

Shintoism

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Definition and Numbers

- An estimated 3 million Japanese strictly follow Shintoism, while an estimated 50 million are nominally affiliated
- Buddhism and Shintoism are syncretistically linked in Japan
- There are 80,000 Shinto shrines in Japan
- The Japanese word for Shintoism is Kannagara, the way of the spirits
- “Shinto” is Chinese, combining *shen* (divinity) and *tao* (the way)



History (1)

- Legend suggests that the nation of Japan (and Shintoism) was founded by Emperor Jimmu in 660 BC)
- Shinto teachings were not written until the 5th century AD.
 - Nature worship, hero worship, fertility cults
- Nara Dynasty (710-794)
 - The Imperial family declared itself to be divine
 - Shintoism and Buddhism were declared the official religions of Japan
 - The Kojiki (Record of ancient matters), the central Shinto holy book, was published

History (2)

- Jesuit missionaries arrived in Japan (1543), challenging Japanese religion.
 - Shimabara Rebellion (1637-1638)
- Meiji Restoration (1868) restructured, spread, and centralized Shintoism. Shrines were classified in 2 types: state shrines and sectarian shrines
 - Thousands of Christians were exiled, and many faced horrible conditions, including confinement in small boxes where they starved to death
- Shintoism promoted and shaped Japanese militarism in World War 2
- Shintoism today focuses on preserving Japanese cultural traditions

Kunihisa, the Grand Shinto Shrine of Izumo



Shinto's Four Affirmations

Tradition and family play a central role in all of society.
Traditions are handed down within families

A love of the natural world - Nature and the spirit realm are closely interwoven.

A commitment to personal hygiene – practitioners clean themselves often

Celebrating matsuri, festivals in honor of spirits (kami)

Shinto beliefs (1)

- Creation
 - Began with an infinite and formless chaos
 - Three gods emerged, Ame-No-Minaka-Nushi-no-Mikoto, Takami-Musubi-no-Mikoto, and Kammi-Musubi-no-Mikoto
 - They helped the earth materialize, and other gods were born from the earth. These gods made the islands of Japan.
- Scripture
 - Ko-ji-ki – Record of ancient matters
 - Nihon-shoki – Continuing chronicles of Japan
 - Rokkokushi – Six national histories
 - Jinno Shotoki – A study of Japanese history and politics
 - Oral transmission across generations by rituals

CORE SHINTO BELIEFS



- No guiding dogmas, official scriptures, or founder
- Centered around kami, spirits and forces of nature
- Everything intelligent may be considered kami
- Japanese emperor is believed to be descendant of sun god and performed many rituals

Shinto beliefs (2)

- “Kami” (spirits) are the gods of Shintoism
 - Guardians of areas and clans
 - Family ancestors
 - Souls of dead national leaders
 - Nature (mountains, forests, plains, rivers, lakes, seas, animals, plants, astronomical bodies, etc.)
 - Straightening – solve problems
 - Bending – create problems (bring calamity)
- Amaterasu Omikami (sun goddess)
 - Japanese emperors were considered living kami, with a lineage which stretches to the sun goddess, until Japanese Emperor Hirohito relinquished his claim to divinity in 1946.

Shinto Chief Spirits



Shinto beliefs (3)

- Man – human nature is good unless corrupted by evil or foreign influences.
- Sin – Moral code similar to Confucianism
 - Courage
 - Loyalty
 - Physical and ritual cleanness
 - Do not thwart the will of the gods
 - Do not neglect duties to ancestors
 - Do not break the laws of the government
 - Do not be lazy at work
- Major sins include infant murder, incest, poisoning, and cursing
- Death, corruption, and grief entered the world after the Divine Mother Izanami died

Shinto beliefs (4)

- Salvation – the shrine practices
 - Before going to the shrine, devotees wash in a sacred river (misogi)
 - Devotee enters by passing through a gateway (torii) through which kami travel between worlds
 - The kami of the shrine inhabit a sacred object
 - The kami listens and answers prayers while the devotee makes offerings, performs ritual cleansings, recites prayers, and performs dances
- Shinto homes have a shelf of the gods (Kami-dana)
- Charms provide healing and protection from harm
- Afterlife
 - The body is cremated, and the relatives use chopsticks to remove bones from the ashes. The urn with the ashes is left out for 35 days
 - Those not cremated are buried in a kimono
 - Everyone becomes a kami: good people become good kamis and bad people become bad kamis. No one faces divine judgment.

