

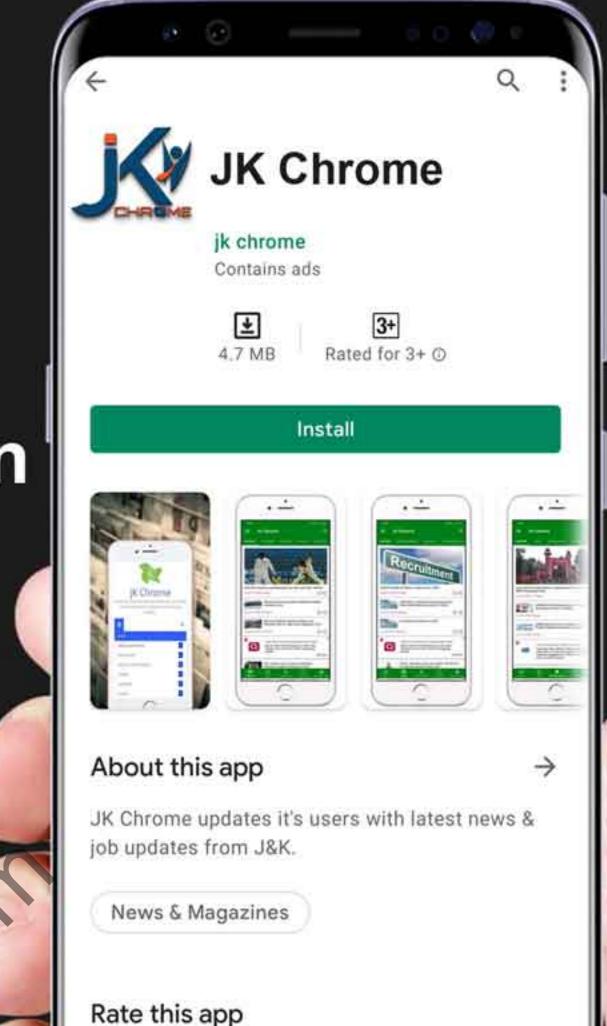
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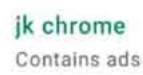








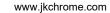
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## Medieval Japan

**1.** Japan consists of hundreds of small islands of which four are major islands-Hokkaido, Honshu, Kyushu & Shikoku.

**2.** Almost the entire country was unified into a single state by around the 7th century AD.

**3.** In the 8th century Edo (modem Kyoto) became the capital and continued to be the seat of the emperors of Japan for over 1000 years. The real power, however, was in the hands of an aristocratic family.

**4.** Towards the end of the 12th century, a new political institution Shogun came into being. The Shogun or the 'General' became the commander of Japan's army and ruled Japan, while the emperor remained at his capital at Edo (Kyoto).

**5.** Until 1867, the Shoguns were the real rulers of Japan. Tokugawa Leyasu was the founder of last Shogun dynasty.

6. In 1867, the last Shogun of Tokugawa dynasty was overthrown and the power was restored to the emperor. Now Japan launched herself on the road of industrial development, modernization and expansion.

7. Samurai or the warriors were similar to the Knights of Western Europe.

**8.** The most unique contribution of medieval Japan to literature was a form of poetry called Haiku. Haiku poems are short poems of only 17 syllables.

**9.** The important contribution of medieval Japan to art was Ikebana or the art of flower arrangement, which is being imitated throughout the world.

**10.** Buddhism reached Japan early in the 6th century from China through Korea and during the course of centuries it became widespread. In certain periods it even eclipsed Shintoism, the old religion of Japan.

**11.** Gradually, the Japanese developed their own distinct schools of Buddhism, the most famous of which is Zen Buddhism. The word Zen is derived from 'Dhyana'.