

Shogun Japan

Backwards Planning Curriculum Units

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How to Use This Unit

Backwards planning offers an innovative yet simple approach to meeting curriculum goals; it also provides a way to keep students engaged and focused throughout the learning process. Many teachers approach history instruction in the following manner: they identify a topic required by state and/or national standards, they find materials on that topic, they use those materials with their students, and then they administer some sort of standard test at the end of the unit. Backwards planning, rather than just starting with a required instructional topic, goes a step further by identifying exactly what students need to know by the end of the unit—the so-called “enduring understandings.” The next step involves assessment: devising ways to determine whether students have learned what they need to know. The final step involves planning the teaching/learning process so that students can acquire the knowledge needed.

This product uses backwards planning to combine a PowerPoint presentation, activities that involve authentic assessment, and traditional tests (multiple-choice and essay) into a complete curriculum unit. Although the materials have enough built-in flexibility that you can use them in a number of ways, we suggest the following procedure:

1. Start with the “essential questions” listed on slide 2 of the PowerPoint presentation (these also appear in the teacher support materials). Briefly go over them with students before getting into the topic material. These questions will help students focus their learning and note taking during the course of the unit. You can also choose to use the essential questions as essay questions at the end of the unit; one way to do this is to let students know at the outset that one of the essential questions will be on the test—they just won’t know which one.

2. Next, discuss the activities students will complete during the unit. This will also help focus their learning and note taking, and it will lead them to view the PowerPoint presentation in a different light, considering it a source of ideas for authentic-assessment projects.

3. Present the PowerPoint to the class. Most slides have an image and bullet points summarizing the slide’s topic. The Notes page for each slide contains a paragraph or two of information that you can use as a presentation script, or just as background information for your own reference. Use the “show set up” function in PowerPoint to present with “two monitors.” Have yours set to include the ‘notes view’ and let the projector show only the slides to the students.

You don’t need to present the entire PowerPoint at once: it’s broken up into several sections, each of which concludes with some discussion questions that echo parts of the essential questions and also help students to get closer to the “enduring understandings.” Spend some time with the class going over and debating these questions—this will not only help students think critically about the material, but it will also allow you to incorporate different modes of instruction during a single class period, offering a better chance to engage students.

4. Have students complete one or more of the authentic-assessment activities. These activities are flexible: most can be completed either individually or in groups, and either as homework or as in-class assignments. Each activity includes a rubric; many also have graphic organizers. You can choose to have students complete the activities after you have shown them the entire PowerPoint

presentation, or you can show them one section of the PowerPoint, go over the discussion questions, and then have students complete an activity.

5. End the unit with traditional assessment. The support materials include a 20-question multiple-choice quiz; you can combine this with an essay question (you can use one of the essential questions or come up with one of your own) to create a full-period test.

6. If desired, debrief with students by going over the essential questions with them again and remind them what the enduring understandings are.

We are dedicated to continually improving our products and working with teachers to develop exciting and effective tools for the classroom. We can offer advice on how to maximize the use of the product and share others' experiences. We would also be happy to work with you on ideas for customizing the presentation.

We value your feedback, so please let us know more about the ways in which you use this product to supplement your lessons; we're also eager to hear any recommendations you might have for ways in which we can expand the functionality of this product in future editions. You can e-mail us at access@socialstudies.com. We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis
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Shogun Japan: Backwards Planning Activities

Enduring understandings:

- Japan is an island nation, which helped it to remain independent in many ways. However, it also developed in the shadow of nearby China and was deeply influenced by that nation's culture, economy, and political system.
- Buddhism and Confucianism came to Japan from China, but they never really replaced Japan's native Shinto traditions, which are based on a belief in the divine aspect of all elements of nature.
- Japan has long had an emperor who is seen as divine, but during the age of the shoguns that emperor rarely had much real power.
- Japan in the era of the shoguns was often divided into feudal territories ruled by powerful aristocratic clans and nobles known as *daimyos*. The shogun was first among these feudal aristocrats and was also a powerful military ruler.
- At first the aristocrats relied on mercenaries and men of lesser status known as samurai. In time, the samurai's status rose and a code of honor governed their behavior.
- During the Tokugawa Shogunate, an era of peace transformed many of the samurai from warriors into skilled workers and administrators.
- For much of the Tokugawa Shogunate, the central government controlled the *daimyos* well in many ways. But toward the end of the shogunate, disorder spread, and the *daimyos* grew more independent and disruptive.
- The Tokugawa Shogunate kept Japan isolated from most of the West. In agreeing to open itself to trade with the United States, the Shogunate caused a crisis that resulted in its fall from power.

Essential questions:

- Why did Japan copy so much of China's religious traditions, culture, and political institutions at various times early in its history?
- Why did Japan's emperor, who was seen as divine, lack much real political power from the Heian era on?
- Why was Japan until the mid-1800s so often divided into regions ruled mainly by aristocratic clans or powerful individual leaders, the *daimyos*?
- What role(s) have the samurai played in Japan's long history? How important was the code of honor, *bushido*, in maintaining or undermining order in Japan's feudal systems?
- Why were the shoguns, rather than the emperor, the key national leaders for so many centuries prior to the late 1800s?
- What forces led to the decline of the Tokugawa Shogunate and its ultimate end during the Meiji Restoration in 1868?

Learning Experiences and Instruction

Students will need to know...	Students will need to be able to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. how China influenced Japanese civilization in its early stages 2. that Japan's emperor has always been important, but has often lacked much real political power 3. that Japan in the era of the shoguns was also divided among powerful clans or aristocratic families who could call on many samurai warriors for help 4. that the shoguns were military rulers who never completely unified the nation 5. that the Tokugawa Shogunate restricted the powerful aristocrats, called <i>daimyos</i>, in many ways 6. that Japan under the Tokugawa Shogunate isolated itself from much direct contact with Westerners and other foreigners 7. that during the peaceful years of the Tokugawa Shogunate, many samurai warriors became administrators or farmers instead. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. read and interpret primary source documents from the era of the Tokugawa Shogunate 2. understand some of the reasons for the shogunate's difficulties in unifying Japan 3. identify some major figures from this era of Japanese history and be able to explain their importance 4. understand and debate certain key controversies having to do with the Tokugawa Shogunate 5. identify causal relationships between various events and developments during this period.

These lessons incorporate the following learning activities to help students reach the enduring understandings:

- Overview of essential questions and basic understandings
- Class discussion of subject matter questions in the presentation
- Teacher introduction of common terms and ideas in the essential questions and related projects
- Provide students with primary source materials from which they will complete the related projects in the unit.
- Students conduct research in groups to be used later in individual and group projects.
- Informal observation and coaching of students as they work in groups
- Evaluation and delivered feedback on projects and research reports
- Students create and present their unit projects.
- Posttest made of multiple-choice questions covering the presentation, with one or more essential questions as essay questions

Project #1: Early Japan— The China Connection

Overview:

In this lesson, student groups learn more about Japan’s adoption of many aspects of Chinese civilization between the sixth and ninth centuries CE. Japan sent numerous large missions to China in those centuries to learn more about that land’s cultural, social, and political life. One ruler heavily influenced by China was Prince Shotoku (574–622), whose Seventeen-Article Constitution reflected aspects of Buddhist and Confucian thought. Soon after that, the Taika Reforms (646 CE) changed land-tenure laws in a way that increased central imperial control. The Taiho Code (701 CE) added to the central government’s power by seeking to create a Chinese-style official bureaucracy. The student groups will together report on these specific ways in which Chinese civilization came to play a part in the formation of Japan in its early centuries.

Objectives:

As a result of completing the lesson, students will be able to:

- identify several examples of Japan’s effort to borrow from China
- understand how this borrowing took place
- better understand what Japan’s imperial rulers hoped to gain by borrowing ideas and practices from China.

Time required:

Three class periods (with one period for small-group presentations)

Materials:

Computer(s) with Internet access, a printer, the “China in Japan Student Worksheet” (provided)

Procedures:

Divide the class into three groups. Each group will study one of three important examples of China’s influence on Japan. The three examples are:

- Prince Shotoku’s Seventeen-Article Constitution
- The Taika Reforms
- The Taiho Code

Each group will research one example and will prepare a brief talk to the class on this example and what it shows about China's influence on Japan. Some students from all three groups will prepare a timeline on this theme and use it to decide the order in which the groups will speak to the class. All of the groups should do some background reading on the overall story of Chinese influence on Japan from the sixth through the ninth centuries CE.

Questions

Here are some questions each group should seek to answer in their presentations.

What is the overall importance of the example in explaining China's influence on Japan?

In what ways, if any, does this example also show Japan's differences from China?

Why do you think Japan's rulers wanted to follow China's practices or beliefs as they did in this example?

Once the groups have been assigned their tasks, allot sufficient time for students to complete research on their topic via the Internet, as well as through more traditional means such as books, magazines, and microfiche. As students find pertinent information or come to their own conclusions about the topic, have them complete the "China in Japan Student Worksheet."

Once the groups have completed research, have them conduct a presentation to the class. Allot a reasonable time for the presentations (likely a class period). At the end of the group presentations, give students time to discuss all three examples and debate why Japan turned to China for ideas and guidelines in so many ways in these centuries.

Evaluation:

After the presentations, you should evaluate students based on their presentation skills as well as on their research skills in completing the "China in Japan Student Worksheet." While you may wish to develop your own rubric for this project, a sample rubric is included as a guideline.

Suggested Web resources:

The following is a sampling of possible resources for the presentations. You should supplement this list by assisting students in finding related information via a reputable search engine.

