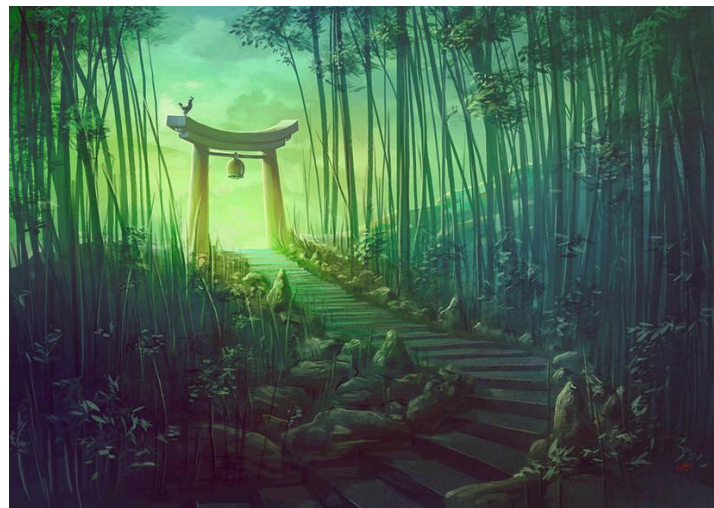


Save Ancient Studies Alliance

January 2024 Texts-in-Translation Master Class

**“The Way of the Gods”:
Japanese ‘Kami’ and the Representation of
Shintoism in Literature and Popular Culture
Lead by Rimi Nandy**



(<https://www.deviantart.com/lun-art/art/Torii-Shrine-700943474>)

Shintoism is a form of belief system enacted in the absence of a concrete pantheon of the Gods. This ancient religious system focuses on the interaction between the local gods and the humans who co-exist. Shinto practices are rooted in a space devoid of any form of hierarchy. A thin line exists between the human world and the supernatural one that co-exist. In this Master Class, we will study the basics of Shintoism through its representation in classical Japanese poetry from the Heian age. The deliberations will also address understanding the politics behind the sudden rise in Shinto practices in connection to the political scenario in Japan. The Master Class will also refer to selected Shinto manga and discuss the most popular Japanese anime in the context of the representation of Shintoism in popular culture.

Course Objectives:

1. Understanding the various nuances of Shinto as a religion: The course will focus on analysing beliefs and rituals functioning as a symbolic representation of the bond between the human and the divine.
2. Gaining a better understanding of Classical Japanese Poetry forms of Haiku and Tanka.
3. Exploring the modern representation of Shinto in anime and manga.
4. Critically evaluating the socio-political and cultural significance of Shinto representation in Literature and popular culture.

The participants will gain a profound understanding of the Shinto belief system and the concept of animistic religion. They will be able to develop a critical perspective of the representation of Shinto in popular culture. This will enable the participants to gain a unique perspective into the evolving nature of religion in the East Asian context. This will enhance cultural literacy through literature and art.



[\(https://www.worldhistory.org/image/6691/torii-fushimi-inari-shrine/\)](https://www.worldhistory.org/image/6691/torii-fushimi-inari-shrine/)

Meet Your SASA Educational Ambassador:



Rimi Nandy

Digital Humanities - School of Media, Communication and Culture,
Jadavpur University, India

riminandy03@gmail.com

Links to Readings

Reading #1:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1w74OSwcPMmO9-miQnHqm5dTC6xFqn4a9qkX2L9nKA4l/edit?usp=sharing>

Reading #2:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UI26s4Rhi6Krt25-n6DKMOlmg5PZ2Cmd/view?usp=sharing>

Module 1: Introducing Shinto Religion

Module 2: Evolution of Shinto Shrines and its political implications

Module 3: Introduction to Classical Japanese Poetry

Module 4: Shinto in Classical Japanese Poetry

Module 5: Shinto in Popular Culture

Selected Texts:

Haikus inspired by Tales of Ise Volume II (Selections)

One Hundred Poets, One Poem Each: A Treasury of Classical Japanese Verse (Selections)

Selected Manga/Anime:

Mushi Shi

Demon Slayer

Spirited Away

My Neighbour Totoro

Hotarubi no Mori

Research Materials:

- Japanese Religions (https://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/docs/japanese_religions)
- Shinto (<https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2056.html>)
- Animating Religious Literacy: Japanese Pop Culture and Teaching through Video (<https://crh.indiana.edu/engaging-religion/essays/ugoretz-essay.html>)

- Religion in Popular Culture: Spirited Away
(<https://angelicaclozadaa.medium.com/religion-in-popular-culture-spirited-away-f7abf5907319>)
- "Tracing Shinto in the History of Kami Worship: Editors' Introduction" (Japanese Journal of Religious Studies, Volume 29)
- "Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion", Kuroda Toshio, James C. Dobbins and Suzanne Gay; The Journal of Japanese Studies; Vol 7, No. 1, pg1-21)