

HISTORY OF JAPAN

Course Description:

This course offers an introduction to the history of Japan from pre-history to the present. We will trace the history of Japan in several different epochs. First, we will investigate how Japanese civilization emerged and how early governments were constituted. Second, we will consider the Yamato Clan and the Nara and Heian periods. Third, we will study the rise of the period dominated by warriors, the first shōgunate and the feudal era. Fourth, we will consider how and why the *bakufu* (tent government--shōgunate) lost its vitality in the late 18th century and why it was unable to deal with the international crisis which led to its demise. We will discuss the irony of how a military *coup d'état*, initiated by samurai, led to the dissolution of a samurai-based society and to the construction of the modern Japanese state. Along the way we will study how democracy in the Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa eras failed and led to the militarism of the Pacific War. Fifth, we will discern whether or not the American occupation of Japan led to substantive changes within Japanese culture, economics and government. Finally, we will discuss Japan today. In particular, we will examine modern Japanese society, the government and the enduring problem of the economic recession.

About the Professor

The course was prepared by Paul Clark, Ph.D. who is an East Asia area specialist and Associate Professor of History at West Texas A&M University. Dr. Clark is the author of *The Kokugo Revolution: Education, Identity and Language Policy in Imperial Japan* (2009) and is the recipient of a 2006 Fulbright-Hays Faculty Research Abroad Fellowship.

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Assignments:

This is a reading and writing intensive course. Please read the textbook chapters assigned to accompany each lecture/summary. These can be found at the end of each lesson. Also, at the end of each lesson, I have provided questions for consideration and investigation. You will be required to write 6 essays over the course of the semester in which you answer the questions I have posed. These essays should be 5 approximately pages long, double-spaced. You may select any 6 questions from the different lessons. It is advisable however, to spread out your essays over the course of the semester. In the textbook, you will find a recommended reading list. Please make full use of these as you write your essays.

Required Texts:

Japan Emerging: Premodern History to 1850, by Karl Friday
Westview Press, 2012

Modern Japan, 2nd edition, by Peter Duus
Houghton Mifflin Press, 1998

Lesson 1: Introductions

Geography, Language and Religions of Japan

Geography

Key terms

- ***4 Main Islands***
- ***Mountains***
- ***Crowded Cities***
- ***Short-Grain Rice***
- ***The Kantō and Kansai plains***

Spatial Position

Japan is located in the western Pacific Ocean off the coast of the Asian mainland. Its nearest neighbors are South and North Korea, the Russian Far East, Taiwan and China. The nation is composed of many islands,* but the four islands where the bulk of the population resides are Honshū, Kyūshū, Shikoku and Hokkaidō.

Cities

Japan is mostly mountainous (approximately 75%), which renders most of the land unsuitable for agriculture. Over the course of its history, the bulk of the population has migrated to the cities. Given that Japan is roughly the same size as the US State of California (or more accurately—Montana), and has a population of 128 million (a number which is projected to contract in the next decade or so), Japanese cities are very, very crowded. For example, the Tokyo metropolitan area (comprised of the 23 city wards, Yokohama, Chiba, Kawasaki, Kanagawa, Saitama and the like) has a population of approximately 35 million.

Agriculture

Rice is the primary staple in Japan and most Japanese prefer the highly refined, short grain variety. Japanese eat rice at breakfast, lunch and dinner. The general consensus among historians and archeologists is that wet rice agriculture arrived in Japan from Southeast Asia or Southeastern China more than 2000 years ago. The bulk of rice (and most other agricultural products) is produced on the two great plains (the Kantō plain—the Tokyo/Yokohama area and the Kansai plain—the Osaka/Kyoto/Kobe area) and the northern-most big island of Hokkaidō.

* There is some dispute about the total number of islands which comprise Japan. The commonly accepted number is more than 1000—but only a couple of dozen are populated. The island dispute (which country controls what islands in the Pacific) between Japan, Taiwan, China, South Korea and the Philippines remains unresolved after the end of the Pacific War.

Language

Key terms

- **Uralic/Altaic Family of Languages**
- **Hyōjungo**
- **Syllabary**
- **Hiragana**
- **Kanji (Chinese Characters)**

Language Family

The Japanese language is best described as being a part of the Uralic/Altaic family group. This means that, after Korean, its closest linguistic neighbors are some of the languages found on the Central Asian Steppe such as Mongolian and Turkish—and—interestingly enough—European languages such as Hungarian and Estonian! All Japanese nationals speak and/or understand standard Japanese (*hyōjungo*).

Syllabary

Japanese is syllabic—which means that the language is based on syllabary, which is very different from languages rendered in an alphabet where 1, 2 or 3 letters are combined to produce a syllable. The syllabary か (ka) is an example of one of the sounds that can be rendered in the Japanese syllabary. The most important Japanese syllabary are called *hiragana*. These serve as the basis for the Japanese language.

Kanji

In Japanese, most proper nouns, most verbs and several other parts of speech are written in Chinese ideographs called *kanji*. An example is the *kanji* 東 (pronounced *higashi* or *tō*—one part of the combination for the city of Tokyo 東京). *Kanji* were imported from China in the 5th and 6th centuries. There are now 1850 *kanji* in standard use called *Tōyō kanji*. Knowledge of these characters serve as the measure of literacy in Japan.

Religion

Key Terms

- **Shintō**
- **Amaterasu**
- **Buddhism**
- **Tōdaiji**

Shintō

The indigenous religion of Japan is called Shintō. Shintō means the “way of the gods” and is polytheistic. Rather than worshipping one single, all powerful God as is the case in the religions from the Abrahamic traditions, adherents of Shintō venerate and worship many different gods

(*kami*) which are reflected in the natural world. Natural wonders, old trees, waterfalls and the like are examples of objects to be venerated. Shintō has no sacred texts, no code of conduct, little concept of the afterlife and a poorly defined liturgy. Shintō provided a cosmology for Japan and introduced the sun goddess Amaterasu, the founding deity of Japan. It would be difficult to convert to Shintō if one were not Japanese. Shintō is often described as being a way of life for the Japanese, but it is not necessarily a philosophy. One can worship at a Shintō shrine or wherever objects in nature are found. Shintō is not exclusive. In fact, many Japanese are adherents of both Shintō and Buddhism.

Buddhism

Buddhism arrived in Japan in the 5th and 6th centuries (probably earlier—but documentary and archaeological evidence for this is lacking) and remains a vibrant part of the religious landscape of Japan today. There are many, many different sects of Buddhism in Japan, some of which have largely disappeared in places such as China and India—where Buddhism originated. The emerging Yamato rulers of the 7th and 8th centuries eagerly embraced Buddhism as a way to legitimize their own rule and provided state sanction and funding for the building of temples and monasteries. The earliest temple complex constructed, of the Tōdaiji sect, can be found in the ancient capital city of Nara. Buddhism is as important in the history of Japan as the Roman Catholic Church is to the history of Europe.

Readings for Lesson 1

Japan Emerging Textbook: Part I, Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (pp 1-31); Part II, Chapters 6 and 7 (pp. 55-76).

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

- A) To what extent did geography play a role in the development of Japanese civilization? What role does geography play in the development of civilization in general?
- B) How was religion used to legitimize ancient rulers in Japan? Was this a phenomenon exclusive to Japan or can it be seen in other civilizations?
- C) Is Shintō a religion? How can one have a religion in the absence of sacred texts, a clearly defined liturgy and little concept of the afterlife?

Lesson 2: The Early State

The Yamato Clan and the Creation of the First Japanese State

Early Migrations

Key terms:

- ***Yayoi People***
- ***Horse-Riding Culture***
- ***Uji***

Pre-History

The knowledge we can glean about Japan before the age of writing is fragmentary at best. What we know comes from archaeology and the occasional references to Japan found in Chinese documents. The archaeological evidence indicates that a group, now known as the Yayoi people, inhabited Japan before the 3rd century BC. It is unclear where these people came from, how long they inhabited the land and exactly what happened to them. At some point during the 3rd century BC, successive groups of people began to migrate from the mainland. There is general consensus among historians that unrest on the Asian mainland related to first unification of China probably generated large number of refugees, some of whom surely sought sanctuary in areas outside the traditional sphere of Chinese influence. Japan—rural, largely unknown by most Chinese and Koreans and without a central government, must have been an attractive alternative. This group began to displace Yayoi culture.

Immigration

Between the 3rd and 6th centuries AD, there was another wave of migration from the mainland. These immigrants brought with them new technology and a new set of organizational skills—both of which were very useful in military applications. For example, there is evidence of a horse-riding culture which came from Korea, of warriors wearing armor and of the ability of some leaders to harness the labor of large groups of people for the building of the very large tombs which distinguish the era. Historians agree that some time between the 3rd and 6th centuries, it is possible to speak of an emerging “Japanese culture.”

Early Settlement

Before the 6th century, Japan had no central government. Regional chieftains, often representing clans (*uji*), governed relatively small groups of people—several hundred to several thousand people. Some of these groups were widely dispersed, others lived in close proximity to each other. In general, Japanese civilization began to emerge in Kyūshū and western Honshū and slowly moved east and north. All along the way, Japanese displaced the indigenous population known as Ainu.[†]

[†] The Ainu were slowly conquered and assimilated by the Japanese. By the year 1800, the only significant populations of Ainu remaining in Japan were in the northern-most main island of Hokkaidō. In 2008, the Japanese

The Clan System, the Emergence of the Yamato and Prince Shōtoku (Shōtoku Taishi)

Key Terms:

- ***Yamato Clan***
- ***Kingdom of Paekche***
- ***Prince Shōtoku***
- ***Nihon Shoki***
- ***Buddhism***

The Yamato

As culture developed in Japan, several clans began to vie for dominance in the settled areas. One in particular, the Yamato, emerged as “first among equals” at some point in the late 5th or early 6th century and proclaimed themselves the Imperial family. This process did not go unnoticed by the other clan chieftains and a series of struggles ensued. The Yamato were very capable leaders and were not above using bribery, force and diplomacy to maneuver themselves into power. For example, the Yamato clan, who ruled an area around what is today the city of Nara, was allied with the Korean kingdom of Paekche. This allowed for the importation from the continent of iron weapons, weavers, scribes, metal workers and other artisans before their rivals.

Chinese Culture

One of the most prominent leaders of Yamato Japan was an aristocrat known as Prince Shōtoku (AD 574-622). Prince Shōtoku never became emperor even though he was the son of Emperor Yōmei and was one of the Yamato leaders who helped defeat the rival Mononobe clan. The *Nihon Shoki*, an 8th century document which chronicles the early years of Yamato Japan, indicates that Prince Shōtoku convinced the Emperor to import many Chinese institutions. Some scholars believe that he even made a journey to the mainland, a dangerous proposition in the 7th century. Prince Shōtoku is credited with bringing to Japan the Chinese calendar, Chinese ideas on statehood and legal system, art and, though some scholars dispute this, Buddhism.

First Capital

In AD 710, the Imperial family decided to build a permanent capital called Nara, which gives name to the Nara Period (710-794). Prior to 710, reigning emperors would build a new seat of government, administer the realm during his (or her) reign and then upon the death of the emperor and the coronation of a new emperor, a new seat of government would be built. It is

government recognized the Ainu as the indigenous population of Japan, a designation which meant that they were no longer to be assimilated as a “former indigenous” people. Today, between 200,000 and 300,000 Ainu live in Japan and serious efforts have been made to celebrate and retain Ainu traditions.

not entirely clear how this practice got started, however, most historians believe that Buddhist notions on the ritual defilement of space associated with death and bodily decomposition led most rulers to seek out a new space. Because of this, Japanese rulers prior to 710 rarely built grand, imposing structures.

