

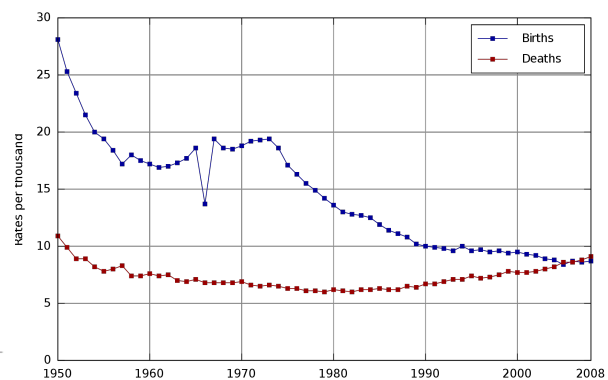
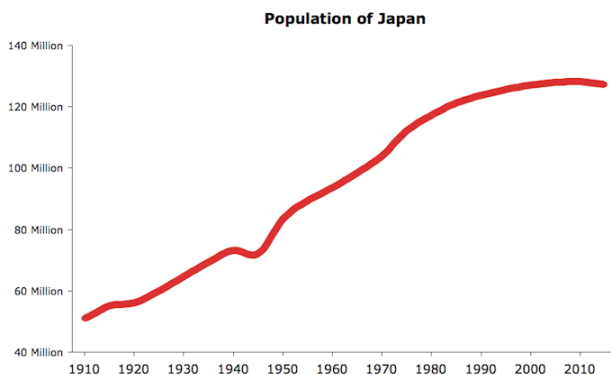
## IV. Japan and the World We Live In

### A. Insular Island Nation

1. Japan is ranked *third* among the world's most important trading nations (after only the United States and China). It is the source of a great number of sought after brands in electronics and automobiles in particular (such as Sony, Toyota, and Honda).
2. Japan also had one of the world's most powerful militaries. (Some rank it as high as 4th; some experts rank it lower in the top 10 in the world).
3. With such military power and "economic power," why is Japan not a cardinal culture in the world today?
4. The answer is simple: Japan is an insular or xenophobic culture, which chooses not to have significant cultural contact with the rest of the world. (The word "insular" means culturally isolated—by choice. The word "xenophobic" is a more extreme characterization; it means "having an irrationally strong fear of foreigners." Which is the best term? You'll have to decide.)

### B. The Shrinking Country!

1. One of the most remarkable features of Japan's insular culture is the fact that it is *shrinking*. Japan has a **million** fewer people already than it did at its highest level of population.
2. As in other advanced countries, people have few babies, and the older population is dying.



Japan's population is shrinking. There are fewer births in Japan than deaths today. In Western countries, there is a similar pattern, however in Japan there is almost no *immigration*.

3. Japan has almost no immigration, because the Japanese people wish to live in their own way, in as isolated a manner as possible. They have made laws that drastically limit immigration.

4. As a result, Japan is one of the most homogeneous cultures in the world (“Homogeneous” means all the people are the same. They are all Japanese, and all speak Japanese. There are almost no non-Japanese people in the country.)

### C. A Post-Imperial Culture

1. Apart from being an advanced industrial nation that is especially insular/xenophobic, the other key defining trait of modern Japanese culture is the fact that it is a peaceful partner of the United States (the world police power) — *after having been* a conquering empire that was defeated by the United States as part of the World War II.
2. This is a unique historical situation. It makes Japan a **post-imperial** culture. (“Post,” as “P.S.” or “Post Script” at the end of a written letter or e-mail, means “after.” Since Japan was once an empire, it once had an *imperial* culture. It no longer has an empire or such a culture, so it’s culture is **post-imperial**. In addition, the Japanese people are still dealing with the meaning of losing the war. They haven’t “moved on.” *That* is the second meaning of “post-imperial.”)
3. A famous feature of Japan’s post-imperial culture is its constitution. This constitution says 1) Japan’s emperor is the “symbol of the nation,” but that he has no power, and 2) promises that Japan will never again wage war. *It is a promise Japan has kept for 70 years.*

### D: 1937-45: *The Cardinal Anchor Fact of Japanese History Today*

1. The first and most important anchor fact in all of Japanese history is ***World War II in Asia (1937-45)***.
2. In most cases, historians say that World War II was from 1939-45. This is because Nazi Germany invaded Poland in 1939, setting off a chain reaction of war declarations, making a truly “world war.”
3. Before that, however, Japan had already invaded China. In 1937, Japan had begun a new phase of building an empire that had started a few decades earlier. It invaded the main part of China. This is sometimes known as the “Second Sino-Japanese War,” because it was not yet a global conflict at the time. However, the best term to use to connect this conflict to what soon was happening in Europe and would soon involve America is “World War II”—but more precisely **“World War II in Asia” (1937-45)**.
4. When Japan attacked the United States at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii as part of this war, the United States entered the war.
5. Over the course of the war, American scientists invented the atomic bomb, the most powerful weapon ever created, and in 1945, such a device was used twice against Japan—destroying the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and causing Japan’s unconditional surrender.
6. Since **1945**, Japan has been under the control and supervision of the United States, acting as the world police power.

The Japanese empire reached its maximum extent during **World War II in Asia (1937-45)** — (left).

Japan's surprise attack on the USA at Pearl Harbor, brought America into the war. It was the United States that forced Japan's surrender in 1945 by two atomic bombings (right), and which since then has overseen the conduct of "post-imperial" Japan as an important culture in the world.

