

THE GOD-PROBLEM IN JAPANESE THOUGHT

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日本思想における神について

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This small paper is the concerning of Shinto and Christianity in Japan. Since, according to Shinto, there is no omnipotent deity or guiding force in the universe, it is not surprising that Shinto does not pretend to knowledge of the future. Instead, it looks for the value of everyday life in the world at hand. In other words, Shinto is not eschatological the way Christianity is. This aspect of Shinto leads to its mind, and the Japanese mind being interested only in the present, and also its usually opportunistic mentality.

1. SHINTO AND CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN

I would like to explain Shinto and Christianity in Japan in brief. But it is not so easy to explain Shinto by borrowing Western terminology. Spae says:

It is no easy task to write intelligently on Shinto, particularly in the categories of Western thought. Shinto has no founder, no sacred scriptures, no established dogmas, no authentic interpreters. There is not even a uniform answer to the question whether Shinto is a "religion," or an ethic, or merely a style of life, typical of Japan. Some say that it is all of these, and possibly much more.¹

Ever since Christianity was first imported into Japan, missionaries have pondered how to make it less Western and more compatible with Japanese customs and society. The discussion, or how to achieve this goal, called the indigenization of the Gospel in Japan, has aroused much controversy for a long time among Christian churches in Japan. There are two ways to view this Christian aim. Negatively, one can reject out of hand any idea of altering the Gospel, based on the assumption that God gave His message to man verbatim, and that it may not be restated. The Gospel is thus untouched by changing time and place. To adapt it in any way is to pervert the true word of God. Of course, accidental and peripheral changes do occur in translation, but to purposely change the Gospel in its essential points is not all allowed.

However, there is another way to view the problem and this is the position I take. God sent Jesus, His only begotten Son, to man as His mediator. Thus, one must first know Christ before one can know God, and this is possible only by realizing the true significance of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. The import of these two historical events in which Christ played the central role must be made intelligible to all men who seriously contemplate making contact with God, and the indigenization of the Gospel is a good way to accomplish this, regardless of individual cultural and historical backgrounds.²

There is still another reason why I feel that the Gospel should be indigenized. Christianity must be extended, not only geographically, but also by the growth and development of the Gospel itself. I base my argument on Arnold Toynbee's conception of the role challenge and response play in the birth, development and death of civilizations. Toynbee apparently believes that civilization progresses by a dialectic process.

Ideally, no doubt, the introduction of any new dynamic forces or creative movements into the life of a society ought to be accompanied by a reconstruction of the whole existing set of institutions if a healthy social harmony is to be preserved; and, in the actual history of any growing civilization, there is in fact a constant remodelling or readjustment of the most flagrantly anachronistic institutions *ex hypothesi*, at least to the minimum extent that is necessary in order to save the civilization from breaking down.³

When a society sustains the invasion of forces into its life, it must rebuild and remodel "the most flagrantly anachronistic institutions" to avoid total breakdown. If it fails to make the adjustment to outside forces, it will be demoralized and defeated by them.

I am convinced that this process is relevant to religion also, but instead of passively waiting for these forces to challenge it, religion actively seeks out challenge in societies other than the one which originally conceived it.

No one who has studied Christian Church history can deny that the Church started out as a very small, harried group of believers, and that it has become the large body it is today only by successfully surviving trials and challenges in Asia Minor, Greece, Rome, Europe and elsewhere. Christianity is apparently facing another challenge in contemporary Japan. Can it meet this challenge successfully and gain widespread acceptance in Japan as it has done before in other parts of the world?

If the Gospel can be understood only by a minute portion of the Japanese people, it can attract only a few followers, remaining forever an outside, alien faith. If this is the case, its growth potential is obviously very small. In this conjunction, we must understand that conditions in Japan are unique and unlike anything that Christianity has ever seen before. It seems to me that the only way to understand these conditions is to know the Japanese people, and the only way to know the Japanese people is to understand their thoughts and desires, or to appreciate their mentality. Thus, we can conclude that, if Christianity is to really succeed in Japan, it must first make an effort to understand the Japanese mind.

