was promoted largely by the police and the media. Jikōson was painted as a mentally unstable figure who had a mysterious grip on her followers, while Katsugi was portrayed in a different light. On 23 January, the *Asahi Shinbun* ran an article by Fujii Tsuneo that reported the police inspector as stating “Katsugi seems to be the leading wire puller.” The inference was that Katsugi, by using Jikōson as a figurehead, eventually targeted major stars in order to carry out his own nefarious plans. This discourse dominated media texts at the time. Yet Jiu itself did little to combat this perception in terms of dealing with outside society. The conflict between the group’s insularity and unwillingness to compromise its patterns of behavior, and also its attempts to cultivate high profile supporters, contributed to its problems. On the one hand, Jikōson was promoted as a mystical figure within the group who possessed great spiritual powers. But she was not open to the scrutiny of outsiders. She did not generally meet with members of the public, she initially refused to meet with journalists from the *Asahi Shinbun*, and she did not deal directly with the police. This could be explained, in part, by the idea Jiu members held that she would possibly become sick if she were to be “contaminated” by contact with the outside world. However, the fact that she was willing to deal with Futabayama almost as soon as he became involved in the group seems to invite questions regarding her motives. And this action, in particular, aroused the suspicions of journalists. While Futabayama was considered to be a particularly fervent worshipper and was given responsibility in the group because of his faith in Jikōson, from the perspective of journalists—and Fujii specifically—Jiu was simply using his status to promote its movement. This was one of the dominant views that pervaded print media reports. Another problem for Jiu members was that they chose to goad the police into further action by sending letters demanding that various police chiefs visit “the palace.”

After the Kanazawa incident, there was a flood of newspaper articles lambasting Jiu, Go Seigen and Futabayama, and new religions in general. According to a Religions Division report, the Jiu case “attracted considerable attention and aroused thoughtful speculation over the causes for the growth of freak religious

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Any report produced by the police bureau of the Japanese Home Ministry had to be submitted first to the Public Safety Division. Colonel Pulliam, the chief of the Public Safety Division, learned of the request by the Religions Division and immediately instructed the Home Ministry to prepare a report. Apparently the Home Ministry misunderstood his instructions and withheld the report from the Religions Division. Pulliam’s swift reaction to the Religions Division request suggests his division was clearly sensitive to the nature of the request and the implications of police involvement in religious activities (SCAP 5).

movements” (SCAP 11). But rather than just concentrating on new religions, some reports used the Kanazawa incident to highlight the challenges faced by established religions. The combination of negative press reports and the social stigma of being arrested by the police dealt a severe blow to Jiu’s public image. With the withdrawal of Futabayama and a number of other followers, the members of Jiu who remained loyal to Jikōson continued to lead an itinerant lifestyle. Journalists followed Jiu for sometime after Kanazawa but a number of other new religious movements, including Tenshō Kōtai Jingū Kyō (*odoru shūkyō*; the “dancing religion”), caught their attention. Go remained a key member of the group until November 1948 when he left the group, together with his wife and her sister. The departure of these key members was considered by the few remaining Jiu members to be an act of treachery (KATSUKI 1970, pp. 8–17). From 1949 Jikōson sent messages to a number of influential and famous people, ordering that they visit the “palace” as she had done in the past. A number of people did actually show up at the “palace.” They included novelist Kawabata Yasunari, former silent movie voiceover star and radio personality Tokugawa Musei, and the president of the Heibonsha publishing company, Shimonaka Yasaburō (MURAKAMI 1985, p. 90).

The police continued to investigate Jikōson. On January 1950 the *Tokyo Shinbun* reported that Jikōson had been ordered to appear in court on the sixteenth of that month. She was suspected of inciting a farmer in Yokohama to refuse to hand over his rice quota to the authorities and instead present it as an offering to her. Jikōson refused to appear and instead sent a letter to the effect that she would not leave the “palace” but would permit a visit by an officer of the court (SCAP 6).

### *Birth of a Taboo*

The police were closely involved in watching and recording Jiu’s movements from before the surrender in 1945 until the Kanazawa incident. However, it was not just Jiu but also other new religious movements that were watched by the police in this manner during the immediate postwar years. By 1951 SCAP’s Religions Division officers became concerned about complaints they received from a number of different groups. The groups held that “they were being investigated by the police in the crude manner reminiscent of prewar years.” The police had apparently told the groups that the investigation had been ordered by the Occupation, “which was mistakenly assumed to mean the Religions Division.” The Division also took up the case of Jiu. WOODARD writes that “when it was learned [in March 1950] that an organization whose followers had approached MacArthur was under police investigation, an inquiry was instituted in order to be sure that the religious freedom of the group was not being restricted by the government” (1972, p. 209). Woodard, writing his record of the activities of the Religions Division in his capacity as a former official, discussed his concerns that the efforts of SCAP

to implement the freedom of religion and protect all religions from government interference would be compromised as the Occupation authorities prepared to leave Japan.

