

1: Culture of Japan - history, people, traditions, women, beliefs, food, family, social, marriage

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I have always liked Japanese history. I think like many others I was attracted by the samurai and ninja stories as well as the beautiful architecture and the charm of the pagodas. And I am sure many of you are familiar with these warriors and other members of society such as geisha and courtesans due to movies, and novels popularising their image. However, I always have the feeling that because of this, we miss the wider picture and we tend to forget that there was more to their society than just samurai and geisha to the sociopolitical and economic structure of Japan. Moreover, this is a system that remained untouched for a long time- various centuries- and that I would like to explore with you today. Traditionally speaking, the feudal period in Japanese history spreads between the years and However, I would like to point out that, although it is like that for the most part, this system does not fully apply I will explain why. The overall stratification goes as follows: The Emperor The Japanese emperor was considered to be of divine origin. Generally speaking, the emperor did not care much for the political or economic issues of the nation. Nevertheless the emperor was still the head religious figure of Japanese society, and his court would have counted with both Buddhist and Shinto priests. The Shogun These were the effective rulers of medieval Japan. However they still had to undertake the ceremony of being appointed by the emperor as a way to acquire legitimacy. There were two main shogunate during this period, the Kamakura shogunate and the Ashikaga shogunate The Daimyo There have being acknowledged around Daimyo in this period. They were court nobles with large domains, although sometimes they have been understood as warlords. They were directly subordinated to the Shogun and possessed economic and military power. Furthermore, the Daimyo had the right to collect ichimangoku salaries from the lands they owned and that were transferred within the family, as these were hereditary holdings. The Samurai This is perhaps the caste better known to us all. They work at the service of the Daimyo, to whom they owed obedience and loyalty to their masters and followed the strict path of the Bushido. The violation of the Bushido code would end with the life of the Samurai by the ritual of Seppuku. Nevertheless, the samurai also had some privileges such as the having their family lineage traced by a surname, or a coat of arms. Perhaps, the more important of these benefits was that they could carry weapons. The not so privileged population The lower strata of the Japanese feudal society was formed by craftsmen, farmers and villagers. Experts have suggested that there was some sort of hierarchy amongst the peasantry, meaning further classification and stratification. In this way, farmers would traditionally be at the top due to their economic contribution. Nevertheless, there was a difference in ranking between farmers who own their land and those who did not. Farmers would be followed by craftsmen and artisans due to their production value- they also had their own reserved area in the city that secluded them from the lower merchants and other classes. Moreover, there was a social class even below of the vast majority of society. That was the place occupied by the ronin. A ronin was a wandering, master-less samurai, who was considered an outcast and lived in the fringes of society. Generally, these would have been people with a previous military background, mainly samurai who had been dishonoured, therefore cast aside. Due to their privileged-and-lost status, many of these men became hired swords and mercenaries, some even criminals in an attempt to seek revenge for their disgrace. However, their position as outcasts was mainly perceived and attributed by the Daimyo. In addition, there were people who lived in the peripheries of society and had their own strata depending on their origins or role within society. This collective was formed by the so-called AINU. Many of them were discriminated and even used as slaves. However it seems that those employed in industries that had a social taboo could also be included as living in the margin of society. Finally, it has to be considered that prostitutes, courtesans and geisha, also were independent to the pyramidal system. Regardless of their position in the entertainment, company or pleasure industries, these people were ranked depending on their skill and beauty. As an afterword it is worth mentioning that moving into the Edo period, this social order continued in a very similar fashion. In fact, it would not be until the Meiji Restoration that these social hierarchy changed, mainly

due to the disappearance or diminishing of the military ranks. However, most of these traditions and structures prevailed in the Japanese mind until the Occupation period, and some argue are still reminiscent nowadays.

2: Milestones: " - Office of the Historian

Long waves of the Japanese economy and regulation mode of the economic and social system --Gaps emerging during the transition from the Old Japanese Regime to the New Japanese Regime --Construction of the Keiretsu model on the bases of the Old and New Regimes --The economic and sociological reasons for the structural and tendentious crisis.

Economic history of Japan The economic history of Japan is one of the most studied economies for its spectacular growth in three different periods. First contacts with Europe 16th century [edit] Main article: It was densely populated and urbanized. Prominent European observers of the time seemed to agree that the Japanese "excel not only all the other Oriental peoples, they surpass the Europeans as well" Alessandro Valignano , , "Historia del Principo y Progreso de la Compania de Jesus en las Indias Orientales. Early European visitors were amazed by the quality of Japanese craftsmanship and metalsmithing. This stems from the fact that Japan itself is rather rich in natural resources found commonly in Europe, especially iron. The cargo of the first Portuguese ships usually about 4 smaller-sized ships every year arriving in Japan almost entirely consisted of Chinese goods silk, porcelain. The Portuguese who were called Nanban, lit. Southern Barbarians therefore found the opportunity to act as intermediaries in Asian trade. The beginning of the Edo period coincides with the last decades of the Nanban trade period , during which intense interaction with European powers, on the economic and religious plane, took place. It is at the beginning of the Edo period that Japan built her first ocean-going Western-style warships, such as the San Juan Bautista , a ton galleon -type ship that transported a Japanese embassy headed by Hasekura Tsunenaga to the Americas, which then continued to Europe. Also during that period, the bakufu commissioned around Red Seal Ships , three-masted and armed trade ships, for intra-Asian commerce. Japanese adventurers, such as Yamada Nagamasa , were active throughout Asia. In order to eradicate the influence of Christianization , Japan entered in a period of isolation called sakoku , during which its economy enjoyed stability and mild progress. For the rest of the 17th century most Japanese porcelain production was for export, mostly in Kyushu. The trade dwindled under renewed Chinese competition by the s, before resuming after the opening of Japan in the midth century. The construction trades flourished, along with banking facilities and merchant associations. Increasingly, han authorities oversaw the rising agricultural production and the spread of rural handicrafts. By the mid-eighteenth century, Edo had a population of more than 1 million and Osaka and Kyoto each had more than , inhabitants. Many other castle towns grew as well. Osaka and Kyoto became busy trading and handicraft production centers, while Edo was the center for the supply of food and essential urban consumer goods. Rice was the base of the economy, as the daimyo collected the taxes from the peasants in the form of rice. The rice was sold at the fudasashi market in Edo. To raise money, the daimyo used forward contracts to sell rice that was not even harvested yet. These contracts were similar to modern futures trading. During the period, Japan progressively studied Western sciences and techniques called rangaku , literally "Dutch studies" through the information and books received through the Dutch traders in Dejima. The main areas that were studied included geography, medicine, natural sciences, astronomy, art, languages, physical sciences such as the study of electrical phenomena, and mechanical sciences as exemplified by the development of Japanese clockwatches, or wadokei , inspired from Western techniques. Pre-war period " [edit] Since the midth century, after the Meiji Restoration , the country was opened up to Western commerce and influence and Japan has gone through two periods of economic development. The first began in earnest in and extended through to World War II; the second began in and continued into the mids. Economic developments of the prewar period began with the " Rich State and Strong Army Policy " by the Meiji government. During the Meiji period " , leaders inaugurated a new Western-based education system for all young people, sent thousands of students to the United States and Europe, and hired more than 3, Westerners to teach modern science, mathematics, technology, and foreign languages in Japan Oyatoi gaikokujin. The government also built railroads, improved road, and inaugurated a land reform program to prepare the country for further development. To promote industrialization , the government decided that, while it should help private business to allocate resources and to plan, the public sector was best equipped to stimulate economic growth. The

greatest role of government was to help provide good economic conditions for business. In short, government was to be the guide and business the producer. In the early Meiji period, the government built factories and shipyards that were sold to entrepreneurs at a fraction of their value. Many of these businesses grew rapidly into the larger conglomerates. Government emerged as chief promoter of private enterprise, enacting a series of probusiness policies. In the mid-1920s, the Japanese nominal wage rates were "10 times less" than the one of the U.S. Japanese post-war economic miracle and Economic history of Japan From the 1950s to the 1980s, overall real economic growth was extremely large: As a consequence Japan ran massive budget deficits added trillions in Yen to Japanese financial system to finance large public works programs. In desperation, the Japanese government undertook "structural reform" policies intended to wring speculative excesses from the stock and real estate markets. Unfortunately, these policies led Japan into deflation on numerous occasions between 1929 and 1932. As opposed to flooding the money market with newly printed money, the Bank of Japan expanded the money supply internally to raise expectations of inflation. Initially, the policy failed to induce any growth, but it eventually began to affect inflationary expectations. By late 1932, the economy finally began what seems to be a sustained recovery. GDP growth for that year was 2.1%. Despite having interest rates down near zero for a long period of time, the Quantitative easing strategy did not succeed in stopping price deflation. However, on 5 April 2013, the Bank of Japan announced that it would be purchasing 60 trillion yen in bonds and securities in an attempt to eliminate deflation by doubling the money supply in Japan over the course of two years. In recent years, Japan has been the top export market for almost 15 trading nations worldwide.

