

On Ainu etymology of key concepts of Shintō: *tamashii* and *kami*

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Abstract

Shintō is the first and the basic religion of Japan. In most works on Shintō it is said that its central object is *kami* but almost nothing is said about etymology and meaning of this concept. In this paper I made an attempt to clarify this question. In Ainu religion there is concept *kamuy* that looks much alike *kami*. Ainu concept *kamuy* can be explained through the concept of *ramat*. Japanese concept *kami* also shapes a pair with concept of *tamashii*. I have come to the following conclusions: Japanese *tamashii* originated from Ainu *ramat* and Japanese *kami* originated from Ainu *kamuy*; *ramat/tamashii* means “vital energy exists”, it is something like energy/ether that fills the universe; *kamuy* means “item filled by [*ramat*]”; *kamuy/kami* are beings/items that have a lot of *ramat* and can share it; aim of any Shintō rite is to get more *ramat/tamashii*.

Key words: *ramat*, *kamuy*, *tamashii*, *kami*, Shintō, Root Shintō

Introduction

It is well known that Shintō is the first and the basic religion of Japan. Along with Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism it shapes spirit landscape of Japanese culture. Shintō is the only religion of Japan which was not imported but is of islands origin.

It is important to note that term Shintō would better be revised because it is just an artificial term invented in the period of Nara (more exactly about 720 AD) in order to distinguish believes of islands origin from Buddhism and Taoism.

First time term Shintō was used in 日本書記“Nihon-shoki”; in the scroll about emperor Yōmei 用明 it is said 天皇信佛法尊神道“Emperor believed in the doctrine of Buddha and honored the way of *kami*” (Nihon shoki); and the term become widely spread in Heian epoch.

Term Shintō “the way of of *kami*” was invented according to Chinese model of naming of different doctrines: in Chinese culture there are many doctrines, and each of them was called as “a way something”.

As far as Chinese culture is culture of written signs, doctrines and concepts can be pretty fully expressed in written signs and through those signs can be step by step pretty fully acquired.

Due to this gradually acquire appears the analogy of ‘way’, i.e. gradually moving to a certain aim. Actually Shintō was not a ‘way’, it was not a systematic doctrine or a belief which was expressed in written signs but it was just a ‘heap’ of rather amorphous cults of islands origin with some borrowings from Buddhism and Taoism.

Well, so this term should be revised or should be used with certain degree of awareness: when we use term Shintō we accept the Chinese point of view and introduce Chinese system into a world which was completely different. That’s why I would prefer to name the subject of actual consideration *atmospheric cult* or *atmospheric cults of early Japan*.

The concept of *atmospheric cult* can be described as an amorphous system of believes one of main point of which is nature worship; it is usually based on a set of principles connected by

their inner logic so it isn't eclectic but it isn't as elaborated in its details as religions of statehood stage.

Also adepts of an atmospheric cult can relate with some super natural being having no detailed image of the being and have dim knowledge: who this being really is, for example: make some offerings to the owner of forest having no definite image of this being, having no definite image of its shape or sex and so on.

When we look at contemporary Shintō we see well elaborated rites made of eclectic mix of very different traditions. At first in second and in the third sight Shinto is just a system of rites a system of well elaborated practices of communication with *kami*.

Not just foreigners but even Japanese people often think of Shintō as just a system of special rites with lack of philosophy behind the rites. But Shintō also has its own philosophy as well as any other spiritual tradition but in contemporary Shintō it is piled by late borrowings and different eclectic practices.

And if we are going to see this philosophy we have to detach late borrowings we have to go to the root of this tradition, i.e. we have to turn to so called root Shintō because it was then when all elements of this tradition were quite logically connected.

Though some anthropologists think that rite is more important than myth; here rite means practice and myth means not stories of deities but ideas or philosophy which is behind certain rite.

I think myth is much more important than rite because myth is like grammar system and rite is like an actual performance of grammar: a person knows a language when he/she knows its grammar system and can produce phrases according to its grammar, and a person who learnt just some often used greetings but has no knowledge of grammar hardly can be considered as a speaker of a certain language.

Culture as well as language can be represented as an ordered pair of the following view $\langle A; \Omega \rangle$ where A is a set of certain memes/morphemes/concepts and Ω is a set of distributions upon A . The situation in religion studies is much alike: if you have good image of philosophy of certain spiritual tradition then you see its inner logic well and can interpret any performances of that system right way

Best way to understand inner logic of a certain tradition is to turn to its key concepts and to pay special attention to their origin/etymology.

