

ARTH 2071 Japanese Art History
Japanese Vocabulary and Terms

Amaterasu: The Sun Goddess of Japan, by legend the grandmother of the first ruler, Ninigi and his great grandson, Jimmu, was the first human emperor.

Amida: *

Asobi: a spirit of play; a key element in the literature and ukiyoe of Edo Japan

Asuka/Hakuho Period: the historical period from 552-710

Bakufu: *

Baku-han: *

Bijinga: *

Bodhisattva: *

Buddha: *

Buddhism: * There are two main schools. *Hinayana* developed the basic concepts of Buddhist community and gathered together the sutras and writings into the Buddhist canon; stressed individual enlightenment. Mahayana developed in the 1st century BC and stressed the liberation of all living beings; the *Mahayana* form was introduced into Japan in the mid-sixth century. The textbook gives many more details of other schools of Buddhism. See Eightfold Path, Four Noble Truths and Zen Buddhism.

Bunjinga: *

Calligraphy: beautiful or expert handwriting; often a special style created by artists.

Censor: during the Edo era, officials of the government (bakufu) who reviewed all artworks and rejected those seen as critical of the government

Chanoyu: *

Chonin: *

Confucianism: a philosophy based on the teachings of the Chinese scholar, K'ung-fu-tse who lived about the 5th century BC. It is a system of ethics and good conduct based on making men better in this life – honest, upright, faithful and obedient to those in authority. See Hierarchy.

Daimyo: *

Daoism: the philosophy of the great Chinese sage, Laozi (6th century BC) that looks for a balance between the yin (negative) and the yang (positive) within all things. By the 2nd century BC its temples and priests had gathered into their pantheon all the animistic and local traditions that continued (and continue) to flourish in China.

Dotaku: *

Edo Period: the period from 1615-1868 when the shogunal capital was at Edo (modern Tokyo) during the time of the Tokugawa shoguns.

Eightfold Path: a key set of beliefs of Buddhism that should guide every adherent: the right understanding, the right purpose, the right speech, the right conduct, the right livelihood, the right effort, the right awareness and the right concentration.

Emakimono: *

Four Noble Truths: in order to reach nirvana, practitioners of Buddhism must realize these truths: life is suffering, the reason for suffering is desire, the liberation from suffering comes from cessation of desire and there it s path to follow to free oneself from desire.

Fujiwara: one of the great royal ruling families of Japan, usually “behind the throne.”

Geisha/courtesan: a woman who is a highly skilled entertainer in dance, music, and conversation.

Genre Painting: a form of realistic painting of people that depicts ordinary events of the day; not religious, historical or mythological; rakuchu, rakugai.

Haiga: *

Haiku: *

Handscroll: *

Haniwa: *

Heian Period: the historical period from 794-1185 when the imperial capital was at the city of Heian (modern Kyoto)

Heisei Period: the current era that began in 1989 with the reign of Emperor Akihito.

Hierarchy/class structure: from the Confucian doctrine, the belief that everyone has their place in society to fulfill, with some groups of people of higher class than others. In Japan the warriors were the highest level, the farmer whose work fed everyone was next, the craftsman was third and the lowest was the merchant who produced no goods.

Honden: *

Hondo: *

Honji suijaku: in the 8th century the new philosophical system that identified each Shinto kami with its appropriate Buddhist entity.

Inro: *

Iwakura: *

Jomon Period: the pre-historic period from about 11,000 – 400 BC

Kabuki: *

Kakemono: hanging scroll

Kamakura Period: the historical period from 1185-1333 when the shogunal capital was at the city of Kamakura

Kami: *

Kana: *

Kanji: *

Kannon/Guanyin: the Bodhisattva of Compassion

Kano School: *

Kansai: the area around Kyoto and Osaka

Kanto: the area around Tokyo

Karma: the Buddhist belief in interdependent origination; each moment arises out of a multitude of causes and conditions and in turn condition the next moment. Thus the soul is continually reincarnated and the nature of those reincarnations is created by the individual's karma.

Kei School: *

Keyhole Tombs: the monumental tombs of the emperors constructed during the Kofun period.

Kimono: *

Koan: *

Kofun Period: the proto-historic period from about 300 –710 AD

Lacquer: a technique of coating a wooden core with resin; used to create food dishes, armor, writing boxes and other decorative arts items.

Mandara/Mandala: *

Meiji Period: the historical period from 1868- 1911 during the reign of the Meiji emperor

Minamoto/Genji: a powerful Heian era family, the winners of the Genpei Wars of the 12th century.

