



CULTUREGUIDE

# JAPAN

SERIES 2  
SECONDARY (7–12)



DAVID M.  
KENNEDY CENTER  
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



# JAPAN CULTUREGUIDE

This unit is published by the International Outreach Program of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University as part of an effort to foster open cultural exchange within the educational community and to promote increased global understanding by providing meaningful cultural education tools.

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# WHY STUDY CULTURES?

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For most of us, cultures are misunderstood; they are nebulous, vague, and hidden. Like the famous iceberg analogy, we know that most of what a culture is cannot be seen. But what does that mean? And why, then, should we study cultures if we do not know what we're studying in the first place?

In the late twentieth century, Brigham Young University did not embrace a new discipline, but rather a new area of study—the study of cultures. Typically, anthropology is the social science that studies cultures. Why should they have all the fun? The study of cultures unites other academic disciplines (as needed), drawing upon literature, political science, sociology, and even the more applied areas of nursing, social work, law, and business. The study of cultures has grown into nothing short of a revolt against disciplines, “a mode of inquiry” that looks at things in new ways.<sup>1</sup>

In 1982, the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies established International Outreach as a formal program to help build bridges of intercultural understanding. Since then, more than 10,000 *gratis* cultural presentations have been given to local area public schools, taking students to new places using language, multimedia, and imagination. *CultureGuides* derive from the same expertise that has been honed in classrooms—with the exciting exception that these intercultural learning tools are not geographically bound. Thanks to the Internet, accessible multimedia technology, and our trusty iMAC, a limitless audience can learn about different cultures.

Globalization, the driving paradigm of the post-Cold War world, means that now, more than ever, culture matters. Culture is the invisible context that may keep us from understanding important people, places, and ideas; it exists whether or not we think about it. Intercultural education can help us, not only as an intellectual exercise, but also in very practical ways to combat racism, to expand business, and to communicate effectively.

*CultureGuides* share the same aim as Edward T. Hall, the eminent cultural scholar, to try and “make culture real.”<sup>2</sup> Even though our “student guides” are not present in every classroom, we hope that *CultureGuides* will make classrooms of the mind and cultural laboratories wherever you may reside.

<sup>1</sup> Ziauddin Sardar and Borin Van Loon. *Introducing Cultural Studies*, Totem Books, New York: 1998.

<sup>2</sup> *The Edge: The E-Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Summer 1998, Vol. 1(3) Posted 10/11/98, <http://interculturalrelations.com/v1i3Summer1998/sum98sorrellshall.htm>.

# GEOGRAPHY & CLIMATE

## FUKUOKA CITY

The geography of Japan has shaped the nation's history and continues to influence modern society. Climate and proximity to other countries affected historical events in Fukuoka (fü-kü-o-kä) City, including the growth of nationalism and the use of *kamikaze* (kä-me-kä-ze) pilots in World War II.



### Starting Points

1. Scramble the letters in the word fukuoka and write them on the chalkboard. Ask the students to arrange the letters to discover the name of this famous city in southern Japan.
2. Give the students three definitions for the word kamikaze. Include the correct definition, "God's wind," along with two false ones. Have them vote for the definition they think is correct and then explain the historical background of kamikazes.
3. The three following questions will help students focus on key points from the information section. Write them on the board before the lesson and have the class answer them in their heads or on paper whenever they hear the answer.
  - a. What geographic conditions made Fukuoka the ideal location for trade in Japan?
  - b. Where did the word kamikaze originate?
  - c. How did the legend of kamikaze influence Japan's decision to send out suicide pilots during World War II?



### Information

#### Land

Exposed peaks of underwater mountain ridges make up the four main islands of Japan. With area and shape comparable to California, Japan's climate ranges from freezing temperatures in the north to subtropical weather in the south. The warmer climate of the southern island Kyūshū (kyūü-shüü) fosters an atmosphere agreeable to foreign traders.

#### Trade

In 500 B.C.E., Fukuoka became the main trading port in Japan. Located on the northwestern shore of Kyūshū and situated seventy miles from the Korean Peninsula, it was the first stop for traders before entering the rest of the country (see **Geography & Climate Visual 1**). Because of the close proximity to China, formidable trade relations grew between the two countries for hundreds of centuries, resulting in a lasting Chinese influence on Japanese written language and religious traditions.

## **Mongols**

With its great wealth and trading power in the thirteenth century, Fukuoka City proved to be a tempting prospect to the crusading Mongols. Their leader, Kublai (kü-blä) Khan, took control of much of Korea and China (see **Geography & Climate Visual 2**). After this, Kublai Khan looked to Japan with hopes of unifying all Asia under Mongolian rule.

In 1268 C.E., Kublai Khan made his first attempt to unite Japan and Asia. He sent an envoy to the Japanese emperor demanding that he open relations with China or suffer defeat in war. For the next five years, the Chinese government continued to send envoys demanding friendly relations, but they were repeatedly denied. The Japanese emperor ignored the threats, based on the rationale that Japan was a chosen land, protected and watched by gods. Kublai Khan, furious at the emperor's indifference, but determined to obtain his goal, prepared his troops for a massive attack.

A Mongolian army with over 30,000 men sailing on 450 ships, left Korea and sailed across the Sea of Japan. With this immense fleet, the Mongolians easily captured the small, outlying islands of Tsushima (tsu-she-mä) and Iki (e-ke). Although the Japanese islanders defended their homelands with great bravery, they were still unable to stop the large Mongolian army.

The ships continued on to Kyushu, where troops landed on the shores of Hakata (hä-kä-tä) Bay (modern day Fukuoka). It was here that the Mongols began a great massacre of the Japanese people.

The Mongols overpowered the Japanese because they were experienced soldiers. Their generals taught them innovative combat skills including how to keep in a strict formation during battle. The Koreans also had advanced weapons such as the long-bow and machines that were capable of firing heavy missiles. The Japanese, on the other hand, fought without a distinct formation. Though they were determined, their lack of skill and weaponry kept them at a disadvantage.

## **Japanese Miracle**

The Mongols fought during the day and returned to their harboring ships at night for rest. One evening a mighty storm fell upon the sleeping Mongolian fleet. To their surprise, many of their ships sank and over 13,000 men drowned. The surviving Mongols fled back to the Korean Peninsula and Kublai Khan swore he would someday return to seize Japan.

