

A Critique of *Girei To Kenryoku: Tennō no Meiji Ishin (Ritual and Power: The Emperor's Meiji Restoration)* by John Breen—What “Narrative” Conceals

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Introduction

John Breen, Professor at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyoto, published *Girei To Kenryoku: Tennō No Meiji Ishin* (August 2011, Heibonsha sensho, the following citations in this article with page numbers only refer to this book). This book compiles eight articles that Breen wrote about the modern emperors and shrines between 1995 and 2009. The introduction and chapters one through three examine the influence of various rituals on power relations from the viewpoint of ritual theory. The rituals examined are the Meiji Emperor's visit to the Ise Grand Shrines in Meiji 2 (1869), the Shogun (General) Iemochi (家茂)'s procession to Kyoto and audience with Emperor Kōmei (孝明) in Bunkū 3 (1863), the ritual oath, (The Imperial Oath consisting of five articles [五カ条の御誓文]) in Keiō 4 (1868), and diplomatic rituals that the Meiji Emperor conducted. Chapters four through six “explore the new meanings attached to Shinto and shrines at the beginning of the modern era through their connection with the emperor,” (p.18), and discuss topics including the separation of Buddhism and Shinto, Ōkuni Takamasa's view of Christianity (*Tenshukyō*, 天主教), and the Hie Shrine's spring festival, *sannō matsuri*. In the addendum, Breen considers the Yasukuni Shrine as a site of memory and claims that the history narrated in this site is “extremely biased and distorted” (p. 264). This article aims to closely investigate Breen's book.

I. Standpoint and Methods of This Article

The main focus of this article is to closely investigate Breen's methodology. In my view, he first surveys a targeted topic and instinctively determines what he believes to be the most important event related to the topic and his evaluation of that event. Then, Breen collects whatever theories and examples are necessary to justify his conclusion, and uses these to formulate his articles. Setting up a hypothesis in the beginning is common among scholars; however, the problem with Breen's work is that he avoids

examining theories and examples that oppose his pre-determined conclusion. Instead of dealing with those theories and examples appropriately, Breen picks and chooses, hiding them, ignoring them, and rewriting them differently. In so doing, he skips the troublesome process of logical validation and ends up doing the very thing that he questions in criticizing the Yasukuni Shrine—“selecting memories.”

Critiquing his argument without looking at the problems of his methodology would be as difficult as trying to correct the reflection in a distorted mirror without correcting the distortion of the mirror itself. Thus, this article closely scrutinizes issues embedded in his methodology that distort his discussion, and reveals a succession of facts hidden from readers' eyes.

II. “Invention” (misrepresentation) of The Content of Eric Santner’s Article

It is Breen’s “narrative” about Eric Santner’s scholarly work, applied to support his argument in the addendum, that clearly shows the problems with Breen’s methodology. Breen introduces Santner’s scholarly work as a standard for evaluating the war memory narrated by Yasukuni Shrine and states as follows:

The reflections on war memory by French historian Eric Santner are suggestive here. Santner’s attention has focused on museums and memorials of post-war France. He points out that, whether they are museums built by Gaullists or memorials sponsored by Communists, they have all failed equally. They have failed in that they have worked to suppress the trauma of the war experience, of defeat, of occupation and of collaboration. Santner acknowledges that it is of course not only post-war France that cannot or will not accept historical trauma; many other post-war societies face a similar situation to some extent. According to Santner, since war memory is too painful to endure, they oppress it and deploy mnemonic strategies in order to ensure suppression. Santner refers to these strategies, or ‘myth production’ as ‘narrative fetishism.’ (pp. 279-280)

According to Breen, the history that the Yasukuni Shrine narrates “falls under the very category of ‘narrative fetishism’ that Santner claims” (p. 280).

However, what corresponds in his account cited above to the contents of Santner’s article is only the fact that Santner uses the term “narrative fetishism.” The rest of his description is Breen’s invention. Santner is not French. The article of Santner’s which Breen refers to, “History Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” is not a study of a French war memorial but a discourse on the issues that German society faces after the Holocaust.

It is hard to believe that Breen fabricates other scholars’ work and uses it as the base of his argument. I thought that it might be the case that Santner writes about French war

memorials not in “History Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” but in another article, and that Breen might have mistakenly referred to “History Beyond the Pleasure Principle” in the endnote. I contacted Santner through a friend to determine the truth of this matter.

Date: July 4, 2011 7:30pm

1) Are you a French critic?

John Breen is, as you may know, one of well-known British scholars on Shinto. In the volume, he mentions you as the French critic--"French critics like Eric Santner". He quotes that you write of French postwar museums that fail because they suppress the trauma of the war experience of defeat, occupation and collaboration. John Breen tries to apply your famous concept of 'narrative fetishism' to the case of issues of Yasukuni shrine in Japan. I wonder if John Breen's description you as the French critic is correct or a mistake. Are you a French?

2) Did you write about a French museum?

In your article of "History beyond the pleasure principle: Thoughts on the Representation of Trauma," the main context is Nazis' Holocaust not French museum, right? ... I would like to ask a question of if you wrote about the French museum often or not. Some portion of your article is available online, so I read it, but I did not find writing about the French museum.

I am asking this question because I felt a little bit strange that despite the strong context of Holocaust in your article, your concept of "narrative fetishism" is introduced by John Breen without mentioning the Holocaust at all. In stead, he cites the French Museum's failure as an example when your article was mentioned.

Santner responded to this question as follows:

Date July 6, 2011 1:56:19 pm

Thanks for your letter. No, I am not French! I am an American, born in New York City. I don't recall ever having written about a French museum. Strange!!!

As far as I know, *Girei to Kenryoku* is the fourth time that Breen mentions Santner's particular article in his writings: "Yasukuni — Rekishikioku no Keisei to Soushitu

(Yasukuni: the Formation and Loss of Historical Memory, *Sekai* 2006 no.756),” “Yasukuni and the Loss of Historical Memory (*Yasukuni: the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan’s Past*, HURST, 2007)”, and “Taiheiyō no torauma: Yasukuni jinja niyoru sensōgatari no fetishism (Traumas in the Pacific: The Fetishism of Yasukuni Shrine’s Narrative on War)” (Higashi Kentarō’s Japanese translation is available online). The third article seemed to be written somewhere between 2007 and 2011. Even once is unusual to misrepresent a main article cited as a central base of argument, but this misrepresentation has continued four times during the last five years.

