

JAPAN HISTORICAL TIMELINE

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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

15,000BC thru 300 BC - **JOMON PERIOD**

660BC - Japan's first mythological Emperor Jimmu, a descendant of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, is enthroned.

300BC-300AD - **YAYOI PERIOD** after invasion/migration from Paekche (Korea) - these are the ancestors of modern-day Japanese

270AD - Emperor Ojin, JAPAN'S FIRST HISTORICAL EMPEROR, enthroned.

4th to 6th century - **KOFUN (Burial Mound) PERIOD** aka **YAMATO PERIOD** - emergence of dominant nobility clans

538-1192 CLASSICAL JAPAN

538-710 ASUKA PERIOD - early courtly/classical, Fujiwara ascent]

Iconic Haniwa tomb ornament sculptures 6th-7th c.

538 - Buddhism (Mahayana) introduced from Korea **602** - Prince Shotoku declares Buddhism the state religion

604 - Shotoku Constitution--> Japan (called NIHON) emerges as a nation-state

607 - Horyu-ji outside Nara – oldest wooden structure in the world

710-794 NARA PERIOD - Capital established at Nara

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 - 'the height of Classical Japan'

Extensive contact with Korea's Silla Kingdom (56BC – 935AD), which had a civilizing influence

1180-85 The **GENPEI WAR** between ruling clans ends in decisive victory for the Minamoto clan

1192-1868 FEUDAL JAPAN

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

1191 - Kamakura Daibutsu (Great Buddha); ZEN INTRODUCED - by way of India, China and Korea

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

(continued)

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 – Sept 1: **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

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 NARUHITO**

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 has ties.

2023- **THE 'SILVER SOCIETY' DEMOGRAPHIC 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 and Japan's economy is robust**.

2024- The **NIKKEI FINALLY RECLAIMS ITS December 1989 ALL-TIME HIGH - officially ending the 'lost decades'**. Japan continues to strengthen its 'unofficial' relations with Taiwan - much to China's displeasure