

A Concise History of Japan

A Concise History of Japan:

Jomon Period to Heisei Period

By

A. W. Jayawardena

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INTRODUCTION

Japan is a country with a long history going as far back as the Paleolithic time (circa 14,000 BC) where the emperor had been the symbol of unity as well as an absolute monarch during part of the history. Over the years and centuries, it has gone through different forms of governance - some regionally and some centrally - sometimes with conflicting interests among regional rulers leading to internal wars. Although modern Japan is well known as an advanced country with a near homogeneous population, the long history including its historical system of governance, rituals, incidents, monuments, and art is not well known to the outside world, partly due to language difficulties and partly due to the limited or non-availability of such information in foreign languages. This book aims to summarize the history of Japan including the rituals, incidents, and monuments, etc, of historical significance from the Jomon period to the end of the Heisei period.

Japanese history can be broadly classified into 17 periods beginning from the Paleolithic to the present Reiwa (Table 1). In the pre-historic *Jomon* period (14,000 BC - 300 BC), the inhabitants were of the nomadic type who lived in a hunter-gatherer culture. It has also been shown using carbon dating that the earliest pottery in Japan had evolved during this period. During most of the history of Japan, the emperor has been the symbol of unity in the country as well as an absolute monarch. It is only after the end of World War II (1945), that the emperor became a symbolic monarch with no political or administrative power. Each epoch had its own uniqueness, and the Japanese people and the country have advanced to their present level despite having undergone hardships at times but with enduring attitude.

The history of Japan as described in textbooks used in the Japanese educational system has become a focus of criticism among neighbouring countries in recent years. The contents of history textbooks in Japan are

subject to government approval which some international observers perceive as an attempt to whitewash the actions of the emperor and the military during World War II. The pre-1945 Showa period has been the most controversial and is marred by omissions of many details of facts. The history textbook controversies have been an issue of deep concern both domestically and internationally, particularly in countries that were victims of Imperial Japan during the war. Anti-Japanese demonstrations were held in the spring of 2005 in China and South Korea to protest against the *New History Textbook* published (in 2000) by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform, a group of conservative scholars. As a result of the lack of adequate details about events between 1931 and 1945, many present-generation Japanese people are unaware of the real historical facts during that period.

This write-up is not based on what is contained in Japanese history textbooks or any other history book written in Japanese. Some of the information contained is extracted from sources available in public domains in the English language.

CHRONOLOGY

Japan has been using four systems for counting the passage of time. The first is by the reigns of emperors. The first year of an emperor's reign reckoned from the day following his accession becomes the first year of an era. For example, the year 1989 is Showa 64 the last year in the reign of Emperor Hirohito; and the year 1989, reckoned from January 9th, is Heisei 1, the first year of the reign of Emperor Akihito. When a new emperor begins his reign, the calendar again starts from year 1, but with a different name to identify the period.

The second system is by counting years following some significant event. The discovery of copper in Japan was commemorated by naming that year *Wado* (meaning copper) and the era lasted 7 years. This system was originally imported from China in the year 645 AD. The third system is that of the sexagenary cycle. This was a more accurate system if carefully maintained. The system is similar to the operation of a clock. It consisted of two imaginary concentric dials, the outer one divided into 10 segments and the inner one divided into 12 segments. The outer one represented the celestial signs and the inner one represented the 12 signs of the zodiac. The two hands (the larger one pointing to the outer dial) rotated one segment every year. Since the number of segments is different in the two dials, the long hand gains over the shorthand one sixtieth every year, and every sixty years the two hands coincide. Years were indicated by the celestial stem and the zodiac sign. This system also originated in China in 623 BC and came to Japan probably in the 4th century AD.

The fourth system is similar to the Western system. The accession of the Emperor Jimmu (660 BC) is taken as the base of time. Thus, the year 1989 corresponds to the 2,649th year of the Japanese dynasty.

