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Generic Denotations Accompanying Names of Gods and Men in the *Kojiki**

I

The Secondary Approximators

About eleven years ago I finished a Polish translation of the Archaic Japanese work called *Kojiki* (traditionally translated as "Records of Ancient Matters"). It is the first Polish rendering of this epic, so the translator met during his work many difficulties which are inevitable when one tries to convey the contents of an ancient literary monument into a modern form. But besides, the translator, introducing himself as a researcher of the Japanese culture, could not stop feeling that he should exert all his strength to attain not only one more European translation of the work, but also a translation on a higher level of the up-to-date knowledge of the old Japanese language and of the old Japanese culture. This ambition led him to the conviction that the names of individual gods and men in the *Kojiki* should be translated from the Japanese in accordance with their structural meaning, because they bring in that way some informational import influencing the contents of the story and changing to some degree our views, concerning the life and abilities of the old Japanese people.

But the names of gods and men in the *Kojiki* are really the most difficult consti-

* In order to avoid many complications which would ensue from applying the most popular method of writing Japanese in Roman characters (the so-called Hepburnian system) to render the Archaic Japanese, let us use for that purpose a more appropriate variant of transliteration, leaving the Hepburnian system to render new Japanese words and phrases only. The following is a short description of the Archaic Japanese transliteration:

- a) There is only one pattern of the syllable, namely CV.
- b) The full list of C (consonants) is: ', *b*, *d*, *f*, *g*, *k*, *m*, *n*, *r*, *s*, *t*, *w*, *y*, *z*.
- c) The list of V (vowels) is: *a*, *e*, *ë*, *i*, *ï*, *o*, *ö*, *u*. (these are examples of CV: 'a, di, de, bë, fi, fu, gi, ko, nö, ma, 'e, ra, si, se, kë, wi, yi, yö, zi, zo, ti, tu, wu, we, etc.).

From the Hepburnian system *ch*, *h*, *j*, *p*, *sh*, *ts*, and long vowels are not used.

The transliteration presented above has already been accepted by "Bochumer Jahrbuch zur Ostasienforschung" 1981 in my article: *Das altjapanische Jenseitsbild*.

tudents, if one tries to understand them on a deeper level than it became customary since Chamberlain¹ and Florenz², two first pioneers in translating the *Kojiki*. They have given some notions, how to interpret the names, especially of gods, but, mostly, they did not tie up their interpretations with the context where the respective gods' names were placed, so that they gave rise to many gaps between the requirements of the text and the products of their own intuition. The names in the *Kojiki* are hard to be analysed because they are very early products of primitive composition of words, and moreover, because we may suspect in them some effects of the magical belief in *kōtōdama*³, according to which "the name and the soul were one and the same thing. If the man was so anxious to know the name of the girl he was in love with, that was only because he had, otherwise, no means of uniting his soul with hers. And if, on the other hand, the girl spared no pains to conceal her name, that was because the man who took possession of her name took thereby possession of her real self. Now we might that expect if this was true even of the names of simple mortals, still more must it have been true of the sacred names of gods or other supernatural beings. And in fact, everywhere in the ancient world we find divine names regarded as mysterious things invested with terrible powers, which may inflict severe punishments for being treated negligently"⁴.

In particular it may be said that e.g. the original names of deceased persons should not be mentioned by living ones, in order not to revoke the spirit of the deceased from the underworld. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same concerns the designations of gods and other spiritual beings who, hearing their names, may also abandon their celestial or earthly abodes, in order to visit the evoker, while the consequences of such a visit may be unpredictably dangerous not only for the doer⁵.

But it should not also be overlooked that, beside the effects of the *kōtōdama*, there were also in those remote times many reasons to change names of persons whose mentioning in the text could arouse real anger or revenge of their superiors.

The interpreter of an old text must therefore build many new bridges, in order to pave his way to the core of the meaning of such names. It was a very interesting enterprise to seek possibilities of a rational interpretation of about one thousand most ancient denominations. It was thereby necessary to form many suppositions, not recognized until now, concerning their surface and deep structure. On various stages of my study I have tried here and there to revise also my own previous assumptions and—in the light of some new observations—come to certain more substantiated statements which in fact are apt to be overturned again, though as a rule the number of cases which I myself feel any doubts about decreases gradually. Never-

¹ B. H. Chamberlain, *Kojiki or Records of Ancient Matters*, Tokyo 1906.

² K. Florenz, *Die historischen Quellen der Shinto-Religion*, Leipzig 1919.

³ Cf. my article *The Belief in Kotodama and Some Misinterpretations of Kojiki*, in: *European Studies on Japan*, Tenterden 1979.

⁴ T. Izutsu, *Language and Magic. Studies in the Magical Function of Speech*, Tokyo 1956, p. 23.

⁵ Ibid.

theless, I cannot state that everything is now already clear and unshakable, and doubtlessly a more extensive academic discussion after publishing of the whole material (which is planned) may bring further alterations or confirmations.

I have presented earlier one part of my arguments and materials on various conferences of orientologists, as in Bochum, Florence, Stockholm, Tokyo, Warsaw, Weimar and Zurich. Some of my views were also printed in a few papers, as presented in the bibliography of the subject annexed to the second part of this paper. Before I publish all the possessed material gathered during my long study, I expect now to receive some valuable hints or critique from specialists, in consequence of revealing hereby the full succession of my reasoning about the most fundamental meaning of such vague terms as *kami* 'a deity', *tama* 'the spirit', *hime* 'the princess', *'omi* 'a court noble'⁶ and others. I am conscious that I touch here the most primitive concepts of the old Japanese society, but I cannot resign my endeavours, because those are words of a relatively high frequency in the text of *Kojiki*, and any misinterpretation of them may have incalculable consequences, distorting the whole picture of the said old society. My discourse below will be full of such mental restrictions as: I suppose, it is possible, perhaps, may be, etc. If it happens that I forget sometimes to add such a qualifying term, let the reader complement it as oft as he likes, because there is no full certainty in any statement about the sources of such crude terms, though, personally, I am convinced that I am following in general a rather right way of research, and therefore any critical remark concerning my standpoint will be justified as far as I bear responsibility for my reasoning.

