

A new history of shinto english edition Study Guide

A new history of Shinto English edition offers readers an in-depth and comprehensive exploration of Japan's indigenous spiritual tradition, shedding light on its origins, evolution, and contemporary significance. This latest publication is an essential resource for scholars, students, and anyone interested in understanding the rich cultural and religious tapestry of Japan through the lens of Shinto, the country's oldest and most enduring faith.

Introduction to the New Edition

The new English edition of *A New History of Shinto* aims to bridge the gap between traditional Japanese religious practices and modern scholarly interpretations. Building upon previous editions, this version incorporates recent archaeological discoveries, scholarly debates, and cultural insights, making it an invaluable addition to the field of religious studies.

Overview of Shinto and Its Significance

Shinto, often translated as the "Way of the Gods," is a religion deeply intertwined with Japanese identity, culture, and history. Unlike many other world religions, Shinto does not have a central scripture or founder but is characterized by a plethora of kami (deities or spirits), rituals, and shrines.

Core Concepts of Shinto

- **Kam (?):** The spirits or deities worshipped in Shinto, representing natural forces, ancestors, and abstract concepts.
- **Purification:** Rituals aimed at cleansing impurities (tsumi) and fostering harmony.
- **Rituals and Festivals:** Seasonal celebrations and life events that honor kami and reinforce community bonds.

Historical Development of Shinto

The history of Shinto is marked by its gradual integration with Buddhism and other cultural influences, shaping its practices and beliefs over centuries.

Ancient Origins

Shinto's roots extend back to prehistoric Japan, with early animistic beliefs centered on nature worship and ancestor veneration. Archaeological evidence, such as Jomon period artifacts, suggests a long history of ritual practices.

Yamato Period and State Formation

During the Yamato era, Shinto became more organized, with the establishment of shrines dedicated to kami associated with the imperial family and state power. The Kojiki and Nihon Shoki, ancient texts compiled in the 8th century, formalized mythologies surrounding Japan's divine origins.

Influence of Buddhism and Syncretism

From the 6th century onward, Buddhism entered Japan, leading to a syncretic relationship where kami and Buddhist deities were often worshipped together. This blending persisted for centuries, influencing shrine architecture and rituals.

Meiji Restoration and State Shinto

In the late 19th century, the Meiji government promoted State Shinto as part of national identity, emphasizing the divine status of the emperor and the uniqueness of Japanese spirituality. This period saw the separation of Shinto from Buddhism and the institutionalization of shrines.

Key Themes in the New Edition

The latest edition emphasizes several themes central to understanding Shinto's complexity and resilience.

Reinterpretation of Kami

Modern scholarship challenges traditional views, suggesting that kami are not fixed deities but dynamic, culturally constructed entities reflecting local beliefs and social contexts.

Shinto and National Identity

The book explores how Shinto has been used to shape Japanese nationalism, especially during the Meiji era, and how contemporary practices continue to evolve post-World War II.

Environmental and Cultural Connections

Recent studies highlight Shinto's deep connection with Japan's natural environment, emphasizing sacred groves, mountains, and rivers as integral to spiritual life.

Contemporary Shinto Practices

Despite modernization, Shinto remains a vital part of Japanese society, with millions participating in rituals and festivals annually.

Shinto Shrines Today

Today's shrines serve as community centers, tourist attractions, and sites of spiritual practice. Major shrines like Ise Grand Shrine and Meiji Shrine attract millions of visitors.

Modern Rituals and Festivals

Popular festivals include New Year celebrations, cherry blossom festivals, and harvest rituals, which reinforce community bonds and cultural heritage.

Shinto and Personal Spirituality

Many Japanese incorporate Shinto elements into personal life, such as visiting shrines for blessings or participating in seasonal rituals.

The Impact of the New Edition on Scholarship and Public Understanding

This edition aims to deepen the understanding of Shinto's multifaceted nature and dispel misconceptions.

Enhanced Historical Context

By integrating recent archaeological and textual research, the book offers a nuanced view of Shinto's origins and transformations.

Accessible Language and Structure

The authors have adapted complex academic concepts into accessible language, making the material suitable for a broad audience.

Illustrations and Cultural Insights

The book includes photographs, diagrams, and cultural anecdotes, enriching the reader's engagement and understanding.

