

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

RELIGIOUS LIFE IN THE GILA COMMUNITY

Some considerable attention was paid to the matter of religious groups and worship at Gila. Naturally, considerable further research must be done on this subject. The material to follow is not well organized, entailing as it does information with regard to religious groups, attitudes, customs, ceremonial observances, funerals, and rituals all of which taken together are so clearly indicative of the transplanting of cultural patterns from Japan. Some of the material to be considered deals with the matter of doctrine and doctrinal tenets.

The Gila community stems from rural areas in the main where adherence to the forms known in Japan is greater than in many urbanized groups. This is particularly true at Gila where the Japanese patterns are followed with some exactness. Religion, especially, is a static holdover from the life these immigrants knew in Japan. The result is that the community is predominantly Buddhist. It is estimated that 80 per cent of the population of the Gila Center is Buddhist in religion although not everyone takes an active interest in the Church. Thus the principal religious groups to be considered in this community are the members of the various Buddhist sects. Christianity takes in the remainder of the community, the activities of the Christian groups to be delineated in the pages to follow. Naturally, there is adherence to Shintoism on the parts of many of those who are classed as Buddhists. Because Shintoism is in accord with the nationalistic policies of Japan its practice has been banned by the W.R.A. and any meetings that Shinto groups may hold are of course subrosa. There are a few followers of the Shinto Tenrikyō definitely in the minority. It will be well to discuss individually the organization and activities of the various religious groups at Gila.

Buddhism:

There are a number of Buddhist priests at Gila around whom the activities

of that religion center. So far as the administration is concerned, the religious leaders of the community are not accorded any official position. Christian and Buddhist dignitaries alike are not allowed to be paid for their services as ministers. The dignitaries of all churches, however, continue to function in their pre-evacuation professions and draw their incomes from the general populace, money being paid for various services such as weddings, funerals, and the like, and by donations from the community residents. It is especially true of the Buddhist leaders and priests, that although they have no position so far as the administration is concerned, they are social leaders in the community, drawing considerable respect from the residents and doing much to affirm public opinion and actions.

Two principal Buddhist sects are represented at Gila. The stronger is the Hongwanji or Shinshū, the most popular of the sects of Japanese Buddhism in this country. The second is Zen Buddhism, a sect of more philosophical and metaphysical connotations lacking the general appeal and more concrete elements of Shinshu. Hongwanji is a saviorist denomination. Its members believe in a concrete after life which they attain through the mercy of Amida Buddha, the counterpart of Christ in Christianity. Shinshu calls for good works and a firm faith in the efficacy of Amida Butsu and offers to the individual a western paradise after death. Zen, on the other hand, is a sect of contemplation. Likewise, it demands the good life and works. Only through giving to others can happiness be attained, by unselfishness and by the identification of one's self with all mankind. Zen prescribes peace and the striving toward an inward light of calm and passivity. It does not offer immortality for the individual but rather an identification with the cosmos, a reunion with the infinite intelligence of which man is representative. In order to attain this goal, moderation is practiced in all appetites, or even total abstinence from women, liquor, and delicacies. Of the

two, Shinshu is the most popular, appealing as it does to the individual and offering him a tangible promise of after life. There are no Zen priests among the Turlock group and only one among the Tulare people. He has a following of a few members, the more intellectual and sophisticated Issei in that community. There are several Shinshu priests.

Shinshu is subdivided into several sects of its own, the principal ones being an eastern and a western Shinshu. The differences between them in the matters of doctrine are not particularly clear and seem to rise out of a regional difference comparable to the Methodist divisions in this country. The west Shinshu sect is the strongest at Gila and generally among the Japanese of the Pacific Coast. One of the Buddhist priests, Reverend Hata, has recently formed a new sect of his own out of the western Shinshu to which sect he formerly belonged. After some congregational and synodical struggles in pre-evacuation times, Hata broke away from the Shinshu of the west and formed his own congregation. It began to develop with some strength at Turlock. It is a "free Shinshu" church. Hata is a man greatly respected in the community. He insists on formal dignity and etiquette at all times from the people with whom he deals. Most of the Japanese evacuees are afraid to talk with him because of his reputed severity. He is respected and feared but heartily disliked. In spite of this he manages to keep a firm hold on his congregation and is truly influential in determining church policy.

In each camp a Buddhist church has been set up in a recreational hall designated for that purpose by the Community Activities Division. A committee appointed by the priests in charge was given the task of furnishing the churches with benches, altars, and the like. Wood was obtained from the scrap lumber piles and the recreation halls were filled with pews sufficient to seat about 300 people. A partition was placed at the front of each church on the auditorium side of which is the altar and the butsudan. The rear of the partition constitutes

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

a chancel or robing room for the priests in charge. In Camp I an 800-year old Buddha figure has been placed in the butsudan, kept under lock and key, which unfortunately, I have been unable to see. The altar is a plain box-like structure covered over with a scarf of purple and gold. The interiors of both Buddhist churches are very plain, no other embellishments having been made. On the outside are bulletin boards announcing the services and the speakers. A porch has been built at the entrance of both churches with a torii arrangement of curved, trimmed gable posts. The pattern is similar for the churches of both camps. With regard to the physical structure of the churches themselves an interesting request was made of the administration by a group of Buddhist delegates. They asked that they be allowed to cut a door in the side of the churches for the exclusive purpose of carrying the dead from the church to the outside. The request cannot be granted until the army engineers pass on the specifications of the buildings. The trait is one noted among the tribes of Eastern Siberia and elsewhere and is expressive of the fact that the dead may not use the same door as the living.

The Buddhist (priests) at Gila are six. Most of them in pre-evacuation days were instructors in the Japanese language schools. Five are Shinshu and one is Zen. Because of Rev. Hata's break with the established Shinshu sect it might be said that two Shinshu congregations exist at Gila in Camp I. The other priests of the Shinshu denomination are fairly well unified and carry on their activities with mutual understanding and agreement. At Camp II, among the Tulare group, is Rev. Ochi, the Zen priest. He has some following as mentioned above. At the moment Rev. Ochi has met with some disfavor and has lost some of the members of his congregation. Recently, in discussing the Bon, the return of the ancestral spirits, particularly with regard to the Higan, the "other side" of spiritual existence, he remarked that the Gautama died as the result of overeating of pork. Many of the listeners were highly incensed at Rev. Ochi's "apostasy" and have

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

somewhat boycotted his church. Rev. Ochi shares the Buddhist church with the Shinshu priests. There are no perceptible differences in services between the Zen and Shinshu sects.

In both churches services are opened with a prayer and benediction. Hymns are sung usually in Japanese according to the Japanese musical scale but sometimes hymns are sung in English. After a hymn or two is sung, a short sermon follows delivered by the priest in charge. Another hymn follows and a final benediction concluded by the three-time repetition by the congregation of "Namu amida butsu." The Zen service omits this response. The service is usually Japanese but occasionally a priest will use English, especially if dealing with young people as in meetings of the Young Buddhists' Association. Only one priest, a Kibei Nisei, uses English, justifying its use to the older and more conservative people by saying that he can reach the younger people more easily and have greater appeal. This is undoubtedly true but it has caused some adverse comment. The English of this priest is remarkably poor however. He does not use English when older people are present but rather on the Sunday evening service for the Young Buddhists' group. The service described here is very parallel to that of many of the sects of Christianity. The Buddhists in this country have made a conscious effort to stay on a par with the Christian churches in organization, social opportunities, and in services. Thus socially, the Buddhists are an active group as will be pointed out presently. One of the few differences between Buddhist and Christian services at the center is the fact that the former does not lay stress on response singing or reading by the congregation. The church members in the Buddhist services take much less of an active part in the performance of the service than do the Christian congregations.