Nara Japan

Key terms:

- ***Tang China***
- ***Taihō Codes***
- ***Emperor Shōmu***
- ***Daibutsu***
- ***Empress Kōken***
- ***Dōkyo***

Land-Holding

The extent of cultural borrowing from China became clear during the Nara period. Even the construction of the capital city reflected Chinese sensibilities on geomancy and design. The Tang Empire in China (AD 618-907) also provided the Japanese Emperor with a system of landholding and its most important accompanying element, a rational basis for taxation. These became known as the Taihō codes. In this system (later to be called the Ritsuryō system), peasants were initially allotted 2 tan (about ½ of an acre) per male over the age of 5 years old and 2/3rds of that amount for females over the age of 5 to farm. Given that in theory the emperor had provided land for the peasants, failure to pay taxes could result in expulsion from the land and quickly to starvation. Initially, the tax—which was based on crop production—was not too onerous and amounted to only 5%. That number later increased significantly. In addition to raising revenue for the Imperial treasury, this also removed the land from the control of local elites because the Emperor had to rely upon a bureaucracy to administer the system.

The Great Buddha

Nara Japan is closely associated with Buddhism. It was the Emperor Shōmu who is credited with the casting of the gigantic, 49ft tall statue of the Daibutsu (great Buddha) which now rests in the great hall in Nara. During this period, Buddhism was privileged in Japan, generously funded and protected by the Emperor. Temples were built all over Japan and Buddhism became institutionally linked to the throne.

Dōkyo Incident

Having close ties with religious organizations can be a tricky thing, however. Within a decade of the Emperor Shōmu's death, trouble began to brew with the Empress Kōken. The chronicles

tell of a special relationship which sprang up in AD 764 between the Empress and a Buddhist monk named Dōkyō. Though it is unclear whether there was any romantic attachment, Dōkyō very, very quickly rose through the ranks, began to put on royal airs and appeared to be making a play for the throne itself. This threat to the prerogatives of the Imperial household became intolerable, but no action was taken because Kōken's premature death in 770 rendered this unnecessary. Still—the threat posed by the Buddhist institutions became all too clear to the court.

Readings for Lesson 2

Japan Emerging Textbook: Part I, chapter 3 (pp. 21-31); Part II, Chapters 8, 9 & 10 (pp. 77-108)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

- A) How much do we really know about humanity in the era before writing? Is it possible to make sweeping generalizations with a high degree of accuracy? How reliable is archaeology?
- B) How do you think contemporary Japanese would react to the notion that the Japanese Imperial family might have ties to Korea?
- C) How difficult was it for early Japanese to construct a civilization where none existed before? Were they starting from scratch—or did they build on existing structures we know little about?

Lesson 3: The Golden Era

Heian Japan

The Early Heian Period

Key Terms:

- ***The Emperor Kanmu***
- ***Heian***
- ***“Circuit Inspectors”***
- ***Tendai Buddhism***
- ***Shingon Buddhism***

A New Capital

In the aftermath of the Dōkyō Incident, the Imperial family and handlers decided that, among other reasons, factional machinations among the Buddhist organizations in Nara would never again threaten the prerogatives of the throne. In an effort to ensure that it never happened again, the Emperor Kanmu (r. AD781-806) decided to construct a new capital. After a few years of searching and consultation, a new site was selected—Nagaoka. Construction began in the year 784 and within a few months, an Imperial Palace and a few other official buildings were sufficiently complete to begin to move the seat of government. But, in one of the great mysteries of Japanese history, the entire city was abandoned by the Emperor Kanmu in 794. A new site had to be found and a new city constructed.

Another Capital

The new city was situated near both Nara and Nagaoka. From a military perspective, the site was very well chosen. It was ringed on three sides by mountains, had ample fresh water supplies and was near enough to the sea for easy access. The city was named Heiankyō. Though it would change names from Heiankyō, to Heian to Kyōto, it would remain the capital city from AD 794 to 1868. The construction of this city ushered in a new, golden era in the history of Japan.

Imp. Institutions

Though the city was new, Imperial institutions remained much the same. The Emperor ruled the country through governors, whose job it was to keep the peace, implement imperial decrees and laws—and most importantly see that taxes were deposited into the treasury. The chronicles tell us that many of these governors, who were court nobles, increasingly became less happy about leaving the only civilization in the country and began to spend more time in the capital rather than doing their jobs in the rural areas. During the last years of the Nara era, they would appoint deputies to do their jobs, levy extraordinarily high taxes and sometimes behave in a coercive and intimidating manner. In the final years of Kanmu’s reign, he cracked down on the worst abuses by creating “circuit inspectors,” whose job it was check on court

appointees. Slowly, power became more and more centralized in the office of the emperor during the early years of the Heian period.

Tendai Buddhism

The Emperor Kanmu also understood the importance of Buddhism in Japan and decided that the capital should have religious institutions—in spite of the problems encountered in Nara. He decided to become a patron of 2 new sects of Buddhism—Tendai and Shingon. Both of these organizations were later urged to ordain their own clergy (which further diminished the power of the Todaiji sect in Nara) and build complexes on the mountains near the city. Both of these sects are still prominent in Japan today. By the time Kanmu died, the Japanese imperial system was functioning well.

The Fujiwara

Key Terms:

- ***The Fujiwara***
- ***Sesshō and Kampaku***
- ***Yoshifusa***
- ***Marriage Politics***
- ***Michinaga***
- ***Murasaki Shikibu***
- ***Tale of Genji***

The Fujiwara

One of the defining characteristics of the Heian period is the prominence of one aristocratic family—the Fujiwara. Prior to becoming the most important court family, the Fujiwara had served the Imperial family in various capacities since at least the 7th century. Later, a member of the Fujiwara family held the position of regent to an underage (usually) boy emperor (*sesshō*). Still later, a Fujiwara could be named regent to an adult emperor (*kampaku*). Over the course of time, the Fujiwara line diverged into 4 main lines, the most famous being the northern—the Hokke branch. The head of this branch would often become the most powerful, wealthiest man in the entire land—much more powerful and wealthy than the emperor.

The Regents

The Fujiwara were able to maintain their grip on power for more than two hundred years. Indeed—most the positions they held at court became hereditary. The early Fujiwara nobles were masterful politicians. One in particular, Yoshifusa (AD 804-872), who became regent to the Emperor Montoku, is reported to have married his daughter Akirakeiko off to the Emperor Montoku—something which was not at all unexpected given his position as grand minister of state. That meant that his grandson would become the next emperor—and Yoshifusa would become his regent (*sesshō*) as well. This is made all the more important because, in Japan, the

offspring of nobility were often raised in their mother's family for several years. His position as head of household and regent allowed him to raise the boy emperor as a Fujiwara and manipulate imperial institutions to his advantage. Thereafter, it became practice for a Fujiwara to marry off a daughter (or niece) to a crown prince or reigning emperor (who was usually a Fujiwara!). In this way, enormous wealth, privilege and power accumulated to this family.

Michinaga

The most famous of all Fujiwara was Michinaga (AD 966-1027). Michinaga was the man of great passions, a lover of strong drink and of beautiful women. He was perhaps the most masterful politician in the Heian period. He was, without question the most powerful, wealthiest man in the land. He was a contemporary of the novelist Murasaki Shikibu, author of the world's first novel—*Tale of Genji*. Several of the stories in Murasaki's work are reportedly about him. Michinaga had an amazing legacy. He married off 4 daughters to emperors, was uncle to 2 emperors and grandfather to another 3 emperors!

The Period of the Retired Emperors

Key Terms:

- ***Shōen (Grand Estates)***
- ***The Ritsuryō System***
- ***The Emperor Shirakawa***

Tax Avoidance

The world of the shining prince (Michinaga's Japan), though brilliant, was destined to be short lived. Even in the midst of the golden era, structural problems were beginning to become evident. In particular, there was an increasing shortfall in tax revenue. In part, this was because taxes were raised to pay for the profligate lifestyle of the court and aristocrats and in part because of conditions outside anyone's control such as poor harvests, natural disasters and the like. However, peasants and low-ranking members of society could (and often did) give their land to aristocrats who had tax exemptions. Those peasants were then able to stay on the land and pay a smaller portion of their income to the aristocrat in "rent." Grand estates (*Shōen*) became very large indeed. This led to a spiraling problem of tax avoidance, higher taxes again and additional attempts at tax avoidance. The old Heian system (the *Ritsuryō* system), though many years away from collapse, seemed to be on the wane. Imperial power began to decline.

Fujiwara Failure

The Fujiwara domination of Heian Japan, based as it was on biology and politics, was not very strong. All it took was one Fujiwara consort not being able to produce an heir and/or the unwillingness of an emperor or crown prince to marry another Fujiwara and the system ended. This happened during the time of the Emperor Shirakawa (AD 1053-1129). As a relatively young

man, Shirakawa set about doing the sorts of things the Fujiwara had done—collect grand estates and the money that came along with them—and get involved in marriage politics and the like. In 1086, Shirakawa abdicated, but he would become the power behind the scenes for the next 43 years. This set off a series of struggles between the Fujiwara and a series of retired emperors which would mark the beginning of the end of the era.

Readings for Lesson 3

Japan Emerging Textbook, Chapters 11-16 (pp. 111-177)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

- A) To what extent should government be linked to religion? What are some positive and negative effects associated with this?
- B) Why do you think that the Imperial family has endured unchanged in Japan for more than 1400 years? Are there any other examples like the Japanese Imperial family in the world?
- C) Was there ever really a “golden age” in Japan? What are some characteristics of a “golden age?” Do these characteristics change based on your perspective and the segment of society you come from?

Lesson 4: Late Heian Era

Political Fragmentation

The Rise of the Great Warrior Families

Key Terms

- ***Minamoto***
- ***Taira***
- ***Military Clans***

The Military

The Imperial court had to rely upon “enforcers” to maintain law and order in the provinces and to ensure the efficient administration of the realm. In an era before the existence of a police force or constabulary, this task was often left to military families. The two most prominent of these were the Minamoto (Seiwa Genji) and the Taira (Heike). The Minamoto were descendents of the Emperor Seiwa, whose grandson—Tsunemoto was given a military position by the Fujiwara. Over the course of time, the Minamoto came to have a very strong fighting force on land. The Taira were descendants of the Emperor Kanmu. Their strength was the navy.

Power Struggles

In the late Heian period, political power struggles between retired Emperors and the Fujiwara seemed to be an endemic problem. Incessant political intrigue led to a series of small clashes that would eventually weakened both groups. The various members of the Fujiwara clan and various members of the Imperial household had to increasingly call upon the military for assistance. Nonetheless, as late as the 10th century, it was still clear, that the military were tools to be employed by their civilian masters. However, as the series of clashes escalated in the late Heian period, the military became increasingly important as independent actors in their own right.

