Shrines Registered in Ancient Japanese Law

Shinto or Not?

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The Procedures of the Engi Era (Engi shiki) contain registers of 2,862 shrines to which the imperial government made offerings during the Nara and Heian periods. An analysis of these shrines is conducted on the basis of three working hypotheses. First, the possibility that the location of these shrines may have been of strategic importance in the political and military campaigns of Yamato, Nara, and Heian Japan. Second, the possibility that these shrines may be related to social and economic competition between the leading sacerdotal houses at the time. And third, the possibility that Buddhism may have been part of the equation. None of these possibilities alone explain the shrines' unequal geographic distribution, or the nature of the cults that were given therein. But the linkage of the three hypotheses reveals the fact that the central government took control of these shrines and their cults in a strategy of territorial and social control, and suggests that the court's appropriation of these shrines and cults must have profoundly transformed pre-existing practices and notions. The shrine registers then are not representative and block our perspective on the nature of kami cults. Whether this imperial cultic system should be called Shinto or not is debatable, and this important issue is treated in the context of a brief discussion of Kuroda Toshio's views.

Keywords: *Engi shiki — shikinaisha —* Nakatomi *—* Imbe *—* Urabe *— Kogoshūi — jingi.*

THE TERM SHINTO has been debated now by Western scholars for several decades, and its origins and meanings, not to mention its contents, have been affirmed, refined, or questioned. In the following it will be suggested that the debate is not over, and that it is of some consequence for historians of religions at large and for Japanologists in particular. I do not know when terms such as Christianity, Buddhism, or Islam were added to the vocabulary of Western cultures, but few people

seem to think that these cognomens represent a serious problem. Some scholars, however, seem to hold that the term Shinto is a problem, and I personally think that this is a good thing. The following is an attempt to provide some balance in the aforementioned debate, in the hope of suggesting that the official cults that the imperial court dedicated to more than three thousand entities called kami 神 in the Nara period (710–784) and early Heian period (794–1185) had been in existence for some time prior to the textual appearance of the term Shinto; that these cults must not continue to be ignored; and that the issue of whether Shinto is grounded in or related to these official cults is a central problem in Japanese cultic and cultural history as well as in our understanding of that cognomen. In the process I would like to revisit Kuroda Toshio's approach and thereby provide a critique of his critics (KURODA 1981).

You Shall be Registered

Official registers of kami and shrines (*jinmyōchō* or *shinmeichō* 神名帳) to which the imperial government made regular offerings are a fundamental feature of early Japanese law, and were established by the Office of Kami of Heaven and Earth (Jingikan 神祇官, or Kanzukasa 神司), an office that was supposed to be superior to the Grand Council of State (Dajōkan 大政官), but was in fact inferior. In short, these registers evidence governmental technologies of social control as well as territorial strategies; they also shed light on the ritual economy of imperial power. At the same time, however, the registers and attendant rites codified by the government may obscure features of cultic life that predated this government control. They also represent the scope of the early imperial cultic system's substance and geographical reach, in that the shrines named therein were the object of mandatory imperial (state) and gubernatorial (provinces) offerings at the time of specified ritual performances. Before dealing with these registers, a brief recapitulation of the history of early Japanese law is necessary.

According to a tradition that is sometimes questioned, the Taika reform of 645 ushered in a new type of governmental rationality, in that it initiated the formation of a Japanized version of the classical Chinese set of legal codes, and in so far as it reformulated social organization, managed economic production in a thoroughly revamped fashion, codified taxation, and established a new penal code. That is the system known in Japanese as *ritsuryō seido* 律令制度, based on the four major divisions of Chinese law: *ritsu, ryō* (both legal codes), *kyaku* 格 (penalties), and *shiki* 式 (procedures). However, the drafting process took a very long time. It began with Emperor Tenchi's *Ōmi ryō*

近江令 (shortly after 668), and Emperor Tenmu's *Asuka-Kiyomihara ritsuryō* 飛鳥清御原律令 (between 681 and 689). It would have matured, we are told, with the *Taihō ritsuryō* 大宝律令 (promulgated in 702), and would have culminated in the *Yōrō ritsuryō* 養老律令 (which were drafted in 718 and promulgated in 757, but survive only in commentaries of 833 and of some time between 859 and 877). Statutes were added over time, usually because not all legal stipulations were clear enough or enforceable. These statutes took the form of imperial edicts (*choku* 勅) or proclamations (*shō* 詔), as well as edicts known as *dajō kanpu* 大政官符 and *dajōkan shobun* 大政官処分. In the first half of the eighth century these proclamations and edicts were collected in summas known as *shoshirei* 諸司例, and between 757 and 765 temporary regulations known as *betsu shiki* 別式 were drafted. It took many years thereafter to see the drafting and promulgation of *kyaku* and *shiki*. Indeed, while no new *ritsu* or *ryō* were added to the system in the ninth century, ten books of *kyaku* and twenty books of *shiki*, known as the *Kōnin kyaku shiki* 弘仁格式, were presented to the emperor in 820 (almost all of these are lost). Subsequently, and on the basis of the former, a new set of twelve books of *kyaku* and twenty books of *shiki*, the *Jōgan kyaku shiki* 貞観格式, was completed in 871. However, because both Kōnin and Jōgan sets of stipulations and regulations were incomplete, they had to be used concurrently. This was a burdensome practice that stood in the way of sound governmental practice, and it led Emperor Daigo to order the compilation of what is now known as the *Procedures of the Engi Era* (*Engi shiki* 延喜式, drafted in 927 and enacted in 967), a monumental document composed of fifty books, the first ten of which concern cults conducted on behalf of the government in the shrines that are registered in books nine and ten.[1]

The earliest register of shrines is said to have accompanied the codes and regulations contained in the *Asuka-Kiyomihara ritsuryō*, but nothing remains of it. The codes of the Kōnin era definitely contained such a register, and so did those of the Jōgan era, but none of these registers survives in toto and very little can be said concerning their contents, except that it seems that the number of shrines increased over time, that the number of kami varied (even in the case of individual shrines), and that the ranks of the kami also changed (both upward and downward). When it comes to the *Procedures of the Engi Era*, however, one is in a much better position to assess the nature of the phenomenon. And, if one were to include in an analysis of the

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[1] See Felicia BOCK 1970–72. These volumes contain a translation of the first ten books of the *Procedures*, as well as groundbreaking analyses of the main problems related to the origins and enactment of these procedures.