The office of Buddhist priest is quite similar to that of the Christian

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

ministers. They perform rites at births and funerals; they perform marriages; and they are expected to visit with the members of their congregations offering help and advice where it is needed. Ritual and doctrinal patterns vary of course, but in general, the Buddhist priest's office parallels that of the Christian minister's. The priests of the community cannot be paid from W.R.A. pay roll funds for their services, but they can solicit and receive funds for themselves and their churches. It is customary to offer the priest a gift of money for his services at a wedding, funeral, or other function. Also some of the wealthier members of the community give money to endow the churches. Everyone who is a member of the church makes some small contribution to the priest at various times during the year. This is for the church itself, for improvements to the building, etc. Out of such money and endowments, the Camp II Buddhist church is buying an air conditioning system for the church. A piano is also contemplated. Church finances are in the hands of a priest. At Gila priests of a similar denomination cooperate with each other in setting up improvements for the church and in handling church funds. Unlike Christian churches, the priest has sole authority in matters pertaining to the welfare of the church building itself. He thus is the chief dignitary and advisor. He sometimes takes counsel with the older people in matters of church policy and the disposition of church money. Laymen do not usually settle the affairs of the church however. In the pre-evacuation days high fees were often paid to priests for their functions in crisis rites, especially funerals. This was usually the only source of income a priest had. This pattern is being followed at Gila and it appears that the priests will be better paid than all the other workers of the community.

Buddhist church services are held on Sunday. A different priest officiates at a morning and evening service. The latter service is designed to reach the younger people of the community, a definite effort being made by priest and Buddhist

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

Issei alike to keep the young people within the bounds of the church. I have heard of active proselyting in the community among the young people quite contrary to the Buddhist pattern in Japan. There seems to exist among the Issei the idea that the church is one of the last ties with Japan. The young people are urged to keep this tie and to be active in the Buddhist groups of the community. It will be interesting to note how great a degree of success such proselyting has had, the forms it has taken, etc. Sunday schools, church meetings, church socials, etc. are seemingly designed to keep the young people together within the church. The predominance of Buddhism at Gila has been fully borne out by the great interest on the part of the young people in the social aspects of the religious life. To keep this up they flock to the church on Sundays in large numbers, something they did not do in the pre-evacuation period so I have been told.

It has been mentioned that the Buddhist priests occupy a leading social position in the community among the Issei. It is customary for a priest, when asked to act in some function, to bring his wife along to administer to the needs of the female members of the family concerned. In cases of otsuya, the Japanese wakes, the priest's wife accompanies her husband and acts as an agent of consolation in some cases. Not all priests take their wives with them. Rev. Hata and Rev. Matura, however, are usually accompanied by their wives when they make visits for an otsuya, the only function outside of actual church administering that the priests have as yet performed. A kind of Ladies' Auxiliary, composed of the wives of the priests and leaders of the Buddhist community, meets on informal occasions for gossiping, sewing, and makes visits in the community. This organization, however, is not a part of the program of either the Buddhist church or the administration; it meets informally and membership, I gather, is restricted to the leading Buddhist Issei ladies of the community.

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

The priests' wives and the wives of the more outstanding Buddhist individuals, usually Issei, teach in the Buddhist Sunday School. This is a well-organized institution designed to keep the children and young people in the church. This is apparently, an American innovation. Such institutions do not occur in the ideal Buddhist situation in Japan. Young people through high school age attend the Buddhist Sunday Schools, which meet before the actual service on Sunday mornings. There is no actual teaching in the American Sunday School sense. Each child learns a verse in Japanese and repeats before the priest or female teacher. The priest blesses the children and a hymn is sung. After the service of the Sunday School, lasting about 15 minutes, the actual Sunday service for all Buddhists begins. In the evenings a meeting of the so-called Y.B.A., Young Buddhists' Association takes place. This is a regular church service following the pattern of the morning service. Usually, a different priest officiates than in the morning probably to allow every priest an opportunity to exercise his profession. The Y.B.A. is just getting well organized at Gila. Social evenings have been planned, entertainments in the Japanese manner, with individuals reciting and singing songs, plays, etc. None of this is of a religious nature but it is believed important in recreation of the young people and in keeping them united with the church. The Y.B.A. does not have dances in the American manner, this being the only deviation from the typical American social pattern. There are games, plays, refreshments, and fellowship get-togethers planned by this group.

The Buddhist Issei rather scorn entertainments sponsored in the name of the Buddhist church. They are content to find what recreation they do allow elsewhere. They do feel it essential, however, that the younger people use the church as a means of social expression thus identifying themselves with their own Buddhist group. It would have been more correctly stated that the Issei do not think of themselves as drawing any recreation from the Buddhist church.

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

Actually, although there is no organized Issei Buddhist group, entertainments are provided through the church which offer recreation to Issei and Nisei alike. The dedication services which took place after the opening of the two Buddhist churches in the center were cause for considerable festivity for all groups.

The Buddhist church in Camp I was opened officially on September 13, 1942 about three weeks after it had been set aside as a church and services had already taken place in it. The dedication of the church was a gala affair in which nearly every Buddhist of Camp I participated. The Buddhists from Camp II were not allowed to come because of inadequate transportation facilities and the conflicting rules of the military. But the three Buddhist priests then in Camp I did come with their families, the administration providing cars for them. Two morning services and two afternoon services were held to accommodate the crowds. In the intervals between the services the Y.B.A. carried on a dedicatory program in the church, the more talented of the younger people giving speeches in both Japanese and English, singing songs, giving recitations of Japanese heroic poetry. The services were conducted after the usual Buddhist pattern as described above. At each service there was a dedication rite performed by offering incense to the butsudān.

This was done by representatives of Issei, Nisei, and Kibei groups. A stick of incense was lighted, carried to the altar before the Buddha image by each of these individuals in turn. A three-time obeisance was made before the altar by the individual as he presented the incense. Some lengthy speeches were made in Japanese throughout the afternoon in the intervals between the formal services. On this occasion banners were hung from the beams in the church but were removed after the ceremonies. In the evening after the services were over, a show was given by the Y.B.A. An outdoor stage was constructed in front of the church by backing two of the W.R.A. trucks together and using their flat beds as the stage floor. The stage was ornately decorated by festoons of paper flowers along

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

the wires holding up the curtains. The camp P.A. system was installed on the stage itself. In front of the church is a firebreak. Here the audience, numbering several thousand people stood. The entertainment was opened by a priest, the Kibei mentioned above, whose name I did not record, in a long Japanese speech, the import of which was a welcome to Gila, thanks to Washington that the Japanese were allowed to practice freedom of religion in the centers, and a statement that a definite pleasure existed in seeing so many people together united socially under a common religion. A kind of talent show followed extending far into the night. A number of Issei arose to present naniwabushi, the favorite Japanese rendering of poetry in a falsetto, talking, singing manner. Younger people sang Japanese songs, both older ballads and modern love songs. Dances were also given by groups of young girls. The dances were presented in the Japanese manner and in Japanese dress. The dances were of two types: the first was done by a group of girls dressed in kimono, obi, etc. and was simply a formalized dance in which expressive gestures were made with the hands as the dance procession moved counter-clockwise around the stage. I was told that the dance was symbolic of nature, of growing things, waving grasses, etc. The second dance was more interesting and was reputed to be a dedicatory dance for the temple. The costume was virtually the same but the heads of the dancers were covered, symbolic, so I was told, of the fact that women were humble before the sacredness of the nearby temple. The same white headdress is used in an ideal rural Japanese situation in cases of weddings. Such a headdress covers the "horns" which a young woman is reputed to have. Because the dancers were young unmarried women, I believe that the idea persisted even though I was unable to get any definite information regarding the concept from the bystanders. The use of the ceremonial costume of this sort persists in many of the ceremonies which are attached to Buddhist rites. The statement that Japanese dances make greater use of the upper parts of the body

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

than the legs is obviously true. This fact was pointed out to me by several of the Japanese with whom I watched various dances. The festivities that evening alternated between songs, recitations, and dances. At the close of the evening, quite late for the center, the usual bedtime being about 11:00 P.M., after 1:00 A.M. the priest who had made the initial speech of the evening repeated a short blessing. The assembled crowd replied three times in unison "Namu amida butsu" and the services closed. The priests and their families were guests of honor for the day and the evening. They were given refreshments and food. Those from Camp II were eagerly asked to accompany the ^{more} prominent Buddhists to the respective mess halls.

