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<律令時代以前 Ancient Times>

\*N.B., the entries for this period are based on *\*Kojiki* and *Nihon shoki*, two works that report as fact and assign dates to events from legends and myths and that also include historical data of uncertain reliability.

660 B.C. 神武天皇即位 (日本書紀) Japan’s legendary first emperor Jimmu takes the throne.

5 B.C. 倭姫命、天照大神を伊勢に移す (日本書紀) The deity Yamatohime no mikoto takes  
\*Amaterasu Ōmikami, the divine source of Japan’s imperial family, to be enshrined at Ise.

538 CE 仏教公伝 Buddhism is transmitted to Japan.

639 新嘗祭初見 First mention of the *\*niiname sai*, a festival celebrated at the imperial palace to express gratitude to the gods for a successful harvest (see also *\*Concepts of Emperor and the State*).

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<貴族政權 Aristocratic Rule (the “Classical” period)>

645 大化の改新 The Taika Reform, a series of political reforms aimed at building a centralized administrative system based on Chinese models, leading to the creation of the so-called Ritsuryō (“criminal and administrative codes”) state.

672 天武天皇即位、大嘗祭 *\*Daijōsai*, “the Great Thanksgiving festival”, held to accompany Emperor Tenmu’s accession to the throne. Marks the institutionalization of the harvest festival (*\*Niiname sai*) at the imperial level (see *\*Concepts of Emperor and the State*).

675 祈年祭初見 The offering of ritual wands (*\*Onusa*) to shrines throughout the country functions as the first mention of the *\*kinensai*, one of the most important observances of the Ritsuryō state.

685 伊勢神宮 式年遷宮制 The *\*shikinensengū* system for rebuilding and reconsecrating the Grand Shrines of Ise, in which the enshrined deity is transferred from an old shrine building to a newly constructed one, is instituted.

712 古事記 Ōno Yasumaro presents *Kojiki* (*\*Kojiki and Nihon shoki*) to the imperial court.

720 日本書紀 Prince Toneri presents to the emperor *Nihon shoki* (*\*Kojiki and Nihon shoki*) in 30 volumes, plus a genealogy.

721 神嘗祭の初見 First mention of *\*kannamesai*, a rite at the Grand Shrines of Ise that celebrates

- the divine ancestry of the imperial lineage. The rite is characterized by “distant worship,” as seen on this first occasion when the emperor sends an envoy (\**Hōbeishi*) to Ise to make offerings (\**Heihaku*) on his behalf.
- 819 賀茂祭、公的祭祀に First indication that the concept of state-approved public festivals exists comes when the festival at Kamo Shrine (which itself had been ranked at highest possible level for a shrine in 807) is officially designated as a court festival.
- 819 貴船神、祈雨奉幣 Prayers seeking the start or end of rainfall (\**Kiu, shiu*) become commonplace around this time, with Kibune Shrine in Kyoto becoming a focal point for imperial tributes (\**Heihaku*) requesting such. Indicative of the belief among ancient Japanese that deities could be solicited to intervene in this-worldly affairs (see \**Ancient Shinto (2)*).
- 859 石清水八幡宮創建 Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine founded. Worship of the deity Hachiman (\**Hachiman shrinkō*) is a preeminent example of Shinto-Buddhist syncretism, and this shrine becomes a focal point for the cult.
- 869 祇園祭の創始 After a major epidemic, 66 halberds (apparently because Japan had 66 provinces at the time) are erected in a rite to appease the deity. One tradition holds this is the origin of the Gion Festival (\**Gion matsuri* and \**Gion/Tsushima shrinkō*), a ritual event that is regarded as providing the model for the basic structure of Japanese summer festivals.
- 888 天皇毎朝御拝の創始 The primacy of the Grand Shrines of Ise is highlighted by the inauguration this year of the daily morning worship rite by the emperor (see \**Chōtei saishi (Imperial Court Rituals)*). This distant worship practice, in which the emperor worships all the deities of heaven and earth (\**Tenjinchigi*) to the four directions, is directed toward Ise.
- 898 16 社制 (後の 22 社制) 成立 The 16-shrine system, later to become the 22-shrine system (\**Nijūnisha*), is established around this time when offerings are made to the Grand Shrines of Ise (counted as one under this system) and 15 other shrines to carry out rainfall rituals (\**Kiu, shiu*). These shrines receive special patronage from the imperial court and perform rites to intercede with the deities on behalf of the court and state in times of flooding, plagues, and other crises.
- 904 朝廷、北野に雷神を祭る The imperial court sends an envoy to worship \**Raijin*, the deity of thunder and more generally associated with calamity, at the predecessor to the Kyoto shrine Kitano Tenmangū as a prayer for a good harvest. *Raijin* is a prominent example of a \*combinatory *kami*, a deity that brings various Japanese and imported religious elements together to varying degrees to produce a new whole (see also \**Tenjin shrinkō*).
- 927 延喜式 50 卷撰上 Fujiwara no Tadahira completes the 50-volume compendium of laws and procedures called \**Engishiki*. The compilation, which includes numerous provisions on kami worship, is promulgated and goes into force in 967.
- 999 祇園祭山車初見 The use of festival floats (\**Dashi*)—a decorated cart originally meant to