3: About Japan: A Teacher's Resource | The Political Economy of High-Growth-Era Japan | Japan Society

Japan - Economic transformation: The Korean War marked the turn from economic depression to recovery for Japan. As the staging area for the United Nations forces on the Korean peninsula, Japan profited indirectly from the war, as valuable procurement orders for goods and services were assigned to Japanese suppliers.

Much of its modern success can be defined by two significant periods of economic progress - the pre-war Meiji Era and the post-war Economic Miracle. Simultaneously, the Meiji government also started to radically transform the education system by sending thousands of students to the US and Europe and also bringing in more than foreign teachers into Japan to teach modern science, mathematics, technology, and foreign languages. The Meiji government also provided economic conditions where private business could prosper. Shipyards and factories were built by the government and sold at extremely low prices to entrepreneurs. These entrepreneurs eventually began businesses that quickly expanded into conglomerates known as the Zaibatsu. The Zaibatsu also had interlocking relationships with each other and Japanese policy makers, allowing them a level of control over government policies. The US also institute new constitutional and economic policies that greatly benefitted the Japanese during the American occupation between Furthermore, although there were attempts to dissolve the Zaibatsu system, the US eventually rescinded the policy in the wake of the emergence of Communism in Asia. During the post-war economic miracle from the s to the s, Japan experienced huge economic growth “ at an average of 10 percent annually in the s, 5 percent in the s, and 4 percent in the s. Growth in the s slowed down largely due to the asset price bubble in late s, and the crash of the Tokyo Stock Exchange in Today, Japan is one of the most advanced and high tech economies in the world. Other challenges that the Japanese face include persistent deflation, heavy reliance on exports to drive growth, and an aging and shrinking population. Much of the damage has been caused to industries and homes. Economic Geography Even though Japan has a land area of , square km, 70 percent of its land is forested and unsuitable for agricultural, industrial or residential uses. With only about 12 percent of its land being arable, Japan imports about 60 percent of grain and fodder crops from other countries, and relies on imports for most of its meat products. With its lack of natural resources, Japan rely on the imports of commodities such as fuels, foodstuffs, chemical, textiles and raw materials from various countries for its industrial sectors. Japan boasts the largest fishing fleets in the world, accounting for almost 15 percent of the global catch. Population and Labour Force Japan has a population of One of the biggest challenges for the Japanese government face is its aging population and a negative population growth rate. Japan has one of the highest proportions of elderly citizens aged over 65 in the world “ at about Much of this problem is due to its low birth rate and high life expectancy. Japan has a total fertility rate of 1. Industry Sectors In , Industry was responsible for Major industries in Japan include motor vehicles, electronic equipment, machine tools, steel and nonferrous metals, ships, chemicals, textiles, and processed foods. However, Japanese automobile companies remain among the most valuable and technologically advanced in the world. Japan is home to six of the top twenty largest vehicle manufacturers in the world “ Toyota 1st , Renault-Nissan 4th , Honda 8th , Suzuki 10th , Mazda 14th , Mitsubishi 16th. The automobile industry also managed to register a massive Japanese electronic products are renowned for their innovation and quality. Despite the historical significance of Japanese manufacturing, Services are the dominant component of the economy “ contributing to Major services in Japan include banking, insurance, retailing, transportation and telecommunications. Japan is also home to companies from the Forbes Global In , Agriculture made up only 1. Only 15 percent of Japanese land is suitable for agriculture, though any available land is highly cultivated. As such, Japan has one of the highest per hectare crops yields in the world. Though it has a small agriculture sector, Japan is self-sufficient in the production of rice and fish, but relies heavily on food imports such as wheat, corn, sorghum and soybeans from the US.

4: Economy of Japan - Wikipedia

Japan has an industrialized global free market economy. A free market economy is a competitive economic system in which businesses compete with each other for profit and the prices of goods and services are based on supply and demand. Japan's economic system is very similar to that of the United.

During the Yayoi period ca. The basic genetic stock of the population and the fundamental patterns of the language were established during that period. Japan came to the attention of China in the fourth century. During the Yamato period C. In , emissaries from the Korean kingdom of Paekche established contact with the Yamato rulers. They introduced Buddhism and thus brought Japan into systematic contact with Chinese civilization. Almost every aspect of Japanese life—agricultural technology, written language, philosophy, architecture, poetry, medicine, and law—was transformed. The Yamato state adopted the conventions of the Chinese imperial court and tried to model society along the lines of Chinese civilization. By the end of the Heian period, economic, social, and military power had shifted to provincial landholders and warriors. Several successive hereditary dynasties occupied this position until The medieval period ended in a century of civil war lasting from the late fifteenth to the late sixteenth century. Contacts with the West began in the mid-sixteenth century with the arrival of the Portuguese Jesuit missionary Francis Xavier. The introduction of Western weaponry hastened the consolidation of power among a few increasingly dominant warlords who unified the country and ended the civil war. In Tokugawa Ieyasu decisively defeated most of the remaining opponents, and established a dynasty that lasted until For over years, Japan experienced political stability, peace, and rising prosperity. The Tokugawa regime ruled through a complicated network of alliances with approximately regional lords, some closely allied to the Tokugawa and others in opposition but permanently subdued. Each fief retained its own castle town, and as a political strategy, some fiefs maintained a high degree of economic, social, and cultural autonomy. During the Tokugawa period, culture and society became codified and somewhat uniform across the country. By the s, the Tokugawa regime had ruthlessly suppressed Christian communities and broken off most ties with European nations. It disarmed the peasantry and imposed rigid household registration requirements to keep the population spatially and socially immobile. Traffic along the great highways was scrutinized at heavily guarded checkpoints. Trade was controlled through feudal guilds, and detailed sumptuary regulations governed the lives of all social classes. These social policies reflected the ideology of neo-Confucianism, which valued social stability and the social morality of ascribed status. Tokugawa social structure was organized around principles of hierarchy, centralized authority, and collective responsibility. In the upper reaches of society, the kinship system upheld neo-Confucian ideals of the family as a microcosm of the social order. Neo-Confucianism also established a rigid system of ranked social classes: Status reflected ideals of social utility, not wealth. Beyond those four hereditary official classes, Tokugawa society included a tiny stratum of imperial nobility, a large clerical establishment, and a population of outcastes. Throughout this period, regional castle towns and the major urban centers under the direct control of the Tokugawa authorities became increasingly integrated into a national economic, social, and cultural network. Urban economic power increased over the agrarian sectors. This undermined Tokugawa political power, which depended on the control of agricultural land and taxes. In the cities, bourgeois culture flourished: Only about 15 percent of Japan is level enough for agriculture. Japanese cities equaled or surpassed their European counterparts in infrastructure and public amenities, but Japanese urbanites lacked a political voice commensurate with their economic and cultural capital. Tokugawa social patterns and institutions laid the foundations for modernization. The urban merchant classes stimulated the development of sophisticated national economic institutions and the beginning of industrial production. Literacy and computational ability were widespread among samurai, merchants, and the upper levels of the peasantry. The samurai became a hereditary class of bureaucrats whose qualifications for leadership depended on education. Society was characterized by discipline and regulation. The Tokugawa dynasty surrendered its authority to the imperial court in after a long struggle. The political crisis included major internal economic problems and the unexpected confrontation with the Western powers precipitated by the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry

and a squadron of American warships in 1853. Opponents of the Tokugawa demanded that it take a firm stand against foreign intrusions and then overthrew the regime. The Meiji regime reconnected imperial rule with civil political authority and military power. Under the nominal leadership of Emperor Meiji, the imperial government was run by the young samurai who had defeated the Tokugawa dynasty. They were fiercely nationalistic and attempted to bring Japanese society into parity with European and North American powers. Society was thoroughly transformed as the leaders created a strong centralized state centered on the imperial line, built a modern military, avoided European colonization, began imperialist expansion into other parts of East Asia, and launched industrialization and economic development. Although they had come to power under the slogan "Revere the Emperor; Expel the Barbarians," the Meiji leaders built a strong state and society along the lines of an industrial European country. Meiji leaders balanced Western powers against each other to avoid domination by any single patron. The government sent delegations to study legal institutions, commerce and industry, science and technology, military affairs, architecture, arts, and medicine in Europe and North America. Foreign experts were hired, and young Japanese were sent to study at Western universities. The new slogan was "Eastern values; Western science. The Meiji grafted the trappings of contemporary Western monarchies onto the sacred imperial institution, creating a court nobility that resembled European aristocracies. Samurai ranks were abolished in 1876. The centrality of the state was strengthened by a new national educational system, and a growing military. Treaties signed by the Tokugawa regime had created zones where Western citizens lived independently of Japanese laws. These "treaty ports" were important sources of Western influence, and many schools, hospitals, and other institutions created by foreign missionaries became prominent. The system of extraterritoriality, however, was considered degrading, and the government tried to transform social life and culture in ways that would command the respect of the Western powers. Japan rapidly built a Western-style navy and army and attempted to expand its influence in East Asia. In 1895, Japan annexed Korea. By the 1890s, Japan considered itself a world military power. This military might was made possible by industrialization after the 1850s. The state built industries such as shipyards, iron smelters, and spinning mills and sold them to well-connected entrepreneurs. Domestic companies became consumers of Western technology and applied it to the production of goods that could be sold cheaply on the world market. Industrial zones grew enormously, and there was steady migration from the countryside to the newly industrializing centers. Industrialization was accompanied by the development of a national railway system and modern communications. In addition to state-sponsored innovations such as uniform national education and the creation of a single national dialect, popular interest in Western life increased throughout the Meiji period, starting at elite levels and eventually extending to almost all social groups, especially in the largest cities. Not all social changes were modeled on the West, however. Many aspects of tradition and history were codified. Nation building and industrialization were complete by the early twentieth century. Mass media and popular culture developed in parallel to the Jazz Age in the West. The military assumed a larger role in politics, and conservative forces made international "respect," military expansion, and the sanctity of imperial institutions the cornerstones of public life. Throughout the 1890s, military and colonial adventures in Manchuria and elsewhere in China led to open war, and society became increasingly militarized. The war in China grew more intense, and international condemnation of Japanese atrocities poisoned relations with the Western nations. Japan joined with Italy and Germany in the Axis because its military planners saw the United States and its interests in Asia as inimical. Diplomatic relations with the Western powers grew worse, and on 7 December 1941, Japanese forces attacked Pearl Harbor. Japan almost simultaneously attacked all the major territories claimed by Western colonial powers, including American possessions such as Hawaii and the Philippines. In the first year and a half of the Pacific War, Japanese forces were on the offensive, but by 1945, Allied forces were recapturing the Western Pacific. They destroyed most of the domestic infrastructure and took an enormous toll on civilians. Anticipating that an invasion of Japan would be a bloodbath, American military planners proceeded with the development of the atomic bomb. Japanese weddings are elaborately staged and usually held in banquet halls or hotels. On 15 August 1945, the Emperor announced that his government had capitulated. From until 1952, Japan was occupied by Allied troops under the command of U.S. The early postwar years were a time of massive rebuilding. Millions of people were homeless, and millions more were

repatriated from the former colonies. The economy was shattered, and mass starvation was a threat. Disillusionment with the cultural and social frameworks of prewar and wartime life was widespread. By the mids, the initial reconstruction of society and economy had largely been accomplished, and the government had built a conservative consensus that the national priorities were economic growth and social stability, which would be achieved through the close cooperation of business and a government directed by bureaucratic elites. After the late s, this "developmental state" created the social, economic, and political contexts in which ordinary people could experience middle-class urban lifestyles. The typical white-collar urban family was secure in the knowledge that lifetime employment was the norm. In the s and s, success in the domestic economy began to be felt around the world as consumer products from Japan began to dominate overseas markets. Economic growth was politically unassailable, but the costs in terms of pollution, declines in the agricultural sector, and massive urban growth without adequate infrastructure were enormous. Grassroots movements developed to combat problems spawned by the developmental ethos; those movements were limited in their effectiveness. Throughout the s and s, Japan experienced unprecedented prosperity. Riding massive trade surpluses and producing top-quality products, the economy was regarded as a model for other industrial and postindustrial societies. That economic strength allowed investment in overseas assets. The affluence of ordinary consumers manifested itself in a growing market for luxury items, conspicuous consumption, and very short product cycles. Although work schedules permitted little leisure time, travel became a desired commodity. High levels of disposable income, however, masked the astronomical cost of real estate and the growing division in urban society between the wealthy and the poor. Because of the intensity of pacifism in contemporary society, opposition to the military runs very strong, and the article in the constitution that prohibits military involvement is of great symbolic importance.

5: Contemporary Japan: Society and Culture | Asian Topics on Asia for Educators

People and Society, Social Structure homogeneous society, group-oriented, family lines, personal decisions, commoners. A largely homogeneous society, Japan does not exhibit the deep ethnic, religious, and class divisions that characterize many countries.

But, what I think they mean when they talk about it as a collection of villages is that Tokyo, like many Japanese cities, still retains a strong sense of neighborhood, of very small spatially discrete, socially discrete, areas that have a real flavor and character of their own. Oftentimes these neighborhoods are organized around a Shinto shrine. They may be organized around some other local institutions: But in fact volunteer fire departments are everywhere; there are hundreds of them throughout Tokyo, and they play an important role in sort of defining the social institutions of particular neighborhoods. But, there are also practical reasons why volunteer fire departments are necessary. Let me ask you, in your neighborhood, do you know who the oldest person living there is? This is something that happened to a friend of mine in Yokohama, which is as urban a place as Tokyo. And when she died, the whole neighborhood association went to her funeral. One of them is that, to the extent that there are strong local organizations and a strong sense of consciousness of "I am a resident of such-and-such a place," people simply take responsibility for the area that they live in. They have a sense of belonging to the place, and they also have a sense of mutual obligation to the other people who live there. Another factor that contributes to relatively low crime rates in urban Japan is an institution called koban, which literally is a police box. Some critics of American police argue that the worst thing to happen to American cities was when police officers started riding around in patrol cars rather than walking a beat, because they were then isolated and stopped interacting with local residents. The family farm even is still a reality in many areas, and the political importance of rural areas is also very great. Rural areas these days tend to suffer from some problems regardless of region. Also, the population of rural areas is increasingly an aged population, which requires special social services, particularly relating to medicine. Thus, many children of middle school, high school, even primary schools, must sometimes be bussed to another larger town, or must board in a larger town, just in order to go to school. That is to say that a married couple lives together with their children, perhaps with one grandparent. But for the most part, the Japanese family today looks much like the American family. The appearance of similarity is very strong, but of course, historical differences are also important, based on the traditional Japanese family, the ie, out of which the present forms have developed. And so if you look at the contemporary Japanese family and the contemporary American or European nuclear families, you might assume that the societies are the same and that the family plays the same kind of role in both of those societies, but if you look historically at Japanese families, you find that there really is a very different kind of social-cultural dynamic at work. IE The traditional Japanese family, known in Japanese as ie, is a very complex kinship unit, a very complex kind of a family system. That is to say that there may be three, four, and conceivably even five generations of a family living together, so great-grandparents, grandparents, parents, children, and then perhaps even the children of children. First of all it is very clearly a patrilineal system in which all of the property, all of the social standing, all of the rights and duties and obligations are expected to go from father to son, father to son, father to son, which has a number of implications. One of them is that, in this particular system, only one child inherits. All of the other children in any generation are expected eventually to leave the family and go establish themselves in some other family or some other social institution. So, in anthropological terms, we call this primogeniture, where the eldest child, and usually the eldest son, inherits the family, everything to do with the family, and the rest of the children have to find their own way in the world. Many other societies, including many societies in Western Europe, have a similar kind of a kinship system. And indeed, one explanation for some of the colonization of the United States is that eldest sons were inheriting family farms in Europe, and younger sons were being sent off to settle the "New World. That, particularly from the middle of the 19th century onward, rural families that had more than one son would often send their second, third, fourth son, off to the newly growing cities to find employment in what was beginning to be the industrial revolution in Japan. Now some economic historians argue that this