The Japanese recognized this miracle as a blessing from the gods. The tempest, along with its strong winds and waves, was proclaimed kamikaze, meaning "God's wind" or "divine wind." The Japanese believed the gods were truly protecting them because of their superiority to other nations, especially to Korea.

Realizing the Mongols were angered by their defeat and would probably return to fight, the Japanese prepared for war. They built large barriers and dikes to prevent the Mongols from landing on the shores of Fukuoka.

Seven years later, the Mongols returned with an army three times larger than the first one. Although the Japanese were better prepared, the Mongols were still able to penetrate many of the barriers. Miraculous tempests once again destroyed most of the

Mongolian army, forcing them to retreat back to Korea. The Mongol fighters who were left abandoned on the shore of Fukuoka were killed by Japanese standing armies. The reoccurrence of kamikaze deepened Japan's nationalism. They believed they were a chosen people, destined to rule over other nations.

From the thirteenth century until World War II, Japan was never invaded by a foreign power again. This strengthened their belief that they were a chosen and protected nation. During World War II, the emperor used Shinto (shen-to), the native religion of Japan, as a means of justifying his attacks upon Asia and the United States. He sought pilots who were willing to sacrifice their lives in defense of Japan. They would have to assume the role of a divine wind. The kamikaze pilots avoided enemy fire by flying directly into targets, trying to cause enough damage to stop enemy forces from invading Japan (see **Geography & Climate Visual 3**).

Young men from all over Japan answered the emperor's call and attempted to overpower opposing fleets. They believed they could gain victory with the gods' help. However, opposing countries endured the attacks and fought back, forcing the Japanese to surrender.

Today, the same harbor once attacked by the Mongols is an industrious part of Fukuoka City. Although it no longer dominates trade in Japan, Fukuoka remains a symbol of nationalism and World War II bravery for all of Japan.



### Activities

1. Write and perform a newscast detailing Kublai Khan's attempts to invade Japan.
2. Imagine you are one of Kublai Khan's soldiers. Describe your experience at Hakata Bay.
3. Design a travel poster for modern-day Fukuoka. Include pictures that reflect the most important aspects of the city.
4. Write a brief paragraph about an interesting fact you have learned about Fukuoka. Edit your paper to fifty words, then twenty-five, then ten, then five, and then one word (it should be the most important word). Construct a collage of the final words from each person's composition.



### Discussion Questions

1. What are some advantages to living in a place that has a lot of contact with other countries? What are some disadvantages?
2. Why do you think the Japanese people used the term kamikaze to describe suicide pilots during World War II?
3. What kinds of difficulties are there for people who live on an island?
4. What stories and traditions are we proud of in American culture? How do these compare to Japanese traditions?

# HISTORY

## THE ATOMIC BOMBING ON HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

The atomic bomb was a very destructive weapon used against the Japanese people during World War II. The bomb caused incredible physical damage to the cities of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Although the war between the Japanese and the Americans has ended, the effects are still prevalent in Japanese society today. The aftermath of the war has caused an immense change in Japanese culture, way of life, and attitude towards war.



### Starting Points

1. Explain how dropping an atomic bomb affected the people of Japan. Describe the scene of the city when it was hit by the first atomic bomb. This will help students to understand how destructive atomic weapons are.
2. Display a map of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that shows the radius of the bomb's effect (**see History Visual 1**). Compare the destructive distances (i.e., kilometers to miles or distance to a local school or establishment).
3. Discuss these main ideas:
  - a. The results of the bombing in helping to end the war
  - b. How Japanese life was altered after the bombing
  - c. Japanese people's feelings toward war as a result of the bombing



### Information

#### Atomic Bomb

While passing along the roads of present-day Nagasaki or Hiroshima, one would never imagine that only fifty years ago these cities were suffering from the terrible impact of an atomic bomb. The first bomb killed nearly 200,000 people and the second bomb killed another 70,000 people, although casualties continued to soar from the extensive post-bomb effects.

When the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, it descended as a fireball reaching several million degrees Celsius and radiating white-heat. During the time of the explosion, people within this area were instantly disintegrated. The intensity of the encompassing fire was so great that it burned shadows into the concrete of buildings and sidewalks.

Those not killed instantly from the blast were still vulnerable to fires that spread throughout the city. Many were trapped under destroyed buildings. Some who tried to flee the city were crushed by the fall of large structures. All wooden structures two kilometers or less from the bomb's hypocenter were completely disintegrated.



Concrete buildings that remained standing after the blast had their windows blasted out and their insides burned.

About thirty minutes after the explosion, the city turned dark and black rain began to fall. Many people did not know the rain resulted from the rising current of air, which sucked up radioactive particles of dust. Those who survived the initial destruction of the bomb were exposed to radioactivity that would cause a variety of illnesses including keloids, leukemia, prenatal retardation, and numerous cancers.

### **Lasting Effects**

Keloids were discovered in fifty to sixty percent of the people exposed to thermal heat rays within two kilometers of the hypocenter. Keloids are major skin deformations that result from an overgrowth of scar tissue where an injury has occurred. A person affected by keloids also suffered mentally from their scarred faces and arms. Many went into hiding, but those who ventured out into society usually wore long sleeve shirts, long pants, and masks, even during the long, hot, humid summer days.

Leukemia was another illness resulting from the radiation of the atomic bomb. It caused the loss of normal bodily functions and weakened the body's immunity to infectious diseases. Those who were exposed to the bomb's radiation at a young age developed leukemia years later.

Women who were pregnant while radiation filled the air gave birth to physically and mentally retarded, and in some cases, stillborn babies. The fetus is the most susceptible stage for a baby to be affected by radiation.

The younger generations who survived the atomic bomb's initial blast developed tumors that became lung and breast cancers about ten years later. Certainly these cancers added even more weight to the hardships many Japanese went through as a result of the atomic bombs.

### **New Realization**

Survivors took refuge with relatives in neighboring cities. The lives of these few remaining citizens of Nagasaki and Hiroshima were changed forever. Hiroshima's population fell from 300,000 to 130,000 in less than one month. The economies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were also greatly affected. Because the necessities of life were in short supply, black markets were set up in front of train stations, selling everything from food to clothing.

