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**PIONEERS OF JAPANESE BIBLE TRANSLATION:
The Application of the Dynamic Equivalent Method
in Japan**

A thesis presented in partial
fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts
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Japanese

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to investigate the appropriateness of the term *kami* (神) as the translation of the term 'God' from the point-of-view of Dynamic Equivalent (DE) translation in Japan. The study argues that the translated term *kami* (神) in the Japanese Bible was adopted at first without sufficient investigation of its appropriateness but because of its penetrating character, it became the exclusive term to represent the monotheistic God. Discussion of the effect of the philosophy of Dynamic Equivalent translation in the history of Bible translation in Japan and the history of the changes of the Japanese notion of God is used to justify the validity of the above argument.

As a procedure, two translation methods (DE and FE) seen in conventional Bible translations have been compared, supported by case studies where these methods are used. Next, to understand the mind of the Japanese who were the recipients of the new concept of God, the history of Japanese Shinto is discussed. Finally, the lives of two Japanese assistants of Japanese Bible translation, Anjirō and Otokichi, are studied.

The study concludes that the adoption of *kami* (神) was appropriate from the point-of-view of DE translation, and the Japanese assistants also applied the DE translation method unconsciously. A reassessment of their selection of the terms for God is possible if they are seen as examples of the DE translation method.

DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis has not previously been submitted for any degree and that acknowledgements have been made to the contributions of others where appropriate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In what way can Japanese people understand the Bible more easily? This has been an on-going question for me. The key word to answer the question is the term *kami*, a Japanese translation of the term 'God'. The term *kami*, like god, encodes a huge amount of linguistic, historical, cultural and theological information. In this thesis, an approach to the term 'God' from the viewpoint of the translation history of the Japanese Bible has been chosen. The research involved the histories of China, England, the USA and medieval Rome as well as Japan. It also required a lot of actual translation work. I would often feel that challenging the project was like scratching a tall concrete block with a finger nail. Without the sincere support of the staff of School of Language Studies in Massey University, I would have never completed this study. I am grateful to Dr. Penny Shino who mentored me with great patience for these four years, Professor Kiyoharu Ono (now retired) who kindly provided me the opportunity to study at Massey University, and also Dr. Fumio Kakubayashi who supervised me in 2003 and 2004, guiding me in historical matters, lending me his precious resources and introducing me to Dr. Kurozumi of Tokyo University. Regretfully Dr. Kakubayashi ended his earthly life on Christmas Eve, 2005, after a long illness, but his works will continue to help the successive scholars in the field. I also wish to express my gratitude to Mrs. Toshiko Kakubayashi who kindly allowed me to use Dr. Kakubayashi's collection and resources after his death.

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AUTHOR'S NOTES

1. Translations of quotations from Japanese-language sources are my own, unless stated otherwise.

Due to the difficulty in locating some resources, some references had to be retranslated into English from Japanese translation of English originals.

Any inaccuracy thus arising is regretted.

2. Personal names are given in the order of first and middle names, then surname, or surname preceded by the initials of first and middle names.
3. Non-English terms are typed in *italic* letters.
4. All Japanese terms are transliterated into Hepburn system romanizationⁱ. They are followed by synonymous *kanji* in parentheses when appropriate.
5. Principal notations of god are:
 - a. god represents a mighty, awesome and superhuman existence used as a general term, differing from *Elohim* in Hebrew, *Theos* in Greek, *Deus* in Latin and God in English, the object of Christian faith.
 - b. God for the god of Christianity.
 - c. *kami* (カミ) represents the general traditional Japanese concepts of gods.
 - d. *kami* (神) is a Japanese translation of the term God of Christianity.
 - e. *shen* (神) is a Chinese translation of the term God of Christianity.

ⁱ Chinese terms are Romanized according to the Wade-Giles system.

ABBREVIATIONS

1-, 2-, 3-	John	First, Second and Third Letters of John
ABCFM		American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions
ABF		American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society
ABS		The American Bible Society
Acts		The Book of Acts
Amaterasu		Amaterasu-ō-mikami
BFBS		British and Foreign Bible Society
BFM		The Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the USA
CEV		The Contemporary English Version
CMS		Church Missionary Society
DE		Dynamic Equivalence
FE		Formal Equivalence
Gegū		The Outer Shrine of Ise Shrine
John		The Gospel of John
KJV		King James Version
LMS		London Missionary Society
Luke		The Gospel of Luke
Mark		The Gospel of Mark
Matthew		The Gospel of Matthew
MEFB		Board of Foreign Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church
Naigū		The Inner Shrine of Ise Shrine
NBSS		National Bible Society of Scotland

PEC Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant
Episcopal Church in the USA

Permanent Committee

The Permanent Committee on the Translation, Revision,
Publication and Preservation of the Text of the Holy
Scriptures

PN Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the
USA

RCA Reformed Church in America

RL Recipient language

Romans The Letter for Romans

SJ Society of Jesus

SL Source language

SPG Society for Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts

Tokyo Committee The Tokyo Bible Translation Committee

Toyoke Toyoukeno-ō-mikami

Yokohama Committee The Bible Translation Committee in Yokohama