

*SHINTŌ* AND BUDDHISM: THE JAPANESE HOMOGENEOUS BLEND

BIB 590  
Guided Research Project

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Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth:  
and put away the gods which your fathers served

–Joshua

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: The History of Japanese Religion.....	3
The History of <i>Shintō</i> .....	5
The Mythical Background of <i>Shintō</i>	
The Early History of <i>Shintō</i>	
The History of Buddhism.....	21
The Founder — Siddhartha Gautama	
Buddhism in China	
Buddhism in Korea and Japan	
The History of the Blending .....	32
The Sects That Were Founded after the Blend .....	36
Pre-War History (WWII) .....	39
Post-War History (WWII).....	45
Chapter Two: The Blending that affects Christianity .....	50
Social Settings that affect Christianity.....	50
Home Settings that affect Christianity .....	54
Rites that affect Christianity .....	57
Chapter Three: The Beliefs and Practices of Japanese .....	60
The Beliefs of Buddhism .....	64
四諦 <i>shitai</i> , “The Four Noble Truths”	
The Teachings on the Human Soul	

The Teachings on Emptiness	
The Teachings on Salvation	
The Doctrines of God	
The Beliefs of <i>Shintōism</i> .....	70
The Four Affirmations	
The Four Steps of Worship	
The Belief in Afterlife	
The Beliefs of God	
Chapter Four: The Biblical Evaluation of the Teaching and Practices of the Japanese ....	73
The Bible’s Teachings of the on the Four Noble Truths and Suffering.....	73
Suffering and Death	
Desire and Origin of Suffering	
The Purpose of Suffering	
The Bible Teachings on the Human Soul .....	76
Eternal Suffering	
Man has an Eternal Soul	
The Bible Teachings on Emptiness.....	78
God’s Permanence	
The Bibles Permanence	
Right and Wrong	
God’s Judgment	
The Bible Teachings on Salvation .....	81

The Bible Teachings on God and Idols.....	82
The Forbidding of Idol Worship and Consequences	
How to Destroy Idols	
The Bible Teachings on Afterlife .....	86
The Written Authority is the Bible .....	86
Chapter Five: Conclusion and Application.....	88
Sources Consulted.....	95
Appendix A. Japanese Survey Questions .....	100
Appendix B. Translation of Survey Questions .....	103

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## SHINTŌ AND BUDDHISM: THE JAPANESE HOMOGENEOUS BLEND

### INTRODUCTION

The Japanese religious tradition is not only rich, but it is also complex. It blends *Shintō*, the indigenous religion of Japan, and Buddhism, which came to Japan from Korea and China no later than the sixth century. While *Shintō* and Buddhism are the two major religions in Japan, they are not mutually exclusive but rather complementary. Worship or prayer as a *Shintō* at a Buddhist temple is acceptable, and worship or prayer as a Buddhist at a *Shintō* shrine is also acceptable.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, most Japanese participate in rituals and customs of both *Shintō* and Buddhist traditions.

The celebration of a baby's birth takes place at the *Shintō* shrine. There are also visits to the shrine on the third, fifth, and seventh birthdays for blessings from the *Shintō* priest. There will also be a visit to the shrine between January 1 and 10 on the year when their twentieth birthday occurs to celebrate becoming an adult. January 10 is a national holiday celebrating "The Coming of Age," and it is the official date of becoming an adult for everyone born in that year. The wedding ceremony might be Christian or *Shintō*, but

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<sup>1</sup> The word "shrine" is the standard translation referring to the *Shintō* structure, and "temple" is the standard term used for the Buddhist structure. This separation dates back to the *Meiji* era A.D. 1868-1912, when efforts were made to separate the indigenous *Shintō* religion from Buddhism.



a Buddhist priest will be in charge of the funeral. Of the 27.1 million<sup>2</sup> people living in Japan, 109 million claim to be *Shintō*, and 96 million claim to be Buddhists.<sup>3</sup> Whether they are *Shintō* or Buddhists, they will join together in ancestor worship. Daily life, culture, and even the language are heavily influenced by these practices and beliefs because of the *Shintō* and the Buddhist religious blend. But for missionaries, indigenous pastors and evangelists this creates a huge obstacle for Christian separation. Until one understands the historical significance, complexity, and difficulties the Japanese Christian faces, one *cannot* effectively minister to them. A survey was used in this research.<sup>4</sup> From the results it appears that through proper discipline, the religious syncretism can be successfully removed.

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<sup>2</sup> U. S. Department of State, “Background Note: Japan,” United States Government, <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4142.htm> (accessed January 24, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Operation Japan Publishing Committee and Japan Evangelical Missionary Association, *Operation Japan Edition 2000: Japan in focus, a handbook for prayer* (Korea: Jeyoung, 2000), 24.

<sup>4</sup> Appendix A is the Japanese version and Appendix B is the English translation.

CHAPTER ONE  
THE HISTORY OF JAPANESE RELIGION

There is virtually no written factual history about the early religious developments in Japan. The oldest known book in Japan, with unquestionable authenticity, is the 古事記 *Kojiki*, “Records of Ancient Matters,” which was finished A.D. 712. This book is a “compilation of annals and legends, partially based on the work started by Prince Shutout (Shōtoku Taishi [A.D. 573–621] also known as Prince Umayado. He was a regent<sup>5</sup> and a politician of the Kofun period in Japan) nearly one hundred years before.”<sup>6</sup> It was written in Chinese, but its syntax is pure Japanese.

The second book of unquestioned authenticity is the 日本書紀 *Nihon Shoki* or 日本紀 *Nihon-gi*, “The Chronicles of Japan,” dated at A.D. 720 and completed by *Prince Toneri* (*Toneri shinnō* [A.D. 676-735] was a Japanese imperial prince in the *Nara* period. He was a son of *Emperor Temmu*). It was written in Chinese and includes the most complete historical record of ancient Japan; it is more elaborate than the *Kojiki*. The

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<sup>5</sup> The regent is the acting Head of State; one who governs a kingdom in the place of a minor, or in the sovereign’s absence, or because the sovereign is disabled.

<sup>6</sup> Anesaki Masaharu, *History of Japanese Religion: With Special Reference to the Social and Moral Life of the Nation* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1963), 87.

*Kojiki* as stated above is a:

bald narrative, grotesque, savage [*sic*], throwing the imagination back to primeval, uncouth dawns. The Nihongi, the second of the two ‘Greater Scriptures,’ [is] contemporaneous in compilation but centuries later in method and feeling, supplementing and amplifying the *Kojiki*, with its classified variants of the myths, humanizes the story.<sup>7</sup>

There is one older work dating back to A.D. 620. It is called the 旧書紀 *Kujiki*, “Old Chronicles,” but its authenticity is questionable as modern scholarship regards it “of lesser value and authority.”<sup>8</sup> Consequently, it is not used for this research; however, the *Nihon Shoki* and *Kojiki*<sup>9</sup> are the foundational materials that are used in the most works.

It is especially noteworthy what the Japanese have done with these two works: “the modern Japanese in a sense made these two books into *bibles of ultra-nationalism*; and at times official policy even forced upon the Japanese people the *acceptance of their historical absurdities as sober facts*” [emphasis added].<sup>10</sup> Both of these works together are known as the “*Shintō Scriptures*” and contain stories of mythical beings that created the Japanese islands. They are not authoritative like the Bible or the Qur’an in that they

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<sup>7</sup> Post Wheeler, *The Sacred Scriptures of the Japanese* (New York: Schuman, 1952), xi.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. This is common knowledge within the academic community in Japan.

<sup>9</sup> For further information on these texts and textual criticism see:

Philippi, Donald L. trans., *Kojiki*. Tokyo, Tokyo Press, 1968. This has dates and scholars listed in the section “Manuscripts and History of Criticism” in the “Introduction.”

Wheeler, Post, *The Sacred Scriptures of the Japanese*. New York, Schuman, 1952. This also has considerable information in the section “Sources” in the “Introduction.”

<sup>10</sup> Edwin O. Reischauer, *Japan: Past and Present* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1964), 31.

are just a compilation of history, *haiku* (poems), and genealogies. A systematic form of *Shintō* mythology appears in both works under the sections that recount the “divine age” with theological, ethical, and political notions that are a deep-seated central theme of the myths. “Both texts strongly emphasize the absoluteness and eternity of the sovereignty of the imperial family as descendants of the solar goddess Amaterasu,”<sup>11</sup> making them deity, and in essence they are still worshiped as deity today.

### *The History of Shintō*

*Shintō* is the name that was given to the indigenous religion of Japan in the sixth century. The name was given to distinguish *Shintō* from 仏道 *Butsudō*, “the way of Buddha.” 神道 *Shintō*, which combines 神 *shin* (Chinese reading for god) and 道 *dō* (Chinese reading meaning road, path or way; it is changed to *tō* when combined with *shin*), is commonly translated as “The way of the gods.” *Shintō* can be described as a religion that:

. . . was and is in some of its phases even to-day [*sic*] an animistic and polytheistic Nature Worship with a strong admixture of Ancestor Worship. The forces of nature are personified and anthropomorphized, while the heroes and ancestors, especially those of the royal family, are deified. The soul of Shintō is reverence and implicit obedience to the Mikado [Emperor]; and religion and patriotism are made one. Yamato Damashii, The Spirit of Japan, is largely the product of this religion, and it has played a great part in the conquest, unification and civilization of the entire country.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Mircea Eliade, ed, *The Encyclopedia of Religion; Japanese Religion* (New York: MacMillan, 1987), 7:546.

<sup>12</sup> August Karl Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism* (New York: MacMillan, 1917), 82.

*Shintō* had no founder but rather grew out of the ancient Japanese awe of the mysterious and supernatural. Any phenomenon, in particular the unusual phenomenon was thought of as 神 *kami*, “deity,” which was then to become an object of *Shintō* worship. This in itself does not describe the history or the full meaning of *Shintō*, but rather it is a complete way of life, a concept that may be understood better by the following quote:

Some *kami*, such as deified ancestors, heroes, or the personified powers of nature, roughly correspond to the term “deity” or “god.” Yet the vital force within anything is also a *kami*. It is not surprising, then, that the kimono, for instance, is made from uncut squares of fabric, or that paper-folding—*origami*—is such a highly developed popular art. Cutting fabric or paper destroys its divine spirit and is consequently avoided. The all-embracing and indefinable nature of the *kami* has been expressed in a poem perhaps composed by Saigyō or by the Heian-period Buddhist monk Gyōkyō, as quoted by Prince Takahito Mikasa in his address to the IXth International Congress for the History of Religions:

Unknown to me what resideth here  
Tears flow from a sense of unworthiness and gratitude<sup>13</sup>

*Shintō* could be considered as a relationship between man and the *kami*; it is Japan’s cultural identity. Consequently *Shintō*’s worship is centered on prayers and gratitude that are addressed directly to nature. This form of worship is concisely described by Paul in Romans 1:17-25, in particular verses 21-23:

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

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<sup>13</sup> Kageyama Haruki, *The Art of Shinto*, trans. Christine Guth (New York: Weatherhill/Shibundo, 1973), 9, 10.

### The Mythical Background of *Shintō*

The Chinese writing system was introduced in A.D. 405,<sup>14</sup> and Buddhism was introduced in A.D. 552, roughly one-hundred sixty years before the *Kojiki* record was compiled. Both of these facts raise the probability that the *Shintō* mythology was influenced by religious cults from China and Korea.

To gain a better understanding of *Shintō*, the mythology must be examined; in short, the “historical” myth is essentially this: In the beginning, in the “primordial chaos,” the Heaven and Earth were gradually separated; the purer became heaven and the less pure became earth. “Reed-shoots” sprouted from earth to heaven and became three invisible deities. “These three deities all came into existence as single deities, and their forms were not visible.”<sup>15</sup> Later, two more invisible deities—a male and female—were added. Then two more who were also male and female were added, making the total number seven.

The two of the most important deities, *Izanagi no mikoto*, the “Male Who Invites,” and *Izanami no mikoto*, the “Female Who Invites,” are the ancestors of all *Shintō* deities. While standing on the “Heavenly Floating Bridge,” they “churned” the ocean depths with a jeweled spear. When they lifted the spear, the drips that fell “piled up” and became the first island, named *Onogoro*, “self-curdling.” The island no longer

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<sup>14</sup> Most scholars agree on the date of 405, though Korean writing many have been introduced as early as A.D. 205. Archeological finds of writings are essentially non-existent until the early 400s. Reischauer’s “Chronology” found in *Japan: Past and Present*, 297, states “Traditional date of introduction of writing from Korea (perhaps corrected to 405).”

<sup>15</sup> *Kojiki*, trans. Donald L. Philippi (Tokyo: Tokyo Press, 1968), 1:2.

exists, though it is thought to have been near Ōsaka Bay.<sup>16</sup>

*Izanagi* and *Izanami* descended from the bridge to the new formed island and made their home there. On the island, they built a pillar around which they built a palace. *Izanagi* and *Izanami* circled the pillar in opposite directions, and when they met face-to-face, they united. The first words spoken were by *Izanami*, the female deity, which was a serious breach of etiquette (females were not to speak unless spoken to). Because of the breach, *Hiruko*, an ugly “leech-child” was born, whom they cast away. They had a second child *Awashima*, “Pale Island”, but it was bad also and is not considered a deity.<sup>17</sup> They returned to heaven to consult the other deities as to what had gone wrong. They were told, “Because the woman spoke first, [the child]<sup>18</sup> was not good. Descend once more and say it again.”<sup>19</sup> They returned and circled the pillar again. This time *Izanagi*, the male deity, spoke first when they met. The eight principle islands of Japan were born from this union.<sup>20</sup>

On the eight Japanese islands, further deities were produced: the god of the sea, the god of wind, the god of mountains, the god of trees, the god of rivers, and other deities that represent natural phenomena, totaling thirty-five.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:1-3.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 4.

<sup>18</sup> The brackets appear in the translation.

<sup>19</sup> *Kojiki*, 5:3.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, chapters 6, 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 7:24, 25.

The 神風 *kamikaze*, “god of wind,” plays a significant role throughout history, especially during WWII. It also plays a significant role in the history of *Shintō* religion. Though the term *kamikaze* was used by the allies for the Japanese suicide pilots; historically it had a significantly different meaning to the Japanese.

In 1281 Kublai Khan sent a great Mongol naval force against the Japanese coast of Hizen and Tokuze. During the battle which raged between the invaders and the defenders a tremendous storm at sea overturned all of the Mongol ships. The Japanese called the storm a *kami-kaze*, or “god-sent wind.” (See p. 127 for a Japanese account of the event.) When Perry and his flotilla entered a Japanese harbor in 1853, the reigning emperor prayed in vain to Amaterasu Omikami for a *kami-kaze* to destroy the “Western barbarians.” The typhoon which destroyed a part of Admiral Halsey’s fleet in 1945 was doubtless considered a *kami-kaze* by history-conscious Japanese. The province of Ise, where the great Shrine of Ise is located, is called in the *Nihongi* the “*kami-kaze* province [province of the divine wind]<sup>22</sup>, whither repair the waves from the eternal world.”<sup>23</sup>

Last to be born was the “Fire Deity,” who caused his mother to be burned fatally during his birth. In her death, seven other deities came into existence. *Izanagi* in his anger cut the fire in pieces with his sword, creating numerous other deities in the process.<sup>24</sup>

In her death, *Izanami* descended to the land of *Yōmi*<sup>25</sup> where she tried to prevent her husband from seeing her decomposed state, but he impatiently peeked. This angered her greatly, and in her humiliation, she with the “Eight Thunder” deities and the “Ugly

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<sup>22</sup> The brackets appear in the original.

<sup>23</sup> Robert O. Ballou, *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy* (New York: Viking, 1945), 5.

<sup>24</sup> *Kojiki*, chapters 7, 8.

<sup>25</sup> “The Japanese Hades or Sheol is a subterranean land of the dead which *Izanagi* visits in his search for his deceased wife *Izanami*. *Yōmi* is consistently written with the ideographs ‘yellow spring’ a Chinese expression for the land beyond the grave.” *Kojiki*, 642. See section on “History of the Blending.”



Females” chased him. He escaped and successfully blocked the entry to the underworld.<sup>26</sup> Returning to the surface, *Izanagi* “purified and exorcized himself”<sup>27</sup> ritually in water. Fourteen deities came into existence through this purification ritual. “Then when he washed his left eye, there came into existence a deity named Ama-terasu-opo-mi-kami [now known as *Amaterasu* the “Sun Goddess”]. Next, when he washed his right eye, there came into existence a deity named Tuku-yomi-nomikoto [now known as *Tsuki-yomi* the “Moon Goddess”].”<sup>28</sup> From his nose came the storm deity *Susanowo*.<sup>29</sup>

*Amaterasu* had many adventures, battles, and victories, creating numerous gods.<sup>30</sup> At one point, she hid in a cave. In doing so, darkness covered the whole earth.<sup>31</sup> She also had many children. The most notable, *Jimmu Tenno*, is known in Japanese history as the first human emperor in 660 B.C.<sup>32</sup> He was given a mirror, sword, and jewels to prove his divine roots and authority of the gods to rule the populace; which are now part of the Divine Imperial Regalia. This dynasty, known by several different names, has occupied

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<sup>26</sup> *Kojiki*, chapters 9, 10.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 11:2.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 11:22, 23.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 11.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, chapters 12-16.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 17.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 41.

the Chrysanthemum Throne since then.<sup>33</sup> The *Emperor Hirohito*—known as 昭和 *Shōwa*, “Bright Peace”—of World War II fame, is a direct decedent of *Jimmu Tenno*.

This is essentially the end of the mythology of the deities; however, the ensuing chapters of the *Kojiki* still contain myths that gradually give place to legends, which gradually give place to historical facts. Throughout Japanese’s history, the sun was worshipped, and hence the name “The Land of the Rising Sun.”

### The Early History of *Shintō*

“Details of the most primitive forms of early *Shintō* are unknown; however, through such scientific methods as philology, archaeology, and comparative folklore these early forms can be conjectured to some extent.”<sup>34</sup> The earliest history of Japan is known as the 縄文時代, “*Jōmon Period*.” Most scholars date this period 8,000 B.C. to about 300 B.C. Assumptions are made from archeological finds that the religion of that time revolved around fertility and mythology. There were:

. . . remarkable clay figures known as *dogu*—bizarre but exquisitely crafted, half-animal, half-human figures with peculiar slit eyes that have reminded some of ski masks. It would be strange if these figures did not have some magical or supernatural meaning, but since the *Jomon* peoples left no written records we can only speculate. We may note, however, that already the brilliant fusion of the

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<sup>33</sup> Chrysanthemum Throne is the English term given to the Imperial Throne of Japan. The Imperial Crest is a chrysanthemum with sixteen open petals, thus the name Chrysanthemum Throne.