The Hōgen and Heiji Rebellions

Key Terms

- ***Taira Kiyomori***
- ***Go-Shirakawa***
- ***Tameyoshi***
- ***Yorinaga***
- ***Blood Feud***
- ***Emperor Nijō***
- ***“Gentleman’s War”***

Hōgen Rebellion

Two rebellions characterized the struggles between various member of the Fujiwara family and the retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa.[‡] The first of these small clashes took place in the city of Heian in the year 1156 and is called the Hōgen Rebellion. This was a small insurrection with only a few hundred warriors on all sides participating. What started as a struggle to determine Imperial succession between the Fujiwara regent Yorinaga and Go-Shirakawa ended with a victory by the Taira and the execution of the Minamoto chieftain--Tameyoshi. Go-Shirakawa's power, influence and authority, though damaged by the affair, was not greatly diminished. Tameyoshi's son was ordered by the Taira chieftain, Kiyomori, to demonstrate his loyalty by cutting off his father's head—a task he resisted doing for understandable reasons. This set off a blood feud between the two military families which would last for decades.

Heiji Rebellion

In the Heiji Rebellion of 1159, many hundreds of warriors were involved. Prior to this time, warfare could be characterized as a “gentleman's conflict.” The intensity and bloodshed of the Heiji Rebellion was somewhat unexpected. The participants in this action were much the same—Taira and allies vs. Minamoto and allies—but there were more of them on all sides. Taira Kiyomori, fighting on the side of Emperor Nijō, was prepared to fight using whatever tactics provided the best chance of success—even if it meant the death of civilians, the use of arson as a weapon—even threatening the safety of the Imperial court. The Minamoto, nominally allied with Go-Shirakawa, were unwilling to use savage, overwhelming force to win the day. This was a fatal blunder. Many of the Minamoto clan were executed and had their heads displayed on a pike in the public squares of Heian. War in the Heian period was becoming more serious.

Kiyomori

After the Heiji Rebellion, Kiyomori was the undisputed military leader in the land. He was initially perceived to be the savior of the emperor himself. He was so powerful that many historians consider him to be something like an early shōgun—although that was not a title to which he aspired nor held. Rather, Kiyomori wanted to be a courtier, and began to accumulate titles, land, and even began to engage in marriage politics. Indeed, he had one of his daughters married off to the Emperor Takakura. This meant that his grandson, Antoku, would be a Taira emperor!

Readings for Lesson 4

Japan Emerging Textbook: Chapter 17 (pp. 178-188)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

[‡] The “Go” in Go-Shirakawa means “the second”—as in Charles II.

- A) To what extent is it wise for civilian rulers to call upon the military to maintain their rule?
Are there examples today of nations that use their military to put down domestic unrest?
- B) Was Taira Kiyomori a wise and benevolent ruler or a tyrant and usurper—both or something in between?
- C) Why do you think the Kiyomori wanted to become a courtier rather than a shōgun?

Lesson 5: The First Shōgun

The First Shogun and the Hōjō Family

Key Terms

- ***Taira Kiyomori***
- ***Nouveau Rich***
- ***The Hōgen and Heiji Insurrections***
- ***Minamoto Yoritomo***
- ***Kamakura***
- ***Hōjō Tokimasa***
- ***The Emperor Antoku***
- ***The Gempei War***
- ***Shōgun***

The Fall of Kiyomori

Kiyomori's Japan

The chronicles describe Kiyomori as someone who was *nouveau rich* and not yet accepted as an equal by members of the late Heian aristocracy. Nonetheless, he was the undisputed power in the land and even became Chancellor of the realm—a title reserved at that time for the highest members of aristocracy. As the political landscape was reset in the decades after the Heiji Insurrection, it eventually became clear that Kiyomori intended to rule if not reign. However, for those with political grievances against Kiyomori, there was no one they could petition who could check his power.

Yoritomo

In the aftermath of the Heiji Insurrection, Kiyomori had, uncharacteristically, shown mercy to the youngest sons and heirs to the headship of the Minamoto clan. These two boys—one most likely in his early teens (Yoritomo) and the other an infant (Yoshitsune)—were sent to live in exile in the small city of Kamakura near the present city of Tokyo. The boys were cared for by a branch family of the Taira, the Hōjō, and made a ward of Hōjō Tokimasa, the clan leader. The boys grew up in Kamakura and developed a fondness for their guardians/captors.

Rising Tensions

In 1179, Kiyomori was 61 years old and, sensing his mortality, moved to consolidate his official power, eliminate his rivals and protect the (new) prerogatives of his descendants. His grandson, the future Emperor Antoku, was made crown prince. Kiyomori believed his enemies were conspiring against him—a charge which was all too true. A plot was hatched and the retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa was arrested. Other government figures were removed from power and banished. This *coup d'état* by Kiyomori was finally more than the elites of Japan could tolerate. There was a sense in the land that a final showdown was imminent.

D) Gempei War

In 1180, Yoritomo, then approximately 33 years old, received a letter in Kamakura from Go-Shirakawa in which he was asked to chastise the traitor Kiyomori. Yoritomo, with revenge on his mind for the dishonorable deaths of his father and grandfather, took up the cause. This would later become known as the Gempei War (1180-1185). In 1181, the despised Kiyomori died leaving the Taira without leadership. A series of battles ensued between 1180 and 1185, some small and some large, which ended in the annihilation of the Taira. Much to the consternation of Go-Shirakawa, Yoritomo had no intention of returning to Kamakura to await Imperial orders. He was named shōgun in 1192, a title which had long existed but which was without political power before this time. Yoritomo then set about creating a shōgunate mostly independent of the throne.

Yoritomo as Shōgun and the Hōjō

Key terms

- ***Hōjō Masako***
- ***Bakufu***
- ***Jitō***
- ***Shugo***
- ***Daimyō***

Kamakura

Having defeated the Taira, Yoritomo had no intention of being drawn into the court intrigue of Heian Japan. Yoritomo believed this had contributed to the downfall of the Taira. When the fighting was over, Yoritomo simply set up his military government (*bakufu*) in the city of Kamakura where his wife, Hōjō Masako, lived. Initially, there wasn't much change in Japan because the civilian government still existed—although in a diminished state. Before long, however, Yoritomo began to issue decrees which had the same effect as law. He set up institutions—such as *jitō* or land stewards in the provinces and *shugo* or military constables in the provinces. Over the course of several decades, a number of *shugo* would slowly become great feudal lords known in medieval Japan as *daimyō* (feudal lords).

Yoritomo's Death

Yoritomo died in 1199 after falling from a horse—a rather ignominious end for the great warrior. His sons, Yoriie and Sanetomo, were not suited to govern and required a regent—which became, of course, Hōjō Tokimasa—Yoritomo's father-in-law. The Hōjō regents sought out members of the Minamoto clan to act as titular shōguns until the year 1333. One of the greatest ironies of Yoritomo's system is that, even though he had struggled all his early life against the Taira, a branch family of the Taira, the Hōjō, governed Japan for more than a century after his death. In the end, Kiyomori had actually won.

Readings for Lesson 5

Japan Emerging Textbook: Chapters 18 and 19 (pp. 189-212)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

- A) Was Minamoto Yoritomo a wise and benevolent ruler or a tyrant and despot—both or something in between?
- B) Why do you think that the Hōjō were able to step in and become hereditary regents to the titular shōguns in Kamakura? Why did one of them not just proclaim himself a shōgun?
- C) Was the first shōgunate the beginning of the feudal era? Why or why not?

Lesson 6: The Ashikaga

The Fall of the Hōjō and the Ashikaga

Key Terms

- ***Mongol Invasions***
- ***Kublai Khan***
- ***Go-Daigo***
- ***Ashikaga Takauji***
- ***Hōjō Takatoki***
- ***“first among equals”***

Mongol Invasions

The Hōjō regency had been very successful in dealing with the Mongol invasions of 1274 and 1281—and the ongoing threat of another Mongol invasion (which never occurred) from 1281 until the great Mongol Emperor Kublai Khan died in the year 1294. However, in so doing, the Hōjō government had been bankrupted and the Japanese people traumatized by the threat of cultural annihilation at the hands of the Mongol hoards.

Go-Daigo

In the year 1318, a new emperor of Japan assumed the throne: Go-Daigo. Unlike his predecessors, Go-Daigo was a grown man, at least 30 years old and fully capable of engaging in the rough and tumble politics of the time. He was not particularly happy about being a political pawn and fervently believed that Japanese emperors should rule as well as reign. When, in the year 1331 he was forced to abdicate by the regent Hōjō Takatoki to make way for a new emperor, he raised a small army which was quickly defeated. He was then exiled, but escaped in 1333 and succeeded in having himself named emperor with help from military men such as Kusunoki Masashige and Ashikaga Takauji. This ended the Hōjō regency. Go-Daigo then set about trying to rule as well as reign. In 1334 when it became clear that he was going to actually wield power as the sovereign, something which not been done in many centuries, the military men who supported him began to fall away and he was removed by Ashikaga Takauji in 1336.

Ashikaga Takauji

Ashikaga Takauji, though named Shōgun in 1338, was more of a “first among equals” than all powerful ruler. Japan can best be described as a (mostly) decentralized state. Feudal lords (*daimyō*) ruled the territory under their control with minimal interference from the shōgun. A balance of power among the feudal lords existed, but alliances were ever shifting in an effort to limit the power of any single *daimyō*. Nonetheless, Ashikaga shōguns still held court in Kyoto and wielded considerable power and influence for the first 100 or so years of the Ashikaga (Muromachi) period.

Religious and Cultural Development

Key Terms

- ***Muromachi Period***
- ***Zen Buddhism***
- ***Bushidō***
- ***Tea Ceremony***
- ***The Golden Pavilion (Kinkakuji)***
- ***Ashikaga Yoshimitsu***
- ***Sesshū***
- ***Nō***
- ***Kyōgen***

Zen Buddhism

In the absence of a strong central government, the Muromachi period (1336-1573)[§] is remembered for cultural and religious development. Buddhism, in particular, enjoyed a renaissance. This was, in part, because Ashikaga Takauji himself embraced Buddhism as he aged and patronized the religion by funding the building of monasteries and temples. It was the Ashikaga who illuminated the connection between the warrior ethic (*bushidō*) and Zen Buddhism. Zen (Chan in China) had a long presence in Japan, but it was (and still is) a very small sect. Zen stressed an austere lifestyle, the clearing of the mind and the total abandonment of ego. These characteristics, when internalized by soldiers, yielded a disciplined, unselfish warrior, free from worldly attachments and willing to sacrifice his life in service to his lord.

Tea Ceremony

The Ashikaga period is remembered for the adoption of Tea Ceremony (*Cha-no-yu*). Tea Ceremony reflects the austere lifestyle of Zen. It is highly stylized and very formal. It is still practiced as an art in Japan and is an activity that all Japanese aspire to participate in at some point in their lives. The austere aesthetic is also evident in some of the representative architecture of the time. For example, the Golden Pavilion (Kinkakuji) in Kyoto was built during the reign of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (the third Ashikaga shōgun) and later became a Zen monastery.

Culture

In the dramatic and visual arts, the Muromachi period saw the importation from China of new forms of monochrome painting. These forms, which were quickly adapted to reflect Japanese artistic sensibilities, were championed by artists such as Sesshū (1420-1506) who is reported to have been one of the first to have used ink splash techniques. Perhaps the most important and well known of the cultural arts introduced in the Muromachi period were Nō and Kyōgen. These forms, especially Nō, are still performed today and can be seen in most major cities in Japan on any given night.

