Chapter Seven

Japanese Religion

"Shintō Tradition"

Objectives:

1. Define Kami and list the different types
2. Understand the difference between Confucian ideals and Shinto ideals
3. Know who the yamabushi were and their functions in Shinto
4. What movement solidified the Shinto restoration?

Shintō tradition

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TIMELINE

	BCE	
Jimmu Tennō	660 (traditional)	
	250 BCE–250 CE	Yayoi (Bronze-Iron) period
	CE	
Pimiku	?201–?269	
Shōtoku Taishi	574–622	
	712	*Kojiki* complete
	720	*Nihongi* complete
	710	Nara established as capital
	794	Heian established as capital
	618–907	Tang dynasty in China
	960–1279	Song dynasty in China
Murasaki Shikibu	b. 978?	
	1192–1867	15 shōguns rule
	1192–1333	Kamakura era
	1603–1867	Tokugawa era
	1614	Christianity banned
	1650	First Thanksgiving pilgrimage to Ise (others 1705, 1771, 1830)
Motoori Norinaga	1730–1801	
Nakayama Miki	1798–1887	
	28 March 1868	Official separation of Buddhism from Shintō
	1870–1945	State Shintō
Emperor Hirohito	1901–1989	
	1945–1952	Japan under Allied forces
	1 January 1946	Emperor Hirohito declares his humanity
Emperor Akihito	b. 1933 (r. 1990–present)	
	1996	2000th anniversary of Ise

The indigenous religion of Japan is known as **Shintō**. The Japanese archipelago comprises four main islands: Hokkaidō, Honshū, Shikoku, and Kyūshū. Early migration patterns to and from these islands are not well understood. The distant ancestors of the Japanese people are Mongols from Korea, Malayo-Polynesians from China and the South Pacific, and the Caucasian-like "hairy" **Ainu** peoples who seem to have been the first inhabitants of the islands. By the time the Japanese were first recorded in history in the 200s CE the immigrant groups were already an ethnically unified people – except for pockets of Ainu who today are found far to the north on Hokkaidō. Although the physical distance between the Japanese islands and the mainland is not great, until modern times travel proved to be difficult and the political will to engage with Korea and China varied with the times. In general there was no continuous contact between Japan and the mainland until the mid-1800s.

Early Shintō was fundamentally an expressive religion that focused on purification and communion with the **kami**. Over time Shintō went through several key changes – particularly as it interfaced with Buddhist and Confucian traditions from China. The various Shintō traditions include folk elements, Shintō-Buddhist variations, and Shintō as an imperial cult. Yet through the transformations Shintō kept its expressive character with a focus on ritual. The earliest Shintō writings existing today are two extensive chronicles: the *Kojiki* (Record of Ancient Matters) and the *Nihongi* (History of Japan), both issued in the eighth century CE. They begin with creation stories and continue into what amounts to a fairly reliable history of events that occurred after 400 CE. The main character in the stories is **Amaterasu**, who is the divine energy of the sun. She is said to be the ancestor of Japan's imperial family whose line continues unbroken from the first human emperor Jimmu until today. Historians place Jimmu's reign somewhere between 550 and 800 CE, while Shintō tradition situates him in the seventh century BCE. The Japanese people have often practiced Shintō along with other traditions. This remains true today in Japan where the **Kami Way** permeates Japanese culture regardless of other religious influences.

PART 1
SHINTŌ PLAYERS

THE ULTIMATE PRINCIPLE

Mysterious – nature – life – creative energy

Kami are vast myriads of mysterious entities that form the focal point of indigenous Japanese religion. Some modern Japanese interpreters translate the term "kami" (which is used in both singular and plural) as "high," "above," and "lifted up." Kami as an ultimate principle may be thought of as life energy and may be described as mysterious. Japanese people have felt the mysterious kami presence in powerful and unusual objects or situations including storms, sprouting rice, animals, ancestors, heroic humans, work, trees, minerals, rocks, heavenly bodies, and more. In general, kami are associated with mysterious life-giving energies. Sometimes kami are specifically linked to dynamic powers involving growth and reproduction. For example, the sprouting of rice first signals that creative (*musubi*) kami are at work.

Kami have been distinguished in terms of the way natural objects express themselves. With their subtle aesthetic sense the Japanese have perceived many fine aspects of nature. For example, Shintō tradition speaks of a "soft and fast sun," "long, soft continuous breezes such as those which rustle the leaves of trees," winds that "disperse the morning mists," and so forth (Herbert 1967: 465, 490). It may not be too far-fetched to call the Mysterious Creative Life Energy of Nature the ultimate principle of Shintō.

> Since every feature of Nature is either a child of the greatest Kami or at least under the special care of a Kami who is their child, it is not surprising to find that every beauty and power of Nature is the object of a respect which may amount to worship. This is true of practically every one of them, from celestial bodies to the very herbs and stones, from rivers and mountains to wind and thunder.
>
> (Herbert 1967: 465)

Kami are not solidly associated with the mere physicality of objects. Kami are an energetic life presence that manifests here and there. Not all trees, for example, would be automatically recognized as kami. Rather, kami energy might be recognized in an unusual tree with a triple-trunk or a tree with branches all bending in the same direction.

IMAGINAL PLAYERS

The mysterious life current that is Shintō's ultimate principle manifests in innumerable ways. General categories into which kami might be divided to understand their many workings are: (1) nature kami and (2) mythic kami.

Nature kami

- *Trees.* Trees seem to have been among the earliest kamis to be revered by the Japanese people. Among trees the *sakaki* (Cleyera japonica; pine) is most precious. The sakaki is found around many Shintō shrines and its branches are used in Shintō rituals.
- *Food.* Kami of growth come down from the mountains into the rice fields. Key Shintō agricultural rites are addressed to the creative kami of growth and food. Among the most popular kamis is Inari who is associated with the harvest, food, and fertility.
- *Animals.* Some wild animals have been recognized as kami, such as the wolf, tiger, hare, wild white boar, white deer, and snake. The fox is thought to be a kami messenger and came to be associated with Inari whose shrines have many fox statues, big and small.
- *Mountains.* Mountains were among the earliest natural objects to be perceived as kami by the Japanese people. Visiting mountain shrines is a common form of Shintō pilgrimage. Mountains are revered especially by hunters, woodcutters, and charcoal-makers whose livelihood depends upon them.
- *Geological entities.* Shintō includes recognition of various kami associated with the earth and cosmos. Some of these are clay, stones, lightning, metals, minerals, gemstones, stars, sun, and moon. Many forms of water are also recognized to have a kami presence, including springs, wells, rivers, the ocean, rain, and storms.
- ***Human constructions.*** Crossroads and houses are among the human constructions that are protected by kami. Many of these kami are deeply embedded in age-old Japanese folk traditions and remain unnamed. Often flowers are offered with reverence to the many household kami who protect the gate, kitchen, cooking stove, lavatory, well, and so forth.

Mythic kami

Many kami of nature came to be associated with Shintō stories relating how they came into existence or their role in various events of sacred history. Two Japanese chronicles (the ***Kojiki*** and ***Nihongi*** compiled in the eighth century CE) tell stories about several nature kami, including the kami of the sun, storms, and the moon (see page 336).

Amaterasu

Amaterasu, the sun kami, became especially important to the Japanese identity. Her magnificence becomes apparent in this passage where she prepares herself for a confrontation with her brother:

> And she forthwith, unbinding her august hair, twisted it into august bunches; and both into the left and into the right august bunch, as likewise into her august head-dress and likewise on to her left and her right august arm, she twisted an augustly complete [string] of curved jewels eight feet [long] of five hundred jewels; and slinging on her back a quiver holding a thousand [arrows], and adding [thereto] a quiver holding five hundred [arrows], she likewise took and slung at her side a mighty and high [-sounding] elbow pad and brandished and stuck her bow upright so that the top shook; and she stamped her feet into the hard ground up to her opposing thighs, kicking away [the earth] like rotten snow and stood valiantly like unto a mighty man.
>
> (deBary *et al.* 2001: 22, adapted from Chamberlain, *Ko-ji-ki*, pp. 45–59)

Clan kami

Some mythic kami are revered as *uji-gami* (tutelary clan deities). The social status of a clan was reflected in the authority and power of its kami protector. The Imperial Clan claimed unique and superior status among all humans due to their exclusive descent from Amaterasu through Jimmu Tennō, the first emperor manifesting as a human. Of lesser status were members of Divine Clans, whose members claimed descent from mythic kami through Jimmu Tennō 's companions or through noble families who ruled Japan prior to Jimmu Tennō's reign. Uji-gami shrines distributed throughout Japan served as a political bond. Eventually Shintōists used the tutelary clan kami system to protect not only families but also their extended alliances in villages and districts.

Guild kami

Many Japanese professions are linked to tutelary kami named in the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*. Traditional guilds traced their tutelary kami back to episodes involving Amaterasu. For example: (1) mirror makers revere the kami who made the mirror that enticed Amaterasu to come out from hiding in a cave, (2) jewelers revere the kami who made the eight-foot-long string of 500 jewels worn by the sun kami, and (3) dancers and **geisha** have as their tutelary kami Ame-no-uzume who danced to entertain Amaterasu. There is a sense that these tutelary guild kami not only protect, but also enable (*yosasu*) human beings to act in this world on their behalf.

EXCEPTIONAL PLAYERS

From time to time Shintōists regard a human being as a living kami. This is always the case with the Japanese emperors, and occasionally true of heroic or uncommonly powerful people such as shamans. Thus in the Shintō context, the most exceptional players in the drama of religions are the emperors and the charismatic people mentioned above.