Procedures the shrines commonly called *kokushi genzaisha* 国史現 [見] 在社 (shrines mentioned in the Six National Histories), one could reach the best vantage point from which to grasp the size and character of the Nara and early-Heian periods' cults that took place in shrines (when they existed) or sites of cult (when only temporary structures may have been set up on the occasion of ritual).[2]

The shrines that are mentioned in the *Procedures of the Engi Era* are commonly referred to as *shikinaisha* 式内社 or *shikisha* 式社, in contradistinction to the *kokushi genzaisha* mentioned above, and the present discussion will focus on them. Many shrines registered in the *Procedures* are mentioned in the Six National Histories (the *Shoku Nihongi*, for example, mentions the addition of sixteen shrines to the government's register, and these shrines were then called "official shrines," *kansha* 官社), but the *shikinaisha* alone have achieved a special status over time. They have been the object of many written studies for at least five centuries, and it has been advanced that the analysis of the *shikinaisha* and the kami enshrined therein eventually became a central part of Shinto historical scholarship and, therefore, should be included in the definition of the word Shinto. Indeed, the register itself became a cult object: it was regularly chanted in Buddhist temples and by individual devotees, for example, and several books of the *Procedures* were given a quasi-canonical status.[3] This being said, the question of whether the imperial cultic system these registers represent should be called Shinto or not remains a daunting issue, especially in light of the Buddhist involvement in it. The following does not claim to solve this issue in a definitive manner and merely tries to clear some ground for a discussion between all who are interested in the set of problems it may breed.

Books Nine and Ten of the *Procedures of the Engi Era* list shrines with regard to which the government's ritual branch (the Jingikan) was held responsible for providing specific offerings (generally called *hei-haku* 幣帛, these included, depending on the status of the shrines, various amounts of cloth, garments, food offerings, weapons, and rice wine). Originally, all official shrines were to receive these offerings at

[2] The Six National Histories (*Rikkokushi* 六国史) are the *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 (compiled in 720 and covering ancient mytho-history down to 696), the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀 (compiled in 797 and covering the years 697 to 791), the *Nihon kōki* 日本後紀 (compiled in 840 and covering the years 792 to 833), the *Shoku Nihon kōki* 続日本後紀 (compiled in 869 and covering the years 833 to 850), the *Montoku jitsuroku* 文徳実録 (compiled in 878 and covering the years 850 to 858), and the *Sandai jitsuroku* 三代実録 (compiled in 901 and covering the years 858 to 887). For lack of time and space, the shrines named therein but not appearing in the *Engi shiki* list will not be studied here, even though they are of great consequence for the problems raised in this article.

[3] The best study on this aspect is NISHIMUTA 1996, pp. 217–316.

the time of the *kinensai* 祈年祭 rite, which took place at the Jingikan during the second month of the lunar year. During the Nara period these shrines' sacerdotal officiants (*hafuribe* 祝部) came from all over the country and gathered in the capital to receive these offerings; this practice was called *hanpei* 班幣. Starting in 798, however, only 573 shrines (dedicated to 737 kami) received these offerings from the Jingikan in the old fashion; these shrines were then called *kanpeisha* 官幣社, "shrines (*sha*) receiving offerings (*hei*) from the central government (*kan*)," while 2,288 shrines (dedicated to 2,395 kami) were to receive offerings on the part of province governors in the name of the court; these shrines were then called *kokuheisha* 国幣社, "shrines receiving offerings from governors." A further distinction was established between "major" shrines (at which the offerings in question were placed on top of tables), and "minor" shrines (at which the offerings were placed below the tables). One therefore sees shrines called "major shrines receiving offerings from the central government" (198 shrines, located mostly in the Kinai area); "minor shrines receiving offerings from the central government" (375 shrines located only in the Kinai area); "major shrines receiving offerings from governors" (155 shrines); and "minor shrines receiving offerings from governors" (2,133 shrines). Yet another set of distinctions was made concerning additional rituals performed at some of these shrines, at which time the government again made offerings; these are registered in the *Procedures*. Finally, a special distinction was made for those kami characterized as *myōjin* 名神, a title they were granted because of their particular power (this will be discussed later in this article).

Time and again ever since 967, one sees the following numbers and qualifications, recited as though they were some kind of mantra: 2,862 (or, depending on the sources, 2,861) shrines (*sha*) in which 271 kami were the objects of joint cults; 3,132 kami (*za* 座), 492 of which were major (*jō* 上), and 2,640 of which were minor (*ge* 下); 36 kami that were the objects of cult in the Imperial Palace, and three in the capital. They were distributed geographically, by province, as follows:

First, the Kinai area: 231 major; 427 minor (658)
   Yamashiro (located in present-day Kyoto): 122
   Yamato (located in present-day Nara):   286
   Kawachi: 113
   Izumi: 62
   Settsu: 75

Second, the Tōkaidō area: 52 major, 679 minor (731)
   Iga: 25
   Ise: 253

Shima:	3
Owari:	121
Mikawa:	26
Tōtōmi:	62
Suruga:	22
Izu:	92
Kai:	20
Sagami:	13
Musashi:	44
Awa:	6
Kazusa:	5
Shimōsa:	11
Hitachi:	28
Third, the Tōsandō area:	42 major, 340 minor (382)
Ōmi	155
Mino:	39
Hida:	8
Shinano:	48
Kōzuke:	12
Shimotsuke:	11
Mutsu:	100
Dewa:	9
Fourth, the Hokurikudō area:	14 major, 338 minor (352)
Wakasa:	42
Echizen:	126
Kaga:	42
Noto:	43
Etchū:	34
Echigo:	56
Sado:	9
Fifth, the San'indō area:	37 major, 523 minor (560)
Tanba:	71
Tango:	65
Tajima:	131
Inaba:	50
Hōki:	6
Izumo:	187
Iwami:	34
Oki:	16
Sixth, the San'yōdō area:	16 major, 124 minor (140)
Harima:	50

Mimasaka:	11
Bizen:	26
Bitchū:	18
Bingo:	17
Aki:	3
Suō:	10
Nagato:	5
Seventh, the Nankaidō area:	29 major, 134 minor (163)
Kii:	31
Awaji:	13
Awa:	50
Sanuki:	24
Iyo:	24
Tosa:	21
Eighth, the Saikaidō area:	8 major, 69 minor (107)
Chikuzen:	19
Chikugo:	4
Buzen:	6
Bungo:	6
Hizen:	4
Higo:	4
Himuka:	4
Ōsumi:	5
Satsuma:	2
Iki:	24
Tsushima:	29

