

## Shinto as a Religion for the Warrior Class

### The Case of Yoshikawa Koretaru

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*This article deals with developments of Shinto in the seventeenth century, focussing on the school of Yoshikawa Shinto. It is presented as an example of the coalition between Shinto and Neo-Confucianism intellectuals typical for that time. Pointing out the medieval predecessors of this coalition, the article argues that the theological ideas of Yoshikawa Shinto were much more indebted to medieval Shinto than is generally assumed. This is demonstrated by a doctrinal comparison as well as by a historiographical sketch of the relations between Yoshikawa Shinto and Yoshida Shinto. Both schools regarded themselves as legitimate representatives of Japan's original Way of the kami. The article examines the internal justifications of these claims as well as their acknowledgments by the political authorities.*

**Keywords:** Confucian Shinto — Yoshida Shinto — Yoshikawa Shinto — ethics — deification — *himorogi denju*

#### *Shinto and the Tokugawa Bakufu*

THE BEGINNING OF THE early-modern period witnessed what may be called a Shinto boom reflected in a growing number of village shrines, an emphasis on the kami as symbols of national identity in political discourse,<sup>1</sup> and last but not least the apotheosis of the new political leaders. Thus the enshrinements of Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1599 (one year after his death, as Toyokuni Daimyōjin 豊国大明神 in Kyoto) and Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1617 (also one year after his death, as Tōshō Daigongen 東照大権現 in Nikkō) have often been regarded as landmarks

<sup>1</sup> I follow Herman Ooms's evaluation here. The use of medieval Shinto doctrines for political purposes is well exemplified in Hideyoshi's diplomatic relations to the Europeans, as is evident, for instance, in his anti-Christian edict of 1587, and his letters to the Portuguese viceroy in Goa and the governor of the Philippines (OOMS 1985, pp. 45-47).

in the development of Shinto, especially in regard to its reception by the ruling warrior class.<sup>2</sup> A closer look at these religious events reveals, however, that the “Shinto” in question was still far from our present understanding of the term. Notably the deification of Ieyasu indicates a striking ambivalence of the Tokugawa regime vis-à-vis the new trends in kami worship.<sup>3</sup> To illustrate this ambivalence, I would just like to mention the well-known fact that Ieyasu’s transformation into a kami was ultimately administered by a Buddhist monk, Ieyasu’s Buddhist advisor Tenkai 天海, archbishop of the Tendai sect.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, the cult for the founder of the Tokugawa dynasty at the Tōshō Shrine in Nikkō was based on the Buddhist rationale that had directed the interpretation of Buddha–kami relations in the medieval period, the so-called *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 pattern: Ieyasu was to be seen ultimately as the manifestation of a buddha in the guise of a kami.<sup>5</sup> Due to Tenkai’s efforts, the rituals accompanying Ieyasu’s deification developed into a permanent cult, which went by the comparatively new label “Shinto”—Sannō-ichijitsu Shinto 山王一実神道, to cite it by its proper name.<sup>6</sup> This denomination notwithstanding, the new Shinto lineage of the Tōshō Shrine was set up explicitly so that “the seeds of the Buddha’s teaching never cease,”<sup>7</sup> i.e., as a supportive tool of (Tendai) Buddhism.

<sup>2</sup> The early Shinto historian Miyaji Naokazu called Hideyoshi’s deification the “opening scene of early-modern Shinto history” (*kindai jingishi no jomaku* 近代神祇史の序幕) (MIYAJI 1926, p. 310), which also inspired the title of a famous article by OKADA Shōji (1982) on Shinto deifications and Shinto funerals.

<sup>3</sup> See the introduction of this volume for a general outline of these developments.

<sup>4</sup> According to various sources, Tenkai lived for 114 years. Most historians follow the dating of Tsuji Zennosuke, according to which Tenkai’s Methuselahic life span ranged from 1536 to 1643, i.e., 107 years. (TAIRA 1983, p. 44). For a detailed historiographical account of his role in connection with Ieyasu’s deification, see Boot 2000.

<sup>5</sup> C.f. SUGAHARA (1996, p. 73–74). In regards to this point, Ooms’s depiction of early Tokugawa thought is certainly mistaken when he maintains: “During the late Kamakura–early Muromachi period, Yoshida Shinto had reversed the relationship between original Buddhas and reincarnated kami. This is what Tenkai did for the Sannō cult: he reversed the superior-inferior or prior-later relationship involved in the *honji-suijaku* theory, and made Amaterasu the *honji*” (OOMS 1985, p. 176).

<sup>6</sup> Sannō-ichijitsu Shinto, translates as the “Shinto of Sannō’s (i.e., the Tendai’s tutelary deity’s) One Reality.” The term One Reality (*ichijitsu* 一実) is frequently used in Tendai theology, yet one cannot help feeling that Tenkai’s “One Reality Shinto” was consciously modelled after and contrasted with Yuiitsu Shinto 唯一神道, the “One-and-Only Shinto” of the Yoshida priests, who had administered the deification ceremony of Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

<sup>7</sup> According to the *Tōei kaisan Jigen Daishi denki*, a biography of Tenkai by his disciple Tōgen 東源, this citation is part of a vow by Ieyasu himself, when he envisioned himself as a kami shortly before his death (JDZ 1: 294). The whole vow also includes the protection of the Tokugawa house and the maintenance of peace in the realm as the aims of Ieyasu’s divine existence. SUGAHARA Shinkai (1996, pp. 74–76) argues that these are indeed the general purposes of Sannō-ichijitsu Shinto.

This return of Buddhism into the paradigm of early-modern Shinto through the backdoor of religious ideology is perfectly in line with the most striking measurement of religious policy under Tokugawa rule, conventionally subsumed under the name of *terauke* 寺請 or *danka* 檀家 system. Under the pretext of its fight against Christianity, the bakufu made the membership of all citizens in a certain Buddhist community compulsory and charged Buddhist monks with the upkeep of family registers, which were to prove that no individual household member adhered to an illegal religious conviction. Thus, the early-modern political administration chose Buddhism as the most powerful means of ideological control.<sup>8</sup> Kami worship, on the other hand, was stressed primarily in the context of Ieyasu's cult at the Tōshō Shrine in Nikkō and a small number of branch shrines. There it took the form of a specific *ritual* system, not an all-encompassing religious worldview. Sannō-ichijitsu Shinto exclusively worshiped Tōshō Daigongen, the divine existence of Ieyasu, and did not envision influence over other religious institutions. Rather, it was the Tendai sect that controlled Sanno-ichijitsu Shinto and tried to control other forms of kami worship as well. Ieyasu's personal Shinto cult, however, celebrated the singular feat of political unification under his rule or rather, the foundation of a new ruling dynasty of the realm. Ieyasu's deification as a kami, therefore, does not indicate a special inclination towards Shinto at the cost of Buddhism by the ruling regime.<sup>9</sup>

On the other hand, there were a number of powerful political figures in the early Tokugawa period who actively sought a religious alternative to Buddhism and often combined an interest in Confucianism with an ardent belief in the kami. Besides Hoshina Masayuki 保科正之 (1611–1672), whom we will mention in more detail later, daimyo such as Tokugawa Yorinobu 徳川頼宣 (1602–1671) of Wakayama-han, Tokugawa Mitsukuni 徳川光圀 (1628–1700) of Mito-han, Ikeda Mitsumasa 池田光政 (1609–1682) of Okayama-han or Matsudaira Naomasa 松平直政 (1601–1666) of Matsue-han not only supported Neo-Confucian scholars, but also ordered an institutional separation of temples and shrines (*shinbutsu bunri* 神仏分離) within their domains. Thus they antedated a religious policy that was acted out on a nationwide scale only in the Meiji period. In their domains shrines often

<sup>8</sup> While this system had its roots in Ieyasu's first ban of Christianity in 1613, it came into existence on a large scale shortly after the Shimabara rebellion (1638), that is, under the rule of Tokugawa Iemitsu (r. 1623–1651). Iemitsu was also responsible for the enlargement of Ieyasu's mausoleum in Nikkō to its present dimensions and for the consolidation of the Sannō-ichijitsu cult. Thus by "early-modern religious policy" I refer to a policy starting under Iemitsu rather than Ieyasu.

