

Shinto and Buddhism

In your own words, how would you describe Shinto when it first began in 500 BCE?

I would describe Shinto Buddhism as a primitive religion, with a focus on fertility, hero worship, divination, and shamanism.

What makes Shinto unique from other religions?

Shinto does not have a fully developed guide, such as the Bible for Christianity or the Koran for Islam. Instead, most people usually follow the tenets of Confucianism.

What is a kami and how is it different from something like an Abrahamic god?

A kami is the Shinto version of a god. However, it is different from Abrahamic gods in that most of the Shinto Gods represent natural formations and creatures, like food, rivers, and rocks. They are also seen as generally good, supporting the people.

Describe 3 general beliefs of Shinto followers

- Ancestors are deeply respected
- All human life is sacred
- People aspire to be like Kami, to be sincere and have a true heart.

Summarize the 4 affirmations in your own words

- **Tradition and the Family:** The family maintains tradition
- **Love and Nature:** Nature is sacred and should be worshipped
- **Physical Cleanliness:** Just be clean lol
- **Matsuri:** Worship the Kami and your ancestors.

Poke around on the Internet more and figure out how Shinto worked its way in Japanese culture and values and exactly what those values are. Read a couple different websites to get a couple different ideas from cultural anthropologist on this subject. Cite your sources informally.

Shinto legends tell us that Japanese emperors are all directly descended from God. Therefore, the Imperial family should be considered as godlike and worshipped. The "Emperor rules Japan because the gods want him to." (BBC). The Japanese government encouraged the Shinto perspective that the emperor was a divine being, controlling shrine finances and training programs for would-be priests. Additionally,

the government attempted to paint practicing Shinto as something patriotic and moral. (Keene)

After Buddhism gained prominence in Japan, Shintoism began to adopt some of Buddhism's values and coexisted quite well with it. In fact, most Japanese people begin in the kami as well as Buddhist ideas, since they fit quite well together.

Merging with Buddhism?: Using the link and the internet, answer the following questions in a couple of sentences in your own words: "What impact did the Japanese religion, state, and culture have on the development of Mahayana Buddhism?" & "How did Shinto and Buddhism merge together and impact the socio-culture of Japan?" Cite your sources informally.

Contrary to other religions completely adopting a major religion, like people in Europe and Christianity, the pagan religion of Japan and Buddhism mixed together. Some people said that certain Shinto deities were in charge of protecting the Buddha, like Hachiman, the God of War.

Additionally, Buddhists seeking to purify Shinto shrines built temples right next to them. Soon over time, these buildings blurred over into temple-shrines, with deities from both Buddhism and Shintoism present.

Putting it all together: Write a thesis clearly defining the role Japan had in shaping Mahayana Buddhism. This thesis might have to be a couple sentences to be accurate (it's ok, now that you're senior you have my permission to write a multi-sentence thesis :)). Note: you do not have to defend your thesis, the research above should do that.

Japan's already-present Shintoism and the Japanese government's use of Shintoism to push their own values transferred to Buddhism as well. Shintoism's primitiveness and worship of nature meshed well with Buddhism's ideas of peace.