Of course, it is most difficult for the non-native to understand the Japanese mind...or for that matter, the mind of any other group one was not born into. It is certainly a momentous task to try to examine all the aspects that contributed to the formation of a national mind, as well as the consequences derived from them. However, in Japan, the influence exerted by the two native religions, Shinto, and Buddhism, should definitely not be ignored. Parenthetically, it should be noted that Buddhism is a foreign import into Japan from China, but that it is considered native in the sense that it was already present and fully indigenized when Christianity was first introduced in the sixteenth century. In this paper, I intend to examine the influence of one of these two religions, Shinto, on the development of the Japanese mind.

2. A SURVEY OF SHINTO

First, we must undertake a short survey of Shinto as a system of religious beliefs and doctrines. Shinto is Japan's "primaeval subconscious intuition"...this kind of intuition occurs in many primitive cultures.⁴ Shinto believes that "whatever is, is divine spirit; man is divine spirit in the divine universe choosing his own way."⁵ It also teaches that the creative process always contains something spontaneous and absolutely new. Shinto teaches no dogma: there is no all-seeing, all-powerful deity supervising the course of the universe, no concept of original sin to separate mortal from divine.

SHINTO shows no evidence of having originated as an analytical effort of self-consciousness to fix man's place in the universe or to provide a heaven for the human soul in distress. Shinto does not philosophize nor moralize about life nor does it attempt to establish a relationship between man and divinity as a deliberate purpose. Primaeval man did not resolve to discover his own spirit or the divine or to find meanings in existence in formulating the Shinto mythology. His intent was to put into permanent form confused recollections of historical occurrences and to trace the ancestry and development of the Japanese race and explain how Japan itself came into being. The initiative in formulating a spiritual conception to give expression to this purpose cannot have come from a self-conscious resolve to make spirituality the basis of the narrative, for primaeval man had no such mental capacity. Rather, it seems that the direct knowledge life has of itself and of subjective reality rose as an immediacy of intuition to inspire the spiritual character of the Shinto mythology. Primaeval man accepted what came forth from the subconscious depths without showing any critical ability and formulated it as best he could with no logical self-conscious aid.⁶

Shinto is not a "self-consciously evolved creed"; it does not try to "philosophize or moralize about life, nor does it attempt to establish a relationship between man and divinity as a deliberate purpose." And, in fact, the Japanese never evolved the intense self-consciousness or inclination to self-analysis as the West has. These points will be discussed more extensively below.

I suspect that there are at least three indispensable necessities in human survival. One is solidarity, or belonging, another is continuity, or a sense of enduring, and the third, spirituality. This triad is the essence of human society, and of these, spirituality is the most essential, because it joins the other two and acts as a catalyst to make them work. The same three factors can be seen at work in the family, which is, after all, a community on a smaller scale involving a much closer blood relationship. The essential factors involved here are family membership, family tradition and family religion, with religion being the most important of the three. This can be seen clearly in Shinto, which provides the spiritual foundation of the family as expressed in worship at the Kamidana (family altar) and Butsudan (Buddhist shrine). The patron gods of the family, as well as the spirit of the Amaterasu-o-mikami

(the Sun Goddess)⁷ are enshrined in the Kamidana, while in the Butsudan are found the statues of Buddha, Kwannon (the Goddess of Mercy) and the family ancestral tablets. Shinto in Japanese family life is a form of ancestor worship, acting as a bond between family members and giving them a sense of continuity with the past. The Kamidana and the Butsudan are symbols of the reverence Japanese feel for their forebears. An inspection of the ancestral tablets in the Butsudan reveals that special devotion is shown to close relatives who have recently passed on within the memory of those still living. Praying at the Butsudan reminds the Japanese that they owe what they are to their ancestors, who created the family tradition. It is incumbent upon the living family members not to sully the memory of the departed, but to strive to be worthy of their names. There is the responsibility of augmenting and passing on the honor of the family name to their offspring. Another important function in Buddhist tradition is observing memorial days of the ancestors through temple observances. The expression of ancestor worship in Shinto is similar, but with far greater implications, because Shinto has had such a great effect on the shaping of the Japanese mind as it is today. There are two theories to account for the origin of ancestor worship in Shinto: the practical and the theological. The practical theory explains that respect for ancestors grew out of the idea that they tend to the welfare of their descendents. This feeling increased after the primeval Japanese people settled down to a life of agriculture rather than the nomadic life they had led until then. According to Aston:

Ancestor-Worship. . . . If we restrict this term to the religious cult of one's own ancestors, as in China, this form of religion has hardly any place in Shinto. The only case of it, except in modern times and under foreign influences, is that of the Mikados, and even then there is no evidence of its existence before the sixth century.⁸

The concept of patron gods or spirits with the function of guarding and protecting specific groups of men probably arose in such circumstances.

The theological explanation penetrates the very heart of Shinto, the subconscious intuition of primitive man. The Shinto concept of Kami is important in this connection. Kami is usually rendered as God or Gods, but it literally means "superior" or "above," and is used to indicate a person of superior status or power. Norinaga Motoori (1730-1801), the great eighteenth century scholar, whose authority in Japanese literature is unquestioned, starts out his well-known essay on the primary idea of the historical usage of the word with the reassuring remark: The word Kami "was applied directly to the seas or mountain themselves as being awful things."⁹ However, Kami cannot actually be used to mean one person is superior to another, or to magnificent, awe-inspiring things, because according to the main doctrine of Shinto, all things, all men, all objects are divine, for whatever is, is Kami.¹⁰ There is no difference between gods and men.

Certain contradictions and vagaries can be pointed out in the Shinto concept of Kami. Why do some gods have certain specific attributes in the first place? Are the gods actually historical heroes deified, or are the heroes really gods personified? The Kojiki (Records of Ancient Matters)¹¹ and the Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697)¹² seem to support both points of view. Actually, it is irrelevant which view we choose. The central point is that men and gods are not spiritually distinct. In a way, gods are the realization of man's ideals, and men are the manifestation of the divine spirit on earth. Thus, in Shinto, there is a definite concept of continuity between gods and humans, and because ancestors are also divine, Japanese respect for them becomes an expression of the spiritual unity between people and gods rather than a cult. The ancestral line "carries the living individual back to the initiating impetus of the divine spirit."¹³

Continuity of life and life's origin in the realm of spaceless divine spirit are emphasized by Shinto, too, through respect paid to ancestors. Ancestors are not objects of worship in Shinto. The fundamental conception of the Shinto principle of respect for ancestors is founded on the spirituality of mankind. The ancestral line carries the living individual back to the initiating impetus of divine spirit. Certainly, immediate relatives who have departed from earthly life are remembered with special devotion, but the basic idea of ancestral respect is much more than that. Ancestorship unites all life with the pure spirituality of spaceless Heaven, whatever the evolutionary forms may have been. It is not the form that matters but the Heavenly divine origin.¹⁴

The Shinto concept of ancestor worship is the spiritual foundation of the Japanese family. Respect for ancestors reminds the Japanese of the first ancestor, or life's Heavenly origin. The idea that each one is an integral part of the whole universe creates feelings of solidarity and continuity in each member of the Japanese family.

Japan's defeat in World War II shook the very foundation of the Japanese family.¹⁵ The idea that the Emperor was divine colored every aspect of the thinking of the Japanese mind, and to be forced to accept the notion that the Emperor was not divine after all came as an extreme blow. Japan's defeat also precipitated the destruction of the Japanese family as a unique social institution. The emptiness that everyone felt was reflected

in the great drop in attendances at public shrine observance and memorial services. We cannot ignore the problem that the Japanese family faces today in light of the gravity of this situation. In the place of the old, repudiated spiritual foundation of the family, we must create and substitute a new one. Here, Christianity can confront Shinto with its own solution.