<sup>9</sup> For a more specific explanation of this argument, see SCHEID, forthcoming.

replaced temples as the agents of the official inquisition policy against Christianity and other heterodox beliefs. It seems to be no coincidence that most of the feudal lords who favored Shinto instead of Buddhism in this way originated from the second row of the leading Tokugawa clan.<sup>10</sup> Using the national appeal of Shinto as a political ideology, they drove the claims of a total Tokugawa rule much further than the official policy of the bakufu, and treated their regional domain as a kind of laboratory. Official bakufu policy, on the other hand, tended rather to compromise with time-honored habits and institutions, maintaining the subtle balance between the shogun, the imperial court and the Buddhist clergy, which had shaped Japan long before the reign of the Tokugawa.

As will be shown in detail below by the examples of Yamazaki Ansai and Yoshikawa Koretaru, the ambitious political figures from the “second row” of the Tokugawa not only engaged in new religious politics within their own domains, but also encouraged new developments in early-modern intellectual history. Notably, they stimulated a peculiar, anti-Buddhist alliance of Confucianism and Shinto, which questioned the doctrine that the “three teachings are one” (三教一致説 *sankyō itchi setsu*) dominant among the intellectual elite of the late medieval period. But not only the contents of intellectual activity in the Edo period changed. In tandem with the quest for a new ideological orientation, a new class of what Herman OOMS (1985, p. 160) called “organic intellectuals” came into being. These intellectuals indicate by their very existence the spread of education and knowledge into various social strata of Edo-period society. It is only natural to assume that these intellectuals challenged the medieval cultural pattern, in which the old *kuge* 公家 aristocracy of the imperial court along with the Buddhist clergy served as the cultural tutors of the emerging warrior-class. In the case of Shinto, however, the court not only maintained its function as a point of reference of kami worship, this function was repeatedly acknowledged and fortified by Tokugawa legislation. In particular, there was one priestly family among the court nobility, which no new school of Shinto could easily pass by: the Yoshida 吉田, who dominated

<sup>10</sup> The only non-cognate relative of the Tokugawa among the names mentioned above is Ikeda Mitsumasa, who was linked to the Tokugawa only by marriage. With the help of Confucian scholars like Kumazawa Banzan 熊沢蕃山 he undertook several political reforms in his domain, which included the reduction of Buddhist temples, the installment of shrines as agents of the *danka* system and the encouragement of Shinto funerals. However, when he retired many of these reforms were taken back by his son (SJ, pp. 15, 496). According to a story recorded by Engelbert Kaempfer, his support of unorthodox intellectuals aroused the wrath of the bakufu and he could only save his fief in the possession of his family by ceding his authority to his son. (BODART-BAILEY 1993, p. 294).

kami worship from the late medieval to at least the beginning of the early-modern period. The relationship of the new intellectuals' Shinto discourse and "medieval" Yoshida Shinto is therefore the overarching issue addressed in this essay.

### *Yoshida Shinto*

The Yoshida's privileged relation to Shinto was based on two factors. The first was their long tradition as imperial court ritualists. Since the Heian period, the family (then known by the name Urabe 卜部) was one of the four houses entitled to a leading position in the *jingikan* 神祇官, the office of divine matters in the traditional court administration. In terms of rank and pedigree the Urabe were initially at the bottom of the *jingikan* hierarchy, but advanced their status slowly but steadily in the course of the medieval period (OKADA 1983, 1984a, and 1984b). Yet, at the end of the fifteenth century, the civil wars of the Ōnin and Bunmei periods (1467–1477) destroyed not only the imperial palace, but also the buildings of the *jingikan*, and the office fell into utter oblivion. In this situation, Yoshida Kanetomo 吉田兼俱 (1435–1511), the founder of what we now call Yoshida Shinto, seized the opportunity to "save" the *jingikan* while at the same time arrogating its leading position. To this end, he proliferated the title *jingi chōjō* 神祇長上 ("master of deities," later often substituted by *jingikan ryō* 神祇官領 "lord of the *jingikan*") for himself and his successors and had the most sacred site of the *jingikan*, the Hasshinden 八神殿, which housed the protective kami of the imperial palace, rebuilt in his own shrine precincts. For about one hundred years this implicit usurpation of courtly kami ritualism went more or less uncontested. Probably no political authority was really interested in interfering in such matters. Around 1590, under the rule of Hideyoshi, however, the Hasshinden was rebuilt on a larger scale within Yoshida precincts,<sup>11</sup> which testifies to the fact that the new central authorities (and therefore also the court) supported Yoshida claims concerning the *jingikan*. It took another fifty years until rival court families raised in open opposition to the Yoshida hegemony in Shinto matters. The rest of the Edo period is marked by permanent disputes between the Yoshida, the Shirakawa 白川 and a few other *kuge* families, until all these courtly Shinto lineages eventually declined in the bakumatsu period.

<sup>11</sup> An imperial order to reconstruct the Hasshinden within Yoshida precincts from 1790 is often regarded as the first indication of the Yoshida Hasshinden. SECKEL (1943, p. 62) and especially FUKUYAMA (1977, p. 65), however, argue convincingly that the Hasshinden must have been transferred to the Yoshida Shrine already by Kanetomo (see also SCHEID 2001, pp. 49–50).

The second factor of Yoshida authority in Shinto matters was, of course, the fact that the Yoshida—in contrast to most other court-priest lineages—had developed their family tradition into a comprehensive religious system, which they called Yuiitsu Shinto 唯一神道, the “One-and-Only Way of the Kami.” Like many other medieval kami interpretations, this Yuiitsu Shinto not only involved specific doctrines, but also ritual innovations taken from the model of esoteric Buddhism. Thus, Yoshida Kanetomo combined Urabe rituals, originating from the family’s ancient function as imperial diviners, with rites from various other kami traditions, and structured them in a hierarchy of esoteric transmissions. “Esoteric transmissions” means that they were—in theory at least—only accessible after highly selective initiations (灌頂 *kanjō*).<sup>12</sup> The highest and most secret initiation/transmission was to be held by “only one person at a time” (*yuiju ichinin* 唯授一人) who was supposed to be the head or the prospective heir of Yoshida Shinto and the Yoshida family. While the structure of this system was basically Buddhist, it set itself apart from other medieval traditions by the fact that its iconography and iconology excluded Buddhist entities. Thus, while we encounter ritual tools and ritual techniques of esoteric Buddhism in Yoshida Shinto, these techniques are hardly directed to Buddhist figures, nor do they serve the purpose of Buddhist salvation.<sup>13</sup> Equally, the doctrines invented by Yoshida Kanetomo to explain the significance of his family tradition do not indifferently draw from Buddhist and non-Buddhist classics, as previous kami interpretations did. If there happen to be doctrinal parallels between Buddhist and Yoshida teachings—and there are actually quite a lot—they are explained by the fact that Buddhism was derived from the original teachings of the kami. Buddhism was thus only a secondary elaboration of the original Way of the kami, which was in possession only of the Yoshida family.

This conscious attempt to substitute Buddhist sanctities by the native kami was a key innovation of Yoshida Shinto. It attracted not only those who felt that the kami ought to be superior to the buddhas, but also those who sought an alternative to Buddhism in Chinese teachings. It is therefore no big surprise to discover predecessors of the Shinto-Confucian coalition already in the early history of Yoshida Shinto. At the time of its founder, Yoshida Kanetomo, Confucian knowledge at the court was the business of the Kiyohara 清原, a family of slightly lesser pedigree than the Yoshida, who were traditionally in charge of the exegesis of Chinese classics (*myōgyō-dō* 明經道). Kanetomo

<sup>12</sup> On similar esoteric Shinto initiations, see Fabio RAMBELLI’s essay in this volume.

