

• Japan is a chain of islands that's stretches north to south in the Northern Pacific Ocean.



• Japan's islands number more than 3,000...many of which are extremely tiny.

• For centuries, most Japanese have lived on the four largest islands:

- Hokkaido (Hah-Ky-Doh)
 - Honshu (Hahn-Shoo)
- Shikoku (Shih-Koh-Koo)
- Kyushu (Kee-OO-Shoo)



• Like China, much of Japan is covered by mountains, in fact the islands that make up Japan are actually the tops of mountains that rise from the floor of the ocean.



• About 188 of Japan's mountains are volcanic (Boso Peninsula, Chiba, Japan)

• Many earthquakes occur in Japan, due to the fact that many islands are located along the Pacific Ring of Fire.



• The Ring of Fire - An extensive zone of volcanic and earthquake activity that coincides roughly with the borders of the Pacific Ocean.



Major Volcanoes of Japan





Topinka, USGS/CVO, 1998; basemap modified from: CIA map, 1997; volcanoes from: Simkin & Siebert, 1994







• Due to the Pacific Ring of fire, Japan suffers constant earthquakes.



• Unfortunately the chain of islands lies in an area where parts of the earths surface are constantly shifting.

• Due to Japan's mountains, only about 20 percent of the country can be farmed.



 Throughout Japan's history, local armies often fought over the few patches of fertile farmland located throughout the tiny country.

• Just like in Ancient Greece the rugged terrain forced many Japanese people to turn to the sea for a living.



• Later on in Japanese history this land would be constantly fought over by clans and imperial armies.

• Early on, they settled in villages along the coast and created an extensive fishing industry.







• This industry still continues today and seafood is the staple for the Japanese diet.







• The Sea surrounding Japan's islands made it easy for people in ships to travel along the coast and eventually from island to island.







• This type of traveling really helped to encourage people to become merchants, traveling from village to village with goods to trade.

 The vast ocean around Japan's islands, however, not only provided food and travel but kept the Japanese people isolated, or separate, from the rest of Asia.



JAPAN'S GEOGRAPHY











• As a result, Japan developed its own fiercely independent society, with a completely fascinating religion, art, literature and government.

CURRENT GEOGRAPHY ISSUES IN JAPAN

• Today Japan has actually created "Fish Farms" to help increase their food supply.







• In "Fish Farms" tuna that is caught in the ocean are brought back to grow larger in a relative safe environments.

• They then raise the fish for several months in a way that increases the amount of tasty fat in their meat.



• Fatty tuna meat is called **toro** and is a favorite and expensive delicacy in sushi restaurants, about 20% of wild tuna consists of toro, with modern fish farming raising it as high as 95%.











• Japan also had to come up with different ways of farming with their limited land.







• In fact, Japan has been using these advanced underground farming technologies for several years





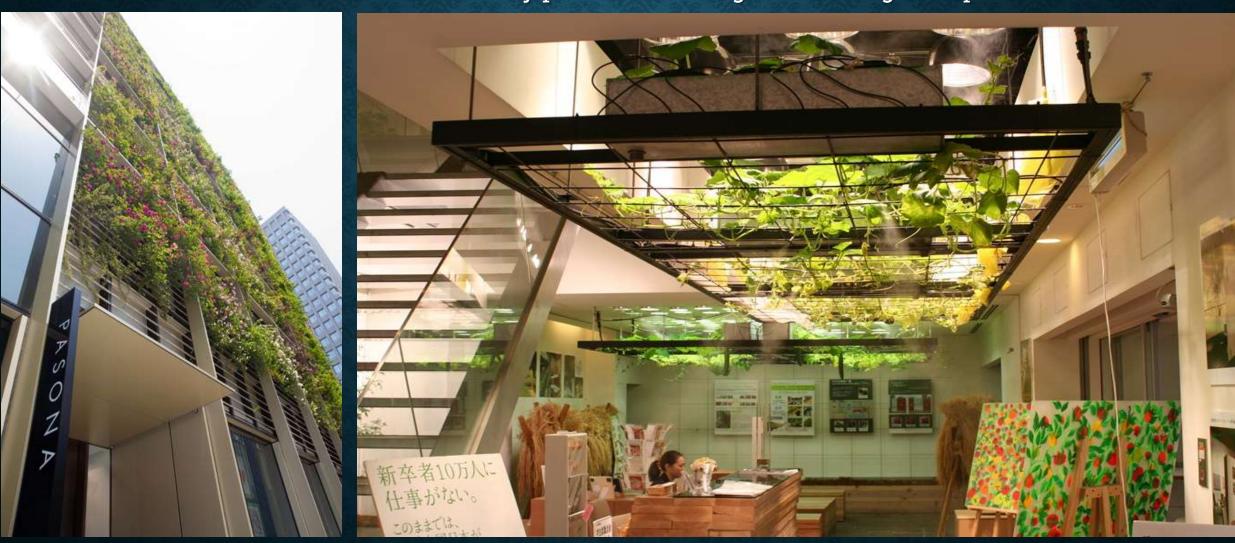








• This has been deemed Japan's urban underground farming concept.



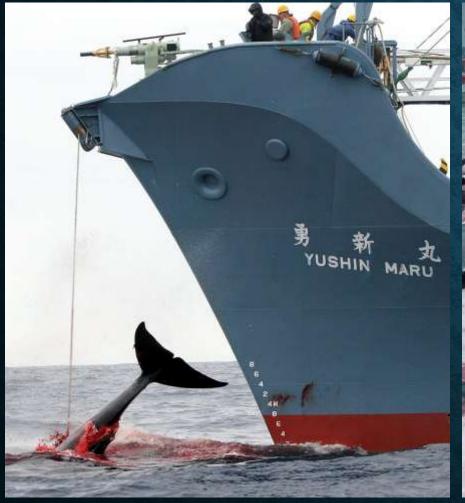
• The first Japanese urban underground farm is set up in 2005 in and around Tokyo







• The official reason that Japan gives for whale hunting is "scientific research", saying the only way to determine the whale's age is to kill it.





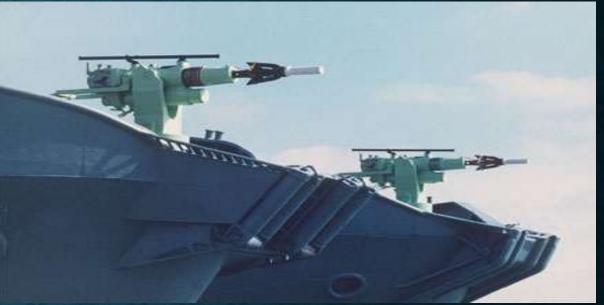
• The purpose of the "research" is to prove that whale populations have improved enough to allow commercial whaling which was banned by the International Whaling Commission in 1986.















• However, the whale meat is sold as a delicacy, and is likely the real reason for the whale hunting.



• In recent years activists have disrupted whale hunting in the arctic.



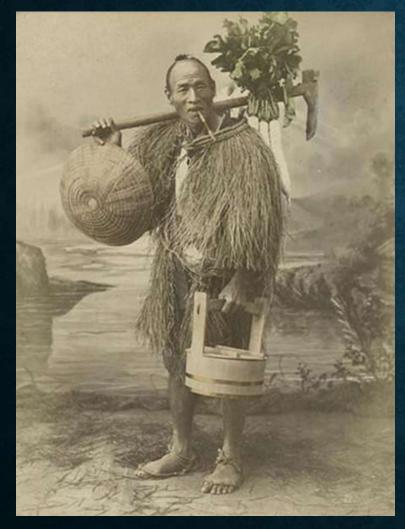
• Shark fin soup is a popular soup item of Japanese cuisine usually served at special occasions such as weddings and banquets, or as a luxury item in the Japanese culture.

• Japan's earliest people probably came from Northeast Asia between 30,000 and 10,000 B.C.E.



• At that time, Japan was joined to the Asian continent by land due to the last Ice Age.

• These early people hunted animals and gathered wild plants.





• They used fire, stone tools and lived in pits that were dug into the ground.





• In about 5,000 B.C.E., these wandering groups began to develop a distinctive culture and identity.







• They made clay pottery, using knotted cords to make designs on the clay's surface.

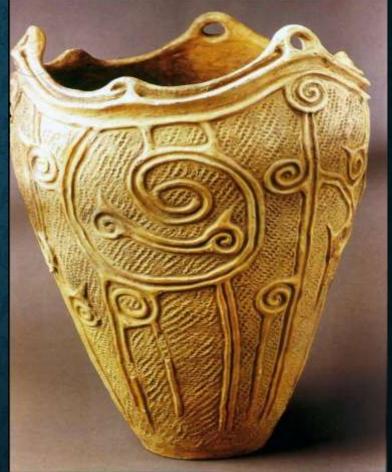




• Today this culture is called the Jomon, which means "Cord Marks" in the Japanese language.

• Modern archeologists have found many pieces of Jomon pottery throughout Japan.

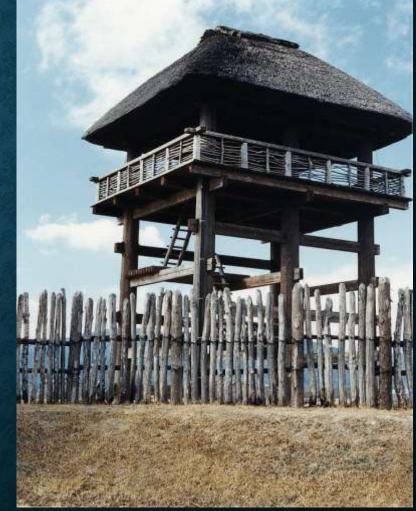




 Over time, the Jomon people settled in fishing villages along the coast of Japan...fishing became their entire way of life.

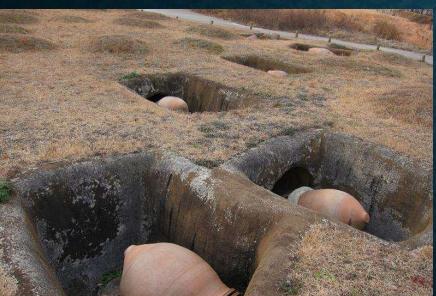
• Jomon culture lasted until about 300 B.C.E.





• At that time, a new group of people appeared in Japan...Modern archaeologists have named this culture Yayoi.







• The Yayoi got their name from the district in Tokyo, Japan where the first discoveries of their culture was found.

• The Yayoi are the ancestors of today's modern Japanese people.





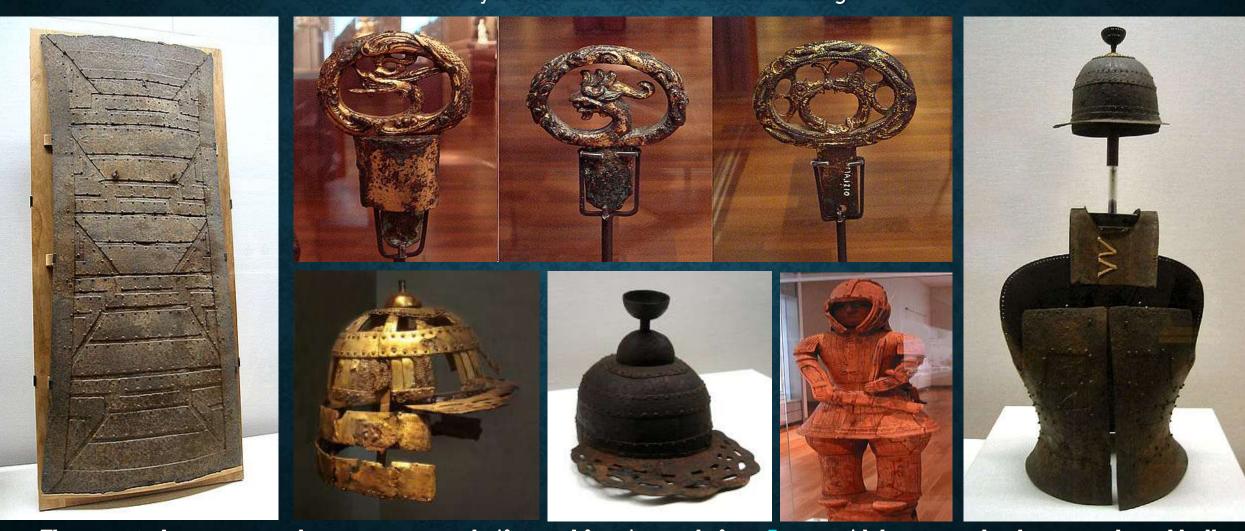
• They introduced farming to Japan and practiced a number of skills that they may have learned from individuals in China and Korea.

• They made pottery on a potter's wheel and grew rice in paddies.



• A paddy is a rice field that is flooded when the rice is originally planted...the water is then drained at harvest season.

• The Yayoi were also skilled in metal working.



• They created weapons such as axes, spears, knifes, and farming tools from **Iron**...with long swords, short swords and bells from being produced from **Bronze**.

• Dotaku are Japanese Bells from the Yayoi people, smelted from thin bronze and richly decorated...Dotaku were used for about 400 years as decorations for rituals)





• Dotaku rituals is a practice that is still commonly used in Japan today.

• By 300 C.E., the Yayoi began organizing themselves into clans.



• Clan – a group of families related by blood or marriage.

• Yayoi clans were headed by a small group of Warriors, or the strongest fighters.







• Under the warriors were the rest of the people...farmers, artisans were all servants of the warriors.



• The clan's warrior chiefs protected the people in return for a share of their farming harvest each year.

• The Yayoi buried their warrior chiefs in large mounds known as Kofun.



• Made of dirt and rocks these tombs were carefully shaped and surrounded by ditches or moats.

• Kofun's were filled with personal belongings, such as pottery, tools, weapons and armor.



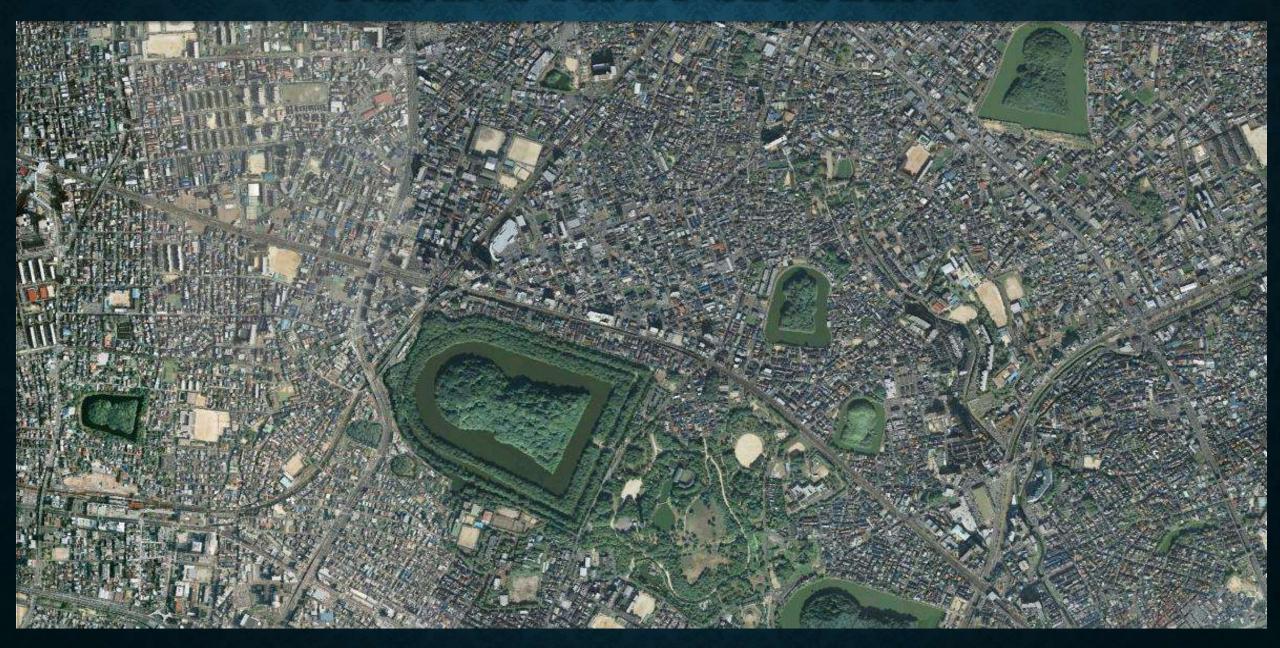
• Many of the tombs were as big as Egypt's Pyramids.