In his monumental work, *Christian Dogmatics*, Karl Barth says:

The word and concept of "family" are deliberately avoided. The term originally denotes the retinue of servants (*famulus*) who belong bodily to a lord. Groups of fighters or actors can also be called *familia*. It then becomes a comprehensive designation for a household, and only finally for all what we mean by it to-day, a family, tribe or clan, or part of such an interrelated collective. In the more limited sense particularly the idea of the family is of no interest at all for Christian theology. . . . When the New Testament speaks of a "house," it means the *familia* in the comprehensive sense of a household fellowship which can become a center of the message heard and reproduced in the wider life of the community. It does not denote the clan as such. And it is no accident that, as with some of the disciples, the second name seems not to be that of a man's father but of his native district, e.g., Jesus of Nazareth, Judas of Kerioth, Simon of Cyrene, Saul of Tarsus. Parents and children are still emphasised, like men and women, masters and servants, but as persons and for the sake of their personal connexions and duties. The family collective as such plays no further part at all. "In the Old Testament the family is an end in itself, in the New Testament it is an organ of the kingdom of God" (L. Kohler, R.G.G., II, 509). Is not this saving too much in both cases? It was the habits of thought and actual customs of the Christianized heathen which later gave to the idea of the family the splendour of a fundamental concept of Christian ethics. We have no occasion to adopt this view. Our business is with the relationship of parents and children, not with a collective embracing both them and more distant connexions.¹⁶

Barth seems to be saying that it might be good to retain the concept of the exclusive and self-centered family, but that the term must be interpreted more broadly.

In conclusion, we may say that Christianity should make a great effort to fill the void in the Japanese mind by rescuing the Japanese family from complete disintegration through new principles of life and new concepts of family and community. Thus it can hope to recreate the solidarity and continuity that have been destroyed: this is an urgent task.

3. THE CONCEPT OF GOD IN SHINTO

In discussing any problem dealing with religion or faith, it is only natural to want to examine carefully the object of worship and its attributes. However, as a religion, Shinto does not seem to have any well-defined concept of God. There exist over ten different definitions of the Japanese word *Kami*, and no one of them predominates over the others.

Shinto is polytheistic. *Kami* are infinitely numerous. In Shinto, belief that deities are numerous has a positive meaning. A great number means that they are sacred, great and merciful. In ancient ages the numbers 8, 80, 180, 5, 10, 50, 100, 500, 1,000, 1,500, 10,000, 15,000,000 were sacred numbers. These were numbers that indicated growth. The number *yaoyorozu* (8,000,000) which was very often used to modify things relating to *Kami*, was the most sacred numerical expression, meaning that the gods increased infinitely.

This idea of number is closely related to the concept of *Kami* in Shinto. As it points to a great number it indicates glorification and not confusion or lowness of concept.¹⁷

However, forced to choose, one could say that the central meaning of the word comes from the Chinese character 上, meaning "above."¹⁸ Perhaps this definition is most acceptable because it incorporates much of the feeling of the other definitions. At any rate, the essence of the word *Kami* is that it represents a being or beings above, or superior to ordinary human beings. Professor Nakamura says:

As to the origin of the word "kami" (god), there are conflicting views among scholars, and none of them has yet produced any conclusive evidence. "Kami" in Japanese may mean "above" "one's superior," or "hair," and the political ruler was once called "okami" (the one that is above us). Everything placed above one both in space or in the hierarchical order is called "Kami." Even if the etymological origin of each "Kami" is different, the difference is not discernible in daily usage. For the Japanese, therefore, God was not a distinct entity complete in itself, but was diffused in all, that is, above and beyond ordinarily human beings. It was the custom of Shintoism from antiquity to deify those persons who rendered

distinguished services to a particular human nexus such as a family, a village, or a native community.¹⁹

In addition, Shinto is considered to be a religion of nature worship as a good number of its shrines were constructed in honor of trees, stones, mountains and rivers, which were seen as symbols of divinity. Nevertheless, this should not be taken to imply that Shinto teaches the worship of all material objects as divine. Natural object or man, the thing that is worshiped must be somehow “above,” an idea which is nevertheless not synonymous with the Christian concept of deity, which postulates a God who is personally interested in human beings and sent Christ as a mediator to them.²⁰ This unique viewpoint raises the question as to whether Shinto conceives of god as creator and also whether Shinto even has a Creation myth. The *Kojiki* actually does include a legend of the creation of the world, but there is still much debate among scholars as to the interpretation of this tale. Norinaga Motoori (1730-1801) a top scholar in one of the two leading schools of classical studies in Japan asserts that the gods appeared after the world was formed. He says:

I do not yet understand the meaning of the term, Kami. Speaking in general, however, it may be said that kami signifies, in the first place, the deities of heaven and earth that appear in the ancient records and also the spirits of the shrines where they are worshipped.

