

# A Critical Review of Joseph Kitagawa's Methodology for the History of Religions in Japanese Religious Studies

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## INTRODUCTION

Joseph Kitagawa (1915-1992), a historian of religions and a specialist in Japanese religion, is considered one of the founders of the western study of Japanese religious traditions.<sup>1</sup> Towards the end of his academic career, Kitagawa proposed a unified interpretation of Japanese religious traditions. Kitagawa understands Japanese religion to be an independent subject for study within the discipline of the history of religions. Further Kitagawa maintains that there is an enduring tradition that may be referred to as "Japanese religion"<sup>2</sup> and asserts that this tradition has evolved from the "synthesis" of non-Japanese elements and the perennial native "Japanese religion."<sup>3</sup>

Kitagawa points out that the Ritsuryō (imperial rescript) system, promulgated during the seventh and eighth centuries, created a classic paradigm of "immanent theocracy."<sup>4</sup> The three principles of the Ritsuryō synthesis of Japanese religion are *ōbō-buppō* (the mutual dependence of the sovereign's law and the Buddha's law), *shin-butsu-shūgō* (the institutional syncretism of Shinto and Buddhist ecclesiastical systems), and *honji-suijaku* (the belief that the original nature of Japanese *kami* were Buddhas and Bodhisattvas).<sup>5</sup> Although the Ritsuryō system has been significantly modified, Kitagawa maintains its ideal has survived throughout pre-modern Japanese history.<sup>6</sup>

Recently, however, the cogency of Kitagawa's methodology and his understanding of Japanese religious history has come under critical scrutiny. Kitagawa's critics point out that his synthetic view of the transformation of Japanese religious traditions poses two major problems

for modern Western scholars in the field. First, Kitagawa's synthetic interpretation of "Japanese religion" uncritically presupposes the existence of a unique primordial tradition. Kitagawa often loosely dubbed it "native Shinto." As a result, Kitagawa's synthetic interpretation tends to minimize the actual political and ideological struggles in the history of the Japanese people in order to create a seamless view of "Japanese religion." Second, although Kitagawa produced a unified vision of "Japanese religion," he never provided an analytical theory to understand how and why such a synthetic vision emerged and operated in Japanese religious history.

This paper is a critical review of Joseph Kitagawa's methodology for the study of "Japanese religion." Such a critical review is important because Kitagawa was deeply committed to the development of the methodology for the academic study of religion in general and of the religious history of the Japanese people in particular. In this paper, first, I will briefly review Kitagawa's writings on the methods for studying "Japanese religion." I will then examine how Kitagawa applies this method for understanding "Japanese religion." Second, I will consider critiques of Kitagawa's unified vision of "Japanese religion" by two modern Western scholars, Neil McMullin and Alan Grapard. Third, I will inspect Kitagawa's thesis of "Ritsuryō synthesis" by referring to a few cases recorded in the ancient Japanese chronicles, *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters)<sup>7</sup> and *Nihonshoki* (Chronicles of Japan).<sup>8</sup> Contrary to Kitagawa's claim, these accounts in the chronicles clearly show the existence of plural traditions. I will also examine Kitagawa's thesis of "Ritsuryō synthesis" from historiographical perspectives. While the major elements of "Ritsuryō synthesis" in his argument are the ideas of *ōbō-buppō*, *shin-butsu-shūgō*, and *honji-suijaku*, these ideas, historiographically, did not exist during the seventh and eighth centuries. Therefore, Kitagawa's thesis is highly controversial. I conclude that Kitagawa's studies of "Japanese religion," which one-sidedly emphasize singularity and indigenouness, fall short of the current academic substantiation in the field of Japanese religious studies.

# 1. A VISION OF UNITY—JOSEPH KITAGAWA'S APPROACH TO THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS AND JAPANESE RELIGION

Over the four decades of his academic career, Joseph Kitagawa has been a constant critic of the study of the history of religions, which employed modern Western nomenclature, such as philosophy, aesthetics, and ethics.<sup>9</sup> Kitagawa objected to these categories, because he defined "religion" as the realm of reality in human experience. He calls this experience a "religious/cultural/social/political synthesis."<sup>10</sup>

Kitagawa called for the integration and balanced vision of "religion" through two simpler perspectives, "biographical (outsider's)" and "autobiographical (insider's)," to understand this holistic experience. As an application of this dual perspective, he articulates a unified vision of "Japanese religion."

In this section, I will focus on *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (1987), a collection of Kitagawa's eighteen articles on Japanese religion published between 1960–1984, and two recent articles, "A Historian of Religions Reflects Upon His Perspectives" (1989), an autobiographical reflection of his own academic career and methodology, and "Dimensions of the East Asian Religious Universe" (1991), a comprehensive review article of ten recent publications on East Asian religious traditions. In these articles, he outlines his general method for the study of the history of religions and his vision of "Japanese religion."<sup>11</sup>

### A. KITAGAWA'S VISION OF THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

In "A Historian of Religions Reflects upon His Perspectives,"<sup>12</sup> Joseph Kitagawa argues for an integration of a two-perspective-three-fold-approach to the academic study of religions. The two perspectives are the biographical (or outsider's description of a religious system) and the autobiographical (or insider's statement of a religious belief).<sup>13</sup> The three-fold approach includes (1) general inquiries into diverse religions, (2) more specialized studies of specific religions, and (3) explorations into the general nature of "religion."<sup>14</sup>

In the first approach, general inquiries into religion, Kitagawa, as a rule, tries to make observations from the "outside," or "biographical" perspective. The "biographical," or outsider's, perspective and the "autobiographical," or insider's, perspective, here, means a general normative attitude of inquiry into the nature of diverse religions. Kitagawa says,

I am inclined to be rather skeptical of any approach to the study of religion(s)—philosophical, religious, or modern Western "social scientific"—which claims to be objective and neutral. Instead, I have attempted to undertake a general inquiry into diverse religions by stressing a "biographical"—in contradistinction to an "autobiographical"—approach; such an approach perceives all religions, including Japanese religion, from the *outside*, as it were.<sup>15</sup>

Kitagawa does not negate the importance of objectiveness or neutrality in the general study of religions as an academic pursuit. Rather,

by introducing these simpler perspectives, he tries to avoid biases existing within the modern Western academic nomenclature in the study of religions.<sup>16</sup>

In the second approach, the study of the specific religious tradition, Kitagawa pays serious attention to the "autobiographical" statements of the insiders of a particular tradition.

In my second agenda—that is, "more specialized studies of specific religions"—I have attempted not only to study a limited (and thus more manageable) number of religions with some depth, but also to pay serious attention to the "autobiographical" understanding and interpretation of the insiders. I have chosen Japanese religion as a particular focus of my research, along with Buddhism, Christianity, and Chinese religion.<sup>17</sup>

"Autobiographical" perception is the "mental prism" by which an insider within a particular religious tradition "sorts out significant items from a mass of data and relates historical realities to the realm of fantasy and imagination."<sup>18</sup>

Kitagawa notes that the "autobiographical" perspective, the insiders' vision, "often entails uncritical acceptance of the self-authenticating circularity of the respective tradition."<sup>19</sup> This perception, obviously, is not unbiased, objective, or neutral. Kitagawa, however, emphasizes that the significance of the "autobiographical" statement of insiders lies not only in its being a part of the scholarly assessment of a religion, but also in its mirroring the "principles of 'selectivity' and of discrimination peculiar to the researcher's own mental prism."<sup>20</sup>

In the third approach, the exploration of the general nature of "religion," Kitagawa carefully sides with neither the "biographical" nor the "autobiographical" perspectives.

In my third agenda, I have attempted to explore the general nature of 'religion' (singular). In this effort, I have tried not to superimpose any arbitrary concepts—philosophical, social scientific, and especially provincial Eastern or Western notions—on this elusive human phenomena [sic]. Rather, I have tried to *let the explanation define itself as a tentative generalized understanding of religion*, based on careful objectification and emphatic, multi-dimensional studies of various religions (my 'general inquiries' and 'specific studies').<sup>21</sup>

Kitagawa maintains that it is impossible to define univocally the general nature of "religion" so long as human experience is analyzed ac-



cording to Western conventions of inquiry.<sup>23</sup> Therefore Kitagawa proposes that "religion" should be defined through the vision of the "biographical" and "autobiographical" perspectives.

## B. KITAGAWA'S VISION OF "JAPANESE RELIGION"

During the late eighties, Kitagawa proposed a unified interpretation of Japanese religious history.<sup>23</sup> Kitagawa also proposed that Japanese religion should be an independent subject of study.<sup>24</sup> Kitagawa maintains there is an indigenous religious tradition that may be rightly referred to as "Japanese religion."<sup>25</sup> This tradition, Kitagawa asserts, developed from an unnamed and unsystematized early Japanese native magico-religious tradition. This early tradition held "a unitary meaning-structure, a structure which affirmed the belief that the natural world is the original world."<sup>26</sup> "From this tradition," Kitagawa argues, "an indigenous religious form, which came to be designated as Shinto, or 'the way of *kami*,' developed in the early historic period."<sup>27</sup>

As a result of contact with the more culturally developed Sino-Korean civilizations, however, the indigenous tradition, which Kitagawa considered to be an early form of "Japanese religion" (in the singular), began to adopt complex foreign systems. The major foreign traditions introduced by the fourth century were Confucianism, Taoism, the Yin-Yang school, and Buddhism. The term "Shinto" was coined in the sixth century to refer to the hitherto-unnamed native tradition "in contradistinction to Confucian and Buddhist traditions."<sup>28</sup> Out of this cultural contact, Court Shinto, an official imperial *kami* worship, evolved as a particular form of the indigenous tradition. Many features of the indigenous tradition remained outside the framework of official Shinto. "They have," Kitagawa remarks, "usually been placed in the category of folk religion."<sup>29</sup> Kitagawa's vision of "Japanese religion" is based on an "immanent theocratic model" of Japanese religion which emerged from the syntheses of polity, religion, society, and culture.

Basically I am persuaded that Japanese religion has been singularly preoccupied with this world, with its emphasis on finding ways to cohabit with *kami* (sacred) and with other human beings. Also, Japanese religion, like other nonrevelatory religions, ultimately seeks an "immanent theocratic model" from a synthesis of polity, religion, society, and culture, just as religions based on a transcendental deity and its revelation often seek a "theocratic principle."<sup>30</sup>

In the development of the immanent theocracy of Japan, Kitagawa distinguishes three periods in the "religious/cultural/social/political syn-

thesis.<sup>31</sup> They are, chronologically, the Ritsuryō synthesis (7th and 8th centuries), the Tokugawa synthesis (1603–1868), and the Meiji synthesis (1868–1945).<sup>32</sup>

Kitagawa considers the basis of "Japanese religion" to be pre-historic *kami* worship, which was practiced at the end of the Yayoi period (ca. 250 B.C.E.–250 C.E.)<sup>33</sup> by those who "had attained a degree of self-consciousness as one people sharing a common culture."<sup>34</sup> Kami worship, however, was "not a coherent system of beliefs and practices." Furthermore,

... there is every reason to suppose that early Japanese religion had within it several different traditions, and that it took many centuries before what may be rightly called Shinto took its shape. On the other hand, *it is also a mistake to think that early Japanese religion is simply a name enveloping a mass of contradictory local religious practices scattered throughout the Japanese islands.* Long before the compilation of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonshoki*, people in Japan knew they were not left alone, helpless, in this mysterious universe; *for they possessed divine models for all human, social, and communal activities.* ... [people in Japan] during the prehistoric and the early historic periods, like their counterparts in other parts of the world, took it for granted that they or their ancestors had learned all the necessary knowledge and technique regarding social behavior and practical affairs from the world of the *kami* which was far away from, and yet closely related to, their world, such that the success or failure of their daily work, to say nothing of the meaning of the whole of life, was interpreted religiously.<sup>35</sup>

Kitagawa argues that the Ritsuryō (imperial rescript) system,<sup>36</sup> promulgated during the seventh and eighth centuries, created a classical paradigm of "immanent theocracy" of "Japanese religion."<sup>37</sup> Though the origin of the imperial rescript is clearly Chinese, Kitagawa emphasizes the uniqueness of the Japanese Ritsuryō system. He says,

It must be stressed in this connection that the Ritsuryō ideal was not simply to appropriate the classical Chinese idea of the nation as a liturgical community with its sovereign as the supreme mediator between Heaven and Earth as well as between Tao and mankind, but rather to create a soteriological community with the emperor functioning simultaneously as the chief priest, the sacred king, and the living *kami*. With the elevation of the throne to divine status, the imperial court now became the earthly counterpart of the heavenly court of the Sun deity.<sup>38</sup>

The ideal of the rescript "in which the sovereign functioned simultaneously as the living *kami*," was, according to Kitagawa, unmistakably Japanese.

