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Review: Although the Shinto religion is the major indigenous religious tradition of Japan it is remarkable that, compared with Buddhism, there is no very great flood of publications on the subject. The earliest period of Japanese culture, including Shinto, has been addressed with some good studies and translations. Similarly the modern period from the mid-nineteenth century onwards has also attracted top-quality research, partly because of the political relevance. Yet this leaves many centuries of history for which first-class studies of Shinto in western languages are simply lacking. The purpose of Bernhard Scheid's study of "Yoshida Shinto" is to help to bridge the gap between the ancient and the modern periods. It is a very original piece of work which makes a most significant contribution to the overall history of Shinto.

The emergence of "Yoshida" Shinto, under the leadership of Yoshida Kanetomo (1435-1511) was one of the most important steps in the development of Shinto. His activity was of immense political importance because it was the Yoshida Shrine in the then capital of Kyoto which managed to get the role, under the Emperor, of licensing Shinto priests all over Japan until this power was rescinded centuries later. Having lost its national influence the shrine nowadays seems just a little sad. At the time however the authorities of Yoshida Shrine were in a position to define what Shinto is, that is, to construct or invent it ideologically. For this reason it is appropriate that the recent perception of Shintô as a series of "inventions" or reinventions should find expression in the sub-title of the work ("Yoshida Kanetomo und die Erfindung des Shinto").

The work takes full account of recent Japanese scholarship regarding the way in which the history of Shintô and its relationship to Buddhism is to be viewed. It provides a substantial account not only of the teaching of Yoshida Shinto but also of the rituals which it carried out and supervised. Thus we have a complete historical picture of the newly established, official religion. Not only that, we are provided with a translation of three relevant texts. These are extremely well presented with an informative but not over-weighted commentary and thereby made quite accessible. The texts are *Sangen juhachi shinto shidai* (a prescriptive ritual text, rather mysteriously titled and pieced together here from various sources), *Shinto taii* ("The basic meaning of Shintô" or "basic meaning

of the way of the kami") and *Yuiitsu shinto myobo yosho* ("Outline of the nomenclature and principles of Yuiitsu Shinto"; translated by the author a little more literally as "Grundzüge von Namen und Gesetz des Einen und Einzigen Shinto). The two latter texts convey the main ideas of Yuiitsu Shinto, which as the name, literally "one and only Shinto" implies, was intended to set up Shinto clearly over against the dominating influence of Buddhism.

It may not seem difficult to say briefly what Yuiitsu Shinto is about, when standard histories are adduced, but when it comes down to more detailed study and research there are endless practical problems in doing ground-breaking research and finding the right terminology for presenting the materials in a non-Japanese language. Bernhard Scheid has performed a fine service here for Japanologists and specialists in the history of religions alike.

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