

## TOPIC: EARLY JAPANESE HISTORY

### **I. Geography**

- A) Japan is located in East Asia and is considered to be an archipelago- A country that consists of a group of islands (Japan is made up of 4 main islands)
- B) Japan has a long and irregular (unsmooth/rough) coastline
- C) Japan is made up mostly of mountains, which has made farming difficult.
  - 1) Terrace Farming- In order to farm in the mountains, the Japanese had to dig and carve flat areas (called terraces) into the sides of mountains. NOTE: The Inca of Peru (in South America) used the same technique.

### **II. Religion**

- A) Shinto is the religion of Japan. It is a religion (similar to Animism in Africa) that believes all living and non-living things in nature (such as trees, mountains, rivers, animals, etc.) have a spirit.
- B) Later in Japan's history, Buddhism became popular as well. Today, most Japanese practice both Shinto and Buddhism.

### **III. Influence of China on Japan**

- A) Cultural Diffusion- Early Japan was GREATLY influenced by contact with the neighboring Asian civilization of China. Through contact with China, Japan received many important things:
  - 1) Writing- Japan's first form of writing was influenced by Chinese writing.
  - 2) Buddhism- The Japanese learned about the Buddhist religion from the Chinese.
  - 3) Tea- The Japanese first learned how to cultivate (grow) tea from the Chinese.

### **IV. Japanese Feudalism**

- A) Similar to Europe during the Middle Ages, Japan developed a system of feudalism early in its history. The feudal system worked like this:
  - 1) Emperor and Shogun (military general)- They were the rulers of Japan.
  - 2) Daimyo- They were the wealthy nobles who were given land by the emperor and Shogun in return for loyalty and military service.
  - 3) Samurai- They were the warriors of Japanese society. They pledged loyalty to the Daimyo and had to fight when necessary. The samurai had a code of behavior called Bushido (which required the samurai to be loyal to the Daimyo and to fight bravely in battle).
- B) **NOTE:** Japanese feudalism was very similar to European feudalism:
  - 1) Japanese samurai and European knights both followed a code of behavior. Bushido was the code of the Samurai and Chivalry was the code of the knights. Both codes emphasized loyalty and bravery.
  - 2) Japanese and European feudalism were both decentralized, which means that power was given to many different local leaders instead of being concentrated in the hands of a single ruler.
  - 3) Because people in each society had a clear role to follow, feudalism brought structure, order, and stability (calmness) to society.

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## TOPIC: AFRICAN CIVILIZATIONS

### **I. Introduction to Africa**

- A) Geography

- 1) Africa has a very diverse (varied) geography that includes deserts (i.e.- the Sahara Desert), savanna (grasslands), and rainforests.
- 2) Due to its many geographic features, Africa is a very diverse continent with many different cultures. No two societies are alike.
- 3) **NOTE:** Africa is currently having problems with desertification (the spreading of desert lands). The Sahara continues to grow, which reduces the amount of available farmland.

B) Religion

- 1) Animism is the traditional religion that is native to (began in) Africa. It is a religion (similar to Shinto in Japan) that believes all living and non-living things in nature (such as trees, mountains, rivers, animals, etc.) have a spirit.

C) Bantu Migrations (500 BC- 1500 AD)

- 1) This is one of the largest migrations (movements) of people in history.
- 2) Due to a shortage of land, the Bantu People scattered throughout southern Africa over the course of 2,000 years.
- 3) Major effects (results) of the migration- As the Bantu people moved, they spread 3 things:
  - a) The Bantu language
  - b) Iron technology
  - c) Agricultural (farming) techniques

## II. West African Civilizations (300-1400s)

A) Three of Africa's greatest civilizations all developed in West Africa. They are:

- 1) Ghana
- 2) Mali
- 3) Songhai

B) Mansa Musa- He was the most famous ruler of Mali. He is important for several reasons:

- 1) He was a devoted Muslim who helped spread Islam in West Africa.
- 2) He made a pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia.
- 3) He turned the city of Timbuktu into a center of trade and Islamic learning.

C) **NOTE:** Ghana, Mali, and Songhai all grew very wealthy for the same reason: They were located along the Trans-Saharan trade routes and participated in the Gold-Salt trade (i.e.- they traded their gold for the salt that they needed to survive).

## TOPIC: THE MONGOLS

### I. The Mongols (1100s-1400s)

A) Introduction

- 1) The Mongol people originated on the steppes (grassy plains) of Central Asia.
- 2) The Mongols lived in a harsh physical environment and survived as nomadic pastoralists- They raised animals and migrated frequently in search of grazing lands for their animals.

