

# [The way of the gods in japanese culture](https://assignbuster.com/the-way-of-the-gods-in-japanese-culture/)

[Religion](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/religion/)

Topic The way of Gods in Japanese culture In Japan, the religious culture practiced and believed was different from that of other Asian countries. According to ancient times, the authentic religion of Japanese was Shinto and is believed to be the reason behind all manifestation of nature. As per (Chapter 2, pg 35)“ To begin with the native religion of Japan is Shinto literally “ the way of Gods” according to which all the beautiful and vital manifestation of nature is deifies”. Here we can notice that the god is not seen as a single figure but there are multitudes of gods in their religious theology. The Shinto religion suggests that the departed soul of ancestors and man flows into nature to create a unified power which is mystic in nature.
Generally speaking, this religion considered that death and its forces has a polluting affect to the environment and purity of nature. The Shinto religion considers their hierarchy emperor has the offspring of Sun goddess. But in many cultures Sun is believed to be a male God and this fact is contradictory to the age old belief of Japanese population. Moreover, the grand ancestor of Japanese culture is the high priest of Shinto who guides the rituals of their religious procedures. They culture also believe that death, diseases and menstruation as a taboo knows as mono –imi , which means the flow of impurity and negative energy. This religious thought is identical with the universal religious concept as most of the cultures regard this bodily process as negative and impure.
In later times, there occurred some major transformation in the Shinto religious concept with the arrival of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism through the countries China and Korea. Even though Confucianism shaped the bureaucracy and capital of the country it had less effect on the ritual practices of the country. It could be due to the fact that Confucianism in real sense was not a religion and had no deities to be prayed to and this contradicted with the age old Shinto rituals. Only the resembling feature of Confucianism of loyalty and honesty to the family adjusted with the belief of Shino religion and made some influence in the Japanese culture. The second religious practice called Taoism was very similar with Shinto religion and it compelled the latter to adopt the former’s yin and yang concept.
Frankly speaking, it is the great religion called Buddhism form China which has transformed the entire nature of Shinto religion of Japan. As per (Chapter 2, pg. 37)“ While Shinto had almost a phobia about death and decay, Buddhism seemed determined to encourage morbid reflection”. The ideal principles of Buddha called meditation and enlightenment invoked spiritual spark in Japanese people, which led them to fully accept this religion as a way to achieve peace and tranquility. In the text (Chapter 2, pg 38)mentions that “ To the Heian mind karma , neatly accounted for the apparent inequities in the world; why one man despite his virtue, seem to have nothing but troubles to live with , or why another was blessed with Continuous satisfaction”. Interestingly, Buddhism propagated the material world as illusionary and the main theme of the life as one based on karma. This scientific understanding of Buddhism created evolution in the Japanese culture in all ways.
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Writer