Before beginning the analysis of particular words, may I be allowed to explain in general my point of view in the matter of the analysis itself. I am not going to base my statements on standard solutions, accessible in various works concerning Japanese religion or Japanese ancient culture. Nevertheless, I intend to review critically the biggest part of the former conceptions, revising them carefully in the light of recent theories or proposing some new standpoint, helping the researcher to see facts in a broader or more favourable perspective. Aiming at that I will never transgress the linguistic rules governing the old Japanese, though it should be added that there is some freedom in applying various rules to a given case, to the effect that even assuming that the argumentation is correct the obtained results may differ widely. In any case we will have to deal here with morphological and semantic changes of words. The users of language, depending on the circumstances, make many slight alternations of the phonic material which with the passage of time may be found to function as standard word forms. The typology of such alternations embraces, in the first place, morphological reductions and ablauts⁷, so a researcher has to reconstruct their original shape in order to recover the proper meaning of a primitive

⁶ Deity, spirit, princess, court noble, and some other terms further on are translations of the respective Japanese terms, found in the work of D. L. Philipp i, namely his translation of *Kojiki*, Tokyo 1968.

⁷ Types of reduction: the head reduction (e.g. *yika* → *ka*, *wumu* → *mu*, *wune* → *une*,

notion. These ancient meanings bring out again many difficulties because it is a forlorn hope in our times to catch indubitably the mood of reasoning peculiar to an ancient man. We try, of course, to understand those remote shifts of word contents, but we are not sure enough that our hypothetical restorations imitate trustworthily the mental processes of ancient people. Needless to say, we must not rely fully on the meanings of Chinese characters, used to render in writing the Japanese myths and legends. It is expedient to admit that some primeval Chinese notions had little in common with Japanese ones, e.g. *shên* and *kamī* (explained below), though they are to a certain degree synonymous. There were also such Japanese distinctions which had found no satisfactory rendering in characters (e.g. *ti*, *mi*, *fi*—all written with the same character *ling*, meaning 'soul, spirit, ghost, etc.'; see also below). Moreover, a number of words was rendered by phonetically equivalent characters (the so-called *ateji*) and it would be evidently erroneous to treat such substitutes as meaningful ideograms.

I have chosen for analysing procedure about two dozen of noun terms which in the book of the *Kojiki* accompany the names of gods and men. I will call further on those terms *approximators* since they allow us to catch in the most general way the category or class to which the named personage is classified. There are namely three structural formulae of names: a) names without approximators (e.g. *Söbakari*, *Kösifaki*) which do not concern us in the present paper; b) names with one approximator (e.g. *Sibi-nö-'omi*, where *'omi* means 'a court noble', which I shall call the direct approximator); c) names with two approximators, e.g. *Susanöwo-nö-nikötö*, where *wo* 'male' will be the direct approximator and *mikötö* 'lord'—the secondary one.

There is an interesting hypothesis⁸ showing that the secondary approximator *kamī* 'deity' was added to gods' names relatively late, because the previous forms of those names had not already satisfied the speaking community as expositors of the category to which the name had belonged. The present author cannot assent to some more detailed explanations within the framework of the said hypothesis, mainly because of its frankly forced tendency to divide names of gods and men on formal principles only, without much endeavour to understand at first their contents, while in reality those groups are interpreted to a certain degree semantically on the one and only ground that they are allegedly homogeneous. But one may rather agree that in general it is extremely desirable to know in detail about all direct and secondary approximators which in all probability can shed some light on the problems of apprehending gods and men in those ancient times.

etc.); the rear reduction (e.g. *suke* → *suk*, etc.); contamination (e.g. *nagi* → *nayi* → *ne*, etc.); overlapping (e.g. *'omö + mi* → *'omi*, etc.).

Types of ablaut: consonant ablaut (e.g. *fe* → *be*, *me* → *be*, etc.); vocal ablaut (e.g. *wosi* → *wusi*; *na* → *ne*, etc.). (Cf. also our previous attempt of formulating word formation rules of Archaic Japanese in: *The belief in Kotodama*, op. cit.).

⁸ Mutsuko Mizoguchi, *Kiki-shinwa-kaishaku-no hitotsu-no kokoromi*—"kami"-kannen-o utagau tachiba-kara, in: "Bungaku" 41-42, Tokyo 1973-74.

It presents some difficulty to enumerate without omission all the types of secondary approximators, because it depends upon the correct interpretation of the whole compound name, whether its penultimate component will be recognized as direct approximator or as a sort of another differentiating word. E.g. I am inclined to interpret the name *Yinasebiko-nō-miko* as 'the august man attracted by the sacred blood', where 'sacred blood' is a figurative denotation of the Imperial family, while 'the august man' himself is an unidentified person summoned to be married to an Imperial daughter. Traditional rendering of the contents of this name was 'Inase-Lad Prince', where 'Inase' is a hypothetical place name, 'lad' would be direct and 'prince'—secondary approximator.

But a provisional survey proved that there are, all in all, six secondary approximators, namely: *kamī*, 'ofokamī', *mikötō*, *sumera-mikötō*, *miko*, 'ofo'omi. It must be added that all of them may also play the role of a direct approximator. I will analyse them first, because they were purposely used as generalizing categorial indicators or hierarchically coordinating titles, so that the ascertained possibility to delete them as extraordinary components (of secondary interest for us) can help us perhaps in understanding the reasons or needs leading to the operation of adding them to the primary forms of names.

Kamī

It is probably the most important term among all the approximators, so we are inclined to discuss it more thoroughly than the others. The standard translation of the archaic word *kamī* is as a rule: 'deity, god, divinity, a deified hero, the spirit of the dead person', not to speak of Christian influenced varieties of meaning, like: the Supreme Being, the Almighty, Providence, etc. There is also the well-known custom of the Japanese to call *kamī* their past and present rulers, the thunder, various animals displaying a peculiar power, and so on.