Besides, Breen did not admit it when I first time pointed out his misrepresentation of Santner’s scholarly work in *Shintō Forum* (Jan. 15, 2012 vol. 43, p.7):

According to Wikipedia, Eric Santner is an American scholar and a Professor of Department of Germanic Studies at the University of Chicago, specializing in Modern Germanic Studies. His writing covers literature and psychoanalysis, religion and philosophy. It deals with German poetry, post-war Germany, and the Holocaust. It is true that Santner published an article “History Beyond the Pleasure Principle,” but its primary concern is not French museums, as one can determine from the subtitle of the book containing Santner’s article—“Nazism and ‘the Final Solution’.” Santner’s main theme in the article is “the project and the dilemma of elaborating a post-Holocaust German national and cultural identity” (Santner 1992, p.145), and Santner does not refer to French memorial museums at all.

In response to this account, Breen criticized that Nitta “turns his back on Santner’s argument itself” and repeatedly stated:

Santner investigated war museums and memorials of post-war Europe and wrote the stimulating article about the narrative on war of these museums. In conclusion, ways of narrating war are closely related to the trauma of defeat, occupation, and so forth” (*Shintō Forum* Jan. 15, 2012 vol. 43. p.7).

Upon seeing this uncorrected repetition, I cannot but think that Breen’s misrepresentation of Santner is not a careless mistake, but an absolutely intentional one.

What I question here is not just the fact that Breen fabricates the content of Santner’s article. A problem is that this fabrication is designed to hide the significant issue from readers, which allows Breen to avoid the difficult task of validating his argument. Santner’s theory of “narrative fetishism” deals with the trauma produced by the attempted genocide against Jews that is the Holocaust. However horror a war was, one cannot apply Santner’s theory of the Holocaust to “war memory” in general right

away. If it is applicable, then it is necessary to explain why and how it is possible. Breen himself needs to explain and prove how Santner's theory is applicable to war memory. But, he avoids taking accountability for establishing his argument and fabricates the fictitious content of Santner's article including the war experience and the trauma of post-war France as well as French war museums as the device of suppressing the trauma. By doing so, Breen acts as if it is unquestionably possible to apply Santner's concept directly to the Yasukuni Shrine.

III. Concealing Fukuchi Gen'ichirō's "words"

As I stated before in this article, "Instead of dealing with those theories and examples appropriately, Breen picks and chooses, hiding them, ignoring them, and rewriting them differently." One typical example is his way of citing *Bakufu Suibōron* (The Theory of Shogunate's Decline, 幕府衰亡論) written by Fukuchi Gen'ichirō (福地源一郎).

Breen argues in the first chapter "Kōmei seikenron—Shōgun no jōraku to kokka girei no saihensei (the Argument of the Kōmei regime—the Shogun's Procession to Kyoto and Reorganization of State Rituals, 孝明政權論—將軍の上洛と国家儀礼の再編成)" in *Girei to Kenryoku* (The author of this article underlines the following citations) as follows:

Bunkyū 3 (1863) was an extremely important year for analysis of the last days of the shogunate from a perspective of ritual theory. I make this claim not because of the Coup of the 18th August that has attained much scholarly attention, but because of the Shogun Iemochi's procession to Kyoto and audience with Emperor Kōmei at the Imperial Court. The fact that the Shogun left Edo Castle and proceeded to Kyoto actually ended *sankin kōtai* (regional lords' alternating residence between Edo and their domain, 参勤交代) and was the catalyst for the collapse of early modern power relations. Afterwards, leading local lords (有力藩主) got together in Kyoto and received an audience with the emperor, through which new power relations were formed. I claim that the Shogun's epoch-making procession to Kyoto, which has been hardly studied, brought about a totally new (albeit temporary) polity (pp.16-17).

According to Breen, from a viewpoint of ritual theory, the Shogun Iemochi's procession to Kyoto in the year of Bunkyū 3 was the decisive event in the formation of new power relations centering on the emperor.

This first chapter is an extension of Breen's book review (Shinto Shūkyō 2002: vol. 184-185) of *Ishinki Tennō Saishi no Kenkyū* (A Study of Imperial Rituals during the End of the Edo Period, 維新时期天皇祭祀の研究) by Takeda Hideaki. In his review, Breen states that rituals are "the most important opportunity not only to demonstrate power relations but

also to shape and produce them” (p. 125). Breen regards this ritual, in which “the 14th Shogun Iemochi proceeded to the Imperial Court, where he received an audience with the Emperor and was bestowed an imperial wine-cup” as “epoch-making” and continues to say that “it is clear that the power relations between the emperor, the shogun, and various feudal lords was drastically reorganized” (p. 125).

In this chapter, Breen uses various sources to prove his argument, among which there are two main ones: Fukuchi Gen'ichirō's words as historical materials and Edward Shils' theory of center.

Breen introduces Fukuchi Gen'ichirō's words:

I will borrow Fukuchi Gen'ichirō's words to examine what the Shogun's procession to Kyoto after 230 years means to the shogunate. This procession signifies “the decline of the shogunate,” “the surrender,” and “the sign of weakness.” Fukuchi concludes that “in the old days, the power of the shogunate in both name and reality were solidified by proceeding to the capital, but today, through proceeding to the capital, the name and the reality were lost altogether” (p. 66).

Those who read this would think that Fukuchi, who was an interpreter of the shogunate and later wrote *Bakufu suibōron*, claimed that the Shogun's procession to Kyoto was decisive for reshaping power relations between the emperor, the shogun, and feudal lords.

However, this is not true. What Fukuchi considers important as the decisive factor for the decline of the shogunate is the fact that the shogunate accepted the imperial demand delivered by imperial messenger to Edo. By accepting it, the shogunate ended up appointing Hitotsubashi Yoshinobu (一橋慶喜) as the shogunal regent (*Shōgun Kōkeshoku*, 將軍後見職) and Matsudaira Yoshinaga (松平慶永) as the shogunal prime minister (*Seiji Sōsaishoku*, 政事総裁職). This also decided the Shogun's procession to Kyoto. In brief, in Fukuchi's view, the definitive factor is the fact that the shogunate followed such an imperial order that demanded political reformation. I will cite the corresponding part from Fukuchi's *Bakufu suibōron* (1967. Tōyōbunko, Heibonsha).

The fact that the shogunate has held real political power is obvious from the emperor's statement of entrusting the shogun with politics. Moreover, the shogunate has been the central government for more than two hundred fifty years. However, the shogunate was instructed by Kyoto (the Imperial Court) to ask for the emperor's permission regarding diplomatic relations and to proceed to Kyoto with *daimyō* (大名 regional lords) for discussing at the Imperial Court. Furthermore, the Imperial Court interfered in the political affairs of the shogunate, and ordered the

creation of the Council of Five Elders or committee of *daimyō* (*Gotairō*, 五大老) and the appointment of Hitotsubashi (Yoshinobu) as the shogunal regent and Echizen (Matsudaira Yoshinaga) as the shogunal prime minister. How can the shogunate maintain its real political power under this situation? Although it is not so obvious on the surface, this Imperial command is nothing but the order to return the shogunate's political power to the Imperial Court (p. 136).

