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# A History of Japanese Religion: From Ancient Times to Present

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by

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*Arigatou gozaimasu!*

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## Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss the progression of Japanese religion from its earliest inception to the present day. In the United States, religion is considered to be a very personal phenomenon, one totally disassociated from any government control. My intention is to demonstrate that this has not always been the situation in Japan, and to explain how and why the state became so influential in the religion of its citizens. I will also attempt to explain why the disassociation of religion and the state coincided with a general wave of religious apathy that spread across the country.

This thesis begins with a history of primitive Shinto, the only indigenous Japanese religion, and the introduction of Buddhism from Korea. The evolution of these religions, and the influence of Confucianism on their development, is also discussed. I then move on to the coming of Christianity, and the religious policies of the Tokugawa shogunate. A brief history of the Meiji Restoration follows, along with a detailed explanation of State Shinto, emperor worship, and the strict religious precepts of the new government, which remained in effect until the end of World War II. Following the separation of state and religion, I move on to the introduction of New Religions, with an emphasis on Soka Gakkai, one of the most popular. The thesis concludes with an analysis of current attitudes toward religion in Japan, with a focus on the opinions of college students.

It is my hope that readers will come away from this thesis with a greater appreciation for the beauty and diversity that comprises the religions of Japan, and a better understanding of how and why these religions developed the way they did.

*"One wants to be able to look at groups in strange, new lands and say, 'That's a religious sect,' or 'This looks like a church.' Unfortunately, the direct application of the paradigms of the sociology of religion to the non-western world often results in monstrous distortions."*

~Winston Davis Bradley

*Japanese Religion and Society: Paradigms of Structure and Change*, pg. 15

♠

*"Foreign observers of modern Japan have sometimes received apparently conflicting impressions of the state of religion within the nation. Some observers have thought that the Japanese are extremely religious; others have gained the impression that the prevailing attitude of the Japanese toward religion is indifference. Both of these impressions are founded upon seemingly sound evidence."*

~ Edward Norbeck

*Religion and Society in Modern Japan: Continuity and Change*, pg. 1

♠

*"When a western observer who has been reared in the quite different context of Christianity examines Japanese religion, several considerations at first puzzle him as incongruities: that most Japanese can follow more than one religion at once; that they value equally religions that are of such different degrees of philosophical elaboration; and, especially, that they do not particularly look on any of these religions as a main source of ethics."*

~Richard K. Beardsley and John Whitney Hall

*Twelve Doors to Japan*, pg. 301

♠

*"Religion is frequently studied as a matter of personal belief. This is not always possible in Japan, where religious phenomena include many dimensions to which faith is irrelevant."*

~ John R. Hinnells

*A New Handbook of Living Religions*, pg. 479

♠

*"Modern Japanese are not eager to declare themselves religious when asked, but religion in Japan has always been more a matter of participation in religious rituals than a matter of holding specific beliefs."*

~Ian Reader

*Japanese Religions, Past and Present*, pg. 34

# Introduction

Religion has always been one of the world's most controversial and volatile phenomena. Wars have been fought in the name of gods and for possession of holy places from time immemorial. In America, religion is seen as something intensely personal, something which nothing and no one may dictate to another person. This country was settled in the hopes of ending religious persecution, and our Constitution declares religious freedom to be an inalienable right. Most religious sites are clearly marked by the presence of churches, synagogues, or mosques. Religious scriptures are easily identifiable. In short, while we may not understand all the religions practiced in our country, there is generally no confusion over what constitutes a religion or a religious action, and our laws forbid interference in that practice.

In Japan, this has not always been the case.

*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* defines religion as "the service and worship of God or the supernatural; commitment or devotion to religious faith or observance; a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices; a cause, principle, or system of beliefs held to with ardor and faith."[1] Depending on what religion one believes in, the absolute definition of religion one holds will vary. In Japan, it is probably safe to say that there has always been two general types of religious belief: a personal set of values that one holds based on faith, and an institutionalized set of values governed by the state. From almost the beginning of Japanese history until 1945, the government has dictated what religion

[1] *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition* (Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1999), 988.

the people must follow, whether or not they attach any value to that belief system. With the exception of Christianity during the Tokugawa shogunate, Japanese people were allowed to follow any private religious belief they chose in addition to the state sponsored religion. Seen in this way, one can begin to understand the dichotomy that is Japanese religion. If the state religion was not one to which a person had any personal affinity, one would simply celebrate the festivals and register at the type of shrine or temple that was required, and that was the end of it. In many cases, the Japanese people became so used to just doing what was required of them to satisfy the government that religion itself lost all real meaning. After World War II, when there was no more state religion, many people had no idea what to do, and the number of religious believers plummeted. However, when asked, an astounding number of people will claim a religious sect on government surveys, because they still perform the old rituals. This is especially common in Shinto and Buddhism. On the other hand, when asked about their actual religious belief – that personal sense of faith in a god or Buddha – the responses are overwhelmingly negative. Religion, then, is defined by the Japanese people two different ways. It is a set of celebrations, festivals and rituals that were handed down from generation to generation that are practiced automatically; and it is an individual belief in the presence of a divine being that watches over the world and protects it.

According to the *Japan Statistical Yearbook*, published in 2005 by the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, there are approximately 127,619,000 people currently living in Japan. The *Yearbook* also states

that there are 215,964,000 residents who claim to adhere to a religious sect.[2] It does not take a math degree to immediately notice that these numbers do not exactly match up.

The reason the number of religious believers exceeds the actual population of the country is because it is quite common for Japanese people to adhere to more than one religion. Shinto and Buddhism are the two most likely combinations, because they work well together. The former tends to focus on matters of the material world, while the latter emphasizes the spiritual world and afterlife. This makes them easily compatible.[3] However, Christianity is the only religion in Japan that expressly forbids followers to have more than one religion, so other combinations are easily possible.

Seen in this light, the Japanese population appears to be extremely religious. Despite these statistics, however, that does not seem to be the case. A survey in 1963 reported that 69 percent of the population did not consider themselves to be religious.[4] In a survey of college students in 2001, less than 10 percent claimed to believe in a religion.[5] In other words, although they practice religious rites and participate in religious festivals, the majority of Japanese people do not believe these activities make them members of a spiritual group. Religious action is seen as separate from religious belief.

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[2] Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, *Japan Statistical Yearbook – 2005* < www.stat.go.jp/english/data/nenkan/index.htm >.
[3] Kiyomi Morioka, *Religion in Changing Japanese Society* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1975), 5-7.
[4] Edward Norbeck, *Religion and Society in Modern Japan: Continuity and Change* (Houston: Tormaline Press, 1970), 4.
[5] Inoue Nobutaka, *Japanese College Students' Attitudes Towards Religion* (Tokyo: 21st Century For Excellence Program, Kokugakuin University, 2003), 21.

In America, this separation would most likely seem quite odd, but it is clear that we cannot impose western standards on Japanese religious practices. The idea of an almost non-religious religion has existed since the Meiji Restoration, and it has only grown since the end of World War II, with the disestablishment of State Shinto and the approval of a new constitution proclaiming religious freedom. As we will see later, the Japanese student generation appears especially apathetic to religion. Whether or not this attitude will continue to grow is up for debate, but it currently exists nonetheless.

It is perhaps more than a coincidence that Japanese religious fervor died down at the same time as the disestablishment of religion and the state. From almost its earliest inception, Japanese religion has been intimately connected with the reigning governmental authority. While actual religious persecution occurred only twice in the country's long history, the Japanese populace has nonetheless nearly always been explicitly told what religion was necessary to practice. It is unclear if the people simply lost their way when, suddenly, there was no one to tell them what to believe in, or if a long-dormant apathy took center stage once religious obligation was no longer present, but it cannot be merely chance that this apathy appeared at the same time religious freedom was granted. The state and religion have always been expressly intertwined, and changes in governmental leadership nearly always led to a switch, or at least alteration, in the favored religion. It is this belief to which we will turn our attention in the majority of this paper. First, however, an overview of the dominant religions in Japan would seem to be in order.

Out of the 215,964,000 current adherents to religious practices, 107,778,000 belong to Shinto and 95,555,000 belong to Buddhism, making them easily the most popular religions in the country. Christianity claims less than one percent of the population, with only 1,917,000 followers. The remainder of the adherents, which encompass 10,713,000 people, are classified as believers in "other" religions.[6] The vast majority of these men and women are followers of so-called New Religions, many of which appeared after World War II. Most New Religions have their basis in Shinto or Buddhist teachings, but they differ from their parent religions in that they focus on individual problems, and leaders claim to have immediate answers to health and happiness for all their followers. New Religions are steadily increasing in membership, as people are attracted to faiths that purport to bring success in everyday life, and it will be interesting to see if they eventually overtake more traditional religions in size and scope.

Shinto, translated as *Kami no Michi*, or "The Way of the Gods," is Japan's oldest and only indigenous religion.[7] It focuses on the connection between the human world and the spirit world, and contains thousands of *kami*, or gods, who protect and nurture their followers. These gods are split into two categories consisting of local *kami* and national *kami*. Local *kami* are the gods worshiped in town or village *matsuri*, or festivals, where followers thank them for providing good food and protection. These festivals are based on traditions that have been handed down for

[6] Statistics Bureau, *Japan Statistical Yearbook – 2005*.
[7] Robert Ellwood and Richard Pilgrim, *Japanese Religion: A Cultural Perspective* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1985), 2.

centuries, and often have their roots in old agricultural rituals of thanksgiving. National *kami*, who protect the country at large, are worshiped at specific times of the year by all Shinto followers. The main aspects of Shinto can be seen in the importance of nature and purification, both of which still exist today.

Perhaps because it is Japan's only indigenous religion, Shinto remains even today the country's most popular religion. However, several "foreign" religions have made their way across the oceans to settle in the island nation. Since Japan was never conquered by an outside invader, all of these religions were peacefully transmitted, and this allowed the Japanese people to study and adapt these belief systems at their own pace.

Buddhism, Japan's most popular outside religion, was introduced from Korea, whose leaders had imported it from India and China. As we will see later, Japanese Buddhism underwent several major changes, with various sects often vying for importance and acceptance, but several basic beliefs have remained consistent. Unlike Shinto, which focuses on the connection between the *kami* and the physical world, Buddhism and its accompanying gods emphasize the individual spirit and its salvation. Followers of the eightfold path are assured not of good harvests and protection in life, but of an eternity in paradise after death. Buddhist funerals are one of the most popular aspects of the religion today. No matter what one's outward beliefs, the vast majority of today's Japanese citizens will receive a Buddhist funeral. The importance of this religion can therefore not be over-exaggerated.

As previously mentioned, Christianity, while still present in Japan, never came even close to gaining a following the size of Shinto and Buddhism, nor, indeed, of even the New Religions. It had two brief flashes of potential success – one in the 16th Century when it was first introduced by Portuguese Jesuits, and once just following the Meiji Restoration when the ban on the religion was lifted after 250 years – but both opportunities eventually failed. Reasons for this are varied, and will be considered later in greater detail, but the most likely candidate for failure lays in the fact that it was simply too alien for the Japanese to accept *en masse*. It required a firm conviction that only this religion and no other was correct, and for a population that had for centuries allowed multiple religious beliefs, this was generally deemed incomprehensible. The Japanese were also seemingly incapable of altering the religion to fit their needs, which they were able to do with Buddhism, and indeed most other foreign ideals, and this was also a hindrance. It is a historical fact that the Japanese tend to take bits and pieces of foreign beliefs and reasoning and accept only what they choose and alter the rest, thus making it something uniquely Japanese. When this could not be done to the religion of Christ, it was simply dropped by most.

Although not a religion per se, it would be remiss not to include at least a brief introduction to Japanese Confucianism, because it played such a large role in both the political and religious history of the country. No matter what one's religious beliefs, Confucian ethics and morality have been extremely important since they were imported from China in the early 5th Century, along with Chinese laws and their bureaucratic form of government. The ideas of filial piety, an unequal society, and

extreme loyalty to one's superiors became the motivators behind several religious movements, especially during the Tokugawa shogunate. Confucianism may not constitute a religion on its own, but its effects on religion and religious development cannot be ignored.

The best way to demonstrate the connection between religion and the state would simply be to provide a chronology of Japanese religious history, thus showing how each religion grew and altered depending on who was in power at the time. We will begin with the era of primitive Shinto and the deification of the imperial line, and continue through time to modern Japan and current attitudes towards and trends in religion, with special emphasis on the views of college students towards religious beliefs and the growth of the New Religions. This will, I hope, provide a clear and concise overview of how religion and the state have always been inexorably linked, and will perhaps also hint at why, when this link suddenly vanished, Japanese religion underwent possibly its most radical change in history.

## Chapter One: Early Shinto and Buddhism

The original religion of the Japanese people was Shinto, the Way of the Gods. Interestingly enough, there was no word for this religion when it first came in to being. It was only given the designation of "Shinto" in the 6th Century, to separate it from the new religion that had just entered the land: Butsudo, the Way of the Buddha.[8] Shinto has always been a very simplistic religion, with no actual doctrines

[8] James Fieser and John Powers, *Scriptures of the East* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1998), 211.

and no formal organization. There was also no specific founder of the religion.[9] Early Shinto was especially simple, with a history more akin to Greek mythology than Christianity or Judaism.

The principle writings which form the basis of Shinto mythology are the Kojiki, or Record of Ancient Matters, written in 712 AD by the Heian courtier Ono Yasumaro, and the Nihon Shoki, also referred to as the Nihongi, the Written Chronicles of Japan, composed by multiple Heian scholars and completed in 720 AD.[10] Both discuss the creation myths of Japan and the myth-histories of the *kami* that lived during that time. The main difference is that the Nihongi focuses on the country as a whole, while the Kojiki emphasizes the role of the Yamato clan, which became the imperial family.[11]

The main purpose of the Kojiki and Nihongi was to substantiate the claims of the Japanese people that they were descendants of the *kami*. This belief is articulated well by Hirata Atsutane, a religious scholar in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. He claimed that, "People all over the world refer to Japan as the Land of the Gods and call us the descendants of the gods. Indeed, it is exactly as they say: our country, as a special mark of favor from the heavenly gods, was begotten by them, and there is thus so immense a difference between Japan and all the other countries of the world as to defy comparison."[12] Obviously not all Japanese would be so quick to put themselves

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[9] Ibid.
[10] Post Wheeler and O. Yasumaro, ed. and trans., *The Sacred Scripture of the Japanese* (New York: H. Schuman, 1952): xi; and C. Scott Littleton, *Shinto: Origins, Rituals, Festivals, Spirits, Sacred Places* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 37.
[11] Littleton, 37.
[12] Littleton, 34.

above all other nations in the world, but Atsutane's beliefs were not unique, either. In fact, a similar observation was made in the early 1690's by Englebert Kaempfer, who visited Japan for two years while doing research for the Dutch government. He noted that, "the Japanese are very indignant when one wants to trace their origin back to the empire and blood of the Chinese, or other foreign people, for they want to have their origin in their own small world. Yet they do not wish to have come into being like mice and earthworms appearing out of the soil...but in a far loftier and nobler fashion. Thus they trace their origins back to the race of the gods and eternity."[13]

While the Nihongi lists all *kami* in the Shinto pantheon and their descendants, showing that all Japanese can claim a god-like heritage, both it and the Kojiki emphasize the ancestry of the Yamato clan, of which all Japanese emperors are direct descendants. The Japanese creation myth, which highlights the divine origins of the imperial clan, begins with a brief summary of seven generations of invisible *kami* who ruled the universe when everything was still covered in chaos. In the eighth generation, Izanagi, the sky god, and Izanami, the earth goddess, came into being. They dipped a spear into chaos and formed Onogoro, the first island, which became part of Japan. Izanami then gave birth in quick succession to a series of *kami*, a monster, and the rest of the Japanese islands. Her last child was the *kami* of fire, and he burned her so badly that she died and went to *Yomi*, the land of the dead. Izanagi

[13] Engelbert Kaempfer, *Kaempfer's Japan: Tokugawa Culture Observed*, trans. Beatrice M. Bodart-Bailey (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 51. This comment was found under a chapter entitled "The Origins of the Japanese According to Their Own Fanciful Opinion."

followed her to attempt a rescue, but, like Orpheus and Eurydice, he ignored her warnings not to look at her, and was chased out of *Yomi* by monsters.

To purify himself from being in the land of the dead, Izanagi bathed in the Hi River, which was sacred. When he washed his eyes, the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, was born from his left eye, and Tsukiyomi, the Moon God, was born from his right. Susano, the *kami* of storms, was born when he washed his nose. Reminiscent again of Greek mythology, Izanagi split his power among his three children. Amaterasu became the supreme ruler of all the *kami*, Tsukiyomi was appointed lord of the night and the moon, and Susano was made ruler of the oceans.[14]

Amaterasu became the primary Shinto deity, and the most important Shinto shrine remains in her memory at Ise, where Izanagi and Inazami first appeared. It is from Amaterasu that the imperial family was born. This family line has been unbroken since 660 BC, with the first emperor, Jimmu Tenno, who was the great-great-great-grandson of Amaterasu.[15] Not until the end of World War II would the emperor be forced to renounce this deification. Considering how long this belief has been in place, one can see clearly how difficult it must have been to relinquish it.

Although these texts and mythologies were not written in concrete form until many, many years after the formation of Shinto, they are the basis of the religious beliefs of this sect, and therefore deserve to be mentioned first. Now we may turn our attention to actual history, and observe how these myth-histories were lived out.

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[14] Littleton, 40-42.
[15] Daniel Clarence Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan: A Study in Modern Shinto* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corporation, 1965), 80.

The Jomon Period, from 6000 to 300 BC, is the first era of Japanese historical record. The people of the beginning of the era formed hunting and gathering societies, which later evolved into sedentary agricultural communities. Religious practices emphasized fertility, and many small clay statues of half-human, half-animal figures were discovered, along with figures shaped like genitals. Men and women were buried in a fetal position, perhaps to promote rebirth. The Yayoi Period, which followed in 300 BC and lasted until 300 AD, was a heavily agricultural society, with rice as the main crop. As such, the people practiced many agricultural rituals, such as reciting prayers, making offerings, and holding festivals honoring the *kami*, in the hopes of securing a good harvest. This culture became increasingly shamanistic, as people began turning to priests and magic-workers to learn how to ensure a good crop. The last prehistoric era was the Kofun Period, from 300 to 538 AD. Kofun, meaning "tomb," was named for the elaborate burial sites found dating from this era. Most of these were for the ruling clans and contained many *haniwa*, or small clay figures that would lead the dead to their next life. Some also contained boats or horses, perhaps as a means of travel to the world of the dead. These tombs also often contained swords, mirrors, and jeweled necklaces, which are the three sacred Shinto treasures.[16] No Shinto shrine even today is without a mirror, and some of the more important shrines possess all three treasures.

During the Kofun Period, around 350 AD, the Yamato clan began asserting itself as the most powerful family in Japan. They used superior military force and

[16] Ellwood and Pilgrim, 20-21; and John Bowker, ed., *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Religions* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 152-153.

systematically conquered the island, eventually becoming the imperial family. They claimed to be direct descendants of Amaterasu, the most important and powerful *kami* in their religion, and therefore claimed rule by divine right.[17] The emperor claimed to rule through the will of Amaterasu, whose desires were made known to him either through dreams or bodily possession.[18] When this occurred, the Japanese people began worshiping the emperor as a *kami* himself, a practice which would continue until the imperial line was forcibly removed from divine power. It was with this practice of emperor-worship that modern Shinto was born, and this was also the beginning of the association of religion with the government. In this case, association took the form of actual worship of the government leader. In other cases, it would simply be a matter of the ruler dictating what beliefs the people should hold, but either way, from this point on, religion and the government were directly linked.

In addition to this emperor-worship, primitive Shinto built a world in which the human and divine lived together, and one in which the common people were protected and blessed in return for adequate worship of their local *kami*. In traditional Shinto, the word *kami* not only meant the mythic deities like Amaterasu and her siblings, but also anything that could be considered sacred or awe-inspiring. This included mountains, rocks, rivers, wind or lighting. Nature was, and still is, intensely spiritual for Japanese Shintoists. *Kami* are often considered personifications of nature, and shrines are built in beautiful areas of the countryside. Aside from Amaterasu,

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[17] Ellwood and Pilgrim, 21

[18] Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, *On Understanding Japanese Religion* (Princeton: NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 16.

most people focused on worshiping their local *kami* through festivals, purification rituals, and prayers. Many of these prayers, called *norito*, can be found in the Engi-Shiki, or Institutes of the Engi Era,[19] which is a 50-book collection written in the late 10th Century. It lists 75 *norito*, or "Shinto ritual prayers and liturgies for use in public ceremonies," as well as several *jingi-ryo*, or rules on how to perform shrine ceremonies.[20] The Engi-Shiki also provides the actual texts of 27 of the 75 *norito*. In return for these prayers and rituals, the *kami* would protect the people from harm and bring them good harvests. Thus, there was a feeling of close relationship with the local gods, and through them, with nature. This triumvirate of human, god and nature is still one of the most important aspects of Shinto today.

Thus we can see two basic aspects of early Shinto. The first is a primitive, shamanistic culture that worships a pantheon of gods who, in turn, protect them and give them prosperity. The second is a more organized form of worship of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, and her descendants, the imperial clan. As Shinto became more organized under this worship of the emperor, society itself became more unified. It is this Shinto that became the prototype for the nationalistic Shinto that will be seen in the 20th Century. Seen in this light, Shinto aided in creating the Japan that we know today. The will of the gods and the will of the emperor, and therefore the government, became one and the same. The emperor was a sacred personage, and to disobey him would be to bring the wrath of heaven down upon the people. Loyalty was thus very easily commanded. In this way, the modern nation was born, not through military

[19] Wheeler and Yasumaro, xi.
[20] Littleton, 43.

strength and political haggling alone, but also through divine intervention. The very birth of a unified nation was brought about by religion.

Belief in the Shinto pantheon of *kami* and the divine ancestry of the emperor would never truly die, at least until it was forcibly removed after World War II, but for many of the following centuries, Shinto become overshadowed by a new religion brought to Japan from across the seas: Buddhism.

When discussing Japanese Buddhism, it is important to note that the original sect that came to the country was Mahayana Buddhism. This sect was formed in India in the first or second century as a reaction against earlier Buddhism, which focused on monastic life. It aimed at bringing Buddhism to the masses by providing a gentler message that claimed all people, no matter what their birth or station, had the ability to become enlightened. It also emphasized compassion as an important ingredient in both life and in the practice of Buddhism.[21] These beliefs remained very strong in all the Buddhist sects that eventually came to Japan.

Buddhism began in India, and from there traveled to China, and then to Korea, which is where Japan would ultimately learn of the religion. Buddhism first appeared in Japan during the Asuka Period in either 538 AD, according to a biography of Prince Shotoku, an important Buddhist ruler, or in 552 AD, according to the Nihongi. At this time, there were three kingdoms in Korea – Silla, Koguryo, and Paekche. The king of Paekche hoped to form an alliance with Japan in order to protect himself against the other two kingdoms. As an offering toward this alliance, he sent the

[21] Burton Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sutra* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), xii.

Japanese emperor, Kimmei Tenno, a gold and copper statue of Buddha and several Buddhist scriptures.[22] From this point on until the 17th Century, Shinto would take a back seat to Buddhism. Despite the fact that it was a foreign religion, it did not have the stigma associated with an invading presence because it did not forbid the practice of the current religion. Its freshness also appealed to the people. They were not tired of Shinto per se, but it is human nature to be curious of the unknown, and that is what Buddhism represented. For the first time, the Japanese were confronted with a religion that dealt with the afterlife and the soul. This spirit world was so new and different, as was the idea of a god, the Buddha, who focused not on the harvests and material goods but on the salvation of an eternal soul, that it is no wonder the Japanese people were eager to test this new religion.

There was a brief battle for supremacy between Shinto and Buddhism, but this ended in 593 AD when Prince Shotoku, a Buddhist, became ruler.[23] In 604 AD, he proclaimed Buddhism as the state religion.[24] It was under Shotoku's rule that the country became firmly united for the first time, and he used Buddhism to do it. By declaring that everyone had to follow Buddhism and register at Buddhist temples, he was able, for the first time, to exert total control over all his people. It was also around this time that Confucianism first entered Japan from China, and Shotoku discovered that Buddhist spirituality and Confucian ethics worked quite well together. Buddhist teachings concentrated on how to achieve happiness in the next life, while

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[22] Bowker, 154; and Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan*, 31.
[23] Masaharu Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion: With Special Reference to the Social and Moral Life of the Nation* (London and New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 57.
[24] William K. Bunce, ed., *Religions in Japan: Buddhism, Shinto, Christianity* (Rutland, Vt.: C.E. Tuttle Company, 1955), 4.

Confucianism taught one how to live a good life on earth. With this combination, Shotoku was able to form a new type of government. He borrowed the Chinese bureaucratic form of government, which made it even easier for him to rule the nation, and he is credited with enlarging, formally organizing, and increasing the power of the central government. According to authors Richard Wood and Richard Pilgrim, Shotoku's rule was truly an influential one for both religion and the state. They claimed that "his era was a turning point in the emergence of three important elements: a mature Japanese culture, Buddhism as a national religion, and a consolidated state."[25] Thus we can again see how the fate of the nation and the fate of religion were one and the same.

