

Katō Genchi

— A Neglected Pioneer in Comparative Religion —

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Anyone wishing to learn something about Shinto will sooner or later come across the “classic” *A Study of Shinto: The Religion of the Japanese Nation*, which was published in 1926. Its author, Katō Genchi, deserves our special attention, since some six decades ago his book was almost unique: apart from Aston’s *Shinto, the Ancient Religion of Japan* (1907), there was hardly any scholarly book on Shinto available in English.

First of all, we have to realize that the “science of religion” is a relatively young academic discipline. *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, by the British-German philologist Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900), was published in 1873, i. e., in the year Katō was born. This book laid the foundation of the study of comparative religion. Müller and the Dutch Egyptologist C. P. Tiele (1830–1902) strove for the academic acknowledgement of the science of religion (SHARPE 1986, p. 35).

The science of religion depends heavily on two subdisciplines: the history of religions and the phenomenology of religions. The history of religions examines and describes the historical facts of religions. It is greatly supported by philological research (LANCZKOWSKI 1980, p. 39). Byron EARHART, however, warns against a too philological approach and thinks that reference books in religious studies and secondary works on Japanese religion up till now have relied too much on two translations, *Kojiki or Record of Ancient Matters* by B. H. Chamberlain (1882), and *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the*

Earliest Times to A.D. 697, by W. G. Aston (1896) (1967, p. 199). The phenomenology of religion tries to find systematic components or structures in a religion. Because of its comparative method it is sometimes called comparative religion. The aim of comparison is to penetrate the essence of religion, “Wesenserfassung” (LANCZKOWSKI 1980, p. 46). Åke HULTKRANTZ advocates “controlled comparisons,” which is to say that phenomena which are compared with each other in functional or structural respects should not be detached from the religions and the cultures they originate from. The data concerned should also be comparable in qualitative and quantitative respects (1974, p. 368).

The first chairs for the science of religion were inaugurated at Geneva and Boston in 1873. In the Netherlands the first chair was established in 1876. International conferences for the science of religion have been organized since 1900. The seventh international conference for the history of religions (1950) resulted in the foundation of the International Association for the History of Religions (LANCZKOWSKI 1980, pp. 76–79).

When we compare the above dates to those of the beginning of the science of religion in Japan, we immediately notice how early this discipline was academically established in Japan. Already in 1887 the philosopher Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1855–1944) lectured on comparative history of religion. In 1896 Anesaki Masaharu 姉崎正治 (1873–1949)—later known for his work *History of Japanese Religion* (1930), Kishimoto Nobuta 岸本能武太 (1865–1927), Yokoi Tokio 横井時雄 (1857–1928) and others founded the Hikaku Shūkyō Gakkai 比較宗教学会, a society for [the study of] comparative religion. In the Hikaku Shūkyō Gakkai the ideas of Müller and Tiele found an appreciative hearing. Anesaki occupied the first chair for the science of religion, *shūkyōgaku* 宗教学, at the Imperial University of Tokyo in 1905. Soon chairs and academic societies for this discipline were also established at other state and private universities (HAMMITZSCH 1981, pp. 1622–26).

The first generation of professors, among them Anesaki Masaharu and Kishimoto Nobuta, greatly contributed to the development of the science of religion in Japan. Anesaki Masaharu is often considered as the founder of *shūkyōgaku* in Japan on account of his voluminous *Shūkyōgaku gairon* 宗教学概論 [Introduction to the science of religion] (1900). Anesaki's *History of Japanese Religion* was published in 1930, four years later than *A Study of Shinto*. From the preface

it becomes clear that the work was first prepared in the form of lectures given by the author at Harvard University in the period 1913–1915 (ANESAKI 1930, Preface). Kishimoto Nobuta concerned himself with typology of religion and subscribed to Tiele's model. For a long time Katō was practically alone in the field of Shinto research. Kishimoto Hideo was especially active in religious research (ANZU & UMEDA 1968, p. 447; YANAGAWA 1988, p. 2), but this was after World War II.

