

MAJOR RELIGIONS OF JAPAN

1. BUDDHISM



Buddhism originated in India and was introduced to Japan through China and Korea in the **6th century**.

FEATURES

- Buddhism has deeply stayed in the everyday life of the Japanese and exerted a significant influence on every aspect of Japanese spirit and culture.
- Ideal states of mind are supreme enlightenment and salvation.
- Buddhism split into many sects. **13 main sects**
Jodo sect, Jodo-shin sect, Zen, Nichiren sect,
- **Zenkoji Temple** belongs to Jodo sect.
- Tera is a Buddhist temple where funerals, memorial services, and other events are conducted. Buddhist temples are viewing attractions.
- Buddhism is polytheistic.

PRECEPTS

- Buddhist precepts prohibit Buddhists from eating meat and fish. Devout Buddhists are **vegetarians!**
- Buddhist precepts also forbid them from **drinking**.
But now even Buddhist monks **drink and eat steak and yakiniku.**

2. SHINTO

— A Japanese Orthodox religion —

Shinto is indigenous to Japan.

FEATURES

- Shinto has neither a specific founder nor scriptures.
- Shinto is polytheistic.

Japanese believe in myriads of deities that inhabit all things :
Trees, rocks, mountains, rivers and the sea

Human beings are part of nature.

- People fear deities because they bring not only happiness and fortune but also **disasters and plagues**.
- Worshippers pray to deities for the following :
 - Good marriage Get married to a millionaire
 - Business prosperity
 - Good health
 - Success in entrance exams to prestige universities
 - Protection against misfortune
- Deities are enshrined at shrines.
- A shrine has a large gateway called "**TORII**" at the entrance.
- Deities are all drinkers. **Japanese Bacchus!**

COMPARISON BETWEEN TEMPLES AND SHRINES

BUDDHIST TEMPLES



Temples are the center of religious activities. Statues of Buddha are enshrined and worshipped. There are facilities to perform Buddhist rituals and memorial services.

Buddhist monks live together for ascetic training. There are typically four indispensable buildings in the precincts; these include a main hall, a lecture hall, a pagoda and a bell house.

SHINTO SHRINES



Torii is a gate to the shrine. It indicates the boundary between sacred precincts and secular areas.

The spirit of the deity is enshrined at the main building. People wash their hands and rinse their mouths before going to the worship building to pray.

No.4

STRIKING FEATURES OF RELIGION OF JAPAN

A MYRIAD OF DEITIES

八百万の神

Japanese believe in a myriad of deities that inhabit all things.

This literally means;
8,000,000 deities!

JAPANESE ARE GENEROUS OF RELIGION. 日本人は宗教に寛容

Religious freedom is guaranteed by Japanese Constitution.

Japan has no state religion.

There was no religious war in Japan.

SYNCRETISM 神仏習合

Buddhism originated in India and came to Japan.

Buddhism and Shinto have influenced each other and have been in harmony and coexisted in the everyday life of Japanese.

ASSIMILATED but NOT UNIFIED

同化すれども統合せず

Most Japanese conduct a wedding according to Shinto rites or at a chapel.

Most Japanese conduct a funeral at a temple and celebrate Christmas.

It is common to have Shinto and Buddhist altars in a house.