

Fall 2019 Arts of Asia Lecture Series
Seeking the Divine: The Lesser-Known Religious Traditions of Asia
Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art

Shinto and Japanese Nationalism

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September 27, 2019

1. Defining terms: "Shintō" and "nationalism"

- Are they relevant for all Japan?
- Are they old or new concepts?
- How do they interact with both individual lives and government policies?

2. What religious and political concepts lie behind the three periods of state-centered ideology?

- First, the early Nara-Heian state (710-1185)
- Next, the Kamakura state (1185-1333)
- Finally, the Meiji > Shōwa state (Meiji 1868-1912) and (Shōwa 1926-1989)

1. How did the Meiji government attempt to use Shintō-based practices in service of the state?
2. When did nationalism first appear during this period? In what ways?
3. Why did the spiritual role of the emperor become the main focus of nationalism?
4. How was violence justified at home and abroad during the Shōwa period?
5. Why did the 1937 text issued by the Ministry of Education called *Kokutai no hongī* (Fundamentals of National Polity) criticize Western individualism?
6. After World War II, how did nationalism and Shintō reassert themselves?
7. What's happening today in Japan (and elsewhere in the Asia Pacific) that actually contributes to nationalistic sentiment?
8. Should we be worried about Japan's "new" nationalism?

Suggested Readings:

Antoni, Klaus, editor. *Religion and National Identity in the Japanese Context*. Hamburg: Lit Verlag (2002).

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Hardacre, Helen. *Shintō and the State, 1868-1988*. Princeton: Princeton University Press (1989).

Ives, Chris. *Imperial Way Zen*. Honolulu: Hawaii University Press (2009).

Kingston, Jeff. *Nationalism in Asia: A History Since 1945*. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell (2017).

Nelson, John. "Social Memory as Ritual Practice: Commemorating Spirits of the Military Dead at Yasukuni Shintō Shrine." *Journal of Asian Studies* vol. 62, 2 (2003): 443-467.

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------. *A Year in the Life of a Shintō Shrine*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press (1996).

Sharf, Robert. "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism." *History of Religions* 33, 1 (1993): 1-43.

Takenaka, Akiko. *Yasukuni Shrine: History, Memory, and Japan's Unending Postwar*. Honolulu: Hawaii University Press (2015).