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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 (vocals) is: a, e, e, i, i, o, ø, u. (These are examples of CV: ’a, d, de, bê, fi, fu, gi, ko, nö, ma, ’e, ra, si, se, ke, 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.
tuents, 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 kōtōdana³, 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 kōtōdana, 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.
³ Cf. my article The Belief in Kotodama and Some Misinterpretations of Kojiki, in: European Studies on Japan, Tenterden 1979.
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 orientalists, 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 trespass 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 ablauts\(^7\), so a researcher has to reconstruct their original shape in order to recover the proper meaning of a primitive

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\(^6\) 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, 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. shén and kamí (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. Sōbakari, Kōsifaki) which do not concern us in the present paper; b) names with one approximator (e.g. Sibi-nō-'omi, where 'omi means 'a court noble', which I shall call the direct approximator); c) names with two approximators, e.g. Susanō-no-nō-nikōtō, where wo 'male' will be the direct approximator and mikōtō 'lord'—the secondary one.

There is an interesting hypothesis showing that the secondary approximator kamí '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. 'omi + 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.).

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: kami, ’ofokami, mikötö, sumera-mikötö, 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.

Kami

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 kami 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 kami 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 kami 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 i versus i in those both words makes it impossible to compare them as directly related. Other older Japanese propositions recognized the word kami 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 mi 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 kami.

At least two theories take advantage of the word mi ‘the body’ in order to construct kami as a composite word. Matsuo Shizuo (in 1929) considers that ka- is a reduced form of kami ‘superior’ so that kami 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" what does not seemingly go with the notion 'superior, sovereign'. The second one, Ōtsuki 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: mi-wo kaku (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 Ōtsuki: 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 Rahtder's Comparative Treatment on the Japanese Language. Rahtder 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 Rahtder'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 Rahtder's): 'ofokami' 'great numen, used as respectful expression, when addressing a wolf; hence: wolf'; kuma 'bear' and köfa (or kōba) 'fierce, strong, hard'. We have sygnaized already the custom to call animals kami (here wolf and bear may be taken into consideration), but since Rahtder sees the equivalency of kami — 'ofokami' — kuma through the mediation of köfa, he should explain the shifts of the consonant -f- into -m-, and the shifts of vocals ō—a into a—i and u—a 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 Rahtder 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

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9 W. K. Bunce, Religion in Japan, Tokyo 1956.
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 kama (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. Motoori 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 Mizoguchi 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: 'araboru kamī, tifayaburu kamī, naru kamī, yama-nō kamī (rough equivalents: raging deity, far shooting deity, sounding deity = thunder, mountain deity), 2) the word kamī cannot be replaced in those cases by mikōtō, as in other cases it mostly does, 3) the word kamī 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) kamī can be defined as entia disposing of terrifying power, b) kamī are fundamentally antagonistic to men and separated from them, c) generalization of god names through adding the indicator kamī took place in 6th century. Such a final result is rather unsatisfactory and unsuitable for the present author, who tries to find argumented interpretation of the term kamī.

Very short indeed, though of some value, is the remark of T a i Nobuyuki in his study Nihongo-no gogen. The author tries to deduce the word kamī in two ways. One of them is rather unconvincing: the verb worikagamu (‘to kneel, to bow’) is liable to be transformed into worogamu, 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 kamī. Even granting that the process of transformation could run over that way, which is not quite obvious, the fact remains that the thus obtained kamī is not the required kamī (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 kamī, 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 K a w a s o e Taketane’s Kojiki-no kenkyū. Its author compars extra carefully various usages of the terms, kamī and mikōtō, 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, K a w a s o e argues that designing a divine being with the title mikōtō in comparison with the import of the indicator kamī 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. Mura yama Shichirō, Yamanka 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 vou-, 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, yikifoi → kifoi, yinori → nōri, wunanu → naru, wusifō → sifo, etc.). Though a hypothetical yikami or wukanami 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 mi. Wuka is widely known as a distinctive component of such phrases as Wuka-nō-kamī or Wukenōmitama, 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 yikifoi ‘energy, force, vigor’, yikari ‘anger, rage, fury’. Not far from it may be: yiki ‘living, life; breath, expiration’, 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 mi 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 *yikami* '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 manaism 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 *kami* was probably a mere supplementary notion, generalizing various older views of divine spirits. Those views were expressed by variegated terms preceding the notion *kami* 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 "uchû-no seimeiryoku" ('the cosmic force of life'); *mi*—"nazararete inai, me-ni mienai aru ishi" ... "uchû-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*—"ei'yûteki shuchô" ('heroic chief'); *fi*—"hi-no keshin-to shite bambatsu-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 reikôkan" '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 *kami* 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 *mikotō* 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 maniac 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 *shintō* should be classified as animism (e.g. "religion in ancient Japan was a combination of animism and nature worship" — W. K. Bunce, 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 maniac cult, although between both stages (maniaism 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 Hori Ichirō concerning folk beliefs in Japan is a characteristic example in this respect. We should also mention the work of Egamī 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 Asia. 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 maniaism.

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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 maniaism prevailed in the early stage of the Japanese cult.

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

′ *Ofo* ′ *kami*

The secondary approximator ′ *ofokami* ′ differs from *kami* 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).

