

# The Geography of Japan

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Geography & Culture

**WHY DO PEOPLE LIVE  
AND MOVE WHERE THEY  
DO?**

**WHY DO PEOPLE LIVE  
THE WAY THEY DO?**

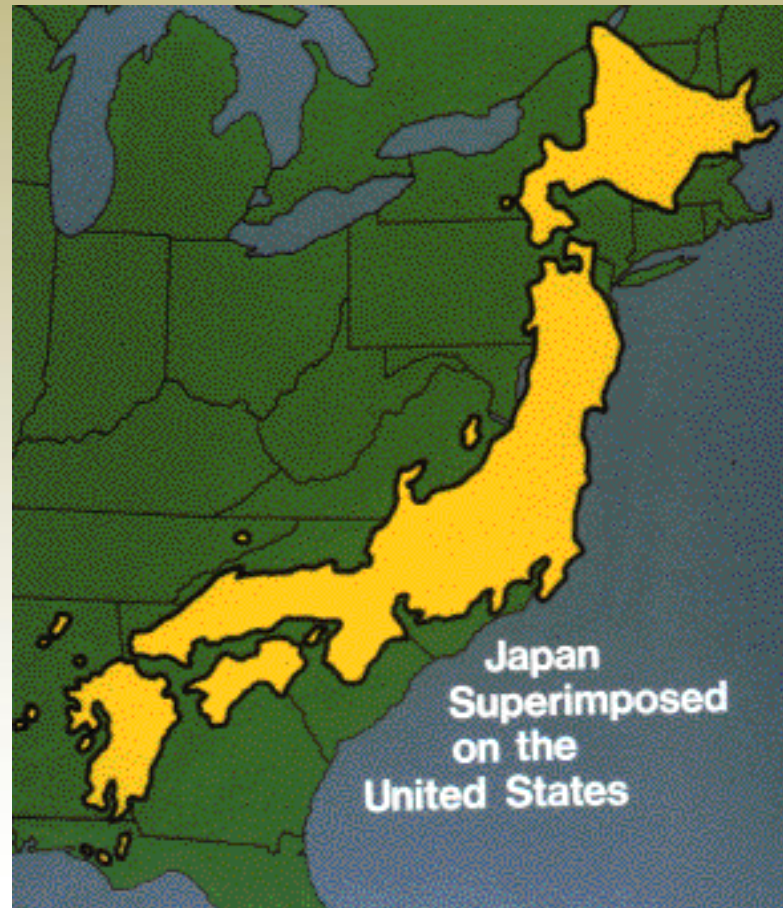


# Geography Defines Japan

- **Japan is a series of islands**—the group consists of over 3000 islands of which 600 are inhabited.
- The overall geographical area of the inhabited islands is less than **California**.
- The **climate** is pleasantly moderate, for the islands lie in the path of the Black Current which flows north from the tropics. All the islands are mountainous and subject to a variety of **natural disasters**, especially earthquakes and tsunamis.
- The mountainous terrain leaves its mark on Japanese culture; since the **mountains provide natural and difficult barriers**, political life in Japan centered around **regional** rather than national governments.
- The earliest flowering of **Japanese history** took place in the low-lying plains on the island of Honshu, especially the Yamato plain in the south—a region that gave its name to the first "official" name for Japan, **Yamato**. There the very first Japanese kingdom arose and provided the basis of future Japanese civilizations.”

<http://wsu.edu/~dee/ANCJAPAN/ANJAPAN1.HTM>

# A comparison of size



Mt. Fuji – About 73% of Japan is mountainous



# Japan's Topography – Where can people live?



# Small houses/packed cities?



336 people per square kilometer (U.S. = 32  
per square kilometer)