Emperors

Japan's emperors all belong to the Yamoto clan, which traces back to Amaterasu. She sent her grandson Ninigi down from the High Plain of Heaven to the Luxuriant-reed-plain land-of-fresh-rice-ears (i.e., Japan). The sun kami presented Ninigi with a troupe of entertainment kami, and three objects that would serve as imperial regalia: (1) a mirror, (2) a jewel, and (3) a sword. Ninigi ruled and passed the imperial regalia down the line. Jimmu, his great-grandson, became the first emperor to gain control over the region of Yamoto. Thus the Yamoto clan traced its imperial line from Emperor (Tennō) Jimmu who was the first ruler in Amaterasu's line to serve in the form of a human being. Modern historians place Jimmu Tennō's reign somewhere in the Asuka and Nara periods (552–794 CE), while the

Plate 13.1 "Japan – a straw culture." Japan has been called a straw culture (*wara no bunka*) linked to 2,000 years of rice cultivation. Villagers store rice straw on poles or slim trees creating a tent-like effect (seen here in a refined and stylized form). Japanese folk culture introduced numerous items made of rice straw, such as sandals, hats, coats, mats, utensils, ropes, masks, and even tree protectors – shown in this picture as they appeared in winter at Nijo Castle in Kyōto. Would one be wrong to detect a kami presence here?

traditional date for his accession to the throne is given as 660 BCE, based on symbolic calculations from the Chinese calendar. All members of the Imperial Clan family are high-born, but only the one who becomes emperor is associated with the quality of kami.

Charismatic humans

Shintō tradition demarcates no hard and fast division between humans and kami. Thus ritual specialists or individual charismatic individuals who commune with the kami are occasionally identified as kami themselves. Here are some examples of human beings who keep close contact with the kami:

- *Miko.* Ritual specialists known as miko (female shamans) typically entered a state of kami possession to seek protection for the community, fruitful harvests, and communication with the dead.
- *Shrine priestesses.* For generations, young women of the Yamoto ruling families served as shrine priestesses (*saiō*) in Amaterasu's shrine at Ise. There they could commune with the kami.
- *Spirits of the dead.* War heroes or people with unusual faith and commitment who served the emperor (hence Japan) have occasionally been recognized as kami. Sometimes restless spirits of people who die by accident or in some other unfortunate way are also placated.

HISTORICAL PLAYERS

Shintō tradition shifted its focus several times in the course of Japanese history – often in response to key changes in Japan's political-cultural environment. The following six players represent these turning points:

- *The Yayoi cultural period*: Queen Pimiku (?201–?269 CE) lived when the Japanese people practiced early Shintō.
- *About 300 years later*: Crown-prince Shōtoku (574–622) was born when Japan adopted the Buddhist tradition and centralized power under the emperor on a Confucian model.
- *About 400 years later*: Murasaki Shikibu (b. ?978 CE) was born when Japanese culture was distinguishing itself in the midst of Chinese influences.
- *About 200 years later*: The first shōgun was appointed by the emperor as general of the army (in 1192), which ushered in a feudal style of rule in the midst of new Chinese influences.
- *About 700 years later*: The Imperial House of Japan restored its absolute power through the Meiji regime that began with the defeat of the fifteenth shōgun in 1867 and the establishment of Shintō, the official state cult.
- *About 100 years later*: The **Tenrikyō** sect started by Nakayama Miki (1798–1887) blossomed into one of the most successful "newly arisen religions" after the fall of the Meiji government in World War II.

Queen Pimiku (?201–?269 CE)

The Japanese people made a great economic transition after many generations of fishing, hunting, and gathering. During the Yayoi period (250 BCE–250 CE) they adopted the technology of wet rice agriculture from Korea and China. Around the same time they developed metalworking skills in bronze, copper, and iron. The new rice-growers revered kami who descended from the mountains for their planting festivals (*matsuri*) and returned to the mountains after grateful farmers offered first fruits to them. Late in this Bronze-Iron period there lived a woman called Pimiku (?201–?269 CE). According to Chinese historians of the third century CE, Pimiku ruled a region of Japan known as Yamatai (possibly on Kyushu, but this location is disputed by present-day scholars). It appears that Pimiku was a miko (female shaman), for their *Record of Wei* said of this unmarried woman, "She occupied herself with magic and sorcery, bewitching the people" (Tsunoda 1951: 13). The chronicle goes on to say that following some political turmoil after Pimiku passed away, order was restored when Iyo (a 13-year-old female relative of Pimiku) became ruler. Subsequently it appears that leaders coming from the Yamoto plain began to rule the queen's land. This was the Imperial Family who traced their descent from Amaterasu. The Chinese historians fill out the picture of life on the queen's land by describing a number of practices that seem to represent early Shintō customs:

> Men, great and small, all tattoo their faces and decorate their bodies with designs. . . . The Wa [i.e., Japanese], who are fond of diving into the water to get fish and shells, also decorated their bodies in order to keep away large fish and water-fowl. Later, however, the designs became merely ornamental. Designs on the body differ in the various countries – their position and size vary according to the rank of the individual. . . .
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> When death occurs, mourning is observed for more than ten days, during which period they do not eat meat. The head mourners wail and lament, while friends sing, dance, and drink liquor. When the funeral is over, all members of the whole family go into the water to cleanse themselves in a bath of purification.
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> When they go on voyages across the sea to visit China, they always select a man who does not arrange his hair, does not rid himself of fleas, lets his clothing [get as] dirty as it will, does not eat meat, and does not approach women. This man behaves like a mourner and is known as the fortune keeper. . . .
>
> Whenever they undertake an enterprise and discussion arises, they bake bones and divine in order to tell whether fortune will be good or bad. First they announce the object of divination, using the same manner of speech as in tortoise shell divination; then they examine the cracks made by the fire and tell what is to come to pass.
>
> In their meetings and in their deportment, there is no distinction between father and son or between men and women. They are fond of liquor. In their worship, men of importance simply clap their hands instead of kneeling or bowing.
>
> (Tsunoda 1951: 10–13)

This *Record of Wei* points out religious customs of the early Japanese people that persist today in Shintō. Remnants of Pimiku's political system and reverence for miko are found today in Okinawa. Moreover, the *kami no michi* makes use of water purification, divination, *sake* as a sacred drink, shamanism, and simple reverential handclaps. Meanwhile, tattoos lost relevance for the Japanese. In the early days of Shintō there seem to have been no fixed shrines. Kami were thought to dwell only for a short time in the human world – but in natural surroundings far from human habitation. The kami manifested spontaneously and rites were performed where the kami presence had been felt. This was likely to have been around a special tree, grove, forest, rock, cave, mountain, river, seashore, or similar. Before conducing a rite, a temporary square space (*himorogi*) was set up. This might have a sacred pine tree with a shoulder-high rope around it. The kami was invoked and thought to leave afterwards. Gradually more permanent shrines were set up where the kami were thought to dwell on a semi-permanent basis – or at least be closely associated with a **goshintai** (symbolic body) that was ceremoniously placed in the inner sanctum of the shrine to represent them or embody their mysterious presence.

Crown-prince Shōtoku Taishi (574–622 CE)

Shōtoku Taishi was born just when China was on the verge of entering its highly creative Tang era (618–906 CE) in which Buddhist, Confucian, and Daoist traditions had ongoing productive literary and artistic encounters. Empress Suiko (r. 592–628) appointed Shōtoku as regent, giving him virtually complete authority to govern. Soon after the Japanese received their first Buddhist teachings through Korea (traditionally in either 538 or 552 CE), they made a prolonged and intensive effort to import nearly every available aspect of Chinese culture. In this connection Shōtoku was a key influence in promoting the Buddhist tradition in Japan. He also paved the way for the Japanese to adopt Tang-era fine arts, orchestral court music and dance, literature, technology (weaving, metal working, lacquer ware), social ethics, law codes, a landholding and tax system, architecture, town planning, philosophy, and a system of political governance.

Shōtoku strengthened Japan's cultural link to China. He sent a large embassy of monks and scholars to China in 607 CE. When they returned (some after his death) they patterned the Yamoto court after the Tang Chinese model. This was accomplished by a group of Chinese-educated Japanese in the Taika Reform (645–646). Following Shōtoku's lead, embassies to China continued for the next two and a half centuries, spanning the whole Tang era in China. Shōtoku is credited with first calling the Japanese ruler *Tennō* (emperor, heavenly sovereign) instead of *daio* (great

king). This ideologically presented the Japanese ruler according to a Chinese model, whereby government was justified according to Heaven's mandate (see page 289). Calling the first emperor Jimmu Tennō gave assurance that the heavenly sovereign was not mortal, but a living kami. In connection with the title Tennō, Japanese emperors were called Aketsu-mikami (manifestation of kami) or Arahito-gami (kami appearing as human). This added a Shintō religious value to the Chinese concept.

Shōtoku introduced seventeen moral guidelines to the Yamoto court in 604 CE. His "constitution" included a mixture of practical matters and religious counsel that reflected Confucian and Buddhist influences. It calls for officials to do things such as: revere the Three Jewels (of Buddhist tradition); avoid class prejudice, gluttony, covetousness, and anger; engage in the consultative process; and (perhaps most significant) recognize a single sovereign of the entire country. Contemporary historian George B. Sansom noted that the "interest [of the seventeen articles] lies in the fact that they represent not a new system of administration but a turning point in the ideals of government, inspired by the new learning, both religious and secular, from abroad" (Sansom 1962: 72). And though he personally seemed to have become a Buddhist, Shōtoku maintained all Shintō imperial rites, agricultural festivals, and so forth.

