

## Origins of the Universe in Shintoism: An Ancient Religion of Japan

Md. Abu Taher\*

**Abstract**– Almost all religions have ideas and beliefs about the origin of the universe. Some religious traditions, such as Hinduism (*Sanatana Dharma*) and Buddhism, see the universe as eternal, without beginning or end. The first books of the Bible contain an account of the creation of the universe, which some Christian faiths hold to be allegorical, and others regard as an expression of literal fact. Other religious traditions have other views, but each attempts to explain this ultimate question of where we came from and how it occurred. In this context, the Shinto people believe that the universe was created for them by their gods. The creation myth of Shintoism contains some general traits of the religion itself and is also influenced by some aspects of ancient Japanese culture. The mythical story also played an influential role in designing the religion's fundamental beliefs. In the Shinto creation myth, we will find various components; as power politics, division of labour, dimensions of relation, the importance of purification. Therefore, having some knowledge of Shintoism's basic features will help understand the influence of the myth of the origin of the universe. Shintoism or Shinto is the indigenous religious belief and practice of Japan. It is a polytheistic and animistic faith and involves the worship of *kami* or spirits. Shinto has no founder or sacred canon. It has no official scripture compared to the Bible in Christianity or the Quran in Islam. However, it has few highly venerated groups of texts, which are very ancient and preserve a record of the myths on the origin of ancient Japan's universe and religious life. The *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters), the *Nihon Shoki* (Continuing Chronicles of Japan), the *Rokkkushi* (Six national Histories) and the *Jinno Shotoki* (a study of Shinto and Japanese politics and history) may be considered the sacred books of Shinto. According to the Agency for Cultural Affairs statistics, in 1982, there were 79,700 shrines (places of worship), and the number of Shinto believers stands at 74,660,000. In this paper, an attempt has been made

---

\* Assistant Professor, Department of World Religions and Culture, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh. Email: mataher@du.ac.bd

to describe the Shinto's general description and mainly focus on its mythology or stories of origins of the universe and the sources are mainly based on relevant secondary books and articles.

**Keywords** Shintoism · Hinduism · Buddhism · Japan's ancient religion ·

## 1. Shintoism: An Introduction

This religion, native of Japan, is called *Kami-no-Michi*. It is best known by its Chinese name, Shinto or Shen-Tao. The word Shinto (way of Gods) was adopted from the Chinese words: "Shin"; meaning gods or spirits (originally from the Chinese word "Shen") and "to", meaning a philosophical path or study (originally from the Chinese word "tao"). It originated in prehistoric times and has long played an essential role in Japanese society. The word Shinto means "the way of kami", Kami means 'mystical', 'superior' or 'divine'. It came into use to distinguish indigenous Japanese beliefs from Buddhism, introduced into Japan in the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Hinnels, 1992: 12). Shinto is no longer Japan's official state religion. However, it is considered the native religion in Japan. Unlike most other religions, Shinto has no real founder, written scriptures, no body of religious laws, dogmas and only a very loosely-organised priesthood.

## 2. Forms of Shinto

Shinto exists in four primary forms or traditions, which are as follows:

- A. **Shrine Shinto (Jinja Shinto):** Shrine Shinto is the largest Shinto group. It consists principally worship of the *Kami* at the local shrine. It was the original form of religion, and its roots date back into pre-history. Until World War II, it was closely aligned with State Shinto, and the Emperor of Japan was worshipped as a living God. Almost all Shrines in Japan are members of *Jinjo Honech*, the association of Shinto Shrines. It played an essential role in the unification and solidarity of the nation and rural society. It currently includes about 80,000 shrines as members ([www.religioustolerance.org/shinto](http://www.religioustolerance.org/shinto)). The association urges followers of Shinto to follow the following:
  - i) To be grateful for the blessing of *Kami* and the benefits of the ancestors and to be diligent in the observance of the Shinto rites, applying oneself to them with sincerity, brightness and purity of heart.

- ii) To be helpful to others and in the world at large through deeds of service without through rewards and to seek the advancement of the world as one whose life mediates the will of *Kami*.
- iii) To bind oneself with others in harmonious acknowledgement of the will of the emperor, praying that the country may flourish and that other peoples too may live in peace and prosperity" ([www.jinja.or.jp](http://www.jinja.or.jp)).

**B. Sect Shinto (Shuha Shinto):** Sect Shinto is also known as Shuha Shinto. It consists of 13 sects that were individuals founded. Each sect has its own beliefs and doctrines. Most emphasise the worship of their central deity; some follow a near monotheistic religion. Generally, these groups do not have shrines but instead use churches as their centres of religious activity.

**C. Folk Shinto (Minzoku Shinto):** Japanese folk belief derives from three sources. The first is the survival of ancient traditions such as divination, magic, shamanic, rituals, folk medicines. Second are those elements forming the base structure of Shinto; cosmos of abstinence and purification and the cult of house and field deities. Third are those fragments of foreign religions such as Taoism, Buddhism, and medieval Catholicism or combined elements. Folk Shinto mainly refers to the second of these three. It is not a separate Shinto group and has no formal central organisation and creed. It is seen in local rural practices and rituals, small images by the side of the road, agricultural rituals practised by individual families. A rural community will often select a layperson annually responsible for worshipping the local deity.

**D. Imperial Shinto (Koshitsu Shinto):** This Shinto involves rituals performed by the emperor, whom the Japanese Constitution defines as the "symbols of the state and the unity of the people". The most important ritual is Niinamesai (harvest festival/National Ceremony), which offers the deities the first fruits of each year's grain harvest. Male and female clergy (Shoten and Nai-Shotan) assist the emperor in performing these rites.

The above four forms of Shinto are closely linked. Shinto is a tolerant religion that accepts the validity of other religions, and it is common for a believer to pay respects to other religions, practices and objects of worship.

### 3. Evolution of Shintoism

Shinto has been a significant part of Japanese life and culture throughout the country's history, and it has shared its spiritual, cultural and political roles with Buddhism and Confucianism. Few books of lore and history provide stories and background to many Shinto beliefs; such as the *Kajiki* (Record and Ancient Matters); the foundation to written Shinto history, the *Shoku Nihongi* (Continuing Chronicles of Japan), the *Rikkokushi* (six National Histories) and the *Jinno Shotoki* (study of Shinto and Japanese political and history) written in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Ancient Shinto was polytheistic. In ancient Japan, the word *kami* was used adjectively to mean something mysterious, supernatural and sacred. They also believed in *kami* of ideas such as growth, creation and judgment. Though each clan made the tutelary *kami* the core of its unity, such *kami* were not necessarily the ancestral deities of the clan. Sometimes *kami* of nature and *kami* of ideas were regarded as their tutelary *kami*. In Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801) classic definition, *kami* means- "anything whatsoever that is outside the ordinary, that possesses superior power or that is awe-inspiring." The simple objects of the folk cult, the deities of the imperial house, and those revered by the great clans are all considered *kami*.

According to Tsunetsugu and Naochi, the ancient *kami* may be divided into three categories:

- (i) natural deities (deities dwelling in natural objects or natural phenomena or deities that control these objects or phenomena),
- (ii) anthropomorphic deities (heroes, great personages and deified ancestors), and
- (iii) conceptual deities (deities who serve an ideal or symbolise an abstract power) (Eliade, 1984: 281).

It is thought that ancient Japanese believed that the souls of their deceased near relatives would become spirits after a period of purification and would merge with the ancestors to return to their dwellings in life once a year or so in specific seasons bestowing happiness and protection. However, the most crucial *kami* was the *ujigami* or clan deity, believed to protect the life and social functions of the most basic social unit of the period, the *uji*, or clan. In all cases, the *ujigami* was not an ancestral deity but rather a deity intimately related to the clan's mode of

subsistence or its geographical or political situation. Nevertheless, a tendency to conceive of the *ujigami* as an ancestor grew more vigorous later.

Two different views of the world were present in ancient Shinto. One was the three-dimensional view in which the plain of High Heaven (Takama no Hara, the world of the gods), Middle Land (Nakatsukuni, the present world) and the Hades (Yomi no Kuni, the world after death). All of these were arranged in vertical order. This vertical structure is the same type seen in Mongolian and North Asian shamanistic culture. It was this vertical cosmology that played the dominant role in Japanese myths. The other view was two-dimensional, one in which this world and the perceptual country (Tokyo, a romantic place for beyond the sea) existed in horizontal order. This type of cosmology belongs to the Southeast Asian type. The three-dimensional world views become the representative view observed in Japanese myths, and the two-dimensional view of the world was dominant among the populace.