<sup>13</sup> See SCHEID 2001, chap. 5, for a detailed description.

obviously strove for closer relations between the two families and had one of his sons, Nobukata, adopted by the Kiyohara. Kiyohara Nobukata 清原宣賢 (1475–1550) became not only the most erudite Confucian scholar of his age, he also supervised the Yoshida house in the time of crisis after Kanetomo's death. Eventually, he managed to have his son re-adopted into the Yoshida line.<sup>14</sup> Also, on an intellectual level, he was probably the most important transmitter of Yoshida Shinto among Kanetomo's six or more sons, as his copies and own commentaries of Yoshida writings demonstrate.<sup>15</sup> His son Yoshida Kanemigi 兼右 (1516–1573) successfully continued the spread of Yoshida teachings under the guidance of his father. Thus, Nobukata actually had an enormous influence on the fate of the Yoshida house, while he acted officially as the head of the Kiyohara family. He is therefore an early embodiment of the coalition of Shinto and Confucianism that was to become a major intellectual trend a few generations later.<sup>16</sup>

### *Shinto-Confucian Syncretism*

The first well-known representatives of Japanese Neo-Confucianism are Fujiwara Seika 藤原惺窩 (1561–1619) and Hayashi Razan 林 羅山 (1583–1657).<sup>17</sup> Seika still adhered to the ideal of *sankyō itchi*—the union of the Three Teachings (Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto)—while his disciple Razan (at least in his rhetoric) was more anti-Bud-

<sup>14</sup> Due to the early death of Kanetomo's eldest son and prospective heir Kanemune 兼致 (1458–1499), Yoshida Shinto faced a period of crisis when Kanetomo's second son, Kanenaga 兼長 (1471–1536), and Kanemune's son Kanemitsu 兼満 (1485–1528) fought fiercely over the succession. The primogeniture line of the Yoshida house was finally successful after Kanemitsu adopted his cousin, Nobukata's son Kanemigi 兼右, and ceded the Yoshida legacy to him (SCHEID 2001, pp. 140–42).

<sup>15</sup> Kiyohara Nobukata's personal interpretations of Shinto topics can be found in his *Jindai no maki shō* 神代巻抄, an exegesis of the *Nihon shoki* account of the Divine Age (c.f. IMANAKA 1972, pp. 273–83). These interpretations gave rise to the expression *Seike shintō* 清家神道 for the Shinto of the Kiyohara 清原 house. Since they are basically streamlined explanations of the interpretations of his father, however, I regard Nobukata as a representative of Yoshida Shinto, not as the founder of a separate Shinto lineage.

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed account of the relation between Kiyohara scholarship and early-modern Confucianism, see IMANAKA 1972 or BOOT 1982.

<sup>17</sup> Razan and Seika both had ties to the Zen temple Kennin-ji 建仁寺, a center of learning that was open also to Chinese Philosophy and Shinto. Already Yoshida Kanetomo used to give lectures on the *Nihon shoki* there. In this multi-confessional atmosphere, Razan received his originally Buddhist training. As is commonly known, he left the Kennin-ji in a juvenile attempt to cut all ties with Buddhism, but took Buddhist orders again when he entered bakufu service. Before meeting his master Seika, Razan most probably encountered members of the Kiyohara house, who lectured at the Kennin-ji. There are even distant family relations between the Hayashi and the Kiyohara families (IMANAKA 1972, pp. 291–95).

dhist. He not only served as a bakufu-scholar of Chinese learning, but also founded a school of Shinto. In spite of Razan's critique of Yoshida Shinto, which was in his eyes still too much influenced by Buddhism, his main Shinto writing, the *Shintō denju* 神道伝授, clearly took Kanetomo's *Yuiitsu shintō myōbō yōshū* 唯一神道名法要集 as a model.<sup>18</sup> Razan wrote this text towards the end of his life, between 1644 and 1648, on the request of the leading bakufu official Sakai Tadakatsu 酒井忠勝 (1587–1662). Nevertheless it was not part of his official duties. Like many medieval Shinto writings, the *Shintō denju* conceived of itself as a revelation of esoteric knowledge that should not be attainable to a common, non-initiated audience (KRACHT 1986, pp. 126–27). The esoteric character of the text is further indicated by its outer form, since it was originally written on *kirigami*, the special paper format of secret transmissions (TAIRA 1972, pp. 518–19). Despite Razan's critique of medieval esotericism his own Shinto writings did not really transcend the established patterns of religious discourse, which built largely on esoteric Buddhism whether they were Buddhist or anti-Buddhist in content.

One generation later we encounter three men of approximately the same age who are sometimes called the founding figures of early-modern Shinto: Deguchi Nobuyoshi 出口延佳 (1615–1690), Yoshikawa Koretaru 吉川惟足 (1616–1694), and Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇齋 (1618–1682). Of these, only Nobuyoshi was originally of sacerdotal ancestry, albeit not of superior standing. He stemmed from a family of proselytizers (*oshi* 御師) of the Ise pilgrimage situated at Yamada near the Outer Shrine of Ise. Nobuyoshi took over the family business, but this did not mean that he received any famous transmissions or any training regarding the Shinto theology of Early Watarai Shinto 度会神道 that had developed in the Kamakura period. What he recovered from this tradition, he seems to have acquired through self-study. In any event, he lamented the loss of the ancient traditions at Ise and was determined to restore them. He criticized the impact of Buddhism, as well as the spread of Yoshida rituals at Ise, and idealized a return to the true “Japanese Way.” A practical Neo-Confucianism influence on Nobuyoshi can be detracted from his criticism of secret traditions, which he found responsible for the loss of ancient knowledge at Ise. To overcome this short-coming he founded a public library at Yamada, which became a center of learning that attracted prominent Confucian scholars of the age. This led to the establishment of the so-called Later Watarai Shinto at Ise (TEEUWEN 1996, pp. 224–29).

<sup>18</sup> For an analysis of Razan's doctrines on Shinto, which also mentions the similarities and differences between *Myōbō yōshū* and *Shintō denju*, see KRACHT 1986, pp. 116–53.



Yamazaki Ansai was a Neo-Confucian scholar who was also on a quest for a Japanese Way. Similar to Razan, he started his intellectual career as a Buddhist monk, then turned to Neo-Confucianism and in his later days developed a new interpretation of Shinto that became a distinct lineage of intellectual Shinto called Suika Shinto 垂加神道. Ansai's commitment to the Way of the kami increased significantly after he came into contact with the daimyo Hoshina Masayuki, whom he served as a Confucian instructor. In this position he established a close relationship with his fellow-tutor Yoshikawa Koretaru (a disciple of Yoshida Shinto), who lectured Masayuki on Shinto. It seems as if both Masayuki and Ansai became increasingly fascinated by Koretaru's lectures, while traces of Ansai's Neo-Confucian knowledge can be found in Koretaru's Shinto school. This common engagement culminated in 1671, when Koretaru initiated first Masayuki and then Ansai into the most secret transmissions of Yoshida Shinto and bestowed upon them a divine title (*reishagō* 霊社号) within only a week's span.<sup>19</sup> Apart from this extraordinary access to Yoshida Shinto, Ansai managed to collect texts from the Watarai tradition (in cooperation with Deguchi Nobuyoshi whom he met in the later 1660s), as well as from the Inbe and Kamo families (TAKASHIMA 1992, pp. 461–64). He interpreted these family traditions as the Japanese expressions of “the Way” that was also formulated by his favored Chinese philosopher Zhuxi. Through this Neo-Confucian lens he hoped to get even closer to the original Way of the kami than the traditional priests who preserved the Way in the form of a private heritage. Ansai's Suika Shinto is probably the most sophisticated school of early Shinto-Confucian syncretism and was certainly the most influential in intellectual circles. On an institutional level, however, he could not cope with the traditional families of courtly status, most notably the Yoshida. Ansai exhibited a contradictory attitude to the Shinto traditions of these families. On the one hand he adopted a Confucian stance similar to that of Nobuyoshi, when he claimed that if these teachings were actually of a national interest, they had to become “public.” As long as they were secret family traditions, they were of a “private” character and therefore worthless.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, that did not imply that

<sup>19</sup> Sources vary on the question of whether Ansai really attained the highest initiation, which would amount to becoming a legitimate heir of the whole Yoshida tradition. TAIRA (1966, pp. 394–97) argues that he possibly did not. In any event, he obtained a divine title, Shidemasu reisha 垂加霊社. Such a *reisha* title usually symbolized Yoshida leadership (see below). Shidemasu can also be pronounced Suika, which became the name of Ansai's Shinto school.