Looking at a map for comparative purposes, one understands why this register has captivated so many people in the past, and continues to do so (Map 1). The provinces with the largest numbers of shrines are often said to have been of interest to the court *at the time:* Yamato (286 shrines); Ise (253); Izumo (187); Ōmi (155); Tajima (131); Echizen (126); Yamashiro (122); Owari (121); Kawachi (113); Mutsu (100); and Izu (92). These numbers, however, are bewildering. First, some major shrines (such as Iwashimizu Hachimangū 石清水八幡宮) are missing. Second, one would expect that all shrines (or kami) mentioned in the myths compiled in 712 (*Kojiki* 古事記) and 720 (*Nihon shoki*), as well as shrines mentioned in the *Fudoki* 風土記, would be included in the register, but quite a few important sites are not registered. This issue may be related, in part, to the fact that kami names and their genealogies differ in *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki,* and—also in part—to the fact that these documents evidence an immature grasp of
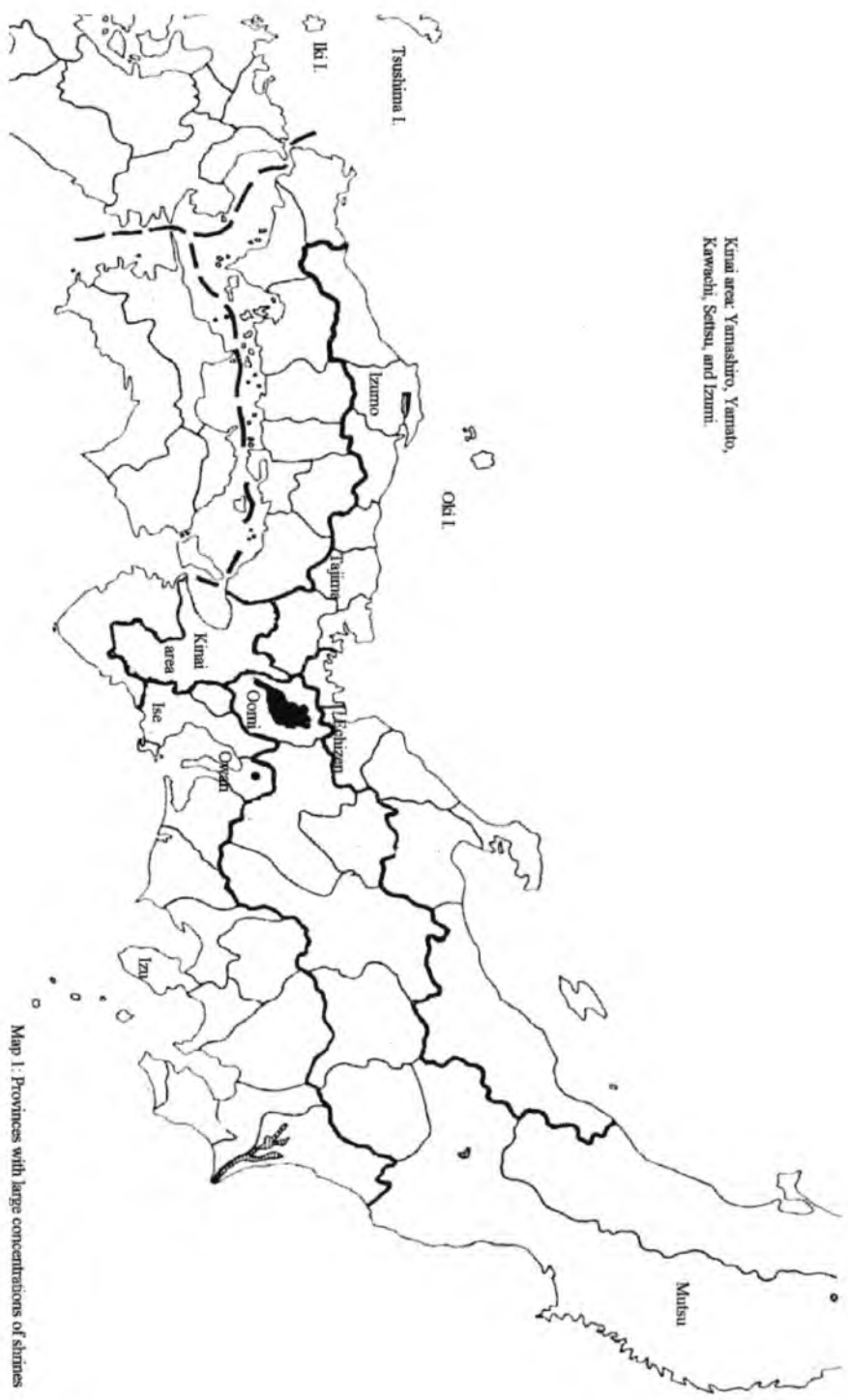
the extent of the Japanese archipelago and its populations and cultures at the time these texts were written. Third, it is unclear why there would be so many officially recognized shrines in the northern reaches of the country (which were under less-than-complete control at the time), and so few in the western reaches of the country (which must have been of value to the court). That is, if one easily understands why Izumo Province has so many shrines, and if one can explain why there are abundant shrines in the very small Iki and Tsushima Islands as well as in the northernmost reaches of Kyushu, one is left guessing why there are so few in the central and southern provinces of Kyushu, for example.

   In an attempt to figure out whether one is dealing here with lacunae, omissions, or uneven accounts, several working hypotheses can be proposed, but only three will be offered at this stage. First, the location of registered shrines may have been of strategical importance in the political and military campaigns during the western and northern expansion, which the Yamato, Nara, and Heian courts engaged in. To evaluate this approach, we should look at the major roads of contact with the continent as well as the location of the campaigns in question. Second, the inclusion of shrines in the register may be related to social and economic competition between sacerdotal houses. We therefore have to look at power relations among those who were involved in compiling the shrine registers as well as records such as the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. And third, Buddhism may have been a major, though hidden, part of the equation. In order to find out whether this was the case, we must investigate the history of relations between shrines and temples as well as the geographical spread of Buddhist institutions at the time these registers were established.

The First Hypothesis: Political and Military Space

Two conspicuous instances call for this hypothesis: the immense amount of shrines located in the Kinai area, and the fairly heavy concentration of shrines situated along the coastal areas of the Inland Sea, the San'in area (including the Oki Islands), the northernmost part of Kyushu, and the Iki and Tsushima Islands. With regard to the first instance, there is no doubt that some shrines were connected to the ancient social groups (*uji* 氏) that supported the nascent imperial house and its military needs in Yamato Province and elsewhere. This point requires no discussion here because the dominant features of this factor are so obvious. With regard to the second instance, quite a few of these shrines were concentrated near the sea lanes and on the land routes that were used extensively for political, economic, and

Kinai area: Yamashiro, Yamato,
Kawachi, Settsu, and Izumi.

Tsushima I.

Iki I.

Izumo

Oki I.