In most works on Shintō you can read that main concept of Shintō is *kami*. They often translate *kami* as “god” or “deity” but it isn't correct approach since *kami* isn't equal to such a concept as “god”.

It should be noted that concept *kami* differs seriously from the concept of “god”. In Abrahamic traditions god is a transcendental being which is opposite to this world and *kami* of Shinto exists in the neighborhood of people's world and people can quite easily get island of *kami* and also people can become *kami*. Because of it, the word *kami* should not be translated as “god”. I think the best way is to leave the word *kami* without any translation and explain its meaning every time when we introduce it in a certain text.

When people write something on Shintō they usually write of *kami* as of central concept of Shintō but in most cases they don't care much of etymology of this word and its original meaning; when they need to explain what *kami* means they usually just say “*kami* is something like deity/spirit” and then they just give some examples of what is *kami*; anyway they don't try to connect origin of the word “*kami*” and its meaning and don't try to connect meaning with concrete examples of *kami*; i.e. etymology is considered as just a subject of interest for the sake of interest and meaning is considered as something separated; speculative thoughts about etymology have almost no relation to interpretations of meaning of the concept of *kami*. I don't consider such approach as good since I believe etymology can be very helpful in the case of interpretation; and proper interpretation should account etymology.

Research on origin

It's amazing fact that a word of almost same sound and meaning exists in Ainu language. This word is *kamuy*. Widely spread is opinion that *kamuy* originated from Japanese *kami*.

Actually there can be four probable schemes of *kami* and *kamuy* relationship: 1) *kamuy* and *kami* are true cognates, i.e., they originated from one word of a language that was a probable common ancestor of Ainu and Japanese; 2) *kamuy* and *kami* appeared independently; 3) *kamuy* originated from *kami*; 4) *kami* originated from *kamuy*.

Let's consider all versions.

1) *Kamuy* and *kami* appeared independently and are completely unrelated. This version seems to be rather impossible: these words are words of languages which have been neighbors for more than fifteen centuries; they sound so alike and designate very similar concepts; this version can be realistic if Ainu and Japanese were not neighbors.

2) *Kamuy* and *kami* are true cognates, i.e., they have originated from a word of a language which is common ancestor of Ainu and Japanese. But this is impossible because Ainu and Japanese are completely genetically unrelated.

This version is sometimes supported by so called megalocomparativists i.e. people who think Ainu and Japanese are actually languages of same stock diverged very long ago. Such ideas are based on a very perfunctory view on language at all and also on ignorance of many important elements of compared languages. People who are followers of such ideas usually do the following: they take some randomly chosen lexemes and having compared them state that compared languages are relatives. And no attention is paid to structural items. It was Swadesh yet who warned that by comparing just vocabularies certain languages relationship can't be proven and some other methods should be used for it, i.e. analysis of structures. Swadesh method is method of estimation approximate time of divergence of languages which have already been proven to be relatives. However his warning is well forgotten and we can see that lexicostatistics is widely spread method and is considered as a completely relevant method in comparative linguistics. It's much easier to take a dictionary compiled by someone else and chose some "look alike" words in it than to study grammar and structures; that fact explains wide spread of this methodology.

But we always should keep in mind that any language is first of all a set of structure but not just a heap of lexemes. Structure is bottle while lexicon is liquid which is inside the bottle; in a bottle can be put wine, water, gasoline or even sand but bottle always remains bottle. Because of it we should pay most attention to structures in any linguistic question but especially while we deal with questions of genetic relationship.

Ainu and Japanese differ seriously in their structural parameters; they differ like for instance Mandarin and Basque. Thereby the version that *kamuy* and *kami* are cognates should be considered as a completely wrong hypothesis.

3) Ainu word *kamuy* originated from Japanese *kami*. Actually according to this version Ainu word *kamuy* has originated from Old Japanese *kamu*. The same transformation **can** be seen in Ainu word for chopsticks that definitely was borrowed from Old Japanese: Old Japanese *pasu* – Modern Japanese *hashi* – Ainu: *pasuy*.

This version is widely spread among scholars who have ever got touch with etymology of *kamuy* and *kami* (Vos 1990: 176; Vovin 1993: 99).

