



# What Is Shinto?

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# What is Shinto?

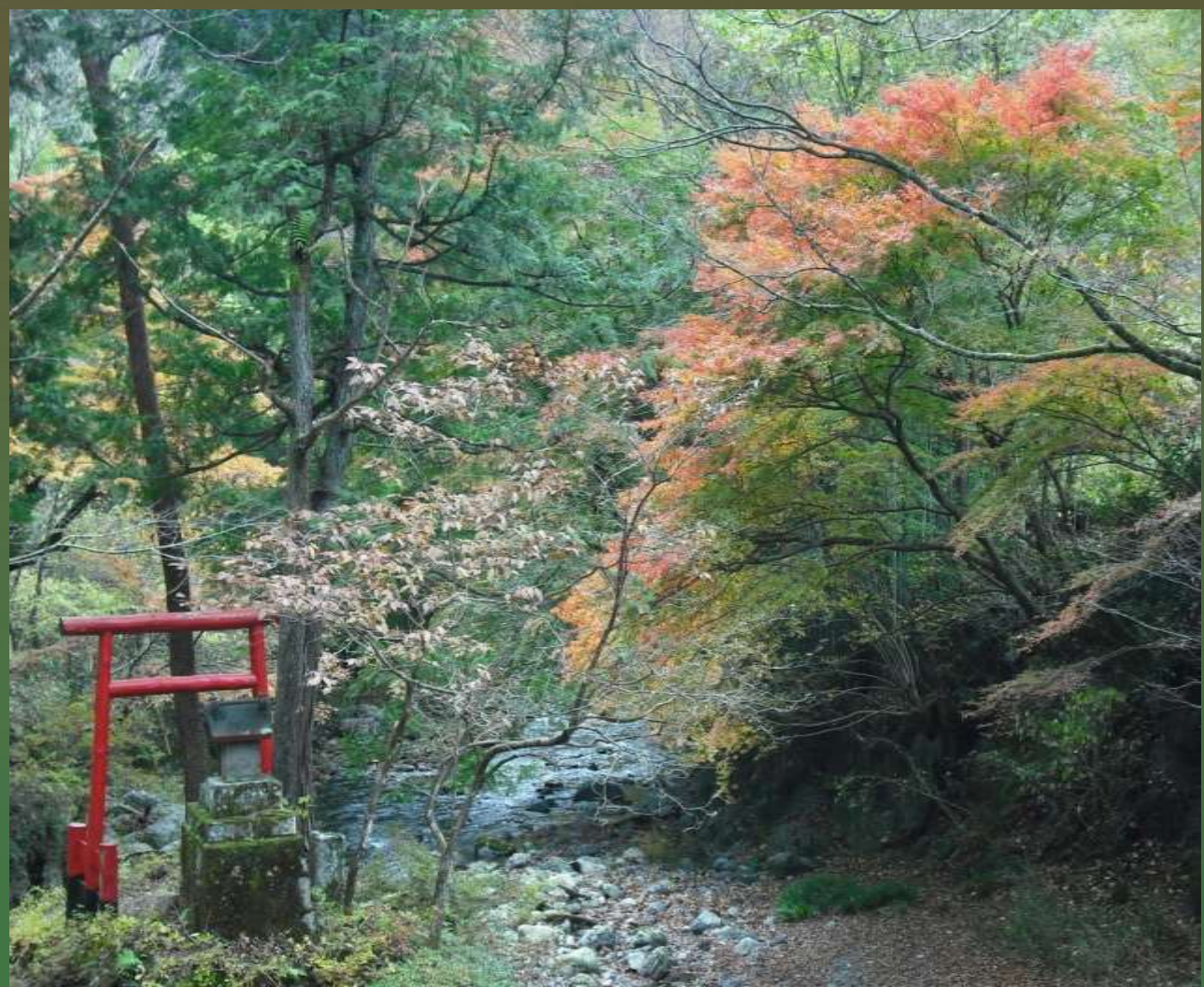
↳ Main Idea (Objective) :



↳ The Japanese Indigenous religion, called Shinto, was based on Nature Spirits.

# What is Shinto?

↳ Lecture Focus (Essential Question) :



↳ Today we know the importance of protecting the environment. Why do you think nature is so important to us? Lets look at why the early Japanese people thought nature was important.