Under the influence of continental culture, ancient Shinto began to develop in many ways. One such development is the consciousness that came about through Chinese culture or philosophy. At that time, Confucianism was a vital part of any philosophy. It was introduced to Japan around the 5<sup>th</sup> century (Eliade, 1984: 283). In the 7<sup>th</sup> century, it had spread among the people together with Chinese Taoism and Yin-yang (harmony of two elemental forces of nature) philosophy (Encyclopaedia of Britannica, v.27, 1997: 279). All of these stimulated the development of Shinto ethical teachings. Shinto developed as a national cult with the gradual centralisation of political power. Myths of various clans were combined and recognised into Pan-Japanese mythology with Imperial Household as its centre. The kami of the Imperial Household and the tutelary kami of powerful clans became the kami of the whole nation and people, and offerings were made by the state every year. Such practices were systematised supposedly around the start of the Taika-era reforms in 645. By the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, about 3,000 shrines throughout Japan received state offerings. As the central government's power declined, however, the system ceased to be effective, and after the 13<sup>th</sup> century, only a limited number of important shrines continued to receive the Imperial offerings. After the Meiji restoration in 1868, the old system was revived.

#### 4. Beliefs and doctrines in Shintoism

##### 4.1 Concept of the sacred

Shinto's core is the belief in the profound and mysterious power (*Musubi*) and in the truthful way or will (*Mokoto*) of Kami. The essence of Kami<sup>12</sup> cannot be fully explained in words. However, devoted followers can understand Kami through faith and usually recognise various kami in polytheistic form. The word 'kami' has several meanings. It can be referring to spirits of nature-mountains, rivers, trees, rocks, and ocean- all conceived to be alive and sacred. It may also refer to the deity dwelling in these natural objects or supernatural power. The Kami spirit may be incarnate in specific individuals- brave, unusual or gifted and these individuals may be deified as living Kami. The Kami may deliver its oracles through shamanic mediums, considered the 'children of the spirit' or Miko.

The great scholar Motoori Norinaga (1750-1801) summarised the meanings of kami in these words:

Speaking in general, it may be said that kami signifies, in the first place, the heaven and earth that appear in the ancient records and also the kami spirits of the shrines where they are worshipped. It is hardly necessary to say that it includes human beings, including such objects as birds, trees, plants, seas, mountains, and so forth. In ancient usage, anything outside the ordinary, which possessed superior power, or awe-inspiring was called Kami. Eminence here does not refer merely to the superior of nobility, goodness or meritorious deeds. If extraordinary and dreadful, Evils and mysterious things are called Kami. It is needless to say that among human beings who are called kami, the successive generations of sacred emperors are all included (Yusa, 2002: 20).

Parishioners of a shrine believe in their tutelary kami as the source of human life and existence. Each kami has a divine personality and responds to sincere prayers. The Kami also reveals and *makoto* to people and guides them to live following it. In traditional Japanese thought, truth manifests itself in emperor existence and transforms infinite varieties in time and space. *Makoto* is not an abstract ideology, and it can be recognised in the encounter between man and Kami.

##### 4.2 The nature of humanity

In Shinto, it is commonly said that "man is kami's child". First, this means that man has received his life from kami and that the life of human beings is sacred. Second, kami's blessing makes our daily life and work possible. An individual

must revere the fundamental human rights of everyone (regardless of race and citizenship) as well as his own. This respect for human rights is the theoretical foundation of the Shinto peace movement. The concept of original sin is not found in Shinto.

On the contrary, man is considered to have a primarily divine nature. However, this sacred nature is seldom revealed in man. Purification is considered symbolically to remove the dust and impurities covering one's inner mind.

### 4.3 Purification and attitudes towards life

Shinto advocates *makoto no kokoro* (the heart of truth) or *magokoro* (the true heart) as the best attitude toward life. These are generally translated as 'sincerely', 'purity of heart' or 'upper lessons'. These attitudes reveal kami's truthfulness and humanity. In common-sense terms, they refer to the attitude of doing one's best in work and human relations, but the most fundamental source of these attitudes is the awareness of the divine. In other words, the source lies in prayer. Shinto ethics does not ignore loyalty, filial piety, love, faithfulness and other individual moral values. However, it is held that all these virtues are different names for actions springing from *magokoro*. In ancient Shinto, *magokoro* was also described as a bright and pure mind, or 'bright, pure, upright and sincere mind'. Succinctly, it referred to a condition of having a purity of mind. As is held now and as was held in the past, achieving this condition by purifying the heart and mind is an absolute prerequisite for coming with kami and receiving kami's blessing.

