

Thematic Timelines: Japanese Civilization

Period 1: 1200–1450 CE

- **Taiko Reforms** occurred in 600s CE, as Japan attempted to emulate and adopt Chinese style centralized government and philosophy (**Confucianism**)
- Native **Shinto** spiritual beliefs, practices, and mythology developed in the 8th century centered around spirits (kamis) and the development of Shinto shrines and monuments
- **Feudal system** developed in Japan; peasant rice production the economic basis of power
- **Shoguns** and **Daimyos** atop feudal hierarchy, with hired samurais for protection and mercenary warfare
- Buddhism brought to Japan from trade and interaction with the **Tang Dynasty**
- **Zen Buddhism** developed as a Japanese blend of **Mahayana Buddhism** and **Shinto** belief, focused more on self-control, meditation, and individual insight

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Period 2 – Period 3

Period 2 – Early Modern Era – 1450 CE – 1750 CE

- Portuguese and Dutch begin trade with Japan introduce Western goods, science, and Christianity
- **Tokugawa Shogunate** begun by the Shogun **Tokugawa**, with a centralized capital in **Edo** after centuries of feudalism and local fighting for power
- Tokugawa formed government and regions favorably around Edo, with supportive and loyal daimyo put in high gov. positions are around the capital of Edo
- Korea and Chinese block printing techniques brought over to Japan to improve printing, reading, and writing
- Christian rebellion crushed by Tokugawa government in 1660s and all foreigners and interaction with the outside world (except select trade with the Dutch and Chinese) were banned (**Sakoku**)
- Japanese population, peace, and school prosper under Tokugawa Shogunate and isolation, but society does not advance technologically or economically

Period 3 – Modern Era – 1750 CE – 1900 CE

- Japan forced to open by US in 1853, Tokugawa gov. blamed for weakness/lack of progress, and emperor restored (**Meiji Restoration**)
- Japan begins state-run industrializing with economic cooperation and funding with large companies
- Students, advisors, and professionals sent to US and Europe to learn Western science, mechanization, factories, military tech / strategies, and culture from 1870s-1890s
- Japan industrializes very quickly, and defeated China in the **Sino-Japanese War** in 1895, taking Korea and Taiwan

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Period 4: 1900 CE – Present

- Rapid state-run industrialization continues as Japan begins its quest to run and dominate Asia
- Russia defeated in the **Russo-Japanese War** in 1905, giving Japan access to Manchuria and the Russian-built railroads
- During the worldwide depression of the 1930s, Japan sought conquest for agricultural land and funding in **Manchuria**
- Japanese blame Chinese extremists for railroad bombs in Manchuria, and beginning the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and **Second Sino-Japanese War** in 1937
- Japan overruns Chinese in Manchuria and invades China directly, quickly taking all main coastal and northern cities by the 1940s
- Japan allies with Nazi Germany and Italy, attacking all major European and US holding in the Pacific, including Singapore, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and **Pearl Harbor** in December of 1941, entering WWII
- Japan is defeated at **Midway** (1942), slowly losing territory in the Pacific to the US, using kamikaze attacks as its navy and air force ran thin
- **Hiroshima** and **Nagasaki** bombed by the US atomic bomb, forcing surrender in 1945, and a new western-modeled constitution, government, and economy, with the U.S. military present in Japan
- American aid programs and free market economic planning revitalize Japan's economy and nation, becoming a top-3 world economy in the 1970s, and competing with the US and Europe in modern manufacturing