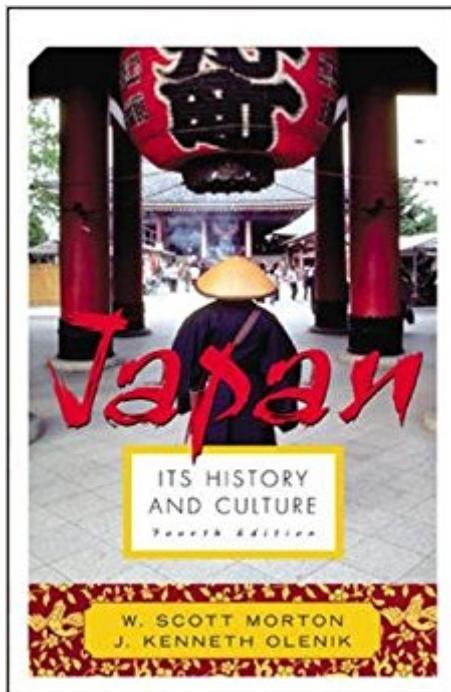


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Japan: Its History And Culture



Synopsis

This is a revision of the long successful, short, illustrated cultural history of Japan, from its beginnings about 3000 BC to the present day, first published in 1970 and continuously in use over several editions in colleges and universities nationwide. It is designed as a straightforward, detail-rich portrait of a nation not well understood in the West. The position of Japan on the international scene has changed markedly since the current edition was published in 1994: Japan had been a star of postwar industrial production and methods; over the past few years, it has encountered serious trouble with market forces; its financial practices, particularly the tacit collaboration between powerful factions in government and industry, has come under question and even attack. Departure from tradition have begun to have a significant presence. The book is distinctive in its incorporation of cultural elements, at their high point, into the unfolding story of political events. Rather than just following the political and military course of history, treating them separately from the cultural side, Morton presents an integrated view, showing the parallel development of cultural and political events, as well as their influence on each other. For example, the sweeping effect of Chinese culture on Japanese is treated as an organic whole, exploring its results in government, social life, religion and art. The book also casts fascinating sidelights on significant personalities, works of literature and historic events. Balanced treatment is key; each period in the past is given equal treatment, with somewhat more emphasis on contemporary history and recent developments.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A fascinating look at Japan's complex history. This revised fourth edition of the popular work, "Japan: Its History and Culture," stretches from the nation's earliest known civilization (about 30009 BCE) to the present. Delightfully written in a continuous narrative form, it traces the many aspects of Japanese art, religion, the imperial court, militarism, race, geography, and agriculture, and carefully analyzes the rich social, political, and economic life of Asia's wealthiest nation. This new edition also covers the fascinating new developments in Japan. Once a star of postwar industrial production and methods, Japan has encountered serious trouble with market forces in recent years. Social changes and departures from tradition are becoming more common in this conservative country, and the authors document and explain these changes. Seamlessly blending current events, politics, and cultural elements, the authors provide a riveting account of a nation often misunderstood by the West. More than a chronicle of names and date, this book also casts fascinating sidelights on significant personalities, works of literature, and historic events. A brief chronology offers a quick and easy means of reference. Richly anecdotal and vividly illustrated with a map and many photographs, this book presents a panoramic view of Japan, old and new. "Comprehensive, thorough, and sensitive, it covers the whole of Japanese activity to the present day. At last there exists a full and balanced assessment of what Japan means."--"The London Times Literary Supplement"

W. Scott Morton (New York, NY) is a full professor emeritus in Chinese and Japanese history and culture and in ancient history at Seton Hall University, in New Jersey. J. Kenneth Olenik, Ph.D. (Upper Montclair, NJ) is a professor of history at Montclair State University.