Just under a century after Shōtoku passed away, the Imperial Family built their capital in 710 CE at Nara on the Yamoto plain. Nara was built (on a smaller scale) according to the Chinese model of the Chinese Tang capital. Buddhist monasteries grew so quickly around Nara that after less than a century a new ruler thought it prudent to extract the imperial palace from its surroundings. An attempt to move the capital nearby to Nagaoka (near Heian) proved troublesome due to internal intrigue, violence, and what were perceived as resultant illnesses and deaths. Thus the new capital (also built on the Chinese model) was finally constructed not far away at Heian in 794 CE. The city is part of today's Kyōto. In the year 838 CE the last great embassy left Japan for China. It returned the following year. After that Japan shifted its focus. The years between 900 and 1200 marked a transformative time during which the Japanese defined their newly enriched culture. Many centuries later the Tokugawa-era scholar Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801) reflected back upon this time of cultural redefinition. He noted that the native Japanese sentiment at times was obscured in the process of assimilating so many elements of Chinese civilization. But Motoori remarked on one woman whose extraordinary work of Japanese literature managed to sustain and capture the quintessential Japanese sensibility toward life – its pathos. The woman was Murasaki Shikibu (b. ?978 CE), a lady-in-waiting to the Heian Empress Akito at the Heian court.

Murasaki Shikibu (b. ?978 CE)

Murasaki Shikibu was among the ladies of the Heian court who wrote in Japanese because they were not educated in Chinese. They learned the new *kana* syllabary that was developed out of Chinese characters for use in recording the Japanese tongue. And with enthusiasm women of the Heian court developed a whole new form of literature. The contemporary historian Edwin O. Reischauer explained the phenomenon this way:

> For the most part, educated men, much like their counterparts in medieval Europe, scorned the use of their own tongue for any serious literary purpose and continued to write histories, essays, and official documents in Chinese; but the women of the imperial court, who usually had insufficient education to write in Chinese, had no medium for literary expression other than their own language. As a result, while the men of the period were pompously writing bad Chinese, their ladies consoled themselves for their lack of education by writing good Japanese, and created, incidentally, Japan's first great prose literature.
>
> (Reischauer 1970: 34–35)

Thus the Japanese women's intuitive writing became what later nativists like Motoori Norinaga recognized as the genuine feature of the Japanese mindset. Around the year 1000 CE Sei Shōnagon wrote the Pillow Book (*Makura no Sōshi*) and Murasaki Shikibu wrote the ***Tale of Genji*** (*Genji Monogatari*). Together they provide a picture of court life among Heian nobles of the day.

Murasaki lived right in the middle part of the Heian era (794–1185) at the height of the power and

BOX 13.1 CULTURE CONTRAST: THE JAPANESE SHINTŌ IDENTITY

In spite of the massive adoption of cultural elements from China, it is important to bear in mind that the Chinese never invaded Japan. The Japanese tended to modify what did not suit them and maintained their cultural identity. The persistence of a Japanese worldview and culture may be seen in the following examples:

Adoption. Contrary to Confucian ideals, the Japanese continued to maintain hereditary government posts, as inheritance was deeply embedded in their aristocratic society. The automatic nature of inheritance was somewhat tempered by the long-standing Japanese custom of adoption, which allowed a man to choose his successor. When there was no male heir the Japanese adopted the husband of a daughter, a young relative, or even someone who was not related by blood.

Bushidō. The Japanese rejected the Chinese-style draft army, as they did not need a large army. Beyond that they maintained the military as an aristocratic profession. In medieval Japan the Shintō military tradition developed the Bushidō (way of the warrior-knight) code. These eight attitudes that characterize a warrior were: (1) loyalty, (2) gratitude, (3) courage, (4) justice, (5) truthfulness, (6) politeness, (7) reserve, and (8) honor. There is the flavor of the Confucian tradition running through these, as well as the Zen Buddhist focus of mind and fearlessness. Yet the product was something with a native Japanese flavor that seems to have continued to the present day.

Japanese language. The Japanese initially adopted Chinese characters for writing and chose Chinese as their literary language. Yet they continued to speak Japanese, which was quite a distinctive language. Moreover, during the 800s CE they adapted the Chinese ideograms to the Japanese language with two syllabaries (known as *kana*) that used simplified characters to phonetically represent Japanese syllables. For example, they wrote the "Collection of Myriad Leaves" (*Manyōshū*) whose 4,516 native poems were copied syllable by syllable in Chinese characters used in a phonetic manner to represent the Japanese words.

influence of the famous Fujiwara family. In fact, she married a Fujiwara lieutenant who was in the Imperial Guard. The Heian government amounted to a Fujiwara oligarchy and the rise of a court aristocracy. In Murasaki's day the nobles generally regarded country people as uncivilized. The gentlepersons of the court developed the Japanese language of politeness, and a culture of luxury with its ceremony, elegant pastimes, cosmetics for men and women, attention to penmanship, and so forth. Perhaps the most distinctive cultural development of the Heian era was in the realm of Japanese literature. Neglecting the thirty-one-syllable poem that was popular at the court, Murasaki wrote what is counted as the world's first novel. It records court life centered on the figure of Prince Genji and his family circle. The book shows psychological sensitivity, but also records elements of the emerging Japanese culture. Murasaki observed this scene, for example:

> A number of grey-haired old ladies were cutting out and stitching, while the young girls were busy hanging out quilts and winter cloaks over lacquered clothes-frames. They had just beaten and pulled a very handsome dark-red under-robe, a garment of magnificent colour, certainly unsurpassed as an example of modern dyeing – and were spreading it out to air.
>
> (Murasaki 1993: 624)

The very object of a Heian book was counted as part of its artistry – as the paper and perfume conveyed a particularly Japanese sense of aesthetics. But while the upper crust of Heian society were busy developing their

highly refined blend of Chinese and Japanese influences, some religious specialists living in the mountains were blending foreign and native influences as well. These were the **yamabushi** (mountain priests or hermits). They can be distinguished from miko (female shamans) and Shintō priests (*onshi* or *oshi*) by their particular functions, which combine Buddhist practice with folk Shintō elements.

The yamabushi were ascetics with uncut hair who lived in the mountains conducting physical and spiritual practices to acquire power over spirits of the dead. The order of yamabushi that survives today is the Shugen-dō, founded by a priest of the En family in the mid-600s CE. For a while their numbers declined, but the sect was revitalized and reorganized by a Shingon Buddhist monk named Shōbō (832–909). The yamabushi worked as a team with miko as assistants. (Sometimes they also married these miko.) The yamabushi used special techniques to help the miko go into a trance to find out for a client what grudge a spirit of the dead was holding. After interpreting the miko's announcement the yamabushi would remedy the problem. Thus the miko diagnosed and the yamabushi exorcised. The yamabushi would go from one mountain to another and from one village to another. Some were ballad singers or musicians as well. And though Shugen-dō was affiliated with the Tendai and Shingon Buddhist traditions, it shows considerable Shintō influence in its connection with sacred mountains, the service of the miko, and so forth. Some yamabushi even became Shintō priests. Nowadays the yamabushi still exist in Japan, meeting villagers to pray for good harvests, exorcise negative spirits from houses, conduct healings, and so forth. They seem to resemble the characters noted by the third-century CE Chinese historians who observed that on voyages across the sea to China the Japanese always have a man with them "who does not arrange his hair" (see page 327).

Fifteen shōguns (1192–1867)

Culturally, with the decline of the Heian court, **samurai** warriors replaced the Fujiwara courtiers. This was due to economic changes as the military leaders gained more local influence in the countryside. The rise of a samurai class represented the militarization of Japanese society. The emperor still maintained the position as ruler seated in Heian. But from a practical point of view the leaders of various semi-independent estates came to control Japanese political life. Finally in 1192 these estates came under a single leader's control. This was Minamoto Yorimoto – the first man appointed by the emperor as shōgun ("generalissimo"). This meant that he was given command of the emperor's army. Thus began the Kamakura era (1192–1333). The shōgunate settled in Kamakura, some 300 miles from Heian (Kyōto), and kept their political liaison intact.

The downfall of the Tang dynasty in China had come after a major persecution of Buddhism in 845 CE. In response to the chaotic atmosphere on the mainland, Japan had discontinued its envoys to China and went through 300 years of isolation. Now, with the emergence of the first shōgun, that isolation was about to end (only to be imposed again in 1600 for about 300 years by the Tokugawa regime!). Medieval Japanese history can be measured between the moment the first shōgun took power in 1192 and the moment the fifteenth and final shōgun was deposed in 1867. The fifteen military chiefs stand like bookends encompassing a whole new orientation toward life flowing from a second period of intensive contact with China. But what the Japanese encountered in 1200 was not a China of the Tang dynasty with its flowering of three traditions – Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian. Rather the Japanese encountered the Song dynasty (960–1279) in China. There, Pure Land and Chan Buddhist traditions percolated in the midst of a growing neo-Confucian Chinese cultural pride. Japanese Buddhist teachers of the Kamakura era who were disillusioned with the state of Buddhism in their country enthusiastically embraced the Buddhist traditions that Song China had to offer. Hōnen, Shinran, and Nichiren promoted Pure Land, True Pure Land, and Nichiren Buddhist practices that began filtering through all levels of Japanese society. Eisai and Dōgen promoted Rinzai and Sōtō Zen (Chan) Buddhist practices that appealed to the samurai (see page 210).

Throughout this medieval period the Japanese people distinguished Buddhist and Shintō traditions as the Buddha Way (*butsu-dō*) and the Kami Way (*kami no michi* or *shen-dao*). Shintō shrines (*jinja*) were distinguished from Buddhist temples (*tera*) but both were contained in religious complexes to serve comple-

mentary functions. A tera would be built within the precinct of a jinja so that the Buddhist priest could perform rituals propitiating the kami. The reverse was also done, whereby kami were enshrined in Buddhist temples. Sometimes the kami were thought of as buddhas or bodhisattvas. As in the community, so both Shintō and Buddhist religious practices were observed in Japanese homes. Some people maintained both **kamidanas** (Shintō altars) and **butsudans** (Buddhist altars) for their households.