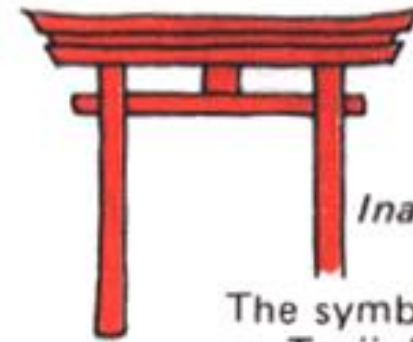
Shinto Shrines



Komainu : the stone dogs which face each other at the entrance to shrines, guarding the precincts. One dog always has its mouth open and is called *A*, while the other has its mouth closed and is called *Un*.



Mōzuya: the small pavilion near the main hall with water and ladles. People come here to wash their hands and rinse out their mouths before going to the main hall to pray.



Inari style - torii

The symbol of a shrine is its gate, or *Torii*. It represents the division between the everyday world and the divine world.



The main sanctuary of *Tōshōgū Shrine*

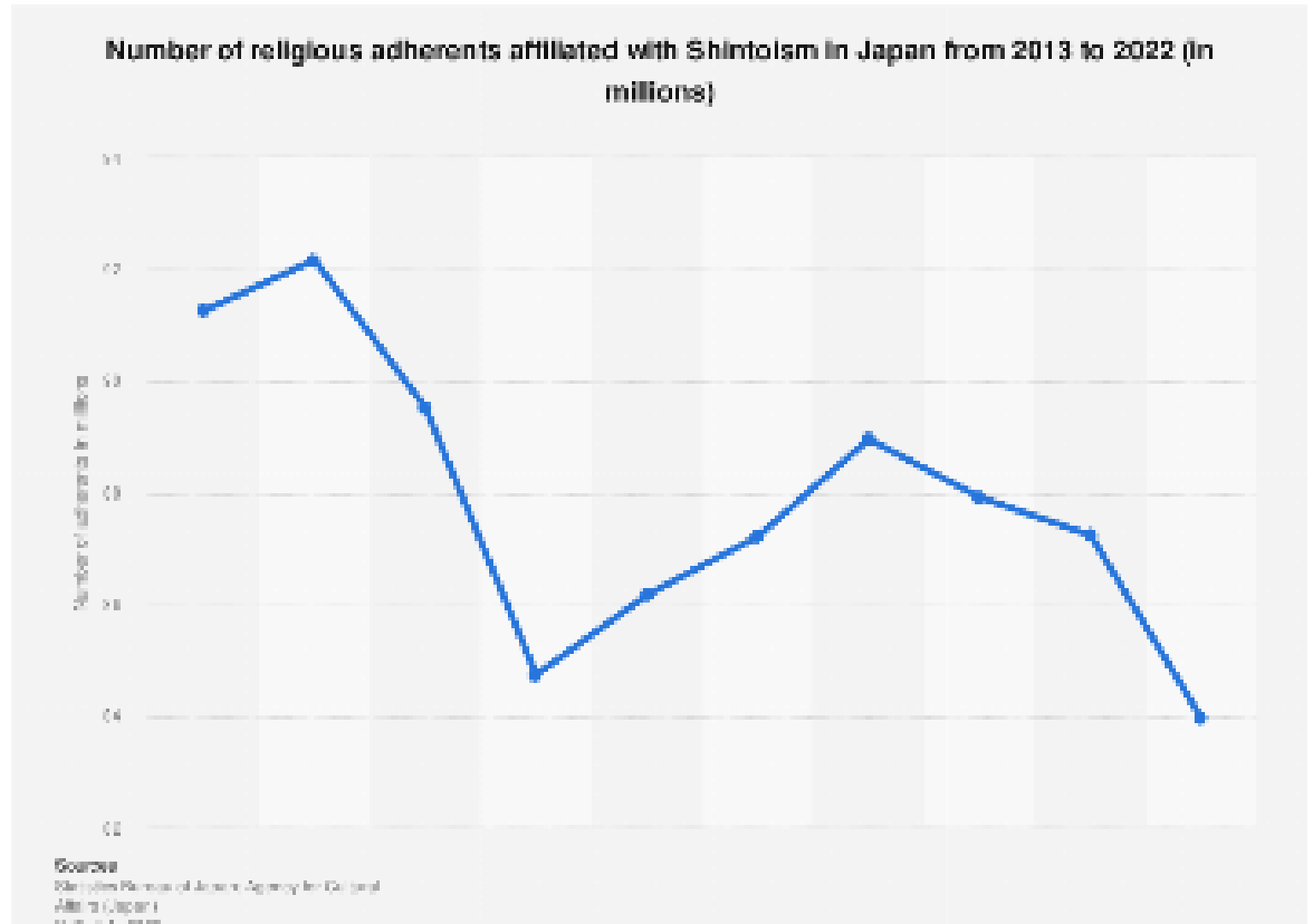
Shinto distinctive beliefs

- Types of Shintoism