Japanese culture prior to the bombings was highly intolerant of other cultures. Afterwards, the Japanese quickly adapted to Western thinking and behavior, both involuntarily and voluntarily. Their way of life was also greatly changed. Schools began to teach English. Government policy was modified to meet American standards. The bombings not only ended the war but also ended the traditional lifestyles many of the Japanese people were accustomed to.

Before the atomic bombs were dropped, the Japanese attitude toward war was aggressive. The government had always maintained superiority and people were highly committed to honoring Japan. However, one of the greatest effects of this devastating war has been the change in attitude toward war. Monuments have been erected to remind people of the devastations of war in the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.



## Activities

1. Research and write an essay about the inventors of the atomic bomb.
2. Read and discuss the poem about the dropping of the atomic bombs (**see History Visual 2**).
2. Using a city map and compass, draw a rough outline of a 1.5 mile radius from the center of your school (**see History Visual 1**). Make a list of areas that would be affected if a bomb were dropped on your school.
3. Conduct a debate. Divide the class into groups and assign each group either a proatomic bomb approach or an antiatomic bomb approach. Have students briefly research their topic and prepare an argument. When debating, allow five minutes for each presentation.
4. Visit one of the Hiroshima or Nagasaki museums online and report on five interesting facts (**see Additional Resources**).



## Discussion Questions

1. Compare the tragedy of the terrorist attacks on the U.S. World Trade Center on 11 September 2001 to the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima in Japan.
2. How important is it that the United States used the atomic bomb as a weapon in war before any other country did?
3. Do you think the dropping of the atomic bomb was necessary to end the war? Can you imagine any other solutions?
4. How can we prevent the dropping of another atomic bomb?

# POLITICS & ECONOMICS

## THE U.S. OCCUPATION OF OKINAWA

Since World War II, American forces have occupied the small Japanese controlled island of Okinawa (o-ke-nä-wä). Although military presence has been an economic boon for this area, cultural clashes between the two nations have spurred debate over the American presence.



### Starting Points

1. Relate to the class the major historical points in Okinawa's history.
2. Discuss the cultural differences between the citizens of Okinawa and American soldiers stationed in Okinawa.
3. Write the following questions on the board for the students to think about during the lesson. This will help students focus on the most important points of the information presented.
  - a. Why did America want to establish military bases in Okinawa?
  - b. What economic benefits does the U.S. military bring to Okinawa?
  - c. What drawbacks are there to having a foreign military presence in Okinawa?



### Information

#### Cultural Differences

The island of Okinawa, along with several small surrounding islands, is historically known as the Ryukyu (ryü-kyü) Kingdom. Although located between Taiwan and Japan, it remained independent until the Japanese gained control of it in 1879 (see **Politics & Economics Visual 1**). Although they are citizens of Japan and are considered Japanese, the people of Okinawa are ethnically different from those on the larger islands of Japan, and many consider themselves an entirely separate race.

Ethnically and culturally, the Okinawans come from a unique mix of indigenous Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and other pacific island peoples, developing separately from Japan until 1870. The culture of Okinawa is similar to the culture of Japan, but the people of this small island perpetuate their own traditions along with those commonly found in Japan.

#### Military Advantage

During World War II, American forces discovered the strategic advantages of establishing a base on Okinawa to launch attacks on mainland Japan. The U.S. military invaded Okinawa in 1945 and over 200,000 people were killed during the next three months of battle. Although American bases were established on the island, many people believed the tremendous loss of life influenced U.S. leaders to drop the atomic bomb instead of invade mainland Japan.

Since this incident, the United States government has considered Okinawa a vital component of its military strategy in Asia. It was routinely used as a staging area for military operations throughout the Vietnam War. During the Cold War, the proximity to the U.S.S.R. and North Korea made the island bases a significant deterrent to the spread of communist ideology throughout Asia. The closeness to the Korean Peninsula also helped calm relations between North and South Korea.

Today, Japan is one of the most generous allies to the United States, giving almost five billion dollars each year in peacetime Host Nation Support (HNS). Equipment, weapons systems, and services have been coordinated to provide better military cooperation between the nations. Japan also purchases U.S. weaponry to update and modernize its armed forces.

Currently, 25,000 of the 47,000 U.S. military personnel in Japan are stationed on Okinawa. Although Okinawa only accounts for 0.6 percent of Japan's territory, seventy-five percent of the land occupied by the U.S. military is on the island.

The continued presence of American soldiers has provided economic and political benefits for Okinawans. The Japanese government considers the bases necessary for maintaining peace and security within the country. Military personnel often have sufficient funds for recreational activities and general consumerism, providing economic strength to Okinawa.

### **Drawbacks**

The greatest drawbacks of having American troops in Okinawa come from the burden on the people of Okinawa. Japanese and Okinawans pay support money to cover the cost of the troops in their role as a military protectorate. Environmental concerns, noise levels, and, most significantly, crime associated with the troops, have plagued the American presence on the island.

Tensions have risen during the last fifteen years as crimes committed by United States military personnel have increased. In the nineties, crimes involving stabbing, robbery, and other violent acts were constantly reported in local newspapers, angering citizens and officials on the island. These feelings climaxed, and in 1995 when three U.S. servicemen raped a twelve-year-old schoolgirl, widespread protest erupted all over the island, along with other parts of Japan.

Since this tragedy, Okinawan officials have pressured the central government to revise the Japan-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement making the American military hand over soldiers suspected of breaking Japanese laws. Currently, the United States and the Japanese government have only agreed to hand over pre-indictment servicemen suspected of homicide, rape, and other serious crimes.

Okinawan citizens have also demanded a reduction in the size and scope of the United States military presence on their island. Yet, Japanese officials agree a military presence is necessary to stabilize the situation between North and South Korea. Officials also believe a military base sustains the ability to respond quickly to any Asian area that may be threatened by foreign or domestic conflict. With the new peaceful relations developing between North and South Korea, Okinawans still feel a significant decrease in troop size should be implemented.





