

Art of Japan: Intro

Haniwa: Seated Warrior,
6th century, Terra-cotta.

The first traces of Japanese art date to about 3000 B.C. and a culture known as **Jomon**. The earliest artworks consist mainly of simple, undecorated vessels, figures, and animals made of red clay. This figure of a seated warrior is a **haniwa (cylinder)**, which was used to decorate a tomb.

Architecture



Temple Complex and Pagodas at Horyuji, near Nara, Japan. c. A.D. 616.

Buddhism was introduced to Japan in 552 when the ruler of a kingdom in Korea sent a gilt bronze figure of the Buddha to the emperor of Japan. In 594, an empress ordered that **Buddhist temples** be built throughout her kingdom. A **pagoda** is a tower several stories high with roofs slightly curved upward at the edges. Since the Japanese islands were formed from volcanic rock, there was little hard stone suitable for building these temples.

As a result, these and other structures were made of wood. These kind of structures contained sacred relics. One of these ancient wooden **pagodas** that has survived countless earthquakes is the **Temple complex at Horyuji** which still stands today as the oldest wooden structure in the world.(616AD)



/7

Name: _____

1. Approximately when are the first traces of Japanese art dated from? (1)

2. Make a compositional outline sketch of the Haniwa: Seated Warrior sculpture from the 6th century and what was the purpose of such a small sculpture? (2)

3. Explain how the Buddhist religion reached Japan. (1)

4. What is a Pagoda? (1)

5. From what material was the temple at Horyuji made and why? (2)

Art of Japan: The Heian Period: Painting

In 784, **Heian (Kyōto)** was made the capital of Japan. The name **Heian** is used to identify a period regarded as a **golden age** for Japanese art. In 898 artists developed their own unique style of painting known as **Yamato-e** or painting in the **Japanese manner**. The term **yamato-e** means "**Japanese pictures**."

Artists using the **Yamato-e** style created decorative wall paintings. This painting from the Late Heian-Early Kamakura period shows the elegantly dressed Benzai-Ten, Japanese goddess of language, music, and eloquent speech.



Benzai-Ten. Late Heian-Early Kamakura. Late 12th century. Silk.



Painting of Basil II, 11th century, Christian manuscript.

/11 Name: _____

1. What does the term "Yamato-e" mean? (1)
2. Make a compositional outline sketch of the figure in the Benzai-Ten painting. (1)

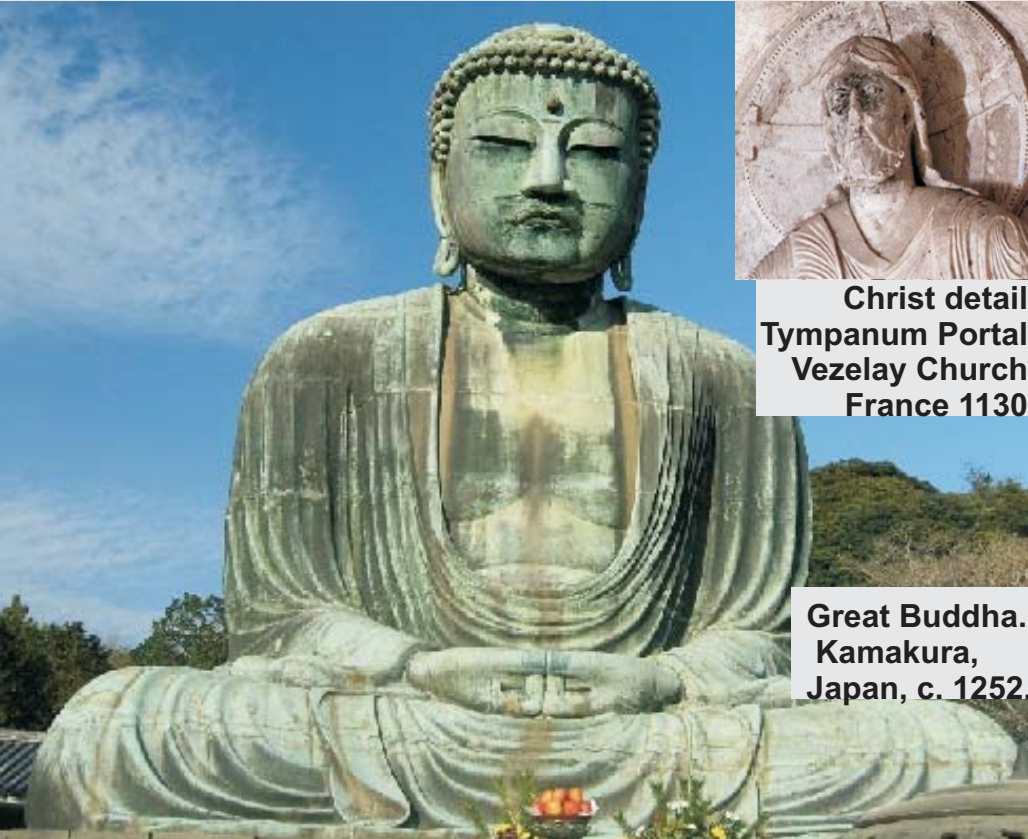
3. List two stylistic differences between the figure in the Benzai-Ten painting from the late Heian-Early Kamakura with the figure in the painting of Basil II, from an 11th century Christian manuscript. (2)

