

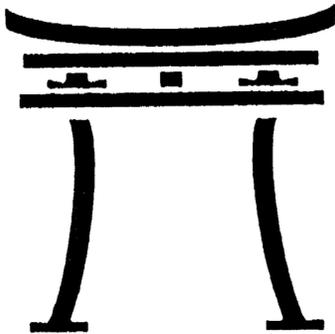
5. Syncretistic "...most Japanese adhere to a sort of folk religion that mixes Buddhism and Shintoism..."

[They] turn to Buddhism mainly at times of death; Shintoism is more evident in [birth], marriages and daily life...[This] Japanese tendency to mix religions sometimes puzzles Westerners, some of whom who have trouble seeing how one can believe in more than one faith at a time." (Nicholas Kristof, "In the Computer Age, Fox Devils Still Prowl," New York Times, 15 OCT 1995, pages A1, 8.)

"The Japanese world view is eclectic, contrasting with a Western view in which religion is exclusive and defines one's identity...a Japanese who is ill may simultaneously or sequentially seek the assistance of a medical doctor, obtain medication from a person trained in the Chinese herbal tradition, and visit a local shrine.

Each of these actions is based on a different belief in causation of the illness: the physician may say that the illness is due to a bacterial infection; the herbalist regards the body as being out of balance; and the basis of the shrine visit is the belief that the mind must be cleansed to heal the body." (Country Study, p. 99.)

II. Shinto Thought



Shintoism (shin-toh--way of the kami [kah-mee--divinities, divine presence]) emerged gradually out of myths, beliefs and rituals of prehistoric Japan. The texts Kojiki, Nihonshoki and Man'yoshu record the "age of the gods." Though important, these books are not scripture in the sense Christians, Muslims or Hindus understand their holy writings.

Shinto practice was solely at the local level until Buddhist and Chinese religions came into Japan. It then became more institutionalized and codified in reaction and relation to Buddhist and Chinese thought.

At the heart of Shinto belief and practice is the worship of kami. This term refers to what is "sacred, pure or powerful" and is expressed in different forms--mythology; forces of creation and nature (sacred mountains, waterfalls, rivers, trees, and boulders); emperors (manifest kami); and even powerful human beings.

Tama (tah-mah) define the animating spirits of kami, people or even a place. Tama has two forms--the active and rough or gentle and harmonizing.

The act of bold speech in the presence of a Kami (kotoage--koh-toh-ah-gay, seeking to invoke the magical power of words), was an early Shinto practice. Kotodama (koh-toh-dah-mah) is the belief, from ancient times, that beautiful words, correctly intoned, in and of themselves contained spiritual power. Prayers, spells, charms and popular songs can express kotodama.

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In earliest times, Shinto rituals, associated with seasons and growth, occurred in natural surroundings. Later, wooden shrines housed ceremonies for Kami worship.

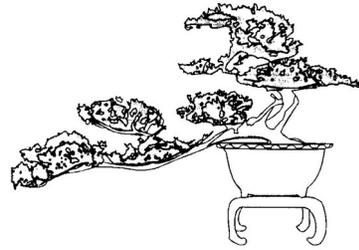
Though originally resisting Buddhist influence in the seventh century, Shinto practice gradually intertwined with Buddhist and Taoist thought, with Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples often being built adjacent to each other.

In 1868, the Meiji Restoration, influenced by the German Imperial system, "restored" the emperor to rule (in place of military rulers or shoguns), and forcibly separated Shinto practice from Buddhism.

In 1945, victorious Allied forces saw to it that Japan renounced the divinity of her emperor and ended state recognition of Shintoism.

III. Historical Overview

1. Early Historical Japan In the eighth century (CE), three works, commissioned by the Central Government, inaugurated the beginnings of written history.



The Kojiki (koh-jee-kee--"Record of Ancient Matters" 712 CE) gave literary form to oral myths and legends. The Nihonshoki (nee-hohn-shoh-kee--'Chronicle of Japan,' C.E. 720) was an imperial chronicle, along Chinese lines, describing times of creation up to the late seventh century. The Man'yoshu (mahn-yoh-shoo--"Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves") was a poetic collection of over forty-five hundred verses.

These texts concentrate on the religious beliefs and practices of ancient Japan's elite groups. The imperial court is seen to descend directly from **Amaterasu Omikami** [ah-mah-teh-rah-soo oh-mee-kah-mee--the central [female] deity in Shinto, associated with the sun and thought to be the founder of the imperial line]. The **ujigami** [oo-jee-gah-mee--the kami from which Japanese clans were thought to have descended, many being guardians of local areas] is the clan that emerged as the imperial clan. (See p. 559, HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion.)

2. Chinese Script



The introduction of Chinese script opened Japan to the world of ideas, including claims and principles of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. Prince Shotoku (shoh-toh-koo, 574-622) recognized China's cultural prestige. He saw Buddhism's ability to invigorate Japan's culture and helped form a unifying religious/political system.

Buddhist texts were first brought into Japan when Prince Shotoku sent an envoy to China during the Sui Dynasty (589-617.) *"By sending an envoy...Japan made its first attempt to gain a true understanding of Buddhist ideas.*

After this initial contact, many fervent priests endured great hardship to go to China and study religion." ("Kukai and Saicho," The East, VOL 32, No. 4, p. 51.)

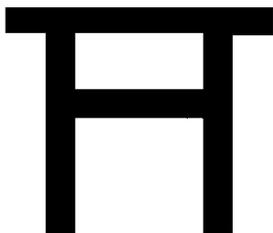
Eventually, Prince Shotoku sought to make Buddhism a national faith--unifying the nation and strengthening her imperial power by utilizing Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist ideas/values along with national myths. Under Shotoku, the government sought control of religious schools of thought and organized them under court supervision.

Some saw Prince Shotoku as an incarnation of Kannon (kahn-nohn--the Bodhisattva who exercises the profoundest compassion) or Sakyamuni (SAHK-yah-muhn-ee--one of the names of the historical Buddha) or as a reborn Chinese master Hui-SSU (hway-suh--a northern Chinese Buddhist monk [515-577] known for his meditation abilities.)



3. The Heian Age (hay-ahn, 795-1185) Two new schools emerged at the end of the ninth century--Tendai and Shingon. Tendai (tayn-dah-ee), founded by Saicho (sah-ee-choh--767-822), and Shingon (shin-gohn) founded by Kukai (koo-kah-ee--774-835), encouraged fusion of Kami and Buddhist practice.

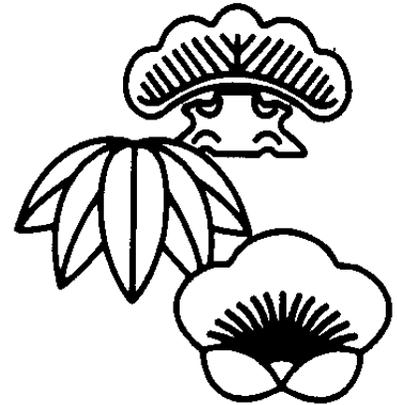
Kukai traveled to China as a member of a Japanese delegation to the Tang Dynasty. Under the mentorship of Hui-kuo, one of the highest ranking Chinese monks, Kukai achieved the rank of eighth degree master instructor of orthodox esoteric (spiritual meaning existing beyond words, actions, or logic) Buddhism.



Saicho, a well respected monk in the days of Kukai, was called upon by the Emperor to evaluate Shingon teaching. *"Saicho examined the scriptures and religious objects that Kukai had brought back [from China], and realized... [Kukai's surpassing] knowledge and understanding of Chinese Buddhism. He advised the Emperor to officially recognize Kukai."*

Saicho and Kukai soon became close friends. Their relationship faltered, however, "when Kukai refused to lend out the *Hannya-rishu-kyo* sutra, which was one of the most important texts of esoteric Buddhism...Saicho terminated their friendship and devoted the rest of his life to developing the Tendai [school of thought.] ("Kukai and Saicho," p. 53.)

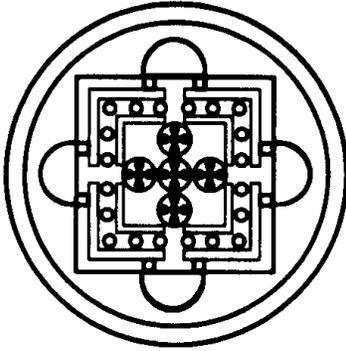
Esoteric Buddhism realizes the limits of language and logic. Nonverbal means of communicating become important. Truth becomes ineffable...unknowable to the ordinary human. "The insolvable mystery of the Buddha's three attributes is called *sammitsu*, or the Three Secrets of " ". ("Kukai and Saicho," p. 55.)



The following rites enabled the faithful to realize sammitsu (enlightenment).

- Employing **Goma** (fire rituals). The goma fires enable closer presence of deities. Sammitsu can come to those performing the goma rite. (See "Kukai and Saicho," p. 55.)
- Utilizing **Mudra** (MOOD-rah), symbolic hand gestures.
- Practicing **Yoga** (YOH-guh). These acts of meditation, concentration and asceticism, as well as bodily exercises involving the control of breath and other movements, constitute yoga.
- Chanting **Mantras** (MAHN-truhs). Such meditational devices are often a sequence of sounds made powerful by a spiritual leader (guru). The most famous mantra is "OM," which returns back to the source of creation.
- Drawing **Mandalas** (MAHN-duh-luhs). These elaborate geometric designs provide an ordered, patterned, display of the many levels of sacred presence in the world.





The mandala symbolizes the divine world. For the enlightened, it becomes a symbol of the universe. (See "Kukai and Saicho," p. 55.)

- Viewing Statues of Deities.

The belief in **goryo** (goh-ryoh--evil instilling spirits of the dead who sometimes caused natural disasters or inflicted illness and death upon the living) also arose in the Heian Age.