## Activities

1. Divide the class into small teams. Give them twenty minutes to formulate opinions on the following issue: Should the U.S. military remain stationed in Okinawa and why? Have each group present their ideas to the class.
2. Ask students to act as newly-appointed cultural advisors to the president of the United States. Their first assignment will be to write a letter to the president attempting to explain why a great number of Okinawan citizens do not want American soldiers stationed on their island anymore. The compositions should include advice to the president on the cultural and political concerns of maintaining troops on the island.
3. Stage a mock hearing. Divide the class into three groups; one group will act as “witnesses” and “experts” supporting U.S. troops on Okinawa while another group will do the same in opposition to an American presence. Remind students to apply what they have learned from the lesson to create realistic testimonials. The third group will listen to both sides and make a decision regarding the future of the U.S. troops.



## Discussion Questions

1. How would you feel if foreign soldiers lived in your town?
2. How do you think the situation in Okinawa influences the way Japanese people think of Americans?
3. When people of different cultures come in contact, they sometimes form a blended culture. Why do you think Okinawan and American citizens do not blend well?
4. Do you think American troops should remain stationed in Okinawa?

# LIFESTYLE

## SHINTO

Shinto, once the national religion of Japan, continues to play an important role in the lives of Japanese people. The basic beliefs of *kami* (kā-me) worship, festival celebration, and ceremonial rituals, establish Shinto as an integral part of Japanese society.



### Starting Points

1. Ask the class what they think a *kamidana* (kā-me-dä-nä), a Shinto family shrine, is used for (see **Lifestyle Visual 1**). Explain the purpose of a *kamidana*.
2. Tell the story of *Amaterasu* (ä-mä-të-dä-sü), the Sun Goddess. Knowing this myth will help the students understand the relationship between the government and religion and why Shinto is part of Japanese culture.
3. Have the students write down the following three questions to think about and answer during the lesson. This will help the class focus on the key information presented.
  - a. How did the myth of Amaterasu help establish Shinto as the state religion?
  - b. What are some of the beliefs of Shinto?
  - c. How does Shinto affect the everyday lives of people in Japan?



### Information

#### Culture vs. Religion

Although once the national religion, Shinto has blended with Buddhist and Christian beliefs. Most people in Japan consider themselves Shinto and Buddhist, but do not practice either one consistently. Although Shinto practices have significantly shaped Japanese culture, the practice of true Shinto has declined. The Japanese have held onto the Shinto beliefs as a traditional practice rather than a religious observance.

#### Myth

Shinto begins with the ancient myth of Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, who provided light and warmth for the earth. One day, after being treated badly by her brother Susanowo (sü-sä-no-o), Amaterasu hid herself in a cave and blocked the entrance with a huge boulder. The world suddenly lost all light and life. Other gods tried to lure her out of the cave, but Amaterasu refused to move the blockade.

In desperation, the gods decided to stage what would sound like a party outside of the cave. Amaterasu, after hearing joyful laughter and music, became curious and stuck her head out of the cave. A large mirror had been placed facing the entrance to the cave. When Amaterasu peered out of the doorway, the first image she saw was her own. Astounded by the beauty of the face looking back at her and not recogniz-

ing it, she ventured out a little further. The god of force grabbed her and returned Amaterasu to her proper place in the sky, giving light back to the world (see **Lifestyle Visual 2**).

The ancient myth of Amaterasu provides the foundation for basic Shinto beliefs. The first emperor of Japan, Jimmu Tenno (jem-mü tēn-ne), was considered to be her descendent and was, therefore, worshiped as a god. Beginning with his reign in 660 B.C.E., the idea of a divine ruler has continued throughout Japanese history. All emperors were worshiped and obeyed, linking church with state and spreading the beliefs and ideas of Shinto. During the late nineteenth century, Shinto became the official state religion, lasting until 1945 with the end of World War II, when the Japanese were forced to institute a separation of religious and governmental rule.

### **Cultural Significance**

Shinto has not only affected Japanese politics, but has also played a huge part in defining the culture of Japan. Its basic belief of worshipping multiple gods shapes many aspects of Japanese daily life. According to Shinto, the Japanese have classified kami or gods, into three types: deified powers of nature, clan ancestors, and souls of the dead.

Shinto is characterized by a respect and worship of nature (wind, rain, trees, rocks, etc.), because it is regarded as having a spiritual substance. Environment is considered sacred, making things like picking wildflowers inappropriate. Shinto belief recognizes kami as an integral part of the surrounding world. The Japanese use kami to explain the forces behind superhuman or supernatural forces in nature. Kami are also associated with nature and natural phenomena such as the sun, moon, earth, mountains, plants, animals, etc. (see **Lifestyle Visuals 3–4**). These gods of nature differ greatly from Western images of God; kami are not divine creatures with intimate feelings for their earthly children. Rather, they are forces within nature.

Ancestry is also an important part of Shinto. Deified ancestors, said to provide protection and wealth to the family, are worshiped privately at family altars within the home. The blessings of these *Ujigami* (ü-je-gä-me), or clan ancestors, are vital to the clan's influence, status, and physical well being. Kamidana are placed in the homes of Shinto believers as a way to honor their kami ancestors. Daily prayers are given to their ancestors and foods of all types are offered. At the grave sites of ancestors, one can sometimes find plates of food placed upon the headstone.

The third category of kami are those of noble lineage or those who performed notable deeds but are deceased. The emperor as well as brave soldiers who were sacrificed during wartime for the well being of the nation are believed to be among the kami. A well known grave site in Tokyo has been set apart for those who displayed courage and honor in time of war.

As part of Shinto worship, believers attend yearly festivals, or *matsuri* (mä-tsü-ri) (see **Lifestyle Visual 5**). On the biggest holiday of the year, New Year's festival, families typically visit Shinto shrines to wish for good luck and other personal desires that will last throughout the coming year. At these shrines, Shinto priests offer prayers of blessing in order to maintain continued stability and prosperity. The

kami are entertained and offered both food and drink. Shinto believers, in hopes of gaining added favor, often flatter the gods with praises and promises.

Another important annual matsuri is the Harvest Festival, 23 November, performed by the emperor himself. At this national holiday, the emperor offers up the first fruits of the year to the gods as a way of showing communion with them.

A final cultural influence of Shinto is the importance of ceremonies. Marriages are performed as Shinto rituals, reflecting more of a traditional belief than a religious belief. Shinto ceremonial rituals are performed as a way of showing purity to the gods. Before one communes with the gods, one must be clean and pure. In turn, land must also be kept clean and pure before it is blessed by the kami. This Shinto belief, as well as a reverence for nature, is reflected in the many beautiful, well kept gardens found throughout Japan.