- 1.
- 2.

Art of Japan: Sculpture & Painting

The Great Buddha at Kamakura

The Great Buddha at Kamakura was cast in bronze in 1252.



Christ detail,
Tympanum Portal,
Vezelay Church,
France 1130.

Great Buddha.
Kamakura,
Japan, c. 1252.

Shinso. Landscape of the Four Seasons: Fall & Winter. 16th century.



4. What material is the Great Buddha at Kamakura made from?(1)

5. Compare the facial expression of the Great Buddha and the Christ detail from the church of Vézelay. How do you interpret the mood/feeling of both and why? (2)

Great Buddha expression:

Christ:

6. Look at the Landscape of the Four Seasons: Fall and Winter by Shinso. How does the work make you feel and why? (2)

7. Compare the Western Dutch landscape by Vermeer with the Japanese landscape by Shinso. List one stylistic similarity and one difference between them. (2)

Western Dutch landscape:

Similarity:

Jan Vermeer, View of Delft, 1660-1661.

Difference:



The Rise of Zen Buddhism

During the **Kamakura period** the growing appeal of **Zen Buddhism** resulted in the popularity of art forms associated with that religion. Zen's appeal may have been due to the fact that it offered people an escape from the chaos that marked daily life. For example, Soami Kangaku Shinso's scroll design of a quiet and peaceful landscape.

Art of Japan: Woodblock Printing



This process involved transferring and cutting pictures into **wood blocks**, inking the surface of these blocks, and printing. Using this technique, an artist could produce as many inexpensive prints as needed. Originally prints were made with black ink on white paper.

In the 18th century a process for producing multi-coloured prints was developed. A separate block was prepared for each colour. Finally the printer inked each block and pressed each one against the paper, being careful to align the print.

