# Shintoism Notes

**Slide 1: Introduction**

Shintoism, also called kami-no-michi, is a religion found in Japan, and is followed by 56% of the population. Shinto is deeply rooted into Japanese people and tradition, therefore preaching or propaganda does not occur. In the Meiji Period (1868-1912), Shinto was made Japan's state religion. Shinto priests became state officials, important shrines started to receive governmental funding.

**Slide 2: Overview of presentation**

1. We will be talking about:
2. The origin of Shintoism that dates back hundreds of years ago
3. Core beliefs
4. Symbols and rituals of shintoism
5. Religious Festivals
6. And the meaning to adherents
7. And our conclusion

**Slide 3: Origin**

Shintoism is a Polytheistic religion that has been formed in Japan around 500 BCE. Shinto has no founder and it is unclear who or what started the religion.But it is believed that the way of Shinto is developed by nature, a spiritual essence. Shinto, literally translated from Japanese means ´the way of god´. The Shinto god is called Kami and because the word isn't plural nor individual it is unclear what Kami actually is.

**Slide 4: Core beliefs**

Shintoism consists of the word shinto, which means way of kami. Kami is a god, so this means they believe in the existence and power of gods [kami], that exist in the world, in nature. It is deeply tied into Japanese society and culture. Shintoism insist in maintaining their own characteristics and working towards the peaceful coexistence of different species and societies.

1. Traditional and family, thanks to these “mechanisms” traditions still exist
2. Physical Cleanliness, then you are free of evil spirits
3. Love of Nature, nature is a sacred element in this world and kami are related to all nature, so worshipping of nature is very essential.
4. Matsuri, the festivals where Kami are celebrated

**Slide 5: Religious festivals**

The main Shinto rites and festivals are for celebrating the New Year, child birth, coming of age, planting and harvest, weddings, and groundbreaking ceremonies for new buildings. Death, funerals, and graveyards, are not Shinto ceremonies

Shinto shrines hold regular festivals, **matsuri** 祭り, to commemorate important dates related to the shrine and its deity(s) and to pray for a wide range of blessings such as abundant rice harvests, fertility, health, and business success.

The essential meaning of the term **matsuri** is “welcoming the descending gods” or “inviting down the gods,” for it is believed that Shinto’s heavenly deities periodically descend to earth to visit shrines, villages, and families, and to make their wills known among the people.

Some common known festivals:

Matsuri (祭?) is the Japanese word for a festival or holiday. In Japan, matsuri is usually sponsored by a local shrine or temple, though they can be secular. Almost every region has at least one matsuri in late summer/early autumn, usually related to the rice harvest.

-Seijin Shiki is a [Japanese holiday](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_holiday) held annually on the second Monday of January. It is held in order to congratulate and encourage all those who have reached the [age of majority](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Age_of_majority) (20 years old (二十歳 *hatachi*[?](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AInstalling_Japanese_character_sets))) over the past year, and to help them realize that they have become [adults](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adult). Festivities include coming of age ceremonies(成人式 *seijin-shiki*[?](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help%3AInstalling_Japanese_character_sets)) held at local and [prefectural](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prefecture) offices, as well as after-parties amongst family and friends.

**Slide 6: Symbols & Rituals**

Shinto does not have any official sacred books like the Qu’ran or the Bible. The entries to shrines, Torii, made of wood and their colours may vary: red, black and orange. One of the signs used is the Torii Gate, which marks the entrance to the sacred space. It marks the transition from the finite world to the infinite world with gods. Shintoists also worship the kami here. Shimenawa is a traditional rope made of twisted straw that is often hung on Torii. Shimenawa can also be used to demarcate sacred or ritual areas in a shrine or outside.

**Slide 7: Meaning**

Shinto’s legends about creation are limited to the islands of Japan. Japan was created by Izanagi and Izanami, who then chose to dwell there. This gives Japan a prominence in the eyes of its people, who feel that it is the best place to live. Shinto has been influenced by Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, and feels that all deities (kami), even those from other religions, are valid. Confucianism and Taoism state that the Tao is the cause of all that is, and Shinto would accept that as valid, even while retaining its own creation accounts.

**Slide 8: Conclusion**

In conclusion, shintoism is a very different religion, if compared to others. It has no holy book and no specific form of god. They do have a very interesting way of buildings and festivals. There aren’t a lot of known festivals, but this is because it is a very old religion and dates back to thousands of years ago. There are 4 core beliefs which are all in the meaning of together and being cleansed of the evil spirit.

**Slide 9: Questions**