Horst HAMMITZSCH (1981, pp. 1622–26) posits two caesurae in the development of the Japanese study of the history of religion, one after the Meiji Restoration (1868) and the other after World War II, when State Shinto was abolished and the science of religion entered a new phase. Until the middle of the nineteenth century Japanese religious research was mainly concerned with problems regarding temples and shrines. In the Meiji period it became possible for Japanese to study Western sources in Europe or the United States. In the beginning of the Meiji period Japanese students were sent abroad, and foreign scholars, technicians, and advisers came to Japan. Therefore it is not surprising that Japanese also became interested in the science of religion. Anesaki Masaharu, for instance, studied in Europe from 1900 till 1903. The Buddhist scholars Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 (1866–1945) and Nanjō Bun'yū 南条文雄 (1849–1927) studied under Max Müller in Oxford.

On the one hand the first Western Japanologists, such as William George Aston (1841–1911), William Elliot Griffis (1843–1928), Ernest Mason Satow (1843–1929), Basil Hall Chamberlain (1850–1939), and Karl Florenz (1865–1929), inspired Japanese scholars; on the other hand, Japanese scholars did not fail to find fault with their pioneering efforts (KITAGAWA 1968, p. 127). Katō was one such scholar: he made use of Western theories, but he questioned the Western approach to Shinto. The origin of this Western approach is found in the sixteenth and seventeenth century reports on Shinto by Portuguese and Spanish missionaries. They considered the Japanese sinners because they did not believe in the hereafter and only prayed to their kami for fear that the devil would take possession of their bodies. In the missionaries' mistaken interpretation, kami were people from the past or the original inhabitants of Japan (SCHURHAMMER 1923, pp. 167–69).

Even now Japanese Shinto scholars criticize the so-called Western blind spots. UEDA Kenji gives the following advice: "The first thing

we have to keep in mind when we try to understand [a] religion which has a completely different value system is to see the religious lives of [its] adherents in their totality and to hear sincerely their own way of interpretation and understanding" (1968, p. 104). KITAGAWA also wonders whether specific Western specialism is coupled with a general Western understanding of Japanese culture, and he pleads for a closer cooperation between Japanese and non-Japanese scholars (1968, p. 129).

The Life of Katō Genchi

Katō was born in Tokyo on 17 June 1873. He was the only son of Katō Genchō 加藤玄聽, a Shingon priest. His father wanted his son to succeed him at the Shōnen-ji 称念寺 in Asakusa.¹ A heated correspondence took place between Katō and his father on the subject of this succession: Katō opposed his father's wishes and became a university student instead, dissociating himself from Buddhism (MOCHIZUKI 1985, p. 25).

Katō specialized in philosophy of religion at the Imperial University of Tokyo. His Ph.D. dissertation on the relation between intellect and belief, "Chishiki to shinkō" 知識と信仰, was reduced to ashes by the great earthquake of 1923. When he was thirty-seven years old, he was appointed to teach English at the Military Academy in Tokyo.² He was also temporary lecturer in Shinto at Komazawa University, Jingū Kōgakkān, and Taishō University,³ and lecturer in the comparative study of Western and Eastern thought at the Military Administration School in Tokyo. Of all his teaching jobs he

¹ Oral information supplied by Katō's daughter-in-law, Katō Yoshiko.

² The Military Academy (Rikugun Shikan Gakkō) was established in Ichigaya in 1874.

³ Komazawa University, a private university, had its origin some 375 years ago when it was opened by the Sōtō sect of Zen. In 1913 its name was changed from Sōtō Sect University (Sōtō-shū Daigaku) to Komazawa University.

Kōgakkān University (Jingū Kōgakkān) is an educational institution for lower-ranking priests, established in Ise in 1882. In 1940 it was officially put on the same level as a university. After the war it was dissolved, but reopened as a private university in 1951. In 1962 it was named Kōgakkān Daigaku.

Taishō University, a private university, was established in Tokyo in 1926 as Bukkyō Rengō Daigaku (Federated Buddhist University) by the merger of Tendai-shū University, Buzan University, and Shūkyō University representing, respectively, the Tendai, Shingon, and Jōdo sects. It was named Taishō University in 1949, and faculties of Buddhism and literature were added.

spent the longest time at the Military Academy. He was popular among his students because of his strength of mind and mild personality (UEDA 1985, p. 27; KISHIMOTO 1978, p. 10).