[§] Most historians agree that the Muromachi period lasted until the Onin war period which began in 1467. After this, however, the Ashikaga were titular shōguns only. They had no real power.

Readings for Lesson 6

Japan Emerging Textbook: Chapters 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 (pp. 213-266)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

A) Why do you think Ashikaga Takauji was so interested in Buddhism? Was he trying to make amends for his own bad behavior, or was he simply using Buddhism because it created more compliant subjects?

B) Why do you think Go-Daigo's attempt to restore the prerogatives of the throne failed? Was he personally to blame, or was it impossible to succeed in the political environment of the day?

C) Tea Ceremony remains very popular today. Is there any tradition like it in the Western world? What is so compelling about it that it has been able to capture the imagination of so many Japanese over the centuries?

Lesson 7: Fragmentation

It All Falls Apart—the Ōnin War and Political Fragmentation

A Weakening Shōgun

Key Terms

- ***Political Devolution***
- ***Ōnin War***
- ***Ashikaga Yoshimasa***

Daimyō

In the decades before the initiation of the hostilities we know as the Ōnin War, power increasingly devolved away from the central government in Kyoto. *Daimyō* in the provinces became more and more powerful, more and more wealthy and increasingly unresponsive to the demands of the Ashikaga shōguns. Indeed, alliances and cliques were formed with the express purpose of becoming strong enough to resist shōgunal pressure. This worked well for a few years, however, until a strong hand was required to keep the peace.

A Crisis

The shōgun during this period was Ashikaga Yoshimasa, who assumed the office in 1443. Yoshimasa was reportedly a capable, hands-on administrator in his early years. Increasingly, however, the task of ruling the country became an impossibility for even the most engaged executive. After a couple of decades, he developed other interests and decided to retire from office. When the topic of shōgunal succession arose, a crisis was at hand—one which, combined with other factors, would lead to full scale fighting.

The Ōnin War

Key Terms

- ***Kyoto***
- ***Wooden Structures***
- ***Fire***
- ***Hosokawa***
- ***Yamana***

Fire

The one and only major city in Japan during the medieval period was Kyoto. Small cities and villages existed, of course. But the only city of consequence was Kyoto. It was the heart of Japanese government, culture and civilization. Before the modern era, battles generally took

place on open plains on which infantry and cavalry were free to maneuver. However, many of the battles associated with the Ōnin War took place in the city of Kyoto. Kyoto was a city made almost exclusively of wood and the structures were built very close together. Above all else, fire was the greatest danger—even in times of peace. One wayward spark could (and often did) result in the conflagration of an entire city block. Fire had to be contained at all costs.

The Ōnin War

Recognizing the dangers of warfare in the only urban center in Japan, the (now) retired shōgun Yoshimasa issued orders that the leader of any army initiating hostilities in Kyoto would be branded a traitor—regardless of the circumstances. However, this did little to stop armies from posturing and maneuvering just outside the capital when it suited their interests. Indeed, a conflict between rival clans—the Hosokawa and the Yamana in the year 1467 lit the spark which resulted the total destruction of the city and the end of central government in Japan.

Devastation

The Ōnin War lasted approximately 10 years. Most of the battles were fought in and around Kyoto. By the time the conflict was over, neither the Hosokawa nor the Yamana existed as national or regional powers. Most of the other great *daimyō* in central Hōnshū had either participated in or were allied with a participant. Many clans were defeated by their rivals. Others had been overthrown by their retainers when they grew weak from incessant fighting. It is safe to say that the political and cultural landscape of central Hōnshū and Kyoto would have been unrecognizable to someone who had been away from the city for more than a decade. Kyoto was in ruins. The chronicles tell of foxes and wolves roaming the city, of corpses choking the streets, of thousands of buildings burned. It was a scene of absolute horror. Civilization lay in ruins. The last armies that occupied Kyoto simply left after a few months because there was nothing left worth fighting over. This ushered in a period of political fragmentation unlike anything seen in Japan since before the Nara period.

Readings for Lesson 7

Japan Emerging Textbook: Chapters 25, 26, 27 and 28 (pp. 267-310)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

- A) Is it better to have a strong central government or a weak central government? How do you think the Japanese would have answered this question before the Ōnin War? How do you think they would have answered the question after the Ōnin War?
- B) Why do you think the Japanese built mostly out of wood even knowing the dangers of fire? Why didn't they build using stone or bricks?
- C) Is war ever necessary? If so, what criteria does one use to answer this question?

Lesson 8: Unification

The Three Great Unifiers—Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu

Oda Nobunaga

Key Terms

- ***Political Fragmentation***
- ***Imagawa***
- ***Takeda***
- ***Tokaidō***
- ***Owari Domain***
- ***Excessive Brutality***
- ***Battle of Okehazama***
- ***Matsudaira Motoyasu***
- ***Military Unification***

Feudal Japan

Japan in the aftermath of the Ōnin War was characterized by total political fragmentation. *Daimyō* ruled their lands with no interference from the titular shōguns in Kyoto. The great lords operated in a (politically) Darwinian environment. Most sought to live peacefully, but kept a military force at the ready in case of invasion from without or rebellion from within. These armies were relatively small—with perhaps a few hundred to a couple of thousand retainers. However, there were a few *daimyō* who sought to dominate their neighbors, to conquer and rule as much territory as possible. Some even dreamed of reunifying Japan under their leadership. These included, among others, famous and powerful clans such as the Takeda, the Ouchi and the Imagawa. These clans could raise armies of tens of thousands. The Oda clan was quite small and ruled a relatively modest domain on the Tokaidō (eastern trunk road) between the Kantō (Tokyo area) and Kansai (Kyoto area) plains.

Oda Nobunaga

In 1551, Nobunaga inherited the lordship of Owari domain upon the death of his father. He was under 20 years of age. Because of his relative youth and inexperience, he spent a few years destroying his familial rivals. By the time he was roughly 29, his brother had finally been eliminated. In the process, he learned how to command men and the importance of showing little or no mercy. Indeed, Nobunaga will be known for his excessive brutality.

War Begins

In 1560, the Imagawa determined to seize the Owari domain in a larger effort to dominate central Japan. Nobunaga's retainers were concerned that his small force of less than 3000

would not be able to defend against Imagawa's 25,000 men. Nonetheless, Nobunaga would not join the Imagawa cause and an invasion began. At the Battle of Okehazama (in Oda's domain), Nobunaga's small force surprised and destroyed the Imagawa. The final and decisive act of the battle for Japan, however, took place not with a member and supporter of the Oda's clan, but with the lord of a neighboring clan. Imagawa's head was taken by his nominal ally—Matsudaira Motoyasu, who turned on the battlefield to support the Oda. This Matsudaira (a neighbor and old enemy of the Oda) would come to support Nobunaga. He would later change his name to Tokugawa Ieyasu.

Partial Unity

Over the next almost two decades, Nobunaga and his soldiers began the military unification of Japan. Nobunaga was perhaps the most ruthless man of a very ruthless era. He very often massacred the survivors (and sometimes the wives and children who accompanied them to the field) and the civilian population who Nobunaga perceived had supported his enemies. Nobunaga's most famous general was an orphan named Toyotomi Hideyoshi. By the time of Nobunaga's death, roughly half of Japan was under his control or allied with him.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi

Key Terms

- ***Akechi Clan***
- ***Taikō no Kenji***
- ***Taikō no Katanagari***
- ***Social Stratification***
- ***Invasion of Korea***
- ***Ming China***
- ***Yalu River***

Oda Assassinated

In 1582, Nobunaga was assassinated by one of his allies—Akechi Mitsuhide and several of Akechi clan. Hideyoshi then hunted down and destroyed all of them he could find—and seized their land and that of their Akechi allies. Though Hideyoshi had not received permission from Nobunaga's other generals for this action, his boldness had led to success. Over the next months, he moved to consolidate his power. Later, he issued two very famous and important decrees: the Taikō no kenji (land survey—for the purposes of taxation) and the Taikō no katanagari (the great sword hunt). The latter demilitarized the civilian population and had the added benefit of beginning the process of social stratification and the (later) creation of the four classes of society that would dominate Japan until 1873—samurai, peasants, craftsmen/skilled laborers and merchants. ** Samurai had the highest social standing and merchants (who produced nothing that benefited society) were the lowest class. All Japanese

** This would be codified legally in the Tokugawa era.

became a member of one of these classes of society. Their descendants remained in them, more or less unchanged, until the modern era.

Unification

Hideyoshi continued the military unification of Japan. By 1590, all of Japan was controlled by one man for the first time in more than 200 years. Japan had become a nation of warriors in a time of peace. In part to give the warriors something to do, Hideyoshi decided to invade Korea as a stepping stone to the invasion of Ming China. This action, bold though it was, reflected a growing megalomania and unpredictability that characterized Hideyoshi as he aged. In his delusions, Hideyoshi came to see himself as the descendant of the Mongol warrior Genghis Khan and rightful heir to the Celestial Kingdom of China. Though initially successful in Korea, when the Koreans began to use guerilla tactics and Ming troops arrived to repel the Japanese near the Yalu River, the invasion(s) of Korea became a disaster. Though reliable numbers are virtually impossible to determine, tens of thousands of Japanese samurai became casualties.

Tokugawa Ieyasu

Key terms

- ***Toyotomi Hideyori***
- ***Political Calculation***
- ***Battle of Sekigahara***
- ***Lord Kobayakawa***

Hideyoshi Dead

In 1598, one of the most dynamic personalities in all of Japanese history, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, passed from the scene. His final months had been dedicated to making sure that his heir (the five year old Hideyori) was properly cared for and that the group of trusted elders (the generals he was closest to) allowed him to inherit his titles and lands. Indeed, he made them publically swear more than once that they would carry out his wishes. He must have known that there were those among them, such as Tokugawa Ieyasu, who would not.

Sekigahara

Tokugawa Ieyasu was initially allied with Imagawa against Nobunaga at the Battle of Okehazama and had turned on the battlefield to support the Oda clan. Since that time, the Tokugawa had been a loyal ally in the struggle to reunify Japan. However, the relationship between the Oda and the Tokugawa predated Hideyoshi and any of his more recent decrees. Tokugawa was perhaps the most astute politician between the time of Michinaga and the modern era. He was meticulous in his planning, cunning and ruthless with his enemies. He was careful to work behind the scenes to make sure that at the most important time, he could count on his allies. An example of his planning can be seen in one of the most consequential battles of all Japanese history: the Battle of Sekigahara in the year 1600. This was the final conflict associated with reunification and resulted in Tokugawa Ieyasu becoming the most

powerful general in Japan. It set the stage for the creation of the Tokugawa shōgunate—an institution which lasted until 1868. Before Sekigahara, Tokugawa had made an agreement with one of his enemies, Lord Kobayakawa, to turn on the field of battle. This surprise resulted in the Tokugawa victory.

Readings for Lesson 8

Japan Emerging Textbook: Chapters 29, 30 and 31 (pp. 311-343)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

- A) Why do you think Oda Nobunaga considered to so necessary to be brutal in the first battles of the wars of unification? Was there some advantage in using this tactic? Or was it a personal decision?
- B) Who among the three great unifiers was most important for Japan—Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi or Tokugawa Ieyasu? Why
- C) Was Tokugawa Ieyasu ungrateful and disloyal to Hideyoshi? Was he following the standards of the time or was he doing what was in his own best interests? Why or why not?