Japanese history

- http://www.mongabay.com/reference/country_studies/japan/HISTORY.html
- <http://motherearthtravel.com/history/japan/history-3.htm>

Japanese missions to China

- http://aboutjapan.japansociety.org/content.cfm/the_japanese_missions_to_tang_china_7th-9th_centuries

Prince Shotoku and the Seventeen-Article Constitution

- <http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/japan/japanworkbook/traditional/shotoku.htm>
- http://heritageofjapan.wordpress.com/inception-of-the-imperial-system-asuka-era/how-buddhism-came-to-take-root-in-japan/prince-shotoku-the-greatest-statesman-of-japan-legend-or-real-national-hero/http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Shotoku_Taishi
- <http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/ANCJAPAN/CONST.HTM>
- <http://www.duhaime.org/LawMuseum/LawArticle-1182/604-The-Seventeen-Article-Constitution-of-Japan.aspx>

Taika Reforms

- http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Taika_Reforms
- <http://learnjapanese.elanguageschool.net/japanese-asuka-period>
- <http://csmh.pbworks.com/w/page/7309553/645%20-%20Taika%20Reforms>
- <http://www.essortment.com/taika-reforms-medieval-japan-51616.html>

Taiho Code

- <http://learnjapanese.elanguageschool.net/japanese-asuka-period>
- <http://www.sp.uconn.edu/~gwang/id101.htm>
- http://books.google.com/books?id=xJxf1W74XSoC&pg=PA29&lpg=PA29&dq=Taiho+Code&source=bl&ots=NK8efZkBfh&sig=j6cFqQnhA13x4f086s54o8Ospwc&hl=en&ei=QripTbmD-3biAKq083vDA&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3&ved=0CB0Q6AEwAjgK#v=onepage&q=Taiho%20Code&f=false
- http://books.google.com/books?id=NC1bDncgKCQC&pg=PA25&lpg=PA25&dq=taiho+code&source=bl&ots=Wd_zDR1ar3&sig=wPH3VGP8fcWzrOeEOMugjyEeKWU&hl=en&ei=X8_PTcG4O4Hi0QGG-MjtDQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=14&ved=0CFUQ6AEwDTgK#v=onepage&q=taiho%20code&f=false

China in Japan Student Worksheet

Your example of China's influence on Japan:

Overall importance of the example in explaining China's influence on Japan:

In what ways, if any, does your example also show Japan's differences from China?

Why did Japan's rulers want to follow China's practices or beliefs as they did in this example?

China in Japan Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Student score
Handout: understanding the group's example of China's influence on Japan	Student shows a clear understanding of the example and how it shows China's influence on Japan	Student has an adequate understanding of the example and what it shows about China's influence on Japan	Student shows only a vague understanding of the example and/or little understanding of how it shows China's influence on Japan	Student shows a lack of understanding of the example and how it shows China's influence on Japan	
Handout: understanding why Japan wanted to learn from China as it did in the example	Student has reasonable and important insights about why Japan's leaders wanted to learn from China in this example	Student has an adequate sense of why Japan's leaders wanted to learn from China in this example	Student makes a few worthwhile observations about why Japan's leaders wanted to learn from China in this example	Student shows little or no understanding of why Japan's leaders wanted to learn from China in this example	
Speaking ability in presenting ideas about the example to the class	Student is very clear, projects voice, uses proper grammar throughout	Student makes some good comments, projects voice, generally uses proper grammar	Student is not clear, does not speak much, uses proper grammar infrequently	Student has little to say, does not project voice well, uses poor grammar throughout	
Other criteria as set by the teacher					
Total score					

Project #2: Samurai Warriors and Medieval Knights

Overview:

The Japanese samurai warrior is often compared to the European knight of the medieval era. But how helpful is this comparison as a way to clarify for students the nature of the samurai in Japanese society? This lesson helps students find out. It offers them a chance to better understand the samurai, learn about his military skills and equipment, and see how his status in society evolved over time. The lesson asks groups of students to produce a PowerPoint presentation or bulletin-board display comparing Japanese samurai to medieval European knights.

Objectives:

As a result of completing the lesson, students will be able to:

- identify some of the key similarities and differences between Japanese samurai and European knights in military equipment and methods
- compare samurai and knights in terms of the social status and overall role they played in society
- better understand how the samurai's role changed over time before and during the Tokugawa Shogunate.

Time required:

Four class periods

Materials:

Computer(s) with Internet access, word-processing and PowerPoint software, a printer, the "Samurai vs. Knights Worksheet" (provided)

Procedures:

Assign each student to a group. Each group's task is to assemble illustrations pertaining to medieval European knights and Japanese samurai. Each illustration should be dated and carefully explained with some text, especially as to whether it is reliable as an image or is based only on stereotypical notions of what knights or samurai might once have looked like.

Tasks among the group's members should be divided up so that at least two students each are responsible for researching and organizing each one of the following topics:

- Samurai and knights: weaponry and fighting tactics
- Samurai: how their military role changed over the centuries
- Samurai: how their role in society in general changed over the centuries
- Knights: how their military role changed over the centuries
- Knights: how their role in society in general changed over the centuries
- Overall comparison of knights and samurai

Both samurai and knights played key roles in the evolution of societies that many historians call “feudal.” In such societies, protection and safety were provided by groups of fighters, each of whom is a “vassal”—i.e., a person committed and loyal to a single lord or powerful individual. In exchange for land or other means of support from that lord, the knights or samurai provided military service. The overall pattern of order or disorder in such a society was then the result of the decisions and interests of a large number of aristocratic lords and their vassals (knights or samurai).

Both knights and samurai have been viewed in somewhat romantic and stereotypical ways. That is partly because each group claimed at times to follow a strict moral code of behavior—chivalry for the knights, *bushido* for the samurai. However, in neither case did the actual warriors all live up to these codes, nor did they all at first have the noble status they came to acquire later on. Their place in their societies changed in many ways over time.

The student groups should assemble illustrations that reflect and help illuminate all of these aspects of the place of knights and samurai in their societies. The goal here is not simply to decide which of these two groups would have been superior in battle, though that can be a part of the presentation. The goal should be to understand each group and the part it played in the overall social, cultural, and political life of its era in history.

Have the groups use the suggested Internet resources or other print resources to find out more about these two groups of warriors. Ask each student to use the “Samurai vs. Knights Worksheet” to organize what they learn from their research and their group discussions. Using these handouts, have the group prepare a PowerPoint presentation or create a bulletin-board display, which they will reveal to the rest of the class in a presentation comparing and contrasting the knights of medieval Europe with the samurai warriors of Japan.

Evaluation:

After this lesson is complete, evaluate the members of the student group using a suitable rubric. A sample rubric is included with this lesson, which you may either use or adapt to meet your individual circumstances.

Suggested Web resources:

Japan and the samurai

- <http://www.samurai-archives.com/chronol.html>
- <http://asianhistory.about.com/od/warsinasia/p/SamuraiProfile.htm>

Samurai history

- <http://www.history.com/topics/samurai-and-bushido>
- <http://martialarts.about.com/od/martialartsbasics/a/samuraihistory.htm>
- <http://asianform.com/page.php?pid=70>
- <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2127.html>
- <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~malokofs/SCA/Persona/History/samurai.html>
- <http://asianhistory.about.com/od/warsinasia/p/SamuraiProfile.htm>
- http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/samu/hd_samu.htm

Samurai and *bushido*

- <http://www.shotokai.com/ingles/filosofia/bushido.html>
- <http://www.aikido-world.com/articles/Bushido-Code%20of%20the%20Warrior,%20the%20Samurai.htm>
- <http://www.historicalweapons.com/samuraiwarrior.html>

Medieval knights

- <http://www.boisestate.edu/courses/westciv/medsoc/08.shtml>
- <http://www.medieval-period.com/medievalknights.html>
- <http://www.medieval-life-and-times.info/medieval-knights/>
- <http://www.epic-fantasy.com/medieval-knights.htm>

Samurai vs. knights

- <http://www.thehaca.com/essays/knightvs.htm>
- <http://www.hyperhistory.net/apwh/essays/comp/cw15samuraiknights33100513.htm>

Samurai vs. Knights Worksheet

Category	Samurai warriors	Medieval knights
What equipment and what tactics made these warriors so effective?		
What were the main features of the code of honor each group of warriors claimed to live by?		
How did the roles of each warrior group change over time and why?		
What do you think was the most important difference between these two types of warriors?		

Samurai vs. Knights Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Student score
Handout: facts and details about these two groups of warriors	Student identifies the most essential details accurately and describes them clearly	Student describes some key details accurately and clearly	Student describes a few details adequately but not always clearly	Student describes a few details but not very accurately at all	
Handout: analysis of the major similarities and differences among these two groups of warriors	Student clearly and accurately identifies most similarities and key differences	Student adequately identifies some key similarities and differences	Student only vaguely describes some similarities, but not all of the most important ones	Student fails to describe clearly any major similarities or differences	
Presentation: contribution to the group presentation	Student makes a substantial contribution to the display or PowerPoint	Student makes an adequate contribution to the display or PowerPoint	Student makes a minimal contribution to the display or PowerPoint	Student makes no contribution to the display or PowerPoint	
Total score					

Project #3: Keep the Europeans Out?— A Roundtable Discussion

Overview:

By 1639, the Tokugawa Shogunate had fully implemented a policy of national seclusion (often called *sakoku*) which, among other things, prohibited contact with nearly all Europeans, except for the Dutch. The Dutch could carry on trade in Japan, but they were confined to a small, artificial island at the port of Nagasaki. In a series of measures, the shoguns strictly limited many forms of contact between most Japanese subjects and nearly all foreigners. Two groups of students pretend to be policy advisers in 1639 and conduct a debate about this issue in the presence of the shogun. A third group acts as the shogun and decides whether or not to proceed with the exclusion of all Westerners from Japan.

