

From *Jindō* to Shinto A Concept Takes Shape

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This article traces the origin and development of the term Shinto. This word was created from an earlier Buddhist term “jindō,” which was used in, for example, the Nihon shoki as a collective noun referring to “the realm of the (non-Buddhist) deities.” The form “shintō” occurred first in the context of esoteric initiations into kami knowledge, probably in the fourteenth century. The article explores how the older term jindō was given a new meaning and a new reading in a discourse that drew both on hon-gaku ideas and Yin-Yang cosmology. It argues that, in contrast to the older jindō, the neologism shintō functioned as a “concept” as defined by Reinhart Koselleck, in the sense that it had a clear historical impact as both a factor and an indicator of historical change. It is only when we are aware of the formative processes that fostered this new concept that we can understand such central Shinto themes as primeval purity and imperial spirituality.

Keywords: Shinto — kami — *honji suijaku* — *hongaku* — Yin-Yang — emperor — conceptual history

IN THE INTRODUCTION to this issue, Bernhard Scheid and I argue that for historiographical purposes, “Shinto” should be reserved as “a collective term for various attempts made in different historical periods to unify kami practices and beliefs.” In this sense, Shinto is not something that has “existed” in Japanese society in some concrete and definable form during different historical periods; rather, it appears as a conceptualization, an abstraction that has had to be produced actively every time it has been used. In contrast to shrines, or even kami, which are part of the landscape and have formed a concrete focus for ritual action and theological speculation, Shinto has “existed” only as an outcome of such speculation, as an attempt to impose some form of coherence on a chaotic reality. In other words, shrines and kami are “things”—or, to focus on another angle of the Saussurian tri-

angle, words that refer to something real and concrete; “Shinto,” in contrast, is a concept that creates its own meaning, and that refers only to itself.

In this article, I argue that by approaching Shinto in this way, we may open up a new perspective on the classical question that we have inherited from Kuroda Toshio: whether “Shinto has existed without interruption throughout Japanese history,” or “emerged as an independent religion only in modern times” (KURODA 1981). Although I shall be drawing heavily on Kuroda’s work in this article, I will attempt to offer a new angle on Kuroda’s findings (as well as updating them on the basis of recent Japanese research), in the hope of offering a more fertile approach to the phenomenon of Shinto and its genesis.

Kuroda’s treatment of Shinto takes the form of a deconstruction of Shinto history, in which phenomena that have been categorized by Shinto scholars as part of a single, coherent tradition are absorbed in the dominant religious and intellectual systems of each age, and continuity between them is either denied, or only grudgingly admitted.¹ Kuroda disqualifies Shinto as a topic of research as “no more than a ghost image produced by a word linking together unrelated phenomena” (KURODA 1981, p. 20). He scatters the “phenomena” “linked together” by the word Shinto, and thus writes Shinto out of ancient and early medieval history. The only thing that has existed “throughout Japanese history,” Kuroda implies, is this word, not the phenomena it has been said to refer to.

Kuroda’s point can be rephrased by saying that it was the word Shinto that “linked together” phenomena that were originally unrelated, and thus created a new “ghost image.” Here, Shinto appears as a consciously created theological concept. As a concept, it was of course in many ways related to contemporary practices around shrines and kami, but it was by no means simply a convenient collective term used to refer to the totality of such practices. It will be argued below that as a theological concept, Shinto has had its own dynamics; its meaning has not been determined directly by the praxis of contemporary shrine cults, but rather by reflection on the word Shinto itself. Here, a new project emerges: to lay bare the emergence of Shinto as a theological concept through an analysis of the semantic development of the term 神道 (*jindō*, *shintō*, *kami no michi*) in historical sources. My contention in this article will be that this term was transformed from a

¹ “Shinto theories may give the impression of continuity with [the later] Confucian Shinto and Kokugaku Shinto, but in reality they did not contain any ideas that are consistent with these [later schools]” (KURODA 1979, p. 157). “... it is undeniable that there is a certain continuity to it all. Therein lies the problem” (KURODA 1981, p. 20).

“word” to a “concept” in the course of the Kamakura period, and that this transformation was of great importance to Shinto’s subsequent development into the self-defined religion that it is today.

As a theoretical framework, I am here drawing on the German field of *Begriffsgeschichte*, as pioneered by Reinhart Koselleck. In his introduction to the nine-volume lexicon *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Koselleck explains the difference between a word and a concept as follows:

The meaning of a word always refers to the signified, whether it is an idea or a thing. Here, the meaning is attached to the word, but at the same time it is also grounded in the content intended by the idea, the spoken or written context, or the social situation. A word can become unambiguous, because it is ambiguous. A concept, however, must remain ambiguous to be able to function as a concept. The concept is attached to the word, but is at the same time more than the word. A word becomes—in our method—a concept, when the totality of a sociopolitical complex of meaning in and for which the word is used, is included in that single word.²

To clarify his meaning, KOSELLECK argues that “the meaning of words can be determined exactly through definitions; concepts can only be interpreted” (1972, p. xxiii). In other words, a word becomes a concept when it is expansive in nature, creates its own meanings, and becomes “both a factor and an indicator of historical change” (1972, p. xiv)—this in contrast to a word, which is constantly contracted, albeit in many different ways, through its application to specific things and ideas.

The question I will ask here is whether the development of the word Shinto in Japanese can be understood in a similar way. If we treat Shinto as a concept in Koselleck’s sense of the term, that means that the word itself, and the attempts to give it meaning in different historical and sociopolitical contexts, have been the prime factors that created the category of Shinto. Our task, then, becomes one of tracing the history of these attempts, by following the word through history and assessing its role in shaping that history.

Similar attempts at tracing the shifting meaning of the word in different historical periods have been made before by a number of Japanese scholars. Most influential among them have been TSUDA Sōkichi (1949), and KURODA Toshio (1979, 1981, 1983). Their findings must form the starting point for a semantic analysis of the term Shinto in historical sources. However, as pointed out recently by MUREI Hitoshi (2000), both these scholars base their conclusions on a rela-

² Reinhart KOSELLECK 1972, p. xxii (my translation).

tively small selection of texts; and also, their findings need to be reconsidered in the light of more recent research. As a first step towards such an evaluation, Murei has done us the extremely valuable service of compiling a list of 186 occurrences of the word, from the time of the *Nihon shoki* (720) to the Jesuit Japanese-Portuguese Dictionary of 1603–1604, as well as 33 occurrences of the corresponding word in Chinese sources (where it is read *shendao*). Murei does not, however, offer an analysis of this material that goes beyond the occurrences of the word in the *Nihon shoki*—and his conclusions differ from the ones I shall propose below.

Within the confines of this article, it will not be possible to follow the development of the term Shinto as far as the Edo period. I shall concentrate on the ancient and early medieval periods, because it was in this latter period that Shinto showed the first signs of developing into a concept in Koselleck's sense. For later periods, I will have to limit myself to some speculative remarks, which will have to be elaborated further at another time and place.

“Shintō” in the Nihon Shoki

Our analysis must begin with the first occurrences of the word Shinto in the Japanese sources. (Below, I will provisionally adopt the spelling *shintō* as a way to suspend judgement on the meaning of this term in the context of the quoted passages.) As is well known, the word made its debut in Japan in the *Nihon shoki*, where it occurs four times.³ *Nihon shoki* records that “Emperor [Yōmei] believed in the Buddhist Dharma, and respected *shintō*” and that “Emperor [Kōtoku] ... respected the Buddhist Dharma, and made light of *shintō*.” Also, we read that this same enemy of *shintō*, Kōtoku, issued an edict stating that Amaterasu had entrusted the land to her descendants with the words: “My children shall rule it, *kannagara* (惟神).” This final adverb is then explained in a note: “*Kannagara* means ‘following *shintō*’ or ‘carrying *shintō* in oneself’”—or, perhaps, depending on how the character 自 is read, “carrying *shintō* naturally.”

Much has been, and is still being made out of these classical occurrences. The traditional view, repeated in countless books and articles, is that Buddhism and Shinto in these passages are juxtaposed as two independent traditions, two religions of equal standing. When Buddhism arrived, we are told, a term had to be invented for Japan's

³ ASTON 1972, vol. 2, pp. 106, 195 and 226; NKBT 68, *Nihon shoki ge*, pp. 154–55, 168–69 and 300–301.

indigenous religion, and this term was Shinto.⁴ The occurrences of the term in the *Nihon shoki* are taken to document the early existence of an autonomous Shinto tradition, and thus warrant the tracing of Shinto's history as an unbroken tradition also in subsequent centuries.