Upon facing this imperial order, if the shogunate wants to continue to seize real power, it has no choice but to reject this command (p. 137).

In my view, it was not when the 15th Shogun Yoshinobu returned political power to the emperor, but when the 14th Shogun Iemochi accepted the Imperial order in the year of Bunkū 2 that the Tokugawa Shogunate lost its power of ruling over the whole country. From that moment, the decline and fall of the shogunate were accelerated. (p. 138)

Fukuchi considers the year of Bunkū 2 (1862) most important and claims that the shogunate's obedience to the imperial command was decisive. However, Breen conceals this claim and makes it look like as if Fukuchi considers the Shogun's procession to Kyoto in the following year the most significant event, despite being a mere consequence of secondary importance in Fukuchi's view.

If Breen values objectivity and fairness, he should first convey Fukuchi's words without hiding them to readers, and then explain why the Shogun's procession to Kyoto in the year of Bunkū 3 (1863) is decisive in his own words. Concealment is not proof, but deception.

There is another possible reason why Breen fabricates as if Fukuchi views the shogun's procession to Kyoto as the most important event. It is because if Breen introduces Fukuchi's words as they are to the readers, then they will contradict Breen's "theory of ritual."

Breen states that rituals are the most important opportunity not only to demonstrate power relations but also to shape and produce them. On the contrary, in Fukuchi's account, it was the political decision to follow the Imperial command that definitively formed this power relationship. Rituals followed by the procession to Kyoto are merely the "demonstration" of power relations that were already determined; they are not the "most important opportunity" to produce and shape power relations. In fact, Fukuchi states: "the procession to Kyoto discloses the fact that while the shogun is a political ruler, the Imperial Court is the supreme sovereign (p.148)." By concealing the main point of historical materials written by Fukuchi, who held a view incompatible with Breen's "theory of ritual," Breen is simply pretending that Fukuchi's historical materials support his theory.

Breen argues that the ritual—after proceeding to Kyoto, Shogun Iemochi had an audience with Emperor Kōmei in the Imperial Palace—was the decisive moment of the Shogun’s “becoming an imperial vassal” (朝臣化) (p. 58). In his view, before the ritual, although the shogun was a palace minister (内大臣) by the imperial proclamation, he would not have actually been conscious of being an imperial vassal. The ritual of the audience with the Emperor Kōmei served to display the Shogun as an imperial vassal (朝臣) for the first time (p. 60).

Is it really true that the Shogun was not conscious of being an “imperial vassal”? It would hardly be possible to think this true if one believes what Fukuchi says below:

Over three hundred years, learning encouraged by the shogunate has shed light on the path of loyalty and filial piety, advanced social morality, and led to civilization. At the same time, learning has taught that the Imperial Court is superior to the shogunate and is Japan’s true sovereign; thus, learning has enhanced a spirit of loyalty. Besides, along with flourishing literature, many literary works, like Mito’s *Dainihonshi* (Great Japanese History, 大日本史) and Rai Sanyō’s *Nihongaishi* (頼山陽, History of Japan, 日本外史), nurtured the spirit of loyalty. In addition, since long before the era of the shogunate, it goes without saying that military chronicles, including the *Genpei seisuiki* (源平盛衰記), the *Heike monogatari* (平家物語), and the *Taiheiki* (太平記), fostered the spirit of loyalty. Also, the novels and plays of Chikamatsu Monzaemon (近松門左衛門), Takeda Izumo (竹田出雲), and Takizawa Bakin (滝沢馬琴) had an indirect role in forming the spirit of loyalty, and their influential power is evenly matched with that of the *Nihongaishi*.

Thus, the spirit of loyalty was nurtured from the beginning of the shogunate. Moreover, shogun of all generations were encouraged revering the emperor.

If one sees only appearances—the shogunate limited the land owned by the Imperial Court to a little more than ten thousand *goku* (10余万石, a size of land which is same as that of a middle rank lord) and forbade the Imperial Court from interfering with the shogunate politically—since these acts look like that the shogunate thought lightly of the Imperial Court, many people might think that the shogunate did look down on the Imperial Court; however, this is completely false. To begin with, the shogunate shows extreme reverence for the Imperial Court and treats imperial messengers honorably. Also, when *kōke* or hereditary officials (高家, families who conduct rites and ceremonies for the Tokugawa Shogunate) report upon returning from Kyoto every year, the shogun receives a report in a same room with them. (This is also the case for visiting Ise Grand Shrines and the Nikkō Shrine.) Before delivering offerings to the Imperial Court, the shogun wears ceremonial clothes and looks at them. Similarly, when the shogunate receives a gift from the Imperial Court,

the shogun never keeps it in their bed room. The shogun's deep reverence for the Imperial Court has something to do with the fact that a counselor has made the shogun believe that it is Kyoto that he should be afraid of.

When a chief retainer needs to remonstrate with his feudal lord, as the best way to approach, he would say, "if you are rebuked by the shogun, you will be in trouble." When a counselor of the shogun needs to advise the shogun, there are two effective phrases; "if your fault is found, it will be inexcusable toward *Nikkō-sama* (日光様, the first Shogun Ieyasu (家康) who is enshrined at Nikkō)"; and "if you are blamed by the Imperial Court, what would you do?"

Although Nikkō-sama is an ancestor whom the shogun reveres the most of all, its effective force is not so strong and as same as that of an ancestral tablet because Nikkō-sama is a deity that is not present in this world. On the contrary, Kyoto (the emperor) is present in the Imperial Court; he bestows an official rank to the shogun and is more venerable than deities of heaven and earth in all sizes. Thus, it is natural that the Imperial Court has more effective force than Nikkō-sama. In the shogunate, all generations of the shogun have been most scared of the Imperial Court, because, through study or convention, they have been taught since they are small that if the Imperial Court were to declare the shogun as an enemy of the emperor, there would be no place for them to stay in this world. With this teaching, the Shogun's counselor makes the shogun sacred of the Imperial Court and uses Kyoto as an excuse to remonstrate with the shogun. (p. 819)

If one believes Fukuchi's words, one should conclude that successive shogun were conscious of their status as vassals of the Imperial Court. However, what I would like to say here is not that you should trust Fukuchi's words but this; if Breen cites a portion of Fukuchi's words as a basis of his argument, would it not be the case that he should also cite Fukuchi's words that contradict his own claim and investigate further? Otherwise, he is not fulfilling his accountability in quoting these words.