The period between 1912 and 1945 was Katō's most prosperous period. During this period of "maturity," as professor KOBAYASHI Kenzō calls it (1976), Katō was executive director as well as head of the research institute affiliated with the Meiji Seitoku Kinen Gakkai 明治聖徳記念学会 [lit., Society in Memory of the Illustrious Virtue of the Meiji Emperor, but officially called the Meiji Japan Society]. Established on 3 November 1912, Emperor Meiji's birthday, this society's aims were the propagation of the essential characteristics of Japanese thought, the demonstration of the essence of *kokutai* [the national structure of Japan] and Japanese culture, the introduction of the truths of Japanese culture to the world, and a contribution to mutual spiritual understanding. Being a close, intimate circle of Japanologists, the Meiji Japan Society brought Katō into contact with foreign scholars like R. Ponsonby Fane, D. C. Holtom, C. W. Hepner, C. M. Salwey, J. W. T. Mason, Mrs. E. A. Gordon, and the Dutch scholars J. B. Snellen and R. H. van Gulik. Katō deeply admired Ponsonby Fane and wrote the preface and a poem commemorating him in *The Vicissitudes of Shinto*, the fifth volume of Ponsonby Fane's collected works. Undoubtedly these international contacts stimulated Katō to publish in English.

Thanks to his efforts, the Meiji Japan Society grew into a solid organization (UMEDA 1976, p. 62). Among its activities were lecture meetings and the publication of research reports, bulletins, and literature (e. g., classical literature in Japanese and foreign languages). These publications drew international attention (KOBAYASHI 1976, p. 27).

Between 1920 and 1945, Katō wrote some of his most famous works. These included commentaries on those parts of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonshoki* dealing with the so-called period of the gods: *Nihonshoki jindai-kan kaichū* 日本書紀神代卷解注 (1920) and *Kojiki jindai-kan kaichū* 古事記神代卷解注 (1922); *Shintō no shūkyōgakuteki shin-kenkyū* 神道の宗教学的新研究 [A new scientific religious study of Shinto] (1922); *A Study of Shinto* (1926), also translated into French and Esperanto; *Honpō seishi no kenkyū: seishi no shijūtsu to sono shinri bunseki* 本邦生祠の研究—生祠の史実と其心理分析 [A study of the shrines for the living and the deceased in our country: The facts about these shrines and their analysis] (1931); *What is Shinto?* (1935,

written for the Japanese Tourist Library), *Shintō no shūkyō hattatsu-shiteki kenkyū* 神道の宗教発達史的研究 [A study of the religious development of Shinto] (1935); *Shūkyōgaku seiyō* 宗教学精要 [The essentials of the science of religion] (1944).

With Hoshino Hikoshirō he wrote an annotated English translation of the *Kogoshūi* [Gleanings from ancient stories] (1924).⁴ His *Shintō shoseki mokuroku* 神道書籍目録 [Bibliography of Shinto books] in two volumes and *A Bibliography of Shinto in Western Languages from the Oldest Times till 1952*—compiled by Katō, Karl Reitz, and Wilhelm Schiffer—are still highly valued by Shinto scholars.

The age of retirement at Tokyo Imperial University was sixty, but it was the custom that one then became a professor at another university or head of some research institute (KOBAYASHI 1976, p. 26). Although Katō had been in charge of Shinto lectures in the Faculty of Letters of Tokyo Imperial University for twenty years, he had never become a full professor. A professorship at the post he had occupied was established after his retirement in 1933 (KOBAYASHI 1976, p. 32).

Katō was purged from public office (December 1945) and his pension stopped (1 February 1946), on the grounds that he had been a professor at the Military Academy.⁵ Civil officials were treated in the same way as military officials. In addition, the Occupation authorities were offended by two of his works, *Nihon seishin to shi no mondai: Nogi shōgun no shi wo chūshin toshite* 日本精神と死の問題—乃木將軍の死を中心として [The Japanese spirit and the problem of death: With special reference to the death of General Nogi] and *Sakaō daijūgū sankeiki* 坂翁大神宮參詣記 [A story of Sakaō shrine] (KOBAYASHI 1976, p. 36). Katō spent many years in poverty and even had to sell his books. In the summer of 1951 a pension was restored to him (KATŌ 1962, Epilogue).

⁴ Compiled for Emperor Heizei 平城 (r. 806–809) by Inbe no Hironari 齋部広成 in 807, the *Kogoshūi* includes details which are not recorded in the *Kojiki* or the *Nihonshoki*. Inbe no Hironari was indignant at the privileged position of the Nakatomi clan at the expense of his own clan.

⁵ The Potsdam Declaration (26 July 1945) instructed that: “There must be eliminated for all time the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest, for we insist that a new order of peace, security and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world” (Par. 6).