<sup>34</sup> Eliade, ed, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, 7:545.

religion and the artistic, which has characterized Japan so well, had arisen. Broadly speaking, Jomon culture and religion were probably comparable to that of Polynesia and Melanesia at the time of initial European contact.<sup>35</sup>

It is also known that the *Jōmon* people were food gatherers and that an animistic worship was prevalent among them.

The next major prehistoric period is the 弥生時代 “*Yayoi Period*,” dated from about 300 B.C. to around A.D. 300. The *Yayoi* people were more advanced and started the art of crop growing. Wet rice was introduced and gradually spread northward from *Kyushu* during this period. Metals and a new type of pottery-making were also introduced, perhaps from Korea. The earlier metal objects found dated to this period were probably used for religious rituals rather than practical use. “Swords, spears, mirrors, and bells that probably served as sacred objects in shrines have been found buried with important persons.”<sup>36</sup> The religion at that time seems to have been only agricultural rites and shamanism.<sup>37</sup> There were female shamanesses who apparently had religious roles for the common people and roles as oracles for clan leaders. “The *niiname*, the harvest festival that has been so important to Shinto and the rites of the imperial house down through the centuries, has its roots in this era.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Robert S. Ellwood and Richard Pilgrim, *Japanese Religion: A Cultural Perspective* (Englewood: Prentice, 1992), 20.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> Shamanism is a form of indigenous religion that was practiced by the early Korean and Japanese. It is a religion that believes in an unseen world of gods, demons, and ancestral spirits who respond only to the shamans or shamanesses. Shamans or shamanesses are similar to a seer or a diviner.

<sup>38</sup> Ellwood and Pilgrim, *Japanese Religion*, 20.

Both the *Jōmon* and *Yayoi* periods provide the roots for *Shintō* religion. From these periods:

We get a vivid portrait of conditions in Japan at that time from the accounts of travelers from China. They tell us that people ate raw vegetables from bamboo or wooden trays, clapped their hands for worship rather than kneeling, were fond of liquor, long-lived, and generally honest. These chronicles tell us that the country was formerly ruled by a man, but more recently (apparently in the third century C.E., after a period of turmoil) by a woman named Pimiko. She was a shamaness who lived in seclusion with a thousand female attendants and a single male who mediated between her and the outside world.<sup>39</sup>

The next period is the 古墳時代 “*Kofun Period*,” dated about A.D. 300 to A.D. 710. *Kofun* literally means “ancient tomb,” which can also be translated as “tumulus.” The majority of the tombs during this period are “keyhole” shaped mounds that were built for rulers. It is from these tombs that paintings and artifacts give a clear picture of upper-class life of that age. The artifacts found in the Tumulus clearly point to the worship of items thought to be gods. Kageyama Haruki noted that:

Archeological finds in the fourth- and fifth-century mounded tombs characteristic of the Tumulus or *Kofun* period as well as references in Shinto mythology indicate that objects such as mirrors, swords, and jewels, which perhaps initially had heirloom value, were thought to embody the divine essence of a kami. The belief that the numinous power of a deity might be captured and contained within an object which was then endowed with overwhelming spiritual energy was one of the primary factors leading to the creation of shrines, often on the natural sites previously set apart for ritual purposes. Later this concept evolved into the creation of devotional imagery.<sup>40</sup>

The walls of the tombs had immaculate paintings, many of which are still preserved. The

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<sup>39</sup> Ryusaku Tsunoda and L. Carrington Goodrich, *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories* (S. Pasadena: P.D. & Ione Perkins, 1951), cited in Ellwood and Pilgrim, *Japanese Religion*, 20.

<sup>40</sup> Kageyama, *The Art of Shinto*, 10.

paintings were of historical accounts and the “soul boats,” which were thought to transport the soul to another world.

The earliest distinctly Japanese works of art were found circling the tumuli by the hundreds, called *haniwa*. The *haniwa* were hollow clay human and animal figures that may have magically guarded the tumuli from robbers. It is also thought that they could have been the retainers of warriors intending to follow the dead rulers into the next world.

It was during this period that Buddhism was introduced from Korea. “According to the ‘*Nihonshoki*’,<sup>41</sup> Buddhism came to Japan on October 13th, 552, i.e. the 13th year<sup>42</sup> of Emperor Kimmei, the 29th mikado of Japan.”<sup>43</sup> This is an official date, but many scholars believe that Buddhism had influences that were earlier.

When *Emperor Kimmei* died, the crown prince, *Bidatsu*, came to the throne. *Emperor Bidatsu* had no interest in Buddhism; however, when he died, *Yomei*, his younger brother, who embraced Buddhism, succeeded him. From this point forward, *Shintōism* and Buddhism began to merge.

In 685 A.D. *Emperor Temmu* (A.D. 631-686), the 40th emperor of Japan made an

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<sup>41</sup> [foot note in original] “A chronological history of Japan that came out in 720. It was done by order of the government and is in Classical Chinese.”

<sup>42</sup> [foot note in original] “As to the date of introduction of Buddhism into Japan, opinions are divided. What is the generally accepted date is what stands in the ‘*Jogushotokuhooteisetsu*’, compiled around 720. This sets the year of introduction at 538. The *Nihonshoki* was compiled in 720, about two centuries after Buddhism officially came to Japan. With this time gap, any slip in record is not entirely impossible.”

<sup>43</sup> Hanayama Shinsho, *A History of Japanese Buddhism*, trans. and ed. Yamamoto Kosho (Tokyo: CIIB, 1960), 3.

edict that “my people shall make a place of honor in every home and make it an altar.”<sup>44</sup> Because of this edict, many Japanese made in the main room of their home an area for the “place of honor.” To make the “place of honor” into an altar, a believer of *Shintō* would hang scrolls depicting *Amaterasu*, the Sun Goddess, and a Buddhist believer would hang pictures of Buddha. This evolved into the modern day 床の間 *tokonoma*, “alcove,” where “the Sun-goddess” was put into a small shrine looking wooden box called 神棚 *kamidana*, “god shelf,” and the pictures and/or images of Buddha were put into immaculately lacquered boxes with gild, which became the 仏壇 *butsudan*, “Buddhist altar.”

“The association between Buddhism, death and the memorialisation [*sic*] of the ancestors is found from very early on in Buddhism’s history in Japan. By the seventh century it had become quite established . . . that all households . . . should possess a *butsudan* or private family altar at which the family antecedents could be worshipped.”<sup>45</sup> This tradition of owning a *butsudan* or *kamidana* is very difficult to overcome even among fundamental Bible believing Christians.

During this period there were three clans in charge of different aspects of the imperial court. The *Soga* clan was in charge of foreign relations, the *Mononobe* clan was the warrior clan, and the *Nakatomi* clan was in charge of *Shintō* rituals and ceremonies.

Each clan also had its own deity or deities and rites that went with it. The clan

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<sup>44</sup> David C. Lewis, *The Unseen Face of Japan* (Tunbridge Wells UK: Monarch, 1993), 124.

<sup>45</sup> Ian Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1991), 84.

chief would become by default the priest of the clan's deity and spirits. Often the wife or sister to the clan leader would become the shamanesse. "Shamanesses called *miko* or *ichiki* delivered divine messages both at shrines and among the common people."<sup>46</sup> This tradition remains active today with the first-born male becoming the default priest of the family's deities and ancestral spirits who are memorialized in the *butsudan*.

According to the historical record, a struggle erupted over the differences of thought within the *Shintō* and Buddhist religions. The *Soga* clan supported Buddhism, while the *Mononobe* and the *Nakatomi* clans opposed it. Scholars cast doubt on this account for starting the war, as there were rifts already existing between the clans. Regardless, this time was a tumultuous time for Japan with attacks from without, and factions warring within.

During the *Kofun Period*, the earlier *Shintō* ceremonies were probably held within the natural setting of the sacred place where the deity was thought to reside. There were no idols to represent the deity who had been thought to reside therein. However, Buddhism introduced graven images and buildings to house them. It was from Buddhism that the inspiration of building a house for the *Shintō* deity came. The earliest shrine thought to have been built was at *Izumo* around A.D. 659 and then another at *Ise* about A.D. 690.

Toward the end of this period, a type of a legal system was introduced. It was based on Confucianism and Chinese legalism which by law established the supremacy of the emperor. Later, these laws were expanded to include the relationship of the emperor

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<sup>46</sup> Ellwood and Pilgrim, *Japanese Religion*, 21.

to major shrines and festivals.

The next period is the 奈良時代, “*Nara Period*,” dated A.D. 710-794. Just prior to the start of this period, Empress *Genmyō* (A.D. 661-721), who was the 43rd imperial ruler of Japan (the fifth woman), constructed the city of *Nara*. It was laid out in squares—the first of its type in Japan. Shrines sprang up prolifically, outnumbering Buddhist temples. In 710, the capital was moved to the new city of *Nara*, marking the start of this period.<sup>47</sup>

By 737 Shinto shrines numbered over three thousand, one out of four enjoying direct government support. In the first capital, *Nara*, the Fujiwara clan founded the important Kasuga shrine. Kasuga was destined to play a critical role in the development of a hybrid of Buddhism and Shinto through its relationship with the nearby Buddhist temple of *Todaiji*.<sup>48</sup>

The 平安時代, “*Heian Period*,” is dated A.D. 794-1185. The capital was relocated again in 794, this time to remove the government from the Buddhist influence of *Nara*. It was relocated to the north a few miles. It remained the imperial capital until 1868.<sup>49</sup> The new capital was placed in *Kyoto*:

. . . with the capital newly established at *Kyoto*, Shinto’s fortunes were intimately bound up with developments in Buddhism. Theologians on both sides devised theories designed to fit the two belief systems together, thereby inventing Dual Shinto, a blend of both Shinto and Buddhist elements.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 87.

<sup>48</sup> John Renard, *101 Questions & Answers on Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto* (New York: Paulist, 2002), 44.

<sup>49</sup> E. Reischauer, *Japan: Past and Present*, 25.

<sup>50</sup> Renard, *101 Questions*, 44.



Large estates were found during this period, which developed large military power; as a result, fighting erupted and ended this period.

The next period 鎌倉時代, “*Kamakura Period*,” dated A.D. 1185-1333, was an interesting, romantic period where feudal lords (*daimyo*) and the *samurai* warrior caste gave obeisance to the *shōgun*.<sup>51</sup> In this period, the *samurai* code called 仏子度 *bushido*, “way of the warrior,” was developed from a “blend of Confucian aristocratic conservatism, Buddhist mental discipline, and Shinto patriotism.”<sup>52</sup> It was during this period that Buddhism became popular among the commoners, which was a break from the past control by the aristocracy.

Both the 源治時代, “*Minamoto Period*” (1333-1568), and 桃山時代, “*Momoyama Period*” (1568-1600), were periods of war with little changes in the Japanese religious systems.

Japan began to be modernized as the Portuguese landed on an island south of *Kyūshū*. Trade, which consisted mainly of firearms, was started between the Portuguese and the feudal lords of *Kyūshū*. The trade also brought the famous Jesuit missionary St. Francis Xavier to Japan from 1549-1551. He had great success in proselytizing the Buddhists. One of the *daimyo*, who was a Christian, successfully converted the fishing village of *Nagasaki* into a major port. Christianity exploded at a phenomenal rate, “it is estimated that there were some 150,000 Christians in Japan around the year 1580 and

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<sup>51</sup> *Shōgun*, “a military leader that ruled large territories in Japan until the start of the *Meiji* era A. D. 1868.”

<sup>52</sup> Renard, *101 Questions*, 44.

twice that number in the early seventeenth century.”<sup>53</sup> In 1587, *Hideyoshi* issued an order banning all missionaries from Japan. In 1593, he executed several European priests and many Japanese Christians. This started the persecutions.

The next period, the 江戸時代, “*Edo Period*,” dated A.D. 1600-1868, brought tremendous changes to Japan. In the years following 1617, *Hideyoshi*’s successor killed thousands of Christians:

. . . missionaries were either killed or forced to leave Japan, and thousands of Japanese Christians either apostatized or else suffered the death of martyrs. A common practice of the time was to order people suspected of being Christian to tread upon a cross or some other sacred symbol, and to kill those who refused to comply.<sup>54</sup>

To prevent Christianity from reentering Japan, *Edo* made a law in 1636 that no Japanese were to leave the country, and no Japanese that had lived abroad could return. The foreigners, including the Portuguese, were expelled in 1638, effectively closing Japan. Japanese isolationism went hand-in-hand with attempts to rid *Shintō* of foreign elements.

For two centuries the Japanese lived under the firm government’s watch, which left an indelible mark on the society.

As a result of this rigid regimentation of society, the Japanese have become a people who live together in their cramped island with relatively few outward signs of friction. Nowhere in the world is proper decorum more rigorously observed by all classes in all situations than in Japan.<sup>55</sup>

This spilled over into the religious side, and everyone was required to follow the decorum

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<sup>53</sup> E. Reischauer, *Japan: Past and Present*, 88.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

rigorously by attending annual rites, activities, and festivals—not because of written rules, but because that was what family, neighbors, and society expected them to do. As a whole, everyone blindly followed this traditional path.

During this period Buddhism became deeply rooted in society. The relationship between Buddhism and each household was solidified, and Buddhism became the religion of death as well. These relationships were formalized through a series of laws enacted by the government. One significant law required each household to register and become formally affiliated with a Buddhist temple. Each individual was required to appear and register at a Buddhist temple to receive a 寺請状 *tera ukejō*, “temple certificate.” They were required to do this annually and affirm the Buddhist beliefs while denying Christianity. “All households were obliged to have a *butsudan* where the ancestors were enshrined and venerated. . . . The temples themselves were obliged to act as a registry of births, deaths and marriages, and to enforce the oath of allegiance.”<sup>56</sup> This system was known as 檀家 *danka*, “temple registry/support system,” and required participation by everyone, including the *Shintō* priests, in all the temple rites. This *danka* system continued until the *Meiji Period*.

In July 1853, Commodore Matthew C. Perry boldly sailed into Tokyo Bay demanding the opening of trade relations with Japan. The Japanese people reacted in one of two ways: either continue the expulsion of the foreigners or bow to the demands made by Perry. “For the first time in 600 years of military rule, the Shogun’s government asked

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<sup>56</sup> Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, 86.

the opinion of the emperor on an important problem of state and invited counsel also from the Daimyo.”<sup>57</sup> Ultimately, the Japanese bowed to the American threat, signed the treaty, and the first American counsel, Townsend Harris, was allowed to enter *Edo* in 1857.

The 明治時代, “*Meiji Period*,” or the “*Meiji Restoration*,” A.D. 1868-1912, returned the country to the rule by the emperor. Total power was restored in the fall of 1867 with the abolishment of the *samurai* class in 1872. In 1877, a group of two thousand *samurai* fought their last stand on land that is now the *Ueno* Park in Tokyo. “The *samurai* armed with swords were no match for the peasant soldiers, well-armed and well-drilled.”<sup>58</sup> Their bodies were left to rot; however, Buddhist monks “released the souls” by burning the entire area.

*Shintō* steadily made gains over Buddhism and deepened the identification with the political power of the *shoguns*, climaxing with the *Meiji Reform* which restored the emperor to divine status. World War II called *Shintō*’s imperial theology into question and saw *Emperor Hirohito* publicly renouncing his deity.

### *The History of Buddhism*

Buddhism is a religion or a philosophy which teaches that enlightenment may be reached by the elimination of earthly desires and the idea of self. Buddhism was founded

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<sup>57</sup> E. Reischauer, *Japan: Past and Present*, 110.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

around the sixth century by Siddhartha Gautama (563-483 B.C.). It is not a monolithic religion, but it encompasses many beliefs with two main branches, the *Mahāyāna* (“the Greater Vehicle”) and *Theravada* (“the Teaching of the Elders”).

### The Founder—Siddhartha Gautama

While the dates of Siddhartha Gautama’s birth and death are uncertain, most scholars date his birth at 563 B.C. and his death at 483 B.C. The writings about his life were written nearly four hundred years after his death; therefore, the trustworthiness and so-called facts are in question.

There are only a few facts about this Hindu guru that are agreed upon by most scholars. He was born around 563 B.C. in what is now called Nepal. His name is not known for certain. The ones that history preserved are spelled differently. One variation is Siddhartha Gautama. Although this name is doubted by many scholars . . . .

It is universally agreed that Siddhartha did not intend to start a new religion. He was born a Hindu. He lived as a Hindu. And he died a Hindu in 483 B.C. The myths and legends that gradually built up around him over the centuries are no safe guide to what he really believed or practiced.<sup>59</sup>

Gautama was born in an upper-class family. His father was a chief, so the early years of his life were well provided and sheltered. His father prevented him from having any contact with the world outside the palace; however, reportedly there were four separate times he successfully evaded the guards and left the compound in his chariot. Dale Saunders wrote of the four escapes, “Each excursion is in the direction of a different cardinal point, and each is marked by an encounter: these are known collectively as the

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<sup>59</sup> Robert A. Morey, *The Encyclopedia of Practical Christianity* (Las Vegas: Christian Scholars, 2004), 656-57.

Four Meetings.”<sup>60</sup> The first encounter was with an old man, the second a sick person, and the third a dead man; from these he learned that no one can escape old age, sickness, and death. On his fourth encounter, he met a sincere religious man; from this he learned the remedy for old age, sickness, and death—religious sincerity.

He supposedly left the palace and luxury on his twenty-ninth birthday. He studied with Hindu masters and practiced asceticism for a time, but he realized that the extremes of indulgence and asceticism were totally pointless. Realizing this, he chose the “Middle Way,” abandoned his austere life, and devoted himself to meditation. While meditating under a fig tree, now called the Bodhi-tree, it is said that he gained enlightenment and discovered the “Four Noble Truths.” At this point he became the *Buddha*, meaning “the Enlightened One.”

