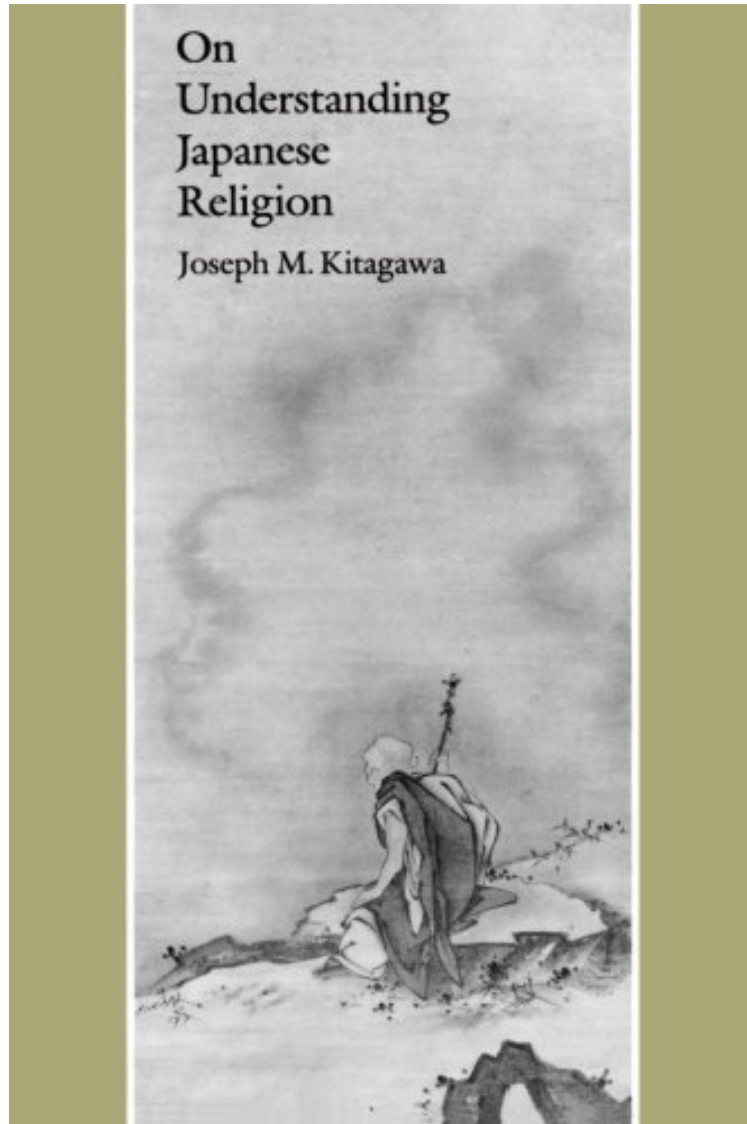


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## On Understanding Japanese Religion

*Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa*

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recommended using this book for either japan high school class or college course.

Joseph Kitagawa, one of the founders of the field of history of religions and an eminent scholar of the religions of Japan, published his classic book *Religion in Japanese History* in 1966. Since then, he has written a number of extremely influential essays that illustrate approaches to the study of Japanese religious phenomena. To date, these essays have remained scattered in various scholarly journals. This book makes available nineteen of these articles, important contributions to our understanding of Japan's intricate combination of indigenous Shinto, Confucianism, Taoism, the Yin-Yang School, Buddhism, and folk religion. In sections on prehistory, the historic development of Japanese religion, the Shinto tradition, the Buddhist tradition, and the modern phase of the Japanese religious tradition, the author develops a number of valuable methodological approaches. The volume also includes an appendix on Buddhism in America. Asserting that the study of Japanese religion is more than an umbrella term covering investigations of separate traditions, Professor Kitagawa approaches the subject from an interdisciplinary standpoint. Skillfully combining political, cultural, and social history, he depicts a Japan that seems a microcosm of the religious experience of humankind.

From Library Journal Kitagawa is a respected name in the history of religion, especially Japanese religion. The 18 chapters of this book have all appeared previously as articles or lectures and are here arranged in a chronological and developmental sequence that moves from prehistory to a discussion of present attitudes towards religion. The appendix offers a very reasoned statement on the current presence of Buddhism in America. Though the articles have not been reedited or the bibliographical references updated, for which the preface apologizes, this is not a serious drawback. An excellent, cohesive disquisition on a subject not simple for the Westerner to grasp. It is not a popularization, nor is it an exercise in abstruse scholarship. For the serious reader. Donald J. Pearce, Univ. of Minnesota, Duluth, Lib. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. From the Back Cover Joseph Kitagawa, one of the founders of the field of history religions and an eminent scholar of the religions of Japan, published his classic book *Religion in Japanese History* in 1966. Since then, he has written number of extremely influential essays that illustrate approaches to the study of Japanese religious phenomena. This book makes available nineteen of these articles, important contributions to our understanding of Japan's intricate combination of indigenous Shinto, Confucianism, Taoism, the Yin-Yang School, Buddhism, and folk religion. About the Author Joseph M. Kitagawa is Professor Emeritus of the University of Chicago Divinity School and of the Department of Far Eastern Languages and Civilizations there: he is also a former Dean of the Divinity School.