ability of a rural family system to send excess children into the cities to work, without undermining the fundamental stability of rural life, was a real important social factor in explaining why Japanese society was able to undergo industrialization with relatively little social breakdown. The fabric of rural society was maintained intact, but at the same time there was an ample supply of young people willing and able to pick up and move into the city and start entirely new lifestyles. What happens to the other children? In the case of daughters, the normal expectation would be that the family would arrange a marriage with another family, and so a daughter would go as a bride and be incorporated into some additional family. But this raises the question also of what happens to the sons. If a family has say three sons, and only one son is going to inherit, what happens to those other two sons? Well, Japanese kinship, traditional Japanese kinship, has an answer for that, which is to say that just as women can be married out as brides into another family, in essence men can be married out as grooms for other families. This puts a heavy strain on Japanese women, and also a strain on the relation between the mother and the child. And if you think about it, both of them are people who were not born into that household; they are both strangers to the household. The mother-in-law of course in an earlier generation has had to go through the same process that the daughter-in-law is going through now, in order to become a full-fledged member. And so, in a sense you have two outsiders fighting with one another, or at least struggling with one another, to define their legitimate role within the household. And at the point when a young wife, a daughter-in-law, had reached maturity, had proven herself to be a loyal and productive member of the household, and her mother-in-law was at a point of being willing to fully welcome her into the household, in traditional times they would have a ceremony at which the mother-in-law would ritually pass the rice paddle on to her daughter-in-law, signifying that she was relinquishing control of the household from one generation to the next. And so culturally, as well as just in terms of the allocation of time, a woman is expected upon marriage to essentially give up her career and devote herself full time over the next fifteen or twenty years to raising children and all of the other household responsibilities that appear, so that occasionally you find women who do attempt to have a career outside the home, but it is very difficult and certainly much less common than it is in the United States. But in Japan, the rate of divorce is very low. I believe it has never gone much beyond two percent of all marriages. And as that traditional family system was transformed into the contemporary nuclear family, and more and more marriages were based on free choice, or relatively free choice, actually the divorce rate went down a great deal. For many mothers, the consideration is how to create a situation in which the child will not be so pressured by examinations later on. How, for example, they might be able to have the child enter a school which will have a kind of escalator quality, so that having entered a good primary school, they can more or less automatically enter a good middle school, and then a good high school, without having to face the so-called "education hell" which characterizes the competitive nature of Japanese education today. However, to do this requires both that the mother take a great deal of responsibility for knowing how the educational system works, for persuading very young children to cooperate and to devote themselves to that kind of education, and furthermore, for overseeing the results all the way up to college. This is a full-time job for anyone. Most levels of Japanese education, at least for better schools, require an entrance exam, and those examinations require an enormous amount of preparation, and so from a very early age, children spend what to an American parent would look like an enormous amount of time studying. American parents worry about how much homework their kids get in third or fourth grade and elementary school. The time for play is limited. You either succeed or you fail. That means primary school, then middle school. And the college examinations are thought to be the most difficult and stressful of all. By the time a Japanese girl or boy has finished high school, they have actually gone through another days longer than an American high school student. There are many problems with the educational system in Japan. However, it is worth pointing out that basically a percent of the population is literate, and that the levels of achievement in science, math and other skills of Japanese high school students are among the highest in the industrialized world. And once students get into college, oftentimes people joke that college is the four-year vacation in a long and hard educational life. If you compare American universities and Japanese universities, they play really different kinds of social functions. An American college student chooses a major, develops a set of skills, and uses that four years in college to create the base for some kind of professional career. Japanese, on the other hand, tend

to regard university education as a kind of pre-determined pathway to particular kinds of careers, so that, for example, graduates of Tokyo University are typically recruited by the national bureaucracy to work in government. Now, Americans may look at the prospect of graduating from college and going to work for the government as kind of a boring outcome, but, certainly in the last century, the national bureaucracy in Japan has been the most elite career that somebody could aspire to. If you are an employee of the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, you are an incredibly elite, incredibly important member of society, and Tokyo University has been the pathway to get there. MEN AT WORK Japanese enterprises, companies, expect that a man will devote himself very whole-heartedly to his job and expect that he will not go just nine-to-five, but will be devoting himself to whatever extent the company requires him. They may in some cases have responsibilities for aging parents. That you join a company or an organization when you finish your education, and that you stick with that company or organization until you retire. So, the huge multinational Japanese corporations that people know about, like Mitsubishi or Mitsui, have for part of this century had this practice of hiring people right out of college and keeping them on until they retire. But in fact the percentage of workers who have ever been part of a lifetime employment system in Japan is probably no more than 15 or 20 percent at any given time. On the one hand, Japanese like to think of their society, their culture, as having this unique identity that is sort of inaccessible to foreigners. So both sides like to see Japan as somehow outside the realm of the expected, the normal, so it has to be unique. The same kinds of social trends can be found in one form or another in almost any other industrialized society. But the elements that make up society are more or less familiar if one pulls aside this curtain of uniqueness and starts to look at the different parts of society. One of the ways in which Japanese think of their own society as "unique" is to emphasize the homogeneity of Japanese society, and indeed by lots of comparisons, Japan is certainly a much more homogeneous society than say the United States. There are relatively few linguistic differences between different parts of the country. The degree to which rich people and poor people are differentiated from one another economically is much less than in the United States. In other words, the Ainu were sort of pushed back and back and back as the frontier of Japanese society expanded. That is to say, Japanese society expanded to fill up the entire Japanese archipelago, from say the 12th century onward, the northward expansion of Japanese society was constantly pushing up against indigenous peoples like the Ainu, pushing them farther and farther back, farther and farther north, to today, where most Ainu today live in Hokkaido, the northernmost of the major islands in Japan. And that process really continued until almost the beginning of the 20th century, because Hokkaido was a frontier region well into the 19th century, even into the early 20th century. And because of the intense amount of discrimination that Japanese have felt towards Koreans in the past, many Korean Japanese find it very difficult to enter mainstream companies, get into good schools, pursue sort of ordinary middle-class aspirations and lifestyles. However, if we look at this consensus model, or the homogeneity of society, from the point of view of minorities living in Japan, we can see it from a very different angle. Koreans living in Japan rather regularly say that they feel shut out of ordinary society and that they may be born there and grow to adulthood without really having a Japanese friend [or] ever having been inside the home of an ordinary Japanese family. And for them, homogeneity is not a warm, cozy harmonious thing, but something from which they feel excluded. Koreans have been coming to Japan for millennia. In fact, some of the earliest settlers of the Japanese islands no doubt came from the area which today is called Korea. Koreans were among the most important people transmitting the culture of the Asian continent, including Buddhism, to Japan. This kind of contact was uncontroversial for many centuries. For example, Japan is widely, and I think correctly, regarded as a fairly hierarchical society. Do they work for a more important company or a less important company? Are they from a major city, or are they from the countryside? So, people are very concerned about establishing a hierarchy, even on the most initial meeting, to understand two people are supposed to react to one another. And this gets expressed in all kinds of settings. Why are social relations hierarchical, or why is there a strong emphasis on in-group versus outside-the-group interactions? So, for example, the eldest son occupies a social role that is quite distinct from a second or a third or a fourth son. The eldest daughter occupies a rank and position that is quite distinct from younger daughters. Certainly fathers and mothers occupy different ranks from their