Although chronological records are available from as far back as 660 BC, their exact dates cannot be taken as reliable until the beginning of the 6th century. From the year 461 AD onwards, the Chinese and Korean annals confirm the Japanese records. Broadly, Japanese history is classified into several epochs or periods as listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Chronological classification of Japanese history

Time period	Epoch
Before 14,000 BC	Paleolithic
14,000 - 300 BC	Jomon
300 BC - 250 AD	Yayoi
250 - 538	Kofun
538 - 710	Asuka
710 - 794	Nara
794 - 1185	Heian
1185 - 1333	Kamakura
1333 - 1336	Kenmu Restoration
1336 – 1573	Muromachi (Ashikaga)
1573 - 1603	Azuchi-Momoyama (Oda Nobunaga enters Kyoto and begins the Azuchi-Momoyama Era)
1603 - 1868	Edo (Tokugawa)
1868 - 1912	Meiji Restoration
1912 - 1926	Taisho
1926 - 1989	Showa
1989 - 2019	Heisei
2019 - Present	Reiwa

Table 2: List of emperors of Japan¹

Period	Name of Emperor	Rank of Emperor
Before 14,000 BC (Paleolithic)		
JOMON PERIOD (14,000 BC - 300 BC)		
14, 000 - 300 BC	Jomon	
YAYOI PERIOD (300 BC - 250 AD)		
660 BC - 585 BC	Jimmu	1
581BC - 549 BC	Suizei	2
549 BC - 511 BC	Annei	3
510 BC - 476 BC	Itoku	4
475 BC - 393 BC	Kōshō	5
392 BC - 291 BC	Kōan	6
290 BC - 215 BC	Kōrei	7
214 BC - 158 BC	Kōgen	8
157 BC - 98 BC	Kaika	9
97 BC - 30 BC	Sujin	10
29 BC - 70 AD	Suinin	11
71 - 130	Keiko (Empress)	12
131 - 190	Seimu	13
192 - 200	Chuai	14
201 - 269	Jingu (empress; wife of emperor Chuai)	14
KOFUN PERIOD (270 - 539)		
270 - 310	Ojin	15
313 - 399	Nintoku	16
400 - 405	Richu	17
406 - 410	Hansei	18
411 - 453	Inkyo	19
453 - 456	Anko	20
456 - 479	Yuryaku	21
480 - 484	Seinei	22
485 - 487	Kenso	23
488 - 498	Ninken	24
499 - 506	Muretsu	25

¹ Some information in this Table is extracted from
https://www.worldhistory.org/timeline/emperor_of_Japan/

507 - 531	Keitai	26
531 - 535	Ankan	27
535 - 539	Senka	28
AKUSA PERIOD (539 - 710)		
540 - 571	Kimmei	29
572 - 585	Bidatsu	30
585 - 587	Yomei	31
587 - 592	Sushun	32
592 - 628	Suiko (empress)	33
629 - 641	Jomei	34
642 - 645	Kogyoku (empress)	35
645 - 654	Kotoku	36
655 - 661	Saimei (empress)	37
661 - 672	Tenji	38
672 - 672	Kobun	39
672 - 686	Tenmu	40
690 - 697	Jito	41
697 - 707	Monmu	42
707 - 715	Genmei (empress), also known as Genmyo	43
NARA PERIOD (710 - 794)		
707 - 715	Genmei (empress)	43
715 - 723	Gensho (empress)	44
724 - 748	Shomu	45
749 - 758	Koken (empress)	46
758 - 764	Junnin	47
765 - 770	Shotoku (empress)	48
770 - 781	Konin	49
781 - 806	Kanmu (or Kammu)	50
HEIAN PERIOD (794 - 1185)		
781 - 806	Kanmu (or Kwammu)	50
806 - 809	Heizei	51
809 - 823	Saga	52
823 - 833	Junna	53
833 - 850	Ninmyo (or Nimmyo)	54
850 - 858	Montoku	55
858 - 876	Seiwa	56
876 - 884	Yozei	57
884 - 887	Koko	58
887 - 897	Uda	59

897 - 930	Daigo	60
930 - 946	Shujaku	61
946 - 967	Murakami	62
967 - 969	Reizei	63
969 - 984	Enyu	64
984 - 986	Kwazan	65
986 - 1011	Ichijo	66
1011 - 1017	Sanjo	67
1017 - 1036	Go-Ichijo (Ichijo II)	68
1036 - 1045	Go-Shujaku	69
1045 - 1068	Go-Reizei	70
1068 - 1073	Go-Sanjo	71
1073 - 1086	Shirakawa	72
1086 - 1107	Horikawa	73
1107 - 1123	Toba	74
1123 - 1142	Sutoku	75
1142 - 1155	Konoe	76
1155 - 1158	Go-Shirakawa	77
1158 - 1165	Nijo	78
1165 - 1168	Rokujo	79
1168 - 1180	Takakura	80
1181 - 1183	Antoku	81
KAMAKURA PERIOD (1185 - 1333)		
1183 - 1198	Go-Toba	82
1198 - 1210	Tsuchimikado	83
1211 - 1221	Juntoku	84
1221 - 1221	Chukyo	85
1221 - 1232	Go-Horikawa	86
1232 - 1242	Shijo	87
1242 - 1246	Go-Saga	88
1246 - 1260	Go-Fukakusa	89
1260 - 1274	Kameyama	90
1274 - 1287	Go-Uda	91
1287 - 1298	Fushimi	92
1298 - 1301	Go-Fushimi	93
1301 - 1307	Go-Nijo	94
1308 - 1318	Hanazono	95
1318 - 1339	Go-Daigo	96