Par. 6 was the rationale used to put into operation the purge by SCAP (the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers) of Japanese ultranationalists and militarists from positions of influence. See CREEMERS, 1968, p. 186.

Katō spent his remaining years on the outskirts of Gotenba, at the foot of Mt Fuji. Especially after the death of his great help and support, his wife, Setsuko, he led a secluded life. Although he became half blind as a result of white cataracts (KOBAYASHI 1976, p. 32), he remained active in his field of interest. He gathered a group of interested persons, under the name of either Tōgenkai 藤玄会 or Seishi Kenkyūkai 生祠研究会, at his home and once a month—for ten years—he lectured on philosophy and religion (SAKAI 1976, p. 57). On 3 November 1960 he received the Purple Ribbon—the highest honor for a Japanese scholar—for his merits in the scholarly study of Shinto (KOBAYASHI 1976, p. 23).⁶ On the occasion of his eighty-eighth birthday Katō's friends collected the results of his research in a memorial publication, *Shintō shinkō yōkei joron* [An introduction to the essential system of Shinto belief] (KATO 1962, Epilogue). At the age of 92 Katō died in his villa, Gakurōkutsu, in Gotenba. In accordance with his will Katō's friends held a memorial lecture meeting in 1965. On the tenth anniversary of his death they founded the Katō Genchi Hakase Kinen Gakkai 加藤玄智博士記念学会 (KOBAYASHI 1976, p. 42), which in 1988 changed its name to Meiji Seitoku Kinen Gakkai. It publishes a yearly bulletin.

The Comparative Religious Ideas of Katō Genchi

Several of Katō's most important ideas about the science of religion may be found in *A Study of Shinto*. He defines religion as “a man's humanly entering into relation with something superhuman or what transcends man” (1926, p. 5). Following Tiele's model he distinguishes two aspects of religion: theocratic (or deocentric / homo-contra-deo-theistic) and theanthropic (or homocentric / homo-deo-theistic). He created the Sino-Japanese terms *shinjin kenkakukyō* 神人懸隔教 (also *shinjintairitsukyō* 神人對立教 or *shinjinsabetsukyō* 神人差別教) and *shinjindōkakukyō* 神人同格教 (also *shinjinkon'ikkkyō* 神人渾一教 or *shinjinbyōdōkyō* 神人平等教), which are the equivalents of “theocratic religion” and “theanthropic religion.” While a sharp distinction is made between god and man in a theocratic religion, there

⁶ The Purple Ribbon (*Shiju hōshō*) was established under the partly revised medal regulations in January 1955. It is a medal (with a ribbon of purple color) which is awarded to people who have made conspicuous contributions to invention, improvement, or creation in the arts, sciences, and humanities.

is a complete union of god and man in a theanthropic religion. While god is above man and nature in a theocratic religion (god is transcendent), god is immanent in man and nature in a theanthropic religion. We find the acme of theocratic religion in monotheism, while pantheism is the highest form of theanthropic religion. A creation occurs in theocratic religions, an emanation in theanthropic religions. Shinto as a theanthropic religion does not have omnipresent, omniscient, or omnipotent kami (KATŌ 1973, p. 38). The relation between man and kami is reciprocal and relative (KATŌ 1973, p. 43).

Though Katō's categories of classification are obsolete and justly criticized, I still want to mention them in order to provide an overview of his religious ideas.

Theanthropic Religions

Buddhism
Hinduism
Shinto

Theocratic Religions

Christianity
Islam
Judaism

Other categories of classification applied by Katō are:

national religion
(*kokuminteki shūkyō*)

国民の宗教

non-proselytizing
(*hi-dendōteki*)

非伝導的

world religion
(*sekaiteki shūkyō*)

世界的宗教

proselytizing
(*dendōteki*)

伝導的

Shinto is a national religion. Whereas gods of world religions can be worshipped everywhere, kami cannot leave Japan, just as Jahweh cannot leave Israel (KATŌ 1973, p. 68).⁷

nature religion
(*shizenkyō* 自然教)

polytheism

(*tashinkyō* [*nigenkyō*])

多神教 [二元教]

pantheism

(*banyūshinkyō/hanshinkyō* 萬有神教 / 汎神教)

culture religion

(*bunmeikyō* 文明教)

monotheism

(*yuiitsushinkyō*)

唯一神教

⁷ With this statement I cannot agree, since kami or parts of their essence can be taken to conquered territory (Vos 1977, p. 224).