Since long ago there were set up many theories concerning links which connect the word *kamī* with other Japanese words. The most durable was probably the thesis confronting it with *kami* 'the top, the head, the upper part, a superior, the sovereign'. But the difference between vocals *ī* versus *i* in those both words makes it impossible to compare them as directly related. Other older Japanese propositions recognized the word *kamī* for a deformation of the word *kagami* 'a mirror', but the meaning discrepancies and formal inconveniences are here decisive for rejecting the proposition. The majority of interpreters tried to combine two various morphemes in such a way that their components comprised somehow the syllables *ka* and *mi*, unconsciously overlooking even that *mī* is indispensable here and proposing break-neck transformations, e.g. *kasikomi* 'osōru' 'inspiring with respect and fear' should be a kind of etymon for our *kamī*.

At least two theories take advantage of the word *mī* 'the body' in order to construct *kamī* as a composite word. Matsuo Shizuo (in 1929) considers that *ka-* is a reduced form of *kami* 'superior' so that *kamī* means 'a superior body'. Formally

we may acknowledge that version, but semantic transition from a 'superior body' to 'a deity' is not fully convincing and seems to have no analogy in antique cultures of the Far East. Especially it should be remembered that in Japan "man's approach to the *kami* [modern spelling of the old *kami*—WK] was one of friendly intimacy"⁹ what does not seemingly go with the notion 'superior, sovereign'. The second one, Ôtsuki Fumihiko (in 1932) explains *kami* as reduction of *kakurimi*, and the last term is according to him to be found in *Kojiki* itself, though his lection of the text as *kakurimi-ni masu* ('to have a hidden body') is in discord with other authorities who read it: *mī-wo kakusu* ('to conceal the body'). But even if we accept the form *kakurimi*, we do not see in it the source of the word *kami*, because the reduction of two internal syllables *-kuri-* is not sufficiently proved (analogies mentioned by Ôtsuki: *sagurime* becomes *sagume* is not self-evident but hypothetical, and the equation *kaku* = *ka* is no result of a reduction but of a derivation, thus it cannot serve as a proof of the abbreviation *kakuri* → *ka*). Besides it seems rather improbable that a term like 'deity' originate from the connotation 'be hidden'.

A new attempt to investigate the connexions of the word *kami* may be found in Johannes Rahder's *Comparative Treatment on the Japanese Language*¹⁰. Rahder compares the term with various words from Ryukyuan, Ainu, Korean, Tibetan, Mongol, Austronesian, Khmer, etc. If we even admit such a large circle of divergent languages being at once tied with Japanese, all the phonetic and semantic differences existing between such compared words should have been examined, as unfortunately it is not the case with Rahder's study. But presently we will scrutinize shortly his suggestions concerning affinities of *kami* in Proto-Japanese and Old Japanese.

In Proto-Japanese he finds (we change only the transliteration of Rahder's): 'ofokami' 'great numen, used as respectful expression, when addressing a wolf; hence: wolf'; *kuma* 'bear' and *kōfa* (or *kōba*) 'fierce, strong, hard'. We have signalized already the custom to call animals *kami* (here wolf and bear may be taken into consideration), but since Rahder sees the equivalency of *kami* — 'ofokami — *kuma* through the mediation of *kōfa*, he should explain the shifts of the consonant *-f-* into *-m-*, and the shifts of vocals *ō—ā* into *a—i* and *u—ā* respectively. Such shifts are in particular cases easy to be explained by various analogies, but it is not easy (or perhaps it is impossible) to point to a case when three such shifts at once are involved.

From the Old Japanese Rahder brings forward four suppositions: a) the likeness of the Japanese name of the kingdom of Koryo: Koma, b) resemblance to the word *kumo* 'pit' and *kuma* 'hiding place', c) resemblance to the word *kabane* 'a corpse', d) supposing a prefix *ka-* in *kamu* and relating *mu* with *muti* 'a honorificum for deities and men'. All those four propositions seem hard to be approved. Ad

⁹ W. K. B u n c e, *Religion in Japan*, Tokyo 1956.

¹⁰ J. R a h d e r, *Comparative Treatment of the Japanese Language*, in: *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. X, 1-2, Tokyo 1954.

a) we see really no principle allowing to derive the word meaning 'deity' from any country's name. Ad b) *kumo* and *kuma* seem to have in R a h d e r's approach a common etymon (pit = hiding place), though he does not express it straightforwardly. But we find in documents only the form *kubo* (instead of *kumo*) and it has probably no direct connexion with *kuma* which in its turn seems to mean 'winding, bend' and only secondarily 'a place round a bend where something disappears'. Taking these corrections as they are, we do not believe that either the meaning 'pit' or 'winding' and even 'disappearing' may help us to reconstruct the meaning 'deity'. Ad c) as for *kabane* 'a corpse' let us remember not only the difficulties with the meaning itself (corpses were rather avoided as unclean), but also formal difficulties with transforming *kabane* into *kami*. Ad d) R a h d e r does not explain what kind of suffix may be *ka-* in *kamu* (which is a variant of *kami* of course) and moreover he does not care at all what to do with the formal difference between *mu* and *muti* or *mutu* where the final sound *ti* or *tu* should not be light-heartedly obliterated.

Edited in 1958 "brief exposition of selective terms of *Shinto*", entitled *Basic Terms of Shinto* is rather very laconic on the matter. Under the item: *kami* (= *kami*) we read: "Appleton [appellation?—WK] for the objects of worship in *Shinto*. An honorific term extolling the sacred authority and sublime virtue of spiritual beings. There are numerous etymological theories, but none of them are acceptable. M o t o o r i Norinaga [1730–1801—WK] interpreted the word as an appellation for all beings which possessed extraordinary and surpassing ability, and which were awesome and worthy of reverence; he pointed out that the word was used, not only for good beings, but also for evil beings. But he was unable to explain why evil spirits are also called *kami*, and he overlooked the fact that the term *kami* is also used for commonplace, weak beings as well [several passages omitted—WK]. The beings which are called *kami* include everything from the spirits encharged with the creation and activizing of heaven and earth, the great ancestors of men, to all things in the universe, even plants, rocks, birds, beasts, and fish. [...]"