Tajima

Kinai
area

Ise

Oomi

Owari

Echizen

Izu

Mutsu

Map 1: Provinces with large concentrations of shrines

military reasons during the Yamato, Nara, and Heian periods (if not earlier). As one might expect, Japanese scholars have addressed these geographical and historical questions because space and time have long been regarded as major aspects of the definition of local cults.

SHIGA Gō's *Shikinaisha no kenkyū* (1987) and NISHIMUTA Takao's *Engishiki jinmyōchō no kenkyū* (1996) epitomize recent attitudes with regard to these categories, and their work will be briefly presented below. In his overview of problems related to the *shikinai* shrines, Shiga focuses on these shrines' location: he makes suitable distinctions between mountain shrines, sea shrines, valley shrines, and shrines that are located in plains. He then characterizes the aspects of the kami that are the object of cult therein: thunder and lightning, trees, ore, wind, earth, and last but not least, water. These entities, he writes, have an often uncontrollable impact on human needs and therefore became the objects of cult. (This argument may be countered, however, by pointing out that they also represent the basic elements of fire, wood, metal, air, earth and water—which may point to continental influences.) Shiga then mentions kami that symbolize and safeguard human activities such as household organization, village protection, and various professions such as weaving, pottery, and the like. In this respect, one wishes that Shiga had made explicit references to the other books of the *Procedures of the Engi Era,* which offer detailed information on these aspects of Japanese society and culture at the time, or to specific data one can gather from documents such as the *Fudoki.*

One is still left wondering about the issue of the shrines' geographical concentrations, however. Tsushima Island, for example, was home to twenty-nine official shrines, while tiny Iki Island housed twenty-four. There is little doubt that the shrines located in these isles and bearing the name Watatsumi 海神 were related to sea travel; others were probably related to military protection of the main stop between Japan and Korea (this is definitely the case of shrines that bear the name Sumiyoshi 住吉); yet others were directly related to the Urabe 卜部 diviners, a feature to which we will return while discussing the second hypothesis. Some shrines were related to groups of seafarers, fishermen, and guides that were clustered in professional groups often referred to as Ama 海部. Indeed, this type of shrine is found all along the northern shore of Kyushu, the coasts of the Inland Sea, and particularly so in the easternmost part of Shikoku Island, the coasts of Awaji Island, and the shores of Izu Peninsula and nearby islands. Many of these shrines are related to the Azumi 安曇, professional groups that specialized in maritime warfare. In others words, some of these shrines' functions in the distant past can be understood. However, if one compares the numbers mentioned above to that of the shrines

located in Chikuzen Province in Kyushu (only nineteen), one can only be surprised. And if one notes that there is not a single *kanpei taisha* (官幣大社, major shrines receiving offerings from the central government) in Kyushu, and compares the numbers of the high-ranked official shrines called *myōjin taisha* (six in Tsushima, seven in Iki, but only seven in Chikuzen—and these numbers vary slightly depending on which manuscript of the *Procedures* is used), one is called to pause and reflect on the issue. The *Kojiki, Nihon shoki,* and *Fudoki* all contain descriptions of military campaigns undertaken by "emperors" in order to "pacify" the land. Generally speaking, these campaigns start from the southwestern reaches of the archipelago (Mount Takachiho in southern Kyushu), move northward to Usa, eastward through the Inland Sea as well as along the Japan Sea coasts of Honshu, and gather in Yamato. Further campaigns target the eastern and northern regions of Honshu, some by sea and some by land. Finally, there are campaigns (some of which are of questionable historicity) that start from Yamato in a westward direction toward Kyushu (to quell rebellions there) and proceed to the Three Kingdoms of the Korean Peninsula. Many shrines are related to these campaigns, from Usa in the northern reaches of Kyushu, to Izumo, Atsuta, Kehi, Suwa, Kashima, Katori, and so on. The kami enshrined therein are often sword spirits or are the objects of offerings of all sorts of weapons. There is no question that a systematic analysis of these texts in relation to those shrines and kami names and characteristics may lead to a deeper understanding of the decisions the government took to list these shrines in the *Procedures*'s register. But the military and political issue alone does not provide a complete, satisfactory answer. That is, while the register of shrines may have included geopolitical concerns on the part of the government, these concerns do not evidence the reason for such high numbers in so remote or limited geographical areas, and for such low numbers in the fairly large island of Kyushu. The register must therefore reflect other issues as well.

The Second Hypothesis: Social and Economic Space

One of the distinctive features of Japanese society after 645 is the ranking of court members and officials. Less known, perhaps, and certainly not extensively studied by Western scholars, is the fact that kami were ranked as well. Twelve court ranks for court members and officials were established under Shōtoku Taishi's rule in 603, in order to promote a hierarchical system that would support and enhance the power and prestige of the emperor. Subsequently, Emperor Tenmu reinstituted parts of an older system of hereditary titles in order to

consolidate his power, and this indicates that there were grand changes in social organization at the time, and that there were both winners and losers. In 757 a definitive ranking was established and it shows that the closer to the emperor an individual was, the higher his or her rank: a new social space was created, and it was economic as well, since emoluments and "rank fields" (*iden* 位田) accompanied the assignment of ranks. This ranking was also applied to the kami, whose pre-Nara conceptualization must have been transformed as a consequence. It is perhaps best here to reproduce John Hall's simple and direct description of the rank system:

> Four special ranks (*hon* 品) were set aside for members of the imperial family. Below these were eight official ranks (*kurai* 位) which applied to the aristocracy as a whole. These were subdivided into twenty-six separate grades. The first three ranks were each divided into senior and junior grades forming six divisions from senior first rank (*shō ichi-i* 正一位) to junior third rank (*jū sanmi* 従三位). These six grades were limited to a small fraction of the upper aristocracy who could aspire to the posts of state ministers (*daijin* 大臣) and state councillors (*nagon* 納言). The fourth and fifth ranks were each divided into junior and senior grades with upper and lower levels. They thus accounted for eight divisions. The highest was senior fourth rank upper grade (*shō shi-i no jō* 正四位上), and the lowest junior fifth rank lower grade (*jū go-i no ge* 従五位下). To these ranks belonged the middle class of court aristocracy. The majority of the aristocracy held ranks within the twelve grades into which ranks six through eight were divided .... [There were, beyond this] "outer" ranks [which] offered twenty divisions descending from outer senior fifth rank upper grade to lower eighth.
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> (HALL 1966, pp. 71–72)