Objectives:

As a result of completing the lesson, students will be able to:

- understand why the shoguns felt the need to restrict contact with foreigners
- identify some key sorts of restrictions the shoguns enacted to limit contact with foreigners
- make judgments about the value of this policy and try to see the issue from various Japanese points of view representative of that era.

Time required:

Three class periods

Materials:

Computer(s) with Internet access, word-processing and PowerPoint software, a printer, the “Japanese Seclusion-Policy Worksheet” (provided)

Procedures:

Prior to beginning the lesson, assign students to three groups:

- Those favoring the seclusion policy
- Those opposing the seclusion policy
- Those representing the shogun

Students may select the group they wish to join, or you may elect to assign them to groups based on student abilities and personalities.

Give each group three class periods to research, read background materials, and discuss Japan's national policy of seclusion, a policy that was mainly complete by 1639. Have the groups study the suggested Internet resources or other print resources to find out more about this policy and discuss the reasons for and against it. All students in each of the groups should complete the "Japanese Seclusion-Policy Position Paper" provided for this lesson. At the last of the small-group meetings, each group should plan out its debate-day presentation and strategy so as to fulfill their task in the debate. A suggested format for the debate is as follows:

Shogun group: This group prepares a ten-minute presentation describing Japan's national seclusion policy in detail. The group should sum up the history of interactions with Europeans. They should also describe other aspects of the policy, such as the restrictions forbidding foreigners to enter Japan or most Japanese ever to leave. They should also note exceptions to the limits on foreign trade (Japan was never completely isolated) and any other details of the policy that seem relevant. They should then indicate that the shogun wants his policy advisers to debate fully, openly, and without fear whether this policy is a good idea or not in order to help him come to a final decision about it.

The shogun group then supervises the debate by the two other student groups. The shogun group must remain neutral but should try to keep debaters focused on the issue and make sure each debater listens carefully to responses from the other side. At the end of that debate, the shogun group will field questions from the rest of the class

Seclusion-policy defenders: This group prepares a five-minute opening statement of why they think the national seclusion policy is needed. They present this statement at the start of the debate. They then listen closely to the opening statement of seclusion-policy critics. They have some time to discuss that statement, and then they must do two things: first, repeat back as fully and accurately as they can the key points made by the seclusion-policy critics, then take five minutes in which to challenge or criticize those points.

Seclusion-policy critics: This group prepares a five-minute opening statement criticizing the national seclusion policy as completely as they can. They first listen closely to the opening statement of the seclusion-policy defenders and will then present their own opening statement. They will have some time to discuss the opening statement by seclusion-policy defenders. They then must do two things: first, repeat back as fully and accurately as they can the key points the seclusion-policy defenders make, then take five minutes in which to challenge or criticize those points.

Evaluation:

At the end of the debate, evaluate student work using a suitable rubric. Two sample rubrics are included with this lesson, which you may either use or adapt to meet your individual circumstances.

Suggested Web resources:

<http://www.suite101.com/content/japans-250-year-seclusion-policy-during-the-edo-period-a301988>

<http://www.koreanhistoryproject.org/Ket/C14/E1404.htm>

http://www.wfu.edu/~watts/w03_Japancl.html

http://www.nakasendoway.com/?page_id=1035

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sakoku>

http://www.uv.es/EBRIT/macro/macro_5003_38_57.html

http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_was_the_reason_for_the_Japanese_seclusion_edicts

<http://www.japanese123.com/nanban.htm>

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Shimabara_Rebellion

http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/wars_shimabara.html

Japanese Seclusion-Policy Worksheet

Policy component	Your views
Strict rules restricting foreign trade	Advantages: Disadvantages: Recommendation (explain reasons):
Ban on Christian missionary efforts and Christianity itself	Advantages: Disadvantages: Recommendation (explain reasons):
Exclusion of foreigners and ban on Japanese travel to other countries	Advantages: Disadvantages: Recommendation (explain reasons):

Japanese Seclusion-Policy Rubric— Shogun Group

Category	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Student score
Understands shogun's policies	Understands the policies well and explains them clearly	Understands the policies adequately and explains them clearly	Only partially understands and explains the policies	Understands the policies poorly and does not explain them clearly	
Keeps debate teams focused on topic	Identifies key points in need of clarification and helps teams address them	Identifies and explains only a few key points in need of clarification	Identifies a few points in need of clarification but cannot help teams address them	Fails to identify points in need of clarification or to help teams address them	
Guides teams to listen and respond to each other	Identifies and explains well central points that the teams need to respond to more carefully	Identifies and explains only a few points the teams need to respond to	Identifies few points the teams need to clarify but fails to help the teams respond to them	Identifies no key points that the teams need to respond to more carefully	
Total score					

Japanese Seclusion-Policy Rubric— Debate Groups

Category	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Student score
Understands the shogun's policies	Understands the policies well and explains them clearly	Understands the policies adequately and explains them clearly	Understands and explains the policies only partially	Understands the policies poorly and does not explain them clearly	
Explains the group's position on the shogun's policies	Identifies and explains well several major points in support of or against the policies	Identifies and explains only some key points in support of or against the policies	Identifies only a few points in support of or against the policies	Fails to identify or explain clearly any points in support of or against the policies	
Responds to the other group's position on the shogun's policies	Understands and responds in a relevant way to the other side's critical comments	Understands and responds in a relevant way to only some of the other side's critical comments	Understands or responds to some of the other side's critical comments only partly	Understands few of the other side's critical comments and fails to respond to them in any relevant way	
Total score					

Discussion Questions

1. What were some of the similarities between European and Japanese feudalism?
2. What were some of the differences between European and Japanese feudalism?
3. What is the importance of the kamikaze to Shogun Japan?
4. What would have been the most important consequence to Japanese culture if the Taika Reforms had been enforced?

1. Possible Answers

- *Both feudal systems were based on obligations, loyalty, and class. In both Europe and Japan, there existed a structure called the feudal pyramid. In Europe, the pyramid had the following order: king, nobles, knights, and peasantry. In Japan, it was much the same: emperor, aristocrats, bushi/daimyo, samurai, and peasantry.*
- *Each class was separate from the classes above and below, but each social/economic class owed loyalty to the class above. For instance, a European noble was given a land grant from the king called a fief. This gift of land meant that the noble owed the king loyalty in war, troops, money, and a certain number of days in battle per year.*
- *The Japanese system was similar. The bushi/daimyo employed the samurai much as knights were in Europe. The samurai owed his loyalty to the bushi whose house he served in the same way the knight owed loyalty to the noble who employed him.*

2. Possible Answers

- *The main difference between the two feudal systems lay in the fact that the European system was based on economics. The Europeans used the feudal system as a form of government before nation-states, but most relationships had a monetary aspect to them or a contribution of time expected of a knight or noble.*
- *The Japanese system was based on warfare. The relationship between bushi and samurai was based on the code of bushido, the way of the warrior. Honor was the most important aspect of the warrior.*
- *It was near the end of the samurai's dominance that many of them were forced to assume an economic role in Japanese society to survive. Many samurai became rice merchants during the latter part of the Tokugawa shogunate to keep from losing everything.*

3. Possible Answers

- *The first kamikaze in Japanese history saved the Japanese islands from destruction at the hands of a giant Mongol fleet. This great storm swept the Mongol fleet out to sea and preserved Japanese culture.*
- *The Mongols attempted to invade Japan in both 1274 and 1280 and failed both times.*

4. Possible Answers

- *If the Taika Reforms had been enforced, the Japanese emperor would have been recreated in the mold of the Chinese emperor, "the son of Heaven."*
- *This means that Japan would have had a strong emperor with all of the political power of the country in his hands. There would have been little and no infighting among the aristocrats or Buddhist monasteries.*
- *There would have been no powerful Shogunate, because the Japanese emperor, in Confucian style, would not have shared his power with anyone.*

Extension Activities

<http://www.artelino.com/articles/samurai.asp>

1. Using the Web site above, research the life of a samurai and create a short timeline to show the rise and fall of the samurai class between the 12th and 19th centuries.
2. Use the Internet search engine of your choice to solve a mystery and answer this question: “Were there really ninjas in feudal Japan and what was their purpose?” Then, see if you can find the answer to this second question: “Were there female ninjas and what was their purpose?” The answers might surprise you.
3. Using what you now know of feudal Japan, take the discussion a step further by making this a change-over-time essay topic: “Trace Japanese industrialization from 1868 to 1904. Explain how this rapid industrialization had consequences for the 20th century.”

Internet Resources

<http://gojapan.about.com/od/japanhistory/a/historytimeline.htm>

This particular site gives a brief, but understandable timeline of Japanese history as well as links to other Japanese Web sites.

<http://www.samurai-archives.com/women.html>

This unique site features the famous women of Japanese history.

<http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/FEUJAPAN/HEIJI.HTM>

This is the ultimate Web site for Japanese feudal culture. It features gorgeous art and a detailed history of the feudal era.

