



The Shinto Cult : A Christian Study of the Ancient Religion of Japan (English Edition)

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Présentation de l'éditeur

We are told that Japan is a country of diversified beauty. Compassed round about with the vast ocean, yet not far from the Asiatic mainland; supplied also with a wonderful inland sea, and with lakes and rivers and fountains of waters; a land of mountains, and valleys, and broad meadows, and all manner of trees and shrubs and fruits and flowers, and charming landscapes, and all varieties of climate; it is no wonder that the people and their poets have called this group of islands "the sun's nest," "the country of the sun-goddess," "the region between heaven and earth," "islands of the congealed drop," "the grand land of the eight isles," "central land of reed-plains," "land of the ears of fresh rice," "land of a thousand autumns,"[Pg 10] and other similar names indicative of manifold excellence.

This island-empire of the Orient is the home of the religious cult called "Shinto," a religion which has never traveled nor sought to propagate itself beyond the dominions of Japan. It has never put itself in a hostile attitude toward any other form of religion, either at home or abroad, except when a foreign cult has entered its ancient home and sought to meddle with affairs of State or to interfere with loyalty to the Emperor.

Is Shinto a Religion?

At a meeting of the Society of Science, held at Tokyo in 1890, the president of the Imperial University expressed the opinion that Shinto should not be regarded as a religion. He believed it to be an essential element in the existing national thought and feeling of Japan, but destitute of the essential qualities of a strictly religious cult. Others have expressed a similar opinion; but we are disposed to think that this judgment arises from an incorrect concept of religion, and a consequent defective definition of the same. A similar denial has been made of the religious character of other cults and systems. Taoism, Confucianism, and even Buddhism have been said to lack the elements essential to a real religion. But if these systems do not constitute a religion for the peoples who accept them, they are in every case their substitute for religion. Any religion or any form of religion may so involve its thought and its practices with philosophical speculation, or with social customs, or with the political management of the State, as to have the appearance of a philosophical or a political system, rather than a form of religion. But, however it may, in such ways, ignore the religious ideas and practices of other systems, if there be no other religious cult among the people, the philosophy, the ethical policy and the customs, which make up this important element of the civilization and the national life, are as truly tantamount to a religious cult as any form of faith and practice which all men agree to call religion.

Origin and Relative Age of the People.

The Shinto Cult, Meaning of the Term Shinto, Japanese Cosmogony and Mythology, Essence of the Shinto Cult, Elements of Animism, Esoteric Shinto, The Great Purification Présentation de l'éditeur

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