In time the Kamakura power base weakened. After several more generations of decline in the effectiveness of the Japanese feudal system, a talented member of the Tokugawa family was poised to take a firm grip on Japan. In the interest of creating unity in Japan Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616) became shōgun in 1603. He instituted a far-reaching bureaucracy that lasted until 1867 with the fall of the Tokugawa regime. Under Tokugawa rule there was no class mobility, no intermarriage, and each family was required to register at the local Buddhist temple. Temple officials kept census records, while Zen Buddhist monasteries became centers for the arts and neo-Confucian studies. The presence of the kami no michi is felt strongly in medieval Japan through the arts. And though the arts of tea, the sword, flower arranging, and so forth are often called Zen arts, a Shintō influence thoroughly pervades them (see Box 13.3).

The Tokugawa regime instituted a new government based on neo-Confucian ideas and political practices derived from interpretations of Confucian literature by Zhu Xi (1130–1200) (see page 301). The neo-Confucian ideology was well suited to monarchic rule because it gave a strong sense that everything under heaven is governed by a single principle (li), which is embodied in the ruler. Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), the first official Japanese neo-Confucian, promoted the Chinese doctrine of five social relationships in these terms:

> Heaven is august, Earth is ignoble. Heaven is high, Earth is low. Just as there is a distinction of high and low between Heaven and Earth, in the society of men, a prince is noble while the subject is common. Proper decorum calls for a hierarchy between the noble and the common, the elder and the younger persons. . . . Unless the distinction between the prince who is noble and the subject who is common is maintained, the land cannot be governed. . . . If the Way that distinguishes the prince as the subject, and the father and the son is followed, and the principle of distinguishing the high and the low, the exalted and the vulgar is upheld, the Way of Heaven will prevail above, and human relationships will be clear below.
>
> (quoted in Hane 1972: 165)

The Tokugawa rulers maintained a strict isolationist policy, and closed Japan in reaction to a century of Christian influences. Christianity first came with the Portuguese traders in 1542. At first Christianity was welcomed along with Portuguese guns. But Christians experienced a backlash when Tokugawa Ieyasu realized that their loyalty to God's authority was greater than their loyalty to the state. In 1614 the shōgun gave all foreign priests one month to leave Japan. Two years later he ordered all Japanese Christians to renounce their religion and become Buddhist on pain of death. At this point the Japanese Christians (some of whom were already second and third generation) were either martyred, recanted, or began to practice secretly. By 1640 most traces of the **Kirishitan** religion were gone. Throughout the Tokugawa era, people had to undergo a yearly ritual of "treading pictures" (*fumi-e*) at the Buddhist monasteries. This involved stepping on images of Jesus Christ or the Virgin Mary to prove their rejection of the Christian tradition.

The Imperial House of Japan

Crown-prince Shōtoku's Japan with its three complementary traditions transformed in the course of 1,300 years into a society apparently dominated by Buddhist and Confucian traditions. By the late Tokugawa era, some nationalistic activists became adamant about removing foreign elements from Shintō and restoring it to the center of Japanese life. They bemoaned the fact that the emperor had become little more than a figurehead through 600-plus years of powerful military rule under the fifteen shōguns from the year 1192. The Japanese effort toward a Shintō restoration was crystallized by two nativist Japanese movements that emerged in the late 1700s and continued to grow in influence until Japan was

defeated by the Allies in World War II: (1) **kokugaku** (nativism or national learning) sought to define, restore, and nurture the native Japanese mindset; (2) **kokutai** (national essence or national spirit) aimed to wrest power from the Tokugawa shōgun and restore full authority to the Imperial House of Japan, which traced back through Jimmu Tennō to Amaterasu. The nationalistic ideology of kokutai was fed by the literary and philological work of kokugaku (see Box 13. 2).

In 1868 the Meiji government replaced the Tokugawa regime and restored full authority to the Imperial House of Japan. The Meiji government replaced the Tokugawa state sponsorship of Buddhism with state sponsorship of Shintō and identified thirteen

BOX 13.2 INTERPRETATIONS: THE KOKUGAKU WAY TO READ

Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801) was a Japanese literary scholar of kokugaku (nativism, national learning). As a nativist he wanted to discover the core spirituality-mentality of the Japanese people. Motoori felt that in ancient times when words were conveyed through the mouths of people and heard by the ears of people (i.e., through oral transmission) there was an accord between meaning (*kokoro*), an event (*koto*), and a word (*kotoba*). To get a better sense of the oral tradition, Motoori wrote in the antique style and favored words in contemporary Japanese usage that hearkened back to the Nara period (710–794) when the Japanese still used much of their antique language. He noticed that old words are not necessarily strange sounding. Yet he found that word choice and word order were significant cultural markers. Thus Motoori taught nativist readers to adjust Chinese phrases that were alien to the Japanese people (e.g., illegitimate elder brother, legitimate wife, national polity). He also noted that the Chinese expressions "day and night" and "mountains and sea" should be corrected to the Japanese wording of "night and day" and "sea and mountains." Motoori felt that authentic Shintō values were reflected in the ancient songs preserved in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi* where "one will find that things are not stated to excess, and that the ways of the world and the inner thoughts of people are known by intuition" (Motoori 1997: 146–147).

Motoori further identified *mono no aware* (the pathos of things, the sorrow of human existence) as a characteristic feature of a Japanese understanding of the world. He identified Murasaki Shikibu's *Tale of Genji* (ca. 1000 CE) as a prime example of such pathos. Motoori saw in her novel an emotional truth steeped in the melancholy of the human condition. He observed that Murasaki's work was not riddled with Buddhist and Confucian morality that would judge Genji's adultery. Rather, with true Japanese sensibility she wrote a work that was:

> simply a tale of human life that leaves aside and does not profess to take up at all the question of good and bad and that dwells only on the goodness of those who are aware of the sorrow of human existence (*mono no aware*). . . . [The] illicit love affairs described in the tale [are] there not for the purpose of being admired but for the purpose of nurturing the flower of the awareness of the sorrow of human existence (*mono no aware*).
>
> (deBary *et al.* 2005: 485)

According to his Shintō intuitive belief (based particularly on the *Kojiki*) Motoori said the world was created by kami, and the Japanese people were descended from Amaterasu. He felt that a debt of gratitude is owed to the sun kami whose radiance continues to sustain the world. He claimed that the proper way to live was the ancient way in accord with how the kami established life on earth. With a universalistic outlook Motoori said that the Way of the Sun Goddess was "the true Way that permeates all nations within the four seas" (deBary *et al.* 2005: 500)

groups as non-Shintō religions officially designating them as Sect Shintō. These sects were considered as separate religions and their places of worship were called churches (*kyokai*) as opposed to shrines (*jinja*). During this time the Meiji government supervised Buddhists, Christians, and **New Religions** (Shinkō Shūkyō, literally "newly arisen religions") and other sects. They all dedicated themselves to the Imperial House. In 1882 a Bureau of Shrines was established and a legal distinction between Shrine Shintō (*jinga Shintō*) and Sect Shintō (*kyoha Shintō*) was made. This did not involve the construction of new shrines. Rather it awarded a new status to shrines that qualified as Shintō shrines, as opposed to those whose affiliations were regarded as other. In the midst of this reform, the hereditary Shintō priesthood was abolished and priests became government appointees. Beneath the government officials were priests of the Shintō shrines appointed by the government who maintained the state rituals. The people themselves continued to worship kami at their local shrines.

The Meiji government undertook an imperial campaign on the mainland. Victories in the Sino-Japanese war (1894–1895) and Russo-Japanese war (1904–1905) were part of a Japanese strategy to become a world stage player instead of capitulating to the forces of European colonialism. Japan focused on strengthening Japan against Western powers. During these Japanese wars of aggression parents often traveled to Shintō shrines (on what was known as the 100-shrine pilgrimage, for example) to appeal to the kami to protect their sons doing military duty. Japan's emperors of the twentieth century rode white horses and donned military uniforms. Imitating the ancient style of government, they served in both a political and religious capacity. Thus the emperors performed Shintō rituals at the Grand Shrines of Ise to commune with Amaterasu. After 1890 education of Japanese students was permeated with nationalistic ideas, with an ethic of filial piety toward the emperor who was to be viewed as a father figure. Japanese schools had shrines with a picture of the emperor and upon hearing the emperor's name they jumped to attention. History was taught beginning with the divine ancestry of the emperor and the Japanese people. Obedience to one's superior was required and self-sacrifice came to be regarded as a key virtue. This nationalistic education came to a halt

Plate 13.2 "Long-legs and Long-arms watch the sunrise." Living on the seashore of north China facing Japan are two mythical beings: Ashinaga (Long-legs) and Tanaga (Long-arms). They like to go fishing together. Ashinaga carries Tanaga far from shore – and there in the deep water Tanaga scoops up fish. Shibata Zeshin (1807–1891) painted this scene with the symbol of his native Japan (the sun) on the horizon. What religious or political meaning might the artist have intended in doing so?

suddenly when on 1 January 1946 Emperor Hirohito (1901–1989) was forced to declare that he was not divine. Japan lost to the Allies in World War II and was obliged to forgo having an army. The existence of Shintō as a state institution had lasted for about seventy years in all.