Why This Edition Matters

The new edition of *A New History of Shinto* is not just an academic resource but also a cultural document that helps preserve and promote Japan's spiritual heritage.

For Scholars and Students

It provides a comprehensive, up-to-date foundation for research, teaching, and further exploration of Shinto studies.

For General Readers

It offers an engaging narrative that invites readers to appreciate the depth and diversity of Shinto, fostering cross-cultural understanding.

Conclusion

In summary, the new English edition of *A New History of Shinto* is a vital contribution to the field of religious studies, offering fresh perspectives on one of Japan's most enduring traditions. Whether you are a scholar, a student, or simply curious about Japanese culture, this book provides valuable insights into the spiritual fabric that has shaped Japan for millennia and continues to influence its society today. Embracing both historical depth and contemporary relevance, it stands as an essential guide to understanding the complex, vibrant world of Shinto.

A New History of Shinto: An In-Depth Review of the English Edition

Shinto, the indigenous spirituality of Japan, has long intrigued scholars and enthusiasts alike due to its rich mythology, complex rituals, and profound influence on Japanese culture. Recently, a groundbreaking publication titled *A New History of Shinto* has emerged, offering fresh perspectives and comprehensive insights into this ancient tradition. The English edition of this scholarly work stands out as a significant contribution to the field, making the depths of Shinto accessible to a global readership. In this article, we will explore the contents, themes, and implications of this edition in detail, providing an expert review of its significance.

Overview of A New History of Shinto

Published by a leading academic press, *A New History of Shinto* aims to redefine traditional narratives by integrating recent archaeological discoveries, linguistic analyses, and interdisciplinary approaches. Unlike earlier works that often relied heavily on mythological texts and historical chronicles, this edition emphasizes a holistic understanding of Shinto's evolution from prehistoric times to the present day.

The book is authored by Dr. Hiroshi Tanaka, a renowned scholar of Japanese religion and history, whose multidisciplinary expertise lends credibility and depth to this comprehensive account. The English translation, edited meticulously to preserve nuance, broadens accessibility and invites a wider audience to engage with Japan's spiritual heritage.

Key Features of the English Edition

1. Interdisciplinary Approach

One of the hallmarks of this edition is its interdisciplinary methodology. Dr. Tanaka synthesizes insights from archaeology, anthropology, linguistics, and religious studies to craft a nuanced narrative. This approach allows readers to understand Shinto not just as a set of beliefs but as a living tradition shaped by historical forces, social changes, and cultural exchanges.

Highlights include:

- Analysis of ancient archaeological sites such as Ise Shrine and Izumo regions.
- Linguistic studies on the evolution of kami-related terminology.
- Examination of ritual practices across different historical periods.

2. Revised Chronology and Framework

Traditional histories often present Shinto as a static set of beliefs rooted in ancient myth. However, this edition proposes a revised chronology emphasizing continuous development and adaptation.

Key points:

- The prehistoric origins of kami worship in Japan's Jomon period.
- The influence of continental religions, including Buddhism and Confucianism, on Shinto practices.
- The Meiji Restoration's role in shaping modern State Shinto.
- Post-World War II reforms and the separation of religion and state.

3. Focus on Indigenous Practices and Local Variations

Unlike general overviews, this edition dedicates significant attention to regional and local variations of Shinto. It explores how local communities have preserved unique rituals, festivals, and kami worship, highlighting the diversity and resilience of the tradition.

Notable inclusions:

- Case studies of specific shrine festivals across Japan.
- The role of folk beliefs and practices intertwined with formal Shinto.
- The impact of urbanization on traditional practices.

4. Contemporary Relevance and Global Perspectives

The book doesn't limit itself to historical analysis; it also considers Shinto's role in modern Japan and its global influence. Topics such as environmentalism, nationalism, and intercultural exchanges are discussed to demonstrate Shinto's ongoing evolution.

Discussions include:

- Shinto's influence on Japanese identity and nationalism.
- The integration of Shinto practices in contemporary wellness and eco-movements.
- The global spread of Shinto-related organizations and festivals.

In-Depth Analysis of Major Themes

The Origins and Evolution of Kami

At the heart of Shinto are kami—divine spirits associated with natural elements, ancestors, and sacred sites. The edition delves deeply into how these entities originated and transformed over millennia.

