# SHINTO – A SHORT HISTORY

*Inoue Nobutaka (editor), Itō Satoshi,
Endō Jun and Mori Mizue*

Translated and adapted by
Mark Teeuwen and John Breen

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*Shinto – A Short History* provides an introductory outline of the historical development of Shinto from the ancient period of Japanese history until the present day.

Shinto does not offer a readily identifiable set of teachings, rituals or beliefs; individual shrines and *kami* deities have led their own lives, not within the confines of a narrowly defined Shinto, but rather as participants in a religious field that included Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian and folk elements. Thus, this book approaches Shinto as a series of historical 'religious systems' rather than attempting to identify a timeless 'Shinto essence'.

This history focuses on three aspects of Shinto practice: the people involved in shrine worship, the institutional networks that ensured continuity, and teachings and rituals. By following the interplay between these aspects in different periods, a pattern of continuity and discontinuity is revealed that challenges received understandings of the history of Shinto.

This book does not presuppose prior knowledge of Japanese religion, and is easily accessible for those new to the subject.

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# TRANSLATORS' INTRODUCTION

The term Shinto covers a many-hued array of Japanese religious traditions. In the Japan of today, these are represented by a considerable number of organised religious groups, an even larger number of more or less organised local shrine cults, and an ill-defined body of unorganised beliefs and practices that do not involve religious professionals. To the outside observer, Shinto appears less as a distinct religion, than as an extremely fluid body of religious phenomena linked, at best, by a family resemblance.

What defines these disparate phenomena as aspects of Shinto, is not so much shared beliefs, ideas or moral attitudes, but rather a common set of physical symbols and ritual patterns. There is no scripture, no set of dogmas, nor even a shared pantheon that could warrant the lumping together of Shinto's multifarious traditions under one label. Rather, practices are identified as some form of Shinto by such markers as the *torii* gate and *shimenawa* straw ropes, used to demarcate sacred spaces or objects; by branches of the evergreen *sakaki* tree, used as offerings or for purification; by shrine buildings with readily identifiable characteristics that set them apart from both Buddhist temples and the churches of established and new religions; and by the use of mirrors to signal the presence of the kami or deities. One ritual pattern that conveys a Shinto identity is purification (*harae*), performed by a priest waving a *sakaki* branch over the heads of worshippers; another is the parading of deities through the streets, carried on the shoulders of parishioners in elaborate portable shrines.

These symbols and rituals are immediately recognisable to all Japanese. Shinto shrines dot the landscape of Japan, and number more than 100,000. Some, such as the Meiji shrine in Tokyo, dominate large areas in city centres; others are tucked away in the corners of rural fields, or on the rooftops of office blocks. Statistics show that the majority of Japanese engage actively with shrines in some form or other on a regular basis. According to a 1997 survey, some 70 per cent of Japanese visit a shrine at New Year (*hatsumōde*), and over 50 per cent celebrate the birth of a new

baby (*hatsumiya*), or their child's third, fifth and seventh birthdays (*shichigosan*), by making a shrine visit. One in three employs a Shinto priest to perform ritual purification of a new building plot, or a new car. One in four participates in shrine festivals, prays at shrines for success in examinations, and uses Shinto-style marriage ceremonies. Only 16 per cent of respondents stated that they never pray at shrines.[1] Yet even these are likely to visit shrines for non-religious reasons, since many shrine precincts double as parks, and are used for a variety of recreational pursuits.

Yet, even though shrines play some part in the lives of most Japanese, few define themselves as followers of a religion called Shinto. In the same 1997 survey, less than 4 per cent did so. In fact, most Japanese have only a very vague understanding of the term, and a large proportion of the younger generation do not know it at all. In contrast to shrines, 'Shinto' is a concept of little consequence in Japanese society. Nor is this a phenomenon of recent origin. While shrines have been an enduring element of Japanese religious life, the notion of an overarching, abstract Shinto that integrates diverse shrine cults into a single cultic system has, at most times, been of marginal importance. In this sense, the present situation, in which shrines are integrated in the social life of contemporary Japanese while Shinto remains an unfamiliar concept, represents a continuation of the past.

It is, therefore, essential to make a clear distinction between shrines on the one hand, and Shinto on the other. Shrines are the concrete sites of worship of kami, the deities or spirits that form the focus of shrine practice. Central to shrines, of course, are the worshippers who manage and use them, and the changing social structures that have secured their upkeep through the centuries. Shinto, on the other hand, refers to structures (organisational, doctrinal, or both) that aim to integrate individual shrine cults into a larger, national or even universal system. Attempts at construing such structures and putting them into practice have been made by various groups during different periods in Japanese history. The institution of a system of regular offerings to shrines throughout the land by the court in the seventh and eighth centuries was the first, and one of the most successful, of such Shinto constructs. During the medieval period, the main superstructures that served to conjoin different local shrine cults were Buddhist ones, and most shrines were linked to, and accommodated within, Buddhist temples. The Meiji, Taishō and early Shōwa periods (1868–1945) saw yet other attempts at rallying shrines under a common Shinto banner; this time, they were political and designed to serve the cause of strengthening the emerging Japanese nation-state. Thus, we find that throughout history, shrines and their kami drifted in and out of consecutive Shinto constructs, presented to them (or, at times, imposed on them)

by various elites – be they court aristocrats, warriors, Buddhist monks, or bureaucrats of the modern period. The relationship between shrines and different forms of Shinto constitutes an important dynamic in the shaping of the history of kami worship.

A failure to make this critical distinction has bedevilled the study of the subject, especially in the West. Today, it is less controversial to state that Shinto was 'invented' in the Meiji period, than to trace its history to, say, the Nara period (710–94). If 'Shinto' is taken to refer only to post-Meiji Shinto, this is of course true; but such an insistence masks the existence of earlier Shinto constructs, and it threatens more damage than good. Even more serious is the fact that the study of not only earlier forms of Shinto but also the history of shrines has been undermined by the assumption that Shinto is a modern invented tradition. It should be clear for all to see that even though Meiji Shinto was indeed a Meiji invention, this does not change the fact that shrines have been important centres of religious, political, social and economic activity throughout Japanese history.

Compared to, say, studies of Japanese Buddhism, Western literature on shrines and Shinto is extremely limited in scope. In Japan, meanwhile, research into this subject has developed rapidly during the post-war period. Until the late 1970s, the history of shrines and Shinto was the unique preserve of scholars with close links to the Shinto establishment, who approached it with a predictable ideological bias. More recently, however, kami cults have also drawn the attention of historians without Shinto affiliations, and their researches have revolutionised the field. Especially, new light has been shed on the many centuries during which the shrines and their kami functioned primarily within a Buddhist framework. Historians such as Kuroda Toshio and Satō Hiroo have transformed our understanding of medieval Buddhism, and also of the role of the kami and their shrines within it.[2] Also, scholars of medieval literature such as Itō Masayoshi have begun to reconstruct medieval practices and legends around kami, drawing on sources previously ignored by Shinto historians.[3] A new critical approach to Shinto has finally been extended also to the modern period by scholars like Yasumaru Yoshio and Miyachi Masato.[4] At the same time, the Shinto world itself has become less rigidly ideological. Many Shinto scholars have taken on board the findings of historians from other disciplines and of other ideological persuasions, and further refined them.

As a result, a radically new view on the history of shrines and Shinto is beginning to take shape. This new perspective has become possible, first and foremost, thanks to the field's liberation from the ideological concerns of post-Meiji Shinto. Much older research departed from the premise that Shinto has existed since time immemorial as an unbroken, autonomous tradition that defined the basic outlook of the Japanese. Concern to uphold

this dogma had typically led to a heavy bias in favour of continuity rather than historical change, of 'native' elements rather than the pervasive Buddhist (and otherwise Chinese) influence, and of court-sanctioned orthodox practice rather than the more eclectic practices of the general populace. Only after historians from other disciplines began to show an active interest in shrines and Shinto could a more balanced view of their history emerge.

It was in order to present the preliminary results of this ongoing re-definition of Shinto history to the general Japanese public that this short volume was first conceived. Inoue Nobutaka, the editor of this book, is an established sociologist of religion specialising in Japanese New Religions. The three other contributors are relatively young scholars with back-grounds in history and literature, rather than in Shinto studies. The authors coordinated their approach by adopting a common perspective on Shinto, namely as a 'religious system'. The outline of this perspective is explained in the book's introduction, and need not be repeated here, but its merit is worth setting out from the start. By approaching Shinto as a religious system, an equal measure of attention is given to religious ideas and practices, the people who conveyed them, and the social structures that ensured their transmission. This ensures that the vital dynamic between Shinto and shrines comes to the surface. The result is a history both of Shinto, and of shrines, that in many ways succeeds in overcoming the limitations of earlier Shinto histories.

Our task has been that of translators, but we have on occasion adapted the original text when we deemed it necessary to clarify the author's mean-ing for a non-Japanese audience. For the sake for clarity, we have worked all substantial notes into the main text. While retaining the original references to Japanese-language works, we have provided key Western-language titles on the same subjects, as well as a list of recommended reading on Shinto in Western languages. Mark Teeuwen is responsible for the transla-tion of the Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2; John Breen for Chapters 3 and 4.

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Mark Teeuwen
John Breen

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## Notes

1   This survey was conducted by the Shrine Association, and is based on 1,389 returned questionnaires. Jinja Honchō Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo, *Jinja ni kansuru ishiki chōsa hōkokusho* (1997), p. 30.
2   E.g. Kuroda Toshio, *Jisha seiryoku* (Iwanami 1980) and 'Shinto in the history of Japanese religion' (*Journal of Japanese Studies* 7–1, 1981); Satō Hiroo, *Kami, hotoke, ōken no chūsei* (Hōzōkan 1998).

3  Here, we would especially like to stress Itō's work on the 'medieval *Nihongi*'; e.g. 'Chūsei Nihongi no rinkaku' (*Bungaku* 40–10, 1972).
4  See, for example, Yasumaru Yoshio, *Kamigami no Meiji ishin* (Iwanami 1979), Miyachi Masato, *Tennōsei no seijishiteki kenkyū* (Azekura Shobō 1981) and Yasumaru and Miyachi eds, *Nihon kindai shisō taikei 5: shūkyō to kokka* (Iwanami 1988).

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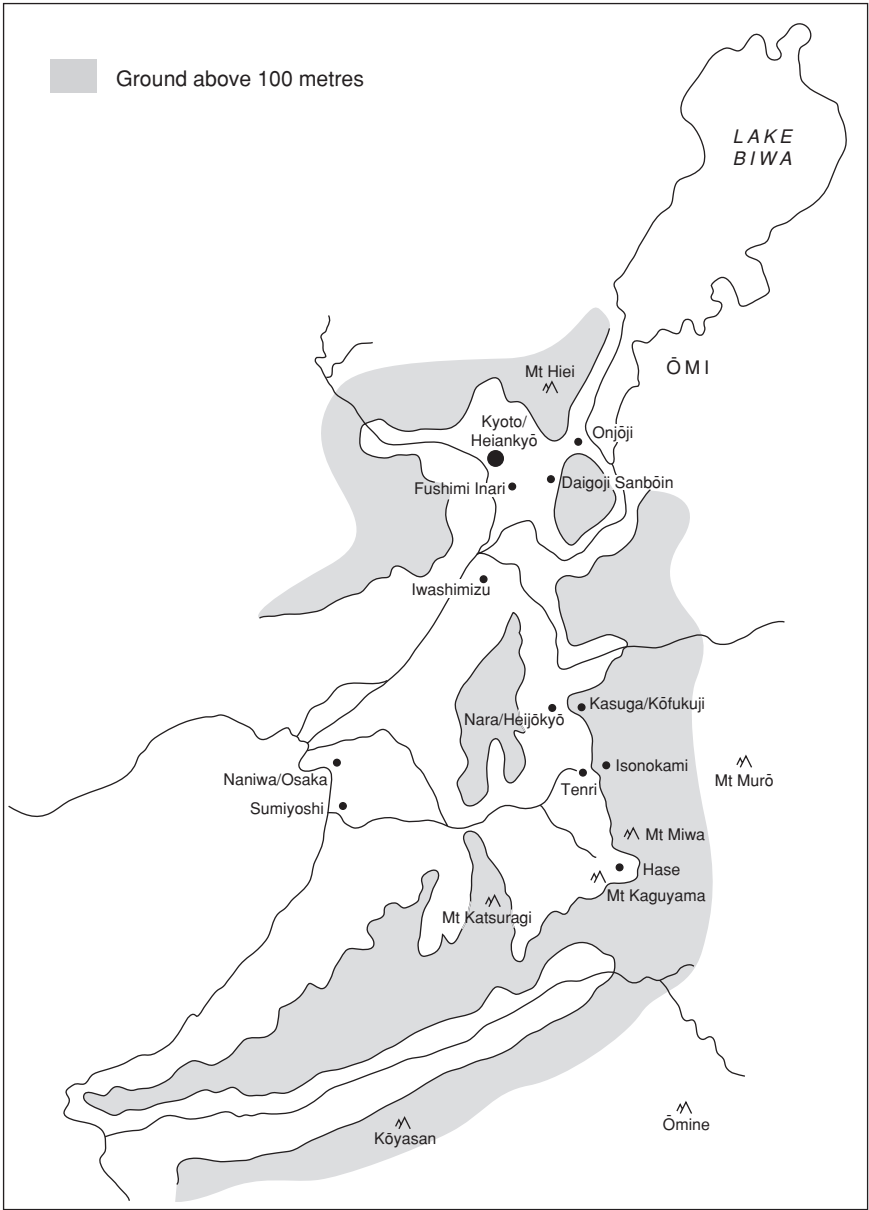
Central Japan: the Home Provinces

# INTRODUCTION
## What is Shinto?

*Inoue Nobutaka*

### Shinto as a religious system

The term 'Shinto' is notoriously vague and difficult to define. A brief look at the term's history confuses more than it enlightens. Its first occurrence is in the *Nihon shoki* (720), which writes of Emperor Yōmei (r. 585–7) that he 'had faith in the Buddhist Dharma and revered Shinto.' Here, as in most early usages of the word, it seems to serve as a synonym for Japan's native deities, in Japanese called kami, in contrast to the new 'foreign kami' that entered Japan with the introduction of Buddhism in the sixth century. Only during the medieval and early modern periods was the term applied to specific theological and ritual systems. In modern scholarship, the term is often used with reference to kami worship and related theologies, rituals and practices. In these contexts, 'Shinto' takes on the meaning of 'Japan's traditional religion', as opposed to foreign religions such as Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and so forth.

A central element in a practical definition of Shinto will have to be systems of kami worship and shrine ritual that date back to classical times. Few will doubt that the kami and their cults form the core of what we call Shinto. However, when we try to pin down more specifically what teachings, rituals, or beliefs have constituted Shinto through the centuries, we soon run into difficulty. Some scholars have attempted to categorise Shinto into 'shrine Shinto', 'sect Shinto', and 'folk Shinto', and others have added 'imperial Shinto' (referring to imperial rituals focusing on kami), 'state Shinto' and 'Shinto-derived new religions'. However, many questions remain both as to the legitimacy of these categorisations, and as to their relationship to each other. In particular, it is well-nigh impossible to separate 'shrine Shinto' from 'folk Shinto'. In extreme cases, some have even resorted to labelling all religious folk traditions in Japan 'Shinto'.

In the field of Religious Studies, Shinto is usually described as an 'indigenous religion'. By this term is meant a religion that emerged naturally within the historical development of an indigenous culture, in contrast to 'founded religions', which are based on the teachings of historical founders. These latter are often described as 'world religions', because they spread across national boundaries to assume a global role. In contrast, Shinto as an 'indigenous religion' is inextricably linked with a single nation, Japan.

Shinto also displays many features of what we may call 'folk religion'. This term is here used as a generic term for popular beliefs and practices that are not directly controlled by a shrine, temple or church, or led by a religious professional such as a priest, a monk or a minister. As such beliefs and practices in Japan, we may mention the worship of various deity tablets (*ofuda*), the tabooing of certain dates or directions, belief in different kinds of spirits (such as spirits of the dead, or 'revengeful spirits', *onryō*), worship of natural objects such as trees and mountains, and worship of the kami of fields and mountains (*ta no kami* and *yama no kami*). Most of what is commonly called religious folklore, local customs, or superstition belongs in this category.

Not only Shinto, but also Buddhism and the new religions of Japan are closely connected with folk religion. Even Christianity, both in Japan and elsewhere, contains many folk influences. In the case of Shinto, however, such elements are so prominent that it is impossible to draw a line between folk religion and some fictional 'pure Shinto'. This is a direct result of Shinto's history, which is rooted in a long tradition of kami worship that developed in close relation with the rhythms of everyday life, both cultural and economic.

There is another reason why it is difficult to follow Shinto through history as a distinct religious tradition: the fact that Shinto has been profoundly influenced by other religious traditions. The influence of the religions of China has been prominent since ancient times, and among them, the religion that left the most profound impact was Chinese Buddhism. Even if we were to use the term 'Early Shinto' to refer to some archaic prototype of Shinto, we would find that such a distant ancestor of Shinto would already have been transformed in important ways by Chinese forms of Buddhism. In addition, other continental traditions such as Confucianism, Taoism, and theories about Yin and Yang and the Five Phases of matter (wood, fire, earth, metal and water) left their imprint in ideas about, and practices around, the kami from an early date. These facts further complicate our question, which appears so simple at first sight: what is Shinto? One is reminded of the onion of Peer Gynt: will there really be a 'core' to be found after we have peeled off layer after layer of foreign accretions?

These are the sort of fundamental problems one is faced with when trying to define Shinto. Looking for Shinto's 'core' or 'true essence' will not take us very far in resolving the issue. In this volume, we have chosen a different approach. Here, we will introduce the concept of a 'religious system' as a new angle on Shinto and its historical development.

The concept of a 'religious system' is here proposed as a tool to explore the historical development of religion in its intimate relation with the structural characteristics and changes of society as a whole. Traditionally, religious history has occupied itself with the histories of individual religions, schools or sects. We have histories of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Shinto, histories of the Methodist church and of Pure Land Buddhism, and histories of Tenrikyō and Sōka Gakkai. While this is a valuable approach to the history of religion, it tends to ignore the fact that the concept of religion itself can vary widely from period to period, or from religious group to religious group. It is obvious, for example, that the Catholic Church in Korea and its counterpart in Japan differ in many respects, in spite of the fact that both are grounded in the same religion. Similarly, Buddhism in classical Japan was fundamentally distinct in character from modern Japanese Buddhism. Conversely, we find that different religious groups display similar characteristics when developing in a common social and cultural environment. The new religious movements of modern Japan, which are collectively known as the 'new religions', are a good example of this: behind the multitude of sect names we find many similarities in actual teaching and practice. If we were to compare, for example, the modern Risshō Kōseikai and Myōchikai (both Buddhist-derived new religions), we would find that they are much more similar to one another than, say, the Buddhism of the Nara period (710–94) and the Edo period (1600–1867).

If we think of a religion in terms of written doctrine, individual religions or sects display a great deal of continuity over the centuries, but when we consider the roles these same religions or sects have played in actual society in different historical periods or in different cultural areas, we notice radical differences. If we regard individual religions as part of a wider religious 'ecosystem', it becomes clear that traditional histories of religion need to be reconsidered in various ways. It is to tackle these issues that the concept of a 'religious system' is useful. This concept allows us to treat clusters of religious groups that display typological similarities as one religious system. When studying such clusters as a religious system we relate their development to changes within society as a whole. This makes it possible to consider, say, the Sōtō Zen sect and the Jōdo Pure Land sect of the Edo period as two members of the same religious system: early modern Japanese Buddhism. Conversely, the Shingon school in the Heian

period (794–1192) can be studied as belonging to a different religious system from its Edo period counterpart.

To study religion from this angle is to exchange the metaphor of religion as an organism for that of religion as an ecosystem. The boundaries of different religious systems are regarded as fluid, both with regard to individual religious movements, and with regard to different historical periods.

When we isolate a particular religious system and try to make out its characteristics, it is necessary to approach it from three angles: the system's *constituents*, its *network*, and its *substance*. The *constituents* of a religious system are the people who carry and maintain it. In most cases, we can distinguish between two groups: the 'makers' and the 'users' of the religion. The first include the founders of religious groups and their successors: monks, shrine priests, ministers, missionaries, and so forth. These are the people who work actively to sustain a particular religious tradition. This category also includes those who carry out the administrative tasks of religious institutions. The 'users' of a religious system are the believers, followers and church-goers who participate in religious activities. It is important to note that not all 'users' are necessarily 'believers'; those who do not necessarily have 'faith' but are active in the periphery of religious groups must also be included in this category. This is because they are important to religious groups as possible future believers, and as targets for missionary education or conversion. The category of 'users', then, can be defined as those who already are, and those who may become, believers of a religion.

This takes us to the term *network*. We use this term to refer to the various elements that are related to the organisational upkeep of the religious system: the channels the religious system uses to ensure its future existence. Here, we can distinguish between 'hard' and 'soft' aspects: the sacred sites, shrine buildings, temples, churches and headquarters of religious groups constitute the first, while the latter includes institutional hierarchies, pilgrimage routes, etc.

The third and last key aspect of religious systems is termed *substance*. This refers to the message that a religion tries to convey to its users through its teachings, practices and rituals. A religion's teachings include both the doctrines laid down in its scriptures, and the contents of the sermons of its preachers – two aspects of teaching that are not always identical or even consistent. Practices and rituals range widely from secret, esoteric rites to public ceremonies.

Religious groups which display a clear similarity in structure or type can fruitfully be studied as components of a single religious system. A new religious system emerges when the three elements of *constituents*, *network* and *substance* come together in some new way. Changes in religious systems

occur when one of these three elements is transformed to such a degree that it affects the other two.

If religious systems are formed and transformed in close interaction with the society in which they partake, it follows that Shinto cannot be considered as a single religious system that existed from the ancient to the modern period. Nonetheless, it is also true that the religious system that emerged with the systematisation of kami worship in ancient Japan is connected with modern shrine Shinto through a long string of gradual transformations. The method we will take in this volume is to follow this long history of transformations. As our point of departure, we will choose kami worship as the characteristic that distinguishes Shinto from other religious traditions and gives it continuity through the ages. It will become clear, however, that the concrete beliefs and practices of kami worship changed considerably from period to period, and took on a great variety of disparate forms.

The classical system of kami worship clearly possessed all the elements of a fully fledged religious system. Its origin is difficult to date, but it was completed as a system after the establishment of a central imperial state governed by an adapted version of Chinese law (J. *ritsuryō*). Shrines from all over the country were included in a system of 'official shrines' (*kansha*). This network of official shrines formed the *network* of kami worship as a religious system. Also, the *constituents* of kami rituals were clearly identified, and their message (the system's *substance*) was transmitted to society through ritual prayers (*norito*) and imperial decrees (*senmyō*). It is not possible to identify a religious system that might be described as 'Shinto' before the systematisation of kami worship by the new imperial state during the classical period, because the constituents, network, and substance of kami cults during this early period were too ill-defined.

Together with the decline of the rule of *ritsuryō* law, the classical system of kami worship gradually lost its character as a distinct religious system. The system's network was lost, and as kami cults amalgamated with Buddhism, its substance was radically transformed. During the medieval period, warrior groups became important carriers of kami cults, leading to a partial shift of the religion's constituents. The spread of private estates (*shōen*) and the popular practice of 'inviting' spirits of the deity Hachiman to such estates encouraged the formation of a new network which partly replaced the classical 'network' of official shrines.

Simultaneously, the amalgamation of kami cults and Buddhism that had begun already in early classical times penetrated into all nooks and crannies of kami worship in the course of the medieval period, and in the process not only transformed the classical system of kami worship but also encouraged the founding of new religious systems, such as that of

Shugendo. This amalgamation generated changes in the substance of kami cults, because it placed kami cults under the strong influence of Buddhist doctrine. On the other hand, the process of amalgamation also encouraged the development of theological kami thought in opposition to Buddhism. During medieval times, Shinto as a religious system was all but absorbed by the much more powerful system of Buddhism, but nevertheless survived. Developments in the early modern and modern periods proved that medieval Shinto, though largely subsumed in Buddhism, still remained sufficiently autonomous as a religious system to move once more into a direction of its own.

Elements of the classical system of kami worship survived through the middle ages into the early modern period. This period saw the emergence of a new form of Shinto thought in the form of National Learning (*kokugaku*) and Restoration (*fukko*) Shinto. This form of Shinto can be regarded as a new religious system in its own right, and also proved essential in the later formation of sect Shinto in modern times. On the level of substance, we see that the multitude of medieval kami theories of the medieval period were rearranged into a new, close-knit discourse through the labours of successive thinkers of the National Learning movement. This was an important step in the formation of a new religious system. With regard to the network of Shinto, the early modern period saw the formation of a range of religious 'confraternities' (*kō*), whose existence was an important factor in the development of the Shinto sects of the modern period.

The Buddhist and Confucian forms of Shinto that were prominent during the medieval and early modern periods were incomplete as a religious system, because they did not provide for a network of their own, or only a fragmentary one. On the other hand, they prepared the ground both for the modern system of kami worship and for the formation of sect Shinto and Shinto-derived new religions. Therefore, it is not impossible to regard them at least as a religious system *in nascendo*.

Shugendo, finally, developed in the power field between kami cults and Esoteric Buddhism, and gradually matured into a religious system of its own. Shugendo will not be discussed in detail in this volume, but it was a factor of great importance in the historical development of Shinto.

## The East-Asian sphere of religious culture and Shinto

Traditionally, there has been a tendency to stress the 'uniquely Japanese' character of Shinto, and little effort has been made to compare kami worship in Japan with the indigenous religions and folk beliefs of other East-Asian countries. It is only recently that researchers have focused on the similarities between kami cults and Taoism, and on the profound

influence of Chinese folk religion and Chinese theories of Yin and Yang and the Five Phases of matter on Japanese kami cults.[1]

Worship of spirits, spirit possession, divination, oracles and polytheism are all features that Japanese kami cults share with East-Asian folk religion. Also, the amalgamation of kami cults with Buddhism in Japan has parallels in the amalgamation of Taoism and Buddhism in China, and of Confucianism and Buddhism in Korea.

The influence of Chinese religion in East Asia is so prominent that the whole region may well be regarded as a single 'Chinese religio-cultural sphere'. Until recently, scholars who have wished to identify the characteristics of Japanese religion did so by comparing Japanese religious traditions with the monotheistic religions of the West. As a result of such comparisons, syncretism, polytheism and animism have frequently been highlighted as typical of Japanese religion as a whole. However, even a superficial glance at the religions of Japan's closest neighbours reveals that these are all features shared by the large majority of religions in the Chinese religio-cultural sphere.

Shinto worships an untold multitude of different kami deities. While this represents an important difference with monotheistic religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, it is a feature that Shinto shares with many other religions across the world, and that constitutes the norm in East Asia. Buddhism incorporated many Hindu deities in India, and once again expanded its pantheon in China with a host of Taoist deities. These countless regional deities play an especially important role on the level of popular religion.

Moreover, popular beliefs and practices revere not only deities but also a multitude of other kinds of spirits and supernatural creatures. Japanese religion recognises many deities and, to some extent, attributes different functions to different deities. The dividing line between deities and human beings is vague, and extraordinary humans are frequently worshipped as 'living kami' (*ikigami*) or as 'emanations of a Buddha' (*keshin*). These features of Japanese religion, too, are widely shared by other religious traditions within the Chinese cultural sphere.

It goes without saying that polytheistic and animistic forms of religion can be found across the globe, and constitute one of the basic types of religion. In East Asia, these features are especially common. Moreover, East-Asian versions of polytheistic and animistic religions can perhaps be further defined as a special sub-species of this form of religion. Here, the role of Mahāyāna Buddhism and ancient Chinese deity worship, ancestor worship, and beliefs in demons must be emphasised.

The universal religion of East Asia has been Mahāyāna Buddhism, a religion of an exceptionally accommodative character. In the Chinese

cultural sphere, Mahāyāna Buddhism absorbed multifarious forms of ancestor worship and deity worship, and through its flexible attitude and its tendency to transform differences and oppositions into expressions of a single religious truth, it contributed to the multifaceted and yet closely interconnected character of East-Asian religion as a whole.

An important issue in all religious traditions is the question of how contact with deities, or with God, can be established and maintained. Christianity and Islam describe how God 'appears' to human beings to convey messages to them (a phenomenon termed theophany); in East Asia, we find a corresponding phenomenon in the various forms of shamanism that are common throughout this region. Shamans can be defined as those who deploy some well-developed technique of interacting with deities or spirits. In contrast to those who encounter a theophany in Christianity or Islam, shamans actively establish contact with deities or spirits and, on occasion, control and use them for their own aims.

Shamanism is often mentioned as a constituent of Shinto. Oracles have formed part of kami cults since the ancient period, and spirit possession is a common element of folk religion to this day. It is perhaps questionable whether all of these phenomena should be termed shamanism, but there is no doubt that they have functioned as important means of communication between kami and their worshippers throughout history. The question remains how exactly kami possession in Shinto relates to shamanic practices current in modern Korea, Taiwan or Mongolia; the least we can say is that all these practices are religious techniques to fathom the will of deities or spirits. Practices of this nature can be found throughout East Asia, and Japan is no exception. In Japan, shamanic features are especially apparent in the activities of different types of spirit ritualists, which are known variously as *ogamiya*, *reinōsha*, *kitōshi*, or, in specific regions of Japan, *yuta* (Okinawa), *kamisan*, *itako*, and *gomiso* (Northern Honshu). The former of these are occupied mainly with healing practices, and the latter specialise first and foremost in contacting the dead and conveying messages from them, and in making predictions for the future.

Another common method to fathom the will of the gods is divination (*uranai*). Techniques to interpret utterances, natural events, or the movements of special contrivances as the will of supernatural beings have been common in most religions since ancient times. In modern Shinto, the drawing of *omikuji* lots springs to mind; older are the reading of cracks in burnt tortoise shells (a technique of Chinese origin), and 'hot-water ordeals' (*kugatachi*), in which a priest sprinkles hot water over the worshippers in the kami's presence. A large variety of annual divinatory rites and ceremonies to predict the prosperity of the coming year are practised at different localities throughout Japan. There are also forms of divination

which include an element of spirit possession, such as *yudate*, a ritual closely related to *kugatachi* in which a *miko* priestess sprinkles hot water over herself and the worshippers to become possessed by the kami. Most forms of divination in Japan have been heavily influenced by Chinese folk religion, by Chinese theories of Yin and Yang and the Five Phases of matter, and by the Book of Changes (*Yijing*). In fact, the very idea that good and bad fortune alternate, and the notion that we can read the 'will of Heaven', have their roots in China.

Even more important in the history of kami cults was their interblending with Buddhism. Throughout most of the historical period, kami have been worshipped together with buddhas or bodhisattvas, as a primarily Buddhist set. This not only assimilated the characters of different kami with those of buddhas and bodhisattvas, but also resulted in a situation in which the same individuals or communities followed different religious traditions parallel to each other. Both of these phenomena are commonly termed syncretism.

Syncretism develops naturally in a society where different non-exclusionistic, open-ended religions exist side by side. In Japan, Shinto amalgamated not only with Buddhism but also with Confucianism. Also, most modern new religions are rooted in more than one established religious tradition. In China, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism have produced a variety of combinatory cults and theologies, and Korea saw the partial amalgamation of Confucianism with Taoism. In Korea one can even find cults that combine Christian with shamanic elements. It is no exaggeration to argue that syncretism is characteristic of East-Asian religion as a whole.

In addition to this traditional syncretism, we can observe a new trend of forming new religious systems by selecting and combining the 'best points' of more than one religion. This tendency is distinguished from traditional syncretism as 'neo-syncretism'. Neo-syncretism is particularly prominent in modern Shinto-derived new religions, but can also be encountered in some of the new religions of modern Taiwan, Korea and other East-Asian countries.

Another prominent aspect of East-Asian religion is ancestor worship. In Japan, memorial services for ancestors are largely the domain of Buddhist sects, and ancestor worship is often regarded as an element of popular Buddhism; nevertheless, ancestors also play an important role in popular kami practices. In East Asia, ancestor worship has often been tied in with Confucianism, and has played a prominent role in people's religious life. Ancestral genealogies have usually followed the paternal line and are, in China and Korea, linked with specific places of origin. In some modern Japanese Buddhist-derived sects (notably Reiyūkai and sects split

off from it), there is a tendency to include maternal ancestors as well. In general, it can be said that the concept of ancestors in Japan is more inclusive than in China or Korea, and the practice of paying reverence to ancestors has consistently occupied a larger proportion of religious activity than in other parts of East Asia. The fact remains, however, that the notion of a shared ancestry has played an important role in the formation of group identities in most societies throughout East Asia.

Ancestor worship mostly takes the form of ritual practice by kin groups or clans, and continues to perform the function of promoting group solidarity, often in secularised ways. Originally, such rituals were strongly religious in character. The ancestors were connected to living individuals or groups not only genealogically, but also as active ancestral spirits that protect their descendants in the present. In Japan, ancestor spirits were not necessarily related to their protégés in a strictly genealogical sense, and could therefore play an important role in community (rather than kin group) rituals. Moreover, ancestor worship has been central to modern ideologies that identify the whole of the state of Japan as an extended family, with the emperor at its head.

As will be clear already from this brief inventory of shared East-Asian features, research into Shinto as a member of the family of East-Asian religions is a promising and necessary avenue to a better understanding of this religious tradition, which has all too often been described as 'uniquely Japanese'.

## Note

1  Examples are Fukunaga Mitsuji, *Dōkyō to Nihon bunka* (Jinbun Shoin 1982), and Yoshino Hiroko, *In'yō gogyōsetsu kara mita Nihon no matsuri* (Kōbundō 1978).

**Shinto of religious groups**

|  | Ancient period | Medieval period | Early modern period | Modern period (pre-war, post-war) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constituents: Makers | | Shrine lineages, monks, etc. | Kokugaku scholars, Shintoists, etc. | Sects' founders, leaders |
| Users | | | Students | Followers |
| Network: Hard | | | | Sects' buildings, sacred sites |
| Soft | | Kami initiations | Students' networks | Law on religious organizations |
| Substance | | Kami as Buddhist emanations; Japan as a 'divine land'; Medieval Nihongi, Shinto thought | Kokugaku, Confucianism | Teachings of founders |

Intellectual Shinto lineages / Initiatory Shinto lineages → Kokugaku → Sect Shinto; Shinto-derived New Religions

**Shinto of shrines**

|  | Ancient period | Medieval period | Early modern period | Modern period |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constituents: Makers | Emperor, kami clans, *jingikan* | Shrine lineages, monks, 'pilgrim masters' (*oshi*); Warriors, courtiers; Confraternities (popularization); Increase in Hachiman and Tenjin shrines | Shirakawa and Yoshida houses | Shrine priests |
| Users | Clans, elites | | (Further popularization) | Parishioners (*ujiko*) |
| Network: Hard | Ise shrines, other shrines | 22 shrines system; Provincial and first shrines; Shrine guilds | Toyokuni shrine, Tōshōgū etc. | Meiji Jingū, etc. |
| Soft | Court offerings to selected shrines; Ise periodic rebuilding, *saigū*; Kami law | | Regulations for shrines and shrine priests | Modern imperial system; State-sponsored shrines; Standardized shrine rights |
| Substance | Myths of *Nihon shoki*, *Kojiki*, *Fudoki*; *Norito* prayers; Clan rituals | Founding myths (*engi*); Amalgamation of kami and Buddhism | | |

Ancient kami system → Gradual transformation → Modern kami system

**Modern Shrine Shinto**

- Shrine priests
- *Ujiko* followers
- Jinja Honchō priests' education facilities
- Law on religious organizations
- Rites prescribed by Jinja Honchō

*Figure 1.1* An overview of Shinto history

# 1

# ANCIENT AND CLASSICAL JAPAN

## The dawn of Shinto

*Mori Mizue*

Where did Shinto come from? Must we look for the origins of Shinto in the Jōmon period (*c.*12,000–400 BCE), or did its traditions arise in the subsequent Yayoi period (*c.*400 BCE–300 CE)? Opinions on this question are still divided. The least we can say is that excavations of ritual sites from the Yayoi period leave little doubt that during this period, people believed in, and worshipped, spiritual powers that controlled the weather and the crops. These sites bespeak the existence at this early date of what we may call kami worship.

   With the arrival of wet rice cultivation from the Asian continent, kami worship became gradually more systematised. As the scale of rice cultivation increased, the necessity arose for large groups of people to cooperate in a more systematic way. At the same time, clan chiefs took control over water resources and agricultural techniques, and increased their own authority by linking these to specific kami. As indicated already by the twin meanings of the Japanese word *matsurigoto* – 'secular rule' and 'ritual' – these chiefs maintained order within their communities through the performance of kami rituals.

   In the late fourth century, the end of the Yayoi period was signalled by the rise of the Yamato court to a position of dominance over other clans. By the latter half of the fifth century, the Yamato chief had attained the position of the country's 'Great King'. The kings of the Yamato court had originally worshipped the kami of the area around Mount Miwa, but this highly localised cult was gradually substituted with rituals focusing on military kami, and worship of a single Sun Deity. While recognising the ritual prerogatives of other clans, the Yamato court moved to force them into a larger political order; in terms of ritual, this was achieved by rearranging the

myths of other clans around the genealogy of the royal lineage. Furthermore, the late seventh century saw the importation of a system of Chinese law, known in Japan as *ritsuryō*. This signalled the beginning of the classical period. Under this legal system, rule over the country was centralised to an unprecedented degree, leading also to a centralisation of kami ritual under a special government office, the 'Ministry of Kami Affairs' (*Jingikan*). It is at this point that, for the first time, we can speak of 'Shinto' as a religious system that is linked directly (if remotely) to the Shinto of today.

The main task of the Ministry of Kami Affairs was to perform rituals for all the kami in the land. The most important shrines of the different regions were given a national status and rank, and became so-called 'official shrines' (*kansha*). At the basis of this system of official kami ritual lay the idea that the sovereignty of the emperor (*tennō*) is derived from his descent from the Sun-Deity Amaterasu Ōmikami. This idea was laid down in mythological form in two National Histories, *Kojiki* (712) and *Nihon shoki* (720). Most poignant in this respect are myths (recorded as history in these National Histories) that recount how Amaterasu granted her grandson, Ninigi, everlasting sovereignty over Japan; how Ninigi descended from Amaterasu's dwelling place, the Plain of High Heaven, to the island of Kyushu; and how Ninigi's descendant, Jinmu, subjugated other clans, established his court in Yamato, and became the first human to ascend to the imperial throne.

The kami rituals carried out by the court during the *ritsuryō* period functioned on the premise that local clan traditions continued. However, kami worship could not remain unaffected by the spread of the Chinese bureaucratic and patrilineal values that lay behind the *ritsuryō* legal system. Whereas the Japanese clan system had contained matrilineal as well as patrilineal elements, the new political environment soon rendered them exclusively patrilineal. This gave rise to the development of so-called *ujigami* ('clan deity') cults. Changes also occurred on the village level where, during this period, the first permanent shrine buildings appeared. This chapter will trace the emergence of Shinto as a religious system of the state, by considering all of these developments and their relationship with the period's political trends.

## Ritual sites and kami cults

The civilisation of the Jōmon period, which began with the introduction of pottery in *c*.12,000 BCE, was almost exclusively based on hunting and gathering. In contrast, Yayoi period civilisation revolved around wet rice cultivation, which was adopted from the Asian continent in the fourth century BCE and spread throughout Japan with remarkable speed during the subsequent century. Jōmon and Yayoi culture have long been regarded

as two contrasting strains that have since defined the character of Japanese culture. The origins of Shinto are often traced back to kami beliefs that existed during the later Yayoi period or the subsequent period of burial mounds (the Kofun period, *c*.300–700). Many writers have linked Shinto's origins to community rituals around the agricultural calendar of rice growing from these periods.[1]

Considering the facts that rituals around rice growing have dominated the ritual calendar of shrines throughout history, and that the emperor has always functioned as a ritual king with a special concern for the rice crop, it is perhaps not unreasonable to look for the roots of Shinto in these periods. At the same time, it is worth noting that recent archaeological finds have led to a revision of our understanding of the Jōmon period. Recently, it has become clear that there must have been as much, if not more, continuity than contrast between this period and the subsequent Yayoi period and, as a result, the animism of the Jōmon period will also have to be taken into account as a possible ancestor of Shinto. Even so, there are indications of a clear break in religious practice between the Jōmon and Yayoi periods. Jōmon period villages were constructed in a circle around a central square or cemetery, and rituals for the dead must have performed an important role in community life. In contrast, Yayoi period ritual sites are never connected to graves. Here, the dead were not the object of ritual practice, but were avoided and tabooed, and rather than on the dead, rituals focused on spirits associated with the forces of nature.

All in all, it appears quite clear that in broad terms, a religious system that we may call Shinto first emerged when kami beliefs were systematised under the influence of Yayoi period rituals relating to the growing of rice. However, rice cultivation spread to *all* areas of Japan only gradually, and in different regions there will have existed a wide variety of kami beliefs and rituals. It is by no means possible to explain the origins and aims of all kami cults with reference to rice-growing rituals alone. It would certainly be an oversimplification to state that the Japanese islands first gave rise to kami cults of different types, which grew and developed naturally within local communities, and then gave birth to Shinto in some kind of natural progression. Rather, it was the Yamato court which, under the influence of Chinese notions of kingship, consciously chose sun worship as the linchpin of its ritual activities. This the Yamato court tied in with the concept of 'Heavenly Deities' (*ama-tsu-kami*), a group of superior kami among whom the Sun Goddess Amaterasu was the most prominent, and who reigned over the 'Earthly Deities' (*kuni-tsu-kami*) and their descendants from their heavenly domain. It was this consciously and deliberately constructed cult that provided the impetus leading to the emergence of Shinto as a religious system.

This leaves us with the question of what can be known about kami cults before their systematisation by the Yamato court. The written sources we possess about early Shinto all date from the period after the establishment of the Yamato court, and most were written down when the Yamato court had already embarked upon the formation of a centralised state based on *ritsuryō* law. For this reason, these sources deal almost exclusively with Shinto state ritual. This renders it very difficult to reconstruct concrete instances of kami cults before the formation of the state cult, or even instances of local kami rites away from the court during and after the formation of this cult. These limitations leave only the archaeological record as a reliable source of information on early kami cults.

Among finds from the Yayoi and Kofun periods are many ritual sites, usually at some remove from settlements, in mountains or valleys, along streams or on islands, which focus on large rocks (*iwasaka* or *shiki*). At some of these sites, fetishes carved from wood, precious objects such as jewels, and containers for food have been found, and they are generally understood to have been places of kami worship. It appears that at such *iwasaka* sites, but also at springs, waterfalls, river banks, and by large trees, mostly in places that were important for the water supply of farming communities, sacred spaces were created and marked off, kami were temporarily invited to descend and attend, and rites relating to the agricultural calendar were performed. For the purpose of such rites, objects known as *yorishiro* were placed in the sacred space to which the kami were invited to descend. At this stage, the kami were imagined as invisible spirits, without permanent dwelling places.

These *yorishiro* could be stones (called *iwasaka*), or trees or branches (*himorogi*); it appears that animals such as snakes, birds, boar or deer could also serve as *yorishiro*. Few of such natural *yorishiro* have come down to us, but it would seem that the most common type was an evergreen tree or branch of a pillar-like appearance, placed directly on the ground. In some cases, geological features such as waterfalls, streams, hills or islands served as objects of worship. In particular, hills that were thought to influence the weather, or that were striking in appearance were regarded as sacred dwelling places of kami and functioned as ritual sites.[2] Low, wooded, conical hills rising from the plains were often referred to as 'kami-inhabited mountains' (*mimuro-yama* or *kannabi-yama*), but ritual sites have also been found on more rugged mountains. The Ōmiwa, Suwa, and a few other shrines have preserved the practice of worshipping a mountain as a kami site to this day: lacking a kami hall, they consist simply of a worshipping hall built before a kami hill (*shintaizan*). Rites on kami hills took place in a demarcated sacred area into which entry for non-ritual purposes was forbidden; but it appears that such hills were also intensively used

for collecting firewood and foodstuffs, and played an important role in everyday village life.

The rapid spread of rice cultivation through most of Japan occasioned the emergence of a new ruling class, which controlled and managed the skills and the excess produce of village communities. In ritual terms, this development is reflected in the performance of communal agricultural rites at the granaries where the rice crops and seeds were stored (raised-floor structures known as *kura*), and at the dwellings of local chiefs (*miya* or *yake*, *yakata*).

*Kura* were regarded as dwelling places of the spirits of the rice. The villagers worshipped these spirits in the forecourts of *kura* or at specially constructed *himorogi*, where the spirits were treated with lavish offerings. In some cases, a special building for the preparation of such offerings (known as a *yashiro*) would also have been put up. Such *kura* later developed into permanent raised-floor shrines; the most famous shrine buildings of this type, known as *shinmei-zukuri*, are the shrines of Ise.

Another type of shrine building developed from the dwellings of local chiefs, or *miya*. Such dwellings were set apart from the other village houses on the fringe of the village area. It appears that a section of the main house was set aside for the performance of rites. The most famous modern shrine that belongs to this type, known as *taisha-zukuri*, is the Izumo shrine. While the main entrance to *shinmei-zukuri* shrine buildings is placed in the long wall of the structure, *taisha-zukuri* shrines have their main entrance in a short wall. Both have raised floors, built on pillars set in holes dug in the ground.

The worship of kami in permanent structures that they were believed to inhabit in a human-like fashion led to their personalisation and humanisation, and soon, village kami acquired human traits. Moreover, those who were directly involved in the rites performed in the enclosed spaces of permanent shrines were thought to have a special relationship with the kami, and thus came to be seen as kami-like figures themselves, clearly separated from other members of the village community. It is thought that village chiefs may have performed a shaman-like role in village ritual.

Yayoi period sites have produced large numbers of ornate bell-shaped bronze objects, known as *dōtaku*, as well as bronze weapons and mirrors. It is believed that these metal objects may have been used to call up kami spirits for agricultural rituals. It is possible that the sounds produced by striking such objects, or their bright and shiny surface, may have inspired a belief that they had special properties, and caused them to be selected for such a role. On *dōtaku*, as well as on the walls of the inner chambers of the burial mounds of the Kofun period, depictions of birds have been found, together with agricultural scenes, the sun and the moon, or boats;

there are also finds of bird figures carved from wood. These pictures and figures seem to reflect a belief that birds are sacred creatures, who fly to and fro between this world and another world, contributing to the movements of the sun, and carrying the spirits of the rice. This belief displays certain similarities with myths recounting the 'shooting of suns'. Such myths are known from a large area, stretching from southern China to Korea, that coincides with the route along which rice cultivation spread. An early account of them can be found in the Chinese *Huainanzi* (second century BCE), which tells how at some time in the distant past, the ten suns which at normal times took turns to illuminate the world in a ten-day cycle appeared all at the same time, causing a disastrous drought. These suns were carried along the heavens by birds, and the crisis was overcome when a hero shot nine of the ten suns. Rites using bird figures and shamanism can be found throughout this area, suggesting that shamans were expected to control the movements of the sun through control of birds, and thus guarantee a good crop.

In these various ways, Japan's religious culture was profoundly affected by the arrival of rice cultivation. Of special importance was the formation of hierarchically structured village communities, led by chiefs. These chiefs played a central part in the rites surrounding the growing of rice, and their ritual role was an essential element of their authority as local leaders. Moreover, towards the end of the Yayoi period, widespread fighting among villages led to the formation of small 'states' (*kuni*), each comprising a considerable number of villages. As these 'states' formed alliances, fought wars, and merged into ever greater units, the military and political roles of kami ritual became ever more pronounced.

This period saw the adoption of precious symbols of secular power, such as mirrors (some imported from China, others Japanese copies), swords, and jewels as *yorishiro* used in kami rites. Some ritual sites, such as Kōjindani in Izumo, have revealed large hoards of metal objects such as weapons (of a size and shape that excludes their practical use) and mirrors, presumably made and used for exorcist ritual purposes. Such finds indicate that the religious powers of chiefs were now expected not only to enable them to control nature, but also to maintain military security and make the right political judgements in a world of ever shifting alliances and power balances.

## *Matsurigoto*: ritual and political power

The National Histories *Kojiki* (712) and *Nihon shoki* (720) give Emperor Mimaki-iri-hiko or Sujin the title 'First Emperor to Rule the Realm' (*hatsu-kuni-shirasu sumera-mikoto*), suggesting that this emperor, whose rule is dated to the late third century, was the first 'Great King' of the Yamato

court. With the establishment of this court in central Japan, the systematisation of kami ritual began. Its *constituents* were the members of the ruling elite, consisting of the royal clan and its allies. Here, I will give an overview of the religious *network* and *substance* that informed the ritual rule of the Yamato kings during the period from the early emergence of the Yamato court in the third century, until its final establishment in the latter half of the fifth century.

Before the establishment of unified rule, the shamanic powers of the various local kings of the many small 'states' (*kuni*) into which Japan was divided must have played a prominent role. An example of such a figure is Pimiko, the queen of 'Wo' who figures in the Chinese *Weizhi* ('History of the Wei'), compiled around 297 CE. The *Weizhi* writes of Pimiko that she 'occupied herself with magic and sorcery, bewitching the people,'[3] suggesting that her powers were religious as much as secular. The articles on Sujin in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, too, contain many religious elements, such as divinely inspired dreams relating to his succession, the stopping of an epidemic through the solving of riddles, and so forth.

The main site, and quite possibly also the main object of the ritual worship of the Yamato court was Mount Miwa. Miwa is a typical kami hill, dotted with *iwasaka* rocks. The kami of Miwa, Ōmononushi, was worshipped as the 'spirit of the land' (*kunitama*) who bestowed bountiful harvests on Yamato, for example by blessing the land with favourable weather conditions. This kami was thought to take on the shape of a snake; to this day, the kami of Miwa is known as *mii-san* ('snake'), and it is said that a messenger from the kami dwells at the foot of a large cedar tree in front of the worshipping hall in the form of a white snake. The kings of Yamato must have performed agricultural rituals similar to those carried out by Yayoi period chiefs, focusing, above all, on ensuring a plentiful supply of water for rice growing. As the Yamato court expanded, its guardian deity, Ōmononushi, also took on the character of a deity of war, and shrines dedicated to this deity were founded in conquered areas.

Another important site was Isonokami, Yamato's gate to the east. At the Isonokami shrine, members of the Mononobe clan performed rituals that focused on a divine sword, praying for the military success of the Yamato state. The Mononobe were ancient retainers of the Yamato court, and were in charge of military matters (together with the Ōtomo clan). There are indications that Isonokami was originally a site for agricultural rites carried out by the communities along the Furukawa river, but it would appear that with the rise of the Mononobe at the Yamato court, this shrine took on the function of betowing success on the battlefield. It is thought that the Kashima and Katori shrines in eastern Japan went through a similar development.

Through a combination of military power and diplomacy, the Yamato court gained supremacy among the 'states' of early Japan between the late third and late fifth centuries. Chinese histories of the Jin (316–420) and Song (420–79) dynasties mention five Japanese kings (the so-called 'Five Kings of Wo'), who sent frequent tributes to China and attained royal status on a par with the kings of Korean states. As proof of their royal status, the Yamato kings received seals, mirrors, ceremonial weapons and glass objects from the Chinese emperor. These objects bespoke the technological superiority of China, and were cherished as symbols of royal power, knowledge and wealth in Japan. They came to occupy a central position in court ritual as divine treasures or as containers of kami spirits.

Ritual sites that emerged with the development of overseas diplomacy were the harbour of Naniwazu (modern Osaka) and the island of Oki no Shima. Naniwazu was the site of the shrine of Sumiyoshi, a deity who was worshipped as the protector of the sea route between this harbour and Kyushu. This deity had strong and long-standing ties with the Yamato court. Oki no Shima is a small uninhabited island off the coast of northwestern Kyushu, linked to the Munakata shrine on the shore. Ritual sites discovered on this island revealed thousands of objects offered by the Yamato court between the fourth and tenth centuries. The deity of Munakata was originally worshipped by the clans of northern Kyushu; the Yamato court raised the prestige of this deity and initiated ritual worship on Oki no Shima as part of its efforts to gain the cooperation of these clans in maintaining relations with the continent.

In the late third century, the Yamato court developed a new kind of burial mound of a particular keyhole shape (*zenpō kōen fun*). Such mounds were also ceremonial spaces, where rituals of succession were carried out. A rite symbolising the transfer of power from the old to the new king was carried out on the high round part of the mound, followed by a ceremony of proclaiming the beginning of the new king's reign on a lower square part attached to the round part. After this, the round part, which contained the grave of the old king, was marked off as a sacred area by means of clay cylinders (*haniwa*), which became more elaborate over time.

It is interesting in this context that an inscription found on an iron sword from the late fifth century, excavated from the Inariyama burial mound, explicitly states that Emperor Wakatakeru or Yūryaku was a direct descendant in the eighth generation of the above-mentioned Emperor Mimaki-iri-hiko or Sujin. The building of burial mounds, the development of new rites of succession, and the casting of ceremonial swords drew heavily on the services of immigrant clans from the continent. It was their knowledge of continental culture that gave the impetus for the development of new conceptions of royal authority, and for their expression in a new royal

genealogy and a new body of ritual. Together with the expansion of the Yamato court, keyhole-shaped burial mounds appeared throughout Japan. The genealogical awareness and ritual forms that were developed by the Yamato court spread in the wake of these monuments, and served as examples for the court's allies in the provinces.

By Yūryaku's time, the unification of Japan under the Yamato court was nearly complete. This reduced the need for Chinese imperial recognition of the Yamato kings, and tribute payments to China ceased. The diminished importance of diplomatic ties with the continent is reflected in a simplification of the rituals performed on Oki no Shima. Here, numerous precious objects were used as offerings during the late fourth and fifth centuries, while in the late fifth and sixth centuries, these were replaced by copies in stone or iron. This same period saw a new development in the conception of the power of the Yamato kings: their authority was increasingly understood to cover 'All under Heaven', and took on an even more religious character. This understanding of royal authority found expression in the cult of the Sun Goddess in Ise.

Ise was not only an affluent district of economic importance, but was also situated directly to the east from Yūryaku's capital at Hase on the eastern slope of Mount Miwa. Seen from Hase, Ise was the sacred place where the sun rose. Opinions are divided over the origin of the Ise shrines, but most scholars agree that the Inner Shrine (Naikū) dedicated to the Sun Goddess Amaterasu was moved to Ise from Yamato, while the original shrine at Ise was redefined as an 'Outer Shrine' (Gekū) dedicated to a food deity subservient to Amaterasu.[4] This move of the Sun Goddess to Ise represented a major change in the Yamato cult of the sun: from a local cult of Amaterasu as the 'spirit of the land' of the province of Yamato, to a cult in which Amaterasu featured as a universal sun deity who illuminates All under Heaven, and whose worship is the prerogative of a royal lineage with equally universal powers.

Our best sources on the transformation of kami cults during Yūryaku's reign are passages from the National Histories *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* relating to the origin of the practice of dedicating imperial princesses (*saigū*) to the Ise shrines. These unmarried princesses carried out ritual functions at Ise in the name of the emperor. The *Kojiki* relates that during the reign of Emperor Sujin, an oracle was revealed to princess Yamato-totobimomoso-hime, proclaiming that in order to appease Ōmononushi and to stop the pestilence caused by his wrath, Ōmononushi's grandson, Ōtataneko, must be found and appointed as his priest. This Ōtataneko then became the ancestor of the aptly named Miwa clan of Miwa priests. The *Nihon shoki* describes how Sujin 'came to dread the great power' of the two deities Amaterasu and Yamato no Ōkunitama ('Yamato's Great

Spirit of the Land'), who until then had been 'worshipped together within the Emperor's Great Hall'. The text states that the emperor 'did not feel secure in their dwelling together',[5] and therefore entrusted each of these two deities to an imperial princess and moved them away from the imperial palace. The imperial ancestor Amaterasu was handed over from one princess to another, until after about a century of wanderings she reached Ise and ordered the imperial princess Yamato-hime in an oracle to build a permanent shrine for her in that 'secluded and pleasant land'.[6] This occurred during the reign of Emperor Suinin.

These legends reveal much about the emergence of professional priests and permanent shrines. However, they also show that rituals that were originally performed by the Yamato king himself were increasingly delegated to female members of the royal lineage and to subordinate clans. This suggests that ritual matters were becoming less central to royal rule than before.

Conversely, these legends about the origin of dedicated princesses also indicate the strong links that existed between ritual worship and political rule before this time, and show that ritual matters were largely the province of female members of the royal clan. Some scholars argue that there existed a system of rule by a closely related female and male (or *hime* and *hiko*, 'princess and prince'), in which the female acted as a shaman in charge of ritual matters while the male held secular power. Examples from the National Histories that may be regarded as remnants of such a system are Jingū Kōgō, who became empress after the death of her husband Emperor Chūai (who died after ignoring an oracle revealed to Jingū Kōgō), and Princess Iitoyo no Ao, an unmarried princess who ruled for a short while after Emperor Buretsu's death; a similar system of rule is sketched in the Chinese account of Queen Pimiko of Yamatai.

It is, indeed, more than a coincidence that the supreme deity in the National Histories is the female Amaterasu, and it is a fact that many deities appear as pairs, one called *hime* and the other *hiko*. Also, there are legends that make mention of female chiefs. However, Chinese records about the tribute-bearing Kings of Wo and legends about the origins of chiefs contained in the National Histories also mention numerous instances of kami possession by males, and it would be wrong, even for this early period, simply to define the female as sacred versus the male as secular. Clearly, different early Japanese states used different ritual systems, and there is no evidence to suggest that a single system of rule involving a female shaman and a male secular ruler was common to all.

What does appear strongly from the sources is that already at an early stage of the royal clan's emergence as Japan's supreme military power, ritual and secular duties were separated from each other by excluding females

*The royal lineage*

|  |  |  |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Jinmu | |
| 10. | Sujin | |
| 11. | Suinin | |
| 12. | Keikō | |
| 14. | Jingū Kōgō | (regent) |
| 15. | Ōjin | |
| 21. | Yūryaku | |
| 26. | Keitai | (507–31) |
| 27. | Ankan | (531–5) |
| 29. | Kinmei | (539–71) |
| 31. | Yōmei | (585–7) |
| 33. | Suiko | (592–628) |
| 36. | Kōtoku | (645–54) |
| 38. | Tenchi | (662–71) |
| 40. | Tenmu | (672–86) |
| 41. | Jitō | (690–7) |

from the latter.[7] Those ritualists, both female and male, who took care of royal kami ritual lost their political influence and were reduced to a supportive role in the service of the royal court. This led, among other things, to a marginalisation of formerly extremely influential female ritualists.

## Emperor Jinmu: clan alliances and legend

Between the latter half of the fifth century (Emperor Yūryaku's reign) and the middle of the sixth century (Emperor Kinmei's reign), the Yamato court imposed its rule over an area stretching from Kyushu in the south-west to the Kanto plain in the north-east. This period saw the emergence of a new, large state which wielded military, diplomatic and ritual authority, centring on the Yamato royal house and supported by an alliance of powerful clans. Elites were formed that were also the *constituents* and *makers* of a new system of kami cults, and the *substance* contained in these cults was shaped by the very process of state formation.

Yūryaku is described in the sources as the 'Great King who Governs All under Heaven'. The term 'All under Heaven' (Ch. *tianxia*, J. *tenka* or *ame no shita*) is a telling one: it reveals that this Great King was seen not as a peripheral king subservient to the Chinese emperors of the Middle

Kingdom, but as a world ruler claiming universal powers. As the title of Great King (J. *ōkimi*) became hereditary, its incumbents used ever greater resources for the building of gigantic burial tombs, designed to impress their military power on possible rivals. With the establishment of the principles of the succession, a beginning was made with the recording of genealogical annals of the royal lineage. On the ritual front, this period saw the development of separate rituals of burial and succession. The new succession rituals included the selection of a suitable site through divination, the construction of an enthronement platform, the performance of an accession ceremony, and, finally, the building of a new royal palace. This new ceremonial form is thought to have arisen both through the influence of Chinese models, and through a strengthening of the taboo on death, which made burial mounds less desirable as sites for succession ceremonies.

Central to the royal funereal ceremonies of this period were the rituals performed during the *mogari* or 'wake', which involved a temporary burial in the court grounds. At the temporary burial site, rites were performed for the pacification of the potentially violent spirit of the deceased king.[8] Most important among the *mogari* rituals was the recitation of a eulogy of the deceased, called *shinobi*. At the wake, those present recited the genealogy and the achievements of the deceased, and swore their allegiance to the new king. As the final rite of the funeral, the deceased king was given a posthumous title in Japanese (*wafū shigō*), which symbolised his accomplishments as a ruler; this practice started with Emperor Ankan (r. 531–5), who was given such a title in 535. These rituals served to impress the importance of the royal lineage on the nation's elite, by stressing both its divine origins and its historical achievements. Members of immigrant clans from the mainland with expertise in writing and calendrical matters were in charge of both these rituals and the written records. Already in inscriptions in metal and stone from the fifth and sixth centuries, Chinese characters were used phonetically to record Japanese personal names and place names; not much later, this phonetic way of using Chinese characters was developed further to commit to writing phrases, poems, formulas and myths in Japanese. These developments show a conscious attempt on the part of the Japanese court to create a historical record that was its very own, even if this meant deviating from Chinese precedents.

Parallel with these changes, the royal court deepened its relations with leading clans of the Home Provinces, for example through actively seeking marital ties. These relations were reflected in a merging of myths and genealogies, resulting in a shared understanding of historical origins and blood ties. Such clans (*uji*) emerged in the late fifth century, and were patrilinear groups bound together by the notion of a shared ancestry. They consisted of an elite of 'clan members' (*ujibito*) led by a clan head (*uji no kami*), and controlled large areas of land as well as great numbers of slaves

(*nuhi*). There were also clans whose positions were not based so much on their control of certain areas, but rather on their expertise in specific (mostly Chinese) skills. Clans who served the royal court, either by implementing royal policies in the region under their control or by offering the court their specialised services, received titles (*kabane*) which indicated their status within the court hierarchy.[9]

When we trace back the history of the formation of these clans, we find that already during the late fifth century, *kabane* titles were granted to chiefs; but at this time clan names do not yet figure in the sources. The founding ancestor of the royal lineage was said to be Emperor Sujin, and early written sources mention persons from Sujin's reign as the ancestors of the main chiefly lineages. We find no indications that there existed a (perceived) genealogical link between the royal lineage and these chiefly lineages, nor between the royal lineage and the deities worshipped by such lineages during this period. The sixth century, however, saw the birth of the legend of Emperor Jinmu's conquest of Yamato. By claiming descent in a straight line from this legendary emperor, the royal lineage proclaimed its legitimacy as rulers over the whole of Japan. The supremacy of the royal court over all other clan chiefs was legitimised by referring to the legendary events from Jinmu's age. At the same time, those groups who served under the royal court adapted their own legends to fit in more closely with those of their masters.

The legend of Emperor Jinmu recounts how Kamu-Yamato-Iwarehiko (i.e. Jinmu), a descendant of the 'Heavenly Deities', left his native Kyushu ('Himuka in Tsukushi'), defeated a series of enemies with the help of the gods, and after many adventures reached Yamato. Here, the legend tells us, he worshipped the Heavenly Deities at Mount Kaguyama and ascended the throne as the first emperor (*sumera-mikoto*). The claim that this legendary figure conquered Yamato from the outside pressed home the point that he and his descendants were not merely local chiefs of Yamato, but were the offspring of the 'Heavenly Deities', and as such had been promised the overlordship over the whole of Japan already in the Age of the Gods.

Scholars have linked the legend of Emperor Jinmu's conquest of Yamato to an alliance of clans that supported the succession of Emperor Keitai (r. 507–31) in the early sixth century. Keitai was brought in from the Hokuriku region (on the coast of the Japan Sea, north of Yamato) by powerful chiefs from the Yamato and Ōmi regions when the lineage of Emperor Yūryaku died out. Legends about the origins of the lineages of these chiefs (such as the chief of the Ōtomo clan) are woven into the Jinmu legend and form an important part of it. The involvement of new powers in the planning of Yūryaku's succession helped to further disseminate the legends of the Yamato kings and their allies, and involved new clan groups in the emerging network of relationships reflected in, and continued through, legend.

Other legends, such as that of the conquest of Korea by Empress Jingū Kōgō and her general Takenouchi no Sukune, and that of the succession of Emperor Ōjin, include founding myths of powerful shrines located along the Japanese coast between Naniwazu (modern Osaka) and Kyushu, such as Sumiyoshi Taisha (in Osaka), Hirota Jinja (Nishinomiya), Iminomiya Jinja (Shimonoseki), and Kashii-gū (Fukuoka). The deities of these shrines had long been worshipped for protection at sea, but in these legends, they display a distinctly military character. Here, court policy is described as the restoration of vested interests, and is shown to carry the blessing of the gods. The acts of Jingū Kōgō and Ōjin are described as legitimate measures flowing naturally from historical necessity. The ever-growing body of legend provided a 'story line' revolving around the lineage of Emperor Jinmu, which defined the legitimacy of the royal court, recorded the past accomplishments of the royal allies (thus legitimising their present positions), and explained the significance of specific political measures.

By the time of Emperor Kinmei's reign (r. 539–71), the ruling elites of Kyushu had submitted to the Yamato court, and the process of adjusting the myths and legends of the leading clans to those that legitimised royal authority gathered speed. The legends that recount the subordination of clans described as descendants of 'Earthly Kami' by Jinmu and his successors mostly refer to clans with the highest *kabane* titles (*omi*, *kimi*), which originally had independent power bases. In addition to Jinmu's conquests, the National Histories recount how Emperor Sujin dispatched four imperial princes to various regions where they 'pacified the savages', and how Emperor Keikō's son Yamato-takeru conquered Kyushu, Izumo and the Kanto region.[10] These legends, too, serve to weave local traditions ranging from Kyushu to the North-East into the tapestry of royal history. In their turn, royal legends were also adopted and adapted in out-lying regions. The *Hitachi kuni fudoki*, for example, a 'gazetteer' from the distant eastern province of Hitachi informing the court of local customs, legends, folktales and resources, records an atypical version of the Yamato-takeru legend, and uses it to explain place names and shrine origins in the region.

Parallel with the emergence of these legends of subordination, local chiefs became provincial governors (*kuni no miyatsuko*) in the service of the royal court. While retaining much of their traditional power in local society, clan chiefs were made part of a nation-wide governmental structure under the royal court. The provincial governors collected royal taxes in specified regional products (*nie*), sent their sons and daughters to the royal court for service, and led provincial armies under royal command. Moreover, they offered traditional 'divine treasures' to the court, which were stored at the Isonokami shrine. In this manner, the religious authority of the local chiefs was absorbed into the ritual prerogatives

of the Yamato king, while at the same time the chiefs were given a role within the royal government.

As the royal genealogy was perfected, the position of the Great King was increasingly shrouded in mystery. It seems that there was a short break in the performance of rituals in worship of the sun goddess at the Ise shrines, which during Yūryaku's reign had become a royal site of worship, but this ritual practice was revived in the mid-sixth century (under Emperor Kinmei), and the latter half of this century saw the establishment of special groups (*shinabe*) throughout the country whose task it was to contribute, in goods or in labour, to the ritual worship of the sun goddess. *Shinabe* groups paid set annual amounts of specified goods or labour to the court; an example of a ritual *shinabe* is the *himatsuribe* or 'sun worship group', who served as assistants of the *saigū* under the supervision of the Nakatomi at the court. The considerable resources invested in such practices bespeak the importance attached by the court to the notion that the Great King was a direct descendant of the Sun Goddess, as a basis for royal legitimacy that was not swayed by the royal incumbent's military and political capacities.

The mystification of the origins of royal rule triggered a similar development among leading clans. Clans began to trace their origins back to 'Earthly Kami' from before Jinmu's time, who had welcomed or had been allies of Ninigi, the grandson of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, when he descended from Heaven to rule over Japan. Clans with the *kabane* title *muraji*, which had no independent territorial bases of power and were directly subordinate to the royal court as so-called *tomo no miyatsuko*, were recognised as descendants of Heavenly Kami, just like the royal lineage itself, and were said to have accompanied Ninigi from Heaven. All of these legends conveyed the message that these various clans had been retainers of the royal lineage since time immemorial, and were indispensable to the royal reign for that very reason.

The establishment of political order, the development of a new notion of royal authority, and the compilation of historical chronicles all had their roots in a new national awareness which emerged not only in Japan but also in other East-Asian peripheral nations after the demise of the Southern and Northern Dynasties in China (420–589). When with the Sui (581–619) and Tang (618–907) dynasties a strong centralised state appeared in China, peripheral states entered into a tribute-bearing relationship with the Chinese empire. According to a practice known as *cefeng* (J. *sakuhō*), 'the conferring of lands', the Chinese emperor recognised the overlordship of tribute-sending local rulers in exchange for regular tribute, and granted them an appropriate title, such as 'king' (Ch. *wang*). During the reign of Empress Suiko (r. 592–628), Japan too reinstituted the

practice of sending tribute to China, after a gap of some hundred years. However, even while sending tribute, the Yamato court refused to accept a Chinese title. Rather than as a local king subordinate to the Chinese emperor, the Yamato kings defined themselves as 'Sons of Heaven in the Land of the Rising Sun' (*hi izuru tokoro no tenshi*). This title is found in an entry dated 607 in the official history of the Sui dynasty (*Suishu*); a corresponding entry in *Nihon shoki* (in the chapter on Empress Suiko) gives the title 'Eastern Emperor'. By avoiding both the Chinese title 'king' and the Chinese name for Japan, Wo (J. Wa), the Yamato court adopted a stance of independence in relation to its powerful neighbour. The title the Yamato kings chose for themselves had its roots in a view of the east as a sacred direction, and in the notion that the royal lineage descended from the Sun Goddess.

Suiko's reign saw the compilation of so-called 'Imperial Records' (*teiki*) and 'Ancient Tales' (*kuji*). The Imperial Records contained information on each emperor's name, his relation to the previous emperor, the location of his palace, the duration of his reign, his offspring, his main achievements, the year of his death and his age, and the location of his grave; the Ancient Tales consisted of tales and songs. Both were burnt when the Soga clan was overthrown in 645, but we may assume that by this time, the basic *substance* regarding the history of the Japanese state had taken shape. This *substance* consisted of three main elements:

1   the descent from heaven of the grandson of the Sun Goddess, and his mandate to rule over Japan (defining royal legitimacy in native terms, quite unrelated to Chinese *cefeng* practice);
2   the imperial genealogy from Emperor Jinmu onwards (praising the accomplishments of the 'Sons of Heaven');
3   the legends and traditions of the royal lineage and allied clans (setting out the historical reality of royal rule).

This first attempt at compiling historical records was a link in a larger programme: to reform the country into a more centralised state under imperial rule. It was this same programme that fuelled the further embellishment of the myths and legends that reached its peak with the compilation of the National Histories, *Kojiki* (712) and *Nihon shoki* (720).

Tribute may not always have been sent, but Japan was nonetheless subject to strong continental influence throughout this entire period. This fact also left its mark on the development of the state myths and legends recorded in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Throughout these works, we can recognise the influence of Chinese thought. The descriptions of the birth of the earliest deities are clearly informed by Chinese theories

on Yin, Yang and the Five Phases of matter (wood, fire, earth, metal and water). We encounter terms from the *Yijing* ('Book of Changes') and from Taoist thought, and find that the Japanese kings are described as saints and immortals in the Taoist tradition.

But while in Chinese thought the universe is governed by an impersonal Heaven and moves according to the unchangeable laws of 'matter' (Ch. *qi*), the Japanese histories explain the origins and changes of phenomena in this world as acts of a large number of human-like deities (*yaoyorozu no kami*, 'the eight hundred myriad kami'). The Japanese histories set out with the origin of heaven and earth, and dwell at length on the 'Age of the Gods'. All of this stands in stark contrast with the conventions of Chinese philosophical and historical writing. Sun worship and the motif of the descent of the royal ancestor from heaven have close parallels in Korea rather than China, and may also have been influenced by Buddhism.

Cultural influences from the continent arrived in Japan as a mixture of practical skills, such as calendrical knowledge, medicine and divination, and philosophical and religious elements from Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. However, in contrast to popular divination techniques and Taoist practices, which arrived in Japan as individual rites without a coherent philosophical foundation, Buddhism was introduced to Japan in an official and systematic manner. This occurred probably in 538 (although some sources give the date as 552).

Buddhism was adopted in Japan, first and foremost, as a body of magical rituals relating to ancestor worship, healing, rainmaking, and so forth. In various sources from this period the Buddhist divinities are described as 'foreign kami', 'Buddhist kami', or 'Chinese kami', and it would appear that their worship was conducted along the same lines as that of the native deities. It is striking, for example, that the first monastics in Japan were not monks but young nuns. It is logical to see a relation with native kami ritual, in which offerings were, as a rule, prepared and presented by unmarried girls. Nevertheless, it is of great importance that Buddha images, Buddhist scriptures and Buddhist monks arrived in Japan as clearly defined parts of a single religious system. Buddhist statues and paintings were clearly different both from the indistinct native and Chinese deities and from the plants and animals worshipped in folk cults, in that they showed beautiful images of idealised human beings. Also, Buddhist divinities were distinct from other objects of worship in that they were revered in special structures (temples), and by specialist priests (monks and nuns). In other words, Buddhism arrived in Japan as a fully fledged religious system in its own right. For this very reason, Buddhism also met with determined resistance. *Nihon shoki* tells that its supporters, led by Soga no Iname, argued

that since 'all the western frontier lands without exception do it worship', Yamato should do the same, while its detractors, such as Mononobe no Okoshi and Nakatomi no Kamako, objected that 'if we were to worship . . . foreign deities, it may be feared that we should incur the wrath of our national deities'.[11]

The *Nihon shoki* is also the oldest source for the term 'Shinto'. In passages relating to the reigns of the Emperors Yōmei (r. 585–7) and Kōtoku (r. 645–54), the term Shinto is used to refer to the cult of the imperial kami, in clear distinction from the 'Buddhist Dharma' (*buppō*): 'Emperor [Yōmei] had faith in the Buddhist Dharma and revered Shinto'; '[Emperor Kōtoku] revered the Buddhist Dharma but scorned Shinto'.[12] It is not clear, however, whether this term was actually in use at these early dates, or whether it was picked from Chinese sources at the time of the compilation of the *Nihon shoki*. Also, the very meaning of the term Shinto in this context is a hotly debated issue.[13] Many find it hard to believe that there was any awareness of the religious difference between kami and buddha worship during the early years of Japanese Buddhism. Nevertheless, it would seem that these enigmatic passages do indicate that the arrival of Buddhism triggered some reflection on the existence and the status of native cults. The sources show quite unequivocally that a distinction was made between 'national deities' on the one hand and 'foreign deities' on the other, and that worship of the former was considered an important duty of the Yamato kings. In this sense, the arrival of Buddhism was a significant event in the emergence of Shinto.

## The descent from Heaven and the succession ceremonies of the Son of the Sun

During the second half of the seventh century, Japan's political structure was radically reformed from an alliance of clans into an imperial state modelled on the Chinese empire. At this time, the myths surrounding the imperial ancestress Amaterasu and the imperial rites of succession took on special importance. The myths around Amaterasu formed the pivot of the *substance* relating to imperial authority, and the succession rites constituted a ceremonial 're-acting' of the imperial myths, performed by the emperor in person as the embodiment of the state.

Emperor Tenmu, who acceded to the throne in 672, enacted the first extant Chinese-style law code, known as the Kiyomihara code, in 689. The Chinese example of both this and subsequent law codes is known as *ritsuryō* (Ch. *lüling*) law. The introduction of *ritsuryō* law was a central element in the transformation of the primitive Japanese state of the early and mid-Kofun periods into a more sophisticated and centralised one, and

the adoption of this first Japanese code of law is often noted as the birth date of a new Japanese '*ritsuryō* state'. Tenmu renamed the country 'Japan', or 'Source of the Sun' (J. *Nihon*, *Nippon*, or *hi no moto*; the Chinese equivalent *Riben*, or in Wade-Giles' transcription *Jih-pen*, is the source of our 'Japan'), and adopted the title 'emperor' (J. *tennō*, from Ch. *tianhuang*). The name *Nihon* came into official diplomatic use in 702, and the term *tennō* was adopted around the same time, probably after 690.[14] These changes signalled a complete denial of the overlordship of the Chinese emperor as symbolised by the practice of *cefeng* discussed above. Neither Tenmu nor his successor Empress Jitō (r. 690–7) sent tribute to the Tang.

*Nihon* or *Nippon* is the Japanese pronunciation of Ch. *Riben*, which refers to Japan's location to the east of China (*hi no moto* is a literal Japanese translation of *Riben*, 'Source of the Sun'). Its adoption as the official name of the state reveals a strong awareness of the Chinese perspective on Japan, but at the same time also bespeaks a strong intent to build an independent Japanese state. This is because it refers to the legends surrounding the 'descent from heaven' of the imperial lineage. Tenmu himself collected the records and legends of both the imperial lineage and its allied clans, and instigated the compilation of a 'correct' history of the state. His activities directly occasioned the compilation of the *Kojiki* (712) and, more indirectly, the *Nihon shoki* (720).

Following on from the origin of Heaven and Earth, these first Japanese National Histories record the myth of the 'birth of the land'. The first male and female deities, Izanaki and Izanami, are ordered by the Heavenly Deities to 'consolidate the land'. They marry on the 'self-coagulating' island of Onogorojima, created from the brine that forms when they stir a jewelled spear in the ocean, and give birth to many islands, together constituting the 'Land of the Eight (i.e. numerous) Great Islands' (*ōyashima no kuni*).

These islands all carry both geographical and personal names. One island is said to have four 'faces', and each of these is given a geographical and a personal name, some male and some female. Clearly, the islands are imagined as deities with human characteristics. After the birth of the islands, *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* continue without break with the birth of various natural deities: of the wind, the plains, the mountains, and so forth. In relation to the 'Plain of High Heaven' (*takama-ga-hara*) on the one hand, and the subterranean 'Land of Darkness' (*yomi no kuni*) or 'Land of Roots' (*ne no kuni*) on the other, the Land of the Eight Great Islands is designated as the 'Land of the Middle' (*naka-tsu-kuni*). This is the domain over which the 'Heavenly Grandson' is granted rule. These myths primarily set out to recount the sacred origins of the territories ruled by the imperial lineage.

It is worth noting that the myths relating to the 'birth of the land' were firmly grounded in the diplomatic realities of the Yamato court in the late seventh century. After the defeat against Silla and Tang forces on the Kŭm river (known in Japanese as Hakusuki no E) in 663, the Japanese had given up all territorial ambitions in southern Korea. Tenmu's reforms had, in no small degree, been informed by this same loss of Japan's last Korean foothold, and by an increased awareness of a possible threat from the continent. It is not possible to put an accurate date on the formulation of 'birth of the land' mythology, but it is clear that these myths define a sacred 'territory', created by the kami and bestowed by them upon the imperial lineage. If Tenmu's intention was to build a small empire of his own without negating Chinese imperial rhetoric, this body of myths served this purpose to perfection. Also, the territories which feature in these myths coincide with the areas actually controlled by the Yamato court during Tenmu's reign.

*Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* define the era before Emperor Jinmu as the 'Age of the Gods', and the period after Jinmu as the 'Age of Man'. The main story line structuring the account of the Age of the Gods proceeds from the 'birth of the land', through Amaterasu's reign in Heaven, to the descent of her grandson, Ninigi, to the 'Land of the Middle'. The notion that the ruler of Japan was the lord of the 'Land of the Rising Sun' and descended from the Heavenly Deities can be traced back to Empress Suiko's reign (592–628); but the idea that Amaterasu was first and foremost an imperial ancestor was consolidated first during the reigns of Tenmu (672–86) and Jitō (690–7).

*Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* tell us that Amaterasu was born as the first of the 'three most august children' of Izanaki (Amaterasu, Tsukiyomi and Susanowo), that she is the kami of the sun, and that Izanaki ordered her to rule over heaven. However, soon afterwards her brother Susanowo visited her in heaven and misbehaved in a wildly destructive way, causing Amaterasu to withdraw into the 'Cave of Heaven' (*ame no iwato*). As a result, both Heaven and the 'Land of the Middle' were plunged into darkness and chaos. The 'eight hundred myriad deities' convened to perform 'divine entertainments' (*kami-asobi*) and succeeded in luring Amaterasu out of the cave, thus restoring light and order. To prevent reoccurrence, the cave was closed and Susanowo was punished.

This tale, known as the 'myth of the Cave of Heaven', is often interpreted as a myth of Amaterasu's 'death and rebirth'. Another important point, however, is that this tale establishes unequivocally who is the supreme deity ruling heaven. Order in heaven and earth is dependent upon Amaterasu's presence, and the myth describes at length how all the kami of heaven gather to submit to her supremacy.

In the subsequent myth of the 'descent of the Heavenly Grandson', Amaterasu sends her new-born grandson, Ninigi, to the Land of the Middle as its ruler. She bestows on him a mirror that represents her spirit, and selects an entourage of kami to accompany and serve him. In W.G. Aston's translation of *Nihon shoki*, Amaterasu 'commanded her August Grandchild (Ninigi), saying: This Reed-plain-1500-autumns-fair-rice-ear Land is the region which my descendants shall be lords of. Do thou, my August Grandchild, proceed thither and govern it. Go! and may prosperity attend thy dynasty, and may it, like Heaven and Earth, endure for ever.'[15] Thus, the Heavenly Grandson is depicted not as a human king who has been entrusted with rule over the land by the gods, but rather as a 'living deity' (*aki-tsu-kami*) who reigns together with Amaterasu. The Heavenly Grandson descends to Mount Takachiho in Kyushu and he and his descendants marry 'Earthly Deities', until Ninigi's great-great-grandson, Jinmu, subdues the kami who would not submit, and becomes the first emperor to realise Amaterasu's 'divine decree' (*shinchoku*).

The *substance* regardin the origin and nature of imperial rule contained in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* was given concrete form by succession ceremonies designed and inaugurated by Tenmu. These ceremonies consisted of two subsequent rituals: the *daijōsai* (or *senso daijōsai*), derived from traditional harvest rituals performed at the Yamato court, and a secular enthronement ritual called *sokui no gi* and based on Chinese examples. Both were carried out as 'kami rituals' on the basis of detailed regulations laid down in 'kami law' (*jingiryō*). The *daijōsai*, especially, was a kami ritual of the highest category, involving a prolonged period of abstinence both before and after its performance. This characterises the ritual as a religiously charged performance that stressed the 'mystical' qualities of the imperial throne.

The *daijōsai* is the first 'ritual of first fruits' (*shinjōsai* or *niiname*) performed by an emperor after his enthronement. By symbolically partaking of products from the new harvest from different parts of the country, the emperor confirmed his territorial claim to the land. In practice, two provinces known as *yuki* and *suki* were chosen by divinatory means to supply the first fruits used in the ceremony. It is revealing that the roles of *yuki* and *suki* were given not to the traditional core area of Yamato control, but to outlying provinces brought under Yamato rule at a later stage. The fields used to produce crops (primarily rice) for the *daijōsai* were supervised by the district governor (*gunji*), who was also in charge of local kami ritual. In addition to the rice produced at the *yuki* and *suki* sites, a broad range of products from areas throughout the land was listed as tribute (*nie*). Thus the entire territory of imperial rule was transformed into a ritual

area for the production of divine food offerings for the *daijōsai* ceremony, and representatives from all areas became ritualists engaged in the ritualised production and submission of produce under the leadership of the emperor as the ritual's chief officiant. On the day of the harvest and the day of the *daijōsai* itself, offerings were made to the Ise shrines and other selected sites of worship, so that, in an indirect way, all the main deities of the land shared in the ritual proceedings of the *daijōsai*. Although it was based on the annual *shinjōsai*, which was performed to ensure the yearly renewal of the spirit of the rice, the *daijōsai* was much more than that; it defined the new powers of the emperors of the *ritsuryō* state in a way that the traditional *shinjōsai* never had.[16]

In the evening of the day of the *daijōsai* (the day of the rabbit in the eleventh month), in the presence of officials of the Ministry of Kami Affairs (*Jingikan*), ladies-in-waiting from the palace (*uneme*), and provincial and district governors of the provinces designated as *yuki* and *suki*, the emperor proceeded to a cluster of ritual buildings constructed for the occasion in the forecourt of the Taikyokuden hall in the palace grounds. Here he retired to a series of temporary shrines, closed to the gaze of all present, to worship the gods in person. The ritual acts of the emperor during the *daijōsai* rites were, and are, kept secret; there are hardly any records, and much around these rites remains unclear. We know that the emperor offers new fruits to the deity, and partakes of these fruits himself; then he lies down on bedding (*ofusuma*) spread over a sacred 'kami seat'. This is interpreted as a reference to the *ofusuma* that one of the Heavenly Deities, Takami-musubi, used to cover the new-born Ninigi before sending him down to earth. The sharing of food with the deity is a rite of granting and receiving the spirit of the rice. During the ritual, a court lady (*uneme*) is in attendance, but her role remains unclear. Some, such as Orikuchi Shinobu and Okada Seishi, have suggested that the ritual may at some stage have included a sacred marriage with the kami, mediated by the court lady; but this view is criticised by others.[17] The dominant opinion now holds that the emperor re-enacts the descent of the new-born child Ninigi, and thus re-embodies Ninigi's 'imperial spirit'.

In contrast to the *daijōsai*, the *sokui no gi* contains no secrets. This ceremony, which was first introduced in Japan during Empress Suiko's reign (592–628) under continental influence, had as its aim to broadcast the succession both nationally and internationally. It included the recitation of 'words of praise of the Heavenly Deities' (*ama-tsu-kami no yogoto*) by the head of the Nakatomi clan, and the ceremonial handing over of the imperial mirror and sword (known as the *senso no gi*) by the head of

the Inbe clan – the two clans who occupied leading hereditary positions in the Ministry of Kami Affairs. Also, an imperial decree (*senmyō*) was read, stating that the succession had been bestowed upon the incumbent by the Heavenly Deities, and ordering the assembled officials to serve him with uprightness, sincerity and purity of mind. The *sokui no gi* was attended also by 'barbarians' not present at the *daijōsai* (Emishi from the north of Honshu and Hayato from southern Kyushu, as well as foreign envoys), and the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* also included legends recounting their submission to the imperial court. Like the *daijōsai*, therefore, the *sokui no gi* enacted the *substance* contained in the national legends, and had the character and status of a kami ritual.

There are many theories but few certainties regarding the question who the main deity worshipped during the *daijōsai* was. Since Ninigi is a spirit of the rice as well as an imperial ancestor,[18] he may have been the original object of worship of the *daijōsai*; if this is so, it would seem logical to assume that the emperor worshipped Amaterasu after having embodied Ninigi's spirit. Another current theory, however, holds that the emperor worshipped not just Amaterasu but the 'eight hundred myriad kami' from all corners of the land.

Moreover, various versions of the myths of the descent of the Heavenly Grandson differ in assigning the role of sending Ninigi to earth to different deities, so there is no consensus even over the question whether Amaterasu played the leading part in this. Ninigi's father was a deity produced by Susanowo by 'crunching' a hair ornament of Amaterasu, and his mother was a daughter of the deity Takami-musuhi. In the *Nihon shoki*, it is Takami-musuhi who takes the decision to send Ninigi to the Land of the Middle, and the *Kojiki* text is ambiguous enough to allow for the interpretation that Amaterasu carried out Takami-musuhi's will in sending Ninigi.

Takami-musuhi is one of the 'separate deities' who were produced simultaneously with the origin of heaven and earth, and also carries the name of Takagi no Kami. *Musuhi* (or *musubi*) is a term for the divine spirits that give birth to all things in heaven and on earth – the origin of all life. Takami-musuhi, or 'the high, august *musuhi*', is the central figure among the *musuhi* deities, and is therefore hardly less suitable than Amaterasu to fulfil the role of imperial ancestor. It is thought that Takami-musuhi was widely revered as the highest deity of all, and that his cult had deep roots in the worship of the forces of life in nature.

However, Ninigi's rule was understood as the fulfilment of Amaterasu's divine decree, and the Jinmu legend, too, draws heavily on beliefs around the sun deity. In *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, therefore, it is clearly Amaterasu

who stands out as the prime ancestor of the imperial lineage. On top of this came Tenmu's personal faith in Amaterasu, as expressed in the development of ritual worship at Ise during his reign. It appears that both Tenmu himself and many of his contemporaries regarded his victory in the so-called Jinshin war of 672 as a gift from the kami of Ise, and as a sign of Amaterasu's special protection. *Nihon shoki* reports that Tenmu worshipped Amaterasu 'from afar' (*yōhai*) in the district of Asake (Ise province), and defeated his enemies soon afterwards; and Japan's earliest poetry collection, the *Man'yōshū*, contains a song of praise about Tenmu's divinely-assisted victory by the poet Kakinomoto Hitomaro, who took part in the Jinshin campaign. For Tenmu at least, the imperial ancestor must, first and foremost, have been Amaterasu, not Takami-musuhi.

Tenmu further embellished the Ise shrines, where the mirror of Amaterasu was worshipped. He established the practices of sending imperial princesses (*saigū*) to Ise, and of periodically (vicennially) rebuilding the shrines and renewing all their divine treasures (*shikinen sengū*). Also, he took measures to ensure that the enormous costs involved would be guaranteed by the court on a permanent basis. Finally, the Ise shrines were given the special status of 'great shrines' (*taisha*) in *ritsuryō* law, making them second only to the imperial palace itself, and superior to all other shrines. The Ise sun deity had been rated highly also before Tenmu's time, but it was during his reign that Ise was for the first time given the official status of ancestral shrine of the royal lineage.

During the seventh century, different religious traditions arrived in Japan from the continent, leading to great changes in the image and conception of the authority of the Japanese royal lineage. Tenmu himself was influenced by Taoist thought, and adopted an imperial ideal close to that of the Taoist immortal. However, even more important perhaps was the fact that, in contrast to his predecessor Tenchi, who stood under a strong Confucian influence and interpreted the 'Heavenly Deities' along the lines of the Confucian concept of Heaven, Tenmu regarded these same deities as his direct, genealogical ancestors (*mioyagami*), connected with him through the blood.

Also enshrined at Ise were the ancestral deities of the Yamato court's priestly clans, as well as other clans that assisted Tenmu's rule. These deities were worshipped as kami who had played a central role during the *kami-asobi* in front of the Cave of Heaven, or who had received direct orders from Amaterasu to serve Ninigi during and after his descent from heaven. Thus Amaterasu was not only the literal 'parent' (*oya*) of the imperial lineage, but also the deity who defined the *raison d'être* of the other clans that dominated the court. All based their positions at court on Amaterasu's divine decree.

## Laws relating to kami worship in the Yōrō code

*Ritsu* (penal) law
Section 'Eight grave offences':
　Offence of grave contempt: damaging a Great Shrine. Punishment: decapitation.

'Guards':
　Punishments for illegal intrusion into Great Shrines and Shrines.

'Personnel':
　Punishments for failure to give notice of a Great Festival.
　Punishments for mourning, visiting the sick, etc. during the abstention period prior to a Great Festival.
　Punishments for mistakes in the performance of rituals.

'Rebellion and Theft':
　No pardon for acts of grave contempt. Damaging a Great Shrine is punishable by exile; planning to do so by forced labour.
　Punishments for negligence during Great Festivals.
　Punishments for neglect of duty in taking care of the Divine Seal.

*Ryō* (administrative) law
'Offices and Ranks':
　Grades 9 to 17 for *Jingikan* officials.

'Personnel':
　Lists of personnel for the *Jingikan* in the capital, and in Sakyō, Settsu, Dazaifu and other provinces.

'Personnel of the Women's Palace':
　Appointments of caretakers of the Divine Seal.

'Kami'
　Tasks of the *Jingikan*.
　Regular festivals: *Kinensai* or *toshigoi* (Praying for the Harvest), *hanashizume* (Pacifying the Flowers), *kanmiso* (Deity Raiment), *Ōmi* (Festival of Ōmi), *Saigusa* (Festival of Izakawa), *Kaze no Kami* (Festival of Tatsuta), *tsukinami* (Thanking for the Harvest), *hoshizume* (Pacifying Fire), *michiae* (Banquet on the Roads), *kanname* (Tasting the First Fruits at Ise), *ainame* (Tasting the First Fruits at the Palace), *mitamashizume* (Pacifying the Spirit of the Emperor).

Rules of abstinence before and after festivals, and for the presentation of offerings at the emperor's accession.

Abstinence is defined as no mourning, no visits to the sick, no eating of meat, no death verdicts or execution of punishments, no music, and no contact with impurity.

Abstinence before Great Festivals is set at one month; before Medium Festivals at three days; before Minor Festivals at only the day of the festival itself.

On the day of the emperor's accession, the Nakatomi are to recite the 'words of praise of the Heavenly Deities', and the Inbe are to present the Divine Seal, as well as the mirror and the sword.

The provincial governor is responsible for the *daijōsai* or *ōname* (Great Tasting) on the occasion of the imperial accession; the *Jingikan* for the *niiname* (New Tasting) at other times.

The *Jingikan* is to give notice of festivals to all other government offices.

The head of the *Jingikan* is personally in charge of offerings.

Offerings for interim festivals.

Procedures for Great Purification ceremonies in the 6th and 12th months.

Contributions of provinces, districts and households on the occasion of provincial Great Purification ceremonies.

Expenditure of taxes from kami households.

'Rice Fields':

Kami fields (fields whose taxes are reserved for kami ritual) are exempt from the six-yearly redistribution of fields.

Allotment of fields to officials in charge of kami ritual.

'Civil Examinations':

The most important task of *Jingikan* officials is to make sure that no mistakes are made in the regulation of rituals.

'Military Defence':

Allotment of labour to local officials in charge of kami ritual.

'Court Ceremonial':

During rituals, the emperor is to be referred to as the Son of Heaven.

Instruction of the local population during harvest festivals in the provinces.

'Costume':

Formal costume is to be worn during Great Festivals, the Great Tasting, and New Year.

'Public Documents':

In imperial edicts, the phrase 'The emperor who rules as a resplendent kami' is to be used.

Guidelines for documents from the Ministry of State to the emperor; documents relating to the Great Tasting.

Before the words 'Great Shrine', a space must be left open to show respect.

Regulations relating to the Divine Seal.

'Prisons':

No executions are to be carried out during Great Festivals.

'Miscellaneous':

The day of the Great Tasting must be declared an annual festival (*sekku*).

## The Ministry of Kami Affairs

Japan's *ritsuryō* system was based on contemporary Chinese law. The Japanese Ministry of Kami Affairs (*Jingikan*), however, was a Japanese innovation which diverged radically from Chinese precedent. Although on paper this ministry enjoyed the same status as the Ministry of State (*dajōkan*), it did not have any policy-making powers, and was in practice a sub-office of the Ministry of State, carrying out its orders. The Ministry of Kami Affairs was responsible for the performance of official kami rituals in accordance with detailed regulations laid down in a special body of 'kami law' (*jingiryō*), and further specified in so-called *shiki* procedures. The general outline of kami law was in place already in Tenmu/Jitō's Kiyomihara code (689), and took on a more permanent form with the issuance of the Taihō code in 701. Responsible for the implementation of these laws and regulations was the Ministry of Kami Affairs, which employed one head, two assistant heads, two secretaries, and two clerks, while controlling the services of thirty kami households, twenty diviners, thirty attendants and two servants.

The activities of this ministry had two main goals: first, to sustain the magico-religious powers of the emperor himself, and thus to ensure the

stability of the state; and second, to demonstrate to the country at large that all ritual prerogatives belonged to the emperor. The former constituted perhaps the most important task of the ministry, and those who breached its ritual rules were severely punished. The ministry informed all court officials of the ritual calendar, and made sure that the rules of purity and abstinence were strictly observed by all concerned. The head of the ministry, the *jingihaku*, was personally in charge of procuring the all-important offerings for all ritual occasions.

With regard to the ministry's second aim, it is noteworthy that during Tenchi's reign (between the beginning of the Taika reforms, 645, when he was the crown prince, and the promulgation of the so-called Ōmi code in *c.*668) the priestly clans Nakatomi and Inbe, who had traditionally been in charge of court ritual, became court officials with public positions and corresponding salaries. The Nakatomi clan-name (which translates as 'intermediaries [between man and the kami]') had been granted first to Tokiwa no Ōmuraji, a retainer of the Yamato court, during the reign of Emperor Kinmei (539–71). The Inbe ('taboo keepers') initially controlled groups of so-called jewel-makers (*tamatsukuri*) in various parts of the country, and at an early stage performed a central role in court ritual together with the Mononobe. Sending Nakatomi and Inbe officials to shrines in the provinces as imperial envoys constituted a first step towards of the establishment of an official, nation-wide system of kami ritual. The practice of periodically assembling the 'hundred officials' (i.e. all court officials) for kami worship had also begun under the Ōmi code, which constituted the first attempt at written law in Japan. It seems that there was even a small-scale 'kami office' (*kamitsukasa*) that can be seen as a predecessor of the later Ministry of Kami Affairs.

The Nakatomi were a relatively recent clan of the *tomo no miyatsuko* category (see above). There is no evidence to suggest that they originally performed a priestly role, nor that they had any strong connection to a particular shrine or deity. It is assumed that the Nakatomi began their career as ritual assistants at the royal court, without an independent power base. However, after the downfall of the Mononobe clan the Nakatomi took over many of their positions, and came to dominate the world of court ritual. This coincided with the beginning of the development of a more centralised Japanese state with direct involvement of the emperor in everyday government. It appears that the Nakatomi, through their dominance over, for example, the Kashima and Katori shrines (both of which had originally been controlled by the Mononobe), increased their influence at the court. They actively organised local groups specialised in the production of offerings to state-sponsored shrines such as Ise, Kashima and

Katori, and in that way succeeded in fashioning a growing ritual establishment under their own control.

The four ranks of officials (constituting a total of seven posts) under the *jingihaku* in the Ministry of Kami Affairs were executive officials, which meant that it was not laid down in law from which clan its incumbents were to be selected; but since these officials were involved with rituals performed by the emperor himself, it was an unwritten rule that they were chosen from a select group of priestly clans. Shortly before the issuance of the Taihō code (701), the Nakatomi clan was divided into two clans by imperial decree. One retained the name of Nakatomi, and its head, Omimaro, was given responsibility for ritual affairs; the other was given the new clan-name Fujiwara, and was to become the dominant political power of classical Japan. In practice, this decree gave the Nakatomi a hereditary position as officials of the Ministry of Kami Affairs. Also, it was laid down that specified ritual tasks were to be carried out by a limited number of clans: the Nakatomi, the Inbe, the Funhitobe of Yamato and Kawachi, and the Urabe. The Funhitobe ('scribes', also read Bunhitobe, Fubitobe, Fumibitobe) were official scholars and scribes of immigrant origin. Various groups of Urabe ('diviners') answered to the Nakatomi and specialised in tortoise shell divination. In further detailed procedures (*shiki*), it was determined that the Sarume clan would offer dancing girls (answering not to the *Jingikan* but the 'Needlework Bureau', *nuidonoryō*, within the Women's Palace, and of a lower status than the Nakatomi and Inbe), and that specified clans would procure specified kinds of ritual attire from specified estates whose taxes were reserved for kami worship (*kanbe*).

With a modern term, all of these clans are known as 'kami clans' (*jingi shizoku*). They were regarded as priestly clans involved in imperial ritual, and with the exception of the Funhitobe and the Urabe, they all traced their ancestors back to deities who had played leading roles in the *kami-asobi* in front of the Cave of Heaven. On this occasion the ancestor of the Nakatomi, Ame no Koyane, recited a ritual prayer (*norito*) imploring Amaterasu to leave the Cave of Heaven; Futodama, the ancestor of the Inbe, set up a *himorogi* tree decorated with cloth, jewels and a mirror; and Ame no Uzume, the ancestor of the Sarume, performed a lewd dance which greatly amused the assembled kami, and through their laughter tickled Amaterasu's curiosity enough to lure her out of the cave. All of these ancestral kami were also included in Ninigi's entourage at the time of his descent from heaven. In this way, the *kami-asobi* in front of the Cave of Heaven served as a myth of origin of the various kami clans, and simultaneously as a sacred precedent and model for the ritual worship of Amaterasu, or indeed the kami in general. The positions of the kami clans were (at least

in theory) unchangeable because of the very fact that the rituals performed by the emperor in person at the imperial palace took the form of a re-enactment of kami myth.

The most important of these imperial rituals were *mitamashizume* and *niiname*, both performed around the winter solstice. In the former, dancing girls (called *sarume* and *mikannagi*) performed rites for the reinvigoration of the emperor's body and spirit; with the emperor's spirit, the spirit of the rice was given new life. During *niiname*, which was performed on the following day, the emperor partook of first fruits from the recent harvest in a shared meal with the deities, and was thus revived as a new-born 'rice king' fully prepared for the new growing season.

The *mikannagi* or 'sacred maidens' were pre-adolescent priestesses who served twenty-three of the thirty-six deities enshrined in the palace. They were granted new-built accommodation, a plot of land for sustenance, and servants, as well as irregular allowances comparable to a second- or third-grade official, and with each new appointment, the kami shrines to be served by each new appointee were rebuilt. The *mikannagi* served an important function as the emperor's sacred spirit mediums (*miko*). They played a key role in a number of kami rites for the sustainment of the emperor's magico-religious powers, performed in addition to the ceremonies prescribed in the *jingiryō* laws. In contrast to the kami clans, who were in the first place responsible for the construction and provision of ritual spaces, the procurement of ritual goods and the recruitment of ritual staff, the *mikannagi* took a direct part in the ritual practice of the emperor. Even so, contemporary law referred to them only to state that they 'are subordinate to the *jingihaku*'. This can be explained by the simple fact that *ritsuryō* law prescribes the conduct of the emperor's magistrates, and not of the emperor himself. In spite of the fact that the *mikannagi* carried out the practical tasks that sustained the emperor's religious authority, their legal status remained rather vague. They were neither court officials nor ladies-in-waiting, and appear sometimes as high-ranking court members, but at other times as low-ranking servants.

A similar problem occurs concerning the legal status of the kami clans who belonged to the Ministry of Kami Affairs as *kanbe* or *tomobe*. The first worked at estates whose taxes, paid in specified products, were reserved for the Ministry of Kami Affairs, and the latter served the Ministry of Kami Affairs as occupational groups, offering specialised skills such as dancing or divination. It remains vague whether, for example, the terms Sarume and Urabe in kami law were official titles (referring to individual members of kami clans who were given positions under the *jingihaku*), or clan names (referring to clan groups under the control of the *jingihaku*, serving the ministry as occupational groups). This problem occurred because a legal

system based on the appointment of individual officials was superimposed on the traditional practice of using clan-based occupational groups. When groups who had in the past performed different aspects of kami ritual on a basis of equality were fitted into a hierarchical bureaucratic system, this automatically led to the emergence of hierarchical relationships between kami clans. This could have drastic consequences for the less powerful among the kami clans. The Sarume, for example, in spite of their expertise, failed to build a position for themselves within the Ministry of Kami Affairs, and disappeared completely from the stage of history in the course of the early Heian period.

The Nakatomi, on the other hand, occupied an ever greater proportion of the leading posts within the Ministry of Kami Affairs, and soon dominated its every corner. One reason for this was the support they enjoyed from the secular Fujiwara; but their priestly function of reciting ritual prayers (*norito*) was also an important factor behind their success. *Norito* were composed for recitation in front of the kami on every ritual occasion.[19] Originally they were recited in a low voice, out of earshot of those who attended the ritual, and they were not written down in order to prevent their exposure to human eyes. However, in state rituals (which included nineteen annual ritual occasions, as well as occasional enthronement ceremonies, Great Purification, and interim offerings, all supervised by the *Jingikan*), *norito* were utilised to broadcast the fact that each ritual was carried out under the ritual authority of the emperor, by the Nakatomi as the emperor's representatives. For this reason, the *norito* came to be addressed not only to the kami but in equal measure to the officials present at the occasion.

While the court rituals performed by the *mikannagi* constituted what can perhaps be described as the secret 'inner sanctum' of the Ministry of Kami Affairs, the state rituals were public affairs where the ministry's officials took centre stage. These rituals followed detailed regulations laid down in kami law, and were performed by officials in the name of the emperor; in contrast to the rituals performed by the *mikannagi*, the emperor himself did not attend in person. In actual fact, most of the state rituals took place at the Ise shrines or shrines in Yamato province, and were performed by local priests; the contribution from the Ministry of Kami Affairs was limited to the procurement of *norito* and special offerings. The recitation of these *norito* proclaimed the fact that the ritual was performed under the auspices of the emperor, and explained the links between the legends and rites of the shrine in question and the myths and legends laid down in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*. Also, the offerings conferred by the ministry's envoys supported the shrines economically, raised the scale and tone of their rituals, and incorporated them in a nation-wide body of ritual.

There were two rituals that were truly national in scale: *kinensai* (also known as *toshigoi*) and *tsukinami*. *Kinensai* seems to have originated as a ritual of offering and praying for the new harvest to the local deity of the Yamato court's earliest territory, while *tsukinami* appears to have its earliest roots in a ritual in worship of the kami of the hearth. In *ritsuryō* times, Item 9 of kami law stated that for the performance of these two rituals, all priests of higher and lower rank (*kannushi* and *hafuribe*) were to assemble at the Ministry of Kami Affairs, where the Nakatomi were to read a *norito*, and the Inbe distributed offerings to their respective shrines. These rituals involved great numbers of people and huge economic costs. The rituals themselves were a continuation of ancient agricultural clan rites, in which local kami were beseeched to guarantee an abundant crop; but their purpose as state rituals was to make apparent the ritual prerogatives of the emperor. In accordance with this general aim, the deities addressed were not specified; instead, the *norito* addressed 'the kami of heaven and earth' in general.

In the *norito* read at the *kinensai*, the assembled priests were ordered to 'emulate the performance of the *kinensai* at the Ministry of Kami Affairs, receive the offerings distributed by the Inbe (as gifts from the emperor himself, mediated by his officials), and offer them to the various kami'. The *kinensai* ceremonies performed at the various shrines took the form not of direct worship by the emperor, but of rituals performed by local officials subordinate to the emperor, under the control of the Ministry of Kami Affairs. This construction is known as the 'system of *kinensai* offerings' (*kinensai heihaku seido*).

In this manner, the *norito* of the Nakatomi and the offerings of the Inbe did not only constitute the specific ritual tasks of these respective clans, but also functioned as parts of a larger mechanism aimed at absorbing local shrines into a nation-wide system of state ritual. The Nakatomi and Inbe were able to secure leading positions within the Ministry of Kami Affairs by successfully integrating their traditional tasks in the new system of state ritual. The Nakatomi, especially, performed the role of the ministry's spokesmen, and dominated its external relations. This soon proved to be an excellent starting position in the race for control over the ministry as a whole.

A ceremony that involved the 'hundred officials' was the purification ritual known as *ōharae* ('Great Purification'), which took place on the last day of the sixth and twelfth months of the year. The *ōharae* consisted of a rite for the purification of the emperor himself, and a rite for the removal of all impurity that had accumulated in the palace area due to the deliberate or accidental offences and misfortunes of the emperor's officials. As part of the first rite, the Nakatomi offered a purificatory wand (*nusa*), and

the Funhitobe handed the emperor a purificatory sword and recited a Chinese purification formula of Taoist origin. The latter rite was performed at a special 'purification site' in the grounds of the Ministry of Kami Affairs, in the presence of all court officials and their families. It consisted of the recitation of the 'formula of great purification' (*ōharae no kotoba*) by the Nakatomi, and the performance by the Urabe of a purification ritual known simply as *harae*.

Incidental purification rituals were performed occasionally in the provinces (*shokoku ōharae*), and on occasions such as a *daijōsai*, purification of the entire country took place (*tenka ōharae*). *Shokoku ōharae* were performed not at local shrines, but at provincial and district offices.

Kami law itemised the quantities and specifications of goods to be offered on the occasion of an *ōharae*, and identified the officials responsible for their procurement. Through local government offices it was ensured that rituals of the same scale and content were performed in all parts of the country. A Nakatomi ritualist was sent to each of the more than sixty provinces to recite the *ōharae no kotoba*. The purification formula of the Nakatomi was linked to the imperial myths even more closely than the other *norito*. The formula refers to Susanowo's offences against Amaterasu which led her to retire into the Cave of Heaven, and to Izanaki's lustration after his descent into the subterranean world of death. Also, it recounts the Heavenly Grandson's descent from heaven, and describes how all impurity is removed through the acts of a series of deities.

As a state ritual, purification or *harae* was performed at government offices. It was a rite that could be carried out anywhere where purity needed to be restored. Through the Ministry of Worship, the Nakatomi became specialists in the performance of this rite, and they would later offer it to a great variety of clients for a great variety of aims. With their appropriation of the purification rite, the Nakatomi had secured an invaluable tool that ensured their survival for centuries to come. In contrast, the Inbe were in charge of the distribution of commodities from the imperial court, and lost their foothold in court society with the discontinuation of the system of nation-wide offerings when the *ritsuryō* economy collapsed.

## Shrines: the kami and the *ritsuryō* state

In order to establish a ritual order worthy of the *ritsuryō* state, the Ministry of Kami Affairs instituted the so-called 'system of *kinensai* offerings' and designated prominent shrines throughout the land as 'official shrines' (*kansha*). These shrines formed the *network* through which the official rituals for emperor and state were put into practice. Seen from the receiving end (the local shrine worshippers), it was as though a nation-wide net

stamped 'public' was cast over their old, customary rites. Soon, the number of official shrines began to increase, and eventually reached a level that rendered the system of *kinensai* offerings unsustainable.

This *network* of nation-wide state offerings was managed on the ground by local executive officials. The question I will address myself to here is how those involved in existing local kami cults (whom we can perhaps define as the 'users' of the age's Shinto) may have perceived the *network* and *substance* directed at them by state institutions at this time.

The establishment of a system of provinces and districts, necessary for the implementation of *ritsuryō* law, undermined the traditional powers of local chiefs (known as *kuni no miyatsuko*) over their old lands. This change represented a shift from local government by groups (clans) to local government by individuals (appointed governors). To make good use of the traditional religious authority of the old *kuni no miyatsuko*, they were appointed by the court as officials of provincial branches of the Ministry of Kami Affairs. In their new function, they are generally known as 'new *kuni no miyatsuko*'.[20] The secular functions of these chiefs were taken over by district governors (*gunji* or *kōri no tsukasa*). *Gunji* appointees were also selected from old *kuni no miyatsuko* lineages, but they had been stripped of their independent power bases, and were no more than local administrators following orders from the provincial governor (*kokushi* or *kuni no tsukasa*). District governors and 'new *kuni no miyatsuko*' were appointed for life from a limited number of clans known as '*kuni no miyatsuko* clans', which were listed in a document from 702 (*Kokuzōki*). While enjoying the stability of appointment for life, their practical powers were limited in various ways, and their status was much lower than that of officials in the capital.

Parallel with the implementation of this system of provinces and districts, we find that the divine treasures sent by the old *kuni no miyatsuko* to Isonokami shrine were returned. This occurred in 674, during Tenmu's reign, and can be interpreted as a sign that by this time the powers of the *kuni no miyatsuko* had dwindled to such an extent that the imperial court no longer regarded them as a threat.

Even so, in the everyday practice of local government, the influence of local chiefs, often grounded in religious authority, must have been considerable. Local chiefs customarily performed ritual functions, and the rituals they led were widely seen as vital for the maintenance of order and prosperity within local society. This fact is clearly expressed in tales recorded in provincial 'gazetteers' (*fudoki*), compiled from 713 onwards to inform the court about local traditions and resources. The few gazetteers that have been preserved tell us about land-owning chiefs who were confronted with the anger of local kami when reclaiming new lands, and describe how these

conflicts were resolved by drawing up ritual contracts, promising the kami worship and offerings in return for permission to till the land. A famous example is the tale of Matachi of the Yahazu clan, recorded in the *fudoki* of Hitachi province (Namekata district). When Matachi reclaimed new rice land to the west of the district office, countless horned snakes appeared and wreaked havoc in the village. Matachi, enraged, confronted them and drove them back. He set up a stick at the boundary of the new fields and promised to respect the area beyond as the domain of the kami. There he built a shrine, and he and his descendants served as its priests. Here, we hear how local landowners doubled as priests of local kami, and thus maintained order and prosperity through their ritual practice.

However, the influence of local elites was not looked upon with pleasure by the *ritsuryō* state. The court took measures to weaken the powers of local officials, while at the same time utilising their authority as local chiefs. Old *kuni no miyatsuko*, for example, were appointed as 'new *kuni no miyatsuko*' serving as officials of the provincial branch of the Ministry of Kami Affairs. Such posts were made hereditary, and involved the duty to present the court with one horse on the occasion of each *ōharae*. However, the 'new *kuni no miyatsuko*' had no executive powers, nor was there any ritual or shrine structure over which they might have presided. In effect, these new titles were little more than honorary posts without any real content. In some cases, appointments were given to women from old *kuni no miyatsuko* clans who had served as ladies-in-waiting. Only once, in 702, were *kuni no miyatsuko* ordered to assemble at the *Jingikan* for the distribution of offerings at *kinensai*, but at later occasions only priests (*kannushi* and *hafuribe*) were ordered to attend. The 'new *kuni no miyatsuko*' were never tied in with the system of official shrines, and soon disappeared as a transitional phenomenon once the *ritsuryō* system came into its own.[21]

The district governors, on the other hand, had an executive role, and their posts were not hereditary. In the practice of local government, however, the court depended completely on their authority and military power, and had little choice but to leave the running of the districts completely to them. Local kami rituals formed an important element of their assignment. Not only were they closely connected with their most important task – the encouragement of agriculture – but there was also a close relationship between the procurement of offerings for kami ritual on the one hand, and taxation on the other. It was for this reason that the management of rice fields for the ritual growing of crops for the *daijōsai* and the procurement of offerings for *ōharae* were part of the duties of the district governors. Moreover, immediately after the issuance of the Taihō code those governorships which included within their district a prominent shrine supported by the court were rendered hereditary by imperial decree.

The reason given for this change was that these districts were so-called 'kami districts' (*shingun*), or districts that included a major shrine; but in actual fact, it had proved impossible to run large-scale shrines if the governor in charge of the district did not have real executive powers. These facts show that the main aims of the system of official shrines in the early days of the *ritsuryō* state were to make good use of the religious authority of local chiefs, and to integrate them and the rituals they presided over in the new centralised government.

What sort of rituals, then, were performed in the villages of Japan under the *ritsuryō* system during the eighth century? We have very few sources on village ritual during this period, but some information can be gleaned from the seventh volume of the Yōrō code (drafted in 718 and enacted in 757). An item on 'spring rituals at common rice fields' (*shunji saiden*) in this code (as well as in a commentary on it, *Ryōshūge*),[22] mentions a village ritual corresponding roughly to the *kinensai* at court. It describes this ritual as a 'ceremony of imbibing sake', and states that it was performed 'in order to honour the village leaders and take good care of the old'. Preceding this ceremony, the villagers were assembled to listen to the proclamation of the nation's laws. Reading between the lines, we can glean from this item how local kami rites were used by the court to impress its legal authority on villagers. Also, it provides an example of the reinterpretation of such rites to make them fit in with the Confucian values on which the *ritsuryō* system was based. However, nothing of all this had any influence on the rituals proper, and there is no suggestion of any direct interference by the court in local kami rites, nor any hint of a court attempt to take control of local shrines.

Supporting village kami ritual were 'common rice fields' (fields owned and cultivated by the village as a community), and a place of assembly known as the *yashiro* – which at this time was not a permanent shrine containing a kami, but rather a common meeting place used for a variety of purposes. At the 'spring and autumn rituals at the common rice fields' the villagers invited the local kami and offered them a feast. Offerings to the kami were then shared out between the villagers and consumed together in a rite known as *naorai*. Expenses were shared between villagers, and priests (mostly one male and one female) were chosen for the occasion according to village custom. Young and old, men and women all had their tasks; it appears that the men were mostly responsible for the gathering of foodstuffs and the catching of prey to be offered, and for the preparation of the ritual site, while the women were in charge of the cooking of the offerings (*mike*) and the brewing of sake (*miki*).[23]

However, after the enactment of the Yōrō code in 757 the costs of the spring and autumn rituals became public expenses, and the village head

was made accountable for them. The resources used for these rituals were now defined as tax. As the external sponsor of village ritual, the court attached various conditions to their performance; for example, the use of meat was prohibited, and injunctions were made against excessive merry-making. Overseeing the use of tax resources for village ritual was made part of the task of the lowest officials of the *ritsuryō* hierarchy, and checks were introduced to prevent the 'squandering of public funds'.

The aim of this policy was to utilise the central meeting places of village communities as a channel for the education of villagers as 'law-abiding citizens'. The court saw village rituals primarily as an opportunity to spread its Confucian state ideology, and the encouragement of kami worship or its standardisation were of secondary importance at best. This explains why the actual content of local kami ritual was never an issue. The same was true of the so-called 'official shrines' which received court offerings on the occasion of *kinensai*. The presentation of court offerings to local kami was no more than a supplementary rite, added onto an unchanged local ritual under the responsibility of local priests. It is also dubious whether the national myths were transmitted effectively at these occasions.