Nakayama Miki (1798–1887)

A popular theistic movement led by individual charismatic teachers sprouted up in the late Tokugawa era (mid-1800s) in the midst of depressed social and economic conditions. The Meiji government later designated these various groups by the term New Religions. At the start, the New Religions attracted followings mainly among poor farmers and urban laborers. Their leaders obtained their authority through personal experience of the divine, based on the traditional Shintō notion that kami manifest themselves through exceptional people. Most of these groups "derived their inspiration from occult practices prevalent among the mountaineer priests [yamabushi]" (Anesaki 1930: 310). Some New Religions sprang from Buddhist roots and some had undertones of Kirishitan (i.e., Christian) belief. However, most of the New Religions were grounded in Shintō and recognized the traditional kami of the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*, such as Amaterasu, Izanagi, and Izanami (see Table 13.1).

Characteristic features of the New Religions include: (1) charismatic, shamanic leadership, (2) an emphasis on spiritual healing and purification, (3) reverence for ancestors, and (4) an expectation of happiness and

Table 13.1 Japanese New Religions: a sample

Sect name/Founder[1]	*Social status of parents*	*Conversion experience*[2]
KUROZUMI Kurozumi Munetada (M)	Shintō priest	(35) Union with Amaterasu Ōmikami, the Sun Kami
TENRIKYŌ Nakayama Miki (F)	Ruined landowner	(41) Possession by 10 kami, organized by Tenri Ō no mikoto (Supreme Kami of Divine Wisdom)
KONKŌ Kawate Bunjirō (M)	Poor farmer	(45) Inspired, possessed by Konjin or Konkō-Daijin (Great Kami of Gold)
ŌMOTO Deguchi Nao (F) Deguchi Onisaburō (M)	Poor carpenter; poor peasant	(56) Chosen, possessed by Konjin (Great Kami of Gold); (27) Entranced, called by Ko-matsu-no-mikoto (Kami of a Small Pine Tree)
HITONO-MICHI Kaneda Tokumitsu (M) Miki Tokuchika (M)	Small-scale merchants	(52) Inspired by the Rising Sun and came to the view that kami is one, not many
REIYŪ-KAI Kotani Kimi (F)	Poor peasant	(25) Chosen, possessed by kami and spirits; Related to Nichiren Buddhist tradition
RISSHŌ-KŌSEI-KAI Naganuma Myōko (F)	Poor laborer	(50) Chosen, possessed by spirit of Nichiren and other Buddhist figures
SŌKA-GAKKAI Makiguchi Tsunaburō (M) Toda Jōsei (M)	Farmer; fisherman	(59) Preach monotheistic theology based on Nichiren's teachings. (Toda Jōsei organized the Sōka-Gakkai sect.)

Notes [1] Male (M) or female (F).
[2] Age when converted is in parenthesis.
Source: Adapted from Hori (1968: 230–231).

success in this world (see Picken 1994: 260–263). In general, women tend to play a more prominent role in the New Religions than in traditional Shintō or Buddhist communities, and participation is geared toward the lay community.

The earliest Shintō-derived New Religion is Tenrikyō (Religion of Divine Wisdom) founded by Nakayama Miki (1798–1887). She was a peasant from Yamoto who practiced the Pure Land Buddhist tradition that focused gratitude toward Amida (Amitabha) Buddha for his universal compassion. One day Nakayama's son became ill and she hired a healer. Because the healer's assistant could not attend the consultation, he asked Nakayama to serve as a channel of healing energy. In doing so, she became possessed by a kami – and continued to have experiences of kami possession from that day forward. A kami called Tenri Ō no Mikoto (Lord of Divine Wisdom) spoke through Nakayama. The kami presented itself also as Oyagama (God the Parent) and began working healing miracles through her. The kami asked that Nakayama's family dedicate all their belongings to the poor, and she took this message to heart. Nakayama's daughter had faith in the mission and together they spread teachings that urged people to recover their original nature of sincere piety (*makoto-shinjitsu*) by cleansing themselves of eight dusts: grudge, covetousness, hatred, selfish love, enmity, fury, greed, and arrogance. Nakayama's fame spread. Disciples regarded her as the Kami no Yashiro (living shrine of the kami) whose message of healing and charity was a prescription for realization of God's kingdom as harmonious life on earth.

Nakayama was imprisoned on several occasions, but managed to write down messages from Oyagama that came through her in two books, the *Mikagurauta* and the *Ofudesaki*. Among her revelations were songs of thirty-one syllables and deliberate physical movements. The shaman's poetic utterances and dance steps became the basis for Tenrikyō liturgy whose central rite is the Kagura Zutome (salvation dance service). In a revelation Nakayama identified a site (the *jiba*) as the sacred place from where human beings originally came. At that spot she later passed away in the midst of a liturgical performance. Nakayama's disciples worked with profound enthusiasm to build a great temple at the jiba, which they called "Terrace of Nectar" (*Kanrodai*). Tenrikyō adherents believe that the founder never died, but continues to exist as a powerful spiritual presence in the temple sanctuary from where she helps do away with social ills and prepare for the *kanrodai sekai* (perfect divine kingdom) – a new world order in which human beings will live joyous and blissful lives. Along with Sōka Gakkai (of Buddhist derivation) Tenrikyō has proved to be the most popular and successful among the Japanese New Religions. More than 200 churches are spread throughout the world, mostly for the sake of Japanese emigrants.

In modern times Shintō has gone through two major upheavals. During the Meiji era the institution of hereditary Shintō priesthood became defunct as the rulers officially appointed priests. In the early 1900s Japan had some 200,000 shrines that were nationalized by the Meiji government. In 1945 the Allies abolished the Imperial Cult after their victory that ended World War II. Shintō shrines suddenly lost all state sponsorship. Stranded with no funding and no organization, priests became ordinary citizens and many did not continue to practice their Shintō vocation. After Shintō shrines were made private their numbers diminished to around 80,000. The New Religions finally gained complete freedom of organization and practice in 1945. In 1946 the Association of Shintō Shrines was formed as an affiliation of local shrines. Priests and committees drawn from among worshipers managed these shrines. Ownership of the land and buildings was privatized and fundraising became a key aspect of support. In the face of this regrouping Japanese New Religions have become very popular, especially these two: (1) Sōka Gakkai, a Buddhist offshoot of Nichiren teaching from Kamakura era, and (2) Tenrikyō, a Shintō offshoot from the Tokugawa era (1603–1867). At the same time the number of Shintōists seems to be dropping annually (see Table 0.1). Nowadays there are over 2,000 New Religions whose membership ranges from a mere one hundred all the way to Sōka Gakkai's estimated sixteen million (on Tenrikyō and other religions that emerged on the world stage in this era see Box 7.4 on page 174).

PART 2
SHINTŌ TEXTURE

FOUNDATIONAL TEXTURE

The Record of Ancient Matters (*Kojiki*) and the History of Japan (*Nihongi* or *Nihon-Shoki*) are the earliest Shintō writings still in existence (dating from 712 CE and 720 CE). They gave names to several of the myriad kami. Among those named, Amaterasu became the most famous due to her standing as ancestor of the Yamato clan. The Emperor Temmu (r. 673–686) was interested in having a record of Japan's history. Thus the scribes began to record stories that had been transmitted orally over generations by a guild of *kataribe* who may have been kami-possessed. The books contain myths, poems, and historical statements. These formed the foundation for Shintō rituals. They also provided the classic references on various tutelary kami of the clans and guilds. The two texts contain material from what may have been independent mythic cycles. For instance, different versions of creation are told in each book.

- The *Kojiki* tells of steaming mud and water out of which grew a plant with seven branches. Each branch held two kami who were brother and sister. These seven pairs of twins were dispersed throughout the cosmos and after an undetermined span of time a brother–sister team was born. They were called Izanagi (He-Who-Invites) and Izanami (She-Who-Invites).
- The *Nihongi* begins with a Chinese-style myth of creation in which the cosmos was formed from an egg-like mass that separated into a male (yang) heavenly portion and a female (yin) earthly portion.

Regardless of such differences, the content of the two texts overlaps considerably. Both contributed to Shintō lore about the kami and Japan's sacred history.

Stories in the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*

The Record of Ancient Matters and History of Japan both describe the creation of the islands of Japan as follows: Izanagi and Izanami stood on a cloud bridge that spanned the sky. Izanagi stirred the muddy water with jeweled spears given to them by the other kami. Islands formed where the mud splashed. Izanagi and Izanami descended to the new land and engaged in a primordial union that made them husband and wife.

Thereafter, Izanagi and Izanami created waters, winds, fire, fields, substances that could be eaten, mountains, and other things. Izanami made fire but was badly burnt in the process. She turned her skull and ribs into caves and other bones to rocks. After she perished Izanagi sought her in Yomi (= darkness), the underworld. There he saw Izanami putrefying with maggots. Izanagi escaped from his underworld pursuers and purified himself in a stream.

Izanagi needed to be purified after escaping from Yomi due to his contact with death. Thus he purified himself. This became the prototype for the Great Purification of Shintō tradition. To become free from pollution Izanagi washed three parts of his body, and from each a kami child was born: (1) from his left eye was born the sun, (2) from his nose, the storms and thunder, and (3) from his right eye, the moon. The sun was Amaterasu, the Heaven-Shining-Great-August-Deity, who came to rule the High Plain of Heaven. The storm was her elder brother Susano-o, His-Swift-Impetuous-Male-Augustness. He came to rule the earth. The moon was Takamagahara, the sun's younger brother who became her consort and helped her rule.

The *Nihongi* says that Izanagi and Izanami together as a couple created the three children. After making the land, they consulted, saying, "We have now produced the great-eight-island country, with the mountains, rivers, herbs, and trees. Why should we not produce someone who shall be lord of the universe?" (deBary *et al.* 2001: 21; adapted from Aston, *Nihongi*, I:18–20). They then produced Amaterasu. After that came the moon kami, a "leech child which even at the age of three years could not stand upright" whom they therefore abandoned to the winds, and then Susano-o. This last kami would figure largely in the cultural memory of the Japanese people. The *Nihongi* describes Susano-o as follows:

> This god has a fierce temper and was given to cruel acts. Moreover he made a practice of continually

weeping and wailing. So he brought many of the people of the land to an untimely end. Again he caused green mountains to become withered. Therefore the two gods, his parents, addressed Susa-no-o no Mikoto, saying, "Thou art exceedingly wicked, and it is not meet that thou shouldst reign over the world. Certainly thou must depart far away to the Nether-land." So they at length expelled him.