This position has been criticized most thoroughly and famously by Kuroda Toshio, and his arguments need not be repeated here. Kuroda is not so clear, however, when it comes to his own interpretation of the word *shintō* in the *Nihon shoki*. He proposes three possible readings, implicitly in increasing order of probability:

1. *Shintō* here means "Japan's indigenous religion" (or, phrased somewhat differently, "popular [Japanese] beliefs in general");
2. It means "the authority, power, activities, or deeds of a kami";
3. It means Daoism.

These first two possibilities derive from Tsuda Sōkichi (who favored meaning 1 for these passages); the last draws on Fukunaga Mitsuji, a specialist on Daoism who has argued for a prominent presence of Daoism in early Japan.

Fukunaga's position has been aptly characterized by Livia KOHN as "iconoclastic" (1995, pp. 401–5).⁵ Fukunaga argues that Daoism played a central role in shaping early Japanese culture, and especially the imperial system. In particular, Fukunaga explains early religious developments in Japan as echoes of four stages posited for the development of Chinese religion: from (1) shamanistic worship of ghosts and demons, first to (2) a formalized ritual system focusing on cosmological forces such as Yin and Yang, and then through (3) a phase focusing on meditation and mystical attainment, to (4) a large, organized synthesis of Buddhism and Daoism characterized by the religious ideal of saving all beings. Fukunaga claims that this second phase was called *shendao*, and that in ancient Japan, "*shendao* was transformed into Shinto and became the original form of Japanese higher religion, including the understanding of the gods in the first chapters in the *Nihon shoki*" (KOHN 1995, p. 403). Kuroda builds on this by proposing

⁴ In English, a classical example of this view can be found in KITAGAWA (1987, p. 51): "Under the impact of Confucianism and Buddhism, the Japanese were compelled to create a designation for their hitherto unsystematized religious tradition. For this purpose they borrowed two Chinese characters—*shin* for *kami*, and *tō* or *dō* for the 'way'." A recent example in Japanese is NISHIMIYA 2001.

⁵ Kohn is here referring to FUKUNAGA 1985, ch. 2. The theory that *shintō* here refers to Daoism goes back a long way; it is already discussed (and rejected) in KŌNO Seizō 1915 and HOSHINO Hikoshirō 1918.

that “it is possible to view these [Shinto] teachings, rituals, and even the concepts of imperial authority and of nation as remnants of an attempt to establish a Daoist tradition in Japan” (KURODA 1981, p. 6).

Fukunaga’s position is iconoclastic in the sense that it subverts the traditional view of Shinto as uniquely Japanese; but, ironically, it also resurrects the notion that *shintō* in the *Nihon shoki* refers to a, or even the “form of Japanese higher religion.” A closer look at the passages featuring this term in the *Nihon shoki*, as well as their original context, appears to be in order.

The first thing that strikes us is that the first two of the occurrences of the term *shintō* are very similar. Both contrast the emperor’s attitude to Buddhism with his attitude towards something else. A third parallel phrase can be found earlier in the *Nihon shoki*, where we read that “Emperor [Bidatsu] did not believe in the Buddhist Dharma, but was fond of literature.”⁶ These phrases all occur at the beginning of a new chapter, and give a brief characterization of a new emperor.

A point that would appear obvious but that is seldom made, is that in all instances, these phrases relate to the tale of the establishment of Buddhism in Japan. Bidatsu (572–585), Yōmei (585–587), and Kōtoku (645–654) all played some critical role in this tale. Bidatsu was the first emperor to actively suppress Buddhism, and is to this day widely reviled as the emperor who forced Soga no Umako, the early protector of the Buddha in Japan, to hand over the three young nuns who served at his Buddhist chapel for whipping.⁷ Bidatsu died soon after, and was succeeded by Yōmei. This emperor fell ill in the second year of his reign while attending the kami ritual of Niiname—no coincidence, surely—and subsequently expressed his wish to become a follower of the Buddhist Three Treasures. When his ministers opposed him in this, “the emperor’s sores became worse and worse”; but just before his death, a certain Tasuna of the Kuratsukuribe clan presented him with a large Buddha image and a temple—the first temple of the revived Japanese Buddhism.⁸ After this, six generations passed until Kōtoku. Kōtoku was Nakatomi no Kamatari’s ally in overthrowing the Soga clan, the first patrons of Buddhism in ancient Japan. In the first year of Taika (645), he issued an edict assuring the court’s future protection of Buddhism, albeit under strict court control.⁹ This edict laid the foundations for the Ritsuryō Buddhism of the classical period.

Together, these three emperors form a set of central characters in

⁶ ASTON 1972, vol. 2 p. 90; NKBT 68, pp. 132–33. “Literature” translates 文史, literally “prose and histories.” Most commentators take this to be a reference to Confucianism.

⁷ ASTON 1972, vol. 2, pp. 101–3; NKBT 68, pp. 148–51.

⁸ ASTON 1972, vol. 2, pp. 109–11; NKBT 68, pp. 158–61.

⁹ ASTON 1972, vol. 2, pp. 202–3; NKBT 68, pp. 276–77.

the early history of Japanese Buddhism. It is true that some other emperors, who are not introduced by phrases like these, also played a role in this drama (notably Kinmei, whose reign saw the first attempt at introducing Buddhism to Japan). Even so, it is quite clear that where these phrases occur, *shintō* plays second fiddle in what basically is an account of the establishment of Japanese Buddhism. The context in which the term occurs in the *Nihon shoki*, then, suggests strongly that it was introduced by a Buddhist monk who participated in the project of compiling this national history, and who was in charge of editing the entries that related to the early history of Buddhism in the country.¹⁰ With this in mind, we must think again about the question what *shintō* might mean in these passages, and what source it might derive from.

As to the intended meaning of the term *shintō*, the *Nihon shoki* gives us only one clue, in the form of a note to the remark that Emperor Kōtoku “made light of *shintō*.” Here, we read: “as is instanced by his cutting of the trees of the shrine of Ikukunidama.” This makes it clear that *shintō* refers to shrines and their deities. As to the cutting of these trees, opinion is divided over the question why this was done; some argue that the timber was used for the building of the new palace at Naniwa, others for a temple.¹¹ In each case, it is clear that “making light of *shintō*” here means “treating kami with disrespect.”

However, when it is said that Emperor Kōtoku made light of *shintō* this does not mean that he did not rely on kami myth and ritual to legitimize imperial power. We have already seen that he issued an edict stating that power is executed by the imperial lineage *kannagara*, “following *shintō*.” The word *kannagara* is used frequently in the *Man'yōshū* and elsewhere (though never with these characters or with this explanation). It means “as a kami, in the capacity of a kami,” and thus identifies imperial power as sacred kami-power. Obviously, Emperor Kōtoku made light of some kami, but not of others.

Pulling together the scarce data that we have, we may conclude that the term *shintō* was pioneered by a monk in the official account of the

¹⁰ INOUE Kaoru (1961, pp. 189–232) proposes that the monk who drafted the *Nihon shoki* account of the introduction of Buddhism to Japan may be identified as Dōji 道慈 (fl. 744), a Sanron monk who studied in China from 702 to 718 and attained a prominent position at the court in the 720s. Inoue argues that it was Dōji who imported the *Jingguangming zuishengwang jing* 金剛明最勝王經 (newly translated into Chinese in 702) to Japan, and points out that several passages in the *Nihon shoki* borrow phrases from this sutra. There is, however, no positive proof of Dōji’s involvement in the *Nihon shoki* project, since only a few of the editors of this work are known.

¹¹ UEDA Masaaki (1996) proposes that the timber was used for the building of the Naniwa palace in 645; NISHIDA Nagao (1978) argues that it was used for Shitennō-ji, a temple in Naniwa founded in 593 under Empress Suiko.

establishment of Japanese Buddhism, and that it referred to shrines and their kami. A final point that needs to be made is that these occurrences of the term *shintō* are extremely isolated. The word *shintō* does not occur anywhere else in the *Nihon shoki*. In its sequel, the huge *Shoku Nihongi*, it occurs only once (see below). The word does not occur at all in any other contemporary official compilations or documents—neither the *Kojiki*, the *Man'yōshū* or the *Fudoki*. In the genre of official texts, the word was very rare indeed.

