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000.3 RELIGION

NO. DATE SUBJECT/SYNOPSIS

1. 30 Jul 48 Mr Yamada, Chief Priest of the Kamo Wakeikazuchi Shrine

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KYOTO MILITARY GOVERNMENT TEAM
APO 301 (Kyoto, Japan)

HCS/ojc

30 July 1948

SUBJECT: Mr. Yamada, Chief Priest of the Kamo Wakeikazuchi Shrine

MEMO TO: Colonel James G. Devine, Kinki Mil Govt Regn, APO 301

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I should like to call to your attention one of the most progressive, democratic, forward looking, civic spirited religious figures which this Team has had the pleasure of meeting. Mr. Taketsugu Yamada, Chief Priest of the Kami Gamo Shrine has shown himself to be a leader in revitalizing the Shinto religion in accordance with basic democratic principles.

Unlike many of his colleagues who bemoan the withdrawal of government support of religion and look forward to the day when the Occupation Forces leave with the possibility of a return of governmental sponsorship, Mr. Yamada has accepted the divorce of state and religion as a fait accompli and turned his attention and energies to the rebuilding of his religion on fundamentals.

It is agreed by historians that the original Shinto religion was a primitive nature worship consisting of the deification and veneration of natural features and forces, such as the sun, moon, wind, mountains, rocks, trees etc. With these concepts as a basis, Mr. Yamada has made excellent progress in reconstituting a religion conforming to modern accepted religious principles.

The precincts of the Kami Gamo Shrine abound in archeological and historic relics of ancient Japanese civilization. Being an amateur archeologist, Mr. Yamada has utilized these relics in the correlation of the ancient and the modern in religion.

In addition, he has emphasized to his followers the urgency of public service and welfare activities, and is giving freely of his time and effort to the religious welfare and educational needs of his community.

As a further evidence of his progressiveness, Mr. Yamada concluded negotiations with the Prefectural officials for the use of part of the Kami Gamo Shrine lands for the construction of Kyoto's only golf course. Realizing that the shrine utilized these lands only a week or two each year during the Shrine Festivals and that during the balance of the year they were unused, he saw no religious inconsistency

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Memo fr KNQT to Col. Devine, dtd 30 July 48, subj: "Mr. Yamada,
Chief Priest of the Kamo Wakeikamuchi Shrine."

in granting the use of this land for recreational purposes providing it
would be available for religious rites when required. Such a modern
religious viewpoint is indeed praiseworthy.

By his splendid example, his progressive ideals, and his civic
pride and spirit, he is contributing much to the spiritual and moral
reawakening of Japan as a true democracy.

HAROLD C. SHEFFIELD
Major QMC
Commanding