

there are thirty millions of Buddhists. The fact is, that in the Mikado's empire there is a triad of religions, the rites and ceremonies of which are so intermingled that millions of people may be counted as belonging to all three. These religions are Shinto, Buddhism, and *Storto*, which is the Japanese term for Confucianism. We propose to take a survey of the first named, which as the old national religion was called *Kami-no-Michi* (or *Mad-su*), and is now generally known as Shinto.*

There are many ways of spelling this word Shinto, which is simply the rendering in Chinese characters of the words *Kami-no-Michi*, meaning "the way of the gods" (*shin* = god, *to* = way), and is equivalent to the Greek *θεῶν λόγος*. The Chinese explain the word as follows: *shin* = spirit, *to* = the doctrine, and they declare that Shinto is a form of spirit worship.

So dense is the darkness that enshrouds the early history of Japan that it is impossible with any degree of certainty to trace the genesis and early development of that which afterward became the national religion of the empire. The drift of scholarship, aside from the Japanese, is settling toward the theory that at least the germs of Shinto were brought from the mainland of Asia. When we know more of the religion of the Aïnu, perhaps we may be able to speak more decisively concerning Shinto.

Not only is the origin of Shinto a matter of great perplexity to investigators, but the religion itself has been so modified by its contact with other systems that no superficial observer can tell just what Shinto is. Japanese scholars themselves are divided into hostile camps when this subject is upon the tapis. Foreigners who have investigated the system with the most disinterested motives do not agree in their conclusions, and many of the most candid are the least dogmatic in their statements.

A returned missionary, for a long time resident in Japan, on being asked for some information as to what Shinto really is, replied: "I would like to learn something about Shinto myself." One scholar † declares: "Shinto is an engine for reducing the people to a condition of mental slavery." Another ‡ says: "There is good evidence that Shinto resembles very closely the ancient religion of the Chinese." A third § holds that "the leading idea of Shinto is a reverential feeling toward the dead." "In its higher forms Shinto is simply a cultured and intellectual atheism. In its lower forms it is a blind obedience to governmental and priestly dictates." This is the verdict of Dr. Griffis, || whose long residence in Japan, and scholarly, unprejudiced investigations combine to give it weight. In fact, it is only since 1870 that we really know anything about Shinto, as writers prior to that time told us of Buddhism, and not of Shinto.

* Japanese scholars use the term *Kami-no-Michi*, and not Shinto.

† Ernest Satow.

‡ J. A. von Brandt.

§ Arinori Mori.

|| See "The Mikado's Empire," by W. E. Griffis. He characterizes Shinto as "a Robinson Crusoe among religions."