(deBary *et al.* 2001: 21; adapted from Aston, *Nihongi*, I:18–20)

Susano-o committed several polluting acts for which he was fined and banished from the High Plain of Heaven, including: (1) damaging Amaterasu's rice fields, (2) defiling her house by voiding excrement in her New Palace at the time of celebrating the Feast of First Fruits, and (3) intending to go to see his mother in the polluted place of Yomi. After his banishment Susano-o carried out several deeds that helped restore him to the good graces of the other kami. He slew a serpent that had eight heads and eight tails. In one tail of the serpent Susano-o came upon a great sword that was to become one of the three imperial regalia. Eventually he came back into the good graces of all the kami.

On one occasion Susano-o startled his sister as she was weaving. The *Nihongi* says:

> Then Amaterasu started with alarm and wounded herself with the shuttle. Indignant of this, she straightway [*sic*] entered the Rock-cave of Heaven and, having fastened the Rock-door, dwelt there in seclusion. Therefore constant darkness prevailed on all sides, and the alternation of night and day was unknown.
>
> (deBary *et al.* 2001: 24; adapted from Aston, *Nihongi*, I:40–45)

The series of acts performed by various kami to persuade the Heavenly Shining One to come out again have lived for centuries in Shintō ritual. After this disaster, eighty myriad kami met at the Tranquil River of Heaven. They made a plan to persuade the sun to come out. They brought roosters to call each other outside the cave, and replanted a 500-branched *sakaki* tree taken from Mount Kagu in Yamoto. They decorated the upper branches with strings of jewels and an eight-hand mirror, and the lower branches with blue and white offerings. Some recited a liturgy. A troupe of kami danced and made music while kami Ame-no-uzume, the Terrible Female of Heaven, displayed herself with elegant gestures.

> [She] took in her hand a spear wreathed with Eulalia grass and, standing before the door of the Rock-cave of Heaven, skillfully performed a mimic dance. She took, moreover, the true Sakaki tree of the Heavenly Mount Kagu and made of it a head-dress; she took club-moss and made of it braces; she kindled fires; she placed a tub bottom upwards and gave forth a divinely inspired utterance.
>
> (deBary *et al.* 2001: 25; adapted from Aston, *Nihongi*, I:40–45)

This inspired utterance piqued Amaterasu's curiosity. The Heavenly Shining One asked herself, "Since I have shut myself up in the Rock-cave, there ought surely to be continual night in the Central land of fertile reed-plains. How then can Ame no Uzume no Mikoto be so jolly?" (deBary *et al.* 2001: 25; adapted from Aston, *Nihongi*, I:40–45). Attracted by the music, roosters, glimpses of light glancing off the jewels, and the sacred speech, Amaterasu peeked out of the Rock cave, and then emerged from hiding. To prevent the world from again suffering in darkness the kami placed a **shimenawa** (a huge rope) across the cave's mouth.

Myth, history, and ritual

Shintō tradition says that Susano-o went to Korea and then to Izumo on the western coast of the Japanese island of Honshū. There his descendant Ōkuni-nushi (Great Land Master) ruled the earth for some time. Eventually Amaterasu noticed the unruly conduct under the governance of his descendants, and decided to send her grandson to rule. Shintōists revere Susano-o as a protector. He is enshrined at the Yasaka Jinja in Kyōto, among other places. From a historical point of view it appears that stories about Susano-o derive from a cult centered at Izumo that historically was filtered into the Yamoto cult, which derived from Amaterasu's grandson Ninigi (Ruddy-Plenty). Amaterasu's clan set up their government on the Yamoto plain across the mountains from Izumo on the eastern side of Honshū.

Amaterasu's shrine was set up at Ise, near the east coast of the island. Amaterasu is enshrined at other locations but the Ise shrine contains the sacred mirror as her goshintai (symbolic body) and continues to be her main dwelling place. In the Edo period (1615–1868) Amaterasu become a popular object of worship as a few million Shintō pilgrims visited the Grand Shrines of Ise.

SUPPORTIVE TEXTURE

Modern Shintō theology

Until modern times, Japanese thinkers tended not to establish any Shintō doctrines. The social ethics and philosophical views of Confucian and Buddhist traditions seem to have occupied them instead. Yet with an interest in defining the Shintō contribution to Japanese thought, some philosophers are working to clarify the principles of Shintō ethics. Hiraï Naofusa identified the "life-attitude of **makoto**" as the "source" of Shintō ethics:

> *Makoto* is a sincere approach to life with all one's heart, an approach in which nothing is shunned or treated with neglect. It stems from an awareness of the Divine. It is the humble, single-minded reaction which wells up within us when we touch directly or indirectly upon the workings of the Kami, know that they exist, and have the assurance of their close presence with us.
>
> While on the one hand we sense keenly our baseness and imperfection in the presence of the Kami, on the other hand, we will be overwhelmed with ineffable joy and gratitude at the privilege of living within the harmony of nature.
>
> (Quoted in Herbert 1967: 71–72)

Other Shintō ethical values related to makoto are said to be: righteousness, individual and community harmony, cheerfulness of heart, thankfulness to nation, society, and family, effort to be a good citizen and member of society and family, devotion to the common interest, tolerant generosity that involves a "mental search for variety," benevolence, propriety and reverence, filial piety, industriousness, exercise of a strong will, and consciousness of shame. Many of these Shintō values are reminiscent of basic Confucian ethics (see Herbert 1967: 72ff.). Yet Shintō thinkers feel that the overriding value of makoto (as sincerity, cleanliness, honesty, and conscientious) gives Shintō ethics a Japanese quality. The Shintō sensibility also includes a subtle and personal feeling for nature, coupled with a sense of the pathos of things (*mono no aware*).

Some conservative Shintōists object to philosophizing, which amounts to an apologetic response to modern Western attitudes that fault religions with no explicit moral rules. They say that an authentic Shintō ethic is spontaneous and intuitive. This alternative view of Shintō ethics holds that human beings need freedom and become paralyzed by needless rules. Jean Herbert, a modern interpreter of Shintō, reported the gist of such a conservative viewpoint:

> From a purely practical angle, if a man follows the pattern of life which has been bequeathed to him by his ancestors the Gods, what need is there to codify rules of conduct for various arbitrary groups of occasions? It is only when the man should fall so low as to be divorced from the life which children of the gods should live that he must resort to principles of morality – which otherwise would have a paralyzing effect and infringe upon the freedom which is his heirloom and which he needs.
>
> (Herbert 1967: 69)

They believe that as children of Amaterasu the Japanese have an innate capacity to act properly when guided by the principles of purity demonstrated by the kami. They recognize that rules are created in times of alienation from the way of the kami, and find a solution in reconnecting with the kami no michi. One approach of going back to traditional Shintō principles is through *misogi* (purification). The process of purification starts with the outer cleansing and culminates in an understanding that the deepest level is "pacifying the soul" (*chin-kōn*).

CROSS-OVER TEXTURE

Japanese poetry

Many early Japanese poets wrote in the Chinese language, in the Chinese style – and even took on

BOX 13.3 SYMBOLS: THE PRESENCE OF KAMI IN JAPANESE LIFE

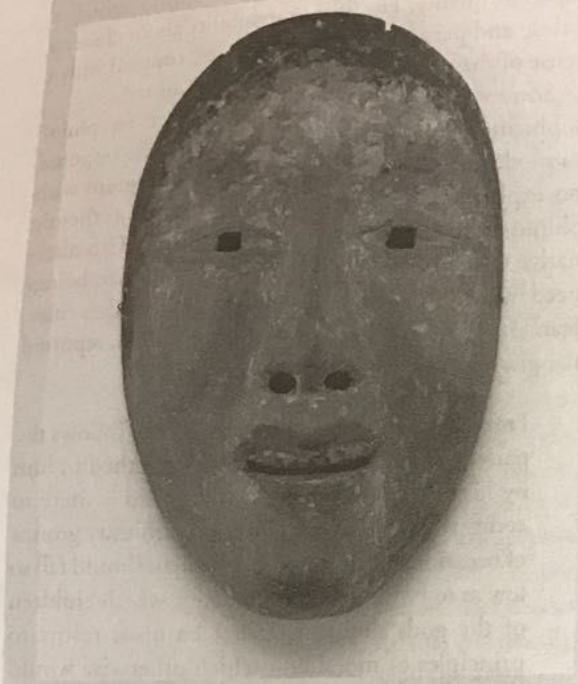

Plate 13.3 "Shintō mask: a young woman's face." Through the history of Shintō performance many styles of mask evolved to carry a rich array of symbolic meanings. One convention used the shape of eye openings to indicate the age of female characters portrayed by the mask: square openings for young women and half circles for older women. Note the eyes of this mask worn during the 1500s or 1600s. Masks are used in many types of Shintō performances including dance and processions, as well as court and religious rituals.

The stories of Izanagi, Izanami, Amaterasu, Susano-o, and other kami impacted the development of Japanese culture through many centuries, and give meaning to the life of Japanese people to this day. Here are some examples of stories that expressed themselves through ritual, art, and politics.