Pantheism (cf. SPAE 1972, pp. 65–66) is the more developed form of a theanthropic religion, monotheism the more developed form of a theocratic religion. Katō discerns theanthropic elements in theocratic religions, and theocratic elements in theanthropic religions (1934, p. 25). He finds pantheism in monotheism and vice versa. Katō tries to rehabilitate Shinto against the historical background of other religions. He refers to earlier polytheistic phases in Judaism and Islam (1934, pp. 19, 23).

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| theism | deism |
| (yūshinkyō 有神教) | (chōzetsushinkyō 超絶神教) |

In theism there is a close relationship between man and god. The transcendent god in deism leads to separatism: as a result of this separation between god and man, god does not interfere with man.

| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| religion with a founder | religion without a founder |
| (yūkaisokyō 有開祖教) | (mukaisokyō 無開祖教) |
| with holy scriptures | without holy scriptures |
| (seitenkyō 聖典教) | (museitenkyō 無聖典教) |
| with a creator | without a creator |
| (yūzōbutsushūkyō 有造物主教) | (muzōbutsushūkyō 無造物主教) |

The absence of holy scriptures, a creator, and a founder had led Western scholars to the assumption that Shinto was not a religion. Katō disagrees: most religions do not have either a creator or a founder or holy scriptures, and can still claim to be religions.

| | |
|---|---|
| religion through one's own strength (better: enlightenment) / attainment religion (jirikikyō / jiryokuteki shūkyō) 自力教 | religion through the strength of others (better: salvation) / redemption religion (tarikikyō / taryokuteki shūkyō) 他力教 |
|---|---|

Like CASE (1960, p. 286), Katō states that both aspects can be present in a religion. According to him, Western scholars mean *tarikikyō*, redemption religion, when they use the word *religion*.⁸ Ultimately they concentrate only upon Christianity and consider other religions as “accessories” (*fuzokuhin* 付属品).⁹

⁸ Cf. TIELE, 1899, p. 75: “All religions are religions of redemption, and all religious doctrine is a doctrine of salvation. This is one of the most striking, and at the same time most certain, results of our science.”

⁹ “. . . shikaru ni konnichi wa mohaya kirisutokyō nomi ni chakugan shi, hoka no shūkyō wa sono fuzokuhin no gotoku ni kangaete. . .” (1934, p. 49).

Katō distinguishes the following phases in Shinto (1926).¹⁰

I. The stage of Shinto as a lower nature religion

Pre-animism / animatism / prepolydemonism. Katō defines this as simple or original nature worship, distinct from animism or polydemonism: the worship of what can be perceived sensorily or directly. He gives Mt Fuji as an example.

Here we find the influence of Robert R. Marett (1866–1943), who distinguishes a phase preceding animism: preanimism, which contains an even simpler belief. Preanimism is the belief in an omnipresent, impersonal power and Marett assumes it to have been the first and most original form of religion. Marett uses the term “animatism” to designate the belief in an undifferentiated power.

Animism / polydemonism. Complex nature worship: the animation of nature by kami. The phenomena of nature are considered to be kami. Here we find the distinction between the natural phenomenon itself and the spirit residing in that phenomenon; in other words, there is no worship of what is sensorily or directly perceived. Hydrolatry, astrolatry, dendrolatry, litholatry, theriolatry, or zoolatry all belong to this category.¹¹

Katō was influenced by Tylor’s theories. Edward B. Tylor (1832–1917) assumed that the experiences of man during sleep, when dreaming or when facing death, led him to this first religious experience, the concept of the soul (anima) within himself. Gradually animism (= the belief in spiritual beings), polydemonism, polytheism, and finally monotheism developed.

Fetishism. Katō defines fetishism as worship of objects to which miraculous virtues are ascribed. He gives jewels, swords, mirrors, and scarfs as examples of fetishism in Shinto.

The designation “fetishism” originally came from Charles de Brosses (1709–1777), who maintained that fetishism was the prototype of all religions.

Spiritism. A person or object can be possessed by a disembodied spirit. A grave can be turned into a shrine in order to propitiate a wandering, angry spirit.

¹⁰ Excellent information on the Western scholars mentioned below is found in SHARPE (1986) and LANCZKOWSKI (1980).

¹¹ Strangely enough, Nelly NAUMANN (1988, p. 112) does not mention the name of Katō in the whole array of scholars who were occupied with the animistic conception in Shinto.