Lesson 9: Tokugawa Reforms

The Tokugawa and the Creation of a Unified State

Consolidation of the New State

Key Terms

- ***Land Seizures and Redistribution***
- ***Control of Currency***
- ***Fudai Daimyō***
- ***Tozama Daimyō***
- ***Tokugawa Hidetada***
- ***Rōnin (Masterless Samurai)***
- ***Seige of Osaka***
- ***Toyotomi Hideyori***

Reforms

Tokugawa Ieyasu was very wise to move slowly in making changes in Japan. He was able to do this, in part, because of his long life. At the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, Tokugawa Ieyasu was 57 years old. In the early modern period, the average life expectancy for a man was approximately 50 years. Hideyoshi had lived to age 61—and the chronicles describe him as aged. Nonetheless, Tokugawa Ieyasu moved deliberately and carefully to consolidate his position. For example, rather than proclaiming himself shōgun immediately, he waited three years. He slowly investigated the battle itself to determine who among the participants should have their land seized or domains diminished. 90 families (of 214 total nationwide) were stripped of their lands and redistributed to his allies and retainers or kept for himself. Within a few years, 25% of all the land in Japan was under the direct control of the Tokugawa clan (either the main family or branch lines). He also moved to control the minting of coinage (currency) and even seized most silver and copper mines for himself. He created a designation for all warrior families. Those who were a part of the extended Tokugawa clan (although they might have a different surname) were called *fudai daimyō*. Those who had been uncommitted at Sekigahara were to be called *tozama daimyō*. The *tozama* were not to be trusted and had to live under a strict set of rules.

Continuity

Tokugawa Ieyasu stepped down from the position of shōgun in 1605—after occupying the position for only 2 years. His son, Hidetada, assumed the position. This had no real effect on his ability to govern the country. However, it did ensure continuity in the event that the (then) 62 year old man died. But there was work to be done—and Tokugawa Ieyasu eventually moved to eliminate Hideyoshi's son and heir, Hideyori, in 1615. With Hideyori dead and many if not most of the *rōnin* (masterless samurai) who had been drawn to Hideyori's side as the only

possible hope to defeat the Tokugawa destroyed at the Siege of Osaka, Tokugawa Ieyasu's odyssey was complete. He had outlived virtually all of his enemies (and bested them) and most of his early allies as well. By 1616, the year of his death, Tokugawa Ieyasu had created a number of institutions which would last until the year 1868.

Tokugawa Policies and Institutions

Key Terms

- ***Sankin Kōtai***
- ***Edo***
- ***Transportation Infrastructure***
- ***Village Headmen***
- ***Static Social System***
- ***Christianity***
- ***Shimabara Rebellion***

Sankin Kōtai

Among the lasting institutions the first Tokugawa rulers instituted was the *Sankin Kōtai*. This was a system of alternate residence by year. Tokugawa Ieyasu, like Yoritomo before him, refused to move to Kyoto to govern. Because he lived in Edo (as the city of Tokyo was then known), all *daimyō* had to live there for 12 months every other year (at a minimum). When the *daimyō* returned to his domain, he was to leave his heir as a hostage. In this way, the shōgunate could carefully monitor all military men in Japan. And when they were away, they were aware that if they rebelled, the first to die would be their oldest sons. The city of Edo benefited from this as well. Most of the great *daimyō* built grand residences in which to ensconce his wife and heir. All the houses had to be staffed and provided with the food and provisions necessary for the great families. Edo became one of the most populous cities in the world. Given that these great families regularly traveled to Edo from all over Japan, the Tokugawa built and maintained very good roads (for the period), promoted the establishment of adequate lodging on the main roads and ensured that the transportation infrastructure remained intact.

The Peasants

The peasants were tied to the land, although they were not serfs. Mobility was limited and permission had to be secured to travel from place to place, to change jobs or to change residences. It was impossible to stop being a peasant, a merchant or a craftsman. One could not stop being a samurai! Social mobility was virtually impossible and society became static. During the Edo period, the Japanese word for change actually came to mean treason! Village headmen were responsible to their *daimyō* for the actions of their charges and sometimes for the collection of taxes. When village headmen could not maintain order, the samurai bureaucracy stepped in and meted out severe punishment

Christianity

The Tokugawa were very suspicious of all religions other than Buddhism and Shintō. Christianity was suspect because Christians believed all authority is derived from Christ—not a secular lord. This was made manifest in the Shimabara Rebellion in 1637 in which several *daimyō* rebelled, in part, against increasingly strict rules on religion. This was the largest conflict between the Battle of Sekigahara and the battles associated with the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Christianity was then outlawed and all missionaries were expelled. Many Christians were martyred.

Readings for Lesson 9

Japan Emerging Textbook: Chapters 32, 33, 34 and 35 (pp. 344-390)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

- A) Did the system created by Tokugawa Ieyasu (and his son and grandson) have a negative or positive impact on Japan? How could things have been done differently given the situation?
- B) If you were a peasant, would you have preferred to live under Minamoto Yoritomo, Oda Nobunaga or Tokugawa Ieyasu?
- C) Christianity (and all non-Japanese religions) were outlawed in Japan under the Tokugawa. Was this a wise policy? Why or why not?

Lesson 10: Middle Edo Years

The Middle and Late Edo Period

The System Stressed

Key Terms

- ***A Static System***
- ***Social Unrest***
- ***Economic Difficulties***
- ***High Taxes***
- ***Mass Starvation and Infanticide***
- ***Kansei and Tempō Reforms***
- ***Samurai into Government Bureaucrats***
- ***Debt Forgiveness***
- ***Structural Problems***

Reforms Needed

The Tokugawa system worked well for approximately 150 years, but as Japan entered the late 18th century, there needed to be reform. The system was set up to maintain the status quo, to keep the peace at all costs. However, peasants began to protest a series of injustices—taxes which ranged from 50%-70%, a staggering debt load among the peasantry and tenancy rates that reached higher than 50% in some domains. There were occasional periods of mass starvation and increasing rates of infanticide and abortion—simply because of a periodic scarcity of food. Change—which came to mean treason to the Tokugawa—would be difficult to implement from both a practical and ideological perspective. To address these problems, the Tokugawa shōgun Ienari instituted the Kansei reforms in the 1790s. These were mostly designed to address moral failings (curbing prostitution, banning mixed bathing, censoring books and the like) and encourage frugality. None worked well. In 1842, the Tempō reforms were attempted but also failed.

The Samurai

Over the course of Edo period, the samurai had been transformed from a fighting force to a bureaucratic work force. The number of samurai in Japan had increased as the population increased, but the treasury (and government stipends) had remained the same. This caused serious hardship for lower-ranking samurai. Even some of the great *daimyō* families had begun to feel the pinch and had borrowed large sums of money from merchants. The Tokugawa responded by issuing debt forgiveness proclamations every few years for *daimyō*. This increased the cost of borrowing for them later and also increased merchant standing in society. The structural problems endemic to the Tokugawa system of the late 18th century were beginning to become evident.

Foreign Policy

Key Terms

- ***The Expulsion of the Europeans***
- ***Protestants and Roman Catholics***
- ***Technology***
- ***Sakoku***
- ***Koreans, Chinese and the Dutch***

Seclusion

During the wars of unification, Japanese commanders had been more than happy to welcome Europeans bearing technology which could be applied to the battlefield. Oda Nobunaga, in particular, was well known for his willingness to embrace new weapons, new tactics and new ideas. As long as the Europeans were useful and didn't cause too much trouble, they were welcome. However, Europeans also brought with them old grudges that reflected national and religious differences. For example, Iberian Jesuit priests simply could not tolerate protestant English merchants (a feeling that was mutual). Both groups were perceived by the Japanese as having transplanted the European struggle to Japan, although violence between Europeans in Japan was rare. As the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) began to rage in Europe, the Tokugawa increasingly saw the Europeans as more trouble than they were worth because they continued to meddle in Japanese affairs. Soon thereafter, the Japanese moved to completely secure their borders and instituted the policy known as *sakoku*—seclusion. Only Koreans, Chinese and a few Dutchmen per year would be allowed to enter Japan. The ability of the Japanese to travel abroad was also strictly regulated. Though not totally isolated, Japan turned inward for more than 200 years.

Japan Behind

The policy of *sakoku* became increasingly difficult to enforce as the Europeans (and Americans) began to industrialize. When *sakoku* was instituted, Japanese technology was roughly on par with the rest of the world. And though Japan developed internally under the Tokugawa and the early stages of industrialization were evident, it became clear by the middle of the 19th century that Japan was behind. Russians, British and Americans demanded that Japan rescind its policy of seclusion, or face the threat of imperial domination by the West.

Readings for Lesson 10

Japan Emerging Textbook: Chapters 36, 37 and 38 (pp. 391-423)

Modern Japan Textbook: Chapters 1, 2, 3 (pp. 1-60)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

- A) Why do you think the Tokugawa were so reluctant to embrace change? Why was reform so difficult to implement?
- B) Of what use were the samurai in a time of peace? Do you think the Tokugawa made good use of the samurai?
- C) Do you think the policy of *sakoku* was wise? In what way did it benefit the nation (if at all)? Or was it a unwise policy?

Lesson 11: Meiji Japan

Japan's Renaissance: The Meiji Era

The Meiji Restoration

Key Terms

- ***Internal and External Problems***
- ***Opium War***
- ***Foreign Imperialism***
- ***Industrialization***
- ***Izu Peninsula***
- ***Chōshū, Satsuma and Tosa domains***
- ***Boshin War***

Foreign Threats

Tokugawa institutions (and leaders) were unable to cope with the rapidly changing world of the 1850s. Both in the domestic and international realm, there were few good options. There seemed to be no end to the number of uprisings, riots and economic crises faced by the government. The treasury seemed always to be empty. Even small, but needed changes had met with resistance from the ruling elites or the peasantry—or both. The Tokugawa were aware that China had recently lost the Opium War to the British and became alarmed because an increasing number of foreign ships had appeared off the coast of Japan. Unlike in centuries past, this time it was clear that new, industrial weapons systems the foreigners were using might overwhelm coastal defenses. When the Americans appeared off the coast of Izu Peninsula in 1853 and demanded that the Japanese open their country, they had little choice but to comply. In so doing, however, the government demonstrated that it was unable to defend its borders, to keep the country safe from a potential (or real) barbarian invasion.

The Boshin War

The combined domestic and international problems overwhelmed the Tokugawa. Conflict arose between some of the old *tozama daimyō* in southeastern Hōnshū (Chōshū domain) and Kyūshū (Satsuma domain) and the Tokugawa. The leaders of these rebellious domains came to consider themselves the right, true patriotic Japanese, the inheritors of the samurai traditions. They depicted the Tokugawa as having lost their way, of having abandoned the all that right and true in Japanese heritage. In a series of relatively small battles known as the Boshin War, the forces of Chōshū, Satsuma and Tosa defeated the Tokugawa. The new leaders proclaimed a new era—one which would be distinguished by the coronation of a new monarch—the Emperor Meiji.

