7th grade

SS

Week 5

LESSON 4

Emergence of Japan

GET READY TO READ

START UP

Study the photograph of Mount Fuji, the largest mountain in Japan. Based on this photograph, how might Japan's landscape have shaped life in that country?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- How did geography affect the development of Japanese culture?
- What actions did Prince Shotoku take to strengthen Japan as a kingdom?
- How did Chinese culture, ideas, and technologies influence Japan?

TAKE NOTES

Literacy Skills: Sequence

Use the graphic organizer in your Active Journal to take notes as you read the lesson.

PRACTICE VOCABULARY

Use the vocabulary activity in your Active Journal to practice the vocabulary words.

Vocabulary		Academic Vocabulary
archipelago	kami	unify
mainland	regent	tradition
clan		

Japan arose in the shadow of its powerful neighbor, China. Early Japanese culture and society often borrowed from China and Japan's other neighbor, Korea. But Chinese and Korean cultures were not the only influences on Japan. Geography also had great effects on the island nation.

How Did Geography Set Japan Apart?

Japan is an **archipelago** (ahr kuh PEL uh goh), or chain of islands. To Japan's west is the continent of Asia. To the east lies the broad Pacific Ocean. In ancient times, the Japanese believed that theirs was the first land to see the sun rise in the morning. They called their country *Nippon*, which means "land of the rising sun." In Japanese tradition, the Sun Goddess was the country's special protector.

What Is Japan's Land and Climate Like? Japan is made up of four large islands and thousands of smaller ones. Its total land area is about the size of the state of California.

The archipelago is very long from north to south. Honshu (HAHN shoo), the main island, is much larger than the others.

A ridge of volcanic mountains runs the length of the island chain. Mount Fuji is the highest peak. It rises more than 12,000 feet above sea level. Because of Mount Fuji's beauty, it has always been an important symbol for the Japanese people.

Japan is so mountainous that less than 15 percent of its land can be farmed. Most people live on plains or along the coastline. The Japanese take much of their food from the ocean.

The Ring of Fire Japan sits at the border between two plates, or sections, of Earth's outer crust. The border forms part of the Ring of Fire. This region of volcanoes and earthquakes circles the Pacific Ocean.

Japan and Its Neighbors Korea and China are Japan's neighbors on the Asian mainland. A **mainland** is an area that is a part of a continent.

About 120 miles of open water separates Korea from Japan. China is farther away. Still, waves of migrants from the mainland settled in Japan. Over time, Japan felt the influence of Korean and Chinese cultures. Many Chinese and Koreans migrated to Japan in search of refuge or opportunity, especially during times of disruption. As the migrants came to Japan, they brought with them knowledge about Buddhism, writing systems, and making metal, paper, and silk.

READING CHECK **Draw Conclusions** Why was Japan's culture able to grow in isolation for so long?