IV. Misrepresentation of Edward Shils' Theory

Breen refers to sociologist Edward Shils' theory of center as "a key to the explanation of the historical meaning about the Shogun's procession to Kyoto" (p. 48).

"The center" is 1) the space where the will of the nation is formed or related institutions exist, and 2) at the same time, a space of a dimension comprised of symbols that establish the authority of the state and individuals in power. Shils concludes that rituals that are characterized by symbols, and principles of order shaped by rituals make the center the center, and make the center the sacred space

of a state. Shils' theory is very significant as the almost first theory that values "space" in history, especially political history. In fact, while Shils developed his theory with the purpose of exploring the "charisma" described by Max Weber, Shils' conclusion on charisma should also be noted. Shils claims that it is the sacred center that functions to produce charisma. (p. 49)

Based on this theory, Breen argues: "It is my main argument that, through the opportunity of the procession to Kyoto, the regime of Emperor Kōmei was created as a new form of a state, centered on Kyoto, the Imperial Court, and the emperor" (p. 50).

I would like to draw attention to those underlined words. If Breen's introduction is correct, surely, Shils' theory will correspond to Breen's theory of ritual; thus it can be understood that Shils' theory supports Breen's view of valuing Kyoto as a spatial site that produces the new charisma. However, does Shils really write as Breen says? Due to Breen's misrepresentation of Santner, I got suspicious and ordered Shils' *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology* (1975, The University of Chicago) and read it. Shils states:

The center zone is not, as such, a spatially located phenomenon. It almost always has a more or less definite location within the bounded territory in which the society lives. Its centrality has, however, nothing to do with geometry and little with geography.

The center, or the central zone, is a phenomenon of the realm of values and beliefs. It is the center of the order of symbols, of values and beliefs, which govern the society. It is the center because it is the ultimate and irreducible; and it is felt to be such by many who cannot give explicit articulation to its irreducibility. (p. 3)

In Breen's explanation, Shils' "theory of center" is supposed to consider "space" important. But, what Shils really thinks highly important is not the "space" (a specific site that physically exists) but "values and beliefs" and "the ultimate and irreducible."

Then, what is the relationship between the "values and beliefs" that Shils emphasizes and "rituals"? Let us listen to Shils' own words:

Ritual and belief are intertwined with each other; yet they are separable. Beliefs and systems of beliefs could conceivably be accepted without adopting the practice of the rituals associated with them. When we speak of rituals in the sense we are discussing here, we think of their cognitive or beliefful content. Logically, beliefs could exist without rituals; rituals, however, could not exist without beliefs. (p.155)

In Breen's explanation, "principles of order shaped by rituals make the center the center, and make the center the sacred space of a state"; however, according to the original theory of Shils, it is "values and beliefs" that form the center, and that, the "beliefs" can be separable from "rituals" and can exist without "rituals."

What becomes clear here is that through adding two major alterations to Shils' theory, Breen manipulates Shils' theory to make it correspond to Breen's view. The first alteration is that Breen claims that Shils' theory of the center, which is not necessarily restricted to space in essence, is a theory that values space. The second alteration is the reinterpretation of Shils' conclusion. Although Shils considers "beliefs and values" to be the important factors that shape the center and states that rituals and beliefs are separable, Breen hides this argument and wrongly presents Shils' conclusion that it is rituals that make the center what it should be.

If Shils' theory is correctly introduced, it does not support Breen's "theory of ritual" but rather disproves or disregards the essential part of Breen's argument—the importance of "space" and "rituals."

V. Fabrication of a "common theory"

In the introduction of "Meiji Tennō wo yomu" (Reading the Meiji Emperor) in *Girei to Kenryoku*, Breen emphasizes Emperor Meiji's visit to Ise Grand Shrines in March of the year of Meiji 2 (1869) as an "epoch-making event" (p. 27). This is Breen's main argument in this chapter:

In a common theory, it is understood that the emperor as a representative of the myth of the unbroken imperial line appears after the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution" (p. 16).

According to a commonly accepted view, it is around the time of completion of the Imperial Constitution and the Imperial Rescript of Education when the emperor, the state, and myths were all connected (p. 29).

However, the common view is not true; since the Emperor Meiji's unprecedented visit to the Ise Grand Shrines, the emperor has been consistently situated as an embodiment of national mythologies (p. 40).

What is the most significant issue here is that as a premise for his argument, Breen assumes it as a "common theory" that it is after the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution that the emperor and the myths were connected. I could not help being surprised at this. In the past, it happened that elements other than myths were introduced to the rituals that an emperor conducts. Although the degree of the connection between an emperor and myths has varied; however, has it ever happened that the link between

the two became disconnected? I have never heard such a “common view” that there was a period when an emperor and his rituals had nothing to do with myths. Also, I do not know any such “common view” that it is after the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution when the emperor, the state, and myths were joined together.

So, I looked at Breen’s notes and found that three names were mentioned as representatives of this “common view”: Okudaira Yasuhiro, Hara Takeshi, and Masuda Tomoko (pp. 43-44). What I first thought suspicious is the fact that both Okudaira Yasuhiro and Masuda Tomoko are jurists. While I pondered that it is a little bit strange to present jurists’ writings as a “common view” concerning history, I thought “there might be some jurists who claim such a thing on history.” Then, I read Okudaira Yasuhiro’s *Banseiikkei no Kenkyū-“Kōshitsutenpannarumono” eno Shiza* (A Study on the “Unbroken Imperial Line”—a Viewpoint toward “the Imperial House Law-Related Matters”[萬世一系]の研究—「皇室典範的なるもの」への視座, Iwanamishoten 2005). Okudaira Yasuhiro states:

While putting aside some theory like ‘*banseiikkei*’ (the unbroken imperial line) advocated by loyalists during the shogunate period, if I speak exclusively based on the discourse on the Constitution, it is fine to consider that this concept originates in the Article 1 of the Meiji Constitution: “The emperor of the unbroken imperial line shall reign over and govern Imperial Japan.” (p. 4)

Okudaira states that he restricts argument on “the unbroken imperial line” within the discourse of the Constitution and does not take other matters before the Meiji Constitution into account. This is by no means a sentence that claims the absence of the connection between the emperor and myths before the Meiji Constitution. It should rather be understood that he affirms the presence of the connection between the emperor and myths before the Meiji Constitution because he recognizes the presence of theory of “the unbroken imperial line” during the shogunate period.

