Ancient Art History of Japan

Traditional Robe, Ainu (Japan), 2001 based on designs pre-11,000 B.C.E.

Yayoi pottery 4 BCE, originally Korean, its footed stem is Chinese.
Byodo Buddhist Palace now Temple, 1053 CE. It reflects the peace and serenity of paradise where Buddha welcomes souls of believers. Built with jointed pieces of wood that perfectly fit together with no nails making it possible to build bigger lighter structures.

Nio Kongo Rikishi Guardian King, a form of the Hindu God Indra at Horyuji Buddhist Temple, 711 CE.

Amida Bronze Buddha, 1252 CE, 39’ h.
Ushnisha - small curls of hair representing wisdom.
Urna - a symbol for the 3rd eye, seeing hidden truths.
Long ear lobes - symbol of wisdom
Mandorla - represents radiating light
Mudra - hand signs with different purposes
Lotus Position - seated cross-legged for proper breathing & stability
Chakra or wheel - ancient sun symbol & energy center, meaning depends on the number of spokes & location
Lotus Flower - grown in muddy water, at dawn it blooms above the surface, at night it closes & sinks. Untouched by the mud, symbolizes purity.
Ancient Art History of Japan: Decorative Art

13 century AD/CE, the Shogun & Samurai were soldiers for hire. They overthrow the royal government & have new wealth from taxes. They show-off, buying art that is highly decorated and covered in gold.

Sake Bottle with gold lacquer c.1600 AD

Teabowl, Raku pottery, 1600 AD. As a reaction against the wealth of the Samurai, simple living becomes popular, known as Tea Taste.
The Great Wave at Kanagawa from 36 Views of Mt. Fuji by Hokusai, Wood Cut Print, changed Modern Art, Edo Period, 1831 AD./CE. The Samurai end their reign and Geisha are popular performers.

Noh theater mask, popular since 1400 AD./CE.

Butoh performance art/dance theater, born after the 1945 Atomic bombing of Hiroshima & Nagasaki
Quiz Ancient Art History of Japan

1. What is unique about the design of Yayoi pottery and architecture? What influenced this change from the Jomon period to the Yayoi?

2. List and describe 3 symbols that images of the Buddha may have?

3. What special way was the Byodo-in Palace and Temple built?

4. What is the name of the world’s first novel and who wrote it?

5. What started the Kamakura period and changed the subject of Japanese art to being more about war and showing-off the new wealth of the Shogun and Samurai?

6. What art form, in the Edo period, changed European modern art?

7. What catastrophic event changed Japanese art during the reign of Emperor Hirohito in 1945?

8. What is the name of the artist who created 36 View of Mt. Fuji?
Quiz: Ancient Art History of Japan

1. What is unique about the design of Yayoi pottery and architecture? Clean Lines

2. List 3 symbols that images of the Buddha may have? Ushnisha, Urna, Long ear lobes, Mudras, Mandorla, Lotus Position, Chakaras, and Lotus Flower

3. What special way was the Byodo-in Palace and Temple built? Built with jointed pieces of wood that perfectly fit together with no nails

4. What is the name of the world's first novel? The Tale of Genji by Murasaki Shikibu

5. What changed the subject of Japanese art from being more about war from the beginning with the Kamakura period? The Military takeover of the government

6. What art form in the Edo period changed European modern art? Woodcut print

1. What catastrophic event changed Japanese art during the reign of Emperor Hirohito in 1945? The bombing of Hiroshima & Nagasaki

2. What is the name of the artist who created 36 View of Mt. Fuji? Hokisai