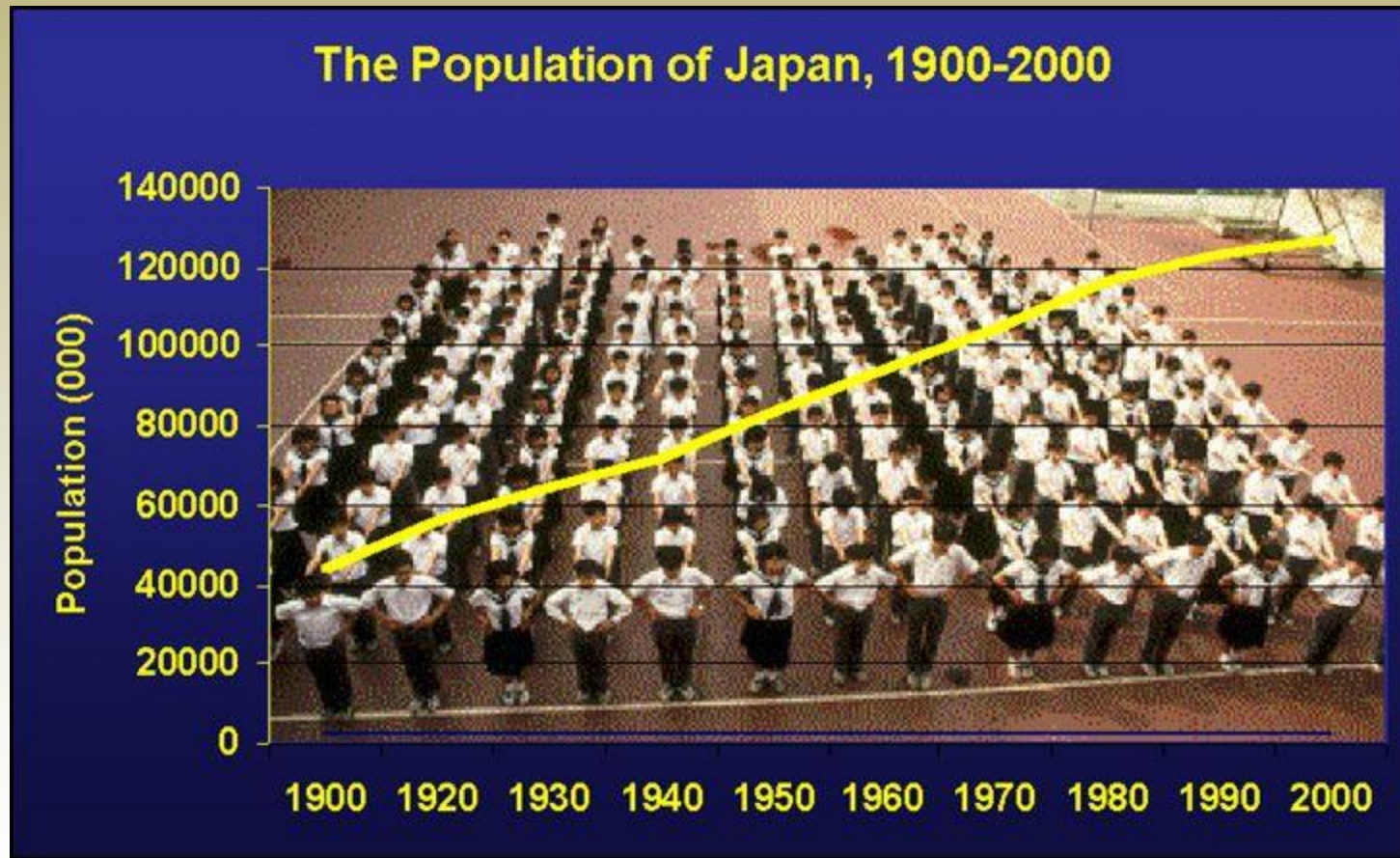
Tokyo – Almost 13 million people



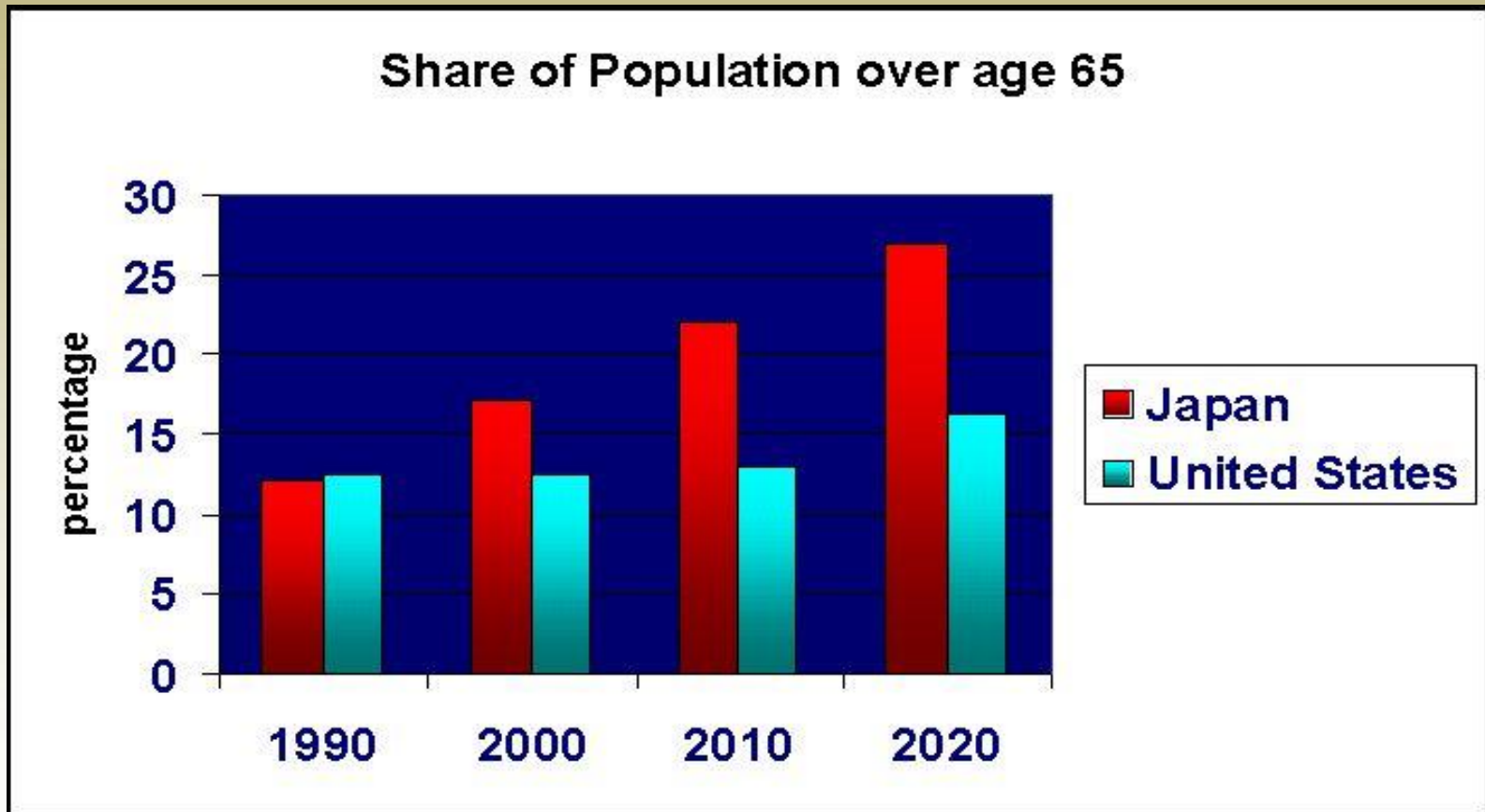
You WILL fit on the subway!