It may be doubted, if it is really "an honorific term" and if it is not sufficient to say "all beings which possessed extraordinary and surpassing ability" to embrace thereby also "evil spirits". More perplexing is the notion about "weak beings" which (according to the same source) "should be explained by reference to the *koto-dama* belief in *Shinto*; this ancient belief had it that beautiful, good words bring about happiness and good, while coarse, evil words bring about unhappiness and evil" (but it must be a priori assumed that "weak beings" were called beautifully or coarsely which does not belong to our discussion of the term *kami*, and therefore we have omitted this explanation in the citation above). Unclear is also the term "spiritual being" in the general definition, because in the end we find "all things in the universe" also. Broad understanding of the term *kami* may help us with our analysis which not neglecting common opinions aims at detecting the primary meaning of that word.

The above-mentioned paper of M i z o g u c h i is also full of interesting but sometimes contradictory suggestions, concerning *kami*. Its incontestable value lies

in proving that: 1) the most substantial use of this word can be seen in phrases such as: *'araburu kami*, *tifayaburu kami*, *naru kami*, *yama-nö kami* (rough equivalents: 'raging deity, far shooting deity, sounding deity = thunder, mountain deity), 2) the word *kami* cannot be replaced in those cases by *mikötö*, as in other cases it mostly does, 3) the word *kami* plays in most of its usages the role of a notion generalizing various older views on divine spirits, expressed in the framework of their names by other terms, so that it screens their former meaning and should therefore be put aside in the course of examination. On the other hand, there are also a few not convincing statements in the reviewed paper, because its authoress does not sufficiently present her arguments. She states rather without proofs that: a) *kami* can be defined as entia disposing of terrifying power, b) *kami* are fundamentally antagonistic to men and separated from them, c) generalization of god names through adding the indicator *kami* took place in 6th century. Such a final result is rather unsatisfactory and unsuitable for the present author, who tries to find argued interpretation of the term *kami*.

Very short indeed, though of some value, is the remark of Tai Nobuyuki in his study *Nihongo-no gogen*. The author tries to deduce the word *kami* in two ways. One of them is rather unconvincing: the verb *worikagamu* ('to kneel, to bow') is liable to be transformed into *woragamu*, *worogamu*, *wogamu*, *ogamu*, *agamu*, *agameru* (all meaning: 'to revere, to honor, to adore, to worship'). It is implied further on that the 'object of worship' may be called *wogami*, in shortened form *gami* and finally *kami*. Even granting that the process of transformation could run over that way, which is not quite obvious, the fact remains that the thus obtained *kami* is not the required *kami* (cf. *Iwanami Kogojiten*, item: *worogami*). The next attempt proves to be more useful for our purpose, though it would be difficult to adopt the author's method of approach. Presuming that in order to express the quality of a god the ancients chose the adjective *yikamesiki*, the author considers possible its shortening to *kamesi* and finally *kami*, but he does not worry over the last vowel (is it *i* or not) nor over the shift in meaning ('solemn, majestic, august' became 'deity'). Nevertheless, let us remark that the link with the stem of the word *yikamesiki*, namely *yika*, is worth to be reconsidered in our further research.

There are many other publications dealing to some extent with the problem of Japanese deities, but we do not undertake the duty to review all of them. We will confine ourselves to one more study, namely Kawasoe Taketane's *Kojiki-no kenkyû*. Its author compares extra carefully various usages of the terms, *kami* and *mikötö*, though he does not even try to examine them semantically. His premise is that the compilers of *Kojiki* had a very keen eye for differences in social standing, which is revealed in subtle nuances while addressing the story heroes with titles and in describing their actions with appropriate degrees of politeness (expressed by means of honorifics). Taking it for granted, Kawasoe argues that designing a divine being with the title *mikötö* in comparison with the import of the indicator *kami* was felt in antiquity as somewhat weaker or degrading. There are left unsolved some detailed consequences of this point of view, but in general it seems convincing,

although we are still ignorant of the mental process which led to the repartition of these two terms.

We have, moreover, left aside all the newest attempts to link the term *kamī* with various foreign words (e.g. *M u r a y a m a* Shichirō, *Y a m a n a k a* Shōta and others). Interesting as they are they should not push out nor replace the endeavours to find as much as possible internal affinities between native words, because only confrontation of all seriously argued parallels and at the same time not forcing one spectacular theorem, deserves to be named scholarly proceeding. Especially as to succumb to semblances is a very human weakness.

Having thus shortly criticized many previous approaches to the word *kamī* I shall now present my own interpretation and its general justification. Because any attempt to link *kamī* directly with homonymous words seemed abortive, it remained to complete the word *kamī* with some initial sound, *yi-* or *wu-*, which in all probability has been lost irretrievably in time immemorial. We know many such words where these initials can be regularly restored with a tolerable change or without any change of meaning (e.g. *yidaku* → *daku*, *yimada* → *mada*, *yikifofi* → *kifofi*, *yinōri* → *nōri*, *wu-naru* → *naru*, *wusifo* → *sifo*, etc.). Though a hypothetical *yikamī* or *wukamī* may be set up formally, they lead us up immediately to no solution, but their morphologic constitution seems to suggest that they can be divided into *yika* or *wuka* and *mī*. *Wuka* is widely known as a distinctive component of such phrases as *Wuka-nō-kamī* or *Wuka-nō-mitama*, designating the deity of cereals or of food, so it can hardly refer to deities in general. The meaning of *yika* is 'force, vigor, vivacity, power, might; solemn, majestic, august; importance, gravity, etc.'. It may be perhaps related with *yikifofi* 'energy, force, vigor', *yikari* 'anger, rage, fury'. Not far from it may be: *yiki* 'living, life; breath, respiration', *yiku-yuku* 'going, proceeding, running'. It is difficult to find one English word reducing to a common denominator all the meanings emerging from this family of words. But the development of the Latin word *anima* 'air, breeze, breath, spirit, enlivening force' which in male form, *animus*, broadens its meaning to 'vigor, energy, power, might' fits quite well to the development from *yiki* to *yika* whose meaning we define therefore generally as 'force' or 'power'.