What was different at official shrines, however, was the fact that there, individual priests from local priestly lineages were appointed as 'priest officials' (*shinshoku* or *hafuribe*) and made responsible for the supervision of the offerings provided by the Ministry of Kami Affairs. These priest officials continued performing ritual functions as members of their priestly group, but were treated differently from their fellows: they were removed from the register of peasants, and transferred to a special list of priest officials (*hafuribe myōchō*) resorting under the Ministry of Kami Affairs. Moreover, over time it became more and more common for the court to make 'interim offerings' in response to crises such as droughts, which led to an increase in the number of occasions at which the court or the provincial governor made offerings to official shrines. This, in turn, led to the building of permanent structures for the storing of official offerings, which in general were overseen by the local priest officials.

If a shrine gave evidence of possessing special kami powers, its deity was rewarded with 'kami households' (*kanbe*) and 'kami lands' (*shinpō*) whose tax revenues were allocated to the shrine in question, as well as with 'kami ranks' (*shin'i* or *shinkai*) corresponding to bureaucratic, military, or imperial ranks. Priests who performed rituals for the protection of the state were also given court ranks and were allowed to dress as court officials, for example by carrying a *shaku* or ceremonial baton. This marked the appearance of managerial figures with special privileges within groups that had tradition-ally worshipped the same kami. From the very beginning, female priests were barred from *ritsuryō* officialdom, and even though they served in direct

contact with the kami and held positions equal or superior to male priests within the world of ritual, they were excluded from managerial roles – this in contrast to earlier practice, when kin groups included both paternal and maternal lines, and women played an active role in the management of clan affairs.

Summing up, we have seen that as official worship was superimposed on the kami rites of local communities, managerial figures with official authority emerged from among local ritual groups. Referring to our definition of religious systems, we might define these people as the 'purveyors' of Shinto during this period. At the same time, *yashiro* acquired lands and real estate, thus providing a *network* that allowed the kami system to develop further. Taken together, these two factors contributed to the emergence of shrines as we know them today.

During the late eighth century, the influence of the provincial and district authorities on village shrines through supervision and economical support intensified even further. Provincial and district officials would check expenses for communal meals, and district governors increasingly attended rituals. This also led to a gradual increase in the number of official shrines and, soon, there was hardly a locality in the land that did not have such a shrine within its boundaries. One factor behind this increase was a diversification of local elites. The reclamation of new lands had given rise to new elites, who competed with the old in various ways. In these struggles, the ancient 'traditions' around clan genealogies and ritual prerogatives surfaced once more as political tools. Already from the Wadō period (708–15) onwards the court had adopted a new policy for appointing district governors, and while individual ability had weighed heavily before Wadō, after this time appointments tended to go to those who held hereditary positions of power. As a result, many local elites tried to have their kin group recognised as a branch of a central clan. This often involved the claim that their kin group worshipped the same clan deity, and was accompanied by a request for court recognition of their shrine as an official shrine. By calling the court's attention to the sacred origins of their shrine, the miracles performed by its kami, and its potential for causing trouble when ignored, local groups appealed to the court for kami ranks, kami lands, and the accompanying rise in status.

To be recognised as an official shrine, a shrine had to be recommended to the Ministry of State by the provincial governor. The Ministry of State then informed the Ministry of Kami Affairs of its decision. The provincial governor had the duty to 'revere' the kami in his province and to repair and maintain their shrines and, in effect, the granting of official recognition to shrines was left to his judgement. The rise in the number of official shrines was not the result of a preconceived plan on the part of the court

to impose hierarchical order on the shrines in the land; apart from Ise, which had a special status, all official shrines were treated as equal. There were no clear conditions for the official recognition of shrines, and their increase was triggered primarily by political developments in the provinces, and natural events and accidents. The 'Procedures of the Engi Period' (*Engishiki*, completed 927, implemented 967) includes a 'List of Kami' (*Jinmyōchō*) showing that by the tenth century, no less than 2,861 shrines containing a total of 3,132 deities had attained official status.[24]

As the number of official shrines multiplied, the system of *kinensai* offerings became an empty shell. The only legal requirement made of official shrines was for its priests to attend the annual *kinensai* ceremony at the Ministry of Kami Affairs and receive court offerings there. However, sending a delegation to the capital for this purpose every year proved a heavy burden. There was no punishment for those who failed to collect the *kinensai* offerings and, soon, attendance plummeted. As shrine buildings decayed and official rites were abandoned, the question of responsibility arose. However, contemporary law proved of little help in resolving the question whether the local head priest, the district governor, the provincial governor or the Ministry of Kami Affairs itself was responsible for this state of affairs.

From the point of view of the Ministry of Kami Affairs the increase of official shrines was in accordance with the aim of developing a nation-wide system of kami worship; but on the other hand, the distribution of *kinensai* offerings to such large numbers of shrines proved problematic. The Ministry's incapacity to deal with the increased numbers of official shrines may well have been one reason why non-attendance was not followed up.

In 798, an attempt was made to break the gridlock by distinguishing between 'national official shrines' (*kanpeisha*) and 'provincial official shrines' (*kokuheisha*). Worship of the first, which were all located in the Home Provinces, was carried out by the Ministry of Kami Affairs, while the latter became the full responsibility of the provincial governors. This solution, inspired though it was by practical concerns, signified the end of the court's policy to absorb the ritual power generated by kami cults throughout the country. After this date, the supervision of the Ministry of Kami Affairs over the 'national official shrines' intensified, but at the same time more and more shrines were redefined as 'provincial official shrines', and thus disappeared beyond the ministry's horizon.

Simultaneously the practice of making 'interim offerings' (i.e. irregular, occasional offerings) and awarding kami ranks to deities who had displayed extraordinary kami powers (called *myōjin*, 'kami of name') increased. This led to the emergence of a new system of shrine ranks which took the place of the system of official shrines in the course of the ninth century. However,

this system of *myōjin* shrines was no more premeditated than its predecessor had been. The *myōjin* worshipped by the Ministry of Kami Affairs were spread throughout the country, and were often defined as 'national official shrines'; but *myōjin* rituals (*myōjinsai*) were mostly carried out in response to specific events such as droughts or epidemics, and were 'interim', irregular affairs. In contrast to the *kinensai* system of making regular offerings through local priests, here the Ministry of Worship made specific offerings, with a specific request, to a chosen deity. While the former is known as *hanpei*, 'distributing offerings (through local priests, for regular worship)', the latter is termed *hōhei*, 'making offerings (directly to kami, with a specific request)'. The ritual contents of *myōjinsai* varied widely, and were clearly different from earlier official practice. *Myōjinsai* included Buddhist practices such as the reading of sutras in front of the kami, and the ordination of monks and nuns as an offering to the kami. The conferment of kami ranks was left to the judgement of the provincial governor, and these ranks soon came to be used as a tool to demonstrate the governor's authority. The frequent use of this tool led to a rapid inflation of kami ranks, and they had lost most of their value by the mid-tenth century.

## The *ritsuryō* system and the emergence of clan deities

The Japanese *ritsuryō* system differed from its Chinese original in that it was grafted onto a pre-existing clan system. Clan order was expressed through the Japanese invention of a Ministry of Kami Affairs. It took the form of a body of myths and legends stating that clan hierarchies originated in the Age of the Gods, and protected the privileges of elite groups in the Home Provinces in various ways.

The clans of Japan were relatively loose kin groups, whose members could be related through both paternal and maternal lines. However, Chinese *ritsuryō* law was based on the premise of strictly patrilinear clans. It is in the course of early efforts to apply Chinese law to Japanese society that we see the appearance of ancestral clan deities (*ujigami*) worshipped exclusively by patrilinear clan groups.

When a Chinese-style bureaucracy was introduced in Japan, the court tried to impose coherence on Japan as a nation by bringing the major local kami together in a national pantheon. In its national history, the *Nihon shoki*, the various kami were given a place in a mythical framework that presented the history of imperial rule as a continuation of sacred events from the Age of the Gods.

Moreover, the development of foreign diplomacy focused the court's attention on the kami that were believed to control the shipping routes – foremost among them the kami of Munakata and Sumiyoshi. Ever greater

efforts were invested in the worship of these deities as protectors of Japan. When envoys were sent to the continent, offerings were made through the Ministry of Kami Affairs not only to deities who controlled the seas, such as Munakata and Sumiyoshi, but also to Ise and the main shrines in the Home Provinces. In this way, the deities of official shrines were transformed from tutelary deities closely connected to clearly defined areas, to protector deities of the whole of Japan. While this may, at first sight, seem to be a promotion of these deities, it also weakened their original functionality within territorial clan ritual.

Changes in the life style of court bureaucrats also influenced the style of kami worship. The city of Heijōkyō (Nara), founded in 710, was modelled on the Tang capital Changan, and was built for the single purpose of housing the court and its bureaucracy. Life in Heijōkyō and the transformation of the clan relations in the capital deeply influenced the kami beliefs held by its inhabitants.

The men who held leading positions within the various clans were required to settle in Heijōkyō for the execution of their public duties. This removed them from their relatives and fellow clansmen, so that they were involved in the affairs of local kami worship only indirectly, from a long distance. At an early stage, the clan head (uji no kami) and his wife or sister (toji) were the main performers of clan ritual; but after the males were moved to the capital, clan matters in the provinces (including clan ritual) increasingly became the domain of the toji alone. Also, kami rituals in the capital soon came to be conducted in man-made rather than natural surroundings. While before, kami had been perceived in terms of natural phenomena such as mountains, rivers, forests and animals, they now gradually lost their 'wild' feel. Clan rituals besought the kami connected with the land for good growing conditions and a good crop, but under ritsuryō law, the land had become public property and, legally, the clansmen were no more than tenants of their own land. Moreover, if a clan leader in the capital fell into disgrace this often led to the displacement of his entire clan. As a result, many ancient shrines fell into disrepair due to the dispersal of their worshippers.

The court bureaucracy regarded official business as public, but clan rituals as private affairs. To attend, clan members had to apply to the court for leave from their public duties. Those who had moved to Heijōkyō, mostly because of official appointments, were separated from their communities and inevitably lost their sense of unity with their clan and its kami. Having to cope as isolated individuals must have caused many some kind of identity crisis. Heijōkyō was, from the start, designed as a Buddhist capital, and had no major shrines. It has been pointed out that the same social changes that affected kami worship in this period may well have

enhanced the appeal of Buddhism, whose teachings open for individual liberation from individual suffering. An individualisation of ritual practice can also be seen in purification rites at this time. Whereas before, purification had been a communal affair, now the rivers and streams of the capital were taken into use as sites of individual purification rites, in which impurity was seen as a personal source of misfortune.

For those who had been called to the capital and given new posts, often quite unrelated to their clan traditions, their traditional ties both with their own and the imperial clan were already becoming little more than the stuff of legend, with little bearing on their present lives. At court, the appeal of Chinese bureaucratic ideals intensified with the rise to influence of people with first-hand experience of the continent, and it was perhaps only a matter of time before the traditional clans, with their attachment to old values, were overtaken and left behind. These circumstances resulted in a strong desire on the part of the old clans to revive once more their ancient legend-based ties with the imperial lineage and, in this way, to carve out a permanent place for themselves within the bureaucratic structure. It was this desire that stood at the cradle of the cults of clan deities.

The emergence of these cults reveals much about the religious system of the age. Not only was a sense of local belonging among clan members weakening rapidly; changes in the conception of blood ties also weakened clan solidarity and diminished the significance of clan ritual. Under *ritsuryō* law, clans were defined as patrilinear groups from which candidates for court appointments could be selected. Court officials were selected from a limited number of clans, defined as strictly patrilinear kin groups, and appointments were based on the internal hierarchy within these clans; the court compiled its own clan genealogies for this purpose. A clearly defined group consisting of the paternal lineage was singled out from what was formerly a broader, more flexible kin group, which had included both paternal and maternal relations. This was of great importance for patterns of inheritance, and led to a strong emphasis on the paternal line of descent from father to son. This, in turn, encouraged maternal lines to establish their own branch lineages.

However, the resulting fragmentation of clans only led to even more heated competition for bureaucratic positions. In a situation where the old clans felt that their position within the bureaucratic system was under threat, the reconstruction of clan structures became an urgent problem. It was as the ritual focus of such a reconstruction that clan members acquired 'clan deities' (*ujigami*) – deities worshipped exclusively by the patrilinear kin group. Clan deities were not an ancient phenomenon; they were deliberate creations inspired by the problems of clans during this

time of change. The term appears in the sources for the first time in the late eighth century, and seems to have come into general use in the ninth. The clan that first established this pattern was the powerful Fujiwara clan, who worshipped its clan deities at the Kasuga shrine.

The Fujiwara, who established themselves as a new aristocratic lineage during the early days of the *ritsuryō* system, did not have an ancient tradition of worshipping a particular deity, nor did they dispose of a particular clan area. Shortly after the capital had been moved to Heijōkyō, the Fujiwara and their close relations gathered at the kami hill of Kannabiyama (later known as Mikasayama), a short distance to the east of the city, to establish a sacred site where they invited the deity Takemikazuchi to descend. This deity, whose name means 'thunderbolt', was originally worshipped at Kashima in the Kanto plain; now, the Fujiwara prayed to him for the protection of the court and the prosperity of their lineage. Together with this deity the Fujiwara also invited Futsunushi, the deity of the Katori shrine (also in the Kanto); somewhat later, they added the ancestor deities of the Nakatomi clan, Ame no Koyane and his wife Himegami, from Hiraoka in Kawachi (near modern Osaka). The Kasuga shrine was finally completed in 768, when an imperial decree ordered the construction of shrine buildings for these four deities.

By the ninth century the Kasuga shrine functioned as the tutelary shrine of the Fujiwara clan, and among the shrine's four deities Ame no Koyane had come to occupy a central position. When the capital was moved, the Fujiwara invited spirits (*bunrei*) from the Kasuga shrine to the new site and worshipped them there, while they retained the Kasuga shrine itself as their 'original shrine' (*honsha*).[25] The Kasuga deities had originally been invited from other sites, and were primarily genealogical ancestor deities; they were not tied up with a specific locality but rather remained closely connected with the Fujiwara clan, wherever they were.

In the ninth century, other clans also created their own clan deities by superimposing a patrilinear ancestor on the local territorial kami worshipped by the clan in its region of origin. These clan deities were worshipped as ancestral deities who protected their descendents. In a number of instances, legends recounting how a thunder deity married a human ancestress were drawn up as a starting point for clans' genealogies. Sometimes, ancestral rituals were carried out in the vicinity of burial mounds of clan forebears, or objects found at such burial mounds were enshrined in clan shrines. Strikingly, many shrines that originated in the eighth and ninth centuries, such as the Kamo, Hirano, Hachiman and Hie shrines, house a 'family' of kami, including a wife (*himegami*) and children (*mikogami*).

This kind of ancestor worship was to become one of the fundamental elements of Shinto. The late eighth century saw an incident that

stimulated this type of kami worship even more: Empress Shōtoku's attempt to cede the throne to the Buddhist monk Dōkyō in 768.

Shōtoku (r. 764–70) was a nun when she ascended the throne, and she relied heavily on Dōkyō in her efforts to establish Buddhist rule. She was accompanied by monks during her *daijōsai* ritual, and revered Dōkyō as a 'Dharma king' (*hōō*). However, when she attempted to cede the throne to him she met with determined resistance from the aristocracy and, in the end, Dōkyō was exiled. The reason why aristocrats were so violently opposed to Dōkyō's accession was not that they resisted his Buddhist policies – they had accepted these for a number of years without any protests. Rather, they clung to the hereditary nature of imperial rule; quite naturally so, since they based their own legitimacy on the same hereditary principle. If the empress were to renounce the right of her lineage to the throne, this would also undermine their own claims to power, and this had to be prevented at any price.

This incident served as a powerful reminder for the aristocrats that their political authority was grounded not in their military power, but in their mythical links with the imperial lineage. Also, it became clear to them that Buddhism carried within it the possibility of invalidating the hereditary principle on which their authority was built. Learning from this experience, a strict separation between kami and Buddhist rites was prescribed for all imperial ceremonies. A central figure in this was the *jingihaku* Ōnakatomi no Kiyomaro (702–88), a son of the above-mentioned Omimaro (Kiyomaro received the privilege to add Ō-, 'great', to the Nakatomi clan-name in 769).[26]

First of all, a taboo on Buddhism was included in the rules of abstention that applied to court ritual.[27] Also, an even stricter taboo on things Buddhist was instituted at the Bureau of the Consecrated Imperial Princess (*saigūryō*) at Ise, the compound where an imperial princess lived a ritually pure existence in order to lead the Ise priests in the *tsukinami* and the *kanname* rituals at the Ise shrines. Here, Buddhist clerics, rites, and even terms were tabooed on a daily basis. Further, shrine temples built by local priests as well as Buddhist structures and temple lands within kami districts were laid down and disowned, allegedly because they gave rise to 'curses' from the kami. The lands concerned were ritually purified and returned to kami use. In conjunction with these measures, the Ministry of Kami Affairs strengthened its supervision over the Ise shrines by establishing a centrally-controlled priestly organisation which prevented local priests from making arbitrary changes to Ise ritual. The new position of 'master of rituals' (*saishu*) was created, and Kiyomaro himself became its first incumbent. The post of shrine governor of the Ise shrines (*daijingūji* or *gūji*) as well as executive positions in Ise province were monopolised by the

Ōnakatomi clan. These measures placed new emphasis on the emperor's status as Amaterasu's descendant, and confirmed that, in the ritual practice of the emperor, primary importance had to be given to worship of the imperial ancestral deities, and secondary importance only to Buddhism.

The main aim of the separation of kami and Buddhist rites was to re-emphasise the ties between the imperial lineage and the aristocratic clans; but an important by-product was a new awareness of the existence of a ritual system separate from Buddhism: Shinto. The tabooing of Buddhism by the emperor as part of the most prominent state rituals established the notion that the kami were fundamentally hostile to Buddhism, and that Buddhism was alien to Japan's original way of worship. Also, it caused the emperor to be wrapped in an ever tighter web of taboos, in order to preserve his primeval purity as a sacred person. Efforts to evoke the ties that were thought to have bound together the imperial lineage and the clans since the Age of the Gods can also be found in poems from Japan's first poetry collection, the *Man'yōshū* – e.g.:

> *Shikishima no / Yamato no kuni ni / akirakeki / na ni ou tomo no o /*
> *kokoro tsutomeyo*
>> Beware, you leaders of our clan
>> which bears a most illustrious name
>> in this wide land of Yamato![28]
>
> <div align="right">(Ōtomo no Yakamochi)</div>

It is not impossible that the very compilation of this poetry collection was informed by the wish to give expression to these ties. However, this sacralisation of the emperor also elevated his position to a level that, conversely, undermined the position of the aristocratic clans as his attendants.

The convergence of the position of the emperor with the Ise shrines was given a new impulse by Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806). This emperor not only strove to emulate Chinese emperorship, but also held Ise in deep reverence, and ordered the compilation of 'ritual procedures' of both the Inner and the Outer Shrine of Ise (*Kōtaijingū gishikichō* and *Toyuke-jingū gishikichō*, both completed in 804). These works fixed the scale of the Ise shrine complex and its ritual forms in writing. Also, they reveal that Kanmu regarded Ise not so much as the seat of Amaterasu as the highest goddess on the Plain of High Heaven, but rather as an ancestral mausoleum (Ch. *zongmiao*, J. *sōbyō*) in worship of Amaterasu as the imperial ancestress, comparable to the mausolea of Chinese noble lineages.

Worship at Ise had long been an imperial prerogative, but now it was unambiguously prohibited in law for all but the emperor to present offerings there. This law must have been inspired by Chinese practices of

ancestor worship. It represented a break with the past, when the allies of the imperial lineage had assisted the emperor in his worship of the imperial ancestress and thus given expression to the myth that they shared in Amaterasu's divine decree. Now, Ise became a distant place beyond the reach even of the emperor's closest retainers.

These changes under Kanmu's reign laid the foundation for the perception of major shrines as ancestral mausolea. In such mausolea, not only the founding ancestor but also successive generations became objects of ritual worship. Soon, not only Ise but also other shrines came to be designated as imperial mausolea; the Hachiman shrine, whose deity had become identified as Emperor Ōjin, was one such shrine. Thus the concept of ancestral mausolea also had the effect of relativising the position of the Ise shrines.[29]

The imperial succession was passed down in a straight line from father to son, without any room for interference from court aristocrats. The sacredness of the emperor was no longer explained mythically, by referring to the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, but was maintained through the rituals performed and taboos observed by the emperor himself. This explains the fact that, for example, important changes were made to the *daijōsai* on the occasion of the succession of Emperor Heizei (r. 806–9), such as the addition of a *misogi* purification, and the distribution of special offerings to Ise and other shrines. These changes rendered the ceremonial more religious and mysterious, and thus enhanced the sacredness of the emperor. At the same time, the new forms of ritual introduced by Kanmu undermined the claims to prominence of clan elites, because they *did* derive their *raison d'être* from *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* myths. Indeed, during this period, ancient clans disappeared from the stage of history one after another. Seen in this light, the clan genealogies and traditions that were recorded in the ninth century (*Kogoshūi* by Inbe no Hiromichi, 807; *Shinsen shōjiroku*, 815, and *Sendai kuji hongi*, late ninth century)[30] were mere mementoes of ancient traditions about to disappear. In a similar way, the regulations for the ritual worship of the Ministry of Kami Affairs laid down in the *Engishiki*, and the attached long list of shrines and deities, were rapidly becoming little more than a past ideal.

In the second half of the ninth century, the Fujiwara gained dominance over political life at court as imperial regents (*sesshō, kanpaku*) and as maternal relatives of the emperor. Increasingly, such private family relations with the emperor became a decisive factor in court politics. This also left its mark on public ritual, which became more and more focused on the protection of the residence of the emperor and his relatives, now in the capital Heiankyō (Kyoto, founded in 794).

Even if clan deity cults did help to preserve clan identity, they proved less effective in the clans' struggle for influence in court society. Political

## *Misogi* and *harae*

After Izanaki had visited his deceased wife Izanami in the 'Land of Darkness', he returned to the 'Land of the Middle' where he washed off the impurity (*kegare*) from that land of death at 'a small river mouth' in Himuka in Kyushu. The removing of pollution with the help of water is called *misogi*. The *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* tell us that during his *misogi*, Izanaki first produced 'deities of evil' (*maga-tsu-hi no kami*), and next 'deities to rectify evil' (*naobi no kami*); as the final stage of his purification, the 'three most august children' of Izanaki (Amaterasu, Tsukiyomi and Susanowo) were born when he washed his right eye, his left eye, and his nose.[31] This legend explains why most shrine precincts include a clear stream. During the ancient period *misogi* was performed before rituals, and kami were invited to descend to a ritual site only after all present had rinsed their bodies of all pollution. The Great Kings of Yamato, too, performed *misogi* as part of their enthronement ceremonies. The modern practice of washing one's hands and rinsing one's mouth before entering shrine grounds can be said to be a remnant of this ancient rite of performing *misogi* before rituals. The custom of setting up a basin with running water especially for this purpose at shrine entrances (*temizuya*, *chōzuya*) is relatively recent, however; the first such basin was put up at the Tōshōgū shrine in Nikkō, founded in 1636.

A second type of purification rite is *harae*. *Harae* originated as a punishment imposed on individuals who had broken community rules. Its mythical precedent was the punishment of Amaterasu's unruly brother Susanowo, whose misconduct had caused Amaterasu to retire to the Cave of Heaven. The *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki* describe how the assembled kami imposed a fine on Susanowo, pulled out the nails of his hands and feet, and banished him. The payment of damages in the form of 'purification goods' (*harae-tsu-mono*, *haraebashira*) was an essential element of *harae*. The *Nihon shoki* mentions, in the chapter on Emperor Kōtoku's reign, that when people died on the way home from corvée labour, locals 'detained the companions of the deceased and compelled them to do purgation' (i.e. pay purification goods). The same applied when people cooked their rice by the roadside, broke borrowed pots, or

allowed their mares to give birth in people's houses.[32] Rather than a 'purgation', *harae* in this context represents a fine for bothering local inhabitants. As purification goods, valuables such as swords and cattle were used.

*Misogi* and *harae* were originally quite unrelated concepts. Yet, the deities produced by Izanaki's *misogi* were called 'the great deities of the *harae* site' (*haraedo no ōkami*). One possible explanation for this is that after the codification of secular law under the *ritsuryō* system, *harae* was increasingly understood as a religious purification rite, and as such blended with *misogi*. *Harae* became a method to deal with offences of a religious rather than a secular nature. Purification goods, too, changed character. The term came to refer to human figurines, or, even simpler, stripped twigs (*haraegushi*), onto which one's impurity and sins were transferred, and which were then thrown into a stream or burnt.

Both *misogi* and *harae* were originally performed *after* the occurrence of disasters and accidents. However, under *ritsuryō* kami law *ōharae* was performed twice annually for the prevention of disasters, *before* their occurrence. *Ōharae* was based on the idea that even though nothing disastrous had happened as yet, various offences must have been committed over time; therefore it was necessary to cleanse the environment regularly to prevent the accumulation of such offences to dangerous levels. It is not clear at what point in history *harae* became part of all kami rituals as an essential preparatory rite. We can, however, note that this practice is based on the same idea as the performance of *ōharae* at the court.

influence depended not on myths and traditions, but on one's concrete relationship with the emperor of the day. The same applied for the careers of clan deities; the kami of Kasuga, for example, attained fame beyond the Fujiwara clan because they were connected to the emperor as his 'maternal ancestor deities'. For the same reason, the Kasuga rituals became official rituals sponsored by the court.[33]

As the *ritsuryō* system stagnated, Japan's political system became completely dominated by the court aristocracy – notably the Fujiwara. However, even though *ritsuryō* law had in most respects become a dead letter, the ritual procedures it prescribed retained their authority, and the

Ministry of Kami Affairs survived, albeit much transformed. Now, its main task was no longer to supervise the old state rituals, but rather to assist in the running of court rituals paid for through the Ministry of State. In the new political constellation of this age, the ministry's old task of unifying public ritual practice under the aegis of the central government was no longer meaningful, and the ministry was absorbed into the increasingly private ritual establishment of the imperial house and the aristocracy.

# Notes

1  See, for example, Matsumae Takeshi, 'Early kami worship', in Delmer M. Brown, ed., *The Cambridge history of Japan* I (Cambridge University Press 1993).

2  See Ōba Iwao, *Shintō kōkogaku kōza* (6 vols, Yūzankaku 1972–81), and Kageyama Haruki, *Shintaizan* (Gakuseisha 1971).

3  Ryusaku Tsunoda and Wm. Theodore de Bary, eds, *Sources of Japanese Tradition* I (Columbia University Press 1958), p. 6.

4  On the early history of Ise, see Tanaka Takashi, *Jingū no sōshi to hatten* (Kokusho Kankōkai 1985) and Okada Seishi, *Kodai ōken no saishi to shinwa* (Hanawa Shobō 1970).

5  W.G. Aston, *Nihongi* (Tuttle 1972), I p. 151.

6  Ibid., I p. 176.

7  Yoshie Akiko (*Nihon kodai no saishi to josei*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1996) argues that the increasing emphasis on the religious powers of females limited their role in society, and resulted in their exclusion from political life. See also Kuratsuka Akiko, *Fujo no bunka* (Heibonsha 1994).

8  See Wada Atsumu, *Nihon kodai no girei to saishi, shinkō* (3 vols, Hanawa Shobō 1995).

9  On *kabane*, see Saeki Arikiyo, *Shinsen shōjiroku no kenkyū* (4 vols, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1971–82) and Yamao Yukihisa, *Kabane no seiritsu to tennō* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1998).

10  On the Yamato-takeru legend and its *Nachleben*, see Isomae Jun'ichi, 'Myth in metamorphosis: Ancient and medieval versions of the Yamatotakeru legend', *MN* 54–3, Autumn 1999.

11  W.G. Aston, *Nihongi*, II pp. 66–7.

12  Cf. W.G. Aston, *Nihongi*, II pp. 106 and 195.

13  See e.g. Kuroda Toshio, 'Shinto in the history of Japanese religion', *JJS* 7–1, Winter 1981.

14  On these and related matters, see Joan Piggott, *The emergence of Japanese kingship* (Stanford University Press 1997).

15  *Nihongi*, I p. 77.

16  See Okada Seishi, *Kodai ōken no saishi to shinwa* (Hanawa Shobō 1970). In English, see Robert S. Ellwood, *The feast of kingship: Accession ceremonies in ancient Japan* (Sophia University Tokyo 1973).

17  On the *ofusuma*, see Aston, *Nihongi*, I p. 70. For criticism of Orikuchi and Okada, see Okada Shōji, *Ōnie no matsuri* (Gakuseisha 1990).

18 The association of Ninigi with rice lies in his very name; Chamberlain trans-
lates his full name in the *Kojiki* (Ame-nigishi Kuni-nigishi Ama-tsu-Hidaka
Hikoho no Ninigi) as 'Heaven-Plenty Earth-Plenty Heaven's Sun-Height
Prince Rice-ear Ruddy Plenty' (*The Kojiki*, p. 129).

19 On *norito*, see Donald L. Philippi, *Norito: A translation of the ancient Japanese
ritual prayers* (Princeton University Press 1990).

20 See Niino Naoyoshi, *Kuni no miyatsuko to agatanushi* (Shibundō 1965).

21 However, the *kuni no miyatsuko* of Izumo and Kii formed an exception. These
held appointments both as 'new *kuni no miyatsuko*' and as district governors
of the kami districts, and thus succeeded in retaining a position of power in
their old clan lands. Both were obliged to pledge their loyalty to the court
in a special ceremony after their appointment. Strikingly, the kami they
revered as their ancestors were the foremost among the 'Earthly Kami' who
opposed the 'Heavenly Kami' (the ancestors of the imperial and many court
clans) in the myths of *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*.

22 Item 19 in Book 7 (Court Ceremonial), and fascicle 28 in *Ryōshūge*.

23 See Yoshie Akiko, *Nihon kodai no saishi to josei* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1996).

24 On the *Engishiki*, see Felicia G. Bock, *Engi-Shiki: Procedures of the Engi Era*
(2 vols, Sophia University Tokyo 1970–2).

25 Kasuga spirits were invited to the new capital of Nagaokakyō in 784, and to
Heiankyō (Kyoto) in 850–1. In Heiankyō, they were enshrined in the ōharano
shrine, where they were worshipped in the same manner as at Kasuga. On
Kasuga, see Allan Grapard, *The protocol of the gods: A study of the Kasuga cult
in Japanese history* (University of California Press 1992).

26 On the relation between this separation between kami and Buddhist rites and
the Dōkyō incident, see Takatori Masao, *Shintō no seiritsu* (Heibonsha 1979).
The fact that this separation was limited to the emperor is pointed out by Satō
Mahito, 'Daijōsai ni okeru shinbutsu kakuri', *Kokugakuin zasshi* 91–7.

27 See Okada Shigekiyo, *Imi no sekai – sono kikō to hen'yō* (Kokusho Kankōkai
1989).

28 *Man'yōshū* 4466, translation from Nippon Gakujutsu Shinkōkai, *The Man-
yōshū*, p. 179.

29 On the relative down-grading of Ise in *norito* see Miyake Kazuo, *Kodai kokka
no jingi to saishi* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1995). On the notion of great shrines
as mausolea, see Hayakawa Shōhachi, *Chūsei ni ikiru ritsuryō* (Heibonsha 1986).

30 *Kogoshūi*, compiled by Inbe no Hironari, contains an account of the myths as
handed down in the Inbe clan, and a protest against the growing influence of
the Nakatomi, who were increasingly displacing the Inbe. *Shinsen shōjiroku* was
compiled on the basis of genealogical information about all clans and their
branches. Genealogies such as the *Ōnakatomi-shi keichō* and the *Inbe-shi keichō*
are also thought to have been compiled around this time. *Sendai kuji hongi*
builds on traditions of the Mononobe clan, and contains among other things
genealogies of *kuni no miyatsuko* clans. See Saeki Ariyoshi, *Shinsen shōjiroku no
kenkyū* (4 vols, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1971–82).

31 B.H. Chamberlain, *The Kojiki* (Tuttle 1981), pp. 45–6.

32 W.G. Aston, *Nihongi*, II pp. 221–2.

33 As rituals of such 'maternal ancestor deities', which did not feature in *ritsuryō*
kami law, the *Engishiki* mentions the festivals of Kasuga, Umenomiya, Hirano

and Ōharano. Rituals of this kind, which were imperial but not based on *ritsuryō* law, are known as *ōyake matsuri* ('official rituals'). See Okada Shōji, *Heian jidai no kokka to saishi* (Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai 1994) and Nijūnisha Kenkyūkai, ed., *Heian jidai no jinja to saishi* (Kokusho Kankōkai 1986).

# 2

# THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD
## The kami merge with Buddhism

*Itō Satoshi*

With regard to the history of kami worship, two trends characterised the medieval period (which is here taken to have begun with the decline of the *ritsuryō* system in the tenth and eleventh centuries). First, the court policy to establish a centralised system of kami worship collapsed, and the kami cults of different political and social groups (the court, local elites, warrior groups, occupational groups) developed into different directions. Second, kami cults and Buddhism amalgamated, and combinatory cults became prevalent. Parallel with this second development, theological 'Shinto doctrines' of increasing sophistication were formulated. These two trends, and the interplay between them, shaped medieval Shinto.

During the ancient period, kami ritual was a local or clan-based practice that followed a cyclical pattern. Its aim was to ensure the prosperity and peaceful existence of the community, be it clan or state. Kami worship was a communal affair, and did not address the concerns of individuals. However, when kami became widely identified as manifestations of Buddhist divinities, their function, too, came to resemble that of buddhas and bodhisattvas: now, individual believers addressed their hopes and wishes for this life and the next to kami as they did to Buddhist divinities.

As we have seen in Chapter 1, the distinction between private and public ritual had become vague already during the late classical period – as indicated, for example, by the fact that the clan rituals of the Fujiwara at Kasuga had become part of the official ritual calendar. But now, this distinction was blurred also in the opposite direction, as private (individual) rituals came to be performed at formerly strictly public (communal) shrines. Also, the collapse of the *ritsuryō* system of funding official shrines through allocating the taxes of 'kami households' (*kanbe*) left the shrines with an increasing degree of financial autonomy. This forced shrines to

attract believers from beyond their original communities, and new private rituals were fashioned and propagated for this purpose.

These ritual and social changes, in turn, demanded theological explanation. It was against this background that medieval schools of kami thought such as Ryōbu Shinto and Ise Shinto arose. The theory-building of these schools can, perhaps, best be described as the adaptation and application of Buddhist thought. It was in this context that the term 'Shinto', which had been little more than a synonym of 'kami', first began to take on moral and sectarian meanings.[1] The notion arose that the kami were the most appropriate divinities to bring salvation to Japan and the Japanese, superior even to the buddhas. The seeds of the anti-Buddhism of the early modern period were sown already at this early date.

Due to these profound changes, kami worship had been transformed almost beyond recognition by the end of the medieval period.

## Official shrine worship in the medieval period

Under *ritsuryō* law, kami worship was centralised under the aegis of the Ministry of Kami Affairs through its distribution of offerings to ever growing numbers of official shrines. However, by the end of the classical period this system had become unsustainable. In the tenth century, the policy to control shrines nationally was abandoned for a more realistic approach. From this time onwards, offerings were made only to shrines that had close ties with the imperial house or with powerful aristocratic lineages such as the Fujiwara. Most of these shrines were located in the Home Provinces, and in economical terms, this new policy resulted in a huge cut in costs. The new system of court kami worship is known as 'the system of twenty-two shrines' (*nijūnisha seido*).[2]

How and when were these twenty-two shrines selected? Already by the late ninth century, regular offerings were made to the sixteen shrines of Ise, Iwashimizu, Kamo, Matsuno'o, Hirano, Inari, Kasuga, Ōharano, Ōmiwa, Isonokami, Yamato, Sumiyoshi, Hirose, Tatsuta, Niu Kawakami and Kifune. These offerings were made in response to droughts or spells of wet weather, and in anticipation of good growth in the coming year. In the early eleventh century, during the reign of Emperor Ichijō (r. 986–1011), the shrines of Hirota, Yoshida, Umenomiya, Kitano and Gion were added. The list of twenty-two shrines was completed when the Hiyoshi (or Hie) shrine was added later in the eleventh century. During the period of Heike dominance (1156–85), there was an abortive attempt to include the Itsukushima shrine in this list. This shrine of warfare and shipping had maintained close ties with the Taira or Heike clan since the age of Taira no Kiyomori (1118–81), who frequented it after his appointment as

governor of Aki province in 1146, and initiated a large-scale pilgrimage by the retired emperor (Go-Shirakawa) in 1174. The fact that this attempt failed shows that the system of twenty-two shrines had become a closed one by this time.

In addition to local agricultural deities from the provinces of Yamato and Yamashiro, the list of twenty-two shrines included shrines to ancestral deities of the imperial lineage (Ise, Iwashimizu, Sumiyoshi and Hirota), shrines to clan deities of the Fujiwara (Kasuga, Ōharano and Yoshida), and shrines to the clan deities of the mothers of Emperors Kanmu and Montoku (Hirano and Umenomiya). Hiyoshi or Hie was the tutelary shrine of Mount Hiei, a mountain on the outskirts of Kyoto occupied by the huge Tendai temple complex, and Hirano and Gion were recent shrines founded to pacify and control 'angry spirits' (goryō), a form of ritual that flourished during the early Heian period (see below). Overall, this list clearly developed as an extension of the private ritual practice of the emperor and the Fujiwara at court.

For a period of time, court offerings to these shrines were regular and substantive. However, with the economic and political decline of the court both the number of shrines and the amount of offerings decreased gradually and, by the fifteenth century, offerings from the court had ceased altogether. Even so, the notion that the twenty-two shrines were the most prominent in the land persisted into the early modern period.[3]

Other networks for public shrine worship developed in the provinces. Here, the running of provincial government had changed radically during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The provincial governors, who were selected from aristocratic circles in the capital, chose to remain at the court rather than settle in the provinces to which they were appointed, and in practice, provincial affairs were left to local officials selected from the circles of local landowners. These officials developed two systems of shrine worship, focusing on 'provincial shrines' (sōsha) and 'first shrines' (ichi no miya). The first were shrines constructed at the provincial office especially for the purpose of public rituals. Spirits of all the kami in the province were invited to receive offerings there. The latter was a title given to the shrine regarded as the most prominent in the province – in practice often selected because of its proximity to the provincial office. In some cases, the provincial office also selected a 'second shrine' (ni no miya) and even a 'third shrine' (san no miya).[4]

These provincial shrines and first shrines came to occupy a central position in the spiritual lives of the landowning elites that assembled at the provincial offices. Of special importance were the rituals performed at first shrines. Most prominent among these were rituals of a military character such as horse races and archery on horseback (yabusame), and agricultural

rituals such as *dengaku* (a ritual form of theatre) and sumo wrestling. This combination of military and agricultural rites reflected the ideology of the provincial landowning elite. Also, one's level of participation in kami rituals depended on one's status and influence, and the confirmation of local hierarchical relations was a prominent aspect of these rituals[5] – a fact that explains why the shrines selected as first shrines tended to have a strong local character. When later in the medieval period provincial hierarchies collapsed and power struggles between landowners intensified, the right to select and supervise first shrines came to be hotly contended. The names of the province's first shrine and other prominent local shrines appear frequently in the written oaths exchanged between local warriors and landowners, side by side with the most prestigious national shrines. This indicates that local elites conceived of shrine ritual as a source of religious legitimation for their control of local resources.[6]

The warrior groups formed by local elites were originally made up of unrelated individuals kept together only through a hierarchical line of command, but soon took on the additional character of quasi-kin groups in which alleged blood ties bound members together. In this process, warrior groups adopted clan deities or protector deities as a further symbol of group solidarity.[7] Some of the deities revered in first shrines also took on this function.

When Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–99) established his national military government in Kamakura and became the first shogun in 1192, he also built a new ritual institution which he placed at the apogee of the network of provincial shrines and first shrines: the Tsurugaoka Hachimangūji ('shrine temple of Hachiman at Tsurugaoka').[8] The history of this shrine goes back to Yoritomo's ancestor Minamoto no Yoriyoshi (988–1075), who had invited a spirit of the Hachiman shrine temple at Iwashimizu to Kamakura after a successful military campaign in 1063, but it was Yoritomo who transferred this shrine temple to its present site and enlarged it. Hachiman was identified as the spirit of Emperor Ōjin, and the Seiwa Genji lineage to which the Minamoto belonged worshipped him as their ancestor deity. Also, Hachiman's martial character had caused him to become the protector deity of the warrior class as a whole. Regular rituals at the Tsurugaoka complex included *yabusame* and *hōjōe*, a Buddhist ritual of raising merit by releasing captured animals. As a whole, the complex served to demonstrate the military and political might of Yoritomo's government, and gave visual expression to the autonomy of his government from the court in Kyoto.

Thus shrine rituals had become an important element of the culture of local elites and warrior groups by the early medieval period. In contrast, it is thought unlikely that shrine rituals were performed by the lower strata

of the population. This changed only after the appearance of so-called 'shrine guilds' (*miyaza*) in the later middle ages.[9]

As agricultural productivity increased, larger villages emerged in most rural areas, and especially in the Home Provinces. The late medieval period saw the appearance of a new type of village community known as *sōson*. While old type villages had consisted of extended family groups, these new communities are better described as groupings of separate households where decisions were taken by a village council.[10] Such villages (*mura*), or groups of villages (*gō*), had shrines which functioned as a focus for the community. The rituals of these shrines were organised and carried out by the village shrine guild. The members of the shrine guilds were prominent villagers known as 'elders' (*otona*, *toshiyori*), and the level of participation in the rituals of the village shrine was determined by the status of each household. These rituals, then, were strongly exclusive in character. On the other hand, the membership of shrine guilds was fluid to a certain degree; in some cases, it was even bought and sold as a marketable commodity. Also, some rural communities had 'village guilds' (*muraza*), which involved all community members in the running of shrine ritual.

Most shrine guilds were organised on the principle not only of household status but also of seniority. This is suggested already by the term 'elders' (*otona*, *toshiyori*) for its members. Opinion is divided over the question of which of these two principles is the older. However, in general it appears that the system of ranking households according to status developed when family groups, organised on the basis of seniority, merged into larger villages consisting of more than one family group. The coexistence of two organising principles in shrine guilds arose naturally from this process of village formation.

## Amalgamation of kami cults and Buddhism

In modern Japanese society, Shinto and Buddhism appear as two clearly distinct entities. However, this distinction was imposed on the Japanese religious landscape only by the 'shrine-temple separation edicts' (*shinbutsu bunri rei*) of 1868 and the ensuing wave of anti-Buddhist destruction (*haibutsu kishaku*). During the pre-modern period, Buddhist and kami beliefs intermingled to give rise to a distinctive religious universe. This is, in modern writings, described as 'the amalgamation of kami cults and Buddhism' (*shinbutsu shūgō*). It is important to remember that this state of amalgamation has been the norm throughout most of the history of Japanese religion; the present state of separation of Shinto and Buddhism has lasted little more than a century. Therefore, the amalgamation of kami cults and Buddhism is a central topic in the history of the kami in Japan.[11]

The relation between kami and buddhas has gone through many changes. The amalgamation of kami and buddhas did not begin immediately after the introduction of Buddhism to Japan in the mid-sixth century. Kami and buddhas first began to merge in the Nara period (710–94), and reached a first conclusion in the late Heian period (794–1192) with the spread of the notion that the kami are emanations or 'traces' (*suijaku*), left on Japanese soil by Buddhist divinities who constitute their 'original source' (*honji*). In subsequent centuries, further theological speculation on the kami led to more complicated and sophisticated forms of amalgamation, which found expression not only in religious writings but also in other cultural fields. Towards the end of the medieval period (in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), Shinto writings began to show a movement away from Buddhism. This developed into an aggressive anti-Buddhist rhetoric during the early modern period (1600–1867). In the reality of religious life, however, amalgamated cults and beliefs remained prevalent until well into the modern period.

It is not sufficient to regard these amalgamated cults and beliefs simply as an overlay, added in some loose manner to ancient indigenous cults and beliefs. In spite of what many Shinto theologians have claimed, 'Shinto' has not existed throughout Japanese history as some unchangeable religious bedrock supporting the structure of Japanese culture. Buddhism penetrated deeply into Japanese life, and has been the dominant religious tradition in the country for most of its history; and Buddhism, too, has undergone such radical changes during its long presence in Japan that many have expressed doubts whether its Japanese forms can still be called Buddhism at all.[12] In fact, there are many elements of Buddhist origin even in the thought and ritual of the Shinto of today, which, after all, took shape during the long period of amalgamation that will be discussed here.

First of all it may be useful to discuss the backgrounds of two technical terms used in the Japanese literature to refer to phenomena of amalgamation: *shinbutsu shūgō* and *honji suijaku*. The first is in general use as a term referring to the merging of kami cults and Buddhism in general. Although it is of modern origin, its roots can be traced back to the medieval period. Yoshida Kanetomo (1435–1511), a central figure in medieval Shinto, referred to the Shinto theories ascribed to Kūkai (774–835) and Saichō (767–822) as Ryōbu Shūgō Shinto, 'Shinto that amalgamates [the kami] with the two mandalas'. The mandalas in question are the Womb (*Taizō*) and Diamond Realm (*Kongōkai*) mandalas, which are central to esoteric Buddhist thought and practice. This phrase was to live on into the early modern period as a generic designation for all Buddhist Shinto thought. It was sometimes abbreviated to Shūgō Shinto, which can perhaps be translated as 'amalgamated' or 'syncretic Shinto'. In the early modern period,

it further gave rise to the designation Ryōbu Shinto, 'Shinto of the two mandalas', which has now become the established term for Buddhist Shinto, and especially for Shinto rites and theories that have strong links with the esoteric Buddhist Shingon school – in contradistinction to so-called Sannō Shinto, linked to the Tendai school. To refer to phenomenon of Shinto–Buddhist amalgamation in a wider sense, the new compound *shinbutsu shūgō* was coined. It is important, however, that the term *shūgō* (like its closest English equivalent, 'syncretism') has long carried with it negative associations of impurity and arbitrariness. It is to avoid such associations that in English-language literature, the word 'amalgamation' is now widely preferred as a translation of *shūgō*.

The second term, *honji suijaku*, refers to the theory that the 'original', 'eternal' buddhas and bodhisattvas (*honji*, 'original sources') temporarily appear among us as kami in order to bring us salvation. *Suijaku* literally means 'to leave a trace, a footprint', and thus describes the kami as traces or footprints left in our world of suffering by Buddhist divinities. As a scriptural basis for this theory, scholar monks referred to the chapter 'Life Time of the Thus Come One' in the *Lotus sutra*, where Śākyamuni reveals that he attained enlightenment not in this life, at the city of Gayā, but 'immeasurable, boundless hundreds, thousands, ten thousands, millions of nayutas of kalpas' ago, implying that the historical Buddha was, in reality, no more than a temporary manifestation of the eternal Buddha, whose existence knows no limits. In the Chinese Tiantai school, this passage and the related theory about Śākyamuni's 'buddha bodies'[13] was explained in terms of *honji* (Ch. *bendi*) and *suijaku* (Ch. *chuiji*), and in Japan, this Chinese Buddhist notion came to be applied to the kami.

However, rather than being inspired directly by this Tiantai doctrine, *honji suijaku* in Japan drew on the much more basic idea, shared by all Buddhists, that divinities can make 'temporary appearances' (J. *keshin*) in different guises and at different places. As Buddhism spread from India to other lands, local kami or historical figures were often identified as such 'temporary appearances' of buddhas and bodhisattvas as a way to root Buddhism in foreign cultures. Thus, *honji suijaku* was not a uniquely Japanese phenomenon; nor was its application to native divine figures exclusive to Japan. In the Chinese apocryphal *Qingjing faxingjing* ('Pure dharma practice sutra'), for example, it is argued that Laozi, Confucius, and his most prominent disciple, Yanhui, are emanations of bodhisattvas sent by Śākyamuni, and that the famous monks Baozhi and Budai (J. Hōshi and Hotei) are emanations of respectively Avalokiteśvara (J. Kannon) and Maitreya (J. Miroku). In Japan, similarly, the Buddhist culture-heroes Shōtoku Taishi, Gyōki and Kūkai were posthumously identified as emanations of Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī (J. Monju) and Vairocana (J. Dainichi).

As we saw in Chapter 1, Buddhist divinities were, at first, worshipped in Japan as foreign kami, different in name but not necessarily in character from the indigenous deities. For a period of time, Buddhism in Japan developed alongside kami cults, without the relationship between the two being raised as an issue.[14] The first signs of such a relationship emerged in the eighth century, when the first so-called 'shrine temples' (*jingūji*) were founded. As the name suggests, these were temples attached to shrines. During the course of the Heian period such temples were founded at the majority of major shrines, which often subsequently came to be controlled by their shrine temples. The first such temples about which we have conclusive sources are the Kehi Jingūji (in Echizen province), the Wakasahiko Jingūji (Wakasa province) and the Tado Jingūji (Ise province), all dating back to the eighth century. It is noteworthy that these shrine temples were all located outside the Home Provinces, away from the centres of court culture. The foundation documents of these temples explain that the kami of Kehi, Wakasahiko and Tado had, through an oracle, expressed the wish to be saved from this world of suffering, into which they had been born as kami because of karmic causes. They hoped to attain salvation through the powers of Buddhism, and asked for a temple to be built at their shrine for the performance of Buddhist rituals.[15]

These foundation documents reveal that the kami were regarded as sentient beings who were subject to suffering in the same way as humans. In Buddhist doctrine the highest of the six realms of transmigration is the realm of devas (J. *tendō*), and it seems that in Japan the kami were included in this realm. The notion that the kami wish to escape from their kami state through Buddhism represents the first stage in the amalgamation of kami and Buddhist divinities. These kami, however, retained many of their kami characteristics. Wakasahiko, for example, caused an epidemic to draw attention to his suffering – a typical example of the use of a curse (*tatari*) by a kami to instruct worshippers on the correct method of worship. Here, typical kami behaviour is being written into a Buddhist discourse.

A practice that originated at this time was the reading of sutras in front of kami shrines. This ritual was performed to alleviate the suffering of the kami, and to allow them to 'enjoy the Buddhist Law' (*hōraku*). As an early example, we may mention a tale from the *Nihon ryōiki* (*c*.822) which describes how the *Lotus sutra* was read for Taga no Ōkami, to save him from his kami state. A related practice that spread around the same time was the copying and donating of sutras to kami shrines.

The spread of shrine temples and practices such as sutra reading and sutra copying for kami indicates that, by this time, Buddhism had penetrated into local society deeply enough to cause a certain tension with pre-existing kami cults, and that this inspired various explanations of the relationship

between the two. A clear distinction can be made between this type of amalgamation in the provinces, and the so-called 'protector deities of the [Buddhist] Law' (*gohō zenshin*) worshipped at the court.[16] These latter were central kami, closely linked to court Buddhism and its rituals for the protection of the state – in contrast to the former, which were all regional deities rooted in local communities. The notion of 'saving the kami from their kami state' was an expression of the wish of local communities for relief from disasters that were ascribed to curses from the kami, and arose when Buddhism began to penetrate regional societies. However, while most scholars agree that this notion emerged in the provinces and spread to the centre from the periphery, it has been pointed out that it existed also in contemporary China, and that its emergence in Japan may well have been due to Chinese influence.[17] In that case, its origins cannot be sought only in the dynamics of religious events in provinces, but must also be understood as the result of the dissemination of central religious expertise to the provinces. Here, popular Buddhist 'missionaries' such as Gyōki (668–749) and his group must have played an important role in the propagation of ideas and practices of kami-Buddhist amalgamation.[18]

In the eighth century, we also notice the appearance of a new kind of kami that was closely connected with Buddhism in a rather different manner from the ones we have encountered above: the kami Hachiman. Hachiman (or Yahata, as his name was also read during the early history of his cult) is a deity of many riddles. He does not figure in the *Kojiki* or the *Nihon shoki*, but suddenly appears rather prominently in historical sources from the Nara period. Then, on the occasion of the founding of the large Tōdaiji temple in Nara, Hachiman shot to national fame with astonishing speed. As noted above, Hachiman was later identified with Emperor Ōjin, and as such revered as an imperial ancestor on a par with Amaterasu; at the same time he also enjoyed widespread worship among warriors as a martial deity.

The region of origin of the Hachiman cult, Usa in north-eastern Kyushu (Buzen province), was strategically placed at the end of one of the main sea routes from the Home Provinces through the Setonaikai sea to Kyushu, and was of great political importance to the court. Also, due to its proximity to Korea, this area seems to have been subjected to strong and prolonged influence from the continent. *Nihon shoki* mentions that monks and healers from 'Toyo' (the later provinces of Buzen and Bungo in northwest Kyushu) were called to the sickbed of Emperors Yūryaku and, more than a century later, Yōmei, implying that these healers disposed over techniques from the continent that were unknown in the rest of Japan. Also, many temples were built in Buzen from the Hakuhō period (645–710) onwards. It appears that Buddhism entered this region directly from the

continent, and it is therefore thought that the religion established itself here earlier than elsewhere in Japan. It is not difficult to imagine how, in this kind of environment, Hachiman may well have taken on a Buddhist character at an early date. There is little consensus, however, on the nature or provenance of the early Hachiman cult, and many questions remain unanswered. Perhaps the most credible theory holds that it developed under Buddhist influence from a cult of giant rocks on Mount Maki in Buzen province.

Hachiman acquired links with the court only in the Nara period[19] and, as mentioned above, rose to prominence in relation with Emperor Shōmu's project of founding the Tōdaiji temple and casting a large bronze image of Vairocana as its central buddha. When in 747 this enormous undertaking ran into difficulties, Hachiman stated in an oracle that he would ensure the success of this project: 'I shall make the molten copper as [easy to handle as] water and melt my body with the grass, wood and earth [used in the making of the image] so that there will be no impediment [to completing the temple]' (*Usa takusenshū*). Not much later, Hachiman was escorted to the capital, and in 749 he was enshrined in a purpose-built sanctuary near Tōdaiji. As to the reasons why Hachiman's priests would have supported the founding of the Tōdaiji in this manner, not much more is known than that his cult had contained many Buddhist elements from an early date. *Shoku Nihongi* reports that Hachiman received copies of sutras, ten monks and a pagoda from the court in 741, and other sources tell us that a shrine temple dedicated to Maitreya (J. Miroku) was built to the west of Hachiman's Usa shrine in 737. Another indication of the Buddhist nature of Hachiman's cult is contained in the title of the female ritualists who escorted him from Kyushu to Nara: 'kami nuns' (*negi-ni*).

Looking back on the process of amalgamation of kami and buddhas, Hachiman was clearly a different case from the kami who asked to be delivered from their kami state. His offer to assist the Tōdaiji project and his subsequent appearance in Nara must have been a literal godsend for Emperor Shōmu and his Buddhist policies. Also after these events, Hachiman continued to stand in the vanguard of the kami-Buddhist amalgamation process.

## The kami as emanations of Buddhist divinities

Kami who protected Buddhism, of the type pioneered by Hachiman, spread rapidly from the early Heian period onwards. Their presence was most conspicuous at temples that were closely connected to the imperial court. The Fujiwara clan temple Kōfukuji in Nara, for eaxmple, had Kasuga as its protector deity, the Shingon headquarters on Kōyasan had Niu Myōjin

and Kōya Myōjin, and the Tendai complex on Mount Hiei had Ōbie and Obie ('Great and Small Hie'). These various deities were believed to protect the temple precincts from evil influences. Some were local kami, and others were 'invited' from elsewhere; all were said to have expressed faith in the Buddhist Law and vowed to serve the local Buddhist community as its protector deities. These kami form a close parallel to Vedic deities such as Brahmā (J. Bonten) and Indra (J. Taishakuten) that were absorbed into Buddhism as protector deities much earlier in India. They were more fundamentally Buddhist in character than the kami who merely wished to be saved by Buddhism.

An expression of the progressing rapprochement between kami and Buddhism at this time was the practice of granting kami the title of 'bodhisattva'. Again, this practice can be traced first in the Hachiman cult. The title Hachiman Daibosatsu ('Great Bodhisattva Hachiman') appears to have been coined as early as the late eighth century.[20] Also later, the title remained largely peculiar to Hachiman. It seems that its conferment was actively sought by the Usa Hachiman shrine, and was probably closely connected with Hachiman's particular character as a Buddhist deity.

In 859, the monk Gyōkyō of the Nara temple of Daianji received an oracle from the 'Great Bodhisattva Hachiman' while doing worship at the Hachiman shrine in Usa. In accordance with this oracle, Hachiman was, in the following year, transferred to a new shrine at Otokoyama in the Home Provinces: the Iwashimizu Hachiman shrine. At first, this shrine was staffed exclusively by monks, and more than a decade passed before any kami priests were appointed. Thus, Iwashimizu was a rare example of an institution that was both temple and shrine at the same time. This type of institution was known as a *miyadera* or 'kami temple'. Members of Gyōkyō's lineage, the Ki, became the hereditary abbots (*bettō*) of Iwashimizu. This position of *bettō* of a *miyadera* had, in itself, a strikingly 'amalgamatory' character: while being ordained monks, these abbots were also married men with families, in the manner of kami priests.

The appearance of *miyadera* stimulated the further amalgamation of the kami and Buddhism, and the tenth century saw the appearance of *honji suijaku* theory. The first instance of such a theory in Japan has been found in a document from 937, which states: 'That [Usa] shrine and this [Hakozaki] shrine are located in different places, but are identical as "traces" (*suijaku*) of an emanating bodhisattva (*gongen bosatsu*)'.[21] The term *gongen* used here literally means 'temporary appearance', and was in use as a translation of the Sanskrit term *avatāra*. It soon came to be widely used for kami that were identified as Buddhist emanations.

Although Hachiman at Usa was described as a *suijaku* already at this early stage, the same notion only came to be applied more widely to other

kami in the eleventh century. An early example is in a letter from 1004 by Ōe no Masahira (952–1012), where he refers to the kami of Atsuta as a *gongen* (*Honchō monzui*). In subsequent decades, this title was given to many deities at sites of mountain practice such as Kumano and Hakusan. Also, more and more kami were identified as emanations of specific Buddhist divinities. The earliest examples of this date back to the early eleventh century, but such identifications became more common only a century or so later. Hachiman, for example, came to be identified as an emanation of Amida (or occasionally of Śākyamuni), and the kami of Hie as an emanation of Śākyamuni. This practice of assigning specific 'original sources' to kami gradually spread throughout Japan and, as indicated by Table 2.1, soon all major shrines were identified as 'traces' of named buddhas and bodhisattvas.

