THE SHINTO CULT

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THE SHINTO CULT

A CHRISTIAN STUDY

OF

THE ANCIENT RELIGION OF JAPAN

BY

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NOTE.

The following pages are the substance of a course of lectures on the old Shinto cult which the author has been giving for a number of years to his classes in Comparative Religion. They are here condensed and adapted to the purpose of a little manual which, it is believed, may interest many readers, and bring together within a small space information gathered from many sources not easily accessible to ordinary students. At the same time it is hoped that this little volume may serve to suggest some valuable hints to the Christian missionary who is to come face to face with the Japanese people in their "beautiful land of the reed plains and the fresh ears of rice." It is possible that some portions, if not every jot and tittle, of this ancient cult may, like the law and the prophets of Israel, find a glorious fulfillment in the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. The principal authorities relied on in the preparation of this essay are named in the Select Bibliography given at the end.

CONTENTS.

THE SHINTO CULT.

1. The Country. In taking up the study of a religion which has never extended beyond the limits of an easily defined territory, we may appropriately first of all take a hasty glance at the geographical outlines of the system we call Shinto, the primitive faith of the people of Japan. To appreciate the geographical position of Japan, one needs to have before him a map of the world. He may then see at a glance how remarkably the three thousand islands of that Empire stretch for some twenty-five hundred miles along the coast of Asia, from Kamchatka on the north to the island of Formosa on the south, which island is crossed by the tropic of Cancer. It may be called the longest and the narrowest country in the world. It looks like an immense sea-serpent, with its northern tail twist-

ing toward the Aleutian Islands, which our Government acquired from Russia in 1867, and its southern head pointing toward the Philippine Islands, which we acquired from Spain in recent years. It seems to guard the whole eastern coast of Asia, and along with China, on the mainland, is suspected and feared by some European diplomats as embodying some sort of a "Yellow Peril." It may be that its noteworthy contiguity to our Alaskan possessions at one extremity and our Philippine wards at the other bodes some sort of peril to any Western nation that may hereafter presume to enlarge its dominions in the Orient by force of arms.

Attention has often been called to the fact that the British Isles, in the Atlantic Ocean, just off the northwestern coast of Europe, occupy a corresponding geographical relation to the Western world. The islands themselves are comparatively small, but their measuring line has gone out into all the earth, and their civilization is dominating the world. Asia, on the east of the Eastern hemisphere, is a land of innumerable population; Europe, on the west, is a land of new ideas and

of hopeful progress. The United States, resting her Atlantean shoulder on the island-empire of Europe, and her Pacific shoulder on the island-empire of the Orient, may be, in the order of God, a mighty mediator, possessed both of a great population and of new and commanding ideas, and destined to bring about the universal peace, the sound knowledge, and the highest prosperity of the world.

We are told that Japan is a country of diversified beauty. Compassed round about with the vast ocean, yet not far from the Asiatic mainland; supplied also with a wonderful inland sea, and with lakes and rivers and fountains of waters; a land of mountains, and valleys, and broad meadows, and all manner of trees and shrubs and fruits and flowers, and charming landscapes, and all varieties of climate; it is no wonder that the people and their poets have called this group of islands "the sun's nest," "the country of the sun-goddess," "the region between heaven and earth," "islands of the congealed drop," "the grand land of the eight isles," "central land of reed-plains," "land of the ears of fresh rice," "land of a thousand autumns,"

and other similar names indicative of manifold excellence.[1]

This island-empire of the Orient is the home of the religious cult called "Shinto," a religion which has never traveled nor sought to propagate itself beyond the dominions of Japan. It has never put itself in a hostile attitude toward any other form of religion, either at home or abroad, except when a foreign cult has entered its ancient home and sought to meddle with affairs of State or to interfere with loyalty to the Emperor.

2. Is Shinto a Religion? At a meeting of the Society of Science, held at Tokyo in 1890, the president of the Imperial University expressed the opinion that Shinto should not be regarded as a religion. He believed it to be an essential element in the existing national thought and feeling of Japan, but destitute of the essential qualities of a strictly religious cult. Others have expressed a similar opinion;

[1]The *Ko-ji-ki* (section XXX) has this remarkable combination: "The luxuriant-reed-plains-land-of-fresh-rice-ears-of-a-thousand-autumns-of-long-five-hundred-autumns." The Ritual of the Great Purification and other rituals call Japan "the luxuriant reed-plain region of fresh young spikes." The word "spikes" here is a synonym for ears of rice.

but we are disposed to think that this judgment arises from an incorrect concept of religion, and a consequent defective definition of the same. A similar denial has been made of the religious character of other cults and systems. Taoism, Confucianism, and even Buddhism have been said to lack the elements essential to a real religion. But if these systems do not constitute a religion for the peoples who accept them, they are in every case their substitute for religion. Any religion or any form of religion may so involve its thought and its practices with philosophical speculation, or with social customs, or with the political management of the State, as to have the appearance of a philosophical or a political system, rather than a form of religion. But, however it may, in such ways, ignore the religious ideas and practices of other systems, if there be no other religious cult among the people, the philosophy, the ethical policy and the customs, which make up this important element of the civilization and the national life, are as truly tantamount to a religious cult as any form of faith and practice which all men agree to call religion.

3. Origin and Relative Age of the People. The main body of the Japanese people are believed to have migrated in old times from the northern central part of Asia, and to have worked their way eastward into Korea, and thence into the islands of Japan. They expelled or subjugated the aborigines of the country, and made themselves masters of the great islands and the inland and surrounding seas. But their origin and early history are involved in dense obscurity. They doubtless brought with them from their earlier dwellings in Asia various myths, legends, and traditions, and these grew and strengthened amid the simple habits of life which they adopted in their new island-world. According to a writer[1] in the *Westminster Review* of July, 1878, Japan is yet, in more senses than one, a young country. Their language and their institutions "show us a people still in a very early stage of development." W. G. Aston holds that the earliest date of accepted Japanese chronology is A. D. 461, and he says that Japanese history, properly so called, can not be said to exist previous to A. D. 500. He regards

[1]Understood to be Sir Ernest Satow.

Korean history more trustworthy than that of Japan previous to that date.[1] According to Satow, "everything points to the descent of the Japanese people in great part from a race of Turanian origin, who crossed over from the continent by way of the islands Tsushima and Iki, which form the natural stepping-stones from Korea to Japan.[2]

But the last twenty-five years have witnessed a most remarkable advance in the use of modern inventions, and more than any other nation of the far East have the Japanese displayed both a willingness and an ambition to improve their condition by means of the ideas and usages of Western civilization. The war with China in 1894, and that with Russia in 1904-1905, displayed a wisdom, tact, and energy which were a great surprise to the world. The self-poise, the generosity, the far-sighted statesmanship exhibited in her concluding terms of peace with her haughty but defeated enemy, have commanded universal admiration. These facts make the study of this people's ancient religious cult, which is still a

[1] "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan," vol. xvi, part I, page 73.

[2] Westminster Review, July, 1878, p. 18.

powerful element in the popular life, a matter of no little interest at the present time.[1]

4. Meaning of the Word Shinto. The word Shinto means the "way of the gods." It came into use when Buddhism was introduced into Japan, and designates the old, ancestral worship as a way of the gods distinct from the way of the Buddhists, or of any other rival way of religious life. The Japanese name is *Kami no michi*. In its essential elements it is a commingling of Animism and ancestor-worship. Not only are the spirits of departed ancestors reckoned among the gods, but there are innumerable deities of other kind and character. The mountains and valleys, the rivers and the seas, the trees, the wind, the thunder, the fire, all moving things and objects

[1]It may not be improper to suggest that some of the notions of the Western peoples as to the backwardness of Japan in the past, and the relative stage of civilization reached generations ago in the island empire may be very ludicrous to the mind of a self-respecting, thoughtful son of Japan. The Mikado's minister at Paris is reported to have said: "We have for many generations sent to Europe exquisite lacquer work, delicately carved figures, beautiful embroidery, and many other things which show our artistic ability and accomplishments, but the Europeans said we were uncivilized. We have recently killed some 70,000 Russians, and now every European nation is wondering at the high civilization we have at last attained!"

of sense are supposed to have each a deity within. And these deities seem for the most part to have been regarded as beneficent powers, and their worship is of a joyous kind.

5. Sources of Information. The sources of our knowledge of this ancient cult are quite numerous, but not as accessible to English and American students as is desirable. The oldest existing monument of Japanese literature is known as the "Ko-ji-ki," the text of which would make a book about the size of our four Gospels. It contains 180 short sections or chapters. The word *Ko-ji-ki* means a "Record of Ancient Matters," and appropriately designates this oldest known record of the mythology, history, and customs of the people of Japan. It is the nearest approach to a sacred scripture of the Shinto cult which we possess. It has been translated into English, and supplied with a learned introduction and many explanatory notes by Basil H. Chamberlain,[1] a distinguished scholar, who has made the

[1]It is published as a Supplement to vol. x of the "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan," pp. lxxv and 369. Yokohama, 1883.

Japanese language, literature, and archæology a subject of extensive and minute research.

Another and much larger work, comprising thirty books, and containing a record of much of the same mythology and history as the *Ko-ji-ki,* is called the *Nihongi,* or "Chronicles of Japan."[1] It is a composite of various elements derived from numerous different sources, and while it reports in substance the myths and stories of the gods as they are found in the *Ko-ji-ki,* it makes no mention of that older work and omits some things which the older work records. It gives, however, a number and variety of reports of the myths and traditions, informing us how, in one ancient writing, it is so and so recorded; in another writing, it is somewhat differently told. This feature enhances its value for purposes of comparison among the varying traditions.

This later production lacks the simplicity and originality of the *Ko-ji-ki,* and bears abundant evidence of the Chinese influences under which it

[1]There is an English translation of the Nihongi, by W. G. Aston: 2 vols. London, 1896. It is published as a Supplement to "Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society, London."

was composed. It is written for the most part in Chinese, and exhibits numerous examples of the learning and philosophical cast of thought peculiar to certain well-known Chinese writings. As a specimen of this rationalistic type of construing the ancient myths of creation, we here cite the opening sentences from the first book of the *Nihongi:*

"Of old, Heaven and Earth were not yet separated, and the In and Yo [or *Yin* and *Yang,* female and male principles] not yet divided. They formed a chaotic mass, like an egg, which was of obscurely defined limits and contained germs. The purer and clearer part was thinly drawn out and formed Heaven, while the heavier and grosser element settled down and became Earth. The finer element easily became a united body, but the consolidation of the heavy and gross element was accomplished with difficulty. Heaven was therefore formed first, and Earth was established subsequently. Thereafter Divine Beings were produced between them. Hence it is said that when the world began to be created, the soil, of which lands were composed, floated about in a manner which might be compared to the floating of a fish

sporting on the surface of the water. At this time a certain thing was produced between Heaven and Earth. It was in form like a reed-shoot. Now this became transformed into a god, and was called *Kuni-toko-tachi no Mikoto* ["Land-eternal-stand-of-august thing"]. Next there was *Kuni-no-sa-tsuchi* ["land-of-right-soil"], and next, *Toyo-kumu-nu* ["rich-form-plain"]—in all, three deities. These were pure males, spontaneously developed by the operation of the principle of Heaven" [the Yo, male principle].

