

# A Brief Outline of Japanese History.

## I. Mythological Period.

Izanagi + Izanami - <sup>Japanese islands</sup> drops that fell from spear of Izanagi.

Amaterasu Omikami (spring from left eye of Izanagi)

Grandson of Amaterasu - first Emperor of Japan - Jimmu-tenno

660 B.C.

## Prehistoric Period:

### II. 660 B.C. - 400 A.D. -

Emperor mainly a tribal ruler, but territory over which he ruled gradually extended.

### III. Imperialistic Period - 400<sup>(?)</sup> - 794 A.D.

About 400 A.D. Japanese records begin to be kept officially.

Power consolidated in hands of Emperor.

Buddhism introduced from Korea in 552 A.D. Became established religion in 621 A.D. Prince

Shōtoku great exponent of Buddhism. Codified Laws.

7<sup>th</sup> Cent. - begin. of Japanese painting.

8<sup>th</sup> Cent. - Nara Epoch - period of literary + esthetic activity. <sup>sculpture</sup> metal work.  
(Manyōshū) (Nara Dai Butsu)

IV. Heian Epoch, or Fujiwara Bureaucracy.

794-1159 A.D.

Fujiwara family usurps power.

Capital moved to Kyoto.

Rise of a powerful Buddhist priest-  
hood.

Hiragana developed by Kōbō Daishi  
according to tradition. (774-835)

10<sup>th</sup> Cent - saw development of a purely  
native school of art.

Siberian Era. Genji Monogatari.  
(11<sup>th</sup> Cent.)

V. Genpei Era - (Minamoto - Taira Clans)  
1159-1199. (White flag - Red)

Short but interesting period.

Yoshitsune + Benkei - Richard + Robin  
Hood.

VI. Hōjō Tyranny - 1199-1333 A.D.

The Hōjō hated because of their  
arbitrary treatment of the Em-  
perors.

Kamakura period - Decline of  
learning - government at lowest  
point. Emperor banished to island  
of Oki in 1333.

Kamakura Kai Butsu.

Sea comes into use.

Making of swords becomes a great  
art.



VII. Ashikaga Anarchy. 1333-1573.

Two Emperors ruling for a while.  
A real period of anarchy.

Christianity - first comes to Japan.

(1542 through Portuguese who  
introd. tobacco, firearms &  
Christianity - Xavier.

By 1573 - Nagasaki practically  
a Christian city.

Great artistic outburst - archi-  
tecture, painting, tea-cult, flower-  
cult, Nō drama.

VIII. Civil Strife. 1573-1603.

Tobunaga, Hideyoshi, Iyeyasu.

Terrible persecution of Christians  
under Hideyoshi.

Iyeyasu receives title of Shōgun.  
1603.

IX. Tokugawa Shogunate. 1603-1868.

Emperor at Kyoto, Shōgun  
at Yedo.

Dutch at Hirado, <sup>later</sup> Deshima in  
Nagasaki harbor - one ship a year.

Christianity - pract. stamped out by  
1622. Horrible tortures.

Pottery - Painting - Sculpture

(1603-1703 Genroku Era)  
Wood cuts - Ukiyoe (1760-1810  
finest work)

IX. Continued -

Awakening of Japan - 1853-1868 .

Perry comes July 7, 1853 - July 14  
delivers letter from Pres. Fillmore.

Treaties made with America &  
various European powers.

Opposition to Shōgunate growing.  
Keiki last of Shōguns surrendered  
power into hands of Emperor Nov. 19, 1867.

X. Meiji Era. 1868 - 1912.

Tokyo becomes capital.

Government gradually trans-  
formed from feudal state to  
constitutional state, with  
Emperor as "divine" and supreme  
ruler.

1889 - Constitution promulgated.

Privy Council.

Diet { House of Peers  
House of Commons }

Cabinet with Premier -

|| Min. of War & Min. of Navy  
not responsible to people or  
Premier.

War with China - 1894-95.

" " Russia - 1904-05

Annexation of Korea - 1910.



During reign of Jimmu's successor  
the Three Treasures - Mirror, Sword & Jewel  
were moved from the palace to the shrine  
at Ise.

History begins about the beg. of the 5<sup>th</sup> cent.,  
with the official keeping of records.

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Saiki - 1912 - 1926

Shoda - 1926 -