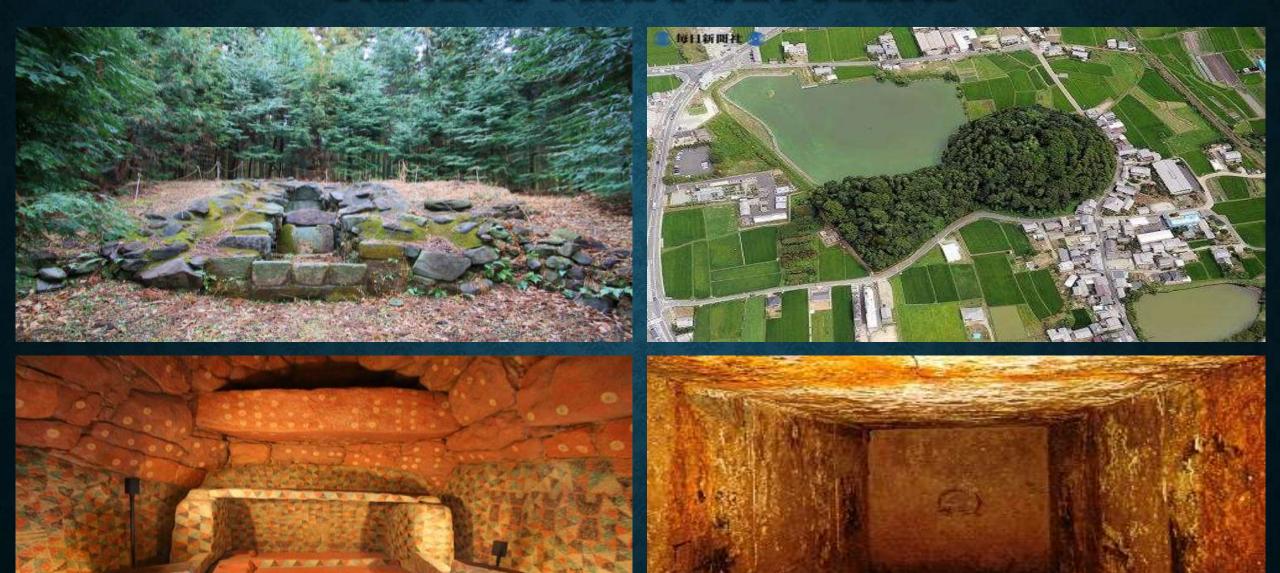
• The Daisen Kofun is the biggest tomb in Japan and is located in Sakai, Osaka seaport.





• This enormous Kofun is considered to be his final resting place of **Emperor Nintoku**, the 16th emperor of Japan







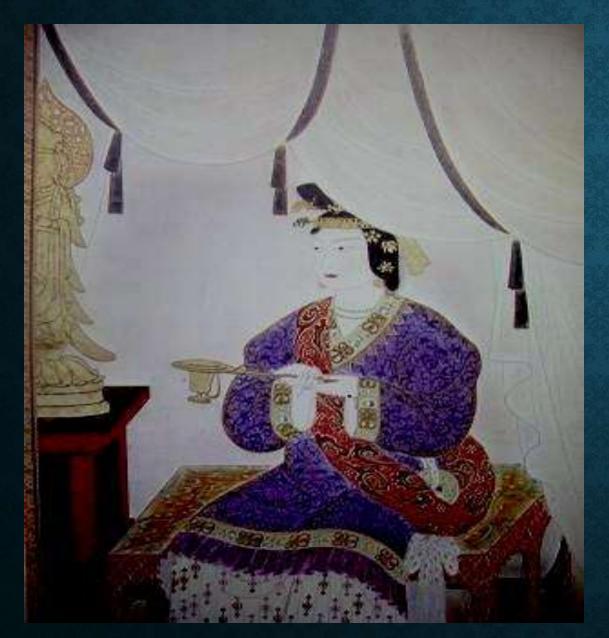




• Japan becomes extremely well organized for a medieval culute.

 Around 600 C.E., a Yamato prince named Shotoku took charge of Japan on behalf of his aunt, the Empress Suiko.





- Before we get into Prince Shotoku it is important to acknowledge who Empress Suiko was...her story is truly amazing.
 - Suiko was the first reigning empress of Japan in recorded history, reigning from 572 C.E. –585 C.E.
 - She was the daughter of the Emperor Kimmei.

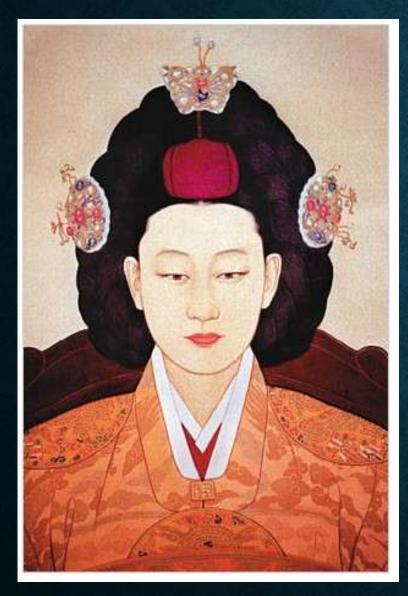
 When Emperor Kimmei died a feud erupted between the Soga clan, the Mononobe Clan and the Nakatomi Clan over the succession.



• The Soga clan was victorious, and the **Emperor Sushun**, succeeded to the throne.



• Emperor Sushun proved too independent, and Soga Umako, the head of the Soga Clan, had Emperor Sushun assassinated in 572 C.E., replacing him on the throne with the empress Suiko, who was Sushun's younger sister.









• Suiko's reign represented a great break with tradition... although Japan had in legends been ruled by several women, in recent centuries the ruling line had been male.



- Back to Shotoku...
- He wanted to create a strong government, and looked to China as an example of what to do.
- Remember that in China, a powerful emperor ruled with the help of trained officials chosen based around their abilities.

• Shotoku's constitution gave all government power to the Emperor, who had to be obeyed by the Japanese people.





• Shotoku also created a bureaucracy (a system of government) and gave the Emperor the power to appoint all officials.

• This new constitution also generated a list of rules for working within the government.





• All of these new rules were taken directly from ideas that were originally taught by Confucius.

- Shotoku also wanted Japan to learn from China's brilliant civilization.
- He actually sent officials and students to study abroad in China.











• The Japanese not only learned about Buddhist teachings but also absorbed a great deal about Chinese art, medicine and philosophy as well.

• One of these temples, Horyu-ji " Learning Temple of the Flourishing Law", still stands to this day.





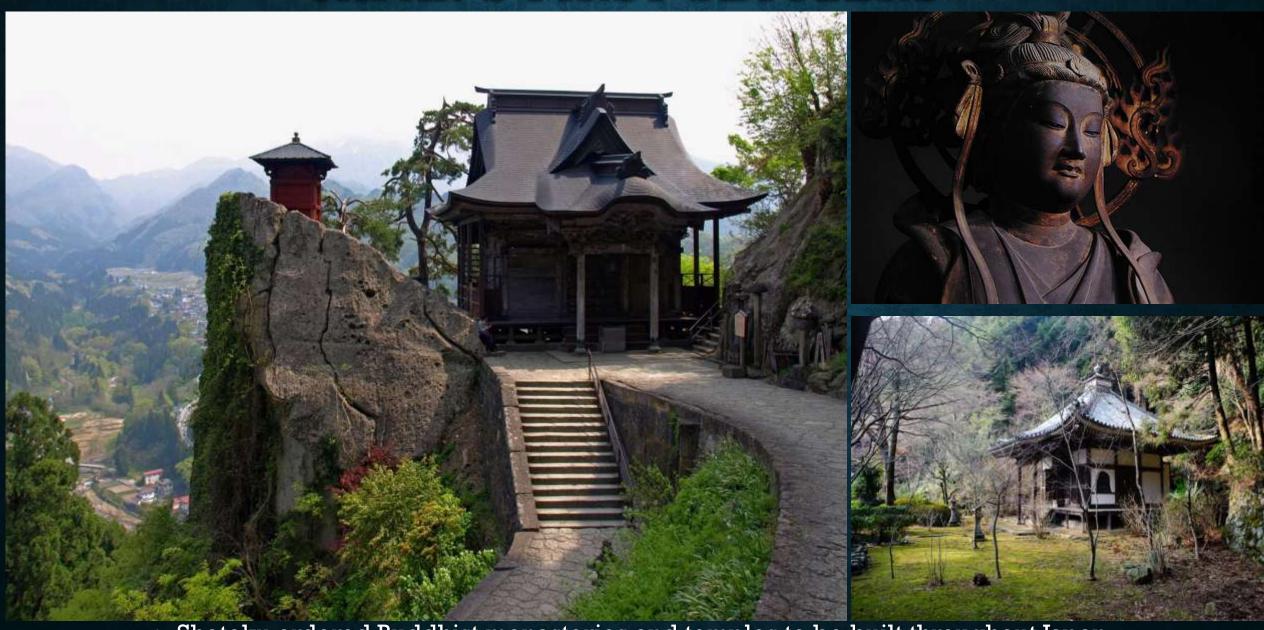


• Horyuji is Japan's oldest temple and the worlds oldest surviving wooden building.









• Shotoku ordered Buddhist monasteries and temples to be built throughout Japan.



In 1993, Horyu-ji was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site under the name Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area.









The Japanese government lists several of its structures, sculptures and artifacts as National Treasures.

• After Shotoku, other officials continued to make Japan's government look like China's.





• In 646 C.E., the Yamato Clan began the **Taika Reforms**, or "**Great Change**".

• These Japanese leaders divided Japan into provinces that were all run by officials who reported directly to the emperor.







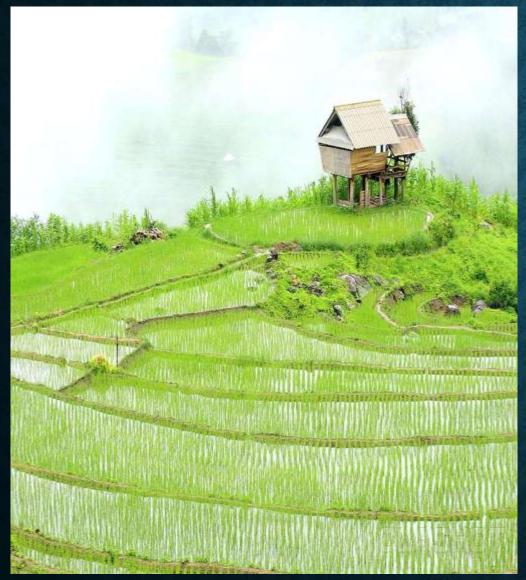
• Provinces – regional districts within a country...almost like a "State" within the United States.





• It was also during the Taika Reforms that all Japanese lands officially came under the Emperors control.

• Clan leaders could direct the farmers working the land, but they could no longer collect taxes anymore.





• Instead, government officials were to gather part of the farmers harvest, instead of taxes, for the Emperor.



• Together with Shotoku's reforms, the Taika change was able to create a strong central Japanese government.