In the same year he declared Buddhism to be the state religion, Prince Shotoku wrote the first Japanese constitution, called The Seventeen Articles. This constitution was heavily influenced by Buddhism and Confucian ethics. It emphasized faith toward Buddha and his scriptures and unquestioning loyalty toward the imperial government. It also promoted hard work, a frugal and moral life, and a strict social hierarchy. Everyone had a specific place in life and should do his job to the best of his ability, but at the same time, should always remember his place and never overstep his boundaries.[26] These notions of filial piety, loyalty to one's superiors, and an unequal society were extremely Confucian in nation. Combining

[25] Ellwood and Pilgrim, 23.
[26] Winston Bradley Davis, *Japanese Religion and Society: Paradigms of Structure and Change* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 167-169.

that with Buddhist beliefs made for a very appealing constitution, at least as far as the imperial court was concerned.

In addition to aiding in the change of governmental structure, Buddhism also brought new ideals to Japan. It emphasized the importance of ancestor worship and an intense reverence for all life. This was also when Buddhist funerals became popular, probably due to the religion's emphasis on the afterlife. Buddhism was a very imperial religion from the time of its inception. It appealed to the aristocracy because it was more complex than Shinto and had formal doctrines that could be studied and discussed. Understanding the hidden secrets of Buddhism became a mark of high society. The common people, meanwhile, tended to stick to what they knew, which was Shinto. It is also important to note that clan separation affected religion. The common people, who continued to live with their families, retained the traditional beliefs of Shinto. Members of the imperial court, who separated from their clan to come live in the palace, lost their familial ties, which perhaps eased their transition into a new religion.

The Nara and Heian eras, which were the golden ages of Japanese culture and imperial court life, continued the spread of Buddhism and Confucian ethics, as well as increased the power of the central government. These were the great eras of temple-building and scripture-writing. In 710 AD, the imperial capital was moved to Nara, which was the first permanent seat of power. Previously, Shinto beliefs forced the capital to be moved upon the death of each emperor, in order to avoid the pollution caused by death. Such superstitions were seen as irrelevant during the age of

Buddhism, so a permanent capital seemed to be in order.[27] During this time Buddhism became more and more formalized, with emphasis mainly on doctrines and religious rites. The Buddhist priesthood steadily grew larger in number, and with this we can start to see the beginning of corruption. Buddhism became a status symbol, not a truly devout religion. Its priests became addicted to luxury and the power given to them by the central government. These practices continued during the Heian Era, which began in 794 and lasted until 1185. This era was ruled by the powerful Fujiwara family, who moved the capital once again, this time to Heian, present day Kyoto, where it would remain until the Tokugawa shogunate.[28] It was during this era that many people became disillusioned with the corruption of the Buddhist priesthood and imperial followers, and set about reforming the religion.

In the hopes of finding a solution to this problem of corruption, two men, Sachio, later called Dengyo Daishi, and Kukai, later called Kobo Daishi, were sent to China to perform research on new forms of Buddhism. When they returned, they each set up a new Buddhist sect that was less complex and doctrine-oriented. It was their hope that they could entice common men and women to try a new form of Buddhism, thus removing the religion from the stigma of a corrupt imperial court and priesthood. Kukai founded the Shingon sect of Buddhism, which focused on the importance of mandalas and other religious art, encouraged chanting and special gestures, and promoted yoga-like activities. This appealed to the common people because it was easy to perform the required tasks, and there were no complex doctrines to memorize

[27] Ellwood and Pilgrim, 27.
[28] Ellwood and Pilgrim, 31.

and follow. Sachio, in his turn, founded the Tendai sect of Buddhism, which focused on only one scripture – the Lotus Sutra – an easily understood piece of writing that, simply stated, claimed anyone could reach nirvana and enlightenment regardless of his position, so long as they focused on this and no other doctrine. This sect again appealed to the common people because of its simplicity. While these two men did not convert the whole country to their new sects, they definitely allowed Buddhism to become more attractive to the non-imperials, and many members of the lower classes did begin devoutly practicing Buddhism.

This, of course, is not to say that Shinto completely died even with the conversions of some of the lower classes. Although the Tendai and Shingon sects were much easier than the previous imperial-centered Buddhism that focused solely on doctrine and interpretation, there was still something lacking that prevented mass conversions from the common folk. Even Prince Shotoku had seen the merits of Shinto, which he believed worked in tandem with other religions and ideas, as different parts of a tree work together to aid it in survival and growth. He wrote: "Shinto is the root embedded in the soil of the people's character and national traditions; Confucianism is seen in the stem and branches of legal institutions, ethical codes, and educational systems; Buddhism made the flowers of religious sentiment bloom and gave the fruits of spiritual life."[29] After Shotoku, even the aristocracy had flirted with a return of Shinto. In 682, Emperor Tennmu commissioned the writing of the Kojiki, so that he could trace the imperial lineage back to the national *kami*.

[29] Anesaki, 8.

Several years later, Empress Jito ordered the compilation of the Nihongi for the same reason.[30] Shinto writing continued in the Heian Era with the composition of the Engi-Shiki, which contained the previously mentioned Shinto *norito*, or formalized prayers.[31]

Perhaps most telling of all was the development of *shinbutsu shugo*, an attempted combination of Shinto and Buddhism that was heavily promoted by the Tendai sect. Shinto *kami* were equated with various *bodhisattvas*, and Amaterasu was seen as one of the various incarnations of the Buddha himself. Buddhist and Shinto shrines were also combined.[32] Unfortunately, this combination did not last long, and Shinto was very quickly almost swallowed up by Buddhism. Buddhist priests took over nearly all the shrines, and Shinto festivals became converted to almost totally Buddhist ones. Priests again became corrupt, and Buddhism retreated once more to the court and the aristocracy without leaving much mark on the common people.

It wasn't until the Fujiwara family was overthrown in the Gempei War in 1185,[33] and the military dictatorship of the Kamakura *bakufu* came to power, that Buddhism really came into its own as a mass religion. With the imperial court in disarray and its patronage of traditional Buddhist sects all but gone, the road was paved for yet another change in religion. This came in the form of three new sects that had exceedingly simple doctrines and wide appeal. They were the Pure Land sect, which worshiped Amida Buddha; the Nichiren sect, which focused on the

[30] Wheeler and Yasumaro, xxii-xxiv.
[31] Bowker, 157-158.
[32] Bowker, 158.
[33] Ellwood and Pilgrim, 35.

teachings of the Lotus Sutra; and the Zen sect, which emphasized meditation and the arts. Each of these sects were much simpler even than Tendai and Shingon, and they were adopted extremely quickly by the common people.

Pure Land Buddhism, founded by the priest Honen and his disciple Shinran, was probably the most widespread of the new sects because of its utter simplicity. The only thing people had to do in order to be saved was throw themselves on the mercy of Amida, who promised salvation to all who truly believed. According to Ian Reader, this sect "turned Buddhism into a religion of salvation, in which the believers, rather than helping themselves, rely on salvation through the benevolence of Amida Buddha."[34] William K. Bunce agreed with this description, and claimed that this sect was the easiest to be accepted by the common people. He wrote that, "the other schools of Buddhism required spiritual enlightenment for salvation and demanded of their followers rigid discipline and much personal effort, whereas Amidaism demanded of its followers only one thing – absolute faith in the Buddha Amida."[35] The only action the worshiper had to take was to chant the phrase "*Namu Amida Buddha*," or "Praise be to Amida Buddha." True believers would then be taken to the Pure Land after death, and live in paradise forever.

Each of the three new sects were created by Tendai monks, but the Nichiren sect reflected the old Tendai teachings more than Amidaism and Zen, because it, too, focused on the Lotus Sutra. This sect became the most radical Buddhist sect yet to be created. The Lotus Sutra is considered to be one of the most important scriptures of

[34] Ian Reader, *Japanese Religions: Past and Present* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983), 36.
[35] Bunce, 14.

Mahayana Buddhism. No one is sure exactly when or where it was created. Most scholars agree that it probably originated somewhere in India, and we do know the first Chinese translation was made in 255 AD.[36] The Lotus Sutra is based on the four noble truths of Buddhism: the world is marked by suffering; suffering is caused by desire; only by ending desire can one reach peace and enlightenment; and enlightenment is reached by following the eightfold path.[37] The sutra contains 28 chapters of both prose and verse, in which the reader is instructed on how to follow the eightfold path and reach salvation. The prominence of the verse style of writing was to assist readers in memorizing the teachings. The Lotus Sutra is also famous for teaching in parables, much like Jesus in the New Testament, in order to encourage readers to act out the Buddhist teachings in their everyday lives and not just absorb the words. According to Burton Watson, author of a more recent translation of the sutra, "much of the Lotus Sutra is taken up with injunctions to the believer to 'accept and uphold, read, recite, copy and teach' it to others, with descriptions of the bountiful merits to be gained by such an action, as well as warnings of the evil effects of speaking ill of the sutra and its practices."[38] The Lotus Sutra attempts to make the Buddha come alive, so that believers can see him as an actual presence, not just a historical figure.

After studying at Mt. Hiei, one of the principle shrines in Japan, Nichiren decided that the Lotus Sutra was the only true means of salvation for the people. His

[36] Watson, ix.
[37] Watson, x.
[38] Watson, xxi.

sect was created in 1253, and it was unique in that it was the first time anyone in Japan had openly proclaimed that his religion and no other was correct.[39] Nichiren blasted all other Buddhist sects and claimed they spread only lies. He firmly believed that only by following the teachings of the Lotus Sutra could one be assured of salvation, and he had high hopes of converting the entire country to his teachings. He encouraged his followers to live out the teachings of the Lotus Sutra in every action they performed, and he ordered them to recite the prayer "*Manu myoho renge kyo*," or "Hail to the marvelous teaching of the Lotus Sutra," as a means of reminding them of the importance of their beliefs.[40] After his death, Nichiren's sect split into two sub-sects, the Nichiren-shu and the Nichiren-shoshu. It is from this second sub-sect that a New Religion, called Soka Gakkai, would be formed hundreds of years later, in the latter half of the 1930's. This militant religion would attempt to bring not only Japan but the entire world under its umbrella. Nichiren's teachings are thus considered to be one of the most influential, and most controversial, in Japanese history.

The final sect that became popular during the Kamakura Era was Zen Buddhism, which has roots in Japan that can be traced back to the 7th Century, but which was formally established in 1191 by the Tendai monk Eisai, who studied it in China and brought its teachings back to Japan.[41] The first Zen temple was built in 1202 in Kyoto, and in 1206, as a reward for all his hard work, Emperor Tsuchi-mikado bestowed on Eisai the title of high priest. He then traveled to Kamakura to

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[39] Bunce, 16.
[40] Ellwood and Pilgrim, 78.
[41] Kaiten Nurkariya, *The Religion of the Samurai: A Study of Zen Philosophy in China and Japan* (London and New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), 28-29.

preach.[42] Eisai's Zen, which was heavily influenced by Tendai belief, was replaced in 1227 by the first pure Zen sect, established by Joyo Dai Shi, who also studied in China.[43]

The appeal of Zen to the common people was its emphasis on meditation, and the idea that the true spirit of Buddhism could not be learned from doctrines or preached by monks, but instead had to be felt in the soul. Meditation allowed people to transcend the physical world and learn eternal Truth. Its techniques were simple enough to be understood by most people and could be practiced anywhere, and yet the religion also had a deep enough philosophy to satisfy nobles and scholars.[44] Zen also spread to different aspects of society. Calligraphy, the tea ceremony and flower arrangements are lasting effects of Zen, all of which require precise movements and deep concentration. The effects of Zen can also be seen in the simplicity of rock gardens. Perhaps the most lasting secular aspect of Buddhism can be seen in haiku poetry, which was perfected by Matsuo Basho in the 17th Century. Basho integrated the Zen concept of sudden enlightenment into his works by contrasting stillness in the first half of his poems with sudden movement in the second half.

Zen Buddhism was heavily patronized by the military, especially the samurai, because of its emphasis on physical and mental discipline and its distain of wealth, luxury and materialism. Courage and composure were also emphasized. Samurai took advantage of their high position in the medieval pyramid and promoted Zen to people

[42] Nurkariya, 29-30.
[43] Nurkariya, 31.
[44] Anesaki, 210.

of all stations. The shogun, who also respected the samurai, began promoting it as well. By the time the Tokugawa Era began in 1603, Zen had become almost a state-sponsored religion.

Kamakura Buddhism can be seen as an example of a true religious revival in Japan. The decadence of the Buddhist monks and the aristocracy paved the way for disillusionment in many followers. With the fall of the imperial court and the reins of power being transferred to the military, a chance came for a similar religious alteration, and a group of monks and priests, with the support of the new government, did just that. Japanese textbooks today make note of this change, and define Kamakura Buddhism as a religious entity all of its own. Vincente M. Bonet, who did research on a number of modern Japanese history textbooks, claims that Kamakura Buddhism can be defined in five statements: "It is a Buddhism so Japanized as to satisfy the expectations of the times; it aims at the salvation of the individual's soul; both its doctrine and practice are simple and easy; it concentrates on and requires absolute conversion to the Buddha and to the sacred book one has chosen; and it has the character of being a layman's religion."[45] Bonet's point that Kamakura Buddhism became "Japanized" is something that must be emphasized. Although many of the priests and monks who created the Kamakura sects studied first in China, these sects became thoroughly altered and re-arranged so as to constitute a truly unique Japanese religion. Thus, the Kamakura Period has the distinction of being not only an era when Buddhism became a truly popular religion and spread to men and woman of all

[45] Vicente M. Bonet, ed. *Religion in the Japanese Textbooks, Vol. III* (Tokyo: Enderle Book Company, 1973), 52.

classes, but also an era that produced the first really unique sects of Japanese Buddhism.

But what about Shinto? Did this old folk religion simply vanish under the weight of such popular Buddhist sects? After all, the common people had been Shinto's biggest supporters, and with so many of them converting to Buddhism, it might seem as if there would not be enough Shintoists left to keep the religion alive. This, of course, was not the case at all, and the same can be said of Confucianism. Both were still very much alive.

During the Kamakura Era, joint shrines were once again erected to both Shinto *kami* and the various Buddhist gods and goddesses. True, Shinto adapted more Buddhist traditions than the other way around, but it was still present. The deep countryside still maintained almost purely Shinto ceremonies and folklore. Certain Shinto ceremonies were even still performed at the imperial court. The *Daijoe*, a ceremony performed when a new emperor is installed, and the *Jinkonjiki*, a bi-annual offering to the *kami* by the emperor in return for peace and prosperity, were only two such rituals still observed.[46] The Buddha and *kami* were also often seen as useful to call upon for different reasons. *Kami* assisted people with worldly affairs, while the Buddha was turned to for issues dealing with life after death.

The biggest development in Shinto came during the Muromachi Period of the 13th Century, just following the Kamakura Era, with the development of Ise Shinto. The Ise Shrine, which is still considered the holiest Shinto shrine in Japan, as it

[46] Kuroda Toshio, "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion," trans. James C Dobbins and Suzanne Gay, *Journal of Japanese Studies* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1981), 15.

honors Amaterasu, still conducted ancient Shinto ceremonies during the rule of the Kamakura and Muromachi *bakufu*. The Shinto priests at Ise were determined to keep it totally separate from any Buddhist influence, not because they felt Buddhism was evil, but because they believed there should still remain a special place for the *kami* alone. This idea never spread, but it was never overthrown, either.[47]

The decline of the Muromachi *bakufu* led to yet another change in government, this time to a feudal system under the Ashikaga clan, which lasted from 1333 to 1568.[48] In this case, there was no radical change in religion, but Zen Buddhism continued to swiftly climb the ranks and became the most popular religion of the era, where it would stay for several hundred years. This was a period of considerable political instability, and this often showed in religious attitudes. The fact that no one was making much effort to alter or improve any of the existing religions, or create new ones, as had been done for the past several centuries, suggests that most people had more immediate things on their minds. This would not change until the country was reunited under the hand of Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1603. There was one more radical change in the religious scene of Japan before the coming of the Tokugawa shogunate, however, and that was the appearance of by far the most alien religion to yet appear in the Land of the Gods: Christianity.

[47] Kuroda, 12-13.
[48] Bunce, 18.

## Chapter Two: The Coming of Christianity

The first Christian missionaries came to Japan during a time of political upheaval commonly referred to as the Sengoku Jidai, or Warring-States Period. The first to land on the shores of the island were Jesuit missionaries from Portugal, led by Francis Xavier. They arrived on the island of Kyushu in 1549, and were initially welcomed by the government.[49] According to Japanese historian Masaharu Anesaki, "the new missionaries were at first an object of curiosity, then welcomed as people whose countrymen and associates would supply new commodities, particularly firearms, and finally revered or hated as the propagators of a religion which was entirely different from any of the religions existing in Japan."[50] In point of fact, the Japanese rulers considered this new religion very carefully when it was offered to them, because they were looking for a pure, unified religion that was not corrupted into sects and could be used to bring the country together again under one specific religion, much as Shotoku had done with the original Japanese Buddhism. However, another camp was heavily protesting the idea of strict fidelity to one God and one religion. After all, no matter what the state-sponsored religion was, the government had never forced anyone to entirely give up any other beliefs they might hold. Nichiren Buddhism had been the exception rather than the rule, and some members of the government were not at all sure they wanted to support so strict a religion. This debate was actually ended by the Christian missionaries themselves, because it wasn't long before members of other sects, such as Dominicans and Augustinians, arrived on

[49] Anesaki, 241.
[50] Ibid.

the shores of the island. Once the Japanese rulers discovered that there were, in fact, Christian sects just as there were in Buddhism, the religion lost a good deal of its appeal.[51]

There is still one aspect mentioned by Anesaki that bears much consideration, and that is the idea of Christian missionaries leading to increased western trade, especially for trade in western weapons. In many cases, Japanese feudal lords ostensibly welcomed the "Kirishitan" missionaries into their homes to teach Christian doctrine, when in reality they only wanted to use them as an outlet for the arms trade.[52] There were some attempts to combine Buddhist and Christian doctrines in order to make the new religion easier to understand, but for the most part, these failed miserably. Christianity was simply too different and unique, and comparing it to other religions was almost impossible.

Engelbert Kaempfer, who visited Japan just over 100 years after the arrival of Christianity, actually blamed the early missionaries themselves for failing to convert the Japanese populace because they did not do their homework before entering the country. Most of the missionaries knew very little Japanese, if any at all, and their knowledge of local customs and traditions were weak at best. Kaempfer wrote that, "initially, the Christian fathers attracted so little faith and attention among the Japanese that even Xavier, the famous converter of heathens, grew quite weary of the little that could be achieved and left the country. But this was due to [the

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[51] Anesaki, 248

[52] H. Byron Earhart, *Japanese Religion: Unity and Diversity* (Encino, Ca.: Dickenson Publishing Company, 1974), 77-79.

missionaries'] lack of knowledge of Japanese customs, government and language. They read their sermons…to the people from speeches translated by uneducated interpreters written in Roman letters. And they did this pronouncing the words…in such a strange and unintelligible way that mischievous members of their audience could not help but laugh and taunted them."[53] This rather humorous account of the missionaries attempting to speak Japanese not only shows that these foreign priests were unsuccessful in their conversions, but also that they were often ridiculed as well.

The missionaries themselves, however, had quite a different version of events. St. Francis Xavier, in particular, was convinced that the Japanese would make superb Christians, if only they were presented with the right incentive by the right leader. On August 15, 1549, Xavier and his small band of missionaries landed in Kagoshima, the capital of the powerful Satsuma clan of Kyushu, and he set directly to work attempting to convince the local daimyo of the merits of his faith.[54] Open to the idea of a new religion and the possibilities of western trade, the lords agreed, and Xavier attacked the court with a vengeance. He was respected by many of the court officials because he could speak a small amount of Japanese, and pictures of the Virgin Mary made a very deep impression on the court ladies. Xavier had a cheerful disposition that allowed him to make friends easily, and he was very excited at the possibility of success in Satsuma. In his memoirs, he magnanimously wrote: "I really think that among barbarous nations there can be none that has more natural goodness than

[53] Kaempfer, 180.
[54] Herbert Henry Gowen, *Five Foreigners in Japan* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1967), 71.

Japan."[55] A compliment by today's standards? Perhaps not. But to his credit, in Xavier's day, this was high praise indeed.

After baptizing several members of all ranks of the Satsuma clan, including the daimyo himself, Xavier and his men left Kagoshima in September of 1550 and went on a preaching campaign across the nation.[56] In many cases, he reported that they were welcomed like royalty. At the town of Firando, near the coast, he claimed that ship crews were especially open to conversion. In twenty days he baptized the same number of people that it took him a year to convert in Kagoshima.[57] Inspired by this success, he immediately decided to set off for Kyoto to perform his biggest conversion attempt yet: the emperor. It was during this journey that Xavier suffered his most disappointing failures, culminating in a disastrous visit to the imperial palace.

On the road to Kyoto, Xavier stopped at the city of Yamaguchi. This was a very rich area because it contained excellent soil and was located very close to silver mines. It was also known for its excessive vices. Xavier saw this as a Japanese Sodom and Gomorrah and preached passionately to the people to redeem themselves, but to no avail. He procured not even one convert, and left wholly discouraged. He arrived in Kyoto, the city which he referred to as "the Jerusalem of Japan," in February of 1551.[58] Unfortunately for the missionaries, their timing could not have been worse. Fierce fighting had broken out and no one was allowed to enter the

[55] Gowen 76.
[56] Gowen, 77.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Gowen, 80.

imperial city. Guards offered to allow Xavier and his followers entrance if they could provide the "small" token of six hundred French crowns, which, of course, poor missionaries could never afford. He remained for two weeks hoping things would calm down, and also attempted public preaching to the crowds, but, as in Yamaguchi, not one person converted. Xavier reluctantly left the capital city, blaming himself for his failure and hoping that God would accept his efforts as an example of his faithfulness.[59] Xavier continued preaching to common people, sometimes meeting with more success than others, but he eventually left Japan in 1551, heading next to China. He believed that China led the way for Japan in culture and politics, and thus thought that if he could convert a large portion of the Chinese, the Japanese would quickly follow suit.[60] This never happened, but even his limited successes made Francis Xavier a force to be reckoned with in medieval Japan.

In all actuality, even if Xavier had succeeded in converting more commoners, or even more daimyo, Christianity would probably still have suffered the same fate. It was Oda Nobunaga, the most powerful feudal lord of the era, and his successor, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who set the tone for Christian tolerance, or, as in most cases, intolerance. In essence, the religion survived so long as these men wished it to, and when they turned against it, so did the rest of Japan. Nobunaga, like many of his contemporaries, initially welcomed Christianity as a possible alternative to the problems facing the multiple Buddhist sects, as well as an outlet for trade. However, when various missionary sects joined the Jesuits and they began fighting amongst

[59] Gowen, 80.
[60] Gowen, 84.

themselves, Nobunaga was no longer amused by Christianity's uniqueness. He was also vehemently against the idea of a single God and a single religion dominating the entire island. Christianity also promoted equality for all men, which would place a peasant on the same level as the emperor or shogun. This was flatly unacceptable to the Japanese feudal rulers. Clearly, something had to be done, even if it meant losing the opportunity to trade for western guns.

Nobunaga did not live long enough to effectively deal with the Christian problem, but Toyotomi Hideyoshi was eager to pick up where his mentor left off. In 1587, he began a campaign to remove all Christians from Japan, starting with the Catholic missionaries. When this proved ineffective, Hideyoshi crucified 26 Christians, nine of whom were European, in Nagasaki, to make an example of them.[61] Whether or not this actually promoted or hindered Christianity is debatable. Obviously, no one *wants* to be crucified, but martyrdom can often promote a religion. One Jesuit missionary, Father Cornelius Hazart, believed Hideyoshi's scare tactics backfired. When he witnessed the crucifixions, he wrote that the "government chose that Death on purpose for the Christians, because they believed in a Crucified Christ. They also gave them charge to run them through the sides with two long spears, because our Savior was transpierced. And whilst the Heathens sought thus to disgrace the Christians by Crucifying them, they took it as a great glory, dying the same Death as the Son of God had done for their sins."[62] Considering the fact that Christianity

[61] John R. Hinnells, *A New Handbook of Living Religions* (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 483; and Bunce, 22.
[62] Arnoldus Montanos, *Atlas Japannensis*, trans. John Ogilby (London: T. Johnson, 1670), 228.

was banned for over 250 years, it is apparent that Father Hazart's assumption that the crucifixions *promoted* Christianity is not very likely, but it does give an indication of how these martyrs might have felt when going to their deaths.

It is highly unlikely that, even without the disapproval of the leading feudal lords, Christianity would have made a deep impression on the Japanese populace. This is shown by the fact that less than one percent of Japanese are Christians today. During the 16th Century, the few converts the missionaries won were in the upper classes, mainly because Christianity has such a heavy and intricate doctrine that the common people had no hope of understanding it. As Kaempfer noted, Christian scriptures were translated very haphazardly and often made very little sense to an illiterate lower class. It is also doubtful that the majority of the people would have wished to give up their *kami* or buddhas to worship a strange, foreign God that demanded sole obedience.

## Chapter Three: Religion Under the Tokugawa Shogunate

The persecution of Christianity survived the next big change in government, which came with the beginning of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603, when Tokugawa Ieyasu triumphed at the Battle of Sekigahara. It was one of his successors, Tokugawa Iemitsu, who succeeded in formally banishing Christianity and sealing the island into over two centuries of isolation, but a long and bloody road preceded this action. In addition to the complete elimination of Christianity, the shogunate is most known, religiously speaking, for the state sponsorship of Zen Buddhism and a Neo-Confucian

revival that aided in formalizing the feudal government. The era ended with a radical revival of Shinto and the return of the emperor to true power.

