

Chapter 8 - Japan



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Geography and Early Japan



7.5.1
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The Big Idea

Japan's early societies were both isolated from and influenced by China and Korea.

Main Ideas

- Geography shaped life in Japan.
- Early Japanese society was organized in clans, which came to be ruled by an emperor.
- Japan learned about language, society, and government from China and Korea.

Main Idea 1: Geography shaped life in Japan.

- Japan is a large group of islands located off the Asian mainland.
- The islands of Japan are really the tops of mountains.
- The mountains were difficult to live on, so most people lived on flat coastal plains near the sea.

The sea influenced Japan by:

Providing food

- Shark
- Seaweed
- Eel

Separating it from other countries

- Japan remained isolated until its rulers decided to visit other countries.

Providing easy access to other countries

- China and Korea were only a short distance by sea from Japan.



Main Idea 2:

Early Japanese society was organized in clans which came to be ruled by emperors.

- Japan was home to two cultures before it was influenced by China and Korea.
- The Ainu were an early people who were believed to come from Siberia and eventually disappeared.

The Early Japanese

The early Japanese were organized into extended families, or **clans**, that lived in small farming villages.

The head of the clan, or chief, had religious and political power over the people of the villages.

Chiefs were believed to have gained their power through *kami*, which were nature spirits.



Shinto

- Rituals to honor the *kami* became the central part of Shinto, a traditional Japanese religion.
- Shinto believes that everything in nature has *kami*. They built shrines to the *kami* and asked the spirits to bless them.

The First Emperors

- Some clans became more powerful than others and built up armies.
- The Yamato clan claimed to have a glorious family history. They extended their control over much of Honshu and began to call themselves the first emperors of Japan.

Main Idea 3: Japan learned about language, society, and government from China and Korea.

The rulers of Japan sent representatives to China and Korea to gather information about their cultures and invited people from Korea and China to come to Japan.

- Learned to write Chinese
- Learned about Confucianism, which outlined how families should behave
- Learn about new religions, especially Buddhism

Prince Shotoku

- Served as regent for his aunt, the empress
- Admired Chinese culture and helped bring it to Japan
- Influenced the spread of Buddhism by writing commentaries and building a beautiful temple

Art and Culture in Heian



7.5.4
7.5.5

The Big Idea

Japanese culture experienced a golden age during the Heian period of the 800s to the 1100s.

Main Ideas

- Japanese nobles created great art in their court at Heian.
- Buddhism changed in Japan during the Heian period.

**Main Idea 1:
Japanese nobles created great art
in their court at Heian.**

- The Japanese imperial **court** was made up of a group of nobles who lived nearby and served the emperor.
- The emperor and his court moved to Heian in 794.
- Heian is now known as the city of Kyoto.

The period of the Heian court was considered a “golden age” for Japanese culture.

- **Fashion:** Beautiful silk robes and decorative fans became popular.
- **Literature:** This was the time of the greatest writers in Japanese history.
- **Visual Art:** Painting, calligraphy, and architecture were more elaborate.
- **Performing Arts:** Musicians, jugglers, acrobats, and actors all entertained the court.

Main Idea 2: Buddhism changed in Japan during the Heian period.

- Religion became somewhat of an art form during the Heian. The religion of the nobles reflected their love of elaborate rituals.
- Most common people did not have the money for elaborate rituals.
- New forms of Buddhism began to develop.

New Types of Buddhism

Pure Land Buddhism

Popular among the common people; did not require special rituals

Zen Buddhism

Involved self-discipline and meditation; was popular among the warriors of Japan





7.5.3

7.5.6

Growth of a Military Society

The Big Idea

Japan developed a military society lead by generals called shoguns.

Main Ideas

Samurai and shoguns took over Japan as emperors lost influence.

- Samurai warriors lived honorably.
- Order broke down when the power of the Shoguns was challenged by invaders and rebellions.
- Strong leaders took over and reunified Japan.

