

**In Dialogue With Shinto:
Challenges to Interreligious Communication.**

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Statement of Originality

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Introduction

[Shinto is] particularly difficult to explain, even for most Japanese. Because its basic values and patterns of behavior have filtered into Japanese culture as part of tradition, most Japanese seldom reflect on Shinto as a “religion” in which they consciously participate.¹

Kasulis’s description helps us to set the scene not only for the unique challenge of defining Shinto, but also for the more important question of how we might participate in dialogue with Shinto. Shinto has been seen as both a religion and a national tradition. I shall argue that Shinto represents a particularly difficult case for dialogue with Christianity because of the historical and theological relationship that has developed between both religions. In this work, I shall address a number of those problems, including:

- i. The historical nature of Shinto and its relationship with Christianity.
- ii. The main theological themes of Shinto.
- iii. Challenges in relation to concepts of God and *kami*.
- iv. Problems in the communication of ideas between Christianity and Shinto.
- v. Assumptions made by Christianity and the challenge of using the language of Christianity in addressing Shinto.

After discussing these problems, I shall offer an alternative framework for interaction, based on a model of communicative theme and symbol. This method can create a foundation from which we can begin a dialogue with Shinto with a greater degree of success because:

- i. It is a dialogue based around recognition of the common themes or symbols found in all religions
- ii. These themes or symbols can be used to create a common framework for dialogue

¹ Kasulis, Thomas P *Shinto: The Way Home* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2004), 1.

- iii. The focus of this dialogue is based on exploring common anthropological foci in religion and how the interpretation of these ideas are expressed through Shinto and Christianity
- iv. Using the anomaly of the *Kakure*², I aim to show how this common framework allows a successful integration of both Shinto and Christian belief systems, demonstrating that both can exist together harmoniously when their relationship to each other is based on a common thematic and symbolic foundation.

I have divided my work into four parts:

1. Part A: An examination of Shinto.
2. Part B: Historical background of Shinto.
3. Part C: Intercultural dialogue: an overview.
4. Part D: Challenges to dialogue with Shinto and an alternative dialogue model.

² The *Kakure* are a group of Christians that went into hiding after the 1639 edict against Christianity in Japan. They fused indigenous beliefs with Christianity to create a unique interpretation of their faith.

I. Part A: An Examination of Shinto

This chapter aims to bring to life the variety of theological themes that exist in Shinto, including how these elements are expressed in modern times. I also explore the origins of many of these traditions, looking at early folk traditions preserved by Shinto. I also explore the role of the Emperor, the key figurehead in Shinto and the impact the change in his status had. This chapter develops a deeper understanding of the main ideas of Shinto and assists in understanding the challenge it poses to more conventional forms of interreligious dialogue. The works of a number of authors form a primary focus in this section; these include Philippi (1930-1993), Aston (1841-1911), Hori (1910-1974),³ Holtom (1884-1962), Smith⁴ (1927-2016) and Sasaki⁵ (1930-present).

Hori's *Folk Religion: Continuity and Change*, is one of the few texts to examine the early Japanese faith communities from whose disparate folk traditions modern Shinto stemmed. His models for the *uji gami* and *hito gami* systems show from where the transactional nature of Japanese veneration stemmed and how it had a profound effect on Japanese religious thought throughout the development of Shinto. Befu⁶ (1930- Present) assists us in helping to give us a solid introduction to Japanese anthropology. Boret⁷, Yanagita⁸ (1875-1962) and Matsuma⁹ both offer insightful perspectives on Shinto that compliment the model Hori offers, expanding on Ancestor and *Kami* worship. Muraoka¹⁰ (1884-1946) assist us in

³ Hori Ichiro, *Folk Religion in Japan: Continuity and Change*, ed. Joseph M Miller Kitagawa (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968)."

⁴ Smith, Robert J. "Ancestor Worship in Contemporary Japan," *A Nanzan Colloquium* 7(1983).

⁵ Sasaki Kokan, "Priest, Shaman, King," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 17, no. 24 (1990).

⁶ Befu Harumi, *Japan: An Anthropological Introduction* (New York: Harpercollins College Division, 1971)

⁷ Boret, Sebastien "From Social to Ecological Immortality: Ancestor Worship, Ecological Cemeteries and Identity in Contemporary Japanese Society," *Japan Anthropology Workshop* 3(2010), 1.

⁸ Yanagita, Kunio. *About Our Ancestors*. Tokyo: Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, 1970.

⁹ Matsuma Takeshi, "Early Kami Worship," *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 1 (6 volumes; Vol. 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

¹⁰ Muraoka Tsunetsugu, *Studies in Shinto Thought* (Classics of Modern Japanese Thought and Culture, Documentary Reference Collections; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1964)

expanding our understanding of Shinto philosophy and we cannot discuss Shinto without referencing Motoori¹¹ (1730 -1801), who is one of the major Edo Period scholars on the subject. He was heavily influenced by the Kokugaku movement (National Literature) which emphasized the importance of Japanese literature. Motoori was instrumental in the modern Shinto revival movement and rejected Buddhist and confucianist influence on Shinto, instead tracing it back to ancient Japanese mythology.¹² Kato¹³ (1873-1965), Morioka¹⁴ (1923-Present), Tomoeda¹⁵ (1876-1957) and Yamamoto¹⁶ all provide excellent sources for Shinto along with Matsumura's¹⁷ (1883-1969) study of Medieval Japanese culture. Nishida¹⁸ (1941-Present) assists us greatly in his exploration of Shinto Shrines. This allows for us to appropriately explore how the perception of Shinto changed from early Edo to post World War II. Ashizu's¹⁹ work on the Shinto Directive gives us a clear understanding of how the post World War II constitution impacted Shinto and peoples perception of Shinto. Iglehart²⁰ (1882-1969) too gives us a better understanding of the modern trends in religion in Japan, which is useful to understand how the religious face of Japan has changed.

To gain greater insight into the concept of death in Shinto, the works of Doerner²¹, Kenney²² and Takamitsu²³ (1946 – Present) provide us with a solid overview of the concept of an afterlife and death rituals associated with Shinto.

¹¹ Motoori Norinaga, *Zenshu* (Yoshikawa Kobukan, 1926-28), VI

¹² Encyclopaedia Britannica. *Motoori Norinaga: Japanese Scholar*.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Motoori-Norinaga>. Accessed 17th November 2017

¹³ Kato, Genchi *A Study of Shinto: The Religion of the Japanese Nation* (2 volumes; Tokyo: Curzon Press, 1971)

¹⁴ Morioka Kiyomi, "The Appearance of 'Ancestor Religion' in Modern Japan: The Years of Transition from Meiji to Taisho Periods," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 4.2-3 (1977)

¹⁵ Tomoeda Takahiko, "The Essence of Shinto," *Pacific Affairs* 3.4 (1930),

¹⁶ Yamamoto, Yukitaka *Kami no Michi* (Tsubaki American Publications, 1987)

¹⁷ Matsumura Takeo, *Nihon Shinwa No Kenkyu* (Japan: Baifukan, 1968)

¹⁸ Nishida, Nagao. *Nihon Koten No Shiteki Kenkyū*. Tokyo, Risosha, 1956

¹⁹ Ashizu Yoshihiko, "The Shinto Directive and Constitution," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 1.2 (1960), 21

²⁰ Iglehart, Charles W. "Current Religious Trends in Japan," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 15, no. 2

²¹ Doerner, David L. "Comparative Analysis of Life and Death in Folk Shinto and Christianity," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 4,3 (1977).

²² Kenney, Elizabeth "Shinto mortuary rites in contemporary Japan," *Cahiers d'Extreme-Asie* 9(1996)

Smith's article, in particular, provides a greater understanding of ancestor worship in modern Japan. His work, however, is limited to modernity and does not really reflect on why ancestor worship is a particular way in modernity. Sasaki's work, whilst not exploring in detail how the Emperor is perceived in modern times, gives an excellent examination of the historical evolution of the Emperor figure and how his role changed. In contrast to this we get a deeper understanding of the role of the Emperor through the work of Kurihara²⁴ (1936-Present) .

II. Part B: Historical Background

This chapter will give a brief overview of Shinto through a number of different periods in Japanese history, finishing with modernity as represented by the Meiji period²⁵. I outline how Shinto developed and its relationship with other faiths to give a better understanding of Shinto's historical place in Japan, and to show why Shinto evolved the way it did. In order to provide a coherent overview of the historical context within which Shinto developed, and within which it encountered Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity, chapter one synthesizes the work of a number of historians. This inevitably results in my drawing with broad-brush strokes in order to provide a sense of the cultural and political world in which Shinto arose and became established. Though broad, the brush strokes are not uncritical, and the secondary literature has been chosen with as much care as possible. A number of key sources are used for this section on early Shinto: *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume I*,²⁶ *The Kojiki*²⁷ and the *Nihongi*.²⁸

²³ Takamitsu Konoshi., "The Land of Yomi: On the Mythical World of the Kojiki." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 11, no. 1 (1984)

²⁴ Kurihara Akira, "The Emperor System as Japanese National Religion: The Emperor System Module in Everyday Consciousness," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 17.2-3 (1990)

²⁵ See Appendix 3, below, for a complete outline of the different periods in Japanese history.

²⁶ Tsunoda Ryusaku, De Bary Wm. Theodore and Keene Donald, eds, *Sources of Japanese Tradition, Volume I* (Columbia University Press, 1964).

These sources are particularly helpful in understanding not only early Shinto but early Japan as well. *Sources of Japanese Tradition* provides documentation from the late Kofun period up to the Edo period. Whilst the editors and translators give an excellent commentary on each of the documents, the true value of this collection of texts lies in the translations themselves, which provide a great degree of insight into the earliest history of Japan, and offer an opportunity to trace the early development of Japan as an empire. Whilst there is important historical data in this volume, not all of it has a direct bearing on the development of Shinto; the most relevant materials relate to how Shinto may have been influenced by China. On the other hand, the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* both prove to be invaluable resources for understanding not only the early perception of Shinto, but also how it was used as a political tool for the benefit of the early Imperial house. The commentaries by Philippi and Aston provide important insights on the development of both texts. The slight inconsistencies between the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* can be important for understanding how Shinto evolved in the manner that it did, and of how the various folk traditions that would later form Shinto perceived the roles of the *Kami*. A further important source is the controversial exploration of the early Shinto texts by Kuroda Toshio (1926-1993), *Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion*,²⁹ although Kuroda can be very dogmatic in his approach, and he leaves many questions unanswered, including the evidence for many of the key characteristics of Shinto prior to the introduction of various other traditions into Japan.

The second section focuses on Azuchi Momoyama and Edo period Shinto, its relationship with Buddhism and the introduction of Christianity into Japan. This section examines two elements that assist in understanding how Shinto permeated Japanese society, precisely because Shinto was, at heart, an intrinsic

²⁷ Philippi, Donald L. ed. and trans., *Kojiki* (First edition; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969).

²⁸ Aston, W. G. *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the earliest times to A.D 697* (Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc., 1989).

²⁹ Kuroda Toshio, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 7, no. 1 (1981).

part of the traditions of Japan. I explore the structure of the feudal system in Edo Japan and how this structure is mirrored in Shinto: for example, how vassalage was based around obligation, an intrinsic part of Shinto tradition, with this sense of obligation including the Emperor and, by extension, the Kami. For this section, my principal sources are Eisenstadt,³⁰ (1923-2010) Bellah,³¹ (1927-2013) Howell,³² and Mullins.³³

Eisenstadt and Bellah provide a thorough description of the Tokugawa *Bakufu* during the Edo period, as well as offering social models that reflect important relationships within Shinto. Eisenstadt is especially useful, due to the fact that he eschews the more conventional models of cultural interpretation, such as the structural and culturalist approaches, and devises his own theory in response to his study of Japanese culture. Whilst he focuses primarily on western studies and works as his sources, and is not principally a specialist in Japanese cultural studies, he creates a thoughtful and intelligent approach to Japanese culture and history. He does not discuss Shinto extensively, but his work does assist us in exploring the way in which Shinto helped to shape Japanese thinking during the Edo period. In relation to this, Howell provides a more updated exploration of the idea of status within Edo Japan. His work is quite concise and informative, which has made it incredibly beneficial, even if he only mentions Shinto occasionally in regards to its place within society during the period. Eisenstadt also avoids the concept of the Japanese consciousness giving way to Japanese uniqueness³⁴, which is problematic in a lot of scholarly discourse³⁵. His work,

³⁰ Eisenstadt, S.N. *Japanese Civilization: A Comparative View* (The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

³¹ Bellah, Robert *Tokugawa religion: The cultural roots of modern Japan* (The Free Press, 1985).

³² Howell, David. *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005)

³³ Mullins, Mark R. ed., *Handbook of Christianity in Japan* (Handbook of Oriental Studies, Vol. 5; Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003).

³⁴ A common issue amongst Japanese scholars is the attempt to create an image of Shinto as something that comes from a unique Japanese perspective, something that could only have developed in Japan. This theory often results in a willingness to overlook how Shinto does have many traits in common with other Primal religious traditions.

³⁵ For an example of commentary on this issue, see Dale, Peter, *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness* (London: Routledge, 1990)

however, is in many respects an overview, suited to this particular section precisely because it provides a good introduction to the Edo period and helps to create an overall perspective on why Shinto developed the way it did.

Bellah provides more detailed insight into the culture of the Edo period and its effects on modern Japan. Hailed as an excellent source by scholars such as Bell, Keyes, Shepherd and Kitagawa, Bellaah's work offers a study of what he considers to be the value systems that existed in Japan. This allows valuable connections to be made between Shinto and the value systems during this period. We can also see how these value systems in turn influence Shinto. Whilst we cannot talk about a clearly defined moral and ethical system within Shinto, a number of parallels can be drawn between Bellaah's system and the values of Shinto, which in many ways replaces the concept of ethics in Shinto. Many of Bellaah's ideas can be seen reflected in the work of Hori Ichiro³⁶ and his concept of *hito gami* and *uji gami*. Runciman³⁷ (1934-Present) also offers particularly helpful insight through his work of social theory which allows us to gain a better understanding of Japanese Edo Period society.

In relation to Christianity, Mark R. Mullins's book, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements*, is an excellent study of the patterns of Japanese responses to Christian attempts to gain control of the faith of Japan. Mullins clearly depicts attempts by Christians to impose their religion, in contrast to allowing for the integration of their faith into Japanese culture. He also explores the response of the Japanese in developing their form of Christianity that shared in Japanese cultural philosophy. Through his study of the history of Christianity, Mullins demonstrates the challenges to dialogue in Japan. Whilst Mullins offers an excellent western perspective, both Iwai³⁸ and Miyazaki³⁹ (1950- Present)

³⁶ Hori Ichiro, *Folk Religion in Japan: Continuity and Change*, ed. Joseph M. Kitagawa and Alan L. Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

³⁷ Runciman, W.G., *A Treatise on Social Theory*, Volume 2 (3 Volumes; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

³⁸ Iwai, Shuma "An Analysis of Francis Xavier's Letters from Kagoshima, Japan (1549): His Approach and Views of Ministry," by *Asia Journal of Theology* 21.1 (2007).

offer an equally valid Japanese perspective. This helps to balance Mullins' interpretation as well as add rich insight into the Japanese perspective on Christianity.

In the third section of this chapter, I explore the major effect of the Meiji Restoration on Shinto, which in many ways defined how Shinto would maintain its identity. During this time we see the development of the *Jinja Honcho* and the regulation of shrines in Japan, as well as the use of Shinto as an instrument for extreme nationalism. This section focuses primarily upon the Meiji, Taisho and Showa periods. The key sources for this section include *The National Faith of Japan*⁴⁰ by D. C. Holtom, (1884-1962) the works of W. G. Beasley (1919-2006), including *The Modern History of Japan*⁴¹ and *The Meiji Restoration*,⁴² along with a wide range of articles from the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*. William Deal's⁴³ exploration of medieval and early modern Japan assists us greatly in understanding the transition from Edo to Meiji period Japan and complements the works of Beasley.

Although some aspects are now dated, D. C. Holtom's work is still a cornerstone for understanding Japanese Shinto during the Meiji period. He offers a comprehensive study of Shinto, including a study of the division between State and Sect Shinto, as well as providing insights into the historical development of Shinto up to this point. One could argue that his work is outdated, but his historical study, combining both Japanese documentary sources and the work of Japanese and western scholars, demonstrates considerable sensitivity to Shinto, especially during the time when he was writing. His work, however, needs to be used in conjunction with more modern scholarship to maximize its usefulness.

³⁹ Miyazaki Kentaro, "Roman Catholic Mission in Pre-Modern Japan," in Mullins, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in Japan* 6.

⁴⁰ Holtom, D.C. *The National Faith Of Japan. A Study in Modern Shintō* (Paragon Book Reprint Corp, 1965).

⁴¹ Beasley, W.G. *The Modern History of Japan* (Harcourt School, 1963).

⁴² Beasley, W.G. *The Meiji Restoration* (Stanford University Press, 1972).

⁴³ Deal William E., *Handbook to life in Medieval and Early Modern Japan* (Oxford University Press, 2005) P217

To expand on this, Hardacre (1949 – Present) and Fridell (both offer insightful and balanced studies of Shinto. Hardacre's⁴⁴ focus on State Shinto offers us a well written and revealing study of the promulgation campaign, whilst Fridell's⁴⁵ focus on Shrine Shinto helps us to appreciate how streamlining of Shinto affected Shinto traditional belief.

To assist us in further understanding the implications of this shift from the Edo period to the Meiji period I also take advantage of the works of Mori⁴⁶ (1928-2013) and Kurihara⁴⁷ (1936-Present), who offer, once again a fresh perspective on the Japanese response to change. Their focus on the Emperor allows us to better grasp the nuances and importance of the symbolic role he played during this period. This is complemented by Sasaki's⁴⁸ study of the evolution of the Emperor role from early to modern Japan.

The works of W. G. Beasley provide a historical approach to modern Japanese history and the Meiji restoration, with less emphasis upon Shinto. In terms of offering a good background for the development of Japan during the Meiji period, however, his work is of great benefit in the insights it offers into the setting of the development of state Shinto. Sadler's⁴⁹ work on the history of Japan also assists us in understanding the important nature of the changes that took place during the Meiji restoration.

⁴⁴ Hardacre, Helen "Creating State Shinto: The Great Promulgation Campaign and the New Religions," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 12.1 (1986)

⁴⁵ Fridell, Wilbur M. "The Establishment of Shrine Shinto in Meiji Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 2 (1975),

⁴⁶ Mori, Koichi, "The Emperor of Japan: A Historical Study in Religious Symbolism," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 6.4 (1979)

⁴⁷ Kurihara Akira, "The Emperor System as Japanese National Religion: The Emperor System Module in Everyday Consciousness," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 17.2-3 (1990)

⁴⁸ Sasaki, "Priest, Shaman, King,"

⁴⁹ Sadler, A. L. *A Short History of Japan*.

III. Part C: Intercultural Dialogue: An Overview

This chapter explores how the larger faiths today communicate together, primarily focusing on an overview of interfaith dialogue between Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. It also explores the concept of religious pluralism and its place in modern dialogue, focusing on the work of Hick (1922-2012).⁵⁰ As part of my overall concern with creating dialogue with Shinto, I aim to show how dialogue has worked between the main religions, and why the models of dialogue that they use are successful. I also intend to show that there are certain consistencies in the approach to dialogue between Christianity and each of these religions that cannot be applied to Shinto in the same way, for example, the key roles of scripture and ethics in dialogue.

To give a wide range of perspectives on interfaith dialogue, I chose a number of different scholars to attempt to offer a wide a varied approach. Levy⁵¹, Yong⁵², Knitter⁵³ (1939-Present), Morimoto⁵⁴ (1956- Present), D'Costa⁵⁵ (1958-Present) and May⁵⁶ offer a varied understanding of the concept of pluralism. This view moves from supportive to critical and allows for a well-rounded approach to the concept.

The works of Hick and Heim represent two opposing standpoints in the debate about pluralism. Hick offers a unique approach to religion in his attempts to

⁵⁰ Hick, John *God and the Universe of Faiths* (OneWorld Publications, 1973).

⁵¹ Levy, Antoine "Between Charybdis and Scylla: Catholic Theology and Interreligious Dialogue," *New Blackfriars* 89 (2008)

⁵² Huang Yong, "Religious Pluralism and Interfaith Dialogue: Beyond Universalism and Particularism," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 3

⁵³ Knitter, Paul F. "Toward a Liberation Theology of Religions." In *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness: Toward a Pluralistic Theology of Religions*, edited by John Hick Paul F. Knitter. 1990.

⁵⁴ Morimoto, Anri. "The (More or Less) Same Light but from Different Lamps: The Post-Pluralist Understanding of Religion from a Japanese Perspective." *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 53, no. 3 (2003)

⁵⁵ D'Costa, Gavin *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of Pluralistic Theology of Religions* (Orbis Books, 1995)

⁵⁶ May, John D'Arcy. *Pluralism and the Religions*. (Cassell, 1998).

create a common framework for all religions, in contrast to Heim,⁵⁷ who argues that exclusivity remains an important element in religion. These two authors encapsulate the range of the pluralistic debate; Hick is a strong advocate of pluralism and is one of the best known, whilst Heim's work offers an opportunity to explore a contrasting and critical assessment of Hick.

The works of John B. Cobb Jr (1925-Present) and Ward McAfee⁵⁸ (1939-Present) are particularly helpful in giving a brief overview of interfaith dialogue from a Christian perspective. Their work is not exclusivist and shows an appreciation for pluralism, espousing the idea that there is no "one size fits all" approach to dialogue with other traditions; dialogue should be pursued through listening and appreciating what they are offering rather than judging them. Whilst this is, in part, a departure from traditional Christian perspectives in relation to dialogue, it is not new and Cobb gives examples from the work of the Jesuits in the 16th and 17th centuries. Whilst Cobb does not represent a more traditional perspective, the different understanding he offers is valuable to Christians attempting to create dialogue with other traditions. Azumah offers a more pragmatic evaluation of interfaith dialogue and in contrast to Cobb's more optimistic outlook, expresses the problems that can exist in dialogue, such as how different faiths perceive dialogue as a form of attempted conversion by Christianity. Muck⁵⁹ (1947-Present) gives a good breakdown of the variety of forms that modern interfaith dialogue takes, although his own work does not really offer anything particularly original. The work of Krieger⁶⁰ describes the concept of proclamation in his theory of communication, which proves to be

⁵⁷ Heim, S. Mark *The Depth of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends Sacra Doctrina: Christian Theology for a Postmodern Age* (Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000).

⁵⁸ Cobb Jr John B , McAfee Ward, *The Dialogue Comes of Age: Christian Encounters With Other Traditions* (2010).

⁵⁹ Muck, Terry C. "Interreligious Dialogue and Evangelism," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 17(1997).

⁶⁰ Krieger, David "Communication Theory and Interreligious Dialogue," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (1993).

quite beneficial when compared with Lindbeck's⁶¹ theories of communication, on which I base my own theory of dialogue.

David Tracy⁶² (1939-Present) gives us an excellent insight into his perspective of Interreligious dialogue, one that is very beneficial in understanding how dialogue has developed. Kenneth Park⁶³ also helps flesh out the many different views on how best to engage with interfaith communication. Massoudi⁶⁴ offers us the system approach, which helps further expand on the manner in which we can engage in dialogue.

In exploring Comparative Theology and its impact on interfaith dialogue, I focused on Laksana⁶⁵, Joslyn-Siemiatkoski⁶⁶ and Clooney⁶⁷ (1950-Present) as offering a wide range of explorations in the field. Clooney, especially, is a leading scholar on the subject and so was able to offer a well thought out and planned study, which I found to be invaluable.

In this part of the chapter, I give an overview of how Christianity has interacted with the other major faiths, in particular, how scripture can assist in dialogue, something that is problematic when dealing with Shinto. Cobb Jr, along with Hans Küng,⁶⁸ (1928-Present) offers insightful Christian perspectives here, although Küng's perspective is based much more around the sense of one

⁶¹ Lindbeck, George A. *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age* (SPCK, 1984).

⁶² Tracy, David *Dialogue With the Other: The Inter-Religious Dialogue*, Kindle Version vols. (William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990)

⁶³ Park, Kenneth "Affirming Rationality of Religious Traditions, Approximating the Ultimate Reality and Advancing Goodwill: A Proposal for Religious Dialogue," *The International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* 1, no. 2 (2011).

⁶⁴ Massoudi, Mehrdad "A System Theory Approach to Interfaith Dialogue," *Incultural Education* 17.4 (2006),

⁶⁵ Clooney, Francis X. *The New Comparative Theology* (T&T Clark International, 2010)., "Comparative Theology,"

⁶⁶ Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, Daniel "Comparative Theology and the Status of Judaism: Hegemony and Reversals," in *The New Comparative Theology*, ed. Clooney

⁶⁷ Clooney, Francis X. *The New Comparative Theology* (T&T Clark International, 2010). "Comparative Theology,"

⁶⁸ Küng, Hans *Christianity and World Religions: Paths of Dialogue with Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986).

singular God, which can be problematic in relation to Shinto. In studying Christian-Muslim dialogue, I used the works of O'Mahony⁶⁹, Kerr⁷⁰ and Bielenin-Lenczowska⁷¹. These authors gave a balanced understanding of the challenges to interfaith dialogue between both religious cultures as well as offering interpretations of what can be done to improve the situation.

To continue from Küng's exploration of Christianity and Buddhism, I wished to expand on this area using other perspectives on the dialogue between both religions. Yagi⁷², Polinska⁷³, Stafford⁷⁴, Reynolds⁷⁵ offer very different views from that of Küng which allows us to view the Buddhist perspective on dialogue between the two groups as well as other Christian views on dialogue between them.

In the last section of this chapter, I explore how Shinto and Christianity have communicated to date. The limited nature of the resources available represent a significant challenge; I have to rely primarily on sparse English sources, and my own interviews with representatives from the Jinja Honcho, *Kokugakuin* University, Sofia University, as well as non-academic interviews. I have added my own translation of the work of Ueda from the Symposium of Shinto held in Nanzan (See appendix). Notwithstanding this lack of source materials, I explore the problems and challenges to the relationship between Shinto and Christianity,

⁶⁹ O'Mahony, Anthony "Modern Catholic Thought on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations," *One in Christ* 44, no. 2 (2010).

⁷⁰ Kerr, David A. "Muhammad: Prophet of Liberation - a Christian Perspective from Political Theology," *Studies in World Christianity* (2000)

⁷¹ Bielenin-Lenczowska, Karolina "Visiting of Christian Holy Places by Muslims as a Strategy of Coping with Difference," *Anthropological Notebooks* 15.3 (2009)

⁷² Yagi, Dickson Kazuo "Buddha for Christians," in *The Dialogue Comes of Age: Christian Encounters with Other Traditions*, ed. Ward McAfee John B Cobb Jr (Fortress Press, 2010).

⁷³ Polinska, Wioleta "Christian-Buddhist Dialogue in Loving the Enemy," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 27 (2007)

⁷⁴ Stafford, Betty "What Buddhists and Christians Are Teaching Each Other About God," *Cross Currents* 58, no. 1 (2008)

⁷⁵ Reynolds, John Myrdhin "Reflections Upon Buddhist-Christian Dialogue," *Dialogue and Universalism* 1.2 (2004), 33

which, in turn, inform my own theory of dialogue. The work of Breen⁷⁶ offers an important overview of the historical conflict between Shinto and Christianity, and, although it is an historical examination much more than a theological one, it is valuable in giving a framework to understand how Christianity and Shinto have communicated in the past.

In addressing actual dialogue between Shinto and Christianity, I explore the works of Kadowaki⁷⁷ (1926-2017), Hideo⁷⁸ (1926-2012) and Ueda⁷⁹ as three examples of the sparse work that has been done on Shinto-Christian dialogue. Although informative, Kadowaki's Christian perspective is problematic as his argument is focused on an evangelistic approach to dialogue which attempts to create a common framework through a single divine source, which, for Kadowaki, would represent God. Ueda, on the other hand, uses the concepts of universality and speciality in religion to offer a more attractive model of how relationships between Shinto and Christianity could be developed. Hideo gives an overview of the Nanzan symposium itself allowing us to gain a better understanding of the discussions that took place. Whilst this is not particularly detailed, it is of great assistance as a summary of the key arguments in the symposium.

⁷⁶ Teeuwen Mark Breen John, *A New History of Shinto* (John Wiley & Sons, 2010); Mark R. Mullins, *Handbook of Christianity in Japan*, vol. 5, *Handbook of Oriental Studies* (Brill Academic Publishers, 2003).

⁷⁷ Kadowaki Kakichi, "Shinto and Christianity: Dialogue for the Twenty-First Century," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 33.1 (1993), 69-89.

⁷⁸ Yuki, Hideo "A Shinto-Christian Dialogue," *Inter-Religio* 4(1984).

⁷⁹ Ueda, Kenji "The Universal and Particular in Shinto," in *Shinto and Christianity: The Particular and the Universal in Religion* (Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture: Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1984).

IV Part D Challenges to dialogue with Shinto and an Alternative Dialogue Model

In the last chapter, I explore the challenges to dialogue with Shinto, primarily focusing on issues of interpretation, and offer my own alternative model of dialogue, based around theme and symbol and inspired by the work of Lindbeck and Ueda. By this juncture, I will have already shown how Shinto developed as well as its main themes. I have looked at how Christianity has developed dialogue with major world religions and how those models for dialogue are problematic in relation to Shinto. I have then examined examples of how Shinto and Christianity have been involved in dialogue up to this point. With these elements in mind, this chapter offers an alternative form of dialogue that, I propose, is more appropriate to dialogue with Shinto. In this section, I employ a number of interviews that I conducted in Japan. These are pertinent to our understanding of many of the key concepts of Shinto and how this understanding has not been reflected in previous works on Shinto; examples of similar issues have been raised in a number of journal articles. My alternative form of dialogue is inspired by the concept of grammatical dialogue that was expressed by Lindbeck. I offer again a number of scholars to assist in my exploration of this theory. I outline the challenges to creating an appropriate dialogue with Shinto and explore the key criteria necessary for this theory to work. I then examine a number of common themes and symbols found in religion and show how they can be used to form a common basis for dialogue. To this end I employ a number of scholars to assist in developing my idea.

To help explore the different themes and symbols that I wish to use as examples for my alternate dialogue, I use a number of different authors. Firstly to assist in defining the concept of symbolism and ritual, I use Rajah⁸⁰ and Seligman⁸¹ who

⁸⁰ Rajah, Solomon "A Study of Symbolism in Visual Arts and Its Relevance to the Church in Malaysia," *Asia Journal of Theology* 19.1 (2005)

both give a good working definition of these terms. I then demonstrate how the themes and symbols I have chosen have a common understanding amongst a wide range of different cultures. Pfeiffer⁸² gives us a solid commentary on religious diversity in Japan, which is useful to us in gaining an understanding of the wide range of religious movements currently active in Japan today. I chose three themes and symbols to use as exemplars for my theory: Purity, Sacrifice and Offering, and Obligation. I had to select works from many different sources which allowed me to show how they were used in their respective traditions. In my study of purity, I use Stewart⁸³, Ariarajah⁸⁴, Ziegert⁸⁵, McCartney⁸⁶, Daifuku⁸⁷, Hara⁸⁸, Martin⁸⁹ and Nagasawa⁹⁰. I chose these authors because they demonstrate how purity was a common concept across a wide range of different traditions, not just Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Shinto. For Sacrifice I chose Reinhartz⁹¹, Hubert⁹², Das⁹³, Dalton⁹⁴, Ojo⁹⁵, Nelson⁹⁶, Aston⁹⁷, Boyd⁹⁸, Gawronski⁹⁹, Kirwan¹⁰⁰, McKenna¹⁰¹ and Chauvet¹⁰². These scholars

⁸¹ Seligman, Adam B. *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

⁸² Pfeiffer, William S. "Cults, Christians, and Confucius: Religious Diversity in Japan," *Japan Studies Association Journal* (2010)

⁸³ Stewart, Benjamin M. "Water in Worship," *Christian Century* (2011)

⁸⁴ Ariarajah, Wesley "The Water of Life," *The Ecumenical Review* 34 (2010)

⁸⁵ Ziegert, Helmut "A New Dawn for Humanity: Lower Palaeolithic Village Life in Libya and Ethiopia." *Minerva - The International Review of Ancient Art and Archaeology* 18.4 (2007)

⁸⁶ McCartney A. P. and Veltre, D. W. 1999. "Aleutian Island Prehistory: living in insular extremes," *World Archaeology*, 30 (1999)

⁸⁷ Daifuku Hiroshi, "The Early Cultures of the Island of Kyushu," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 5.3 (1949)

⁸⁸ Hara, Kazuya, "Aspects of Shinto in Japanese Communication," *Intercultural Communication Studies* 12, no. 4 (2003).

⁸⁹ Martin, Simon "Time, Kingship, and the Maya Universe," *Expedition* 54.1 (2012)

⁹⁰ Nagasawa Sohei, "The Deity and the Mountain," *Asian Ethnology* 70.1 (2011).

⁹¹ Reinhartz, Adele "review of Maria-Zoe Petropoulou, Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism and Christianity, 100 BC to AD 200," *Society of Biblical Literature* (2009)

⁹² Hubert Henri, Mauss Marcel. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1981)

⁹³ Das, Veena. "Language of Sacrifice." *Man, New Series* 18, no. 3 (1983)

⁹⁴ Dalton, G. F. "The Tradition of Blood Sacrifice to the Goddess Eire." *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 63, no. 252 (1974)

⁹⁵ Ojo, Olatunji. "Slavery and Human Sacrifice in Yorubaland." *The Journal of African History* 46, no. 3 (2005).

⁹⁶ Nelson, John "'Social Memory as Ritual Practice: Commemorating Spirits of the Military Dead at Yasukuni Shinto Shrino,'" *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62.2 (2003).

⁹⁷ Aston, W. G. "Sacrifice in Shinto." *Man* 12 (1912)

⁹⁸ Boyd James W. and Williams Ron G., "Japanese Shinto: An Interpretation of a Priestly Perspective," *Philosophy East and West* 55.1 (2005)

again represent a wide range of interpretations of sacrifice and offering and demonstrate how closely related this concept is.

Whilst this may seem like a wide range of different religious traditions that may not seem to be connected to my theory, I feel that it demonstrates the common nature of these themes and shows how they transcend cultural barriers.

Finally for Obligation, I followed the same structure; taking a wide range of scholars that demonstrated how the concept of obligation transcended cultural barriers. For this section I used Broodin¹⁰³, Frazer¹⁰⁴, Fowler¹⁰⁵, Chidester¹⁰⁶, Molnar¹⁰⁷, Pobee¹⁰⁸, Chretien¹⁰⁹, Adhioroussis¹¹⁰ and Meyers¹¹¹. I felt that they demonstrated quite clearly the usage of obligation in a wide range of different cultures as well as being useful in creating a common link between them all.

The example of the *Kakure Kirishitans* demonstrates how they used a similar process when they amalgamated Christian and Shinto ideas. My sources on the *Kakure* include the works of Turnbull,¹¹² Harrington¹¹³ and Nosco.¹¹⁴ Harrington and Nosco offer an excellent review of the history of the *Kakure*. Neither of these

⁹⁹ Gawronski, Raymond "Salvation in the Blood of the Lamb," *Nova et Vetera* 9.1 (2011).

¹⁰⁰ Kirwan, Michael "Eucharist and Sacrifice," *Dominican Council Journal Compilation* (2007)

¹⁰¹ McKenna, John H "Eucharist and Sacrifice: An Overview," *Worship* 76, no. 5 (2002)

¹⁰² Chauvet, Louis Marie *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Liturgical Press, 2001)

¹⁰³ Boodin, John E. "The Function of Religion," *The Biblical World* 46.2 (1915)

¹⁰⁴ Frazer, Sir James George *Totemism* (A. & C. Black, 1887)

¹⁰⁵¹⁰⁵ Fowler, Cynthia T. "The Ecological Implications of Ancestral Religion and Reciprocal Exchange in a Sacred Forest in Karendi," *Worldviews* 7.3 (2003)

¹⁰⁶ Chidester, David "Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth Century South Africa," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76.1 (2008)

¹⁰⁷ Molnar, Andrea K. "Christianity and Traditional Religion among the Hoga Sara of West-Central Flores," *Anthropos* 92(1997)

¹⁰⁸ Pobee, John "Aspects of African Traditional Religion," *Sociological Analysis* 37.1 (1976)

¹⁰⁹ Chretien, Antoine *The Duties of a Christian to God and the Means to Fulfill Them Properly*, Vol. 1 (Paris, 1703)

¹¹⁰ Aghioroussis, Maximos "The Meaning of Christian Baptism for the Baptized and for the Church," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 55 (2010)

¹¹¹ Meyers, Ruth A. "Fresh Thoughts on Confirmation," *Anglican Theological Review* 88.3 (2006)

¹¹² Turnbull, Stephen *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan: A Study of Their Development, Beliefs and Rituals to the Present Day* (Routledge, 1998); Stephen Turnbull, "Mass or Matsuri? The Oyashiki-Sama Ceremony of Ikitsuki," *Monument Nipponica* 50, no. 2 (1995).

¹¹³ Harrington, Ann M "The Kakure Kirishitan and Their Place in Japan's Religious Tradition," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 7, no. 4 (1980); Ann M Harrington, *Japan's Kakure Kirishitan* (Claremont Graduate School, 1977).

¹¹⁴ Nosco, Peter "Secrecy and the Transmission of Tradition: Issues in the Study of the "Underground" Christians," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 20, no. 1 (1993).

authors, however, gives much detail with regard to ritual practices, which were an important aspect of the life of the Kakure. Turnbull, on the other hand, having spent time amongst the Kakure, is able to provide a significant first-hand account of these rituals, although more commentary on the rituals would have enhanced the value of his work for my project further.

Finally, as part of my work I conducted a number of interviews, two of which I have included as Appendix II. All interviewees were aware that they were being interviewed as part of my thesis and that I would publish their remarks as part of my work. All notes pertaining to my interviews are currently kept in Japan and will be destroyed in December 2014 by shredding in an industrial shredder after submission of my work. The interviews with Iwahashi Sensei and Suga Sensei are included to give a greater reference to the academic perspective of both scholars.

Terminology

Faith

One of the key issues within this text is the usage of the term faith and spirituality. The term *faith* is often seen as very Christian terminology, which is loaded with Christian ideology. Within the context of this work, the term faith is used to describe any system of religion that has a belief structure and hence has faith or belief in a form of entity that transcends our reality. This is a reflection of the extensive usage of the term by other scholars such as Hori Ichiro¹¹⁵ and Miyaji Naokazu.¹¹⁶ Spiritual and spirituality have a multitude of meanings within this text, but primarily are used to refer to the actual specific nature of faith, ie in terms of the Primal belief structure and essence of religion in Japan. This is based on the system used by Honda Soiehiro¹¹⁷ and Saeki Shoichi.¹¹⁸

In an attempt to develop the historical Pre-Meiji concept of Shinto, the focus has been primarily on treating the form of Shinto that would have held an official cult status prior to Meiji. Given the very wider spectrum of Shinto sects and cults, I have focused on these beliefs over the various organizations and groups that interpret and implement Shinto ideas within Japanese society. I have focused primarily on exploring the development of the official cult Shinto belief over the individual belief systems of the variety of Shinto schools that existed at the time. It is not that I feel these groups were invalid, but a thorough exploration of the beliefs of these various groups is simply not within the scope of this thesis, nor does it assist in the exploration of intercultural communication between Shinto and Christianity.

¹¹⁵ Hori Ichiro, *Shamanism in Japan* Japanese Journal of Religious Studies 2/4 December 1975 PP 233, 250, 264, 275, 286.

¹¹⁶ Miyaji Naokazu, *What is Shinto* Contemporary Religions in Japan Vol 17:1 (1966). 40, 45, 47

¹¹⁷ Honda Soiehiro, *Shinto in Japanese Culture* Nanzan Bulletin N8 (1984). 24, 26, 29, 30

¹¹⁸ Saeki Shoichi, *Is a Shinto Renewel Possible?* Nanzan Bulletin 17 (1993). 32, 33.

When we are studying Shinto in terms of the Meiji Period and onward, certain groups or organisations are included for their contribution to the overall belief in Shinto. I feel that this contribution is more relevant than their status being a Post-Meiji administrative response in classifying the variety of interpretations of Shinto.¹¹⁹ As such we must recognize that when we discuss Sect Shinto or any organizational sects in the Meiji Era, we are only discussing it in terms of the contribution it makes to the faith and belief of Shinto as a whole. Recognizing that we are exploring the contribution to faith and belief becomes relevant, for example when studying Sect Shinto's understanding of *kami*. It is through this theme that Sect Shinto is made relevant to the Meiji Era.

In exploring post-1945 Shinto, one must accept that, as a result of the *Shinto Shirei*¹²⁰ document, organizational Shinto loses its relevance and becomes part of a larger concept of Shinto that transcends organisational barriers. This allows for a more cohesive understanding of the key concepts found within the Shinto tradition as it is subsumed into the overarching concept of Shinto as a whole.

¹¹⁹ Inoue, Nobutaka "The Formation of Sect Shinto in Modernizing Japan" *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 2002 29/3-4. 406

¹²⁰ Shinto-Shirei was also known as the Shinto Directive. It was, according to Kokugakuin's dictionary on Shinto, "Regarding the abolition of government protection, support, supervision and proliferation of State Shintō or shrine Shintō." It guaranteed religious freedom within Japan and abolished state sponsored Shinto.

(see: <http://eos.kokugakuin.ac.jp/modules/xwords/entry.php?entryID=1109>)

Makoto no Kokoro

The concept of *makoto no kokoro* or simply *magokoro* reflects a wide range of concepts focused upon the interconnection between the physical and spiritual in the world.¹²¹ There is an interdependence of both the spiritual and the physical.¹²² This interdependence reflects the circular nature of Shinto and the connection between human existence, nature and the *kami*. Through the interaction with the world, we recognize the role of the spiritual within it. This is further extended to the natural world too having a sense of heart and mind, more accurately, “mindful heart.”¹²³ This definition can further be extended to emphasizing the interconnection between nature and humanity. The essence of nature is the essence of *kami* and by extension the spiritual awareness of *kami* exists within nature. It is this awareness that forms *mono no kokoro* or *magokoro*.¹²⁴ This is contrasted against the “true or genuine” concept of *makoto no kokoro* which defines the human *kokoro*. This concept, which stems from Norinaga¹²⁵, is quite interesting because it includes the nature of intentionality; human beings can, intentionally, defile or cause harm to their own *kokoro*. It is this form of *kokoro* that is reflected like a mirror onto the natural. This is quite an interesting definition and distinction between the natural concept of *kokoro* and that of human *kokoro*. We could take Norinaga’s concept even further and imply that the natural world is a reflection of the human spirit, one could easily argue that the pollution of the world, the destruction of earths ecology reflect the defiled *kokoro* of humanity. Norinaga describes such a condition as:

The mirror can become so covered with the dust of everyday worries and problems that it ceases to reflect the *tama*.¹²⁶

¹²¹ Kasulis, Thomas P. *Shinto: The Way home – Volume 1 of Dimensions of Asian Spirituality*. (University of Hawaii Press: 2004)

¹²² Kasulis. *Shinto: The Way Home* 24

¹²³ *Ibid.* 24

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* 24

¹²⁵ *Ibid* 24-25

¹²⁶ *Ibid* 24 *Tama* refers to the spirit or soul. For further information see: http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/bts/bts_t.html (Accessed 01/06/2016).

When we approach the idea of *kokoro* in this manner, we can see the importance of the interconnection between humanity and the natural world. Indeed, with the world as a reflection of the self, one becomes very aware of the damage that we do not only to ourselves but the world around us.

This concept of interdependence and understanding of the relationship between the natural world and humanity has been emphasised in environmental studies. In their brief study of post World War II Shinto, Boyd and Williams¹²⁷ also reference *makoto no kokoro* as a source of recognizing the importance of the connection between humanity and nature:

It suggests, for example, that nature is not merely an *object* out there, something for humans to observe and study. Though this is at times a useful cognitive stance, it is also important to realize we are embedded in the natural world – it is inseparable from us.¹²⁸

This sense of connection reflects a deep-rooted association of the natural world that Shinto espouses. Hence, we are inseparable from the natural world. The recognition of this connection is an invaluable tool in approaching ecology.

¹²⁷ Boyd, James W & Williams, Ron.G. *Reconsidering Shinto After World War II: Perspectives from the life and thought of a Shinto priest*. <http://faculty.ccp.edu/faculty/dfreedman/HCS/boyd.pdf> (Accessed 01/06/2016).

¹²⁸ *Ibid* 4

Primal Tradition/Religion

Finally, to understand and appreciate the context of this work, it is important to understand the term Primal Tradition or Primal Religion. Thorpe identifies the features of a Primal Religion/tradition:

- It is a religion found among societies consisting of relatively small groups of individuals who are heavily dependent on one another, as such, Wernhart (cited in Figl 2003:260) and Sundermeier (1999:31) talk about 'tribal societies'.
- Society is dependent on nature.
- Society does not have a (long) history of written culture.
- Metaphors, symbolism and art play an important role in that culture.
- The religion does not have a specific founder.¹²⁹

Thorpe does point to a number of valid identifiers, for example; that society is dependent on nature and the importance of metaphor, symbolism and art in that culture and that the religion does not have a specific founder. However, when we look at the first identifier, it is most aptly contradicted by the very nature of Shinto, a Primal Tradition that is identified in the consciousness of millions, and reflected in the societal practice of a developed nation. This demonstrates how this outline does not take into account that the concept of a Primal Tradition can span beyond small ethnic tribal culture. Whilst there are some flaws in Thorpe's identification of Primal Religion/tradition, it is how it is later interpreted that is cause for concern. This can be seen in the concept of 'tribal societies' in Beyer's¹³⁰ article on African religious tradition. In his work, he paraphrases Sundermeier, saying:

¹²⁹ Beyers, Jaco. "What is religion? An African understanding" *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* No. 66-1 Art. #341 (2010) 1-8 [Http://10.4102/hts.v66i1.341](http://10.4102/hts.v66i1.341) (Accessed May 2016). 2

¹³⁰ Beyers, Jaco. "What is religion?"

The assumption was that some religions progressed in development and others did not. The underdeveloped religions were pejoratively referred to as Primal, traditional or primitive, or even tribal, religions.¹³¹

Sundermeiers¹³² concept is derived from his own interpretation of Thorpes identifiers. Why is an assumption like this made? Bediako, in her study of Primalism¹³³ points to an inherent bias, most likely based around a Christian outlook that assumes an identity associated with a western perspective:

With respect to Primal Religion, there is a further problematic element. There has long been a consensus in the West that the Primal Religions of the world, often designated by the term 'Animism', were as backward and primitive as the people who practised them.¹³⁴

There is an underlying assumption of that the religion in question has not developed past a certain point. This is problematic because it creates a number of assumptions, primarily that the tradition is inferior in some way or uncivilized. If this is the starting point of any exploration, it automatically creates bias when engaging with Primal Traditions.

It is important that one does not look upon the term Primal as another way of saying primitive, a term that is often assumed to connote a system that it is underdeveloped and does not necessarily have anything to offer modern society.

¹³¹ *Ibid.* 1

¹³² Sundermeier, T. *Was ist Religion? Religionswissenschaft in theologischen Kontext* [What is religion? Religious studies in a theological context], Chr Kaiser Gütersloher Verlagshaus, Gütersloh: 1999,

¹³³ Bediako, Gillian. M. "All believers are Primalists underneath: Towards a new appreciation of Old Testament religion as Primal religion." *Public Lecture at Calvin College Meeter Center Lecture Hall.* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: 2007)

¹³⁴ Bediako, Gillian. M. "All believers are Primalists..."

A more accurate attempt at defining Primal Tradition is made by Bediako¹³⁵ who states that:

Primal means more than primeval or archetypal, in that it gives account of an enduring consciousness of the spiritual nature of the universe that translates into coherent religious beliefs and ways of living religiously.¹³⁶

This implies that Primal represents a sense of continuity and enduring tradition that is found within all religious traditions. I would further include the importance of the natural world within Primal Traditions. Primal Tradition is closely linked with nature and the very fabric of the world itself. It embraces the deep-rooted spiritual connection with the earth itself, the spiritual and the mundane exist side by side in the present.¹³⁷ Dickie¹³⁸ in her study of the traditions of the Pacific Islands, notes:

For many Primal Religions, the land, sea, and all that exists are interwoven and interconnected in all of life's processes. The Pacific Islands and their people survive within a reciprocal relationship held with the land and are a perfect representation of an interdependent existence. Not only does seeing nature as sacred become a view of life, but a way of life as well. This can be seen in their myths, traditions, ceremonies, speech, and respect for the source of life (nature).¹³⁹

This description of the Pacific Islanders connection with nature is an excellent example of the importance that the natural world has in Primal Traditions.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* 2

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* 1

¹³⁷ This is explored in Part A of this work.

¹³⁸ See Dickie, Rachele A. "Indigenous Traditions and Sacred Ecology in the Pacific Islands" *UW-L Journal of Undergraduate Research* VIII (2005)

¹³⁹ *Ibid* 1

As such, I offer this definition of Primal Tradition:

Primal tradition embraces the natural world as an extension of the self through which the spiritual and the mundane coexist in a harmonious state. The concept of an afterlife is superseded by the importance of the present coupled with an understanding that one will return to the earth and rejoin the spiritual once again.

This will act as the working definition for the duration of this work.

Part A: An Examination of Shinto

1 What are the Key Themes in Shinto?

To gain a better insight into modern Shinto I shall examine briefly a number of key themes found within the Shinto tradition. A wide range of interpretations of Japanese religious philosophy have been offered by a number of noted scholars; there is, however, a problem in our understanding, as westerners, of how Japanese faith works, as its belief structure is inherently different to our own. This becomes evident in the problems that arise if we attempt to apply our basic concept of 'religion' to the Japanese cultural and spiritual mindset. My analysis derives from a western perspective and attempts to apply certain concepts and themes to help grasp the way in which Shinto works as a symbol system. This is not a thorough historical examination of Shinto and should not be viewed as such. Whilst I attempt to take into account the diverse history of Shinto, as well as the numerous external religious traditions that have influenced it, this study is focused primarily on identifying the key themes that are important in our investigation of its interaction with Christianity. As such, this work will explore themes that are identifiable in post-Shinto Shirei Shinto¹⁴⁰; it does not presume to represent what constitutes Shinto within the Japanese mindset, but is a western interpretation of these major themes. I shall discuss in this section: ancestor worship, purity, *kami*, tabu, talisman and sacred objects and, finally, shamanism.

¹⁴⁰ Shinto-Shirei was also known as the Shinto Directive. It was, according to Kokugakuin's dictionary on Shinto, "Regarding the abolition of government protection, support, supervision and proliferation of State Shintō or shrine Shintō." It guaranteed religious freedom within Japan and abolished state sponsored Shinto.
(see: <http://eos.kokugakuin.ac.jp/modules/xwords/entry.php?entryID=1109>)

1.1 Shinto and Ancestral Tradition.

Historically, we can speak of Shinto as stemming from an agricultural tradition, which influenced its belief structure and development. Firstly, the existence of an early fertility tradition is attested by numerous references in the writings of the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*, which indicates its importance. Hori states that this belief may have stemmed from the evolution of agriculture within early Japanese society. The cyclical nature of agriculture could have given rise to a belief in the cycle of birth, life, maturity, death and then the repetition of the cycle. The importance of the product of this cycle to the early Jomon period (Neolithic) farmers would have been the difference between life and death; hence the crop or seed would have been seen as a gift and the importance of its rise to life as something that would have been encouraged by the early farmers. Hori refers to wheat and rice as being seen as a gift from a supernatural source. This life-giving product would have been perceived as a good indication of an outside source's approval of the people. Hori points to the sacred act of farming, stating that "At the end of each agricultural task, various magico-religious rituals are performed in order to ensure the favorable course of the ripening of wheat or rice plants."¹⁴¹

One could go further and suggest that the discovery of the seed as the source from which all life sprang may have imbued the people with a sense of the importance of the continuity of the plant itself through its previous forms. In my opinion, this could have led to an assessment of past generations as being just as important as the current incarnation, prompting an understanding of the importance of one's ancestors. This concept was slowly transferred from the crop to the individual. By the Asuka period it had become firmly rooted in Japanese consciousness and it would become the main source of worship and

¹⁴¹ Hori, *Folk Religion*, 21.

control of the *uji gami* school of thought. Kato gives a number of examples of the important ancestral figures that were worshipped after death.¹⁴²

The source of the Imperial family, the August Grandchild, provides another excellent example of this. The very fact that the Emperors' ancestry held a supernatural quality, alongside the important wisdom that they continued to receive, gave them a unique position within the Japanese imperial court.¹⁴³

The importance of the ancestor, although not unique to this proto-Shinto or to Japan, is a defining feature of the tradition. The importance of one's ancestors to guide and educate held great significance for the early Japanese people. An example of this is a temple, built during the time of Jimmu-Tenno (660 B.C.E), the first human Emperor, and designed for the worship of Ame-no-Futotama-no-Mikoto, the ancestor of Ame-no-Tomi-no-Mikoto.¹⁴⁴ This is important evidence for the role of the dead in Japan at the time and also demonstrates the prominence attached to the worship of one's ancestors. The building of a temple, in itself an expensive and costly creation, indicates the importance of ancestor worship. The importance of the ancestor during this early period led to the integration of the ancestor into the household in the form of a small shrine, which was symbolic of that family's dedication to those who had come before. Indeed, the ancestor, worshipped in this way, was considered more than just a guide to the early people but also a protector or guardian to that family within their home. The social model created by Hori offers a useful framework for understanding how the early folk traditions contributed to the overall development of the ancestral system within Shinto.

¹⁴² Kato, Genchi *A Study of Shinto: The Religion of the Japanese Nation* (2 volumes; Tokyo: Curzon Press, 1971), Vol. 2, 51.

¹⁴³ Hori, *Folk Religion*, 20.

¹⁴⁴ Ame-no-Futotama-no-Mikoto was the heavenly *Kami* who accompanied Ninigi-no-Mikoto when he descended to earth. He is considered to be the ancestor of the Shinto priestly Family who served as ritualists at the Yamato court. Ame-no-Tomi-no-Mikoto built a palace for Emperor Jimmu and introduced the cultivation of hemp and blackberries. Ninigi-no-Mikoto became the first ruler of Japan. For further information, see: Frédéric, Louis *Japan Encyclopedia* (Harvard University Press 2002) p. 28, 311.

1.1.A Uji Gami

Two systems of society existed in early Japan. Both emphasised the authority and importance of the familial society, which was to influence subsequent generations and was integral to the development of the clan or tribal structure that became the prevalent social system by the sixteenth century. The first system was the *uji gami* type (guardian shrine system), based, in particular, around the family or clan system. This particular type of belief emphasised the importance of the ancestors within the immediate family. The family formed a hierarchy, with the ancestors at the top, guiding the family, and, immediately below the ancestors, the father or eldest male. The patriarchal family unit worked towards the continuation of the family name and the work that their ancestors started before them. This work is carried out by all members of the family and is controlled and protected by the patriarch. Emphasis in this tradition is placed on *ko* (filial piety) and ancestor worship, the ancestors often embodying both *kami* and ancestor. The collective takes precedence over the individual, the individual resembling a cog in a giant and complex device. Upon death, an individual's wisdom is embraced by the ancestors; their individuality is merged with a community of ancestors to continue guiding the family that has been left behind. This school accentuates a sense of elitism of the family or tribal group, with the importance of their work stressed over that of other tribes or families.

The emphasis on this work leaves the spiritual role of the ancestor vague; only the work is considered important enough to warrant defined spiritual roles or powers. This singular goal orientated perspective also lends itself to conflict with other tribes or familial groups, as their mission may not coincide with the mission of the tribe in question. This style of worship is best exemplified by the Imperial Family in the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*. Their authority was granted by their Ancestors, and primarily by the August-Grandchild, was controlled by the Emperor, a patriarchal leader, and focused on the continuation of the work begun by his ancestors. Each action of each patriarch was guided by the one

preceding him, allowing for a continuation within both texts of the works set out by their predecessors.

Several groups called *ko* would exist in both communities at the time. These groups were identifiable with the region from which they came, an indicator not just of geographical location but also of the importance of the *kami* that dominated that particular group. This common framework is also a good indicator of the nature-worshipping society that existed at the time. Such groups were best served by the *uji gami* system of worship, which dominated particular *ko*, through a need for a constant mission and familial structure. Examples of these groups would be: *Ta-no-kami-ko* (*ko* for the *kami* of the rice-field), *Yama-no-kami-ko* (*ko* for the *kami* of the mountain), *Hi-machi-ko* (*ko* for awaiting and worshipping the rising sun), *Nijusanya-ko* (*ko* for awaiting and worshipping the rising moon on the twenty-third night of the lunar month), *Koyasu-ko* (*ko* for praying to the *koyasu kannon* (*Kannon Bodhisattva*) for easy delivery and protection of children), *Koshi* or *Kinoene-ko* (*ko* for Daikoku deity, a guardian of the household and good fortune on the day of the elder rat), *Koshin-ko* (*ko* for *Koshin* deity on the day of the monkey, a complex act of worship that had various functions).¹⁴⁵

Each group worked around the basis of worship that their ancestors began, allowing an elitist village structure to emerge within each *ko*. This elitist group would have no need for a shaman leader, as the worship of the collective is simply a continuation of the worship laid down by its ancestors, who continued to guide. The practice of worshipping a collection of *kami* related to particular aspects of nature, for example the mountain, or fertility, or the easy delivery of children, allows us to draw a clear connection between the style of worship and the importance of nature to the folk-traditions at the time.

¹⁴⁵ Hori, *Folk Religion*, 39.

This system is a good indication of how early Shinto developed its concept of ancestral worship. Was there a sense of continuity between the concept of the ancestor during the Meiji period, as described by Hori, and that of later generations? I shall continue by briefly looking at the role of the ancestors during Edo. In the sociological development of Edo Japan, there was a distinctive redevelopment of Japanese thought surrounding the ancestors, not in terms of their role, but in terms of integrating them into the new feudal system that had developed during this period.¹⁴⁶

1.1.B The Meiji Period and Ancestral Evolution

The further development of the ancestral system was reinforced during the Meiji period by the role that the Emperor played within Japanese culture.¹⁴⁷ The state developed the image of the Emperor as the father of Japan, and the Imperial Family as representing the national family to which all Japanese belonged.

During this period, within the divergent traditions of the Sect Shinto movement that existed outside of State Shinto, there were further developments in the concepts of ancestor. Article 3 of the Shinrikyo refers to the importance of the ancestors in the continuation of its tradition:

Article III. We of this Church repudiate such heresies and delusions as contempt for rulers and fathers and the severing of ancestral lines. We make plain the relations of Sovereign and subjects, entertain deep gratitude towards our ancestral origin, foster the study of word-spirits contained in the doctrine of fifty sounds of the old tradition of Isokoto-no-Sukune who received the last

¹⁴⁶ See the discussion of the Loyalty and Goal systems in Part A, sections 1.2.D and 1.2.E. When we discuss the different stages of Shinto, we can see an early period, which can be seen as the development of Shinto up to just prior to Edo, a central period of Shinto which stems from Edo to Meiji, the Meiji period during which State Shinto is given to rise and finally the later generation which is post WWII Shinto.

¹⁴⁷ See Part A, section 1.5.

instructions of Nigi-Hayahi-no-Mikoto¹⁴⁸, teach sacred writings and drawing in order to stimulate national customs and have revived the sacred music and dancing, flower arrangement and the tea ceremony in order to preserve the ancient way of etiquette.¹⁴⁹

This indicates a clear sense of the continuing importance of the ancestors within contemporary Shinto and points to the contribution that Sect Shinto made in terms of the concept of *kami*. The need to validate concepts inherent in Shinto, such as ancestral veneration, in terms of its importance within the national psyche of Japan was evident. In the Shinrikyo, this was also emphasised in the second precept, which states, “Do not forget your obligation to your ancestors.”¹⁵⁰

In a similar manner, Shusei Ha (another branch of Sect Shinto) emphasised the importance of the ancestors and, by extension, the family. There was a focus on improvement for one’s family and future generations, which paralleled ancestral veneration and, to a degree, was almost the reverse of the more traditional concept of ancestral obligation. Instead of working towards that which one’s ancestors have worked towards, one worked to create a better environment for one’s future.

1.1.C Taisho and Showa Periods and the Ancestors

The dynamic shift in life after 1945, left many questions as to how Shinto would continue to exist, including the key question of the meaning of the ancestors in this new world. Morioka Kiyomi, alongside many other scholars, had emphasised the issues involved in redefining Shinto in terms of post war Japan; my analysis,

¹⁴⁸ Nigi-Hayahi-no-Mikoto is the child of Amaterasu and a powerful chieftain. His ancestor Isokoto-no-Sukune is purported to have revived the ancient traditions of the *kami*. See: Holtom, *National Faith* P196

¹⁴⁹ Holtom, *National Faith of Japan*, 197.

¹⁵⁰ Holtom, *National Faith of Japan*, 199

however, is limited to the new role of the ancestors in post-Meiji Shinto. There is an almost paradoxical attitude to the ancestors in modern Japanese culture. Whilst many could argue that there is a sense of decline in religion and faith in the modern world, my personal experience in interaction with Japanese people is that ancestors continue to hold an important place in Japanese culture. It even permeates home décor. Nelson¹⁵¹ in his study of household altars, discusses the *butsudan* has evolved in style to harmonise with modern interior design. The important place of the ancestors seems to be very individualistic, transcending any real societal pattern, such as age, economic factors or education. I shall present three personal accounts from three very different people (in chronological order) that exemplify this feature of contemporary Japan.

The first account is of a 30 year old nurse (2010)¹⁵², studying English in Ireland, who was faced with a decision about travel in Europe. This was very difficult for her and something that she was very concerned about. We discussed the problem at length, and then she said to me, “I will go and ask my grandparents about this.” I asked her if she was going to contact them that night as it would be very late in Japan. She told me that they were dead, and she explained that she prayed to her grandparents and great-grandparents regularly for advice when things were difficult for her. This was not strange or unusual to her at all; in fact it was as regular as everything else in her life. The woman was not especially religious, though she kept a small image of the Buddha on her desk.

In contrast, the second account concerns a 30 year old doctor in Japan (2011). In the tatami room of her home is a small box, in which is kept a small bone belonging to her great-grandfather. The box is kept in a small press, and taken out on occasions by her parents when they seek advice. The woman herself,

¹⁵¹ Nelson, John. “Household Altars in Contemporary Japan: Rectifying Buddhist “Ancestor Worship” with Home Décor and Consumer Choice.” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 35/2 (Nanzan. 2008) 305-330.