Anthropolatry, which consists of:

- a. worship of the dead (necrolatry)
- b. ancestor worship
- c. worship of a living human god (hagiotheism).

Contrary to the Western view, Katō proves that shrines were sometimes dedicated to living human gods. Anthropolatry exists in the periods of nature and culture religion and forms an important aspect of a theanthropic religion.

Katō describes the conflicts between Shinto on the one hand, and Buddhism and Christianity on the other. The anthropolatric aspect is not acceptable to Christianity (1973, p. 82).

Totemism. Katō explains totemism as worship of animals, plants, or inorganic objects that are considered to be divine ancestors of clans or persons.

Here we notice some influence of W. Robertson Smith's (1846–1894) ideas on totemism.

Primitive monotheism. Belief in a comparatively higher being. Katō finds an instance of primitive monotheism in the belief in Ame no Minaka Nushi no Kami 天之御中主神, who distinguishes himself from the other kami and is not locally worshipped.

Katō is influenced by Andrew Lang. Lang discovered gods in primitive religions who have nothing in common with the spirits of animism; these gods are creators and supporters of the world (see SPAE 1972, p. 46).

From the above we may conclude that Katō was under the influence of evolutionistic ideas in vogue in the period from 1870 till 1920. Anthropologists like Marett, Tylor, Lang, and Frazer¹² (1854–1941) dominated the study of comparative religion (SHARPE 1986, pp. 94–95). Under Darwinian influence the evolutionists maintained that the development of religion was comparable to biological evolution, and that every religious development went through certain stages according to fixed laws. After 1920 evolutionistic theories became less popular (WIDENGREN 1974, p. 87), but this did not induce Katō to renounce his previous ideas. In *Shinto's Terra Incognita to be Explored Yet* (1958)—for private circulation—he gave a synopsis of

¹² In his works Katō frequently refers to Frazer.

the ideas he had already worked out in *Shinto no shūkyōgakuteki shinkenkyū* and other works more than thirty years earlier.

One other point to notice is that, in his choice of material, he relied mainly on material that scholars used in the initial period of the study of comparative religion. He often confined himself to the same sources, to the religious tradition of the ancient world: the Semites, Indians, Greeks, and Romans.

II. The stage of Shinto as a higher nature religion

Polytheism. Worship of eight million kami. This number only indicates that the kami are extremely numerous.

III. The stage of Shinto as a culture religion

Pantheism, henotheism. Shinto is pantheistic, since everything is pervaded by kami. Katō refers to the *Nihonshoki* and *Shintō gobusho* 神道五部書. Henotheism designates a polytheistic system in which a god is worshipped as a supreme god and in which it is difficult to discern whether this worship takes place temporarily or permanently. Shinto's henotheism is exemplified by Amaterasu Ōmikami 天照大御神. Katō finds proof in the *Kogoshūi*: "Now since Amaterasu is the greatest Ancestral Goddess, no Shinto god can claim equality, just as a son is ever inferior to his father, or a vassal to his lord" (KATŌ and HOSHINO 1926, p. 46).¹³

In this so-called ethico-intellectualistic stage Shinto pays more attention to inner purity than to bodily purity. Katō discovers similarities between Shinto and foreign rituals (1973, pp. 95 and 150). The moral principle of sincerity becomes fundamental. Spiritual sacrifices are preferable to material (*Nihonshoki*, *Kojiki*, *Shintō gobusho*, *Oharai no norito*, *Warongo*). *Kami* are classified in categories of good and false. *Kami* of a lower stage—Katō illustrates this with the help of phallic kami—are degraded or replaced by kami of a higher stage under Confucianist and Buddhist influences. In the ethico-intellectualistic stage there are "germs of morality" (1973, p. 152).

Katō wants to oppose the Western view that Shinto is a lower or primitive religion and criticizes Western scholars for neglecting the ethico-intellectualistic aspect of Shinto (1973, Preface). For instance, TIELE writes that he omits a description of the nature religions because they do not have a history (1892, p. 6). In *Shintō no shūkyō-*

¹³ Katō also discerns monotheism in Shinto. He quotes Izawa Nagahide 井沢長秀, who labels Kuni no Tokotachi 國常立 as the only kami (1926, p. 144).

gakuteki shinkenkyū Katō does not mince words, and he dares to be more critical when writing in Japanese concerning the shortcomings of Western scholars (1934, p. 49).