“It is hardly necessary to say that it includes human beings. It also includes such objects as birds, beasts, trees, plants, seas, mountains and so forth. In ancient usage, anything whatsoever which was outside the ordinary, which possessed superior power or which was awe-inspiring was called kami. Eminence here does not refer merely to the superiority of nobility, goodness or meritorious deeds. Evil and mysterious things, if they are extraordinary and dreadful, are called kami. It is needless to say that among human beings who are called kami the successive generations of sacred emperors are all included. The fact that emperors are also called ‘distant kami’ is because, from the standpoint of common people, they are far-separated, majestic and worthy of reverence. In a lesser degree we find, in the present as well as in ancient times, human beings who are kami. Although they may not be accepted throughout the whole country, yet in each province, each village and each family there are human beings who are kami, each one according to his own proper position. The kami of the divine age were for the most part human beings of that time and, because the people of that time were all kami, it is called the Age of the Gods (kami).

Furthermore, among things which are not human, the thunder is always called ‘sounding-kami’. Such things as dragons, the echo, and foxes, inasmuch as they are conspicuous, wonderful and awe-inspiring, are also kami. In popular usage the echo is said to be tengu and in Chinese writings it is referred to as a mountain goblin. . . .

In the *Nihongi* and the *Manyoshu* the tiger and the wolf are also spoken of as kami. Again there are the cases in which peaches were given the name, August-Thing-Great-Kamu-Fruit, and a necklace was called August-Storehouse-Shelf-Kami. There are further instances in which rocks, stumps of trees and leaves of plants spoke audibly. They were all kami. There are again numerous places in which seas and mountains are called kami. This does not have reference to the spirit of the mountain or the sea, but kami is used here directly of the particular mountain or sea. This is because they were exceedingly awe-inspiring.²¹

However, Atsutane Hirata (1776-1843) states:

Regarding the meaning of kami: At the beginning of the Chronicles of the Age of the Gods (*Nihongi*) it stands written, ‘In ancient times Heaven and Earth were not yet separated and the In and the Yo were as yet undivided. All was turbid and of chaotic mass like an egg, and kabi was contained therein.’ Kami is the same as this kabi. The ka of kabi has the significance of ‘that’ and is a demonstrative serving to point out an object. Bi is a word that indicates something which is mysterious (reimyo). The forms kabi, kami, kabu and kamu are all the same. . . . The kabi which was included in original matter was the cause of matter taking on form. . . . Kabi was the source of all things that appeared in the world and, in as much as it was very mysterious, afterwards everything that had mystery in it came to be designated by this word. Now kabi and kami are the same. In as much as the idea is that of a thing that is mysterious and strange, not only the kabi which performed the work of creation, but also everything in the world possessing marvelous and strange virtue was called kabi. Later this was written kami. Then it followed that among ordinary human beings any superior person was called kami. Also, in the natural world anything that was preeminent was generally called kami.²²

Here we can clearly see the polar differences existing between two renowned scholars in the eighteenth century: no definite conclusion to the debate has yet been offered, despite the gap of more than a century. This implies the

vast difference between god-concepts in Christianity and Shinto. If Christianity were suddenly to decide to adopt the idea that God appeared after the creation instead of before it, its whole theology would have to be entirely rewritten.

Shinto's god-concept can be understood as one which does not separate man from god, nor creator from created, and therefore, whether gods appeared before or after creation is not particularly important or relevant, as it is in Christianity.