### 4.4 Rites and rituals

There are no weekly religious services in Shinto. Some people occasionally visit shrines and churches to calm and strengthen themselves through prayer. Others may go to the shrines on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month and on the occasions of rites or festivals, which take place several times a year, but devotees or believers visit the shrine daily.

### 4.5 Festival, prayer and worship

Shinto Shrine: Shinto shrines are the place of worship and dwelling of the *Kami* (Refers to the Gods of Shintoism. There are many *Kami*, and can be anything from a human being to a magnificent mountain). A public shrine is a building or place that functions as a conduit for *Kami*. A fewer number of shrines are also

natural places called *Mori*. The most common *mori* are sacred groves of trees, mountains, or waterfalls. All shrines are open to public art sometimes or throughout the year. People visit shrines to respect the *Kami* or pray for good fortune. Shrines are also visited during special events such as New Year, *setsuu*, *shichigosan* and other festivals. Newborn babies are traditionally brought to a shrine a few days after birth, and many couples hold their wedding ceremonies there.

Shinto shrine festivals (Littleton, 2002: 302) include annual and occasional festivals, divided into grand, middle-sized and minor festivals. Among the grand festivals are spring festivals (*Haru-Matsuri*; prayer for a good harvest and the success of various industries), fall festivals (Shinto thanksgiving), annual festivals (*Rei-sai*) and divine processions (*Shinko-sai*). Among the occasional festivals are the ceremony of shrine dedication and shrine removal.

The general plans of grand festivals are as follows:

**Purification:** Typically, the purification rites are held at a corner of the shrine precincts right before participants enter the shrine. At other times, the rites are performed inside the shrine before a ceremony.

**Adoration:** Bowing to the altar is a practice that the chief priest and the congregation participate in.

**Open the inner sanctuary door:** The chief priest carries out this.

**Presentations of food offering:** Food offerings are then presented and usually consist of sake wine, rice cakes, fish, seaweed, vegetables, salt, water, and rice. It is important to note that animal meat is not offered because it is forbidden to shed blood within sacred surroundings. It was customary for Shintoists to offer cooked food to *Kami*, but the present-day see uncooked food mainly used.

**Prayer:** The chief priest gives prayers (*norito*) on ancient Shinto prayers. These prayers were compiled in the early 10<sup>th</sup> century. Today, the old beliefs are still embraced, where spoken words carry a strong spiritual influence.

**Sacred music and dance:** Sacred music and dance play an essential role during Shinto rituals.

**General Offering:** Worshipers offer the symbolic gift of a small branch of the *Sakaki* sacred tree before the *kami*'s altar and pray.

Taking offering away: After the public offering has passed, the offerings are then taken away.

Shutting the door of the inner sanctuary: The door to the inner sanctuary is closed shut.

Adoration: This is a greeting to the kami at the end of the ceremony.

Feast: Also known as natural, a short sermon or speech is delivered before the feast, which has become a widespread practice amongst Shintoists since World War II.

## 5. Myths or stories of the origins of universe in Shintoism

The Japanese mythology relevant to the study of Shinto is recorded in classical sources from the Nara and early Heian periods. It is often called *Kiki* mythology (*Kiki shinwa*) and refers to the chapters on the age of the *kami* in the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*. Alternatively, it is also described as "classical mythology" to include myths from other classical sources, such as the *Fudoki* and the *Kogo shūi*. Moreover, much importance was attached to the mythological tradition recorded in the Sendai *kuji hongu* in the medieval period. Except for the ancient *norito* (prayers) recorded in Book- 8 of the *Engishiki* (927), the myths recorded in these classical works were not read out as part of ritual performances. This *norito* were recited during rituals and referred implicitly to the *Kiki* mythology. The *Kiki* myths retain clear traces of religious concepts from the agricultural society that existed during the process of political integration in the Yayoi period (when, for example, the Yamatai state arose) and the birth of the Japanese state as a coalition of clans under the "Great Kings" of the Kofun period. In these periods, society moved away from the relatively egalitarian, loosely-structured society of the Palaeolithic and Jomon periods, when the economy had been based on hunting and gathering. In all sectors of society, we can note signs of the concentration of power, social stratification, and specialised division of labour. It was against this background that religious specialists emerged, and with this development, deities gained individual characteristics, and these deities were integrated into a pantheon. The *Kiki* myths were developed in the course of this process. In their final form, they reflect traditional religious ideas and conceptions of deities and the political intention of the Yamato court to mobilise the authority of the deities for the legitimisation of court rule in the sixth and seventh centuries. It explains why *Kiki* mythology gives much attention to the relationships between deities and their achievements and why the myths are placed within a clear overall structure both temporally and spatially. Such structuring of myth is characteristic of highly developed culture and society.

