



“昇る太陽の国”

“Land of the Rising Sun”

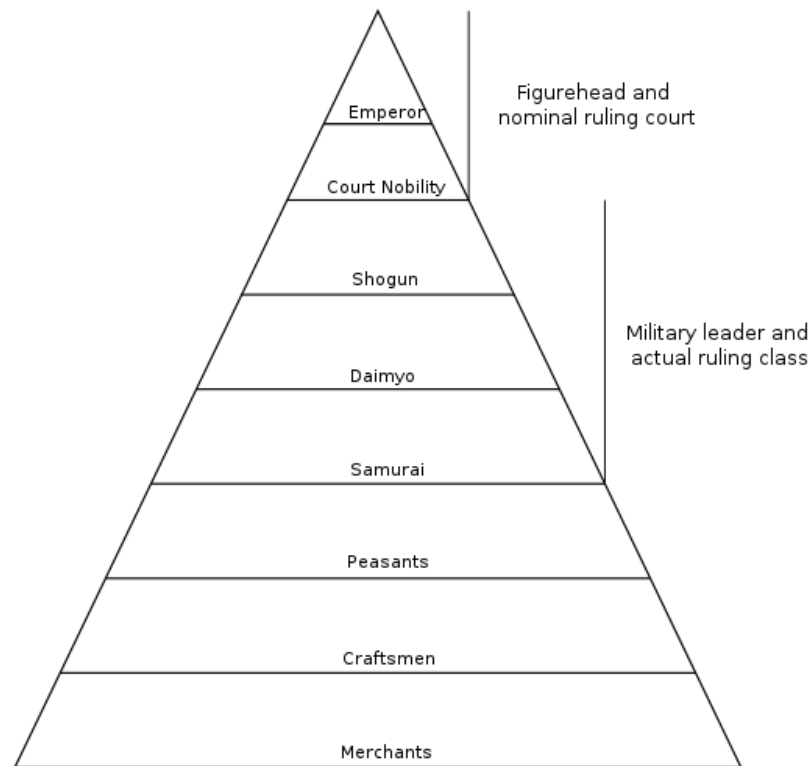
-A Complete Dossier-



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-Class Structure-



Introduction

A Feudal System was present in full in Japan from the Nara and Heian periods (710-1192 CE) to the Edo periods (1603-1868 CE). Like European Feudalism, A person's position in society was decided by his or her birth. Land was distributed to landlords called *Daimyo* who in return pledged allegiance and military aid. Estates were created by the *daimyo* for his family and workers which formed the basis of Japanese Society. The person on top of this class structure was the emperor. The role of emperor however was a ceremonial one, most emperors being figureheads and noble courts have limited powers.

True power resided in the hands of the *Shogun* literally translating to “military leader”. The *Shogun* had the loyalty of his army and *daimyo* to keep his regime and clan in power.

Social Mobility

There was little social mobility for lower class people of Japanese Society as they followed the paths and professions of their forefathers (Fishing, Agriculture and Trade) while noble families lived sheltered lives, not having to work for money and living in absolute luxury.

Role of Clans



A Clan is a political and cultural coalition of families connected through marriages and alliances. Clan Politics played a big role in the

running of the country. Through the ages, some clans became more powerful than others and had more influence on society. The Imperial Clan (Royal Family), Minamoto Clan and the Hojo Clan are a few examples. Although the title of emperor has stayed with the Imperial Clan for 2000 years, The Title of *shogun* has switched from clan to clan in a brutal power struggle in which *daimyo clans* fought each other in civil wars, forming coalitions and betraying allies.

Differences from European Feudalism

A distinguishing difference between Japanese and European Feudalism is the Land Ownership for warriors. European lords promised their knights land and fiefs in return for their services. Japanese Samurais weren't given land. Instead, the *daimyo* gave a portion of his income or harvest to his samurai.





-Samurai-

Samurai were the hereditary military and officer caste of Feudal Japan. They were well-paid and loyal warriors of their respective *daimyo*. They were respected in society, had privileges like the right to wear 2 swords and were held in high regard by the commoners like a European knight. They developed their own sub-culture distinct from those of nobles and commoners. Samurai warriors adhered to the *bushido* code and practiced Zen Buddhism. Samurais not employed by lords were called *ronin*. They lived lawless lives and bullied commoners.



