

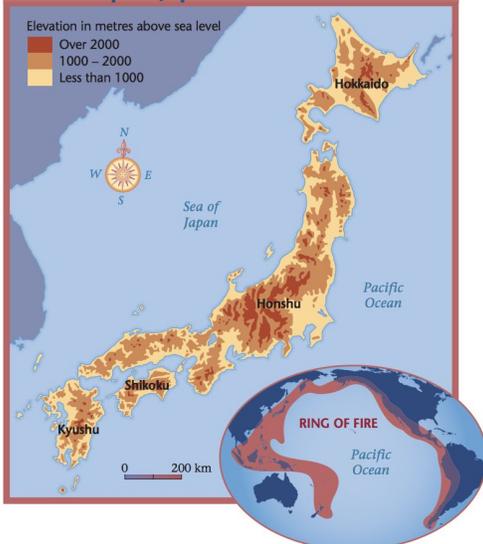
# The Lockyer Times

Langevin School, ROOM 102 — Japan Volume 1 Issue 1

## How Did the Geography of Japan Affect Its Worldview?

The country of Japan is composed of a long, narrow series of islands along the Eastern Pacific coast of Asia. It stretches from 24° to 46° north latitude and from 123° to 146° east longitude. The four main islands, running from north to south, are Hokkaido (*hoe-kidoe*), Honshu (*hone-shoe*) (the main island), Shikoku (*she-koe-koo*), and Kyushu (*kyoo-shoe*). There are also about 3000 smaller islands, including Okinawa Island, that are part of Japan. Japan's total area is 377 835 square kilometres, about three-fifths the size of the province of Alberta. The closest foreign countries are South Korea to the west and Russia to the north. A large neighbour to the west is the People's Republic of China.

### Relief Map of Japan



About 73% of the country is mountainous, with a chain running through each of the main islands. There is little flat area for cultivation, so farming is done in the valleys, along the coastline, and on terraces on the hills and mountainsides. Japan is situated on the volcanic zone that rings the Pacific Ocean; there are frequent earth tremors, with occasional volcanic activity. The rivers are deep and swift and there are many hot springs. Japan has high levels of rainfall and tends to be very humid. It has four distinct seasons. Although the climate tends to be cool in the north and subtropical in the south, the seas that surround Japan moderate the climate. The moderate moist climate allows farmers to grow rice and fruits.

### Think About...

Although the mountainous landscape provides little good farmland, the climate makes it very productive. Societies that develop on islands tend to be quite isolated from other cultures. How might that show in Japan's worldview? Mountains create natural barriers that divide the country into many separate areas. Being surrounded by the sea, Japan has always looked to the sea for food.

Being geographically close to a dominating culture such as China's has brought many aspects of Chinese culture onto the islands. How have these geographic factors affected Japan's values and beliefs?



## Reflect and Respond

*You may respond in written form, via Google Slides or short video/audio clip.*

Examine the map of Japan over to the left to help you answer these questions:

- In 16th-century Japan, there were many separate regions, each ruled by a different leader. The regions were constantly at war with each other. How might the geography of Japan have helped the people defend themselves against their enemies?
- Do you think it would be easy or difficult to prevent foreigners from visiting Japan?

Explain your reasoning.