

Religion in Japanese History

552 C.E.

Introduction of Buddhism from Korea

574-621

Prince Shōtoku

- “Seventeen-Article ‘Constitution’” (Confucian and Buddhist principles)
- Patron of Buddhism
- Shinto as root, Confucianism as trunk, Buddhism as branch of Japanese culture



Prince Shōtoku

710-784

NARA PERIOD

- Capital: Nara (south of Kyōtō)
- Emperor Shōmu: built **Tōdaiji** (Great Eastern Temple) in 728; all ordinations took place here; center of network of temples in each province



Tōdaiji

- Six schools of Buddhism (1-3 Mahayana, 4-6 Theravada):
 1. **Kegon** (Skt. Avatamsaka; declared authoritative by Emperor Shōmu in 749)
 2. Hossō (Skt. Yogacara)
 3. Sanron (Skt. Madhyamika)
 4. Ritsu (Skt. Vinaya)
 5. Jōjitsu (Skt. Satyasiddhi)
 6. Kusha (Skt. Kosha)

794-1185

HEIAN PERIOD

- Capital: **Heian-kyō** (Kyōtō)

762-822

Saichō (Dengyō Daishi): **Tendai Buddhism** (includes some esoteric practices)

- Traveled to China in 804
- Established **Enryakuji** temple on **Mt. Hiei** (Hieizan), just outside Kyōtō

774-835

Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi): **Shingon Buddhism** (esoteric, tantric)

- Traveled to China in 805
- Established monastery on **Mt. Kōya** (Kōyasan), far south of Kyōtō
- Later given Tōji (Eastern Temple) in Kyōtō
- Invented *kana*, founded school open to all classes, patron saint of pilgrims

978-1026

(Lady) **Murasaki Shikibu**: author of *Tale of Genji*, world’s first novel

1185-1333 KAMAKURA PERIOD

- Military government (*bakufu*) separate from Imperial (civil) government
- Military capital established at Kamakura
- 1147-1199 • Minamoto Yoritomo given title “*Sei-i tai shōgun*” (Great Barbarian-quelling General)
- New Buddhist schools/sects: **Pure Land**
(see separate handouts) **Nichiren**
Zen

1333-1573 ASHIKAGA PERIOD

- Ashikaga Shogunate never ruled over a unified Japan
- Development of **Daimyō system**:
Shōgun (general, military ruler)
Daimyō (feudal lord)
Samurai (retainers, knights)

1534-1582 Oda Nobunaga

- ended Ashikaga shogunate
- destroyed Enryakuji (Mt. Hiei)
- failed to gain control over western Japan

1536-1598 Toyotomi Hideyoshi

- originally a commoner
- inherited Nobunaga’s domain and conquered remaining *daimyō*
- gave Edo domain to Tokugawa Ieyasu
- began custom of keeping families of *daimyō* at his headquarters as “hostages”
- instituted rigid division between samurai and commoners
- invaded Korea, but army turned back after his death



Daimyō family and retainers traveling to Edo on Tokaido Road.

1600-1868 EDO (TOKUGAWA) PERIOD

- Capital: Edo (later called Tokyo)
- Neo-Confucianism adopted as governing ideology
- Christianity prohibited
- every Japanese family required to register with a Buddhist temple (*danka* system)
- national isolation

1542-1616 Tokugawa Ieyasu

- named one of five regents for Hideyoshi's infant son

1600 • subjugated other regents

1603 • named Shogun by Imperial court

1616 • European traders limited to two ports (Nagasaki and Hirado)

1624 • Spanish traders expelled

1635 • Japanese prohibited from going abroad or returning home (death penalty)

1637-1638 • Shimabara Revolt (near Nagasaki), blamed on Christians; beginning of persecution of Christians

1639 • Portuguese traders expelled

1641 • Dutch (only foreigners left) moved to Deshima Island in Nagasaki harbor

-1853 • **“Pax Tokugawa” (Tokugawa Peace) and Isolation**

1853 • Commodore **Matthew C. Perry** sent by U.S. with 8 ships to negotiate trade

1854 • treaties signed with U.S., Britain, Russia, Netherlands

1860-1868 • anti-Shogunate revolts



Tokugawa Ieyasu, who founded the shogunate in 1603 in present-day Tokyo.

1868-1911 MEIJI PERIOD (RESTORATION)

- modernization, industrialization, Westernization

1870 • Shinto declared guiding ideology:

- *saisei ichi*: “unity of religion and government”

- Department of Shinto as branch of government – later Department of Shrines (Shinto) and Temples (Buddhism)

- 1882 • **Shrine/State Shinto** differentiated from **Sect Shinto**
 - Shrine Shinto declared part of government, not religion
- 1890 • Imperial Rescript on Education
- 1895 • Sino-Japanese War (Japan wins, Taiwan becomes part of Japan)
- 1905 • Russo-Japanese War (Japan wins)

1912-1925 **TAISHŌ PERIOD**

- increasing industrialization and militarization

1926-1988 **SHŌWA PERIOD**

- 1931 • Japan invades Manchuria
- 1941 • Pearl Harbor
- 1945 • Hiroshima, Nagasaki, defeat
- 1945-1952 • Occupation by U.S.
 - Shrine Shinto separated from government; Association of Shinto Shrines established
- 1945-
 - Increasing population shifts to cities; accelerated growth of New Religions
 - Perennial disputes over Yasukuni Shrine

1989- **HEISEI PERIOD**

- 1995 • Aum Shinrikyo releases sarin gas in Tokyo subway