INTERACTIVE

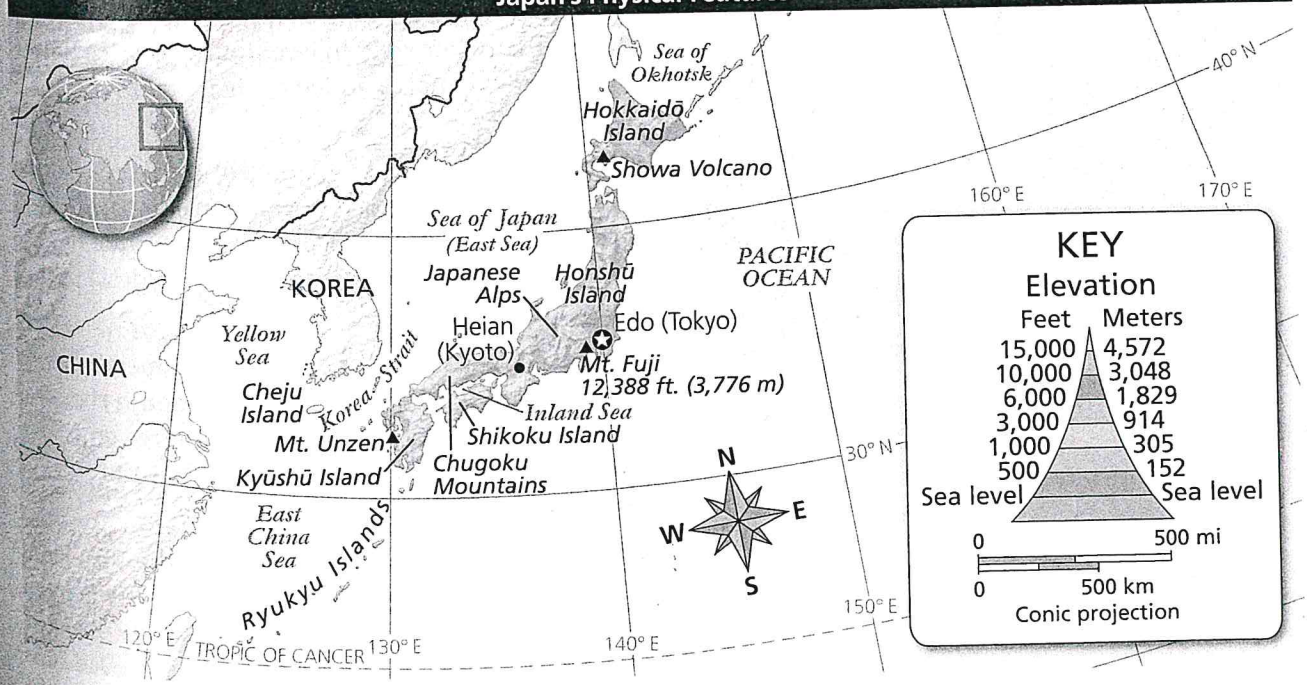
Geography of Japan

GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

Japan is an island chain stretching south to north, to the east of China and Korea.

1. **Location** What bodies of water separate Japan from other countries?
2. **Use Visual Information** What route would traded goods and ideas need to take to reach Japan?

Japan's Physical Features



Japan's Early History

The first groups of humans in Japan arrived many thousands of years ago. Historians have identified one culture group, the Jomon (JOH mun), by their distinctive pottery. The Jomon migrated to Japan some 11,000 years ago. They lived by hunting and fishing.

The Yayoi By 250 BCE a new group had appeared in Japan—the Yayoi (YAH yoy). They probably came from mainland Asia. In time, the Yayoi merged with or pushed out the Jomon. Unlike the Jomon, the Yayoi wove cloth and worked bronze and iron.

Most important, the Yayoi introduced the technique of growing rice in irrigated fields. Rice became Japan's most important crop. A diet based on seafood and rice helped boost the population.

The Yamato Clan Triumphs Local clans ruled Japan by the 200s CE. A **clan** is a group of people with a common ancestor. The head of a clan was also a religious leader. Part of his job was to show respect to the clan's kami so they would have good harvests. A **kami** (KAH mee) is a holy being that represents a spirit of nature, sacred place, ancestor, or clan in Japanese culture. Each clan also had its own land.

From the 200s to the 400s, warlike clans competed for land and power. The winner of this struggle was the Yamato clan from the plains of central Honshu.

Analyze Images This piece of pottery dates from the Jomon period. **Use Visual Information** What makes this pottery different from the Chinese pottery pictured in previous lessons?

Riding horses and fighting with swords and with bows and arrows, the Yamato first gained control over lands to the north and west. They eventually built a small state. Sometimes they went to war against neighboring clans. More often they made alliances through marriage or other ties.

The Yamato applied new technology in their territory. They used iron tools to till the land. They also found better ways to level and flood rice fields. These improvements added to their wealth and power.

Yamato emperors claimed descent from their kami, the Sun Goddess. Even today, Japan's imperial family traces its descent from the Sun Goddess and the Yamato clan. It is the world's oldest ruling royal family.

Yamato Society The most powerful members of Yamato society were clan leaders. Beneath them was a large class of free farmers, with free craft workers ranking below farmers. The lowest rank was held by enslaved Japanese people.

Family life in Yamato times involved different roles for men and women. Males in farming families received a plot of land at the age of 6 to farm the

rest of their lives. Males also had to provide military service to clan leaders. Women had an important role in religion, communicating with kamis. Women were able to hold property, like men. Women could also hold power. There were several female Yamato rulers.