Rituals to pacify these spirits developed. As the present age degenerated more and more (mappo), one's own individual effort was no longer able to achieve salvation. The need for help, through others (Bodhisattvas), became necessary.



4. The Kamakura Period (kah-mah-koo-rah--1192-1333)

Simple acts of faith with an accompanying opening of salvation to ordinary people characterized the Kamakura period. Practices such as the **nembutsu** (nem-boo-tsoo--reciting the name of the Amitabha Buddha); **nembutsu odori** (oh-doh-ree--joyful dance while chanting nembutsu); and **ofuda** (prayer strips) became popular.

Six Japanese Buddhist schools of religious practice all arose during the Kamakura age. Most emphasized faith and the choosing of a single means to express that faith. These schools appealed to the common masses of Japanese people.

a. Jodoshu The Jodoshu (joh-doh-shoo--Pure Land) school followed the teachings of **Honen** (hoh-nen--1133-1212). For ordinary people, the recitation of the nembutsu is the only practice necessary for salvation.

b. Jodo Shinshu The Jodo Shinshu (joh-doh shin-shoo-- True Pure Land) trend of thought was founded by Shinran (shin-rahn--1173-1262).

The monk Shinran married, establishing a hereditary structure to Jodo Shinshu leadership. He stressed reliance upon the power of Amida Buddha as the salvation source, with faith being a gift of Amida. Faith alone effected salvation. Pure Land teachings applied to all, no matter how corrupt. Today, the Jodo Shinshu school has more adherents than any other Japanese Buddhist practice.



c. Jishu (jee-shoo) This Japanese Buddhist practice followed Ippen's thought (eep-pen--1239-1289). Ippen received a revelation in 1274. Amulets (charms used to ward off evil spirits) established a linkage between believers and Buddha, guaranteeing salvation to the individual. An ascetic monastic community and lay followers developed.

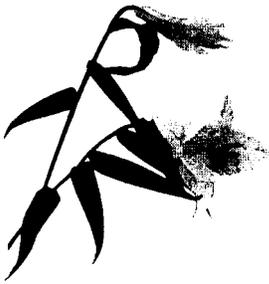
d. Rinzai Rinzai Zen (rin-sah-nee) most likely came from Eisai (ay-ee-sah-ee--1141-1215.) Sudden enlightenment within everyday life became possible. Koans--short, pithy sayings, poems and riddles--became means to enlightenment. Dr. D.T. Suzuki (1870-1966) did much to spread Zen teachings in the West.

e. Soto Zen Soto Zen (soh-toh) adheres to the teachings of Dogen (doh-gen--1200-1253), a Japanese religious figure who traveled to China, received enlightenment, and came back to Japan to spread his views. Many consider Dogen a Bodhisattva. Distinct Soto Zen thought advocates seated meditation, gradual enlightenment, simple funeral rights and the practice wherein Zen temples became places of earnest study of Chinese classics and neo-Confucian thought.

f. Nichiren Nichiren (nee-chee-ren--1222-1282) posited that the Lotus Sutra (Mahayana scripture dating from the first century) was the only teaching which would lead to salvation. This text became the object of veneration. Eventually Nichiren's thought (a sort of militant fundamentalism) became the basis for the Soka Gakkai new religious movement.

5. Tokugawa Period (TOH-koo-gah-wah--1600-1867)

Advocating the destruction of the institutional base of Tendai and Shingon schools, **Tokugawa shoguns** (shoh-guhn--imperial military title assumed by leaders of military governments in the Tokugawa period) pushed for a reorganization of society/values along Confucian lines.



In order to get rid of Christianity, all peoples were required to register with Buddhist temples. These leaders emphasized the five relations of Confucianism, with ultimate loyalty being to the shogun or highest national authority.

During this period a restoration movement occurred among Shintoists as well. Leaders sought a return to pure Japanese religiosity--the Shinto faith--and accompanying nativist tradition. Old texts received new popularity. A new nationalism flourished.

6. Meiji (may-jee--1868-1912, Restoration of the Emperor)

During the Meiji period, imperial rule returned. Modernization occurred. Buddhist and Shinto practice became distinct. (See HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion, p. 564.)

7. Selected New Religions In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, many new religions arose reinterpreting Buddhist or Shinto practice. Often, a charismatic founder established the new trend of thought. New revelations, forms of worship, and objects of veneration became commonplace.

