20-2 The Reunification of Japan
Japanese Feudal Structure

1. Emperor (Figurehead)
2. Shogun
3. Daimyos
3. Samurai
4. Peasants
5. Artisans
6. Merchants
A Rigid Class System

The **Samurai** (*Shi*) were the only persons allowed to carry a *katana* (sword), and have a family name.

The **farmers and peasants** (*No*), or *Hyakusho* in Japanese, were ranked higher than the merchants and craftsmen.

The **craftsmen** (*Ko*) and **merchants** (*Sho*), despite being ranked the lowest of the four classes, were the most powerful and wealthiest of the era.

In addition to these four classes, there were two lower classes, **Eta** and **Hinin**.

The **Eta** class were considered “unclean” (both and was discriminated against; they were only allowed to work as butchers

The **Hinin**, which means “non-human,” were the criminals; ranked under Eta, they were the lowest, but sometimes could return to their original class.
Feudal Japan Daimyo
A Feudal System

Country under the ruler of numerous warlords known as *daimyo*

Each daimyo had his own castle town and an army of warriors known as *samurai*

Daimyo pledged allegiance to the emperor (in Kyoto) and shogun, or hereditary commander of the army
Map of Feudal Japan
Warfare was common in the late 1500s, Japan was in a constant civil war

Hideyoshi was a successful warlord who wanted Korea AND Japan

“Turtle Boats” delayed invasion
Ieyasu established his new capital at **Edo** which developed into present-day Tokyo.

Ieyasu was a brilliant administrator and strategist.

- He moved hostile daimyo to outlying areas.
- Then he passed a new regulation, the **Sankin Kotai** (alternate residence), requiring every daimyo to live in Edo and in their own castles every other year.
  - The families were left permanently as hostages in Edo if the Daimyo lord was not there.

[Tokugawa Video](#)
Domestic Peace

- Samurai became better educated because of the peace
- Consumption grew → merchant trading rose (silk, sake, fans, porcelain, books, money lending)
- Started steelmaking
- Gov’t tried limiting merchant’s power due to Confucian ideals (Agriculture should be the basis of state wealth)
Foreign Affairs

Initially open to trade and new ideas (Christianity spread)

In 1617, the gov’t persecuted and destroyed almost the entire Christian community in fear that the religion might overthrow their doctrine

1633- ended European trade (only Dutch could trade at Nagasaki’s harbor

Chinese ships limited as well
In 1716, a book called the “Greater Learning for Women” was published. It consisted of 19 chapters telling how women should be subordinate to men, and that a woman's world should consist almost entirely of housework, reproduction and child rearing. The woman was supposed to “...look to her husband as her lord, and must serve him with all worship and reverence;” and, she should never disobey his instructions.
The six Confucian virtues for women were: obedience, purity, goodwill, frugality, modesty and diligence.

If a samurai male wanted to divorce a woman he only had to write her a letter saying he was divorcing her.

The woman received any dowry she had brought with her and returned to her parent's household.
Culture in Tokugawa Japan

- There were considerable cultural advancements made.
- During this time, the merchant class became rich and, as a result, new art forms appeared.
Kabuki is a traditional Japanese form of theater with its origins in the Edo Period.
Kabuki, was the popular culture of the townspeople and not of the higher social classes.
Kabuki plays are about historical events, moral conflicts in love relationships
The actors use an old fashioned language which is difficult to understand even for some Japanese people.
They speak in a monotonous voice and are accompanied by traditional Japanese instruments.
In the early years, both, men and women acted in Kabuki plays.
Later, the Tokugawa Shogunate forbade the acting of women
During kabuki plays, fans shout the names of their favorite actors in the right moments during short pauses.
Culture: Haiku

Haiku is one of the most important form of traditional Japanese poetry. Today, Haiku is a 17-syllable verse form consisting of three metrical units of 5, 7, and 5 syllables.
古池や蛙飛び込む水の音
old pond . . .
a frog leaps in
water’s sound

haiku: Matsuo, Basho (Japan) artwork: Kuniharu Shimizu