Heian, the Era of “Peace and Tranquility” (?)

21H.154, Session 4
Prince Shōtoku (524-622)

- 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)
Taika Coup (645)

- Prince Naka-no-Ōe (626-671)
- Nakatomi no Kamatari (611-669)
- Kill Soga no Umako’s grandson, Iruka, during ceremony
Taika ("Great Change") Reforms

- Administrative reforms
- Grand Council of State; Dept. of Divinities (jingikan); Japan divided into provinces (see map)
- Provincial inspectors, census and surveys (tax)
- Redistribution of land (652): state own all land • later abandoned
Taika Reforms

- Capital moved away from Soga base in Naniwa (Osaka)
- Monopoly over warfare > also later abandoned
Increasing Confidence

- Imperial family: unquestioned
- Nakatomi no Kamatari = Fujiwara no Kamatari
- Intervention in Korea (660, 663)
- Battle of Baekgang (663): Tang China/Silla vs. Japan/Paekche
More Reforms

• Prince Naka-no-Ōe becomes Emperor Tenji
• Clans (uji) swear loyalty
• Direct control of worker units (be)
• Improved defense: esp. in Kyushu
• Employ refugees from Korea
• “Administrative and Penal Law Codes” (ritsuryō)
• Capital moved to Ōtsu in Ōmi province
Family Feud

Prince Ōama (Tenji bro) vs. Prince Ōtomo (Tenji son)
Tenji dies (671); Temmu ("Heavenly Warrior," r. 672-686) takes over after killing Tenji’s son

- Promotion of Amaterasu worship
- Imperial princess at Ise Shrine
- Active use of Buddhism
- Yet another capital in Yamato
- Reformers continued by wife, Empress Jitō (686-697)
  - Begin using "tennō" (天皇 “heavenly sovereign”)
Nara Period (710-784)

Heijōkyō ("Capital of Peaceful Palace")
Nara Developments

- Confucian university
- Compilation of *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters; 712) and *Nihongi* (Chronicles of Japan; 720)
- Even heavier use of Buddhism
State Buddhism

• Emperor Shōmu (r. 729-749)
• Network of monasteries and nunneries (*kokubunji* = “provincial temples”)
• “State-protecting sutras”
• Construction of Tōdaiji temple in Nara
• “State Protecting Temple through the four Guardians and the Golden Light”
Tōdaiji
Shōsōin
Heiankyō (“Capital of Peace and Tranquility”)

View from Rashōmon (south gate)
Heiankyō

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View of Daidairi (imperial palace)
Imperial Rule

- Strengthening of state
- police (kebiishi)
- circuit inspectors
- extending frontier
- 794: Sakanoue no Tamuramaro’s victory over Ainu
- sei-i-taishōgun (barbarian-subduing-generalissimo)
A Map of a Todaiji, Shōen (759)
Key Shōen Dynamics


“three-way competition for control of lands and the profits that could be derived from them among wealthy peasants and the other elite provincial residents, provincial governors, and the great houses and religious institutions (kenmon)” (173)

“...seesawing game of shifting alliances, interests, and balances of power that transformed both public and private landholding” (174), e.g. provincial governors as competitors AND allies to shōen people