Many new faiths offered personal healing or individual counsel. They advocated a combination of beliefs--Buddhist, Taoism, Shinto, folk practice and Christianity. The individual became the focus of the faith appeal, followed by a pattern wherein the particular faith could be inherited from others.

a. Tenrikyo (ten-ri-kyor--religion of heavenly truth) Nakayama Miki (1798-1887), a faith healer, founded this movement after she was possessed by a spirit identified as the creator of humankind. Nakayama's revelations form the basis of the Tenrikyo creed. Adherents are encouraged to live cheerful lives of service for others while purifying themselves of disharmonious bad thoughts.

b. Soka Gakkai (soh-ka gak-kai--Value creation society) Makiguchi Tsunesaburo (1871-1944) founded this new religion in 1928. Originally designed as an educational society, it is now Japan's largest new religious movement. Distinct traits include:

- Aggressive proselytism.
- A state based on Buddhist principles following the Komeito clean government political party.
- Nichiren himself becomes the source of salvation for this present world.
- The "Namu Myoho Renge Kyo" (hail to the wonderful law of the lotus) prayer, which venerates the Lotus Sutra, is seen to capture the essence of Buddhist power.
- Chanting the "Namu..." before the Gohonzon (scroll depicting Nichiren's sacred calligraphy) improves one's life, brings happiness and leads to development of a better society.



c. Kurozumikyo (ku-ro-zu-mee-kyor) In 1814 the founder, Kurozumi, prayed to the sun deity Amaterasu after experiencing personal illness and the death of his parents. Kurozumi experienced a revelation that the human and divine were one. Amaterasu became the guiding spirit of the universe.

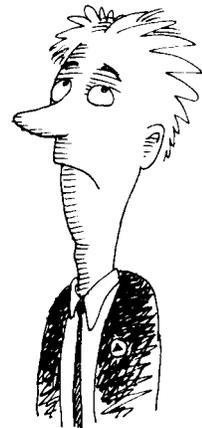
d. Oomoto (oor-moh-toh) This new religion stems from revelations received by an illiterate peasant woman Deguchi Nao. According to followers, Deguchi "*acquired...healing and divinatory powers and recorded, in automatic writings*" the teachings of the deity Ushitora.

In the 1920s, Oomoto membership was in the millions. Suppressed by the government in the 1920s - 30s, it reorganized in 1945, though at a loss of its former popularity. "*It continues to preach religious tolerance, to foster ecumenical worship, and to assert the value of artistic expression as a spiritual practice.*" (HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion, p. 814.)

e. Mahikari (ma-hi-KA-ree) Okada Kotama founded this new religion in 1959. A new divinity, SU, revealed to Okada that Japan was the center of an originally benevolent universe. This world became polluted. Through Okada's offerings, SU returned to restore the universe. Spirit possession--either by unhappy ancestral or animal spirits--is the cause of world problems. To banish evil spirits, adherents seek SU's power--which can be expressed in blessed charms. Beliefs include spiritual healing, miracles, and divine control over life events.

f. Aum Shinrikyo (oh-moo shin-ree-kyoh--"Aum" derives from the Sanskrit "om;" "shinrikyo" being translated as "supreme truth") This movement, founded by Chizuo Matsumoto, gained notoriety for the recent nerve gas attack in Tokyo.

After becoming enlightened while in the Himalayas in 1986, Chizuo Matsumoto changed his name to Asahara. He established a meditative and ascetic practice based on Hindu and Buddhist thought, with Japanese and Western elements. Ashara encourages his followers to intensify their spiritual energy to counteract evil forces and avert catastrophes predicted for the end of the 1990s.



Prosecution of the Aum Shinrikyo leader Shoko Asahara and other cult leaders continued in 1996.

g. Reiyukai (rei-yoo-kai) This new religion developed in the 1920s in Tokyo. Eventually, Kotaini Kimi, the charismatic wife of one of the founders, became a main proponent of the new religion. Teachings include the value of the Lotus Sutra and importance of venerating one's ancestors. Problems are seen as the result of one's shortcomings. Respect for ancestors, elders and seniors is necessary. The duty of a wife to honor and obey her husband is essential.

h. Rissho Koseikai (ri-shor kor-say-kai) In 1938, this religion seceded from Reiyukai. Comprised of some 2 million members, it takes its name from Nichiren's treatise of 1260 advocating "true Buddhism to establish peace in Japan..."



Adherents develop their own enlightenment in fellowship with others. Discussion groups focus on personal problems and issues, faith, and advice on how to keep these in line with Buddhist principles. Rissho Koseikai seeks world peace, and maintains an active peace foundation.

i. Christian groups

"Christianity was introduced in the sixteenth century by Portuguese and Spanish Roman Catholic missionaries, but, because it was associated with Western imperialism and considered a threat to Japanese political control, it was banned from the mid-seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century. With the reopening of Japan in the mid-1850s, missionaries again arrived.

While fewer than 900,000 people considered themselves Christian in the late 1980s, Christianity was respected for its contributions to society, particularly in education and social action [antiprostitution, antisaloon, labor movement].

In the late 1980s, about 64 percent of all Christians belonged to Protestant churches, about 32 percent to the Roman Catholic Church, and about 4 percent to other Christian denominations." (Country Study, p. 106.)

(1) Kakure Kirishitan (kah-koo-ray kee-ree-shi-tahn)

These Christians trace their heritage to believers remaining in Japan after Tokugawa persecutions in the seventeenth century. Until the mid-nineteenth century, they often practiced their faith secretly.



(2) Mu-Kyokai (moo-kyoh-kai--no-church) Popular among college students and intellectuals, this Christian movement began around the turn of the century. It rejects denominations and institutions, focusing instead on Bible studies, personal experience and hard work.