The integration of kami in the Buddhist pantheon also brought about great changes in the iconography of kami. As a parallel to the sculptures of Buddhist divinities that occupied central positions in all temples, however small, kami sculptures began to appear in the early Heian period. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the kami had originally been imagined as invisible spirits who for the sake of ritual interaction were invited to 'take possession of' natural objects such as rocks, trees or even entire hills, or of man-made objects such as mirrors that served as *yorishiro* or 'kami containers'. However, already at an early stage some kami had taken on more human features, and were personified as ancestors who dwelt permanently in shrines much like aristocratic palaces. Now, under the influence of Buddhism, the kami came to be depicted in sculpture, mostly as male or female aristocratic laymen, but also occasionally as Buddhist monks.

Another iconographic novelty was introduced on kami mirrors. As *honji suijaku* theories spread, it became common to carve drawings of the *honji* of kami onto the reverse side of their *yorishiro* mirrors. Such drawings are known simply as *kyōzō*, 'mirror pictures'. Also, round or fanshaped metal plates were produced carrying reliefs of kami's *honji*, known as *kakebotoke*, 'hanging buddhas'. Such Buddhist kami mirrors and *kakebotoke* were collectively referred to as *mishōtai*, '[kami's] real bodies', and were produced in great quantities throughout the medieval and early modern periods. The early modern period also saw the spread of so-called shrine mandalas (*miya mandara*), which, under the influence of Esoteric Buddhism, depicted the precincts of famous shrines as sacred mandalas. In some of these mandalas the *honji* of the shrine's main kami is shown hovering over the main shrine hall.

We have seen how the amalgamation of kami and Buddhism proceeded from the practice of saving kami with the help of Buddhism, to the adoption of kami as protector deities of Buddhism, via the designation of certain

*Table 2.1*  Buddhist identifications of shrines

| Shrine name | Honji | Sources |
|---|---|---|
| Ise | 1  Rushana, Dainichi Nyorai | *Daijingū shozōjiki, Tōdaiji yōroku* |
|  | 2  Kuse Kannon | *Seiji yōryaku, Gōdanshō* |
|  | 3  Kannon Bosatsu | *Kojidan* |
| Kasuga |  |  |
| first hall | Fukūkenjaku Kannon, Śākyamuni | *Kasuga daimyōjin honji chūshin* |
| second hall | Yakushi Nyorai, Miroku Bosatsu | *Kasuga-sha shiki* |
| third hall | Jizō Bosatsu |  |
| fourth hall | Jūichimen Kannon, Dainichi Nyorai |  |
| *wakamiya* | Monju Bosatsu, Jūichimen Kannon |  |
| Kumano |  |  |
| Shōjōden | Amida Nyorai | *Chōshūki* |
| Nishi no Miya | Senju Kannon |  |
| Naka no Miya | Yakushi Nyorai |  |
| Waka no Miya Ōji | Jūichimen Kannon |  |
| Zenji no Miya | Jizō Bosatsu |  |
| Hijiri no Miya | Ryūju Bosatsu |  |
| Chigo no Miya | Nyoirin Kannon |  |
| Komori no Miya | Shōkannon |  |
| Hachiman | 1  Muryōju Nyorai | *Zoku honchō ōjōden* |
|  | 2  Amida trinity | *Hakozaki-gū ki* |
|  | 3  Śākyamuni trinity | *Minami-gun Daianji tōchūin engi* |
| Hie |  |  |
| Ōmiya | Śākyamuni | *Ryōjin hishō* |
| Ni no Miya | Yakushi Nyorai | *Hōbutsushū* |
| Shōshinji | Amida Nyorai | *Sanke yōryakki* |
| Hachiōji | Senju Kannon |  |
| Marōdo | Jūichimen Kannon |  |
| Jūzenji | Jizō Bosatsu |  |
| San no Miya | Fuken Bosatsu |  |

kami as bodhisattvas, to the identification of kami as 'footsteps' of Buddhist 'original sources'. However, even at this last stage, not all kami were regarded as emanations of Buddhist divinities. It is important to note that the perception of kami as suffering sentient beings in need of the saving

powers of Buddhism persisted throughout the medieval period, and even beyond. The coexistence of these two perceptions of kami was dealt with by categorising the kami into 'kami who are Buddhist emanations' (*gonshin*) and 'real kami' (*jisshin*).[22] These latter did not have a Buddhist 'original source', but were simply sentient beings in need of salvation, on a par with us humans.

However, even these 'real kami' were sometimes regarded as 'temporary appearances' of buddhas. In these cases, it was explained that a buddha can, under some circumstances, appear in this world as an ordinary sentient being who shares in the suffering of this world, in order to spread salvation more effectively. When a buddha appears in this world as a kami (be it as a *gonshin* or a *jisshin*) in order to save sentient beings, it was said with a Chinese phrase that he 'dimmed his light and mingled with the dust' (*wakō dōjin*).[23] In other words, the buddha was thought to have tempered the bright light emitted from his body, and descended to the impure, dusty world of transmigration in the form of a kami. It was explained that Buddhist divinities chose to appear as kami because that was the most effective way to achieve their aim of bringing salvation to Japan. Here, we can see that the dissemination of *honji suijaku* ideas had far from undermined belief in the kami; to the contrary, it was argued by some that as saviours of sentient beings in Japan, the kami should be valued even higher than the divinities of Buddhism themselves.

A passage from *Keiran shūyōshū*, compiled by the Tendai monk Kōshū (1276–1350) in the early fourteenth century, offers an example of this. In reply to the question 'why kami always appear as snakes', this text explains:

> The kami are forms of *wakō dōjin*, and therefore they resemble worldlings and take on the same shape as worldlings, namely the form of the extreme of the three poisons. The extreme of the three poisons becomes the form of uncreated, original [enlightenment] (*musa honnu*), and this always has the body of a snake.[24]

Here, the traditional image of kami as snakes (exemplified by the snake-deity of Miwa) is given new significance as an embodiment of the ultimate, true state of the sentient beings: the three poisons (greed, hate and ignorance) transformed into uncreated enlightenment. This and similar texts point at the kami as beings that stand closer to us 'worldlings', and that can teach us a more fundamental and profound truth than the buddhas themselves.[25]

Another type of cult that was closely connected with kami-Buddhist amalgamation and *honji suijaku* theory was that of 'angry spirits' (*goryō*).[26] These cults were based on the belief that the spirits of political figures who

had died under tragic circumstances or had been unfairly executed during the eighth and ninth centuries had returned to the capital to take revenge, and had to be ritually pacified. What is important here is that these cults pioneered the idea that spirits of the dead could lay curses, and that their emergence contributed to the further development of kami–Buddhist amalgamation.

Originally the laying of curses (*tatari*) was understood to be a method for the kami to communicate their will to the people. *Tatari* usually took the form of epidemics. Some kami were associated particularly closely with disease (*ekishin*, 'disease deities'), and exorcist rites against such kami (such as *harae*) formed an important part of ritual practice. However, the idea that ancestral spirits or spirits of deceased people could lay curses does not appear to be so old. This notion became possible when, as we have seen above, the kami came to be regarded as human-like figures during the establishing phases of the *ritsuryō* system. When the gap between kami and humans narrowed, the kami's ability to lay curses must have been transferred to human spirits. This occurred during the transition from the Nara to the Heian periods, when many courtiers met untimely deaths as real or suspected rebels. When fate turned on their executioners, the fear arose that their spirits had returned to lay curses.

The earliest examples of courtiers who were feared as 'angry spirits' after their deaths date from the mid-Nara period (Fujiwara no Hirotsugu, fl. 740, and Prince Inoue, 717–75). However, it was only during the reign of Emperor Kanmu (r. 781–806) that *goryō* cults boomed. A central figure in *goryō* history was Crown Prince Sawara (750–85), who became implicated in the murder on Fujiwara no Tanetsugu (737–85). Sawara was stripped of his position as crown prince and exiled to Awaji, and died on his way there. A wave of incidents and disasters that occurred after his death was attributed to his spirit, and sutras were read in an attempt to pacify it. Also, Sawara was restored to his former rank, and when this proved insufficient he was even given the posthumous title of Emperor Sūdō. After these events every political upheaval during the early Heian period was followed by a spate of *goryō* rumours and rituals. Notorious 'angry spirits' from this period were Prince Iyo (fl. 807), Tachibana no Hayanari (fl. 842) and Fun'ya no Miyatamaro (exiled in 844).

While, at court, these events were interpreted and dealt with as political, personal attacks, the population at large reacted in a different manner. For them, the string of curses that descended on the capital appeared not so much as acts of revengeful individuals, but rather as a wave of 'disease deities'. To deal with this threat, rituals to avert the activity of such deities were devised and carried out among the general population of the city. At first, the court tried to ban such events, but as popular pressure proved

too great the court performed a first public *goryō* ceremony (*goryōe*) in the capital in 863. Attendance at this ceremony was open to all, and it was an extremely lavish and large-scale event in worship of six notorious angry spirits (Prince Sawara, Prince Iyo, Fujiwara no Kisshi, Tachibana no Hayanari, Fujiwara no Hirotsugu and Fun'ya no Miyatamaro). Later, *goryōe* became a regular part of the ritual calendar and amalgamated with other cults of disease deities.

These cults of angry spirits as disease deities produced many new deity figures. Among them, Gozu Tennō ('Bullhead Deva King'), who was worshipped at Gionsha in Kyoto (the present Yasaka shrine) stands out as a figure of markedly amalgamatory characteristics. This deity's history in Japan was shallow, and his roots are thought to lie in Chinese traditions of Yin-Yang thought and astrological divination (see below). The angry spirit that made the most lasting impact on the Japanese religious land-scape was the courtier and poet Sugawara no Michizane (845–903), who was sidelined from court affairs and eventually died in the provincial outpost of Dazaifu. Michizane was feared as the most powerful angry spirit of all during the first half of the tenth century, but later took on a less destructive guise as Tenman Tenjin, the main deity of the Kitano Tenmangū shrine in Kyoto. His cult, known as the Tenjin cult, went through many transformations, and is as popular today as ever – but now, he is revered as a deity of academic achievement rather than disease.

All the angry spirits we have discussed here were first of all disease deities, but the Heian period also saw the establishment of other types of spirit cults. There was, for example, an upsurge in beliefs and rituals around ghosts (*mononoke*) who were thought to cause mischief of a more general nature. Another figure that rose to prominence at this time was the long-nosed goblin called *tengu*, who originated as a demon bent on destroying Buddhism. When, later in the medieval period, emperors such as Sutoku (r. 1123–41) and Go-Toba (r. 1183–98) met dramatic deaths, they too were believed to have turned into angry spirits, and Sutoku, especially, came to be associated with the figure of the *tengu*. The *tengu* continued to be feared throughout the medieval period as the most dangerous angry spirit of all.[27]

## Japan as a 'land of the gods'

Characteristic of medieval Shinto is the production of a vast amount of theological texts, often referred to in academic writing as 'medieval Shinto thought' (*chūsei Shintōsetsu*) and 'the medieval *Nihongi*' (*chūsei Nihongi*).[28] We shall see that although these texts built on earlier *honji suijaku* theories, they were not a straightforward continuation of classical Shinto thought. The medieval period was an age when kami adopted a

great variety of appearances, and when kami beliefs and rituals had a profound influence on intellectual thought, literature, art, and people's behaviour in general.

An important factor behind the age's preoccupation with the kami was the demise of the classical state and the emergence of a new, medieval state structure. While the classical state had been based on Chinese *ritsuryō* law, the medieval political structure was modified to suit the conditions peculiar to Japan as a territory, a 'place' (*ba*) fundamentally different from other places – notably China. The eleventh to thirteenth centuries inclusive (the Insei and Kamakura periods) can be regarded as an age of transition between these two state structures. It was during this transitional phase of Japanese history that medieval Shinto thought first emerged, and in order to explain the nature of this thought it will first of all be necessary to discuss changes in the perception of history, territoriality, and imperial authority that occurred in parallel with the country's political restructuring during this period.

The political and social chaos of the eleventh and subsequent centuries encouraged the spread of eschatological pessimism among all layers of the population. It was believed that Japan had entered the age of the 'Latter Days of the Law' (*mappō*), when Buddhism had lost its efficacy as a vehicle for salvation. A political offspin of this belief was the idea that the imperial lineage would come to an end with the hundredth generation, and that Japan as a state would perish with its imperial rulers.[29] Needless to say, this notion formed a threat to the authority of the emperor (irrespective of the question whether he had any real power or not), whose position at the top of the political system had never been questioned before, and of those who exercised political power in his name. In response to this threat, attempts were made to reconstruct and revive imperial authority. In the search for a new legitimation of imperial power Buddhism played an important role. Large temples such as the Tendai head temple Enryakuji on Mt Hiei and the Tōdaiji in Nara, which before had been dependent on the court both financially and politically, now became increasingly independent power blocks whose power was based on their control of extensive landed estates (*shōen*). The establishment of these new Buddhist power blocks found expression in a new view on the relationship between the imperial court and the large Buddhist establishments. The two came to be regarded as the two wheels of a cart, each as vital as the other to the stability of the vehicle of the state.

In this view of the state, the emperor was not only a descendant of the kami, but also a protector of Buddhism. At the same time, he himself was dependent on the protection of Buddhism, for it was through the religious power of Buddhism that his position was secured into the future. In ritual

terms, this new perspective on Japanese emperorship led to a rise in status for esoteric Buddhist court rites during the Insei period (1086–1192). During this period, Japanese Buddhism underwent a series of changes that rendered it significantly different from its Chinese antecedents. It is not possible to discuss these Buddhist developments here in any detail, but it must be mentioned that it was at this time that the so-called New Buddhism of the Kamakura period (1192–1333) originated, and that theories of 'original enlightenment' (*hongaku*) arose within the Tendai school.[30] The contents of these new Buddhist teachings varied widely, but one thing they had in common was that they all emphasised the particularity of Japan as a 'place' with special characteristics, which required a ritual practice and a theology suited to its own distinct identity.

It was within these Buddhist theological explorations that the position of the kami became an issue, and *honji suijaku* theories and Shinto thought arose. These trends are perhaps reflected most clearly in the notion that Japan was a 'land of the gods' (*shinkoku*).[31] Japan had already been described as a land of the gods in the *Nihon shoki* (in the chapter on Jingū Kōgō), and the expression itself must have originated in the seventh or early eighth century. At this time the notion served to legitimise imperial rule, and to define the position of the Japanese *ritsuryō* state in relation to China and Korea. However, in subsequent centuries it had all but disappeared from active use, to resurface only during the Insei period.

At this time, a number of different images of Japan coexisted side by side. The most influential of these held that Japan was located in the periphery of the Buddhist universe. Japan was often described as an 'outlying land, like scattered grains of millet' (*zokusan hendo*), situated so far away from the centre of the Buddhist universe that the beneficence of Buddhism could reach it only in a much weakened form. In this world view, the inhabitants of Japan were inferior beings with a limited capacity for progression on the Buddhist path.

Parallel to the emergence of this image of Japan, we encounter an image of the world as consisting of three centres, each with its own periphery. In order of diminishing importance, these three centres were India, China and Japan – the three countries through which Buddhism was transmitted. Here, Japan was at least identified as a centre of Buddhist culture comparable (if not equal) to India and China. In other words, the fact that Buddhism had established itself as firmly in Japan as in the other two centres of Buddhism was grasped upon as a matter of pride that raised the status of Japan in the world.

Japan was once more defined as a land of the gods within the context of this understanding of the world as consisting of three great Buddhist

centres. According to *honji suijaku* theory the kami of Japan were eman-
ations of various buddhas and bodhisattvas, and so, as a land of the gods
Japan was at the same time a Buddhist land – and, importantly, a Buddhist
land in a distinctly Japanese way. This notion was expressed, for example,
in *Shingon fuhō san'yōshō* (compiled in 1060 by the Shingon monk Seizon,
1012–74), where Japan is defined in a punning way as 'the original land
of Dainichi' (*Dainichi-hongoku* or *Dainippongoku*).[32] One may well regard
the perception of Japan as a country on the periphery of Buddhism as a
negative self-image, and that of Japan as a land of the gods as a positive
one; ultimately, they are two sides of the same coin.

Be this as it may, it is clear that Japan's self-image during the late Heian
and Kamakura periods was a composite one. Even if we isolate the notion
of Japan as a land of the gods as an element of this composite image, we
find that those who used the phrase at this time did not do so to argue
that Japan was superior to all other nations. This changed only after the
two failed Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281. After Japan's miraculous
escape from what could have been two devastating attacks, the idea that
the country was a land of the gods took on new meaning, while the image
of Japan as a small and inferior land in the borderlands of Buddhist
civilisation retreated.

Returning to the search for a new legitimation of imperial authority
during the Insei period, we find that new definitions of emperorship often
focused on the so-called three regalia (*sanshu no jinki*): the jewel (*yasakani
no magatama*), the mirror (*yata no kagami*) and the sword (*ame no murakumo
no tsurugi*). These three objects first came to be recognised as the emblems
of imperial legitimacy from the mid-Heian period onwards. Their roots go
back to the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, which recount how Ninigi received
these objects from Amaterasu prior to his descent from heaven. How-
ever, *Nihon shoki* mentions the bestowal of these objects not in the main
text, but only in a parallel 'variant', while another work of clan legend,
the Inbe's *Kogoshūi*, makes mention of only the mirror and the sword.
At the Heian court large numbers of swords and mirrors were kept as
valuable treasures, but no specific sword or mirror was singled out as a
sacred object of a particular divine origin.[33] At this time, the concept of
a set of three divine treasures had yet to emerge.

The sanctification and mystification of the three regalia, and especially
of the mirror, began during the mid-Heian period. A mirror that was
believed to contain Amaterasu's spirit had, during the early Heian period,
been kept in the Unmeiden hall at the palace, but here it was stored rather
than worshipped, and it was not the object of any special ritual practice.
This mirror caught people's attention only after a fire in 960, which
destroyed most of the palace including the Unmeiden and its treasures,

when it was found miraculously unscathed among the ashes. In spite of the fact that the mirror did not fare so well in two later fires in 1005 and 1040, it became the subject of miracle tales, and there were rumours that it had escaped the fire of 960 by flying away through the air. Its raised status as an object of miraculous powers appears clearly in dance performances staged at the Naishidokoro (here a designation for the Unmeiden and the adjacent Kashikodokoro hall taken together). These dances, known as *Naishidokoro no mikagura*, were first initiated by Emperor Ichijō (r. 986–1011) and became a regular event under Emperor Shirakawa (r. 1072–86).[34] These dances, based on the story of Amaterasu's retreat into the Cave of Heaven, were but one instance of the suddenly increased interest in worship of Amaterasu during the Insei period.

It was another incident, however, that focused attention on the regalia as the essential tokens of imperial legitimacy. In 1183, when the Taira were chased from the capital by Minamoto no Yoshinaka (1154–84), they took both the young Emperor Antoku (r. 1180–3) and the three regalia with them to Western Japan. In the sea battle of Dan no Ura (1185), the Taira were destroyed, Antoku drowned, and one of the regalia, the sword, was lost to the waves. These events were deeply shocking to the court aristocracy and strengthened the idea that the imperial lineage was approaching its final demise.

Such incidents involving the three regalia proved to strengthen rather than weaken their appeal as objects of divine powers. As a sense of crisis enveloped the imperial lineage, the importance of the regalia as symbols for the reconstruction of imperial power increased. During the Kamakura period, the three regalia came to be thought of as inseparable from the position of the emperor, and in the subsequent Nanbokuchō period (1338–92), when two branches of the imperial house fought a protracted war over the imperial throne, the physical possession of the regalia as proof of imperial legitimacy became a prime fighting cause.

The aura of sacredness that enveloped the three regalia inspired a large body of esoteric texts on the nature of these magical objects. A thread that runs through the vast majority of these texts is their linking of the regalia with the Buddhist Wish-Fulfilling Gem (J. *nyoi hōju*, Skt. *cintāmaṇi*).[35] Esoteric theories about the three regalia as a set, or about each of the regalia separately, formed an important element of the Shinto thought that began to develop around this time. Such theories taught, for example, that the mysterious 'Divine Seal' which features prominently in *ritsuryō* kami law was a treasure (variously described as a jewel, a document, or even a map of Japan) bestowed on the imperial lineage by the Demon King of the Sixth Heaven of Desire (*Dairokuten Maō*). Some of these texts construed intricate links between the imperial mirror on the one hand,

and the mirrors worshipped at the two main shrines and many sub-shrines at Ise on the other. Also, esoteric diagrams illustrating the esoteric significance of the regalia were drawn up and transmitted in great secrecy.

Another result of the developments described here was a renewed interest in the *Nihon shoki*. This work had been all but forgotten since the mid-Heian period, but was rediscovered in the twelfth century, first of all in the context of poetry writing. Texts on poetics and poetry commentaries from this time frequently refer to the *Nihon shoki*.[36] However, the quotations contained in these texts are rarely taken from the main text of the *Nihon shoki*, but more often refer to a fluid body of legends cited under the title of *Nihongi*. This was characteristic also of the *Nihon shoki* revival of the Insei period as a whole.

The poetical interest in the *Nihon shoki* during the Insei period was a direct result of the practice of reciting *waka* as part of official *Nihon shoki* lecture series. Six such series took place at the court during the ninth and tenth centuries, with intervals of some thirty years.[37] More generally, however, this interest was informed by a concern for the origins of *waka* poetry. The simple fact that *waka*, like the kami, were a typically Japanese phenomenon without Chinese precedents meant that the question of their origin was inextricably linked with the question of the origin of Japan itself. Here we see parallels with the 'Japanisation' of Buddhism and the emergence of the notion that Japan was a land of the gods – both of which also had their origins in the Insei period. Also, the understanding of the world as consisting of three comparable centres of civilisation inspired the idea that the *waka* of Japan were equivalent to the *shi* poems of China and the *dhāraṇī* spells of India. *Waka* came to be seen as Japanese-language spells, infused with the same magical powers that characterised the *dhāraṇī* and *mantra* of Esoteric Buddhism – and indeed, *waka* served as such spells in medieval Shinto and Shugendo traditions. This idea is identical in structure to *honji suijaku* theory in that typically Japanese phenomena (the kami; *waka*) are explained as localised equivalents of Indian ones (Buddhist divinities; Buddhist spells).

It is hardly surprising, then, that the same period produced a large number of *waka* about kami. The first imperial poetry collection to include a section of poems on kami was *Goshūi wakashū* (1086), but only as a minor subsection within the category 'miscellaneous poems'. In contrast, the following imperial collection (*Senzai wakashū*, 1187) included an entire fascicle dedicated to kami poems. This remained the same in all subsequent collections. The rapid expansion of kami poetry had its background in the practice of organising frequent poetry assemblies for kami priests which, in turn, built on the conception of *waka* as sacred spells imbued with kami power.

The rediscovery of the *Nihon shoki* in the context of Insei period poetry was more than a mere rediscovery of this ancient work. As I briefly mentioned above, the references to the *Nihon shoki* deviate in many instances from the original *Nihon shoki* text. The body of legends and theories that arose from the tangled references and cross-references between these medieval works is often termed the (medieval) *Nihongi*, by way of distinction to the classical *Nihon shoki*. Below, we shall see that the twelfth century also produced the first texts of Ryōbu Shinto. Thus, the revival of the *Nihon shoki* set in motion a creative process that produced a veritable flood of both new texts and new ritual practices.[38]

## Ryōbu Shinto: Buddhist speculations around Ise

The second half of the twelfth century onwards saw the composition of a group of esoteric texts that are often referred to collectively as 'texts of medieval Shinto'. The first such texts were written by monks in the Buddhist milieu that was taking shape around the Ise shrines. *Honji suijaku* theory had been widely disseminated already by the mid-Heian period; from the Insei (or late-Heian) period onwards, Buddhist thought was increasingly concerned with questions related to Japan and its kami, and both came to occupy a more prominent place in Buddhist doctrine. Buddhist attention focused especially on the imperial ancestress Amaterasu. Already, before this time, Amaterasu had in *honji suijaku* texts been identified as an emanation of Kannon (Skt. Avalokiteśvara) or Dainichi (Skt. Vairocana).

The Buddhist interest in Amaterasu naturally led monks to take an interest also in this deity's shrine at Ise. However, as mentioned in Chapter 1, it was a long-established practice at Ise to taboo Buddhism, and *honji suijaku* identifications proved insufficient to overcome this taboo. However, rather than impede Buddhist theological speculation the tension between Ise and Buddhism presented monks with a tantalising problem that demanded doctrinal explanation, and it inspired a series of texts that are known collectively as 'Ryōbu Shinto texts'. *Ryōbu* refers to the twin mandalas of Shingon Esoteric Buddhism, the Taizō and Kongōkai mandalas. The name Ryōbu Shinto refers to theories that associated these two mandalas with the two Ise shrines (the Inner and the Outer Shrine).

One of the first Ryōbu Shinto texts was *Tenshōdaijin giki* ('Guidelines for Rituals Focusing on Amaterasu'), also known as *Hōshi kashō kuden* ('Oral Traditions of Abbot Baozhi'), and is thought to date from the late Heian period. In the early Kamakura period it was followed by *Nakatomi harae kunge* ('Reading and Explanation of the Nakatomi Purification Formula') and *Mitsu no kashiwa denki* ('Record of the August Oak'). These texts all originated at an estate of the Ise shrines called Sengūin, located to the

south-west of Ise in Shima province. Sengūin, then, can be identified as the cradle of Ryōbu Shinto. There are, moreover, indications suggesting that this Sengūin was closely connected with mountain practitioners from Ōmine, who in turn were under the control of the Tendai temple of Onjōji at the eastern foot of Mount Hiei.[39] This fact alone shows that early Ryōbu Shinto cannot be identified exclusively with the Shingon school.

The prime purpose of these Ryōbu texts was to provide a doctrinal explanation of Ise, its deities and its rituals in terms of Esoteric Buddhism. One important element of any such explanation was to rationalise the taboo on Buddhism adhered to at Ise. Two legends were devised to achieve this. One explained that when the territory of Japan originated, the 'Demon King of the Sixth Heaven of Desire' (*Dairokuten Maō*) sensed that this land would become a fountainhead of Buddhism, and therefore tried to destroy it. To save the day, the legend tells us, Amaterasu deluded the Demon King by vowing that she would lay down a taboo against Buddhism. Thus it was thanks to this taboo, the legend concludes, that Buddhism flourishes in Japan.[40]

An alternative legend recounts that when Emperor Shōmu founded the Tōdaiji temple in Nara, he sent the famous monk Gyōki (668–749) to Ise to ask Amaterasu for her endorsement of this large-scale Buddhist project. It seems that worship of Gyōki played an important role in the formation of Ryōbu Shinto; several early texts of Ryōbu and Ise Shinto were ascribed to Gyōki, and Gyōki was also said to have drawn the first map of Japan (known as *Gyōki-zu*) – a belief closely related to the notion of Japan as 'the original land of Dainichi', mentioned above. In the legend of Gyōki's pilgrimage to Ise, we are told that Amaterasu appeared to Gyōki and communicated an oracle to him, revealing her fundamentally Buddhist character. The fact that both of these legends feature already in *Nakatomi harae kunge* indicates that they originated at a very early stage, presumably to legitimise the approaches made by monks to the Ise shrines.

Important events that contributed to the formation of these legends were a series of Ise pilgrimages by Tōdaiji monks, led by Chōgen (1121–1206). These large-scale pilgrimages, the first of which took place in 1186, were undertaken to pray for (and later offer thanks for) the completion of the rebuilding of the Tōdaiji in Nara, which had been burnt to the ground by Taira no Shigehira in 1180. The legend of Gyōki's Ise pilgrimage, in particular, is thought to have originated in connection with these events. Chōgen's pilgrimages set a precedent that was followed by many other Buddhist parties, and the subsequent wave of Buddhist pilgrimages to Ise must have been an important factor in the development of Ryōbu thought.

The speculations and theories of Buddhist monks also triggered new developments in the theology of Ise shrine priests. This influence is most

apparent in the writings of priests of the Outer Shrine of Ise, who were of the Watarai lineage. The Outer Shrine of Ise (*Gekū* or *Toyuke daijingū*) and its deity, Toyuke, had traditionally been treated as inferior to the Ise Inner Shrine (*Naikū* or *Kōtaijingū*) and its deity Amaterasu. However, the Watarai argued that their shrine was equal, or even superior to the Inner Shrine. To press their point they even sued the Inner Shrine in 1295, after the Inner Shrine's head priest had protested against the Outer Shrine's 'novel' use of the character 'imperial' in its own title in an official document.[41] On this occasion the Outer Shrine used a group of 'secret texts' as evidence to prove that Toyuke was an imperial ancestor and thus equal to Amaterasu. These secret texts included the works that later came to be known as 'the Five Books of Shinto' (*Shintō gobusho*).[42] The theories included in these works are known as 'Ise Shinto' or 'Watarai Shinto'.

The texts of Ise Shinto deal mostly with the sacred origins of the Inner and Outer Shrines of Ise and their auxiliary shrines and sub-shrines, and contain detailed explanations of the buildings and rituals of these shrines and their religious meanings. They belong to the genre of 'foundation legends' (*engi*), documents that set out the origins of a shrine or temple, and on the basis of those origins explain its significance as a sacred site. The texts of Ise Shinto contain some ancient traditions peculiar to the Ise shrines, but also draw heavily on Chinese theories of Yin and Yang and the Five Phases of matter (wood, fire, earth, metal and water), for example by identifying the Outer Shrine with the phase of water and the Inner Shrine with fire. Since Chinese theory states that 'water conquers fire', this implied that the Outer Shrine was superior to the Inner Shrine. Also, these texts argued that the Outer Shrine deity Toyuke was identical to Ame no Minakanushi, a deity mentioned in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* (though in the latter not in the main text) as the first deity of the cosmogony. By stressing the seniority of Ame no Minakanushi over Amaterasu, once again the Outer Shrine was argued to be superior to the Inner Shrine.

An important figure in the formation of Ise Shinto was Watarai Yukitada (1236–1305). Yukitada played a leading role in the 1295 lawsuit over the character 'imperial', and was of central importance in systematising Ise speculations into a coherent set of doctrines. It has been argued that Yukitada must have been closely involved in the compilation of the secret texts (attributed to ancient Watarai ancestors) referred to on the occasion of this lawsuit, including those texts that were later termed 'the Five Books of Shinto'. While it is unlikely that Yukitada was the author of all of these texts, it is highly probable that he had a hand in the redaction of at least some of them. Yukitada's successors Watarai Tsuneyoshi (1263–1339) and Ieyuki (1256–1356) built upon his work, and completed Ise Shinto as a coherent doctrinal system by the end of the Kamakura period.

Ryōbu Shinto played an essential role in the formation of Ise Shinto. Many scholars have argued that Ise Shinto constituted a reaction against *honji suijaku* thought, quoting from its secret texts (*Yamato-hime no mikoto seiki* and others) the phrase: 'One must hide one's breath concerning Buddhism'. However, this phrase must be understood as a reference to the longstanding ritual taboo on Buddhism at Ise, and does not necessarily imply an anti-Buddhist stance. It is true that Buddhist phrases and Buddhist monks were tabooed in the context of kami ritual at Ise but, at the same time, Buddhism played an important role in the communal affairs and private lives of Ise priests, as is shown for example by the considerable numbers of Inner and Outer Shrine priests who took monastic vows after their retirement from shrine service. The lineage-based and private involvement of Ise priests with local Buddhist temples provided a solid basis for Buddhist speculation about the Ise shrines. Both Ryōbu and Ise Shinto shared the 'sacred space' of Ise not only as their stage but also as their main theological concern. Moreover, one of Ise Shinto's central figures, Watarai Tsuneyoshi, was in close contact with the monk Dōjun (?–1321) of the Shingon Sanbōin school, via the retired emperor Go-Uda. There is much to suggest that more than anything else, it was the exchange between these two figures that advanced the esoterisation of the Ise shrines.

The formulation of kami theories around Ise by Buddhist monks and Ise priests entered a new stage during the last decades of the Kamakura period. This was occasioned by new advances to the Ise shrines made by monks of the Esoteric Buddhist, Zen and Ritsu (Skt. Vinaya) schools. Of particular importance was the school of Eison (1201–90), who was a leading figure in both Shingon Esoteric Buddhism and the Ritsu school. Eison made three pilgrimages to Ise, founded a temple (Kōshōji) on Inner Shrine territory, and expanded his influence in Ise from there. Eison's Saidaiji lineage played an essential role in the further history of both Ryōbu and Ise Shinto as a centre of ritual initiations into their secrets.[43] Other Buddhist lineages that performed a similar function were the Sanbōin lineage (a branch of the Shingon Ono lineage) and the An'yōji lineage (a branch of the Rinzai Zen Shōichi lineage).[44]

As a result of the rapprochement between these various Buddhist lineages and the Ise shrines, a large number of Ryōbu Shinto texts were composed from the late Kamakura period onwards. Most of these texts, such as *Reikiki* ('Record of Subtle *Qi*'), *Ryōgū gyōmon jinshaku* ('Profound Commentary on the Architecture of the Two [Ise] Shrines'), and *Ryōgū honzei rishu makaen* ('The Original Vow of the Two Shrines Explained According to the Great Vehicle of the *Rishukyō*'), were attributed to the Shingon patriarch Kūkai (774–835), who was claimed to have been the founder of Ryōbu Shinto. Some of these texts even state that Kūkai and

Amaterasu emanated from the same 'original source' and were ultimately identical.[45] The most important (and voluminous) among these texts was the *Reikiki*, which served as the basis for elaborate ritualised initiation rituals and became the subject of a considerable number of theological commentaries.

Towards the end of the Kamakura period, a number of digests were compiled that provided an overview over the wide-ranging speculations and theories around Ise and its deities. Watarai Ieyuki's *Ruiju jingi hongen* ('Rubricated origins of the kami [of Ise]') from 1320 is a work of encyclopedic proportions, consisting almost entirely of quotations from texts of Ise Shinto and Ryōbu Shinto as well as a great variety of Buddhist and 'Chinese' works. Around the same time, an unknown author compiled *Jindai hiketsu* ('Esoteric Secrets of the Age of the Gods'), which gives an overview of Ryōbu theories. This work quotes widely from texts of Ise Shinto, Ryōbu Shinto, and also Sannō Shinto – another tradition of Buddhist kami theories, developed at the Tendai centre of Mount Hiei. These digests suggest that Buddhist kami theories flowed freely across sectarian dividing lines.[46]

During the Nanbokuchō period (1336–92), the Watarai priests of the Outer Shrine were active supporters of the southern court, and they lost their political influence with the downfall of that court. During this same period, the production of theological texts at Ise stagnated, and there were no significant new developments in Shinto thought at Ise during this time. On the positive side, the ideas of Ise Shinto were spread widely also outside Ise through the works of Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293–1354),[47] a courtier and general of the southern court who had learned about Ise theology from Watarai Ieyuki. The decline of the Watarai coincided with increased activity among the Inner Shrine priests, whose lineage was called Arakida. The Arakida composed hardly any new texts, but actively copied and preserved the Ise and Ryōbu Shinto texts of earlier centuries. In stark contrast to the Kamakura period, knowledge of Ise Shinto texts and theories during the later medieval period was handed down primarily at the Inner, rather than the Outer Shrine. Also, texts and documents of both Ise and Ryōbu Shinto were disseminated throughout Japan through the teachings of various Buddhist lineages.

## Sannō Shinto and the 'medieval *Nihongi*'

Parallel to the developments at Ise described in the previous section, another body of kami thought known as Sannō Shinto formed around the tutelary deity of Mount Hiei, Hie Sannō ('the Mountain King of Hie').[48] Worship of the kami of Hie had been part of Tendai practice on Mount

Hiei since Saichō (767–822) founded the first Tendai temple Enryakuji there. During Saichō's time there were two Hie shrines: Ni no Miya ('the Second Shrine'), where the mountain's original territorial kami Ōyamakui or Obie ('Small Hie') was worshipped, and Ōmiya ('the Great Shrine'), where the 'invited' kami Ōnamuchi or Ōbie ('Great Hie') was believed to reside. Over time more deities were 'invited' to the mountain, and the Hie shrine complex grew to a total of seven shrines, known as 'the Seven Shrines of the Mountain King'. Theories about the Buddhist 'original sources' of the seven Hie shrines, formulated in the course of the mid-Heian to Insei periods, laid the foundation for the later development of Sannō Shinto thought.

Today, the beginnings of Sannō Shinto are usually traced to the late Kamakura period. A central text from this period is *Sanke yōryakki* ('Abbreviated Record of the Essentials of the Mountain Lineage'). Although attributed to the Tendai abbot Kenshin (1131–92), this text was in fact compiled by a certain Gigen in the early fourteenth century. Another text compiled around the same time is *Enryakuji gokoku engi* ('Origins of the Protection of the State by Enryakuji'), which recounts the founding legends and later history of the Hie shrines and relates them to Tendai doctrine. This text takes the form of (often fictional) quotations from earlier texts by the famous Tendai monks Saichō, Ennin (794–864), Enchin (814–91), Annen (born 841) and Sōō (831–918), and the court historian Ōe no Masafusa (1041–1111). On Mount Hiei, kami theories were regarded as the domain of a dedicated group of monks known as the *kike* ('chroniclers'). While other groups specialised in exoteric teachings and practices, esoteric teachings and practices, or the precepts, these monks were in charge of 'documents' of various kinds, including those relating to Sannō. Gigen belonged to this group; and so did Kōshū (1276–1350), whose encyclopedic work *Keiran shūyōshū* ('A Collection of Leaves Gathered in Stormy Streams', 1318–48) gives us some insight into the breadth of *kike* knowledge.[49] Not all of this work has been preserved, but several versions of the section on kami (*shinmeibu*) have come down to us. It includes not only Sannō but also Ryōbu material, and is of a bafflingly expansive nature. The Hiei monks clearly drew on the kami theories developed earlier around Ise, and Sannō and Ise/Ryōbu Shinto had much in common; but naturally, the monks of Hiei regarded Hie Sannō as the supreme deity, and wove their theological web around this composite divinity to link it in with Tendai doctrine.

While Buddhist Shinto developed most fully at Ise and Hiei, parallel developments on a smaller scale took place also at other cultic centres. One of these was the Kasuga shrine, the clan shrine of the Fujiwara, which formed a 'shrine–temple complex' together with the nearby Fujiwara clan

temple of Kōfukuji. Here kami doctrines appeared from the late Insei period onwards, when the Fujiwara had already lost most of their political powers to the rising warrior class. A central idea in Kasuga texts was that in the Age of the Gods, Amaterasu had made a covenant appointing the descendants of Ame no Koyane (the Fujiwara clan ancestor) as 'assisting ministers' of her own descendants, the imperial lineage.[50] Also, Kasuga texts maintained that while Ise and Hachiman (as the shrine of Emperor 'jin) were the two most prominent imperial 'mausolea' (*sōbyō*), the Kasuga shrine was the first among the 'shrines of provincial magistrates' (*shashoku*). This is a reference to the Chinese system of mausolea (in Chinese *zong-miao*), where ruling houses worshipped their ancestors, and provincial shrines (*sheji*), where the gods of the land and the five grains were revered. Building on this Chinese parallel, Kasuga/Kōfukuji monks argued that the three shrines of Ise, Hachiman and Kasuga were the highest of all of Japan's sacred places. At the basis of this 'trinity' lay an obvious political analogy to the emperor (Ise), the military shogunate (Hachiman), and the Fujiwara court aristocracy (Kasuga) as the three pillars of the state. Sets of these three deities, each with an appropriate oracle, were depicted on scrolls (*sanja takusen*, 'oracles of the three shrines') and became popular objects of worship during the later medieval period.[51]

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Ryōbu Shinto lost its exclusive focus on Ise and began to spread also to other cultic centres, where local Ryōbu-type Shinto traditions were formed. One reason for this was that Ise was ravaged by war during the Nanbokuchō period, causing the production of theological texts to stagnate; another was that the Shingon sect lost much of its influence in the area as a result of these troubles.

Two centres where such localised Ryōbu traditions emerged at an early stage, were Mount Miwa and Mount Murō, both in the vicinity of Nara. The formulation of kami theories at Miwa can be traced back to the activities of the monk Kyōen (1140–1223) of Byōdōji, during the mid- or late Kamakura period.[52] According to its own founding legend, Miwa Shinto originated when the kami of Miwa appeared to Kyōen and revealed the secrets of an esoteric initiation (*kanjō*) to him and, in exchange, received a similar initiation from Kyōen. However, Miwa Shinto developed into a more well-defined body of kami theory only with the appearance in Miwa of monks of the above-mentioned Saidaiji lineage founded by Eison, who rebuilt the old shrine temple of Miwa, the Daigorinji. This lineage also played a prominent role in the formation of Ise-based Ryōbu Shinto, and it is natural to assume that their arrival in Miwa was an important factor in the systematisation and further development of Miwa Shinto, too. This assumption is confirmed by the frequent borrowings of earlier Ise ideas in Miwa texts.

A text from the earliest stage of Miwa Shinto is *Miwa daimyōjin engi* ('Origins of the Great Deity of Miwa') from 1318. This text stresses that the kami of Miwa and Amaterasu are two spirits of the same godhead, emanating from the Womb and Diamond Realm mandalas (which depict different aspects of the World Buddha Dainichi or Vairocana), respectively. Clearly, Miwa Shinto constituted an attempt to apply central notions from Ise Ryōbu Shinto to Miwa. Miwa Shinto later spread far beyond Miwa itself, and flourished throughout the medieval period as, perhaps, the most ubiquitous of all Ryōbu Shinto lineages.

The Shinto thought of Murō, an isolated site in the mountains between Miwa and Ise, was in later ages referred to as Goryū Shinto. An apocryphal 'testament' (*Goyuigō*) of the Shingon patriarch Kūkai, which is currently dated to the mid-Heian period, stated that Kūkai had buried a Wish-Fulfilling Gem (J. *nyoi hōju*, Skt. *cintāmaṇi*), given to him in China by his master Huiguo (746–805), on the 'Peak of Assiduous Practice' at Murō. This legend served to explain the prominence of the remote mountain temple of Murōji as a centre of Shingon rituals focusing on this magical gem. Ritual practices around the Wish-Fulfilling Gem became prominent first during the Insei period, and flourished in many shapes and forms during the rest of the medieval period. This gem was linked theologically with the jewel that formed part of the imperial regalia, and via this route, also with Amaterasu. These associations formed the foundations on which Goryū Shinto was construed.[53] The designation Goryū ('August Lineage') was based on the lineage's legendary origin in an initiation received by Kūkai from Emperor Saga (r. 809–23). Other Ryōbu Shinto lineages, of which we know little more than the fact that they existed, are generally regarded as branches of Goryū Shinto. Examples are the Kanpaku, Suwa, Susanowo and Ise lineages (of which the last is to be distinguished from Ise or Watarai Shinto).

The secret theories and rituals of these Ryōbu lineages were handed down in the manner of Esoteric Buddhist lineages, through oral initiations from master to disciple. Although oral, these initiations were often accompanied by written slips of paper (*kirikami*) containing the essentials of the transmitted ritual, its uses, its origin and its line of transmission. Especially within the Goryū lineages, collections of *kirikami* were compiled towards the end of the medieval period (*Hachijuttsū injin*, *Tateyoko injinshū*). Some of the *kirikami* (also known as *injin*) included in these collections may date back as far as the late Kamakura period, and they provide precious information about the transmission of Buddhist kami practices. These ritual initiations (J. *kanjō*, Skt. *abhiṣeka*) were often elaborate affairs, and receiving them was regarded as an important event in a monk's career. *Kanjō* initiations relating to kami included the *Ame no iwato kanjō*

('Cave of Heaven Initiation'), the *Sanshu no jinki kanjō* ('Three Regalia Initiation'), the *Waka kanjō* ('Waka Poetry Initiation'), the *Ise kanjō* ('Ise Initiation'), and many others; collectively, these are known as 'Shinto initiations'.

As indicated already by the inclusion of *waka* in the topic list of Shinto initiations, the influence of Ryōbu Shinto theory also extended into the field of literature. Within medieval literature and scholarship, the writing and transmitting of commentaries on older texts occupied a central position. As different lineages of hereditary scholars emerged, each specialising in their own genre or even in a single text, the commentaries handed down in each lineage could easily take on more significance than the original texts they were supposed to explain. This trend was further reinforced by the fact that these original texts were often open-ended, so that sections of commentary could, over time, become part of the original text. The tradition of writing commentaries extended also to texts of the kami tradition, such as *Nihon shoki*, *Reikiki*, *Nakatomi harae* (the Nakatomi purification formula, a slightly abbreviated form of the *ōharae no kotoba* or 'formula of great purification') and *Kuji hongi*. In addition, theories relating to the kami can be found in many medieval commentaries on works of classical literature, Buddhist scriptures and Chinese philosophical texts.[54]

Theories from Ryōbu and Sannō Shinto lineages gradually filtered into medieval literary genres such as poetry and poetics, collections of tales (*setsuwa*), military chronicles, and Noh. For example, the above-mentioned anecdote about Amaterasu and the Demon King of the Desire features in the military chronicle *Taiheiki*, the Noh piece *Dairokuten*, a dance piece entitled *Nihongi*, a popular didactic tale (*otogizōshi*) entitled *Shintō yurai no koto*, and others. This indicates that these theories were not exclusively the domain of secret transmissions and initiations at temples and shrines. Through readings and performances, and via commentaries, these theories reached a broad audience and offered a wealth of material for new literary activity.

Medieval Shinto thought not only influenced medieval literature but was also influenced by it. Legends and theological speculations about the kami span the bulk of medieval writing, from theological Shinto texts to collections of tales, military chronicles and *otogizōshi*. In contrast to Buddhist thought, kami theories lacked a solid doctrinal base; perhaps it was this very lack of solidity that allowed them to penetrate into all genres of Japanese writing in this way. It is well known that medieval Shinto was heavily influenced by Buddhist and Chinese thought but, during the later medieval period, the influence of medieval literature was at least as important as a source of inspiration for new kami legends and theories.

Of particular importance here was the relationship between kami thought and Japanese poetical theory. Most of the newly formulated legends and theories that are now collectively known as the 'medieval *Nihongi*' appeared first in commentaries on the *Kokin wakashū* (c.905), Japan's first imperial anthology of poetry. The references to kami in military chronicles and Noh drew not on theological Shinto texts, but rather on these *Kokin wakashū* commentaries.[55] Thus, medieval poetry commentaries were perhaps the main driving force behind the rapid development and expansion of kami thought during this period.

## Kamakura Buddhism and the kami

Throughout the medieval period, the relationship between kami and Buddhist divinities was conceived of as one between 'emanations' (*suijaku*) and their 'original sources' (*honji*). This view was held not only by religious professionals, but was shared also by other layers of the population. Therefore, the notion of *honji suijaku* was an important topic also for the Buddhist innovators of the Kamakura period. Among these, some simply adopted this notion without protest – as examples, we might mention Jōkei (a Hossō monk, 1155–1213) and Myōe (a Kegon monk, 1173–1232), who are both regarded as renewers within 'Old Buddhism'.[56] Others, as we noted above, not only adopted traditional *honji suijaku* thought but were also active in formulating new kami theories on the basis of this thought; Eison and the monks of the Rinzai Zen school come to mind as prominent examples. These attitudes contrast with those of the Pure Land schools, such as the followers of Hōnen (1133–1212) and Shinran (1173–1262), the Lotus school of Nichiren (1222–82), and the Sōtō Zen school of Dōgen (1200–53). These Buddhist thinkers were caught in a dilemma: on the one hand, they could not fully accept the *honji suijaku* view of kami and buddhas without weakening the strength of their arguments against existing Buddhism, while on the other hand, they could not completely abandon this view without alienating large sections of the population.

Hōnen rejected all religious practices except the chanting of Amida's name (*nenbutsu*). It follows logically from this stance that he also rejected faith in the kami. Although there is no evidence that Hōnen himself actively argued against kami worship, moves against such worship were, from time to time, initiated by his followers, and the Pure Land school's 'neglect of the kami' was a recurrent theme in attacks on this school by schools of 'Old Buddhism'. The same applies to Hōnen's disciple, Shinran. Shinran, too, took the standpoint that his followers should not worship the kami; but, on the other hand, he also recognised the existence of deities who protected the *nenbutsu* practitioner, and reprimanded those among

his followers who openly repudiated the kami. This was, at least partly, for fear of offending not only the power blocs of established Buddhism, but also the local warriors and peasants who formed his main recruiting ground.

While Hōnen and Shinran themselves eschewed kami-related practices, their successors tended to include *honji suijaku* theories in their teachings as an important tool for the propagation of Pure Land Buddhism. The Jishū school, which had its roots in a branch of Hōnen's Pure Land school, is a striking example of this. The founder of this school, Ippen (1239–89), claimed that he had received an oracle from the kami of Kumano (who was widely believed to be an emanation of Amida), and travelled from temple to temple, shrine to shrine to spread his message of salvation. Within the True Pure Land school, Shinran's great-grandson Zonkaku (1290–1373) wrote a work in which he explained which kami are emanations of Amida and can be of use in attaining rebirth in the Pure Land (*Shoshin honkaishū*, late Kamakura period).[57] A distinctive feature of this text is the clear distinction it makes between kami who are Buddhist emanations on the one hand, and 'real', i.e. non-Buddhist kami on the other. By means of this distinction, Zonkaku tried to reconcile kami worship with his school's rejection of all practices other than the *nenbutsu*.

Dōgen, too, rejected the principle of *honji suijaku*, but soon after his death the Sōtō school took a more open approach. Keizan Jōkin (1264–1325) in particular, who as the founder of Sōjiji (the head temple of the largest Sōtō lineage) was later recognised as the second patriarch of Sōtō Zen, invited both local kami and deities with roots in Chinese Yin-Yang thought to Sōtō temples as protector deities. Doctrinal explanations of the role of these protector deities naturally drew on *honji suijaku* theory.

Nichiren, on the other hand, actively sought to include the kami in his theology of devotion to the *Lotus sutra*. He revered Amaterasu and Hachiman as protector deities of the *Lotus sutra*'s 'True Law', and recommended the kami of Hie and a host of other minor kami to his followers as benevolent deities who protect the Lotus practitioner. Nichiren argued that these deities had abandoned Japan because of the decline of the True Law, and prophesied that they would return to protect the land once the True Law had been restored. After Nichiren's death, a faith in thirteen deities taking turns to protect the *Lotus sutra* spread among his followers. Much later, towards the end of the Muromachi period, a special form of so-called 'Lotus Shinto' (Hokke Shinto) developed among Nichiren followers.[58] This Buddhist form of Shinto was heavily influenced by Yoshida Shinto (see Chapter 3).

Looking back on these developments, we find that all schools of Kamakura Buddhism adopted the notion of *honji suijaku* in some form

or other. Also, it appears that the accommodation of kami within each school's original teachings was one way of reaching a wider audience, especially among lower layers of the population.

## Shugendo

Mountain worship existed in Japan already before the arrival of Buddhism. The mountains were regarded as a sacred area and were, in general, off-limits to all but those with special religious powers. With Buddhism arrived the practice of performing religious austerities in the mountains. In the Nara period especially, esoteric rites from the continent contributed to a rapid increase in the number of mountain practitioners. Initially, the court repressed such practitioners as 'privately (i.e. illegally) ordained monks' (*shidosō*), but its attitude changed with the establishment of the Esoteric Buddhist schools of Shingon and Tendai in the early ninth century. These schools used mountain areas such as Kōyasan and Hiei as centres for religious training. Increasingly, mountain practitioners found employment at the court as ritual specialists, and a growing number of them enjoyed court protection.

In this way, mountain worship was amalgamated with Esoteric Buddhism from an early date. It soon grew apart from village kami worship and developed into a distinct religious system of its own, known as *shugendō* (hereafter Shugendo). Important names in its formative period were En no Ozunu, Taichō (682–767), Mangan and Shōdō. These founding figures soon became the subjects of an ever-expanding web of legends and miracle tales, leaving it well-nigh impossible to separate fact from myth and assess their historical roles in the early stages of Shugendo's development. What is certain, is that mountain practitioners such as these opened up mountains throughout the country as sites of religious training. Legend names En no Ozunu as the patriarch of the Shugendo tradition of Mount Katsuragi, Taichō as the patriarch of Mount Hakusan, Mangan of Mount Hakone, and Shōdō of Nikkō. All these centres produced large numbers of mountain practitioners throughout the classical and medieval periods.[59]

After the mid-Heian period, increasing numbers of monks and nuns took to an itinerant life style away from the larger temples. In their quest for rebirth in a Pure Land, many of these monks and nuns spent long periods of time as hermits in remote mountain regions. To them the large temples appeared as a part of secular society, which had to be abandoned in order to gain true salvation. These itinerant monks and nuns were called *hijiri*, and the sites where *hijiri* formed groups and conducted a communal life became known as *bessho*, 'places separate [from the temple]'. The mountain practitioner and the *hijiri* resemble each other in that both can be

described as half monk and half layman. Together with Shugendo practitioners (known as *yamabushi* or *shugenja*), the *hijiri* played an important role in the evolvement of religious centres in the mountains.[60]

During the same period, the large temples lost the security of their classical state-sponsored existence with the decline of the *ritsuryō* system. To survive economically, temples began to advertise the magical powers of their main divinities in order to attract lay pilgrims. At the same time, rites for the personal salvation of believers increased in popularity. Combined, these two trends resulted in the development of pilgrimages to sacred sites. From the late Heian period onwards pilgrimages became an important religious practice among the court aristocracy. During the Insei period retired emperors made regular, large-scale pilgrimages to Kumano. The retired emperors Uda (970) and Hanayama (late tenth century) pioneered this practice in the late tenth century, but it became institutionalised from Shirakawa's pilgrimage in 1090 onwards; Shirakawa made nine Kumano pilgrimages, Toba twenty-one, Go-Shirakawa thirty-three, and Go-Toba twenty-eight. The pilgrimage route around the 'thirty-three Kannon temples of Western Japan' developed around the same time. Even Ise, where all private worship was forbidden by law, set its first steps on the road to becoming a pilgrimage destination during this same period.

From the Kamakura period onwards, the practice of making pilgrimages gradually spread from the court aristocracy to other layers of the population. Lower-ranking shrine priests and *yamabushi* known as 'masters' (*oshi* or *onshi*) acted as professional middlemen between pilgrims and sacred sites, organising pilgrimage groups and serving as pilgrims' guides. These middlemen travelled widely throughout the country, advertising the legends and miracle tales of their sacred site to attract custom.[61] To illustrate their preaching, illustrated scrolls and so-called 'pilgrimage mandalas' (*sankei mandara*) depicting pilgrimage sites were produced in great numbers.

Most active among those who preached faith in the powers of sacred mountain sites such as Kumano were the mountain practitioners or *yamabushi* themselves. In addition to their role as itinerant preachers, *yamabushi* also acted as specialists in all kinds of magical rituals, often of an exorcist nature. During the later medieval period they also gained a reputation for their military and *ninja* skills. In southern Kyushu, for example, ruling Shimazu *daimyō* employed warriors with a *yamabushi* background to lead their armies.[62]

In the course of the medieval period, Shugendo gradually came under the control of large temples of Esoteric Buddhism. By the onset of the Edo period (1600–1868) nearly all Shugendo centres were under the control of one of two lineages: the *Honzan-ha* governed by the Tendai temple Shōgoin, and the *Tōzan-ha*, initially under the Kōfukuji in Nara but later

under the Shingon temple Daigoji Sanbōin. In addition to these, a *yamabushi* from Mount Hiko in Kyushu with the name of Akyū-bō Sokuden (dates unknown) systematised the teachings and practices connected with this mountain, and succeeded in developing its Shugendo traditions into an autonomous religious organisation.

## The 'Way of Yin and Yang'

Next to Buddhism, theories on Yin and Yang and the Five Phases of matter were perhaps the intellectual import from the continent that had the most profound influence on Japanese intellectual and religious life. Greatly simplified, these theories explained that all matter can take on Yin ('dark') or Yang ('bright') qualities, and that these two qualities should ideally maintain an intricate balance. Moreover, all matter was thought to move through a regular cycle of 'phases' over time, taking on, in turn, the properties of each of the five basic elements: wood, fire, earth, metal and water. These two theories combined to produce a sophisticated body of cosmological thought, and lay at the basis of an understanding of the cosmos and its workings that was shared throughout the Chinese cultural sphere.

In Japan, these theories gave rise to an indigenous 'Way of Yin and Yang' (*onmyōdō*). This 'Way' had its origin in the classical *ritsuryō* bureaucracy, in the so-called 'Bureau of Yin and Yang' (*Onmyōryō*) that specialised in the three fields of astronomy, the calendar and Yin and Yang. The 'Yin and Yang' division of this ministry was charged with different forms of divination adopted from Sui and Tang China, all based on Yin and Yang and the Five Phases. One method, known as *chokusen*, involved the turning (in a roulette-like manner) of plates engraved with calendrical signs; another, called *ekizei*, the casting of sticks representing the eight trigrams from the Book of Changes (*Yijing*). However, as described in detail in Chapter 1, Japan also had a Ministry of Kami Affairs (*Jingikan*) whose functions overlapped with those of the Bureau of Yin and Yang. The Ministry of Kami Affairs used an earlier form of Chinese divination known as *kiboku*, which entailed the interpreting of cracks that appeared in tortoise shells when heated over a fire. It appears that at first, the 'Yin and Yang' division of the Bureau of Yin and Yang performed a subordinate, supplementary role under the Ministry of Kami Affairs. Over time, however, this division developed its own rituals under the influence of Esoteric Buddhism, and formulated an extensive body of rules of conduct based on *chokusen* divination. These rituals and rules laid the foundation for the Japanese Way of Yin and Yang. We can perhaps describe this 'Way' as a religious tradition developed in the religious environment of classical Japan from the bureaucratic tasks of this 'Yin and Yang' division.

The Way of Yin and Yang influenced kami ritual in many complicated ways from an early date. In fact, theories of Yin and Yang and the Five Phases had found their way into kami thought and ritual already before the institution of the Bureau of Yin and Yang. As the Way of Yin and Yang took shape as a religious tradition, it naturally overlapped with kami ritual in many aspects. This was perhaps most marked in the field of ritual purification. During the late Nara and early Heian periods, the Ministry of Kami Affairs carried out a number of public purification rituals, most notably 'Great Purification' (ōharae) in the sixth and twelfth months, and the 'Banquet on the Roads' (michiae) performed at the entrances to the palace, the capital, or even the whole of the Home Provinces to avert epidemics. However, these rituals were discontinued and replaced by similar rituals performed by the Bureau of Yin and Yang in the course of the mid-Heian period. As performance of the ceremony of Great Purification ceased, the 'formula of great purification' (ōharae no kotoba) recited on these occasions was adopted (under the new name of 'formula of the Nakatomi', Nakatomi harae) by 'Yin and Yang' specialists, who recited it as part of private purification rituals to treat illness or to guarantee the safe delivery of a child. The emergence of such 'Yin and Yang' rituals brought about great changes in existing kami ritual, and many elements of modern Shinto ritual can be traced to their influence.