¹⁵² Represents the year the interview took place.

however, looks on the idea with disdain, stating that if the ancestors do exist, it is not for the benefit of those of us living here now. What was most interesting about her attitude was not that she did not venerate her ancestors, but that she seemed to retain a degree of acceptance of their existence, as agnostic as this was. When I pressed her further to explain why, if her family were willing to accept her ancestors, she was not, she told me that this was an old empty tradition that had been carried forward, but that should have disappeared with the war. Yet, on New Year's Eve, we went to a large shrine where we prayed extensively to the *kami* for a good new year. When asked about this seeming contradiction in attitude, she responded that the *kami* are all around us and deserve our respect.

Later that evening, I went to visit a teacher of *koryu bujutsu*¹⁵³ in Tokyo (2011), aged in his sixties. I had been invited to watch a demonstration by a group of his most senior students. I entered the building and was welcomed by the teacher. We watched the demonstration with interest and when it was complete I noticed that each student in turn bowed to a portrait on the wall. I enquired why, and was informed that it was the previous instructor of the dojo, who now kept watch over the students who were training there.

These three accounts, out of many conversations with many different people, signify for me the inherent importance of ancestor worship within Japanese cultural faith, and how it seems to have transcended the assumption that faith would have been more strongly maintained among the older generations. It seems, given the fluid nature of Japanese faith development, that faith also extends to the younger generation of people. This, however, is a very small sample of people and is derived from personal experience rather than from any

¹⁵³ *Koryu Bujutsu* refers to the classical martial arts that originated in Japan. Very often these particular martial arts are closely connected with shrines or temples. In the case of my own experience, it is related to the school called *Tenshin Shoden Katori Shinto Ryu*, one of the oldest martial arts in Japan. It is closely linked to the *Katori Shrine* in Kashima.

quantifiable data. We can, however, discuss these in terms of three divisions of Japanese perspectives on ancestor worship:

1. A concrete view of ancestors based upon direct experience.
2. A conceptualized experience based upon indirect experience.
3. An ideological abstract view of the ancestors, which is a concept developed as an ideology, surpassing the sphere of experience and transcending the actual blood related lineage.¹⁵⁴

A reflection of the divisions within this framework can be seen in my three accounts of encounters with Shinto belief. In the first, we have someone who holds to ancestral worship based on direct experience, and through this experience, the ancestors play a tenable and real role in her life. We can also see the third division in the final story, where students venerated the ancestor of the dojo, not an actual blood relation but a figurehead who had transcended the blood lineage barrier in ancestral worship, although this may be more common than is sometimes assumed, considering that, traditionally, many people venerated the Emperor in a similar fashion. In the 1930s, this common ideology of the ancestor and its place within the family, and which is relevant to our discussion, was delineated by Tomoeda Takahiko:

Thus we respect our ancestors, become conscious of ourselves, and bear a love towards our offspring. "Ancestor-worship" is only a general term for this principle. A Japanese family is centered about the father. He is not, however, considered individually, but rather as a representative of the ancestors. For the Japanese it has been a matter of boast to talk of one's ancestors. When the warriors of feudal times met in battle it was

¹⁵⁴ Morioka Kiyomi, "The Appearance of 'Ancestor Religion' in Modern Japan: The Years of Transition from Meiji to Taisho Periods," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 4.2-3 (1977), 184.

customary for them to proclaim their names and those of their ancestors. The whole of the Japanese nation is thought of as one family having the Imperial House as its head. It is from this family-institution that the mutual respect and love of parent and child, brother and sister, and of all family relationships spring. From this institution both village and national communities have also developed. In a Japanese family the family ancestors are worshipped.¹⁵⁵

Although Tomoeda was writing at the height of nationalistic Meiji-Taisho period Japan, at the core of his nationalistic rhetoric were central convictions about ancestry as it was seen and still is seen in Japan. In this perspective, ancestry is familial, binding households together through their common ancestry, still seen in the respect given to the older generations and to their ancestors even today. There has been a change, however, in the manner in which ancestral worship is followed in modern society. There have been a number of more subtle changes, which have been brought about by low birth rates and new western-influenced ideas of identity and death. This has led to the development of a number of new funeral forms. Examples of this include the tree burial (*jumokusō*), where a tree replaces the tombstone and so the burial ground becomes an ecological cemetery. This preserves the identity of the individual through the creation of a vast forestland.¹⁵⁶

In this practice, the shift from the deceased person joining the collective ancestors to becoming seen in a much more individualistic way reflects a subtle shift in society towards an understanding of the importance of individuality, especially in death, as a recognition of what individuals have contributed to society. For example, bringing gifts of food to certain ancestors as an act of respect remembers them as still an active part of the family, and affirms that they share in the pleasure of the gift that they have been given. Furthermore, on the remembrance day

¹⁵⁵ Tomoeda Takahiko, "The Essence of Shinto," *Pacific Affairs* 3.4 (1930), 346-347.

¹⁵⁶ Boret, Sebastien "From Social to Ecological Immortality: Ancestor Worship, Ecological Cemeteries and Identity in Contemporary Japanese Society," *Japan Anthropology Workshop* 3(2010), 1.

of an individual, the offering of that person's favourite food is given to them as a token of respect and a demonstration that what they have enjoyed is still remembered.¹⁵⁷

This recognition of constant participation in the household can transcend it. Taking the case of my friend who took her grandparents with her as an example, it seems that one can bring the spirits to wherever one considers home at any time. Hence, in modern society the importance of ancestors has not been lost, but has changed and evolved within the framework of the modern world. In times of crisis, many Japanese return to this worship as a way of stabilising focus for themselves. It is more than just a faith activity but also something deeply ingrained within the identity of the Japanese people.

¹⁵⁷ Smith, "Ancestor Worship," 33-34.

1.2 *Kami*

The development and status of *kami* is one of the most important aspects of Shinto and one of the major themes that have evolved throughout its history. *Kami*, more than anything else, define modern Shinto and still hold a deep importance for many Japanese today. The *Kami* have become a distinct and well-documented area of study. Here, my aim is to provide a brief outline of the development of *Kami* as a central theme to Shinto. Yamamoto Yukitaka explained how important the *kami* are and emphasized that the very meaning of Shinto is “The way of the *kami*.”¹⁵⁸ This name was given to Shinto during the sixth century C.E. by Buddhism to distinguish it from the Buddhist traditions that were being taught at the time. This implies that the veneration of *kami* was a normal practice prior to the entry of Buddhism, emphasizing how important the *kami* were to the people of Japan.

One of the earliest Japanese folk worship systems was the *hito kami* (man-god system). This system is based around a close relationship between a specific *kami* and a shaman figure.¹⁵⁹

The concept of a strong religious or charismatic leader is not unique to Japan, and could be compared, for example, with the prophetic tradition in ancient Israel. Whereas, however, there is a constant in the form of the deity that concerned itself with the affairs of Israel, the *kami* in the Japanese context were highly individual, with their own unique needs. Each shaman, likewise, was unique but both would have a profound effect on believers and followers. This concept of *kami* represents a much more domineering spirit that commands obedience and respect; the concept of familial obligation is focused primarily on the *kami* that dominated that village, rather than one’s ancestors. The position of the ancestors in the *uji kami* system of worship is replaced in this system by the

¹⁵⁸ Yamamoto, Yukitaka *Kami no Michi* (Tsubaki American Publications, 1987). 69.

¹⁵⁹ Hori, *Folk Religion*, 31.

importance of the *kami*, who had more power than the ancestors. This system, however, also recognized the transactional nature of the relationship between the *kami* and the community. As it was important that both parties kept the contract, the shaman was an intercessor on behalf of the community. The *kami* could be used as a political tool by the shamans, giving rise to a theocratic governing system in the villages, with the shaman capable of applying both blessings and curses on the villagers. This system was reliant on the sense of the here and now, rather than of the afterlife. This could easily result in a situation where “The charismatic personages could easily be deified by their relationship with the *hito-gami*.”¹⁶⁰

The capacity for human beings to transcend their mortal status, approaching immortality through their deification as a *kami*, and attaining their own form of duty in protecting and commanding, through a conduit, their own villages, pervades proto-Shinto. This form of worship, however, reflects the ethical and social viewpoint of early Japan and, as in the *uji kami* system, the requirements of *on* and *ho-on* are strictly enforced. This obligation to allow the recipient to return something for blessings or favours follows a strict hierarchy, reflected not only in the villages but also in Japanese society as a whole. It permeates the very nature of Japanese religious experience. The Japanese social system reflects family relationships. These relationships are regulated by a patriarchal figure and each person is responsible to the one above them. For example, the Emperor would be responsible to the ancestors for his behavior and conduct. This system does not allow for the concept of a singular God. Even *Kami* are part of an obligatory system.¹⁶¹

This can be discerned best in the *Kojiki*, in the form of the responsibilities and obligations held by each divine being, even the founder of the royal line – the August Grandchild having obligations to his father. The sense of dependence on a

¹⁶⁰ Hori, *Folk Religion*, 31.

¹⁶¹ Quoted by Hori, *Folk Religion*, 32.

higher authority reflects the need of the Japanese people for validation and this pervades early Japanese religious experience. The deification of human beings in the *hito kami* tradition clearly reflects how the concepts of *on* and *ho-on* continue beyond mortal life into the life of the spirit. In contrast to the indirect leadership of the ancestors, the *kami* has a direct conduit in the form of the shaman. This figure transmits the needs and commands of the *kami* and acts as his presence within the group of worshippers. As such, the *hito kami* system reflects a varied tradition that allows for a wide range of followers, in contrast to the *uji kami* system. The *hito kami* system strictly entailed the worship of a particular *kami*; the work of a shaman allows for a much broader range of accessibility to various temples and shrines. The *ko* in the *hito kami* system allows those who represent it to visit certain shrines or to hold a connection with a specific religious body or shrine association. It can also be seen in the choice of those who climb the sacred mountains.¹⁶²

By the time of the completion of the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*, the *hito kami* system appeared in place. The importance of lineage through the roles played by both Izanagi and Izanami, and the symbiotic relationship between both the divine and humanity formed the foundation from which the worship of the *kami* stems. The important role played by Susa-no-wo as saviour and destroyer, a deity to be placated, reinforces the concept of the *kami* guardian deserving worship and, in return, aiding those that require assistance. There is a clear and distinct *hito kami* school of thought demonstrated through the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*. In these texts, Imperial Shinto comes to represent the more overt form of the *hito kami* through the emphasis on, and flamboyant worship of the charismatic leader (the Emperor), alongside the need for a holy man or shaman to aid in channelling the need of the *kami*, which, I suggest, is seen in the evolution of the Shinto Priest. It is also common to see the importance of this intercessor in continuing the relationship between the communities and the *kami* figures described in the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*. The understanding of the *kami* as being in some way equivalent to what other cultures

¹⁶² Hori, *Folk Religion*, 39.

consider Gods is important here. Whilst they cannot be considered gods in the same way that many western traditions think of deities, their nature as creators (for example, Izanagi and Izanami) can often be mistaken for holding a similar nature to what a Christian would consider to be the divine.

1.2.A Blending of Buddhism and Shinto: Kofun Period to Edo Period

One of the major changes during this period was the fusion of Buddhism and Shinto. This had a major impact on the people's understanding of Shinto tradition, as well as demonstrating the fluid nature of Shinto. In relation to the *kami*, the impact of the fusion between Buddhism and Shinto was not as simple as reducing their position in society. To assume that the *kami* would simply be accepted in the role of secondary spirits to that of the Buddha greatly underestimated the importance of *kami* in Japan. Buddhism maintained that the *kami* were used by Buddha to allow for a closer interaction with the Japanese people, and also noted that this allowed for the creation of the "angry spirits", figures of some influence who had died in tragic circumstances and who would return to take revenge on those who had forsaken them in life. This angry spirit worked best to remind others of its presence and authority through the use of curses and in the nature of its return. The need to placate these spirits often produced new rituals that were combined with Buddhist mantras to create either an effective form of exorcism, or forms of veneration to aid in the prevention of the disease or disaster associated with the spirit in question.

Divergence from contemporary ancestor worship is also evident. Normally the spirit of one who died either passed into the land of Yomi or became an advisor to his family unit. Now we see the development of a concept of spirit that can exist outside the norms of the early folk traditions; such a spirit is not confined by the barriers that existed in relation to the *kami* at the time. This creates a much more human form of spiritual being, one that is directly linked to humanity and yet has not quite ascended to the status of the *kami*. This creature, seemingly trapped between worlds, might appear simply as a spirit with unfinished

business, but with one major divergence. The idea, found in many cultures, that the living could identify and provide what the spirit wished or needed to complete its journey, is remarkably absent from the Japanese tradition. In fact, it is quite the opposite; it seems that the spirit remains trapped within this realm. As a result, there is an acceptance that this spirit, although not precisely *kami*, must be dealt with in some way similar to the *kami*.

The status of the Emperor was defined more clearly during this time and his position as a living *kami* is important for understanding the role of *kami* during this period. Whilst the encounter with Buddhism had transformed aspects of Shinto, the Emperor remained in a unique position. Every effort towards perfection represented the Japanese debt to both the Gods and the Emperor who together were striving to make Japan strong and, in return, being granted the strength and protection of the spirits, as manifested in the Imperial Dynasty. In this, and in the concept of the Emperor's obligation to the *kami* as their earthly representative, both the *kami* and Buddhas have a dual role. The dual position of the *kami* in relation to the Buddhas is mirrored in the Emperor's dual role as both divine being and child of the *kami*, and also as the protector of Buddhism. Buddhism is fitted into the ideology of the Imperial house in a way that suits the thinking already in place: the Emperor maintains his divinity but also becomes a protector of Buddhism. His role adapts to incorporate an imported religion, but this religion is also adapted to a subservient role. This implied that Buddhism's place in Japan was protected not only by the Imperial house but also by the *kami* themselves. Although Buddhism gained considerable prominence, it still had to contend with traditional Japanese beliefs. However this did not stop it from subsuming Shinto into its belief structures to such an extent that the two became closely linked to one another. There were rare examples of the opposite being true, for example the Ise Shrine in the 14th century, which in turn allowed for Shinto to maintain enough of its identity to successfully separate from Buddhist tradition during the Meiji Period.

1.2.B Meiji Period

During the Meiji period, however, we begin to see the final stages in the evolution of the *kami*. Their importance in the move towards a unified nation of Japan cannot be overestimated. State Shinto reinforced the image and importance of the *kami* to the people, and the connection between *kami* and the Emperor. Whilst the natural development of Shinto had been corrupted, the unique nature of Shinto had been ingrained in the Japanese people as something that was part of their culture and entirely unique to them.¹⁶³

There was a dynamic shift in the role and importance attributed to the *kami* in State Shinto. The agenda of the Meiji government, when developing State Shinto, aimed at ensuring that the Emperor was recognized as the descendant of the *kami*. Two hundred and fourteen *kami* could be worshipped in State Shinto; in the attempt to emphasize the uniqueness of Japan in the wider world, State Shinto actively limited the number of unique spirits that existed in Japan at the time, acknowledging barely a quarter of the existent *kami*.

In contrast, Sect Shinto took a number of different approaches to *kami* worship, predominantly maintaining the common concept of *kami*, with only slight modification. An example of this is found in the texts of Shinto Honkyoku (now known as Shinto Taikyo, a branch of Sect Shinto founded in 1973), which describes the people saying:

[We] are made of one line with the *kami* by direct descent through our ancestors of a specific endowment of tendencies and aptitudes and if we permit this innate disposition to find normal expression, we achieve spontaneously, filial piety, loyalty and love of fellowmen.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ Holtom, *National Faith of Japan*, 180.

¹⁶⁴ Holtom, *National Faith of Japan*, 195.

All the creative energy in the universe was attributed to the *kami*. This creative energy appears as life, implying that *kami* are an active part of the world, pervading Japanese society. In Shinto Honkyoku, the concept of the beautiful arises from the understanding that all beauty stems from the Shinto shrines. The *kami* create a vision of ultimate beauty that can only be understood through appropriate veneration in their shrines. All the Japanese are descended from the *kami* through their ancestors and, through this connection; they hold a greater capacity for filial piety, loyalty and love of those around them. This indicates the element of nationalistic pride that is clearly of great importance to the Shinto Honkyoku. Through the ancestors' connection to the *kami* the Japanese are connected to their land through loyalty not only to Japan but also to their fellow people.

In contrast, other Sect Shinto groups attempted to reinterpret *Kami* in their own way, which in turn contributed to the overall understanding of *kami* in Shinto. Shinrikyo took a very different approach to the concept of the *kami*. The divine can be treated as God, with the role of the *kami* mirroring that of angels or saints. Jikko Kyo, on the other hand, focuses much more on the understanding of *kami* in folk tradition, with a greater focus on the worship of the mountain *kami*, for example, *Fuji sama*. The mountains themselves are the homes of the *kami* rather than of humans, barren places that are devoid of any real attempts at human habitation. This resulted in considerable growth in mountain veneration, reflecting the belief that the *kami* of the mountains were both powerful and awe-inspiring. The mountains were important just by their sheer mass.¹⁶⁵

They were not only a home of *kami* but also a meeting point between humanity and the *kami*. The connection they offer between life on earth and the divine and spirit worlds is so important that they receive a defined place in the rituals of the *bon* festival, which welcomes the dead back to their homes, with lanterns and

¹⁶⁵ Hori, *Folk Religion*, 143-144.

candles leading from the mountains back to the various villages, towns and cities.

Dr Ariyoshi Saeki reinterpreted the *kami* in light of the new context of Meiji wartime Japan. He saw that the *kami* were reflected in anything that could stimulate wonder or awe. The association became a positive one, during which time evil *kami* were sifted out and what remained were these powerful positive beings. The Emperor was seen as a living *kami* and Amaterasu became the highest ancestor.¹⁶⁶ This interpretation of *kami* by Saeki outlines the major scholarly concept of *kami* during this period, reflecting the evolution of a new understanding of *kami* within the framework of nationalist Meiji Japan.

1.2.C *Kami* and the New Shinto

The end of World War II was probably one of the most traumatic periods experienced in the history of Shinto, with the religion being broken down and rebuilt into something that would not be deemed a threat to the West. The declaration by the Emperor that he was not divine was characteristic of this process. This forced Shinto as a whole, and by extension the *kami*, to be viewed in a new light. The Shinto Shirei, or 'Shinto Directive', established a new understanding of the ideas found in Shinto. Primarily, there was a transition from State Shinto to Jinja, or Shrine Shinto. Whilst this might have seemed like a major turnaround for its practitioners, in reality it was a smooth transition, and resulted in a revised understanding of the role of the *kami*.

State Shinto was effectively abolished by the following articles:

Article 20: Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State, nor exercise any political authority. No person shall be compelled to

¹⁶⁶ Holtom, *National Faith of Japan*, 393.

take part in any religious act, celebration, rite or practice. The State and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity.¹⁶⁷

Article 89: No public money or other property shall be expended or appropriated for the use, benefit or maintenance of any religious institution or association, or for any charitable, educational or benevolent enterprises not under the control of public authority.¹⁶⁸

These articles removed government control over Shinto, and also removed the provision of religious education in schools. Within this framework, the new modern Shrine Shinto developed in a context shaped by the removal of the Emperor's role in Shinto and the removal of any official or governmental control.

Shinto retains many of the concepts that were developed in pre-Meiji times and early in the Meiji era. In post war Japan, older rigid structures have been replaced by a more naturalistic understanding of Shinto and *kami* within the new Japan. Whilst the economy is a major problem for the practical Japan today, it is tempered by a new understanding and scholarly outlook on what makes the faith of Japan unique and special. This is reflected in the reinterpretation of *kami* by earlier scholars such as Saeki, Holtom, and others. A simplified, yet fresh look at the role of *kami* ties it closely with the concept of *Musubi*, which is connected with fertility. This in turn represents a connection between all things within this world, a binding that connects everything within what is called the Great Nature. The *kami* are a direct result of *Musubi*, and represent the connection between this world and the spirit world.

The modern *kami* can hence be described as follows:

¹⁶⁷ Ashizu Yoshihiko, "The Shinto Directive and Constitution," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 1.2 (1960), 21.

¹⁶⁸ Ashizu, "Shinto Directive," 26.

Among the elements that made up the content of ancient ideas about Kami - etymologically "Kami" is thought to have been identical with "superior" (kami) - the most powerful was the worship of the natural objects of heaven and earth (such as heavenly bodies, mountains, rivers, fields, seas, rain, and wind), but also of birds, beasts, insects, trees, wood, grass, and minerals. The next most important element was the worship of great men, heroes, or leaders. The two types were often fused. Aside from Kami that were identified with concrete objects, there were cases of a deification of the power that resided in nature or men.¹⁶⁹

The *kami* that have evolved are now capable of being developed from anything natural or created. The idea that *kami* can come not only from nature, but also from the human sphere, demonstrates the wide application of the *kami* concept within modern society. This connection brings the *kami* closer to humanity, and makes them both immanent and transcendent. They are immanent because of their immediacy within both nature and the real world, whilst transcending the barriers within the spirit world and this one with ease. This sense of the connection between humanity and *kami* is much more deep and intimate than in previous tradition, not only in terms of the role of *kami* as spirit but also as divine power and inspiration. This closeness between humanity and *kami* can be described as follows:

The standard translation of kami is "deity," a word suggesting the Western concept of a transcendental divinity such as in the Judaeo-Christian God. But the gulf between divinity and humanity found in the Judaic religions does not exist in Shinto. Even though the Shinto kami are given credit for creating various parts of the

¹⁶⁹ Muraoka Tsunetsugu, *Studies in Shinto Thought* (Classics of Modern Japanese Thought and Culture, Documentary Reference Collections; Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1964), 51.

universe, kami are neither omniscient nor omnipotent, and unlike the ancient Greek gods, they are not necessarily immortal.¹⁷⁰

Kami share the human potential for failing, akin to the gods of ancient Greece. Whilst they are spiritual and otherworldly, they are also flawed, lacking omnipotence or omniscience, and reacting in a manner very similar to humans. This helps reinforce the deep connection between the spiritual and the physical, and, in some ways, contradicts the attitudes of early authors such as Ueda Akinari (1734-1809), who, in his treatise of *kokugaku*, stated that a Buddhist could aspire to enlightenment and a Confucianist could become a sage, but no one could become *kami*. What makes this view distinctive is its clearly defined separation between the spiritual and the physical; this is, however, no longer as persuasive an interpretation today. And, although the ideas of Akinari can be seen to be somewhat outdated, given the general acceptance of the connection between both realms, comparing them with more modern views clearly demonstrates how understandings of the *kami* have evolved and adapted beyond the Tokugawa scholarly approach.

Westerners who have attempted to approach Shinto have often failed to create an appropriate comparative for the concept of *kami*. Often the comparison is to that of 'gods', which is inadequate because it does not accurately portray their transcendent nature. The multitude of representations that *kami* can take is important here. For example, they can be living, i.e., the Emperor, or ancestors can become *kami* after death. Human made objects can be *kami*, as can natural objects. Another misconception is that the *kami* inhabits the object. This is contradictory to the nature of the *kami*, who actually is the object. The best term to use then is "sacred presence." For example, the unmarked *tori* gate on Mount Fuji, which reflects the *kami* nature of the mountain.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Matsuma Takeshi, "Early Kami Worship," *The Cambridge History of Japan*, vol. 1 (6 volumes; Vol. 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 231.

¹⁷¹ Kasulis, *Shinto*, 441.

This succinctly reinforces a close connection between *kami* and the physical. The role of *kami* is expanded to be something that can be created or made, not just something in nature, thus imbuing them with a much greater sense of presence and a more transcendental existence within this world. Their role goes beyond the normal western perspectives of sacred beings and objects. Within modern Shinto, there is no sense of separation between any of the concepts of nature, spirit or sacred creation. The *kami* pervades all and can be considered a constant sacred presence.

My own interpretation of *kami* builds, in part, on Kasulis's work. In my view, the concept of *kami* was consistently compartmentalized for many years, from early Tokugawa right through to State Shinto, where there was an attempt to define the undefinable. The all-pervasive nature of *kami* is one of its most important aspects, which is often overlooked. In the process of making a *kami* a God or a spirit, there is a reluctance to accept that the *kami* transcends all of these roles. *Kami* is at the heart of Japanese spirituality; but, because of the transcendental nature of the *kami*, it is very difficult to define and cannot be contained within a single concept. The *kami* is part of the Japanese cultural spirit. It is, in essence, the faith of Japan, an all-encompassing spiritual essence that exists in many forms. Hence *kami* can exist not only as a spirit or God but also as an aspect of nature. *Kami* moves freely between these ideas and also exists as a single spiritual essence, encompassing all elements of Japanese faith. Where ancestor represents obligation, *kami* represents hope. The attempt to nationalize Shinto represented an attempt to empower the *kami* for a particular purpose whilst at the same time stripping it of its more problematic and indefinable aspects. This attempt at definition had a detrimental effect, reducing *kami* to a captured symbol within a shrine instead of recognizing its value as a Primal spiritual essence. In summary:

1. The *kami* is an all-pervasive entity.
2. Its existence transcends any particular state, e.g., God or spirit.

3. *Kami* represents a positive, intrinsic, spiritual aspect of Japanese culture, with roots dating back to early folk traditions.
4. The subsuming of the *kami* into Buddhism assisted in creating a perception of the role of the *kami* as limited.
5. The *kami* is a communal spiritual essence, and as such it is part of the communal aspect of Japan.
6. The *kami* is not limited to a nationalistic concept of Japan but predates the concept of Japanese nationalism.
7. *Kami* is a positive communal force that encourages positive, pro-active communal action within Japanese society.

1.3 The Land of the Dead and Shinto Funeral Practice

When death occurs, mourning is observed for more than ten days, during which period they do not eat meat. The head mourners wail and lament, while friends sing, dance and drink liquor. When the funeral is over, all members of the family go into the water to cleanse themselves in a bath of purification.¹⁷²

In Shinto, the ancestors and *kami* are the primary answer to the age-old question of what happens after death, and in this respect Shinto can be seen as more focused on this world rather than the next.

One of them is the question of where the spirit goes after death. There are inherent problems with the material from the early period of Shinto, in this case the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*, as the information they yield is limited and so, therefore, are any presumptions that can be built from the stories they contain. A second issue is that a majority of rituals to do with death were taken over by Buddhism after its arrival in the eighth century, leaving Shinto with no real reason to develop a concept of life after death outside of the role of the ancestor and *kami*. This leaves us with the references from the *Kojiki*. Before examining the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*, I shall first look at the issues the land of Yomi has created for scholars of Japanese culture. There is disagreement between scholars as to whether or not the land of Yomi truly represents the land of the dead, or whether it is simply an anomaly based around the death of Izanami.

There are two theories in regards to the land of the dead.¹⁷³ The first views the land of Yomi as a land of the dead. Scholars, such as Muraoka, who hold this view, argue that “Yomi was the hated, polluted place where souls went after death”.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Tsunoda. Quoted in de Bary *Sources*, 5.

¹⁷³ Doerner, David L. “Comparative Analysis of Life and Death in Folk Shinto and Christianity,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 4,3 (1977).

¹⁷⁴ Muraoka, *Shinto Thought*, 23.

Some argue that Yomi is in some ways similar to a type of hell.¹⁷⁵ A second view opposes this; it claims that too much is being read into the text, and that in fact the early Japanese did not give the afterlife much thought. Hirata wrote “It is quite wrong to think that the soul goes to Yomi-no-kuni after death. The ancient Japanese people never pondered over such matters.”¹⁷⁶ Doerner follows the same line of argument, as does Herbert.¹⁷⁷

Doerner argues in favour of a theory put forward by Hirata, which focuses not so much upon the land of the dead and more on the dead becoming *kami*; he argues that humanity is destined to become *kami* based upon the way they live their lives.¹⁷⁸

This offers an alternative interpretation of the concept of the dead, with an afterlife in the form of *kami*, becoming the most important role that the soul takes on. That Hirata speaks of a realm of dimness indicates a place of separation, although he is unclear as to ‘where’ this place is. This concept of an afterlife is also closely connected with this realm, giving a sense of the symbiotic relationship between the world of dimness and the world of the living. It is possible to claim that this description fits the land of Yomi, changing the view of the land from a land of the dead to a kind of holding ground for the spirits before they continue into their next transition. This interpretation, however, is also problematic because it relies excessively on a single story in an early text.

Konoshi (1984) raises a number of criticisms about the land of Yomi, although these are primarily focused on the idea of the land and its location rather than on the mythical quality of the land itself. His examination of where Yomi is placed challenges the tomb period theory of Philippi and others, claiming that there is

¹⁷⁵ Tomoeda, “Essence,” 347.

¹⁷⁶ Quoted by Herbert, *Shinto*, 66.

¹⁷⁷ Doerner, “Comparative Analysis,” 154.

¹⁷⁸ Herbert, *Shinto*, 66.

not enough written about Yomi.¹⁷⁹ There is further argument against this theory by Matsumura Takeo, who claims that the land of Yomi appears to be an underground country, that also manifests itself on the same level as and a great distance away from *Ashihara no Nakatsukuni*.¹⁸⁰

This throws into light the problematic nature of Yomi, especially given that it is only referenced briefly by Izanagi's visit there, posing the question as to how valid Yomi is as a location for the land of the dead. Yet, whether it was traditionally perceived to be the land of the dead or not, Yomi is now seen as representative of that place. It is difficult to give a definitive answer to the question of whether it is merely a holding ground for spirits, or the actual land of the dead. With scholarship in conflict over its status, I would argue that the common perception of Yomi in modern Shinto is that it is the land of the dead, and I examine the text from this perspective. Although there is no scholarly consensus on this, my aim is to analyse the common understanding of key themes in Shinto for comparative purposes and, as such, the debate as to the legitimacy of seeing Yomi as the true land of the dead falls outside the scope of this work.

The understanding of death demonstrates a very pragmatic interpretation of the land of the dead, and with the introduction of Buddhism into Japan, this interpretation seemed to remain static throughout the history of Japan. This is important for our understanding of the perception of death amongst the Japanese. Even during the modern era, the pragmatic and underdeveloped concept of afterlife continues to exist within Shinto. There is a sense of closeness between this world and the dead. This is often presented in a number of different yet popular views. First, souls are believed to remain after death instead of leaving. Second, the dead can come and go between worlds and the living can potentially invite their return. Third, the soul's dying wish is to be carried out

¹⁷⁹ Takamitsu Konoshi, "The Land of Yomi: On the Mythical World of the Kojiki." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 11, no. 1 (1984): P63.

¹⁸⁰ Matsumura Takeo, *Nihon Shinwa No Kenkyu* (Japan: Baifukan, 1968), 349

and it exists in that memory. Finally, the idea of 'rebirth' allows for work that was begun in a previous life to be concluded.¹⁸¹

In this section I shall explore the concept of the land of the Yomi in Shinto as a modern perception of the land of the dead, focusing primarily on the *Kojiki* and, to a lesser extent, the *Nihongi*. In the following section I shall examine modern funeral rites and rituals to do with Shinto in relation to the modern perception of Yomi. This is a brief overview of themes related to death in Shinto rather than a thorough academic investigation, perceptions of death in Shinto will be important for comparison with the much more developed concept of death in Christianity, set out later in this work.

1.3.A The *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* and the Land of the Dead.

The *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*, as written sources, are invaluable to any examination of the concept of death in early Japan. They provide insights into the interpretation of death by the early Japanese and, to a large extent, by Shinto, during the Nara Period, although they cannot be seen to be entirely free of outside influences, as Confucianism and Taoism had already influenced Japanese culture at this stage and Buddhism had begun to develop a strong presence.

According to these sources, the death of Izanami, the final punishment for her involvement in the breaking of taboo, begins the journey into the land of Yomi, the land of the dead. The introduction of an afterlife is presented through the death of a *kami*; that a *kami* can die indicates that the concept of immortality, in the sense of being permanently above death, is not prescribed in early Japanese beliefs. In contrast, one can argue that death is the gate to immortality in Shinto. The lack of early written sources offering a clearer insight into the concept of death within Shinto, apart from the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*, is, however, a major obstacle to pursuing this line of argument. The fact that a majority of studies of

¹⁸¹ Yanagita *About our Ancestors* P146

death in Shinto focus on these texts lends credence to their importance in understanding this theme.

As mentioned above, this element in the story begins with the death of a *kami*. Motoori presents a beautiful reference to the nature of a *kami's* death when he says:

Everything is an exotic, alien falsehood and deception which esteems the ideas of not rejoicing at what should rejoice us, not sorrowing at what would sorrow us, not being surprised at what should surprise us, and in general not feeling emotion when we should. This is against human nature and a most bothersome matter. Death, in particular, is one thing about which we cannot help but feel sorrow. Even the great God Izanagi, who formed the land and all things in it and who initiated the Way of this world - did he not, at the death of the goddess, weep and sorrow with all his heart like a little child, and out of his yearning follow after her to the land of Yomi? This is the true, the real human nature, and the people of the world must of necessity be this way.¹⁸²

This account of the death of Izanami yields two items of important information. Firstly, it seems that there may have been a ritual or tradition of touching the head and feet of the deceased. Izanagi is described as crawling around Izanami's head and feet after her death, possibly to provide safe passage to the land of the dead, perhaps something similar to the Greek practice of placing coins on the eyes of the dead.

Then he crawled around her head and around her feet, weeping.¹⁸³

¹⁸² Motoori Norinaga, *Zenshu* (Yoshikawa Kobukan, 1926-28), VI, 11. Quoted from *Kojiki*, 57.

¹⁸³ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 58.

So while he crawled at her head and crawled at her feet, weeping and lamenting, the tears which he shed fell down and became a Deity.¹⁸⁴

The act of burial is also important, as practices in this regard changed extensively with the introduction of Buddhism. It seems that in contrast to later cremation, burial of the dead was the common method of laying the corpse to rest and preparing it for the next life. The very fact that Izanami is buried is indicative of the acceptance of this custom in Japanese culture at the time; otherwise the author of the text would have edited the piece to reflect the current trend, befitting someone of such high status:

Then he buried the departed Izanami-no-kami on Mount Piba, the border between the land of Idumo and the land of Papaki.¹⁸⁵

Of equal interest is the lack of reference in the *Nihongi* to this act of burial. If we are to take the act of burial in the *Kojiki* as a possible addition to the text, then it points to the standard method of disposing of a corpse in Japan at the time.¹⁸⁶

The land of Yomi, the land of the dead, is described to us in great detail, offering valuable insight into early Japanese views of the afterlife. The text indicates that the land of Yomi is a great subterranean realm, possibly due to the practice of catacomb burial during the late Tomb Period (Kofun Period to early Heian

¹⁸⁴ Aston, W. G. *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D 697* (Japan: Charles E. Tuttle, 1972), 23.

¹⁸⁵ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 58.

¹⁸⁶ It is interesting to note that tomb burial, while common in a number of cultures, may have been influenced by China. We know from a number of artefacts recovered in China, dating back to the third century C.E., that tomb burial was very common. Given the fourth century as an early definitive reference to Japanese burial, it is not altogether unlikely that this form of burial may have been borrowed by the Japanese and come into common use. This would then have been incorporated in common mythology and, in light of this, would have been seen as a home for the dead, later being incorporated into the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*. See J. M. Addis, *Chinese Ceramics from Datable Tombs* (Shenyal Press Ltd, Harlow, Essex, 1978), for more on Chinese tomb archaeology.

Period; 6th- 9th centuries)¹⁸⁷. It is also possible that it was understood to be a land hidden in the mountains¹⁸⁸. The credibility of this viewpoint can be seen in the escape of Izanagi:

Then he pulled a tremendous boulder and closed [the pass] Yomotu-pira-sakka with it.¹⁸⁹

So he took a thousand-men-pull-rock, and having blocked up the path with it, stood face to face with Izanami no Mikoto and at last pronounced the formula for divorce.¹⁹⁰

If, however, we take into account the apparent description of an underground world in both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*, then what does the sealing of the pass to the land of Yomi refer to? The pass could be a reference to the path to the entrance to *Yomi*, rather than *Yomi* itself. This suggests that the text was influenced by the late Tomb Period.¹⁹¹ It also gives us considerable insight into the accepted view of the positioning of the land of the dead in Japanese theology. The place of heaven is above the earth, attached by a bridge over which the Gods enter the earthly realm. The land of the dead is placed within the earth itself. I propose that this is because of the association of death and corruption with uncleanness. The heavenly world cannot have something impure within it. As such, the land of the dead must reside in the land where impurity is part of everyday existence, hence it is found in the earth. This, however, leads to a further problem. If the land of the dead exists in the impure land of earth, does that mean that humanity is by its very nature impure? And given the impurity of earth, does this mean that those who tread upon the earth are impure as well?

¹⁸⁷ See Jonathan Kidder, *Japan before Buddhism* (International Thomson Publishing, 1966) and Goto Shuichi, *Nihon kodaishi no kokogakuteki kento* (Tokyo: Yamaoka Shoten, 1947).

¹⁸⁸ Matsumura, Takeo, *Nihon shinwa no kenkyu* (Tokyo, Japan: Baifukan 1968).

¹⁸⁹ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 65.

¹⁹⁰ Aston *Nihongi* 25

¹⁹¹ Befu Harumi, *Japan: An Anthropological Introduction* (New York: Harpercollins College Division, 1971), dates the Japanese tomb period from approximately 250 C.E. onwards, possibly related back to the Yayoi period 300 B.C.E. – 300 C.E which may have been responsible for the introduction of the concept of these underground tombs to Japan.

Does the death of Izanami and her subsequent entry into the Land of Yomi mean that she is impure as a result of her contact with earth? Unfortunately, it is difficult to pursue these lines of investigation due to the lack of further textual information relating to death in Shinto. To assist us in understanding why Yomi is to be found on earth, we must return to the description of the development of Japan from the chaos that existed before it. The fact that the heavens are created out of the pure and the earth from the grosser elements means that the impurity of the grosser elements became part of the earth. There is a degree of impurity within everything that exists on the earthly plane. The need for purification rituals implies this; if there were no impurity then purification would not be required. I suggest that since Izanami died on earth, earth is responsible for her impurity.

We can further expand this theory by connecting it to the place where Izanami gives birth before she passes to the land of Yomi. She gives birth on this plane of existence and not on the heavenly plane, possibly due to certain impurity concerns connected with the birthing process. The creation of the next generation of *kami* by Ama-terasu and Susa-no-wo¹⁹² is, in contrast to this, pure; as a result they are granted the right to be created on the plane of heaven. Hence Yomi would be located where the impurity or the grosser elements exist and this would indicate the earth. The influence of the Tomb period may have created an association with the underground and death, and the land of Yomi came to be accepted as existing within these underground tombs. It is possible that the Tomb period may have given rise to catacomb-like structures in the mountain regions, further developing the idea of the land of Yomi as a place in the mountains of Japan.

¹⁹² Although we are left to wonder what the term “pure” is defined as within the framework of the Gods. There does not seem to be any moral framework for the heavenly deities, given the acts of violence and mischief that Susa-no-Wo causes in his time upon the earth!

The concept of Yomi is, however, contradictory by nature. The first vision of Yomi reflects a lack of moral consequence. When Izanami arrives, Izanagi welcomes his wife as if she has not suffered death:

When she came forth out of the door of the hall to greet him,
Izanagi no Mikoto said:
'O, my beloved spouse, the lands which you and I were making
have not yet been completed; you must come back!'
Then Izanami no Mikoto replied, saying:
'How I regret that you did not come sooner, I have eaten at the
hearth of Yomi.'¹⁹³

This implies that there are no moral consequences for one's actions before death; those who die and leave this plane continue their existence in a realm that mirrors the one they have left. The almost casual meeting between Izanagi and Izanami indicates that the realm in which Izanami exists appears not much different from the one inhabited by the living of humanity. There is, however, an indicator that the major difference between the worlds is impurity. The other realm, while not one filled with fear, terror or horror exists in a constantly unclean state. This impurity separates the land of Yomi from the realm of the living. The best example of this is when Izanami, upon returning from the land of Yomi, states, "I have been to a most unpleasant land, a horrible, unclean land. Therefore I shall purify myself."¹⁹⁴

This highlights two important points. Firstly, the land of Yomi is not by its nature a horrific place in which people are subject to fearful ordeals. This is in contrast to many concepts of the realm of the dead; popular Christian representations of hell, for example, are often associated with eternal torment. It seems more likely that the realm of the dead is a common place inhabited by all who pass from this

¹⁹³ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 68.

¹⁹⁴ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 68.

existence into the next, heaven being solely occupied by the deities. While this contrasts with Christian mythology in regards to the concepts of Heaven and Hell, it seems to mirror Greek and Roman concepts of the lands of the dead. Elysium does not seem to be far removed from this concept; it is almost seen as a retirement home for the dead, in contrast to the heavens, which were solely the realm of the *kami*.

Secondly, the story points to the importance of purity in the early folk traditions. The association with pollution seems to be indicated in the *Kojiki* when Izanami leaves the land of Yomi to return to the earthly realm:

The two deities came into existence from the pollution which he took on when he went to that unclean land.¹⁹⁵

The association of pollution with the land of the dead also seems to limit the contact between the dead and the living. They can enter their world, but are unable to partake in the world beyond. Pollution condemns those who enter Yomi, creating a barrier between them and the earthly realm. Izanami is stopped from returning with her.

How I regret that you did not come sooner. I have eaten at the hearth of Yomi.¹⁹⁶

My Lord and husband, why is thy coming so late? I have already eaten of the cooking furnace of Yomi.¹⁹⁷

It seems that in many ways this can be compared to the exile of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden. Once Adam and Eve had eaten from the Tree of

¹⁹⁵ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 69.

¹⁹⁶ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 61.

¹⁹⁷ Aston, *Nihongi*, 24.

Everlasting Life, they gained knowledge of good and evil and were at once cast out from the garden. One could argue that this act pollutes their purity or innocence, which in turn stops them from returning to Eden. In the case of Izanagi and Izanami,, once one has consumed the food of Yomi, its pollution invades the spirit and stops the individual from returning to the land of the living. Motoori goes a step further, seeing the reference to the “hearth of Yomi” as a reference to the flame of Yomi as the corrupting influence.¹⁹⁸

I disagree with Motoori’s argument that it is the fire itself that corrupts, on the basis that Izanami refers to partaking of food from Yomi, which should be seen as the corrupting influence. If the fire itself were polluting, it would be only one aspect of the overall pollution in Yomi, as indicated in the *Kojiki*. The assumption that the fire and the hearth are the polluting sources does not adequately explain why Izanagi could enter and then return to the land of the living. I would argue that the pollution of Yomi can only apply to the dead themselves, and represents a final act of sealing them in the land of Yomi through feasting on its food; the fire itself is only as polluted as the land from which it comes. This may have also been one of the reasons for the development of cremation during later periods.

Just as Izanami could not pursue her lover beyond the gate to Yomi, no individual can pass the barrier between the polluted world and the earthly realm. The fact that the great barrier is pollution enforces for us the importance of purity within early Japanese folk tradition. I propose that the land of Yomi is to be viewed as a mirror image of our own world: people exist there as they would in the realm of the living and continue an existence very similar to the one they left. The people eat food (as seen in the conversation Izanagi holds with Izanami) and dwell in housing that seems to be a reflection of their own: “When she came forth out of the door of the hall to greet him ...”¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki-den* Book I, ed. Ann Wehmeyer (2 volumes; Ithaca, NY: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1997), 278.

¹⁹⁹ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 61.

With Izanami's first appearance we do not see any physical changes. This portrayal of the land of the dead may have grown from an underdeveloped Japanese understanding of transition into the afterlife. It seems that the Japanese did not dwell on the spiritual transformation of the body after death; they seem to have accepted a simpler and more pragmatic concept of life after death, simply assuming that the body of the deceased decays whilst the soul remains a reflection of the person and continues to exist in the same type of role as it did when it lived in physical life. It appears that the early Japanese saw this world and the world of the spirits and dead as mirrors of each other, almost like the concept of In and Yo, through which balance is maintained. This balance is important in early Japanese tradition, or, particularly in the court tradition, and has been translated into the understanding of life and death. A simple balance must be maintained but does not indicate a sense of finality. Just as the circle must be completed and the land of the living and dead must maintain a complete balance, the soul continues its assigned task, and duty is maintained even in death. The mirroring of the land of the living in the land of Yomi may possibly reflect the importance of balance and the understanding of duty.

A number of key differences exist between the land of the living and the land of the dead. Within the land of Yomi, the corpses of those who have died continue to exist with them. This seems to act as a secondary anchor to the land of Yomi: the decaying corpse, a symbol of corruption, continues to bind the figure to the land. The fact that the corpse is still there indicates burial beneath ground, and thus further reinforces the view that Yomi was heavily influenced by the Tomb Period. It is possible that placing the corpse in the tomb reflected a taboo against looking at the corpse. There is also a possibility that the corpse was watched regularly to ensure that it had not come back to life. The Yomi myth may have been a reflection of this custom.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 62.

The taboo against looking at the corpse explains the importance of cremation as a post-Tomb-Period folk tradition that has continued down to modern times. The act of cremation may have stemmed from a combination of both the taboo against looking upon the corpse and the practice of ensuring that the corpse did not come back to life. The final act of cremation ensures that the body continues on to the next life.

There seems to be some ambiguity as to who actually rules over the land of Yomi. Izanami refers to them as an entity but does not actually give them a name. Later she commands the crones to attempt to catch Izanagi as he flees, leaving the question of whether she is an authority figure herself, or holds a more subservient role within Yomi. In my view, a greater sense of order once again reflects the land of the living; if the land of the dead mirrors the land of the living, then the order of the Gods would mirror that of the living as well. Izanami goes to discuss her leaving with the Gods of Yomi, stating, “Therefore I will go and discuss for a while with the Gods of Yomi my desire to return.”²⁰¹

This reference to the Gods of Yomi indicates that there was a hierarchy of Gods in the land of Yomi, although we are never given any further information on them. We can see a sense of order in regards to the Gods on the planes of heaven and earth, and so it is logical to assume that this should apply also to the land of the dead. If this is so, is it not possible that deities who die and go to the land of Yomi are in fact deemed to still hold a similar position in the grand scheme of the hierarchy of the dead? Can one truly place a God at the same level as that of a mere human being? If so, then it could be seen as a dramatic departure from the norm, but the very fact that Izanami can make such a request, which is unlikely to be made by every mortal who enters this plane of existence, implies a certain privileged status. The unique status implied here might be seen as a place amongst the pantheon of the Gods of Yomi. If this is the case, the shift in her role from wife to one who sends the guardians to hound Izanagi on his escape may

²⁰¹ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 62.

reflect her place in the land of Yomi. It is possible that she holds power over a number of the guardians of Yomi. Philippi, in his commentary on the *Kojiki*, compares the shift in Izanami's role to other Gods in early traditions:

The metamorphosis of the goddess Izanami from a land-creating goddess to a goddess of death and the underworld is paralleled in other mythologies, where the Earth-mother (Freya, Persephone, Nerthus, Frigg) becomes a goddess presiding over the abode of the dead.²⁰²

The status of Izanami represents a role a *kami* takes up once he or she has passed from the land of the living. The old crones sent by Izanami to chase her husband are the first real reference to the guardians of the underworld. This may imply that the pollution and impurity one ingests upon entering the land is not the only barrier against entry into the land of the living by those from the land of the dead.

It may be implied that the purity represented by Izanagi, as well as his skill in making his escape, is the real factor that allows him to escape the land, a place he was not supposed to have entered anyway. Izanagi escapes by using food created from his comb and a vine used to create grapes and bamboo shoots, finally driving them away with peaches. Whilst the story may appear bizarre in itself, I propose that because the food was not entirely of the land of Yomi, it represents purity, which again emphasises the impurity that surrounds those that exist in this land.

Purity and washing are representative of the early folk traditions. We find an important reference to the role of purification in *Kojiki*:

²⁰² Philippi, *Kojiki*, 66.

I have been to a most unpleasant land, a horrible, unclean land. Therefore I shall purify myself... Then he went down and dived into the middle stream and bathed ...²⁰³

The importance that water has for the early Japanese and the place of bathing within Japanese custom can clearly be seen in the *Kojiki*. Within the text, *History of the Kingdom of Wei*, we find the following reference to the importance of washing as purification, especially after a funeral or burial:

When there is death, they mourn for ten days, during which period they do not eat meat. The chief mourners wail and weep, and others sing, dance, and drink liquor. After the burial the whole family goes into the water to bathe, like the Chinese sackcloth-ablutions.²⁰⁴

The story of Izanagi washing in the stream, together with this statement in the *History of the Kingdom of Wei* points towards the importance of bathing and purification to the early folk traditions. Equally, I agree with Tsunoda, who points to the importance of cleansing for the early Japanese people in his *Sources of Japanese Tradition*. The author of the *Kojiki* was referencing something that seems to be at the heart of early Japanese culture, not out of the need to be clean, but out of the need to rid themselves of the impurities associated with death. It is only when Izanagi actually entered the land of the dead that he needed to purify himself. Considering that he had previously buried the body of Izanami²⁰⁵ and had no need to cleanse himself then, it seems that the act of purification is required to save oneself from the damage of the impurities associated with the dead and the spirits that may attempt to grasp hold of humans.

²⁰³ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 67.

²⁰⁴ Quoted by Philippi, *Kojiki*, 68.

²⁰⁵ See *Kojiki* Book 1 Chapter 7: 29

The death of Izanami may reflect a position in which one might not have to cleanse oneself: Izanami is a unique case, her status as a deity denies her a death that would be considered permanent, she is taken to a place where she begins again as a Goddess of Yomi with all the inherent responsibilities associated with this new role. Eating the food of Yomi traps her, not death. The fact that Izanagi can go freely to her is indicative of the unique position she is in. The act of cleansing that might have been required on her death within this plane is not required as she does not truly die in the sense of a mortal death. The *Nihongi* account here states:

When the time came for the Fire-God Kagu tsuchi to be born, his mother Izanami no Mikoto was burnt, and suffered change and departed.²⁰⁶

The reference to change implies that she does not die a conventional death and, as a result, Izanagi does not have to purify himself. It is evident from this story that the *kami* of the early folk tradition pantheon can be affected directly by access to this world. They can, in one sense, die. This, however, is not death in the same sense as humans suffer death. The reference to Izanami changing and departing indicates that the Gods do not in fact die, but move from one plane of existence to another, hence explaining why Izanagi does not engage in the appropriate ritual when she leaves this plane. Furthermore, it seems that when a God passes from this realm he or she is exiled to the land of the dead and only through eating the food of the land becomes bound to dwell permanently there. Permanent abode in Yomi is the final indication of a sort of death, although it is not direct contact with Izanami that causes Izanagi's sense of uncleanness, rather, it is the land itself that causes this and Izanagi's need to cleanse himself result from being in this land.

²⁰⁶ Aston, *Nihongi*, 22.

Does the early folk tradition apply a degree of natural purity to a *kami* that it does not to humanity? If so, it would be strangely ironic if we consider that the *kami* are themselves atoning for their own form of original shame that seems to imply that they are the inheritors of their own form of impurity, whilst at the same time being more pure than humanity. Perhaps the special place of the *kami* as creators gives them a greater quality of purity than human beings, or perhaps human beings are, by their association with the *kami*, suffering a degree of impurity that cannot be fully cleansed, similar in a way to Christian notions of original sin. The earlier inference, that the *kami* are attempting to redeem themselves, allows for a slightly different and simpler answer to this: the *kami* Izanami, our one real reference to a *kami* passing from this place not by choice but through the actions of others, is not in fact dead, but exiled from the land of the living, until she takes of the food of Yomi and becomes permanently bound to that land. Izanagi does not become unclean until he enters the land. Therefore it is not Izanami who makes him unclean but the land of the dead.

Izanagi's need for cleansing reflects the purification conventions of the early folk traditions, suggesting that the *kami* are bound by the same requirements of cleanness as the early Japanese. The rules that govern humanity thus seem to govern the *kami* as well; the *kami* are not holders of a unique form of purity but are bound by the same rules as humanity. The big difference seems to stem from the fact that the *kami* are not bound by the same rules of death as humanity is. This implies that the *kami* and humanity seem to hold a very close link, their worlds able to crisscross and interact on several levels.

1.3.B Death and Post-War Shinto

Given the problematic issues of interpretation in relation to the land of the dead, outlined above, how does Post-War Shinto interpret this idea? In modern texts on Shinto, the Land of Yomi is often referred to as the land of the dead. There is a great deal of scholarly disagreement over this idea. Nevertheless, the question remains as to the perception of the land of the dead within Shinto. Is there one at all? Or is this just a debate over a minor segment of the *Kojiki*?

“Born Shinto, die Buddhist” is an old Japanese saying. One can easily misinterpret it as meaning that there is no ritual for death in modern Shinto. This is problematic, because although the majority of death rituals performed in Japan are indeed Buddhist, a number of key Shinto rituals, set out by the Jinja Honcho, are still practised, as well as many Christian funerals. We could potentially look at this idea from an alternative perspective: “In the morning of each day and all of life, all the Japanese are Shintoist ... but in the evening of life two-thirds of them are buried with Buddhist rites. A Japanese rises as a Shintoist ... and lies down to eternal sleep as a Buddhist.”²⁰⁷

There is very little scholarly writing on Shinto funeral rites,²⁰⁸ the most recent work is by Elizabeth Kenney, who describes in detail modern Shinto funeral practice. The importance of the Jinja Honcho response is that it represents a modern institutional interpretation of death within Shinto. The source of Kenney’s information are the “etiquette books” which give precise details as to how ceremonies and rituals should be carried out, and include not only funerals, but also marriage and ancestral worship rituals as well. Kenney notes that many of the rituals stem from early Chinese rites and authors, for example, the Confucian scholar Chu Hsi, that seems to be the primary source for the books themselves with large portions copied almost verbatim. Kenney estimates that 2-4% of funerals in Japan today are Shinto. The reasoning for having a Shinto funeral instead of a Buddhist one varies from family to family and indeed from area to area. Some areas have been predominantly Shinto since the Edo period,

²⁰⁷ Kenney 1996 *Shinto Mortuary Rites in Japan* 399

²⁰⁸ See the following for an updated study of Shinto funeral rites:

Macé, François. “La Mort et les funérailles dans le Japon ancien,” *Paris: Publications orientalistes de France*, 1986.

Nakamaki Hirochika, "Continuity and Change: Funeral Customs in Modern Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* (1986) 13: 177 -192.

Hardacre, Helen. *Shinto and the State: 1868-1988* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Ketelaar, James. *Of Heretics and Martyrs in Meiji Japan: Buddhism and Its Persecution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.

Prior to this a majority of the texts found in Japanese and English date back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

whilst other families take the more pragmatic approach that it is cheaper to have a Shinto funeral; some funerals are even prompted by disagreement with the local Buddhist priest. Based on conversations that I have had about funeral traditions here in Japan, it seems that this issue of disagreement stems from the personality of the local priest and the quality of the ceremony more than the actual philosophical and faith based beliefs of the community.

There are several aspects to the rite itself. The first step is to make the home presentable for the deceased. *Sakaki* tree branches adorned with Shide are laid out and *Gagaku*, a distinctive type of Shinto music, is played in the house. The deceased is then given water, symbolically offering a last chance to revive the corpse. The water guarantees that the deceased is truly dead and also is the first offering to the newly created ancestor spirit. There is an important role reversal here in which the deceased's children feed their parents, providing nurture for the dead. This form of offering is primarily associated with Buddhism, indicating the extent to which Buddhism ritual has become an integral part of the Shinto tradition.

Once the deceased has been offered water, the body is bathed and prepared by the family. This part of the ritual demonstrates that death pollution is slowly diminishing in the mind of the Japanese people. Fujii and Namihara²⁰⁹ both remark on how the death taboos are now less strictly observed. In a series of interviews carried out by these two scholars, the interviewees responded to questions about why they do not send new year's cards when there has been a death in the family, or enter shrines after a relative's death, by saying that it had to do with sadness or mourning.²¹⁰ Instead of death pollution, there appears to be a growing tendency to be squeamish about actual corpses. This may result in a similar distaste for the dead, but now arising from a modern dislike for corpses,

²⁰⁹ Kenney, 1996 397-43

²¹⁰ Kenney, 1996 402

rather from concerns about ritual purity. The washing, however, is also the most defiling moment for those in mourning and is never done by the Shinto priest involved. The dress of the deceased gives a clear indication of the underdeveloped nature of Shinto ritual in regards to death. Whilst in a Buddhist tradition there would be specific clothing to dress the corpse, the Shinto tradition does not have a similar requirement.

The death is then reported to the *kami*. This is important in our understanding of the immanent and transcendent nature of the *kami* and, by extension, of the ancestors. Here we see a unique difference between Shinto and Buddhism. An announcement is made and then a white piece of paper is pasted on the *kamidana* which ensures the *kami* is not polluted by the dead. The *soreisha* is also covered by a sheet of white paper. A Buddhist household, on the other hand, will cover the *kamidana* but not the *butsudan*. This is because Buddhist ancestors are not polluted by the dead. In Shinto, the chief mourner, who is the most polluted, covers the *soreisha*.²¹¹

The deceased is placed with the head pointing north and covered with a white cloth. A small table, upon which the mourners set out the offerings, is decorated with food, sakaki, washed rice, salt, sake and water. The final addition is a sword or mirror. Table 1 clarifies how much this ritual is influenced by Buddhism.²¹²

²¹¹ Kenney, Elizabeth "Shinto mortuary rites in contemporary Japan," *Cahiers d'Extreme-Asie* 9(1996). 404

²¹² Ibid.P405

Table 1

Shinto	Buddhism
<i>kami</i> tree (sakaki)	Buddha tree (shikimi)
uncooked rice / for the gods	cooked rice / for the dead
	flowers ("living" [seika 4.7b])
water / for the gods	water / as though for the living
Salt	
Sake	dango
[sometimes tamagushi]	bell
[sometimes one or two candles]	one or two candles
	incense
favourite foods of the deceased	[sometimes favourite foods of the deceased]

It is noticeable that the ritual holds many similarities to that of Buddhism. This may indicate the underdeveloped concept of death found in Shinto and the pervasive nature of the integration of Buddhism and Shinto. The minor differences are primarily found in the food choices and their contrasting symbolic meaning. The choice of cooked rice in Buddhism is symbolic of how the dead in the Buddhist tradition remain part of the human realm, whereas the Shinto dead immediately become part of nature, which is also the realm of the *kami*.²¹³ What is important here, in Shinto, is the focus on the spirit and its place in the next life; rather than leaving for a different place of salvation, the ancestor stays within this realm. Although a distinct entity that has crossed over and out of this world (the uncooked rice indicating a return to nature), the ancestor is still immanent within the household and will remain an active member in offering guidance to them in the future. That they have moved on to some other

²¹³ Ibid. P406

place does not seem to be an issue for the ceremony itself, nor for the family of the deceased.

The final stages of the ceremony involve the interring and the final return of the spirit. The family is responsible for moving the corpse to the coffin, normally by lifting it using the futon that the deceased was laid upon. The process of leaving gifts and purification comes next, followed by bowing appropriately to the deceased. Daily offerings are then left for the deceased each day, a combination of living and spiritual offerings, which indicate the dual nature of the spirit. Finally, an announcement is made at the local shrine to indicate that the deceased has moved on. This aspect of the ritual is open to differing interpretations, depending on the family. Some choose to omit it completely, believing that with the announcement to the *kami*, there is no further need to announce it to anyone else. Others will send a relative or attend the shrine and make the official announcement. This is unique to Shinto, and is not done in Buddhism.

The final process is the ceremony of cleansing the grave site in preparation for the interment. Rituals of purification and appeasement to the *kami* are performed and the site is cordoned off in order to ensure it remains pure. The wake the night before is then carried out in the family home. The purification rituals involved before entering the household follow the same process as those of the shrines, indicating that the individual is stepping into a place where spirits dwell. With the presence of the Shinto priest as well, the home effectively becomes a small shrine. The following are the stages of the wake:

1. The coffin-altar has been prepared by arranging the offerings of washed rice, salt, water, sake, vegetables, seaweed, cakes, etc. Also set up is a photo of the deceased — an important element of modern funerals.
2. The priests and mourners enter the room.

3. The chief priest bows once, then the mourners bow once all together.
4. Food offerings are made.
5. The priest offers prayers and an elegy. A purification ceremony may also be performed at this point.
6. Offering of *tamagushi*: first the priests, then the chief mourner, followed by relatives in order of closeness and status, and finally friends and other mourners. (See below for how to offer *tamagushi*.)
7. The offerings are taken away.
8. The chief priest bows, and the mourners then bow in unison.
9. The priests leave the room, while the mourners watch silently.²¹⁴

The *tamagushi* is an important element of the ritual, indicating status and closeness to the deceased. The ritual of the funeral is then performed.²¹⁵

The body is then cremated and final purification rituals are performed. The cyclical nature of the ritual is important: placing the bones into a vase is symbolic of a return to the womb, the vase representative of the beginning again, except that this new beginning is in death. Once the body is duly interred and final purification is complete, Shinto does not offer any further information about what happens to the soul. The Jinja Honcho does not provide theological information in this regard, outside of the role of ancestor and *kami*. This again brings us back to the fact that Shinto does not really have a clearly defined concept of afterlife, but in fact remains vague in its teachings on this topic. This short quotation from a Shinto priest shows the many interpretations of the afterlife that exist within Shinto:

²¹⁴ Ibid., p. 410

²¹⁵ Kenney, "Shinto mortuary rites in contemporary Japan," pp. 410-421

After death, the spirit becomes a bird and goes to the top of the house. Then it flies to a nearby tree and stays there for fifty days. After that, the bird-spirit goes to the land of the dead.²¹⁶

The reference here to the land of the dead brings us back to the concept of Yomi, indicating that this concept remains in existence, notwithstanding the lack of information, especially in regards to what constitutes the land of the dead in this quotation. The fact that it is mentioned demonstrates that Yomi, or a variation of this concept, is still recognized in modern Shinto. The profound similarities, however, between Shinto and Buddhism in the ritual itself demonstrate that death rites have relied heavily on the Buddhist tradition, with minor variations reflecting the more individual beliefs of both Shinto and Buddhism. A majority of the differences are rooted in the symbolism of the various offerings, which represent different meanings to Buddhism and Shinto.²¹⁷ There is also a distinct difference in terms of doctrinal belief as to where the spirit of the individual goes, which is reflected in the Shinto belief of ancestor worship.

Whilst there is still extensive ritual associated with death in modern Shinto, it is difficult to get a sense of the continuity with the theological concepts associated with the land of the dead. The primary focus is on the *kami* and ancestors, rather than Yomi, and, while we have reference to a land of the dead in the quotation from a Shinto priest, it is not clear precisely what this refers to. In my opinion, the death rites have primarily stemmed from Buddhism, with minor divergences where Shinto differs from Buddhist beliefs. The concept of afterlife beyond *Kami* and Ancestor remains underdeveloped, once again emphasizing the immediate nature of Shinto, its focus always on this world, the immediate world, rather than a next one. The existence of Yomi within the *Kojiki* seems similar; no real further development has occurred and, as a result, it is difficult to talk about a sense of afterlife beyond what has already been mentioned.

²¹⁶ Ibid., pp.428-429

²¹⁷ For an example of the differences, please note the table of p. 116 of this text.

