

## Japan: 600s to 1600s

### Overview of Topics

- Early Japan
- Prince Shotoku & Taika Reforms
- Japan under Emperors – Nara & Heian
- Kamakura Shogunate
- Ashikaga Shogunate
- Warring States Period



## Early Japan

- Hunter-gatherers in the beginning
- Later settlers arrived with skills in iron, bronze, weaving, & rice farming
- Influences from China & Korea
  - Borrowed Chinese writing system
  - Later, **Buddhism** arrived in Japan from Korea
    - Competed with **Shintoism** (native Japanese religion)

## Shintoism

- Traditional Japanese religion
- Based on “kami” (神 or かみ)
  - Similar to nature spirits & found in natural objects (rocks, trees, water, etc.)
  - Built shrines (Torii gates) dedicated to different kami
- Initially threatened by Buddhism, but later blended with it



## Prince Shotoku & Taika Reforms

- Prince Shotoku
  - Member of Soga clan
  - Admired China
  - Brought Buddhism & central government to Japan
- Taika Reforms (645 C.E.)
  - Strong, central government
  - Declared all farmland outside the capital of Kyoto belonged to the emperor
  - Based on Chinese practices & culture



## Nara & Heian Periods (~650-1185)

- Japan ruled by emperors
- Capital at Kyoto (京都 or きょうと)
- Golden Age of literature, art, & drama
  - *Tale of Genji* by Murasaki Shikibu (a woman!!)
- Decreasing Chinese influence in late 800s (*Why?*)
- Declined after Genpei War (1180-1185) between Minamoto & Taira clans





## Kamakura Shogunate (1185-1333)

- **Minamoto Yoritomo** won Genpei War & became “**Shogun**” (military leader)
- Emperors had no real power during this time
- Allowed to rule country in exchange for keeping the peace
- Lost power because of a rebellion encouraged by Emperor Go Daigo



## Ashikaga Shogunate (1333-1467)

- Weaker than Kamakura Shogunate
- Shared power with imperial government
- Fighting between different factions of samurai in countryside
- “Kamikaze” (かみかぜ / 神風) or “Divine Wind” – origins
  - Mongols tried to invade Japan in 1274 & 1281
  - Typhoons wrecked Mongol invasion fleets & Japanese samurai took care of the rest



## Warring States Period (1467-1603)

- Started with dispute over who would become next Ashikaga shogun
- Different clans fighting for control of Japan
  - e.g.: Oda, Takeda, Imagawa, Hojo, etc.
- Frequent betrayals & changing alliances
  - *“Friends one minute, enemies the next”*
- “Ikko-ikki” – peasants & monks who fought against samurai



## Warring States Period (1467-1603)

- **Oda Nobunaga** (1534 – 1582)
  - Daimyo who fought to unify most of Japan
  - Captured Kyoto & destroyed Ikko monks
- **Toyotomi Hideyoshi** (1536 – 1598)
  - Peasant who rose through the ranks & became Nobunaga's top general
- **Tokugawa Ieyasu** (1543 – 1616)
  - Served under Nobunaga & Hideyoshi before founding Tokugawa Shogunate

## Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1867)

- Capital: **Edo (now known as Tokyo)**
- **Tokugawa Ieyasu**
  - Won **Battle of Sekigahara** (1603) & became first shogun of Tokugawa Shogunate
  - Kept a **strict social order** to preserve a traditional society
  - Persecuted Christians
  - Banned trade with Europeans