**Chapter 7: Japanese Traditions**

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**Student Study Guide**

Chapter Overview

In Japan, religious practice is more important than religious belief. Though they participate freely in Buddhist, Shinto, and Christian rituals, the Japanese say they are not “religious.” The Japanese language lacked a word for “religion” until the 1880s. This calls into question the traditional study of religion focused on the doctrines, institutions, and histories of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Shinto.

The first written records of Japan are fourth-century Chinese histories that describe the island of “Wa” (Japan) ruled by a woman who controlled the *kami*. In 250–538, nobility were buried in large tombs called *kofun*, with *haniwa*, red clay images. In 538, a Korean king sent Buddhist images to Japan. In the myth-history *Kojiki* 712 ce, the *kami* Izanagi and Izanami are shown creating the islands of Japan; it introduces Amaterasu, the sun goddess. Todaiji, built in 752, adapted Buddhism to fit *kami* belief. Emperor Shomu built it after earthquakes and poor crops with permission from the *kami*.

One major religious practice is seeking *riyaku*, or “benefits”: good health, business success, passing exams, marriage, conceiving a child. To get benefits, one purchases amulets, asks priests to do ritual, makes a pilgrimage, etc. A second major practice is appeasing spirits. Spirits provide benefits when given proper respect but become angry and vengeful if neglected. At first, spirit appeasement was the domain of shamans. Buddhist rituals were also performed for the purpose of controlling spirits. The need to control unsettled spirits is an enduring responsibility of all of Japan’s religious traditions.

There are several periods of pivotal development in Japanese religious history. In the Nara period (710–794), a government ministry managed *kami* shrines and the Sangha Office oversaw Buddhist monks. Travels to China by Saicho (767–822) and Kukai (774–835), who brought back Tendai and Shingon Buddhism, mark turning points in Japanese Buddhist transmission beyond the courtly level. A key concept in the localization and adaptation of Buddhism in Japan is *Honji* *suijaku* (“manifestation from the original state”) whereby buddhas and bodhisattvas are considered the “original ground/state” (*honji*) with *kami* as their local “traces” or “manifestations” (*suijaku*).

In the Kamakura period (1185–1333), new forms of Pure Land, Zen, and Nichiren Buddhism developed and are still major traditions today. Shinto began to assume an institutional form after the eleventh century. In Pure Land Buddhism, Honen (1133–1212) advocated chanting *Namu Amida Butsu*, the name of Amida Buddha. His close disciple Shinran (1173–1262) taught that “other-power” (*tariki*) rather than “self-power” (*jiriki*) brings salvation. Around 1450, Rennyo (1415–99) organized Pure Land followers into a military force, which eventually controlled several provinces. The Tendai monk Eisai (1141–1215) made two trips to China in 1168 and 1187 and brought Rinzai Zen to Japan. After his return in 1191, he wrote “The Propagation of Zen for the Protection of the Country” and built the Kenninji temple in Kyoto in 1202. Dogen (1200–53) played a similar role in establishing Soto Zen in the Japanese countryside with support from local aristocrats and wealthy landowners. Nichiren (1222–82) founded the sect named after him. He urged recitation of *Namu myoho renge kyo* (“Hail the marvelous teaching of the *Lotus* *Sutra*”), charged that other forms of Buddhism were mistaken, and claimed that invasions, plagues, and social disorders were the fault of a ruler who had not adopted the *Lotus* *Sutra*.

Regardless of religious affiliation, Japanese venerate and memorialize spirits at household shrines and Buddhist and Shinto temples. Devotees purchase amulets and talismans, go on pilgrimages to sacred places, make donations and perform good deeds, and participate in a wide range of festivals. *Ikebana* flower arranging, garden design, domestic architecture, interior room design, *haiku* poetry, Noh theatre, *anime*, *manga*, and movies all invoke religious symbolism, implicitly or explicitly.

Christianity arrived in Japan in 1549 with Francis Xavier, a Jesuit missionary. In the early 1600s, the Tokugawa government expelled all missionaries and forced all Japanese converts to recant. Japanese Christianity went underground until the Meiji re-opening of the country in 1868. To ensure stability, the Tokugawa government imposed a four-class Confucian structure on society: samurai, farmers, artisans, merchants. New religions got started beginning with Nakayama Miki, the founder of Tenrikyo in 1838. Kokugaku, or “native learning,” argued for the superiority of indigenous Japanese Shinto traditions over Buddhism and Christianity.