1.4 Creation

Both the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi* tell us of the creation of the heavens and the earth. I have chosen to give examples from both texts because it is important to notice the subtle differences in the descriptions that reflect the attitudes of the writers and also the prevalent attitudes of the people when they were written.

“When the primeval matter had congealed but breath and form had not yet appeared there were no names and no action. Who can know its form?”²¹⁸

There is a more detailed creation myth in the *Nihongi*:

Of old, Heaven and Earth were not yet separated, and the In and Yo not yet divided. They formed a chaotic mass like an egg which was of obscurely defined limits and contained germs. The purer and clearer part was thinly drawn out, and formed Heaven, while the heavier and grosser element settled down and became Earth. The finer element easily became a united body, but the consolidation of the heavy and gross element was accomplished with difficulty. Heaven was therefore formed first, and earth was established subsequently.²¹⁹

Before heaven and earth had taken form all was vague and amorphous. Therefore it was called the Great Beginning. The Great Beginning produced emptiness and emptiness produced the universe. The universe produced material-force which had limits. That which was clear and light drifted up to become heaven, while that which was heavy and turbid solidified to become earth. It was very easy for the pure, fine material to come together but extremely difficult for the heavy, turbid material to first solidify. Therefore heaven was

²¹⁸ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 35.

²¹⁹ Aston, *Nihongi*, 1-2.

completed first and earth assumed shape after. The combined essences of heaven and earth became the yin and yang, the concentrated essences of the yin and yang became the 4 seasons, and the scattered essences of the four seasons became the myriad creatures of the world. After a long time the hot force of the accumulated yang produced fire and the essence of the fire force became the sun; the cold force of the accumulated yin became water and the essence of the water force became the moon. The essence of the excess force of the sun and moon became the stars and planets. Heaven received the sun, moon, and stars while earth received water and soil.²²⁰

There is a thread common to some far eastern concepts of the creation: both Chinese and Japanese creation myths speak of a sense of nothing, and of a chaos that existed within that nothingness. The order that results from a separation of two forms is common to both traditions, where the pure and the crass elements are separated to form the Heavens and Earth. Hence the similarity between the Japanese concepts of In and Yo which express a sense of balance like the Chinese concepts of Yin and Yang,²²¹ lending credence to the claim of a Chinese influence on the text. If, however, we are to assume a degree of sharing of ideas between the courts of China and Japan we must consider the possibility that this concept was imported from China.

This initial examination of the texts, in the hope of gaining insight into the religious experience of the society in which it emerged, is forestalled by the very nature of the development of the Gods. Whilst the authors of the *Kojiki* and the

²²⁰ *Huai-nan Tzu*

²²¹ Note that in reference to Yin and Yang the appropriate kanji are the same, lending credence to the suggestion that Chinese influences had already infiltrated the thinking of the author. The use of In and Yo also implies a degree of familiarity with Chinese philosophical belief. This, however, also raises the possibility that the concept of balance as represented in In and Yo may have been common to Japan, China and Korea, but a full examination of this possibility is outside the scope of this work. Also, given the nature of Korea's history, we must also face the possibility that earlier concepts of faith and practice have been corrupted by both Chinese and Japanese domination.

Nihongi present a wide range of deities, their two dimensional role within the texts and their failure to be anything more than a name indicates that they were developed during the production of the text, for the purpose of accounting for a body of deities with no real connection to contemporary Japanese culture. Each God that is formed is instead part of the step-by-step evolution of the universe, with their creation resulting in a step towards the creation of the universe. As a result, their creation implies a gap in common Japanese folklore, and are probably a result of influence from Chinese texts.²²²

The author's need for an early creation myth, without tracing it explicitly through folk tradition may also imply a lack of understanding or ignorance of the less popular mythologies of the time. Considering that the text's first link with popular Japanese tradition is the story of Izanagi and Izanami, we can justifiably question the range of the author's knowledge of stories and sources outside Imperially-sanctioned knowledge. We may even go so far as to raise the possibility that Izanami and Izanagi represent the common creation myth of the people at the time, and suggest that there was no creation mythology before this. The two-dimensional representation of the *kami* and their lack of interaction within the world outside the first chapters implies that they have no further role than that of justifying the author's need to create something to predate Izanagi and Izanami. If this is the case, then we must contend with the implication that the nature of creation within the *Nihongi*, with its reference to In and Yo is indeed a Chinese concept, brought into Japanese mythology to appeal to a literati that embraced Chinese philosophical thought to such an extent that they needed to insert Chinese creation mythology into the *Kojiki* to justify similar thought later in the text. If In and Yo do in fact represent Japanese interpretation of Chinese philosophy, then we must dismiss the early creation mythology that precedes Izanagi and Izanami as corrupt data with too much Chinese influence to be a plausible source for our understanding of Japanese folk-religious belief and custom.

²²²Philippi, *Kojiki*, 397.

Here I agree with Philippi, who contends that the native mythology must have begun with Izanagi and Izanami.²²³ He overlooks, however, the implication of this interpretative decision in his understanding of the role of the *Kojiki*, limiting it to political ideology.²²⁴

If, therefore, we discount the beginning of both the *Nihongi* and the *Kojiki*, the true beginning of Japan rests on the shoulders of Izanagi and Izanami. In stark contrast to the first deities created in the Chinese-influenced creation myth, Izanagi and Izanami show a degree of life and complexity that is often exhibited by characters that have been developed over time.

If we take the Izanagi and Izanami mythology as the foundation from which folk tradition began, then we can make a number of deductions about cultural beliefs at the time. Consider, for example, the act of solidifying the land:

At this time the heavenly deities, all with one command, said to the two deities Izanagi no Mikoto and Izanami no Mikoto:

“Complete and solidify this drifting land!”

Giving them the Heavenly Jewelled Spear, they entrusted the mission to them.

Thereupon the two deities stood on the Heavenly Floating Bridge and, lowering the jewelled spear, stirred with it. They stirred the brine with a churning-churning sound; and when they lifted up the spear again, the brine dripping down from the tip of the spear piled up and became an island.²²⁵

Izanagi no Mikoto and Izanami no Mikoto stood on the floating bridge of Heaven and held counsel together, saying:

²²³ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 397

²²⁴ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 397

²²⁵ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 49.

“Is there not a country beneath?”

Thereupon they thrust down the jewel-spear of Heaven, and groping about therewith found the ocean. The brine which dripped from the point of the spear coagulated and became an island which received the name of Ono-goro-jima.²²⁶

The texts differ in their interpretations of this event, most notably in their interpretations of the creation of the island of Ono-goro-jima. In the *Kojiki*, this act is in response to a direct command. If we accept that the author has been influenced by court and Chinese tradition, then the command may indicate the author’s concept of authority. The *Nihongi* presents the act of creation as being at the whim of the two Gods.

Having developed a creation mythology in which there are Gods that exist before Izanagi and Izanami, this idea of a mandate may appear to appeal to an order from a higher power, in direct contrast to the idea of Izanagi and Izanami taking their own initiative in creation. If, however, we assume that the creation story begins with Izanagi and Izanami, then we must also assume that there is no such mandate, and its appearance in the *Kojiki* implies that the author of the *Nihongi* worked from purer sources (or that, in this case, he was not prepared to make this addition to the text).

The importance of the ‘spear’ within creation is emphasised by its role in the passage: “Thereupon they thrust down the jewel-spear of Heaven, and groping about therewith found the ocean. The brine which dripped from the point of the spear coagulated and became an island ...”²²⁷

²²⁶ Aston, *Nihongi*, 10-12.

²²⁷ Aston, *Nihongi*, 12.

1.4.A Phallic Symbolism

The spear represents creation itself. The phallic symbolism is unmistakable. The thrusting of the spear is indicative of an almost sexual act in creation. The involvement of Izanagi (male) and Izanami (female) further supports this. If the phallic symbolism stems from common folk mythology, then the implication is that an active phallic cult or movement existed. This can possibly be linked with the jewel spear's *wo-bashira* (male-pillar) form, referring to the pillars of a railing or balustrade. The *wo-bashira* can be equated to its equivalent in Chinese, known as a jewel stalk, an ornate term for penis.²²⁸ The importance of fertility in early worship is evident later in the text with the introduction of Saruta-hiko no Oho-kami, a fertility and phallic deity. Aston further supports this idea through reference to "A cave in Kamakura [that] formerly contained scores of phalli carved in stone."²²⁹

The significance of the fertility and phallic cult cannot be underestimated, given the importance of the act of walking around a ceremonial phallus as part of an ancient marriage ceremony. The importance of the phallus is referred to again in the myth of Izanagi and Izanami:

Descending from the heavens to this island, they erected a heavenly pillar ... Then let us, you and me, walk in a circle around this heavenly pillar and meet and have conjugal intercourse.²³⁰

This allows us to appreciate the importance of fertility and sex to the phallus or fertility worshippers in ancient Japan and also allows us to place the role of such acts in the context of worship and the imitation of the Gods' act of creation.

There is also an alternative meaning:

²²⁸ Quoted by Aston, *Nihongi*, 11.

²²⁹ Aston, *Nihongi*, 12

²³⁰ Phillippi, *Kojiki*, 50.

The procession around it summoned the spirits and ensured their blessing upon the marriage. The ancient Japanese believed that sexual intercourse was a sacred rite and that the presence of the deities was vital when performing it. Although phallic symbolism and fecundity symbolism can be seen in the heavenly pillar, they are only peripherally significant.”²³¹

Matsumura dismisses the importance of the phallic symbolism of the pillar, though the nature of the pillar, in my opinion, helps to define the very act that it is used for. Attracting the deities during the procession grants those in the act of marriage permission to imitate the Gods themselves. The symbol represents the Gods’ overall control over such the act. Their blessing gives permission to reproduce, the very act the Gods themselves engaged in through the act of creation.

1.4.B Taboo

Given the apparent importance of sex in the early folk tradition, we must acknowledge an important taboo that also stems from the Izanami and Izanagi tradition, that of incest. Nishida refers to it as the Shinto version of original sin.²³² The act of creation by Izanagi and Izanami is regarded as flawed because of the nature of their relationship. Being Gods of the same generation seems to give them a familial kinship, which pollutes the very act of creation. The taboo may have stemmed from incest within the early communities of ancient Japan, the results of which they would have been familiar with. By depicting the *kami* as involved in incest through creation gives it even more significance. The walk around the pillar was designed to circumnavigate this taboo. The creation of the leech child by Izanagi and Izanami is described in both the *Nihongi* and the *Kojiki*:

²³¹ Matsumura, *Nihon shinwa no Kenkyu*, 219.

²³² Nishida Nagao, *Nihon koten no shiteki kenkyu* 153-54

They commenced procreation and gave birth to a leech-child. They placed this child into a boat made of reeds and floated it away.²³³

Their first child was the leech, whom they straightway placed in a reed boat and sent adrift.²³⁴

This seems to be representative of the taboo they broke by engaging in an incestuous relationship. Izanagi refers to a ritual, which we mentioned above, namely, the walk around the pillar. In the *Kojiki* it is as a result of performing the ritual wrongly that the leech child is born.

You walk around from the right, and I will walk around from the left and meet you. After having agreed to this, they circled around.

The Izanami said first:

“Ana-ni-yasi, how good a lad!”

Afterwards Izanagi said:

“Ana-ni-yasi, how good a maiden!”

After each had finished speaking, Izanagi said to his spouse:

“It is not proper that the woman speak first.”

Nevertheless, they commenced procreation and gave birth to a leech child.²³⁵

The fact that failure in this ritual leads to the birth of the leech-child indicates the importance of the pillar and its purification ritual within early Japanese folk tradition. It demonstrates the result of breaking taboo. The leech-child seems to represent failure and disgrace. Philippi, in his translation of the term *piru-go*, refers to it as “Some sort of monstrosity lacking arms and legs.”²³⁶

²³³ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 51.

²³⁴ Aston, *Nihongi*, 15.

²³⁵ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 51

²³⁶ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 399

Both the *Nihongi* and *Kojiki* refer to sending the child away on a boat made of reeds. Although the initial indication is that the child is a failure, it seems that the parents cannot destroy it, possibly because it reminds them of their shame.²³⁷ The main focus on the leech-child seems to be a combination of the incestuous relationship between Izanagi and Izanami and their disregard for proper ritual. The death of Izanami, giving birth to their children, becomes the ultimate and inevitable consequence of the act of incest.

The breaking of taboo is by the Gods, not by humans. In contrast to Judeo-Christian mythology, Japanese mythology makes a point of showing the *kami*, rather than human beings, breaking the laws and being responsible for recompense. One could think of this as original sin, which is not attributed to humanity but to the *kami*. This leads to a role reversal of the Gods in ancient Japanese mythology, but also allows us to view early concepts of the *kami* and their responsibilities in folk tradition. I believe a degree of atonement is part of the responsibility the Gods bear towards humanity. The *kami's* role is more like that of a well-respected ruler than an omnipotent being; they show many traits that humanity demonstrates, including mistakes, love, compassion and anger. Whilst Nishida points to original sin with reference to the *kami* atoning for humanity, it is my view that the concept is more that they must atone to humanity for the sins that they have committed against them. The act of incest committed by Izanagi and Izanami represents the beginning of atonement, and Izanami's death represents a sacrifice. In birthing the *kami* of fire, Pi-no-yagi-paya-wo-no-kami, she sacrifices herself to give humanity fire. Izanagi's response of killing Pi-no-yagi-paya-wo-no-kami results in the creation of six Gods who represent rock, fire and water. In this way, Izanagi contributes to humanity by giving them the three elements needed to create the sword, one of the most sacred weapons of Japan. The tears of Izanagi in mourning Izanami's loss give

²³⁷It is interesting to note the similarities between the leech-child story and the stories of Sargon, Moses and Perseus. Although it seems unlikely, one must wonder about a possible common ground from which these mythological tales sprang. It seems that there is a surprising amount in common within Greek, Hebrew, Japanese and Polynesian mythology. It may just be conceivable that elements in these mythologies predate mass migration and may be older than we would usually consider possible.

birth to the Divine Goddess of the Sun, Ama-terasu-opo-mi-kami, who is the ancestor of the Imperial line. Ama-terasu also breaks this taboo in her act of creation with the God Take-Paya-Susa-no-wo-no-Mikoto. Kato Genchi refers to this incident in speaking of an attack made by Confucianist scholars on Shintoism, based on the act of creation by Ama-terasu and Susa-no-wo.²³⁸ They made the accusation that the act of creation constituted incest, although Shintoists at the time refuted, claiming that Ama-terasu and Susa-no-wo did not engage in incestuous relations, due to the fact that they were on opposite sides of the river. Yet, because both Ama-terasu and Susa-no-wo must atone for incest, as the implication is that they did not perform the ritual of the pillar, and whilst they did not engage in intercourse, they were both related and involved in the *act of creation*. I believe it is this act that the early folk tradition deemed to be incestuous. Both must attempt to atone for this act. Ama-terasu goes into exile, taking the sun with her:

At this time, Ama-terasu-opo-mi-kami, seeing this, was afraid and opening the heavenly rock-cave door, went in and shut herself inside.

Then Takam-no-para was completely dark, and the Central Land of the Reed Plains was entirely dark.²³⁹

Susa-no-wo is sent into exile and there, like the heroes of Greek legend, must perform a number of acts and go through great pain to atone for his sin; he is both exiled and punished by the *kami*:

At this time the eight hundred myriad deities deliberated together, imposed upon Paya-Susa-no-wo-no-mikoto a fine of a thousand tables of restitutive gifts, and also, cutting off his beard and the

²³⁸ Kato Genchi, *Kojiki kamiyo no maki*, 116-20.

²³⁹ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 81.

nails of his hands and feet, had him exorcised and expelled him with a divine expulsion.²⁴⁰

His exile, whilst related to his behaviour towards Ama-terasu, also relates to his own sin. His battles to protect the people can be seen as his act of atonement to humanity. By his protection of the old couple and their daughter from the eight-tailed dragon in chapter 19, he purges himself of the sin of incest and shifts from the role of a villain to that of a folk hero. There are many different interpretations of this; the changes may be related to a parallel story of Susa-no-wo which depicts his role as a hero. This story is more closely linked with his act of atonement, and while this is possibly not made directly to humanity, there is no reference in the text to it being atonement to the *kami*. This points to his atonement being for his original sinful act of creation with Ama-terasu and not directly related to his expulsion for his crime against her. Having explored the importance of phallic symbolism, we shall now explore the role of the Emperor within early State Shinto.

²⁴⁰ Philippi, *Kojiki*, 85-86.

1.5 Emperor: Role Within Early State Shinto

The Emperor has been of great importance in Shinto for a vast portion of its history. We cannot assume that just because the Emperor publicly renounced his divinity,²⁴¹ the perception of the Emperor's role in Shinto has changed. The Emperor's act of renouncing his divinity dramatically changed the connection between the most sacred *kami*, in this case Ama-terasu, and the people. Nevertheless, the Emperor and royal family are still viewed as having a close and important connection between *kami* and Japan.

1.5.A The Emperor in Post War Japan.

State Shinto represented the pinnacle of the Emperor's role as a divine being and leader of the Japanese people. After the end of the war, the Emperor was perceived in a very different manner. In 1947, Iglehart, in his analysis of the development of religion in Japan, stated:

On January 1, 1946 a blow was struck at the heart of the Shinto system when the emperor addressed the Diet with words precisely echoing the sentiments of the occupation authorities, cautioning the people against a belief in their superiority as descendants of deities, and urging them to base their loyalty to the throne not upon ancient myths or false legends, but upon kinship and common devotion to their nation ... The personal prestige of the emperor, too, is now at an all-time high. The hold which the institution had on the people was made sharply clear when at his command the war ended without invasion, three and a half million men at home laid down their arms without a struggle, and as many more scattered throughout all of Asia, many of whom had never

²⁴¹ See above, Part A, section 1.5.

seen combat but were mad for battle, surrendered and went into imprisonment.²⁴²

This description of one of the most significant changes to Shinto since the Meiji restoration provides a good foundation for a brief examination of the changing role of the Emperor after World War 2.

In 1946, D. C. Holtom was already commenting, in his *Far Eastern Survey*, on the changes that were happening as a result of the change in status of the Emperor, although one must accept that he was, unfortunately, rather biased in his opinion:

If the waters of that stream still seem muddy, even after "disestablishment," we know that they can be truly purified only as they are fed from the reservoir of an economically sound and morally free democracy, and that this can be accomplished only within the framework of democracy on a truly world scale.²⁴³

Whatever the shortcomings of Holtom's article, his recognition of the Emperor's significant role prior to the war, and his appreciation of that role as one that was focused on creating a community that would unquestioningly follow the Imperial edict through the Meiji regime, are important.

Has the Emperor's position as divine truly died? Is the Emperor now just a figurehead and nothing more? As mentioned earlier, the belief persists that the Emperor is more than just a man. Emperor Showa, just after the end of the war, embarked on a pilgrimage that had the effect of bringing the people together. Even though he had proclaimed himself to be a man and not a God, the Emperor's journey effectively united the nation behind him. Hattori Shiso made the point that the

²⁴² Iglehart, Charles W. "Current Religious Trends in Japan," *Journal of Bible and Religion* 15, no. 2 (1947). 82

²⁴³ Holtom, D.C. "New Status of Shinto," *Far Eastern Survey* 15, no. 2 (1946). 20

Emperor didn't lose his position, but that it was redefined in light of the new constitution:

The emperor system lost real power in between those eras, when it existed 'in name only,' as under our new [1947] constitution. ²⁴⁴

Kurihara also gave this more sceptical interpretation of the modern Emperor:

Today, however, this trinity has been emptied of its content and become a mere image through the intermediation of the mass media. In this sense you might say the "replication" of the Emperor's person has made progress. The pattern has been set for representing the person of the Emperor to the world through the media, and this is the all too familiar copy that we keep seeing. It is all geared to breaking down the imperial "aura." To use the expression of Walter Benjamin, they have transformed the person of the Emperor from a "worship-able asset" to an "exhibit-able asset."²⁴⁵

He is recreated with a modern image of an Emperor who is seen and sold as a person. Whilst ambiguity about his divinity may continue to create debate, the figure of the Emperor is used in a number of different ways. The idea that the Emperor is seen, visibility being the primary point of this representation, is, in ways, a repetition of the early Meiji tours that the Emperor took to raise awareness. The major difference is the fact that now the Emperor does not need to travel but can be televised by national media instead.

In many ways, one can argue that the role of the Emperor as a tool of the government has not changed a great deal. There are a number of uses for the

²⁴⁴Hattori Shiso, "Tennosei zettaishugi no kakuitsu," *Naramoto Tatsuya* 10(1972). 125

²⁴⁵ Kurihara, "The Emperor System," 320.

Imperial image, each one representing the tensions that are created between the old and the new in the form of the Emperor. Such a tension can be seen in the continued promulgation of ultra-nationalism by claiming it is internationalism. An example is how the far right-wing political parties come and worship the Emperor as a *kami* on his birthday by waiting outside his window and hailing him as a God when he comes out.

1.6 Conclusion

We can see that both Shinto and Christianity shares many themes and ideas, including purity, creation mythology and concepts of taboo. However, just because they share these concepts and themes does not necessarily mean that they understand them in the same way. Historical perspective has a significant impact upon the development of a faith and the world view that it takes.

Whilst it is important to understand the key themes and concepts found within Shinto, its development must be understood within an historical framework.

This framework allows for us to appreciate why Shinto has evolved and how the Meiji Era was such a profound impact upon its development. It is also equally important to understand Christianity's impact upon Japan and how the approach of the missionaries that arrived in Japan still has a lasting impact upon the manner in which both faiths approach each other. The next section shall explore Shinto's historical development as well as its interaction with Christianity.

Part B: The Historical Context of Shinto

2 Shinto: The Historical Context

This thesis presupposes the reality of cultural and religious change in Japan, and looks to the way in which such change is reflected in Shinto, and in Shinto's relationships with Christianity. This section covers a large period of time and as such it is important to emphasise that this is a broad historical narrative. As such it relies primarily on secondary literature to give an outline of the different historical settings that Shinto passed through. To set the scene, this short chapter presents some of the key historical landmarks to which reference will be made in subsequent chapters. In discussing historical Shinto there are three different perspectives to be aware of. The first believes that Shinto existed without interruption throughout Japanese history. The second believes that there have always been Shinto-like traditions within Japan. This view derives from the teachings of Norinaga²⁴⁶ and National Learning. I will refer back to these ideas throughout this section. The third perspective is the work of Kuroda Toshio and his alternative²⁴⁷ approach to ancient and medieval Shinto.

²⁴⁶ Kuroda, Toshio "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion." 2.

²⁴⁷ Kuroda is noted for offering a concept of Shinto that, at the time of writing, was quite controversial. It emphasized how Shinto lacked any real uniqueness and in fact was just an extension of Buddhism.

2.1 The Beginnings of Japan²⁴⁸

To assist in our understanding of Shinto's development it is important to understand Japan's beginnings. This chapter examines the early development of Japan to assist in our understanding of the reasons why Shinto developed the way it did.

The first major challenge in studying this field is to examine the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*. In these texts we find the Japanese creation mythology that existed from approximately the eighth century C.E. and that forms the groundwork for an examination of the early religious practices of the Japanese natives during the Heian period. It is widely accepted among scholars that the *Kojiki* was completed during the Nara period in approximately 712 C.E.²⁴⁹ At this time there were questions about the legitimacy of the Imperial line and of a number of royal houses that formed the basis of the ruling class. The *Nihon Shoki*, or *Nihongi* as it is more commonly called, is considered to be a younger text, dating to 720 C.E. Again, this text is political in nature but with much clearer mythological references, possibly due to the existence of the *Kojiki*, and of access to records that may have been unavailable before the *Kojiki* was completed. Both texts must be studied together to gain a clear idea of what mythological beliefs were prevalent at the time, and to allow us to discern the contaminated data that exists in both texts.

The *Kojiki* as a text was designed to form the basis on which the Emperor of the time could justify his family and ancestry, as well as apply divine status to his line. It was also designed to clarify ancestral issues surrounding a number of the familial lines of nobility, which had become unclear. We must also consider the possibility that some form of quasi-religious leadership or political power outside the throne wished for legitimisation in return for its recognition of the ruling family.

²⁴⁸ Please see the introduction for the historical sources used.

²⁴⁹ See Phillip *Kojiki* 3

The *Kojiki* takes little account of the popular tradition at the time, and we must constantly be aware of the author's familiarity with Chinese culture and text; his style often emulates Chinese models, sometimes to the point of detracting from the story he is trying to tell. There are also many parallels between Japanese and Chinese mythology: hence we must acknowledge that we are not working from a *purely* Japanese cosmogony. However, if we attribute a purely political agenda to the text then we lose out on its valuable information regarding the religious outlook of the society at the time. The text blends common Japanese oral mythology with its political agenda. As such, we must study the text with close attention to the religious or quasi-religious beliefs presupposed by the text as well as addressing the hermeneutic of the author.²⁵⁰

²⁵⁰ These issues will be discussed in section 2.4 below, with particular attention to the texts' creation mythology.

2.2 Japan and the Azuchi Momoyama and Edo Period

With this brief overview of our source materials, we now turn our attention to the Azuchi Momoyama and Edo periods and their impact upon the early folk traditions that we now refer to as Shinto. I have designated Shinto prior to this period as 'Proto-Shinto', because it was still in a fluid formative stage and it refers to the folk rituals and traditions that existed and that carried a number of key identifying features that one can claim as indigenous to Japan. It was during the Azuchi Momoyama and Edo periods that Shinto began to define itself.

However, we must also recognise that it is of the nature of such Primal Traditions to be in a constant state of flux and evolution. This evolutionary process, often due to external influences such as foreign rulership, the introduction of different religious traditions, interaction with other cultures, acts of genocide or war, and/or ongoing philosophical development, means that the Primal faith tradition will inevitably adapt or evolve into increasingly more complex beliefs and rituals.

Kuroda Toshio²⁵¹ explores a number of problems with identifying Shinto during the early and medieval period. "Shinto", as such, is rarely referenced by name in the early works of Shinto tradition, the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*. Kuroda argues that Shinto is in fact just another term for the Taoism that was imported from China during the period of the development of the *Nihongi*. There are a number of ideas that are possibly borrowed from Taoism, for example, the veneration of sword and mirror, the ideas of *tenno* (heavenly sovereign) and the *jingu* (shrine). This may have led to the development of an indigenous Japanese Taoism in the form of Shinto. We do not have the scope in this work to explore this idea further, but it is valuable in making us aware that early Shinto would have been heavily influenced by other religious traditions, including Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism. As part of the process of understanding Shinto we need to recognize that it has been influenced by other

²⁵¹ Kuroda, Toshio "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion." PP 1-21

religious traditions, just as it has influenced external religious traditions that were imported into Japan.

By integrating aspects of other faiths, does Shinto effectively sacrifice its indigenous flavour? Does it become nothing more than a shadow of its former self, sacrificing its cultural, traditional values and ideas as it is slowly subsumed into another faith? Or, does proto-Shinto, at a time when it faced a variety of religious ideas from foreign cultures, re-define itself in light of this threat? I consider that the best example of the next evolutionary step, from proto-Shinto towards what can be recognised today as Shinto, comes during the feudal period in Japanese history between approximately the eleventh (Kamakura) and the nineteenth (Edo and Meiji) centuries C.E. During this time we see the greatest number of external religious traditions being imported into Japan. By the seventeenth (Edo) century we have the introduction of Christianity by Francis Xavier; prior to this, Buddhism is an established part of Japanese culture.

What is Japanese cultural faith during this period? I shall focus primarily on an examination of Shinto during the feudal era, treating it as an established religious faith during the seventeenth century and examining its interaction with Buddhism and Christianity. As a result, we shall have a better understanding of any decisive steps away from the traditional concepts found in our earlier model and thus be able to assess if these deviations are too far removed from its base to allow it to be regarded as still in continuity with its most Primal form. However, before a proper examination of these concepts can be carried out, I shall first provide a sketch of feudal Japan to give a better understanding of the world that existed during this formative evolutionary stage of Shinto.

2.2.A The Feudal System in Japan

To gain a better insight into the developmental changes within Medieval or Feudal Shinto we must first understand the cultural changes that took place from the Heian period (794 C.E.) onwards. Feudalism in Japan can be divided into two

distinct blocks of time. First, the Heian (c.794 – 1185), Kamakura (1185 -1333), Kemmu Restoration (1333 – 1336), Muromachi (1336 – 1573) and the Azuchi Momoyama periods (1573 – 1600). The reason that these periods are blocked together is that there was a constant state of flux in leadership and no centralized government. The second feudal block was the Tokugawa (Edo) period (1600 - 1867). This block of time represents a stable, centralized government and leadership. Within both blocks of time we can see a steady importation of different religious values, including Christianity and Confucianism. The development of early feudal Japan was both similar and different to the development of feudalism in Europe.²⁵² This development may be broken down into a series of different periods of time, based on a model designed by P. Duus and A. Lewis. According to this model, Japanese feudal development moves through the following historical stages: early feudal development (794-1185), formative feudalism (1185-1334), the flowering of feudalism (1334-1600) and, finally, the absolutist stage (1600-1867). The collection of small village states that existed prior to feudalism began to be redeveloped along the lines of a Lord-Vassal system. However, we can also see a distinct difference between the early town governorship, within which religious and faith tradition developed, and a more militaristic development that begins from approximately 794 onwards.

During the early feudal development, we see the growth of a more domineering lordship system than developed in feudal Europe. The relationship between lord and vassal was usually based upon familial or filial obligations.²⁵³ This may have stemmed from the traditional *hito gami* system,²⁵⁴ denoting a constant sense of obligation to the *Kami* or ancestor figure. It evolved into a more complex form that added the place of the lord and vassal relationship to that of the existing *hito gami* system. However, whereas the *hito gami* would see the obligation as part of a contractual deal that had been made with a village in return for protection, the

²⁵²Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization*.

²⁵³Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization*, 165.

²⁵⁴ For further information, see section 2.1.

lord was much more invested in the vassal. In addition to this responsibility on the lord's part, the vassal could have only one lord at a time. This form of protection and nurturing of the vassal creates a familial environment, which in turn bonds the vassal more strongly to his lord, thus generating a strongly personal relationship with the lord. This in turn meant that the land controlled by the vassal depended on how close he was to the lord. This had a dual effect of allowing the lord to demonstrate his personal authority by his capacity both to give and take away land.

Unlike the traditional court system that existed in Europe, which allowed the nobility access to the king or to some other form of justice outside of that offered by their overlord, Japan allowed no equivalent appeal.

The impotence of the Emperor created a figurehead with little or no real authority within Japan itself. However, the Emperor was honoured by the *Shogunate*²⁵⁵ and also used as a legitimising tool to justify the acts of lords and *Shoguns*. The Emperor symbolised the divine in the heart and soul of every native of Japan, and played this role throughout a great deal of its existence. The irony of this situation is that even though the Emperor remained powerless in terms of political influence and power, Japan could not have existed at this time without him. He came to represent the spiritual nature of Japan, legitimising Japanese belief in its own unique status, as well as providing a link to the divine.

In the *Kojiki*, the imperial house represents the walking *Kami*. Its members are direct descendants of the Gods, and, as a result, represent the only divine being that lives in human form on the earth. The symbolic nature of the Emperor denies the possibility that those from external families could ever take their place as rulers.²⁵⁶ It should be noted also that the Emperor, bereft of any real political power, also represented the limitations of military power and ambition.

²⁵⁵ The Shogunate was the Shogun and all his staff and government officers.

²⁵⁶ Runciman, W.G., *A Treatise on Social Theory*, Volume 2 (3 Volumes; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 374-9.

The very real possibility of the imperial house reasserting itself was enough of a threat to keep the *Shogunate* in line, at least in its management of the people's perceptions of how the *Shogunate* treated the Emperor.

The imperial court itself also represented the height of culture and sophistication. It represented the ideal of how one should behave and act, as well as representing a philosophical and theological utopia. It was the focus for cultural activity and identity, with the *Shogunate* and lesser lords measuring their own understandings of culture and identity in terms of the imperial household. The imperial house represented something above the political and military issues of the time

In some respects the Emperor was the one constant within Japan during the feudal period. Regardless of changing lords and leadership in Japan, and of constant struggles and violence, the Emperor and the imperial house both represented an unchanging symbol of Japan as well as serving as a symbol of the connection between the people of Japan and the Gods. The Emperor also embodied the difference between symbolic power and political power. The fact that the Emperor was politically impotent in Japanese society made it clear that one did not necessarily gain fame, fortune and status through wealth and land. Indeed, this aided in the development of a system of loyalty to one's superior and lord as the way to secure power rather than through the ownership of land. This resulted in the separation of the *samurai*²⁵⁷ from the land and strengthened his ties to his lord.

2.2.B Vassalage in Feudal Japan

The kinds of vassal rights that would have existed in contemporary Europe failed to form in the Japanese feudal system. The autonomous rights of vassals were

²⁵⁷ The samurai were the warrior class of Japan. Their name literally meant 'to serve'. They would serve a specific Lord and were honor bound to maintain loyalty to him. The samurai had a strict ethical code called *Bushido* which was similar to the code of Chivalry in European culture.

not allowed to flourish, which in turn permitted the development of an authoritarian notion of lordship. The nature of the early folk tradition (based on obligation without a definitive form of return), reflects the *hito gami* system: the *Kami's* contract with the village, reflected in their surrender of authority to the *Kami*, obliges the same obedience for generations in return for the benefits given by the *Kami*. It is likely that this Primal form, that had worked in each autonomous village unit, is reflected in the development of the Japanese feudal system. There was no centralised concept of law in Japan; rather, a sense of obligation reflected the hierarchy that was embraced by the early folk traditions of the time. This resulted in a strict structuring of access to resources that would be made available to the vassal. This led to the stipend system that allowed the lord both to reward the behaviour of the vassal and to remove the relationship between a vassal and the land itself. Without any sense of land ownership there was no resource on which the vassal could draw to revolt. This allowed for the emergence of a sense of self-worth for the vassal: reward was based on the vassal's capacity, not on the land that he owned. This also resulted in the separation between each distinct class within Japanese society, namely the samurai, the lords and the peasants. The social distance between the samurai and the peasant class was enormous: samurai were in a position comparable to that of the *Kami*; in return for obedience, they too would protect the peasants from external harm. This did not, however, give the *samurai* any form of equal footing with the lord; there was an almost equal gap between the *samurai* and the lord as between the *samurai* and the peasants.

This represents a natural evolution of the *hito gami* system that had existed prior to the feudal period in Japan; hence its contrast with the European style of feudal leadership. In Europe, the king gave to the duke/lord, who in turn gave to the knight, who in turn gave to the peasant; the system relied on the distinct hierarchical system of the time. This is a natural evolution of the Roman concept of leadership that had pervaded Europe prior to the Dark Ages. There is, however, no style of leadership similar to this in Japan. The Emperor exists and holds the title of a living God in his own right, but there is no sign that he held

power over Japan in the same way as a European king.²⁵⁸ To add to this, it was not until the late Edo period that it really became a significant factor, and this was related very closely to the attempt by the Tozama daimyo to find a ideological basis to oppose the Tokugawa state.²⁵⁹

Feudalism thus represents a natural development of the town state system that had existed within Japan hitherto, bringing with it a range of characteristics inherent within that tradition, including the spiritual order, simply translated into a semi-hierarchical form of leadership, which culminated at the lord. There was no standard hierarchical system, but rather a multitude of systems that existed in every fiefdom in Japan. The removal of land from the equation made land or inheritance inconsequential to the nobility, but loyalty and interpersonal relationships with the lord were matters of consequence, which creates a similarity between the lord and the *Kami* of the *hito gami* system. This contrasts with the European system, where land was a vital part of a noble's status and title. This evidences an evolutionary development of the Japanese town system that had existed prior to feudalism, but also incorporates the distinctive development of cities as well as towns. This urban development, which begins during the early feudal period and reaches its height under the Tokugawa regime, redefined the nature of Shinto. As a result of this development, proto-Shinto can no longer be considered to have expressed the interests of small isolated towns, but must have catered to a much larger grouping. Given the variety of religious traditions in Japan at this period, especially Buddhism and the entry of Christianity in 1542, there were many challenges to the socio-political place that Shinto had held. Indeed, the Edo period challenged Shinto to define itself specifically in the light of Christianity, which was fighting to establish itself during this time. Understanding these challenges in the development of Shinto requires an understanding of the Tokugawa period itself.

²⁵⁸Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization*, 167.

²⁵⁹ For a more detailed explanation, see Fujitani, Takashi *Splendid Monarchy: Power and Pageantry in Modern Japan* (University of California Press, 1998)

2.2.C Tokugawa (Edo) Period

The Tokugawa (Edo) period (1600-1868) impacted dramatically on the traditions and values of Japan and was the longest single period of rulership in Japanese history. It was also a period of unity that had not been experienced in Japan prior to this, in which we see the formative development and evolution of Shinto into the most clearly defined concept of Japanese cultural and religious experience during the feudal era. Moreover, the introduction of Christianity and western thought created a number of new challenges to Shinto.

I have introduced the basic model of Japanese feudalism. This section expands on this model by examining the social structure of Japan during the Tokugawa period. This is important both for our understanding of how Shinto develops and for providing greater insight into the understanding of the role of religion during this period. The period of (relative) peace that existed at the time enabled a greater level of theological, philosophical, martial and scientific development to take place than in any previous era. This led to enormous social and cultural change in Japan. Indeed, these developments and the freedom that permitted them led ultimately to the Meiji Restoration in 1867.²⁶⁰

Japanese unification would be hugely beneficial to whoever could bring it about. It had been attempted before, notably under Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. However, in contrast to these earlier attempts, the Tokugawa regime survived and did not splinter amongst disparate warlords as had existed as a part of Japan for most of its early existence.

2.2.D Loyalty System

Historically, the concepts of obligation and value play an important place in Japanese society. The *hito gami* and *uji gami* system of pre-feudal Japan

²⁶⁰Eisenstadt, *Japanese Civilization*, 185.

generated a strong concept of obligation and trust in one's social superiors. The development of early Japanese religious tradition, one could argue, permeated every aspect of subsequent political development. The importance of defining the Emperor politically by association with the Gods of Japan, in particular the August Grandchild, indicated the significance of early Japanese faith tradition, not only for the common people, but also for those politically astute or powerful enough to gain recognition as Imperial powers. Unsurprisingly, this spiritual ordering continued to impact the mortal plane of social and political reality. It is equally unsurprising that the intrinsically moral and hierarchical system would evolve out of the feudal system into a value system. Where the feudal value system diverges from its spiritual counterpart is in its highly politicised nature. This emphasis changes loyalty²⁶¹; it is loyalty to the status of the individual rather than loyalty to the actual person. This fits with the *hito gami* model of loyalty: the status of the individual (whether good or bad) mimics the *Kami's* worship, which is the worship of its status rather than its personality.

Howell further discusses this concept in his work, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth Century Japan*.²⁶² He points to the use of the status system by the Tokugawa regime as a framework for political authority. Here there is a dynamic shift from the individual to the institution by combining the public nature of the Shogunate with the private character of the administration of the Tokugawa house.²⁶³ This may seem contradictory, but in many ways reflected the *hito gami* system, simply replacing the individual with the institution. The institution still required loyalty, based around obligation.

Loyalty is an essential quality in the attainment of a goal. The attainment of this goal is singularly one of the key driving forces in Edo period Japan. This goal was the responsibility of each individual and attaining it was not just limited to the

²⁶¹ Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion*, 13.

²⁶² Howell, David. *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005)

²⁶³ Howell, *Geographies* 21

lower classes. The upper classes, even the Emperor himself, had a goal to attain, and responsibility for the attainment of this goal was laid not only on the individual in the present day, but on those who would come afterwards. Here we see the translation of the obligation system into a more political and secular level. Early folk tradition obliged the people both to worship a certain *Kami* and to fulfill certain requirements. Likewise, the goal, whatever it might be, obliged those attempting to attain it to continue their efforts until they or a member of their family completed it.

The need to complete this goal placed demands on the entire family unit. Children were expected to achieve high levels of performance with the threat of expulsion from the family as a way of encouraging this result. Apt pupils were often adopted by masters of arts and crafts to continue their attempts to attain their goal by allowing someone to take over from them when they died. This created a very fluid form of movement within the different groups. As Howell states:

The son of a samurai remained a full-fledged samurai only if he entered into service; likewise, a peasant youth could cross status boundaries by taking the tonsure or through incorporation into a lord's retainer band. To be sure, opportunities for social mobility were limited (though surprisingly common), but, with the exception of members of the imperial household, the *eta*, and some descendants of Christians (including apostates), mobility was not constrained by an ideology of essential identity such as race or caste.²⁶⁴

This shows that the focus was upon the obligation to complete the goal over the individual involved. The high value on performance that developed as a result of the Edo period remains a powerful element in modern Japanese society. This

²⁶⁴ Howell, *Geographies* 25

indicated the importance of obligation, starting in the spiritual and moving naturally to the political or secular, in Japanese culture. The goal itself was not necessarily attainable and varied greatly from group to group.

Hence the obligation to one's ancestors to complete this goal plays a central role in the early feudal tradition. The attainment of a goal flowered into attempts to secure perfection, thereby generating ritual and tradition governing every facet of Japanese life. From the military to flower arranging, all art was inspired by an obligation to one's ancestors in the completion of a goal.²⁶⁵ The integration of this concept of obligation, which shifted focus away from the spiritual and towards the physical, demonstrates the importance that the early *hito gami* and *uji gami* systems held within feudal Japan. This also led to a dynamic shift in the emerging culture of Japan. For the needs of the group, aggression and disruptive behaviour rapidly became taboo. Indeed, for the sake of the group, the importance of harmony was emphasised as well as the need to compromise for the attainment of a goal. The group behaviour reflected in the *hito gami* and *uji gami* systems, that is, the collective obligation of eighth-century villagers to work towards the goals that they promised the *Kami* to complete, is expanded on within the Tokugawa regime. Disharmony within the collective in feudal Japan is construed as disloyalty to one's lord, the figurehead to whom one is obliged to complete one's goals. This is reflected in the *Kokudaka*²⁶⁶ system, which allowed for an efficient translation of obligation from agricultural production to feudal requirements of the Tokugawa regime.²⁶⁷ To assist in the completion of this goal, the formalisation of Edo period society took place. This society was governed by a series of protocols and a reduction of conflict in order to allow complete loyalty to the collective.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁵Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion*, 15.

²⁶⁶The *Kokudaka* system tracked tax burdens and military obligations in terms of agricultural productivity. *Koku* was a measure of rice and represented the amount of rice required for one family to survive for a year. It was also used to calculate the military force a lord could support and the scale of public works he could be expected to supervise. See Howell, *Geographies*, 23

²⁶⁷Howell, *Geographies*, 22

²⁶⁸Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion*, 16.

If the values of both loyalty and obligation were to be correctly and honourably followed, then adherence to a proper way of thinking and working was needed. Inspired by the *hito gami* and *uji gami* systems, and reinterpreted to deal with a much larger population (from single town or village to entities such as a state, city or fief), we see the redevelopment of Japanese identity in terms of the collective in contrast to a smaller town group. I agree with Bellah's description of the family as a microcosm of Japanese society. Here, loyalty to the elders and ancestors of the family reflected a more widely evident concept of loyalty in contemporary Japan. During the Edo period it is possible to discern several levels of cultural identity in operation; family, fief, lord, Emperor, indicating a complex collective inclusivism.

The final sphere of value was that of culture, which is distinguished by first, the cultural valuing of study and scholarship, which is termed *gakumon*, and which relates primarily to teachers and those who wish to benefit from education in its own right. The view that "a truly learned man will be a truly loyal and filial man"²⁶⁹ characterises *gakumon*, tying it closely to the values of loyalty and obligation. Second, there is personal expression and enjoyment, which I have referred to, above, when describing how such attainments can connect with the goal and obligation followed by a certain group. The pursuit of these aesthetic ideals is the embracing of one's cultural values, which in turn brings one to embrace an understanding of loyalty and to furthering the goals of the group to which one belongs. Hence, art appreciation, horticulture, metal-crafting, etc., were developed to a unique degree under the Tokugawa *bakufu*, and these arts or skills were developed always with the group or collective in mind, and wariness of the pursuit of art or skill becoming a selfish act. Each movement towards perfection in a cultural value or aesthetic is understood as a step towards greater cultural awareness for Japan, which in turn brings a certain group a step closer to a goal. This is best exemplified by the *samurai* class during this time. Literally meaning "to serve", *samurai* embodied the ideals that each

²⁶⁹Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion*, 16.

individual should strive towards in areas of loyalty, aesthetics, honour, trust and cultural development.

2.2.E The Integrative System

The integrative system can also be described as a further development of the *hito gami* and *uji gami* systems that were active within the village folk traditions prior to, and during, the feudal era. The major focus of the integrative system is conformity. The individual was actively marginalised in favour of a primary focus on the group. The group became the keystone to the development of the integrative system, with group members often taking part in the discipline of those within their group. The individual held a representative role within the group's existence. If one figure went astray, then the whole group suffered a loss of respect as a result, and possibly became an object of ridicule. As such, the group actively worked towards the discipline and education of its members. Discipline often came in the form of rejection by the group, displacing the individual and leaving him/her bereft of a sense of belonging. In terms of education, the group educated its members in terms of their duty and obligation to their elders, allowing a successive continuation of this sense of obligation. This form of obligation, similar in many ways to the *hito gami* system, led to groups within groups, as smaller sections developed within the larger collective that was Edo Japan. These sections worked independently of each other towards their individual goals and achievements. Within what might have appeared to have been an integrated system, this created a plurality of different groups each with its own agenda and suspicious of those who existed outside its perimeters.²⁷⁰

Religion was one of the key reinforcers of “mechanical solidarity”, that is, the cohesion of the groups in Edo period Japan. It was the bond that held together feudal Japan. I shall discuss this in greater detail, below, as it must be taken into

²⁷⁰ See Bellah *Tokugawa Religion*.

account in order to understand properly how such disparate groups, each with their own obligations and agendas, held together under the Tokugawa *Bakufu*. It was this common ground of religion and loyalty, outlined earlier, which allowed for the groups to work together under a common leadership whilst at the same time holding a degree of independence in working towards achieving their own goals.

However, the role of “religion”, and the prominence of one tradition (Buddhism) or another (Shinto) varied from one place to another. Gradually, in some places like the Mito domain, Confucian ideas, or Confucian-Shinto mixes, came to dominate the thinking of some daimyo, but not all, and the influence of such intellectual trends only had limited influence of villages where the village protective deity (*chinju*) and the Buddhist parish temple often held sway. As Helen Hardacre’s study of religious institutions in 19th century Kanto notes, in many cases, the local Buddhist clergy or Yamabushi administered the majority of small shrines.²⁷¹

As part of the integrative system, it is important to understand the early occupational system. One’s occupation made one part of a group with a distinctive place in feudal hierarchy and society. Whilst one could be born into one of the major status groups²⁷² and would thus grow up within that specific group, following its obligations, it was possible to leave the group and move to another occupation. The occupation was considered more important than the original status of the individual in question. This goes back to the sense of completing the task or goal at hand and the importance of the obligation of the

²⁷¹ See: Hardacre, Helen “Religion and Society in Nineteenth-Century Japan: A Study of the Southern Kanto Region, Using Late Edo and Early Meiji Gazetteers.” *Michigan Monograph Series in Japanese Studies*, No. 41. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, (The University of Michigan, 2002)

²⁷² Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion*, 24-25, describes the four major groupings as warriors, farmers, artisans and merchants. Howell expanded the four major groups to also include clergy and outcasts. See *Geographies* 28.

individual to the group. Hence, for example, a *samurai* could request permission to leave his current post to pursue another, as he could be seen to be completing his obligatory duty in a different way, but that would still be beneficial to the overall group. Ishida Baigan, for example, was a farmer who established himself as a teacher. This shows the fluidity with which one could move from group to group in an effort to find one's place within society. This freedom was not given to everyone, but it allowed some people to achieve the best they could within the environment in which they existed. Many different groups supported this transitional structure; for example, the samurai class set up a number of schools and universities which educated their children in Confucian ideology and tradition, and from which many officials for the Shogunate government were chosen. The constant emphasis was on the goal of the particular group rather than the individual's position within society, which meant that profession, transcended the class system of the time. A former *samurai* and a former farmer could both be engaged in the same task, with their status based around their experience in their given field rather than their rank. This also enforced the sense of integration and conformity, as each individual would be subsumed within the greater whole of the group profession of which he had become part.

Howell follows a similar line of thinking but distinguishes between formal and actual livelihood.²⁷³ However, as long as one managed to fulfill one's status obligations, one could maintain both identities at the same time. It was difficult to formally change status, but one's livelihood could allow an individual to bypass that issue. The worst punishment was to be removed completely from the register and become status-less. If this happened the individual no longer had a sense of identity, their capacity to integrate and conform having been taken away from them. This showed the importance of being integrated into the societal structure.

²⁷³ See Howell, *Geographies* 20-44

The family²⁷⁴ was the primary focus for the development of the motivational system, which was designed to integrate the family unit into society. At an early age, children were given the chance to indulge themselves with a great degree of patience from their parents, but they were still expected to follow some basic protocols. For example, toilet training was introduced and rigorously enforced by parents, thus creating a sense of discipline in the child from the start. Small aspects of discipline such as this formed the beginnings of the induction and training that would take place when the child entered adolescence, when the child would be expected to conform to the group's tasks and familial ordering within Tokugawa society. These expectations were enforced not so much through physical punishment as by the threat of expulsion from the family, the primary group with which the child was identified. The ideals of obligation, honour and loyalty were impressed upon the child in a similar way to the *uji gami* system. These ideals were then reinforced in the school environment.

These processes fed into a balance between one's commitment both to the group goal and to one's family. One was expected to maintain a high standard in the pursuit of one's goal, especially if one belonged to the artisan class. The further one perfected one's skill, the more prestige one gained. The attainment of perfection in both the external form (for example a perfect piece of pottery) and internal (gaining insight into ones self) was encouraged, which, in turn would benefit the group as a collective entity. Hence one was motivated to achieve better results not only to gain prestige for oneself but also for the group. Even in the home, there were certain customs that should be followed. These governed social interaction in the home and functioned to consolidate individual awareness of one's role within the group.

The second use of the motivational system was as a form of stress management. Stress was an unsurprising consequence of the demands each individual faced; the motivational system provided frameworks to express this anxiety, preferably

²⁷⁴ Bellah *Tokugawa Religion* 18

in a creative way. Neatness and control within a Japanese household was one example of such an outlet for anxiety. It also represented inner peace expressed externally. There were also motivational elements in relation to health.²⁷⁵ The motivation to express one's stress and anxiety in a creative or beneficial manner was essentially a microcosm of Edo period Japan. The family was not a refuge from society, but an extension of it. Just as one could describe the *uji gami* system as an internal one relating to family, so too the family became the internal representation of the Tokugawa regime, whilst the occupational became the *hito gami* or external expression of the regime's values.

The Tokugawa *Bakufu* represents feudal Japan at its height and as such is the ideal period in which to examine Shinto. I shall begin by examining a number of the stronger religious traditions in order to gain a sense of their impact on Shinto. I shall then examine Shinto to ascertain whether or not it diverged dramatically from its original form.

²⁷⁵Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion*, 38-39.

2.3 Christianity and Feudal Japan

To understand the challenges that Christianity now faces in its dialogue with Shinto we need to explore Christianity's history with Japan, especially during the period of initial entry. While Buddhism was integrated quickly and successfully into Japanese culture, Christianity became something of a byword for conflict. After its arrival in Japan, Buddhism quickly developed a relationship with the existing indigenous culture. Identification between Buddhist traditions and contemporary folk traditions allowed Buddhism to be incorporated into the traditional deity system, taking its place alongside the many key *Kami* of that system. Christianity underwent a much more turbulent entry into Japan. Buddhism had the prestige of coming from China, still seen as a symbol of civilization, whereas Christianity was completely alien to the Japanese and was perceived as a threat to the Japanese way of life by the ruling daimyo.²⁷⁶ The way in which Christianity developed, from its arrival in Japan in 1549 C.E until its almost complete expulsion in the years between 1660 and 1682 C.E. is of primary interest to my examination of the development of dialogue between Japanese cultural tradition and Christianity. We do not see the return of Christianity for around 200 years until the edicts forbidding the practice of the Christian faith were dropped in the late Edo period, c.1859 C.E. I shall begin by examining the historical background to Christianity's entry and expulsion from Japan. Following this, I shall examine the interaction between Christianity and Shinto and Christianity and Buddhism. This will allow us to appreciate more fully the historical issues that arose in the development of dialogue between Japanese culture and other religious schools of thought, in this case Christianity, and will also assist in setting up a framework to examine how any form of inter-faith dialogue in a Japanese context might be developed. It will also allow us to examine how the concepts of duty, honour and obligation were applied to Christianity.

²⁷⁶ One of the lords who was the vassal of the Shogun.

2.3.A Christianity's entry into Japan

Francis Xavier first entered Japan in the late Muromachi period (1549) after meeting a Japanese man called Yajiro whilst on missionary work in Malacca.²⁷⁷ From Yajiro he learned about Japanese civilization and, deeming it ready for mission, decided that he would go to preach in Japan. Yajiro was baptised and became the first Japanese Christian. Xavier went to Kagoshima and began to have Yajiro translate the gospels into Japanese. He wrote that:

I believe that we shall be busy this winter in composing a rather long explanation of the articles of the faith in the language of Japan so that it may be printed, since all the leading people know how to read and write, in order that our holy faith may be spread through many regions, since we cannot go to all of them. Paul [Yajiro], our dearest brother, will faithfully translate all that is necessary for the salvation of their souls into his own language.²⁷⁸

This project led to a number of subsequent difficulties: Yajiro was forced to translate Christian terminology using Buddhist vocabulary, causing a great deal of early misinterpretation by those Xavier met with. This was especially so concerning the translation of the Latin *Deus*, which had been interpreted as *Dainichi*.²⁷⁹

These initial problems led to serious confusion over what Christianity was actually preaching. Xavier's lack of knowledge of the Japanese language meant that he had to rely heavily on Yajiro to aid him in his mission, which we have already seen as problematic. Indeed, when Yajiro went with Xavier to the Ichiuji-

²⁷⁷ See Iwai, Shuma "An Analysis of Francis Xavier's Letters from Kagoshima, Japan (1549): His Approach and Views of Ministry," by *Asia Journal of Theology* 21.1 (2007).

²⁷⁸ Iwai, "Francis Xavier's Letters," 11.

²⁷⁹ Miyazaki Kentaro, "Roman Catholic Mission in Pre-Modern Japan," in Mullins, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in Japan* 6.

jo Castle to speak with Shimazu Takahisa, one might wonder what concept of Christianity Yajiro conveyed to him:

When Paul went to speak with the duke ... he took with him a very devout picture of Our Lady, which we had brought with us. The duke was marvelously pleased when he saw it; he knelt down before the image of Christ our Lord and of Our Lady, and he adored it with great respect and reverence. He then ordered all those who were with him to do the same; after this they showed it to the duke's mother, who was amazed and showed her own great pleasure in seeing it ... A few days after Paul returned from there to us in Kagoshima his lady sent a request that we send her in writing what the Christians believe. Paul thus spent several days in doing this, and he wrote many things about our faith in her language.²⁸⁰

The accuracy of this statement is open to question. Xavier seems to have taken the reaction of Shimazu Takahisa as one of praise, rather than the more likely scenario of the duke's fascination with the novelty of the work of art. Art of this kind would not have been a familiar sight prior to the entry of Europeans. The inadequate translation of Yajiro, confusing God with the Buddha Dainichi, created the assumption that Christianity was another school of Buddhism. The image of the Virgin, was also compared to the Goddess of the Sun, Ama-terasu, which was considered an aspect of the Dainichi Buddha.

Xavier provided an introduction of Christianity to the Japanese people. Xavier's process of encouraging greater understanding of the Japanese language and culture was instrumental in allowing him to find a place for the Jesuits in Japan. He also understood the need for the teaching class within Japan to be exposed to Christian instruction in other places. Hence he sent a number of Buddhist priests to Goa and Malacca in an attempt to convert these respected figures to the

²⁸⁰ Iwai, "Francis Xavier's Letters," 12.

Christian message, in the hope of creating circumstances in which native educated men would convert their fellow Japanese to Christianity. As Xavier noted in his diary:

We hope to write to you in great detail about all the dispositions that there are in Miyako and in the universities for their coming to a knowledge of Christ our Lord. This year two bonzes who have studied in the universities of Bandu and Miyako are going to India and together with them many Japanese to learn our law.²⁸¹

Further support, however, did not come as he had hoped. The Emperor of Japan, whom Xavier had hoped to visit, turned out to have little or no actual authority. In view of this lack of support, coupled with the challenges that he faced in attempting to learn the language, he decided to abandon Japan and return to his preaching in China and India. He left, however, with a very positive sense of the Japanese people:

The people, whom we have met so far, are the best who have as yet been discovered, and it seems to me that we shall never find among heathens another race to equal the Japanese. They are a people of very good manners, good in general, and not malicious.²⁸²

After Xavier left Japan, his mission was taken over by Father Torres, but it took ten years for the mission to achieve anything. A number of powerful Daimyo converted to Christianity in the hope of achieving trade privileges between their fiefdoms and Portugal. This did not materialise and, as a result, a number of the Daimyo reverted to Buddhism and began actively to persecute Christianity. Miyazaki estimates that soon after Xavier landed in Japan he had made 6,000

²⁸¹ Iwai, "Francis Xavier's Letters," 13.

²⁸² Miyazaki, "Roman Catholic Mission," 6.

converts. By 1569 there were about 20,000; by 1579 there were 130,000; by 1601 there were 300,000; and there was a total of 760,000 in the 1630s. One can, however, question the legitimate accuracy of such numbers, as the conversion of the Daimyo would have resulted in the mass conversion of the populace within their fiefdoms. Such large numbers as these most likely represent examples of the process of mass conversion²⁸³ rather than voluntary and individual conversion. We must also take into account the ulterior motive of the hope for enhanced trade with a foreign power as tainting the conversions of Daimyo.

The Jesuits began their work towards the conversion of the Japanese to Christianity with a series of policies developed by the vicar-general Alexander Valignano (1579-1606). He encouraged the study of both the language and customs of Japan. He established a language school at Sakaguchi and a number of treatises were written to assist in understanding how best to spread Christianity. Dress codes for the Jesuits were designed so as to resemble the Buddhist monks, and the church buildings respected distinctly Japanese architecture. This discouraged the perception that Christianity was hostile to either Japanese traditions or religious outlook and encouraged interaction between the Jesuits and the Japanese people on a level that the latter could understand. In 1570 the Jesuits negotiated the use of the port town of Nagasaki as a trade port; it became the centre of interaction between Europe and Japan, as well as between Christianity and Japan. In 1580 Nagasaki was given to the Jesuits as their own fief, which they supported through the trade of silk between Nagasaki and Macao.

In the interest of developing international acceptance of the growing Japanese Christian communities, Valignano sent four young Japanese boys to Europe to be exposed to European culture and to collect donations for the mission,

²⁸³ Deal William E., *Handbook to life in Medieval and Early Modern Japan* (Oxford University Press, 2005) P217

culminating in a meeting with the Pope, which Valignano hoped would result in active support for the Jesuit missions in Japan. The boys left in 1582 and in 1583 received an audience with the Pope, resulting in a surge of support for the Jesuit work in Japan. During their return journey to Japan, however, there was a shift in Japanese politics when Toyotomi Hideyoshi took control of Japan and issued orders to expel all foreign missionaries. This was a surprise to the burgeoning Christian church.²⁸⁴

Nagasaki was confiscated and placed back under government control. This action taken by Hideyoshi seems to have had as much to do with political control as with any hostility he had towards Christianity. The lucrative silk trade controlled by the Jesuits would have been a valuable source of income for a *Shogun*²⁸⁵, especially one who had unified Japan. The cost of such an endeavour would have meant that any income to secure his coffers would have been taken without question. This was not an outright persecution of the Christian missionaries; the edict was not strictly followed and was often overlooked as long as the missionaries kept out of the public eye. This implies that the act of expulsion was more to justify taking control of Nagasaki than a result of any actual hatred of the missionaries themselves. In 1590 Valignano returned to Japan with the four boys that he had taken with him to Europe. The security the Jesuits enjoyed in having sole right to missionary activity in Japan was also reinforced by the promotion of Valignano from viceroy of India to become the envoy to Hideyoshi, making him an influential figure with the ear of the *Shogun*. There was, however, a degree of frustration felt by the Augustinians, Franciscans and Dominicans at the loss of access to Japan. In 1593, Franciscans from the Philippines were sent as ambassadors to Japan. They received permission to build a monastery in Kyoto, and proceeded to begin public missionary work, claiming that the expulsion of the Jesuits did not affect them. This act, which blatantly ignored the Japanese edict, had a profound effect on Christianity's foothold in Japan, resulting in a

²⁸⁴ Miyazaki, "Roman Catholic Mission," 10.

²⁸⁵ The Shogun was the chief military ruler of Japan.

great deal of friction between the Portuguese Jesuits and the Spanish Franciscans. Additionally, in 1596 the Spanish ship *San Felipe* was captured by the Japanese, who confiscated the rich cargo on board. The leader of the Franciscans, Baptista, who was also the representative of Spain, objected. Hideyoshi renewed his order for the expulsion of all foreign missionaries and arrested the Franciscans in Kyoto. In Osaka and Sakai, Jesuits were rounded up, their ears were cut off and they were paraded as a warning to others of the consequences of missionary work. They were then crucified in Nagasaki in 1597.

One can clearly see a political motive for each act of Hideyoshi. In capturing the Spanish ship he acted out of a need to support his army in Korea; his renewal of the edict was in response to the objections of Baptista to the capture of the ship and to the actions of the Franciscans in ignoring his authority. Consequently, Hideyoshi reinforced his authority through torture and crucifixion, which was described as “The martyrdom of the twenty-six Japanese Saints.”

Battle broke out in 1598; Tokugawa Ieyasu became *Shogun* in 1603 and established the Edo *Bakufu* government. For the next ten years, whilst building his power base, he did not take a definitive position regarding the Christians, and permitted their cautious continued existence; the last expulsion remained fresh in their minds. In 1600 the Pope rescinded his order granting the Jesuits sole missionary access to Japan, and soon missionaries from the Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians arrived in Japan. This resulted in a series of struggles for control of the Christian communities in Japan. Also in 1600, a vessel from Holland drifted into Usuki. The English chief navigator, William Adams, became a close advisor to Tokugawa (and was immortalised in the Book *Shogun* by James Clavell). Holland established its first trading post in Japan in 1609 and England in 1613. The foundation of these trading posts brought Protestant Christianity to Japan. Unlike the outposts established by Spain and Portugal, the Protestant traders did not mix their religious faith with their trading acumen, resulting in a secular trade with European powers, which appealed more to the Japanese rulers. This resulted in more favourable conditions for trading with

Holland and England, and consequently the *Bakufu* government had no further need to protect the Christian communities in Japan for fear of losing trade with Portugal and Spain. This opened the way for a systematic persecution of all Christians. In 1614 the *Bakufu* government issued a nationwide order, prohibiting Christianity in any form, and actively sought out and expelled all foreign Christian missionaries and Christian community leaders. This order was to last for 210 years. Churches and monasteries were destroyed or given to Buddhist monks as temples. Christian Daimyo were expelled from Japan along with their entire families. Missionaries were forced underground for fear of what would happen if they were found; they were often burned at the stake or tortured to induce them to recant their Christian values. To make sure that an ex-Christian remained true to his word he had to marry a non-Christian Japanese and take part in the interrogation of other suspected Christians. This resulted in as many as forty thousand being executed or tortured for being Christians over the 210 years period.

