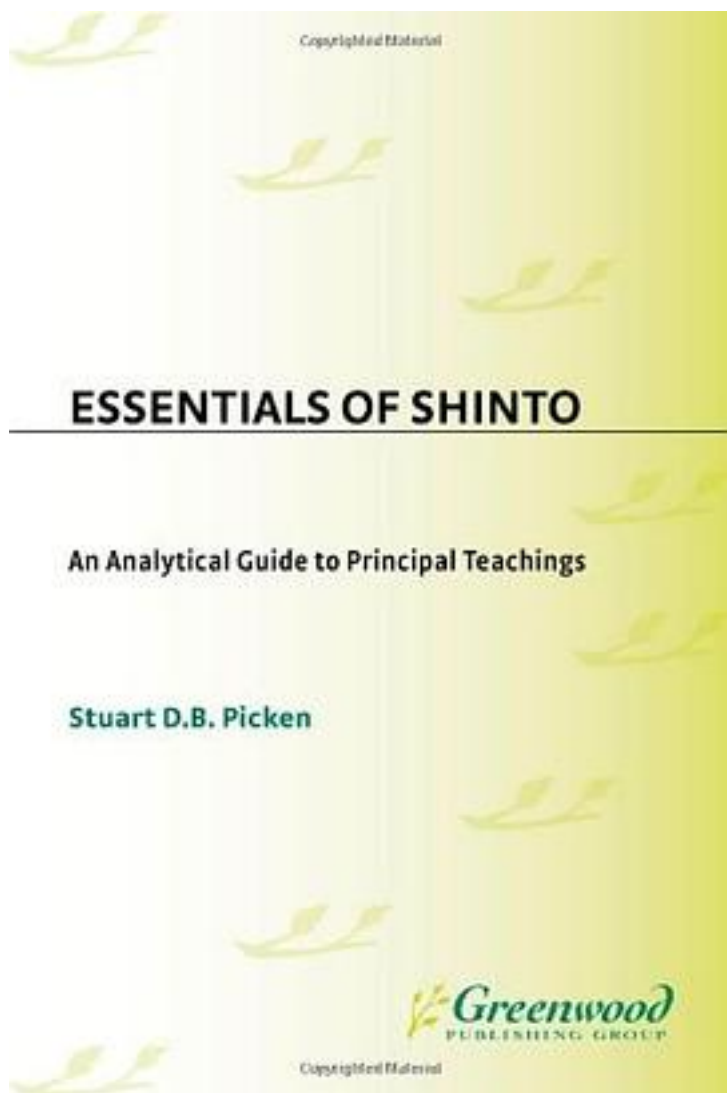


Essentials of Shinto



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Shinto is finally receiving the attention it deserves as a fundamental component of Japanese culture. Nevertheless, it remains a remarkably complex and elusive phenomenon to which Western categories of religion do not readily apply. A knowledge of Shinto can only proceed from a basic understanding of Japanese shrines and civilization, for it is closely intermingled with the Japanese way of life and continues to be a vital natural religion. This book is a convenient guide to Shinto thought. As a reference work, the volume does not offer a detailed critical study of all aspects of Shinto. Instead, it overviews the essential teachings of Shinto and provides the necessary cultural and historical context for understanding Shinto as a dynamic force in Japanese civilization. The book begins with an historical overview of Shinto, followed by a discussion of Japanese myths. The volume then discusses the role of shrines, which are central to Shinto rituals. Other portions of the book discuss the various Shinto sects and the evolution of Shinto from the Heian period to the present. Because Japanese terms are central to Shinto, the work includes a glossary.

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