In the Meiji period (1868–1911), Shinto became state religion and Buddhism was persecuted for a short time (1868–1872). The government constructed Yasukuni Shrine in memory of soldiers and sailors who had died for Japan in wars with Russia, China, and Korea. After Japan’s defeat in World War II (1945), the emperor was obliged to renounce his divinity and Shinto lost its status as state religion. The new constitution guaranteed freedom of religion. This encouraged a proliferation of new religious movements, many of which are quite large with membership in the millions. The Aum Shinrikyo group perpetrated the 1995 sarin gas attack on Tokyo’s subway system. In the current experimental phase, Buddhist and Shinto shrines and temples continue to attract visitors, although many do not necessarily seek religious experiences, and rural temples often lack resident priests. Despite a growing tendency to turn away from official religious institutions, “turning to the gods in times of trouble” especially following the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown in March 2011 ensures that Japanese religious practices will likely adapt to changing circumstances.

Learning Objectives

In this chapter, students are encouraged to

* explore the persistent themes in Japanese religious traditions;
* appreciate the ancient myths that establish the *kami* spirit tradition;
* outline the foundational aspects of tending to the spirit world;
* examine the development of Tendai and Shingon Buddhist traditions;
* understand the gravitation to Buddhist traditions with an emphasis on practice: Pure Land, Zen, and Nichiren;
* explain the adoption of Confucian hierarchical structures;
* identify and explain the role of women in Buddhism in Japan
* outline the emergence of Shinto ritual practice;
* examine encounters with “Western” cultures and their effect on economic trade and religious traditions;
* understand the Meiji restoration and modernization effect on Japanese religious traditions; and
* explore post–World War II restructuring, new religious movements, and other religious adaptations

Key Concepts

Seeking benefits

Much Japanese religious practice is directed to *genze riyaku*, “material benefits in this world.” These benefits are very practical: healing an illness, winning a battle, starting a new business, taking an examination, finding a marriage partner, or conceiving a child. Japanese religious life is like a marketplace in which consumers decide which shops to patronize on the basis of cost, product availability, and benefits received. To get benefits, one purchases amulets, asks priests to do rituals, makes a pilgrimage, etc. In exchange for tangible assistance from a spiritual agent—whether *kami*, bodhisattva, or Buddha—one must show one’s gratitude not only by performing various formal rituals but by treating that agent with special respect. (pp. 344–349, 364–366)

Appeasing spirits

A second major practice is appeasing spirits. Spirits provide benefits when given proper respect but become angry and vengeful if neglected. There is a complex history behind the belief in vengeful spirits but in short, it was thought that the spirits of people who had been killed and did not die a natural death remained in a state of constant resentment, always seeking vengeance. In order to calm these spirits, periodic rituals of acknowledgment and pacification were necessary. Before the importation of Buddhism in the sixth century, spirit appeasement was the exclusive domain of shamans. Then Buddhism entered and it too got involved in controlling spirits. In modern times since the 1970s, the bodhisattva Jizo has become the center of a new ritual, the pacification of the spirit of aborted fetuses. The mother’s fear is that the spirit of the fetus will return to cause trouble in the mother’s life. (pp. 349, 353–355, 365–366, 371–375)

Blurred lines between Buddhism and Shinto

When Buddhism first entered Japan, it both competed with *kami* belief and adapted to it. A good example is the construction of the great temple Todaiji. Ostensibly a “Buddhist” institution, housing a monumental statue of the Cosmic Buddha Vairocana, the temple was conceived by the emperor Shomu in the early 740s in response to a series of earthquakes and poor crops. Before construction, he sent a high-ranking priest to ask a powerful *kami* named Hachiman whether the project should proceed. Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines alike still conduct rituals for the health of the emperor and the stability of the nation. In addition, *honji suijaku* thought provided a way of identifying Shinto with Buddhism. Buddhas and bodhisattvas were considered the *honji* “original” who appeared in Japan in the guise of *kami*, the local *suijaku* or “trace.” The Kasuga Shrine in Nara is a good example. The four main kami of Kasuga were said to be local manifestations of Shakyamuni Buddha, Kannon the Compassionate, the Medicine Buddha, and the Buddha of the future. In this way of looking at them, buddhas and *kami* were not two; they were one. (pp. 347–348, 353–357)