The three imperial regalia. Amaterasu bestowed three objects upon her grandson Ninigi before sending him down to Japan from the High Plain of Heaven: mirror, jewel, and sword. According to archeological evidence, the Japanese had used spears, swords, and mirrors made of bronze at least 500 years before the sacred stories about the imperial regalia were written down. They became imperial regalia that were passed down through generations of emperors. An enthronement transmission with these three imperial regalia was televised in 1989 with the accession of Emperor Akihito (Heisei).

The shimenawa rope. The shimenawa is a specially braided straw rope that demarcates the sacred space of Shintō shrines in memory of the time Amaterasu retreated to the Rock-cave after being shown disrespect by her brother Susano-o.

The troupe of kami. The dance and music created by the kami to entertain Amaterasu became the seed of Japanese theater. During the late 1300s and 1400s in the courts of the shōgun traditional Japanese dance was used in Nō drama. Nō performance involved a handful of actors who portrayed Shintō myths (such as Amaterasu being coaxed out of the cave by kami) and historical episodes through chant and dance movements. Ame-no-uzume, whose elegant gestures made Amaterasu joyful, is popular in the geisha tradition.

The sun. Amaterasu as the sun appears on a white background at the center of the Japanese flag. The connection between the ruler and the sun kami may indicate the early presence of a solar cult in Japan. The Yamoto ancestor cult used beads, mirrors, and items related to the horse. Scholars interpret the custom of keeping white imperial horses as another indication of connections between the ruling family and a solar cult.

Ninigi. The ancestral connection between Amaterasu's grandson Ninigi and his descendant Jimmu was taken to mean that every Japanese emperor was a living kami. Prior to World War II no ordinary person could even look at the emperor and no one could look down at him from above. These taboos pertained to the notion that the emperor was semi-divine.

Chinese pen-names. But poetry is one aspect of culture that the Japanese soon made to suit themselves. The radical differences between the Chinese and Japanese languages motivated new explorations into the possibilities of poetic expression. The development of pivot words (*kake-kotoba*) and the later **haiku** form seems to have captured the Japanese sentimentality.

Pivot words

In the Japanese language each syllable generally has one consonant followed by one vowel. Many words contain other words within them. There are also many homonyms. These are words that sound the same but have different meanings embedded within other words which makes for rich possibilities of layers of expression. Thus in Japanese poetry the feature of word association is called the "pivot word" around which several meanings are linked. In his study of Japanese literature Donald Keene said, "The function of the 'pivot-word' is to link two different images by shifting in its own meaning" (Keene 1955: 4–5). Keene provided the following double translation of this poem by Shin Kokinshū (dated 1205 CE) based on his understanding of the pivot words and alternate meanings of the sounds:

Kie wabinu, utsurou hito no, aki no iro ni,
mi wo kogarashi no, mori no shita tsuyu.

(1) Sadly I long for death.
My heart tormented to see how he, the
inconstant one,
is weary of me, I am weak as the forest dew.

(2) See how it melts away,
that dew in the wind-swept forest,
where the autumn colors are changing!

(Keene 1955: 6)

Tanka

A twenty-volume collection of Japanese poems called the *Manyōshū* (Collection of Myriad Leaves) dates from the eighth century CE. Many of its 4,516 poems are *tanka* or "short poems" with a 5-7-5-7-7 syllable structure. The tradition ordinarily calls for a natural scene to be expressed in the first three lines, with their five, seven, and five syllables. The last two lines bring a wave of emotion that reveals a parallel between nature and the human condition. Here is an example:

Haru tateba	When spring comes
kiyuru koori no	the melting ice
nokori naku;	leaves no trace;
Kimi ga kokoro mo	Would that your heart too
ware ni tokenan.	melted thus toward me.

(Reischauer and Craig 1978: 27)

Haiku

Haiku is a Japanese art form of three poetic lines in a 5-7-5 format that was based on the older tanka form. Here subtle connections between nature and aspects of life are compressed into a mere seventeen syllables. Among the most famous haiku artists was Matsuo Bashō (1644–1694) who was born as a low-ranking samurai. He gave up that social position in 1672 and moved to the city of Edo, whose population was approaching one million. He began to concentrate on writing poetry, and focused on the lowly side of city life. Although Bashō became accomplished as a professional poet in the city, he turned to a life of lonely wandering during the ten years before he passed away. Consider these translations of Bashō's haiku by James H. Foard:

Yuku haru ya	Spring departs –
Tori naki uo no	Birds cry; fishes' eyes
Me wa namida.	Fill with tears.
Toshi toshi ya	Years and years –
Saru ni kisetaru	The monkey keeps wearing
Saru no men.	A monkey's mask.
Samidare ya	Constant rain –
Kaiko wasurau	The silkworms are sick
Kuwa no hata	In the mulberry fields.

(Foard 1976: 381, 385, 384, 379)

Bashō and other great haiku poets captured the double sense of Japanese aesthetics as they expressed both **wabi** (loneliness) and **sabi** (poverty). Wabi is reflected in the sense of the person as but a small, humble part of the vast mysteriousness of nature. Sabi is reflected in the simplicity of haiku whose three lines are lean and minimal.

BOX 13.4 A SPIRITUAL PATH: JAPANESE AESTHETICS

Wabi-sabi. Wabi and sabi are two notions central to Japanese aesthetics. Wabi is an experience characterized by longing, tearfulness, nostalgia, aesthetics appreciation, loneliness, and sincerity. Sabi refers to things that are weathered, rustic, stark, or imperfect – which convey a sense of poverty, leanness, chilliness, or simplicity. Often an encounter with something sabi brings up a feeling of wabi.

Wabi and sabi intermingle in the purity of living apart from society in the heart of nature where one lives purified by nature (wabi) without pretense (wabi) in a simple way (sabi) in poverty (sabi). Wabi and sabi also intermingle in the Japanese arts, including: (1) martial arts (archery, self-defense, the sword), (2) literary arts (poetry, calligraphy), and (3) arts of sacred spaces (flower arrangement, tea). The way of tea (cha-do) shows how even drinking a cup of tea can serve as a kind of spiritual path that leads to deeper awareness of reality.

The way of tea. Tea seeds were brought to Japan from China by the Zen Buddhist Eisai (1141–1215) during the Kamakura period. It was the age of the samurai who increasingly went to study the arts in Zen monasteries and drink tea. The way of tea developed into a Japanese art form that reflects Shintō sensibilities to nature and the Buddhist contemplative attitude and awareness of interdependence. The tea ceremony takes place in silence in a small thatched tea hut, ideally placed in a beautiful natural setting. Powdered green tea is spooned into boiling water in a pot situated low in the floor of the tea hut where a fire burns. Scrolls with single-line poems hang on the walls. Each tea bowl is unique with its own flaw. Tea-drinkers listen to the sounds of nature outside the hut and hear them reflected in the tea preparation. The sound of the boiling water echoes the sound of the wind flowing through the pine trees outside the tea hut. The whisking of tea mimics the rustling of leaves outdoors. In the midst of the loneliness of wabi and the simplicity of sabi those practicing the way of tea gain a deep sense of the mysterious presence of kami – perhaps in the wind, in the trees, in the boiling water, and in the tea itself. Ultimately, tea is no-tea. Zen master Seisetsu (1746–1820) said that whoever enters into the realm of no-tea realizes: No-tea is no other than the Great Way (*ta-tao*) itself (Suzuki 1970: 310).

PART 3
SHINTŌ PERFORMANCE

PURITY AND COMMUNION IN SHINTŌ RITUAL

Shintō rituals from archaic times until today have been concerned with two things: (1) removing impurities, and (2) maintaining communion with the kami. Tsumi is impurity or pollution. It is associated with disasters, sickness, and errors. Impurities that happen to human beings include injury, death, immodest behavior, contagious disease, wounds, and other ill things. Tsumi is not considered necessarily within the control of a human being, but all states of pollution must be purified. Sometimes whole groups of people must be purified. A person cannot exist in the right relationship with the kami in a polluted condition. Therefore at the very least all those who approach the Shintō shrine wash their mouth and hands at the "water purification place" (ablution pavilion). There are three basic Shintō means of removing impurities: (1) *harai* (purification through rites), (2) *misogi* (purification with water), and (3) *imi* (avoidance of the sources of pollution). Beyond the ritual ways of removing pollution are three means of maintaining a close relationship with the kami to develop the proper attitude toward life: (1) keeping a kamidana in the home, (2) visiting local shrines and making pilgrimages to Ise or other prominent shrines, and (3) participating in festivals.

Harai (purification through rites)

Shintōists call priests to ritually purify situations in which pollution has become or may become a problem. People may go to festivals, visit shrines, or call priests to travel to a site to perform a harai (ritual purification). Shintōists generally seek to be purified through rites performed by a priest at times of: (1) groundbreaking, (2) misfortune, (3) travel, (4) home cleaning, (5) marriage, and (6) communal purification. A few examples should suffice to give a sense of these rites: (1) On the occasion of groundbreaking a priest is called in to pacify kami in the area where a new building is to be erected. (2) Japanese tradition considers special times in people's lives when they are more likely to encounter misfortune than usual, such as in a woman's thirty-third year and a man's forty-second year. On these years purification is sought. (3) Someone who is going on a trip will seek safe travel and request protection from the kami through ritual purification. (4) On many occasions a Shintōist will want a house or business establishment freed from pollution, such as for home cleaning at New Year, after a death, at the start of an election campaign, and upon opening a new business. (5) A Shintō wedding ceremony is called a Shinzen Kekkon. It involves purification of the couple and their families, and concludes with a drink of sake to commune with the kami. (6) At times an entire community wants to be rid of pollution and seeks purification.