READING CHECK **Identify Supporting Details** How did the Yamato clan gain control of much of Japan?

How Did Shotoku Strengthen Japan?

Even after the Yamato clan gained power, Japan was not fully united. Clan leaders saw little reason to obey a distant government. In 593, Prince Shotoku took power. He was not an emperor. Instead, he was a regent for the empress, his aunt. A **regent** is someone who governs a country in the name of a ruler who is unable to rule, often because of age.

Support for Buddhism Shotoku began the difficult task of **unifying** Japan. He had to strengthen the central government and reduce the power of clan leaders. One way he did this was by supporting Buddhism, which arrived in Japan from Korea in 538.

Shotoku hoped that the new religion would unite the Japanese people. However, clan leaders opposed the new religion because they were also religious leaders. If people stopped worshiping their kami, clan leaders would lose importance.

Guidelines for Government Japanese leaders also learned about Chinese government and the teachings of Confucius. Shotoku studied these. He believed that Confucianism, like Buddhism, could unify Japan. Shotoku's moral code is laid out in a document known as the Constitution of Seventeen Articles.

This document was not like modern constitutions. It was not a plan for government. Instead, it was a set of guiding principles for people, rulers, and the government itself. It was based on Confucian and Buddhist thought. A section of the first article laid out the Confucian idea of harmony. It read, "Harmony should be valued and quarrels should be avoided."

The second article called for respecting Buddhism. A later article said that clan heads should not be allowed to tax the people. That power, it suggested, belonged only to the central government.

Missions to China In 607, Shotoku sent official representatives to China to study arts and government. This was the first of several official missions to the Chinese mainland. A mission is a group of people sent to represent their country. The mission included scholars, artists, and Buddhist monks.

▲ Prince Shotoku

Academic Vocabulary
unify • *v.*, bring together

Quest CONNECTIONS

How does the quote from the first article of the Constitution of Seventeen Articles show Chinese influence? Record your thoughts in your Active Journal.

Quick Activity

Explore the guidelines for government in your Active Journal.

When they returned, these experts helped make Japan's government more like that of Tang China. For example, Japanese rulers began using a system of official ranks and duties like those in the Chinese court. Officials could be recognized by the color of their caps.

READING CHECK **Identify Supporting Details** How did Prince Shotoku attempt to unify Japan?

Later Reforms

Prince Shotoku died in 622. Japan was still ruled by clans, but other reformers continued efforts to create a strong government. In 646, they enacted a program known as the Taika Reform. *Taika* means "great change."

The most important new laws said that all land belonged to the emperor and that everyone was his subject. Some clan leaders became local officials. They were responsible for collecting taxes, which were based on the number of people who lived in an area. These changes made Japan more like Tang China.

In 702, a new law code for the entire country made the leader of the Yamato clan the official emperor and said that he should be called "son of Heaven." The new laws also defined crimes and punishments. These criminal laws applied equally to everyone in Japan.