Seven weeks later, two merchants, *Tapusha* and *Bhallika*, met Buddha, and they became his first two disciples. They offered him food; “however, wishing to set an example for monks, he [took] alms only in a bowl to be used for that purpose.”<sup>61</sup> According to one tradition, each of the four protectors (a protector for each cardinal point on the compass) presented Buddha a bowl that was made of precious stones, but he refused them. In place of the precious stone bowls, he was offered bowls of common stone. The Buddha accepted the austere bowls and merged the four into a single bowl.

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<sup>60</sup> E. Dale Saunders, *Buddhism in Japan: With an Outline of Its Origins in India* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1964), 23.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 27, 28.

Buddha then took the food that the merchants offered.<sup>62</sup>

Two months after his enlightenment, Gautama preached a sermon in Deer Park (near *Rishipatana*), telling of the Four Noble Truths. This set into motion the “Wheel of the Law” which has become the fundamentals of the Buddhist doctrine. This law is represented in the Buddhist icon as a wheel. The disciples that were converted formed the *Sangha*, or a community of beggar monks. It is a common sight in Japan to see monks dressed in white robes representing purity and wearing large white woven hats shaped like upside-down bowls that cover their faces. They will stand for long periods, not moving nor speaking, while holding a bowl for people passing by to put in “alms.”

The Buddha traveled over India, preaching and converting people. Though he was their spiritual guide and teacher, he never required vows of allegiance. He apparently died of food poisoning at about eighty years of age.

Buddhism evolved over the next four centuries after Buddha’s death because of many different followers with diverse cultures who propagated their own views and doctrines. This disparity can be attributed to the lack of writings on systematic theology of Buddhism, which has resulted in deep-seated contradictions. For the most part, Buddhism has embraced these contradictions as being honorable. At one point, there may have been up to eighteen major schools of theology<sup>63</sup> though there are now only two main branches, the *Mahāyāna* and *Theravada*. The latter is essentially non-existent in

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<sup>62</sup> A. Ferinand Herold, *The Life of Buddha: According to the Legends of Ancient India*, trans. Paul C. Blum (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1954), 106-09.

<sup>63</sup> Yamamoto, J. Isamu, *Buddhism, Taoism & Other Far Eastern Religions* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 9.

Japan.<sup>64</sup> *Mahāyāna* Buddhism is thought of as the Northern School of Buddhism, as opposed to the Southern School (*Theravada*), “because it is dominate in Tibet, Mongolia, China, Korea, and Japan.”<sup>65</sup>

### Buddhism in China

Buddhism probably made its way into China along the “Silk Road” in the first century.<sup>66</sup> Most accounts attribute this date to the *Han Dynasty*, as the dynasty lasted from 202 B.C. to A.D. 220.<sup>67</sup> Other scholars date this arrival specifically to A.D. 68; however, there may have been some teaching as early as 2 B.C. Initially, Buddhism was accepted with indifference, as it was considered a barbarous, foreign teaching.

The Chinese, like the Japanese, had a high respect for nature, family, and ancestors; but this was in direct conflict with Buddhism. Buddhism had to change in order to coexist within the Chinese culture. This transformation was probably similar to what was described in Walter Martin’s *Kingdom of the Cults*, where a religious import was “superimposed on native cultural and religious patterns. Such an approach by the cults has been disastrously successful, particularly in South America.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Ellwood, *Japanese Religion*, 28.

<sup>65</sup> Yamamoto, *Buddhism*, 11.

<sup>66</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 70.

<sup>67</sup> Yamamoto, *Buddhism*, 12.

<sup>68</sup> Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, ed. Ravi Zacharias (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2003), 501.



Buddhism was made compatible with ancestor worship through the help and participation of the Chinese leaders. Buddhism with its new changes became a permanent religion in China during the Tartar kings.

In A.D. 168, a *Mahāyāna* monk *Lokaksema* translated the *Small Perfections of Wisdom Sūtra* and *A Land of Bliss Sutra*.<sup>69</sup> Shortly after this translation was completed, the first Buddhist monastery was constructed. The complete translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese was completed by *Kumarajiva* and *Hui-yüan* during the middle of the fourth century. In A.D. 402, the *Amida* or the “Pure Land School” (*Ching t’u*) emerged in China.

### Buddhism in Korea and Japan

From China, Buddhism spread in several directions, mainly in its *Mahāyāna* form. It reached into Tibet, and there it branched into Lamaism. Buddhism reached Korea about 220 years before it reached Tibet. “At this time, there was really no Korea as we know it at present, but it was divided into the three small independent kingdoms of *Koma* (Koguryu), *Kudara* (Pakche), and *Shiragi* (Silla), with some small buffer states between the latter two.”<sup>70</sup> Buddhism was introduced to *Koma* from *Sin-an-fu*, China,<sup>71</sup> by a Chinese monk *Sunto*<sup>72</sup> in A.D. 372. In A.D. 384, an Indian priest named *Masananda* came to

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<sup>69</sup> Buddhist Studies “Timelines of Chinese Buddhism,” Buddha Dharma Education Association & Buddhnet, [http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/chin\\_timeline.htm](http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/chin_timeline.htm) (accessed January 24, 2011).

<sup>70</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 77.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Yamamoto, *Buddhism*, 14.

*Kudara* from eastern China, and in A.D. 424, *Koma* sent a Buddhist missionary to *Shiragi*.<sup>73</sup> With this accomplishment, Buddhism covered the entire peninsula of Korea.

Much like the Japanese indigenous religion, the Koreans had a shamanistic<sup>74</sup> indigenous religion. Because of the changes Buddhism had undergone in China, the Chinese form of Buddhism was not seen as a conflict with the Korean indigenous worship of nature. Therefore, it was able to “blend in” with the shamanistic worship that was already taking place in the Korean mountains, where deities and spirits were believed to live. The first Buddhist temple was built there in A.D. 375,<sup>75</sup> but unlike the Japanese, the Korean religious sites became Buddhist temples, not *Shintō* shrines.

The Korean Buddhism is different from the other forms of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism because the Koreans tried to remove the conflicts that were in the Chinese *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. Early Korean monks believed that the traditions they received from China were internally inconsistent; in order to correct the inconsistencies, they created a holistic approach and created the “*Won*” or “complete” Buddhism.

It would seem, however, that the new religion early won its way among the upper classes and enjoyed the protection of the royal families; for it was the king of *Kudara*, King Seimei, who in the year 552 A.D. sent Buddhism across the narrow channel which separates Korea from Japan when he sent his Buddhist mission to the emperor [Kimmei (540-571)] of Japan.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 77.

<sup>74</sup> Shamanism is a form of indigenous religion that was practiced by the early Korean and Japanese. It is a religion that believes in an unseen world of gods, demons, and ancestral spirits who respond only to the shamans or shamanesses. Shamans or shamanesses are similar to a seer or a diviner.

<sup>75</sup> Yamamoto, *Buddhism*, 14.

<sup>76</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 77.

With the mission came gifts, *sūtras*<sup>77</sup>, and an “image of Buddha in gold, silver and copper.”<sup>78</sup>

It would seem that the Japanese Court would have had some knowledge of the religion before then.<sup>79</sup> It is interesting, however, how the Buddhist gifts were received:

The emperor of Japan was apparently greatly pleased with these gifts, for it must be remembered that images and books were exceedingly rare among the simple Japanese of that early day. He said to the messengers, “I have never heard such sublime teachings, yet I myself dare not decide whether to accept this doctrine or not.” The matter was submitted to the counsel of his vassals and one Soga no Iname replied, “Western countries all believe this doctrine and why should not we?” But two other ministers of a more conservative disposition said in substance, “We have our own gods, and if we now change and worship the gods of other nations we are in danger of bringing the wrath of our gods upon our heads.”<sup>80</sup>

The image was given to the *Soga* clan to “test worship the new god.” Dale Saunders compared the Japanese to the Grecians of Paul’s encounter in Acts. “Like the Athenians of old the Japanese did not dare run the risk of leaving any god without an altar even though they already had myriads of their own.”<sup>81</sup> Supposedly, *Soga* converted his own house into a temple to set up the new images. Shortly after the god was set up, a terrible pestilence afflicted Japan. Because of the Japanese superstitions, they believed the pestilence to be the wrath of the native gods. Consequently, “Soga’s temple was

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<sup>77</sup> *Sūtra*, “written discourse, poem, passage, or verses that creates the basic texts of the Buddhist scriptures.”

<sup>78</sup> Saunders, *Buddhism in Japan*, 92.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>80</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 81.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

burned to the ground, and the Buddhist image was thrown into a canal of Naniwa (Osaka).”<sup>82</sup> Immediately after the Buddhist god was thrown into the canal, a fire suddenly destroyed one of the halls in the Imperial residence. The pestilence was not abated, but now in addition to the pestilence, there was increasing violence among the clans. It is claimed that the secondary problem came from the anger of Buddha, so the image was rescued from the canal, and reverently placed in a different building of worship.

“We see how trifling and chance occurrences may play a great part in momentous issues. Not that these were the only or even the main determining factors, for in the long run the success of Buddhism in Japan was due to its real superiority over the native Shintō faith.”<sup>83</sup> The superiority was in the sense that the Buddhist religion was a structured religion with priests, majestic rites, writings, and doctrinal statements. Not only did it have structure and writings, but it was also the vehicle by which a higher civilization and aristocracy came from China. Educators, artisans, physicians, almanac makers, and construction workers came by the droves to Japan, propelling it into a new civilization.

The 法隆寺, *Hōryūji Temple* construction started in A.D. 607 and was completed in A.D. 615; this was the first Buddhist temple built in Japan.<sup>84</sup> Under Empress *Suiko*,

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>84</sup> Buddha Studies, “Timelines of Japanese Buddhism,” Buddha Dharma Education Association & Buddhanet, [http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/jap\\_timeline.htm](http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/jap_timeline.htm) (accessed 24 January 2011).

Buddhism made prolific strides. From this phenomenal growth, in a few short years there could be counted 46 temples, 816 priests, and 569 nuns.<sup>85</sup> With the development of the *Hōryūji Monastery*, the city of *Nara* grew to perhaps 500,000 people. The monastery is still standing and boasts of having the oldest wooden structures in the world. The original doors of the monastery are preserved in glass climate controlled cases and can be viewed today. The *Nara Daibutsu*, the world's largest bronze statue, which was cast in A.D. 749, can also be viewed.

There were six Buddhist sects named the “Six Sects of *Nara*” to prevent confusion with the sects that appeared in *Kyoto* and *Kamakura*. Two of these sects, the *Tendai* and *Shingon*, emerged during the *Heian* Period. The Buddhist pantheism was greatly expanded by the *Tendai* and *Shingon* sects.

The *Tendai* could be characterized as a harmonizing and comprehensive sect that taught moral purity. The harmonization was rooted in the *T'ien-t'ai* Chinese sect which worked out an elaborate scheme to “harmonize” the contradictions and discrepancies of the Buddhist scriptures by showing that each had its own peculiar niche. Each scripture had its own truth depending on the angle of perception. They accepted the sūtra and the *Mahāprajna-pāra mitā-sūtra* as truth and other scriptures as incomplete or provisional. The *Tendai* disciple would find salvation only through gaining philosophical wisdom.

In Japan, however, the *Tendai* underwent further changes to become eclectic rather than all-inclusive. Thus, in one Japanese *Tendai* temple, one may find innumerable

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<sup>85</sup> Saunders, *Buddhism in Japan*, 96.

Buddhas and Bodhisattva,<sup>86</sup> yet in another there may be only a trinity of Buddhas, and in others there may be only one Buddha. These inconsistencies are said to be the truth seen from different angles; however, the practical Japanese can see through this philosophy and reject it. *Tendai* has lost most of its followers and is now a small sect; however, it is an important sect because through it the *Amida* and *Zen* sects came into being.

The *Shingon* sect came to Japan from *Kōbō Daishi* (A.D. 774-835, posthumously named *Kūkai*), a Japanese who studied Buddhism in China. He had a particular interest in the doctrines of the mystical sect *Mikkyō* which was called *Shingon*, meaning the “true word.” This mystic sect became popular probably because of the beauty of its religious ceremonies. It is called a mystic sect because it claims to possess the secret to attain to the Buddha nature.

They claim there are two roads to obtain the truth: one spiritual, the other moral. The spiritual road has stages that must be passed through, and the moral road has principles and commandments that point out the way of salvation.

*Daishi*, who was exceptionally gifted, was “credited by some with the invention of one form of the simple *Kana* script,” the Japanese alphabet used for foreign words.<sup>87</sup> He was also a linguist, and as such, the *Emperor Saga* summoned him to the palace to use his abilities. *Daishi* became popular with the emperor, and because of this, he held great influence on the emperor.

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<sup>86</sup> A deity or being that is worshiped in *Mahāyāna* Buddhism. They are believed to have the ability to save others because of their compassionate refusal to enter into nirvana (so that they may save others).

<sup>87</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 94.

The *Shingon* has two lines of thought: “a world of ideas” that are unchangeable and everlasting, and the “world of phenomena”; the second is the counterpart to the first. The “world of phenomena” was already spread throughout Japan by *Shintō* worshipping the phenomena. It is through the *Shingon* thought patterns and beliefs that the *Shintō*-Buddhist blend comes. If the blend were to be dated, it would have to be dated within *Daishi*'s lifetime, likely in his later years when the *Shingon* schools were well established.

### *The History of the Blending*

Before the arrival of Buddhism, the rituals that involved *kami* worship seem to have come from Chinese Taoism and Confucianism. While each clan had its own set of rituals, there were large disparities between the rituals of the clans. The new system of Buddhism had great appeal to the *Shintō*.

The syncretism of *Shintō* and Buddhism somewhat parallels how the pagan festivals were adapted into Christian festivals. “The methods are familiar to anyone who knows how many of the holy festivals of the Christian church are but pagan festivals adapted by early Christian missionaries.”<sup>88</sup> However, unlike the pagan festival's influence on the early church, there was more adaptation done on both sides of Buddhism and *Shintōism*. It could be said two ways; either “Buddhism had the greater effect on Shinto” or “Shinto had the greater effect on Buddhism.”<sup>89</sup> The adaptive influence on both sides was so great that “Buddhist priests officiated at Shinto shrines; Shintoists worshiped

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<sup>88</sup> Ballou, *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy*, 30.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

at Buddhist temples”<sup>90</sup>

It should be noted that the syncretism resulted in a form of Buddhism that is totally unique to Japan. The uniqueness of the Japanese Buddhism came from the adapting *Shintō* rites. Even though a Japanese Buddhist can relate to another countries’ Buddhism, the Japanese Buddhism has become “something different from every other form of the faith in Asia.”<sup>91</sup> The resulting syncretism is called 神仏習合, *Shinbutsu Shūgō* (神仏混淆, *Shinbutsu Konkō*) “mixture of Buddhism and *Shintō*” or 両部神道, *Ryōbu Shintō* (両部習合神道, *Ryōbu Shūgō Shintō*) “two-sided *Shintō*.” *Ryōbu Shintō* is predominantly used by a *Shintōist* while the Buddhist prefers *Shinbutsu Shūgō*, though the two terms are used interchangeable.

A large amount of the syncretism between Buddhism and *Shintō* can be attributed to *Kōbō Daishi*. His use of adaptation would earn him a special place in the Japanese history. However, the syncretism actually started a century before *Daishi*, when *Emperor Shomu* contemplated the idea of creating the *Nara Daibutsu*. As the Emperor, he was still required to uphold the *Shintō* rites; however, in order to build the desired Buddhist image, he had to find a way to appease the native deities and their devotees. The appeasement was necessary before he dared show his open confidence in Buddhism by building the *Daibutsu*. Therefore, he sent a patriarch named *Gyōgi Bosatsu* to the *Ise Shrines* to inquire of the *Amaterasu*, the *Shintō* Sun Goddess, as to what she thought of the

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>91</sup> W. E. Griffis, *The Religions of Japan* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1896), cited in Ballou, *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy*, 32.



emperor's project. *Gyōgi* remained at the shrine for a week, and then he returned to *Nara* with a favorable answer: "All the deities of the Shinto pantheon were but avatars, or manifestations, of the Buddha, and that it was the same Buddha spirit which appeared as a *kami* to Shintoists, as a sage to Confucianists, or as a Buddha to Buddhists."<sup>92</sup>

*Gyōgi* convinced the Emperor and the court that the Sun Goddess had declared herself to be identical with the *Mahāyāna* Buddha of Light or Sun. It is said that a few nights later the emperor had a dream in which the Sun Goddess *Amaterasu* told him, "The Sun is *Biroshana*" (*Biroshana* is the Japanese transliteration for *Vairochana*, which is the name of the *Mahāyāna* Buddha of Light).<sup>93</sup> Because of *Amaterasu*'s approval, *Emperor Shomu* completed the 53-foot tall Buddha image, creating the world's largest bronze statue. This statue may be viewed in the *Tōdaiji Temple* in the city of *Nara*.

A year later in A.D. 750, an image of the *Shintō*'s war *kami Hachiman* was moved from its shrine at *Usa* in *Kyushu* to the *Tōdaiji* in *Nara*. This was in order for *Hachiman* to pay respects to the *Nara Daibutsu*. The move was to have been temporary; however, *Hachiman* remained in a special shrine at *Tōdaiji* where he became the guardian *kami* of *Tōdaiji*. Thus, a *Shintō kami* became the protector of the Buddha.

*Kōbō Daishi*'s teachings of *Shingon* are reflected in these two accounts, thus making the syncretism complete. The *Shingon* sect believed that the gods of *Shintō* were a temporal manifestation of the Buddhist deities. To them, the *Amaterasu* was a temporal manifestation of *Vairochana*. This blend avoided struggle between the two religions. This

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<sup>92</sup> Ballou, *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy*, 30.

<sup>93</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 88.

type of blending of deities started in China and continued in Korea. *Daishi* solidified ideas that were already in existence by blending the identity of numerous *Shintō* deities with those of Buddhism, creating a pantheon of new gods. 八百萬神, *Yaoyorozu no kami*, “Eight hundred myriads of deities,” is the phrase frequently used to describe the pantheon gods of Japan. *Shintō* thus blended with the Buddhist *Shingon* sect and received the name of *Ryōbu Shintō*, “*Shintō* with two sides.”<sup>94</sup>

This theological blend not only had political ramifications, but it also set the stage for many years of Buddhist growth and royal patronage. “Buddhist texts were read in the imperial palace and to the people under government direction. Imperial decrees regulated Buddhist affairs and Buddhist festivals became ceremonies of state. Buddhist rites were performed in Shinto shrines.”<sup>95</sup> From then until 1868, the *Ryōbu Shintō* dominated all forms of *Shintō* rituals.