SCAP officials and religious leaders began to hold discussions regarding changes to the legal structures of religious administration. The Religious Corporations Ordinance of 1945 was introduced as a temporary measure to handle religious affairs and was due to expire at the end of the Occupation. But it was an unsatisfactory legal instrument whose shortcomings were becoming more obvious with the advent of a number of unscrupulous groups, most notoriously Kōdō Chikyō, which abused the law in the name of “religion.”<sup>23</sup> By early 1949, with rumors of a peace treaty prevalent, there were concerns among religious circles that if a specific law was not introduced before the SCAP administration wound up its duties in Japan, politicians in the first post-Occupation Diet would be “swayed by their new sense of power” and compromise the gains achieved with respect to religious freedom and the separation of church and state. Hence, religious leaders and Religions Division officials wanted to draft a new law before the Occupation ended (WOODARD, 1972, p. 93). Discussions got underway to draft what was to become the Religious Corporations Law of 3 April 1951. At that time, a number of new religious movements, including Makoto Kyōdan, Sekai Kyūseikyō, and Reiyūkai, were implicated in media reports as abusing their status as religious organizations. Although leaders of established religions did want to insert clauses that would allow government authorities to investigate “suspicious religions,” in the end the law did not discriminate between religious organizations, nor did it provide specific provisions that would allow government authorities to carry out such investigations.

As moves got underway to introduce the Religious Corporations Law, religious groups were encouraged by SCAP’s Religions Division to form associations and collective organizations in order to allow them to have a unified voice and to negotiate more effectively with government offices. Established religious organisations had already formed the Sectarian Shinto Union (Kyōha Shintō rengōkai 教派神道連合会), the Japan Buddhist Association (Nihon Bukkyō rengōkai 日本仏教連合会), the Japan Christian Association (Nihon Kirisutokyō rengōkai 日本キリスト教連合会), and also the Japan Religions League (Nihon shūkyō renmei 日本宗教連盟; now the Japanese Association of Religious Organizations) (WOODARD 1972, p. 180). However, new religious movements were quite isolated and had no formal association: what many of them did share was hostility that was articulated in print media reports. Around mid-1950, plans to establish an organization specifically

23. Registration as a religious corporation under this Ordinance was a relatively simple affair. Registered organizations, protected under the new freedom of religion laws, could receive tax breaks and other benefits. Kōdō Chikyō operated successfully in the late-1940s, claiming that the coffee shops, laundries, and brothels it ran were “churches,” and that the customers were “believers.”

designed for new religions began to formulate. In August 1951 the Union of New Religious Organizations of Japan (Shin Nihon shūkyō dantai rengōkai 新日本宗教団体連合会; often abbreviated to Shinshūren) was formed by five new religions, PL Kyōdan, Risshō Kōseikai, Sekai Kyūseikyō, Seichō no Ie, and Ishinkai. Within two months of formation, the organization had over twenty groups.<sup>24</sup> This group was scorned by a number of critics, not the least by representatives of established religions. However, by April 1952 it became affiliated with the Japan Religions League (SHINSHŪREN CHŌSA SHITSU 1963, pp. 173–75). NAKANO holds that with this step, “new religious organizations, once held in contempt, acquired, at least in form, citizenship in the Japanese religious world” (1996, p. 124).

In discussing the case of negative media coverage of Risshō Kōseikai in the 1950s, Morioka holds that during most of the postwar period, the government had been much more careful than in the past about actively interfering in the affairs of any religious group, arguing that the mass media tended to spearhead attacks on groups, and from there the government would move in to impose controls of their own (MORIOKA 1994, p. 309). Thus, his perspective tends to support the idea that government interference of religious groups became a taboo in the postwar period. While I would agree with his opinion generally, I would argue that it was not until the promulgation of the Religious Corporations Law in 1951 that this taboo took firm hold within the law enforcement community. Considering the case of Jiu and other religious groups that followed, including Tenri Honmichi, an offshoot of Tenrikyō, the Japanese authorities wavered between applying banned prewar methods of investigation and following the letter of the SCAP-imposed laws. This was due, in part, to the different agendas within the Occupation administration itself. In the case of Jiu, the concerns of the Religions Division about freedom of religion were overridden by the powerful intelligence organization of G-2 and its branches, the Public Safety Division and the Civil Intelligence Unit, which relied to a significant extent on information supplied by the Japanese police. This issue of conflicting agendas again surfaced in 1950–1951 when representatives of SCAP’s Government Section denied the charge that the Special Investigations Bureau of the Attorney General’s Office was engaged in investigations of religious organizations, despite the fact that Religions Division officials had evidence to the contrary (WOODARD 1972, pp. 181–82).