2.3.B Tokugawa and Christianity

In 1623 Tokugawa Iemitsu became *Shogun*. During his rule, England pulled out of Japan, leaving the Dutch trading posts as the only Christian presence in Japan, as Tokugawa cut off all diplomatic relations with Spain. These were the first steps in what became isolation from the rest of the world. An uprising in Shimabara in 1637 allowed the Tokugawa regime to tighten its control further over Christians in Japan. Blaming Christians for the uprising, the *Bakufu* government instituted a number of laws that completed Japanese isolation by banning any foreigners from entering Japan. It enacted six laws that were aimed at effectively removing the last traces of the Christian faith:

The system of remunerating denouncers: this was a system of giving financial remunerations to those who denounced Kirishitan that was introduced in 1619 in Nagasaki. In 1633 it was introduced also in the regions under direct control of the Bakufu government ... *The five-family groups* was a system of local neighbourhood

associations based on units of five households ... If a member of one's five family groups accused someone to be a Kirishitan the remaining four households were not censured, but if a member was accused by someone of another group all members of a five-family group were executed. *Fumie*: In order to test if a person was a believer or not the person was made to trod on an image of Christ or Mary, the objects of belief, as a means of psychological torture. *Written declaration of renunciation*:... A written document in which the person who had thrown away the Kirishitan belief swore before the deities of Japan and before the Christian God not to convert again. *Certification by a Buddhist Temple*: All Japanese were forced to become parishioner of a temple, a Buddhist priest had to assist in the burial of the dead and the burial had to be conducted according to Buddhist rites. *Lists for the control of family groups*: In 1687 the Bakufu government established a special system of surveillance over the family groups of Kirishitan martyrs ... If any change occurred in a family group such as death, birth, marriage, change of residence ... it was declared obligatory to file a written notice.²⁸⁶

These new laws brought about dramatic changes for Christians in Japan. With their every movement watched, along with the widespread use of torture, being a Christian became very dangerous and many believers were forced underground. In 1657 the government instituted random searches of villages for Christians, making it dangerous to harbour them. As a result, until the late Edo period, few Christians remained in Japan. Active pogroms and constant surveillance meant that they had to be very careful about their activities, but it also meant that they could write very little, making sources for understanding their actions and practices few and valuable. Christians who survived became

²⁸⁶ Miyazaki, "Roman Catholic Mission," 14-15.

part of a group, which Miyazaki refers to as the *Kakure Kirishitan* (Underground Christians), a school of Christianity that survived despite the persecutions and searches. I shall undertake a close examination of this particular group in the next section. But why did such active persecution come down on Christians, in contrast to Buddhism and Shinto? I shall attempt to answer that question by looking at Christianity's relationship with Shinto at this time, alongside asking what this means for the development of dialogue between Christianity and the indigenous faith traditions in Japan.

2.4 State Shinto

The Meiji period was one of the most important periods in the development of Shinto as well as for its relationship with other religions. It is important to explore this period because it gives us greater insight into the relationship that would develop between Christianity and Shinto, and it also yields insights into the challenges that we face in developing dialogue between both faiths. State Shinto was set down by the Meiji government in an attempt to standardise a faith within Japan that would both legitimise the government and at the same time allow it to regulate the spiritual wellbeing of the Japanese people.²⁸⁷

The key aspect of this concept of Shinto was its use as a political tool that could be manipulated and directed in the way required to gain the maximum loyalty from its subjects. The negative effect of this usage was that it stunted the growth of Shinto. This is grounded in the Meiji reinterpretation of Shinto to suit their political ambitions, which impeded Shinto from developing naturally by placing at its core a number of systematic and dogmatic beliefs that would separate it from its more traditional partner, which became known as Shrine Shinto. State Shinto was placed under the auspices of the Bureau of Religions. One of the prime indicators of the state's attempt to take a degree of control over Shinto was the separation of the *Kami* between State and Shrine Shinto. A number of *Kami*, considered to be of value to the Japanese government, were adopted and applied to State Shinto. These, whilst not unique to State Shinto, became the mainstay of the state, meaning that one could not add others to its approved list. In contrast, Shrine Shinto was given the freedom to continue to worship any number of deities, which for the most part remained the same as those of the state but in practice often included *Kami* that were not part of the canon of the state.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ Holtom, *National Faith*, 4.

²⁸⁸ Holtom, *National Faith*, 69-70.

Of primary importance to the state was a recognition of what the Emperor was in terms of control. The Emperor represented the Gods, the infallibility of such an individual reinforced by the state's policy of controlling the practice of Shinto. The text implies that not to follow Shinto was not only dishonourable, but also disloyal. Such powerful vocabulary evokes the possibility of damage to one's personal name and, as such, to the name of one's ancestors.

2.4.A Separation of Ritual and Religion

The separation of Shinto into both a national ritual and a religion created a tension between Shinto and the other religions that existed within Japan at this time. The use of Shinto for political gain in this instance was not unique. The *Kojiki* created an image of the imperial house directly related to the deities themselves, which allowed Japan to assert its status as an empire. However, we are not just dealing with the deification of the imperial family, but with a demand placed on the Japanese people to embrace this revised version of their common faith or, if they did not, face the consequences of a loss of face and damage to their families' name arising from their act of treason. It cannot, however, be taken for granted that this move for control was made purely with the status of the Emperor in mind. During the period from 1889 onwards, both Buddhism and Christianity were embarking on active education programs designed to encourage the Japanese to embrace their particular traditions. Each utilized propaganda to encourage their followers to embrace their faith in contrast to that of the government.

Buddhism had been active in Japan for approximately one thousand years and offered a largely Japanese interpretation of the Buddhist faith that had been amalgamated so much with Shinto that for a long period the two had become well-nigh inseparable. The need to emphasise something unique to Japan against what were considered foreign faiths forced the government to attempt to create something that would emphasise Japan first and everything else second. This need, however, to emphasise the uniquely religious aspect of Japan in State

Shinto was closely tied to the development of a strong nationalistic rhetoric. This informed the process of moral education introduced by the government in the school systems, and the banning of religious education so as to stop other faiths from attempting to gain a modicum of control through the education system. This was quickly followed by the creation of non-religious status for State Shinto, bypassing the religious ban in favour of indoctrinating students into the government-run religion. Order Number Twelve, published on the third of August 1899, stated that:

The separation of general education from religion is very necessary to educational administration. Accordingly, in all schools established by the government and in all public schools (privately) founded and, also, in all schools wherein the curriculum is fixed by law, religious instruction and the holding of religious services are prohibited even outside the regular curriculum.²⁸⁹

State Shinto ceremonies were not considered to be religious in nature and, as such, could be practiced, and indeed were encouraged as part of the student's experience. Students were taken to shrines to take part in celebrations, the government excusing this act by claiming that, as it came under its jurisdiction, the act was not religious but secular. This was confusing for many schools that faced the difficult decision of whether to rescind their status as government-run or drop religion. It had a massive impact on Buddhist and Christian education centres, the nature of the law forcing them to close their doors or omit expressing their faith in a school environment. After the passing of this law, we see the beginning of a new form of education, in which only the tenets of State Shinto were taught to the student body emphasising an ultra-nationalistic interpretation of key Shinto concepts. Within the school system, the image of the Emperor was linked closely with divinity. This was accurately described by Mori Koichi, who notes that at the time the government distributed a copy of the

²⁸⁹ Holtom, *National Faith*, 69-70.

Imperial Rescript on Education together with a photo of the Emperor and Empress that had to be displayed.²⁹⁰

During this period, scholars such as Okuni Takamasu of the Kokugaku school insisted on creating an almost utopian view of Japan in terms of its role in creation, reinforced by a sense of pride and privilege that other cultures had tried to remove from the Japanese people. In his trenchant assault on foreign faiths, Takamasu stated that "The entire course of history during the 1,250 years since Emperor Jimmu ... is the story of the destruction of our ancient customs and the imitation of foreign ways in all things."²⁹¹ This separation of Shinto from other faiths, emphasising how much damage had been done to the ancient and noble culture of Japan by external influences, seems to have been one of the foremost aims of the state in its development of State Shinto.

The utopian ideal of Japanese culture reinforced the constant link between Shinto and the divinity of the Japanese people. A key element in this strategy is the need to create a sense of identity within the modern world; Japan, through its isolation, had not yet had to deal with the conflict that arose from exposure to other cultures. As a result, the need to appeal to something that was considered unique to Japan became emphasized. This, however, would require a level of control that could only be ensured through a state mandated religion.

2.4.B The Government's Priesthood

The government further ensured control over the shrines and temples by bringing the priesthood directly under the control of local councils that were answerable to the government, allowing it to undo the centuries-old hereditary nature of the priestly class and to replace it with one that was much easier to

²⁹⁰Mori, Koichi, "The Emperor of Japan: A Historical Study in Religious Symbolism," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 6.4 (1979), 549.

²⁹¹Hardacre, Helen "Creating State Shinto: The Great Promulgation Campaign and the New Religions," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 12.1 (1986), 29-63.

manage and control. This also allowed the government to gain control over the finances of the shrines, ensuring that they were dependent on the government, not only for their priesthood, but also for any funding that they hoped to receive. This meant that the government could focus on ensuring that Shinto became recognized for its uniquely Japanese outlook. They could also ensure that appropriate teaching took place in the temples, focusing on the worship of the Imperial house and reinforcing the image of the Japanese people as distinct from the rest of the world through their uniquely divine nature. There was a shift in the class of each shrine, as each shrine and priest was ranked according to their importance. We can see this in the chart below:

SHRINES		PRIESTLY RANKS
Major Divisions	Subdivisions	
. <i>kansha</i> ("central government shrines")	<i>kanpei-kokuhei taisha</i> ("government and national shrines of higher grade")	<i>daigūji</i> ("high priest"), <i>shōgūji</i> ("assistant priest"), <i>negi</i> ("priest"), etc.
	<i>kanpei-kokuhei chūsha</i> ("government and national shrines of middle grade")	<i>gūji</i> ("chief priest"), <i>gongūji</i> ("deputy priest"), <i>negi</i> ("priest"), etc.
	<i>kanpei-kokuhei shōsha</i> ("government and national shrines of lower grade")	<i>gūji</i> ("chief priest"), <i>gongūji</i> ("deputy priest"), <i>negi</i> ("priest"), etc.
Lower Shrines or <i>minsha</i> ("people's shrines") ^a	<i>fusha</i> ("metropolitan shrines") <i>hansha</i> ("clan shrines") <i>kensha</i> ("prefectural shrines") <i>gōsha</i> ("district shrines") [<i>sonsha</i> ("village shrines")]	<i>shikan</i> ("priest") and <i>shishō</i> ("priest") <i>shikan</i> and <i>shishō</i> <i>shikan</i> and <i>shishō</i> <i>shikan</i> and <i>shishō</i> [<i>shishō</i>] ^b

SOURCE: *Fukoku zensho: Dajōkan fukoku*, no. 235. See also Umeda, 413, 423-424.

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²⁹² Fridell, Wilbur M. "The Establishment of Shrine Shinto in Meiji Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 2 (1975), 151.

The role and status of the priest depended entirely on the importance of the temple or shrine. For example, the central government shrines were considered to be of special importance and used a different terminology when referring to their priests compared with the lower shrines. The Ise Shrine held a unique position within the system, being seen as the Imperial Shrine and, as such, holding a singular importance within the Japanese psyche. This also assisted in creating a sense of hierarchy which, by placing each shrine in terms of importance, gave rise to a simple system of belief and practices stemming from the Imperial shrine in Ise to the village and city shrines that were found all over Japan. New rituals were devised to emphasize the special place of the Emperor within Japanese culture. Kurihara Akira refers to this as ‘the Japanese National Religion’.²⁹³

This nationalism formed the core of State Shinto and was also the reason why Shinto, in its state form was constrained to develop along a line that was based around the worship of the Emperor. As has been already pointed out, the role that the Emperor played within Japanese faith development had been originally emphasized during the early development of the *Kojiki*. This shift in dynamics for their national faith penetrated many differing aspects of religious experience. To define accurately how much of an impact this change had on Shinto, I shall examine it under a number of different aspects: the Emperor, the nationalistic rhetoric, the change in ceremony, and the use of the Gods and *Kami* that were developed to create State Shinto.

²⁹³ Kurihara, Akira, “The Emperor System as Japanese National Religion: The Emperor System Module in Everyday Consciousness,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 17.2-3 (1990), 317.

2.5 The Emperor

“The earliest known religion is a belief in the divinity of kings. I do not say that it is necessarily the most primitive; but in the earliest records known, man appears to us worshipping gods and their earthly representatives, namely kings. We have no right, in the present state of our knowledge, to assert that the worship of gods preceded that of kings; we do not know. Perhaps there never were any gods without kings, or kings without gods. When we have discovered the origin of divine kingship we shall know, but at present we only know that when history begins there are kings, the representatives of gods.”²⁹⁴

The Emperor forms a vital part of the Shinto tradition. The concept of ‘the Emperor’ also evolved as Shinto evolved during the Meiji Period, and the concept is important to helping us to understand the role of obligation in Shinto as well as the concept of the close connection between Japan and the *Kami*. The Emperor system within State Shinto has been described as a system of the imagination that exists by being believed.²⁹⁵ The very basis for State Shinto relied on the total acceptance of the deified Emperor, one who was by blood the child of the divine. This system of imagination, as Kurihara describes it, focused on creating and maintaining not only a solid belief in the Emperor’s divinity, but also the belief that to question this was disloyalty. The use of the term ‘disloyalty’ in warnings against disagreeing with State Shinto implies that any questioning of the governmental faith would be seen to stem from disloyalty to the Emperor and also Japan itself. At the heart of the successful promulgation of State Shinto was the willingness of Japan to submit to these ideas. As during the time of the *samurai*, one simply obeyed without question. This is in many ways similar to the earlier work of the Tokugawa *Bakufu* to closely link Shinto to their own

²⁹⁴Sasaki, “Priest, Shaman, King,” 106.

²⁹⁵Kurihara, “The Emperor System,” 315.

ideology. However, this was primarily because they were mimicking the imperial house.²⁹⁶

The Emperor was considered the “sacred well of heaven” and held a triumvirate of positions within the state: a statesman, a human and a divine being. In many ways, it invites a simple comparison between the status of the Emperor and the Christian interpretation of Jesus as being both human and divine. Where Jesus represented a new Covenant and a break from older traditions, the Emperor, however, was exactly the opposite. He represented the *status quo*, encouraging a consistent acceptance of the way things were and discouraging any thinking that would be deemed radical or contrary to the implicit moral and societal rules of the time. Rituals reinforced this idea of upholding the *status quo*.

This can be seen as an example of a circular ritual²⁹⁷ that developed out of State Shinto’s need to emphasize the importance of the Emperor. Whereas Kurihara bitterly depicts this ritual as an empty performance, I would disagree; this ritual recalls the more agrarian nature of Shinto that was incorporated into State Shinto. The incorporation of a ritual such as this into the state-sponsored form of the religion had the aim, first, of developing rituals that were already familiar from folk traditions in Japan and, as such, would allow for an easier transition from the ‘faith-based’, natural religious experience to one that was more restrictive in social and political terms. Second, it aimed to reinforce the *status quo*. The circular nature of the event evoked constancy; the ritual represented the life that should be followed: one should continue without question to accept the Emperor’s primacy as child of the Gods, and - unless told to do otherwise - continue to live out the roles into which one was born for the rest of one’s existence. The *hito gami* and *uji gami* systems assisted in reinforcing the role to be played in appeasing both the Ancestors and the Emperor in his role as the

²⁹⁶ See Scheid, Bernard. “Shinto as a Religion for the Warrior Class” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* (2002 29/3-4) 300-324

²⁹⁷ See Kurihara “The Emperor System” on his interpretation of the performances of the Emperor on P321

ruling *Kami*. One of the key strengths of State Shinto was its ability to take the underlying cultural faith and use it as a tool in developing a much more nationalistic and secular 'concept of faith.'

A further development in this regard was the image of the Emperor as the father of Japan. The image of the Emperor as the father of the Japanese race was promulgated as an educational tool: when children were asked what image they had of the Emperor, many of them replied by calling him the "father of Japan".²⁹⁸ This extended to seeing the imperial family as a microcosm of the Japanese people, described as harmonious, caring and hard-working. This description allowed the people of Japan to identify with the Emperor as a man and with his family as representing the best of the Japanese people. This did not detract from the overall image of the Emperor as a divine figure. Rather, this personalization of the imperial family would have increased the perception of their divine nature, since as representatives of an ideal the imperial family's perfection was unattainable by other Japanese people. The government encouraged a form of emulation of the imperial family, representing Japan as a family in and of itself. As such, the whole of Japan was working towards the benefit of the imperial house, which represented the national family to which all belonged, and hence they would have to respect and follow the national ancestors' need for a strong and unified Japan.²⁹⁹

This concept of a national family headed by the Emperor reinforced his unique status, including the fact that he was divine and that, by extension, all of Japan possessed a divine aspect that separated it from other countries and peoples. This divine status also allowed the development of a sense of superiority to others, but only when closely tied to the concept of the imperial family. Two key pieces of text in the constitution stated that the Emperor had reigned over Japan in an unbroken line since the beginning of Japan, and also that he was sacred and

²⁹⁸ Kurihara, "The Emperor System," 322.

²⁹⁹ Koichi, "The Emperor," 547.

inviolable. In schools, children were taught about their role within the extended Japanese family, with each text and element of moral education designed to indoctrinate them further into the nationalistic imperial Shinto cult. The Emperor himself was regarded with the same reverence and fear as the *Kami*. An account of an imperial tour within Japan states that:

The people built an altar of planed wood in front of one of their houses. They welcomed the Emperor by offering a rice cake and cleansed rice on the altar.³⁰⁰

The Emperor is offered the same veneration as a *Kami*, including offerings to placate and demonstrate submission. This again demonstrates the vital role that an agrarian society attributed to the *Kami* that they had venerated so as to protect them and bring them luck, and it is striking how easily State Shinto was able to replace the popularly-revered *Kami* with the Emperor, reinforcing the idea that all Japanese were part of a unified single family. The use of rice is also noteworthy, as rice represented wealth even in a time when monetary currency was the norm. The inherent value of the rice was still vitally important to the people of agrarian Japan, and the act of offering such a gift represented the importance that they vested in the Emperor.

The value that people placed on certain items and locations that the Emperor would touch or stay in during his travels also reinforced the Emperor's divine role in State Shinto. Mori refers to one example where the Emperor rode through a region on a boat. The owner diligently dismantled the boat after its use and built a smaller model that he then venerated. Fearing that it would rot, he burnt the model and buried it, choosing to venerate the burial mound of earth as sacred instead. This veneration of objects and places associated with the Emperor assisted in creating a more concrete image of the Emperor as a physical presence, as well as a power that existed on the spiritual plane. As Mori points

³⁰⁰ Koichi, "The Emperor," 551

out, it also led to a greater acceptance of governmental policy in regards to the national family ideology. This push towards a king clearly indicates State Shinto's aim to ensure that its followers would accept the Emperor above all else. The other *Kami* that existed during this period fulfilled a purely supportive role; the new imperial emphasis altered many of the ritualistic elements of Shinto from an original context to the worship of the Emperor. The natural evolutionary process and freedom that the folk traditions represented were actively redirected and locked into a particular function, that of the worship of the Emperor. With the focus on the Emperor over all others, the need to evolve was removed and, coupled with the active separation of State Shinto from Buddhism, with which there had existed a mutually beneficial symbiotic relationship, the natural shape and form of Shinto was redirected. When State Shinto effectively came to an end with the Emperor's speech at the end of World War Two, his admission that he is not a *Kami* proved more damaging to the Japanese psyche than the surrender of Japan itself.³⁰¹

This admission was the death knell for State Shinto, but at the same time it does nothing to change the fact that the natural development of Shinto³⁰² had been disrupted and would now remain stagnant.

³⁰¹ Koichi, "The Emperor," 553.

³⁰² The natural development of Shinto is predominantly the development of Shinto as a faith system, adhering to a Primal belief structure and its capacity to integrate and amalgamate other faith traditions without threatening its own sense of self. Whilst there have been a number of times the state has coopted Shinto for its own gain (Toyotomi, Tokugawa etc), there was not a great degree of interference in the process by which Shinto operated. However, State Shinto actively redefined the core belief structure and through its doctrinal nature, disallowed for other faith traditions to integrate. This effectively put an end to the natural development of Shinto.

2.6 From the *Samurai* to Meiji: Shift in politics and the development of a modern Japan.

“In ancient times Amaterasu-Omikami sent down her grandson Ninigi-no-Mikoto, and caused him to rule over this country. The great grandchild of this prince was Jimmu Tenno. Since that time the descendants of this Emperor have succeeded to the Imperial Throne without interruption. From the year of the accession of Emperor Jimmu to the present is upwards of two thousand five hundred and ninety years [the book was published in 1930].³⁰³

The shift in politics during the Meiji period was important for our understanding of the relationship between Christianity and Shinto because of the significant change in the Japanese perception of religion and tradition; this would, in turn, raise challenges for any dialogue between Shinto and Christianity. Prior to the Meiji period, Shinto had originated within the folk traditions of Japan, imprinting itself upon the Japanese psyche, both in its concern with perfection and its spiritual awareness. This system of faith had integrated key elements of other religions that entered Japan, including Buddhism and Christianity, taking the elements that were familiar and interpreting them in terms of this evolving Shinto. At the same time, key ideas of Shinto were embraced by the faiths that were entering Japan, creating unique schools of Buddhist and Christian thought.³⁰⁴ Shinto took elements of new faiths and seamlessly incorporated them into its existing traditions by fitting them around key elements such as ancestral worship, the *Kami* and the *hito gami* and *uji gami* models of shamanic worship and belief. This natural evolution was an integral part of the nature of Shinto. The key elements of Shinto, that allowed an open acceptance of other faiths by amalgamation, made it unique among the other faiths in Japan. Christianity, in contrast, held strongly to doctrines that resisted similar amalgamations.

³⁰³ *Jinjo Shogaku Shushinsho* (Textbook of Ethics for Ordinary Primary Schools; Vol. V; Tokyo, 1930), 1-2.

³⁰⁴ These have been detailed in the previous section.

As we have seen, Christianity's early encounter with Japanese culture had negative consequences for practitioners of that faith. Buddhism's fusion with Shinto was a reflection both of its capacity to adapt to contemporary Japanese faith, and also of its flexibility, becoming something unique to Japan, when reinterpreted to include proto-Shinto beliefs. Proto-Shinto and Buddhism thrived as they went hand in hand with each other, their teachings naturally overflowing from Buddhism into proto-Shinto and back again. This partnership between the two faiths shows how pliable proto-Shinto was and also demonstrates the free and accepting nature of the faith; the concept of a formulated written doctrine, such as that found within Christianity, was quite alien to it. To understand the impact of modernity on Shinto, I shall first examine the political shift within Japan during the Meiji period from 1853, the transition from the *Samurai* era to a new government and its impact. This period witnessed the cementing of what we now know as Shinto and its restructuring both in its style of worship and its developing canon and doctrine, aspects which had not previously existed.

For over two hundred years the Japanese had enforced a system of *sakoku*, isolationism. They had closed their doors to the rest of the world and continued to live as they had since the Edo period. This, coupled with the continuous rule of the Tokugawa regime,³⁰⁵ significantly impeded industrial development in Japan.³⁰⁶ The regime itself, however, was beset on all sides by internal problems. The imperial family and the Emperor were effectively hostages in the capital, Kyoto, and all senior officials were chosen by the regime itself. The regime was represented in Kyoto by a *Shoshidai*, or governor. He liaised with the imperial

³⁰⁵ The Tokugawa regime had held power since 1603; this meant that for approximately 200 years there was a continued rulership under one governing body, with the samurai class under its control. This effectively meant that the only military that existed in Japan was under direct control of an unbroken dynasty, giving it great sway over Japanese politics and life.

³⁰⁶ It has been argued that Japan underwent an "industrious revolution" instead of an industrial one. See Tamaki Toshiaki. "Japanese Economic Growth during the Edo Period" *Kyoto Sangyo University Economic Review No.1* (March 2014) 255-266 and Hayami, Akira. *Economic Society in Early Modern Japan* (Tokyo, 2003)

family and the court, and ensured that they did not interfere with the everyday running of the country. All Daimyo were subject to a very strict code of behaviour and conduct. Marriages required the *Shogun's* permission, along with simple things like the repair of castles. There was, however, no form of taxation for the Daimyo; rather, they were obliged to carry out public works, such as irrigation, and to pay out of their own wealth. To ensure this happened, there was an exchange of hostages who attended the *Shogun* in Edo, every other year. For example, a Daimyo would be required to spend one year in Edo and another year in his fiefdom. This allowed the regime to retain control over the Daimyo and ensured their loyalty. The *samurai* themselves lived under a similar rule to that of their masters; a controlled form of etiquette and traditions that had been enforced at the beginning of the Edo period continued, described here in the writings of Yamaga Soko:

In minor matters, such as dress, food, dwelling and all implements and their uses, he must live up to the best samurai traditions of good form ... Among major matters there are the maintenance of peace and order in the world; rites and festivals; the control of feudal states and districts; mountains and forests, seas and rivers, farms and rice fields, temples and shrines; and the disposition of suits and appeals among the four classes of people.³⁰⁷

These rules and regulations sought to deal with growing discontent among the *samurai* classes. As battles and wars grew less frequent, the question of one's status and position became more and more important. The code of *Bushido*³⁰⁸ became central to the life of the *samurai*; and *Zen* principles, coupled with the ingrained need to strive for perfection, became the central focus of a *samurai's* life. The ideals of the *hito gami* and *uji gami* systems were integrated into *Bushido*, encouraging the *samurai* to accept their place in accordance with their

³⁰⁷ Beasley, *Modern History of Japan*, 10.

³⁰⁸ An elaborate code of honor followed by the Samurai.

social duties and also their duties to their ancestors and the *kami*. This sense of *ho-on*³⁰⁹ discouraged a shift in the role that the *samurai* played within society. What is most interesting about this is the clear religious influence that again is reinforced by the *hito gami* and *uji gami* systems. Clearly the active role that the ideals of proto-Shinto had inculcated in the people through their understanding of their faith had a strong societal impact, in which the sense of *ho-on* to one's ancestors expanded to include those of better standing and also those who ruled, for example, the Emperor, or the *Bakufu* of the Tokugawa regime. This concept of duty was reinforced by Confucian hierarchical ideas as described by the Sung philosopher Chu Hsi, reinterpreted in Japanese terms alongside the Zen concept of the perfection of the self, in this case through fulfilment of the duties that one was set.³¹⁰

This system of government, however, was inherently economically flawed. The focus on crops and their yield created an unstable economy, especially since a *samurai* had to be away from his land for a minimum of six months, and possibly a year, at a time. This created considerable inconsistency in the management of the fields and in the crops that were produced. Moreover, by the eighteenth century, merchants and tradesmen had become a highly specialised group that congregated around the castle towns that had developed in response to the demand for various products, from clothes to swords. This began to have an effect on the villages, where villagers began to move from subsistence farming to growing commercial crops. The production of wax, cotton, silk and indigo began to flourish and, as a result, small cottage industries began to spread.

For a *samurai* to benefit from this, however, was more difficult. With the development and expansion of the merchant trade, the need arose for a form of

³⁰⁹ *Ho-on* was a sense of obligation that one had to continue the work of the previous generation, attempt to further perfect it. This sense of obligation would often be reflected in the continuity of a family in the same line of work or the same role over generations. For example, if the son made pottery, it was because his father made it and he was obliged to continue so that the advances in the perfection of technique his father had developed would be further developed by the son.

³¹⁰ Beasley, *Modern History of Japan*, 11.

currency that could be used in exchange for the goods and services they offered, and for money brokers, rice brokers and credit transactions. *Samurai* required assistance in acquiring money to spend, giving rise to the financier and to the dual role of the merchant as a moneylender offering advancement in return for a later payment. The *samurai* also had to deal with their own disconnection from the territories for the time they were in Edo, which would only accept coin and would not accept barter. This began to place *samurai* under increasing debt to the merchant who used his knowledge of the system of fluctuating rice prices to benefit from the debts of the *samurai*.³¹¹

The *samurai* began to become distracted by the considerable number of unique and expensive tastes of the cities, building up heavy debts to the merchant classes. The price of goods rose at a faster rate than the value of rice because of the demand for them by the *Samurai*, and even the more careful members of the class began to fall into debt. This also directly affected the Tokugawa *bakufu* as they struggled to deal with the mounting debt that was being created. They began to levy new taxes in an attempt to bring the economy under control. This had a negative impact on the *samurai* class, whose wealth was controlled by their stipend. Many *samurai* could not afford to give up half of what they owned to the government and, as a result, they became increasingly indebted to the merchants, leading to murmurs of discontent amongst the *samurai* class, which had traditionally remained stoically loyal. Many left their position to become farmers or merchants; some became very successful, such as the family of Matsukata Masayoshi, whose father had left the *samurai* class to become a trader. Matsukata became a finance minister in the Meiji period. *Samurai* began to encourage cottage industries in their fiefs as a way of covering their debts. By this stage many villages had also begun to take up monetary exchange instead of barter. This affected not only the *samurai* but also the peasant class below them, since as more and more *samurai* fell deeper into debt, added pressure was placed on peasants to cover their masters' costs.

³¹¹ Beasley, *Meiji Restoration*, 44.

By the eighteenth century, the chief concern of most rulers was money. The growth in the production and sale of goods resulted in massive economic issues for the Tokugawa *Bakufu*, increased by the previous one hundred years of growth in the mercantile districts throughout many of the cities. Reforms attempted to halt the growing debt but the feudal regime could not cope with the scale of the changes in the economy. This led to resentment on the part of the *samurai* class, who felt that their lords were no longer looking out for them. This resentment was also felt amongst the peasant classes who were most affected by the changes in their traditional way of life. As the middle of the nineteenth century drew near, one of the most important factors in the fall of the Tokugawa *bakufu* arrived in the form of foreigners attempting to gain entry into Japan for the first time in almost two hundred years. For many years both the Russians and British had attempted to access Japan with little or no success. This was met with frustration by the governments of many countries, especially during the period of the Opium War between China and Britain in 1839. This frustration at the inability of Britain to access Japan was voiced in the *Edinburgh Review*:

The compulsory seclusion of the Japanese is wrong not only to themselves, but to the civilised world ... The Japanese undoubtedly have an exclusive right to the possession of their territory; but they must not abuse the right to the extent of debarring all other nations from a participation in its riches and virtues. The only secure title to property, whether it be a hovel or an empire, is, that the exclusive possession of one is for the benefit of all.³¹²

It was eventually the Americans who opened Japanese ports to European entry. In 1853, ships under the command of Matthew Perry arrived at Uraga. The *Bakufu* met with Perry in Uraga, fearing the size of the fleet under his control. They were handed a number of documents from both the President and Perry

³¹² Beasley, *Modern History of Japan*, 43.

himself. Whilst the President made a diplomatic offer, Perry's was a simple threat that if they did not accept America's offer then he would return with a larger fleet the following spring. This caused turmoil amongst the Japanese government as it considered its response. The government and the lords of various fiefdoms debated how best to deal with this situation, resulting in an agreement to obfuscate their answers and hope to persuade Perry to leave.

Perry returned in February 1854 with a much larger force and anchored off the coast of Edo. The *Bakufu* met with him at the small fishing village of Yokohama. Negotiations began in earnest after Perry made it clear he was not leaving without an appropriately signed treaty. By the end of March the treaty was signed at Kanagawa in Edo Bay. The treaty allowed for access to a number of ports, which was what Perry was primarily interested in. The issue of trade was left ambiguous, but was followed up by the sending of Townsend Harris, who managed to secure a number of concessions, including trade, in 1858. This treaty however, was not signed by the Emperor, it was Ii Kamon-no-kami³¹³ who persuaded the *Bakufu* to sign the treaty, bypassing the imperial house altogether. He also persuaded the *Bakufu* to imprison the Tokugawa lords, Mito and Owari, along with a number of their sympathisers, as a way to ensure that the Emperor would not benefit from any real support. Ii then placed Iemochi of the house of Kii as successor to the Shogunate. Ii, however, was assassinated, followed by the death of the *Shogun*, leaving Japan without strong leadership. The anti-foreigner movement then moved to take control and to remove the *Bakufu*, which, they felt, was blocking the removal of the foreign element within Japan. A train accident involving a pair of Englishmen, however, caused a violent response from the British, who bombarded Kagoshima, setting it on fire. The Americans and British then proceeded to destroy Japan's coastal defences and demanded three million dollars in reparations for the death of the English.

³¹³ Ii-Kamon-no-kami, also known as Ii Naosuke was the daimyo of Hikone. He served as *Tairo* (high ranking official position) to the Tokugawa *Bakufu*. He is famous for signing the Harris Treaty in place of the Emperor.

The Japanese had little chance to respond to this, as they did not have the power or capacity to defend themselves against such an attack. The Shogunate had to resist a number of rebellions, which they could not put down effectively. They had little choice but to repeal the regulation requiring lords to stay in Edo and, as a consequence, they lost their only real control over the Daimyo. Attacks on Europeans broke out throughout Japan; Europeans responded by attacking anti-foreign *samurai*. European embassies were burnt to the ground in 1863. In 1867 the Emperor Komei died of small pox and was replaced by the Emperor Meiji. Meiji sent a recommendation to the *Shogun* that he rescind his power to the imperial throne. In 1867 the *Shogun* formally resigned, paving the way for the development of a new system of government under the Emperor Meiji, and so began the Meiji period. This government would be instrumental in shaping the political and spiritual path that Japan took, as far as the end of World War Two.

2.6.A Meiji to World War II

In 1869 Edo was renamed Tokyo and the Emperor took up official residence there. He reversed the change in the law in relation to *samurai* staying at the capital. The country was divided into prefectures, and new European-style titles were applied, including Prince, Marquis, Count, Viscount and Baron. The daimyo were requested to rescind control of their fiefs to the imperial house. In a brave document, Okubo, Hirosawa and Itagaki officially offered to submit their lands to the Emperor:

The lands in which we live are the Emperor's lands. The people we govern are the Emperor's people. How, then, can we rightly treat them as our own? We now surrender our registers to the throne, asking that the Court dispose of them at will, bestowing that which should be bestowed, taking away that which should be taken away; and we ask that the Court issue such orders as it may deem necessary, disposing of the lands of the great domains and deciding changes in them, as well as regulating all things, from

institutions, statutes, and military organisation down to regulations concerning uniforms and equipment, so that state affairs both great and small, may be in the hands of a single authority. Thus will name and reality be made one and our country put on a footing of equality with countries overseas.³¹⁴

The judicial system and penal code were reformed; a postal service and an official currency were created. In 1872 the first railway was opened from Tokyo to Yokohama and in 1873 the Christian calendar and seven-day week were adopted. Conscription was introduced, removing the elite status of the *samurai* class who, until then, had been the only warriors in Japan. This army was also unique in being trained almost exclusively by foreign officers, including those from France and Britain.

The formation of a government under the Emperor represented a considerable change in the exercise of power. In 1875 the government brought in an act abolishing all *samurai*, who were banned from wearing the two swords. This resulted in the Satsuma Rebellion of 1877, which lasted for eight months, until it was finally put down by the Imperial army. Saigo, the leader of the rebellion, committed *Seppuku* at the Satsuma capital. In 1885, Japan officially abolished its old form of government in favour of a new system under a prime minister. Various departments were created to assist in the running of the country, including Departments of Justice, War, Treasury, etc. In February 1899 a new constitution was proclaimed, creating a House of Peers and a House of Representatives. Even within this new constitution, the Emperor was accorded a unique place, being recognised as sacred and inviolable. He could issue edicts when the government was not sitting and he was supreme commander of the army and navy. Religious freedom was given to all citizens of this new Japan, along with freedom of speech. This was a major departure from the old Tokugawa *Bakufu* and paved the way for a freer Japan. The foreign nature of the

³¹⁴ Beasley, *Meiji Restoration*, 331.

constitution is noteworthy; it was clearly influenced by the western powers that had entered Japan.

In 1905 Japan went to war with Russia. The defeat of the Russians resulted in Japan being considered a Great Power in its own right. The same year, the Anglo-Japanese alliance was renewed and a military pact concerning the Far East was agreed. In 1912 the Emperor Meiji died having ruled Japan for forty-five years and was succeeded as Emperor by Taisho. This began the Taisho period and the Emperor saw the fruition of the work that Meiji had begun, as Japan took its place alongside the West in terms of industry and commerce. Economic changes were not the only ones to impact on the Japanese people: they embraced western culture and style of dress, letting go of their traditional clothing in favour of the business suits and ceremonial wear of their western counterparts. The Meiji changes had less impact on rural life than on life in the towns and cities. The rural Japanese continued the routine of their daily life, often working in exactly the same way as under the rule of the *samurai*. Religious life, however, was greatly affected by the change in the regime, with Shinto gaining a massive following and Buddhism going into decline. Christianity began to emerge once again in Japan, and by 1907 there were approximately 140,000 converts. In 1914 Japan entered the war on the side of Britain. Not only did the Japanese emerge victorious, but they managed to secure a number of ports in China and also took a small area of Russian land under their control.³¹⁵

In 1925, America passed a new emigration law forbidding all Asians from entering the United States; this became a sticking point in relations between Japan and America. Around the same time, the bill for universal male suffrage was passed in Japan, allowing all males over the age of twenty-five to have a vote thus increasing dramatically the number of voters. During this period, the War Council and the Privy Council had direct access to the Emperor, giving them a unique position and ensuring that they held significant political power.

³¹⁵ Beasley, *Modern History of Japan*, 196.

In 1926 the Emperor Taisho died and was replaced by the Emperor Showa. The Showa period of “Brilliant Peace” began with the seizing of the Manchurian capital by the Japanese army in 1931, followed by an attack on Shanghai and the destruction of Chapei. In 1932 Manchukuo was declared an independent state, under the control of Emperor Kang Te and officially allied with Japan. The League of Nations refused to recognise this new state, resulting in Japan’s leaving the League in 1933. The Showa period also increased Japan’s trading capacity, and its aptitude for both scientific and industrial adaptation and invention allowed it to manufacture cheap products quickly and efficiently. The *hito gami* and *uji gami* models continued to exist and the emphasis on the values of loyalty and obedience in the newly developed State Shinto helped create a motivated workforce that was willing to work long hours in the service of the Emperor. The sense of duty instilled both by faith and by the previous regime worked to Japan’s advantage. Colonel Strange refers to this in his book *Japanese Illustration:*

The fact is that the Japanese have the instinct of handicraft. They have the manual traditions of generations of skilled workers, and being in no wise deficient in intelligence they are able to adopt our tools and apply to their use qualities far higher than those possessed by the average English mechanic. It has yet to be admitted that Japan is England’s most dangerous rival in commerce. With her magnificent artistic training she can, if she will, beat us from the field of skilled craftsmanship altogether.³¹⁶

This sense of duty began to become accentuated during the thirties, growing much more fanatical. Lieutenant-General Nagata was assassinated by Lieutenant-Colonel Aizawa, based on the belief that Nagata was not looking after the interests of Japan and the Emperor. A spate of assassinations based on this premise plagued the government, even as it tried to set an example by executing

³¹⁶ Sadler, A. L. *A Short History of Japan*, 265.

those responsible. The military attempted to dissolve the Diet because it was dissatisfied with the share of government spending it received and feared for the defence of Japan. This level of nationalism began to spread throughout Japan, which now focused its attention on making itself an empire. In 1935 Japan terminated the Washington Naval Treaty. In 1936 a large section of the Japanese military took part in an attempt to seize power to remove corrupt elements of government. This resulted in the deaths of the former Premier, Finance Minister, Inspector of Military Education and the brother-in-law of the Premier. The military took over key buildings and held them for three days, before an Imperial order for them to lay down their arms was issued, which they followed. Harsh measures were taken against the transgressors in the hope of curtailing this type of ultra-nationalist violence. Following this, Japan signed the German-Japan Pact against Communism. A shift in focus in education began creating an ultra-nationalistic middle class. This ultra-nationalist outlook was demonstrated in what became known as the China Incident, in which the Japanese army in China began to extend its influence by taking control of Shanghai, Nanking, Canton, Shantung, central China, and the coast and railway towns. It was led by a fanatical section of the army, the "Young Officer" party. By 1938 Japan controlled Hong Kong and the island of Hainan. The need to maintain such a large area of China resulted in the military budget being expanded. Britain began to criticise publicly the expansion of Japan, which sparked anti-British marches in Tokyo. This resentment of Britain was fuelled by ultra-nationalists who used the opportunity to encourage Japanese nationalism and the creation of a strong empire that would protect it. In 1941 Matsuoka, the foreign minister, declared that Japan must "dominate the Western Pacific for the sake of humanity, not for the sake of Japan ... The white race must cede Oceania to the Asiatics ..." ³¹⁷ In March, he went to Berlin and spoke with the Axis leaders, and the following month he signed a five-year neutrality pact with Soviet Russia. In October the government underwent a major change with the role of Premier going to General Tojo. In December 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbour and declared war on both

³¹⁷ Sadler, *Short History of Japan*, 282.

Britain and the United States. Japan's war lasted from 1941 until 1945 with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Emperor ordered the surrender of Japan, even after objections from his war cabinet that Japan could still continue. He addressed his people saying:

We are keenly aware of the inmost feelings of you, Our subjects, but according to the dictates of time and fate We have resolved to prepare for a grand peace for all the generations to come by enduring the unendurable and suffering the insufferable. Being thus able to save and maintain the structure of the Imperial State, We are always with you, Our good and loyal subjects, relying on your sincerity and integrity. Beware most strictly of any outbursts of emotion that may cause needless complication and of any fraternal contention and strife that may create confusion and lead you astray so that you lose the confidence of the world.³¹⁸

The Allies accepted the surrender and began the occupation of Japan. The entire government system was thoroughly investigated and a number of departments were suppressed, including the Bureau of Religions and that of Thought-control in the Department of Education. Secret societies were purged ruthlessly alongside the ultra-nationalistic elements of the police and military. Schoolbooks were censored and rewritten by the government to exclude the divine status of the Emperor and the nationalistic rhetoric that they had previously contained. Whilst in 1946 there had been great emphasis on the Japanese not maintaining a military, by the 1950s Japan was allowed to create a sizeable military force as America suddenly recognised her as a potential ally in the war in Korea. Soon after rearmament was allowed, and Japan began to regain her independence, which was ratified in 1952 making the country once again self-governing.

³¹⁸ Sadler, *Short History of Japan*, 293

In 1969 Japan began the more difficult task of re-entering the foreign market. The values of loyalty and duty still ran strong in Japan and the Japanese economy began to grow rapidly.

The background outlined in this section provides an appreciation of the dynamic changes which took place in the Japanese understanding of Shinto during the Meiji period and throughout World War Two. Shinto underwent a major change both in identity and style during the Meiji era, and this is important for our understanding of how much its natural evolution was disrupted and was eventually cut off altogether.

2.7 Conclusion

The historical development of Japan from early times to the modern Showa period gives us a better understanding of how Shinto has changed and developed historically. As a result of both the Edo period and the Meiji period, there were changes in the role and character of Shinto and also in its own character. In seeing these changes we can better appreciate the structure of Shinto today, one that is expressed through the Jinja Honcho, whose core beliefs have been heavily influenced by the history of Shinto, including how it changed and was influenced by external religious faiths including Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Christianity. To appreciate fully why Shinto is the way it is now, we must be aware of its historical role in society, which changed from being a subservient faith to a dominant faith during the Meiji period, and which finally became a national faith in the Taisho and Showa periods, coexisting with Buddhism as the other national faith of Japan. As a result of its history and the development of other faith traditions within Japan, we can see a radically different understanding of religion developing, in contrast to the development of Christianity in Europe and the United States.

Whilst we may be able to see a great deal of common ground between Shinto and Christianity, it is important to remember that there are a number of problems that we must address before this. So we must ask the following questions: where are the applicable areas for dialogue? Are there any areas upon which both traditions can truly interact, or are there too many differences, in terms of both cultural and spiritual background, to make any form of real dialogue workable? Before we can do this, we must have a better understanding of dialogue and how Christianity has interacted with other religions. Once we have identified the manner in which Christianity does this, we can then explore the possibility of dialogue with Shinto. I shall begin by giving an overview of what dialogue is and explore examples of the relationship between Christianity and other major religions, in this case, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. I shall then look at the work undertaken on dialogue between Christianity and Shinto up to this point.

Part C: Intercultural Dialogue: An Overview

3 The Christian Response to Dialogue

In the first section of this work, I gave an outline of key themes in Shinto and the processes that helped shape its development. A more comprehensive portrayal is not within the scope of this work; the outline, however, is adequate for our needs in terms of gaining an understanding of how dialogue with Shinto would work, and of the key problems that one must face to be able to interact successfully with this faith.

In this section, I shall address a number of elements that are important to our understanding of the possibility of dialogue between Shinto and Christianity. I shall explore the different approaches to interreligious dialogue, starting by looking at a number of models of dialogue, and then providing an overview of pluralism. I will explore the idea of interfaith dialogue, and examine how this dialogue has taken place between Christianity and other major world religions, primarily Judaism, Islam and Buddhism. This is important in order to show that Christianity has been successful in approaching these faiths in a very specific way, allowing for common ground in either scripture or ethics to bridge other divisions of interpretation. I will then show how this approach has been attempted between Christianity and Shinto and also the problems to which this approach gives rise. This will assist in us understanding why an alternative form of dialogue is needed to begin dialogue in a new way with Shinto.

3.1 Dialogue?

Having examined key themes in Shinto, I shall now explore if dialogue with Shinto is possible. Interreligious dialogue, in particular, is focused on gaining a greater appreciation and understanding of the religious traditions of another culture and attempts to find points of commonality that can be used in further dialogue, whilst at the same time encouraging cooperation between the religious groups involved. Before we begin examining how interfaith dialogue could work between Christianity and Shinto, I shall outline different perceptions of interfaith dialogue within the scholarly community today and ask why it would be of benefit for Christians to engage with Shinto. I shall then offer my own alternative model of dialogue that complements existing models and offers a manner in which we can begin to attempt an appropriate form of dialogue between Shinto and Christian faiths. Why would it benefit Christianity to engage with Shinto?

It is difficult to attempt to create understanding when there are cultural and ideological barriers in place. These barriers can cause a wide range of problems, not least of which is finding the most fitting way to approach linguistic translation and interpretation. In addition, there must be a desire to engage in dialogue. A degree of resistance can be created by questions as to the valid benefit of interfaith dialogue, apart from satisfying the curiosity of the individuals involved. For Christians, such questions include whether there is an appropriate form of dialogue in existence, and, secondly, what more of God there is to learn that has not already been definitively revealed. As Levy states:

Why should Catholics enter into dialogue with representatives of non-Christian religious traditions? Although the last decades have witnessed an impressive involvement of Catholic theologians in these

contacts, a positive dogmatic framework of interreligious dialogue is still waiting in the wings.³¹⁹

Christian dialogue has a wide range of objectives; conversion which reflects the missionary goal of Christianity: to convert others and to spread the teachings of Christ. There is also dialogue on social issues and exchanges of spirituality with the purpose of mutual understanding. As we have seen above, pluralism and the many approaches to interfaith dialogue demonstrate that Christianity is attempting to engage with other religions with the aim of creating an appreciation and understanding of other faiths. With, for example, the changes brought about by Vatican II, the need for interreligious dialogue was recognized; no longer could Christians just ignore the other faiths and exclude them. But do we need to include them? This is problematic. What is the point of learning if one has everything? More importantly, how do we create dialogue and accept as valid the parallels between Christianity and other faiths, whilst at the same time seeing them as invalid due to the fact that they represent a non-Christian religion?

There are a number of perspectives on the validity of interfaith dialogue. How do these pertain to Shinto? When I explore the dialogue between Christianity, Islam and Judaism, it will show the constructive gains offered by that particular form of dialogue in reinforcing the historical place of Christianity, as well as recognizing the common foundation from which all these faiths originate. How would such a process connect with Shinto? Historically, Christianity has gained very little in its attempts to spread its faith to Japan. Even now, Christians make up less than 1.6%³²⁰ of the population. We can speak of a culture that is resistant to the Christian message, not only because Christianity is an external religion, but also because Christianity has not allowed itself to be integrated into the Japanese faith system. In light of such a tension, what would Christianity get out of engaging with Shinto? I argue that

³¹⁹ Levy, Antoine "Between Charybdis and Scylla: Catholic Theology and Interreligious Dialogue," *New Blackfriars* 89 (2008), 231-250. 231.

³²⁰ OMF International, "Japan," OMF International, <https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.omf.org%2Fomf%2Fcontent%2Fdownload%2F2303%2F8319%2Ffile%2FJapan%2520country%2520profile.pdf>. Accessed on 11/10/2013

Christianity would gain not only an understanding of Shinto but also an insight into the Japanese cultural mindset. The recognition is needed in Christianity that one cannot simply state the case for one's religion and expect it to be accepted. There has to be a recognition of the validity of the other faith they are dealing with. I think there is potential for Christianity to benefit from getting a better understanding of the fluid character of religion in Japan, which is different to the rigid sense of separation between religions that is characteristic of Western and Middle Eastern religions. Whilst distinctions are made between religions in Japan, these are secondary to the beneficial messages that are contained within particular religions. What is at stake is not whether or not Christians can learn about their own faith through dialogue, but how they can gain much greater insight into how faith is *perceived* by other traditions.

Levy argues that Christianity needs to allow its dogma to play an active role in interfaith dialogue. Dogma is a statement that, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia:

... is now understood to be a truth appertaining to faith or morals, revealed by God, transmitted from the Apostles in the Scriptures or by tradition, and proposed by the Church for the acceptance of the faithful. It might be described briefly as a revealed truth *defined* by the Church — but private revelations do not constitute dogmas, and some theologians confine the word defined to doctrines solemnly defined by the pope or by a general council, while a revealed truth becomes a dogma even when proposed by the Church through her ordinary magisterium or teaching office. A dogma therefore implies a twofold relation: to Divine revelation and to the authoritative teaching of the Church.³²¹

If we are to accept this interpretation of dogma prior to the Second Vatican Council, we can see that by its very nature there is no place for difference of opinion. It is

³²¹Daniel Coghlan, "Dogma," The Catholic Encyclopedia Vol. 5 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909), <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05089a.htm>.

unchanging and unbendable. Dogma, in this sense, is a major stumbling block to dialogue because it does not allow for the appropriate level of interpretation that Japanese culture takes for granted.

However, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) changed this statement in a very important way. According to the Vatican II, in the section entitled *Lumen Gentium* [my emphasis]:

(76) This Church constituted and organized in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the Bishops in communion with him,(13*) **although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure.** These elements, as gifts belonging to the Church of Christ, are forces impelling toward catholic unity.³²²

The most important aspect of this statement is the highlighted section “although many elements of sanctification and of truth are found outside of its visible structure.” This acknowledges that there are truths outside the scope of dogma. This creates a more fluid and creative interpretation of dogma that can be used in a context that can be appreciated by Shinto. Given the cultural significance of dogma in Western religious tradition and its specialized role³²³ pertaining specifically to the Christian faith, a greater appreciation for the fluidity of faith in its Primal form is vital to dialogue. For this to take place, however, Christianity needs to accept that the understanding that stems from this fluid faith system does not take away from the Christian tradition or from the centrality of Christ. On the other hand, it places the Christ-centered framework within an overall universal framework of all spiritual traditions. This requires a focus on the Primal elements in Christianity, moving away from the focus

³²² Vatican Council Website Archives: *Documents of II Vatican Council*
http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html Accessed 29/11/2014

³²³ See Ueda’s description of universalism and speciality, discussed in section 5.3.B below.

on dogma to arrive at recognition of common themes within the spiritual. This thematic dialogue is something I will return to later.

The major difference between Japan and a majority of Western countries is that Japan has had a pluralistic society for centuries. Acceptance of external religious cultures is part of Japanese tradition. It was only when these religions actively opposed integration into the overarching religious milieu that conflict resulted.³²⁴ In this context, what role does interfaith dialogue play? It is important, before proceeding any further, to have a model of dialogue to work with. There is a vast literature on interfaith dialogue and it is outside the scope of this work to do justice to such a range of scholarship. I shall examine some of the more prevalent theories to offer a relatively broad understanding of interfaith dialogue, which will set the context for my alternative model of dialogue.

3.1.A Religious Pluralism

Knitter describes the pluralist tradition as:

A move away from the insistence on the superiority or finality of Christ and Christianity towards a recognition of the independent validity of other ways.³²⁵

Whilst many scholars, including D'Costa, took exception to this definition of pluralism, Knitter provides a good example of the vision of the pluralist, which focuses on Christianity recognizing its place as one valid faith amongst the many equally valid faiths. But what does this mean to Christianity? Knitter proposes exposing Christianity to the experience of other faiths so that it may not only validate itself in their terms, but also against the backdrop of human experience. I shall first approach the idea of pluralism from the perspective of Hick, who

³²⁴ See above, section 1.3.A, on the entry of Christianity into Japan as an example of this.

³²⁵ Knitter Paul Hick John, *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, ed. Paul Knitter John Hick (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books; London: SCM, 1987), viii.

focuses almost exclusively on the validation of pluralism. I shall then explore a response to Hick as presented in the work of Heim, and also offer alternative theological responses to pluralism as presented by a number of other scholars.

Hick proposes a strongly pluralistic basis for dialogue, based on the concept of a universal response to the transcendent 'Real'. Hick presents human religions as multiple responses to a transcendent reality influenced by a plurality of particular cultural perspectives. Hick does not attempt to create a scale of religious goodness; rather, he attempts to bring to light how there is a combination of both good and evil in all religions.³²⁶

This perspective, that religion exists as something that is both good and evil, is essential in understanding Hick's approach. With the acceptance that every religion represents a duality of good and evil comes the recognition that no religion can ultimately provide a complete picture, as each religion has effectively contributed similarly to understanding the transcendent reality. This is a key element of Hick's work: all religions are effectively equal through their capacity for understanding the transcendent. When each religion takes the view that it is ultimately more right than any other, it creates a confessional standpoint, inimically opposed to interfaith dialogue, due to the nature of its thinking, "I am right and the other is not as right, maybe fundamentally wrong ...". The assumptions behind this standpoint are problematic for dialogue. Hick instead calls for a "truth-seeking stance"³²⁷ because the hope is to induce change in the beliefs of others,

... each is conscious that the Transcendent Being is infinitely greater than his own limited vision of it ... and they accordingly seek to share their visions in the hope that each may be helped

³²⁶ Huang Yong, "Religious Pluralism and Interfaith Dialogue: Beyond Universalism and Particularism," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 37.3 (1995), 129.

³²⁷ Hick, *John God Has Many Names* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1980) 89

towards a fuller awareness of the Divine Reality before which they both stand.³²⁸

This consciousness of holding an incomplete truth is the impetus to engage in interfaith dialogue. Based on an understanding that they hold a common reality, all other aspects of faith are criticized, enriched and transformed, creating an ideal environment in which they may grow through dialogue. This contrasts with Hick's earlier idea that all religions could be united into one.³²⁹ The many differences between religions give rise to profound challenges to this level of integrative acceptance or change.³³⁰ The inherent problem, argues Salamon, is that from the beginning Hick approaches the idea of plurality from an undeniably Christian perspective, taking common ideas found in other religions that are fundamentally compatible with his own Christian standpoint. Furthermore, his concept of salvation and liberation is called into question; is the idea of salvation and liberation, as laid out by Hick, appropriate to all religions? Or is it merely appropriate to Hick's concept of world religions? Ultimately, he fails to deal appropriately with the great conflict implied by differing truth claims, something that is central to accepting his notion of transcendent reality.

There are further problems with Hick's concepts of the interpretative act of religion and of the transcendent reality, primarily because of what the transcendental reality actually is. In this respect, a degree of inconsistency can be seen in Hick's work. While he argues strongly that the existence of the transcendent is real and not just a part of the psyche of a religious culture, he also argues that all religious belief has to be interpreted mythologically, creating a sense of paradox in his works. Hick almost appears to sit on the fence, defending both concepts in an attempt to make his ideas tenable.³³¹

³²⁸ *Ibid* 81

³²⁹ Huang, "Religious Pluralism," 130.

³³⁰ Salamon, Janusz. "John Hick's Philosophy of Religious Pluralism - A Critical Examination," *Forum Philosophicum* 8(2003).

³³¹ *Ibid*. 179

Morimoto Anri engages with Hick from a Japanese perspective, opening with a quotation from Endo Shusaku (1923-1996), who had made it his quest to “remake the ill-fitting Christianity into a suit that the Japanese [could] wear comfortably.” For Morimoto, the concept of pluralism that Hick offers is refreshing and welcome in a country with such a complex and diverse religious history, stemming from the pluralistic nature of society not only in Japan, but also more widely in Asia. This is vitally important for any attempt to create dialogue in Japan. Pluralism is an accepted reality. Morimoto quotes an old Japanese proverb, “Though there are many paths to climb atop a mountain, we all come to look upon the same moon.”³³² This proverb is in itself a statement of faith, one that pushes back the boundaries of differentiation between religions, and lending itself to an acceptance that each person travels their own path to the same source. This also affects another aspect of the Japanese psyche, that of the group and the importance of the group within society. If a religion exists as a separate entity, distinct from other fundamental structures in society, we may see an increasing sense of separation compared to that religion within a society that focuses primarily upon inclusion. Taking Christianity as an example, we can see that the elitism and sense of separation associated historically with Christianity in Japan created problems for its relation to the structure of Japanese society. Simply by not accepting integration it became a problem. It brings to mind another popular Japanese proverb, “The nail that sticks out gets hammered down,” expressing the important concept within Japanese society that something that cannot be part of the group, or that withholds itself by sticking out in some way, is inherently problematic.

Morimoto also offers a very important critical assessment of Hick from the perspective of a religious minority, as Morimoto is seeking not only to examine Hick’s pluralistic approach but also to ask a greater question about the validity of complete integration of minority religions within Japan, even to the extent that

³³² Morimoto Anri, “The (more or less) same light but from different lamps: The post-pluralist understanding of religion from a Japanese perspective,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 53, no. 3 (2003). 164

they lose their identity and personality. Pluralism should not represent purely a move towards commonality of understanding of the transcendent but recognition of the different paths and their values precisely because they are different.

Morimoto bases his criticism on the description by Knitter, in *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*, of the three bridges through which one moves from “exclusivism to inclusivism to pluralism.”³³³ By crossing the first bridge one accepts that there is a transcendent reality, something that we have already discussed. It is the first step towards acknowledging that there is an infinite reality that one cannot comprehend, and encompasses the variety of concepts within the wide range of religious faiths in existence today. All attempts at understanding, however, are restricted by the hermeneutic of the individual, which creates limits to our understanding, from linguistic to cultural (I will detail this more in the discussion of the second bridge). This is where Knitter and Hick separate: Knitter argues that one must not end up in a position of “relativist pap in which ‘many’ means ‘any’”³³⁴. This is where we see the divergence between Hick and his pluralistic approach and Knitter’s more liberation theological approach. Hick, however, crosses this bridge through the first steps towards acceptance of a transcendental reality, one that is not known to all but interpreted by many.

The second bridge that Knitter describes is the historical-cultural bridge of relativity. We cannot truly know the transcendent or the real. No one can claim complete or unique knowledge of the transcendent because everything is filtered through our historical cultural reality. The different pluralistic interpretations offer many different examples of this. For example, belief in the divinity of Christ as “idolatry”: Samartha refers to Christ as a “tribal god”. Hick, on the other hand, views Christ as divine but not unique. This effectively removes Christianity’s

³³³ Ibid. 165

³³⁴ Knitter, Paul F. “Toward a Liberation Theology of Religions” in *Myth* 181

sense of uniqueness or elite status, as Christ is no longer a unique personage but one of many representations of the divine. He redefines the Divine as the Real, something that cannot be truly known by any religion but is interpreted differently by all. Hence it is valid to perceive Christ and the Buddha as having equally valid truth claims. This concept of the Real becomes the source of all religious experience and transcends definition. However, the concept of self-interpretation gives rise to the question of faith; if we are to accept that everything is our own interpretation then we begin to lose a sense of the divine in our faith. To deal with conflicting truth claims, Hick states that they are mythological claims. This is inherently problematic because he does not clearly define what is myth and what is literal truth. His definition of myth is that any statement that contradicts another religion is considered to be myth.³³⁵ In fact this is a very extreme response, which significantly reduces the authenticity of religious belief and strips away the sense of logical fact about the Divine. Unfortunately Hick never responds adequately to this issue. He reinforces his concept of the limitations of the historical-cultural dimensions, and thus engages in a sense of self-interpretation, recognizing that we have created our own societal interpretation of the transcendent reality.

In response, Hick argues that all religions are working towards the same end; not just religions, but all people are working towards the transcendent reality, even if they don't know it, once they are working towards a transformation of human existence. This is just another version of Rahner's "anonymous Christians" that received extensive criticism, ironically from Hick himself, among others.³³⁶

The third bridge is the ethico-practical bridge of justice. This is a natural step for Hick who already focused his theory on the transformation of human existence for the greater good. Hick makes a vital point that transformation is a key

³³⁵ Johnson, Keith. John Hick's Pluralistic Hypothesis and the Problem of Conflicting Truth-Claims <http://www.leaderu.com/theology/hick.html> Accessed 04/12/2014

³³⁶ Morimoto, "The (more or less) same light but from different lamps: The post-pluralist understanding of religion from a Japanese perspective." 269

element in all major religions and claims that it is a central focus in religious experience. This claim itself is flawed, as Hick's notion of transformation is not, for example, the same concept as that found in the New Testament. Hick responds by arguing that to define salvation purely from a Christian perspective is at odds with his sense of inclusive transformation. He speaks primarily of the actual human change that is evident in a similar way within all faith traditions. Hick does not, however, offer a means to measure this transformation, nor does he make a case that this is something that can be measured or, even appropriately understood, in a universal sense apart from changes from a societal perspective.