The official duties of the priests have been touched upon to some extent. Another principal duty which the priests have is the officiating at services of this kind. It is expected of them that they will remain the full time, lending moral support for the occasion even if they do not take an active part. A similar program was held at the dedication of the Buddhist church in Camp II some weeks later. This program varied only slightly in its details. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend at that time, but was told that the crowds, church services, entertainment, etc. ran pretty much on a similar scale. The Zen priest, although the affair was primarily Shinshu, was an invited guest at both functions. At the second dedication the priests from Camp I were invited guests together with their families.

It is interesting to note an attitude here which reflects on the Japanese view of religion. Zen and Shinshu are as opposed to one another in doctrine as Protestant and Catholic in Western society. There is, however, none of the marked adherence to doctrinal differences which is to be found among the Christian sects. As a Buddhist priest a man has standing in the community even though the doctrines he preaches are in opposition to the beliefs of the general population of the

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

community. There is a definite lack of rivalry between the priests and the members of the two sects. It will be noted that there is some rivalry between the Christian ministers and the Buddhist priests, most of such rivalry stemming from the Christian leaders themselves. The Christian and Buddhist members of the colony live together harmoniously, a subject which will be more fully treated shortly. It is further to be noted that the Buddhist churches are not of themselves sacred. True, there are sacred objects in them which are considered sacred and which sanctify the building. A concept analogous to the Christian "God's House" idea is lacking. The butsudan is to be revered but when its doors are closed the Buddhist church is just another building in which all manner of entertainments and social gatherings may be held. The building becomes a temple only when the doors of the butsudan are opened. Thus there is no objection on the parts of the Buddhists to lending their church with its many benches to lectures, informal entertainments such as engekai (talent shows) and social gatherings. The Christians will not allow this in their church, which, by virtue of its altar, is a holy place and so treated. This attitude on the part of the Buddhists seems in keeping with the little stress they lay on differences in belief and doctrine. On the whole, they seem far less bigoted than the Christians, stressing the social attributes of religion rather than the doctrinal.

Aside from his duties as a church and social leader, it has been mentioned to some extent that the priest functions as the chief agent in rituals for the individual members of the center and their families. To date the ritual functions of the priest have been those concerned principally with funerals. A word about attitudes on death and interment will be in order here to show the relation between organized religion and death. When a person dies at Gila, the priest is summoned to give a short prayer over the body of the deceased. As yet there have been no deaths of Christians in the community. Death has usually occurred in the hospital, ^{on} only one occasion did an old man die at home. The priest goes

to the hospital. He views the body and recites a sutra or two over it. He purifies the air with a stick of incense. For such rituals, the priest always dresses in his ceremonial robes. The robe is black, not unlike those used by some ministers of Protestant Christian denominations. The robes open in front and are in actuality black kimonos fastened by one side of the robe being drawn over the other and made fast by a sash. The sleeves are long and flowing but do not have the pocket arrangement in the sleeve of the usual kimono. A stoll is frequently worn by the priest; it varies, being long and broad or narrow and reaching only to the waist. The obi, or sash with which the garment is fastened, is like the stoll rather ornate. Stoll and obi may be green, purple, or gold. Gold threads are usually interwoven in the articles. The stoll and sash are put on with the kimono at all occasions in which the priest functions and are not restricted solely to the funeral arrangements. It is in such a costume that the priest visits the hospital after a death there has occurred. He is met by the acting family head and exchanges bows with the weeping family. He checks with the position of the body, sees that the eyes are closed and the hands folded left over right. If the corpse is wearing a garment the priest sees that it too is girded contrary to the way it would be worn in life. The attitude that death is reversal of normal patterns is borne out by such actions and postures. A sutra is recited and the priest lights his incense. After a time he departs. He does not offer consolation to the bereaved family nor speak at this time except as his office requires.

In cases of death the administration takes care of the disposition of the body. The W.R.A. has made an arrangement with a mortician in the nearby town of Casa Grande who is under federal contract to care for the funeral needs of the colonists. This mortician receives \$87.00 for each funeral. Any additional expenses must be borne by the family in question. The mortician is called and asked to embalm the body. When this is done the body is brought to the Buddhist

church where it lies in state until the otsuya (wake) is held. In evacuation times it is not necessary that participant cooperation follow a death. I have been told that kenjinkai and distant family members did, in some cases, in the pre-evacuation period, aid the family by preparing the corpse for burial. To be sure, the Japanese in America, for the most part, did make use of the services of a mortician. In some cases in rural communities, however, kenjinkai members were called in to help and washed and dressed the body, prepared the coffin, etc. Although gifts of money, usually \$1.00 were given by each person invited to the funeral feast and otsuya, a poor family might have to use this and what money they had at hand for a payment for the feast and to the priest for his services. In some cases, therefore, the neighborhood mortician was not employed. Neighborhood doctors could be prevailed upon to sign the death certificate, thus avoiding trouble with the authorities. In pre-evacuation days as in the centers, cremation is the rule for disposition of bodies. Although a mortician in pre-evacuation times was not employed to embalm the body or to purchase a casket which was made by kenjinkai members, the mortician had to be called in to arrange cremation. The fee for this service runs to about \$35.00. Families often had to borrow this amount if they did not receive sufficient help from their cooperative group. In the centers, however, varying amounts are offered by morticians the bulk of whose fees are paid by the government.

After some time the body of the deceased has been returned to the temple and the otsuya can be held. To this wake all the friends, relatives, and acquaintances are invited. Even in the post-evacuation time, however, the pattern of giving the bereaved family some small remembrance is preserved. The Japanese system of returning these gifts is preserved here also. The family gives in return refreshments at the otsuya and a little bit of candy, crackers, etc. wrapped as a gift is often given to the guests. The normal pattern in rural Japan would be

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

to give a wrapped bit of fish. The otsuya is generally held in the evening. The invited guests view the body and then return to the home of the deceased where a general reception of the guests is held. In the center soda pop and crackers with cheese or cookies are offered to the guests as refreshment. At this time the guests offer consolation to the bereaved family. The priest and his family are always invited to the otsuya. Before the body the priest recites a sutra. On the following day the mortician returns and takes the body to Phoenix for cremation. After a week or more the ashes are returned by mail to the center. They are then given by the mail clerk of the administrative staff to the priest in charge so that he may return the ashes ceremonially to the family. The Christians, some of whom insist on burial, are expected to protest the fact that as yet no arrangement has been made for a cemetery in the community. The Buddhists are content with the arrangement suggested by the administration, that of cremation. In pre-evacuation days there was a varying pattern of interment among the Buddhists, some of whom regularly buried their dead. Since cremation fits into the Buddhist pattern there have been no protests against it from the Buddhists.

In spite of the fact that at Gila \$87.00 is allowed to each bereaved family to defray the costs of the funeral, this amount is not sufficient to cover the lavish funeral displays that the Japanese prefer. There is bound to be a certain amount of adverse gossip if a family does not "do right by" its dead. Those who can afford it do have elaborate receptions and costly items in the general run of the funeral. One wealthy man died of a stroke in the community. As nearly as I could determine, the following amounts of money were spent on his funeral.