The first order of religious business during the new shogunate was to rid the island once and for all of its Christian population. Ieyasu was just as concerned as his predecessors that Christian sectarianism would rip his nation apart, and he was also nervous about a possible coup by the Spanish, who, he had heard, were in the midst of expanding their great empire overseas. He had no wish to become a servant of either the Spanish *rey* or the Catholic pope. In order to prevent this, he continued Hideyoshi's removal of all Christian missionaries from his shores. In 1614, his successor Tokugawa Hidetada passed an official law that all missionaries must leave the country. Any who remained would be executed.[63]

Father Cornelius Hazart, who had witnessed the crucifixions in Nagasaki, was still in the country during Hidetata's reign, and he reported several of the atrocities this shogun committed. On October 17, 1613, he witnessed 20,000 Christians being burned at the stake. What touched him the most was a prayer of encouragement shouted by one of the condemned, a priest by the name of Leo Canyenon, which he transcribed thusly: "Brothers, this day appears the power of Faith in Jesus Christ, whilst we gladly endure the Flames, which can scarce devour our Bodies; but we shall be rais'd out of the Ashes, to be preserv'd at the day of Judgment from everlasting Fire in a most blessed life! Brothers, be constant to the Law of God, and

[63] Earhart, *Japanese Religion*, 79.

account him above your lives and fortunes."[64] He also noted a temple in the city of Facata, where all Christians had to sign a book swearing that they renounced their faith, or they would be immediately killed.[65]

Father Hazart apparently spent some time considering the wretched state of his brethren in Japan, because he sat down and came up with four specific reasons why he believed the shogunate was so cruel toward Christians. One was simply the general fear that all rulers possess at one time or another, and that is the fear of being overthrown. Both the shogun and the daimyo were nervous of the increasing power shown by the European outsiders, and they had no wish to lose their seat of power. The second was a more specific reason, and ties into Ieyasu's fear of a Spanish coup. In 1587, Lord Yamondono, a country gentleman, met with a Spanish captain for a casual conversation. During their discussion, this captain noted that it was normal Spanish policy to send missionaries to a new country as a sort of advance guard to soften up the local populace. Once this was done, the soldiers would follow, and conquest would be a simple matter. This, he proclaimed proudly, was how the Spanish had gained such a large empire. Yamondono immediately carried this news to the emperor, after which Christian persecution increased. This idea was enforced by English and Dutch merchants, who claimed that the Spanish had indeed come to Japan with the intention of conquering the country and placing ultimate rule in the hands of the Pope. The last reason for Christian intolerance noted by Hazart was the fate of Portasius, a Japanese prince. He was a powerful supporter of Christianity, but

[64] Montanos, 221.
[65] Ibid.

he fell into disfavor with the emperor and was burned at the stake in 1612. The idea that a member of the Japanese ruling class could be so taken in by this foreign religion must have been a huge blow to the shogun and daimyo, and no doubt they wanted to prevent it from ever happening again.[66]

Ultimately, Hazard blamed the Spanish for the persecution of the Christians, because they were the ones with the empire that ostensibly needed enlarging. If they had not made the rulers so nervous about a hostile take-over, the shogunate might have been more lenient. As mentioned earlier, Englebart Kaempfer, who had the opportunity to visit the country after the worst of the persecutions were finished, had a different view of the situation. He blamed the missionaries themselves for the failure of Christianity, due to their lack of preparation and their greedy nature. He wrote that, "the impatience of the *padres*, who always personally want to enjoy the fruits of their labor, and having conquered the nation's souls, also strove to conquer its worldly possessions, provoked the ruler of this empire to utmost brutality, and he unleashed such terror against them and the new Christians as had never been described in the pages of the history of mankind. As a result, the religion was completely eliminated, down to the last believer."[67] This greed, combined with the fact that Christianity was simply too different from the more popular religions of Shinto and Buddhism, was, he claimed, the real reason why it did not succeed.

The final blow to Christianity came from the third shogun, Tokugawa Iemitsu, who is perhaps most known for his brutal suppression of Christian rebels in Kyushu

[66] Montanos, 222-223.
[67] Kaempfer, 103.

during the Shimabara Rebellion of 1638. During this battle, 37,000 Christians were slaughtered.[68] In 1639, Iemitsu banned all Portuguese ships from Japan, and Christianity officially became an underground religion.[69] It would not be practiced openly until the Meiji Restoration, over 250 years later.

Along with the ending of Christianity came what is likely the most famous aspect of the Tokugawa shogunate, and that was its isolationist policy, which was directly related to the banning of Christian belief. In 1637, Iemitsu passed the Sankoku, or the Closed Country Edicts, which closed Japanese ports to all ships. It ordered that no Japanese ship was to leave for foreign soil, and any Japanese person currently living abroad would be put to death if they attempted to return. The proclamation also stated that Japanese citizens would be rewarded for any information regarding practicing Christians or Christian priests.[70] According to Kaempfer, who summarized the Edicts, "anybody reporting a priest will be rewarded with four to five hundred pieces of silver; for an ordinary Christian a proportional sum will be paid...Anyone perpetuating the Christian religion, and anybody tainted by this evil name, must be imprisoned."[71] The only foreigners still able to walk on Japanese soil were Dutch traders in Nagasaki, and they were observed quite carefully. With the main threat of both foreign nations and a foreign religion gone, the shogunate could turn its attention to more important, local matters.

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[68] Charles Wheeler Iglehart, *A Century of Protestant Christianity in Japan* (Tokyo and Rutland, Vt.: C.E. Tuttle Company, 1959), 24; and Earhart, *Japanese Religion*, 80.
[69] Earhart, *Japanese Religion*, 80.
[70] H. Byron Earhart, *Religion in the Japanese Experience: Sources and Interpretations* (Encino, Ca.: Dickenson Publishing Company, 1974), 110-111.
[71] Kaempfer, 184.

Buddhism continued to be the state-supported religion, and with the importance of the military and samurai, Zen quickly rose to the top of that list. The shogunate itself, however, had no official preference for any one Buddhist sect, so long as Buddhism itself was promoted. All families were required to register all current members, and later births and deaths, at their local Buddhist temple. The Buddhist priests, who became extensions of the government, were instructed to keep a careful eye on their flocks, not only to look for renegade Christians but also to make sure the populace remained loyal to the shogunate. Ieyasu and his successors were determined to unite the country and stamp out all dissension, and they were equally determined to do this using Buddhism. Under one religion, they hoped to bring peace to the country. Unfortunately, since everyone was forced to follow Buddhist practices, it became more of a ritual obligation than a true religion based on faith. [72] It did provide the desired outcome, which was to unite the populace, but it did so only at the cost of true belief in its doctrines. This is not to say, of course, that there were not plenty of people who honestly believed in Buddhist teachings and gladly welcomed it as the state-sponsored religion, but it did lose something rather special for many people when it was forced on the populace at large. It also prevented the religion from growing or increasing in vitality, as the priests became more and more government officials and less actual religious advocates.[73]

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[72] Anesaki, 260.
[73] Bowker, 102; and Robert Neely Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion: The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957), 51

The Tokugawa shogunate is also known for a revival in ethics and morality, which took the title of Neo-Confucianism. Tokugawa Ieyasu instituted the Shushi School of Confucianism as the government-sponsored school for moral education. He believed Confucian ethics had much in common with Zen Buddhism, as both taught the importance of obeying superiors and giving ultimate loyalty to the government. It taught that rulers were good and just, and therefore deserved unswerving loyalty. This obedience extended on a smaller scale into the home, where women must be subservient to men, the younger to the older, and so on. According to author Robert Bellah, this concept reduced personal affections and loyalties and instead made loyalty a totally impersonal concept. He claimed that, "this loyalty is loyalty to the head of one's collectivity, whoever that person may be. It is loyalty to a status rather than to a person."[74]

This idea of loyalty and filial piety was a huge boon to the feudal government, which was based, like Confucianism, on an unequal society. It ensured loyalty from subordinates because they were taught that it was ethical and moral for them to obey. Only in this way could they live a good life.[75] Byron Earhart perhaps said it best when he noted that, "the Confucian notions of social harmony and respect for one's superiors were translated to mean that the Japanese people should unite in unquestioning loyalty to the political state and its aims."[76] This loyalty was very influential in preserving national harmony. Everyone had their own individual duties

[74] Bellah, 13.
[75] Anesaki, 260-263.
[76] Earhart, *Religion in the Japanese Experience*, 69.

but were working toward the same goals and were subservient to the same person. It also meant that a person could kill two birds with one stone, meaning that achieving success in religious life was the same as achieving success in the material world. In Pure Land Buddhism, behaving morally and working hard was a sign of thanks to Amida Buddha for his blessings and protection. It was a form of proclaiming one's faith. In Zen, loyalty and discipline were key. Therefore, there was no split in the two paths of the physical and spiritual worlds, which made them easier to follow.[77]

This combination of Buddhism and Confucianism led to the creation of Bushido, the famous warrior code of the samurai that promoted extreme loyalty and self-discipline, often through the use of meditation. The military was held in extremely high esteem during the Tokugawa shogunate, and the samurai were at the top of that group. They were therefore charged with the responsibility of setting the best example to all people of how to live a moral and ethical life. Loyalty to one's superiors was seen as both a moral and spiritual duty. Bushido provided rules of conduct for absolutely every action one took. Greetings, farewells, sword handling, and even suicide rituals were strictly outlined. Death was accepted without regret so long as it came in performing a service to one's lord. Individual desires were reduced to almost nothing. Luxury was abhorred and moderation was key. One must buy simple things, wear plain clothing, drink sparingly, and work hard. This code was a warrior's life, and one would rather die than go against it.[78]

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[77] Bellah, 118.
[78] Anesaki, 263-264; and Nurkariya, 90-98.

These strict behavioral codes extended to all levels of society. Every action one took was governed by one's position in the feudal pyramid. Frugality, hard work and moderation were emphasized along with absolute loyalty. According to Masaharu Anesaki, "the details of abode, food and dress were fixed according to the classes and occupations; the manners of speech, salutation, walking and sitting, and many other things were rigidly prescribed."[79] This behavioral code led to a stable economy. Confucian scholars maintained that, while living simply was important, there was also a minimum standard of living that had to be met, because those in extreme poverty could not be expected to behave morally and rationally. This would lead to rebellions. The shogunate therefore encouraged increased rice planting and the introduction of new plants, including sugar and ginseng. Tax breaks were given to those who assisted in these plantings.[80] The government also at one point confiscated whole estates from rich merchants who were living too luxuriously. This was done to prevent this class from growing too powerful, but also to promote the benefits of working for one's money. Labor was not seen as a black mark against one's station, but was rather a positive symbol of giving back to the community, while greed was looked down upon as detrimental to society and was a cardinal sin in Buddhism. This idea of pride in one's work gave the impression that even though society was stratified and unequal, there was no shame in being a laborer. It was simply one of many jobs that had to be performed in order to make a good and moral society. The

[79] Anesaki, 294.
[80] Bellah, 111.

greater shame lay in materialism and working not for the benefit of society and as a form of thanks to the Buddha, but for personal profit and greed.[81]

Not even during the height of the imperial court had everyone's lives been so specifically dictated. The Tokugawa feudal system was by far the most orderly government Japan had known, and it owed its success not just to a strong ruling class, but to the ethics and morals provided by a unified religion and moral code. Buddhism provided the means to end all religious strife, and Confucianism convinced the people that loyalty and obedience to superiors was the only path to a moral and ethical life. The Tokugawa shogunate is probably the best example of the unity between Japanese government and religion. Only one thing could shatter such a perfect system – the rise of an even more powerful religion. This came in the form of what is now known as Restoration Shinto.

Despite governmental support of Buddhism as the official Japanese religion, folk Shinto never truly died. It was especially popular in the backcountries, as it had always been, where people far enough away from the prying eyes of the central government could practice their traditions in peace. And in any event, so long as the people paid lip service to Buddhism and did not practice Christianity, the shogunate didn't care what the people did. During his visit to Japan, Englebert Kaempfer noted the importance many people still put in old Shinto traditions. "As among all other Asian nations and pagans," he noted, "in this country also freedom of worship has

[81] Bellah, 112.

always been permitted, as long as it does not obstruct secular government."[82] While Christianity clearly presented a threat to the ruling class, Shinto did not claim that same stigma. In fact, although it was not the most popular religion by far, Kaempfer believed that Shinto was regarded with the highest amount of respect and esteem.[83] As always, it complimented Buddhism well, with its emphasis on worldly assistance from local *kami*, while Buddhism focused on life after death. Kaempfer appeared quite curious about these local gods to whom men and women prayed for protection, and noted that various natural formations, such as waterfalls and hills, were also worshiped as gods. He pointed out that Shinto shrines were always located in beautiful spots in the middle of unblemished nature, far away from crowded communities and towns. The purity of the area surrounding the shrine was reflected in the emphasis on the physical and mental purity of the parishioners. Spiritual purity was attained by obeying secular laws and living a moral life, and physical purity must be maintained by regular washing. A person exposed to blood, for example, had to wait a minimum of seven days before approaching a shrine.[84] Perhaps one of the best legacies Kaempfer was able to pass along was a detailed description of a normal Shinto ritual during this era:

> "Ordinary devotion is performed in the following way: The worshiper cleanses his body thoroughly, dresses in clean clothing according to what he can afford, and puts a kamishimono, a dress of honor...on top. He then goes to that part of the temple compound where there is a stone water basin, draws some water with a ladle placed nearby, and using liberal amounts of water washes his hands to his heart's content. With modest gestures and downcast eyes he moves on to the raised floor or the veranda in front of the lattice grill of the locked-up temple, facing the mirror inside.

[82] Kaempfer, 103.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Kaempfer, 106-110.

> Kneeling, he bends his head slowly and humbly to the floor and lifts it up again, or, still kneeling, says a little prayer of his own composition about his personal concerns...Then he throws a few coins down through the lattice as a sacrifice or donation...and with three blows sounds the bell hanging in front of the temple to cheer up the god with the tone, a sound that all gods love. Then the worshiper goes his way, spending the rest of the day walking, feasting, and enjoying all sorts of entertainment."[85]

Kaempfer also noted that many Shinto holy days were still celebrated with vigor during the shogunate. There were five annual festivals, which were held on what were considered to be the unluckiest days of the year. The most important of these was, and still is, the New Year. Celebrations were performed to pay tribute to the *kami* and distract them in the hopes of avoiding bad luck. There were also three *reibi*, or visiting days, per month, when people went to local shrines to worship their ancestors and celebrate with family and friends to wish them good fortune.[86] In addition, he reported that several pilgrimages were performed by Shintoists, the most important being a journey to Ise to honor Amaterasu. This pilgrimage was done to cleanse the soul and assure one of a happy afterlife.[87]

Based on Kaempfer's observations, it is quite clear that Shinto was still alive and well during the Tokugawa shogunate. He also noted the presence of dual Shinto and Buddhism, which survived from medieval times and associated Shinto *kami* with Buddhist gods. However, an even more important branch of Shinto was being created toward the end of the shogunate, one that would, like Christianity, threaten the authority of the feudal lords. This time, however, the religion was created as an open challenge against the shogun.

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[85] Kaempfer, 111.
[86] Kaempfer, 111-112.
[87] Kaempfer, 118.

What came to be known as Restoration or Revival Shinto had its roots in Neo-Confucianism, the ethical and moral code that the shogunate promoted so heavily. It was created under the umbrella of the Mito School by men who promoted the idea of a "pure Japan" that had no emphasis on anything foreign, including Buddhism. Shinto, as the only true indigenous religion, was the answer.[88] The Mito School, named for a powerful daimyo family, was founded by Tokugawa Mitsukuni, and became an intensely nationalist school. Its supporters focused on the Confucist idea of filial piety, but instead of conferring ultimate loyalty on the shogun, they took it one step further and declared the emperor to be the true recipient of ultimate fealty. He was seen as the father of the entire nation. Much research was done on the Kojiki and Nihongi, which emphasized the divine ancestry of the emperor and his family. Loyalty to him, followers claimed, equaled direct loyalty to the gods, and they made the claim that all true Japanese people owed their ultimate loyalty to the emperor. Those who did not were not real Japanese.[89]

A similar group, members of the Kokugaku School (National Learning Movement), also focused on the revival of Japanese history, literature and religion. They performed even more intense research on the Kojiki and Nihongi, and agreed that the emperor must be placed at the head of the country once more. Their hatred of all things foreign extended even further than the Mito School's, in that they refused to write in Chinese kanji, the style of the highly educated classes, and wrote only in phonetic Japanese. Their slogan of *sonno kokutai*, reverence of the emperor by the

[88] Bowker, 166.
[89] Bellah, 105.

national body, would become a rallying cry when the black ships of Matthew Perry were seen off the coast of the island.[90] One of the greatest Kokugaku scholars was Motoori Norinaga, who was very influential in forming the school. His main goal was to combine the Japanese identity with Shinto, and he wanted to get away from Chinese influence, which he felt was stifling Japan.[91]

It is interesting that these men who were so defiantly against the use of outside religion and writing would ultimately gain their biggest triumph by combining Shinto with Confucianism, a Chinese invention. Research into old mythological texts brought the idea of the god-like emperor back into the public eye, but only through the use of Confucianism's ideal of filial piety did the movement truly succeed. Loyalty and obedience had been drilled into the minds of the Japanese people, but loyalty to whom? Ultimate loyalty, the men and women of Mito and Kokugaku explained, lay not with the shogun, who was, after all, only a mere mortal, but with the direct descendent of gods, the emperor. Seen in this light, it was difficult to argue against the logic of the nationalist schools, and so the shogunate was brought to a close. The arrival of Matthew Perry and the forcible opening of the ports to foreign trade ended Japan's 250-year isolation, but by that point, the Tokugawa shogunate was already gasping its final breaths. Peasant revolts due to starvation and high taxes were running rampant throughout the land. Even more daunting was the threat of samurai rebellion. Many samurai were living in extreme poverty, or were even homeless, and this was a large wound to their pride. Samurai were supposed to be the

[90] Bellah, 99.
[91] Littleton, 49.

elite of the shogun's military, the soldiers to whom all looked as shining examples of morality and honor. In reality, they had high statue in name only. Many of them were extremely poor. Disenchanted samurai, called *shishi*, eventually joined with the Mito and Kokugaku schools to rebel against the shogun and his army in favor of the emperor. By the time Matthew Perry weighed anchor at Urada, a town to the west of Edo, the Tokugawa Era had almost totally fallen apart. The shogun and his military had met their match, not in foreign guns and treaties, but in the person of their own emperor. Religion, once again, had brought about the end of an era and paved the way for the beginning of a new one.

Revival Shinto was a very nationalistic religion at heart. It may have had a strong Confucian backing, but the majority of its ideals focused on a pure and unblemished Japan that was not sullied by the outside world and its effects. Japan, the scholars declared, was a special country blessed by the gods through their imperial descendants, and it should be treated as such. This nationalism coalesced during the early stages of the Meiji Restoration, which officially began in 1868, and continued to grow until the end of World War II, when Japanese divine illusions were forcibly shattered.

## Chapter Four: The Meiji Restoration and State Religion

The Meiji Isshin, which translates to either restoration or renovation, contained two fundamental changes. The first was the unification of Japan under the new imperial government of the Emperor Meiji, and the second was the adaptation of

a new life in the global world, which came with the end of seclusion.[92] This brought to an end the Tokugawa feudal system and the strict class hierarchy that had governed the nation for over two centuries. While the core Confucian beliefs of the old era remained basically the same, that of ultimate loyalty resting with the state (in this case, in the person of the emperor) and with individual wants and needs taking a back seat to the needs of the country, other things became radically different.

Change in the governmental structure of course led to a change in religion. Since Shinto had brought the nation into this new era, it was Shinto that became the state-supported religion. Buddhism, which was seen as an archaic and foreign religion, as well as the religion of the defeated shogunate, was forcibly suppressed. Old Buddhist temples were "purified" and converted into Shinto shrines, and the lands of the Buddhist clergy were re-claimed by the new government.[93] Without the support of the state, Buddhism died a swift but brief death.

Another large change in religion came about in 1858, when, according to the treaty negotiated between the United States and Japan, the imperial government lifted the ban on Christianity. When this happened, over 20,000 underground Christians came out of hiding.[94] For a short time it seemed as though this new freedom would lead to a sharp increase in the practice of Christianity, but the chance was quickly lost, and today less than one percent of Japanese citizens are Christians.

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[92] Anesaki, 329.
[93] Anesaki, 334.
[94] Morioka, 117.

One of the main reasons for the swift failure of both Buddhism and Christianity during the beginning of the Meiji Restoration was due to the installation of Shinto as the state religion. Within the first month of the new era, the government created the Jingi-kan, or the Department of Shinto.[95] All Shinto priests had to be approved through this department, and its members controlled all aspects of the maintenance of the shrines, as well as gave specific orders on how rituals were to be performed. Everyone was required to register at their local Shinto shrine, much as they had been ordered to do at Buddhist temples under the Tokugawa shoguns. Similarly, Shinto increasingly became a tool of the government, with its priests merely extensions of government officials. It was obvious Shinto was heading down the same path Buddhism had so recently trod.

While Christianity remained in the background, members of the imperial government soon discovered that they could not repress Buddhism in the same manner. Too many people protested the take-over of Buddhist shrines, and it became clear that a good portion of the people truly believed in a combination of both Shinto and Buddhism. To lessen the wounds inflicted by the state support of Shinto, government leaders abolished the Jingi-kan in 1871, and the following year they created the Kyoby-sho, the Religious Ministry, which took control of both Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples. In this way, Buddhism would be available to the people but still under the control of the government.[96]

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[95] Bunce, 27.
[96] Bunce, 28.

Unfortunately for the government, this combination did not last long, either. The US-Japanese treaty had promised freedom of religion, and the Japanese people believed this meant not only the freedom to worship as one pleased, but also freedom of religion from the state. Being able to practice whatever religion they wanted was a good start, but with government officials making the rules as to how and where those religions could be practiced, freedom did not feel so free after all. In a rather unprecedented move, the Japanese government bowed to the wishes of the people and made what could possibly be considered the most important alteration to religion the country had ever, and would ever, see.

In 1882, the government split Shinto into two sects. The first is known as either Shrine Shinto (Jinja Shinto) or State Shinto (Kokka Shinto). This religion continued to be supported and controlled by the imperial government, and became the official state religion. The second is known as Sectarian Shinto (Shuha Shinto), which was considered to be a private religion supported by individual believers and communities, and had no connection with the government.[97] Sectarian Shinto is the Shinto now practiced in Japan, and it had its roots in traditional folk Shinto. It focused on purification, rituals, prayers, and offerings to the *kami* for a happy and profitable life. It was considered to be on the same level as Buddhism and Christianity, and its members were left alone to perform their own private ceremonies. State Shinto, on the other hand, became a "non-religious" religion. It connected Shinto to the nation and focused on the shrines, which were no longer

[97] Daniel Clarence Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism: A Study of Present-Day Trends in Japanese Religiuons* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corporation, 1963), 28.

considered to be purely religious. There was no further preaching or conversion attempts at shrines, and they were instead used for festivals or as places to pray for the well-being of the nation and its leaders. State Shinto focused on the connection between the divine *kami* and the imperial family, emphasizing that the emperor deserved loyalty because he was the descendant of the gods. Loyalty to him and to the nation was a religious duty. This created an incredibly intense nationalism.

On February 11, 1889, the Japanese government passed a new Constitution. Article I makes the following claim: "The Empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal," and Article III states: "The Emperor is sacred and inviolable."[98] The divine ancestry and supreme authority of the emperor was thus proclaimed right up front. Article 28, which dealt with religion, reads thusly: "Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief."[99] This was obviously not the clearest definition of religious freedom ever granted, but it did have one very important consequence. The Japanese people were fiercely loyal to their government officials, and if they claimed that the people were enjoying freedom of religion, than it must be true. This really drove home the idea that State Shinto was not a true religion. If it was, and everyone was required to believe in it, then the Constitution would be false, and that was simply unthinkable. Reverence to the emperor therefore became a truly non-religious religion, and the duty of all Japanese citizens. If they wanted to worship privately at a Buddhist temple

[98] Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan*, 77.
[99] Bunce, 33.

or a Shinto altar, that was perfectly fine, so long as it did not get in the way of the growing nationalism that was sweeping the country.

State Shinto, since it was officially supported by the government, was the set of beliefs and values that were taught in public schools. Since it was not considered to be an actual religion, it did not go against the idea of the separation of church and state. In 1890, the government forbade the teaching of religion in all schools and ordered that teachers should instead encourage reverence of the emperor.[100] This law came in the form of the Imperial Rescript on Education, published October 30, 1890. According to Byron Earhart, "the content [of the Rescript] is rather simple: the source of education is the realization that Japan is a sacred empire handed down by the imperial line and to which all are loyal and obedient."[101] A combination of State Shinto, which focused on the divine ancestry of the emperor, and the filial piety and absolute loyalty of Confucianism, dominated the document, and can be seen in this excerpt:

> "Ye, Our Subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual facilities and perfect moral powers; furthermore, advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; Should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the state, and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and Earth. So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers."[102]

[100] Bunce, 31.
[101] Earhart, *Religion in the Japanese Experience*, 203-4.
[102] Reader, *Japanese Religions*, 171.

