

## Catch the Whisper from Nature

Guji Yukiyasu Yamamoto & Rev. T. Ochiai.

*Tsubaki Grand Shrine has been an active member of IARF since 1969. IARF Friends from all over the World have visited Tsubaki. The late Guji Yukitaka Yamamoto served as President of the IARF. Dr. Marcus Braybrooke included him in the book, Beacons of the Light, 100 Holy People who have shaped the History of Humanity.*

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Friends, Peace, “Heiwa” and Gratitude, “Kansha,” from Tsubaki Grand Shrine. For a few minutes I would like to introduce you to the spirit of **Shinto Shrines** and **Matsuri Shinto Ceremony**. These traditions are the mental base and cultural frame of Japanese life. Japan has been blessed with rich natural features: beautiful mountains, fertile land, clean water. The ancient Japanese saw nature as the basis for life, with power to give clean water, fine and rich land. They felt the soul of great nature from this power and they called this soul “*Kami*”<sup>※</sup>. In Shinto, the human is regarded as a part of nature, which has an endless and dynamic power of renewal. Priests conduct Shinto ceremonies which follow the movement of Nature through four seasons.

Eiji Yoshikawa was a great writer in Meiji Era. When he visited Ise Grand Shrine, he wrote a poem “Here is a home of my soul, it seems to be a baby held in arms of mother.” Shinto is a part of the Japanese subconscious. Shinto is more than a religious faith. It is an amalgam of attitudes, ideas, and ways of doing things that through two millenniums and more have become an integral part of the way of Japanese life.

Please come across to the trees, and see the forest, You will catch the whisper from Nature.

**In the Shrine, a word is not necessary.**

**Big and small trees and a grass that has survived for thousands of years, without fail,  
these are part of our soul.**

**Place your ear to a tree.**

**Take a close look at a tree and a grass.**

**Pause. ... .. Catch the whisper from nature.**

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