

JAPAN

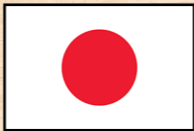
SMART CARD



Produced by the TRADOC Culture Center
 550 Cibique Street, Suite 111; Fort Huachuca, Arizona 85613
 Comm: (520) 538-5502
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OVERVIEW

- One of the world's most successful democracies and largest economies
- Has few energy resources and is the world's largest coal and natural gas importer and 2nd largest oil importer
- Bicameral *Diet* consists of a House of Councilors and a House of Representatives
- Chief of state: Emperor; mostly ceremonial with little formal power; Japanese monarchy is hereditary
- Head of government: Prime Minister – the de facto Japanese political ruler; leader of the majority party in the House of Representatives
- Although China is Japan's largest partner, Japan and US are major trading partners



POPULATION

- Total: 127 million; 93.5% urban (2015)
- Ethnicity: Japanese 98.5%, Koreans 0.5%, Chinese 0.4%, other 0.6%
- Religion: Shintoism 79.2%, Buddhism 66.8%, (totals exceed 100% because many practice both Shintoism and Buddhism), Christianity 1.5% (2012)
- Language: Japanese (official)



HISTORY

The islands of Japan were originally home to many kingdoms. They were centralized under an Emperor between the 3rd and 8th centuries. Ultimately, the power of the court declined and military warlords and clans took control. After decades of civil war, the Tokugawa *shogunate* was established in 1603, bringing a long period of political stability. For over two centuries, isolation and control enabled Japan to build a growing indigenous culture. In 1854, Japan re-opened its doors to foreigners, after signing the Treaty of Kanagawa with the US, and began to modernize.



Kusunoki Masashige (1294-1336)

During the late 19th century, Japan became a regional power that was able to defeat both Russia and China. It occupied Korea, Taiwan, and southern Sakhalin Island. In 1931-32, Japan occupied Manchuria, and in 1937, it attacked China. Japan attacked US forces in 1941, ushering in America's entry into World War II, and soon occupied much of East and Southeast Asia. After its defeat in World War II, Japan recovered under US occupation to become an economic power and US ally.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Since World War II, Japanese policy has centered on a US alliance and an emphasis on cooperation within international organizations. Because of its rapid economic growth, Japan has regained its status as a major power but still is viewed negatively by former World War II foes, such as China and Korea, and has lingering territorial disputes with Russia as well as China. The US / Japan alliance is a cornerstone of US security interests in Asia. Japan provides military bases and financial and material support to US forces, which are important for maintaining regional stability.



HOLIDAYS & OBSERVANCES

Japan has 16 national, government-recognized holidays. New Year's Day marks the beginning of Japan's most important holiday season, the New Year season, and many workplaces are closed from December 29 to January 3.



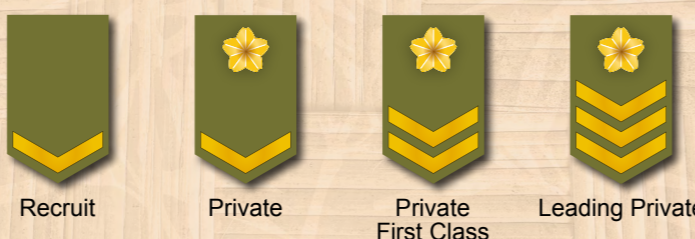
Japanese Holidays

MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS

The Japanese military consists of the: Ground Self-Defense Force (GSDF), Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF), and Air Self-Defense Force (ASDF). The Self-Defense Force is a disciplined and motivated all-volunteer force which until recently was only constitutionally permitted to use force in cases of self-defense. However, recent legislation has strengthened military power, giving limited powers to participate in armed conflicts.

Status is important in Japan. In keeping with the Japanese emphasis on hierarchy, always send equivalent ranked personnel when meeting or operating with Japanese counterparts. Although not expected from US Soldiers, the Japanese render a hand salute for all military ranks; enlisted personnel salute each other, as well as officers.

The presentation of gifts, tokens and command coins is very common in the Japanese military. You should plan on reciprocating during engagements.



RELIGION

Most Japanese are more spiritual than openly religious and organized religion does not play a large role in daily life. Many Japanese live a way of life that combines aspects of Buddhism, *Shinto*, and Confucianism.

Shinto: The indigenous faith in Japan. In the Meiji Era (1868-1912), Shinto became the state religion. Shinto does not have a founder nor does it have sacred scriptures. Most Japanese practice Shinto by praying at a home altar or visiting shrines.



Buddhism: Imported into Japan in the 6th century, it consists of the teachings of the Buddha. Shinto and Buddhism were soon able to co-exist and usually complement each other. Buddhism does not strongly affect Japanese everyday life; however, funerals are usually conducted using Buddhist rituals and many households keep a small altar at home.



Confucianism: While declining in influence, Confucianism is still important in Japanese culture and provides a framework for hierarchy, obedience and conformity. It also organizes society in terms of five principal hierarchical relationships.

KEY CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

Hierarchy: Seniority is a defining feature of Japanese society. A person's social status or senior/subordinate, *Sempai-Kōhai*, relationship is immediately evaluated using a number of factors: age, gender, profession, education, and title. The senior person is granted greatest regard, speaks first and sits at the head of the table, with less senior members often deferring to their seniors.

Modesty: Modesty, or *kenkyo*, is an important feature of Japanese society. Loud, self-assertive, and emotional behavior is discouraged while moderate and polite behavior is encouraged. Soldiers should practice restraint and mirror the behavior of their counterparts.

Ceremony: Ceremony is an important value in Japanese society and is found in many common activities. A common example is the Japanese Tea Ceremony which is a ritual involving the ceremonial preparation and presentation of powdered green tea. Learning the ceremony involved in activities will help build rapport and relationships.



Politeness and Harmony (Wa): Harmonious relations are key to Japanese culture. They have a negative view of conflict and care about maintaining politeness and harmony, which they believe reduces conflict and loss of face. Assertive behavior can be seen as aggressive. Questions and challenges need to be formed in ways that do not pose direct threats to counterparts.



Respect: Showing and earning respect are the basis of Japanese culture and relationships. Submission and respect to elders and persons of higher status is a way that Japanese show respect. Soldiers should make significant effort to demonstrate respect in all situations.

Education: Education is one of the most important factors in social stratification in Japan and derives from Confucian and Buddhist heritage where education is given great respect. Educational qualifications are often regarded as the determining factor for social and economic status.

Shūdan Ishiki: The importance of the group consciousness, *shūdan ishiki*, and reliance on others is encouraged while individualism is discouraged. This collectivist nature is shown both at work and home, where members of a family or organization are expected to work towards the betterment of the group rather than the individual.



Family: Traditional Japanese family, the *ie*, is an important social structure in Japan. Japanese law requires all households to record their composition in the family registry or *koseki*. The *ie* is patriarchal and usually led by the father. The eldest son inherits the household property and has responsibility for caring for his parents.



Aesthetics: Japanese show great appreciation for aesthetics and beauty and have an emphasis on cleanliness and appearance.

HELPFUL PHRASES

The Japanese language, spoken by about 125 million people, has a small set of sounds with 14 consonants and 5 vowels.



English	Japanese Pronunciation
Yes	<i>Hi</i>
No	<i>E-ay</i>
Good afternoon	<i>Kon-nee-chee-wa</i>
Thank you	<i>Doh-moh ah-ree-gah-toh</i>
I'm sorry	<i>Goh-men-nah-sigh</i>
Excuse me	<i>Soo-mee-mah-sen</i>
Where is the...?	<i>Dooko day su ka</i>
Can you speak English?	<i>Ay-goh gah hah-nahseh-moss-kah?</i>
My name is...	<i>Wah-tah-shee wa ____ dess</i>
Nice to meet you.	<i>Hah-jee-meh-mosh-teh</i>

For more on language: <http://hs2.dliflc.edu/japanese.html>

BUILDING RAPPORT

The most difficult aspect of rapport is the time that it takes, especially during missions, when time is valuable. You should consider where you spend your time. Taking time to build rapport can be critical, so you should also ensure that you identify the appropriate individuals to work with.



Rapport tips to consider:

- Seek to understand before being understood
- Take ownership of your counterpart's issues and needs
- Align with your counterpart's communication style
- Work to make a good first impression
- Focus on your appearance
- Once rapport is built, maintain coordination and communication
- Understanding and joining in informal activities is a good method to build rapport.



- Making a first impression in any culture is important, especially in Japan where personal comportment is vital. One way to demonstrate respect is to be prepared to bow, which is a very common greeting. Bow lower and longer for persons of a higher status; bend from the waist, place hands to the side for males, in front for females; and avoid eye contact. Handshakes are also used; only use one hand when shaking. Avoiding eye contact or bowing the head when addressed by superiors is a sign of respect.
- When meeting new counterparts, always bring a gift. Gift-giving is highly ritualistic and gift presentation and packaging is as key as the gift itself. Always receive gifts or business cards with two hands and avoid putting it in your pocket because that may be perceived as disrespectful.
- *Nemawashi*, or digging around the roots, is a commonly-used Japanese consensus building technique that is critical in decision making. It is a practice, often taking some time, to gain collective input and support prior to a formal or informal decision and often involves pre-meetings to gain consensus and lay the groundwork prior to an actual meeting or decision.



COMMUNICATION

- Non-verbal communication is important because Japanese strive for harmony. They rely on facial expression, tone and posture to tell them one's feelings instead of expressing it verbally. For example, Japanese will not often disagree verbally but rather disagreement is expressed by frowning or inhaling through clenched teeth.
- The Japanese concept of ambiguity, or *aimai*, is also very common because Japanese value a pleasant environment and will often be indirect when dealing with a negative issue. Instead of saying "No," one often answers "Yes" with hesitation, expecting understanding. If they cannot agree, they will often say, "it is under consideration" instead of "No." Japanese often remain silent for long periods during conversations and while forming responses; this is not negative but allows time for reflection.
- When communicating with Japanese, remain patient, adopt an indirect manner and concentrate on nonverbal signals.



Traditional Geisha

LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Many Japanese activities center around meals. It is a special honor to receive an invitation to a home. If invited to a home, one should follow the actions of the host. In Japan, a home meal is served in one course with several dishes. There is the starch, which is usually steamed rice; a soup, which is usually miso soup, and at least two dishes.



Sports are important to Japanese culture. Both traditional sports such as *sumo* wrestling and martial arts, and Western sports like baseball, soccer, basketball and golf are popular.

Sumo is a Japanese style of wrestling. It is considered Japan's national sport and contains many religious rituals.