symbolize the presence of kami at the festival—is mentioned for the first time in the context of the Gion Festival this year when a street performer attired as a monk pulls an object resembling the cart used in the *\*daijōsai* at Gion Tenjin'e. Floats are a common sight at many shrine festivals; those of the Gion Festival have become particularly renowned.

- 1063 源頼義、鎌倉に八幡宮建立 Minamoto no Yoriyoshi builds a Hachiman shrine at Yui City (present-day Kamakura City). The event marks the origins of Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine, an important Hachiman cult (*\*Hachiman shinkō*) site associated with one of the major imperial branch families.
- 1086 熊野詣の御幸盛んになる The growth of the many-layered Kumano cult (*\*Kumano Shinkō*) is reflected by the popularity among all classes of going on pilgrimages to Kumano around this time. Four retired emperors, Shirakawa, Toba, Goshirakawa, and Gotoba, visit Kumano almost 100 times over the course of the century.

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<武家政権 Warrior rule: Medieval period>

- 1192 鎌倉幕府成立し、1194年に寺社奉行初見 Minamoto Yoritomo begins nearly 800 years of warrior rule in Japan with the founding of the Kamakura bakufu (shogunate). The system used to administer Buddhist and Shinto religious institutions throughout these years is inaugurated in 1194 with the appointment of the first *\*Magistrate of Temples and Shrines: Medieval (Jisha bugyō)*.
- 1219 北野天神絵巻 成立 *\*Kitanotenjin'engi emaki*, an illustrated scroll recording the origins and history of Kitano Tenmangū with a focus on the acts of Sugawara no Michizane, is produced around this time (see also *\*Tenjin shinkō*).
- 1232 御成敗式目 発布 (第一条に「神社を修理し祭祀を専らにすべきこと」と記載) The *Goseibai shikimoku*, the fundamental legal code for the Kamakura bakufu, is promulgated. Article 1 and Article 2 contain stipulations about warrior oversight of shrine and temple repairs and devoting oneself to religious services, indicative of the shift in power from the imperial court to warrior leaders.
- 1320 度会家行「類聚神祇本源」成立 *\*Watarai Ieyuki* writes *\*Ruijūjingihongen* (Rubricated sources on the origins of the deities, 15 fascicles). The work is a compendium covering the origins of Japanese deities that functions as a medieval sourcebook for belief in *kami* (see also *\*Ise Shintō*).
- 1339 神皇正統記 *\*Kitabatake Chikafusa* writes *Jinnōshōtōki* (Chronicle of the direct descent of divine emperors). This work argued for Japan's world historical importance owing to the rule of an unbroken line of emperors descended from the *kami*.
- 1352-60 神道集 *\*Shintōshū* (A collection of Shintō legends) compiled. The miscellany brings