Mu-Kyokai advocates a distinct Japanese Christianity, free from foreign structures. Uchimura Kanzo (oo-chee-moo-rah kahn-soh, 1861-1930), a prominent Japanese Christian educator/writer, helped found the movement.

(3) Kyodan, Nihon Kirisuto (kyoh-dahn, nee-hon kee-ree-

soo-toh--Japan Christian Church) This united group of most Protestant denominations is the largest such association in Japan. It was established during WW II.



"Get rid of your old baggage."

Vocabulary List: Japan

Amaterasu Omikami (ah-mah-tehr-ah-soo OOH-mee-khah-mee) Goddess of the sun in Shinto mythology. Ruling emperors of Japan trace their ancestry back to this deity.

Aum Shinrikyo (oh-moo shin-ree-kyoh) "Aum" derives from the Sanskrit "om;" "shinrikyo" being translated as "supreme truth" This movement, founded by Chizuo Matsumoto, gained notoriety for the recent nerve gas attack in Tokyo. After becoming enlightened while in the Himalayas in 1986, Chizuo Matsumoto changed his name to Asahara. He established a meditative and ascetic practice based on Hindu and Buddhist thought, with Japanese and Western elements. Ashara encourages his followers to intensify their spiritual energy to counteract evil forces and avert catastrophes predicted for the end of the 1990s.

Bunka-no-hi (BOON-kah-noh-HEE, Culture Day) Japanese Day to honor contributions to the arts and sciences. Originally celebrated as birthday of Emperor Meiji, who ruled from 1868-1912

Burakumin (buh-rah-kuh-mihn) Descendants of feudal Japan era "outcasts" who practiced "unclean" professions such as butchering and undertaking.

Bushido (buh-SHEE-doh) The way of the warrior (samurai), a term applied to the principles of loyalty and honor; a code of stoic endurance, scorn of danger and death, religious worship of country and sovereign, and proper social relationships; an aesthetic life-style.

Edo (eh-DOH) Original name for Tokyo (from 1180-1868) which means "river gate". Edo became Japan's official capital around 1600 when the Tokugawa Shogunate located there.

Freeing of Insects Traditional Japanese rural festival. Insects purchased on 28 May, kept in cages, and make songs during the summer months, are freed. Occurs in public parks, temples or shrines.

Goma Fire rituals where deities come closer to adherents in Japanese Buddhist thought and practice.

Goryo (goh-ryoh) In Japanese Buddhist practice, evil instilling spirits of the dead who sometimes cause natural disasters or inflict illness and death upon the living.

Hanami (Hah-nah-MEE) Japanese appreciation of cherry blossoms. People go to parks for picnics, games, stories and dance.

Higan (HEE-gahn) Buddhist observance looking to "the other shore" (higan). Japanese celebrate move from world of suffering to world of enlightenment. Adherents remember dead, visit and clean graves, recite texts and prayers.

Hiroshima (HEE-roo-shee-mah) Japanese city located on the southwestern island of Honshu. Was a strategic military site until its near destruction by the first atomic bomb on August 6, 1945.

Hui-ssu (hway-suh) A northern Chinese Buddhist monk [515-577] known for his meditation abilities.

Jishu (jee-shoo) Japanese Buddhist practice which followed Ippen's thought (eep-pen--1239-1289). Ippen received a revelation in 1274. Amulets (charms used to ward off evil spirits) established a linkage between believers and Buddha, guaranteeing salvation to the individual. An ascetic monastic community and lay followers developed.

Jodo Shinshu (joh-doh shin-shoo) True Pure Land trend of thought founded by **Shinran** (shin-rahn--1173-1262.) The monk Shinran married, establishing a hereditary structure to Jodo Shinshu leadership. He stressed reliance upon the power of Amida Buddha as the salvation source, with faith being a gift of Amida. Faith alone effected salvation.

Jodoshu (joh-doh-shoo) Pure Land Japanese school or Buddhist practice which followed the teachings of **Honeen** (hoh-nen--1133-1212.) For ordinary people, the recitation of the nembutsu is the only practice necessary for salvation.

Kakure Kirishitan (kah-koo-ray kee-ree-shi-tahn) These Japanese Christians trace their heritage to believers remaining in Japan after Tokugawa persecutions in the seventeenth century. Until the mid-nineteenth century, they often practiced their faith secretly.

Kami Schools of thought (kah-mee--mythological, natural or human figures worshipped within Shinto thought [similar to Greek deities]; those sacred, pure and powerful forces in a destructive as well as creative sense) which focuses on this world, often being identified with specific natural sights.

Kannon (kahn-nohn) The Japanese Buddhist Bodhisattva who exercises the profoundest compassion

Keiro-no-hi (KAY-ee-ROOOH-noh-HEE) National holiday honoring the elderly.

Koans Short, pithy sayings, poems and riddles which become means to enlightenment. Dr. D.T. Suzuki (1870-1966) did much to spread Zen teachings in the West.

