

# Japan

## Key facts in 1929

**Area:** 381,808km<sup>2</sup><sup>[1]</sup>

*With Colonies:* 680,742km<sup>2</sup><sup>[1]</sup>

**Population:** 64 Million<sup>[1]</sup>

*With Colonies:* 90 Million<sup>[1]</sup>

**Life expectancy:** 46 years<sup>[2]</sup>

*With Colonies:* 42.6 years<sup>[1,3]</sup>

**Literacy rate:** Above 90%<sup>[4]</sup>

*With Colonies:* 87%<sup>[1,4,5]</sup>

**Biggest Minorities:** Koreans, Taiwanese, Han Chinese<sup>[1]</sup>

**Select Main Cities:** Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, Yokohama, Nagoya<sup>[6]</sup>

*With Colonies:* Keijo (Seoul), Pyongyang, Fusan (Busan), Taihoku (Taipei)<sup>[7,8]</sup>

**Neighboring countries:** None

*With Colonies:* Republic of China, USSR<sup>[7]</sup>

**Sea Access:** Yes, Sea of Japan, Pacific Ocean, Sea of Okhotsk

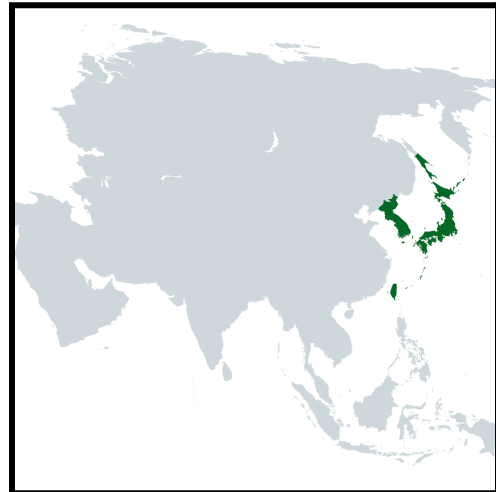
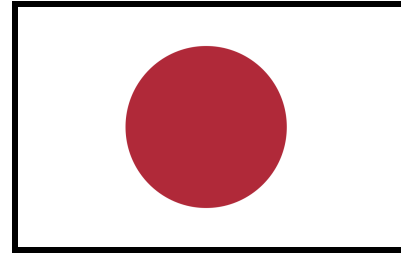
*With Colonies:* Yellow Sea, South China Sea<sup>[7,8]</sup>

**GDP:** 16'800'000'000 \$1929<sup>[9]</sup>

*With Colonies:* 22'300'000'000\$1929<sup>[1,9,10]</sup>

## Recent Historical Background

During the Meiji period's rapid industrialization, which began in 1868 and flourished until around 1912, Japan modernized its economy, laying foundations in iron and steel, shipbuilding, and mining to bolster its industrial prowess.<sup>[11]</sup> This era also saw Japan assert its military might, as evidenced by the capture of Karafuto (the southern half of Sakhalin Peninsula) during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905, solidifying its position of strength in the region.<sup>[12,13]</sup> During World War I, Japan was allied to the Entente, and used its strength against the Imperial German Navy.<sup>[14]</sup> Later, the country was not spared from the global influenza pandemic of 1918-1919, which killed over 250'000 people.<sup>[15]</sup> In 1923 another tragic event happened: Japan was devastated by the Great Kanto Earthquake, which wreaked havoc on Tokyo and its environs, causing widespread destruction and loss of life.<sup>[16]</sup>



## Political Situation

In 1929, Imperial Japan, under the reign of Emperor Hirohito since 1926 following Emperor Taishō's passing, operated within a constitutional monarchy framework, wherein the emperor wielded symbolic authority while governance was entrusted to elected officials and a parliamentary system.<sup>[6,17]</sup> The current Prime Minister was Osachi Hamaguchi, who governed Japan from 1929 to 1931. His administration grappled with economic challenges amidst global turbulence and decided to pursue economic reforms instead of military actions.<sup>[18]</sup> The political landscape featured influential parties like Rikken Seiyūkai, advocating conservatism, Rikken Minseitō, championing liberal reforms, and Kokumin Dōmei, promoting nationalist expansionism and fascism.<sup>[19,20,21]</sup> Japan's colonial policy towards territories such as Korea and Taiwan sparked tensions with minority groups, facing discrimination and oppression.<sup>[8,22]</sup>