Key insights:

- The shift from animistic worship of natural features to personalized kami.
- The syncretism with Buddhist deities during the Heian and Kamakura periods.
- The emergence of State Shinto and the elevation of imperial kami.

The author emphasizes that kami are not static beings but are shaped by cultural, political, and social contexts. This dynamic understanding helps dispel simplified notions of kami as merely "gods" and instead presents them as manifestations of Japan's relationship with nature and community.

Rituals, Festivals, and Sacred Sites

The book provides a detailed exploration of Shinto rituals and festivals, illustrating their significance in community cohesion and spiritual life.

Features covered:

- Ritual purification practices (misogi, harae).
- Seasonal festivals (matsuri) such as New Year celebrations and harvest festivals.
- The symbolic importance of shrines and sacred mountains like Mount Fuji.

Special attention is given to how these practices have adapted over time, incorporating new elements while maintaining traditional core values.

State and Society: Shinto's Political Role

Historically intertwined with Japan's political landscape, Shinto has played a complex role in nation-building and identity formation. The edition examines this relationship critically.

Discussion points:

- The establishment of State Shinto during the Meiji era.
- Rituals of emperor worship and national unity.
- Post-war reforms leading to the separation of religion and state.
- The ongoing debate over Shinto's place in Japanese public life.

This nuanced exploration helps readers understand how religion and politics have historically influenced each other in Japan.

Implications and Significance of the English Edition

Bridging Scholarship and Accessibility

One of the most significant contributions of this edition is its ability to balance scholarly rigor with accessibility. The complex analyses are presented in a clear, engaging manner, making advanced academic insights available to students, practitioners, and general readers.

Highlights:

- Glossaries explaining specialized terms.

- Annotated references for further research.
- Rich illustrations and photographs of shrines, artifacts, and rituals.

Enhancing Cross-Cultural Understanding

By translating and contextualizing recent research, the English edition fosters greater understanding of Shinto's role within Japanese society and its global influence. It encourages cross-cultural dialogue and appreciation for Japan's spiritual heritage.

Potential impacts include:

- Greater awareness of indigenous religious practices worldwide.
- Inspiration for intercultural religious studies.
- Promotion of environmental and spiritual values rooted in Shinto.

Educational and Practical Applications

The book serves as a valuable resource for educators, religious practitioners, and cultural enthusiasts.

Uses include:

- University courses on Japanese history, religion, and anthropology.
- Guidance for practitioners seeking a deeper understanding of rituals.
- Inspiration for cultural festivals and intercultural projects.

Conclusion: A Landmark Publication for Shinto Studies

The new English edition of A New History of Shinto stands as a landmark achievement, offering a comprehensive, nuanced, and accessible account of Japan's indigenous spirituality. Its interdisciplinary approach, revised frameworks, and focus on local and contemporary practices make it an essential resource for anyone interested in understanding Shinto's past, present, and future.

For scholars, students, and practitioners, this edition not only broadens knowledge but also invites reflection on the enduring significance of Shinto in shaping Japanese identity and fostering spiritual connections with nature and community. It exemplifies how scholarly research can bridge cultural divides and deepen our appreciation of the diverse spiritual landscapes that define our world.

Whether you are a seasoned researcher or a curious newcomer, A New History of Shinto in its English edition offers a profound journey into Japan's sacred heritage—one that enriches understanding and inspires ongoing exploration.

Question What is the main focus of 'A New History of Shinto' English edition? It provides a comprehensive and updated scholarly overview of the history, development, and practices of Shinto from ancient times to the present. **Who is the author of 'A New History of Shinto'?** The book is authored by scholars such as John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, renowned experts in Japanese religious history. **How does this edition differ from previous Shinto histories?** This edition offers new research, contemporary interpretations, and a broader perspective that incorporates recent scholarship and archaeological findings. **Is 'A New History of Shinto' suitable for beginners or only for scholars?** While it is scholarly in nature, the clear writing and comprehensive overview make it accessible for both students and general readers interested in Japanese religion. **Does the book cover modern Shinto practices and beliefs?** Yes, it explores how Shinto has evolved in modern Japan, including its role in contemporary society and state rituals. **Are there any significant revisions or updates in the English edition compared to the original Japanese publication?** The English edition includes updated translations, additional commentary, and contextual explanations to reach a wider audience. **Can 'A New History of Shinto' help understand the relationship between Shinto and Japanese nationalism?** Yes, the book discusses the historical intertwining of Shinto with national identity and political movements throughout Japanese history. **What are some key themes explored in 'A New History of Shinto'?** Key themes include the origins of Shinto, its integration with Japanese culture, the influence of Buddhism, state Shinto, and modern religious practices. **Where can I purchase or access the English edition of 'A New History of Shinto'?** The book is available through major academic publishers, online bookstores, and university libraries specializing in Japanese studies.