 - Koshitsu (Shinto of the Imperial House) – The Emperor performs ceremonies which symbolize the state and the Japanese people.
 - Jinja (Shrine Shinto) – The largest type of Shintoism
 - Kyoha (Sectarian Shinto) – 13 different sects founded in the past 200 years
 - Minsoku (Folk Shinto) – Local and regional variations, typically rural
- Origami (Paper of the Spirits) – Japanese art of paper folding. Originated in the Edo period (1603-1867). Some do not cut the paper out of deference to the spirit of the tree that provided the paper.

Shinto Origami

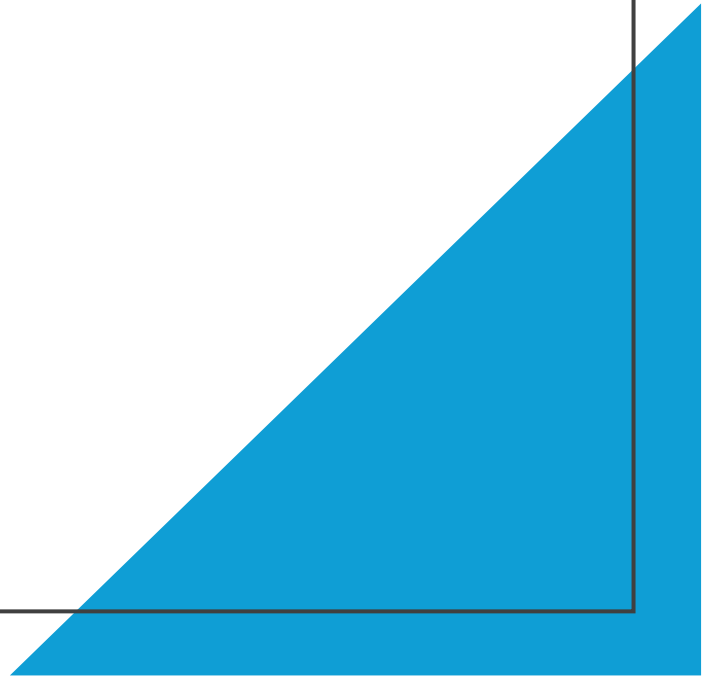


Shintoism Today



Conclusion

- Discussion



References

- H. Wayne House, Charts of World Religions, Zondervan, 2006