Hick reflects on a series of evils committed by each religion. For example, Hinduism validated a hierarchical caste system in India, whilst Buddhism has been accused of ignoring social injustice. Islam has sanctioned Holy Wars, intolerance, confinement of women and extreme corporal punishment. Christianity finally, has validated wars, torture and burning of heretics, anti-Semitism and condoning such things as misusing nuclear energy and promoting economic injustice.³³⁷

Hick uses this list of evils to demonstrate the importance of why there has to be an active change and why one must judge the evils of religion in recognition of the need for change towards a new set of ethico-societal values. This is a common claim in modern liberal theology. A more significant question that must be posed is how this impacts on the transcendent reality. Is this reality just a tool for greater social justice? If so, does it not further strip away the mystery and otherness of faith, reducing the transcendent reality to just another rationalistic tool for the common good? The sense of universality is only achieved through profound change within religions, losing something distinct and unique in becoming part of Hick's grand vision. Whilst we can note an evolution in Hick's theology, fundamentally it remains the same, requiring a religion to undergo

³³⁷ Ibid., 171

such great change as to risk losing its sense of identity. The importance of pluralism is its capacity to allow religion to maintain its uniqueness whilst at the same time integrating it into any given cultural community without conflict. The key to integration is its behavior in relation to society, one that works towards the good of the society itself. Morimoto argues that this is a key point in Japan. For Christianity to exist sustainably within the pluralist context of Japan, it must maintain its uniqueness whilst at the same time becoming part of the society. Hick offers a model of plurality that at first glance would seem to suit Japanese culture perfectly, but, on further review, we see that it does not take into account the way in which the variety of religions in Japan have maintained a sense of identity and uniqueness whilst at the same time integrating into the overall Japanese cultural identity.

Hick's model of pluralism, therefore, becomes untenable and frustrating, removing the religious experience and identity that is so important to the integrative religious experience that exists in Japan. It also does not offer a suitable framework for interfaith dialogue between Christianity and Shinto. I shall, however, offer an alternative model to the initially positive proposals of Hick.

3.1.B Heim's contrast and critique of Hick

S. Mark Heim provides an interesting contrast to Hick, precisely because he does not consider himself a pluralist, and, in fact, one could argue that he is anti-pluralist. His critique of pluralism, and, by extension, of Hick, offers an alternative to the more extreme concept of pluralism embodied in Hick's work. Heim has often found Hick to be as much of an imperialist as the exclusivist and inclusivity theories that he criticizes, whilst, on the other hand, his theory of religious pluralism offers the opportunity for Hick's model to exist within the framework of Heim's own model. Heim's major criticism of Hick is in relation to his use of language and his failure to maintain the spirit of pluralistic equality in his work. Recognition of the validity of all religions is vital to existing within a

pluralistic society. In *The Depth of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends*, Heim states that a single interpretation of God and the Trinity is impossible, due to the “experiences of mystery, of a numinous power or powers that encounter us in nature, which dwarf our perspective and hint at a mysterious transcendence.”³³⁸ The very nature of the divine makes it impossible for us to begin to comprehend it fully, and it is even more impossible for a single religion to hold an exclusive claim to knowledge of the divine. The nature of the Trinitarian God demands acceptance of a plurality of interpretations of God. Hence every religion is entitled to its interpretation of God whilst maintaining, to various degrees, the exclusivity of its faith. This gives every religion an access point to the Christian faith through its interpretation of the Trinity. World religions put their followers in touch with the reality of the Holy Trinity.³³⁹ There must be a focus on inclusivism and a need to interpret other religions within the framework of the Christian message. This is an important clarification and expansion on his earlier model, which seems to have worked as a framework for his later Trinitarian pluralistic theology.

In his earlier work, Heim warned that just because every religion is equal it does not make them the same, in fact, quite the contrary. Every religion’s interpretation of the sacred is valid, but this diversity cannot simply be fitted together into one religious experience. Different religions become keys to different locks. The keys represent different approaches to salvation, each religion offering a different path to the same goal.³⁴⁰

This is one of the most vital points in his early work on the question of pluralism. The independence of each religion in the construction of its major beliefs must be recognized. To attempt to meld these religions is an attempt to take away their uniqueness and individuality, which is effectively taking away their

³³⁸ Heim, *Depth of the Riches*, 132.

³³⁹ Light, Aimee Upton "Harris, Hick, and the Demise of the Pluralist Hypothesis," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 44, no. 3 (2009). 469

³⁴⁰ Yong, Huang. “Religious Pluralism,” 131.

identity. In the case of Hick, the need for a universal faith produces the destruction of identity. Whilst Hick argues that this is necessary for the form of pluralism he envisages, Heim is critical of this as it destroys not only identity but also the distinctive interpretation of the divine in each religion, and, by extension of his later work, their distinctive interactions with the Trinity. If a religion keeps its individuality, it does not lose the opportunity for dialogue or a pluralistic stance, but is able to embrace dialogue and pluralism from its own cultural perspective. Each of these different perspectives is as valid as any other and, as such, requires acceptance and understanding and, most importantly, recognition of its validity. Heim's critique of Hick emphasizes that with Hick's model this is just not the case.

I shall next briefly look at how D'Costa and Moltmann respond to pluralism, continuing the exploration of the Christian response to pluralism because of its importance in allowing us a better understanding of why Christianity has had issues in its dialogue with Shinto, which by its very nature is itself a pluralistic tradition.

3.1 C: D'Costa & Moltmann

D'Costa, in "The Christian Trinity: paradigm for pluralism?"³⁴¹ reflects on the role of the Trinity in pluralism, focusing on two particular images to approach the question of the relationship of the Trinity and, by extension Christianity, to pluralism. These two images are Rublev's *The Trinity* and Sahi's *The Word Made Flesh*. Rublev's painting represents a triumvirate of images *pertaining to the Trinity*: the meeting of the three angels by Abram, the transformative nature of Christ's message and its relationship with the Old Testament, and an invitation to participate with the Trinitarian life of God. Each of these images is important for our understanding of the different contexts in which dialogue may take place: conversion, mission and negotiation. Abram and Sara represent the beginning of the covenant community,³⁴²

³⁴¹ May, John D'Arcy *Pluralism and the Religions* (London: Cassell, 1998).

³⁴² May, *Pluralism*, 24.

welcoming strangers to their table in a reflection of the importance of hospitality. D’Costa points to a number of connections that are made between the offering of food to strangers by Abram and the Eucharistic offering, which is depicted by Rublev by the Eucharistic cup that sits in the center of the table between the three figures. This symbol represents the “church of Jesus Christ, centered around the Eucharistic table, participating in the life of the triune God”.³⁴³ The meal further represents the gifts of God passed on to us through himself in the salvation that is Christ.

It is here that I find the most important element of D’Costa’s assessment of Rublev’s work. He states that Trinitarian grammar governs Christian theology to guard against idolatry. This concept borrows from Nicholas Lash’s idea of the “Protocols against idolatry”, in which he describes the importance of the Trinity as a source from which language about God comes. This creates a vocabulary that is appropriate to use in discourse, which describes what God is not. This guards against idolatry because it never speaks of God as a being that humanity can truly know.³⁴⁴ This statement is important for our understanding of the manner in which Christianity engages with dialogue. It is through the grammar of Trinitarian doctrine that Christians negotiate with other religions. This grammar, whilst to some degree similar to that of the faiths that are closely tied to Christianity, for example Judaism and Islam, also reflects an inherent problem for Christian dialogue. The grammar precludes the opportunity to understand religious traditions that exist outside of the concept of God or Trinity. This is an issue Christian dialogue has to recognize; Christianity sees itself as bearing unique knowledge pertaining to the Divine, which in turn can cause tension between communities of Christians and non-Christians due to the need to maintain the uniqueness of this interpretation of the Trinity and God. D’Costa provides some good examples of this: Nestorian Syrian Christians exist in isolation from Hinduism, evangelical Christianity rejects Hindus and Nestorians wholesale, and then there are Hindu Christians who live within and between the two religions.

³⁴³ May, *Pluralism*, 25.

³⁴⁴ Lash, Nicholas *Easter in Ordinary Reflections on Human Experience and the Knowledge of God*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988

This example is furthered by an examination of Sahi's *The Word Made [Flesh]*. What makes Sahi's work interesting is its mixture of Indian folk symbols and gospel stories, something that is not part of more traditional artistic representations. D'Costa sees his work as an active engagement with Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim traditions. This is an engagement of the Trinity with other religious traditions. The image depicts a child being nourished by its mother, the symbol of the dove representing the Holy Spirit. Below them, the waters of creation and the hands of God represent an affirmation of the Word. At the same time, however, we see Hindu symbolism throughout the piece. The child represents the Guha born from the secret place³⁴⁵ and so transcends the Christian concept, finding creative tension between Hindu and Christian. The symbol of the Aum, recalls the sense of the Hindu Trinity; Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. Hence the symbolism creates a sense of duality between Christianity and Hinduism, a sense of universality of the symbols, transcending the barriers that have been self-imposed to show the connection that is possible between both traditions.

This engagement is through the Trinity. Even the symbolism points towards a Trinitarian concept of dialogue; this is the manner in which engagement with Christianity takes place. This Trinitarian belief, however, also constrains the Christian dialogue to one of negotiation and causes a number of problems in regards to allowing for proper dialogue to take place with the non-Abrahamic faiths or those without common scriptural traditions.

I shall continue my examination of the Christian response to pluralism through looking at the work of Moltmann.³⁴⁶ Why is this relevant? Both of these texts are in some way responses to the work of Hick and Knitter, especially *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*.³⁴⁷ It also is an excellent example of the problems that we face in attempting to enable real dialogue.

³⁴⁵ May, *Pluralism*, 29.

³⁴⁶ D'Costa, Gavin *Christian Uniqueness Reconsidered: The Myth of Pluralistic Theology of Religions* (Maryknoll etc: Orbis Books, 1995)., ed. Gavin D'Costa, 149.

³⁴⁷ Hick, John *The Myth of Christian Uniqueness*.

What sets Moltmann's work apart from the others is that he focuses upon two key questions: whether the dialogue of world religions, as represented by Hick's and Knitter's work, is the only reasonable relationship between them, and if their presentation of pluralism is the only reasonable basis for dialogue. Moltmann begins with the problems that have greeted those who held too strongly to their Reformation beliefs, and the conflict that arose from that. Those that held on to Reformation beliefs, would be in constant conflict with non-Christians because of their unwavering belief in the absolute truth of Christianity. In the context of these conflicts and the attempts to solve them, a distinction must be made between communities that encourage religious freedom, in recognition of "formal pluralism" through recognition of human rights, and the "empirical pluralism"³⁴⁸ of Asia and Africa. This is important for the Christian church due to the absolutist demands that often stem from its tradition, which are often tied closely to a political perspective on the Christian message, rather than a pastoral one. This is contrasted with the Christianity of Asia and Africa, which represents a much less dogmatic approach to the Christian message. This less dogmatic approach resulted in a nonviolent conversion to the Christian tradition in the midst of the extensively pluralistic religious cultures that existed both in Asia and Africa. This, in turn, can be contrasted sharply with the refusal of the Orthodox Churches to enter into dialogue with any other groups, most notably with Christian Marxists. On the other hand, the Christian church in China has flourished because of its ability to survive in house churches, despite the Cultural Revolution.

Moltmann's examples focus on a number of elements: first, on how the Church must coexist with other religions, and, second, on how the Christian church responds to this in one of two ways. Either it adapts its missionary stance in light of this pluralism, or it isolates itself from it. What makes the Eastern approach different to the Western approach is the manner in which religion is conceived. A focus on the concept of the rights of the individual emerges where, as Moltmann describes, different religions have lost their capacity to be a binding element of society, but instead become the

³⁴⁸ D'Costa, "Pluralistic Theology", 151.

equivalent of consumer goods that the individual chooses in a manner akin to shopping.³⁴⁹ Absoluteness becomes irrelevant in the eyes of consumers who see the religions' authenticity in light of the range of equally authentic options set out before them. Hence absolute truth becomes subjective under the realities of pluralism. This leads to what Moltmann calls "pious skepticism" where one takes the best of what is available and so loses its inherent religious meaning.

Whilst I find this view to have merit, I would argue that perhaps this is a perspective from which Christianity often attempts to shield its belief in itself as the holder of absolute truth. In creating a need to be absolute, surely we defeat the rationale for engagement in dialogue? This brings us to a question I will look at later. Moltmann develops his argument by stating that, through giving up a claim of uniqueness required to some extent by a context of pluralism, a religion is no longer of special interest. Hence, for Moltmann, the only path towards meaningful dialogue is the ethico-practical bridge, which focuses on a common peace, working towards a more peaceful humanity. For meaningful dialogue to take place, three conditions must be met: a life-threatening global conflict exists, the truth which serves life is itself at stake and there is a need for a real change in the conditions of life on earth that will force religious communities to change.³⁵⁰ Whilst Moltmann presents a pragmatic and, in many ways, persuasive argument for dialogue, in my view he does not see a possibility for dialogue existing without getting tied into the concept of uniqueness and, in many ways, allowing this uniqueness to continue. I will address this further in the next chapter, but here I shall next examine the concept of interfaith dialogue.

³⁴⁹ D'Costa, "Pluralistic Theology", 152.

³⁵⁰ D'Costa, "Pluralistic Theology", 156.

4 What is dialogue?

Before we begin looking at dialogue between different faiths, we must first understand what the term *interfaith dialogue* or *interreligious dialogue* actually means. I shall examine the theories of Muck, Krieger, Habermas, Tracy and Lindbeck, who together demonstrate a wide range of theories of dialogue that are useful in understanding how Christianity enters into dialogue. This will be especially important later when I examine the interaction between Shinto and Christianity and present my own approach, which is influenced by the work of Lindbeck and Ueda.

Muck succinctly breaks interfaith dialogue down into four categories:

One of three answers is usually given to this question: interreligious dialogue as a communication methodology, as an intellectual strategy, and as a teleological argument. I'd like to add a fourth answer, interreligious dialogue as an emotion or attitude toward people of other religious traditions.³⁵¹

It should be emphasized that dialogue is an act of communication that must come about freely between two individuals or groups and cannot be coerced or forced. Those who enter into dialogue choose to do so, and this prescribes a degree of willingness on the part of those involved to accept or at least consider the perspectives of all participants.

David Krieger argues that interreligious dialogue is often impeded by conflict between religions.³⁵² Notwithstanding a desire on both sides to communicate, even the act of communication can be made difficult by conflicting concepts of the divine and transcendent. The biggest challenge to communication arises from differing

³⁵¹ Muck, "Interreligious Dialogue," 140.

³⁵² Krieger, "Communication Theory."

perspectives and worldviews; perhaps the greatest danger to interfaith dialogue is the content of the dialogue itself. If we are to communicate effectively, there has to be a change in attitude towards the concept of religion and of the divine as mediated through religion. There must be an active move away from analyzing religion purely in terms of truth-claims towards understanding interfaith dialogue in terms of a communication problem, one that can be solved if treated in that manner. The communicative method attempts to move away from the concept of religion as a personal identifier, treating it as a subject of open debate that should attempt to escape the constraints of a personal emotional perspective, allowing more effective communication without fear of reprisal or insult. At the same time, this process requires a degree of sensitivity and restraint, where the usage of language in dialogue is of utmost importance. Krieger describes several different levels that allow for this kind of effective communication.

The first is the argumentation level, which presents a convincing case for discussion, and which can succeed if all parties have the same perspective or concept of communication rules. If participants coexist within the same worldview and cultural perspective, they should be able to present successfully a number of different positions and arguments through constructive conversation. If all participants share the same worldview, their perspectives are normally similar. This level of communication is most common in the realm of science, due to its requirements of deductive reasoning and a universal perspective.

The second level is the proclamation level, which is used primarily when there is conflict resulting from differing perspectives or worldviews. At this stage the hermeneutical standpoints of the individuals in dialogue are too different from each other for common ground to be found.³⁵³

Krieger's example raises an interesting issue that can be closely associated with Shinto. The issue of different forms of language and worldviews is important when

³⁵³ Krieger, "Communication," 334-335.

dealing directly with Shinto. The language of Shinto and, indeed, of Japan is quite different to Western languages and to the presuppositions that come with them. We must be aware of differences in worldview, and in how language is used within different worldviews, when attempting to create a form of dialogue. In a context which lacks the appropriate argumentative language, and, in many ways, in Shinto, there is a clear need to move towards creating a common linguistic basis, as expressed in the proclamation level. Hence the goal of the proclamation level is not to verify any claim but to attempt to bring others into an appreciation of the perspective or worldview of one particular party. It seeks to encourage a common acceptance of one particular worldview, and by extension its language, as grounds for the dialogue that will take place.

This, however, can be problematic. Whose perspective is deemed “right” in the discussion? If one is to bring the other participant over to one's own perspective, is that not a return to the argumentative level? Does it not discount the perspective of the other party? If so, are we not coercing the other party into a single perspective that might not represent effectively that person's worldview? This makes the proclamation level seem like an attempt to return to the argumentative level, whilst removing the perspective of the other party, which is required for effective dialogue to take place. There is a case for the use of the argumentative level if both parties share the same basic worldview, but there is a divergence in belief within that worldview. In such circumstances, there is a good chance that both parties can communicate effectively at the proclamation level, without compromising too much of their own identity for the process to become ineffective.

The third level is the disclosure level. When the first and second level of dialogue have failed, this level attempts to engage in communication by removing all the boundaries and accepting transcendence in all its forms. This is an acceptance of both parties' perspectives and, rather than create a situation where one is required to adopt the other's language, there is an attempt to create a new language that strives to create a bridge between the worldviews of both parties. Through acceptance that each party's perspective is valid, the third level of discourse removes the need for a private language and embraces a form of universalism that allows progress in the dialogue.

The application of this method, however, is open to criticism. This theory of communication is based on the framework of the third level. Hence the first two levels are there as comparative tools for the third, rather than being steps along the way or alternatives to the third approach. This implies that, to a degree, Krieger has little faith in the first two levels of his theory of communication. If, in the end, dialogue must progress to the third level, one must ask why he does not start with the third level in the first place. In the case of interfaith dialogue, Krieger dismisses out of hand dialogue that does not take place at the third level:

What is usually termed 'religious language' is primarily determined by second-level pragmatics, but ... for a religion to be truly meaningful, it must be 'spoken' and communicated by means of the third-level pragmatics of disclosure.³⁵⁴

On this rationale, Krieger dismisses the possibility of using religious language anywhere but in the third level. He seems to display an inherent lack of trust in dealing with religious language, indicated by his unwillingness to accept that religious language can be used at the argumentation level between people of the same faith. One could argue, however, that adherents of the same faith structure within the same faith system³⁵⁵ can easily use the language they have been immersed in to communicate their religious philosophy effectively to one another, and thus remain on the argumentative level. In a situation where a different religious perspective is represented in the conversation, then the third level is entirely justified.

Muck offers an alternative version of Krieger's theory, where, rather than a progression of levels, each level is equal and valid in its own way. This allows Muck to better tailor the model to suit the needs of the people involved in

³⁵⁴ Krieger, "Communication," 336.

³⁵⁵ This is important as Krieger rightly points out that even between different denominations of the same religion there is a difference of language and worldview.

dialogue. So, for example, one could begin with the proclamation level, and place the argumentation level in the middle of the process. All three are required equally to create effective dialogue.³⁵⁶

This is an interesting solution to the problem, noted above, in Krieger's theory. Why do we even need to distinguish separate levels in communication? Why not treat them as different potential phases, which may be found in any form of dialogue. If they do not follow a set pattern or structure, is the need to distinguish them merely a formality with no practical function in progressing the dialogue? I would argue that we must look at a transcendental level of discourse that incorporates all three levels of Krieger's theory, not as separate phases but as part of a free-flowing process, in order for it to be effective. Whilst there may be many different stages in any given argument or debate, we must also recognize that there are no boundaries placed on how that dialogue takes place, other than the boundaries both parties apply to themselves. If this is the case, one can subsequently choose to use any element of Krieger's theory, combining it with other elements found in the different levels that Krieger speaks of, to help create effective dialogue. This dialogue, in turn, must be freed from the constraints or expectations that are prescribed in Krieger's theory, releasing it from a preconceived concept of the structure of communication as outlined in that theory, so as to be able to adapt to the different paths that dialogue can take. This transcends the different levels of communication, moving freely between each element to suit the flow of the conversation best.

In this respect, Habermas offers a different perspective that seems to flow more easily than Krieger's. Habermas' theory focuses on rational dialogue as the key to a cohesive society. Sharrock and Button describe Habermas' theory as one that is open to reinterpretation and not limited to one single area of communicative theory:

³⁵⁶ Muck, "Interreligious Dialogue," 147.

Habermas' categories, being very abstract and general, can clearly accommodate a whole range of empirical instances – but not in a way that can discriminate amongst the inevitable diversity of such instances.³⁵⁷

Although this theory is not directly related to interfaith dialogue, it has a number of applications to the field. We must be careful in the application of his intellectual strategy in terms of interfaith dialogue; the inherent problem in his work is due, in part, to the nature of Habermas' theory. The focus of his theory is to show that the claim to reason is thoroughly oppressive. This is due to the fact that there is an independent source of rational wisdom outside the system and non-oppressive reasoning has been incorporated into the structure of communication.³⁵⁸

Habermas' framework of communication is aimed at understanding the person and, through that understanding, to communicate successfully within what he defines as a "universal moral respect" where, through understanding, one may come to respect that person's perspective. Where, however, does that understanding come from? Are we creating it from an understanding of our own worldview or hermeneutic? Where, in turn, does this hermeneutic come from? Although the concept of universal moral respect is close to a Kantian concept of a universal good, there is an issue in defining it in terms of communication. This assumes that an understanding can be reached between different parties through the use of communication. To achieve this there are two different aspects at play. First, that the 'lifeworld' is the locus of communicative action and that these are best represented through collaborative action.³⁵⁹

The concept of the lifeworld is simple; it is basically the social existence of the

³⁵⁷ Sharrock Wes and Button Graham "On the Relevance of Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action for CSCW," *Computer Supported Cooperative Work: The Journal for Collaborative Computing* 6(1997)., 370.

³⁵⁸ Sharrock and Button, "Relevance," 372.

³⁵⁹ Sharrock and Button, "Relevance," 372.

people, incorporating the concepts of culture, membership and personality. This lifeworld is the understanding of the person, their ideology, philosophy and culture. In terms of communication, this means that the outcome of any dialogue will be understood and accepted by both parties. Habermas argues that, by entering into this dialogue, participants are implicitly agreeing that through their debate or argument there is going to be an outcome as a result of intrinsic conditions that are a result of the communication beginning in the first place. Habermas emphasizes that the argument or debate must be free from any form of coercion or fear for the self, or for others, for it to succeed. Habermas speaks of understanding as coming from a person's willingness to attempt to gain appreciation and a better overall perspective on another's worldview. If one is willing to and cannot, does that mean that the attempt has failed? Is this not common because human beings exist in such divergent realities from one another that even people living in the same country can exhibit a lack of appropriate understanding for the worldview of others living there? This may not be intentional, but may arise simply from different upbringings and perspectives. In this situation, the lack of understanding does not come from a lack of willingness to understand, but from a lack of direct experience of the other person's cultural upbringing and perspective.

If this is the case, does it imply that the lifeworld that Habermas proposes is inherently flawed, since, for many people, there cannot be a complete understanding of another's worldview or perspective? Does this, in turn, imply a limit to what Habermas perceives as constituting understanding? Do we limit ourselves to the content of the dialogue, which is already loaded with preconceived concepts and ideologies as a result of cultural and familial ideology being part of the individual engaged in dialogue? Or is there a capacity to gain an understanding that transcends our own preconceived ideas? It appears that Habermas does not expect complete understanding, rather, an appreciation of the worldview is of greater importance, symbolizing an attempt to understand and appreciate that person's perspective. If this is the universal moral respect that he talks of, then we are able to have a greater appreciation for the dialogue

that will take place. There must, however, be acceptance that complete understanding is not possible, due to the filtering of truth through so many of the participants' own preconceived ideas and frameworks. Nevertheless, there must be an attempt to create a safe environment for communication. Habermas offers this safe environment by emphasizing that an argument that is free from external coercive factors is the key to successful dialogue. This represents the *ideals* of the argument. These ideals are used to give a critical assessment of an argument.

The participants can be criticized, for example, for not really trying to argue in a wholehearted and sincere way, or for being unprepared to acknowledge the force of the better argument. The notion of the ideals is, for Habermas, essential for the notion of 'rationality' in his scheme. This is because it would be through approximation to or fulfillment of these requirements for non-coercive argument that one can talk about the results as "rationally motivated agreement."³⁶⁰ That is, the result is purely the product of reasoning, of invoking only the cogent and relevant issues, and of honest acknowledgement of the force of the arguments.

The ideals represent a means by which one may judge whether or not an argument is genuine. But can we be free, as Habermas believes, from the external factors, such as the system? The need for an environment that is free from all factors (for example, culture, tradition, and family background) that will interrupt a mutual form of understanding is problematic. There are so many ideal factors that govern the creation of such an environment as to make Habermas' theory almost untenable. As much as one can attempt to discard one's natural prejudices and cultural concepts, it is simply impossible to do so. Therefore, all communication and dialogue is filtered and as such, the ideal environment of Habermas cannot exist.

This environment is too much of an ideal, something that just cannot exist in the actual society we live in. The concept of universality of dialogue is contradicted by

³⁶⁰ Sharrock and Button, "Relevance," 374.

the fact that not everyone is capable of engaging in such an ideal philosophy and attitude to communication. One is reminded of Plato's *Republic* and its Chosen, who are grown and trained to be capable of leading and guarding the Republic. Are the people who would be involved in this dialogue akin to such supermen? If so, then Habermas' dialogue remains an ideal in itself, rather than a realistic proposal, as it makes too many unsustainable presuppositions concerning the environment and the attitude of the individual. It does, however, offer something to work towards, the goal of reaching a place where such rationality can open the avenues of dialogue through which one can engage successfully with others.

Tracy, in his work *Dialogue with the Other: The Inter-Religious Dialogue* argues that dialogue must remain a constant in the world. In the context of changing historical and cultural forces, which extensively shape the world, communication is the one consistent factor in any form of engagement and hence dialogue remains vital because, just like the world, it must constantly evolve and change, and the communication of this change within society is the key to avoiding societal breakdown or conflict. Tracy is clear that he cannot enter into dialogue in any form other than as a Christian. His willingness to enter into dialogue stems from this Christian commitment. The focus of this particular section of his work is to formulate

... A Christian theological question on religious pluralism in such manner that a genuinely new answer may be forthcoming without abandoning Christian identity.³⁶¹

Christians enter dialogue because of their commitment to either of two concepts: reason as dialogical or faith-working-through-love³⁶². Tracy finds it hard, however, to commit to either camp. Instead he offers his own interpretation. He agrees that there needs to be an examination of Christian theological answers in light of interreligious dialogue, which, in turn, gives rise to the need to develop new answers. In light of this

³⁶¹ Tracy, David *Dialogue With the Other: The Inter-Religious Dialogue*, Kindle Version vols. (William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990). 96.

³⁶² Tracy, David *Dialogue With the Other* 96

there are two crucial considerations when dealing with interreligious dialogue. First, the dialogue must transform all who enter into it and in turn create new theological thoughts and theories. Second, these changes must then be discussed within the Christian community, which must express what these possibilities represent. These dialogues will allow a critical assessment of Christian traditions and a better understanding of these traditions. Dialogue also affects the language we use when engaging in dialogue and how this language impacts on those participating. Primal Religions, too, require a greater place within dialogue as they assist in finding the Primal character in Christianity. This dialogue can be transformative for both parties involved; Tracy uses his encounters with Buddhism as an example. Through these encounters with the transformative,³⁶³ we can engage more deeply in dialogue, with greater impact, in turn, on both parties.

Muck offers a further approach:

Interreligious dialogue is an emotion or attitude toward other people that not only allows for differences, but also postulates them and accepts them as fact, but not as truth. Although I disagree with much of what he has to say regarding the relationship between dialogue and evangelism, on this point I do agree with Stanley Samartha when he says, "Dialogue is a mood, a spirit, an attitude of love and respect towards neighbors of other faiths. It regards partners as persons, not statistics."³⁶⁴

Muck argues that the emotional is a key component to dialogue, although often ignored or put aside in the fear of what these emotions might cause in the dialogue itself. One could argue that emotion could cloud the judgment and understanding of those involved, even to the point of preventing dialogue. Muck proposes that one must develop a new set of emotions to deal with the challenges of dialogue, noting

³⁶³ The transformative is the capacity for one to gain a positive idea or concept through dialogue and apply that idea in a way that benefits the community.

³⁶⁴ Muck, "Interreligious Dialogue," 141.

that as human beings we are aware and capable of dialogue, yet somehow we cannot move to commit to such an act. Most people are convinced that dialogue can work but are unwilling to do it. There is a disparity between the idea of dialogue and the act of committing to dialogue.³⁶⁵

The crucial dimension that is missing is the emotional element. Commitment is the key emotion in interfaith dialogue, although acknowledging that often this emotion is used to champion our own faith without allowing engagement with other religions or acceptance of any ideas that they hold. Everything that is said is based around a negative and possessive use of commitment. This results in tension and disagreement, each side stubbornly attempting to dig in and refusing to accept any perspective of the other party. This is a result of the need to have opposition or an enemy for the group to maintain a sense of identity and cohesiveness. For example, the USA's hitherto traditional enmity with communist Russia has gone, leaving an identity vacuum which is now filled with a new enemy or enemies, such as Islam, China, Japan or the environment. A further example of this perspective can be seen in the American Evangelical Churches' response to homosexuality and marriage. For instance, the current move to recognize gay marriage in the USA has been vehemently opposed by the Evangelical Church. An article in *Christianity Today*, remarked that:

Same-sex marriage has highlighted high-profile relationships between theology, church, state, and society. Though a 2013 Pew Forum survey noted that nearly three-quarters of Americans think that legal recognition of same-sex marriage is "inevitable," evangelicals remain largely opposed to redefining marriage, with less than a quarter favoring the policy. The divide between evangelicals and mainline U.S. churches on this issue has been further fueled by increasing support by state governments, culminating with the Supreme Court's June 2013 ruling against a provision in the federal Defense of Marriage

³⁶⁵ Muck, "Interreligious Dialogue," 149.

Act (DOMA), which prevented the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages.³⁶⁶

This is perceived as a direct threat to their sense of religious identity. The need to maintain their identity in light of change, results in an obstinate refusal to recognize that change to belief can be positive. In many ways this is a direct opposition to Tracy's concept of the transformative, where the group is unwilling to engage in any form of dialogue. Another example of this opposition to the transformative was demonstrated recently in the changing of key wording in the recent synod report from the Catholic Church. Even though Pope Francis and a growing number of cardinals wished to change the Church's stance on homosexuality, it was undermined by the conservative element and failed to gain a two thirds majority.³⁶⁷

This possessive use of commitment has a hugely detrimental effect, however, on interfaith dialogue. If we maintain unwavering loyalty to the group, then that includes unquestioning faith in the group's message. The enemy becomes demonized, and the propaganda created against such a group creates fear leading to complete distrust. Dialogue is not an option. The need to defeat and destroy the enemy becomes the goal of the group. The language of the group becomes negative, and the group becomes "good soldiers of God marching out to fight Satan's forces."³⁶⁸ These tones of fanaticism create a group outside the parameters of the religion's positive theology. For example, in Christianity, active qualities of peace, love and gratitude are part of the framework of positive Christian belief, but in the case of negative commitment, these are downplayed in favor of the rhetoric of hate. We must hate our enemies because they are not chosen by God. Extreme Christian movements in the United States exemplify this. For example, in the documentary, *Jesus Camp*, the language of hate is pervasive throughout the film, with Church leaders using it extensively to indoctrinate the children further into their particular group. This hate language was

³⁶⁶ Christianity Today *Same Sex Marriage* <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/topics/s/same-sex-marriage/> Accessed 05/12/2014

³⁶⁷ BBC News James Reynolds October 18th 2014. *Catholic Synod: Pope Francis Setback in Gay Policy*. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29677779> Accessed 05/12/2014

³⁶⁸ Muck, "Interreligious Dialogue," 149.

used to demonize anything the group considered to be contrary to their beliefs, including the condemnation of Harry Potter as a warlock. Muck's description here may be developed by adding a further emotional element that often plays a part in negative commitment, the use of guilt to maintain loyalty to the group. In *Jesus Camp*, there are several incidents where the leaders use guilt as their control tool, telling everyone that they are sinners and going to hell, unless they subscribe to the salvation offered by the group. Another example is the Phelps family, who controversially picket the funerals of dead soldiers. This group indoctrinates children from birth, filling them with the language of hate and certainly not trying to create dialogue with anyone, instead relying on a constant barrage of hate language which provokes anger and violence.³⁶⁹

The second element is to change perception of mission within major world religions. The concept of mission is rooted in evangelism. This presumes that the religion it represents holds the absolute truth and therefore all other religions do not have valid truth claims. Muck has not fully developed this idea, confining it to a passing comment that barely constitutes a paragraph. His inclusion of Buddhism as an evangelistic faith contradicts most standard understandings of Buddhism, which does not actively promote through evangelism.

Muck also proposes a shift from church authority to reason and individual choice. He states that the Enlightenment was the birth of modern thinking and philosophy but lacks completion, assuming the development of a more complete image of God that could be used within the realms of the rational. Again Muck's comment is not developed in detail. His achievement is thus limited to expressing a desire to move forward and appreciate the role of emotion at play in interreligious dialogue. While the issue of commitment is relevant to interfaith dialogue, Muck does little more than point to a common problem. His use of commitment as an emotion is problematic, as commitment requires love and belief, both of which help define one's commitment to

³⁶⁹ USA Today Lindsay Deutsch. March 21 2014. *Five Incendiary Westboro Baptist Church funeral protests*. <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2014/03/21/westboro-baptist-church-pickets-funerals/6688951/>. Accessed 26/08/2014

a particular faith. To define commitment as an emotion in the absence of either love or belief simply does not work. In this situation, we view commitment as a device through which a negative use of love and belief can be channeled. There are many different forms of commitment, even within religion, which Muck does not allude to, and his statement that commitment is used in a negative manner based on the requirement of group cohesion to have an enemy is questionable at best. Whilst groups often form around a similar personal experience or cultural understanding, the concept of an enemy is not always formed, and many groups coexist in harmony with others. In terms of religion, we can argue that the nature of revelation gives a certain validity to the perception that we are more right than the others; to assume, however, that commitment is always used in a negative manner is problematic.

The missionary urge can be a problem in relation to dialogue, but Muck does not offer a means to overcome this. He recognizes the problem, and, although he claims that there are enough theories of dialogue to overcome this problem, he does not apply any of them. He says very little in relation to evangelism, and fails to address the concept of evangelism in dialogue adequately, simply stating that “We need to more clearly articulate the relationship between evangelism and interreligious dialogue, a relationship that I have suggested is not either/or.”³⁷⁰ Again, there is no further elaboration of this statement. Overall, Muck’s proposal for recreating emotional language in dialogue fails to offer a major breakthrough, rather, it makes us more aware of the failings of the language we use.

Lindbeck, in *The Nature of Doctrine*, also offers a review of various approaches to dialogue. His perspective on different models is beneficial to our understanding of both the Christian approach to dialogue and also of the alternative methods that we can use to approach dialogue. These are split into theological and non-theological approaches. The first model is the Ecumenical Matrix, based around Christian scholars engaging in theological dialogue with each other and finding a form of agreement about such topics as the Eucharist, ministry, justification and the papacy.

³⁷⁰ Muck, “Interreligious Dialogue,” 150.

What makes this a difficult process to believe is the claim that the participants can continue to adhere to their own convictions as well. This creates three distinct types of theory of religion and doctrine.³⁷¹ The first emphasizes the cognitive aspects of religion and focuses on doctrine as truth claims about objective realities. The second is called the experiential-expressive model. I shall explore this model in greater detail, along with the cultural-linguistic alternative that Lindbeck offers.

The experiential-expressive model is characterized in the following way:

- (1) Different religions are diverse expressions or objectifications of a common core experience. It is this experience that identifies them as religions.
- (2) The experience, while conscious, may be unknown on the level of self-conscious reflection.
- (3) It is present in all human beings.
- (4) In most religions, the experience is the source and norm of objectifications: it is by reference to the experience that their adequacy or lack of adequacy is to be judged. A fifth point (which is fourth in Lonergan's original enumeration) characterizes the primordial religious experience as "God's gift of love."³⁷²

This model is based on a sense of a universal experience that all human beings share and that ties all cultures together. It is given expression through religious acts and worship. This unity of experience is found in the engagement with the divine. This theory, however, is problematic because it presumes a common sense of the divine, something that can be proven to lack consistency within religions. This model can be used as a framework for dialogue, through the application of an assumed universality within religions, attempting to find common expression through the love of the divine. The assumptions that go with this theory create a number of problems, such as the inconsistencies in the understandings of universality and also the underlying unity of religions and the concept of the love of the divine.

³⁷¹ Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age.*, 16.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 31.

In Lindbeck's alternative cultural-linguistic model, we see a combination of anthropology, sociology and philosophy. Religions are seen as "comprehensive interpretive schemes, usually embodied in myths or narratives and heavily ritualized, which structure human experience and understanding of self and world."³⁷³ Religion is a kind of cultural or linguistic framework that shapes a person's life and thoughts. It is communal by nature; the community of the religion shapes the individual and builds within itself a vocabulary and grammatical framework which is similar to a language, as it is "correlated with a form of life, and just as a culture has both cognitive and behavioral dimensions, so it is also in the case of religion."³⁷⁴ All the rituals, practices, experiences, ethical and institutional forms can be compared to a cultural linguistic system, as religion is highly influenced and developed by the culture in which it finds itself. Christianity, for example, can find different kinds of meaning depending on the culture it has developed in. So the inner religious experience and the outer cultural experience interact and change each other whilst maintaining their sense of unity and understanding. However, we cannot understand this experiential language unless we understand the vocabulary. Until one can understand the language thoroughly and appropriately, one cannot engage with the religion. Religion gives shape to the experience of the culture from which it comes and the story structures the dimensions of existence, its vocabulary helping to conceptualize this existence for the believer.

I agree with Lindbeck's connection between the experiential-expressive model and the cultural-linguistic one, in that the cultural linguistic model can accommodate the concepts of the experiential-expressive model within it and allow them to be portrayed in a manner that creates consistency in the approach to understanding religion. To become religious one must interiorize the skills and language and culture that form it. Hence it moves beyond the cognitive to the instinctive. This allows for a proper expression and understanding of the aesthetic elements of religions, those that come through and are understood not cognitively but instinctively. This functions not only in terms of the aesthetic but also in terms of the capacity to discriminate

³⁷³ Ibid., 32.

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 33.

intuitively between authentic and inauthentic, and effective and ineffective objectification of religion.³⁷⁵

This reflects the important difference between the experiential-expressive and cultural-linguistic models. It reverses the relation between the inner and the outer. In the cultural-linguistic model, we are required to have the language before we can properly express our faith. Hence this language must exist in the unconscious or *a priori* for us to express our feelings and understanding of the given faith. Lindbeck uses the example of the tribe that does not discriminate between green and blue. It is not that they don't recognize the difference between the colors; it is that they do not have the language to express this difference. This does not discount the idea that one cannot experience without the language to express it but, rather, experience is expressed through language, or the interpersonal relations and social interactions that result. Hence this experience and the change that results is part of the evolution of the cultural (or religious) language. Innovation comes from interaction through the cultural linguistic system. Religious traditions do not become obsolete because of change but because they fail to appropriately interpret change.³⁷⁶

The response to these anomalies creates new conceptual language with which to explain them. Experience, in a way, helps create the language needed to describe it; the experience generates new symbols that are expressed through the language of that religion. Is there a concept of the inner experience of God common to all of humanity? Lindbeck describes this experience not as many diverse ideas about God but as many different experiences based on culture, language and background. Hence religion is something universal from within the individual, which is then objectified in different faith traditions. As such, the cultural-linguistic background creates a framework from which each individual understands the concept of the divine. This creates a variety of different interpretations reflected in the many different faith traditions.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 36.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 39.

Having outlined a number of different interpretations of dialogue, I turn now to outline how Christianity deals with interfaith dialogue. This allows us to understand the manner in which Christianity interacts with other religions. It is especially important to note the focus that Christianity maintains on scriptural and ethical dialogue, which is not really compatible with an understanding of Shinto.

4.1 Interfaith dialogue

I shall now look at how scholars have explored the relationships between Christianity and other religions, focusing upon the major world religions. Why do Christians wish to engage in dialogue?

John B. Cobb Jr. describes the tension that many Christians feel in relation to interfaith dialogue:

Today many of us Christians live in intimate relations with persons who belong to other religious communities. Many of these people draw forth our respect. Sadly, some Christians think that they are betraying or watering down their own faith when they feel admiration for other forms of faith.³⁷⁷

The obstacles noted in this statement are further reinforced by the risks in attempting interfaith dialogue, as Azumah warned in relation to Christian-Muslim dialogue. This comes from a perception of dialogue as an attempt to undermine the Islamic tradition. There is a strong belief that dialogue is a covert attempt by Christians to convert members. This belief is seen in a similar manner among some Christians, who believe they are sacrificing their belief and traditions to branch out to people of other religions.³⁷⁸

In contrast to this rather pragmatic statement about interfaith dialogue, Laksana³⁷⁹ is more optimistic. Christian interfaith dialogue is not so much an act of evangelism as an effort to build a hermeneutical bridge that would allow the construction of a discourse, which would, in turn, create a context in which to begin comparative theology. This bridge would also allow us to transcend the barrier of elitism and the

³⁷⁷ McAfee, "The Dialogue Comes of Age: Christian Encounters With Other Traditions." 1-2

³⁷⁸ Azumah, John "The Integrity of Interfaith Dialogue," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 13.3 (2002), 269-270.

³⁷⁹ Bagus Laksana, A. "Comparative Theology: Between Identity and Alterity," in *The New Comparative Theology*, ed. Francis X. Clooney (London: T. and T. Clark International, 2010), 1-20.

sense of self-purity so as to engage in an act of identity formation and begin to develop constructive insights based around this new identity. Through this dialogue we can help create a greater sense of communal identity, inspired by the new learning and new perspectives that we are shown. The only way this can happen is to actually gain experience of the other faith.³⁸⁰

How active, however, is this optimistic perspective? Joslyn-Siemiatkoski³⁸¹ points to the issue of Jewish-Christian dialogue in comparative theology as an example of reluctance to engage in building a hermeneutical bridge. This bridge often meets a number of construction problems in dialogue, tied deeply to the problem of supersessionism. Despite the persistence of negative perspectives such as this, interreligious dialogue is quite common between a number of major Western and Middle Eastern religions, owing mainly to their common ancestry and capacity to recognize the divine in the similarities of their faith. All are structured, have a definite sense of moral and spiritual guidelines, and accept certain texts as authoritative within their traditions. Eastern religions are also being brought into dialogue with Christianity; again, these tend to have clearly defined theologies and philosophies, often associated with an authoritative textual tradition.

Where does this leave other less-defined and morePrimal Traditions? Where can dialogue begin between Shinto and Christianity? Is dialogue even possible? Is it something that cannot progress beyond a certain point because of the inherent differences between the two traditions? Is the lack of an appropriate structure a major problem for furthering dialogue between Shinto and other religions?

With these challenges in mind, I shall outline briefly the current state of interfaith dialogue involving Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Christianity. The purpose of this outline is to bring a level of awareness of the difficulties in

³⁸⁰ Laksana, "Comparative Theology," 6.

³⁸¹ Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, Daniel "Comparative Theology and the Status of Judaism: Hegemony and Reversals," in *The New Comparative Theology*, ed. Clooney, 89-108.

creating dialogue with other religions, and also to set the context for comparison to dialogue with Shinto, acknowledging that a different approach needs to be taken for this dialogue to be successful. I shall then examine past attempts at dialogue with Shinto, before offering an alternative model.

4.2 Dialogue in the Major Faiths

In this section I shall explore how dialogue takes place in relation to four major faiths, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. The role that scripture plays in these dialogues is important to our later understanding of why Shinto requires a different approach. Instead of taking each faith separately to explore each religion's role in dialogue, I shall review them in terms of the method in which they contribute. Whilst this work does not have the scope to provide an in-depth account of all aspects of dialogue in which these religions are engaged, it will allow a greater appreciation of how the detail and structure of the scriptural tradition in each faith is a major factor in the dialogue that takes place. The importance of this dialogue cannot be underestimated. Pak quotes Hans Küng, saying:

Hans Küng made his famous statement that there will be “[n]o peace among the nations without peace among religions” and “[n]o peace among the religions without a dialogue among religions.” When there is no dialogue, when “people no longer converse with one another,” Küng warns, “Violence is the alternative.”³⁸²

Only through dialogue can one begin the process of understanding. There is no peace without peace among religions. It is important to develop an understanding of what is meant by this. Whilst Küng speaks in a universal sense, applicable to all faiths, in this context, he is referring to the major faiths that have engendered so much hostility through intolerance and misunderstanding: Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Historically, we can point to these three religions as having had a considerable impact on society as a whole, especially in Europe, America and the Middle East. They have also been responsible for a large amount of conflict. How does dialogue take place between these particular groups?

³⁸² Park, Kenneth "Affirming Rationality of Religious Traditions, Approximating the Ultimate Reality and Advancing Goodwill: A Proposal for Religious Dialogue," *The International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society* 1, no. 2 (2011). 25

Massoudi speaks of finding common ground amongst the major faiths in his comment:

While each religion is characterized by a different historical origin and distinct development, there are certain parts or concepts which are similar; such common denominators are, for example, the injunctions to be kind and compassionate, to be helpful to others, to be just and wise and to lead a moral life.³⁸³

To expand on this basic assumption, there must also be a common point of reference. In the case of the major faiths branching from Judaism, it is the common sacred texts and traditions from which all three particular faiths spring. Within the framework of the Quran, Bible and Tanakh we can find a common ancestry, which can be used as a foundation for the beginning of dialogue.

³⁸³ Massoudi, Mehrdad "A System Theory Approach to Interfaith Dialogue," *Incultural Education* 17.4 (2006), 422.

4.3 Conflict as History

Whilst there are common roots and a common literature, one must not underestimate the conflict that can result from a common ancestry. Scriptural and historical difference must be taken into account. Whilst one can view a great deal of scholarship in Christianity and Judaism as a form of apologetic, it also emphasizes issues that stem from misunderstanding the historical nature of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. The early development of all three faiths was heavily influenced by times of change and unrest. There is also the historical element of the relationship between Christianity and Judaism: Joslyn-Siemiatkoski³⁸⁴ states that “Judaism is rarely a tradition that is engaged ... the heritage of rabbinic Judaism remains in the background.”³⁸⁵

In Judaism we see this through the return of the exiles from Babylon, in Christianity during the anti-imperialist conflicts with Rome, and in Islam during the huge societal and cultural upheaval of the trade era.³⁸⁶ The expectation of a Messianic figure, a central theme in Judaism at the time, was born from the returnees from Babylon, and their concept of the Messiah was to have far-reaching implications. From the Roman invasion of 63 B.C.E., there was an evolution in Messianic thinking, which led to the emergence of Christianity and created a new concept of the Messiah, based around forgiveness and immediacy in contrast to that of a mighty leader. With Muhammad, there was a further evolution of the potent sources created by Judaism and Christianity. In contrast to the concept of a Messianic figure, a leader coming to bring the people to God, Muhammad preached that the prophets were repeating the same message over and over again. The inclusion of both Jewish and Christian figures in the Quran, exemplifies its dependence upon both faiths to develop its own interpretation of the Messianic message. These religions, so closely tied together and yet so divergent, brought their messages to the world: and this divergence brought

³⁸⁴ Clooney, Francis X. *The New Comparative Theology* (T&T Clark International, 2010),. “Comparative Theology,” 89-108.

³⁸⁵ Ibid., “Comparative Theology,” 89.

³⁸⁶ McAfee, Ward "Islam and Christians," in *The Dialogue Comes of Age: Christian Encounters With Other Traditions*, ed. Ward McAfee John B Cobb Jr (Fortress Press: Augsburg Fortress, 2010). 210

with it conflict between the faiths.

Early in Jewish-Christian relations, there is a strong disagreement over the place of the Jews and Gentiles within this new religion. Tensions increased, especially through the disagreement between Paul and Peter in regards to Gentiles. The destruction of the temple furthered the divide, one side seeing it as punishment and divine retribution and the other seeing it as a fulfillment of prophecy. At a Christian scriptural level, the representation of the Jews changes as they become a symbol of cosmic evil. In John 8 they are denoted as the offspring of Satan: when the Gospel of John was being developed, church membership had become predominantly gentile rather than Jews. However, we must recognize that there is a degree of complexity in this issue, which may have been the reason that John did not blame the Jews for the death of Jesus.³⁸⁷

When we look at the evolution of the Gospels, we see that, by the second century, a clear separation between Jews and early Christians had been written into the Christian scriptures and, as a result created future conflict between the two groups. When Christianity moved from being a minority to a majority within the Roman Empire in the fourth century and Judaism remained in the minority, hostile views towards the Jews that had evolved from the Gospels had become widespread, e.g., Augustine's statement that the Jews hold:

... Guilt for the death of the Savior, for through their fathers they have killed the Christ. The Jews held him, the Jews insulted him, the Jews bound him, they crowned him with thorns, dishonored him by spitting upon him, they scourged him, they heaped abuses upon him, they hung him upon a tree, they pierced him with a lance.³⁸⁸

This became a widely accepted position and, whilst not finding its way into the Christian creeds, continued throughout history, reaching its apex during World War

³⁸⁷ Ibid. 121

³⁸⁸ Ibid. 125

II, and the persecution and attempted genocide of the Jews by Hitler³⁸⁹.

In contrast to the active demonization of Judaism in the early Christian texts, Islam created the concept of the “People of the Book”³⁹⁰, incorporating Jews, Christians and Muslims. Contrary to the early Christian and Jewish attempts at exclusion, Islam worked to effect inclusion³⁹¹. While we can recognize historically that Islam did not consider either faith as its equal, there were golden ages of prosperity in Spain and North Africa, which exemplified early interreligious cooperation. However, this tenuous relationship of harmony between Christianity, Islam and Judaism broke down, especially when Christians regained control of Spain, resulting in persecution of both Jews and Muslims.

Shoah represented the turning point in relations between the Christian Church and Judaism, as Christians were forced to face the reality that they had assisted in engendering hatred that was manipulated into violent persecution that almost destroyed the Jewish people completely. In many ways, we could argue that World War II brought with it a need to preempt violence through dialogue³⁹². In 1965, Vatican II’s *Nostra Aetate* opened the gates for dialogue between Christianity and other faiths, allowing for progressive dialogue to begin between Christianity and Islam. What is the key to this dialogue?

³⁸⁹ Ibid. 63

³⁹⁰ Sher Ali. *The Holy Qur'an*. Chapter 3:111 (Tilford, Surrey, U.K.: Islam International. 2004) 67.

³⁹¹ For a brief example of this inclusion, see Vaughan, Lindsey Marie, "Convivencia: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Medieval Spain" (2003). *University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Projects*. http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/692

³⁹² There are a wide range of texts that deal with post-Holocaust interreligious dialogue and the need to preempt violence with it. Examples include; Berger, Alan L. *Post-Holocaust Jewish-Christian Dialogue: After the Flood, before the Rainbow* (Lexington Books: 2014), Ellis, Marc H. (Editor) *Encountering the Jewish Future: With Elie Wiesel, Martin Buber, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Hannah Arendt, Emmanuel Levinas* (Fortress Press 2011) and Langton, Daniel. “Speaking Truth After the Shoah: Jewish Post Holocaust Theologies and Multireligious Conversation” *Journal of Interreligious Studies* Issue 14 (June 2014) 42-55.

4.3.A Conflict and Communication

Man's eternal questions about the meaning of life, suffering, and death, about the highest values and ultimate norms for the individual and society, about where humanity and the cosmos have come from and where they are going, are not simply still with us, but have grown far more urgent in the face of political catastrophes and disenchantment with blind faith in progress ... If one wishes to prevent some false god (be it fuehrer, political party, nation, or even science) from being made into humanity's ground for meaning, supreme value, and ultimate norm, then faith in the one true God must replace faith in the false gods of modernity. And so, these days especially, one must confirm together with the Qur'an and the Bible: "There is no god but God." "You shall have no other gods before me." Which means that faith, whether Qur'anic or biblical, in the one true God is capable of demystifying the powers of this world and, insofar as they are idols, of dethroning them.³⁹³

The key, both to conflict and dialogue, is the source of all three faiths: scripture. Each textual source, be it the Quran, Torah or Bible, are all claimed as the truth. A sense of unerring truth and ascendancy, i.e., the sense of having superseded the previous tradition brought with it frustration that the other traditions could not understand this. The sense of supersession contributed to constant conflict and mistrust between the three faiths. We can describe it in the following manner: Judaism is perceived as the beginning, the covenant with God becoming the foundation of the later faiths; Christ, who brings about a new era and revises the teachings of the old faith through the second covenant, fulfills its message; and finally Muhammad restores the true faith through the undiluted word of God in the Quran, both the Bible and Tanakh having an inaccurate interpretation of the message. Such conflict is intensified through differences within scripture. For Islam, for example, it stems from such issues as the Trinity, the Crucifixion and the validity of the Jesus stories in the Gospels in

³⁹³ Küng, *Christianity and World Religions*, 55-56.

comparison with those in the Quran. In contrast, O'Mahoney (2010) quotes Arnaldez expressing frustration at the sense of differentiation between the three religions, saying:

Moses, Jesus and Muhammad: three messengers of the one, the only God! And yet: three different messages, three religions standing against one another in their dogmas, sometimes in their spirit and in their conceptions of the One who sent their founder! How do we understand and justify such divergence if the God whom they invoke is the same?³⁹⁴

This is a very simplified statement, but reflects a common perception of the conflict between the faiths today. This perception exacerbates conflict as each group attempts to defend itself, through either the pogroms against the Jews, the conflict between Israel and Palestine, or the attacks on the Twin Towers on September 11th.

Scriptures, however, may also provide a key to a sense of commonality amongst Jews, Muslims and Christians. In all three sets of scriptures, there is a common beginning through Abraham and his Covenant. Both Christianity and Islam owe their existence to elements of the tradition of Judaism. All three faiths subscribe to the same God, even if their perception of that God differs. All three faiths hold to a moral code linked to this God. They see this moral code in different ways, but connect it closely to the will of God.³⁹⁵

All three groups have a moral code. In Judaism, the moral code is contained in the Torah, in Christianity it is expressed by the teachings of Jesus, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, while in Islam it is the five pillars of faith. All three focus on concepts such as social justice, equality and stewardship. We should not see the Quran as something alien to the Bible but as a contextualization of the same justice-

³⁹⁴ O'Mahony, Anthony "Modern Catholic Thought on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations," *One in Christ* 44, no. 2 (2010). 111-112

³⁹⁵ McAfee, "Islam and Christians." 236

ethics that were preached by the biblical prophets.³⁹⁶ Christians need to appreciate the ethics of Muhammad's ministry and his status as a prophet. This does not detract from claims for the divinity of Christ but assists in placing Muhammad within the overall perspective of Christianity, allowing Christians to build on this to further dialogue between the two groups. Bielenin-Lenczowska describes the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Macedonia in her study:

[They] admit they lived together on very good terms; they also highlight differences between Christianity and Islam and diminish them by emphasizing similarities between feasts and values presented in the Bible and in the Koran.³⁹⁷

We find a similar attempt to build further dialogue with Judaism through the development of an understanding of common scripture and a redevelopment of scriptural understanding. Keith³⁹⁸ describes how there has been a development of common ground between the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures.³⁹⁹

The scriptures form the key to interaction between all three groups, and a sense of commonality through text and early formation that is vital in allowing the development of understanding. Islam and Christianity share a basis for dialogue in their common sense of the sacred, Judaism and Christianity in their common sense of the historical. We could go further and point to the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem as another example of common ground held sacred by all three groups in recognition of its special place in the scriptures of all three traditions (whilst recognizing that a tension exists over the rights to that area). In Macedonia, we see a real and active dialogue going on between Muslims and Christians, emphasizing the concept of a common God shared in Islam and Christianity. Bielenin-Lenczowska gives this

³⁹⁶ Kerr, David A. "Muhammad: Prophet of Liberation - a Christian Perspective from Political Theology," *Studies in World Christianity* (2000), 139.

³⁹⁷ Bielenin-Lenczowska, Karolina "Visiting of Christian Holy Places by Muslims as a Strategy of Coping with Difference," *Anthropological Notebooks* 15.3 (2009), 27.

³⁹⁸ Keith, Graham "A Rival, a Relative, or Both? Differing Christian Stances Toward Judaism Over Two Millennia," *The Evangelical Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (2003).

³⁹⁹ *Ibid* 153-154.

example:

Monasteries, especially St. Jovan Bigorski, are regularly visited by Muslims (e.g. 'I was in monastery of Saint Jovan Bigorski maybe ten times; my mother was there as well. It is normal: it is the house of God'). It is a place particularly significant for Macedonian Muslims since the first meeting of the *Torbeshi* cultural organization, set up in 1970, was held at this place.⁴⁰⁰

This concept of the common God and of the close relationship between the bible and the Quran greatly assists in creating a sense of community between Muslims and Christians. This respect is furthered in a reference to an interview with a group of Nuns from a monastery in Rajcica.⁴⁰¹

It is important to recognize that this sense of community extends from an acceptance of the validity of scriptures on both sides, with an emphasis placed on the ethics and values that are found in both books. Hence the sense of commonality stems from an acceptance of a common historical framework and, even more importantly, a common concept of ethics and the divine.

Their close historical and scriptural ties and close social teachings provide the basis for further attempts by all sides to recognize the validity of each of the three religions. Cobb states that the Christian perspective towards Judaism has moved from the early negative textual and theological thought to one that embraces the Jewish traditions.⁴⁰²

Dialogue between these religions is based around scripture as a common basis for discussion. It is through their mutual and interdependent development of scriptural interpretation that this form of dialogue is available. It requires common scripture,

⁴⁰⁰ Bielenin-Lenczowska, "Visiting," 34.

⁴⁰¹ Bielenin-Lenczowska, "Visiting," 34.

⁴⁰² Cobb Jr, John B "Theological Response," in *The Dialogue Comes of Age: Christian Encounters With Other Traditions*, ed. Ward McAfee John B Cobb Jr (Fortress Press, 2010). 189

belief and moral code. The dialogue between Christianity, Judaism and Islam focuses on these key ideas, with an emphasis on scripture and morality. How does Christianity deal with other religious traditions? Can Scripture be a viable basis for dialogue with them? Or is it a common basis in morality that creates common ground for dialogue? It is important to explore how Christianity interacts with other Eastern traditions before we examine dialogue with Shinto, to allow us to understand how Christianity's interactions with non-Abrahamic traditions have developed.

4.4 Christianity and Buddhism

A first-term furloughing Japan missionary came to our church in Hilo. We were third-generation Japanese youth, and we couldn't speak Japanese. The missionary told us the meaning of our Japanese names. We were amazed at a white man speaking our language! Then he asked me if we had a Buddha altar in our house. I said yes, we did. He read to me the Old Testament story about Gideon tearing down the village idol. He said I must tear down the Buddha idol in our living room!

That night after everybody had gone to their rooms, I stood in our living room and looked at the Buddha altar. It centered on the fierce Buddha Protector, Fudo-Myo-O. He was painted black with sharp fangs, holding a sword in one hand and a looped rope in the other. It was Grandpa's greatest treasure. I looked at the Buddha altar for a long time. My head said I should do it. But my heart stopped me. I couldn't tear down Grandpa's Buddha altar. I was a fifth grader, just ten years old.

Many years later when I read the Bible for myself, I saw what the missionary did not see. When Gideon tore down the village idol, he fled the village that night. The Bible says he left that night before the sun came up (Judge 6:25-27). The missionary should have told me that when I tear down Grandpa's Buddha altar, I have to leave home that night before the sun came up and never come home again. When I was ten years old, I learned not to trust American ministers when they trash Japanese religions.⁴⁰³

This text by Yagi suggests that Buddhism and Christianity may not have shared the best relationship. In modern times, however, Buddhism has become one of the most accessible religions in terms of dialogue. The prejudice and intolerance described by Yagi, where missionaries preyed on the minds of young children, while surviving in more extreme forms of Christianity, and of other faiths, does not reflect the more recent Christian approach to interfaith dialogue, especially in relation to Buddhism.

⁴⁰³ Yagi, Dickson Kazuo "Buddha for Christians," in *The Dialogue Comes of Age: Christian Encounters with Other Traditions*, ed. Ward McAfee John B Cobb Jr (Fortress Press, 2010). 293

Attempts to gain greater insight into each other, particularly in the last thirty years, have created a strong and active dialogue community, which has produced a considerable body of literature in relation to Buddhist-Christian dialogue. Within the scope of this thesis, it is not possible to do complete justice to the extensive relationship that has evolved, but I shall give a number of examples of how that relationship has established ties between both traditions.

The work of the International Buddhist-Christian Theological Encounter is a significant example of the ongoing dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism. The founders, Prof. John Cobb and Prof. Abe Masao, hoped that the dialogue, through which they could find similarities as well as differences, would lead to a greater mutual understanding and positive influence on each other. The group itself was made up of a wide range of representatives from a variety of Buddhist and Christian traditions, and also included mixed gender representation. The ease with which this group operated demonstrated the willingness of both sides to engage in dialogue, and its focus on similarities is important in terms of our understanding of interfaith dialogue. Was it scriptural or ethical? Could a comparison be developed exclusively using one, or were both required? I suggest that constructive comparison was often found in both areas, due to the rich written tradition of both Christianity and Buddhism.

Justice has a strong basis in modern Christian theology, for example in liberation theology, stemming primarily from Latin America as a Christian response to social injustice, exploitation and oppression. Polinska, in her work on liberation theology in dialogue with Buddhism, points to the work of Thich Nhat Hanh as an example of the use of liberation theology in the interests of developing dialogue. His philosophy of liberation has very strong roots in Buddhist tradition. He claims that:

If we divide reality into two camps - violent and nonviolent - and stand in one camp while attacking the other, the world will never have peace. We will always blame and condemn those we feel are responsible for

wars and social injustice, without recognizing the degree of violence in ourselves.⁴⁰⁴

This brings together the concept of liberation outlined in Christian texts and the idea of the “interconnected and interdependent nature of all things” taught in Buddhism. Where Christianity focuses on the message of Christ and its vision of the equality of all, this is bolstered by the Buddhist sense of how interdependence makes conflict impossible. Thich Nhat Hanh emphasizes the jettisoning of consumerism and exploitative attitudes towards the planet, justified by the duality of a Christo-Buddhist teaching. By identifying with both the victim and the perpetrator, Nhat Hanh creates a new understanding in which both must be recognized as victims of their own circumstances; both the perpetrator and the victim are born into the circumstances of their individual lives. The goal of deep compassion arising from the teachings of Christ is liberation from the victimhood of those circumstances, but only through the recognition, as demonstrated in the teachings of the Buddha, of the interconnected nature of the universe can we understand why we should do this. Nhat Hanh takes the concept of embracing the practicing of peace, compassion, love and understanding and combines it with the Buddhist tradition of mindfulness. In this way Nhat Hanh creates a situation where one can realize the tenets of Christianity through gaining the Buddhist techniques to accomplish them. Nhat Hanh describes in detail how one must accept anger as part of the self and not something to destroy. Through personal compassion, one can find the way to being compassionate about others.⁴⁰⁵

The common ground found between Christianity and Buddhism is moral. Whilst we can claim that scripture has assisted in shaping morality in Christianity and Buddhism, we must be careful about assuming that the same salvific and messianic concepts that are applied to Christ can be applied in Buddhism. Theism, referring to a specific deity such as the Christian God, can be hugely problematic in relation to Buddhism. The concept of a divine creator does not work in Buddhism: there was no

⁴⁰⁴ Polinska, Wioleta “Christian-Buddhist Dialogue in Loving the Enemy,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 27 (2007), 93. Taken from Thich Nhat Hanh, *Love in Action* Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, (1993). 65.

