



# Japan

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This essay focuses on the political, economic, and cultural history of Japan. Japan was never colonized and was not defeated by foreign powers until World War II. I discuss the rise, accomplishments, and fall of Japanese kingdoms over 15 centuries – the Yamamoto monarchy in the Taika Era (646-1192), the Minamoto, Ashikaga, and Tokugawa governments in the Shogun Era (1192-1868), the Meiji governments (1868-1945), the American occupation (1945-1952), and democratic governments in modern Japan (1952-present). I wrote these lectures for a Stanford Travel/Study program in Japan in April 2015.

I first discuss how Japan was unified in 646 and how the Tokugawa Shogun took control in 1603. I next look at economic evolution under the Tokugawa shoguns and why the US forced Japan to open trade in the 1850s. I examine the impacts of the Meiji Restoration (1868), how Japan built a Pacific empire, and why it fought and lost World War II. I analyze the reforms of the American occupation, the determinants of Japan's economic boom (1955-1990), and the causes of Japan's economic stagnation after 1990. I append an addenda on the struggle between Japan and Russia over control of the Kurile Islands and

a time line, bibliography, and description of sites that I visited in Japan and the Kuriles.

## **Japan (646-1603) – Ancient Kingdoms and Early Shoguns**

**The Yamato Monarchy and the Taika Reforms.** Early political organization in Japan revolved around numerous autonomous chiefdoms, comprising small groups of villages under the authority of individual lineage groups. Each clan was largely self-sufficient, governed by its own codes and laws, producing most of the goods it consumed, and worshipping its own ancestral lineage.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
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*Kofun Helmet of Iron And Gilt Copper – 5<sup>th</sup> century, Ise Province*

Toward the end of the fifth century, one powerful family began to assert its control over other chiefdoms. The Yamato line claimed its heritage from the Sun Goddess and used diplomacy, marriage alliances, patronage, and coercion to extend its dominions in central Japan. In 645, ruling members of the Yamato clan invited prominent rivals to a banquet and then killed them, paving the way for the transformation of the clan into a powerful monarchy that ruled all of Japan. In the mythology created by Yamato historians, the monarchs descended in a direct line from the Sun Goddess, who sent her grandson Ninigi to pacify Japan. The historians depicted Ninigi's great-grandson Jimmu as the first to rule all the islands, thus establishing the Yamato claim to suzerainty over the nation.





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*Buddhism Was Officially Introduced into Japan in 538 – Horyo-ji Buddhist Temple, Ikaruga, Nara Prefecture, Japan, Founded in 607*

The system of government was modeled on Chinese statecraft.

The Taika (“great change”) Reforms initiated by the Yamato on New Year’s Day, 646, established the philosophical norms, legal principles, and fundamental institutions that would shape Japan for many centuries.

Japan’s strong cultural links to Korea also date back to that era, with the introduction into Japan of Buddhism, a system of writing, pottery, weaving, and metalwork. Some Korean migrants to the islands became

powerful chieftains. As much as one-third of the new aristocracy that emerged in the Taika era traced lineage to the Korean peninsula.

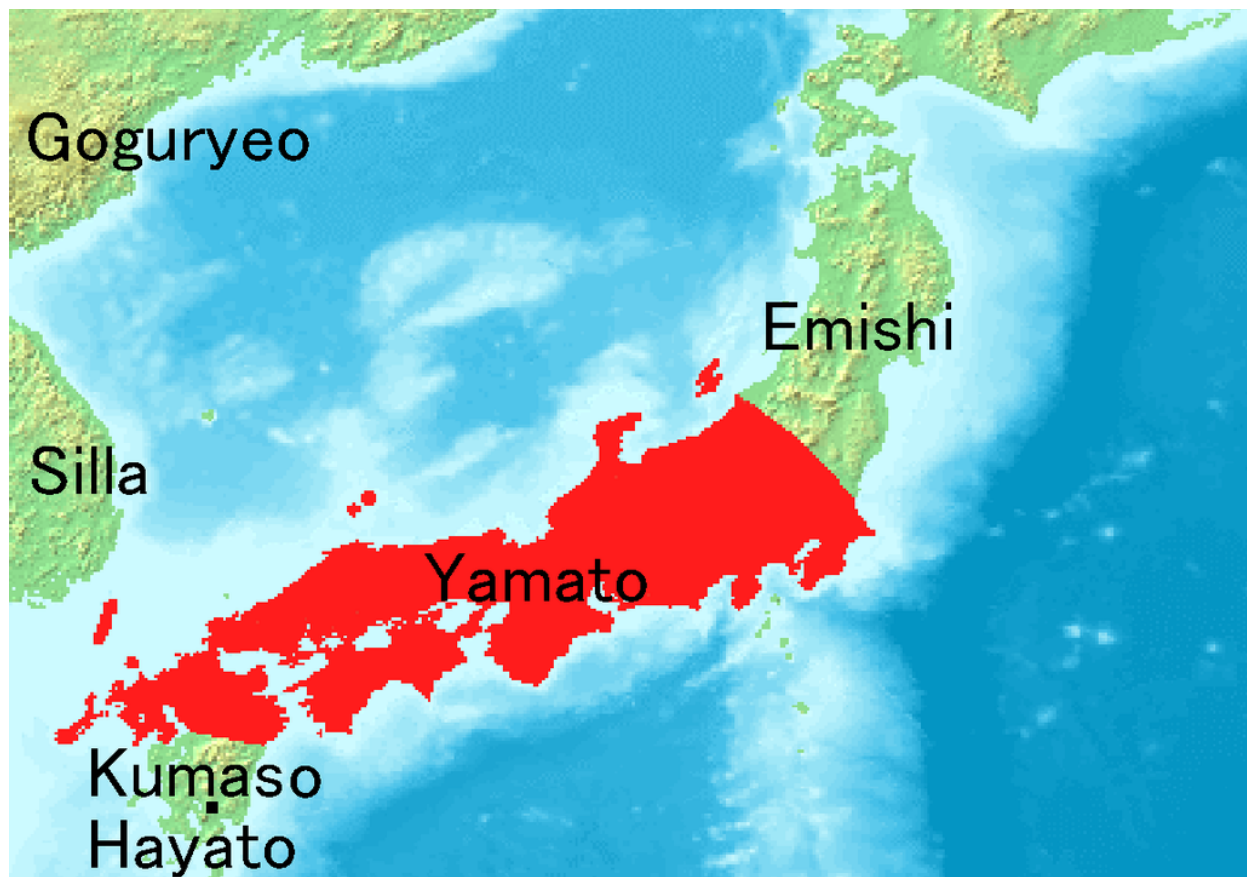


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Korean\\_ambassadors\\_to\\_the\\_Tang\\_court,\\_7th\\_century\\_CE.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Korean_ambassadors_to_the_Tang_court,_7th_century_CE.jpg)>

*Envoys from the Three Kingdoms of Korea to the Tang Chinese Court –  
Portraits of Periodical Offerings, 7<sup>th</sup> century*

**Taika Era Legacy.** The head of the Yamato line now became a monarch, the Heavenly Sovereign, who served as the direct intermediary to Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess. That role of the monarch has persisted to the present. Government became highly organized through central and provincial bureaucracies in eight ministries (Central Affairs,

Personnel, Civil Affairs, Popular Affairs, Military Affairs, Justice, Finance, and the Royal Household). The Yamato monarchy converted many former clan lineages into a hereditary aristocracy that enjoyed privileged access to posts in the governments of the 66 provinces into which the country was organized.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yamato\\_en.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yamato_en.png)>

*Yamato Japan – Most Wealth from Agriculture*



That combination of a sophisticated central administration and strong provincial governments would drive political dynamics in Japan until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The monarchy also laid claim to all agricultural land and created an administrative structure for distributing land to farm families and levying annual taxes, thereby introducing the role of the agricultural sector as a source of central government revenue. A lasting Yamato stamp on the history of Japan was the designation of Kyoto (Heian-kyo) in 794 as the seat of the Heavenly Sovereign.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nijo\\_Castle.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nijo_Castle.jpg)>

*Nijo Castle, Kyoto (Heian) – Yamato Capital*

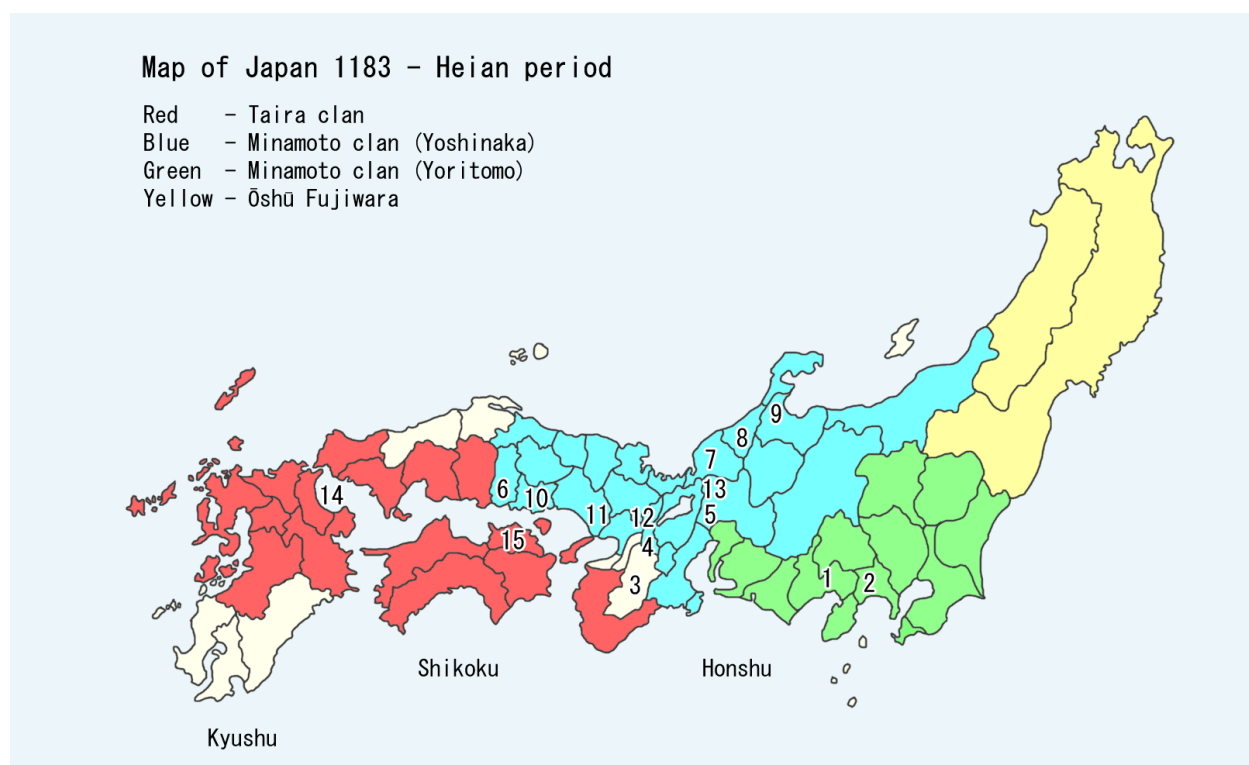
Stability under the Yamato monarchy allowed the court and aristocracy to flourish and evolve into a class of office-holders and policy makers, gain wealth as a landed aristocracy (the daimyos, who were landlords and warlords), and patronize the arts in what some consider the golden age of Japanese culture. In the military arena, the centralized authority was unable to create a conscript army. It was therefore forced to rely on an emerging warrior class, the samurai, to coerce opponents, counter external threats, and maintain peace. The monarchy called on those warriors when needed, and the samurai leveraged this dependence into growing influence that ensured them a central role in Japan's politics for centuries to come. The Yamato monarchy initially established the position of shogun as a temporary office, filled in times when it needed a military leader to subdue resistance on the frontiers of the kingdom. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, however, that position evolved into a far stronger influence on the history of Japan.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HeianShrine.jpg>>

*Daimyos Revered the Emperor –  
Heian-jingu, Shinto Shrine, Replica of Imperial Palace, 8<sup>th</sup> century*

**Shogun Era – Minamoto and Ashikaga Governments (1192-1573).** By the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the families that the Yamato relied on for military services had evolved into large armed organizations allied under two leading families, the Minamoto and the Taira. In the second half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, those two families fought each other in a power struggle.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
 < <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map-of-Japan-1183-Heian-Genpei-War.png> >

### *Japan in 1183 – Areas Controlled by the Taira Clan (Red) and the Minamoto Clan (Blue and Green)*

The Minamoto clan prevailed under Yoritomo, who in 1192 was installed by the new court as Shogun. The Shogun headed a tent government (*bakufu*) with military and police powers that paralleled the court's civil authority. Shogunal responsibilities included defense of the monarchy, control of the samurai estate, adjudication of land disputes, and collection of taxes. Although the Minamoto line preserved peace for more than 100 years, military governors and warrior families in the

provinces grew increasingly discontent believing they were not sufficiently compensated for their services.

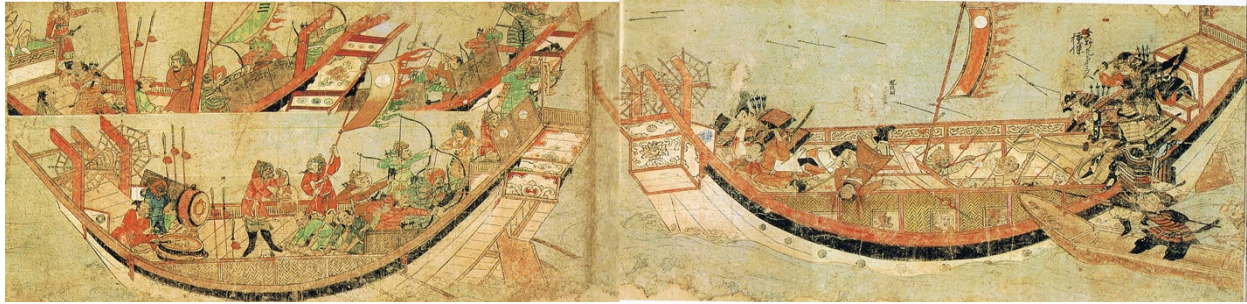


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Minamoto\\_no\\_Yoritomo.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Minamoto_no_Yoritomo.jpg)>

*Minamoto Yoritomo (1147-1199) – First Shogun, 1192*

In 1274 and 1281, Kublai Khan, the Mongol Emperor of Yuan China, attempted to invade Japan, the second time with a fleet of 4,400 ships and 140,000 men. The invading force was dispersed by a typhoon (*kamikaze*, or “divine wind”) after establishing an initial foothold on the islands and being fought off by samurai. The failure to reward samurai adequately for their defense of Kyushu shores against the invaders bred further resentment against the Minamoto shogunate.





Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Takezaki\\_suenaga\\_ekotoba3.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Takezaki_suenaga_ekotoba3.jpg)>

*Japanese Samurai Boarding Mongol Ships, 1281 –  
Before Kamikaze Destroyed the Mongol Fleet*

In 1333, Ashikaga Takauji, a military governor, organized a rebellion and destroyed the Minamoto, and five years later he was appointed the first Shogun of the Ashikaga line. However, the Ashikaga were never able to dominate as the Minamoto had, and the military governors grew increasingly powerful and less inclined to follow the shogun's lead. Ashikaga weakness, reflected in a dispute over shogunal succession, led to an outbreak of the Onin War throughout the provinces (1467-1477). Peace and stability did not return to Japan for over a century. The royal court and the shogunate existed only in name. Power rested at the provincial level and Japan reverted to a feudal system. About 250 daimyo (estate-owning warlords) controlled much of Japan's arable land.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ashikaga\\_Takauji.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ashikaga_Takauji.JPG)>

*Ashikaga Takauji (1305-1358) – First Ashikaga Shogun*

**Shogun Era – Transition to Tokugawa Government (1560s-1603).** In the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, a daimyo named Oda Nobunaga sought to reunify Japan. Following victories against other warlords, in 1568 he installed Ashikaga Yoshiaka as a puppet shogun. Nobunaga destroyed Kyoto in 1573 and sent Yoshiaka into exile, thus ending the Ashikaga shogunate. Nobunaga's success was attributable to his gifts as a tactician and his adoption of firearms, introduced by the Portuguese in 1543. He controlled one-third of Japan's provinces in

One of his generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, assumed control of the army of 250,000 men and continued to pursue national unification.



Source: *Wikimedia Commons* available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Azuchimomoyama-japan.png>>

*Oda Nobunaga's Reunification of Japan (Gray Area) in 1582*

By 1590, Hideyoshi secured control over all territories through diplomacy, intimidation, or conquest. In 1592, he extended his ambitions beyond the Japanese islands and invaded Korea. Japanese troops quickly advanced up the peninsula, but could not maintain reliable supply chains. China intervened in 1593, but Hideyoshi persisted. The troops returned to Japan after his death in 1598, having achieved nothing.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Toyotomi\\_Hideyoshi\\_armor\\_\(replica\)\\_-\\_Siege\\_of\\_Osaka\\_Quadricentennial,\\_Yukimura\\_Sanada\\_and\\_Sengoku\\_Samurai\\_Warriors\\_-\\_Marunouchi\\_Building,\\_Tokyo,\\_Japan\\_-\\_DSC01662.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Toyotomi_Hideyoshi_armor_(replica)_-_Siege_of_Osaka_Quadricentennial,_Yukimura_Sanada_and_Sengoku_Samurai_Warriors_-_Marunouchi_Building,_Tokyo,_Japan_-_DSC01662.jpg)>

*Replica of Armor Used by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598) –  
Re-unifier of Japan*



Just before his death in 1598, Hideyoshi had five of the most powerful daimyo swear to hold the nation in trust until his infant son, Hideyori, came of age. But the daimyo fell to fighting for supremacy. In 1600, Tokugawa Ieyasu emerged victorious from that struggle, and he was made Shogun by the Heavenly Sovereign in 1603. That appointment launched the Tokugawa Shogunate that controlled Japan for 265 years.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ieyasu\\_Tokugawa.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ieyasu_Tokugawa.JPG)>

*Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616), First Tokugawa Shogun (r. 1603-1616)*

By the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, and English traders were active in Japanese ports. They brought new fruits and vegetables to the islands, and the Portuguese introduced bread and tempura. The Jesuit Francis Xavier inaugurated the first Christian mission to Japan in 1549. In 1587, Hideyoshi ordered all missionaries to leave the archipelago, but they persisted despite harassment and occasional executions. By 1600, Catholic missionaries claimed to have converted as many as 300,000 Japanese, although many acknowledged Christianity to gain access to trade relationships.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Franciscus\\_de\\_Xabier.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Franciscus_de_Xabier.jpg)>

*Francis Xavier, Founder of the Society of Jesus and Missionary in Japan, 1549-1551 – Japanese Painting, Kobe City Museum*

## **Japan (1603-1868) – Tokugawa Shoguns and Samurai**

**Tokugawa Government.** At first, Tokugawa Ieyasu's authority rested on uncertain footing. But during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Tokugawa shoguns systematically strengthened their control by developing a sophisticated, pervasive system of governance through an extensive civil-service bureaucracy. The Tokugawa shoguns differed from their predecessors, because they did not limit their role to military matters. Tokugawa Ieyasu and his successors claimed the right to issue laws and levy taxes and assumed control over civil as well as military government. The royal court remained extremely important, but now only in a symbolic, ceremonial role.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tokugawa\\_shogunate.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tokugawa_shogunate.jpg)>

*The Mon (Official Crest) of the Tokugawa Shogunate (ruled 1603-1868)*

Some historians have described the Tokugawa shogun as a military strongman, while the emperor's role was reduced to that akin to the Catholic pope. For political control, the government required that all citizens register at local Buddhist temples. The Tokugawa dynasty rested on a foundation of unassailable military strength and unquestioned monopoly over the office of shogun. In 1615, to ensure the latter, Ieyasu and his son Hidetada destroyed Osaka Castle and the



surrounding community, killing all Toyotomi supporters and driving Hideyori to suicide.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Long\\_Sword\\_and\\_Scabbard\\_LACMA\\_AC1999.186.1-16.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Long_Sword_and_Scabbard_LACMA_AC1999.186.1-16.jpg)>

*Daisho (Pairing of Two Japanese Swords), Symbol of the Samurai –  
Wakizashi (Top) and Katana (Bottom)*

Tokugawa government was dominated by the two million samurai (warriors) who constituted the military class. All of the samurai lived under an austere philosophy, *bushido* (“the way of the warrior”), which stressed skill in martial arts, superiority over commoners, extreme loyalty, and a duty to die, if necessary. The imposition of strong government led to a higher degree of political stability than ever before

experienced in Japan. The population of the country, which had grown from about 10 million in 1450 to perhaps 16 million by 1600, nearly doubled in the first Tokugawa century, reaching 31 million in 1720.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_of\\_Japan\\_in\\_Provinces\\_in\\_time\\_of\\_Iyeyasu.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Japan_in_Provinces_in_time_of_Iyeyasu.jpg)>

### *Provinces in Japan Under Tokugawa Ieyasu (1603-1616)*

**Tokugawa Economy.** During the Tokugawa era, agricultural production increased, commerce flourished, and new social classes emerged as a consequence of evolving economic relations. Although military strength brought the Tokugawa dynasty to power, growing



wealth helped the Tokugawa maintain patronage relationships. By the time Iemitsu (the third Tokugawa shogun, r. 1623-1651) took office, the family claimed about one-quarter of all agricultural land in Japan. Annual rice production on shogunal lands totaled about 6.8 million *koku* of rice (one *koku* was the equivalent of about five bushels, theoretically enough to feed one adult man for one year).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iemitsu.jpg>>

*Smooth Succession and Appropriation of Land –  
Tokugawa Iemitsu (1623-1651), Third Tokugawa Shogun*

Taxes levied on rice output financed the shogunate's operations and the stipends for its nearly 40,000 retainers, bannermen, and

horsemen. Power and wealth also derived from direct administration of key ports and cities, such as Nagasaki and Osaka, and control of silver, gold, and copper mines. Japanese mines yielded perhaps as much as one-third of the world's annual silver output in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Inaka.jpg>>

*Farmers Paid Half of Their Crop in Taxes –  
Rice Fields in Sawara, Chiba*

Foreign trade grew in importance during the initial years of the Tokugawa reign, although it would become less important in the long period of seclusion to follow. An association of merchants called the Nagasaki Merchant Office, formed in 1604, was granted a monopoly

over foreign trade, taking orders from foreign merchants and purchasing their goods as an intermediary between the outside world and the Japanese economy. Japanese merchants imported silk and fabrics, herbs, spices, sugar, and medicines, and exported copper, camphor, sulfur, swords, pottery and lacquerware.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Grote\\_partij\\_bij\\_het\\_opperhoofd\\_van\\_Dejima.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Grote_partij_bij_het_opperhoofd_van_Dejima.jpg)>

*Dejima, Dutch Trading Post in Nagasaki (1634-1854), c. 1805*

In the Tokugawa period the urban sector became increasingly important in the Japanese economy. Between 1580 and 1610, half of today's large cities came into existence as castle towns. The shogunate established its base in a small town called Edo, which later became



Tokyo. By the 1720s, Edo had become the world's largest city with a population of 1.3 million people. With 6 percent of Japanese living in large metropolises, Japan was the most urbanized country in the world in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century; only 2 percent of people in Europe lived in cities at that time. Japan became one of the most advanced nations of the world. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Japan had one of the highest literacy rates in the world, exceeded only by England and the Netherlands.

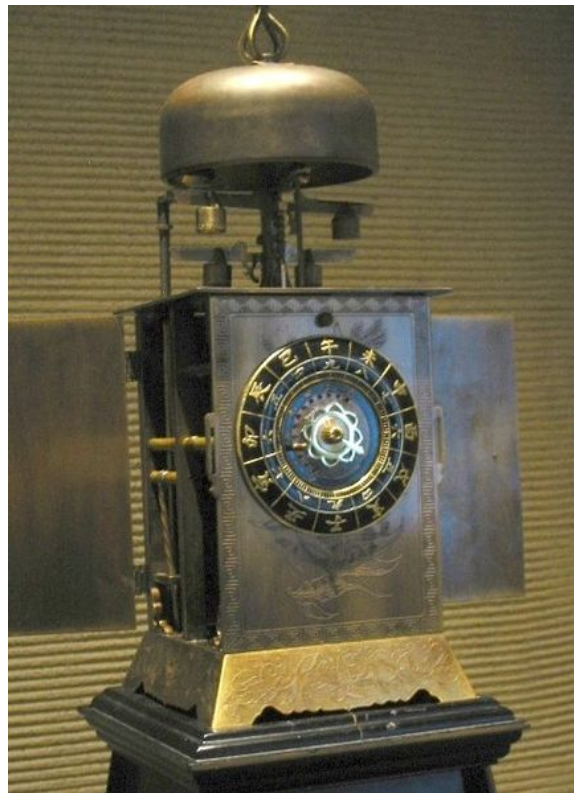


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edo\\_Hibachi.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edo_Hibachi.JPG)>

*Edo Had 1.3 Million Inhabitants in 1720 – Home of a Wealthy Merchant*

**Emergence of a Commercial Economy.** The castle towns first were established for defense, but they became more significant as

centers of commerce due to migrations of merchants and artisans. The regional rulers, the daimyo, needed cash to maintain castles and infrastructure, pay tribute to the shogunate, and finance operations. Duties levied on agriculture were paid in kind, so daimyo needed merchants to trade the grain in the main national rice market of Osaka.

