

# THE WAY OF THE KAMI

## GODS AND GODDESSES OF JAPAN

Yuriko Ohno



**I**wonder if you know just how many gods and goddesses there are in Japan. In fact, it is said that about eight million kami are worshipped!

Shinto, or the 'Way of the Kami', has been observed in Japan since ancient times and its central belief teaches that kami reside in everything in the universe. In mountains, water, rocks, the wind... the list goes on. Most importantly, kami reside inside us – humans.

The kami of Japan are energy and have consciousness, existing without clear physical form or shape. Shinto has no founding figure and follows no doctrine. Ancient Shinto speaks of the nameless, formless source of all – energy known as 'the Great Harmony'. Heaven and Earth were formed and with their creation appeared the kami, Ame-no-Minakanushi (meaning 'Lord of the Centre of Heaven'). Seven kami emerged before Izanaki and Izanami joined to create a whole host of different kami.

Residing in the kitchen stove is the Kami of the Hearth. The Water Kami is worshipped wherever clear water springs from the ground. Seamstresses in Japan have long observed a custom of expressing gratitude to spirits in



the sewing needles they use and take needles to shrines where they pray for advancement of their sewing skills. 'Divine consciousness and intelligence reside in everything around us. Thus all people and all things are to be shown respect and gratitude.' This became a fundamental way of living.

Inside us exists what is called *naohi*, or 'direct spirit'. This is our direct link to the *kami* and is divine energy in itself. In other words, we are each a branch of the divine. And to know a *kami*, to connect to their energy, opens a door to a part of us inside resonating with the harmonics of that *kami*. It becomes a journey of discovery to know oneself. One Shinto ritual still performed today involves paying respects to your own reflection in a mirror. The idea is that you are acknowledging the *kami* within.

Purification, or *misogi*, is a basic Shinto rite. Whenever we become disillusioned, creating conflict, we lose *ki*, or life force energy, and it is harder to connect with *naohi*, our soul. Once we get rid of our inner conflicts, the original divine light is able to shine through again. Fire and Water *Kami* can help us let go of our concerns and self-judgement.

The energy of *kami* transcends time and space. This means you can connect with them wherever you are. You can invoke the energy of any *kami* you wish to support you. First ring a bell, or clap your hands, to get their attention. Then call out the name of the *kami* in a clear monotone voice. The sound of a *kami's* name is *otodama*, or 'spirit in sound'. And then focus on your breathing and slowly enter the stillness inside you. Just ask and the *kami* should give you their support or a message. The Shinto breathing exercise I will introduce makes for a good preparation exercise.

Each *kami* has its own specialty. If you feel tired, invoke the support of *Sukunahikona-no-Kami* who is a god of healing and hot springs. He will awaken the healing power within you. The key when asking for assistance is to show gratitude. You may also like to pray for the *kami's* own prosperity.

I believe the universe, too, is breathing. As the universe switches between exhale and inhale, human consciousness shifts from unity to separation and from separation to unity. Japan is part of the ancient continent of Lemuria and Japanese *kami* therefore possess energy

from the period of unity, in the distant past, when there was no fighting, no war. Japanese *kami* are thus guardians of unity and harmony.

Human consciousness, I believe, is about to shift from separation back to unity. Perhaps now is the time to connect with the harmonising *kami* of Japan and bring about peace both outside and within.

Finally, I would like to share a secret method for enriching your lives! It might surprise you that in Japan, the Toilet *Kami* is treated very well. This *kami* is very powerful and it has been proven that wealth visits homes or companies that put their heart into cleaning the toilet.

Try it!

## THE SHINTO BREATHING

Stand up or sit on a chair with your back straight. Take a quick but strong breath through your nose, deep down into your stomach, and then breathe out through your mouth. When breathing out, make it last as long as possible until the breath is completely exhaled. Allow around 40 seconds for each breath.

## IZANAKI-NO-MIKOTO

After giving birth to the land together with *Izanami-no-Mikoto*, *Izanaki-no-Mikoto* went on to father 35 natural deities, one of which is *Amaterasu-Omikami*. He gave birth to her and other *kami* when he cleansed himself in the ocean. He was the one who gave substance to his energy to form *Oyashima*, the myriad islands of Japan. *Izanaki-no-Mikoto* represents masculinity, which gives energy substance and structure. He is also a deity of purification. When we purify ourselves to get rid of inner conflicts, it enables us to manifest our vision. He helps us to bring our thoughts down to three dimensions. *Izanaki-no-Mikoto* teaches us the importance of the spoken word and the value of gratitude.

So let's create our own clear vision to guide our lives and give form to it with help from *Izanaki-no-Mikoto*.



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I hope you have fun exploring this Kit and that you have a truly positive experience.  
God Bless .....Love and Light to You and Yours

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### The Message from Izanaki-no-Mikoto

Give substance to your thoughts. Substance takes form through logos, or spoken word. Experience the power of definitive speech by following through on the words you speak with feelings of gratitude. I will see to it that you are heard.

### AMATERASU-OMIKAMI

Beautiful goddess, Amaterasu-Ōmikami, born from the left eye of Izanaki-no-Mikoto, embodies the sun and is worshipped in the Shinto religion as the highest of all deities. Amaterasu literally means 'the shining sun in the heaven'. She is at times gentle, at times tempestuous, just like the sun. The power of Amaterasu-Ōmikami is diverse and infinite. She is a resource for all life on the ground. By connecting with her energy, you start to see your authentic self – your *naohi* – and you can manifest your own heart's desire with the power of the sun within – that is to say, she is the divine joy within you.

### The Message from Amaterasu-Ōmikami

I am the shining light. I illuminate everything. And where there is light, there is shadow. Shadow is also my creation. I will not turn it into light – it is fine as it is. I am light. I am your infinite self.

Author, lecturer and counsellor, Yuriko Ohno graduated from Kobe College. In 1992, she started work as an interpreter in the psychology and spirituality fields. Through this experience, she became a practitioner of integration therapy. She currently gives workshops on Japanese gods and goddesses and also teaches at The School for Mystical Knowing in Japan. Since childhood, she has had many mystical experiences. Official website: <http://homepage2.nifty.com/i-unity> (Japanese).

Yuriko's Gods and Goddesses of Japan card deck is published by Visionary Company in Japan and is available from The Spirit Guide bookshop for your convenience – RRP \$39.95, VIP \$33.95. See page 68 for how to order.