# What is Shinto?



↳ Like many ancient peoples from around the world, the early Japanese believed that all natural things are alive, even the winds, the mountains and the rivers.

# What is Shinto?

↳ They believed that all of these things have their very own spirits.



↳ This idea is called **Animism**, basically the acknowledgment that everything has a soul... plants, inanimate objects, and natural wonders.

# What is Shinto?

↳ When people need help, the early Japanese believed that they could ask the nature spirits, whom they called **Kami**, to help them.



↳ **Kami** - a divine being in the Shinto religion, think of them almost as gods.

# What is Shinto?

↳ To honor the Kami, the Japanese worshiped at **shrines**.



↳ **Shrine** - a place regarded as holy because of its associations with a religion or a sacred person or relic.



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# What is Shinto?

⌘ At Shinto shrines priest, musicians and dancers would perform rituals for people who wanted to communicate with the gods.



⌘ Sometimes these communications with the Kami were simple, asking for a healthy harvest of crops, happy marriages, good fortune for children or any other favors.

# What is Shinto?

↳ These early Japanese beliefs developed into the religion that we know today as **Shinto**.



↳ The word Shinto means “**Way of the Spirits**”, and today it is an essential way of Japanese life that is still followed.

# What is Shinto?

↳ Followers of Shinto believe that Kami will help only if a person is pure.



↳ Many things, such as illness, cause spiritual stains that must be cleansed by bathing and other rituals before entering a Shrine and praying.

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# What is Shinto?

## & Questions:

- & 1) What is the essential idea behind **Animism**?
- & 2) What are nature spirits called in the Japanese indigenous religion?
- & 3) Where did the Japanese go to worship nature spirits?
- & 4) What does the word “**Shinto**” mean?

# What is Shinto?

## ↳ Questions:

↳ 1) What is the essential idea behind **Animism**?

↳ **All things have their own spirits**

↳ 2) What are nature spirits called in the Japanese indigenous religion?

↳ **Kami**

↳ 3) Where did the Japanese go to worship nature spirits?

↳ **Shrines, holy places**

↳ 4) What does the word “**Shinto**” mean?

↳ **“Way of the Spirits”**

# What is Shinto?

## ⌘ Lecture Check:

- ⌘ Answer the question in a 2-3 sentence response.
- ⌘ Explain how Japanese Shintoist honor the various Kami and nature spirits?



# How Does Shinto Work?

⌘ Part of being Japanese is participating in Shinto...the religion and the Japanese culture are very much intertwined and part of each other.



⌘ Lets look at some different aspects of Shinto, so we can truly understand the religion and Japans past and present relationships with nature.

# How Does Shinto Work?



↳ **Torii** - The gateway of a Shinto Shrine, normally created with two upright beams and two crosspieces.

# How Does Shinto Work?



# How Does Shinto Work?



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# How Does Shinto Work?



↳ **Komainu** (Kom-ain-u) - Guardian dogs, lions or foxes often found on each side of a shrine's entrance.

# How Does Shinto Work?



↳ Komainu Fox is a messenger between good and evil spirits.

# How Does Shinto Work?



↳ **Purification Trough** - The water of these fountains is used for purification... you are supposed to clean your hands and mouth before approaching the main hall of a shrine.



# How Does Shinto Work?



↳ **Omikuji** – a Japanese word which means “**random fortunes**”. They are fortune telling paper slips found at many shrines and temples. A person will randomly take one... they contain predictions for good or bad luck.

# How Does Shinto Work?



# How Does Shinto Work?



& **Shimenawa** (Shim-in-awa)- a Japanese word which means "**enclosing rope**" are lengths of laid rice straw rope used for ritual purification in the Shinto religion. Sacred places are typically marked with a Shimenawa and shime (strips of white paper).

# How Does Shinto Work?



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# How Does Shinto Work?

↳ **Origami** - a Japanese word which means "**Paper of the Spirits**" - A Japanese folk art in which paper is folded into beautiful shapes.



↳ They are often seen around Shinto shrines, out of respect for the tree spirit that gave its life to make the paper, origami paper is never cut.

# How Does Shinto Work?



# How Does Shinto Work?





# How Does Shinto Work?



↳ **Calligraphy** - a Japanese word which means "**the way of writing**" is the art of writing magnificently, most children learn calligraphy in elementary school.

