



Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction

Christopher Goto-Jones

[Download now](#)

[Read Online ➔](#)

Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction

Christopher Goto-Jones

Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction Christopher Goto-Jones

Japan is arguably today's most successful industrial economy, combining almost unprecedented affluence with social stability and apparent harmony. Japanese goods and cultural products--from animated movies and computer games to cars, semiconductors, and management techniques--are consumed around the world. In many ways, Japan is an icon of the modern world, and yet it remains something of an enigma to many, who see it as a confusing montage of the alien and the familiar, the ancient and modern. This *Very Short Introduction* explodes the myths and explores the reality of modern Japan, offering a concise, engaging, and accessible look at the history, economy, politics, and culture of this fascinating nation. It examines what the term "modern" means to the Japanese, debunks the notion that Japan went through a period of total isolation from the world, and explores the continuity between pre- and post-war Japan. Anyone curious about this intriguing country will find a wealth of insight and information in these pages.

About the Series: Combining authority with wit, accessibility, and style, **Very Short Introductions** offer an introduction to some of life's most interesting topics. Written by experts for the newcomer, they demonstrate the finest contemporary thinking about the central problems and issues in hundreds of key topics, from philosophy to Freud, quantum theory to Islam

Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction Details

Date : Published 2009 by Oxford University Press

ISBN : 9780199235698

Author : Christopher Goto-Jones

Format : Paperback 159 pages

Genre : History, Cultural, Japan, Nonfiction, Asia

 [Download Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction Christopher Goto-Jones

From Reader Review Modern Japan: A Very Short Introduction for online ebook

Thaer says

A great read about Japan written by specialist.

I have been living in Japan for about 10 years now, and there are things I never came to know until I read this book.

What is exactly to be modern? Since Japan is the first non-western nation to be modern, the unique experience of Japan in this regard is highly worth the investigation. I would recommend this book to Arab intellectual to analyze this experience, since Arab nations are in so much need to rapidly go along the modernization process.

Japan faced the struggle to define its identity while rapidly trying to modernize. How Japan changed from the Tokugawa period to Meiji restoration to war time to the present time is the main topic of this book while discussing this identity defining process.

While Japan was faced by western power, they developed this mentality that either you become an empire or a colony. I think this motivates Japan to push hard to be powerful not to be swallowed by western power. Needless to say that the spread of publication and journalism helps deliver intellectual ideas to the public. I think though that this book takes the western view, I felt that author might have given credit to U.S more than needed in supporting the modernization of Japan.

One big issue that has been discussed here is in some sense, some commentators think that Japan has a schizophrenic nature.

Japan's miraculous economic development, not only resulted from the hard work of Japanese population but also the Korean War next door provided a big opportunity to boost the economy of Japan. In addition, being an ally to the west, helped Japan to buy advanced technology instead of investing time and money in researching them.

Few points worth mentioning: The discrimination against Asian people in Japan is an old thing and not only in the current present time.

Japan felt in the time of World War II that it has been discriminated by the west even though it was a modern nation, but was not treated equally with other western nations. Specifically after the ban of East Asian nations from immigration to U.S.

The policy of U.S in Japan after occupation has significantly influenced by the fear that Japan might fall under communist influence so they supported Japan's modernization the same as what they did in Germany for the same reason.

A final thought: I would think that it might be more of Japan's interest to and China and South Korea to have an alliance on the same path as the EU. The conflict of interest that Japan and China have might not be beneficial to both of them.

D says

3.5 / 5

????????? ??? ?? ?????????? ?????? ? "for dummies" ??? "very short introduction" ? ???????????, ?? ??? ?????????
(?? 200 ????????? ?) ????????? ? ?????? ?????? ?????????? ?????? ? ?????????? ?????? (????????? ? ??????? ?? ?????????
?? ?????? ??? 21-?? ???, ?????? ??? ? ?????????? ??? ???????????), ?? ?? ?????? ?????? ? ?????? ????????

Topu Apple says

"????????????????????????????? = ?????????????????? = ?????????????? !"

Harrison says

A decent book, but didn't hold my interest as much as Hane's Japan: A short history, which I recommend over this book.

A nitpick I have with this book over Hane's is that the author uses ô to represent the long vowels in Japanese over the more common ?: such as Tôkyô instead of T?ky?. Sure, it's petty and I'm not marking the book points against it, but could the author really nit have either used the more standard ?, or ou, since these words cropped up several times per page?

Jabont Chamikorn says

Xuankang Lin says

The first time looking at Japan as an entire outsider.

Simon says

I am a big fan of the VSI series by Oxford but admittedly it can be sometimes a bit hit and miss. The series often tries to achieve two things at the same time: Firstly, to provide an overview and introduction to a topic and secondly, to have eminent scholars of the field update that overview and to give a bit of a fresh perspective. Sometimes that can go awfully wrong with the scholar overly emphasising irrelevant academic details, while neglecting the task of giving a first rate introduction to the subject.

In this case however I had the feeling that the task was excellently executed. The author gives indeed a very well written account of Japanese history, describing the developments before Perry's arrival and the developments that followed it. In order to give the whole thing a fresh touch he looks and evaluates these historical developments taking the concept "modern" as a starting point. And this turns out to be incredibly fruitful (and at least in my case revising some preconceived ideas that I had about Japanese history). He illustrates to what extent Japan was already modern prior to Perry's arrival and how the dynamics between Japanese tradition and national consciousness and Western modern ideas play out and interact with the historical developments. Additionally, towards the end he also reflects on how these ideas are being picked up culturally in literature and film - which helps to connect Japanese history to other books one might have heard about (Murakami, Mishima, Banana, Oe etc.).