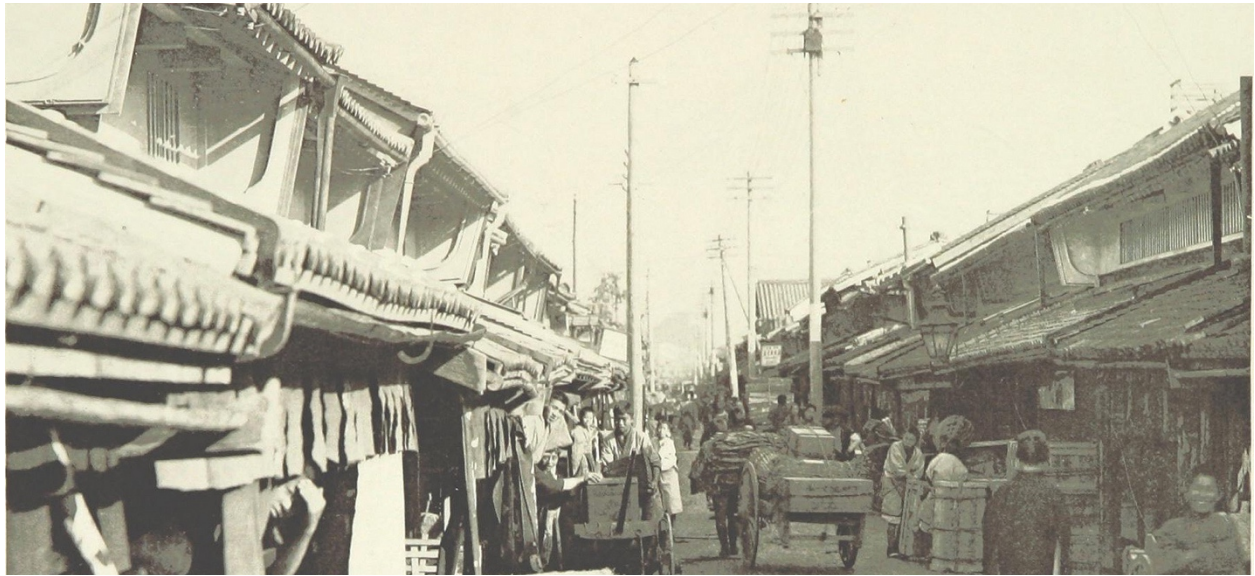


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:JapaneseClock2.jpg>>

*Japan's Commercial Economy Gradually Emerged –  
Wadokei, Japanese-made Clock, 18th century*

In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, one million koku of rice passed through Osaka, and four times as much was traded in Osaka 100 years later,

making the city the economic hub of Japan. The daimyo promoted other profitable activities, by providing training stipends, bringing in experts for extension services, and funding nurseries for cash crop seedlings.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Osaka\\_Japan\\_1880s\(11228428706\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Osaka_Japan_1880s(11228428706).jpg)>

*Rice Brokers in Osaka, Key Tokugawa Port – 19<sup>th</sup> century*

The shogunate also facilitated commercialization by investing in transportation and communication systems. For example, the shogunate commissioned the building of a system of lighthouses and beacons to improve the safety of waterborne transport, and they improved the road between Edo, Kyoto, and Osaka. Both shogunal and private express courier services ran packages, documents, and money along the road



network. Leading merchant houses also initiated the development of early financial institutions that extended loans to both daimyo and entrepreneurs, offered insurance, maintained deposit accounts, and issued letters of credit and bills of exchange to facilitate transactions between merchants. Growing urban centers were markets hungry for food, clothing, and construction materials, spurring the emergence of intraregional networks and a nationwide marketing system. Trade and production networks linked workshops in rural areas to merchants and artisans, so that by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, virtually every household in Japan was linked to the urban-based commercial economy.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edo\\_Panorama\\_old\\_Tokyo\\_color\\_photochrom.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Edo_Panorama_old_Tokyo_color_photochrom.jpg)>

*Edo in 1866 – Tokugawa Capital and Commercial Center*

**Emergence of Commercial Agriculture.** The transformation of the economy was made possible by productivity increases in agriculture.

Irrigation, flood control, and land reclamation efforts nearly doubled the amount of land under cultivation between 1550 and 1650. Farmers improved tools, developed new seed strains, and introduced new fertilizers. The expansion in food production capacity facilitated population growth from 10-12 million in 1550 to 31 million by 1720, and agricultural productivity growth enabled portions of the population to accumulate in urban centers as merchants and artisans.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese\\_farmers\\_Elstner\\_Hilton.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese_farmers_Elstner_Hilton.jpg)>

*Women Farmers in Japan, c. 1914 –  
Benefitted from Agricultural Improvements in the Tokugawa Era*

Urbanization and the rise of a commercial culture, in turn, stimulated further change in agricultural production patterns. Farmers began to cultivate cash crops such as tea, tobacco, and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. Cash crops were planted either on lands not suitable for rice production or on land under rice cultivation following the rice harvest. Rural families further supplemented their income with sales of manufactured products (silk, cotton fabrics, straw hats, paper, tatami mats, charcoal, tools, lacquerware, and crockery) and foodstuffs that required processing (salt, sugar, vinegar, soy sauce, and miso).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Juncus\\_effusus.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Juncus_effusus.jpg)>

*Igusa (Juncus effusus) – Soft Rush Used to Make Tatami Mats*

The silk industry provides a good illustration of these trends. From the 1650s, entrepreneurs began to encourage sericulture among farm families, who cultivated silkworms in the rafters of their dwellings. The cocoons were processed in workshops to produce filaments and thread, both subsequently dyed and woven by specialists to produce finished cloth. Entrepreneurs organized the manufacturing process and initiated large-scale production for the national market. Farmers bred silkworm strains that were more resistant to disease and produced hybrids to generate particular fabric characteristics. Increasingly sophisticated tools were developed for producing thread from cocoons, and in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century water-powered machines yielded productivity gains in early factory-style silk production.

Cotton production also thrived after Hideyoshi brought back a type of plant from Korea that thrived in the Osaka region. As cotton clothing became the norm for the average Japanese during the first half of 17<sup>th</sup> century, families around Osaka dedicated as much as 70 percent of arable land to cotton.





Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Noh\\_Robe\\_\(Karaori\)\\_with\\_Snow-Laden\\_Camellias\\_and\\_Genji\\_Clouds\\_LACMA\\_M.2002.71.1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Noh_Robe_(Karaori)_with_Snow-Laden_Camellias_and_Genji_Clouds_LACMA_M.2002.71.1.jpg)>

*Expanding Artisanal Silk Industry –  
Silk Noh Drama Costume, 18<sup>th</sup> century*

**Tokugawa Foreign Affairs.** Tokugawa Ieyasu launched a merciless campaign to hunt down and execute missionaries and converts. Thousands perished through the late 1630s. Under Iemitsu (3<sup>rd</sup> Shogun), persecution of Christianity became part of a broad ban on all Europeans from Japan. The Tokugawa rulers feared that foreign influences (especially Christianity) threatened the basis of their legitimacy (which was partially rooted in the Shinto and Buddhist religions).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Karasuzumo\\_purification\\_ritual.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Karasuzumo_purification_ritual.jpg)>

### *Shinto Purification Rite, Kamigamo Jinja, Kyoto*

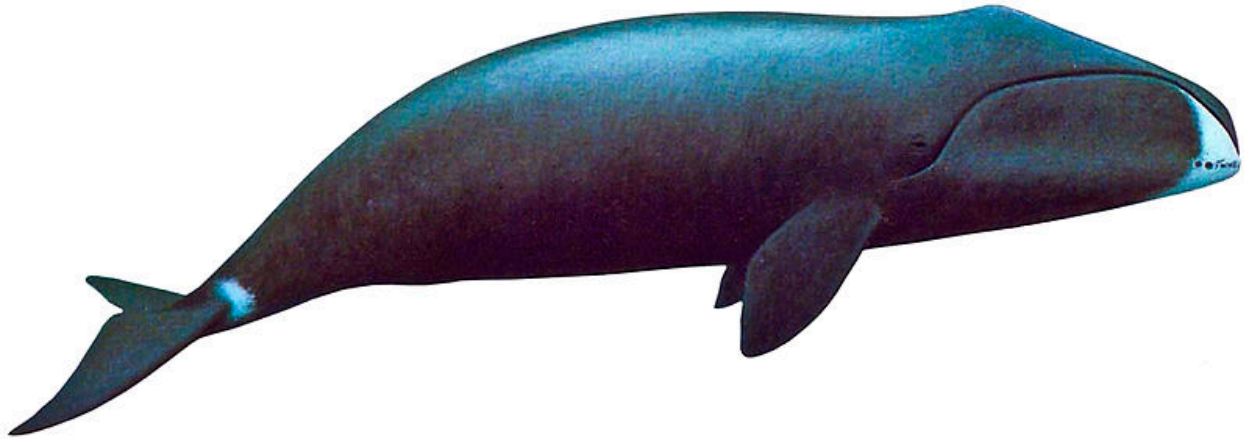
Moreover, foreign trade drained precious metals from the islands and allowed daimyo to build up power bases. Between 1633 and 1639, the shogunate issued edicts proscribing Christianity, forbidding Japanese to travel abroad, barring Portuguese ships from Japanese ports, and strictly regulating foreign trade. Only Dutch and Chinese merchants were permitted to trade with Japan, and the Dutch were confined to an artificial island constructed in Nagasaki Bay where they established a permanent settlement of the Dutch East India Company. The only other foreigners allowed in Japan were diplomatic emissaries from Korea and the Ryukyu islands.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DejimaInNagasakiBay.jpg>>

*Tokugawa Seclusion –  
Dutch Ships and Chinese Junks in Dejima Bay, Nagasaki, c. 1820*

**The Opening of Japan.** Japan's period of seclusion persisted for more than two centuries, until Commodore Matthew C. Perry arrived in Edo Bay. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, American whaling ships, based in Hawaii, began appearing near Japan, and in the 1830s their number had grown to more than 200. Because of their proximity to whaling grounds in the Bering and Okhotsk Seas, Japanese ports appealed to American captains as supply stations. In response to complaints from the whaling industry about Japan's seclusion policy, American politicians decided to pursue efforts to establish relations with Japan.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bowhead-Whale1\\_\(16273933365\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bowhead-Whale1_(16273933365).jpg)>

*Bowhead Whale – Adult Males Reach 60 Feet, Weigh 60 Tons*

The Americans also sought trade opportunities for the west coast, following the acquisition of California and Oregon in the 1840s. Perry arrived in Edo Bay with four warships on July 8, 1853 and delivered a letter from President Fillmore insisting on full relations between Japan and the United States. Perry returned on February 14, 1854, this time with a strong force of eight ships, and on March 31 Japan signed a preliminary treaty with the US, committing to perpetual peace and allowing US ships to take on provisions at the ports of Shimoda and Hakodate.





Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Commodore\\_Perry%27s\\_second\\_fleet.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Commodore_Perry%27s_second_fleet.jpg)>

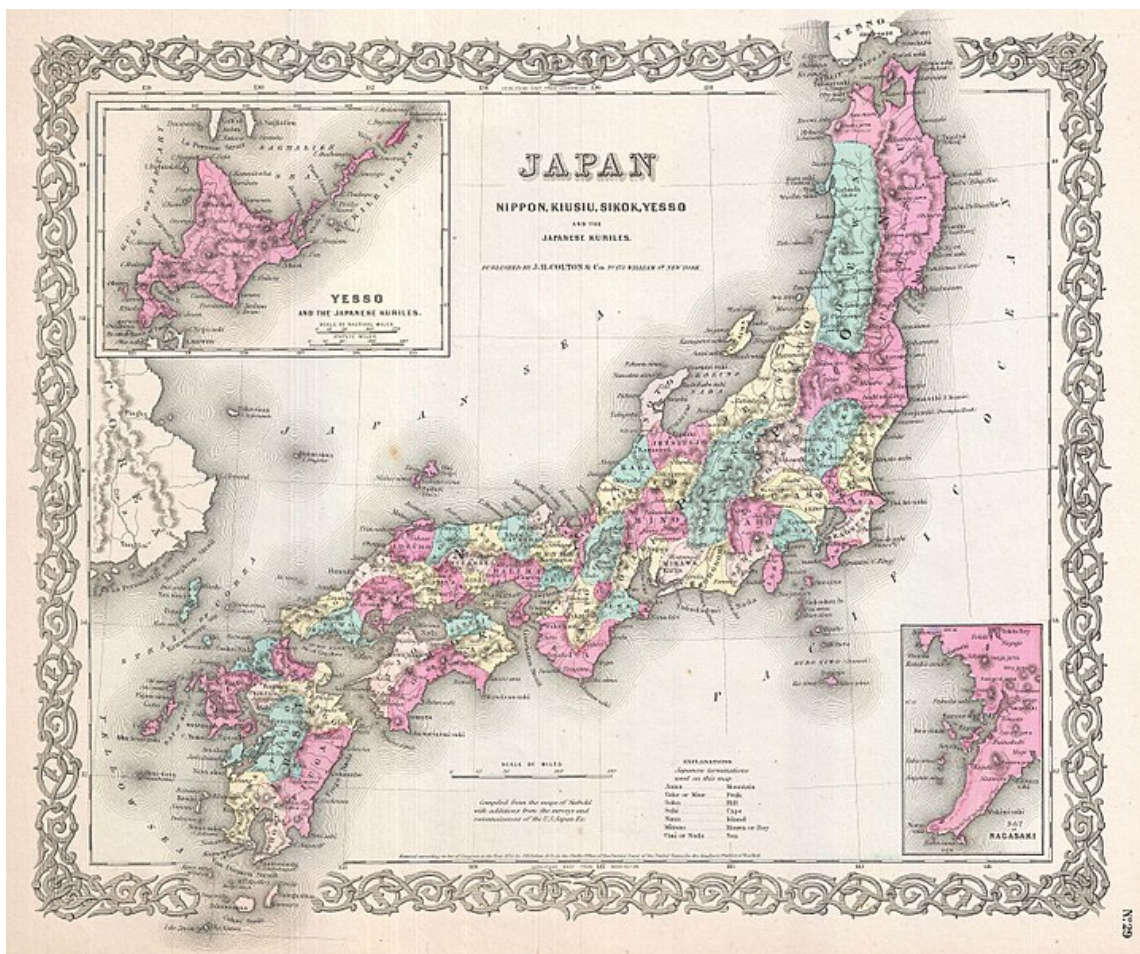
### *Commodore Perry's Second Fleet, Uragawa, 1854*

Shogun Ie signed the United States-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce (also called the Harris Treaty) on July 29, 1858, establishing diplomatic and commercial relations with the United States.

Subsequently, Japan signed similar treaties with the Netherlands, Britain, France, and Russia. The Shogun had little choice. Japan was not strong enough to resist the outsiders in the event of armed conflict, and trade could be beneficial.

Those treaties opened Edo (Tokyo), Kanagawa (Yokohama), Osaka, Hyogo (Kobe), Nagasaki, and Niigata to foreign merchants,

where they could live and enjoy the privilege of extraterritoriality. The treaties also dictated Japanese tariffs at levels favorable to foreign traders. World trade at that time was growing exponentially, and the West eagerly imported Japanese tea and silk thread. Japanese exports quadrupled and its imports grew nine-fold between 1860 and 1865.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1855\\_Colton\\_Map\\_of\\_Japan\\_-\\_Geographicus\\_-\\_Japan-colton-1855.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1855_Colton_Map_of_Japan_-_Geographicus_-_Japan-colton-1855.jpg)>

*J. H. Colton's Hand-drawn Map of Tokugawa Japan –  
Colton's Atlas of the World, 1855*

## Japan (1868-1937) – Meiji Restoration and Imperialism

**The Meiji Restoration.** The transformation of samurai warriors into a shogunal bureaucracy created a class of disaffected radicals from warrior families who objected to the erosion of the political stature of the emperor and the vulnerability of the nation to foreign influence. The growing concentration of power within the central governing bureaucracy, and the dynasty that dominated it, undermined and impoverished other samurai families. The dissatisfied samurai attacked foreigners, assassinated high-ranking shogunal officials, and attempted to overthrow landlords (daimyos).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Satsuma-samurai-during-boshin-war-period.jpg>>

*Satsuma Samurai – Plotting the Meiji War, 1868*



But when the coup against the Shogunate – the Meiji (“Enlightened Rule”) Restoration – took place in 1868, it was cloaked in rhetoric about restoring the rule of the Heavenly Sovereign. The Emperor stood at the heart of the political system that replaced the Shogunate, but his role remained restricted to ceremonial and symbolic functions.

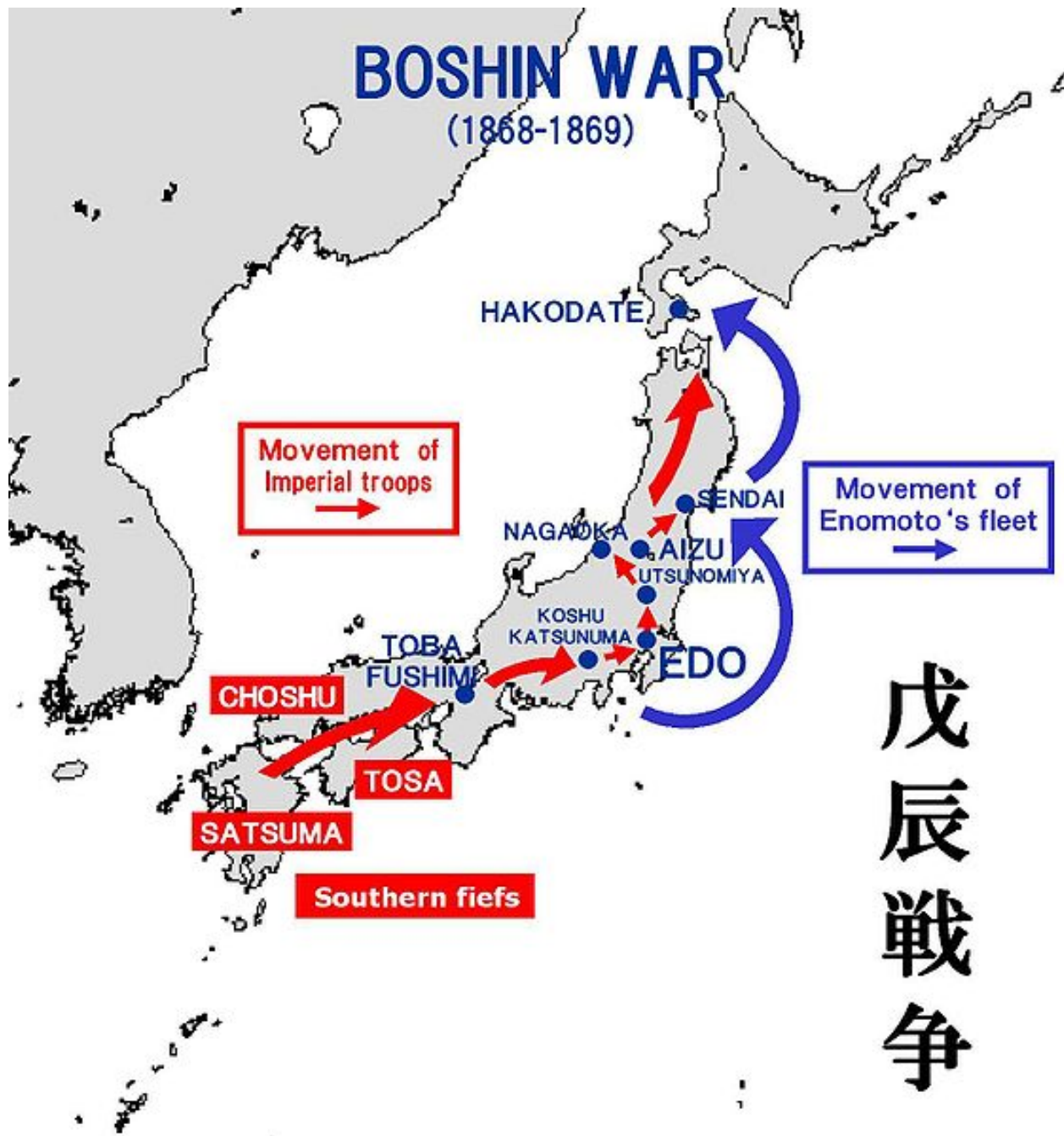


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Meiji\\_tenno1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Meiji_tenno1.jpg)>

*Mutsuhito, Meiji Emperor (1867-1912) – Pictured in 1888*



Intending to thwart divisiveness that was perceived to result from group politics, the Meiji form of government emphasized rule by a disinterested, well-intentioned bureaucracy presided over by imperially appointed ministers. Those ministers were drawn from a small group of influential men, the Meiji oligarchs, who had been the driving force behind the overthrow of the Shogunate. Their overarching goals were to ensure national independence, secure revision of the unequal treaties with the West, and attain international respect and stature on par with advanced nations. To achieve those goals, they looked to the West for examples and lessons in politics, industrialization, science, technology, and social and military organization.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BoshinCampaignMap.jpg>

*Southern Regions Were the Victors in the Boshin War (1868-1869) –  
 Choshu, Satsuma, and Tosa*

An essential step toward gaining acceptance in the community of advanced nations (the West) was the promulgation of a constitution, although a draft was not presented to the Emperor until 1889. Designed to reconcile oligarchic government with Western insistence on democratic institutions, the new constitution enshrined the principle of absolute obedience to the Emperor, provided for a relatively weak bicameral legislature (the Privy Council and the Diet), and concentrated political power in the hands of the Prime Minister and his cabinet.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kenpohapu-chikanobu.jpg>>

*Meiji Emperor Promulgates the Constitution, 1889*

**The Early Meiji Economy.** Economic troubles nearly derailed the Meiji Restoration during its first decade. Tariffs and exchange rates, set in the unequal treaties before the Restoration, resulted in high levels of imports and outflow of specie. Cheap foreign manufactures overwhelmed domestic processing and small-scale industry. The Meiji oligarchs sought to address those challenges through massive investment in communications (telegraph, telephone, postal service) and transportation infrastructure (highways, railroads, ports) and the establishment of a national currency and a national integrated banking system. The government also directly managed strategic and military enterprises, such as shipyards, and model factories, such as modern textile mills, to provide examples to the private sector and promote mechanization to compete with foreign imports. Those measures incurred an enormous fiscal burden and saddled the government with a range of loss-making enterprises.





Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kiyomizu-dera,\\_Kyoto,\\_November\\_2016\\_-01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kiyomizu-dera,_Kyoto,_November_2016_-01.jpg)>

*The Meiji Government Controlled the Economy, Not the Religion –  
Kyoto's Kiyomizu-dera Buddhist Temple*

The combination of deficit spending and the proliferation of banks that issued currency contributed to inflation, since the government was expending its specie on imports of military supplies and strategic technology. The oligarchs refused to borrow money abroad, fearing additional vulnerability to foreign influence, and could not raise land taxes for fear of aggravating rural unrest. Their only recourse seemed to be still more printing of currency.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
 < [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:JAPAN-10-Constitutional\\_Monarchy-One\\_Yen\\_\(1873\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:JAPAN-10-Constitutional_Monarchy-One_Yen_(1873).jpg) >

### *One-yen Banknote, 1873 – Lost Value With Inflation in Meiji Japan*

In October 1881, Matsukata Masayoshi became finance minister and steered the economy in a radically different direction. Matsukata slashed administrative expenditures, increased indirect taxes, sold many government enterprises, and used the resulting surplus to withdraw currency from circulation. He thus balanced the government budget and controlled inflation. To maintain control over currency supply, he restructured the banking sector so that the Bank of Japan was the only currency-issuing institution, transforming the remainder into commercial

banks. Under Matsukata, the economic philosophy of the Meiji government came to resemble the laissez-faire policies of Western Europe and the United States. The Japanese government now relied on the private sector for industrial development while working aggressively to provide a conducive institutional setting and economic environment.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:4\\_MatsukataM.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:4_MatsukataM.jpg)>

*Matsukata Masayoshi, Meiji Finance Minister, 1880s –  
Balanced the Budget, Controlled Inflation*

**Industrialization and the Rise of the Zaibatsu.** After the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Amity with the United States (1858), Japan had begun consciously to seek imports of Western ideas and technology



to promote industrialization and modernization. The Meiji leaders actively pursued that strategy. Although initial industrialization relied on the importation of technology from the West, especially in the textiles sector, Japan did not simply replicate and adopt foreign methods. The Japanese quickly adapted and improved on acquired technology.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tokyo-Ueno-Park-National-Industrial-Exhibition-Museum-Hiroshige-III-1877.png>>

*Meiji Period Trade Exposition, 1877 – in Tokyo's Ueno Park*

Although light industry remained dominated by small-scale firms, during the Meiji period four expansive financial-industrial-commercial conglomerates (Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, and Yasuda) took form



and in the 1910s came to be referred to as *zaibatsu*. Those entities comprised extensive networks of companies, linked by their business activities as well as personal relationships, an overarching centralized governing committee, overlapping boards of directors, and shared capital and technology. The zaibatsu structures were anchored by shared financial institutions that served to coordinate corporate planning as well as finance. The zaibatsu also enjoyed privileged relationships with government, which helped the conglomerates enter and dominate modern strategic sectors such as mining, shipbuilding, heavy manufacturing, and chemicals.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Old-Marunouchi-Street-Tokyo-1920.png>>

*Mitsubishi Zaibatsu Headquarters, Marunouchi Street, Tokyo – c. 1920*

The increase in factory jobs was remarkable – from a few thousand in the 1870s to more than 400,000 in the late 1890s. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 60 percent of all factory labor was employed in the silk and cotton industries, and more than 80 percent of those workers were women. Despite the rapid growth in industry, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century factory workers comprised only a small proportion of the work force. Nearly two-thirds of employed persons remained in agriculture.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:19C\\_\(late\)\\_Japanese\\_hand\\_loom\\_with\\_flying\\_shuttle.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:19C_(late)_Japanese_hand_loom_with_flying_shuttle.jpg)>

*Japanese Hand Loom With Flying Shuttle, late 19<sup>th</sup> century*

As with industry, Japanese agriculture during this period also received active support from government. The Meiji government organized extension agents, agricultural discussion groups, and seed exchange societies that helped transmit best practices throughout the agricultural sector, including higher-yielding rice strains, new fertilizers, mechanization, and new weeding tools. Innovation and dissemination fueled annual average productivity growth of about 1.7 percent in Japanese rice production during the Meiji period.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese\\_girls\\_winnowing\\_the\\_grain.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese_girls_winnowing_the_grain.jpg)>

*Japanese Young Women Winnowing Rice Grain. c. 1914*



**The Rise of Japanese Imperialism.** Western colonialism spurred Japanese imperialism in two ways – Western expansion posed a direct threat to Japanese regional interests in Asia that needed to be countered, and Japanese leaders wanted an overseas empire to gain recognition and respect as a world power. The Korean Peninsula, described by Japanese military strategists as a “dagger pointed at the heart of Japan”, became one of the principal targets of Japanese expansion.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Children\\_kabuki\\_theater\\_in\\_Nagahama\\_\(lady\\_Shizuka,\\_10\\_y.o.\);\\_2013.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Children_kabuki_theater_in_Nagahama_(lady_Shizuka,_10_y.o.);_2013.jpg)>

### *Traditional Kabuki Theater Venerated the Japanese Imperial Past*

The threatening presence of three Japanese warships forced Korea to sign the Treaty of Kanghwa in 1876. Such gunboat diplomacy, as



well as the substance of the treaty, paralleled the “unequal treaties” that Western powers had forced on China and Japan. The terms included extraterritorial legal rights for Japanese nationals in Korea and privileged Japanese access to Korean ports. The treaty’s recognition of Korean autonomy meant the rejection of any traditional Chinese claims on Korea.

Following Japan’s victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895), in the Treaty to Shimonoseki (1895) China ceded Taiwan to Japan and acknowledged Korea’s independence. The United Kingdom recognized Japan’s claims to Korea in the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, concluded in 1902.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
 <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:First\\_Chinese\\_Japanese\\_war\\_map\\_of\\_battles.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:First_Chinese_Japanese_war_map_of_battles.jpg)>

### *The Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) – Japan Defeated China and Gained Control of Taiwan and the Independence of Korea*

Japan's hold on Korea was further legitimated in the 1905 Treaty of Portsmouth, brokered by Theodore Roosevelt, ending Japan's hostilities with Russia. That treaty affirmed Japan's interests in Korea

and transferred the Liaodong Peninsula (Kwantung Territory), railroad and mining interests in Manchuria, and the southern half of Sakhalin (Karafuto) from Russian to Japanese control. In return for American support in that affair, Japan acknowledged American claims in the Philippines. The UK and US thus tolerated Japanese imperialism directed toward Korea and Manchuria in return for respect for their own spheres of influence in the region.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Prince\\_Ito\\_and\\_Crown\\_Prince\\_of\\_Korea.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Prince_Ito_and_Crown_Prince_of_Korea.jpg)>

*Ito Hirobumi, Japan's Resident General in Korea –  
and Yi Un, the Crown Prince of Korea, 1907*

When a Korean patriot shot and killed former Japanese Resident General Ito Hirobumi in Manchuria on October 26, 1909, Japan used the event as justification to force Korea to submit to the Treaty of Annexation (signed August 22, 1910). Japan renamed the country Chosen and placed the peninsula under its direct colonial control.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Location\\_Japanese\\_Empire.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Location_Japanese_Empire.png)>

*The Japanese Empire in 1910 –  
Japan, Taiwan, Kwantung, Karafuto, and Korea*

**World War I.** Under the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, Japan entered World War I on the side of the Allies (the Triple Entente Powers – the United Kingdom, France, and Russia). Japan's official



entry into the war took place on August 23, 1914, and by November Japan had gained control of the German leasehold in China's Shandong Province. Japan later took German-held territories in Micronesia.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_Europe\\_alliances\\_1914-en.svg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_Europe_alliances_1914-en.svg)>

### *Triple Entente and Triple Alliance (Central Powers) in World War One – Japan Joined the Entente and Gained German-held Micronesia*

Japan's actions were rewarded in the post-war period when its rights to those colonial possessions were formally acknowledged by the European powers and the United States, including the formerly German Pacific islands, which Japan renamed the South Sea Territories

(*Nan'yo*). In 1921 Japan signed the Four Powers Treaty with the United States, Great Britain, and France, and in 1922 Japan signed the Washington Naval Treaty and the Nine-Power Treaty. Those treaties committed their parties to respect for territorial possessions and to collective resolution of any problems in East Asia. They also governed the balance of naval power between the parties and symbolized the recognition of Japan as a world power by the other advanced nations.



Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Conference\\_on\\_Limitation\\_of\\_Armaments,\\_Washington,\\_D.C..jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Conference_on_Limitation_of_Armaments,_Washington,_D.C..jpg)>

*Japan Resented Its Unequal Treatment in the Washington Naval Treaty  
– US and UK Could Build 40% More Naval Tonnage than Japan*

The Nine-Power Treaty committed the parties to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of China and recognizing the rights

of all other countries to equal access to China for commerce. Due to its proximity, Japan in particular had more to gain from commercial relations with China relative to the European powers. In return for the various benefits obtained through this series of international agreements, Japan withdrew from Shandong Province.

**Japan during the Depression.** In the two decades after World War I, Japan suffered several severe setbacks. Immediately following the war, a global economic slump was particularly difficult for the rural sector when prices collapsed for commercial crops such as rice, barley, wheat, tobacco, and silk cocoons. Those crops provided the bulk of annual income for cultivators; most worked as tenants and paid high rents on the land they worked. The combination of high rents (typically half the harvest) and low market prices was devastating for the 70 percent of farm families who rented a portion or all of their land.

Just as the business sector began to recover, Japan was struck by the Great Kanto Earthquake on September 1, 1923. That catastrophe caused more than 100,000 deaths, destroyed 60 percent of all homes in Tokyo, and flattened almost every workshop and factory between Tokyo

and Yokohama, the country's most developed industrial area. In the wake of World War I, Japan's relationships with other modern nations left its economy more vulnerable than ever to global fluctuations.



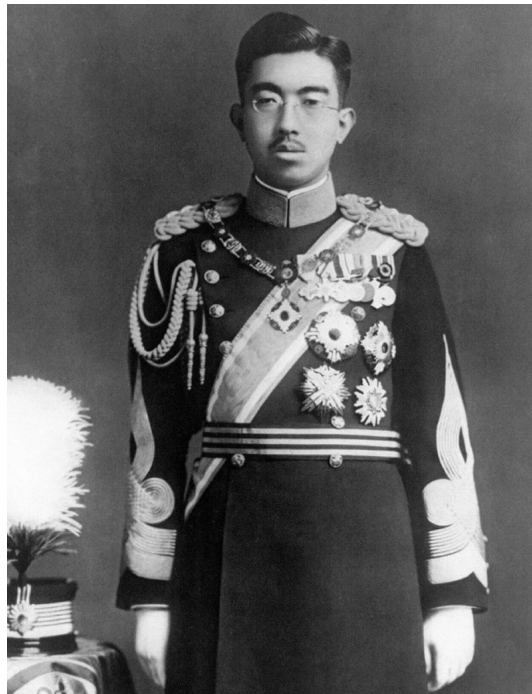
Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_Great\\_Kanto\\_Earthquake\\_\(3767766524\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Great_Kanto_Earthquake_(3767766524).jpg)>

### *Great Kanto Earthquake, Nihonbashi, Tokyo, 1923*

When the Great Depression arrived, it hit Japan hard. Between 1929 and 1931, exports fell by half, GNP shrank by 18 percent, and capital investment fell by one-third. More than 1 million people lost employment, and many in the industrial sector returned to their ancestral villages seeking agricultural work. Severe crop failures in 1931 and



1934 brought even more hardship. Japan's economy was further battered by Chinese boycotts and American legislation that restricted trade, which were responses to harsh administration of Japan's colonies in Taiwan, Korea, and especially Manchuria (where Japan displayed continuing expansionist tendencies). The assassinations of two prime ministers and one finance minister during 1930-1932 reflected the intensity of growing dissatisfaction. Capitalism and party politics were perceived as the main causes of Japan's severe difficulties.



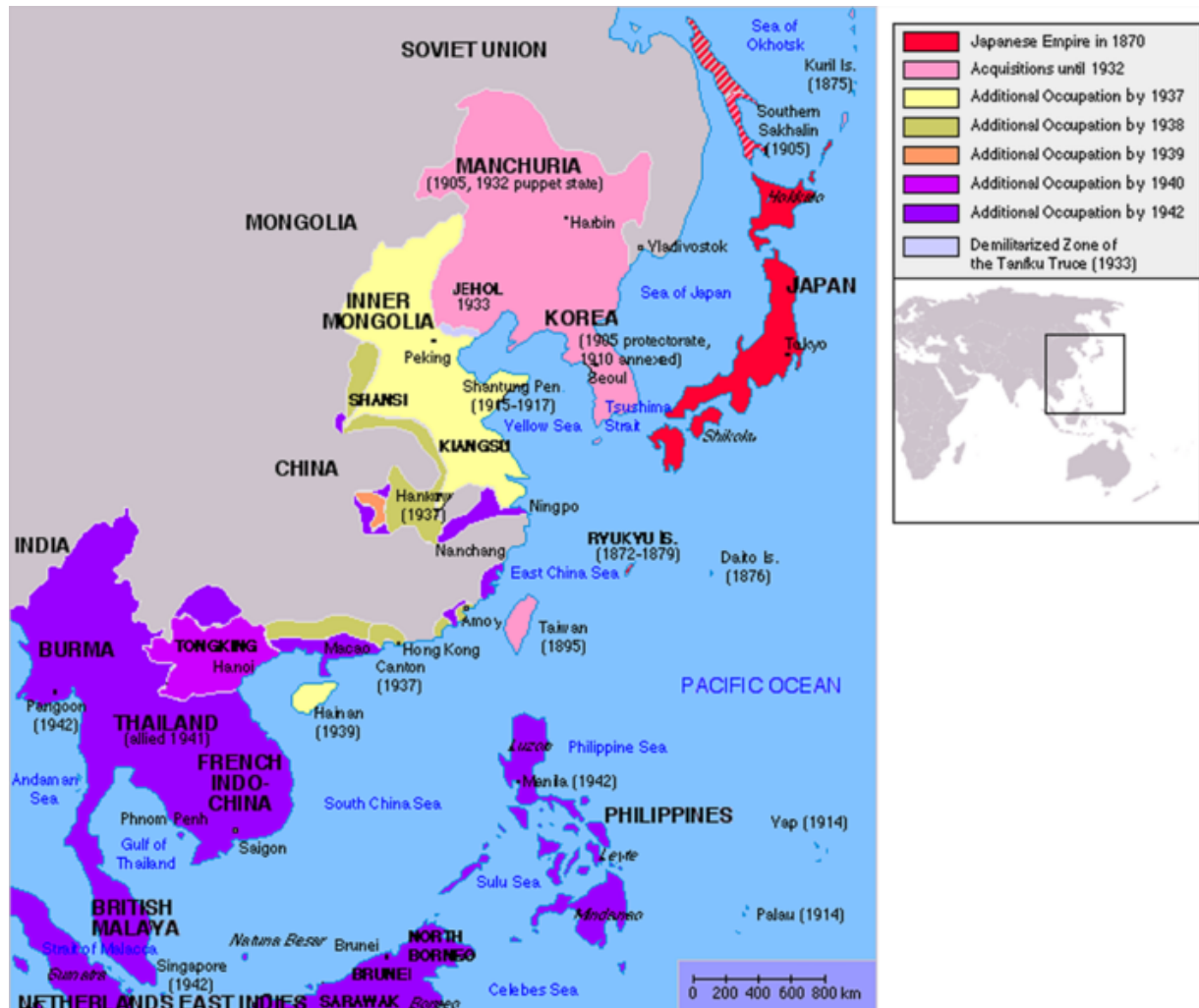
Source: Wikimedia Commons, available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emperor\\_Showa\\_in\\_dress.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Emperor_Showa_in_dress.jpg)>

*Emperor Hirohito (1901-1989), Reigned (1926-1989), Pictured in 1935  
– Oversaw the Rise of Extreme Japanese Nationalism in the 1930s*

## **World War II in the Pacific (1941-1945)**

**Japan's Imperial Strategy (1895-1941).** To assert leadership in East Asia, Japan made significant imperial conquests prior to World War II. Japan defeated China and colonized Taiwan (1895). Following its victory over Russia (1905), Japan received Kwantung (a key peninsula in Manchuria) and Karafuto (the southern half of Sakhalin Island). The Japanese annexed independent Korea in 1910, captured the islands of Micronesia from Germany during World War I (1914), and ruled Micronesia (Nanyo) as a League of Nations mandate-territory (1922).

Japan's nationalist oligarchs expanded into continental Asia in the 1930s. They took over coal-and-iron-rich Manchuria (Manchukuo) from China in 1932 and turned it into the most industrialized region of continental East Asia. They invaded China in 1937 and by 1941 gained control of the key cities on China's eastern coast. But the 1 million Japanese troops were stalemated in western and northern China. In July 1941, Japan seized control of Vietnam from Vichy France.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese\\_Empire2.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese_Empire2.png)

### *The Militaristic Expansion of Imperial Japan, 1872-1942*

Japanese military theorists anticipated a war for hegemony in the East between Japan and the United States. Naval commander Yamamoto Isoroku saw a pre-emptive strike on the US navy in Pearl Harbor as a means to buy time. Japan then would establish a defensive perimeter from Japan, through Micronesia in the western Pacific, and

around the East Indies to Malaya and Burma. The resources of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere – notably oil in the East Indies, tin and rubber in Malaya and Thailand, and rice in Burma and Vietnam – would support Japan in a war of attrition. The Japanese leaders hoped that the United States, which they saw as isolationist and reluctant to fight a long war, would come to terms following an expected German victory in Europe.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:European\\_colonisation\\_of\\_Southeast\\_Asia.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:European_colonisation_of_Southeast_Asia.png)>

*Japan “Liberated” Southeast Asia from Colonial Rule – British (Red – Burma, Malaya, North Borneo). French (Blue, Indochina), Dutch (Orange, Indonesia), and American (Yellow, The Philippines)*



**Japan's Early Successes (December 1941-May 1942).** The first step in Japan's strategy, the attack on Pearl Harbor, was a qualified triumph. Japan destroyed eight US battleships, a dozen other vessels, and nearly two hundred planes, inflicting almost 4,000 casualties. Japan lost only 29 planes and 64 men. But the Japanese attack omitted several crucial targets – fuel tank farms, dry-docks and repair facilities, and the Quarry Point submarine base – and all three American aircraft carriers in the Pacific were at-sea.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at*  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The\\_USS\\_Arizona\\_\(BB-39\)\\_burning\\_after\\_the\\_Japanese\\_attack\\_on\\_Pearl\\_Harbor\\_-\\_NARA\\_195617\\_-\\_Edit.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_USS_Arizona_(BB-39)_burning_after_the_Japanese_attack_on_Pearl_Harbor_-_NARA_195617_-_Edit.jpg)>

*USS Arizona –  
During the Japanese Attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941*

Pearl Harbor was part of a coordinated Japanese attack in Asia and the Pacific. Japan made several quick conquests in December 1941 and January 1942. Guam and Wake Island – both key American air bases – were taken first. Hong Kong, the important British colony, port, and naval base that serviced China, fell to Japanese invaders on Christmas Day 1941. With help from Burmese nationalists, Japan conquered rice-rich Burma easily in January when British forces fell back to defend India.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hk\\_japo\\_westerners.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hk_japo_westerners.jpg)>

*British Residents of Hong Kong at the Beginning of the Japanese Occupation, December 1941*

Japan rolled on to make more crucial takeovers. General Yamashita Tomoyuki (the “Tiger of Malaya”) captured British Singapore in February 1942. The British, anticipating a naval invasion from the south, had constructed a large naval base that was of little use in defending Singapore against the land invasion from the north. The Japanese military invaded oil-rich Indonesia (the Dutch East Indies) in January 1942 and wrested control of the colony from the Dutch within two months. Japan then took northern New Guinea from Australia in March. After a five-month struggle, Japan defeated American forces in the Philippines in May 1942 and took control of its rice, copper, iron ore, chromium, and manganese. Japan claimed to be an Asian liberator. But Japanese fascist rule was far worse than European colonial rule.

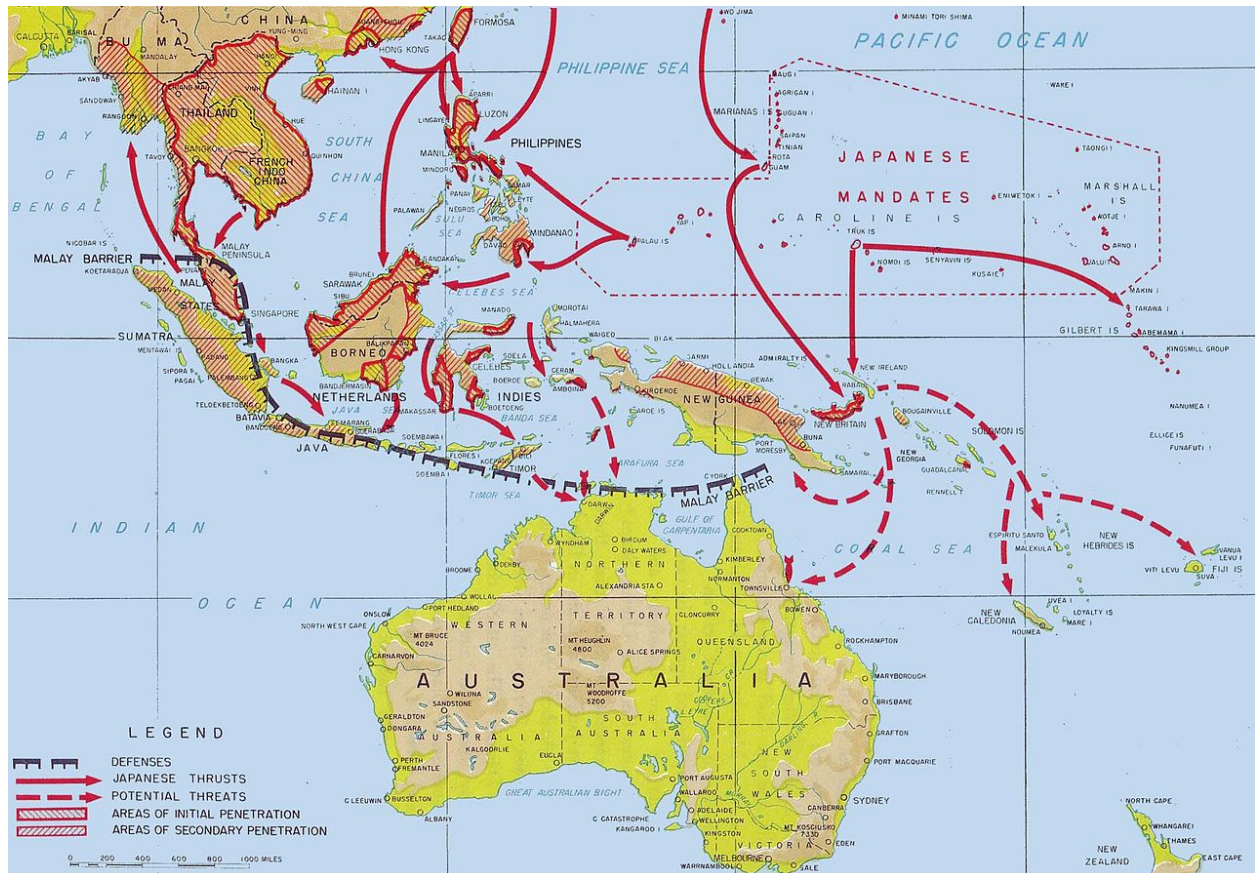


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greater\\_Japanese\\_empire.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greater_Japanese_empire.png)>

*The Japanese Empire At Its Peak in 1942-1943 – Japan, Taiwan, Karafuto, Korea, Nanyo, Manchukuo, Eastern China, Indochina, The Philippines, Indonesia, and Northern New Guinea*



**Coral Sea and Midway (May-June 1942).** The Japanese military advance seemed unstoppable. Japanese strategists decided against invading Australia because Japan had 1 million troops tied down in its quagmire in China and faced a potential Russian invasion from the northwest. Japan's southern strategy was to gain air superiority by building airports on well-sited islands and thereby to cut Allied communications with Australia. Japan thus decided to capture Australian-built airports in Tulagi (Solomon Islands) and Port Moresby (southeastern New Guinea) and, thereafter, to conquer Nouméa (New Caledonia) and Suva (Fiji).



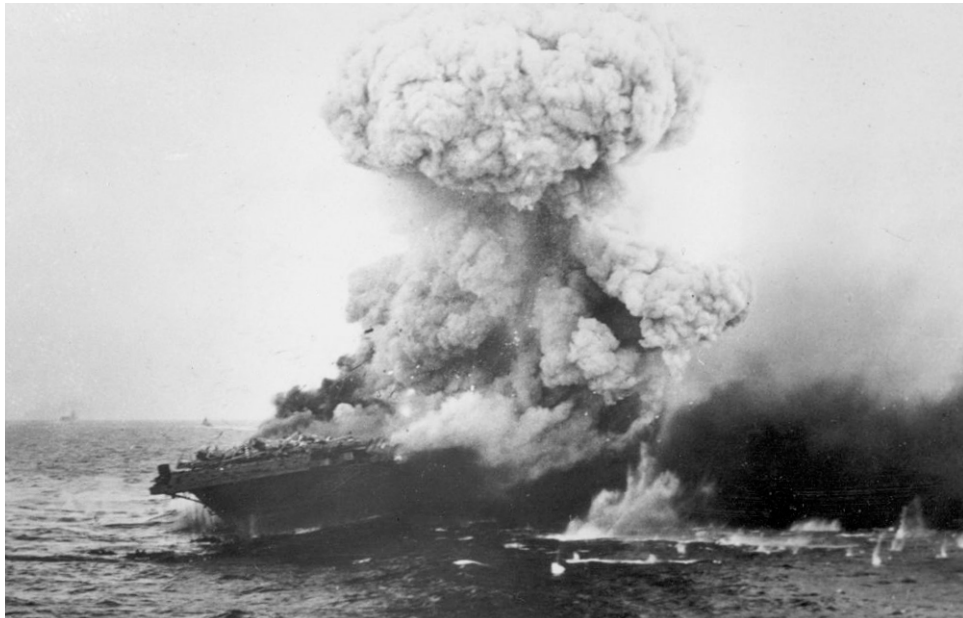
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pacific\\_War\\_Japanese\\_Advances.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pacific_War_Japanese_Advances.jpg)

### *Japanese Advances in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific – December 1941-April 1942*

In May 1942, 14 Japanese troop transports, protected by 70 ships (including 3 aircraft carriers), left Japan's naval base in Rabaul (New Britain, north of New Guinea) en route to Port Moresby. In the ensuing Battle of the Coral Sea, 25 Allied ships (including 2 aircraft carriers) stopped the Japanese armada and saved Port Moresby. The battle, a standoff, involved only naval aircraft. Opposing ships never sighted one

another. The Allies (Americans and Australians) lost 3 ships (1 carrier), 66 planes, and 547 troops, whereas Japan lost 1 carrier, 77 planes, and 1,047 men and had 2 carriers severely damaged.

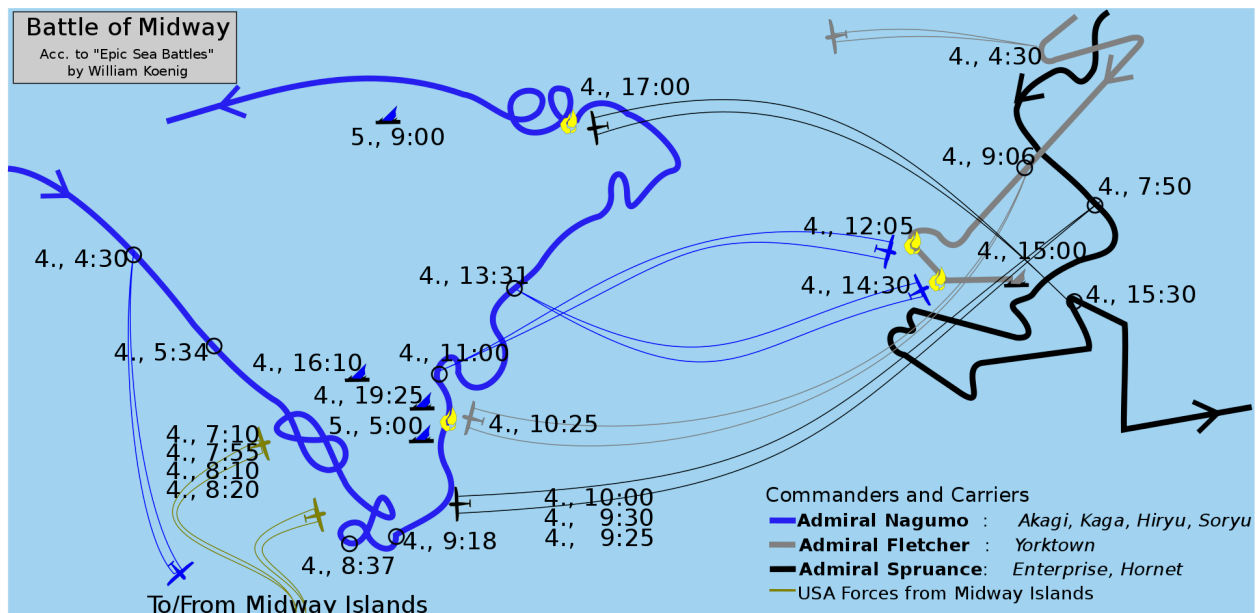


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<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Large\\_explosion\\_ aboard\\_USS\\_Lexington\\_\(CV-2\),\\_8\\_May\\_1942\\_\(80-G-16651\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Large_explosion_ aboard_USS_Lexington_(CV-2),_8_May_1942_(80-G-16651).jpg)>

*Battle of the Coral Sea, May 1942 – US Prevented Japan from Invading Port Moresby, But Lost the USS Lexington, An Aircraft Carrier*

In June 1942, Japan hoped to destroy the American Navy in the Pacific by luring it into a trap near Midway Island. But American cryptanalysts had broken the Japanese naval code. Despite Japan's huge materiel advantage (105 ships plus 18 submarines versus the Allies' 28 ships plus 19 submarines), the Allies won an overwhelming victory –

their first in the Pacific theater. Japan lost 4 (of its total of 6) fleet carriers, 280 planes, and 3,500 troops. In contrast, the Allies suffered losses of 1 carrier (the *Yorktown*), 170 planes, and 307 troops. Midway was a turning point in the Pacific.



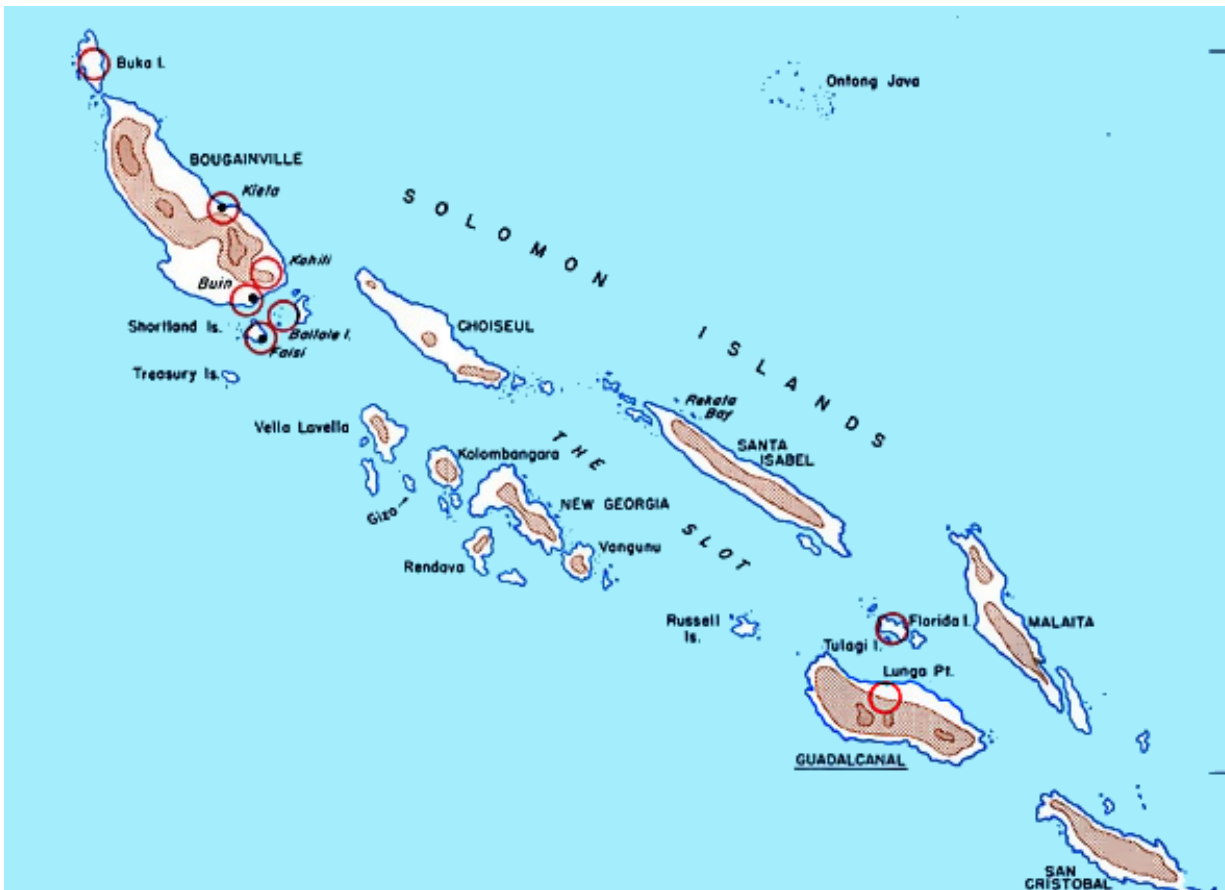
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
 <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Battle\\_of\\_midway-deployment\\_map.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Battle_of_midway-deployment_map.svg)>

### *The Battle of Midway, June 1942 – Overwhelming Allied Victory*

**Guadalcanal and New Guinea (July 1942-February 1943).** In the Solomon Islands, the Japanese took Tulagi's airport in May 1942 and began construction of an airport on Guadalcanal in July. Under Operation Watchtower, the Allies captured Tulagi and Guadalcanal in early August. In the Battle of Savo Island, Japan countered by sinking



all but one of the Allied ships in the Tulagi-Guadalcanal region (Ironbottom Sound), the worst defeat in American naval history. US Marines succeeded in completing and using the nearly-finished Japanese airport on Guadalcanal, which they named Henderson Field.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map\\_of\\_Solomons\\_area\\_in\\_1942.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Solomons_area_in_1942.png)>

*Guadalcanal in the Southeastern Solomon Islands –  
Henderson Field is Marked by a Red Circle*

Japan landed waves of troops to attempt to re-take Guadalcanal, but failed because of Marine courage and Japanese tactical inflexibility.

In the Battle of Bloody Ridge in mid-September, Japanese officers led a prodigal waste of their troops (1,100 deaths). The critical turning point was the naval Battle of Guadalcanal in November, which the Allies won decisively after huge losses on both sides (at least 40 wrecked battleships lie at the bottom of Ironbottom Sound). In February 1943, Japan evacuated its last 12,000 troops from Guadalcanal. Six months of warfare there had cost Japan 26,400 troops, 19 ships, and 1,827 planes.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hirokawa\\_Maru\\_and\\_Kinugawa\\_Maru\\_burning\\_Guadalcanal\\_15\\_Nov\\_1942.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hirokawa_Maru_and_Kinugawa_Maru_burning_Guadalcanal_15_Nov_1942.jpg)>

*Battle of Guadalcanal, November 1942 – Two Japanese Transport Ships, Hirokawa Maru and Kinugawa Maru, Beached and Burning*

In New Guinea, Japan tried to take Port Moresby by land to sever Allied communications with Australia. Japanese troops marched south over the Kokoda and Kapa Kapa trails in the Owen Stanley Mountains (the “Green Hell”) to within 20 miles of Port Moresby, but then were ordered to retreat to allow Japan to focus on Guadalcanal. Pursuing Allied troops finally gained control in January 1943. In the decisive Battle of the Bismarck Sea (February 1943), the Allies prevented a Japanese re-invasion of New Guinea by sinking all 8 troop transports, 4 destroyers, and 4,000 troops.

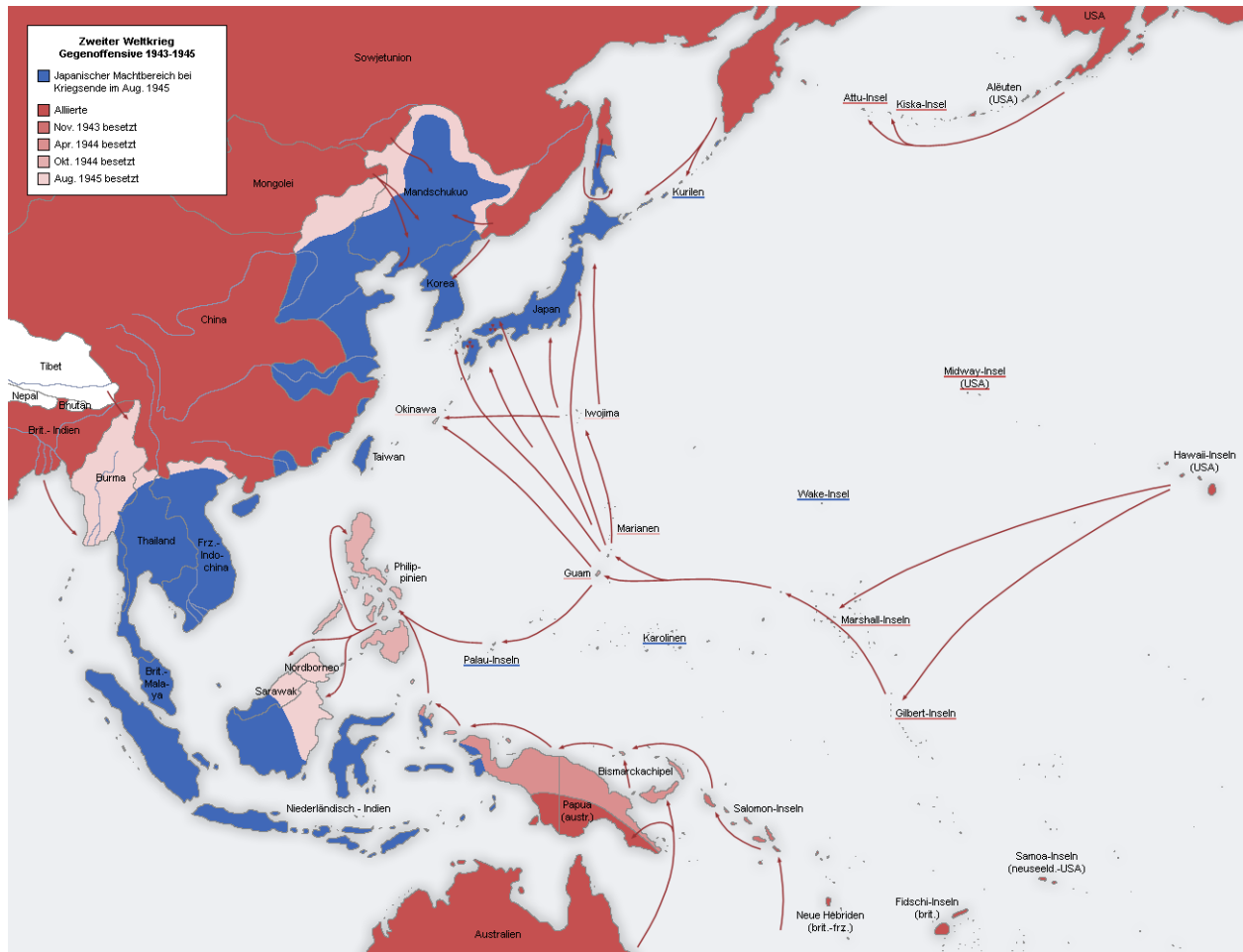


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:U.S.\\_Army\\_Bantam\\_Jeep\\_crossing\\_a\\_river\\_on\\_the\\_Kapa\\_Kapa\\_Trail\\_1942.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:U.S._Army_Bantam_Jeep_crossing_a_river_on_the_Kapa_Kapa_Trail_1942.jpg)>

*US Jeep on the Kapa Kapa Trail, Owen Stanley Mountains, New Guinea*

**Allied Victory in the Pacific Theater (1943-1945).** During the last 30 months of World War II in the Pacific theater, the Allies were on the offensive. The US Navy, led by Admiral Chester Nimitz, wanted Allied strategy to focus on capturing key islands in Micronesia to create a protected, central approach to bombing Japan. The US Army, led by General Douglas MacArthur, preferred to sap Japanese military strength by island-hopping to re-claim the Philippines and thus to take a southern approach to Japan. President Franklin Roosevelt chose to follow both strategies concurrently.





Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
 <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Second\\_world\\_war\\_asia\\_1943-1945\\_map\\_de.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Second_world_war_asia_1943-1945_map_de.png)>

### *Allied Counter-offensive Against Japan, 1943-1945*

The Navy's strategy led to successive Allied victories after brutal battles across the central Pacific, during 1943 (Tarawa), 1944 (Kwajalein, Eniwetok, and Saipan), and 1945 (Iwo Jima and Okinawa). The Army's strategy led to a series of island-hopping, Allied successes across the southern Pacific from the Solomons to the Philippines, during

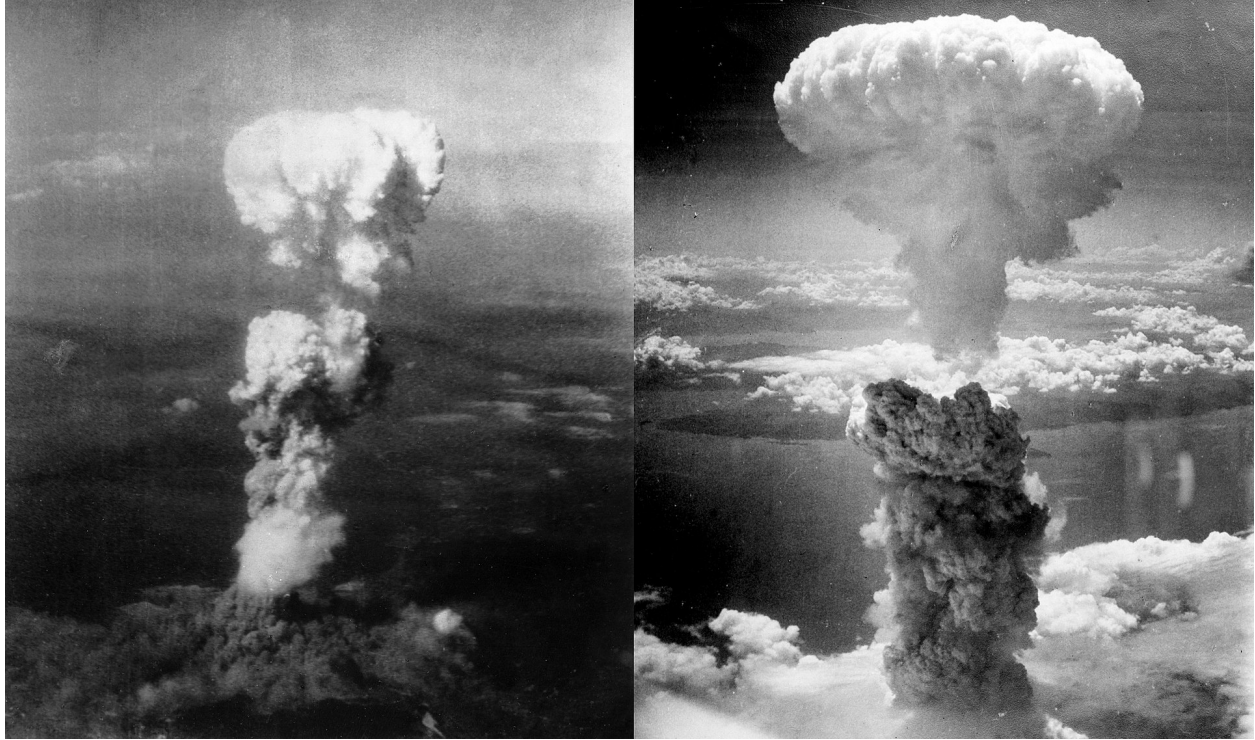
1943 (Bougainville), 1944 (northern New Guinea – skipping over Japan’s huge base in Rabaul – and Leyte in the Philippines), and 1945 (Luzon in the Philippines).



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Douglas\\_MacArthur\\_lands\\_Leyte1.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Douglas_MacArthur_lands_Leyte1.jpg)>

### *General Douglas MacArthur Returning to the Philippines, October 1944*

Allied bombers fire-bombed Tokyo in March 1945, causing 100,000 deaths. In a controversial decision, President Harry Truman chose to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, causing 200,000 deaths. Allied bombing took a total of 500,000 civilian lives in Japanese cities.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Atomic\\_bombing\\_of\\_Japan.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Atomic_bombing_of_Japan.jpg)>

*American Atomic Bombs above Hiroshima, August 6, 1945 (Left) and  
Nagasaki, August 9, 1945 (Right) – 200,000 Deaths*

On August 15, 1945, Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender. During World War II, 1.74 million Japanese soldiers and one million civilians died, 3.6 percent of the 1941 population (76 million). The Allies destroyed one-fourth of Japan's material wealth, including four-fifths of its ships. The Allies' victory over Japan resulted from superior production capability, better military strategy, and incredible personal courage.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Surrender\\_of\\_Japan\\_-\\_USS\\_Missouri.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Surrender_of_Japan_-_USS_Missouri.jpg)>*

*Japan's Surrender to End World War II –  
USS Missouri, August 15, 1945*



## **Japan (1945-1973) – Occupation and Economic Boom**

**American Occupation.** The United States claimed the sole responsibility for the Allied post-war occupation of Japan, during which Japan enjoyed no sovereignty and no diplomatic relations with other nations. American priorities were to dismantle the Japanese empire, strengthen representative government through the Diet, dissolve the zaibatsu, and separate government from the Shinto religion. General Douglas MacArthur oversaw the occupation as Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP). MacArthur had the power to suspend the Diet, censor the press, disband political parties, and govern by administrative decree.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DouglasMacArthur1945.jpg>>

*General Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964), Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, 1945-1951 – Pictured in August 1945*

The first phase of the occupation (1945-1947) emphasized disarmament, demilitarization, and democratization. Geographically, Japan was reduced to its 1868 boundaries, comprising only the four main islands. Demilitarization involved abolishing the army and navy, demobilizing over 5 million troops, and purging “militarists” from business and government, causing more than 200,000 people to lose their jobs.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%E6%97%A5%E6%9C%AC%E3%81%AE%E4%BD%8D%E7%BD%AE%E5%9B%B3.svg>>

*Japan, 1945 – Reduced to Its 1868 Borders (Green Areas)*

Japan faced dire economic conditions at the conclusion of the war. A frenzy of military spending in the final months fueled already high inflation. Many in a position to do so spent those final months looting military warehouses and embezzling funds. The occupation government

enacted price controls on a wide range of foods and daily necessities, yet prices for such goods rose 539 percent in 1946 and 336 percent in 1947. In that environment, the black market flourished. According to one estimate, diverted goods totaled more than 300 billion yen in value in 1947, compared to a government budget of 205 billion yen.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Black\\_market\\_in\\_Shinbashi.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Black_market_in_Shinbashi.JPG)>

### *Post-war Japan's Black Market – Shinbashi, Minato, Tokyo, 1946*

One cost of defeat that the government had not anticipated was the burden of paying for the costs of housing and supplying the occupation force – which amounted to one-third of the government budget in the



early years of the occupation. Meanwhile, the repatriation of nearly 6 million soldiers and civilians from overseas created widespread unemployment. The rationing of food during the war continued in the occupation era. Bad weather, labor shortages, lack of equipment, and a shortage of fertilizer made the 1945 harvest the worst since 1910, suffering a nearly 40 percent shortfall from normal yields.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Work\\_of\\_rice\\_straw\\_baling\\_in\\_Minamitaku.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Work_of_rice_straw_baling_in_Minamitaku.jpg)>

### *Rice Straw Baling – Minamitaku, Taku City, Saga Prefecture*

The United States sent shipments of wheat, flour, corn, legumes, sugar, rice, powdered milk, and tinned goods, averting starvation and enhancing the occupiers' image. However, the activities and rhetoric of

the occupation harbored contradictions that were not lost on the Japanese. While promoting democracy and egalitarian civil liberties, the occupiers comprised an authoritarian government and an unassailable elite that operated on the assumption of Western superiority.

**Reforming Japan.** MacArthur sought to restructure the political, social, cultural, and economic character of Japan, but he strove to preserve one crucial element of the past – the role of the Emperor. The war tribunals never investigated the Emperor's role, and the Americans actively sought to dissociate him from any responsibility. He was fully exonerated in July 1946. MacArthur quashed a suggestion from court circles that the Emperor abdicate and instead preserved a strong symbolic role for him as the anchor of Japan's democratic institutions, though without any formal powers. That accommodation proved an effective means of indirect rule and a smooth transition to the new political configuration, but it reduced the credibility of the entire war-tribunal process. Ironically, if the Americans had committed to such a course of action in July 1945, Japan might have capitulated before the dropping of the atomic bombs.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Macarthur\\_hirohito.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Macarthur_hirohito.jpg)>

*General Douglas MacArthur and Emperor Hirohito, September 27,  
1945 – Authoritarianism versus Democracy*

Japan's new constitution was written by a small team of Americans and then given to the Emperor for submission to the Diet. After several amendments that further strengthened the role of parliament, it was adopted by a vote of 421 to 8. The new constitution guaranteed civil liberties more expansive than those in the United States, specified that the cabinet answered to the legislature (not the emperor), and stated that

the government derived its authority from the electorate. Unlike any other national charter, Japan's new constitution explicitly renounced the right to use military action as an instrument of policy.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NPR\\_personnel2.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NPR_personnel2.JPG)>

*Japan Spent 1% of GDP on Defense –  
Japan's National Police Reserve, 1952*

Another dramatic change wrought during the occupation was a massive land reform program. In 1945, almost half of Japan's population of 72 million still lived in agricultural villages, and many farmers owned little of the land they cultivated. The American occupiers believed that high tenancy rates contributed to the pre-war



depression, which in turn bred ultranationalism in the rural areas. Therefore, the land reform bill of 1946 authorized the government to force absentee landlords to sell their property and allowed resident landlords to retain only as much as their families could cultivate – about 2.5 acres in most of the country and 10 acres in Hokkaido – plus about 5 acres that they could rent out. The government purchased millions of acres from 2.3 million landowners and resold them to 4.7 million tenant farmers at the purchase price, offering long-term, low-interest-rate mortgages. By 1950, resident-owners cultivated nearly 90 percent of all rice paddy fields.