Kodomo-no-Hi (koh-doh-moh-NOH-hee) National holiday for boys and girls. Family picnics occur, households with boys fly streamers with carp fish. Carp represent strength, courage and determination as they swim upstream.

Kojiki (koh-jee-kee) The "Record of Ancient Matters," the oldest historical record of Japan. Covers the period from the age of gods (beginning of time) to the rule of Empress Suiko (593-628). First section is a holy book in Shinto and includes the myths of how the gods founded Japan.

Kotoage (koh-toh-ah-gay) Act of bold speech in presence of kami, seeking to invoke the magical power of words, an early Shinto practice

Kotodama (koh-toh-dah-mah) Belief, from ancient Japanese times, that beautiful words, correctly intoned, in and of themselves contained spiritual power.

Kukai (KOO-kah-ee, 774-835) "Father of Japanese culture", also known as Kobo Daishi. Founded the Shingon or "True Word" school of Buddhism. Also remembered as a traveler, poet, artist, and the compiler of the first Japanese dictionary.

Kurozumikyo (ku-ro-zu-mee-kyor) Japanese new religion based upon founder, Kurozumi, who in 1814 prayed to the sun deity Amaterasu after experiencing personal illness and the death of his parents. Kurozumi experienced a revelation that the human and divine were one. Amaterasu became the guiding spirit of the universe.

Kyodan, Nihon Kirisuto (kyoh-dahn, nee-hon kee-ree-soo-toh) Japan Christian Church. This united group of most Protestant denominations is the largest such association in Japan. It was established during WW II.

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Man'yōshū (mahn-yoh-shoo--'Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves') An early poetic Japanese collection of over forty-five hundred verses.

Mandalas (MAHN-duh-luhs) Pictures of the physical and spiritual world in concrete terms.

Mantras (MAHN-truhs) Meditational devices, often a sequence of sounds made powerful by a spiritual leader (guru), the most famous being "OM."

Mappō (mahp-poh) Era of degeneration, term describing this present age in Japanese Buddhism.

Meiji Restoration (meh-ee-jee) Period of reform and unification in Japan begun by the signing of the Harris Treaty in 1858 by the Tokugawa Shogunate. Treaty opened Japanese ports to foreigners. A series of protests and political acts ensued which caused an end to the Shogunate and 800 years of militaristic rule.

Mu-Kyōkai (moo-kyoh-kai--no-church) Popular among college students and intellectuals, this Japanese Christian movement began around the turn of the century. It rejects denominations and institutions, focusing instead on Bible studies, personal experience and hard work. Mu-Kyōkai advocates a distinct Japanese Christianity, free from foreign structures.

Mudra (MOOD-rah) Symbolic hand gestures, assisting devotees to achieve closeness with deities.

Nembutsu (nem-boo-tsoo) Reciting the name of the Amitabha Buddha.

Nembutsu odori (oh-doh-ree) Joyful dance while chanting the nembutsu

Nichiren (nee-chee-ren--1222-1282) Posited that the Lotus Sutra (Mahayana scripture dating from the first century) was the only teaching which would lead to salvation. This text became the object of veneration.

Nihonshoki (nee-hohn-shoh-kee--Chronicle of Japan, C.E. 720) An early imperial Japanese chronicle, along Chinese lines, describing times of creation up to the late seventh century.

Noh drama (noh) Tragic drama. Full of style and imagery, proceeding at a slow pace. Lead characters wear wooden masks and every performer is male. Begun in the fourteenth century, there are now only about 250 plays performed.

Obon Festival (OOOH-bohn) Also called festival of dead, Japanese Buddhist belief that dead revisited the earth. Climax is Bon-Odori (Dance of Rejoicing), folk dances which comfort the souls of the dead by the light of paper lanterns

Ofuda (prayer strips) popular in some Japanese Buddhist practice

Oomoto (oor-moh-toh) New Japanese religion which stems from revelations received by an illiterate peasant woman Deguchi Nao. According to followers, Deguchi "*acquired...healing and divinatory powers and recorded, in automatic writings*" the teachings of the deity Ushitora. In the 1920s, Oomoto membership was in the millions. Suppressed by the government in the 1920s - 30s, it reorganized in 1945, though at a loss of its former popularity.

Reiyukai (rei-yoo-kai) This new Japanese religion developed in the 1920s in Tokyo. Eventually, Kotaini Kimi, the charismatic wife of one of the founders, became a main proponent of the new religion.

Rinzai Zen (rin-sah-nee) Most likely came from Eisai (ay-ee-sah-ee--1141-1215.) Sudden enlightenment within everyday life became possible.

Rissho Koseikai (ri-shor kor-say-kai) In 1938, this new Japanese religion seceded from Reiyukai. Comprised of some 2 million members, it takes its name from Nichiren's treatise of 1260 advocating "true Buddhism to establish peace in Japan..."

Sammitsu Japanese term meaning enlightenment

Seppuku (SEP-puh-koo) Form of ritual suicide caused by self-disembowelment due to the belief of the soul being in the midsection. Begun in the eleventh century and common until the last century, seppuku was initiated as capital punishment, to avoid capture, to follow a deceased lord in death, or to protest the orders of superiors.

Shingdon (shin-gohn) An early Japanese Buddhist practice founded by Kukai (koo-kah-ee--774-835) encouraging a fusion of Kami and Buddhist practice.

Shintoism (shin-toh--way of the kami [kah-mee--divinities, divine presence]) Japanese traditional belief system which emerged gradually out of myths, beliefs and rituals of prehistoric Japan. The texts **Kojiki**, **Nihonshoki** and **Man'yoshu** record the 'age of the gods.'

Shogun (shoh-guhn) Imperial military title assumed by leaders of military governments in the Tokugawa period

Soka Gakkai (soh-ka gak-kai) "Value creation society" Makiguchi Tsunesaburo (1871-1944) founded this new Japanese religion in 1928. Originally designed as an educational society, it is now Japan's largest new religious movement.

Soto Zen (soh-toh) Adheres to the teachings of **Dogen** (doh-gen--1200-1253), a Japanese religious figure who traveled to China, received enlightenment, and came back to Japan to spread his views. Many consider Dogen a Bodhisattva. Distinct Soto Zen thought advocates seated meditation, gradual enlightenment, simple funeral rights and the practice wherein Zen temples became places of earnest study of Chinese classics and neo-Confucian thought.

Sumo wrestling (soo-MOOOH) National sport begun 2000 years ago, perfected in the seventeenth century. Wrestlers wear only a mawashi and try to force one another out of a ring. Wrestlers are ranked on a scale called the banzuke and are usually chosen from poor families to be raised into the higher sumo class. Weight classes vary from 250-500 pounds.

Tama (tah-mah) Define the animating spirits of kami, people or even a place.

Tendai (tayn-dah-ee) An early Japanese Buddhist practice founded by **Saicho** (sah-ee-choh--767-822)

Tenrikyo (ten-ri-kyor) "Religion of heavenly truth" Japanese religionist Nakayama Miki (1798-1887), a faith healer, founded this movement after she was possessed by a spirit identified as the creator of humankind. Nakayama's revelations form the basis of the Tenrikyo creed. Adherents are encouraged to live cheerful lives of service for others while purifying themselves of disharmonious bad thoughts.

Ujigami (oo-jee-gah-mee) the kami from which Japanese clans were thought to have descended, many being guardians of local areas.

Urabon (oohr-ah-bohn, [Oban]) Buddhist religious holiday derived from a Sanskrit word meaning "All Saints' Day." Grave sites are cleaned, decorated and laden with offerings. Proceedings prepare for the return of dead spirits to the homes where they were born. On the last day, farewell fires are set to send the spirits away.

Yoga (YOH-guh) Acts of meditation, concentration and asceticism, as well as bodily exercises involving the control of breath and other movements, enabling adherents to achieve closeness with Japanese deities.

Review Quiz: Japan



Part 1--Multiple Choice Place the letter of the most correct answer in the blank provided.

1. _____ In common Japanese religious activity, life cycle events (births and weddings) often draw upon _____ practice.
 - a. Buddhist
 - b. Taoist
 - c. Shinto

2. _____ _____ priests most often perform Japanese funeral rites.
 - a. Buddhist
 - b. Taoist
 - c. Shinto

3. _____ Domestic violence against Japanese women often goes unreported due to
 - a. harsh punishments inflicted by police.
 - b. cultural concerns about shaming one's family and reputation.
 - c. popularity of the Samurai spirit.

4. _____ The 1993 public apology by the Japanese prime minister acknowledged
 - a. brutal handling by Japanese guards of Allied prisoners in WW II POW camps.
 - b. full responsibility for 1932-1945 abuses of "comfort women" by Japanese troops.
 - c. "spirit of samurai" practice.

5. _____ The Japanese government-sponsored Asian Women's Fund was established in 1995 to compensate former comfort women and

- a. help improve the status of women and girls throughout Asia.
 - b. support the American National Organization of Women.
 - x. address sexual harassment issues in the Japanese workplace.
6. _____ The Japanese national holiday honoring the elderly is
- a. Keiro-no-hi.
 - b. Obon.
 - c. Hanami.
7. _____ The Obon Festival celebrates a Buddhist belief that the dead
- a. remain forever in their stupas.
 - b. revisit the earth.
 - c. need physical and spiritual sustenance in the afterlife.
8. _____ The most significant Japanese holidays are
- a. Kodomo-no-Hi and Keiro-no-hi.
 - b. New Years and Obon.
 - c. Hanami and Bunka-no-hi (Culture Day).
9. _____ According to Gestures by Roger Axtell, some Japanese people wear white gauze masks in public because
- a. they can't stand polluted, urban air.
 - b. the style is appreciated by many of the middle aged.
 - c. they do not want to pass along cold germs.
10. _____ Permanent Korean residents in Japan are
- a. often subject to entrenched discrimination.
 - b. able to legally live free of discrimination.
 - c. awaiting exit visas for South Korea.
11. _____ Religious groups in Japan
- a. must all register with the government.