*Mizoguchi* \(^{12}\) quotes about 30 various instances from the ancient Japanese literature, where the phrase ′ *ofokami* ′ 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 ′ *ofomônûnusinô-ô-kami* ′, ′ *asifarasikôwônô-ô-kami* ′, and ′ *fitôkôônûnusinô-ô-kami* ′, 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 sygnaizes mostly that the duties of a given deity have been broadened (e.g. “This *Adi-sikî-taka-pitone-nô-kami* is the deity called today ′the great deity of Kamo’” — according to *Philipp*, op. cit.). One may question, why a *kami* is ′called today’ ′ *ofokami* ′ ‘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 *kami* is here expressly demonstrated in contradistinction to ′ *ofokami* ′, 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 ′ *ofusu* ′ (to command, to charge; used only of honorable persons), namely ′be in command of, be charged with, be in charge of’ etc. Thus *Kamo-nô-ô* ′ *ofokami* may mean ′the deity being in charge of Kamo [shrine]’. It is possible that also other uses of ′ *ofokami* ′ turn to be translatable in this way; e.g. *fitôkôtô-nûsî-nô-ô-kami* ‘the deity charged with the power of unalterable dispositions’. If this were a fairly adequate translation, we would be probably forced to recognize ′ *ofokami* ′ as a direct approximator and even to shorten its shape to *kami*.

The next term we are going to explain, is mikōto. Needless to say that mikōto is in most cases interchangeable with kami 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 mikōto as ‘lord’; in various dictionaries (e.g. Kenkyusha’s) we find also the equivalent ‘prince’, because the word mikōto was applied also to ruling families. The dictionary ōkaihōkō-hōkugo-daigynten interprets its structure as consisting of courtesy prefix mi and the noun kōtō ‘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 ikata-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 mikōto, because all beings are usually doing something.

The word kōtō itself is also rather dim and has no satisfactory elaboration. The comparison kōtō: kата ‘shape’, found under § 139 in R a h d e r’s study¹³, may seem tolerable but according to Iwanami Kogojiten (item: katari) confronting kōtō with kата 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 kōtō ‘a thing, a talk, etc.’ and in this respect it is probably justified, while our investigations concern a rather nondescript sound product k+i+t+i which may be contrasted with other sound products by virtue of analogies. We know parallels, e.g. tavawa: tōwōwō, fora: förō, tamē: tōmē, taka: tōkō [?], etc. On this ground we are entitled to juxtapose hypothetically kata with kōtō, 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 -gōtō, derived most probably from kōtō, whose meaning is ‘each one, each’; it is preserved also in reduplicated form kōtogōtō ‘each, everybody, all’. This can be certainly connected with another meaning of kōtō ‘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 mikōto.

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.

² Rocznik Orientalistyczny t. 44 z. 2
which title may be translated: "mikado has «charm» in his self"). In this way mikōtō 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 kami translated as 'an area exhibiting potency' or 'a powerful body'.

We must conclude with reminding the above-mentioned statement of Kawasoe about differences in using terms kami and mikōtō. In order to understand more profoundly these differences, we may assume that both constituents, namely mi 'a ring, an area; a body' and kōtō '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 kōtōdama 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". 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 mikōtō resulted in proving it suitable as a title designating gods and even honored personages, while kami was probably avoided, at least by laymen.

Sumeramikōtō

Granting that our conclusions concerning mikōtō are acceptable, we may turn our attention to the next of secondary approximators, namely sumera-mikōtō, as a rule denoting a dynasty. 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-kami 'an ancestor deity', sume-mima 'descendant of the 'Amaterasu'-ofokami; the emperor'. This -ra is traditionally regarded as suffix denoting some sort of euphemism or periphrase (it has its counterpart in suffix -rō, as in the word sumerōki '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: subegami, suberagami, suberaki which may be variants of formerly mentioned: sumekami, sumera-mikōtō, sumerōki. 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. Yamamoto

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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 ablaust). 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 -rō) which we recognize without difficulty as the defective form of yira (yirō), 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. Takakinōyiribime, Fafēyirōne, Takaranōyiramute. 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, suberoki), it gains its generic denomination 'a man, an elder' (a man belonging to the imperial family); with mikōto it becomes, 'an inviolable person belonging to the ruling family', etc.

If somebody sees the possibility to get abbreviated and changed wosuheyira' ot subera as far-fetched, let us to remind him that e.g. in old Polish the equivalent of His Grace, namely jegro Milość 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 mikōto as 'charmed, enchanted, bewitched, forbidden, prohibited, tabooed, inviolable, sacrosanct, etc.' The second factor in miko, i.e. ko, may be grasped as 'descendant, off-spring, 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 'ofa'-omi). After 684, the influential families who had the rank of 'omi were given the rank of 'asōmi, 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 'ofomi 'a great position, a big status' is formally incorrect, because of the difference in the final sound. Now, Iwanami Kojiten quotes from an old dictionary, Myōgishō, (11th century), that the said character shin can be read not only 'omi but also fitō (a man) which leads to conjecture that both words are synonymous. We can note, besides, the existence of the word wutusī-omi (= wutusōmi = wutusemi) 'a real man, a vivid man, a man in waking experience' as well as an interesting phrase in Nihongi, namely wutusī-omi-nō kami 'a deity being in reality a man'. The afore-said dictionary infers henceforth that 'omi was initially opposed to kami 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 wutusī-omi-nō kami ‘deities being in reality men’; but their close companions were also some sort of kami 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 'omō-mi where 'omō 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 also be a mode of comprehension of a humen being as a mere reflex of extravagant 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 cosmogony16 that the deities in the Takamanōfara 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. Kotański, 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 shintō 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 'omō + 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 'ofo'omi as the title given "to members of families of 'omi rank who assumed an active role in the governmental affairs of the Yamatō court"18 seems to confirm our opinion that it is a secondary shift of meaning. A title like 'Abē-nō-'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 'ofo' 'being chargee with'. E.g. Takesisoutinōsukunenō'ofo'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 -no'ofo'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 Phillipi, op. cit., p. 546.