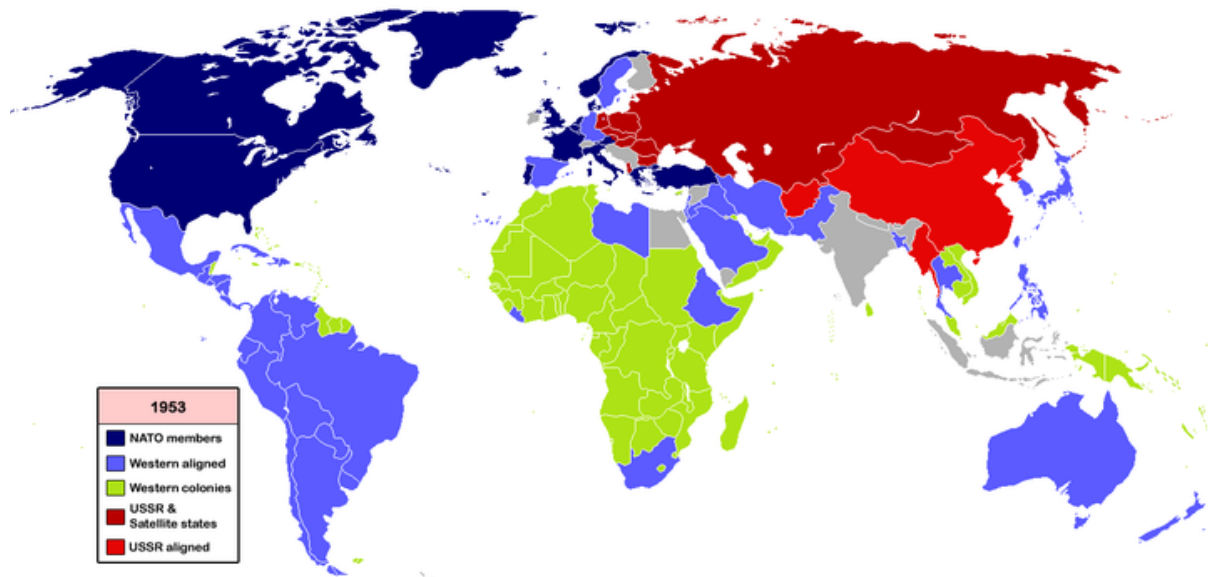


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:TawaramotoRiceField.png>>

*After the Land Reform, Japan's Average Farm Size Was 4 Acres –  
Rice Paddies, Tawaramoto-cho, Nara Prefecture*

In the industrial sector, the promotion of unions as a counterbalance to the concentration of economic power proceeded with astonishing speed. At the end of 1945, union membership amounted to about 380,000. Over the next month that number grew by 1 million, and by mid-1948 unions totaled 6.7 million members, more than half of the nonagricultural work force.

**Reverse Course.** Initial reforms under the occupation sought primarily to dismantle economic, social, and political elements that had contributed to the rise of aggressive ultranationalism. Punitive American intentions specifically precluded any specific attention to rebuilding of the Japanese economy. However, the Cold War soon shifted the focus of occupation policies to create a strong and stable US ally in East Asia. The Americans reversed the anti-militarist purge of the first occupation years and aligned themselves more closely with conservative elements in society, even those linked to war crimes.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
 <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cold\\_War\\_WorldMap\\_1953.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cold_War_WorldMap_1953.png)>

*Cold War Alliances in 1953 –  
 Western, Led by US (Blue) vs. Communist, Led by USSR (Red)*

Efforts to thwart the economic influence of big capitalists and government technocrats were abandoned, and support for organized labor was reversed as the occupation implemented a “red purge” against radical unions. Between the end of 1945 and June 1950, 11,000 activist union members were fired from the public sector, and by the end of that year a similar number had been dismissed in the private sector.

Nevertheless, the early success in promoting unionism made labor and the left a potent political force that shaped the relationship between

government and the economy. Active state intervention, job security, and income distribution became accepted principles. To undermine radical labor, business management worked with labor organizations in what was termed “enterprise unionism”, which relied on good relations between labor and management at the level of individual corporations.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NUGW\\_May\\_Day\\_2011.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NUGW_May_Day_2011.jpg)>

*Enterprise Unionism in Japan – National Trade Union Council  
(Zenyokyo), May Day March, Tokyo, 2011*

The government, meanwhile, embarked on an interventionist program designed to promote key sectors such as coal and electric power, iron and steel, fertilizer, shipbuilding, and textiles. That program



of “priority production” involved three major components – allocation of labor and scarce resources, direct government subsidies, and policy-guided loans through the recently established Reconstruction Finance Bank. Although the Americans planned to promote economic recovery through light manufacturing (ceramics and glassware, toys, paper goods, simple electronics), the Japanese clearly sought to capitalize on skills and expertise acquired during the war in heavy and chemical industries. Their emphasis lay on science, advanced technology, and sophisticated managerial techniques to produce high value-added goods.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Enkai\\_in\\_Kumamoto.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Enkai_in_Kumamoto.jpg)>

*Japan's Strategy Stressed High-value Goods –  
Businessmen Working the Evening Shift in Kumamoto*

Government interventionism in the economy was implemented through the powerful Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), created expressly for that purpose in 1949. MITI's work was facilitated by the re-emergence of zaibatsu, originally the target of aggressive anti-trust actions, as similar groupings of commercial and industrial firms anchored by key city banks. Those new groupings – *keiretsu* – differed from zaibatsu by being more horizontally organized, open, and internally competitive. Five of the six major keiretsu were direct descendents of zaibatsu – Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo, Fuji, and Daiichi – with Sanwa as a newcomer. Those three elements – MITI, enterprise unionism, and the keiretsu – defined the economic landscape of Japan at the end of the American occupation in April 1952.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ministry-of-Economy-Trade-and-Industry-02.jpg>>

*Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Formed in 2001 – Successor to the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI)*

**The High Growth Era (1955-1973).** In the mid-1950s, Japan's economy was one-fifteenth the size of the US economy, and wages were not much higher than in the best years before the war. By the early 1960s, Japan's GNP was already the fifth largest among the world's capitalist economies. High growth during the 1960s saw Japan surpass West Germany's total output to rank second in economic size to the United States. From 1955 to 1973, Japan experienced extraordinary growth, transitioning from a poor, largely agricultural country to a

Newly Industrialized Country (NIC). National GDP grew by 8 percent per year in the 1950s and by 9 percent per year in the 1960s.

More than half of that growth derived from increases in total factor productivity (TFP) as opposed to additional amounts of labor and capital, and initially economies of scale were the single most important contributor. In the late 1950s, economies of scale generated a 140 percent increase in output for a 100 percent increase in inputs. Later, much of TFP growth also derived from rapid change in the overall product mix of Japanese industry. In 1971, one-third of exports comprised products that had not been exported a decade earlier, and 40 percent of industrial output consisted of goods that did not exist at all in the Japanese market in 1951. In 1969, 10 percent of total output involved products that had not been invented five years earlier.





Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1968\\_Toyota\\_Corolla\\_1100\\_Deluxe.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1968_Toyota_Corolla_1100_Deluxe.jpg)>

*Labor-saving Productivity Gains – First Generation Toyota Corolla (1968), The World's Best-selling Line of Automobiles*

Extensive government interventionism guided that process, through protective import quotas, generous subsidies, targeted loans, and export cartels. Those policies amounted to effective application of infant-industry protection, designed to support key industries that remained vulnerable but, with appropriate measures, could become globally competitive. In 1963, the greatest protection was given to sectors that were already significant exporters (textiles, steel, and shipbuilding) or emerging exporters (electrical machinery and

automobiles). Favored sectors were those where rapid productivity growth could be expected so that prices could be lowered, low prices would result in large increases in volume, and world demand was expected to rise faster than GDP growth.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%C5%8Csanbashi\\_Port\\_of\\_Yokohama\\_April\\_14,\\_2005.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:%C5%8Csanbashi_Port_of_Yokohama_April_14,_2005.jpg)>

*Japanese Government Invested in Improved Infrastructure –  
Osanbashi Pier, Modern Port, Yokohama*

Government-authorized industry cartels were a powerful feature of the Japanese economy. Cartels had the power to limit capacity and output of members, coordinate prices, and control a member firm's investment in new capacity. In 1955, there were 162 sanctioned cartels, and from 1965 to 1973 the number of legal cartels averaged 1,000 per

year. Nearly one-third of the economy was dominated by cartels throughout the 1960s. Cartels facilitated government efforts to coordinate and target particular industries and thus provided a vehicle to promote growth in key sectors. The close collaboration between government and private industry brought into vogue the term “Japan Inc.”, denoting a bureaucratic capitalist model that proved extraordinarily effective until the early 1970s.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japan\\_takes\\_away\\_Kinchow\\_Castle\\_LCCN2008660171.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japan_takes_away_Kinchow_Castle_LCCN2008660171.jpg)>

*Cartels Dominated Japan's Economy in the 1960s –  
Japan Takes Away Kinchow Castle Abstract*

**External Contributions to Japan's High Growth.** Several factors contributed to Japan's success in the 1950s and 1960s. Crucially, the Reverse Course of US policy during the occupation preserved the strong centralization of capital and a bureaucracy with the ability to direct the economy. The Cold War continued to benefit Japan as the US sought to solidify and strengthen its principal ally in Asia. Japan could rely on the US for defense and thus spent less than 1 percent of its national budget on defense. That anomaly allowed Japan to impose a relatively light tax burden on the corporate sector, thereby catalyzing large profit reinvestment.

Until 1971, the US tolerated a pegged exchange rate that substantially undervalued the yen, thus promoting Japanese exports. The US also countenanced Japan's extensive import restrictions while yielding access to US markets, again benefiting Japanese exporters. The price Japan paid for that advantageous economic relationship was the continued presence of American military bases, most notably the nuclear installations on Okinawa.





Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marine\\_Corps\\_Air\\_Station\\_Futenma\\_1977\\_1.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Marine_Corps_Air_Station_Futenma_1977_1.jpg)>

*US Marine Corps Air Station, Futenma, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan*

In the 1950s, Japan also benefited immensely from one of the first flash points of the Cold War. During the Korean War, the US relied heavily on Japan for “special procurements” of fossil fuels, machine oils, cloth and finished textile goods, medicines, vehicles, primary metal products, nonmetallic minerals, electric machines and installation parts, clothing and shoes, building components, nonelectrical machinery, drink and tobacco, paper and paper products, food, and rubber products. That

surge in demand provided an initial boost for several industries that later would be targeted for infant industry protection. Americans also purchased ammunition, light weapons, and napalm bombs, although officially Japan could not produce such items. Those special procurements totaled \$2.3 billion between 1950 and 1953 and exceeded the total amount of US aid to Japan from 1945 to 1951. The Korean War purchases were particularly valuable because the US paid in hard currency. Military purchases over three years following the Korean War brought in \$1.75 billion, and Japan further benefited from the US-led reconstruction effort in South Korea which relied extensively on Japanese suppliers.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
 <[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Korean\\_War\\_high\\_water\\_mark\\_of\\_UN\\_occupation.gif](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Korean_War_high_water_mark_of_UN_occupation.gif)>

### *The Korean War (1950-1953) – Japan Benefited By Supplying the Allied Forces and By Carrying Out Post-war Reconstruction*

Japanese firms used that windfall to upgrade equipment and import advanced technology, initiating a systematic effort to acquire rights to



American commercial licenses and patents. The high growth era also reflected the rapid technology advances possible during a “catch-up” period. The advantage of cheap labor and the potential for gains from adoption of advanced technology, economies of scale, and learning-by-doing reflected the gap between the maturity of the Japanese economy and those of industrialized nations. Once that gap closed, sources of rapid growth would be harder to identify.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Skyscrapers\\_of\\_Shinjuku\\_2009\\_January.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Skyscrapers_of_Shinjuku_2009_January.jpg)>

*American Technology Aided Japanese Growth – Shinjuku District,  
Tokyo’s Commercial Center, with Mt. Fuji in the Background*

**Agriculture.** Japan’s agricultural sector also reflected the strong influence of the occupation and government planning. Land reform



during the occupation had virtually eliminated rural tenancy and exploitation of agricultural laborers by landlords. Fertilizer production, as part of the chemical industry, was among the sectors targeted by MITI, and farmers received heavily subsidized supplies of that essential input. Mechanization in the agricultural sector also received government support, with the dual benefits of raising agricultural productivity and supporting industrial manufacturers of farm equipment.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rice-planting-machine\\_2,katori-city,japan.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rice-planting-machine_2,katori-city,japan.JPG)>

*Mechanization of Japanese Agriculture –  
Rice Transplanter, Invented in Japan in the 1960s*

With the help of those government subsidies, agricultural labor productivity grew 10 percent in 1954, then 20 percent in 1955, and continued to grow at an average of 4 percent per year through the late 1960s. Rapid productivity growth in agriculture freed rural labor for factory employment, providing a pool of cheap labor that was the source of Japan's initial cost advantage in industrial production. Agricultural productivity growth also reduced food prices, which freed domestic consumer budgets for expenditures on manufactured goods, expanding the home markets for protected infant industries.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rice-combine-harvester,\\_Katori-city,\\_Japan.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rice-combine-harvester,_Katori-city,_Japan.jpg)>

*Japan Shifted from Manual to Mechanical Harvesting of Rice –  
Freed Labor and Capital for Industry*

Shifting capital and labor from farm production to industry contributed 25 percent of TFP growth in the 1950s and 15 percent in the 1960s. That reallocation of inputs was made possible by the phenomenal productivity increases in agriculture. Japan thus underwent at an extreme speed the process of structural transformation, whereby an economy transforms from one with most of its population and production in agriculture to one where manufacturing and services account for the bulk of GDP. In 1950, half of students graduating from middle and high schools went into agriculture. In 1960, that figure dropped to 10 percent, and it fell to 5 percent by the middle of the following decade. By 1970, the total farm population had dropped to 23 million from 36 million in 1950. Farm incomes rose by an astonishing 700 percent between 1960 and 1979 and nearly doubled again in the following decade. By 1973, the incomes of farm families averaged 7 percent more than those of their urban counterparts.





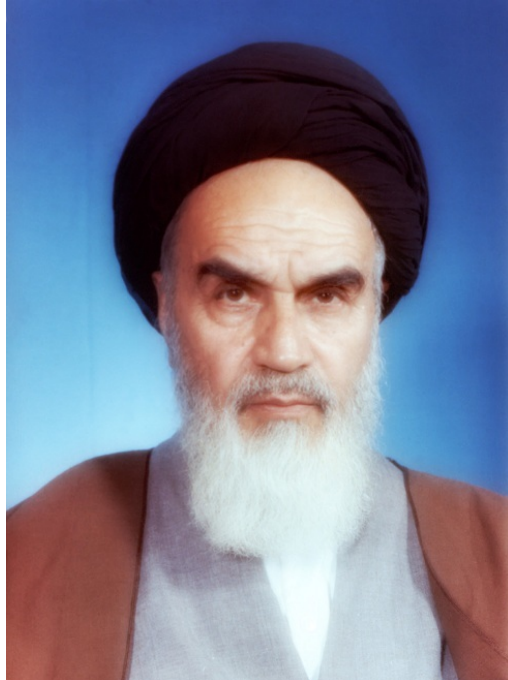
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rice\\_Paddies\\_In\\_Aizu,\\_Japan.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Rice_Paddies_In_Aizu,_Japan.JPG)>

*Japanese Farmers Had Higher Incomes Than City-dwellers in 1973 –  
Rice Paddies in Aizu, Fukushima Prefecture*



## **Japan (1973-present) – Economic Collapse and Stagnation**

**Decline and Collapse of Japan's Economy (1973-1990).** The global oil shocks in 1973-1974 and 1979-1980 strongly impacted Japan. Growth rates fell by half to 4 percent, and Japanese industry suddenly faced chronic excess capacity. High costs and stagnant global demand meant that industries, including shipbuilding, textiles, basic steel, and many others, were priced out of the market. The emergence of Asian competitors and rising Japanese wages exacerbated the impact of the oil shocks. However, rather than adjust, Japan applied the protectionist measures that in previous decades had nurtured infant industries.

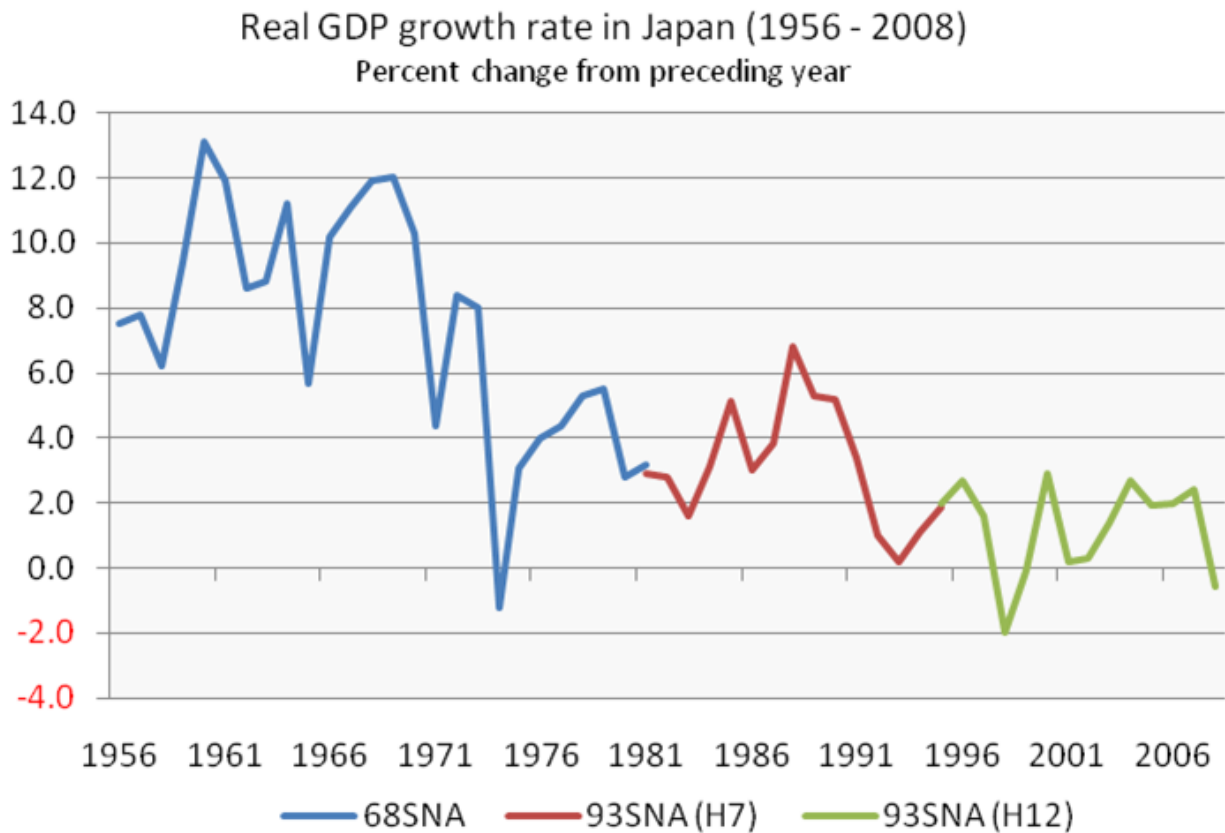


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<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Portrait\\_of\\_Ruhollah\\_Khomeini.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Portrait_of_Ruhollah_Khomeini.jpg)>

*Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic Revolution in Iran, 1979 –  
Triggered Oil Price Rise to \$34 (1979-1981)*

That development represented a radical shift in policy. Even during the high growth era, Japan had been reducing formal protective policies. Between 1963 and 1973, the government reduced tariff rates from 32 percent to 14 percent. After 1973 that trend reversed, and the nature of Japanese protectionism changed from the nurturing of promising infant industries to the protection of industries that were in decline. In 1978, industries receiving the highest protection included textiles and metals, where competitiveness was fading, and wood

products, paper, leather, and chemicals, which never had been competitive.



source: Cabinet Office, Government of Japan)

Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Real\\_GDP\\_growth\\_rate\\_in\\_Japan\\_\(1956-2008\).png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Real_GDP_growth_rate_in_Japan_(1956-2008).png)>

### *Growth Rates of Real GDP in Japan, 1956-2008*

Robust growth rates returned to Japan through the 1980s, and Japanese nominal per capita GNP (not adjusted for differences in purchasing power) surpassed that of the US in 1987. But that

performance was achieved through means that proved to be unsustainable. In that period, Japan invested 35 percent of GDP to achieve growth rates that other economies typically could have achieved with a 25 percent rate of investment, indicating a severe lapse in productivity. Economies of scale had been fully exploited by the late 1970s, labor had become expensive, and the dynamism of the high growth era was replaced by a rigid, unresponsive cartel system.

Necessary reforms included import liberalization to re-introduce price competition in the domestic market. But the Liberal Democratic Party relied on the support of entrenched interests – cartels, farmers, and retailers – for their control of the government. Therefore, rather than reform, the government expanded the money supply and drove down interest rates to sustain investment. Prices of stocks and real estate were thus artificially inflated in a bubble that had to collapse at some point.



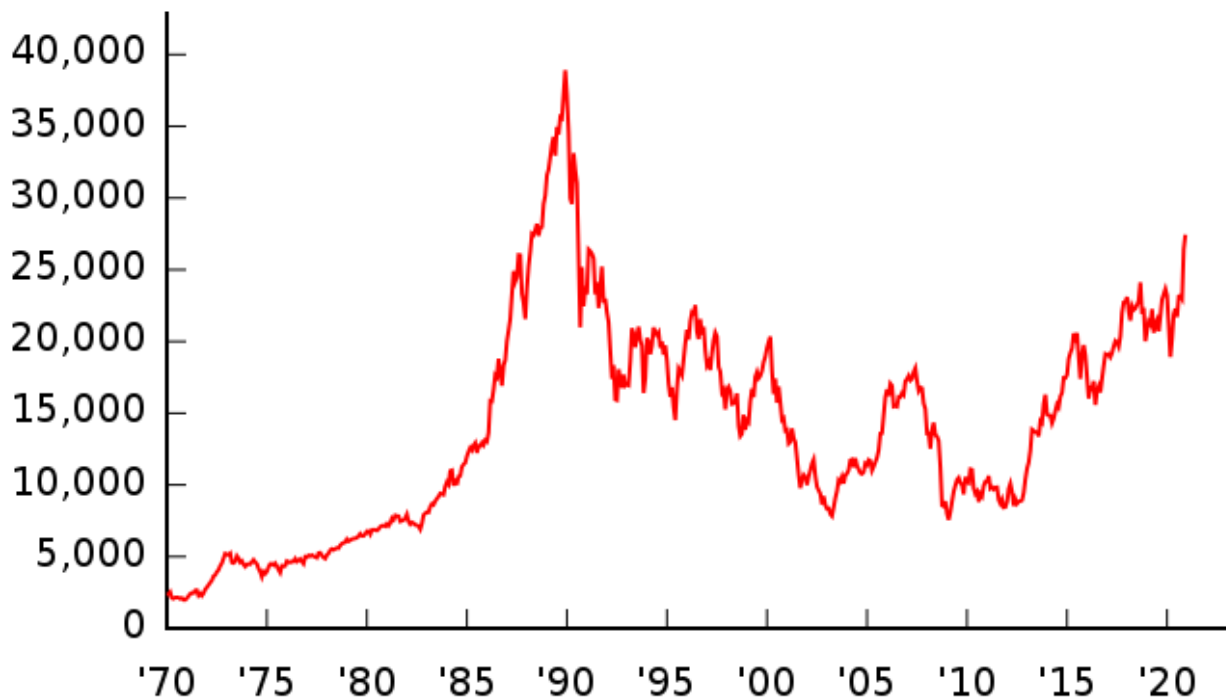


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<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tokyo\\_Tower\\_and\\_around\\_Skyscrapers.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tokyo_Tower_and_around_Skyscrapers.jpg)>

*Over-investment in Japanese Real Estate, 1980s –  
Tokyo Tower and Skyscrapers*

That collapse took place in 1989-1990, as the Nikkei index of equity prices crashed by 40 percent. The financial system could no longer sustain the ever-growing portfolio of bad loans based on artificially inflated stock and real estate prices rather than on genuine productivity. Bad loans at that point totaled as much as 10 percent of all bank loans and 20 percent of GDP, and half of those loans were in the portfolios of Japan's 21 largest banks. In the first half of the 1990s,

annual growth rates of per capita income barely reached 1 percent as Japan slid into a deep recession from which it has yet to recover fully.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nikkei\\_225\(1970-\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nikkei_225(1970-).svg)>

*Japan's Nikkei (Stock Market) Index, 1970-2020*

**Causes of Economic Decline.** The continuation of policies suitable in an infant industry environment produced a dual economy with very strong, highly competitive export sectors (such as automobiles and machinery) and weak, highly inefficient domestic sectors (such as foodstuffs and textiles). In foodstuffs, Japan trailed US productivity by more than 65 percent and continued to fall behind. On the supply side,

the protection of inefficient domestic sectors hampered productivity growth and drained resources from efficient industries to inefficient ones. On the demand-side, the dual economy stifled domestic consumption due to high prices and a chronic deficiency in purchasing power. As a result, Japan featured both excess savings and investment and was therefore trapped into excess productive capacity.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Working\\_in\\_the\\_Rice\\_Paddies\\_in\\_May.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Working_in_the_Rice_Paddies_in_May.jpg)>

### *Japan's Tariff on Rice Was 778% – Rice Field, Sawara, Chiba*

Japan relied on demand stimulation in the form of huge deficit spending by the government and massive trade surpluses. The former caused financial strains, while the latter were politically unsustainable vis à vis Japan's trade partners. Protection against imports was also



unsustainable because the competitive export sector created upward pressure on the yen. Government protection policy essentially blocked equilibrating forces that would create trade balance and thus limited the potential for the export sector to sustain growth. Meanwhile, exporters also suffered the impact of artificially rising input costs in the home market.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Big\\_Naruto\\_Bridge04n3872.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Big_Naruto_Bridge04n3872.jpg)>

*High Deficit Spending Led to Low Productivity Public Investment –  
Ōnaruto Bridge, Connecting Awaji Island with Ōge Island*

Japan's highly centralized banking structure further contributed to the collapse. During the high growth era, about a dozen commercial banks and three trust banks supplied almost all financing to big business.