Schools became sites of an almost fanatical emperor worship. A portrait of his imperial majesty was required to be hung in every school, and students had to bow to it whenever they walked by.[103]

According to author Daniel Clarence Holtom, "the modern Japanese state was deliberately established on a foundation which unified government and religion."[104] This statement was made in reference to the Meiji Restoration and State Shinto, which focused on the unity of government and religion through the divine emperor. Government officials could claim that this was not a true religion, but in reality it was. The emperor was worshiped as a god. Any shrine that worshiped Amaterasu had an altar for the emperor. The Sun Goddess and the imperial leader were seen as one and the same. Teachers in primary schools all the way through universities emphasized the divine ancestry of their ruler, and all students were encouraged to worship them together. According to Daniel Holtom, "at its heart was a vital theory of state, a conception of a united nation ruled over eternally by an unbroken line of emperors, divinely descended from the great *kami* of the Age of the Gods."[105] If this is not the "service and worship of God or the supernatural," or the "institutionalized system of religious attitudes" that Mirriam-Webster mentioned, then what is? No matter how this was explained as a sign of nationalism and not religion, it *was* a religion, and it its fanaticism only grew as time went on.

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[103] Earhart, *Religion in the Japanese Experience*, 203.
[104] Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, 5.
[105] Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan*, 54.

State Shinto became the call word of patriotism. Worshiping the emperor, praying at shrines, and believing in the sanctity of the Land of the Gods were not considered religious activities, because they did not aid the individual soul. Instead, they assured the unity and peace of the nation. This was the critical difference, and it is at this point that pure religion was seen as a specifically personal practice, and we get the division mentioned in the beginning of this paper between a personalized set of beliefs based on faith and an institutionalized set of values dictated by the government. What aided the individual was religion, and what aided the state was not. These beliefs continued into the Taisho Period (1912-1926) and the beginning of the Showa Period (1926-1989), during which State Shinto would meet its demise at the hands of the allied troops.[106]

One of the results of State Shinto and the patriotic feelings it inspired was an increase in militarism. In 1904, Japan went to war with Russia, and the victory of this small island nation over one of the largest and most powerful countries in the world increased Japanese prestige both at home and abroad. The Land of the Gods had truly been blessed above all others, government leaders cried, and here was the proof! Only with divine support could the nation become so powerful. Nationalism and patriotism only increased during World War I, as the military again stretched their legs to see what else they could accomplish. The closer the nation came to the second world war, the more intense these nationalistic feelings became. An ethics textbook printed in the early 1930's proclaimed Japanese superiority for all students to see:

[106] Bowker, 170-172.

> "There are many countries in the world, but there is no other which, like our empire of Great Japan, has over it an Emperor of one and the same dynasty throughout the ages, where in the Imperial Family and the people of the nation are one body. We who are born in such a precious country, who have over us such an august Imperial Family, and who, again, are the descendants of subjects who have bequeathed such beautiful customs, must become splendid Japanese and do our utmost for our empire."[107]

War with China in 1931 brought about yet another change in religion, and that was the suppression of the separation of church and state. The Religious Bodies Law put absolute control of all religion back under the auspices of the government. All sects had to register with the Minister of Education, and government approval had to be given before new temples or churches could be built.[108] Government officials justified this by claiming that they would not attempt to control religious activity, but instead wanted to ensure that the "national spirit" was being sufficiently invigorated.[109] Now, more than ever, everyone needed to throw their support in with the emperor and the nation. All Shinto shrines were used as places to pray for the success of the war effort and promote nationalism. The government created the "Spiritual Mobilization Movement," which was comprised of organizations that made gift boxes to send to the Japanese troops. They sent supplies, wrote encouraging letters, and even cared for family members left behind by soldiers.[110] In 1937, the government published the *Kokutai no Hongi*, or the Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan. According to author Charles Iglehart, this document was

[107] Reader, *Japanese Religions*, 172.
[108] Bunce, 34.
[109] Bunce, 35.
[110] Bunce, 38.

"intended to gain unqualified support for the military goals of the state which constituted a world power."[111]

When World War II began, patriotic nationalism and the cult of the emperor only increased. Visiting shrines and offering prayers for the victory of the Japanese forces were considered patriotic duties. All schools had portraits of Hirohito that were guarded 24 hours a day by a rotating staff. These guards were instructed to protect the pictures with their lives, because they were considered to be just as important as the emperor himself, and must be given the same respect.[112] Japanese citizens loved being called the emperor's children, and he was considered to be always in the right, since all his laws were actually orders passed down to him through the will of the *kami*. If something went wrong, it was because his subordinates had either disobeyed him or misunderstood him, and they were instructed to take full responsibility for their mistakes. School teachers informed their students that being a good citizen meant believing in the Japanese creation myths and showing absolute reverence for the divine emperor.[113] This was to be accomplished by a total rejection of western individualism and a return to the ideals of filial piety toward the emperor. For civilians, this meant offering prayers and glorifying the emperor. For soldiers, this meant the unselfish offering of one's life in service to the god-emperor. The idea of the emperor as a *kami* in his own right was extended to include the power of removal of sins. Soldiers were told that if they died an honorable death in service to their

[111] Iglehart, 205.
[112] Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, 180.
[113] Earhart, *Religion in the Japanese Experience*, 27.

country, the emperor would assure them a place in paradise by washing away all their past misdeeds. This, obviously, was a very appealing prospect. Not even religious scholars dared question the powers of the emperor, and the government took great pains to keep all regulations and instructions very simple so that no one could claim a misunderstanding.

William Bunce elegantly summarized the religious results of World War II in claiming that, "for the Japanese people in general...the war itself was a religious experience. The nation was stirred up to a state of fanatical zeal based on a sense of national destiny centering in the divine nature of the emperor and the sacred 'national structure.'"[114] Winning the war had as much, and perhaps more, to do with religion than it did with politics. Japan was unique. Only her people could claim leadership by a god. Japan *could not* be defeated, so long as the entire nation banded together to ask the *kami* for assistance.

But what happened to those people whose religions were not first and foremost concerned with State Shinto – the Buddhists and the Christians? Buddhists attempted to encourage their own kind of nationalism and unity, going all the way back to Shotoku's constitution, which promoted national unity under Buddhism. When this did not succeed, they changed their message to one of warning. Buddhists promoted a state ruled by wise, just and moral men concerned with the lives of their subjects, but they also claimed that a nation that paid no attention to salvation in the afterlife was sure to self-destruct. Since Shinto very rarely looked beyond the here

[114] Bunce, 42.

and now, Buddhists were perhaps quite right to be worried. Despite these issues, even the most ardent Buddhists eventually bowed to the will of State Shinto during the height of the war. Buddhism is by its very nature a totally pacifist religion, with reverence for all forms of life. How, then, did it accommodate itself to promoting the war effort? According to Daniel Holtom, "if...Buddhism has never declared a holy war, it has nonetheless proclaimed all Japanese wars holy. Japanese Buddhism today [late 1940's] accepts practically without qualification the principle that if the nation goes to war, by that very fact the war is sanctified; it becomes a crusade for peace and good will on earth."[115] Peace, being the ultimate goal of mankind, was thus seen as something worth fighting and dying for. If the god-emperor willed this fight to be just, then it must be so. In this way, the peace-loving Buddhists found themselves in the State Shinto camp.

Christianity did not fare quite as well as Buddhism. Even without directly supporting the war, the worst a Buddhist could be called was unpatriotic. At the very least, there was nothing within Buddhist doctrine that conflicted with State Shinto precepts. This was not the case with Christianity, which came to be seen as an outright threat to patriotic nationalism. The idea of worshiping a god-emperor was anathema to the firmly monotheistic Christians. Christianity is also a very individualistic religion, focused on the salvation of personal souls. This had the potential to thwart the national belief in the sacrifice of the individual for the greater good of society. It also claimed that all men were created equal, which put the divine

[115] Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, 148.

emperor on the same level as a common person. This was unacceptable to the nationalistic Japanese. How, then, were the two ideals to be reconciled? Christians at first tried to equate Amaterasu with their God as the one true creator, and through this they could look on the emperor as a descendant of God and endowed with some of His powers, but this never quite worked out. In the end, like Buddhists, the Christians were forced to accommodate to State Shinto. They accepted the fact that worshiping at shrines and praying for military victories were non-religious activities and therefore did not violate their monotheistic faith. They even consented to bow before the emperor, though more than likely they did so by convincing themselves they were only paying tribute to a secular ruler, not the incarnation of a god.[116]

It is ironic that only by relinquishing its religious classification did Shinto finally reclaim its place as the national belief system of Japan. What came to be known as Sectarian Shinto would continue to be an important religion after the end of the war, but until that point, only a non-religious Shinto could reign supreme.

In the end, the Land of the Gods suffered the ultimate defeat at the hands of the allied nations and their latest invention, the atomic bomb. The Japanese people lost much more than the war, however. Under the command of Douglas MacArthur, the allied forces systematically demolished State Shinto from the bottom up, beginning with the emperor. In the beginning, there was much debate among the allies as to whether or not the Japanese should be allowed to keep their emperor at all. His mere presence might be enough to incite a revolt. However, MacArthur and

[116] Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, 100.

several other members of the government convinced the allies that the emperor had to remain. He *was* Japan, and without him, MacArthur feared that total chaos would ensue. The emperor was so much a part of everyday life for the Japanese that to be without him was unthinkable for the nation. In the end, Hirohito was allowed to remain as emperor, but in exchange he was forced to renounce his divinity and admit to being a mere mortal. As of January, 1946, the god-emperor was no more.[117] He was no longer an idol to be worshiped, and government officials could not claim that his laws came from a divine messenger. With its central figure removed from glory, State Shinto lost all of its power. Only by bringing this non-religious religion to its knees could the allied occupational government be assured that no mass revival of nationalism and patriotism would occur. The allies ordered a total separation of church and state. No longer could school teachers preach to their students the importance of worshiping the emperor, nor could shrines be used as sites of patriotic fervor. All of this must end.

On December 15, 1945, the allied forces issued a formal prohibition of State Shinto. An excerpt reads as follows: "The sponsorship, support...and dissemination of Shinto by Japanese...governments...are prohibited and will cease immediately. All financial support from public funds and all official affiliation with Shinto and Shinto shrines are prohibited and will cease immediately."[118] Along with the end of State Shinto came the freedom of a western ideal that had been long suppressed, that of the

[117] Minrou Kiyota, "Buddhism in Postwar Japan: A Critical Survey," *Monumenta Nipponica* 24, no. ½ (Summer 1969), 115.
[118] Holtom, *Modern Japan and Shinto Nationalism*, 175.

importance of individuality. No longer did the Japanese people have to submit to the will of their deified emperor or the glorious state. Perhaps now, for the first time in centuries, they could focus on their own personal needs and desires.

Shinto as a religion had suffered much under the new imperial reign. Like Buddhism under the shoguns, it had lost its vitality and had ceased to grow. Followers of Sectarian Shinto had maintained the old folk traditions of their ancestors, but nothing new had evolved. Everything remained stagnant. Since this was now the only version of Shinto left, it was time the priests and clergy brought the religion up to date.

For the first time, the Japanese lived in a nation that had true, uninhibited freedom of religion. That power was immense, and sometimes quite frightening. Ever since prehistoric times, the Japanese drew their identity from their myth-histories, and firmly believed that they were blessed and protected by the *kami* through their imperial sovereign, the direct descendant of the Sun Goddess. Even when Buddhism and Confucianism dominated the religious scene, this idea was always in the back of everyone's minds. Never before had it been challenged. With this belief literally ripped away from them after World War II, one very difficult question remained: If the Japanese were not the descendants of the *kami*, then who were they?

Picking up the tattered remains of an identity is never easy, and it was doubly difficult for the Japanese, who were trying not only to find a new identity, but who at the same time wanted to disassociate themselves from the western world. Whoever they were, they wanted to remain unique, and not just get absorbed into the rest of the

world. Their identity is still being formulated even today, and this may well continue for several more decades or even centuries. After all, they have several millennia worth of heritage to re-create. It seems only logical that it would take a long time to formulate a new cultural identity.

## Chapter Five: New Religions and Old Beliefs

Freedom can be very difficult, especially for those who have not known freedom for most of their lives, if at all. The Japanese people were so used to their rulers telling them what to believe that, when it came time to decide for themselves, many were just plain stumped. This was the greatest religious and political change ever to occur on the island, and it showed. A survey in 1946, after the allied government revoked the emperor's divinity, showed that only 39.3 percent of the people believed in some form of religion,[119] compared to only a year previously, when the entire nation had gathered behind the imperial banner of the Rising Sun. In a way, this made sense. The state religion was no longer even a choice for people, and traditional Shinto and Buddhism had grown stagnant and old. It would take time before they could be altered and made useful in the 20th Century. What was needed, then, was a third choice. This came in the form of what is today known as the New Religions, a large group of independent faith organizations that emerged following World War II.

[119] Kiyota, 115-116.

*Shinko shusyo*, or New Religions, contrasted sharply with established religions, or *kisei shukyo.*[120] While some New Religions have roots in the years before or during World War II, they all came into their own during the "rush hour of the gods" following the war.[121] Probably the main reason why New Religions became so popular is because they did what the traditional religions did not, and that was help people deal with everyday life in the modern world. They were extremely individualistic religions, and they promised solutions to common problems plaguing many people. Some were broad issues, such as poverty and physical and mental illnesses, and others catered to specific needs, such as helping a student pass an entrance exam. Most people gained some immediate benefit from joining the religion, usually in the curing of an illness or financial problem. The majority of these religions lacked specific doctrines, but instead instructed followers to live good and moral lives and to participate fully in religious events. Often, gaining more converts was a key test of spiritual worth. This could be done by sharing personal stories of the miracles worked by the leaders of the sect, or just general stories about how the religion improved their lives. Entrance into New Religions was always a very simple task, and since there were no complex ceremonies or rituals to learn, new members never felt out of place. According to author Minoru Kiyota, "the new sects can ease the pain of living for the masses, who, by and large, are suffering from an acute case of 'cultural lag,' for although they are exposed to modern civilization...their inner

[120] Kiyota, 119.
[121] Kiyota, 121.

world remains substantially that of feudal Japan."[122] Until the traditional religions found a way to assist their individual followers with their day-to-day problems, the New Religions had a huge advantage.

Kiyota claims that the emergence of the New Religions had three basic causes: "The social upheaval, economic insecurity and political confusion which caused a political and spiritual vacuum; reaction against and loss of confidence in the established religion and the moral and ethical values enunciated in the Imperial Rescript on Education; and the freedom of religion and self-expression guaranteed by the new Constitution."[123] In a way, people felt very betrayed by the traditional religions. Old priests and officials had apparently been lying for thousands of years, telling the people that they were being ruled by a god. The New Religions were very simple, and were free of the stiff rituals and complex scriptures that plagued Shinto and Buddhism. With these religions, the people could start fresh and not have to worry about the lies of the past.

Perhaps the biggest change brought about by the New Religions was a renewed vigor and vitality. Followers of these new sects truly believed in them and in the powers of their founders. They were not forced to participate in rituals just for the sake of doing so. It was the beginning of true belief coming back into Japan after centuries of dry and formalized ritualistic practices. For the first time, freedom of religion meant just that. People took part in ceremonies only because they wanted to and because they believed in them. In 1951, there were 720 registered groups that

[122] Kiyota, 122.
[123] Kiyota, 132.

called themselves New Religions.[124] It is obvious that the Japanese people recognized the religious void they now had, and moved very quickly to eliminate it. Here was a way to start fresh and find new ways to express one's faith.

One thing that did not disappear, however, was the idea of having a divine religious leader. The founders of New Religions were often looked upon as mystics who, at the very least, had some sort of healing power, or claimed to be in contact with a god who preached his doctrine through dreams or possession. Most, if not all, of the founders of the New Religions were charismatic individuals who came from the same class as their followers. This meant there was no separation of station, as there was between the priestly class and their parishioners in traditional religions. The founders and their preachers spoke at a level anyone could understand, and offered simple solutions to everyday problems. According to Ian Reader, "most Japanese new religions have developed around a powerful individual leader who believes him or herself to have received a special revelation from a god or to have found a special message of truth within the Buddhist scriptures. Many claim to be able to heal people."[125] Around 50 percent of these founders were women, which would be unheard of in a traditional Shinto or Buddhist sect.[126] Since these religions had no formalized rules or scriptures, there was nothing to stop women from becoming spiritual leaders. Whatever their gender, these leaders all preached the same basic message, that happiness could be achieved if one put his or her full belief into the

[124] Reader, *Japanese Religions*, 39.
[125] Reader, *Japanese Religions*, 122.
[126] Richard K. Beardsley and John Whitney Hall, *Twelve Doors to Japan* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965), 342.

religion of choice. Unhappiness was seen as a mark of mental and/or spiritual instability, and changing to a new, better religion would combat this. Prayer was always emphasized, along with group meetings or therapy sessions to assist with individual problems. All leaders of the New Religions were extremely charismatic and had a knack for gaining many converts in a very short time. Reader added that all New Religions "speak to the Japanese on a level that they can readily understand, and...provide[s] them with teachings and religious techniques that enable them to deal with the problems they face in life and that help them live a better and happier life."[127] These leaders not only assisted their followers in living out their chosen faith, but also, like the Tokugawa samurai, endeavored to set the best example possible. As author Baiyu Watanabe pointed out, "more than anything else the example of someone who lives according to his convictions appeals to the average Japanese."[128] In an era where the Japanese people were just beginning to reacquaint themselves with the idea that religion was more than just ceremony, it was indeed impressive to witness so many men and women so fervently devoted to their new faith.

The vast majority of the New Religions had their basis in either Shinto or Buddhism, meaning that their primary doctrine generally came from a piece of scripture or an ideal held by the traditional religion. This scripture or ideal was then transformed into something that was useful in the modern age, and then combined with special attention given to individual members of the faith. New Religions were

[127] Reader, *Japanese Religions*, 126.
[128] Baiyu Watanabe, "Modern Japanese Religions – Their Success Explained," *Monumenta Nipponica* 13, no. ½ (April-June 1957), 162.

hardly ever about saving souls or discussing the afterlife, but were instead useful tips on how to lead a happy, healthy and prosperous life today. There was no aestheticism, no complicated scriptures, and very few, if any, rituals to perform. The basic idea was to assist people in living out the best life possible. For a country riddled with worries about formal religion, this was a perfect halfway point. It allowed the people to exercise their faith in some kind of higher deity, while at the same time did not bog them down with rituals and scriptures. Instead, the followers gained valuable information on how to survive happily in the here and now. Author John Hinnells may have put it best when he claimed, "the principal reason why people join the new religious organizations is to find help with health, marital, financial and other problems...In general, however, one can perceive a tendency to affirm that health, wealth and happiness can be obtained if a person will only have implicit faith in the leader, and in the divine reality he or she represents, participate wholeheartedly in the activities of the organization, and win other [converts] by holding out the promise of the help available through this support fellowship."[129]

New Religions were aided in their growth with the advent of increasing urbanization. As many people, especially of the younger generation, moved away from their homes and into new city dwellings, they broke ties with their traditional religious sects and local gods. New ties, often to New Religions, were then made once they became settled in their new urban life.[130]

[129] Hinnells, 500.
[130] Norbeck, 39.

It is possible that some might see New Religions as not religions at all, but more like self-help groups or mystical communities. Many Japanese religious scholars declared these religions to be beneath their notice. However, if we return to our definition of religion, these groups can indeed be defined as people ardently committed to a system of beliefs based on faith, and seen in this light, they are very much religions.

Perhaps the best way to explain the appearance of the New Religions is to give specific examples. The first is a personal account of a Nikkyo Niwano, who joined a Buddhist New Religion and eventually became the head of an offshoot branch. The second is an in-depth look at one of the most famous and controversial New Religions, Soka Gakkai.

In his biography, *Travel to Infinity*, Nikkyo Niwano describes his experiences with New Religion. In 1935, he joined a sect called Reiyu-Kai when a neighborhood midwife, Iizuka, told him that something "unusual" would happen if he did not. She claimed to be a messenger of the Buddha sent to warn him. Sure enough, the following week, Niwano's daughter grew very ill and lost consciousness. She was apparently afflicted with what was known as Japanese Sleeping Sickness. When he saw that his doctors could not do much for her, he agreed to join Reiyu-Kai. This sect emphasized the worship of ancestors who, in return for prayers, aided and protected

their descendants. Very soon after joining the New Religion, his daughter made a complete recovery. Niwano was hooked.[131]

In addition to worshiping ancestors, Reiyu-Kai promoted the use of the Lotus Sutra, which Niwano praised as the most perfect scripture ever created:

> "Shouldn't there be a law able to save all human beings? Isn't there, instead of something mysterious like magic based on some imaginary rules, anything that can be understood by reason? I had always been seeking after something like that. When I went again to listen to the lecture on the Lotus Sutra, I found what I had been looking for. I examined the doctrine of the sutra at every point but could not find any defect...If you want to attain happiness in its truest sense, if you want to lead a truly human life, if you want to know the mysteries of the world and the essential character of human beings, I heartily recommend you to read the Lotus Sutra once...If you have a genuinely scientific view of the world, you will surely be amazed at the fact that the Lotus Sutra speaks of a scientific view of the world that is deeper than yours. If you have an old view of Buddhism or religion, you will be excited when you find the idea that Buddhism in its true sense is a living religion also for our times."[132]

Niwano became truly committed to Reiyu-Kai. He changed his business practices and bought a milk shop so he could finish his work early and devote more time to studying Buddhism. He became very active in converting others, and told the story of how he helped cure a woman of a debilitating illness by having her join the sect. Once her ancestors were being properly worshiped, her pain ended.[133] In the late 1930's, Niwano left Reiyu-Kai when the heads of the sect decided that the Lotus Sutra was out of date and should not be used any longer. He was intensely against this change, and in response formed his own sect based on the teachings of the Lotus Sutra. He called it Dai-Nippon Rissho-ka, and it officially opened in March, 1938.[134]

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[131] Nikkyo Niwano, *Travel to Infinity: An Autobiography of the President of an Organization of Buddhist Laymen*, trans. Wihelm Schiffer and Chido Takeda (Tokyo: 1968), 85-86.
[132] Niwano, 87-88.
[133] Niwano, 91-92.
[134] Niwano, 101.

Niwano remained on the outskirts of the patriotic nationalism during World War II. He believed the Lotus Sutra taught respect for all people and focused on building humanity up to be the best it could be, and he felt that war, for any reason, went against this. A fellow member of the sect also claimed that he had received a revelation from Buddha that Niwano would not serve in the army during the war because he had another, greater mission. Sure enough, Niwano was disqualified from military service for unknown reasons.[135] Niwano himself would later receive a revelation that encouraged him to focus his sole efforts on understanding the Lotus Sutra. He claimed that Buddha told him, "You have come on this earth with the mission of disseminating the Lotus Sutra in this world. It is now not the time to read other books. First be well versed exclusively in the Lotus Sutra."[136] Similar visions and revelations were at the heart of most New Religions, and in this way, Niwano's sect was no different. He did, in fact, spend the rest of his life devoted to teaching the Lotus Sutra to his followers, and hoping that, through his ministrations, he could leave the world a better place than it was before.

Niwano's religious sect was much like any other New Religion that sprang up during the war, although his single-minded adherence to the Lotus Sutra may have been a bit unusual. Without a doubt, however, the Buddhist sect of Soka Gakkai was much more controversial. It, too, focused on the Lotus Sutra for divine revelations, but it was unique in that it was the only New Religion to declare its teachings to be superior to all others, and anyone who did not follow its path was said to believe in a

[135] Niwano, 105.
[136] Niwano, 112.

false religion. Anyone following Soka Gakkai could not have any other religion, which was unheard of in all other New Religions. What is odd is that it became one of the most popular sects. Comparing this to its only monotheistic counterpart in Japan, Christianity, its successes were phenomenal, as it is currently the largest and fastest-growing of all New Religions.[137]

The predecessor to Soka Gakkai was one of the earliest New Religions in existence. It was founded in 1937 by Makiguchi Tsunesaburo, an elementary school principal in Tokyo, and was called Soka Kyoiku Gakkai, the Value-Creating Education Association. It was created in an attempt to combine the teachings of Nichiren Buddhism and public education.[138] Nichiren Buddhism, if we look back to the Kamakura Era of popular Buddhism, was based solely on the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and proclaimed all other faiths false. The Soka school was suppressed by the government because it went against the current policy of State Shinto and absolute loyalty to the emperor, and Makiguchi was imprisoned. He died in jail in 1944.[139]

Toda Josei, the vice president of the organization and a close friend of Makiguchi, took the reins back after the war, changed the name to simply Soka Gakkai (Value-Creating Society), and pressed on with Makiguchi's goals. The new society had its first formal meeting on May 3, 1951, and by the end of the year Toda

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[137] Fieser and Powers, 164.
[138] Kiyota, 123; and Noah S. Brannen, *Soka Gakkai: Japan's Militant Buddhists* (Richmond: John Knok Press, 1968), 73.
[139] Kiyota, 123.

had 5,000 followers. Twenty years later, that number jumped to over 13 million.[140] Like all New Religions, Soka Gakkai had no complicated doctrines or rituals, and its benefits could be felt immediately in the present world. One had to focus only on the Lotus Sutra and perform the *daimoku*, which is repetitive chanting of *Nam-myo-bo-renge-kyo*, meaning "homage to the Sutra of the Good Law."[141] This should be chanted at least 3,000 times per day, in the hopes of achieving one million repetitions per year. Other obligations included reciting portions of the Lotus Sutra aloud or to one's self, the teaching of new members, participation in group discussions, called *zadankai*, and public speaking in order to gain new converts and raise money. All group discussions and conversion efforts generally included personal testimonials of how Soka Gakkai improved the lives of its members through miraculous healings or assistance in financial matters.[142] It is only since 1972 that Soka Gakkai leaders have abolished their law that a member may not participate in any other religious activities, because they possessed the absolute belief that their religion was the only means of gaining salvation.[143] Previously, they hoped to convert the entire country, and perhaps the world, to their sect. However, it is simply abnormal in the current era for a Japanese person to have only one religion, and this became a burden, so the prohibition was relaxed.