Kitagawa's immanent theocracy is supported by three principles of the Ritsuryō synthesis. They are the principles of *ōbō-buppō* (the mutual dependence of the sovereign's law and the Buddha's law), *shinbutsu-shūgō* (the institutional syncretism of the Shinto and Buddhist ecclesiastical systems), and *honji-suijaku* (the belief that the original identity of Japanese *kami* were Buddhas and Bodhisattvas).<sup>39</sup> Although the Ritsuryō system has been significantly modified, Kitagawa maintains that the ideal of the Ritsuryō synthesis has persisted throughout the history of Japanese religion.<sup>40</sup>

According to Kitagawa, Japanese religion during the Tokugawa period was transformed into a different kind of "immanent theocracy." Kitagawa calls the change the "Tokugawa synthesis." The Tokugawa shōguns replaced "a Shinto version of sacred kingship" centered on an imperial court with "the Neo-Confucian principles of natural laws and natural norms implicit in human, social, and political order, all grounded in the Will of Heaven."<sup>41</sup> As a result, according to Kitagawa, the first principle of the Ritsuryō synthesis, *ōbō-buppō* (the principle of mutual dependence of the sovereign's law and the teaching of Buddha), was dropped.<sup>42</sup> The Tokugawa government was, however, "surprisingly supportive of Shinto-Buddhist institutional syncretism (second principle), and openly affirmed the doctrine of *honji suijaku* (the third principle)."<sup>43</sup>

After the fall of the Tokugawa government, the Meiji government was installed in 1868 under the authority of the emperor. The Meiji regime "dissolved Shinto-Buddhist institutional syncretism by proclaiming the separation of Shinto from Buddhism."<sup>44</sup> As a result, the second principle of the Ritsuryō synthesis, the *shinbutsu-shūgō*, was dropped. "Instead, the Meiji government concocted the hitherto unknown State Shinto as a 'nonreligious' (the term used by the government) national cult closely related to the cult of the emperor."<sup>45</sup> According to Kitagawa the third principle of the Ritsuryō synthesis, *honji-suijaku* was kept alive in this new synthesis. After World War II, the new democratic constitution promulgated in 1946 abolished State Shinto. There is no room for an "immanent theocracy" in any form in modern Japan. But Kitagawa maintains that the third principle of "equating Shinto and Buddhist deities" is still affirmed by many modern Japanese.<sup>46</sup>

Throughout his interpretation of "Japanese religion," Kitagawa consistently rejects the view of "Japanese religion" as a composite of different religious traditions, such as Shinto, folk religion, Confucianism, Taoism, the Yin-Yang school, Buddhism, and so on. Kitagawa writes,

This perspective suggests that "Japanese religion" is not a coherent reality but is, rather, diffuse and composite. We expected to find this kind of approach in sectarian literature; it is surprising to find it in the scholarly monographs of the social sciences, art history, philosophy, and *Religionswissenschaft* as well.<sup>47</sup>

Rather, he claims, Japanese religion is a coherent reality shared by all Japanese, and is a tradition which originated from indigenous *kami* worship.<sup>48</sup>

Kitagawa's vision of "Japanese religion" is not simply a personal academic pursuit. It is his critique of the "West-centric critical method." Kitagawa constantly criticizes the use of modern Western methods to study non-Western traditions because the former presupposes "that the only thing non-Westerners should do is present their languages, religions, cultures, and histories as 'raw material,' as it were."<sup>49</sup> As one of the pioneers of the Western study of Japanese religious history, he seems to welcome the current trend away from its West-centric orientation.

Today an increasing number of competent historical works that deal with the *zeitgeist* of important epochs, for example, ancient Japan, the Ritsuryō, Nara, Heian, Kamakura, Tokugawa, and modern periods, as well as some illuminating biographical works, portray the religiously homologous nature of various ages. Equally edifying is the growing trend among some scholars, Asian and Western, who seem to feel that the Western logic and taxonomy that underlie the modern critical approach may not be the most dependable tools to unlock the depth of non-Western traditions, and they are willing to conjecture that East Asian peoples had their own unique ways of perceiving the texture of human experience and/or reality. Accordingly, there are more serious efforts being made today than ever before to come to terms with non-Westerners' own unique conventions of exploring human experiences instead of analyzing them simply by means of modern critical methods (based on Western concepts, logic, and rhetoric).<sup>50</sup>

Kitagawa's method of the dual perspectives—"biographical" and "auto-biographical"—is his response to a "Western" way of dividing human experience into a series of semi-autonomous pigeonholes—religion, philosophy, aesthetics, ethics, and so forth.<sup>51</sup>

Kitagawa's applies his non-West-centric method to the various studies of "Japanese religion." His method corresponds with the first and second approaches of the study of religions he outlined, namely: (1) the general inquiry into diverse religions, and (2) the more specialized

study of specific religions. Through these two approaches, Kitagawa visualizes a unified interpretation of "Japanese religion" as a "religious/cultural/social/political synthesis." This unified vision of "Japanese religion" leads him to the third approach of the study of religion, namely, (3) the exploration into the general nature of "religion."

Kitagawa, in his recent publication, *The Quest for Human Unity*, further develops his comprehensive vision of "religious history" through his dual perspectives and three approaches. He applies his method to the history of various world religious traditions, ancient and modern, to create a vision of a global human unity based on his thesis that "religion" is a "religious/cultural/social/political synthesis." This book is Kitagawa's final contribution to the field of the history of religions. Kitagawa, in this work, tries to present a comprehensive human vision of religion.<sup>52</sup>

## 2. CRITICS OF KITAGAWA'S VISION OF JAPANESE RELIGIOUS HISTORY

Kitagawa's vision of the development of "Japanese religion" which appears in *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (1987), has its critics. Two such critics, Allan Grapard and Neil McMullin, attack Kitagawa's thesis of "Japanese religion" as a singular tradition. Grapard and McMullin argue that Kitagawa neglects the religious/cultural/social/political plurality and diversity in the history of Japanese religious experience in order to create a seamless vision of "Japanese religion."

Their criticisms expose a serious methodological defect in Kitagawa's quest for "Japanese religion," namely, Kitagawa's vision lacks analytical theory. For example, Kitagawa maintains that the ideas of "*obō-buppō*," "*shinbutsu-shūgō*," and "*honji-suijaku*" are the pillars of his vision of a "Japanese religion." Surprisingly, however, Kitagawa does not explain how these ideas actually functioned in Japanese religious history. I will in this section critically examine Kitagawa's methodology for the study of Japanese religious history through his critics, Allan Grapard and Neil McMullin.

### A. CRITIQUES OF KITAGAWA'S SINGULARITY THESIS OF JAPANESE RELIGION

After the publication of Kitagawa's *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (1987), Allan Grapard and Neil McMullin responded with critical reviews. Both of them cast grave doubts on Kitagawa's singularity thesis for the history of "Japanese religion." In his review published in 1990, Grapard writes "Kitagawa's interpretive work is guided by a fun-

damental presupposition that comes about in the systematic use of the term 'Japanese religion'.<sup>53</sup>

Grapard points out that Kitagawa uses the qualifying term "Japanese," to mean the "regional and subjective aspects of religion," and also "an overarching presence of immutable characteristics, shared by all Japanese people at all times, that makes religious behavior unmistakably Japanese."<sup>54</sup> Grapard wonders whether Kitagawa's systematic use of the singular in the term "Japanese religion" is based on the critical examination of historical sources, or whether it is his presupposition and "cultural exceptionalism."<sup>55</sup>

Kitagawa's singularity thesis appears in the first paragraph of his article, "Japanese Religion," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. I will compare the first paragraphs of "Japanese Religion" by Kitagawa (1), with "Korean Religion" by Yim et al. (2), also from the same encyclopedia, in order to clarify the difference between Kitagawa's and other usages of the singular term "religion" with regional qualifying terms. I quote Kitagawa's article first. Yim's article is quoted second.

(1) Like many other ethnic groups throughout the world, *the earliest inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago had from time immemorial their own unique way of viewing the world and the meaning of human existence and their own characteristic rituals for celebrating various events and phases of their individual and corporate life* To them the whole of life was permeated by religious symbols and authenticated by myths. *From this tradition an indigenous religious form, which came to be designated as Shinto, or "the way of kami," developed in the early historic period.* Many aspects of the archaic tradition have also been preserved as basic features of an unorganized folk religion. Meanwhile, through contacts with Korea and China, Japan came under the impact of religious and cultural influences from the continent of Asia. Invariably, Japanese religion was greatly enriched as it appropriated the *concepts, symbols, rituals, and art forms* of Confucianism, Taoism, the Yin-yang school, and Buddhism. *Although these religious and semireligious systems kept a measure of their own identity, they are by no means to be considered mutually exclusive; to all intents and purposes they became facets of the nebulous but enduring religious tradition that may be referred to as "Japanese religion."*<sup>56</sup>

Below is the opening passage of "Korean Religion." We are able to see the difference between these two articles in their usage of the singular and plural forms of "religion(s)" and "religious tradition(s)."



(2) *Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, often said to be Korea's major religions, all came to Korea from or through China* Another faith, indigenous to Korea, has usually been considered superstition rather than religion because it lacks an explicitly formulated, elaborated, and rationalized body of doctrine. Yet this indigenous creed possesses a rich set of supernatural beliefs, a mythology, and a variety of ritual practices. In recent years, therefore, an increasing number of scholars have come to recognize *this folk system of beliefs and rites as another of Korea's major religious traditions*<sup>57</sup>

Kitagawa, in his article, consistently uses the regional term "Japanese" with "religion" in the singular form to represent a particular religious tradition. He also identifies "indigenous religious form" (also in the singular) with "Japanese religion." Note that, although Yim's article uses the term "Korea" with "religion" in the singular form in its title, the authors of the article use the term "religions," or "religious traditions" in Korea in the plural form. Unlike Kitagawa, Yim does not insist on the existence of a "Korean religion" as a singular tradition.

Kitagawa acknowledges that like Korea various foreign religious "systems" have also existed in Japan. According to Kitagawa, these foreign religious "systems," however, once introduced into Japan miraculously became "facets" of "Japanese religion" nurtured by the soil of Japan. Kitagawa uses the term "Japanese" not merely as a regional qualifying term, but also a qualifying term of a religion which, according to Kitagawa, is uniquely and unanimously shared by the people living in the Japanese archipelago from time immemorial.

The drawback of the "singularity thesis" is not simply this potentially chauvinistic cultural exceptionalism. Rather, as Grapard points out, Kitagawa concentrates always on the aspect of permanence in "Japanese religion."<sup>58</sup> His method lacks the critical analysis of Japanese religious history, especially with respect to the mutual interactions between foreign and (what Kitagawa calls) indigenous Japanese traditions.

Kitagawa maintains that "Japanese religion" has developed from an "unnamed, unorganized, and unsystematized cluster of religio-magical views, beliefs, and practices of early Japan."<sup>59</sup> Kitagawa, however, overlooks the mutual interactions among separate traditions co-existing in the Japanese religious history. Grapard criticizes,

Thus, Japanese religion is presented in this book [*On Understanding Japanese Religion*] as an assortment of monolithic, separate traditions that rarely impinge on each other: Shinto, for example, is discussed as though it were an enduring phenomenon that underwent little or no significant historical change, and even as a



unique essence that kept reaffirming itself over and against all radical social and political changes.<sup>60</sup>

In Kitagawa's vision, there is no room for a critical analysis of Japanese religious history which is filled with tensions and conflicts among different traditions.<sup>61</sup>

Neil McMullin also presented his review on *On Understanding Japanese Religion* in 1989. McMullin points out another shortcoming of Kitagawa's singularity thesis of "Japanese religion." Like Grapard, McMullin criticizes Kitagawa's vision for neglecting the tension-filled dynamics of Japanese religious history. McMullin adds that Kitagawa not only neglected the horizontal diversity of Japanese religious history, but also the vertical dimension of diversity, e.g. its political and economical class structure, urban-rural divisions, and so on. McMullin writes,

We might ask whether there is, or ever was, such a thing as Japanese religion (singular)? The religious discourse of any age (not to mention across the ages) was *not* a single, unified one at all; rather, it was a tension-filled, multi-valent field of *competing* discourses that were differentiated one from the other *not* simply along horizontal sectarian/denominational lines (i.e., Buddhism, Shinto, Confucianism, etc.), but also along the *vertical* axis of class divisions and urban-rural divisions.<sup>62</sup>

Kitagawa, McMullin criticizes, systematically apoliticizes the horizontal and vertical dynamics of the religious experience of the Japanese.<sup>63</sup>

Here and there Professor Kitagawa refers to the masses, but as a rule they are treated as passengers on the ship of state and are not considered to have been major players in the religious dramas. Moreover, there is little mention of the conflict between the religious institutions and the state, or among and within those institutions, over the centuries, and faint recognition of the fractured, tension-filled character of so many of those communities.<sup>64</sup>

McMullin's critique presents, perhaps, a generic problem in Kitagawa's methodology for the history of religions. As I pointed out in section one, Kitagawa disavowed every conventional academic principle, which he often dubbed as "Western", including the critical methods of the social sciences. Although Kitagawa claims his methodology to be free of modern Western bias, it is not free of ideology.<sup>65</sup> Kitagawa's vision of "Japanese religion" tends to overlook, as McMullin mentions,

the vertical class structure of Japanese society. His vision tends to reflect a sense of history as it is visualized by the ruling powers. Kitagawa continually speaks about religious synthesis effected by the established power, but he avoids speaking about, for example, religiously inspired revolts against the central government's attempt to contain and control all religious movements.