Different conclusions have been drawn from these facts. Perhaps the most common is that the term occurs only in the *Nihon shoki* because it should be regarded as diplomatic jargon. In this view, the word was used only in the *Nihon shoki* because this was a state document, written with an audience of foreign (Chinese) diplomats in mind. *Shintō* was a political term, invented to give expression to the new national identity of Japan, with the kami-born emperor at its head. Since the term was a term of international relations, there was no use for it in documents for domestic use.¹²

My own view is different. First of all, the Japanese of this period were too sophisticated in the ways of diplomacy to believe that a rhetoric of imperial power based on the emperor's descent from and control over indigenous deities would impress the Chinese. Obviously, this kind of rhetoric was designed to have a domestic impact, rather than an international one. Moreover, it cannot be a coincidence that the term *shintō* occurs only in those parts of the *Nihon shoki* that deal with the establishment of Japanese Buddhism, and that are likely to have been drafted by a Buddhist monk. Rather than diplomatic jargon, it would seem logical to think of the term as Buddhist jargon.¹³

This view is strengthened by the fact that the term occurs relatively frequently in early Japanese Buddhist texts from the late eighth century onwards. Here, we encounter the term *shintō* in a different but yet related context: the domestication of local Japanese deities by Buddhism. After the *Nihon shoki*, the word reappears for the first time in *Tado jingūji garan engi narabi ni shizaichō* 多度神宮寺伽藍縁起并資財帳, a document from 788 relating to the Tado shrine-temple, founded in 763. Here, the term is used in the oracle of the kami of Tado that inspired the founding of the shrine-temple:

¹² This position is argued by, for example, MITSUHASHI Takeshi (1996) and MUREI Hitoshi (2000).

¹³ The first to point out this possibility was, perhaps surprisingly, the Shinto ideologue ONO Motonori (1954). Ono argues that Shinto must be understood as a Buddhist term that is in some way related to the *rokudō* (the six paths of transmigration). However, he remains unable to locate a source for the term in this sense in Buddhist texts.

At that time, a certain person became possessed by the deity and said: “I am the kami of Tado. I have created evil karma through many kalpas, and received the karmic retribution of *shintō*.”
(ZGR 27 *ge* p. 350)

Another early occurrence of the term in a similar context is in the biography of Saichō, the patriarch of Japanese Tendai Buddhism. Here we read that this Great Master climbed the mountain of Kaharu 賀春 and “warmly saved the *shintō*” who dwelt there. This proves, we are told, that the power of his goodness and his mercy extended everywhere, even “beyond his four obligations” as a monk (*shion no hoka* 四恩之外).¹⁴

As was pointed out already by Kōno Seizō before the war (and in more detail by Tsuda Sōkichi just after the war), the term *shintō* here appears to mean little more than “kami,” or perhaps “the state of being a kami.”¹⁵ It is applied especially to troublesome kami, kami who obstruct Buddhism or otherwise need Buddhist help. Here we are reminded of Emperor Kōtoku’s troubles with the *shintō* of Ikukunidama. It is tempting to see this instance of the term in the same light as these slightly later Buddhist examples. (The example where *shintō* is used to gloss *kannagara*, on the other hand, cannot be explained in this way.)¹⁶

Recently, the Chinese origin of the term in this sense has been pointed out by YOSHIDA Kazuhiko (1996). Yoshida focuses on *Tado jingūji garan engi narabi ni shizaichō* and points out that the vocabulary and the reasoning in this document are patterned closely after Chinese examples. This is a spectacular challenge to a long history of research into the relations between Buddhism and the kami in Japan. Scholars have always assumed that the phenomenon of domesticating the kami by Buddhist means constituted a clear departure from Chinese Buddhism, and was a core element of the Japanization of Buddhism. Yoshida, however, points to a whole list of passages in *Gaosengzhuan* 高僧伝 and *Xu gaosengzhuan* 續高僧伝 (collections of biographies of

¹⁴ *Eizan Daishi den* 叡山大師伝, ZGR 8, *ge*, p. 471. The four obligations are towards one’s parents, the sentient beings, the king, and the Three Treasures of Buddhism. Earlier, Saichō had founded a shrine temple on this mountain in Kyushu on his way to China, and he had enjoyed the protection of this kami on his travels.

¹⁵ KŌNO Seizō 1924, p. 204; TSUDA Sōkichi 1949, p. 3.

¹⁶ It must be mentioned here that already in the Edo period, many scholars looked upon this passage with suspicion and suggested that this note may have originated as a gloss that later ended up in the main text through the process of copying. Opinions are still divided over this question; but the Kitano manuscript shows that if the passage strayed into the text in this manner, this must have happened by the early Insei period (late eleventh century). See MITSUHASHI 1996, p. 102.

eminent Chinese monks), where the term *shendao* is used in exactly the sense of “non-Buddhist deities who obstruct Buddhism, or deities who are domesticated by Buddhist monks.” Phrases such as “receiving the karmic retribution of *shintō*” stem directly from these sources.

It was argued by Tsuda Sōkichi already in 1950 that at least the first of these biographies, the *Gaosengzhuan* (519), was used as reference material for the editing of the *Nihon shoki*'s account of the introduction of Buddhism to Japan.¹⁷ When we now find that the same source was used in documents explaining the Buddhist domestication of the kami, we can hardly conclude otherwise than that *shintō* was, indeed, a Buddhist term, adopted in Japan from Buddhist sources such as the *Gaosengzhuan*.

When we arrive at this conclusion, we also have to reconsider the received reading *shintō*. No glosses give us clear information about the original reading of the term; we encounter the first *furigana* only in a Chinese tale recorded in *Konjaku monogatari* 今昔物語集 (early twelfth century), where we read about an old lady who was so “deeply deluded” that she “served the *jindō* and did not believe in the Three Treasures.”¹⁸ Here, the character combination is read in the *go'on* form one would expect of a Buddhist term. Also, the context is very similar to that in the *Nihon shoki*, in that *jindō* derives its meaning from its opposition to Buddhism. In the *Nihon shoki*, most editions read 神道 as *kami no michi*, parallel to *hotoke no minori* for 佛法, the “Buddhist Dharma,” in the same passages;¹⁹ when we understand *hotoke no minori* to be the *kun*-reading of *buppō*, it is logical to conclude that *kami no michi* is the corresponding *kun*-reading of *jindō*.

In fact, the reading *shintō* appears in the sources for the first time only in the early fifteenth century. In 1419, when the Tendai monk Ryōhen 良遍 lectured on the *Nihon shoki*, he commented on the word as follows:

On the term 神道: we do not read this *jindō* but *shintō*, without voicing, to indicate its straightforward character (*sugu naru gi* 直ナル義). Straightforward means that it is just as it is (*ari no mama* 有ノ任).²⁰

¹⁷ TSUDA 1950, vol. 2, pp. 93 ff; cf. also INOUE 1961, pp. 229–30. YOSHIDA (1996, pp. 244–45) adds that Dōji, whom Inoue suggests is the author of the passages relating to the introduction of Buddhism in the *Nihon shoki*, studied at Ximing-si 西明寺 in Chang'an, the temple where Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) had compiled the *Xu gaosengzhuan*.

¹⁸ NKBT 23, *Konjaku monogatari* 2, p. 124.

¹⁹ The Kitano manuscript (late eleventh century) has a katakana *no* between 神 and 道; other early manuscripts give no indications for the reading (MITSUHASHI 1996, pp. 110–11).

²⁰ This is pointed out by MITSUHASHI 1996, p. 112. The source is *Nihon shoki kan daiichi kikigaki* 日本書紀卷第一聞書, ST, vol. Tendai Shintō jō, p. 517.

Here, the term has already become a concept, linked closely to ideas of original enlightenment, as we shall see below. The change from *jindō* to *shintō*, then, may serve as a symbol for the final transformation of the term from a word to a concept. For this reason, I shall from here on read the term as *jindō*; the same reading must be applied retrospectively to all passages quoted so far.

Jindō

When we regard *jindō* as a Buddhist term for non-Buddhist deities, this offers a natural explanation for the fact that the word was seldom used in an official context. The word carried negative, or at least Buddhist connotations. Rather than *jindō*, *jingi* 神祇 commended itself as the official term for shrine deities in Sinified prose. In contrast to *jindō*, *jingi* (Ch. *shenqi*) was widely used as a term for “the gods of heaven and earth” in the Chinese classics, from the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of Documents* to the *Analects of Confucius*, and thus had the right antecedents for use as an official term. This explains, for example, why kami matters were regulated by *jingi-ryō* (kami law) and supervised by the *jingi-kan* (the kami council), and not by *jindō-ryō* or by a *jindō-kan*.