Can we then assume that Shinto takes a pantheistic view of god as identical with man and all other objects in the universe? Not so, says Dr. Genchi Kato, who studied the history of Shinto and came to the following conclusion:

In short, the idea of deity has evolved through a gradual translation. At first, everything, including man, was considered to be a deity, and then only man was regarded as equal to the god. This position of equality was soon accorded to man's mind, and then to the posthumous spirit of man. Finally the spirit of the honest assumed the place of the god. This transition clearly proves the humanistic attitude of Shinto, endeavoring to focus on man out of the whole creation and to find out the condition of man as a deity in man's mind or in a certain state of man's mind.^{2,3}

Shinto does not regard god as the only, absolute, omnipotent power in the universe, but as a power residing in man. This does not imply that man is equal to god, per se, but that god is an integral part of man's higher nature. Naturally, this concept leads to the realization that Shinto is a man-centered religion in opposition to Christianity, a God-centered religion, where the concept of God is of central importance.

Even more uniquely interesting is the Shinto concept of Yaoyorozu no Kami, which means eight million gods, but even though it implies more than one god, it is not polytheistic.^{2,4} As a matter of fact, the Shinto family god-shelf normally honors several deities, and there are also usually more than one branch shrine attached to a main shrine, but this actually reflects the syncretistic rather than polytheistic leaning of Shinto. Traces of a henotheistic idea, revolving around Ame-no-minakanushi (the Heavenly-Central-Lord) and Amaterasu-Omikami (the Sun Goddess)^{2,5} can be found in Shinto. Called unificative polytheism by Shinto scholars, this is a truly unique aspect of Shintoism, but it is unlikely ever to result in any move to unify or otherwise combine the deities into a monotheistic creed. Thus it is unreasonable to view Shinto as on the road from polytheism to becoming a monotheistic faith simply because this is what happened in the West, or because the dominant Western religions profess faith in one god. This type of reasoning only leads to erroneous criticism of the Shinto god-concept and failure to understand Shinto properly.

Because of these unique and irreconcilable characteristics of Shinto and Christianity, Kami will be used to refer to the Shinto understanding of deity and "God" to refer to Western concepts of divinity.

NOTE:

- 1 . Joseph J. Spae, CICM, "The Shinto View of Man: An Introduction," *The Japan Missionary Bulletin*, XXV /8, September, 1971, p.479.
- 2 . Cf. There is a vast literature by Christians on this subject, some of it found in the notes which follow. A selection of books in Japanese: Nihon ni okeru Kirisutokyo to Shoshukyo tono Sesshoku no Mondai (*Problems of Christianity's Contact with other Religions in Japan*, 1960), Nihonjin no Kachikan (*The Japanese View of Value*, 1963), Kirisutokyokyoiku o habamu mono (*Obstacles to Christian Education in Japan*, 3rd ed., 1962). These three small volumes by several authors are published by the Research Institute of the Kyodan (The United Church of Christ in Japan); they take a fairly critical attitude. Nihonjin to Fukuin (*The Japanese and Gospel*, 1962), also by several authors, discusses Japanese thought patterns, religiosity, social structures and indigenization, published by The United Church of Christ in Japan, Press Center. Junichi Okada ed., Nihon no Fudo to Kirisutokyo (*Japanese Climate and Christianity*, 1965), is a symposium by several scholars in honor of Heinrich Dumoulin, published by Riso-sha. Alfonso M. Nebreda, "The Japanese University Student Confronts Religion," *Monumenta Nipponica*, Vol.XX, 1965, pp.15-40; 298-318; Vol.XXI, 1968, pp.31-65.
- 3 . Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1939), Vol.IV, p.133.
Of course, I am not subscribing to his view of circular history. I am only using his notion of dialectic in history.
- 4 . J. W. T. Mason, *The Meaning of Shinto*, 1st ed. (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1935), p.15.
- 5 . *Ibid.*, pp.61-62. Cf. W.G.Aston, *SHINTO* (The Way of the Gods), (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905), pp.26-31, 34.
- 6 . *Ibid.*, p.81.
- 7 . According to Aston "The most of the Shinto deities is the Sun-Goddess. Nor is this surprising. If, as Scotus

