

Unit 5 O-MO-TE-NA-SHI Japanese Culture

✓ REVIEW

Put the following Japanese into English.

1. 狂言は、厳粛な能の合間に演ぜられ、観客に笑いをもたらす短時間の喜劇です。
2. 文楽は、日本の伝統的な人形劇です。

日本の宗教 Religion in Japan



A Shinto shrine

A Buddhist temple

1. Read the following key words, which appear in the text your teacher is going to read.

Key words:

- continent 大陸
- indigenous 固有の
- spirituality 精神的基盤
- entity 実在する物事
- cherished 大切に心に持ち続けた
- reflected 反映される
- celebration お祝いをする事

2. Listen twice and answer the questions.



QUESTIONS

1. What are Japan's major religions?
2. When and from where did Buddhism arrive in Japan?
3. What is Shintoism?

Japanese Views of Religion (1)

1. Read the following key words, which appear in the text your teacher is going to read.

Key words:

- prevailing 支配的な・一般的な
- ambiguous あいまいな
- deity 神
- profess 明言する
- votive 願掛けの
- ground-breaking ceremony 起工式
- observance 守ること

2. Listen twice and answer the questions.

QUESTIONS

1. How religious are Japanese people?
2. What do you mean by 'ambiguous'?
3. Give me more examples, please.



Japanese Views of Religion (1)



A butsudan

A kamidana

1. Read the following key words, which appear in the text your teacher is going to read.

Key words:

- altar 祭壇
- prosperity 繁栄
- contradiction 否認
- afterlife 死後の世界

2. Listen twice and answer the questions.

QUESTIONS

1. What is a butsudan?
2. What is a Shinto kamidana?
3. Why do Shintoism and Buddhism exist so successfully together?

PRACTICE SENTENCES

Put the following Japanese into English.

1. 神道と仏教が日本の二大宗教です。
2. 神道は、日本古来の精神的基盤をなすもの、自然界のすべてに実在する物事に神が宿っていると信じるものです。
3. 宗教に対する現在の日本人の一般的な態度は、かなりあいまいです。
4. 神道とは、この世と現世に関する精神的な基盤をなすもので、一方、仏教は来世に関するものです。

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Conversation Script

Conversation 1

Shintoism and Buddhism are Japan's two major religions. The religion of Shinto is as old as the Japanese culture, while Buddhism arrived in Japan from the Asian continent in the sixth century. Shintoism is a purely Japanese religion and a general term for Japan's indigenous spirituality that treats every entity in nature as kami, or gods. As a result, we can see Shinto principles everywhere in Japanese culture, for example, in terms of respect for the turning of the seasons. The annual celebration of cherry blossom viewing is a typical example.

Conversation 2

The religious attitude of Japanese people is ambiguous and not very clear. Although most Japanese say they do not follow any religion, they visit shrines at the beginning of the year to pray for the safety of their families. They also visit shrines to celebrate births, have a wedding at a church, and hold a funeral at a Buddhist temple. I think the Japanese follow cultural traditions rather than observe religious ceremonies and practices.



Conversation 3

Almost all the traditional homes in Japan have a butsudana. A butsudana is a Buddhist altar for praying to family members who have passed away. It is often decorated with candles, flowers and food offerings. Some traditional homes also have a Shinto kamidana, where family members pray for safety and prosperity. The kamidana altar is decorated with rice and sake. Shintoism and Buddhism exist so successfully together without contradiction in Japan, because, for the Japanese, Shintoism is the spirituality of this world and this life, whereas Buddhism is concerned with the soul and the afterlife.

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