When we take a closer look at the occurrences of *jindō* listed by Murei, we notice that the term was in the Nara and Heian periods almost exclusively used in the meaning “the authority, power, activities, or deeds of kami,” as argued already by Tsuda Sōkichi. If we were to translate the term, in most cases “the realm of the kami” suggests itself most strongly. In some cases, this realm is placed in clear contrast to Buddhism; in others, this is not so clear—or, at least, not explicit.

It is not hard to find examples where *jindō* is contrasted to, or supplements Buddhism. In 829, the kami Wakasahiko announced that he wished to “be delivered from [the realm of] *jindō* by taking refuge in the Buddhist Dharma.”²¹ In 836, Emperor Ninmyō dispatched monks to the provinces to read the *Lotus Sutra* at a range of shrines in order to “turn bad fortune into good,” explaining in an imperial pronouncement that “serving the *jindō* is no equal to the power of the One Vehicle.”²² In 859, the monk Eryō 惠亮 of Enryaku-ji petitioned for two annual ordinands who were to read specified sutras for the kami of Kamo and Kasuga. In arguing for these appointments, Eryō identified the kami as “expedient aspects” (*gon* 権) or “traces” (*suijaku* 垂迹) of the Buddha, and stated that “the *jindō* cuts through troubles solely by

²¹ *Ruijū kokushi*, entry Tenchō 6/3/16. SZKT 6, p. 260.

²² *Shoku Nihon kōki*, entry Jōwa 3/11/1. SZKT vol. 6, 1st series, p. 59.

relying on the sword of wisdom [of the Buddha who] subdues and controls [evil].”²³ Here, the “sword of wisdom” stands for the power of Buddhism, and the implication is that the services of the annual ordinals Eryō asked for would improve the powers of the kami of Kamo and Kasuga. In 1065, when Enryaku-ji monks read the *Ninnōkyō* at the Kamo shrine to remedy a drought, a little snake appeared and spit out some water, causing a shower of rain to fall. Our source, the Buddhist history *Fusō ryakki* 扶桑略記, comments: “We praise the power of the Buddhist Dharma, and the mysterious responsiveness (*myōkan* 冥感) of the *jindō*.”²⁴ Finally, *jindō* occurs as a category of poetry in *Gōrihōshū* 江吏部集, a compilation of Chinese verse by Ōe no Masahira (952–1012). Here, *jindō* is used in contradistinction to the category of “Buddhist teachings” (*shakkyō* 釈教).²⁵

In rare cases, *jindō* is contrasted to the human rather than the Buddhist realm. In 828, for example, Emperor Junna gave orders to enquire of the kami of Kitayama whether the current floods were due to “recurrent flaws in our government, or damage caused by the *jindō*.”²⁶ More often, the word was used on its own, as a rare synonym for the more common *jingi*. A telling example is the one occurrence of the term in the *Shoku Nihongi*, the voluminous sequel to the *Nihon shoki*. In 782, Emperor Kanmu was in mourning, and therefore unable to carry out shrine rituals; this caused so much trouble that the Minister of the Right addressed the emperor as follows:

The Great Deity of Ise and [the deities of] all shrines all cause calamities.... There is a good reason why “one should not deny the existence of the *jindō*.” We pray thee, lay aside the narrow filial piety of [Confucius’s two filial disciples] Zeng [Shen] and Min [Sun], and accept the [worship of] shrines as your gravest duty. Put aside your evil-boding mourning, and dedicate yourself to the *jingi*.²⁷

Here, “one should not deny the existence of the *jindō*” (神道難誣) appears to be a set expression; I encountered it in Gan Bao’s intro-

²³ *Nihon sandai jitsuroku*, entry Jōgan 1/8/28. SZKT 4, p. 37. “Subdue and control” translates *chōgyō* 調御, an epitheton of the Buddha “who brings the passions of man under control as a master does a wild elephant or horse.”

²⁴ *Fusō ryakki* 29, entry Kōhei 8/5/21. SZKT 12, pp. 301–2.

²⁵ In the case of *waka* poetry, the practice of including a separate section of *kami* poems was first adopted in the imperial compilation *Senzai wakashū* 千載和歌集 (1188), with a slightly earlier precedent in the private *Zoku shika wakashū* 続詞花和歌集 (after 1165). Both these collections use *jingi* rather than *jindō* to denote this category.

²⁶ *Ruijū kokushi* entry Tenchō 5/8/24. SZKT 5, pp. 92–93.

²⁷ *Shoku Nihongi* 37, entry Enryaku 1/7/29. SNKBT 16, *Shoku Nihongi* 5, pp. 246–47. My understanding of this passage is quite different from Kuroda’s; see KURODA 1981, p. 9.

duction to his collection of ghost stories, the *Soushen ji* 搜神記 (early fourth century), as quoted in *Jinshu* 晉書 (635), the dynastic history of the Jin dynasty.²⁸ Here, the term derives from a non-Buddhist context, and compares the Japanese kami to the ghosts that feature in Chinese tales of the supernatural. *Jindō* is here used as a stylistic flourish taken from Chinese literature; revealingly, the Minister of the Right reverts to *jingi* when he chooses his own words.

In some cases, *jindō* similarly means kami, without a clear Buddhist angle. In 816, Emperor Saga declared that “revering the *jindō*” (敬神道) is necessary to secure an abundant harvest.²⁹ In 848, Emperor Ninmyō stated that the “propitious signs displayed by the *jindō*” (神道効禎) show that the divine realm is responding to the court’s benevolent rule.³⁰ In this sense, the term also made some inroads into court diaries. Murei lists four occurrences in *Shōyūki* 小右記, the diary of Fujiwara no Sanesuke (957–1046), and two in *Shunki* 春記, by Fujiwara no Sukefusa (1007–1057). Most of these entries deal with questions about shrine rituals and ritual taboos connected with them. In one entry, Sanesuke faces the question of whether the making of offerings to Inari is to be performed as offerings to the *jindō*; if so, persons polluted by mourning cannot attend.³¹ In another, he records how *kanpaku* Michinaga ordered his son Norimichi to present offerings at the Ōharano Shrine in the name of the clan, in spite of Norimichi’s protest that he was ritually polluted through the presence of a pregnant woman in his household. Sanesuke wonders: “[Norimichi] obeyed the orders of the *kanpaku*, but what will the *jindō* say?”³²

The first author to take the term into use regularly, however, appears to have been Ōe no Masafusa (1041–1111). Murei lists no less than nine passages by Masafusa including the term. One of these passages is an *engi*, explaining the origin of the practice of “ceaseless *nenbutsu*” at Iwashimizu Hachimangū. Here, Masafusa explains the relationship between Buddhism and the *jindō* as follows:

²⁸ *Jinshu* 82, *Gan Bao zhuan* 干宝伝 reads: 足以明神道之不誣也。DE WOSKIN and CRUMP (1996, p. xxvii) translate this as “it is enough to make clear that the spirit world is not a lie.” This reference is not mentioned in the SNKBT annotation to the *Shoku Nihongi*, which strangely argues that 誣 means “to defile” (*kegasu*). I found this source through an example quoted in *Hanyu Dacidian*, entry *shendao*. Morohashi’s *Daikanwa jiten* (35542.51) also quotes the expression *fushin no togame* 誣神咎, “punishment for denying the existence of the gods,” from *Hou Hanshu*, a history of the Later Han by Fan Ye (398–446).

²⁹ *Ruijū kokushi* entry Kōnin 7/7/20. SZKT 5, p. 91.

³⁰ *Shoku Nihon kōki* entry Jōwa 15/6/5. SZKT 1–6, p. 212.

³¹ *Shōyūki* entry Chōgen 1 (1028)/12/20. DNK, vol. *Shōyūki* 8, p. 116.

³² *Shōyūki* entry Kannin 3 (1019)/2/2 (3?). DNK, vol. *Shōyūki* 5, p. 114. I wish to thank Mitsuhashi Tadashi for his help in interpreting this passage.