*Ryōbu Shintō* became a very popular doctrine. The priesthoods blended, and “as the two faiths merged, the distinction between Shinto priest and Buddhist bonze<sup>96</sup> grew unimportant and an amalgamated priesthood (called *shasho*) served in the temples of the Ryobu.”<sup>97</sup> New iconography was created, and the architectural styles of the *Shintō* shrines were changed. “Even shrines which stubbornly insisted on their Shinto character

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<sup>94</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 79, 98.

<sup>95</sup> Ballou, *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy*, 32.

<sup>96</sup> A Buddhist monk.

<sup>97</sup> George C. Ring, *Religions of the Far East: Their History to the Present Day* (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1950), 97.

yielded so much to Ryobu influence as to sanction an inner sanctuary where Buddhist rites were permitted.”<sup>98</sup> Even the 唯一神道 *Yuitsu-Shintō*, “one and only” system which strongly opposed any religion other than the indigenous *Shintō*, fell to *Ryōbu Shintō*. Their *kami* became the *Vairochana* icon of *Shingon* Buddhism.

In 1868 the *Meiji*’s restoration, increased the pressure to rid the country of the Buddhist influence. With help from the government *Shintō* scholars, it started a purge of all Chinese influences. However, for the Japanese, the *Ryōbu Shintō* has remained alive; the gods belonging to this sect are still worshipped, and most families belong to the two religions of Buddhism and *Shintō*.

*The Sects That Were Founded after the Blend.*

For more than three hundred years after the blend, there were no major changes in the religions of Japan. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, however, several more sects were introduced. Of the Japanese Buddhist sects, *Jōdo*, *Zen*, and *Nichiren* are important.

*Amida* Buddhism must be discussed first to understand *Jōdo*, the Japanese form of *Amida* Buddhism. *Amida* Buddhists believe in the existence of a paradise and a hell. *Amida* is the “Buddha of the eternal light,” or *Amitayus*, “eternal life,” and is said to be the immaterial part (eternal light) of Gautama Buddha. *Amida* (Gautama Buddha) is believed to have purified a land for paradise which was called the “Pure Earth.” The Pure Earth takes the place of Nirvana; it is a reward for the human beings that have done good

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

deeds. They believe that since there is a paradise for the good, then logically there must be a hell for the wicked.

The Japanese *Jōdo* Buddhists believe that 地獄 *Jigoku*, “hell,” is located under the earth and is divided into eight hot and eight cold regions. Additionally, there were secondary hells and preliminary hells. When a person dies, the soul would appear before the head deity *Emma-Ō*, a *Shintō* deity of the underworld. He would judge the soul from a book which listed the sins. A female deity 見る目 *Miru-Me*, “seeing eye” who had the ability to perceive the most secret faults, and a male deity 嗅ぐ鼻 *Kagu-Hana*, “smelling nose” who had the gift of smelling the scent of all misdeeds (both *Shintō* deities), would help *Emma-Ō* judge the newly arrived soul.<sup>99</sup>

The dead person then passed in front of a mirror that reflected all the deeds of his earthly life. *Emma-Ō* would pronounce the judgment and hand over the condemned soul to the demons to administer the punishment based upon the degree of guilt.<sup>100</sup> In this belief, there is no eternal suffering; damnation is but for a fixed period. One can be released by the prayers and offerings of the priests.

The *Shintō* blend with the *Amida* Buddhist belief created the Japanese 浄土, *Jōdo*, “Pure Earth,” (also known as “Pure Land”) Buddhism. This sect was founded by the monk *Genku* (1132-1212, posthumously named *Hōnen Shōnin*). It is a monastic sect that honors other Buddhas or Bodhisattvas besides *Amitayus*, whereas a true believer of the

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<sup>99</sup> Saunders, *Buddhism in Japan*, 192-99.

<sup>100</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 228, 250.

*Amida* sect would not. Contrary to the *Zen*, this sect relies on Buddhist and *Shintō* deities for one's salvation. The doctrine is that salvation is impossible outside the Buddha. The doctrine includes a belief that salvation can be obtained more easily by recitation of *Amida's* name.<sup>101</sup>

The second new sect, *Zen*, made its appearance shortly after the *Jōdo* Pure Land sect. The *Zen* sect was introduced into Japan by the monk *Myōan Eisai*, who had studied it in China. *Zen* made no changes to the *Ryōbu Shintō* iconography or mythology. *Zen* is a simple spiritual meditation to obtain the purity of one's soul. This philosophy fit well with the *bushido* of the *samurai* and was quite popular with the warrior class. Tea drinking and tea ceremonies are a form of *Zen*. "The tea itself is served in simple, everyday utensils which indicate that religious experience is after all an ordinary thing; just as clay is transformed into a teacup, so man is transformed into a vessel capable of receiving Enlightenment and Buddhahood."<sup>102</sup> Unlike *Amida*, *Zen* emphasizes salvation within one's own self and one's purity instead of a deity.

The third new sect 日蓮 *Nichiren*, "Sun Lotus," was founded in the thirteenth century. It was as an offshoot of the *Jōdo* Pure Land sect. *Risshō Daishi* (1222-1282, posthumously named *Nichiren Shōnin*) founded the sect that is based upon the doctrines of the Lotus Sūtra. They taught that enlightenment can only be obtained by chanting

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<sup>101</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 106-113.

<sup>102</sup> Saunders, *Buddhism in Japan*, 228.

“*Namu-Myoho-Renge-Kyō*.” A short summary of *Nichiren*’s doctrine is found in the “Lotus” and the “Three Esoteric Principles.”

The Three Esoteric Principles are: (i) *Daimoku* (Title), the chanting or saying phrase *Namu-Myoho-Renge-Kyō* “Adoration of the Lotus of Perfect Truth.” This phrase has been given a “holy title” by the *Nichiren* sect. (ii) *Honzo* (Object of Worship), the graphic and symbolic representation of the Supreme Being. This can be in the form of an icon or picture, and (iii) *Kaodan* (the Daïs from which the Buddhist Principles are proclaimed), the Forces of Universal Irradiation of Buddhism.<sup>103</sup>

*Nichiren*, like *Zen*, made no changes to iconography or mythology. The *Nichiren* was the last of the modern Buddhists sects to form in Japan. It should be noted that the *Sōka Gakkai* is a branch of *Nichiren*, and from the *Sōka Gakkai* comes the third largest political party in Japan: *Komeito*.

#### *Pre-War History (WWII)*

The architects of the *Ryōbu Shintō* system used the sacred modalities of Buddhism with those of native *Shintō* traditions. *Shintō*-Buddhist institutionalism brought about the building of *Jingū-ji*, Buddhist chapels dedicated to *Shintō kami*, and *Shintō* shrines within the Buddhist temple compounds. This synthesis was popularly accepted.

It was within this setting that the *Meiji* government, A.D. 1868-1912, made major reforms to Japanese religion and nationalism. The government used the growing

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<sup>103</sup> E. Steiniliber-Oberlin, *The Buddhist Sects of Japan*, collaborator Matsuo Kuni (London: George Allen, 1938), 242.

sentiment of nationalism to renew again the worship of 御門 (also written as 帝), *Mikado* “emperor.” It could be said that the government’s action was an act to purify the *Shintō* religion that had been corrupted by Buddhism. The government borrowed a catchphrase from the *samurai*: “Revere the Emperor.” This revival of *Shintō* or *Mikado Nationalism* led to an alliance of the whole nation and the return of the imperial rule without bloodshed. The nationalism certified the divine ascension to rule Japan and renewed the emperor’s position as a sacred person.

The following edict was disseminated in 1868 by the *Emperor of Meiji* shortly after his coronation:

The worship of the gods and regard for ceremonies [Shinto] are the great properties of the Empire and the fundamental principles of national polity and education. . . . On this occasion of the restoration [of direct imperial rule],<sup>104</sup> Tokyo has been made the new capital and the Emperor shall reign in person. First of all rituals shall be initiated and the administration of law and order shall be established. Thus the Way of the unity of religion and government (*saisei itchi*) shall be revived.<sup>105</sup>

This renewed form of religion, based on the throne as being sacred, was called *State Shintō*. To unify the *Shintō* into a state religion, the leaders had to change the traditions of *Shintō* that were created by the syncretism between Buddhism and *Shintō*. To obtain their goal of a unified *State Shintō*, they chose to focus the nation’s attention on

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<sup>104</sup> Both brackets and ellipsis appear in the original.

<sup>105</sup> An imperial rescript promulgated November 30, 1868, on the occasion of the visit of the emperor to the Hikawa Shrine. Shōzō Kōno, *Jingishi Gaiyo*, “An Outline of Shinto History” (Tokyo, 1927): 143, quoted by D. C. Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism: A Study of Present Day Trends in Japanese Religions* (University of Chicago: Chicago, 1943), 5.

the throne and its deity. Joseph Kitagawa quotes Sansom on the unified *State Shintō*:

In the words of George B. Sansom: “Japan before 1868 was a loose federation of autonomous units, particularist in outlook, suspicious of their neighbors, and jealous of central authority. It was the task of the Meiji leaders to weld them into one nation.”<sup>106</sup> [footnote in original] In this situation, the architects of the Meiji regime, being superb realists, recognized that none of the traditional religions—Shinto, Confucianism, and Buddhism—could serve as the spiritual axis that would unite the nation. . . .<sup>107</sup>

Also in 1868, the *Meiji* government created the “*Department of Shintō*” which was over all other government departments, thus this finalizing *Shintō* as the state religion. Conversely Buddhism was no longer considered as a religion for the Japanese. The government annexed most of the Buddhist properties. “Regulations for preaching were established in which Shinto priests (and later Buddhist, when they were again allowed to preach) were required to combine political indoctrination with religious precepts.”<sup>108</sup>

Soon, the government subsidies were stopped to all Buddhist temples, which required them to reach out for private support. However, the *Shintō* shrines, which were directly under the government, retained the government’s financial support.

The Buddhists were shocked by the *Meiji* government-led anti-Buddhist movement. The Buddhists were also concerned about the Western and Christian influences. Because of this, it was easy for the *Meiji* government to influence

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<sup>106</sup> Sansom, George B., *The Western World and Japan* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1962), 364.

<sup>107</sup> Kitagawa, Joseph M., *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1987), 214.

<sup>108</sup> Ballou, *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy*, 63.



conservative Buddhist leaders (*Sōka Gakkai*) in rural areas to support the government's policies (this influence remains in use today). The government used existing groups and created others to help support the *Mikado*. Jared Taylor writes of one group:

One of the best known groups was *Sōka Gakkai*, which was founded in 1930 but did not really catch on until 1956 [partially because it was suppressed under *State Shintō*].<sup>109</sup> It was an offshoot of *Nichiren Buddhism* and taught that simply by chanting the sutra *Nammyō hō rengekyō* over and over, the believer would get whatever he wanted. This religion has launched a major political party, claims 11 million members, and has done extensive missionary work in the United States.<sup>110</sup>

Through this, Buddhist leaders aligned with *Shintō* leaders to help stamp out Christianity. After World War II started, the Japanese government expected and required all religious organizations to visit the front and pray for the victory. This made it difficult for any religious groups to oppose the war.

One other important aspect of the *Mikado* was his deification of the souls who died for the service of the country. The respect for the war dead, whom the Japanese believe are not really dead, is esoterically Japanese *Shintō* that has a tradition as old as the Japanese. The enshrinement took place on October 17, 1938 and was a rallying point for the Imperialism of WWII. Mr. *Setsuo Uenoda*, a well known Japanese author and historical authority says:

It is futile and irrelevant to ask how the spirits of the soldiers who died in the battlefields in China came back and how they are invited to assemble in the compound of the Yasukuni Shrine to be deified. Suffice it to say that the Japanese race have [*sic*] always believed that their dead friends and relatives who died in

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<sup>109</sup> Bracketed information added.

<sup>110</sup> Jared Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun: A Critical View of the "Japanese Miracle"* (New York: William Morrow, 1983), 139.

foreign countries return somehow to their fatherland. They feel their ancestral spirits dwell in the land and haunt their home sanctuaries and the holy precincts of temples and shrines. So they daily offer food to the spirits of their ancestors, speak with them, invite them to the annual family reunion and pray for their well-being. They died for their country and live in the spirit world to be the guardians of their families and the nation instead of going to heaven. No land, therefore, is more truly a fatherland than Japan is to the Japanese race. On Monday night [October 17, 1938, the night of the enshrinement] all Japanese present felt that every one of the 10,334 spirits of dead soldiers was there at the Yasukuni Shrine waiting to be deified.<sup>111</sup>

During the Japanese *Shintō Nationalism* (*State Shintō*), it was taught to believe that the dead warrior's spirits were glorified and became *kami*, to “become the guardian deities of the state, especially of its military affairs, and that they protect soldiers on the field of battle and watch over the destiny of the nation with the same intensity of devotion that once inspired them to shed their life's blood in patriotic duty.”<sup>112</sup>

Even today in the post-war society, although less glamorous because of the militant atrocities of the war, this statement by *Uenoda* continues to reflect part of the religious faith of the Japanese. The rites conducted during the enshrinement continue today in fall during the お盆祭り *obonmatsuri*, “the Festival of the Dead,” (also the Buddhist All Soul's Day). *Obon* is something like New Year's, Christmas, and a birthday feast all rolled into one (*Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary*, s.v. “*Obon*”). During the rite, “the spirits of the dead are assembled in a solemn service of prayer and priestly ritual and, after having been given temporary residence in a portable ark, are

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<sup>111</sup> Uenoda, Setsuo, *Japan Advertiser*, October 21, quoted by D. C. Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism: A Study of Present Day Trends in Japanese Religions* (University of Chicago: Chicago, 1943), 48, 49.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

transferred with stately processional to the inner sanctuary of the grand shrine and deified there with further impressive prayer and ceremony.”<sup>113</sup> This enshrinement rite continues annually by the Emperor (*Mikado*) for the souls of the Self Defense Forces, Coast Guard, Police, and Firemen who have died in great honor of their country.

“According to interpretations of modern State Shinto, the heavenly mission to which the emperor and his people were committed from the beginning [of WWII] was to conquer the world so that all peoples would be ‘blessed’ by the rule of the divine emperor.”<sup>114</sup> The characteristic beliefs of State *Shintō* and *Mikado* which propelled Japan into World War II are epitomized in the following three quotes:

The people and gods . . . are only working to accomplish this greatest and loftiest task of unifying the world under the sway of the Emperor of Japan . . . . *We are only aiming at making the Emperor of Japan rule and govern the whole world* [emphasis added], as he is the only ruler in the world who retains the spiritual mission inherited from the remotest ancestors in the Divine World.<sup>115</sup>

It is now most clear that *the salvation of the entire human race is the mission of our empire* [emphasis added]. . . . Our people, through the benevolent virtue of the emperors, have attained a national constitution that is without parallel in the world . . . . *Now, if all the human race should come to look up to the virtue of our Emperor and should come to live under that influence, then there could be light for the future of humanity* [emphasis added]. Thus the world can be saved from destruction. Thus life can be lived within the realms of goodness and beauty. Of a truth great is the mission of our nation.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ballou, *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy*, 23.

<sup>115</sup> Taisho Nichi-Nichi Shimbun (Osaka, December 21, 1920), quoted in D. C. Holtom, *The Political Philosophy of Modern Shinto, a Study of the State Religion of Japan* (Tokyo: Keiogijuku, 1922), 126.

<sup>116</sup> Uesugi Shinkichi, *Kokutai Sikwa Hatsuyo*, “The Exaltation of the Essence of the National Constitution” (Tokyo, 1919), translated and quoted in D. C. Holtom, *The Political Philosophy of Modern Shinto* (Tokyo: Keiogijuku, 1922), 126, 127.

The Emperor is not to be worshipped exclusively by the Japanese, nor to be represented as Emperor of Japan alone. The Emperor governs Japan and is the *Emperor of mankind the world over* [emphasis]. He rules the universe with Amaterasu-o-Mikami and Taka-mi-Musubi-no-Mikami. *Therefore Japan exists not only for Japan but for the whole world, and as a representation of the High Plain of Heaven must be expanded through the universe* [emphasis added]. Our national law is the representation of the Great Way of the High Plain of Heaven, which is the way of the Gods, and is creating the law of the Universe.<sup>117</sup>

The State *Shintō* lasted until the historical announcement made by Emperor *Hirohito* denying his deity on January 1, 1946. *State Shintō* belief is still prevalent today, especially among the nationalist rightwing fundamentalist who desire that the throne be reestablished as a ruling deity.

#### *Post-War History (WWII)*

The prolonged war, the atomic bombings, the devastating defeat, the occupation, and the emperor's New Year's Day renouncement of deity have left indelible changes to Japanese religion. Temples and sacred places of worship were destroyed along with the lives of many future leaders.

Though the Japanese hope was broken and their ability to supply the needs for their daily living substance was crushed because of the war, there was a religious awakening. Their souls were crying out. The helpless feelings stemming from the defeat helped strengthen some of the pre-war *Shintō* glory. Robert Ballou, in his book *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy*, has a section of newspaper articles, thesis, and other short articles

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<sup>117</sup> Sadao Kiyohara, *Shintoshi*, "History of Shinto" (Tokyo, 1935), translated and quoted by Qtto D. Tolischus, *Through Japanese Eyes* (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1945), 40.

translated, which voiced Japan's sentiment. The following quote is one example:

Victory over the armed forces of Japan does not mean that we have conquered the aggressive, war-making, power of Shinto which gave them their life, their strength, and their purpose of world domination. Indeed, in view of the hatred which our bombing—and especially the use of the atomic bomb—has instilled in the Japanese, it may well be that we have only strengthened, through our military victory, some of the concepts which have grown out of Shinto.<sup>118</sup>

The strength of the pre-war *Shintō* is still felt today. The *Department of Shintō* that was established in 1868 was replaced by the Department of Religion in 1871, and that department remains operative to this day. Though the present constitution guarantees freedom of religion, it is the same department that was established in 1871 that governs and controls all religious activities in Japan. Even today without proper registration with this department (which requires a plethora of legal documents and is difficult to obtain), it is illegal to establish a church. The government feels more comfortable having one 宗 教法人 *shūkyōhōjin*, literally “religious law person”—more commonly called the Juridical Person—over each group, whether the group is Catholic, Methodist, or Southern Baptist (each group has a hierarchal origination that fits well to the Japanese bureaucracy). The government balks at registering independent Baptist churches, declaring that “this makes too many groups. Too many groups are difficult if not impossible to manage; if you are like churches then you should be in a group under one leader.”<sup>119</sup>

This is also seen in the government's attitude toward religious freedom and

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<sup>118</sup> Ballou, *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy*, 4.