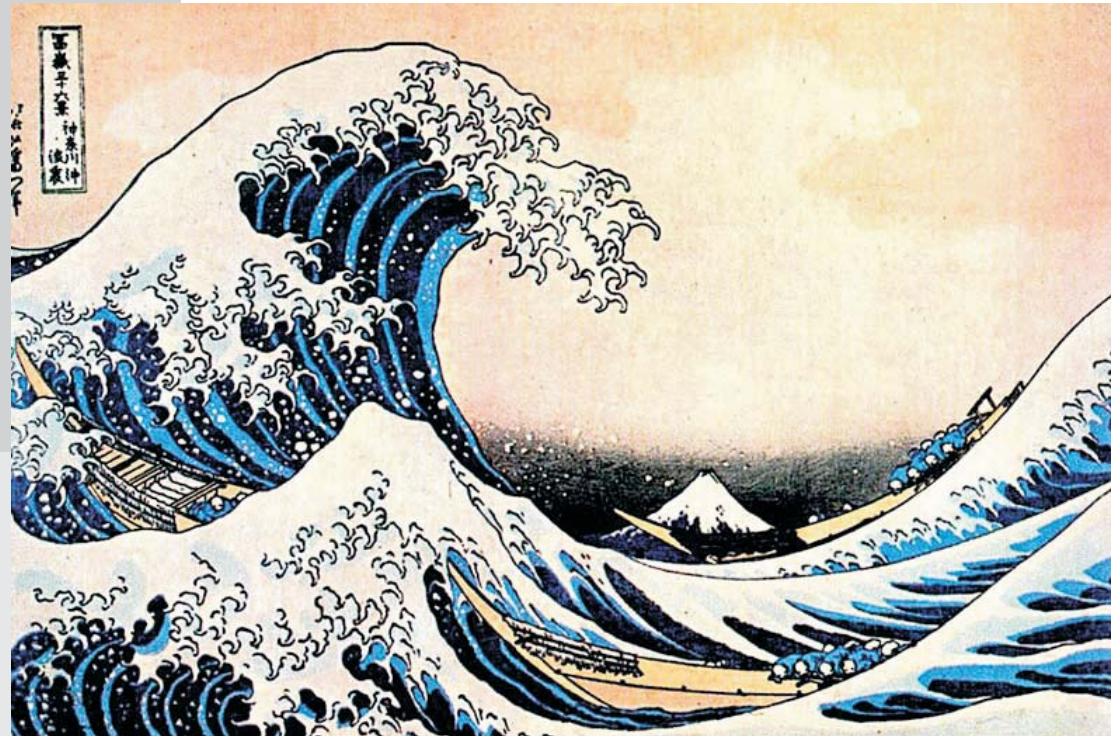
Torii Kiyonobu I

He was an actor's son who often selected as his subjects actors from the **Kabuki theatre**. His picture of a woman dancer uses a characteristic bold line that flows across the paper to create a complex yet graceful rhythm of curved lines and patterns.

Torii Kiyonobu I. A Woman Dancer. 1708. Woodblock print.

Katsushika Hokusai

From about 1825 to 1831 **Hokusai** published his brilliant Mount Fuji series of prints. "**The Great Wave off Kanagawa**" shows Mount Fuji in the distance, beyond a huge wave that threatens to destroy the fishing boats that are almost lost in the violently churning sea.



Katsushika Hokusai. Under the Wave off Kanagawa. c. 1823-29. Woodblock print.

/8 Name: _____

1. Why is the woodblock printing process inexpensive? (1)
2. Look at A Woman Dancer woodcut by Torii Kiyonobu I and explain how does the artist create a sense of movement in this work? (1)
3. How does Katsushika Hokusai create a sense of movement in his famous Under the Wave off Kanagawa woodcut from 1823-29? (1)

Art of Japan: Woodblock Printing cont.

Ando Hiroshige

Hiroshige used delicate lines and a harmonious colour scheme to give nature a more subdued atmosphere. Much of the beauty of his work comes from his sensitive response to variations in the weather and changing seasons. **Hokusai** and **Hiroshige** produced many of the works that were to inspire the **French Impressionists** in the 19th century. **Vincent Van Gogh** copied Japanese prints to hone his technique.

Ando Hiroshige, Sudden Rain at Ohashi. 1857, Woodcut print.



Vincent van Gogh. Japonaiserie: Bridge in the Rain (after Hiroshige). 1887.

4. What kind of compositional cropping and lines does Hiroshige use in his Sudden Rain at Ohashi print from 1857 and what kind of mood does he create as a result?(2)

line:

mood/feeling:

5. Who did Hokusai's and Hiroshige's work inspire later in the West during the 19th century? (1)

6. Look at Hiroshige use in his Sudden Rain at Ohashi print from 1857 and compare it with Vincent van Gogh's Japonaiserie: Bridge in the Rain (after Hiroshige). List two stylistic similarities between the works. (2)

1.

2.