Northern Court (1333 - 1392)		
1331 - 1333	Kogon	
1333 - 1348	Komyo	
1348 - 1351	Suko	
1352 - 1371	Go Kogon	
1371 - 1382	Go Enyu	
1382 - 1392	Go Komatsu	
MUROMACHI PERIOD (1333 - 1573)		
1333 - 1336	Kenmu restoration	
1318 - 1339	Go-Daigo	96
1339 - 1368	Go-Murakami	97
1368 - 1383	Chokei	98
1383 - 1392	Go-Kameyama	99
1392 - 1412	Go-Komatsu	100
1412 - 1428	Shoko	101
1428 - 1464	Go-Hanazono	102
1464 - 1500	Go-Tsuchimikado	103
1500 - 1526	Go-Kashiwabara	104
1526 - 1557	Go-Nara	105
1557 - 1586	Ogimachi	106
AZUCHI- MOMOYAMA PERIOD (1573-1603)		
1573 - 1586	Ogimachi	106
1586 - 1611	Go-Yozei	107
EDO PERIOD (1603 - 1867)		
1586 - 1611	Go-Yozei	107
1611 - 1629	Go-Mizuno	108
1629 - 1643	Meisho (empress)	109
1643 - 1654	Go Komyo	110
1654 - 1663	Go Sai	111
1663 - 1687	Reigen	112
1687 - 1709	Higashiyama	113
1709 - 1735	Nakamikado	114
1735 - 1747	Sakuramachi	115
1747 - 1762	Momozono	116
1762 - 1771	Go-Sakuramachi	117
1771 - 1779	Go-Momozono	118
1779 - 1817	Kokaku	119
1817 - 1846	Ninko	120
1846 - 1867	Komei	121

IMPERIAL AND POST-WAR PERIOD (1867 - Present)		
1867 - 1912	Meiji	122
1912 - 1926	Taishyo	123
1926 - 1989	Showa	124
1989 - 2019	Heisei (Kinjo)	125
2019 - Present	Reiwa	126

JOMON PERIOD (14,000 BC - 300 BC)

During this pre-historic period (14,000 BC - 300 BC), Japan was inhabited by nomadic type people who obtained their food from wild plants and animals. They lived in a hunter-gatherer culture which later became more sedentary. The earliest pottery in Japan (maybe across the world too), now known as Jomon Pottery, started during this period. The population increased in the early Jomon period but, towards the latter part, it declined.

YAYOI PERIOD (300 BC - 250 AD)

The earliest archaeological evidence of the Yayoi period (300 BC - 250 AD) is found in northern Kyūshū but spread to the main island of Honshu, mixing with the native Jomon culture. During this period, pottery was made by using the potter's wheel as opposed to the hand method used during the Jomon period. This period is also referred to as the Iron Period in Japan, as the craftsmen of the time made bronze bells, mirrors, and weapons. The society became relatively affluent and people began to possess land and grains (rice cultivation began during this period) and lived in permanent houses leading to a stratified class system. It is believed that the origin of the Yayoi people is in the southern Yangtze, with cultural influences from both China and Korea. Rice farming and the metal-making cultures have their origins in the Yayoi period.

KOFUN PERIOD (250 -538)

Kofuns are burial mounds built for the people of the ruling class during the 3rd to 7th centuries in Japan and the Kofun period derives its name from these distinctive earthen mounds. The mounds contained large stone burial chambers. Some are surrounded by moats. They take different shapes and sizes; round, square, and a distinct keyhole shape, with sizes extending to over 400 m. Of about 161 Kofun tomb sites, of a total of 560, Hyogo Prefecture and Chiba Prefecture have the most. Kofun burial mounds in Tanegashima and two old Shinto shrines in Yakushima suggest that these islands were the southern boundaries of the Yamato state which belonged to the Kofun and the Asuka periods, which are collectively referred to as the Yamato period. The northern borders extend to Tainan in modern Niigata Prefecture. Migration of people from China and Korea took place during this period.

