

HISTORICAL PERIOD	DATES
PRE-HISTORY Paleolithic ('Mythical Japan')	35,000 – 11,000 BC
JOMON Period Neolithic - indigenous societies, early polities	11,000 - 300 BC
YAYOI Period Invasion! - brings wet rice, bronze & iron	300 BC - 300 AD
KOFUN (YAMATO) Period Rise of cities, cultural consolidation	300 - 538
CLASSICAL PERIOD A nation-state emerges Asuka, Nara, Heian (Kyoto)	538 -1185
FEUDAL PERIOD Age of the Shoguns & Samurai Kamakura, Muromachi, Sengoku, Azuchi-Momoyama, Edo	1185 - 1868
IMPERIAL JAPAN Rise and Fall of Fascist Japan	1868 - 1945
MODERN DEMOCRATIC JAPAN Cultural & economic superpower	1945 -

PRE-HISTORY (Paleolithic)

30-40,000 BC - First migrants from Siberia (ancestors of modern-day Ainu people) enter Hokkaido via the Kurils
40,000BC-15,000BC - Hunter-gatherers spread throughout the Japanese archipelago

11,000 to 300BC JOMON PERIOD (Neolithic)

11,000BC thru 300 BC - **JOMON PERIOD**- early indigenous societies, agriculture, pottery
660BC - Japan's first mythological Emperor Jimmu, a descendant of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, is enthroned

300BC to 300AD YAYOI PERIOD

300BC- **Invasion/migration from Korea** - these are the ancestors of modern-day Japanese. They brought wet rice cultivation ('the foundation of Asian civilization'), metallurgy and a new culture.
210 AD - Sumiyoshi Taisha in Osaka is founded, and exists to this day
270AD - Emergence of city-state polities and centralization. Emperor Ojin, Japan's first (quasi-)historical Emperor, enthroned.

300AD to 538AD YAMATO (KOFUN) PERIOD

4th to 6th century - Increasing centralization, emergence of court-based control by dominant nobility clans, contact with China as well as consolidation of an intrinsically Japanese culture with heavy Chinese influences. Iconic Haniwa tomb ornament sculptures.

538-1185 CLASSICAL JAPAN

538-710 ASUKA PERIOD- Buddhism introduced (from Korea), extensive Sinicization and consolidation of courtly control
593- Shitteno-ji, Japan's oldest Buddhist temple, is founded in Osaka by Prince Shotoku
602- Prince Shotoku declares Buddhism the state religion
604- The Shotoku Constitution, Japan's first --> establishes Japan as a nation-state, called NIHON ('Source of the Sun')
607- Horyu-ji outside Nara – oldest wooden structure in the world
Early 800s- Shingon and Tendai Buddhism introduced to Japan, from China
710-794 NARA PERIOD - Capital established at Nara, modeled after Chinese capital at Xian
712 - THE *KOJIKI* is published, codifying Japan's mythology, and justifying the rule of the imperial Yamato family
749- *Daibutsu* (Great Buddha) at Todai-ji in Nara

780- Kyomizu (Clearwater) Temple in Kyoto founded

794-1185 **HEIAN PERIOD** - Capital moved to Kyoto (then called Heian-kyo, 'Tranquility Capital') - flowering of the courtly society under the Fujiwara clan dominance - 'the height of Classical Japan'. Extensive contact with Korea's Silla Kingdom (56BC – 935AD), which had a major civilizing influence on Japan.

1180-85 The **GENPEI WAR** between ruling clans ends in decisive victory for the Minamoto clan over the Taira. This conflict is immortalized in the classic Tale of the Heike. The ascent of the Minamoto clan would end the Classical Period and usher in a new 683-year era: Feudal Japan, with the Shogun military dictator marginalizing the figurehead Emperor.

1185-1868 FEUDAL JAPAN - Age of Shoguns & Samurai

1185-1333- **KAMAKURA PERIOD** – The first shogunate – MINAMOTO no Yoritomo is Shogun (Military Dictator)

1191- Kamakura Daibutsu (Great Buddha); ZEN BUDDHISM INTRODUCED, from China.

1200- Jodo ('Pure Land') Buddhism widely popularized - and remains the most common Buddhist sect in Japan to this day

1232- Samurai legal code and Code of Honor (Bushido)

1274 & 1281 - Failed Mongol invasions of Kyushu by Kublai Khan

1333- Himeji Castle (first built as a fort, converted/expanded to a castle in 1601)

1333-6 - **KENMU RESTORATION** - short-lived attempt by Emperor Go-Daigo to overthrow the Kamakura Shogunate

1338-1570s - **MUROMACHI PERIOD** aka **ASHIKAGA SHOGUNATE PERIOD**. Zen is ascendant and pervasive, but there is also renewed interest in Shinto. Increased contact with Ming China. The arts flourish, but political life becomes increasingly fractured as provincial powers compete. (Muromachi is the district in Kyoto from which the Ashikaga shoguns ruled.)