Main Idea 1: Samurai and shoguns took over Japan as emperors lost influence.

- The emperor was distracted by life at the court.
- The landowners, or daimyo, were worried that they needed to protect their land.
- Landowners hired **samurai**, or trained professional warriors, to defend their property.

Shoguns Rule Japan

- The nobles became frustrated with the emperor, so they decided to take power.
- Two powerful clans fought for thirty years.
- The Minamoto clan won the war but decided to keep the emperor as a **figurehead**, a person who appears to rule even though real power rests with someone else.
- The Minamotos became **shoguns**, generals who ruled Japan in the emperor's name.
- Shoguns ruled Japan for 700 years.

Main Idea 2: Samurai warriors lived honorably.

- The word *samurai* comes from the Japanese word for “to serve.”
- Armies of samurai were expensive to support.
- Samurai were paid with land or food.
- They followed a strict code of rules called **Bushido**, which taught them how to behave.

Bushido: The Way of the Warrior

- Samurai followed Bushido, which means “the way of the warrior.”
- Both men and women of samurai families learned how to fight, but only men went to war. Women protected their homes from robbers.
- They lived simple and disciplined lives.
- Obeying their lord was the most important thing for their sense of honor.

Main Idea 3:

Order broke down when the power of the shoguns was challenged by invaders and rebellions.

- Foreign invasions by the Chinese threatened the empire and caused chaos. The shoguns sent troops to fight the Mongols. They withstood the invasion attempts, but many nobles thought the shoguns did not give them enough credit for their part in the fighting.
- Internal rebellion occurred when the emperor tried to regain his power that had been lost to the shoguns.
- Daimyo, who owned most of the land, fought to break away from the shoguns' power. Small wars broke out all over Japan.
- The shoguns lost most of their power and authority. The emperor was still largely powerless, and the daimyo ruled his own territory.

Main Idea 4: Strong leaders took over and reunified Japan.

- Oda Nobunago was the first leader to try to reunify Japan.
- Efforts continued to try to reunify Japan after Oda died.
- By 1603, Japan was ruled by shoguns from one family, the Tokugawa.

Tokugawa Shogunate

- In 1603 Japan's emperor made Tokugawa shogun.
- The rule by one family lasted until 1868. During their rule, Japan traded with other countries and let Christian missionaries live in Japan.
- Later shoguns closed off Japan from the rest of the world and banned guns. This helped extend the samurai period in Japan until the 1800s.



A Shinto Shrine

Entering a Shinto shrine, these people walk through a gate called a torii (TOR-ee). The torii marks the boundary of a shrine or other sacred Shinto site. Over time, the torii has become a symbol of Shinto, Japan's ancient religion.

What elements of nature can you see in this painting?

Prince Shotoku's Japan

Under Prince Shotoku, Buddhism spread across Japan. Shotoku ordered beautiful Buddhist temples to be built, such as the one below in Nara, Japan. The spread of Buddhism changed many areas of Japanese culture during Prince Shotoku's time.



BIOGRAPHY

Prince Shotoku

573–621

Prince Shotoku was one of Japan's greatest leaders. He helped rule Japan when he was only 20 years old. For many centuries, people have admired him. Legends have developed about his wisdom. According to one early biography, Shotoku was able to talk as soon as he was born and never made a wrong decision.



Horyuji
Temple in
Nara, Japan

The Arts in Heian

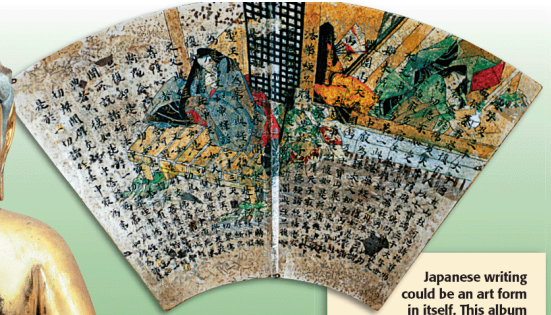
Heian was Japan's capital for many centuries. The wealthy nobles who lived there were great supporters of the arts. With their support, literature, painting, calligraphy, and other arts flourished in Heian.