<sup>119</sup> Lavern Rogers, interview by author, Myota, Japan, December 12, 2007.

separation of state. While the government asserts there is a freedom of religion and a separation of state, they decry that “the doctrines of State Shinto do not constitute a religion.”<sup>120</sup> This has helped to instill a belief that the Japanese word *kami* is not a religious word.

On New Year’s Day 1946, the largest religious holiday of the year, *Emperor Hirohito* read a statement renouncing his deity and status of a “living god,” thus formally ending *State Shintō*; however, *State Shintō* still exists. It seems that this renouncement was more of a formality than a reality, as the Emperor still leads many *Shintō* rites today—even though after World War II, a new constitution was ratified requiring total separation of church and state.

In some respects, however, this renunciation was meaningless for the Japanese. The emperor had never claimed anything like the omnipotence that Americans associated with divinity.

In fact, the emperor has retained his vital role as the chief priest of Shinto. Every year one of his jobs is to plant some rice seedlings in the spring and reap a few ripe ears in the fall. This harks back to prehistoric times, when the tribal leader was thought to have a special ability to gain favors from the gods of fertility and harvest.<sup>121</sup>

Even today the *Shintō* rites led by the Emperor will be a front page news item, and the broadcast media will devote large sections of time to these rites.

The changes brought by General MacArthur<sup>122</sup> during the occupation stopped the

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<sup>120</sup> Ballou, *Shinto the Unconquered Enemy*, 10, 11.

<sup>121</sup> Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun*, 136.

<sup>122</sup> General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964) was appointed Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) on April 18, 1942. He officially accepted the Japanese surrender on the USS Missouri, September 2, 1945. He oversaw the Japanese occupation from 1945-1951.

financial support of all shrines and temples by the government. However, “The principle of religious liberty put into effect during the occupation was a mixed blessing to Japanese Buddhism.”<sup>123</sup> The occupation, through the newfound religious freedom, awakened many of the forgotten Buddhist traditions. Joseph Kitagawa notes, “Never in the history of Japanese Buddhism have laymen and lay women taken such an active part in Buddhist affairs as they do today.”<sup>124</sup> But that revitalization also created problems with their identity. As for the Buddhists in Japan, they are facing today the problem of their own identity in a way they have never faced before.

Historically, Japanese Buddhists never raised questions about the meaning of Japanese Buddhism as such. But today, they realize that they are both Japanese and Buddhists simultaneously. By far the most significant characteristic of contemporary Japanese Buddhism is its self-conscious awareness of being an integral part of worldwide Buddhism. They are also aware that being Japanese and being Buddhists simultaneously. They are also aware that being Japanese and being Buddhists are two different components in their own world of meaning”<sup>125</sup>

In sharp contrast to other countries, the Japanese Buddhists feel genuine kinship and respect of Buddhism elsewhere.

In the post-war period, numerous “new religions” cropped up; many of them were based on *Shintō* or Buddhism, and others were imported forms of religions, including Christianity. Jared Taylor writes of the new Japanese cults:

Many of the new cults borrow elements from major religions and blend them together. They add a new twist to the Japanese love of harmony by teaching that all religions are good and true. In the main worship hall of one such cult there

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<sup>123</sup> Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 217.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 219.

is a Buddhist image in front, a Christian cross on the left, and a Star of David to the right. Other religions appeal to the credulous by promising outright shamanism: miracle cures, magic, and divination.<sup>126</sup>

To the Japanese, Christianity is just another way to receive protection from accidents and to gain success. It is this thought that brings the differences in Buddhism, *Shintō*, and Christianity together, and then they all become intermingled and syncretized.

In recent years, nearly every major cult has started some form of work; however, even with their inroads, the modern concept of religion in Japan has not changed. The interrelationship of the spiritual and physical continues to be an important underlying concept of all Japanese attitudes and religious beliefs. Religious motifs are found everywhere in Japan, almost on every corner. A survey conducted in the mid-1970s by the Japan Agency for Cultural Affairs showed there to be a total of 79,467 *Shintō* shrines and 73,973 Buddhist temples, not counting the family altars.<sup>127</sup> This totals 153,440 shrines and temples for a population of 127.1 million people, roughly one per one thousand people.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Marvin Tokayer, *Nihon ni wa Minshuushugi wa Nai*, “There Is No Democracy in Japan,” trans. Sōichi Hakozaiki (Tokyo, 1976), cited by Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun*, 139, 140.

<sup>127</sup> Japan’s Agency for Cultural Affairs, *Japanese Religion: A Survey by the Agency for Cultural Affairs* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1972), 239.

<sup>128</sup> U.S. Department of State, “Background Note: Japan” <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4142.htm> (accessed January 24, 2011).



## CHAPTER TWO

### THE BLENDING THAT AFFECTS CHRISTIANITY

The syncretistic blend has such a strong grip on the Japanese people that it is difficult to remove its influence. Even when Christians are carefully disciplined, in some cases it takes years for the Holy Spirit to bring about total separation. There are at least three areas that the blend affects: social settings, the home, and rites.

#### *Social Settings That Affect Christianity*

“In Japan there is no such thing as philosophy in the Western sense. Meaning, morality, and existence are not real issues for the Japanese. The debate on these questions is closed, and any attempt to reopen it would be abstract, irrelevant, and *rikutsuppoi*<sup>129</sup>.”<sup>130</sup> However, one must have a fundamental understanding of Japanese morality if they are to do any work with the Japanese.

Ruth Benedict, an anthropologist of the Japanese Culture, argues:

. . . that the Japanese are so attuned to the opinions of others that shame is the strongest psychological sanction and the key to morality. She contrasted this with Western culture, in which each individual absorbs universal, usually religious

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<sup>129</sup> Argumentative, captious, disputation, controversial, *Kenkyusha's New Japanese-English Dictionary*, s.v. “*rikutsuppoi*.”

<sup>130</sup> Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun*, 129.

principles which become a person's conscience. Thus Westerners can feel guilty for having violated a universal principle, even if no one else knows of the violation. Shame, on the other hand, requires an audience. Benedict, therefore, held that the Japanese need the group and its sanctions in order to feel they have done right or wrong. Westerners carry around their consciences and their universal principles wherever they go, but Japanese morality is more fluid and dependent on context.<sup>131</sup>

This fluid morality is seen and felt both inside and outside of the 仲間 *nakama*, “group,” setting. It interfuses every aspect of the Japanese life and even flows into the Christian realm. To the unsaved Japanese, there is little if any sin concept, only 恥 *haji*, “shame, disgrace, dishonor, or ignominy.” *Haji* is a strong social motivator. The *nakama* to the Japanese is distinctly different than to Western cultures. In every part of the Japanese life, there is a strong knowledge of who is in the *nakama* and who is outside. “The group draws firm boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and, like hierarchy, is an essential guidepost to proper behavior.”<sup>132</sup>

The *nakama* may be defined as the 組 *kumi*, “group.” The department or sub-department at work, the section at the factory, the sports team, the club, the family, the political or church group, or even the country as a whole would be considered *nakama*. *Kumi*, on the other hand, is more precisely defined as a sub-group in a grade at school. To a child in school, the *kumi* is written on their nametag and is more important than what grade they are in. The Japanese will have an unfaltering loyalty to the *nakama* or face ostracism from that group.

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<sup>131</sup> *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1954): 222ff, cited in Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun*, 80.

<sup>132</sup> Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun*, 67.

The concern for others is one of the fundamental concepts for the group setting. Having sensitivity to others reduces the friction within the group while creating a vulnerability to ostracism and shame. The sensitivity to others prevents most Japanese persons from using black and white principles which tend to limit group relationships. *Therefore, Japanese, at the risk of appearing to have no principles, could forgo morality to protect the group.* The concern of violating the *nakama* creates a shame that is based on human feelings, not the Biblical principle of sin and guilt. The concern for others will replace principles with a type of situational ethics.

The ostracism and shame may ultimately lead to suicide, which thousands of Japanese commit every year. David Lewis, a Christian anthropologist, recounts a real heart-rending story of ostracism and shame. A Japanese family who lived in his neighborhood had committed suicide. The family's son was in the same class as the son of the anthropologist's closest Japanese friend. His friend explained what the neighbors thought had happened:

‘The boy had been caught stealing and everyone knew this. It seems as if the father hit him, but he must have hit the boy too hard and somehow killed him. In any case, the parents then decided on a mass suicide. They took the dead boy and his sister to the family's hut in the mountains. Then they killed the sister and both parents hung themselves while embracing each other. When the children did not turn up at school, the school made investigations and contacted the police, who eventually found the family in the woods.’<sup>133</sup>

Lewis also noted that while this account may or not be totally accurate, the details matched what appeared in the national and local media. Regardless of truth or embellishment, the story told by his friend is the one that all the neighbors believed. The

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<sup>133</sup> Lewis, *The Unseen Face of Japan*, 228.

shame felt by the family from their group, the neighbors, created enough group pressure that left only one known honorable escape, suicide.<sup>134</sup> Another neighbor left this weighty remark:

‘The boy’s crime was public knowledge and brought shame upon the whole family. They could not face the public shame and gossip, so needed to escape it somehow. I don’t know whether the father intended to kill his son or if it were just an accident, as some say, but it solved the problem of the family’s shame.’<sup>135</sup>

For this family the act of their son caused unpardonable *haji* within two groups, one being the immediate family, and the second group being the immediate neighborhood. No amount of apology would or could resolve the situation, thus suicide.

Generally the Japanese apology is not given because of the wrong they have done; it is given because a person has infringed the customary feelings, practices, or beliefs of a *nakama*. In actuality, the one apologizing is asking the group that the *haji* he caused be ignored. If it cannot be ignored, at the least, he is asking not to be ostracized. “The goodwill of the group comes first, and truth or justice only afterward.”<sup>136</sup>

The group pressure is so real that when Japanese are arrested, they will cover their head with a jacket or shirt in shame. Rarely will the media be able to take a video or picture of the face of the person being carted off under police escort. The *haji* is a reflection upon their own *nakama*. The fear that drives all actions is the fear of ostracism.

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<sup>134</sup> Ever since the *Shintō* form of 武士道 *bushidō*, “the way of the *samurai*” came into being, suicide has been an honorable death. The *bushidō* rules and codes are all based on the *Shintō* rites and religion.

<sup>135</sup> Lewis, *The Unseen Face of Japan*, 228.

<sup>136</sup> Yutaka Sakisaka, *Haji no Kōzō [The Structure of Shame]* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1982): 160f, quoted in Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun*, 81.

The concern for the group and others are paramount to one's own feelings or needs. This has created a country with one of the world's lowest crime rates. Even in the greater Tokyo Metropolitan area of over twenty-five million people, crime is rare. Though this has started to erode in recent years, unescorted women and young children still can move about in safety practically twenty-four hours a day. It is common to find a child, perhaps eight years old, commuting unescorted on the subways to a relative, a friend, or some unknown destination.

It is through this mindset of *haji*, "shame" rather than guilt (of sin) that drives the Japanese society and, therefore, removes all thoughts of the need for redemption. Because of the *haji*, there is no concept of the original sin or man's having a sin nature.

#### *Home Settings That Affect Christianity*

To the average house in Japan, they believe the immediate family consists not only of the living and the dead ancestors, but it also includes those from the future. The ancestors who at one time provided energy to the family in the past continue to do so in death through traditions, and by their spiritual influence, they are thought to bring prosperity and luck.

If one were to peer into cars in Japan, he would likely see a small, colorfully decorated cloth pouch hanging from the rearview mirror. The pouch is a *Shintō* charm to prevent accidents. Thousands of people will line up their cars at special designated shrines on New Year's Day to have a *Shintō* priest bless the car. *Shintō* charms and amulets sales are always brisk on New Year's Day. The charms are bought to help women to get pregnant and or to have a safe pregnancy; students buy them to help pass important exams; politicians buy them to help gain the needed votes' or salary men will

buy them for a promotion or success in business.

Buddhist authors tout their books with quaint clichés, such as:

‘Far too many people have run into disaster and bad luck because they ignored the spirits. . . . The only way to make it through the tough 1980s is to work hard and improve your luck. If you treat the ancestral spirits right, your whole family will be healthy and prosperous.

The spirits of your ancestors can be your guardian spirits, and whether or not your family has guardian spirits makes a world of difference. The spirits will ward off misfortune and arrange success in studies, work, business, family problems—anything at all.’<sup>137</sup>

In the average bookstore one can find a large section devoted to people’s names and the writings or characters of how the names are written. There is still a belief that names have special spiritual power and significance. “Parents about to have a baby often buy a numerology book that explains the significance of the number of brushstrokes in a child’s name. They are careful to choose a name that will not bring bad luck.”<sup>138</sup> This fact is even true for earnest Christian parents, though the name will usually have a Christian meaning. They will use names such as 息吹 Ibuki, “[God] breathed,” for males, or 恵み Megumi, “blessing,” for females. Thirty-eight percent of the Christian respondents are concerned with the brush stroke count.

Communication—though communication affects all aspects of life—is one more important aspect of the Japanese business dealings. Communication at home is just as important. Many Japanese still believe that there is a communication system based on

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<sup>137</sup> Yasuo Kiriyaama, quoted in an ad for his book, *Shugorei o Mote [You need Guardian Spirits]* (Tokyo: Hirakawa Shuppansha, 1982). Ad appeared in *Asahi Shinbun*, summer of 1982 quoted in Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun*, 139.

<sup>138</sup> Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun*, 137.

pure feelings, or, basically, a form of telepathy. This belief is a form of the *Shintō* and *Zen* religions. “It might be said that the culture is primarily visual, not verbal, in orientation, and social decorum provides that silence, not eloquence, is rewarded.”<sup>139</sup> This silent communication can be seen in all aspects of life ranging from the aesthetically-pleasing colorful decorations found on kitchen dishes and utensils, to the careful and colorful arrangement of food on a plate, to the colored kimonos.

Eloquence is often thought of as pure logic, something to be disdained. Therefore, when serious concerns or problems arise, the Japanese will approach it using feelings rather than logic. A person who can solve problems with intuition or spirit rather than logic is one held in reverence. To the Japanese the 胎 *hara*, “stomach or belly,” is the seat of true emotions. It is said that “the word *haragei* (“belly arts”) means an actor’s ability to express his feelings directly to his audience without saying or doing anything. . . . To read a man’s belly is to read his mind, and conspirators hatch a plot by putting their bellies together.”<sup>140</sup> For the most part Japanese believe that emotions can be transmitted or communicated from one person to another without the form of verbal or written communication. “For the Japanese, it is rude to insist that something be spelled out when it should have been understood implicitly.”<sup>141</sup> For that matter to insist or make demands is considered rude.

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<sup>139</sup> Masaso Miyoshi, *Accomplices of Silence* (Berkeley: University of California, 1974): xv, quoted in Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun*, 130.

<sup>140</sup> Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun*, 130.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

Because of these feelings and beliefs of what is rude and what can be non-verbally communicated, preaching becomes difficult at best. It requires a fine and difficult balancing act of politeness while lovingly pointing out the truth. Though it is Biblical necessary, the direct confrontation of sin is considered bad etiquette.

### *Rites That Affect Christianity*

For the most part it seems as if Japanese believe that the *Shintō* gods are the happiest when there is prosperity. “Shinto is, therefore, a religion of festivals in which the Japanese eat, drink, and make merry, thank the gods for all good things, and ask for more. It is also a religion of charms and magic, but not one in which sin or evil plays an important part.”<sup>142</sup> This quote is still prevalent today. One can go view any of the thousands of festivals throughout Japan and observe the drinking and merry making.

There is a strong superstitious current flowing throughout the Japanese society. Japanese, including many fundamental, Bible-believing Christians participate in *Shintō*, *Shaman*, and Buddhist rites. This is more for emotional security and peace of mind than for being religious. It is a “play it safe” mindset; one that participates in everything and all religions so that all bases are covered. “It is clearly seen as better to attain a sense of peace of mind by knowing that one has sought the help of the *kami* during one’s *yakudoshi*<sup>143</sup> or has married on a lucky day than to risk the potential anxiety and sense of

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>143</sup> The “unlucky age” for men are twenty-five and forty-two, and for women the ages are nineteen, thirty-three, and thirty-seven.



guilt that could accrue if one did not.”<sup>144</sup>

Ceremonies are prevalent in many areas, most of which are Buddhist or *Shintō*, or at least have a strong Buddhist and *Shintō* overtones. Most unsaved Japanese would declare that a Buddhist funeral is a religious ceremony. However, a born-again Christian Japanese would argue that a “*Shintō* ground breaking ceremony is no more religious than an Americans Thanksgiving turkey.”<sup>145</sup>

Before a new building is constructed, an elaborate ceremony 鍬入れ式 *kuwaire shiki*, “ground breaking ceremony,” is conducted by a *Shintō* priest to appease the local gods and to bestow protection on all the workers constructing the building. The property owners, the architects, and the construction companies and their personnel are expected to attend the purification ceremony. Many, if not most, companies will refuse to do any work at the site without the ceremony being conducted first. This is true for house or church construction where a *Shintō* ceremony is not desired. From the questionnaires, one percent of the Christians responded by saying that the *kuwaire shiki* was a religious ceremony. Two percent said they would have a *kuwaire shiki* before building a new house.

The syncretism can and does have an effect on Christianity and how the Christian philosophies and principles are approached. The response by the Japanese to any setting can be mind boggling, even for one who has long experience with Japanese in the

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<sup>144</sup> Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, 30.

<sup>145</sup> Yasuda Atsushi, interview by author, Ayase, Japan, January 24, 2008.

religious setting. Understanding the synchronic blend's profound effect on the Japanese society is necessary to evangelize the Japanese effectively.