1346- Komasu shrine, Matsue 1394-Kinkaku-ji (Golden Pavillion), Kyoto 1473-Ginkaku-ji (Silver Pavillion), Kyoto

1500- Ryoan-ji Zen rock garden and temple, Kyoto

1467-77 **ONIN WAR** civil war --> **SENGOKU PERIOD - 1477 thru 1600**- fragmentation, conflict, warring warlords

1542- Portuguese arrive (via shipwreck on Tanegashima Island off Nagasaki). Western firearms are embraced.

1549 - St. Francis Xavier, 'The Apostle of the East', arrives in Japan

1570s-1600 **AZUCHI (Shogun NOBUNAGA)-MOMOYAMA (Shogun HIDEYOSHI) PERIOD**

Final stage of the chaotic Sengoku Period. Nobunaga begins, and Hideyoshi furthers, **THE REUNIFICATION OF JAPAN**

1592 and 1597 - Hideyoshi launches 2 unsuccessful invasions of Korea (a sign of things to come).

1600- **TOKUGAWA IEYASU WINS AT THE MOMENTOUS BATTLE OF SEKIGAHARA** - THUS BEGINS 268 YEARS OF TOKUGAWA RULE

1601- Himeji Castle built by Tokugawa from prior fort of 1333

1603- Tokugawa officially appointed Shogun,. Capital moved to Edo (Tokyo) - **EDO PERIOD 1603-1868**

Nijo Castle built as Tokugawa's Kyoto residence

1597- Martyrdom of 26 Christians at Nagasaki 1615- Christians boiled alive in Nagasaki

1620- Shukkei-en Garden in Hiroshima 1622- 51 Christians slaughtered at Nagasaki; Kenroku-en built at outer Kanazawa Castle

1623- 50 more Christians burned at stake 1635- Portuguese expelled, Dutch confined on island of Deshima off Nagasaki

1636-Japan is "closed" (SAKOKU) 1637- Christianity officially banned after the last-gasp, unsuccessful Shimbara Rebellion

1641 - The Dutch (Protestants) are allowed to open trading houses on Dejima Island in Nagasaki.

1650- Ritsurin Garden in Takamatsu

1691- Toko-ji – 500 stone lanterns – Mori clan feudal lord temple/cemetery in Hagi 1701- The 47 Ronin Affair

1707- Last eruption of Mt. Fuji (Fuji summit today=12,388 ft.)

1709 –Todai-ji rebuilt around the 749AD Daibutsu– it was the largest all-wooden structure in world, and still is

1810- Gyokus-en garden in Kanazawa 1822- Kenroku-en (Kanazawa) expanded to 25 acres

1853-4 - **COMMODORE PERRY AND HIS BLACK SHIPS VISIT TOKYO BAY**. 1st visit: "I'll be back." 2nd visit: The Treaty of Kanagawa is signed, a coercive trade treaty essentially forcing open Japan's *sakoku* closed door.

1863- Seisonkaku Teahouse built in Kenroku-en garden in Kanazawa

MODERN JAPAN

1868 – **THE MEIJI RESTORATION** (a euphemism for REVOLUTION) - Modernizers ally with imperial forces to overthrow the Tokugawa Shogunate. The new government embarks on a major campaign to Westernize = industrialize and militarize. Shinto is hijacked and used to promote ideas of Japanese superiority and expansionism. This will end very, very badly.

1869 - Births allowed on Itsukushima island for first time (burials are still forbidden today)

1872- Satsuma Rebellion, the last paroxysmal gasp of the samurai, led by Saigo Takamori, 'The Last Samurai'

1888- The original Imperial Hotel, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, opens in Tokyo

