Overseas Influence & the Imperial State

21H.154, Session 3
Periodization

- Yamato Period: 250-710 CE
- Kofun ("Ancient Tombs") period: 250-550 CE
- Reform/Asuka period: 550-710 CE
- Nara period: 710-784 CE
Shamaness-Himiko-Queen Mother of the West-Amaterasu?
Kofun Period: 250 -550CE

*matsurigoto* (政):

“worship”

and

“government”

“Nintoku” Daisen Tomb, Osaka (ca. mid. 400s)
Be and Uji

- *be*: “craftspeople and payers of taxes in kind”
  - overseen by *muraji (uji)*
- Japan divided and rule by competing clans (*uji*) each
  - with *ujigami* (clan gods) = Shintō deities
- *kabanesystem* (hereditary proximity to ruler)
  - Ō-omi (Great Imperial Chieftain): Soga
  - Ō-muraji (Great Deity Chieftain): Nakatomi, Mononobe
Transitions in the 6th century
(a.k.a. “Age of Reform”/Later Yamato/Asuka Period, 550-710)
• 552: introduction of Buddhism via the King of Paekche (Korea)
Soga Clan

• Buddhism sponsored by “Great Imperial Chieftain” Soga clan
• 587: Soga-no-Umako’s victory over “Shintoist” Mononobe
• Centralizers vs. local chieftains
Why Buddhism?

• Buddha as protector of state
• Support existing hierarchy
• Single religious hierarchy
• Not exclusive: allow for syncretism
• *kami* as supporters of Buddha
• Advanced technology and culture: civilization
Prince Shōtoku (574-622)
Prince Shōtoku (574-622)

- Regent for Queen Suiko (r. 592-628)
- Related to Soga clan
- Admirer of China
- Founded and resided in Hōryūji temple
- Never reigned
“Shōtoku” Reforms

- Merit-based “cap ranks” system
- “Seventeen Articles” of 604
- 3 missions to China (607, 608, 614)
- “The Child of Heaven in the land where the sun rises addresses the Child of Heaven in the land where the sun sets.” (SJT, p.11)