It is the same case in Masuda Tomoko’s *Tennōsei to Kokka* (the System of the Emperor and the State, 天皇制と国家, Aoki Shoten 1999). I read the page of Masuda’s book indicated in Breen’s notes:

Analysis of modern Japan in this book focuses on the constitutional monarchy under the emperor system, where the state and the ideology of “*kokutai* (the national constitution, 国体) of “the unbroken imperial line” were connected, and grasps the structure of and changes in constitutional monarchy by applying the concept of *taiken-seiji* (大権政治, politics of Imperial prerogatives). (p. 25)

Masuda also states that modern Japan and a constitutional monarchy is the target of

the analysis and like Okudaira, she doesn't take other things before the establishment of the Meiji Constitution into account.

It is Breen's alterations to "narrate" their discourses as the claim that it is after the establishment of the Meiji Constitution and the Imperial Rescript on Education that the emperor, the state, and the myths were linked. In short, this introductory chapter fails to formulate an argument appropriately in the first place because the "common view" that Breen attempts to disprove is itself his fabrication.

Still, if Breen wants to argue that the link between the emperor and the myths began from Meiji Emperor's visit to Ise Grand Shrines, he has to first prove the absence of the link between the two before the emperor's visit to the shrines. However, he does not show any evidence for this. It is natural why he does not. It is self-evident for those who have researched even a little bit about the emperors that such attempts are meaningless. There are abundant examples demonstrating the connection between the emperor and the myths before Emperor Meiji's visit to Ise Grand Shrines. Reading the *mikotonori* (詔, the Imperial edict) of all emperors from the ancient to the modern period will be suggestive (*Mikotonori*, Kinseisha, 1995).

Upon observing how Breen writes, I cannot but think that he must assume that there are no readers who would examine the articles and historical materials that he uses as his basis. Otherwise, he would not have been able to carry out such a series of interpolations and concealment.

VI. Omitting Proof by Generalization and a Subliminal Method

Chapter 2 of *Girei to Kenryoku* focuses on the famous "Imperial Oath of Five Articles" (or Charter Oath, 五箇条の御誓文) and aims to "prove that the Imperial Oath functioned as a device for constructing power relations under 'imperial rule' after the restoration of imperial rule" (p. 87).

There are three aspects of the "construction of power relations" that Breen attempts to demonstrate here. The first aspect is that "the purpose of the ritual of the Charter Oath (*seisai girei*, 誓祭儀礼) is to bestow supreme power to the Meiji Emperor by associating him with the first Emperor Jinmu" (p. 93). This has already been pointed out by Takeda Hideaki in his *Ishinki Tennōsaishi no Kenkyū* (維新期天皇祭祀の研究, A Study on the Emperor's Rituals During the End of the Edo Period), among others, and basically I have no objection to this aspect of the argument.⁽¹⁾

The second aspect is that "the Emperor who appears in rituals or imperial letters is the one whom Kido (木戸), Ōkubo (大久保), and Iwakura (岩倉) easily manipulate as they like; The Emperor's political will is their will, and likewise, an 'imperial rule' with the emperor at its central core is also an 'imperial rule' manipulated by these men." In Breen's view, those who attended the ritual of the Charter Oath were overwhelmed

by the demonstration of the emperor's authoritative power, which caused their "misrecognition" (p. 96). As his basis for this discussion, Breen refers to Catherine Bell's detailed analysis about "the function of rituals to cause misrecognition" (p. 118).

This is a manipulative alteration. Even if a general theory asserts that rituals have such a function, Breen still needs to present concrete evidence in order to prove that it is applicable to this particular case. However, he does not provide any historical data to prove that this "misrecognition" actually occurred. No matter how magnificent the ritual was, common sense would tell us that it is impossible to assume that attendees of the ritual oath "misrecognized" that Emperor Meiji himself determined political matters, because the attendees were aware that the Emperor was a sixteen year-old boy. If Breen thinks my common sense is irrelevant, then I would like him to present proof to verify the attendance's "misrecognition."

The third aspect of the "construction of power relations" is Breen's discussion of the group of nobles who were appointed to *gijō* (議定, a minister of state) and who opposed Kido, Ōkubo, and Iwakura. He claims that "the ritual of the Charter Oath acted to deprive this group of power" (p. 109). Here, again, Breen does not present any historical materials at all to prove that the *gijō* group changed their opinions to obey Kido and others, or that the *gijō* group acted on their changed opinion.

Instead of providing historical data, Breen repeats his claim that "rituals construct power relations" subliminally and attempts to implant it in readers' consciousness (lines 4, 5, 13 on p. 87, line 13 on p. 91, lines 6, 8 on p. 92, line 15 on p. 96, line 10 on p. 110, and line 12 on p. 116: in total 9 repetitions among 31 pages in Chapter 2).

In this chapter, Breen refers to Ōkubo's "proposal of transferring the national capital to Osaka" and Iwakura's plan of "an Imperial tour to Osaka" (pp. 105-106, 115). Considering the relation to the introductory chapter, there are some questions that Breen should closely investigate but fails to do so. How does not Breen interpret these phenomena in terms of Shils' "theory of the center" (pp. 48-49) and Geertz' "theory of Imperial tours" (p. 60)? How does not Breen interpret the fact that the capital was transferred from Kyoto to Tokyo as soon as Meiji Restoration took place? Naturally, Breen should discuss these issues, but he addresses none of them.

Regarding his way of citing sources, in most cases, Breen exploits theories disposably, applying each to an individual issue and then discarding it. It seems that Breen does not interpret history consistently based on the effectiveness of some convincing theory; instead, he conveniently finds whatever theory appears to be able to support his viewpoint and uses it only as long as it suits his purpose. Much less, Breen's attitude and awareness of problems is so lacking that he attempts to examine the effectiveness and appropriateness of various theories in the light of concrete history of Japan.

VII. Lack of Concern About Contradictions Between the Premise and Conclusion

What is hard to understand about Breen's approach is his lack of will to maintain coherency about not only others' views, but even his own.

In the preface, Breen refers to the "fact that rituals that the modern state imposed on shrines were, unlike the early modern period, all conducted for to justify the legitimacy of the emperor of unbroken lineage" (p. 7). In his view, those rituals which have been held at shrines since the modern period are "all" for legitimization of the emperor of the unbroken lineage, and this is a "fact."

Breen repeats his claim that this is a "fact," and states in Chapter 6, "*Jinja no Matsuri no Kindai—Kanpei Taisha Hie Jinja no Ba'ai*" (The Modernity of Rituals at Shrines—The Case of Kanpei Taisha Hie Jinja, 官幣大社日吉神社) that "it was the role of Hie Shrine of *Kanpei Taisha* (large-scale state shrine) during the new era to narrate the myth of the unbroken Imperial line through rituals" (p. 252).

