

Geography -Japan as an island nation – surrounded by water – not too much – enabled connection to the land & southeast asia .

Barrier- ritsu monk Jianzhen(Ganjin) – 688-763 – 6th attempt reached Japan

Tgt with Buddhism comes – 1 monumental architecture - Korean style by craftsmen from Paekche, such as the Hōkōji temple completed in 596 2. Medicine 3. Calendrical sciences 4. Organised philosophical syst 5. Writing

Kubilai Khan – 1274, 1281

Missions to china- Gishi Wajinden 280-290. Kenzuishi – prince Shotoku – credited for cultural borrowing – seventeen article constitution. Kentoshi – Abe no Nakamoro. Kukai (Kobo Daishi) met Huiguo in China and brought back mandalas, sutras. End 894 - Sugawara no Michizane refuses to go. Pirate stages at coastal areas – the acquisition of Chinese books. The availability of these books contributed greatly to the compilation of literary and scientific works in Japan, especially under Saga Tenno. China to reimport titles

In the ninth century Japan began to be incorporated in the maritime trade that flourished between the Chinese coast, Southeast Asia, and the states rimming the Indian Ocean

7, Ono no Imoko sent to China with a letter from the Japanese ruler Suiko to Emperor Sui Yangdi (r. 604-617). The letter contained the phrase hi izuru tokoro no tenshi, hi bossuru tokoro no tenshi ni sho o itasu

, Imoko returned to Japan, accompanied by the Chinese envoy Pei Shiqing. Imoko pretended that the imperial letter from China had been stolen as he passed through Korea. But the Chinese envoy presented a letter from China saying: kotei Wako o tou: "The emperor greets the sovereign of Yamato.

Imoko back: The heavenly sov ereign of the east respectfully addresses the emperor of the west

Buddhism: Siddharta Gautama – Sakyamuni – 4 Noble Truths , Eightfold Paths. Spreads in North India, religion of Ashoka – splits into Theravada and Mahayana (great vehicle). Linkage evidence : grottoes and statutes from Afg to Yun'gang. Spreads to china via central caravan route. 4 Noble truths not much emphasized. Faith in compassionate boddhisattva- Avalokitesvara (portrait change), Amitabha. Maintain regional difference : pagoda – china masonry, KOR stone, JAP wood. X cave temple in Japan or south China. Fusion with Daoist myths. 4th CE starts to flourish due to collapse of North China gov. Assertion of control over Buddhism – persecution by 2 northern dynasties, and Wuzong in Tang.

China – Buddhism requires translation – Kucha – Kumarajiva and Chinese pilgrims. Usage of Confucianism to explain Buddhism by Mouzi.

Buddhism in Japan.

Immigrant Clans as Cultural Vectors: Groups like the Hata and Tora clans, originally from the Korean peninsula and China, brought Buddhist practices with them. 540: Over 7,000 immigrant households registered in Japan—many with Buddhist affiliations. 522: Shiba Totto, a Korean immigrant, reportedly built a Buddhist hall in Yamato decades before the official introduction. **Merchant Monks & Maritime Routes:** Buddhist monks traveled with traders across the South Seas, embedding themselves in port cities and immigrant communities. These monks weren't part of state missions—they were entrepreneurial, multilingual, and mobile.

Buddhism as a Trade Commodity

Religious Goods: Icons, incense, and texts were traded like luxury items. **Monasteries as Economic Hubs:** In China and Korea, monasteries lent money, stored goods, and supported caravans—functions that likely extended to Japan via immigrant networks.

The Official Narrative (and Its Gaps)

- 552 (or 538): Baekje sends a Buddha image and sutras to the Yamato court.
 - This event is often cited as Buddhism's "arrival," but it was more of a formal recognition than a true beginning. 584: When a new Buddhist image arrived, only one lapsed Koguryo priest was available to perform rituals—suggesting the religion was still marginal at court. 623: A Paekche priest was appointed head of Japan's Buddhist church, reinforcing Korea's role as intermediary.
 - **Buddhism from the South Seas**
- **South Indian Monk Bodhisena:** 736: Bodhisena arrives in Japan, believing Mañjuśrī had been reborn there.

- His journey—via China and Southeast Asia—highlights the southern maritime route as a legitimate channel for Buddhist transmission.
- Originally understood as the "kami" of foreign lands Kami = Shintô deities (forces beyond human ken)
- Early Buddhism Becomes a technique of government Prayer for the success of the state, emperor
Emperor combines power of Buddhism and Shintô in self
- the Shômu Emperor was proclaiming his right to rule: Descendant of Amaterasu Creator of Vairochana
- Initially Buddhism for the upper classes, Emphasis on this world , some scholars eg Kukai
- Kamakura Buddhism – Zen, Pure land, Nichiren(Lotus Sutra)
- Konjaku Monogatarishu

Language

Chinese – Sino Tibetan language family. Japan unknown. Traditional Chinese as a written language.

Japanese and Chinese differences: polysyllabic while Chinese is monosyllabic (with compound words)

Chinese has no inflections. Emphasis on word order vs particle.

Adapting: from Manyôgana(Kojiki, manyôshu) to Hiragana (from cursive) and Katakana (from parts)

Not just character but also high extent of loan word

Genji Monogatari by Lady Murasaki Shikibu (world first great true novel) 978-1016

Chinese remained as prestigious form of serious writing. Fujiwara Michinori 1106-1159 used exclusively Chinese

When Japan modernized, many vocab (Sino-Japanese words) created in Japanese are exported to China