Now the morpheme *mī* gives us the chance to confront it with its homonyms: a) 'fruit; contents', b) 'body; one's lot', c) 'a winnow, sieve, riddle', d) 'the serpent, snake', e) 'surroundings, bounds, confines, circle' (from the verb *mu* 'to surround, to circle, etc.'). Three among them, namely a,) b), and e), seem to have a common meaning, because something which is 'confined in some bounds' forms a 'body' or has some 'contents'; the meanings: 'fruit' and 'one's lot' may be secondary ones. We omit the homophonic 'winnow' and 'snake' as of no use for our purpose.

Thus we are now prone to say that our *yikamī* may mean 'the circle of force; the area of power; a mighty body' and in extension 'the area (body) externalizing some power, or exhibiting potency' etc. (the last is literally the same as *cratophany* 'the exhibition of potency' which is the term used by religiologists to define concretions or manifestations of *mana*, the supernatural power possessed by spirits, deads,

objects, animals and men, too). The definition-like term *yikamī* 'an area of power' is very apt one and certainly such an approach to various natural objects, namely, treating them as areas of some power, was peculiar to the ancient Japanese as it was also to many other peoples of the Far East, especially of Pacific Islands. Should it mean, therefore, that manaim was sometime the form of religion which prevailed among the Japanese?

Confronted with such a dilemma we must remember once again the thesis of *Mizoguchi* which states that the word *kamī* was probably a mere supplementary notion, generalizing various older views of divine spirits. Those views were expressed by variegated terms preceding the notion *kamī* in each particular theonym. Later on, we shall analyse all those terms as direct approximators, but now, we shall mention here in short, how *Mizoguchi* characterizes those direct approximators. E.g. *ti* is for her "*uchū-no seimeiryoku*" ('the cosmic force of life'); *mi*—"nazukerarete inai, me-ni mienai aru ishi" ... "*uchū-ni ugoite ite sore-ga sekai-o shihai-shite iru*" ('some unnamed, invisible will ... it is working in the universe and domineers over the world')—it may be inferred that such a 'cosmic will' is something like 'fate, or destiny, fortune, lot', though the authoress describes the same will as 'something provided with a mysterious (miraculous) force', what is according to her synonymous with *mi* (Sino-Japanese *go*), meaning 'something held in awe and reverence'; *ne*—"eiyūteki shuchō" ('heroic chief'); *fi*—, *hi-no keshin-to shite bambutsu-seisei-no minamoto*" ('regarded as manifestation of the sun, the very root of existence of all things in the universe'); *wusi*—'governor, ruler, occupant, possessor, seizer, etc.); *tama* — "*shizen-nomi narazu ningen-ni-mo naizai-suru reikonkan*" 'a sort of spirit indwelling not only nature but also man').

We do not intend to discuss now the concepts of *Mizoguchi* in detail, but we take them for the time being as they are. We are not inclined at the same time to believe the authoress that before appending the generalizing term *kamī* all theonyms appertained to a few categories which can be strictly defined. On the contrary, categories proposed by *Mizoguchi* are rather liquid and arbitrarily defined, which is probably a reflex of the situation in the ancient worshippers' way of thinking. According to the present author, such categories did not really exist, though it is possible to make up lists of similarly ending names and to construe artificially some vague explanations to those lists. But what about the certainty of such explanations, if one cannot be assured not only of the adequateness of such formulae as above-mentioned (e.g. "invisible will working in the universe") but also of the validity of such formulae in application to each member of the names' group described by the given explanation? Before we achieve a full and unshakable interpretation of a theonym, we cannot pass judgments about its membership in a given category, otherwise our judgment will be quite perfunctory, as it is the case with the classification of *Mizoguchi*, who sees only endings and does not bother about analyzing names as wholes. Nevertheless, it is true that these endings (we call them rather direct approximators) must be studied as primeval attempts to express important religious notions. They were surely ambiguous to such a degree that at the time of

the first codification of myths, the compilers felt the indispensability to term the category of sanctity or divinity in an unequivocal and uniform manner. For the purpose they coined the word *kami*, equivalent of *mana*, or exploited the title *mikötö* which is also an universal notion with a somehow weaker shade of meaning.

Manifestation of *mana*, or cratophany, shifted admittedly later on after some intermediary stadia to hierophany and then to theophany, where any phantom of potency became something sacred or a sort of anthropomorphic powerful divine spirit or deity. But even in those times the original manaic understanding of spiritual beings was prevalent; we recall e.g. the mythical scene when the Fire God being born burns the womb of his mother. Nobody thinks that it is in any way symbolic; it is simply reminiscent of a very natural apprehension of fire, irrespective of its anthropomorphic traits in this story.

There is, nevertheless, prevailing the view that the cult called *shintö* should be classified as animism (e.g. "religion in ancient Japan was a combination of animism and nature worship" — W. K. B u n c e, op. cit., p. 99). It cannot be directly denied but, as already stated, it could be only the later step in the development of the more original manaic cult, although between both stages (manaism and animism, or cratophany and theophany) might come into play a mere difference of abstraction degree. In the epoch *Kojiki* was compiled, there was already theophany in its full bloom and, therefore, we feel it possible to translate freely the word *kami* not only literally as 'the area of power' or 'the phantom exhibiting potency' but also as 'divine spirit' or 'deity', the more so that such entia are always imagined as endowed with a certain quantum of power.