Shinto

While Buddhism and Confucianism were imported into Japan from China, Shinto is the indigenous religion, “based on the ritual veneration of natural and human spirits called *kami*.” Texts like the *Kojiki*, published in 712 ce, describe a mythical world when the *kami* created the Japanese islands. This gives the impression that Shinto existed as an organized religion early on. But though there were shrines, belief in *kami*, and rituals, there was no overall organized Shinto religion. Recent scholarship has shown that Shinto began to take form as a distinct organization only in the medieval period. The imperial family used to make pilgrimages to Ise to perform rituals to Amaterasu, the sun goddess. In the early eleventh century, the imperial family’s decision to switch to the Kumano shrines left the Ise shrines financially destitute. Ise responded, first by opening itself to samurai and lower-ranking nobility, and second by offering new rituals making available a Buddhist-style enlightenment. Ise priests created doctrine when it took *honji suijaku* thought and reversed it in order to privilege Shinto *kami* over Buddhist bodhisattvas.

Nationalism

Until the modern separation of state and religion, Japanese religion was usually connected to the Japanese state. During the Nara Period 710–794 ce, the government set up a ministry of *kami* and shrines and the Sangha Office to oversee Buddhist monks. The state wanted the protection of the *kami* and the buddhas. That is why the emperor Shomu constructed the great Buddha of Todaiji. Since the state sponsored Buddhism, when priests started a new branch of Buddhism, it was not unusual for them to seek government support. Thus Eisai on return to Japan in 1191 wrote “The Propagation of Zen for the Protection of the Country” to attract Kamakura government support for his branch of Rinzai Zen. After the Meiji Restoration, Shinto became the national religion. On the other hand, there are several striking examples when religion and the government at the time were opposed. Nichiren fiercely criticized the government. He argued that invasions, plagues, and social disorder were the fault of a ruler who had not adopted the *Lotus* *Sutra*. Rennyo’s militant peasants took control of several provinces in the name of Pure Land Buddhism. The Tokugawa government stamped out Christianity in the early 1600s and the Meiji government persecuted Buddhism. These latter examples underline the fact that governments all expected religion to be loyal to government and its policies. (pp. 371–373)