1894-5- Japan defeats China in **SINO-JAPANESE WAR**. Chinese expelled from Korea. Taiwan annexed 'in perpetuity'.
1904-5 - Japan defeats Russia in the **RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR**. **JAPAN NOW OCCUPIES KOREA** (as a 'protectorate').
1910 - **JAPAN ANNEXES KOREA**
1914 - **Japan enters WWI - ON THE SIDE OF THE ALLIES**
1923 – Sept1: **Great KANTO QUAKE** >7.9 143K dead (same as Nag A-bomb) –FL Wright's Imperial Hotel opens same day
1931-32 – The Manchurian Incident → Japan invades Manchuria and a 'Manchuoko' puppet state is created
1937 - Japan invades China, including 'The Rape of Nanking'
1940 - Japan signs The Tripartite Alliance with Germany and Italy. After France falls, Japan occupies French Indochina.
1941 – **PEARL HARBOR ATTACK**, followed by rapacious and capacious Japanese conquest of Asia
*[NOTE: For a detailed timeline of Japan in WWII, see my **TIMELINE OF THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC** handout.]*
Aug 6 1945 – **HIROSHIMA (LITTLE BOY) A-BOMB DROPPED** Aug 9 1945 – **NAGASAKI (FAT MAN) A-BOMB DROPPED**
Sept 1945 - **JAPAN SURRENDERS ON BOARD USS MISSOURI IN TOKYO BAY**. US occupation of Japan headed by MacArthur
1946 - Framing of Japan's Pacifist Constitution 1951 – San Francisco Treaty **ends U.S. OCCUPATION** (except Okinawa)
1964 – Tokyo Olympics. The first Shinkansen (bullet train) connects Tokyo and Osaka.
1972 – **OKINAWA IS RETURNED TO JAPAN** by the U.S. administration. Sapporo Winter Olympics.
1975 - An economically resurgent Japan joins the G7. 1978 – Narita International Airport (NRT) opens
1988 – Japan becomes world's largest creditor. The economy booms ---> into a giant bubble.
1989- **NIKKEI HITS ALL-TIME HIGH OF 38,916 ON DECEMBER 29TH**.
1990 – **NIKKEI DROPS 48% IN 4 DAYS, INITIATING A LONG PERIOD OF ECONOMIC STAGNATION KNOWN AS 'THE LOST DECADES'**
1995 – **KOBE QUAKE** (Richter 7.5)- 6,000 dead; Shinrikyu cult subway **sarin attack** – 12 dead, 5000 injured
1998 – Nagano Winter Olympics
2001 – Junichiro Koizumi elected in landslide on reformist platform; he is charismatic and immensely popular
2006- Shinzo Abe elected as Prime Minister 2007- Abe surprise resignation → Fukuda becomes P.M.
2008- Fukuda surprise resignation-→ Taro Aso (Roman Catholic) becomes P.M.
2009- Aso resigns. DPJ (Dem. Party of Japan) wins by landslide, ending 54 years of LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) rule. Yukio Hatoyama of the DPJ becomes P.M.
2010- Hatoyama steps down over Okinawa air base issue; Nato Kan takes over, DPJ still in control.
2011- **TSUNAMI and FUKUSHIMA DISASTER**. **CHINA OVERTAKES JAPAN AS WORLD'S 2nd LARGEST ECONOMY**.
Kan steps down due to perceived poor handling of Fukushima. Yoshihiko Noda takes over, DPJ still in control.
2012- Nuclear reactor at Ohi re-opens, the first since Fukushima. Japan recalls ambassador to Seoul in protest of visit to Takeshima/Dokdos by South Korea's President Lee Myung-bak. The LDP wins in a landslide comeback - **ABE REDUX**
2013- The Abe government controversially approves the move of Futenma Air Force Base and its 25K US troops to another part of Okinawa (versus closure, as desired by the overwhelming majority of Okinawans).
2014- **'ABE THE HAWK' BEGINS DISMANTLING ARTICLE 9 OF THE PACIFIST CONSTITUTION**; Abe embraces US, wary of China.
2015- Abe surprises his critics on 70th anniversary of end of WWII by apologizing for “comfort women” and other atrocities.
2017-Trump pulls out of Trans-Partnership, much to Abe's chagrin. US-Japan ties remain strong in face of muscular China.
2018- Abe re-elected. 2019- Japan-South Korea friction over wartime sex slaves ('comfort women') and labor conscription.
2019- **EMPEROR AKIHITO STEPS DOWN AT AGE 86** after 30 years on the throne. He is **SUCCEEDED BY HIS SON, PRINCE NARUHIITO**
2020 - Abe steps down, for health reasons, after setting a record as Japan's longest-serving Prime Minister. **YOSHIHIDE SUGA, ABE'S CHIEF CABINET MINISTER, TAKES OVER**. He represents continuity.
2021 - Suga proves unpopular due to a surprisingly weak COVID vaccination program and controversy about whether and when to hold the Tokyo Olympics. **THE OLYMPICS COME OFF RELATIVELY WELL, AFTER A YEAR'S DELAY**, in the shadow of COVID.
SUGA RESIGNS AND IS SUCCEEDED BY FUMIO KISHIDA, also of the LDP. Less hawkish than Abe and Suga, Kishida still takes a strong stance against Chinese and North Korean aggression, wants a strong alliance with the USA, and strongly supports Ukraine.
2022- **ABE IS BRUTALLY ASSASSINATED** by a disgruntled former member of the Unification Church, with which Abe and the LDP has long had ties.
2023- **THE 'SILVER SOCIETY' DEMOGRAPHIC TIME BOMB IS EXPLODING** as Japan's population ages and shrinks. Addressing this is PM Kishida's #1 declared priority. The **NIKKEI HAS A GOOD YEAR driven by earnings and Japan's economy is robust**, albeit due in part to the weak Yen as a result of rock-bottom interest rates.
2024- The **NIKKEI FINALLY RECLAIMS ITS December 1989 ALL-TIME HIGH - officially ending the 'lost decades'**. **The Bank of Jaon raises interest rate (to just above 0%!) for the first time in over 2 decades**. Japan continues to strengthen its 'unofficial' relations with Taiwan and build its military with record spending on defense - much to China's displeasure. PM Kishida announces he will not seek a second term in the face of political funding scandals. Demographic data reach a new record for Japan's 'Silver Society' and the world with 29.3% of the population age 65 or greater, with a brewing labor shortage crisis. To address the labor shortage, plans for increasing immigration are a hot political issue (Japan's immigrant population is approximately 2% - vs. 14% for the USA and 16% for the U.K.).