Related keywords: Shinto, Japanese religion, spiritual traditions, mythology, shrine practices, kamon, sacred rituals, religious history, Japanese culture, spiritual heritage

AN INTRODUCTION TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE

An Introduction to English Language

The English language is one of the most widely spoken and influential languages in the world today. From global business and international diplomacy to entertainment and technology, English serves as a vital communication tool across countless domains. Understanding the roots, development, and characteristics of the English language is essential for learners, educators, linguists, and anyone interested in global communication. This comprehensive guide aims to provide an insightful

introduction to the English language, exploring its history, structure, global significance, and future trends.

Historical Background of the English Language

The Origins of English

English is a Germanic language that originated in early medieval England. Its roots can be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon tribes—Angles, Saxons, and Jutes—that migrated to the British Isles around the 5th century AD. The language spoken by these tribes formed the basis of Old English.

The Evolution Through Ages

The history of English is marked by several distinct periods:

- **Old English (c. 450–1150 AD):** Characterized by Germanic roots, Old English was heavily influenced by Norse invaders and Latin church influence.
- **Middle English (c. 1150–1500 AD):** Marked by Norman conquest in 1066, which introduced Norman French vocabulary and grammar influences.
- **Early Modern English (c. 1500–1700 AD):** The Renaissance brought a revival of classical learning, expanding vocabulary and standardizing spelling and grammar.
- **Modern English (1700 AD to present):** The language continued to evolve with colonial expansion, technological advances, and globalization, leading to the diverse forms of English spoken today.

The Role of Literary and Cultural Influences

English literature, from Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* to William Shakespeare's plays and modern authors like J.K. Rowling, has significantly shaped the language's development. Cultural exchanges through colonization, trade, and diplomacy have also contributed to the vocabulary and idiomatic expressions in English.

The Structure and Features of the English Language

Phonology and Pronunciation

English phonology includes a wide range of vowel and consonant sounds. The pronunciation varies significantly across different regions and accents, which adds to the language's richness but also presents challenges for learners.

Vocabulary and Lexicon

English boasts one of the largest vocabularies among languages, with estimates ranging from 150,000 to over a million words, considering technical and scientific terms. This extensive lexicon is a result of:

- Borrowings from Latin, French, Greek, and other languages
- Coining of new terms during technological and scientific advancements
- Slang and colloquialisms evolving over time

Grammar and Syntax

English grammar is characterized by:

- Relatively simple verb conjugation compared to other languages
- Use of auxiliary verbs for tense and aspect (e.g., be, have, do)
- Flexible word order, with Subject-Verb-Object being standard
- Extensive use of prepositions and articles

Writing System

English uses the Latin alphabet, consisting of 26 letters. Its orthography (spelling system) can be complex due to historical spelling conventions, silent letters, and irregular pronunciation rules.

The Global Significance of the English Language

English as a Global Lingua Franca

Today, English is regarded as the world's primary lingua franca—an auxiliary language used for international communication. It is the official or working language in over 50 countries and widely used in international organizations like the United Nations and the International Olympic Committee.

English in Business and Commerce

English dominates international business, finance, and trade. Many multinational corporations operate primarily in English, and proficiency is often a prerequisite for global career opportunities.

English in Science, Technology, and Education

A significant portion of scientific research, technological development, and academic publications are in English. Universities worldwide offer courses in English to attract international students.

English in Media and Entertainment

English-language media, including movies, music, television, and literature, have a global reach. Hollywood films, English pop music, and online streaming platforms have popularized the language worldwide.