Erigena has well said, 'every visible and invisible creature is a theophany or appearance of God,' what more striking aspect of Him can there be to the uncultured mind than the Sun? In a later stage of intellectual development men find a fuller revelation of Him in the moral order of the world, in the laws of human progress, and in the spiritual experiences of saints and sages, culminating in a synthesis of all the divine aspects of the universe in one harmonious whole. But, naturally enough, there is little of this in Shinto. The ancient Japanese recognized the divinity of the universe in a very imperfect, piecemeal fashion, and almost exclusively in those physical aspects by which they were more directly affected. Among these the light and warmth of the Sun and the sources of their daily food held the chief place. Sun-worship is specially natural to the Japanese as an agricultural people. Almost all the peasant's doings are in some way dependent on, or regulated by, the Sun." (Aston, *op. cit.*, p.121).

8. *Ibid.*, p.44. Cf. Hajime Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples*, Revised English Translation ed. by Philip P. Wiener (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1964), pp.417-426.
Cf. Delmer M. Brown, "Kami, Death, and Ancestral Kami," *Proceedings The Second International Conference for Shinto Studies, Theme: Continuity and Change*, (Tokyo: Japanese Culture Institute, Kokugakuin University, 1968), pp.169-182.
9. Quoted by Mason, *Ibid.*, p.62: There are many cases of seas and mountains being called Kami. It is not their spirits which are meant. The word was applied directly to the seas or mountains themselves as being very awful things.
10. Aston, *Shinto*, pp.36-74. Cf. see also D. C. Holton, *The National Faith of Japan* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1938), pp.24-25.
11. The work entitled "Kojiki" or "Record of Ancient Matters," which was completed in A.D. 712.
12. The work entitled "Nihon Shoki" or "Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697," which was completed in A.D. 720.
13. Mason, *op. cit.*, p.97.
14. Mason, *The Meaning of Shinto*, p.97.
15. Chie Nakane, "Japanese Family Structure and its Change," *Japanese Religions*, Vol.6, December 1970, No.4, pp.9-10. "As far as the family was concerned, Western jural ideology and systems were utterly ignored. What actually appeared was the modified Confucianist family ethics established among the general masses. Under this system, the head of a household was given strong powers, and was succeeded by the eldest son. . . . The old family system in the legal context went out of existence in 1947, but it was nearly 20 years before the change could be felt in an obvious form in the minds of people. One thing has become clear during these last several years. The younger generation denies or hates the traditional family system, as illustrated by a popular phrase "married life without a mother-in-law." See also the same author's *Kinship and Economic Organization in Rural Japan*, 1967, Athlone Press, London.
16. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, IV/4: The Doctrine of Creation, ed. by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. by A. T. Mackay and others. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1961), fn. pp.241-242.
17. Cf. Sokyō Ono, "The Concept of Kami in Shinto," *Proceedings The Second International Conference for Shinto Studies, Theme: Continuity and Change*, (Tokyo: Japanese Culture Institute, Kokugakuin University, 1968), p.12.
18. A Protestant writer, Mr. Kiyoshi Maejima of the Japan Episcopal Church: "But although the ideograms for the Chinese shen and the Japanese kami are the same, their contents differ. Also, their backgrounds are entirely different. The Chinese term shen is entirely religious and represents nothing more than a crude conception of an age of spiritism. The Japanese kami, however, as used in national Shinto, although it possesses a spiritual content, does not have a religious meaning. Furthermore, in China the shen are worshiped by the vulgar common populace, while in Japan the kami are revered and commemorated by the State. Thus the force of the backgrounds are entirely different. There are those who believe that, since in China shen is used by Christianity to designate its object of faith, there will come a time when shen is changed completely into a Christian term, just as the word "god" of various Teutonic peoples was adopted and absorbed by Christianity until it was entirely a Christian term. In Japan, however, this can never take place. Kami is not a religious word. Inasmuch as this word, as used in Shinto shrine terminology, is an important agency for fostering the national spirit, no change in content is permissible. The declaration of the Christian world that "God is the one and only creator of the universe, that He is uniquely omnipotent with no other gods besides him" is not realized in any term in the Japanese language. The Japanese kami is not a word that indicates such a Christian meaning, and since the significance of this word cannot be changed, Christianity on its part must select another

word in place of kami for the expression of its religious terminology.