Casket	\$100.00	
Cremation	35.00	
Transportation	17.50	(Mortician's hearse -- usually pick-up truck used.)
Gifts to mourners and guests (about)	50.00	(Gifts: These were gifts of food, canned goods, etc.)
Refreshments -- 300 guests (Guess number of guests)	80.00	(Refreshments: Soda pop, candy, tea, ice cream, crackers, cheese, etc.)
Not every guest received an elaborate gift.		
Gift to priest for services given to Buddhist church	250.00	
	<u>\$532.50</u>	

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

Eighty-seven dollars of this amount was defrayed by the government. The remainder was borne by the family. Even in cases of this kind, the family may assert itself and request that the extra services of a hearse and costly casket be granted them. The figures above are only approximate but they do show that a funeral may be conducted in a lavish manner. A poor family must keep within the prescribed bounds set by the government and not order any embellishments. A plain wooden casket is the rule in such cases. They will, of course, be given small gifts of money by the relatives and close friends whom they invite. The kenjinkai still functions as a cooperative unit only in this case, its members giving some aid to fellow members when a death occurs.

Some difficulty arises in the matter of jurisdiction of evacuees by the agencies which were and are concerned with evacuation problems. The W.C.C.A., upon turning evacuees over to the jurisdiction of the W.R.A. relinquishes its control over them once they have come into the WRA centers. In some cases individuals have been left behind and did not travel with their families because they were ill. Such persons were left behind in sanitariums and hospitals. The difficulties to which the Sakai family were exposed are typical of the difficulties which have arisen over division of control by the two agencies. Mr. Sakai, the head of an evacuee family, had been left behind after suffering from a stroke. He had been confined in the Santa Maria County Hospital in California. After some time Mr. Sakai died, the family were notified and made every effort to bring the body to Gila. Unfortunately, it could not be decided whether the deceased came under the jurisdiction of the WRA or the WCCA. The WCCA claimed that payment for the funerals should be allocated from WRA funds. The mortician in Santa Maria, California, had a contract specifying that he be paid \$69.00 for each evacuee funeral. If the WRA had paid the expenses they would have been able to pay at the rate specified in the Casa Grande mortician's contract, \$87.00. The mortician in

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

Santa Maria had embalmed the body and was waiting for instructions as to its disposition. After five days the family agreed to have the body sent to Gila. Washington decided that the payment for the funeral expenses should come under the jurisdiction of the W.C.C.A. and should be paid for from funds allocated to that organization. When this had finally been decided upon the body was sent to Gila with the understanding that the mortician in California should receive \$69.00 for his services. But charges of storage and transportation had been already established in excess of \$69.00. The mortician in Santa Maria requested the balance from the undertaker in Casa Grande. The latter, thinking that under the contract which he had, he would be reimbursed, paid the expense of the transportation of the body. The difficulties over payment of both morticians was not settled for several days during which time the body rested in the mortuary in Casa Grande. The mortician, on finding that government contract had already been let to the mortician in Santa Maria, refused to surrender the corpse until the family paid for the whole amount of the funeral. The family, a poor one, had to borrow heavily from friends in order to make the payment. At this time the United States Public Health Service, on hearing that a body had been left uninterred for over a fortnight requested that a representative of theirs inspect the body to ascertain the state of embalming. There is no United States Public Health Agency in Arizona, with the result that Dr. Sleath, the chief medical officer at Gila had to be deputized to perform this service for the public health service. This necessitated additional days of phone calls and telegrams to the nearest agency. At last the body was cleared for burial. In the center, in the meantime, considerable adverse criticism was levelled against the Sakai family for allowing the body of the head of the house to be treated in this manner. The family were quite broken up at the unsettled conditions resulting from difficulties in administrative policy. The body was finally brought to the camp a fortnight after death and the otsuya was held. The body was then

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

brought to Phoenix for cremation. The Sakai family has incurred a large debt as the result of this mismanagement and has definitely lost face in the community. There is the feeling among the Japanese that cremation or burial should follow immediately after death at least within two days. The wife of the deceased is afraid to go to the mess hall and the washrooms for fear that adverse comment will follow her.

When the priest receives the ashes from the mail clerk, the family having previously designated the officiating priest, an official call is made by the priest to return the ashes. In such cases the priest requests that he be given transportation and usually appears fully robed. The ashes are carried by the priest who enters the house bowing to the family. On two occasions I was permitted to be present when the priest returned the ashes of the dead. A box or trunk is produced for the priest to use as an altar. This he covers with a cloth, making a bow before it. If the family has a butsudān this is placed on the improvised altar. If there are any flowers, real or artificial they too are placed on the altar as well as a glass to hold the incense which is provided by the priest. The priest begins to intone sutras for several minutes, terminating each phrase with a definite hissing sound, the meaning of which, I understand, is significant of consolation and used only in funeral sutras. After this simple ritual is completed, the priest bows himself out of the room, leaving the family to weep over the ashes of the departed member. All members of the family weep although the women seem much more demonstrative than the men.

The ashes are placed in a jar or urn and kept with the family heirlooms. Sometimes people have not kept up the family relics. In this case they will usually build a shelf on which the ashes repose in their urn. The Shinto practice of keeping up ancestral tablets is confined to only a few families. The people are most secretive about Shinto practices and the reports of kamidana that I do have are from hearsay only. The period of mourning over the dead is

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

observed by Buddhists. During this time the family cannot engage in any social activities and outwardly, at least, must appear respectful for the dead. The mourning period is carried on through the forty-ninth day after death. A memorial ceremony is held on the twenty-first, thirty-fifth, and forty-ninth day. The intermediate ceremonies of a weekly nature have pretty well fallen away in most families. The above days after death are observed. The twenty-first day is an occasion for a large gathering similar to the otsuya, friends are again invited, and there is a sort of feast. The priest comes again and renders memorial sutras for the benefit of the family. On the thirty-fifth day the family privately sets aside a part of the day for remembering the deceased, and on the forty-ninth day the period of mourning is officially over. The anniversary of the death is remembered for three years and a time is set aside for the family to remember the dead. After this time the family mentions the deceased only with regard to the other members who have died. The general pattern of mourning is as the above. More attention must be paid to it, however, and attitudes, rituals, etc. more fully depicted.

In nearly every funeral the request has been made that the family be allowed to have a picture of its members centered around the coffin of the deceased. The WRA is permitted to photograph such events for the family and large pictures are generally requested. The pictures take their place beside the urn containing the ashes of the dead or with the kamidana and ancestral tablets, if any. The administration has been quite lenient in allowing such pictures to be taken even though the army is strong in its disapproval of the picture taking.

For his repeated services for families in times of funerals and memorial services the priest is paid. The money is paid to the priest as a gift ostensibly for the benefit of the church. It is agreed that the priest will keep the money for his own use. Attendance at funerals and officiating at them was the principal

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

source of a priest's income in pre-evacuation days and it promises to be his chief source of income in the centers. Each family ^{pays} according to its means.

As with any similar situation, a concentration of people of this kind, it is to be observed that the religious development assumes different forms even though there is virtual uniformity in sect and attitude. For example, certain individuals in the community adopt different views toward their religion. On the whole, in the Gila community, Buddhism lays stress on the social values; the doctrinal demands on the individual are simple: do good, love one's fellow, respect Amida, and have faith. This is not different from Christian concepts as expressed among many sects of that religion. Naturally, every individual can take refuge in the communal character of the church. He can derive a certain amount of comfort and a feeling of identification with his group by participation in its activities. In pre-evacuation times the young people did not need the Buddhist church as a social outlet. As such it was important to the older people. With evacuation, however, there is a greater interest on the part of the young people in the Buddhist church. Most of the young people hold to the doctrines of the church and probably did so before evacuation. Such beliefs were passive; it is unlikely that the individuals concerned thought much about them. In the centers there seems to be a greater interest for the social outlet and also because of the doctrinal and spiritual comfort provided. Religion as such is on the upgrade. This is true not only of the Buddhist groups but of the Christian as well. There are, of course, individuals who stress the spiritual side of the religious life in the community. Some are more devout than others. Thus it happens that many young people engage in the social activities, but do not go to the services. It also happens that many individuals, Issei and Nisei alike, have adopted a greater interest in the spiritual aspects to the detriment of the social life. There are some who have

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

reached the state of virtual fanaticism. There are a few houses in the community which have been decorated by their owners with religious inscriptions of all kinds. These inscriptions, in Japanese, are written on boards and hung on the outside of the houses. They speak of various themes: conscience, love, respect, filial piety, duty, worship of Amida, etc. Such houses usually have ornate gardens around them, lanterns decorated with such devices, etc. Such decorations are not to be confused with the Shinto ofuta or charms.