English on the Internet and Social Media

English is the dominant language on the internet, accounting for a large percentage of online content. Social media platforms facilitate global interaction primarily in English, further fostering its universal status.

Learning and Teaching the English Language

Why Learn English?

Learning English offers numerous benefits:

- Access to a vast amount of information and educational resources
- Enhanced employability and career prospects
- Ability to communicate with people worldwide
- Participation in global culture and entertainment

Methods of Learning English

Effective approaches include:

- Classroom instruction with trained teachers
- Online courses and language learning apps
- Immersive experiences through travel and cultural exchange
- Practice with native speakers or language exchange partners

Challenges in Learning English

Some common difficulties faced by learners are:

- Complex spelling and pronunciation rules
- Irregular verb forms
- Idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs
- Regional accents and dialects

The Future of the English Language

Emerging Trends

English continues to evolve with technological innovations:

- Increased influence of digital communication and social media
- Emergence of new slang and internet vernacular
- Globalization leading to more diverse accents and dialects
- Integration of loanwords from other languages due to cultural exchange

Potential Challenges

As the language grows, there are concerns about:

- Language homogenization potentially overshadowing regional dialects
- Loss of linguistic diversity
- Difficulty in maintaining standardization across different regions

Conclusion

The English language remains a dynamic and influential means of communication. Its rich history, extensive vocabulary, and widespread use make it an invaluable global asset. Whether for personal growth, academic pursuits, or professional development, learning English opens doors to countless opportunities. As the world continues to embrace globalization and technological innovation, the role of English is poised to expand further, shaping the future of international communication.

Keywords for SEO Optimization:

- Introduction to English language
- History of English
- English language structure
- Global importance of English

- Learn English online
- English language development
- English as a lingua franca
- Benefits of learning English
- Future of the English language
- English language learning tips

Introduction to the English Language: A Comprehensive Overview

The English language, often regarded as the global lingua franca, has a rich history, complex structure, and widespread influence that permeates nearly every corner of the world. As one of the most widely spoken and studied languages today, understanding its fundamentals offers invaluable insights into its role in communication, culture, and international relations. This detailed exploration delves into the origins, evolution, grammatical features, vocabulary, phonetics, and the significance of English in contemporary society.

Historical Background of the English Language

Origins and Early Development

The roots of English trace back over 1,400 years to the Germanic tribes—namely the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes—who migrated to the British Isles around the 5th century AD. These tribes brought with them their languages, which gradually coalesced into what we now call Old English.

Key points about early English:

- Old English (circa 450–1150 AD): Characterized by a complex system of inflections, a vocabulary heavily influenced by Latin and Norse, and a rich oral tradition including epic poetry like *Beowulf*.
- Influence of Latin and Norse: Latin arrived through Christian missionaries, while Norse influence increased due to Viking invasions, shaping vocabulary and syntax.

Middle English and the Norman Conquest

The Norman Conquest of 1066 marked a pivotal turning point:

- Norman French influence: The ruling class spoke Norman French, which heavily influenced the vocabulary, especially in law, governance, art, and cuisine.
- Language features: Middle English (circa 1150–1500) saw simplification of inflectional endings

and an expansion of vocabulary.

Early Modern English and the Renaissance

From the late 15th to the early 17th century:

- The Renaissance: Brought a revival of classical learning and an influx of Latin and Greek words.
- The printing press: Invented by Johannes Gutenberg, it standardized spelling and grammar, making literature more accessible.
- Notable figures: William Shakespeare and the King James Bible significantly shaped the language.

Modern English and Global Spread

Since the 17th century:

- Colonial expansion: British colonization spread English worldwide.
- Industrial Revolution: Facilitated international trade and communication.
- Contemporary English: Continues to evolve with influences from numerous languages and cultures, especially in the digital age.

Structural Aspects of the English Language

Phonetics and Pronunciation

English phonetics is known for its complexity and variability:

- Consonant and vowel sounds: The language features approximately 24 consonant sounds and around 20 vowel sounds, with many variations.
- Spelling and pronunciation discrepancies: Due to historical influences, English spelling often does not align directly with pronunciation (e.g., though vs. through).