Lecture Outline

Lesson 1: Foundations and Pivotal Developments in Japanese Religions

* Overview
  + Persistent Themes:
    - Reciprocity between spirits and humans is key to traditional Japanese religiosity
    - Most Japanese people tolerate doctrinal diversity at the popular level
    - Japanese religions tend to be complementary rather than exclusive
    - Most Japanese religious traditions also do not impose regulations about what is and is not allowed
    - Religious belief is generally second to religion activity
  + Japanese language had no equivalent to the word “religion” until the 1880s
    - The characters meaning “teachings” (*kyo*) and “sect” (*shu*) were combined as part of a government modernization campaign to form *shukyo* (religion)
    - Grand Traditions are neither discrete nor autonomous
  + Seeking benefits
    - Desire to secure various benefits, either in this world or in the next, leads to a pragmatic attitude towards religious institutions and beliefs
      * Religious life as a marketplace with customers who decide which shops, brands, and services to patronize
      * Visiting temples and shrines
      * Engaging priests to perform rituals
      * Making regular offerings
    - Done for tangible assistance from *kami*, bodhisattvas, or buddhas
  + Religious and Spiritual Agents
    - *Kami*: highly mobile and fluid “life-energy” circulating in nature
      * peaceful side is beneficial and helps humans prosper
      * destructive side can only be appeased through rituals
  + Mythology
    - *Kojiki*: collection of regional stories compiled in 712 ce
      * Izanagi and Izanami: primordial *kami* couple who created the islands
        + After creating all the dimensions of the natural world, Izanami gives birth to the deity of fire and in the process suffers burns that lead to her death
        + The destructive side of the *kami* is revealed when Izanagi kills the fire deity and goes to find Izanami in the underworld
        + When Izanami is rejected by Izanagi, she vows to kill 1,000 of his subjects each day, and Izanagi counters that he will cause 1,500 to be born
        + Amaterasu, female kami of the sun, born from eye of Izanagi
* Foundations
  + No Japanese written records from early centuries ce
    - Chinese histories from the fourth century refer to “the land of Wa” (Japan) ruled by a female queen
  + Belief that early rulers and emperors embodied *Kami* 
    - More than 10,000 earthen mounds (*kofun*) house their tombs
    - Clay models (*haniwa*) of servants, musicians, shamans, and soldiers
    - Early rulers became guardian spirits as local *kami* of clans, communities, and regions
  + Introduction of Buddhism to Japan from Korea
    - 538 ce: Korean ruler sent images and wrote in praise of Buddhism as a superior religion
    - First Buddhist temple in Japan constructed in 596 ce with the assistance of Korean builders
    - Other early temples: Shitennoji (Osaka), Horyuji (Nara); Todaiji (Nara) constructed in 752 by emperor Shomu
    - Buddhism used both as a source of additional protection and as a worldview that, without discrediting older ideas about the *kami*, adapted them to fit into a Buddhist cosmos
    - Most Japanese do not distinguish the two dominant religious tradition as discrete entities
    - Mahayana bodhisattvas
      * Kannon (Chinese Guanyin/Sanskrit Avalokiteshvara)
      * Jizo
  + Unsettled Spirits
    - Before Buddhism, spirit appeasement had been the exclusive domain of shamans, who engaged in *kami* veneration
      * Neglecting or ignoring spirits of deceased enemies invited retribution in the form of storms, earthquakes, droughts, infertility, sickness
      * Buddhist ritual activities sponsored by rulers fulfilled the aim of spirit appeasement
    - Local Japanese, Chinese, and Korean beliefs combined with Buddhist and Daoist dynamics
  + The need to control unsettled spirits is an enduring responsibility of all of Japan’s religious traditions
* Pivotal Developments in Japanese Religious History
  + Nara period (710–794) Tendai and Shingon
    - Before the ninth century, Buddhism was the preserve of elites in Nara who constructed temples, commissioned art, and populated Buddhist monasteries
    - Saicho (Tendai) and Kukai (Shingon) travelled to China in 804 with diplomatic missions in order to study new interpretations of Buddhist practice, which helped to domesticate rituals
  + Tendai
    - Saicho (767–822) promoted the *Lotus Sutra* as a vehicle for enlightenment and salvation
    - Headquarters on Mount Hiei, 70 km northeast of Kyoto
  + Shingon(Chinese Zhenyan)
    - Kukai (774–835) taught that possibility of enlightenment and salvation within the reach of the common person through use of incantations, ritual gestures, meditation, visualization, and austerities
    - Headquarters at Mount Koya, also outside of Kyoto
    - Placement of monastic headquarters on sacred mountains suggests respect for local *kami*
  + *Honji suijaku*(“manifestation from the original state”) implies a relationship between localization of Buddhas/Bodhisattvas and *kami* worship, since the *kami* of a particular mountain or powerful clan was viewed as a “provisional manifestation”
    - As Buddhism expanded from the ninth century, it increasingly overshadowed the traditional ritual practices centered on *kami*
* New Emphases in Japanese Religious Practices
  + End of relative stability of the previous period and shift in political power from Kyoto to Kamakura (site near Tokyo) resonated with a Buddhist teaching predicting that 1052 would mark the beginning of the degenerate age (*mappo*), during which the Buddhist dharma would decline. New Buddhist sects emerged during the Kamakura period (1185–1333), which remain the main forms of Japanese Buddhism
  + Pure Land
    - Genshin (942–1017) organized Pure Land beliefs into a coherent system
      * Buddhist monks began to concern themselves with the salvation of the ordinary person
    - Honen (1133–1212) initiated current form of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism
      * Believed it was impossible for people in an age of *mappo* to attain salvation by traditional means, so he emphasized the repeated recitation of the *(“Namu Amida Butsu”)*
      * Since this practice was viewed as subversive by the orthodox monastic community, Honen was banished from the Kyoto region
      * Monks from Tendai monastery desecrated his grave in 1227
    - Shinran (1173–1272), disciple of Honen, advocated reliance on “other power” (*Tariki*) of Amida for salvation, rather than disciplined “self-power” (*Jiriki*)
    - Rennyo (1415–99) systematized teachings and organized Pure Land followers into a disciplined community
      * Created a kind of militant security force to protect Honganji temple (Osaka)
  + Nichiren (1222–82)
    - Believed that the *Lotus Sutra* was the only possible path to salvation, not only for the individual but for Japan (proposed a much more radical politicization of a Buddhist sutra than his Tendai predecessors)
    - In the millenarian end-time of Mappo, instructed his followers to chant the Mantra “*namu myoho renge kyo*,” (“Hail the marvelous teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*”)
    - In “On Establishing the True Dharma to Bring Peace to the Nation” he argued that if Japan suffered invasions, plagues, and social disorder, it was the fault of the ruler who had not adopted the *Lotus Sutra*
    - When the Mongol dynasty actually invaded Japan in 1274, Nichiren’s warnings were seen as a fulfillment of prophecy
    - Nichiren tradition was a front-runner to Soka Gakkai and other Lotus Sutra–based new religious movements that are still popular inside and outside of Japan
  + Rinzai Zen
    - Tendai monk, Eisai (1141–1215) went to China in 1168 where he encountered Chan
      * Returned to China in 1187 to study with a Chan master in the Linji (Japanese Rinzai) tradition, who certified Eisai’s enlightenment
      * Built Kenninji temple in Kyoto (Japan’s first Zen temple) in 1202
      * Benefitted from ongoing relationship with Samurai class in Kamakura
      * In addition to Zen, Eisai imported tea which could be made to keep sleepy monks awake during meditation
  + Soto Zen
    - According to traditional accounts, Dogen (1200–53), the founder of Soto (Chinese Caodong) Zen, studied in the Tendai tradition
      * Dogen went to China in 1223, where he encountered the Caodong tradition
      * After returning to Japan, Dogen established Eiheiji monastery in 1244 with support from local aristocrats and wealthy landowners who were more receptive to his new way to liberation
  + The Emergence of “Shinto”
    - “Shinto” began to take institutional form only after the eleventh century
    - “Way of the *kami*” lacked the conceptual and organizational structure of Buddhism

