

Post-Classical Japan

Rise of the Shogunates





Yamato Period

250 CE to 710 CE

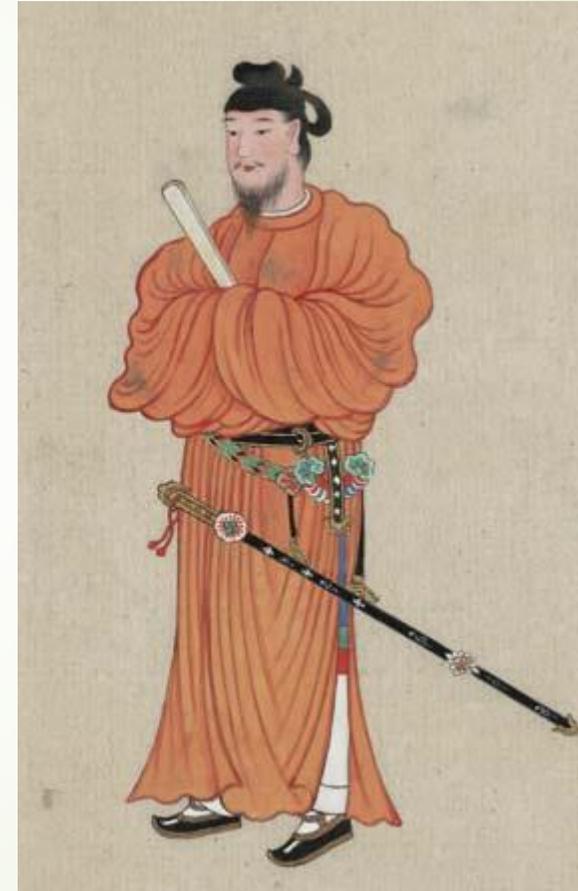


Tribal Japan and Unification

- ▶ Prior to the 6th century, Japan was a **primarily tribal society**, with different powerful families and clans ruling over different regions.
 - ▶ Culture, religious practice, and law differed from clan to clan
- ▶ By the end of the 6th century, the **Yamato clan** from Honshu (the main island) came to dominate, and established their leader as an emperor
 - ▶ Japan's current emperor is a direct descendent of this family lineage. Japan thus has the **longest continuous ruling family** in history
- ▶ It is during this period that the Japanese begin borrowing heavily from Chinese civilization:
 - ▶ **Buddhism**
 - ▶ **Centralized, imperial state**
 - ▶ **Confucian ethical and political thought**
 - ▶ **Chinese writing system**

Unification: Prince Shotoku Taishi

- ▶ Adopted **Chinese culture and Confucianism**
- ▶ Allowed the **development of Buddhist sects and monasteries**
- ▶ Created a new government structure
 - ▶ **17 Article Constitution** in 604 CE





Prince Shotoku's Constitution

“The ministers and officials of state should make proper behavior their first principle, for if the superiors do not behave properly, the inferiors are disorderly; if inferiors behave improperly, offenses will naturally result. Therefore, when lord and vassal behave with propriety, the distinctions of rank are not confused. When people behave properly the Government will be in good order.”





On Chinese Influence in Japan

“But... it is crucially important to understand that what the Japanese borrowed, they also adapted and made Japanese.”

Haruo Shirane, Professor of Japanese Literature and Culture, Columbia University.

Chinese Cultural Influences: Writing

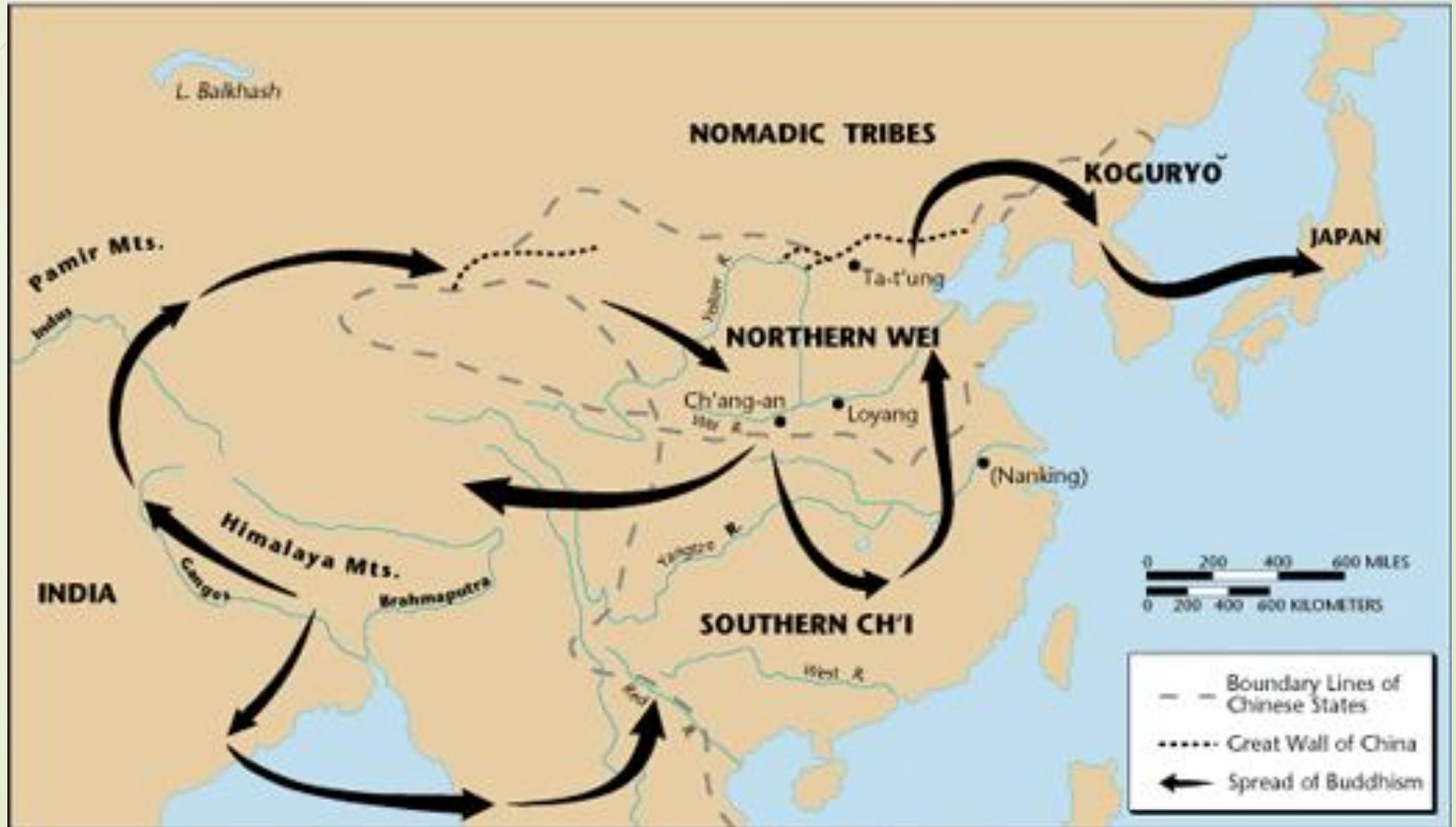
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“At this time, Chinese language was to East Asian civilization what Latin was to early Europe. It was written and read by educated elites in China, Japan, Korea, and what is Vietnam today.”

Robert Oxnam

President Emeritus, Asia Society

Chinese Cultural Influences: Buddhism





Development of Shinto

- ▶ **Shinto** is a result of **cultural borrowing and syncretism** between **native Japanese beliefs** and the arrival of **Buddhism**
- ▶ Translated, “Shinto” means “**the way of the kami**”
 - ▶ “Kami” are deities or spirits
- ▶ Emphasizes **ritual practice and worship**, and can involve:
 - ▶ Worship at shrines of spirits or gods tied to **natural features**
 - ▶ **Divination**
 - ▶ **Ancestor veneration**
 - ▶ **Spirit possession**
 - ▶ **Shamanic healing**

Chinese Cultural Influence: Political

- ▶ While Japan adopts a centralized bureaucratic state headed by an emperor and Confucian political thought, **it does NOT adopt the following:**
 - ▶ **Mandate of Heaven.** Instead, Japan pulls from its own history and ritual to justify imperial rule.
 - ▶ **Civil service exams.** Instead, Japan will tend towards more inheritance in their government, instead of meritocracy.



