Assessment: Heian-kyo: The Heart of Japan's Golden Age

Mastering the Content

Circle the letter next to the best answer.

1. Why is the Heian period called Japan’s golden age?
   A. because of its rich mines
   B. because of its foreign trade
   C. because of its military power
   D. because of its art and literature

2. Which group was most responsible for the achievements of Japan’s golden age?
   A. aristocrats
   B. farmers
   C. emperors
   D. merchants

3. What action did the emperor Kammu take to reduce the political power of Buddhist priests?
   A. He taught a new religion.
   B. He introduced high taxes.
   C. He moved the capital city.
   D. He tore down old temples.

4. What features gave natural beauty to Heian-kyo?
   A. vast desert sands
   B. lakes and streams
   C. plains and grasslands
   D. rocks along the seacoast

5. Some of the original buildings of Heian-kyo were later rebuilt on the same sites. Where might a tourist go to see them?
   A. Nara
   B. Kyoto
   C. Tokyo
   D. Nagaoka

6. Read these three facts about Heian-kyo:
   • It was surrounded by a wall.
   • Its site was easy to defend.
   • Part of its name meant “tranquility.”
   These facts show that the Japanese leaders in the late 700s valued
   A. natural beauty.
   B. political power.
   C. wealth and riches.
   D. peace and security.
7. Why would a visitor to the home of a Heian aristocrat see few objects?
   A. Simplicity was thought to be beautiful.
   B. Valuables were hidden to prevent theft.
   C. The wood floors were considered dirty.
   D. The nobles lacked money to buy things.

8. How did the Fujiwara family gain political power?
   A. by taking over the position of emperor
   B. by getting support from unhappy peasants
   C. by marrying daughters into the royal family
   D. by gaining a monopoly on international trade

9. Which of these people would have ranked most highly in Heian Japan?
   A. one whose father was a court noble
   B. one who scored well on national tests
   C. one whose beauty was admired by poets
   D. one who paid the emperor money

10. If people saw two Heian men carrying fans with different numbers of folds, they could conclude that the men
    A. had different tastes.
    B. held different ranks.
    C. had reached different ages.
    D. belonged to different clans.

11. What is the best title for the list below?
    • kemari
    • rango
    • bugaku
    A. Heian Tests of Artistic Skill
    B. Training for a Heian Emperor
    C. Forms of Heian Entertainment
    D. Seasons on the Heian Calendar

12. Which of the following was a factor that influenced the development of Heian art and sculpture?
    A. Being an island nation provided some isolation.
    B. The emperor forbade all religious images.
    C. Ocean shipping brought contact with Europe.
    D. Most skilled craftsmen were sent to study in China.
13. What did the leading writers of the Heian period have in common?
   A. Most of them were priests.
   B. Most of them were women.
   C. Most of them were peasants.
   D. Most of them were foreigners.

14. Why is the Tale of Genji especially famous?
   A. It records the lives of ordinary farmers.
   B. It reveals secrets about the royal family.
   C. It was retold as an oral history.
   D. It may have been the world's first novel.

15. Which royal practice helped bring the Heian period to an end?
   A. imposing military control
   B. taxing most land too heavily
   C. providing food to the hungry
   D. giving large estates to nobles

16. In Japan today, the lasting influence of the Heian period is strongest in
   A. rank and class.
   B. literature and drama.
   C. science and technology.
   D. politics and government.
Applying Social Studies Skills
Use the picture and your knowledge of history to complete the sentences.

17. One can guess that this is the estate of a noble because

18. One can tell that the main building is raised above ground level because the drawing shows

19. The outdoor part of the estate celebrates the beauty of nature by
Exploring the Essential Question: What was life like for aristocrats during the Heian period?

20. Suppose you recently visited a Heian noble family in their home. Write a brief thank-you letter to your hosts. Your letter should include the following:

- a statement of appreciation and thanks
- specific descriptions of the house and furnishings
- specific information about the lord and lady
- specific information about activities or entertainment during the visit

If necessary, you may refer back to the drawing of the estate on the previous page.

Dear Noble Family,

Sincerely yours,