

Japan

WORDS OF THE DAY: SCRIPTS: Units of writing; DIPLOMATIC: (in this context) relating to international relations, getting along; DISARMAMENT: getting rid of weapons designed for national defense or war; CULTURE SHOCK: a state of discomfort while experiencing another culture because of the differences.

1. This story will focus on the ways that individualism and collectivism vary across cultures. But in the story next week the students will see how individualism and collectivism also vary across time—when they will see changes in what is expected of children in the US from the roaring twenties to the depression thirties. You might try to gently lead the students into understanding the difference between the two orientations. The students will also see the sailor Herman again next week.
2. The students may be aware that Japan went to war against the US in WWI and WWII and might wonder how that happened. You might point out that in the Washington Conference mentioned in the stories (as well as the League of Nations) both the US and Britain voted against the Covenant of Racial Equality, concerning the Japanese. This Anglo attitude of racial superiority really angered the Japanese and stayed with them through the Second World War.
3. You might also want to ask them how this compares to the girl from China or ask them where they've seen worship of ancestors before.
4. Responsibilities to one's lineage are not quite as rigid in today's Japan, but they still exist, especially in rural areas. It remains strong among Shinto practitioners. However, after the Second World War, Japan became more acquainted with Western ways and this changed the structure of their household. Today 80 percent of the households only include the nuclear family, and heirs do not carry the heavy responsibility they once did.

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