children and so forth. It seems, to an outsider at least, as if everything in Japan is decided by this sense of harmony and this sense that everybody has to agree. One of the ways in which they do this is by making sure that any decision that affects a group as a whole is at least going to be circulated around and discussed amongst all its members. So indeed, Japanese organizations do often appear to have a much higher degree of consensus about policies, about aims, about aspirations, than would be true in an equivalent American group.

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Japanese social hierarchy portrays a systematic classification of all the social classes in the Japanese social society. This hierarchy is quite different from the social system that was employed in the ancient Japan as since the ancient times society has undergone several structural changes.

Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process. World History Standard Understands how post-World War II reconstruction occurred, new international power relations took shape, and colonial empires broke up. Knopf, , pp. Columbia University Press, , pp. What about the significance of domestic conditions versus the international environment and foreign influences? Is a system like this unique to Japan? Consider yardsticks like life expectancy, nutrition and health, ownership of appliances like televisions and automobiles, percentage of homes connected to sanitary sewers, urbanization rates, etc. How can one explain the postwar political dominance of the Liberal Democratic Party? Activities Focus Activity Ideas. In small groups, have students brainstorm answers to the following question: Main Lesson Activity Ideas. What does this data show regarding the experience of Japan compared to other developed and developing nations? How might this rising affluence have affected lifestyles in Japan? Consider whether this arrangement is truly unique to Japan as van Wolferen argues or is a variant of what is found in other industrial democracies, including the United States. It is hardly surprising that this ambitious plan whose growth targets were met far faster than the document outlined was popular with the Japanese public and solidified support for the pro-growth Liberal Democratic Party. Note also the role of the state and specifically the central government bureaucracy in charting, guiding, and supporting the development of the private sector. What is the impact of rising postwar affluence on traditional values, social structures, youth, and the family unit? Professor Levi also presents ways to use anime in the classroom in, Anime and Manga: Have students agree or disagree with the following statement and explain why: An accessible introduction to the Japanese economy, portions of which would be suitable for classroom use, is James Mak et al. A unique source is a translated comic book which details the workings of the Japanese economy and corporate system: Introduction to Japanese Economics Berkeley: University of California Press, Ishinomori is a well-known Japanese manga comic book artist, famed for his Cyborg and work on the television series Kamen Rider. Selections from this beloved comic series are available in translation: Focusing on a good-for-nothing-traveling salesman Tora-san and his multigenerational family in the old shitamachi downtown section of Tokyo, the series is unabashedly sentimental and nostalgic. Several of the Otoko wa tsurai yo films are available subtitled in English.

7: JAPAN'S ECONOMIC SYSTEM

The US also institute new constitutional and economic policies that greatly benefitted the Japanese during the American occupation between Furthermore, although there were attempts to dissolve the Zaibatsu system, the US eventually rescinded the policy in the wake of the emergence of Communism in Asia.

Bring fact-checked results to the top of your browser search. Economic transformation The Korean War marked the turn from economic depression to recovery for Japan. As the staging area for the United Nations forces on the Korean peninsula, Japan profited indirectly from the war, as valuable procurement orders for goods and services were assigned to Japanese suppliers. The Japanese economy at the return of independence in was in the process of growth and change. Sustained prosperity and high annual growth rates, which averaged 10 percent in 1960 and later climbed to more than 13 percent, changed all sectors of Japanese life. The countryside, where farmers had benefited from land reform, began to feel the effects of small-scale mechanization and a continuous migration to industrial centres. Agricultural yields rose as improved strains of crops and modern technology were introduced, as household appliances appeared in remote villages, and as the changing patterns of urban food consumption provided an expanded market for cash crops, fruits and vegetables, and meat products. Efforts to control population growth, which had begun with the legalization of abortion in and included a national campaign to encourage family planning, showed considerable success, as the population stabilized and thereafter grew slowly. Gains in economic output, therefore, were not offset by a rapidly expanding population, and steady industrial growth brought full employment and even labour shortages. Two elements underscored rapid growth in the s. Under these influences the structure of the Japanese economy changed to concentrate on high-quality and high-technology products designed for domestic and foreign consumption. In the s Japanese exports expanded at an annual rate of more than 15 percent, and in Japan revealed the first signs that it had a trade surplus. The Japanese became enthusiastic followers of the American statistician W. At the same time, Japan was able to import, under license, advanced foreign technology at relatively low cost. With the addition of a youthful and well-educated workforce, a high domestic savings rate that provided ample capital, and an activist government and bureaucracy that provided guidance, support, and subsidies, the ingredients were in place for rapid and sustained economic growth. Social change Two major changes were visible in the social life of the Japanese from to The first was the significant decline in the birth rate that stabilized the Japanese population. The second was the population shift from the countryside to urban centres. In addition to birth control, such factors as a more highly educated populace, postponement of marriage in favour of education and employment, and a desire for greater independence in early adulthood contributed to changing fertility patterns—as did the increasing conviction among many couples that it was in their economic self-interest to have fewer children. As population growth slowed and the economy expanded, Japan faced a labour shortage that drew workers from agriculture, as well as from small and medium enterprises, to the new large-scale industries of the cities. In the Meiji period the rural population of Japan stood at 85 percent of the national total; by it was approximately 50 percent, and by it had fallen to less than 20 percent. In the process, both village and urban life underwent significant changes. Factories were built in the countryside as industrialists tried to tap into the still-underemployed rural labour force. Agriculture itself became increasingly mechanized and commercialized. As sons, and even husbands, went off to the factories, women, children, and the elderly were often left to run the family farm. At the same time, the face of rural Japan changed, with hard-surfaced roads, concrete schools, factories, and sales outlets for automobiles and farm equipment replacing the once timeless thatched-roof houses. By the average farm household income had risen higher than its urban counterpart, providing considerable rural purchasing power. Television tied rural households to urban Japan and to the world beyond. Young men brought up on visions of urban life as projected by American television programs were eager to move to the cities after graduation from high school. Young women showed increasing reluctance to become farm wives, and in some instances villagers sought spouses for their sons in Southeast Asia. Rural solidarity suffered from such out-migration, and in many cases prewar village life ceased to be, as villages amalgamated into cities and struggled to

