

## **Component 3, Part 1**

### **Japan in World History: Teaching and Learning—East Asia and Japan's Classical Period (550-1185CE)**

Several teaching Web sites are included here as is the case in each part. However, [Asia for Educators \(AFE\)](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu) (<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu>) is such a comprehensive and high quality pedagogical site that it deserves special treatment. The site, designed for high school and undergraduate classes, contains applicable Japan lessons for much of the content of this entire Japan in World History component.

Many instructors prefer to begin any treatment of a culture by focusing upon geography. Besides the two geography teaching components in this module—[Japan's Cultural Landscapes](#) and [Centripetal Forces in Japan](#)—the following [Lesson on Japan's Geography](#) (<http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/japan/japanworkbook/geography/japgeo.html>), although designed for high school or introductory college classes, is also adaptable to middle school.

Japan's indigenous religion, now called Shinto, was an important part of Japan's cultural heritage before extensive regional contact occurred. [Shinto](#) ([http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan\\_1000bce\\_shinto.htm](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan_1000bce_shinto.htm)) is a student reading followed by discussion questions that provides an introduction to this religious tradition. [The Shinto Online Network Association](#) (<http://jinja.jp/english/>) maintains an excellent English language site for further instructor and student exploration of this unique Japanese spiritual tradition.

Along with a written language, Confucianism and Buddhism were imported into Japan from Korea and became major early influences upon Japan's developing aristocracy. Confucianism and Buddhism were significant in the development of Japan's early ruling class. In order to understand both Japan and East Asia in world history, students should have an in-depth experience studying basic Confucian principles. [Confucian Thought](#) ([http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china\\_1000bce\\_confucius\\_intro.htm](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1000bce_confucius_intro.htm)) combines both a succinct overview of Confucius for students with primary source excerpts from *The Analects* and discussion questions. [The Constitution of Prince Shotoku](#) ([http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/at/cl\\_japan/cj06.html](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/at/cl_japan/cj06.html)) is a primary source-based lesson where students learn about Buddhist and Confucian influences on Japan's early government. Although Buddhism was not a popular religion during this period, it was influential among the aristocrats. Teachers and students who are interested in Buddhism in general, and Japanese Buddhism in particular, should visit [Teaching and Learning: Part 2](#) of this component.

It is important for students to understand that by the latter part of Japan's classical period, even though the country was first influenced by East Asia, a few aristocrats in Heian (present day Kyoto) were developing cultural forms that were distinctively Japanese. In addition to importing Chinese characters, the Japanese, (particularly aristocratic women) were writing with the *kana*, two Japanese scripts developed during the Heian period (794-1185). The best user friendly Web site on the Japanese writing system is [Kanji Land](#) (<http://japanese.about.com/blkodarchives.htm>) which can be used by a wide variety of audiences ranging from those who desire to simply better understand the writing system to students who

want to learn it.

The Heian Period's court-aristocrats and the two greatest literary works of the era, *The Pillow Book* and the *Tale of Genji*, both epitomize the cultural values and aesthetics that became distinctively Japanese. [The Heian Period 794-1185](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/tps/600ce_jp.htm#nara) ([http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/tps/600ce\\_jp.htm#nara](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/tps/600ce_jp.htm#nara)) includes teacher and student readings and links to lessons based upon these two master pieces. Of the two works, *The Tale of Genji* is particularly important. Literature professor Sonja Arntzen's remarkable article " [The Heart of History: The Tale of Genji](http://aas2.asian-studies.org/EAA/EAA-Archives/10/3/640.pdf) (<http://aas2.asian-studies.org/EAA/EAA-Archives/10/3/640.pdf>)" that appears in Volume 10, Number 3 of the Association for Asian Studies teaching publication, *Education About Asia*, should be read by all world history teachers because it helps educators understand the role of the classic novel in Japanese history and culture.

Art history is an excellent medium for teaching about Japan's classical period as well as regional Asian influences on Japan. The Freer and Sackler Galleries of Asian Art have a downloadable teaching guide on [Japanese Art](http://www.asia.si.edu/explore/listByArea.asp?browseTopic=7) (<http://www.asia.si.edu/explore/listByArea.asp?browseTopic=7>) that includes lessons on the classical period.

## References

### **Part 1 Web sites**

**TITLE:** Asia for Educators (AFE)

**URL:** <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/>

**TITLE:** Education About Asia

**URL:** [www.asian-studies.org/ea](http://www.asian-studies.org/ea)

**TITLE:** Freer and Sackler Galleries - Japanese Art

**URL:** <http://www.asia.si.edu/education/teacherResources/onlineGuidesJapanese.htm>

**TITLE:** Historyteacher.net ☐ PowerPoint Palooza

**URL:** <http://www.pptpalooza.net/>

**TITLE:** Kanji Land

**URL:** <http://japanese.about.com/od/kan2/Kanji.htm>

**TITLE:** The Shinto Online Network Association

**URL:** <http://www.jinja.or.jp/english/index.html>

**TITLE:** University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Asia Program In-Service/Pre-Service Teaching Module

**URL:** <http://www.utc.edu/Research/AsiaProgram/teaching/>

### **Part 1 Recommended Sources**

**The following sources are far from inclusive but do provide educators and students interested in this particular part of Japanese history with additional information.**

### **Books**

Barnes, Gina L. *The Rise of East Asia: The Archaeology of China, Korea, and Japan*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1999.

Beasley, W. G. *The Japanese Experience: A Short History of Japan*. Berkley: University of California Press, 1st edition, 1999.

Shirokauer, Conrad. *A Brief History of Chinese and Japanese Civilizations*. Wadsworth Publishing, 3rd edition, 2005.

Varley, Paul. *Japanese Culture*. University of Hawaii Press. 4th edition, 2000.

### **Journal**

*Education About Asia*

The Association for Asian Studies, Inc.

1021 East Huron St.

Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

[www.asian-studies.org/ea](http://www.asian-studies.org/ea)

### **Videos**

Asian Educational Media Service: Center for East Asian & Pacific Studies

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

805 West Pennsylvania Avenue MC-025

Urbana, Illinois 61801

<http://www.aems.uiuc.edu/>