CHAPTER THREE  
THE BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF THE JAPANESE

Both shrines and temples are places of worship. They are places set aside for spiritual refreshment and are often surrounded by a sacred park which is thought to create a close relationship to the natural environment. The places serve as centers of religious power that demarks a holy area. The structure was most likely built there because of some unusual phenomenon or manifestation. The shrines and temples are thought of as a “gateway” to the deities’ power. In this thought there is little or no difference between the shrine and the temple. “Because one place is so designated it does not preclude others in the near vicinity from also being recognized in a similar way and often, in fact, one finds such places in clusters, for one overt expression of the spiritual in the physical world is an indication that others may occur close at hand.”<sup>146</sup> This is particularly notable in *Kyōtō*, *Nara*, and *Nachi* where major Buddhist temples and *Shintō* shrines co-exist with overlapping motifs, festivals, and rituals.

Worship is normally performed outside of the shrine or temple. The worshiper stands before the sanctuary, pulls a large hemp or cotton rope to ring the bell to get the deity’s attention, then claps his hands and utters a brief prayer. On departing, he will

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<sup>146</sup> Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, 137.

usually throw an offering of a few coins into the offering box.

Entrances to the shrines and temples are marked with special gateways. Particularly in the rural areas, the entrances may be lined with rows of small shrines, statues, or high trees; some include all three. In the *Shintō* shrine the most recognizable item is the *torī* gate. It is usually constructed of two (in some cases six) pillars of wood or concrete, with two crossbeams at the top; often there is more than one *torī* over the path leading to the main structure. They are usually painted a bright vermilion. Interestingly, a *torī* gate may also be found leading to a *Shintō* shrine inside a Buddhist temple complex or monasteries.

Conversely the Buddhist temple's entrance is a *sanmon* or *nimon*, a gate-like structure that may be two stories high, having rooms on each side of the passage. It encloses and protects the two guardians; one on each side of the opening through which the worshipper walks to enter the complex. The enclosure protects the guardian gods from the elements. In some cases, the guardians may be *Shintō* rather than Buddhist even though it is a Buddhist complex.

In the average Japanese household, there can usually be found two altars: the Buddhist 仏壇 *butsudan*, and a *Shintō* 神棚 *kamidana*, literally “god shelf.” The *butsudan* is an immaculately decorated temple cabinet, dedicated to the family ancestors who protect and watch over the family. The *kamidana* is a simple wood shrine shelf for the gods. At both altars there are usually daily offerings of *mochi*, “rice cakes” and/or *sake*, “rice wine”.

The Japanese are superstitiously concerned about zodiac signs and numbers. There are two different Chinese calendars, and favorable and unfavorable numbers both

in life and in death. For example, in the 七五三 *shichi-go-san*, “seven-five-three,” each represents an age of transitional period. At each transition the children will dress up in their new uniforms or kimonos and have professional photographs taken, which in many cases will be proudly displayed next to the ancestors photo above the door in the room where the *kamidana* or *butsudan* is. 二十歳 *nijyūsai (hatachi)*, “twenty years old,” or the Adults Day is also an important number, as it represents adulthood. On New Year’s Day everyone turning twenty during that year will dress in bright kimonos and go to a shrine or a temple.

The numbering continues in death. When a person dies, Buddhist rites are performed to send the dead soul from this world and make it into an ancestral spirit to be enshrined in the *butsudan*. The spirits of the dead are superstitiously believed to linger around the place of death for forty-nine days. Consequently, there are flowers, food, drinks, and toys or other gifts placed at the site of death to appease the spirit.

The body is normally cremated prior to the formal funeral service, and the remaining bones and ashes are placed in an urn. At many funeral services, the Buddhist priests will chant Buddhist sūtras and *Namu-Myoho-Renge-Kyō* while the mourning family and friends pray and make offerings of incense in front of a large picture of the deceased. In current times, in addition to the picture, a large flat-screen monitor will scroll through pictures of the deceased situated in peaceful settings.

On the seventh day after death, the dead person is given a posthumous name by the Buddhist priest. So in death, the Japanese, including the *Shintō* priest, become a Buddhist. By “hearing” the chanting of the scriptures at the funeral and the *Namu-Myoho-Renge-Kyō*, the dead person is popularly considered to have become enlightened.

The posthumous name (usually purchased for a large sum) is eventually inscribed on an 位牌 *ihai*, “memorial tablet,” a long narrow stick (about the size of a popsicle stick) that is placed in the *butsudan*. The *ihai* then represents the spirit of the ancestor, and prayers and offerings are directed to it. A larger *ihai* (roughly a five-foot board that is one inch by four inches) bearing the posthumous name is placed at the grave site of the temple where the family is registered.<sup>147</sup> Ian Reader tells about the importance of these items and rituals for the family members:

The rituals that occur assuage the worries of the living concerning their loved one by assuring them that he/she has attained peace and entered the benevolent world of the ancestors. This not only helps reassure the living in the face of any unease they may harbour about their own demise but also reminds them that they will not be forgotten when they die.<sup>148</sup>

Not only does the superstitious numbering continue in death, the numbering also spills over into the Japanese calendar having a cycle of twelve days that are good, bad, and in between.

Perhaps the strongest evidence of the continued importance placed on auspicious and inauspicious days was seen at the death of the late Emperor Hirohito in January 1989. This event caused the postponement or cancellation of major celebratory events but, as a television news item reported from a sedate and darkened entertainment district in Osaka on that evening, there were not very many of these taking place on that day anyway: he had died on a *butsumetsu*<sup>149</sup> (literally ‘death of Buddha’) day, the most inauspicious day in the cycle, and

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<sup>147</sup> Temple registration is a remaining form of the *danka* system created during the *Meiji* Reformation.

<sup>148</sup> Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, 89.

<sup>149</sup> 仏滅 *butsumetsu*, *butsu* means “Buddha”; *Metsu* means “extinction” and is one of the *Four Noble Truths*.

consequently virtually no weddings, parties and other such celebrations had been scheduled anyway.<sup>150</sup>

The best days of the cycle include the 友引 *tomo biki*, “pull friend” day. The *tomo biki* days are the holidays for the crematoriums, though recently in the greater Tokyo area this has had to change because of the amount of deaths. A calendar in a funeral home will prominently cross out the *tomo biki* days marking the holidays. Since everyone wants the loved one’s soul to make it to nirvana, they are concerned that by cremating the body on the “pull friend” day, rather than having a good send-off, they are risking the chance of having the soul pulled back and left in limbo, or worse left on earth as a ghost.<sup>151</sup> Therefore “pull friend” days are holidays in the death industry.

### *The Beliefs of Buddhism*

The following beliefs are generic Buddhist beliefs. Some of the differences found between sects have already been discussed above. While the Japanese beliefs differ, the following provides a good representation of their beliefs.

#### 四諦 *Shitai*, “The Four Noble Truths”

In short, the four noble truths are suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path to the cessation of suffering.

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<sup>150</sup> *Emperor’s Death News Special*, Asahi Television Osaka, January 7, 1989, cited in Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, 30.

<sup>151</sup> Honda Hideyuki, funeral business operator, interview by author, Ebina, Japan, February 25, 2008.

The first is known as 苦 *ku*, “suffering.”

Now this is the Noble Truth as to suffering. Birth is attended with pain, decay is painful, disease is painful, death is painful. Union with the unpleasant is painful, painful is separation from the pleasant; and any craving unsatisfied, that, too, is painful. In brief, the five aggregates of clinging (that is, the conditions of individuality) are painful.<sup>152</sup>

Suffering is not pessimism; it is realism—something that everyone must encounter. This includes all physical and mental suffering. It is also change; all happiness will turn to sorrow. Since life is not permanent, suffering is the essence of life.

The second is known as 集 *shū*, “accumulation.”

Now this is the Noble Truth as to the origin of suffering. Verily! it is the craving thirst that causes the renewal or becomings, that is accompanied by sensual delights, and seeks satisfaction, now here now there — that is to say, the craving for the gratification of the senses, or the craving for a future life, or the craving for prosperity.<sup>153</sup>

All suffering must have an origin. Buddha taught that there was a “Twelve-fold Chain” which had the origins and links for suffering: 無明 *mumyō*, “ignorance”; 行 *gyō*, “latent impressions”; 識 *shiki*, “thought-substance”; 名色 *myōshiki*, “name and form”; 六 処 *rokusho*, “the six roots”; 觸 *shoku*, “contact”; 受 *ju*, “sensation”; 愛 *ai*, “desire”; 取 *shu*, “clinging to existence”; 有 *yu*, “becoming”; 生 *shō*, “birth”; and 老死 *rōshi*, “decrepitude and death.”

The third is known as 滅 *metsu*, “extinction.” “Now this is the Noble Truth as to the passing away of pain. Verily! it is the passing away so that no passion remains, the

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<sup>152</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 29.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*



giving up, the getting rid of, the emancipation from, the harboring no longer of this craving thirst.”<sup>154</sup>

This is the liberation from suffering. To the Japanese this is the essence and the goal of salvation. To have salvation is to enter 涅槃 *nehan*, “Nirvāna.” In original Buddhism, it meant annihilation, but to *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, it is both an escape and an entrance; escaping from suffering and obtaining land of bliss.

The fourth is known as 道 *dō*, “way.” “Now this is the Noble Truth as to the way that leads to the passing away of pain. Verily! it is this Aryan Eightfold Path, that is to say, Right Views, Right Aspirations, Right Speech, Conduct and Mode of Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Rapture.”<sup>155</sup>

This is also known as 中道 *chūdō*, “the Middle Path,” which avoids both extremes of the senses. The Middle Path is found through the Noble Eightfold Path in which the eight items are different aspects of life that represent a total way of life: 正見 *shōken*, “right views”; 正思惟 *shōshiyui*, “right aspirations”; 正語 *shōgo*, “right speech”; 正業 *shōgō*, “right conduct”; 正命 *shōmei*, “right mode of livelihood”; 正精進 *shōjōjun*, “right effort”; 正念 *shōnen*, “right mindfulness”; and 正定 *shōjō*, “right rapture.”

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

## The Teachings on the Human Soul

The Japanese belief on the 魂 *tama* (shortened form of *tamashī*), “soul,” is different than what the westerners believe. To the Japanese, anything and everything, regardless if it has life or if it is inanimate, has a soul. “The great objects of nature, or groups of phenomena, behave as they do because they have souls something like the soul that controls the human body.”<sup>156</sup> To the Japanese the soul could be thought of as something or a substance that survives eternally and leaves the body upon the dissolution of the body through death.<sup>157</sup>

Historically, Buddhism, because of the syncretistic blend, took on various religious roles including the responsibility of dealing with death. The *Shintō* believed that the Buddhist priest were possessed by Buddha and therefore held special magical powers

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>157</sup> The Japanese believe the soul does not leave the body until its dissolution. They also do not like embalming or burial, cremation is the preferred way. One hypothesis to why they cremate is to release the soul quickly. This hypothesis is based upon three items. One, the belief is that the soul does not leave the body until dissolution. Two, all Buddhist hearses are covered in immaculate gold sculptures of the phoenix. The hood ornament is normally a large phoenix. The phoenix is largely associated with death and the soul’s release. The phoenix is a legendary bird which according to one account lived 500 years, burned itself to ashes on a pyre, and rose alive from the ashes to live another period. The phoenix’s close association to death makes this hypothesis seem likely. Three, devout Hindus regard cremation as an essential rite that frees the soul from the body, enabling its journey to the next spiritual level.

“But many Hindus have balked at this option, [the option was to change the outdoor cremation into one in a crematorium] saying that oven like crematoriums prevent them from carrying out important rituals such as the ‘mukhagni,’ in which a fire is lit in the body’s mouth, and the ‘kapal kriya,’ in which the corpse’s skull is shattered by a blow from a bamboo stick to release the soul.” Quote taken from Bruce Wallace, “India’s funeral pyres leave behind a deadly legacy for the living,” Los Angeles Times in Tokyo, Japan Times, 22 September, 2007, 2.

to transform the dead and lead them to enlightenment.

Buddhist rituals for the dead have strongly transformational and purificatory motifs, seeking to lead the soul to enlightenment by bestowing a Buddhist identity on it and eradicating the impurities of death, physically by cremating the corpse and metaphorically by chanting Buddhist texts and prayers that are believed to guide the soul away from this world, purify it of its shortcomings and transform it into an enlightened state. Attaining the state of peaceful rest after death (that is, completing the journey to ancestorhood) and attaining Buddhahood or enlightenment are also denoted by the same word, *jōbutsu*. Here again there is a sense of continuity between human and other states, the human progressing through death to become a *hotoke* [means a Buddha or enlightened being] and an ancestor.<sup>158</sup>

Cremation was introduced as a means to get rid of the unpleasant evidence of the corpse. The Buddhist also had the responsibility of looking after the soul. “The first cremation in Japan was that of a Buddhist monk in 700 AD [*sic*], followed soon after by the cremation of members of the Imperial family: this method of disposal has become more and more predominant.”<sup>159</sup>

The being is described as having 五蘊 *goun*, “five aggregates,” which are: 色蘊 *shiki*, “bodily” or “form”; 受蘊 *jyu*, “sensation”; 想蘊 *sō*, “perception”; and 行蘊 *gyō*, “predisposition” or “action.” These aggregates are continually changing.

### The Teachings on Emptiness

The Buddhist believes that emptiness is a state of relatedness. Everything is

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<sup>158</sup> Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, 41.

<sup>159</sup> Norman Weatherall, “A Nation’s Dying Industry,” *Far Eastern Economic Review* 146, no. 48 (March 1989): 67, cited in Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, 84.

relative and non-substantial. Information on the Japanese belief of emptiness or *shūnyatā* written in Sanskrit is defined as, “Void, emptiness, that is without substance.”<sup>160</sup> Another word for emptiness, *anicca*, was also found written in Sanskrit. It was written in another form as *anitya*. *Anitya* is listed by the Japanese as one of the Three Conceptions, and it means “The Impermanence of All Individual Existence.”<sup>161</sup> Only these two definitions could be found on the Japanese teachings of emptiness.

### The Teachings on Salvation

Much of the salvation aspects have already been covered; however, a summary here is helpful:

*Zen* — Meditation and self discipline are required for salvation.

*Amida* — Praying to and faith in the *Amida Buddha* are required for salvation.

*Nichiren* — Chanting “*Namu-Myoho-Renge-Kyō*” is required for salvation.

*Theravada* — Becoming a monk and denying one’s self are required for salvation.

### The Doctrines of God

The major doctrines of God according to Buddhism include the following:

*Zen* — There is no God or Supreme Being who can help with enlightenment.

*Amida* — *Amida Buddha* was not a god, but a man who had god-like traits.

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<sup>160</sup> Dale Saunders, *Buddhism in Japan*, 318.

<sup>161</sup> A. Reischauer, *Studies in Japanese Buddhism*, 25.

*Nichiren* — *Nichiren* was not a god, but a Japanese monk who is worshipped.

*Theravada* — Thinking about God hinders enlightenment.

### *The Beliefs of Shintōism*

*Shintō* has no written rules or tenants; however, it is said that there are four aspects to the *Shintō* follower's life. They are called the "Four Affirmations."

#### The Four Affirmations

There are four affirmations in the *Shintō* religion.

1. Tradition and Family — In Japan, the family unit is important. There are individual family traditions, neighborhood traditions, and annual traditions.
2. Love of Nature — Nature is sacred; natural objects are worshipped as if they contain spirits.
3. Physical Cleanliness — Baths are taken for purification and cleanliness.
4. Festivals or *Matsuri* — Participation in the neighborhood festival is necessary.

#### The Four Steps of Worship

In all worship settings, purification is essential. This belief follows *Izanagi's* example of purification when he exited the underworld, washing in water. All participants must purify themselves with water or salt before performing any sacred ritual.

More elaborate ceremonies require ceremonial bathing. Priests sometimes purify by immersion before major rites; it is common to see priests or individuals wearing white robes and purifying themselves under waterfalls, even in the middle of winter.

Large rituals normally have four steps of worship:

1. Purification — Any sacred act requires purification.
2. Welcoming the Deity — The invitation is necessary to bring the deity to the site of worship. Some of the *matsuri* or festivals start at a different location than the shrine where the deity is thought to reside.
3. The Offering — An offering to the deity is necessary to appease him. Offerings include flowers, food, or drink.
4. Sending Off the Deity — This is a simple gesture, usually a simple prayer saying goodbye.

### The Belief in Afterlife

For the *Shintō*, life is good, and death is evil or a curse. The ancient Japanese believed that the dead continued to live as spirits and would visit the world from time to time. At harvest time festivals were conducted, and offerings of the first fruits were presented to the dead. This is part of the *Shintō* faith and the duty of all people.

In *Shintō*, there are no fixed moral codes; good and evil are relative. The meaning and value depends on circumstances, motives, and purpose. The soul of man is thought to be good. Since there is no concept of original sin, by nature man is inherently good because deities created the world to be good. Evil therefore cannot originate in this world or in man. By default thinking, evil must come from a god.

### The Beliefs of God

To the *Shintō*, anything and everything is a god. It is a simple statement, yet that

is the entire concept of *Shintōism*. To say anything more is to reiterate what has already been said.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE BIBLICAL EVALUATION OF THE TEACHING AND PRACTICES OF THE JAPANESE

Nine items of the Buddhists and *Shintō* tenants are evaluated and compared to what the Bible teaches. It is only through the Light of God's word that the darkness of idolatry can be penetrated. The following Biblical evaluations are given as an aide to bring a Japanese to Jesus Christ.

#### *The Bible's Teachings on the Four Noble Truths and Suffering*

The Japanese are taught that suffering is the result of selfish desires. Whereas suffering does happen, the Buddhist's teaching for the cause and origin of suffering is incorrect.

All suffering originates with sin. The Bible tells us that sin came from what Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden; they disobeyed God and sinned (Gen. 3). Because of their sin, man is born with a sinful nature that was inherited from Adam (Rom. 5:12). There is no escaping the fact that because man is born of woman, he is born with a sinful nature (Ps. 51:5).

Genesis 3:14-24 is quite clear that all suffering started with the fall, and that all men will feel the effects of Adam and Eve's disobedience. The effects are suffering.