Another Protestant writer, Dr. Anteí Hiyane says: “The kami (gods) connected with shrine worship are the spirits of Amaterasu Omikami, of our emperors and of persons in history who have rendered meritorious service to our country. The God of our (i.e., Christian) worship, however, is the almighty Creator of heaven and earth. It is unfortunate that misunderstanding has come about through the use of kami to connote both meanings.

In the early period of the missionary activities of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan, “God” was rendered either by the Latin Deus or the Portuguese Dios. Later, after the settlement of the Rites Controversy in China, the expression Ten Shu, “The Lord of Heaven,” was favored. Until very recently, however, the usage of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan has not been officially unified, and kami has been employed both by individuals and by responsible literary agencies of the church. A Catholic translation of the New Testament by E. Rage, issued in Tokyo, renders theos by kami. It can also be found in certain places in the Catechism and the prayer-books, where kami is used for “My Lord” and “My God” in Daniel C. Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1943), pp.118-119. Cf. Genchi Kato, *A New Study of Shinto from a Viewpoint of Religious Study* (Tokyo: Daitokaku Publisheres, 1922), pp.314-318.

19. Hajime Nakamura, *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples*, p.522.
20. Cf. Aston, *Shinto, The Way of The Gods*, p.36-74. Cf. Mason, *The Meaning of Shinto*, p.61. Cf. Daniel C. Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1938), pp. 24-25. Cf. F. H. Ross, *Shinto, The Way of Japan* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), pp.32-33.
21. Holtom, *idid.*, pp.23-24.
22. Daniel C. Holtom, *Transaction of the Asiatic Society of Japan* (Tokyo: Keio University, 1922), p.139.
According to Nihongi, between Heaven and Earth were separated as follows: “Of old, Heaven and Earth were not yet separated, and the In and Yo not yet divided. They formed a chaotic mass like an egg which was of obscurely defined limits and contained germs. The purer and clearer part was thinly drawn out, and formed Heaven, while the heavier and grosser element settled down and became Earth. The finer element easily became a united body, but the consolidation of the heavy and gross element was accomplished with difficulty. Heaven was therefore formed first, and Earth was established subsequently. Thereafter Divine Beings were produced between them. Hence it is said that when the world began to be created, the soil of which lands were composed floated about in a manner which might be compared to the floating of a fish sporting on the surface of the water. At this time a certain thing was produced between Heaven and Earth. It was in form like a reed-shoot. Now this became transformed into a God, and was called Kuni-toko-tachi no Mikoto.” (William G. Aston, *Nihongi*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1956, pp.1-3).
Aston says: The Nihongi tells us that the first deity produced between Heaven and Earth while still in a state of chaos sprang up like a reed-shoot, which then changed into a God, and was called Kunitoko-tachi no Mikoto or ‘Earth-eternal-stand augustness.’ The Kojiki calls the first God Ame no mi-naka nushi no Kami, that is to say ‘Heaven august-centre-master-deity,’ identified by some with the Polar Star, a hypothesis for which there is no other ground than the name itself. . . . The Kojiki first Gods disappear at once from the mythical record. There is little trace of their worship in later times, and they must be pronounced mere abortive attempts at deity-making. (William G. Aston, *Shinto-The Way of The Gods*, London, Longmans, Green, and Co., 1905, pp.85-86.)
23. Genchi Kato, *A New Study of Shinto from a Viewpoint of Religious Study* (Tokyo: Daitokaku Publishers, 1922), pp.314-318.
24. Genchi Kato, *A Study of Shinto, The Religion of The Japanese Nation* (Tokyo: MEIJI Japan Society, 1926), pp.67-87.
25. Holtom says that Ame-no-minakanushi (the Heavenly-Central-Lord) is interpreted as the total spiritual ground work of the universe, existing for eternity, without beginning and without end. (*The National Faith of Japan*, p.203.) And Amaterasu-Omikami (the Sun Goddess) is the name given one of the creation deities or growth principles of the old cosmogonic myth. (*Ibid.*, p.25.)