One of the festivals in which the Buddhists have taken considerable interest is the Bon day. Bon, the time of the return of the souls to visit the living, is usually celebrated in early July. Embree points out that the Bon has lost its religious significance in Hawaii and the Bon dances have become commercialized, although the religious connotations still make themselves felt in rural Japan. In order to preserve the Bon festival, a nonreligious dance is held in early July in Hawaii. The rural Japanese in the United States have also kept up this custom, preserving some of the religious aspects of the festival. Because there were conditions of considerable unrest in Turlock at the time of the Bon festival, the people of that group decided to postpone the dances, Bon-O-Dori, until relocation. Quite out of keeping with the usual ceremonial calendar, the Bon-O-Dori was held on September 27. The dance, although now entirely for social purposes has not altogether lost its religious aspects. It is connected with the priests and the Buddhist temple. The priest who gave a preliminary address stated in Japanese that the Bon-O-Dori held a promise of the return of the dead, stressing the fact that the ancestors are always nearby, and that the dance, if properly entered into, held something of the hope of salvation for men. In rural California, the Bon-O-Dori was sometimes held on August 15, although July 7 or 8 is more usual in Hawaii and Japan. The administrative staff were the guests of honor at the Bon-O-Dori that night,

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

being accorded seats at the edge of the dance ring. The younger people in the main were the participants in the dancing. The dancers were dressed in the national Japanese costumes with kimono, hakama, obi, and geta. The dancers assembled in the church and then marched out into the dance ring accompanied by Japanese record music over the public address system. Some of those who did not have costumes of Japanese style wore regular western dress. Small children led the procession. Three concentric circles were followed by the dancers, who were about 300 or more in number. In addition to the record music, a drum, made of a skin stretched over a keg for the occasion, was played by an older man and lent a tempo to the dancing. The circles of dancers all followed the same lines, all going in the same direction. There were five dances with an intermission between each series. Three series of five dances each made up the program. In the intermissions songs were sung by the local talent. Some of these were modern Japanese love songs, although one boy sang a rather obscene song in English. He received three encores. After an intermission of about 15 minutes the dance would begin again led by the beating drum and the record music. Refreshments were served to the administrative guests during the intermissions.

The dance itself is simple. Five dance patterns are followed which employ simple gestures of the hands, and a gentle swaying of the body. A kind of lock-step seems to predominate. Fans are used in one series, castanets in another. The effect is one of considerable grace. The pattern of five dances is repeated three times. The whole performance takes about three hours.

The social aspects of the dance are clearly exhibited by the reaction of the audience. They laugh uproariously at a dancer who makes a misstep and at the comic relief which is provided. A man dressed as Charlie Chaplin as well as a man parodying a western woman attempting to do the Bon dance were, with their clowning, providing considerable comic relief. In addition, a rather fierce looking Samurai,

again

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

wearing improvised straw armor and carrying the two swords of his office, provided considerable amusement. A figure representing the onion, with a head mask of paper mache, and representative of good fortune frolicked about the rows of dancers.

The Bon meeting was presided over by the president of the newly organized Y.B.A. The dance was sponsored by the Protestant Rev. Hata although the other priests were there as well. Hata acted as chief host to the administrative guests. He delivered a prayer of blessing at the close of the festivities and the traditional response of the thrice repeated "Naum amida butsu" followed his last words. All during the intermissions and in the preliminary introductory there were speeches by the Y.B.A. leaders. The speeches were for welcome to the guests and the evacuees and also to bring about good fellowship and a proper frame of mind for the Bon, which although a social event, must be viewed with the proper religious attitude. The Bon was explained in English to the Caucasian guests. It was said that the dance signified a graceful welcome to the ancestral spirits.

One of the more metaphysically inclined Issei explained to me that the Bon at this time was justified coming as it did on the heels of the Higan festival, the "other side" of spiritual life mentioned above. Higan is the feast of the fall equinox properly speaking when each individual makes a transition into a new attitude or mood. Just how the two, Bon and Higan are to be reconciled is not at all clear. I gather that Higan carries with it the feeling of renewal and that thus an individual is pure and can receive the ancestral spirits. Considerable further research must be directed to an understanding of such problems. I heard several people speaking of the Bon-O-Dori Higan.

The pre-evacuation pattern of visits during Bon time was not carried through at this festival. There was the feeling in the community that this was not a real Bon. The visits which were held in honor of the occasion were purely social and

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

were seemingly restricted to the young people who viewed the festival much as a parallel to Halloween. The Bon having been interrupted and the Higan seemingly having lost much of its Japanese significance there are as yet really no festivals which may be ascribed to the Buddhist yearly round of events. A ceremonial calendar has not as yet been observed. A Bon festival was not held in Camp II among the Tulare people because it had been observed in that center at the usual time. Not to be outdone, however, the young people of Camp II, the Y.B.A. are possibly planning such a ceremony.

The foregoing remarks as to the Buddhist situation at Gila should serve to indicate that this religion is well organized in the community and the activities of this group exercise a hold of the members of the community because of the social opportunities presented rather than the emotional religious appeal. The Christian bodies, representative of the next most active group of a religious nature in the community, although being far less well off numerically, should follow the discussion of Buddhism. It is not the intention of this report to omit Shinto and Tenrikyo activities. The latter groups are, of course, not active in the community nor does the administration permit their being well organized. The Christians are to be considered as the next most active group.

Christianity at Gila:

There are a few Protestant sects at Gila but the most active and the one which boasts the largest membership is that of the Methodists. The Congregationalists, Baptists, and Episcopalians are represented but are numerically small. The Methodist-Presbyterian has joined forces with the Methodist and joint services are held. The smaller sects are obliged to have their services under the auspices of the Methodist group. Actually, then, there is only Protestant Christian denomination at Gila. The Christians total about 20 per cent of the community. There are about

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

100 Catholics. It is the intention of the administration to take a religious census in cooperation with various Christian groups. As yet this has not been done and only estimates based on church attendance are available. The perspective on the religious groups above is apparently correct.

An Issei-Nisei conflict arises as the result of differences in religion. This is a subject of considerable interest but one on which the settlers are most reticent. It often occurs that the Issei members of a family will be Buddhist while the Nisei members will be Methodist Christian. This gives rise often to a family conflict. The Nisei of the family by virtue of their pre-evacuation association with young Christian people have adopted Christianity in many cases. It is odd that such Nisei are often intensely religious and devote a good deal of their time toward attempts to convert their families. The Issei of the family very often strongly resist the efforts of their children to bring them to Christianity, becoming angry when the subject is mentioned and criticizing the Nisei for leaving the Japanese fold. The arguments they advance are social rather than religious. They ask that the children hold a certain fondness for the mother country. The fact that the children in such cases rather scorn the mother country as heathen is a thorn in the sides of these Issei. They are ashamed of such children before their Japanese friends. It often happens, too, that the children adopt a very intolerant attitude toward the parents which further increases family disunity. In the centers it is not unusual to find that the children and parents no longer live together. They visit with one another, it is true, but both generations are ashamed of each other. It is not to be implied that such a situation exists among many of the Japanese families at Gila, but it is present in some cases. This is the only real conflict which appears between the Buddhists and Christians in the community. Outwardly, at least, they live together in peace and harmony. The Christians do not attempt to gain converts from among the ranks of the Buddhists.