<sup>20</sup> OOMS (1985, p. 228) cites a pupil of Ansai, Asami Keisai 浅見綱齋 (1652–1711), who “tells how Ansai complained about the jealous secrecy with which the different houses

he renounced the usage of esotericism altogether. In his school the idea that the Way was in possession of only one legitimate successor was equally applied, and the fact that Koretaru had bestowed Ansai with a divine title was taken as a proof that Ansai was the fifty-fifth heir of the Way counted from Ame-no-koyane, whom most court priest families claimed as their divine ancestor (TAIRA 1966, pp. 397-98).

*Yoshikawa Koretaru and the Himorogi Transmission*

In the following, I will concentrate on Yoshikawa Koretaru, who is generally portrayed as a reformer of Yoshida Shinto. While I will touch on his theoretical achievements later, let me first sketch his personal career. This career can be regarded as a series of most unlikely successes and is nevertheless quite telling in regard to the shift that occurred in Shinto theology at that time.<sup>21</sup>

Proud of a supreme *buke* ancestry, Koretaru was adopted into an Edo merchant family, which he headed after the early death of his adoptive father.<sup>22</sup> Discontent with the business of a merchant, he entrusted it to a subordinate and retreated to Kamakura to engage in poetic and scholarly activities. Thus he became interested also in Shinto. In 1553, at the age of 37, he made his way to Kyoto looking for someone who was able to explain the *Nihon shoki* and the *Nakatomi no harae* 中臣祓 to him. In the east, he was not even able to find someone who could read these texts correctly.<sup>23</sup> Kyoto nobles who shared Koretaru's fondness of poetry introduced him to Hagiwara Kaneyori 萩原兼従 (1588-1660), then the leading figure of Yoshida Shinto in Kyoto. At

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guarded the traditions they, on the other hand, boasted of possessing. If these had to do with national ritual (*tenka itto no rei*), they should be publicized, Ansai argued; all that is secret is merely private (*Satsuroku*, NST 31: 368-69)."

<sup>21</sup> In the following, I rely mostly on the writings of Taira Shigemichi, who wrote the still most-recent monograph-length study on Yoshikawa Shinto (TAIRA 1966). Taira bases his biographical account on Koretaru's biography, *Yoshikawa Aremidō sensei gyōjō*. It was drafted soon after his death by his pupils, under the guidance of his adoptive son Yoshikawa Yorinaga, i.e., under circumstances which usually lead to hagiographic palliations. Nevertheless, Taira attests high credibility to it (c.f. TAIRA 1966, p. 435).

<sup>22</sup> According to this biography, Koretaru's family claimed Uda-Genji origin (descent from Uda Tenno). When Koretaru was nine years old his father died. His adoptive parents were probably distant relatives of his mother. They owned a pharmacy that Koretaru was expected to take over as adopted heir. Yet, he still harbored the pride of a warrior and disposed of his merchant carrier as soon as his adoptive father had died. According to a much later, polemic account of Koretaru's life, however, the family sold fish and Koretaru was simply without talent for business (TAIRA 1983, p. 60).

<sup>23</sup> For a time he studied with a priest of the Asama Shrine (in present-day Shizuoka), but was not satisfied with his reading of the *Nakatomi no harae* (*Yoshikawa Aremidō sensei gyōjō*, TAIRA 1966, p.442; TAIRA 1983, p. 62).

first, Hagiwara showed little interest in lecturing a dubious warrior-merchant from Edo, but at some point he changed his opinion radically. In the end he found in Koretaru the ideal “vessel” (*utsuwamono*) for the transmission of Yoshida Shinto that he had long been looking for. Reportedly, he interpreted their encounter as a manifestation of divine will in order to maintain the Way, which was rather the “Way of the realm” than the possession of the Yoshida family.<sup>24</sup> In 1656, after only some two years of training, Koretaru was selected as Hagiwara Kaneyori’s spiritual successor and received the most secret and prestigious transmission called *Himorogi-iwasaka denju* 神籬磐境伝授 that should be known only to a single person at a time. Soon after his initiation Koretaru returned to the east. The two men met only once again, when Koretaru paid a visit to his severely ailing master and stayed with him until his death in 1660/8/13. At this point, Koretaru had already been received in an audience by Tokugawa Yorinobu, daimyo of Wakayama-han, and was thus beginning to build a reputation as a Shinto instructor among the political elite of his time. This was certainly a result of his possession of the legendary secrets of Yoshida Shinto.

The reasons for this extraordinary transmission of Yoshida leadership to a non-member of the Yoshida family are still quite puzzling to me. I suspect that it can be partly explained by the history of the family in the early seventeenth century. Yoshida Shinto had experienced a time of unprecedented prosperity under Yoshida Kanemi 吉田兼見 (1535–1610), when the Yoshida were charged with the deification of Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1599 at the newly erected Toyokuni Shrine in southeast Kyoto. Kaneyori, grandson of Kanemi, was installed as the head priest of that shrine and simultaneously became the head of a new branch family, the Hagiwara house, at the age of only 11 years. His future may have appeared even brighter than that of his head family, yet political changes brought about a dramatic shift in his individual career. In 1614–1615, when he was in his mid-twenties, tensions between Hideyoshi’s descendants and Tokugawa Ieyasu resulted in open conflict, leading to the siege of the Toyotomi stronghold at Osaka and the subsequent extermination of most members of the family. Hideyoshi’s shrine was also destroyed and Hagiwara Kaneyori only barely escaped exile.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the main line of the Yoshida

<sup>24</sup> “From the time of our ancestor Ibimaro, the Way was never transmitted from our family to another one, which has led to a decline of the Way. Since it is the Way of the realm (*tenka*), the vessel for it must be sought after on a large scale [...]” (*Aremidō sensei gyōjō*, TAIRA 1966, pp. 11 and 447).

<sup>25</sup> According to the *Shintō jinmei jiten* (SJJ, p. 236), this was due to the intervention of the daimyo Hosokawa Tadaoki (1563–1645), husband of the famous Hosokawa Gracia and brother of Kaneyori’s mother.

suffered a setback as well. When Ieyasu died in the following year, he had provided that he should be worshiped as a god, following Hideyoshi's example. The Yoshida were first ordered to take over the deification ceremonies again, but as mentioned above, they eventually had to cede this function to Tenkai. Tenkai seems to have achieved this by identifying Yoshida Shinto with the inimical Toyotomi.<sup>26</sup> We can infer that this identification led not only to the destruction of Hideyoshi's Toyokuni Shrine, but also to a temporary decline of Yoshida Shinto altogether.

