

## **On Shintoism - the Japanese way of venerating the gods of nature**

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This is an analytical observation of some basic characteristics of Shintoism – the native religion of Japan. Described as ‘the Way of Gods (神道 - *shin tō*)’ it exists in Japanese culture being a living force of spiritual inspiration for all from the emperor to the peasant. While native or primitive religions cease to exist in the face of more influential religions or cultures, it is inspiring to observe how Shintoism in Japan was never challenged so. For this study, primary sources on the history of Japan and Shintoism were read in Japanese originals and English translations with special attention to origin, evolution and basic characteristics of Shintoism. Secondary literature both in Japanese and English was referred as necessary. Japanese experts were consulted to gather rare data and the places of worship were evidenced for information on present practices of Shintoism. Hitherto unearthed results are presented now for careful perusal and constructive comments. ‘Japanology’ is the scientific study of unique features and way of thinking of the Japanese culture. Present study sheds light on understanding the cultural atmosphere of one of the most powerful civilizations of Asia. From the anthropological point of view, it observes how, in a given society, a system of beliefs (or faith) continues to exist unchallenged, as long as it influences happiness and well-being of all living beings.

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