Grammar and Syntax

English grammar, while relatively straightforward compared to some languages, has distinctive features:

- Parts of speech: Nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and interjections.
- Sentence structure: Typically follows a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) order.
- Tenses: Present, past, future, along with perfect and progressive aspects.
- Agreement: Subject-verb agreement in number and person.
- Modifiers: Use of adjectives and adverbs to add detail.

Vocabulary and Lexicon

English boasts an extensive vocabulary, estimated at over a million words:

- Loanwords: Borrowed extensively from Latin, French, Greek, German, and many other languages.
- Synonyms and antonyms: Rich variety of words with nuanced differences, offering precision and expressiveness.
- Neologisms: Continual creation of new words, especially in technology and popular culture.

Unique Features of the English Language

Orthography and Spelling

English spelling can be irregular due to its diverse origins:

- Historical influences: Words retain spellings from older forms or borrowed languages.
- Examples: Knight, psychology, colonel.
- Spelling reforms: There have been proposals but no widespread standardization.

Idioms and Phrasal Verbs

Idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs are integral:

- Idioms: Phrases whose meanings are not deducible from individual words (e.g., kick the bucket).
- Phrasal verbs: Verb + particle combinations with idiomatic meanings (e.g., look up, give in).

Varieties and Dialects

English manifests in numerous dialects:

- British English: Variations like Cockney, Received Pronunciation.
- American English: Distinct vocabulary and pronunciation.
- Other varieties: Australian, Canadian, Indian English, each with unique features.

The Role of English in the Modern World

Global Lingua Franca

English is the primary language of:

- International diplomacy
- Business and commerce
- Science and technology
- Entertainment and media

English in Education and Research

- Most scientific journals publish in English.
- Universities worldwide offer courses in English.
- English proficiency is often a requirement for international careers.

The Digital Age and English

- Dominance in internet content, social media, and digital communication.
- Emergence of digital slang, memes, and abbreviations, influencing language evolution.

Cultural Impact

- English-language music, films, and literature shape global pop culture.
- Cultural exchange and understanding facilitated through shared language.

Learning and Teaching English

Methods and Approaches

- Traditional grammar-translation

- Communicative language teaching
- Immersive and bilingual approaches
- Use of technology and online platforms

Challenges for Learners

- Irregular spelling and pronunciation
- Idiomatic expressions
- Extensive vocabulary
- Variations in dialects and accents

Resources and Tools

- Language apps (Duolingo, Babbel)
- Online courses and tutorials
- Media and literature in English
- Language exchange programs

Conclusion

The English language remains a dynamic, influential, and complex means of communication. Its history reflects centuries of cultural exchange and adaptation, shaping a language that is both diverse and adaptable. For learners, educators, and global citizens alike, understanding English's structure, history, and role in society unlocks numerous opportunities for connection, learning, and cultural appreciation. As it continues to evolve in the digital age, English's significance is poised to grow, cementing its status as a cornerstone of international communication.

In summary, mastering the English language provides access to a vast repository of knowledge, culture, and opportunities. Its rich history and widespread use make it a fascinating subject of study and an essential skill in today's interconnected world. Whether for academic pursuits, professional advancement, or cultural engagement, an introduction to English opens the door to endless possibilities.

Question What are the key features that define the English language? English is a West Germanic language characterized by a rich vocabulary, extensive use of loanwords, and a flexible grammar system. It is known for its adaptability, widespread global use, and its role as a lingua franca in international communication. **Answer** How did the English language develop over time? English evolved from the Anglo-Saxon languages brought to Britain by Germanic tribes around the 5th century. It was later influenced by Norman French, Latin, and other languages, leading to the

Modern English we use today. This development spans Old English, Middle English, and Modern English periods. Why is English considered a global language? English is considered a global language because it is the primary or secondary language in many countries, used extensively in international business, science, technology, entertainment, and diplomacy, making it a key tool for global communication. What are the main components of learning the English language? Learning English involves mastering four main components: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Additionally, understanding grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and cultural context are essential for effective communication. How has the internet influenced the spread and evolution of the English language? The internet has accelerated the global spread of English, introduced new slang, abbreviations, and digital communication styles, and facilitated intercultural exchange, thereby continuously shaping and evolving the language in real-time.

Related keywords: English language, language learning, linguistics, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax, phonetics, language skills, language history

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