Business finance made almost no use of stock or bond issues. The banks therefore depended on continual cash injections from the Bank of Japan (BOJ). The private credit sector thus became highly concentrated and politicized, which facilitated the accumulation of loans based on less-than-sound prospects.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bank\\_of\\_Japan\\_headquarters\\_in\\_Tokyo,\\_Japan.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bank_of_Japan_headquarters_in_Tokyo,_Japan.jpg)>

*Bank of Japan, Japan's Central Bank –  
Pumped Credit into Japanese Banks to Finance Industry*

The cartel structure that seemed to promote inter-industry synergies and coordinate economic expansion in the high growth era proved to be an obstacle once the economy matured. By stifling intra-industry competition, cartels contributed to the erosion of productivity. But the concentration of capital conferred substantial political lobbying

power that ensured continuing protection from global markets. The cartels thus became a vehicle for redistributing wealth rather than promoting growth. The LDP used the protected sectors as a means to combat unemployment, and even within cartels, sales and production shares were allocated so as to transfer wealth from more productive members to inefficient members. In sum, Japan's collapse was attributable to a high degree of financial and industrial concentration, a highly politicized economic policy environment, and a failure to adapt the economic policy environment as the economy matured.

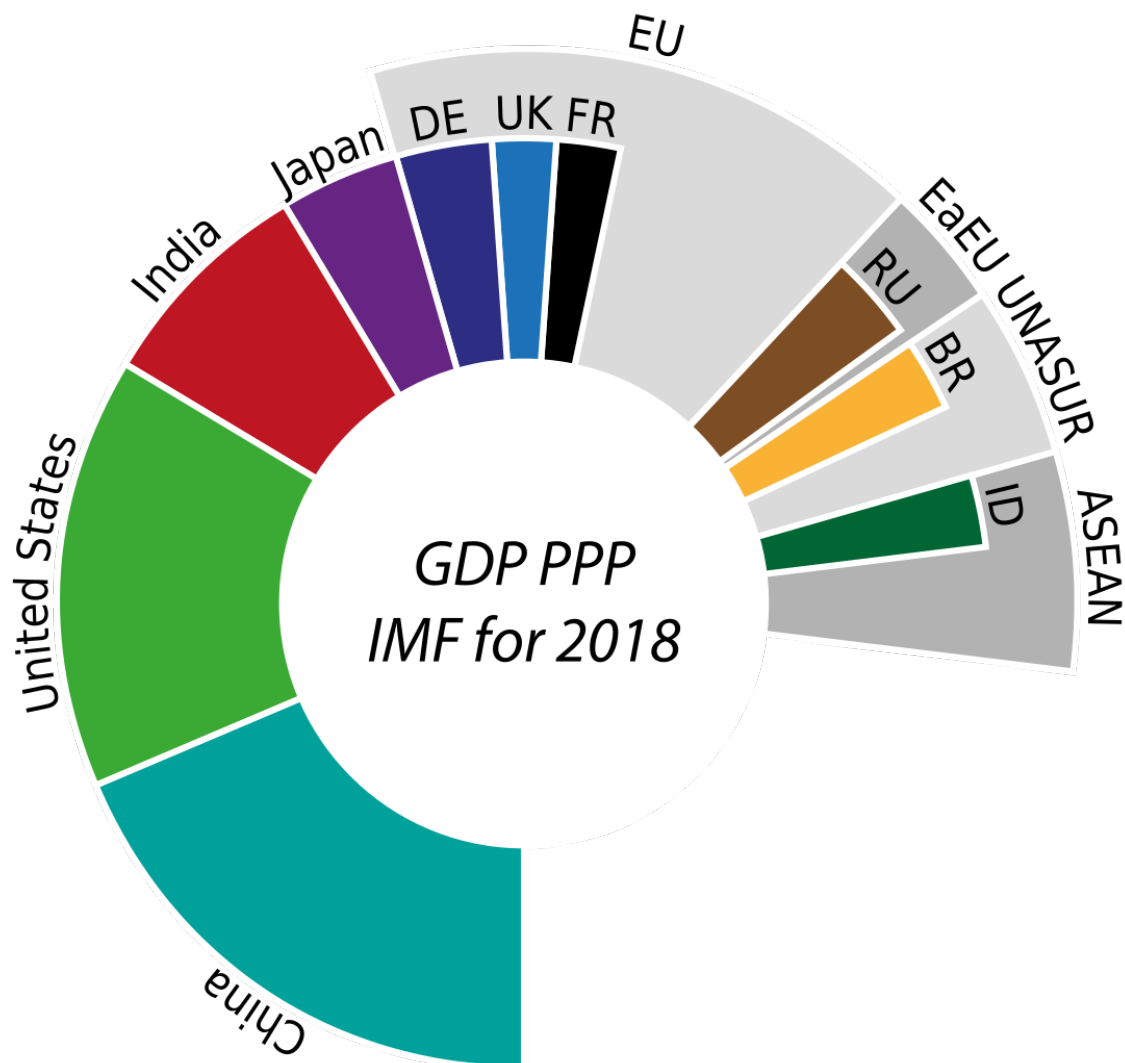


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tokyo\\_Otemachi\\_1-chome\\_Redevelopment\\_Bldgs\\_20100618-001.jpg?](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tokyo_Otemachi_1-chome_Redevelopment_Bldgs_20100618-001.jpg?)

*Headquarters of the Keidanren (Japan Business Federation, Center) –  
More than 1600 Corporations and 130 Industrial Associations*

**Stagnation and Slow Growth (1990-present).** After the collapse of Japan's economy in 1989-1990, the country has suffered three decades of disappointing economic performance. Between 1990 and 2019, the average annual growth rate of income was only 0.9 percent. The rate of unemployment was 2.3 percent in 2019. Interest rates were near zero, and average price levels fell in a deflating economy.

Asset values on the stock market and in real estate declined to less than one-third of their pre-collapse levels, before starting to recover in 2013. Politics and inadequate policies were largely to blame. Japan had 16 prime ministers between 1990 and 2012, and none demonstrated outstanding leadership skills. In 2009, the Democratic Party of Japan finally displaced the LDP, but its three years in power were no more successful than those under LDP leaders. By 2018, Japan had slipped to being only the fourth largest economy in the world – behind China, the United States, and India – and Japan's GDP (measured by the IMF in Purchasing Power Parity) was only one-third of US GDP.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GDP\\_PPP\\_2018\\_Selection.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GDP_PPP_2018_Selection.svg)

### *Stagnation in Japan – GDP of Large Economies, Measured by the International Monetary Fund in Purchasing Power Parity, 2018*

In spite of that lack-luster performance, Japan still had world-class economic and quality-of-life indicators in 2019. Japan's level of per capita income (on a price-adjusted or Purchasing Power Parity basis)



was \$43,236, only 66 percent of the US level but 2.6 times that of China. Japan also had one of the world's highest life expectancies at birth – 84 years – and 99 percent its adults were literate, a rate also among the best in the world. In 2019, Japan was 30<sup>th</sup> of 186 countries in the World Bank's ranking of per capita incomes, 19<sup>th</sup> of 189 countries in the United Nation's Human Development Index, 29<sup>th</sup> of 190 countries in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index, and 20<sup>th</sup> of 198 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index. These figures demonstrate that in spite of lost economic opportunities from the past three decades, Japan continues to be a major economic power and its citizens enjoy a very high quality-of-life.

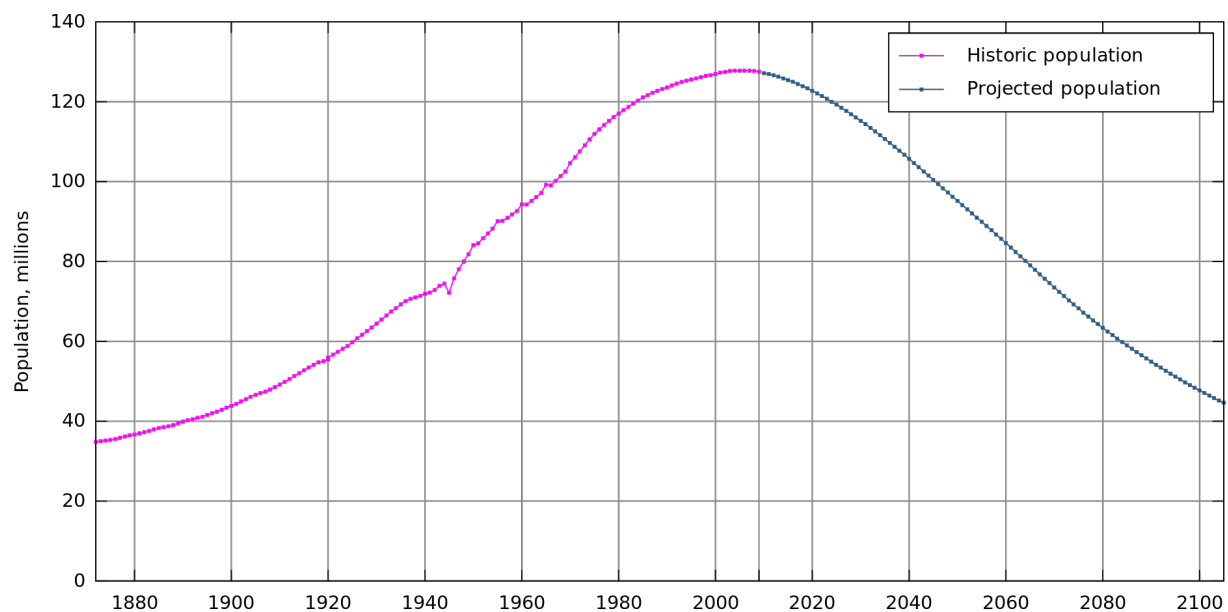


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Man-and-lady-kimono.JPG>>

### *The Citizens of Japan Enjoy a Very High Quality-of-Life*

However, Japan's economic and political future faces a challenging demographic threat. Japan is suffering from an aging population. Because of high longevity (84 years), low total fertility rate (1.4 children per woman), and meager immigration, Japan's population is aging more rapidly than any other in the world and is shrinking in size. Japan's population peaked in 2008 at 128.1 million and has declined since then, falling to 126.3 in 2019. Based on these trends, one demographic projection of Japan's population to 2050 came up with

startling results. By that year, 40 percent of Japan's population is expected to be over age 65 and Japan's total population is expected to shrink to only 87 million, a decline of 32 percent. In that dire circumstance, working Japanese would be hard-pressed to support those in retirement.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Population\\_of\\_Japan\\_since\\_1872.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Population_of_Japan_since_1872.svg)>

*Japan's Aging Population Problem –  
Shrinking Share of Working-age People as the Population Declines*

**The Reform Agenda.** True reform of Japan's economy must begin in politics and governance. Business needs to be de-politicized, so that elected government represents national interests rather than those of

avored business circles. Achieving that radical political change requires breaking the links between the LDP, rural political machines, an entrenched bureaucracy, and the coddled corporate elite. A government less beholden to such interests might then be able to implement the required changes, such as reform in the financial sector. Credit markets need to be transparent and competitive to allow capital to flow to its most productive uses. Collusion and favoritism in the current system instead promotes issuance and bailouts of patently unproductive loans.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese\\_family\\_01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese_family_01.jpg)>

*Young Japanese People – In Search of a New Beginning*



Corporate links and cross-shareholdings between financial institutions and industrial and commercial enterprises need to be severed. To generate consumer-led growth, Japan must liberalize trade aggressively, thereby forcing domestic sectors to become more efficient and allowing export industries to take full advantage of their global competitiveness.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shinzo\\_Abe\\_\(2017\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Shinzo_Abe_(2017).jpg)>

*Shinzo Abe, Japan's Prime Minister (2012-2020) –  
Popular Leader and Consummate Politician*

In 2013, new LDP Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made a courageous start by introducing a three-part package of reforms (dubbed the three arrows of “Abenomics”). Abe first instructed the new governor of the Bank of Japan to loosen monetary policy through quantitative easing (buying bonds) with the goals of achieving a 2 percent inflation target and depreciating the Japanese yen and thereby expanding exports. He next increased public spending by about \$100 billion to create a large fiscal stimulus. Previous stimulus packages had raised Japan’s public debt to 245 percent of GDP without creating much economic growth. Abe has promised to introduce a third arrow in his set of reforms – a varied package of deregulation reforms to improve the competitiveness of Japanese industry and agriculture and stimulate innovation for productivity gains. In particular, Abe promised to reduce protection of agriculture, introduce flexibility in hiring and firing workers, and permit greater competition in the health sector and in public utilities.

In spite of the impressive LDP electoral victories and Abe’s high approval ratings, few of those third-arrow, structural reforms had been put in place by 2019. In September 2020, citing health challenges, Abe

resigned and was replaced as Prime Minister by Yoshihide Suga, also of the Liberal Democratic Party, who promised to continue to follow the Abenomics agenda.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yoshihide\\_Suga\\_September\\_2020\\_\(1\).jpg#filehistory](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Yoshihide_Suga_September_2020_(1).jpg#filehistory)>

*Yoshihide Suga, Prime Minister of Japan, (2020-present) –  
Speaking at His First Press Conference in September 2020*



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japan\\_sea\\_map.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japan_sea_map.png)

### *Contemporary Japan*



## **The Kurile Islands**

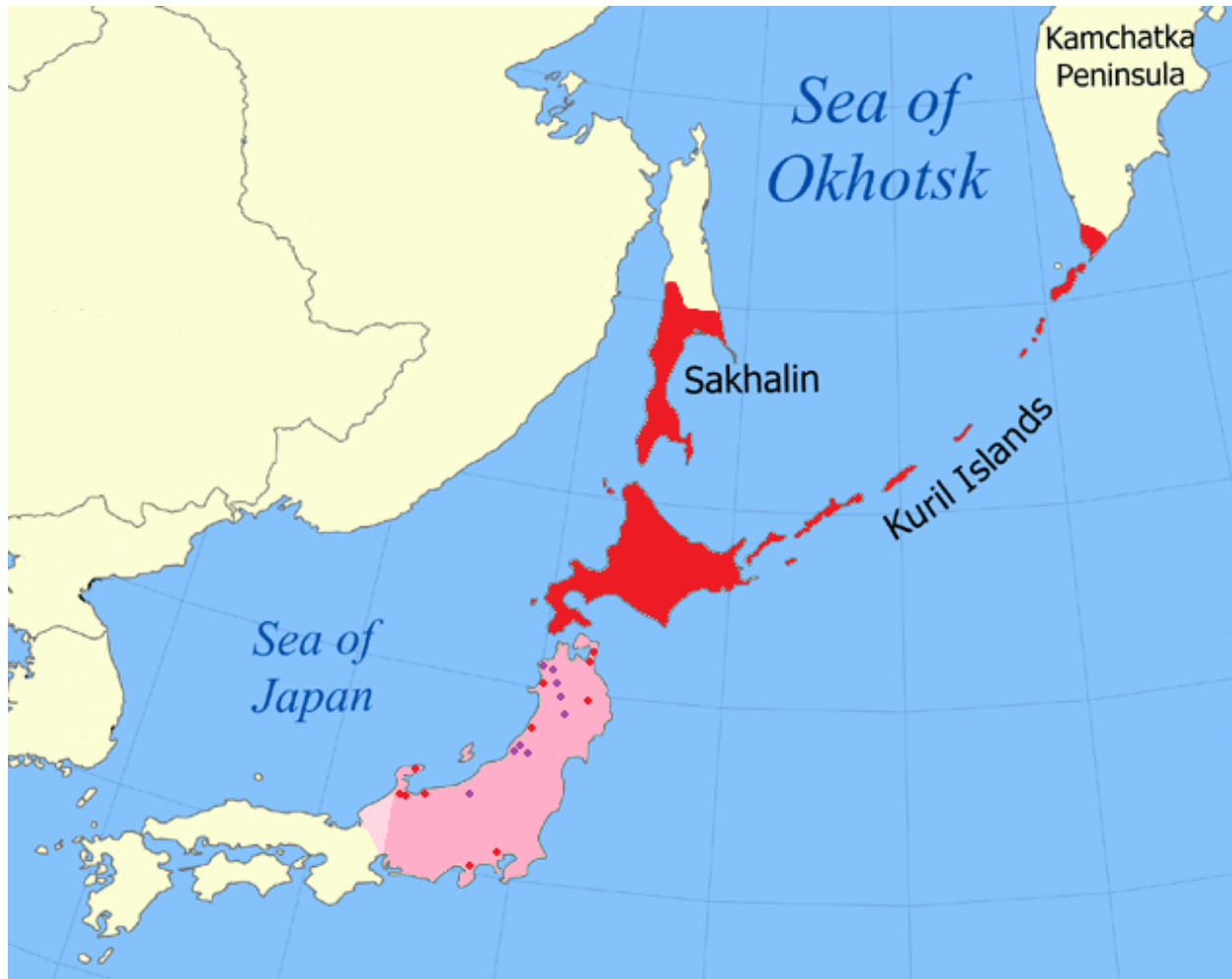
**Ainu Indigenes.** The indigenous inhabitants of the Kurile Islands were Ainu, who had large stature, round eyes, and hirsute bodies. Ainu men were renowned for their lengthy black beards. The Ainu once were thought to be Indo-Europeans, but recent research has demonstrated an Asian origin. The Ainu language has not been linked with any language family (and thus is not Indo-European). Most experts now believe that the Ainu are a remnant of an ancient Paleo-Asian population, descended from two early Northeast Asian cultures – the Jomon, who lived in Japan for at least two millennia before 500 CE, and the Okhotsk, who spread from Siberia to Sakhalin Island c. 500 and to the Kurile Islands c. 600.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ainu\\_old\\_man\\_circa\\_1930.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ainu_old_man_circa_1930.JPG)>

*Ainu Man, Hokkaido, Japan, c. 1930*

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Ainu region of settlement included northern Honshu, Hokkaido, southern Sakhalin, the Kurile Islands, and southern Kamchatka. During the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Ainu developed a far-flung maritime trading empire, linking the Asian mainland (China, including Manchuria, and Russian Siberia) with the Japanese and Kurile islands. They exported fish and sea mammal hides and furs and received in return wood, cloth, and metal products.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Historical\\_expanse\\_of\\_Ainu.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Historical_expanse_of_Ainu.png)>

*Historical Ainu Territories – Northern Honshu, Hokkaido, Southern Sakhalin, Kurile Islands, and Southern Kamchatka*

Ainu subsistence depended on hunting, fishing, and gathering. The Ainu diet combined meat (sea mammals and deer), fish (salmon, trout, cod, and herring), seafood (crabs and kelp), and wild plants (parsnips, skunk cabbage, garlic, anemone, and berries). The Ainu developed good

techniques of food preservation and storage – drying and smoking – to maintain food supplies through long, harsh winters. The Ainu inhabiting the Kurile Islands migrated regularly between seasons, living in winters in villages on larger islands and moving in summers to smaller islands to set up fishing and hunting camps.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn\\_Museum\\_-\\_Ainu\\_Hunters.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Brooklyn_Museum_-_Ainu_Hunters.jpg)>

*Ainu Hunters, 19<sup>th</sup> century – Asian Art Collection, Brooklyn Museum*

**Ainu Culture.** The most highly valued characteristic in Ainu culture was generosity. The Ainu believed that all living things were gods with spirits. Those gods came to earth to offer their material forms



so that humans could have food, clothing, and shelter. In return, humans needed to recognize their reciprocal obligations with nature's gods. If humans failed to carry out rituals and prayers to repay the gods and renew life, the world would become barren and uninhabitable.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ishuretsuzo\\_\(Ikotoi\)\\_by\\_Kakizaki\\_Hakyo\\_\(MBAA\\_Besancon\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ishuretsuzo_(Ikotoi)_by_Kakizaki_Hakyo_(MBAA_Besancon).jpg)>

*Ikotoi, Ainu Chieftain of Akkeshi –  
Painted by Hakyō Kakizaki, 1790, Besançon Museum, France*

The most valued human rituals were spirit-sending ceremonies to aid the spirits to return to the god world. Those ceremonies involved complex rituals, prayers, prayer sticks (*ikupasy*), gifts (*inaw*), songs,

dances, and drinking (of rice wine (*sake*), obtained through trade with Japan). All spirits needed to be returned to the god world.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ainu\\_Marriage\\_-\\_2.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ainu_Marriage_-_2.jpg)>

### *Ainu Women Celebrating a Traditional Marriage Ceremony*

But the most elaborate ceremony was reserved for the chief deity – the bear. The bear-sending ceremony (*iyomante*) was carried out annually. It represented the most sacred gift exchange – that between the chief deity and humans – and was intended to demonstrate the epitome of human respect for nature. The *iyomante* involved three stages. The AINU first captured a bear cub, usually in its den. Next, they reared the cub for one and one-half to two years. Finally, they killed the

young bear ritually and used the corpse centrally in the *iyomante* ceremony.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iomante2.JPG>>

*Ainu Men Celebrating a Traditional Iyomante Ceremony, c. 1930*

Each Ainu village invited nearby villages to attend the annual *iyomante*, and the multifaceted ceremony had religious, social, political, and festive dimensions – singing, dancing, drinking, and praying. Ainu society was decentralized. Village chiefs were the highest level of political authority. There were no kings or strong priests and no



standing armies. Hence, the Ainu were unable to fend off Japanese and Russian invasions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ainu\\_Armour.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ainu_Armour.JPG)>

*Ainu Armour, Museum of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Sakhalin, Russia –  
No Match for Japanese or Russian Guns*

**Japanese and European Incursions (16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries).** The 36 Kurile Islands stretch from Hokkaido to Kamchatka and are slightly smaller than Hawaii in land area. The first recorded sighting of the Kuriles occurred in 1643, when Maerten de Vries, an explorer for the Dutch East Indies Company, was searching for gold.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sea\\_of\\_Okhotsk\\_map\\_with\\_state\\_labels.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sea_of_Okhotsk_map_with_state_labels.png)>

*The Kurile Islands – Between Hokkaido Island in Northern Japan and  
the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russian Siberia*

In 1604, the Tokugawa shogun granted the Matsumae clan of Hokkaido monopoly control over Ainu trade. The Ainu began to pay tribute to the Matsumae in 1731. The first recorded Japanese settlement



in the Kuriles was on Kunashir in 1754. The Ainu unsuccessfully resisted the Japanese incursions. The failed Kunashir Rebellion of 1789 was the Ainus' last attempt to retain their freedom, fisheries, and territory. Fearing Russian intrusion, the shogun assumed control of trade in the Kuriles between 1799 and 1821. Matsumae rule then resumed until 1855.



*Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:MatsumaeJo.jpg>>*

*Matsumae Castle, Hokkaido, Japan – Built in 1606*

The Russians came later to the Kuriles. Ivan Kozyrevsky led expeditions to Shumshu and Paramushir in 1711 and 1713, and other

Russian explorers visited most other Kuriles in the 1720s and 1730s.

The Russians forced the Ainus to pay *yasak* (tribute in furs and hides) by taking hostages. Russian exploitation of sea otters in the Kuriles began in the 1740s. Sea otter pelts, sold in China, were the most valuable of all furs.