Shogun Japan: Multiple-Choice Quiz

1. The Taika Reforms of 646 CE were meant to:
 - A. recreate the Japanese emperor in the style of a Chinese Confucian emperor
 - B. recreate the Chinese legal code in Japan
 - C. recreate the Chinese examination system in Japan
 - D. recreate the Grand Canal on the island of Honshu.
 - E. all of the above
2. Which of the following religious groups competed with the Japanese aristocracy for imperial power and favor?
 - A. Muslim
 - B. Hindu
 - C. Buddhist
 - D. Nestorian
 - E. Manichean
3. Where was the Japanese royal court finally forced to relocate because of monastic influence?
 - A. Nara
 - B. Heian
 - C. Kyoto
 - D. Silla
 - E. Nagasaki
4. What does the term *bakufu* mean?
 - A. Tent
 - B. Temporary
 - C. Feudal
 - D. both B and C
 - E. both A and B
5. The European feudal systems featured knights while the Japanese feudal system featured:
 - A. samurai
 - B. koken
 - C. ninja
 - D. hojo
 - E. ryoanji

6. The end of the age of shoguns came with the _____ Restoration in 1868.
- A. Meiji
 - B. Shinto
 - C. Ryoanji
 - D. Tokugawa
 - E. Kamakura
7. Where was the first shogunate established?
- A. Hiroshima
 - B. Edo
 - C. Kyoto
 - D. Kamakura
 - E. Honshu
8. During the Heian era, the first novel in history was written about Heian court life. What was the title of that novel?
- A. *The Tale of Genji*
 - B. *The Romance of the Rose*
 - C. *The Tales of Sinbad*
 - D. *The Secret History of the Mongols*
 - E. *A History of the Gempei Wars*
9. Who was the author of that novel?
- A. Omar Khayyam
 - B. Lady Murasaki
 - C. Himeji
 - D. Ashikaga Yoshino
 - E. none of the above
10. The *samurai* served overlords known as:
- A. *bushi*
 - B. *shoguns*
 - C. primogeniture
 - D. zen.
 - E. all of the above

11. The Tokugawa Shogunate guaranteed Japan's isolation by expelling which group from the country?
- A. Buddhists
 - B. Muslim Sufis
 - C. Jesuit priests
 - D. Shinto priests
 - E. Shamans
12. The code of the warrior, *bushido*, held that a samurai's honor was all-important. If defeated in battle or dishonored in any way, he was required to commit _____, or ritual suicide, to redeem his honor.
- A. *Seppuku*
 - B. Shinto
 - C. *Chan*
 - D. *Sati*
 - E. Koryo
13. Which family established the first shogunate at Kamakura in 1185?
- A. Ashikaga
 - B. Hojo
 - C. Minamoto
 - D. Taira
 - E. Tokugawa
14. What family overthrew the shogunate from the previous question?
- A. Ashikaga
 - B. Hojo
 - C. Minamoto
 - D. Taira
 - E. Tokugawa
15. What family controlled the last shogunate, which was overthrown in 1868?
- A. Ashikaga
 - B. Hojo
 - C. Minamoto
 - D. Taira
 - E. Tokugawa

16. During the Onin Wars, what group was able to confiscate land and accumulate power for themselves at the local level?
- A. *bushi*
 - B. Shinto
 - C. *samurai*
 - D. the peasantry
 - E. none of the above
17. Between 1467 and 1477, civil war raged across Japan. What was a consequence of this period of warfare?
- A. The rise of the Taira Shogunate
 - B. The Meiji Restoration
 - C. The destruction of the Heian court
 - D. The decline of Buddhism in Japan
 - E. The division of Japan into 300 smaller states
18. Which of the following shogunates ruled the longest?
- A. Ashikaga
 - B. Hojo
 - C. Minamoto
 - D. Taira
 - E. Tokugawa
19. By the 1630s, which was the only Japanese port open to limited trade with the world outside of Japan?
- A. Nagasaki
 - B. Hiroshima
 - C. Edo
 - D. Tokyo
 - E. Kyoto
20. What group of European traders were the only source of technology and literature for the Japanese for nearly two centuries?
- A. English
 - B. Portugese
 - C. Dutch
 - D. Germans
 - E. Italians

Shogun Japan: Multiple-Choice Quiz

Answer Key

1. A
2. C
3. B
4. E
5. A
6. A
7. D
8. A
9. B
10. A
11. C
12. A
13. C
14. A
15. E
16. A
17. E
18. E
19. A
20. C

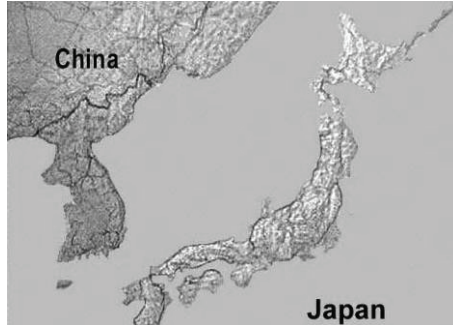


Japan is an important player in modern-day geopolitics, and its unique historical development has affected the way in which Japan has participated in global events. Throughout its history, Japan has struggled to find the proper way to interact with other countries; at the same time, it has endeavored to establish its own national identity. Issues of foreign relations and national identity became important during the shogunate period in Japan, along with challenges relating to governmental organization, social structure, and national autonomy. Though most historians characterize the shogunate period as lasting from the mid-14th century to the mid-19th century, to fully understand developments in shogun-era Japan, we need to begin by looking at some key events from earlier times.

Essential Questions

- Why did Japan copy so much of China's religious traditions, culture, and political institutions at various times early in its history?
- Why did Japan's emperor, who was seen as divine, lack much real political power from the Heian era on?
- Why was Japan until the mid-1800s so often divided into regions ruled mainly by aristocratic clans or powerful individual leaders, the *daimyos*?
- What role(s) have the samurai played in Japan's long history? How important was the code of honor, *bushido*, in maintaining or undermining order in Japan's feudal systems?
- Why were the shoguns, rather than the emperor, the key national leaders for so many centuries prior to the late 1800s?
- What forces led to the decline of the Tokugawa Shogunate and its ultimate end during the Meiji Restoration in 1868?

Chinese Influence on Japanese Identity



- Japan borrowed many Chinese ideas and innovations
- Chinese writing script and literature
- Governmental organization
- Buddhism
- Persistence of Shinto

China had a significant impact on the development of early Japan because the two countries were located so closely to each other. The Chinese, however, were stronger and richer than Japan and dominated the Far East (including Korea and Vietnam) both culturally and militarily for centuries.

The Japanese incorporated many Chinese ideas and innovations, including Chinese writing script, Chinese literature, and governmental organization and bureaucracy. The most significant Chinese import may have been Buddhism, which was introduced into Japan in the sixth century. Buddhism eventually became highly influential in the political development of Japan.

Even though Japan adopted Chinese Confucian and Buddhist traditions, the Japanese did not abandon their native religion, Shinto, which emphasizes veneration and worship of nature. Shinto centers on the belief that all elements of nature (from waterfalls to boulders) contain some elements of the divine, called *kami*. Unlike other religions, Shinto has no strictly delineated moral code; instead, it simply stresses purity.

The Yamato State

- In its early history, Japan was organized around the *uji*
- The Yamato State developed as a consolidation of several *uji*
- Chinese-style government
- Prince Shotoku and the Seventeen-Article Constitution



Prince Shotoku

In its early history, Japan was organized into a number of clans called *uji*—groups ruled by hereditary chiefs. These clans had a hereditary warrior aristocracy and their rulers tended to be authoritarian.

The Yamato State came into existence as the result of the consolidation of several different *uji*. In 587, the Soga *uji* won a war of succession and assumed power. Heavily influenced by Buddhism and other Chinese ideas, the Soga incorporated many Chinese elements into the Yamato State, including a “bureaucracy of merit” organized according to Confucian principles.

In 604, the regent Prince Shotoku created the “Seventeen-Article Constitution.” It was not so much a political document as a set of ideal social behaviors and a moral code that incorporated elements of both Confucianism and Buddhism.

In spite of attempts to bring orderliness to the Yamato State, Japan during this time still struggled with issues relating to the role of the emperor and the influence and power of the elite families.

Taika Reforms



- Elites unhappy with Yamato policies, installed Tenchi
- Emperor moved to curb power of elite families
- Taika Reforms (646)
- Land redistribution
- Taxation system
- Taiho Code (701)

A number of elites were unhappy with the policies of the Yamato court, particularly the control exerted by the government and the emphasis placed on Buddhism. The elites managed to successfully install a new emperor, Tenchi, who was supported and advised by a powerful aristocratic family, the Fujiwara.

Although the wealthy Japanese clans had helped him gain his position and power, the emperor soon came to regard them as a liability. Tenchi (under the influence of the Fujiwara) pushed through what became known as the “Taika Reforms.” These were designed to cast the emperor of Japan as an absolute ruler in the same mold as the “Son of Heaven,” as the Chinese emperor was called. To control the families, the emperor undermined the source of their wealth by forbidding private land ownership. He then built loyalty by rewarding those he favored with land grants. The government also instituted a census and used it to implement a form of taxation based on the one used in China.

In 701, the Taiho Code modified and legally enshrined many of the changes begun by the Taika Reforms. Most importantly, it set up a Chinese-style centralized bureaucracy for running the country.

Nara Period

- 710–794
- New capital established
- Buddhist temples built
- *The Sutra of the Golden Light*
- Power struggles continued within Japanese government
- Capital moved to Heian



The imperial Japanese ruling house established a new capital in Nara in 710. The city was a copy of the Chinese city of Chang'an, although it was only about one-fourth the size of Chang'an. The court was modeled after the Tang dynasty's in China.

The Buddhist temples of the Nara period owned land and were politically powerful in their own right. Much of their power came from the emperor's use of the *Sutra of the Golden Light* as the basis for his right to rule. The *Sutra* stated that law was of the human world and could change rapidly. That meant that the laws of humans and Buddhism could be adapted to the emperor and the politics of the Japanese court as needed.

The end of the Nara period was characterized by political struggles to determine who would assume the Japanese throne. These power struggles between the Japanese clans and Buddhist monasteries from the hills around Nara reached a fever pitch of violence and deceit.

To end the conflict, the capital at Nara was moved to the city of Heian in order to move the government away from the Buddhist monasteries that surrounded the former capital city on all sides.

Discussion Questions

1. What key aspects of social, political, and cultural life did the Japanese borrow from China in forming their national identity and political system early in the Common Era?
2. How did the Nara period (710–794) show the continuing influence of China on Japan’s political rulers and their political system?
3. What showed the continuing strengths of native Japanese traditions during this time when much was borrowed from China?