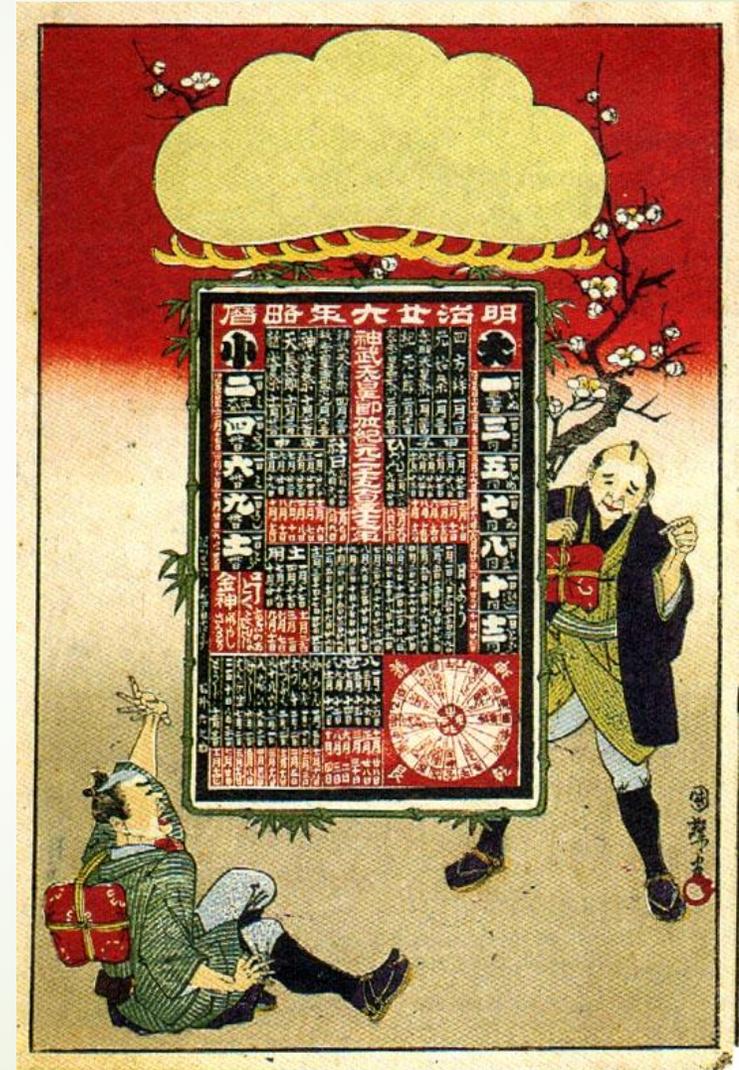


Nara Period

Establishing Patterns

Nara Period: Taika Reforms

- ▶ The **Taika Reform edicts** were written and sponsored by **Confucian scholars** in the Yamato court in 645 CE, and:
 - ▶ Established the **emperor's supremacy**
 - ▶ Established the idea of **giving land for service to tie vassals to their lords**
 - ▶ Sets the responsibility for **day-to-day governance** more heavily on **local lords**





Nara Period



- The **Nara period** (710 to 784 CE) saw the creation of a new capital city (Nara), an imperial court, and bureaucracy
- The capital city and **court imitate Tang China**
 - HOWEVER: **heredity is more important in Japan**
- Eventually, increased influence of Buddhist monasteries in Nara led to the emperor moving the court to a new city—**Heian** (eventually known as Kyoto)



Heian Period

Civility, Culture, and Corruption



Heian Period: 794 to 1156 CE

- ▶ Elaborate court life
- ▶ Period of intense artistic and literary production
 - ▶ ***The Tale of Genji***, by Lady Murasaki Shikibu
 - ▶ ***The Pillow Book***, by Sei Shonagon
- ▶ Moving further away from Chinese models in religion, arts, and government
- ▶ Development of **large, landed estates**– **SHOEN**
 - ▶ Evidence of **increasing political decentralization**
 - ▶ **Imperial family increasingly lost real political control**– emphasis on religious ritual instead
 - ▶ Control passes to regents and warlords (**shoguns**)

JAPAN



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HEIAN ARISTOCRACY IN JAPAN



Imperial Decline

Rise of the Samurai



Feudal Japan: 1192 to 1543 CE

- ▶ Japan is dominated by powerful regional families (**daimyo**) and military rule under local warlords (**shoguns**)
- ▶ Emperor still remains, but is **primarily a figurehead**
- ▶ A form of **FEUDALISM**: real power in the hands of aristocratic warriors with relative autonomy in provinces
 - ▶ Warlords and their vassals are held together **by oaths of loyalty, marriage alliances, and economic/political interests**
 - ▶ Rise of the **samurai class** and bushido → **DEATH BEFORE DISHONOR** (seppuku)
- ▶ Attempted **Mongol invasions** legitimize militarization of society



川中萬百勇將數之内
明將武田晴信入道信玄

清
國芳
五



當世英雄傳

高崎佐二郎

常陸の國の浪人として大阪
生玉返お居より一が幕吏
の手に取用され荒陵山にて
自終して其名を四方に
残し今元三大師の
傍に碑を立て建らしむる

花陽梅園員画