## Economic Situation in 1929

Having massively ramped up its coal and raw silk production in the previous decades as well as its railroad coverage, Japan's economy was rapidly industrializing and increasing in importance. Other key sectors during that period included naval construction, the military industry as well as forestry and fishing.<sup>[23]</sup> Japan's main trade partners at that time were the United States, the United Kingdom and India. Japan mainly imported cotton, wool and iron and exported wool articles, silk and rayon. During that period, Japan ran a slight trade deficit with imports being about 15% bigger than exports.<sup>[24]</sup> Despite this strong economic showing, Japan faced regular economic and financial crises, especially in 1920, 1922, 1923 and culminating in 1927.<sup>[25]</sup>

## Military Strength in 1929

In 1929, the Japanese army was a well-equipped army boasting about 300'000 active personnel.<sup>[26]</sup> It had about 20 tanks, imported from France and the United Kingdom<sup>[27]</sup> and was in the process of developing its own military vehicles<sup>[28,29]</sup> The Japanese Navy was very developed, using 217 ships, including 48 submarines and 106 destroyers<sup>[30]</sup> It also had a very high amount of planes, totaling about 1900 for its Navy and 500 for its air service.<sup>[31,32]</sup>

<b>Key Facts about Military Strength of Japan</b> <sup>[26,27,28,29,30,31,32,33]</sup>	
Active personnel	296'000
Tanks	20
Cavalry	Unknown
Other vehicles	Developing
Ships	217
Planes	2400
Funding in 1929\$	647'187'500

## **Allies/Enemies/Existing territorial disputes in 1929**

Allies: Germany (improvement of relations in 1928)<sup>[35]</sup>, France (favored treatment of Japanese people in French Indochina)<sup>[36]</sup>

Increasing Tensions: Britain (Deterioration of relations due to pressure of British dominions)<sup>[37]</sup>

Enemies: Republic of China (Japan trying to secure its interests in China)<sup>[38]</sup>; Soviet Union (Sakhalin Islands, Kuril Islands, Opposition to Soviet Communism)<sup>[39]</sup>

## **Some of the main goals for the 1930s**

1. Expansion of territory: Japan has sought to expand its territorial control in East Asia and the Pacific region, for instance in Manchuria.<sup>[40]</sup>
2. Economic Dominance: Aim to establish economic dominance in East Asia through the acquisition of resources and the establishment of spheres of influence.
3. Maintain Political Influence and Hegemony by keeping control of Korea (Chōsen) and Taiwan.<sup>[7,8]</sup>

## Sources:

1. *Demographics of the Empire of Japan* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics\\_of\\_the\\_Empire\\_of\\_Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_the_Empire_of_Japan)
2. *Life expectancy (from birth) in Japan, from 1860 to 2020\** - Statista (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1041369/life-expectancy-japan-all-time/>
3. *Life expectancy at birth* - Our World in Data (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/life-expectancy?country=TWN~PRK~KOR~CHN~RUS>
4. *ILLITERACY IN THE SEVERAL COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD* - Department of the Interior Bureau of Education (Date: 26.02.2024) <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED540100.pdf>
5. *World illiteracy at mid-century: a statistical study* - UNESCO (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000002930>
6. *Empire of Japan* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empire\\_of\\_Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empire_of_Japan)
7. *Korea under Japanese rule* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korea\\_under\\_Japanese\\_rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korea_under_Japanese_rule)
8. *Taiwan under Japanese rule* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan\\_under\\_Japanese\\_rule](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiwan_under_Japanese_rule)
9. *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://web.archive.org/web/20220521073928/https://statlinks.oecdcode.org/4103063.XLS>
10. *GDP per capita Historical data – Maddison Project Database* - Our World in Data (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://ourworldindata.org/grapher/gdp-per-capita-maddison?tab=chart&country=PRK~KOR~TWN>
11. *Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining* - UNESCO (Date: 26.02.2024) <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1484/>
12. *Russo-Japanese War* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russo-Japanese\\_War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russo-Japanese_War)
13. *Karafuto Prefecture* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karafuto\\_Prefecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karafuto_Prefecture)
14. *Japan during World War I* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan\\_during\\_World\\_War\\_I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan_during_World_War_I)
15. *Deaths Associated with Influenza Pandemic of 1918–19, Japan* - NCBI (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3647405/>
16. *The Great Japan Earthquake of 1923* - Smithsonian Magazine (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-great-japan-earthquake-of-1923-1764539/>
17. *Hirohito* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hirohito>
18. *Hamaguchi Osachi* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamaguchi\\_Osachi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamaguchi_Osachi)
19. *Rikken Seiyūkai* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rikken\\_Seiy%C5%ABkai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rikken_Seiy%C5%ABkai)
20. *Constitutional Democratic Party (Japan)* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional\\_Democratic\\_Party\\_\(Japan\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitutional_Democratic_Party_(Japan))
21. *Kokumin Dōmei* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kokumin\\_D%C5%8Dmei](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kokumin_D%C5%8Dmei)
22. *Korean independence movement* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean\\_independence\\_movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_independence_movement)
23. *Economy of the Empire of Japan* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy\\_of\\_the\\_Empire\\_of\\_Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_the_Empire_of_Japan)
24. *Foreign commerce and shipping of the Empire of Japan* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign\\_commerce\\_and\\_shipping\\_of\\_the\\_Empire\\_of\\_Japan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_commerce_and_shipping_of_the_Empire_of_Japan)

25. *The Japanese Economy during the Interwar Period* - Bank of Japan (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://www.boj.or.jp/en/research/wps\\_rev/rev\\_2009/data/rev09e02.pdf](https://www.boj.or.jp/en/research/wps_rev/rev_2009/data/rev09e02.pdf)
26. *Military Personnel and Spending* - Our World in Data (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://ourworldindata.org/military-personnel-spending>
27. *Tanks in the Japanese Army* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanks\\_in\\_the\\_Japanese\\_Army](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanks_in_the_Japanese_Army)
28. *Tanks & Armored Vehicles of the Japanese Empire from 1918 to 1945* - The Online Tank Museum (Date: 26.02.2024) <https://tanks-encyclopedia.com/ww2/japan/>
29. *Otsu-Gata Sensha (Renault NC in Japanese Service)* - The Online Tank Museum (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://tanks-encyclopedia.com/ww2/jap/otsu-gata-sensha>
30. *List of ships of the Imperial Japanese Navy* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_ships\\_of\\_the\\_Imperial\\_Japanese\\_Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_ships_of_the_Imperial_Japanese_Navy)
31. *List of aircraft of the Imperial Japanese Navy* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_aircraft\\_of\\_the\\_Imperial\\_Japanese\\_Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_aircraft_of_the_Imperial_Japanese_Navy)
32. *Imperial Japanese Army Air Service* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial\\_Japanese\\_Army\\_Air\\_Service](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Imperial_Japanese_Army_Air_Service)
33. *Interwar U.S. and Japanese National Product and Defense Expenditure (Page 27)* (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://www.cna.org/reports/2003/D0007249.A1.pdf>
34. *\$545,000,000 in 1937 is worth \$647,187,500 in 1929* (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/1937?endYear=1929&amount=545000000>
35. *Germany–Japan relations* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany%E2%80%93Japan\\_relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany%E2%80%93Japan_relations)
36. *France–Japan relations* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France%E2%80%93Japan\\_relations#20th\\_century](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France%E2%80%93Japan_relations#20th_century)
37. *Japan–United Kingdom relations* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan%E2%80%93United\\_Kingdom\\_relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan%E2%80%93United_Kingdom_relations)
38. *History of China–Japan relations* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_China%E2%80%93Japan\\_relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_China%E2%80%93Japan_relations)
39. *Japan–Soviet Union relations* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan%E2%80%93Soviet\\_Union\\_relations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japan%E2%80%93Soviet_Union_relations)
40. *Manchukuo* - Wikipedia (Date: 26.02.2024)  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manchukuo>