



History of Japanese Religion

Masaharu Anesaki

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Masaharu Anesaki's *History of Japanese Religion* continues to be a much-cited pillar of Japanese studies and is now available in digital format.

The original draft of the present book was an outcome of the author's lectures at Harvard University during the years 1913-15, when he had the honor of occupying there the chair of Japanese Literature and Life. In response to the encouragement given by several friends at Harvard, the author tried to put the material of the lectures into book form and redrafted it from time to time.

The history of Japanese religions and morals shows the interaction of various forces which manifested their vitality more in combination than in opposition. A saying ascribed to Prince Shotoku, the founder of Japanese civilization, compares the three religious and moral systems found in Japan to the root, the stem and branches, and the flowers and the fruits of a tree. Shinto is the root embedded in the soil of the people's character and national traditions; Confucianism is seen in the stem and branches of legal institutions, ethical codes and educational systems; Buddhism made the flowers of religious sentiment bloom and gave the fruits of spiritual life.

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