In Japan of today also the study of shamanism gets popular gradually, and all sorts of religious practices are being identified as shamanistic. The study of H o r i Ichirö concerning folk beliefs in Japan is a characteristic example in this respect. We should also mention the work of E g a m i Namio, called *The Formation of the People and the Origin of the State in Japan* (New York and Tokyo 1973), where he supports the hypothesis that horse-riding invaders from the continent subjugated the agricultural population in Japan during the late Yayoi period (ca. 3rd century) bringing with them various shamanistic practices originated among the nomadic cultures of Inner Asia¹¹. Daring as it is, from our angle we are not interested in it immediately, but there are researchers regarding shamanism as pretender to the title of the most primary form of cult in Japan. My thesis that the term *kami* is equivalent to *mana* may be appreciated by them as inadequate, though I wonder what they could propose against it. As far as I see it, shamanism coming from Inner Asia is, first of all, connected with animism, because shamans were engaged in various contacts with spirits of heaven, earth, and the nether land through which they could achieve some changes in their surroundings for the good of their community. From this point of view, shamanism seems to be nearer to the stadium of theophany and thus cannot be prior to manaism.

¹¹ M. C z a j a, *Gods of Myth and Stone. Phallicism in Japanese Folk Religion*, New York 1979.

But there is a strong trend among researchers to extend the notion *shaman* to all priests, sorcerers, fortune-tellers, diviners, magicians, ascetics, etc. Quaint as it is, such treatment of this term allows us to say that on all stages of the history of religions there acted some functionaries occupied with communication between mankind and the extraordinary forces, sometimes regarded as sacred and godlike, too. Thus it does not contradict our assertion that manaism prevailed in the early stage of the Japanese cult.

In order to support additionally the above interpretation of the term *kamī* I may stress that in what follows we will find a few other terms which have nearly the same structural meaning as *kamī*. Such a parallelism must infallibly testify to the conclusion that we are in general on a right way of search.

'*Ofo kamī*

The secondary approximator '*ofokamī*' differs from *kamī* in form, being extended by a prefixed '*ofo*' which meaning is traditionally rendered by 'big, great, etc.' (i.e. 'a big area of power', 'a great deity' and so on).

Mizoguchi¹² quotes about 30 various instances from the ancient Japanese literature, where the phrase '*ofokamī*' is applied to denominations of deities. But most of them do not correspond to the function of a secondary approximator we are interested in. Except '*ofomönönusi-nö-'ofokamī*', '*asifarasiköwo-nö-'ofokamī*', and '*fitökötönusi-nö-'ofokamī*', all others have no relation to the *Kojiki*, play the role of direct approximators or are construed in accord with the pattern: "great deity from [here and here]" which does not belong to theonymy at all. Nevertheless, the last type of phrases is of great importance, because it signalizes mostly that the duties of a given deity have been broadened (e.g. "This *Adi-siki-taka-pikone-nö-kamī* is the deity called today 'the great deity of Kamo'" —according to Philippi, op. cit.). One may question, why a *kamī* is "called today" '*ofokamī*' 'the great deity'? For Mizoguchi it is simply an evidence, that an irremovable new title replaced the former one, where the last constituent was removable. For us it is unconvincing, because the allegedly removable constituent *kamī* is here expressly demonstrated in contradistinction to '*ofokamī*', so we should search after reasons of such promotion of the god. We propose to seek elucidation in the meaning of the prefixed '*ofo*'. It may be, according to us, not the equivalent of "great" but an ablaut derivation from the verb '*ofu*' in its rather obsolete meaning which can be deduced from its parallel form '*ofosu*' (to command, to charge; used only of honorable persons), namely 'be in command of, be charged with, be in charge of' etc. Thus *Kamo-nö-'ofokamī* may mean 'the deity being in charge of Kamo [shrine]'. It is possible that also other uses of '*ofokamī*' turn to be translatable in this way; e.g. *fitökötö-nusi-nö-'ofokamī* 'the deity charged with the power of unalterable dispositions'. If this were a fairly adequate translation, we would be probably forced to recognize '*ofokamī*' as a direct approximator and even to shorten its shape to *kamī*.

¹² Mizoguchi, op. cit., part III, pp. 86–88.

M i k ö t ö

The next term we are going to explain, is *mikötö*. Needless to say that *mikötö* is in most cases interchangeable with *kamī* in the times of the *Kojiki*, so they must have some close resemblance one to another. In his translation of the *Kojiki* Philippi translates usually *mikötö* as 'lord'; in various dictionaries (e.g. *Kenkyusha's*) we find also the equivalent 'prince', because the word *mikötö* was applied also to ruling families. The dictionary *Jidaibetsu-kokugo-daijiten* interprets its structure as consisting of courtesy prefix *mi* and the noun *kötö* 'a thing, a matter, an affair, a fact, a case; an event, a happening; a talk, words, a saying, etc.' Explanation follows saying: *moto-wa nanigashi-no koto-to itte sono hito-o sasu iikata-de arô* "it was probably once a mode of expression pointing at a man by saying: the case of So-and-So". I do not consider it a convincing explanation. *Iwanami Kogojiten* supposes it to be the expression denoting men or deities who committed some deed or utterance—this is according to me too broad an assumption which does not provide any base to apprehend the specific difference existing between names with and without the title *mikötö*, because all beings are usually doing something.

The word *kötö* itself is also rather dim and has no satisfactory elaboration. The comparison *kötö: kata* 'shape', found under § 139 in R a h d e r's study¹³, may seem tolerable but according to *Iwanami Kogojiten* (item: *katari*) confronting *kötö* with *kata* is dubious on account of accentual inconsistencies. Far from feeling fully competent, the present author takes the liberty to suggest that the said objection refers to etymology of the word *kötö* 'a thing, a talk, etc.' and in this respect it is probably justified, while our investigations concern a rather nondescript sound product *k + ö + t + ö* which may be contrasted with other sound products by virtue of analogies. We know parallels, e.g. *tawawa: töwöwö*, *fara: förö*, *tamë: tömë*, *taka: tökö* [?], etc. On this ground we are entitled to juxtapose hypothetically *kata* with *kötö*, too. There is even one common meaning of both, namely 'one part', 'one of a pair'. It is maybe a noun form recurring to the verb *kati* 'to cut, to chop, to chip, to hew, to split', so that its etymon could mean 'a chip, a split, a splinter, a chunk, a piece', henceforth 'one piece, one part, one'. There is also a suffix *-götö*, derived most probably from *kötö*, whose meaning is 'each one, each'; it is preserved also in reduplicated form *kötögötö* 'each, everybody, all'. This can be certainly connected with another meaning of *kötö* 'different, particular, distinct, separate', hence we derive meaning 'individual, an individual, a being, a person' (there is also variant *kata* and *katagata* denoting 'persons, personages, gentlemen, etc.', though they differ in accentuation from *kata* 'one part'; according to us both are cognate and with time dissimilated accentually). Anyway, a word like "personage" is the one we seek, trusting that it should be sufficient to explain the discussed term *mikötö*.

