

Shotoku Taishi Encyclopedia Article

Shotoku Taishi

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Contents

Shotoku Taishi Encyclopedia Article.....	1
Contents.....	2
Shotoku Taishi.....	3



Shotoku Taishi

573-621

Japanese prince who greatly influenced the development of his country, and who is traditionally regarded as the father of Japanese arithmetic. Shotoku authored the "Seventeen-Article Constitution" (604), which provided the governing principles of Japan, and played an important role in encouraging Japanese acceptance of the Buddhist religion. He was present when in c. 600 the Korean Buddhist priest Kanroku presented a set of works on astrology and the calendar to the Japanese empress. Legend has it that as a result of this experience, Shotoku became fascinated with mathematics, and exhibited a talent for performing calculations.