1. The Japanese borrowed Buddhism from China, they adapted China’s written script and its official bureaucracy of “merit” based on Confucian principles, etc.
2. The new capital in Nara was modeled on China’s imperial city Chang’an; the influence of Buddhism and Buddhist monasteries on the central government; the concept of the emperor as an absolute ruler and the “Son of Heaven,” etc.
3. Perhaps the most obvious evidence was the continuing loyalty of the Japanese to the various forms of Shinto worship native to their land.

Heian Japan



The Tale of Genji

- 794–1185
- Emperor as divine, not to be bothered with ruling
- Cultural contributions
- Courtly life in Heian Japan
- Social and political organization

The role of the emperor in Heian Japan originally followed the Chinese model, with the emperor holding complete power over a centralized state. As the Heian era progressed, however, the emperor became more of a symbolic and ceremonial figure rather than one with real political power. This shift occurred largely due to the idea that because the emperor was divine, he should not be bothered with ordinary things—such as day-to-day governing. Consequently, real power came to be held by powerful aristocratic families.

The move to Heian signified the beginning of a more distinctive Japanese culture. Although the Chinese language remained dominant in education and government, Chinese characters were adopted into a Japanese script, which was often used by women at court. One such woman, Lady Murasaki Shikibu, wrote the world's first novel, *The Tale of Genji*, which tells the story of the life and loves of a prince.

As real power shifted away from the emperor, his court became more focused on elaborate rituals and ceremonies. The Japanese created a new system of etiquette and language unique to the Heian court.

In Heian society, Japanese peasants worked the land and provided the taxes (mostly in the form of textiles and rice). A hereditary aristocracy dominated local areas in much the same way that the *uji* had exerted influence earlier, and powerful aristocratic families in the emperor's court wielded the power of the centralized government.

Land and the Heian

- Land became consolidated in the hands of a few powerful families
- Tax burden fell more and more on the peasants
- *Shoen*: private estates that operated as small, local states



During the Heian period, more and more land became consolidated in the hands of a relatively small number of families. These powerful families were exempt from taxes, as were Buddhist and Shinto monasteries; consequently, the tax burden fell increasingly on the peasants.

Private estates called *shoen* developed as aristocratic families came to control more and more land. These *shoen* were not single blocks of land like those found in Europe during its feudal period; instead, the wealthy would seize scattered pieces of land when they could, and then would get peasants to work the land under the supervision of a manager.

Shoen came to comprise the majority of agricultural land in Japan and were passed down within families. The families controlling the *shoen* also increasingly began to act independently from the Heian government.

Military and the Heian

- Powerful families in the government organized armies relying heavily on mounted cavalry
- Samurai emerged
- Contending armies grew in power



Aristocratic families like the Fujiwara and Taira controlled the government Council of State and organized armies that relied largely on mounted cavalry. Originally the military answered only to the emperor, but during the mid-Heian period government armies composed of *samurai* (meaning “servants”) were converted into private armies of the Japanese aristocracy. *Shoen* also developed their own private armies, recruiting men to help defend and expand their estates. These private armies formed the backbone of the Japanese military for nearly a thousand years.

The early samurai were not the stylish, educated samurai depicted in films and television shows; rather, they were largely illiterate, recruited from the lower classes, and trained to destroy an opposing army. (The samurai of legend and history originated with the Tokugawa Shogunate, in the 17th century.) The samurai were mounted warriors who carried a wide variety of weapons such as bows and arrows, short swords, and long swords with a curved blade.

The contending armies of the different aristocratic families came to exert more and more influence, further weakening the power and position of the emperor and the centralized government. The armies also made it possible for aristocratic families to wield more power.

The *Bushi*



- Feudal warrior leaders
- *Bushido*
- *Seppuku*

In addition to the samurai, feudal warriors called *bushi* (which means “warrior”) also arose. They came from aristocratic families and served as both military and political leaders in defending the *shoen* against attacks from other families. The *bushi* were similar to European knights and even had a code of honor known as *bushido* that was very much like the European knights’ code of chivalry.

The following quote by the famous warlord Imagawa Ryoshun illustrates the aims and ethics of *bushido*: “In Governing the country, it is dangerous to lack even one of the virtues of humanity, righteousness, etiquette and wisdom. It is forbidden to forget the great debt of kindness one owes to his master and ancestors and thereby make light of the virtues of loyalty and filial piety... There is a primary need to distinguish loyalty from disloyalty and to establish rewards and punishments... Just as Buddha preached the various laws in order to save all living beings, one must rack one’s brains and never depart from the Way of [the] Warrior.” One of the most well-known aspects of *bushido* is *seppuku*—a ritual suicide committed to restore honor.

The Decline of the Heian

- Emperor's influence continued to weaken
- Decentralization of government
- Taira and Minamoto clans
- Gempei Wars of the 11th century
- Shogun: military governor



As the Heian period wore on, the emperor's power continued to weaken and he became more and more of a symbolic figure rather than a political leader. Politics had become increasingly dominated by the aristocratic families and the emperor no longer governed the country. In addition, the central government stopped trying to exert its influence anywhere outside of the capital area. As a result, Japan quickly spiraled towards feudalism and a decentralized government.

The Japanese aristocracy had accumulated large tracts of land and private armies; consequently, power shifted to the local elites in the countryside. Two families came to control much of Japan: the Taira and their mortal enemies, the Minamoto. The two battled in the 11th century in the Gempei Wars, with the Minamoto emerging victorious. They then claimed to rule Japan in the emperor's name and installed their clan leader as military governor, or shogun. After taking power, the Minamoto executed every member of the Taira clan.

Discussion Questions

1. In the Heian period, how did the notion that the emperor was divine actually work to limit his effective political power?
2. In what way did women at the imperial court in the Heian period aid in shifting Japan's culture away from simply copying Chinese practices?
3. The growing power of the top aristocratic clans was in part due to the way the pattern of land distribution changed over the course of the Heian period. Can you explain?
4. What was the difference between the samurai warriors of the Heian period and the *bushi* of the same era?

1. He was viewed as divine, but this meant (among other things) that he should not be bothered with ordinary problems of governing, which were to be handled by various powerful aristocratic clans.
2. Among other shifts, Chinese characters adapted for use as a written script of the Japanese language, and this script was often used by women at the court.
3. Land became concentrated in the hands of a small number of powerful aristocratic families and Buddhist and Shinto monasteries, many of which were exempt from taxes.
4. The samurai of that era were usually ordinary, uneducated men fighting for various powerful aristocratic clans. The *bushi* were themselves aristocrats who fought and led in battles and followed a code of honor known as *bushido*.

The Kamakura Shogunate



- 1185–1333
- Minamoto established their own capital at Kamakura
- Emperor recognized Minamoto leader as shogun
- Creation of the *bakufu* government

The Minamoto allowed the emperor to remain in the city of Heian and still treated the city as the formal capital, but they then established their own secondary capital at Kamakura and exercised the real power of their government from there. The emperor offered official recognition of the shift in power by giving Yoritomo, the leader of the Minamoto, a number of official titles and posts, including the name *Seii Taishogun*, which meant “barbarian-subduing general”—a title later shortened to *shogun*. In theory, the shogun was simply the emperor’s military adviser, but in reality the shogun held the actual power.

The government of the shoguns was called the *bakufu*, or “tent government” (because soldiers lived in tents), and it functioned more or less as a military government primarily concerned with military and police matters. The remnants of civil government were left in the hands of the emperor.

The Kamakura Shogunate (cont.)

- Relied on ties of loyalty and obligation
- Took steps to strengthen the government
- Mongols attempted to invade Japan
- Kamakura weakened by the Mongol attempts



Great Buddha of Kamakura

Japan began to develop more and more feudal elements. Yoritomo's power relied on loyalty from those who served him, so he rewarded them with land or government posts. In addition, other families made themselves vassals of the government in order to further their own positions in society. The Kamakura Shogunate further consolidated its power by establishing new administrative offices, a council for policy creation, a court (the Office of Inquiry), and new law codes; the government also carefully watched and limited the actions of the emperor.

One of the greatest threats that the Kamakura faced was invasion by the Mongols, who controlled China at the time. On two different instances, the Mongols attempted to invade and conquer Japan. Even though they had superior weapons, the Mongols failed because of bad weather: in 1274, a storm drove back their fleet, and in 1281, they ran into a typhoon. The Japanese called this second storm the *kamikaze* (divine wind) and saw it as nature (*kami*) protecting them. The Mongols planned a third invasion, but it never materialized.

Though the Mongols failed to conquer Japan, their attacks weakened the authority of the Kamakura and drained the shogunate's finances. The vassals of the Kamakura demanded compensation for financial losses; when the Kamakura couldn't provide this, discontent began to spread and weaken their power.

The Ashikaga Shogunate



- Emperor tried to reassert power
- General Ashikaga Takauji seized power in 1336
- Ashikaga Shogunate established its capital in Kyoto

As the Kamakura weakened, Emperor Go-Daigo attempted to reassert his power militarily. Although he failed, his attempt caused the Kamakura to lose control of Japan, for in the fighting a general named Ashikaga Takauji seized power. After a series of battles, Ashikaga's clan overthrew the Kamakura Shogunate in 1336. Ashikaga set up his own *bakufu* in Kyoto. The Ashikaga Shogunate lasted until the late 16th century. During that time, Japan remained in a continual state of war as military leaders established independent territories.

Decentralization of Power

- Ashikaga Shogunate's authority gradually weakened
- Power shifted to those in charge of the *shoen*—the *daimyo*
- Civil war broke out in 1467



The Ashikaga shoguns proved unable to limit the fighting among local lords (*daimyos*) who fought to increase their landholdings and their power. Military power increasingly came to lie with individual lords. Formal centralized power waned, and the real ties between the shogunate and local governments came through individual bonds of loyalty between the *daimyos* and the *bakufu*.