After he lost his function as a Toyokuni priest, Hagiwara Kaneyori became a kind of senior advisor (*kōkennin* 後見人) of the Yoshida house and immersed himself in theological studies. Gradually he built up a sound reputation as a Shinto scholar and became the foremost intellectual authority in the Yoshida family. Yet it is still not entirely clear to me what entitled Hagiwara to act as the head of the Yoshida transmission and hand it over to an outsider. Judging from the official genealogy by the Yoshida,<sup>27</sup> Hagiwara was merely the head of an insignificant branch family. Accordingly, the head family was taken over by the line of his younger brother Yoshida Kanehide (1595–1671). Moreover, the *Shingyō ruiyō* 神業類要, an apologetic treatise on Yoshida Shinto written in 1779, mentions Hagiwara Kaneyori as belonging to an illegitimate lineage (*shoryū* 庶流) of the Yoshida family (ST *ronsetsuhen* 8, p. 234). A closer look at the genealogy reveals, however, that the purported heir Yoshida Kanehide as well as his son Kaneoki (1618–1657) never played a significant role in the family.<sup>28</sup> Thus, Hagiwara Kaneyori acted at least *de facto* as head of the whole family. But, even as a *de facto* head, he was obviously not empowered to pass Yoshida leadership directly to his son Kazuyori.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Cf. BOOR 2000, notably the citation on p. 159 from Tenkai's biography.

<sup>27</sup> Genealogies of the Yoshida Urabe house (*Urabe-ke keifu* 卜部家系譜) were customarily added to the *Yuūtsu shintō myōbō yōshū* and tend to be comparatively accurate. I refer here to one of the most detailed ones, drafted in 1801 by the Yoshida retainer Yamada Mochifumi 山田以文, and augmented with additional material by another retainer, Suzuka Tsurayori 鈴鹿連從, in 1825. It was singled out by Nishida Nagao for its high academic standard (ST *ronsetsuhen* 8, p. 30) and is reproduced in ST *ronsetsuhen* 8. This genealogy contains also accounts of the Yoshidas' respective advancements in court ranks.

<sup>28</sup> This can be detected by their advance in court hierarchy indicated in the above mentioned genealogy. While prospective heirs of the Yoshida house started in their early youth with the "junior fifth rank, lower division" 從五位下, and finally advanced to the third or even second rank, according to their age, Kanehide and Kaneoki received their initial fifth rank around the age of thirty and never advanced any further (ST *ronsetsuhen* 8, p. 466). Moreover, Kanehide was apparently of weak constitution (SJJ, p. 236), while his son died young.

<sup>29</sup> His influence was certainly checked by other advisors of the Yoshida house. There was, for instance, a family of traditional retainers, the Suzuka 鈴鹿, who served as priests at the Yoshida Shrine even before the Urabe. According to TAIRA (1966, pp. 18–19), the Suzuka

Yoshikawa sources attribute Hagiwara's choice of Koretaru to his sincere, and even desperate search for the ideal "vessel" to spread Shinto in the entire realm. Koretaru corresponded to this ideal, since he searched for the Way without ulterior motives (*hakarazu*) and selfish interests (*muyoku-muga* 無欲無我) (TAIRA 1983, p. 69). In other words, the Yoshikawa perspective contrasts Hagiwara's and Koretaru's selfless commitment to the Way with the jealous efforts of the Yoshida house to keep the Way within family confinements. Regarding the specific constellation of the family it seems equally plausible, however, that the succession routine was stalemated by two opposing claims for Yoshida leadership—one favoring Hagiwara's fifteen year old son Kazuyori 員從 (1645–1710), the other Yoshida Kaneyuki 吉田兼敬 (1653–1731), Hagiwara's seven year old grand nephew. This is supported by the fact that Kaneyuki and Kazuyori continued to represent the Yoshida house side by side in the later course of events. And indeed, if we regard the entries in the Yoshida genealogy it appears as if both were educated as prospective heirs.<sup>30</sup> In the light of these possible family tensions, Yoshikawa Koretaru's function as a "vessel" may have had a slightly different connotation than is indicated in his own biography. Since he could not decide the issue of Yoshida succession during his life-time, Hagiwara may have looked for an impartial outsider to take custody of the symbols of Yoshida leadership until the matter was decided in this way or another. The very fact that Koretaru was neither a priest nor of courtly ancestry may have been the guarantee in Hagiwara's view that he would not use the Yoshida's *Himorogi denju* for his own purposes.

This hypothesis can be further backed up by Hagiwara Kaneyori's last will, which he wrote in 1660 only a few days before his death. In this testament, Kaneyori provided that Yoshikawa Koretaru should hand his transmissions back to the Yoshida as soon as there was a qualified successor.<sup>31</sup> Such a by-pass of family transmission was not

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inherited from Hagiwara Kaneyori the ritual part of the Yoshida family transmission, in a similar way as Yoshikawa Koretaru inherited the doctrinal part.

<sup>30</sup> Kazuyori advanced at a pace similar to his famous ancestor Yoshida Kanemi, while the younger Kaneyuki was even a little quicker (ST *ronssetsuhen* 8, pp. 467 and 494). Thanks to his long life Kaneyuki finally achieved the Senior Second Rank at the age of 77, a hitherto unprecedented fact in the Urabe family history.

<sup>31</sup> The document is reproduced in TAIRA 1966, p. 17. It lists (1) the "utmost meaning of Shinto" (*shintō no gokui no koto* 神道極意), (2) the "three rituals of *Nakatomi no harae*," and (3) the "two volumes on the divine age in the *Nihongi*" as the items in possession of Koretaru, which were put into his custody to perpetuate Shinto and guarantee that "(our) house will further transmit it." The order to return the transmission is thus not explicitly stated (at least in the still extant documents) but may be rightfully inferred from this testament.

unheard-of in the context of medieval and early-modern Shinto.<sup>32</sup> Usually it was enacted according to the wishes of the deceased. In this case, however, the *Himorogi* tradition never came back to the Yoshida. Instead, it turned the Yoshikawa family into priests who had no interest at all in abandoning this token of legitimacy to transmit the One-and-Only Way of the kami.

According to Yoshikawa sources, this usurpation of Yoshida secrets did not accord to Koretaru's original intentions. In fact, there were several attempts to execute Hagiwara Kaneyori's last will and hand the tradition back. These attempts resulted in a partial re-transmission, but the *Himorogi denju* remained with the Yoshikawa family. The details of this story as it is related in Koretaru's biography are quite specific and complicated. All in all they appear as a series of misunderstandings and quarrels about seemingly secondary, formalistic aspects (TAIRA 1966, pp. 40-48). Nevertheless, they went far beyond a private conflict between two families. In 1672, for instance, a Yoshida petition was forwarded to the bakufu by way of the imperial court to send Yoshikawa Koretaru to Kyoto and have him return the Yoshida secrets. He did go to Kyoto, but not only to deal with the Yoshida. During his half-year stay there he lectured extensively on the *Nihon shoki*, which attracted an audience of 90 people from all over the country, including Yamazaki Ansai. He also initiated Yoshida Kaneyuki into three of the four grades of secret transmissions, but somehow returned to Edo before completing the fourth and highest level of transmissions.

What we can gather from these accounts is that Koretaru wanted to celebrate at least parts of the re-transmission in the form of a public ceremony combined with a public lecture, as a propagandistic incentive to the spread of Shinto. This was, however, without precedence in the tradition of Yoshida Shinto, and was looked upon derogatorily by the Yoshida family.

The fact that Koretaru disregarded Kaneyori's testament does not mean that all relations with the Yoshida were broken. In many respects Koretaru's function as a local agent of the Yoshida in Edo was extremely helpful to Yoshida Shinto due to Koretaru's excellent political connections. When his master Hagiwara Kaneyori was still alive, Koretaru already came into contact with Tokugawa Yorinobu, daimyo

<sup>32</sup> It had occurred in the Yoshida house two generations before Kanetomo (OKADA 1984b, pp. 24-26; SCHEID 2001, p. 102), and it was also practiced among the descendants of Yoshikawa Koretaru, when Matsudaira Masakata 松平正容 (1681-1731), the son of Hoshina Masayuki, took over the custody of the Yoshikawa transmissions (TAIRA 1966, pp. 242-44). In these cases, the trustee family was definitively of higher status, which was not the case in the Yoshida-Yoshikawa instance.

of Wakayama-han, and subsequently aroused the interest of his nephew Hoshina Masayuki, whom he first met in 1661 (TAIRA 1983, p. 77). Masayuki was then probably the most influential political figure of the day.<sup>33</sup> The fact that Koretaru became his Shinto teacher and accompanied him until his final days, is yet another of Koretaru's unlikely successes. It may be partly due to Hagiwara Kaneyori relations to the Tokugawa elite,<sup>34</sup> but was certainly facilitated by Koretaru's own family background. Born as a samurai, Koretaru may have appeared all the more trustful to people of that status, even if he could not compete with a powerful daimyo in terms of political power.