- together origin stories and myths for numerous important shrines, material and immaterial features of Shintō, and certain \*combinatory *kami*.
- 1462 伊勢内宮遷宮（以後 124 年間遷宮途絶） The Ise Inner Shrine is rebuilt and reconsecrated (\**Shikinensengū*) for the last time for 124 years.
- 1467 応仁の乱 The Ōnin War breaks out in Kyōto. Many shrines and temples are burnt down around the capital during the 10-year long conflict. The civil war precipitates the roughly century-long Warring States (Sengoku) period during which Japan's central government collapses, bringing the medieval bakufu to an end.
- 1484 神祇大副吉田兼俱、山城神楽岡に斎場所を造営し遷座を行う。同年「唯一神道名法要集」、1486 年に「唯一神道大意」成立 \*Yoshida Kanetomo, the then-senior assistant director of divinities (*jingi taifu*), constructs his family's ritual space in the outskirts of Kyoto and transfers deity to the site while also publishing that year his work \**Yuiitsushintō meihōyōshū* (Essentials on the name and the law of the one and only Shintō). Two years later, he completes the \**Shintō tai'i* (Outline of Shintō). The developments help to establish the Yoshida family's unique interpretation of Shintō, and the family would have a dominant role in shaping the tradition and overseeing much of its development.
- 1545 後奈良天皇の大嘗祭実行できず Prayers of apology are offered at Ise Shrine for not having performed the \**daijōsai* for Emperor Go-Nara Tennō. The incident is suggestive of the eclipse in prestige and financial straits that beset the imperial institution during the Warring States period.
- 1549 キリスト教伝来 Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier arrives in Kagoshima, introducing Christianity to Japan.
- 1563 伊勢神宮（外宮のみ）式年遷宮再興 Ise Outer Shrine is rebuilt and reconsecrated (\**Shikinensengū*), but the rite is not yet revived at the Inner Shrine.
- 1563 日本人ロレンソの書簡でシントー（Xinto）初見 The first appearance of the word “Shintō” (Xintō) in a Christian document is found in correspondence from the Japanese Christian Lourenço (see \**Shinto and Christianity*).
- 1585 伊勢式年遷宮再開 The Inner and Outer Shrines at Ise are both rebuilt and reconsecrated (\**Shikinensengū*) for the first time in 124 years.
- 1590 神祇官八神殿、吉田斎場所に遷座 The \**Hasshinden*, the hall enshrining the eight tutelary deities of the emperor, is relocated from the Department of Divinities (\**Jingikan*) to the precincts of Yoshida Shrine. Another would later be constructed at the mansion of the rival Shirakawa house, highlighting the primacy of the two Shinto clans at the time.

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<武家政権 Warrior rule: Early Modern period>

