3.0. HISTORY

General History links:

• Natural Museum of Japanese History: http://www.rekihaku.ac.jp/index_ne.html
• Japan Center for Asian Historical Records: http://www.jacar.go.jp/asia_en/index_en.html

3.1. Prehistory

Principal periods, dates, artifacts and monuments, waves of migrations of Altaic peoples from Central Asia; others from South China, Southeast Asia and Polynesia; Ainu people

Keywords: Joomon Culture, Emperor Jimmu, Yayoi Culture, Yamato, Uji, Shinto and KAMI, Buddhism

30,000 BC – (522?AD): STONE AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JOMON CULTURE</td>
<td>30,000BC</td>
<td>earliest datable traces of human habitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>(JOO means 'rope or cord'; MON means 'figure')</td>
<td>10,000BC-300BC</td>
<td>Many Jomon-doki (rope figured pottery) were produced.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Doguu figurines</td>
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<td>Tate-ana pit dwellings</td>
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### Japan: Cultural Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>YAYOI CULTURE</strong> (continued)</th>
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<td><strong>300BC - 300 AD</strong></td>
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<td>About this time - the first clear view of the Japanese (by Chinese record 3c BC) - sharp class divisions and living by agriculture and fishing (Occurrence of bronze articles and evidence of established agricultural communities) - a hundred or more tribal units under female or male chieftains of semi-religious status - &quot;queen's country&quot; - a certain hegemony over the others - MATRIARCHAL system - descent of the historical imperial line from the sun goddess Starting around 200AD - overrun by waves of mounted invaders from Korean Peninsula/cultural influences from Korea</td>
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**Rope figured pottery**

- The first Emperor

**YAYOI CULTURE**

- technical innovations - metal working, the use of pottery wheel and irrigated rice cultivation (from Korea)
- clan units grow in power

**Yayoi Pots**

Pottery
ca. 260 - Conjectural date for founding of the Great Shrine of the Sun Goddess at Ise

297 AD Chinese record - Accounts of the Eastern Babarians "Land of Wa" (dwarfs)
mound burial, purification rituals, "mourning keeper", "fond of liqueue", longevity, polygamy, litigation infrequent, group responsibility, class distinctions, slavery, Queen Himiko (or Pimiko), shaman queen, junshi (sacrificial death)- "over a hundred male and female attendants followed her to the grave"

KOFUN (Tomb) PERIOD

ca. 300-552

- many large burial mounds (KOFUN) were built throughout the western 2/3 of the islands -> concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a military aristocracy
- creation of giant key-hole tombs and Haniwa figure
- agression into Korea (Silla, Paekche, Koguryo), Mimana colony

By 6 c AD

- the YAMATO family gains supremacy (Nara Plain) and founds the imperial line.
Emperor - dual character - functions of a religious leader and a leader of the state
- Political and economic organization was still primitive
- most of the land - controlled by semi-autonomous tribal unit - UJI (bound to the ruling family of the
Yamato
UJI - had chiefs and own UJI shrines, a number of subordinate UJI and pseudo-family groupings of farmers, fishermen, weavers, and other types of workers
Religious practice - **SHINTO** "the way of the gods" - the worship of gods or **KAMI** (natural phenomena, mythological ancestors (often nature gods)) - the line between man and nature was not drawn sharply - unusual or awesome men were easily made into deities - No ethical concepts associated with these religious ideas except the sense of awe and reverence before nature and a concept of ritual purity (NO list of DOS and DON'TS - NO Ten Commandments)
(even presently can see - water in front of a shrine to wash mouth and hands)
- cultural influences from the nearby continent - iron and bronze

| 538 AD | - **BUDDHISM** arrival from China via Korea (Buddhism - an endless cycle of reincarnations, enlightenment - Nirvana, universal appeal)
use of Chinese characters
A fight started in the Yamato court - Buddhist images and beliefs as a magical system of equal or greater power than Shinto - the supporter of Buddhism won |

Quick history of Japan
http://www.jinjapan.org/museum/historyofjp/histjp.html
3.2. Early Japan

**Keywords:** Prince Shootoku, NARA Period, KOJIKI, NIHON-SHOKI/NIHONGI, MANYOOSHU, Shoossoin, HEIAN period, TALE OF GENJI, Great Buddha in Toodai-ji

