

Overview and Possible Topics for The Enigma of Japan Seminar Spring 2023

Many Americans have a cursory knowledge of Japan based upon topics such as shoguns, samurai, sumo, Pearl Harbor, and Iwo Jima. It was one of our most reviled enemies in WWII. Fast forward to 2022 and Japan has become one of the US's vital allies in the Far East, standing as a bulwark against China. In between, the country grew into a formidable international industrial competitor in the 1980's.

The plan is to dig a little deeper in this seminar to develop a more complete understanding of Japan's history, culture, geography, and its place in the current world order.

As with some other online seminars, participation requirements include a 30-minute presentation/talk about a topic of the participant's choice either from the list provided or one agreed upon with the moderator. All members are encouraged to participate in seminar discussions to make for lively, thought-provoking sessions. There is no one recommended book about Japan. However, the moderator will provide a list of suggested books and links to videos for participants.

Possible Presentation Topics:

General Topics:	Buddhism/ Zen
Geography	Temples
Samurai	Castles
Shoguns	WWI
Daimyo	WWII
Emperors	1980's economic powerhouse
Relationship with China	Individuals:
Relationship with Korea	William Adams (Inspiration for Shogun character)
Mongol/Chinese Invasions	Minamoto Yoshitsune (legendary samurai)
Art	Tomoe Gozen (woman samurai)
Manga	Katsuke (Black samurai)
Music	Oda Nobunaga (Japanese General)
Festivals	Toyotomi Hideyoshi (Japanese General)
Sports	Emperor Hirohito/Showa
Shintoism	Emperor Meiji