

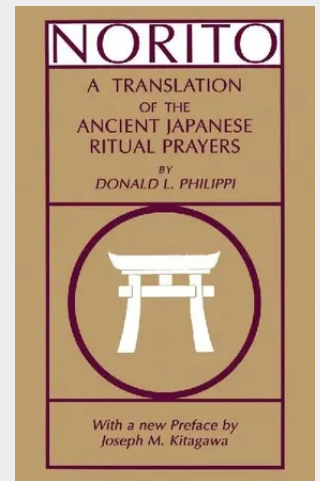
Philippi

Norito

A Translation of the Ancient Japanese Ritual Prayers - Updated Edition

This volume presents the only English translation of the prayers of Japan's indigenous religious tradition, Shinto. These prayers, norito, are works of religious literature that are basic to our understanding of Japanese religious history. Locating Donald Philippi as one of a small number of scholars who have developed a perceptive approach to the problem of "hermeneutical distance" in dealing with ancient or foreign texts, Joseph M. Kitagawa recalls Mircea Eliade's observation that "most of the time [our] encounters and comparisons with non-Western cultures have not made all the 'strangeness' of these cultures evident. We may say that the Western world has not yet, or not generally, met with authentic representatives of the 'real' non-Western traditions." Composed in the stately ritual language of the ancient Japanese and presented as a "performing text," these prayers are, Kitagawa tells us, "one of the authentic foreign representatives in Eliade's sense." In the preface Kitagawa elucidates their significance, discusses Philippi's methods of encountering the "strangeness" of Japan, and comments astutely on aspects of the encounter of East and West.

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