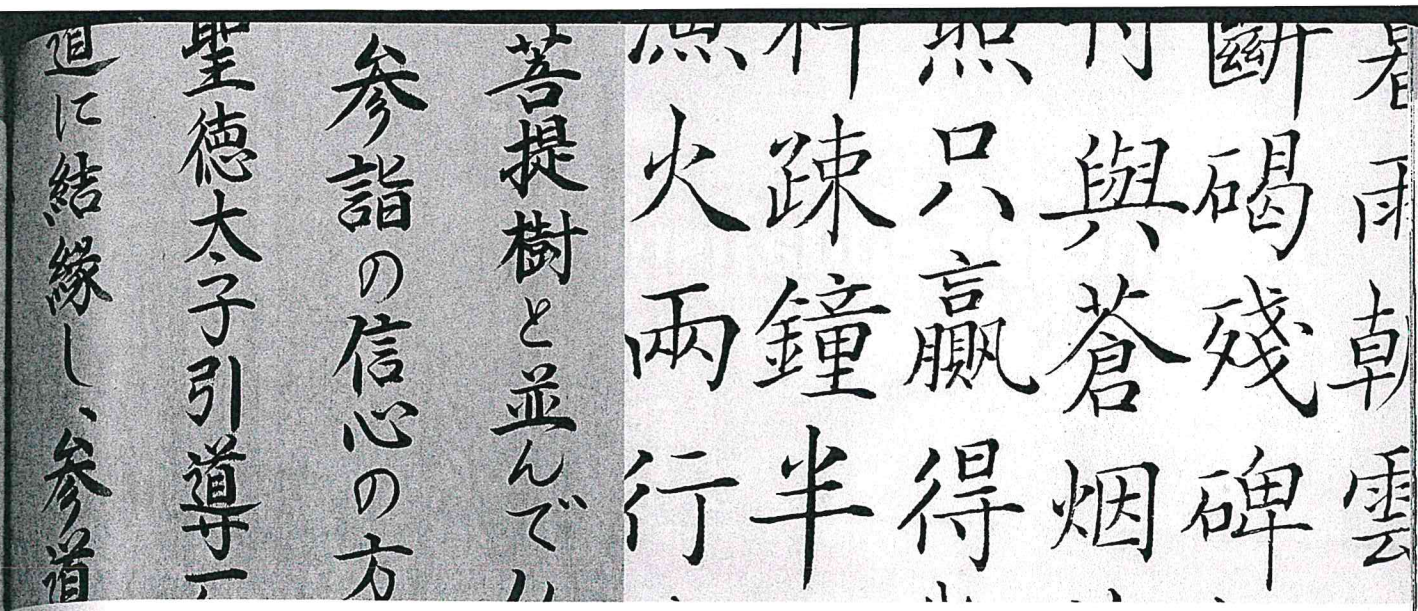
The rulers continued to strengthen their power. In 710 they built a new capital city at Nara.

READING CHECK **Identify Supporting Details** How did Taika Reform increase government's power?

Political Reform in Japan, 646

Land Ownership	Structure of Local Government
• Abolishing all titles held by imperial princes • Abolishing title to lands held directly by the imperial court • Abolishing private titles to lands and works held by ministers and "functionaries" of the court, local nobles, and village chiefs	• Placing the capital under an administrative system • Appointing governors and prefects in other areas of the country • Forming a village out of every 50 households and appointing an alderman for each village who was responsible for assigning the sowing of crops and collecting taxes, among other things

Analyze Charts In 646, Emperor Kōtoku began a set of political reforms. These Taika Reforms were based on Confucianism and other Chinese political philosophies. **Infer** How did these reforms strengthen Japan's government?



Borrowing From Neighbors

Chinese culture of the Tang dynasty strongly influenced Japan and Korea. As you learned, early Japanese rulers looked to China as a model for government. Japanese scholars organized an official history of Japan, just as Chinese rulers arranged histories of China. Japan also adopted the Chinese calendar.

In the time of the first Yamato emperor, Japanese had only been spoken, not written. Contact with the mainland changed that. Around 500, the Japanese began to adapt China's writing system. They used Chinese characters, with some changes, to write the Japanese language.

Japan and Korea also developed ties. Buddhist monks arrived in Japan from Korea in 538. Most Japanese practiced Shinto, a mix of ancient beliefs and traditions. Over time, Japan's practice of Buddhism would absorb many of the Shinto spirits and **traditions**. You will read more about these religions in Lesson 6.

Analyze Images Japanese calligraphy is pictured on the left, and Chinese calligraphy on the right. **Synthesize Visual Information** How did Chinese writing affect written Japanese?

Academic Vocabulary
tradition • *n.*, a practice or belief handed down from one generation to another

READING CHECK **Identify Supporting Details** What did most Japanese practice before Buddhism arrived? How did religion in Japan change after Buddhism's arrival?