Japan's population = 128 million

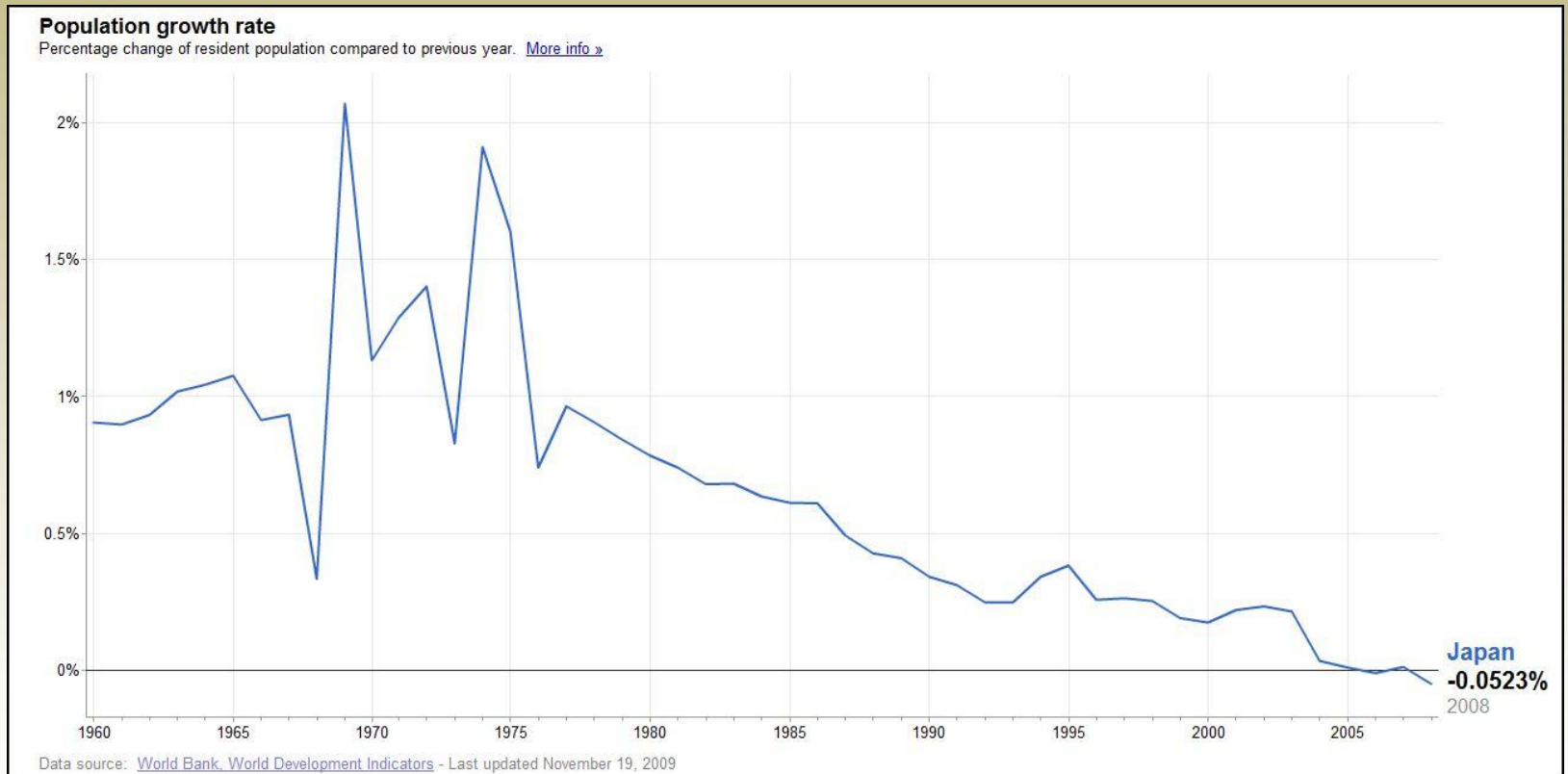


# Japan is getting older





# Population is shrinking too



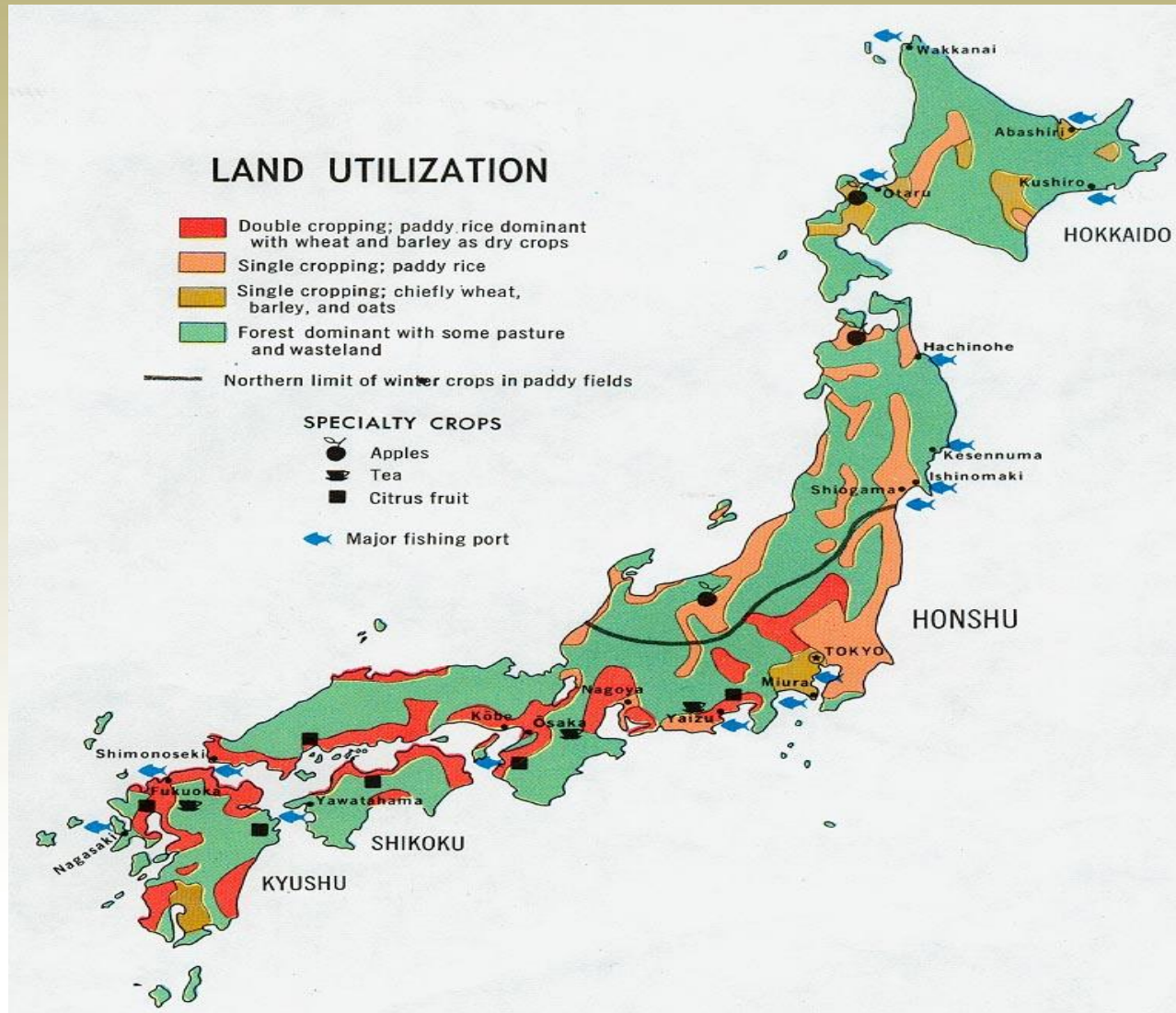
# What lies ahead for Japan then?



Living so close together, created norms for cleaning up trash and not littering.