⁴⁰⁵ Polinska, “Dialogue”, 100.

beginning and as such there is no reason to create something that can degenerate from perfection into suffering.⁴⁰⁶

There is a consistent degree of disagreement over the concept of the divine. Many scholars agree that there is a degree of similarity between the Buddha figure and God, but Buddhists like to refine this statement to say that the Buddha transcended through evolution rather than having pre-existed. Nhat Hanh speaks of a comparison between the Buddha and God in terms of Tillich's description of God as the "ground of being". For Nhat Hanh, this description also fits the Buddha. Just as the "simple and primitive images" of God⁴⁰⁷ evolve over the life of the Christian, so too the images of the Buddha evolve over the life of the Buddhist. If not, there is a stagnation of faith, becoming harder and harder to reconcile the image of God held as a child with the changes that result from experience. What this means is a more abstract concept. As we mature our image of God changes, but the concept of God as a sense of wonder and compassion remains constant throughout our lives. The meaning is left purposely vague, in many ways an excellent conceptualization of God. For what do we know about the divine? We project human characteristics and attempt to humanize the transcendent, but in the end we are giving shape to our ignorance. In the same manner, the Buddhist expression of the Universe, exemplified in scholars such as Nhat Hanh, Kornfield and Surya Das, is attempting to shape the unknowable, and by retaining the mystery, create an accessible concept of the transcendent that is compatible with both Christianity and Buddhism.

This concept of retaining the mystery opens the way for Christians to benefit from the teachings of Buddhism. The idea of an ever-changing concept of the transcendent allows for a more open dialogue between Christians and other traditions, as it avoids getting trapped in a rigidly defined concept of the divine. This leads inevitably to a point of contention between Christians and Buddhists: that of the personal God. If there is no need for a personal relationship with God, then what place do Christianity,

⁴⁰⁶ Stafford, Betty "What Buddhists and Christians Are Teaching Each Other About God," *Cross Currents* 58, no. 1 (2008). 110

⁴⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 110

Islam and Judaism have in the world? We must look beyond a focus on the question of a personal relationship, recognizing that Buddhists don't have the same perception of the transcendent as Christians: their sense of the transcendent is one that moves beyond any one individual being or entity. This would allow for a greater appreciation and acceptance of the plurality of religions than would generally be envisaged in light of the more-narrow Christian concept of salvation through Christ alone.

There have been a number of studies on Christian-Buddhist communication. For a further introduction to this field, extensive study is found in the journal *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue*⁴⁰⁸, as well as works by Cobb⁴⁰⁹, Fleming⁴¹⁰, and Ingram⁴¹¹. In brief, Christian-Buddhist dialogue works because fundamentally, at an ethical level, a great deal of similarity can be established. Christianity has a strong ethic of love and compassion, shared with Buddhism (and indeed many religions). There is also a readiness on the part of the Buddhist tradition to accept that Christianity and Buddhism are both attempting to reach a similar state of understanding. Further, there are certain schools of Buddhism that will even accept the validity of the Christ, within the framework of their own understanding of course, but this still represents an acceptance which can assist greatly in dialogue. Mahayana Buddhism, for example, has absolutely no issue about accepting Christ as a divine figure; he is seen by many Buddhists as a bodhisattva.⁴¹²

Could this mean that Christianity would be willing to give a degree of canonization to the Buddha in return? This may be too much to ask; there is a degree of acceptance by Christianity, however, that the Buddha may have been a wise and holy man, a concession that is not easily made within the Christian tradition.

⁴⁰⁸ *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue* Journals Department, University of Hawai'i Press 1981-Present

⁴⁰⁹ Cobb Jr., John B. "Reversals in Buddhist-Christian Relations *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*: Winter 2014, Vol 49 Issue 1, 152-158

⁴¹⁰ Fleming, Kenneth. *Asian Christian theologians in dialogue with Buddhism* Peter Lang International Academic Publishers (2002)

⁴¹¹ Ingram, Paul O. "Buddhist-Christian-Science Dialogue at the Boundaries." *Buddhist-Christian Studies*. Issue 31, (2011) p165-174

⁴¹² Reynolds, John Myrdhin "Reflections Upon Buddhist-Christian Dialogue," *Dialogue and Universalism* 1.2 (2004), 33.

What does this mean in terms of scriptural interpretation and Buddhism? The scriptural traditions play a role in the dialogue of both traditions. Christian ethics are informed by Scripture; the two great commandments (Mt 22:37-40) and the beatitudes (Mt 5:3-12 / Lk 6:20-22/24-26), for example, form a strong basis for compassion that can be appreciated and understood within the Buddhist tradition as it reflects on the eightfold path. This similarity in scripture, along with a shared focus on the divine as compassionate and loving, creates a fertile ground for dialogue.

Buddhism and Christianity, although representing very different worldviews, allow for dialogue through similarities in the ethical basis of their faith and a common understanding that can stem from a more universal concept of the divine in Buddhist tradition. I have focused primarily on the concepts of justice and divinity, given the importance of these aspects in forming a basis for dialogue to take place. In all dialogue, there is an idea of both the divine and ethics reflected in the scripture or teachings of the given religion, be it the Tanakh, Bible, Quran or Tripitaka. Where dialogue has thus far been successful, it is because of clearly developed ethical teachings and a common sense of the transcendent in the texts of these traditions. What, however, about traditions that lack these shared elements? In this light, I shall examine Christian-Shinto dialogue, with the aim of assessing if these tools towards understanding explored in this chapter can be also applied in that context.

5 Shinto and Dialogue

I have examined how Christianity has developed its dialogue with other major faith traditions. What about its relationship with Shinto? In this section I shall explore the work that has been done so far in terms of dialogue between Shinto and Christianity. I use the term “faith” in this section, because this is a more appropriate term in view of the fact that I am not basing my work on one particular Christian tradition, and am referring to Christianity in its various complex expressions. In turn I have used ‘faith’ for Shinto as well, to reflect its internal diversity of traditions, whilst at the same time focusing as much as possible on the more common aspects of each.

5.1 Christian-Shinto Dialogue

There are very few articles written on dialogue with Shinto; of these, many stem from the work of the Nanzan Institute. This work has been done by a small number of scholars, amongst them John Breen⁴¹³, Ueda Kenji⁴¹⁴, Yuki Hideo⁴¹⁵ and Kadowaki Kakichi⁴¹⁶. Other works on interfaith dialogue are mainly reflections by Japanese Christians on their personal experiences and their interaction with their Shinto counterparts, amongst them Hirota Filo⁴¹⁷ and Suga Koji⁴¹⁸.

Breen's work is primarily historical, and provides an excellent account of the relationship between Christianity and Shinto. Kadowaki, on the other hand, offers a look at modern Shinto-Christian dialogue and where it stands today. Whilst Hirota offers an interesting account of his experience, Suga (through interviews that I conducted with him over the past year) also gives excellent insights into his own personal experiences as a Christian who converted to Shinto.

First, I shall explore Breen's historical work to provide a framework for dialogue. Then I shall examine what has been achieved so far in dialogue between Christianity and Shinto, including the personal experiences of those directly involved.

Breen discusses a number of examples that are important to understanding the development of dialogue within the complex relationship between Shinto and

⁴¹³ Breen, John. "Shinto and Christianity: A History of Conflict and Compromise." In *Handbook of Christianity in Japan*, edited by Mark R. Mullins. Brill Academic Publishers, (2003).

Breen John, Teeuwen Mark. *A New History of Shinto*. John Wiley & Sons, (2010).

⁴¹⁴ Ueda, Kenji. "The Universal and Particular in Shinto." In *Shinto and Christianity: The Particular and the Universal in Religion*. Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture: Tokyo: Shunjusha, (1984).

⁴¹⁵ Yuki, Hideo. "A Shinto-Christian Dialogue." *Inter-Religio* 4 (1984): 6.

"The Universal in Religion: A Protestant View." In *Shinto and Christianity: The Particular and the Universal in Religion*, edited by Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture. Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture: Tokyo: Shunjusha, (1984).

⁴¹⁶ Kadowaki, Kakichi. "Shinto and Christianity: Dialogue for the Twenty-First Century." *International Philosophical Quarterly* 33, no. 1 (1993): 20.

⁴¹⁷ Hirota, Filo. "A Dialogue Experience of a Japanese Catholic." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, Vol 39, No.1-2 Spring (2002)

⁴¹⁸ Suga, Koji. "A Concept of "Overseas Shinto Shrines": A Pantheistic Attempt by Ogawara Shozo and Its Limitations." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 37, no. 1 (2010): 28.

Christianity. In the first segment of his work, Breen focuses on the relationship between Yoshida Shinto and Christianity in the 16-17th centuries. The Yoshida Shinto family were closely linked to the three major rulers of Japan, namely, Nobunaga Oda, Hideyoshi Toyotomi and Tokugawa Ieyasu. They were the key instigators of the deification of both Hideyoshi and Tokugawa. Tokugawa gave them control over all the shrines, priests and rituals in Japan. They also had a very complex theology, focused on the veneration of the Kunitokotachi no mikoto. A deep-rooted connection between this early form of Shinto, Taoism and Buddhism formed a vital part of intellectual life in Edo Japan.

The connection between Yoshida Shinto and Christianity is reflected in *Myotei Mondo*, by Fabian Fucan, a Japanese Jesuit.⁴¹⁹ This text was a guide to Christian teachings, but included a section on Shinto, primarily in the form of an attack on Shinto. This particular excerpt is an example of the scorn for Shinto shown by Yutei, a Christian character created by Fucan to help teach his ideas:

It is a mere paraphrase of Confucianism; its claims that the deity, Kunitokotachi, created Japan are quite preposterous ... What the story of the spear dangled downward has for its hidden meaning is so embarrassing that even intimates such as you and I cannot talk about it. What is the spear? And what the drippings? You can easily guess.⁴²⁰

The contempt for Shinto on the part of the writer is clear. It represented an enemy of faith, although it was not as much of an issue in this respect as Buddhism. This has to be seen in the context of the time. Oyama Tokuko speaks of earlier interactions

⁴¹⁹ Fabian Fucan, is an interesting individual. Apart from writing apologetics for Christianity, he later become one its greatest opponents when he turned his back on the faith. Later he wrote *Ha Daiusu* 破提字子 in 1620 which was a condemnation of Christianity. For further information a good starting point is Monika Schimpf and her paper "The Pro- and Anti-Christian Writings of Fucan Fabian 1565-1621" *Japanese Religions Vol. 33 (1 & 2): 35-54*

⁴²⁰ Breen, John "Shinto and Christianity: A History of Conflict and Compromise," in *Handbook of Christianity in Japan*, ed. Mark R. Mullins (Brill Academic Publishers, 2003). 251

between Gaspar Vilela⁴²¹ and Yoshida Shigekata in which an accommodation was reached between them in regards to a definition of Kunitokotachi as a creator deity, thus allowing for a common ground to be found between both parties. The change from the use of *deusu* to *tendo*⁴²² is closely linked to this debate and is a clear influence of the Yoshida school on early Christian thinking in Japan, even as the school itself was criticized for attempting to reach an accommodation with the Western religion. The various edicts of Hideyoshi are an example of the antagonistic relationship between Shinto and Christianity. In these expulsions, Hideyoshi used Shinto as the reason for removing the Christian faith. He even went so far as to state that Christianity was completely undesirable in Japan.⁴²³

The expulsion orders, most notably by the Tokugawa, would effectively terminate any relationship between Shinto and Christianity for approximately two hundred years. Not until the return of Christianity during the Meiji era can the relationship between the two faiths be examined again. I have already noted the changes wrought by the Meiji government in relation to Shinto.⁴²⁴ We must, however, once again turn to our understanding of the Meiji interpretation of Shinto to appreciate how the new Shinto would give rise to a modern understanding of the faith, along with a different relationship between Christianity and State Shinto.

The expulsion order brought with it many ideological issues that could not be resolved between Shinto and Christianity, which in turn led to the persecution of Christians during the early years of Meiji, most notably the active persecution of the Kakure movement. Suzuki Hiroko, however, states that this was not the case. It was not an ideological issue but a political one; the Meiji government itself was afraid of what would happen with Christianity re-entering Japan. Breen points out that perhaps the government was not over-reacting; in 1873, after the removal of the ban on

⁴²¹Oyama, Tokuko. *Nihonjin no miidashita kami* [The Japanese discovery of the *kami*] (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1988).

⁴²² *Tendo* literally means the way of heaven and indicates a place beyond the earthly realm. This would have been an easier concept to use in explaining the Christian concept of afterlife.

⁴²³ Breen, "Shinto and Christianity: A History of Conflict and Compromise." 251

⁴²⁴ See sections 2.1.B, 2.2.B and 2.5 above.

Christianity, there were regular reports to the Japanese government that people were actively converting and participating in Christian gatherings and funerals. What does this mean for dialogue between the two groups? Firstly, it became an issue between Shinto and Christianity, as many Shinto priests felt that Christianity was a threat to the tradition that had been developed during this period. Numerous theological clashes erupted between various scholars, most notably, according to Breen, the case of Nikolai, a Russian Orthodox missionary and Sano Tsunehiko, the founder of Shinrikyo. The argument was based around the creed that each tradition held. Tsunehiko argued that Shinto was a natural creed whilst the Christian one was man-made. Nikolai accused Tsunehiko of stealing the Christian idea of creation. Patriotism became another point of conflict, as Tsunehiko questioned the loyalty of Nikolai and his converts, if they followed a foreign religion. The Meiji constitution was also a problem for Shinto-Christian relations, because of the strong Shinto emphasis found there, including the sacred role of the Emperor and the requirement for all people to take part in Shinto ritual.

One of the most important features was the lack of proper communication between both groups; works written during this period point to an assumption that Christians would not appropriately understand this new Shinto way. Holtom uses the example of Kato, who stated:

[Christians] cannot have it in their hearts at all to read the Rescript acceptable. They much practice deception ... It is entirely clear that the teachings of Christianity and our national structure [as manifest in the Rescript] can never stand together.⁴²⁵

Christians, however, could not give a response without fear of being censured by the government. Priests like Maeda Chota and Kashiwagi Gien had their works banned because the content was critical of the new State Shinto. Many Christians attempted to reconcile the Rescript and Christian virtues to prove their patriotism to Japan.

⁴²⁵ Holtom, *National Faith*, 81-82.

It was not until the early twentieth century that there were any attempts to reconcile the differences between not only Christianity and State Shinto, but also between Buddhism and State Shinto. In February 1912, the first Shinto-Christian-Buddhist conference took place. This conference, which was attended by a range of sects from Buddhism and Shinto as well as both Catholic and Protestant Christians, formulated a policy to assist in promoting a national ethic. Kozaki Hiromachi wrote:

The fact that our nation is a divine nation, that the imperial institution is descended from the gods, and that our national essence is a unique national essence in no way clashes with my beliefs as a Christian.⁴²⁶

This statement must be understood within the framework of the Japanese mindset. The possibility of holding two contradictory theologies was perfectly acceptable within Japanese psychology.⁴²⁷ This attempt at reconciliation, however, was hampered further by changes to the shrine policy in 1915.

The early moves towards dialogue faced a new barrier in this attempt to ensure adherence to the national religion. Holtom quotes the Bishop of Nagasaki:

The members of the Catholic Church, without hesitation will join in paying due reverence toward the nation's distinguished men as part of patriotic duty. Shrine worship is an organized form of reverence paid to supernatural beings and must be regarded as a religion. Moreover it is a religion forced upon the people. We regret exceedingly that as Catholics we cannot accept the interpretation of shrine worship given

⁴²⁶ Breen, "Shinto and Christianity: A History of Conflict and Compromise." 260

⁴²⁷ Buddhism and folk traditions had maintained a strong relationship for hundreds of years, their ideologies intertwined through centuries of coexistence until their separation through State Shinto. Reconciling the concepts of Christianity and the ideology of the new Meiji regime was, by comparison, a simple process, which recognized both as legitimate, involving a dual acceptance of both positions as equally valid, Christianity having its place within this new society alongside the concepts of a divine Emperor and the divine creation of Japan.

by the government, nor can we visit shrines and engage in the service for the dead nor can we ever pay respect to the so-called gods.⁴²⁸

The Protestant community had an equally negative response to the Shrine policy. In the *Japan Evangelist*, the Federated Churches of Japan stated:

To lead the people into a vague religious exercise under the pretext of reverence towards ancestors and thus to mix the two things is not only irrational, but results in harm to education and hinders in many ways the progress of the people.⁴²⁹

Both groups strongly disagreed with enforcing such an act, not because of any differences over patriotism, but because of its religious implications. It is not surprising that this once again brought back a divide between Christians and Shinto, undoing the initially positive work that had been done earlier in the century. It is important to note, however, that even during this period of disagreement and persecution, Christianity was not banned from Japan.

During the Second World War, there was an attempt to bring all religious groups together under a single banner as the Great Japan Religious Patriotic Society.⁴³⁰ This organization brought together Christians, Buddhists and Shintoists, with the aim of raising the national spirit through religion; it focused on having all members of the religions in Japan promoting Japanese nationalism. Extensive Christian apologetic literature in the 1940's clearly indicates that they were pro-nationalist and as a result avoided significant persecution by the Japanese government. Two instances of persecution happened in 1941, which provide examples of how tenuous the position of Christianity was in Japan during this time. The first was when Koyama Munehiro, a pastor, was arrested because he refused to take part in the daily pilgrimage to the shrine dedicated to the war dead. He subsequently died in prison. Not long after,

⁴²⁸ Holtom, *National Faith*, 98.

⁴²⁹ Holtom, *National Faith*, 96.

⁴³⁰ Breen, "Shinto and Christianity: A History of Conflict and Compromise." 266

members of The Holiness Church were arrested because the teachings of the church were deemed to be subversive. Both of these examples show how, during this time, dialogue was not taking place, but a drive for a very strict nationalist concept of acceptable religion predominated.

The surrender of Japan, and the changes to the constitution that followed, brought a shift in the relationship between Christianity and Shinto. The Shinto Directive stripped away the power that State Shinto had enjoyed during the pre-war period. Shinto, which referred to shrines, their duties and priests were referred to as *kokutai*. The directive removed any reference to Shinto in schools and forbade support for the war dead.⁴³¹

Following that, the Emperor formally renounced his divine status. The post-war constitution provided, importantly for our discussion, freedom of religious worship and a separation of religion and state. This led to a number of tensions between Christianity and Shinto. There have been protests against the apparent closeness between Shinto and state, which have been countered with the argument that the constitution was imposed on Japan by a Christian nation with no knowledge of Japanese spiritual tradition, and, secondly, this separation exists to guarantee freedom of religion, but was never meant to mean total severance between the state and religion. Two issues have highlighted this tension. In 1973, a soldier of the self-defence forces was killed in a car crash. The Self Defense Force wanted to enshrine his spirit in the Yamaguchi prefectural Nation-Protecting Shrine. His wife, Nakaya Yasuko, a Christian, objected very strongly to this. The Self Defense Force proceeded anyway. She sued the state and won initially but, in the long run, lost her case when the Supreme Court decided that her rights had not been violated. This resurrected the issue of whether shrine activity is religious. It seems that the war shrine is considered non-religious, although there has been constant conflict over any perceived government support for shrines like Yasukuni.

⁴³¹ Breen, "Shinto and Christianity: A History of Conflict and Compromise." 267

The second incident, according to Breen, was the enthronement of Akihito as the Heisei Emperor. The enthronement followed the Shinto tradition and was almost identical to the rites followed by his father in 1926. The issue stemmed from the fact that the government covered the cost of this very public event, as this was contrary to the constitution. This performance suggested that the State and Shinto still held very close ties. This caused great consternation to Japanese Christians and others opposed to any type of state involvement with Shinto.

Breen's outline provides an excellent starting point for understanding the relationship between Shinto and Christianity. To gain further insight into what has been done in terms of dialogue, I shall examine the work of a number of scholars engaged in contemporary dialogue.

5.2 Scholarly Dialogue

Dialogue can be divided into two different perspectives: scholarly dialogue and personal dialogue. I shall proceed by examining what has been done in terms of gaining a scholarly understanding of dialogue with Shinto. Very little has been written in relation to dialogue at a scholarly level, and what has been written is often little more than a comparison of each tradition, with suggestions as to how one can relate to the other. I shall examine the dimensions of the dialogue before offering an alternative model for dialogue between Christianity and Shinto.

5.2.A Kadowaki

Kadowaki Kakichi S.J, with support from the School of Oriental Studies in Sofia University, spent seven years working with a study circle for dialogue between Shinto and Christianity. The results of his findings were produced in his article, “Shinto and Christianity: Dialogue for the Twenty-First Century.”

Kadowaki begins with the assertion:

... The Japanese are, at bottom, psychologically Shintoist with a consciousness of being one family. They form a “sympathetic” community with the Emperor as apex.⁴³²

This statement, in many ways, reinforces the observation of Breen in regards to the ceremony that enthroned the Emperor Heisei. The active state involvement in the event indicated that there was an acceptance of the unique status the Emperor held in Shinto. Given the number of protests against the government's assistance in funding the event, however, Kadowaki is making a very broad statement in claiming that fundamentally all Japanese are Shintoist. He does not present any evidence to support

⁴³² Kadowaki, “Shinto and Christianity,” 69.

this statement, which makes it all the more problematic; he later says that “the ancient Shinto mentality lives on in the subconscious of the Japanese,” yet fails again to give clear evidence, referring to his sources as “many wise people.”⁴³³

Kadowaki does, however, make a valid observation in regards to the roots of Shinto, stating that modern Shinto needs to be seen in terms of ritual and festival; it is represented by practical applications of faith, in contrast to the more transcendental and doctrinal emphases of Christianity.⁴³⁴ He makes a valid argument that Christianity is too complex to allow for proper communication. His concept of devolution of Christianity, however, is inherently problematic; no matter how ideal the circumstances created by stripping Christianity down to its most basic form, it removes too much of what Christianity is. He does not seem to realize that by doing this he is not examining Christianity, but a pseudo-Christianity that has not existed since the early stages of Christian development – if, indeed, it existed then. He is not taking into account the fundamental changes that have taken place in Shinto either. To suppose that devolved Christianity is a realistic tool for dialogue with Shinto removes what fundamentally makes Christianity what it is today. I do not believe that this process of devolution is the most appropriate manner in which to create dialogue. He criticizes historical study of religion through the fields of anthropology and paleontology. In the study of religion, two theories of religious process have been put forward. The first, evolution, states that primitive man originally had a polytheistic faith and over time “evolved” into a monotheistic one. The alternative theory, devolution, states that primitive man began with monotheism and “devolved” into polytheism. Kadowaki states that one cannot study religion from an external objective perspective. The only way one can truly understand the divine is to entrust themselves completely to it and accept an existential reality that cannot be understood logically. By reducing religion to its lowest common denominators, they disregard their unique characteristics.⁴³⁵

⁴³³ Kadowaki, “Shinto and Christianity,” 70.

⁴³⁴ Kadowaki, “Shinto and Christianity,” 70.

⁴³⁵ Kadowaki, “Shinto and Christianity,” 70.

By this statement, he effectively contradicts himself, because surely the act of stripping and reducing Christianity to its initial form is, for all intents and purposes, devolving the religion to gain a sense of common ground with Shinto.

He follows this up with an argument that, for one to engage in dialogue, one has to recognize the infinite in the faith of the other. By this argument, dialogue cannot take place with anyone who is not a believer in his or her faith. Whilst I agree with his Gadamerian ideal of a fusion of horizons, I disagree with his requirement that one must have deep reverence for the infinite potential of the other.⁴³⁶

Whilst we can call this dialogue, it is problematic because it excludes anyone who does not possess a 'real faith'. In effect, only those deemed to be truly faithful can engage in dialogue. A further problem arises with how he interprets the infinite in Shinto. Kadowaki compares the *kami* experience of Shinto to the God experience of Christianity. This does not take into account how Christianity and Shinto each have very different concepts of divinity. In my interviews with Shinto scholars and priests, including Iwahashi, the international representative of the Jinja Honcho, there were constant references to the problem of trying to compare the role of *kami* to that of the Christian God. Kadowaki argues that there must be recognition of polytheism in Christianity and monotheism in Shinto, yet this would be strongly opposed by scholars in both traditions, and indeed by followers of the faith. Whilst he is arguing that we must discover ourselves in the face of others, he does not resolve adequately the many different interpretative issues that he proposes.

At the forefront of these issues is his use of God language. There are too many assumptions associated with the term God, a majority of which are centered in the Christian tradition. There is a distinct difference of character between *kami* and God, yet Kadowaki attempts to attach them together, through the concept of the god-experience of nature. He fails to recognize, in his development of the triune god

⁴³⁶ Kadowaki, "Shinto and Christianity," 71.

system of Shinto, agriculture, clan, Emperor, that this concept of God is very different to that of Christianity. This highlights a common problem in attempting to create dialogue with Shinto. The interpretation of *kami* in terms of Christianity is not compatible with the concept of *kami* in Shinto itself. The use of the term “God” is misleading and problematic as a representation of what the *kami* is. Relating *kami* to God, or even the Shinto deities to Gods, does not properly describe them, given the traits of the Christian concept of God. For example, the God of Christianity is typically associated with the term omniscient, a phrase that most certainly cannot be associated with the Shinto deity or *kami*. Another more pressing example is that the Christian God is seen as ever-present and ever-being, immortal. The Izanagi and Izanami myth speaks of the death of Izanami, which demonstrates that the deities of Japan, whilst not bound by the same laws as human life, can still die and thus are not immortal in the Christian sense of immortality, nor are they forever present. The deities are born or created, in contrast to the Christian God, who has existed always. From the source that separated everything from the chaos, the Gods arrive; but this separation does not overtly point to one specific deity – the heavenly bridge connects the two realms, indicating the importance of one world to another.

The interpretation that is used by Kadowaki reflects his own misinterpretation of the concept of *kami*. He quotes Ueda Kenji who states that:

The believer is not worshipping a power of nature, which he has personalized, nor does he adore nature as a god. The reality of belief could not have been anything like that. Actually if we wish to understand that experience, before anything else we ourselves must come face to face with the Kami. The reality of this religious experience is undeniable and precedes all else. It is a communing of life with life and therein lies the reality and the power of the encounter. It is not that we discern the Kami in the midst of nature or as the power of life: the Kami *is the power of life and exists there as nature.*⁴³⁷

⁴³⁷ Kadowaki, “Shinto and Christianity,” 72.

This description is accurate, but Kadowaki extends the idea that Ueda describes. We can agree that *kami* are not Gods, but something that transcends the concept of the divine and nature, something wholly other and yet part of the whole. The encounter is with something that takes an active role in the lives of the people, something that is immanent and active. It is strange that Kadowaki adds that *kami* are the power of life and exist as nature. This is problematic because it is not explicitly said by Ueda. In fact, Ueda stated, “It is not that we discern the Kami in the midst of nature or as the power of life.” This contradicts the statement made by Kadowaki afterwards. Ueda does not specify that the *kami* is either; in fact, he states the opposite. It seems that Kadowaki inserts this to assist in establishing his own theory, which is not compatible with the idea that Ueda is trying to express, which is primarily about what a *kami* is not.

Kadowaki recognizes the immanence of the *kami* in Japanese society; a being that is actively part of Japanese cultural and spiritual life. His use of the term “God” is, again, problematic, given the extremely pragmatic nature of the contract between people and *kami*. The transactional and contractual nature of the *kami* is entirely overlooked by Kadowaki, who presumes that worship takes place instead of recognizing the nature of veneration compared with worship. The description of the *kami*'s activities as life-giving is also problematic and impedes a more adequate understanding of the role of *kami* in Japan, as the nature of *kami* does not always offer the opportunity of life or life-giving.

Kadowaki acknowledges how some communities focus on individual *kami* that were linked to their lives, but does not appear to acknowledge the transactional nature of this agreement. Communities need not solely focus on one such *kami*; if the *kami* failed in its duty or agreement, then the tribe would seek another *kami* that would fulfill its obligation. The use of the term polytheism implies worship over veneration and, if this is the interpretation of Kadowaki, then we can make the same claim about Christianity, saying that the veneration of the saints can be seen as polytheism.

The description that Kadowaki uses, borrowed from Ueda, is a more accurate description of the *kami* experience, with the exception of the term ‘god’, which again leads to problems in interpretation. According to Ueda:

... In the Shinto Kami-experience, the god does not manifest himself as an absolute being, to be seen as absolutely separate from men and nature. He reveals himself as a god linked to men and the world by the unbreakable bond of life, so that men and nature are seen as repositories or dwellings of the Kami and as partaking of his nature.⁴³⁸

This description emphasizes a concept of *kami* as something closely connected in nature, and part of the complete cycle. The *kami* does not exist outside the cycle but is a part of the process. The *kami* does not hold an otherworldly perspective in the sense of being distinct and separate but rather it takes an active role, interacting through the intrinsic connection between the spirit world and *kami*.

Emphasizing differences in interpretation between Shinto and Christianity is an important aid to understanding, and Kadowaki does his best to highlight such differences. He points to the central role that nature takes within Shinto, but criticizes the centrality of nature by arguing that, due to the role that nature plays, it is impossible for nature to be considered objectively.⁴³⁹ This in turn makes it difficult for Shinto to connect with science. However this is problematic given that Shinto does not seem to engage in any active attempt to oppose science and in fact often embraces it. For example, Iwashimizu Hachiman-gu Shrine in Yawata, has a monument to Thomas Edison, celebrating his use of their bamboo to make the electric light and also holds a festival every year on February 11th to honour him.

In attempting to create a sense of harmony between Christianity and Shinto,

⁴³⁸ Kadowaki, “Shinto and Christianity,” 73.

⁴³⁹ Kadowaki, “Shinto and Christianity,” 73.

Kadowaki creates three phases of the God-Experience.⁴⁴⁰ He describes the first two as follows:

The first phase is the moment of the god's revealing himself, the moment when the believer receives a comprehensive knowledge. The second phase is when that comprehensive intuition becomes articulated. In Shinto this is the point in time at which the believer realizes that men and the world are "things" born of the life of Kami, that god is the origin of the life of all "things". In Christianity it is the moment when one realizes that God created the entire universe. In the second phase one obtains a comprehensive vision of the kami, the world, and men.⁴⁴¹

There are a number of problematic assumptions in this statement, primarily the use of the term "god", and the implicit understanding that goes with it. Kadowaki states that "god" is the origin of the life of all "things", but this assumes a major deity that is the founder of life. Kadowaki uses the singular, in an attempt to associate monotheism with Shinto and so create a common deity with Christianity. There is nothing in the creation myths of Shinto to imply that a single divine source was responsible for creation.

In his description of the second phase, we are faced again with Kadowaki's assumptions about the deity:

The second phase in Shinto is the point at which the world and men are born from the deity; in Christianity, this is the point at which creation takes place, the beginning of human time.⁴⁴²

Who is "the deity"? The sense of a single entity or source creates an issue once again,

⁴⁴⁰ Kadowaki, "Shinto and Christianity," 74.

⁴⁴¹ Kadowaki, "Shinto and Christianity," 74.

⁴⁴² Kadowaki, "Shinto and Christianity," 74.

as we struggle to understand who it is that Kadowaki is speaking of. The usage of God-language becomes a barrier rather than the bridge to understanding, as Kadowaki would like it to be. God-language brings assumptions that cannot be translated into Shinto. In his attempt to create a connection between Shinto and Christianity, Kadowaki is removing the uniqueness of Shinto as a Primal Tradition, and instead replacing it with an understanding that is compatible with Christianity, which has already been stripped of key aspects of its essential Christian nature to allow for this compatibility in the first place. This does not create a common place so much as highlight the differences between the two traditions.

The final of the three phases of the God-experience is its expression in words and images. For Kadowaki, this represents an opportunity to present both traditions as closely linked. He points to the creation myths within both traditions as proof of this.⁴⁴³ Although he compares the story of Izanagi and Izanami with that of Genesis and its precursors, he considers the concepts of polytheism and monotheism within Shinto, and attempts to give a sense of monotheism to Shinto. The concept, again, is inherently flawed. Kadowaki, however, states that:

[Shinto] contains within itself the germ of monotheism. In fact, among new religions related to Shinto, some (e.g., Shoroku Shinto) actually are monotheistic. The intact whole which was the primary phase, the “infinite activity,” because of the exigencies of men’s lives was broken down into a variety of activities, and Shinto thus became polytheistic.⁴⁴⁴

The evidence for this allusion to monotheism is based on new religions that stem from Shinto. These religions do not represent accurately the beliefs or traditions of Shinto, given that they are new movements that have broken away from it. The second issue is the problematic use of the terms polytheistic and monotheistic, because they represent certain assumptions that imply worship, and define the external presence as

⁴⁴³ Kadowaki, “Shinto and Christianity,” 74.

⁴⁴⁴ Kadowaki, “Shinto and Christianity,” 75.

a God.

Of relevance to our discussion is Kadowaki's understanding of the role of *kami*. Kadowaki speaks of *kami* in terms of a number of stages based on what he considers the God-experience of the *Kojiki*. He divides the development of *kami* into four stages. The first are *kami* who decreed that the nation was to be created. The second are those who received that request, for example Izanagi and Izanami. Their marriage in turn creates the third stage, Amaterasu, who continues this decree and in turn declares that the Emperor shall be a descendent of heaven. Finally, the Emperor who continues this, descends to the land of Japan. All of this emanates, according to Kadowaki from a divine or dynamic life source.⁴⁴⁵

Whilst aspects of this interpretation are quite valid, he does, however, make a number of errors or reinterpretations, which cause problems. First, he misreads the marriage between the Gods, as well as the order of the creation of Japan and marriage. This contradicts the *Kojiki*, which describes how Izanagi thrust the spear into the sea and created the island of *Onogorojima*. Also we know from the previous section that the marriage ritual had to be performed appropriately, and the wedding of Izanagi and Izanami represent a warning as to what happens when one fails to follow appropriate ritual. The second is the concept of the dynamic life source. We have no explicit evidence for belief in a single deity responsible for everything, but rather that there is a degree of responsibility and leadership within the early *kami* as they created everything. It is, however, a large leap to claim that it emanated from a single source or divinity that can be considered on par with the Christian concept of God.

In the final section of his work, Kadowaki explores establishing dialogue between Shinto and Christianity. This gives a degree of justification to his exploration of Shinto. He offers an interesting and plausible dialogue between Shinto and Christianity, even if it is based on a number of preconceptions that are tied very closely to the language of Christianity and western theology. At this point, Kadowaki

⁴⁴⁵ Kadowaki, "Shinto and Christianity," 77.

begins to examine the different interpretations of language, which he seemed to ignore previously, in particular, using the language of Christianity to express Shinto tradition.

Initially, Kadowaki explores the concept of reception, how Shinto and Christianity receive their concepts of nature or the divine, speaking of the difference between reception of the heart and reception of the soul. Kadowaki does not do justice, however, to the Japanese concept of *magokoro* or mindfulness. In the concept of *magokoro* there is a sense of acceptance. The mind and heart accept that certain truths exist and thus place them in a logical place in the mind. The sincerity of the heart allows for an unobstructed understanding of an idea, welcoming it into the mind and allowing it to take a place of relevance within one's life. Kadowaki, however, does not see the sincere heart as working that way; rather, the heart is placed in a secondary position to that of the soul. But what is the soul in Shinto? The underdeveloped concepts of death, as I briefly examined earlier,⁴⁴⁶ do not lend themselves to a concept of soul. Neither is there a sense of soul attached to the concept of *kami*. It is a greater sense of oneness that is important to the spiritual in Japan; this connection is expressed through a sincere heart, but there is not a concept of soul, as Christians understand it. Kadowaki, however, uses soul, an idea that does not quite work in Shinto, as a key element in his theory, and states that in Shinto, man does not allow himself access to his soul until after his death, thus becoming separated from that sense of oneness with the self.

In contrast to this, the Christian experience of God seems more authentic because it is an experience of the soul. For Kadowaki, this experience creates closeness to God because the spirit can "rise above itself."⁴⁴⁷ In this act of communion, humans are raised above the simple realm of *Geist* to that of a direct communion with God. There is an implication here that, because Shinto lacks that authentic soul experience, it is deemed to be lacking the purer reception, which is a feature of Christianity. Whilst Kadowaki does try to place *kami* in the same realm as humankind, by doing so he

⁴⁴⁶ See above, section 2.3.

⁴⁴⁷ Kadowaki, "Shinto and Christianity," 84.

creates a further gap in the relationship between Christianity and Shinto, raising questions about the validity of the human-*kami* relationship. The fact that the *kami* have, up until this point, been placed in the same realm as God, and have now been returned to the earth, accounts for the problematic nature of attempting to create a common understanding of God and *kami*. This problem is further emphasized in Kadowaki's understanding of the second phase of the God-experience. He describes Christianity's expression of the word as the total and undivided articulation of the word of God. It becomes the source of moral teaching and evolves into its written form, which is the Bible. The source is God and as such the text cannot hold any errors.⁴⁴⁸

In contrast to this, he describes Shinto as follows:

When we come to the second phase we find the following. (1) The content of the first phase, under the influence of the maternal principle, has unconsciously been narrowed and distorted. Furthermore, the possibility exists that, under pressure of what is desired, all the faculties of the mind may be distorted. (2) Because the recipient of the Kami-experience is the sentient, guileless heart, innocent of any reasoning process, when the content of the experience is translated into words, the constructive imagination and not the intellect is at the center and controls the process; thus it cannot escape using the form of myths.⁴⁴⁹

The implicit judgments that have been passed on Shinto in this quotation make these comparisons questionable at best. The depiction of the authenticity of the Christian experience in contrast to that of Shinto is striking. Shinto is narrowed and distorted whilst the Christian message is carried by those divinized by the Spirit, implying that the Shinto message is not as pure as that of Christianity. Kadowaki does not seem to

⁴⁴⁸ Kadowaki, "Shinto and Christianity," 85.

⁴⁴⁹ Kadowaki, "Shinto and Christianity," 85.

account for the numerous influences and agendas within the Gospel texts. Instead he forms an idealism that is contradicted by the reality of the texts themselves. There is validity in the statement that Shinto was rewritten in some ways to suit the agendas of the court, but Kadowaki fails to acknowledge a similar flaw exists in Christianity. In this respect, he also ignores an obvious similarity between the two traditions that could have been used to draw them both together, and, by doing so, assist in creating a stronger case for the concept of universality of divinity that he is proposing. Instead he creates a stronger divide between the two traditions; the ignorance of his own tradition and his proclamation of the purity of the writing of the gospels becomes almost condescending. He further compounds this image as he compares the creation mythology between both traditions, in which he praises Christianity and the image of creation through the guidance of God.⁴⁵⁰ Again, Kadowaki gives a sense of the authenticity of the Christian experience that is deemed to be lacking in the Shinto tradition. The recognition of God in creation seems to imply that Christianity holds a more valid position than Shinto, which seems to be denigrated as something confused and directionless in contrast to the spiritual direction afforded to Christians by the divine.

In his final statement, in regards to the future of Shinto, Kadowaki speaks of the inherent dangers caused by Shinto, including racism, that must be removed to gain world vision. It seems, however, that to do this one must return Shinto to a state matching the Christian vision of monotheism. The following statements of Kadowaki deserve specific attention in this case:

(1) Japan is now a pluralistic society, but people who are not Shinto will be forever “outsiders” with a result that our dialogue can never come to pass.⁴⁵¹

This is a flawed assumption. The history of Shinto shows that it is an integrative faith. The concessions made in the relationship with Buddhism demonstrate that Shinto

⁴⁵⁰ Kadowaki, “Shinto and Christianity,” 86.

⁴⁵¹ Kadowaki, “Shinto and Christianity,” 89.

itself is not a racist or narrow-minded religion. Many Japanese are both Buddhist and Shinto, which, according to Kadowaki's definition above, would mean they are outsiders in their own country. Kadowaki simplifies a complex historical and psychological development to justify his argument, without recognizing that the major reason that Christianity reaches an impasse with Shinto is its reluctance to recognize Shinto as a tradition just as old, detailed and valid in its own way as Christianity. Kadowaki's dialogue cannot come to pass, because he is not searching for dialogue but acquiescence to the Christian imperative of monotheism and the Christ vision.

(2) If the notion that Japan is the only nation created by the Kami remains fixed in the subconscious of the Japanese, they will look down on other countries or discriminate against them or make obstacles to peaceful coexistence with them.⁴⁵²

Again, this statement ignores the complex history of Japan. In the perception of Japan in terms of creation, the mythological role of the *kami* has been surpassed by modern science. Whilst the isolation of Japan and the Meiji government played a huge part in discrimination by Japan, Kadowaki ignores the many obstacles to dialogue that Christianity has created by its expansionism, ignorance and abuse of authority. In Ireland, issues in regard to clerical abuse, contraception, censorship, and discrimination in access to schooling all point to what Kadowaki claims is the problem of Shinto in Japan.

(3) The consciousness of "family" is strong among Japanese; they are apt to think of foreigners, especially those from Southeast Asia, as "outsiders".⁴⁵³

Discrimination based on the group principle is a trend that is part of Asian culture and, as such, is not limited to Japan, but can also occur in countries such as Korea, Thailand and China. This assumption cannot play a role in describing the problems

⁴⁵² Kadowaki, "Shinto and Christianity," 89.

⁴⁵³ Kadowaki, "Shinto and Christianity," 89.

facing dialogue; to include it would run the risk of discounting the possibility of valid dialogue taking place with any eastern tradition.

Kadowaki, unfortunately, instead of providing a solution for the problems of dialogue, offers an apologetic that does not assist in developing a relationship with Shinto. The assumptions of monotheism and the attempt to posit a common source for Shinto and Christianity create more problems than they solve and neglect the fact that his simplification of Shinto and Christianity emphasizes division rather than unity. His work is strongly biased, emphasizing how Christianity has a more authentic experience than Shinto. This shows a lack of understanding of Shinto itself, and does not create an atmosphere in which Shinto can effectively communicate with Christianity.

5.2.B Ueda Kenji

In contrast to Kadowaki's approach to Christian-Shinto dialogue, Ueda offers a much more experiential-expressive model, based on his theory of Universality and Specialty.⁴⁵⁴ Ueda focuses on understanding how Christianity and Shinto can potentially communicate with and understand each other, emphasizing that one of the most important elements of Christianity is its missionary activity, which assumes the willingness of Christianity to engage in an act of dialogue, even if this is just to gain a better understanding of the environment it has come to evangelize. Given that Christianity makes up a very small part of the population of Japan, now just over 1%, and given the prevalence of both Shinto and Buddhism, it is important that, according to Ueda, Christianity is willing to engage in dialogue with Shinto.

It is difficult to ask Shinto to recognize the difference between universality and specialty; indeed, these ideas are difficult for Japanese culture in general to comprehend. I agree with Ueda when he states that Shinto only fully began to grasp

⁴⁵⁴ Ueda, Kenji "The Universal and the Particular in Shinto" (paper presented at Shinto and Christianity: The Particular and the Universal in Religion, Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Nagoya, Japan., 1984).17-33. Page references are to the translation of Ueda's paper by Richard Tighe and Kana Mochida; see Appendix.

the concept of universality when Buddhism arrived in Japan. This forced the Japanese to attempt to comprehend their own faith, in contrast to the new faith that was entering Japan. Shrines such as Ise and Yoshida responded with hostility, attempting to create their own forms of ritual and traditions in reaction to the strong position of both Buddhism and Confucianism. The formation of the Jinja Honcho during the Meiji era was an extension of this policy; it encouraged and supported the concept of *Hakko Ichi* ('Make the world one'). This was an expression of Japanese dominance, through the export of Shinto to countries they controlled and through the building of Shinto shrines. This theory was replaced after World War II by a more scholarly approach to universality, in an attempt to create a greater sense of identity for Shinto in light of the Shinto *Shirei* and its impact on State Shinto.

Ueda helps us to understand that the concept of universality, as developed within Shinto from an early time, remained insular in its focus, treating Shinto's universality more as an expression of dominance. Thus a reactionary universality resulted from Shinto's attempts to create a greater sense of its identity in light of the entry of other religions; and, more importantly, this paved the way for a nationalistic faith, which was again insular in nature. Ueda neglects, however, to consider the impact of Christianity on Shinto and the Shinto tradition.

In chapter 2 of his paper, Ueda explored the meaning of universality in Shinto, comparing it with the Christian sense of universality, as manifested in a notion of salvation that is proclaimed to people regardless of their national or ethnic background. In contrast, Shinto is a deeply Japanese tradition and local character proves normative. It is part of Japanese communal life that:

It [i.e., Shinto] passed from one generation to the next. You can see there is no focus on individuality; there is no sacred scripture to help people learn Shinto. There is no positive expansion of Shinto. We can say Shinto is like nature religions. Therefore this Shinto can work only

for Japanese and Japanese society. It can exist in Japanese society. It can exist only in Japanese society.⁴⁵⁵

As a result, Shinto is very specialized. It is an expression of Japanese religious expression based around a pre-existent Primal faith. Ueda, however, asks: why is Christianity considered universal? With its many internal disparities and specializations (again this term must be recognized within the context of religious expression that is particular to one region or area) that exist within it, can we really call it universal? Ueda argues that we can. To do so, we must look at the idea that within universality is specialty, that universality can contain a religious expression that is unique to one particular area, as part of the greater expression of that religion. Therefore, for example, the disparities within Christianity are specialties within the universality of the Christian tradition. Is it possible to express Shinto as a kind of specialty? Ueda begins with the concept of the *yaoyorozu* (eight million gods), emphasizing how this concept does not simply number the gods, but also expresses a deeper meaning concerning the idea of power. To emphasize his point, Ueda explores two concepts: existence as a god, and being a god:

So one is to be, and the other is to be born. To be god is to exist from the beginning as a god. It is one of the origins of gods. These gods had families and the family gods were called “to be born god”. That is why from the myth many gods have the perspective of the born god. However in addition, at the same time, they have the perspective of the ancient gods too.⁴⁵⁶

This conceptual differentiation between a god that was always a god and gods born of the land (for example, mountain or field or ancestors), is not only a Shinto idea but is a universal idea as well. For example, the god Amenominakanushinokami existed before the creation of the world; in some ways we can argue that this god can be seen as similar to the Christian or Confucian concept of the divine. There is also a sense of

⁴⁵⁵ Ueda, "The Universal and the Particular," 3.

⁴⁵⁶ Ueda, "The Universal and the Particular," 4.

specialty here, as this particular deity not seen as a singular source but one amongst many; it is one source from which the other gods originate, but in not the sole source for the creation of gods. It is, therefore, not the creator of all in the same sense as the Christian God. Hence, whilst we find a sense of universality, we also have a sense of specialization reflected from the perspective of Shinto on that particular god. We see this specialization consistently, through other deities like Amaterasu and Izanagi and Izanami, all of whom are not God in the sense of the creator of all things, yet at the same time they perhaps command more veneration than Amenominakanushinokami.

This is reflected in the Shinto understanding of the Emperor. The Shinto *Shirei* removed the Emperor's divinity; yet, at the same time, this action stemmed from a lack of understanding by the Christian West of the representation of the Emperor. As Ueda makes clear, Japan does not have a history of belief in a single god (I would be inclined to go further than this; even the term 'god' is not really helpful in explicating the Japanese religious and cultural context, *kami* being a much more applicable term).⁴⁵⁷ This issue of Western misinterpretation of god in Shinto is reflected in attempts by Japanese to translate texts from Christianity, resulting in significant confusion as a result of the alien nature of the text. The concept of a god, however, could be grasped, representing the universality of the idea. Ueda furthers his argument by stating that removing the divinity of the Emperor was due to a misunderstanding of the role of the Emperor. It could be compared to demanding that Christians remove their claims to the divinity of Christ. Ueda notes that the Emperor's divinity is understood to be based on the concept of bloodline, in contrast to Jesus being considered the the direct son of the Christian God. Hence, there is universality in the idea of the divinity of the Emperor and of Christ, but specialty in terms of how this idea is appropriated.

Developing this idea, Ueda compares the concept of humanity (and the role that it plays) in both Shinto and Christianity, focusing on the idea of sin (again, the term is not entirely appropriate to Shinto, 'shame' would be better). Ueda argues that both

⁴⁵⁷ In this essay, Ueda is unclear as to whether he prefers the term God or *Kami*. I decided to use the term God as it is in line with a lot of scholarly reference to the *kami* in English.

Christianity and Shinto share a common idea of sin. In Christianity, sin is with humanity from the start (original sin), in contrast to Shinto where people can make mistakes and, to some degree, cannot be responsible if the gods make them suffer for these. In Shinto, moreover, these sins can be removed through purification, in contrast to the requirement for repentance in Christianity. Whilst there is a sense of universality in the concept of sin, there is a further sense of speciality as to how it is perceived. This extends to perceptions of humanity as well: Christianity holds that humanity is created by God and has limitations in the form of sin. In contrast, Shinto views humanity as the descendants of gods and therefore limited; but from this limitation arises the possibility of creating life and history. This again demonstrates a consistent sense of the universal which is contrasted sharply with the sense of speciality.

Ueda demonstrates a major problem of the Christian approach to dialogue in pointing out that Shinto does not have a structured and clearly defined ethical system. This does not mean that Shinto lacks ethics, but rather that it exists within a concept of “we should be” instead of “we shouldn’t be” which Ueda indicates is the prevalent thinking within Christian ethics. Human desire stems from the gods and is acceptable, but it is bound by what can be considered a proper attitude. According to Ueda, the Japanese concept of ethics is not expressed consciously but unconsciously, and over time has integrated further rules of behavior from Christianity, Buddhism and Shinto. This creates a highly internalised approach to morality, one that is communally-based, rather than the community-transcending concept of ethics that characterizes Christianity. I agree with Ueda’s argument; noting, in turn, that this makes it difficult for Christianity to engage in ethical debate, because its concept of ethics is different to that of Shinto.

Having explored the concept of universality, Ueda moves on to explore speciality. Christianity can transcend its boundaries, which is how it maintains constancy and also universality. Hence everyone is seen as equal because they are part of the universal concept of Christianity, even if their individual beliefs may be more specialized. Shinto, however, does not share this concept of transcendence. It is very specialized. The major exception to this is the coexistence of both Christianity and

Shinto in post World War II Japan, generally in peace and harmony. This is quite an achievement, given that they have contradictory ideas and no common origin. This is possible because of the specialty of Shinto. This can be clearly seen in the *Kojiki*, which focuses only on Japan. It is the country of the gods, created by the gods. In contrast to other religions, which focus on the whole of creation, there is a much greater focus on Japan in the *Kojiki*. This does not preclude the world having been created by the gods, but the *Kojiki* specifically speaks only of the creation of the islands of Japan. This idea extends into that of the Emperor, who is the representative of that creation. In essence, Shinto relates closely to the bloodline of the Emperor and, by extension, Japan. Ueda stresses this close connection between Japan and Emperor and, by extension, the people as the focus of Shinto's specialty. This raises the sense of obligation once again, since the Emperor, as a representative of the *kami*, must maintain a relationship with the people, which is mirrored in the relationship that is renewed in *matsuri* by the people. This is a renewal of the relationship between the people and the local *kami*. This also reflects the Emperor's attempt to venerate the *kami*, because he knows that the *kami* enjoys this attention. Hence, this specialty can be seen as an active communication between the *kami* and the people, which demonstrates the immediacy of the divine in Shinto, the sense of the *kami* within the community, in contrast to the greater sense of the divine existing outside of the community.

In Ueda's final remarks, he considers the reality of Shinto as universal, through the process of emigration. There are many problems with this, because, as Ueda notes, the sense of change that comes about with emigration affects the nature of the Shinto that is practiced. This does not, however, preclude the possibility of Shinto becoming universalized by this process. Ueda's distinctive approach, involving the concepts of universality and specialty, is useful for its attempt to find commonality between Christianity and Shinto, whilst at the same time retaining a sense of their distinctiveness.

5.2.C Yuki Hideo

Yuki offers a response to Ueda's paper from two differing perspectives, first revising Swyngedouw's⁴⁵⁸ response to Ueda's paper (from the perspective of Catholic Christianity), before giving his own response from the perspective of Protestant Christianity. In both cases he focuses on the concept of the universal within Christianity. In his initial exploration, Swyngedouw had contrasted the universal nature of Catholicism with the particular nature of Protestantism, as expressed in the work of Ueda. The Reformation translation of the scriptures, for example, represents the sense of the particular in the Protestant traditions; this allowed the community to access the text and, by extension, to add their own specialty to it. This contrasts sharply with the Catholic tradition, where a constant translation maintained a continuity of meaning throughout its communities. This is similar to the situation in Islam, where the teachings of the Quran are not translated, thereby maintaining a sense of universality. In recent times, however, Catholicism has made efforts to translate the Bible to make it more widely accessible, recognizing that, in say Asia and Africa, Latin is seen as a Western language. This shifts the focus to specialty within the universality of Catholicism. Hence, "a universal religion is spoken of in a particular language".⁴⁵⁹ This is problematic, however, for the sense of universalism: it presumes that meaning can be expressed in the same way across a number of languages; hence the difficulty in the translation of the term *Deus* in Japan for Francis Xavier. It is in this difficulty we find a clue to the issue of dialogue with Shinto. By not translating the term into Japanese, Xavier attempted to apply western thinking that assumed its own universality to Japanese tradition, which resulted in Christianity remaining alien to the Japanese people. Protestants attempted the same strategy, though they used the term *kami* (which is why, even today the terms God and *kami* are used interchangeably amongst scholars an inaccuracy that I will examine in the next section). This translation, however, presumes a false concept of universality.

⁴⁵⁸ Swyngedouw, Jan "The Universal and the Particular in the Catholic Tradition," in *Shinto and Christianity: The Particular and the Universal in Religion*, ed. Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture (Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture: Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1984).

⁴⁵⁹ Yuki, "A Shinto-Christian Dialogue.", 6.

Yuki examines the problem of Japanese in his own contribution to the symposium.⁴⁶⁰ Protestant entry into Japan from the Meiji era onwards came with an attitude of bringing “modern civilization”⁴⁶¹ which stressed the universality of a Western interpretation of Christianity and gave no significant thought to what it deemed to be outdated Japanese customs. This was echoed the early Catholic approach. The Catholic Church, on the other hand, had decided to adopt a more flexible approach, but the Protestant churches remained committed to a concept of Christianity as the only true religion. This resulted in its effective isolation from Japanese culture. I agree with Yuki’s assessment that there arose in reaction a standpoint which stressed the indigenous and focused on emphasizing the importance of Japan in things great and small.⁴⁶²

There was a return to the particular of Japan. This resulted in a constant struggle for the Protestant tradition, which spent most of its time teetering between isolation and immersion,⁴⁶³ Yuki’s attempts to define the Protestant tradition in post-World War II Japan focuses on the primary issue of whether or not there is a major change in post-war Japan, in terms of both an understanding of Christianity and in society as a whole. The concepts of community and shame are still prevalent. These concepts are further expressed with reference to both Church and God; often the Japanese refer to the church as “Mother Church.”⁴⁶⁴ This, however, is not used in the same sense as it is used in Western Christianity. It is not the western understanding of God as Father, Church as mother. In Japanese tradition, referring to Mother Church is a reference to the concepts of community and obligation (which I have detailed, above). The Protestant churches in Japan remain isolated from culture and society at a conceptual level. However in terms of church life, there was greater experience of integration.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁰ Yuki, "The Universal in Religion: A Protestant View," in *Shinto and Christianity: The Particular and the Universal in Religion*, ed. Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture (Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture: Tokyo: Shunjusha, 1984).

⁴⁶¹ Yuki, "A Shinto-Christian Dialogue." 6.

⁴⁶² Ibid. 7.

⁴⁶³ Please refer to Reid’s “Remember the Dead:” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, and Mullins *Christianity: Made in Japan* for examples of the challenges the Protestant tradition in terms of isolation or immersion into the Japanese faith tradition.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid. 8.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid. 8.

This is a simple reflection of the perspective and language of Japan. Members of the “mother church” maintain their place there and so become “guests” in the other church that they attend. The obligation and sense of duty to their original church remains. So whilst they may attend another church, they are not members of it; they are better viewed as visiting outsiders and, no matter how many years they remain with that particular church, they will be always considered outsiders.

This creates a sense of the universal in terms of understanding Christianity as universal, yet constrained again by the specialty of the Japanese people, a reflection of the levels of immersion that exist within the Japanese church and its mindset. As such, Yuki disagrees with the terms universal and particular or special. Whilst these elements exist within both Christian and Shinto traditions, there is a challenge to the dialogue with Shinto, which is to attempt to bring Shinto out of the realm of its own specialty and to help it to recognize pluralism. I disagree with Hideo in this regard, since Shinto, as I understand it, recognizes the existence of other religions. This is a problem when it comes to dialogue; we clearly see in Yuki’s work a desire that Shinto adapt its perspective on Christianity, something that is difficult because of their very different vocabularies.

In posing the challenge of bringing Shinto out of its own specialty to recognize pluralism, Yuki questions the validity of Yasukuni Shrine commemorations. Why must those soldiers killed in the war be remembered at this particular place? But this is to ignore a major problem in dealing with Shinto, namely that it is both tradition and religion. The Shrine embodies a duality of purpose, representing both tradition and religion, and these do not necessarily have to interact all the time. This raises the consistent problems of dialogue between Shinto and Christianity and the hermeneutical problems that need to be engaged properly before we can begin appropriate dialogue between these two traditions.

5.3 Conclusion

In this section I have explored the understanding of dialogue, looked at the manner in which Christianity engages in dialogue with other traditions, and finally explored the work done towards dialogue between Shinto and Christianity. At this juncture, we have an overview of Shinto in the history of Japan, we have outlined its key themes and have explored the concept of dialogue. I shall now offer some theoretical observation regarding dialogue between Christianity and Shinto in light of the challenges that have been faced in creating this dialogue.

Part D: Challenges to Shinto and an Alternative Dialogue

6 Challenges to Dialogue with Shinto: Interpretation

As we have seen in studying dialogue between other major faiths, the key element is the common framework from which they work. There are a number of factors that may allow them to transcend their own cultural barriers in their attempts to seek understanding. Focusing, for example, on common scriptural ideas pertaining to such concepts as justice, salvation, morality/ethics. These sources of commonality form a strong basis for dialogue. They bring with them, however, the weight of cultural perspectives and the danger of cultural clashes. These ideas can be constructive to communication as long as a middle ground can be found for dialogue, a route that allows for a common framework to be built. For example, in Islam the moral framework of the five pillars may be found to be compatible with the Christian concept of "Love thy neighbor". But what if such a framework of commonality does not exist? Or it exists, but is interpreted in a way that creates more misunderstanding than understanding? I think that this is a common problem when we address Shinto as a faith and attempt, to enter into dialogue with it. In interviews⁴⁶⁶ conducted in the course of this research, primarily with the international representative for the Shinto Shrines Federation (神社本庁- Jinja Honcho), Iwahashi Katsuji, and Professor Suga Koji of Kokugakuin University, as well as with many practicing Shintoists, a number of challenges emerged to common western understanding of Shinto.

⁴⁶⁶ Interviews with Iwahashi Sensei, Suga Sensei and others took place between March 2011 and December 2011. Interview transcripts with Suga Sensei and Iwahashi Sensei are available in the Appendix.

6.1 Issues in interpretation

Issues that stem from the interpretation of key ideas form some of the greatest problems in understanding Shinto. One such key idea is the concept of *kami*. I have already detailed the basis for *kami* veneration,⁴⁶⁷ but shall approach it again in terms of the interpretation and implications of this concept. In an interview with Iwahashi, one of the key issues that came up was the extent to which we may helpfully translate *kami* as God or Gods. The sense of divinity, whilst often attributed to *kami*, is not the basis for their existence. The western idea of God cannot be applied to the term *kami* precisely because of its implications of otherworldliness and the sense that it transcends this existence – which is something that *kami* does not. The concept of God does not fit well in Shinto, which is more characterized by divine immanence, a faith in which the important acts or actions happen now, not in an afterlife. The application of the Western deity concept to *kami* actually limits the role that the *kami* play. *Kami* are not primarily divine beings and the idea of them being separate spiritual entities is also problematic. *Kami* should be limited to an interpretation of a God or spirit. In my interview with Prof. Suga, one of the primary difficulties that he had with this conceptual equivalent of God and *kami* (one that has become very popular, primarily due to the work of Motoori Norinaga⁴⁶⁸) was that it used a Western concept that did not properly apply to *kami* in the first place.

Iwahashi Sensei used a potent example to counter this common understanding: he held up a knife and told me that this knife would, in time, become *kami*; once one hundred years had passed, an inanimate object like this would become *kami*. This is an excellent example of how the concept of *kami* is an all-pervasive idea, not limited to spiritual beings but a part of everything that exists. The concept of *kami* is much better translated as the concept of oneness with the natural world. The *kami* is not a separate spiritual entity but a manifestation of the natural environment. To presume that *kami* just means a spirit is to limit the *kami* itself. To attempt to define *kami* using

⁴⁶⁷ See above, sections 2.2-2.2.C.

⁴⁶⁸ Motoori Norinaga, *Kojiki-den Book I*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Ithaca N.Y.: Cornell University East Asia Program, 1997).

characteristically Western concepts actively limits its potential. The *kami* is essence at its simplest and can be described as a manifestation of that connection to the natural world. Not only humans can become *kami*, but also so can objects and areas of nature (for example, Mount Fuji). It is common to see items venerated in the same way as *kami*, because essentially, they are *kami*.