### Suffering and Death

Suffering is inherent to living. The Bible tells us that all humans can expect to suffer and die. Job, a man who was intimately familiar with suffering, ultimately realized that some suffering comes from God. The wisdom gained from Job's suffering tells us that man will suffer:

“Yet man is born unto trouble” (Job 5:7);

“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble” (Job 14:1);

“his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn” (Job 14:22).

Two further references about suffering to look at are Job 14:2 and 10.

### Desire and Origin of Suffering

The Buddhist teaches that desire is evil; however, the Bible teaches us to desire good things. Desire in some cases may lead to suffering, if bad choices are made.

However, according to the Bible, having desire in itself is not wrong. In fact God wants us to have some desires:

“I delight to do thy will” (Ps. 40:8). Delight equates to a want or a desire; in other words, we are to desire to do God's will. This desire is a wonderful desire to have, not one that is to be disdained as the Buddhists teach.

We are to “covet earnestly the best gifts” (1 Cor. 12:31). We are to wish for or strongly desire the best gifts of the spirit, and we are to “desire spiritual *gifts*” (1 Cor. 14:1).

Desire is not the origin of suffering as the Buddhists teach. It is sin and the sin nature that are the causes of suffering. The Bible teaches that some suffering has a

distinct origin, but not as the Buddhists teach in the “Twelve-fold Chain.” Both Buddhism and *Shintōism* are “unable to account for human suffering and evil. Whereas Christians see the source of evil outside of God, they nevertheless recognize that God is sovereign and offers the solution to the problem of evil both in this life and in the life to come.”<sup>162</sup> This is contrasted to what *Shintōism* believes. Since everything is god, then if there is evil or suffering, it comes from god. In a sense the evil and suffering are also gods; they cannot be separated.

### The Purpose of Suffering

In the case of Christ, His suffering was part of God’s plan; it was for the good of all mankind. God purposed for Christ to suffer, and Christ made no attempt to avoid it. Christ testified Himself of His suffering, “testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow” (1 Pet. 1:11.) Verses that point to Christ’s suffering are: \*Matt. 17:12; \*Mark 8:31, 9:12; Luke 24:26; \*Acts 3:18, 17:3; Heb. 2:9; 1 Pet. \*2:21-24; 3:18; \*4:1.<sup>163</sup>

Not only did Christ suffer for the good of mankind, others will suffer for the good of mankind. One famous example is Joseph in the Old Testament who suffered greatly at the hands of his brothers. He was sold into slavery, falsely accused, and wrongly jailed, but ultimately it was for the good of Egypt and his family. Many people benefited and

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<sup>162</sup> Dan Story, *Christianity on the Offense: Responding to the Beliefs and Assumptions of Spiritual Seekers* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998), 113.

<sup>163</sup> \* = significant references.

were saved from starvation because of his suffering. Joseph reflected on his suffering at the end of his life, “God meant it unto good . . . to save much people alive” (Gen. 50:19-21). Therefore, suffering may be God’s will which ultimately will be good.

Another form of suffering that should be desired is chastisement. Christians will experience the chastisement of God in order to make them more Christ-like. 1 Peter 5:10 tells us that as Christians the suffering one experiences is for the benefit of obtaining perfection; in that God, “called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you*.”

Some suffering just cannot be explained; however, for whatever reason God has allowed it. When this type of suffering occurs, we must be like Paul and “take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake” (2 Cor. 11:22-12:10). Thereby suffering will be pleasure.

#### *The Bible’s Teachings on the Human Soul*

One form of Buddhism teaches that the only way to be freed from suffering is by “extinction” or “annihilation” of the soul. The other form of Buddhism teaches that the soul can enter into “bliss.” The Bible tells us suffering will end for the Christians, “the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption [sin and the world] into the glorious liberty of the children of God” (Rom. 8:20-23). The Bible also tells us that in heaven God will end the suffering and “shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain” (Rev. 21:3-4). The unsaved person’s soul will suffer eternal suffering.

### Eternal Suffering

For those who do not accept Christ, their soul will be in eternal suffering. The soul will not cease through extinction as the Buddhists believe. Isaiah 66:24 teaches that hell is “a flame that is unquenchable.” It is everlasting suffering, not a period for some punishment followed by a release because some priest prayed. It is an eternal “everlasting fire” (Rev. 20:10) and is “the mist of darkness is reserved for ever” (2 Pet. 2:17). Other references include; Matt. 18:9; Luke 16:19-31; 2 Thess. 1:9; Heb. 6:2; Jude 13; \*Rev. 14:10-11.

### Man Has an Eternal Soul

Most Buddhists and *Shintō* believe that man has a soul; however, many do not believe in an afterlife. Therefore, it is necessary to teach what the Bible tells about the soul and what will happen in the afterlife.

God is a Triune God having three parts. Since man is “created in His image,” man has three parts, or is a trichotomy: soul, spirit, body (Gen. 1:26, 27, 5:1; Job 32:8; Ps. 51:10; \*Mark 12:30; 1 Cor. 2:14-3:4, 11:7, \*15:44-50; 2 Cor. 7:1; \*1 Thess. 5:23; \*Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 2:11).

The Buddhists teach that cremation releases the soul,<sup>164</sup> and according to the Bible that teaching is incorrect. The Bible teaches us that there is a connection between the body and soul when a person is born (Gen. 2:7), and a departure or separation of the soul at death (\*Gen. 35:18; \*1 Kings 17:21-22; Eccles. 12:7; Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59, 60;

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<sup>164</sup> To the Japanese Buddhist they believe that the soul is the spirit.

2 Cor. 5:8; \*James 2:26). After the soul has departed, it continues to exist eternally after death of the body (Rev. 6:9-11).

### *The Bible's Teachings on Emptiness*

The Buddhists believe that emptiness is a state of relatedness, in that the life and soul, everything is impermanent. Everything is relative and non-substantial.

### God's Permanence

The Bible does teach that there are things that have permanence. There is an unchanging God and an unchanging Bible. God is eternal and immutable, He is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb. 13:8). The following verses speak of the "eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:20): \*Gen. 21:33; \*Deut. 33:27; Ps. 33:11, 90:2, \*93:2; 102:24-27, 103:17, 146:5-10; Isa. 40:28, 44:6, 57:15; \*Jer. 10:10; Mic. 5:2; \*Hab. 1:12; Mal. 3:6; \*Rom. 1:20, 16:26; Eph. 3:11; 1 Tim. 1:17, 6:15, 16; Heb. \*1:10-12; 6:18, 9:14, \*13:8, James 1:17; Rev. 1:8, 22:13.

### The Bible's Permanence

John chapter one tells us that "The Word," or Christ, is God. Since Christ is God, He has the same attributes of God, one of which is permanence. It is said that Christ is the Bible in the living flesh, and that the Bible is Christ put on paper. If the Bible is Christ put into words on paper, then by default the Bible is permanent. R. A. Torrey says that:

A Book dating from days as ancient as those of the Ancient of Days, and which when all that makes up what we see and call the universe shall be dissolved, will still speak on in thunder-tones of majesty, and whisper-tones of light, and music-tones of love, for it is wrapping in itself the everlasting past, and opening and expanding from itself the everlasting future; and, like an all-irradiating sun,

will still roll on, while deathless ages roll, the one unchanging, unchangeable Revelation of God.<sup>165</sup>

The following passages tell of the scriptures permanence: Num. 23:19; Ps.

\*12:6,7, 89:34, \*119:89-91, \*152; Isa. \*40:8, 46:9-11, 55:8-11; \*Matt. 5:18, 24:35;

\*Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17; \*21:33, John 10:35; \*1 Pet. 1:23-25.

There is permanence to both God and the Bible. Both are unchanging and true.

Since they are both unchangeable, they become the ultimate standard.

### Right and Wrong

There is a standard, one that is black and white. It is not situational ethics that bend and waffle for each situation. There is a right and a wrong and good and evil: Gen. 2:9, 17, \*3:22; Deut. 1:39; 1 Kings 3:9; \*Ps. 34:14; Isa. 7:15; Rom. 7:12; Heb. 5:14.

The *Shintō* does not believe in an original sin; however, as stated above the Bible teaches that Adam and Eve sinned. Not only did Adam and Eve sin, but because of that sin everyone has inherited sin. It was passed down from Adam and Eve through each generation. Romans 5:12 declares, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that *all have sinned* [emphasis added]”. The following Scriptures support that everyone is inherently sinful and commits sin: Gen. 8:21; \*1 Kings 8:46; \*2 Chron. 6:36; Job 15:14-16; Ps. \*51:5, 58:3; \*Eccles. 7:20; Isa. 53:6, 64:6; \*Rom. 3:9-12, 23, 5:12; Gal. 3:22; 1 John 1:8-10.

From these verses, one can see that *everyone* is born a sinner. There is no

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<sup>165</sup> R. A. Torrey, A. C. Dixon et al, eds., *The Fundamentals: A Testimony of the Truth* (1917; repr., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 2:80-81.

escaping it. No one is born good or without sin; no one is inherently good. There is no moral subjectiveness. One is either a sinner or God, and there is no in-between. All men are equally sinful in God's sight.

This sinful nature permeates every single aspect of man's life. Charles Caldwell Ryrie writes on how sin affects man's thoughts and standing with God:

Every facet of man's being is affected by this sin nature. (1) His intellect is blinded (2 Cor. 4:4). His mind is reprobate or disapproved (Rom. 1:28). His understanding is darkened, separated from the life of God (Eph. 4:18). (2) His emotions are degraded and defiled (Rom. 1:21, 24, 26; Titus 1:15). (3) His will is enslaved to sin and therefore stands in opposition to God (Rom. 6:20; 7:20).<sup>166</sup>

Because of sin and unrighteousness there must be a judgment.

### God's Judgment

There is a judgment day, and Christ (God) will judge, not the *Shintō* gods of *Emma-Ō*, *Miru-Me*, and *Kagu-Hana*. It is God and God alone who will judge the "secrets of men" (Eccles. 12:14; Rom. 2:16). Everyone will be judged; those who are still alive, and those who have lived and died in the past. God will use the Bible as the standard to judge man's works, whether they are good or bad. Additionally, those whose names are not found written in the book of life will be "cast into the lake of fire" (2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-15). Additional references that speak of God's judgment are: Eccles. 11:9, \*12:14; Ps. 96:13; \*Matt. 10:15, 12:36, 25:31-46; Luke 12:2, 3; John 5:22-29; Acts 17:30, 31; Rom. 2:12, \*14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:13, \*4:5; 2 Tim 4:1.

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<sup>166</sup> Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systemic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 252.

Since there is sin and because of God's judgment of sin, there is a price to pay. Therefore, questions now arise: "How does one take care of his sin problem?" and "How does one find a way to be forgiven or cleansed of his sins?" The answer lies in God's plan for salvation.

### *The Bible's Teachings on Salvation*

God is a righteous God and therefore He cannot allow sin to go unpunished. The Scriptures clearly teach that there is an eternal punishment and torment for those who reject Christ as Lord. If God is sovereign and loving, then He must and did provide a way for recompense. In other words, one must have their sins covered and forgotten (Ps. 103:6-18) to become righteous in God's eyes. To have the transgressions and sin removed and forgotten, one must be "born again" by placing their faith in Jesus Christ.

The Bible does say that one must "be born again" (John 3:3, 7) to escape eternal punishment and enter into the kingdom of God. Jesus proclaimed in Matthew 5:20, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Other references include Matt. 18:3; Luke 13:2-5; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Eph. 2:4-10; 1 Pet. 1:18-23.

The simple answer is that as the Son of God, Christ has the ability to cover our sins because He shed His blood on the cross (Rom. 5:6-21). That is why His crucifixion and resurrection are so important.

By putting faith in Jesus Christ, one can be born again. The following verses reveal that one becomes righteous by faith, through salvation (believing in Christ): Isa. 55:6-7; Rom. 1:16,17; \*3:19-31, 4:9-16, 9:30-32, \*10:1-11; \*2 Cor. 5:16-21; \*Gal. 2:16-21, \*3:6-29, 5:5; \*Eph. 2:4-9; Phil. 3:9; Heb. 11:7; Titus 2:11-14; 2 Pet. 1:1.



It is a simple belief in Christ, not by chanting and repeating “*Namu-Myoho-Renge-Kyō*.” This chanting does nothing for salvation. Matthew 6:7 says, “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do.”

### *The Bible’s Teachings on God and Idols*

Creating and worshipping idols are strictly forbidden. God is a jealous God; there is a danger in worshipping idols. God declared in Exodus 20:3-5:

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.

There is only one way “one God, and one mediator between God and men” (1 Tim. 2:5). This way is not *Amida* or an idol. It is “by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth....Neither is there salvation in any other” (Acts 4:10-12). Other verses that refer to one God are: Deut. 4:35-39; \*2 Sam. 7:22; 2 Kings 19:15; \*Neh. 9:6; Ps. 83:18, \*86:10; \*Isa. 37:16-20, 42:8, \*43:10-13, \*44:6-8, 45:5, 14, 18, \*20-25; \*Mark 12:29-32; John 14:6, 17:3; \*1 Cor. 8:4-6; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Tim. 1:17; \*James 2:19.

It is through idol worship that Satan and demons gain a foothold or space of one’s personal spiritual realm. The Bible clearly warns of the consequences.

### The Forbidding of Idol Worship and Consequences

God has forbidden idol worship, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me,” (Exod. 20:3), and it is repeated in Deuteronomy 5:7-9. The following verses refer to the danger and God’s anger to those who worship idols: Deut. 4:24-31; 32:16-19; Ps. 96:1-8,

97:6-7, 106:34-42,115, 135:5-18, Isa. 2:8,9<sup>167</sup>, 17-21, 42:8, 17, 44:6-20<sup>168</sup>, 45:20-22, 46:1-9, 57:5-12; Jer. 10:1-16; Ezek. 14:3-8, 22:4; Dan 5; Hab. 1:14-2:20; Matt. 4:10; Acts 15:20, 17:16-31, 21:25; 1 Cor. 8, 10:6,7, 19-22; 2 Cor. 6:14-18. John sums it up with this simple statement, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols” (1 John 5:21).

### How to Destroy Idols

The Bible clearly shows that Satan and demons are closely related with idolatry. Satan and the demons effectively blind and turn men from God through idolatry: Deut. 32:16-20; Isa. 65:11; Matt. 13:19; John 3:19, 20; Rom. 1:19-25; 1 Cor. 2:12-16; 2 Cor. 4:3,\*4; 2 Thess. 2:9-12; 1 Tim. 4:1-4.

There is a great danger of having an idol or worship altar such as the *butsudan* or *kamidana* in the home. These become demon strongholds and can be passed down through the family from one generation to the next. The first mention of the Satanic stronghold being passed on to ones offspring’s occurs in the Ten Commandments. God warns that the children of idolaters and their children will be affected. Exodus 20:5 states, “Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them . . . visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation*.” It is repeated in Deuteronomy 5:7-9, God said not to make or bow down to “*any* graven image [idol] . . . I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers [who worship the

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<sup>167</sup> Both verses reflect Japans social-economical situation.

<sup>168</sup> Verse 18 specifically states that God shuts the eyes of spiritual understanding for the idol worshippers.

idol] upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.” These are not the only two places that God said this; the same warning occurs at least three more times in Exodus 34:7, Leviticus 26:39-40, and Numbers 14:18.

Merrill Unger in his book *What Demons Can Do to Saints* found that:

Occult powers and mediumistic tendencies can be passed down from generation to generation. They run through the family tree of practicing sorcerers and magicians to the third and fourth generation of people implicated in idolatry and its inseparable companion, demonized religion (Exodus 20:1-7; cf. 1 Corinthians 10:20). If a person’s grandparents were spiritists or mediums, he may expect his children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren to demonstrate mediumistic tendencies.<sup>169</sup>

On the other hand, the blessings of righteousness and faithfulness to God are also passed on through generations. So when the Bible repeatedly warns that the effects of idolatry can be felt for generations in a family, one must understand and take heed of God’s warning. The Japanese especially must be aware of and resist Satan’s attacks because of ancestral idolatry problems. A father who had the *butsudan* or *kamidana* in his house can pass along a spirit and open up his family, wife, and children to the temptation and attacks of demons and Satan. I believe that the Bible teaches that the stronghold and idolatry will be worse in each succeeding generation until Satan’s strongholds are torn down. The Scriptures teach how to stop the cycle and to find freedom in Christ:

1. Acknowledge the idolatry. Nehemiah confessed the iniquity of his father in Nehemiah 1:6, and then all of Israel confessed the iniquities of their fathers in Nehemiah 9:2. Daniel made a similar confession in Daniel 9:3-19.

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<sup>169</sup> Merrill F. Unger, *What Demons Can Do to Saints* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 172-73.

2. Ask God to cleanse and cover the idolatry in the blood of Jesus Christ (I John 1:9). It is only through the blood of Jesus Christ that the Japanese family can be set free.

3. Ask God to take back the ground given to Satan and tear down every stronghold.

4. Claim the promise given in Psalm 103:17. This verse should be memorized.<sup>170</sup>

The Japanese have a unique problem in that I am not aware of any fourth generation Christian families, although one would think that there are some. Normally, within the third generation Christian families, one of the spouse's parents is not a Christian. In this setting it is difficult at best to break this cycle of idolatry. David Lewis explains why:

Whereas the first Japanese Protestants tended to destroy their butsudans and kamidanas, later generations became more accommodating by introducing substitute butsudans or by continuing to maintain butsudans intact.<sup>171</sup> The effect has been a continuing receptivity to demonic influences from Shinto and Buddhist practices. Such demons can often be passed on through families.<sup>172</sup>

There is only one way to destroy them, and Deuteronomy 7:23b-26 tells how they are to

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<sup>170</sup> Logan, J., *Reclaiming surrendered ground: Protecting your family from spiritual attacks* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 114.

<sup>171</sup>[Footnote in original] Berensten, J.M., *Ancestor Worship in Missiological Perspective* in Bong Rin Ro (ed.) *Christian Alternatives to Ancestor Practices* (Taichung: Asia Theological Assn.), 139.

<sup>172</sup> Lewis, *The Unseen Face of Japan*, 271.

be destroyed:

And thou shalt destroy them with a mighty destruction, until they be destroyed. And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand, and thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven: there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them. The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire: thou shalt not desire the silver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* unto thee, lest thou be snared therein: for it *is* an abomination to the LORD thy God. Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it: *but* thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing.