How do they feed themselves? - About 11% of their land is arable.






# Japan uses it's arable land wisely



Kanegasaki, Japan

Kanegasaki – Northern Japan – ski resorts are nearby.

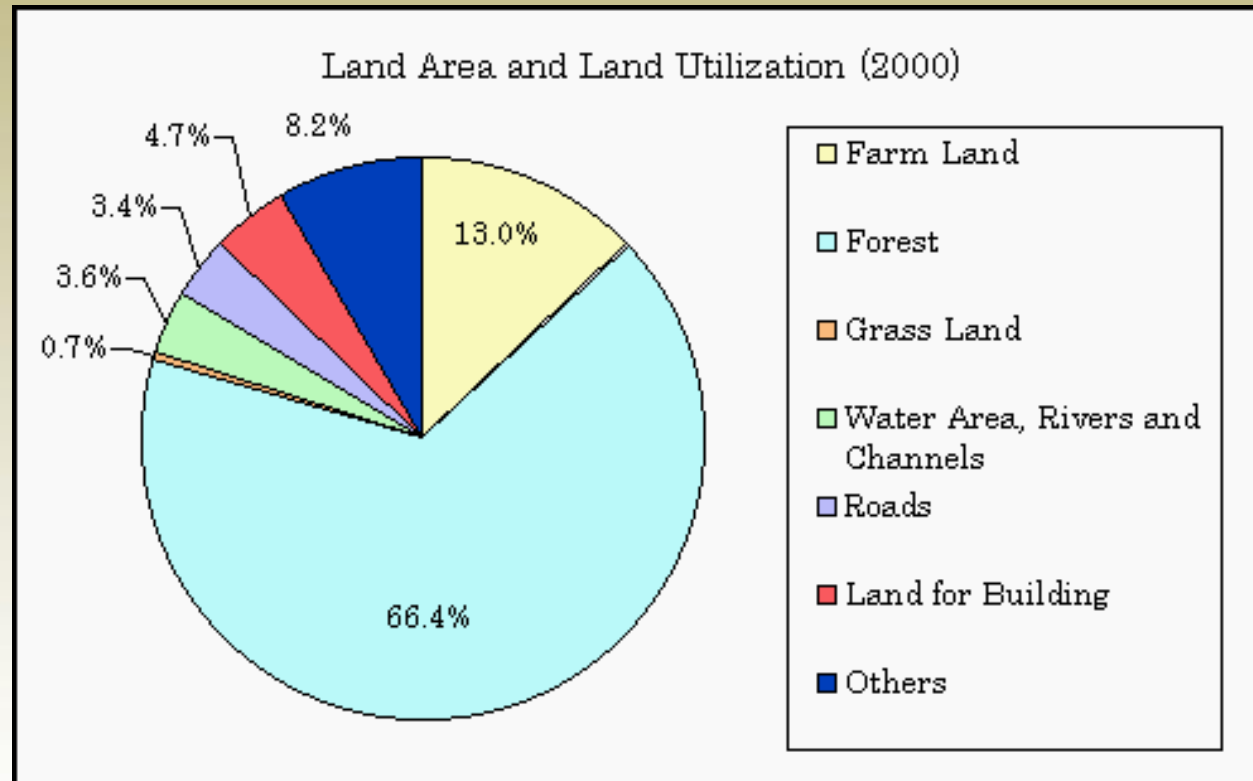




Terraced farming makes good use of what arable land they have.