- 1603 江戸幕府成立。幕府、山田奉行を置く Tokugawa Ieyasu establishes his bakufu (shogunate) in Edo (present-day Tokyo). Around this time, the bakufu creates the Yamada magistrate (*Yamada bugyō*) to oversee security and the regular rebuilding and reconsecration of the Grand Shrines of Ise (see *\*Shinto in the Early Modern Period*).
- 1612 禁教令 The bakufu prohibits Christian activities and orders the destruction of the cathedral in Kyōto (see *\*Shintō and Christianity*). It bans the religion itself the following year, reaffirming in the text of its prohibition order that “Japan is the land of the *kami*.”
- 1613 公家諸法度・勅許紫衣法規 The bakufu issues a set of legal codes governing noble households, including the imperial family. It also issues a law prohibiting the imperial court from granting purple Buddhist robes to high-rank priests, one of a series of policies designed to vest authority over religious matters in the bakufu itself.
- 1615 武家諸法度・禁中並公家諸法度・諸宗本山本寺諸法度 Further enhancing its hold on the state, the bakufu issues separate ordinances that respectively govern the activities and behavior of warrior households, aristocratic families, and the head temples of all Buddhist sects.
- 1616 家康没、久能山及び日光東照宮の起源 Tokugawa Ieyasu dies. He asks in his will that a Shintō-style funeral be held for him at Mt. Kunō. The bakufu establishes a temporary shrine on Mt. Kunō and begins the construction of a mausoleum for Tokugawa Ieyasu in Nikkō. Work is completed in 1617 with the transfer of the deity to the shrine. The developments are part of a politically motivated effort to deify the spirit of Ieyasu, buttressing Tokugawa control of Japan (see *\*Shinto in the Early Modern Period*).
- 1635 幕府寺社奉行を設置 The bakufu appoints Tokugawa clan retainers as \*Magistrates for Temples and Shrines (*Jisha bugyō*), taking over from the religionists who once held the position.
- 1639 鎖国完成 The Portuguese are expelled from Nagasaki and their ships are forbidden from coming to Japan. While the Tokugawa bakufu still maintained contact to the outside world through Chinese and Dutch traders, such contacts were strictly controlled. Start of what has been labeled Japan’s “closed country” (*sakoku*) period.
- 1640 山崎闇齋「三教一致論」 Scholar-thinker \*Yamazaki Ansai writes *Sankyō itchi-ron* (On the harmony of the three doctrines), promoting a fusion of Confucianism and Shinto (*\*Suika Shintō*).
- 1644 林羅山「神道伝授」 Confucian scholar and bakufu advisor \*Hayashi Razan writes *\*Shintō denju* (Initiation of Shintō).
- 1646 徳川義直「神祇宝典」 Daimyō \*Tokugawa Yoshinao, a patron of both Confucian and Shinto scholarship, compiles *\*Jingihōten*, a collection of studies and research on the shrines listed in *\*Engishiki*.
- 1649 慶安の御触書 *Keian no ofuregaki* (Proclamations of the Keian era) promulgated. A series

- of codes that regulates the activities of commoners, the legislation contains implicit suggestions that making pilgrimages to temples and shrines had become popular by this time.
- 1657 徳川光圀「大日本史」編纂開始 \*Tokugawa Mitsukuni begins compiling *Dai Nihonshi* (History of Great Japan). The work marks the origin of \*Mitogaku, a scholarly and academic tradition that applied Confucian historical methodologies to Japanese history. The school in its late period also took up contemporary social problems, and its influence would be felt in the developments that led to the Meiji Restoration.
- 1661 伊勢御蔭参り流行 Popularity of going on pilgrimages to Ise (*Isemairi*, see \**Okagemairi*) has become widespread.
- 1665 諸社禰宜神主諸法度 The bakufu issues an ordinance outlining its fundamental principles for all shrines and shrine affiliated priests (\**Shosha negi kannushi hatto*). Part of the Tokugawa regime's religious control policies, the law also in effect authorizes the Yoshida family's control over all shrines.
- 1667 出雲大社落成 Izumo Shrine completed (see also \**Izumo shrinkō*).
- 1682 吉川惟足、幕府の神道方となる \*Yoshikawa Koretari, a founder of \*Yoshikawa Shintō, becomes Shintō Councilor for the bakufu. While the lineage never outpaced \*Yoshida Shintō in terms of influence, the Yoshikawa house did maintain its position as the head of the government agency in charge of Shintō matters until the bakufu's demise.
- 1687 東山天皇、1466年以來途絶していた大嘗祭を再興 \**Daijōsai* ceremony held to accompany accession of Emperor Higashiyama. The rite had not been performed since 1466.
- 1694 将軍、1467年以來途絶していた賀茂祭を再興 The *Aoi matsuri* ("Hollyhock Festival," also known as the Kamo Festival) is revived. Last held in 1467, the festival is still regarded one of the archetypical examples of an imperial court rite (see \**Chōtei saishi [Imperial Court Rituals]*).
- 1699 伊勢神宮、祈年祭・神御衣祭再興 The Grand Shrines of Ise attempt to revive the \**kinensai* and \**kanmisosai* rites for the first time in over 300 years. Both rites soon lapse again into abeyance until the late 19th century.
- 1704 谷川士清「日本書紀通証」成立 \*Tanigawa Kotosuga completes *Nihon shoki tsūshō* (A compendium treatise on the \**Nihon shoki*), a commentary that would become a major reference work for scholars of the \**Kokugaku* (National Learning) school.
- 1768 賀茂真淵「祝詞考」 \*Kamo no Mabuchi completes \**Noritokō*, a commentary on the magico-religious incantations (\**Norito*) contained in the \**Engishiki*. Considered to be the foundational text for *norito* research.
- 1786 塙保己一「群書類従」刊行開始 Publication begins of \*Hanawa Hokiichi's *Gunsho ruijū*, a massive bakufu-ordered compendium of rare historical documents. The collection would become a major source for \**Kokugaku* scholars.