The Kofun period is characterized by the Shinto culture which existed prior to the introduction of Buddhism. Politically, much of West Honshu and the northern half of Kyushu were controlled by the leader of a powerful clan (Yamato clan), which eventually established Imperial Japan.

ASUKA PERIOD (538 - 710)

The Asuka period derives its name from the region Asuka, which is about 25 km south of the modern city of Nara. The Yamato polity, which started during the Kofun period, evolved greatly during the Asuka period. This period is characterized by significant developments in artistic, social, and political transformations largely due to the arrival of Buddhism from China which made marked changes in Japanese society. Another important occurrence during this period is the change of the name of the country from *Wa* to *Nihon*. Taoism was also introduced to Japan during this period. The first of eight empresses in Japan, Empress Suiko, reigned during this period but merely as a figurehead for 'Soga no Umako' (of the powerful Soga clan) and Prince Regent 'Shotoku Taishi' (also a member of the Soga family).

NARA PERIOD (710 - 794)

Nara remained the capital for 75 years throughout the reign of 4 emperors and 3 empresses. Nara is located in the province of Yamato. There is no historical evidence to show why Nara was selected as the seat of administration. Today it is one of the most beautiful scenic spots in Japan with many preserved fine specimens of ancient Japanese art and architecture.

This era is an important one in the history of Japan for many reasons. Copper was discovered and to commemorate the discovery the period from 708 - 715 AD was named the *Wado* era. Coins were minted and were used as tokens of exchange. An empress (*Gensho*) succeeded another empress (*Genmyo*, also known as *Genmei*) for the first time (and the last time too) in the history of Japan. The two oldest Japanese histories, the *Kojiki* and the *Nihonji*, were compiled during this era.

Communication with China had a great influence on the cultural and religious developments of Japan during the 7th and 8th centuries. Many scholars were sent to China in search of knowledge and many educators from China came to Japan to preach. The highest regard and respect were given to people of high intellectual attainment. The priests, *Doji*, *Gembo*, and *Kanshin* attained great reputations and were responsible for the establishment of the *Daian-ji* and *Kofuku-ji* temples (the word 'ji' in Japanese means temple), two of the most powerful Buddhist temples in Nara. The other five were *Todai-ji*, *Yakushi-ji*, *Saidai-ji*, *Gango-ji*, and *Horyu-ji*. *Kanshin* was a Chinese person who took Buddhist Sutras, images, relics, and such items with him to Japan. He was offered the highest rank (*dai-sojo*) of the Buddhist priesthood by the empress, but he declined the offer. The temple *Shodai-ji* was built by him.

7.1 Buddhism in the Nara era

Buddhism received more respect and welcome than any other foreign philosophy. Emperor after emperor worshipped the Buddha irrespective of their military policies. Emperor Monmu (697 - 707 AD) erected the *Kwannon-ji*. Fujiwara Fuhito built the *Kofuku-ji* and his son Muchimaro, when governor of Omi, built *Jingu-ji*.

During this period many shrines and temples were built by various emperors out of wood and suffered destruction by fire at subsequent times. One great monument that endured all forms of destruction is the colossal bronze statue of the Buddha which is known to the tourist world as *Nara Daibutsu*. Emperor Shomu proclaimed his intention to pursue this massive task on the 7th of November 743 AD. But the actual construction began in 747 and lasted 3 years (after 7 failures). It was cast in pieces and soldered together. This sitting statue of the Buddha has a total height of 16.3 m, a face height of 4.88 m, and two disciple Bodhisathwas (9.1 m high) standing on either side. It required 450 million kg of bronze for casting and about 400 kg of refined gold for gilding the surface. The unveiling ceremony took place in the year 752 and in the following year, the temple *Todai-ji* was endowed with the taxes of 100 households and the revenue from 100 km² of rice fields.

During this period, Buddhism spread well in provincial cities - almost to the same extent as in the capital. Emperor Monmu appointed Buddhist priests to preach and teach Sutras. Emperor Shomu ordered that every province should have a large image of the Buddha. Many pagodas and temples were built and emphasis on religion and cultural education was made through these seats of learning.