In the case of kami there were three types of ranks that paralleled the system outlined above: *ikai* (位階, ranks and grades similar to those of the court), *kun'i* (勲位, merit or valor ranks, granted originally for military valor and later as honors), and *hon*, which corresponded to ranks for members of the imperial family. During the Heian period, new types of kami ranks were added: *shaku-i* (借位, temporary [?] ranks), and during the Muromachi period there appeared *sōgen senji* 宗源宣旨, special dispensations on the part of Yoshida Shinto 吉田神道 authorities.[4] The first recorded instance of *ikai* is in the *Nihon shoki*, twenty-first day, seventh month of 672: "When the [Jinshin] war was over, the Generals reported the monitions of these three gods to the Emperor,

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[4] See Hiromi MAEDA's article in this volume.

who straightway commanded that the three gods should be raised in rank and worshipped accordingly" (ASTON 1972, vol. 2, p. 318).[5] The granting of such ranks continued for centuries. The first example of *kun'i* occurred in 765, when the kami Tsukubusuma 都久夫須麻 of Ōmi Province was granted valor rank, eighth class, for its merit at the time of Fujiwara no Nakamaro's rebellion. Such ranks were granted up to the middle of the tenth century. The *hon* ranks were rarely given, as one can imagine; the most famous case occurred in 749, when Hachiman (Yawata) of Usa was granted the first rank in that category, and the kami Himegami, also of Usa, the second rank. Typically, the process for deciding and granting these ranks originated with Jingikan officials or with provincial governors, who submitted a request to the court, which would issue a Guard-Post Judgment (*jin no sadame* 陣定) and would make a recommendation to the emperor. In the case of kami enshrined within the capital, the Jingikan was responsible for the official record; in the case of kami enshrined in the provinces, the court would issue an order (*kanpu*). As Namiki Kazuko notes, there have been two theories in the past to assess the meanings of kami ranking: first, the notion that these grants were accompanied by land estates for economic support; and second, the possibility that the grants were made at the time of government offerings. It seems, however, that most scholars today prefer to abandon these theories and simply note that the practice was just a way of honoring the kami in question (NAMIKI 1994, pp. 106–7).[6] This may be the case, but it is necessary to mention that when the court was pleased with events said to be related to the activity of given kami, it often made grants of land or other offerings, not necessarily accompanied by rank assignment, and that this practice lasted for a long time.

Finally, it must be noted that *shaku-i* (a term I am not quite sure how to translate), refers to ranks that were granted by governors to some kami in the provinces to which they were assigned, or by the Jingikan, but without adhering to the formal process of petition and recommendation. This practice was frowned upon by the court, which attempted to put a halt to it, but it eventually continued and degenerated to the point it became a business. The same is true of the special ranks granted by Yoshida Shinto authorities during the Muromachi

[5] Aston adds the following footnote: "There were three classes of shrines, Greater, Middle and Lesser. The Greater Shrines included those from the senior division of the first rank to the senior division of the third rank; the Middle included those from the junior division of the third rank to the junior division of the fourth rank; the Lesser included those from the senior division of the fifth rank to the junior division of the fifth rank. *The lands allotted to each shrine and the offerings made to them were regulated accordingly*" (emphasis mine).

[6] I have relied heavily on this source for parts of this paragraph.

period and thereafter; these ranks were also supposed to be the object of an imperial order, but as time went on the official process was completely bypassed. Most famous, perhaps, was the competitive and fairly expensive granting of the senior first rank to Inari shrines during the Edo period.

It seems timely to suggest that the term "pantheon" may be inappropriate to refer to the mass of kami that were the object of cults on the part of the government: there was, indeed, a quasi-society of kami whose members were given a roof, regular food, and other types of offerings; were addressed in archaic and sometimes poetical form (which the government regulated); were offered music, songs and dances; were granted ranks; and were the object of imperially or locally denominated economic support. But the ranking decisions do not appear to have been a direct reflection of the human social ordering (that is, a human member of a given lineage may have received a higher rank without an equal raise in that lineage's ancestral or tutelary kami's rank), even if Amaterasu was at the zenith just as the emperor was at the head of the state in gestation: it does not seem that relationships between kami had everything to do with relationships between members of Japanese society at the time under consideration. How, then, should one refer to this loosely organized system of hierarchies related to the vagaries of history, a system whose structure seems to bear more similarities to a rhizome than to a spider web? In my opinion, the question remains open.

A second important feature to keep in mind with regard to the social, historical, and geographical contexts of the *shikinaisha* is the role played by professional sacerdotal officiants. This is a vast issue on which there is much, but fragmented, Japanese scholarship.[7] The original organization of the Jingikan is difficult if not impossible to trace; however, because this rather large set of offices was part of a government claiming to rest on imperial authority, whose legitimacy was the object of the early eighth-century compilations of mytho-history (the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*), it is obvious that the leading ritualists of the eighth century claimed to be descended from kami that are depicted in these documents as loyal supporters of the emerging imperial system.[8] Indeed, both *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* take time to note that so-and-so a kami is the ancestral deity of this or that house of ritualists

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[7] Among the many works on the topic see INOUE 1980, which discusses the Hiokibe, Himatsuri (Hikibe), Urabe, Nakatomi-shi, Imbe, and Kataribe lines. See also the works of Nagatomi Hisae on the Urabe. The vast majority of other studies is composed of articles and book chapters.

[8] On this and related issues see FUJIMORI 2000, NAKAMURA 1999, NIJŪNISHA KENKYŪKAI, ed., 1986, and TAKIGAWA MASAJIRŌ SENSEI BEIJUKINEN RONBUNSHŪ KANKŌKAI ed. 1984.

who were active at the time in the Jingikan. Among those, the Nakatomi 中臣 and Urabe seem to have been in hot competition with other houses, and to have garnered the most enviable positions.[9] The Nakatomi, pointedly, filled many of the leading offices in the Jingikan and in shrines dedicated to top-ranked kami, because their ancestral kami, Ame-no-koyane-no-mikoto, was said in these texts to have presented the mirror that lured Amaterasu-ō-mikami from the cave where she hid after her brother, Susano-no-o-mikoto, so grievously injured her. The real story, however, is that the Taika Reform of 645 was engineered by Prince Naka no Ōe 中大兄皇子 and his advisor Nakatomi no Kamatari 中臣鎌足 (?–669), whose descendants were given the name Fujiwara 藤原—the name under which Kamatari's sons built the Heian period's most powerful aristocracy. It is less known that, following the rise of the Fujiwara house to political power, the Nakatomi tried to use the Fujiwara name in order to garner power for themselves. Specialists of scapulimancy, the Nakatomi *muraji* 連 would have originated when a certain Tokiwa no Ō-muraji 常盤大連 was granted the Nakatomi name some time during the reign of Emperor Kinmei 欽明 (629–641). Tokiwa's grandsons (Mikeko, Kuniko, and Nukateko) went on to create their own lines, as a result of which the Nakatomi house split into three branches. In 684 these branches adopted the name Fujiwara (in the hope of being granted a higher rank, no doubt), but they were prohibited from doing so in 698, when the court decreed that only Kamatari's direct descendants were entitled to the name Fujiwara, and that a certain Omimaro (意美麻呂) and his descendants should revert to using the name Nakatomi and continue specializing in their traditional practice of scapulimancy. These descendants went on to become the leading administrators of the Jingikan, in which they held the primary directorship (*haku* 伯, also pronounced *kami*) as well as the secondary office (*taifu* 大副, also pronounced *suke*), and they kept these positions for a number of generations thereafter. One of them was, indeed, a member of the team that established the register of the *Procedures of the Engi Era*. The Nakatomi also went on to become the leading

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[9] Bernhard Scheid suggested that I write "urabe" and not Urabe, because at the time of the *Engi shiki* this term was used to denote various professional groups that specialized in divination but were unrelated by blood. It is quite possible, indeed, that the high concentrations of these groups and their shrines in Tsushima and Iki Islands, in the Yamato area, and in the Izu Peninsula and island chain point to unrelated groups, for the Tsushima, Iki, and Yamato "urabe" (卜部) specialized in plastromancy, whereas the eastern "urabe" (占部) specialized in scapulimancy. However, those "urabe" who were active in Nara and Kyoto are, in my view, related and treated as such in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki* narratives mentioning their ancestral kami; they were also active in the Jingikan, and one of them was given the direction of the Yoshida Shrine in Kyoto in 859. I would therefore argue that at least these "urabe" should be referred to as "Urabe" (see NAGATOMI 1984).

officiants of the court's major shrines: they managed the ritual affairs of the Kasuga Shrine (春日大社, dedicated to the ancestral and tutelary kami of the Fujiwara house) for centuries, while a sub-branch took the name Ōnakatomi 大中臣 ("Greater Nakatomi") after one of its members was appointed head of the Inner Shrine of Ise (dedicated to the ancestral kami of the imperial line). It is not surprising that other lineages of ritualists became jealous of the Nakatomi's relationship to the Fujiwara.

Indeed, a most interesting text in this regard was submitted to Emperor Heizei 平城 by the ritualist Imbe no Hironari 斎部 (忌部)広成 in 807; that is, the *Kogoshūi* (古語拾遺, Gleanings from Ancient Stories), which consists of arguments against the *Kojiki*'s version of mytho-history, and of eleven specific complaints concerning "omissions" (*i* 遺) which, by and large, Hironari held the Nakatomi responsible for (KATŌ and HOSHINO 1925). The first complaint is indicative of the fact that some important shrines were missing from [pre-807] registers: in this case, Imbe no Hironari bemoans the fact that the Atsuta 熱田 Shrine, where the Kusanagi Sword was kept, "has not received court offerings for a long time."[10] The second complaint concerns the circumstance wherein the ancestral kami of the imperial line, Amaterasu, was not properly honored because its shrine was not heading the list of shrines that received the court's offerings at the time. Indeed, Hironari argued, it should be expected that people who claim to honor ancestral lines as well as the emperor will behave in accordance with their stated ideals and thus put Amaterasu's shrine at the top of their list.[11] The third complaint reveals the matter of social competition under consideration: "[In ancient times,] the Imbe and Nakatomi [sacerdotal] houses assisted one another in supplicating the Solar kami. The ancestral kami of the Sarume 猿女 house [Ame no Uzume 天鈿女] assuaged the kami [Amaterasu]'s wrath. Therefore, the three [sacerdotal] houses should not be separated [in their duties]. Nevertheless, the Nakatomi house alone holds the head office of the Ise Shrine, while the two other sacerdotal houses are not appointed."[12] The fourth complaint concerns

[10] *Kogoshūi*, in SHINTŌ TAIKEI HENSANKAI, ed., 1986, p. 42. Compare with KATŌ and HOSHINO 1925, p. 45.

[11] *Kogoshūi*, in SHINTŌ TAIKEI HENSANKAI, ed., 1986, p. 43; compare with KATŌ and HOSHINO, 1925, p. 46.

[12] *Kogoshūi*, SHINTŌ TAIKEI HENSANKAI, ed.,1986, pp. 43–44. Compare with the creative imagination of KATŌ and HOSHINO, 1925, pp. 46–47: "Imbe and Nakatomi conjointly prayed for the Sun-Goddess to graciously re-appear from the Heavenly Rock-Cave, and it was the ancestress of the Sarume family who succeeded in propitiating the incensed Goddess. The government, therefore, should appoint the descendants of the three families conjointly to the office of Shinto service; yet nevertheless, the Nakatomi family alone nowadays enjoys the exclusive privilege of holding the priestly office of the Ise Shrine, the two other families being utterly ignored."

the fact that, in the past, the Imbe sacerdotal house had been in charge of the construction and consecration of shrines, such as the Ise Shrine reconstructions every twenty years, but that this was not the case anymore. The fifth complaint is also revealing: "[Whereas in the past the Nakatomi and Imbe equally participated in some of the Imperial palace rituals,] in the Hōki era [770–780] … Nakatomi-no-Asomi-Tsune arbitrarily changed the words in the report [to the emperor], saying 'the Nakatomi, followed by the Imbe, are now at the august gates.' This long-lasting situation has not been changed as of the present."[13] The sixth complaint bemoans the fact that the court rank of the Imbe is now inferior to that of the Nakatomi. The seventh complaint states that only the Nakatomi are appointed to ritual duties in Dazaifu in Kyushu (KATŌ and HOSHINO 1925, p. 49). The eighth complaint states that only the Nakatomi are now entrusted with ritual duties at the Greater Shrines. The ninth complaint concerns the fact that only the direct descendants of Ame-no-Uzume should hold the office of *miko* at the time of the Spirit Pacification ritual (*chinkonsai*). The tenth complaint states that other sacerdotal houses unrelated to the Nakatomi or the Imbe are either disappearing or are scattered. And the eleventh and last complaint concerns the fact that the Nakatomi alone are now acting as imperial envoys to convey sacred offerings to Ise. In other words, traditionalist though he may have been, Imbe no Hironari felt degraded, insulted, and oppressed by the phenomenal rise to power of the Nakatomi sacerdotal lines, a rise which must have closely paralleled that of the Fujiwara house. And this goes a long way to explain why so many shrines listed in the *Engi shiki* register were related to the Nakatomi and Urabe sacerdotal houses.