B) Empire

- 1) Under the skilled military leadership of Genghis Khan, the Mongols conquered so much land that they established the LARGEST EMPIRE in all of history.
- 2) At its height, the Mongol empire included China, Central Asia, Russia, and much of the Middle East

C) Marco Polo

- 1) Marco Polo was an Italian merchant who visited the Mongols in China and remained there for almost 20 years.

- 2) After returning to Italy, Marco wrote down extensive information about his experiences in China with the Mongols.
- 3) **NOTE:** The writings of Marco Polo are important for several reasons:
  - a) They are valuable primary sources that teach us about China during this period.
  - b) They increased the desire of Europeans to trade with China to obtain valuable goods.
- D) The Mongols are important for several reasons:
  - 1) Trade and travel between Europe and Asia increased TREMENDOUSLY during Mongol rule since the Mongols kept peace and prevented violence along trade routes (like the Silk Road).
  - 2) Influence on Russia
    - a) After they conquered Russia, the Mongols kept Russia isolated (removed) from developments that were taking place in Western Europe.
    - b) The Mongols taught the Russians how to have a centralized government- A strong government with one ruler in firm control.
  - 3) The Mongols were the first foreign group to completely conquer China.
  - 4) The Mongols developed a tribute system- Areas taken over by the Mongols were required to give the Mongols money each year.

## THE TRANSFORMATION OF WESTERN EUROPE

### I. The Black Death (1347-1351)

- A) The Black Death refers to the major disease (called bubonic plague) that killed 25 million people in Europe (almost 1/3 of the population) during the late Middle Ages.
- B) The disease started in East Asia (maybe China) and spread to Europe over trade routes such as the Silk Road. The interaction of different groups of people helped spread the disease.
- C) Major effects (results) of the Black Death:
  - 1) Depopulation- The population of Europe decreased from 85 million to 60 million.
  - 2) Feudalism continued to decline as serfs fled from manors for better opportunities.
  - 3) Trade temporarily decreased.

### II. The Renaissance (1400-1600)

- A) The Renaissance was the Golden Age of Western Europe. The Renaissance had the following characteristics:
  - 1) Like all Golden Ages, there were amazing achievements in the arts, literature, and science.
  - 2) Renaissance scholars studied art and books from ancient Greece and Rome.
  - 3) Humanism- There was a focus on humans and life on earth instead of on God and Heaven.
- B) The Renaissance began in Italy because:
  - 1) The Italian city-states (like Venice and Florence) had great economies. These areas controlled Mediterranean trade and grew very wealthy. Much of this wealth was used to support artists.
- C) Famous artists of the Renaissance include Donatello, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael
- D) Niccolo Machiavelli- Famous author of the Renaissance who wrote a book called "The Prince," which is a guide for government leaders. Key ideas of this book include:
  - 1) Rulers must have absolute power and do whatever is necessary to stay in power (even if that means dishonest and cruel behavior).

2) "The end justifies the means"- Leaders must do whatever is necessary to help their nation.

### III. The Protestant Reformation (1500s)

A) The Protestant Reformation was the religious revolution that challenged the Catholic Church and led to the further division of Christianity.

B) Causes of (reasons for) the Protestant Reformation:

1) Europeans were angry that the Catholic Church was too concerned with worldly issues (i.e.- money and power).

2) Europeans were angry about indulgences- Reductions in punishment that were sold by the Catholic Church.

C) Key leaders of the Protestant Reformation:

1) Martin Luther- German monk who created the 95 Theses, which were 95 arguments against the sale of indulgences.

2) Henry VIII- King of England who separated from the Catholic Church because he wanted a divorce from his wife and the Catholic Church would not allow it.

3) John Calvin- Swiss reformer who believed in predestination, which is the idea that God already knows who will be punished and who will be saved (i.e.- sent to Heaven).

D) Effects (results) of the Protestant Reformation:

1) The power of the Catholic Church (and the Pope) decreased.

2) The power of monarchs (kings) increased since they gained power over religion.

3) Religious unity in Europe came to an end- Before the Protestant Reformation, almost everyone in Western Europe was Catholic. Now there were large numbers of Protestants too.

### IV. The Printing Press

A) Invented by Johannes Gutenberg.

B) The printing press was important for several reasons:

1) It helped spread new ideas quickly.

2) It helped spread the Protestant Reformation since people like Martin Luther were able to print copies of their writings for others to read.

3) It increased literacy (the ability of people to read and write) since books were now easier and cheaper to obtain.