It is based mostly on Japanese state mythology that says Ainu people always were and are "savage aborigines of North" and haven't contributed anyhow into Japanese culture. Such ideas

can be broken if we take an impartial glance at genetic landscape of Japanese archipelago. About 35% of Japanese have Ainu Y haplogroup D2. (Tajima et al. 2004; Hammer et al. 2006) Cultural influence correlates well with genetic influence: if there is no serious genetic influence there can be just borrowing of certain techniques or ideas but not serious acceptance of culture. If we take a look at for instance USA we can see that Native American didn't make any serious contribution into genetic landscape of contemporary Americans and contemporary American culture as well; if we take a look at Mexico we can see that many people there are of Aztec/Mayan origin and we can see some influence of Aztec/Mayan culture on contemporary life of Mexico.

When we see that about 35% of Japanese population have Ainu Y haplogroup it's hardly possible to deny the fact of Ainu influence on Japanese culture. Of course, one can ignore it but such statements would be based on Japanese nationalists' mythology that roughly ignore facts and states "Kojiki isn't myth" and "Japanese have been living in Japanese archipelago since long ago in their present form".

Ainu were not 'primitive aborigines'. One can easy understand it if just takes a look at Jōmon pottery that is the oldest pottery of the world and one of the most elaborated artwork ever known in human history.



Pic. 1 A middle Jōmon pot

(source http://www.earlywomenmasters.net/masters/jomon/mma_jomonpot.html accessed February 2015)

By the end of Jōmon period (13000 – 300 BC) there was appropriate material base for appearing of a state, though agriculture which usually is the precondition for appear of statehood, was practiced restrictedly by the Ainu of late Jōmon, but rich sea hunting sea fishing and sea gathering definitely could be the base of material stratification and statehood.

Best marker of state is weapon since state is first of all institutionalized violence and killing people as special activity. Archaeology evidences shows us that during most of Jōmon period

(13000 – 300 BC) arrowhead weighted about 2 grams while by the end of Jōmon appeared heavier arrowheads. Lighter arrowheads fly further while heavier arrowheads make more serious wounds. Also we can see that appeared fenced settlements and tombs where human remains were buried with weapon. (Sahara 1990: 200 – 201)

When they speak of early Japan they usually say that first state alike structures appeared when some so called ‘Korean group’ came; in this context ‘Korean’ is just compact term to designate groups of Mongoloid race speaking a language of so called Buyeo stock¹.

But we don’t see any serious ‘Korean’ influence until Kofun period (4 – 6 centuries AD). In the period of Kofun we can see regular and wide spread of ‘Korean’ technologies in Japanese archipelago but we don’t see it before. Another proof that there were no ‘Korean’ before Kofun is spread of Chinese influence: as I told above serious spread of certain culture always correlate with some genetic influence; people of Yayoi epoch (300 BC – 300 AD) had some contacts with Chinese but it happened quite irregularly and Chinese culture didn’t influence seriously into people of Yayoi; we can speak of serious Chinese influence only since the end of Kofun; ‘Korean’ people were bridge of Chinese influence; if there were no ‘Korean’ there were no Chinization.

If we take an impartial look at architecture of Yoshinogari site (Yayoi) and at Sannai-Maruyama site (late Jōmon) we see almost no differences; it isn’t a great mistake to say architecture of Yoshinogari was just development of that of Sannai-Maruyama (Pic. 2, Pic. 4). If we take a look at Yayoi pottery and at pottery of Late Jōmon we also don’t see border between two potteries (Pic.5, Pic. 6) be we can rather say that pottery of Yayoi is a continuation of late Jōmon potter with just slight continental influences.



Pic. 2 Map representing location of Sannai-Maruyama and Yoshinogari sites (created by the author after Google map screenshot)

¹ Buyeo stock or Buyeo languages is a group or a stock that consists of closely related languages: (Baekje, Buyeo, Goguryeo, Korean, Japanese); Buyeo stock is supposed to be a part of Altaic stock.



Pic. 3 Architecture of Sannai-Maruyama
(photo source: http://tabisite.com/gallery_as/japan/japanen.shtml – accessed February 2015)



Pic. 4 Architecture of Yoshinogari
(photo source: http://tabisite.com/gallery_as/japan/japanen.shtml – accessed February 2015)



Pic. 5 Late Jōmon pot

(photo source <http://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/maibun/english/artifact-en1.html> – accessed February 2015)



Pic. 6 Yayoi pots

(photo source <http://www.kyoto-u.ac.jp/maibun/english/artifact-en1.html> – accessed February 2015)

Yamatai state described in Chinese chronicle “Records of the Three Kingdoms” possibly was Ainu state since it existed before large spread of Korean influence; some scholars believe Yoshinogari site was capital of Yamatai kingdom. Also it’s interesting fact first name of Japanese state i.e. Yamato obviously originated from word Yamatai; actually Yamato is transformation of word Yamatai in Old Japanese since no diphthongs were allowed in Old Japanese and diphthongs were transformed into a single vowel.