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

It is true that Caucasian missionaries come into the community from time to time seeking converts from among the Buddhists. The Buddhists regard such men as good and holy, men to be respected and heard. The attitude of the Buddhists generally is one of sincere tolerance with few exceptions. They are willing to admit a place for all religious worship. They do not submit to conversion at this time for the simple reason that community solidarity swings in favor of the Buddhist groups. If it should have been that Christianity were the chief religion of the center there is little doubt that many former Buddhists would submit to conversion. I have heard of no cases in which Christians have returned to the Buddhist fold. The Japanese Christians ^{are} in the main quite intolerant, almost willing to accept a social martyrdom in defense of their religious stand.

The majority of the Christians in the community are those who were converted either in Japan before emigration to America or who submitted to baptism after reaching this country. Some of the families who are Christians came to this country in order to escape the social pressures brought about in Japan by the religious intolerance of some of the Meiji pro-Japan supporters. The majority of religious services are held under the auspices of Presbyterian and Methodist ministers from the outside. There are a few ordained clergymen in the center among the Japanese. Like the Buddhist priests their position carries with it a certain amount of social prestige, although perhaps a shade lower than that of the Buddhist priests. Rev. To is an Issei Methodist minister who speaks no English. He had a congregation in Turlock before evacuation. Now quite along in years he still preaches on occasion but is generally agreed to be retired. He is in Camp I. Here most of the religious services are conducted by preachers imported from the surrounding Casa Grande-Coolidge Valley by the Community Activities or Recreation Department. In Camp II, a Nisei, Rev. Susimago is the chief Christian leader. He is a very

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

intense Christian, rather bigoted and intolerant. He is aided in his attitudes by his wife, a Caucasian. The two have made considerable trouble for the administration in attempting to secure the reins of the control of the Community Welfare Department. Mrs. Susimago feels herself somewhat superior to the bulk of the evacuees by virtue of her race. Formerly acting head of the community welfare activities at Tulare, she has persisted in refusing to turn her case histories over to Mr. Landward and Mrs. Smith, acting heads of this department since the inception of the project. She demands a job and a certain amount of control in the community welfare department. The residents of the center are divided in their opinions of her. She has a large Christian following, but is rather the butt of jokes by the Buddhists. Rev. Susimago himself resents the fact that Caucasian ministers are allowed to come into the community. Like the Buddhist priests, the Christian ministers receive honoraria for performing at weddings, funerals, etc. Both he and his wife have resented very much the fact that ministers are accorded no official position by the W.R.A. employment department. They have written to Washington protesting this and stating that the clergy is as established a profession as medicine. They were told that if this were allowed any individual could set himself up as a religious leader and draw the W.R.A. Professional and Technical salary. Birth control measures, considered by the community council and urged by the medical department, are rabidly fought by the Susimagos.

There is usually a morning and an evening Christian service. The morning service is a general devotional service replete with hymns, an order of service, a sermon, and various benedictions. The evening service is designed primarily for the young people. It is a prayer meeting at which Bible discussions and catechumen classes are held. A similar service usually takes place on Wednesday nights. Most of the groups adhere to fundamental interpretations of the Bible. As a group,

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

although numerically inferior to the Buddhists, the Christians are extremely unified, more so perhaps than the Buddhists who are inclined to a greater laxness and tolerance. The Sunday morning services are conducted by the Caucasian minister from outside. It is the aim of the administration to let every preacher in the valley have an opportunity to address the community. The result is a kind of community church leaning strongly in favor of the Presbyterian-Methodist.

The young Christian group is well organized. The church group sponsors socials for the young people on Friday nights. At these refreshments are served, games played, etc. Some of the more intellectual Christian young people hoped to have seminars and discussions of various topics but interest lagged and the Friday night meetings have been turned over solely to social functions. The Y.M. and Y.W.C.A. are represented among the Nisei but membership is too limited to warrant the inception of a branch auxiliary at Gila. The young people of the Christian evacuees have rather banded together in an association of their own. They are remarkably clannish, finding their social outlets entirely within their own group. Wienie roasts, group sings, amateur dramatics, picnics, hikes, and social evenings are planned by these Nisei.

The Catholic group is **not** organized. There are a number of Issei Catholics in the community, most of whom were converted to Catholicism while in Japan. They have imparted their religion to their families. It is thus to be estimated that there are about nineteen to twenty families at Gila who are Roman Catholic. In addition there are some families some of whose members are Catholic. There are about 100 Catholics in all. A Mass is held on Saturdays, the second and fourth Saturday of each month. The Maryknoll Fathers, an organization founded for Far Eastern missionizing, has a branch at Poston and another at Manzanar. The priest from Poston makes bimonthly visits to Gila to conduct the Mass. During this time

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

of his visit he hears confessions and offers Communion. It might be remarked here that the Protestant church also wishes to be allowed to have a Communion service. There is a slight schism in the matter of how Communion should be offered depending on the Protestant sect backgrounds of the evacuees. The offering of wine is, of course, taboo so far as the administration is concerned. Some of the Christians feel that they are being deprived of one of the Sacraments as the result of this intervention. The Catholics do not have this difficulty since the Host is deemed sufficient. The priest who generally comes is a Father Clement Boesflug, a young Maryknoll friar of Polish extraction, a man who speaks excellent Japanese. The majority of Catholics being Issei, sermons are conducted in Japanese and Japanese litanies are chanted. It is odd to hear Japanese in conjunction with the Roman Catholic Latin. When the Catholics enter the building designated as a church, usually a recreation hall in Camp I, although there is now an official Christian Church in Camp II, the pattern of the ablution of holy water is followed. The water is poured from a vinegar cruet by an appointed sacristan into the hands of the worshippers. In the absence of Father Clement, the Catholic functions are cared for by the parish priest of the community, a Franciscan, Father Healey. A need for his services has not yet arisen. Father Healey is not nearly so broad-minded as Father Clement. He has had a number of bitter arguments with him over the fact that the Christians retain a certain amount of veneration for the ancestors, some of them even keeping a kamidana with ancestral tablets and pictures. This, declares Father Healey, is nothing short of idolatry. Healey, a parish priest, has all of the missionary zeal which Father Clement, a trained missionary, seems to lack. Father Healey is nevertheless a most tolerant and understanding man, interested in the welfare of the community. The Maryknoll organization has been most interested in the Japanese communities. The branches at Poston and Manzanar have done much to provide certain comforts and entertainments for the colonists

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

there. The attitude expressed by Father Clement is that by caring for the immediate needs for recreation, the members of the community will see a certain advantage in listening to the exhortations of the Catholic priest. The Maryknoll Fathers bought the printing press for Manzanar as well as a motion picture projector.

As the result of the unsettled conditions of the time which immediately preceded evacuation many Japanese became converted to Christianity. Some did this in order to satisfy an inner need. Many others, however, felt that to join up with the Christians at the time was to offer a further proof of loyalty to the United States. The typical Buddhist attitude toward the Christians is that they are somewhat goody-goody. To become a Christian is to reform. To the Japanese mind it implies no drinking, no dancing, no dissipation or roystering of any kind. Embree mentions this in his Kona study and the same is true of the Japanese in America. There are some in the community who have become fanatical Christians, most intolerant of the pagan Buddhists. The Buddhist people treat such people with tolerance and deference, manifesting no ill-feeling or resentment. The most active of the Christians are the Nisei whose attitude toward the Buddhists is allied with a hatred for things Japanese. They incline to an American pattern of culture which to them is typified by the religion they have adopted. A particular fervent type of Christianity among the evacuees is that which is sponsored by the Swedish synod of the Methodist Church. The Swedish people sent many missionaries to Japan with the result that some of the Christian Issei families are members of the Swedish Methodist church. This group is perhaps the most intolerant of the Christian groups with regard to the other religions in the community. They have been visited by Swedish missionaries from California on a number of occasions, principally a Rev. Karlson, a man who expressed such open intolerance of the extent of Buddhism in the community that he ^{was} asked to leave by Mr. Korn, the assistant project director. The Japanese who have joined this church are most interested in the affairs of Sweden, and, although none of them have visited that country, nevertheless, they are most familiar with it, speaking of Sweden, its geography, organization, government, etc.