Lesson 2: Continuities and Recent Developments in Japanese Religious Practice

* Continuities of Religious Practice
  + Almost endless varieties of benefits (*riyaku*) matched by diverse religious practices:
    - Rituals at temples or shrines as well as Buddhist and Shinto household altars
    - Purchases of amulets and talismans
    - Pilgrimage to sacred places, such as Kumano, Ise Grand Shrine, and Shikoku island
    - Monetary donations and good deeds to generate merit
    - Grand festivals (*matsuri*) especially common at Shinto shrines
  + Veneration and memorialization of spirits
    - Spirits of the dead continue to play active roles in the life of the living
* *Butsudan* household altars memorialize departed family members
* In the Obon festival, held in mid-August in most parts of the country, the spirits of the dead are entertained and ritually offered food and drink
  + - Material impact of religious practices and traditions
      * *Ikebana* (flower arranging)
      * Japanese garden
  + Religious influences on literature and popular culture
    - Minimalism of image and language in the *haiku* derives from Zen’s emphasis on penetrating to the essence of reality
    - Noh theatre also uses minimalism to evoke deep emotions and reflect on the nature of reality
    - *Anime* and *manga* refer to religious practices, individuals with spiritual powers gained through ascetic training, and divinities who use their powers for both good and evil ends
    - *Totoro*, *Spirited Away*, *Princess Mononoke* draw heavily on Shinto themes
* Global and Domestic Trends
  + Christianity
    - Jesuit missionaries led by Francis Xavier (1549)
    - Oda Nobunaga, Japan’s first military unifier, saw Christianity as a potential wedge against Buddhist Tendai warrior-monks and True Pure Land militias
    - Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–98) continued Nobunaga’s unification effort, with increased tolerance of Christianity
    - Tokugawa Ieyasu (1548–1616) at first tolerated Christianity, but viewed its priests as meddlesome and disruptive of social order
    - Beginning in the 1620s all adults were required to register at the local Buddhist temple; others were threatened with torture if they refused to recant Christian identity
    - Japan closed the door on Europe (and Christianity) in the seventeenth century following suppression of Shimabara peasant rebellion
    - From 1641–1853 the only port open to the outside world was the island of Dejima
    - Christianity did not entirely disappear; rather it went into hiding
  + Unification and Stability
    - Inspired by the Confucian doctrines introduce to Japan by Chinese Zen priests, the Tokugawa Shogunate attempted to restructure Japanese society into four distinct classes: samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants
      * Neo-Confucianism became more relevant to Japan with growing economic prosperity in the cities and order imposed by a police state
      * Buddhism remained central to ritual life, and benefited from state patronage with the growth in temples (17,500 Soto Zen temples in Tokugawa period), but was losing its vitality
  + Religion Meets Modernity
    - New religious expressions at end of the Tokugawa period
      * Tenrikyo
      * Kurozumikyo
      * Konko-kyo
    - Kokugaku movement argued the superiority of all things Japanese over their foreign counterparts (indigenous Shinto over foreign Buddhism)
    - Aizawa Seishisai advocated for the adoption of Shinto as the national faith in 1825
* Recent Developments
  + Nationalism and Shinto
    - The Meiji government (1868–1911) promoted Japanese nationalism by associating the Meiji emperor with various *Kami*
    - Shinto was designated the official religion of the Meiji state
      * Buddhism briefly but dramatically persecuted (1868–1872)
      * Institutions that had combined Buddhist and *kami* worship were split
      * Ritual specialists forced to marry
      * Some Buddhist temples, icons, and artifacts destroyed
    - Patriotic fervor of Japanese victories
      * China (1894–95)
      * Russia (1904–5)
      * Korea (1910)
      * Yasukuni shrine dedicated to the veneration of the spirits of soldiers visited by several Japanese Prime Ministers remains controversial
  + Postwar Restructuring
    - After Japan’s defeat in 1945 the emperor renounced his divinity and Shinto lost its status as *de facto* state religion
    - Constitutional guarantees of religious freedom led to a proliferation of new religious movements
      * Soka Gakkai (Nichiren derivative)
      * Rissho Koseikai (Lotus Sutra)
      * Shinnyo-en (Shingon derivative)
      * Mahikari (“True Light”)
  + Contemporary Japanese Buddhism
    - 74,000 Buddhist temples benefited from economic bubble
    - “Memorial boom” serviced by “funeral Buddhism”
    - Shortage of resident priests for rural temples
* Summary
  + Experimental phase for Japanese religious traditions
    - Ancient shrines and temples still attract many visitors, but not necessarily for religious experience
  + Triple Disaster (11 March 2011)
    - Earthquake, tsunami, Fukushima nuclear meltdown
    - Visible role of religious specialists and temples in providing counseling, shelter, and relief to survivors
  + Growing tendency to turn away from religious traditions
  + Yet paradigm of “Turning to the gods in times of trouble”