- 1790 本居宣長「古事記伝」刊行開始 \**Kokugaku* scholar \*Motoori Norinaga begins publishing his masterwork, \**Kojikiden* (Exegesis on the *Kojiki*).
- 1794 富士講の禁止（以後度々禁令が出る） The bakufu bans commoners in Edo from forming Fuji confraternities (*Fujikō*, see \**Fuji shinkō*). Despite the bakufu's attempts to control such independent expressions of religious belief, it is repeatedly forced thereafter to announce such bans.
- 1813 平田篤胤「靈能真柱」他刊行 \**Kokugaku* scholar \*Hirata Atsutane publishes \**Tama no mihashira* (The true pillar of spirit) and other writings.
- 1814 黒住教、禊教、神道修成派 One of the earliest of the Shintō-derived new religions is launched when \*Kurozumi Munetada, the founder of \*Kurozumikyō, begins proselytizing. The group will be classified as one of the 13 prewar Shintō sects. In subsequent decades, \*Inoue Masakane founds \*Misogikyō and \*Nitta Kuniteru founds \*Shintō Shūseiha, two more of the prewar Shintō sects (see \**Shinto-Derived Religions*).
- 1867 金光教、天理教、布教を公認される。 The \*Yoshida Shintō lineage grants the new religions \*Konkōkyō and \*Tenrikyō permission to proselytize. The two will also be counted among the 13 prewar sects (see \**Shinto-Derived Religions*).

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<明治期以降 Modern period (post-Meiji era)>

- 1867 王政復古の大号令 The Order on the Restoration of Imperial Rule is promulgated, bringing an end to rule by the Tokugawa bakufu (see \**Imperial Restoration* and also \**Modern and Contemporary Shinto*).
- 1868 五カ条の御誓文 The Five-Article Charter Oath (*Gokajō no goseimon*) promulgated. The document set down the political principles of the new government. Senior officials read out the oath to the emperor in a ceremony at a shrine, pledging to the deities to fulfill its promises on the emperor's behalf.
- 1868 神祇官再興 The new government takes several steps to institutionalize Shintō on a modern basis, grounded in a political ethos aimed at the unification of rites and rule (*saisei itchi*; see \**Modern and Contemporary Shintō* and also \**Fukko Shintō*). One of the first measures it undertakes is the revival this year of the Department of Divinities (\**The Meiji Jingikan*). Shintō house lineages are no longer allowed to license priests, and all shrines and priests placed under the authority of the Department.
- 1868 神仏分離 To further enhance the status of Shintō while also lower that of Buddhism—which is criticized as foreign and also had been closely associated with the defunct Tokugawa regime—the Meiji government launches an ultimately abortive campaign to separate Shintō and Buddhism (\**Shinbutsu bunri*).