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

with surprising familiarity and accuracy. A few such Japanese are studying the Swedish language although I cannot say what progress they have made with it. They point to Sweden as one of the few nonbelligerent major countries of the world and emphasize the fact that Sweden is Christian and therefore does not persecute its minority groups or wage war.

From the Portland Assembly Center came a family which had been just converted to the Methodist Faith. The father had been greatly distressed over evacuation; his business had been ruined and he had sold it to a dishonest individual who had mulcted him of a considerable sum. The family had been Buddhist. So perturbed was the father over his financial losses that he attempted suicide in the Assembly Center. He nearly succeeded in cutting his throat but not quite. While convalescing he was visited in the hospital by a Japanese Methodist minister who talked to him and his wife about that faith. He became converted, insisted that his family undergo baptism, and finally was well enough to appear around the center again. He immediately went to work to convert his Buddhist cronies. They only ridiculed him for being a "sucker" and losing his business, for failing to commit suicide, and for becoming a Christian. He withdrew from their company, forbade his children to associate with other than Christians, and brought matters to an ugly turn by his fervent Christian endeavors among the Buddhists. At length the authorities agreed that he must be sent away. He and his family were sent to Gila and placed in a block in which other Methodist families had congregated. At last he and his family have settled down although they will associate only with fellow Christians now. There has been no further trouble at Gila although he and his wife are vexed that the children must attend ~~school~~ with Buddhist children.

Thus, in general, the Christians live at equality with the other sects in the community. The Buddhists look upon the Christians with veiled amusement but are in

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

the main tolerant. The Catholics, oddly enough, are accorded equal religious status with the Buddhists although the Protestant sects are somewhat looked down upon. The rather undemocratic hierarchy which is paralleled in Catholicism is perhaps a reason for this attitude. The Buddhists are much more inclined to laugh at the peculiarities and superstitions of such Japanese sects as Tenrikyo.

Shinto and its offshoot, Tenrikyo, are the unorganized religions of the community having no official status and being banned by the W.R.A. administration as nationalistic and pro-Japanese. It is fitting that a short discussion of the activities of these groups should follow.

Shinto: In the pre-evacuation period Shinto, the Way of the Gods, was a popular religious system among many of the rural Japanese population. The term "religious system" is used here because Shinto as such can scarcely be called a religion. It is rather a system of precepts based on mythological history. There is really no unified system of Shinto beliefs in this country. In Japan, the identification of Shinto as a national religion has made for some unity. Shintoism is polytheistic, embracing greater and lesser pantheons and including many beliefs, practices, and systems which are not well unified and which vary from locality to locality in this country. There used to be Shinto shrines and temples in many places in California particularly in rural communities. In this country there was ^a certain amount of personal Shintoism; families kept household gods, good luck charms, and believed in various spirits. The activities of the Shinto people were centered around a shrine to which people came for special events in the Japanese calendar. It was unusual for actual services to be held at prescribed days. Adherence to Shinto followed a ceremonial calendar. At the Shinto shrine was a priest and possibly one or two assistants depending on the size of the shrine. They were subsidized in most cases by Japanese money, possibly, or so it is implied by some of those with

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

whom I have spoken, through the help of the Japanese consulate. There was such a shrine in Fresno and also one or two others throughout the San Joaquin Valley. On the whole, however, shrine development and partisanship in Shinto sects seems to have been limited in California in the pre-evacuation period. The principal expression of Shinto was in the home, in the household gods which were kept for good luck, and in the kamidana, the small Shinto shrine of the home. The priests of Shinto were taken into custody after December 7, 1941.

Much further study is necessary in order to understand the position of Shinto in the pre-evacuation communities and its present reflection in the relocation center. It is obvious that the distinctions between Buddhism and Shintoism are not at all well defined. It might be said that each devout Japanese who subscribes to the religious systems of the mother country is both a Buddhist and a follower of Shinto. The Shinto is applied to the life of today, the mundane existence. It brings good luck, it cures diseases, and it offers certain patterns which, if followed, will bring good fortune to the faithful. Buddhism is the promise of the life to come. Shinshu Buddhists usually have some veneration of Shintoism in their beliefs. This religious division in the individual is true also in Japan, as well as in the United States. Shinto in this country is not emphasized as is Buddhism; it does not form a basis for social activity. It offers only certain small comforts to the individual who, by a belief in Shinto, and by an adherence to its magical powers, can bring about for himself good fortune in this world. Shinto does not demand the following that Buddhism does. In this country it is a purely personalized thing.

Shinto subscribes to a kind of ancestor worship. The illustrious ancestors of an individual take their place in the pantheon of Shinto deities. There has been a definite breakdown of the division of religious concepts which arise between Buddhism and Shintoism. Thus the Buddhists honor the ancestral dead in the Shinto

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

manner of keeping the tablets and relics of the departed members of the family. In this case the concept is both Buddhist and Shinto (ancestor reverence), but the external form is Shinto, the thought linked with Buddhism. Shinto demands that the tablets of the ancestors be kept sacred in the kamidana of the home. Many Buddhist homes thus have both butsudan and kamidana. Some homes have combined the two. Shinto demands further that the family name and crest be kept intact through a succession of male heirs. In Japan adoption is the rule when a family does not have a male heir. This has broken down in the United States with the result that adoptions of male heirs are rather infrequent. Some Issei families are concerned over the fact that they have no male children and some cases of adoption are recorded. The Nisei no longer respect the concept with the result that family adoption on the Japanese scale will probably not occur among that generation. The problem of child adoption among the Issei, while superficially infrequent, will bear further research.

Thus in the centers a Shintoistic type of worship does exist among the Buddhists in many cases. Often such Buddhists are not aware that they are engaging in Shinto practices. There are, however, a few Shinto devotees in the community who do follow the precepts of Shintoism. If one were to ask them their faith they would answer Buddhist since they subscribe to many of the Buddhist tenets, so confused are the religious issues between the two. The Japanese themselves, both here and abroad, do not seem to think of Shinto as a religion. It is rather a system by which one may obtain happiness and success in this world. Jizo rites are thus observed by an outstanding member of the Buddhist congregation. The Jizo deity is primarily Buddhist but the god in form of a good luck stone has been taken over by the Shintoists, not being used in the form of a stone in Japan. The man in question has Jizo stones in his front yard. To be sure, they are not true Jizo stones, having been found in the desert nearby, but the similarity is unmistakable. The same Buddhist has

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

charms of paper in his yard attached to the stone lanterns which he has made. These are called ofuta and impart qualities of good luck. Some Shintoists meet for discussions of various kinds and for prayers offered to the Shinto deities, so states one informant.