He follows in the evolutionistic footsteps of the Dutchman Tiele, the first professor in the history and philosophy of religion in Leiden from 1877 till 1900. The step-by-step scheme of Katō shows similarities with that of Tiele, who makes a division between nature and ethical religions.

Tiele's outline (TIELE 1901)

Lower nature religions dominated by animism

- polyzoism (from *zoa* [animate beings] in natural phenomena and objects)
- spiritism
- fetishism
- totemism

Higher nature religions

- therianthropic-magical (conception of gods in half-human, half-animal form; the cult is mixed with magical elements)

Highest nature religions

- anthropical or hemi-ethical religions (anthropical: gods as ideal human beings, although supernatural; hemi-ethical: gods represent the good and maintain order)

Ethical religions

- particularistic (closely connected with the national culture) or nomistic (based on holy scriptures)
- universalistic / world religions (spreading of the doctrine of salvation)

TIELE calls the development of religions not only gradual, but also qualitative (1901, p. 12). The growth of the human mind has an influence on the development of religion which is not coincidental or arbitrary. He aims at understanding the essence and origin of religion—through its development of many historical forms.

Katō uses the terms “theocratic” and “theanthropic” in the meaning Tiele attached to them (1973, p. 31). TIELE explains in *Inleiding tot de godsdienstwetenschap* [Introduction to the science of religion] that the word *theanthropic* is a composition of *theos*, “god,” and *anthropos*, “man,” and that the emphasis is on the divine in man and

his affinity with god; while the word *theocratic*, a composition of *theos* and *kratein*, "to govern," designates the empire of god over the world of human beings (1900, p. 41). The distinction between theocratic and theanthropic is not like that between black and white. KATŌ (1934, p. 30) as well as TIELE (1900, p. 41) emphasize that each religion contains both elements and that, if one of them would be missing, there would be no real religion. Tiele classifies the Semitic religions under the theocratic category and the Indo-European religions under the theanthropic category.

Katō not only follows in Tiele's tracks by applying the latter's outline to Shinto, but also goes beyond him. According to what TIELE maintains in *Hoofdtrekken der godsdienstwetenschap* [Main characteristics of the science of religion] (1901), the best division of religion is the classification into nature and ethical religions, without excluding the possibility of a third category in which the natural and ethical become reconciled—even though, he adds, such a form of religion does not exist. But if we read Katō's *A Study of Shinto* carefully, we find him proposing that Shinto belongs to that third category. Although Shinto has attained the stage of an ethical or culture religion, it remains polytheistic. The natural and ethical are, indeed, reconciled in Shinto.

UEDA Kenji of Kokugakuin University sharply criticizes Katō's system of classification (1978, pp. 49–70). A comparative concept like "development" implies a personal interpretation, a value judgment. What is development, and with which universal criteria can we measure it? LANCZKOWSKI writes the following concerning the typology in primitive and culture religions: "The danger of such a typology is that it implies value judgments which do not originate from any genuinely religious realm, but are linked with the degree of perfection a civilization has reached" (1978, p. 125).¹⁴

Katō Genchi's Contribution

Katō was formed by ideas from the period of the science of religion when the field was still in its infancy. The early definition of comparative religion by Louis H. JORDAN almost seems an exact

¹⁴ "Ihre Gefahr besteht darin, dass sie Wertungen impliziert, die nicht genuin religiösen Bereichen entstammen, sondern an dem Grad zivilizatorischer Vervollkommnung gemessen sind."

description of the way in which Katō approached the science of religion: “that science which compares the origin, structure, and characteristics of the various religions of the world, with the view of determining their genuine agreements and differences, the measures of relation in which they stand one to another, and their relative superiority and inferiority when regarded as types” (1905, p. 63).

Evolutionism sustains Spencer’s assumption that the religions of primitive peoples are similar to proto-religion. Western scholars classified other, non-Christian religions according to their various stages of development and placed Christianity on top. While Katō is faithful to this theory and submits to the scheme of religious development, he is opposed to the value judgment which it contains. He asserts that every religion starts from a material basis and that the immaterial, spiritual aspects develop later (1973, p. 138).

Katō made abundant use of Western terminology, such as fetishism, totemism, animism, animatism, and polydemonism, that are now obsolete and consequently out of favor. They are neither precise nor expressive enough, and according to Clifford Geertz they do not sufficiently depict the idiosyncrasy of a religious tradition (HULTKRANTZ 1974, p. 375).