Kitagawa does, however, sporadically mention new religious communities which arose during the Kamakura period. For him, the emergence of these new religious communities and the rise of a new feudal regime were coincidental.<sup>66</sup> Thus Kitagawa pays little notice to religiously-inspired civil disobedience, such as, the *ikkō ikki* and the *hokke ikki*. McMullin also criticizes Kitagawa for not taking into account why religious communities tried to dissociate themselves from the prevailing social system. In the next section, through Grapard's and McMullin's reviews, I will try to explain Kitagawa's reluctance to discuss the tension-filled dynamics of Japanese religious history.

## B. CRITIQUES OF KITAGAWA'S LACK OF ANALYTICAL THEORY IN HIS VISION OF JAPANESE RELIGION

In their reviews of Kitagawa's *On Understanding of Japanese Religion*, both Grapard and McMullin contend that Kitagawa does not provide a rational theory to explain how such ideas as *ōbō-buppō*, *honji-suijaku*, and *shinbutsu-shūgō* arose. Further, this lack of analytical theory resulted in Kitagawa's imprecise definition of "Shinto" and the Shinto tradition. Both Grapard and McMullin find it difficult to accept Kitagawa's definition and usage of the term "Shinto," because Kitagawa often loosely identifies "Japanese religion" with "Shinto" without sufficient explanation. Kitagawa seems to take this identity as a matter of "fact," even though, historically and historiographically, it remains largely unconfirmed. Nor does he provide sufficient explanation for this identity other than by saying that he has "more questions than answers about the Shinto tradition as a part of Japanese religion."<sup>67</sup>

In an article titled "Shinto," Kitagawa identifies "Shinto" to be a designation for an indigenous Japanese religion. He writes,

*Shinto, which is usually translated as the "way of the kami (gods)" (kannagara), is the indigenous religion of Japan. The term Shinto was coined in the sixth century A.D. by using two Chinese characters—shin (in Chinese, shen: unfathomable spiritual power, superhuman or god-like nature or being) and dō or tō (in Chinese, tao: way, path or teaching)—in order to differentiate the loosely organized native religious tradition from Buddhism, which was then*

being introduced to Japan. The beginnings of Shinto are clouded in the mists of the prehistory of Japan, and it eludes such simple characterizations as polytheism, emperor cult, fertility cult, or nature worship, although these features are embodied in it. Having no founder, no official sacred scriptures, and no fixed system of ethics or doctrines, Shinto has been influenced historically by Chinese civilization, especially Confucianism and Buddhism. Nevertheless, it has preserved its abiding, if nebulous, ethos throughout the ages. *Thus, in a real sense, Shinto may be regarded as the ensemble of contradictory and yet peculiarly Japanese types of religious beliefs, sentiments, and approaches, which have been shaped and conditioned by the historical experience of the Japanese people from the prehistoric period to the present.*<sup>68</sup>

Kitagawa's vague definition of Shinto may be easily accepted by the general reader. From the standpoint of view of the methodology of religious studies, however, Kitagawa's imprecision is critical. Grapard notes that "Kitagawa uses the same term, 'Shinto' to refer to the non-Buddhist tradition throughout Japanese history."<sup>69</sup> McMullin also points out that Kitagawa uses the term "Shinto" and "Japanese religion" interchangeably.<sup>70</sup> Kitagawa's usage can be justified, if his definition were limited to "Modern Shintoism." This claim would be a legitimate "autobiographical" description, as well as a correct "biographical" description of modern Shinto practice, if Kitagawa's proposed categories for understanding a religious tradition were used. But instead Kitagawa uncritically adopts the modern Shintoists' characterization of their Shinto tradition.<sup>71</sup>

Although Kitagawa maintains that the early Japanese coined the expression "Shinto" to distinguish their native religion from Buddhism, his "what-seems-very-obvious" claim that Shinto developed from an indigenous religious form in the early historic period may need revision as a result of recent archaeological and historiographical research. For example, Fukunaga Mitsuji, a Japanese scholar in Chinese Studies, proposes an alternative interpretation of pre-historic *kami* worship and Shinto. He suggests that what we believe to be early Shinto is "not so much an indigenous religion but merely a local brand of Taoism, and the word Shinto simply meant Taoism."<sup>72</sup> Kuroda Toshio, a Japanese historian, shares the same opinion. Kuroda argues that early "Shinto" is in fact a synonym for "Taoism."<sup>73</sup> Kuroda Toshio further critically examined the chronological changes in use of "Shinto" in the various historiographical records and concludes that the notion of Shinto as Japan's indigenous religion finally emerged complete both in name and in fact with the rise of modern nationalism.<sup>74</sup>

Grapard and McMullin point out that Kitagawa's view of the Shinto tradition arises because his methodology lacks an analytical theory from which the historical development of a religious tradition can be understood. Kitagawa presents a vision of "Japanese religion" as a unified "religious/cultural/social/political synthesis." He does not, however, theorize how the synthesis was achieved. As a result, the tension-filled dynamics of Japanese religious history dropped out of his vision.<sup>75</sup> Grapard and McMullin wonder why Kitagawa avoids theorizing on the historiographical issues which arose in the institutional history of Shinto. Grapard writes,

The problem arises precisely because Shinto is treated as an abstract set of religious ideas and not as a local-specific, ritual, institutional, and political system endowed with elite and popular dimensions and historically interacting with non-native systems. In this book [*On Understanding Japanese Religion*], which spans over twenty-five years of writing, the author does mention those interactions, but he never says more than that there is a phenomenon called "*Shin-Butsu-shugo*"... and a phenomenon called *honji suijaku*—which he never cares to define in such a manner that the reader might know the relation between the two phenomena.<sup>76</sup>

McMullin also writes,

Here and there Professor Kitagawa acknowledges the intimate relations between Buddhism and Shinto over the centuries, but as a rule he pays surprisingly little attention to the *honji-suijaku* mechanism, and does not take into account Kuroda Toshio's *kenmitsu taisei* theory<sup>77</sup> which helps us to overcome the inclination to treat the various religious traditions in pre-modern Japan as thoroughly separate and autonomous.<sup>78</sup>

McMullin raises an interesting point when he mentions Kuroda Toshio and his *kenmitsu taisei* theory. Kuroda's *kenmitsu taisei* theory is one of the major modern interpretations of the institutional development of medieval Japanese Buddhism.<sup>79</sup> This theory is crucial for understanding the development of the idea of *obō-buppō* in medieval and pre-modern Japan.<sup>80</sup> The fact that Kitagawa never acknowledges Kuroda's theory is an indication, I believe, that he is not interested in establishing analytical theory for his understanding of "Japanese religion."

### 3. "A PAST OF THINGS PRESENT": SOME ACCOUNTS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE DURING THE SEVENTH CENTURY

Even though Kitagawa does not provide a viable analytical theory of the Ritsuryō synthesis, he does provide an important perspective on the development of the Ritsuryō system during the seventh and eighth centuries, particularly in his two articles "A Past of Things Present": Notes on Major Motifs of Early Japanese Religions,"<sup>81</sup> and "Some Remarks on the Study of Sacred Texts."<sup>82</sup> These articles are his contributions to the critical study of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonshoki* (or *Nihongi*) which were compiled during the seventh and eighth centuries.

In these articles, Kitagawa maintains that these chronicles were heavily "Sinicized" by the compilers who rewrote the past from the perspective of the present. Even though the chroniclers were under foreign influence, he emphasizes that their essential unified vision of Japanese religion had not been altered. Contrary to Kitagawa's claim, however, various accounts in the chronicles clearly reveal the existence of plural traditions.

#### A. "A PAST OF THINGS PRESENT": KITAGAWA'S VISION

Kitagawa does not link the compilations of these two official chronicles, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonshoki*, directly with the Ritsuryō synthesis. He does, however, clearly believe that the ideology supporting the compilation of these chronicles had a significant role in creating the "immanent theocracy" of the Ritsuryō synthesis. Kitagawa writes,

{in these two articles}, I attempt to show that the so-called chronicles—the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*—were not unbiased ancient histories but *were written from the perspective of the Ritsuryō synthesis of the seventh and eighth centuries*. These chronicles contain mythologies of the old "imperial ideology," as N. Saigō has phrased it.<sup>83</sup>

These chronicles claim to record the oral history of ancient Japan. The texts were, as Kitagawa mentions, written by people who had their own political agenda, as well as that of the Ritsuryō system in mind. Undoubtedly they were equipped with the Chinese, or Continental, mental prisms through which they viewed the Japanese world.<sup>84</sup>

Kitagawa describes the existence of the political and intellectual background of the compilation of these national chronicles. Kitagawa writes,

the compilation of the *Kojiki* (The Records of Ancient Matters) and *Nihongi* (Chronicles of Japan) was ordered in A.D. 673 by Emperor Temmu in part to justify his accession to the throne after he usurped it from another emperor. By the time these two documents were completed in the eighth century (the *Kojiki* in 712; the *Nihongi* in 720) Japanese intelligentsia were well acquainted with the literary, legal, and philosophical traditions of China.<sup>85</sup>

As Kitagawa points out, the compilers of the chronicles were very knowledgeable about Chinese culture. One of the best known examples of their knowledge is found in the myth of the origin of the world. The outline of the story was obviously borrowed from the Chinese idea of *yin-yang wu-hsing*.<sup>86</sup> The intellectuals, who created the history of ancient Japan, were not critical historians. Nor were they neutral and objective. They intentionally created the new vision of ancient Japanese history in order to support the political discourse of the Ritsuryō politicians. Kitagawa writes,

It must also be mentioned in this connection that those who were engaged in writing and editing official chronicles in the seventh and eighth centuries were members of the cultural elite. Otherwise they would have lacked the time, opportunity, and motivation to study the native lore as well as to acquire the ability to read and write Chinese. Moreover, unlike the critical historian of our own time, the early Japanese chroniclers were court officials, and as such they shared the outlooks and politics of the government. Thus they viewed the past history of Japan—reversing the Augustinian formula<sup>87</sup>—as “a past of things present.” As the preface of the *Kojiki* explicitly states, it was the task of the chroniclers to correct the mistakes and corruptions of available court documents and provincial records as seen from their “present” perspective. *Such a project had its own agenda, rectifying the “mistaken” facts and “corrupt” documents and rearranging if need be the sequence of events in order to recreate or create the past as an integral constituent element of the present.*<sup>88</sup>

Kitagawa's analysis, however, stops here. He neither asks why the government needed to monopolize the past nor how it integrated the society by using this historical vision.

Kitagawa describes the recreation of history as if the production of official history were done only within a small circle of mostly “Sinicized” intellectuals. While Kitagawa emphasizes that Chinese civilization penetrated the intellectual discourse of the seventh and eighth



centuries, he discusses the foreign traditions only at the level of fragmented abstract ideas or concepts. When he talks about Japan, he suddenly reverts to a realm of simple, unitary, monistic, and mythical characteristics attributed to the early Japanese. Kitagawa writes,

With the penetration of Chinese civilization and Buddhism, the simplistic, unitary meaning structure of the early Japanese was greatly enriched. For example, Buddhism introduced the belief in the various realms of existence, whereas the Yin-Yang school offered cosmological theories based on the concepts of two principles (yin and yang), the five elements (metal, wood, water, fire, and earth), and the orderly rotation of these principles and elements in the formation of nature, seasons, and humankind. *Nevertheless, these and other theories and concepts from outside never completely obliterated the early Japanese unitary meaning structure.*<sup>89</sup>

But who were the Japanese under the Ritsuryō synthesis? Kitagawa does not discuss the concrete examples recorded in the chronicles. Contrary to Kitagawa's assertion, the chronicles record that the early Japanese may not have lived in a simple, unitary, monistic, and mythical realm unique to the Japanese. In the next section, I will examine some accounts of the Japanese during the pre-Ritsuryō era which reveal the early Japanese were not so indigenous as Kitagawa believes.

