

H. Japan's Isolation: A Closer Look

1. The culture of isolated Japan stayed the same for many centuries.
2. The only minor change that happened during its early history was the adoption of writing from China c.552 AD.
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 was again very isolated.
6. It was only with the arrival of Europeans, that Japan encountered a serious problem in relating to other cultures.
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. The Japanese emperor could not tolerate Christianity, which denied the Japanese gods and him (as a descendant of the gods).
9. The emperor's generals, the *Shoguns*, banned foreigners from entering Japan in what 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 adopting advanced technology and copying the idea of creating an empire from the Europeans.
2. 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.
3. This created a conflict with China, still the "Middle Kingdom" of East Asia, resulting in the **Sino-Japanese War (1894-5)**. Japan defeated China, and controlled Korea after that.
4. The Japanese ruled Korea outright starting in 1910, which 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 key to explaining why Japan is the way it is today.
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) 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.
- d) 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 c.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 (c.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 version of Japanese history, here is the final model of the three periods of Japan's history:

