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| **Japan** |  |  |

1     Japan, known as the Land of the Rising Sun, is a small island country off the east coast of Asia with the capital in Tokyo. It is the home of some of the world's greatest ancient traditions, natural beauty, and art.  
   
2     Japan's land is made up of four main islands and is full of dramatic landscapes. Most of the land in Japan is very mountainous. Several active and dormant volcanoes are located on the Japanese islands, including the well-known Mount Fuji, which stands at 12,388 feet tall. Mount Fuji has been one of the most favorite subjects of Japanese art from the country's ancient history to modern time.  
   
3     Heavy rainfall is common in Japan, which sustains the vegetation cover over much of the land. The rain is also helpful to rice farming, which has been the occupation for many Japanese people for much of the country's history. In fact, some of Japan's early inhabitants brought rice farming with them from China.  
   
4     Rice farmers united to create villages and around 100 B.C. began forming social classes, dividing the rich farm owners from smaller farmers. This formation of communities and classes helped to create Japan's first government under the leadership of an emperor. In early Japanese history, there was no capital city; emperors moved from town to town.  
   
5     The first recorded history of Japanese people can be found in ancient Chinese writings, when some people from Japanese islands came to meet the emperor of China in 57 A.D. A Chinese writer wrote about Japanese people, stating, that "they are very short, eat lots of vegetables, serve food on dishes made of bamboo and there is no stealing among them."  
   
6     In the 8th Century, the first capital of the country was created in Nara. Many places of Buddhist worship, called monasteries, were built in Nara. Among them is one of the largest wooden buildings in the world, which still stands today.  
   
7     Buddhism, the worship of the god Buddha, was brought to Japan from China. Before then, nearly all Japanese people practiced the Shinto religion. Shinto is native to Japan and has no sacred writings. Its followers worship Kami, sacred spirits that can take the form of natural elements like the sun, mountains, trees and rocks. Kami can also represent one's ancestors. Today, many different religions, including Shinto, Buddhism and western Christianity are practiced in Japan.  
   
8     As the practice of rice farming grew in Japan, many farmers hired soldiers, called Samurai, to protect their land. Partly because of this power over the land, the Samurai quickly became the leaders of the country. Samurai were thought to be a good example to average Japanese citizens. They were loyal, disciplined and respectful. Samurai take these responsibilities extremely serious. They see it as a crime if they cannot fulfill their duties.   
   
9     An important ritual to the Samurai was the Tea Ceremony. The ceremony, which is now very popular and became a part of daily life in Japan, involves the preparation and drinking of green tea. The ceremony is very specific in its movements, and many people who practice it study the movements for years.  
   
10     The Tea Ceremony is one of the many artistic Japanese traditions. Among these are the fanciful Kimono, a long gown with wide sleeves and colorful belts, the art of folding paper into different shapes, called origami, the art of arranging flowers, called ikebana, and the art of growing miniature trees, or bonsai. For many centuries Japan was closed to visitors from other countries, so many of these traditions remained pure and unchanged by outside influence.  
   
11     By the mid 19th Century, Japan had opened its borders to visitors from other lands, which brought much change to the Japanese people. Japan changed into a very industrialized society and sought to gain much regional power. This desire for power led Japan into war with the United States from 1941 to 1945. Despite its defeat, Japan quickly rebuilt itself and today is a major player in world economics.  
   
12     Japan's influence on the world, from its beautiful artistic traditions like the Tea Ceremony, ikebana and bonsai, to its modern-day production of cars and electronic devices, can be seen in households all around the world. You will not have to look far to find something made in Japan that you use every day. It may be the car you ride to school in, the cell phone you use, the camera you take pics with, the video game system you play or some of your favorite cartoons.

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | | 3. | The first capital of Japan was: http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  Osaka http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  Tokyo http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  Nara http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  Hiroshima | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 4. | Japan is a Muslim country http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  True http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  False | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | 5. | Today's capital of Japan is: http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  Nagasaki http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  Tokyo http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  Kyoto http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  Nara | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 6. | Shinto is: http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  A Japanese religion http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  A Japanese monastery http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  A famous Japanese poet http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  An Indian goddess | |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | 7. | Ikebana is: http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  The art of flower arranging http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  A city in Japan http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  A Japanese artist http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  The art of folding paper | | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 8. | Origami is: http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  The art of flower arranging http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  A Japanese soldier http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  A long gown with wide sleeves http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  The art of folding paper | |
| 9. Japan is known as the land of the rising:  http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  flower http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  moon http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg  sun http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  flag | 10. Sacred spirits that can take the form of natural elements such as trees or the sun are called:  http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblea.jpg  The art of flower arranging http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbleb.jpg  Buddha http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubblec.jpg   Japanese Samurai http://stories.edhelperclipart.com/clipart/bubbled.jpg  Kami |