A favorite theme in Japanese painting was *The Tale of Genji*. In this illustration of a scene from the novel, Genji's son is reading a letter as his wife approaches.



The Buddha was a popular subject for statues in the Heian period.



Japanese writing could be an art form in itself. This album made in the shape of a fan is covered in text and pictures.

ANALYSIS SKILL ANALYZING VISUALS

How does art from this period reflect the culture of Heian?

Japan's Samurai

The samurai were bold, highly trained warriors. They followed a strict code of behavior called Bushido, or "the way of the warrior."

What equipment did samurai have to protect themselves?



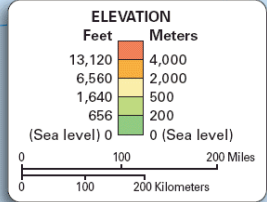
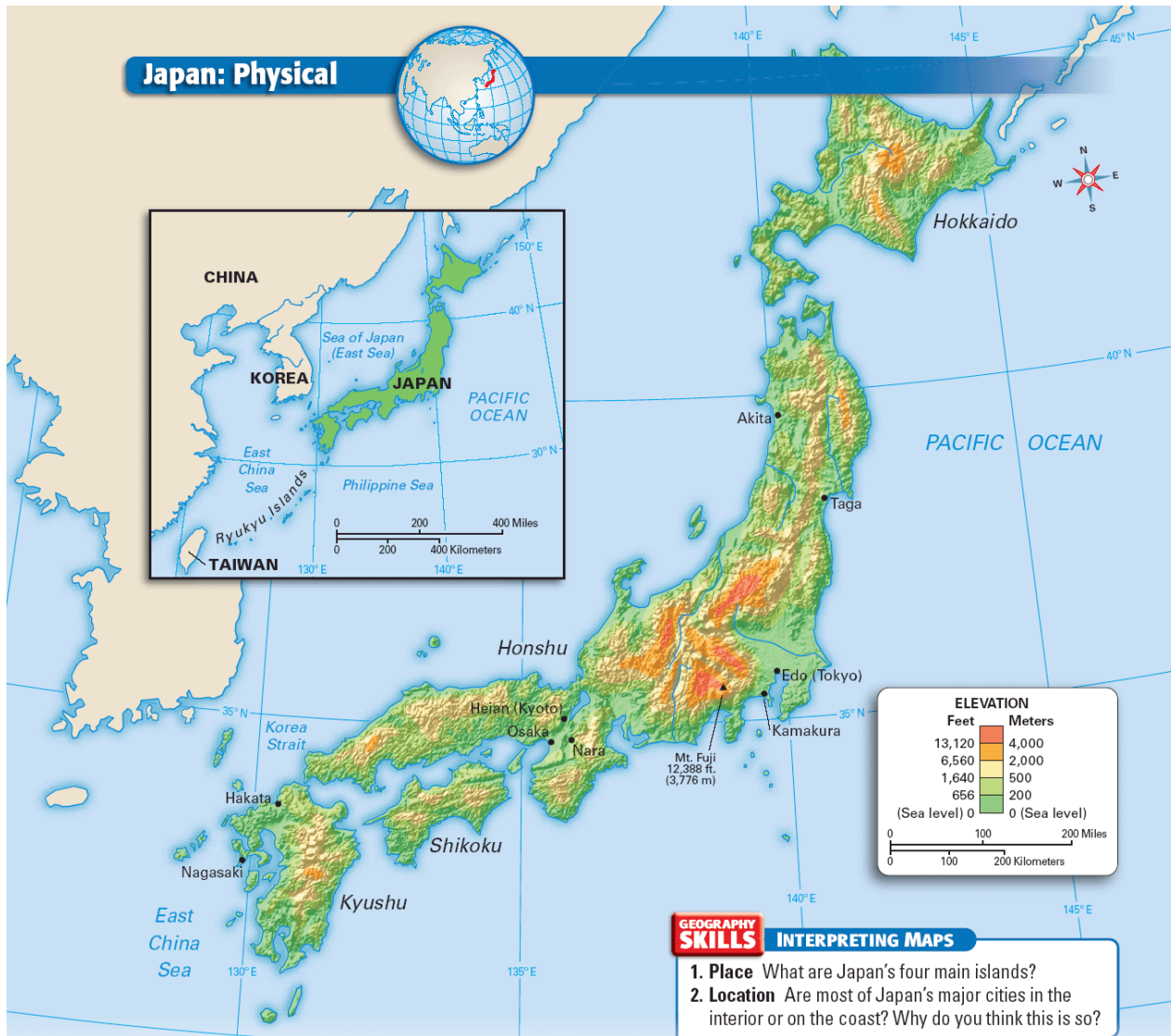
Samurai were often called on to fight, like in the scene above. They were expected to serve with honor and loyalty in battle. The samurai in the scene to the right is writing a poem on a cherry tree. Writing poetry helped train the samurai to concentrate.