Misogi (purification with water)

Misogi involves water purification done by pouring water over oneself by hand, by buckets or ladles, crouching in a river or ocean, or standing beneath a waterfall. Misogi Shuhō or waterfall purification is among the key Shintō rituals. People are led through the ritual by a priest who performs ritual movements that include esoteric mudras (hand gestures) for purification. The leader directs some physical exercises, pours sake into the waterfall and throws salt both into the falls and on to the participants. Entering the waterfall first, the leader then directs each person to follow and informs him or her of the proper time to exit the falls. Men wear a loincloth and headband, while women wear a headband and usually a white *kimono*, a formal divided skirt, and wide-sleeved outer robe that reaches the knees. They allow the rushing sacred mountain water to fall on the backs of their necks and shoulders, saying, "Harae tamae kiyome tamae rokonshōjo," ("I beg for removal of impurity. I beg for cleansing. Make pristine all six elements"). Misogi Shuhō usually takes place late at night or at the crack of dawn. Some people undertake the ritual often.

Imi (avoidance of pollution)

Imi is the avoidance of pollution incurred by using taboo words (such as saying the word for "cut" at weddings) or doing taboo acts (like getting married on "Buddha's death" day). Imi is required of people who have been polluted by contact with a corpse, snakebite, incest, leprosy, tumors, and so forth. Anyone who is ritually unclean may be cursed as he or she approaches a Shintō shrine. Thus Shintōists practice imi to avoid pollution whenever possible.

Keeping a kamidana (home altar)

Each morning offerings of food (e.g., cooked rice) and drink (e.g., water) are set on the altars. The kamidana has representations of local and national kami, and homage is paid to the kami morning and evening. Many Japanese make an annual pilgrimage to a major shrine. From those sites (especially Ise, which is Amaterasu's shrine) they bring back sacred objects (which may simply be blessed paper) to place on their home shelves (kamidana) or attach to doors, put in stables, and so forth. Kami are also asked to bless people's homes during construction. Ritual specialists invoke them when the threshold, central pillar, kitchen, and bathroom are built. By contrast, the butsudan has representations of Buddhas, ancestor tablets, and ashes of the deceased. Tablets are inscribed with a new Buddhist name, and are generally kept for thirty-three or fifty years. On the Buddhist altar are ancestors of the main family of the oldest son in the father's line. Special offerings are made in conjunction with Buddhist memorial masses and particularly during forty-nine days of mourning.

Visiting a Shintō shrine

Common Shintō practitioners (not priests) go to the Shintō shrine and walk on foot beyond the point where the **torii** stands as a gateway. This walk has a purifying

effect. Someone with an illness, open wound, flowing blood, or who is in mourning should not approach the shrine (though this practice may be somewhat relaxed in the present day). It is appropriate to remove hats, scarves, and coats. Ritual actions include several instances of bowing, handclapping, bell ringing, and kneeling to make an offering. It is common for people to go to Shintō shrines on important occasions of their personal lives such as: (1) when new business is conducted, (2) when a soldier goes to war, or (3) when children are born, start school, get married, and so forth.

Participating in shrine festivals (matsuri)

Festivals are an aspect of Shintō that goes back to the earliest days of planting and harvesting rice, and today matsuri is the heart of all Shintō activities. The shrine festivals follow a four-part sequence: (1) invoking the kami, (2) making offerings to the kami, (3) entering into communion with the kami, and (4) sending the kami back. A Shintō priest, having undergone a personal purification ritual, makes a ritual invocation that calls the kami to the shrine and opens the doors of the shrine's inner sanctum. Offerings such as rice, salt, water, sake, rice cakes, fish, seaweed, vegetables, grain, and fruit are present for the kami. In village festivals the Shintō participants carry a portable shrine (*mikoshi*) and march in procession. Young men dressed in festive clothing shout and act in ways reminiscent of ecstatic kami-possession and sometimes rush through the streets. The ceremony involves dancing, drumming, and singing in addition to contests. Performances may include ritual Japanese dances by shrine maidens (called miko), a lion dance, a Nō performance, or a Sumo wrestling contest. All performances are meant as entertainment for the kami, and the contests serve as forms of divination. For example, the outcome of tug-of-war, Sumo wrestling, horse-racing, archery, and swordsmanship competitions indicates the kami's will. The heart of a festival is entering into communion with the kami. For this a feast is prepared. Wooden casks of sake are broken open and consumed as a means of communing with the kami. The feast may end with silent meditation. Finally the kami formally are sent back and the doors of the inner sanctum are closed.

KEY POINTS

- Kami are the mysterious presences revered in Shintō tradition. They are mainly understood either as aspects of nature or as divine figures from the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*. Various kami function as tutelary (guardian) kami for clans, guilds, and locations.
- Shamanism has been a long-standing aspect of Shintō. According to Chinese historians of the third century CE, a Japanese ruler called Pimiku was a shaman. Japanese women shamans are called miko, and they sometimes work together with yamabushi to contact spirits of the dead.
- Throughout China's Tang era (618–907 CE) the Japanese deliberately imported elements of Chinese civilization, forming (among other things) their basic model for imperial rule. Late in the Chinese Song era (960–1279) the Japanese were deeply impacted by neo-Confucian ideology as well as Pure Land and Chan (Zen) Buddhist traditions.
- One of the most striking ways that the Japanese culturally distinguished themselves was through literature. Nativist interpreters such as Motoori Norinaga (eighteenth century CE) claim that the authentic Japanese sentiment is the "pathos of life," which can be felt clearly in Murasaki Shikibu's *Tale of Genji*.
- The Tokugawa shōgunate unified Japan and oversaw a period of nearly 300 years of peace. This was achieved through a strict isolationist policy and government based on a neo-Confucian ideology of a highly stratified society, and a widespread network of Buddhist monasteries to which families officially were attached.
- The Shintō tradition continued to impact daily life throughout various political and cultural transformations in Japan. A strong sense of nationalism developed among the Japanese people as they were affected by State Shintō from 1868 until 1945 when Japan was defeated by the Allies in World War II.
- Since the end of World War II the New Religions in Japan have gained tremendous popularity – especially Sōka Gakkai (derived from the Nichiren

Buddhist tradition) and Tenrikyō (based in part on the Shintō belief in kami-possession).

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Define the term "kami" and name two types of kami recognized in the Japanese Shintō tradition. Review stories about the kami given in the *Kojiki* and *Nihongi*.
2. Describe the religious life of the early Japanese people and reflect on connections between early forms of worship and religious practice today.
3. What impact did the import of Chinese civilization (sometimes through Korea) have on Japanese religious and political life? When were the periods of most intensive contact between Japan and China?
4. Name two Japanese contributions to world literature, and identify a couple of great authors. (Hint: Think of the novel and haiku.)
5. Define kokutai and kokugaku. What was their impact on life and thought in Japan in the century or so prior to World War II?
6. Describe the rise of the New Religions in Japan, with specific reference to the origins and beliefs of Tenrikyō.
7. Describe Shintō ethics and practices today in terms of: (1) the importance of makoto, (2) removal of impurities, and (3) maintaining communion with the kami.

GLOSSARY

Ainu Early Caucasian-like people living in Japan with a distinctive culture.

Amaterasu The kami of the sun, from whom all Japanese emperors are said to be descended according to Shintō belief.

Bushidō Way of the warrior-knight; code of conduct for samurai that appeared earlier but was formalized around 1600 in the Tokugawa era.

butsudan Household Buddhist altar in Japan.

geisha A professional group of women entertainers in Japan, trained from childhood in singing, dancing, and the art of conversation.

goshintai A sacred object used in a Shintō shrine to represent or embody a kami presence.

haiku Seventeen-syllable poem in three lines of 5-7-5 format that developed in Japan.

kami (singular or plural) (literally, high, above, lifted up) Mysterious creative life energies that form the focus of Shintō worship.

Kami Way (Japanese: kami no michi) Another name for Shintō.

kamidana (literally, kami shelf) Shintō home altar for use in kami worship.

Kirishitan A Japanese Christian.

Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters) Earliest surviving Shintō book (completed in 712 CE).

kokugaku Nativism or national learning; a literary-philological cultural movement from the Tokugawa era (1603–1867) dedicated to understanding and restoring the kokutai (national essence) of Japan.

kokutai (literally, national essence or national polity) Ideology promoted during the Meiji era (1868–1912) in Japan to justify the establishment of State Shintō.

makoto The life-attitude of sincerity that is the core value of Shintō tradition.

New Religions (Japanese: Shinkō Shūkyō) The "newly arisen religions" that developed in Japan starting in the late Tokugawa era, including Tenrikyō and Sōka Gakkai.

Nihongi (***Nihon-Shoki***) (History of Japan) Second oldest Shintō book (completed in 720 CE).

sabi (Japanese) Principle in Japanese art indicating an objective simplicity (poverty). See wabi.

samurai (literally, men who serve) Members of the military class in medieval Japan.

shimenawa (literally, enclosing rope) Ceremonial rope braided with rice straw displayed in Shintō sacred places.

Shintō Japan's indigenous religion; Shintō is the Chinese pronunciation of the Japanese term *kami no michi*, Kami Way; it comprises the Chinese characters for *shen* (spirit) and *dao* (way).

Tale of Genji (*Genji Monogatari*) First novel in world literature, written by Murasaki Shikibu around 1000 CE about life in the Heian court.

Tenrikyō (literally, Religion of Divine Wisdom) A Japanese New Religion founded by Nakayama Miki (1798–1887) after being possessed by a kami.

torii (literally "bird-perch") Gateway to a Shintō shrine; also symbols marking places associated with kami.

tsumi Pollution in Shintō. Harai is purification. Thus a Shintōist removes sumi by means of harai.

uji-gami A tutelary clan kami in the Shintō tradition.

wabi (Japanese) Principle in Japanese art indicating a subjective loneliness. See sabi.

yamabushi Mountain ascetics who combine elements of Shintō and Buddhist traditions in their practices of healing and exorcism.

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