

D Ise Shrine (as rebuilt in 1973)

Shinto Shrine and the veneration of the kami/ Amaterasu/ rebuilt every 20 years (shikinen sengu)/ "heart pillar"/ Imperial or Inner Shrine/ Outer Shrine/ wooden weights with metallic caps/ chigi forked finials/ tiered fencing/ formal simplicity, disciplined structure, and a spiritual presence

1. Unlike the Pantheon (which has survived for almost 2,000 years) this sacred structure in Japan is rebuilt every 20 years. Why do the worshippers of the Shinto faith insist on such rebuilding?
2. During each rebuilding, a particular pillar called the "**heart pillar**" stays in place. Why is the "heart pillar" so important?
3. In the Shinto faith, the **kami** are the spirits of nature found in rocks, mountains, trees, and forests. How would a structure like the Ise Shrine involve the veneration of the kami?
4. The Imperial (or Inner) Shrine is dedicated to **Amaterasu**, the Shinto sun goddess (from whom the Japanese family traces its descent). The main shrine is called the **shoden**. The Outer Shrine is dedicated to the goddess of farming and harvest, **Toyouke Okami**.
5. The shrine holds a sacred mirror sacred to Amaterasu. Izanagi, Amaterasu's father, gave a mirror to each of his children, instructing them to kneel before it every morning and evening and examine themselves. If they had evil thoughts, the mirror would be cloudy. To trick Amaterasu to come out from hiding in a cave, a mirror was used to create an extremely bright light created by Amaterasu's reflection so that she would think that the gods were celebrating the arrival of a new goddess, even greater and brighter than she is herself.
6. To reach the Inner Shrine, visitors must cross the Isuzu River via an arched footbridge and a **torii** (sacred gateway). The devout then proceed upstream to an area of the river bank where they can wash their hands and rinse out their mouths with water in an act of purification.
7. To protect the exposed grain of the timber where it is most vulnerable to moisture, penetration and decay, metallic caps are placed. Why do the Japanese refuse to varnish or paint the wood to further protect the structure?
8. To secure the timber frames, the Japanese used a method of traditional joinery to create forked finials called **chigi**. Why do the Japanese not use nails to build the structure?
9. The Inner Shrine is set up from off the ground and is surrounded by gravel and four concentric tiered fences. What does the gravel represent?
10. How would compare the Shinto faith as exemplified by the Ise Shrine with ancient Roman beliefs as exemplified by the Pantheon?