Breen's purpose in Chapter 6 is to demonstrate that the origin of the Sannō (山王) Festival of Hie Shrine, which is said to be primitive and archaic, can in fact be found "in the Meiji Restoration of the 19th century" (p. 207). The reason why Breen focuses on the Sannō Festival is because he thinks that "it is no exaggeration to say that the Sannō Festival is the *raison d'être* of Hie Shrine (p. 206).

If that is the case, what is the result of examination about the Sannō Festival that is allegedly the *raison d'être* of Hie Shrine? Here are Breen's words:

First, as for the deities enshrined of Nishihongū (西本宮), Ōnamuchi(大己貴神), has been consistently enshrined as the deity of Hie Shrine since ancient times, when Ōnamuchi was ceremonially transferred from Miwa (三輪); however, it is no doubt that those enshrined today, except Ōnamuchi, were settled after the Meiji Restoration. Based on the fact that Ōyamakui (大山咋神) appears in the *Kojiki* (古事記) or Records of Ancient Matters, one can presume that Ōyamakui became enshrined at Mount Hachiōji (八王子) before the ceremonial transferring of Ōnamuchi. After that, due to ambiguous circumstances, Ōyamakui disappeared from Hie Shrine and was replaced with Kuni-no-Tokotachi (国常立), which had been consistently enshrined until the Meiji Restoration. Furthermore, the identities of deities other than Ōyamakui also drastically transformed after the Meiji Restoration. Ōyamakui's spouse Tamayori-hime (玉衣姫) also became an enshrined deity of Hie Shrine at the time of Meiji Restoration. We must note that when new deities appeared like this, old deities left. Not only Kuni-no-Tokotachi but also deities such as Ninigi (瓊瓊杵), Kuni-no-Satsuchi (国狭槌), Kashikone (榎根), Oshihomimi (忍穗耳), and Izanami (伊弉册) became unnecessary to Hie

Shrine and the Sannō Festival of this new era. The main reason why these deities relinquished their *shinza* (神座, the seat of the deity) to the new deities is that they had nothing to do with the new story narrated by the Sannō Festival. The new story is about the marriage between Ōyamakui and Tamayori-hime and their child's birth. It has become clear that this story has no relation with the Sannō Festival before the Meiji Restoration. (pp. 251-252)

Upon reading this, I became very confused. This is because the deities that are essential to “the myth of the unbroken imperial line” such as “Ninigi”(the imperial ancestral deity Amaterasu's grandson) and “Oshihomimi” (Ninigi's father) left Hie Shrine along with the Meiji Restoration, and its reason is “these deities had nothing to do with the new story narrated by the Sannō Festival.” Then, how can Breen claim, “It was the role of Hie Shrine as a *Kanpei Taisha* during the new era to narrate the myth of the unbroken imperial line through rituals”? How can he say, “Rituals that the modern state imposed on shrines were, unlike the early modern period, all conducted to justify the legitimacy of the emperor of unbroken lineage”? These should be contrary: “The new story that the Sannō Festival narrates was moving away from the myth of the unbroken imperial line.” “It was not Hie Shrine's role as a *Kanpei Taisha* during the new era to narrate the myth of the unbroken imperial line through rituals.” In other words, should not the conclusion be that “it can not be necessarily said that the rituals that the modern state imposed on shrines were, unlike the early modern period, all conducted to justify the legitimacy of the emperor of unbroken lineage”?

Could it really be that the author himself does not notice such self-contradiction? I considered the possibility that I might have misunderstood the meaning of “a new story narrated by the Sannō Festival,” but this was not the case. My correct understanding is supported by Breen's own words in the conclusion.

If we ignore for a moment of our empirical investigation, this story, on which the contemporary Sannō Festival is based, is really primitive and seems to possess eternal characteristics. It seems to be a myth all the more attractive because the story, as a myth invented under the modern state, is in quite a different dimension from the unbroken imperial line. (p. 245)

Breen's own empirical examination negates what Breen assumes a “fact.” This might be “attractive” to readers, but the author cannot be excused. This is such a contradiction that Breen would be expected to deal with in detail. However, for some reason, he appears to be completely uninterested.

VIII. Again Avoiding Proof by Generalization and Losing Memory of the Basic Character of the Object of Study

At the end, let us return to the addendum. In the addendum, Breen regards Yasukuni Shrine as a “site of memory” and states repeatedly, “The history that is narrated by memory is quite biased and distorted.” He claims, “It is questionable if Yasukuni Shrine can be a site that commemorates the war dead, who devoted themselves their precious lives for various reasons” (p. 281). Breen concludes the section: “There would be many advantages in the creation of a new national memorial” (p. 281).

Breen states that “this section identifies what kinds of memory Yasukuni Shrine shapes through what methods, and why it has to create such memory” (p. 263). In order to do so, Breen examines the “memory” that Yasukuni Shrine narrates in the order of “ritual,” “display,” and “text.”⁽²⁾

First, in regards to ritual, Breen takes up *ireisai* (慰靈祭, rites of propitiation) and asserts that the purpose of the rites is “to repeatedly produce a sense of awe” (p. 268) towards values that the war dead embody and that the emperor characterizes. Breen asserts that, under the values held by Yasukuni Shrine, the deaths of the war dead were “a tragedy to be lamented, but also a praiseworthy honor,” and that “the war, which ended in defeat, was nonetheless a meaningful and noble war” (p. 268). In this line of discussion, Breen raises the critique that “war memory like this should indeed be called myth rather than history” (p. 268). By “myth”, Breen means a made-up story that distorts facts and supports this based on the fact that the “war memory of the Yasukuni Shrine’s ritual of propitiation comprises all those elements of myth defined by Paul Connerton: struggle, sacrifice, and redemption (through death)” (p. 268). His common pattern of avoiding proof by generalization can be seen here again. Whether or not a “memory” of “a praiseworthy honor” and “a meaningful and noble war” is “myth” should be judged as a result of investigating many historical facts individually. Breen's authoritarian method of simply applying one scholar’s generalization to serve his purpose must not be tolerated.

Breen argues that, since that the rites of propitiation of Yasukuni Shrine venerate “as glorious spirits only the military, civilians in military employ, and the paramilitary,” the rites are intended to “banish the sacrifices of the common man and woman from memory”; thus, Yasukuni Shrine “cannot be a national site of mourning” (pp. 268-269). This is an argument that forgets the basic character of shrines—“shrines are sites constructed towards particular deities.” If his argument is right, then it would mean that all shrines in Japan are sites intended to “banish from memory” all other non-enshrined deities.

