

## H. Japan's Isolation: A Closer Look

1. The culture of isolated Japan had its own beliefs and way of life, which its people had to come embrace over many centuries.
2. We only know about those beliefs and traditions because they were eventually written down, when the Chinese form of writing spread to Japan c. 552 BC.
3. One of the emperor's allies, the Soga clan, began to promote Chinese learning, including Buddhism (a religion originally created in India, which had spread to China) and Confucianism (the form of benevolent despotism practiced by China's emperors.)
4. Japan's rulers wanted to take advantage of China's values, but they did not want to become Chinese. When the Soga clan's influence became too great, other Japanese leaders assassinated the leader of the Soga in the "Isshi Incident" of c.645 AD.
5. After this brief phase of greater contact with China, Japan withdrew into greater isolation.
6. It was only with the arrival of Europeans, that Japan struggled to adapt to the presence of other people and their beliefs.
7. European merchants first arrived in Japan in **1534**, and the missionary Francis Xavier soon followed in **1549**, wanting to teach Christianity to the Japanese.
8. Buddhism could be combined with Shintoism in a way that did not threaten the power of the Japanese emperor, but Christianity could not. (According to Christianity, there is only one God, and any Japanese beliefs about Japanese gods are viewed as false.)
9. To protect Japan from foreign religion, the emperor's generals, the *Shoguns*, banned foreigners from entering Japan starting c.1633. This seemed to be proven to be a wise choice when a Christian lord rebelled against the emperor in the Shimabara Rebellion of c.1637.
10. The ban on foreigners in Japan is known as the "sakoku" policy. ("Sakoku" means isolation in Japanese.) It lasted until the arrival of Commodore Perry

## I. Japan's Empire: A Closer Look

1. Once Japan was forced to open itself to the world, it responded by a rapid process of industrialization and militarization.
2. Seeking to copy the world's great powers in order to achieve the same degree of control of the world for itself, Japan began to build an empire.
3. It used its newly powerful navy in "gunboat diplomacy" with Korea in the same way that the United States had used its power on Japan.
4. Having established influence over Korea, Japan found itself challenging China in its traditional role there as the "Middle Kingdom."
5. This resulted in the **Sino-Japanese War (1894-5)** as we saw in Chinese history (Section G on page 12). Japan defeated China, and was able to control Korea after that.
6. After having defeated Russia in a sequel for control of Korea, Japan felt strong enough to actually invade and rule Korea completely. The Japanese rule of Korea began in 1910 and continued all the way until 1945, when Japan was defeated by the United States.

## J: Post-Imperialism: A Closer Look at Japan Today

1. Japan's evolution into the insular but peaceful country that it is today begins with its defeat in **World War II in Asia (♣1937-45)**. Although this fact is *necessary* to explain Japan's benign modern culture, it is not *sufficient*. There is one other historical key to Japan's unique modern self.
2. After the United States defeated Japan, it occupied the country from **1945 to 1952**. During this occupation, American officials made so many positive contributions to life in Japan that it was lifted out of its miserable post-war situation into a life of modern political freedom of a kind its people had never known, as well as amazing industrial prosperity.
  - a) Japan's empire was transformed into a modern democracy by General Douglas MacArthur, the American military ruler of Japan.
  - b) MacArthur was responsible for creating Japan's new constitution (the one that retains the emperor as a symbol, but repudiates imperial power and war).
  - c) Under American supervision, Japan began its transition towards a modern form of political freedom, including democratic elections and the protection of rights.
  - d) In addition, an American business genius named William Deming arrived in Japan to teach its business leaders how to conduct their industrial production more efficiently.
  - e) His teachings were so helpful in boosting Japan's level of technology and wealth that Deming remains a hero to the Japanese to this day. The *Deming Prize* is award annually by the the Japanese society of scientists and engineers as the most prestigious industrial award in Japan to honor the most innovative company.

## K. A More Advanced Final Summary of Japanese History ("Level 2")

1. The isolated culture of Japan became established ♣**c.660 BC** with the rule of Jimmu (according to Japan's unique Shinto belief), and continued to be separate despite Chinese influence, until the arrival of the Europeans, **1543/9** challenged the Japanese to impose the almost total "sakoku" ban on foreigners.
2. Japan's original isolated culture continued until it was disrupted by the arrival of Commodore Perry, who broke Japan's isolation in ♣**1853/4**.
3. Japan responded to being forced to have contact with the world by trying to build an empire to shield itself. It started by taking control of Korea away from China in the *Sino-Japanese War (1894-5)*, leading to its rule of Korea all the way from 1910 through to *World War II in Asia (♣1937-45)*.
4. Having been defeated in that war, Japan became the *post-imperial* culture that it is today because of the American occupation of Japan (**1945-52**) during which time Douglas MacArthur imposed a peaceful and free constitution on the country, and

William Deming promoted advanced industrial methods to help boost Japan's prosperity.

5. As a way of diagramming this more detailed progression of Japanese history in the most succinct way possible, here is the final model of the three periods of Japan's history, with the most important additional anchor fact references to explain the meaning of each period:

