



NARA JAPAN

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Nara Japan

- **Main Idea (Objective):**



- During the 700's C.E., Japan built a strong national government at Nara and Buddhism became an influential religion.

Nara Japan

- Lecture Focus (Essential Question) :



- Do you know people who got their jobs because they were friends with the boss or perhaps because the boss knew their family? Lets investigate how Japan's emperor chose people for government jobs during their Medieval period!

Nara Japan

- In the early 700's C.E., Japan's emperors built a new capital city called Nara.



- For the next 100 years, Nara was the center of government and religion in Japan.

Nara Japan



- Due to Nara's importance, the historical period in Japan during the 700's C.E., is often referred to as the "Nara Period".

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Nara Japan

- The city of Nara looked striking similar to China's capital city of Changan, only a bit smaller.



- Nara had broad streets, large public squares, government offices, Buddhist Temples and Shinto Shrines.

Nara Japan



Nara Japan

- Nobel's and their families lived in large, Chinese style homes throughout the new capital.



- The typical home of a noble consisted of wooden walls, a heavy tile roof and polished wooden stores.

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- Most homes during the Nara period also included a inner garden called a **Roji**.



- **Roji** literally translates to “**dewy ground**”, and is known for creating an air of ease.

Nara Japan

- **Questions:**
- **1)**What was the name of the new Japanese capital city and how was it modeled?
- **2)**The homes during the Nara period are known as very impressive, what types of amenities did they have?

Nara Japan

- Questions:
- 1) What was the name of the new Japanese capital city and how was it modeled?
 - Nara, it was modeled after the Chinese capital of Changan.
- 2) The homes during the Nara period are known as very impressive, what types of amenities did they have?
 - Wooden walls, tiled roof, wooden flooring and an inner garden.

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The Emperor's Government

- At Nara, Japanese emperors added to the changes begun by Prince Shotoku.



- They organized government officials into ranks, which were basically levels of importance from top to bottom.

The Emperor's Government

- Now unlike China, Japan did not use examinations to hire officials.



- Instead, the emperor gave jobs to nobles from powerful families...once a person was appointed a job, he could pass on his office and title to his son or other relatives.

The Emperor's Government



- Which method do you agree with...Chinese plan of testing or the Japanese plan of promotion?

The Emperor's Government

- For their services, top government officials received estates, which were extremely large farms.



- These officials were also given farmers to work the land.

The Emperor's Government

- The emperor's power came from his control of the land and its crops.



- To measure Japan's wealth, the government carried out a **census**.

The Emperor's Government

- Essentially a census counted all of the people in Japan, to give the government an accurate population number.



- The census also listed the lands on which people lived and worked.

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The Emperor's Government

- Based on the census results, all people who held land from the emperor had to pay taxes in rice or silk cloth.



- Also the men that were counted in the census had to serve in the military.

The Emperor's Government

- **Questions:**

- **1)** During the Nara period, how were government officials organized?

- **2)** How did you receive a government job during the Nara period of Japanese history?

- **3)** How were paxes paid following the census?

The Emperor's Government

- Questions:
- 1) During the Nara period, how were government officials organized?
 - Ranks, or levels or importance
- 2) How did you receive a government job during the Nara period of Japanese history?
 - The emperor gave jobs to nobles from powerful family
- 3) How were taxes paid following the census?
 - Rice, silk cloth and men had to fight in the military

Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- At the same time that the emperor's government was growing strong, Buddhism became very popular in Japan.



- Buddhism came to Japan from Korea in the 500's C.E.



Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- Japanese government officials and nobles were the first to accept the new religion.



- Then, during 600's C.E. and 700's C. E., Buddhism spread rapidly among the common people.

Buddhism Spreads to Japan



- Buddhism soon became a major religion in Japan and had an extremely important role in government and society

Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- As Buddhism became more powerful, nobles who were not Buddhist themselves began to oppose the religion and its philosophy.
- Soon, those who backed Buddhism and those who opposed Buddhism were fighting for control of the government.
- Now would you imagine that Buddhist, given their philosophy would really want to be engaged in fighting?



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Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- In 770 C.E., a Buddhist who served in the government attempted to seize the throne and become the emperor of Japan.



- He was stopped by **Emperor Konin's** family and leading nobles.

Buddhism Spreads to Japan



- Frightened by this event, **Emperor Konin** and his family briefly turned away from Buddhism.
- Remember how the government in China attacked Buddhist monasteries when they became influential and strong?

Buddhism Spreads to Japan



- In Japan, instead of attacking the Buddhists, the Emperor Konin and his family decided to distance themselves from the religion and leave Nara and its Buddhist monks and practices.

Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- **Questions:**
- **1) Buddhism came to Japan from what country?**
 - **Korea**
- **2) Buddhism spread rapidly among the people of Japan, what aspects of the country did it affect the most?**
 - **Government and social society**
- **3) How did the Japanese government and Imperial House manage what they thought was a Buddhist “threat”?**
 - **They turned away from Buddhism and eventually left Nara**

Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- **Reading Check:**
- Answer the following question in a well crafted, 2-3 sentence response
- **How was the Japanese system of hiring government officials different from the Chinese system?**

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Buddhism Spreads to Japan



- Time Travel Time: **Sōhei Warrior Monks!**

Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- **Sōhei** "*Monk Warriors*", were Buddhist warrior monks of feudal Japan.
- At certain points of history they held considerable power, serving the imperial and military governments to collaborate.



Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- The fame of the Sōhei rose with the dominance of the Tendai school of Buddhism, the main school in Japan.



- The warriors protected land and intimidated rival schools of Buddhism, becoming a significant factor in the spread of Buddhism in Japan.

Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- **Sōhei** warriors were similar to the **Yamabushi** warrior monks, but unlike the Yamabushi, *Sōhei* generally organized into large armies.



- A famous monastery is the Enryaku-ji on Mount Hiei, just outside Kyoto.

Buddhism Spreads to Japan



- A famous monastery is the **Enryaku-ji** on Mount Hiei, just outside Kyoto.

Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- The *Sōhei* shared many similarities with the Crusaders of Medieval Europe.
- Much like the Crusaders, the *Sōhei* did not operate as individuals, or even as members of small, individual temples, but rather as warriors in a large extended brotherhood or monastic order.



Buddhism Spreads to Japan



- History Mystery Time: **Nara Park**

Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- **Nara Park** is a public park located in the city of Nara, Japan, at the foot of Mount Wakakusa, established in 1880.



- The park is one of the "Places of Scenic Beauty" where over 1,200 wild sika deer freely roam around in the park and are classified as natural treasure.

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Buddhism Spreads to Japan



- The park is home to the Nara National Museum and Todai-ji, where the largest wooden building in the world houses a 50' tall statue of Buddha.

Buddhism Spreads to Japan



Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- According to local folklore, deer from this area were considered sacred due to a visit from **Takemikazuchi-no-mikoto**, one of the four gods of **Kasuga Shrine**.
- He was said to have appeared on Mt. Mikasa-yama riding a white deer.
- From that point, the deer were considered divine and sacred by the Kasuga Shrine, killing one of these sacred deer was a capital offense punishable by death up until 1637, the last recorded date of a breach of that law.



Buddhism Spreads to Japan

- After World War II, the deer were officially stripped of their sacred/divine status, and were instead designated as national treasures and are protected as such.



- Today, visitors can purchase "deer-crackers" to feed the deer in the park.

Buddhism Spreads to Japan



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