

Background Essay 9: Modern Japan

RAPID RISE Japan's ability to quickly rebuild after World War II came only partially with American aid. The Japanese people throughout history have had a strong national pride and work ethic. Although crushed and defeated, this very pride and hard work allowed Japan to rapidly rebuild into a powerful nation. Only now their power was not military, but rather economic. Japanese business began to flourish. The entire country needed to be rebuilt, and Japanese factories supplied the goods. Originally, Japanese products were of poor quality, but very inexpensive. Soon markets for these goods were developed in other countries, though much resentment was encountered from countries which had fought against Japan. Gradually, the quality of Japanese goods improved and resentment diminished. The new Japan was peacefully achieving the desire which had led it originally into war, to become a respected nation and an equal to the other world powers.

JAPAN'S ECONOMY Today, no home in the U. S. is without some Japanese products. Brand names such as Sony, Honda, Sanyo, Mitsubishi, Hitachi, Nissan, and many others have become common in the United States and throughout the world.



Even many Western companies use Japanese manufactured parts in their products. The list of Japanese exports is long. For years, Japan was known for its production of silk, cultured pearls, as well as its shipbuilding. More recently, Japan has excelled in the production of cameras, automobiles, and electronics. But Japan is a small nation with many people and few natural resources. It relies on imports of these resources to feed its people and operate its factories. Oil, lumber, and food are the main needs of Japan. Now Japan is among the wealthiest nations. Its banks are the world's largest, supplying money for projects all around the globe. Japan now provides foreign aid to poorer countries who would like to peacefully become emerging nations, too.

ESSAY OBJECTIVE TEST 9

1. America provided aid to Japan after World War II.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Throughout history, Japanese people have had:
 - a. To fight for independence
 - b. A strong national work ethic
 - c. An open-door policy
3. Immediately after World War II, Japanese products were:
 - a. Extremely well made
 - b. Boycotted by other countries
 - c. Very expensive
4. Japan was known for its production of:
 - a. Silk
 - b. Nylon
 - c. Wool
5. Japan imports what goods?
 - a. Cultured pearls
 - b. Oil
 - c. Rice
6. What service does Japanese banking interests provide today?
 - a. Printing currency
 - b. Foreign aid to emerging countries
 - c. Fashion shows for clients

Questions
 