

Shinto

2 religions in Japan: Shinto and Buddhism

- (Shinto = worshipping of the ancestors and nature.)
- Gods created the world and KAMI (Kami - Gods living in nature)
- Originated in Japan, is a east asian religion nowadays
- no central authority in control of Shinto and much diversity exists among practitioners
- revolves around the kami ("gods" or "spirits"), supernatural entities believed to inhabit all things
- kami are worshiped at kamidana household shrines, family shrines, and jinja public shrines



Shinto is a natural philosophy.

Torii marks the outer boundary of the sacred place.

Bow before the Kami.

Purification (oharrai omisoti)

•

There is a large amount of Kami:

- Sometimes called jingi
- Often said there are 8 million kami
- not regarded as omnipotent, omniscient, or necessarily immortal
- inhabit both the living and the dead, organic and inorganic matter, and natural disasters like earthquakes, droughts, and plagues, their presence is seen in natural forces such as the wind, rain, fire, and sunshine

five defining characters of Kami:

1. Kami are of two minds. They can nurture and love when respected, or they can cause destruction and disharmony when disregarded. Kami must be appeased in order to gain their favour and avoid their wrath. Traditionally, kami possess two souls, one gentle (nigi-mitama) and the other assertive (ara-mitama);

additionally, in Yamakage Shinto (see Ko-Shintō), kami have two additional souls that are hidden: one happy (saki-mitama) and one mysterious (kushi-mitama).

2. Kami are not visible to the human realm. Instead, they inhabit sacred places, natural phenomena, or people during rituals that ask for their blessing.
3. They are mobile, visiting their places of worship, of which there can be several, but never staying forever.
4. There are many different varieties of kami. There are 300 different classifications of kami listed in the Kojiki, and they all have different functions, such as the kami of wind, kami of entryways, and kami of roads.
5. Lastly, all kami have a different guardianship or duty to the people around them. Just as the people have an obligation to keep the kami happy, the kami have to perform the specific function of the object, place, or idea they inhabit.

Motoori Norinaga

- was a Japanese scholar of Kokugaku active during the Edo period
- conventionally ranked as one of the Four Great Men of Kokugaku (nativist) studies
- born in Matsusaka in Ise Province (now part of Mie Prefecture) as the second son of an Otsu merchant house
- After his elder brother's death, Norinaga succeeded to the Ozu line. At one stage he was adopted out to a paper-making family but the bookish boy was not suited to business.
- his mother suggested that, at the age of 22, Norinaga went to Kyoto to study medicine.
- he also studied Chinese and Japanese philology under the neo-Confucianist Hori Keizan. It was at this time that Norinaga became interested in the Japanese classics and decided to enter the field of Kokugaku under the influence of Ogyū Sorai and Keichū.
- began loving traditional Japanese court culture.
- Returning to Matsusaka, Norinaga opened a medical practice for infants while devoting his spare time to lectures on The Tale of Genji and studies of the Nihon Shoki (Chronicles of Japan). At the age of 27, he bought several books by Kamo no Mabuchi and embarked on his Kokugaku researches. As a doctor, he adopted the name of one of his samurai ancestors, Motoori.
- In 1763, Norinaga met Mabuchi in person when the latter visited Matsusaka, a meeting that has come down in history as 'the night in Matsusaka'. Norinaga took the occasion to ask Mabuchi to supervise his annotations of the Kojiki ("Records of Ancient Matters"). Mabuchi suggested that Norinaga should first tackle the annotations to the Man'yōshū in order to accustom himself to the ancient kana usage known as the man'yōgana. This was the only meeting between the two men, but they continued to correspond and, with Mabuchi's encouragement, Norinaga later went on to full-fledged research into the Kojiki.
- Norinaga's disciples included Ishizuka Tatsumaro, Nagase Masaki, Natsume Mikamaro, Takahashi Mikiakira and Motoori Haruniwa (Norinaga's son).
- Although overshadowed by his activities as a Kokugaku scholar, Norinaga spent 40 years as a practicing doctor in Matsusaka and was seeing patients until 10 days before his death in 1801.
- **Works:** Norinaga's most important works include the Kojiki-den (Commentaries on the Kojiki), made over a period of around 35 years, and his annotations on the Tale of Genji. Using the methods of Kokugaku and Kaozheng, Norinaga claimed that the Kojiki was the oldest surviving Japanese text. He used the supposed antiquity of the Kojiki to develop an idea of indigenous Japanese religion, laws, and religion which were later used in the development of an idea of State Shinto.
- Norinaga took the view that the heritage of ancient Japan was one of natural spontaneity in feelings and spirit, and that imported Confucianism ran counter to such natural feelings. He criticized Ogyū Sorai for his over-valuing of Chinese civilization and thought, although it has been pointed out that his philological methodology was heavily



influenced by Sorai's. His ideas were influenced by the Chinese intellectual Wang Yangming (Ō Yōmei in Japanese), who had argued for innate knowing, that mankind had a naturally intuitive (as opposed to rational) ability to distinguish good and evil.

- Hitherto scholars of ancient literature had shown a preference for the grandness and masculinity of Man'yōshū poetry and an aversion to works like the Tale of Genji, which were regarded as unmanly and feminine. Norinaga resurrected the position of the Tale of Genji, which he regarded as an expression of mono no aware (concept related to magokoro which Kamo no Mabuchi also spoke about), a particular Japanese sensibility of "sorrow at evanescence" that Norinaga claimed forms the essence of Japanese literature. Each man, according to Motoori, has at his birth a "true heart" a "magokoro" (the term magokokoro is itself almost an onomatopoeia since kokoro (the heart) expresses these "beats of the heart") whose ancient Japanese literature is the most faithful expression.
- In undertaking his textual analysis of ancient Japanese, Norinaga also made vital contributions to establishing a native Japanese grammatical tradition, in particular the analysis of clitics, particles and auxiliary verbs. As part of this research, Norinaga would initially discover Lyman's Law of rendaku, preceding the naming of which in honor of its later proponent, Benjamin Smith Lyman, by some 100 years.