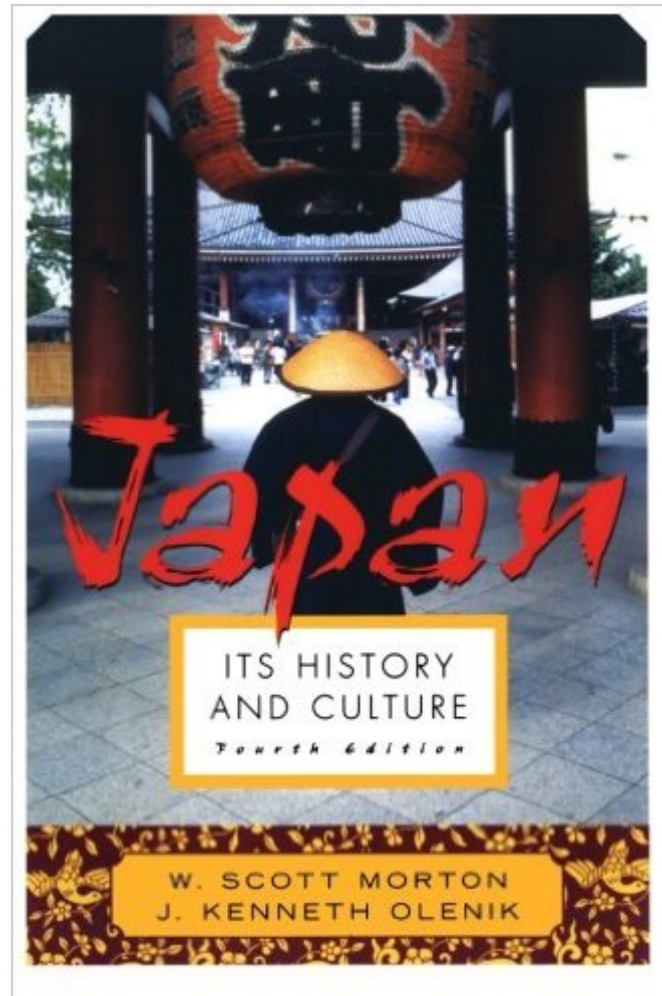


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# Japan: Its History And Culture



## 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

This book seeks to give the reader a broad grasp of the space of Japan's cultural history. Important names and dates are mentioned in connection with their cultural accomplishments. More than simply telling who killed whom in what war and when, this book gives the reader a vague understanding of how Japan's customs, architecture, art, and prose evolved into the form they are today. This book is best for those who know next to nothing about the history of Japan and would like an outline with which to proceed to learn more.

Morton has made an effort to impart understanding of Japanese heritage and culture. For the most part, he succeeds; the historical survey has about the right amount of depth for this type of book, and cultural issues are discussed. What would have made it better would have been a section on specifically Japanese concepts that are hard for non-Japanese to grasp accurately. Many are touched on throughout the book, but words such as 'wa' and 'giri' really deserve a page or two each to go into full descriptiveness, and that doesn't happen. It is clear that Morton has the understanding of them to share; I wish he'd done so.

This book is perfect for anyone who knows nothing about Japanese history (as I did). It is short and easily readable (less than 250 pages for Japanese history to WWII). As an introduction to Japanese history it does just what it should.....inspire you to learn more....

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.

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 climate 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.

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.

The book *Japan It'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 its 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 Japan'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.

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