Another unprecedented development in Soka Gakkai came in November, 1964, when the sect established the Komeito, the first political party based on a New

[140] Ibid.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Kiyota, 124-125; and Brannen, 152-153.
[143] Morioka, 10.

Religion.[144] It gained much support quite quickly, and it is still considered to be a force to be reckoned with by the other two major parties, the Liberal Democrats and the Socialists. Their platforms usually included an emphasis on peace and the removal of corruption from the government, along with reducing the cost of food and housing.[145] It is not certain if Soka Gakkai leaders hoped to use politics as a means of gaining new converts, or if they simply wanted to have more influence in the country at large, but it is clear that they have indeed made much further inroads than any other New Religion.

Because of its uniqueness and tendency toward militaristic organizations and conversions, Soka Gakkai gained somewhat of a bad reputation. In his book on Soka Gakkai, Noah Brannen opens with the tale of Tomoji, a man who killed his son with a baseball bat in 1965 because the son had destroyed his parents' Shinto and Buddhist altars to try to convince them to join Soka Gakkai. The sympathy of the local village went to Tomoji, because they believed his son had done a worse deed by "killing" the Shinto and Buddhist gods.[146] This example also illustrates how passionate Soka Gakkai members were about their religion, and how far they were willing to go to gain converts. They honestly believed it was the only true path to salvation and therefore had life-altering effects. Despite its sometimes harsh image, the members of Soka Gakkai claimed that their ultimate goal was to bring happiness and goodness to its followers. This was achieved in pursuing something valuable. According to the

[144] Kiyota, 125.
[145] Norbeck, 181.
[146] Brannen, 13.

Lotus Sutra, peace and happiness could be gained by all, therefore it was seen as the duty of all followers to ensure that everyone had this opportunity.

Although the fastest growing religions in Japan today are the New Religions, traditional faiths are by no means disappearing, especially in the countryside. Shinto and Buddhism in particular are still very popular. In fact, no matter what their religious beliefs, some things remain constant throughout the lives of most Japanese people.

Buddhism is currently the second most popular religion in the country, with its most important aspect being the death rite. No matter what one's religious affiliations in life, the vast majority of Japanese people will have a Buddhist funeral. According to Byron Earhart, "the purpose of the ceremony is to enable the dead person to pass from the defiled state of death to a purified state in paradise."[147] The death rite includes the giving of a Buddhist name to the deceased person, the creation of a memorial tablet, a recitation from one of the sutras, and cremation of the body. Cremation is important because it symbolizes the freeing of the spirit and its rise to paradise through fire. Memorials are then performed to honor the spirit. If these memorials do not take place, it is believed that the spirit will not enter paradise and will remain to haunt the living in retaliation.[148] The ashes of the deceased are then usually placed in the local Buddhist temples, which are community sites for festivals and public places of worship. Unlike Christian churches, there are no weekly

[147] Earhart, *Religion in the Japanese Experience*, 61.
[148] Ibid.

ceremonies in these temples. Instead, families can enter whenever they wish to honor the spirits of the ancestors whose ashes reside there.

Ancestor worship is one of the largest forms of religious expression in Japan, so it only makes sense that temples are not the only places where this worship takes place. Most homes have a *kamidana*, or god-shelf, and/or a *butsudan*, or Buddhist altar, for worshiping the family ancestors. *Kamidana* specifically honor ancestors who are revered as *kami*. This not only indicates the high level of Shinto-Buddhist dualism in the nation, but also the extreme importance of the family, which is considered to be just as important, if not more so, than formal services in a shrine or temple.[149] Ancestor worship is not practiced just out of obligation, but also for the sense of comfort it offers in reminding people that they belong to a larger group. It also encourages moral behavior because it would be difficult to "face" one's ancestors after behaving poorly. Bringing shame upon the family is something most all Japanese are very careful to avoid.

New Religions like Soka Gakkai are currently the fastest-growing Buddhist sects in Japan, but traditional elements such as ancestor worship and Buddhist funeral rites will most likely never disappear completely. They are too ingrained in the Japanese psyche, and have become basically second nature to the people.

In contrast to the more formalized aspects of Buddhism, traditional Shinto, which is currently the most popular religion in Japan, has remained prominent in the lives of the Japanese through its many annual festivals. There are currently around

[149] Earhart, *Religion in the Japanese Experience*, 145.

78,000 Shinto shrines in Japan, in addition to the god-shelves in personal family homes.[150] As Byron Earhart points out, "neither Shinto shrines no Buddhist temples observe a weekly day of worship like the Sabbath of Jews and Christians. What characterizes Japanese religion is the yearly round of festivals which enliven family activity and participation in both shrine and temple celebrations."[151] Most festivals, or *matsuri*, are local and worship the *kami* of the immediate vicinity, but several are nation-wide. The two biggest are Shogatsu Matsuri, the three-day New Year's festival which focuses on the visit to a shrine to make offerings and ask the *kami* for a new year of health and good fortune, and Obon, which is the festival for the dead that takes place in mid-August. Most people return to the area of their birth in order to visit gravesites and honor their ancestors. This festival also includes the *bon-odori*, a special Shinto dance to honor the dead.[152] Another important festival is the Shinto birth ritual, called *omiyamairi*, or honorable shrine visit. This takes place several months after the birth of the new child, and includes a blessing by the *kannushi*, or head priest of the shrine, which purifies the newborn and welcomes him or her into the community.[153]

All festivals include prayers, offerings and thanksgiving to the various *kami*, as well as a huge feast. Many festivals also feature a *mikoshi*, which is a portable shrine that is carried around the village or town. Since most *matsuri* are small festivals to honor the local *kami*, these festivals are seen as a good way to renew the

[150] Fieser and Powers, 212.
[151] Earhart, *Religion in the Japanese Experience*, 173.
[152] Gowen, 79-80.
[153] Gowen, 85.

close bonds between man and the gods.[154] Many festivals are also tied to seasonal changes, and they celebrate the traditional association between *kami* and nature. These seasonal festivals will generally honor both ancestors and *kami*, include prayers for good harvests, and involve some sort of personal communion with nature.

Shinto purification rites, called *oharai*, are also still a large part of Japanese society.[155] Instead of the cycle of sin and forgiveness that Christians experience, Shintoists believe in the circle of defilement and purification. In traditional Japan, there were very specific rituals for cleaning one's home at New Year's, in order to start the year fresh, and after a death in the house, to remove any lingering stain. These actions are not nearly so formalized now, but the Japanese are still very obsessed with cleanliness. Hot towels, for example, are provided in up-scale restaurants so patrons can wash their hands before eating, and a Japanese person will also always wash himself off before getting into a bathtub. Purification rituals are also still practiced at Shinto shrines. All shrines have a water basin where parishioners must wash their hands and rinse their mouths before approaching the *kami*.[156]

Charms sold at Shinto shrines are also exceedingly popular in Japanese society. Over 70 percent of the population carries at least one.[157] They are called *omamori*, which comes from the verb *mamoru*, to protect.[158] Their forms vary, but most are accepted as amulets that are supposed to aid with something the user deems important. They can be anything from a charm to assist in performing well in school

[154] Earhart, *Religion in the Japanese Experience*, 173.
[155] Gowen, 62.
[156] Earhart, *Religion in the Japanese Experience*, 161-162.
[157] Reader, *Japanese Religions*, 48.
[158] Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan*, 160.

to a special object that will help the user in carrying out certain rituals away from the shrine. Most people do not believe that the charms will magically fix everything in their lives, but instead see them as a form of aid, or a reminder that one is not alone in one's endeavors. They also serve as a reminder of one's goals. A charm for good fortune in school, for example, would supposedly encourage the student to study more and work hard.[159]

Even the most devout Shintoists will often have a Buddhist funeral in modern Japan, but they also generally accept the Shinto belief that dead ancestors eventually become part of the family pantheon of *kami*. The newly dead, however, are believed to still be able to exert power over the living, so offerings are made to them at family shrines to ask for their blessings and to placate them until the spirit moves on to join the ancestors.[160]

Although Christianity claims less than one percent of today's Japanese population, it would be remiss not to mention its current place in society. Despite its sizable lack of followers, two Christian traditions are very popular in Japan, one being Christmas and the other being weddings. Japanese Christmas celebrations have become incredibly westernized, and even non-Christians will generally celebrate it. The same holds true for western-style weddings. Marriages in Christian churches are quite common in modern Japan, even if neither the bride nor the groom is Christian.

What these traditions show is the increasing penchant for the modern-day Japanese to perform specific rituals and ceremonies regardless of his or her true

[159] Davis, 48.
[160] Littleton, 90.

religious belief, if there is one at all. As Minoru Kiyota so succulently put it, "a Japanese will continue to pay respect to a Shinto shrine on the occasion of the birth of a child; that child upon reaching maturity will most likely exchange vows in a Christian church, as a demonstration of his 'modernity;' but he will in the end receive the traditional Buddhist funeral."[161] What this has caused is an increasing apathy toward religion itself, with people attending ceremonies and performing rituals out of habit or obligation. When asked, however, many will claim to have no spiritual connection to these actions.[162] It is almost as though people live their lives, take some time out to pray at a Shinto shrine or perform a Buddhist ritual, and then get on with their lives as though nothing happened. It has become all habit and ceremony. This is not to say, of course, that many people do not firmly believe in these rituals, but just as many, especially in the younger generation, see religion as nothing more than an archaic crutch.

Most true believers of traditional religions are older and live in rural areas, and generally have lived in the same community all or most of their lives.[163] Urbanization and the increasing tendency of the young generation to move away and start their own family separate from their parents can rightly be seen as one of the main causes of disinterest in religion. The number of households increased from 24,080,000 in 1965 to 30,780,000 in 1975, reflecting this moving trend. Similarly, family size decreased from 4.97 members in 1955 to 3.94 members in 1966.[164] Break-

[161] Kiyota, 131.
[162] Kiyota, 130.
[163] Kiyota, 127.
[164] Norbeck, 95.

up of traditional families and communities cause a break in religion, especially with Shinto *kami*, the most important of which are the local gods. Traditional *kami* were always guardians of a specific family or clan. When the clans broke up, the *kami* became the guardian deity of the local area. When one moves, one has no attachment to the local gods of the new area, so one sees no reason to worship them. Shinto as a whole is also much more conducive to an agricultural society, because of all its harvest and seasonal rituals. All this moving also breaks up family ties, which puts the emphasis on nuclear, not extended families. While familial relationships are still exceedingly important in Japan, they are not as strong as they once were. Moving away from one's family lessens the importance of one's ancestors, and sometimes reduces the desire to pray to them. [165]

Availability of clergy has also lessened the opportunity for traditional worship. Many Buddhist priests, for example, make very little money without state support, so they are forced to take other jobs, such as becoming teachers. This means they are only available part-time in the temples. This greatly reduces the opportunity for individual attention for the followers. This is in direct contrast to the growing New Religions, which promise one-on-one attention.[166] Lack of state support is hurting all traditional religions. Without governmental backing, they are not nearly so organized or strong.

In contrast to Buddhism and Shinto, Christianity has experienced its greatest successes not in the countryside, but in the cities. The biggest churches are located in

[165] Morioka, 106-107.
[166] Kiyota, 129.

business districts, and the greatest number of parishioners are white-collar workers.[167] Again, the success of Christianity is very limited, but it is rather ironic that the only formalized religion to really be holding its own in the cities is the one with the least number of followers.

Another reason why the Japanese people will claim to be apathetic toward religion is because of their very definition of the word, which we have discussed previously. According to a large survey conducted of Japanese college students, "many nonbelieving Japanese will not deny the existence of that 'something' which they cannot express and which no one can explain to them."[168] Religion is seen as an intensely personal experience, and it must come from the inside. It cannot be taught by a priest or experienced in an old ritual. It must be a *feeling* that is formed from one's own thoughts and beliefs. Some actually claim to be jealous of those who have a true and strong faith in something or someone, and while many will claim to have no specific religion, most will agree that the principle of religion is good. An anonymous student, for example, claimed in a religious survey that he was "envious of a man who can really believe from his heart in a religion, and I myself would like to come to such a state."[169] In other words, the Japanese are not irreligious; they simply make a distinction between true, internal belief and standardized ceremonies. It is the organized and formal side of Japanese religion that is weak.

[167] Morioka, 141-143, 150.
[168] Fernando M. Basabe, *Japanese Religious Attitudes* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1972), 90.
[169] Basabe, 2.

This distinction between true belief and pre-fabricated rituals can be seen everywhere in Japan. Many Buddhist altars, for example, remain in the home solely for ancestor worship, not for the performance of oblation toward the Buddha or his demi-gods. This shows the continuing importance of family on one hand and the apathy toward the actual gods on the other. There is also a growing concept of "scenerization" of old religions. Shrines and temples are seen not as places of religious worship, but merely as natural parts of the landscape that enhance its beauty. This severely limits the significance of such places.[170] Even the rituals that are still deemed important, such as Buddhist death ceremonies, have become much simpler and more "practical." Many people claim to be "too busy" to believe in religion, and they simply want to get the required ceremonies over with as quickly and expediently as possible.[171] Many Shinto rituals have become excessively commercialized, and their true significance is reduced. They have become such a normal part of life that they become more habit than anything else. They are no longer seen as special.[172]

Life in general in Japan has become much more secularized, which, while a normal reaction to the disestablishment of state religion, happened perhaps quicker and more radically than in other nations. The Japanese people went directly from unquestioned belief in the god-emperor of the nation to not knowing what to believe. Author Winston Davis believes that a huge part of this disinterest in religion came from the growth of a capitalist economy, where people are more concerned with

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[170] Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. III*, 2.
[171] Davis, 248.
[172] Norbeck, 4-7.

making money and continuing scientific and technological advancements than studying religion.[173] The epitome of the Japanese husband and father is now the professional "salary man," who is much more focused on earning money, providing for his family and being an asset to.his company than he is on religion.[174] Interestingly enough, Davis believes that certain aspects of religion actually promote corporate life and a growing economy. He claims that "Zen Buddhism seems to satisfy the secular activities of everyday life, including industry. Shinto lends to that optimism, and plain good luck. Confucianism encourages the kind of close social bonds one encounters on all sides."[175] Whether this is true or not is perhaps up for debate, but the main point is that traditional religion is being buried under the fast-paced modern world, with its rituals and ceremonies becoming everyday habit, a part of life that cannot be ignored but that is so normal that any spiritual meaning is deadened. By its very nature of being so ingrained in the Japanese psyche, religion has become so normal as to be practically useless. The irony is rather astounding.

## Chapter Six: Japanese Students and Religious Apathy

Perhaps one of the best ways to examine current Japanese attitudes toward religion is through surveys of the recent generation. Since they are the future of Japan, their feelings will most likely become the majority in the next several decades. According to a college survey in the 1970's, which asked 5,178 men and 1,002

[173] Davis, 236.
[174] Norbeck, 113.
[175] Davis, 113.

women what their feelings were toward religion, only 397 men, or 7.6 percent, and 130 women, or 12.9 percent, admitted to believing in a specific religion.[176] The vast majority of the students claimed that self-confidence and the ability to solve one's own problems was more important than religion, and that people who possessed these virtues would find religion unnecessary.[177] They also claimed that religion was based on emotional and psychological needs, and that many people only seemed to really care about religion when they were in trouble and needed help from the gods. Author Fernando Basabe noted that, "the only true value of religion that a great majority recognizes is its infusion of peace into the soul and its support to the human heart in moments of affliction or tribulation."[178] Some students even went so far as to say religion was a form of escape from reality and had no place in a world filled with modern science. Only the elderly, they claimed, found true comfort in something so archaic.[179] Some students claimed in this survey that religion weakened individuality. One student wrote: "We should have firm convictions; but I can't help thinking that religion turns you into a weakling, dependent upon something outside yourself."[180]

One of the reasons for this apathy toward religion may be because of the intense belief mentioned previously, that religion must be a very personal experience. Now that the state cannot dictate what one should believe, modern Japanese believe that no one may have that right. Even parents are not supposed to direct their children toward any one religion; they must decide for themselves what to do when they are

[176] Basabe, 11.
[177] Basabe, 13.
[178] Basabe, 66.
[179] Basabe, 20-23.
[180] Basabe, 22.

old enough. While this freedom is good in some respects, it can also make a religious choice very difficult, leaving many people with no idea where to turn. Most Japanese people also do not believe that any one religion is absolute, which is why dualism is the norm. This may lead them to not feel as strongly about one or another religion as a monotheistic believer would.

A much more extensive survey on student attitudes toward religion was completed between 1992 and 2001, and was part of the Religious Education Project. Respondents were mainly from four-year universities, but there were some from junior colleges and technical schools as well. The basic results showed that most students refused to admit to believing in a specific religion, and many actually claimed to distrust organized religion. Only about half of the respondents claimed to believe in *kami* or Buddha and the afterlife, yet the same percentage also claimed to participate in religious customs, such as visiting a Shinto shrine on New Year's or paying respects to ancestors.[181] Interestingly enough, although the numbers of those who claimed to believe in religion fell from 17.7 percent in 1992 to 9.3 percent in 2001, the number of students who claimed that religion was still needed in today's world remained constant at 16 percent.[182]

Survey questions seemed to produce basically the same result, which is that students were more concerned with practical matters of the world than they were in religion. For example, 57.6 percent of the students claimed that they would have no interest in listening to a religious official speak in school, but 73.5 percent said that

[181] Nobutaka, 15.
[182] Nobutaka, 21.

they would enjoy listening to someone speak who was active in social work.[183] This may be because the level of trust in religious leaders is so low – only 4.3 percent. Interestingly enough, when asked who they trusted more, students ranked Christian priests the highest (21.4 percent), while Buddhist monks and fortune tellers were practically equal at around 11.5 percent, and Shinto priests were only trusted by 5.8 percent.[184] Many students seemed to want to separate religion from everyday life as much as possible. Close to 60 percent agreed that street preaching should be against the law, and over 50 percent believed that religion should not support or be supported by a political party.[185] Around 70 percent believed that a public center for complaints about religious practices should be established.[186] According to Inoue Nobutaka, who helped analyze these statistics, "it appears that respondents' primary 'experience' with religion is composed of religious solicitation on the street or at home, and coverage in the popular media, making it easy for them to form negative images of religion."[187]

This survey also showed apathy toward monotheism. Over 50 percent of students claimed that it was not unusual for a person to have a wedding in a Christian church or have a Buddhist-style funeral, even if he or she followed neither of those religions.[188] In addition, fortune-telling seemed to be very popular. Over 80 percent of respondents admitted to performing *omikuji*, the pulling out of a paper fortune from a

[183] Nobutaka, 29-30.
[184] Nobutaka, 32-33.
[185] Nobutaka, 34.
[186] Nobutaka, 98.
[187] Nobutaka, 38-39.
[188] Nobutaka, 55.

shrine, which is incredibly popular at New Year's.[189] Religious scholars note that "an 'occult boom' has occurred since the mid-1970s among young people, evidenced by a rising popularity of mysticism, magic, and other activities indicating a resurgence of what till then had been considered 'irrational phenomena.'"[190] This is supported by the development of *Kokkurisun*, a game like Ouiji, and the popularity of Akio Gibo, a TV psychic.[191] Popular culture is increasingly becoming a substitute for religion, with today's children learning more about concepts like life and death from *manga* (comic books) or other forms of media than from priests or other religious officials.[192]

Probably one of the most extensive surveys compiled on Japanese college students and their opinions toward religion was conducted in 44 schools across several prefectures in 1966. All the respondents were first year university students, and the number of respondents totaled 6,586, of which 5,178 were male and 1,002 were female.[193] The main result of this survey supported a concept previously mentioned, that people with self-confidence do not need religion. According to the survey, "among the opinions of a negative character concerning religion, what seems to be the most representative of the typical Japanese students is the inclination to believe that religion is completely unnecessary to those who have confidence in themselves, to the strong-willed, to those who know how to meet their problems and

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[189] Nobutaka, 60.
[190] Nobutaka, 76.
[191] Ibid
[192] Nobutaka, 81.
[193] Shin Anzai et al., *Japanese Youth Confronts Religion: A Sociological Survey* (Tokyo and Rutland, Vt.: C.E. Tuttle Company, 1967), 14.

solve their difficulties without having recourse to external support."[194] Between 60 and 65 percent of the respondents agree with this statement.[195] Several examples of actual student responses to this question are as follows:

- "The man who relies on religion is a weak man. A strong man does not need religion. I would even go so far as to say that religion makes man weak."
- "When a man is self-confident, he is an atheist; when he is dispirited, he is a believer."[196]

Interestingly enough, most students agreed that, despite their aversions to religion, it was still necessary in today's world, because it is rare for there to exist so strong an individual that he never needs outside religious support.[197] Over 50 percent of the students agreed that religion was not necessary for people who were already happy with their life. They believed that religion was only needed if people were frustrated with something or needed help. If they were already content, there was no need for religion.[198] Similarly, approximately 50 percent agreed that the decision to believe in religion or not was based on a person's moods and feelings. When people choose to follow religion, it is most likely because they need emotional support. When this help is no longer needed, neither is the religion.[199] Many students agreed that religion can be considered an escape from the real world. One student wrote, "I think the so-called 'believer' is a man running away from real life – very much like a coward would," and another claimed, "Nowadays, in the midst of a mechanized society, religion is nothing more than one way of getting away from everyday

[194] Anzai, 15.
[195] Anzai, 16.
[196] Anzai, 17.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Anzai, 19.
[199] Anzai, 22.

reality."[200] Only 30 to 35 percent of students agreed that a person living a life based on religion, like a monk or priest, deserved respect,[201] and only 11 percent claimed that believing in religion was a duty of mankind. The majority of respondents considered this idea to be a huge threat to individual freedom.[202]

In the end, only 8 percent of the surveyed students claimed to have a true religious faith, and over 60 percent believed religion was necessary only for the weak-minded. [203] This does not mean that students see religion as a bad thing, but rather as something abstract that is only required in certain circumstances. In fact, many positive aspects of religion were raised. Between 55 and 65 percent of students believed religion had positive values and morals, assured people that they were never truly alone, and had the power to greatly encourage peace and goodness in the world. Over 50 percent of the students claimed that religion put people's minds at ease when thinking about the afterlife, and that religion encouraged moral behavior because it emphasized love.[204] An impressive 73 percent of students claimed that everyone should study religion at least once in their lives, which proves that they believe it is an integral part of society even if they do not always support it.[205] One of the most telling responses was that 50 to 55 percent of the students agreed that if religion totally disappeared, the world would be worse off. One student wrote: "The truth is

[200] Anzai, 28.
[201] Anzai, 83.
[202] Anzai, 91.
[203] Anzai, 94-95.
[204] Anzai, 75-79.
[205] Anzai, 99.

that religion is essential in this world. On the whole you can see that religion fulfills an important role in providing criteria and rules to this world."[206]

Even though most students claimed that religion is generally used only as a crutch, a good portion of them admitted to praying during difficult times in their life, such as during a sickness or before a particularly hard exam. This shows that religion is sometimes needed even by those who speak out against it.[207] Many students also admitted to carrying an *omamori* from a Shinto shrine for luck and protection, and claimed that they visited Shinto shrines at celebrations such as New Year's, and worshiped at their ancestors' gravesites.[208] One student noted an old saying that he compared to religion – "*Bara ni wa toge ga aru*" – meaning "no rose without thorns." As much as man would like to have a smooth, self-confident life with no road blocks and no need for outside support, that will probably never happen, just as a rose will never be without thorns. Therefore, religion will always be necessary to provide assistance during difficult times.[209]

Education also appeared to have an inverse relationship with belief in religion. In the 1970's, a survey was conducted on working men between the ages of 20 and 40. About 1,300 men responded, and of those, only about 14 percent, or 182, claimed to believe in religion.[210] Of those that did believe, 17.2 percent of them finished middle school, 15 percent finished high school, and only 9.9 percent went to a

[206] Anzai, 86-87.
[207] Basabe, 42.
[208] Basabe, 66.
[209] Basabe, 77.
[210] Basabe, 59.

university or junior college.[211] In other words, it appears that the more schooling one has, the less likely one is to claim a religion.

Vicente M. Bonet produced a wonderful three-book series on the inclusion of religion in Japanese textbooks, and from his observations, perhaps an understanding can be reached as to why schooling seems to produce increasing religious apathy among students. It is also important to note that, by order of the Ministry of Education, religion cannot be debated in a classroom. It can only be presented in a historical format, without reference to individual beliefs or convictions. This means that all textbooks provide an almost identical account of religious history.[212] The first volume in Bonet's series deals with the presence of religion in ethics textbooks. While it is hardly mentioned in grammar-school textbooks, middle and high school students are given many different philosophies to study, including Christianity, Shinto, Buddhism, and even the philosophies of Nietzsche.[213] The importance of family is especially emphasized. Information on pure religion, however, focuses not so much on doctrine as the reasons for its successes or failures. The Japanese Constitution is cited for its provision of religious freedom, and then the books tend to dive into modern experiences. Cities are noted as reasons for the existence of religion, and religion itself is defined as something man can use to feel safe, something man can turn to when life gets rough. This belief in something greater than one's self was seen as a good morality booster. Many ethics books also claim that the main purpose

[211] Basabe, 80.
[212] Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. I*, 183.
[213] Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. I*, 15.

of religion is to bring harmony and peace to the world.[214] Nothing about specific beliefs or doctrines, or even the ethics and morality of individual religions, is mentioned. Everything is purely theoretical.