7.2 Koken and Fujiwara

In 749 AD, Emperor Shomu abdicated in favour of his daughter Princess Abe, known in history as *Koken*. This empress, who was herself connected to the Fujiwara family, offered favouritism and high-ranking administrative powers to *Fujiwara no Nakamaro*. This, in Japanese history, is considered a disgrace to the imperial family, for she is said to have visited *Fujiwara no*

Nakamaro.

Later she became a nun abdicating in favour of the Crown Prince Junnin, but in 765 she de-robed and resumed the throne under the name of Shotoku (765-770) after de-throning Junnin and killing him.

Abuse and injustice were dominating and the glory of the Yamato Empire was in decline during this reign. Robbery, plundering, sea pirating, etc. were common features of the Koken (or Shotoku) administration. The productivity of the country was very low since most of the revenue was spent on works of piety based on religious fanaticism.

7.3 Agriculture and Industry

Land development was encouraged very much during this era for crops like rice, barley, and millet. Private investments and industrialization were also encouraged by offering honours and exemptions from forced labour as incentives. Stock farming was not successfully attempted since Buddhism, strictly observed at that time, condemned all kinds of killing.

Industries were keeping ahead of the time as could be seen from the numerous wooden and metal statues, buildings, and pagodas built then. The lacquer industry and painting also prospered (vermillion lacquer was invented in the time of Temmu), although Japanese history does not have a notable painter comparable to those of China and Korea.

One superb achievement of Japanese casting techniques was the creation of the traditional bell which almost every temple is equipped with. The quality and workmanship of these huge bells surpass their contemporary counterparts in Western Europe. One of the most remarkable bells cast in the year 732 (the Shomu era) - 3.88 m high, 2.69 m in diameter, 25.4 mm thick, and weighing 49 tons - is found in *Todai-ji* in Nara.

7.4 Literature and Poetry

Only a handful of people had the privilege of learning which at that time was considered as a means of preparing men for official administration, rather than as a means of encouraging scientific or cultural achievement.

Thus, people belonging to the aristocratic clans only had the opportunity to learn. During the Nara epoch, Japan did not have any books of her own and hence much of the literature came from China. Since printing presses were not available, every bit of Chinese literature had to be carefully hand-copied.

Poetry received much recognition and development during this era. The first Japanese anthology, *Mangyō-shū*, was compiled during this era. The compiler's name is not known but is believed to be either *Tachibana no Moroe* or *Otomo no Yakamichi*.

A peculiarity found in Japanese poetry is the existence of a fascinating rhythm where 5 syllables and 7 syllables are used alternatively. There are generally five lines, the first and the third consisting of 5 syllables, making a total of 31 syllables. The number of lines is immaterial as long as there are lines of 5 and 7 syllables alternatively. The most popular of these is the 3-line 17-syllable *haiku* or *hokku*. The following are examples of 5-line poems:

momi ji ha o
kaze ni makasete
miru yori mo
kakanaki mono wa
inochi nari keri

hotogisu
nakatsuru kata o
nagamureba
tada ariake no
tsuki zo nokoreru

shira kumo ni
hanuuchi kawashi
tobukari no
kazu sae miyuru
aki no yono tsuki

HEIAN PERIOD (794 -1185)

In Japanese history, the least sharply defined period is the Heian epoch which was a period of 398 years from the time the imperial capital was transferred from Nara to Kyoto (794 AD) to the time of establishment of the capital in Kamakura (1192 AD). The first ruler in the epoch was the Emperor Kwammu (781-806) who was the son of Konin. His reign is important for two significant events; the conquest of the eastern *Yemishi* (Ainu) by *Tamuramaro* and the transfer of the capital from Nara to Kyoto.

Although it has been the custom in Japan to change the site of the capital on the accession of a new emperor to the throne until the 8th century, Nara served as the capital for 75 years during eight reigns. Thus, it was a well-established and developed capital when Kwammu ascended to the throne. As to why Kwammu desired to change his capital despite this can be thought of as being due to two reasons. The influence of the priests in Nara over the administration was beyond what was needed and that Nara itself was a small city having no scope for development as Kwammu had expected.