# With so many people, why so much untouched forested land?



# A leap of faith theory - It's in their indigenous religion...Shintoism.



“Shinto comprises the religious ideas and practices indigenous to Japan. Ancient Shinto focused on the worship of the *kami*, a host of supernatural beings that could be known through forms (objects of nature, remarkable people, abstract concepts such as justice) but were ultimately mysterious.” (Infoplease.com)

# Kami – Shinto gods

“They are sacred spirits which take the form of things and concepts important to life, such as wind, rain, mountains, trees, rivers and fertility. Humans become kami after they die and are revered by their families as ancestral kami. The kami of extraordinary people are even enshrined at some shrines. The Sun Goddess Amaterasu is considered Shinto's most important kami.” Japan-Guide.com

-Connection to Confucianism



# Shinto shrine at Hiraizumi



# Shinto shrine in Kanegasaki



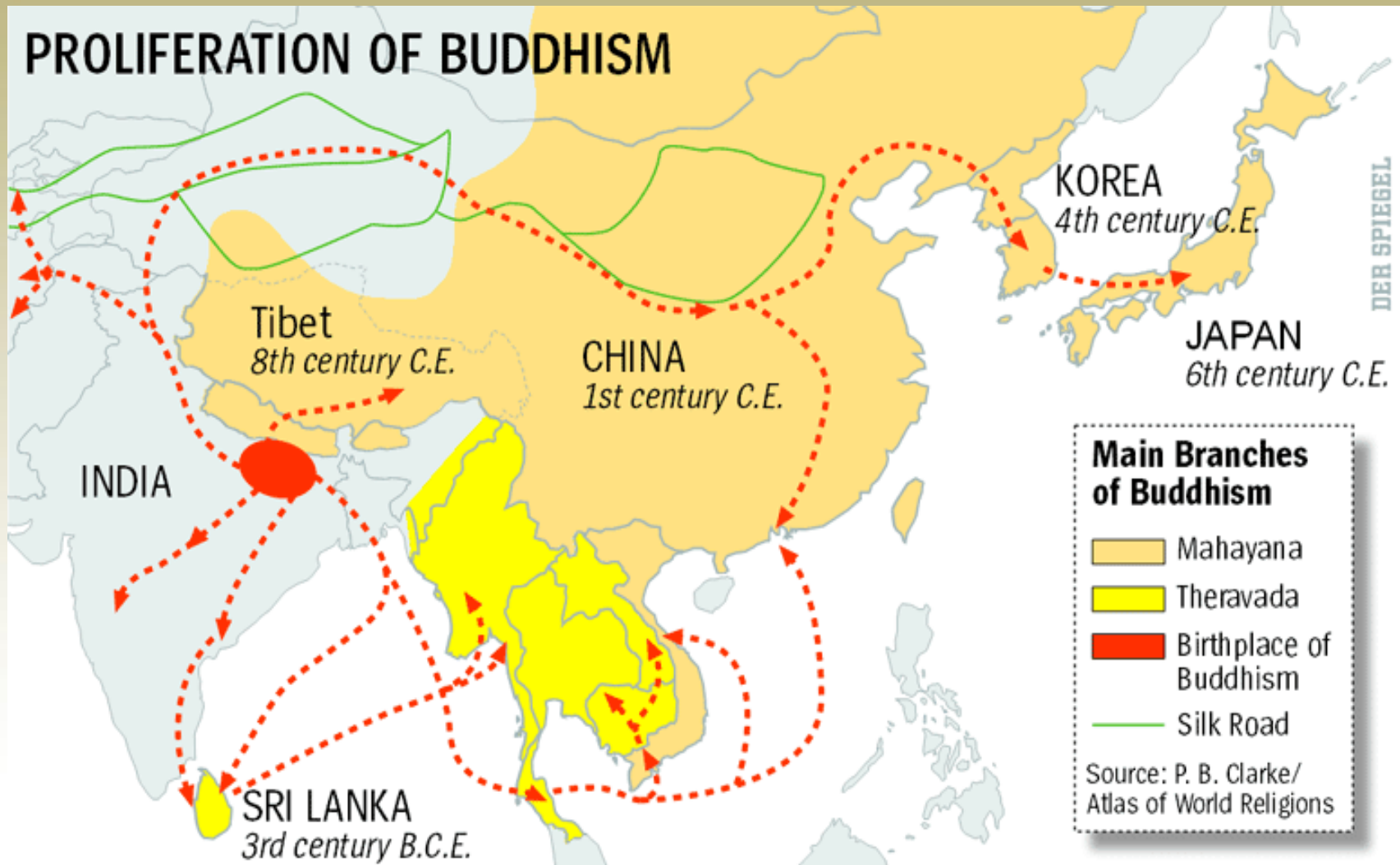
Families  
have small  
shrines in  
their house  
sometimes to  
honor  
relatives.