I thoroughly enjoyed this little book and can only recommend it to anyone with a cursory interest in Japan.

Benjamin says

Christopher Goto-Jones has made a very intriguing read here. His book examines Japan through the last 400 or so years, and does a rather good job of explaining concisely the reason Japan is the way it is now, especially in regard to the ambiguity of its identity and of Japan's lack of purpose now that its drive to overtake the West has largely already happened.

This is not so much a book about where Japan is going in the future as it is a critical look at where she is now, and that is a very refreshing experience in a world where it seems every vision of today is clouded by a plethora of opinions about where it should be, where it will go, etc. Just for that alone, it deserves five stars, but I also awarded it five stars because the author really brings across the difference of Japan from the Western nations and its unique history even from other Asian nations.

Abhishék Ghosh says

A detailed run-up to one of the most controversial countries out there. Consider the case of Mishima. His ideology was that of the need to redefine Japanese history in entirely martial terms, through a return to a militarist Japan under the Emperor and the rejection of democracy. He committed *sepukku* or ritual suicide for he couldn't bear the break-neck modernisation and consequent commercialisation that destroyed the soul

of what it meant to be Japanese. Or the case of the Nanjing Massacre and Japan's half-hearted apologies for the horror of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, which sought Japan to paradoxically fly the imperial flag of the rising again across much of South-East Asia, in an attempt to fight Western Imperialism. Or the ubiquitous conflation of the *samurai*<|i> culture --- *bushido*<|i> with Japan, despite the dark turn of events that led to their disempowerment as a social class after the Meiji Restoration in 1868. The country remains such a mystery for its policy of complete isolation or *sakoku*<|i> before the landing of Commodore Perry, which forced open Japan to the West. The Yasukuni Shrine<|i> still stirs up sentiments amongst Japanese polity for its association with freedom fighters who have also been variously termed as enemies of the state. The history of Japan is such a confusing paradox for its own people, that my Japanese friend cautioned me, "it's important to be critical when you read Japanese history in English. As most articles written in English might somewhat contain the Western<|i> point of view!" In sum, if you want to wrap your head around the geishas<|i>, the otaku<|i> culture (geeks glued to anime<|i>) and their fetish for high technology (and karaoke<|i> bars featuring skimpily-clad schoolgirls), this is a must-read!

Suneo Thanvorapong says

Sarah says

In theory I love the whole idea of the A Very Short Introduction series, so it was time I finally read one. Since my husband is pretty interested in all things Japanese and has gotten me into some manga and anime, and everything else I know about Japan I learned from watching Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles as a kid, I thought this would be a good book to pick up.

The book covers Japanese history from the arrival of Admiral Perry in 1853 to the current day, but also goes back to outline the Tokugawa Period which began in the 17th-century. Even when learning about parts of Japanese history I thought I knew somewhat well (WWII), I was surprised at how much I learned. I'm always asking my husband why the Japanese do X seemingly weird thing and his response is usually something

along the lines of explaining that their cultural background is completely different from ours. Here I started to understand some of those differences. One of the main lessons Goto-Jones tries to get across in this book is that modern is not synonymous with Western and that while Japan is a thoroughly modern (or post-modern) culture, they are thoroughly Eastern, which can be further extrapolated to explain a lot about why Japan's modernity looks very different from Western modernity.

I liked it, but this is definitely not a stand-alone book. This seems like a really good supplemental book, perhaps for someone studying recent Japanese history or someone studying the Japanese language who wanted a clearer overview of Japanese history. With the supplemental nature of this book, I felt it would have been helpful to include a glossary in the back. Because everything was run through so quickly I often had trouble remembering important terms that popped up briefly in one chapter and then were brought up again a few chapters later with the assumption that the reader still remembered the term. I kept reading interesting sections and then being disappointed that there weren't more details to flesh out the rest of the story, so I may be spending some time with titles on the suggested reading list in the back. Definitely good for whetting my appetite.

Gavin Leech says

Terribly written, with the glib say-what-you're-going-to-say structure, cod psychology and thoughtless overreach common in social theory.

Japan retreated into a state of denial... Can a nation's [unacknowledged] past make its people ill, in the same way as repressed memories make individuals ill?

No and no they don't. But he gives a brief and clear sketch from Edo to their World Cup; still helpful if you are a total novice like me. (Never knew the shogunate were the internationalists in the Meiji struggle!) Needless to say Goto-Jones is unable to step beyond C20th stereotypes - to note, for instance, that by time of writing Japan had likely stopped being the place the future happens first.

Cardyn Brooks says

This really readable, compressed overview of Japan from ancient times to the early 2000s provides multiple launch points for deeper study into the military, socioeconomic, geopolitical, religious, environmental, and social class hierarchy of this multifaceted culture.

Josiah says

The book gave a brief overview on the history of Japan. However, despite the lengthy amount of time the author had to cover, he insisted on infusing his view of politics in the book. Other than that, the book was great.

Thanawat says

??
??
????????? ?????????????????????????????????????? Modern Japan
??? Ancient ??? Pre Modern Japan ???????