develop new identities. Cities also underwent rapid change. As the national centre for government, finance, business, industry, education, and the arts, Tokyo became a magnet for many Japanese and the quintessential expression of Japanese urban life. But while Tokyo and other large cities remained highly attractive, urban dwellers also faced serious problems, notably housing. Living space for most urban dwellers was infinitesimal when compared with Western societies. Such apartments were often found in drab residential developments that pushed out at greater distances from the inner wards of major cities and required increased commuting times. The impact of American culture was everywhere. Young urbanites, in particular, took with gusto to jazz and rock music, pinball machines, American soft drinks and fast foods, baseball, and the freer social relations that typified American dating patterns. American fashions of dress and grooming, often set by movie and rock stars, quickly found bands of faithful imitators. Indeed, almost every American fad from the hula hoop to hang gliding had its Japanese supporters. Urban life also brought about changes in traditional Japanese family and gender relationships. The position of women improved, as many more now went to high schools and colleges. Most found urban employment until marriage. Urban living promoted the ideal of the nuclear family, particularly as housing conditions made it difficult for the extended family to live together. Urban dwellers found themselves less dependent on the goodwill of their neighbours. There was also less need for the conformity that typified rural life—although for many recent arrivals the city-based company and factory effectively restructured village values to support an efficient workplace. The majority of villagers actually made the transition from rural to urban life with less social stress than was the case in Europe and America. Juvenile delinquency showed some increase, but overall crime rates remained low. Disparities between the newly rich and the older generation living on fixed incomes and between a freer, franker, and often more egotistic and brash mass culture that appealed to the young and traditional taste set by what once had been the aristocracy often accentuated how generations viewed the postwar situation. For many of the older generation, the new culture epitomized moral decay, which they attributed to the postwar system of education; to the young, the older generation seemed out of touch with the new realities that Japan faced. Such a generational split was further dramatized in the universities, where older professors were firmly in control but where young people struggled to find ways of expressing their own positions, which, typically, were often far more radical than those of their teachers. Political developments With the restoration of sovereignty, politicians who had been purged by the occupation were allowed to return to public life. This included a number of prewar rightists who had been active in the s. The left fared considerably better. Communists who returned to Japan from foreign exile or who were released from domestic prisons played a vigorous role in the immediate postwar political arena. But by the Korean War which had led SCAP to purge communists from public office, steady improvements in living conditions, and uncooperative Soviet attitudes in negotiations over the return of the Kuril Islands and over fishing treaties had seriously undermined public support for the communists, as did communist opposition to the imperial institution and extremist labour tactics. Still, Marxist, and later Maoist, ideas remained highly appealing to large numbers of Japanese intellectuals and college students, and the noncommunist left became a major voice for opposition in Japanese politics. The year was highly significant in postwar politics. The right and left wings of the socialist movement, which had been divided since over the peace treaty, merged to form the Japan Socialist Party JSP. Japan thus entered a period of essentially two-party politics. As a result, ex-bureaucrats played significant roles in the LDP, often being elected to the Diet and becoming important cabinet members. Ideologically, the LDP combined a strong commitment to economic growth with the desire to return Japan to world prominence. The party depended on the financial support of business and banking, but its voter base remained in rural Japan. But individual LDP Diet members realized that in order to provide patronage for their constituents they needed the support of party leaders with access to the bureaucracy. Factions therefore formed around such leaders, who vied with one another for the premiership and sought to have members of their faction appointed to important cabinet posts. As the voice of the opposition, the JSP resisted rearmament, had a strong antinuclear stance, campaigned to rid Japan of the American bases and abrogate the Mutual Security Treaty, supported mainland China, and vigorously opposed all efforts to change the postwar constitution. By the early s urban issues also attracted the JCP, which started to substitute practical matters for ideology and won a number of mayoral elections. On occasion, as in with the

Kishi government and the proposed renewal of the U. S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, the opposition could mount sufficient public support to bring down an LDP cabinet, but on the whole the era was one in which the LDP remained firmly in power. In the LDP had garnered two-thirds of the Diet seats, but by it controlled only slightly more than half. International relations The Japan that returned to the international community in was considerably reduced in territory and influence. Given the rise of the Cold War , international relations were not destined to be conducted on the pacifist lines envisioned by Article 9 of the constitution. The United States maintained its occupancy of Okinawa and the Ryukyus, while the Soviet Union occupied the entire Kuril chain and claimed southern Sakhalin. The Korean War increased the urgency for a peace treaty. Details for such a treaty were worked out by the United States and its noncommunist allies during the command of General Matthew B. Ridgway, who succeeded MacArthur as supreme commander in April The San Francisco peace conference that convened in September thus ratified arrangements that had been worked out earlier. In the peace treaty that ensued, Japan recognized the independence of Korea and renounced all rights to Taiwan , the Pescadores, the Kurils, and southern Sakhalin and gave up the rights to the Pacific islands earlier mandated to it by the League of Nations. The Soviet Union attended the conference but refused to sign the treaty. This enabled Japan to retain hope for regaining four islands of the Kurils closest to Hokkaidoâ€”territory that Japan had gained through negotiations, not war. Japan agreed not to grant similar rights to a third power without U. Consequently, effective resumption of relations with the countries of Asia came only after treaties covering reparations had been worked out with them. These were signed with Burma now Myanmar in , the Philippines in , and Indonesia in In Japan restored diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union but without a formal peace treaty. With the Soviet Union no longer blocking the way, Japan was admitted to the United Nations in late and subsequently became active in United Nations meetings and specialized agencies. Japan spearheaded the creation of the Asian Development Bank in â€” At the time of the peace treaty, Prime Minister Yoshida wanted to delay committing Japan to either of the two Chinas, but the U. Senate unless assurances were given that Japan would recognize the Republic of China. Thus, Tokyo soon negotiated a peace treaty with that regime, but one that would not prejudice subsequent negotiations with Beijing. A lively trade developed with Taiwan , where Japan made considerable contributions to the economy. Trade relationships with mainland China developed slowly in the absence of diplomatic ties. In an unofficial trade pact was signed between private Japanese groups and Chinese authorities. Japanese government leaders indicated a willingness to compromise ties with Taiwan in favour of a closer relationship with Beijing. In , a year after mainland China was admitted to the UN, Prime Minister Tanaka Kakuei reached an agreement with Beijing on steps to normalize relations. Japan simultaneously severed its ties with Taiwan, replacing its embassy with a nonofficial office. Part of the understanding that lay behind this treaty was that Japan would have access to the U. Tensions therefore mounted as the renewal date of the treaty scheduled for approached; both governments hoped to extend it for 10 years as the revised Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security. Kishi had been named, though not tried, as a war criminal by the occupation. Added to this was the proposed visit to Japan by U.

8: Japan Economic Structure | Economy Watch

The economic history of Japan is most studied for the spectacular social and economic growth in the s after the Meiji Restoration, when it became the first non-Western great power, and for its expansion after the Second World War, when Japan recovered from devastation to become the world's second largest economy behind the United States.

The Japanese regarded this sphere of influence as a political and economic necessity, preventing foreign states from strangling Japan by blocking its access to raw materials and crucial sea-lanes, as Japan possessed very few natural and mining resources of its own, although it imported large amounts of coal from Korea , Manchukuo , and some regions of occupied China. In the first period, the economy grew only moderately at first and relied heavily on traditional agriculture to finance modern industrial infrastructure. During World War I , Japan used the absence of the war-torn European competitors on the world market to advance its economy, generating a trade surplus for the first time since the isolation in the Edo period. Transportation and communications had developed to sustain heavy industrial development. Beginning in with significant land seizures in China, and to a greater extent after , when annexations and invasions across Southeast Asia and the Pacific created the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere , the Japanese government sought to acquire and develop critical natural resources in order to secure economic independence. Among the natural resources that Japan seized and developed were: Japan also purchased the rice production of Thailand , Burma, and Cochinchina. Steel production rose from 6,, tonnes to 8,, tonnes over the same time period. In Japanese aircraft industries had the capacity to manufacture 10, aircraft per year. Much of this economic expansion benefited the " zaibatsu ", large industrial conglomerates. Over the course of the Pacific War , the economies of Japan and its occupied territories all suffered severely. Inflation was rampant; Japanese heavy industry, forced to devote nearly all its production to meeting military needs, was unable to meet the commercial requirements of Japan which had previously relied on trade with Western countries for their manufactured goods. Local industries were unable to produce at high enough levels to avoid severe shortfalls. Furthermore, maritime trade, upon which the Empire depended greatly, was sharply curtailed by damage to the Japanese merchant fleet over the course of the war. By the end of the war, what remained of the Japanese Empire was wracked by shortages, inflation, and currency devaluation. The destruction wrought by the war eventually brought the Japanese economy to a virtual standstill. Japanese post-war economic miracle The war wiped out many of the gains which Japan had made since The people were shocked by the devastation and swung into action. New factories were equipped with the best modern machines, giving Japan an initial competitive advantage over the victor states, who now had older factories. US grant assistance, however, tapered off quickly in the mids. Finally, the economy benefited from foreign trade because it was able to expand exports rapidly enough to pay for imports of equipment and technology without falling into debt, as had a number of developing nations in the s. By the mids, production matched prewar levels. Released from the demands of military-dominated government, the economy not only recovered its lost momentum but also surpassed the growth rates of earlier periods. Japanese schools also encouraged discipline, another benefit in forming an effective work force. The mids ushered in a new type of industrial development as the economy opened itself to international competition in some industries and developed heavy and chemical manufactures. Whereas textiles and light manufactures maintained their profitability internationally, other products, such as automobiles, electronics, ships, and machine tools assumed new importance. Oil crisis[edit] Japan faced a severe economic challenge in the mids. The oil crisis shocked an economy that had become dependent on imported petroleum. Japan experienced its first post-war decline in industrial production, together with severe price inflation. The recovery that followed the first oil crisis revived the optimism of most business leaders, but the maintenance of industrial growth in the face of high energy costs required shifts in the industrial structure. Changing price conditions favored conservation and alternative sources of industrial energy. Although the investment costs were high, many energy-intensive industries successfully reduced their dependence on oil during the late s and s and enhanced their productivity. Advances in microcircuitry and semiconductors in the late s and s led to new growth industries in consumer electronics and computers, and to higher productivity in pre-established