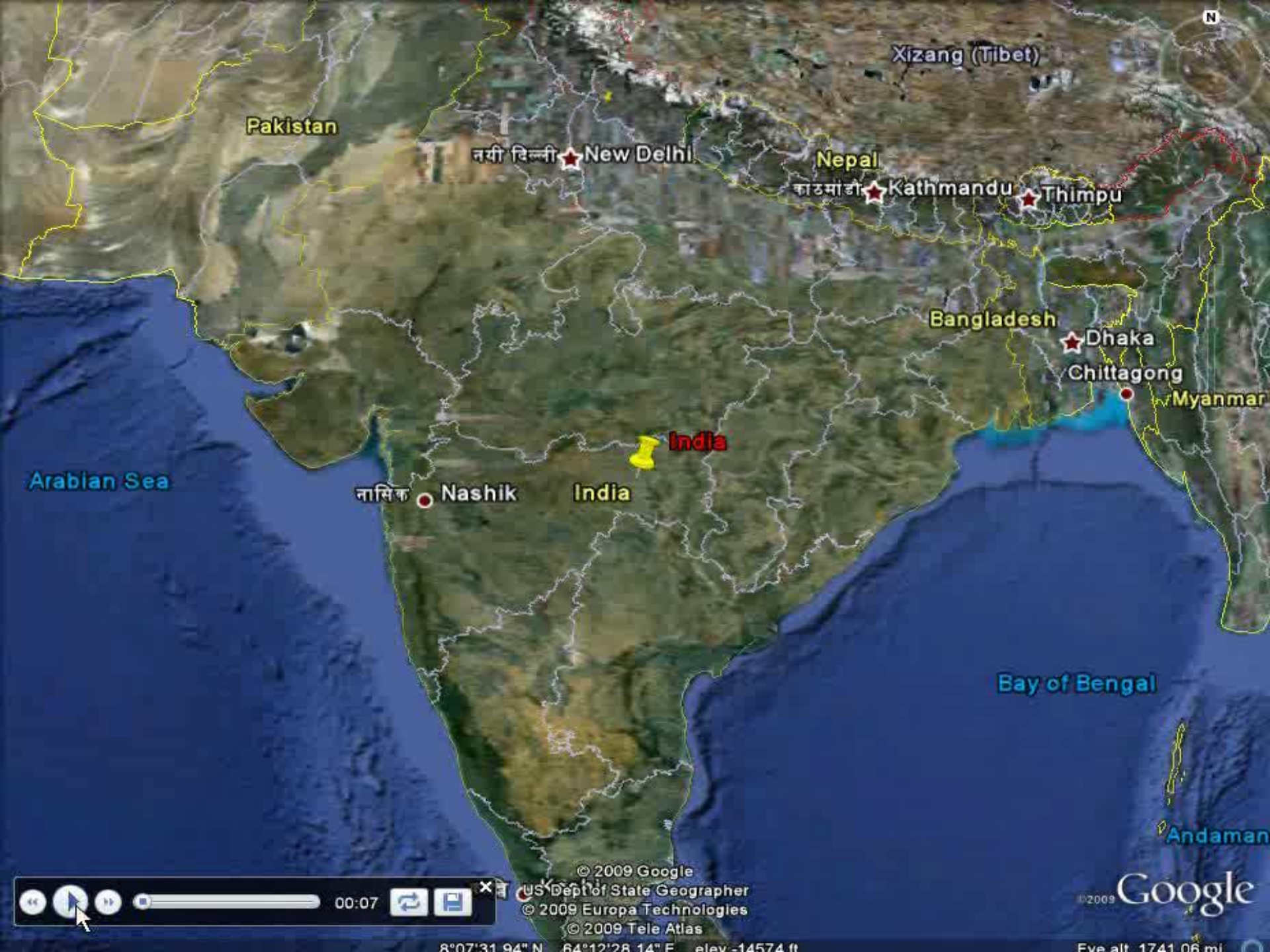


Walking distance from my homestay.



# The Spread of Buddhism – Zen Buddhism in Japan





Pakistan

नयी दिल्ली ★ New Delhi

Xizang (Tibet)

Nepal

काठमांडौ ★ Kathmandu ★ Thimpu

Bangladesh

★ Dhaka  
● Chittagong

Myanmar

India

नासिक ● Nashik

India

Arabian Sea

Bay of Bengal

Andaman

Navigation controls including back, forward, and zoom buttons, a progress bar, and a timer showing 00:07.

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8°07'31.94" N 64°12'28.14" E elev. -14574 ft

Eve alt 1741.06 mi

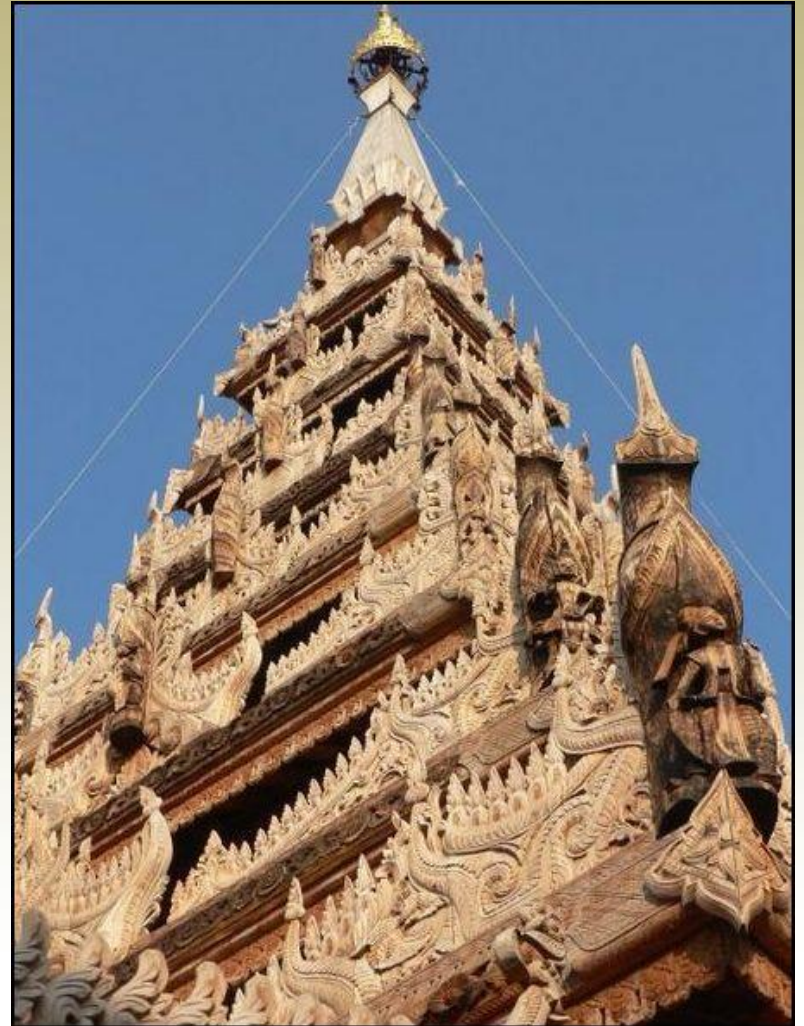
# Architecture of Buddhism: From India to China to Korea to Japan