The Meiji Reforms

Key Terms

- ***Political, Economic, Social, Cultural and Military Reforms***
- ***Iwakura Mission***
- ***Iwakura Report***

Meiji Reforms

As the new leaders surveyed Japan beginning in 1869, the enormity of the task became evident. In order to secure the nation from foreign and domestic threats, they would have to transform Japan economically, politically, militarily, socially and culturally. This was an ambitious goal, one which would take two generations to complete. Some reforms were easy. For example, the four classes of society were abandoned and the samurai ceased to exist as a social caste (many were given pensions). A new government based on Japanese-style democracy was to be implemented (but which would not look much like democracy for two decades). A new conscript army was created. But most of the decisions on how to build a new country would take several years to determine.

Iwakura Mission

Many of the goals set for the Meiji Reforms were by informed by the Iwakura Mission, which began in 1871. This was a diplomatic (and fact-finding) mission in which most of the leaders of the new Meiji government traveled to the United States and Europe over a period of 2 years to study what made these nations strong. They investigated religious, educational, economic military and government institutions; visited factories and machine shops; looked at penal and legal systems and the like; and considered how they wanted Japan to progress. They also went to try to renegotiate a series of unequal treaties, something they were unsuccessful in doing. Upon their return, they published a 2000 page report, called the Iwakura Report, which outlined their findings. Perhaps the most important discovery was that they believed Japan was only 40 years behind the industrialized countries, a gap which through hard work and sacrifice could eventually be bridged. The Meiji elite then created a blueprint for the development of Japan—in virtually every facet of life. They were largely successful in this endeavor.

Readings for Lesson 11

Modern Japan Textbook: Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 (pp. 61-133)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

A) Was the Tokugawa response to US demands in 1853 predictable? How else might the Tokugawa reacted to the US?

B) Were the Tokugawa doomed to fail from the start of the Boshin War or were they out maneuvered and out fought?

C) Were the Meiji reforms a net positive or a net negative for the average Japanese subject?

Lesson 12: Imperial Japan

Early Successes

Key Terms

- ***Sino-Japanese War***
- ***The Struggle to Attain World Power Status***
- ***Heavy Industry***
- ***Raw Materials***
- ***Imperial Russia and the Romanovs***
- ***Russo-Japanese War***
- ***Korea and Manchuria***

Empire

By the turn of the 20th century, Japan had completed many of the reforms instituted by the Meiji oligarchs. Though not on par economically or militarily with the most of the industrialized nations of the West such as Great Britain, Japan had defeated the Chinese in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894-95 and had acquired its first imperial possessions. Japan was no longer concerned about maintaining its sovereignty and its leaders were beginning to think strategically about how to become a world power. Obviously, a second series of economic, educational and military reforms would be necessary, tasks which they were ideally suited to implement. Given the paucity of the natural resources available in Japan which were necessary for heavy industry (coal, petroleum, various iron ores, etc), Japanese leaders wanted access to these items elsewhere. In addition, the Japanese did not want other nations (Imperial Russia, in particular) to have them. Also, Japan wanted to (generally) minimize Russian power and influence in Manchuria and China. Indeed, Japan considered Russian troops in the Far East to be an existential threat. This led to a series of diplomatic exchanges between the Romanovs and Japanese leaders which laid the groundwork for what came to be known as the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05. Achieving the victory over Russia emboldened the Japanese to extend their own empire to Korea and Manchuria.

World War I in Asia and a Change in the Balance of Power in East Asia

Key Terms

- ***World War I***
- ***Military Adventurism***
- ***German Possessions in the Pacific***
- ***The Bolshevik Revolution***
- ***The Rise of Chinese Nationalism***
- ***US Isolation***

The Costs of War

The war with Russia had not been an unqualified success, and it costs both in treasure and human capital, should have caused Japanese leaders to reconsider military adventurism on the continent. But it did not. WWI had also radically changed the balance of power in East Asia. German possessions in the Pacific were seized (and mostly kept) by the Japanese. France and Great Britain, though victorious, were bankrupt and unable and/or unwilling to engage in continued imperial expansion. Russia had undergone the Bolshevik Revolution. This left the United States as the last major Western power in East Asia—and it entered a period of isolation. Finally and most importantly, however, China was waking from a century-long slumber—a fundamental change that Japanese leaders failed to detect and which led to an ignominious and catastrophic defeat.

The Great Depression and Shifting Attitudes on the Military

Key Terms

- ***Taishō Democracy***
- ***A Mature Japanese Economy***
- ***Export Economy***
- ***The Great Depression***
- ***Right-Wing Politics and Militarism***

Great Depression

In the first three decades of the 20th century, Japanese subjects enjoyed unprecedented democracy and freedom. Indeed, during the period we know as “Taishō Democracy,” (the teens and twenties) the Japanese political system was freer and more representative than many democracies of the West. The Japanese economy was also relatively strong during the teens and twenties, but given that it relied heavily on exports, was somewhat fragile. By the 1920s, it is reasonable to say that Japan could no longer be considered a developing country politically or economically and had reached a state of relative maturity. As Japan entered the 1930s, its economic and military strength was roughly on par with Italy. But this was not enough. Perhaps more importantly, many of Japan’s leaders were unaware of their military and economic strength relative to Great Britain and the United States. The shock of the Great Depression hit Japan hard—and with its export-based economy—felt rather quickly across the entire economy. This created the conditions in which ultra-right wing politics and militarism could find expression.

Shifting Opinions

It is important to note that the patterns of behavior Japan had engaged in to attain the level of power and influence it had up until the early 1930s was fairly typical for the period. A military wasn’t just a defensive force. Nations often defined very broadly what was in their national interests and invaded other countries if it suited their purposes. Given that Japan had a rich

martial heritage, its leaders had been more than willing to use the military as a tool to further its national interests—and had been successful in doing so in the recent past. It is therefore not at all surprising that Japan moved that direction in the 1930s. However, the world had changed just enough after WWI that acts of military aggression came to be considered unacceptable to several nations—including, among others, Great Britain, France and the United States. Japanese leaders were unwilling to be constrained by this shift in world opinion.

Readings for Lesson 12

Modern Japan Textbook: Chapters 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 (pp. 134-213)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

- A) Why do you think the Japanese were so concerned about the Russian Empire around the turn of the 20th century? After all, the vast majority of the Russian population lived in the European part of Russia. Why were they perceived to be such a threat?
- B) Do you think it was wise for Japan to have embraced imperialism? Did the Japanese government behave as a rational actor? Were they acting within or outside of international standards of behavior?
- C) What happened between the period of “Taishō Democracy” and the militarism of the 1930s? How was it possible for a society to embrace liberal democracy and a decade later embrace authoritarianism?

Lesson 13: World War II

The War Years: 1937-1945

Manchuria

Key Terms

- ***Kwangtung Imperial Army***
- ***Raw Materials***
- ***Qing Dynasty***
- ***The Multiple Manchurian Incidents***
- ***Manchukuo***
- ***Guomindang Army***
- ***Chiang Kai-shek***
- ***Xi'an Incident***
- ***The Marco Polo Bridge Incident***
- ***Prince Konoe Fumimaro***

Manchuria

Over the course of many decades, the Japanese military slowly seized Manchuria. It would be hard to describe Japanese actions as having taken place as a part of a larger strategic plan. On the other hand, most Japanese leaders were willing to allow the Japanese Kwangtung Imperial Army to claim more and more territory for Japan. Japan had coveted Manchuria since at least the Sino-Japanese War for its wide open spaces and ample natural resources. It was sparsely populated when compared to Japan and China proper. It was also not technically a traditional part of China. It had been the land of the Manchu (where the last ruling dynasty—the Qing—had come from). The collapse of the Qing in 1912 had created a vacuum into which the Japanese were willing to step on the continent. And though China had begun to reunify in the late 1920s, it was not clear to the Japanese that they would ever reoccupy Manchuria.

Mission Creep

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, there were a series of “incidents” in Manchuria—several of which were initiated by the Japanese. Given the lack of central authority in warlord-controlled Manchuria, the Japanese military moved to seize these “lawless” areas. By 1933, Japan had created a puppet state in Manchuria, which they renamed Manchukuo. Soon thereafter, it was formally detached from China. Of course, the new Chinese government (Guomindang) led by Chiang Kai Shek was not very happy about this. However, they were not yet in a position to make war on Japan.

War Begins

In 1936, Chiang Kai-shek had given his word, as a result of the Xi'an Incident, that he would commit troops to fight the Japanese. The next year, Japanese troops who had spilled out of

Manchuria into North China proper got into a skirmish with Guomindang troops at the Marco Polo Bridge near Beijing. This sort of thing had happened many times before and a ceasefire had always been signed. This time, however, Chiang Kai-shek did not back down, nor did the Japanese Premier—Prince Konoe Fumimaro. Large scale fighting erupted on the North China Plain. World War II had begun.

The Wider War

Key Terms

- ***North China Plain***
- ***The Invasion of Shanghai***
- ***Full-Scale War***
- ***The Nanjing Massacre***
- ***Japanese Aggression***
- ***Diplomatic Exchanges***
- ***Tripartite Pact***
- ***Embargo***
- ***Pearl Harbor***
- ***Southeast Asia***
- ***Industrial Capacity***
- ***Chinese Will to Fight***
- ***Red Army***
- ***The Soviets Enter the War***
- ***Hiroshima and Nagasaki***

Nanjing Massacre

The Guomindang realized that fighting a modern, mechanized army on the North China Plain would be suicidal. Chiang Kai-shek then pulled his troops back to the capital city (then Nanjing) where he believed he could more successfully campaign against the Japanese and where he could more fully count on the support of the population. In August of 1937, the Japanese sent approximately 250,000 soldiers to invade Shanghai as a prelude to the conquest of nearby Nanjing. The Chinese mustered more than 500,000 soldiers. Intense fighting occurred which resulted in a 50% casualty rate for the Chinese and approximately 40,000 Japanese casualties. Nonetheless, by December 1937, the Japanese had fought their way to Nanjing, surrounded the city and leveled it. Japanese troops then engaged in an orgy of killing called the Nanjing Massacre. Some historians argue that 200,000 Chinese civilians died. Others argue that fewer than 100,000 died. Regardless, this was the sort of atrocity that could not be ignored by the rest of the world. Japan was clearly the aggressor and in violation of many of the rules of war.

Diplomacy

By early 1938, a series of diplomatic exchanges were taking place between Tokyo, Washington D.C. and the great capitals of Europe. It became clear that the Chinese were not going to give up and the Japanese were not going to withdraw. The diplomatic exchanges grew more strident on all sides as Japan was then engaged in a war that it could not win, and a war which could otherwise not be ended with honor. By 1940, it appeared that salvation was at hand for the Japanese. They were allied, as a result of the Tripartite Pact, with a victorious Germans and Italians. France had fallen, Great Britain seemed doomed and soon, the Soviet Union, would follow. Since the United States was preparing to place an embargo on Japan that would make it impossible to continue the war against China, Japan decided to strike first. Pearl Harbor was attacked and the wider war began with the US and Great Britain. Japan then invaded Southeast Asia as well.

Pacific War

War with the United States alone was ill-advised. War with the US, Great Britain, China and most of the peoples of Southeast Asia at the same time was folly. Japan was a small nation with very limited natural resources. It had a population of 90 million that had been at war in China for approximately 4 years. Its people and military were already tired. The US had ample natural resources and a population of 134 million. As the most heavily industrialized nation in the world, its production capacity dwarfed Japan's. For example, when calculated on an annual basis, the city of Pittsburgh alone produced more steel than did all the steel mills in Japan. Still—the Russo-Japanese War provided a model of how a small, determined nation, possessed of an indefatigable will, could defeat a larger and more powerful one.