- b. must register to enjoy tax benefits and advantages.
 - c. don't worry about government registration at all.
12. _____ In Japanese religions, the lines between human and divine are
- a. clear cut.
 - b. hard to distinguish.
 - c. superfluous.
13. _____ Before WW II, the emperor was sort-of-like
- a. the pope and god.
 - b. a kami and Bodhisattva.
 - c. the president and a cardinal.
14. _____ At the heart of Shinto belief and practice is the worship of
- a. nature.
 - b. kami.
 - c. the emperor.
15. _____ Historic Shinto texts, recording the "age of the gods," focus on the religious practice of
- a. ordinary people in ancient Japan.
 - b. elites in ancient Japan.
 - c. the samurai in prehistoric Japan.
16. _____ The introduction of _____ opened Japan to ideas and practices of Buddhist and Chinese religions.
- a. sailing vessels and world trade
 - b. Chinese script
 - c. samurai warrior principles
17. _____ The Bodhisattva commonly known to exercise the profoundest compassion is
- a. Sakyamuni.
 - b. Siddhartha.
 - c. Kannon.
18. _____ Esoteric Buddhism realizes the _____ in religious practice.

- a. limits of language and logic
 - b. importance of rules and regulations
 - c. power of samurai incarnations
19. _____ According to Honen and Jodoshu Buddhist practice, the recitation of the nembutsu brings
- a. salvation.
 - b. sammitsu.
 - c. one close to god.
20. _____ What schools of Buddhist thought and practice has the most Japanese adherents?
- a. Jodo Shinsu Pure Land
 - b. Zen
 - c. Tantra

Part 2--True/False Place a T or an F in the blank provided.



1. _____ As of 1996, Japan had no specific law governing sexual harassment.
2. _____ Equal Employment Opportunity Law prohibits wage discrimination against women, yet Japanese women still earn significantly less than their male counterparts.
3. _____ In Japanese conversations, periods of silence rarely take place.
4. _____ Japan has rigorous and extensive laws concerning the rights of the disabled.
5. _____ Most Burakumin Japanese openly publicize their ethnic identity and culture.
6. _____ Japanese religious groups have strong national religious organizations and bureaucracies.

7. _____ Most Japanese adhere to a folk religion where Buddhist and Shinto practice is intertwined.
8. _____ The Japanese religious world view is exclusive, drawing rigid definitions of doctrine and practice.
9. _____ Shinto texts recording the "age of the gods" are scriptures like the Bible or Qur'an.
10. _____ Shinto practice was institutionalized and codified in response to Buddhist/Chinese religion making headway in Japan.



Part 3a--Matching Place the letter of the most correct response in the blank provided.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ Goma | A. Joyful dance accompanying Buddhist religious rites |
| 2. _____ Mudra | B. Prayer strips |
| 3. _____ Yoga | C. Practice of meditation, concentration, asceticism and bodily exercises for spiritual purposes |
| 4. _____ Mantras | D. Short, pithy sayings, poems and riddles used to further religious thought |
| 5. _____ Goryo | E. Imperial military title assumed by Japanese military government leaders |
| 6. _____ Nembutsu | F. Reciting the name of Amitabha Buddha as a religious rite |
| 7. _____ Nembutsu odori | |
| 8. _____ Ofuda | |
| 9. _____ Koans | |
| 10. _____ Shogun | |

deities

- G. Fire rituals used to draw close
- H. Meditational devices often employing a series of sounds
- I. Evil instilling spirits of the dead which inflict natural disasters
- J. Symbolic hand gestures



Part 3b--Matching Place the letter of the most correct response in the blank provided.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ Kimono | A. Japanese way of the warrior, advocating principles of loyalty and honor |
| 2. _____ Hiroshima | |
| 3. _____ Bushido state this | B. Term describing the current of decline/degeneration in age |
| 4. _____ Kami | C. Enlightenment |
| 5. _____ Mandalas | D. Symbolic, spiritual pictures describing the physical/spiritual worlds |
| 6. _____ Mappo | E. Spiritual meaning exists beyond words, actions or logic |
| 7. _____ Bodhisattvas | F. Traditional Japanese robe garment worn by both sexes |
| 8. _____ Amatersu | G. Enlightened beings in Buddhist thought |
| 9. _____ Sammitsu | |
| 10. _____ Esoteric | |

- H. Central female deity of Shinto, associated with the sun
- I. Mythological, natural or human figures worshipped in Shinto practice
- J. Japanese city destroyed by an atomic bomb, 6 Aug 1945



"...let me tell you the true secret of the entire American military's success: it's our people. We've got dedicated, talented professionals who are doing all Americans proud! That's because the members of the military not only swear an oath to defend the Constitution and obey their leadership-- they also live by a very special set of values."
Honorable Sheila Widnall, Secretary of the Air Force