Lesson Check

Practice Vocabulary

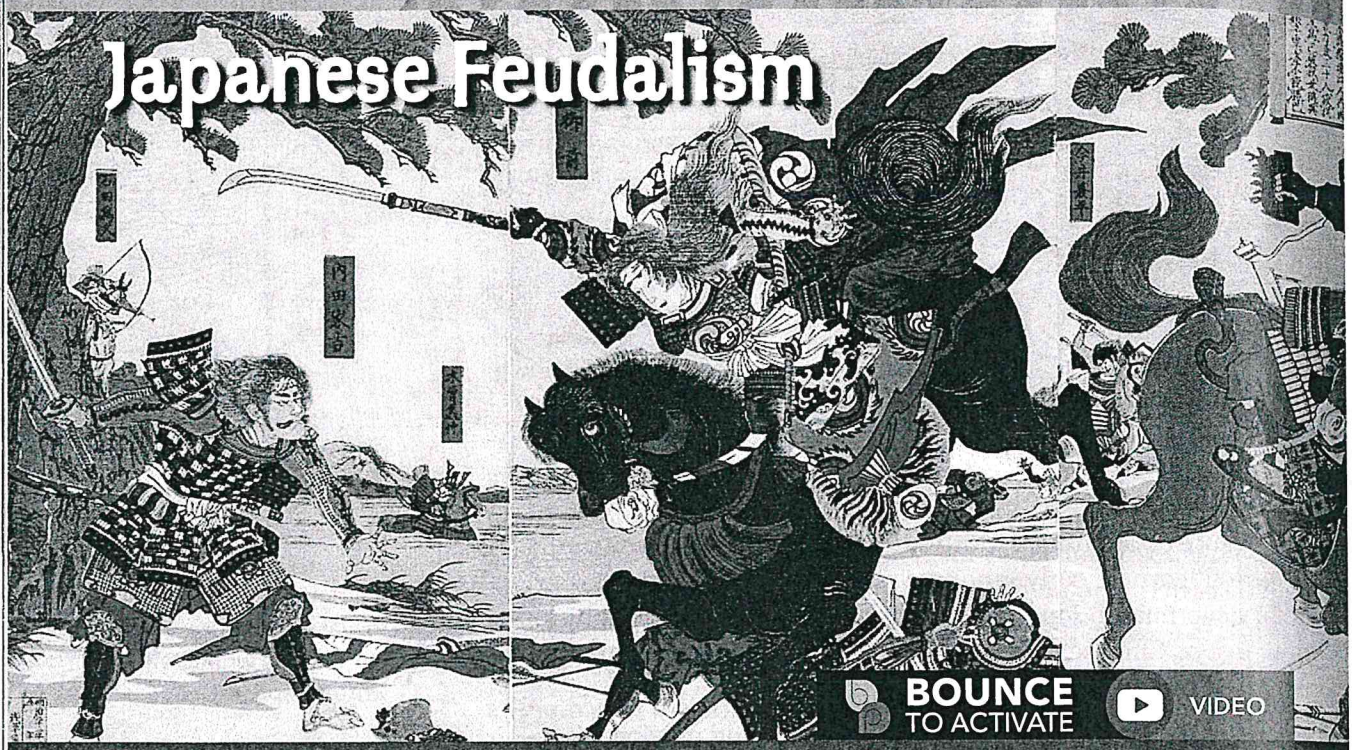
1. What is an **archipelago**?
2. What was the role of a **kami** in Japanese culture?
3. What is a **regent**?

Critical Thinking and Writing

4. **Identify Cause and Effect** How did Japanese emperors increase their power?
5. **Infer** Why did Japanese rulers send missions to China?
6. **Writing Workshop: Find and Use Credible Sources** Use tips in your Active Journal to conduct research to learn more about how technology affected agriculture in Japan under the Yamato.

LESSON 5

Japanese Feudalism



GET READY TO READ

START UP

Study the picture of the samurai. Samurai had a similar role to knights in medieval Europe. How did knights help to maintain a system of feudalism?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Why did Japanese emperors lose power to rival clans?
- How did feudalism structure society in medieval Japan?
- What influence did samurai values have on medieval Japan?

TAKE NOTES

Literacy Skills: Analyze Cause and Effect

Use the graphic organizer in your Active Journal to take notes as you read the lesson.

PRACTICE VOCABULARY

Use the vocabulary activity in your Active Journal to practice the vocabulary words.

Vocabulary		Academic Vocabulary
figurehead	daimyo	constantly
shogun	samurai	factor
feudalism	bushido	

Prince Shotoku and other reformers tried to unify Japan. They had only limited success. Over time, the power of the emperor faded and Japan became a violent land ruled by rival warriors. Peace was only restored around 1600.