industries. The net result of these adjustments was to increase the energy efficiency of manufacturing and to expand knowledge-intensive industries. The service industries expanded in an increasingly postindustrial economy. But these rates were remarkable in a world of expensive petroleum and in a nation of few natural resources. Despite more petroleum price increases in , the strength of the Japanese economy was apparent. It expanded without the double-digit inflation that afflicted other industrial nations and that had bothered Japan itself after the first oil crisis in . Japan experienced slower growth in the mids, but its demand -sustained economic boom of the late s revived many troubled industries. The Tokugawa period " bequeathed a vital commercial sector in burgeoning urban centers, a relatively well-educated elite although one with limited knowledge of European science , a sophisticated government bureaucracy , productive agriculture, a closely unified nation with highly developed financial and marketing systems, and a national infrastructure of roads. The buildup of industry during the Meiji period to the point where Japan could vie for world power was an important prelude to post-war growth from to , and provided a pool of experienced labor. Japanese businesses imported the latest technologies to develop the industrial base. As a latecomer to modernization , Japan was able to avoid some of the trial and error earlier needed by other nations to develop industrial processes. In the s and s, Japan improved its industrial base through licensing from the US, patent purchases, and imitation and improvement of foreign inventions. In the s, industry stepped up its research and development , and many firms became famous for their innovations and creativity. Before and immediately after World War II, the transfer of numerous agricultural workers to modern industry resulted in rising productivity and only moderate wage increases. As population growth slowed and the nation became increasingly industrialized in the mids, wages rose significantly. However, labor union cooperation generally kept salary increases within the range of gains in productivity. High productivity growth played a key role in post-war economic growth. The nation also benefited from economies of scale. Many industrial enterprises consolidated to form larger, more efficient units. Before World War II, large holding companies formed wealth groups, or zaibatsu , which dominated most industry. The zaibatsu were dissolved after the war, but keiretsu "large, modern industrial enterprise groupings" emerged. The coordination of activities within these groupings and the integration of smaller subcontractors into the groups enhanced industrial efficiency. Growth-oriented corporations that took chances competed successfully. Product diversification became an essential ingredient of the growth patterns of many keiretsu. Japanese companies added plant and human capacity ahead of demand. Seeking market share rather than quick profit was another powerful strategy. International conflicts tended to stimulate the Japanese economy until the devastation at the end of World War II. The secondary sector manufacturing, construction, and mining expanded to . By the late s, however, the Japanese economy began to move away from heavy manufacturing toward a more service-oriented tertiary sector base. During the s, jobs in wholesaling, retailing, finance, insurance, real estate, transportation, communications, and government grew rapidly, while secondary-sector employment remained stable. Even industries such as automobiles and electronics that had experienced phenomenal growth in the s entered a recessionary period in . Foreign and domestic demand for Japanese electronics also declined, and Japan seemed on the way to losing its leadership in the world semiconductor market to the United States, Korea and Taiwan. Unlike the economic booms of the s and s, when increasing exports played the key role in economic expansion, domestic demand propelled the Japanese economy in the late s. This development involved fundamental economic restructuring, moving from dependence on exports to reliance on domestic demand. The boom that started in was generated by the decisions of companies to increase private plant and equipment spending and of consumers to go on a buying spree. Japanese post-war technological research was carried out for the sake of economic growth rather than military development. The growth in high-technology industries in the s resulted from heightened domestic demand for high-technology products such as electronics, and for higher living, housing, and environmental standards; better medical care and more welfare; expanded leisure-time facilities; and improved ways to accommodate a rapidly aging society. Information became an important resource and product, central to wealth and power. The rise of an information-based economy was led by major research in highly sophisticated technology, such as advanced computers. The selling and use of information became very beneficial to the economy. Even here, however, the recession took its toll. In , the Nikkei stock average began

the year at 23, points, but fell to 14, points in mid-August before leveling off at 17, by the end of the year. Japanese asset price bubble In the decades following World War II, Japan implemented stringent tariffs and policies to encourage the people to save their income. With more money in banks, loans and credit became easier to obtain, and with Japan running large trade surpluses, the yen appreciated against foreign currencies. This allowed local companies to invest in capital resources more easily than their overseas competitors, which reduced the price of Japanese-made goods and widened the trade surplus further. And, with the yen appreciating, financial assets became lucrative. With so much money readily available for investment, speculation was inevitable, particularly in the Tokyo Stock Exchange and the real estate market. The Nikkei stock index hit its all-time high on 29 December when it reached an intra-day high of 38,915. The rates for housing, stocks, and bonds rose so much that at one point the government issued year bonds. Additionally, banks granted increasingly risky loans. At the height of the bubble, real estate values were extremely over-valued. Prices were only slightly less in other areas of Tokyo. Trillions were wiped out with the combined collapse of the Tokyo stock and real estate markets. Investments were increasingly directed out of the country, and Japanese manufacturing firms lost some degree of their technological edge. As Japanese products became less competitive overseas, some people argue that the low consumption rate began to bear on the economy, causing a deflationary spiral. The easily obtainable credit that had helped create and engorge the real-estate bubble continued to be a problem for several years to come, and as late as 1997, banks were still making loans that had a low guarantee of being repaid. Loan Officers and Investment staff had a hard time finding anything to invest in that would return a profit. Meanwhile, the extremely low interest rate offered for deposits, such as 0%. Correcting the credit problem became even more difficult as the government began to subsidize failing banks and businesses, creating many so-called "zombie businesses". Eventually a carry trade developed in which money was borrowed from Japan, invested for returns elsewhere and then the Japanese were paid back, with a nice profit for the trader. The Nikkei stock index eventually bottomed out at 7,971. The downward movement in the Nikkei is likely due to global as well as national economic problems. Deflation from the 1990s to present[edit].

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Yashiro: Yes, if no major changes in the current economic and social system. No, if we can change it to improve per capita productivity and well utilize women and older men as labor force.