Service at the Bureau of Yin and Yang required specialist knowledge and was, at least initially, beyond the ken of the average official. During the early years of the ministry's existence, it employed mainly foreign immigrants and monks who had returned to lay status. The early Heian period saw the appearance of specialised officials and, as with most functions within the ritsuryō bureaucracy, positions within the ministry were gradually monopolised by a small number of clan lineages. In the second half of the tenth century, Kamo no Yasunori (917–77) and Abe no Seimei (921–1005) gained prominence over all other lineages at the ministry. From the late tenth century onwards, the Kamo and Abe clans gained exclusive control over all official 'Yin and Yang' matters. Some of those who lost their longstanding positions within the ministry to the Kamo and the Abe established themselves as private 'masters of Yin and Yang' (onmyōji), and 'Yin and Yang' rituals spread to itinerant monks who performed rituals of divination and exorcism for aristocrats, warriors and peasants alike. This 'Yin and Yang' practice amalgamated with other, overlapping, traditions of Chinese origin in Japan. In the Nara period the court employed Taoist exorcists, many of immigrant stock, known as jugon;[63] and from the Heian period onwards, an astrological tradition known as the 'Way of the Planets and Stellar Mansions' (sukuyōdō) developed within Esoteric Buddhism.[64] These various traditions continued to exist side by

side throughout the classical and medieval periods, and gave rise to an extremely complicated body of divinatory and exorcist theories and practices which extended its influence to all layers of the population.

Behind the expansion of the 'Yin and Yang' thought and ritual lay an ever growing system of rules of conduct for the avoidance or removal of impurity (*kegare*), which governed every detail of life at the Heian court. On the level of the state, this preoccupation with impurity was given expression through, among others, the annual exorcist rituals at the four entrances to the capital, and through annual purification rituals at seven river rapids around Kyoto (*nanase harae*). These rituals were intended to forge multiple rings of supernatural protection around the person of the emperor, his palace, the capital and the Home Provinces. The notion that the emperor and his court were a focus of purity which was gradually diluted into the periphery, be it social or geographical, gave rise to persistent discrimination against peripheral social groups, areas and foreign lands.[65]

'Yin and Yang' thought governed everyday life at court both spatially and temporally. The practice of 'changing direction' (*katatagae*), for example, was based on the belief that malevolent deities (e.g. Daishōgun, Konjin) resented movement into specified directions at specified times. Complicated rules were followed to avoid the wrath of these deities, and there were strict taboos on movement or building work in offensive directions at offensive times.[66] Also, it was believed that fate had laid down a number of 'days of misfortune' (*suijitsu*) for every individual. 'Masters of Yin and Yang' handed down techniques for calculating such days and averting their dangers.

During the medieval period, the various continental techniques of divination and exorcism that had reached Japan in waves ever since the ancient period, amalgamated in complicated patterns. During the classical period, such techniques were, first and foremost, operated by the court, but during the medieval period they spread to the population at large, where they intermingled with folk custom to produce a tapestry of local practices that included all layers of society.

An example of such a practice is the use of purificatory figurines (*hito-gatashiro*). Many such figurines, roughly carved from wooden planks and sometimes decorated with coarsely drawn faces in ink, have been excavated from the area of the old capital of Heijōkyō in Nara. It is thought that aristocrats and officials transferred their impurity onto these figurines at rituals of great purification, by stroking them over their bodies and then discarding them on a river bank. Later, these figurines came to be used in so-called *karin-barae* ('riverside purifications'), large-scale rituals of exorcism which involved both masters of Yin and Yang and Esoteric

## *Ema* ('pictured horses')

*Ema* are paintings of horses on wood, offered to shrines or temples. Their origin can be traced back to the ancient custom of offering living horses to the kami. The practice of sacrificing oxen and horses and offering them to the gods originated on the continent, and references to it can be found already in the first-century *History of the Early Han* (*Hanshu*). In Japan, such sacrifices are mentioned in the *Nihon shoki* (in the chapter on Empress Kōgyoku). It is a matter of controversy when such rituals were introduced to Japan, but we know that in times of drought oxen and horses were sacrificed and offered to the 'kami of Han' (*kanjin*), and that such sacrifices were common in villages during the Nara period.

Such rituals seem to have ceased when Emperor Shōmu prohibited the taking of animal lives as part of his Buddhist policies in the mid-eighth century. Instead, wooden images or paintings of horses and oxen came into use. Although paintings of horses seem to have become part of kami ritual already at this early stage, the term *ema* itself does not appear before the eleventh century. At this time, the custom of offering such paintings to shrines had already become well established. The medieval period saw the appearance of *ema* depicting not only horses but also kami or buddhas, various animals, ships, and scenes from local life. Also, large *ema* were produced to demonstrate the economical resources of their donor. Today, *ema* are on the way to becoming objects of folklore, but they have yet preserved some of their religious function in modern shrine life.

Buddhist monks. Today, we find the same custom in rites of folk religion throughout Japan, often under the name *nagashi-hina* ('dolls set adrift').

Another ritual element of Chinese origin that soon gained prominence in kami ritual is the use of amulets and exorcist tablets (*jufu*). Such tablets, which have their roots in Chinese Taoist and folk practice, were introduced to Japan as early as the Nara period, and later spread through Shugendo and Yoshida Shinto (see Chapter 3).[67] Magical spells and inscriptions from the continent formed a central part of the practice of *yamabushi* and kami priests alike.

## *Omikuji* ('lots')

Today, lots are drawn for a large variety of reasons on all sorts of occasions but, originally, the drawing of lots was a religious method to determine the will of the gods. Lots were used to consult the kami in distinguishing the auspicious from the inauspicious, the high from the low, victory from defeat. Early methods included the drawing of marked strips of paper, wood or bamboo, or the waving of a sacred stick (*gohei*) over a pile of scraps of paper until one piece stuck to the stick. During the medieval period the drawing of lots was exclusively a religious rite, but during the Edo period (1600–1867) secular lotteries of various kinds became common. The present *omikuji*, which can be drawn by various methods at shrines and temples throughout the country and make predictions and give advice on one's personal future, developed from the late Edo period onwards.

In modern Japan divination, both at Shinto shrines and elsewhere, often draws on the Book of Changes, but this is a relatively recent phenomenon. Other methods were preferred, partly because of their greater simplicity, and partly because there was a belief that misfortune would befall those who studied the Book of Changes before the age of sixty.[68] However, during the Muromachi period (1338–1573) Zen monks, in particular, increased knowledge of the Book of Changes in Japan. As the country descended into war, this text became important as a basis for military theory (*heihō*), and many *daimyō* employed specialists in its use as military advisers. Many such specialists were educated at the Ashikaga academy, which flourished from the mid-fifteenth century onwards. This laid the foundation for the spread of knowledge of the Book of Changes in the Edo period and beyond.

Via these various routes, continental techniques of divination and exorcism penetrated deeply into the religious life of Japan. Practices derived from such techniques played an important role in medieval kami ritual, and continue to occupy a central position within shrine life to this day.

# Notes

1 See Kuroda Toshio, 'Shinto in the history of Japanese religion', *JJS* 7–1.

2 See Nijūnisha Kenkyūkai, ed., *Heian jidai no jinja to saishi* (Kokusho Kankōkai 1986), Okada Shōji, *Heian jidai no kokka to saishi* (Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai 1994), and Allan Grapard, 'Institution, ritual, and ideology: the twenty-two shrine-temple multiplexes of Heian Japan', *History of Religions* 23–3.

3 Studies of shrines by early modern Shinto scholars (beginning with the Yoshida in the late medieval period) all prioritise the twenty-two shrines. A well-known example is *Honchō jinjakō* ('A study of shrines in our land', *c.*1640) by Hayashi Razan (1583–1657).

4 On the emergence of the system of *sōsha* and *ichi no miya*, see Itō Kunihiko, 'Shokoku *ichi no miya*, *sōsha* no seiritsu', *Nihon rekishi* 355, and 'Shokoku *ichi no miya*-sei no tenkai', *Rekishigaku kenkyū* 500.

5 See Kawane Yoshiyasu, 'Ōdo shisō to shinbutsu shūgō' in his *Chūsei hōken shakai no shuto to nōson* (Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai 1984).

6 Nitta Ichirō, 'Kyogen wo ōseraruru kami', *Rettō no bunkashi* 6.

7 A typical example is the Chiba clan's cult of Myōken (the bodhisattva Sudṛṣṭi). Myōken cults spread throughout Japan from the Kamakura period as branches of this clan settled in different parts of the country. See Itō Kazuo, *Myōken shinkō to Chiba-shi* (Ron Shobō 1980).

8 See Nuki Tatsuto, *Tsurugaoka Hachimangūji* (Yūrindō 1996).

9 Higo Kazuo, *Miyaza no kenkyū* (Kōbundō 1941); *Toyoda Takeshi chosakushū* (8 vols, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1983), vol. 1; and Hagiwara Tatsuo, *Chūsei saishi soshiki no kenkyū* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1975).

10 See Kozo Yamamura, ed., *The Cambridge history of Japan* vol. 3, medieval Japan (Cambridge University Press 1990), chapter 7. In the glossary, this work defines *sōson* (also *sōmura* or simply *sō*) as 'self-governing organizations that existed in rural Japan from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries. Each *sō* took responsibility for its own irrigation, communal lands, law and order, and, in some cases, defence. Decisions were reached and carried out at group meetings (*yoriai*) made up of a headman and a small group of elders selected from among the leading landholders (*myōshu*).'

11 *Shinbutsu shūgō* was introduced to the academic world as a topic for research by Tsuji Zennosuke in 1907 ('Honji suijaku setsu no kigen ni tsuite', *Nihon bukkyōshi kenkyū* I, Iwanami Shoten). This article was epoch-making to the extent that later research may be characterised as criticism of, or elaboration on, Tsuji's arguments. On the history of research into this topic, see Yamaori Tetsuo, *Kami to okina no minzokugaku* (Kōdansha Gakujutsu Bunko 1991), especially chapter 'Kodai ni okeru kami to hotoke'; Hayashi Jun, 'Shinbutsu shūgō kenkyūshi nōto', *Shintō shūkyō* 117; Sone Masato, 'Kenkyūshi no kaiko to tenbō', *Bunka* 59–1/2; and Itō Satoshi, 'Shinbutsu shūgō no kenkyūshi', *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 63–3. In English, see Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan* (RoutledgeCurzon 2003).

12 This has been argued recently by, among others, Hakamaya Noriaki, *Hongaku shisō hihan* (Taizō Shuppan 1989) and *Hihan Bukkyō* (Taizō Shuppan 1990). For a discussion, see Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the transformation of medieval Japanese Buddhism* (University of Hawai'i Press 1999), chapter 2.

13 A central Mahāyāna doctrine explains that the Buddha, while able to take on physical form, is actually an eternal existence of pure enlightenment, which exists outside time. This form of the Buddha is called his 'dharma body'. When taking on physical form, the Buddha can choose to take on his 'enjoyment body', the body in which he has attained enlightenment, or a variety of 'transformation bodies', temporary manifestations conjured up by the Buddha to help others attain enlightenment. See e.g. Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism, the doctrinal foundations* (Routledge 1989), chapter 8.

14 Ienaga Saburō, 'Asuka Nara jidai no shinbutsu kankei', *Jōdai Bukkyō shisōshi kenkyū* (Hōzōkan 1966).

15 In the case of Kehi Jingūji, for example, the kami of Kehi appeared in a dream of Fujiwara no Muchimaro (680–737), and announced that he had become a kami long ago because of bad karma and wished to escape from that state through 'faith in the Way of the Buddha.' He asked Muchimaro to found a temple to that end. The story is handed down in the Fujiwara genealogy *Tōshi kaden*.

16 Tamura Enchō, 'Shinbutsu kankei no ichikōsatsu', *Shirin* 37–2.

17 Tsuda Sōkichi (*Nihon no Shintō*, Iwanami Shoten 1949) has pointed out that references to deities who wish to escape their deity state occur in Chinese biographies of monks (*Liang Gaosengzhuan*, *Tang Gaosengzhuan*). See also Yoshida Kazuhiko, 'Tado Jingūji to shinbutsu shūgō', in Umemura Takashi, ed., *Isewan to kodai no Tōkai* (Meicho Shuppan 1996).

18 Nemoto Seiji, *Nara Bukkyō to Gyōki denshō no tenkai* (Yūzankaku 1991). However, I disagree with Nemoto when he treats the tale of Gyōki's pilgrimage to Ise (on which more below) as historical (p. 117).

19 Hachiman is first mentioned in two articles from *Shoku Nihongi*, relating to incidents from 737 and 740. In both of these cases, Hachiman already displays characteristics of a martial deity associated with the protection of the state. It has been argued that Hachiman's rapid rise to fame may indicate that the deity was already, at this early stage, identified as Emperor Ōjin. See Nakano Hatayoshi, *Hachiman shinkō* (Hanawa Shinsho 1985).

20 This title features in a decree from the Ministry of State (*dajō kanpu*) dated 798 (in *Shinshō kyakuchokufu shō*).

21 A document issued by the authorities at Dazaifu, and handed down in the *Iwashimizu monjo*. Earlier Japanese occurrences of the term *suijaku* exist, but not in a context that identifies kami as Buddhist emanations.

22 Later, a third category was sometimes added: kami as embodiments of dharma nature, or the absolute itself (*hosshōshin*). See Nakamura Ikuo, *Nihon no kami to ōken* (Hōzōkan 1994), and Kagamishima Hiroyuki, 'Shinbutsu kankei ni okeru hosshōshin no mondai', *Shūkyō kenkyū* 3–3.

23 Although the ultimate source of this phrase is *Laozi*, it entered Buddhist discourse more directly via the *Mohezhiguan*, a treatise on meditation by the Tiantai patriarch Zhiyi (538–97). Here, *wakō dōjin* is described as the 'starting point of tying a karmic link [with the Buddhist truth].'

24 On this text, see Allan G. Grapard, '*Keiranshūyōshū*: A different perspective on Mt. Hiei in the medieval period', in Richard K. Payne, ed., *Re-visioning 'Kamakura' Buddhism* (University of Hawai'i Press 1998). The passage quoted

here can be found in *Shintō taikei* vol. 'Tendai Shintō ge' (Shintō Taikei Hensankai 1993), p. 415.

25 See also Mark Teeuwen, 'The kami in esoteric Buddhist thought and practice', in John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, eds, *Shinto in history: Ways of the kami* (Curzon 2000).

26 See Shibata Minoru, ed., *Goryō shinkō* (Yūzankaku 1984).

27 During the Boshin War of 1868–9, the court sent an imperial messenger to the tomb of Emperor Sutoku in Sanuki province to 'invite his spirit' to Kyoto, lest he would impede the imperial army in its struggle with the bakufu forces. This incident shows that the fear of angry spirits remained real over many centuries. Tanigawa Ken'ichi, *Ma no keifu* (Kōdansha Gakujutsu Bunko 1984).

28 On the use in this context of *Nihongi* as an alternative title for the *Nihon shoki*, see below.

29 Important texts in which this idea is formulated were *Yamatai shi* ('Poem of Yamatai'), ascribed to the Chinese monk Baozhi (J. Hōshi), and *Miraiki* ('Prophesy'), ascribed to Shōtoku Taishi. See Komine Kazuaki, '*Yamatai shi* no gengo uchū', *Shisō* 829, and 'Shōtoku Taishi *Miraiki* no seiritsu', *Kikan Bungaku* 8–4.

30 *Hongaku* theories and practices were based on the notion that all beings are fully enlightened buddhas by birth. On *hongaku* thought and its influence on kami thought and practice, see Jacqueline I. Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the transformation of medieval Japanese Buddhism* (University of Hawai'i Press 1999), especially pp. 40–3, and Tamura Yoshirō, *Hongaku shisōron* (Shunjūsha 1990).

31 Sasaki Kaoru (*Chūsei bukkyō to Kamakura bakufu*, Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1997) argues that this notion performed three main functions: 1) to legitimise imperial rule; 2) to base imperial legitimacy on the kami's protection of the state and the people; and 3) to sanctify the territory of the state.

32 The same text also identifies Amaterasu and Kūkai as emanations of Dainichi. The passage in question was often quoted in later works of Ryōbu Shinto (see below), and served as one of the nodal points of medieval Shinto thought.

33 See Ōishi Yoshiki, *Nihon ōken no seiritsu* (Hanawa Shobō 1975).

34 See Gerhild Müller, *Kagura, Die Lieder der Kagura-Zeremonie am Naishidokoro* (Harrassowitz 1971).

35 Wish-Fulfilling Jewels were often identified as relics of the Buddha. In the Shingon school, a jewel said to have been brought back from China by Kūkai and buried for the protection of the nation at Murōzan formed an important focus for esoteric court ritual. See Brian D. Ruppert, *Jewel in the ashes: Buddha relics and power in early medieval Japan* (Harvard East Asian Monographs vol. 188, 2000).

36 Examples are Fujiwara Norikane, *Waka dōmōshō*, Fujiwara Kiyosuke, *Ōgishō*, Fujiwara Chikashige, *Kokinshū jochū*, and Fujiwara Norinaga, *Kokin wakashū chū*. Commentaries on *Nihon shoki* from the same period include Fujiwara Michinori, *Nihongi shō*, and Kenshō, *Nihongi kachū*.

37 These lecture series took place over several years, with series starting in 812, 843, 879, 904, 936 and 965; *waka* composed in conjunction with *Nihon shoki* lectures have been preserved from 879, 906 and 943.

38 On the significance of the Insei period revival of the *Nihon shoki* see Ogawa Toyoo, 'Chūsei Nihongi no taidō', *Nihon bungaku* 42–3, 'Hensei suru Nihongi', *Setsuwa Bungaku Kenkyū* 30, and 'Inseiki no honsetsu to Nihongi', *Bukkyō Bungaku* 16.

39 See Okada Shōji, 'Ryōbu Shintō no seiritsuki', in *Shintō shisōshi kenkyū* (Anzu Motohiko Sensei Koki Kinen Shukugakai 1983), and Mark Teeuwen and Hendrik van der Veere, *Nakatomi harae kunge: Purification and enlightenment in late-Heian Japan* (iudicium verlag 1998).

40 The same legend was also used in other contexts; see Itō Satoshi, 'Dairokuten Maō setsu no seiritsu', *Nihon Bungaku* 44–7.

41 The documents of this case are collected and transmitted under the title *Kōji satabumi*, which can be found in *Shintō taikei* vol. 'Ise Shintō jō' (Shintō Taikei Hensankai 1993).

42 *Gochinza shidaiki*, *Gochinza denki*, *Gochinza hongi*, *Hōki hongi* and *Yamato-hime no mikoto seiki*. All were claimed to date from before the Nara period, but are obviously of medieval origin (mid-thirteenth century?). Other Ise Shinto texts include *Jinnō jitsuroku*, which identifies itself as an appendix to *Shinsen shōjiroku* (815), and three works attributed to Shōtoku Taishi: *Jinnō keizu*, *Tenkujisho* and *Ōdai keuki*. They can be found in *Shintō taikei* vol. 'Ise Shintō jō' (Shintō Taikei Hensankai 1993). On Ise Shinto or Watarai Shinto, see Mark Teeuwen, *Watarai Shinto: An intellectual history of the Outer Shrine in Ise* (CNWS Leiden 1996).

43 Kondō Yoshihiro, 'Ise Jingū mishōtai', in Hagiwara Tatsuo, ed., *Ise shinkō I* (Yūzankaku 1985), and Itō Satoshi, 'Ise no Shintōsetsu no tenkai ni okeru Saidaiji-ryū no dōkō ni tsuite', *Shintō Shūkyō* 153.

44 The An'yōji lineage was founded by Chigotsu Daie (1229–1312), a disciple of Enni Ben'en (1202–80). It combined Zen with esoteric practices, and was based in Ise. Its traditions were transmitted to Nōshin, the founder of Shinpukuji in Aichi prefecture which, to this day, preserves large numbers of medieval Shinto texts. See Hagiwara Tatsuo, 'Chūsei ni okeru zenmitsu itchi to Ise Jingū', *Kamigami to sonraku* (Kōbundō 1978).

45 See Itō Satoshi, 'Tenshō Daijin – Kūkai dōtaisetsu o megutte', *Tōyō no Shisō to Shūkyō* 12.

46 A prominent representative of this trend was the Tendai monk Jihen, who was active during the early decades of the fourteenth century. Jihen, who authored *Kuji hongi gengi* and *Toyoashihara shinpū waki*, learnt about Ise and Ryōbu Shinto from the Outer Shrine priest Watarai Tsuneyoshi (1263–1339). In the early fifteenth century another Tendai monk, Ryōhen, lectured on *Nihon shoki* and *Reikiki*, and the Pure Land monk, Shōgei (1341–1420), composed commentaries on these same texts.

47 Ise Shinto theories are prominent in Chikafusa's *Gengenshū* and *Jinnō shōtōki*.

48 For an overview of Sannō Shinto, see Sugahara Shinkai, *Sannō Shintō no kenkyū* (Shunjūsha 1992). The main texts of the tradition can be found in *Shintō taikei* vols 'Tendai Shintō jō' and 'ge' (Shintō Taikei Hensankai 1990 and 1993).

49 In English, see Allan G. Grapard, '*Keiranshūyōshū*: A different perspective on Mt. Hiei in the medieval period', in Richard K. Payne, ed., *Re-visioning 'Kamakura' Buddhism* (University of Hawai'i Press 1998).

50 Ōmori Shirō, 'Jindai no yūkei', *Nihon bunkashi ronkō* (Sōbunsha 1975).

51 Brian Bocking, *Sanja takusen: Oracles of the three shrines* (Curzon Press 2002).

52 See Murayama Shūichi *et al.*, eds, *Miwaryū Shintō no kenkyū* (Meicho Shuppan 1983).

53 Other Ryōbu Shinto lineages, of which we know little more than the fact that they existed, are generally regarded as branches of Goryū Shinto. Examples are the Kanpaku, Suwa, Susanowo and Ise lineages (of which the last is to be distinguished from Ise or Watarai Shinto).

54 Commentaries on the *Nihon shoki* include Urabe Kanekata, *Shaku Nihongi*; Ryōhen, *Nihongi kikigaki*, *Nihongi shikenmon*; Shōgei, *Nihongi shishō*; Dōshō's and Shun'yu's copies of *Nihon shoki shikenmon*; Ichijō Kaneyoshi, *Nihon shoki sanso*; and Yoshida Kanetomo, *Nihon shoki shō*. Commentaries on *Reikiki* include the anonymous *Reikiki seisakushō*; Ryōhen, *Reiki kikigaki*; and Shōgei, *Reikiki shishō* and *Reikiki shūishō*. Literary works containing kami theories include Kitabatake Chikafusa, *Shokugenshō*; the above-mentioned *Yamatai shi* and *Shōtoku Taishi miraiki*; and commentaries on works of classical literature such as *Kokinshū*, *Ise monogatari*, and *Wakan rōeishū*. Kami theories can also be found in Buddhist commentaries on sutras such as the *Yugi-kyō* or the Lotus sutra, or on Kūkai's apocryphal testament (*Goyuigō*).

55 Itō Masayoshi, 'Chūsei Nihongi no rinkaku – Taiheiki ni okeru Urabe Kanekazu setsu o megutte', *Bungaku* 40–10.

56 Both Jōkei and Myōe felt close to the Kasuga shrine, and wrote about its kami. On Jōkei, see Agatsuma Matashirō, 'Jōkei no jingi shinkō', *Terakoya Gogaku Bunka Kenkyūjo Ronsō* 2.

57 On Zonkaku and the kami, see Imahori Taitsu, *Jingi shinkō no tenkai to bukkyō* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1990).

58 On kami beliefs in the Nichiren school, see Miyazaki Eishū, *Nichirenshū no shugojin: Kishimojin to Daikokuten* (Heirakuji Shoten 1958). In English, see Lucia Dolce, 'Hokke Shinto: Kami in the Nicheren tradition', in Mark Teeuwen and Fabio Rambelli, eds, *Buddhas and kami in Japan* (Routledge Curzon 2003), pp. 222–54.

59 Murayama Shūichi, *Yamabushi no rekishi* (Hanawa Shobō 1970).

60 See Inoue Mitsusada, *Nihon Jōdokyō seiritsushi no kenkyū* (Yamagawa Shuppansha 1956), and Itō Yuishin, *Hijiri bukkyōshi no kenkyū* (2 vols, Hōzōkan 1995).

61 A typical text that originated in this context is *Shintōshū*.

62 Nagamatsu Atsushi, *Shuryō minzoku to shugendō* (Hakusuisha 1993).

63 See Shimode Sekiyo, *Nihon kodai no jingi to dōkyō* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1972).

64 *Sukuyōdō* was based on the *Sukuyō-kyō*, a Chinese sutra imported by Kūkai which draws heavily on Indian astrology. See Yamashita Katsuaki, *Heian jidai no shūkyō bunka to onmyōdō* (Iwata Shoin 1996).

65 Needless to say, this contempt for foreign lands was closely related to the notion that Japan was a 'land of the gods' (see above). The one exception here was China, to which Japan was thought to be inferior. It has been argued that the Japanese took their inferiority complex out over Korea, which they regarded as greatly inferior to Japan. See Itō Kiyoshi, *Nihon chūsei no ōken to ken'i* (Shibunkaku 1993), and Murai Shōsuke, *Ajia no naka no chūsei Nihon* (Azekura Shobō 1988).

66 See Bernard Frank, *Kata-imi et Kata-tagae: Étude sur les interdits de direction époque Heian*, Bulletin de la maison franco-japonaise, nouvelle série 5–2/4 (Isseidō Shoten 1958).

67 Responsible for the widespread adoption of exorcist tablets at shrines was Yoshida Kanetomo (1435–1511), who adapted Taoist tablets to shrine use and accorded them a central role in Yoshida ritual.

68 An exception was Fujiwara no Yorinaga (1120–56). Yorinaga noted in his diary *Taiki* that he had the *onmyōdō* ritual of Taizanpukun-sai carried out before he embarked on his study of the *Yijing* to avert any negative effects. Subsequently, court opinion ascribed his violent death in the Hōgen war to his hubris (*Hanazono-in nikki*). Imaizumi Yoshio, 'Eki no batsu ga ataru koto', in *Chūsei Nihon no shosō* II (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1989).

# 3

# THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD
## In search of a Shinto identity

*Endō Jun*

It was in the early modern period (1600–1867) that the outline of Shinto as we know it today came into focus. From the perspective of the religious system, we have already seen that Shinto of the middle ages was indistinguishable from Buddhism in terms of *constituents*, *network* and *substance*. In the early modern period, however, Shinto gradually re-defines itself in contradistinction to Buddhism. It is not that both existed as separate religions; rather they coexisted, each necessitating the other. Bitō Masahide has defined that coexistence by saying that Shinto, Buddhism and folk religions merged and adopted the form of a 'national creed'.[1] He points out, for example, that it was in the early modern period that all sorts of religious elements, Shinto, Buddhist and many more besides, began to intermingle; the ritual cycle of contemporary Japan proves to be a legacy of this early modern period.

Let us turn our attention to the different dimensions of the religious system. It was Yoshida Shinto that set the direction of what we have called the network of early modern Shinto. In place of the now-defunct shrine system of ancient Japan, the Yoshida family, after its own fashion, began to organise shrines and priests across the length and breadth of Japan. This reorganisation by the Yoshida became, with the support of the Edo bakufu, the foundation of the early modern shrine system. Now, for the first time, local shrines of medium to small size, as well as peripheral religious practitioners, were all incorporated into a single national structure. Again, the early modern network was characterised by the formation of religious groupings transcending locality and status. This period witnessed the formation of *kō*, religious confraternities affiliated to sacred mountains or famous temples and shrines. The people who affiliated themselves to these *kō* were linked to the mountains and temples through the intermediary of religionists such as *oshi* and, as a result, these confraternities themselves

became one of the transregional groupings that proved typical of early modern Japan.

The creation of academic circles, such as those that grew up around masters of National Learning (*kokugaku*), established a network that cut across status distinctions as well. Through the communication between circle members or disciples and through various types of publishing activity, Shinto *substance* – once the closely guarded secret of hereditary Shinto families – was now made more generally available. These developments, along with the organisation of shrine priests and shrines under shrine families like the Yoshida and Shirakawa, were the premise upon which modern Shinto religious groups were subsequently to be constructed. This was a system that allowed the broadest participation. With regard to the *constituents* dimension, there are striking developments in the direction of the 'popularisation' of Shinto and its reception amongst the masses, both rural and urban. Until now, the principal bearers of Shinto were a limited number of Shinto families and Buddhist priests, but the early modern period saw the emergence of a number of new *constituents*, new varieties of religionists and nativists, for example. At the same time, the period saw anti-Buddhist tendencies, moves, that is, to expel Buddhist priests from the *constituents* of the Shinto system.

In terms of *substance*, academic shifts are noteworthy. Developments in the methodology of textual analysis led to methodological advances in Shinto study. For the first time since the middle ages, Shinto thought of various types now became systematised as a focus of research by Confucianists, and by specialists of Japanese literary studies and National Learning. New investigative tendencies prompted questions about historical origins, and Shinto began to be spoken of as constituting the 'original form' of Japanese history. The flourishing of anti-Buddhist thought, aimed at expelling Buddhist elements from Shinto preaching and thinking, was one striking expression of the purification of Shinto *substance*.

## Yoshida Shinto: reorganising shrines and priests

We can locate the budding of early modern Shinto in the collapse of the various systems sustaining medieval Shinto after the Ōnin war (1467–77). With regard to the imperial court, which went into decline as the Muromachi period (1338–1573) progressed, we should note that the court's dispatch of emissaries to various shrines bearing offerings (*hōhei*) ended with the outbreak of the Ōnin conflict. The *daijōsai*, the most sacred of the several stages of imperial enthronement rites, was performed for the last time in 1466, for Emperor Go-Tsuchimikado. Many other court rites and ceremonies – the eleventh month *niiname* harvest

celebration prominent among them – ceased to be performed from around this time.

The ancient shrine system structured around the twenty-two shrines (*nijūnisha*), first shrines (*ichi no miya*) and provincial shrines (*sōsha*) also now fell into disuse. The special position occupied by the twenty-two shrines in the devotion of the imperial family was always evident from their regular receipt of imperial emissaries bearing offerings, but with the decline of the court the practice was discontinued. In the midst of the social anarchy induced by the Ōnin wars, the twenty-two shrines and the first and provincial shrines lost their privately-held land which had sustained them economically, and they now encountered serious financial difficulties. This was part of the chaotic social context in which Yoshida Shinto emerged to raise the curtain on the stage of early modern Shinto.

Yoshida Shinto grew against the backdrop of that particular brand of late medieval thought known as *sankyō itchi*, which taught the 'three creeds' (*sankyō*) of Shinto, Confucianism and Buddhism are ultimately 'one and the same' (*itchi*). The idea traces its origins to China, where it referred to Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. It was transmitted to Japan in the Kamakura period both by Japanese priests who crossed to Song China and Chinese Song priests who came to Japan. There were also parallel developments of Japanese origin. Shinto theories were being expounded in the middle ages from a position of the unity of various creeds – here the background was the tendency towards an identification of Shinto and Buddhism (*shinbutsu shūgō*) – and these developments were observable in both Ise Shinto and Ryōbu Shinto. In the middle and latter parts of the Muromachi period, there emerged amongst the ruling elite and intellectual groups a Japanese version of the 'three creeds are one' involving Shinto, Confucianism and Buddhism, which effectively merged the Ise and Ryōbu approaches. Yoshida Kanetomo (1435–1511), the founder of Yoshida Shinto, was one man who formulated his Shinto thought in that environment.

Kanetomo was born into the Yoshida Urabe family which served both as *jingi taifu*, a court post with responsibility for imperial rites, and as hereditary priests to the Yoshida shrine. The Urabe family was from Izu province originally and was founded by Urabe Hiramaro (807–11). In this early period, the family served the court with its expertise in tortoise-shell divination. After Hiramaro's great grandson, Kanenobu (dates unknown), became *jingi taifu*, that position became the hereditary right of the Urabe family. In the Kamakura period, the Urabe family divided into the Hirano and Yoshida lines, but both transmitted knowledge of the *Nihon shoki* and other classics as well as ritual practices, and both served the court because of the privileged knowledge they had in these areas. In the Kamakura

period, the Hirano family flourished but in early Muromachi – in the Nanbokuchō period (1337–92) to be precise – declined, and the Yoshida family rose to prominence by default, as it were. Kanetomo was initiated into these traditions, and he it was who merged them with medieval Shinto theories in order to create his own unique brand of Shinto.

Kanetomo began to expound his new theories during the Ōnin war and the period of anarchy that ensued. He took advantage of the social chaos that prevailed, and he rapidly won converts to his Shinto, both at court and amongst the military. In 1484, with the assistance of Hino Tomiko (1440–96), the mistress of the eighth shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa, he built on the top of Yoshida mountain a shrine which he styled *Taigenkyū saijōsho* or the 'Shrine of the Great Origin'. He summoned deities from every part of Japan to his shrine – most notably those of Ise – and claimed that here stood the original of all the shrines in the land since the time of Emperor Jinmu.

It was the normal function of a priest to oversee the rites at a given shrine, and to construct and expound teachings based on his understanding of the shrine and its deities. The significance of Kanetomo's activities, however, was that it marked a first step towards a new type of priest, one who was not necessarily bound by the local traditions of a specific shrine. The separation of shrine Shinto from Shinto based upon a specific set of teachings was a striking development of the late Edo and early Meiji periods, but the origins of that separation are to be found in Yoshida Kanetomo's activities of the late medieval period. We should also note well the subtle intermingling of local shrine tradition and new Shinto theory which Kanetomo achieved.

Again, Kanetomo styled himself *jingi kanryō chōjō* ('Supreme head of shrine and kami affairs') and, with the support of courtiers and military houses, he began to issue Yoshida notices 'as if from the emperor' (*sōgen senji*) to shrines in the Home Provinces. He began, in other words, to seize for himself what had been the court's exclusive right to issue court ranks and titles to priests and shrines, and the right to appoint men of his choosing to different localities. Further, he sought to place the Ise shrine under his own control by proclaiming in 1489 that the sacred mirror of Ise had removed itself into the Yoshida shrine. He clearly hoped to have his own shrine displace Ise as the most important of all the shrines in the land.

Kanetomo's Shinto theories are to be found in greatest detail in his *Yuiitsu shintō myōbō yōshū*, which he claimed had been written by his ancestor Kanenobu.[2] In this text, he refers to his own Shinto as *genpon sōgen shintō*, that is, Shinto as founding principle of the universe, in contra-distinction to other prevailing types of Shinto which he dismissed for their obsession with shrine origins or their merging with Buddhism. Kanetomo

maintained that his Shinto was the one true Shinto (*yuiitsu* Shinto was the word he used) deriving as it did from the orthodox line that began with Amaterasu and Ame no Koyane. The deity Kunitokotachi, who appears in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* but is notable there for not actually doing anything, was the great founding deity whom Kanetomo placed at the centre of the cosmos. In terms of its content, Yoshida Shinto divides into two sets of teachings, 'manifest' (*kenro*) and 'discreet' (*on'yū*). Manifest teachings seek to disclose such phenomena as the creation of heaven and earth, the happenings of the era of the gods and the lineages of the nobility. Manifest teachings are rooted in such texts as the *Kojiki*, the *Nihon shoki* and the *Sendai kuji hongi*, a compilation of tales and legends which acquired a place of especial importance in both Watarai and Yoshida Shinto.[3] For the 'discreet' teachings, on the other hand, Kanetomo cites three otherwise unknown scriptures with Taoist-sounding titles as its sources, which treat such esoteric (and ritual) matters as 'the spirit-responses of the Three Powers (i.e. Heaven, Earth and Man)', the 'empowerment of the three mysterious properties (i.e. body, speech and mind)', and the 'three kinds of spirit-treasures'. Kanetomo defined Yoshida Shinto as being comprised of essence (*hontai*), form (*sugata*), and function (*hataraki*). He divided each of these into the three subsections of Heaven, Earth and Man to create nine component parts, which he further subdivided into eighteen. All of creation, he argued, partook of one of these eighteen manifestations, and thus there was nothing that did not have its origins in Shinto.

Kanetomo insisted on the unique qualities of his Shinto but, in reality, the notion of a 'God of Great Origin' derived directly from Ryōbu and Ise Shinto teachings, and the subdivision of Shinto into 'essence, form and function' was a direct loan from esoteric Buddhism. To all this Kanetomo added Yin Yang theories about the five elements and Taoist thought, too. In Yoshida Shinto, a range of ascetic practices based on these various doctrines was performed, but it is clear that the three main rituals of Yoshida Shinto (named *shintō goma*, *sōgen gyōji* and *jūhachi shintō gyōji*) were profoundly influenced by esoteric Buddhism and Ryōbu Shinto. Yoshida Shinto practices were, in short, constructed out of an amalgam of intellectual trends current during Kanetomo's lifetime.

Yoshida Shinto thus had a forced, contrived quality to it which inevitably enough was to lead to the fiercest of attacks, but Yoshida Shinto had the profoundest influence on the Shinto theories of later times since it was the first systematisation of Shinto principles. Almost all early modern Shinto theories have Yoshida Shinto as their starting point, and one might go so far as to suggest that Yoshida Shinto doctrines as developed by Kanetomo marked not only the summation of medieval Shinto thinking, but the very origins of early modern Shinto thought.

Kanetomo not only wrote but he delivered lectures as well, and many of his lectures were recorded, copied and disseminated. Perhaps it was only natural, given the traditions of his family, that the *Nihon shoki* was taken up so frequently in his lectures, but that he devoted so much energy to the *Nakatomi harae*, is worthy of especial note. The *Nakatomi harae* was a version of the *ōharae* purification rite which became popular amongst Yin Yang specialists after the *harae* purification rites of the court fell into decline. They were called Nakatomi because it was the Nakatomi family that used to recite the text employed in the rite. The *Nakatomi harae* incorporated elements of Yin Yang and Esoteric Buddhism during medieval times, and such was its import in medieval religious society that there were commentaries written upon it from both Ryōbu Shinto and Ise Shinto perspectives. Kanetomo himself wrote a commentary, and there are extant many accounts of his own frequent lectures on this *Nakatomi harae*. His commentaries were calculated to standardise the *Nakatomi harae* texts that emanated from the Yoshida family.

Again, Yoshida Shinto exerted a profound influence on the spread during the early modern period of the *sanja takusen*. The *sanja takusen* or the 'Oracles of the three shrines' refer to the oracles of the shrines of Ise, of Hachiman Daibosatsu and of Kasuga Daimyōjin. These were inscribed on hanging scrolls beneath depictions of the three deities and became the object of popular veneration in Edo Japan.[4] It appears the oracles had their origins in the work of a Buddhist priest from the Tōdaiji, but Kanetomo incorporated them within Yoshida Shinto and so played a major role in disseminating faith in the oracles amongst the common people of the Edo period.

In terms of the organisation of shrines and their priests, the imperial certificates of court rank and status (*sōgen senji*) and the Shinto licences (*saikyojō*) which Kanetomo began to dispense, merit attention. In earlier times, the ranks and status accorded to shrines and priests were determined at court assemblies, and priests would make direct appeals to the emperor for, say, advancement through rank and status, but this practice fell into disuse in medieval Japan. Kanetomo began to issue rank and status certificates with the sanction of the imperial court, but his successors in later generations no longer sought imperial sanction; the Yoshida family came to exercise their own discretion. These Yoshida certificates and licences were a response to two specific changes taking place against the backdrop of the reorganisation of local society in the late medieval period: the increasing specialisation of the shrine priest's role on the one hand, and the emergence of a relatively new type of shrine belief, centring not on local kami but on kami 'installed', as it were, from further afield. During the period of the civil wars, the so-called Sengoku period (1467–1568),

the head of the Yoshida family, Kanemigi (1516–73), issued court rank, status and licences to local shrines and their priests in ever greater numbers and by, for example, embarking on frequent tours of the regions, made efforts to accommodate local shrine priests. By monopolising the issue of documents of an official nature, the Yoshida family came to occupy a position of public authority vis-à-vis shrines and their priests.

One can also see evidence of Yoshida involvement in the *miyaza* that were developing throughout the medieval period. *Miyaza*, sometimes translated as 'shrine guilds', were groups of generally well-to-do shrine parishioners who held a monopoly on the performance of rites at the local tutelary shrine. Feudal lords, the *daimyō*, saw villages as a new power base and were anxious not only to protect powerful shrines that had local village connections but also to protect and guarantee the position of local tutelary shrines. The activities of the Yoshida family matched perfectly the inclinations of the *daimyō*. With regard to Yoshida family links to local village shrines, these can be traced back to the year 1485 when Kanetomo was ordered by shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa to conduct surveys on the kami at such shrines in the vicinity of Kyoto. More consequential still were the activities of Kanetomo's grandson, the afore-mentioned Kanemigi. Yoshida Kanemigi established linkages with the *daimyō* themselves, and then proceeded to hand out court rank and status and dispense Shinto licenses to important shrines in the *daimyō*'s territory. Kanemigi's activities in the territory of the Kyushu *daimyō*, Ōuchi Yoshitaka (1507–51), are but one example.[5] In respect of local village shrines, too, Kanemigi would distribute both types of certification. Not only was this an activity that matched the thinking of *daimyō* who wished to protect their shrines, it was also a response to the demands of the class of *otona* or village elder who sought rank and status for their deities. And so it was that, while not yet on a national scale, the Yoshida family was already beginning to assert itself at the level of the local village shrine as well.

Kanemigi's eldest son and successor was Kanemi (1535–1610) and he, with his younger brother, Bonshun (1553–1632), began to consolidate the family's links with the men who wielded political power. A striking example of success here concerns the fortunes of the Hasshinden shrine. In the ancient period, the Hasshinden, or Shrine to the eight deities who protect the imperial family, was located within the Western hall of the *Jingikan*, and offerings would be placed before it on such major festive occasions as the *toshigoi*, *tsukinami* and *niiname*.[6] The practice ended with the Ōnin wars. The Shirakawa Shinto family continued to venerate the eight deities in the family residence, but in 1482 the Yoshida built a new Jingikan Hasshinden within their shrine complex.[7] In 1590, this Yoshida Hasshinden appears to have been granted official court status. The result

was that the Yoshida family and the Yoshida shrine secured a place within the frame of imperial court ritual. Furthermore, not long after the establishment of the Edo bakufu, with the publication of the official regulations for shrines and shrine priests (*shosha negi kannushi hatto*), the Yoshida family acquired an official role as court intermediary for all shrines in the land that did not have their own established links to the court. In this way, the family was able to consolidate its official status in early modern Japan.

## The Tōshōgū shrine in Nikkō and the deification of the political elite

In the process of the formation of the Tokugawa administration, that is to say, from the Sengoku period through the administrations of Oda Nobunaga (1534–82) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–98), religion played a major role in guaranteeing the legitimacy of the newly created power. In the ancient period, an administration's legitimacy was guaranteed by the idea that the land and its people belonged to the emperor, or that Japan was a sacred nation by virtue of the existence of the imperial family, but such ideas were hardly sufficient to legitimise those who, after the middle ages, seized power with their own hands. This new breed of men sought to rationalise their positions with the new concept of *tenka* (realm) derived from Confucian ideas about heaven (*ten*). The transcendental concept which sustained the idea of *tenka* was *tendō* or the way of heaven. There were aspects to the Confucian concept of heaven that justified revolution, and herein lay the appeal of this idea to the new men of power.[8] The 'way of heaven' was entirely distinct from the various secular powers, and it was understood as the 'unseen transcendental' which controlled the rise and fall of human fortune. This *tendō* concept first appeared in Japan in the late Heian period, but it really only proliferated in the Sengoku period when various powers were at each other's throats and there no longer existed any single authority to guarantee stability.

For any who would establish anew a unified power, then, the way of heaven could serve as guarantor of legitimacy. Oda Nobunaga is a case in point. The form he chose to justify his own assumption of power was to enter the imperial framework of authority and exercise control from within while, at the same time, insisting he was *tenkabito*: 'man of the heavenly realm', 'the first of the realm', 'the man to whom the realm had been entrusted'. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who next acceded to power, adopted an approach not dissimilar. Hideyoshi established his own authority by advancing through the secular ranks, by acquiring, that is, rank in the imperial court as *kanpaku* or 'regent', thus acting as the emperor's proxy. However, he always insisted that his actions accorded with the heavenly way.

It might be asked what the linkage was between those who now came to power and Shinto and shrines, and how this linkage underpinned the legitimation of respective administrations. It is well known that the Minamoto and the Ashikaga of earlier ages deployed faith in the deity Hachiman, their own ancestral deity, as a vital spiritual support for their regimes. This sort of veneration Oda Nobunaga also exploited. He identified the Tsurugi shrine in the Oda estate of Echizen province as his ancestral deity; he guaranteed the existing land of the shrine, and went out of his way to make new donations of land and to construct new shrine buildings.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi engaged with kami belief in a somewhat different fashion. Being of peasant-warrior origins, Hideyoshi had no ancestral deity of his own; he had to rely on an alternative strategy for the religious legitimation of his power. Toyokuni shrine, built after his death, was that different strategy. When Hideyoshi died in 1598, his body, in accord with his last wishes, was buried at the top of Amidagamine mountain in the Higashiyama district of Kyoto, and a mausoleum was built at the foot of the mountain in order that it might serve as the protector shrine for the Hōkōji temple there. Yoshida Kanemi arranged to have Emperor Go-Yōzei (r. 1586–1611) issue the title Toyokuni Daimyōjin ('The magnificent deity of the land of plenty') to the spirit of Hideyoshi; a splendid shrine building, similar in design to the Kitano shrine in Kyoto dedicated to Sugawara no Michizane (845–903), was then erected. The business of the Toyokuni shrine and its management were entrusted totally to the Yoshida family so that, for example, Kanemi's younger brother, Bonshun, became the priest in charge. The shrine's grand ceremonies were open to the 'public' and for a while they enjoyed immense popularity. This was the first instance of a political leader deploying his own religious authority, rather than that of his ancestors. It was also one of the earliest known examples of *hitogami* faith; faith, that is, in a man-made-god, which does not have its origins in a desire to propitiate the angry spirit of the deceased, as was the case with the Kitano shrine and Sugawara no Michizane. With the demise of the Toyotomi family, the Tokugawa confiscated the shrine's land, abolished its title, and the shrine itself fell into decline.

The Tokugawa, too, sought deification as a means of legitimation and Ieyasu was himself venerated as deity. When he died in 1616, leaving instructions that he be buried according to Shinto funeral rites, a Yoshida Shinto burial was carried out in a temporary structure on Kunōzan in modern day Shizuoka. Immediately thereafter, however, a bitter dispute erupted over both the title to be accorded to Ieyasu's spirit and appropriate rites to be performed. On one side were Bonshun and his supporter, Sūden

(1569–1633) who insisted that Ieyasu's spirit be consecrated as a *daimyōjin* or Magnificent kami; on the other was Tenkai (1536?–1643), a priest of the Tendai lineage, who insisted that his spirit be worshipped as a *Daigongen* or Great Avatar. In the end, the rites performed were those of *Sannō ichijitsu shintō* as demanded by Tenkai.[9] In February of the following year, imperial sanction was granted for Ieyasu's spirit to be accorded the title Daigongen, once again as demanded by *Sannō ichijitsu shintō*. Ieyasu was accordingly reburied and his spirit transferred to the mausoleum in Nikkō. At first, the mausoleum was known as Tōshōsha, 'the shrine of he who shines from the east', but in 1645, the court issued notification of the shrine's new *miya* status – apart from Ise only ten other shrines in the land were styled *miya*. Henceforth Ieyasu's shrine could be referred to as Tōshōgū (*gū* is the Chinese reading of the character for *miya*). At the same time, the court instituted the dispatch of offerings (*hōhei*) to the Tōshōgū. In the following year, the court revived the practice of sending *reiheishi* (imperial emissaries bearing offerings) to the Ise shrines and, at the same time, instigated a parallel system of Nikkō *reiheishi*. This is generally understood as an attempt by the bakufu to use imperial prestige to elevate the Tōshōgū to a status parallel to that of Ise.[10]

For successive generations of shoguns, pilgrimage to Nikkō was a major event. This involved the shogun himself progressing to the Tōshōgū on the seventeenth day of the fourth month, the anniversary of Ieyasu's death. Nikkō pilgrimage was carried out relatively frequently, at least in the early part of the Edo period. Tokugawa Hidetada (r. 1605–23) progressed three times as shogun, Iemitsu (r. 1623–51) nine times, and Ietsuna (r. 1651–80) once. Nikkō pilgrimage was designed to shore up the shogun's authority through his veneration of Ieyasu as ancestor. The view that the pilgrimage served additionally as an opportunity for the shogun to express the (sacred) nature of his realm has become authoritative.[11]

The Tokugawa bakufu established shrines to Ieyasu outside Nikkō and Kunōzan, too, in such places as Edo castle and Ueno; Tokugawa-related families and other *daimyō*, too, built shrines to Ieyasu's spirit in their own castles. In 1625 the bakufu built the Kan'eiji temple in Ueno to the north-east of Edo to protect the city from the malevolent spirits known to reside in that quarter, and constructed within the temple grounds the Ueno Tōshōsha. The more influential of the shrines dedicated to Ieyasu's spirit include those in Sendai, Mito, Kawagoe and Owari. Festivals were carried out regularly at these shrines – the Owari festival to the spirit of Ieyasu developed into the Nagoya festival – and, as the areas where these festive activities were carried out expanded, so did the veneration of Ieyasu spread to the general populace.

# The Edo bakufu and the control of shrines and their priests

The twenty-two shrines, first shrines and provincial shrines that were the object of official worship lost their private land holdings in the anarchy at the end of the medieval period. This process was halted by the land surveys which Toyotomi Hideyoshi instigated. The land surveys ended once and for all the complex system of private land holdings (*shōen*), but for shrines Hideyoshi issued licences (*shuinjō*) which recognised and guaranteed their land. With the subsequent establishment of the bakufu in Edo, the Tokugawa military rulers first confiscated the licensed lands from the twenty-two shrines but then issued their own licences in certain limited cases; they also set aside funding for shrine buildings. At the same time, it became the practice in some domains for *daimyō* to donate land anew to the first shrines and provincial shrines in the area. We have seen how government began to dispatch emissaries bearing offerings to the Ise shrines but to none other. In 1645, it then dispatched imperial emissaries to the Tōshōgū shrine which coincided with the emperor granting *miya* status to the Tōshōgū. All this was part and parcel of bakufu efforts to enhance the legitimacy of the Tōshōgū; it was not a general resumption of the medieval court's practice of dispatching emissaries. In this way, the twenty-two shrines and the various first and provincial shrines, too, lost the social autonomy they had retained throughout the medieval period, and were placed instead under the supervision and protection of the bakufu and the various domains.

In the early years of the Tokugawa bakufu, the problem of how to organise shrines was inseparable from another: namely the systems and organisations to be deployed for the control of shrine priests. The bakufu's basic position was to be found in typical form in the set of laws known as the *Shosha negi kannushi hatto* ('Bakufu regulations for the control of shrines and their priests'). The bakufu issued these laws to all shrines and their priests in the land in 1665. The main items were the following:

1 Shrine priests must devote themselves exclusively to the ways of the kami; they should apply themselves to the performance of traditional shrine rites; failure to do so will result in dismissal from the priesthood.
2 Hereditary shrine priests who, till now, have relied on the services of specific court families to intercede with the emperor in requesting new court rank and status for their families shall continue to do so.
3 Shrine priests without court rank shall wear white; all over other priestly garments are to be determined in accord with licences issued by the Yoshida family.

4   Shrine land is not to be sold or bought; nor is it to be pawned.
5   In the event of damage to shrine buildings, repairs may be carried out as and when needed; it is essential to keep shrines in a state of good repair.

If the second of these items, concerning the services of specific families for intercession at court, suggests a continuity with former practice, it was a continuity designed uniquely to facilitate bakufu control. These families were known as *shissōke*, and the practice referred to dates back to the ancient and medieval periods when the *Jingikan* still functioned. The *shissōke* families were able to exercise very considerable control over the court ranks and status to be issued, and it was normal for them to exact a fee for their services from the shrine priests who sought their intercession. However, the next item in the regulations grants to the Yoshida family a monopoly control in practical terms over those shrine priests who had not yet secured court rank. The Yoshida were to intercede on their behalf, and it is here clear that the bakufu was according privileged treatment to the Yoshida family. The shrines referred to were not the shrines of great pedigree, the large provincial shrines, and the problem remained as to how these might be made subject to bakufu control.

The Yoshida family understanding was that the priests of these shrines were, indeed, covered by the regulations, and that it was their privilege to act as court go-between on their behalf. The large, traditional provincial shrines understood, for their part, that such status as they had was a consequence of their long connections with the imperial court and that they were exempt from Yoshida family control. Friction resulted from this difference in views. In 1674, the bakufu issued a supplement (*oboe*) to the original set of regulations which established the general principle that intercession with the imperial court was *not* the exclusive right of the Yoshida; it offered a solution of sorts. In any event, it is clear that the bakufu was seeking to maintain a comprehensive hold over all shrine priests in the land. On the one hand it sanctioned the general control by *shissōke* families – such as the Shirakawa – over shrine priests; on the other, it granted Yoshida family control over priests without rank or go-betweens of their own. Shrine priests who, after 1674, had no access to the court of their own now had a choice: either they ingratiate themselves with the Shirakawa or they come under the control of the Yoshida family.[12] The Yoshida family regarded the regulations as a basis for their monopolistic control of low-ranking shrine priests but, at the same time, the Shirakawa and other families saw the same priests as an opportunity for them to expand their own influence. In this competition for influence lay the

origins of the bitter disputes in the later Edo period between the Yoshida and the Shirakawa families.

The mountain ascetics (*shugenja* or *yamabushi*), who embodied in their practice the merging of Shinto and Buddhism so typical of pre-modern Japanese religious culture, were also the focus of bakufu attempts at control.[13] The problem facing the bakufu here was how to restructure and rationalise the multifarious *shugenja* lineages that already existed. The most important of these were the *Tōzanha* and the *Honzanha*.

The *Tōzanha* lineage had its origins in the esoteric Shingon tradition. It is thought the lineage traces its origins back to the mountain priests at the Hossō school's Kōfukuji temple. Kōfukuji was a mighty temple in Yamato in the Kamakura period; the majority of temples in the region were either attached to it as branch temples or they were otherwise subject to its influence. In all of these temples, there were mountain priests in considerable numbers but, as the temples came under the growing influence of Shingon, priests made common cause with others throughout the Home Provinces who were affiliated to mountain temples, and together, they formed a community of mountain priests known as the *Tōzanha sendatsu shū*. During the Sengoku period, as the Nara Kōfukuji steadily lost its influence, these priests distanced themselves at an ever accelerating pace, and began to establish new links with the Sanbōin hall in the Daigoji temple complex in Kyoto. The Daigoji had by now assumed a central role within Shingon Buddhism.

The *Honzanha* for its part was a mountain ascetic lineage originating in the Kumano region which established its centre at the Shōgoin temple in the Shirakawa district of Kyoto. The Shōgoin, a branch temple of the Tendai Onjōji temple, subsequently became a *monzeki*, a temple, that is, whose senior position was occupied by successive generations of imperial princes or court nobles. In the Muromachi period (1338–1573), the Shōgoin chief abbot and senior mountain ascetics established direct links with mountain priests all over Japan. During the years 1469–87 (the Bunmei period), Dōkō (dates unknown), the incumbent of the Shōgoin, took himself on a tour across the Hokuriku, Kantō and Tōhoku regions, in an effort to establish a degree of control over the most influential mountain ascetics in the regions he visited. His achievement was to exert a degree of control over those ascetics affiliated with the sacred sites in the Kumano mountains. The three Kumano shrines lost a huge number of their private land holdings in the Muromachi period and consequently, too, their influence. Influential regional mountain ascetics found their positions stabilised by their adherence to the Shōgoin abbot with his connections to the imperial court. In this way, the *Honzanha* lineage came into being. It was centred at the Shōgoin *monzeki* in Kyoto and had the most powerful mountain ascetics in the land affiliated to it.

During the years 1596–1615 (the Keichō period), there were major disputes between the two lineages over control of mountain ascetics throughout Japan. Behind the conflict were differences over the principles of control. The Shingon-related *Tōzan ha* exercised control over its priests through a type of master–disciple relationship; the Tendai-related *Honzan* lineage, by contrast, divided up the land into spheres of control, which it then entrusted to individual ascetics. The *Tōzan ha* sought to reach a solution by having the Sanbōin abbot, Gien (1558–1626), utilise his contacts with Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu. His efforts finally bore fruit and in 1612, the Tokugawa bakufu banned the *Honzan* lineage from using its regional control system. In the following year, Tokugawa Ieyasu issued licences to both *Honzan* and *Tōzan* lineages recognising Shōgoin and Sanbōin as their respective headquarters. He remained very much partial, though, to the *Tōzan ha*. The *Honzan* ascetics had till now insisted upon levying a tax on *Tōzan ha* priests seeking access to sacred sites in *Honzan ha* spheres of control. This practice the Edo bakufu stopped. It demanded a master–disciple system of control, that is the *Tōzan* system of control, over all mountain ascetics in the land. Moreover, by banning proselytising by mountain ascetics not affiliated to one or other of the two lineages (1618), the bakufu sought to control access to the calling of mountain ascetics and so define their social status.

There was, in the early modern period, a settling of mountain ascetics in localities.[14] This was a consequence of the new organisational structures imposed on mountain ascetics by the Edo bakufu, of the establishment of new communities with connections to the locality and, finally, of bakufu restrictions on the movement of ascetics. There emerged, in fact, two different categories of ascetic: those who remained affiliated to mountain sites as *oshi* or itinerant priests, and those who sank roots in villages and towns. For priests of both *Tōzan* and *Honzan* lineages, the latter came to constitute the norm in Edo Japan. These ascetics formed priest–parishioner links with local families and visited them frequently; they would perform rites before the kami of the house; they also would recite prayers and rites for recovery from sickness. In return for both, they would expect payment. Ascetics also distributed amulets, and they led groups of parishioners on pilgrimage to mountain sites. Quite a few ascetics of this type doubled as priests (*bettō*) for local tutelary shrines and Inari shrines, and they came to assume a leading role in such popular religious practices as *himachi*, which involved groups of parishioners waiting up all night to pray at sunrise. It was inevitable, then, that the ascetics who settled in villages and towns competed for influence with temple and shrine priests and that conflict between them ensued.

