Reading Questions for Subunit 11.3

Subunit 11.3, which forms a part of larger unit on “East Asia and its Trading World,” provides us with our first introduction to Japanese history. The resources used here furnish insights not only into this country’s political, social, and cultural traditions, but also, the manner in which these were influenced by developments in China. Our readings and video lectures provide numerous examples of cultural transfer between the two societies and its effects in the area of Japanese arts, religion, thought, and architecture. What are some specific examples of borrowing described in these materials?

These facts beg the question, in turn, of what gets borrowed and what does not. The resources do in fact provide some clues that may help to illuminate the factors that exerted some influence over which aspects of Chinese culture were most enthusiastically adopted by Japanese thinkers and artists. What are some of the reflections of the various scholars on this point?