## B. SOME ACCOUNTS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE DURING THE SEVENTH CENTURY

We are not exactly sure of the identity of the early Japanese during the seventh century C.E. As far as the description in the *Nihonshoki* goes, the Japanese, whom the Ritsuryō ideologues wanted to unify, were not as uniquely indigenous as Kitagawa presumed. I cite two examples from the *Nihonshoki* which are accounts of the era of Empress Kōgyoku<sup>90</sup> (594-661).

The first account is a record of ritual prayers for rain during drought in 642 C.E.

[7th month, 25th day.] The Ministers conversed with one another, saying:—"In accordance with the teachings of the village *hafuri* [priest], there have been in some places *horses and cattle killed as a sacrifice to the Gods of the various (Shinto) shrines*, in others *frequent changes of the market-places, or prayers to the River-Gods*. None of these practices have had hitherto any good result." Then Soga no Oho-omi answered and said:—"The *Mahayāna Sutra* ought



*to be read by way of extract in the temples, our sins repented of, as Buddha teaches, and thus with humility rain should be prayed for.*" 27th day. In the South Court of the Great Temple, the images of Buddha and of the Bosatsu, and the images of the four Heavenly Kings, were magnificently adorned. A multitude of priests, by humble request, read the "Mahāyāna Sutra." On this occasion *Soga no Oho-omi held a censer in his hands, and having burnt incense in it, put up a prayer.* 28th day. A slight rain fell. 29th day. The prayers for rain being unsuccessful, the reading of the "Sutra" was discontinued.

8th month, 1st day. The Emperor [sic] made a progress to the river-source of Minamibuchi. Here he [sic] knelt down and prayed, *worshipping toward the four quarters* and looking up to Heaven. Straightway there was thunder and a great rain, which eventually fell for five days, and plentifully bedewed the Empire...

Hereupon the peasantry throughout the Empire cried with one voice, "Bansai," and said, "An Emperor of Exceeding virtue!"<sup>91</sup>

In the first passage, we see three different types of religious practices according to the vertical social classes: 1) "animal sacrifices" of popular *kami* worship, 2) a "ritual of sutra chanting" of aristocratic Buddhism, and 3) an imperial ritual of "worshipping toward the four quarters." Popular *kami* worship and the imperial practice were both obviously of Chinese origin and most likely Taoist practices.<sup>92</sup>

The second account is of the emergence and persecution of a popular religious movement in 644 C.E.

Autumn, 7th month. A man of the neighborhood of the River Fuji in the East Country named Ohofu Be no Oho urged his fellow-villagers to *worship an insect*, saying:—"This is the God of the Everlasting World. Those who worship this God will have long life and riches" At length the wizards and witches, pretending an inspiration of the Gods, said:—"Those who worship the God of the Everlasting World will, if poor, become rich, and, if old, will become young again." So they more and more persuaded the people to cast out the valuables of their houses, and to set out by the roadside sake, vegetables, and the six domestic animals. They also made them cry out:—"The new riches have come!" Both in the country and in the metropolis people took the insect of the Everlasting World and, placing it in a pure place, with song and dance invoked happiness. They threw away their treasures, but to no purpose whatever. The loss and waste was extreme. Hereupon *Kahakatsu, Kadono no Hada no Miyakko*, was wroth that the people should be so much deluded, and slew

*Ohofu Be no Oho. The wizards and witches were intimidated, and ceased to persuade people to this worship.* The men of that time made a song, saying:—Udzumasa has executed the God of the Everlasting World who we were told was the very God of Gods. The insect is usually bred on orange trees, and sometimes on the Hosoki. It is of a grass-green colour with black spots, and in appearance entirely resembles the silkworm.<sup>93</sup>

In the second passage, we find, perhaps, the earliest account of the persecution of a popular religious practice, which was of Chinese origin, and which was most likely Taoist.<sup>94</sup>

Japanese people during the seventh century had developed fairly systematized teachings and rituals, and were organized into communities. Besides the aristocratic Buddhist practices, the popular and imperial religious practices recorded in the *Nihonshoki* were not indigenous, but of Chinese origin, perhaps Taoist. Foreign traditions existed, not only abstract ideas or concepts among the "Sinicized" intellectuals. These foreign traditions were being practiced by many Japanese. According to accounts in the *Nihonshoki*, the religious lives of the Japanese did not seem, contrary to Kitagawa's vision, to be uniquely indigenous.

The historicity of these records is uncertain. The compiler's intention in these accounts was to authenticate imperial practices and to subordinate popular and aristocratic religious practices. The Ritsuryō politicians employed "Sinicized" intellectuals to rectify the "mistaken" and "corrupt" popular religious practices, and to rearrange them if necessary to create or recreate an unified "immanent theocracy." Kitagawa, however, here again avoided discussing the hidden agendas of the Ritsuryō politicians. Grapard and McMullin rightly point out that Kitagawa tends to "mystify" and "romanticize" the "immanent theocracy."<sup>95</sup> Kitagawa, during his entire academic career, never critically examined how the ideal of the "immanent theocracy" was created and applied to the Japanese people in the course of their history.

### C. HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ORIGINS OF THE IDEAS OF ŌBŌ-BUPPŌ, SHIN-BUTSU-SHŪGŌ, AND HONJI-SUIJAKU

Kitagawa's lack of concern with analytical theory is, I suspect, produced by his inattention to the historiographical perspective in his method of studying "Japanese religion," which makes his thesis of "Ritsuryō synthesis" more controversial. Kitagawa argues that the major elements of "Ritsuryō synthesis," during the seventh and eighth century, are the ideas of *ōbō-buppō*, *shin-butsu-shūgō*, and *honji-suijaku*. These ideas, however, did not exist historiographically during the sev-

enth and eighth century. The major principles of the Ritsuryō system conceived by Kitagawa include *ōbō-buppō*, *shin-butsu-shūgō*, and *honji-suijaku*. In an article published in 1991, Kitagawa reconfirms his thesis:

Elsewhere I have stated that the foundation of the Ritsuryō synthesis was based on three broad principles, namely, (1) *the mutual dependence between the sovereign's law (ōbō, in Japanese, which was in effect a homology of the earlier Japanese feature of tribal- or uji-chieftainship and the Chinese-Taoist cosmological notion of the monarch, operating in the Chinese-Confucian-inspired notion of sociopolitical order) and Buddha's Law (Buppō, in Japanese, which was also believed to authenticate the legitimacy of the sovereign's rule in Japan)*, (2) *the institutional syncretism between Shinto and Buddhist ecclesiastical systems (Shin-Butsu shūgō, in Japanese, which preceded the doctrinal formula of the amalgam of the two religions as a practical accommodation of Shinto edifices and practices on the Buddhist temple-owned lands and also de facto recognition of Buddhist establishments on Shinto shrine-owned areas)*, and (3) *the belief that the original nature of Japanese kami were Buddhas and bodhisattvas in India (honji sui-jaku, in Japanese, that gradually emerged as an eclectic folk belief, which was given more articulate Buddhist doctrinal interpretation after the tenth century, later precipitating the reverse honji sui-jaku theory that asserted Japanese kami as the original nature of Buddhas and bodhisattvas)*. Although *the external structure of the Ritsuryō synthesis was greatly altered* by the regency of the Fujiwara oligarchy, the rule by the nominally retired ex-monarchs, and the rule by the shogun (the military administrator), *the overall framework of the Ritsuryō system—notably its three underlying principles—survived until the sixteenth century.*<sup>96</sup>

Kitagawa defends these three principles as supports for his understanding of the Ritsuryō synthesis by appealing to the famous "Vow (*ganmon*)" of Saichō (762-822), the founder of the Japanese Tendai school. Kitagawa writes,

Saichō, called posthumously Dengyō Daishi (A.D. 767-822), described himself in his famous vow as "the greatest among all fools, and the least worthy among men, having violated the teaching of the Buddha and the laws of the sovereign, and failed in filial piety and propriety...."<sup>97</sup> Thus he portrayed himself as both a firm believer in *Ōbō-Buppō* mutual dependence and a practitioner of the Shinto-

Buddhist-Confucian combination which was the main tenet of the Ritsuryō system.<sup>98</sup>

Kitagawa's interpretation of Saichō's passage is, however, problematic and misleading, because the original passage neither mentions the mutual dependence of *ōbo-buppō* nor does it refer to Shinto. According to the original text of Saichō's Vow, "having violated the teaching of the Buddha *and* the laws of the sovereign, *and* failed in filial piety and propriety" should be read as "First, I have often violated the teaching of Buddhas. Second, I have often deviated from the sovereign's law. Third, I have often failed in filial piety and propriety."<sup>99</sup>

We can see from this passage of the "Vow (*ganmon*)," that Saichō portrayed himself neither as "a firm believer in *Ōbo-Buppō* mutual dependence" nor as "a practitioner of the Shinto-Buddhist-Confucian combination" in contradiction to what Kitagawa would have us believe. Rather, Saichō is, in all possibility, reflecting on his conduct, first, with reference to the Buddha's law, which he believes to be universal, second, with reference to the state law, which is a secular law he is to obey, and third with reference to individual moral and ethical conduct, which he defines with Confucian expression. Saichō, in this passage, places Buppō before the state law. He makes mention of the Buddha's law and uses Confucian terminology. But he makes no reference to Shinto. Kitagawa arbitrarily replaces conjunctions and punctuation in Saichō's original words to create his own vision of Saichō's thought.

There are, in addition, some major flaws in Kitagawa's notion of the Ritsuryō synthesis. First the idea of mutual dependence between *ōbō* and *buppō* did not appear in historical documents until the early eleventh century, approximately four hundred years after the Ritsuryō system was formulated. Neil McMullin writes,

*From the eleventh century there appear in the documents declarations to the effect that although the ōbō and the buppō are two in terminology, they are one in reality. The ōbō, with its sanction of the kami, and the buppō, with its sanction of the Buddhas, formed the two chambers of the heart of a single living organism, the Japanese body politic.*<sup>100</sup>

Under the Ritsuryō system institutional Buddhism was controlled by the *sōniryō*, laws for Buddhist institutions to regulate monks (*sō*) and nuns (*ni*). In the Ritsuryō government, the relationship between the Buddhist institutions and the government was not mutual, but one-sided. The secular government materially and financially supported the spiritual institution and in return the temples guaranteed its prosper-

ity and protection. This relationship is crystallized in the term *chingo-kokka* (protection of the of the state).<sup>101</sup>

The two possible interpretations of the relationship between the idea of the *chingo-kokka* and the *ōbō-buppō* are that (1) the latter is a direct expansion of the ideal of the Ritsuryō government as a result of the development of Buddhist institutions through the support of the Ritsuryō government, and (2) the latter is the declaration of institutional independence of Buddhism from the Ritsuryō government by which Buddhists claim that they are not the servants of the sovereign's law. In either case, mutuality of *ōbō-buppō* did not gain currency until the early eleventh century.