# Shinto and the populace: the spread of ritual and teachings

It was in the latter half of the seventeenth century that Edo society acquired its enduring character. In terms of local society, the period saw the transformation of the lowest stratum in such a way that families universally came to operate the principle of individual inheritance by the eldest son. Accompanying this change in family inheritance, ancestral rites came to infiltrate local family religious practice. In farming villages of the medieval period, it was normal for individual families to be organised together as extended family units under a male head; it would be the unique responsibility of the head and his family to oversee ancestral rites. From the end of the medieval period through to the initial stage of the early modern, however, these extended units began to fragment. Families splintered off from the head family in proportion as the economy developed in the locality concerned. In economically advanced areas around the Home Provinces, this process appeared to begin at an early stage. Families would splinter, asserting their independence from the head family and rapidly establish a strong sense of their own distinct identity. This sense was sustained by an awareness of continuity, stretching back to the ancestors on the one hand and forward through to future generations on the other. It was as a reflection of this new awareness that ancestral rites came to be performed on an individual family basis. Protection of the family was not a matter uniquely of caring for the living; it was also a question of giving rest to the souls of the departed.[15] Ancestral rites took their place within the annual ritual cycle, and were linked intimately to the agricultural calendar. For example, the *koshōgatsu* ('little new year') celebrations, performed around the time of the full moon in the first month of the new year, were designed to secure from the kami an abundant harvest in the coming year, but it was customary, too, on such occasions to summon the ancestral spirits. Again, the *bon* festival, known today for its welcoming of the ancestral spirits, was at the same time a celebration of a rich harvest.

It was by way of giving religious support to these ancestral rites that local temples were constructed in many regions of Japan in the early Edo period. The *terauke* system, the axis so to speak of the early modern religious system, was built upon the foundation of the network of temples constructed now to sustain the new practice of ancestral rites. The *terauke* system was ordained by the Edo bakufu initially as a counter-Christian measure, and was so called because it required of all families in the land that they 'receive' (*uke*) the beneficence of a Buddhist temple (*tera*). In practical terms, Buddhist temples kept records of all the families within

their parish, conducting a local census every year. Temples also issued marriage and travel licences. The result of this political responsibility was that temples came to assume tremendous power in the Edo period.

At the same time, huge changes were to be observed in the 'shrine guilds' or *miyaza* of the Home Provinces. Village communities structured according to hereditary status were dissolving and being determined anew by economic status. As a consequence, the *miyaza* ceased to be dominated by one hereditary family; rather, all in the *miyaza* came to share equally in ritual roles. The new situation did not endure for long since, through the eighteenth century, a new status system was being formed, and people emerged who were dedicated exclusively to the performance of shrine rites. Here was the first burgeoning of the professional shrine priest.[16]

At the same time, the latter half of the seventeenth century saw an expansion of urban areas and a corresponding concentration of population. A national market emerged centred on Osaka and linking Kyoto, Edo and castle towns all over the land. Again, by the middle of the century, farmers, artisans and merchants all over Japan were developing small-scale management skills, and the general populace was acquiring the leisure to participate in cultural activities of various sorts. Such is the background to the emergence of the Genroku culture in the three cities of Osaka, Kyoto and Edo. (Genroku is the era name for the period 1688–1704). Genroku was Japan's first genuinely popular culture in which both creators and consumers had their roots in the general populace.

Let us turn our attention here to popular festivals. Many of those festivals that are practised to this day trace their origins to Edo Japan. The annual cycle in Edo was structured around the five feast days or *gosekku*: *jinjitsu* on the seventh day of the first month; *jōshi* on the third day of the third month; *tango* on the fifth day of the fifth month; *tanabata* on the seventh day of the seventh month; and *chōyō* on the ninth day of the ninth month. In the most general sense, these moments in the calendar originate in the rituals of the imperial court, but beyond that they are traceable back to Chinese rites with their distinct emphasis on odd-number days. These festivals came to be observed by people of all classes in Edo Japan after the Edo bakufu accorded them status as national holidays.

*Jinjitsu* was a celebration involving seven types of grass and a rice gruel into which they were mixed. In earlier times, it appears there were seven types of gruel, each made of a different crop (rice and millet among them). In the early Muromachi period, the gruel changed to one containing seven spring grasses. The grasses were gathered on the sixth day, chopped up during the night in the presence of the kami; on the following day, a gruel was made containing the seven grasses which was then offered to the kami before being consumed.

*Jōshi* has its distant origins in Chinese rites of purification typically carried out by the water's edge on the third day of the third month. The rites and their dates were adopted by the imperial court of Japan in the Nara period. Dolls were used in the rites for the transference of impurities, and these were then cast into the water. The practice of displaying these dolls in the glamorous form we know today in the *hina matsuri* dates from the Genroku period. Legend has it that the seated *hina* dolls now popular have their origins in a certain act of Tokugawa Kazuko, Ieyasu's granddaughter. Kazuko, known to her contemporaries as Tōfukumon'in, was the mistress of Emperor Go-Mizunoo. They had a daughter, Princess Okiko, who became Empress Meishō (1623–96) at the age of six. Masako reckoned that since Okiko became empress at such a young age, she was destined never to marry and so she made a cloth collage of her daughter depicting her as the happy person she had seen in a dream. Legend has it that this cloth collage was the first ever *hina* doll.

The *tango* feast similarly has its origins in ancient China; its purpose was the exorcism of evil influences and involved drinking an alcoholic brew made of irises, displaying dolls made of *yomogi* (mugwort), and the gathering of medicinal herbs. In Nara Japan, *tango* became instituted as an annual rite at the imperial court. Irises were offered to the emperor to guard him from evil; persons attending court would make their offerings wearing wigs made of iris; banquets and archery competitions were hosted by the imperial family. In the medieval period, *tango* became a festival celebrated by warriors, too. The word for iris in Japanese is *shōbu*, a homophone for *shōbu* in the sense of military spirit and, in the early Edo period, the *tango* feast day became a celebration of manhood. Amongst Edo commoners, too, there spread the practice of displaying dolls of warriors, of Shoki the 'Devil Destroyer', of carp and rice-dumplings wrapped in bamboo leaves.

*Tanabata* was imported from ancient China in the Nara period. In origin, it was a star festival, and celebrated the once-in-a-year meeting of the Altair and Weaver stars. Women prayed on this day that they might acquire the finest weaving skills. In the Edo period, it became the norm to buy sticks of bamboo on the evening of the sixth day and attach coloured paper to them before suspending them from the eaves of the home. *Tanabata* established itself in farming communities in the Edo period since it overlapped with well-established rites such as the *nemuri nagashi* or 'sleep dispelling' rite. Taking place as it did just before the heavy labour of the autumn harvest, the point of the *nemuri nagashi* was to dispel the sleep-inducing kami. Water was the essential symbol: it was used for the washing of hair, the dousing of farm animals, the cleaning of grave sites and the washing out of wells.

*Chōyō*, too, was Chinese in origin, adopted at the imperial court during Emperor Tenmu's reign in the late seventh century. It was a most auspicious

day since the greatest of the odd numbers, nine, appeared in both month and day. In Japan, Chinese precedent was followed so that it was celebrated with displays of chrysanthemum and the exchange of cups of rice wine. In the Edo period, *chōyō* was institutionalised as one of the five feast days. *Daimyō* would enter Edo castle on this day, and offer their congratulations to the shogun. They would exchange cups of sake in which chrysanthemum flowers floated. At the popular level, *chōyō* became a vital holiday after the toils of the harvest and was established as the date for autumn festivals everywhere.

The spread to the general populace of these customs, first established in Japan as imperial rites, was accompanied by moves to spread Shinto teachings amongst the general populace. The Yoshida family called upon the services of such men as Tachibana Mitsuyoshi (1635–1704), Hikita Koremasa, Yoshida Teishun, Aoki Nagahiro, Yoshino Sueaki and other popular scholars to disseminate Yoshida Shinto teachings throughout the populace. Tachibana Mitsuyoshi was the pioneer of Shinto sermonising. Mitsuyoshi studied Yoshida Shinto but then broke away and founded a variety he styled *Sōgen gojūrokuden shintō* (Original Shinto of the fifty-six transmissions), which he began to preach in the Asakusa area of Edo. During 1675–97 he embarked on a missionary tour of the first shrines throughout Japan. Records of his tour can be found in his *Shokoku ichi no miya junkeiki*. At each of the first shrines he made an offering of the *Nakatomi harae*.

Hikita Koremasa was a Yoshida preacher who first learned Shinto teachings from a priest at the Kitano shrine in Kyoto. His book, *Kamikaze no ki*, a discussion of popular Japanese customs, was published in 1668 in a form accessible to the general populace. His argument began by contrasting Buddhism and Confucianism with Shinto as the fount of all truth, and his comparison encompassed such realms as ethics, sacred sites, festivals, funerals and taboos. Koremasa located the orthodox Shinto tradition in the Inbe, Urabe (Yoshida) and Nakatomi families but pride of place he gave to Yoshida Shinto.

At a somewhat later date, Shinto preachers emerged who were rather more independent of the Yoshida school. The best known of these was Masuho Zankō (1655–1742). Zankō was born in Ōita in Bungo province and converted to Shinto having first trained in Pure Land (Jōdo) and Lotus (Nichiren) Buddhism. In 1719, Zankō joined the Yoshida school and became the head priest of the Asahi Shinmei shrine in Kyoto. He penned numerous works in simple language that deployed straightforward logic so as to teach Shinto to the general populace. His sermons were constructed around these compositions of his, and he acquired a reputation for the stylish manner of his exposition. A special feature of Zankō's approach was

### *Ujigami* and *ubusunagami*

Nowadays the distinctions between the kami categories of *ujigami*, *chinjugami* and *ubusunagami* are much less than clear. *Ujigami* was a designation in the ancient period for the ancestral deities of the family, but in the tumult of the medieval period the homogeneity of many of these familial groups was undermined, and the original meaning of rites before the *ujigami* was in a state of flux. Contemporaneously, another development of consequence was taking place. With the flourishing in the early medieval period of private estates (*shōen*), estate owners began to set up shrines to kami whom they would venerate not as ancestral deities but as guardian deities (*chinjugami*) of those estates. In this they were inspired by the long-established examples of deities who guarded temples and castles. When the estate system declined later in the medieval period, the same term for protector guardian deity, namely *chinju*, was transferred to all manner of deities long venerated in the provinces. As the autonomous village began to emerge first in the Home Provinces, these guardian deities of private estates were co-opted, as it were, as guardians of these new villages. Again, as villages merged to create the larger district (*gō*) units, so were the estate kami adopted as their protector deities, too.

In the early Edo period, partly because of the veneration showed by successive shoguns, new importance was attached to the *ubusunagami*, or kami of the birth place. In time, the guardian kami and these *ubusunagami* came to be regarded as one and the same deity at the heart of the village community, and both came to be known by the generic term of *ujigami*.

In early Edo, there was also a shift in the meaning of the word *ujiko* or shrine parishioner. In origin, the term referred to those in receipt of the blessings of the ancestral deity, but it came to refer to those who venerated the local guardian deity. The origins of the present usage of *ujigami* and *ujiko* lie here. In any event, the various terms for kami of different origins came to be used without distinction.

### *Inga* and *zōka*

Buddhist teachings permeated deep amongst the common people in the Edo period, but critical was the Buddhist idea of *inga ōhō*, the idea that deeds in a previous life have determined one's fortune or otherwise in this life; and that deeds in this life will determine one's fate in future lives. In origin, Buddhist *inga ōhō* was premised upon the idea of rebirth. The self in this life is a manifest consequence of the deeds of the self in a previous life; the deeds of the self in this life similarly predetermine the self in the next life. In the Buddhism of early modern Japan, the idea of retribution was understood in the context of the family system. In other words, we in this life are the manifest consequence of our parents' deeds, and our deeds will exert a profound influence upon our children. Ancestral rites and the idea of *inga ōhō* merged, then, in Edo Japan as they permeated the hearts of the common people.

In the disseminating of Shinto teachings to the general populace in Edo Japan, the issue of *inga ōhō* was one that could not be sidestepped. Masuho Zankō told this tale. Two men seek the love of the same woman. The woman is unable to decide between them, and has them compete with each other that she might the better determine which to favour with her affection. She is unable to make a decision, however, and in despair takes her life. Both men end their lives, too, to follow her into the next realm. For Zankō, who believed in the imperative of true love, the actions of the two men, motivated by their love of the woman, were morally correct, but the result was nonetheless for him a tragedy. Zankō applied the idea of *inga ōhō* to explain the injustice of it all. He said all the tragedy was a consequence of retribution for deeds committed in a previous life.

Zankō used the term *zōka* or 'creativity' to refer to the way of the kami rooted in true love. His theory was that behind the diverse events of the world stood the two principles of *zōka* 'creativity' and *inga* 'retribution'. To universalise one at the expense of the other was a mistake. Zankō's 'achievement' as a preacher was to promote the Shinto idea of *zōka* whilst not denying the Buddhist common sense of *inga*.

his affirmation of sexual desire between men and women, but all his sermons were popular in approach and focused on familiar themes. This may help explain why Zankō was frequently the butt of criticism by other Shintoists and scholars of National Learning.[17]

The early Edo period saw a proliferation of popular participation in urban festivals. Yanagita Kunio in his book *Nihon no matsuri* ('Japanese festivals') has pointed out the need to distinguish between *matsuri* and *sairei* (the former might best be translated here as 'festival' and the latter as 'spectacle'), and he has examined the process whereby the former transmutes into the latter. According to Yanagita, the shift took place when the crowd emerged as mere observers rather than active participants in the events. He saw the influence of urban culture since the medieval period as a major causal factor here.

It may be suggested that this transposition, the creation of urban spectacles, their development and penetration of the rural periphery, defines the nature of public spectacle in Edo Japan. The research of recent years suggests that the shift to the modern form of popular spectacle has its origins in the early modern period.[18] The creation of the *tenka matsuri* ('festivals of the realm') marks a turning point in the development of what Yanagita would have defined as the Edo urban spectacle.[19] *Tenka matsuri* denote three particular events: the Sannō festival of the Hie shrine, the Kanda festival of the Kanda Myōjin shrine and the one-off festival of the Nezu shrine. What distinguished these from other events in Edo was that their processions passed through Edo castle, and were observed by the shogun himself; their performances were also aided and regulated by the bakufu. The chronicler, Saitō Gesshin (1804–78), suggests that by the end of the seventeenth century it had become practice for the Sannō and Kanda festivals to be held in alternate years.[20] Much work remains to be done on the process of historical change that created these Edo spectacles, but this much is clear: that they exerted a major influence on the form of the spectacles performed in castle towns throughout the Kantō region.

## Juke Shinto: Shinto and Confucian rationality

It is well known that Confucian thought was profoundly influential in early modern Japanese society, but there was never formed a specific Confucian social class. In China, there was the Confucian bureaucracy and in Korea, the *yangban*, both of which were social groupings specialising in Confucian knowledge. Nothing resembling these groupings emerged in Japan. Rather, those who studied Confucianism did so in order to consolidate their allotted status, their calling and their identity.[21] Confucianism

also played a vital role in clarifying the calling, the status and the Shinto identity of those who performed rites before the kami and disseminated Shinto doctrine.

*Juke* Shinto or 'Confucian Shinto' is the name usually given to Shinto theories deriving from Confucianism. Juke Shinto, as we shall call it here, began with Japanese Confucianists theorising about the nature of Shinto. The Confucian mainstream in early Edo was the Neo-Confucianism of the Song period (960–1279) in China, and the theories of Zhu Xi (1130–1200) were its most important variant. In the formative phase of the Song period, anti-Buddhism was a major Confucian motif, and in the Song Confucianism adopted in Japan, too, scholars sought to distinguish themselves clearly from Buddhists. At the same time, since Shinto did not feature in Song Confucian thinking – naturally enough – Japanese Confucianists were led to develop their own approaches. Here, again, the tendency was for a clear distinction to be drawn between Shinto and Buddhism. Fujiwara Seika (1561–1619) is an early example of a Japanese Confucianist who engaged with Shinto. Seika, a descendant of the court poet Fujiwara Teika (1162–1241), began life as a Buddhist priest, and after his father's death he headed for Kyoto where he studied at the Zenrinji temple. Later, however, he abandoned Buddhism for Confucianism. His thought drew on Zhu Xi, but his position was one of tolerant accommodation towards other schools of Confucianism, such as the school of Wang Yangming (1472–1529); towards Buddhism and towards Shinto as well. In fact, his own Shinto theorising in his *Chiyo motokusa* did not go much beyond a rather contrived search for analogues between Confucianism and Shinto.

Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), a disciple of Seika, promoted a more positive understanding of Shinto. Razan studied Buddhism as a youth though he never took the tonsure. He rapidly acquired renown for the public lectures he gave in Kyoto on the *Analects* of Confucius. Razan also incurred the wrath of certain court nobles who regarded Confucian learning as their monopoly. In Edo, Razan was able to get a foothold in bakufu corridors of power on the recommendation of his master, Seika. Razan argued that a clear distinction needed to be drawn between Zhu Xi learning and that of Wang Yangming; he was also ferociously anti-Buddhist. On Shinto, Razan was initiated into Yoshida Shinto teachings, but remained critical of all Shinto teachings, Yoshida teachings included. Yoshida Shinto was the Shinto of fortune tellers and ritual celebrants, he insisted, and he went on to develop his own Confucian-rooted Shinto theory, which he called *Ritō shinchi shintō*. Razan argued for the integration of Shinto and Confucian ideas, but Confucianism was always dominant in this thinking and Shinto very much subservient. His ideas were derived specifically from the *ri-ki*

theories of Song Confucianism. In brief, this theory held that *ri* (principle) and *ki* (manifest form) constituted the origin of all creation. 'Principle' existed in all things and constituted their origin, making them what they are. Kami, he argued, were to be explained in terms of this Neo-Confucian principle. The way of the kami (*shintō*) he further identified with 'the way of the king' or political rule. Razan's ideas lacked systematisation of a sort which enabled them to be inherited by subsequent generations.

Razan did, however, write a book on shrines; *Honchō jinjakō* he called it. His position was anti-Buddhist, and he attacked the merging of Shinto and Buddhism that defined the religious culture of medieval Japan. The book was a compendium of major shrines and their deities, their origins, associated beliefs and recorded miracles. Partly because Razan made ample use of medieval Buddhist history, such as the *Genkō shakusho* (1322), the result of his labours was, ironically, to promote Buddhist theories about the origins of shrines. Another work of Razan's, *Shintō denju*, was an introduction to Yoshida Shinto, Ise Shinto, Sannō Shinto and other forms of medieval Shinto. The book served subsequently as a basic reference tool for understanding the Shinto of early modern Japan.

Other Confucianists of a non-Zhu Xi perspective also wrote about Shinto. Nakae Tōju (1608–48) and Kumazawa Banzan (1619–91) of the Wang Yangming school and Yamaga Sokō (1622–85), a pioneer of the Ancient Learning (*kogaku*) school, were conspicuous among them. Tōju was from Ōmi province near Kyoto, but served the Ozu domain in Iyo where he taught himself Confucianism. He was highly suspicious of varieties of Confucianism that focused on etiquette and ritual, and insisted that Confucianism acquire an ethical core. He preached the existence of a transcendental, anthropomorphic deity, and explained Shinto in terms of the 'way' as found in Daoism. Tōju had a steadfast belief in the existence of various wondrous phenomena and in the ability of spirits to communicate with humankind.

Banzan, a disciple of Nakae Tōju, held that politics must be conducted suitably in accord with the age and the national character, a position which led him to regard Shinto as something uniquely suited to Japan. Yamaga Sokō, for his part, expounded his own Shinto views in *Chūchō jijitsu*. He argued that before the teachings of the sages (that is, Confucianism) came to Japan, the wisest teachings were to be found in Shinto. Given that Japan's imperial family had continued uninterrupted for generation upon generation, it was clear – he argued – that it was not the Chinese mainland where the ethical way had first held sway but Japan. It was Japan, then, not China that was the central dynasty, the centre of civilisation (*chūgoku*). Sokō never established his own school, but he exerted a profound influence on the soon-to-emerge school of National Learning, *kokugaku*.

At the same time, it should be noted that moves were under way on the Shinto side, too, to reinterpret and systematise traditional family scholarship using Confucian theory. Yoshikawa Koretari (1616–94), active from the middle to the end of the seventeenth century, was one of these re-interpreters of Shinto. Koretari was adopted into a merchant family in Edo, but retired from business at an early age to devote himself to learning.[22] He became a disciple of Hagiwara Kaneyori (1588–1660), a senior adviser to the Yoshida. Fearing the demise of Yoshida Shinto, Kaneyori entrusted to Koretari the school's secrets. Koretari proceeded to establish linkages between these Yoshida teachings and Song Confucianism, Yin Yang and the five elements. The product was what we now call Yoshikawa Shinto. Koretari interpreted earth and metal as the source of all creation, and he read the characters for earth and metal as *tsuchi shimaru* or the 'earth compacts' since, as he explained, metal is formed when earth is compacted. He saw here a linkage, owing to homophonous coincidence, with the Japanese virtue of *tsutsushimi* or self-denial. He explained that this *tsutsushimi* or self-denial was the path to the sincerity that is the true way of the kami; and that *harae* or purification was the means to attain this true way. Koretari did not, however, go so far as to coordinate Yoshida Shinto and Song Confucianism into a seamless whole.

Koretari also established intimate links with the bakufu. Hoshina Masayuki (1611–72), Tokugawa Iemitsu's stepbrother and the lord of Aizu domain, became a disciple of Koretari's Shinto and was initiated into Yoshida secrets, and this led to Koretari being employed by the bakufu as *Shintōkata*, or Shinto specialist. This is important in terms of understanding the influence Yoshida Shinto was able to exert in matters of shrine administration. Takano Toshihiko has argued that when the bakufu employed Koretari it was proclaiming the fact that it favoured Yuiitsu Shinto, and not Ryōbu Shinto with its orientation towards the merging of Shinto and Buddhism.[23]

There were yet other scholars who, having being initiated into Shinto secrets, reinterpreted those Shinto teachings anew through a Confucian lens, so to speak. Deguchi Nobuyoshi (1615–90), a priest in the Outer Shrine at Ise with good contacts in *daimyō*, court and Confucian circles, was typical in this regard. The conflict between northern and southern courts (1336–92) put an end to the conspicuous activities of Ise Shinto, and sacred texts were lost in fires as conflict between the Inner and Outer Shrines at Ise grew in intensity during the Muromachi period. Nobuyoshi and his son Nobutsune (1657–1714) were, between them, responsible for the revival of Ise teachings in the Edo period. They not only created an archive known as the Toyomiyazaki bunko, they set out to borrow missing classics and Shinto texts from different traditions and had their disciples transcribe them.

This Ise revival was, in intellectual terms, a Confucian-inspired system-atisation of Ise teachings. In Ise since medieval times, there had been moves to construct distinct identities for Shinto and Buddhism but, by introducing Song Confucianism with its anti-Buddhist proclivities, Nobuyoshi used a Shinto-Confucian standpoint to argue Shinto's essential distinctiveness from Buddhism. In this way, he formulated a new body of teachings. Deguchi Nobuyoshi focused particularly on divination based on the Book of Changes (*Yijing*), and argued the essential oneness of the way of divination and the way of the kami. At the time, there were few Shinto publications at large, but Nobuyoshi changed that. He wrote about his different Shinto theories in an accessible fashion and published them as *Yōfuku ki* (1650), his aim being to disseminate Ise Shinto far and wide. Nobuyoshi's publication activ-ities marked a departure from earlier practice when Shinto theories were typically transmitted from father to son within a given family.

## Suika Shinto: the subtle linkage between Shinto and Confucianism

In addition to Shinto teachings built upon the academic traditions of specific Shinto families from one generation to the next, there also emerged men who, while inspired by Confucian thought, came to formu-late their own unique Shinto theories. These men were not themselves born into Shinto families but rather scraped together different Shinto theories from different schools and began to systematise them after their own fashion. Yamazaki Ansai (1616–82) was such a man.[24] Ansai began life as a Buddhist priest; he then learned Zhu Xi studies in Tosa province which prompted his departure from the priesthood. Returning to Kyoto, he practised as a Confucianist, and later he divided his time between Kyoto and Edo. Ansai was invited as a special guest by the Aizu lord, Hoshina Masayuki, and remained in touch until death separated them. Presently, he was initiated by Kawabe Kiyonaga (1601–88), the Chief priest of the Ise shrines – Kawabe was another man who spent time as a Buddhist priest – into the mysteries of the *Nakatomi harae*. Yoshikawa Koretari, whom he met through Masayuki, initiated him into Yoshida Shinto, after which time he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the study of Shinto. Ansai subse-quently received from the Yoshida family the *Shijū okuhi no den* ('the transmission of the forty secrets'), and the right to refer to his shrine with the title *reisha* or 'spirit shrine'. During his life, he venerated his own spirit at the *Suika reisha* shrine. Ansai claimed to find scriptural basis for this veneration, but the practice was in fact quite unheard of before. The word *suika*, with which he defined his own brand of Shinto, derived from an

oracle recorded in *Yamato-hime no mikoto seiki*, a thirteenth-century text of Ise Shinto: 'To receive divine beneficence (*sui*), give priority to prayer; to obtain divine protection (*ka*), make uprightness your basis.'[25]

There was a Zhu Xi and a Shinto strain to Ansai's scholarship. Ansai was clearly anxious to be seen as faithful to Zhu Xi teachings. The orthodox approach to Confucian learning among his contemporaries involved studying Zhu Xi through commentaries on his work written by scholars of later ages. Ansai sought to return, rather, to Zhu Xi's own thought in order to expose its true meaning. In Ansai's understanding, *kei* 'respect' occupied a place of especial importance in Zhu Xi thought, and he advanced his own theories about the centrality of *keinai gigai*, the idea that respect lies 'within' (*nai*) and rectitude (*gi*) lies 'without' (*gai*). He derived this position from a commentary by the Cheng brothers on a passage in the *Eki kyo*. The phrase the Cheng brothers focused on was 'one must consolidate one's inner spirit with respect (*kei*), and give direction to the exterior with rectitude (*gi*)'.

The Shinto promoted by Ansai was known as Suika Shinto because of the Suika name he gave to his shrine. Ansai identified kami with the principle (*ri*) of Song Confucianism. In Song Confucianism, the principle that adheres in all of creation is understood to partake ultimately of the heavenly principle (*tenri*) or providence; the principle inherent in the heavens (*ten*) the principle in humankind (*jin*) were further interpreted as identical (*tenjin gōitsu*). Ansai understood the kami of Shinto to correspond to this universal principle, and he grasped the creation of the world, which in Song scholarship was explained by principle and material form, as the work of the various Shinto deities. In the hearts of humans who were all born by the actions of these kami, there dwelt the spirit of the same kami, and it was thus that heaven and humans found identity one with the other. This is what Ansai meant when he spoke of the identical way of heaven and man (*tenjin yuiitsu no michi*). Ansai believed this principle to be manifest in the chapters on the Age of the Gods in the *Nihon shoki*. These theories he transmitted to his successors as *Tenjin yuiitsu den* ('transmission of the identity of heaven and man'). What characterised Ansai's theory, in short, was the idea that kami dwelled in the human heart, and it was this, of course, that explained how Ansai came to venerate his own spirit during his lifetime.

Other pillars in Ansai's Shinto teachings were *tsutsushimi* and the aforementioned 'respect' or *kei*. Medieval Ise Shinto developed theories on the concept of *tsutsushimi* long before Ansai's time, but in all likelihood it was Yoshikawa Koretari who exerted the more immediate influence on Ansai. Koretari's theories we have already encountered, but Ansai took 'respect' or *kei* – the core of Zhu Xi teaching as he understood it – to be synonymous with *tsutsushimi*. This opened for him the possibility of identifying

Zhu Xi teachings with Shinto. The 'heart' (*kokoro*) was the intermediary. For Ansai, the heart was the locus for the merging of heaven and man, and *tsutsushimi* defined those actions that sought to achieve this state of unity. The practical measures required to achieve the purity of one's own heart, Ansai insisted, were 'prayer' and 'sincerity' (*shōjiki*). He brought these ideas together in the esoteric text *Tsuchishimi no den* and, along with *Tenjin yuiitsu no den*, it came to constitute a core Suika Shinto text.

'Respect' or *kei* and *tsutsushimi* were the keys to unlocking the meaning of ethical relationships. Of all the ethical relationships, Ansai gave greatest weight to that between lord and vassal. Ansai read the chapters on the Age of the Gods in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* and traced through them the way of the lord as it endured unbroken from Amaterasu through to the present emperor. His argument was that Amaterasu was both Sun Goddess and the founder of the imperial line. Thus were made manifest the identity between heaven and humankind. Shinto was one with the way of the emperors. The three treasures were unchanged since the descent to earth of Ninigi; the emperors, who transmitted them from one generation to the next, continued in a line unbroken for all eternity. Thus was the way of the lord unbroken in Japan. At the same time, Ansai's understanding of the way of the vassal was linked to the *himorogi* and *iwasaka*, structures used in rites before the kami. In one book of the chapters on the Age of the Gods, Takamimusubi has Ame no Koyane and Futodama hold the *himorogi* and *iwasaka* just at the moment of Ninigi's descent to earth and use them in rites on behalf of Ninigi. Ansai's reading of this moment was that the *himorogi* symbolised protection of the lord and the *iwasaka* denoted the way of the lord and vassal. Here he located the origins of the linkage between emperor on the one hand and the way of the lord and vassal on the other. In brief, what Ansai did was infuse the lord/vassal relationship with a new Shinto meaning.

Ansai's Shinto theories were an attempt to interpret and systematise various different Shinto teachings prevalent since the medieval period and to establish linkages with Confucianism. In intellectual terms, his approach can be counted as a Confucian reading of Shinto. Ansai himself regarded Confucianism and Shinto as two aspects of a single truth, but he nonetheless drew a clear distinction between them and warned sternly against merging or mixing them. He referred to his own position as that of *shinju kengaku* or 'Shinto and Confucianism in parallel'.

Suika Shinto was unique, too, in terms of its initiations. The prevalent practice in Shinto circles of transmitting mysteries was to inscribe them on a piece of paper, but Ansai favoured oral transmission. He warned against the dangers of passing on mysteries to a single individual, but insisted nonetheless that teachings once transmitted should not be

divulged. A tension remained between secrecy – which he advocated with a passion – and openness, which was an unforeseen consequence of his synthesis and systematisation of medieval Shinto secrets.

After Ansai's death, the Confucian-Shinto identification that he favoured was lost as his disciples tended to favour – and so to study and pass on – either the Confucian or the Shinto side to his teachings. The Confucian strain became known as Kimongaku (*ki* being the Chinese reading of the *zaki* character in Yamazaki), and three disciples of Ansai's made a name for themselves here: Satō Naokata (1650–1719), Asami Keisai (1652–1711), and Miyake Shōsai (1662–1741). They were known as the 'three geniuses of Kimongaku' (*kimon sanketsu*), and each went on to create his own school. Naokata entered Ansai's school in Kyoto, but left in protest at his increasingly Shinto leanings; Keisai began his professional life as a doctor, but then studied Zhu Xi with Ansai. He, too, went his own way as Ansai appeared to over-stress Shinto teachings. Keisai's loyalist tract *Seiken yuigen* exerted a profound influence on the pro-emperor movement of the late Edo period with its exposition of the ideal ethical relationship between sovereign and subject.

The Shinto dimension to Ansai's work was promoted by numerous diverse groups: Hoshina Masayuki and others from Aizu domain consti-tuted one such group. Then there were members of hereditary shrine priest families from the Kyoto area like the senior courtier, Ōgimachi Kinmichi (1653–1733), to whom Ansai transmitted the *Nakatomi no harae fūsuisō*, the single most important work in Suika Shinto; Izumoji Nobunao (1650–1703), a priest at the Shimo *goryōsha* shrine in Kyoto, a close companion of Kinmichi and, like him, entrusted with Suika Shinto secrets; and Nashinoki Sukeyuki (1639–1723), priest at the Kamo Mioya shrine in Kyoto. Again, there were men from Aki like Ueda Gensetsu (1651–1735) and Katō Kōken (dates unknown); others like Tamaki Masahide (1670–1736), the man responsible for disseminating Kikke Shinto in Edo Japan, and Atobe Yoshiakira (1658–1729) and Tomobe Yasutaka (1667–1740) from Edo. Ōgimachi Kinmichi it was who, after Ansai's death, inherited the orthodox line of Suika Shinto. When Kinmichi became the head of the Suika school, Suika Shinto began to make its mark amongst the nobility at the imperial court in Kyoto. Indeed, the regent Ichijō Kaneteru (1652–1705) became a Suika disciple, and it was Kaneteru who was more responsible than any for reviving the *daijōsai* enthronement rite for Emperor Higashiyama (r. 1687–1709). The retired emperor Reigen (r. 1663–87; d. 1732) encountered Suika Shinto through Ichijō Kaneteru, and had his spirit enshrined in a sacred mirror while still alive. The regent Ichijō Kaneyoshi (1692–1751) won imperial sanction for the worship of the spirits of three deceased emperors,

namely Reigen, Higashiyama and Nakamikado (r. 1710–35), as kami. It was around this time, too, that other important court rites were resurrected, and Suika Shinto played its part in authorising and giving meaning to the activities of those charged with ensuring the rites were faithfully performed.

In the Shirakawa Shinto family, Shirakawa Masafuyu, the senior *Jingikan* official at court, learned Suika Shinto from Kaneteru and took as his teacher Usui Masatane of the Suika school. The Shirakawa family used Suika Shinto to bolster their own position at court, especially with regard to the performance of court ritual. It was in this context in 1751, that the Shirakawa oversaw the rebuilding of the Hasshinden, the shrine of the Eight protector deities. They also now began to use their Suika Shinto connections to expand their role as court intermediary for provincial shrines and priests seeking court rank and status, and this inevitably brought them into conflict with the Yoshida school, who until now had had an effective monopoly here.

The Tsuchimikado family of the court's Yin Yang school (*onmyōdō* in Japanese) also used Suika Shinto influence to help systematise their teachings and ritual practice.[26] At the end of the medieval period, privileged knowledge of *onmyōdō* was in the possession of three different families: the Tsuchimikado, who were astronomers; the calendar specialists of the Kamo family; and the Ōkuro family who presided over the New Year celebrations at court. Of these it was the Tsuchimikado, however, who survived through to the early modern period. The family head at the end of the seventeenth century, Tsuchimikado Yasutomi (1655–1717), studied Suika Shinto and sought to systematise its teachings and ritual practices. The Tsuchimikado family won a major legal battle in the 1680s, and with sanction from emperor Reigen and a licence from the bakufu to assume control over all the Yin Yang specialists in the land, the Tsuchimikado set about creating a comprehensive country-wide organisational structure. It was not really until 1791, when the bakufu made public for the first time the Tsuchimikado's authority over Yin Yang specialists, that real organisational change began to manifest itself. The Tsuchimikado family assumed responsibility for performing all manner of private and public rituals connected with astronomy, the calendar and with imperial enthronements. They served not only the imperial court but the military leadership as well.

The afore-mentioned Tamaki Masahide was a unique figure amongst Suika Shinto disciples. He appears to have been initiated into the mysteries of Kikke Shinto, a variety that traces its origins back to the Nara period courtier Tachibana Moroe (684–757) but only acquired renown owing to the efforts of Tamaki Masahide. In his later years, Masahide became a

senior disciple of Ōgimachi Kinmichi with whom he studied Suika Shinto. Masahide used knowledge of Suika Shinto to give structure to his Kikke Shinto. It was less a question of Kikke ideas than Kikke ritual practices, such as the *hikime* and *meigen*, that he subjected to Suika influence. Both were designed to dispel evil spirits: the former involved plucking the string of a bow with the fingers, the latter plucking the bow string with the head of an arrow to produce a higher pitched sound. Masahide introduced a military colouring to his writings, too, drawing on military theory prevalent since the medieval period. As a result of Masahide's efforts, Kikke Shinto became to be widely known in Edo Japan and it was espoused by many others, such as Tanigawa Kotosuga (1709–76) and Yoshimi Yoshikazu (1673–1761). Masahide stressed the importance of the secret transmission of Shinto, whether it be Suika or Kikke varieties, but after his death, no independent school of Kikke Shinto formed; rather it was passed on as an integral component of Suika Shinto.

Atobe Yoshiakira and Tomobe Yasutaka were responsible for disseminating Suika Shinto in Edo. They were schooled in both Suika Shinto and, via Satō Naokata, Yamazaki Ansai's Confucian teachings, but both abandoned Ansai Confucianism in favour of his Shinto. They received their initiation into its mysteries from Ōgimachi Kinmichi in Kyoto before heading for Edo. Yoshiakira penned a volume of Ansai's Shinto teachings which he styled *Suika-ō shintōkyō no den*. Both men gradually distanced themselves from Kinmichi and were finally disowned by him. It was inevitable that, as Suika Shinto teachings spread and its organisation expanded, so the centripetal force of the Ōgimachi family became correspondingly weaker.

An incident in the imperial court makes the point. I refer to the socalled Hōreki incident of 1758 (Hōreki 8). Takeuchi Shikibu (1712–67), a servant in the Tokudaiji court household, was a student of Suika Shinto and Kikke Shinto, which he learned with Matsuoka Obuchi (1699–1783) and Tamaki Masahide. Shikibu was additionally familiar with Wakabayashi Kyōsai (1679–1732), a Suika Shinto disciple. Shikibu's theories made their presence felt on young courtiers in the entourage of Emperor Momozono (r. 1747–62), via the intermediary Tokudaiji Kinmura. Especially important were ideas of Takeuchi's that offered an intellectual justification for a return of political power to the imperial court. Tokudaiji Kinmura took it upon himself to lecture Momozono on the Suika Shinto reading of the chapters on the Age of the Gods in the *Nihon shoki*. Senior figures in the court regarded these actions as an unwelcome departure from the established practice of court–bakufu cooperation. They had Kinmura and his allies punished and Shikibu, too, was expelled from Kyoto. It was the position of Suika Shinto that the court should not involve itself with

### *Shinsōsai*: Shinto and funerals

In the Edo period, not only were all Japanese required to register at the local Buddhist temple, they were also required by law to avail themselves of the temple's service for funeral rites. By way of reaction to this universal imposition of Buddhist funerals, there emerged, especially among Shinto families, demands for non-Buddhist, Shinto funerals. The premise for the Shinto funeral movement was that Japan must have had its own indigenous funeral practice before Buddhism arrived from the continent. The Yoshida family was the first to systematise Shinto thought and ritual practice in the Edo period, and funerals were part of their general concern as well. But Yoshida Shinto funeral rites only became well known later in the Edo period. In fact, the first to debate the performance of funeral rites outside the established Buddhist framework were Confucianists and Confucian-inspired Shintoists. Funerals were important to them as part of their on-going efforts to 'Japanise' ritual practice. Zhu Xi type funeral rites are set out in the *Karei* text, and such development as there was in Confucian funeral practice in Edo Japan owed much to this classic work. Nakae Tōju's funeral in 1648 was one of the first to be conducted beyond Buddhist boundaries. We saw that Tōju was inclined favourably towards Shinto but his own funeral was in fact Confucian. The series of funerals overseen by Tokugawa Mitsukuni (1628–1700) in the 1660s were based on the ritual formulae in the *Karei*.[28] Kumazawa Banzan was another Confucianist who engaged in debate about funeral practice. Banzan's *Sōsai benron* and the *Sōreiryaku* of Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728) are well-known examples of Confucian writings on funerals.

When Confucian-inspired Shintoists abandoned Buddhist funerals, they cited *Karei* in their defence. The funeral of Hoshina Masayuki, lord of Aizu domain, was carried out under the supervision of a Yoshikawa Shinto priest, albeit in a distinctly Confucian style. Several of Yamazaki Ansai's disciples debated Shinto funeral rites, too, and by about the middle of the eighteenth century, it was increasingly common for even local shrine priests to demand Shinto funeral rites at least for themselves. Shrine priests started around this time to conceive of themselves as a different sort of religionist to the local Buddhist priest; they saw Buddhists as their oppressors,

on account of the law demanding they undergo Buddhist funerals; and they sought liberation from that oppression. The growing awareness on the part of shrine priests of their difference and uniqueness was, of course, closely connected to the expansion of the roles of the Yoshida and Shirakawa families as court intermediaries. These families also embraced religionists who, until now, had no particular attachment to any Shinto school. There began now to emerge many self-consciously Shinto shrine priests. They sought out Shinto funerals as qualitatively distinct from Buddhist funerals, and demanded to be freed from the restrictions imposed by the temple parish system. When 'Restoration Shinto' made its appearance in the nineteenth century, certain well-to-do peasants turned to Shinto funeral rites. The feeling grew that any 'restoration' to the ways of pre-Buddhist Japan had to be accompanied by a return to the Shinto funerals believed to have existed in the pre-Buddhist history of Japan.

After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, Shinto funerals, legitimated by restorationist ideology, were promoted by government as part of the general drive to demarcate distinct Shinto and Buddhist spheres of activity. The early Meiji government set aside the Aoyama cemetery in Tokyo – and other sites in other cities – as Shinto graveyards, and expended considerable effort on the design of uniform Shinto funeral rites. Disputes between rival Shinto factions stymied these efforts, however, and only the most basic guide to funeral practice was ever produced by the state. In many localities, the Meiji Restoration inspired moves to adopt Shinto funerals on a village or hamlet basis, but it was not long before the vast majority reverted to the Buddhist mode.

politics but should devote itself uniquely to ritual, but Shikibu's more radical ideas on the role of the imperial court were understood by those around him to be Suika Shinto pure and simple.[27]

## Confraternities (kō) and fashionable deities: the birth of cross-regional religious communities

In the later half of the seventeenth century, Japanese society began to adopt what we might call its early modern form. After the middle of the

eighteenth century there then unfolded changes which would lead Japan ultimately to modernisation. Already from the seventeenth century, there were developments in the production of goods and crops as well as in manufacturing, but in this latter period the scale and pace of change was of a different order. These developments brought in their wake changes that began to affect the whole of society.

One dimension of this change took place in urban areas. The development of the economy was accompanied by a large influx of people into urban areas as they experienced unprecedented growth. As production of goods and crops advanced and local markets were formed, so Edo, with its huge market, flexed its economic muscle. At the same time, the Osaka-Kyoto region, the heart of Japanese culture until now, ceded precedence to Edo. Edo became the cultural capital of Japan. The carriers of Edo culture were no longer the samurai, but increasingly urban dwellers themselves, including some of the lowest classes.[29]

It was against this background that pilgrimage to temples and shrines became ever more popular. The medieval period had already seen the growth of pilgrimage to distant temples and shrines, but the phenomenon was confined to the Home Provinces. In the early modern period, with the improvement in the road network and the enhanced economic strength of the common people, the sphere of pilgrimage expanded. Around the Genroku period (c.1700), more and more people went on pilgrimage to the island of Shikoku, but with Edo emerging as the cultural centre later in the eighteenth century, there was an upsurge in pilgrimage by the populace of Edo and the wider Kantō region. People formed confraternities, known in Japanese as *kō*, to facilitate pilgrimage. These confraternities were essentially mutual-aid associations, and the typical pilgrimage would involve a *kō* representative going on pilgrimage, funded by other members' contributions. Representative of these confraternities were the Mt Fuji confraternities (Fuji-*kō*) that organised pilgrimage to Mt Fuji. Fuji-*kō* were first established by a mountain ascetic, Hasegawa Kakugyō (1541?–1646?), some time between the 1620s and 1640s, and their popularity increased until a high point was reached in the early nineteenth century, with pilgrims from all over the Kantō area converging on Mt Fuji.[30] Kakugyō underwent ascetic disciplines at the foot of Mt Fuji, and claimed as a result to be endowed with the spiritual powers and the spells essential to the redemption of all people. Kakugyō compiled what became the basic text of Mt Fuji believers, the *Ominuki*, a map of Fuji studded with Kakugyō's characters. Kakugyō also actively promoted his healing skills which won him attention in early Edo when numerous diseases were rampant. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the cult of Mt Fuji was invigorated by the activities of Jikigyō Miroku (1671–1733).[31] There was a millennial

dimension to Jikigyō's teachings. Following his ascent of Mt Fuji in 1688, he received a revelation that faith in Mt Fuji was vital to the realisation of Maitreya's realm. The magic dimension to the cult of Mt Fuji was, nonetheless, diluted under Jikigyō's influence, since he emphasised practical ethics for daily life. Mt Fuji was, of course, not the only Kantō pilgrimage site. Pilgrimage to Ōyama was immensely popular in Edo and throughout the whole Kantō region. So too, if rather further afield, were Narita in present day Chiba and Konpira in what is, today, Kagawa.

The pilgrims to Fuji and other sites tended to be drawn from the region in which the sacred site was located, but Ise was one pilgrimage site that was country-wide in its appeal. Ise confraternities (Ise-*kō*) were formed all over Japan. Sometimes individual representatives would head for Ise alone; on other occasions, wave after wave of pilgrims would set off. The latter phenomenon was known as *okagemairi*. The term has two possible meanings: 'pilgrimage (*mairi*) thanks to (*okage*) other members of the *kō*' or 'pilgrimage to offer thanks (*okage*) to the Ise shrine kami'. On four occasions, 1650, 1750, 1771 and 1830, pilgrims numbered in their hundreds of thousands and even millions. The 1770 pilgrimage is said to have involved some two million people. Distinct from these occasions were others, known as *nukemairi*, when men, women and children all over Japan, would set off without permission from master or employer and would, with no concern for correct travel procedures, head for Ise. They would effectively abscond (*nuke*) on pilgrimage.[32]

An important Edo phenomenon is that of *hayarigami* or 'fashionable deities', deities, that is, which were the object of intense popular veneration for a while before slipping back into obscurity.[33] Inari was one of the deities who was the object of such veneration in Edo. Few shrines were built to Inari in Edo during the seventeenth century, though cases of Inari cults springing up in the provinces were reported. But around the Genroku period, Inari began to attract attention in villages around Edo as a deity endowed with miraculous powers. By the end of the eighteenth century, Inari shrines were being built all over Edo. Not only Inari became the focus of Edo cults; Jizō was another, and it even happened that natural objects of various sorts were identified as kami or Buddhas, and their miraculous powers and this-worldly benefits sought out. Belief in these fashionable deities would thrive fanatically for a while only, then typically, to die down as fashion became unfashionable, perhaps to be rekindled later once more. What was striking here was the emergence of religious beliefs and practices, quite independent of established religions.

In Edo, established temples and shrines would seek to take advantage of popular faith by exposing, for fixed periods, statues of Buddhas and other sacred objects and treasures in their possession. Sometimes the expositions

(known as *kaichō*) took place at the temples and shrines; sometimes temple and shrine priests would embark on tours to different parts to exhibit their sacred objects. Generally, priests sought to generate a festive atmosphere, and the offerings made by the faithful were an invaluable source of income. Temples and shrines would also set up stalls for food and drink within their precincts and offer various entertainments, all in an effort to draw people in and bolster incomes.

The calendar was intimately linked to pilgrimage. With the calendar revision of 1684, the bakufu assumed for itself what had been the imperial court's right to revise and re-edit the calendar. The bakufu now assumed control over astronomical matters, but the Tsuchimikado court family continued to pen commentaries on the calendar, and advised on auspicious times and directions and on various taboos as well. Until 1684, local calendars were produced all over Japan but, henceforth, the independent production of private calendars was banned. What was allowed, and what subsequently proliferated, were abbreviated versions of the official calendar with commentaries attached. That the common people now began to speak of *ehō* in the sense of 'auspicious directions' was a reflection of the broad appeal that these abbreviated calendars had. People came to situate their kami altars in auspicious directions and to take care to set off in an auspicious direction for, say, the first visit of the year to the temple or shrine.

In rural Japan, at least in the Home Provinces in the latter half of the seventeenth century, the old village hierarchies began to dissolve and be replaced by a new hierarchy based more on economic power. As economic power grew still more, the status hierarchy once more dissolved and a new family-based class system emerged. In this context, there rose to prominence men in considerable numbers who functioned as professional shrine priests. Elsewhere, there were moves to oust priests of privilege from the village and so shrine priests' status was somewhat fluid. The fact that shrine priests now began to demand the right to perform Shinto funerals for themselves and their families was a concrete manifestation of the strengthening of their sense of distinct identity. It was against this background that the court mediation problem was exacerbated. The Yoshida family responded to the fluid nature of the shrine priests' profession by seeking to enhance their control. The bakufu's regulations on the control of shrines and their priests worked to the advantage of the Yoshida, as we have seen and, after persistent lobbying, the Yoshida finally succeeded in getting the bakufu to re-issue in 1782 the earlier Edo edict on shrines and priests. In 1791, the Yoshida family set up a Kantō office and worked to expand their influence and control over priests in the east of Japan. At the same time, the Shirakawa family, invigorated by their absorption of Suika Shinto theories,

### *Shichi-go-san*

The rites known as *shichi-go-san* (meaning seven, five and three [years old]) were events in the Edo life cycle that are, to this day, typically conducted at shrines. The rites were undergone by boys at three and five, and girls at three and seven. Their origins lie in three separate rites originally known as *kamioki* or 'leaving the hair', *hakamagi* or 'wearing the hakama' and *obitoki* or 'untying the belt', respectively.

*Kamioki* was a rite commemorating the moment beyond which the child let his or her hair grow. It was customary in pre-modern Japan for babies to have their heads shaven, and children of court families would then undergo the *kamioki* aged two while, for babies born into warrior families, the typical age was three. The rite involved the child donning a wig of long white thread, and praying for a long life. The custom appears to date back to the Muromachi period, but it may be older still. *Kamioki* was typically carried out on the fifteenth day of the eleventh month in the lunar calendar.

*Hakamagi* was a ceremony for both boys and girls of ages three to seven when they would, for the first time, wear a *hakama*. It was a rite of passage that had its origins in the Heian court. Elders of the family concerned would provide the *hakama* and tie the *hakama* belt around the child's waist. It thus represented the first formal recognition by the family, of the child as a fully fledged family member. The *hakama* worn by the child differed from that worn by adults only in that it lacked the *yubinuki*, though the reasons are not clear. Perhaps, the idea was simply to leave the *hakama* as yet incomplete. It was in the Kamakura period that warrior families began to adopt this ceremony.

*Himotoki* or *himohajime* was a rite for boys and girls aged seven, the central moment of which saw the child tying his or her own belt, in place of the simple cord used till now. It appeared to have its origins among the court nobility in the late Muromachi period. Initially, nine-year-old boys and girls would choose an auspicious day in the eleventh lunar month for the ceremony. But, by the middle of the Edo period, it became customary for *hakamagi* to be performed in a boy's fifth year, and *himotoki* to take place in the

seventh year. The general protocol was for the child to face an auspicious direction, and to have his sponsor tie the belt for him or her before all headed off to the local shrine.

It was in the Edo period that these three rites came to be regarded as a single unit with shrine visits de rigueur. The late Edo period work, *Tōto saijiki* ('Customs of the Eastern Capital'), reports that children would wear new clothing reflective of their social status, visit their local shrine, call in at relatives' houses and, at night time, welcome relatives and friends for festivities. Early on, an auspicious day in the eleventh month was chosen but, by the time the *Tōto saijiki* was written, the fifteenth day appears to have become customary. Legend has it that Tokugawa Tokumatsu, the future fifth shogun, Tsunayoshi (1646–1709), had his *obitoki* on the fifteenth day. The linkage between these various coming of age rites and shrines is to be noted.

In the early Edo period, these rites, known collectively as *shichi-go-san*, were the preserve of the court and warrior families. Later, they caught on amongst the wider urban population. The bakufu ordered a frugal approach to these rites in warrior families, but urban class versions were renowned for their extravagance. Around the turn of the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, the custom of *shichi-go-san* began to catch on in rural areas, too. It was not until the Meiji period, however, that it became a nation-wide phenomenon.

also began to extend their services as court intermediaries to local priests, and the numbers of those who affiliated themselves with the Shirakawa grew apace. The Shirakawa also set up an office in Edo and competition and conflict between them and the Yoshida was constant.

The circumstances of Buddhist temples changed now too. New economic wealth in villages combined with the establishment of the early modern family system. Temples and their priests occupied positions of considerable wealth which they derived from the economically improved circumstances of their parishioners. One implication was that temples and priests came to be seen as economic and political oppressors, which led, in turn, to a burgeoning of anti-Buddhist sentiment. One intellectual response to this anti-Buddhism was to be found in the activities of the Shingon Buddhist priest Jiun (1718–1804), who promoted what he called Unden

Shinto.[34] Jiun, a student of both Ryōbu Shinto and of the Confucianism of Itō Tōgai (1670–1738), argued that Shinto and Esoteric Buddhism were one and the same, and that there was no need to approach Shinto through contrived analogies with Buddhist and Confucian doctrine.

There was, in brief, a whole raft of changes to the world of Japanese belief from the middle of the eighteenth century onwards. Pilgrimage to more distant temples and shrines and the cults of fashionable kami marked the advent of patterns of belief that crossed the boundaries of established social organisations. The character of religionists changed, too. Men became shrine priests and dedicated themselves exclusively to that calling. New forms of organisation also appeared: the confraternities (kō) and the Yoshida and Shirakawa affiliations. All of these moves determined the *substance* of Shinto as it was on the eve of modernity.

## National Learning (*kokugaku*): development of Shinto-based learning

Two characteristic features of eighteenth-century culture were the rise in general intellectual standards and the spread of literacy. The dissemination of Confucianism had a major role to play here. As domain schools were set up all over Japan in the eighteenth century and Confucian education was provided for men of the warrior class so, at the same time, did private Confucian schools spring up to meet the needs of the better-off class of commoner. Again, from the end of the seventeenth through to the start of the eighteenth centuries, there were established so-called *tenarai-juku* (academies of learning) where literacy skills were taught, and *terakoya* (temple schools) where, additionally, Confucianism in a more popular format was conveyed and began to make its mark on the lives of commoners.

At the same time, the eighteenth century saw not only an ever increasing flow of people, material objects and money but also of information. The culture and arts of the great urban centres were dispersed to the rural periphery through the nodes of castle towns, and these engaged people of intellect. Poetry circles were created among the upper levels of the urban and rural populace. A broad-based class of cultivated Japanese now began to emerge with the leisure to engage in learning. In response to this new situation, publishing became viable for the first time as a commercial enterprise. A whole range of texts that had only trickled through in hand-copied form could now be distributed widely and in great quantities. This development brought about a fundamental change in learning and, in turn, in religious belief. One change relates to the method of conveying information. The printed text, the ownership of which in

multiple copies was now, for the first time, possible, rendered redundant the traditional method of transferring knowledge by word of mouth from master to single, privileged pupil. Now, knowledge could be accessed by all and sundry. A second change was to the method of study. Since the basic texts for study now became available in printed form, research could be done more easily and with a much wider range of sources than was possible before. Rapid strides were now made in empirical research.

Around the time that the popularity of Suika Shinto was at its peak, the academic study of Shinto began in earnest. Shinto studies had already emerged by the middle of the seventeenth century. Well-known examples included Hayashi Razan's *Honchō jinjakō*, his three-volume study of shrines, their history and related beliefs and practice completed in 1645; Tokugawa Yoshinao's *Jingi hōten*, a nine-volume work on shrines, their kami and their lineages completed in 1646; and Mano Tokitsuna's *Kokin shingaku ruihen*, a hundred-volume encyclopedia of Shinto begun in 1682. These studies were an attempt to systematise and summarise in comprehensive fashion various Shinto theories that until now had been the exclusive preserve of various court and Shinto families. They set out to expose Shinto in its entirety and disperse their findings widely. None of these works, however, was concerned to develop critical analyses of specific texts.

In the first three decades of the eighteenth century, there emerged amongst commoners, too, an enthusiasm for the study of ancient customs and ritual forms. No longer were these the unique preserve of courtiers and warriors. The name given to these new enthusiasts was *kojitsuka*, literally 'experts on the truth of ancient times'. Students gradually broadened their focus beyond ritual and ceremonial precedent to the study of ancient Japanese history and Shinto. Notable among them were Tsuboi Yoshichika (1657–1735) and Tada Yoshitoshi (1698–1750). Suika Shinto adherents were responsible for the most systematic and comprehensive work on Shinto, but others responded with empirical research into the Shinto classics and historical texts that referred to Shinto. Their method was to consult Shinto classics, historical sources and texts that disclosed ancient ritual practice in an effort to advance further the work of men of an earlier generation who similarly searched for an orthodox Shinto. In the process of their studies, they came to dismiss as fraudulent a whole corpus of Shinto texts written in the medieval period.

Yoshimi Yoshikazu was typical of such scholars. Yoshikazu was born in 1673 to a warrior family in Owari which rose to some prominence in the service of the domain lord, Tokugawa Yoshinao (1600–50). Thereafter, the family served as priests at the Nagoya Tōshōgū, the domain's shrine dedicated to the spirit of Ieyasu. Yoshikazu inclined increasingly towards Suika Shinto, and was initiated into Suika secrets by the courtier and

present head of the Suika school, Ōgimachi Kinmichi; he was also initiated into Kikke Shinto by Tamaki Masahide; Zhu Xi Confucianism he learned from Asami Keisai. Yoshikazu embarked on a critical appraisal of Yoshida, Ise and Suika Shinto theories in an effort to evaluate their claims through a comparative study of independent historical sources of undisputed veracity. He took issue with the Yoshida family over two matters: court mediation on behalf of the priests at the Nagoya Tōshōgū shrine and the appointment of priests at other shrines. These essentially political clashes seem to have prompted his academic critique of Yoshida Shinto theory. He subsequently published the critique in a work called *Zōeki ben bokushō zokkai*. He launched a devastating critique, too, on the basic Watarai Shinto text, the *Shintō gobusho*. In his work *Gobusho setsuben*, Yoshikazu did a thorough word-for-word analysis of the *Gobusho*, thought to be of Nara pedigree, and proved it to be a fraud, a product of the medieval period. He also attacked the Suika Shinto reading of the chapters on the Age of the Gods in the *Nihon shoki* with two volumes of his own revisionist analysis, the *Kamiyo seigi* and *Kamiyo jikisetsu*.

Three other scholars who engaged in a similar sort of enterprise were Amano Sadakage (1663–1733), like Yoshikazu a samurai from Owari; Tanigawa Kotosuga (1709–76), a doctor from the province of Ise; and Kawamura Hidene (1722–92), another samurai from Owari. Sadakage worked with Yoshikazu on the editing of the *Owari fudoki*, a study of the customs and folk practices of Owari province, and absorbed the latter's critical approach in the process. One product was his massive, one-thousand volume study of shrines, laws, history and literature called *Shiojiri*. Kotosuga was a disciple of Tamaki Masahide's and, though initiated into Suika Shinto, he wrote a critical study of it in thirty five volumes called *Nihon shoki tsūshō*. He compiled medieval sources for a variety of Shinto theories and subjected them to in-depth critical analysis. Hidene was a student of both Yoshida and Yoshikawa Shinto, a disciple, too, of Yoshikazu's; he also worked with Tada Yoshitoshi. His legacy was a study of the *Nihon shoki* and all the sources cited in that text. Indeed, between them, Hidene and Kotosuga represent the pinnacle of early modern *Nihon shoki* studies.