The *Ko-ji-ki* was written about 712 A. D., and the *Nihongi* in 720 A. D., and they are both remarkable for the naïve and peculiar manner in which they unite together in their narratives matters of traditional mythology and of history without apparent consciousness of any noteworthy differences between the two. Besides these remarkable books there is a Code of ceremonial laws, in fifty volumes, known as the *Yengishiki,* which was published A. D. 927. It includes a large number of ancient Japanese rituals, called *Norito,* of which several have been translated into English and provided with a commentary and learned notes by

Ernest Satow and Karl Florenz.[1] There is also an interesting collection of ancient poems, called the *Manyoshu,* "Collection of Myriad Leaves," which furnishes numerous pictures of the life of the early Japanese, both before and after the time of the compilation of the *Ko-ji-ki* and the *Nihongi.* There are also the voluminous writings of the three famous Shinto scholars, Mabuchi, Motowori, and Hirata, who flourished between the middle of the eighteenth and the middle of the nineteenth century, and effected an intellectual revolution and a remarkable revival of the Shinto cult.[2]

6. Japanese Cosmogony and Mythology. Our study of Shinto may well begin by a brief notice of Japanese cosmogony as presented at the very beginning of the *Ko-ji-ki:*

"I, Yasumaro, say: Now when chaos had be-

[1]These appear in vols. vii, ix, and xxvii of the "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan." Over thirty-five volumes of these Transactions have appeared, and they are an invaluable repository of information on the history, customs, religion, and literature of Japan. Other journals of like value are the "Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society of London" and the "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens in Tokio."

[2]Sketches of these men and numerous extracts from their works may be found in Satow's essay on "The Revival of Pure Shin-tau," published as Appendix of vol. iii of the "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan."

gun to condense, but force and form were not yet manifest, and there was naught named, naught done, who could know its shape? Nevertheless Heaven and Earth first parted, and the Three Deities performed the commencement of creation; the Passive and Active Essences then developed, and the Two Spirits became the ancestors of all things. Therefore did he [Izanagi] enter obscurity and emerge into light, and the Sun and Moon were revealed by the washing of his eyes; he floated on and plunged into the sea-water, and heavenly and earthly Deities appeared through the ablutions of his person. So in the dimness of the great beginning, we, by relying on the original teaching, learn the time of the conception of the earth and of the birth of islands; in the remoteness of the original beginning, we by trusting the former sages, perceive the era of the genesis of Deities and of the establishment of men."

This brief fragment from the compiler's "Preface" furnishes a condensed outline of what we read in the first part of the *Ko-ji-ki,* and it indicates the peculiar cosmogony of the Japanese mythology. The early sections of the book record

the names of the first deities, who are said to have been "born alone, and hid their persons;" which seems to mean that they came into being in some exceptional way, and then disappeared. Then followed what are termed "the Seven Divine Generations," among which we find such names as "the Earthly - eternally - standing - Deity," "the Mud-Earth-Lord, and his younger sister, the Mud-Earth-Lady;" "the Germ-Integrating Deity, and his younger sister, the Life-Integrating Deity." These seven generations of gods end with the birth of a brother and sister, named *Izanagi* and *Izanami* (*i. e.*, "the male-who-invites and the female-who-invites"). These two are commanded by the higher and more ancient heavenly deities to "make, consolidate, and give birth to this drifting land;" whereupon they two, "standing upon the floating Bridge of Heaven, pushed down a jewelled spear, and stirred the ocean brine till it became thick and sticky;[1] and then, drawing the spear upward,

[1]Japanese cosmology seems to postulate eternal matter, but "it is matter almost completely lacking consistency—an indescribable, nebulous, unsubstantial, floating, muddy foam" —"Japan: Its History, Arts, and Literature." By Captain F. Brinkley. Vol. V, p. 108. (J. B. Millet & Co., Boston and Tokyo.)

the brine that dropped down from the end of the spear became an island." Upon this island Izanagi and Izanami descended from the Heaven above, and in course of time generated all the islands of the Japanese world. When they had finished giving birth to countries they proceeded to give birth to deities, and so by them were begotten fourteen islands and thirty-five deities. There is little room to doubt that Izanagi and Izanami are a mythological representation of the generative powers of nature; but their portraiture in the Japanese literature has probably received some coloring from Chinese influence and thought.

But in giving birth to the deity of fire, Izanami died, and her brother buried her, and drawing his mighty sword he proceeded to cut off the head of his son, the deity of fire. Whereupon, wonderful to tell, sixteen deities were born from the blood and the different parts of the body of the fire-god. Among the names of these we find such titles as "Rock-splitter," "Root-splitter," "Brave-snapping," and "Possessor-of-Mountains;" and the name of the sword which cleft the head

of the fire-god was "Heavenly," or "Majestic-Point-Blade-Extended."

After the birth of these deities, Izanagi longed to see again his sister and spouse, and went to seek her in the underworld. He called to her and asked her to come back to him. She answered that such was her desire, but she must consult the deities of Hades, and she bade him wait, saying, "Look not at me." One can not help comparing here the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Orpheus descended into the lower world, charmed Pluto with his lyre, and obtained permission for his wife Eurydice to return, following behind him, but only on condition that Orpheus should not look back at her till they had both reached the upper world. He grew impatient, looked back to see if she were indeed following, and she at once vanished from his sight. According to the Japanese myth, however, Izanagi grew tired of waiting outside, made a light and entered, and was shocked to behold maggots swarming over her body, and eight thunder-deities dwelling in her rotting form where they had been born. He turned and fled back, but she pursued him with the forces

of the underworld. He succeeded in driving them all back, and with a mighty rock blocked up the pass of Hades. Then he went to purify himself by bathing in a stream, and from his staff, and girdle, and bracelet, and various garments, and from the filth which he contracted in the underworld were born a multitude of deities, bearing composite names of strange significance. There was also born, as he washed his left eye, a deity who was called "the Heaven-Shining-Great-August One;" and from his right eye was born the "Moon-Night-Possessor," and as he washed his nose there was born *Susa-no-Wo,* "Impetuous-Male-Deity."

But we need not pursue further this seemingly "endless genealogy" of the deities. We are told in section XXX that in a divine assembly of eight hundred myriad deities it was decided to send one of their number to govern "the Central Land of Reed-Plains," and subdue the "savage Earthly Deities." Various deities were sent, and at length a grandchild of the Sun-Goddess[1] be-

[1]In the rituals he is often called "The Sovran Grandchild," though an adopted son of the Goddess; so "the sovran grandchild" is first applied to the founder on earth of the Mikado's dynasty, and afterward to each and all of his successors on the throne of Japan.

came the Ruler of the Empire, and bears the composite name of *Kamu-yamato-iharc-biko*, but is commonly called by his "canonical name," *Jimmu*, a title given him long after his decease. From such heavenly origin sprang all the Emperors of Japan, and the present Mikado, like all his predecessors, is thus conceived as an offspring of Heaven, a direct descendant of the ancient heavenly deities. The significance of this fact will appear conspicuously when we come to notice more particularly the essential elements in the Shinto cult.

On this remarkable cosmogony and mythology we do well at this point to offer the following observations:

(1) These accounts of the origin of the Japanese Archipelago and its rulers are regarded as *genuine traditions handed down from former ages.* One part of the tradition is that the Emperor, who took pains to have the old records carefully looked after, employed a person living in his household, who was gifted with marvelous memory; "he could repeat without mistake the contents of any document he had ever seen, and never forgot anything that he had heard;" and from the lips of this man

of prodigious memory the scribe Yasumaro wrote down the contents of the *Ko-ji-ki*.[1]

(2) Notice, in the next place, that the island world of *Japan is all the world* which these records know anything about. The universe of this cosmogony consists of "the islands of the Central-Land of the Reed-Plains," with their inland and surrounding seas, and "the Plain of High Heaven," which, however, was not conceived as very far away above them.

(3) The entire description of the beginnings of heaven, and earth, and gods, and men accords with the idea of a continuous process of evolution. The first three heavenly deities "were born alone, and hid their persons," or disappeared. All the other deities are spoken of as begotten, or born, and the deities give birth to the different islands of the earth.[2]

[1]See Chamberlain's English translation of the *Ko-ji-ki*, p. iv. It is interesting to compare the story of Ezra dictating the lost sacred books of Israel, from a memory inspired supernaturally, while five rapid scribes wrote down what was told them. See 2 Esdras, chap. xiv.

[2]We may compare the fact that in our book of Genesis the formation of the earth and the heavens is called "the *generations* of the heavens and the earth" (Gen. ii, 4). In a paper of the "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan" (vol. xvi, part I), Dr. J. Edkins has an interesting compar-

(4) The world-idea of this old mythology is in notable keeping with the ancestor worship, and the Animism which enter so largely into the Shinto faith. In spite of all the wars and discords of the deities, there is a primordial monism, so to speak, at the basis of Japanese cosmogony, and of all its diverse generations of the heavens and the earth; and yet there is no one Supreme Ruler in all the Pantheon of eight hundred myriad gods. When a great council of the gods assembles in the bed of the Tranquil Heavenly River, no one deity is chief among them, and we are at a loss to imagine who has authority to call them together or to preside over the assembly. Izanagi seems for a while to be the chief creator and ruler, but after a time he disappears, and the Sun Goddess, his daughter Amaterasu, has her heavenly domain shaken and ravaged by her younger brother, but is avenged by the heavenly assembly of gods, who fine and punish the offender, "and expel him with a divine expulsion." So the Sun Goddess maintains

ison of "Persian elements in Japanese legends," in which he shows analogies between Mithra and Amaterasu, the seven Japanese deities of wood, water, fire, wind, earth, sea, and mountain with the Mazdean Amesha-spentas, and analogies of the underworld in several other mythic cults.

her dominion by the help of the eight hundred myriad gods, no one of whom is invested with supreme power. It appears from certain poems of the *Manyoshu* that the moon as well as the sun was extensively worshiped among the primitive Japanese.[1]

(5) It accords with all these ideas that the devotees of the "pure Shinto" faith trace all their history back to the age of the gods, and recognize some deity in, or back of, all phenomena. Japan is the country of the gods; every Japanese is a descendant or offspring of the gods, and the Mikado is the direct descendant of the imperial line which has continued in unbroken succession from the beginning of the world. Japan is, therefore, superior to all other countries, and the Japanese, being thus directly from the gods, are superior in every respect to other people. Sprung from the gods, they need no codes of moral law (like the Chinese), for they are naturally perfect, and do the right things spontaneously.