Shinto, although no longer practiced as strictly as it was before the end of World War II, continues to significantly impact the culture and traditions of Japan.



### Activities

1. Reenact the myth of Amaterasu using different students to portray the roles.
2. Pretend you are natives of Japan visiting a Shinto temple during the New Year's Festival. What will you ask for? List five things (tangible or intangible) and explain why you want them for the upcoming year.
3. Write a list of everything you can remember about your ancestors. A few students may share their lists.
4. Design your own family altar. Make sure to include drawings of the different objects you want to incorporate and an explanation of what they represent and why you chose to include them. Several students may share their designs.



### Discussion Questions

1. How has the myth of Amaterasu helped shape the culture of Japan?
2. Based on Shinto beliefs, how do you think Japanese people generally feel about environmentalism? How do you think they feel about the government?
3. Many Japanese people have religious objects like kamidana in their homes that represent their religion. What kinds of religious objects might you find in American homes? What do those objects express about different religious beliefs in the United States?
4. What kinds of things do you do to honor your ancestors?



# FACTS ABOUT JAPAN

**Official Name:** Nippon or Nihon  
(Source of the Sun)

**Capital:** Tokyo

**Government Type:** constitutional  
monarchy

**Area:** 377,835 sq km

**Land Boundaries:** Coastline 29,751  
km

**Climate:** varies from tropical in south  
to cool temperate in north

**Lowest Point:** Hachiro-gata 4 m

**Highest Point:** Mount Fuji 3,776 m

**Natural Resources:** negligible mineral  
resources, fish

**Natural Hazards:** many dormant and  
some active volcanoes; about 1,500  
seismic occurrences (mostly tremors)  
every year; tsunamis

**Population:** 126,974,628 (July 2002  
est.)

**Ethnic Groups:** Japanese 99%, other  
1% (mostly Korean)

**Religions:** observe both Shinto and  
Buddhist 84%, other 16% (including  
Christian 0.7%)

**Languages:** Japanese

**GDP:** \$3.45 trillion (2001 est.)

**GDP Per Capita:** \$27,200 (2001 est.)

**GDP Composition By Sector:** agricul-  
ture 2%, industry 36%, services 62%  
(2000 est.)

**Labor Force:** 67.7 million (2000)

**Unemployment Rate:** 4.9% (2000)  
urban; plus considerable underemploy-  
ment

**Industries:** steel and nonferrous metal-  
lurgy, heavy electrical equipment, con-  
struction and mining equipment, motor  
vehicles and parts, electronic and  
telecommunication equipment, machine  
tools, automated production systems,  
locomotives and railroad rolling stock,  
ships, chemicals, textiles, processed  
foods

**Agricultural Products:** rice, sugar  
beets, vegetables, fruit; pork, poultry,  
dairy products, eggs; fish

**Exports:** \$404.6 billion (f.o.b., 2001)  
manufactures (including machinery,  
motor vehicles, consumer electronics)

**Imports:** \$331.6 billion (f.o.b., 2001)  
manufactures, foodstuffs, raw materi-  
als, and fossil fuels

**Trade Partners:** U.S., Southeast Asia,  
EU, China

**Currency:** yen (¥)

**Exchange Rate:** 132.66 yen (¥) = \$1  
U.S. (January 2002)

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# HISTORY AND HOLIDAYS

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## TIME LINE

- 660 B.C.E.** Jimmu, the mythological descendent of the sun goddess, Amaterasu, founds the Japanese Empire
- 300** Yayoi period—rice cultivation, metal-working, and the potter's wheel are introduced from China and Korea
- 100 C.E.** Local clans form small political units
- 300** Yamato period—Powerful clan rulers unify the state, clan rulers claiming descent from Amaterasu Omikami create an imperial dynasty
- 645** Asuka period—Taika reforms used to strengthen the emperor's power are implemented
- 710** Nara period—New capital built at Nara, adoption of Buddhism, writing of *Nihongi* and *Kojiki*, ancient Shinto texts
- 794** Heian period—Capital moves to Kyoto, official contact with China stops
- 1185** Kamakura period—Military government established in Kamakura
- 1192** Title of shogun, or military ruler, first given out, bushi (warrior class) becomes new ruling class.
- 1274 & 1281** Kublai Khan and the Mongols attempt to invade Japan, origin of kamikaze
- 1333** Muromachi period—the district of Muromachi becomes the center of the shogun-led government in Kyoto, new military leaders patronize Zen Buddhism
- 1467–1568** Warring states period—Turmoil and fighting within Japan
- 1549** Frances Xavier and the Jesuits introduce Christianity
- 1568** Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi begin the process of unifying Japan, Japan closes its borders to foreign influences and trade
- 1635** Sakoku, the isolation policy, begins, almost all foreign trade stops, shogunate moves to Edo (Tokyo)
- 1853** Commodore Matthew Perry of the United States arrives and demands that Japan open its markets to trade
- 1868** Meiji period—Shogunate dissolved and emperor restored to power, feudal system eliminated and Japan becomes a nation-state
- 1895** Sino-Japan War (Japanese victory)
- 1904** Russo-Japan War (Japanese victory)
- 1910** Korea becomes part of Japan
- 1925** Universal manhood suffrage begins
- 1931** Manchuria becomes part of Japan
- 1937** World War II, war in China followed by invasion of Southeast Asia
- 1940** Japan joins the Axis powers
- 1941** Attack on Pearl Harbor

- 1945** First atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima, the second on Nagasaki, the emperor airs by radio a statement of unconditional surrender, new constitution instated
- 1951** Japan regains its independence after signing a peace treaty
- 1964** Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo
- 1972** Relations with China are normalized
- 1989** Prince Akihito succeeds to the throne
- 1995** Hanshin Earthquake
- 1998** Winter Olympic Games in Nagano