*Kiki* mythology contains a great variety of heterogeneous elements, some motifs that had spread from other regions and others reflections of historical events and popular practices, allowing for multiple interpretations of any particular point. Moreover, there were differing objectives in the compilation of the *Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, and as a result, the works display numerous differences. It needs to focus on these two sources' characteristics rather than their differences. It needs to address the connections between myths and ritual practice and an overview of some religious ideas and conceptions of deities that formed the background to *Kiki* mythology.

The creation of the Islands of Japan: In the beginning, when the universe was created from the pre-existing chaos, several kami ('gods' in this context) appeared spontaneously. Their relationships gave rise to a brother and sister, Izanagi and Izanami. Izanagi means 'he who invites' and Izanami means 'she who invites'. Izanagi and Izanami thrust a jewelled spear into the ocean, and the first land formed where the spear touched the water. It was the central island of Japan. Izanagi and Izanami married and discovered sexual intercourse. Their first child, Hiruko, was born deformed and later abandoned by his parents; legend says the deformity was caused because Izanami had spoken first in the sexual ritual. The couple had sexual intercourse on several other occasions, and their other offspring included the other islands of Japan and some of the kami.

The house of the dead: Izanami was severely burned during the birth of the kami of fire and died. It is the first death in the world. Izanagi was furious with sorrow and beheaded the child he blamed for his wife's death. Other kami were born from the blood of the execution. Izanagi was grief-stricken and searched for her to the underworld - Yomi, the land of the dead. When he found her, Izanami had eaten the dead fruit and might be doomed to stay in Yomi forever. Izanami made Izanagi promise not to look at her but to give her time to consult with the underworld rulers to see if they would let her return to the land of the living. After a while, Izanagi broke his promise and looked for her. When he found her, he saw that her body had rotted and was full of maggots. Izanagi was horrified and tried to return to the land of the living, but his wife/sister, angry and ashamed at being seen in a state of decay, pursued him so that she could force him to live with her in the underworld forever. Izanagi escaped and blocked the entrance to Yomi with a boulder so that Izanami could not follow him, forming a permanent barrier between the worlds of the living and the dead. Izanami was furious and said that every day from that moment on, she would kill 1000 people every day. Izanagi said that he would create 1500 newborn babies each day.

The power of purification: After escaping from Yomi, Izanagi was contaminated by his contact with death and was plagued with misfortune. He bathed himself thoroughly in the ocean to wash away the pollution of death. It was the first example of the *harae* purification ritual. Many new kami, including Amaterasu (the Sun Goddess) and her brother Susanoo (the kami of the wind and storms), was created during the purification ritual.

Amaterasu and Susansoo: Izanagi gave Amaterasu authority to rule the land. Susanoo was disappointed and angry. His tantrums led him to misbehave, and he was banished from heaven. Things do not end in disaster for Susanoo, who remains an essential and powerful kami. Although he has fearful powers of destruction, he is worshipped at many shrines for having the power to prevent disaster. Amaterasu was upset by the behaviour of Susanoo, and in a sulk, hid in a cave. The absence of the sun brought darkness to the world. The other kami gathered outside the cave and asked Amaterasu to come out. She, still sulking, refused. The kami had a party during which a female kami did a sexy dance outside the cave, which made them all laugh. Amaterasu came out of the cave to see what the jollity was about. The other kami grabbed her and persuaded her to take her proper place in the cosmos.

The imperial family: Interestingly, it also acknowledges the power of the female, something that is at odds with earlier parts of the myth and which does not seem to have played many parts in setting gender roles in Japanese life. Amaterasu had children and grandchildren, and in consultation with other senior kami, she decided that Japan should be ruled forever by an Imperial family.

The above mythical stories have a clear political consequence. They established the powerful Yamamoto clan as descended from the gods and ruled Japan. The rival Izumo clan is descended from Susanoo, and so it can be seen as part of the divine plan that they should have a subordinate role. The legend that the Japanese are loosely descended from the Sun Goddess is shown by the symbol of the sun on the Japanese flag.