-Religion-

Religion played a big part in the lives of the Japanese people as it did for other cultures. Shinto and Zen Buddhism were the two major religions. Shinto focused on the daily life while Zen Buddhism focused more on the life that is to come and spirituality. These religions helped the Japanese understand the world around them.

Shintoism

The word “Shinto” itself means the way of the gods. Shintoism is practiced in Japan, and it is Japan’s indigenous religion. Shintoism focuses on the worship of various *kami* or gods. Shintoism is an animistic religion and helped the Japanese through daily life.

Zen Buddhism

Zen Buddhism is a school of Mahayana Buddhism. Zen Buddhism found its way to Japan from Korea and China as diplomacy and trade prospered. Prince Shotoku made Buddhism the state religion of Japan. Buddhism's core belief system is about escaping from suffering. Buddhism became very popular with the Japanese people over time.





“徳川家康”

-Tokugawa Ieyasu-

Tokugawa Ieyasu was the founder of Japan's third *Shogunate* (Tokugawa Shogunate). He was one of Japan's three great unifiers. Born into a minor *daimyo* household, Ieyasu had many challenges throughout his life. This didn't stop him from achieving his ambition and he eventually became the *shogun*.

Early Life

Tokugawa Ieyasu was born in Okazaki Castle in Japan, to the *daimyo* of Mikawa of the Matsudaira Clan. In the same year he was born, Ieyasu's grand uncle defected to the Oda Clan. This prompted Oda Nobuhide, a member of the Oda Clan, the confidence to launch an attack on Okazaki Castle. As Oda continued to attack the Matsudaira clan, Ieyasu's father Hirotada turned to his powerful neighbor Imagawa Yoshitomo for assistance against the Oda Clan. In the years of fighting, Hirotada was betrayed and killed by his own vassals and Ieyasu had to flee for his safety. Imagawa Yoshitomo took Ieyasu under his protection. After he came of age, He served Yoshitomo as his samurai.

Rise to Power

After Yoshitomo's death, his heir Imagawa Ujizane sought every way to legitimize his rule. He held Ieyasu's wife and son hostage to make him submit. Instead, Ieyasu broke out in open rebellion against Ujizane, allying himself with Oda Nobunaga. He marched back into Okazaki Castle and fought a brutal war to reunify his ancestral land of Mikawa. He fought for the Matsudaira clan once again, being the head of his clan and the enemy of various other factions.

Tokugawa Clan

After various wars, Ieyasu formed the Tokugawa Clan from a coalition of the Matsudaira and other families. He claimed ancestral ties to the Minamoto Clan to justify his militarist ambitions to reunify Japan.