In any event, it is quite obvious that Koretaru used his political relations as a kind of return favor to the Yoshida. In 1665, when the two parties were still on friendly terms, the prospective heirs of the two branch families, Yoshida Kaneyuki and Hagiwara Kazuyori, were ordered to come to Edo to be introduced to his mentor, Masayuki (TAIRA 1966, p. 41). Soon after, the bakufu issued the "Provisions for Shrine Priests" (*Shosha negi kannushi hatto* 諸社禰宜神主法度). These provisions explicitly confirmed the status of the Yoshida as the highest authority in questions of shrine hierarchy, besides a number of *kuge* families with individual relations to certain traditional shrines.<sup>35</sup> Indirectly the bakufu thereby acknowledged the Yoshida's long cherished ambition to act as representatives of the *jingikan*. As already mentioned,

<sup>33</sup> Masayuki was daimyo of Aizu-han and the half-brother of the third Shogun Iemitsu, who installed him in his testament as the tutor of his eleven year old successor Ietsuna (r. 1651–1680). His most active period as a politician lasted from 1651 to 1660. Thereafter poor health urged him to shift his interests from practical politics to more intellectual and religious activities, which explains his acquaintance with Koretaru and later Yamazaki Ansai.

<sup>34</sup> He had given lectures on Shinto to Tokugawa Yorifusa 徳川頼房 (1603–1661), daimyo of Mito and father of the above-mentioned Mitsukuni, for instance.

<sup>35</sup> The regulations, which were repeated in 1782 and 1791, consist of five short paragraphs among which the second and the third were of particular importance for the Yoshida. The second paragraph reads: "As for the court ranks (*ikai* 位階) of shrine priests, those who received promotion in the past by way of the *tensō* shall continue to do so."

*Tensō* 伝奏 refers to a group of *kuge* families who had hereditary relationships to a number of important shrines for which they acted as intermediators in their negotiations with the Tenno. Thus, the second paragraph acknowledges these traditional relationships. For the rest of the shrines, the third paragraph provides the following: "Priests without rank shall be dressed in white (*hakuchō* 白張). All other formal dresses (*shōzoku* 装束) require a permission by the Yoshida."

In a somewhat indirect way the paragraph specifies that ranks and dresses are related, and that all shrine priests who have no traditional relationship with the court and therefore no rank shall turn to the Yoshida, if they want to establish such a relation (i.e., acquire a special dress/rank).

The other paragraphs instruct priests to study the way of the gods (*jingidō*) and their specific shrine tradition (§1); not to sell shrine property (§4); and to take charge of at least minor repairs at their shrine buildings (§5) (Cited in SJ 1994, p. 116.).

this privilege did not go through uncontested. In particular, the priestly lineage of the Shirakawa had become a serious challenger of the Yoshida's claims and fought a series of lawsuits after 1665 to counter Yoshida influence. It seems no coincidence, however, that during the lifetime of Hoshina Masayuki, the bakufu tended to side with the Yoshida.<sup>36</sup>

Another indication of Hoshina/Yoshikawa influences on the bakufu's Shinto policies was the plan to restore Hideyoshi's Toyokuni Shrine, formerly headed by the Hagiwara. This project was also decided in 1665, but eventually seems to have failed. According to his biography, Koretaru's untiring personal engagement to enforce these Yoshida-friendly measurements resulted in his physical collapse in the winter of 1666. Yet his efforts were never adequately appreciated by the Yoshida (TAIRA 1966, p. 41). Thus the biography implicitly explains Koretaru's unwillingness to return the *Himorogi denju* by the cold ignorance of his loyalty on the part of the Yoshida.

In any event, Yoshikawa Koretaru's support in the bakufu was important enough for the Yoshida not to risk a complete breakdown in negotiations. As for Koretaru, the question how to accord to Hagiwara's testament tormented him all the rest of his life, according to his biography. In the end, however, he decided that his own family should remain the vessel of the Way and gave all transmissions to his adopted son, Yoshikawa Yorinaga 吉川従長 (1654-1730). It is at this point that Yoshikawa Shinto definitively departed from Yoshida Shinto and only in retrospect can we say that Koretaru founded his own Shinto lineage. During his lifetime it was highly ambiguous whether he acted as the administer or as the usurper of Hagiwara Kaneyori's legacy.

In addition to these dubious circumstances, there is yet another point that is far from evident: What did this mysterious *Himorogi-iwasaka denju* actually consist of? According to Yoshikawa sources (and also to the above-mentioned testament of Kaneyori) it seems to be a kind of secret text that reveals the ultimate truth of Shinto. According to the writings of Yoshida Kanetomo, and also to later Yoshida sources like the *Shingyō ruiyō*, however, *himorogi* and *iwasaka* are designations for certain divine objects, comparable to the imperial regalia.<sup>37</sup> These objects were handed down to the Yoshida by their divine ancestor Ame-no-koyane together with the teachings that formed the core of

<sup>36</sup> On the details of the legal disputes between the Yoshida and Shirakawa families after 1665 see, MASE 1985.

<sup>37</sup> The *Yuiitsu shinto myōbō yōshū* (NST 19, p. 220; GRAPARD 1992, p. 144; SCHEID 2001, p. 322) backs up this claim by a reference to the *Nihon shoki* (NKBT 67, p. 152; ASTON 1998, pp. 81-82). See also *Shingyō ruiyō*, *Himorogi-iwasaka no koto* 神籬磐境之事 (ST *ronsetsuhen* 8, pp. 235-42).



Yoshida Shinto. Reportedly they were in the custody of the Yoshida also after the Yoshikawa incident. In this way the claims of the two families seem to have coexisted for a long time without a final decision on who was actually in possession of the Way, nor what constituted the final right to transmit it.

At an institutional level at least, the Yoshida remained the most powerful family in the world of Shinto. In comparison to its prerogatives, for which Koretaru had enforced legal status, the privileges he gained for himself appear indeed rather modest. The only lasting benefit was a post as *shintō kata* 神道方 (Shinto advisor), which was subordinate to the bakufu's *jisha bugyō* 寺社奉行 (Commissioner of temples and shrines). In spite of the fact that Koretaru had been given several opportunities to lecture Shogun Ietsuna on Shinto, it was only under the next shogun, Tsunayoshi (r. 1680–1709) when he eventually acquired this hereditary post for himself and his family in 1682. If this had implied actual tutorship of the shogun in Shinto matters, as Koretaru probably expected, it would have been indeed of great importance. The mere scarcity of information on the post, however, substantiates Taira's evaluation that the role of the Yoshikawa in the actual government was not comparable to the role of the Hayashi, for instance, who acted as historians and Confucian advisors of the bakufu (TAIRA 1966, pp. 54–55). From the reign of Shogun Tsunayoshi onward Shinto was regarded as a matter of the court, and the *shintō kata* was probably not much more than a formal title.

