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The diplomat and Japanese and Korean scholar William George Aston (1841–1911) wrote several highly regarded publications, particularly on the Japanese language. Condensed from his more comprehensive 1905 study of the subject, this 1907 work is a brief introduction to Shinto, the indigenous religion of Japan. Based on the worship of nature and ancestor spirits, Shinto has evolved throughout its history, particularly under Buddhist and Confucian influence. In the late nineteenth century it played a notable role in the revival of Japanese nationalism, and continued to be central to public life until 1945. This work focuses on describing its general character, and its myths and practices, drawing on early written sources based on the oral tradition. Aston's work has been criticised for its dependence on philological study of the early texts, but his expertise is undeniable. His groundbreaking *History of Japanese Literature* (1899) is also reissued in this series.

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