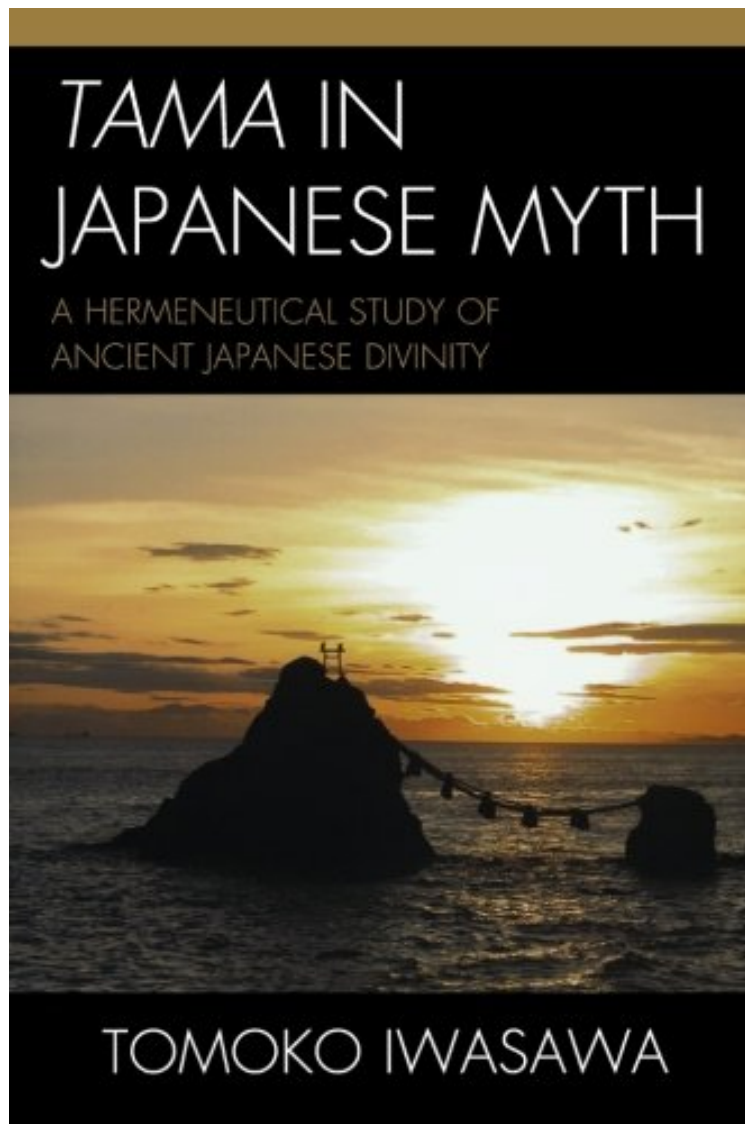


[Free download] Tama in Japanese Myth: A Hermeneutical Study of Ancient Japanese Divinity

Tama in Japanese Myth: A Hermeneutical Study of Ancient Japanese Divinity

Tomoko Iwasawa

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Tomoko Iwasawa : Tama in Japanese Myth: A Hermeneutical Study of Ancient Japanese Divinity before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tama in Japanese Myth: A Hermeneutical Study of Ancient Japanese Divinity:

Tama in Japanese Myth attempts to elucidate Japanese religious experiences by presenting a new interpretation of the oldest existing text of Japanese myth, the Kojiki. Informed by phenomenological hermeneutics, Iwasawa shows that the concept of tama lies at the core of Japanese religious experiences. Tama is often compared to spirit and soul in Western philosophy and religion and especially to the German concept of Geist. Tama develops in ways that do not assume a dichotomy between the ideational and the sensible, which is precisely the dichotomy informing Western theism and the Platonic tradition of metaphysics. Iwasawa argues that the Western concept of God, far from explaining all possible connections between the human and the divine, is less than satisfactory for analyzing Japanese religious experiences. Iwasawa proceeds by examining the Japanese notion of tama as an inquiry into the origin of values wholly unaffected by the Western idea of a moral God.

Tomoko Iwasawa's fascinating and, in many ways, revolutionary study of the Kojiki makes a convincing case for the fundamentality of tama within the overall structure of Japanese myth. Fully conversant with Western philosophy and the leading experts in the analysis and criticism of classical Japanese texts, Tomoko Iwasawa's [book] should be considered required reading in Japanese studies, religious studies, and the comparative philosophy of religion. (Alan M. Olson, Boston University) Unusually lucid and intelligent. This thoroughly hermeneutic analysis looks to the thought of Paul Ricoeur and Hans-Georg Gadamer and then goes beyond them. Her argument is startling in its originality, thorough in its documentation, and deeply persuasive. (Michael Palencia-Roth, Trowbridge Scholar in Literary Studies, Emeritus professor of comparative and world literature, University of Illinois) Few scholars have yet approached the kind of exegesis that Iwasawa accomplishes. Grounded in ancient Shinto texts and modern scholarship, this original and even courageous work critiques and advances Ricoeurian understanding of myth and perhaps ultimately of the human condition. (Carl Becker Ph.D., Litt., professor of comparative religions, Kokoro Research Center, Kyoto University) I heartily applaud Iwasawa for the boldness of her project. I especially agree with her call for more re-mythologizing in the scholarly study of Shinto myth, that narrative corpus that was mythologized by State Shinto and then has been so thoroughly demythologized in postwar scholarship. (Japan) About the Author Tomoko Iwasawa is associate professor of comparative religions at Reitaku University, Japan. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. in philosophy of religion from Boston University. Her publications include Jaspers' "Schuldfrage" and Hiroshima: Does the Concept of Guilt Exist for Japanese Religious Consciousness? (2008) and On the Concept of Defilement: A Comparative Study of Paul Ricoeur's "Symbolism of Evil" and Japanese Myth (2009). She is an executive board member of International Shinto Foundation.