[1]See the valuable paper on "The Beginning of Japanese History, Civilization, and Art," by the Rev. I. Dooman, in Vol. XXV of "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan;" especially his chapter iv, on "The Fundamental Religious Ideas of the Early Japanese."

7. The Japanese a Self-centered People. The Japanese people, with such traditions and such a faith, would naturally be a self-centered people, and they conceived their island-empire as occupying the summit of the earth. The Mikado is the Son of Heaven, entitled and empowered to reign perpetually over the land and the sea. But as all the people are descendants of the gods, and the islands and all that is in them have also been begotten of the gods, it follows that the worship of ancestors is a worship of all the gods of whom they have knowledge, and all the lower animate and inanimate things in the world are also in some way instinct with the deities from whom they were born, and whose they are.

Accordingly, the honoring of the gods is a fundamental thing in the Shinto thought and in the Japanese civilization and government. Every loyal subject of the Mikado's Empire is expected to be true to the ancient faith. It is assumed that religion and worship and the proper administration of government are all essential to each other. The Japanese word (*Matsuri-goto*), which is used to denote the art of government, means, literally,

worshiping. And it is a common thought and saying: "Everything in the world depends on the spirit of the gods of heaven and earth, and therefore the worship of the gods is a matter of primary importance. The gods who do harm are to be appeased, so that they may not punish those who have offended them; and all the gods are to be worshiped, so that they may be induced to increase their favors."[1] One of the rules which all the ministers of the Mikado emphasized in the old times, before the introduction of Buddhism into Japan, was, "First serve the gods, and afterwards deliberate on matters of government."[2]

8. Essence of the Shinto Cult. From what we have now stated it is to be seen that reverence

[1]See Satow's "The Revival of Pure Shintau, in Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan," vol. iii, Appendix, p. 71.

[2]Lafcadio Hearn puts this whole matter very tersely, thus: "The ethics of Shinto were all comprised in the doctrine of unqualified obedience to customs originating, for the most part, in the family cult. Ethics were not different from religion; religion was not different from government, and the very word for government signified 'matters of religion.' All government ceremonies were preceded by prayer and sacrifice; and from the highest rank of society to the lowest every person was subject to the law of tradition. To obey was piety; to disobey was impious, and the rule of obedience was enforced upon each individual by the will of the community to which he belonged."—"Japan, an Interpretation," p. 175.

and worship of the ancestors of the Japanese, and the recognition of the Mikado's divinity as the incarnation and earthly representation of the celestial gods, constitute the essence of the Shinto cult. All the Japanese are offsprings of the gods, but the imperial "Sovran Grandchild" of *Amaterasu*, the Sun-Goddess,[1] is pre-eminently divine and worshipful. The first Mikado, however, was not the real son of *Amaterasu*, according to the mythic tradition of the prehistoric time, but her nephew, the son of *Oshi-ho-mi-mi*, whom she adopted as her son. But the title of "Sovran Grandchild," having been applied first to the founder of the Mikado's dynasty, came in time to be the common title of all the Mikado's successors. The imperial worship, accordingly, represents the most conspicuous national form of the Shinto cult.

9. The Great Sanctuaries. The Mikado's palace would, accordingly, be the most holy shrine of the national worship, the private and exclusive sanctuary of the imperial ancestors. But the most notable shrine of the Sun-Goddess

[1]This respect for the Sun-Goddess points to an aboriginal worship of the sun among the ancestors of the Japanese people.

is not now the residence of the Mikado. On account of some great calamity that occurred far back in prehistoric times, her worship was removed to a separate temple, and was finally established in the province of Isè, in which the temples, called the "Two great divine Palaces," are the resort of thousands of pilgrims every year, and, though not the most ancient, are regarded as first among all the Shinto temples in the land.[1] These two divine palaces, or temples, called *Geku* and *Naiku,* are about three miles apart, and stand in the midst of groves of aged cryptomeria trees.[2] They are approached through archways (called *torii,* or *toriwi*) of simple construction. The *Geku* temple is an irregular oblong structure, 247 feet wide at the front, but only 235 feet wide in the rear; while the side to the right of the entrance is 339 feet, and that on the left is 335. Within this large enclosure are others of similar structure, all made of the wood of cryptomeria trees, and left unpainted and without ornamentation. The va-

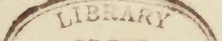
[1]Strictly speaking, the Shinto sanctuaries are shrines rather than temples, so that the Japanese would always speak of Shinto shrines as distinct from Buddhist temples.

[2]A kind of evergreen, like the pine, and peculiar to Japan.

rious buildings of the temples are thus fashioned after the manner of the simple huts, or dwellings of the earliest inhabitants of these islands. Some of the buildings are covered with thatched roofs and have their walls and doors made of rough matting. Mr. Satow, who has visited and described the temples of Isè, says that "All the buildings which form part of the two temples are constructed in a style that is disappointing in its simplicity and perishable nature. . . . None but those which are roofed with thatch are entitled to be considered as being in strict conformity with the principles of genuine Shinto temple architecture."[1] The perishable nature of these temples is such that it becomes necessary, and is, in fact, the standing rule, to rebuild them every twenty years. Two sites for each temple are used alternatively; they lie close to each other, so that the new building is constructed and ready for use before the old one is removed.

The temple which, though less venerated than those at Isè, is the shrine-center of the more ancient Shinto cult, is the one at Kitzuki, in the an-

[1] "The Shintau Temples of Isè." "The Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan." vol. ii, p. 108.



cient province of Idzumo. These famous shrines of Isè and Kitzuki represent the two supreme cults of Shinto; namely, that of the Sun-Goddess, *Amaterasu*, and that of *Oho-kuni-nushi*, offspring of the brother of the Sun-Goddess, who became the ruler of the unseen world of the spirits of the dead. But there are many other great temples maintained in whole or in part from the imperial revenues. Some are of greater sanctity and renown than others, but those of Isè and Kitzuki are the most celebrated, and every Shinto worshiper is expected, at least once in his lifetime, to make a pilgrimage himself, or send a deputy to one of these most famous shrines.

10. Five Noteworthy Objects Connected with the Worship. One noteworthy fact is the absence of images from the pure Shinto temples; that is, images exposed as objects of worship. But there is a number of objects connected with these sacred places which should receive brief notice:

(1) There is, first, the wooden archway (called *torii*, or *toriwi*) through which one passes in approaching the temples. It consists of two upright posts set in the ground on the tops of which is laid

a long straight beam, the two ends of which project a little beyond the uprights. Under this top beam is another horizontal beam connecting the two side posts after the manner of a girder. According to Satow, "The *toriwi* was originally a perch for the fowls offered up to the gods, not as food, but to give warning at daybreak. It was erected on any side of the temple indifferently. In later times, not improbably after the introduction of Buddhism, its original meaning was forgotten, and it was placed in front only and supposed to be a gateway."[1]

(2) Opposite the various entrances to the temples is placed a wooden screen, or fence, called *Banpei,* which serves as in other dwellings to guard and hide the privacy of the interior.

(3) Another object of special interest is the *Go-hei,* a slender wand, originally a branch of the sacred tree called *sakaki.* From the Go-hei hang two long slips of white paper notched on the opposite sides. These wands of unpainted wood are supposed to represent offerings of white cloth and

[1] "The Shintau Temples of Isè." "Transactions of Asiatic Society of Japan," vol. ii, p. 104.

to have the power of attracting the gods to the places where they are kept.

(4) The offerings presented consist of cups of water and small vessels filled with rice, vegetables, fruits, salt, fish, birds, and other simplest products of the land and of the sea. It is noteworthy that we find no bloody sacrificial rites in Shinto worship, in which one life, animal or human, was made a vicarious substitute for a guilty soul.

(5) The sacred *mirror,* which figures in the mythology of the Sun-Goddess, and is said to have been once used to entice her from a cave into which she had hid herself in a spell of anger, is carefully guarded in one of these temples, and also many copies of the mirror. "Each mirror is contained in a box which is furnished with eight handles, four on the box itself and four on the lid. The box rests on a low stand and is covered with a piece of cloth said to be white silk. The mirror itself is wrapped in a brocade bag, which is never opened or renewed, but when it begins to fall to pieces from age, another bag is put on, so that the actual covering consists of numerous layers. Over the whole is placed a sort of cage of unpainted wood with orna-

ments said to be of pure gold, and over this again is thrown a sort of curtain of coarse silk, descending to the floor on all sides."[1] One can not read this description of the sacred mirror thus secretly guarded in a costly box without being reminded of the sacred ark of the Levitical sanctuary, and its enclosed "tables of testimony."

11. The Ancestor Worship. We have already observed that ancestor worship is the basis of the Shinto cult. This kind of worship is also conspicuous among the Chinese, and is held by many writers to have been the original cult of all civilized races and peoples. It began, they tell us, with a belief in ghosts, and at the first there was no clear distinction between ghosts and gods. The departed spirit was thought of as abiding near the place where the dead body was deposited, and the earliest shrines would therefore be the graves or tombs of the dead. Later thought would beget the idea that the invisible spirits were present to witness the acts, and share the joys and sorrows of the living. And this fundamental idea would, of course, develop into many diverse conceptions and practices among the different tribes.

[1]Satow's "The Shintau Temples of Isè," pp. 119, 120.

Without here discussing this theory of aboriginal religious thought and practice, as applicable to all peoples, we may note that it accords with the facts of Japanese history and civilization so far as we can now trace them back into the mists of prehistoric time.[1] We have seen that Japanese history and mythology run together and blend in remarkable artlessness as they stand recorded in the oldest literature (*e. g.*, the *Ko-ji-ki* and the *Ni-hongi*). Unthinkable monstrosities of the origin of gods and lands and men are told with the same simplicity as the unquestionable facts of historic times. But taking the one leading thought which runs through all these records and appears to be fundamental in the Japanese civilization—namely, that all their islands and emperors and chiefs and people are offspring of the gods, the very first of whom were somehow self-evolved from the primordial elements of the universe—we look upon the Shinto worship as it exists in its purest form today, and note the most apparent facts.