More enduring than Yoshikawa influence on shogunal politics was the role of Yoshikawa Shinto in Aizu-han, the domain of Hoshina Masayuki. Masayuki seems to be the first daimyo after Ieyasu who provided for his own deification<sup>38</sup>—of course with the help of Koretaru. He ordered that he should be enshrined in his domain and that Koretaru should act as the main officiate of the ceremony. Not surprisingly this enterprise was regarded very critically by the bakufu, and also by the Yoshida. Eventually, however, Koretaru overcame all attempts to suppress Masayuki's apotheosis and deified him under the name of Hanitsu Daimyōjin 土津大明神 in a newly erected shrine.<sup>39</sup> From that

<sup>38</sup> According to ASOYA (1985, p. 9), Tokugawa Yoshinao 徳川義直 (1600–1650, daimyo of Owari-han) and Tokugawa Yorifusa (daimyo of Mito-han)—two founders of the so-called Tokugawa *go-sanke* 御三家, the three important branch families of the Tokugawa house—had a funeral according to Confucian rites. In Yoshinao's case, however, the lecture of Buddhist sutras was requested by the bakufu.

<sup>39</sup> When Koretaru initiated Masayuki into the highest secrets of Yoshida Shinto in 1671, he bestowed upon him the title *Hanitsu reisha* 土津靈社. *Reisha* or *reishin* 靈神 titles were customarily conferred as post-mortal titles to the heads of the Yoshida house who used to be elevated to the state of a kami after they had died, probably since the time of Yoshida Kanetomo (OKADA 1982, p. 12–18). Thus, Masayuki's title presumably anticipated his prospective

time onward, Shinto deifications became the usual way to entomb the daimyo of Aizu-han. Masayuki's son and successor Masatsugu, by the way, was the one who took over the custody of the Yoshikawa transmission one generation after Koretaru. Thus, Yoshikawa Shinto seems to have become something like a state religion in the domain of the Hoshina, Aizu-han. Later, Koretaru's successor Yorinaga developed a similar relation between Yoshikawa Shinto and the Tsugaru 津軽, a daimyo family in the far north of Honshu (TAIRA 1983, pp. 83-88).

Judging from these relations to individual daimyo, we can infer that the Yoshikawa family's forte was a special reputation as experts of Shinto, by which they gained personal access to select members of the Shinto-friendly *bushi* elite.<sup>40</sup> This reputation, however, lasted no longer than a few generations.<sup>41</sup> Apart from this intellectual appeal, Yoshikawa influence on the administration of shrines or on popular beliefs on a nation-wide scale was certainly only of marginal significance. Thus Yoshikawa Shinto was not a sincere threat to the Yoshida. Yet it must have harmed their self-image: now there were two lineages of hereditary priests who based their claims on the legacy of Yoshida Kanetomo and thus regarded themselves as spiritual descendants of Ame-no-koyane, who in their eyes was the divine founder of Japanese religion.

### *Yoshikawa Shinto*

Yoshikawa Shinto is generally described as a reformed version of Yoshida Shinto, which is also evidenced by the above mentioned fact that it was not intended as a separate school of Shinto by its founder Koretaru. Regarding the nature of this reform I believe, however, that the differences regarding Yoshida Shinto are often overemphasized, or rather, that the emphasis is put on the wrong point. In short, I would say that Yoshikawa Shinto's views of cosmology, of man, and of

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apotheosis, which he eventually ordered in his testament. When he actually died the next year, it was extremely difficult to carry out a Shinto funeral not following normal Buddhist standards. Koretaru himself had to overcome the opposition of *rōju* Inaba Masanori 稲葉正則 (1623-1696) by verifying the authenticity of Masayuki's Shinto initiation. Even among Masayuki's Aizu retainers, opinions were divided on this issue. When the ceremony itself was finally held four months after Masayuki had passed away, Koretaru still had to oversee the erection of a proper shrine, which was finally finished in 1675. During this time he also drafted detailed regulations on how worship of Masayuki should be carried out, including the provision that no offerings should be given for trifling causes. Thus the installation of a proper Shinto cult for Masayuki took Koretaru at least three years (TAIRA 1983, pp. 80-82).

<sup>40</sup> On the individual daimyo and other high ranking *bushi* among Yoshikawa disciples, see TAIRA 1966, pp. 338-52.

<sup>41</sup> After Koretaru's descendant Yoshikawa Yorikado 從門 (1737-1797), no daimyo outside of Aizu-han joined the ranks of Yoshikawa disciples (TAIRA 1966, p. 342).

kami are hardly at variance with Yoshida Shinto, while there are differences in the categories of “cult” and “ethics.”<sup>42</sup>

To prove this contention, let me just give a few examples.<sup>43</sup> Koretaru shares with the Yoshida (and with virtually all medieval Shinto theoreticians) the belief in Kuni-no-tokotachi as the founding deity of the universe. Kuni-no-tokotachi, or his alias Ame-no-minaka-nushi, can be taken as an icon of medieval Shinto ontology. This ontology is based primarily on the *Nihon shoki* account of how the world came into being (where Kuni-no-tokotachi is mentioned as the primary deity). Shinto theologians argued, however, that since this text is written in a primitive, “pure” language that no longer can be correctly understood, Chinese texts are needed to interpret its meaning. Thus, the *Nihon shoki* and the scriptures of Chinese sages describe ultimately the same truth, but the Japanese text corresponds closest to the original revelation of the kami. Indeed, not only Koretaru, but also most of his predecessors in and outside Yoshida Shinto interpret Kuni-no-tokotachi in terms taken from the *Yijing*, the *Daodejing* and other Confucian or Taoist classics.<sup>44</sup> Yoshikawa Shinto hardly adds much substantially new to this already well established link between the Shinto pantheon and Chinese ontology.

In the same way, Koretaru shares his views of man and the kami with various predecessors. He also believes in their fundamental identity, or—to be more precise—in the oneness of kami and the human mind.<sup>45</sup> This theory bears correspondences to the Buddhist *hongaku* 本覺 philosophy as well as to the Neo-Confucian writings of Zhuxi and is therefore well qualified for the Japanese fondness of synthesizing teachings of different origin. In our connection it is important to add, however, that Koretaru extends this theory of human-divine identity

<sup>42</sup> I refer here to the categories of religious discourse set up by Klaus Kracht in his hermeneutical study of Neo-Confucian discourse on the kami. Kracht distinguishes the following categories of argumentation, where discourse on the kami was relevant: cosmology; anthropology (questions applying to the conditions of human life and death); demonology; cult; ethics; and political legitimation (KRACHT 1986, p. 80).

<sup>43</sup> The following references to Yoshikawa theology are mainly based on TAIRA 1966 and ASOYA 1985.

<sup>44</sup> In Watarai Shinto, Kuni-no-tokotachi is particularly important, since the Watarai tried to prove an identity between their personal goddess, Toyouke of the Outer Shrine of Ise, and this founding deity of the universe (TEEUWEN 1996). In Yoshida Shinto, direct reference to Kuni-no-tokotachi is comparatively rare—probably due to the strained relationship between the Yoshida and Ise, which led to the fact that the Yoshida promoted the somehow Daoist appellation Taigenshin 大元神, the “Deity of the Great Origin” as the proper title for the primordial deity. In Yoshida prayer and ritual, however, this Taigenshin is clearly identified with Kuni-no-tokotachi (SCHEID 2001, p. 283).