The second and third principles, *shin-butsu-shūgō*, and *honji-suijaku*, were also absent in the Ritsuryō system. In the Ritsuryō system, government regulations of the *kami* affairs and Buddhist affairs were clearly separated. Kuroda Toshio writes,

As the section following the *jingiryō* in the *ritsuryō*, the government drew up the *sōniryō*, laws for Buddhist institutions, to regulate priests and nuns. By compiling the *sōniryō* separately from the *jingiryō*, the government placed ceremonies for *kami* in a different dimension from religions such as Buddhism which exerted a special influence on society through its high doctrines.<sup>102</sup>

The idea of *shin-butsu-shūgō* first became popular during the late eighth century. The idea of *honji-suijaku* was introduced to support institutional amalgamation, or more likely the annexation of shrines of the local *kami* by Buddhist institutions during the mid-ninth century. Kuroda Toshio summarizes the process of the development of the ideas of the *shin-butsu-shūgō* and *honji-suijaku*,

As is already well known, between the late eighth century and the eleventh century Shinto and Buddhism gradually coalesced with one another (*shinbutsu shūgō*)—or, more precisely, veneration of the *kami* was absorbed into Buddhism through a variety of doctrinal innovations and new religious forms. Among the doctrinal explanations of the *kami* were the following: 1) the *kami* realize that they themselves are trapped in this world of samsara and transmigration and they also seek liberation through the Buddhist teachings; 2) the *kami* are benevolent deities who protect Buddhism; 3) the *kami* are transformations of the Buddhas manifested in Japan to save all sentient beings (*honji suijaku*); and 4) the *kami* are the pure spirits of the Buddhas (*hongaku*)... The first stage in this process of Shinto-Buddhist syncretization covered the late eighth

*century and early ninth century. During that period the first two doctrinal explanations of kami, mentioned above, became current*<sup>103</sup>

Historical evidence indicates that the idea of *shinbutsu-shūgō* first appeared during the late eighth century, and that the ideas of *ōbō-buppō* and *honji-suijyaku* did not exist during the seventh and eighth centuries. Consequently these three principles could not have provided the essential framework for the Ritsuryō system. On the contrary, these principles emerged during the late Nara (the late eighth century) and Heian periods, a time when the Ritsuryō system was eroding. In fact, among these principles the idea of *ōbō-buppō* was often used by influential Buddhist monasteries to protect and expand the privileges of tax-exempt temple estates outside the Ritsuryō system.<sup>104</sup>

#### D. TRANSFORMATION OF THE IDEA OF *ŌBŌ-BUPPŌ* AND THE TOKUNAGA SYNTHESIS

Kitagawa's lack of analytical and historiographical concerns naturally produces another confusing vision of "Japanese religion" when he applies his thesis of "Ritsuryō synthesis" to interpret the historical transformation of "Japanese religion." For example, when he discusses the rhetoric of mutual dependence of *ōbō-buppō*, Kitagawa does not examine the social-political context in which the idea of *ōbō-buppō* was used or the historical transformation of the socio-political meanings behind the idea. In his explanation of "Tokugawa synthesis," Kitagawa maintains that the Tokugawa government dropped the principle of *ōbō-buppō* (the principle of mutual dependence of the sovereign's law and the teaching of the Buddha). Kitagawa asserts that after the decline of the Ashikaga shogunate,

It took three strongmen, Oda Nobunaga (d. 1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (d. 1598), and Tokugawa Iyeyasu [sic] (d. 1616), to unify Japan. The first two, Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, gave lip service to the sovereign's law (*ō-bō*), but *rejected the first cardinal principle of the Ritsuryō synthesis: that the sovereign's law needed the cooperation of the Buddha's law (buppō) for the sake of the nation*. Both men thus campaigned against powerful Buddhist institutions, such as Mount Hiei and Mount Kōya, and the main temple of the True Pure Land school (*Jōdo Shinshū*) at Ishiyama (present Osaka). Thus ended the coherence of the once influential Ritsuryō system form of religious-cultural-social-political synthesis, which had dominated the Japanese religious-cultural universe from the seventh century.<sup>105</sup>



Kitagawa's argument that the Tokugawa government *dropped* the principle of *ōbō-buppō* is misleading for two reasons. First, the shōgunate had essentially nothing to do with the idea of the mutual dependence of the sovereign's law and the Buddha's law, which applied specifically to the emperor (*ō*), and which had been concocted by Buddhist institutions during the Heian period. Second, the rhetoric of mutual dependence was a claim always made by Buddhist institutions, not by the court or the shōgunate. Accordingly, the shōgunate was in no position to abandon a claim which it had never made.

Furthermore, historically, the Tokugawa shogunate neither dropped nor rejected the idea of the *ōbō-buppō*. What changed was the relationship between the *ōbō* and the *buppō*. First of all, the principle of *ōbō-buppō* had not always implied mutual dependence. Neil McMullin describes the historical transformation of the rhetoric of *ōbō-buppō*.

In the mid-Heian period, for example, as the monastery-shrine complexes became richer and stronger, the definition of the nature of the relationship between the *ōbō* and the *buppō* changed from one that described the *buppō* as the servant of the *ōbō* to one that identified the two as equals. From the late Heian through the medieval periods, the relation between the *ōbō* and the *buppō* was likened to the relation between the two wings of a bird, the two horns of a cow, and the two wheels of a cart: the *ōbō* and the *buppō* were, so to speak, the two oars that propelled the Japanese ship of state.<sup>106</sup>

Thus, the idea that the principle of *ōbō-buppō* was based on mutuality changed in accordance with the relationship between Buddhist institutions and secular authority. As McMullin noted, the idea of mutual dependence appeared during the late Heian period, not during the formative period of the Ritsuryō system as Kitagawa assumes.

Further, the idea of the mutual dependence between *ōbō-buppō* was always a view advocated by Buddhist institutions. Moreover, secular authority did not fully accept the rhetoric propagated by the Buddhist monasteries. McMullin writes,

[There is a] question of just how pervasive and persuasive the "*ōbō-buppō* mutual dependence rhetoric" might have been in the late medieval period. He [Martin Collcutt] suggests that it was a one-sided rhetoric on the part of the monasteries, and that there is no reason to think that the sixteenth century *daimyō* ever accepted that rhetoric "or anything like parity between Buddhist claims and secular claims."<sup>107</sup>



McMullin and other scholars reject Kitagawa's contention that *obō-buppō* had been the "first cardinal principle." Furthermore, Kitagawa's belief that the relationship between *obō* and *buppō* was a mutual one was rejected by Oda Nobunaga, who campaigned most fiercely against the major Buddhist institutions. Nobunaga used the idea of the *obō-buppō* to justify his attacks on the True Pure Land School. His aim was to subjugate the True Pure Land and other Buddhist institutions to his secular power. For Nobunaga *obō-buppō* meant ruler and ruled.

Nobunaga arranged the final surrender of Kenryo, the head of Honganji, through imperial emissaries, giving Honganji's defeat the appearance of submission to imperial will and not to his own forces. Far from being an enemy of the law, of faith, of the public order, Nobunaga instead posed as its defender. *Obō ihon*, the official *Ikko* doctrine that upheld respect for the secular order (*obō*) as fundamental, was subsumed under the new equation that identified *obō* with *tenka*, with Nobunaga.<sup>106</sup>

With Oda Nobunaga, *buppō* became once more a servant of *obō*. This time, however, *obō* was controlled by the military government, not by the imperial court. Toyotomi Hideyoshi continued Nobunaga's policy. He, however, helped to restore those Buddhist institutions which surrendered to his authority. Tokugawa Ieyasu also followed Hideyoshi's policy. In retrospect, Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa neither dropped nor rejected the idea of the *obō-buppō*. They subjugated and utilized both the secular and religious authorities, the *obō* and the *buppō* on behalf of their military power.

## CONCLUSION

Joseph Kitagawa, throughout his academic career, opposed classifying the study of the history of religions as one of the divisions of modern Western modes of analysis. Kitagawa called for the integration and balance of "biographical (outsider's)" and "autobiographical (insider's)" perspectives so as to understand this holistic synthesis of human experience, called "religion." Religion is a synthesis of religious/cultural/social/political human experience. His academic pursuit of "Japanese religion" employs this dual perspective.

Kitagawa's synthetic vision of the development of "Japanese religion" in *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, however, has been severely criticized. Critics challenge Kitagawa's thesis that "Japanese religion" is a singular tradition. This singularity thesis sacrifices the religious/cultural/social/political diversity in the history of Japanese religious traditions for the sake of creating a seamless vision of "Japa-

nese religion." Kitagawa's critics also cite Kitagawa's vision of "Japanese religion" for its inadequate theoretical support. Kitagawa does not cogently address how his vision is historically related to the people living in the society.

Kitagawa pursues only a religious/cultural/social/political synthesis. Thus, he constantly avoids discussing religious/cultural/social/political conflicts. Kitagawa's critics point out that Kitagawa tends to mystify and romanticize "immanent theocracy." During his entire academic career, Kitagawa never critically theorizes how his religious/cultural/social/political synthesis applied to and transformed the history of the Japanese people.

Kitagawa does, however, provide an important perspective in understanding the development of the Ritsuryō system during the seventh and eighth centuries, which is crucial to his vision of "Japanese religion." Particularly, Kitagawa did make a significant contribution to the critical study of the chronicles the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonshoki* (or *Nihongi*). But one problem in Kitagawa's studies of these ancient chronicles is his one-sided emphasis of the singular and unified vision of "Japanese religion." Contrary to Kitagawa's claim, however, various accounts in the chronicles reveal the existence of plural traditions.

While Kitagawa presented his version of a unified "Japanese religion," he did not specify where his vision came from. Kitagawa's approach to "Japanese religion" is, unfortunately, historically and historiographically not conversant with current academic work in the field. The most serious problem in Kitagawa's works on "Japanese religion," I believe, is that Kitagawa's approach to Japanese religious history is methodologically uncritical.

Kitagawa is a sharp critic of modern Western critical theory. His methodology itself is a critique of conventional methodology. The question remains for others to speculate upon why Kitagawa avoided articulating a theoretical basis for his thesis.

I would like to close this paper with Terry Eagleton's remark on "theory," which characterizes the difference of viewpoint between Kitagawa and his critics.

Children make the best theorists, since they have not yet been educated into accepting our routine social practices as 'natural,' and so insist on posing to those practices the most embarrassingly general and fundamental questions, regarding them with a wondering estrangement which we adults have long forgotten. Since they do not yet grasp our social practices as inevitable, they do not see why we might not do things entirely differently. 'Where does

capitalism come from, mummy?" is thus the prototypical theoretical question, one which usually receives what one might term a Wittgensteinian reply: 'This is just the way we do things, dear.' It is those children who remain discontent with this shabby parental response who tend to grow up to be emancipatory theorists, unable to conquer their amazement at what everyone else seems to take for granted.<sup>109</sup>

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Neil McMullin, a Canadian historian of Japanese religions, praises, "It was largely through the efforts of Professor Kitagawa that the

Japanese religious traditions came to be studied in the West, and he is one of the intellectual parents of virtually all of us in the field of Japanese Religious Studies." Neil McMullin, "On Understanding *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, A Critique of Joseph Kitagawa's Opus in the Field of Japanese Religious Studies," Berkeley: Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1990. Photocopied. Paper distributed by the author at the Numata Lecture [1990, Fall] at the Institute of Buddhist Studies. This paper was originally presented to the Society for the Study of Japanese Religion and reprinted in the *Supplement to the May 1989 Issue of the Japanese Religions Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Japanese Religion* (June 1989).

According to the bibliographical notes in one of Kitagawa's publications, he studied at Rikkyō University in Tokyo, Japan. Kitagawa came to the United States in 1941, and briefly enrolled at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific before the outbreak of World War II. He spent three and a half years during the War at camps for persons of Japanese ancestry in New Mexico and Idaho. He was ordained an Episcopal minister, during his internment, in 1942. Kitagawa became an American citizen in 1955. He also studied at Seabury Western Theological Seminary and the University of Chicago. He taught the history of religions from 1951-85 at the University of Chicago where he served as Dean of the Divinity School, 1970-80. Kitagawa was President (1969-72) of the American Society for the Study of Religion, a past chairman of ACLS's Committee on the History of Religions, and former vice-president of Conseil International Philosophie Sciences Humaines. Joseph Kitagawa passed away on October 7, 1992. His major publications include *Religion in Japanese History*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), *The History of Religions: Understanding Human Experience* (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1987), *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), and *The Quest for Human Unity: A Religious History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990). See Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, ed., *Religious Studies, Theological Studies and the University-Divinity School*, (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992), 198, and an obituary in *History of Religion*, 32 (1993).

- <sup>2</sup> Kitagawa maintains that "Japanese religion" should not be interpreted to be "an umbrella term overarching a group of disparate and coexisting religious and semireligious systems." Kitagawa, "Dimensions of the East Asian Religious Universe," *History of Religions* 31 (1991): 187.
- <sup>3</sup> For example, Kitagawa says that "Japanese religion was greatly enriched as it appropriated the concepts, symbols, rituals, and art forms of Confucianism, Taoism, the Yin-yang school, and Buddhism. Al-



though these religious and semireligious systems kept a measure of their own identity, they are by no means to be considered mutually exclusive; to all intents and purposes they became facets of the nebulous but enduring religious tradition that may be referred to as 'Japanese religion.'" Kitagawa, "Japanese Religion," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 7 (New York: Macmillan, 1986), 520.

- <sup>4</sup> In a paper originally published in 1981, Kitagawa states that "In retrospect it becomes evident that the Ritsuryō ideologies of monarchy and government, which were developed from the intricate fusion of indigenous and Chinese features during the seventh and eighth centuries, characterized by sacred kingship and an immanentist theocratic government, remained a classical paradigm throughout pre-modern Japanese history." Kitagawa, "Monarchy and Government: Traditions and Ideologies in Pre-Modern Japan," in *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 96.

<sup>5</sup> Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, xii-xiii.

<sup>6</sup> Kitagawa, "Monarchy and Government," 96.

<sup>7</sup> English translation is available by Donald L. Philippi, *Kojiki*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969).

<sup>8</sup> English translation is available by W. G. Aston, *Nihongi, Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles Tuttle Company, 1896, reprint 1972).