The second volume deals with the presence of religion in world history textbooks. After World War II and the granting of religious freedom, school teachers were banned from teaching religion as a specific subject, and instead it was incorporated into the history of individual nations.[215] Christianity is presented in much greater detail here than any eastern religion. Its history includes the life and death of Jesus, as well as the initial development of the religion, its persecutions, and its scriptures. The Crusades and the Protestant Reformation figured prominently in many of the books, as did other wars fought in the name of religion. The story of the failure of the Spanish armada due to the "Protestant Wind" from Queen Elizabeth's England was also mentioned in many books.

In general, world history textbooks focus on the chronological development of other nations, and when religion becomes a large part of the political or cultural landscape, it is mentioned in as much detail as is historically warranted. Religion is simply treated as a part of historical development. It is also noted that, in almost every nation, religion is seen to play a smaller and smaller role the closer one gets to the current era. This may only serve to indicate that religion plays less of a part in recent governmental and political history, but it no doubt has an effect on the students who read these texts. If they see religion playing less of an important role in other

[214] Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. I*, 28-31.
[215] Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. II*, 7-8.

nations, they will no doubt assume that the same should be true of their own country. Since teachers are forbidden to speak about religion as a personal experience, the students will only see that religion is diminishing in importance.[216] According to Bonet, "there is no doubt that Humanism, as it appears in the texts, is much more attractive, in all respects, than religion. Religion is an old story, powerful and influential in the past, meaningful for the man not yet grown up to maturity."[217] Religion, seen in this light, has very little meaning for the modern age.

The final volume in Bonet's series deals with religion in Japanese history textbooks. According to the Ministry of Education, the purpose of including religion in Japanese history is as follows: "To deepen the students' understanding of our ancestors' efforts in order to create, develop and propagate our culture, as well as of our cultural tradition; to foster an attitude of familiarization with and respect for our cultural inheritance; and to promote a strong desire to build up and develop a new culture."[218] As in world history books, then, religion in Japan is presented in a historical and cultural context in order to facilitate better understanding of the nation's growth and development.

Primitive Shinto is described briefly, and then most books move on to the beginning of Buddhism and Prince Shotoku's constitution, which is emphasized as having a very large impact on society and the formation of a strong central government. The founders of the Shingon and Tendai sects are briefly mentioned as

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[216]Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. II*, 169-170.
[217] Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. II*, 185.
[218] Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. III*, 15.

men who reformed corrupt Buddhism to help maintain government order and stability. No information, however, is given on whether or not people really believed in Buddhism or why. An incredibly large section is devoted to the new Buddhist sects of the Kamakura Era, and in these cases, specific doctrines are actually listed. No mention, however, is made of Shinto. The textbooks seem to indicate it had vanished completely.[219]

Early Christianity is almost universally described as something tolerated by the feudal lords in order to facilitate trade; nothing more. No mention is ever made of any true believers.[220] In contrast to Kamakura Buddhism, no Christian doctrines are noted or discussed, and very little mention, if any, is made of Francis Xavier or other missionaries. During the Tokugawa shogunate, the focus is on the collapse of Buddhism and the rise of Restoration Shinto, but again, no doctrines or scriptures are given for the new Shinto sect. It is regarded as simply a political maneuver to return the emperor to his throne.

During the Meiji Restoration, State Shinto is discussed for its political and military effects, and after the defeat of World War II, religion almost completely disappears from textbooks. Hardly any mention is made of the New Religions, and there is no information on rituals or ceremonies still performed by believers of traditional religions. Occasionally, a textbook will claim that current religions focus on individual problems, and that the world is simply more rationalist now, so religion

[219] Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. III*, 58.
[220] Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. III*, 61.

plays a smaller part in history and in life.[221] According to Bonet, "religion is described as something belonging to the past, and the textbook explanations give a strong impression of this to the young students."[222] If this is truly the case, it is no wonder the modern generation has very little interest in religion. Instead of learning why a religion succeeded or failed by studying its doctrine, students only learn how it impacted politics or governments. When religions no longer connect to these things, the textbooks stop mentioning them. Most students are simply left with annoyance at having to memorize the names of hundreds of sects and their leaders.[223]

So do all these negative surveys and the lack of true religious education mean that the modern Japanese student is truly against religion? Not necessarily. According to author Shin Anzai, "the typical Japanese youth is not conscious of having a negative attitude toward religion...They think that the cultured man of these times has freed himself from the myth of considering religion as possessing absolute values."[224] Vicente Bonet added that, although members of the modern generation will openly doubt the existence of a supreme creator and the importance of religion, they also "still show some kind of awe toward nature, [which is] seen as having an animistic character, a respect for ancestors, a kind of belief in the immortality of the soul, and, especially, a great admiration for life."[225] Seen in this way, students may be said to have an almost primitive faith, with their distrust and apathy focused more on organized religions and religious leaders than on personal, spiritual faith. For this

[221] Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. III*, 82.
[222] Ibid.
[223] Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. III*, 84-85.
[224] Anzai, 27.
[225] Bonet, *Religion in Japanese Textbooks, Vol. III*, 86.

reason, it is perhaps no surprise that the younger generation is flocking more and more to the New Religions, whose leaders promise individual attention and solutions for living a happy and successful life in the modern world.

The low number of students who claim to believe in religion does not mesh well with the national statistic that proclaims that the actual population of Japan is less than the number of people practicing religion. However, when one looks closer at the phrasing of the questions, it is perhaps easier to understand. Students were asked mainly about their own personal, internal faith, while the census bureau asks what religion is *practiced*. Students may practice Shinto and Buddhism through the celebration of New Year's and the worshiping of ancestors, but they may also lack a firm conviction in the rituals being practiced. Japanese religions are living religions, meaning they overlap with everyday aspects of one's life. As mentioned before, sometimes these ceremonies are performed out of habit, and the religious connotations are not seriously considered. This would explain the discrepancies between the national surveys and the student surveys.

## Conclusion

So how would one define religion in Japan today? One could take the viewpoint that author Kiyomi Morioka did, and claim there are currently three types of religions vying for supremacy: those based on the community (Shinto), those based on the household or family (Buddhism), and those based on the individual

(Christianity and the New Religions).[226] Shinto has survived to the current day based on the widespread celebration of festivals and repeated prayers for the success and happiness of a local community. Today's Buddhism focuses on ancestor worship and funeral rites. Christianity and the New Religions emphasize the needs of the individual, and both have strong desires for mass conversions. While Christianity is more focused on the salvation of the soul, the New Religions offer solutions to everyday problems and claim to have the answer to happiness and success in the modern world. Currently, these religions are the fastest-growing, and they will probably continue to be so as long as the current trend of urbanization continues. This forces the break-up of extended families and communities, and encourages people to focus on their own needs.[227]

All of these religions combine and interact with each other. The ideal form of Japanese religion is still an almost ancient combination of a Shinto love for nature, a Buddhist respect for ancestors, and the Confucian ideal of loyalty and respect. Most Japanese people, even those who do not claim to believe in any specific religion, agree that these ideals are extremely important for a good society. In addition, most Japanese are more focused on the physical world and how to live well in it, but that does not necessarily exclude the presence of religion. According to Robert Ellwood, "Japanese religion tends to find the sacred or ultimate within the natural/human realm, or at least in ready access to it."[228] In other words, in contrast to Christian

[226] Morioka, 155.
[227] Moriyoka, 159.
[228] Ellwood and Pilgrim, 143.

ideals, religion for the Japanese is not focused on spiritual salvation, but rather on teaching people how to live a good life in the present world. Japanese religion is not a means to an end; it is a journey.

The history of Japanese religion is another journey in and of itself, and through this study it is hoped that the reader can come to a better understanding of the relationship between religion and the government, and how both have come to be what they are today. Primitive Shinto and the worship of the Sun Goddess, led by clan leaders, was superceded by the Buddhism of Prince Shotoku and, later, the Tendai and Shingon sects when imperial rule engulfed the land. The popular Buddhist sects of the Kamakura Era took hold when imperial rule was pushed aside for control by the military and samurai. Christianity infiltrated the country while the shogun and daimyo were busy fighting with one another and the western weapon's trade was appealing, but it was firmly subdued when the powerful Tokugawa shogunate took the reins of power. For the next 250 years, a strict feudal system was kept in place by the values of Neo-Confucianism and Zen Buddhism, only to be overthrown by Restoration Shinto and a passionate reverence for the emperor. The State Shinto of the Meiji Restoration and the patriotism, nationalism and militarism it created can rightly be called a major cause for the Japanese involvement in World Wars I and II, and it was only destroyed by the forcible actions of the allied governments who turned the divine emperor into a mere mortal. With the old religions gone and the government forbidden to interfere in religion ever again, many Japanese felt a growing apathy toward the spirit world, and instead chose to focus on improving the

government and economy of the here and now. New Religions, with their emphasis on personal problems and promised aid with everyday problems have become the mainstay of current Japanese religion. This is not to say, of course, that both religion and the government would not have turned out exactly the same way even without the influence of the other. But it is a bit too coincidental that every time a major change in government occurred, the state-sponsored religion was generally overhauled, and it would be very remiss of us to ignore this fact.

Now that religion and the government have been forcibly separated, it is difficult to predict where Japanese religion will go in the future. Clearly, many aspects of traditional Shinto and Buddhist beliefs are still very much alive and well in Japan, and the vast majority of the New Religions are based on one sect or another of these two religions. It is quite doubtful that they will ever fully disappear, especially since they contain so many rituals and ceremonies that are full ingrained in the lives of the Japanese people. Still, one also cannot ignore the fact that, once the government ceased controlling religion, a generally feeling of apathy toward true religious belief set in. One need only review the statistics related from the college surveys to see this. Whether this apathy will continue is debatable, but at the moment, this does appear to be the trend.

Japanese religion is so completely different from the western, Christian ideal that it is impossible for us to speculate on its future by basing it on the future we foresee for ourselves. Instead, we will have to sit back and wait to see if the Land of the Gods continues to turn its back on its namesake, or if a new type of revival will

suddenly sweep the nation as it has so many times in the past. Like Japanese religion itself, the development of this country will, indeed, be a fascinating journey.

# Appendix

This table documents the number of religious adherents, clergymen and shrines/temples possessed by each religious sect in Japan, beginning in 1975 and ending in 2002. All numbers are in thousands. [229]



## 23—22 宗　　教
## RELIGION

「宗教統計調査」(723ページ参照) による。年末現在。
Data are based on the Statistical Survey on Religion (see page 725). As of the end of the year.

### A 宗教団体数，教師数及び信者数 (昭和50年～平成14年)
### RELIGIOUS BODIES, CLERGYMEN AND ADHERENTS (1975～2002)

「信者総数」が日本の総人口より上回っているのは寺院の檀徒と神社の氏子などの重複による。「宗教団体数」は被包括宗教団体と単位宗教法人の計で包括宗教団体は除く。
Total adherents exceed the total population of Japan, because some persons often belong to both Shintoism and Buddhism. Religious bodies refer to the total of dependent juristic religious bodies and independent juristic religious bodies excluding general juristic religious bodies.

| 年末 End of year | | 総数 Total | | | 神道系 Shintoism | | | | | 仏教系 Buddhism | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 宗教団体 Religious bodies | 教師数 Clergymen (1,000) | 信者数 Adherents (1,000) | 宗教法人 Juristic religious bodies | | 宗教法人以外の団体 Religious bodies except juristic religious bodies | 教師数 Clergymen (1,000) | 信者数 Adherents (1,000) | 宗教法人 Juristic religious bodies | | 宗教法人以外の団体 Religious bodies except juristic religious bodies |
| | | | | | 社寺 Shrines and temples | 教会，その他 Churches and other | | | | 社寺 Shrines and temples | 教会，その他 Churches and other | |
| 昭和50年 | 1975 | 322,198 | 2,079 | 188,211 | 81,138 | 4,928 | 11,688 | 98 | 89,063 | 74,177 | 2,143 | 80,902 |
| 55 | 1980 | 224,935 | 628 | 200,395 | 81,290 | 4,697 | 5,998 | 103 | 95,848 | 75,100 | 1,863 | 7,925 |
| 60 | 1985 | 226,088 | 646 | 223,798 | 81,330 | 4,505 | 4,997 | 102 | 115,602 | 75,574 | 1,848 | 7,191 |
| 平成2年 | 1990 | 230,704 | 665 | 217,230 | 81,402 | 4,371 | 5,191 | 104 | 109,000 | 75,800 | 1,845 | 10,711 |
| 7 | 1995 | 229,969 | 682 | 215,984 | 81,326 | 4,342 | 4,595 | 90 | 116,922 | 75,900 | 1,877 | 10,660 |
| 12 | 2000 | 226,117 | 681 | 215,366 | 81,167 | 4,031 | 3,985 | 82 | 107,953 | 75,725 | 1,789 | 9,072 |
| 13 | 2001 | 225,885 | 655 | 214,755 | 81,157 | 3,942 | 3,983 | 81 | 106,787 | 75,733 | 1,759 | 9,155 |
| 14 | 2002 | 225,501 | 650 | 215,964 | 81,146 | 3,921 | 3,908 | 84 | 107,778 | 75,735 | 1,737 | 9,061 |

| 年末 End of year | | 仏教系 Buddhism | | キリスト教系 Christianity | | | | | 諸教 Other | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 教師数 Clergymen (1,000) | 信者数 Adherents (1,000) | 宗教法人(教会，その他) Juristic religious bodies (churches and other) | 宗教法人以外の団体 Religious bodies except juristic religious bodies | 教師数 Clergymen (1,000) | 外国人教師・宣教師 Foreign clergymen and missionaries | 信者数 Adherents (1,000) | 宗教法人 Juristic religious bodies | | 宗教法人以外の団体 Religious bodies except juristic religious bodies | 教師数 Clergymen (1,000) | 信者数 Adherents (1,000) |
| | | | | | | | | | 社寺 Shrines and temples | 教会，その他 Churches and other | | | |
| 昭和50年 | 1975 | 1,770 | 86,607 | 3,142 | 4,633 | 20 | 4.6 | 886 | 41 | 15,576 | 43,830 | 191 | 11,655 |
| 55 | 1980 | 246 | 87,745 | 3,375 | 4,970 | 21 | 4.8 | 1,019 | 45 | 15,953 | 23,719 | 258 | 15,783 |
| 60 | 1985 | 269 | 92,065 | 3,614 | 5,002 | 22 | 4.1 | 1,688 | 36 | 16,156 | 25,835 | 253 | 14,444 |
| 平成2年 | 1990 | 286 | 96,255 | 3,937 | 5,118 | 17 | 3.7 | 1,464 | 40 | 16,159 | 26,130 | 258 | 10,511 |
| 7 | 1995 | 299 | 87,481 | 4,000 | 5,189 | 17 | 3.1 | 1,450 | 46 | 16,115 | 25,919 | 276 | 10,131 |
| 12 | 2000 | 305 | 95,420 | 4,110 | 5,218 | 29 | 3.5 | 1,772 | 79 | 15,348 | 25,593 | 265 | 10,221 |
| 13 | 2001 | 312 | 95,493 | 4,337 | 4,993 | 28 | 3.2 | 1,822 | 80 | 15,269 | 25,477 | 235 | 10,654 |
| 14 | 2002 | 304 | 95,555 | 4,378 | 5,022 | 28 | 3.2 | 1,917 | 88 | 15,218 | 25,287 | 234 | 10,713 |

[229] Statistic Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, *Japan Statistical Yearbook – 2005*
< www.stat.go.jp/english/data/nenkan/index.htm >.

# The Seventeen Articles
# Prince Shotoku[230]

Prepared in 604 AD, on the third day of the fourth month.

I. Harmony should be valued nd quarrels should be avoided. Everyone has his biases, and few men are far-sighted. Therefore some disobey their lords and fathers and keep up feuds with their neighbors. But when the superiors are in harmony with each other and the inferiors are friendly, then affairs are discussed quietly and the right view of matters prevails.

II. The three treasures, which are Buddha, the (Buddhist) Law and the (Buddhist) Priesthood; should be given sincere reverence, for they are the final refuge of all living things. Few men are so bad that they cannot be taught their truth.

III. Do not fail to obey the commands of your Sovereign. He is like Heaven, which is above the Earth, and the vassal is like the Earth, which bears up Heaven. When Heaven and Earth are properly in place, the four seasons follow their course and all is well in Nature. But if the Earth attempts to take the place of Heaven, Heaven would simply fall in ruin. That is why the vassal listens when the lord speaks, and the inferior obeys when the superior acts. Consequently when you receive the commands of your Sovereign, do not fail to carry them out or ruin will be the natural result.

IV. The Ministers and officials of the state should make proper behavior their first principle, for if the superiors do not behave properly, the inferiors are disorderly; if inferiors behave improperly, offenses will naturally result. Therefore when lord and vassal behave with propriety, the distinctions of rank are not confused: when the people behave properly the Government will be in good order.

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[230] W. G. Aston, "Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697," in *The Transactions and Proceedings of the Japan Society of London, Supplement 1, Vol. 2* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., 1896), 128-33. <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/eacp/japanworks/japan/japanworkbook/traditional/shotoku.htm>.

V. Deal impartially with the legal complaints which are submitted to you. If the man who is to decide suits at law makes gain his motive, and hears cases with a view to receiving bribes, then the suits of the rich man will be like a stone flung into water, meeting no resistance, while the complaints of the poor will be like water thrown upon a stone. In these circumstances the poor man will not know where to go, nor will he behave as he should.

VI. Punish the evil and reward the good. This was the excellent rule of antiquity. Therefore do not hide the good qualities of others or fail to correct what is wrong when you see it. Flatterers and deceivers are a sharp weapon for the overthrow of the state, and a sharp sword for the destruction of the people. Men of this kind are never loyal to their lord, or to the people. All this is a source of serious civil disturbances.

VII. Every man has his own work. Do not let the spheres of duty be confused. When wise men are entrusted with office, the sound of praise arises. If corrupt men hold office, disasters and tumult multiply. In all things, whether great or small, find the right man and they will be well managed. Therefore the wise sovereigns of antiquity sought the man to fill the office, and not the office to suit the man. If this is done the state will be lasting and the realm will be free from danger.

VIII. Ministers and officials should attend the Court early in the morning and retire late, for the whole day is hardly enough for the accomplishment of state business. If one is late in attending Court, emergencies cannot be met; if officials retire early, the work cannot be completed.

IX. Good faith is the foundation of right. In everything let there be good faith, for if the lord and the vassal keep faith with one another, what cannot be accomplished? If the lord and the vassal do not keep faith with each other, everything will end in failure.

X. Let us control ourselves and not be resentful when others disagree with us, for all men have hearts and each heart has its own leanings. The right of others is

our wrong, and our right is their wrong. We are not unquestionably sages, nor are they unquestionably fools. Both of us are simply ordinary men. How can anyone lay down a rule by which to distinguish right from wrong? For we are all wise sometimes and foolish at others. Therefore, though others give way to anger, let us on the contrary dread our own faults, and though we may think we alone are in the right, let us follow the majority and act like them.

XI. Know the difference between merit and demerit, and deal out to each its reward and punishment. In these days, reward does not always follow merit, or punishment follow crime. You high officials who have charge of public affairs, make it your business to give clear rewards and punishments.

XII. Do not let the local nobility levy taxes on the people. There cannot be two lords in a country; the people cannot have two masters. The sovereign is the sole master of the people of the whole realm, and the officials that he appoints are all his subjects. How can they presume to levy taxes on the people?

XIII. All people entrusted with office should attend equally to their duties. Their work may sometimes be interrupted due to illness or their being sent on missions. But whenever they are able to attend to business they should do so as if they knew what it was about and not obstruct public affairs on the grounds they are not personally familiar with them.

XIV. Do not be envious! For if we envy others, then they in turn will envy us. The evils of envy know no limit. If others surpass us in intelligence, we are not pleased; if they are more able, we are envious. But if we do not find wise men and sages, how shall the realm be governed?

XV. To subordinate private interests to the public good--that is the path of a vassal. Now if a man is influenced by private motives, he will be resentful, and if he is influenced by resentment he will fail to act harmoniously with others. If he fails to act harmoniously with others, the public interest will suffer. Resentment interferes with order and is subversive of law.

XVI. Employ the people in forced labor at seasonable times. This is an ancient and excellent rule. Employ them in the winter months when they are at leisure, but not from Spring to Autumn, when they are busy with agriculture or with the mulberry trees (the leaves of which are fed to silkworms). For if they do not attend to agriculture, what will there be to eat? If they do not attend to the mulberry trees, what will there be for clothing?

XVII. Decisions on important matters should not be made by one person alone. They should be discussed with many people. Small matters are of less consequence and it is unnecessary to consult a number of people. It is only in the case of important affairs, when there is a suspicion that they may miscarry, that one should consult with others, so as to arrive at the right conclusion.

# Closed Country Edict of 1635[231]
# Tokugawa Ietmitsu

1. Japanese ships are strictly forbidden to leave for foreign countries.

2. No Japanese is permitted to go abroad. If there is anyone who attempts to do so secretly, he must be executed. The ship so involved must be impounded and its owner arrested, and the matter must be reported to the higher authority.

3. If any Japanese returns from overseas after residing there, he must be put to death.

4. If there is any place where the teachings of padres ["fathers," as in Catholic priests] is practiced, the two of you must order a thorough investigation.

5. Any informer revealing the whereabouts of the followers of padres must be rewarded accordingly. If anyone reveals the whereabouts of a high ranking padre, he must be given one hundred pieces of silver. For those of lower ranks, depending on the deed, the reward must be set accordingly.

6. If a foreign ship has an objection (to the measures adopted) and it becomes necessary to report the matter to Edo [a city at the site of modern Tokyo], you may ask the Omura domain [the area around the city of Nagasaki] to provide ships to guard the foreign ship.

7. If there are any Southern Barbarians [persons from Christendom/Europe] who propagate the teachings of padres, or otherwise commit crimes, they may be incarcerated in the prison....

8. All incoming ships must be carefully searched for the followers of padres.

9. No single trading city shall be permitted to purchase all the merchandise brought by foreign ships.

10. Samurai [persons of the military aristocracy] are not permitted to purchase any goods originating from foreign ships directly from Chinese merchants in Nagasaki.

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[231] Kimberly E. Nichols, A.B.D., The University of Memphis, "Closed Country Edict, Tokugawa Ietmitsu." < http://www.people.memphis.edu/~kenichls/1302Ietmitsu.html >.

11. After a list of merchandise brought by foreign ships is sent to Edo, as before you may order that commercial dealings may take place without waiting for a reply from Edo.

12. After settling the price, all white yarns [silk] brought by foreign ships shall be allocated to the five trading cities [Kyoto, Edo, Osaka, Sakai, and Nagasaki] and other quarters are stipulated.

13. After settling the price of white yarns, other merchandise (brought by foreign ships) may be traded freely between the (licensed) dealers. However, in view of the fact that Chinese ships are small and cannot bring large consignments, you may issue orders of sale at your discretion. Additionally, payment for goods purchased must be made within twenty days after the price is set.

14. The date of departure homeward of foreign ships shall not be later than the twentieth day of the ninth month. Any ships arriving in Japan later than usual shall depart within fifty days of their arrival. As to the departure of Chinese ships, you may use your discretion to order their departure after the departure of the Portuguese *galeota* [a type of ship].

15. The goods brought by foreign ships which remained unsold may not be deposited or accepted for deposit.

16. The arrival in Nagasaki of representatives of the five trading cities shall not be later than the fifth day of the seventh month. Anyone arriving later than that date shall lose the quota assigned to his city.

17. Ships arriving in Hirado [a small island not far from Nagasaki] must sell their raw silk at the price set in Nagasaki, and are not permitted to engage in business transactions until after the price is established in Nagasaki.

# Exclusion of the Portuguese, 1639[232]
# Tokugawa Ietmitsu

1. The matter relating to the proscription of Christianity is known [to the Portuguese]. However, heretofore they have secretly transported those who are going to propagate that religion.

2. If those who believe in that religion band together in an attempt to do evil things, they must be subjected to punishment.

3. While those who believe in the preaching of the priests are in hiding, there are incidents in which chat country [Portugal] has sent gifts to them for their sustenance. In view of the above, hereafter entry by the Portuguese *galeota* [ship] is forbidden. If they insist on coming [to Japan], the ships must be destroyed and anyone aboard those ships must be beheaded. We have received the above order and are thus transmitting it to you accordingly.

The above concerns our disposition with regard to the *galeota.*

***Memorandum***

With regard to those who believe in Christianity, you are aware that there is a proscription, and thus knowing, you are not permitted to let priests and chose who believe in their preaching to come aboard your ships. If there is any violation, all of you who are aboard will be considered culpable. If there is anyone who hides the fact that he is a Christian and boards your ship, you may report it to us. A substantial reward will be given to you for this information.

This memorandum is to be given to those who come on Chinese ships. [A similar note to the Dutch ships.]

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[232] The Japan Karate-Do Organization, "The Closed Country Edict of 1635." < http://www.jko.com/portal/forum/forum_posts.asp?TID=57 >.

# Excerpt of the Constitution of the Empire of Japan, 1889[233]

*Note: This excerpt provides information from the Constitution relative to the powers of the emperor, religion, and expectations of Japanese subjects. Excluded were chapters V-VII, which dealt with the Judicature, Finance and Supplementary Rules.*

**Imperial Oath Sworn in the Sanctuary in the Imperial Palace (Tsuge-bumi)**

We, the Successor to the prosperous Throne of Our Predecessors, do humbly and solemnly swear to the Imperial Founder of Our House and to Our other Imperial Ancestors that, in pursuance of a great policy co-extensive with the Heavens and with the Earth, We shall maintain and secure from decline the ancient form of government.