In truth, the moon of the presence of original enlightenment illuminates the Lotus Seat in the state of Buddhahood; but the sun, who dims its brightness and mingles with the dust, descends to the assembled shrines in the [form of] *jindō*.³³

This passage is one of the earliest explicit statements of the doctrine of *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹, which identifies kami as “traces” (*suijaku*) of Buddhist “originals” (*honji*).³⁴ It was in the eleventh century that this doctrine, which in Japan can be traced back to Eryō’s request for kami ordinands quoted above, began to be applied to individual kami. Ōe no Masafusa played a central role in this development; particular *honji* for the kami of Ise, Kumano, Kamo, Matsuo, Inari, Kasuga, Sumiyoshi, Hie, Gion, Kitano, and Aso all appear for the first time in Masafusa’s writings.³⁵ All but one of these *honji* are mentioned in ritual texts, often intentions (*keibyaku* 啓白, *ganmon* 願文) read when offering scriptures, Buddhist images, or other Buddhist objects to kami. The other eight occurrences of the term *jindō* quoted by Murei are all from ritual documents of this kind.

With Ōe no Masafusa, the term *jindō* became the focus of a new doctrine about the relationship between Buddhism and local deities in Japan: *honji suijaku*. With the spread of *honji suijaku* practice, *jindō* came to be understood as a designation for the local “traces” of distant buddhas, and the word was primarily used in Buddhist writings on Buddhist rituals focusing on these traces. One typical example can be cited from *Nakatomi harae kunge* 中臣祓訓解, a twelfth-century text that sets out to clarify the esoteric Buddhist meaning of the Nakatomi purification formula, which by this time had been incorporated in various combinatory rituals. This text systematically looks for correspondences between kami myths, practices, and rituals on the one hand, and esoteric Buddhist doctrine on the other. At the basis of the text’s combinatory framework lies the identification of Amaterasu with Dainichi, the definition of Japan as the “Original Land of Dainichi,” and an interpretation of the ritual of purification as “a secret technique to extinguish transgressions, to produce good, and to achieve immediate enlightenment.” It is in this context that the term *jindō* appears in the text:

Although within and without [the Buddhist teachings] the words are different, [kami and buddhas] are identical as means of salvation. Kami are the spirits of the various buddhas; the bud-

³³ *Iwashimizu fudan nenbutsu engi* 石清水不斷念仏縁起, in *Honchō bunshū* 本朝文集 53, Enkyō 2 (1070)/10. SZKT 30, p. 221.

³⁴ On *honji suijaku*, see TEEUWEN and RAMBELLI forthcoming.

³⁵ See YOSHIHARA Hiroto 1994.

dhas constitute the essence of the various kami. Therefore it is written in a sutra: “The buddhas dwell in non-duality, and they always manifest their traces in the *jindō*.”

(TEEUWEN and VAN DER VEERE 1998, p. 21)

Here, the *jindō* is presented not only as *a* form, but as *the only* form in which communication with the buddhas is possible in Japan. Because they are “non-dual,” the buddhas do not appear in our dualistic world, and the kami are our only channel to the salvation embodied by the buddhas. Moreover, it is worth noting that the term is here used without hesitation in a quotation from a (no doubt imaginary) sutra. In late medieval and early modern times, after the term had developed into a concept, this choice of terminology immediately branded this quotation, and indeed the whole text, as a fake; but in the twelfth century, *jindō* was still naturally understood as a Buddhist term.

Looking back on the development of the term *jindō* in the Nara and Heian periods, I hope to have made a convincing argument for the fact that the term served mainly as a Buddhist alternative to the Confucian/official *jingi*. In the earliest sources, the term often carried a negative connotation: it labeled local deities as non-Buddhist, and therefore as troublesome and in need of Buddhist conversion. Later, when *honji suijaku* became established as a combinatory system, *jindō* came to be used as a technical term for kami in their capacity of *suijaku*: the concrete, local traces of abstract, distant buddhas.

Conceptualization

In the senses described above, *jindō* can hardly be described as a concept in the sense of Koselleck. *Jindō* referred to concrete beings, “the kami,” and changed meaning in parallel with changes in kami practice. Such changes were not propelled by speculations on *jindō* as a concept; rather, the term gradually acquired a customary set of connotations, a characteristic context that defined the associations that the word would give rise to among educated readers: “the kami as Buddhist traces.” It did not yet possess the expansive nature of a concept, because it did not propel historical change.

Change, of course, was dramatic in the history of shrines and kami during the latter half of the Heian period. This was the time when the court system of offerings to twenty-two selected shrine-temple complexes came into being, a system that has rightly been described as the foundation without which “Shinto—as described by Kuroda Toshio—would never have been born during the Kamakura period” (GRAPARD

1988, p. 249). Also, practice at shrines was utterly transformed in the course of the tenth through twelfth centuries. At the beginning of this period, shrines were almost exclusively sites where clan and court representatives made periodical offerings on a few set days a year. From the late tenth century onwards, however, shrine visits for personal reasons began to become popular in court circles, including the imperial house. This process has been painstakingly described by MITSUHASHI Tadashi (2000, ch. 1), who discerns three stages in the transformation of shrine practice: from participation in clan *matsuri*, first to the sending of offerings (both public and private) to shrines on *matsuri* days, and then to shrine visits and pilgrimages, both on *matsuri* days and, later, also on other days.

Parallel to this, Mitsuhashi traces the transition from a system of “*matsuri* priests,” or priests who were appointed shortly before the annual shrine festival and functioned as such only for the duration of the festival, to “shrine priests,” who settled near a shrine and served as its permanent priests (MITSUHASHI 1993). The notion of professional shrine priests became feasible first when private shrine visits, pilgrimages, and private donations to shrines had become sufficiently frequent. Even at Kasuga, which was the main clan shrine of the Fujiwara and as such was treated relatively generously by the court, the first permanent shrine priest appears in the sources only in 992, when the “*matsuri* priest” Ōnakatomi no Tamemoto 大中臣為元 was reappointed as “permanent resident priest”—which he remained until his death in ca. 1047.³⁶ Even at Ise, which had been exceptional in the sense that there had been a permanent priest (*negi*) at each of the two main shrines since an unknown date, the number of permanent priests began to rise first in 950, to reach twelve (six at each shrine) by 1002, and sixteen by 1221.

Perhaps the most important factor sustaining the emergence of a permanent priesthood was the donation of lands to shrines. Control over tax-free lands (*shōen* 莊園, *mikuriya* 御厨, *misono* 御園) provided a lasting economic base for the establishment of a shrine priesthood. At the same time, small branch shrines were erected on shrine estates, bringing cults of clan deities to areas far away from the old clan lands. These so-called *shōen* shrines were to play a central role in the social organization of village communities (*sō* 惣) from the late Kamakura period onwards; it was around these shrines that the popular shrine cults that we know from late medieval and early modern times first emerged (HAGIWARA 1975).

³⁶ MITSUHASHI 1993, p. 41. The source is *Nakatomi shashi honin* 中臣社司補任.

It was also in this period that we encounter the first attempts at conceptualizing *jindō*. A first prerequisite for such a conceptualization to take place is that an established group of people adopts a term as a self-designation, and then proceeds to derive its self-identity from it. A striking first example of the use of *jindō* in this sense can be found in *Mitsunokashiwa denki* 三角柏伝記, a brief *engi*-type text compiled at an Ise estate that supplied the shrines with “sacred oak” (*mitsu no kashiwa*) timber for ritual use, and that accommodated a shrine-temple complex where Buddhist services (*hōraku* 法樂) were performed for the Ise deities. The text is usually dated to 1170 or earlier, but parts of it must have been rephrased or added at a later date. In *Mitsunokashiwa denki* we encounter the following passage:

Court lineages (*kokka*) give priority to rewards and punishments, Buddhist lineages (*bukke*) to compassion, kami lineages (*jindō*) to purity, and lay lineages (*zaïke*) to honesty.³⁷

Here, *jindō* occurs in parallel with different kinds of lineages (*ka/ke* 家), and thus refers to a well-defined, self-conscious body of kami priests who have their own function in society, and therefore their own priorities. Here, this function places them between Buddhist and lay lineages, quite in accordance with the understanding of the role of the kami in the *honji suijaku* system.

In this same text, however, we also encounter for the first time a radically different perception of the kami, which turns *honji suijaku* order on its head:

Kami 神 is the first transformation of the one *qi*, producing life from nothingness. Buddha 仏 is enlightenment. Monk 僧 is purity. Sage 聖 is the unconditioned. Common 凡 is the conditioned. Ultimately, the gods of heaven and earth and all the buddhas are united in the Tathāgata of Original Enlightenment, in which the trichilocosm is one.