Yoshikazu and Kotosuga, though both initiated into Suika Shinto, nonetheless took major strides beyond the Suika Shinto framework. Part of the new learning these men helped inspire merged with 'National Learning' or what became known as *kokugaku*. So-called 'orthodox' Shinto teachings ceased to be those of Suika Shinto as this 'National Learning' came steadily to exercise the decisive influence on Shinto development.

National Learning might be defined simply as the study of the traditions, institutions and literature of Japan prior to the advent of foreign influence.

Inevitably enough, the character and definition of National Learning was, from the outset, not so clearly delineated as this. National Learning was influenced by, and developed in contradistinction to, the Confucianism that began to spread throughout Japanese society from early Edo.

Learning in the medieval period, and prior to it, was generally a question of studying Chinese texts or Buddhist scriptures. Japanese arts, history and customs were not usually regarded as pertinent topics for general study. Rather, specialist and privileged knowledge of these subjects was entrusted to specific families for maintenance and transmission. However, after the decade-long Ōnin wars (1467–77), this traditional learning encountered crisis. Many of the tomes kept for generations in different families were destroyed by fire; the families themselves either died out or lost the capacity to maintain their specialist learning.

It was in this environment, at the end of the medieval period, that a number of men appeared with an acute awareness of the need to embark upon the study of things Japanese. Important among them were Ichijō Kaneyoshi (1402–81), Iio Sōgi (1421–1502), Sanjōnishi Sanetaka (1455–1537) and Kiyohara Nobukata (1475–1550). They set themselves the task of writing commentaries and lecturing on the classics, and the customs and laws of ancient Japan. Their work provided the foundation for the early modern study of Japanese literature and institutions which, in its beginnings, was known as *wagaku*, or Japanese studies.

Students of so-called Japanese studies worked in a whole range of 'disciplines', poetics being perhaps the most important of them. Poetics had already been systematised to a degree in a form known as *Dōjō kagaku*. Literally the term means 'the study of poetry (*kagaku*) by high-ranking court nobles (*dōjō*)'. This court poetics expanded its vision in the early modern period as culture became popularised. Court poetics placed special emphasis on the Eight Great Imperial Collections (*Hachidaishū*), namely the *Kokin wakashū* (908– ), the *Gosen wakashū* (951– ), the *Shūi wakashū* (1006– ), the *Goshūi wakashū* (1086– ), *Kin'yō wakashū* (1124– ), the *Shika wakashū* (1151– ), *Senzai wakashū* (1290), and the *Shinkokin wakashū* (1205– ). To the extent that these collections remained the focus of early modern poetics, they constituted an important continuum with medieval studies, but there now surfaced new voices of criticism. The critics included men like Kinoshita Chōshōshi (1569–1649), born to a samurai family in Bichū. He served Toyotomi Hideyoshi and participated in his Korean campaigns before falling out of favour and taking the tonsure. Others were Toda Mosui (1629–1706), the son of a vassal of Tokugawa Tadanaga, who took the tonsure in his later years, and Shimokōbe Chōryū (1624–86), a disciple of Chōshōshi's who edited a collection of commoner poetry. All these men led reclusive lives, and they all fought against the normative,

prohibitive nature of traditional poetics as they turned back to the *Man'yōshu* in their search for creative poetry composition.

Keichū (1640–1701), widely regarded as the pioneer of classic studies and National Learning, is to be understood in this context. Keichū was born into a warrior family and later became a Shingon priest, but he studied the *Man'yōshū* under the aegis of Tokugawa Mitsukuni (1628–1700), the lord of Mito domain, and wrote his major work on the *Man'yōshū*, the *Man'yō daishōki*. Originally, this was entrusted to Shimokōbe Chōryū, but he died and Keichū, his friend, took over the work and saw it to fruition. What was epoch-making about the *Man'yō daishōki* was that it was the first critical, empirical study of the *Man'yōshū*. Keichū learned from Chōryū's critical commentaries on Buddhist texts how to establish and demonstrate the validity or otherwise of one or other set of teachings. He inherited the technique and applied it to his own studies of the *Man'yōshū*. His analysis of the *Nihon shoki* and the *Man'yōshū* also led him to write on ancient *kana* usage and the *kun* – that is, the Japanese – reading of Chinese characters used in those texts. This method constituted a fundamental critique, too, of what, until now, had been the dominant approach to Shinto studies: namely the identification in Shinto texts of contrived analogies with Buddhism and Yin Yang teachings.[35]

Keichū's understanding of Shinto was an extension of the medieval approach. His understanding of Shinto owes much to those medieval theories which found an identity between Shinto and Buddhism, the *shin-butsu shūgō* approach; at the same time, though, he understood Shinto as something distinct from Buddhism and Confucianism. Keichū was clearly, then, influenced by Ryōbu Shinto ideas with their focus on *honji suijaku*. As for the latter dimension to his approach, he formulated his own ideas based on a reading of the *Jinnō shōtōki* by Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293–1354). This led him to conclude that 'this country of ours is the sacred land of the kami'. As Inoguchi has pointed out, Keichū took a *honji suijaku* type approach in identifying Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, with Dainichi, the Sun Buddha, but he nonetheless came to the conclusion that Japan was sacred. He adhered to both positions, unaware of the inherent contradiction between them.

Keichū's critical approach to texts made its impact over time on all those who studied Japanese traditions. Shinto adherents were no exception. The afore-mentioned Yoshimi Yoshikazu was just one who employed Keichū's critical method. Kada no Azumamaro (1669–1736) was another.

Azumamaro was born into the family of hereditary priests attached to the Fushimi Inari shrine in Kyoto. He studied Shinto and poetics within the context of the Fushimi Inari tradition. He wrote up his studies on the *Man'yōshū* into *Man'yōshū hekianshō*, which built upon Keichū's *Man'yō*

*daishōki* but was yet more empirical in its approach. Azumamaro focused exclusively on the chapters on the Age of the Gods in the *Nihon shoki* and interpreted them from his own 'Shinto ethical' perspective. His basic understanding was that the mythical motifs in the chapters on the Age of the Gods constituted a metaphor for ideal human behaviour in the real world. This was one step removed from the interpretive approach of the medieval period which took the myths as literal truth. Azumamaro's was a rational interpretation, but ever-present was the danger of him departing from his stated analytical critical position, and interpreting the myths in a purely arbitrary fashion. Azumamaro insisted that the way he uncovered through his reading of the myths constituted a norm that all men must follow. His position, at once empirical and normative, was inherited by other scholars of National Learning.

Azumamaro, maintaining that his learning was for the greater renown of his family, left Kyoto for Edo where he lectured to shrine priests on the classics and poetics and, finally, gathered round him a group of loyal disciples. Here, too, we see evidence of the general trend of the times away from private oral transmission of secret knowledge to the more public dissemination of teachings. Families' privileged knowledge still had a part to play, and Azumamaro found legitimation in his family background even as he disseminated his own more enlightened understandings. Azumamaro owes his renown, partly at least, to a petition he drew up calling on the bakufu to create a network of Japanese schools dedicated to the teaching of Japanese, as opposed to Confucian, knowledge. The petition, which was never in fact submitted, criticised Confucianists for the contempt they displayed towards the study of Japan, and demanded schools be established to ensure the thriving of Japanese studies. Azumamaro's petition is of interest for the linkage it established between Japanese studies and what might be called an incipient national consciousness. It has been suggested that the petition, only made public fifty years after Azumamaro's death, was a fake but the national scholar Hirata Atsutane later praised it highly, and it certainly helps explain why he and his disciples referred to Azumamaro as the founder of National Learning.

Kamo Mabuchi (1697–1769), a disciple of Azumamaro's, started his studies under the tutelage of the Hamamatsu scholar, Sugiura Kuniakira (1678–1740); he then went to Kyoto and studied with Azumamaro in Fushimi during the latter's twilight years. After Azumamoro's death, Mabuchi went to Edo and, helped out by Azumamaro's youngest brother Kada Nobuna and his nephew Kada Arimaro, he began to speak and write and form his own group of disciples.

The *Man'yōshū* poetry collection was the focus of Mabuchi's classical studies, too. The goal he set himself was to acquire expertise on the age

of the gods, but he believed that expert knowledge would only come after studying the ancients' language and emotions, in short by approaching the way the ancients lived their lives. Only then would the age of the gods disclose itself. The clue to the language and emotions of the ancients was the poetry of ancient times, and the *Man'yōshū* was, for Mabuchi, the supreme collection. The age of the gods and of humans, as brought into relief by his studies, was not merely a question of historical fact. Mabuchi accorded them a normative quality; he saw humankind and society represented there in ideal form. Mabuchi had a special word for the innocent yet powerful poetry he encountered in the *Man'yōshū*: he called it *masuraoburi* which means something like 'masculine vigour'. He understood it to be an original Japanese quality, and was fulsome in his praise of it. He contrasted this quality with the style of poetry found in the later *Kokin wakashū*, which he dismissed as *taoyameburi*, or 'feminine elegance'. One of Mabuchi's conclusions was that the ideal form of the Japanese female was not elegantly feminine at all, but vigorous in a masculine way.

Mabuchi's ideas were to be found in their most accessible form in his work *Kokuikō* (1760). Here, he rejects as superficial and formalistic, foreign teachings, especially Confucianism, and celebrates the ancient Japanese heart as unselfconscious and natural. This book prompted counter-attacks not only by Confucianists such as Numata Yukiyoshi (1792–1849), but by other scholars of National Learning as well. Mabuchi's thinking was very much of an ethnic nationalist variety, but there was in him none of the actual awareness of crisis in Japan's relations with the rest of the world that was the hallmark of the later anti-foreign loyalist movement.[36]

Mabuchi's disciples were interested above all in his poetics. Around the year 1700, many adherents of the court poetics group had come down to Edo from Kyoto. Mabuchi's group was opposed to these aristocratic poeticists, and Mabuchi himself went out of his way to recruit Edo merchants to his school. He was wont to refer to his own intellectual activities as *kogaku* or Ancient Learning, and he and his followers were known in Edo as the Ancient Learning faction (*kogakuha*). The group subsequently splintered and gave rise to other factions. Among them were the Edo faction of Katō Chikage (1735–1808) and Murata Harumi (1746–1811); the *Man'yō* faction of Kurita Hijimaro (1737–1811) and Arakida Hisaoyu (1746–1804); and the *Shinkokin* faction of Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801). While the *Man'yō* faction sought to perfect Mabuchi's work on the *Man'yōshū* collection, the Edo faction and the *Shinkokin* faction gave new emphasis to the *Kokin* and *Shinkokin* imperial poetry collections. Intriguingly, the Edo faction was also accommodating towards Confucian studies.

From the end of the eighteenth century through to the last throes of the Tokugawa government in the 1860s, National Learning underwent a

major transformation. Two notable aspects to the transformation were the formation of large groups of disciples and a decisive inclination towards an active religious faith in the kami. The stream of National Learning that developed a more powerful religious attitude is generally known as restoration (*fukko*) Shinto.

Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801) was the greatest of this group of scholars. He was the first to put together his own systematic intellectual approach to literature, to history and to Shinto. He was also the first to organise disciples in huge numbers. Norinaga, who was born in Matsuzaka in Ise into a family of a cotton wholesalers, set off for Kyoto aged twenty-three with the intention of becoming a doctor. In Kyoto, he joined the school of the Confucianist, Hori Keizan (1688–1757). During his five years there, Norinaga encountered the writings of Keichū and determined to pursue an academic career. On returning to Matsuzaka, he started a poetry circle and gave lectures on *Genji monogatari* and, in so doing, added the finishing touches to the concept of the *mono no aware* theory that was to be the centrepiece of his literary theory.[37] Hino Tatsuo has argued that the words *mono no aware* – by which Norinaga meant 'the movement of the heart as it feels' – were quite familiar to Norinaga's contemporaries, but Norinaga was unique in his application of the words to the essence of a tale. He was thus able to dismiss the contemporary fashion for reading Buddhist or Confucian moral purpose into works of literature. He began instead to substitute for this an understanding of literature in purely literary terms. Norinaga developed this new approach because of the analytical, empirical methodology he applied; a methodology he shared in common with the *kojitsuka* mentioned earlier.

Norinaga deepened his understanding of Shinto after his meeting with Mabuchi and joining the latter's school. Gradually hereafter, his interest shifted from literature to Shinto. From Mabuchi he learned how to use classical Japanese language to study the feelings of the ancients, and the importance of locating the purpose of his study in an elucidation of Japan's own unique 'way'. It was at Mabuchi's prompting that Norinaga began his study of the *Kojiki*. The study became his life's work, and it emerged some thirty years later as *Kojikiden*. The forty-four volume *Kojikiden*, published finally in 1798, remains an authoritative work to this day. As Kamino and others have pointed out, Norinaga not only retold the story of the *Kojiki* but he restructured it in terms of three distinct realms: heaven, earth and the nether realm. Norinaga was influenced by the writings of the Confucian scholar Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728). Sorai rejected the later interpretations of Zhu Xi and others, advocating a return to Confucius' original writings. In returning to the *Kojiki*, Norinaga was adopting a similar approach. Norinaga also shared Sorai's position on the unknowable nature

of kami. He thus avoided passing judgement on the truth or otherwise of the *Kojiki*. But he came eventually to affirm that the tales of the age of the gods were historical fact. Norinaga's analytical endeavours were all directed towards resurrecting the truths about the age of the gods. It was also his considered belief that the activities of the kami constituted an ideal towards which all humans should aspire.

Norinaga created a network of disciples that spread country-wide; it was built around men from urban as well as rural areas. Numbers grew exponentially in the 1790s and, when Norinaga died in 1801, they numbered 487. In his later years, he set up the Suzunoya, a society designed to facilitate the organisation and control of his disciples. His adopted son, Motoori Ōhira (1756–1833), was placed in charge. It was this group of disciples who made possible the later publication of the *Kojikiden*. Disciples were aware that Norinaga could ill-afford to publish privately, and so provided him with the capital for the enterprise. In this way, developments in printing and publishing helped transform the organisation of National Learning from a group passively in receipt of the master's teachings into an active one of readers and publishers.

Hirata Atsutane (1776–1843) inherited Norinaga's thinking while giving to it a new religious and normative quality. Atsutane was born to a samurai family in Akita but fled home after an unhappy childhood and headed for Edo. He devoted himself to learning in Edo where he acquired a fascination for the *Kojiki*; he idolised Norinaga after coming across the *Kojikiden*. Before long, Atsutane was himself lecturing, and his accessible, simple approach enabled him to draw to him people not normally enamoured of learning.[38]

Atsutane first put forward his own systematic theories in his *Tama no mihashira* (1812), where he made use of Norinaga's *Kojikiden* and the *Sandaikō* of Hattori Nakatsune (1757–1824) – published as a supplement to the *Kojikiden*. His purpose was to argue that the kami were behind the creation of the sun-that-is-heaven, the earth, and the moon-that-is-nether-realm. He expounded his belief that the destination of the souls of the deceased was not the nether realm at all but the earth. Indeed, the destination of the soul was the main focus of the *Tama no mihashira*, and it relegated to a position of only secondary importance an empirical understanding of the *Kojiki*.

This 'religious' tendency came to underpin Atsutane's whole approach to learning. Facts about the age of the gods were, for Atsutane, not to be derived exclusively from the *Kojiki*. He relied, rather, on a whole array of works to invigorate his beliefs. His publications marked the dilution of the empirical, analytical approach that had characterised National Learning until now, and with Atsutane, National Learning shifted decisively to matters of the spirit.

Atsutane also incorporated into his schema religious ideas that were accessible to the common people: ancestor worship, karma and hell featured prominently. Many of these were closely linked to early modern Buddhism, but Atsutane was a vehement critic of Buddhism, and insisted the beliefs he promoted were all present in Japan's ancient traditions. He sought to redefine Shinto as a creed that reached to all corners of the globe. He believed that all religious truth derived from Shinto, and it was this perspective that led him to deny Buddhism. The view that the origin of all things existed in ancient Japanese tradition he applied even to foreign civilisations. He proposed, for example, that Adam and Eve were none other than Izanagi and Izanami. He later acquired an interest in the calendar, in geomancy and in the occult. Here, too, the same view operated: Shinto constituted the foundation of all this different knowledge. Scholars identify in Atsutane's articulation of these beliefs, a shift from National Learning to Restoration Shinto. One is tempted to see in Atsutane's efforts to extend his gaze far and wide, a new accommodative approach; but, in fact, he returns and reduces everything to Japan's ancient tradition, to Shinto. His writing marks a retreat to a pre-National Learning, a pre-empirical type of contrived, forced approach to knowledge. Atsutane argued for the existence of an indigenous type of writing – he called it *jindai moji* or 'characters from the age of the gods' – before Chinese characters came to Japan in the fifth century CE. Contemporary scholarship regards the idea of *jindai moji* as a fiction, the imaginings of Atsutane.[39]

Atsutane formed his disciples into a community he called the Ibukiya. At the start, he lectured principally in Edo, and most of his Ibukiya disciples were Edo merchants, but subsequently he travelled to the rural areas of Shimosa and Kazusa where he won adherents amongst the upper level of the peasantry. As Atsutane gained more and more followers in the Kantō area, so the Yoshida and Shirakawa families, themselves locked in battle over the right to mediate with the court for local shrine priests, sought to cultivate him. The Yoshida first commissioned Atsutane to teach ancient studies to shrine priests, but there was a falling out and the Shirakawa stepped in. On behalf of the Shirakawa school, Atsutane edited the *Hakke gakusoku*, a guide to Shirakawa Shinto; he was then appointed to the position of Shirakawa lecturer, but his expulsion from Edo in 1841 meant that he remained lecturer in name only.

If the Ibukiya acquired new recruits at a rapid pace in the late Edo and Restoration periods, it owed less to Atsutane himself than to the energies of his adopted son, Hirata Kanetane (1799–1880). In Atsutane's lifetime there were some 500 followers, but those who joined the Ibukiya after his death numbered in excess of 1,300. Most of the publication work done by the Hirata disciples was achieved after his death, as well.

For a period after Atsutane's death, the focus of Ibukiya activity centred upon the fate of the soul and the world view that supported this religious theory. During this period, Hirata disciples – especially those of the upper peasantry level – continued to grow in number. As the academic tendency of the age became increasingly analytical in approach, so peasant interests shifted to academic matters. Many of these people were drawn to Atsutane's writings for such academic reasons, and they sought to solve the contradictions they confronted in rural society by integrating the spirit world with the real world. Mutobe Yoshika (1806–63) was an influential disciple of Atsutane's, a shrine priest too, who drew on Atsutane's conception of the spirit world to construct a cosmogony centred on local guardian kami. He proposed that guardian kami in all localities constantly oversaw the souls of people of the locality, just as the kami themselves were overseen by Ōkuninushi. Behind this conception was Yoshika's belief in the need to reconstruct order in local society. Another Hirata disciple, Miyaoi Yasuo (1797–1858), believed that a revival of the rural economy could be achieved by instructing villagers in Atsutane's religious ideas, especially those on the afterlife. The Tsuwano domain priest, Oka Kumaomi (1783–1851), was another ardent admirer of Atsutane's, who constructed his own world-view based on Atsutane's writings on the afterlife.

As the bakufu committed itself to an open-port policy from the 1850s, Hirata disciples' own sense of crisis intensified. They came to understand social contradictions to exist less at the local level than at the state level. Atsutane's writings came to be appreciated for the emphasis they appeared to place on the state and anti-foreignism. Around the regions of Shinano and Mino in central Japan, men of warrior class and their associates began to register with the Hirata school in significant numbers. With its cross-class membership, the Hirata school became a gathering point for information on national politics and international affairs.

The exercise of intellectual control over Hirata disciples in these circumstances became impossible. Disciples who crossed from province to province as activists exchanged information through the Ibukiya but, at the same time, they formed their own linkages with men of influence. Yano Harumichi (also known as Gendō, 1823–87) was one such. He was a pivotal figure in the late Edo Hirata school and was active in and around Kyoto. He was influential in the anti-foreign movement and facilitated a deepening of ties between the Hirata school and Shirakawa Shintoists. Harumichi was appointed a lecturer for the Shirakawa school, and became a point of contact between adherents of both schools. Ōkuni Takamasa (1792–1871) was another who, though influenced by Hirata's writings, acted independently of the Hirata school. Takamasa, a samurai from Tsuwano domain, learned National Learning from Atsutane's work, but

was also well read in Dutch studies owing partly to his visit to Nagasaki in 1818. Takamasa then left his domain and became active in Kyoto as a scholar. He was keenly aware of the threat of Christianity, and sought in Shinto a religious, ideological foundation that would enable Japan to counter the Western powers and their religion. He interpreted National Learning from what we might call a nationalist perspective. He was also responsible for identifying Azumamaro, Mabuchi, Norinaga and Atsutane as constituting the four great men of the orthodox lineage of National Learning, an approach which exerted a major influence on Meiji and all subsequent studies of National Learning.

In the Restoration period, Hirata advocates envisaged an important role for the Shirakawa and Yoshida families. By contrast, Ōkuni Takamasa and those from Tsuwano that surrounded him had a different vision. Imperial ritual was to be liberated from the influence of these traditional schools and revived according to the manner of the mythical first emperor Jinmu. In Jinmu's age, ritual was performed by emperors themselves as celebrants. When the Restoration happened in 1868, the Ōkuni model was adopted, the Yoshida and Shirakawa families were rejected, and the Tsuwano group came to dominate the ritual and religious policies of the early Meiji government.[40]

# Notes

1  Bitō Masahide, 'The creation of a national religion in Japan' in idem, *Edo jidai to wa nani ka: Nihon shijō no kinsei to kindai* (Iwanami 1992).

2  In English see Allan Grapard, 'The Shinto of Yoshida Kanetomo' (*Monumenta Nipponica* 47–1, 1992), idem tr. (1992b) '*Yuiitsu Shintō Myōbō Yōshū* (by Yoshida Kanetomo)' (*Monumenta Nipponica* 47–2, 1992) and Bernard Scheid, 'Reading the *Yuiitsu Shintō myōbō yōshū*: a modern exegesis of an esoteric Shinto text', in John Breen and Mark Teeuwen eds, *Shinto in history: Ways of the kami* (Curzon Press 2000).

3  Early modern textual analysis demonstrated the compilation to be a fabrication of the late Heian period, but it remains of value for the light it sheds on the Mononobe lineage and Mononobe ritual practice. It is published in volume 7 of *Shintei zōho Kokushi taikei* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1953).

4  On the *sanja takusen* see Brian Bocking, 'Sanja takusen: "Shinto", "Buddhism" and the oracles of the three shrines', in John Breen and Mark Teeuwen eds, *Shinto in history: Ways of the kami* (Curzon Press 2000).

5  See Hagiwara Tatsuo, *Kamigami no sonraku* (Kōbundō 1978).

6  *Toshigoi*: a court rite of the second month to pray for an abundant harvest; *tsukinami*: held twice yearly in the sixth and twelfth months before government ministers, the rite involved the distribution of offerings to the priests of some two hundred shrines gathered in the *Jingikan*; *niiname*: a harvest ritual that takes place in the court and at shrines across Japan in the eleventh month.

7 The Shirakawa family built a Hasshinden of its own in 1751.

8 Hiraishi Naoaki, *Ichigo no jiten ten* (Sanseidō 1997).

9 On Ieyasu's deification, see Herman Ooms, 'Trajectory of discourse: transfiguring warlord powers into sacred authority' in idem, *Tokugawa ideology* (Princeton University Press 1985), and W.J. Boot, 'The death of a shogun: deification in early modern Japan' in John Breen and Mark Teeuwen eds, *Shinto in history: Ways of the kami* (Curzon Press 2000).

10 Takano Toshihiko, 'Edo bakufu to jisha' in idem, *Kinsei Nihon no kokka kenryoku to shūkyō* (Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai 1989).

11 Yamaguchi Keiji, *Sakoku to kaikoku* (Iwanami 1993).

12 Hashimoto Masanori, 'Kanbun 5nen "Jinja jōmoku" no kinō' (*Shintō Shukyō* 168–9).

13 On mountain ascetics, see Byron Earhart, *A religious study of the Mount Haguro sect of Shugendo* (*Monumenta Nipponica* monograph 1970).

14 On this phenomenon, see for example Miyake Kesao, *Sato shugen no kenkyū* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1984).

15 On the establishment of the family system and its linkage to an awareness of ancestors and ancestral rites, see Ōtō Osamu, *Kinsei nōmin to ie, mura, kokka* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1996).

16 On *miyaza*, see Winston Davis, 'The Miyaza and the fishermen: Ritual status in coastal villages of Wakayama prefecture' (*Asian Folklore Studies* 36–2, 1977).

17 See also Peter Nosco, 'Masuho Zankō (1655–1742): A Shinto populariser between nativism and National Learning' in idem, ed., *Confucianism and Tokugawa culture* (Princeton University Press 1984).

18 Higashi Jokan, 'Kinsei toshi sairei no bunkashi' in Yokkaichi hakubutsukan ed., *Sairei, dashi, fūryū* (Yokkaichi Hakubutsukan 1995). An overview of recent research on urban spectacles is Kuroda Hideo, 'Toshi sairei bunka kenkyū no genzai' in Kawagoe hakubutsukan ed., *Dai jūikkai kikakuten zuroku: Kawagoe, Hikawa sairei no tenkai* (Kawagoe Hakubutsukan).

19 See Sakumi Yōichi, *Ōedo no tenkamatsuri* (Kawade Shobō Shinsha 1996).

20 Saitō Gesshin, *Bukō nenpyō* (Heibonsha 1968).

21 Watanabe Hiroshi, *Kinsei Nihon shakai to Sōgaku* (Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai 1985); Shibata Jun, *Shisōshi ni okeru kinsei* (Shibunkaku 1991); Kurozumi Makoto, 'Jugaku to kinsei Nihon shakai' in Asao Naohiro, ed., *Iwanami kōza Nihon tsūshi* 13: *Kinsei 3* (Iwanami 1994).

22 Taira Shigemichi, *Yoshikawa Shintō no kisoteki kenkyū* (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1966); see also the Yoshikawa Shinto volume of the *Shinto taikei*.

23 Takano Toshihiko, 'Jūhasseiki zenhan no Nihon: Taihei no naka no tenkan' in Asao Naohiro, ed., *Iwanami kōza Nihon tsūshi* 13: *Kinsei 3* (Iwanami 1994). Note that there are scholars, like Taira Shigemichi, who contest Takano's assertion that the *Shintōgata* had any substantial influence at all.

24 On Ansai and Suika Shinto, see Kobayashi Kenzō, *Suika Shintō no kenkyū* (Shibundō 1940); Abe Ryūichi, 'Kimongakuha shoke no ryakuden to gakufu' in Nishi Junzō, ed., *Nihon shiso taikei* 31, *Yamazaki Ansai gakuha* (Iwanami 1980); and Takashima Motohiro, *Yamazaki Ansai: Nihon shushigaku to Suika Shintō* (Perikansha 1992). In English, see Herman Ooms, 'Yamazaki Ansai: repossessing the way' in idem, *Tokugawa ideology* (Princeton University Press 1985).

25 On Suika Shinto, see Herman Ooms, 'Suika and Kimon: The way and the language' in idem, *Tokugawa ideology* (Princeton University Press 1985).

26 On *onmyōdō* prior to the early modern period, see the section above on Shugendo and onmyōdō. See also the following articles: Yamamoto Nobuya, 'Tsuchimikado Shintō' (*Kokugakuin Zasshi*, 18–3, 4, 9 and 19–2); Kiba Akashi, 'Kinsei Nihon no onmyōdō: Onmyōji no sonzai keitai o chūshin ni' in Murayama Shūichi *et al.*, eds, *Onmyōdō sōsho* 3 (Meicho Shuppan 1992).

27 On the Hōreki incident, see Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi, *Japanese loyalism reconstrued: Yamagata Daini's Ryūshi Shinron of 1759* (Hawaii University Press 1995).

28 On Confucian funerals, see Kondō Keigo, *Jusō to shinsō* (Kokusho Kankōkai 1990).

29 On the religious beliefs of urban dwellers in Edo Japan, see Miyata Noboru, 'Edo chōnin no shinkō' in Nishiyama Matsunosuke ed., *Edo chōnin no kenkyū* 2 (Yoshikawa Kōbunkan 1973).

30 On Kakugyō see Royall Tyler, 'The Tokugawa peace and popular religion: Suzuki Shōsan, Kakugyō Tōbutsu and Jikigyō Miroku' in Peter Nosco ed., *Confucianism and Tokugawa culture* (Princeton University Press 1984).

31 On Jikigyō see Royall Tyler, 'The Tokugawa peace and popular religion: Suzuki Shōsan, Kakugyō Tōbutsu and Jikigyō Miroku' in Peter Nosco ed., *Confucianism and Tokugawa culture* (Princeton University Press 1984).

32 On Ise pilgrimages, see Winston Davis, 'Pilgrimage and world renewal' in idem, *Japanese religion and society: Paradigms of structure and change* (SUNY 1992).

33 On these fashionable deities see Miyata Noboru, *Edo no hayarigami* (Chikuma Gakugei Bunko 1993).

34 On Jiun, see Katō Genchi, 'The Shinto studies of Jiun, the Buddhist priest, and Motoori, the Shinto savant' (*Monumenta Nipponica* 1) and Paul Watt, 'Jiun Sonja (1718–1804): a response to Confucianism within the context of Buddhist reform', in Peter Nosco ed., *Confucianism and Tokugawa culture* (Princeton University Press 1984).

35 On Keichū and Shinto, see Inoguchi Takashi, *Keichūgaku no keisei* (Izumi Shoin 1996).

36 On Azumamaro and Mabuchi, see Peter Nosco, *Remembering paradise: Nativism and nostalgia in eighteenth century Japan* (Harvard University Council on East Asian Studies 1990).

37 Hino Tatsuo, 'Norinaga gaku seiritsu made' in Yoshikawa Kōjirō *et al.*, eds, *Nihon shiso taikei* 40: *Motoori Norinaga* (Iwanami 1978) and Hino Tatsuo, 'Kaisetsu: "Mono no aware o shiru" no setsu no raireki' in *Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei* 39: *Motoori Norinaga shū* (Shinchōsha 1983).

38 On Hirata Atsutane, see in English Harry Harootunian, *Things seen and unseen: Discourse and ideology in Tokugawa Nativism* (University of Chicago Press 1988); Kamata Tōji, 'Nativism disfigured' in Breen and Teeuwen eds, *Shinto in history: Ways of the kami* (Curzon 2000); Anne Walthall, *The weak body of a useless woman: Matsuo Taseko and the Meiji Restoration* (Chicago University Press 1998); and John Breen, 'Nativism restored' (*Monumenta Nipponica* 55–3, 2000).

39 See Yamada Takao, 'Iwayuru jindai moji no ron' (*Geirin* 2, 4 and 6, 1953).

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# 4

# THE MODERN AGE
## Shinto confronts modernity

*Inoue Nobutaka*

When Japan encountered modernity, two major changes took place in the religious system known as Shinto. The first was the creation of the modern shrine system. A shrine system was first organised in the ancient period, and continued thereafter through the medieval and early modern periods even as it ceased to function. Under the modern state, however, it acquired a new form. The second major change was the emergence of a new type of religious system within Shinto; what we might call 'sectarian Shinto'. At the end of the Edo period, there were striking and rapid movements towards the creation of Shinto 'sects'. Prototypes of these sects were already to be seen in the Suika Shinto, the Yoshida and the Shirakawa Shinto movements. It was only with Meiji, however, that a Shinto that was unquestionably sectarian in style emerged.

The modern shrine system assumed its basic form in the early Meiji period (1868–1912); it acquired stability of structure as it developed in parallel with, and in the closest possible connection to, the emerging 'modern emperor state'. This shrine system endured for the best part of three-quarters of a century, until the end of the Second World War. The religious policies of the General Headquarters of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (GHQ) at the end of the war ensured that the modern shrine system was once again transformed in the shortest space of time; the result was the post-war era in which the *Jinja honchō*, the umbrella organisation for the majority of Japan's shrines, has dominated shrine affairs. An awareness of continuity and change in the immediate aftermath of the war is essential for any study of modern shrine Shinto.

Sectarian Shinto, for its part, can be usefully considered as comprising two sub-categories: the first comprises the thirteen Shinto sects that sprung up in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; the second comprises Shinto-derived new religions or what, in Japanese, have come to be called

*Shintō-kei shinshūkyō.* Various developments of the early modern period made inevitable the formation of a sectarian Shinto. The sect Shinto of the first of our two sub-categories was, in one respect, a movement for the revitalisation of shrines and shrine practice, but developments were greatly accelerated by the religious policies of the new Meiji government. And, as with the shrine system, so was sect Shinto swayed greatly by political considerations. That sect Shinto developed in the striking way it did in Meiji was anything but sudden. In the Edo period, the spread of National Learning (*kokugaku*) and the organisation of shrine priests by the Yoshida and Shirakawa Shinto families constituted a sort of Shinto revivalist movement focused on shrines and their priests. In other words, one can argue that the revivalist tendencies in Meiji Shinto developed along sectarian lines for sound historical reasons.

Shinto-derived new religions, the second of our sub-categories, were a manifestation of the system of new religions that emerged in modern Japan. From the early part of the nineteenth century, there were signs in all regions of Japan of new and popular religious movements forming in rhythm, as it were, with popular culture. These tendencies became striking towards the end of the period. There were Shinto movements, Buddhist movements and others, too, in which Shinto and Buddhist elements were conflated. All in all, they constituted a quite different religious system to the traditional one evident at the start of the early modern period. Here, our focus falls uniquely on the system of Shinto-derived new religions. This system acquired immense social influence in the twentieth century and, under the new legal system operative after the Second World War, it has come to constitute the mainstream of sect Shinto.

Because the borders of a given religious system are in a state of constant flux, it is nigh-on impossible to demarcate one religious system from another. It becomes necessary, therefore, to place sect Shinto and Shinto-derived new religions, as well as Buddhist-derived new religions and others together in the same basket, so to speak, and treat them all as 'new religions'. Here, my aim is to examine the shifting tides in Shinto as Japan underwent modernisation. My attention falls inevitably, therefore, on the linkage between sect Shinto and the Shinto-derived new religions on the one hand, and the Shinto system that had prevailed until this time on the other. The relationship between them may be depicted as shown in Figure 4.1.

One has, of course, to appreciate the changes that modernisation inflicted upon society as a whole in order to grasp those affecting Shinto. The restructuring of the education system was linked to a rise in intellectual levels which, in turn, created the necessary preconditions for the organisation of popular movements of one sort or another. Again,

Buddhism-based
new religions

Shinto-based
new religions

Sect Shinto
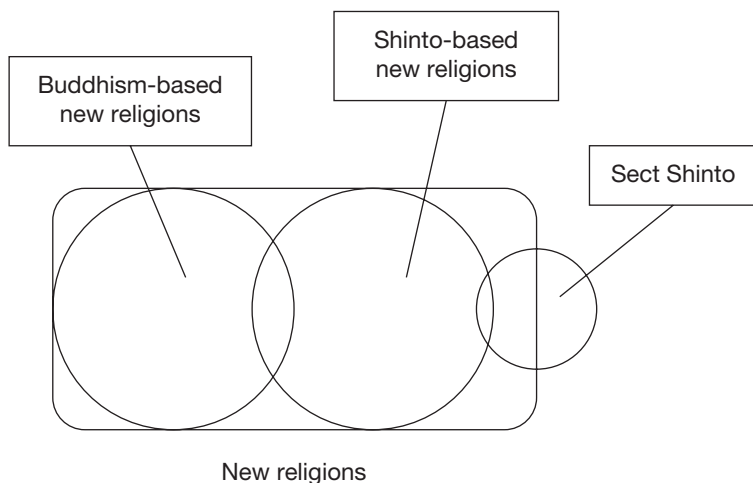
New religions

*Figure 4.1* Chart showing inter-linkage between sect Shinto, Shinto-based new religions and Buddhism-based new religions

developments in communications networks and mass media not only accelerated changes in popular consciousness, but enabled rapid shifts in methods of religious propagation as well. It was only to be expected, then, that the form of Shinto in Meiji would be quite different to that prevailing in the early modern period. The scale of change now experienced by Shinto was far in excess of that endured by Buddhist groups, for the simple reason that the Shinto religious system was not durable in the departments of what we have called *network* and *substance*.

The restructuring of Shinto by the state and the emergence of genuinely sectarian Shinto groups were the marks of Japan's modern age, but the changes in society as a whole, such as those in communications and urbanisation, also spurred modern developments in what we might call 'folk Shinto' (*minzoku Shintō*). For example, pilgrimages to temples and shrines may well have been popular at certain moments in the early modern period, but there were all sorts of restrictions placed on social movement by the Tokugawa. In the modern period, such restrictions were lifted, and patterns of pilgrimage shifted easily from one centred on the group to one centred more on the individual.

In 1873, the sixth year of the reign of the Meiji emperor, the solar (Gregorian) calendar was adopted in place of the lunar. As a result of this and other changes – the shrinking rural population, for example – the cycle of annual rites began slowly to undergo change. It is probably the case that the solar calendar really only impinged on rituals in the annual cycle after

the end of the Second World War, but the result was that practices rooted in the traditional calendar fell gradually into disuse. The decline in the rural population explains the gradual disappearance of the communal celebration of the spring festival, say, which sought the blessing of the kami for an abundant crop, and the autumnal festival of thanksgiving for the harvest. The linkage between rites before the kami and planting and harvesting became steadily diluted.

Such rites of passage as the newborn's first visit to the local shrine (*hatsu miyamōde*), *shichi-go-san* and coming-of-age increasingly lost their communal, 'extended-family' aspect; steadily, they became rites of the individual or the immediate family. Fewer and fewer people sustained their interest in the performance of traditional rites. At the same time, however, there surfaced signs of a new linkage between Shinto and the life-cycle rites. The creation and popularisation of Shinto wedding rites in the twentieth century constitute but one example. The popularity of Shinto wedding rites was prompted, partly at least, by the 1900 wedding of the future Taishō emperor (r. 1912–26). But shrines and shrine practice were inevitably associated with tradition, and they were put to use in modern Japan's restructuring of tradition.

## The modern shrine system: shrine Shinto and the rituals of the Meiji state

Let us first consider shrine developments. The shrine system is probably best described as having survived rather than thrived through Japan's early modern period, even though there were signs, towards the end of the period, of a genuine revival. The Meiji period saw the shrine system supported and sustained by the modern state. In April 1868, the new government announced the resurrection of the *Jingikan*, the office which in the ancient state had been charged with all state affairs relating to the kami. The Meiji government's purpose was to centralise control over shrines. All shrines and their priests that had, until now, been under the control of either the Yoshida or the Shirakawa families, were henceforth to come under *Jingikan* jurisdiction. The Council of State (*Dajōkan*) issued an edict in June 1871 which effected a decisive structural change upon the shrine world:

> Shrines are sites for the performance of state ritual; it goes without saying that they are not the private property of individual families. However, after the medieval period and the disintegration it brought to the Great Way [of the kami], there emerged a tendency . . . for a priest to be appointed temporarily to a shrine and then

for the principle of heredity to establish itself. Elsewhere ...
priestly positions at village and hamlet shrines tended to become
hereditary. Priests would take the shrine income as their salary and
regard shrines as their private property. This became established
practice everywhere in the realm. Shrine priests came to consti-
tute a class distinct from [the ruling] warrior class, and this was in
contravention of the governing principle of *saisei itchi* [according
to which government and rites are inseparable]. The harm dealt
by these practices has been considerable. Reforms are now to be
implemented and the practice of heredity [will be abolished].
Priests at all shrines, from the two Ise shrines to those of large
and small scale the length and breadth of the realm, will be re-
appointed only after the most careful consideration.

Shrines were hereby declared 'sites for the performance of state ritual'
(*kokka no sōshi*); at the same time, the practice of heredity in the priest-
hood was terminated. The bureaucratisation of the priesthood was one
consequence. The *network* and *constituents* of the shrine system were, willy-
nilly, transmuted. There was fundamental revision to the appointment of
priests and to the question of where they might serve. The intimate linkage
between shrine families and the locality was not, perhaps, totally severed
but in comparison to the earlier era, it was much diluted.

The policy of separating the kami from Buddhist deities and their respec-
tive sites of worship – *shinbutsu bunri* as scholars have termed it – was
another dimension of the Meiji religious reformation. A few days after
the revival of the *Jingikan*, a series of policies correctly known as the
*shinbutsu hanzen rei* (the clarification of kami and Buddhas) was issued.[1]
They ordered the removal of all Buddhist symbolism from shrines; shrines
deploying Buddhist terminology (like Gozu Tennō) for their kami were
required to justify themselves and ultimately to abandon the practice;
shrines actually dedicated to Buddhist deities had to dislocate statues of
those deities and Buddhist paraphernalia like bells of different types were
to be removed, too. There is no doubting the influence here of some
of National Learning (*kokugaku*) thinkers, especially those of the Hirata
persuasion. These men typically loathed the idea of any identification of
Shinto with Buddhism.

These policies of 'separation' or 'clarification' shifted in some localities
into violent mode as priceless cultural treasures were destroyed in a move-
ment that became known as *haibutsu kishaku* or 'expel the Buddha and
destroy Sākyamuni'. But the basic intention of government was neither
the expulsion nor the abolition of Buddhism; it was rather to define
the respective realms of each. The circumstances leading to these new

policies were of importance, of course, but my concern here is rather with their effect.

The effect of removing Buddhist symbolism from shrines was not so much the superficial one of clarifying the religious differences between shrine Shinto and Buddhism; rather it was to stress the profound relationship of shrines to questions of national identity. Whatever the effects on the religious lives of the Japanese of the denial of the previous arrangement – according to which the realms of the kami and the Buddhas were identified with one another – this was an ideological measure that initiated substantial change in Shinto's *substance*. The ideology promoted up-front was that Shinto was a uniquely Japanese religion. Modern Japan found itself having to contemplate the essence of its culture; the proliferation in early Meiji of the word *kokutai*, sometimes translated as 'national essence', suggests the seriousness of the endeavour. *Kokutai* began to appear in the late Edo period discourse of Confucianists and National Learning scholars, but became widespread only later in Meiji following the promulgation of the Meiji Constitution of February 1889 and the Imperial Rescript on education in 1990. This new ideological environment helps explain why particularistic Shinto, rather than universal Buddhism practised across Asia, came to find favour. In brief, shrine Shinto and the emperor 'system' came to play a vital role in defining the identity of the Japanese, and of Japan, in the modern period.

In the very early Meiji period, shrines and their priests were called upon to play an active part in the dissemination of state ideology. This applies to the first two decades of Meiji when first the *senkyōshi* or 'missionary' system and next the *kyōdōshoku* or 'state evangelist' system were operational. Through the early Meiji process of trial and error, shrine Shinto came to acquire a rather different role in the national life than that played by sect Shinto.

The Shinto missionary programme was launched in November 1869, and its purpose was to disseminate what was called the Great Teaching or *taikyō*. An imperial rescript of spring 1870 explained that the Great Teaching was synonymous with the Great Way of the kami. The rescript contained guidelines for missionary practice which offer a picture of the ideal missionary. He was a man, not necessarily a Shinto priest, a paragon of lofty ethical ideals, one able, moreover, to enlighten the people as to correct ethical conduct. Magical practices were prohibited the missionaries, as was the telling of outrageous tales that might lead people astray. Missionaries were ordered, moreover, not to attack other creeds, Confucianism or Buddhism, in their preaching.

During this early Meiji period of frenetic change, men of the qualities required to accomplish the objectives of the Shinto missionary programme

were few and far between. The ethical education of the Japanese could hardly be accomplished by scholars or activists of National Learning, or by shrine priests and their sympathisers. The missionary programme, with barely a success to its name, was replaced in 1872 by the state evangelists or *kyōdōshoku*. The new system coincided with the establishment of modern Japan's one and only ministry of religions, the *Kyōbushō*. The *Kyōbushō* had considerable powers in the religious field as its official five-point programme makes clear. The Ministry was to have power over:

- doctrines and the sects that identify with them;
- regulations governing religious sects;
- the establishment and abolition of both shrines and temples;
- the ranks of shrine and temple clergy and the classification of their shrines and temples;
- the appointment of shrine priests and the ordination of Buddhist priests.

This *Kyōbushō*, powerful though it was in religious matters, was itself of short duration. From its launch in March 1872, it operated for a mere five years before it was abolished in January 1878. The evangelists were, initially at least, under *Kyōbushō* supervision, and they differed from the earlier missionaries in terms, first, of their composition. The missionaries had been recruited mostly from the ranks of national learning scholars and shrine priests; by contrast, evangelists drew on the Buddhist priesthood in large numbers. But Ministry regulations did not restrict evangelist status to shrine and temple clergy; rather, anyone with enthusiasm – storytellers and *rakugo* comedians – were signed up. Their great challenge was to inspire such audiences as they could muster.[2]

In March 1873, Shintoists and representatives of the seven Buddhist sects – Jishū, Jōdo, Shinshū, Shingon, Zen, Tendai and Nichiren – pooled their expertise, and founded an institute called the *Taikyōin* ('Great Teaching Institute'), which was intended to serve as a forum for academic debate on religious matters and the discussion of teaching methodology. The *Taikyōin*, partly as a reflection of Buddhist enthusiasm, was sited within the Jōdo sect's Zōjōji temple in the Shiba district of Tokyo. The plan was that the *Taikyōin* would be the national centre of a network of teaching institutes or *kyōin*, located not only in each prefecture but at local level as well. *Chūkyōin* was the designation for prefectural institutes and *shōkyōin* for local institutes. Together they were to constitute the front-line of state propaganda. But some prefectures never got round to creating *chūkyōin* and though, according to records for 1874, there were some 227 *shōkyōin* across the nation, the vast majority were inactive. What the evangelists and the

institutes that supported them were all supposed to be teaching were the three principles known as the *kyōsoku sanjō*. These were:

1  always revere the deities and love your country;
2  clarify the heavenly principles and the way of man;
3  revere the emperor and abide by the wishes of the court.

However, in the wake of the early Meiji 'separation' policy and the attacks on Buddhism in certain localities, it was a tall order to expect cooperation of shrine priests and Buddhist clergy. The *Taikyōin* quickly turned out to be something rather different from what its Buddhist sponsors had anticipated. It rapidly became Shinto-focused, which explains why the Shinshū Buddhist clergy opposed it with such vigour. By August 1875, the *Taikyōin* was no more. Its regional operation had been seriously hampered from the outset by the fact that Buddhist priests, supposed to be preaching the three principles, devoted all their energies rather to spreading their own sect's brand of Buddhism.

The *Kyōbushō* experience demonstrated that the effects of government-led endeavour to transform the populace were destined to be limited. What arose from this experience was a perception of the need to separate Shinto's ritual dimension from Shinto's doctrinal dimension. Shrine-based Shinto came to constitute the ritual dimension, whereas sect Shinto dominated doctrine. Shrine Shinto remained under state control, but the various sects of Shinto were authorised to continue proselytisation, albeit under the supervision of a state-approved appointee, styled *kanchō*.

The modernisation of the shrine system proceeded in parallel with the trial and error of the propaganda programme. In essence, it involved establishing a clear shrine hierarchy, and the make-up of shrine clergy, and the extent of imperial and state involvement in shrine rites. Two broad categories now established were those of *kansha* and *shosha*. The former designated state-sponsored (*kan*) shrines and the latter all other (*sho*) shrines. State-sponsored shrines, numbering 97 at the start of the modern period and expanding eventually to 221, were further sub-divided into *kanpeisha* and *kokuheisha*. The former received offerings from the imperial court and the latter from state coffers on the occasion of their major rituals. The much larger *shosha* category were sub-divided into metropolitan district shrines (*fusha*), prefectural shrines (*kensha*), and local district shrines (*gōsha*). Later, a new category of village shrine (*sonsha*) was created. This structuring and categorisation makes clear the special treatment accorded shrine Shinto by the Meiji state.[3]

At the same time, local district shrines came under the jurisdiction of local government. They were regulated by a series of regulations (the *gōsha*

*teisoku*) published in summer of 1871, which effectively accorded these shrines the role of guardian shrine for the district. The modern system of shrine parishes has its origins here. In other words, the *network* of shrine Shinto proceeded apace under state initiative. All shrines in all parts of Japan were allocated a place in this overarching shrine network.

In the process of structuring anew the shrine system for modern Japan, the Meiji state abandoned, in the second decade of the era, interference in the propaganda dimension of religion. In 1882 a law was passed forbidding shrine priests from functioning as evangelists; another law of 1884 abolished the evangelist system altogether. At this point, the pre-war system of the separation of religion and state came into being. In other words, the Shinto arena was divided up into the distinct categories of ritual, teaching and learning. Shrine Shinto dominated the first of these; sect Shinto the second and research institutes like the *Kōten kōkyūjo*, founded in 1882 as the centre for the study of imperial classics, occupied the third.

With regard to the *substance* dimension of the modern shrine system, ritual came to dominate. In what did this ritual consist? In the early modern period, there existed no unified system of Shinto ritual or ritual practice, though the ritual of the imperial court offered one model. The first attempts to unify shrine practice were made in 1875 with the publication of the *Jinja saishiki*; these 'regulations for shrine rites' remained operational until a series of Home Ministry refinements in 1907. Hereby, a national programme of shrine rites was established. Even though local shrine tradition was, to some extent, respected, it remains that the imposition of state rituals upon shrines constituted a nation-wide unification of the *substance* dimension to the Shinto system.

What, though, of the *constituents* dimension? With the creation of the shrine system, there occurred, inevitably, the dissolution of some shrine families and the bureaucratisation of other shrine priests. It is noteworthy, too, that numerous National Learning scholars were appointed as priests to a good number of powerful shrines throughout Japan. This resulted, inevitably, in the importation of strident nationalistic thought into these shrines. What implications can all this have had for those who worshipped at shrines? Important here is the fact that, from Meiji on, all Japanese were instilled with an awareness of themselves as parishioners of one shrine or other. In some cases, this meant the continuation of a consciousness already present in the early modern period, but gradually a sense burgeoned among the people that the shrines they venerated were 'sites of state ritual'. As a result, shifts in the *constituent* dimension took place at state initiative. In this way, the modern shrine system was one which, in all its aspects, *network*, *constituents* and *substance*, was formed under state tutelage.

# The modern emperor system: the emperor and his sacred attributes

There are dimensions of the modern emperor system that one might usefully regard as a religious system, but the extent of its influence was broad, and it is inappropriate to approach it as an extension of a pre-existing religious system. Here I discuss only the aspects in which the modern shrine system constituted a premise for the formation of the emperor system. For here, too, tradition and its reinterpretation as they appeared in the shrine system make their presence felt.

The ancient state's shrine system was, itself, intimately linked with the emperor system. The rituals of state and the rituals of the imperial family were one and the same. This quality was lost in the early modern period but was thrust to the forefront once more after the Meiji Restoration. The linkage between Ise shrines and emperor was confirmed by state rites; the shrine system which allocated supreme place to the shrines in Ise was designed to impress upon the minds of the general populace the fact that the rites performed by the emperor were rites of the state.

One of the objectives of the imperial restoration was to resurrect the ancient model, undermined after the collapse of the ancient state and the emergence of successive military regimes. In this ancient model, the linkage between shrines and state had been intimate. In no *real* sense, of course, could there be in Meiji Japan a resurrection of the ancient state, but it was, nonetheless, a model aspired to. Thus it was that there was perceived a need to firm up the linkage between the imperial family and shrine Shinto.

The early Meiji separation of kami and Buddhas extended to the imperial family and, notwithstanding the closest connection that existed between the imperial family and Buddhism, the new era saw Shinto emerge as the imperial family's 'official creed'. It was not the case that all linkage was now severed with Buddhism, since the Kyoto palace held on to its Buddhist chamber (named the *kurodo* or 'black door'); the imperial family also maintained a parish temple in Kyoto but, at least on the surface, the relationship was now a tenuous one.

There were two categories of shrine rite in which the imperial institution now became intimately involved. These rites were known as *shinsai*, which the emperor celebrated personally, and *chokusai* or rites held at shrines to which the emperor dispatched an emissary bearing offerings. The *niiname* autumn harvest rite was an example of *shinsai* and the Ise, Higawa and Kamo shrine rites were examples of *chokusai*.

When the Meiji emperor died in 1912, the Meiji shrine (Meiji Jingū) was built as a testimony to his virtue. The linkage between the emperor system

and shrine Shinto was evident here once more. The emperor's divine attributes were increasingly manifest in the later Meiji period. The influence of the 1882 Rescript for Soldiers and Sailors (*gunjin chokuyu*) and the 1890 Imperial Rescript on Education (*kyōiku chokugo*) exerted a major influence here. The former, in its preamble, depicted the emperor as the supreme commander of the military forces and proclaimed the need for military men to adhere to the five ethical values of loyalty, etiquette, valour, trustworthiness and modesty. The Education rescript, the work of Motoda Eifu (1818–91) and Inoue Kowashi (1844–95), was distributed to all schools in the land. As it was disseminated, this latter document played an important role in raising awareness of the emperor as a living deity. People began to speak of the emperor as sacred and inviolable and the emperor became, as it were, the living deity of the modern Japanese state.

The myths worked their way in to the school education system, and the trend was consolidated through the Taishō (1912–26) and Shōwa (1912–89) periods. As the idea of the eternal line of emperors (*bansei ikkei*) and Japan as a sacred nation (*shinkoku Nippon*) took root, so the significance of the emperor, who embodied these ideals, was inevitably enhanced. The emperor's religious dimension acquired new emphasis; one might say that he came to assume the characteristics of a priest-king.

The emperor's religious authority and the place of shrines as sites for state rites were mutually reinforcing, and it is clear that the modern emperor system played a decisive structural role in the modern shrine system. As the emperor's divine attributes acquired new emphases, and as militarism raised its head, the idea of all Japanese as the emperor's children became commonplace. The emperor became like a father to the nation. The imperial family was projected as the paragon, the model of family life. Japanese had little choice but to become enthusiastic supporters of the modern emperor system.

Under the emperor system, shrines came to constitute a presence tantamount to that of a state religion. There is a sense, of course, in which the ideal of a state religion failed with the collapse of the early Meiji evangelists and the missionaries that preceded them; yet in another sense, by the early Shōwa period, the emperor system steadily and increasingly manifested itself as modern Japan's state creed. The modern shrine system, with its linkage to the imperial institution, was unique, quite unlike state creeds forged in a Western European mould.

There is much controversy over whether to call this construct, state Shinto (*kokka Shintō*).[4] State Shinto, a term which only entered popular usage in the post-war Shinto directive, is a referent for the special relationship between shrine Shinto and the modern Japanese state. The Shinto directive (*Shintō shirei*) of December 1945 defined state Shinto as

'that faction of Shinto distinguished under Japanese law from religious or sect Shinto'. Scholars have used the term in all manner of different senses but, if the term is deployed less in a negative sense and rather as an expression of the unique pre-war relationship between Shinto and the state, then the existence of state Shinto is an indisputable fact.

## *Jinja honchō*: the separation of religion and state, freedom of religion and the restructuring of the shrine system in post-war Japan

The modern shrine system could be said to have dissolved with the end of the Second World War, and yet there have remained aspects of substantial continuity with the pre-war model. In brief, shrine Shinto in post-war Japan constituted a new religious system of its own, with significant elements inherited from the past.

The modern shrine system was, as we have seen, rapidly structured by Meiji government initiative, but its dissolution came about suddenly as a consequence of external pressure in the shape of GHQ policy. Of the Shinto-related policies GHQ implemented, none had more decisive an impact than those which severed the links between shrine Shinto and the state, and placed shrine Shinto and other religions all on the same legal footing. In 1945 the Religious juridical persons edict (*shūkyō hōjinrei*) was passed, and revised in the following year. It stipulated that Shinto receive the same treatment in law as Buddhism, Christianity and the new religions. The 1951 Religious juridical persons law *shūkyō hōjinhō*, active to this day, developed out of this. The *Jinja honchō*, a national umbrella organisation for shrines, was created in response to the new situation.[5]

The *Jinja honchō* came into being following the abolition of the *Jingiin*, which was itself set up in 1940 as a bureau within the Home Ministry, responsible for shrine affairs. It was designed to assume, additionally, some of the functions of the *Kōten kōkyūjo*, that Meiji institute concerned with the training, development and authorisation of shrine priests. At the time of writing, 99 per cent of the 79,000 shrines in Japan come under the umbrella of the *Jinja honchō*. Supreme among them, still, are the Ise shrines. The *Jinja honchō* oversees shrine administration, research and priest training. On the doctrinal side, the *honchō* has issued an important document styled 'Principles for a life of kami-reverence' (*Keishin seikatsu no kōryō*):

1   Be grateful to the kami for their blessings and to the ancestors for their beneficence; devote yourselves to shrine ritual with hearts of sincerity, bright and pure.

2   Serve society and all people; as purveyors of the wishes of the kami, restructure the world and give it substance.
3   Respect the emperor as mediator of the wishes of the Sun Goddess; be sure to follow his wishes; pray for good fortune for the people of Japan, and of all nations and pray, too, that the world may live in peace and prosperity.

The *Jinja honchō*, which has branch offices in all prefectures, called *Jinja-chō*, issues a journal, the *Jinja shinpō*, and lays down the basic direction for shrine activities, but individual shrines maintain a certain degree of autonomy. The *Jinja honchō* oversees what might be thought of as a sort of a national shrine league.

In the post-war period, the system of state-supported shrines evaporated and so the expression 'former state shrines' is sometimes still heard. The point is that a new hierarchy has been contrived even as the old hierarchy endures. The new system is that known as *beppyō jinja*, and the appointments and dismissals of chief priests and their deputies to the shrines of this category are not subject to the decisions of the *honchō*. The former state shrines were placed in this category but recently, for various reasons – historical, economic and social – other shrines have been added to the category. The new additions are shrines which have been especially active in post-war society; their number rose to 350 in 1995.

There has thus been a fundamental change in the relationship between shrine Shinto and the state in the post-war period, but the fortunes of individual shrines have probably been more profoundly affected still by social change in post-war Japan. The depopulation of village communities, industrialisation, urbanisation and other social fluctuations have exerted the profoundest influence on the relationship between shrines and local society. Shrines today carry out rites of state as well as rites for the safety and flourishing of local communities. Shrines were always deeply linked to such primary industries as agriculture, but with the increase in secondary and tertiary industries and with changes in Japan's industrial structure, the foundations of shrine Shinto are now in a state of flux. The number of shrines without parishioners is on the rise. Here we have a change in terms of the *network*.