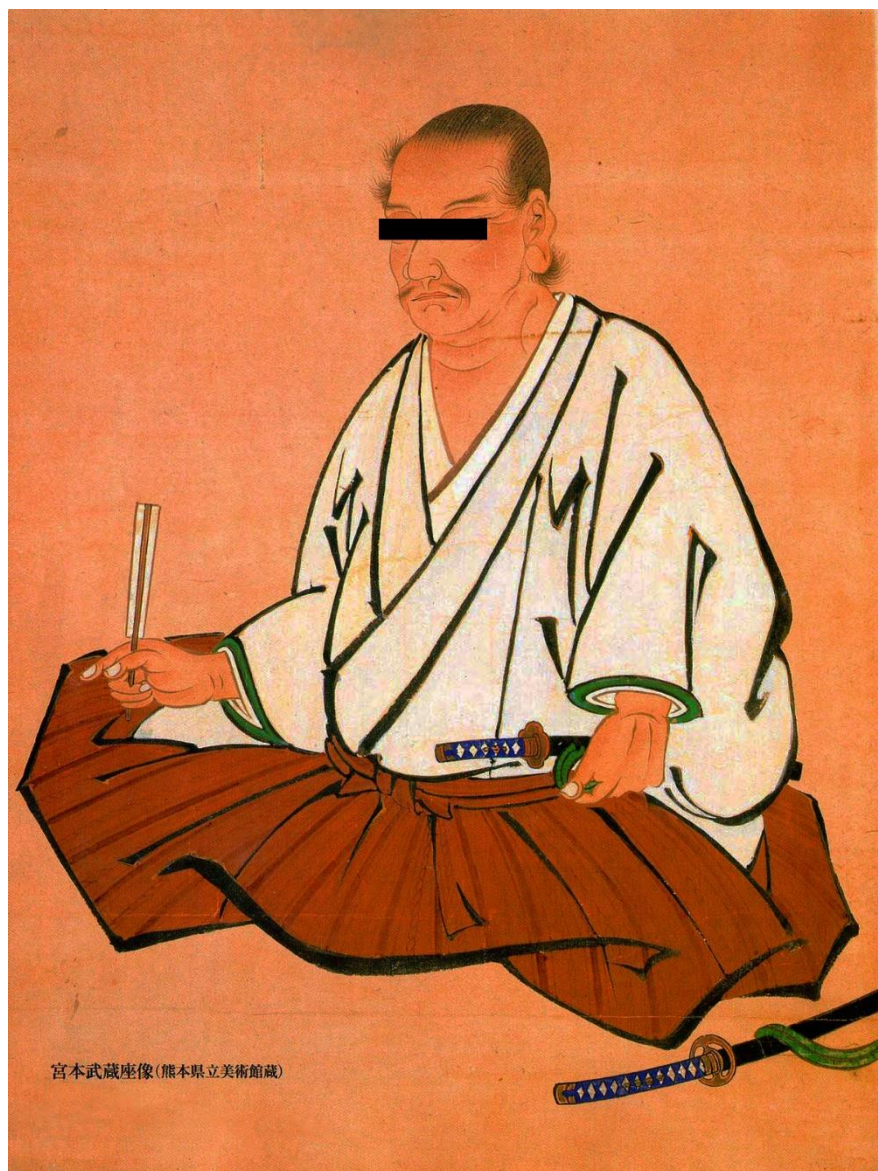


Death of Oda Nobunaga

Through their wars, Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu had most of Japan under their control. To celebrate this, Nobunaga invited Ieyasu and other allies to a feast and a tour. However, Nobunaga was assassinated by rival clans a few days before the feast. Ieyasu gathered his forces to avenge the death of his ally and this led to Ieyasu being the most powerful man in Japan, second only to the emperor.

Shogun

Tokugawa Ieyasu finally attained the title of *shogun* in 1603. He used his power to solidify the Shogunate Authority and empower his clan. He supervised the construction of the Edo Castle. He reformed the legal system and gave his samurai places of power in his *baifuku*.



“宮本 武蔵”

—Miyamoto Musashi—

Miyamoto Musashi was a Japanese Swordsman turned philosopher well known for his unique double-handed technique and his undefeated record in 61 duels. He is known as the father of a Japanese swordsmanship variant called “*Niten Ichi-Ryo*” and as a sword saint or *Kensei*.

Early Life

Details of Musashi’s childhood remain mostly unknown or unverified. He states in his books that he was born in Harima Province during the Year of the Monkey (1584). At the age of 13, He defeated the samurai Arima Kihei in his first duel. At the age of 15, He left his village to master swordsmanship and find his purpose in life.

Master of the Sword

Musashi travelled to Myonshin Temple to practice *Zazen*, a form of disciplinary meditation. This is where he met Nagaoka Sado, a local warlord. After getting acquainted with each other, Nagaoka Sado introduces Musashi to a friend of his, Sasaki Kojiro. Either out of jealousy or overconfidence, Kojiro proposed a friendly duel to Musashi. Musashi agreed and they decided on the location and time. On the agreed date, Kojiro reached the banks of the island for the duel on time while Musashi overslept. Kojiro sent servants to wake him up and bring him. Kojiro saw this as a sign of disrespect and became dedicated to kill Musashi. Musashi could sense that Kojiro was not hesitating to fight to the death, so Musashi did the same. The two circled each other on the beach when finally, both leaped forward at each other. Musashi was cut in the forehead but he had managed to land a heavy blow on Kojiro’s skull killing him instantly.

Later Life

After his travelling and duels, He served Hosokawa Tadatoshi as his right-hand man. In his final years, He retired to a cave as a hermit to write his final book “The Book of The Five Rings”. He died at the age of 62, dying with a legacy of unwavering skill.





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