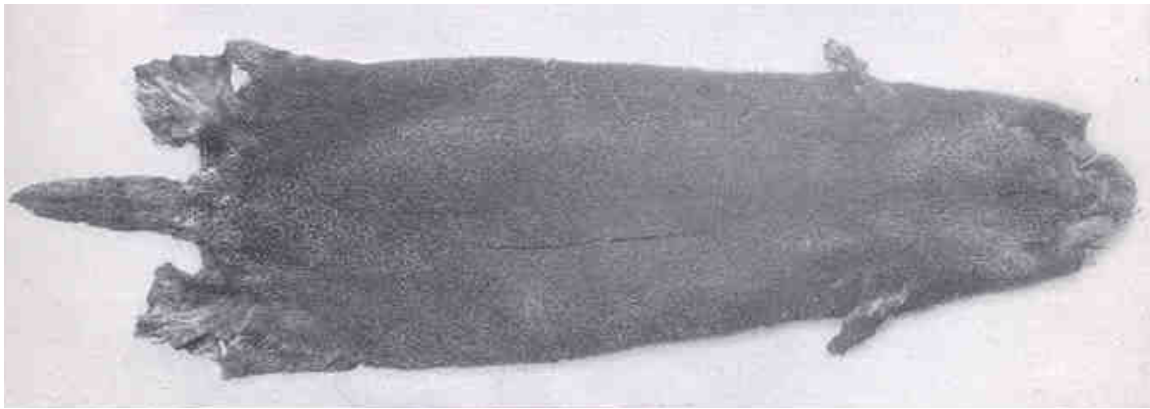


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sea\\_otter\\_cropped.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sea_otter_cropped.jpg)>

### *Sea Otter (Enhydra lutris) – Russians Exploited Its Valuable Pelts*

In 1799, Tsar Paul granted the Russian-American Company (RAC), which was operating mainly in Russian Alaska, a monopoly on trade in the Kuriles. That monopoly continued until 1860. The RAC settled Aleuts from the Aleutian Islands on Urup and Simushir to exploit

sea otters and seals. During the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Japanese controlled the south Kuriles (Habomai to Iturup) while the Russians dominated the north Kuriles (Urup to Shumshu). But the Kurile frontier was not formally defined.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FMIB\\_33982\\_Sea-Otter\\_Skin,\\_Dressed,\\_Natural.jpeg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:FMIB_33982_Sea-Otter_Skin,_Dressed,_Natural.jpeg)>

*Sea Otter Skin, Dressed and Natural – c.1901-1902*

**Japanese and Russian Colonization (1855-1945).** When Russia learned that the American Commodore, Matthew Perry, was negotiating with Japan in 1853, the tsar dispatched a naval expedition to Nagasaki, led by Evfimii Putiatin, to open diplomatic relations, expand trade, and settle border disputes. Russia had occupied Sakhalin in that year, despite earlier Japanese settlements there.

Already fighting the Crimean War (1853-1856) with Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire, Russia sought good relations with Japan. In the Treaty of Shimoda (1855), Japan and Russia divided the Kurile Islands – Japan received Iturup and the islands south, whereas Russia obtained Urup and the islands north – and agreed on “joint possession” of Sakhalin.



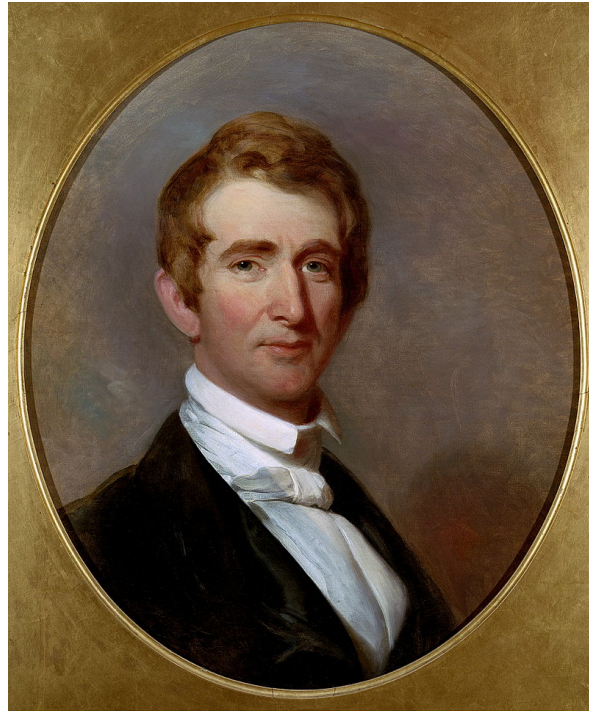
Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sakhalin\\_Ainu\\_Man.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sakhalin_Ainu_Man.jpg)>

*Wealthy Sakhalin Ainu Merchant, 19<sup>th</sup> century*

In 1869, the new Meiji government of Japan asked William Seward, the former American Secretary of State who had purchased



Alaska from Russia in 1867, to mediate on Sakhalin. Seward recommended purchase, but Russia refused to sell.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Henry\\_Inman\\_-\\_William\\_H.\\_Seward.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Henry_Inman_-_William_H._Seward.jpg)>

*William Seward, US Secretary of State (1861-1869), Pictured in 1844 –  
Mediated the Japan-Russia Conflict Over Control of Sakhalin Island*

Facing budgetary problems and social unrest, the Meiji government decided to focus on developing Hokkaido (by appropriating Ainu land). Through the Treaty of St. Petersburg (1875), Japan ceded Sakhalin to Russia in return for the north Kurile Islands.

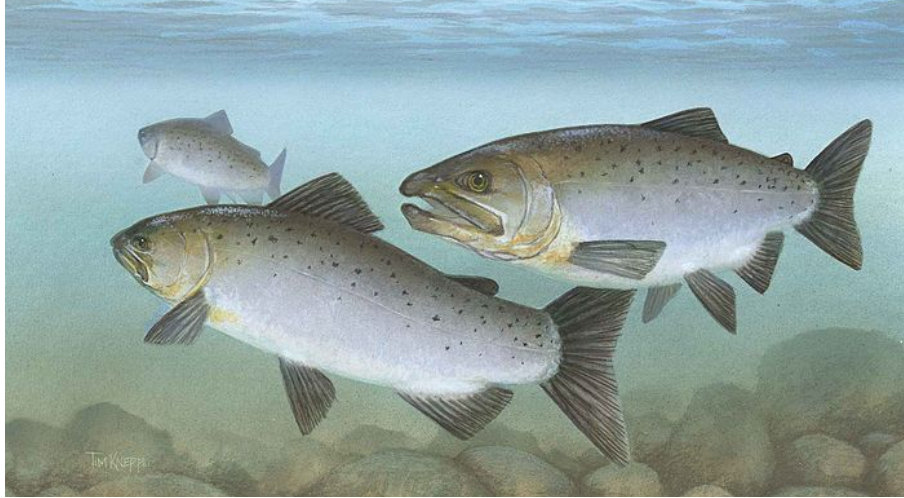


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russia\\_1533-1896.gif](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russia_1533-1896.gif)

### *Russian Expansion in Asia, 1533-1894 – Sakhalin, 1875 (Teal Blue)*

In 1875, only 900 people, all Ainu, lived on the Kuriles. Most of the 800 Ainu on the south Kuriles died – from smallpox, syphilis, alcoholism, or depression. In 1884, Japan relocated the 100 Ainu inhabiting the north Kuriles to Shikotan (a south Kurile island near Hokkaido). Japan repopulated the islands with Japanese and Korean fishermen and their families. The population of the Kuriles was only 4,000 in 1913, but rose to 18,300 (plus 20,000 seasonal workers) by

1939. The Kurile fisheries produced salmon and herring in the north and crab and kelp in the south.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pacific\\_salmon\\_fish\\_underwater\\_oncorhynchus.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Pacific_salmon_fish_underwater_oncorhynchus.jpg)>

*Pacific Salmon (Oncorhynchus) –  
Abundant Resource Throughout the Northern Kurile Islands*

**Russian Rule and the Kurillian Knot (1945-present).** Japan began fortifying the Kurile Islands in 1940. Hitokappu Bay in Iturup was the secret gathering point for Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Japan occupied Attu and Kiska in the Aleutian Islands in mid-1942 with forces staged on Paramushir. The Allies rejected a "northern strategy" to occupy the Kuriles in 1944 and use them to invade Japan.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greater\\_Japanese\\_empire.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Greater_Japanese_empire.png)

*The Kurile Islands Were Staging Bases for Japan in World War II –  
Greatest Expansion of the Japanese Empire, 1942-1943)*

At the Yalta Conference (1945), Josef Stalin agreed to enter the war against Japan on condition that the USSR would receive the Kuriles and southern Sakhalin after the war. Following Japan's surrender (August 1945), the Soviets conquered Sakhalin and the Kuriles, after a bloody battle on Shumshu. Since 1945, the Kuriles have been part of the



Russian Far East. The Russians repatriated the 17,300 Japanese civilians (and the few remaining Ainus) who inhabited the Kuriles and repopulated them with Russians and Ukrainians.

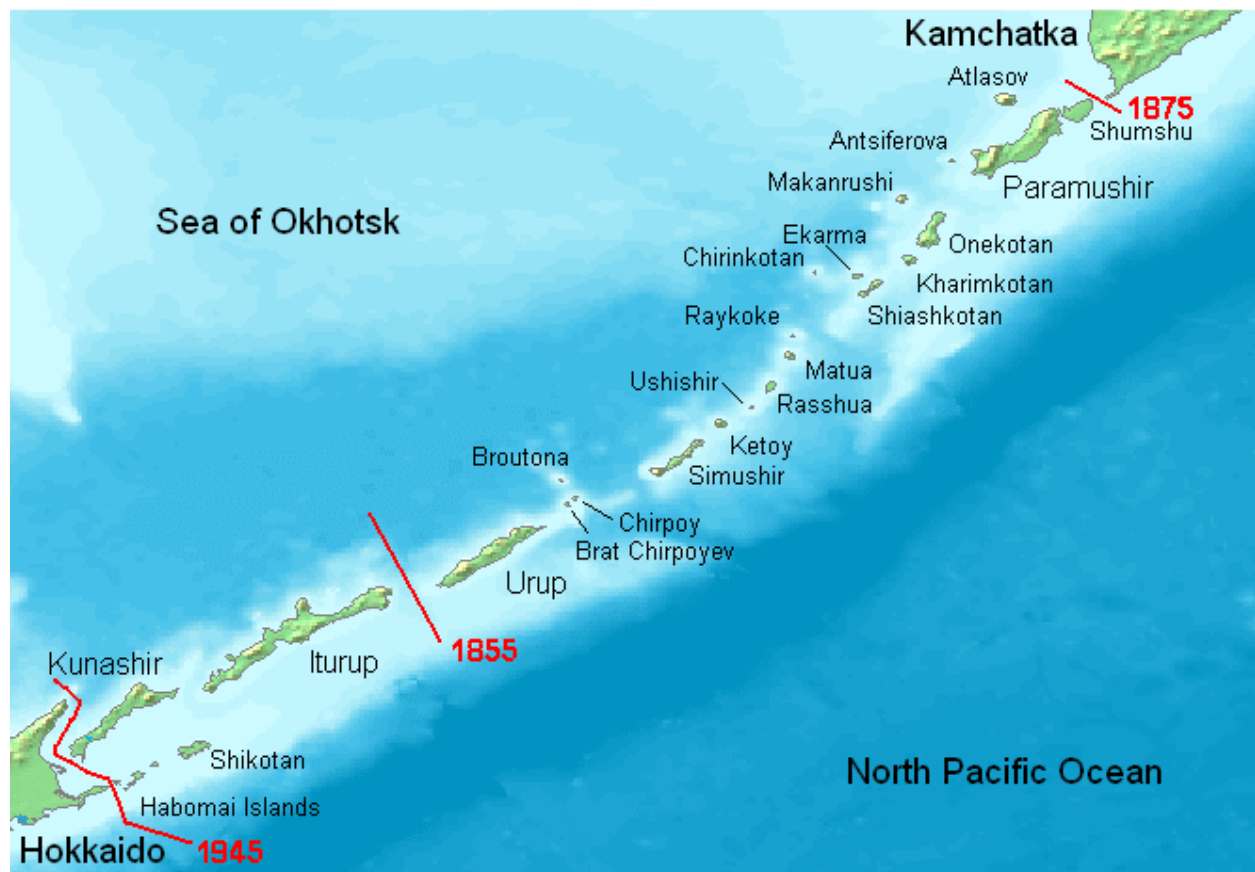


Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Japanese-Buddhist-Temple-Iturup-Etorofu.png>>

*Japanese Residents of Etorofu (Iturup), At a Buddhist Temple in 1939 – The Allies Promised the Kuriles and Sakhalin to the USSR at Yalta, 1945*

The current estimated population of the Kuriles is 19,400. Half live below the Russian poverty line. They are engaged primarily in fishing and fish-processing (of herring, salmon, and crab). Russia and Japan have not signed a peace treaty ending the Second World War.

The sticking point – the Kurillian knot – is Japan’s claim to the south Kuriles, which Japan terms its Northern Territories – Etorofu (Iturup), Kunashiri (Kunashir), the Habomai group, and Shikotan.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
< [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Demis-kurils-russian\\_names.png](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Demis-kurils-russian_names.png) >

*The Kurile Islands – Japan Owned Them Between 1855 and 1945, Russia Has Owned Them Since 1945, and Japan Claims the Four Southern Kuriles (Iturup, Kunashir, Habomai, and Shikotan)*

As the outer rim of a protected Sea of Okhotsk sanctuary, the Kurile Islands had strategic value to the USSR during the Cold War

(until new technology lengthened the range of nuclear missiles fired from submarines). Boris Yeltsin negotiated a formula for deciding the Kurile issue, but Vladimir Putin agreed to transfer only the Habomai group and Shikotan in return for Japan's willingness to sign a peace treaty. The diplomatic stalemate continues.



Source: Wikimedia Commons available at  
<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vladimir\\_Putin\\_and\\_Shinzo\\_Abe\\_\(2019-06-29\)\\_01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vladimir_Putin_and_Shinzo_Abe_(2019-06-29)_01.jpg)>

*Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (Right) and Russian President Vladimir Putin, June 2019 – Discussed the Kurile Islands Dispute, But Reached No Breakthrough*

## **Time Line for Japan and the Kurile Islands**

538	Buddhism introduced into Japan from Korea
646-1192	Taika Era – Yamato clan set up powerful monarchy, unified Japan – rulers descended from Sun Goddess
646	Taika Reforms – established philosophical norms, legal principles, and fundamental institutions – influenced by Korean culture
794	Kyoto (Heian-kyo) – designated as the seat of the Heavenly Sovereign – landed aristocracy – warrior class (samurai)
1192-1868	Shogun Era – shogun headed government – defense of monarchy, control of samurai, adjudication of disputes, collection of taxes
1192-1573	Minamoto and Ashikaga Governments – clan rivalry – Minamoto shoguns (1192-1338) – Ashikaga shoguns (1338-1573)
1271-1368	Yuan Dynasty in China – Mongol-led – ruled all of China – effective under Kublai Khan – corrupt, ineffective under successors
1274-1281	Kublai Khan tried to conquer Japan – suffered huge military losses – navies struck by typhoons – lost 70,000 troops at sea
1467-1477	Onin War – shogun lost central control – 250 daimyo (estate-owning warlords) controlled arable land – feudal system



1549-1551	Francis Xavier, Founder of the Society of Jesus – missionary in Japan – 300,000 Japanese converted to Catholicism by 1600
1573-1582	Oda Nobunaga – destroyed Kyoto – sent Ashikaga Yoshiaki into exile – ended Ashikaga shogunate – began re-unification
1582-1590	Toyotomi Hideyoshi – took control of army, after Nobunaga's suicide – re-unified Japan
1592-1598	Toyotomi Hideyoshi – invaded Korea – advanced up Korean peninsula – could not maintain supply chains – achieved nothing
16 <sup>th</sup> century	Ainu people inhabited northern Honshu, Hokkaido, southern Sakhalin, the Kurile Islands, and southern Kamchatka
1603-1868	Tokugawa Era – 2 million samurai – strong military control – effective civil service– efficient taxation – symbolic royal court
1603-1616	Tokugawa Ieyasu – first Tokugawa shogun – won struggle among daimyo for control of re-unified Japan
1604	Nagasaki Merchant Office – granted monopoly over foreign trade – imported silk, sugar, and medicines – exported copper, swords, pottery and lacquerware

1623-1651	Tokugawa Iemitsu – third Tokugawa shogun – began persecution of Christians – Tokugawa family owned ¼ of farm land
1643	Maerten de Vries, explorer for the Dutch East Indies Company – first European discovery of the Kurile Islands
1644-1912	Qing Dynasty in China – Manchurian-led – population tripled – conquests expanded China to current size – weak in 19 <sup>th</sup> century
1710s-1730s	first Russian exploration of the Kurile Islands – Russians forced the Ainus to pay tribute in furs and hides by taking hostages
1720	Edo (Tokyo), Tokugawa capital – 1.3 million population – world's largest city – population of Japan was 31 million
1754	first recorded Japanese settlement in the Kurile Islands – on Kunashir Island
1784	Grigorii Shelikov established the North East Company – built first permanent trading post in Alaska on Kodiak Island
1789	Kunashir Rebellion – failed to overthrow the trade cartel of Matsumae clan of Hokkaido – the Ainus' last attempt to retain their freedom, fisheries, and territory
1799-1867	Russian Government granted a charter to the Russian American Company (RAC) – rights to

	monopolize trade in Russian America and in the Kurile Islands
1853-1856	Crimean War – Great Britain, France, and the Ottoman Empire soundly defeated Russia
1853	Commodore Matthew C. Perry arrived in Edo Bay – four warships – US president sought open trade relations with Japan
1854	Commodore Matthew C. Perry – returned to Japan – eight warships – Japan-US treaty – perpetual peace – US ships allowed to take on provisions in Shimoda and Hakodate
1855	Treaty of Shimoda – Japan and Russia divided the Kurile Islands – Japan received Iturup and the islands south – Russia obtained Urup and the islands north – joint possession of Sakhalin
1858	United States-Japan Treaty of Amity and Commerce (Harris Treaty) – forced opening of Japan – established diplomatic and commercial relations between Japan and US
1867-1912	reign of Mutsuhito, Meiji Emperor
1867	Russia sold Alaska to the United States for \$7.2 million – offset half of the RAC's accumulated losses – Russian Asia (Amuria, Lake Baikal, Central Asia) more attractive
1868-1945	Meiji Era – ministers were Meiji oligarchs – national independence – revision of the unequal

treaties with the West –international stature on par with advanced nations

- 1868-1869      Boshin War – Meiji revolutionaries from the South (Choshu, Satsuma, and Tosa) won the civil war – ended Tokugawa Shogunate
- 1868            Meiji (“Enlightened Rule”) Restoration – coup against Tokugawa Shogunate – rhetoric restored the rule of the Heavenly Sovereign – but Emperor became symbolic
- 1869            Meiji government asked William Seward (US Secretary of State who had purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867) to mediate on Sakhalin – Seward recommended purchase, but Russia refused to sell to Japan
- 1875            Treaty of St. Petersburg – Japan ceded Sakhalin to Russia in return for the north Kurile Islands
- 1876            Treaty of Kanghaiwa – Japan used gunboat diplomacy with Korea – extraterritorial legal rights for Japanese nationals in Korea – privileged Japanese access to Korean ports
- 1881-1901      Matsukata Masayoshi, Finance Minister for 15 of 20 years – balanced the budget, controlled inflation, set up the Bank of Japan
- 1889            new constitution for Japan – obedience to the Emperor – weak bicameral legislature (Privy Council and Diet) – political power to the Prime Minister and cabinet



1894-1895	Sino-Japanese War – Japan annihilated Chinese military forces
1895	Treaty of Shimonoseki – China ceded Taiwan to Japan – acknowledged Korea’s independence from China – opened Chinese ports to Japanese trade and investment
1902	Anglo-Japanese Alliance – United Kingdom recognized Japan’s claims to Korea
1904-1905	Russo-Japanese War – complete victory by the Japanese military over Russia
1905	Treaty of Portsmouth – affirmed Japan’s interests in Korea – transferred the Liaodong Peninsula, railroad interests in Manchuria, and the southern half of Sakhalin (Karafuto) from Russia to Japan
1909	assassination of former Japanese Resident General Ito Hirobumi in Manchuria – by an anti-Japanese, Korean patriot
1910	Treaty of Annexation – Japan forced Korea to yield its independence – placed Korea under colonial control – renamed it Chosen
1914-1918	World War One – Japan entered on the side of the Allies (the UK, France, and Russia – Japan took control of German-held territories in Micronesia
1922	Japan signed the Washington Naval Treaty and the Nine-Power Treaty – respect for territorial possessions in East Asia – balance of naval power

	– symbolized the recognition of Japan as a world power
1922	Japan received a League of Nations mandate to govern Micronesia (Nanyo) – former German colony
1923	Great Kanto Earthquake – caused 100,000 deaths – destroyed 60 percent of homes in Tokyo – flattened almost every workshop and factory between Tokyo and Yokohama
1926-1989	reign of Emperor Hirohito – oversaw the rise of extreme Japanese nationalism in the 1930s – pivoted to democracy in the post-war period
1932	Japan established puppet state of Manchukuo in Manchuria – turned it into the most industrialized region of continental East Asia
1937-1945	Japan invaded China – conquered large parts of eastern China – but could not defeat Nationalists in west or Communists in north
1941-1945	Japan fought and lost World War II in the Pacific – early successes in Southeast Asia, Melanesia – Allies formed Pacific corridor of air bases to bomb Japan and win the war
1941	Japan seized control of Vietnam from Vichy France
1941	Hitokappu Bay in Iturup, Kurile Islands – secret gathering point for Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor

- 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor (December) – buy time to establish a defensive perimeter – hoped Nazi Germany would win in Europe and US would not fight a long war in Pacific
- 1942 Battle of Coral Sea (May) – Allies prevented Japan from invading Port Moresby, New Guinea
- 1942 Battle of Midway (June) – overwhelming Allied victory – turning point in the Pacific war – Japan lost 4 (of its total of 6) fleet aircraft carriers
- 1942 Japan occupied Attu and Kiska in the US-owned Aleutian Islands (June) – with forces staged on Paramushir, Kurile Islands
- 1942 Battle of Guadalcanal (July-November) – Allies won decisively after huge losses on both sides (40 wrecked battleships lie at the bottom of Ironbottom Sound)
- 1943 Battle of the Bismarck Sea (February) – the Allies prevented a Japanese re-invasion of New Guinea by sinking all 8 Japanese troop transports, 4 destroyers, and 4,000 troops
- 1945 Yalta Conference (February) – Josef Stalin agreed to enter the war against Japan on condition that the USSR receive the Kurile Islands and southern Sakhalin after the war
- 1945 Allied bombers fire-bombed Tokyo (March) – caused 100,000 deaths

1945	US President Harry Truman chose to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (August) – caused 200,000 deaths
1945	Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender (August) – Allies' victory over Japan resulted from superior production capability and better military strategy
1945	USSR conquered Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands (August) – after a bloody battle on Shumshu
1945-present	Kurile Islands under Soviet or Russian (since 1991) control – part of Russia Far East – Japan claims four southern Kuriles (the Kurillian Knot Controversy)
1945-1952	American occupation of Japan – General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers – power to suspend the Diet, censor the press, disband political parties, and govern by administrative decree
1947	Japan's new constitution – written by Americans – guaranteed civil liberties – specified that the cabinet answered to the legislature (not the emperor) – renounced military action as an instrument of policy
1949	Ministry of International Trade and Industry created – oversaw Government intervention in the economy – re-emergence of zaibatsu (cartels) as keiretsu – enterprise unionism

1949	Communists defeated Nationalists in China – Nationalists had mismanaged economy, carried out brutalities, permitted corruption
1950-1953	Korean War – stalemate – Japanese economy gained from provisioning Allies, from US aid to Japan, and from carrying out post-war reconstruction in Korea
1955-1973	high growth era in Japan – average annual growth rate of GDP was 9 percent – economies of scale – promotion of favored sectors – sanctioned cartels
1973-1990	modest growth era in Japan – average annual growth rate of GDP was 4 percent – failure to adapt to changing global markets – high industrial concentration, politicized economic policy environment
1990-2019	very low growth era in Japan – average annual growth rate of GDP was 1 percent – politics and inadequate policies – lack of adequate reforms – aging population
2012-2020	Shinzo Abe, Japan's Prime Minister – popular leader and consummate politician – loosened monetary policy – increased public spending – did not reform protection of agriculture, inflexible labor laws



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## **Sites Visited in Japan and the Kurile Islands**

**Japan by Sea, Aboard the *Caledonian Sky***

**Stanford Travel/Study Program**

**April 10-23, 2015**

**Ship-based, Aboard the *Caledonian Sky***

### **Tokyo**

In 1600, Edo (now Tokyo) was a fishing village of 1500 residents. By 1720, Edo was the center of the Tokugawa Shogunate and, with 1.3 million inhabitants, the world's largest city. Today, Tokyo has 13.4 million people and is Japan's prosperous and tidy capital. Our group first visited the extensive collections in the Tokyo-Edo Museum, which focuses on the development of the city through the Tokugawa (1603-1868), Meiji (1868-1912), and modern (1912-present) periods. We next took a scenic cruise down the Sumida River from historic Asakusa to the Hama-rikyu Garden. Hama-rikyu was the family garden and duck-hunting preserve of the Tokugawa shoguns from 1654 to 1868. Tidal waters from adjacent Tokyo Bay were used to make ponds and moats. The imperial family took over the garden in 1868 and donated it to the city as a public park in 1945. We also visited Tsukiji, the largest of Tokyo's 11 fish markets. Every day at Tsukiji, 17,000 employees handle 2 million tons of fresh fish (450 different varieties of fish). We sampled delicious fresh sushi and sashimi at one of Tsukiji's endless fish stalls. We next observed the variety of specialty shops in Kappabashi and went to one store that exclusively sold plastic models of plates of food for the windows of Japanese restaurants.