It remains now to elucidate the component *mi-*. It is recognized as prefix of respect, and may be certainly traced to the form *yimi* meaning 'charmed, enchanted, bewitched; prohibited, tabooed, inviolable, sacrosanct, etc.' (see my article in Polish

¹³ R a h d e r, op. cit.

which title may be translated: “*mikado* has «charm» in his self”). In this way *mikötö* should be interpreted as ‘tabooed person’ or ‘inviolable person’ or ‘sacrosanct personage’, etc. (cf. titles: His Holiness, His Excellency, His Grace, etc.) The epithet “tabooed person” confirms an unusual character of a given epiphany, and thus it is a formal and material equivalent of the term *kamī* translated as ‘an area exhibiting potency’ or ‘a powerful body’.

We must conclude with reminding the above-mentioned statement of K a w a s o e about differences in using terms *kamī* and *mikötö*. In order to understand more profoundly these differences, we may assume that both constituents, namely *mī* ‘a ring, an area; a body’ and *kötö* ‘a distinct body, an individual, a person’, give no ground to differentiate the social status of respective referents. We are therefore inclined to draw the conclusion that *yika* ‘powerful, potent, exhibiting might, etc.’ in contradistinction to *yimi* ‘tabooed, enchanted, sacrosanct, etc.’ was more esteemed. It would be in accordance with the principles of *kötödama* as disputed already above: “if the word uttered happens to be of an ominous nature, the supernatural forces which its utterance has released are sure to act on their victims and bring about horrible results”¹⁴. Certainly the word *yika* seemed more ominous and risky than *yimi* which evoked something forbidden, but was holding no immediate menace. Thus the benignant content of the word *mikötö* resulted in proving it suitable as a title designing gods and even honored personages, while *kamī* was probably avoided, at least by laymen.

S u m e r a—m i k ö t ö

Granting that our conclusions concerning *mikötö* are acceptable, we may turn our attention to the next of secondary approximators, namely *sumera-mikötö*, as a rule denoting a dynast. We have here evidently to explain only the first part *sumera* which appears also in other composites as *sumera-waga*, *sumera-fe*, *sumera-mikusa*, etc. We find also forms without *-ra* as *sume-kamī* ‘an ancestor deity’, *sume-mima* ‘descendant of the *Amaterasu*’-*ofokamī*; the emperor’. This *-ra* is traditionally regarded as suffix denoting some sort of euphemism or periphrase (it has its counterpart in suffix *-rö*, as in the word *sumeröki* ‘emperor’), so it may follow that the preceding *sume* is a sort of an attributive word. A dictionary notes: *sume* ‘noble, high, exalted, venerable, august; praised, glorified, extolled, admired’, but it is only a hypothetical sense deduced from the respective compounds.

There are also known forms: *subegamī*, *suberagamī*, *suberaki* which may be variants of formerly mentioned: *sumekamī*, *sumera-mikötö*, *sumeröki*. An old theory suggested that there is a link between attributive *sube* and the verb *subē* ‘to control, to supervise, to reign’, but—attractive as it is—it is rejected by linguists because of vocal difference. To trace the origin of *sume* from Latin *summa* (the highest), *summus* (superl. of *superus*), *superus* (upper, higher), *super* (over, above) as it does S. Y a m a m o t o¹⁵

¹⁴ I z u t s u, op. cit., p. 26.

¹⁵ S. Y a m a m o t o, *Kokugo-gogen-jiten*, Tokyo 1979.

is really impressive but lacks evidence of historic connections between both populations. More fantastic still appears the attempt to link *sumera* with Babylonian *sumer* 'a deity' or *Sume-Ak* (the Fire God), quoted in the same source.

Dissatisfied at afore-said conceptions we intend to propose another one. The starting point for us will be *subera* (while *sumera* may be regarded as a mere ablaut). The inner component *-be-* can be recognized as a metamorphosis of *fe* 'house'. Taking it as possible, we puzzle about the meaning of *su-* as an attribute of 'house'. As it was already signalized, we are entitled to precede *su-* by a prosthesis *yi-* or *wu-*. Thus comes into being the notion *wusu* which we treat as variant of *wosu* 'to reign' (cf. the item *wusi* in this article). The hypothetical equation *wosufe* = *sufe* = *sube* 'reigning house, ruling house, imperial family' ends with *-ra* (or *-rö*) which we recognize without difficulty as the defective form of *yira* (*yirö*), a verbal noun derived from *yiri* 'to enter, to get in, to range among, etc.' It is very often interwoven in various surnames (or cognomina) of emperors and their relatives, e.g. *Takakinöyiribime*, *Fafëyiröne*, *Takaranöyiratume*. In this way *subeyira* = *subera* means: '(one) belonging to the ruling family', in short: 'a dynast'.

Subera does not occur as a free form. Followed by *-ki* (as in *suberaki*, *suberöki*), it gains its generic denotation 'a man, an elder' (a man belonging to the imperial family); with *mikötö* it becomes, 'an inviolable person belonging to the ruling family', etc.

If somebody sees the possibility to get abbreviated and changed *wosuheyira* of *subera* as far-fetched, let us to remind him that e.g. in old Polish the equivalent of His Grace, namely *jego Miłość* was shortened in speech to *jegomość* and further even to *Imć*. It was the result of pronouncing velocity as well as of high frequency of usage.