A third issue that must be taken into consideration is the sociopolitical role of each shrine, taken separately, in relation to the creation of provinces and counties on the part of the government. While extremely little information is available on the topic, it seems reasonable to suggest that these shrines served as sites of gathering of local communities, and that the rites performed therein were important occasions for displays of social power as well as for the accumulation of symbolic capital. That some of these shrines were singled out by the court for regular offerings points to a desire for control. The visiting of these shrines by governors at the time of their nomination as well as at the time of rites is indicative of a desire to reinforce claims to legitimacy and authority. While much research needs to be conducted on this set of problems before conclusions are reached, one still has the impres-

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[13] *Kogoshūi*, SHINTŌ TAIKEI HENSANKAI, ed., 1986, p. 46. But compare with KATŌ and HOSHINO's *affabulation* (imaginary representation), p. 48.

sion that the register is not representative and thereby blocks our perspective on ritual life and social history because it is, indeed, emblematic of that time's imperial cultic system only.

The Third Hypothesis: Buddhism

Most studies of the *Engi shiki* seem to ignore the reach of Buddhism at the time. It is interesting to note, however, that several of the kami registered therein are Buddhist entities: the Great Bodhisattva Hachiman 八幡大菩薩 in Usa 宇佐 as well as in Hakozaki 箱崎 in Kyushu, and the Bodhisattva Yakushi 薬師菩薩 in Hitachi Province, at Ōarai-isozaki 大洗磯前 and at Sakatsura-isozaki 酒列磯前. All were granted bodhisattva titles and high ranks in the first half of the ninth century. Of course, one should not forget the unregistered, but important Iwashimizu Great Bodhisattva Hachiman 石清水八幡大菩薩; nor should one avoid noticing the presence of important Buddhist temples on or near the grounds of shrines, almost everywhere in the country. It is equally necessary to pay attention to some small details, such as the mention of a *miko* 巫女 at the Wakamiya Shrine of the Kanzeon-ji Temple in Dazaifu 太宰府観世音寺; the mention of a *negi-ni* (禰宜尼, sacerdotal officiant *qua* nun) at the Tamuke Shrine of the Tōdai-ji Temple 東大寺 手向神社, in Nara; the fact that Mount Futara 二荒山 in Shimotsuke Province was first scaled in the late-eighth century by the Buddhist monk Shōdō 勝道; and that the famous monk tied to Mount Shosha 書写山 in Harima, Shōkū 性空, erected a Buddhist temple on the grounds of the Kirishima Shrine 霧島神社 in southern Kyushu between 961 and 963. In other words, it is a terrible mistake to pay attention only to shrines and thereby give the impression that Buddhism was an entity completely separate from the imperial cultic system at the time. Interestingly enough, a majority of the Buddhist temples that were built during the Nara period on the grounds of shrines (the *jingūji* 神宮寺) were created by Hossō 法相 monks, that is, by religious figures who were deeply involved in politics and were directly connected to the Kōfuku-ji 興福寺, the private temple of the Fujiwara house.

It is obvious that the spread of Buddhism was a swift phenomenon, that it was institutional, political, and economic in character, and that it was almost always accompanied by contact with (and often enough, dominion over) shrines. In the process, Buddhism profoundly transformed many a local cult as well as understandings concerning the character of the kami. One notes, for example, that cultic practices such as offerings of animal sacrifices (with the exception of fish) at shrines were prohibited under the influence of Buddhism, which emphasized rice cultivation in its estates and attempted to curb hunting;

this must have brought about some major changes in culture and lifestyle. One also notes that Buddhist monks of the time considered kami to be in need of salvation. One of the finest sources on the topic is the *Nihon ryōiki,* ca. 820.

There is something amiss, therefore, in the character of the *Engi shiki* at large, and it may have something to do with its overall purpose. Felicia Bock, for instance, takes exception to the *Nihon rekishi daijiten*'s characterization of the *Procedures of the Engi Era* as "a document commemorating an earlier age"; she accepts this characterization for the last forty books of the *Procedures,* but not for the first ten—of which she writes that they have eternal value (BOCK 1970, p. 58). But the eminent scholar Takigawa Masajirō himself emphasized that the entire document is "backward looking, not forward looking," that is, that it either harks back to an age that was already gone, or that it actually imagines that past. Takigawa also warns that students of the document should approach it with care and suspicion, for, he says, it is quite possible that some shrines registered in the *Procedures* may not have existed at the time. This is a weighty assessment, but it lacks any reference to Buddhism.

The reason why Buddhism is usually not mentioned with regard to shrines registered in the *Procedures* is, of course, a result of the history of the commentaries of the *Procedures of the Engi Era,* the immense influence of Nativist Studies (*kokugaku* 国学) during the Edo period, and the post-1868 total reconstruction (not to say fabrication) of Shinto. If one takes the studies of Shiga Gō as an example, one finds here and there a mention of *jingūji,* but no overall treatment of the momentous issues related to Buddhism. The dominant representation one extracts from Shiga's work is that of an idyllic world of peaceful villages ensconced at the foot of mountains and hills, each having its shrine located in the midst of luxuriant groves where people would have engaged, primarily, in nature worship. This representation reminds one of the *Man'yōshū* 万葉集 poem in which an emperor standing on a hilltop chants the beauty of Yamato as he observes smoke rising from hamlets and revels in his benign rule. It is emblematic of such a representation, for instance, that Shiga mentions kami that were related to epidemics, but does not detail the dread caused by disasters, the vast number of deaths or maimed bodies that resulted from them, or the frequency of catastrophes and the extent to which Buddhist rituals played an ever-increasing role in dealing with them. Neither does he mention the poverty or the heavy burden of taxations and corvees that must have been the lot of the majority of the population at the time. In a nutshell, Shiga's purpose appears to be marked by the nostalgia that is characteristic of ethnographers like Yanagita Kunio

柳田国男 and Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫, as well as numerous Japanese studies scholars of this past century, in which the notion of *furusato* 故郷 (hometown) reigned supreme.[14] In writing this I do not mean to demean the notion of *furusato*, but to call for a detailed history of this important term. It is clear that Nishimuta's study on the *Engi shiki* register takes the same slant I am advocating. For example, he proposes a table of recorded incidents of epidemics or earthquakes and other disasters (and only those) that would have caused the court to grant certain kami the title of *myōjin*, and thereby shows that the court relied heavily on local claims that disasters had been avoided because of a certain kami's protection. He too, however, thoroughly ignores Buddhism, which dominated rituals aimed at protecting the country from all kinds of calamities during the Nara and Heian periods. It is time to call for a change in such approaches to the cultic history of Japan, for all they do is continue to separate the study of kami cults from that of Buddhist practices and institutions, and thereby fail to reveal the complex dynamics that occurred on the ground.