### **Sado Island**

When the Tokugawa clan consolidated its control of Japan in 1603, the first Tokugawa shogun, Ieyasu, claimed Sado Island as a clan preserve. The Tokugawas mined Sado's gold and silver and banned trade with the

island. Following the decline of mining, the Tokugawas opened Sado to commerce in the mid-18th century. One seaside village, Shukunegi, developed as a center for ship-building because of the abundance of high-quality cedar and oak forests and the island's location on the Osaka-Hakodate (southern Honshu-Hokkaido) trade route. Skilled ship-building craftsmen settled in Shukunegi and turned the village into one of the wealthiest in Japan. Today, Shukunegi has more than 100 well-preserved, Edo-period wooden buildings, dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. Our group visited the exquisite village and its well-appointed museum and marveled at the expert carpentry. We also visited the taiko drumming center, established by the Kodo Cultural Foundation, a non-profit group that trains apprentices, composes taiko music, and offers performances around the world. Our group enjoyed lessons in taiko drumming by Kodo's expert staff and took turns playing some of the center's enormous drums (made of cedar wood and calf-skin).

## **Kanazawa**

In 1583, the Maeda clan constructed a castle in Kanazawa and expanded its control of rice-producing lands to become the second richest feudal clan in Japan (after the ruling Tokugawa clan) for nearly three centuries. A century later, in 1676, the Maeda feudal lord (daimyo) began creation of the Kenroku-en Garden, which today is one of the most beautiful gardens in all of Japan. Spectacular Kenroku-en (meaning six-dimensional) contains the six key attributes of classical Japanese gardens – spaciousness, seclusion, artifice, antiquity, watercourses, and panoramas. After the Meiji Restoration and the ending of daimyo rule, Kenroku-en Garden was opened to the public in 1874. Although Japanese aficionados of gardens look first at mosses, foreigners tend to be most impressed by panoramas of trees, especially the blooming cheery trees, which we were fortunate to enjoy in a rainy setting. Our group walked through the hill-top garden and stopped at the Shiguretei tea house to experience a classical Japanese tea ceremony. We were served bitter green tea complemented by sweet bean paste in a spectacular garden setting. The tea ceremony has evolved from an

occasion for samurai warriors to psyche themselves up for battle to an expression of calmness and beauty.

## **Matsue**

En route from the port of Sakaiminato to the castle town of Matsue, our group visited the outstanding Adachi Museum of Art. Adachi Zenko had progressed from selling charcoal to making a fortune in Osaka real estate. He constructed his museum to house his collection of 1500 contemporary paintings by Japanese artists, featuring 20 works by Taikan Yokoyama. He also created an award-winning Japanese garden with rocks, moss, and gravel surrounded by trees and borrowed landscape. The small city of Matsue, with 150,000 inhabitants, is sited astride picturesque Lake Shinji. In 1611, Yoshiharu Horio, a daimyo ally of the victorious Tokugawa clan in the decisive Battle of Sekigahara (1600), began the construction of Matsue Castle. With its six stories, that impressive castle is the largest of the 12 existing castle towers in Japan. Matsue Castle is set in the scenic Jozan Park. Our group climbed to the top floor of the castle, which was renovated in the 1950s, and enjoyed great views of Lake Shinji and Mt. Daisen. Matsue is a leading example of the evolution of Tokugawa castle towns from defensive fortresses to commercial centers. Between 1580 and 1630, daimyos built about 275 castles in Japan. Over half are the foundations of Japan's current leading towns or cities.

## **Hagi**

Hagi has a small population (50,000) but played a large role in Japanese history. Hagi is known for its potters and revolutionary samurai. During the early-17<sup>th</sup>-century struggle between the Tokugawa and Toyotomi clans, the Mori clan (controlling Hiroshima) fought on the losing side. The winning Tokugawas forced the Moris to relocate to Hagi, command only half its former area of rice production, and build a new castle. The Mori clan recovered impressively and created a strong base in Hagi (Choshu Prefecture). Our group visited three Hagi sites, all

demonstrating Mori influence. The hillside Toko-ji Temple contains hundreds of moss-covered stone lanterns that guard the graves of five Mori daimyo (lords). The Kikuya House in the samurai quarter of Hagi was the home of the purveyor family to the Mori lords, which became extraordinarily wealthy as merchants and financiers. The Nosaka Kogetsudo ceramics works features a 65-year-old “climbing-up kiln” that is fired only once per year. Hagi-yaki pottery, introduced by the Moris, has been synonymous with high quality for 400 years. We also saw the primary school attended by Ito Hirobumi, the Hagi-born leader of the Choshu samurai rebels and first prime minister of Japan after the 1868 Meiji Restoration.

## **Hiroshima**

Hiroshima, a castle city in the Edo Period (1603-1868), is now a thriving city of 1.1 million. On August 6, 1945, Hiroshima was a Japanese army base and industrial city of 350,000 residents. The US chose Hiroshima as the site of the first atomic bomb because of its military-industrial importance and because it did not have a POW camp housing Americans. President Harry Truman used the atomic bomb to force Japan to surrender and avoid an invasion of Japan by American troops. The horrific bomb killed 140,000 victims in Hiroshima. An additional 70,000 Japanese died after the second atomic bomb in Nagasaki on August 9. Our group visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Museum, dedicated in 1955, and observed the terrible human impact of the explosion and radiation. We searched our souls in front of a burial mound, which contains the ashes of 70,000 anonymous victims, and a peace flame, which will be extinguished only if all nations ban nuclear weapons. The citizens of Hiroshima have dedicated themselves to promoting world peace. While acknowledging that Japan was the aggressor in the war, the museum’s disappointing explanation strongly implies that the United States used nuclear weapons to preempt the Soviet Union’s entry into the Pacific war.

## **Miyajima**

Miyajima Island (“Shrine Island”) is located in the Inland Sea near Hiroshima. The tiny island of 12 square miles houses about 2000 permanent residents. Miyajima is a key destination for pilgrims. The Itsukushima Shinto Shrine, a UNESCO World Heritage site, was built originally in the 6<sup>th</sup> century, enlarged in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and re-constructed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The shrine is dedicated to the three daughters of Susano-o no Mikoto, the Shinto god of seas and storms and the brother of the Shinto sun goddess, Amaterasu, the primary Shinto deity. Pregnant Japanese women visit the shrine in hopes of improving their chances of having successful births. Our group observed a *bugasu* performance, featuring a tall male dancer accompanied by a five-piece orchestra playing traditional Japanese instruments. The shrine was built like a pier to allow easy access for pilgrims arriving by sea. Both the shrine and its *torii* (shrine gate) appear to be floating in the sea but are not. Many of us climbed up a small mountain to visit the Daishoin Temple, a Tibetan Buddhist temple dedicated to the Dalai Lama. It was fascinating to contrast the Tibetan Buddhist emphasis on iconic images of the Buddha and prayer wheels with the Japanese Zen Buddhist stress on pure forms, nature, and meditation.

## Kyoto

Kyoto was the seat of the emperor, and thus Japan’s capital, from 794 until 1868. (After the Meiji Restoration (1868), the emperor and capital were moved to Tokyo.) Many of Japan’s most significant cultural sites are nested within this modern city of 1.5 million. Our group visited two of Kyoto’s UNESCO World Heritage sites. The Nijo Castle, constructed by the first three Tokugawa shoguns between 1603 and 1627, contains splendid artwork from the Kano Tantu school and bold samurai gardens. The Tokugawas wished to honor the emperor while relegating him to ceremonial functions. The Kinkaku-ji Temple (Golden Pavilion) features a three-story, Zen Buddhist pagoda from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, covered with gold leaf and set in a beautiful pond-filled, 12-acre garden. Atop the temple is a gold phoenix, a mythical bird symbolizing



peace. We next observed the unusual rock gardens at the Ryoanji Temple, created in 120 acres to inspire Buddhist meditation. Many of us bussed an hour eastward to Shiga to visit the spectacular Miho Museum, one of architect I. M. Pei's most masterful creations. Pei ingeniously permitted illumination of the museum's diverse Japanese art forms (Buddhist relics, silk-screen paintings, and porcelain) and of its Asian and Western antiquities.

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**A Voyage in Japan and South Korea Aboard *The World***  
**The World, Residences At Sea**  
**September 13-October 14, 2014**  
**Ship-based, Aboard *The World***

**Yokohama, Japan**

Yokohama was created in 1858, after the United States forced Japan to open several ports. The thriving metropolis of 3.7 million people is now Japan's leading port and second largest city. With a group from the ship, Sandra and I visited Senkeien Garden, which displays ancient Japanese buildings collected by a silk merchant in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The centerpieces were an 18<sup>th</sup>-century gassyo, a large farm house with a steeply-inclined roof, and a 15<sup>th</sup>-century, three-story pagoda. We also rode up to the 69<sup>th</sup> floor of the Landmark Tower for a view of Tokyo Bay. With Lesley Downer, a guest lecturer from England, we took a train to Kamakura, the capital of Minamoto Japan from 1185 to 1333. There, we saw the Daibutsu (Great Buddha), a 44-foot bronze, created in 1252, and the Hachiman-gu Shrine, the Shinto guardian shrine of the Minamoto rulers.

**Nagoya, Japan**

Nagoya, with 2.2 million inhabitants, is Japan's fourth largest city and the manufacturing center of Toyota motor vehicles. Located between

Tokyo and Osaka on Honshu's Pacific coast, Nagoya has long been a key commercial center. The first Tokugawa shogun, Ieyasu, constructed Nagoya Castle in 1612 and installed his ninth son in it to defend central Honshu and promote regional trade. With a group from *The World*, Sandra and I visited that impressive castle, reconstructed in 1959 after the original buildings were destroyed in World War II. We then toured the Tokugawa Art Museum, which contains countless treasures, including 500 samurai swords, from the Edo Period (1603-1868). After a 10-course Japanese lunch, we paid a visit to the Atsuta Jingu Shrine and took part in an intriguing Shinto religious ceremony capped by a cup of Shinto-blessed sake.

### **Shingu, Japan**

Shingu, a port town of 32,000 residents in central Honshu, serves the three Kumano Shinto shrines that have attracted Japanese pilgrims for a millennium and since 2004 have been a UNESCO World Heritage site. Devotees of the Shinto religion created the Kumano shrines to house three key gods. Lesley Downer, Sandra, and I explored two of those shrines by local bus and train. South of Shingu, the Kumano Nachi Grand Shrine, originally built in 907, rests in a stunning mountain setting. Nearby are the Seiganto-ji Temple, a three-storied, orange pagoda, and the Nachi-no-Otaki waterfall, at 436 feet the highest in Japan. We walked the pilgrimage route through cedar forests in the Daimon-zaka hills. Later, in Shingu we visited the Kumano Hayatama Taisha shrine, an orange-and-green structure that many consider to be Japan's most significant Shinto shrine.

### **Nara, Japan**

Nara, Japan's imperial capital from 710 to 784, was the eastern terminus of the Silk Road. Today, Nara is small city of 370,000 residents and a bedroom community for the port of Osaka. I escorted a group from the ship on an exploration of early Buddhist temples and art. It was an enlightening experience. The Horyu-ji Temple, constructed in the early

7<sup>th</sup> century by Crown Prince Shotoku, features a five-story pagoda (representing the five elements of earth, water, wood, wind, and sky) and became Japan's first UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1993. The Todai-ji Temple contains the world's largest ancient wooden building to house a Great Buddha. The Treasure Museum at Kofuku-ji Temple features one of the true masterpieces of Japanese art – the Asyura, a Buddhist statue of three faces and three arms, created in 734 using the hollow-dry-lacquer process.

## **Takamatsu, Japan**

Takamatsu, with 420,000 residents, is the leading port on Shikoku Island. Sandra and I visited the moat-filled grounds of the Takamatsu Castle, built in 1590, and spent a delightful hour walking in the Ritsurin Garden, one of the finest rock gardens in Japan. We each escorted tours to Naoshima Island, an islet with 3000 residents – once the polluted site of a Mitsubishi copper-smelter and now a revived center for contemporary art. We visited three stunning museums, all built by the Benesse Company and designed by Tadao Ando. The architecture is supra-modern concrete tucked into natural scenery. The Benesse House Museum features art by Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg, the eponymous Lee Ufan Museum contains works by the Korean sculptor-painter, and the Chichu Art Museum has rooms devoted to the art of Claude Monet and James Turrell.

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## **Northern Ring of Fire II: Kamchatka and the Kurile Islands**

### **Zegrahm Expeditions**

**August 9-21, 2010**

**Ship-based, Aboard the *Clipper Odyssey***

Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky is the capital of Kamchatka Province in Russia's Far East. The city of 200,000 residents is the center of Kamchatka's lucrative salmon fishery and houses Russia's largest submarine base. Petropavlovsk (the city of St. Peter and St. Paul) was founded in 1740 by Vitus Bering, a Danish explorer in the service of the Russian Navy. Bering named the settlement after the two ships, the *St. Peter* and the *St. Paul*, which he used in his discovery of Alaska and the Bering Strait (1741-1742). During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Russian fur traders exploited the sea otter ("Kamchatka beaver"), then so numerous that the first Russian term for the Pacific Ocean was the "Beaver Sea." Sea otter pelts, the most valuable of all furs, were traded for Chinese tea, silk, and porcelain. Salmon has been Kamchatka's main export since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The salmon fishery was dominated by Japanese entrepreneurs after the Russo-Japanese War (1905) through the Second World War (1945). Since 1945, Russian fishing interests have controlled the valuable Kamchatka salmon fishery.

As our chartered flight from Anchorage flew over Kamchatka, we observed several of the peninsula's 29 active volcanoes. Petropavlovsk is nestled among volcanoes along Avacha Bay, a scenic, closed harbor. We bussed to the St. Peter and St. Paul Church, a 20-year-old Russian Orthodox church replete with golden onion domes and a beautiful floor-to-ceiling iconostasis. In the former Lenin Square (renamed Theater Square after the fall of the Soviet Union), we visited the Museum of Local Handicrafts and enjoyed an exhibition of dances by Koryak women and girls. A nearby chapel commemorated fallen soldiers, who died when the Russian army averted an invasion attempt by English and French forces in 1855, during the Crimean War. We ended our city tour with a walk through the Petropavlovsk market, where our guide identified five different varieties of smoked salmon. We then sailed to Russkaya Bay in southwestern Kamchatka, hiked along a river in a mountain-crested valley, and observed two distant Kamchatka brown bears, nesting Steller's sea eagles, and hauled-out Steller's sea lions.

### **Shumshu Island, Kurile Islands, Russia**

Shumshu Island is the northernmost of the 36 main Kurile Islands, lying just south of the Kamchatka Peninsula. The island earned its place in history as the site of the Battle of Shumshu (August 18-22, 1945) when a massive Soviet invading army annihilated 8,500 Japanese troops. The armistice ending World War II in the Pacific had already been signed (August 15, 1945). But Josef Stalin wanted to ensure that the Allies would honor the secret agreement signed by Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill at Yalta (in February 1945) to allow the USSR to obtain the Kurile Islands and the southern half of Sakhalin Island from Japan in return for entering the war against Japan. We went ashore in two parts of Shumshu, despite pouring rain. On a walk through a river valley, we saw evidence of Japanese defensive fortifications. We then visited a deserted former Russian military base. For three decades after taking possession of the Kurile Islands in 1945, the Soviet Union had no strategic reason to militarize the archipelago. But in 1978, the Soviets began to establish a strong military presence in the Kurile Islands.

### **Matua, Shimushir, and Yankicha Islands, Kurile Islands, Russia**

At the end of the Cold War (1978-1991), the Soviets used the Kurile Islands as a shield to protect their fleet of submarines in the Sea of Okhotsk, which carried missiles targeted on the western two-thirds of the United States. We visited two major Soviet military facilities in the central part of the Kurile chain. On Matua Island, the Russians re-built a former Japanese airfield to serve as their primary air base in the Kuriles. Three teams of geologists – one from the University of Washington – were camped on Matua to carry out research on the effects of a 65-foot tsunami in 2006 and an eruption of Sarycheva volcano in 2009. On Shimushir Island, which has five volcanoes, the Soviets established their principal submarine base in the Kuriles and operated it for two decades (1974-1994). We walked through the detritus-filled skeleton of the base, deserted since 1997, which once housed 5000 people. We sailed on to Yankicha Island to Zodiac cruise in a spectacular caldera. On Yankicha,



we also observed fumaroles (geo-thermal gas vents) and numerous species of birds, including a haze of crested and whiskered auklets.

### **Urup and Iturup Islands, Kurile Islands, Russia**

Urup is the southernmost of the northern group of Kurile Islands (those accorded to Russia by Japan in the Treaty of Shimoda (1855)). Urup currently is uninhabited, but it had a Russian-American Company station to hunt sea otters in the 1820s and a Japanese military airfield during World War II. We went ashore at Natalia Bay, despite near-shore williwaws (high winds that sweep down steep surfaces), and saw pink salmon running up streams to spawn. After an overnight sail, we spent a morning on a beach in northeastern Iturup. Iturup is the largest of the Kurile Islands and has had over half of the islands' total population during Ainu, Japanese, and Russian occupation. Iturup is the center of productive salmon and king crab fisheries. In December 1941, the Russian fleet that attacked Pearl Harbor was launched from Hitokappu Bay, Iturup. Our group went ashore to hike along a scenic beach that contained fresh brown-bear tracks. On the beach was a Russian salmon-fishing camp, and we were warmly greeted by seven Russian fishermen. That meeting was our only encounter with Russians in the Kurile Islands.

### **Tyuleniy Island, Sea of Okhotsk, Russia**

Tyuleniy (Seal) Island is the site of an indescribable phenomenon – a plethora of sea mammals and seabirds, crowded together in a tiny area (750 yards by 400 yards) in the Sea of Okhotsk (east of Sakhalin Island). During the summer breeding season, the small island serves as a rookery for 80,000 northern fur seals, 4,000 Steller's sea lions, and more than 200,000 seabirds, primarily common murres (which resemble a small penguin). Our passengers went ashore in small groups and walked carefully to minimize impact. Despite an overpowering stench, everyone was mesmerized by the enormous concentrations of birds and animals, all raising new pups and chicks. The seal pups, about three

months old, stayed near the cliffs, out of the way of adult seals and sea lions en route to the ocean to fish. All of the Tyuleniy birds and sea mammals are pelagic and return to the island only to breed. The Russian government has constructed barriers and blinds for viewing. During the Soviet period, the government also built a hotel on the beach on Tyuleniy, but that decrepit facility is used only infrequently by research teams.

### **Korsakov and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Sakhalin Island, Russia**

Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, a bustling city of 185,000 residents, is the capital of Sakhalin Oblast in Russia's Far East. Sakhalin Island lies immediately north of Japan and east of southeastern Siberia. The island stretches for 600 miles north-to-south, is never more than 100 miles wide, and is home to 550,000 residents, mostly ethnic Russians. Sakhalin has had a checkered history. In the Treaty of St. Petersburg (1875), Russia took control of Sakhalin and Japan received all of the Kurile Islands. After Japan defeated Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905), the Japanese received the southern 40 percent of Sakhalin, named it Karafuto, and governed it from Toyohara (now Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk) for four decades. In return for entering the Second World War against Japan, the Soviet Union gained sovereignty over all of Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands in 1945. In the past 14 years, Sakhalin has enjoyed an oil-and-gas boom. International experts estimate that Sakhalin has 45 billion barrels of petroleum reserves. Russia's first liquefied natural gas facility has been constructed near Korsakov, the port where the *Clipper Odyssey* docked.

In Korsakov, our group was greeted at the dock by a lively, 12-piece brass band, which entertained us with Russian marches and waltzes. We then boarded busses for a one-hour drive northward to Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, where we enjoyed a city tour. We began with a visit to St. Nicholas Cathedral, a beautiful Russian Orthodox Church built in 1958 and reconstructed three years ago. The first highlight of our day in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk was the guided tour of the City Museum. The

exhibits contain extraordinary representations of Sakhalin Native (Ainu and Nivkh) clothing, tools, and boats, show what life on Sakhalin was like when it housed a Russian penal colony in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and explain the technologies used by multinational petroleum companies in the current oil and gas boom. Our second highlight was the tireless choir and dance troupe, which presented traditional Russian songs and Cossack dances during our sumptuous Russian lunch. The troupe provided a festive ending to our diverse visit to the Russian Far East – Kamchatka, the Kurile Islands, and Sakhalin Island.

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**A Cruise in East Asia, Aboard the *Silver Whisper***  
**Silversea Cruises**  
**February 26 - March 8, 2009**  
**Ship-based, Aboard the *Silver Whisper***

**Naha, Okinawa, Japan**

The Ryukyu Islands divide the Pacific Ocean and the China Sea, running from Taiwan northeasterly to the main islands of Japan. Okinawa is the largest and most populous of the Ryukyus. For several centuries, beginning about 1200, Okinawa was the center of the prosperous Ryukyu Kingdom, which paid tribute to dynastic China and earned wealth from rice agriculture and entrepôt trade with China. Shortly after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the Meiji oligarchs incorporated the Ryukyu Islands into Japan in 1879. Okinawa was the site of a horribly bloody battle in the last stages of the Second World War. In April-June 1945, Japanese defenders fought to the death in an 82-day battle to prevent Allied forces from taking Japanese soil. After winning the Battle of Okinawa and the war, American forces established controversial bases in Okinawa.

After World War II, the Allies permitted Japan to retain control of the Ryukyu Islands. Naha, the former capital of the Ryukyu Kingdom, is

the largest city and administrative center of the Ryukyus. The city is sited in an attractive, semi-tropical setting, but its architecture is undistinguished. Naha resembles most small Japanese cities that had to be almost fully re-built after the war. It is modern, clean, and efficient, and it has an impressive mono-rail system for public transportation and a well-run small port. One feature – the impressive Shuri Castle (Shuri-jo) – distinguishes Naha from the rest of modest-sized Japanese cities. The Shuri Castle was the administrative and royal center of the Ryukyu Kingdom. Following its destruction in the Battle of Okinawa, the Shuri Castle was re-built to original specifications and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Because we had only a half-day to visit Naha, we decided to visit the castle and, en route, to view the city from the mono-rail train. We had to plead with bankers in downtown Naha to open the foreign exchange window early so that we could buy some Japanese yen for the train (the castle took charge cards). Riding the mono-rail proved to be a great way to see Naha city and its environs. The most memorable visual impression was the endless colorful laundry hanging out on apartment balconies (dryers have not yet taken hold in Naha). Shuri Castle was well worth our efforts to visit. Its hill-side setting is impressive, and its architecture is unusual and highly attractive, reflecting both early Chinese and later Japanese influences. The main gate, Shurei no Mon, is especially striking. The museums contain excellent teaching exhibits about the Ryukyu Kingdom.

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**A Cruise in East Asia – Japan, Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong,  
and Vietnam**

**Clipper Cruise Line**

**September 8-October 6, 2002**

**Ship-based, Aboard the *Clipper Odyssey***

## **Sado Island, Kanazawa, Matsue, Hagi, Nagasaki, Miyajima Island, Hiroshima, Okayama, and Himeji, Japan**

The first leg of the trip began in Tokyo where we enjoyed a one-day pre-cruise tour of that city. We then took a two-hour ride on the bullet train to Niigata, a port city in northwestern Honshu, where we boarded the *Odyssey* and began the first cruise. On that first leg, we had 102 passengers and sailed down the western coast of Japan, across the Sea of Japan to Pusan, South Korea, and then back to Kyushu, Shikoku, and Honshu in Japan's Inland Sea region. Highlights of that cruise included a robotized exhibit at Japan's once-largest gold mine on Sado Island, the once-powerful Maeda clan's beautiful Kenroken Garden in Kanazawa, the incredibly well-preserved, four-century-old castle in Matsue, the Daisho-in Buddhist funerary temple for the Mori clan in Hagi, the new Dejima museum that explains Dutch and Chinese commercial activities in Nagasaki, the eighth-century-old Shinto shrine on Miyajima Island, the Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima, the Koraku-en Garden, one of Japan's three finest, in Okayama, and Japan's grandest original castle in Himeji.

## **Iriomote Island, Japan**

Our next stop was in Iriomote Island, one of Japan's southern-most islands located east of Taiwan, where we hiked in the subtropical rainforest in search (unsuccessfully) of the elusive Iriomote lynx.

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