The Great Stupa of Sanchi

# Architectural style in India

The stupa was originally a mound-like structure containing Buddhist relics.



# Bunwangsa Pagoda



Originally 9 stories – Built in stone to copy the Chinese, but the Koreans didn't have bricks, so they used rocks as bricks.

# A stupa at the Academy of Korean Studies



# Kyoto – Kiyomizu-dera Temple



# Kofuku-ji Temple Pagoda - Nara





# Todai-ji Temple in Nara — World's largest wooden building



Given the abundant forests, temples were made of wood compared to stone or bricks in China.

An abundance of timber = wooden temples



# Cultural Diffusion



Statue of Buddha in India

# Buddha Sculptures – Seokguram Grotto – Gyeongju, Korea



“The sea can be seen on a clear day from the grotto and it is hypothesized that the Buddha was made to protect the Silla kingdom from Wa (Japan) attacks.”

# Buddha gains Asian qualities



Bulguksa Temple, Gyeongju, Korea

# Japan's largest Buddha statue at Todai-ji Temple



# Sanjusangen-do Temple – A thousand Buddhas - Kyoto



# Zen Buddhism – The Japanese adopted Buddhism to incorporate Shintoism.



Landscape artwork at Daitoku-ji Temple



# Pruning trees at Daitoku-ji Temple



# Zen garden at Daitoku-ji Temple



# Zen garden at Jishoji Temple



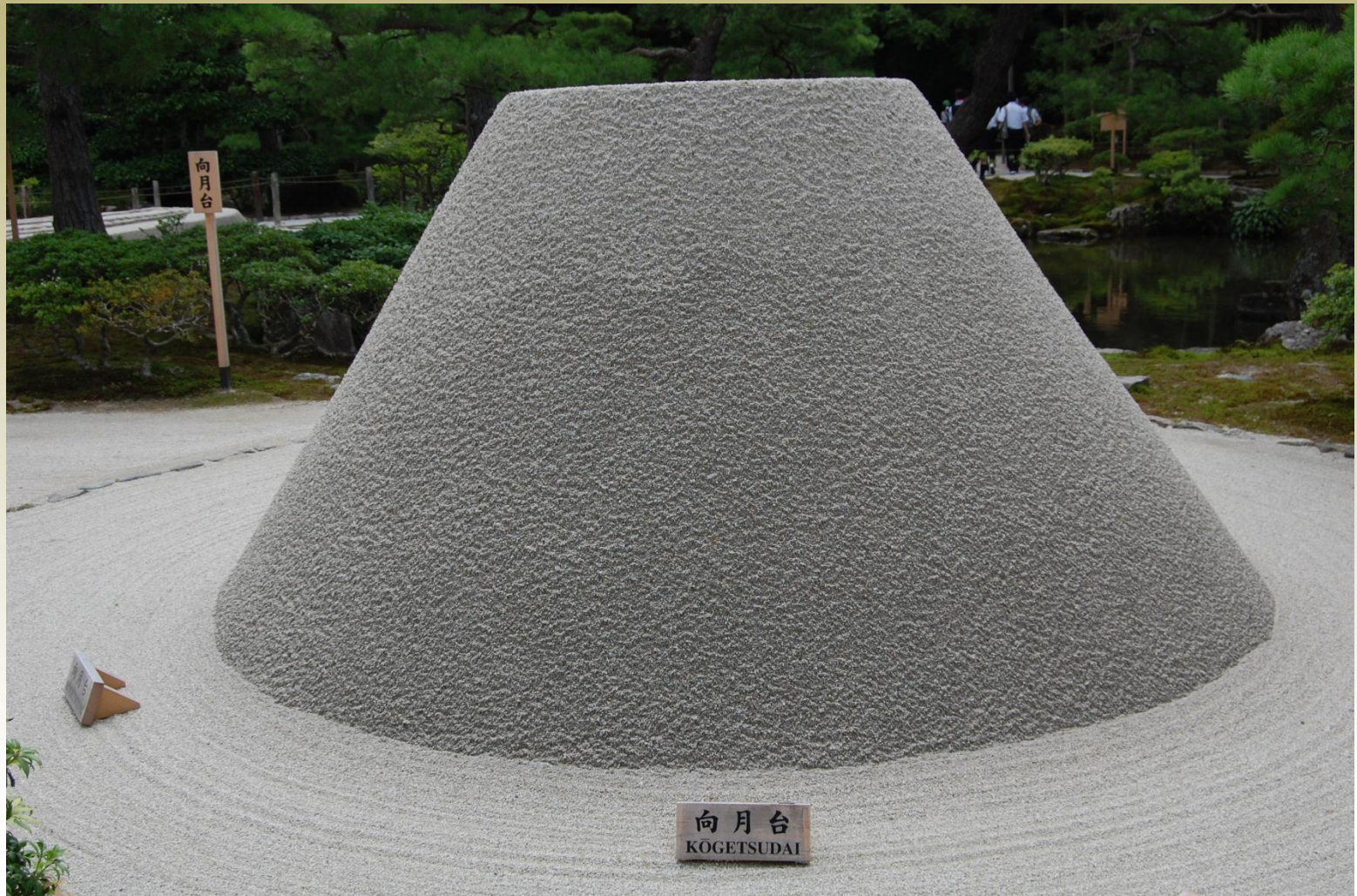
# Doorway at Jisho-ji 'Silver Pavilion' Temple



