Japan: Isolation to Adaptation

Chapter 12 Student Notes

Kami isolated rituals Ainu kamuy haiku matsuri tsunami stoic arable monsoon gohan homogonous assimilation archipelago

***Big Idea:***

*8.1: Through an examination of Japan, students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of the ways in which beliefs, values and knowledge shape worldviews and contribute to a society’s isolation or adaptation.*

According to Japanese mythology, two divine beings… (Finish this sentence)

For most of their long history, the Japanese have believed that their country is favored and by those gods. In 1274, rulers sent a large fleet from Asia that landed on Kyushu, the southern island of Japan. A typhoon forced the invaders to retreat. In 1281, the Mongols returned with thousands of ships and more than 100 000 men. The Japanese in their smaller, swifter boats defended their island well, but again a ferocious storm destroyed most of the Mongol fleet. Lucky huh? The Japanese called the storm a divine wind sent by the gods to defend their islands.

**PREDICT 🡪 How do you think the geographic location of Japan affected and shaped their worldview?**

Put the FULL Answer Below: (at the end of the unit/chapter)

**The Land of the Rising Sun**

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Why do the Japanese describe their country as the “Land of the Rising Sun”?

The rulers or emperors of Japan were considered the of Amaterasu. The emperor was believed to be divine (godlike).

**Maps and Identity: Pg. 263**

* What does the position of Japan say about how the Japanese viewed the importance of their country relative to the rest of the world?

Japanese names are written with the surname (LAST NAME) first. How would your name be written in Japanese?

With a land area of nearly square kilometers, Japan is about 60% the size of Alberta. Shade in 60% of the picture of Alberta below:

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Japan, however, has always had a larger population than Alberta. In 1600, Japan’s population was around 12 million!!! (Alberta only became a province in 1905)

Forested mountains and steep valleys cover about 80% of Japan. About 18% of the country is level enough to permit agriculture or settlement. The largest plat are in Japan is less than kilometers across. The habitable areas of Japan with population density are mainly along the .

**A Land Apart**

If you were planning to visit Japan how would you travel there?

How long do you think it would take?

Because Japan is an island country it is geographically from its nearest neighbors Korea, and .

Fig. 12-9: Map. What connection can you make between the shoreline and location of major Japanese cities?

The 185 km of ocean between Japan and Asia is very rough, making travel difficult. The western coast of Japan has fewer bays and inlets – logical places for harbors – than the eastern side. Evidence suggests that there was contact between peoples living in present-day Japan and China as early as the mid- ! Before , Europeans did not have the means to reach Japan by sailing either across the Pacific or around the southern tip of Africa and across the Indian Ocean. It was extremely dangerous travel and took several months to do.

The Japanese chose freely the elements of other that they wanted to include in their own. They borrowed the Chinese system of writing and later adapted it to create their own language and written characters.

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3. Choose the two provinces in Canada that you think are geographically the most similar to Japan. Create a Venn diagram to show your thinking about the geography of these three areas.

Nature Shaping a Worldview

The beauties of the natural landscape of Japan have always been a great source of pride to the Japanese people. Most of Japan experiences distinct, predictable seasons. Celebrations and , or special ceremonies, mark the change in seasons, and have traditionally played an important part in all Japanese life.

Describe below why the cherry blossom is important to the Japanese:

What is a haiku?

Write your own haiku poem below!

Nature has a dominant role in the culture of the (the indigenous people of Japan). How are First Nations people of Canada and the Ainu similar? How are they different? Use the Venn diagram below to show this

*First Nations Ainu*

Voices: Nature and Culture pg. 269

Q1 Think it through:

A:

**Shinto: The way of the Spirits**  
What is Shinto?  
  
The love of           is the most important aspect of Shinto. Shinto is based on the belief that sacred spirits called            take the form of objects in nature such as mountains, trees and stones. Human beings become *kami* when they die and are honored by their families. To please and celebrate the kami, festivals called                              are held throughout the year.   
  
Shinto does not have a founder and there are no religious laws. The Japanese have borrowed aspects from both Buddhism and Confucianism. Borrowing has resulted in a distinctly Japanese form of worship.   
  
*The Dark Side of Nature*  
Japan is located in an area where several continental and oceanic tectonic plates meet. Earthquakes are caused by shifts in these plates. Every few decades, a major earthquake strikes Japan. When earthquakes happen on the ocean floor they may cause devastating waves called                    , which means “harbor wave”. In late summer and fall, Japan may be struck by typhoons - a type of tropical storm.   
  
Japan has a calm and violent side to it. How does the constant possibility of a natural disaster affect the people?  
  
  
  
  
Define **stoic** below:   
  
  
  
  
  
Why are the Japanese people described as being **stoic**?

Draw the timeline of the major disasters in Japanese history. Include the most recent natural disaster to hit Japan as well. Do this below:   
  
  
  
  
  
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Q2: To what extend does nature contribute to your sense of identity? Do you think living in a primarily rural or primarily urban environment might affect your answer? Explain.

**A Self - Sufficient Country**  
What does it mean to be self-sufficient? Do you consider yourself to be self-sufficient?  
  
  
  
  
  
Japan had little trade with other countries prior to 1853. Yet, the country survived and prospered. Japan’s farmers and fishers provided sufficient food to feed the people. Wood came from the abundant forests. Silkworms and cotton plants provided material for clothing. Artisans made use of available metals. As a result, Japan was .   
Nature compensated for the limited amount of                             land, by making it very fertile. A temperate climate and dependable rainfall provided a longer growing season than is possible in Canada. Japan’s climate includes brief winter, so people had to grow enough food to last through the colder months.   
  
Rice was the main food of                      . Although the poorest Japanese could afford rice only occasionally, it was - and remains - the food most associated with Japan and its culture. Growing rice is                         intensive, which means it requires a lot of time and person power to grow. For centuries, rice was also the Japanese money system. For tax purposes, land was valued by the amount of rice it could potentially produce.

What else do the Japanese eat? Draw pictures below showing the Japanese diet.   
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
{In 1853, Commodore Perry and his ships from America made contract with the Japanese.}  
  
Even though the geography of Japan would suggest division from other groups of people (mountains, forests, rivers, etc.), the Japanese have always thought of themselves as a society.   
  
Define **homogenous** below:   
  
  
  
  
The Ainu lived in the northern part of Japan for several thousand years in an area called Ezochi, Land of the Ezo (Ainu). The word *ainu* means “                      “. The Ainu had their own separate society and territory, but eventually the Japanese became to take over the Ainu lands. They Ainu fought several wars of resistance against Japanese control, but each time were defeated. The Japanese began a program of                                    of the Ainu people. They were forbidden to speak their own language or practice many of their customs, and were restricted to living in areas the government provided for them.

>>>Does this remind you of anything in Canadian history? Describe below :<<<