(KOKUBUNGAU KENKYŪ SHIRYŌKAN pp. 364–65)

Here, kami has come to mean something more fundamental than buddha. Suddenly, the term is related to the cosmogony, and defined as the ground for all existence. Also, kami here does not refer to a concrete being, but rather to an abstract principle that existed in pure form at the time of the cosmogony, and that produces life. This new

³⁷ KOKUBUNGAU KENKYŪ SHIRYŌKAN p. 365. In what at first sight appears to be a close parallel, KURODA (1981, p. 17) claims that in *Ruiju jingi hongen* (by Watarai Ieyuki, q.v.), Shinto “is juxtaposed to *bukke* (Buddhist schools)”;

but the term juxtaposed to *bukke* in this text is *shake* 社家 “shrine lineages,” not *shintō*. Ieyuki does, however, use *jindō* in a similar way when he describes his own tradition as *jindō monbū* 神道門風, a “*jindō* lineage”; see below.

definition of kami constituted a radically new, and extremely fertile development in kami theology. The novelty of this new kami concept cannot be overemphasized. We find nothing in earlier sources to foreshadow the sudden appearance of this vision of kami as a cosmological force—and especially not of kami as an abstract concept, rather than a word referring to a named, localized deity.³⁸ Koselleck has pointed out that many concepts take the form of a “collective singular”: *Geschichte*, for example, begins to function as a concept when “histories” (in the sense of “stories”) are raised to become History—*hochstiliert*, is Koselleck’s untranslatable term (KOSELLECK 1979, pp. 270–77). In the passage quoted here, a similar phenomenon can be observed: plural kami are *hochstiliert* to become a collective singular “Kami.” We will encounter more examples of this collective singular below.

Relating to the definition of kami, *Mitsunokashiwa denki* goes on to clarify that there are three categories of kami, corresponding to the three kinds of enlightenment set out in such Mahayana works as the *Daijō kishin ron* 大乘起信論 and *Shaku makaen ron* 釈摩訶衍論:

1. The kami of original enlightenment, Amaterasu who dwells at Ise. This kami is the “eternal, unchanging, wondrous body of original, pure presence” (*rishō* 理性), or “the primordial kami of original enlightenment and original beginning” (*hongaku honsho no ganjin* 本覺本初之元神).
2. Kami of no enlightenment, such as the kami of Izumo. These kami “lose their mind-kami” even while seeing the Three Treasures and hearing the Sanskrit sounds of the buddhas, and dwell forever in the four evil realms.
3. Kami of acquired enlightenment, such as the kami of Iwashimizu and Hirose. These awaken from their delusions after many rebirths thanks to the teachings of the buddhas, and have thus returned to their original enlightenment, but should be distinguished from the kami of the first category.

This categorization would hereafter become a recurrent theme in texts about kami, and was to be repeated again and again in a great variety of contexts right up to the early modern period. It was, of course, on the first of these categories that theological speculation concentrated. In *Mitsunokashiwa denki* this category was limited to Ise; but in the course of the Kamakura period we encounter similar the-

³⁸ In MUREI’s list (2000, p. 55 no. 05), one occurrence of the term stands out as a possible exception: a passage from *Denjutsu isshin kaimon* 伝述一心戒文 (ca. 834), where *jindō* appears to be used as a parallel to *kengen* 乾元, “the Yang Origin; the Way of Heaven.” However, 神道 here turns out to be a mistake for *kondō* 坤道, “the Yin Dao; the Way of the Earth.” See T 74, p. 639.

ologies also at other places, notably the shrine-temple complexes of Hiei/Hie and Miwa. The category of “kami of original enlightenment” was based on the identification of Amaterasu with Dainichi, and other shrines latched on to this by identifying their kami with Amaterasu. Speculation along these lines, then, developed in the form of speculation on Ise and its deity Amaterasu.

Original Enlightenment and Primeval Chaos

This speculation took two routes. One was through Buddhist channels, by identifying Amaterasu with Dainichi or the Dharma-body, the eternal, unchanging foundation of all existence. Again, we may quote a typical example from *Mitsunokashiwa denki*, occurring just before the passages quoted above:

Kami is the principle of heaven-like changelessness (*tennen fudō no ri* 天然不動之理), identical to the body of Dharma nature. Therefore the kami of emptiness is True Reality (*jissō* 実相), and is called the August Deity of the Great Origin. When it appears, it is called the Shining Imperial Deva. It becomes the sun and the moon, is suspended eternally and never falls. It becomes kami and it becomes emperor, it is eternal and never changes. For [the liberation] of the sentient beings from karma, it has set up a Precious Foundation on the sacred rock (*iwasaka* 磐境) of Mount Sumeru, and illuminates the Three Worlds, bringing benefits to the myriad things. Therefore it is called “the August One Who Illuminates All” [an honorary title of Dainichi] or Ōhirume [another name for Amaterasu]. Since it descended to the Middle Land of Abundant Reed Plains (Japan), we call it by the name of, and describe its forms as “the Two Imperial Heaven-Shining Great Kami.” (KOKUBUNGAU KENKYŪ SHIRYŌKAN p. 364)

This passage uses the association between Dainichi and Amaterasu to construe a non-personal, abstract concept of kami, identical to such terms for the Absolute as Dharma nature, True Reality, or the Great Origin. This “kamified” Absolute is then pulled down to a specific location, in this instance Ise, where it appears in the form of a “Precious Foundation” built on the indestructible bedrock of Mount Sumeru—a description of Ise inspired by ancient *norito*, where the shrines are said to be “set upon the bedrock beneath the plain of Yamada in Watarai.”³⁹ In this way, the Ise shrines are transformed into a site of

³⁹ *Engishiki* (927) Book 8; F.G. BOCK 1972, vol. II, p. 95.

cosmic dimensions, linked directly both to the undifferentiated Absolute, and to the creation of the differentiated world, of which it forms the sacred center. Ise is the place where the Absolute touches our world, and where it dispenses benefits directly to the sentient beings. It does this in the form of kami—a term that no longer refers only to the concrete “traces” of transcendent buddhas, but that has acquired a supreme transcendent quality of its own.

The interpretation of kami as something original, primeval, and fundamental turned it into a natural focus for original enlightenment thought and practice. As I have discussed in more detail elsewhere (TEEUWEN 2000), this view of kami gave rise to the notion that the buddhas represent the (inferior) acquired enlightenment of exoteric Buddhism, while the kami embody the (superior) original enlightenment of esoteric Buddhism.⁴⁰ Towards the end of the Kamakura period, we encounter these ideas not only in doctrinal contexts, but also in a rapidly expanding range of esoteric initiations and rituals focusing on kami.

A second, radically different route towards a conceptualization of kami in terms of the cosmogony was through Yin-Yang theory. In *Mitsunokashiwa denki*, we encounter the following attempt in this direction:

When Heaven and Earth first separated, there was pure and turbid in the *qi* of the [primordial] waters. These transformed and became Yin and Yang. Yin and Yang changed into Heaven, Earth, and Man. Therefore, kami is the one *qi* of the transformation of the Way, the Being that exists within the Non-being. When the Buddha calls the Kami of emptiness True Reality, he means to say that it is indestructible.

(KOKUBUNGAU KENKYŪ SHIRYŌKAN, p. 366)

The first sentence in this passage refers to Chinese theories about the origin of the universe. Of special importance in relation to our topic was the idea that the cosmogony can be described as a process of gradual differentiation, from nothingness (the Way, defined both as the nothingness in which the universe exists, and as an absolute entity that pervades all existence), to (1) the “one *qi*”—the matter or energy that gives rise to all physical existence, to (2) turbid, heavy Yin and pure, light Yang, to (3) Heaven, Earth, and Man, and finally to the myriad things that constitute our world.⁴¹ In this scheme, kami (or, rather, the collective singular Kami) was conceptualized as straddling both the Way and the one *qi*; the exact position of kami in this scheme

⁴⁰ See also Jacqueline STONE 1999, especially pp. 40–43.

⁴¹ Based on a quotation from *Laozi shuyi* in *Ruiju jingji hongben*, ST vol. Ise Shintō jō, p. 402.

was to become a standard topic for doctrinal discussions later.