Many Japanese scholars agree, moreover, that the *Procedures* soon lost its legal character, that its laws were not enforced, and that the overall "system" purported to be evidenced by the register of kami quickly fell apart. Indeed, the court eventually continued its support, but only to the highly restricted list of the "Twenty-two Shrines" (*nijūnisha*, 二十二社). As I have argued elsewhere (GRAPARD 1988), Buddhism was a fundamental aspect of the shrines in question, and all medieval schools of "Shinto" (in fact, Shinto-Buddhist ritual and philosophical systems) were produced by shrine-monks or sacerdotal officiants deeply influenced by Buddhism and who were active in these twenty-two shrine-temple complexes. Not a single Shinto school emerged outside that system prior to the Edo period (beginning with Hayashi Razan 林 羅山 and his *Ritōshinchi Shintō* 理当心地神道). This evidences the pervasive Buddhist presence in shrines all over the country and means that we simply cannot set it aside. It is in this light that Kuroda Toshio's work may best be evaluated.

The question, then, is whether the various registers of the Nara and Heian periods should be thought to contain all the elements of what some call ancient Shinto. Kuroda has paid little attention to these registers, but he would have argued that neither they, nor the Jingikan, nor the sacerdotal lineages represent the Shinto in question. There is absolutely no question that there have been from very ancient days

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[14] On this topic, see the insightful discussion in the epilogue of HAROOTUNIAN 1988, which gives an adequate overview of the intellectual and emotional framework of Yanagita Kunio and Orikuchi Shinobu.

cults dedicated to kami, but little information is available on the nature and conduct of these cults, or on how the kami were conceived. Little objection will be raised concerning the fact that there were many shrines or cults dedicated to water sources, man-made springs and wells (and they are numerous in the *Engi shiki* register, be they located within the imperial palace or in faraway areas), or many cults dedicated to stones, most notably fire cults whose origins were connected to maritime navigation at night (fires were lit atop these stones to guide boats). Little objection will be raised, either, concerning cults that occurred in or in front of funeral tumuli prior to the mid-seventh century, even though we know little about them. And little objection will be raised concerning the existence of many mountain cults, though in this case again there is only scant information. When it comes to history after the Taika Reform of 645–646, however, there is much evidence that radical changes took place: funeral tumuli were, in general, prohibited thereafter; we begin to see written information on mountain cults marked by Taoist and Buddhist elements; and we continue to see water cults, but with an emphasis on Buddhist rain-making rituals, while many fire cults are also radically transformed and enhanced by Buddhism.

More importantly, though, the equally radical transformation of land "ownership" patterns in the context of the emerging construction of the emperors as absolute lords, claiming control over the entire "realm," came to be fundamentally associated with the registers of shrines. Officially registered shrines, then, are a living testimony to the government's appropriation of pre-existing cults, while the government-sponsored and unified rituals of the four seasons, and other rituals, are proof of that government's transformation of cults. Between the Taika Reform and the enactment of the *Procedures of the Engi Era* some three hundred years later, one can see blow-by-blow the following transformation process: the unification of ritual formulas (the *norito* 祝詞); the unification of ritual procedures; the unification of offerings or their specification; the officialization of certain shrines; the ranking system in which one should see these shrines and/or their communities' proximity to the court as determining factors, at the same time as one should see it as reinforcing the notion that it was the government that decided such matters; the transformation of private cults into public ones; the social competition and/or appearance of powerful lines of ritualists; and the ever-growing influence of Buddhism. There were quite a few shrines and cults that were not caught in this vast net—but they have been little studied. And it is here that one is most frustrated when it comes to using the word Shinto.

What Kuroda Toshio saw and decided to emphasize was the institu-

tional, economic, and ideological dimensions of relations between temples and shrines, which led him to use the term *kenmitsu taisei* 顕密体制 to conveniently refer to what he very well knew was a variety of patterns and practices. Arguments have been made against his use of the term, but generally in scholarship that lacks analytical depth in the treatment of the historical relationships that existed between temples and shrines. What Kuroda was interested in—among so many other things—was institutions of the court and their relations to temples, and he concluded that these entities represented power blocks that should be subjected to dissection and analysis. Separately from this, he was also interested in the relations—of all kinds—between shrines and temples; he published an analysis of these relations under the name *Jisha seiryoku* 寺社勢力 (KURODA 1980, an important work that should be translated), and in many other works. I have seen very few references to this book in non-Japanese publications. I fondly remember having many discussions with him, and do recall that whenever I mentioned shrines and the existence of cults (*jingi sūhai* 神祇崇拝), he always said, "Yes, but that was not called Shinto at the time." Kuroda used the term Shinto to refer to the late-Heian and medieval periods, when the word was used quite consciously, which seems to make much more sense. As noted earlier, the term Shinto was then used to refer mostly to Shinto-Buddhist documents, institutions, and practices that were heavily marked by esotericism (*mikkyō* 密教), and not to whatever the *Engi shiki*'s world was. Even though Nishimuta writes that the *Procedures*'s register was an object of imperial interest as early as the Kamakura period, one has to wait for the fifteenth century and Yoshida Kanetomo 吉田兼倶 (1435–1511) to discern a more focused look at the *Procedures of the Engi Era* and to get a glimpse of what some thinkers of the late medieval period conceived this register to mean.

In light of the preceding discussion, I think it would be dangerous to refer to the shrines listed in the *Procedures*'s register as symbolizing what we today call Shinto. One needs to refine the argument presented above, in geographical and historical specificity. One must include Buddhism in the historical institutionalization of sites and their cults. One needs to consider and assess the almost complete lack of theological formulation on the part of sacerdotal officiants at the time of the registers' compilation. There is little doubt that future studies will show the register to have been only an attempt by the court to govern by means of Chinese-type institutions and laws and by way of controlling specific shrines and their rituals. This attempt failed, in that the goal of centralization materialized neither in the domain of political power over the realm that was asserted at the time, nor in the domain of shrines and their communities. Hopefully, future studies of the

many shifts and breaks that occurred in shrines' cultic histories will displace or void the oft-claimed presence of an imaginary unity of beliefs subsumed under the term "primal religion." Furthermore, I am in complete agreement with Nishimuta's statement that the study of the *shikinaisha* must continue in tandem with the study of provincial registers (*kokunai jinmyōchō*), which included both *shikinaisha* and many shrines not registered in the *Procedures,* and with the study of the *kokushi genzaisha,* that is, those shrines that were not listed in the registers but which appear in the Six National Histories. Nishimuta writes that this latter group of shrines was equal in historical importance to the shrines listed in the *Procedures,* and I can only applaud his opinion and encourage students and scholars outside Japan to be ever more geohistorically conscious.

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