Samurai wore armor and special helmets. Many carried two swords.



Japan: Physical

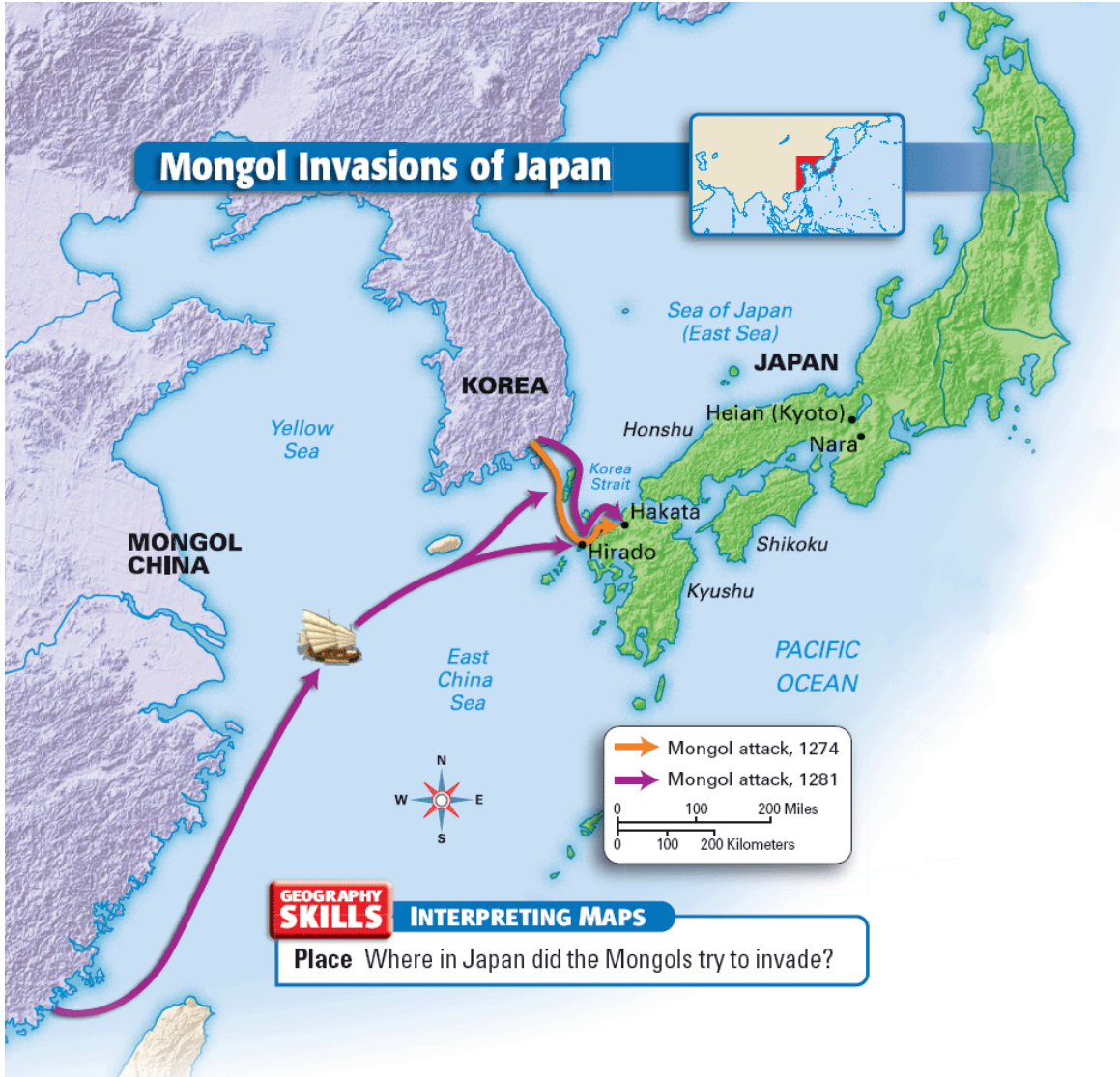


GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

- 1. Place** What are Japan's four main islands?
- 2. Location** Are most of Japan's major cities in the interior or on the coast? Why do you think this is so?



Mongol Invasions of Japan

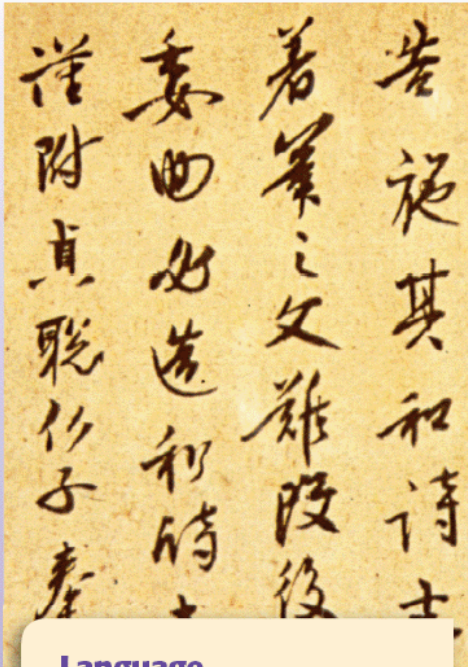


GEOGRAPHY SKILLS INTERPRETING MAPS

Place Where in Japan did the Mongols try to invade?

Influences from China and Korea

QUICK
FACTS



Language

The earliest Japanese writing used Chinese characters.



THE GRANGER COLLECTION, NEW YORK

Philosophy

The ideas of the Chinese philosopher Confucius helped shape Japanese culture and family life.



Religion

Buddhism came to Japan from Korea.

Samurai Society

QUICK
FACTS



Emperor

The emperor was a figurehead for the powerful shogun.



Shogun

A powerful military leader, the shogun ruled in the emperor's name.



Daimyo and Samurai

Daimyo were powerful lords who often led armies of samurai. Samurai warriors served the shogun and daimyo.



Peasants

Most Japanese were poor peasants who had no power.

ANALYSIS
SKILL

ANALYZING VISUALS

Who was the most powerful person in Japan's samurai society?

Visual Summary

Use the visual summary below to help you review the main ideas of the chapter.

**QUICK
FACTS**



Japan's early culture was influenced by China and Korea.

A golden age of Japanese art and culture occurred during Japan's Heian Period.

After the Heian Period, the Japanese created a military society.