<sup>9</sup> Kitagawa reflects that "After studying the history of religions for some time, I came to be struck by the simple and obvious fact that underneath the Westerner's way of dividing human experience into a series of semi-autonomous pigeonholes—religion, philosophy, aesthetics, ethics, and so forth." Kitagawa, "A Historian of Religions Reflects upon His Perspectives," *Criterion* 28 (Spring 1989): 8.

<sup>10</sup> Kitagawa says, "Working in the history of religions, I worry about the elusive meaning, status, and identity of the notion of 'religion.' I am inclined to agree with Mircea Eliade's sentiment that 'it is unfortunate that we do not have at our disposal a more precise word than 'religion'. . . ' (Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969], preface). Unfortunately, we have not discovered a better notion to replace this ambiguous and difficult term, although I am currently exploring the feasibility and adequacy of focusing on the 'religious/cultural/social/political synthesis' rather than simply on what Western convention designates as 'religion,' a move which you might have noticed in my 'Introduction' to *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (see my effort to articulate the Ritsuryō, Tokugawa, and Meiji forms of religious/cultural/social/political synthesis)." Kitagawa, "A Historian of Religions Reflects upon His Perspectives," 8.



- <sup>11</sup> Of the ten titles, two are from the Chinese tradition—A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao* (1989), and Anne D. Birdwhistell, *Transition to Neo-Confucianism* (1989)—and eight are from the Japanese tradition; Bunsaku Kurata and Yoshiro Tamura, eds., *Art of Lotus Sutra* (1987), George J. Tanabe Jr. and Willa Jane Tanabe, eds., *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture* (1989), Yoshifumi Ueda and Dennis Hirota, *Shinran* (1989), James C. Dobbins, *Jōdo Shinshū* (1989), Carl Bielefeldt, *Dōgen's Manuals of Zen Meditation* (1988), Mary Evelyn Tucker, *Moral and Spiritual Cultivation in Japanese Neo-Confucianism* (1989), Helen Hardacre, *Shinto and the State 1868-1988* (1989), and Willis Stoesz, *Kurozumi Shinto* (1989).
- <sup>12</sup> This article is the most concise and comprehensive summary of Kitagawa's approach to the study of history of religions. In the opening passages of the article, Kitagawa briefly comments that the article is also his response to reactions to his *On Understanding Japanese Religion*.
- <sup>13</sup> Kitagawa quotes the analogy attributed to Sir Hamilton Gibb to explain the difference between "biographical" and "autobiographical" perspectives. Sir Gibb writes, "Islam is the religion of Muslims [biographical], but to Muslims Islam is the religion of truth [autobiographical]." See Kitagawa, "A Historian of Religions Reflects upon His Perspectives," 6.
- <sup>14</sup> Kitagawa says, "Although I have felt my share of personal tension, I have been motivated to study, and to hold in balance, three related and equally demanding orientations to the study of religion(s): 1) general inquiries into diverse religions; 2) more specialized studies of specific religions; and 3) explorations into the general nature of 'religion.'" See Kitagawa, "A Historian of Religions Reflects upon His Perspectives," 5.
- <sup>15</sup> Kitagawa, "A Historian of Religions Reflects upon His Perspectives," 6.
- <sup>16</sup> Kitagawa describes the existing Western bias in the study of non-Western religion. "Throughout my career, I have met a number of otherwise sophisticated and fair-minded Western historians of religions and Orientalists who think that the only thing non-Westerners should do is present histories as "raw materials," as it were, for Western scholars to analyze and interpret with West-centric critical methods. (I have become increasingly uncomfortable, too, with a similar orientation still held in some quarters of Western Japanological studies. On this score, I sometimes wonder whether our current Japanese linguistic-thought systems...can really deal adequately with the pre-modern Japanese religious and cultural materials.)" Kitagawa, "A Historian of Religions Reflects upon His Perspectives," 9.

<sup>17</sup> Kitagawa, "A Historian of Religions Reflects upon His Perspectives," 6.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 7. Emphasis added.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>23</sup> This interpretation was probably first presented in his article, "Japanese Religion," 520–538. (This article is also available in *The Religious Traditions of Asia* [New York: Macmillan, 1987]: 305–332). The interpretation was a product of Kitagawa's continuous studies on the subject which were published under the title *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, in 1987. His interpretation of a unified vision of "Japanese religion" is concisely summarized in the preface of the book (ix–xxii). As he mentions in the preface, this is a substantially updated version of his earlier concept of Japanese religious history presented in the *Religion in Japanese History* published in 1966.

<sup>24</sup> Kitagawa mentions that he has "studied Japanese religion and Buddhism for what the richness of these traditions might contribute to my understanding of the history of religions." (ix) He also defines Japanese religion to be "non-revelatory," and seems to differentiate the use of the term "religion" and "religious systems." He calls Confucianism, Taoism, Yin-yang school, and Buddhism specific "religious systems" when he refer to their influence on Japanese "religion." Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, xi.

<sup>25</sup> Kitagawa says, "Like many other ethnic groups throughout the world, the earliest inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago had from time immemorial their own unique way of viewing the world and the meaning of human existence and their own characteristic rituals for celebrating various events and phases of their individual and corporate life. To them the whole of life was permeated by religious symbols and authenticated by myths." Kitagawa, "Japanese Religion," 520.

<sup>26</sup> Kitagawa says, "According to this paradigm, the total cosmos—including physical elements such as fire, water, wood, and stone, as well as animal and celestial bodies—is permeated by sacred, or *kami*, nature." Kitagawa, "Paradigm Change in Japanese Buddhism," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 260.

<sup>27</sup> Kitagawa, "Japanese Religion," 520.

<sup>28</sup> Kitagawa, "Paradigm Change in Japanese Buddhism," 260.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, xii.

<sup>31</sup> Kitagawa, "A Historian of Religions Reflects upon His Perspectives," 9.

- <sup>32</sup> See Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, xii.
- <sup>33</sup> Kitagawa says, "While no one is absolutely certain, most scholars recognize the appearance of a certain kind of pottery with characteristic rope-like markings somewhere around the fourth millennium B.C. as the first sign of the earliest phase of the prehistory of Japan, known as the Jōmon (literally, 'code pattern,' which indicates the pottery decoration) period. The Jōmon period, which had a sub-Neolithic level of culture, was followed around 250 B.C. by the Yayoi (so named because of pottery of this period unearthed in the Yayoi district of Tokyo) period, which had lasted until about A.D. 250. During this period, hunting and fishing continued, but people also acquired the arts of rice cultivation, spinning, and weaving, as well as the use of iron, and established communities in the lowlands. It is widely held that the culture of this period was a blending of northeast Asian, Korean, Chinese, and other cultural influences with the residual features of the earlier Jōmon tradition. The Yayoi period was succeeded by what archaeologists call the Kofun ("Tumulus") period, which covered the period of A.D. 250–600 or the earliest phase of Japanese history." Kitagawa, "Shinto," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 140.
- <sup>34</sup> Kitagawa, "Japanese Religion," 522. See also, Kitagawa, "Shinto," 140.
- <sup>35</sup> Kitagawa, "Prehistoric Background of Japanese Religion," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 39–40. Emphasis added.
- <sup>36</sup> The origin of the Ritsuryō system in Japan is an outcome of the Taika reform (645–646), a political power struggle over imperial succession. The newly enthroned emperor Kōtoku (596–654), supported by prince Nakano Ōe (626–671) and Nakatomi no Kamatari (614–669), issued an edict "to consolidate the power of the centralized government by such Chinese-style measures as land redistribution, collection of revenues, and a census. During the second half of the seventeenth century the government, utilizing the talents of those who had studied in China, supported the compilation of a written law. Significantly, those penal codes (*ritsu*; Chinese, *li*) and civil statutes (*ryō*; Chinese, *ling*), which were modeled after Chinese legal systems, were issued in the name of the emperor as the will of *kami*. The government structure thus developed during the late seventh century is referred to as the Ritsuryō ('imperial rescript') state." Kitagawa, "Japanese Religion," 525. The first imperial rescript, *Taihō-ritsuryō* (the Taihō Penal and Civil Codes), was promulgated in 702. The rescript was soon replaced by *Yōrō-ritsuryō* (the Yōrō Penal and Civil Codes) enacted in 757.
- <sup>37</sup> Kitagawa says, "In retrospect it becomes evident that the Ritsuryō ideologies of monarchy and government, which were developed from the intricate fusion of indigenous and Chinese features during the seventh and eighth centuries, characterized by sacred kingship and

an immanent theocratic government, remained a classical paradigm throughout pre-modern Japanese history." Kitagawa, "Monarchy and Government," 96. See also 87–89.

<sup>38</sup> Kitagawa, "Monarchy and Government," 88.

<sup>39</sup> Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, xii–xiii. See also "Monarchy and Government," 83–97, and "Dimensions of the East Asian Religious Universe," 194–195. Kitagawa's claim that these principles are the foundation of the Ritsuryō synthesis of the seventh and eighth centuries is, however, highly controversial. I will discuss this problem later in the third section of this paper.

<sup>40</sup> Kitagawa says, "Ironically, while the Ritsuryō system came to be regarded as a classical paradigm in Japan, it never functioned as well as the architects of the system intended. Rather, the reality of Japanese life throughout the pre-modern period compelled the nature of both the monarchy and the government to be modified, without, however, rejecting altogether the Ritsuryō ideal as such." Kitagawa, "Monarchy and Government," 90.

<sup>41</sup> Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, xiv. See also Kitagawa, "Dimensions of the East Asian Religious Universe," 201–202.

<sup>42</sup> Kitagawa's argument that the Tokugawa government "dropped" the principle of *obō-buppō* is misleading because the shōgunate had essentially nothing to do with the idea of mutual dependence of the sovereign's law and the Buddha's law, as it was in fact concocted by Buddhist institutions during the Heian period. I will discuss this problem later in the third section of this paper.

<sup>43</sup> Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, xiv.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., xiv–xv.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., xv, and Kitagawa, *The Quest for Human Unity*, 146. Kitagawa's argument, here, is confusing. If the theory of "*honji-suijaku*" is taken literally, that is, if the Japanese deities are manifestations of the original nature of the Buddha, this principle was, logically speaking, also officially abolished along with the separation of Shinto from Buddhism. Kitagawa, however, changed the meaning of "*honji-suijaku*" to mean the equation of *kami* and Buddha without any explanation.

<sup>47</sup> Kitagawa, "Dimensions of the East Asian Religious Universe," 187.

<sup>48</sup> Kitagawa further says, in this article published in 1991, "Unfortunately, in dealing with East Asian religious traditions, I am far less informed about the state of scholarship on Chinese religious traditions than on its Japanese counterpart. In addition, *I have not come across many recent works (with some notable exceptions) that deal with significant differences or the interrelationships between Chinese*

and Japanese traditions." Kitagawa, "Dimensions of the East Asian Religious Universe," 187. Emphasis added. This comment is very surprising. Fukunaga Mitsuji and Yoshino Hiroko's works which discuss the close affinity of the Japanese *kami* worship and Taoism were published in the past two decades. Also Kuroda Toshio's article on Shinto, which I mentioned earlier, was published in 1981 in English. These works substantially changed the direction in the study of Japanese religious culture, which used to be dominated by the cultural exceptionalist thesis. According to recent archaeological and historiographical studies, "the perspective [which] suggests that 'Japanese religion' is not a coherent reality" is not only a historical perspective but also has already become a part of historical reality of the Japanese religious culture. See Kuroda Toshio, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," translated by James C. Dobbins and Suzanne Gay, *Journal of Japanese Studies*, 7 (1981): 9–13. See also Fukunaga Mitsuji, ed. *Dōkyō to higashi ajia: Chūgoku, Chōsen, Nihon*, (Kyoto: Jinbun shoin, 1989), and Yoshino Hiroko. *In'yō gogyō to nihon no minzoku* (Kyoto: Jinbun Shoin, 1983).

<sup>49</sup> Kitagawa, "A Historian of Religions Reflects upon His Perspectives," 9.

<sup>50</sup> Kitagawa, "Dimensions of the East Asian Religious Universe," 187–188.

<sup>51</sup> Kitagawa, "A Historian of Religions Reflects upon His Perspectives," 8.

<sup>52</sup> Kitagawa's preliminary sketch of a global vision of "religion" is found in his article originally published in 1973, "Religion as a Principle of Integration and Cooperation for a Global Community," reprinted in Kitagawa, *The History of Religions, Understanding Human Experience*, 165–173.

<sup>53</sup> Allan G. Grapard, "Enduring Problems in the Study of Japanese Religions," 73. It is important to note, however, that throughout Kitagawa's work, the use of the term "Japanese religion" is inconsistent. He seems to have two contradictory understandings of "Japanese religion." On the one hand, he defines it as "the unnamed, unorganized, and unsystematized cluster of religio-magical views, beliefs, and practices of early Japan." Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 259. This definition seems to refer to early Shinto. Furthermore he states that he has "studied Japanese religion and Buddhism," (ix) and that "Buddhist studies is obviously a legitimate area quite apart from Japanese religion as such" (ibid.), again implying that "Japanese religion" is to be equated with Shinto as opposed to Buddhism.