He sent his most trusted minister Fujiwara Tanetsugu to survey a new site for the capital. Fujiwara selected the site at Nagaoka (in the same province of Kyoto) and soon the work on the new palace began. The capital was moved before they could finish the work in the palace. Although the work program was expedited, an incident that led to the assassination of Tanetsugu by the crown prince in the absence of the emperor from the capital led to the dispatching of the crown prince to Awaji island (which he did not reach alive as pre-planned), and other subsequent occurrences made the emperor dislike Nagaoka. In 794, Kyoto was made the capital and remained as the capital for the whole empire. The site was selected by *Wake no Kiyomaro*.

Kyoto was a well-planned capital with every street and government building laid in some geometrical exactness. The site was in the form of a rectangle about 5.75 km long from North to South and about 5 km wide from East to West. In each direction there were 9 principal roads running North to South and from East to West, and crossing each other at right angles. The East and West streets were numbered from 1 to 9 and even today this nomenclature is found in Kyoto city despite several destructions caused by fire. From North to South was a wide road (85 m wide) which divided the city into two parts, the Eastern (later *Tokyo*) and the Western (or *Saikyo*). These streets divided the city into 9 equal parts which were again sub-divided into equal parts by similar streets running perpendicular to each other. Even in modern Japan, this regular pattern of streets and city planning is found only in Kyoto.

8.1 Classical age of literature

The *Engi* era (July 901 to April 923), during the reign of Emperor Daigo, and the three or four decades before and after may be considered the classical age of literature in Japan. Few scholars reached high positions as ministers purely on their superior academic achievements. The Nara epoch gave to Japan the famous *Manyo shu* (collection of ten thousand leaves) believed to have been compiled by Ōtomo no Yakamochi, and the *Engi* era gave the less celebrated *Wakashū* (a collection of Japanese poems of ancient and modern times) commonly referred to as *Kokin shu* - an anthology of over 1,100 poems, conceived by Emperor Uda and published by order of his son Emperor Daigo around 905. The language attained considerable literacy development during this era and hence most of the original native Japanese writings originated in the course of the Heian epoch. During the Nara epoch, they were still learning and borrowing from Chinese literature.

It is a remarkable fact that two of the best works in Japanese literature were written by women. This may be partly because male scholars continued to maintain their literacy works in the Chinese language. The two famous works were *Genji Monogatari* (the tale of *Hikaru Genji*, or "Shining *Genji*", the son of an ancient Japanese emperor (a fictitious character), known to readers as Emperor Kiritsubo) by *Murasaki Shikibu*, and *Makura Soshi* ('pillow book') by *Seishonagon*. The Japanese phonetic scripts,

known as *Hiragana* and *Katakana*, were widely used in the writings of the era. They were symbols derived from original Chinese characters to represent the Japanese phonetic system. *Hiragana* is said to have been devised by *Mabiki* and *Katakana* by *Kobo Daishi (Kukai)*, a Japanese Buddhist monk who propagated Buddhism. They were known before the end of the 9th century. Many well-remembered poets have made their contributions to Japanese literature during the 9th and 10th centuries.

The period from 947 to about 1036 was very perplexing in Japanese history. The Fujiwara family intermingled with the royals. Several instances of quarreling among the members of the Fujiwara family for reasons of their individual claims to rule have occurred.

8.2 Invasion of Japan by Toi

In the spring of 1019, during the reign of Emperor Go-Ichiro, Japan was invaded at the island of Tsushima, which lies halfway between South Korea and Kyushu. The invaders were *Toi*, or *Jurchen* pirates, a group of East Asian Tungusic-speaking people who lived in the northeast of China (later known as Manchuria). At the time, *Toi* meant "barbarian" in the Korean language. They came in a fleet of vessels and their arms were swords, spears, bows, and such primitive ones. They invaded Tsushima and came down to Hakata, plundering and massacring old folk and children. With many heavy losses in the fighting, Japan maintained Hakata uncaptured.

8.3 Temples in Kyoto

Emperor Shirakawa (1073-1086) made more than 6 temples of which *Hosho-ji* is of special grandeur. He also erected 33,333 images of Kwannon in Kyoto (*Sunjusangendo*). Many Buddhist sculptures, paintings, statues, and pagodas were constructed by him during his reign. He was so fanatic about Buddhism, that on one occasion when rain prevented the work in the construction of *Hosho-ji*, he sentenced the rain to imprisonment and caused a quantity of water to be confined in a vessel. This silly act is known by the people as *Ame kingoku*.