During the 15th century, the relationship between the *daimyos* and the *bakufu* grew increasingly uneasy. Civil war finally broke out with the Onin War (1467–1477) and brought about the final disintegration of the centralized Japanese government.

Feudal Japanese Society



- *Shoen* came to exert more influence and control in society
- Role of the samurai
- Villages: main administrative bodies
- Agricultural production
- Economic developments

When the Ashikaga Shogunate failed, the *shoen* became feudal centers of power, with the *daimyos* taking on the responsibilities of administration and organization. As the *daimyos* assumed various local and regional governmental roles, the *samurai* came to fill local and regional governmental positions (in addition to serving as soldiers and military leaders). The *daimyos* who governed the 300 smaller estates of feudal Japan ruled on a local basis in place of a centralized government.

Villages represented the main administrative bodies in Japan. Though the *daimyos* controlled and governed the villages, the peasants who lived there remained relatively free from direct control of the *daimyo*, although they still had to pay taxes.

Agricultural productivity improved during this time period. The *daimyos*' financial stability depended, at least partially, on the productivity of the land, so they oversaw the implementation of improvements in irrigation and farming techniques in order to make the land as fruitful as possible.

In spite of the political turmoil during this time period, trade continued (both foreign and domestic) and Japan began to shift to a money-based economy, rather than one based on barter.

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to say that the Kamakura Shogunate was a “feudal” government and that it became more so over time?
2. What effect did the failed invasion attempts by the Mongols have on the Kamakura Shogunate?
3. The Ashikaga Shogunate was never really successful at unifying Japan. Why do you think that was so?

1. In this case, the Kamakura Shogunate became more “feudal” as other powerful families became vassals of the Minamoto family in exchange for land and protection, and as vassals contributed their own wealth and military resources to the shogunate.
2. The efforts at defense against the Mongols drained the Kamakura Shogunate’s finances. This weakened its ability to help the other aristocratic families that had aided in the defense, who became dissatisfied with the Kamakura government.
3. The growth of other aristocratic powers, the *daimyos*, and their private armies kept the country in a state of turmoil and civil war.

Wars of Unification

- Fighting broke out as people tried to take advantage of the weakened Ashikaga Shogunate
- Oda Nobunaga
- Toyotomi Hideyoshi



Between 1573 and 1600, two powerful and ambitious men attempted to lead Japan as shoguns themselves or to manipulate the office for their own ends. Neither of these men ultimately became shogun, but each did become extremely powerful in his own right. This time marks the transition between the end of the Ashikaga era and the beginning of the golden age of Japanese feudalism—the Tokugawa.

Oda Nobunaga was a samurai who attacked the city of Kyoto and established control over it, then went on to take over other regions. He was a brutal leader who treated the people he conquered harshly. Ultimately, he was murdered by his generals. After his death, General Toyotomi Hideyoshi rose to power.

Japan Under Toyotomi



- Toyotomi unified the country
- Attempted to conquer China by invading Korea
- Tokugawa Ieyasu

Toyotomi tried to unify Japan, and by 1590, he had conquered the remaining provinces and established himself as ruler of the entire country. Next, he attempted to take over China: he began by invading Korea, but the Ming dynasty sent troops to help the Koreans beat back the Japanese. Although he tried again later, he never succeeded in his attempts to conquer Korea and China.

Before his death, Toyotomi arranged for a council to govern until his son came of age. After Toyotomi died, one of the regents, Tokugawa Ieyasu, killed his son, defeated a coalition of *daimyos*, and assumed full power.

European Contact



- Portuguese traders arrived in 1543
- As the Portuguese began to trade regularly, Jesuit priests also arrived to spread Christianity in 1549

During Toyotomi's reign, Europeans came into contact with Japan for the first time when Portuguese sailors were shipwrecked on the Japanese coast. Over time, the Portuguese traded goods and weapons with the Japanese. In addition, the Portuguese also introduced Christianity to Japan. Jesuit missionaries met with some success in converting the Japanese, but the country remained predominantly Buddhist and Shinto. The few Japanese the Jesuits did manage to convert later suffered persecution and even death before Japanese Christianity was driven underground during the Tokugawa Shogunate.

Tokugawa Ieyasu

- *Daimyo* of Edo
- Proclaimed shogun in 1603
- Installed his son as shogun in order to strengthen Tokugawa control and eliminate problems of succession
- Political unity



Tokugawa Ieyasu, who seized power after the death of Toyotomi, was the *daimyo* of a large territory around the city of Edo (present-day Tokyo). After solidifying his control, he was proclaimed shogun by the emperor, an act which led to centuries of rule by the Tokugawa family.

Ieyasu tried to secure Tokugawa rule and avoid problems of succession by resigning as shogun in 1605 and having his son Hidetada named as his successor, although Ieyasu kept most of the real power for himself. These actions established a precedent, and in the same way that his father had, Hidetada resigned the position of shogun while still alive so that his grown son could assume the position. Eliminating problems of succession helped strengthen the claim to leadership for the Tokugawa family.

Ieyasu had reorganized the *daimyos* and required pledges of allegiance from *daimyos* in outlying areas. Eventually, the Tokugawa and their allies brought most of the estates under their control, bringing a degree of political unity to Japan.

The Tokugawa Shogunate

- 1603–1869
- Relied on the feudal system
- Appointed *daimyos* to help administer government
- Emphasized maintaining order and control
- Maintained both a public and secret police
- Eventually “closed” Japan to foreign influences

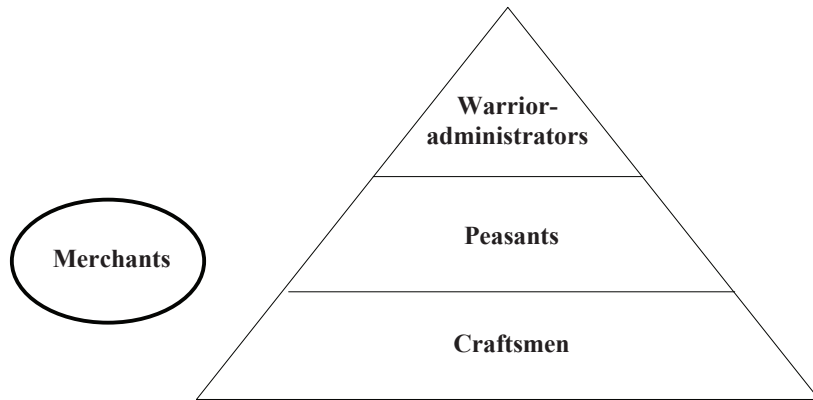


The Tokugawa government relied on the feudal system and appointed loyal *daimyo* to help administer the provinces outside the capital of Edo. To further encourage loyalty and ties to the central government, the *daimyos* were expected to spend time both in the court at Edo as well as their own province.

The Tokugawa also placed a premium on keeping order and control. It took a number of steps to strengthen its control and to decrease both domestic and foreign threats to their power. For example, the Tokugawa outlawed guns in order to protect its rule and to preserve order, and also established both a public and secret police in order to monitor events in the provinces and report any disloyal activities that took place. In addition, the government ultimately “closed” Japan to foreign influences, which it had increasingly come to see as a danger.

The Tokugawa Shogunate established a long period of peace throughout Japan while consolidating its own power.

Social Classes During the Tokugawa Shogunate



The Tokugawas' emphasis on order resulted in a well-developed class system centered around professions. Warrior-administrators stood at the top, along with the hereditary elites. Because the Tokugawa regarded them as valuable producers, peasants made up the second tier. Craftsmen and artisans formed the third tier, since the Tokugawa saw their work as less critical than that of the peasants. The prevailing attitude at the time was that merchants did not produce anything for society—they merely handled what others had produced—and therefore stood outside the traditional class system. This view reflected the continuing influence of Chinese Confucian principles of order and structure.

Samurai During the Tokugawa Shogunate

- Samurai began to follow the *bushido* code
- In charge of Japan's military
- Gradually shifted to governmental and administrative roles



During the Tokugawa shogunate, the samurai began to transcend their lower-class, mercenary origins and devoted themselves to the *bushido* code—in particular its emphasis on self-control.

Since the Tokugawa government had taken the weapons out of the hands of the people of Japan, the military role of the samurai grew.

Because the Tokugawa era was a time of relative peace and order, less need existed for the military leadership of the samurai. Consequently, many of them shifted into governmental and administrative roles.

The Tokugawa and Christianity



- Catholic missionaries attempted to convert the elites, but had little success
- More success in the countryside
- Shimabara Rebellion
- Persecution of Japanese Christians, expulsion of missionaries

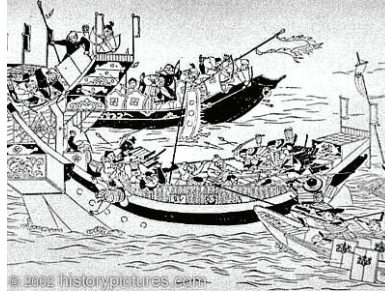
Catholic missionaries, including groups like the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) took steps to introduce Christianity in Japan. While the shoguns had initially thought that the missionaries might bring valuable information with them, as well as facilitate trade, they later came to see the missionaries—and ultimately all foreigners—as threats.

Catholic missionaries had hoped to convert the elites, but had little success in doing so. The missionaries then turned their attention to the peasants and those in the countryside, where they fared better in gaining converts.

In 1606, the shogunate issued legislation that aimed to force people to abandon the Christian faith. An uprising known as the Shimabara Rebellion had occurred earlier in the southern and eastern areas of Japan, where most of the country's Christian converts lived. The shogun believed that the revolt had occurred because of the influence of Christianity. The new laws began a period of persecution: foreign missionaries were killed or expelled, and Japanese Christians were punished or executed if they did not recant.