The War Ends

The war ended badly for the Japanese. US production and firepower simply overwhelmed the Japanese. It should be noted, however, that the Chinese did more than their fair share in the war. It was, after all, about them more than any other nation. Chinese troops, both Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party's Red Army, fought the fearsome Japanese Imperial Army to a standstill. After the Soviet Union declared war and atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan capitulated and was occupied for the first time in its history.

Readings for Lesson 13

Modern Japan Textbook: Chapters 13 and 14 (pp. 218-250)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

- A) Were the Japanese ruling elites acting rationally when they went to war against China in 1937?
- B) Were the Japanese ruling elites acting rationally when they went to war against the US, Great Britain and most of southeast Asia in 1941?
- C) Did the Chinese win the war against Japan or did the US win the war against Japan?

Lesson 14: Post-War Period

From Devastation to Super-State

The Occupation

Key Terms

- ***Pervasive Homelessness***
- ***Destruction of Industry and the Collapse of Agriculture***
- ***Military and Civilian Deaths***
- ***Stranded Soldiers and Colonists***
- ***Merchant Marine***
- ***Starvation***
- ***The Far Eastern Commission***
- ***Supreme Command of the Allied Powers (SCAP)***
- ***General Douglas MacArthur***
- ***Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal***
- ***Zaibatsu “Busting”***
- ***Communist Revolution in China***
- ***Korean War***
- ***Reverse Course***
- ***Cold War***

Devastation

As the war came to an end, Japan was devastated. Though the government still functioned (in contrast to Nazi Germany), they had waited too long to surrender. Tokyo and Osaka had lost 57% and 60% of its dwellings respectively. 8 million people nationwide were homeless. Japanese industry functioned at less than 10% of its prewar capacity. 80% of Japanese shipping (merchant marine) was destroyed. Approximately 3 million Japanese had been killed and an additional 3 million soldiers had to be repatriated. 3.2 million Japanese civilians had to find their way home as well. The agricultural sector collapsed and hunger was an ever-present specter. Occupation officials had to import hundreds of thousands of tons of food, but thousands of Japanese died of starvation anyway in the first 18 months after the war ended.

The Occupation

The nations who had fought the Japanese created the Far Eastern Commission (FEC) to administer the occupation. The FEC in turn created SCAP (Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers) which was headed by General Douglas MacArthur. It was MacArthur’s job to demobilize and demilitarize Japan. All weapons were seized, many government officials were purged (about 220,000) and a number of government and military leaders were placed on trial at the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal. Large corporations (*zaibatsu*) were split up in what was called “*zaibatsu* busting.” Agricultural land was redistributed. A new constitution was

implemented in 1947 which included as its most famous article the total renunciation of war as a tool of government. By 1948, the Communist Revolution in China had caused US and FEC policy makers to soften several of their most punitive occupation measures. When the Korean War began in 1950, the FEC and SCAP reversed course. The allies began to see a strong, self-sufficient Japan as a strategic partner in the Cold War and implemented policies which would lead to economic growth and a strong, stable, democratic government.

Recovery

The Korean War also had the added benefit of jump-starting Japanese manufacturing in textiles, steel production and other heavy industries. It was cheaper and more efficient to buy Japanese manufactured goods than it was to manufacture them in the US and ship them across the world. Food production also returned to pre-war levels. By 1954, the Japanese economy had surpassed pre-war levels.

Economic Growth

Key Terms

- ***Treaty of San Francisco***
- ***Mutual Defense Treaty***
- ***Access to US Markets***
- ***Exponential Economic Growth***

Peace Treaty

The Occupation ended in 1952 when the Treaty of San Francisco was signed. At the same time, Japan signed a Mutual Defense Treaty with the United States. This allowed Japan to live under the umbrella of US military protection. As long as Japan has been willing to remain a junior partner, this has worked well and the treaty is still renegotiated every decade. Japan was also allowed access to the US market to trade, more or less, freely. This meant that Japan spent very, very little on its own defense and poured those resources into the continued rebuilding of the country and the growth of the economy.

Economic Growth

The Japanese government decided that its highest priority in the 1950s and 60s would be economic growth. They were successful beyond all expectations. The growth rate per year between 1955 and 1960 was 9.1%, between 1960 and 1965 was 9.8% and 1965 and 73 was 10%. These are extremely high numbers and were three times higher than the US growth rate during the same period. By the late 1980s, Japan had become the world's second largest economy. However, in the drive to grow the economy, social and cultural issues received little attention from Japan's governing elite. Some of these would become problematic in contemporary Japan.

Readings for Lesson 14

Modern Japan Textbook: Chapters 15, 16 and 17 (pp. 251-312)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

- A) What do you think about the Far Eastern Commission's decision to reverse course in the occupation of Japan when the Cold War started? Was this a wise decision or should Japan have been punished further?
- B) Was it reasonable for the Japanese government in the wake of WWII to focus on economic development above all else?
- C) Do you think the US-Japan Security Treaty should have been renewed every decade since 1952? Does it benefit only Japan or only the United States—or is it of mutual benefit for both nations?

Lesson 15: Japan Today

Key Terms

- **Continued Economic Growth**
- **Anpo Protests**
- **Economic Slowdown in 1989**
- **Liberal Democratic Party**
- **Democratic Party of Japan**
- **Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Disaster**
- **Prime Minister Naoto Kan**

Protests

Japan continued to grow economically in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. Indeed, Japan became one of the wealthiest nations in the world. Its drive in the modern era to become a world power had succeeded, just not as had been planned for in the pre-war period. There have been serious social and cultural crises. For example, labor actions and social protests rocked Japan in the 1960s during what has been known as the Anpo Protests. This series of events associated with the renewal of the US-Japan Security Treaty called into question how democracy worked in the post war era. Other problems such as the shrinking population, the role of guest workers in Japan, very high government debt (one of the highest per capita in the world) remain intractable. Protests over the US military presence in Okinawa periodically make it into the public sphere.

Economic Malaise

The most enduring challenge facing Japan today is the economy. In 1989, the Japanese economy contracted for the first time in several decades and, despite all efforts to jump start it, has stopped growing altogether. In the year 2012, the Chinese economy surpassed the Japanese economy as the world's second largest. This has been a blow to the psyche of the Japanese. The Japanese were very patient with the government as it tried to deal with the economic malaise. However, in the year 2009, the Japanese people replaced Taro Aso of the Liberal Democratic Party with Yukio Hatoyama of the Democratic Party of Japan. This marked the first time since the end of the occupation (with the exception of a couple of very short periods of time) that a prime minister not associated with LDP has governed Japan.

Disaster

The triple disasters of March 11, 2011—the massive 8.9 Tōhoku earthquake, followed by the tsunami, followed by the nuclear meltdown of the Fukushima nuclear power plant, have been a body blow to a Japan. At least 20,000 people died and tens of thousands were left homeless. There are several areas around Fukushima that have been lost to humanity and will never again be inhabited by humans. The situation was so dire for a few days that if the wind had been blowing from a northeasterly direction, the city of Tokyo would have been contaminated and 35 million people would have been affected. Given that the government had no real plan for what to do with 35 million refugees (many of whom would have been dealing with radiation

sickness), it lied to the public and said that there was never any threat to public safety. When this was discovered, the government of Prime Minister of Naoto Kan fell. Japan's economy took a significant hit during this period and has not yet recovered. Japan will be dealing with the March 11 disasters for several decades to come.

Readings for Lesson 15

Modern Japan Textbook: Chapters 18, 19 and 20 (pp. 313-368)

Questions for Consideration and Investigation

- A) Why do you think the Japanese economy has stalled? What more could they do to stimulate additional growth? Or has the Japanese economy reached a mature state where little growth can be expected?
- B) Was it possible for the Japanese government to have reacted more reasonably to the triple disasters of March 11? If so, how?
- C) What do you think about the use of nuclear power as a means to generate electricity? Is there ever a fail-safe way to use it?

Assignments

This is a reading and writing intensive course. Please read the textbook chapters assigned to accompany each lecture/summary. These can be found at the end of each lesson. Also, at the end of each lesson, I have provided questions for consideration and investigation. You will be required to write 6 essays over the course of the semester in which you answer the questions I have posed. These essays should be 5 approximately pages long, double-spaced. You may select any 6 questions from the different lessons. It is advisable however, to spread out your essays over the course of the semester. In the textbook, you will find a recommended reading list. Please make full use of these as you write your essays.

Please review the questions for consideration and investigation for each lesson.

Unit 1: Ancient Japan

Lesson 1: Introductions: Geography, Language and Religions of Japan

1. To what extent did geography play a role in the development of Japanese civilization? What role does geography play in the development of civilization in general?
2. How was religion used to legitimize ancient rulers in Japan? Was this a phenomenon exclusive to Japan or can it been seen in other civilizations?
3. Is Shintō a religion? How can one have a religion in the absence of sacred texts, a clearly defined liturgy and little concept of the afterlife?

Lesson 2: The Yamato Clan and the Creation of the First Japanese State

1. How much do we really know about humanity in the era before writing? Is it possible to make sweeping generalizations with a high degree of accuracy? How reliable is archaeology?
2. How do you think contemporary Japanese would react to the notion that the Japanese Imperial family might have ties to Korea?
3. How difficult was it for early Japanese to construct a civilization where none existed before? Were they starting from scratch—or did they build on existing structures we know little about?

Unit 2: Classical Japan

Lesson 3: The Golden Era: Heian Japan

1. To what extent should government be linked to religion? What are some positive and negative effects associated with this?

2. Why do you think that the Imperial family has endured unchanged in Japan for more than 1400 years? Are there any other examples like the Japanese Imperial family in the world?
3. Was there ever really a “golden age” in Japan? What are some characteristics of a “golden age?” Do these characteristics change based on your perspective and the segment of society you come from?

Lesson 4: Political Fragmentation and the Late Heian Period

1. To what extent is it wise for civilian rulers to call upon the military to maintain their rule? Are there examples today of nations that use their military to put down domestic unrest?
2. Was Taira Kiyomori a wise and benevolent ruler or a tyrant and usurper—both or something in between?
3. Why do you think the Kiyomori wanted to become a courtier rather than a shōgun?

Unit 3: Medieval Japan

Lesson 5: The First Shogun and the Hōjō Family

1. Was Minamoto Yoritomo a wise and benevolent ruler or a tyrant and despot—both or something in between?
2. Why do you think that the Hōjō were able to step in and become hereditary regents to the titular shōguns in Kamakura? Why did one of them not just proclaim himself a shōgun?
3. Was the first shōgunate the beginning of the feudal era? Why or why not?

Lesson 6: The Ashikaga

1. Why do you think Ashikaga Takauji was so interested in Buddhism? Was he trying to make amends for his own bad behavior, or was he simply using Buddhism because it created more compliant subjects?
2. Why do you think Go-Daigo’s attempt to restore the prerogatives of the throne failed? Was he personally to blame, or was it impossible to succeed in the political environment of the day?
3. Tea Ceremony remains very popular today. Is there any tradition like it in the Western world? What is so compelling about it that it has been able to capture the imagination of so many Japanese over the centuries?

