

JAPAN TO 1868

History 277
Fall 2008
TTH: 2:15-4:05

Andrew Hsieh
201 Mears, x3093
Office Hours: W 2:00-4:00 p.m.
and by appointment

This is a survey course on Japanese history. It begins, chronologically, with the emergence of Jomon culture (ca. 8,000 B.C.) and ends with the Tokugawa Period (1600-1867). We shall not be concerned in this course with Japan after Tokugawa, though certain themes may be pursued through later years if doing so helps to clarify or refine them.

The literature on periodization is voluminous, and much of it is tendentious, ideologically biased or silly. Yet some tentative breakdown is necessary. I propose the following:

- I. Japan Before the Coming of Buddhism.
- II. Nara and Heian Periods. 700-1100 A.D.
- III. Kamakura to the Warring State Period. 1185-1600 A.D.
- IV. Tokugawa, 1600-1867.

A major theme of this course is the problem of “cultural borrowing.” Throughout, we shall explore whether Japan has been largely distinctive in its historical evolution until the mid-19th century, or whether it should be seen as part of a larger East Asian Confucian civilization. Students are urged to approach this problem from any of a number of different perspectives: religious life, land system, armed dissidence, literary genres, etc. Whatever the perspective, this main theme should remain paramount.

Requirements include:

- Writing a one-paragraph comment on the weekly principal reading for discussion (not from Totman, Japan Before Perry). Do so for weeks 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 11. These one paragraph comments are due in class on Thursdays.
- Preparing DI sheets which are due in class on Thursdays. Do so for weeks 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 11.

Each DI (which stands for Discussion initiation) sheet is to be typewritten on one 8 1/2” x 11” piece of paper and should contain the following:

- the student’s name;
- the date;
- the student’s title for the week’s discussion;
- the student’s choice of one quotation from the week’s assigned reading for discussion;
- the student’s formulation of one question for the week’s discussion.

Each DI sheet is due in class on Thursday of the week for which the readings are assigned. Late DI sheets will not be accepted.

- Completing a special writing assignment. Instructions to be announced later.
- Participating in discussions in class on Thursdays;

Each student's grade will be based on the performance of three kinds of assignments with roughly equal weight given to each:

35% on comments and the DI sheets;
35% on the midterm and the special writing assignment;
30% on attendance and classroom discussion.

Texts: (* available at the College bookstore)

* Conrad Totman, Japan before Perry, (University of California Berkley, 1981)

Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. deBary and Donald Keene, eds., Sources of Japanese Tradition, (NY: Columbia University Press, 1958)

* Ivan Morris, The World of the Shining Prince, Court Life in Ancient Japan, (NY: Penguin, 1979)

H. Paul Varley, Samurai, (Dell, 1970)

Noel Perrin, Giving Up The Gun: Japan's Reversion to the Sword, 1543-1879, (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1980)

* Ihara Saikaku, Five Women Who Loved Love, Amorous Tales from 17th Century Japan, (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1956)

Donald Keene, Anthology of Japanese Literature, Vol. I (NY: Grove Press, 1960)

David Lu, Japan, A Documentary History, (NY: Sharpe, 1997)

* Shusaku Endo, Silence, (NY: Taplinger, 1980)

Sessions

Week I

TH Aug 28 Introduction to the course

Week II

T Sep 2 Earliest Records of Japan

TH Sep 4 The Buddhist Conquest

Readings:

Japan before Perry, "Preface," "Chapter 1."

"Japan in the Wei Dynastic History," in Sources of Japanese Tradition, Vol. I, pp. 3-7.

Selections of the Kojiki, in Japan: A Documentary History, pp. 4-11.

Week III

T Sep 9 The Chinese Influence

TH Sep 11 Nara Culture

Readings:

Japan before Perry, pp. 42-63.

Selections from the Man'yōshū, in Anthology of Japanese Literature, pp. 33-53.

"Buddhism as Protector of the Nation," in Documentary History, pp. 46-50.

Japan before Perry, pp. 18-41.

"Prince Shotoku and the 17-Article Constitution, 604 A.D.," "The Taika Reforms," "The Taiho-Yoro Code," in Documentary History, pp. 22-36.

Week IV

T Sep 16 Heian and Its Culture

TH Sep 18 Growth of Indigenous Institutions

Week V

T Sep 23

Reading:

Ivan Morris, The World of the Shining Prince, "Preface," "Introduction," and pp. 1-88.

TH Sep 25

The World of the Shining Prince, pp. 88-250.

Week VI

- T Sep 30 The Kamakura Period (1185-1333): Development of Feudal Institutions.
- TH Oct 2 Samurai
Readings:
 H. Paul Varley, Samurai, pp. 47-125.
Japan before Perry, pp. 70-132.

Week VII

- T Oct 7 Buddhism in Medieval Japan
- TH Oct 9 Medieval Culture
Readings:
 “The Tale of Heike,” in Anthology, pp. 179-191.
 “The Account of My Hut,” in Anthology, pp. 197-212.
 “Tales from the Uji Collection,” in Anthology, pp. 213-223.
 “The Three Priests,” in Anthology, pp. 322-331.

Week VIII

- T Oct 16 Kwaidan (film)
- TH Oct 18 One-hour midterm

Fall Recess—October 18 through 26

Week IX

- T Oct 28 First Contact with the West
- TH Oct 30 Read Noel Perrin, Giving up the Gun

Week X

- T Nov 4 Reunification and the Tokugawa Order
- TH Nov 6 Tokugawa Society
Readings:
Japan Before Perry, pp. 133-164.
 “Tokugawa: Era of Peace,” in Documentary History, pp. 203-215.

Week XI

T Nov 11 Economic Growth in Tokugawa

TH Nov 13 Samurai Culture

Readings:

“Growth of Commerce,” in Documentary History, pp. 228-241.

“Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy,” in Sources of Japanese Tradition, pp. 335-368.

Week XII

T Nov 18 Ihara Saikaku, Five Women Who Loved Love

TH Nov 20 Five Women Who Loved Love

Week XIII

T Nov 25 No Class

Week XIV

T Dec 4 Discussion: Silence

TH Dec 6 Discussion: Silence

Week XV

T Dec 9 Retrospect

TH Dec 11 Complete Special Assignment
Due Date: Dec. 11, 4:30 p.m., Academic Support Office, Mears Cottage