

(3) Thou shalt revere the Mikado as thy sovereign, and obey the will of the court.

III. RITES AND CEREMONIES. Most interesting are the religious ceremonies of the Japanese. From these we learn, if not the doctrines of the primitive cult, at least the popular beliefs of the present time. Here we have to do only with those practices which belong peculiarly to Shinto. We must, however, keep in mind the fact that Buddhism has leavened everything in Japan, and it will not be surprising to find under the name of Shinto some things that should be labelled Buddhist.

1. Purification. As sin is regarded as pollution, the chief rite of Shinto is purification. At first the Mikado ordered public ablutions. Afterward paper figures representing men were cast into the water. Later still the high priest at Kioto threw into the water an iron figure the size of the Mikado. This rite represented the cleansing of the whole people. Now the festival of general purification is held twice a year. Besides this there are frequent washings for purification, which, with the ceremonies connected therewith, are similar to those of the Brahmins of India.

2. Festivals. As has been noted, the sun-goddess is the supreme object of worship. The hierarchy consists of the Mikado, two ecclesiastical judges, and numbers of priests and monks. In the springtime festivals are held in honor of the goddess, at which these dignities play a most important part. The Mikado is the representative of the goddess. The priests make offerings of fish, rice, etc. Ceremonies in imitation of planting and sowing are held.

3. Pilgrimages. Each district now has its own deity and its own temple; but there is a most sacred temple (or several of them) in the Province of Ise. This was built in honor of the sun-goddess, and to it all Shintoists make at least one pilgrimage during their lifetime. The more pilgrimages that can be made the better. The Shintoists believe that the gods of Ise have more than once saved Japan from destruction. When Perry anchored his fleet in the Bay of Yeddo, "orders were sent by the imperial court to the Shinto priest at Ise to offer up prayers for the sweeping away of the barbarians."^{*}

4. Marriage. The marriage rites and relations are held to be under the direct patronage of Izanagi and Izanami. It is deemed most unlucky for a Buddhist priest to officiate at a wedding. A Japanese has but one lawful wife, but he may have as many concubines as the size of his purse will allow. While in ancient times polygamy was common, now the great majority of the people are monogamists.

5. Hero-worship. By decree of the government, semi-divine honors are conferred on the dead. Statues of poets, orators, and famous men are placed in the temples and regarded with reverence.

Idols are now worshipped, but this is due to the influence of Buddhism. Keeping in mind the fact that the first Mikado was a god, and

^{*} Griffiths, quoting a native annalist.