But what about the gods? They are depicted at the core of the creation process of Japan in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*. In seeing the gods as fundamentally different, we are misinterpreting the fact that they are actually the source of the natural environment from which *kami* spring. The gods are not perfect, transcendent, otherworldly beings, but may be flawed characters in themselves. Most importantly, the gods mostly spring from the natural world themselves, from the birth of Gods as detailed in the Izanamai and Izanagi story, to those created by Amaterasu and Susano-wo. All of these gods are *kami*, not because of their divinity but because they are connected to the natural world through their very creation. This act of creation took place on the earth and as such ties them closely with the world around them. This immanence is important in many other ways that emphasize why *kami* need to be a part of the world around them. Japanese faith is very practical in nature; it is focused as much on getting a return for worship and on seeing the results of worship as it is on giving thanks. I have described, above,⁴⁶⁹ the transactional nature of folk tradition and we must remember that the *kami* also reflect this. They have obligations and duties that stem from their place in a traditional society. Matsume repudiates the common identification and translation of *kami* with God by emphasizing the immanence of the *kami* in everyday life in Japan. *Kami* are also neither omniscient nor omnipotent and in some cases are not necessarily immortal either.⁴⁷⁰

To expand my treatment of this issue, I shall refer to a number of interviews I conducted with non-scholars on their own understanding of *kami*. In these, there was a consistent disagreement over the concepts of worship and veneration, as understood by westerners and applied to Shinto. In conversations with one particular couple, they

⁴⁶⁹ See section 2.2 above.

⁴⁷⁰ Takeshi Matsuma, *Matsumae Takeshi chosakushū* (1998). 317

emphasized the unique nature of Shinto, viewing what takes place ‘liturgically’ as conversation (*Kaiwa*), and not worship or even veneration. This concept of conversation relates to perceptions of the natural order where the *kami* is a partner in society, one that fulfills a role as much as the people do. The terms “veneration” and “worship” hence do not apply, but conversation with the *kami* and making a request of the *kami* in return for a gift or offering is common. We should note the transactional nature of this act; the offering is similar to the payment made to someone who will fix a car or serve food. However, there is still respect shown to the *Kami*. A contract is formed with payment made for a service.

This form of conversation between the *kami* and the individual is common and demonstrates the pragmatic nature of Japanese faith. This is also a reflection of the nature of the *kami*. The *kami* is part of the world, immanent and active within it. The *kami* is not an external force that is alien to the worshipper, unknowable and above us. The *kami* represents the knowable, the understandable, the natural, and is as much a part of the world as humanity, and represents merely another aspect of the world around us. It also represents the essence of Japan. This Japanese-ness associated with the *kami* can cause huge difficulties in interpretation. The concept of *kami*, as such, transcends the limited interpretation that Western notions of God, deity and spirit imply.

It is, therefore, extremely difficult to create understanding when there is such a significant cultural and ideological barrier in place. To draw on traditional Christian theological vocabulary to create a concept of the *kami* removes the unique position that the *kami* holds within Japanese society, and also fails to do justice to what the *kami* represents, even after its evolution and redevelopment in the modern era. It is this complex simplicity that gives the *kami* presence. Throughout my interviews, Shinto was frequently portrayed with a strange mixture of reverence and irreverence. This highlights a paradox in the nature of Shinto that must be understood in order to appreciate the role of Shinto in Japanese society better, as well as to understand the importance of the need for a different approach to dialogue with such a faith. It is a common perception that the Japanese are not religious; from this, it has been extrapolated that the Japanese are not religious in *our* understanding of the term

religious. Their faith does not mean that they attend services or observe religious worship regularly, like Christians do. Indeed, we can actually understand Shinto in terms of its irreverent reverence. Shinto, by and large, is not a major concern for most Japanese. It is simply part of tradition and is seen in that light. To borrow a term from Charles Taylor⁴⁷¹, it is the social imaginary of Japan. Most Japanese would not really consider the importance of Shinto in their daily lives. Hence, shrines are tourist attractions for the Japanese as much as for visitors; Japanese people eat, talk loudly and take photos smiling outside. Within this irreverence for the formal structure, however, is a reverence for the *kami*.

For example, I travelled with the dojo I was studying in to Katori Shrine in Chiba. The shrine was a quiet place, and the rain poured down as we travelled there. We chatted amiably together as we walked towards the temple without a strong sense of this being a location in which one is supposed to feel the reverent energy of the *kami*. When our sensei took us to the central shrine where we were blessed, the mood changed to a much more somber one and everyone became quiet and introspective. It could be argued that this was simply out of respect for the priest who was performing the rite, except for a second incident where we travelled to a smaller shrine in the complex, and there our teacher and senior students performed *kata* to appease the *kami*, showing him that we were still staying true to the traditions of the *kami*. Again, it could be argued that this was because we were part of a group of older men for whom this tradition was as much part of their lives as their martial art. The next day, however, I returned to the shrine with a number of students, younger men around my age. Two went to visit the smaller shrine and left offerings to ask the *kami* to grant them strength. These two particular individuals claimed no religious affiliation at all. They still revered the *kami*, however, without showing a particular reverence for the location or the shrine itself. This is a common Japanese attitude. In interview with an elderly couple, they stated unequivocally that they were not religious or Shinto, and claimed that it was just tradition. Nevertheless, when their daughter was travelling in the USA, the mother would go every day to the shrine and ask the *kami* to help take

⁴⁷¹ Charles Taylor. *Modern Social Imaginaries*. (Duke University Press, 2004)

care of her child while she was away. The combination of irreverent reverence and the role and place of *kami* create a very different worldview compared to that of the Christian concept of the sacred and the importance of the Church.

6.2 Alternative Dialogue

At this juncture, I shall offer an alternative method of dialogue that allows for these differences in interpretation to exist, whilst at the same time offering an opportunity for the recognition and mutual appreciation of many of the cultural and faith-based concepts found in both Shinto and Christianity. The biggest problem in dialogue between Shinto and Christianity is that both sides never truly communicate. A consistent problem, highlighted in my conversations with Iwahashi Sensei, is that no actual communication was taking place at conferences between Shinto and Christianity. Instead, each group simply reads a document prepared in advance, everyone applauds and then afterwards both sides retreat into their own corners and avoid talking to each other. Probably the most important dimension of any dialogue is that the parties accurately communicate their differences and ideals to each other. Given the differing hermeneutics that exist within different societies, however, I think it is extremely difficult for accurate, unprejudiced dialogue to take place. It would be foolish to assume that just because we are both speaking the same language we both mean the same thing. It is also important to note that there is a lack of proselytizing in Shinto. This lack of experience and the general unease with an assertive tradition (i.e. Christianity, Buddhism etc.) may also add to the problem of engaging in dialogue.

Does this mean that dialogue is useless? Dialogue itself is not inherently useless, but we must understand that when dialogue takes place, we will receive not truth but an interpretation of truth, filtered through our own senses, preconceptions and ideologies. These filters will realign our interpretation of the event, idea or concept in terms of our own understandings, hence creating to a degree a false image, one that is not what the speaker is saying but is, on the other hand, what we reconstruct it to be in our own understanding. It is not that we hear what we want to hear, but we instead hear what we can understand within the framework of our own imagination and philosophy. In every translation, we are given the ideas of another through the filters of an interpreter. Even if the writer expresses ideas on paper without an interpreter, it is already filtered through a set of preconceived notions and concepts inherent in the language used. In this case, our interpretation of Shinto is filtered not only through our western upbringings but also through the God-language of Christianity. Even

when we look at Shinto writers and apologists, it is striking that their communication through English does not seem to convey the ideas in their truest forms to us, but must rely on Western philosophical and theological language, with its inherent assumptions about divinity, to decipher the cultural faith of Shinto. Even Christian scholars writing in Japanese about Shinto, for example Kadowaki, translate key Shinto concepts in terms of Western understandings of faith. Pfeiffer, writing on religious diversity in Japan, points to this as a major issue in interpreting Japanese religious tradition.⁴⁷²

Pfeiffer identifies the inherent problem of attempting to understand religion from a Western perspective because this gives rise to many problems, including problems of interpretation and the cultural filtering process that results in an incomplete understanding of a particular idea or concept. The depiction however, does not do justice to the issues in regards to Christian interactions with Japan. It was not just the doctrinal inflexibility of the Catholic Church, but rather its inability to adapt to a Japanese hermeneutic that caused the problems that I described above.⁴⁷³

If we truly cannot understand, then why should we even try? I do not believe that we should not engage in dialogue, rather, that we must recognize the limitations of dialogue when it takes place as well as the inherent problems of engaging in dialogue. If we are to attempt to engage in an appropriate dialogue, we must begin in a place that transcends both Shinto and Christianity, somewhere where we can find areas of commonality that transcend cultural identification and can be understood at a basic level by both traditions. An understanding of the interpretative differences is another vital element in an attempt to create a form of dialogue through which participants can be party to a fresh perspective, one that can allow them to gain a greater understanding of the other culture, whilst being able to retain their own framework as a source of reference. Theological discussion, as we have seen in the work of Kadowaki, can easily turn into an attack on the Shinto tradition or into an attempt to apply the language of Christianity to a tradition whose philosophy and ideology does

⁴⁷² Pfeiffer, William S. "Cults, Christians, and Confucius: Religious Diversity in Japan," *Japan Studies Association Journal* (2010) 132-145

⁴⁷³ See the historical overview in Part A, above.

not fit within the same boundaries. We must turn to another form of dialogue that allows us to engage without attempting to gain complete comprehension, but that, at the same time, gives us a deeper appreciation for the nature of Shinto. This form of comprehension, which I call cultural compensation⁴⁷⁴, allows us to engage with Shinto in a way that is both beneficial and also productive. To this end, I propose the language of theme and ritual as the key to creating a successful dialogue that can work within a Christian framework, whilst at the same time making it possible to find an area in which both parties can engage in structured communication and still retain their own cultural awareness. The interpretative value of theme allows a plurality of meanings to transcend the boundaries of a particular faith, whilst also affirming a common understanding associated with these symbols. The ritual that helps form the theme is also vital to our understanding, as the process, which allows one to see the symbol within its framework, whilst interpreting it from our own religious perspective.

⁴⁷⁴ Cultural Compensation, is a concept that – recognizing no-one can comprehend a concept that is entirely culturally alien, i.e., something from a culture that is fundamentally different to our own, both in terms of social and religious interaction – acknowledges our interpretative need to engage in a form of cultural compensation. Through this act, we attempt to fill in the gaps in our understanding with concepts or ideas that are familiar to us. This can be beneficial or detrimental depending on the situation. It can be a helpful way to appreciate an idea or concept that we share in common, but can also lead to misinterpretation of key concepts as we attempt to apply our own interpretation to the concept. The ideal situation is one where we are able to compensate with a familiar concept or idea, but at the same time, retain an awareness of our cultural limitations. This can work well with the concept of thematic dialogue, as outlined below.

6.3 Cultural Challenge

It is important to emphasize that we cannot cross the threshold of cultural understanding, or escape the reality that we will filter data through our own cultural perspective. To engage successfully we must recognize a transcendent value of a theme. This is the concept that certain symbols or themes are consistent across a wide range of different cultures. The transcendent value of the theme must be seen within this framework. It is through the act, the consistent and conscious interpretation of the theme that both makes it so potent and, at the same time, makes it something that follows consistent patterns in cultural interpretation. Within these consistent patterns, we are able to find an appreciation for the theme's value to another faith tradition. Within the symbolism found in these themes, we can find a possibility for engaging in meaningful and culturally adaptable dialogue with another religious or cultural tradition. We must be careful, however, in how we apply the concept of symbol. The symbols used must have common ground within all the traditions. As Rajah warns:

Nowadays the word "symbol" seems to be in grave danger of being overemphasized. Almost everything appears to be a "symbol" of something else. In such a situation it is important to safeguard a certain precision in language and to prevent this term from losing all force and meaning. This is certainly the case in the theological realm. Symbols have a long history of use in Christian contexts and they have provided significant links between theology, spirituality and culture in the contemporary world. One has to consider the place of symbolism in various sectors of contemporary life, especially in philosophy, in psychology, in visual arts and in religious contexts.⁴⁷⁵

In attempting to create a common framework for cross-cultural thematic, symbolic and ritualistic dialogue, we must carefully choose the most universal symbols and themes that we find in a large number of different cultures. The fact that almost

⁴⁷⁵ Rajah, Solomon "A Study of Symbolism in Visual Arts and Its Relevance to the Church in Malaysia," *Asia Journal of Theology* 19.1 (2005) 30-67.

everything can appear as a symbol to someone creates an inherent problem in deciding *which* symbols we should consider and how they impact on a particular faith tradition. We must be aware that this applies to themes as well. For example, should the symbol of the Trinity be a relevant and important choice, given its centrality to the message of Christianity? Are the key themes found in relation to the Trinity also applicable? I shall explain briefly the criteria I used for choosing the symbols and themes I deemed relevant to this study.

6.3.A Criteria

By this point, I have outlined the history and themes of Shinto, and examined the way Christianity approaches Shinto, with particular attention paid to the problems that dialogue between Christianity and Shinto faces in terms of interpretation. I shall now put forward my own theory of communicative theme and symbol.

My approach is inspired by Lindbeck's cultural-linguistic model and Ueda's Universality and Specialty theory. In light of Lindbeck's work, it is vital that we be aware of the use of the language of experience and the culture in which it is based. In relation to both Shinto and Christianity, I have shown that there is a different vocabulary being used in each case, and one is not compatible with the other. This vocabulary creates a barrier to understanding and, by extension, to dialogue. Recognizing that the vocabulary of both are problematic, we must look beyond the vocabulary to the core of the cultural and linguistic systems of both traditions, moving beyond words to themes and symbols. In this I apply my own interpretation of the concept of commonality. Rather than the problematic term 'universal', I am instead using 'common' to imply that the theme or symbol is recognized by a wide range of faiths and faith traditions (if not by all). In attempting to find commonality in terms of theme and symbol, I recognize that specialty exists in all faiths; concepts and ideas that are not compatible with other traditions, yet stem from a wider range of themes and symbols, and which can be used to form a basic foundation. My model is aimed at creating this foundation.

Here are the two criteria on which I base my selection of symbols and themes:

1. The symbol should be a natural symbol that is evident in Primal Tradition, and the symbol or theme should hold a universal meaning that can be understood across traditions.⁴⁷⁶
2. Shinto and Christianity should demonstrate the use of the chosen symbol or theme in their rituals, and this use should allow us to compare the different interpretations in a manner that is understandable to both faiths.

A wide range of symbols and themes transcends many different cultures. The symbols and themes I chose here had to be applicable to both Shinto and Christianity. Hence I discarded symbols and themes that would have meaning for one tradition only, and would not be relevant to the other faith. The Trinity, for example, as a symbol or theme is not compatible with Shinto, as the concept of being both distinct and part of a whole, does not translate into Shinto culture.

To contribute constructively to dialogue, symbols must be more basic and Primal in nature. The Primal symbol represents concepts and associations that hold a special place virtually universally, within a great majority of faiths. These symbols are often incorporated into religious tradition as it evolves. Lott,⁴⁷⁷ in his work *Vision, Tradition, Interpretation*, speaks of how religion is inherently symbolist in nature. The rites and rituals are symbolic representations of the mythic, attempting to form a connection with the divine. Furthermore, he speaks of certain core natural symbols that are incorporated into religious faith. I agree that these often stem from the natural world, having evolved alongside the various faiths, and form a basic structure from which the most Primal associations in religion are formed. These symbols and themes exist on two planes. On the material plane, they exist in a physical form as natural phenomena, for example, water or fire. Lott gives an example of this concept in Buddhism:

⁴⁷⁶ Extensive work has been done on the concept of Natural Symbols. Mary Douglas' fine exploration of the topic in *Natural Symbols: Exploration in Cosmology* (Psychology Press: 1996) is an excellent study of the concept of natural symbolism.

⁴⁷⁷ Lott, Eric. J. *Vision, Tradition, Interpretation: Theology, Religion and the Interpretation of Religion*. (Berlin; New York; Amsterdam Mouton De Gruyter 1987)

The tree, for example, is a relatively common Primal symbol, as is the pot, both signifying fullness of life, fertility and plenty in the Primal context; no doubt they may have signified the ‘spirit’ of the tree and the pot.⁴⁷⁸

These physical forms help reinforce the symbols in the mind of the believer. On a transcendent plane, they suggest a wide range of meanings, each one important to the believers’ understanding of their personal interpretation of faith and the faith message. Lott mirrors this sentiment, stating that no symbol has a simple meaning but is in fact based around the interpretation of the believer

These symbols can transcend cultural barriers, through a consistency of form and function. Dr Takayama-Losch in her work on the study of the Tibetan auspicious symbols,⁴⁷⁹ gives a detailed examination of how each symbol has a cross-cultural meaning that is strikingly similar. Her study of the fish, for example, shows that it can be seen as a sign of fertility and harmony in Chinese, European, Hindu and Tibetan culture.⁴⁸⁰ This shows how symbols can maintain a very similar meaning throughout a number of different cultures. Sperber⁴⁸¹ also states in his book, *Rethinking Symbolism*, that one prevalent hypothesis in the study of symbolism is that individuals are innately endowed with a concept of key archetypes that allow them to interpret certain symbols in the same way.⁴⁸² This is taken from Carl Jung’s *Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*⁴⁸³, in which he speaks of the concept of a collective unconscious, which retains certain symbols, and ideas that are held in common by all of humanity. Jung describes this as:

⁴⁷⁸ Lott, Eric. J. *Vision, Tradition, Interpretation: Theology, Religion and the Interpretation of Religion*. 33

⁴⁷⁹ Takayama-Losch, Nanci. *Universal Metaphysical Symbols and Their Role in Cross-Cultural Inspiration* Forum on Cross Cultural Inspiration (2007), F13-F43

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.* F19

⁴⁸¹ Sperber, David. *Rethinking Symbolism* (Great Britain. University Press, Cambridge 1979)

⁴⁸² *Ibid.* 136

⁴⁸³ Jung, Carl. *Collected Works of C.G.Jung, Volume 9 (Part I): Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. (United States. Princeton University Press (1980) Kindle Edition.)

...identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us.⁴⁸⁴

A part of this collective unconscious is the concept of universal images and symbols that are Primal in nature but which share a common deep-rooted meaning for each culture. If we take this hypothesis a step further, the Primal symbols that hold a common ground in all traditions will most likely be interpreted in a similar manner. This in turn creates a sense of consistency of interpretation in certain key symbols, which has developed in response to this collective unconsciousness. As such, these symbols and themes that reside in the collective unconsciousness can be used as the foundation for dialogue.

It could be argued that I am working from a reductionist perspective, by focusing on Primal themes and symbols and attempting to strip away the more complex concepts of religion to create a sense of universality. However the objective of this model is not to strip away complexity but to begin with simplicity. This model has to be seen as a building block or foundation for discourse, one that is derived from finding that which is common to both faiths and beginning there.

The second criterion is the expression of the symbol and theme. This focuses on the importance of ritual as a symbolic expression of the believers self-understanding. The expression of faith through the ritual, and the symbolic and thematic value of the ritual itself, holding many common themes that transcend cultural barriers, makes the ritual as important as the symbols and themes it represents. Ritual represents, in many ways, a form of sincerity, which allows us to react to the ritual at a symbolic level. This sincerity⁴⁸⁵ represents a degree of symbolic honesty with the self, which then is translated into an external medium through the ritual. This symbolic representation is important because it focuses on what the believer perceives as an authentic experience, one that expresses the theme or symbol of the religious tradition, in this case either Christianity or Shinto.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.* Location 213 of 12972

⁴⁸⁵ Seligman, Adam B. *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 103.

These criteria identify symbols, themes and rituals that can create a common framework within which to conduct dialogue. The criteria, once matched, move away from the extensive theological issues that are problematic for appropriate communication and instead focus on the manner in which theological ideologies are understood and expressed. It might seem that I am ignoring an important element in the discourse, but this is a deliberate strategy to allow Shinto a chance at self-expression.

With these questions in mind, I shall explore the symbols, themes and rituals, which fulfill the criteria I have proposed.

6.4 Water and Purity

One of the most common themes and symbols found in a wide range of traditions is the symbolic connection between water and purity. The importance of water and its symbolic value has been consistent not only in Shinto and Christianity, but in a majority of major contemporary religions. Stewart states that:

For as long as humans have prayed, they have probably prayed at water places. Water often moves us to wonder, joy, terror or peace, and many times, water—whether it's the awesome power of ocean waves, the cold upwelling waters of a spring, a small, still pond, the sound of a mountain stream flowing over rocks, deep, slow rivers with creatures rippling the surface, crashing waterfalls, nourishing rain on parched land, the seemingly infinite expanse of the sea or hot springs rising mysteriously from the earth, moves us to prayer.⁴⁸⁶

Water is a powerful symbol to humanity. It represents life, strength, transformation and purity, and has been constant in human faith and the human psyche for generations. Water has a very special place in all religious traditions. Ariarajah (1998) reinforces the importance of water in terms of both spiritual and physical need as something that is shared within all religious traditions. The very nature of water and its importance to society creates a myriad of symbols.⁴⁸⁷

Water is one of the most universal of symbols, expressing many universally important themes and, by extension, generating a wide range of rituals across many faith traditions around the world. Water is a cleansing force within the world, helping people to achieve and maintain purity in the home. Its importance, often taken for granted in societies where there is a ready supply of clean water, is advertised regularly by organizations such as Trocaire and Project Aware Foundation. In its

⁴⁸⁶ Stewart, Benjamin M. "Water in Worship," *Christian Century* (2011), 22-25. 22

⁴⁸⁷ Ariarajah, Wesley "The Water of Life," *The Ecumenical Review* 34 (2010), 271.

simplest form, water represents transformation; through the giving of water, crops and plants can transform a barren wasteland. It also represents a destructive force, for example, through its capacity to destroy ships, and, most potently, to cause unmitigated destruction through flooding, as seen in the Touhoku region in 2011. The universal nature of thematic and symbolic associations that come from water make it an ideal candidate for examination, as it fulfills both of my criteria.

1. It is a natural symbol with deep roots in Primal society.

To understand why water evolved as a universal symbol, we must examine the importance of water to early tribes. Many Primal tribes and early civilizations based their villages along rivers, lakes and the sea to avail of fresh water and the food that was available from these locations. There is extensive evidence for this from villages that have been excavated around the world. For example, Ziegert describes some of the earliest communities located along a stretch of river in Budrinna, Libya:

Budrinna is located on the shore of the extinct Lake Fezzan in southwest Libya, 800km south of Tripolis. The settlers of this lakeside community occupied the primary and terminal inundations of the lake, exploiting its 130,000 square kilometers of freshwater and fishing resources. Our excavations of 1972, 1973, 1996, and 1998 have discovered a site comprising the remains of permanent huts dating to the Old Acheulian period in a 2.2m-deep strata associated with hand-axes and other stone tool assemblages dating to around 400,000 years BP.⁴⁸⁸

The Aleuts also followed a similar pattern on the Aleutian Islands, their villages

⁴⁸⁸ Ziegert, Helmut "A New Dawn for Humanity: Lower Palaeolithic Village Life in Libya and Ethiopia." *Minerva - The International Review of Ancient Art and Archaeology* 18.4 (2007), 8.

located close to beaches and inlets to maximize the use of the sea and rivers.⁴⁸⁹ In Japan, extensive evidence demonstrating the importance of the sea and water to the early tribes, has been found in excavations of sites along the islands. In Kyushu, for example, the Todoroki Village was located around a river, which flows from Mount Aso.⁴⁹⁰ This village was excavated by Kyushu University in 1919 and contained extensive remains of shellfish, indicating the importance of the sea to the villagers that lived there. Similar finds were located in Izumi and Ibusuki, indicating the importance of the sea as a provider for the villages in this region. The evidence produced by many archaeologists supports the important role that water had in villages and the choice of location for villages. Even if we look at many of the older cities still in existence today, we can see how the prominence of locations near the coast or near a river, or both. In Ireland we have only to look at Dublin, Limerick, Galway and Cork to find evidence of this. It is not within the scope of this work to do justice to the huge amount of scholarly material available on the subject; to meet my criteria, it is enough to advert to the ample evidence that supports the theory that water was important to the primitive traditions from which Shinto and Christianity sprang.

2. It has universal meaning across a wide spectrum of cultures.

The symbol of water and the themes associated with this symbol are recognized across a wide variety of cultural traditions, as the following examples of the religious importance of water illustrate. In Mayan culture, water was a powerful symbol, representing the underworld in the mythological universe. It was still seen, however, as a source of life.⁴⁹¹ The Mayans perceived water as an element of creation from which everything came. Martin even describes it as the origin of riches from the earth. This implies that it provides commodities that were needed by humanity. That fresh water, food, plants and humans came from the underworld creates a strong connection

⁴⁸⁹ McCartney A. P. and Veltre, D. W. 1999. "Aleutian Island Prehistory: living in insular extremes," *World Archaeology*, 30 (1999), 503-515.

⁴⁹⁰ Daifuku Hiroshi, "The Early Cultures of the Island of Kyushu," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 5.3 (1949), 257.

⁴⁹¹ Martin, Simon "Time, Kingship, and the Maya Universe," *Expedition* 54.1 (2012), 19.

between the beginning of life and water. The Quran speaks of all life stemming from water. The word *sharia* originally meant “way of water”.⁴⁹² We see further evidence of the importance of water in the Tao Te Ching, where it compared enlightenment to water.⁴⁹³ In Hinduism, rivers and water hold a sacred place in the tradition. The Ganges River is deemed to be sacred and a deity that removes the sins of those who wash in it.⁴⁹⁴ Finally, Muskogee Creek Indians⁴⁹⁵ believe that the Creator created first creatures and then water. From the water the turtles created the earth.

Shinto and Christianity also share a connection with water, both in terms of its symbolic and thematic value, and they also commend a wide range of rituals that incorporate the use of water.

Hara⁴⁹⁶ describes the place purity and, by extension, the symbol of water, holds in Shinto tradition:

In Shinto, purity is given great emphasis, and impurity is seen as taboo. The purity in Shinto refers to the purity of mind rather than cleanliness of the body. Behind such faith, there is a view that any life in this universe is born from water, and the view of purification that water washes away any evil and sin and purifies us (Honda, 1985). An activity with a prayer to purify oneself is called harai (its verb form is harau). Also, to purify with water is called misogi. The undesirable state of not being purified is called kegare (impurity). Harai is also performed with norito (a Shinto prayer), the words of which are seen to have a power called kotodama (the soul of a word which has supernatural power). A unique point in Shinto’s purification is that

⁴⁹² Rodrigues, Antonio. “Islam and Symbolism” *Military Review* May-June (2008). 106-114.107

⁴⁹³ Laozi. *Tao Te Ching* Chapter 8 http://www.with.org/tao_te_ching_en.pdf. Accessed March 2, 2015

⁴⁹⁴ Ariarajah, Wesley “The Water of Life,”... 273

⁴⁹⁵ Graham, Bill. *Creation Myths and Legends of the Creek Indians*. USA, University Press of Florida (2002). 255

⁴⁹⁶ Hara, Kazuya, "Aspects of Shinto in Japanese Communication," *Intercultural Communication Studies* 12, no. 4 (2003).

impurity or sin of a person is seen like a material, which could be removed, by *misogi* or *harai*.⁴⁹⁷

From my own observations at shrines in Japan, the ritual of purification before one enters the temple is probably the most common example of water-based ritual in Shinto. The individual goes to the *Chozuya* (cleansing font) to perform *temizu* (ritual purification), beginning by taking the ladle provided and washing first the left and then the right hand. Finally, the mouth is rinsed, purifying the individual to allow entry to the temple grounds. Most people will observe the act of *temizu*, often teaching their children to do it as well.

Another example of Shinto ritual where water is given an important and symbolic place as found in the *gongen mai* ritual.⁴⁹⁸ The residents around Mt Hayachine who show the proper veneration to the *kami* because it provides fresh water for drinking and agriculture perform this particular ritual. A water offering is repeatedly made to the *gongen* (avatar or representation of a Buddhist deity in the form of a Shinto *kami*) throughout the ritual, allowing the *gongen* to gain power and at the same time protecting the *gongen* from fire.

At the *Haru Yama* celebration, the people chant prayers of purification over the hot springs that come forth from a rocky outcrop on the mountain. The water is drunk because it is believed to have healing qualities, and other participants fill their water bottles to take the water home with them or to bathe their feet there.

In Christianity, there are many parallels to the importance of water as a source of ritual purification. The ritual of purifying oneself before entering the sacred site of the church is a very common act that I have experienced countless times. The laver is found just outside the entrance to a church; here the faithful dip fingertips into the

⁴⁹⁷ Hara Kazuya. "Aspects of Shinto in Japanese Communication," *Intercultural Communication Studies* 12, no. 4 (2003), 91.

⁴⁹⁸ Nagasawa Sohei, "The Deity and the Mountain," *Asian Ethnology* 70.1 (2011).

water to cleanse themselves symbolically before entering the church itself. This very closely parallels the act of *Chozuya* in Shinto.

Whilst this Christian ritual is not as extended as the Shinto one, the very act of purifying oneself before entering a holy area is common to many traditions. For example, the act of purification in Islam⁴⁹⁹ reflects a similar process of cleansing. The common thread is important here, symbolizing the need to cleanse oneself before entering sacred land. This also generates a sense of separation between the profane land around the sacred site and the sacred site itself, which requires a gesture of cleansing oneself from the common world before entering the site of the transcendent world. This entry into the church building in Christianity, casting aside the individual's worldly existence to spend time communing with the divine, is mirrored in the act of communicating with the *kami* experienced by the Shintoist going to stand before the shrine. In a similar manner, Shinto and Christianity have a separate place for the priest to be cleansed before performing rituals.⁵⁰⁰

There is, however, a clear distinction between Shinto and Christianity in the manner in which an infant is welcomed into the community. The use of water as a purifier in the Christian tradition, as the child has water poured over his or her forehead as a symbol of the purification of the soul, is not paralleled in the *myamairi*. Whilst one can see the purification through water as *misogi*, we are also pointed to another form of purification that is quite common in a number of faiths, expressed in the case of Christianity and Shinto as spiritual purification.

Spiritual purification in Christianity can be seen through the act of repentance, reflected in the Catholic tradition in the confession of one's sins. Shinto follows a very

⁴⁹⁹ This act, known as *wudu*, is the act of cleansing oneself before prayer. The Muslim washes his hands, rinses out his mouth, washes his face, and his forearms. He will then wash his hair and ears before finally washing his feet. More information about this can be found in: Bin Jamil Zeno, Shaikh Muhammad. *The Pillars of Islam and Imam*. Dar-us-Salam Publications (1996) 60.

⁵⁰⁰ I have based this on the distinction referred to as the sacred and profane found in the work of Mircea Eliade. For further information please read: Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion*. New York; Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc (1987)

similar concept of purification through the *harai*. Both use ritual to express a need for purification; in the case of Christianity it is through prayers of repentance, seeking forgiveness from the divine, saints or God. Shinto *harai* follows a similar act of ritual prayer but in this case it is not an act of repentance. Instead, it is an act of purification from pollution and uncleanness. Here we can see a problematic divergence between the two faiths, the concept of sin being something that does not exist in Shinto. The fact that they both interpret purity differently, however, does not necessarily mean that the concepts of repentance and *harai* should be considered outside the criteria I have laid down. The fact that they both, in a very basic way, believe in the importance of a ritual spiritual purification is the key here. Both faiths focus on the need for a kind of purification. The important element in both traditions is a concept of pollution that extends to the spiritual. In Christianity, it is sin; in Shinto, the concept of pollution, which has a wide range of interpretations, can be related back to taboo acts, some of which I have detailed previously. Does this mean that the criteria are too open? I do not think so. Rather, the criteria must maintain a degree of simplicity, a move away from the more complex ideas that fail to find a common framework within the traditions involved in dialogue. In the case of repentance and *harai*, they are very different but, at the same time, hold many similar key themes, which can be used to build a foundation from which dialogue can begin.

As such, the interpretation of water as a symbol linked to the theme of purity must focus on the simplicity of the theme to be effective. I am not arguing that the more complex issues, such as the study of literature or examining complex belief systems, cannot bring a degree of success. Rather, I am saying that there are far too many problems associated with the interpretation of such matters for it to maximize effectiveness. In the case of water, we must take the time to maintain the Primal understanding, one that focuses on water as a purifying force that prepares the believer for the encounter with the transcendent.

Does the use of this symbol allow us to compare the different interpretations found within Shinto and Christianity in a manner that is understandable to both faiths? Despite the differences in interpretation, in my view it appeals to a universal concept that be interpreted successfully by both traditions and, further, can also be proven to

be compatible through its role in the Kakure movement in Japan. This particular group has, over its history, successfully achieved a degree of synthesis of Shinto and Christianity through embracing common themes. The Kakure have also held together a strong tradition of passing their teachings from one generation to another, one, which has remained, quite true and accurate to its predecessor. Nosco⁵⁰¹ speaks of the importance of transmission amongst their leadership. Whilst there was a degree of distortion in prayers that were originally said in Latin or Portuguese, the prayers and rituals in Japanese maintained their coherency and were passed along as close to accurately as possible. As such, the Kakure represent an example of a successful fusion between both traditions, reflecting a dialogue of theme and symbol that created a common foundation for this synthesis to work.

6.4.A Kakure Kirishitans

First, I shall briefly outline the background of the Kakure movement to assist in understanding the place of the Kakure Kirishitans in terms of dialogue between Shinto and Christianity. When missionaries re-entered Japan in 1853, there were more than 35,000 Kakure who refused to return to the Catholic Church and instead opted to continue in the worship that had been established by their ancestors. This indicates the importance that was placed on teachings received from ancestral tradition, a clear feature of many traditions in Japanese culture. What makes the Kakure unique was that the missionaries who first accessed Japan during the reopening of the borders and interacted with the Kakure, felt that they had strayed from the teachings of the church. They offered to re-educate the Kakure in the Roman Catholic tradition but the Japanese refused. But this is relevant only when we understand the development of the Kakure in Japan.

According to Nosco, by the seventeenth century there were as many as 150,000

⁵⁰¹ Nosco, Peter. "Secrecy and the Transmission of Tradition: Issues in the Study of the "Underground" Christians." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 20, no. 1 (1993): 20

Christians in Japan.⁵⁰² This number was greatly depleted after restrictions were put in place in 1639 and persecutions took place under the Tokugawa *Bakufu*. The Kakure were forced underground, their religious tradition hidden to protect themselves from persecution and destruction. It was not until the Meiji era that they were able to come back out from the shadows. This had a profound effect on them as a religious tradition and, importantly, it created a world where symbol and theme both flourished, and demonstrates the use of both as a way to create connections between their own faith and the faith they had grown up with. It was vital to secret societies to use symbol and theme to help educate their adherents, especially during a period where they could not openly worship.⁵⁰³

Turnbull and Whelan agree that the Kakure were influenced by their indigenous religious experience.⁵⁰⁴ This is seen through their reinterpretation of a number of key Christian beliefs, rituals and fetishes. The persecution of Christians in Japan forced the Kakure to become increasingly secretive. This created a need to stay hidden and indeed, to remain hidden in plain sight. Secrecy of belief became so important that the clusters of Kirishitans within a community seemed almost to work as independent cells, with no knowledge of the other groups around them. This seems to be one of the more external aspects of their secrecy. Only certain individuals who were highly ranked within the Kakure were given any real details in regards to the identity of Kirishitans outside their group. This seems to indicate that there were different levels of secrecy, creating a form of hierarchy of secrets within the Kakure. I suggest that the Kakure, in a similar fashion to other faith groups in a hostile environment, reacted by creating a series of protective barriers for themselves between their oppressors and their leadership. This not only meant that there were lines of defense against the identification of those in authority within the Kakure, but it also created a hierarchy that would be capable of giving guidance to the group. This was also a good means of ensuring that worshippers maintained teachings appropriately and that there was a

⁵⁰² Nosco, "Secrecy," 3.

⁵⁰³ Nosco, Peter "The Experience of Christians During the Underground Years and Thereafter," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 34, no. 1 (2007)., 87.

⁵⁰⁴ Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan*; Christal Whelan, "Religion Concealed. The Kakure Kirishitan on Naushima," *Monument Nipponica* 47.3 (1992).

proper transmission of the moral and theological teachings of the Kakure.

According to Whelan, due to the persecution and the need to stay hidden, there was no central place of worship. This meant there was a need to facilitate worship within their homes. The Kakure divided themselves into closely-knit households with transmission being primarily the duty of the leaders of the community or household. Kataoka Yakichi states:

The underground organization of the Christians itself became the social organization of towns and villages, developing a strong closed society in order to sustain the faith and to remain unknown to outsiders.⁵⁰⁵

This meant that they needed to create their own forms of worship within the confines of the symbols that were acceptable to the government at the time. This, in turn, meant that much dogma was discarded in favour of a belief system that could function more effectively in their new and dangerous situation. Of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church, only Baptism and the Eucharist were maintained, and they devised many of their own liturgies, prayers of worship and funeral rites. Sacraments such as confirmation and ordination could not be performed by the Kakure in the absence of a Bishop and so were dropped. In a similar manner, marriage was not seen to be an important element of their faith and was discarded as a sacrament. The sacrament of penance, however, proved challenging to remove. Instead of fully removing sacramental confession, the early Kirishitans remodeled this on the concept of forgiveness through repentance. This did not directly involve a priest, as seen in the text *Konchirisan no ryaku*. Believers began to form more and more into leagues that were used to fund the leadership of the Kakure. Groups like the Jesuit Santa Mariya no Kumi and the Franciscan Obi no Kumi⁵⁰⁶ provided much needed support to the Kakure, giving the spiritual leaders a chance to move around the various communities and assist in ensuring a consistent approach to the belief structure that had been

⁵⁰⁵ Nosco, "Secrecy," 8.

⁵⁰⁶ Nosco, "Experience," 90.

developed. One could argue that the manner in which the Kakure redeveloped their belief and structure of their rituals brought them closer to Protestant tradition than Catholic. However, the Kakure did not see themselves as breaking away from the Catholic church, but rather protecting what their religious beliefs from being eradicated by the Tokugawa Bakufu.

By bracketing the major dogmatic elements of Christianity, they created an environment in which Shinto and Buddhist belief could be more easily incorporated into this new Christian skeletal structure. This opened the way for a more Primal interpretation that needed to find connections with the wider culture that the Kirishitans could understand to help them interpret this new tradition. This stemmed from finding a common understanding through the themes and symbols that were present within the Kakure community. This resulted in the removal of a number of specifically Christian elements to reduce it to something capable of carrying the message across the two cultures.

Returning to my criteria, I shall examine an example of how transcendence is symbolized in water, as evidence that this system of dialogue can be successful.

6.4.B Holy Water

Holy water is an excellent example of how the Kirishitans managed to find a common form in relation to this theme and symbol. As noted above, the concept of purity within Shinto is important; the need to bathe and cleanse oneself before entering the spiritual realm, after death, or coming into contact with a woman during her menstrual cycle indicate the central role that purity plays in Shinto. Izanagi's cleansing after entering the Land of Yomi indicates the importance that the Gods placed on being pure. The very nature of the Land of Yomi as an impure place stresses the importance of keeping oneself in a pure and clean state. The place that holy water held for the Kirishitans seems to have been inspired by their being able to find a concept in Christianity that was compatible with Shinto. It was used for a number of different and important roles: sanctifying objects, purifying the body and soul, and for

exorcism.

Turnbull discusses the holy water that was taken from the Martyrs' Island of *Nakae no shima*. This water is sacred because of the sacrifice of the martyrs, made holy only because of the spirits of those who died there and who watch over the spring from which it comes. Veneration of the martyrs was part of the process for requesting access to the water. These beliefs tie closely with the Shinto concept of spirit entry; water was used to sanctify an object and thus allow a *kami* to enter it. The Kirishitans who would make use of holy water to turn them into *kamisama* followed this concept of spirit entering closely. This shows how the Japanese Kirishitans, without access to the teachings of European Christianity, appropriated a relatively similar Shinto practice to fill the void.. The common theme of purity and the symbol of water allowed the Kirishitans to create a dialogue between the two traditions that they could build on to survive their isolation. This, in turn, did not mean they were compromising their faith. For example, instead of accepting a *kami*, it became the home for all the *kamisama* including Jesus, Mary and saints or martyrs. Harrington also describes the use of holy water, which was referenced to the saint *kami* San Juan Sama and used to bless or cleanse a room or house.⁵⁰⁷ The Kakure also believed that this water had healing powers. I suggest that this represents a redevelopment of the Shinto tradition, amalgamated with the Christian concept of holy water, structured on the basis of a common concept that created a foundation that the Kakure could build upon. Close ties between the concepts of purity in both faiths meant that the development of the role of holy water did not have to stray too far from the role it holds in Christian theology.

⁵⁰⁷ Harrington, Ann M. "The Kakure Kirishitan and Their Place in Japan's Religious Tradition," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 7.4 (1980), 320.

6.5 Sacrifice and Offering

The themes of sacrifice and offering are an intrinsic part of Primal culture and the symbolic value of these ideas in Primalism cannot be underestimated. The term sacrifice has a number of implications. The Oxford Dictionary defines it as:

1 an act of slaughtering an animal or person or surrendering a possession as an offering to a deity: *they offer sacrifices to the spirits*
[mass noun]: the ancient laws of animal sacrifice

An animal, person, or object offered in the act of sacrifice: *a flat cake offered by the Romans as a sacrifice to their gods*

2 *Christian Church* Christ's offering of himself in the Crucifixion.

The Eucharist regarded either (in Catholic terms) as a propitiatory offering of the body and blood of Christ or (in Protestant terms) as an act of thanksgiving.

3 an act of giving up something valued for the sake of something else regarded as more important or worthy: *we must all be prepared to **make sacrifices*** (Oxford online dictionary)

Origin:

Middle English: from Old French, from Latin *sacrificium*; related to *sacrificus* 'sacrificial', from *sacer* 'holy'⁵⁰⁸

Reinhartz, reviewing *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism, and*

⁵⁰⁸“Sacrifice”, Oxford Dictionary Online,
<http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/sacrifice?q=sacrifice>

Christianity, 100 BC to AD 200, by Maria-Zoe Petropoulou, describes sacrifice as:

The act of sacrifice includes beliefs, gestures, objects, and materials that can be arranged along both vertical and horizontal lines. The vertical line pertains to the relationship between the one who offers the sacrifice and the one who receives it, whereas the horizontal line describes the relationship of the offerer to his or her society, its fundamental principles, and the materials that it values and/or produces.⁵⁰⁹

The theological significance of this term cannot be overlooked. First, I shall examine what is perhaps the most common concept of religious sacrifice, namely the slaughter of an animal or person or the offering of a possession to a deity. This understanding connects the terms sacrifice and offering; here, the act of sacrifice involves giving a gift, either the slaughter of a human or an animal. There are two socially significant factors to be included in defining sacrifice. First, the relationship between the receiver and the offer-er has a different meaning depending on the culture and tradition from which it stems. The second aspect is the relationship between the offerer and society, both in relation to the principles involved in the sacrifice and also in relation to what society deems valuable. In some cultures, the role and status of the offerer can often be perceived to affect the reception of the gift, whilst in others the simple act of making the offering is enough to appease the deity.

The alternative to a living sacrifice is the offering of a gift or symbol. The need to slaughter and give a life to the deity brings with it a sense of violence and subjugation in terms of the destruction of the victim, willing or not, to appease the deity. In contrast, the offering can be more peaceful, for example, the offering of rice or food, incense, or other burnt offerings in place of an act of violence. It is important to

⁵⁰⁹ Reinhartz, Adele "Review of Maria-Zoe Petropoulou, *Animal Sacrifice in Ancient Greek Religion, Judaism and Christianity, 100 BC to AD 200*," *Society of Biblical Literature* (2009). 310

differentiate between the violent acts as part of the sacrifice, the slaughter making the sacrifice possible, and the offering, which is often made after a violent act. Even the term, stemming from *sacer* “holy”, implies the divine importance of the act. But is there a significant difference between sacrifice and offering? This is difficult to determine. Often the terms are used interchangeably. I would, however, prefer to differentiate between the concepts of offering and sacrifice: offering is a much less violent concept, and also suggests something offered in barter or exchange. The offering is part of an agreement, or the creation an accord between the divine or spiritual and the human being. In contrast, the concept of sacrifice has a focus on appeasement, where one attempts to offer something to appease the deity, to assuage its anger or judgment. Both H. Huber and M. Mauss defined sacrifice as something that involved death or slaughter, and referred to the act of slaughter as 'a means of communication between the sacred and the profane worlds through the mediation of a victim'.⁵¹⁰

Can we see this difference culturally? Shinto offering is often a gift of rice or wine. These gifts are part of a transaction with the *kami*, requesting its service in exchange for payment. From my own observations, this can be reflected in the offering of rice or wine at smaller shrines or the offering of money in bigger shrines. These gifts are not born of violence but, rather, of barter or exchange, the payment for a service. In conversation with many people about their understanding of Shinto, the idea that the offering was made in exchange for a service was expressed repeatedly. For example, a woman whose daughter went to stay in America regularly prayed at the shrine and left an offering *in exchange* for the *kami* protecting her. This implied that if the *kami* failed to protect her daughter, she would discontinue the offerings. Hence the offering was made as payment. But we could equally argue that sacrifice is, by its nature, a transaction as well. One offers sacrifice in return for the continued protection of the deity, or for a service to be performed by the deity. Yet the violence involved in sacrifice separates the concept of sacrifice from that of offering.

⁵¹⁰ Hubert, Henri and Mauss, Marcel. *Sacrifice: Its Nature and Functions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1981). 211-12

What about the idea of one making a sacrifice, focusing not on the act of sacrificing *to*, but sacrificing something of *oneself*? The act of personal sacrifice makes clearer the difference between sacrifice and offering. For example, in Christianity, we can argue that Jesus chooses to sacrifice himself for the good of others, making a sacrifice of *himself on behalf* of others, rather than sacrificing *something else on behalf* of others. The idea of self-sacrifice can move between the act of offering and sacrifice; it can be both violent (crucifixion of Jesus) and non-violent (donation to temple). Self-sacrifice is understood as the act of sacrificing something of the self, an offering can be also considered self-sacrifice; by offering food, or money, or incense, we are taking away from ourselves to give to the other, and hence we are sacrificing something of the self. Nevertheless, whilst self-sacrifice does indeed fall within the category of offering, one must also recognize that, because of the potential for violence involved in the act of self-sacrifice, we cannot simply refer to it as offering. Hence it becomes a third category: sacrifice, offering, and self-sacrifice.

With this in mind, I can also apply my criteria to the theme of sacrifice, self-sacrifice and offering. Is it a theme that is prevalent in Primal Tradition? Many traditions, historically, include sacrifice, self-sacrifice or offering. In ancient Judaism, the offering of an animal in ritual slaughter was a common act amongst the tribes. Klawans⁵¹¹, in an article on sacrifice and purity, describes the act of sacrifice in Judaism thus:

Animal sacrifice in ancient Israel proceeds only in a very orderly and controlled way. The domesticated animals fit to be offered, as sacrifices have no power whatsoever to resist: "Like a lamb to the slaughter" (Jer 11:19). That is why, at least in ancient Israel, sacrifice is very little like the hunt—the sacrificial animals chosen cannot put up much of a fight! In ancient Israel, sacrifice involved the controlled exercise of complete power over an animal's life and death. This is

⁵¹¹ Klawans, Jonathan. "Pure Violence: Sacrifice and Defilement in Ancien Israel." *Harvard Theological Review* 94 (2001)

precisely one of the powers that Israel's God exercises over human beings: "The Lord kills and brings to life" (1 Sam 2:6; cf. Deut 32:39).⁵¹²

The importance of animal sacrifice to Judaism imitated the powers of the divine. It is, however, more an act of respect, the control reflecting the control that God holds over his believers. The act of sacrifice is not only an offering but also a de-creation of the animals, almost a reflection of the act that God controlled and allows his followers to imitate through their sacrifice.

In the Mimamsaka tradition, the act of sacrifice has a very different connotation. In contrast to Christian, Judaic and Islamic concepts of sacrifice, where one makes an offering as an expression of thanks and praise, the concept of a heaven and Gods is a strange one for the Mimamsaka tradition. Sacrifice is divided into two traditions: *kratvarthath* and *purusar*. *Kratvarthath* is sacrifice as an act for all, whereas *purusar* is much more an act for the self to fulfill one's desires. Das gives an excellent example of this:

For example, the pursuit of dharma may be considered as a *purusartha* or a *kratvartha*, that is, dharma pursued for the sake of man or dharma pursued for the sake of sacrifice. In the former case, the pursuit of dharma is for the benefit of man, while in the latter case, it is for the performance of the sacrificial act.⁵¹³

Another contrast to Judaism, Christianity and Islam is the lack of a need to be purified. Purification in this tradition is something one does for the self, the act itself not required for sacrifice to take place, but is for the benefit of the individual, making it part of the *purusar* tradition. In return for the sacrifice, the Gods will grant gifts, such as strength and wisdom, to the individual who makes the sacrifice.

⁵¹² *Ibid* 147

⁵¹³ Das, Veena. "Language of Sacrifice." *Man, New Series* 18, no. 3 (1983). 449

In ancient Irish tradition, blood sacrifice to the goddess Éire was also a common practice. Éire was the very land itself and her place was as the wife of the high king of Ireland. She was seen as both symbolizing beauty and making demands in return for her fertility. The appropriate sacrifice to appease the goddess was often a young male, whose blood would be spilled on the land. Dalton describes two such references to the blood sacrifice. The first is in a ballad where Éire appears to a group of young men:

A change fell on the nature of the tender youths
Before that obscene lustful horror;
Sooner than look upon her
They had chosen to be buried under earth alive.
Their spirit and senses turned
With a throb sorer than stark combat;
The sons of Daire gave themselves
Over to a death of shame.
She addressed them with an evil saying:
'One of you must sleep with me to-night,
Or I will devour you all, unaided,
Horse and strong man alike'.
When he saw the danger plain,
Lugaid Laigde spoke:
'I will sleep with her - unwelcome task;
Enough for you to lose me only'.⁵¹⁴

Here we see a subtle but clear point that one must be sacrificed so that the others may survive, the others representing the people of Ireland and the fertility of the land, the gift in return for the sacrifice. We find a second reference to this blood sacrifice in the story "The Adventures of Art, son of Conn":

⁵¹⁴ Dalton, G. F. "The Tradition of Blood Sacrifice to the Goddess Eire." *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 63, no. 252 (1974). 343-4.

And when the druids saw the young man with Conn, this is the counsel they gave: to slay him and mingle his blood with the blighted earth and the withered trees, so that its due mast and fruit, its fish, and its produce might be in them.⁵¹⁵

From these examples, we can see that the concept of sacrifice was a major part of their culture of the ancient druidic tradition in Ireland.

Filiha's⁵¹⁶ study notes that both tribes engage in acts of sacrifice and offering to either a pantheon of Gods or a single deity. In a similar manner to Shinto, however, the act of sacrifice in this situation tends to be transactional, with the tribes focusing on making an offering or sacrifice in return for action on behalf of the God involved. If the God does not respond appropriately it is unlikely that they will offer a sacrifice to that God again. In Yorubaland the Yoroba tribe also engaged in sacrifice, often human in nature. Sacrifices were sent as messages to Gods, as requests to ward off sickness and plague and to protect the upper classes in the tribe.⁵¹⁷

Sacrifice has been a common concept and practice amongst many religious traditions, past and present, allowing us to view it as a universal theme. The examples above demonstrate that sacrifice is both a Primal and a modern tradition, and holds a special place across the spectrum of religions. As such, it fits the first criteria that I laid down. The next questions we must ask is: How is sacrifice or offering seen in the Christian and Shinto traditions, and is there ritual in those traditions that demonstrates the importance of these ideas?

For both Shinto and Christianity, the concept of offering in preference to sacrifice is prevalent. In Shinto, we can see extensive rituals of offering; for example, from my own observations, the ritual of making a token offering of yen at a shrine is common.

⁵¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 344.

⁵¹⁶ Tahiti, "Rituals of Sacrifice in Early Post-European Contact Tonga and Meredith Filihia." *The Journal of Pacific History* 34, no. 1 (1999). 5-22. 5.

⁵¹⁷ Ojo, Olaturunji. "Slavery and Human Sacrifice in Yorubaland." *The Journal of African History* 46, no. 3 (2005).

Nelson describes how an official in the Ehime prefecture used tax revenue to make an offering of 166,000 yen to the local shrine.⁵¹⁸ The person stands before the *kami* shrine and offers the money, which is thrown into a box before the *kami*'s home. The person then bows twice, places their hands together, claps twice, brings their hands up again and then bows one final time to the *kami*. This signals the end of the interaction between the person and *kami*. This offering, in conjunction with the request made by the one making the offering, creates a contract between the offerer and the *kami*. I have also experienced Japanese making offerings to ancestors, either of their own family or of their school or dojo, leaving an offering of money or rice to make a contract or seek advice from the ancestor in question. The importance of the agricultural tradition in Japan may be why the act of offering over sacrifice became prevalent in both pre-Meiji and post-Meiji Shinto ritual tradition. W. G. Aston gives an example of such an act of offering in the *Daijowe* ceremony, where the priest offers the first fruits to the *kami*.⁵¹⁹

The offering is the most important element here. The sense of the offering being something of the earth and excluding violence emphasizes the peaceful nature of the offering, and also highlights that the offering is made to fulfill the contractual obligation between both parties. By making the offering of the first fruits, the person making the offering will expect a continuation of the good harvest in return. The offering itself is not elaborate, simply a bowl of rice and sake, but is symbolic of sealing the agreement with the *kami*. This ritual is followed throughout Japan.⁵²⁰

The focus on agricultural goods highlights the nature of the ritual act carried out by the Japanese as an offering, and also emphasizes its transactional nature, making a bargain or deal with the *kami*. These simple offerings are made to encourage the *kami* to attend, through the ritual surrounding the offering, which is often purified before

⁵¹⁸ Nelson, John "Social Memory as Ritual Practice: Commemorating Spirits of the Military Dead at Yasukuni Shinto Shrine," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62.2 (2003).

⁵¹⁹ Aston, W. G. "Sacrifice in Shinto." *Man* 12 (1912), 6.

⁵²⁰ Nelson, John K. "Freedom of Expression: The Very Modern Practice of Visiting a Shinto Shrine." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, no. 1-2 (1996): 142

being presented to the *kami*. The ritual is structured in the following way:

It begins with cleansing; participants purify themselves with water, and the ritual precincts are energetically scrubbed; and the shrine area is carefully arranged and prepared with offerings. The chief priest and the participants intone an ancient liturgy in a respectful and sonorous manner; it is an invocation of the *kami* and a call for harmony. This is followed by brief recitations by the priest and a short drumming-and-flute sequence. The accompanying gestures and movements are solemn, deliberate, and graceful. The assistant priest then concludes this brief service by purifying the offerings, the chief priest and the audience using a wand covered with paper streamers (*haraigushi*). Following this, there may be a ceremony in which written petitions addressed to the *kami* are read aloud; these have been collected beforehand from the participants. This is sometimes preceded by a dance performance by a female assistant (*miko*). Then the participants retire to an inner sanctuary, where an offering is made. Subsequently, they partake in a ceremonial drink of consecrated sake (*naorai*), which celebrates the establishment of a good relationship among the participants and the *kami*.⁵²¹

The act of offering sake forms a basis for the completion of the ceremony, signaling the conclusion of the agreement between the person making the offering and the *kami* itself.

In the case of Christianity, the Mass or Eucharist, combines elements of both offering and sacrifice. The act of celebration itself focuses upon two key elements: the ritual remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ, the bloody slaughter of the divine man, and the offering of the self through participation in the ritual. I shall explore both of these elements as exemplifying a ritual of offering or of sacrifice, depending on how the act

⁵²¹ Boyd James W. and Williams Ron G., "Japanese Shinto: An Interpretation of a Priestly Perspective," *Philosophy East and West* 55.1 (2005), 47.

is perceived. Gawronski speaks of participation in the Eucharist as a form of reliving, in a spiritual manner, the sacrifice made by Christ.⁵²² By extension, it becomes symbolic; through the ingestion of the body and blood of Christ we too offer ourselves, our spiritual selves, as a gift to God, that our souls may be cleansed and purified by the sacrifice of Christ. This is also a symbolic statement that we are willing to make the sacrifice to find salvation, even if it is simply through the act of partaking in the ritual whereby we relive the sacrifice of Christ. Is this, however, an entirely accurate representation of the Eucharist? One could argue that Christians do not partake in an actual act of sacrifice or offering, and that, in fact, the reverse is the case. Christians are, in a way, the recipients of the sacrifice. Through partaking in the Eucharist, Christians are not offering themselves, apart from the reaffirmation of their faith, but renewing the relationship and agreement made with Christ. In this light, the act of partaking in the Eucharist is, in fact, receiving the offering of Christ once again so that they may reaffirm their place within the Christian society and, by extension, their place within heaven. This represents not so much a direct sacrifice as commonly defined, but an inverted sacrifice, in which we are not offering but watching or experiencing the sacrifice of a third party, in this case, Christ. By partaking in the Eucharist, Christians reaffirm their faith and trust in the act that Christ chose to undertake.⁵²³

The other, more popular, theory is that of the internalization of sacrifice. McKenna describes this internalization as a result of historical development:

... The Christian usage of sacrifice is to be understood in the context of a long process of ‘spiritualization’, both in the Jewish scriptures and in the surrounding Hellenistic culture. Under pressure of the conditions of exile, and also of the prophetic critique of cult, ‘sacrifice’ evolved from the notion of a material immolation (destruction) ritual, towards a more spiritual prayer form, for which no immolation was necessary.⁵²⁴

⁵²² Gawronski, Raymond “Salvation in the Blood of the Lamb,” *Nova et Vetera* 9.1 (2011).

⁵²³ Kirwan, Michael “Eucharist and Sacrifice,” *Dominican Council Journal Compilation* (2007), 214.

⁵²⁴ McKenna, John H “Eucharist and Sacrifice: An Overview,” *Worship* 76, no. 5 (2002). 384

Chauvet argues that, through the Eucharist, the act of sacrifice comes from a recognition that the individual must partake in an act of self-sacrifice; that this self-sacrifice is an act prepared through the Eucharist, and the willingness to partake in self-sacrifice stems from one's involvement in the Eucharist.⁵²⁵ This creates an interpretation of sacrifice within the Christian tradition that stands at odds with the immediacy of the Shinto offering ritual. Instead, we have a combination of the celebration of the memory of sacrifice and the development of a preparation for the potential of sacrifice that is inspired by the actions of Christ.

Does the theme of sacrifice allow us to create a dialogue between both faith groups on the basis of an understanding of the concept of offering or sacrifice? Again, the Kakure provide an excellent example of a successful synthesis, in which we see an active and successful amalgamation of both traditions, exemplifying the universality of the concept of sacrifice. The Kakure integrated both an external and an internal concept of sacrifice, combining the idea of making an external offering in the form of the regular agricultural offerings made in Shinto shrines with the recognition of the internal offering made through the Eucharist. In his exploration of the ceremonies of Ikitsuki Island, Turnbull discusses the actions carried out in the celebration of the Oyashiki Sama ceremony. This ceremony is an excellent example of the pattern in which rituals were followed in the Kakure tradition and provides insight into the Kakure way of performing the Eucharist. There are a number of elements involved in this ceremony, but primarily the two examples of offering, both internal and external, are performed as part of the ritual. Turnbull describes the ritual:

When all are assembled, the ritual itself begins, and this consists of three parts. The first is the making of offerings to the kamisama. The offerings are of food and drink, and may also include money to defray the expenses of the event. This is followed by prayers, some of which are recited, other are chanted or sung. It is at this stage that any

⁵²⁵ Chauvet, Louis Marie *The Sacraments: The Word of God at the Mercy of the Body* (Liturgical Press, 2001).

specific ritual activity, such as a baptism, will be performed. The ritual then moves into the communal meal, each course of which is solemnly dedicated by prayer and shared among the participants. The event concludes with courtesies of departure, and in some cases a forward link is established to the next ritual.⁵²⁶

The external offering takes place at the beginning of the ceremony, in which the offerings are made to the *kamisama* (the term used to describe God, the angels, saints, etc.). This offering is a traditional agricultural offering of food and drink; sometimes money is included as well, if those offering can afford to do so. Prayer then follows this offering. Here we see an external offering, similar to the Shinto tradition, in which the participants are making a contract or transaction between them and God. The second key dimension of the external offering is that the two consistent elements of the offering are food and drink, symbolic representations of bread and wine found in the Christian tradition. In the case of the Kakure, the offering is seshi and sake.⁵²⁷

The consistent offering of seshi and sake indicates not only the importance of the seshi and sake to the ancestor, but also the centrality of these offerings to Kakure ceremony. That they are then consumed at the communal meal demonstrates the nature of the ceremony as Eucharist. Hence the dual nature of the offering becomes clear: the external offering that reflects the Shinto heritage of the Kakure is coupled with the internal offering when one applies the understanding of the Eucharist as memorial and potential sacrifice. The Kakure combine both the external ritual of Shinto with the internal ritual of Christianity. Whelan also notes this common theme throughout the holy days celebrated by the Kakure including Ganjitsu, Haritsuke, Mannaka, Kanashimiagari and San Juan Sama no Hi. She describes the act of passing the Eucharist in many of these rituals:

The assistant directly opposite the chokata hands him the tray with the sake bowls; he takes it, raises it while bowing his head, then places it

⁵²⁶ Turnbull, "Mass or Matsuri?" 177.

⁵²⁷ Turnbull, "Mass or Matsuri?" 184.

on the floor in front of him so that the plate of fish is in the upper right-hand corner. He then opens and closes the chopsticks inside the sake bowl in the lower right corner, lightly disturbing its surface. He repeats this in the bowl on its left and then in the third bowl in the upper left-hand corner. He then goes back to the first bowl and performs the action for the last time, returning the chopsticks to their original position. Next he hands the second sake bowl to the celebrant directly across from him and the third bowl to the celebrant diagonal to him. He himself drinks from the first bowl and hands it to the person beside him on his left. If no one is beside him, he alone drinks from this bowl. He then takes up the chopsticks again, picks up a small piece of fish, and offers it to the celebrant opposite him; he receives it in the palm of his hand, and placing the palm near his mouth, he eats directly from it. The chokata repeats this offering of fish to the shikuro diagonal to him. He then attends to whoever else might be present. The sake bowls are returned to the tray, which is then placed under the table.⁵²⁸

This ritual performance of the Eucharist by the Kakure again focuses on the act of external and internal offering, placing the offerings before the *kamisama* before consuming them and reflecting on their role and the sacrifice of Christ. This symbolic act demonstrates the close connection in Kakure ritual between Christianity and Shinto, the connection of the universal theme allowing for both faiths to exist in the tension of very different theological perspectives and traditions.

⁵²⁸ Whelan, "Religion Concealed," 376-377.

6.6 Obligation

The concept of obligation, of owing a debt to one's ancestors or to the divine, is a consistent theme throughout religion. The concept of debt or obligation is not necessarily negative, and can be an impetus to continue in acts of worship. Boodin stated that:

... True human obligations are also divine obligations; that initiation into human life at every step must also, in order to insure real success and happiness, be an initiation into the Kingdom of heaven; that God calls us to devotion to the great common tasks of life.⁵²⁹

Obligation entails not just a sense of debt, but also expresses the sense that, by becoming a member of the religious community, we accept the obligation to act in an appropriate manner as set down by our ancestors who were members of that particular faith. This can be represented through the formal moral code within a religion or the customary obligation to act a certain way or follow a certain path that has been set down before.⁵³⁰

This sense of obligation does not necessarily have to be a moral code, but can also be represented by acceptable careers, or the father-son apprentice concept in which the son inherits the position of the father after being apprenticed to him during his youth. But is this idea of obligation part of Primal Religion?