The Closing of Japan

- Shimabara Rebellion heightened fear of foreign influences
- Tokugawa “closed” Japan beginning in 1649
- Allowed limited contact with the Dutch, Chinese, Koreans
- Trade significantly limited and controlled
- Some *daimyos* ignored the closing



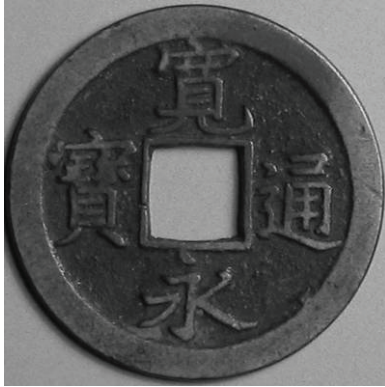
The Shimabara Rebellion convinced the Tokugawa leadership to take steps in order to limit the influence of Europeans. They limited public access to foreign literature and books—a decision that would prevent many European scientific and technological advances from reaching Japan. The Tokugawa also forbade foreigners from coming to Japan, made it a capital crime for Japanese citizens to leave the country, and strictly limited trade.

The Japanese did not reject everything foreign. While they sought to isolate themselves from the world, they did allow very limited trade with the Dutch, the Chinese, and the Koreans.

Some *daimyos* far-removed from Edo ignored the ban and continued trading with the outside world. In doing so, they accumulated a great deal of wealth and increased their status and power in Japan.

Japan would remain isolated from the rest of the world for more than two centuries.

Japan's Economy After the Closing



- Although isolated, Japan experienced economic success and advances
- Regional trade flourished
- The Japanese economy grew
- Money replaced barter
- Agricultural production lagged

The closing did not cause Japan to collapse economically. The country did maintain limited (and strictly controlled) trade with the Koreans, Dutch, and Chinese. In addition, interregional trade within Japan grew rapidly, and different regional *daimyos* encouraged production of goods that could be traded throughout the country. Economic growth resulted in the abandonment of the barter system and the implementation of a money system.

Production in the agricultural sector, however, did not grow in the same way that regional trade did, as it remained weak. Despite advances in irrigation and other farming techniques, crop yields remained low—a troublesome development for *daimyos* and samurai who depended on taxes collected on agricultural production.

Decline of the Samurai

- Less need for warriors
- Samurai slowly lost power, status
- The warrior ethic seemed to lose its relevance
- The “Forty-Seven *Ronin*”



Although some samurai obtained positions in government, many found that there the need for warriors had dropped. In order to survive, many samurai turned to merchants to borrow money. The position of the samurai gradually worsened, and some took more and more common positions, tilling land alongside peasants or becoming rice merchants. In addition to tilling the land, the samurai serving as rice merchants accumulated debt at a rapid rate, further weakening their position and status in society.

As the role of the military declined, the samurai code of honor seemed to lose its relevance, as seen in the case of the “Forty-Seven *Ronin*” (*ronin* were *samurai* who had lost their master). In this incident, the shogun condemned a group of samurai for avenging the death of their lord, instructing them to commit suicide as a punishment for their revenge. By this time, the shogun was more interested in preserving a centralized order rather than allowing for individual samurai to pursue justice according to their own code of ethics.

Tokugawa Culture

- *Kabuki* theater
- Puppet plays known as *bunraku*
- *Haiku* poetry
- Architecturally, Edo was made almost entirely of wood
- The “Floating World” section of Edo



In spite of its isolation, Tokugawa Japan had a vibrant cultural and artistic life. The lavish culture in Edo was known as *Genroku*.

Kabuki was a popular form of theater involving rich costumes and interaction with the audience. Women were not allowed to act in plays, so men played female roles as well. Lifelike-puppet plays known as *bunraku* were also frequently staged.

Haiku (poems made up of three lines with five syllables in the first line, seven in the second line, and five in the third line) also became popular during this period. Here is an example of *haiku*:

“Against the bright sky
stones glow where strong arms placed them
to say ‘Remember.’”

The city of Edo was built almost entirely of wood (except for the shogun’s fortifications); not surprisingly, it burned down several times and had to be rebuilt. The section of Edo that contained arts and culture (as well as other questionable pursuits) became known as the “Floating World.”

Painting and Literature



Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, wood-block print

- Japanese painters adapted a style of Chinese landscape painting
- Wood-block printing
- A return to “serious” literature

During the Ashikaga Shogunate, Japanese painters adapted a style of landscape painting developed in Song China, providing a deeper, more abstract focus on nature. Japanese painting flourished under the patronage of wealthy merchants in cities like Edo.

The Japanese made wood-block printing a fine art. Artists would create a series of wood blocks based on a painting, then would apply a different color of paint to each block and then print them on top of one another. Wood-block prints became very popular and widespread, since multiple copies could be easily made.

An increased literacy rate helped fuel an interest in literature. Many of the works written during this time period were fairly serious, including several important histories that stressed the value of the Japanese identity.

Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Tokugawa Ieyasu succeeded in unifying Japan for the long run, whereas Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi could not sustain their efforts to unite Japan past their own lives?
2. One way by which the Tokugawa Shogunate kept the powerful *daimyos* under control was to require them to spend some time at the court in Edo as well as in their own provinces. Why do you think the shoguns adopted this policy?
3. What else did the shoguns do to maintain order and central governmental control?
4. Do you think the shogunate's decision to isolate the nation from outside influences, especially those of the West, was a wise step for Japan to take? Why or why not?
5. How did the role of the samurai change during the rule of the Tokugawa Shogunate?

1. Answers will vary and should be discussed. Tokugawa Ieyasu was careful to keep a low profile and not assert his power too openly or abruptly; he resigned early so his son could assume power, thereby settling the succession issue, etc.
2. The regular trips of entire *daimyo* households to and from the court at Edo took time and money. At the court it was easier for the shogun, the secret police and others to keep a close watch on powerful and potentially rebellious *daimyos*.
3. Outlawing gun ownership, setting up secret police to monitor political activities, closing Japan to most foreign traders to keep out outside influences, etc.
4. Answers will vary and should be discussed. Some students may stress the positive aspects of the decision. They may say it gave Japanese rulers greater control and fostered unity by limiting the disruption caused by outsiders, especially missionaries out to change Japan's culture. Others may see it as a negative factor, saying it cut Japan off from many worthwhile influences and much scientific learning that could have helped the nation.
5. The samurai became less a lower-class group of hired fighters and more a military elite based on the *bushido* code. As time went on, the samurai's military role declined and more samurai took on administrative duties.

Growing Weakness in the Tokugawa Shogunate

- Not everyone honored the imposed isolation
- The feudal system changed and new groups gained power
- Shoguns grew weaker
- Some came to question the wisdom of Japan's isolation



Some of the *daimyo* who ignored the official closing of the country by trading illegally became very wealthy and gained increasing power that the shogun found difficult to check.

The feudal system had also changed. The position of the samurai had declined, the merchant class had grown in power, and the shogun's authority had begun to erode. In addition, the position of the peasants, particularly in rural areas, gradually grew worse and worse.

The shoguns had also become less skilled in their leadership and did not exert as much control as they did previously. They seemed intent on preserving the status quo and protecting Japan's isolation rather than pursuing progress.

Those who interacted with the Dutch came to question Japan's isolation. They were particularly concerned that Japan was falling further and further behind the West. They raised questions about the shogunate system and called for an end to isolation.

The Arrival of Commodore Perry



- Perry arrived from the U.S. in 1853 and demanded that Japan open its ports
- Perry's demands created a crisis for the shogunate
- Japan signed the Treaty of Kanagawa with U.S. in 1854

The Russians had long tried to establish a trading relationship with Japan, but instead the Americans became the first to accomplish this and open Japan to the West diplomatically. In 1853, Commodore Matthew C. Perry steamed into Yedo (Tokyo) Bay with his gunships and demanded that the Japanese open their ports for refueling and trade. Perry said he would return the next year for the answer.

The Japanese knew that they could not stop the Americans (and others including the British) from forcing the ports to open to Western trade. The shogun's advisors urged him to give in to Perry's demands, but the shogun feared that to do so would demonstrate weakness in the shogunate system. After much internal argument and debate, the shogun gave in to Perry's demands. In 1854, the U.S. and Japan signed the Treaty of Kanagawa. It was an unequal arrangement that gave the Americans priority in trade relations, access to ports, and protection for citizens (extraterritoriality).

The Collapse of the Tokugawa

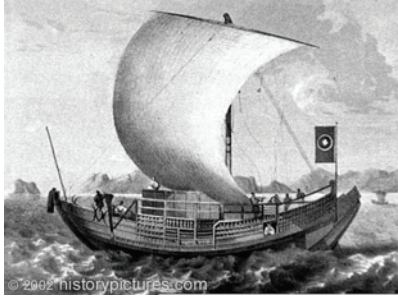
- Opening of Japan eventually led to the fall of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1868
- Tensions erupted in Japan over the shogun's capitulation to the Americans
- Civil war broke out
- Feudalism collapsed with the “restoration” of the emperor



Many elites were disillusioned with the decision to give in to the demands of the Americans. Tensions between the shogun and the daimyos escalated as some regional elites sought to reverse the concessions that the shogun had made. In 1867, a brief civil war broke out, with two rival factions (Choshu and Satsuma) eventually joining together to overthrow the shogun.

In 1868, the Tokugawa Shogunate ended and the emperor Mutsuhito was “restored” to power—an event known as the “Meiji Restoration.” Japan’s feudal age ended after having existed for more than seven centuries. New technologies and industries from the West replaced ritualistic warfare and scripted samurai battles for honor. In one of the saddest periods of Japanese history, the samurai fought one last battle for survival but lost to a modern army equipped with guns.