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<td>562</td>
<td>Japanese power in Korea destroyed by Korean Kingdom of Silla</td>
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|                   | 592-628 | • Reign of Empress Suiko with the support of the continental-looking Soga clan.  
• Prince **SHOTOKU** (593-622) - the regent for his aunt Empress SUIKO proved a great champion of the new religion and the continental civilization |
| 552-646           | 594  | Buddhism proclaimed the state religion                                                                                               |
| **ASUKA PERIOD**  | 604  | • Shotoku drafted Seventeen Article Constitution - ethical government  
• establishes a 200 yr tradition of scholarly missions to China  
• Conscious effort of massive cultural borrowing (No parallel in the western history except Peter the Great -18 c in Russia)  
• Adoption of Chinese calendar.  
• Soga clan increases influence over the Imperial (Yamato clan) family.  

Chinese concept of all-powerful monarchy (Emperor - from a naive semi-sacred leader into a secular ruler of the Chinese type, but in reality by 7th century - largely symbols of authority rather than wielders of personal power - manipulated by other members of the extensive imperial clan or the broader court aristocracy -> NOW "symbol of the State and the unity of the people")

Centralized state - provinces administered by officials from the
capital higher posts in the government - largely filled by bureaucrats who passed scholastic state-administered examinations, but didn't last long -> determined by inherited family status rather than by individual merit)

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<td>607</td>
<td>Founding of Horyu-ji Temple (World's oldest wooden building, Chinese copy) - Hosso Sect</td>
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- The **TAIKA REFORM** (abolishes most private land ownership and aims for the central government like China, but gradually into the hands of private owners - hereditary privilege of certain families, tax-free estate - temples and shrines)

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<td>645</td>
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- Imperial court moved to the newly built city Nara, Japan's first permanent capital and urban center (*Heijo-kyo*) - the court left the old city to escape Buddhist political influence
- City laid out on symmetrical grid-pattern of Changan, capital of Tang China

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<td>710 - 784</td>
<td>NARA PERIOD</td>
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- KOJIKI (Records of Ancient Matters), Japan's first written history book
- NIHON-SHOKI or NIHONGI (Chronicles of Japan), Japan's first written mythology
- KAIFUSO, first collection of Chinese poetry written by Japanese

- Founding of Todaiji Temple (rebuilt 3 times), The Great Buddha, Kegon Sect
- largest wooden structure in the world
- Bronze-cast Great Buddha (Daibutsu) -dedicated in 752- Buddha of Light (Vairochana or Dainichi Nyorai) parallels other mammoth Buddhist temples built in Asia at same time (e.g., Borobudur Temple in Indonesia, Pagan Temple in Myanmar/Burma)
### Japan: Cultural Notes

- All reality is mirrored in every other part of reality "A speck of dust rises in the air: it contains the whole of the earth; a single flower blooms: the whole world blossoms forth."

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| 759  | **MANYOSHU** (Collection of Myriad Leaves), Japan's first anthology of poems 4516 native Japanese poems in 20 volumes, covering 400 yrs of poetry (from Emperor Nintoku (d. 399) to 759)  
  - beginning of written poetic tradition; imperial patronage after 905  
  - Waka (Japanese songs, syllable count 5-7-5-7-7) cf. Tanka (short poems) and Choka (long poems); Themes - romantic love, nature, seasons (Spring vs. Autumn), change, parting and separation, passage of time  
  - techniques - fixed epithets, pillow words, pivot words  
  - Further development of kana symbols (manyoogana)  
  - Great poets (e.g., Hitomaro, Yakamochi)  
  - Manyo spirit - expansive, life-affirming, natural |
| 8c   | **SHOSOIN** (Imperial storehouse/museum) - 10,000 treasures from Middle East (in particular from Iran (silk road)), India, China, Korea, etc.  
  - raised platform construction of a rice granary |
Nara today

(has withstood abandonment, samurai wars, WWII to become the greatest surviving repository of Buddhist and continental art and architecture from China of the Six Dynasties (220-589), Sui Dynasty (589-618), and Tang Dynasty (618-907), as well as other parts of Asia)