[1]According to Aston, ancestor worship, in the sense of a deification and honoring of the departed spirits of one's own ancestors, was no part of the oldest Shinto cult, but rather a later importation from China. See his "Shinto, the Way of the Gods," pp. 44-47. London, 1905.

Mr. Lafcadio Hearn, in his "attempt at an interpretation" of Japan, has, more clearly than any other writer I have consulted, described the Shinto ancestor-worship under its three forms of *Domestic, Communal,* and *State* cults. In every case it is a worship of the dead, but the individual, whether he be the most obscure servant, the influential citizen, the commanding chieftain, or even the Mikado, is but a part and parcel of the body politic. There is a most remarkable unity of popular and national life. Government and religion are virtually identical, and there is no distinction between religion and morality. Obedience and conformity to the rules of family life, and to the customs of society and the requirements of the State—these are the simple sum-total of Shinto law and gospel. The individual must always stand ready to be sacrificed for the good of the community or of the State. Everything is to be regarded as public, and must serve the public weal. There is no such thing as privacy, and oddities have no respectable standing. Tradition and custom seem to constitute the essence of religion as well as of family, communal, and more public life.

There is no code of moral law; there is nothing in the worship that is fairly comparable to what we understand by dogma, creed, or Church. Strictly speaking, this system has no heaven or hell, no deep sense of sin, and no concept of mediatorial redemption from sin and evil. The dead—all the dead of all the ages—are conceived as somehow living in the unseen vacancy around, above, below; they are present at the worship; they haunt the tombs; they are interested in the life and works of their descendants; they visit their former homes and attend the family worship there; their happiness, in fact, depends upon the honor and worship which their living descendants pay them; and also the happiness and prosperity of the living is believed to depend upon their sense of filial duty and proper reverence toward the dead. Furthermore, all the dead are supposed to become gods and attain to supernatural power. But there is no one Supreme Deity; no central throne of God; no paradise of heavenly blessedness. So far as any ideas of this kind obtain among the people, they may be regarded as later conceptions introduced by missionaries or adherents of other religious sys-

tems. But the cult implies beyond question a belief in some kind of future life. The *Yomi,* or Hades, of Shinto mythology, into which Izanagi went to seek his lost sister, was conceived as "a hideous and polluted land," and even the realm of the unseen heavenly deities was never longed for by the devotees of Shinto. Dooman observes that "to the Japanese mind and imagination Japan, as a place of residence, was far superior to heaven, and its inhabitants a far more desirable society than those living in the transcendent regions. We see that every god who is sent from heaven to Japan on some important business by the divine assembly marries, and is utterly unwilling to go back once more to the place from which he descended."[1]

12. Elements of Animism. The ancestor-worship of Shinto can not be disassociated altogether from the elements of Animism which appear in the names and titles of certain deities, and also in the fact that there are "evil gods" and demons who are capable of working mischief and calamity in the family, the com-

[1] "Japanese History of Civilization and Arts." "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan," vol. xxv, p. 89.

munity, and the State. How these evil deities originated is matter of myth, legend, and speculation. Bad men would naturally be supposed to carry their evil character with them into the unseen world of the dead, and to have the same power to work harm among the living as the good spirits have to bestow benefits. But human spirits would hardly be supposed to become deities of the wind, and the thunder, and the waves, and the mountains; of the trees, and the fire, and the sun, and the moon, and the autumn, and the food of men. Here the old mythology of the *Ko-ji-ki* comes in to tell us of a prehistoric and cosmical origin of evils. When Izanagi went to find his sister Izanami in the hideous and polluted underworld, and found her body swarming with maggots and eight thunder deities dwelling in the different parts of her decaying form, he fled back in astonishment and awe, and she in a rage of shame pursued him with all the horrid forces of that nether sphere. He escaped, but not without contracting much pollution on his august person, and when he sought to wash and cleanse himself in the waters of a certain river, there were born from the filth

of his person two deities, named "the wondrous deity of eighty evils," and "the wondrous deity of great evils." These evil gods afterwards multiplied, and may be supposed to be the authors of all the demons, goblins, and mischievous spirits of evil that disturb the world and its inhabitants. But there are also good spirits innumerable that animate all moving things. The winds and the waters, the songs of birds and the hum of the bees, the growing plants and trees, are all instinct with a sort of conscious life, and the spirits that live and move in them are to be recognized and reverenced by prayers and offerings.

The spirits of dead ancestors and the powerful spirits of the winds and the storms and the growths of nature may or may not have been supposed to have concert of action understood between them. The Japanese mind seems never to have elaborated any formal philosophy of this life or any specific theories of the life to come.

13. The Domestic Cult. The simplest and most original form of the Shinto worship is that of the family. In the inner chamber of every home there is a high shelf against

the wall called the "Shelf of the August Spirits." Upon it is placed a miniature temple, in which are deposited little tablets of white wood bearing the names of the deceased members of the household. These are often spoken of as "spirit sticks" and "spirit substitutes." Before these household shrines simple offerings are offered daily and a few words of prayer are spoken. The ceremony is a very short one, but as regular as the coming of the day. It is usually performed by the head of the family, but it frequently devolves upon the woman, the mother or the grandmother, rather than the father. "No religion," says Hearn, "is more sincere, no faith more touching than this domestic worship, which regards the dead as continuing to form a part of the household life and needing still the affection and the respect of their children and kindred. Originating in those dim ages when fear was stronger than love, . . . the cult at last developed into a religion of affection; and this it yet remains. The belief that the dead need affection, that to neglect them is a cruelty, that their happiness depends upon duty, is a belief that has almost cast out the primitive

fear of their displeasure. They are not thought of as dead: they are believed to remain among those who loved them. Unseen, they guard the home and watch over the welfare of its inmates; they hover nightly in the glow of the shrine-lamp, and the stirring of its flame is the motion of them. . . . From their shrine they observe and hear what happens in the house; they share the family joys and sorrows. They were the givers of life; they represent the past of the race, and all its sacrifices. . . . Yet, how little do they require in return! Scarcely more than to be thanked, as founders and guardians of the home, in simple words like these: 'For aid received, by day and by night, accept, august ones, our reverential gratitude.' "[1]

14. The Communal Cult. The next phase of the Shinto worship to be noticed is that which is represented in the temples scattered about everywhere in the land and which are said to number over 195,000 at the present time. In every community, village, and large city is found the parish-temple, and in the larger towns

[1] "Japan: an Interpretation," pp. 52, 53. New York, 1904.

each section or district has its public shrine, in which the whole community honor the deified ancestors of certain noble families of ancient time, or the spirit of the first great patriarch of the clan. The farmers, or those who till the fields, usually dwell in a village on the principal highway, and go out thence to work the rural districts round about. So the villages vary in size from fifty houses set on a single street half a mile long to a large town of many hundred houses. In Simmons and Wigmore's "Notes on Land Tenure and Local Institutions in Old Japan,"[1] we read that the Japanese rural population is, as a rule, "exceedingly stable. The villagers are for the most part engaged wholly or partially as cultivators of land, and in the vast majority of cases many generations of cultivators have been born and have died on the same spot. From the almost numberless replies to inquiries, the answer usually is, 'We do not know where our ancestors came from, or when they came to live on this spot. Our temple register may tell, but we have never thought about the matter.'"

[1] In vol. xix, pt. I, of the "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan," pp. 93, 94.

The deity honored at these village temples is called the *Ujigami*, and recognized as the patriarchal and tutelary god of the community. Just whether he were the clan-ancestor of the first settlers in that particular parish, or the spirit of some mighty ruler of that district at a former time, or the patron-god of some noble family once resident there, is as uncertain as the knowledge of the common villagers touching their earliest progenitors. But in every class these *Ujigami* were worshiped as the tutelar deity of the community in which the temple stood. Also, in the larger towns there are Shinto temples dedicated to certain patron-gods of other localities.

Each one of these parish temples naturally has a most intimate relation to the life of the community about it. Thither every child born in the parish is taken, when a month old, and formally named and placed under the protection of the ancestral deity. As it grows up it is regularly taken to observe all the festivals and the processions and ceremonies, and the temple groves and gardens become its common playground. There is nothing somber or solemn about this religious cult to scare

a child, but rather very much to attract and interest.[1] Every village temple has its appointed days of public worship, and neighboring districts vie with each other in making their great festival days occasions of popular delight. To these joyous festivals every family contributes according to ability, and the worship is accompanied by public amusements of various kinds, athletic sports, and the sale of toys for children. The temple worship consisted in the presentation of offerings of cloth, herbs, fruits, and other of the most common products of the country, and in a ritual prayer enumerating the various gifts and supplicating for prosperity and success in all communal affairs, for protection against sickness, plague, and famine, and for the triumph of their chieftains in time of war. In this way the *Ujigami* was recognized as the tutelar deity of the community and the

[1]This cheery and jubilant aspect of Shintau worship ought not to be deemed an objectional element of true religion. Rather the opposite idea, that religion is a matter of soul-peril and seriousness so grave as to produce fear or dread of the deity, is a perversion of the truth. True love of God (or of the gods) must needs have wholesome reverence for what is adorable, but also ought to inspire a warmth of affection and a confidence that drives out superstitious fear and begets exquisite delight in the heart and soul and mind of the true worshiper.

district, the abiding friend and helper of his offspring. The communal cult thus powerfully confirmed the family cult, and enforced the lesson that no man could live unto himself alone.

15. The National Cult. But it is in the State or National observances of the great temples that the Shinto worship is seen in its most elaborated form. The substance and manner of this worship may be learned from the ancient Japanese rituals, which make mention of the chief deities, enumerate the offerings that are presented at the sacred shrines, and furnish us the very language employed "in the presence of the sovran gods." How early these rituals of worship were committed to writing is an open question, but it is altogether probable that in substance they had been transmitted orally through many generations before they were put in written form. From these rituals, and the practices of the worship as they may be observed at the present time, we are able to learn the chief features of the service.[1]

[1]See "Ancient Japanese Rituals," translated and annotated by E. Satow, in "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan," vol. vii, part II, and part IV; vol. ix, part II. Also

In connection with this national worship we may here note (1) that the great festivals and occasions of worship were observed in all the principal temples at the same time; (2) the *Yengishiki* mentions 3,132 shrines distinguished as great and small; there were 492 great shrines, and 2,640 small ones. But besides these there were many thousands of smaller, undistinguished temples scattered all over the lands. (3) These various shrines were dedicated to a great number of deities, and there were many gods who received worship in a number of temples at one and the same time. (4) The offerings were made in the name of "the Sovran Grandchild" of the sun-goddess, the divine title of every Mikado, and Satow remarks that "it is difficult to resist the suggestion that the sun was the earliest among the powers of nature to be deified, and that the long series of gods who precede her in the cosmogony of the *Ko-ji-ki* and *Nihongi*, most of whom are shown by their names to have been mere abstractions, were in-

by Karl Florenz, in vol. xxvii, part I. In vol. vii, part II, pp. 106-108, Satow gives a list of the Norito rituals contained in the Yengishiki, to the number of twenty-seven. Of these he translates only nine.

vented to give her a genealogy, into which were inserted two or perhaps more of her own attributes, personified as separate deities."[1] (5) The priesthood seems to have been for the most part hereditary, and many priests claimed descent from the chief deity to whom the temple was dedicated. The reader of the ritual was a member of the priestly tribe which traced its origin to *Oho-nakato-mi,* chief of the whole Nakatomi family. Another priestly family is the Imbibi tribe.[2] (6) Virgin priestesses also figure in the celebration of the great ceremonies of State. Princesses of the Mikado's family have been consecrated to officiate in the temples of Isè and in other great temples also. While some of the priestesses are virgin princesses, some of them also are young, not yet having reached the nubile age, and when they reach that age they cease to be priestesses. With others the office is hereditary, as it is with men,

[1] "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan," vol. vii, part II, p. 127.