On the other hand, as Grapard notes, in Kitagawa's book overall "Japanese religion" is presented as "an assortment of monolithic, sepa-

rate traditions that rarely impinge on each other and that must be studied independently from each other." Grapard, "Enduring Problems in the Study of Japanese Religions," 75. Kitagawa himself says that "the way to study Japanese religion is to study these traditions [Buddhism, Taoism, Shinto, etc.] separately." Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, x. Kitagawa thus also uses the term "Japanese religion" as a blanket term indicating all religious traditions that exist in Japan.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>55</sup> Grapard writes, "In other words, on the basis of the title alone, one is led to wonder whether Japan is to religion what Bach is to music (this might be an interesting question, but it is not asked) or whether Japan offers merely a variation on a theme and therefore does not deserve to be treated from the point of view of cultural exceptionalism. Furthermore, one might say that the use of the singular leaves little room for dissenting or competing views within Japanese society, either in the past or today, and makes little allowance for argument within academic circles, be they Japanese or not. One might posit the thesis that the way in which all competing views interact with each other, either in the past or today, is what forms religion in the Japanese context, but that is not advanced either. And, although Kitagawa makes passing references to 'paradigmatic change' in Japanese history, it is not the modalities of that change that are studied in any detail: the emphasis in these articles is on permanence, and that is paradigmatic of Kitagawa's approach to, and conceptualization of, his field of inquiry." Grapard, "Enduring Problems in the Study of Japanese Religions," 74. Emphasis added.

<sup>56</sup> Kitagawa, "Japanese Religion," 520. Emphasis added.

<sup>57</sup> Yim Suk-jay, Roger L. Janelli, and Dawnhee Yim Janelli, "Korean Religion," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 8, 367-368. Emphasis added.

<sup>58</sup> Grapard says that "the emphasis in these articles is on permanence, and that is paradigmatic of Kitagawa's approach to, and conceptualization of, his field of inquiry." Grapard, "Enduring Problems in the Study of Japanese Religions," 74.

<sup>59</sup> Kitagawa defines "Japanese religion" thus: "By the phrase 'Japanese Religion' I refer to the unnamed, unorganized, and unsystematized cluster of religio-magical views, beliefs, and practices of early Japan." Kitagawa, "Paradigm Change in Japanese Buddhism," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 259.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 75.

<sup>61</sup> In a recent article, Kitagawa explains this process by the formula of "inclusion by reconnection" which is suggested by William Ernest



Hocking. See Kitagawa, "Dimensions of the East Asian Religious Universe," 194. See also William Ernest Hocking, *Living Religions and a World Faith* (New York: Macmillan, 1940), 190–208.

Kitagawa's view of "Japanese religion" is always on the side of the "permanent" which has maintained that religion's unchanging character and which has continuously transformed foreign traditions. The following comment clearly represent Kitagawa's analytical paradigm; "I believe that it was this strong impact of Esoteric insights that later enabled the *Japanese Buddhist tradition to be integrated so smoothly into the mainstream of Japanese religion*" Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, xx. Emphasis added.

Kitagawa, however, has also studied Buddhism as a separate tradition which is "obviously a legitimate area quite apart from Japanese religion as such." Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, ix. The result is his very confusing view of Japanese Buddhism; "Contrary to those who uphold the 'plural belonging theory'—that the Japanese belong simultaneously to Shinto, Buddhist, Confucian, folk religious, and other traditions—I believe that *Japanese Buddhists are self-consciously heirs of both historic Buddhism and Japanese religion*" Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, xx. Emphasis added.

<sup>62</sup> McMullin, "On Understanding *On Understanding Japanese Religion*," 21.

<sup>63</sup> See McMullin, "The *Encyclopedia of Religion*: A Critique from the Perspective of the History of the Japanese Religious Traditions," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 1/1 (1989): 80–96.

<sup>64</sup> McMullin, "On Understanding *On Understanding Japanese Religion*," 21.

<sup>65</sup> McMullin points out Kitagawa's rhetoric often shows close affinity with the mental prism of pre-war Japanese. McMullin writes that, "Also, the nativeness of Shinto is stressed persistently by Professor Kitagawa, as is the foreignness of Buddhism. This is, I suggest, Meijispeak. If Buddhism is not part of Japanese Religion, then what is it? Is Japanese Buddhism not as native to the Japanese world as European Christianity is to the European?" McMullin, "On Understanding *On Understanding Japanese Religion*," 24. McMullin also writes in his review of Kitagawa's article in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, "At one point it explains the new Meiji government's legislated separation of divinities and buddhas toward the end of the nineteenth century thus: 'the government's feeling [note the choice of terms] was that the Shinto-Buddhist amalgam of the preceding ten centuries was contrary to indigenous religious tradition' (Vol. 7, 533). This is obscurantist in the extreme: it is like saying that the Christian Church

condemned Galileo for supporting Copernican heliocentrism because of its 'feeling' that that view was contrary to indigenous European religious tradition. Posh! The dangerous implication of the decentralization of the Church's place in human society, etc. The Meiji politicians, whom the ER portrays as, at heart, history-of-religion purists who wanted to correct a ten-centuries-long theological fallacy, were cold-eyed ideologues who redefined the religious discourse in order to have it support the newly developing state ideology. The entry cited immediately above acknowledges that the Meiji thinkers were trying to create an overarching new religion called State Shinto, but the crass, oppressive, and duplicitous character of that enterprise is completely muted in that entry. Why is a profoundly important political-ideological development portrayed in such anaemic terms?" McMullin, *"The Encyclopedia of Religion,"* 85–86.

<sup>66</sup> Neil McMullin writes, "Consider, for example, the following quotation: 'The establishment of the feudal regime (*Bakufu*) in Kamakura in the thirteenth century *coincided with* these new Buddhist movements [Pure Land, Nichiren, Zen, etc.] (p.225, emphasis added).' What does 'coincided with' mean? Surely it was more than a 'co-incidence' that the new religious movements appeared at precisely the same time that the classical Japanese world was being transformed into feudal one. Professor Kitagawa asserts, in quoting one of his earlier works, that he studies Japanese religion's 'involvement in the social and political life of the nation' (p. xii), but as a rule, in his works, religion maintains a considerable distance from the rest of society: he sees proximity where there is intertwining, and intertwining where in fact there is little or no distinction at all to be made." McMullin, *"On Understanding On Understanding Japanese Religion,"* 25.

<sup>67</sup> Kitagawa asks himself that "Is the imperial system *esse*, *bene esse*, or accidental to Shinto? What other institutions or qualities are necessary for Shinto? Unfortunately, I have more questions than answers about the Shinto tradition as a part of Japanese religion." Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, xviii–xix.

<sup>68</sup> Kitagawa, "Shinto," 139. Emphasis added.

<sup>69</sup> Grapard, "Enduring Problems in the Study of Japanese Religions," 75.

<sup>70</sup> McMullin writes, "I find some confusion in Professor Kitagawa's definitions of Shinto and Japanese Religion in that he appears to use those terms interchangeably. For example, at one point he defines Japanese Religion as 'the unnamed, unorganized, and unsystematized cluster of religio-magical views, beliefs, and practices of early Japan' (p.259), but elsewhere he offers an almost identical definition of Shinto. Namely, 'Sometime during the sixth century the term "Shinto" was

coined, to refer to the hitherto unnamed and unsystematized native magico-religious tradition' (p.260)." McMullin, "On Understanding On Understanding Japanese Religion," 24.

- <sup>71</sup> Kitagawa especially does not inquire into the institutional development of Shinto tradition during the medieval period. As specialists in medieval Japanese religious history, Grapard and McMullin point out that Kitagawa presents a confused definition of Shinto, because he tends to describe the historical development of Shinto tradition as a history of the liberation of a mystical indigenous tradition from foreign Buddhist control. For some aspects of Medieval Shintoism, See McMullin, "On Placating the Gods and Pacifying the Populace: the Case of the Gion Goryō Cult," *History of Religions* 27/3 (1988): 270–293, and Grapard, "Institution, Ritual, and Ideology: the Twenty-Two Shrine-Temple Multiplexes of Heian Japan," *History of Religions* 27/3 (1988): 246–269.

- <sup>72</sup> Kuroda, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," 6.

- <sup>73</sup> Kuroda writes, "Another possible interpretation of Shinto in the *Nihon shoki* is Taoism. Based on recent studies, it is clear that Shinto was another term for Taoism in China during the same period. Moreover, as Taoist concepts and practices steadily passed into Japan between the first century A.D. and the period when the *Nihon shoki* was compiled, they no doubt exerted a considerable influence on the ceremonies and the beliefs of communal groups bound by blood ties or geographical proximity and on those which emerged around imperial authority. Among the many elements of Taoist origin transmitted to Japan are the following: veneration of swords and mirrors as religious symbols; titles such as *mahito* or *shinjin* (Taoist meaning—perfected man, Japanese meaning—the highest of eight court ranks in ancient times which the emperor bestowed on his descendants), *hijiri* or *sen* (Taoist—immortal, Japanese—saint, emperor, or recluse) and *tennō* (Taoist—lord of the universe, Japanese—emperor); the cults of Polaris and the Big Dipper; terms associated with Ise Shrine such as *jingu* (Taoist—a hall enshrining a deity, Japanese—Ise Shrine), *naiku* (Chinese—inner palace, Japanese—inner shrine at Ise), *geku* (Chinese—detached palace, Japanese—outer shrine at Ise), and *taiichi* (Taoist—the undifferentiated origin of all things, Japanese—no longer in general use, except at Ise Shrine where it has been used since ancient times on flags signifying Amaterasu Ōmikami); the concept of *daiwa* (meaning a state of ideal peace, but in Japan used to refer to Yamato, the center of the country); and the Taoist concept of immortality. Early Japanese perhaps regarded their ceremonies and beliefs as Taoist, even though they may have differed from those in China. Hence, it is possible to view these teachings, rituals, and even the

concepts of imperial authority and of nation as remnants of an attempt to establish a Taoist tradition in Japan. If that is so, *Japan's ancient popular beliefs were not so much an indigenous religion but merely a local brand of Taoism, and the word Shinto simply meant Taoism.* The accepted theory today is that a systematic form of Taoism did not enter Japan in ancient times, but it is not unreasonable to think that over a long period of time Taoism gradually pervaded Japan's religious milieu until medieval times when Buddhism dominated it completely . . . Moreover, *when Buddhism was introduced into Japan there was a controversy over whether or not to accept it, but there is no indication that these popular beliefs were extolled as an indigenous tradition. Hence, Shinto need not imply a formal religion per se, and it need not indicate something which is uniquely Japanese.*" Kuroda, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," 6–7. Emphasis added.

<sup>74</sup> Kuroda writes, "The notion of Shinto as Japan's indigenous religion finally emerged complete both in name and in fact with the rise of modern nationalism, which evolved from the National Learning school of Motoori Norinaga and the Restoration Shinto movement of the Edo period down to the establishment of State Shinto in the Meiji period. The Meiji separation of Shinto and Buddhism (*shinbutsu bunri*) and its concomitant suppression of Buddhism (*haibutsu kishaku*) were coercive and destructive 'correctives' pressed forward by the hand of government. With them Shinto achieved for the first time the status of an independent religion, distorted though it was. *During this period the 'historical consciousness' of an indigenous religion called Shinto, existing in Japan since ancient times, clearly took shape for the first time.* This had remained the basis for defining the word Shinto down to the present. Scholars have yielded to this use of the word, and the population at large has been educated in this vein.

"There is one further thing which should be pointed out. That is that separating Shinto from Buddhism cut Shinto off from the highest level of religious philosophy achieved by the Japanese up to that time and *inevitably, moreover artificially, gave it the features of a primitive religion.* Hence, while acquiring independence, Shinto declined to the state of religion that disavowed being a religion." Kuroda, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," 19. Emphasis added.

