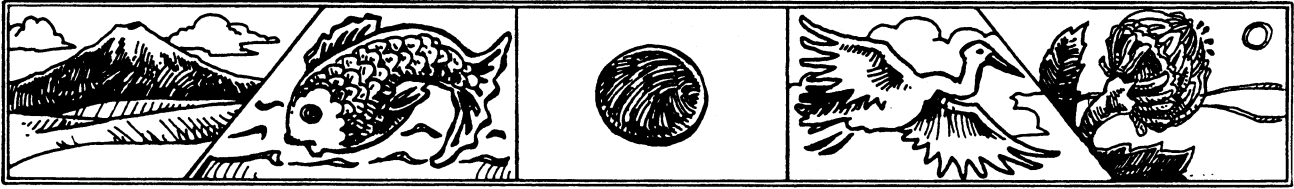


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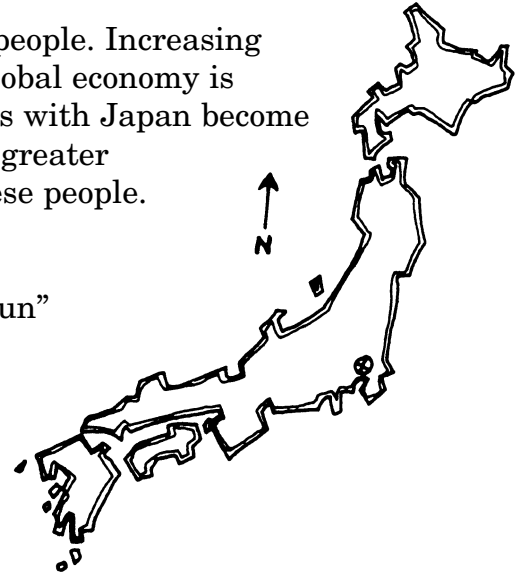
JAPAN





Japan

The world has been greatly influenced by Japan and its people. Increasing numbers of consumer goods come from Japan, and our global economy is increasingly dependent on interaction with Japan. As ties with Japan become stronger, it will become necessary for students to have a greater understanding of the traditions and values of the Japanese people.



Name—Nippon or Japan meaning “Source of the Sun”

Population—127.3 million people

Density—873 per square mile—if evenly spread.

Size—145,730 square miles

Climate—Japan has both temperate and tropical areas. One can experience both typhoons and blizzards.

Major Cities—Most people live in the cities.

Tokyo—the capital, has 35 million people in the central city area.

Osaka—the third largest city.

Kyoto—the ancient capital.

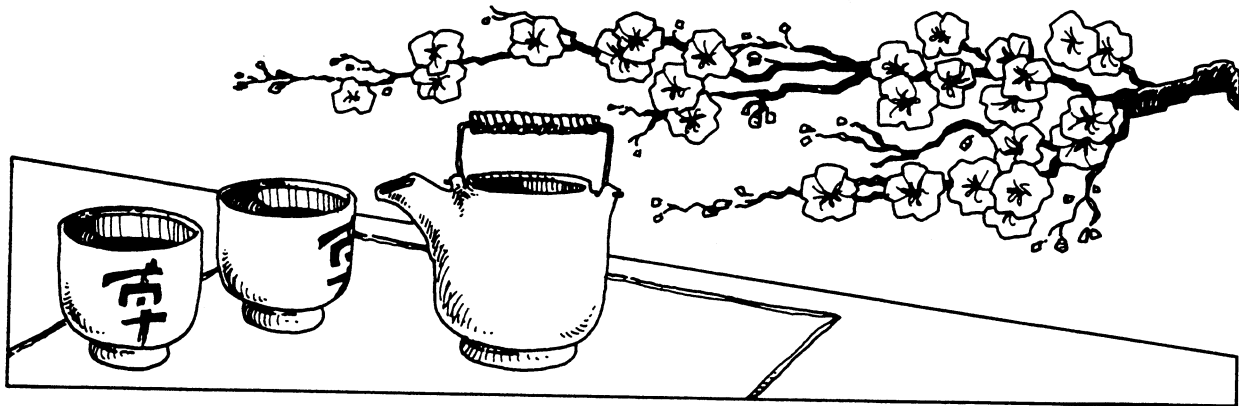
Language—Japanese; literacy of about 97%

Physical Features

Japan consists of four major islands and hundreds of tiny volcanic islands. Honshu is the most populous. Hokkaido, Shikoku, and Kyushu are the other main islands. Earthquakes and volcanic action continually change and build the islands. Mt. Fuji, or Fuji san, is the most famous volcano, known for its beautiful cone. The islands are rocky and mountainous, with jutting cliffs and gentle valleys. Because there is little land suitable for cultivation, Japan grows little of its own food. The most important crop is rice, and

many other foods are imported. Japan has a damp, temperate climate. Many species of plants, insects, birds, and animals have lived on the Japanese islands. As in much of the world, many species have become endangered as humans pollute the air, earth, and water. Land is crowded and valued on these islands. Each piece is expensive and is used carefully.

Japanese culture is deeply rooted in nature. Believing that humans are a part of the earth, Japanese children are taught to admire, respect, and be close to the earth. Natural phenomena like trees, water, wind, and mountains are the focus of the traditional religion, Shinto.



Nature is the major topic of the arts. Share the glories of the ceramics, scroll paintings, and carvings from Japan. The tea ceremony (o chano yu), an elegant system of making green tea, is perhaps the best example of the unity of art, nature, and man. In the ceremony, a warrior (samurai) would invite his friend to a tiny, rough house with a front door so small, that all swords must be left outside. Inside would be the simple implements of making tea: bowl, pot, tea whisk, and fire. The samurai would make and serve the tea. After finishing, each would admire the beauty of the simple bowl, the simple house, and the simple actions of the ceremony. Each would leave refreshed, having touched the natural world.

Japan is an active, modern, and powerful economic entity built on fragile, volcanic islands. Its factories, products, and business skills awe the world. As in all countries, human success has poisoned the natural world. The rivers, mountains, and seas are polluted. Garbage management is an immense problem, and the air is dirty. These typical, modern problems are being dealt with in a typically Japanese fashion. Tokyo's trash has been recycled by using it to fill part of Tokyo Bay, thus creating room for an island Disneyland. Trains and buses are efficient and cheap, and many people use public transportation. Consumer groups and businesses discuss conservation. Each family tidies up its own space. Using traditional reverence, the Japanese focus on the natural world to remedy the problems of pollution.