The Meiji Restoration



- Program of modernization and industrialization implemented
- New industrial base expanded rapidly between 1868 and 1912
- Military buildup

The reform-minded Meiji emperor who came to power in 1868 immediately began a program of modernization and industrialization in an effort to catch up with the advances made in other parts of the world and to make itself capable of defending against foreign threats. The age of steel and industry had begun in Japan.

Japanese students departed Japan to study economics and political institutions in the West so that ideas could be brought home and duplicated. Having been humiliated by the western powers once, the Japanese also began to build up their military and create an empire so that they would never again have to undergo that experience.

Shogun Japan: Legacy

- Industrialization
- Militarism
- Territorial expansion
- World War II



A Japanese *kamikaze* bomber during World War II

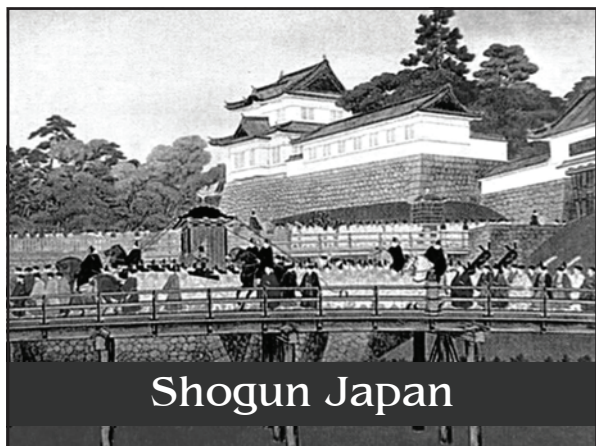
After pursuing rapid industrialization, the Japanese sought to build a navy that they could use to create an empire that could rival those in the West. By 1912, the Japanese navy was the third-most powerful on the planet. This naval strength would play a central role in Japan's territorial expansion in the 20th century.

The Japanese embarked upon a policy of expansion that included victories over Russia and China. Japanese militarism grew consistently during the 1920s and 1930s—actions that ultimately contributed to the outbreak of World War II in the Pacific.

Discussion Questions

1. In what ways did the feudal system change during the last half of the era of the Tokugawa Shogunate?
2. The Tokugawa Shogunate was brought down in part because of the United States. Can you explain how?
3. The shogun was basically a military leader who sought to unite the nation under one central ruler. But in the face of the threat from the West, the shogunate's way of ruling came to be seen as too weak to give Japan the unity and independence so many Japanese wanted. Why do you think it was too weak to do that?

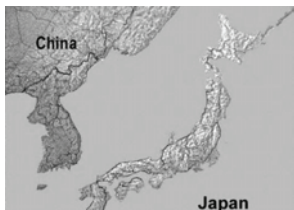
1. The *daimyo* became more independent and powerful, in part through trade; a merchant class arose and grew in wealth; the condition of the peasantry worsened; etc.
2. The shogun angered many daimyos and others in Japan by giving in to U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry's demand that Japan open itself to trade with the U.S. The agreement was seen by many in Japan as unfair and a sign of the shogun's weakness. This triggered an upheaval that led to the fall of the shogunate.
3. Answers will vary. The shoguns always had to rule in cooperation with very independent and powerful *daimyos*, as compared with the more unified and centralized state reformers built around the emperor during the Meiji Restoration.



Essential Questions

- Why did Japan copy so much of China's religious traditions, culture, and political institutions at various times early in its history?
- Why did Japan's emperor, who was seen as divine, lack much real political power from the Heian era on?
- Why was Japan until the mid-1800s so often divided into regions ruled mainly by aristocratic clans or powerful individual leaders, the *daimyos*?
- What role(s) have the samurai played in Japan's long history? How important was the code of honor, *bushido*, in maintaining or undermining order in Japan's feudal systems?
- Why were the shoguns, rather than the emperor, the key national leaders for so many centuries prior to the late 1800s?
- What forces led to the decline of the Tokugawa Shogunate and its ultimate end during the Meiji Restoration in 1868?

Chinese Influence on Japanese Identity



- Japan borrowed many Chinese ideas and innovations
- Chinese writing script and literature
- Governmental organization
- Buddhism
- Persistence of Shinto

The Yamato State

- In its early history, Japan was organized around the *uji*
- The Yamato State developed as a consolidation of several *uji*
- Chinese-style government
- Prince Shotoku and the Seventeen-Article Constitution



Prince Shotoku

Taika Reforms



- Elites unhappy with Yamato policies, installed Tenchi
- Emperor moved to curb power of elite families
- Taika Reforms (646)
- Land redistribution
- Taxation system
- Taiho Code (701)

Nara Period

- 710–794
- New capital established
- Buddhist temples built
- *The Sutra of the Golden Light*
- Power struggles continued within Japanese government
- Capital moved to Heian



Discussion Questions

1. What key aspects of social, political, and cultural life did the Japanese borrow from China in forming their national identity and political system early in the Common Era?
2. How did the Nara period (710–794) show the continuing influence of China on Japan’s political rulers and their political system?
3. What showed the continuing strengths of native Japanese traditions during this time when much was borrowed from China?

Heian Japan



The Tale of Genji

- 794–1185
- Emperor as divine, not to be bothered with ruling
- Cultural contributions
- Courtly life in Heian Japan
- Social and political organization

Land and the Heian

- Land became consolidated in the hands of a few powerful families
- Tax burden fell more and more on the peasants
- *Shoen*: private estates that operated as small, local states



Military and the Heian

- Powerful families in the government organized armies relying heavily on mounted cavalry
- Samurai emerged
- Contending armies grew in power



The *Bushi*



- Feudal warrior leaders
- *Bushido*
- *Seppuku*

The Decline of the Heian

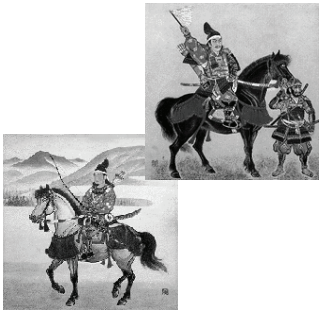
- Emperor's influence continued to weaken
- Decentralization of government
- Taira and Minamoto clans
- Gempei Wars of the 11th century
- Shogun: military governor



Discussion Questions

1. In the Heian period, how did the notion that the emperor was divine actually work to limit his effective political power?
2. In what way did women at the imperial court in the Heian period aid in shifting Japan's culture away from simply copying Chinese practices?
3. The growing power of the top aristocratic clans was in part due to the way the pattern of land distribution changed over the course of the Heian period. Can you explain?
4. What was the difference between the samurai warriors of the Heian period and the *bushi* of the same era?

The Kamakura Shogunate



- 1185–1333
- Minamoto established their own capital at Kamakura
- Emperor recognized Minamoto leader as shogun
- Creation of the *bakufu* government

The Kamakura Shogunate (cont.)

- Relied on ties of loyalty and obligation
- Took steps to strengthen the government
- Mongols attempted to invade Japan
- Kamakura weakened by the Mongol attempts



Great Buddha of Kamakura

The Ashikaga Shogunate



- Emperor tried to reassert power
- General Ashikaga Takauji seized power in 1336
- Ashikaga Shogunate established its capital in Kyoto

Decentralization of Power

- Ashikaga Shogunate's authority gradually weakened
- Power shifted to those in charge of the *shoen*—the *daimyo*
- Civil war broke out in 1467



Feudal Japanese Society



- *Shoen* came to exert more influence and control in society
- Role of the samurai
- Villages: main administrative bodies
- Agricultural production
- Economic developments

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to say that the Kamakura Shogunate was a “feudal” government and that it became more so over time?
2. What effect did the failed invasion attempts by the Mongols have on the Kamakura Shogunate?
3. The Ashikaga Shogunate was never really successful at unifying Japan. Why do you think that was so?

Wars of Unification

- Fighting broke out as people tried to take advantage of the weakened Ashikaga Shogunate
- Oda Nobunaga
- Toyotomi Hideyoshi



Japan Under Toyotomi



- Toyotomi unified the country
- Attempted to conquer China by invading Korea
- Tokugawa Ieyasu

European Contact



- Portuguese traders arrived in 1543
- As the Portuguese began to trade regularly, Jesuit priests also arrived to spread Christianity in 1549

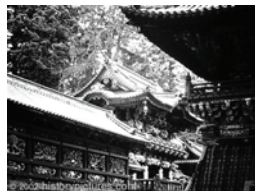
Tokugawa Ieyasu

- *Daimyo* of Edo
- Proclaimed shogun in 1603
- Installed his son as shogun in order to strengthen Tokugawa control and eliminate problems of succession
- Political unity

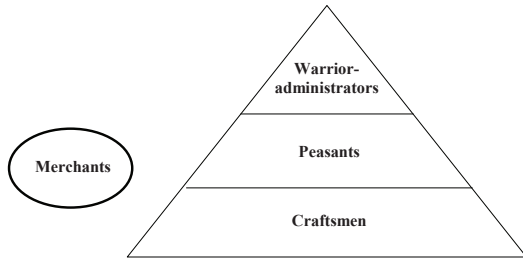


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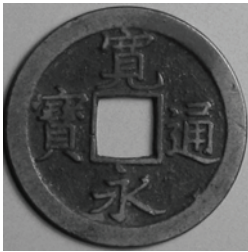
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- *Haiku* poetry
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- The “Floating World” section of Edo



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Hokusai's *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, wood-block print

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- Wood-block printing
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Shogun Japan: Legacy

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- Militarism
- Territorial expansion
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© 2002 historypictures.com
A Japanese kamikaze bomber during World War II

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