

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2013
The Culture and Arts of Korea and Early Japan
Sponsored by The Society for Asian Art

Laura Allen, Asian Art Museum

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Part I: Introduction to the Arts of Japan

Part II: Prehistoric Japan: art of the Jomon, Yayoi, and Kofun eras

Period Dates for Japan

Jomon	_____	10,500–300 BCE
Yayoi	_____	300 BCE–300 CE
Kofun	_____	300–552
Asuka	_____	552–645
Nara	_____	645–794
Heian	_____	794–1185
Kamakura	_____	1185–1333
Nambokuchō	_____	1333–1392
Muromachi	_____	1392–1573
Momoyama	_____	1573–1615
Edo	_____	1615–1868
Meiji	_____	1868–1912
Taishō	_____	1912–1926
Shōwa	_____	1926–1989
Heisei	_____	1989–

Documentary evidence for Early Japan

Chinese Accounts: “History of the Wei Dynasty (220-265)” (*Wei zhi*), written by Chen Shou (233-297 CE); references to the “The Land of Wa (Japan)”

Japanese Accounts: *Record of Ancient Matters (Kojiki)* and *Early Records of Japan (Nihon shoki)*, both written early 8th c. CE

Origins of Modern Archaeology in Japan

Edward S. Morse (1838-1925) and the Ōmori Shell Midden (outside of Tokyo)

***Jōmon* Era (10,500 BCE – 300 BCE)**

Terms and concepts:

- *jōmon* = cord-marked (used primarily in reference to Jōmon era pottery)
- hunter-gatherers; pit-dwellings
- coil-built ceramics
- *dogū* = clay figurines
- Sannai-Maruyama site, Aomori prefecture, 3,900 BCE-2,300 BCE

***Yayoi* Era (300 BCE – 300 CE)** Terms and concepts:

- wet-rice cultivation; more settled society
- raised granaries/storehouses
- metalworking introduced from continent (Han dynasty China, via Korea)
- artifacts: *dōtaku* (bronze ceremonial bells); bronze mirrors; jade discs; ceramics, turned on wheel to finish

Kofun (Tumulus) Period (300-552 CE)

Terms and concepts:

- *kofun* = “old tomb” mounded, often in key-hole shape (with coffin in stone chamber under the round rear mound)
- centralization of power in Yamato region
- Emperor Nintoku (r. 313-399)
- close contacts with China, Korea

Key Kofun artifacts: *haniwa* = clay ring, some simple cylinders, other shaped as sunshades, shields, houses, human figures, and animals; placed atop tumulus mounds

Ex. of a painted tomb: *Takehara Tomb*, 6th-7th c.

Terms and concepts relating to *Shintō*:

- *shintō* = indigenous religion of Japan
- *kami* = Shintō deities, e.g. Amaterasu no Ōmikami, the Sun Goddess, who is the principal female deity of Shintō, regarded as progenitrix of the imperial line. Other *kami* regarded as the tutelary deities of particular clans. *Kami* are often embodied in a place, person or sacred object. The *iwakura* is a natural site where a *kami* has taken up residence; it is often the location for a Shintō shrine, within an enclosure marked off by *torii* gate and fences.

Ise shrine (Ise Jingū), 6th c., Mie Prefecture

- dedicated to Amaterasu no Ōmikami, the Sun god, ancestress of the Imperial line
- first constructed circa 4th c. BCE; rebuilt every twenty years, with the exception of a 123 year interval during the Ōnin civil wars (15-16th c.). Rebuilding takes 8 years.
- architectural features: four fences defining inner compound; multiple *torii*; cypress post and boards; thatched roofs (miscanthus reeds); *naikū*, or inner shrine elevated on posts; ten *katsuogi*, or roof billets; *chigi*, or forked finials at each end; metal ornamentation

Further Reading:

Richard J. Pearson, *Ancient Japan* (Washington, D.C.: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, 1992)

Richard J. Pearson, *Windows on the Japanese Past* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, 1986)

Walter Edwards, “In Pursuit of Himiko: Postwar Archaeology and the Location of Yamatai,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 51:1 (Spring, 1991): 53-79

William Coaldrake, “The Grand Shines of Ise and Izumo,” in *Architecture and Authority in Japan* (NY: Routledge, 1996), pp. 16-51

For a video interview with UC Berkeley professor Junko Habu on the culture of the Jōmon period, see:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aw8HBgV0VM>