[2] "The priests who officiated at the chief festivals belonged exclusively to two families, the Nakatomi and the Imbibi, both of whom were descended from inferior deities, who accompanied the 'Sovran Grandchild' when he came down to earth." —Satow, in Westminster Review for July, 1878, p. 16.

and the women of this class retain and exercise their priestly office after marriage.

16. The Harvest Service. As an example of public worship of exceptional interest, we take the ritual ceremony for Harvest, which is celebrated once a year—the fourth day of the second month. The chief service is at the capital, but the festival is observed in all the provinces under the direction of the local rulers. Preparations go on for a fortnight beforehand, and the service begins twenty minutes before seven in the morning. At the capital, in the large court used for the worship of the Shinto gods, the ministers of State assemble, along with the priests and priestesses of many temples which are supported from the Mikado's treasury. When all things are in readiness, the ministers, priests, and priestesses enter in succession and occupy the places assigned them. The various offerings are duly presented and the ritual is read. At the conclusion of each section of the ritual as recited by the reader, all the priests respond, "O!" (Yes, or Amen.)

The following is a portion of the ritual used on

one of these occasions: "Hear, all of you, assembled priests of higher and lower order. I declare in the presence of the sovran gods[1] whose praises are fulfilled as heavenly temples and country temples.[2] I fulfill your praises by setting up the great offerings of the sovran grandchild's augustiness, made with intention of deigning to begin the harvest in the second month of this year, as the morning sun rises in glory. I declare in the presence of the sovran gods of the harvest: If the sovran gods will bestow in many-bundled ears and in luxuriant ears the late-ripening harvest which they will bestow, the late-ripening harvest which will be produced by the dripping of foam from the arms and by drawing the mud together between the opposite thighs, then I will fulfill their praises by setting up the first fruits in a thousand ears, and many hundred ears, raising high the beer-jars, filling them, and ranging them in rows." The ritual goes on to specify, among the offerings, sweet and bitter herbs, "things which dwell in the blue sea-plain;" clothes bright, and glittering, and soft, and coarse; a

[1]The reader of the ritual here personates the Mikado.
[2]Temples here used by metonymy for deities.

white horse, a white boar, and a white cock. The names also of many deities are declared: the "divine Producer," the "great Goddess of Food," "wonderful-rock-Gate," "the from-heaven-shining-great Deity who sits in Isè," "sovran gods who sit in the Farms," "sovran gods who sit in the mouths of the mountains," and those "who dwell in the partings of the waters."

As soon as the reader had finished the words of the ritual, he retired, and the priests distributed the various offerings and presented them to the gods for whom they were set apart.

17. The Great Purification. But the ritual of the Great or General Purification is said to be "one of the most important and most solemn ceremonies of the Shinto religion." Professor Karl Florenz, who has given us a translation of this ritual,[1] informs us that it is by means of this ceremony that "the population of the whole country, from the princes and ministers

[1]In vol. xxvii, part I, of "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan." From this our extracts are taken. Florenz gives in great detail the various practices, and the ancient and modern forms of the ritual, and the customs at different shrines. He also discusses the question of the origin and age of the ceremony.

down to the common people, is purified and freed from sins, pollutions, and calamities." It is celebrated twice a year, on the thirtieth day of the sixth and twelfth months. "The chief ceremony was performed in the capital, near the south gate of the imperial palace, and might be styled the purification of the court, because it was to purify all the higher and lower officials of the imperial court. In a similar way the ceremony was celebrated also at all the more important public shrines of the whole country." Besides the regular semi-annual celebration of the "Great Purification" (called *Oho-harahe*), it is also performed on such special occasions as at the accession of a new emperor to the throne, or when an imperial princess was chosen as a virgin priestess and sent to the temple of Isè.

Without detailing the movements, positions, and practices of the assembled priests, officials, and common people at the service of the General Purification, we simply cite a few extracts from the ritual which may serve to show us the underlying concept of purification. While the ritual is only a part of the entire ceremony of the occa-

sion, we are told that it is not infrequently recited without performing the ceremony. Moreover, while in ancient times the reader was always a member of the priestly Nakatomi tribe, at the present time the ritual is read by the officiating priest of each particular temple. The following excerpts are made from Florenz's translation:

"Hear, all of you, assembled princes of the blood, princes, high dignitaries, and men of the hundred offices. Hear, all of you, that in the Great Purification of the present last day of the sixth month of the current year, [the Sovran] deigns to purify, and deigns to cleanse the various offenses which may have been committed either inadvertently, or deliberately, especially by the persons serving in the imperial court: (viz.) the scarf-wearing attendants, the sash-wearing attendants (of the kitchen), the attendants who carry quivers on the back, the attendants who gird on swords, the eighty attendants of the attendants, and, moreover, by the people serving in all offices."

The ritual goes on to declare how the Sovran's dear progenitors, in a divine assembly, ordained that the "Sovran Grandchild's Augustiness should

tranquilly rule the luxuriant reed-plain region of fresh young spikes as a peaceful country;" how they expelled with a divine expulsion the savage deities, and "silenced the rocks and trunks of trees;" how they let him go down from his heavenly place, "and dividing a road through the eightfold heavenly clouds," they sent him down and gave the land into his peaceful keeping. The ritual also makes mention of various kinds of offenses which need to be cleansed and purged away, and distinguishes them as "heavenly offenses" and "earthly offenses." Among the former are "breaking down the divisions of the rice fields, filling up the irrigating channels, and opening the floodgate of sluices," and the evacuation of one's bowels in improper places. Among "earthly offenses" are the cutting the skin of the living or the dead body so as to become defiled by blood, being affected with corns, bunions, boils, or proud-flesh; sins of adultery, the offense of using incantations, and various kinds of personal calamity.

"It is expected," the ritual adds, "that the heavenly gods will be favorably disposed by reason of these offerings, ceremonies, and ritual of the

Great Purification, and will deign to purify and cleanse, and make all the specified offenses disappear, even as the clouds of heaven and the dense morning and evening mists disappear before the blowing winds." It is expected that "the goddess who resides in the current of the rapid stream that comes boiling down the ravines, from the tops of the mountains," and the goddess who resides in the currents of the briny ocean will carry them away, and "swallow them down with gurgling sound," and they shall be utterly "blown away, banished, and got rid of," so that "from this day onwards there will be no offense in the four quarters of the region under heaven, especially with regard to all people of all offices who respectfully serve in the court of the Sovran." The offenses were thought of as somehow swept away by the winds and the waves, and then swallowed into the depths of the sea, and so cast down into the underworld, the realm of death and pollution, whence all defilements were supposed to have originated. So they were cast down into the depths whence they came forth.

The concluding words of this ritual are a com-

mand for the "diviners of the four countries to leave and go away to the great river-way, and carry away the offenses by purification." Thus divination was honored, as moving in the will and way of the gods; but incantation is mentioned among the "earthly offenses." Probably these evil incantations refer to evil-minded witchcraft and invoking calamity on others.

This great ritual ceremony of purification, being one of the most solemn formal expressions of the Shinto cult, calls for the following remarks:

(1) The central idea is purification from certain forms of evil, or certain kinds of offenses.

(2) The offenses are conceived as either willfully committed, or committed inadvertently.

(3) They are also spoken of as heavenly and earthly. This distinction seems to us quite arbitrary and unnatural, but it probably had a mythical origin and the offenses called heavenly are mainly such as involve distress for an agricultural community. They are sins against the *land* of the gods, while the earthly offenses are mainly matters of personal defilement. In all cases it is conspicuous that the Shinto concept of offenses which need

purging away is that of outward physical pollution and damage. They are all offenses committed against the interests of the community and likely to bring some kind of calamity upon the people.

(4) We should also remark that while, according to the ritual of the Great Purification, it is expected that from that day forwards "no offense which is called offense" will occur again in the four quarters of the whole region under heaven, the same ceremony of purification is repeated every six months—year in and year out.

(5) These facts serve to show a moral and religious basis for the Japanese love of cleanliness and the scrupulous care with which these people of "the luxuriant central land of the ears of fresh rice" study to keep their bodies, their houses, their temples, and their whole domain free from all manner of physical impurity.

18. Other Ritual Services. Other rituals for other occasions and purposes furnish nothing of a different character or of exceptional importance that we need here give further attention to their various contents and suggestions. There are, in the voluminous *Yen-*

gishiki, rituals for the service of the gods of Kasuga, for the service of the goddess of food, and of the gods of the wind, and for the service of particular temples. Some of these services are occasions of grand ceremonial display. The place, the day, the hour, and all the details of the service are arranged beforehand. The procession of those who take part is ordered with extreme precision and made in every way magnificent. Various orders of officials move along in separate ranks. The priestess, accompanied by many mantled attendants, is drawn in a car, and on either side four men in scarlet coats carry a silk umbrella and a huge, long-handled fan. The female attendants and servants of the priestess, each a lady of rank, follow in seven carriages. Chests filled with sacrificial utensils and food offerings, the messenger of the Mikado and his attendants of rank, have their assigned places in the procession. Upon arriving at the temple enclosure, the priestess alights from her car or palanquin, passes into the courtyard behind curtains so held by her attendants as to hide her from the gaze of the crowd, enters her private room and changes her traveling dress for the sac-

rificial robes. Meantime the Mikado's presents and all the other offerings are duly placed on the tables and in the various chapels prepared for them and the high officers of State take their seats within the temple enclosure. All the prescribed forms are observed with scrupulous care, and the ritual is read. In many services harpists, flute-players, singers, and dancers perform their several tasks. At the conclusion of the services the company clap their hands and then separate. The priestess changes her robes again for her traveling dress, and returns to her lodging in like stately procession as she came to the shrine.