A similar passage, but in terms of *jindō* rather than kami, can be found in *Zō Ise nisho daijingu hōki hongī* 造伊勢二所大神宮宝基本記, the “Original Record of the Building of the Precious Foundation that is the Two Great Shrines of Ise.” This text is usually dated to the early thirteenth century, and identified as the earliest text of Watarai (Ise) Shinto. It reads:

Jindō appears from the borders of primeval chaos, and returns to the beginning of primeval chaos. The Three Treasures destroy the illusion of Being and Non-being, and recover True Reality. The kami punish evil, and lead us to the source of correctness. The buddhas set up teachings and instructions, and eliminate our desires.⁴²

Here, *jindō* refers to the state of “primeval chaos” (*konton* 混沌), and is therefore given precedence over Buddhism. “Primeval chaos” denotes the state of the cosmos before Yin and Yang, or Heaven and Earth separated; at the same time, it is an ideal state of absolute union, to which man must aspire to return. Chaos occurs in this meaning elsewhere in the text, where Amaterasu pronounces in an oracle that “a man of kami preserves the original state of chaos and covers his breath concerning the Buddhist Dharma.”⁴³

In this passage, *jindō* seems to mean something different from kami. *Jindō* appears as a parallel to Buddhism, focusing on primeval chaos as Buddhism focuses on True Reality. Kami, on the other hand, corresponds not to Buddhism as a system but rather to concrete buddhas. The kami are here given precedence over the buddhas, but otherwise feature in their typical *honji suijaku* role: acting locally to punish those who oppose the instructions of the distant buddhas. In this early passage, then, the new *jindō* concept is only making its first tentative inroads into a traditional *honji suijaku* understanding of the kami.

Jindō in this new sense was developed further in the course of the Kamakura period. This development took the form of redefining the Buddhist term *jindō* along Daoist lines. Insight into the Chinese sources that were used to accomplish this can be gained from two texts: *Taigen shin'ichi hisho* 大元神一秘書, an undated compendium of Daoist sources that may have been acquired in the capital by the Ise priest Watarai Yukitada,⁴⁴ and *Ruiju jingi hongēn* 類聚神祇本源, a compi-

⁴² ST, vol. Ise Shinto jō, p. 62.

⁴³ ST, vol. Ise Shinto jō, p. 52. For an analysis of this oracle, and also its Daoist sources, see Mark TEEUWEN 1996, pp. 99 ff.

⁴⁴ MUREI 2000, p. 364. Yukitada (1236–1305) was in the capital for a short period during the 1280s.

lation of sources relating to “the origin of the *jingi*,” compiled by Watarai Ieyuki and offered to the emperor in 1320. These texts reveal that the main sources from which Ise priests drew their Daoist vocabulary were the classical *Heshang gong* 河上公 commentary on Laozi, a later commentary called *Laozi shuyi* 老子述義 by a certain Jia Dayin 賈大隱 (656–706), and a Chinese anthology entitled *Xinduan fenmen zuantu bowenlu* 新端分門纂圖博聞錄, which contains selected passages from various *Yijing* commentaries, *Huainanzi*, *Zhuangzi*, *Taiji tushuo*, and so forth.

While the original source of *jindō* in Japan was Buddhist, most likely the *Gaosengzhuan*, now, a new word *jindō* was discovered—a homonym, written with the same characters, but meaning something completely different. The main source of this new word was the following passage from the *Yijing*:

When we contemplate the *shendao* of heaven, we see how the four seasons proceed without error. The sages have laid down their teaching in accordance with this *shendao*, and all under heaven yield submission to them.⁴⁵

In *Ruiju jingi hongen*, Watarai Ieyuki quotes lengthy discussions on the meaning of the term *shendao* in this *Yijing* passage.⁴⁶ Two points stand out when we compare this *shendao* with the *jindō* that we encountered above. First of all, the stress has shifted from *shen* to *dao*. In established Japanese usage, *jindō* meant “the realm of the kami,” and its meaning was determined by the first element of the compound; but in the *Yijing* commentaries, *shen* is secondary to *dao*, the Way. *Dao* is the referent, and *shen* serves to describe it. Drawing on another passage in the *Yijing*, *shen* is explained as “that which is neither Yin nor Yang.” *Shen* is what causes Yin and Yang to go through endless transformations, and in this way, we read, *shen* creates life.⁴⁷ *Dao*, on the other hand, is defined as Non-being, and can only be known through studying *shen* as it is active in the process of endless transformation. Knowing *dao* leads one to goodness, humanity, and wisdom, and forms the basis for the conduct of men of nobility. Together with the shift from *shen* to *dao*, the word *shen* has also changed meaning. Now, it denotes not “deities” but “the divine,” as an abstract concept.

From the late Kamakura period onwards, this new concept of *jindō* was used actively to redefine kami worship. It was at this time that the

⁴⁵ Legge, tr. *The Sacred Books of the East* 16, p. 230 (Appendix I, XX.3, on the hexagram *guan* 觀 “contemplation”); slightly changed. Legge translates *shendao* as “the spirit-like way.”

⁴⁶ ST, vol. Ise Shintō jō, pp. 403–5.

⁴⁷ Cf. a passage in *Ruiju jingi hongen* (p. 405) quoted from *Laozi shuyi* in ST, vol. Ise Shintō jō: “The divine is the origin of life; form is the medium for [the production of] life.”

term *jindō* began to be used in titles. Ieyuki, for example, closes his *Ruiju jingi hongen* with a chapter by his own hand (all others consist of assorted quotations), entitled *Jindō gengi hen* 神道玄義篇, “On the hidden meaning of *jindō*.” This chapter begins as follows:

Question: Do the *jingi* classics attach supreme importance to the separation of heaven and earth? Is there not something higher than that?

Answer: ... Although most regard [the chapters dealing with] the separation of heaven and earth as the most important among the *jingi* scriptures, the *jindō* lineage (*monpū* 門風) does not regard this as the ultimate. What we strive for is to adopt *kizen* 機前 as our Dharma. What we practice is giving priority to purity.⁴⁸

Reading on, we learn that *kizen* refers to the state that preceded the separation of heaven and earth, namely, primeval chaos.⁴⁹ Here, then, *jindō* refers to a “lineage” that defines its ultimate aim as union with primeval chaos, attained through purity.

It is important to stress that this new concept of *jindō* by no means ruled supreme from the Kamakura period onwards. In most medieval texts, the word continued to be used in the older meaning of “kami as traces of buddhas and bodhisattvas.” To mention just one famous example, in Agui’s *Shintōshū* 神道集 (or *Jindōshū*?), a collection of shrine legends from the mid-fourteenth century, we read under the title “On the origin of *jindō*”: “When we look for the originals (*honji*) of *shinmei* and *jindō* we find that they are the various bodhisattvas; traces of the various bodhisattvas is what the *shinmei* and *jindō* are.”⁵⁰

Even so, the new definition of *jindō* did have a clear impact in Buddhist contexts too. An example may be quoted from a medieval Tendai text translated by Jacqueline STONE (1999, pp. 165–66):

There are four reasons why kami correspond to original enlightenment. First, when one visits a shrine, one offers [cold] water, and when one visits a buddha, one offers hot water. In other words, the kami correspond to Yin and have water as their essence. Water here corresponds to original enlightenment. The buddhas correspond to Yang and have

⁴⁸ ST, vol. Ise Shintō jō, p. 555. Cf. also Ieyuki’s *Jindō kan’yō* 神道簡要 (1317), which lists passages on *jingi* matters under the header “*jindō*” (although, strikingly, the term occurs not once in the rest of the text).

⁴⁹ For a lucid analysis of Ieyuki’s ideas around *kizen*, see ASOYA 1985, ch. 2.

⁵⁰ *Shinmei* (or *jinmyō*) 神明 is widely used to denote both kami and “Kami,” especially in Buddhist texts and in the Tendai school. The question of how *shinmei* relates to *jindō* is one of the problems that need further consideration. See ST, vol. *Shintōshū*, p. 5.

fire as their essence. Hot water is a transformation of water; thus it corresponds to acquired enlightenment. Once the originally undifferentiated Yin and Yang have separated, Yin here becomes the seminal essence and manifests the function of Yang; thus kami are the origin and buddhas, the manifest traces...⁵¹

In this passage, the kami as original enlightenment and the kami as primeval chaos have merged into a seamless whole. Moreover, this new understanding of kami is here not derived from obscure Chinese sources or abstruse doctrinal arguments, but emerges naturally from such basic practices as the offering of water to kami, and tea to buddhas.

