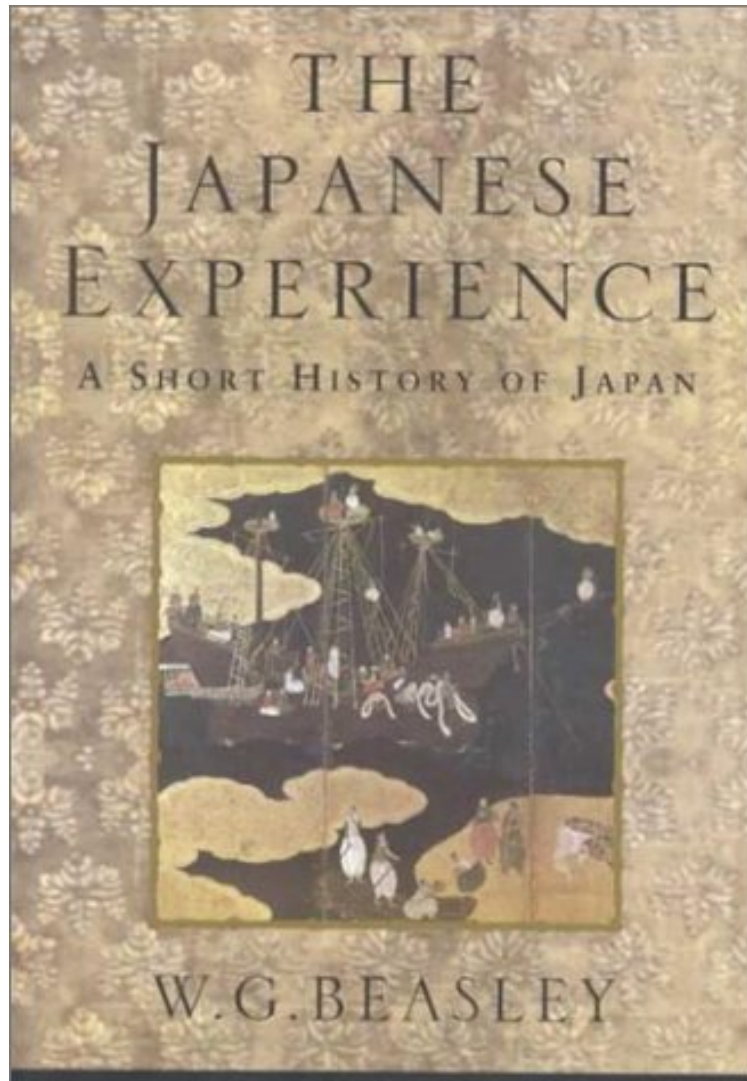


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The Japanese Experience: A Short History of Japan (History of Civilisation)

W. G. Beasley

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W. G. Beasley : The Japanese Experience: A Short History of Japan (History of Civilisation) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Japanese Experience: A Short History of Japan (History of Civilisation):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. For a classBy Egres122Needed this text for a class. Was very cheap on . It is a pretty interesting book that sums up nearly of all of Japanese history. Does not dive too deep into it, but great if you are simply looking for an overview.8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A Good

Overview By Michael Gunther At just under 300 pages, William Beasley's "The Japanese Experience" provides a short but expert overview of Japanese history and culture. The author, who was born in 1919 and died in 2006, was a pioneer in Japanese studies who specialized in the modern history of Japan. The present book, however, offers the entire sweep of Japanese history, from earliest times down to the mid-1990's. With so much material to cover, the book is short on details, but this is compensated by the author's expertise and graceful writing. Within the constraints of a short book, Beasley has done an admirable job of integrating Japan's cultural and political history into a readable and consistent narrative. A major theme throughout the book is the Japanese response to outside influence (China, Korea, Europe, America), from the Kofun period (250-350 AD) to the present, that the book explains in a thoughtful and easy-to-understand manner. Like any expert, Beasley has his own opinions (against Heian-period Japan, for example, and against the idea of Japan's "cultural uniqueness.") However, one doesn't have to agree with everything in the book to appreciate its overall value to the general reader, homeschooler, or beginning student. 3 of 44 people found the following review helpful. A General History of Japan for those with No Knowledge By David Dirilo This is an excellent general history for those who don't have any knowledge of Japanese history or culture. I recommend it to those white Americans who are proud to be rednecks. This book will open your mind to the fact that not all people like to drink beer, watch Nascar and generally behave like louts. After reading this book you will be impelled to read more on this country.

The Japanese Experience is an authoritative history of Japan from the sixth century to the present day. Only a writer of W.G. Beasley's stature could render Japan's complicated past so concisely and elegantly. This is the history of a society and a culture with a distinct sense of itself, one of the few nations never conquered by a foreign power in historic times (until the twentieth century) and the home of the longest-reigning imperial dynasty that still survives. The Japanese have always occupied part or all of the same territory, its borders defined by the sea. They have spoken and written a common language, (once it had taken firm shape in about the tenth century) and their population has been largely homogeneous, little touched by immigration except in very early periods. Yet Japanese society and culture have changed more through time than these statements seem to imply. Developments within Japan have been greatly influenced by ideas and institutions, art and literature, imported from elsewhere. In this work Beasley, a leading authority on Japan and the author of a number of acclaimed works on Japanese history, examines the changing society and culture of Japan and considers what, apart from the land and the people, is specifically Japanese about the history of Japan. The arrival of Buddhism in the sixth century brought a substantially Chinese-style society to Japan, not only in religion but in political institutions, writing system, and the lifestyle of the ruling class. By the eleventh century the Chinese element was waning and the country was entering a long and essentially "Japanese" feudal period with two rulers, an emperor and a Shogun which was to last until the nineteenth century. Under the Tokugawa shogunate (1600-1868), Chinese culture enjoyed something of a renaissance, though popular culture owed more to Japanese urban taste and urban wealth. In 1868 the Meiji Restoration brought to power rulers dedicated to the pursuit of national wealth and strength, and Japan became a world power. Although a bid for empire ended in disaster, the years after 1945 saw an economic miracle that brought spectacular wealth to Japan and the Japanese people, as well as the westernization of much of Japanese life.

.com In the late ninth century, a Japanese scholar of Chinese literature named Sugawara Michizane received an unexpected promotion from on high: the emperor appointed the outstanding young commoner to the Council of State, "an advancement," author W.G. Beasley writes, "almost unheard of for one of his birth." The emperor apparently wanted Michizane to help him in an intrigue against a rival family, but the emperor's plot failed. The emperor was deposed, and Michizane went into exile to Kyushu, where he died in 903. After his death, storms and earthquakes, events attributed to Michizane's ghost, struck the imperial capital. The story of Sugawara Michizane, a footnote in a long epic of interfamilial struggle, illustrates several of the problems scholars of premodern Japanese history face. For one, important actions were directed by members of the imperial household, who took pains to conceal their motives. For another, actors in the historical record tend to appear and disappear quickly from the scene. For still another, that record is shot through with mythology and, in Beasley's words, "distortions of fact and chronology." Beasley ably negotiates these considerable difficulties, taking pains to distinguish conjecture from fact as he unfolds a sweeping chronicle of Japanese history. Covering a period of 30,000 years, Beasley's book stands among the best one-volume histories of Japan, accessible to general readers and scholars alike. --Gregory McNamee About the Author W.G. Beasley is Professor Emeritus of the History of the Far East at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. His books include *The Modern History of Japan* (1963), *The Meiji Restoration* (1972), and *Japan Encounters the Barbarian: Japanese Travelers in America and Europe* (1995).