Lesson 7: It All Falls Apart—the Ōnin War and Political Fragmentation

1. Is it better to have a strong central government or a weak central government? How do you think the Japanese would have answered this question before the Ōnin War? How do you think they would have answered the question after the Ōnin War?

2. Why do you think the Japanese built mostly out of wood even knowing the dangers of fire? Why didn't they build using stone or bricks?
3. Is war ever necessary? If so, what criteria does one use to answer this question?

Lesson 8: The Three Great Unifiers—Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu

1. Why do you think Oda Nobunaga considered to so necessary to be brutal in the first battles of the wars of unification? Was there some advantage in using this tactic? Or was it a personal decision?
2. Who among the three great unifiers was most important for Japan—Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi or Tokugawa Ieyasu? Why?
3. Was Tokugawa Ieyasu ungrateful and disloyal to Hideyoshi? Was he following the standards of the time or was he doing what was in his own best interests? Why or why not?

Unit 4: Early Modern Japan

Lesson 9: The Tokugawa and the Creation of a Unified State

1. Did the system created by Tokugawa Ieyasu (and his son and grandson) have a negative or positive impact on Japan? How could things have been done differently given the situation?
2. If you were a peasant, would you have preferred to live under Minamoto Yoritomo, Oda Nobunaga or Tokugawa Ieyasu?
3. Christianity (and all non-Japanese religions) were outlawed in Japan under the Tokugawa. Was this a wise policy? Why or why not?

Lesson 10: The Middle and Late Edo Period

1. Why do you think the Tokugawa were so reluctant to embrace change? Why was reform so difficult to implement?
2. Of what use were the samurai in a time of peace? Do you think the Tokugawa made good use of the samurai?
3. Do you think the policy of *sakoku* was wise? In what way did it benefit the nation (if at all)? Or was it a unwise policy?

Unit 5: Modern Japan

Lesson 11: Japan's Renaissance: The Meiji Era

1. Was the Tokugawa response to US demands in 1853 predictable? How else might the Tokugawa reacted to the US?
2. Were the Tokugawa doomed to fail from the start of the Boshin War or were they out maneuvered and out fought?

3. Were the Meiji reforms a net positive or a net negative for the average Japanese subject?

Lesson 12: Imperial Japan

1. Why do you think the Japanese were so concerned about the Russian Empire around the turn of the 20th century? After all, the vast majority of the Russian population lived in the European part of Russia. Why were they perceived to be such a threat?
2. Do you think it was wise for Japan to have embraced imperialism? Did the Japanese government behave as a rational actor? Were they acting within or outside of international standards of behavior?
3. What happened between the period of “Taishō Democracy” and the militarism of the 1930s? How was it possible for a society to embrace liberal democracy and a decade later embrace authoritarianism?

Lesson 13: The War Years: 1937-1945

1. Were the Japanese ruling elites acting rationally when they went to war against China in 1937?
2. Were the Japanese ruling elites acting rationally when they went to war against the US, Great Britain and most of southeast Asia in 1941?
3. Did the Chinese win the war against Japan or did the US win the war against Japan?

Unit 6: Contemporary Japan

Lesson 14: From Devastation to Super-State

1. What do you think about the Far Eastern Commission’s decision to reverse course in the occupation of Japan when the Cold War started? Was this a wise decision or should Japan have been punished further?
2. Was it reasonable for the Japanese government in the wake of WWII to focus on economic development above all else?
3. Do you think the US-Japan Security Treaty should have been renewed every decade since 1952? Does it benefit only Japan or only the United States—or is it of mutual benefit for both nations?

Lesson 15: Japan Today

1. Why do you think the Japanese economy has stalled? What more could they do to stimulate additional growth? Or has the Japanese economy reached a mature state where little growth can be expected?
2. Was it possible for the Japanese government to have reacted more reasonably to the triple disasters of March 11? If so, how?

3. What do you think about the use of nuclear power as a means to generate electricity?
Is there ever a fail-safe way to use it?

Syllabus

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. Discuss the major developments and texts found in the subject of the course.
2. Identify unique theoretical underpinnings and influential thinkers in the course topic.
3. Analyze the relationship between historical texts and the particular social, cultural, and biographical contexts of their production.
4. Research and critically evaluate historical, social, cultural, or biographical criticism relevant to the analysis of specific events.
5. Use secondary sources and close reading skills to produce a substantive critical essay relating a one or more specific historical texts to the economic, social, cultural, or biographical contexts of its production.
6. Demonstrate a balanced perspective and a deepened understanding of the cultures, times, people, and situations that produce these works.
7. Write coherent historical arguments that explore the relationships of various concepts and texts, and which provide a clear synthesis.

Course Goals:

1. To provide students with a broad perspective of approaches to world history and an understanding of the various ways in which they manifest themselves and to assess students' ability to express their perspectives through exams and essays.
2. To provide students with a deeper understanding of diverse historical and interdisciplinary traditions the course focus and to express this deepened understanding in written tests and a critical essay.
3. To provide an overview of historical analysis and interpretation methods and help students apply these skills in writing essay examinations and a critical essay.
4. To read widely and critically in a variety of historiographic and historical texts and to demonstrate the depth and breadth of this reading in essay examinations and a critical essay.
5. To do library research on a particular trend, event, concept, an individual theorist, or an issue in the area of history studies and to write a critical essay which incorporates this research.

Course Content:

1. Historical events and texts that have been designated as being produced within the category of the course topic.
2. Discussion of the theoretical, social, cultural and biographical contexts in which those works were produced.
3. Historical movements in various periods.
4. Discussion of the historical issues and questions related to theoretical, social, cultural, and biographical approaches to the study of the course topic.
5. Key ideas about how to evaluate and interpret historical events, texts, and approaches.
6. Criticism and reflection upon political and economic systems as reflected in literature.
7. Discussion of the relevance of course readings to the understanding of contemporary global issues.
8. Critical analysis and interpretation of history.

9. Conducting scholarly research on and off-line.

Course Outline:

For the detailed course outline, please see the study guide.

Course Readings:

The course readings for this course will be available through the Online Library, which will provide students access to selected journal articles, book chapters, and reference materials.

Course Preparedness:

This course is a history course which requires analysis, research, and writing. It assumes the mastery of prerequisite college-level skills in spelling, grammar, punctuation, paragraphing, and essay writing. It also assumes the ability to read and analyze literary texts. This course provides instruction in history and does not address remedial writing issues at the sentence, paragraph, or essay level. The California Department of Education "English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools" offers context for understanding the standard for writing at the college level. Students who do not meet the standards outlined in the "English-Language Arts Content Standards" will not pass this course.

In short, this course assumes that students already "write with a command of standard English conventions, write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument, and use clear research questions and creative and critical research strategies" (California Standards, Grades Nine and Ten). This course focuses on texts and analysis and requires college-level writing skills that exceed those required at the secondary level.

Course Workload:

In accordance with accreditation standards, requires approximately two hours of outside work for every contact hour. For a 3-hour course, there are 48 contact hours, plus a minimum of 96 hours outside work. For a sixteen-week course, students can expect to devote a minimum of 6 hours of independent study per week in order to complete the coursework.

Grading Factors:**Discussion Board (20%)**

The Discussion Board provides the learner a place to respond to questions on the topic and to exchange ideas, reactions and analyses of the texts. Discussion questions concentrate on ideas, themes, and characters in literary works. There will be one question per week. Discussion Board questions will be responded to by all learners in the course and will be evaluated by the instructor. The Discussion Board is not available for OCW courses.

Journal (20%)

Your journal consists of your responses to questions in the Study Guide. These questions require you to reflect on the material and to write a one to two-paragraph response. At the end of the course, you will gather together all of your Study Guide responses and will turn

them in as a final portfolio.

Essay (20%)

You will write an essay on one of the topics provided to you by your instructor in which you apply a critical paradigm from theorists or issues raised by the Study Guide questions. You should start your paper with a succinct thesis statement, describe the critical paradigm and the text(s) being analyzed. Be sure to cite critical passages to demonstrate support for your argument.

Length: 1,000—1,500 words. Essay topics will be assigned by the instructor and will reflect material covered in the Study Guide and the readings.

Exam (40%)

Students must complete the assignments, submit them, and take the proctored exam.

Definition of Grades:

Graduate Courses

- A** Outstanding Achievement
- B** Commendable Achievement
- C** Marginal Achievement
- D** Unsatisfactory *
- F** Failing *

* Students receiving this grade in a course that is required for his/her degree program must repeat the course.

I Incomplete A grade given at the discretion of the instructor when a student who has completed **at least two-thirds of the course class sessions** and is unable to complete the requirements of the course because of uncontrollable and unforeseen circumstances. The student must convey these circumstances (preferably in writing) to the instructor prior to the final day of the course. If an instructor decides that an "Incomplete" is warranted, the instructor must convey the conditions for removal of the "Incomplete" to the student in writing. A copy must also be placed on file with the Office of the Registrar until the "Incomplete" is removed or the time limit for removal has passed. An "Incomplete" is not assigned when the only way the student could make up the work would be to attend a major portion of the class when next offered.

An "I" that is not removed within the stipulated time becomes an "F." No grade points are assigned. The "F" is calculated in the grade point average.

W Withdrawal Signifies that a student has withdrawn from a course after beginning the third class session. **Students who wish to withdraw must notify their admissions advisor before the beginning of the sixth class session in the case of graduate courses, or before the seventh class session in the case of undergraduate courses.** Instructors are not authorized to issue a "W" grade.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas or work as one's own. Students must give credit for any information that is not either the result of original research or common knowledge. If a student borrows ideas or information from another author, he/she must acknowledge the author in the body of the text and on the reference page. Students found plagiarizing are subject to the penalties outlined in the Policies and Procedures section of the Catalog, which may include a failing grade for the work in question or for the entire course. The following is one of many websites that provide helpful information concerning plagiarism for both students and

faculty: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

Ethics:

Ethical behavior in the classroom is required of every student. The course will identify ethical policies and practices relevant to course topics.

Technology:

Students are expected to be competent in using current technology appropriate for this discipline. Such technology may include word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software. Use of the internet and e-mail may also be required.

Diversity:

Learning to work with and value diversity is essential in every class. Students are expected to exhibit an appreciation for multinational and gender diversity in the classroom.

Civility:

As a diverse community of learners, students must strive to work together in a setting of civility, tolerance, and respect for each other and for the instructor. Rules of classroom behavior (which apply to online as well as onsite courses) include but are not limited to the following:

- Conflicting opinions among members of a class are to be respected and responded to in a professional manner.
- Side conversations or other distracting behaviors are not to be engaged in during lectures, class discussions or presentations
- There are to be no offensive comments, language, or gestures

Students with Disabilities:

Students seeking special accommodations due to a disability must submit an application with supporting documentation, as explained under this subject heading in the General Catalog. Instructors are required to provide such accommodations if they receive written notification from the University.

Writing Across the Curriculum:

Students are expected to demonstrate writing skills in describing, analyzing and evaluating ideas and experiences. Written reports and research papers must follow specific standards regarding citations of an author's work within the text and references at the end of the

paper. Students are encouraged to use the services of the University's Writing Center when preparing materials.

The following website provides information on APA, MLA, and other writing and citation styles that may be required for term papers.

Online Library:

Our Online Library supports academic rigor and student academic success by providing access to scholarly books and journals electronically.