### *A Post-Aum Shift*

Returning again to the issue of protecting the constitutionally-guaranteed freedom of religion balanced against genuine threats to public safety, the case of Jiu is one of a religious group that existed in both the presurrender and postwar eras. It experienced official investigation and control under the umbrella of State Shinto and

24. Two notable new religions that did not join Shinshūren were Sōka Gakkai and Tenshō Kōtai Jingū Kyō.

under the Allied Occupation. The caution that the Japanese authorities were officially required to exercise when investigating religious groups subsequent to the Occupation (in comparison to their prewar activities) reflected the idea that religious freedom was paramount, hence the development of the taboo. But has the balance shifted now more to issues related to public safety in the wake of the case of Aum Shinrikyō? READER (2001, p. 226) has argued that with the Aum affair a new era has emerged whereby a consensus within Japanese society that existed since the end of World War Two has been shattered. Thus, he holds, the idea that religious groups in the postwar period should be protected from possible repression by the authorities has been replaced by one whereby society needs to be protected from religious groups themselves. In endorsing his opinion with the additional qualification that this consensus solidified toward the end of the Occupation as mentioned above, I want to return to more recent events briefly to reconsider the postwar taboo of law enforcement investigations into religious groups.

Since Aum, there has been a significant shift in the ways in which the Japanese authorities deal with religious movements that appear to deviate from social norms. After being criticized for sluggish and ineffective investigations before the attack on the Tokyo subway system, the Japanese civil and legal authorities, buoyed by the media and public opinion, have been much keener to demonstrate a willingness to show the public that their collective fingers are on the pulse of any potential threat by a religious group suspected of deviancy. Given the natural demands by the public to guarantee their safety from organizations that commit horrendous crimes, Aum being the prime example, the authorities have moved to strengthen their power to investigate religious groups.<sup>25</sup> The recent case of Pana Wave Laboratory (referred to in the Japanese press as Shirozukume shūdan, the “white-clad group”) which, like Jiu, made millennial claims of global destruction, shows that the authorities wish to be seen to be dispensing swift and appropriate action to stave off potential threats, or groups that are somewhat difficult to deal with.<sup>26</sup> Pana Wave received massive national and international publicity for about one month from late-April 2003. Despite an extensive police investigation two weeks later, the police merely charged the group with possessing three falsely registered vehicles. Although occasional stories have followed relating to the death of a follower and more vehicular problems since that time, the authorities have produced nothing substantial to back up the claims of Aum-like tendencies.

Thus it would appear that in the post-Aum era, the taboo that made government authorities reticent to investigate religious groups has effectively been broken. Despite the fact that the authorities had gathered no specific evidence

25. For a discussion on legal changes since the sarin gas attack, see the article by Mark Mullins in KISALA and MULLINS 2001, pp. 71–86.

26. For further information, see DORMAN 2003 and forthcoming.

linking Pana Wave Laboratory with any crime, on 1 May 2003 the chief of the National Police Agency announced that Pana Wave members looked strange and resembled Aum in its early days. This official connection to one of most feared and loathed social pariahs in contemporary Japan virtually guaranteed the story intense media coverage. Thus, by merely mentioning Aum, the police chief drew on all the associated images well known to the public: a deranged leader with a lust for power at any cost, groups of besotted followers who adhere unquestioningly to the leader's commands, and a society in constant fear of violence based on religious imagery. In this sense, in the current era of ongoing trials for former Aum members accused of various crimes, there do appear to be clear parallels to the pre-war era when official censure effectively signaled the end for religious groups that were accused of some offence against the state. While Aum's appalling crimes did alert the public to the problems related to official fears of retribution concerning investigations into religious groups, the pendulum has swung to the extent that the emphasis on public safety and police autonomy may have potentially serious consequences for freedom of religion in contemporary Japan.

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