To answer the first question laid out in my criteria, I shall first explore whether or not the idea of obligation is prominent within Primal society. Fowler describes how obligation created a contract between the indigenous Indonesians in Mata Loco and the ancestral spirits of the river to keep it protected.⁵³¹

Fowler describes how the indigenous tribes have had this responsibility passed down

⁵²⁹ Boodin, John E. "The Function of Religion," *The Biblical World* 46.2 (1915), 73.

⁵³⁰ Frazer, Sir James George. *Totemism* (London: A. & C. Black, 1887). 2-3

⁵³¹ Fowler, Cynthia T. "The Ecological Implications of Ancestral Religion and Reciprocal Exchange in a Sacred Forest in Karendi," *Worldviews* 7.3 (2003), 316.

to them from their ancestors, one that they are obliged to keep through the debt they owe to the river deity. The Marapu tribes also held obligation as an important part of their culture. The ancestors would:

... Punish people for committing sins such as failing to fulfill reciprocal obligations, stealing, adultery, violating taboos, breaking promises, presenting inadequate sacrifices, or failing to perform scheduled rituals.⁵³²

The important element of this statement is the fact that failure to fulfill reciprocal obligations constitutes grounds for punishment and is in the same rank as breaking promises, stealing and adultery. In Zulu tradition, tribesmen would often attempt to block dreams because of the obligations that they would bring. Chidester describes how:

Africans turned to ritual techniques for blocking dreams because they were unable to fulfill the practical obligations to their ancestors that were conveyed by dreaming ... In the ritual energetics of exchange, Africans deprived of cattle could not fulfill the requirements of sacrifice. Recounting a recent dream, Uguaise Mdunga noted, "I have seen my brother." His deceased elder brother, appearing in a dream, called for a sacrificial offering, which placed a solemn and sacred obligation on Uguaise to respond.

But Uguaise had no cattle. Addressing the spirit of his brother, he cried, "I have no bullock; do you see any in the cattle-pen?" Unable to achieve the necessary exchange, Uguaise could only feel the anger of his brother. "I dreamed that he was beating me," he reported, noting that in further dreams this spirit kept "coming for the purpose of killing

⁵³² Fowler, "Ecological Implications," 317.

me” (146–147, 157). The result of this blocked exchange, he felt, would only be suffering, illness, and death.⁵³³

These accounts demonstrate the wide range of interpretations that the term “obligation” brings with it. In the first example, the Primal cultures of Indonesia were be obliged by their Gods to protect the river. In contrast, the Zulu tribes would fall under obligation to their ancestors, who could make demands on them and their time, including sacrifices to be made; the ancestors could punish the living for not fulfilling their obligations. The Hoga Sara tribes of Flores, Indonesia, also emphasized the importance of obligation in the fulfillment of traditional rituals of identity and acceptance.⁵³⁴

The key obligation in these examples from Primal Tradition consistently stems from those who have gone before. In the Zulu and Indonesian tribes, there is a focus on the ancestor who is owed a debt that must be fulfilled, either through sacrifice or remembrance, by those who came after them. The Akan tribes of Africa hold a concept of obligations similar to that of the Zulu.⁵³⁵ Here we see the idea of inherited obligation, similar to that of the Japanese. In the case of the Akan, however, the idea of obligation is passed through blood, and those of the same blood, not just by a single inheritor or chosen successor, inherit inheritance collectively.

Through these examples, we can see the presence of the idea of obligation throughout different traditions. The concept of obligation is an inherent part of human nature that has extended to the spiritual. In the examples above, there are two important aspects to the concept of obligation. The first, and probably the most important, is the idea of *remembering*. Obligation is not just about holding to a debt but also about remembering those who have come before, giving appropriate appreciation for the

⁵³³ Chidester, David “Dreaming in the Contact Zone: Zulu Dreams, Visions, and Religion in Nineteenth Century South Africa,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 76.1 (2008), 32-33.

⁵³⁴ Molnar, Andrea K. "Christianity and Traditional Religion among the Hoga Sara of West-Central Flores," *Anthropos* 92(1997). 395-6

⁵³⁵ Pobee, John “Aspects of African Traditional Religion,” *Sociological Analysis* 37.1 (1976), 8.

actions of those before us that allowed us to reach where we are today. That religion and faith would include this concept of obligation is a given; the focus on remembering the past and being appropriately appreciative for the work of our ancestors or the deities is in our human nature. The very fact that we record and study history and maintain a fascination with what has come before is all part of the concept of obligation through remembering. We see it as our duty to remember the past; often, many argue, so that we do not repeat past mistakes, but more importantly, it is an obligation observed subconsciously to our ancestors, to maintain their memory. Prayers of remembrance, acts of offering to ancestral spirits, acceptance of the return of the dead on sacred nights, are all expressions of the sense of obligation we feel to remember. There appears to be a universal concept of remembrance in religion, obligation to those who passed before, to continue their legacy. It is found in the worship of the divine or transcendent, in which we remember the acts of those before us, or in the acts of the divine in creation, which allow us to be here. We are obliged to act, to remember in worship.

The second key aspect of the concept of obligation is that of duty. Obligation and duty are not identical. With obligation we are working from a debt concept, remembering because we have a debt to those who came before and obliged to continue because of the debt we hold to those before us. Duty, on the other hand, is slightly different, with a less heavy emphasis on the concept of debt. In the context of religion, I argue that duty involves consciously choosing to continue with the act of obligation to our ancestors or deities. We must actively choose to fulfill our obligations. Whilst obligation is recognizing the debt and remembering what we owe to the past, duty is the conscious act of continuing that obligation, and of attempting to fulfill that obligation. So, we could argue that when the spirit appeared to the Zulu tribesman in the example quoted above, he had an obligation to fulfill the sacrifice required by his brother, but chose not to and attempted to block it out. Hence he did not fulfill his duty. We are given a duty to carry on a certain aspect because the spirits, our elders or ancestors, or the divine laid it down for us. The Hebrews had a duty to follow the commandments God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai; the Tanakh, however, relates how the Jews strayed on numerous occasions. Even though they were obliged to follow the requirements of their faith, they did not fulfill their duty;

they *chose* not to do so. The subtle difference between obligation and duty allows us to gain a better understanding of the different attitudes that religions and faith traditions take towards the ideas of obligation and duty. The themes of obligation and duty in the form I have described above transcend different cultures and traditions, being prominent within Indonesian, Japanese and African traditions, and thus can be seen to be a significant element of Primal Traditions around the world. I shall now investigate how obligation and duty are demonstrated in the rituals of both Christianity and Shinto. I have already discussed the importance of obligation in Shinto tradition and ritual,⁵³⁶ and turn now to show how Christianity demonstrates the ideas of obligation and duty in its rituals.

The idea of obligation has long been a constant and vital part of Christian life. This obligation is often translated into responsibilities to the Church and God, or as duties that stem from the induction into Christianity. This is represented by a multiplicity of interpretations of moral obligation as a distinctively Christian religious experience. These range from traditions that stress human freedom as the setting for ethical obligation as a freely-chosen path of virtue (in, for example, much Roman Catholicism), to traditions that emphasize the compromised or even illusory nature of human reason as a resource for articulating moral vision (e.g., the divine command understanding of morality found in many Reformed moral theologians). A usefully condensed example of the breadth of Christian approaches to moral obligation may be found in the section on 'Religion and Values' offered in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*⁵³⁷, which evidences not only differences amongst Christian ethical theories and theorists, but also demonstrates - by way of methodologies followed and authors considered - the extent to which ethical theory and theological-denominational perspectives are mutually implicated and by extension reflect the obligation of Christians to their faith.⁵³⁸ I have chosen to focus upon two particular

⁵³⁶ See Part B above.

⁵³⁷ Philip L. Quinn and Charles Taliaferro, Editors, *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion* Blackwell Companions to Philosophy; Malden and Oxford: Blackwell, (1997; 1999)

⁵³⁸ See Janine Marie Idziak, 'Divine command ethics,' 453-459; Robert P. George, 'Natural law ethics,' 460-465; Jean Porter, 'Virtue Ethics,' 466-472; Robert C. Roberts, 'Narrative ethics,' 473-480; Gene Outka, 'Agapeistic Ethics,' 481-488; Paul J. Weithman, 'Theism, law, and politics,' 489-496; James F. Childress, 'Theism and medical ethics,' 497-504; Gary L. Comstock, 'Theism and environmental

moral obligation; duty to the Apostles' Creed and the role of baptism as the beginning of obligation for the Christian.

The source for obligation and duty is the Apostles' Creed. This document sets out the core principals, which Christians need to follow. They represent the obligations that Christians have to God as well as their belief system. Pope Benedict the XVI describes the Creed as:

...a genuine encounter between God and man. In the mystery of Baptism, God stoops to meet us...⁵³⁹

Chrétien also reinforces this idea in his classical piece, *The Duties of a Christian to God and the Means to Fulfill Them Properly*, Vol. 1, where he states:

The Apostles' Creed contains everything that Christians are obliged to believe and know in particular. This Creed is a summary of the main points of our faith that the Apostles, according to Saint Augustine, left us by Tradition as a rule and profession of faith so that all the faithful might everywhere profess the same beliefs.⁵⁴⁰

Participation in the rituals of their faith demonstrates the Christian's obligation or duty. For Chrétien, the ritual recitation of the Creed, in which Christians reaffirm their faith in Christ, functions as a reminder of their obligation and duty. I would extend this to claim that the acts of baptism, communion and confirmation also exemplify the concepts of obligation and duty. They represent the obligation to bring children into the community through baptism, and in course the children's obligation and duty to

ethics,' 505-513; and Edward Langerak, 'Theism and toleration,' 514-521, in *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion*, 453-513. Despite the more general concern of this section with 'theism', most of the articles in this section either presuppose, or engage seriously with, specific traditional obligations of Christianity. Further studies on the concept of obligation can also be found in the essay by Gabriel Daly 'Conscience, Guilt and Sin' found in Freyne, S. (ed) *Ethics and the Christian*. Trinity College, Dublin: Studies in Theology, Dublin: The Columbia Press (1991)

⁵³⁹ Vaghi, Perter J. *The Faith We Profess: A Catholic Guide to the Apostles' Creed*. Indiana. Ave Maria Press (2004) (Kindle Edition) Location 46 of 1347

⁵⁴⁰ Chretien, Antoine. *The Duties of a Christian to God and the Means to Fulfill Them Properly*, Vol. 1 (Paris, 1703), 27.

confirm their faith and prepare themselves for their future as Christians. Thomas Aquinas referred to baptism as showing us the right direction so that we can live Christian lives. However, it is our obligation to follow the will of God in order to attain salvation.⁵⁴¹ Aghiorgoussis describes the importance of the ritual of baptism as an acceptance of both duty and obligation. He states that when it is:

Administered in obedience to our Lord, baptism is a sign and seal of our common discipleship. Through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the church of every time and place. Our common baptism, which unites us to Christ in faith, is thus a basic bond of unity. We are one people and are called to confess and serve one Lord in each place and in the entire world.⁵⁴²

The ritual of baptism brings us not only into the community of believers but also places the duty upon us to confess and serve God. In a similar manner, the ritual of confirmation reinforces the obligation of Christians to fulfill their duties in the context of the Church.

After birth, the infant child is often baptized and, in ritually joining the community of Christians in this way, takes on the obligations and duty of a Christian. The maturing child then proceeds to pass through a second rite of initiation and passage in the form of confirmation. This reinforces the duty and obligation placed upon the child at baptism, but through the ritual, the child also recognizes the obligations and duties of becoming and being a Christian. This renewal reminds confirmees that they are part of a bigger community and, as such, they are required to fulfill the promises made at baptism.⁵⁴³

The renewal of the solemn promise represented recognition of the duty and obligation

⁵⁴¹ Aquinas, Thomas. *Confessions on the Apostles' Creed* Figs Classic Series 2012 (Kindle Edition) Location 23 of 881

⁵⁴² Aghiorgoussis, Maximos "The Meaning of Christian Baptism for the Baptized and for the Church," *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 55 (2010), 23.

⁵⁴³ Meyers, Ruth A. "Fresh Thoughts on Confirmation," *Anglican Theological Review* 88.3 (2006), 324.

that one accepted on becoming a Christian. Whilst there are many arguments regarding the status of confirmation as a sacrament or, indeed, its necessity after baptism, it is still recognized as an act in which one renews the duties and obligations that were ritually undertaken in baptism. This rite affirms that the individual has renewed the faith and covenant that they entered at baptism.

The most important element of this quotation is the concept of covenant. The covenant, or new agreement made through Christ's sacrifice, represents the obligation that we took upon ourselves as part of that agreement.

Rituals of baptism and confirmation demonstrate the role that obligation and duty play within the Christian tradition. But does this sense of obligation transcend the barriers of culture and allow us to compare the idea in a way that is understandable by both Christianity and Shinto? I shall return to the Kakure as an example of how this basic understanding of obligation can allow them to understand the importance of this concept and apply it in a way that maintains harmony between the beliefs of both faiths.

I have already outlined the importance of the veneration of ancestors and the sense of obligation that the Japanese feel towards their ancestors and, by extension, the Emperor. This persisted within the Kakure, but moved from just ancestor veneration to include the saints, Mary and God. Keeping in mind that the Kakure recognized that they were obliged to follow the teachings both of their ancestors and also of the saints, Mary, Jesus and God, I shall briefly examine an example of such obligation through the role of Mary in Kakure tradition.

6.6.A Virgin Mary and Ancestors

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was venerated in the way that the Japanese considered acceptable within their folk tradition: having been promoted from purely human status to the status of a *kami*. This meant that she was actively involved in the world, as all *kami* are, and was venerated accordingly as part of the obligations that the Kirishitans

had to their ancestors. On a plaque known as the *Shitayado tsumoto* is a depiction of the Immaculate Conception. Turnbull describes how Mary is presented:

... Standing on a crescent moon with radiance streaming from behind her, and seven stars around her head. Tagita relates how this image was cherished as *osan no kamisama* (the *kamisama* of childbirth), and that women seeking an easy delivery would visit this image in the *tsumoto* on Christmas Eve.⁵⁴⁴

This depiction clearly distinguishes Mary from Amaterasu, the sun Goddess. Here Mary is placed on a crescent moon, in stark contrast to the sun, the stars making the halo around her head. This indicated that she held status and authority. The title given to her of *kamisama*, pointed towards the unique *kami* rank that she held, one of being more divine than the spirits themselves. Pregnant women visited and venerated her image during Christmas. It is here that we could see her status as a *kami* when she was called on to ease the birth of a child. Women would often leave an offering of food at the shrine, as part of their duty in return for Mary's assistance, which, in turn, represented her obligation as part of the contractual relationship. The addition of offerings and the role that Mary had as a *kami* indicates the crossover of Shinto in the Kirishitan movement. In contrast to the role that a *kami* plays, often based around a specific location, for example, a forest or mountain, Turnbull relates how Mary transcended this limitation, and was "honorably present" on earth. This combines Christian concepts of heaven and the Shinto role of the *kami*, in a way that allows the duality of Mary's existence in the realm of heaven and her earthly presence granting an easy birth to the women who requested it from her.

We can also clearly see parallels between the role of ancestors in the Kirishitan faith and the veneration of ancestors in Shinto, which lent itself to the *uji gami* model,⁵⁴⁵ honoring and venerating those who have gone before as purveyors of wisdom and guidance, as well as laying the path which one should follow in order to continue the

⁵⁴⁴ Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan*, 91.

⁵⁴⁵ See above, section 2.1.A.

duties that the ancestors followed and were bound to. The early Kirishitans mimicked this in their understanding of the death of those within their communities, and in the associated rituals. As with the concept of death in Shinto, the person who died was believed to linger between life and death, if the proper ceremonies were not performed. As with Shinto, the Kirishitans believed that this death was the first step to becoming a *kami*. These ancestors, however, represented the moral fibre not only of the family from which they came, but also of the whole community. As with the *uji kami* system, belief in the importance of guidance from these beings superseded many other traditions, even the concepts of Christian burial, which had been taught to them by the Jesuits. This again points to the transactional nature of the obligation and duty that both the Kakure and ancestors had. The Kakure would venerate and listen to their ancestors, continuing to fulfill their duties, whilst at the same time the ancestors would fulfill their duties to the Kakure.

6.7 Conclusion

I have attempted to show how the use of my criteria can help to define common themes and symbols that can then be used to build a foundation on which dialogue can take place. As I have argued, the language that we use, as well as the cultural differences between Shinto and Christianity, make dialogue difficult. If, however, we use this model of communicative themes and symbols, we can find what we have in common between Shinto and Christianity without sacrificing the more complex theological themes and symbols that are unique to both traditions. This starting point can then be used to engage in dialogue in recognition of common dimensions within both Shinto and Christianity. That they can also be compatible is exemplified through the Kakure Kirishitans, who, out of necessity, had to combine their Christian beliefs with the beliefs of Shinto. This resulted in a successful combination based on thematic and symbolic communication of both faiths, which, in turn, allowed them the flexibility to survive during the pogroms against Christianity until the changes in religious policy under the Meiji government. The Kakure represent a successful example of this form of dialogue, and whilst we do not see extensive theological debate within the Kakure movement, we can accept that they realized that, by fusing their traditions at a thematic level, they could survive. This, in turn, is what I propose for the future of communication and dialogue between Shinto and Christianity. Both traditions can form a foundation on which to base their future dialogues through finding what is common in their themes and symbols.

Conclusion

This study set out to determine a manner in which appropriate dialogue could take place between Shinto and Christianity. It has given an account of the historical development and theological evolution of Shinto to allow the reader to gain a better understanding as to why an alternative method of dialogue should be developed. The first two chapters outlined the development of Shinto, showing how cultural factors led Japan to adapt foreign religions to suit the Japanese mindset and, by extension, to conform with theological concepts that already existed within Shinto. This historical outline provides a greater appreciation of the unique nature of Shinto, in which there has been a consistent amalgamation of Japanese tradition and religion. The circumstances of the early development of Christianity in Japan, through Xavier and his successors, resulted in Christianity never really getting a foothold in Japan, in contrast to other countries. This insecure relationship eventually resulted in the expulsion that isolated Japan from Christianity for 250 years, allowing Shinto and Buddhism to flourish uncontested. This meant that Christianity was dealing with Shinto as an established faith that had not been influenced to a great degree by either western or Christian thought and, as such, maintained a perspective that was alien to Christian thinking.

To address why Christianity found dialogue with Shinto particularly difficult, it was important to explore the major themes within Shinto. Through this exploration, I showed not only the importance of the ancestors and *kami*, but also how these ideas did not blend with the Christian concept of the transcendent. Indeed, Shinto ideas of Ancestor and *Kami*, alongside its approach to death, provide a rather problematic starting point for Christianity to begin dialogue. This chapter also helped to highlight the extent of the differences between Shinto and Christianity and how these differences need to be taken into account when creating any form of dialogue between the two groups. This brings us back to my initial quotation, which characterised Shinto as:

... Particularly difficult to explain, even for most Japanese. Because its basic values and patterns of behavior have filtered into

Japanese culture as part of tradition, most Japanese seldom reflect on Shinto as a “religion” in which they consciously participate.⁵⁴⁶

With this ambiguity as an essential element of the nature of Shinto, it is important to appreciate that many of the attributes of Shinto that I outlined in Part two are also a major part of Japanese tradition more generally. With this in mind, the next step of my work was to explore how dialogue took place between Christianity and other religions, to understand better why Shinto represents a particularly difficult case for dialogue. To begin, I explored the meaning of dialogue, including the concept of pluralism as expressed by Hick, Knitter and Heim, illustrating different forms that dialogue can take. I also examined the responses to pluralism expressed through the writings of D’Costa and Moltmann, and then I showed how more contemporary interpretations of Christian interreligious dialogue allow a better understanding of why interreligious dialogue works with religions that hold similar forms. This was demonstrated in the exploration of Christianity’s interaction with other major world religions, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. The emphasis in this section was on demonstrating how much of this dialogue revolves around scriptural interpretation and ethics, aspects that are – by comparison – lacking in Shinto. I also examined how dialogue has taken place between Shinto and Christianity and how this type of dialogue has proved problematic due to the differing natures of these religious traditions. This difference stems from a number of areas that I have outlined in Part B of the thesis; challenges for dialogue also arise if Shinto is treated in much the same manner as Christianity has engaged with other major religions, notably Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. I have concluded that the manner in which dialogue is achieved between these particular faiths is simply not compatible with Shinto. The problem of engaging in scriptural or ethical dialogue with Shinto is that Christianity will be capable of overshadowing Shinto with the sheer volume of written theological understanding of its identity in comparison to the much smaller amount of work

⁵⁴⁶ Kasulis, *Shinto: The Way Home.*, 1.

from Shinto scholars. With this in mind, I explored other problems between Shinto and Christianity: primarily the issues of language and experience. As Lindbeck states:

Religion cannot be pictured in the cognitivist (and voluntarist) manner as primarily a matter of deliberately choosing to believe or follow explicitly known propositions or directives. Rather, to become religious – no less than to become culturally or linguistically competent – is to interiorize a set of skills by practice and training.⁵⁴⁷

It is this interiorization and experience that forms Shinto in Japanese people; this cannot be appropriately addressed in the language of Christianity, because Christianity presumes too many theologically-incompatible ideas. Having explored the problems that face Shinto-Christian dialogue, I offered an alternative model for dialogue, based on theme and symbol. This model offers a way to deal with the tensions of dialogue between the two faiths, within the criteria I outlined in the final section. In the context of the historical relationship between Shinto and Christianity, and of how Christianity has experienced dialogue with other religions, this method offers a way to begin dialogue by exploring the manner in which faiths hold something in common over their differences, in a way that does not simplify the faith of either, but offers a building block with which they can begin to build a new understanding of each other through the language of theme and symbol.

This study set out to determine whether or not there could be an alternative approach to dialogue with Shinto. There were a number of problems in examining the relationship between Shinto and Christianity. Firstly, little material on actual dialogue between Shinto and Christianity has been published. Also, there has been little written in response by Shinto scholars to Christian

⁵⁴⁷ Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age.*, 35.

papers on dialogue, meaning that a majority of the work has a Christian perspective, leaving us with interpretations that were focused upon Christocentric language. A practical problem I faced was that this work needed to be written in English, and without Japanese as my native language, this made the process of engagement with many of the Japanese scholars who had written on Shinto more difficult. I found, however, that I was able to garner a great deal of information from discussions with academics, ordinary people, and representatives from the Jinja Honcho, which greatly benefitted my work and gave me a deeper perspective on Shinto and the subtle but clear differences between the way Japanese and Westerners perceive Shinto and religion. Living in Japan has changed many of my perceptions of the role of Shinto in the lives of the people, accounts of which are detailed in this work. This allowed me to experience first-hand the relationship between people and Shinto and gain a much greater understanding and appreciation of Shinto, both from an academic and an aesthetic perspective.

The final problem I faced was trying to create an alternative form of dialogue that would work for both Christianity and Shinto. I had to accept that I would not be able to give a completely Japanese perspective on Shinto, and so focused on articulating a western approach to dialogue with Shinto. This allowed me to explore Shinto from a more western perspective, focusing largely on English scholarly literature, whilst also being able to draw on my own experience of Shinto through my interviews and translations. I was able to ascertain that dialogue between Christianity and Shinto would not progress appropriately on a purely linguistic level due to the loaded meanings that are easily imposed in the exploration of the Shinto's key themes by Christianity. Even in the language I have used in my study, I have been forced to use Christian language and concepts that do not always appropriately express the deeper meaning of much of the Japanese concept of spirituality that is tied to Shinto. Whilst Shinto has been influenced by many faiths in its development, we can also see a number of recurring themes that have to be addressed appropriately, not through Christian theological language, but through a new model of communication that allows us

to engage with both traditions, operating in a position of mutual respect and not simplifying or belittling the beliefs that are held by either particular faith. This study shows that we need to reassess how we engage in dialogue with Shinto and, by extension, how we dialogue with Primal Traditions. To this end, the first step towards addressing the problems I identified was exploring a possible alternative, focused on themes and symbols that transcended culture and tradition. In the case of Shinto and Christianity, I developed the following criteria:

1. The symbol should be a natural symbol that is evident in Primal Tradition, and the symbol or theme should hold a universal meaning that can be understood across traditions.
2. Shinto and Christianity should demonstrate the use of the symbol or theme in their rituals, and this use should allow us to compare the different interpretations in a manner that is understandable to both faiths.

Using these criteria, I attempted to find symbols and themes that were common to both traditions and could thus transcend the boundaries that exist in terms of theology. In this way, I created a common starting point that both religions could use to begin dialogue in a way that accepted that there was a common foundation. With an appreciation for that common foundation, each could begin to explore the beliefs and views of the other, filtering them through the common theme or symbol to gain a renewed perspective that respected the beliefs of the other without trapping them in the language of absolutes.

The evidence, as found in my use of the Kakure movement as a test case for my model, suggests that this model is compatible with both the Christian and the Shinto traditions. The Kakure were able to fuse key themes of Shinto and Christianity in a manner that allowed them to maintain a balance between both religious traditions, through a focusing on these themes over extensive in-depth theological knowledge of Christianity and Shinto. Through the implicit dialogue that took place within the Kakure movement as they tried to refine their beliefs

and make them compatible with the culture they already knew, they broke Christianity down into key elements that transcended the boundaries of Christianity and Shinto. As I have shown in my work, this returned them to a Primal state in the form of themes and symbols.

This implies that dialogue is possible when we reduce the traditions to something that transcends the filtering and interpretation of concepts that takes place through the discussion of theological and philosophical terminology and that, at the same time, allows us to use this basic structure as a foundation that can assist in broaching dialogue between religions whose perspectives are extremely different. The example in this work is dialogue between Shinto and Christianity, between traditions that hold vastly different perspectives on what each perceives as the world, the transcendent and the role of the spiritual. The degree of success that the model achieves in relation to these two faiths can enhance our understanding of how to begin creating a point of access for dialogue between faiths that have had violent conflicts and are, at the least, indifferent or, at worst, violently opposed to one another.

The result of this work can help us to appreciate how the variety of experiences that one culture undergoes can create a substantive difference between the understanding and interpretation of key points in the expression of religion. It also enhances our appreciation of the importance of finding a starting point that can allow the creation of a common grammar between religions. Through this, without taking away from the language of either religion, both religions can speak to each other in a way that makes it possible for each to gain a better, though still incomplete, understanding of what the other religion is trying to express in its theology. For example, there can be a common understanding of purity, but the subtleties of what purity means to the two parties can then be further explored. A concrete example of this can be found in my conversation with Prof Suga in regards to the idea of sacrifice; whilst the theme and concept of sacrifice were understood, a subtle difference came with the misunderstanding

of the role of the death of Christ, which he deemed to be transactional. Without a common framework in which we could both place this idea, i.e., the theme of sacrifice, we would not then have been able to explore the idea of the sacrifice of Christ, and further accept that the language we used was based around our own experience.

Finally, we also need to explore a number of limitations in regards to the work itself. Whilst my model has offered a foundation on which to work, it does not answer the question of where to go from there. The present work has focused on Christianity and Shinto; further examination and work within other traditions will be necessary before I could state unequivocally that this model works between other faith structures also. This model represents a particular form of dialogue that provides a basis for Shinto and Christianity to engage with one another, and offers an opportunity for them to create dialogue in a manner that is respectful and beneficial to both parties. The real challenge, however, stems from the future of this model and how we can use it to further our understanding not only of Shinto but also of the subtler aspects of other unique religious traditions.

Its perspective limits this work: a western Christian perspective based primarily upon English texts. I do not think that this affects the constructive contribution of the work in a negative way, but it has impacted on what I have been able to say in terms of my understanding of Shinto. A more extensive exploration of the Japanese texts is required before I could say unequivocally that this model would be successful if employed as part of a more extensive dialogue.

This research has raised questions that need further investigation. How would this model work with other traditions outside of Christianity, for example, Buddhism or indigenous tribal faiths in Nigeria? Also, further investigation is needed as to why Shinto has been interpreted the way it has by modern western scholars. Does the misinterpretation often represented by western ideas of Shinto lead to a reluctance to engage in dialogue? Or does Christianity feel that it

has learned all it needs from Shinto as a faith? How can the implications of a different understanding of God be explored further? The question as to how it affects the tension between Shinto and Christianity in the Kakure movement also merits further attention.

The model I have developed provides a unique and effective foundation that Christianity can use to engage with Shinto. By engaging in the dialogue process I have outlined here, Christianity and Shinto may find new and better ways to interact and learn from each other. In a time of intra-religious strife, with religions and governments having to adapt to the fundamental cultural and philosophical challenge of climate change, Christianity needs to learn from Primal Traditions. It would be hugely beneficial if humanity as a whole could gain a greater appreciation for the affinity that Primal Traditions have with nature and how this respect and veneration could translate into positive ecological change within society, and new models for social and economic interaction. My model presents a foundation upon which that communication can take place. Through engaging in dialogue based on this new model, western religions can learn from Primal Traditions, and find new ways of understanding themselves and their relationship with each other.

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Appendix I

Nanzan Symposium 4: Shinto and Christian Dialogue

In Shinto: Universality and Speciality

(Kenji Ueda P17 - 33)

Prologue:

This time we are having a dialogue between Christianity and Shinto. We have chosen one thing, in religion universality and speciality. In general the theme and idea is too abstract for people to be familiar with. In addition it is very philosophical in nature. Why did we choose this theme? As an author I proposed this theme, however when I chose it, I didn't truly understand the problem it would present. That's why, at the beginning of this chapter I would like to talk about why I chose this topic.

This symposium is part of the regular activity in Nanzan, and we decided to look at the dialogue between Christianity and different religions. In this case, we wished to understand the perspective of both Christianity and Shinto and then explore how they can communicate and understand each other. It will also help us to understand the perspective of the Catholic Church after Vatican II. This symposium can offer the opportunity for non-religious people to engage in dialogue and offer them insight into the perspective of religion. This kind of exchange can also be used in missionary work. I feel that Christianity as a universal religion has a responsibility through its sense of mission to engage in this form of dialogue. However from the Christian perspective the issue is not only spreading faith. This kind of theme includes Christianity that is localised in Japan. If I try to make it general, this theme makes the fundamental rule in Japan clear. However the reality is to Christianity this problem is very important. After Meiji period, there is less than 1% Christians in Japan. They have never been able to propagate more than 1%. To understand Shinto as a local culture and religion and to analyse Shinto is definitely necessary for Christianity. Now let us consider Shinto, especially Jinja Shinto.

What kind of meaning does this theme have? or what kind of meaning will it be able to have? From the general and formative perspective, probably as an ethnic religion, to Shinto, asking what is universality and to recognise what speciality is means nothing. These ideas cannot be basic questions. However they can be very important

questions to the religion which has the challenge to overcome preexisting criticism and problems and the challenge to overcome existing questions. The time Japanese people finally recognise their own religion and belief: Shinto, is when they started accepting Buddhism. Buddhism is a universal religion. When Buddhism came it allowed for the Japanese people to realise that they had their own religious perspective. After that the Japanese accepted Buddhism as a universal religion with Shinto as a speciality religion. They began to consider how to protect Shinto.

After the middle ages, a fusion of philosophy occurred at Shrines such as Ise and Yoshida. This philosophy was a kind of resistance against involvement with universal religion, in this case embodied in Buddhism and Confucianism. The Shinto specialist, Atsunobu Hirata, created a new form of thinking in relation to Shinto. There was an understanding of Shinto as a universal religion. From that position, they created the rituals and guidelines for the proper performance of Shinto rites and traditions. These days to Jinja Shinto, however, to investigate universality and speciality, is not only because of external pressure but also is necessary as a result of the internal belief that exists within Japan.

Previously the Japanese government during WWII created the Hakko Ichiu (make the world one) policy. This policy created shrines all over territories that were captured by the Japanese including Taiwan, China and Korea. The Shrine department and Shinto Shrines were concerned which Gods should be put in shrines on foreign soil. After WWII, even though it was only for the Japanese citizen, there was controversy over which gods should be prayed to at the shrines. As a result of our regrettable past, we need to search for the universality of Shinto. After the Shinto Shirei mainstream Jinja Shinto became based upon the opinions of scholars and their concepts of universality. They didn't focus on the major issue, what was needed to be done and instead mainly tried to focus on Shinto's speciality and its ethnic and national focus. However in this case what is really special? What is worthy of being a speciality? We need to focus on this in discussion.

Chapter 2: The Universality in Shinto

In general the person who believes Jesus is Christ and belong to Church and follow the churches education and method feel they can be saved by God regardless of their national or ethnic background. That is the reason why Christianity can be a universal and world religion. However in Shinto its Japanese ethnic local belief. It is a part of Japanese society. It is not personal but life and communal belief. It passed from one generation to the next. You can see there is no focus on particularity, there is no sacred scripture to help people learn Shinto. There is no positive expansion of Shinto. We can say Shinto is like nature religions. Therefore this Shinto can work only for Japanese and Japanese society. It can exist in Japanese society. It can keep existing only in Japanese society. That's why it's very specialised as a religion. However can we make the reality of belief so easily? And clearly? For example, lets consider the universality of Christianity. Henry VIII founded the Anglican church because he wanted to be divorced. Why were they independent? Why are they still saying they are a Christian church? And why are protestants allowed to see a special side of God? This is the same as the belief in miracles. They try to look at the universality in speciality. Why do they have a black Jesus? Or the concept of salvation through Mary? It is Catholicism? If we look at these varieties of Christianity, even though they are a universal religion, they are a gathered body of specialised beliefs. This is the reality of Christianity. Therefore I think universality and speciality cannot exist in opposition but instead we can emphasise that both act in support of one another. Based on the perspective I discussed, at this time, I would like to talk about Shinto which emphasizes specialised religion. Do they need or have universality? Is there a kind of universality there?

At first I would like to look at their main beliefs. Shinto's god are many, historically yaoyorozu (8 million gods). Ya originally iya which means great strength or power and growing numbers. People say yaoyorozu, but it actually doesn't just mean number but also means the idea of power. As such I would like to focus on the idea of many gods. Why are there so many gods? The reason is very clear, even in the old myths. In the old myths, it talks about the origin of the gods. The concept of naru (to be) and to be born god as two separate concepts. So one is to be, and the other is to be born. To be god is existing from the beginning as a God. It is one of the origins of gods. These gods had families and the family gods were called to be born god. That is

why from the myth many gods have the perspective of the natural god. However in addition at the same time they have the perspective of the ancients' gods too. So Japanese folkloristic study made clear about the god of the mountain and field and the ancestors gods. The relationship between ancestral gods and the mountain and field gods reflects this relationship. However this kind of natural god and the belief of the natural god and ancient gods or a fusion of both from the humanistic perspective. It is not only for Shinto. It is basically a universal idea.

Shinto's traditional idea has two structures of heaven and earth. One is the beginning of the heaven and the earth, and the other is the creation of the world. It is two ideas for recognising the world. When Shinto describes the beginning of the world, there are gods, specifically there are seven generations of Gods. These seven generations existed before the creation of the world or after the creation of the world. Depending upon the perspective you take, defines your sense of universality in Shinto. This can be problematic however. For example, logical Shinto has several schools, and they believe that the seven generations were before the creation of the world. As a result of this they emphasised Shinto universality as a worldwide phenomenon. The case of Amenominakanushinokami is very typical of this. He is a good example of their concept of universality of Shinto. This particular God is claimed to have existed before the creation of the world. The Kojiki describes this God as the first god. The school of Hirata specified this kami as the same as the heavenly emperor in Confucianism. They also claim that this particular deity is the same as the Christian God as well. Even in this case, Shinto has multiple Gods, who continue to exist even in light of the Deity existing as a supreme being. They do not accept Ameno as the one God and that the others don't exist, instead he works as part of the group of Gods. We need to discuss about whether this study is a misinterpretations of Christianity or the study is an example of Shinto speciality.

In this moment, I might need to mention about the God of the Jinja Honcho at Ise Shrine, Amaterasu. Amaterasu's personality is also emphasized as a universality from the perspective compared to Amenomina. However Amaterasu is not a god that created the world. The order of the Gods is Izanami and Izanagi, but Izanagi went to the land of the Dead. As a result of her death, Amaterasu was born, hence she is the third generation of Gods. But Nihongi and Kojiki give compliments and say that

Amaterasu is the highest God. She brings light into the world and the Emperors are descendents from Amaterasu. Previously Amaterasu was treated at the same level as the Emperor. The reason why this God was treated as a universal God, was her name. The term sun god, created a sense of universality whilst maintaining speciality. On the other hand she is specified as an ancestral god of the Emperor. Rice, crops, and food spirits were associated with her as well. This is the Japanese speciality and by extension creates a sense of universality due to the existence of other agricultural gods as well. At this point I would like to discuss the religion of Emperor as God.

After WWII people tried to deny this religion after WWII. In the year Showa 21 I believe was the year we finished the second world war. This year, new years day they officially announced that the emperor was not a god. Some people said that this was the official reason why people could deny the divinity of the Emperor. Many people believed that this address was the official reason they could deny the Emperor as god. However this is a fundamental misunderstanding, stemming mainly from Christians way of thinking (monotheism). Japanese traditional religion was confused with the Christian concept of God. From this confusion over the status of the emperor stemmed. That is why this official announcement spread and gained popularity as a manner in which the denial of the emperor took place. During the Meiji period, the Japanese tried to translate scriptural texts from Christianity and were confused by a lot of the ideas. However they grasped a concept of a singular god that they then applied to Shinto. Anyway, Japan doesn't have any history to believe in a single God, since the beginning of our traditions. So from the beginning we did not have any concept of the one god. Even with Amaterasu, who is seen as one of the highest gods is not an exception to this. The Gods the Japanese believed in are, as I mentioned before, they come from concrete ideas and from within the world. They have an existence that is really obvious compared to the abstract ideas of other faiths. Their existence can influence our lives and that is the reason why they can become Gods, because of their strong existence and by extension this existence can influence the lives of its followers.

Motoori Norinaga said "What is God? It is not normal, something special and respectful. That is God." Therefore basically, all existence has the possibility to be a

God. Even a wolf can be a god and so people would fear the wolf, because of its strength and cunning. Initiation or sacrifice or ancestors belief, those kinds of things are also similar. In general, for local people there is a respect for a living God, in a manner similar to Tibet. The concept of a living god still exists within society, for example, in Tibet the concept of the living god, often a young girl still exists. Until maturation and getting her period she is worshipped, and wants for nothing, but when she matures it is seen as a sign that another living god will come into existence.

However we have the words “Emperor is a God” in the Man yo shu. People try to read too much into this statement. People argue that this was created by the political establishment, but this concept is very natural. Peoples saying represents too much confusion between Christianity and Shinto, ignore the historical reality of Shinto or just don’t understand Shinto. The Emperor throughout a long history, has always been better than others and is close to Godhood. As a descendent of Amaterasu, he was given life by Amaterasu and so can be a God. In addition these ideas are not inconsistencies. The concept of the Emperor as a human and having the aspect of a God is quite natural. People take Jesus as a human whilst at the same time he is the son of God. Taking the Emperor as a God is slightly different, but each idea has its own speciality but at the same time are universal in nature.

Next let us think about the understanding of the human being. In case we compare Christianity to Shinto, the most significant difference between them is the question of sin. Christianity has the idea of original sin. However in Shinto not everyone has sin. The origin of the idea of the existence of sin, is that the start of all things, the start of belief, is that the people should be saved from sin. However in Shinto people can make mistakes, but sometimes even some Gods become angry, or stubborn or make mistake and people suffer for it. However it is not only peoples mistakes so makes it difficult to avoid. In addition these sins can be removed through the appropriate purification rituals. Between Christianity and Shinto we can see a huge gap in understanding. Let us consider which one is very special. You can see that Christianity has the concept of purity through baptism and Jesus died for people’s sins. Christianity believes that humans are made by God and by extension they are okay. In Shinto the humans are descendents of Gods and so humans can be okay. Can

we say there is a fundamental difference? I would be inclined to believe that in Christianity, human beings are made by God and that is why to the God they have limitations. This limitation is seen as a sin. However for Shinto, because of the limitation of humans there is the possibility of creating life and history. Shinto looks at the possibility of human limitation instead of condemning it. Shinto can hence see the possibility of human achievement. Maybe there is significant difference between the concept of humanity between Shinto and Christianity. Objectively speaking, this is the difference between categorising ideas. That's why I cannot say which one is more accurate. It's just the difference between in humans' existence and then how to meet god. In this case I think we can say both Christianity and Shinto are universal.

In general while we cannot understand the objective, people understand it as special and put it out of their understandable category. They consider their side as universal. However when people can understand the other side or explain themselves well, both sides can be universal. If we think in the world there is no universal religion or special religion, actually there is the person who has universal religion and the person who has special religion. To understand humanisation there is another important thing, it's the way of ethical thinking. Christianity is well known as a very ethical religion, however Shinto doesn't have ethical basis as a rule. Of course it doesn't mean Shinto has ethics. I would like to emphasise, for example, Jinja Honcho Shinto, have the kind of rules that govern one's life. These are referred to living through respecting the Gods. This rule is often discussed at so many meetings. However the rules contents do not discuss a positive or negative concept of ethics. They discuss "We should be," instead of "We shouldn't be". I think this is really special and worth considering the difference between both Christianity and Shinto. Fundamentally this difference stems from the understanding of God's personality. However if we just focus on the human side, this difference can be considered as how to think about human desires. Shinto is fundamentally based around the idea that human desire is acceptable. That is why Shinto doesn't have the ethics of "You should not". However, just because there is not an ethical rule, it does not mean people can do whatever they want. So there are some limitations in terms of proper attitude. For example at festivals, one is limited as to what they can do (drinking etc). One has to maintain a sense of decency. It is not written down but implied. To reduce one's sin, they have to purify the festival itself.

Then in normal life, it is also accepted as a normal life's rule as well. In addition from Buddhism, Confucianism and Christianity has stemmed further rules of behaviour. From these three religions they developed the idea of ethics. From a Shinto perspective the concept of festival and traditional ethics, for example, it would be honesty and purity and rather than based upon particularity its based around the collective or group. In the relationship between people, Shinto tends to trust peoples individual good will. Of course in normal life, ethics is changing and evolving as a result of how society is changing and developing. Each society has different ethics, which change. Can we say that this is special? I can understand Japan as both an individual society, or some kinds of different levels of society. Each level has specific ethics. In that meaning, each different style of ethics is special. However, the ethics rule can be accepted by all individual society could be called constant and the ideal ethics. I think it's too much. This is purely academic though. If it is constant without objective understanding, that is not constant. From that standpoint, in normal peoples worldliness, to create the very pure world outside of worldliness and from there peoples lifestyles that can be controlled, reflects the perception of Christianity, where there is commandments from outside of the real world. I think it is the one that can be very special. Human society, if it is strong enough the commandment transcends to become constant. While people believe it to be religious ethics it isn't constant.

Speciality in Shinto

To understand this element, let us focus upon speciality. If we look at this topic in detail to understand real meaning, it would be the belief that only Shinto could achieve or emphasise that this is really ethnic belief. Hence only Japanese can have this belief. In the pervious chapter I was criticized for being suspicious. Now I will change my perspective completely. Generally the reason why Christianity can be a constant religion is that Christianity transcends it boundaries. From that position Christianity looks at the world. Everything is seen as equal from that perspective. The idea of particularity is also coming from that standpoint. Buddhism also has a similar standpoint. On the other hand Shinto does not transcend and does not have definitive ideas and concepts. Shinto learned that standpoint from Buddhism, but didn't accept

it. According to my theory, both Buddhism and Shinto do not share the origin of their idea. They don't share their categorization. Hence they can be combined or coexist and still have contradictory ideas. In India, for example, they have many localised religions, which are then combined yet co exist with contradictions and discrepancies. I assume that Shinto didn't do that. If we understand these contradictions because they are totally different, Shinto already existed in such a state to create comparison. So everything that Shinto has is just so special. This idea did not attempt to remove everything from Shinto. Some people believed that Shinto is exclusive but this is just a misunderstanding. This kind of relative mentality creates strong, weak, big, or small and allows us to understanding this idea. It is not the idea of exclusivity and the denial of the existence of everything else because Shinto is based upon relativeness. Let us consider the examples with objectivization. At first, after WWII, the idea of the land of the gods gained a very bad reputation. The Nihongi and Kojiki, the origin of Japan, from the beginning of the world, they created eight big countries. However they do not talk about the other countries, only Japan. This story is completed only with Japan as the world. We can understand this, because at the time Japan was the world to the writers of the text. However, if at that era, people already knew that there were other countries except for Japan, it would not change the text, they would still focus upon Japan as the world. This god story already accepted multiple origin myths. As such it accepted pluralism. The Nihongi and Kojiki were both pluralistic texts. Then this country was born as a child of the gods. This idea itself, is the gods country ideology. It means that this country is Gods country or this country was created by the gods for the god's children. These are two ideas but there is controversy. At this moment, the gods created the country as their child. However this idea started to talk about other ideology of (shinbutsu shego) Shinto-Buddhist Fusion, which became accepted around the end of the Heian and Kamakura period. A really good example of the movement is the Ise document, Isegobushou, the basic teachings of the Ise Shrine. This god country ideology is prevalent throughout this document. This is the statement of the differentiation against constant ideology. Compared to the Buddhist concept that Japan is the edge of the world, like dust, this is a very specialised statement. However, of course we can look at the similarities between the Catholic Church and several religions. So for example the idea of the sacred places. I feel that the belief that has the highest level of similarity would be the belief of Judaic concept

of the land of Canaan and Shinto concept of Japan. However if we can find some similar things, they are just similarities in the end. Individual differences cannot be substantial enough to replace particularity, or speciality. It is not replaced by anything similar. In addition, we cannot replace the constant ideas either. As a country was born with the concept of a single deity, it cannot be replaced. However, we can see the possibility for the future movement. Other countries were created by other gods and therefore are also god's country. That is why we can create a kind of community. In that kind of idea we can keep Japan's speciality as god's country. I assume Shinto is really negative about expanding. It's also because of this idea. Of course Shinto doesn't kick people who join out.

The belief in the Emperor is really connected with the concept of god's country. Technically god's country idea is that the land and the Emperor's families work. It is not going to be okay if we lose either of those ideas. Both are necessary to create god country idea. The basic idea of this belief is that life is created by the essence of the existing world. The life can have particular speciality with historical and ancestral tradition. The ancestors' historical life created the life they have today. In addition this combined idea is connecting the existing world with the essence directly connected to the essence of the world. This means the Emperor's bloodline. This essence has to be pointed through the festivals of the Emperor. The Emperor's family line is directly linked to Amaterasu and so the Emperor is god for the sun and farming. Because of this he can also be the essence of the world. The Emperor's family line has to rely on the bloodline because of their connection to the gods. Shinto is looking at the meaning of existence with the passing of life (essence). That is why bloodline is very important. Classical sects or family societies collapsed, it became individual family societies. Still now the essence of passing life idea is still there. If we look at a normal family we can adopt kids or just focus on the meaning of passing on the family name. However as a representative of race, with the Emperor family at the center of the ethnic group, they cannot lose the speciality (bloodline) and they shouldn't lose it either. In that perspective they are really special.

Let's look at the Matsuri. The concept of Matsuri means to treat a god. The Emperor's family's job is to treat the god. Now I start talking about festival and

treatment. Lets look at how to treat god. Maybe from the people who do not know about Shinto, it's very easy to see speciality of Shinto. At first, the shrine, which originally means gods home. Today, many shrines are located inside the area people were living. However previously the Shrine was at a distance from the peoples living area and often located within nature. Because people believed the place that spirits lived and stayed, they wanted the shrine to be in a pure place and not face people's shame or pollution. Later people created the belief that having the god around always and so brought the god closer to them. People started to create a house type of shrine. This thinking is also special. Maybe previously the Shrines did not have the kind of celebration atmosphere but as people built the buildings for the shrine, there was a feeling of closer communication between the people and gods. In addition if we look at the shrine buildings, there is a lot of variety compared to other religions. Each shrine has the god there. Some shrines have a mirror, others have something as simple as paper and rock. This is very special as well. Shinto is different from Christianities origin myth. Shinto was also affected by Buddhism. However for the time that Shinto was affected by Buddhism, it did not have the statue and prayer style. The aim of prayer is for the soul. This soul representative is the mirror or rock. Those things are not a symbol however. Symbol is just a symbol. The item is not a symbol, just describing the soul of the person there. It would be different from Christianity's concept of the statues of saints or Jesus and Buddhism's Buddha. Of course the item cannot describe the working of the spirit, but it is still not just a symbol. Festival is also special. The festival is treating gods together. The offering of sake and food is made. Those things are stuff for the existing god. Thats why each shrine has particularity and each shrine has its own festival. There is a wide range of variety for the Shrines.

Kami is there. They enjoy the festival with people. So dancing or music is also an offering to the god and enjoyed with the kami. People created nicer and nicer demonstrations. However we can see similar examples in other religions as well.

Let's looks at the way of praying to the gods. 柏手 かしわで is really particular to Shinto. I wonder why this very simple activity cannot be seen in other religions. I think the origin of kashiwade has no specific explanations. Generally it is the

representation of happiness and awe. In the rules of the festival, what kind of meaning does kashiwade have? I think it has the meaning of trying to get the gods attention to the individual. I feel that is a more accurate meaning and the noise that it creates is the focus of the individual praying. It is the prayers wish. We with use the bell as well or taiko to gain the gods attentions. When we go to the first shrine praying with a baby, they make the baby cry. There is the speciality of Shinto, seen through the active communication between the gods and people.

Finally to review the topic of Shinto as universality and speciality, lets look at the possibility of foreigners' Shinto belief and the creation of Shrines in foreign countries. Of course this kind of challenge, if we make even the slightest mistake can be just a discussion or soulless. However in the past, we can see the example, like Patrick Lafcadio Hearn, who claimed belief in Shinto and as I mentioned previously that there are Shrines in Hawaii. There is a possibility that Shinto does not have much of a chance to become a universal religion. If we try to emphasise an understanding of god and exist to understand the existence world and humanities position and life ideas. If we try to expand Shinto actively, we can see the success of expansion. However that expansion is just individual belief and logical Shinto or just the study of Shinto. Of course we will see how the festival is treated as a local thing. I think in this point there is a huge possibility as well. People tend to think that in Hawaii, only Japanese Hawaiians can have Shinto belief, but as long as it gets peoples understanding of the belief it is not impossible for one to believe. We can just wait for early festivals and rules which will be created by the local people. When the festivals have been going long enough we will have the structure of shrine, rule, clothes and the presents to gods. Those things are the speciality with the Japanese tradition and the possibility of universalisation. However these kinds of things can really be changed and if I say, extreme idea, if they created totally new ideas, new ideas cannot be real obstacles to the belief in Shinto. However there is difficulty if Shinto becomes universalised.

Previously after WWII, Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫, a folklorist, published the book, From the Race Religion to World Religion. His idea created huge controversy in the Jinja Honcho. He tried to make Shinto separate from the belief of the Emperor. To become a universal religion, the category of country and race are obstacles to its

success. I am not sure if Orikuchi san wanted to really do, but at that time, because of GHQ (American Army) tried to proceed in the direction to separate Shinto from local religion. They wanted to redirect Shinto's development. At that time Shinto's belief in Tenno (Japan as superior, only one country), was created as a speciality of Japan. They tried to separate those beliefs from local Shinto. They wanted to create a really individual Shinto. Some shrines and Shinto practitioners still now, are speaking about this controversial idea at. However as a result without talking about Tenno belief and the Emperors families treatment and festival work we cannot even talk about Jinja Shinto's origin and the logic of Shinto. Therefore the discussion topics I would like to choose that a foreigner could accept this religion. Or we just remove tenno only for the foreigner. In the foreigners' case can we talk about Shinto to a foreigner.

Appendix II

Interviews with Prof Suga of Kukugakuin University and Iwahashi Katsuji of the Jinja Honcho.

This conversation took place in October 2011 between myself and Iwahashi Katsuji the international representative of the Jinja Honcho and a Shinto priest.

R - Richard Tighe

I - Iwahashi Katsuji

R: Iwahashi Sensei thank you very much for meeting with me I really appreciate it.

I: No problem at all. I hope I can be of assistance. I just need you to know that all my answers will reflect the standpoint of the Jinja Honcho and I will not give my own opinions unless necessary. I hope this is okay.

R: That is fine. I appreciate your honesty and I feel that you will be of great assistance.

I: So please ask me some questions.

R: Okay, to start can you please describe Shinto from your perspective to me.

I: Shinto is difficult to explain. I think that is because it is very area specific and so it is very individualistic in the manner in which people follow it. It has no set text like a bible which means that the manner that Shinto is followed differs greatly depending upon where you are. The literature is often modified to be accessible for each person. This is something that I think really makes Shinto different. Shinto has a different meaning to each individual. You might think of it as one thing and I can think of it as another. So the meaning is very personal. The prayers that are said can be modified a lot depending upon who is saying them and also the rituals themselves are not like in other religions. The meanings of the rituals are something that is really based around the person more than the Gods. So whilst the aesthetics of the ritual is very important, the meaning of the ritual is based upon the meaning that the person wants to get out of it. I think this is very important because each individual gets what they want to get out of the ritual. This means that they can cater to a wide range of wants and needs. I think this is a problem for many westerners to understand because it is something that is ever changing and very individualistic. Also I think that the idea of Kami is something that is not understood either. I think many people think Kami are like Gods but I don't think that is accurate. I feel that way because anything can be Kami. There are no set requirements or anything it is the natural order of things. Take this knife for example, after one hundred years this knife can become Kami.

R: So the concept of Kami is something that exists in all things?

I: Yes exactly! It is like when we say *いただきます*. We are giving thanks to the kami for the food because of the connection between kami and everything around us. It is not just the food but the cutlery and everything else as well that we give thanks for.

R: Is this understood across all of Japan?

I: No, to be honest I don't think many Japanese fully understand the reason as to why they say these things. But I think that many Japanese also don't understand the difference between a temple and a shrine. This is because Shinto is a very tolerant religion and accepting of foreign ideas which makes it difficult to define. This is because everything is kami in the end and so Shinto is an act of appreciation for the world. So Shinto encourages co-existence and not control. This leads to a sense of awe and respect for nature. As such Shinto aims to pacify nature, and recognises the divinity or sacred status of the forest and sea and as such believe that these two forces represent an opposition in the world, the sea in a constant battle with the forest. This battle is something that must be recognised as part of nature and the spirit of the kami. It represents the natural order of the world and also the natural order of everything that exists there.

R: So nature is the heart of Shinto?

I: In a way.... But nature is the heart of everything. Human beings are part of nature too, I mean we can also become Kami because we are part of nature and the natural world. I think the best way to describe it is that Shinto is the essence and spirit of everything.

R: So can I ask you about what you feel the relationship is between Shinto and Christianity?

I: Of course! Basically the biggest issue that Christianity faced when it entered Japan was that it was too doctrinal. There was not an issue in regards to offering a new value system. This could be easily incorporated into the present Japanese concept of religion, however the concept of conversion and exclusivity was problematic. On top of this there was difficulty in communication due to a lack of appropriate understanding of language. To add to that Shinto was difficult to explain to Christians because it was not prepared for outside contact. Writers like Norinaga had to respond

to this and so began defining Shinto, but in terms that Christians could understand. So even the term Shinto is problematic because it was used to define so many different groups in Japan at the time. I personally prefer to think of Shinto as an idea of faith rather than a religion. So in Meiji there is a massive campaign for the promulgation of Shinto. Christianity was sidelined and discriminated against, whilst still being given the right to exist. It was difficult to be a Christian because there was a ban on the practice of ritual. It was only after Meiji that there was a renewal of Christian ritual. However after the Meiji era there was a separation of Shinto from the government.

R: How did this effect Shinto?

I: Well Shinto had to become selective about what rituals were part of its tradition. It could not revert back to old Shinto because that was gone. So certain Shinto Shrines were seen as holding the key to that past. The Shrines of Ise and Izumo were seen as especially important during this time. They both maintained the dignity of Shinto and the Shinto tradition. However the Jinja Honcho had to also rewrite certain aspects of Shrine tradition to bring it into the new era.

R: So where does that leave Shinto now?

I: I think that now Shinto is a more open faith that is focused upon ritual and how that ritual is perceived by the believer. Kind of like when Bruce Lee says ‘Don’t think, feel’ that is pretty much what Shinto is now. It encourages self-reflection over external learning. So the strict nature of the ritual only applies to the priest who is honoring the kami by performing in a specific way. This performance is now part of the tradition. This feeling can then in turn be shared with everyone, because it has a specific importance to each individual. So the prayer is always fundamentally the same, even if the ritual might look slightly different. It says:

Those kami who have great power I would like to invite you to answer these people’s prayers.

I think that this can be felt in any faith tradition, but I think for Shinto it is a central element to it.

R: So what about ethics in modern Shinto? Does it exist?

I: Ethics is not part of Shinto. I think ethics does not need to be part of Shinto. People often think things like Bushido is the ethics of Shinto but it isn’t. This is because

ethics is a part of culture. In the case of Japanese ethics it is part of Japanese culture. So its isn't a religious concept. If it is part of religion it becomes rigid and unbending. In the case of Shinto it is not there, it is instead given to the Japanese people in their traditional view of we and what is best for everyone.

R: So how do you feel Shinto's relationship with other religions? Do you feel that this understanding can be communicated?

I: This is difficult. I think that Interfaith dialogue is problematic in itself. Interfaith dialogue has a thing for labels and so once something is one thing it can't be another. It is also problematic to talk in general terms about religion. This stems from the fact that the opinion of the individual is not necessarily the opinion of the tradition. So people are afraid of discussing their faith because they are afraid that they will cause a conflict on behalf of their faith. For me interfaith dialogue is not so much about understanding as an attempt to promote friendship. However I think the reality is that it continues to promote a form of segregation. There is no honesty there. People work too hard to create an amicable atmosphere that does not invite any controversy or disagreement. Dialogue is not designed to constantly please the group. For real communication to grow there has to be disagreement and through disagreement there needs to be an attempt to understand that difference. We must dissent to understand so that we can move forward.

R: Iwahashi Sensei thank you very much for taking the time to talk we me. I really appreciate it.

I: You are more than welcome.

INTERVIEW WITH PROF SUGA SEPTEMBER 2011

R - Richard Tighe

S - Professor Suga

R: Prof Suga, thank you very much for meeting with me. I know you only have a short time so I hope you don't mind me asking you some questions.

S: Not at all. Thank you for taking an interest in Shinto and I hope I can help you.

R: May I first ask you, what is your position here?

S: Ah, I am an associate professor here. My primary field is Shinto.

R: Okay, please could you tell me what Shinto is to you?

S: For me Shinto is something of a challenge to explain. I don't think that we have found a way to properly explain it yet to Christians because we are faced with a number of linguistic and cultural understandings that cause a problem. If I was to put it into a simple form I would say it is the cultural faith of Japan. It is something of a combination of tradition and religion or faith.

R: You said there that there is a challenge in understanding Shinto. Could you explain that further?

S: Of course. You will have to excuse my English, but I will try my best. Basically there are a lot of terms that we use, like Kami and Ancestor and Shrine which are really very culturally individual. So when we talk about these things it causes problems and misunderstanding. For example, what is kami to you?

R: For me... Kami represent a spiritual presence that pervades the natural world. I think many people see kami as spirits or gods but I think it is more a presence that is closely tied to all things.

S: Interesting, so how do you feel about the fact that humans can become kami?

R: I think that within the framework of my idea it makes sense. It is a connection to the natural world that allows us to become kami. We don't become gods but rather we return to that natural world.

S: That is a good answer. I think you are onto something there. Many times people assume that Kami is the same as a saint or God. But I think that is wrong. I believe that kami is something with a much greater significance and that boxing it into one

specific role does not do justice to the kami. It is like Buddhism and other traditions that attempted to create a concept of kami for others to understand. It was not in line with what kami actually represented. As a result we often have a very inaccurate interpretation of kami. I think we need to look at kami as a problematic tool to our understanding of Shinto if we attempt to limit it in the manner of western thinking. It was one of the great challenges that I had when I converted to Shinto.

R: So you weren't a Christian to begin with?

S: No, I was actually a Christian. I joined Shinto when I joined this university because it is a Shinto university.

R: I see. Please what was your experience like as a Christian here in Japan.

S: For me growing up I did not think about it much. I was very aware that my family did not attend the things that other Japanese families attended and my church was very different. However there were a lot of things that I found to be similar and I think we believed very strongly in the connection between God and Japanese tradition as well so there were a lot of little things that I was part of. However I was always aware that I was not part of what everyone else believed. This caused a few problems because people would get confused about my understandings. Also I don't think we believed things in the same way you believed things. For example the concept of the sacrifice of Christ. For us we believed that this sacrifice was a ransom for salvation. Do you feel that this is an accurate portrayal of the crucifixion?

R: That is a difficult one. I feel that Christ did not actively sacrifice himself as part of a ransom. I think that Christ chose to sacrifice himself on behalf of humanity, hence he was not forced or made to pay for the sins of others but chose to do so.

S: I see. As you can see, we have a different interpretation of the message and mythology. However I find that I am still criticised by my peers for being too Christian in my work, an irony being that I am Japanese and converted to Shinto but one which I can understand given the fact that I was brought up originally Christian.

R: I see! That must have been quite challenging.

S: Yes it is but at the same time it is quite rewarding to have a slightly different perspective as well. I apologise but I must go to another meeting now.

R: That is quite all right. Thank you for your time and I look forward to talking to you again.

Appendix III

Periods in Japanese History

Period Name	Date (Circa)
Jomon	10,000 -300 BCE
Yayoi	300 BCE – 250 CE
Kofun	250 CE – 600 CE
Asuka	600 CE – 710 CE
Nara	710 CE – 794 CE
Heian	794 CE – 1185 CE
Kamakura	1185 CE – 1333 CE
Kemmu Restoration	1333 CE – 1336 CE
Muromachi (Ashikaga)	1336 CE – 1573 CE
Azuchi Momoyama	1573 CE – 1600 CE
Tokugawa (Edo)	1600 CE – 1867 CE
Meiji (Mutsuhito)	1868 CE – 1912 CE
Taisho (Yoshihito)	1912 CE – 1926 CE
Showa (Hirohito)	1926 CE – 1989 CE
Heisei (Akihito)	1989 - Present

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Feudal Period Blocks

Feudal Block 1 – Unstable Leadership
Heian Period
Kamakura Period
Kemmu Restoration
Muromachi
Azuchi Momoyama
Feudal Block 2 – Stable Leadership
Edo Period

Tomb Period: Archaeological time period referring to a block of time from the Kofun Period to the early Heian Period (6th-9th Century)

⁵⁴⁸ The Library of Congress <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/jptoc.html>