M i k o

Nobody knocks the bottom out of the thesis that the word is to be divided into *mi* and *ko*. The meaning of *mi* we have already explained arguing it in *mikötö* as 'charmed, enchanted, bewitched, forbidden, prohibited, tabooed, inviolable, sacrosanct, etc.'. The second factor in *miko*, i.e. *ko*, may be grasped as 'descendant, offspring, or child', but otherwise it occurs as an agreeable, warm, hearty designation of a man and we are not able to imitate such a phrasing in English. Now it only remains to say that *miko* will be for us 'the sacrosanct descendant', in other words 'the imperial offspring' which is a standard interpretation of the word.

' O f o ' o m i

We are unquestionably enabled to divide 'ofo'omi into 'ofo, previously (under 'ofokami) explained as 'great, big, etc.' or 'be in command', and 'omi, being a common noun 'a court noble' and a high hereditary title (*kabane*), given before 645 AD to noble families, usually those claiming descent from imperial princes (from among

their numbers were chosen the 'ofo-'omi). After 684, the influential families who had the rank of 'omi were given the rank of 'asömi, the second highest rank in the new system of titles, and the title of 'omi became a low rank, sixth in a system of eight.

The meaning of 'omi is not clear; its Chinese notation as *shin* 'a subject, retainer, vassal or minister', sometimes also other notation: 'one dispatched with orders', provides really no evidence for the pure Japanese word 'omi.

A former suggestion that 'omi developed from 'ofomī 'a great position, a big status' is formally incorrect, because of the difference in the final sound. Now, *Iwanami Kogojiten* quotes from an old dictionary, *Myôgishô*, (11th century), that the said character *shin* can be read not only 'omi but also *fitô* (a man) which leads to conjecture that both words are synonymous. We can note, besides, the existence of the word *wutusi*-'omi (= *wutusömi* = *wutusemi*) 'a real man, a vivid man, a man in waking experience' as well as an interesting phrase in *Nihongi*, namely *wutusi*'omi-nö *kamī* 'a deity being in reality a man'. The afore-said dictionary infers henceforth that 'omi was initially opposed to *kamī* as is the man to the deity, and in the course of time it became antonym of the word *kimi* (subject as contrasted to ruler). This being, in my opinion, too general an approach, it should be narrowed a little. „A man” means here probably not “a man in general” but rather a group of men being near to the ruler. The rulers of Japan, as descendants of the Sun deity, were the above mentioned *wutusi*'omi-nö *kamī* 'deities being in reality men'; but their close companions were also some sort of *kamī* though not so high in the hierarchy of entia. They mostly lost what their forefathers have had before (e.g. the forefathers of the 'omi Soga were emperors). We may suppose, therefore, as possible that the word 'omi can be deduced from a hypothetical 'omö-mi where 'omö means 'the surface, the exterior, the outside, the outward show, the appearance, the image, the figure, vestiges, shadow', and *mi* can be traced to 'the divine spirit'. An 'omi is therefore something like 'a shadow of a divinity' or 'an image of a divine spirit'. It may be a figure of speech (cf. the Christian “God created man in His own image”), aiming at expressing 'omi's secondary position in the presence of the deity-like ruler (something like 'god's servant' which later on became 'emperor's servant'), but it may be also a mode of comprehension of a human being as a mere reflex of extramundane beings. It is by no means an isolated attitude in the *Weltanschauung* of the ancient Japanese. I have already showed in my Polish article *Japanese cosmogony*¹⁶ that the deities in the *Takamanöfara* are like ideas of the Platonic type which exist in some celestial places. Also Inoue Shunji¹⁷ states: “everything in this physical world, mountains, rivers, plants, animals, fish, creeping creatures, birds, living and lifeless, including mankind is nothing but the shadow of what is in *Takaamahara*. The astral world makes the archetype of the physical world” (p. 13). It seems that only a revelation of something in Heavens sets a model for an occurrence of a similar thing in

¹⁶ W. K o t a ń s k i, *Kosmogonia japońska*, “Euhemer” 3(97), 1975.

¹⁷ In his translation of *Kojiki*, Fukuoka 1966.

the earth. Thus the primary existence is that in Heaven and the earthly existence is only its echo, its reflex. If the allegation that a human being is only a reflex of a heavenly one causes still some anxious doubts, it may be additionally recollected that on the basis of *shintô* sources it is rather impossible to establish the real status of a man; everybody knows that a group of denizens of heaven descended therefrom to the earth, but there are no inklings of how it happened that they metamorphosed into visible humans.

Nevertheless, the equation $'om\ddot{o} + mi = 'omi$ forms a peculiar case which confirms the thesis stating a possibility of the reflexional character of all the mundane appearances in the sense of Platonic ideas. The earth-bound development causing that the *'omi* is then declared 'the servant of his ruler', i.e. verbally 'a ministrant, or a minister' is only a secondary shift of meaning, with no influence on the primary semantic process.

The expanded form *'of'o'omi* as the title given "to members of families of *'omi* rank who assumed an active role in the governmental affairs of the Yamatô court"¹⁸ seems to confirm our opinion that it is a secondary shift of meaning. A title like *'Abë-nö-'omi* 'a court noble from the family *'Abe* or 'minister *'Abe* was probably understood, but from the side of the speaker it was quite unmotivated semantically. So on occasion of assuming an active role in governmental affairs, the title was propped with *'of'o* 'being chargee with'. E.g. *Takesiwutinösukunenö'of'o'omi* 'A Well Steering emperor's servant charged with the command of court officers'; *takesi* 'well steering' is a laudatory cognomen of the referent; all the rest is a description of his role in the high society. Because *-nö'of'o'omi* can be deleted, *sukune*—hereinafter discussed separately as direct approximator—turns also to be a sort of a title: 'commander of officers' ('command' converted into 'commander' is common in Japanese, e.g. *yadomori* 'the custody of a lodging' or 'a custodian of the lodging').

¹⁸ P h i l i p p i, op. cit., p. 546.