It means that social structure of Ainu society was developed enough by the end of Jōmon and during Yayoi and they obviously could influence on Japanese culture as well as they influenced on Japanese genetics.

4) Japanese *kami* has originated from Ainu *kamuy*. This version is based on the following: in Japanese language word for paper sounds completely same way, i.e. *kami*; when it was borrowed into Ainu it has become *kampi*; in this connection it is thought that Ainu *kamuy* can’t originated from Japanese *kami* because Japanese *kami* would become *kampi* but not *kamuy* in Ainu (Akulov 2006: 200) and so *kamuy* can’t be derived from *kami* but *kami* was derived from *kamuy*.

Though I support the last version I don’t think it is possible to deny the possibility of Japanese origin of word *kamuy* basing solely on the fact that Japanese “paper” *kami* has become *kampi* in Ainu; since *kampi* and *kamuy* could be borrowing of different epoch i.e. word *kampi* is probably borrowing of a rather late epoch close to nowadays and if paper would be borrowed in earlier epoch when Old Japanese was language of everyday use it would probably have sounded same way i.e. *kamuy*.

Anyway, I think it can be seen quite clearly now that it’s impossible to say something definite of whether word *kamuy* has originated from word *kami* or *kami* from *kamuy* if our consideration is restricted by these two words only; in order to clarify this issue we should use all information that is related to these concepts.

Neil Gordon Munro writes that two basic concepts of Ainu religion are *ramat* and *kamuy* (Munro 1962).

Akulov shows these two concepts are connected, i.e. the meaning of *kamuy* can be understood through that of *ramat* (Akulov 2006).

Among concepts of Shintō we can see word that looks much alike Ainu *ramat* and has very close meaning. This word is *tama/tamashii*. It’s interesting fact that in Ainu-Japanese dictionary compiled by Kayano Shigeru *ramat* is translated as *tamashii* (Kayano 2005: 461). Thus we have got two pairs: *kamuy* – *ramat* and *kami* – *tamashii/tama*.

Concept *kamuy* is closely connected with that of *ramat* and same situation is probably in the case of *kami* and *tama/tamashii* so I think there was no borrowing of single concept but it was borrowing of whole pair, both concepts were borrowed as a system. If we suppose the pair was borrowed from Old Japanese by Ainu then it contradicts the fact that there were no words beginning with [r] in Old Japanese (Ono 1982); and also the fact that Japanese [t] can’t become [r] in Ainu; for instance: *tono* “master” is just same *tono* in Ainu but not **rono*.

It means that the pair is originally Ainu and was borrowed from Ainu to Old Japanese.

In Old Japanese initial [r] was prohibited but in Ainu [r] can easy turn into [tr]/[t] so when word *ramat* was borrowed by Old Japanese initial [r] transformed into [t]; then since only open syllables were allowed in Old Japanese so original Ainu *ramat* had become something alike **tamati* and later became *tamashii*. Transition of dental consonant into fricative during a process of borrowing from Ainu to Old Japanese is also described by Kindaichi when he considers etymology of word *emishi* – name of an Ainu tribe described in old Japanese chronicles; according to Kindaichi word *emishi* originated from Ainu word *emchiu* / *emtiw* that was old self-naming of Ainu (Kindaichi 1993: 134 – 135).

In the case of *kamuy* – *kami* the history is the following: in Late Jōmon Ainu it was probably the following group of words: **ka mu ʔi*; I think we can reconstruct glottal stops for Late Jōmon as far as Tamura writes that all syllables that now begin with vowels actually should be considered as syllables beginning with glottal stop (Tamura 2000: 21); later as far as life in the period of Yayoi step by step became more and more unset it required more compact utterances and so glottal stop started to drop and **ka mu ʔi* became composite *kamui*, last two vowel formed diphthong *uy*; in Old Japanese diphthongs were not allowed and if Old Japanese borrowed a word with diphthong the diphthong drifted into a single vowel, *kamuy* became *kamuu* (same situation happened with above mentioned Yamatai that became Yamato in Old Japanese) and then with disappear of [u] *kamuu* has become contemporary *kami*.