Power Shifts in Japan

By tradition, each Yamato ruler set up court in his own territory. Then, in 794, the imperial court settled in a new capital city, Heian (HAY ahn). The name meant "capital of peace and tranquility." It later became known as Kyoto. It was modeled after the Chinese city of Chang'an. Emperors lived in Heian for more than a thousand years. But during that time, their power began to shift into other hands.

The Imperial Court The imperial court was divided into different ranks, or levels, of nobles. Privileges and influence depende mainly on one's rank. Unlike China, Japan did not give out government jobs based on merit. Most officials were sons from noble families.

The emperor and nobles of the court appeared to live wonderful lives. Their nights and days were filled with dinner parties, dances, poetry contests, music, and religious rituals. They also produced magnificent art and literature. Among these nobles, the Fujiwara family grew in power.

The Fujiwara Take Over By 860, the emperor was no longer the true ruler. The Fujiwara family was running the country. Behind the scenes, they controlled the government for some 300 years. The emperor was a **figurehead**, which means that he was only a symbolic leader, while someone else was really in control.

The Fujiwara rose to power by having their daughters marry emperors. The sons of these marriages often became emperors. They made sure that members of the Fujiwara clan got high positions in the government.

In the late 800s, the Fujiwara moved closer to taking complete power. They persuaded several emperors to retire. The position of emperor went to the child who was next in line for the throne.

A Fujiwara leader then became regent for the child. He was now the power behind the throne. When the young emperor was finally old enough to rule, the leader became his advisor, thus holding on to power. The Fujiwara repeated this process again and again.

▼ Minamoto Yoritomo was a military leader who defied the emperor and the Fujiwaras.

Fortunately for Japan, most of the Fujiwara were able rulers. But their long rule marked a shift in power. Japan remained unified, but the Fujiwara family was in charge, not the emperor. In addition, nobles came to own most of the land.

Japan also began to trade with its neighbors, China and Korea. Merchants from both nations traded luxury goods for Japanese timber, copper, silver, and steel swords. These connections helped China dominate the region economically and culturally by 1300.

READING CHECK **Identify Supporting Details** How did social interactions allow the Fujiwara to gain power in Japan's government?

Rival Clans Battle for Power

Outside the capital, other clans envied and resented the Fujiwaras' power. Some clan leaders began to raise their own private armies. Those leaders became warlords. The warriors that they trained were fiercely loyal to their own clans, not to the Fujiwara or the emperor.

Military Leaders Gain Strength The most powerful of these warrior clans were the Taira (TY rah) and the Minamoto (mee nah MOH toh). They worked together just long enough to push the Fujiwara out of power.

Then they turned against each other. Over long years of war, power moved between the Taira and Minamoto clans. The violence eventually reached Kyoto. In 1159, Minamoto forces stormed into the capital. They burned the emperor's palace and killed many court officials. Japan had entered a long period of warfare and suffering. A poet expressed his sadness this way:

Primary Source

"All hung about with cloud,
The distant mountain meadows
Are in autumn and
All I do recall
Is sadness."

—Saigyo, translated by Thomas McAuley

The First Shogun In 1185, Minamoto warriors defeated Taira forces in a final clash at sea. As a result, Minamoto Yoritomo (yoh ree TOH moh) became the most powerful person in Japan.

Minamoto received the title of **shogun** (SHOH gun), or supreme military commander. The position was supposed to be temporary, but Minamoto wanted to keep the title permanently. In theory, Minamoto served as advisor to the emperor. In reality, he ruled Japan. Shoguns held true power in Japan for hundreds of years.

READING CHECK **Identify Supporting Details** What effect did war between rival clans have on Japan?

Analyze Images A scroll from the 1200s shows Minamoto forces attacking the capital. **Use Visual Information** Based on the details in the picture, how well-equipped do you think the Minamoto were for battle?

Feudalism in Japan

Minamoto's rule marked the beginning of military rule by local lords and their fighters. The central government became weak. Life was often lawless and violent under the shoguns. Local nobles owned much land and fought for power. The result was a new set of social, political, and economic relationships known together as feudalism.

Daimyo, Samurai, and Peasants **Feudalism** was a social system in which landowners granted people land or other rewards in exchange for military service or labor. Landowners, warriors, and peasants served one another's needs. This system spelled out relationships among those different classes of people.