## **HOLIDAYS**

- 30 Dec–2 Jan** Oshogatsu (New Year's)
- 15 Jan** Seijinshiki (Coming of Age)
- 3 Mar** Hina Matsuri (Girl's Festival)
- 21 Mar** Shunbun-no-hi (Spring Equinox)
- Apr** Sakura matsuri (Cherry Blossom festival)
- 29 Apr** Golden Week
- 5 May** Kodomo-no-hi (Children's Day)
- 7 Jul** Tanabata (Star Festival)
- 12–19 Aug** Hanabi Taikai (Fireworks Festival)
- mid-Aug** Obon (Honoring of ancestors)
- 15 Sep** Keiro-no-hi (Respect for the Aged Day)
- 23 Sep** Shubun no Hi (Autumn Equinox)
- 10 Oct** Taiiku-no-hi (Sports Day)
- 15 Nov** Shichi-go-san (Seven-Five-Three Day, a special day for boys and girls of these ages when they give thanks and pray for the future)
- 23 Dec** Emperor's Birthday

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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### **JAPANESE EMBASSY TO THE UNITED STATES**

2520 Massachusetts Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20008  
Phone: (202) 238-6700, Fax: (202) 328-2187  
Web site: <http://www.embjapan.org>

### **JAPAN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM**

515 South Figueroa Street Suite 1470  
Los Angeles, CA 94109  
Phone: (213) 623-1952, Fax: (213) 623-6301

### **JAPAN INFORMATION CULTURE CENTER (JICC)**

JICC Embassy of Japan  
Lafayette Centre III 1155 21st Street NM  
Washington, D.C. 20036-3308  
Phone: (202) 238-6900, Fax: (202) 822-6524  
E-mail: [ejjicc@erols.com](mailto:ejjicc@erols.com)

### **BOOKS**

Christman, Albert B. *Target Hiroshima: Deak Parsons and the Creation of the Atomic Bomb*, Naval Institute Press, 1998.  
*CultureGram 2001*, Brigham Young University, 2000.  
Feiler, Bruce S. *Learning to Bow: Inside the Heart of Japan*, Mariner Books, September 1992.  
Furuya, Yasuo. *A History of Japanese Theology*, August 1996.  
Hein, Laura and Mark Selden. *Living with the Bomb: American and Japanese Cultural Conflicts in the Nuclear Age*, M.E. Sharge, 1997.  
Hoyt, Edwin Palmer. *The Kamikazes*, Arbor House, 1983.  
Inoguchi, Rikihei, et al. *The Divine Wind: Japan's Kamikaze Force in World War II*, October 1994.  
Itoh, Mayumi. *Globalization of Japan: Japanese Sakoku Mentality and U.S. Efforts to Open Japan*, Palgrove, September 2000.  
Kawamata, Kazuhide. *We Live in Japan*, Bookwright Press, 1984.  
Kurian, George Thomas. *Japan (Facts on File National Profile Series)*, Facts on File, Inc., 1990.  
Lamont-Brown, Raymond. *Kamikaze: Japan's Suicide Samurai*, Cassell Academic, May 2000.  
Maclear, Kyo. *Beclouded Visions: Hiroshima-Nagasaki and the Art Witness*, State University of New York Press, 1998.  
Nelson, John K. *Enduring Identities: the Guise of Shinto in Contemporary Japan*, University of Hawaii Press, April 2000.  
Reader, Ian and George J. Tanabe Jr. *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan*, University of Hawaii Press, November 1998.



Reader, Ian and Paul Norbury. *Simple Guide to Shinto, The Religion of Japan* (*Simple Guide to World Religions*), October 1998.

Rebischung, James. *Japan: the Facts of Modern Business and Social Life*, Tuttle, 1975.

Sansom, G.B. *Japan: A Short Cultural History*, Stanford, 1978.

Talmage, Dan. *The Greatest of Grains*, Dan Talmage, 1970.

Yahara, Hiromichi. *The Battle for Okinawa*, John Wiley & Sons, March 1997.

## **FILM**

*Lost Treasures of the Ancient World 3: Samurai Japan—A Journey Back in Time*, Kultur Video, 2000.

*Nova: Japan's Secret Garden*, WGBH Boston Video, 2000.

*Pearl Harbor—The View from Japan*, Cpm/Central Park Media, 2001. (English subtitles)

*The Lonely Planet—The Japan Experience (Tokyo to Taiwan)*, Questar Inc.

Pat Metheny Group. *We Live Here (Live in Japan)*, Image Entertainment, 1995.