<sup>75</sup> McMullin writes, "He [Kitagawa] states that religion 'is *closely related to other aspects of human life*' (p. xi, emphasis added), and he recognizes a 'proximity' (p. xi) of the various components of premodern Japanese societies, but he does not explain *how* religion and those other aspects of life were related." McMullin, "On Understanding On Understanding Japanese Religion," 24–25. And Grapard writes,

"Whether one looks at an article written in 1960 or at another written in 1980, Kitagawa never raises any historiographical issue, and this static framework leaves no room for 'intraproduct' historical treatments of any of the movements, no room for an analysis of the crises and conflicts that must have animated their founder, no room for the study of the protests that must have taken place, either symbolically or not, through Japanese history. In other words, we are never told what the conditions of production, maintenance, or rejection, of religious discourse were. The net result of that approach is that, since historical dialectics never seem to impinge on its formulation, Japanese religion is treated as though it formed a single entity that consists of neatly separated categories: the elite (Buddhist) tradition, the Shinto tradition, and folk religion. While this may appear to be a convenient and, to some students of Japanese cultural history, a proper way to establish fields of academic inquiry, it might also be seen as the result of unexamined conceptions of history on the one hand, and of religions on the other." Grapard, "Enduring Problems in the Study of Japanese Religions," 76-77. As Grapard notes, there are also significant problems in Kitagawa's historiographical approach. The most serious problem is his indifference to it.

<sup>76</sup> Grapard, "Enduring Problems in the Study of Japanese Religions," 75. Emphasis added.

<sup>77</sup> Kuroda concisely summarizes his *kenmitsu taisei* thesis as follows; "Nominally, medieval Buddhism comprised eight sects, but it was not unusual for individuals to study the teachings and rituals of all the sects. The reason is that the eight held a single doctrinal system in common, that of *mikkyō* or esoteric Buddhism (Skt. Vajrayāna). The medieval period had *mikkyō* as their base, combined with the exoteric teachings or *kengyō* (Buddhist and other teachings outside of *mikkyō*) of each of the eight schools—Tendai, Kegon, Yuishiki (Hossō), Ritsu, etc. These eight sects, sometimes called *kenmitsu* or exoteric-esoteric Buddhism, acknowledged their interdependence with state authority, and together they dominated the religious system of medieval Japan. Shinto was drawn into this Buddhist system as one segment of it, and its religious content was replaced with Buddhist doctrine, particularly *mikkyō* and Tendai philosophy. The term *kenmitsu* used here refers to this kind of system. At the end of the twelfth century, various reform movements arose in opposition to this system, and there even appeared heretical sects which stressed exclusive religious practices—the chanting of the *nembutsu*, *zen* meditation, etc. Nonetheless, the *kenmitsu* system maintained its status as the orthodox religion until the beginning of the sixteenth century." Kuroda, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," 11-12.

The *kenmitsu* system which includes virtually everything religious in Japan was, however, not merely religious but also depended on powerful temple-shrine-estate complexes. These religious-secular powers claimed the *ōbō-buppō* mutual dependence to protect their tax-exempted estates. The authority of *kamis* associated with the *kenmitsu* system, such as Kasuga Shrine or Hie Shrine, often used by the Buddhist institutions to claim their power to override the *ōbō*, or the secular authority.

<sup>75</sup> McMullin, "On Understanding *On Understanding Japanese Religion*," 24.

<sup>79</sup> See McMullin, *Buddhism and the State in Sixteenth-Century Japan*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 8–9. See also McMullin, "On Understanding *On Understanding Japanese Religion*," 24–25.

<sup>80</sup> Kitagawa must know about Kuroda and his theory because he cites Kuroda at least twice in his works. See 'footnote 38' in Joseph Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 58, and "Dimensions of the East Asian Religious Universe," 195. In the latter article, he even recommends Kuroda's article on *honji-suijaku* theory that "I am of the opinion that if readers have only limited to read about the Lotus tradition, they should read (at least) the last chapter [sic] of this volume [George J. Tanabe Jr. and Willa Jane Tanabe, eds., *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture*], entitled "Historical Consciousness and Hon-jaku Philosophy in the Medieval Period on Moun Hiei," by a leading historian, Kuroda Toshio." Ironically, however, if readers read the article, they will find Kuroda's statement that *honji-suijaku* theory "appeared in texts from the latter half of the ninth century and became the basis for the combinations and associations of Shinto and Buddhist divinities [page 144]." This obviously contradicts Kitagawa's assertion in his article (page 194) that *honji-suijaku* theory as one of the fundamental principles of the Ritsuryō synthesis which, he believe, appeared during the seventh century). See section four "Historiographical Critiques of Kitagawa's Vision of Japanese Religion" in this paper.

<sup>81</sup> Originally published in 1980. Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 43–58.

<sup>82</sup> Originally published in 1979. Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 59–68.

<sup>83</sup> Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, xvi. Emphasis added.

<sup>84</sup> Kitagawa writes, "Undoubtedly the eighth-century chroniclers in Japan were greatly indebted to Chinese Historical writings. Indeed, it was the influence of Chinese thought that initially aroused the historical consciousness of the Japanese, whereby the Japanese began to review their racial memories of the past by using Chinese chronicles



as their guide. Thus the meaning (or overarching idea) as well as the significance (the relationship between the meaning of the text and something outside the text) of *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* will not become intelligible unless we compare them with Chinese historical writings and delineate the differences between the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi* on the one hand and Japanese and Chinese historiography of the other." Kitagawa, "Some Remarks on the Study of Sacred Texts," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 64.

<sup>85</sup> Kitagawa, "Some Remarks on the Study of Sacred Texts," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 63.

<sup>86</sup> In *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, the editor notes that "Elements of Chinese cosmology were most apparent in rationalistic passages explaining the origin of the world in terms of the yin and yang principles, which seem to come directly from Chinese works such as *Huainan tsu*. The prevalence of paired male and female deities, such as Izanagi and Izanami, may also be a result of conscious selection with yin and yang principles in mind. Also the frequency of Seven Generations of Heavenly Deities of the *Nihongi*, may represent an attempt at selection and organization in terms of Chinese cosmological series in this case the Five Elements and Seven Heavenly Luminaries." Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 1, (New York: Columbia University, 1958): 24-25. The Chinese influences in the opening passages of the *Nihonshoki*, especially, have been criticized since the eighteenth century by the Shintoists, like Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), and Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843). See the *Nihon shoki*, Book 1, Part 1 and Aston, *Nihongi*, 1-2.

Fukunaga Mitsuji also identifies a possible source of the *Kojiki's* opening passages in a text called *Chiu-t'ien-shêng-shên-ching* in *Tao-tsang*. The text, which was compiled during the sixth century, explains the births of the gods in the same pattern; three gods (three primordials; *san-yüan*) > five gods (five elements; *wu-hsing*) > seven gods (*yin-yang* and *wu-hsing*, or seven heavenly bodies), and the expression that these gods are invisible. See Fukunaga Mitsuji, *Dōkyō to nihon shisō*, (Tokyo: Tokuma shoten, 1985), 216-236, and *Chiu-t'ien-shêng-shên-ching* in *Tao-tsang*, vol. 3, 266. See also Philippi's *Kojiki*, Preface, Chapter One, and Chapter 2.

<sup>87</sup> St. Augustine says, "What now is clear and plain is, that neither things to come nor past are. Nor is it properly said, 'there be three times, past, present, and to come:' yet perchance it might be properly said, 'there be three times; a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things future.'" *Confession*, Book 11 [XX], 26.

<sup>88</sup> Kitagawa, " 'A Past of Things Present': Notes on Major Motifs of Early Japanese Religions," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, 54. Emphasis added.

<sup>89</sup> Kitagawa, "A Past of Things Present," 45. Emphasis added.

<sup>90</sup> Empress Kōgyoku reigned (642–644) before the Taika-reform (645–646). The result of the Taika-reform provided the basis for introducing the Ritsuryō system.

<sup>91</sup> Aston, *Nihongi*, vol. 2, 174–175. Emphasis added.

<sup>92</sup> Sacrificing horses and cattle, changing the market-places, and offering prayers to the River-Gods are popularly practiced in China for rain during the drought season. See commentary in Sakamoto Tarō, Iendaga Saburo, Inoue Mitsusada, and Ōno Susumu, eds. *Nihon shoki*, *Nihon koten bungaku taikei*, vol. 68. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967), 240–241. Fukunaga Mitsuji identifies Empress Kōgyoku's worshipping toward the four quarters to be a Taoist practice of worshipping Peitou (the Big Dipper). Fukunaga, *Dōkyō to kodai nihon* (Kyoto: Jinbun shoin, 1978), 249–250, and Fukunaga, *Nihon no dōkyō iseki* (Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1987), 186–188.

<sup>93</sup> Aston, *Nihongi*, vol. 2. 188–189. Emphasis added.

<sup>94</sup> Fukunaga, *Dōkyō to kodai no tennōsei* (Tokyo: Tokuma shoten, 1982), 67–69.

<sup>95</sup> McMullin writes, "I suggest that Professor Kitagawa tends to 'spiritualize' or, in stronger terms, 'other-worldly'ize' religious traditions, and to 'doctrinalize' them and to emphasize their enchanted dimension.[20]" He also writes, "There is also quite a bit of romanticization of the Japanese tradition in general in the works of Professor Kitagawa. For example, he states that 'It is virtually impossible to explain the history of the Fujiwara family . . . to non-Japanese' (p.xviii), and that 'only those who live within Japanese culture and society can fully understand the mystique of Japan, although not every Japanese attains such a lofty goal' (p.294)! . . . I consider modern Texas to be far more incomprehensible than Heian Japan.[26]" McMullin, "On Understanding *On Understanding Japanese Religion*," 20 and 26.

Grapard writes, "Kitagawa states that in ancient times Japan was 'a world in which all facets of daily living were considered religious acts,' that there was 'no line of demarcation between sacred and profane dimensions of life' or between ritual and government, and that 'this principle lasted until 1945' (p.71). This kind of generalization contributes to the mystique that some Japanese have fostered about themselves in a nativistic, nationalistic context. It is to be associated with the claim that the authors of Japanese mythology 'historicize the Yamato myths concerning the legendary first emperor Jimmu' (p.89) which might be countered with the opposite, namely, that they (who-

ever they were) mythologized remembrances of Jimmu. The author treats the question of the religious aspects of oligarchy and kingship as if there was a set of institutions that sustained the ideas in question or that there were antithetic forces. For him, there is no conflict whatever in Japanese history." Grapard, "Enduring Problems in the Study of Japanese Religions," 77.

<sup>96</sup> Kitagawa, "Dimensions of the East Asian Religious Universe," 194-195. Emphasis added.

<sup>97</sup> An abridged translation of Saichō's vow by Kitagawa is in Wing-tsit Chan, I.R. al-Fārūqī, J.M. Kitagawa, and P.T. Raju, comps., *The Great Asian Religions: An Anthology* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), 266-267.

<sup>98</sup> Kitagawa, "Preface," *On Understanding Japanese Religion*, xii.

<sup>99</sup> 上達於諸仏。中背於皇法。下闕於孝礼。 See Andō Toshio and Sonoda Kōyū, eds, *Saichō, Nihon shisō taikēi*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1974), 395.

<sup>100</sup> McMullin, "Historical and Historiographical Issues in the Study of Pre-Modern Japanese Religions," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, 16/1 (1989): 14. Emphasis added.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>102</sup> Kuroda, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," 8. Emphasis added. *Jingiryō* is a set of laws which instituted ceremonies to the *kami*.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. Emphasis added. Kuroda also writes that the *honji-suijaku* theory "appeared in texts from the latter half of the ninth century and became the basis for the combinations and associations of Shinto and Buddhist divinities." Kuroda, "Historical Consciousness and Honjaku Philosophy in the Medieval Period on Mount Hiei," George J. Tanabe Jr. and Willa Jane Tanabe, eds., *The Lotus Sutra in Japanese Culture*, [Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989]: 144. Ironically, Kitagawa in his article, "Dimensions of the East Asian Religious Universe" (page 195), recommends Kuroda's article on *honji-suijaku* theory, writing "I am of the opinion that if readers have only limited time to read about the Lotus tradition, they should read (at least) the last chapter [sic] of this volume . . . by a leading historian, Kuroda Toshio." If readers peruse the article, however, they will find out that, contrary to Kitagawa's assertion, *honji-suijaku* theory cannot be the fundamental principle of the Ritsuryō synthesis which, Kitagawa believes, appeared during the seventh century.

<sup>104</sup> See McMullin, *Buddhism and the State*, 15-58.

<sup>105</sup> Kitagawa, "Dimensions of the East Asian Religious Universe," 201. Emphasis added.

<sup>106</sup> McMullin, "Historical and Historiographical Issues in the Study of Pre-Modern Japanese Religions," 14-15.

- <sup>107</sup> McMullin, "Historical and Historiographical Issues in the Study of Pre-Modern Japanese Religions," 15. See also Martin Collcutt's review of "Buddhism and the State in Sixteenth-Century Japan by Neil McMullin," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 12/2 (1986): 406.
- <sup>108</sup> Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 34. Nobunaga identified himself as *tenka* which literally means "the realm." See Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology*, 33.
- <sup>109</sup> Terry Eagleton, *The Significance of Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 34.