

What is behind Shinto? (slide 1)

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Today I want to become a pilot guiding you behind the world of Shinto.

When you come to Japan, you may see Ise Jingu shrine (slide 2) and say, "It's just Shinto. This purified simplicity is the essence of Shinto." I, of course, agree with this point of view. Saigyō (1118-1190), who was a very famous Japanese poet and a Buddhist, came to Ise Jingu and was impressed by its solemn simplicity so much that he wrote this poem: "I do not know who would be enshrined here. I only feel grateful to Something highly important that moves me to tears deeply." Usually Japanese people love this poem and recognize the essence of Shinto as simplicity. But I want to add another aspect of Shinto, which is closely connected with the belief of Aborigini People in Austraria.

I sometimes go to the Japanese countryside, where older Japanese traditional beliefs have been a part of customs, rites and ceremonies. For example Hanamatsuri festivals (slide 3) in the Okumikawa area are not simple but complex. They are more dynamic and aboriginal than Ise Jingu's ceremonies. They smell spiritual taste of the earth.

How can this difference be explained when we look at Shinto or Japanese culture? In Japan I believe there are two types of aboriginal culture, one of which I want to call the Jomon type and the other the Yayoi type. The Jomon type (slide 4) is based on Jomon culture (12000BC-1000BC).. People of the Jomon culture had a hunting and gathering lifestyle. They lived in nature, with nature and through nature, like Aborigini People in Austraria. Their culture smells spiritual taste of the earth, Mother Earth.

The Yayoi type is based on Yayoi culture (1000BC-300AD) (slide 5). In the Yayoi period people cultivated Mother Earth and grew rice. Rice was very important for Yayoi people. Using rice they made various things, for example sake wine, *dango* rice dumplings, *musubi* rice balls, *hoshi-i* dry rice and so on. Always they offered not only special foods related to Jomon culture, but also

rice for the *kami*, the invisible gods. And in the Yayoi period there were important symbols related to the rice culture. Because rice is white, white was the best color for them. Symbolically speaking, purification of the soul, which is important in Shinto, meant changing the color of the mind from dark to white. I believe that in Jomon culture too, it meant changing the color of the mind from dark to a kind of transparency such as that of crystal or jade.

I was surprised to notice that these two types of culture had been harmonized for a long time. I dare to claim that they are even now continuing in Japan. I believe they have been making a complementary spiral shape like DNA alpha-helix (slide 6). I think that it is impossible to fully comprehend Shinto, Japanese culture and Morita Therapy without understanding this structure.

To explain this clearly I want to show the esthetic point of view about it. In Kyoto you will see a very famous building, Katsura-rikyu (slide 7), the style of which is called *sukiyazukuri*. Roughly speaking, the style of *sukiyazukuri* is very simple. It will bring to mind the building of Ise Jingu. I want to call it the Yayoi type of architecture (slide 8) . In the early Meiji period foreign philosophers and scholars of fine arts, recognized its beauty and regarded it as an essential beauty and important part of Japanese culture. Their statements misled Japanese people in their views about Japanese culture, for example they did not recognize the beauty of Nikko Toshogu (slide 9) until Taro Okamoto, a famous Japanese modern artist, extolled the beauty of Jomon art. I want to stress that the Yayoi style, which is typically seen in pots of the Yayoi period, is just one of two important traditions.

When you see Nikko Toshogu, you may say “How dynamic and powerful it is!” and taste spirituality of the earth Its style is called *gongen-zukuri*. I think it is closely connected with Jomon culture, the essence of which you will find in pots (slide 10) of the Jomon period. So I think *gongen-zukuri* can be called the Jomon type of architecture.

Even in architecture you will find two types of aboriginal culture. Sometimes one type is more prevalent, but usually both types appear harmonically, as

you can see in photo (slide 11,12), Tanashi Jinja Honden in Tokyo.

In conclusion, I believe Shinto has the complementary spiral movement of the Jomon and Yayoi types, like DNA alpha-helix. To understand Shinto, Japanese culture and Morita Therapy, please imagine my idea of their structure and solve the "DNA" codes(slide 13).I would like to offer one of key words to solve the codes. It is the earth, Mother Earth, through which two strings of the "DNA" is combined harmonically.

(slide14) I have to add "Human culture and civilization has been hurting Mother Earth since the beginning of it. Aboriginal People let us know it . We have to notice the meaning of their kind advices ,I think"

- Photo
- 1 Ise Jingu
  - 2 Hanamatsuri
  - 3 Jomon pot
  - 4 Yayoi pot
  - 5 DNA
  - 6 Katura Rikyu
  - 7 Yayoi pot
  - 8 Nikko Toshogu
  - 9 Jomon pot
  - 10 Kaendoki pots of the Jomon period
  - 11 Tanashi Jinja Honden