Research on meaning

Since concepts *tamashii* and *kami* are proved to be of Ainu origin we can widely use data about Ainu religion to clarify their meaning.

Ramat is the first and the main concept. According to my data this word consists of two morphemes: *ram* which means “soul”/”mind”/”heart” and *at* which is similar to such verbs as *an/oka* and *oma* which mean “to be”/”to exist”. So the concept of *ramat* can be interpreted as “soul exits” (Akulov 2006: 200).

Root *ram* is component of many Ainu verbs designating mental/psychic activity: *ram* – “to think”, *e-ram-an* – “to understand”, *e-ram-iskar* – “not to understand”, *e-ram-as* – “to rejoice to something”, *e-yay-ram-at-te* – “to maintain”, “to suffer”.

Also I am to note here that component *at* in *ramat* is rather a variation of verb *as* “to stand” though it doesn’t change the interpretation.

Explaining the meaning of this concept Munro gives the explanations that he received from Ainu elders:

Kotan-Pira said *ramat* was the backbone of Ainu religion. Rennuikesh, eighty years old, very active and intelligent, who came from the north of Hokkaido, said: 'Whatever has no *ramat* has nothing'. Nisukrek and other elders agreed with this: '*ramat* is all-pervading and indestructible'. Uesanash said: '*ramat* is everywhere' (Munro 1962: 8).

Ramat exists everywhere and fills everything. Everything has its own portion of *ramat*. One thing has a lot of *ramat* another has little but nothing can exist without *ramat*. *Ramat* cannot be annihilated. When beings die or when things are broken their *ramat* leaves them but doesn't disappear and goes to another place. Because of it tools and weapon buried with a dead person often were broken for their *ramat* could follow the dead person. Following to Neil Gordon Munro it is possible to state that *ramat* is very much alike to the Polynesian concept *mana* (Akulov 2006: 200).

Ramat is something like ether or dark matter that penetrates and fulfilled whole universe. I believe it’s more correct to translate concept of *ramat* as “vital energy exists”.

Kamuy is the second basic concept of Ainu creed.

At least it is possible to state the following; *ramat* is the basis. But *ramat* itself cannot make anything. It may just exist or not exist, but it cannot act. Instead of it *kamuy* can act. *Kamuy* has a lot of *ramat* and can endow or take away *ramat* to other beings. *Kamuy* which endows *ramat* is good, *kamuy* which takes *ramat* away is bad (Akulov 2006: 201).

As for interpretation of original meaning of the concept there are two main versions.

The first version is that Ainu word has originated from the root with the meaning of “meat” – *kam* so according to this version *kamuy* is just *kam-uy* <- *kam-us/kam-un* which means just “of meat” or “rich with meat”.

This point of view is usually explained in such a way: *kamuy* is often used in connection with bear because bear has a lot of meat, i.e. *kamuy* originated from *kam+us/kam+un* which later became *kam+uy*.

Objections against this version are very strong:

a) According to Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney *kamuy* should be distinguished from other beings. And it is important to know that the word *kamuy* is often used to name some beings and things, which real names are tabooed. (Ohnuki-Tierney 1984)

Word *kamuy* is used in connection to very different phenomena and things which can't be associated with meat or even food anyhow (for example volcanoes or earthquake or wind and so on) and I seriously believe that if *kamuy* really originated from root *kam* “meat” such a serious drift of meaning hardly would be possible.

b) If we by the way assume that the version of *kamuy* ← *kam-us/kam-un* is right then in modern Ainu language we would have **kamus/*kamusu* (probable variant **kamusu* as a result of influence of Japanese phonotactics) or **kamun*, but we know that transformation of *un* (locative/genitive particle) into *uy* can be stable only if it is in a very special position, i.e. is always followed by a syllable which begins with sound “y”[j] for example: *pis un yakura* – “observer tower placed in the shore” is regularly transformed into *pis uy yakura* and this *pis uy yakura* is stable but in the case of *kam-us/kam-un* we see that it is not so since *us/un* syllable isn't followed by syllable beginning with “y” and so I think it's possible to state this version is wrong.

The second version is the following:

Following to John Batchelor I believe that word *kamuy* consists of three morphemes: *ka* + *mu* + *i*. According to my interpretation the meaning of these morphemes is the following: *ka* is similar to Ainu words *kurka/ka ta* – “over”/“above”;

suffix *-i/-hi* is often used as a verbal substantivator ex.: *pirka-hi*, *itak-i*, *an-i*;

though now I a bit misunderstand the meaning of the middle morpheme *mu*, cause I have never met it in Saru dialect. But I have met such morpheme in Sakhalin Ainu. In Sakhalin Ainu *mu* means “spread” and it is equal to *imakare*, *pirasa* of Saru dialect. Because of it I think that *mu* in *kamuy* has the similar meaning.