- 1869 九段招魂社（後の靖国神社） Tokyo \*Shōkonsha is built in the city's Kudan neighborhood to enshrine the soldiers killed in the Boshin Civil War of 1868. It subsequently becomes Yasukuni Shrine.
- 1872 官国幣社祈年祭式制定 The \*kinensai ceremony is established as one of the major imperial shrine rites of the Meiji state (\*Meiji Kokka Saishi: State Rites of the Meiji Period) for imperial and national shrines (*kankoku heisha*, see \*Modern Shrine Ranking System).
- 1875 神道事務局設置。1886年、神社事務局、神社本局に改組。神道と称し、教派神道の独立教派となる The Shintō Office (\*Shintō Jimukyoku) is established as an institute for proselytization and doctrinal research. It is a core institution in the drive known as the Great Promulgation Campaign (\*Taikyō senpu) conducted by the Meiji government to disseminate its ideology of imperial rule. After the campaign is abandoned, the Jimukyoku will be reorganized in 1886 as Shintō Headquarters (*Shintō honkyoku*) and treated as one of the independent sects of sectarian Shintō (see \*Shintō Taikyō).
- 1882 神道神宮派、大社派、扶桑派、実行派、大成派、神習派特立。さらに御嶽派独立。 Several other groups that will comprise the 13 prewar Shintō sects are established, including Shintō Jingūha (a precursor to \*Jingūkyō), Shintō Taishaha (\*Izumo Ōyashirokyō), Shintō Fusōha (\*Fusōkyō), Shintō Jikkyōha (\*Jikkōkyō), Shintō Taiseiha (\*Shintō Taiseikyō), and Shintō Shinshūha (\*Shinshūkyō). Also, Shintō \*Ontakekyō breaks away from \*Shintō Taiseikyō.
- 1882 チェンバレン古事記英訳 The first English translation of *Kojiki* appears when Basil Hall Chamberlain's rendering is published as *The Kojiki: Records of Ancient Matters*.
- 1882 皇典講究所設置（國學院大學の前身） The Center for the Study of Classical Culture (*Kōten kōkyūjo*) is established. The institution will eventually become \*Kokugakuin University.
- 1882 神官教導職分離 Priests from national and imperial shrines (\*Shinkan) are prohibited from working concurrently as moral preceptors (*kyōdōshoku*) in the Great Promulgation Campaign (\*Taikyō senpu) as a product of the attempts to establish Shintō as something other than a religion (see \*Modern and Contemporary Shintō and also \*State Shintō).
- 1889 大日本帝国憲法発布・皇室典範制定 The Imperial Constitution (also known as the Meiji Constitution) is promulgated. The Imperial Household Law is set down, establishing the rules of succession. In the House of Representatives Election Law that is also promulgated this year, shrine priests, Buddhist priests and monks, and Christian priests are all deemed ineligible for office.
- 1894 神理教、禊教独立 \*Shinrikyō and \*Misogikyō are established; both will be counted among the 13 prewar Shintō sects.
- 1900 社寺局を宗教局とし、神社局を置く The Home Affairs Ministry is reorganized. The Bureau of Shrines and Temples becomes the Religious Affairs Bureau and the Bureau of Shrines (\*Jinjakyoku) is created (see \*Modern and Contemporary Systems and Institutions: An



*Overview*).

- 1915 明治神宮造営局設立 A bureau for the construction of a shrine to the late Meiji emperor is created within the Home Affairs Ministry (see also *\*State Shintō*).
- 1945 終戦。神道指令 World War II ends with Japan's surrender. The General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) issues its Shinto Directive (*\*Shintō shirei*), which abolishes *\*State Shintō*. Lays the groundwork for the separation of religion and the state, a principle that will be firmed up legally in 1947 with the adoption of the postwar Constitution.
- 1946 神社本庁設立 The Association of Shintō Shrines (*\*Jinja Honchō*) is founded as religious corporation.
- 1951 宗教法人法公布 The *\*Religious Corporations Ordinance* is abolished and replaced by *\*Religious Corporations Law*.