The principal manifestations of Shinto are in the faith healing powers of the priest in the pre-evacuation period. Now that there are no Shinto priests in the community this power of faith healing by the priest is no longer present. The manifestations of Shinto in the community are in the following: (1) gardens with phallic stone lanterns and ofuta; (2) kamidana (which I have not seen but which I have heard exist); (3) superstitions, Inari concepts, spiritualistic observances, and faith healing. In the latter category superstitions center around concepts of good luck which may be brought about by charms, which were often sent from Japan in pre-evacuation times and sold by the Shinto priests. Inari is a Shinto deity whose messengers are foxes. The belief in Inari as a healer is quite prevalent in Hawaii and rural Japan. Much of the beliefs and practices which surround the Inari concept of curing are restricted to the Issei. There was a certain manifestation of the Inari belief in the rural areas of California in the pre-evacuation period, ^{centers,} but in the like so many other aspects of Shintoism, it has virtually died out. Little foxes are occasionally seen at Gila. The fox is regarded as good luck by some of the Issei who subscribe to this belief but also thought to be trickster and a harbinger of death. The fox shares some of the traits of the trickster, culture-hero concept in Japan. The presence of the little desert foxes around the center have given rise in some cases to manifestations of Inari beliefs. The few Shinto priests in this country were also expected to act as mediums through whom spirits could be contacted. The Shinto group when it does meet, talks about spirits and the like, but I have heard of ^{no} spiritistic demonstrations. Some of the people believe in ghosts and young children are frightened

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

of ghosts having heard their elders speak of them. The most interesting manifestation of Shintoistic beliefs appears in the center in the practices of faith healing which sometimes occur. Some of the Issei are most opposed to Western medical practices. The hospital has gained a bad reputation among some of the community residents. Anyone who goes there, this being a consensus of many Issei and some Nisei, "submits to death." The residents, in part at least, are hard to convince that the hospital is there for their service and use and that it intends only to offer help. Some say that the doctors are paid to kill off the number of Japanese in the center and are waiting to get their hands on everyone. At first there were a few deaths in the hospital which occurred as the result of excitement, heat, old age, disease, etc. Many deaths were reported at first as compared with more settled conditions of the present. With many of the Issei, the hospital got off to a bad start. Dr. Furuta, the bacteriologist in charge of water and sewage, told me that he had severely reprimanded a man for saying to his small boy when the latter refused to eat his cereal: "You'd better eat that or you'll get sick and have to go to the hospital and they'll kill you like they did Mr. Komura." This is a fair indication of the opinions of some of the population. One reason that the hospital has had so much disfavor is that the doctors are very careful. If there is any danger of some affliction being contagious, the sick person must go to the hospital. Many Issei would like to keep their sick at home and resort to home treatments. The Nisei of the family are the usual ones to report an illness in the family, often to the annoyance of the older people. Many Issei would like to resort to the faith healing practices which center in Shinto. In spite of the fact that priests are no longer present to act in the capacity of healers, the curing practices known to many parts of rural Japan have some survival in the cultural patterns of the Japanese in America.

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

The best example of faith healing of this kind came out through the hospital. A woman was dying of coccidioides in the lungs. She had developed this disease while in the assembly center and had transmitted it to her small son, eight years of age. The two were put in the hospital in separate rooms in an effort to isolate the woman who was most concerned over the condition of the boy, who, incidentally, later recovered. The woman in her last days developed a fever of 108 degrees, losing consciousness intermittently. She was given up for dead by the hospital staff. The woman's family in the meantime became quite concerned over her obvious high fever. Her husband and brother asked that they be allowed to try their remedies on the patient. Since the woman could not possibly survive the terrific fever, Dr. Kanai, the resident physician in charge of the case agreed that they might. To refuse the family this request at the time when the woman was dying would be extremely detrimental to the hospital and the confidence which it is trying to win. The husband and brother brought in a live carp which they had caught in the irrigation canal. The fish was allowed to flop about on the hospital floor until it died. Immediately as it died, its head was cut off and its blood squeezed out into a cup. The woman then was raised up to drink the fish's blood which she did. This was accompanied by a kind of muttered incantation on the part of the brother. The husband and brother then made a poultice from the macerated remains of the fish. This was wrapped tightly to the woman's body and she was left alone. During the night she died. The nurse on the floor came in during the last moments to discover the poultice, soggy and odorous in the wet bedclothes. She pulled the fish off. Dr. Kanai was very careful not to tell the family what the nurse had done lest the family think that the hospital was deliberately trying to offset their magic. He replaced the poultice and allowed the family to see that it was still in its position when they went to view the body and to prepare it for the undertaker. It is interesting to

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

note that after they do this they bathe their hands in saltwater for purification. This pattern was followed in this case. The dead woman's son recovered without the benefits of such treatment. The news of his mother's death was carefully kept from him by the others in the family.

It is true certainly that the hospital staff is overworked and are often unable to come to the immediate aid of the sick. This is one reason that the hospital has not been able to keep the community in a state of confidence. Various home remedies are used for minor illnesses by some Issei, who do this rather than seek medical attention. A young Issei woman whose child was very ill of fever put the feet in cold water and refused to heed the advice of the doctor ^{who} was asked by neighbors to visit the family. The child was suffering from heat prostration and died shortly thereafter. The return of the ashes of this child is described some pages back. Many Issei also go into the desert and pick up various herbs and cacti which they brew as teas and serve to the sick. I have not seen this done and know it only as hearsay. Superstitions about sickness and the remedies for various illnesses are subjects of interest and on which further work must be done.

The offshoot of Shinto, Tenrikyō, is present in the Gila community. Tenrikyō is a composite of three root elements: Ten, heaven; ri, mind; and kyo, the way of. Thus the word means "Heavenly way of rational thinking" Although the Tenrikyō cult is limited in America, having a fairly large following in Japan, there are a few Issei individuals who subscribe to the faith in the Gila community. Tenrikyō has the same basis of polytheism as does Shinto proper. Actually, it is a cult of Shinto. It is more of a religion than Shinto proper, however, having definite promise of an afterlife and a series of very well defined sacraments for marriages and funerals. Oaths sworn in the name of Tenrikyō are binding. Many of the Issei look down on the cult members, saying that the faith is just too silly for words.

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

But Tenrikyō offers a promise of afterlife and success and freedom from ills in this existence. Its followers are most devout. The Tenrikyō development in this country is independent of affiliations with the mother country. Thus the Turlock Tenrikyō priest was not interned and is present at the camp. Actually, Rev. Tanaka is a self-appointed evangelist but he does have prestige in the community as great as an ~~ordained~~ Christian minister. He has a great reputation as a curer which perhaps explains his following. The actual mention of Shinto healing practices should not be divorced from the discussion of Tenrikyō, but the attitude toward the two is slightly different. The great promise of Tenrikyō is in its curative powers. Cures in the community center ^{around} /Rev. Tanaka. Tenrikyō is somewhat like Christian Science inasmuch as it possesses a tendency to minimize the ills of the individual. Some of the more sceptical Issei have told me that Rev. Tanaka puts people off until the cure is ready to come of its own accord. Then he effects a cure which would occur anyway. In any event, Rev. Tanaka does have patients who go to him for faith cures. In curing people, Tanaka puts paper poultices on the affected part. He uses Japanese rice paper and lays it all over the part of the body which feels the pain. He removes the paper and puts the whites of eggs on the affected member and covers these with the paper. Then he chants, dancing around the patient. If this does not effect a cure, the "reverend" plays the Japanese flute, shakohachi, and repeats the performance. He whispers and chants the incantations, working himself up into a kind of frenzy as he does so. He is always master of himself, however, and does not pretend that a spirit enters his body. He rather summons spirits which lend curative powers to the paper and the whites of eggs. The patient lies supine on the floor while the curer does this. He has effected already some cures for stomach ache among the believing Issei and the smaller children. The Nisei rather avoid him. Another way in which he cures is by a kind of head lifting. The patient reclines on the floor of the house and the reverend squats at his head. He lifts

Robert F. Spencer
Gila

November 2, 1942

the head several times while he chants and whispers. I have not seen either of these cures performed, although I hope to make the acquaintance of Rev. Tanaka when I return to Gila. It is true that he has a following and that many Issei believe in his powers even though they do not subscribe to Tenrikyō. General good luck, success in farming, business, social life, and cures are sought by the devotees of Tenrikyo in prayers. Thus, if a man has good luck after praying for it, his belief in Tenrikyō is strengthened.

* * *

It is in the religious life at Gila that the closest ties with the mother country are manifested. The religion persists where many other traits have fallen away. The writer hopes that Buddhism in its acculturated aspects has been clearly delineated and that the position of both Buddhists and Christians is clear. There are a few other Christian sects which have not been mentioned here because of the fact that information on them was lacking. The Christian Scientists, Salvationists, Pentecostalists, and "Holy Rollers" (whatever the church is called) are represented but in very small numbers. They are not functioning bodies in the Gila community.