In consideration of the progressive tendency of the course of human affairs and in parallel with the advance of civilization, We deem it expedient, in order to give clearness and distinctness to the instructions bequeathed by the Imperial Founder of Our House and by Our other Imperial Ancestors, to establish fundamental laws formulated into express provisions of law, so that, on the one hand, Our Imperial posterity may possess an express guide for the course they are to follow, and that, on the other, Our subjects shall thereby be enabled to enjoy a wider range of action in giving Us their support, and that the observance of Our laws shall continue to the remotest ages of time. We will thereby to give greater firmness to the stability of Our country and to promote the welfare of all the people within the boundaries of Our dominions; and We now establish the Imperial House Law and the Constitution. These Laws come to only an exposition of grand precepts for the conduct of the government, bequeathed by the Imperial Founder of Our House and by Our other Imperial Ancestors. That we have been so fortunate in Our reign, in keeping with the tendency of the times, as to accomplish this work, We owe to the glorious Spirits of the Imperial Founder of Our House and of Our other Imperial Ancestors.

We now reverently make Our prayer to Them and to Our Illustrious Father, and implore the help of Their Sacred Spirits, and make to Them solemn oath never at this time nor in the future to fail to be an example to our subjects in the observance of the Laws hereby established.

May the heavenly Spirits witness this Our solemn Oath.

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[233] Hirobumi Ito, *Commentaries on the Constitution of the Empire of Japan*, trans. Miyoji Ito (Tokyo: Igirisu-horitsu gakko, 22nd Year of Meiji, 1889). Part of the Hanover Historical Texts Project. < http://history.hanover.edu/texts/1889con.html >.

## Imperial Rescript on the Promulgation of the Constitution

Whereas We make it the joy and glory of Our heart to behold the prosperity of Our country, and the welfare of Our subjects, We do hereby, in virtue of the Supreme power We inherit from Our Imperial Ancestors, promulgate the present immutable fundamental law, for the sake of Our present subjects and their descendants.

The Imperial Founder of Our House and Our other Imperial ancestors, by the help and support of the forefathers of Our subjects, laid the foundation of Our Empire upon a basis, which is to last forever. That this brilliant achievement embellishes the annals of Our country, is due to the glorious virtues of Our Sacred Imperial ancestors, and to the loyalty and bravery of Our subjects, their love of their country and their public spirit. Considering that Our subjects are the descendants of the loyal and good subjects of Our Imperial Ancestors, We doubt not but that Our subjects will be guided by Our views, and will sympathize with all Our endeavors, and that, harmoniously cooperating together, they will share with Us Our hope of making manifest the glory of Our country, both at home and abroad, and of securing forever the stability of the work bequeathed to Us by Our Imperial Ancestors.

## Preamble [or Edict] (Joyu)

Having, by virtue of the glories of Our Ancestors, ascended the throne of a lineal succession unbroken for ages eternal; desiring to promote the welfare of, and to give development to the moral and intellectual faculties of Our beloved subjects, the very same that have been favored with the benevolent care and affectionate vigilance of Our Ancestors; and hoping to maintain the prosperity of the State, in concert with Our people and with their support, We hereby promulgate, in pursuance of Our Imperial Rescript of the 12th day of the 10th month of the 14th year of Meiji, a fundamental law of the State, to exhibit the principles, by which We are guided in Our conduct, and to point out to what Our descendants and Our subjects and their descendants are forever to conform.

The right of sovereignty of the State, We have inherited from Our Ancestors, and We shall bequeath them to Our descendants. Neither We nor they shall in the future fail to wield them, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution hereby granted.

We now declare to respect and protect the security of the rights and of the property of Our people, and to secure to them the complete enjoyment of the same, within the extent of the provisions of the present Constitution and of the law.

The Imperial Diet shall first be convoked for the 23rd year of Meiji and the time of its opening shall be the date, when the present Constitution comes into force.

When in the future it may become necessary to amend any of the provisions of the present Constitution, We or Our successors shall assume the initiative right, and submit a project for the same to the Imperial Diet. The Imperial Diet shall pass its vote upon it, according to the conditions imposed by the present Constitution, and in no otherwise shall Our descendants or Our subjects be permitted to attempt any alteration thereof.

Our Ministers of State, on Our behalf, shall be held responsible for the carrying out of the present Constitution, and Our present and future subjects shall forever assume the duty of allegiance to the present Constitution.

## CHAPTER I.
## THE EMPEROR

Article 1. The Empire of Japan shall be reigned over and governed by a line of Emperors unbroken for ages eternal.

Article 2. The Imperial Throne shall be succeeded to by Imperial male descendants, according to the provisions of the Imperial House Law.

Article 3. The Emperor is sacred and inviolable.

Article 4. The Emperor is the head of the Empire, combining in Himself the rights of sovereignty, and exercises them, according to the provisions of the present Constitution.

Article 5. The Emperor exercises the legislative power with the consent of the Imperial Diet.

Article 6. The Emperor gives sanction to laws, and orders them to be promulgated and executed.

Article 7. The Emperor convokes the Imperial Diet, opens, closes, and prorogues it, and dissolves the House of Representatives.

Article 8. The Emperor, in consequence of an urgent necessity to maintain public safety or to avert public calamities, issues, when the Imperial Diet is not sitting, Imperial ordinances in the place of law.
(2) Such Imperial Ordinances are to be laid before the Imperial Diet at its next session, and when the Diet does not approve the said Ordinances, the Government shall declare them to be invalid for the future.

Article 9. The Emperor issues or causes to be issued, the Ordinances necessary for the carrying out of the laws, or for the maintenance of the public peace and order, and for the promotion of the welfare of the subjects. But no Ordinance shall in any way alter any of the existing laws.

Article 10. The Emperor determines the organization of the different branches of the administration, and salaries of all civil and military officers, and appoints and dismisses the same. Exceptions especially provided for in the present Constitution or in other laws, shall be in accordance with the respective provisions (bearing thereon).

Article 11. The Emperor has the supreme command of the Army and Navy.

Article 12. The Emperor determines the organization and peace standing of the Army and Navy.

Article 13. The Emperor declares war, makes peace, and concludes treaties.

Article 14. The Emperor declares a state of siege.
(2) The conditions and effects of a state of siege shall be determined by law.

Article 15. The Emperor confers titles of nobility, rank, orders and other marks of honor.

Article 16. The Emperor orders amnesty, pardon, commutation of punishments and rehabilitation.

Article 17. A Regency shall be instituted in conformity with the provisions of the Imperial House Law.
(2) The Regent shall exercise the powers appertaining to the Emperor in His name.

## CHAPTER II.
## RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF SUBJECTS

Article 18. The conditions necessary for being a Japanese subject shall be determined by law.

Article 19. Japanese subjects may, according to qualifications determined in laws or ordinances, be appointed to civil or military or any other public offices equally.

Article 20. Japanese subjects are amenable to service in the Army or Navy, according to the provisions of law.

Article 21. Japanese subjects are amenable to the duty of paying taxes, according to the provisions of law.

Article 22. Japanese subjects shall have the liberty of abode and of changing the same within the limits of the law.

Article 23. No Japanese subject shall be arrested, detained, tried or punished, unless according to law.

Article 24. No Japanese subject shall be deprived of his right of being tried by the judges determined by law.

Article 25. Except in the cases provided for in the law, the house of no Japanese subject shall be entered or searched without his consent.

Article 26. Except in the cases mentioned in the law, the secrecy of the letters of every Japanese subject shall remain inviolate.

Article 27. The right of property of every Japanese subject shall remain inviolate.
(2) Measures necessary to be taken for the public benefit shall be any provided for by law.

Article 28. Japanese subjects shall, within limits not prejudicial to peace and order, and not antagonistic to their duties as subjects, enjoy freedom of religious belief.

Article 29. Japanese subjects shall, within the limits of law, enjoy the liberty of speech, writing, publication, public meetings and associations.

Article 30. Japanese subjects may present petitions, by observing the proper forms of respect, and by complying with the rules specially provided for the same.

Article 31. The provisions contained in the present Chapter shall not affect the exercises of the powers appertaining to the Emperor, in times of war or in cases of a national emergency.

Article 32. Each and every one of the provisions contained in the preceding Articles of the present Chapter, that are not in conflict with the laws or the rules and discipline of the Army and Navy, shall apply to the officers and men of the Army and of the Navy.

## CHAPTER III.
## THE IMPERIAL DIET

Article 33. The Imperial Diet shall consist of two Houses, a House of Peers and a House of Representatives.

Article 34. The House of Peers shall, in accordance with the ordinance concerning the House of Peers, be composed of the members of the Imperial Family, of the orders of nobility, and of those who have been nominated thereto by the Emperor.

Article 35. The House of Representatives shall be composed of members elected by the people, according to the provisions of the law of Election.

Article 36. No one can at one and the same time be a Member of both Houses.

Article 37. Every law requires the consent of the Imperial Diet.

Article 38. Both Houses shall vote upon projects of law submitted to it by the Government, and may respectively initiate projects of law.

Article 39. A Bill, which has been rejected by either the one or the other of the two Houses, shall not be brought in again during the same session.

Article 40. Both Houses can make representations to the Government, as to laws or upon any other subject. When, however, such representations are not accepted, they cannot be made a second time during the same session.

Article 41. The Imperial Diet shall be convoked every year.

Article 42. A session of the Imperial Diet shall last during three months. In case of necessity, the duration of a session may be prolonged by the Imperial Order.

Article 43. When urgent necessity arises, an extraordinary session may be convoked in addition to the ordinary one.
(2) The duration of an extraordinary session shall be determined by Imperial Order.

Article 44. The opening, closing, prolongation of session and prorogation of the Imperial Diet, shall be effected simultaneously for both Houses.
(2) In case the House of Representatives has been ordered to dissolve, the House of Peers shall at the same time be prorogued.

Article 45. When the House of Representatives has been ordered to dissolve, Members shall be caused by Imperial Order to be newly elected, and the new House shall be convoked within five months from the day of dissolution.

Article 46. No debate can be opened and no vote can be taken in either House of the Imperial Diet, unless not less than one-third of the whole number of Members thereof is present.

Article 47. Votes shall be taken in both Houses by absolute majority. In the case of a tie vote, the President shall have the casting vote.

Article 48. The deliberations of both Houses shall be held in public. The deliberations may, however, upon demand of the Government or by resolution of the House, be held in secret sitting.

Article 49. Both Houses of the Imperial Diet may respectively present addresses to the Emperor.

Article 50. Both Houses may receive petitions presented by subjects.

Article 51. Both Houses may enact, besides what is provided for in the present Constitution and in the Law of the Houses, rules necessary for the management of their internal affairs.

Article 52. No Member of either House shall be held responsible outside the respective Houses, for any opinion uttered or for any vote given in the House. When, however, a Member himself has given publicity to his opinions by public speech, by documents in print or in writing, or by any other similar means, he shall, in the matter, be amenable to the general law.

Article 53. The Members of both Houses shall, during the session, be free from arrest, unless with the consent of the House, except in cases of flagrant delicts, or of offenses connected with a state of internal commotion or with a foreign trouble.

Article 54. The Ministers of State and the Delegates of the Government may, at any time, take seats and speak in either House.

## CHAPTER IV.
## THE MINISTERS OF STATE AND THE PRIVY COUNCIL

Article 55. The respective Ministers of State shall give their advice to the Emperor, and be responsible for it.
(2) All Laws, Imperial Ordinances, and Imperial Rescripts of whatever kind, that relate to the affairs of the state, require the countersignature of a Minister of State.

Article 56. The Privy Councillors shall, in accordance with the provisions for the organization of the Privy Council, deliberate upon important matters of State when they have been consulted by the Emperor.

# Imperial Rescript on Education of the Emperor Meiji, 1890[234]

Know ye, Our subjects:

Our Imperial Ancestors have founded Our Empire on a basis broad and everlasting and have deeply and firmly implanted virtue; Our subjects ever united in loyalty and filial piety have from generation to generation illustrated the beauty thereof. This is the glory of the fundamental character of Our Empire, and herein also lies the source of Our education.

Ye, Our subjects, be filial to your parents, affectionate to your brothers and sisters; as husbands and wives be harmonious, as friends true; bear yourselves in modesty and moderation; extend your benevolence to all; pursue learning and cultivate arts, and thereby develop intellectual faculties and perfect moral powers; furthermore advance public good and promote common interests; always respect the Constitution and observe the laws; should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth.
So shall ye not only be Our good and faithful subjects, but render illustrious the best traditions of your forefathers. The Way here set forth is indeed the teaching bequeathed by Our Imperial Ancestors, to be observed alike by Their Descendants and the subjects, infallible for all ages and true in all places.It is Our wish to lay it to heart in all reverence, in common with you, Our subjects, that we may thus attain to the same virtue.

The 30th day of the 10th month of the 23rd year of Meiji.
(October 30, 1890)

[234] Sensei George E. Arrington III, "The Rescript on Education of the Meiji Emperor."
< http://www.danzan.com/HTML/ESSAYS/meiji.html >.

# Excerpt of the Constitution of Japan, 1947[235]

***Promulgated on November 3, 1946. Put into effect on May 3, 1947.***

*Note: This excerpt provides information from the Constitution relative to the powers of the emperor, religion, and the rights of Japanese subjects. Excluded were chapters VI-IX and XI, which dealt with the Judiciary, Finance, Local Self-Government, Amendments and Supplementary Provisions.*

We, the Japanese people, acting through our duly elected representatives in the National Diet, determined that we shall secure for ourselves and our posterity the fruits of peaceful cooperation with all nations and the blessings of liberty throughout this land, and resolved that never again shall we be visited with the horrors of war through the action of government, do proclaim that sovereign power resides with the people and do firmly establish this Constitution. Government is a sacred trust of the people, the authority for which is derived from the people, the powers of which are exercised by the representatives of the people, and the benefits of which are enjoyed by the people. This is a universal principle of mankind upon which this Constitution is founded. We reject and revoke all constitutions, laws, ordinances, and rescripts in conflict herewith.

We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationship, and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world. We desire to occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth. We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want.

We believe that no nation is responsible to itself alone, but that laws of political morality are universal; and that obedience to such laws is incumbent upon all nations who would sustain their own sovereignty and justify their sovereign relationship with other nations.

We, the Japanese people, pledge our national honor to accomplish these high ideals and purposes with all our resources.

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[235] "1947 Japanese Constitution." Part of the Hanover Historical Texts Project. < http://history.hanover.edu/texts/1947con.html >.

## CHAPTER I.
## THE EMPEROR

Article 1. The Emperor shall be the symbol of the State and of the unity of the people, deriving his position from the will of the people with whom resides sovereign power.

Article 2. The Imperial Throne shall be dynastic and succeeded to in accordance with the Imperial House law passed by the Diet.

Article 3. The advice and approval of the Cabinet shall be required for all acts of the Emperor in matters of state, and the Cabinet shall be responsible therefor.

Article 4. The Emperor shall perform only such acts in matters of state as are provided for in this Constitution and he shall not have powers related to government
(2) The Emperor may delegate the performance of his acts in matters of state as may be provided by law.

Article 5. When, in accordance with the Imperial House law, a Regency is established, the Regent shall perform his acts in matter of state in the Emperor's name. In this case, paragraph one of the article will be applicable.

Article 6. The Emperor shall appoint the Prime Minister as designated by the Diet.
(2) The Emperor shall appoint the Chief Judge of the Supreme Court as designated by the Cabinet.

Article 7. The Emperor, with the advice and approval of the Cabinet, shall perform the following acts in makers of state on behalf of the people:

(i) Promulgation of amendments of the constitution, laws, cabinet orders and treaties;
(ii) Convocation of the Diet;
(iii) Dissolution of the House of Representatives;
(iv) Proclamation of general election of members of the Diet;
(v) Attestation of the appointment and dismissal of Ministers of State and other officials as provided for by law, and of full powers and credentials of Ambassadors and Ministers;
(vi) Attestation of general and special amnesty, commutation of punishment, reprieve, and restoration of rights;
(vii) Awarding of honors;
(viii) Attestation of instruments of ratification and other diplomatic documents as provided for by law;
(ix) Receiving foreign ambassadors and ministers;
(x) Performance of ceremonial functions.

Article 8. No property can be given to, or received by, the Imperial House, nor can any gifts be made therefrom, without the authorization of the Diet.

## CHAPTER II.
## RENUNCIATION OF WAR

Article 9. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as a mean of settling international disputes.
(2) In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

## CHAPTER III.
## RIGHTS ANO DUTIES OF THE PEOPLE

Article 10. The conditions necessary for being a Japanese national shall be determined by law.

Article 11. The people shall not be prevented from enjoying any of the fundamental human rights. These fundamental human rights guaranteed to the people by this Constitution shall be conferred upon the people of this and future generations as eternal and inviolate rights.

Article 12. The freedoms and rights guaranteed to the people by this Constitution shall be maintained by the constant endeavor of the people, who shall refrain from any abuse of these freedoms and rights and shall always be responsible for utilizing them for the public welfare.

Article 13. All of the people shall be respected as individuals. Their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs.

Article 14. All of the people are equal under the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or family origin.
(2) Peers and peerage shall not be recognized.
(3) No privilege shall accompany any award of honor, decoration or any distinction, nor shall any such award be valid beyond the lifetime of the individual who now holds or hereafter may receive it.

Article 15. The people have the inalienable right to choose their public officials and to dismiss them.

(2) All public officials are servants of the whole community and not of any group thereof.
(3) Universal adult suffrage is guaranteed with regard to the election of public officials.
(4) In all elections, secrecy of the ballot shall not be violated. A voter shall not be answerable, publicly or privately, for the choice he has made.

Article 16. Every person shall have the right of peaceful petition for the redress of damage, for the removal of public officials, for the enactment, repeal or amendment of law, ordinances or regulations and for other matters, nor shall any person be in any way discriminated against sponsoring such a petition.

Article 17. Every person may sue for redress as provided by law from the State or a public entity, in case he has suffered damage through illegal act of any public official.

Article 18. No person shall be held in bondage of any kind. Involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime, is prohibited

Article 19. Freedom of thought and conscience shall not be violated.

Article 20. Freedom of religion is guaranteed to all. No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the State nor exercise any political authority.
(2) No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious acts, celebration, rite or practice.
(3) The state and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity.

Article 21. Freedom of assembly and association as well as speech, press and all other forms of expression are guaranteed.
(2) No censorship shall be maintained, nor shall the secrecy of any means of communication be violated.

Article 22. Every person shall have freedom to choose and change his residence and to choose his occupation to the extent that it does not interfere with the public welfare.
(2) Freedom of all persons to move to a foreign country and to divest themselves of their nationality shall be inviolate.

Article 23. Academic freedom is guaranteed.

Article 24. Marriage shall be based only on the mutual consent of both sexes and it shall be maintained through mutual cooperation with the equal rights of husband and wife as a basis.
(2) With regard to choice of spouse, property rights, inheritance, choice of domicile,

divorce and other matters pertaining to marriage and the family, laws shall be enacted from the standpoint of individual dignity and the essential equality of the sexes.

Article 25. All people shall have the right to maintain the minimum standards of wholesome and cultured living.
(2) In all spheres of life, the State shall use its endeavors for the promotion and extension of social welfare and security, and of public health.

Article 26. All people shall have the right to receive an equal education correspondent to their ability, as provided by law.
(2) All people shall be obligated to have all boys and girls under their protection receive ordinary educations as provided for by law. Such compulsory education shall be free.

Article 27. All people shall have the right and the obligation to work.
(2) Standards for wages, hours, rest and other working conditions shall be fixed by law.
(3) Children shall not be exploited.

Article 28. The right of workers to organize and to bargain and act collectively is guaranteed.

Article 29. The right to own or to hold property is inviolable.
(2) Property rights shall be defined by law, in conformity with the public welfare.
(3) Private property may be taken for public use upon just compensation therefor.

Article 30. The people shall be liable to taxations as provided by law.

Article 31. No person shall be deprived of life or liberty, nor shall any other criminal penalty be imposed, except according to procedure established by law.

Article 32. No person shall be denied the right of access to the courts.

Article 33. No person shall be apprehended except upon warrant issued by a competent judicial officer which specifies the offense with which the person is charged, unless he is apprehended, the offense being committed.

Article 34. No person shall be arrested or detained without being at once informed of the charges against him or without the immediate privilege of counsel; nor shall he be detained without adequate cause; and upon demand of any person such cause must be immediately shown in open court in his presence and the presence of his counsel.

Article 35. The right of all persons to be secure in their homes, papers and effects against entries, searches and seizures shall not be impaired except upon warrant

issued for adequate cause and particularly describing the place to be searched and things to be seized, or except as provided by Article 33.
(2) Each search or seizure shall be made upon separate warrant Issued by a competent judicial officer.

Article 36. The infliction of torture by any public officer and cruel punishments are absolutely forbidden.

Article 39. In all criminal cases the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial tribunal.
(2) He shall be permitted full opportunity to examine all witnesses, and he shall have the right of compulsory process for obtaining witnesses on his behalf at public expense.
(3) At all times the accused shall have the assistance of competent counsel who shall, if the accused is unable to secure the same by his own efforts, be assigned to his use by the State.

Article 38. No person shall be compelled to testify against himself.
(2) Confession made under compulsion, torture or threat, or after prolonged arrest or detention shall not be admitted in evidence.
(3) No person shall be convicted or punished in cases where the only proof against him is his own confession

Article 39. No person shall be held criminally liable for an act which was lawful at the time it was committed, or of which he has been acquitted, nor shall he be placed in double jeopardy.

Article 40. Any person, in case he is acquitted after he has been arrested or detained, may sue the State for redress as provided by law.

## CHAPTER IV.
## THE DIET

Article 41. The Diet shall be the highest organ of state power, and shall be the sole law-making organ of the State.

Article 42. The Diet shall consist of two Houses, namely the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors.

Article 43. Both Houses shall consist of elected members, representative of all the people.
(2) The number of the members of each House shall be fixed by law.

Article 44. The qualifications of members of both Houses and their electors shall be fixed by law. However, there shall be no discrimination because of race, creed, sex, social status, family origin, education, property or income.

Article 45. The term of office of members of the House of Representatives shall be four years. However, the term shall be terminated before the full term is up in case the House of Representatives is dissolved.

Article 46. The term of office of members of the House of Councillors shall be six years, and election for half the members shall take place every three years.

Article 47. Electoral districts, method of voting and other matters pertaining to the method of election of members of both Houses shall be fixed by law.

Article 48. No person shall be permitted to be a member of both Houses simultaneously.

Article 49. Members of both Houses shall receive appropriate annual payment from the national treasury in accordance with law.

Article 50. Except in cases provided by law, members of both Houses shall be exempt from apprehension while the Diet is in session, and any members apprehended before the opening of the session shall be freed during the term of the session upon demand of the House.

Article 51. Members of both Houses shall not be held liable outside the House for speeches, debates or votes cast inside the House.

Article 52. An ordinary session of the Diet shall be convoked once per year.

Article 53. The Cabinet may determine to convoke extraordinary sessions of the Diet. When a quarter or more of the total members of either house makes the demand, the Cabinet must determine on such convocation.

Article 54. When the House of Representatives is dissolved, there must be a general election of members of the House of Representatives within forty (40) days from the date of dissolution, and the Diet must be convoked within thirty (30) days from the date of the election.
(2) When the House of Representatives is dissolved, the House of Councillors is closed at the same time. However, the Cabinet may in time of national emergency convoke the House of Councillors in emergency session.
(3) Measures taken at such session as mentioned in the proviso of the preceding paragraph shall be provisional and shall become null and void unless agreed to by the

House of Representatives within a period of ten (10) days after the opening of the next session of the Diet.

Article 55. Each House shall judge disputes related to qualifications of its members. However, in order to deny a seat to any member, it is necessary to pass a resolution by a majority of two-thirds or more of the members present.

Article 56. Business cannot be transacted in either House unless one third or more of total membership is present.
(2) All matters shall be decided, in each House, by a majority of those present, except as elsewhere provided in the Constitution, and in case of a tie, the presiding officer shall decide the issue.

Article 57. Deliberation in each House shall be public. However, a secret meeting may be held where a majority of two-thirds or more of those members present passes a resolution therefor.
(2) Each House shall keep a record of proceedings. This record shall be published and given general circulation, excepting such parts of proceedings of secret session as may be deemed to require secrecy.
(3) Upon demand of one-fifth or more of the members present, votes of the members on any matter shall be recorded in the minutes.

Article 58. Each house shall select its own president and other officials.
(2) Each House shall establish its rules pertaining to meetings, proceedings and internal discipline, and may punish members for disorderly conduct. However, in order to expel a member, a majority of two-thirds or more of those members present must pass a resolution thereon.

Article 59. A bill becomes a law on passage by both Houses, except as otherwise provided by the Constitution.
(2) A bill which is passed by the House of Representatives, and upon which the House of Councillors makes a decision different from that of the House of Representatives, becomes a law when passed a second time by the House of Representatives by a majority of two-thirds or more of the members present.
(3) The provision of the preceding paragraph does not preclude the House of Representatives from calling for the meeting of a joint committee of both Houses, provided for by law.
(4) Failure by the House of Councillors to take final action within sixty (60) days after receipt of a bill passed by the House of Representatives, time in recess excepted, may be determined by the House of Representatives to constitute a rejection of the said bill by the House of Councillors.