<sup>45</sup> For this doctrine in Watarai Shinto, see TEEUWEN 1996, pp. 99–102 and 109–12; for Yoshida Shinto, see SCHEID 2001, pp. 192–95.

for the first time explicitly to the question of post-mortal existence. Men will become kami upon their death. They re-unite with the divine essence that existed also at the beginning of the universe. While the Yoshida must have had a similar conception, the traditional Shinto taboo on death seems to have prohibited them from writing explicitly on this topic. Thus, one of the intellectual merits of Yoshikawa Shinto is its opening of questions on death and the afterlife to theoretical Shinto discourse.<sup>46</sup>

The point where Yoshikawa Shinto distinguishes itself most clearly from Yoshida Shinto, however, is the establishment of a theory of ethics. This theory bears many correspondences to Yamazaki Ansai's Suika Shinto, which allows us to surmise that it is ultimately a result of the close cooperation between Ansai and Koretaru in the late 1660s. In any event, these most innovative theories of Yoshikawa Shinto also contain its most confusing parts for the modern observer. Koretaru bases his ethics on the five Cardinal Virtues of Confucianism among which he singles out "reverence" 敬 as the most important. Instead of the Sino-Japanese pronunciation *kei*, however, he prefers the Japanese equivalent *tsutsushimi*. In a bold etymological reduction (that is nevertheless typical not only for Shinto, but also for Confucian reasoning of that time) he associates *tsutsushimi* with *tsuchi* 土 (earth) and thus with one element of the Five Phases.<sup>47</sup> It is to be noted that this etymological reduction only functions in Japanese, although both the virtue of Reverence and the Five Phases appear to us as of Chinese origin. The element Earth, therefore, receives special attention in Yoshikawa Shinto as does the virtue of reverence. Apart from these attempts to back up social ethics by relating them to cosmic principles, Koretaru's ethical reflections center on the relationship between lord and subject. Koretaru defines human relationships basically as hierarchical, the relation of lord and subject being the fundamental model (TAIRA 1966, pp. 118-19). In this sense his ethics are clearly designed for a social utopia of Tokugawa society.

Clearly Yoshikawa theories on ethics deserve a deeper analysis than it is possible in a half-page paragraph. What I would like to emphasize here, however, is the very fact that ethical considerations become a topic of Shinto theology at all. In medieval Shinto, by contrast, there is a significant lack of concise ethical discourse. Perhaps the most representative Shinto texts about righteous behavior are the so-called

<sup>46</sup> On this topic Koretaru wrote several treatises including *Seishi denpi* 生死伝秘 and *Seishi rakuchaku* 生死落着. See also ASOYA 1985.

<sup>47</sup> *Nakatomi no harae gokōdan kikigaki*, ST *ronssetsuhen* 10, p. 342; TAIRA 1966, p. 92. The same etymology was also applied by Yamazaki Ansai (c.f. OOMS 1985, p. 229 and 237-39).

*Oracles of the Three Shrines*.<sup>48</sup> These oracles consist of extremely short statements confirming the importance of three human “virtues”: honesty (*shōjiki* 正直), compassion (*jīhi* 慈悲) and purity (*shōjō* 清淨). Not only is this set of virtues (we may suspect deliberately) syncretistic and therefore compatible with Shinto as well as with Buddhism and Confucianism, it is further grounded in nothing but a divine utterance, and it exhibits a characteristic ambiguity in not differing moral standards like good and bad from ritualistic standards like pure and impure. Yoshida Shinto made use of this already established set of human virtues and did little to explain righteous human behavior more specifically. Yoshikawa Koretaru, on the other hand, combined ethical virtues with a theory of the functioning of society, and thus constructed a causal nexus between individual behavior and social, as well as transcendent, benefits. However feeble these explanations may appear to us now, they are no longer simple statements attributed to powerful kami, but are deduced from universal *principles* that grant at the same time social and metaphysical order.

Koretaru’s concern for ethical standards can also be seen in his conceptions of the afterlife. In his vision of the beyond, there is a clear distinction between a heavenly realm of bliss (*takama no hara*) and a kind of hell (*yomi no kuni*). Moral behavior is the determinant factor, in which of these realms one is going to spend ones’ post-mortal destiny (ASOYA 1985, pp. 15–17). Such a conception of moral retribution hardly exists in medieval Shinto. Rather, fortune and misfortune are determined by the degree of “purity” realized in ritual. That is to say that divine retribution is dependent not so much on right moral conduct, but on correct ritual performance. And indeed, in Yoshida Shinto ritual is the main focus. Doctrine, and in particular ethical doctrine, albeit existent, is of minor importance.<sup>49</sup>

In Yoshikawa Shinto, on the other hand, ritual and doctrine reversed their respective ranks. This tendency is already exemplified by the fact that for the Yoshida, *himorogi* is a magical object, while for the Yoshikawa it is a text. Rather than the specific doctrinal topics, it is this shift of importance from ritual to rationalized ethics that is the most basic difference between Yoshida Shinto and Yoshikawa Shinto. It is well reflected in the self-designation of Yoshikawa Shinto: Rigaku Shinto 理学神道, which translates as “Shinto of the study of principles.” It seems too far-fetched to regard this as an indication of scientific rationality, as the term *rigaku* (“science”) in a modern sense would

<sup>48</sup> *Sanja takusen* 三社託宣. “Three shrines” usually refers to the deities Amaterasu, Hachiman, and Kasuga (BOCKING 2000).

<sup>49</sup> On ethics in Yoshida Shinto, see SCHEID 2001, ch. 6, especially pp. 195–98.

suggest.<sup>50</sup> But it certainly indicates a conscious inclination towards a logo-centric conception of religion that seeks salvation in a quest for the morally good in contrast to a mystic immersion in ritual precedence. This shift to Neo-Confucian “rationalism” is related to a shift in the missionary aims of Yoshikawa Shinto that has become apparent also in the *Himorogi denju* incident. In theory at least, this mission was seen as the educational task to communicate the proper Way to the entire populace.

### Conclusion

In my presentation I have tried to portray Yoshikawa Koretaru as a mediator between the medieval Shinto traditions and the intellectual mood of early Tokugawa Japan that was significantly shaped by the discovery of Neo-Confucianism. In my view, Koretaru performed this role not only intellectually, but also socially. His personal career constitutes a breach in the court nobility’s monopoly of knowledge and legitimacy in matters of the kami. The initiation of intellectuals like Yamazaki Ansai and politicians like Hoshina Masayuki were probably of equal historical importance for the establishment of a distinct Shinto school. All these activities helped to create new centers of Shinto authority that were no longer dependent on the esoteric charisma of the imperial court. Koretaru achieved this by a successful exploitation of the three social “classes” he was in touch with. Backed by the wealth of a merchant, he found leisure enough to indulge in sophisticated pastimes that brought him into contact with the nobility. There he acquired traditional learning, which he spread to the warrior elite favored by his own family background. After Koretaru, secret texts of Shinto circled widely among his pupils, who included urban intellectuals as well as powerful regional lords.

On the level of intellectual history, it is important to note the changes as well as the continuity that Yoshikawa Shinto brought about. There is, as I have tried to show, a programmatic trend towards logo-centrism (embodied in the self-designation *rigaku*) that tightens and rationalizes the medieval esotericism of Yoshida Shinto. In particular, there is a stress on ethics based on a Confucian understanding of society. In this sense Yoshikawa Shinto presents itself as a perfect Shinto version of Tokugawa ideology, as Herman Ooms defines it.

There are, however, limitations to this claim. First, neither the basic doctrines of medieval Shinto, nor its fondness of secrecy are funda-

<sup>50</sup> For this reason, I cannot really agree with Nelly Naumann’s—albeit ironical—translation “naturwissenschaftlicher Shintō” for *rigaku shinto* (NAUMANN 1994, p. 73).

mentally put into question by the Yoshikawa. Thus, Yamazaki Ansai's Confucian ideal that all that is useful to society should be "public" is not realized. Second, it is far from evident whether the ruling elites were actually in need of such an ideology. As indicated above, straightforward loyalty to *bushi* rule jeopardized the subtle compromise of the Tokugawa with Buddhism on the one hand and the court on the other. Tradition and precedent were valued higher than codified rules. Consequently, it is not surprising that the promise to rediscover the original Way of the country in the form of Shinto remained a minor program in the religious world of the *bushi*.

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 NST *Nihon shisō taikei* 日本思想体系. 56 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970–.  
 SJ *Shintō jiten* 神道事典. Kokugakuin Daigaku Nihon Bunka Kenkyūjo, ed. Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1994.  
 SJJ *Shintō jinmei jiten* 神道人名辞典. Tokyo: Jinja Shinpōsha, 1986.  
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