IX. Lack of Doubt towards Own View of History

As for “display,” Breen takes up Yasukuni Shrine’s “Yūshūkan war museum” and

states, “there is one feature of the Yūshūkan museum which is, perhaps, unique; and that is the odd absence of the enemy” (p. 272). He guesses the reason of this absence as follows:

What the absence of the enemy achieves splendidly is the amnesia of defeat, of perpetration, of the vanity of war and of the horror of war. If the spoils of war from the American, British, and Chinese forces and their articles are displayed, and the enemy is visible, then visitors cannot but associate them with the Japanese military’s perpetration, the damage, and the horror of war. (pp. 272-273)

Here again, his premise is wrong. “Odd absence of the enemy” is not a “feature” limited to the Yūshūkan. More or less, this is a common feature among war memorials in Japan. One such popular example is the Atomic Bomb Cenotaph in Hiroshima, inscribed with its commitment: ‘Rest in peace, we shall not repeat the evil.’ Here, the “enemy” who dropped the atomic bombs was completely “sanitized,” “obliterated,” and “lost in memory⁽³⁾”.

Breen provides these examples of memories that are “obliterated” by the “rites of propitiation” and the “Yūshūkan memorial museum.”

- The historical fact that there were countless soldiers and sailors who died squalid deaths of starvation and disease (p. 269). The historical fact that even those who doubtlessly embodied the vaunted imperial virtues of loyalty, patriotism and self-sacrifice, were victims of the militarism; thus their deaths were in vain (p. 269).
- The historical fact that the war that took the lives of the war dead was extremely horrible and cruel (p. 269).
- The truth of war experienced by the naval military administration officer, Ōda Susumu (p. 270).
- A widely-known fact that no battle was more ferocious than that fought over Okinawa in the Pacific war (p. 273).
- The basic fact that Japan, which the *tokkōtaiin*(特攻隊員) tried to protect, was such a country that it was determined to be governed by the sacred and inviolable emperor of the unbroken lineage (Articles 1 and 3); that the military authorities were given privileged positions (Article 11); that the Meiji Constitution controlled Japan. (p. 277).
- The peace and prosperity of the postwar period was guaranteed not by the way in which the Japanese forces fought—no matter how brave they were—but rather by the disassembly of the army and non-militarization, democracy focused on safeguarding human rights, and reformation of the state system;

in sum, the Japanese Constitution, based on the sovereignty of the people and pacifism, replaced the Meiji Constitution (p. 277).

The problem here is that, Breen never considers to critique the issues he thinks we should remember in terms of “selection,” “sanitization,” and “amnesia” of memory. Without investigating his memory with historical materials, Breen keeps arguing on the premise that all are “facts” and “truths.” In short, he completely lacks doubt towards the view of history that he upholds. This is not just unfair but also inappropriate. For it has been already pointed out that selection, exaggeration, concealment, and distortion of memory are involved in Okinawans’ widely-known fact that “the Japanese army literally used the civilian population as shields, eliminated them, sometimes murdered them with bayonets, and even drove many to acts of group suicide⁽⁴⁾” (p.273). If Breen still wants to claim it as a “fact,” he should rely on the individual concrete research of history. In addition, it is essential for him to investigate policies of the American Occupation that demanded “selection” and “loss” of memory from the Japanese.

Concerning the argument that the Tokyo war crimes tribunal was the “judgment of the winner,” Breen states that such an aspect “cannot be denied.” While he admits that “it is an unmistakable fact that the imperialism of Europe and America, including the author’s own country, Britain, had been invading Asia since before the nineteenth century,” Breen dismisses this lightly without any further consideration. He avoids providing proof through his common method of generalization by saying, “even so, it does not necessarily mean that Justice Pal’s view becomes appropriate historical memory” without investigation. Also, he brings up an argument that “it (European imperialism) does not erase the fact that the Japanese military committed a crime” (p. 274). But it is an argument that Yasukuni Shrine has never claimed before. By doing this, Breen tries to mystify readers.

X. Overlooking Historical Context

Breen states:

History as narrated by the rites of propitiation and reproduced in the exhibits on display in the Yūshūkan is intended to impart meaning to the horror and the waste of war. This is the result of the shrine officials’ unwillingness or inability to face the emptiness of war, the deaths of the war dead, and defeat. (p. 275)

His speculation that the shrine officials intend to impart meaning to the horror and the waste of war as a result of their inability to face the emptiness of war, deaths of the war dead, and defeat is no more than a guess by overlooking the context of the postwar

period in Japan. Since I have argued this point in detail in the past, I will repeat only a summary here.

The Yūshūkan only positively set about telling own view of history very recently in 2002, in fact, after the total reconstruction of the museum. The background to this is that an extremely negative view of Japan's modern history, one which emphasized exploitation within Japan and unremitting aggression abroad, had been implanted in people's minds through the Japanese public education system; this has resulted in a situation that can only be described as pathological. Most Japanese children continue to be taught that the American dropping of atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki could not be helped, since Japan had started the war in the first place. They are taken on school trips to visit the Atomic Bomb Cenotaph, inscribed with its commitment: 'We shall not repeat the evil.' Some junior high schools even take pupils on trips to China expressly to visit the Nanking Massacre memorial hall. It has reached the point that a negative view of history that is full of falsehoods continues to be imposed on students.

Confronted with this situation, Yasukuni itself felt that displays dedicated to the private honoring of war dead were insufficient; the shrine has favored exhibits that attached importance to the sort of historical view that till that time had remained in the background. However, this change in attitude is an insignificant matter and a tiny resistance in view of the realities of places of education. In fact, while schools that take pupils on school trips to visit the atom bomb museums in Hiroshima and Nagasaki are countless, few schools take students to the Yūshūkan⁽⁵⁾.

XI. Fabrication of The Object of Criticism

While analyzing the "text," Breen criticizes the "cornerstone theory" that it is upon the noble cornerstone (*ishizue*, 礎) laid by the 2,500,000 glorious spirits that the Japan of today stands, that you stand, and that your family stands. In his view, "the claim that the war dead considered the postwar society ideal and died for democracy is preposterous" (p. 277). This is based on his fabrication of an object for easy criticism, another example of his common method of formulating a counter-argument against nonexistent claim. In the "cornerstone theory," post-war society is not ideal; however, Japan somehow managed to be able to survive and could attain economic prosperity. This is because, as a result of WWII, the West could not but give up racism and colonialism, and the world became a place where free trade, which is essential for Japan's survival, is guaranteed. In this sense, even though there are cases that cannot impart meaning concretely to the war dead's sacrifice individual, their sacrifice was greatly meaningful overall to the Japan of later years. Therefore, we have to be grateful to the war dead for that. This is the meaning of the "cornerstone theory"⁽⁶⁾.