Article 60. The Budget must first be submitted to the House of Representatives.
(2) Upon consideration of the budget, when the House of Councillors makes a

decision different from that of the House of Representatives, and when no agreement can be reached even through a joint committee of both Houses, provided for by law, or in the case of failure by the House of Councillors to take final action within thirty (30) days, the period of recess excluded, after the receipt of the budget passed by the House of Representatives, the decision of the House of Representatives shall be the decision of the Diet.

Article 61. The second paragraph of the preceding article applies also to the Diet approval required for the conclusion of treaties.

Article 62. Each House may conduct investigations in relation to government, and may demand the presence and testimony of witnesses, and the production of records.

Article 63. The Prime Minister and other Ministers of State may, at any time, appear in either House for the purpose of speaking on bills, regardless of whether they are members of the House or not. They must appear when their presence is required in order to give answers or explanations.

Article 64. The Diet shall set up an impeachment court from among the members of both Houses for the purpose of trying judges against whom removal proceedings have been instituted.
(2) Matters relating to impeachment shall be provided by law.

## CHAPTER V.
## THE CABINET

Article 65. Executive power shall be vested in the Cabinet.

Article 66. The Cabinet shall consist of the Prime Minister, who shall be its head, and other Ministers of State, as provided for by law.
(2) The Prime Minister and other Minister of State must be civilians.
(3) The Cabinet, in the exercise of executive power, shall be collectively responsible to the Diet.

Article 67. The Prime Minister shall be designated from among the members of the Diet by a resolution of the Diet. This designation shall precede all other business.
(2) If the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors disagrees and if no agreement can be reached even through a joint committee of both Houses, provided for by law, or the House of Councillors fails to make designation within ten (10) days, exclusive of the period of recess, after the House of Representatives has made designation, the decision of the House of Representatives shall be the decision of the Diet.

Article 68. The Prime Minister shall appoint the Ministers of State. However, a majority of their number must be chosen from among the members of the Diet.
(2) The Prime Minister may remove the Ministers of State as he chooses.

Article 69. If the House of Representatives passes a non-confidence resolution, or rejects a confidence resolution, the Cabinet shall resign en masse, unless the House of Representatives is dissolved within ten (10) days.

Article 70. When there is a vacancy in the post of Prime Minister, or upon the first convocation of the Diet after a general election of members of the House of Representatives, the Cabinet shall resign en masse.

Article 71. In the cases mentioned in the two preceding articles, the Cabinet shall continue its functions until the time when a new Prime Minister is appointed.

Article 72. The Prime Minister, representing the Cabinet, submits bills, reports on general national affairs and foreign relations to the Diet and exercises control and supervision over various administrative branches.

Article 73. The Cabinet, in addition to other general administrative functions, shall perform the following functions:

(i) Administer the law faithfully; conduct affairs of state;
(ii) Manage foreign affairs;
(iii) Conclude treaties. However, it shall obtain prior or, depending on circumstances, subsequent approval of the Diet;
(iv) Administer the civil service, in accordance with standards established by law;
(v) Prepare the budget, and present it to the Diet;
(vi) Enact cabinet orders in order to execute the provisions of this Constitution and of the law. However, it cannot include penal provisions in such cabinet orders unless authorized by such law.
(vii) Decide on general amnesty, special amnesty, commutation of punishment, reprieve, and restoration of rights.

Article 74. All laws and cabinet orders shall be signed by the competent Minister of state and countersigned by the Prime Minister.

Article 75. The Ministers of state, during their tenure of office, shall not be subject to legal action without the consent of the Prime Minister. However, the right to take that action is not impaired hereby.

## CHAPTER X.
## SUPREME LAW

Article 97. The fundamental human rights by this Constitution guaranteed to the people of Japan are fruits of the age-old struggle of man to be free; they have survived the many exacting tests for durability and are conferred upon this and future generations in trust, to be held for all time inviolate.

Article 98. This Constitution shall be the supreme law of the nation and no law, ordinance, imperial rescript or other act of government, or part thereof, contrary to the provisions hereof, shall have legal force or validity.
(2) The treaties concluded by Japan and established laws of nations shall be faithfully observed.

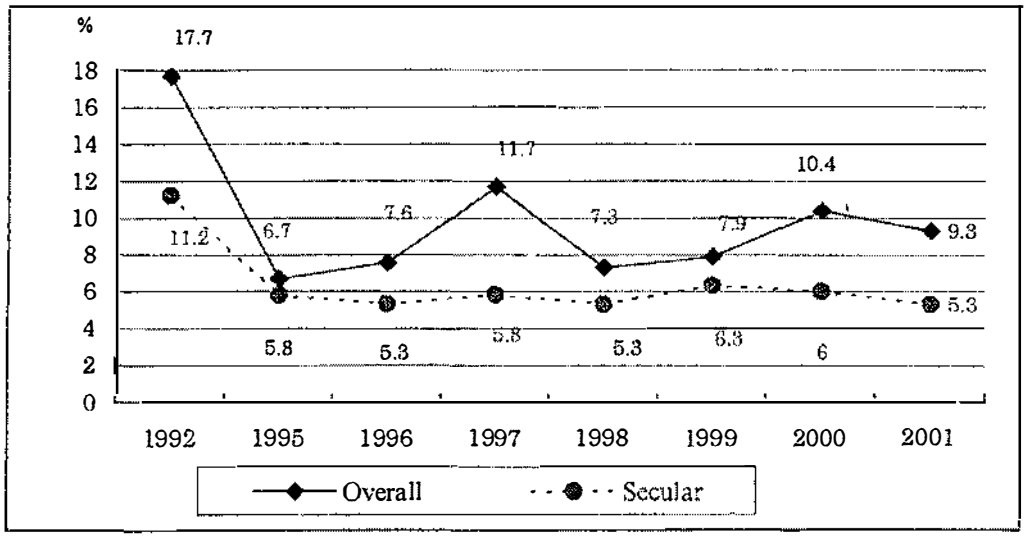
Article 99. The Emperor or the Regent as well as Ministers of State, members of the Diet, judges, and all other public officials have the obligation to respect and uphold this Constitution.

This table shows the level of participation by college students in various religious sects.[236]

**Table 6. Religious sectarian affiliation (respondents at secular schools)**

| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shinto | 3.3 | 2.7 | 4.9 | 4.3 | 2.5 |
| Buddhist | 34.4 | 28.8 | 32.5 | 37.4 | 23.3 |
| Christian | 20.1 | 22.4 | 19.9 | 19.4 | 30.2 |
| New Religion | 37.8 | 33.3 | 32.7 | 28.4 | 39.0 |
| Other religion | 4.3 | 7.3 | 1.5 | 2.5 | 1.1 |

*Figure 3. Ratio of those with faith*




[236] Inoue Nobutaka, ed., *Japanese College Students' Attitudes Towards Religion.* (Tokyo: 21st Century For Excellence Program, Kokugakuin University, 2003), 18.

This table represents the amount of interest shown by college students in religion and how they express their beliefs.[237]

*Figure 10. Level of interest in religion*
*(overall)*

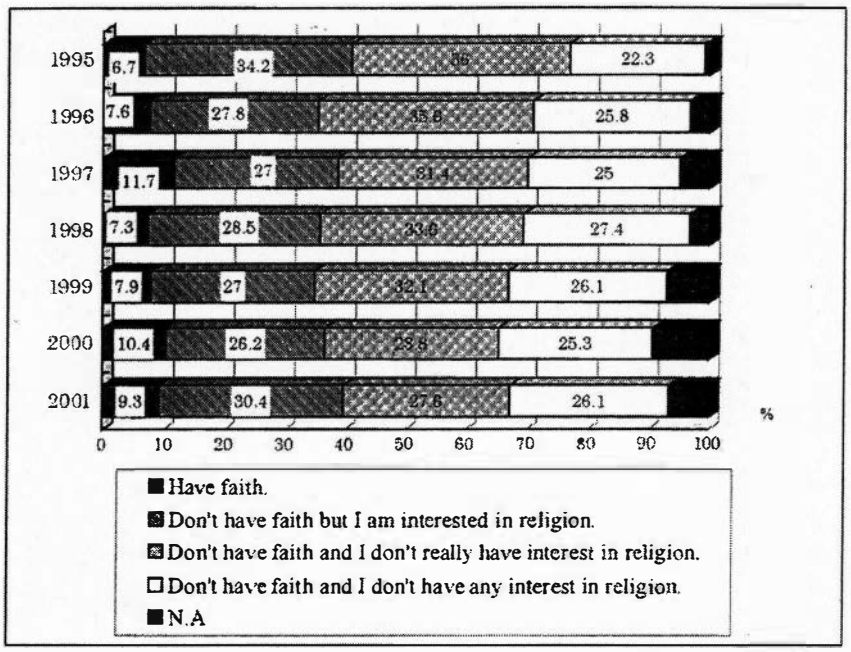



**Table 9. Objects of interest**

| | '95 | '96 | '97 | '98 | '99 | '00 | '01 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. Visiting shrines, temples, churches, etc. | 33.3 | 45.4 | 42.6 | 44.1 | 46.0 | 50.6 | 45.9 |
| B. Religious texts like the Bible and Buddhist scriptures | 37.9 | 45.9 | 42.5 | 42.3 | 43.9 | 47.7 | 43.0 |
| C. TV programs dealing with world religions, etc. | 48.8 | 34.1 | 36.6 | 31.5 | 33.1 | 35.3 | 36.0 |
| D. Books about religion | – | – | 36.0 | 35.1 | 35.1 | 31.8 | 34.0 |
| E. Nonfiction and fiction dealing with religion | 23.1 | 25.1 | 27.5 | 28.1 | 27.5 | 28.8 | 29.1 |

[237] Inoue Nobutaka, ed., *Japanese College Students' Attitudes Towards Religion.* (Tokyo: 21st Century For Excellence Program, Kokugakuin University, 2003), 26.

This is an example of a religious survey administered to Japanese college students in 1992. Several questions show answer percentages.[238]

## 1992 Survey Form

A1. Your sex.

A2. Your year of birth. (Western Calendar)

A3. Please write the name of your department, subject (course, major) name and class year to which you belong.

A4. Please write the name of your junior high school and the prefecture in which it was located.

A5. Was that school public or private?

A6. Please write the name of your senior high school and the prefecture in which it was located.

A7. Was that school public or private?

B1. Was the junior high school from which you graduated a religiously affiliated school?

B2. Was the senior high school from which you graduated a religiously affiliated school?
*Those who answered "Yes" to either B1 or B2, please answer questions B3 – B7. Likewise, those who answered "No" to both please proceed to C.

B3. Have you ever thought that by attending a religiously affiliated school that you began to believe in that religion?

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. I began to believe. | 22% |
| 2. I had an interest but it did not extend to belief. | 39% |
| 3. I don't think that I especially believed in it. | 31% |
| 4. I felt a repulsion instead. | 5% |

B4. Among the religious things that you saw at school, please give the one thing that left the strongest impression.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chapel | 32% | Buddhist chapel | 9% |
| Buddhist images | 8% | The cross | 4% |
| Images of Maria | 9% | Images of Jesus | 1% |

[238] Inoue Nobutaka, ed., *Japanese College Students' Attitudes Towards Religion.* (Tokyo: 21st Century For Excellence Program, Kokugakuin University, 2003), 108-112.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sisters | 3% | Minster, Father | 3% |
| Monks | 1% | Shrines | 2% |
| Shinto priest | 1% | | |

Religious art Memorial monuments; Other (Specify)

There was nothing that really left an impression.

B5. Of the religious activities at your school, please give the one that that left a strong impression. If there was nothing, please write "none."

B6. Did you have religion classes in junior high school?

* Those who answered yes only, please answer the next question, B6a.

B6a. Do you think that the classes were useful in increasing your understanding and appreciation of religion?

1. Very helpful. 24%
2. A little bit helpful. 44%
3. Can't say either way. 18%
4. Didn't really help. 8%
5. Didn't help at all. 5%
6. Don't know. 1%

B7. Did you have religious classes in senior high school?

* Those who answered yes only, please answer the next question, B7a.

B7a. Do you think that the classes were useful in increasing your understanding and appreciation of religion?

1. Very helpful. 22%
2. A little bit helpful. 42%
3. Can't say either way. 19%
4. Didn't really help. 9%
5. Didn't help at all. 5%
6. Don't know. 3%

C1. Do you think that the following classes would be a good as a part of junior and senior high school instruction or do you think that they are not necessary?

Please respond to each by number, by either "1. I think they should have it" or "2. It is not necessary. "

1. Teaching basic knowledge about Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and other main religions. 66/28%

2. Lectures by those who are passionately working in social welfare, socio-cultural

work, or other such work. 74/20%

3. Lectures by ministers, priests, monks, and Shinto priests. 36/58%

C2. Is the college that you attend affiliated with a religion?

*For those who answered "It is affiliated", please answer C3-C4.

*For those who answered "It is not affiliated", please proceed to D1.

C3. When you were taking entrance exams, did you know that your current college was affiliated with a religion? 92%

*Those who answered "Yes" only, please answer the next C3a.

C3a. When you were deciding where to matriculate, to what extent was a religiously affiliated college influential?

1. My desire to matriculate increased because of the religious affiliation. 15%
2. To a certain extent I was concerned, but I matriculated. 14%
3. I wasn't concerned about it. 71%

C4. Do you feel that the college that you now attend has a religious flavor?

*Those who answered "Yes" only, please answer the following C4a.

C4a. What aspects do you feel that there is a religious flavor? What did you think about that?

D1. If you were asked by a foreigner, "What religion do Japanese believe in?" how would you answer?

1. Most believe in Buddhism. 31%
2. Most believe in Shinto. 1%
3. Most believe in Christianity. 0%
4. Most believe in several religions. 18%
5. Most don't believe in religion. 26%
6. I don't know. 12%
7. Other (Specifically ) 9%

D2. Which statement applies to your interest in religion?

(Also, depending on your answer please answer either D2a, D2b, or D2c on the right.)

1. I believe in a particular religion. →To D2a
2. I don't believe in a particular religion but I have interest in religion. →To D2b
3. I don't believe in a particular religion and I have absolutely no interest. →To D2c

D2a. Which of the following does your belief belong to?

1. Shinto

2. Buddhism (If you know which sect, the sect name)
3. Christianity (If you know which denomination, the denomination name)
4. Soka Gakkai
5. Tenrikyo
6. Other (Specifically )

D2b. Which of the following fits your attitude towards religion?
(You can choose more than one.)

1. I am interested in various religions and I collect information about them.
2. I like reading religious texts like the Bible and Buddhist scriptures.
3. I don't have a particular faith but if there was a religion that I liked I would convert.
4. I do not belong to a particular religion but I religious feelings important.

D2c. Of the following, which is your reason for not having a faith?
(You can choose more than one.)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1. I didn't really have chances to interact with religion. | 24% |
| 2. I don't need it. | 32% |
| 3. I have a bad image of religion. | 13% |
| 4. I had a bad experience with religion. | 3% |
| 5. No special reason. | 48% |
| 6. Other. (Specifically ) | 5% |

D3. Of the follow phenomena a-e, to what extent do you believe in each? Please answer by number (1-5) from each of the answer groups below.

a. Spoon bending that you see on TV a lot
b. Aiko Gibo's spirit reading
c. The existence of a world after death
d. Horoscopes
e. The 1999 Prophecies of Nostradamus

(Answer Groups)

1. I basically believe it.
2. I don't necessarily believe it, but I think it is possible.
3. If I had to say one way or the other, it's a bit suspicious.
4. I don't believe it.
5. I don't know about this stuff.

D4. Of the following, if there is something that you have a relative interest in and watch or listen for, please encircle the number of the item in the answer column with a circle. (It does not matter if you circle several.)

1. Special Programs on supernatural powers on commercial broadcasting stations

31%

2. Television programs on novel world religions like voodoo and others. 22%

3. Minoru Kuroda's Spirit Manga 3%

4. Fortune telling columns in magazines 56%

5. Magazines like Twilight Zone and MU 10%

6. Articles that come out in magazines on new religions 20%

7. The religious book section of large bookstores 6%

8. Novels that are themed on Christianity by Ayako Miura, Shusaku Endo, and others 12%

9. Stories told by my friends on spirits and curses 50%

10. Old legends that my grandparents and parents tell me 35%

This is an example of a religious survey administered to Japanese college students in 2001. Answers are given in percentages to some questions. This survey may be contrasted to the previous example of 1992.[239]

## 2001 Survey Questions

For Q1~Q20, please write the appropriate mark, number, or letter in the[ ]. When choosing a number please encircle it with a circle. Also, among the questions there are several which ask for specific religion names. In that case, please answer by using the number from the Religion Names Table.

Q1. The year you were born 19[ ]

Q2. Your sex.
1. Male 2. Female

Q3. Please write whether the senior high school you graduated from was either public or private, which prefecture the school is located (if it was overseas, the name of the country), and the name of the school. Also, in case of high school equivalency examinations, in the place for senior high school name, please write "Equivalency exam."
Public / Private
Prefecture name (For a foreign country, country name)[ ]
Senior High School name [ ]

Q4. Please write the name, department, subject of study (course) etc., and class year of the college, junior college, vocational school, etc. which you currently attend.
Name, department/subject of study/ course, etc., class year.

Q5. Please choose from the following your current living situation.
1. Live with parents 2. Live alone
3. Dormitory 4. Other

Q6. If you have a "Family religion", please choose a name from the "Religion Names Table", and write a symbol or specific name. If there are two or more, please write each one.[ ]

Q7. To what extent do you have interest in your religion? Please choose from the following and answer the corresponding questions.
1. At the present, I have faith. →Please answer SQ7A-SQ7G
2. I don't have faith but I am interested in religion. →Please answer SQ7H
3. I don't have faith and I don't really have much in religion. →Please answer SQ7I

[239] Inoue Nobutaka, ed., *Japanese College Students' Attitudes Towards Religion.* (Tokyo: 21st Century For Excellence Program, Kokugakuin University, 2003), 157-163.

4. I don't have faith and I have absolutely no interest in religion.

→Please answer SQ7I

SQ7A. Please choose the religion in which you currently have faith in from the Religious Names Table. [ ]

SQ7B. When did you convert to that religion. Please choose from the following

1. From when I was born. 71%
2. In the time before I graduated from elementary school. 13%
3. When I was in junior high school. 6%
4. When I was in senior high school. 6%
5. After that. [(around years of age) ] 7%

SQ7C. Who recommended that religion to you? Please choose from the following.

1. Grandfather 14%
2. Grandmother 14%
3. Father 29%
4. Mother 37%
5. Sibling 2%
6. Friends 2%
7. Colleague 0%
8. Some who came as a missionary 1%
9. Someone who approached me on the street 0%
10. Proceeded on my own 12%
11. Other [Specifically ] 18%

SQ7D. To what extent are you devout about your faith? Please choose from the following.

1. I'm devout. 28%
2. I'm average. 46%
3. I am not really devout. 19%

SQ7E. Have you ever invited another person to your faith?

1. No. 64%
2. I've invited two to three people. 22%
3. I've invited several to ten or so people. 7%
4. I've invited more than a dozen people. 5%

SQ7F. Of the following, please circle the ones in which you hold an interest.

1. Religious texts like the Bible and Buddhist sutras.
2. A book that explained religion.
3. Novels and non-fiction books that deal with religion.
4. Television programs that deal with religious communities or world religions.
5. Visiting religious facilities like shrines, Buddhist temples, etc.
6. Other. [Specifically ]

SQ7G. Please choose from the following reasons the reason why you don't have much interest in religion or have no interest.(It's okay to circle more than one.)

1. I had a bad experience related to religion. 4%
2. For some reason I just don't like it. 19%
3. I don't feel a necessity for religion. 71%
4. Other. 15%

Q8. Does your father have personal religious faith?

1. Yes 2. No

SQ8. For those who answered [1.Yes] in Q8, please choose a religion from the Religious Names Table and write the symbol or specific name. [ ]

Q9. Does your mother have personal religious faith?

1. Yes 2. No

SQ9. For those who answered [1.Yes] in Q9, please choose a religion from the Religious Names Table and write the symbol or specific name. [ ]

Q10. What did you do for this year's first visit of the year to the shrine? Please choose from the following.

1. Went as a family.
2. I went separately from my family.
3. Some family went but I did not go.
4. No one went.
5. Other. [ ]

Q11. What did your family do about visiting the graves for last year's Festival of the Dead? Please choose from the following.

1. Went as a family.
2. Some family went but I did not go.
3. Went by myself separate from my family.
4. No one went from my family.
5. Other [ ]

Q12. Please select all applicable religious symbols or items in your family home (or your own home, if you live alone).

1. Shinto altar 38%
2. Buddhist altar 47%
3. Photograph of deceased relative 36%
4. Other religious items [please specify ] 7%

Q13. Among your friends, is there anyone that has a personal religious faith?

1.Yes → Please answer SQ13A-SQ13B

2. No → Please answer SQ13C

SQ13A. Please choose the name of your friend's religion from the Religious Names Table. If more than one friend has a faith, please answer with the case of the friend that is the most devout. [ ]

| | |
|---|---|
| Shinto | 1% |
| Buddhist | 8% |
| Christian | 40% |
| New Religion | 42% |

SQ13B. Because a friend believes in a religion, what is your position?

1. I would interact with them just as I always have. 77%

2. I interact more closely with them than other friends. 4%

3. I am a bit more aware of than when I interact with other friends. 7%

Friend A→ [ ]

Friend B→ [ ]

SQ13C. If you found out that a friend believed in a religion what would you do?

1. I would interact with them just as I always have. 57%

2. I would change how I interact with them depending on the religion my friend believed in. 25%

3.I would stop seeing that friend. 1%

4.Other. [ Specifically ] 3%

Q14. Have you every thought about the meaning of life or existence? Please choose from the following.

1. I think about it a lot.

2. Sometimes I think about it.

3. I don't really think about it.

4. I haven't thought about it at all.

Q15. What do you think about the existence of gods or the Buddha? Please answer by number from the following, "1. I believe 2. I think it's possible 3. I don't really believe 4. I deny it."

1. The existence of gods

2. The existence of the Buddha

3. The existence of a soul or spirit

SQ15A. Do you think that certain things cause curses? Please choose from the following.

1. I think there is

2. If I had to say one way or the other, I would say there was
3. If I had to say one way or the other, I would say no.
4. I don't think there is.

SQ15B. What kind of things do you think cause curses? (Multiple answers possible)

1. Gods
2. Buddha
3. Dead people
3. Animals
4. Dolls
5. Other [ Specifically ]

SQ15C. Concerning ancestors, please choose from the following what matches your thoughts (multiple answers okay).

1. The ancestors are an existence that watch over and protect their descendants. 51%
2. The ancestors are people who started the family and are connected from generation to generation to us. 53%
3. The ancestors are those family members I know and close blood relatives. 21%
4. When I die, I want to be enshrined by my descendents. 11%
5. If you don't hold services for the ancestors, you will be cursed. 8%

Q16. Concerning "healing," of the following given below, if there is one that applies to you, please circle it.

1. I have bought books or magazines on healing. 11%
2. I have bought a CD on healing. 23%
3. I have experienced aromatherapy. 20%
4. I have been to a healer. 0%
5. I have products that heal the heart/mind. 14%

Q17. When life troubles you, if there is a religious person that you would wish to seek advice from, please choose from the following (multiple answers okay).

1. A Buddhist monk
2. A Christian minister, priest, or sister
3. A Shinto priest
4. A fortune teller in town
5. Other person of religion [ Specifically ]

Q18. Of the following, which social work activities should a religious figure be involved with? (multiple answers okay):

1. Work to get rid of prejudice 36%
2. Counseling for victims and disaster victims 32%
3. Support for those who are facing death 40%

4. Social work activities for the physically handicapped and elderly 28%
5. Other [ Specifically ] 7%

Q19. Please answer the following questions about religion and gender differences.

SQ19A. Some religions do not allow women to achieve certain positions or ranks within the religious organization. Do you think this is discrimination?

1. I think it is discrimination 49%
2. I do not think it is discrimination 22%
3. I don't know 28%

SQ19B. Some religions forbid women from enter mountains or other sacred places; do you think this is discrimination?

1. I think it is discrimination 48%
2. I do not think it is discrimination 24%
3. I don't know 27%

SQ19C. Some religions forbid homosexuality. What do you think about this?

1. Religions should be concerned with that. 19%
2. Religions should not necessarily be concerned with that. 39%
3. I don't know. 40%

SQ19D. Some religions forbid abortions. What do you think about this?

1. Religions should be concerned with that. 22%
2. Religions should not necessarily be concerned with that. 41%
3. I don't know. 35%

Q20. Of the following best describes your Internet use? (multiple answers okay)

1. I have my own website. 5%
2. I have written on bulletin boards and chatted. 1%
3. I look at various websites 56%
4. I access the Internet via my mobile or cellular phone. 5%
5. I use e-mail. 8%
6. I don't use the Internet. 7%

All of the people except for those who chose number 6, please answer SQ20A.

SQ20A. Among Internet websites, please choose from the following what you have interest in (multiple answers possible):

1. Religious organization websites. 3%
2. Websites about the occult or strange phenomenon 5%
3. Websites about healing 5%
4. Websites about UFOs 3%
5. Websites about fortune telling 21%

6. I have no interest in websites like those in 1 through 5. 46%

All of the people except for those who chose number 6, please answer SQ20B.

SQ20B. How would you describe yourself as a result of accessing information about religions on the Internet? (multiple answers okay):

1. My interest in religion and things related to religion grew fervently. 5%
2. My knowledge about religion and things related to religion increased. 13%
3. My opinions about religion and things related to religion changed. 3%
4. I began to hold adverse feelings towards religion and things related to religion. 2%
5. Nothing particularly changed. 2%

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