# How Does Shinto Work?

↳ **Shinto** is the term for the original religious beliefs and practices of Japan.



↳ Shinto has no founder, no official sacred scriptures, and no fixed doctrines, however, it has preserved its main beliefs and rituals throughout the ages.

# How Does Shinto Work?

⌘ Why was Japan able to develop their own unique and truly fascinating religion and mythologies???

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# How Does Shinto Work?

⌘ Why was Japan able to develop their own unique and truly fascinating religion and mythologies???

⌘ ...**Japan was ISOLATED!!!!!!!!!!**

# How Does Shinto Work?

& **Shintoism** roots stretch back to 500 B.C.E. and is a **Polytheistic** religion.



& **Polytheism** - the belief in or worship of multiple gods.

# How Does Shinto Work?

⌘ Like many ancient people, the early Japanese believed that all natural things are alive... winds, mountains, rivers, rocks, trees

⌘ They believed that all of these objects possessed spirits of their own and even could hold the spirits of their passed ancient ancestors...**Animism**



# How Does Shinto Work?



⌘ In other words **souls** and **spirits** exist, not only in humans, but also in animals, plants, rocks, natural phenomena such as thunder, rain and even geographic features such as mountains or rivers



# How Does Shinto Work?

↳ **Shinto** remains Japan's major religion alongside Buddhism.



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↳ Shinto can be found in all aspects of Japanese life...in fact almost everything you know about Japan comes from Shintoism.

# How Does Shinto Work?



⌘ Since Shinto has no official sacred book, it has preserved its main beliefs and rituals by passing down sacred arts like **calligraphy**, **origami** and **story telling**.

# How Does Shinto Work? ?



# How Does Shinto Work?

↳ The word **Shinto**, comes from the Chinese *shin tao*, meaning "*the way of spirits*", and only received a name in order to distinguish native Japanese beliefs from Buddhism.



↳ Shinto (together with Buddhism) are closely tied to Japanese society and culture.

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# How Does Shinto Work?



# How Does Shinto Work?

↳ Shinto deities are known as **Kami**.



↳ The word "**Kami**" is generally translated "**god**" or "**gods**", however, the Kami has little resemblance to the gods of monotheistic religions.

# How Does Shinto Work?



↳ **Kami** are sacred spirits which take the form of objects and concepts important to life, such as wind, rain, mountains, trees and rivers...they can be found anywhere and are kind Kami.



# How Does Shinto Work?

- ⌘ There are countless Kami within Shintoism...which can be viewed in many different forms and styles throughout Japan.



- ⌘ **Kami** related to natural objects and creatures, essentially take form within nature.

# How Does Shinto Work?



↳ **Guardian Kami** are seen as protectors of sacred areas, clans and homes.

# How Does Shinto Work?

- ↻ Extraordinary people upon death may become **Ancestral Kami**, who will watch over their families and help protect and guide them as spirits.



- ↻ These incredible **Ancestral Kami** are preserved at shrines, almost like tombs... it is believed that **Kami** will watch over the areas where their shrines are located.

# How Does Shinto Work?



↳ Abstract creative forces (**wind**, **rain**) are seen as generally kind Kami who sustain and protect the people of Japan.

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# How Does Shinto Work?

↳ **Shintoist** believe that natural wonders are created by super natural powers, and the spirits of Kami may in fact dwell in these natural powers.



↳ Also great warriors, leaders and scholars are often divinized and looked at as ascended Kami.

# How Does Shinto Work?

☞ To communicate with these Kami Shinto Shrines were created in a sacred spots throughout Japan.



☞ Among these Kami, the **Sun**, "**Amaterasu**" is the most important to Japan and is regarded as the principal deity of Shinto, particularly by the Imperial Family.

# How Does Shinto Work?

↳ There are "Four Affirmations" in Shinto:



↳ *Tradition and the family*: The family is seen as the main mechanism by which traditions are preserved, their main celebrations relate to birth and marriage.



# How Does Shinto Work?



↳ *Love of Nature*: Nature is sacred; to be in contact with nature is to be close to the Gods, natural objects are worshipped as sacred spirits.

# How Does Shinto Work?



↳ *Physical Cleanliness*: Followers of Shinto take baths, wash their hands, and rinse out their mouth often.

# How Does Shinto Work?



↳ *Matsuri*: The worship and honor given to the **Kami** and **Ancestral Spirits**.