## **6. Origins of the universe and influence in the Japanese society**

Izanagi continued his given task after Izanami died giving birth. He commenced the first cleaning ritual washing his left eye and creating the sun goddess Amaterasu. When he washed his right eye, the moon goddess *Tsuki-Yumi* came forth. He created Susanowo, the god of the seas and the storms from his nose. He then created the first people and animals, thus concluding the creation of Earth.

The initial influence that Shintoism brought to the culture of Japan was the idea of worship—worshipping all creation as parts of a more significant being made an essential impact for Japan as it began the idea of believing or worshipping in more than one God in that particular society. The belief in Shintoism came progressively, as the religion formed itself through readings, storytelling and myths. Society adopted its characteristics, features, and qualities to it.

The early days of the religion saw Japan engage considerably as a complete environment, and it was uniting everyone together over the same convictions and appreciations that they shared. It is still currently a very independent religion, which allowed the people of Japan to find their inner spirituality and communicate their worldview. Shintoism has influenced and shaped very distinct traits and has challenged the beliefs of many other religious cultures throughout the world. More specifically, the Japan we know and all the identifications we associate with Japan have been closely impacted by Shinto's beliefs, wisdom, practices, and knowledge.

The idea of overall acceptance within Shintoism is essential to the culture of Japan. It gives the country's body a more national binding and close relationship than most nations. Most religions classify societies into specific groups, stereotypes and classes. Accepting other religions and their beliefs allows the people to fit together understandingly and positively, without religion or contrasting beliefs. This self-selective and open practice of religions are very different from most Christianity and Judaism principles. It is a contributor to why Japan is known for its peaceful atmosphere.

The culture of Japan has been dramatically affected by the fundamental beliefs and way of life of Shinto. Additionally, the belief in Kami and its nature drives people to connect with their surroundings significantly. The love and respect for Kami and their appreciation for all nature and creation compels the Japanese society's value of cleanliness, helpfulness, and complete care over the environment.

Shinto imprints the idea of optimism throughout their teachings. This embracing of positive thinking gives the place and the people a pleasant setting and allows them to be more at peace within their souls and as people within the world. The most important influence that Shintoism has had on society is peace. Through the love of the environment, care for all things within the world and the genuine acceptance and cheerful outlook of life. The Japanese people and the followers of Shintoism create a peaceful projection in and throughout their own and others' societies.

## 7. Conclusion

The above creation story forms the core of the Shinto faith. It explains earth's existence and components and defines many of its beliefs. This story explains the creation of their gods, an essential aspect of religion. It also serves as a foundation for their belief that their emperors were divine. This idea is the basis for many of the Japanese people's actions. The Japanese emperor's authority went unquestioned, and Kamikaze flights were considered the highest tribute one could pay to the emperor-god. The gods would reward the pilot and his family by doing such an act. In these instances, and many more, the Shinto creation story permeates the lives of its Japanese followers.

### References

- Bounce, William K. (1948). *Religions in Japan*; Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company.
- Damien Keown. (2003). *A Dictionary of Buddhism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Herbert, Jean. (1967). *Shinto: at the fountain-head of Japan*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.
- John R. Hinnels (Ed.). (1992). *Shinto: Shinto Literature, Shinto Shrines*, UK: PenguinsBooks Ltd.
- John R. Hinnells (Ed.) (1984). *Dictionary of Religions*, UK: Penguin Books Ltd.
- Littleton, C Scott. (2002). *Shinto: Origins, Rituals, Festivals, Spirituals, SacredPlaces*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mason, J.W.T. (1967). *The meaning of Shinto*, New York: Kennikat Press.
- Mircea Eliade (Ed.). (1987). *The Encyclopaedia of Religion* (Vol.13), New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Michiko Yusa. (2002). *Japanese Religions*, London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd.
- Ross, Floed Hiatt. (1965). *Shinto: the way of Japan*; Boston: Sounders of Toronto.
- The New Encyclopaedia of Britannica (Edition in 1997), Vol.27.
- "The Shrine Shinto" is at: <http://www.religioustolerance.org/shinto.htm>
- The Jinja Shinto (The Shrine Shinto), is at: <http://www.jinja.or.jp/>
- "The Shuha Shinto" is at: <http://www.religioustolerance.org/shinto.htm>
- "The SHINTO" is at [http:// www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinto](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinto)