The mirror, sword, bow, and spear, which are mentioned in the rituals as presents offered to the gods at the great festivals, doubtless have their symbolical significance, and like the three divine insignia of sword, precious stone, and mirror—the regalia or symbols of Japanese power and glory—have doubtless their mythic connection with prehistoric traditions; but these belong to the study of Japanese antiquities rather than to the religious elements of Shinto.[1]

[1]See the interesting article by Thomas R. H. McClatchie on "The Sword of Japan," in "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan," vol. ii, pp. 50-56.

19. Influence of China on Japanese Thought. So far we have spoken only of what may be called the original or pure Shinto cult as the religion of the ancient Japanese. But it is important to observe that the moral and religious ideas of other peoples and other systems have for some two thousand years past been affecting the life and thought of the Japanese people. One noteworthy foreign influence came in from China, and as early as the first century of the Christian era—perhaps somewhat earlier—Chinese scholars made their way into Japan. This was very natural, for the proximity of China favored intercourse between the two nations, and Confucianism was at the beginning of our era five hundred years old. Ancestor-worship was common to the people of both lands, and the arts and industries of the two countries might have found affiliation in many ways we can not now determine. That such a leavening Chinese influence was early introduced into Japan is simply matter of fact. The Preface of Yasumaro, the compiler of the most ancient records of the *Ko-ji-ki,* shows the effect of Chinese philosophy in its incidental mention of

"the Passive and Active Essences" which co-operated at the beginning of the creation; and Chamberlain, in his Introduction to his English translation of the *Ko-ji-ki,* observes that "at the very earliest period to which the twilight of legend stretches back, Chinese influence had already begun to make itself felt in these islands, communicating to the inhabitants both implements and ideas." Then it is to be further remarked that the *Nihongi,* completed in 720 A. D., although essentially a parallel chronicle of Japanese traditions, is in thought and style conspicuously Chinese. It is made in every aspect and element of its composition to resemble as far as possible a Chinese history.

20. Influence of Buddhism. But a deeper and more widespread influence than that of anything of Chinese origin was the introduction into Japan of Buddhism, which was first brought in about A. D. 552, but did not succeed in leavening the whole country until the middle of the ninth century. It was quietly propagated by leaders of various Buddhist sects which differ in minor practices, and slowly it gained as-

cendency, but its first more notable triumph followed the teaching of Kukai, founder of the Shingon sect, who so adapted Buddhist doctrines to the traditional ideas of ancestor worship as to maintain that all the Shinto deities were *avatars* or incarnations of Buddha. With great ingenuity and cunning, a new interpretation was given to ancient myths, and new constructions were put upon old beliefs. The Shinto gods, rites, customs, and traditions took on a Buddhist significance, and many of the mysteries of birth and of death were explained in a manner so simple and popular as to commend them to all who listened to the new teaching. For Buddhism had already learned in India and in China the clever art of appropriating old beliefs and customs and of clothing them with a new and higher meaning. Confucianism itself had already in part prepared the way for Buddhism in Japan, and the successful Buddhist propagandists were wise enough to suppress or keep out of sight all that might be offensive in their system, and to teach only such forms of doctrine as could be made attractive to the masses of the people. Kukai thus suc-

ceeded in converting the Mikado to his new interpretations of the Shinto beliefs, and the new system thus put forward received the name "Riyobu Shinto," which means "two parts," or the "double way of the gods," or the twofold divine teaching. So complete and general did this Riyobu Shinto become in its spread throughout Japan that for a thousand years it dominated the civilization of the Empire. It had its priests, its gorgeous temples and ritual services, its philosophy, and its divers sects, and it is said that there are at least twelve distinct Buddhist sects in Japan to-day. According to Lafcadio Hearn, "the religion of the Buddha brought to Japan another and a wider humanizing influence—a new gospel of tenderness —together with a multitude of new beliefs that were able to accommodate themselves to the old, in spite of fundamental dissimilarity. In the highest meaning of the term, it was a civilizing power. Besides teaching new respect for life, the duty of kindness to animals as well as to all human beings, the consequences of all present acts upon the conditions of a future existence, the duty of resignation to pain as the inevitable result of for-

gotten error, it actually gave to Japan the arts and the industries of China. Architecture, painting, sculpture, engraving, printing, gardening—in short, every art and industry that helped to make life beautiful—developed first in Japan under Buddhist teaching."[1] To which may well be added the following statement of Aston: "There was nothing in Shinto which could rival in attraction the sculpture, architecture, painting, costumes, and ritual of the foreign faith. Its organization was more complete and effective. It presented ideals of humanity, charity, self-abnegation, and purity far higher than any previously known to the Japanese nation."[2]

But after a thousand years of mixture, who can now tell for certain just what is original Shinto and what is the Buddhist supplement or modification? The Buddhism of Japan is as far from the original teachings of Gautama as the Roman Catholic religion of Spain is from the simple precepts and practices of Christ and His first apostles. The same is true of the Buddhism of China and Thibet.

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[1] "Japan: an Interpretation," p. 208.
[2] "Shinto, the Way of the Gods," p. 360.

The Shingon sect of Buddhists in Japan, of which Kukai was the founder, has taken up into itself many ideas which are neither purely Buddhist nor purely Shintoist. Superstitions alien to both cults are likely to have found their way among the people and to have exerted influences on the popular cult, and no man is now able to point out their origin or their history.[1]

21. Revival of Pure Shinto. We are not here concerned, however, with Japanese Buddhism. Our inquiry is after the facts and the significance of the essential Shinto cult. A great and remarkable revival of the older Shinto began near the beginning of the eighteenth century and persisted with great success for more than one hundred years. The most distinguished scholars of Japan were the chief leaders in this reform. We have already had occasion to mention the names of the three most famous men among them—Mabuchi, Motowori, and Hirata. These by their expositions of the

[1]It is admitted by all writers on Japan that the practical ethics of Confucianism has from the first largely nullified the more subtle and dreamy elements of Buddhism. The common sense of the Japanese people, in spite of all peculiarities, has made it necessary for Buddhism to adjust itself to the popular mind.

ancient scriptures and traditions turned the tide of popular thought against Buddhism and Chinese philosophy. It is quite interesting to note in some of their writings the antipathy and hostility to Chinese teachings. Motowori had a remarkable answer to those critics who say that Shintoism knows no moral code. He declared that all a loyal Japanese subject was concerned to do was simply to obey the Mikado, whether his commands were right or wrong. He maintained that "morals were invented by the Chinese because they were an immoral people; but in Japan there was no necessity for any system of morals, as every Japanese acted aright if he only consulted his own heart.[1] Whatever we may think or say of such self-complacency, it accords well with Japanese religion, mythology, and history, and it is a simple fact to be noted that in 1871 Buddhism in Japan was disestablished and disendowed, and the old Shinto was declared to be the national religion. Percival Lowell observes that this reinstatement

[1]Satow, in "Transactions of Asiatic Society of Japan," vol. ii, p. 121. Compare the statement of Mabuchi as given in Satow's paper on "The Revival of Pure Shin-tau," in Appendix to vol. iii of "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan," p. 14.

of the Mikado and the old national faith is "a curious instance of a religious revival due to archæological, not to religious zeal.[1] But while the old Shinto is at present the official cult of Japan, it appears to have little life or force. Japanese Buddhism is said to be showing signs of renewed activity, and is likely to prove a powerful antagonist of Christianity. It is certainly a question of vital importance to the future civilization of Japan which of these mighty rivals shall gain ascendency over the popular mind.

22. Esoteric Shinto. Shinto did not continue very long to hold its newly proclaimed status as the State religion. Its own most devoted adherents and leaders felt that its highest interests would be best served without official and governmental prestige. A wise and prudent State policy determined that its permanence and success should be left to care for themselves and to depend upon the merits of its teachings and its historic and popular hold upon the national, the communal, and the family life. As a cult it is deeply rooted in the civilization of the empire, and its pilgrims swarm along the highways

[1] "The Soul of the Far East," p. 166.

of travel and at the historic shrines. They are found journeying to the summits of sacred mountains, and there performing esoteric rites which induce mystic divine possession. The performance of such mystic rites and incantations seems to be no modern innovation. It may have its connections with Buddhist counting of rosaries, and possibly other foreign influences have helped to cultivate its somewhat mantic forms, but its origin is from a remote antiquity. This "esoteric Shinto" is essentially akin to that self-induced religious fervor which exhibits itself in many lands and in connection with various cults, and is often seen among the Mohammedan dancing and howling dervishes. Its existence and its practices in Japan refute the notion of those who would deny to Shinto the character of a real religion.[1] The excrescences and extravagancies of religious fervor must have some sort of a religion to inspire them.

23. Mingling of Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism. The noteworthy fact that Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism have for more than a

[1]For interesting information on this mystic phase of Shinto see the articles of Percival Lowell on "Esoteric Shinto," in "Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan," vols. xxi and xxii.

thousand years mixed with each other in Japan demonstrates the susceptibility of the Japanese people to foreign influence and teaching, and their natural hospitality toward the various religious cults. The ethical teachings of Confucius prepared the way for Buddhism, and, in spite of antipathy and wars between the nations, maintain a powerful hold upon the thoughtful Japanese to-day. Still more remarkable is it that millions of the Japanese appear to accept both Shintoism and Buddhism, and good Shintoists and good Buddhists may be found worshiping in some temples at one and the same time.[1] A Japanese scholar, speaking at the Chicago "Parliament of Religions" on the "Future of Religion in Japan," declared that the three systems named "are not only living together

[1] "The gods of Japan," writes Gulick, "are innumerable in theory and multitudinous in practice. Not only are there gods of goodness, but also gods of lust and of evil, to whom robbers and harlots may pray for success and blessing." But in all this multitudinous pantheon there is no one Supreme Deity. "There is no word in the Japanese language corresponding to the English term God. The nearest approach to it are the Confucian terms Jo-tei, 'Supreme Emperor;' Ten, 'Heaven,' and Ten-tei, 'Heavenly Emperor;' but all of these terms are Chinese; they are therefore of late appearance in Japan, and represent rather conceptions of educated and Confucian classes than the ideas of the masses."—"Evolution of the Japanese," p. 311.

on friendly terms with one another, but, in fact, they are blended together in the minds of the people. One and the same Japanese is at once a Shintoist, a Confucianist, and a Buddhist. Our religion may be likened to a triangle. One angle is Shintoism, another is Confucianism, and a third is Buddhism, all of which make up the religion of the ordinary Japanese. Shintoism furnishes the objects, Confucianism offers the rules of life, while Buddhism supplies the way of salvation."[1]

24. Roman Catholicism in Japan. We must not omit altogether a notice of the introduction of Roman Catholic Christianity into Japan about the middle of the sixteenth century. It was in 1549 that the famous Jesuit, Francis Xavier, landed at Kagoshima, and began his marvelous missionary work through Japanese interpreters, and in two years of strenuous toil he succeeded in winning many converts from all classes of the people. Fifty years thereafter the Christian converts throughout the country are said to have numbered nearly a

[1] "The World's Parliament of Religions," vol. ii, p. 1282. We must not overlook the fact that the modern Shintoism has its sects, as well as Buddhism. There is the sect called "Ten-Ri-Kyo" ("Heaven-Reason-Teaching"). Also the Kurozumi sect, putting noteworthy emphasis on morality.

million. But the Jesuit habit and policy of meddling with affairs of State, their intolerance of other cults, and at length their crusade against the ancient national faith and their burning of Buddhist temples and slaughter of Buddhist priests, aroused the bitter reaction and bloody persecutions, which, after some forty years of struggle, succeeded in obliterating every public sign of Christianity from every province of the empire. And for over two hundred years Japan closed her doors to all foreign influences and appeals. It was not until 1873 that the edicts against Christianity were withdrawn. Of the Protestant missionary movements in the island empire since that date, it is not the purpose of this essay to speak.