There have arisen, at the same time, changes in the *constituents* as well, but two are especially worthy of note. The first is a resurgence in the practice of heredity among the shrine priesthood. This marks a return, it might be said, to the norm of early modern Japan. As mentioned above, many famous shrines were, prior to Meiji, sustained by hereditary shrine families. The second is that since the shrine parish system is no longer promoted by the state, the whole idea of the shrine parishioner is now much diluted.

## Overseas shrines

Many shrines were constructed overseas in the pre-war period and there are two patterns observable here. The first relates to shrines constructed in Asia for Japanese living overseas either in colonies, such as the Korean peninsula or Taiwan, or as part of Japan's overseas military expansion in places like Manchuria, the Chinese mainland and Indonesia. There was a Daijingū shrine to the Sun Goddess in Korea and another in Taiwan. The second pattern was of shrines built at the request of Japanese emigrants to North and South America and Hawaii. Emigration to Hawaii began in 1868 and, as the number of emigrants grew, so too did the demand for birth, marriage and death rites according to traditional Japanese practice. In Hawaii, there were also the Hawaii Daijingū, Hilo Daijingū, Maui Jinja, and the Hawaii Izumo Taisha. Shrines then sprang up in North America. South America's shrines date from a later period. The war transformed the fate of these shrines fundamentally. Shrines throughout Asia were destroyed at the end of the war, but those that originated in Japanese emigration endured in some places, in Hawaii and parts of South America, for example. One new shrine has been built in post-war North America.

It is now customary, for example, for people to take their firstborn not to their local tutelary shrine but to some shrine of special renown. Indeed, the shrine visited more than any other at New Year is the Meiji shrine, completed in 1915 and dedicated to the spirit of Emperor Meiji. Few Japanese conceive their relationship with shrines to be something 'religious', and in opinion surveys nowadays only some three to four per cent reply that they 'believe in' Shinto.

What though of the *substance* dimension? There are no major changes to report in the sphere of ritual. In doctrinal terms, too, the ideals forged in the Meiji period remain today, to a considerable extent, intact. There is a strong tendency, it might be said, on the part of the *Jinja honchō* for a return to the Meiji period. But shrine activities at the local level bear more similarities, perhaps, with Edo than with Meiji practice.

It can be seen, then, that between the modern shrine system of Meiji Japan and the present post-war shrine system, substantial changes have taken place in the spheres of *network*, *constituents* and *substance*. These have all arisen not spontaneously from within, but in response to overwhelming

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### Shrine etiquette

The usual etiquette for shrine worship is as follows. The first stage is purification, namely the washing of hands and rinsing of the mouth by the *temizuya* before the *shaden* building. Before the *haiden*, there is typically an offerings box (*saisenbako*) and a bell with rope attached. The supplicant first throws in some coins, then rings the bell and beseeches the kami for favours or offers thanks for blessings received. It is normal next to bow twice, to clap twice and then bow once more.

On formal occasions, an application to the shrine office is usually required before the supplicant may enter the *haiden* proper. The shrine priest intones a *norito* prayer, and performs purification before the supplicant makes offerings to the kami. It is often possible to sign a register at the end of the ceremony. It is normal, too, to take home a charm, known as *omikuji*.

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external pressures. Following the end of the Occupation, shrine Shinto has been striving to return to 'original forms'; the trajectory being towards a strengthening of ties with the state and the imperial family. At the same time, there is evidence at some local shrines of a new popular religious dimension. By way of contrast to pre-war and war time Japan, the activities of shrines in the post-war period are freer; they are no longer subject to state control. Many shrines now perform purifications for men and women in years of ill-omen; they perform weddings, car-blessings, and ground-breaking rites, the purpose of the latter being to pacify the kami of the locality before building work begins. There are shrines which perform funerals, too. These and other rites – for rice planting, for completion of building works, for consoling the souls of the dead, for example – are generally placed in the category of 'assorted rites', since they fall outside those stipulated by the *Jinja honchō* in its regulations. There are now shrines where these assorted rites comprise the principal function.

Shrine Shinto has deep roots in village society, but as business concerns have grown proportionately in post-war society, so there has been an increase in the number of businesses which venerate shrines. The relationship between business and shrines is surprisingly deep. It is reasonably well known that ground-breaking rites are de rigueur before the foundations of a building are laid, but it is by no means rare to find company buildings with shrines or kami shelves sited on their roofs.

## The shrine priesthood today

The afore-mentioned *Jinja honchō* determines individual shrine priests' titles, rank and status. Among the common titles are *gūji*, *gongūji*, *negi* and *gonnegi*. Additionally, the Izumo shrine uses the title of *kyōtō*, Sumiyoshi taisha uses *shōnegi*, Ise and Atsuta use *kujō*. Regardless of the size of the shrine, there is only one *gūji* or Chief Priest per shrine, so they correspond perhaps to the company president of the business world. Rank in the shrine world is of four degrees, known as 'purity', 'brightness', 'correctness' and 'straightness'. The rank of purity is only for those priests who have a long and proven record. A student who has graduated with distinction from Kokugakuin or Kogakkan university is automatically accorded the rank of brightness. The other ranks, correctness and straightness, are awarded to those who have attended short courses at either university. There are, additionally, six degrees of status: special status, 1st degree status, upper 2nd and 2nd degree status, 3rd and 4th degree.

At many shrines under the *Jinja honchō* umbrella, a priest may serve regardless of his rank and status, but at Ise, Atsuta, Meiji and other major shrines, certain rank requirements need to be met before a priest may participate actively in shrine rites.

## Sect Shinto: the Restoration government and the creation of sect Shinto

The process whereby sect Shinto came into being overlaps to a very considerable extent with the establishment of the modern shrine system, but its foundations are to be located at the end of the Edo period.[6] The historical conditions for the emergence of sect Shinto are to be found in numerous Edo phenomena: National Learning (*kokugaku*), the confraternities (*kō*) attached to mountain cults and, finally, the Shinto teachings of families like the Yoshida and Shirakawa. When we speak today of sect Shinto, we normally refer to the thirteen sects founded in pre-war Japan. These are, to give them the names they are known by today, and in the order of their being awarded independent status by the Meiji government: Kurozumikyō, Shintō shūseiha, Izumo ōyashirokyō, Fusōkyō, Jikkōkyō, Shinshūkyō, Shintō taiseikyō, Ontakekyō, Shintō taikyō, Misogikyō, Shinrikyō, Konkōkyō and Tenrikyō. This categorisation of sect

Shinto works on the administrative level, but is one of mere convenience. In the *Bunkachō*'s annual compendium of religious institutions and their affiliations – the *Shūkyō nenkan* as it is known – Japanese religions are divided into the four categories of Shinto-derived, Buddhism-derived, Christianity-derived and 'other'. The majority of Shinto sects and the Shinto-derived new religions are included in the first of these categories; Buddhist-derived new religions come under the second category and a selection of other new religions come under the 'other' heading.

If we look closer at the thirteen sects, we find that they include many of quite distinct character. This was a consequence of the Meiji political arrangement. For a Shinto-derived new religion to proselytise with freedom, it had to win government approval as an independent Shinto sect or, alternatively, attach itself to another sect as a branch church. There were sects like Renmonkyō and Maruyamakyō, which were always fiercely independent and should, perhaps, best be thought of as quite independent religions but which, in pre-war Japan, were bound up with Shintō taiseikyō and Fusōkyō respectively. Renmonkyō was founded by Shimamura Mitsu (1831–1904) in Kitakyūshū, and was based on the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. Mitsu had already been arrested and imprisoned for her healing activities before she headed for Tokyo in 1882 where she joined Shintō taiseikyō. Her adherents numbered in the hundreds of thousands, but once more she became the target of police and hostile media attention. The sect no longer exists. Maruyamakyō was founded by Itō Rokurōbei (1829–94). Rokurōbei was attached to a confraternity devoted the worship of Mt Fuji, Fuji-*kō* as it was known. In 1870, he began to undergo intensive ascetic training following a divine revelation. In 1875, Rokurōbei joined forces with Shishino Nakaba (1844–84) and the Fusōkyō church he headed. Fusōkyō was originally under the wing of the Shintō jimukyoku, a body set up by Shinto evangelists in 1875 after the collapse of the *Taikyōin*. Fusōkyō was granted independence by the Meiji government in 1882, but in 1885 Rokurōbei left Fusōkyō and affiliated himself to Shintō honkyoku, another of the thirteen sects, intimately related to the Shintō jimukyoku. Maruyamakyō adherents numbered in the millions in Meiji, though its influence died away towards the end of the period.

It is clear, then, that if we are to bracket together as 'sect Shinto' these various Shinto sects that have at least some things in common, we need a method of categorising that goes beyond the standard thirteen sects. Of the thirteen, what we might call the classic Shinto sects would include Izumo ōyashirokyō, Shinshūkyō, Shintō shūseiha, Shintō taiseikyō, Shintō taikyō and Shinrikyō. Shintō honkyoku ought perhaps be included under this heading as well. But other groups outside the thirteen should be added with Jingūkyō and Izumikyō most notable among them. The sects that are related

to mountain worship, Ontakekyō, Fusōkyō and Jikkōkyō, are not obviously Shinto sects, but they might be included as peripheral Shinto groups.

At the same time, it is probably better to define Tenrikyō, Konkōkyō and Kurozumikyō as a distinct category of Shinto-derived new religion. Maruyamakyō which, as we have seen, began under the wing of Fusōkyō, joined the Shintō honkyoku before finally achieving independence after the war, is properly counted as a Shinto-derived new religion. Kurozumikyō and Misogikyō fall somewhere between sect Shinto and Shinto-derived new religions. That there should be sects of this half-way category is inevitable given that the conditions leading to the emergence of sect Shinto and Shinto-derived new religions were similar. The mid-Meiji conditions that prompted the organisation of sect Shinto were quite simply created by the Meiji government's religious policies. The major impetus here was that the government declared itself ready to grant official recognition – that is, practically speaking, the right to proselytise without interference – to any religious group or organisation with Shinto-type characteristics and a modicum of organisation. The Meiji government duly granted such recognition, after suitable checks were implemented, to Shinto-derived new religions like Kurozumikyō, Tohokami-*kō* (later known as Misogikyō), Fuji-*kō* and Ontake-*kō*.

A word about Fuji-*kō* and Ontake-*kō* is probably in order here. The former was founded by a man called Hasegawa Kakugyō, about whom little is known other than that he was born in Nagasaki in the sixteenth century, possibly in 1541. From the age of eighteen he began to tour the provinces and in Mito, in Hitachi province, he came under the influence of a teacher of Shugendo. Kakugyō then performed all manner of ascetic practice in every part of Japan, including Mt Fuji. He prayed for peace in the realm and performed healings in Edo and many other places besides. Ontake-*kō* began to win adherents in all corners of Japan from the 1830s. It was immensely popular, but there was little organic connection between its different confraternities scattered across Japan. In the Meiji period, then, the pattern was one of numerous confraternities forming, grouping together rather loosely to form sects, to which the Meiji government would eventually grant freedom to proselytise.

Elsewhere I have referred to this type of sect formation as conforming to the *takatsuki* model, *takatsuki* being a single-footed offering table used in shrine rituals. The principle binding the different groups here is a loose one, though the groups may share a common base. The majority of elements are, though, rather like offerings placed in distinct clusters upon the surface of the table. This we might contrast with the *jumoku* or 'tree' model which is suggestive of the pattern whereby the Shinto-derived new religions were formed. Here, the integration of different elements was

much more thorough-going. The founder corresponds to the roots, and the church and adherents constitute the trunk; branches nourished by the same sap appear here and there. In other words, the founder's teachings, his rituals and his methods for salvation extended to the most extreme parts. What was placed on the offering table of sect Shinto were the confraternities of the mountain cults and small religious groups formed around the personage of a founder-like figure. Especially important here were the confraternities of Fuji-*kō* and Ontake-*kō*. The offering table accommodated religious beliefs which, as long as they drew on Shinto tradition, did not have to be of the same substance. Such accommodation was a necessary means of mutual protection. There were, in the Meiji period, two issues operative: the practical one of legal recognition and the rather more ideological one of Japanese identity and its protection.

What was the characteristic *substance* of sect Shinto? There was much in common here between sect Shinto and shrine Shinto. Shrine Shinto ideas on kami, rites and world-view constituted the precedent for sect Shinto which then devised its own particularistic systematisations. What was it that inspired the founders of these Shinto sects to launch into what might be described as Shinto-revivalist activities? For the sects which emerged in the early modern period, the impact of the National Learning scholars was immense. Indeed, a majority of the sect Shinto founders were either Shintoists or National Learning scholars. Of additional importance was the existence of the peripatetic *oshi* priests at Ise and Izumo. They too were manifestly instrumental in the creation of sect-type Shinto groups. Sect Shinto groups were formed as a response to the unique social conditions of the late Edo and early Meiji period, and it was inevitable that in the post-war environment of state–religion separation and new religious laws, they would experience a decline in fortunes, at least in organisational terms. After all, the multiple offerings on the *takatsuki* table now became independent religious sects.

Here let us survey the varied processes whereby the different sect Shinto sects came into being.

### Typical sect Shinto organisations

#### Izumo taishakyō

Izumo taishakyō was founded by Senge Takatomi (1845–1918), who was born into the Izumo *kokusō* family. In 1872, Takatomi became the 80th Izumo *kokusō*, a term denoting a hereditary ritual office in Izumo. He came to believe that disseminating faith in the Izumo shrine required a different type of organisation. In 1873, then, he founded the Izumo taisha

keishin-kō or 'the confraternity of faith in the kami of the great Izumo shrine'. The group was re-styled Shintō taisha-ha in 1882 (*ha* means a faction), when it won government recognition. It was subsequently restyled Shintō ōyashirokyō. Takatomi was the first head (*kanchō*), and he remained the dominant figure of the Izumo ōyashirokyō until 1888 when he became involved in politics as a counsellor in the Senate (Genrōin). Adherents of the Izumo taisha shrine were concentrated in the West of Japan, and Izumo ōyashirokyō drew most of its faithful from the same Western Japan pool.

## *Shinshūkyō*

Shinshūkyō was founded by Yoshimura Masamochi (1839–1915) in Tokyo. Yoshimura was born into a samurai family in Misaku. He studied Confucianism, national studies and Chinese in various localities before he acquired a fascination with religion in the late Edo period. After the Restoration, he found employment in first the *Jingikan* and then the *Kyōbushō*. He was opposed, however, to the creation of the *Taikyōin* which promoted joint proselytisation by shrine priests and Buddhist clerics; he left the *Kyōbushō* in protest and headed for Ise. He underwent ascetic training, thereafter, on Mt Fuji and Mt Ontake. Around these ascetic practices he constructed his own religion, which he launched in 1880 as Shinshū-*kō*. In 1882, Shinshū-*kō* won recognition and independence as Shinshūkyō. Masamochi was the religion's first head, and he set up his headquarters in the Kanda district of Tokyo. Many of the Shinshūkyō faithful were drawn from the confraternities linked to Mt Ontake.

## *Shintō shūseiha*

Shintō shūseiha was founded in Tokyo by Nitta Kuniteru (1829–1902), who was born in Awa province. Kuniteru seems to have believed from an early stage in his youth that Japan was the land of the kami and that the people were descendants of the kami. He was a devoted follower of Shinto, he engaged vigorously in proselytisation and built up a group of devoted followers. In 1868, he was commissioned to the *Jingikan* but he became embroiled in a scandal and ended up in prison in Oshi domain. After his release, he devoted himself to religious activities. In 1873, he formed the Shūsei kōsha which was granted official recognition in 1876 as Shintō shūseiha, with Kuniteru serving as its first head. He preached a strain of Shinto that was deeply infused with Confucian ethical teachings. Nitta also accommodated within Shintō shūseiha many affiliated to the Ontake and other sacred mountain confraternities.

## Shintō taiseikyō

Shintō taiseikyō was the creation of Hirayama Seisai (1815–90) who was also the first *kanchō* of Ontakekyō. Seisai was born in Ōshū and was adopted by Hirayama Gentarō, a bakufu vassal. At the end of the Edo period, Seisai served in the sensitive position of bakufu magistrate for foreign affairs. After the Restoration, he was placed in confinement for a short period before becoming an active Shinto proselytiser. He became chief priest of Hie shrine in 1875; the following year he served as chief priest in Hikawa shrine before leaving to establish his own sect, Taisei kyōkai, in 1879. In 1882, he won for his sect government recognition and independence, and restyled the sect Shintō taiseiha. He was Shintō taiseiha's first head. In terms of organisation, Seisai sought to accommodate and build upon multiple organisations and amalgamate them into one great Church.

## Shintō taikyō

Shintō taikyō was originally referred to merely as 'Shinto' but, owing to inevitable confusion, it came to be known most usually as Shintō honkyoku in the first instance and, after 1940, as Shintō taikyō. Inaba Masakuni (1834–98) was the first head. Masakuni served in the late Edo period as Kyoto *shoshidai*, the bakufu's military governor in Kyoto, and also as bakufu elder. After the Restoration, he served as governor of Yodo domain. He studied the Hirata brand of National Learning, and then devoted himself to Shinto, becoming, in 1873, chief priest of the Mishima shrine in Shizuoka, and a senior official in the *Taikyōin*. He was, in fact, one of the key figures behind the creation of the Shintō jimukyoku in 1875, which institute was the Shinto response to the collapse of the *Taikyōin* and its joint Shinto–Buddhist proselytisation. Shintō honkyoku, which Inaba Masakuni ran from 1884, inherited its basic role from the Shintō jimukyoku. It served as an umbrella organisation for those religious groups which did not have the vigour to strike out on their own as independent sects. Given this characteristic, it is almost impossible to identify any teachings as specific to Shintō taikyō.

## Shinrikyō

The founder of Shinrikyō was Sano Tsunehiko (1834–1906), born in the province of Buzen. In the Bakumatsu period, he was active as a proponent of what he called 'imperial medicine'. In 1875–6, he claimed to have received countless oracles, and had other mystical experiences besides. He began to recruit adherents in the following year, and in 1880 in Kokura he founded Shinrikyō. At first, he was not given the official recognition

he sought, and so attached himself to the Shintō honkyoku. He transferred his loyalties to Ontakekyō in 1888, and finally won independence for Shinrikyō in the following year, serving as its head. He toured the provinces with great energy, and set up branch churches all over the west of Japan which were served by the sect's headquarters in Kitakyūshū.

### Jingūkyō

Jingūkyō was based on faith in the Ise shrines. Tanaka Yoritsune (1836–97), the key figure in the sect's formation, worked in the government's *Jingishō* ministry in 1871, and served also as the chief priest of the inner shrine at Ise. In 1880, he became assistant chief to the afore-mentioned Shintō jimukyoku and, when Jingūkyō won its independence in 1882, he became *kanchō* and so resigned as Ise chief priest. Urata Chōmin (1840–93) was especially active in the provincial proselytisation of Jingūkyō through the sermons he delivered in all parts of the country. In 1889, Jingūkyō acquired status as a juridical foundation – Zaidan hōjin Jingū hōsaikai, as it was known – and it ceased in law to be a religious sect.

### Izumokyō

Izumokyō was founded in 1883 by Kitajima Naganori (1834–93). The Kitajima family was, like the Senge, a hereditary *kokusō* family at the Izumo taisha. The state refused to recognise the sect in 1883 when it sought independence and so, by default, it came under the wing of the Shintō honkyoku. This was partly because the sect was new but partly also, no doubt, because of friction between the sect and the Senge family. In 1897 the sect, whose adherents now numbered some 400,000, applied once more but its application for state recognition was again rejected. Indeed, it was not until the post-war period, 1952 to be precise, that Izumokyō acquired independent status.

## Mountain-focused Shinto sects

### Ontakekyō

Hirayama Seisai was the head when Ontakekyō won state recognition in 1882. Shimoyama Ōsuke (dates unknown) was the driving force behind Ontakekyō's early development in Meiji. It is known of him only that his faith in Ontake was deep, and that in the late Edo period he founded a religious confraternity known as the Daidai-kō. In 1873, he reorganised his confraternity into a church styled Ontake kyōkai. Ontake kyōkai was then,

for the best part of the next decade, attached to Hirayama Seisai's Taiseikyō, but Shimoyama resigned as church leader after Ontake-*kō* affiliated itself to Taiseikyō. He suddenly disappeared in 1882, never to be seen or heard of again. It should be noted that other confraternities attached to Ontake split and affiliated themselves not only to Ontakekyō but to Shinshūkyō and Shintō shūseiha as well.[7]

## Jikkōkyō

Shibata Hanamori (1809–90) founded Jikkōkyō. Hanamori was born a samurai in Bizen province; he studied the Hirata brand of National Learning and then joined Fujidō which was led at the time by the eighth *sendatsu* Kotani Rokugyō. Hanamori himself subsequently became Fujidō's tenth leader or *sendatsu*. He went on to found Jikkō-sha in 1878, and was granted independent status by the government in 1882 when he became the first head of what was now known as Jikkō-ha. Subsequently, the sect was re-styled Jikkōkyō. Hanamori's teachings were based on faith in Mt Fuji, but they had a strong nativistic colouring to them.

## Fusōkyō

Fusōkyō was another sect drawing on belief in Mt Fuji. Shishino Nakaba (1844–84) was the driving force behind Fusōkyō's formation. Nakaba was a Satsuma samurai who became a disciple of Hirata Kanetane (1799–1880), Atstutane's adopted son. He was employed by the *Kyōbushō* after the Meiji Restoration and was subsequently appointed chief priest of the Sengen shrine at the foot of Mt Fuji in Shizuoka. Nakaba assumed charge of a number of shrines in the area, and sought to impose his authority on the many Fuji confraternities scattered across Japan. In 1874, Nakaba led the attack on Buddhist institutions on Mt Fuji removing all nomenclature with a Buddhist ring to it. In 1875 he brought Maruyamakyō into his orbit, and joined the Shintō jimukyoku under the name of the Fusō kyōkai. He changed the name to Fusōkyō when he won independence for his sect in 1882. But in 1885, when Maruyamakyō broke away to join the Shintō honkyoku, Fusōkyō adherent numbers were halved.

### Mixed-category sects

#### Kurozumikyō

Kurozumikyō was founded by Kurozumi Munetada (1780–1850), born into a shrine family in Okayama, Bizen province. The family were hereditary

priests at Imamura shrine. As Munetada recovered from sickness, he underwent a mystical experience known to his adherents as *tenmei chokuju*, or 'direct revelation from heaven'. In the morning of the winter solstice in 1814, as he was venerating the sun from the veranda of his house, the sun appeared to approach ever closer, until Munetada became one with it. From 1815, he became actively involved in proselytising, lecturing and healing, and built up a growing band of adherents. Before long, his disciples included people of samurai status. The only structured doctrine he committed to paper was a seven-article piece called *Hibi kanai kokoroe no koto* or 'A guide to everyday living'. His preaching was characterised by an impromptu approach. He would speak on whatever 'floated to the surface' of his mind. Munetada based his proselytising activities in and around Okayama. After his death, the activities of 'the six disciples' as they were known – Ishio Kansuke, Kawakami Tadamasu, Tokio Munemichi, Akagi Tadaharu, Hoshijima Ryōhei and Morishita Keitan – ensured that Kurozumi influence extended through central and western Japan and beyond to Shikoku as well. Kurozumikyō was the most powerful of the new religions in the last years of the Edo period.

*Misogikyō*

Misogikyō began its activities somewhat later than Kurozumikyō but, in the last years before the Restoration, nonetheless, came to exert a major influence on men of samurai background. Inoue Masakane (1790–1849) was the sect's founder. Born to a samurai family in Ueno province, Masakane studied Zen in his youth; in 1809 he studied medicine with Isono Hiromichi. In 1814, he became a disciple of Mizuno Nanboku of the Kansō family. He returned to Edo in the following year and made a living as a fortune teller. In 1833, he was visited in a dream by a young girl, an emissary from a kami, and his mind was awoken to the virtues of Shinto. In the next year, he became a disciple of the Shirakawa Shinto family, and received a licence to perform Shirakawa rituals. He was appointed priest to the Umeda Shinmei shrine in Adachi, and began his Shinto proselytising in earnest. However, he was swiftly arrested by the Edo magistrate for temples and shrines (*jisha bugyō*), on charges of disseminating 'new and bizarre' teachings. In 1842, he was exiled to Miyakejima where he died. His disciples campaigned for his release in vain. After his death, Misogikyō split in two, one group attaching itself to Taiseikyō; the other achieving renown as the Sakata group, named after its leader Sakata Kaneyasu (1820–90). Kaneyasu was an active proselytiser all over Japan, but in 1855 his activities in Yamashiro incurred the displeasure of the magistrate there, and he and his disciples were expelled from the region. He continued to

disseminate Misogikyō teachings after the Restoration. Kaneyasu petitioned the Tokyo governor for a shrine to venerate Inoue's sprit, and became head of Misogikyō in 1882. Under Kaneyasu's leadership, the sect won independence in 1894.

From early through to middle Meiji, sects won their independence from the state one after the other and came to exert an influence upon Meiji society as 'sect Shinto'. It appears that the popularity of these sects peaked in late Meiji. The figures disclosed by the statistical reports of the Home Ministry point to the largest number of proselytisers appearing in the 1890s. While one cannot extrapolate the number of adherents from these figures, the data does give us clues as to the size of the sects. After the 1890s, the numbers of Shinto sect proselytisers began to decline.

The process of decline accelerated further still in the aftermath of the Second World War. One of the major reasons was to be found in the splintering-off of numerous branch organisations which, before the war, had came under a given sect's umbrella. This fragmentation, in turn, was facilitated by the publication of the Religious juridical persons law and other related government directives. Another reason could be found in the rapid decline in the traditional forms of belief in the shrine kami which, before the war, had a perceptible influence in society. In this respect, sect Shinto shared a fate in common with shrine Shinto.

As the influence of sect Shinto steadily weakened, so the Shinto-derived new religions expanded their religious influence, gaining adherents in great numbers. This was clearly because, unlike sect Shinto, Shinto-derived new religions were structured by a religious system that was adaptable to the social changes of the modern period.

## Shinto-derived new religions: new multitudes of kami

The structuring of the religious system based on Shinto-derived new religions had its origins in the middle of the nineteenth century.[8] A major prompt here was the transformation in the intellectual level of Japanese. The change can be understood within our category of *constituents*. Religionists possessed of privileged knowledge functioned as teachers of the under-educated, a role which helped sustain their religious organisations. This arrangement typified the basic early modern structure of the religious world. In the modern period, however, the structure was transformed by the birth of new religious sects. The common people – by which I mean men and women with no special religious training, and with only a modicum of doctrinal knowledge – began to think about religious teachings, and an intellectual environment coalesced in which they were able

to apply the fruits of their thinking; and when this happened it became possible for common people to propagate among common people, and for religious groups for the common people to come into being.

Two major categories of new religions need to be distinguished, those derived from Shinto and those derived from Buddhism. It should be added that a very small number of new religions have also issued from Christianity, the most significant of these being the Iesu no mitama kyōkai. For our present purposes, however, we need identify only those Shinto-derived new religions that drew to some extent on traditional worship of the kami, and those that were influenced by such Buddhist traditions as Nichiren and Shingon. Buddhist-derived new religions have, in terms of doctrine and organisation, the deepest links with established Buddhist sects. In Shinto-derived new religions, the original teachings of the founder were typically much in evidence and, as a whole, they manifested the character of newly founded religions.

The Shinto-derived new religions formed in the late Edo and early Meiji periods, the period of initial growth, include Tenrikyō, Konkōkyō and Maruyamakyō. Of these, the influence of Tenrikyō was unquestionably the greatest for, not only did it spawn many a splinter-sect, but several other sects were profoundly influenced by Tenrikyō's teachings, its organisation and its methods of proselytising.

Again, Ōmotokyō which flourished from the early twentieth century through to the 1930s and 1940s, and Seichō no ie, which began its activities in the 1920s and 1930s, were profoundly influential. After the war, many of these sects became independent religious charities but the Sekai kyūseikyō, and the sects that splintered from it, were striking in terms of their organisation and their ritual practice. Hence, in the discussion of the Shinto-derived new religions that follows, my focus falls on Sekai kyūseikyō.

Tenrikyō was founded by Nakayama Miki (1798–1886). Miki was the eldest daughter of a village headman in Yamato province, and her family had for generations been devout followers of Jōdo (Pure Land) sect Buddhism; Miki's own faith in Jōdo was deep. When she was thirteen, she married Nakayama Zenbei and was widely respected as a reliable, trust-worthy spouse. It is to the year 1838 that Tenrikyō traces its origins. In that year, a Shugendō priest was called to perform a healing for Miki's eldest son, Hideshi, who had been suffering from excruciating pains in the leg. Typically on such occasions, Shugendō priests would be accompanied by a *miko* medium, whom the spirit summoned by the priest would possess and through whom the spirit would speak. On this occasion, however, the *miko* normally used by the priest was absent, and Miki was asked to perform the task. The spirit, calling itself the Great General of Heaven (*Ten no*

*daishōgun*) declared that Miki was to be his abode. This event marked the founding of Tenrikyō. There must have been many internal problems to overcome, but by the 1860s the number of believers had grown – Iburi Izō (1833–1907) ranked first among them – and by the Restoration there were confraternities of Tenri believers all over Japan. The pattern here, of someone who until now had no particular aspirations to be a religionist but who, as a result of some special religious experience, began the process of sect formation, was much in evidence elsewhere in the Shinto-derived new religions. In the traditions of Shinto, there were, from the earliest period, records of kami possession and oracles; but the possession and oracles of the Shinto-derived new religions were of a different order altogether. In the past, people had simply played the temporary role of a messenger from the kami; now, people like Miki were growing aware of their own unique god-given role to disseminate a sacred message among all people.

Miki's religious activities continued to expand after the Restoration, but since she refused to enrol as a state evangelist (*kyōdōshoku*), she was frequently pressurised by the police to desist. She was herself often arrested and imprisoned. Her grandson, Nakayama Shinnosuke, seeking to facilitate Tenri proselytising, aligned Tenri with Shintō honkyoku in 1886, and restyled it Tenri kyōkai, but it was not until 1906 that Tenrikyō won recognition from the state as an independent religion. After Miki's death, Tenrikyō adherents grew rapidly in number and, by the first and second decades of the twentieth century, there were well in excess of one million believers. What might be said of the precedent set and the influence exerted by Tenrikyō on other subsequent Shinto-derived new religions?

First, we might point to the founder-as-woman. There were female religious founders before Miki, a case in point being Isson Nyorai Kino (1756–1828), the founder of Nyoraikyō. But Miki's legacy for later generations was nonetheless decisive. It was simply epoch-making that the workings of the Tenri parent deity should have been made manifest through the medium of a woman. The Tenri method of proselytising, especially the so-called *tandoku fukyō*, was highly influential too. The idea of *tandoku fukyō* – or 'independent proselytisation' – was that a Tenri believer would go to a region quite unknown to him or her, seek out families and care for their sick, conveying Miki's teaching and praying for recovery from illness. When the sick person recovered, the patient and the patient's family were persuaded to think of it as a consequence of faith, and the Tenri healer had a chance to create a new locus of belief. This method accounts for the rapid growth of Tenri in areas that were geographically far apart.

The linkage forged in this way between the instructors of the faith and converts was also vital in organisational terms. There were 'parent' churches, 'child' churches and 'grandchild' churches. These hierarchical

linkages constituted Tenri's 'vertical thread', and personal and church-based linkages of this order were typical of the structures in new religions. The difference between this system and the head-temple branch-temple structure in Buddhism or the ranking system that operated in the shrine world was a unique fluidity, which resulted from competition between members of different branch churches.

In doctrinal terms, what was special was the Tenri concept of salvation. As Miki herself put it, the 'object is to redeem the entire world'. The idea was to redeem all people without favour, but to give special priority to those at the bottom of society. The ultimate meaning of salvation was, to cite Miki once more, *yōkigurashi* or 'happy living', and adherents prayed this might be achieved in this life. Salvation was achieved in Jiba, the name given to the place where Nakayama Miki lived and which is now the site of the Tenrikyō headquarters. It contains the *kanrodai*, the hexagonal structure that Tenrikyō believers face when they worship. In Tenrikyō, it is believed the space above the *kanrodai* is the entrance to heaven. What, ultimately, characterised Tenrikyō was its equality, its this-worldly orientation and its pursuit of happiness.

Konkōkyō, founded by Konkō Daijin (1814–83), and Maruyamakyō, founded by Itō Rokurobei (1829–94), were both late Edo/Restoration period Shinto-derived new religions. Konkō Daijin was born to a peasant family in Okayama. He had profound faith in Konjin, whom he transformed from a fearsome deity to be avoided at all costs into a benevolent being, who had the salvation of all humankind as his aspiration. Konkōkyō adherents were located mostly in the Kansai area of Japan. By contrast, Maruyamakyō was predominantly Tokyo-based. Itō Rokurobei was also born to a peasant family. He was early drawn to participation in a Mt Fuji confraternity. When Rokurobei's wife became ill, he embarked on a programme of ascetic practice and, after a revelation from the parent god, Oyakami, of whom Mt Fuji was the this-worldly manifestation, he began to preach. These two sects did not have the influence, perhaps, that Tenri had on later generations, but they were both distinguished by the fact that their founders were peasants and their concepts of kami were rooted in daily life. Both gave much weight to the salvation of the populace. It was, of course, for these reasons that the religions of the late Edo and Restoration periods are styled 'popular religions'.

In any survey of the development of twentieth-century Shinto-derived new religions, the significance of Ōmotokyō is striking. Those religions that remain active to this day in proselytising are to a very great extent derived from Ōmotokyō. Seichō no ie and Sekai kyūseikyō are both directly influenced by Ōmotokyō. Many other sects came indirectly under Ōmotokyō influence. Byakkō shinkōkai is one, which in turn directly influenced

Seichō no ie. Byakkō shinkōkai, with its headquarters in Ichikawa in Chiba, was founded by Goi Masahisa (1916–80). Masahisa was, for a time, a preacher in Seichō no ie. He was engaged in the active promotion of peace, and is best known for the slogan *sekai jinrui ga heiwa de arimasu yō ni* ('May all humankind be at peace'), that is to be seen on plaques all over Japan. Shinji shūmeikai, a sect which splintered from Sekai kyūseikyō, has its headquarters in Shiga prefecture. Koyama Mihoko (1910–  ), the founder, was herself a Sekai kyūseikyō believer but, after the death of Okada Mokichi (1882–1955), she left the sect and founded her own. Shinji shūmeikai is known for its adherents who stand on street corners and offer to pray for the health and happiness of passers-by. Sekai kyūseikyō also spawned Sekai mahikari bunmei kyōdan and Sūkyō mahikari.

Ōmotokyō itself was founded by Deguchi Nao (1836–1918) and her adopted son-in-law Deguchi Onisaburō (1871–1948). Nao recorded the *Fudesaki*, words revealed to her by the kami, which became the Ōmoto sacred texts; and Onisaburō interpreted them. His interpretations provided the basis for Ōmotokyō teachings. In terms of their influence, Ōmoto doctrine on the spirit world and Ōmoto rituals known as *chinkon kishin* – the healing of sickness, the calming of malevolent spirits and various types of spirit possession – are noteworthy. *Reishu taijū*, or the idea that the spirit (*rei*) is privileged over the body (*tai*), is of special importance. In a word, the distinguishing feature of Ōmotokyō has been the emphasis it places on the existence of the spirit world and communication with it. Ōmotokyō was, at the same time, concerned with the emperor system, and advocated a more religious dimension to the emperor's functions. Thus, the sect aroused the suspicions of the state and suffered persecution on two occasions, in 1921 and then again in 1935. Several other sects were persecuted before the war, especially in the late 1920s and early 1930s, but none as thoroughly as Ōmotokyō. Shintō tenkōkyo, founded in 1921 by Tomokiyo Yoshinobu (1888–1952), adopted a similar position to Ōmotokyō on the spirit world; unsurprisingly perhaps since Tomokiyo was originally an Ōmotokyō adherent. He left in 1919, however, and founded the Shinkakukai, which he renamed Shintō tenkōkyo in 1921, after a mystical experience on Mt Iwaki in Yamaguchi. If anything, Yoshinobu's position was still more mystical than Ōmotokyō's. Shinsei ryūshinkai, founded by Yano Yūtarō (1888–1938), was another sect which owed much to Ōmotokyō influence. Yūtarō's sect was also persecuted by the state in 1936. These few examples make it clear that the pre-war state regarded as threatening the lives of any man and woman whose religious conviction led them to challenge the emperor system and the state's definitions of divinity.

Seichō no ie, too, exerted a notable degree of influence in terms of its proselytising, especially in its stress on the written word. Ōmotokyō had

bought up newspapers, and used the printed media to a greater extent than any before. The Seichō no ie founder, Taniguchi Masaharu (1893–1985), had worked at one time as an editor of the Ōmotokyō newspaper *Shinreikai*, and under his leadership, Seichō no ie developed a highly systematic approach to media proselytising. The sect was founded in 1930, and sought to appeal to the intelligentsia, for example, through the dissemination to members of the *Seimei no jissō* ('True facets of life'), the founder's core work.

Other pre-war sects worthy of comment are the Hitonomichi kyōdan founded by Miki Tokuchika (1900–83), which was restyled and revitalised as PL kyōdan after the war, and Soshintō founded by Matsushita Matsuzō (1873–1947). In early Shōwa, Matsuzō was venerated as the 'living deity of Nagasu'. His sect won many adherents and spawned numerous sects all over Japan including Shidaidō, Soshintō kyōdan, Ten'onkyō and Shinri jikkō no oshie.

In the post-war environment of the GHQ-implemented separation of state and religion and religious freedom, new religious movements underwent profound change of a type quite different to that experienced by shrine Shinto. The greatest change was that each sect was able now to establish in law its own independent organisations. Many minor religious groups defined under the 1940 Religious organisations law (Shukyō dantaihō) as *kessha* or 'religious societies' were now able to win their independence. In pre-war Japan, they had been allowed to practise and preach after registering with the local government office, but they were not eligible for tax privileges. The effect that these changes in *network* exerted on the religious system was the emergence of a multiplicity of religious societies and groups.

In the social tumult of the immediate post-war period, Tenshō kōtaijingūkyō and Jiu attracted much attention. Both symbolised the onset of a new age of change in similar ways: both were founded by women – Kitamura Sayo (1900–67) in the former case and Ji Kōson (Nagaoka Yoshiko 1903–84) in the latter; both advocated the application of new era names, *Kigen* and *Reiju* respectively, to define the new age; both also reflected the tumult of post-war society so that neither developed into large-scale religious movements. Tenshō kōtaijingūkyō was renowned for its fierce social criticism and its prayers for world peace. Jiu owed its popular appeal to the fact that it attracted two famous adherents, the sumo champion Futabayama and the *go* master Go Kiyohara.[9]

Sekai kyūseikyō and its various branch sects spread with alacrity in the post-war climate of rapid economic growth. They proposed solutions, too, to such everyday problems as poverty, sickness and human conflict. Okada Mokichi (1882–1955) joined Ōmotokyō in 1920 having suffered one serious illness after another. He referred to himself as 'a wholesaler of

sickness'. He left Ōmotokyō in 1935 after receiving a revelation, and set up Dainihon Kannonkai which, after the war, he reorganised as Sekai kyūseikyō (also known as Meshiakyō). The distinctive practice of this sect involved purification, and the sect taught that humankind must uncover within itself its inherent powers of purification and healing. If this was part of Sekai kyūseikyō's challenge to the single-minded modernisation of post-war Japan, so too was its advocacy of, say, natural farming techniques. The fragmentation of the sect after the death of Mokichi owed much to the power that was characteristically devolved to local church leaders. Seimeikyō, Kyūseishuko, Kyūsei shinkyō, Shinji shūmeikai and Sukui no hikari kyōdan were just some of the newly splintered groups to emerge in the post-Mokichi era.

Two groups that deployed spirit-purification techniques to great effect from the 1970s owed their origins to Sekai kyūseikyō. Sekai mahikari bunmei kyōdan, founded in 1959 by Okada Kōtama (1901–74) was one. Kōtama received a revelation while still a member of Sekai kyūsei kyō, and so left to found his own sect with its headquarters in Shizuoka. Another such was Sūkyō mahikari founded by Okada Seishu (1929–  ) in 1978. Both groups built massive shrines in response to prophecies of Okada Kōtama, the former in Naka Izu and the latter in Takayama.

In addition to these sects, whose followers number today in the hundreds of thousands, there were yet others of a smaller scale whose membership lies between the thousands and the tens of thousands. There were several that grew up around someone of psychic powers, and spread within a comparatively short space of time. Many had little new to offer by way of teachings. Reiha no hikari kyōkai, founded by Hase Yoshio (1915–84) after a religious experience that gave him the gift of healing, has its headquarters in Noda city, Chiba prefecture. Ōyamanezu no mikoto shinji kyōkai in Yokohama was founded by Inai Sadao (1906–88), who worked in a local bath house until 1946, when he had a revelation. He founded his church in 1953 and his healing powers rapidly won him adherents. Similar examples exist in the case of still smaller sects. There are several of these whose founders are women with shaman-like powers. Their supernatural abilities, their healing powers and their prophetic capacities were responsible for attracting followers. The Fukui-based sect Uchū shinkyō kōmeikai founded by Nakamura Kazuko (1947–  ) was one such. She first established a centre for spiritual healing in Osaka which acquired charity status in 1985. The Tokyo-based sect, Shinmei aishinkai, founded by Komatsu Shin'yō is another.[10] Both these women conveyed revelations from Amaterasu 'mikami, and claimed to be inspired by her mighty powers. Both, that is, took advantage of traditional kami even as they were founders of new religious sects. Yet another example of this category of small-scale

## The overseas dissemination of Shinto-derived new religions

New Japanese religions have spread rapidly overseas in the post-war period. Before the war, sect Shinto spread to Hawaii, North America and the Korean peninsula and Taiwan as well. Tenrikyō was the first of the Shinto-derived new religions to proliferate overseas, especially in Hawaii and North America. It began its North American mission in 1896. Konkōkyō set about disseminating its teachings in North America in 1919. Ōmoto's propagation in Brazil in 1924 is of interest since it came so swiftly after the first Ōmotokyō persecution of 1921. Somewhat later, in 1935, Seichō no ie set up in California a *Shiyūkai*, as its groups of believers were known.

If we turn our attention to Asia, 1885 marks the start of Shintō shūseiha propagation in Korea. The timing is to be explained, no doubt, by the fact it was the first sect to gain its independence from the Meiji state. Tenrikyō began to preach in Pusan in 1893. Pusan also saw the arrival of preachers from Shinrikyō a few years later. Shinrikyō headquarters were in Kitakyūshū and Kokura, both handy bases for moving into Korea. Konkōkyō and Ōmotokyō were other sects active in Korea. Tenrikyō was first into Taiwan; 1897 was the date, just a little after the sect began its operations in Korea. There is evidence of various sects' activity on the Chinese mainland, too, and Kurozumikyō set up a missionary office in Karafuto (Sakhalin) in 1907.

In the post-war period, no sooner had the San Francisco treaty been signed in 1951 than Tenshō kōtaijingūkyō moved into Hawaii. The founder, Kitamura Sayo, went to Hawaii herself in 1952. The next to arrive was Sekai kyūseikyō, which began its Hawaii proselytising in 1953. Hawaii lent itself to proselytising by Japanese new religions in the immediate post-war period because of the large number of residents there of Japanese descent.

South American proselytising was a notable feature of the post-war activity of new religions. Many made their way to Brazil. In 1955, Sekai kyūseikyō began its Brazilian activities, and the following year Seichō no ie set up a branch organisation there for new converts. In 1961, Tenrikyō established a church in Mexico, the first of the new religions to establish a base in Central America.

All over America, especially though in South America where there was little adverse influence from the war, branch churches began to proliferate. At the same time, many of these religions began a complete withdrawal from Asia. Given that the new religions moved into Asia as part of Japanese colonial activity, this was inevitable; their advance into the American continent was, by contrast, an accompaniment to post-war Japanese migration. Tenrikyō offers a striking exception to this rule, since local believers in Taiwan have remained faithful throughout the post-war period.

For a while after the war, then, overseas proselytising was directed at Japanese residents overseas, or at least people of Japanese descent. Local converts were too few to be counted. However, after 1970 or thereabouts, there were increasing numbers of cases of foreign nationals converting to these sects. Two examples of this trend are Sekai kyūseikyō and Sūkyō mahikari. Sūkyō mahikari, especially, has extended its reach to new areas in Europe, Africa and the Caribbean. Internationalisation and globalisation are likely to increase this trend further in the future.

sects founded by women might be Yamato no Miya founded by Ajiki Tenkei (1952– ) after a revelation from kami and buddhas.

Shinto-derived new religions that seek recourse to traditional concepts of the kami are by no means few and far between. Tenshōkyō is another such. Tenshōkyō, founded by Senba Hideo (1925– ) and his wife Kimiko, has its headquarters in Muroran in Hokkaido, and has its origins in Senba's mystical experiences while a member of the Hokkaido Ontakekyō. Tenshōkyō venerates Amaterasu, Ōkuninushi and Ebisu, but is also influenced by belief in Mt Ontake. Nihon seidō kyōdan, located in Urawa in Saitama, was founded by Iwasaki Shōō (1934– ), to whom Eight Great Dragon-Kings appeared when he was in a coma suffering from jaundice. Fukami Tōshū's Worldmate (originally Cosmomate) which has its headquarters in Tokyo is influenced both by Ōmoto and Sekai kyūseikyō. Fukami Tōshū (1951– ), whose birth name is Handa Haruhisa, shows signs of seeking a rapprochement with shrine Shinto and has built the Kōtaijinja shrine in Izu.

There is an important sect in Okinawa called Ijun which draws on Okinawan folk religious practices. Its founder, Takayasu Ryūsen (1934– ),

an actor in his youth, has structured a set of new teachings on the foundation of traditional Okinawan belief in the transcendental deity Kinmanmon. He preaches the life-giving power of the universe, and the need for all people to awake to its benefits. His sect, which has branches in mainland Japan, Taiwan and Hawaii, shares with many a new religion, a tendency towards universalisation of popular religious practice; he is just one more example of how, in this media age, a sect can spread with very considerable alacrity.

Spirit possession remains, then, an important inspiration to the emergence of founders of the most recent Shinto-derived new religions, and the suggestions are that it continues to be a vital component in the structures of all Shinto-derived new religions. There are many sects that boast a connection to traditional shrine Shinto beliefs and, where they do, they approach – in terms of their form – what we earlier defined as sect Shinto.

## Shinto customs: 'folk Shinto' practices in contemporary Japanese society

From the ancient to the early modern periods, Japanese religious culture was defined by the identification of kami and shrines with buddhas and temples, of Shinto with Buddhism (*shinbutsu shūgō*). The end to this arrangement was marked by the Meiji Restoration of 1868 and the new government's religious policies. Nonetheless, the 'syncretism' that underpinned Shinto-type customs did not disappear overnight. Indeed, modern Japanese religious practice remains subject to multiple influences. Christianity is one such influence, to the extent that Christmas now takes its place in Japan's annual religious cycle. After the war, Valentine's day and more recently Halloween have also become increasingly common. It is probably truer to say that Japanese syncretistic tendencies have merely become more complex. As Ishii Kenji's research has demonstrated, the acceptance of Christian-derived customs among young Japanese is in inverse proportion to the steady post-war decline of traditional Japanese rites linked to, say, agricultural occupations.[11] It is not the case, however, that this same period has witnessed an increase in conversions to Christianity. Indeed, Christians continue to occupy the same, steady one per cent of the population. The above phenomenon is to be related rather to changes in life style and changes in industrial patterns.

Modern and contemporary religious practice is becoming increasingly syncretistic then, but it is characteristic of contemporary trends that, at least on the surface, the syncretism is encouraging a new secularisation. This applies, indeed, to Shinto practice. The first visit of the year to a

Shinto shrine and, say, Children's day festivities (*shichi-go-san*) are adhered to not because they are Shinto or religious; rather they have become uniquely *social* practices. It may be more accurate to regard this trend as a consequence of the fact that the history of these customs and rites is no longer conveyed in an appropriate fashion from one generation to the next. Still, the secularisation of annual rites and life rites is not yet complete. They retain a semblance of the religious and there is, as yet, no fundamental change to the basic function of traditional Shinto practices, either. There are many cases where practices which have only become established in the modern age are defined by traditional religious views.

Since ancient times, people have sought to understand the divine will, to learn of their fate and fortune, and have relied upon divination (*uranai*) to do so. *Omikuji* is well established, of course. This well-known custom involves a believer visiting his or her local shrine, praying to the kami and then purchasing a slip of paper on which fortunes are inscribed. Other examples of traditional divination still practised today are palm-reading, character-reading, grave-reading, name-reading, and the practice known as *shijū suimei* or 'divination by the four means' (literally four pillars) of birth year, birth month, birth date and birth time. Advances in technology and the advent of the new age of information and globalisation account for the dissemination of non-traditional divination methods. Computer divination is also now immensely popular, as is divination based on blood group, tarot cards and crystals. The influence from Western culture in each of these areas is apparent enough, but despite a superficial variety of method, what is being sought in each case is nothing especially novel. Indeed, palm reading and face reading trace their origins back to concepts rooted in ancient Chinese practice of Yin Yang or the Five Phases of Matter (wood, fire, earth, metal and water). The Japanese have always found it congenial to interpret human relations in terms of Yin and Yang and the Five Phases of Matter. The popularity of divination by blood groups is easier to understand in this context, perhaps. Blood and other types of divination appear to be based on 'modern' scientific knowledge, but the ideas which sustain these fashions are verifiably old.

Every year since 1995 the academic society *Shūkyō to shakai* ('Religion and society') has been conducting annual surveys of the religious views of some 5,000 students. The surveys provide further evidence of the continued popularity of divination among the young. The survey results suggest a striking popularity among girls. Intriguingly, there are considerable discrepancies between the numbers who actually seek out divination and the level of belief in the various forms of divination. For example, belief in blood group divination is almost the same as that in palm reading and greatly in excess of divination by computer, but computer divination

proves, in fact, to be immensely more popular. Ease of access no doubt explains much. Some of the results from the 1995 and 1996 surveys are shown in Table 4.1.

Certain taboos are specifically related to Shinto. There has certainly been a wide acceptance since ancient times of the defiling nature of death, the dead and involvement in funeral rites. Practices rooted in death-related taboos can be found to this day; it remains taboo, for example, to stand a single chopstick vertically in a bowl of rice, or to pass food directly from one set of chopsticks to another. While these taboos are now usually associated with Buddhism, they are intimately linked, too, to ancient Shinto taboos about death. As ancient taboos die away, so new taboos assume popularity; the idea of taboo itself stays with us. Take, for example, linguistic taboo. In earlier times, Buddhist words were taboo in the vicinity of the Ise shrines, and Buddhist sutras were referred to euphemistically as 'dyed paper', Buddhist priests as 'the long-haired', and the Buddhist faithful by a designation meaning 'arrows made from antlers' (*tsunohazu*). When you visit a sick person, it is nowadays taboo to take along a potted plant; since the plant is rooted in a pot, the idea goes, sickness will remain 'rooted'

*Table 4.1* Divination beliefs

| Belief in divination (1995) | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Divination method* | *Considerably accurate (%)* | *Occasionally accurate(%)* |
| Star signs | 5.3 | 59.8 |
| Palm | 10.7 | 58.9 |
| Name | 5.6 | 52.5 |
| Computer | 1.7 | 52.5 |
| Blood group | 1.7 | 37.3 |
| *Experience of divination (1996)* | | |
| *Divination method* | *Use (%)* | |
| *Kokkuri** | 68.0 | |
| Computer | 66.5 | |
| Character divination | 31.1 | |
| Books | | |
| Palm/character reading | 12.4 | |
| Star signs in magazines | 11.7 | |
| Name reading | 9.2 | |
| Tarot cards | 6.2 | |

Note * A version of ouija, that involves divination based on the automatic movement of a board supported on three bamboo sticks.

in the person. There are new taboos, too, on bringing gifts of various flowers. Saineria (a Japanese transliteration for the cineraria plant) and cyclamen are discouraged since the former in Japanese is homophonous with a word meaning 'to sleep again', and the latter with a phrase wishing death and suffering on the patient. These are examples of the modern reproduction of linguistic taboo derived from plays on words. This is at work, too, in various admonitions that have enjoyed much popularity until recently. One was directed at women who held one vanity mirror before them and another behind so as to check, for example, the coiffeur at the nape of the neck. 'Never set eyes on the thirteenth reflection!' went the admonition. This is an admixture of Western taboos against the number thirteen and traditional Eastern ideas about the power of the mirror. Another admonition warns against using a hair dryer at two in the morning. This is another admixture of the modern – here the appliance – with the classical, the idea that at this hour of the morning evil spirits appear.

Contributing to the proliferation of these ideas are comic books; they help explain why taboos have such a hold over primary and middle school aged children. Indeed, a new pattern of dissemination is emerging. In earlier ages, it was common for taboos to spread from the more senior members of the community to the younger as 'traditional wisdom'; here the direction is reversed. The important point remains, however, that the basic ideas derive from folk beliefs of considerable antiquity.

The transmission among the general populace of ancient beliefs about the soul owed much to the activities of people gifted with special spiritual and psychic powers; they have much in common with the traditional mediums or *miko*. There have almost always been, in all corners of Japan, people able to dispel evil and communicate with the spirits of the living and the dead. These people have been evident in urban areas, too. They belong to no particular religious group, and often their ritual actions and magic words do not constitute a profession so much as a side-occupation. Knowledge of their existence was typically spread by word of mouth. Nowadays, though, in this media age they often advertise their powers in the media. The media is also responsible for the introduction into Japan of folk culture from the Asian mainland; indeed, there is evidence of new interest in Daoist type phenomena. Concepts of the spirit are already beginning to change under this neo-Daoist influence. In the 1980s, films about Chinese ghosts were immensely popular in Japan, and there was a new interest, too, among the younger generation in the supernatural powers of wizard-like figures in modern China, especially those emanating from Hong Kong.

Modern Shinto practices frequently manifest what we might call a 'tourist dimension'. Communal festivals have become local 'events' and

shrine visits are increasingly a type of leisure pursuit. This phenomenon is not unrelated, of course, to post-war society's steady departure from the religious world. Shrine visits and pilgrimage were, in origin, always an admixture of religious elements and entertainments, but in post-war Japan the leisure dimension has increased disproportionately. Such practices as *senja mōde* (thousand-shrine pilgrimage) which involves visiting multiple shrines, especially those dedicated to Inari, and *shichi fukujin mairi* (tours of temples and shrines that venerate one or more of the seven gods of good fortune, Ebisu, Daikokuten, Bishamon, Benzaiten, Hotei, Fukurokuju and Jurōjin) are popular among young people today, but their abiding concern seems to be collecting the stamps available from the railway stations on the pilgrim's route. This phenomenon, that sees shrines transformed into tourist sites, is not of course confined to shrines; it applies more generally to all sacred places. If veneration is never entirely absent, it is subordinated to the pleasure, entertainment dimension. The dilution of shrine-related belief in post-war Japan is a consequence of the increasngly tenuous relationship between people and shrines during the same period. Before the war, veneration of shrines was promoted by the state, but with the post-war reaction against state Shinto, the numbers visiting shrines dropped considerably. This adverse reaction has, in recent years, been overcome somewhat, but the religious significance of shrines is unquestionably less than it was in the pre-war period, and shrines are on their way to becoming 'part of the scenery', as it were, and little more. It goes without saying that all customs are directly influenced by social change, and Shinto customs are no exception. They continue to transform in fundamental ways in response to the social shifts of post-war society. As members of the generation educated in pre-war Japan decrease in number, so will the impact of social change on Shinto customs be felt still further.

## Notes

1 There are now several studies in English on this fundamental aspect of Meiji religious policy. See Allan G. Grapard, 'Japan's ignored cultural revolution: The separation of Shinto and Buddhist divinities in Meiji (*shinbutsu bunri*) and a case study: Tonomine' (*History of Religions* 23–3, 1984); Martin Collcutt, 'Buddhism: the threat of eradication' in Jansen, Marius and Gilbert Rozman, eds, *Japan in transition: from Tokugawa to Meiji* (Princeton University Press 1986); Helen Hardacre, *Shinto and the state, 1868–1988* (Princeton University Press 1989); James E. Ketelaar, *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and its Persecution* (Princeton University Press 1990); and John Breen, 'Ideologues, bureaucrats and priests: on "Shinto" and "Buddhism" in early Meiji Japan' in Breen and Teeuwen, eds, *Shinto in history: Ways of the kami* (Curzon 2000).

2  On the missionary and evangelist movements, see Helen Hardacre, *Shinto and the state, 1868–1988* (Princeton University Press 1989).

3  On the modern shrine system, see also Wilbur Fridell, 'The establishment of shrine Shinto in Meiji Japan' (*Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 2, 1975); Helen Hardacre, 'Shrine rites' in idem *Shinto and the state*, and John Breen, 'Ideologues, bureaucrats and priests'.

4  On state Shinto, see Nitta Hitoshi, 'Shinto as a non-religion: the origins and development of an idea' and Sakamoto Koremaru, 'The structure of state Shinto: its creation, development and demise', both in Breen and Teeuwen, eds, *Shinto in history: Ways of the kami* (Curzon 2000).

5  See Hardacre, *Shinto and the state*, chapter 7.

6  There are very few comprehensive studies of sect Shinto. Among them are Tsurufuji Ikuta, *Kyōha Shintō no kenkyū* (Taikōsha 1939), Nakayama Keiichi, *Kyōha Shintō no hassei katei* (Moriyama Shoten 1932) and, for the post-war period, Inoue Nobutaka, *Kyōha Shintō no keisei* (Kōbundō 1991).

7  On Ontake see, for example, Akaike Noriaki, 'The Ontake cult association and local society: the case of the Owari-Mikawa region in central Japan' (*Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 8–1/2, 1981).

8  A basic reference work for new religions is Inoue Nobutaka *et al.*, *Shinshūkyō kyōdan, jinbutsu jiten* (Kōbundō 1996). This book carries much detailed information on the Shinto-rooted new religions. A general academic work on the new religions is Inoue Nobutaka, *Shinshūkyō no kaidoku* (Chikuma Shobō 1996).

9  See Carmen Blacker, 'Millenarian aspects of the new religions in Japan' in Donald Shively, ed., *Tradition and modernization in Japanese culture* (Princeton University Press 1998).

10  See Helen Hardacre, 'Shinmeiaishinkai and the study of shamanism in contemporary Japanese life' in Peter Kornicki and James McMullen, eds, *Religion in Japan* (Cambridge University Press 1997).

11  Ishii Kenji, *Toshi no nenchū gyōji: Hen'yō suru Nihonjin no shinsei* (Shunjūsha 1994).

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