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# How Does Shinto Work?



# How Does Shinto Work?

↳ "Wakakusa Yamayaki"

An annual festival during which the grass on the hillside of Mount Wakakusayama is set on fire.



# How Does Shinto Work?



# How Does Shinto Work?





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# How Does Shinto Work?



# How Does Shinto Work?

## & Questions:

- & 1) Please explain what Origami is and how it is utilized in Shinto?
- & 2) How are Torii's used in Shinto and what do they represent?
- & 3) Calligraphy is much more than just writing, how is it used in Japanese culture?
- & 4) What is a Matsuri and how are they celebrated in the Shinto religion?

# How Does Shinto Work?

## Questions:

1) Please explain what Origami is and how it is utilized in Shinto?

“Paper of the Spirits”, an art form in which paper is folded into beautiful shapes.

2) How are Torii’s used in Shinto and what do they represent?

Torii’s mark the entrance to a Shinto Shrine and represent a holy place

3) Calligraphy is much more than just writing, how is it used in Japanese culture?

Origami means "the way of writing" and is used as a form of art

4) What is a Matsuri and how are they celebrated in the Shinto religion?

Celebrations used in Shinto

# Japanese Shinto



& History Mystery Time: **The Legend of the Kodama**

# Japanese Shinto

↳ A **Kodama** is a spirit or Kami that lives in a tree.



↳ However, not all trees have Kodama that reside inside them.

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# Japanese Shinto

⌘ Rather, these spirits tend to inhabit older and larger trees that are a part of a forest and they protect the forest from any harm.

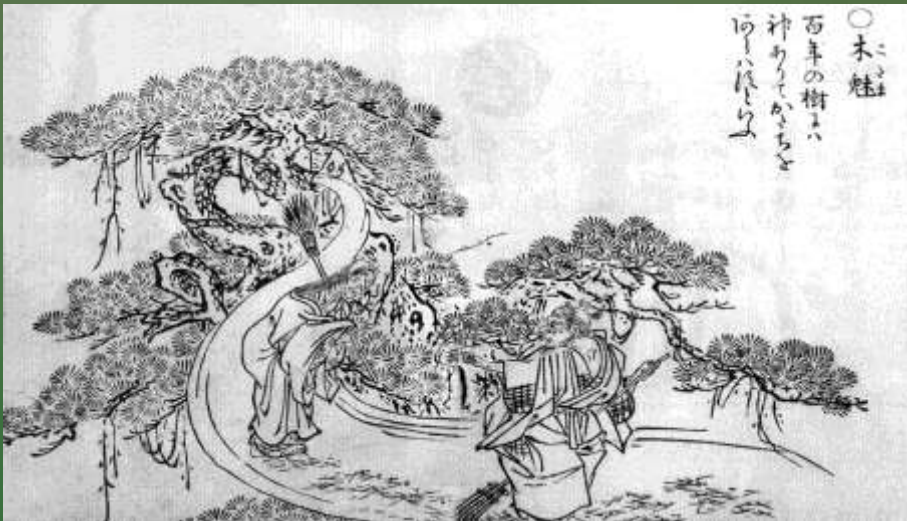


⌘ It is said that if you cut down a tree that houses a Kodama, you will be struck with a curse, resulting in bad luck and misfortune...thus it is believed that Kodama have supernatural powers.



# Japanese Shinto

☞ The knowledge of those trees that have Kodama living in them is passed down by the elderly of that area to younger generations, who will protect the Kodama.



☞ It is also said that only certain species of ancient trees have Kodama living in them and that when these old trees are cut, blood could come forth from them.

# Japanese Shinto

- ⌘ Kodama's are extremely similar to **Dryad's** which is a tree nymph, or female tree spirit in Greek mythology.
- ⌘ In Greek *drys* signifies "oak"...thus, dryads are specifically the nymphs of oak trees, though the term has come to be used for all tree nymphs in general.
- ⌘ They were normally considered to be very shy creatures, except around Artemis, the Goddess of the Moon and Hunting, she was known to be a friend to most nymphs.



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# How Does Shinto Work?

## ⌘ Expository Writing:

⌘ Imagine that you are visiting Japan sometime in the 300's C.E. Write a letter to a friend describing what you have observed and learned about the Shinto religion.