- Jomon (10,000 - 300 B.C.) Prehistoric period of tribal/clan organization. Stone Age hunters and gatherers
- (300 B.C. - A.D. 300) Rice cultivation, metalworking, and the potters wheel are introduced from China and Korea
- In Shinto, Japan’s oldest religion, people identify kami (divine forces) in nature and in such human virtues as loyalty and wisdom
- (300-645) Yamato clan rulers begin imperial dynasty that continues to occupy throne today.
- 285 CE - Confusion virtues are promoted
- 552 CE - Buddhism introduced from China
- Official contact with China stop in 838
- 1274, 1281: Kublai Khan’s Mongol invasions are repelled with help of Kamikaze (“divine winds,” or storms).
- Firearms introduced by shipwrecked Portuguese soldiers (1543), Christianity by Francis Xavier (1549)
- (1600-1845) Japan enters an age of peace and national isolation.
- Chinese and Dutch traders are limited to Nagasaki
- Christianity is suppressed
- Establishment of rigid social hierarchy ensures peace and stability throughout Japan. (Samurai are ranked in quest, followed by farmers, artisans, and merchants.)
- 1848: the USA forces Japan to sign a trade agreement (“Treaty of Kanagawa”) which reopens Japan to Foreign trade.
- 1864: British, French, Dutch, and American warships bomb Japanese ports in order to open more Japanese ports for foreign trade.
- 1871: The revolutionary government dismantles the feudal system forbids the lords from retaining private armies.
- 1872: Western dress is prescribed for official ceremonies.
- 1873: Japan adopts conscription so that the central government can have an army of it’s own.
- 1895: Japan defeats China in First Sino-Japanese War and China is forced to cede Taiwan and Recognize Japanese supremacy over Korea at the Treaty of Shimonoseki.
- 1896: A law code based on the German code is adopted.
- 1902: Japan signs the London Treaty with Britain that recognizes Japan’s rights to Korea and Britain's rights in China
- Feb 1904: Japan attacks Russia in Manchuria, destroying the Russian fleet at Port Arthur, and invades Korea. This begins the Russo-Japanese war.