### *The Bible's Teachings on Afterlife*

There are only two places for afterlife, heaven and hell. Heaven is a real place; it is described in Revelation 21-22 as a fourteen-hundred mile cube, a single place called the New Jerusalem. Other references describing heaven and the new earth include: \*Isa. 11:1-9, \*65: 17-25, 66:22; Eph. 1:10; Heb. 12:22-28; 2 Pet. 3:11-13; Rev. 3:12, \*21:1-8.

References that describe hell as an eternal punishment of fire are found in: Isa. 66:24; Matt. \*5:22, 29, 30, \*18:9; \*Mark 9:43-48; Luke 12:5; 2, \*16:19-31; 2 Thess. 1:9; \*Heb. 6:2; 2 Pet. 2:4-9, 17; Jude 13; Rev. 1:18, \*14:10-11, \*20:10-15. For those who do not accept Christ, their soul will go into eternal suffering.

### *The Written Authority Is the Bible*

The Bible is true, without error, and is the final authority because the Bible is the “Words of God,” and God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). Additional verses on the authority of the Bible include: 2 Sam. 7:28; \*Num. 23:19; Ps. 12:6, \*19:7-8; Jer. 10:10; \*John 17:17; \*2 Tim. 3:16-17; \*Heb. 6:17, 18.

Without the Scriptures, man is blinded. As was put forth at the beginning of this section, Satan has blinded the idol worshipper to the gospel. It takes love and the Holy

Spirit's illumination to set them free.

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things (Rom. 1:21-25).

Other verses that speak of opening the spiritually darkened eyes are: Isa. 9:2;

\*Acts 26:18; Eph. 4:18; 1 Pet. 2:9.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND APPLICATIONS

In general there is contempt for organized religion among the Japanese. “Nishiyama Shigeru found, in a survey of 363 university students in Tokyo, that while they had high levels of interest in religious activities, they expressed extreme contempt for organized religion, with 92 per cent stating that they would not join any organized religious movement.”<sup>173</sup>

One reason for this contempt is that the Japanese believe that religion is narrowly focused, and that by committing to a particular religion there would be a commitment that excludes and denies all other religions. A feeling that is well entrenched in the college students as a whole, who on several occasions have personally stated identical feelings during our monthly college outreach meetings.

The Japanese are afraid to make such a commitment. “Japanese sociologists of religion have long recognized that this general pattern of disdain, denial of belief and reluctance to affirm commitment to specific doctrinal systems does not prevent Japanese

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<sup>173</sup> Ōmura Eishō and Nishiyama Shigeru, eds., *Gendaijin no shūkyō undō* (Tokyo: Yuhikaku, 1988a), 206, cited in Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, 14.

people from taking part in *all sorts of religiously focused actions* [emphasis added].<sup>174</sup>

The Japanese are willing to and often times feel the need to participate in Christianity (for protection like an *omamori*). They will freely participate up to the point of commitment.

Jared Taylor, who grew up in Japan as the son of missionaries and later wrote the book *Shadows of the Rising Sun*, believes that the Japanese attitude towards Christianity and commitment is because it is too much of a foreign religion for their liking. That the Japanese thinking is:

. . . related to the tendency to operate according to group and context, rather than universal principle. Missionaries arrive in Japan preaching a doctrine they believe to be true for all circumstances. The Japanese think that Christianity is too universal, too abstract, and not concerned enough about the specifics of human relations. . . .

Put differently, the reason why Japanese balk at Christianity is that it demands exclusive loyalty. If it demands of the community are in conflict with demands of God, Christianity teaches men to follow God. This takes great courage in any society but. . . for the Japanese, it is well-nigh unthinkable to forsake the group for a principle of belief, no matter how deeply felt.<sup>175</sup>

This situation is plainly seen in the Japanese Christian culture today, when school functions or the annual neighborhood cleaning conflicts with church. The second aspect not mentioned is that the Japanese feel that they are being a poor witness for Christ by refusing to participate, particularly in the annual neighborhood cleaning. The church and members understand the necessity of fulfilling community obligations and will give members allowance.

Both missionaries and indigenous pastors alike will frequently encounter the

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<sup>174</sup> Reader, *Religion in Contemporary Japan*, 14.

<sup>175</sup> Taylor, *Shadows of the Rising Sun*, 142.



strong resistance that Japanese have to Christianity. It is not uncommon to hear the following response when pressed for a decision: “I have a respect for Christianity and its teachings, but I cannot become a Christian because I am Japanese.” Christianity is a foreign religion, which is fine for Westerners, but it is too “foreign” for the Japanese. Question six in the survey<sup>176</sup> asked, “I cannot become a Christian because I am Japanese (because Christianity is a foreign religion)?” Sixty-one percent of those who responded answered “yes.”

For the 長男 *chōnan*, “first born male,” who become a Christian, it is especially difficult. There is intense pressure from the family *nakama*<sup>177</sup> to carry on family traditions and to take care of the family’s ancestors. The new Christian *chōnan* faces many difficulties, especially in homes where the *chōnan* is the only Christian. There is extreme pressure to carry on the family’s religious traditions regardless of Christian belief. David Lewis quotes from Timothy Boyle’s doctorate thesis:

. . . after the death of the father of a Christian young man, who was the eldest son, ‘a tremendous amount of pressure was applied to him by his non-Christian relatives to fulfill his filial duty of enshrining his father’s soul’ in a butsudān. Although this went against his Christian faith, ‘in order to avoid an acrimonious family spirit, he reluctantly consented to allow the altar to be placed and Buddhist services held in his home.’<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Appendix A.

<sup>177</sup> To the Westerner the *nakama* includes any group (a class, work group, etc.) of which a family is in the category of *nakama*. To the Japanese the *nakama* is any group excluding the family; the family is a category of its self.

<sup>178</sup> Boyle, Timothy Dale, *Communicating the Gospel in Japanese Cultural Terms* (Doctor of Ministry thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, 1986), cited in Lewis, *The Unseen Face of Japan*, 271.

For the Japanese this kind of pressure is hard to bear; it is a very real peer pressure. Twenty-eight percent of the *chōnans* or spouses of *chōnans* responded to question 24 in the survey with “yes.” This mindset, along with other Japanese worldviews of the *Shintō* and Buddhism syncretism, has created one of the hardest mission fields in the world. The Japanese are blinded by Satan, and without the illumination of the Holy Spirit, non-Christians are unable to apprehend Christian truths fully (1 Cor. 2:12–14).

As a Christian, they are identified with Christ and are no longer considered Japanese. The process of ostracism starts because they have made the profession. They are cajoled, coerced, and manipulated into resuming their original Japanese identity—without Christ. In reality, *they have not lost their Japanese identity, but rather their identity has become whole, complete, and fulfilled in Christ*. However, as a newborn Christian, they have not yet come to that realization.

Because of facing this rejection, the process of discipling cannot be neglected. If the church does nothing to fill the void created by the ostracism, the rejection, loneliness, and loss of Japanese identity will drive them back to their old ways. They need to learn that in Christ they are whole, a completed Japanese; in Him they need nothing more (Acts 17:27). They need to learn that the body of Christ is there to support them and that others have faced the same rejection. They need to hear of the blessings and testimonies of how God has worked personally in other Japanese Christian lives. They must be taught, disciplined, and mentored if they are to remain walking with God and become what God desires them to be.

Jesus gave us an example of the falling away in His parable found in Mark 4:5-6, “And some [seeds] fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it

sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.” Why did the new Christian wither away? The answers are found in Mark 4:16-17: “And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when **affliction** or **persecution** ariseth for the word’s sake, immediately they are offended” [emphasis added].

At least in part, this falling away can be prevented with proper “soil” preparation; both in the hearts of the lost and in preparing good discipleship processes. “Part of the discipling process is this phase of preparation, sustaining the believers while the seeds of commitment germinate.”<sup>179</sup> This is absolutely true in the Japanese culture.

Preparing the soil is accomplished through teaching and by living a Godly example. Teaching will “plant seed” where the Christian growth starts. Sustaining the new believer “plant” is done in the discipling program. The discipling will establish the roots. The discipling stimulates, feeds, and protects the plant while getting the roots established so it can survive on its own. Later, the mentoring nourishes and encourages sustained growth. Therefore, the discipling processes are at the very core of missions in the Japanese culture particularly.

“Jesus used every situation as an opportunity to teach his disciples. Class was always in session in the laboratory of life. . . . Jesus preferred planting a few seeds of

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<sup>179</sup> Bill Hull, *Jesus Christ Disciple Maker* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 1993), 17.

thought and then nurturing them through experience.”<sup>180</sup> Missionaries and indigenous pastors must do the same. The only way most Japanese will ever get a glimpse of the Gospel is in the example from a Christian’s life. Ministers of the Gospel must realize that they are continually planting seeds through example, through conversation, or through witnessing. It is not up to them to create the harvest, that is God’s responsibility, and He gives the increase.

Pushing people into decisions is detrimental, particularly with the Japanese. Jesus did not push Nicodemus into an immediate decision. Missionaries, indigenous pastors, and disciplers must follow His example by allowing the Holy Spirit to convict and bring about the change. Our job is to plant seeds. Doing otherwise gives way to an emotional decision with no internal value. Too much with the wrong timing could scare them away permanently.

The new converts are fragile. While mentoring, one must be careful not to place them in situations where they will fail and become discouraged. The mentor should teach and train in small, careful, methodical steps. “The purpose of mentoring is not for the mentor to carry the protégé, but for the mentor to help the protégé learn to walk on his own.”<sup>181</sup> The goal is to disciple the national converts, then train the trained converts to disciple others, and ultimately train the nationals to train the disciplers.

It is possible to separate the Christian from the syncretistic Japanese society, but it

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>181</sup> Howard & William Hendricks, *As Iron Sharpens Iron*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 111.

requires strong, long-term, loving discipleship and mentoring. This thesis is born out from the data derived from the surveys. In churches where discipleship was a lesser focus, there was less separation. In churches where strong discipleship and mentoring occurred, there was greater separation from the Japanese traditions. To overcome the syncretism, strong, loving, Biblical discipleship and mentoring programs must be used effectively.

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## Appendix A

リサーチプロジェクト（修士論文に必要な資料の為）

秘密は厳守しますから、正直に質問に答えてください（匿名）。

該当する答えを丸で囲って下さい。

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| 1. あなたは？   | 長男 長男の妻 ほか   |
| 2. あなたは救われていますか。   | はいいいえ        |
| 3. ご両親は救われていますか。   | はいいいえ        |
| 4. あなたの配偶者は救われていますか。   | はいいいえ        |
| 5. イエスを信じてから何年になりますか。  | _____        |
| 6. 「私は <b>日本人</b> だからクリスチャンになれない」（キリスト教は外国の宗教だから）と思っている人がたくさんいると思いますか。 | はいいいえ        |
| その様に話しているのを聞いた事がありますか。   | はいいいえ        |
| ご意見_____   |              |
| 7. 「私は <b>長男</b> だからクリスチャンになれない」と思っている人がたくさんいると思いますか。                  | はいいいえ        |
| その様に話しているのを聞いた事がありますか。   | はいいいえ        |
| ご意見_____   |              |
| 8. <b>救われている夫婦が</b> 赤ちゃんの名前をつける時、「何画がいい」という様に縁起をかつぐ事があると思いますか。         | はいいいえ        |
| ご意見_____   |              |
| 9. 毎週教会に行きますか。   | 毎週 時々 殆ど行かない |
| 10. 牧師かだれか聖書に詳しい人と個人的な聖書の学びをした事がありますか。                                 | はいいいえ        |
| ご意見_____   |              |
| 11. 会社に神棚がありますか。   | はいいいえ        |
| 12. 家に神棚がありますか。  | はいいいえ        |
| 13. 現在の会社、又は以前勤めていた会社で、あなたは地鎮祭や神棚をまつる等の宗教的儀式に参加した事がありますか。              | はいいいえ        |
| ご意見_____   |              |
| 14. 神棚をまつる事は宗教的だと思いますか。  | はいいいえ        |
| 15. 新しい家を建てる時、鍬入れ式が必要だと思いますか。  | はいいいえ        |
| ご意見_____   |              |
| 16. 新しい家を建てる時、地鎮祭が必要だと思いますか。   | はいいいえ        |
| ご意見_____   |              |
| 17. 鍬入れ式は宗教的だと思いますか。   | はいいいえ        |
| 18. 地鎮祭は宗教的だと思いますか。  | はいいいえ        |

## Appendix A

19. クリスチャンのあなたが神社やお寺に行く事に（観光やお参りを問わず）問題を感じますか。 はい いいえ  
ご意見\_\_\_\_\_
20. 神社やお寺に入る前に手を洗いますか。 はい いいえ
21. 家に位牌がありますか。 はい いいえ
22. 家に仏壇（又は厨子）がありますか。 はい いいえ
23. 車にお守り札がありますか。家や他の場所にありますか。 はい いいえ
24. 自分が拝まなければ家に仏壇があっても問題がないと思いますか。 はい いいえ  
ご意見\_\_\_\_\_
25. 親戚が集まる時、日本の伝統的な宗教行事や礼拝等に参加しますか。 はい いいえ  
ご意見\_\_\_\_\_
26. おみくじをひいた事がありますか。 はい いいえ  
それはクリスチャンとして問題だと思いますか。 はい いいえ
27. 星占いをした事がありますか。 はい いいえ  
それはクリスチャンとして問題だと思いますか。 はい いいえ
28. 手相を見てもらった事がありますか。 はい いいえ  
それはクリスチャンとして問題だと思いますか。 はい いいえ
29. 教会以外の場所での葬式に出席した事がありますか。 はい いいえ
- 29で「はい」と答えた方へ、**
30. その時、拝礼をしましたか。 はい いいえ  
拝礼をしたとしたら、どのように拝礼しましたか。 はい いいえ  
ご意見\_\_\_\_\_
- 拝礼しないのは周りの人に対して問題だと思いますか。 はい いいえ  
ご意見\_\_\_\_\_
31. その時、祈りましたか。 はい いいえ  
祈ったとしたら、どのように祈りましたか。 はい いいえ  
ご意見\_\_\_\_\_
32. その時、焼香をしましたか。 はい いいえ
33. 焼香をしない事は周りの人に対して問題だと思いますか。 はい いいえ

## Appendix A

ご意見

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Appendix B

**Research Project (This questionnaire is for [Masters] thesis)**

**Please answer honestly, your privacy will be protected, (anonymously)**

**[don't write your name]**

**Please answer by circling the applicable item.**

- |   | 1 <sup>st</sup> Born | Spouse of 1 <sup>st</sup> Born | Other  |
|---|----------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
| 1. Are you?   |                      |                                |        |
| 2. Are you saved?   |                      | yes no                         |        |
| 3. Are your parents saved?  |                      | yes no                         |        |
| 4. Is your spouse saved?  |                      | yes no                         |        |
| 5. How many years have you been saved?  |                      | _____                          |        |
| 6. Do you think that others believe, "I can not become a Christian because I am Japanese" (because Christian is a foreign religion)?          |                      | yes no                         |        |
| Have you heard someone say that?  |                      | yes no                         |        |
| Comments_____   |                      |                                |        |
| 7. Do you think that others believe "I can not become a Christian because I am the 1 <sup>st</sup> born?"                                     |                      | yes no                         |        |
| Have you heard someone say that?  |                      | yes no                         |        |
| Comments_____   |                      |                                |        |
| 8. <u>For saved parents</u> , when you chose a name for [your] baby, are you concerned with the "number of strokes" in the [kanji] name?      |                      | yes no                         |        |
| Comments_____   |                      |                                |        |
| 9. Do you attend church every week?   | Every week           | Sometimes                      | Seldom |
| 10. Have you been disciplined by the pastor or someone else?  |                      | yes no                         |        |
| Comments_____   |                      |                                |        |
| 11. Does your workplace have a <i>kamidana</i> ?  |                      | yes no                         |        |
| 12. Does you house have a <i>kamidana</i> ?   |                      | yes no                         |        |
| 13. At your current or previous work place, have you participated in a company ground-breaking, or participate in a <i>kamidana</i> ceremony? |                      | yes no                         |        |
| Comments_____   |                      |                                |        |
| 14. Do you think having a <i>kamidana</i> is [associated to] religion?  |                      | yes no                         |        |
| 15. When you build a new house, do you think it is important to hold a ground-breaking?   |                      | yes no                         |        |
| Comments_____   |                      |                                |        |
| 16. When you build a new house, do you think it is important to hold a ground-breaking?   |                      | yes no                         |        |
| Comments_____   |                      |                                |        |
| 17. Is ground-breaking [associated to] religion?  |                      | yes no                         |        |
| 18. Is ground-breaking ceremony [associated to] religion?   |                      | yes no                         |        |

**Please continue the answers [on next page]**

## Appendix B

19. As a Christian do you think there is a problem to go to a shrine or a temple (for sight-seeing or festival)? yes no  
 Comments \_\_\_\_\_
20. Before you enter a shrine or temple do you wash your hands? yes no
21. Do you have a *ihai* in you home? yes no
22. Do you have a *butsudan* (*zushi*)? yes no
23. Do you have a *omamori* in your car? In your house or someplace else? yes no
24. Do [you] think it is ok to have *butsudan* in [your] house as long as you don't worship [at it]? yes no  
 Comments \_\_\_\_\_
25. When [you] have a family gathering, do [you] participate in [your] Japanese family traditional religious events or worship? yes no  
 Comments \_\_\_\_\_
26. Have [you] participated in Japanese luck lottery? yes no  
 Do [you] think this a problem for Christians to participate in? yes no
27. Have [you] had astrology [readings]? yes no  
 Do you think this a problem for Christians to participate in? yes no
28. Have [you] had palm [readings]? yes no  
 Do you think this a problem for Christians to participate in? yes no
29. Have [you] attended a funeral outside the church? yes no
- Continue if you answered "yes" to 29**
30. Did you worship at that time [funeral]? yes no  
 If you worshiped, how did [you] do the worship? yes no  
 Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do you think it would be a problem to the people around [you] if [you] didn't worship? yes no  
 Comments \_\_\_\_\_
31. At that time [the funeral] did you pray? yes no  
 If [you] prayed, how did you pray? yes no  
 Comments \_\_\_\_\_
32. At that time [the funeral] did you [offer] incense? yes no
33. Do you think it would be a problem to the people around [you] if [you] didn't offer incense? yes no

## Appendix B

Other Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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