

A Brief History of Japanese Culture

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“The” Japanese

Analyzing Popular Culture

- formal
- aesthetic
- quantitative
- sociological
- political

Ganguro fashion, late 1990s

(source: New York Times)

Lawrence Grossberg (1989)

"Japan"

- What is culture?
 - Humanist
 - Arts and letters
 - Anthropological
 - Meanings and lifeways
 - Historical
 - Traditions, institutions

Bunraku puppet theater

Goals of the Class

- Analyze Japanese popular culture
- Locate popular culture in social context
- Understand its power and politics

TEZUKA Osamu (1949)

Metropolis

Course Dynamics

- Lecture
- Presentations
- Discussion
- Media
- Outside events

Reading

- Three texts + articles
 - Treat, *Contemporary Japan and Pop Culture*
 - Craig, *Japan Pop!*
 - Kinsella, *Adult Manga*

Why take this course?

- Japan
 - 2nd largest economy
 - Asian modernity
- Popular culture
 - information economies
 - media power
 - fan cultures
 - new millennium politics

A Brief History of Japan

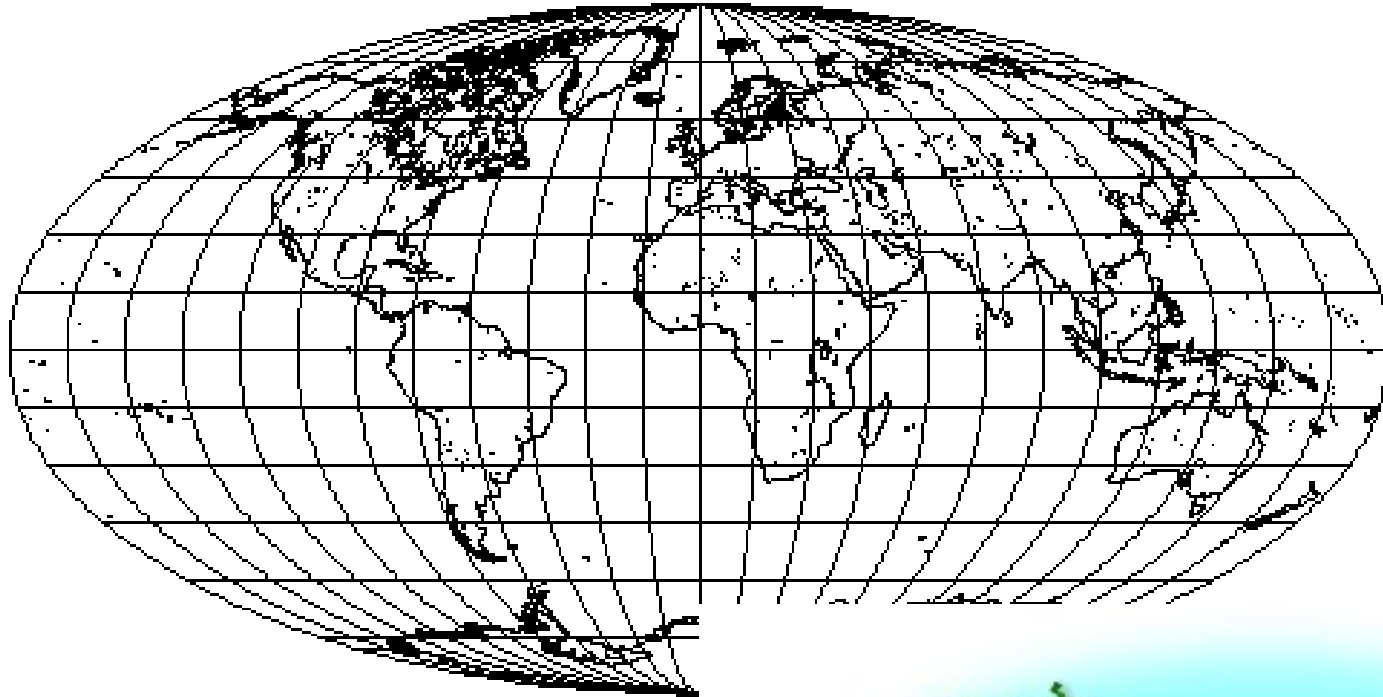
Japan: Traditional and Modern

“Although time may pass, the important things never change. Trust. Proven results. Nichie.”

-- Nichie Bank (TV commercial)

Geisha

see also *Golden Memoirs of a Geisha*



Map of the world with Europe at the center.



Map of the world with the Pacific Rim as the center



Locating Japan in Asia

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Japan Geography

- Four main islands
 - Hokkaidô (north)
 - Honshû (main)
 - Shikoku (small)
 - Kyûshû (southern)

- also, Okinawa (small islands like Hawaii)

Pre-historic Japan (1)

- first humans over 30,000 yrs ago
- 10,000 - 7,000 yrs ago from Korea
- **Jomon** up to 300 BC (pottery with cord markings, figurines)

Pre-historic Japan (1)

- **Yayoi** after site in SW Japan by 100 AD replace Jomon
- 500s AD fighting men on horses, armor, swords, bows (from Korea)
- **Yamato clan, Shintô, Buddhism**

Classical age (6th-12th c.)

- 710 - 794 Nara capital
- Heian court in Kyoto 794 -1185
- Literacy (*kanji, kana*)
- dueling aesthetics

see also Totman (1981)
Japan Before Perry

Warring states period (1192 - 1600)

- local warlords (*daimyô*)
- samurai (historical change)
- shifting centers of power
 - Kamakura 1192 - 1333
 - late 1200s Mongols invade (fail)
 - Muromachi 1334 - 1573 etc.
- Religion moves to the masses

Yukio MISHIMA,
20th c. novelist,
posing as a samurai

Tokugawa Period (1600 - 1868)

- Shogun rule Edo (Tokyo)
 - TOKUGAWA Ieyasu
- samurai bureaucrats
- rigid class structure
 - samurai, farmers, artisans, merchants
- but power shifts to merchants
 - rise of mercantile culture

Himeji Castle near Osaka

Meiji Restoration 1868

- 1853 Commodore Perry “Black Ships”
- Reformers “restore” Meiji Emperor
- Modernization following Western models
- Imperial aggression begins in 20th century

Izumo Shrine, the Emperor as living god of Shintô religion

Reading Discussion

Homework

- Reading for Wednesday
 - from Craig, *Japan Pop!*
 - Atkins, *Can Japanese Sing the Blues*