The book Japan ItÃ¢Â™s History and Culture was a very informative, and dense read. The pros of the book is that it will tell you about all of what has happened in Japan, all of it ranging from how it was formed to itÃ¢Â™s current economy. Because, of that if you are doing a report on Japan it would be a perfect read. Just be warned that it is very dense, dry read that will make it feel more like a textbook than a book, I would recommend that it was read in small sections rather than all at once. Along with it doesn't talk much about the anime, otaku culture of Japan only the history of the country. But overall it is a good read for learning about JapanÃ¢Â™s history and culture, and would recommend it to people who are doing a report on Japan, or people who want to learn about Japan. For my need I wanted a book that will inform me about just both the historical culture, and modern day Anime and Gaming culture of Japan. But for me the book only did half of what I wanted

it to do, it almost only talked about the history of Japan. It mentioned Japan's film a little bit but not to the extent that I wanted it to. As well as the book was terribly dry, and for me the book dragged on. But the positives of the book would be that after I read the book I felt accomplished, and I felt as if I had a firm understanding of Japan's culture. The book is a good read and enjoyable if you do it in small sections. I would not recommend it if you want a book on the anime, or gaming culture, because it will not tell you anything about it. But would if you need a book on the history of Japan.

There's no way you can expect a book of this length (about 300 pages) to fully cover the history of a civilization as ancient, rich, and varied as Japan, but this book does a good job of providing a fairly comprehensive introduction into the main trends in Japanese culture from prehistory to the modern day. As might be expected, the events of the 19th and 20th centuries occupy a considerable amount of the book, and a substantial percentage of the end of the book, which covers post-World War II Japan, was written by Olenik, who Morton specifically brought on to cover parts of modern Japanese culture which Morton is not an expert in. (The change in style is noticeable.) Because this book is covering so much history in such a small number of pages, very few events are written about in detail. There is considerable discussion about the historical evolution of the cultural aspects of Japanese civilization (as opposed to the political or military), and the authors do a good job of emphasizing the particular nature of the shogunate and why the military used to hold so much power in Japan. By the end of the book, the authors also discuss the economic and pop culture aspects of Japan, which is appropriate in light of their status in the modern world. If you're already reasonably well-versed in Japanese history, then this book isn't for you. The intended audience is probably students in an introduction to Japanese or East Asian history class, or perhaps the reasonably educated layperson who is ignorant about the main trends of Japanese history but is interested in learning more. As other reviewers have mentioned, this book provides a good foundation from which to start learning more about Japan.

I needed this book for my Early Japanese history class and I am so happy that my professor chose it as our textbook. Its a great size and not heavy in the slightly. The writers did a great job with each chapter, gives us facts while also making a great entertaining read. The text and visuals are wonderful and not at all hard to follow in the slightest.

Don't expect more than a bland textbook-style read. There's plenty of listing of facts but it reads with

less flavor than an entry on Wikipedia, which at least covers the same amount of ground with more style. Personally speaking, I was disappointed, but I was looking for a broad overview of Japan's history and culture, how they developed together, with more of a narrative style...I was looking for the Edward Gibbon of Japanese history. What I found was the driest Japan 101 college history course conceivable.

I purchased this book as a textbook for a course on Eastern cultures. I enjoyed this book immensely, along with the China counterpart, and I feel like I learn something new every time I open the book. You can learn and enjoy this book whether reading cover to cover or jumping around different chapters. This book is an excellent addition to my library.

This is the text book utilized in the course on Chinese and Japanese History that was taught in CSUF during the autumn months of 1988, from the leading authority on the subject W. Scott Morton, that traces the migration of the Japanese people from the People's Republic of China to the land of the Rising Sun, aptly named as an allusion to the worship of the Sun God, namely encompassed in the religion of Shintoism, as they migrated from the harsh cold weather of China to the warmer clime of Japan. Traces the development of Japanese culture and tradition from the days of imperial Japan to present. Also discusses eminent Japanese literary books from the earliest periods of history to present as well as art forms, the religion of Shintoism - its traditions, practices and rituals; while incorporating elements of Japanese philosophy and the influence of Buddhism on the Japanese people, in particular the Samurai.

Interesting, I guess, but really dry and hard to follow. Japanese culture is so much more interesting than how this book presents it.

The book provides good information on the Japanese history and culture. It is easy to read and well written. The book also includes some pictures that help in understanding and demonstrating some topics covered in the text. Purchased this book for one of my classes and found it to be very helpful.

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