## **INTERNET SITES**

### **A-Bomb WWW Museum:**

<http://www.csi.ad.jp/ABOMB/index.html>

### **Ancient Japan:**

<http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/ANCJAPAN/SHINTO.HTM>

### **Archeology in Japan:**

<http://www.csuohio.edu/history/japan/japan14.html>

### **Atomic Bomb: Decision:**

<http://www.dannen.com/decision/index.html>

### **Christianity in Japan:**

<http://www.baobab.or.jp/~stranger/mypage/chrinjap.htm>

### **CIA World Factbook:**

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>

### **Damages Caused by the Explosion:**

<http://www-sdc.med.nagasaki-u.ac.jp/n50/shirabe/contents-E.html>

### **Encyclopedia.com:**

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/J/Japan.asp>

### **How to Prepare a “Kamidana”:**

<http://www.kyokushin.dk/shinden.htm>

### **Information Fukuoka:**

<http://universiade.fjct.fit.ac.jp/en/fukuoka/fukuoka.html>

### **Japan—A Country Study:**

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/jptoc.html>

### **Japan Atlas:**

<http://jin.jcic.or.jp/atlas/index.html>

### **Japan Atlas: Historic Cites:**

<http://jin.jcic.or.jp/atlas/historical/his13.html>

### **Japan Culture Club:**

<http://www.asahi-jc.com/index2.htm>

**Japan Information Resource Center:**

<http://www.konrad.ws/jp.html>

**May's Fukuoka City Guide:**

<http://www.kyushu.com/fukuoka/about/index.shtml>

**My Experience of the Nagasaki Atomic Bombing and An Outline of the U.S.**

**Military Base in Okinawa:**

<http://www.pref.okinawa.jp/baseprob-e.html>

**U.S. Military on Okinawa, Japan:**

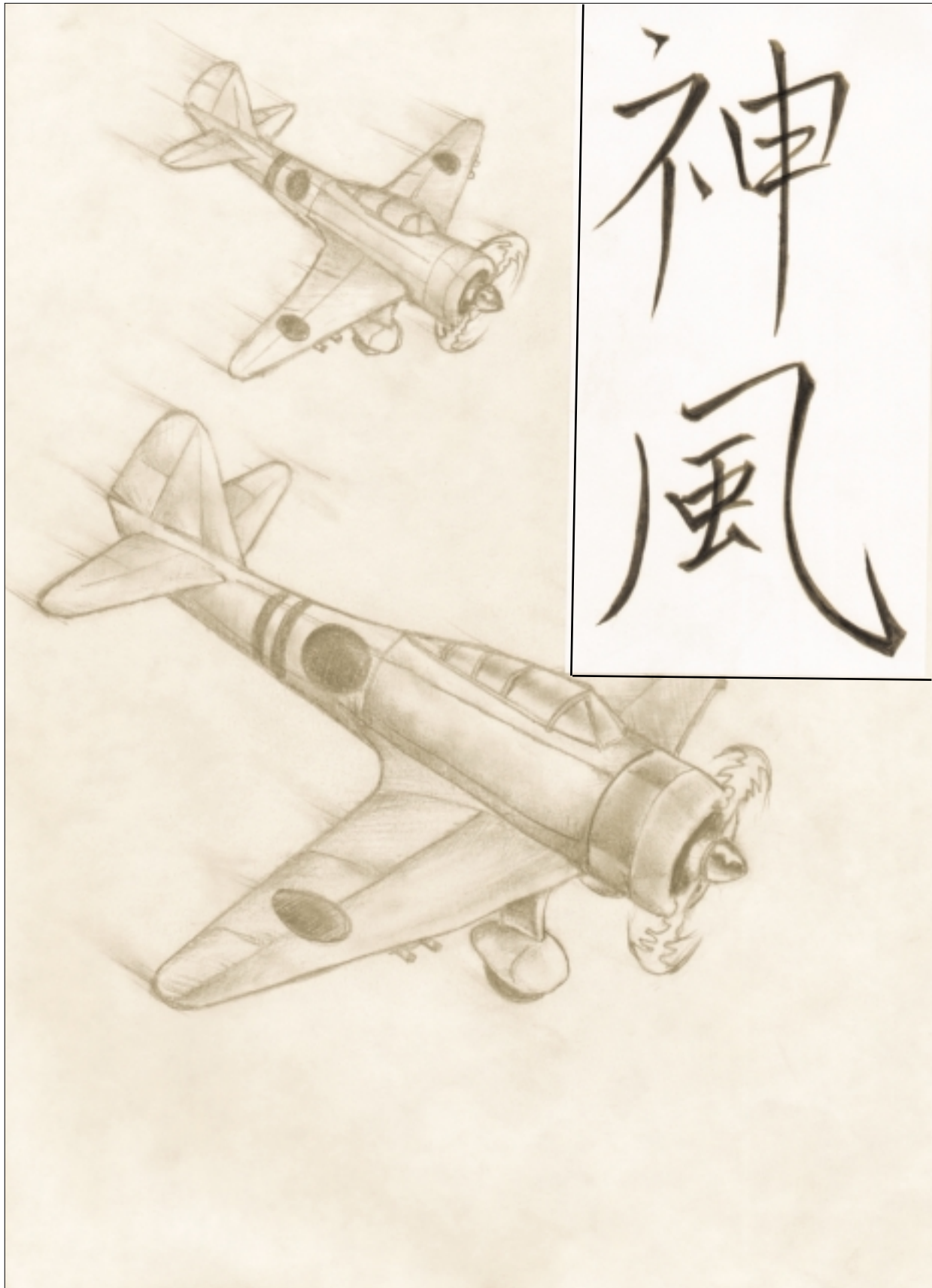
<http://www.virtualokinawa.com/military/>