25. Present Religious Indifference. Much is said nowadays about the apparent religious indifference of the Japanese. Some writers seem to think that the Japanese and the Chinese people are alike inferior and defective in religious nature. Mr. Gulick, in his "Evolution of the Japanese," reports Marquis Ito, Japan's most illustrious statesman, as having said: "I regard religion itself as quite unnecessary for a nation's life; science

is far above superstition, and what is religion—Buddhism or Christianity—but superstition, and therefore a possible source of weakness to a nation? I do not regret the tendency to free thought and atheism, which is almost universal in Japan, because I do not regard it as a source of danger to the community." And yet this same distinguished statesman is reported on the same page (288) to have given utterance to the following much more recent statement: "The only true civilization is that which rests on Christian principles, and consequently, as Japan must attain her civilization on these principles, those young men who receive Christian education will be the main factors in the development of future Japan." Possibly these two discrepant statements may be reconciled by supposing that, in the first case, Ito's thought was turned especially to the superstitions and temporary phases incident to all religious cults, and in his later remark he spoke of Christianity as somehow synonymous with Western civilization. But in any case it would seem that one who deems the Japanese either irreligious, or non-religious, or deficient in religious sense, ought to explain the mani-

fold facts of the Shinto cult, such as the "god shelf," the ancestral tablets, the daily offerings, and the family worship in almost every household of that Eastern island-empire. What mean the hundreds of thousands of white-robed pilgrims who annually visit the numerous sacred shrines? And is there no element of religion in the devout patriotism that is ever ready to sacrifice life and all that men hold dear for the faith and inheritance of their beloved "central land of Reed-Plains" given long ago to the care of the "Sovran Grandchild" by the celestial deities?

It is only a one-sided concept of religion, and a too prevalent failure to distinguish between its local temporary phases and its deeper essentials as grounded in the spiritual nature of man, that have led superficial observers to deny the profound religious element in the Shinto and Buddhist worship of Japan. If Paul, waiting at Athens, and beholding the city full of idols, could truly say, "I perceive, O Athenians, that in all things ye are very religious," just as truly may we say, in view of the 195,000 temples and the innumerable deities of the Shinto cult, that the Japanese are exceedingly religious.

Let me add the testimony of Mr. Gulick himself, who spent years in the country: "The universality of the tokens of family religion, and the constant and loving care bestowed upon them, are striking testimony to the universality of religion in Japan. The pathos of life is often revealed by the family devotion of the mother to these silent representatives of divine beings, and departed ancestors or children. I have no hesitation in saying that, so far as external appearances go, the average home in Japan is far more religious than the average home in enlightened England or America, especially when compared with such as have no family worship. There may be a genuine religious life in these Western homes, but it does not appear to the casual visitor. Yet no casual visitor can enter a Japanese home, without seeing at once the evidences of some sort of religious life." [1]

It is to be remarked that in the history and

[1]Gulick's "Evolution of the Japanese," p. 294. Whatever may be the defects of Japanese character in general, it is common for nearly all travelers who have visited the country and studied the habits of the people at their homes, to speak of them as mild, courteous, cleanly, frugal, intelligent, quick to learn, and gifted with a genius for imitation. Their soldiers have proved themselves a match for the most renowned warriors, and are marvelously apt to make the most of opportunities.

evolution of religion, where there has been obvious evolution, periods of long peace and repose, marked by formalism, skepticism, and indifference to religious obligation, are generally followed by great revivals and reforms. Some new light breaks in; some great prophet appears; new ideas and hopes take hold on the popular mind, and thereupon a new era opens in civilization. The renaissance in Japan of the last fifty years may be the prelude to an epoch-making revival of the Orient

26. Concluding Observations and Suggestions. Our study of Shinto has led us over a somewhat unfamiliar field of thought. The mythology and the records of the *Ko-ji-ki* and the *Nihongi* are far apart from all our Western legends and ideals of the early world, and in great part seem like monstrosities of fantastic speculation. It is affirmed by some that the Japanese people have been halting for two millenniums in a state of childhood, receiving nothing from Confucianism or from Buddhism to quicken or change the national life; but with the introduction of Western thought and enterprise they have suddenly leaped into comparative maturity, and their new departure from a dreamy past

is likely to astonish the whole world. It is very obvious that the introduction of modern science into her thousands of elementary schools must sooner or later undermine all faith in the traditional cosmogony, and, along with that, a whole world of notions bound up with the Shinto cult must needs be overthrown. Eminent Japanese scholars say that Western learning has sounded the knell and signed the death warrant of the ancient religion of their island-world.

It is for us very easy, in the light of our New Testament revelation, to point out defects in the Shinto system. Some four or five of these we may briefly mention as matters which a Christian missionary should keep in view as evincing the need of preaching among these people the deeper demands of the religion of Jesus Christ. (1) The first and fundamental defect in Shinto as a religious system is its lack of any clear or helpful concept of one God and Father of all. The doctrine of God is fundamental in any cult, and where the idea is vague and imperfect the entire system of doctrine and practice must needs possess an element of uncertainty

and weakness. (2) Another defect is its want of a clear concept of sin as a moral disease of the heart. The Japanese mind needs to be turned inward to a deeper sense of the real sinfulness of sin. (3) Another serious fault in the Japanese civilization is its low estimate of womanhood. Here as in China woman has not attained her proper sphere. She is subjected to three forms of obedience, which in actual life are too abject for her higher development—she must bow to her parents, to her husband, and to her son in a manner that involves what we should call a humiliating form of domestic slavery. Japan needs the practice of a monogamy of the highest Christian type in order to rectify this inferior and one-sided view of the male and female constitution of humanity. (4) There is also in Japan an apparently low estimate of human life. It is probably due largely to the communal and feudal system which has for a long time ruled the people. The individual is nothing; the community is everything. These and other defects show our grounds for believing that the old order and system must sometime change. But it is no strange or unheard of thing in our

world for an old order to change and give place to something new and higher. Western civilization has seen not a few examples of such changes; but, as touching religious evolution, what a monumental example we have in the transition from the Old Testament Judaism to the New Testament kingdom of heaven! The main contents and scope of the Epistle to the Hebrews point out the fact that the old covenant, with its sanctuary and altars and tables and sacrifices and priests, could not make their worshipers perfect. Notwithstanding its long and glorious history, it waxed old, and when the Epistle was written it was nigh unto vanishing away (Heb. viii, 13). It did pass away and give place to a more spiritual cult, the gospel of peace on earth and universal love. May not the national cult of Japan—with its faith in the unseen, its rituals of purification, its concepts of a heavenly ancestry, and its intimations of deification after death—be made to give way before a superior cult that may have the wisdom to offer a higher and more rational presentation of the essential truths embodied in the Shinto worship? Whatever men may think or say about the mystical and

legendary elements in the Hebrew Scriptures, no one familiar with the literatures of the nations can hesitate for a moment to acknowledge the immense superiority of the Old Testament law and prophets and psalms over the contents of the *Ko-ji-ki* and the *Nihongi*. If, then, the covenants and the rituals of Judaism waxed old and vanished away before the clearer light and truth of the teachings of Jesus Christ, much more should we expect that the same superior "Light of the world" must needs, sometime, supersede and supplant the rituals of the Shinto cult.

Accordingly, I shall venture to specify sundry elements of ancient Shinto, which, to use the language of Jesus, are not to be *destroyed,* but rather *fulfilled,* in the higher and more universal truths of the kingdom of Christ. *Fulfilled,* I say; for I look upon all the religious longings, and prayers, and penitential psalms of the nations, and their inquiries after the Unseen and Eternal, as so many foregleams of a coming Light, destined to enlighten every man that cometh into the world.

We have seen that one of the most conspicuous aspects of the Shinto cult is its ceremonial of the

Great Purification. Physical pollution of any kind is abhorrent to the Japanese. The touch of a dead body, contact with a foul disease, failure to wash and keep one's person clean, are regarded as of the nature of calamities. We know that there was much in the practices and traditions of the Jewish elders that closely resembled these Shinto ideas of pollution. The Pharisees and scribes found fault with Jesus because of His indifference to their "washings of cups, pots, and brazen vessels." But cleanliness, we all admit, is a near neighbor of godliness. St. Paul said, "Glorify God in your body;" for he maintained that "your body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit which is in you." Jesus found no fault with Jewish ablutions, and enjoined the highest personal purity. But He pointed out the deeper lesson that the more horrible defilement of man is a pollution of the heart. "For from within," He said, "out of the heart of man, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness:—all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man." This, then, is one fun-

damental truth which the Shinto worshiper should learn from the teachings of our Lord. The clean body and the pure white robes are eminently proper and beautiful in their way; but they should symbolize the consciousness of a pure heart, and a blameless life that keeps itself "unspotted from the world." Shinto purification needs the supplement of a deeper knowledge of spiritual defilement in order to a deeper knowledge of purity.