Mingei: *

Miroku/Maitreya: the Buddha of the Future

Momoyama Period: the historical period from 1573-1615 during the rule of shoguns Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi

Mudra: distinctive hand gestures on Buddhist statues that communicate spiritual beliefs

Muromachi Period: the historical period from 1392-1573 during the many civil wars; also known as the Ashikaga for the shoguns of the time.

Nambokucho Period: the historical period from 1336-1392

Nanga: *

Nara Period: the historical period from 710-794 when the imperial capital was in the city of Nara (originally named Heijo-kyo)

Netsuke: see intro

Nihonga: *

Nishi-e: brocade pictures; the technique of multi-color woodblock prints

No Theater: *

Outcasts: eta and hinin; people who handled dead bodies and meat; considered below the lowest class

Pagoda: *

Performance art: artworks of the 2nd half of the 20th century that combine visual art with music, theater and/or drama.

Pure Land Buddhism: *

Raigo: *

Raku: *

Rakuchu Rakugai: *

Rinpa School: *

Sabi: *

Sacred Treasures: the Imperial regalia of mirror, sword and jewels arising from Shinto legends.

Samurai: *

Shaka Buddha: * the historical Buddha.

Shaseiga: *

Shibui: a subtle, unobtrusive and deeply moving beauty; applied to color, design, taste, and voice as well as to human behavior in general; a quietly appealing ambience and understated disciplined beauty.

Shinden: *

Shinto: the native animistic religion of Japan of which the emperor is the leader. Shinto is organized around the heavenly gods led by Amaterasu and the earthly gods led by her brother, Susano-o. The gods, *kami*, are unseen and awe-inspiring; believed to inhabit natural phenomenon such as rocks, trees, waterfalls and mountains.

Shitenno: *

Shogun: the highest military ruler of the samurai class; first appointed in 1185 when the imperial court lost power. Shoguns ruled Japan until 1868.

Shoin: *

Showa Period: the historical period from 1926-1989 during the reign of the Emperor Hirohito

Shrine: a Shinto complex of sacred buildings, including worship and lecture halls

Silk Road: the ancient trading route that at its height in the 1st century AD linked the Mediterranean world to China and Japan. It was especially active when the Tang Dynasty greatly influenced Japan.

Song dynasty aesthetic: the 2nd wave of Chinese influences during the Kamakura period; stressed a more sober and introspective approach to art (versus gaudy exuberance of Tang) and key to Zen aesthetic.

Sumptuary Laws: restrictions of the bakufu on the merchants and townspeople of Edo period; anyone below samurai status was prohibited from wearing clothes of excessive luxury. Actually led to great creativity in the decorative arts.

Sutra: *

Taira/Heike: a powerful Heian era family, defeated during the Genpei wars of the 12th century.

Taisho Period: the historical period from 1911-1926 during the reign of the Taisho emperor.

Taisho Reforms: the reforms of 645 that established a bureaucracy with trained government officials based on Confucian principles.

Tale of Genji: *

Tale of Heike: the great epic that tells the story of the Genpei Civil Wars between the Taira and the Minamoto during the 12th century.

Tang Dynasty: the Chinese period from 618-907 at the height of trade and diplomatic relations between China and Japan; greatly influenced painting, sculpture, decorative arts, architecture and religion. The Chinese capital of Chang'an was the hub of Asia.

Tang International Style: from the Tang Dynasty; art characterized by Indian and Central Asian influences from the Silk Road, including a new three-dimensionality and realism through modeled forms and realism in the visual arts.

Tea Ceremony: chanoyu *

Temple: *

Tokaido: the ancient official road between Kyoto and the eastern provinces; during the Edo period it connected the imperial capital of Kyoto with the shogunal capital of Tokyo and the bakufu regulated the inns, restaurants and means of transportation.

Tokonoma: *

Tonseisha: *

Torii: *

Tosa School: *

Ukiyo: the Buddhist concept of the impermanence of the world of humans; all things are illusory and ephemeral; during the Edo Period, this ephemeral character was to be savored with gusto by a society devoted to sensual pleasure all the more exciting because of their changing nature.

Ukiyoe: *

Wabi: *

Yakushi: the Buddha of Medicine

Yamato Dynasty: the name of the imperial ruling family of the Kofun, Asuka and Nara periods.

Yamato-e: *

Yayoi Period: the proto-historic period from about 400 BC – 300 AD

Yin/yang: the Daoist idea that every entity contains both positive (yang) and negative (yin) forces that must be kept in balance.

Yoga: *

Zen Buddhism: * Zen developed during the 12th century and taught that the key to enlightenment was intense meditation. The Rinzai sect was popular with the shogun and daimyo and believed in the possibility of sudden enlightenment. The Soto sect was popular with the samurai and peasantry and balanced meditation with physical activity to achieve a gradual enlightenment.

Zenga: *