People Ethnic groups The Japanese people constitute the overwhelming majority of the population. They are ethnically closely akin to the other peoples of eastern Asia. During the Edo Tokugawa period , there was a social division of the populace into four classes—warrior, farmer, craftsman, and merchant—with a peer class above and an outcast class below. The burakumin, however, are still subject to varying degrees of discrimination. The few exceptions include those classified as resident aliens particularly Koreans and Japanese citizens of Ainu and, to a much lesser degree, Okinawan origin. Japan also has a small population of Chinese descent. FPG Hundreds of thousands of Koreans migrated to Japan a great many against their will before and during World War II , when Korea was a Japanese colony, and worked mainly as labourers; those remaining after the war and their descendants, the latter born and raised in Japan, do not have Japanese citizenship and face considerable discrimination. Historically, both Ainu and Okinawans were often relegated to a second-class status. The indigenous Ainu largely were assimilated into the general population centuries ago; a few small, scattered groups, however, have maintained their identity in Hokkaido. Before the war there was a tendency to distinguish the people of Okinawa from other Japanese because of perceived physical and cultural differences; that tendency has diminished considerably but not entirely disappeared. Okinawan culture , including its dialect and religion, has been recognized as sharing many traits with Japanese culture, and Okinawans have become more assimilated into the larger Japanese society. However, Okinawans have long believed that the continued large presence of U. There has also been a resurgence among Okinawans who want to maintain their distinctive cultural identity. The Japanese language is generally included in the Altaic linguistic group and is especially akin to Korean, although the vocabularies differ. Some linguists also contend that Japanese contains elements of Southeast Asian languages. The introduction of the Chinese writing system and of Chinese literature about the 4th century ce enriched the Japanese vocabulary. Until that time Japanese had no written form, and at first Chinese characters called kanji in Japanese were used to write Japanese; by the 9th century two syllabaries, known collectively as kana katakana and hiragana , were developed from them. Since then, a combination of kanji and kana has been used for written Japanese. Although some 3, to 5, kanji are in general use, after World War II the number of characters necessary for a basic vocabulary was reduced to about 2,, and the writing of these characters was simplified. Tens of thousands of Western loanwords, principally from English, also have been adopted. The distribution of Japanese nearly coincides with the territory of Japan. Standard Japanese, based on the dialect spoken in Tokyo, was established in the late 19th century through the creation of a national educational system and through more widespread communication. There are many local dialects , which are often mutually unintelligible, but standard Japanese, widely used in broadcasting, is understood nationwide. The Hondo dialect is used throughout Japan and may be divided into three major subdialects: Eastern, Western, and Kyushu. After the 17th century there was a vigorous influx of the Kamigata Kinai subdialect, which was the foundation of standard Japanese. The Kyushu subdialects have been placed outside the mainstream of linguistic change of the Western dialects and retain some of the 16th-century forms of the latter. They extend as far south as Tanega and Yaku islands. Long placed outside the mainstream of linguistic change, they strongly retain their ancient forms. Not one of the religions is dominant, and each is affected by the others. Intense religious feelings are generally lacking except among the adherents of some of the new religions. Japanese children usually do not receive formal religious training. On the other hand, many Japanese homes contain a Buddhist altar butsudān , at which various rituals—some on a daily basis—commemorate deceased family members. People, commonly major historical figures, as well as natural objects have been enshrined as gods. Some of the Hindu gods and Chinese spirits were also introduced and Japanized. Each rural settlement has at least one shrine of its own, and there are several shrines of national significance, the most important of which is the Grand Shrine of Ise in Mie prefecture. Direct contact with central China was maintained, and several sects were introduced. In the 8th

century Buddhism was adopted as the national religion, and national and provincial temples, nunneries, and monasteries were built throughout the country. The Tendai Tiantai and Shingon sects were founded in the early 9th century, and they have continued to exert profound influence in some parts of Japan. Zen Buddhism, the development of which dates to the late 12th century, has maintained a large following. Photos Pack Christianity was introduced into Japan by first Jesuit and then Franciscan missionaries in the mid- to late 16th century. It initially was well received, both as a religion and as a symbol of European culture. After the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate, Christians were persecuted, and Christianity was totally banned in the s. Christianity was reintroduced by Western missionaries, who established a number of Russian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant congregations. Practicing Christians account for only a tiny fraction of the total population. Settlement patterns Traditional regions The concept of regions in Japan is inseparable from the historical development of administrative units. Care was always taken to include various physical features in the larger administrative units so as to create a well-balanced geographic whole. Many of the ancient terms for administrative units have survived in the form of place-names. The Taika-era reforms of the 7th century established the *ri* roughly corresponding to the later village community as the basic social and economic unit and the *gun* district as the smallest political unit to be governed by the central government. The *gun* were grouped to form more than 60 *kuni* provinces, the largest political units, which were ruled by governors appointed by the central government. Each *kuni* was composed of maritime plains, interior basins, and mountains to constitute a more or less independent geographic entity. The core region of the country was called the *Kinai*—i. In the feudal system was dissolved and the *ken*, or prefectural, system was established. At first the more than prefectures were mostly the former fiefs of feudal lords, who were appointed as governors. Early in the 20th century it was recognized that larger geographic divisions were needed. Rural settlement From the late 19th century, economic and social changes affected even the remotest rural villages, but many traditional aspects of rural life have survived. In the villages, many features that are in common with those of other Asian villages are well preserved. Autonomous and cooperative systems of agricultural practices and rituals, as well as mutual assistance among the villagers, have been handed down to the present. These traditions are mixed with modernized farming practices and employment diversification. An autonomous rural unit, generally known as a *mura*, consists of some 30 to 50 or more households. Now called an *aza*, this unit should not be confused with the administrative terms *mura* or *son* in use after Traditional *gassho-zukuri* farmhouses, Gifu prefecture, central Honshu, Japan. Hodge The origins and histories of most rural settlements are lost in time. Historically traceable settlements largely originated through land reclamation after the 16th century. Considerable local difference is evident in the settlement pattern. Some villages are agglomerated, as are those of the Kinki region; some are dispersed, as in northeastern Shikoku; some are elongated, such as those on the rows of sand dunes in the Niigata Plain and on the natural levees of deltas; while others are scattered on the steeper mountain slopes. Although these differences are only superficial, the traditional ties that bind the inhabitants together to form a firm village community are changing as industry moves into the countryside and offers farmers attractive employment options. No village is regarded as purely rural. Those that are near industrialized urban centres include large numbers of commuters and industrial workers. The more remote settlements send out seasonal labourers during the winter months, though outright migration to urban centres is now more common. The villages of Hokkaido are based on commercial agriculture, and each household has direct contact with a nearby town. They originally depended on nearby rice-producing villages, although some dried, salted, or smoked fish found more distant markets. The fishing villages are most numerous in the southwest, where an exchange economy has long been in practice. Mountain villages that rely solely on local products other than rice are exceedingly rare. Many of them were founded after the 17th century, when lumber, charcoal, and other such commodities found markets in the growing towns on the plains. Urban settlement Urbanization is generally of relatively recent origin. Most of the provincial capitals, or *koku-fu*, of ancient Japan were only administrative centres that contained official residences and were not developed towns. After the latter part of the 16th century, influential temples and feudal lords began to build towns by gathering merchants and craftsmen close to their headquarters. Castle at Matsumoto, Japan. Hodge Next in importance were the port towns, such as Hakata and Sakai, which

experienced more vicissitudes than the castle towns. In addition, some of the religious towns eventually grew to a considerable size, as in the case of Ise and Izumo. With industrialization came the rapid growth of Japanese cities, and some of the industrial towns e. Most of the former castle towns, and especially those along the Pacific side of the country, have been expanded directly or indirectly by industrialization. In Hokkaido and southern Kyushu, raw materials and power resources have attracted a limited number of industrial plants, which alone are responsible for the existence of cities such as Tomakomai , Muroran , Nobeoka , and Minamata. Central Yokohama, Japan, at dusk. Mixed land use, including agricultural activity, can be found side by side with the most modernized business centres and industrial establishments, and the fragmented, patchwork pattern of landownership is a formidable obstacle in ever-expanding cities of skyscrapers , subways , and underground plazas. Other serious problems are the shortage of better housing, the increasing use of the automobile, overcrowded public transportation systems, the shortage of open space for recreation, environmental pollution , and the constant menace of earthquakes and floods.

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