

Aim: What were the early origins of Japan?
Notes

I. Geography

- a. Archipelago: chain of islands
- b. 4 main islands, over 3,000 smaller islands
- c. Located in the Ring of Fire (prone to earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanoes)
- d. 11% of land can be farmed
- e. Ethnocentric and Isolated
- f. Shintoism: “way of the gods”
- g. Worshipped the *kami* or Divinities.
- h. Worshipped nature and ancestors

II. Rise of Japan

- i Society based on clans
- ii Yamato Clan 300-700
- iii Seventh century Yamato Prince Shotoku wrote the Taika Reforms which modified Japanese government
- iv Japan took Chinese gov’t, writing, Confucianism and Buddhism

III. Classical Japan

- a. Rise of Buddhism during the Nara period in 710
- b. Heian period 794-1185
- c. Golden Age improved culture
- d. *Tale of the Genji* Written by Lady Murasaki
- e. Gave noble women status
- f. Birth of Samurai (those who serve)
- g. Zen Buddhism- enlightenment achieved suddenly or through self-discipline

IV Kamakura Shogunate

1. 1185 powerful noble creates empire
2. Shogun has real power (general of the military)
3. This is the birth of feudalism in Japan 1192
4. Kamakura fell in 1333 but laid foundation for feudal Japan