More exalted than any mere forms of purification, or rituals of worship, is that notion of a living Presence concealed in all phenomena. There has been and is to-day among all peoples a belief in many invisible spirits that have some sort of power over the clouds, the winds, the waters, the earth, and all its teeming growths. We call it Animism, Shamanism, and in a certain specific form, Fetishism. Belief in a countless multitude of spirits who can influence the elements about us for good or for evil, is firmly rooted in all the ancient peoples of Eastern Asia, from India to Japan. We have seen how deep a hold it had upon the earliest Shinto cult, and the later influences of Confucianism and Buddhism in Japan have tended rather

to strengthen than to suppress it in the popular mind.

These animistic conceptions have played a noteworthy part in connection with most, if not all, the religions of mankind. When combined with a groveling fear of the spirits, and with the practice of magic rites and incantations to propitiate them as so many evil demons, the belief has run into the lowest forms of superstition. But is there no element of truth in Animism? Why should we speak disparagingly of the old Japanese worshiper - hearing the voices of unseen spirits in the moaning winds, in the sounding waterfalls, in the rolling thunder? Why should he not adore the Sun as the heavenly Benefactor, and see in waving trees and blooming flowers and drifting clouds the presence and activity of beings, perhaps sometimes a Being Supernatural? One-sided, defective puerile notions controlled, no doubt, his thinking, but the one supreme and fundamental fact was that he felt himself in the presence of the Supernatural. And that primeval concept is the one most essential truth of all religion. We have only to divest it of sundry errant,

non-essential interpretations in order to come face to face with the grandest, noblest, and most affecting theism, and monotheism as well. For monotheism finds its most advanced exposition in the doctrine of the universal immanence of God,—one God, the Eternal Spirit, in all, through all, over all. How far from such a concept of universal Animism was the old Hebrew psalmist, who sang of Jehovah "laying the beams of His chambers in the waters, making the clouds His chariot, walking upon the wings of the wind, sending forth springs into the valleys, causing the grass to grow upon the mountains," and receiving tribute of praises from the "sea-monsters and all deeps; fire and hail, snow and vapor; stormy wind performing His word; mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying birds." To such a worshiper the world was all alive with God. And Jesus added an intensity and an affecting beauty to this whole concept of an immanent God when He said: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," and "not one sparrow falleth on the ground without your Father." I can conceive no Animism and no

Supernaturalism more minute or more adorable than the ever acting and ever continuous presence of an unseen but all observant "Father in the heavens." The heavens in which He dwells are above, below, within, and all around us.

And this is the higher Animism which ought to be welcomed by the Shinto pilgrims of Japan as the beautiful fulfilling of their ancient dreams. Not so many gods, not a multitude of unfriendly spirits that need propitiation by our gifts of food and clothing, but ONE Heavenly Father, immanent in every plant that grows and in every dewdrop on the flowers, forever working for our good, caring for every birdling, and numbering the very hairs of our head.

With such a monotheistic conception of the world all mythologic and polytheistic notions of deity and the rule of the spirits of the dead must sooner or later disappear. Japanese scholars of high rank are telling their people and others that the modern Western learning has already destroyed the cosmogony of the Shinto cult. What is now most needed is a class of teachers straightforward and broad enough to show these people a nobler

and truer concept of the world. The new conception need have no conflict with the belief that the spirits of the dead are all about us, and are deeply interested in us still. The family cult may adjust itself to the new and higher doctrines, and lose none of the beauty and tenderness and sanctity which old affection connects with the domestic tablets of the honored and beloved dead. Herein the new faith is to fulfill rather than destroy the ancient rites of love. Such a monotheistic cult will find no reason or occasion to commit the blunder of the Jesuit missionaries, and seek interference with the government of the land. The Mikado may still command the reverence and the love of the people and be rationally honored as a child of heaven. Loyal Christians do that under every form of government. "Fear God; honor the king; for there is no power but God, and the powers that be are ordained of God; for they are the ministers of God's service;"—these are the precepts of the earliest apostolic gospel, and the modern missionary of Christ is bound to observe and teach them. He should exhibit common sense and discretion in foreign politics, recognize and honor the

legitimate power, and like the Great Teacher, "render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

The Shinto cult is essentially a religion of race and national patriotism. It is the secret of Japanese heroism and sacrifice in the day of battle. He counts it sweet and glorious to die for his country. He is not his own; he belongs to the State. We are told that the three principal commandments of the public and official Shinto faith are these:

1. "Thou shalt honor the gods and love thy country.

2 "Thou shalt clearly understand the principles of Heaven, and the duty of man.

3. "Thou shalt revere the emperor as thy sovereign, and obey the will of his court."

Surely these principles and precepts are capable of easy adjustment to any form of national government, and the ethics of Christianity are in fundamental accord with their essential claims.

But how can the Christian religion, with its monotheistic worship, adjust itself without antagonism to the ancestor worship of Japan? Many

seem to think that in this particular there must needs be an irrepressible conflict, for the worship of ancestors is central and fundamental in the Shinto faith, and the most precious and hallowed bond that holds the family, the community, and the State together.

In this matter we do well to observe a number of relevant facts. Ancestor worship has existed in a variety of forms among many peoples. It has undergone various modifications in different countries, and it appears to have ceased among some peoples and given place to other ideas and forms of worship. The Japanese conception is that their Mikado and all his people are offspring of the gods, and each one, when he dies, becomes a deity, but does not cease to have interest in the relatives and companions of his earthly life. During the siege of Port Arthur, Togo sent the Mikado a message in which he expressed the thought that the patriotic *manes* of the fallen heroes might hover over the battlefield for a long time and give unseen protection to the Imperial forces. Such a faith and such inspiration from the dead are things which a proud nation does not easily let die.

But may we not approach the devotees of such a faith with the words of the old Hebrew prophet: "Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?" Ye think your honored ancestors still live, and love to think of you and aid you from their higher sphere; is it not also just as true of the ancestors and heroes of other lands and peoples? You have learned that your beautiful "land of the reed-plains and the fresh rice-ears" is only a very small portion of the world of men. Have these broader lands and more numerous peoples sprung from other and greater gods than yours? May it not rather be that, as there is only one sun to shine on all this habitable world, so there is one Heavenly Father of us all? Then we are all offspring of one Supreme God and we should all be brethren. Our ancestors and dear kindred who have passed out of our sight should lose no place in our affection by this larger thought.[1]

[1]In his "Evolution of the Japanese" (p. 75) Gulick quotes from the Japan Mail (of September 30, 1899) a number of special instructions to be given to the pupils in the Japanese schools touching their behavior toward foreigners. One of the orders reads thus: "Since all human beings are brothers and sisters, there is no reason for fearing foreigners. Treat them as equals and act uprightly in all your dealings with them." Such instruction should surely, in time, enlarge the world-conception of the Shintoist.

By some such suggestions, and by such friendly and persuasive appeal to larger truths, it would seem that a higher and purer faith may commend itself to the adherents of Shinto, without provoking their hostility, and without the compromise of any essential Christian truth. As surely as self-evidencing science wins her onward way among the nations, so surely will self-evidencing truths of religion win the hearts of men. We are familiar with the Christian congregations singing:

> "Faith of our fathers, holy faith!
> We will be true to thee till death."

But Christian and Shintoist should note the fact that the fathers and the sons are greater than the faith. As "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," so the faith, the forms of worship, the æsthetic arts, the culture, the learning, and all the ennobling elements of the highest civilization are made for man, not man for them. Being, therefore, not an end in themselves, but a means to the attainment of some higher boon, they must all be judged according to the broad and noble proverb: "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are

just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, take account of these things" (Phil. 4:8).

It may be that ancestral shrines will become more sacred and more heavenly when lighted with the glimmer of immortal hopes of blessed reunion in the unseen world, and our forms and manner of honoring father and mother and friends that pass out from our homes may be safely left to adjust themselves to an uplifting faith that lives in the heart and ever longs for all that is holiest and best.

The whole world looks with admiration upon that island-empire of the Orient that has shown within thirty years such marvelous capacities of adaptation and improvement. If she thus go on to "prove all things and hold fast to that which is good," who knows but her brilliant rising to great power and influence among the nations may mark the beginning of world-wide reforms? Her tremendous, bloody battles should say to all mankind: "Let us have no more of this. Let us establish great, trustworthy tribunals of arbitra-

tion, and settle our rights and differences there. Let us beat our swords into plowshares and our spears into pruning-hooks." Such triumphs of peace and righteousness might well bring to pass the old Shinto ideal of a code of morals so deeply written in the hearts of men and of rulers that they spontaneously do that which is obviously right. For is not this lofty ideal in accord with that of the Hebrew prophet who descried a coming golden age when "they should teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know the Lord, from the least of them unto the greatest" (Jer. 31: 34)?

On the assumption that the highest form of religion must needs respond to the highest moral test, the editor of *The Hibbert Journal*[1] propounds the following startling question, "How would the general status of Christianity be affected by the appearance in the world of a religion which should stand the test better than herself?" That is, a religion or people that should present an exhibition of moral excellence superior to that seen among the

[1]Vol. iv, 1906, pp. 19-41.

Christian nations. Our own belief is that such an exhibition of moral excellence in a non-Christian people would set the Christian searching his own standards of morality. It may be that Japan in her late exhibitions of ability in political diplomacy, and her sacrifice and waiving of certain rightful claims to indemnity, and the exalting of the right and the truth above narrow, selfish interests, has put to shame the "Christian Powers" of Europe, whose conspicuous qualities have been baneful statecraft, jealousy of rivals, and greed to enlarge their territory by crushing feebler States, and grinding down the masses of the people. Such an exhibit would not prove the inferiority of Christian ethics, but the failure of the so-called Christian Powers to honor and exemplify the ethics of our gospel. The plain fact in this matter is, as thoughtful men must everywhere acknowledge, that the aggressive "Christian Powers" have enlarged their empire at the expense of weaker States and, by taking advantage of their day of weakness and adversity, have by such ambitious procedures belied and violated the fundamental commandments of the religion which they profess.

We Americans have dreamed and sometimes boasted that our great Republic of freedom has proven a mighty evangel of human liberty and rights. It is a luminous star of the first magnitude, and it arose in the Western hemisphere. But this brilliant star of the West has cast its helpful beams across the Pacific Ocean upon the blooming rice-fields of Japan. It may be that those grandchildren of the sun-goddess may by their skill and prowess flash upon the world a light so strong as to eclipse to some extent our own, and be so self-evidently excellent that all mankind will bid it welcome. It may or may not be that all will acknowledge the radiant Evangel as "the root and the offspring of David." With the Japanese it may for long be insisted that this new Light is the root and offspring of the Mikado and the Goddess of the Dawn. But we can waive that point and all of us cry out, Let the true Light come. If it make for righteousness and love and the peace of the world, we shall hail its rising in the far East as the light of "the bright, the Morning Star;" for there is no other that can ultimately prove itself to be "the true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

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