Conclusion

Writing this article was a painstaking task. It is because I had to reinvestigate the articles and historical materials which Breen uses as the basis for his arguments.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, Breen first determines his conclusion, combines theories and historical materials that correspond to his conclusion, and excludes from his scope those unmatched to his claims and logic. What is underlying in his methodology seems to be both Breen's overconfidence towards his intelligence and his lack of respect for object of his study, other scholars' work, and readers. If he had a feeling of awe toward history, Breen would have never been able to develop an argument with convenient theories and historical materials only. If Breen had a feeling of awe for scholars who constructed theories, it would have been impossible for him to misrepresent them. If he had a feeling of awe for eyes of readers, he would have never been able to conceal some data. If Breen were aware of a fact that it is human nature to select convenient memory unconsciously and that Breen himself is not an exception of it, without reflecting upon himself, he would have never been able to criticize object of study and other scholars.

Breen criticizes: "War memory that Yasukuni holds is not objective and not complicated one, but it is the memory that corresponds to virtue and morality of contemporary society and that serves it" (p 279). However, Breen's own essay is not objective and not complicated, which is correspondent to his sense of value, conclusion, and claim, full of fabrication, alteration, concealment, manipulation, and loss of memory. Since he has gone so far like this, an issue is not methodology anymore. Should not it be said that the level of ethics is in question?

I will leave this judgment to the readers and end this article with citation of the bible, which I always keep in mind as a humble admonition towards myself who usually critique other.

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. (Chapter 7 of the Gospel of Matthew)

Notes

- (1) Takeda states the "characteristics" of the "ritual of the Charter Oath":

First of all, the ritual of the Charter Oath was conducted by the emperor as a ritual where the emperor swore to the deities of heaven and earth of himself. It was a national ceremony to present establishment of the Imperial sponsorship and main principles of “the Charter” through the emperor’s own body. Secondly, the ritual was a national ceremony conducted by the civil and military officials beyond the boundary of usual Imperial rituals. It also meant great change of tradition of usual Imperial rituals in terms of the participation of various feudal lords in the ritual. These lords not only participated in the ritual but also signed the Charter Oath and swore their observance of the emperor’s national policy (*Ishinki Tennōsaishi no Kenkyū*, p. 179; The author underlines; When I inquired Mr. Takeda that the first underlined phrase must be a typo for “Imperial sovereignty” based on the context, I got his confirmation”).

Breen points out Takeda’s scholarly work and criticizes: “Takeda focuses on the priest and the enshrined deity too much, which results that the dimension of power remains hardly unexplored” (*Shintōshūkyō*, vol. 184&185, p. 125); “Takeda overlooks a function of ritual of constructing power relation” (Breen 2011, p 87). However, as Takeda’s citation above shows, he does point out the function of ritual of constructing power relation by phrases of “Imperial sovereignty,” “conducted by the civil and military officials,” and “swore their observance of emperor’s national policy.”

- (2) When I use a quotation mark without page number after this section, basically, those are borrowed from Breen’s terms.
- (3) Justice of the Tokyo war crimes tribunal, Radhabinod Pal, who saw this Cenotaph, got angry and questioned why the Japanese apologize to the Japanese as saying that “We shall not repeat the evil” although it is America that committed an offence of atomic bombing. Justice Pal deplored: “I did not imagine how deeply the Japanese got the impact of the demagoguery of wartime-propaganda that it is all Japan’s fault, stigmatized at the Tokyo Trials. It took over the Japanese’ souls.” “The influence of the Tokyo Trials is more severe than damage of the atomic bombing.” In response to a request of a Buddhist monk of Honshōji temple, Kakei Yoshiaki, who knew Justice Pal’s grief through news, Justice Pal wrote an epitaph inscribed on “Great Asian Earnest Wish Cenotaph” (*Justice Pal ‘Declaration of Peace,’* Shōgakkan, 2008, p. 214).

For the peace of those departed souls who took upon themselves the solemn (solemn) vow at the salvation ceremony of oppressed Asia, Oh! Lord, thou being in my heart, I do as appointed by you

1952. 11.5

Radhabinod Pal

As for Breen’s “odd absence of enemy,” I have responded before as follows, but he did not pay attention to it:

What is typically overlooked in arguments that criticize “the narration in Yasukuni” is the fact that Yasukuni is a facility for consoling the spirits of the deceased. I don’t know how it works in other religious traditions, but in Shinto funeral

ceremonies, it is customary for prayers (*norito*, 祝詞) to introduce the history and achievements of the deceased and to single them out for praise. There is surely no one who would take issue with that discourse, and insist that ‘unless you make mention of the negative side of the deceased, you will have failed to make a just assessment of them’. When speaking of the hardships encountered by the deceased, it is simply not the done thing for a man to stress the evil deeds of his rivals; no civilized person emphasizes the wrongdoings of the enemy. In brief, it goes against traditional Japanese religious sensibilities to introduce, or stir up, negative feelings of bitterness and hatred at a place whose purpose is consoling the spirits of the deceased.

Shinto priests and the majority of the Japanese people unconsciously view the Yūshūkan and its display of the exploits of the war dead with the same feelings as they might hear the prayers dedicated to the deceased at funerals. That being so, the focus of the exhibits at the Yūshūkan is placed on the positive significance of the lives of the deceased, and there is no emphasis on the existence of enemies (Nitta Hitoshi, “And Why Shouldn’t the Prime Minister Worship at Yasukuni?,” in John Breen ed., *Yasukuni: the War Dead and the Struggle for Japan’s Past*, Hurst, 2007, pp. 134-135).

- (4) Sono Ayako, *Okinawa-sen, Tokashikijima ‘shūdanjiketsu’ no shinjitsu—Nihongun’no jūminjiketsumeireiwanakatta* (Truth of “group suicide” of the battle for Okinawa and Tokashiki island—there was no military command of group suicide), Wakku, 2006. (曾野綾子『沖縄戦・渡嘉敷島「集団自決」の真実—日本軍の住民自決命令はなかった』). This Sono’ literary work is a significant source that teaches us how really we should investigate and think a subject in order to overcome what Breen calls “myth.” Not to mention her methodology, what is so interesting about her way of thinking is her argument by comparing between these two: the Jewish people’s evaluation about group suicide at Masada, the last base of the Jewish’s rebellion against Rome in 66 B.C. and the Japanese people’s evaluation about group suicide at the battle for Okinawa.
- (5) See Ishikawa Mizuho’s ‘commentary’ included at the end of Sono’s book shown above.
- (6) Nitta Hitoshi, “Kindai kokumin kokka ‘Nihon’ no imi kara kangaenaoshitemiyō” (Let us reconsider the meaning of Japan as a modern nation state), in *Yasukuni jinja o dō kangaeruka* (How do we think about the Yasukuni Shrine), Shōgakkan, 2001, p. 133.