**Japan**

-Mona’s Notes

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Topography:

-Mountains- primarily volcanic. Since Japan was very mountainous, agriculture was difficult.

-Sea of Japan separates Japan from the rest of Asia.

-Very mountainous, so therefore, little arable land.

-Mt. Fuji is considered sacred in Japanese tradition.

-Most rivers are swift-moving, which produces hydroelectric power.

-Mt. Aso is one of Japan’s active volcanoes.

-Japan is located in the “Ring of Fire”, where lots of earthquakes and volcanoes occur.

-Tsunamis are also common in Japan.

Feudal System:

1. **Emperor** – Reigned, but did not always rule
2. **Shogun** – Had political power and was leader
3. **Daimyo** – Nobles of the warrior class
4. **Samurai** – Warriors
5. **Rorin** – Soldiers
6. **Peasants** – Farmers; 90% of the population
7. **Artisans** – Craftspeople
8. **Merchants** – Salespeople

-There was VERY LITTLE social mobility.

-Feudalism – A political, economic and social system based on mutual obligations, loyalty, the holding of land, and military service.

Code of Bushido:

-\*Fidelity (loyalty)

-Politeness

-Virility (manliness)

-Simplicity

-Samurai must commit ritual suicide to die ‘honorably’.

Zen Buddhism:

-Japanese variation of the Mahayana form of Buddhism, which came from India through China.

-It reinforced the Bushido values of mental and self-discipline.

Heian Period: 794-1156:

Characteristics:

-Growth of large-landed estates

-Arts and literature from China flourished

-Elaborate court-life (highly refined), with etiquettes

-Personal diaries: *The Pillow Book,* by Sei Shonogon (10c)

-Great novel: *The Tale of Gengi,* by Lady Mumasaki (1,000 pgs+)

-Moving away from Chinese models in religion, arts, and government.

Cultural Borrowing:

-Chinese writing -Chinese artistic styles -Zen Buddhism

-NO Chinese civil service system -Women=kana; men=kanji (alphabet was gender-specific) -Language = Chinese ideographs & kana/kanji

Ashikaga Age (1338-1573):

-Shoguns fight for power.

-Laws are unclear: each class has different set of laws.

-Less-efficient government than the Kamakura

-Armies of samurai protect the country.

-Castles and forts are built for protection, by shoguns and daimyos.

-Wood was extensively used in Japan for building; stone was extensively used in Europe.

Age of the Warring States (1467-1568):

-Castles built on hills in different provinces.

-Power shifts from above to below

-Europeans arrive in Japan, bringing firearms and Christianity.

-Christianity and foreign trade flourish.

Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582):

-Banishes last Ashikaga shogun -Brutal leader who took control of capital “Kyoto”

-Unifies a large part of Japan -Ruled Empire by force

-Didn’t completely unify Japan, and therefore committed ritual suicide.

Catholic Jesuits in Japan:

-St. Francis Xavier- first Catholic missionaries in Asia

Toyotomi Hideyoshi:

-Oda Nobunaga’s best general

-Was a commoner and was one of the few who changed classes.

-Becomes suspicious of European territorial ambitions.

-Orders all European missionaries expelled from Japan.

-Tries to invade Korea, but fails.

1594- First Japanese Christian martyrs.

Tokugawa Shogunate Period: (Golden Age):

-Japan closed off to all trade (except to the Dutch and Chinese)

-Dutch were restricted to a small island in Nagasaki harbor

-Japanese Christians were persecuted and Christianty is forbidden.

-Became extreme isolationists

-Domestic trade flourishes (trade inside Japan)

-Towns, esp. caste towns, increase

-Merchant class becomes rich

-New art forms 🡪 haiku poetry (5,7,5), Kabuki theater

-Japan had 250 years of prosperity

-Agriculture > commerce –therefore, peasants were taxed more.

Women:

-Worked in fields

-Managed household

-Cared for children

-Obeyed their husband

Shintoism:

-Polytheism -World of kami -Ancestor worship -Wants to minimize guilt and sin (purification) -hyper-nationalistic -Great creator (but still polytheistic in the way it’s worshipped)

Virtues:

-Purity -Simplicity -Order -Amaterasu=son goddess

Shintoism in Traditional Japanese Culture:

-Noh Theater- 8-man chorus, masks were usually worn, private theater, and generally tragic themes

-Kabuki Theater- elaborate kimono, public theater, painted faces, and modern

-Puppet Theater (Banraku Puppets)

-Shintoism ideas are incorporated into plays

-Tea Ceremony (etiquettes; rituals)

-Oragami- act of purifying (art of Japanese paper folding)

-Calligraphy (similar to Chinese calligraphy)

-Haiku (17-syllable poem) (5, 7, 5)

-Ikebona- the art of Japanese flower arranging. (Tallest=heaven; Middle=man; Smallest=Earth)

-Bonzai- A unique method of meditation

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