# Jisho-ji Temple Zen Garden



# Jisho-ji Temple Zen Artwork



# Kyoto: Ryoan-ji Temple – Zen Garden



# An island geography has a diet of seafood





# Dinner in Kyoto



# Sushi in Tokyo



# Fishing Industry in Japan



Japanese people eat about 3 ounces of fish daily, on average, while typical Americans eat fish perhaps twice a week. - [Science Daily](#)

# All the tea in China...actually, some went to Japan



- **The Legend of Tea**

- *According to Chinese legend, tea was invented accidentally by the Chinese Emperor Shen Nong in 2737 B.C. The emperor believed that drinking boiled water contributed to good health. By his decree, his subjects and servants had to boil their water before drinking it as a hygiene precaution. On one summer day while he was visiting a distant region, he and his entourage stopped to rest. The servants began to boil water for the skilled ruler and his subjects to drink. Dried leaves from a nearby camellia bush fell into the boiling water. The emperor was interested in the new liquid because it had a pleasing aroma in this new brew interested the emperor, so he drank the infusion and discovered that it was very refreshing and had a delightful flavor. He declared that tea gives vigor to the body, thus. That was when tea was invented, but it was considered as a medicinal beverage. It was around 300 A.D. when, tea became a daily drink.*

# Tea Served Traditionally in Korea



# Korean Tea Ceremony



# Tea served in our room in Kyoto



Coke?...No, I'll have tea, please.

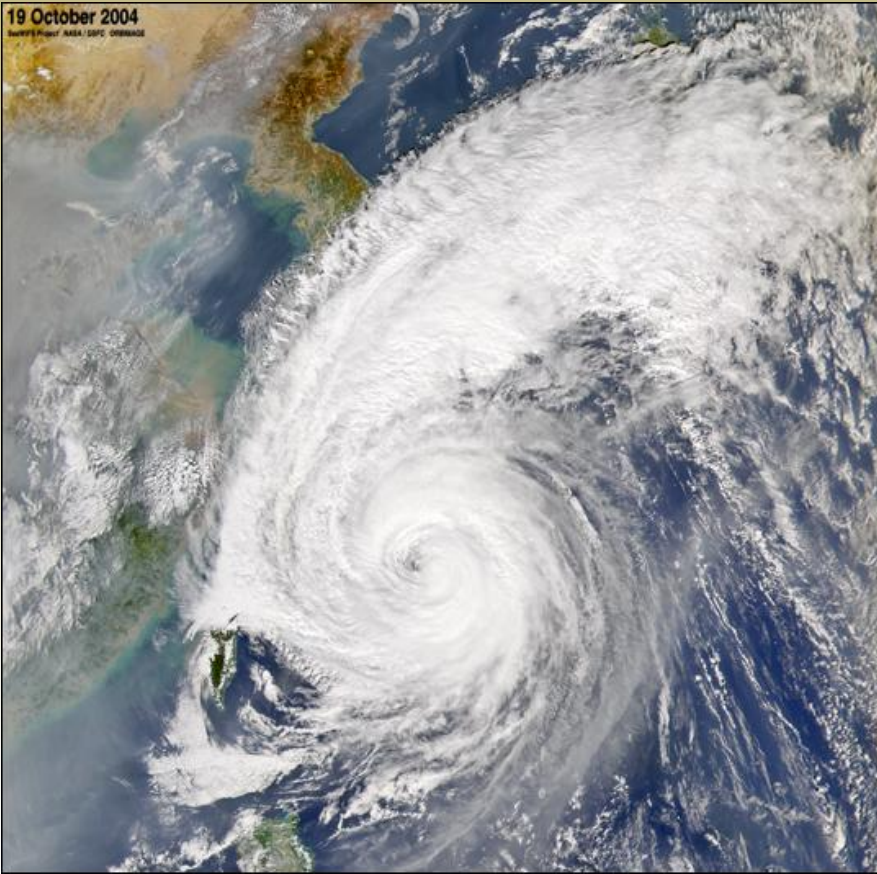




# Island Protection – Mongol Invasions (1274 and 1281 C.E.)



Kamikaze – “Divine Wind” or typhoon that destroyed Kublai Kahn’s navy.





Dependency upon imported goods – How does this affect international relations? – Something to think about...

|             |        |
|-------------|--------|
| Energy      | 84.5 % |
| Coal        | 92.1 % |
| Natural Gas | 95.6 % |
| Oil         | 99.6 % |
| Iron Ore    | 100 %  |
| Copper      | 98.9 % |
| Lead        | 93.0 % |
| Zinc        | 82.9 % |
| Tin         | 100 %  |
| Bauxite     | 100 %  |
| Nickel      | 100 %  |



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**THE END...**