Suggestions for Discussion or Debate

1. Buddhism entered Japan in historical stages. In the beginning Buddhism arrives in 538 when a king in Korea sends Buddhist statues and texts. In this initial stage, Buddhism is accepted by the Japanese and the Nara Buddhist sects develop. In the second stage, the monks Saicho and Kukai bring back Tendai and Shingon Buddhism respectively. In the third stage, three new forms—Pure Land, Zen, and Nichiren Buddhism—appear in the Kamakura period. Finally in the twentieth century, many new religions appear, some derived from Buddhism and some quite large and influential. What characterizes the Buddhism movements at any given stage?
2. Many people think that chanting the Buddha’s name in Pure Land Buddhism is simply another form of practice for benefits, but in Pure Land Buddhist thought, the practice is quite a bit more complicated than that. Honen described the universal grace of Amida Buddha by saying, “If even an evil person will be saved by Amida, how much more so a virtuous person.” Shinran turned this around and said, “If even a virtuous person will be saved by Amida, how much more so an evil person.” Explain this.
3. What happened to Buddhist temples during the Tokugawa period? During the Tokugawa period, the government required everyone to register with their local Buddhist temple. Buddhist temples became responsible for keeping track of people, their households, the taxes they paid, etc. Meanwhile Buddhist monks became more and more specialists in ritual, such as funerals and memorial services.
4. Shinto focusses a great deal of attention on pollution and defilement. There is the “black impurity”—anything to do with death, decay, and dirtiness in general. And there is the “red impurity,” anything to do with blood. Describe these Shinto practices both in history and in the present. What social impact do they have? Remember that in the *Kojiki*, *kami* are born out of feces, urine, and vomit. What do you make of that?
5. The Japanese government has usually expected religions to support the state politically; religion ought to serve and protect the nation. Individual members of a religion, however, practice religion for their own individual reasons; they seek rebirth in the Pure Land, or Zen enlightenment, or salvation through chanting the title of the *Lotus Sutra*. What is the relation between these two different conceptions of religion?

Additional Resources

* Bloom, Alfred. 1965. *Shinran’s Gospel of Pure Grace.* Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press.
* Ambros, Barbara. 2008. *Emplacing a Pilgrimage: The Ōyama Cult and Regional Religion in Early Modern Japan*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
* Mishra, Pankaj. 2012. *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia*. New York: Picador.
* *Buddha in the Land of the Kami: 7th–12th Centuries.* DVD, 53 min. 1989. Films Media Group <http://ffh.films.com/search.aspx?q=Buddha+in+the+Land+of+the+Kami>
* *Ise Jungū*
  + The official website of the Ise Grand Shrines <http://www.isejingu.or.jp/english/>