## Geography & Climate Visual 1: Aerial View of Fukuoka

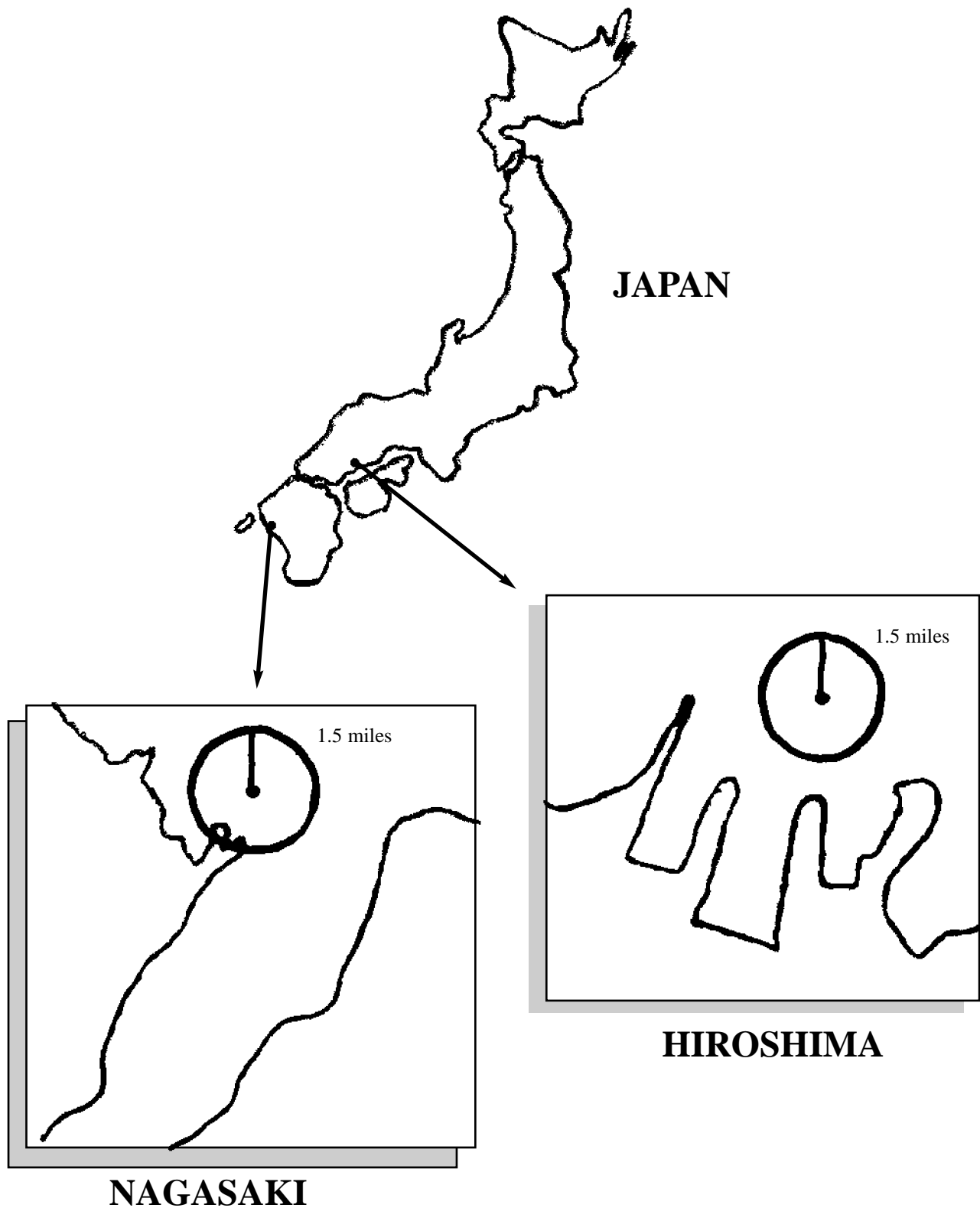








# EFFECTS OF THE BOMB ON NAGASAKI AND HIROSHIMA



## **The After-effects of the A-Bomb**

By Joseph Ahuna

I wonder what the scene was like  
If I were riding through Hiroshima  
on an old '45 bike.

The culture and life must have changed  
Once the 'little boy' went *ka-bang!*  
With bodies all around

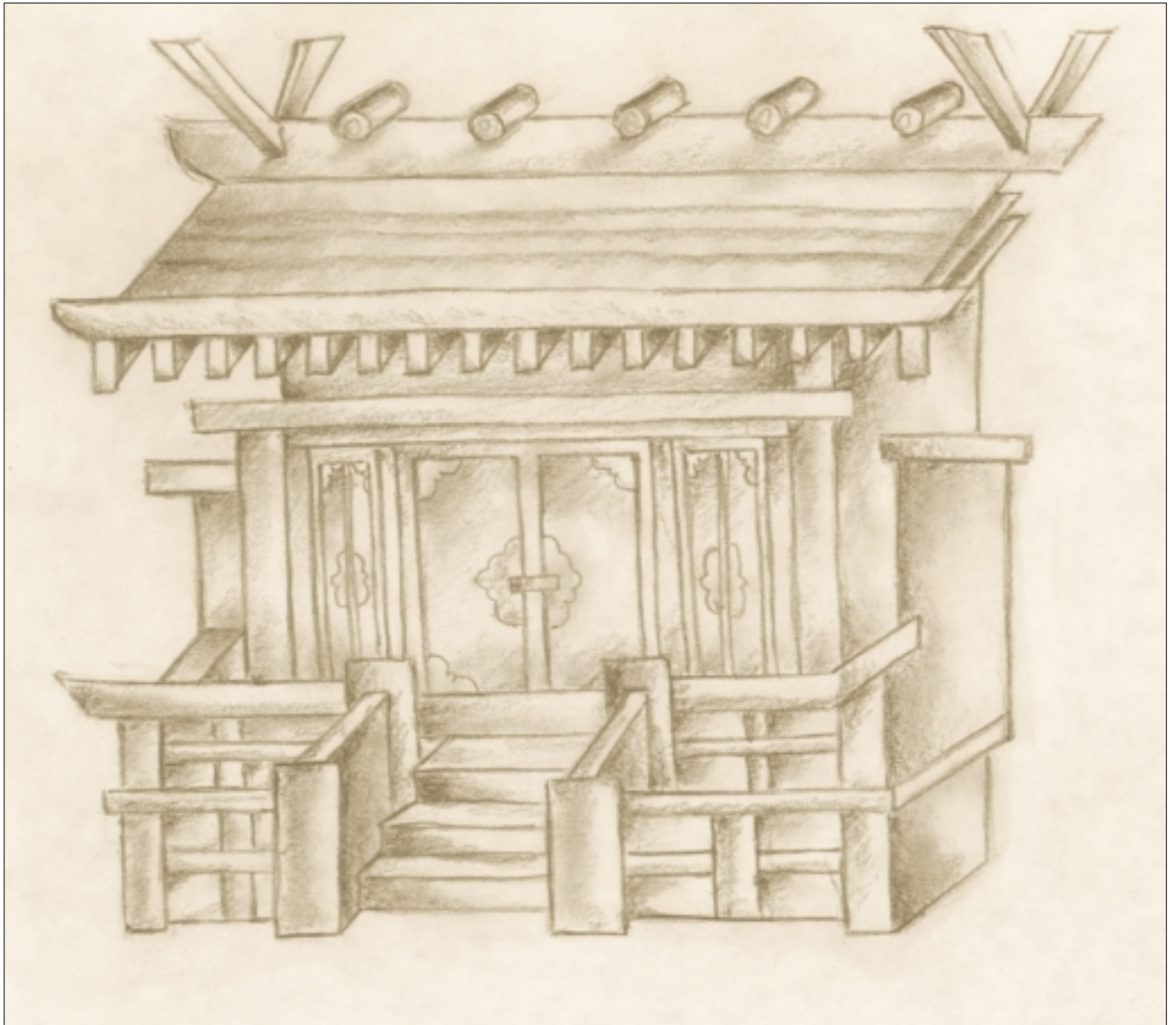
And with nothing but weeping as the sounds  
'Who could have ever done such a thing?,'  
Would be the only thought that would ring.  
In war there is no loser and there is no winner,  
For all the destruction comes to us sinners.  
With much to improve and with much to find  
I guess in the end love is the only thing that will bind.

## Politics & Economics Visual 1: Okinawa Rooftops





## Lifestyle Visual 1: Kamidana





### Lifestyle Visual 3: Nature, Cherry Blossoms





#### Lifestyle Visual 4: Nature, Rice Field



## Lifestyle Visual 5: Okinawa Festival





### **FLAG OF JAPAN**

The flag is white with a large red disk in the center representing the sun. The flag is symbolic of Japan as the “Land of the Rising Sun.”

## Map of Japan

