

E. The Origin's of Today's Japan (c.660 BC)

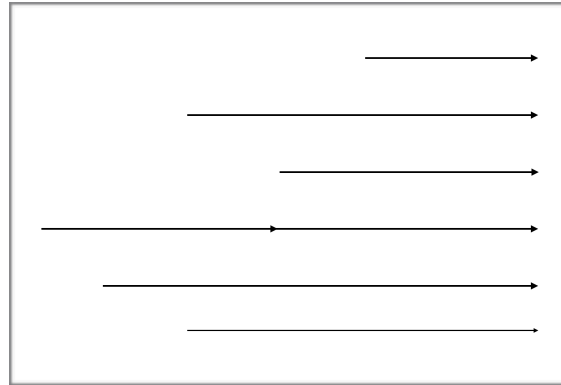
1. Japan's insular culture has pre-historic roots.
2. Japanese religion — a *national* religion called “Shintoism” — holds that the islands of Japan and the leaders of Japan are the creations of *Japanese* gods or “kami.”
3. In particular, the royal family of Japan, the Yamato family is believed to be of divine origin, with a goddess *Amaterasu* as the mother of the clan, including the first emperor, Jimmu.
4. The story of Jimmu is told in a national history called the “Nihon Shoki” about 1400 years after the events it presents, because only at that later time did the Japanese people actually having writing.
5. Historians do not accept the stories that are told about the earliest emperors as being true, but because of the importance of Japan's religion to Japan, we put the first anchor fact of Japanese history where the Japanese believe it goes.
6. Jimmu became the first emperor, according to Japanese tradition, **c.660 BC**.
7. The key to using this anchor fact is knowing that it is not considered an accurate event by historians, but it is so important in Japanese tradition that it is possibly *more important* to the Japanese than a true event would be.
8. The Japanese belief in the kami and the emperors is so strong is that the same family has ruled Japan its entire history (about 2700 years!).
9. As we saw earlier, the Japanese emperor no longer has any power, according to the Japanese constitution, but the fact that there is an “emperor” mentioned at the beginning of the constitution shows us that even today — in *post-imperial* Japan — there is a belief in the divine royal family.



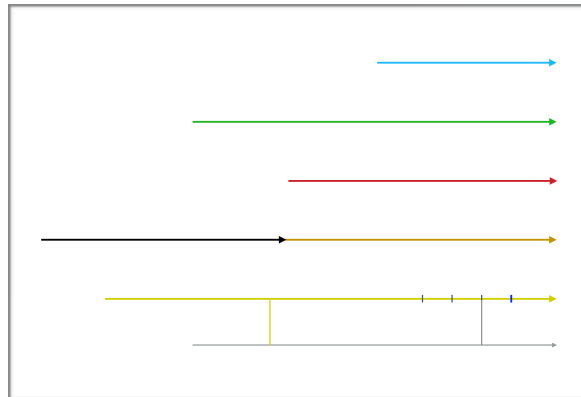
A famous depiction of the first emperor, Jimmu, shown with a bow and a *three-legged* crow— considered a mystical creature in Shintoism.

F. Illustrating Japan's History as Part of World History

1. Because Japan is *not* a cardinal culture, it must be shown on a diagram of World History as an addition to the main diagram of the five cardinal cultures of world history.
2. The best way to do this is to make room for it at the bottom of the diagram, and to add a line there (under China). The line is about the same length as the line for Europe. (See next page).



3. To illustrate further, with the colors of the cultures used before, and with the “tick marks” of Chinese history to help with the spacing, here is a version of the diagram that will help us understand Japanese history more completely. It includes two connecting lines between China and Japan.



4. Labeling the anchor facts we have so far, would look like this:

