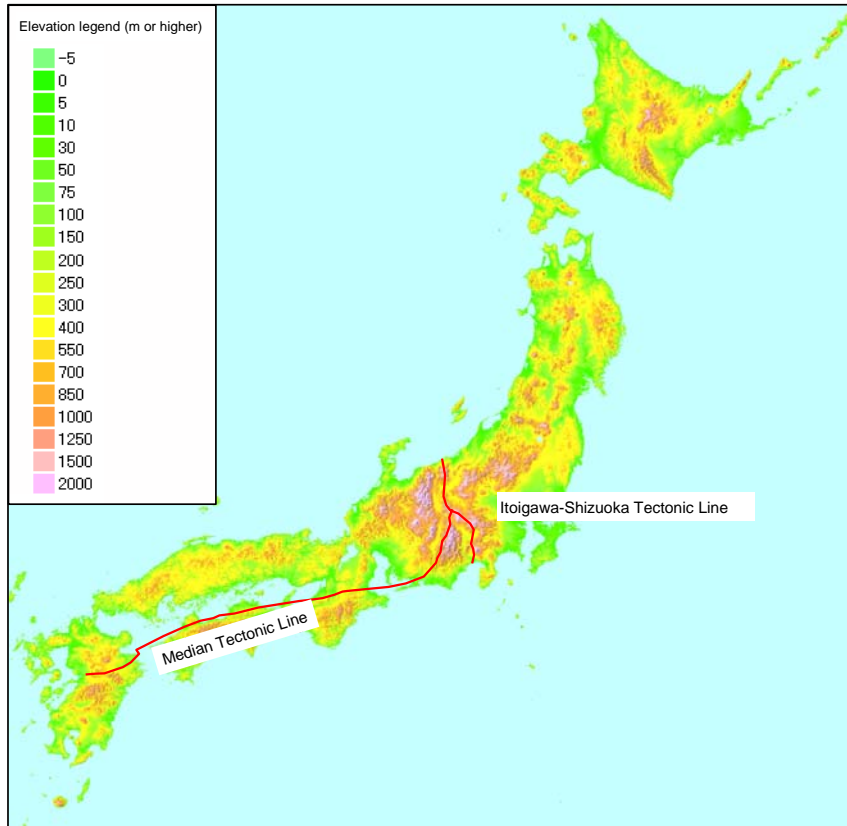


Natural conditions of Japan



Topography	Long and slim archipelago about 2,000 km long in the north-south direction
Four main islands	The four main islands separated by straits, and many smaller islands
Backbone mountain ranges	Mountain ranges running longitudinally at the center of Japan roughly divides the country into two halves.
Tectonic lines	The Median Tectonic Line and the Itoigawa-Shizuoka Tectonic Line run north to south across the Honshu island.
Plains	Small plains along the coastlines (about 14% of the total land area)
Soft ground	Most of the large cities in Japan are located on weak ground .
Earthquake	About 10% of all earthquakes in the world occur in or around Japan.
Heavy rain	Rainy weather (mean annual precipitation: 1,714 mm, which is about two times as much as that in the European countries); steep rivers
Snow	About 60% of the country is located in snowy cold regions (annual cumulative snowfall: more than 4 m in many cities).

Snowy region: The average of maximum snow depths in February is 50 cm or more.
Cold region: The average of mean temperatures in January is 0°C or lower.