So I think *ka-mu-i/ka-mu-y* means “spread over thing”, “a thing above people”. And my interpretation is similar to the interpretation of Batchelor (Akulov 2006: 200).

For some unknown reason Akulov missed the fact that word *mu* is presented in Kayano Shigeru dictionary and there it is translated as “to be clogged” or “to be plugged up” (Kayano 2005: 428); so I think it is better to translate *kamuy* as “item plugged up by [*ramat*]” or “item fulfilled by [*ramat*]”; and this interpretation correlates well with idea that *kamuy* has a lot of *ramat* and can share it to other beings.

One can probably speak out the following objection against this version: “this way of naming, i.e., designating of something by a noun that ends with suffix *-i/-hi* that expresses the idea of

‘abstractness’ is rather unusual and metaphysical for ‘ancient primitive consciousness’ and ancient Ainu would rather name such class of beings using nouns with *-p/-pe* suffix that originated from noun that means “being”, “thing” and that is usually used when they name different things and beings”. However such approach is wrong since it’s a projection of European conception of abstractness to Ainu culture. Suffix *-pe/-p* is very concrete, it is used when they speak about items which can be named things, for example: *c-i-p* – “boat”, *c-e-p* – “fish”, *c-u-p* – “Sun”, *tanne-p* “sword” (literally “be long thing”), *a-mi-p* – “dress” (literally “worn thing”) and so on; suffix *-i/-hi* is used not just in nouns expressing such highly abstract items as *pirka-hi* “beauty”, *itak-i* “speech” but also is used in such nouns as *wen-i* “rainy and windy weather” (literally “badness”) or *un-i* “house”, “dwelling”; suffix *-i/-hi* isn’t “very abstract” or “metaphysical”, but it is just marker of items that simply can’t be considered as things/beings. As far as *kamuy* are not just legendary heroes or outstanding people or bears but also volcanoes, wind, tsunami, fog et c. so use of this suffix is completely logical and consistent if they need to designate a wide class of items some of which look alike things, but many don’t.

Conclusion

Thus we have the following:

ramat and *kamuy* are key concepts of Ainu religion.

Ramat is the basic concept. Literally it means “vital energy exits”. *Ramat* is something alike ether or dark matter that fills whole universe.

Kamuy is everything that has a lot *ramat* and can share it. *Kamuy* literally means “item filled by [*ramat*]”.

As far as these concepts are closely connected they were borrowed by Old Japanese as a pair. The proves that the pair was borrowed from Ainu to Old Japanese but not from Old Japanese to Ainu are the following: if we suppose *ramat* originated from *tamashii* it contradicts the fact that Old Japanese [t] doesn’t give [r] in Ainu while Ainu [r] easy can give [t] since Ainu [r] has variations of [tr]/[t]; then due to the prohibition of initial [r] and prohibition of diphthongs in Old Japanese *ramat* has become *tamashii* and *kamuy* has become *kami*.

Kami is all outstanding and unusual, for example: thousand-year cedar, stone of a freakish form, fall, mount Fuji, founder of the Panasonic company, emperor Meiji, master of a calligraphy or, for example, famous musician or writer. It is very important to understand that often *kami* is not any personal anthropomorphous being or a subject or a thing that can be represented, touched or, in general, be felt by means of five feelings. Much more often *kami* is an amorphous force, for example, gravitation force acting between Earth and Sun can be considered as a *kami*, forces operating inside atomic nucleus between protons and neutrons also are *kami*.

All these items are *kami* because they have a lot of *tamashii* and can share *tamashii* to other beings/things.

Though sphere of usage of Shintō *kami* is more narrowed than that of Ainu *kamuy* they are actually similar concepts.

And any ritual of Shintō as well as any ritual of Ainu religion is intended to get more *tamashii/ramat* and to save the existing one. In order to get more *tamashii* people have to contact with beings that have a lot of *tamashii* and can share it, i.e.: with *kami*. So *kami* actually are something like tools that help people to get more *tamashii* and it would probably be better to rename Shintō into Reijijutsu 霊持術 that means “art of holding and catching *tamashii*”.

Thus, having turn to deep root of Shintō and considering etymology of its basic concepts we can catch its philosophy.

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