

## WHI.10c in a Nutshell



### Geography

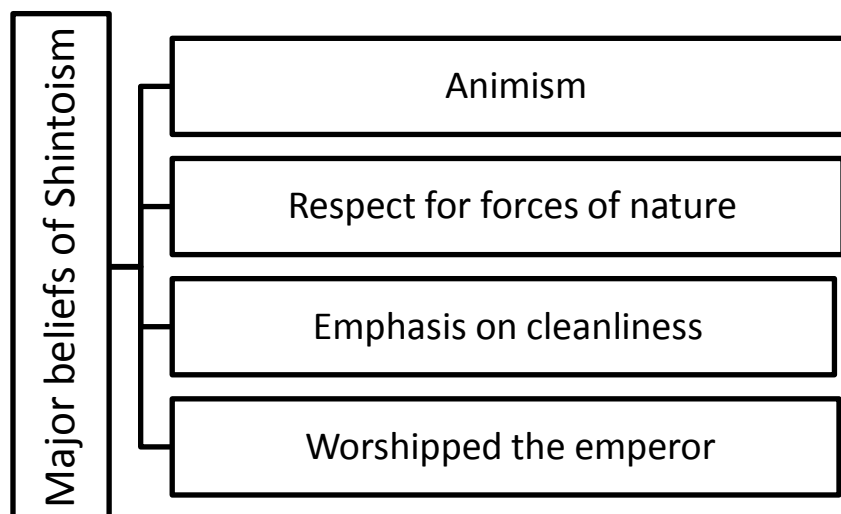
Japan is made up of a chain of islands called an **archipelago**. It has many **mountains** and has very little **farmable** land. Japan also experiences many **typhoons**, or strong tropical storms, and **earthquakes**. This is why the area is called the “Ring of Fire.”

### Early Japan

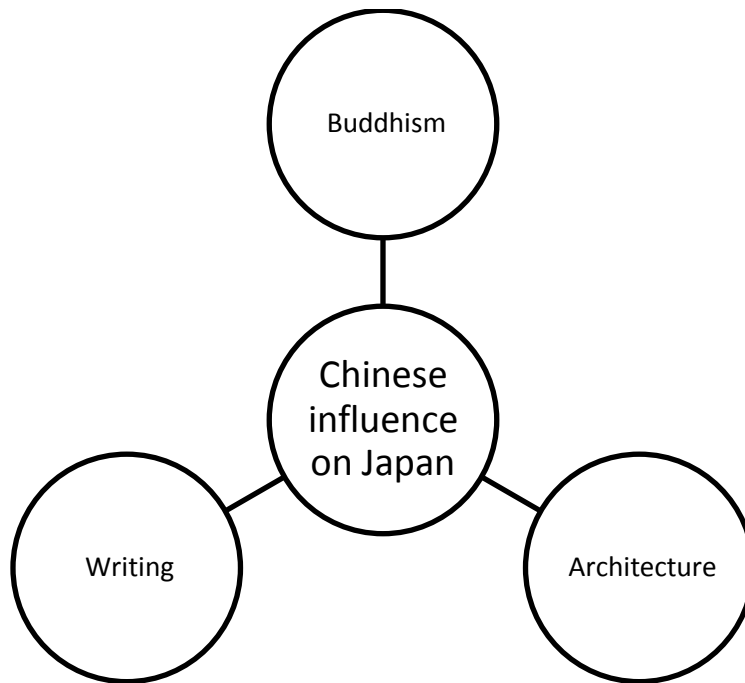
Early Japan was ruled by independent **clans**. The **Yamato** Clan eventually became the most powerful clan. Their leaders were called **emperors**, but had very little political power. The **military** leader had the real power.

### Shintoism

Shintoism is a religion unique to **Japan** and became the state religion. It is a **polytheistic** religion, which means that they believed in many gods. These gods were called **kami**. They also worshipped their **ancestors**. Most people practiced Shintoism and **Buddhism**. The Japanese built many **toriis**, which were Shinto shrines.



Japanese culture was greatly influenced by nearby China.



By the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Fujiwara family took control of Japan. Large landowners set up private armies and began to attack the countryside. This led to the development of feudalism in Japan as small farmers traded their land for protection.