Katō was well-read and had a wide knowledge of Western literature. He had read not only the Bible, but also standard academic works like *The Golden Bough* by Frazer, *Primitive Culture* by Tylor, and *Elements of the Science of Religion* by Tiele. Few could have matched his courage to claim room for Shinto in a young academic discipline like the science of religion. Up till then only marginal attention was paid to Shinto, and this attention was filtered through missionary lenses. Even Katō’s beloved Tiele dismisses Shinto: “Of the Japanese no mention is made, because the history of the present form of their religion belongs to that of Buddhism, and the investigation of the old national religion (designated by a Chinese name, Shinto, the way or doctrine of spirits, and perhaps itself derived from China) has not yet led to any sufficiently satisfactory results” (TIELE 1892, p. 6). In *The Religions of Japan* (1895) Griffis wrote that Christians had the responsibility to point out the great truth of the Bible and Jesus to their fellow men, the Japanese, and to undo the shortcomings of Japanese religion with careful coercion (GRIFFIS 1895, pp. 6–7).

Katō attempted to build a bridge of comparative religion between

the West and Japan. Nevertheless, he did not receive the recognition he really deserved.¹⁵ This is partly due to the difficult position of Shinto within Japanese society. From 1882 till 1945 the Japanese government held the reins of Shinto research (KAMSTRA 1967, pp. 22–26; KITAGAWA 1968, p. 28), and after World War II, these reins were taken over by the Allied Occupation authorities (MORITA 1976, p. 63). There are also political reasons for the fact that Katō's work has been neglected. William Bunce,¹⁶ Chief of the Religions Division during the allied occupation in Japan, was influenced by D. C. Holtom (WOODARD 1972, p. 198).¹⁷ Holtom's *The Political Significance of Modern Shinto* may have determined the Religions Division's negative attitude towards Katō. Holtom mentions that the essence of Katō's Shinto theology as exposed in *Waga kokutai to Shintō* 我が国体と神道 "is nationalistic political philosophy" and that his statements reflect "the interests of the revival of imperial institutions that began with the Restoration in 1868" (HOLTOM 1922, pp. 118, 120). He concludes that, "Indeed, it is difficult to avoid the impression that such political interest is largely the determining factor in giving form to the interpretation which makes emperor worship the center of modern Shinto" (p. 124).

NAKAMURA Hajime, on the other hand, is positive in his assessment. He points to the fact that Katō contributed to introducing Japanese thought to the Western world. He calls Katō's attitude scholarly, since he dared to give an exposition of medieval Shinto, a subject which had been ignored by former narrow-minded Shinto scholars (1978, pp. 1–4). According to KITAGAWA (1968, pp. 122–134) Katō belonged to the first generation of modern Japanese scholars who dared to criticize the viewpoint of Western scholars dealing with Japanese studies.

Katō's classification system may be old-fashioned, but his *Shintō shoseki mokuroku* and *Bibliography of Shinto in Western languages* are still of great value to all who are interested in Shinto literature. At the time of their publication such works were rare (KISHIMOTO 1978,

¹⁵ In the bibliography of *Die einheimische Religion Japans* by NAUMANN (1988), Katō's work, even his Shinto bibliography, is not mentioned.

¹⁶ William Kenneth Bunce (b. 1907) served as Chief, first of the Religions Division, later of the Religions and Cultural Resources Division, SCAP, from September 1945 until April 1952.

¹⁷ Daniel Clarence Holtom (1884–1959) was Professor of the History of Religions Department, later of Religions and Church History, at Kantō Gakuin in Yokohama. From 1936 to 1940 he was a professor at Aoyama Gakuin in Tokyo.

pp. 5–24). Katō's work is also of historical interest since it reflects the earliest stage of the establishment of the science of religion in Japan. Hence, the study of his life and work is worthwhile.¹⁸

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¹⁸ While all works by Anesaki are being reprinted in Japan (JAPAN FOUNDATION 1977, pp. 113–14) only two of Katō's works – apart from a few of his articles – have been reprinted: a partial translation of *Shintō no shūkyō hattatsushūteki kenkyū* (1973) and *Honpō seishi no kenkyū* (1985). Most books by Katō are not available any more, and searching among secondhand bookstores in the Kanda district of Tokyo results in the acquisition of two or three books at the most. Since his work is of incalculable value for Japanese and non-Japanese scholars, reprints of his works would be a welcome development.

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