794 - 1191
HEIAN PERIOD

- The imperial court establishes **Heian-kyo** (Kyoto), which represents a capital of peace and tranquillity (laid out on larger scale than Nara; again on Chinese model of Chang-an, but Buddhist temples were excluded from city proper.
- Kyoto becomes permanent site of residence of emperors until 1868
- Isolation, Assimilation and Naturalization of Cultural Influences
- Malevolent influence of Buddhism on politics, especially the priest Dokyo, who was close to Empress Shotoku (r. 764-770), the last empress to reign in Japanese history
- Development of urban culture (city vs. country dichotomy)
- Zenith of courtly or aristocratic life-style
  - emperor, court, and bluebloods (Kuge)
  - wealth derives from large land estates or shooen
  - authority derives from bloodlines, cultural prestige
  - emperors "reign, but do not rule"
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<td>805</td>
<td>• Saicho (767-822) returns from China to found Enryaku-ji on Mt. Hiei (Kyoto), Tendai Sect of Buddhism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 806   | • Kukai (a.k.a. Kobo Daishi, 774-835) returns from China to found Shingon Sect of Buddhism on Mt. Koya (Wakayama)  
|       |   • emphasis on rituals, court patronage, secret transmission of teachings sutra, mudra (hand poses), mandala (cosmic diagrams) |
| 838   | • last mission to China, termination of official relations with China |
| 858   | • The Fujiwara family secures ruling power as regents to the imperial throne. (marriage politics: Fujiwara marry daughters to emperor, produce heir, force abduction, become regent for grandchild) |
| 9c    | • KANA developed from kanji (31 syllable -Tanka; diary written in Kana - man ,but pretended to be a woman) |
| 905   | • First imperial anthology Kokin-shuu (Collection of Ancient and Modern Verse) preface by editor, Tsurayuki (905), on nature of waka |
| 1011  | • **TALE OF GENJI** by Lady Murasaki, the world's first novel, description of a court life (in brilliant detail and psychological subtlety), a novel but also a story to be read aloud from hand scrolls and to be illustrated  
|       |   • Sensitivity - esthetic feelings  
|       |   • Yamato-e - Chinese influence (bold use of color) |
| 11c   | • Buddhist paradise on earth, Phoenix Hall of the Byodoin Temple |
| 1068  | • Gosanjo Tenno attempts to control the power of the Fujiwara family |
| 1086  | • Shirakawa Tenno begins institution of "Cloistered
### Japan: Cultural Notes

#### HEIAN PERIOD

(continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature</th>
<th>Emperor&quot;</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Waka poetry, diaries, fictional tales of courtly life and loves&lt;br&gt;- Sei Shoonagon, arbiter of good taste in Makura-no sooshi &quot;The Pillow Book&quot;&lt;br&gt;- Monogatari ‘tales'&lt;br&gt;  - poem tales: Ise Monogatari (Tale of Ise)&lt;br&gt;  - prose tales:&lt;br&gt;    - Taketori Monogatari (Tale of the Bamboo Cutter and the Shining Princess)&lt;br&gt;    - Tale of Genji - World of the &quot;Shining Prince&quot;, Hikaru Genji&lt;br&gt;- courtly ideals and aesthetics&lt;br&gt;  - miyabi, courtly refinement &quot;rule of taste&quot;&lt;br&gt;  - mono-no aware, the &quot;ahness&quot;, &quot;sadness&quot; of things/life/love; nothing is permanent, all is change&lt;br&gt;    - Shinto expression of beauty and awe (aware) plus Buddhist feeling that life is suffering, changing, unstable and impermanent (mujo)&lt;br&gt;- arts of poetic exchange, calligraphy, painting, incense, dress, gardening&lt;br&gt;- importance of court women as writers, perpetrators of native Yamato language and its literary tradition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Kojiki
http://www.sacred-texts.com/shi/kojiki.htm
http://www.wsu.edu/~wldcv/world_civ_reader/world_civ_reader_1/kojiki.html

Tale of Genji

Makura-no soshi (pillow Book)
http://www.f.waseda.jp/mjewel/jlit/authors_works/premodernlit/makura_no_soshi.html

http://benign.org/texts/pillow00.htm