This example illustrates that the two “routes” towards identifying the kami with the cosmogony should be understood as two sides of the same coin. When Watarai Ieyuki collected passages around the theme of *jindō*, Yin-Yang, and the cosmogony, he placed them side by side with quotations from texts from what he labeled as “Buddhist lineages,” that stress the theme of original enlightenment. Rather than two “routes” it would perhaps be better to speak of two idioms, which were to a certain degree kept separate, but were ultimately understood to point to the same truths. Both idioms stressed that the kami (or a collective singular Kami) represented some primeval, undiluted essence, that could be unlocked through the practice of purity.

It was in this sense, as we have seen above, that the “straightforward” reading *shintō* without the “turbid” *nigori* (voicing), was first created. At this point, then, the transformation of the word *jindō* finally reached the stage at which we can safely speak of a “concept” called Shinto.

Concluding Remarks

Above, I have traced the emergence of the concept of Shinto from an earlier word *jindō*. I contend that *jindō* was originally introduced to Japan as a Buddhist term, with reference to the kami as non-Buddhist, local deities. In the course of the eleventh century, the word acquired a more or less fixed context within the framework of *honji suijaku*, as a designation for kami as Buddhist traces; with this, the term became part of a Buddhist discourse, and its usage was consolidated. From the late twelfth century onwards, however, the word was given a radically new meaning, drawing on what one might argue is a different Chinese

⁵¹ From *Mongu ryaku taikō shikenmon* 文句略大綱私見聞 by Sonshun 尊舜 (1451-1514), DNBZ 18, pp. 189-90.

term *shendao*, a homonym of the Buddhist term that had found its way into Japanese usage some centuries earlier. The new term, with roots in the *Yijing*, was related to the cosmogony, and to Daoist ideas and practices around primeval chaos. In Japan, these ideas converged with original enlightenment thought, and this laid the basis for the development of Shinto as a concept.

I call this new Shinto a “concept” for two reasons. First, Shinto is not a “word” in Koselleck’s sense: it cannot be made unambiguous by contracting it to something outside the concept itself. Secondly, it acted both as a factor and an indicator of historical change. The concept of Shinto was historically effective in creating a new discourse, while the earlier word *jindō* was not. Through its very existence the concept of Shinto changed kami worship, as speculations around this concept gave rise to new forms of practice and new doctrines. Moreover, the emergence of this concept serves as an indication of social, political, and economic changes in the field of kami worship.

On a factual level, I hope to have made a convincing case for two contentions: first, that the character combination 神道 was first read *shintō* after the term had been conceptualized—probably at some point in the fourteenth century, by 1419 at the latest. Secondly, that the term was related to the *Yijing* only in the twelfth century, and not at the stage of the *Nihon shoki*, as has been argued by, for example, Fukunaga Mitsuji and Kuroda Toshio. An additional indication in this direction is that in surviving records of lectures on the *Nihon shoki* from the Heian period, no special attention is given to the term *jindō* nor is it related in any way to the cosmogony. This is in fact not even the case in Urabe Kanekata’s *Shaku Nihongi* 釈日本紀 (ca. 1275), a strikingly “orthodox” commentary on the *Nihon shoki* that gives us an overview of traditional *Nihon shoki* philology at the court. Here we find no trace of the esoteric/Daoist speculation that is so prominent in almost all other contemporary writings on the kami; as such, this work appears completely out of touch with contemporary developments, and thus underlines the novelty of the emerging concept of Shinto.

Relating to the nature of Shinto, I am myself surprised to come to the conclusion that imperial rule was not one of its central topics. Of course, there are echoes of the ancient Ritsuryō system of nationwide court offerings to the kami, and also of the mythological theme of clan power as grounded in kami power. However, the discourse of Shinto would seem to move away from, rather than expand on these themes. It was the realm of *jingi* rather than Shinto that was imperial, and as the *jingi* were “Shintoized,” they shed much of their clan-based particularity to become universal emblems of something other than clan power.

The same tendency is pointed out by Yamamoto Hiroko in her analysis of medieval transformations of classical kami myth. She shows that in a range of Kamakura-period writings on the kami, even the tale of the descent of Ninigi, the imperial grandson and first divine ruler of Japan, ceased to function as a divine precedent for imperial rule; instead, Ninigi became the “king of the one-pronged vajra,” a cosmic figure who embodies the presence of the Dharma realm in Japan (YAMAMOTO 1998, ch. 3). This new Ninigi was not invoked to construe a new centralized emperorship, but had his home in esoteric initiations performed by and for people who had no connection whatsoever with the imperial court. Shinto, too, emerged not as a political or ideological reassertion of kami-legitimated imperial rule, but rather as a privatized offshoot of the *jingi* system of ancient times. Through *shintō kanjō*, initiates from the ranks of mountain ascetics and shrine monks acquired such imperial attributes as the “mudra of rule over the four seas” (*shikai ryōshō in* 四海領掌印, performed by emperors during their enthronement unction), and even the three regalia.⁵² This Shinto, then, signalled a dispersal of imperial symbolism rather than an attempt at concentrating kami power in a narrow hierarchy headed by the “real” emperor.

In this respect, Shinto changed dramatically once more in the course of the late medieval and early modern periods. The reinvention of Shinto by Yoshida Kanetomo in the fifteenth century was a first step towards the reassertion of imperial control over Shinto—and, through Shinto, over shrines. The medieval dispersal of imperial symbolism, and the spread of shrine cults to all layers of the population, laid the foundations for a further stage in the development of Shinto as a concept. At this stage, Shinto for the first time linked the imperial cult of clan kami to popular shrine practice, a link that was given concrete form by the expansion of court control (through the Yoshida and Shirakawa lineages) over local village shrines.⁵³ Here too, the kami emerge as something primeval, pure, and pre-Buddhist, and Shinto takes the form of a teaching of attaining purity through a return to this primordial entity—but this time in a Confucian or nativist garb rather than in a Buddhist or Daoist one. These later developments, though, will need to be examined in much more detail elsewhere.

I feel compelled to close this essay by pointing out some of its many limitations. First of all, a danger inherent in the methodology of conceptual history is that the reader is left with the impression that the

⁵² Cf. Fabio RAMBELLI's essay in this volume. See ABE 2000 for examples.

⁵³ Cf. Hiromi MAEDA's essay in this volume.

changes described here were somehow driven by the semantic structure of the word *jindō* or *shintō* itself. This is of course not the case. When *jindō* was given a new meaning and a new reading, this was a conscious act by someone whose background, context, intentions, discursive position, and audience we need to investigate. When others adopted the new *shintō* and developed it further as a concept, they too had their own reasons. These are problems that cannot be solved through a semantic analysis of the word as attempted here.

Finally, I want to stress that while my analysis supports Kuroda's view that Shinto did not exist in classical and early medieval Japan, this does not, of course, in any way deny the existence of the classical *jingi* system as a central element of Japanese imperial and clan rule, or the importance of kami worship in various social contexts. Rather, by approaching Shinto from the viewpoint of conceptual history, a vital distinction is maintained between the concept of Shinto, the practice of kami worship, and the institutionalized *jingi* system. I believe that it is absolutely essential to make this distinction if we are to avoid serious misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Kami worship occurred both within the *jingi* system and outside it, both at shrines and temples, both in a Shinto context and otherwise. Together, kami worship, the *jingi* system, and Shinto form a triangle consisting of three closely related but at the same time very different sides, each with its own historical development. If we fail to distinguish between them, we lose sight of the dynamics that formed all three of them. Writing Shinto out of ancient and early medieval Japanese history, then, is not the same as denying the importance of either kami worship or the *jingi* system during these periods. Rather, I argue that by analyzing the transformation of *jindō* into Shinto, which formed one of the sides of this triangle, new light can be shed on the other two.

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- DNK *Dai Nihon kokiroku* 大日本古記録, ed. Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo 東京大学史料編纂所. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1952–.
- NKBT *Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 日本古典文学大系. 100 vols. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1958–68.
- SNKBT *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 新日本古典文学大系. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1989–.
- ST *Shintō taikai* 神道体系. Tokyo: Shintō Taikai Hensankai, 1985.

- SZKT *Shintei zōho kokushi taikei* 新訂増補国史大系. Kuroita Katsumi 黒板勝美, ed. 60 vols. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1929-67.
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