In the Japanese feudal system, people had clearly defined roles. By the 1400s, protecting people had become the responsibility of **daimyo** (DY myoh), or local land-owning lords. Each daimyo relied on peasants to work the land. In exchange for a share of the crop, he promised to protect them.

The daimyo usually had a large wooden castle, surrounded by a strong wall. It offered some safety from attack. The daimyo also provided protection through a small army of **samurai** (SAM uh ry), or highly trained warriors. In Japanese, *samurai* means "those who serve." In exchange for their military service, the daimyo paid his samurai a salary.

The Code of Bushido Two values guided samurai. One was loyalty to one's lord. The other was personal honor. These formed the heart of a set of rules called **bushido** (BOO shee doh)—"the way of the warrior." This strict code of conduct guided samurai behavior. It became an official code in the 1600s and influenced Japan into the 1900s.

The code of bushido governed a samurai's life. He trained hard, fought bravely, and died with honor. "A man born a samurai should live and die sword in hand," one warrior advised.

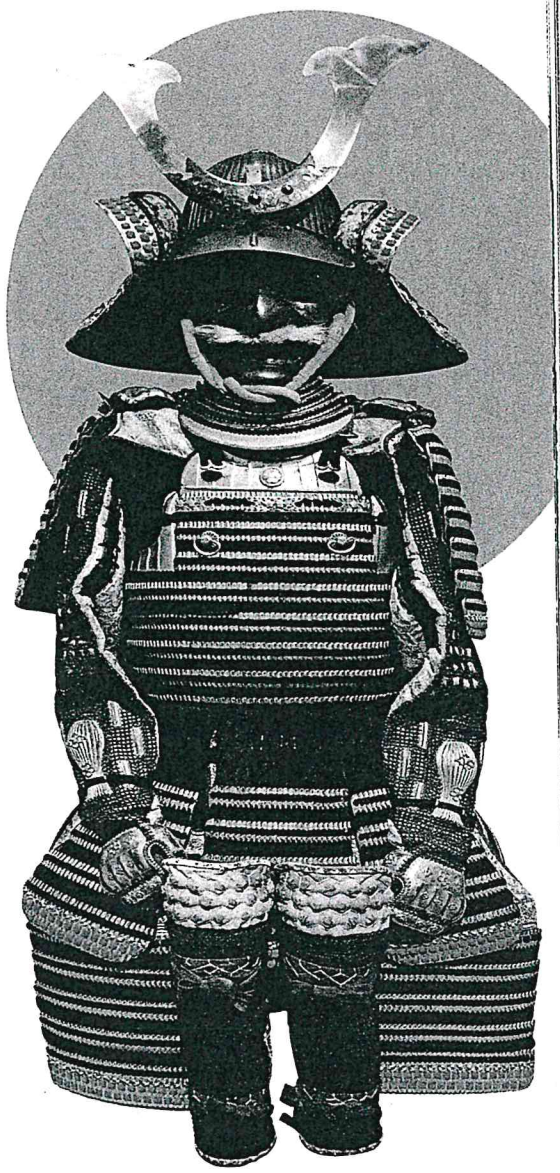
Under the code of bushido, loyalty to one's lord was more important than loyalty to family, religion, or even the emperor. If a samurai's lord was in danger, he would follow the lord, even if it meant certain death.

An old story relates a conversation between two samurai whose lord is losing a battle. "The general is surrounded by rebels," the first samurai reported. "It is hard to see how he can get away." The second samurai replied:

Primary Source

"If he must die, I intend to share his fate and go with him to the underworld."

—from *Tale of Mutsu*, translated by Helen Craig McCullough



Analyze Images Samurai warriors wore armor like this. **Compare and Contrast** Compare this armor to images you have seen of medieval knights in Europe.

Quest

Document-Based Writing Inquiry

A Strong Influen

Quest KICK OFF

You are a traveler to J
notice a temple tha
travels in China,
the temples c
Question:

How
ar

to battle, a samurai
everyone to see his cour-
it his appearance. His
his pride.

udalism
ne features. Both began
nvolved an exchange of
ere expected to follow
very, and loyalty.

ence: religion. Most
a was influenced by ideas

Compare the systems of

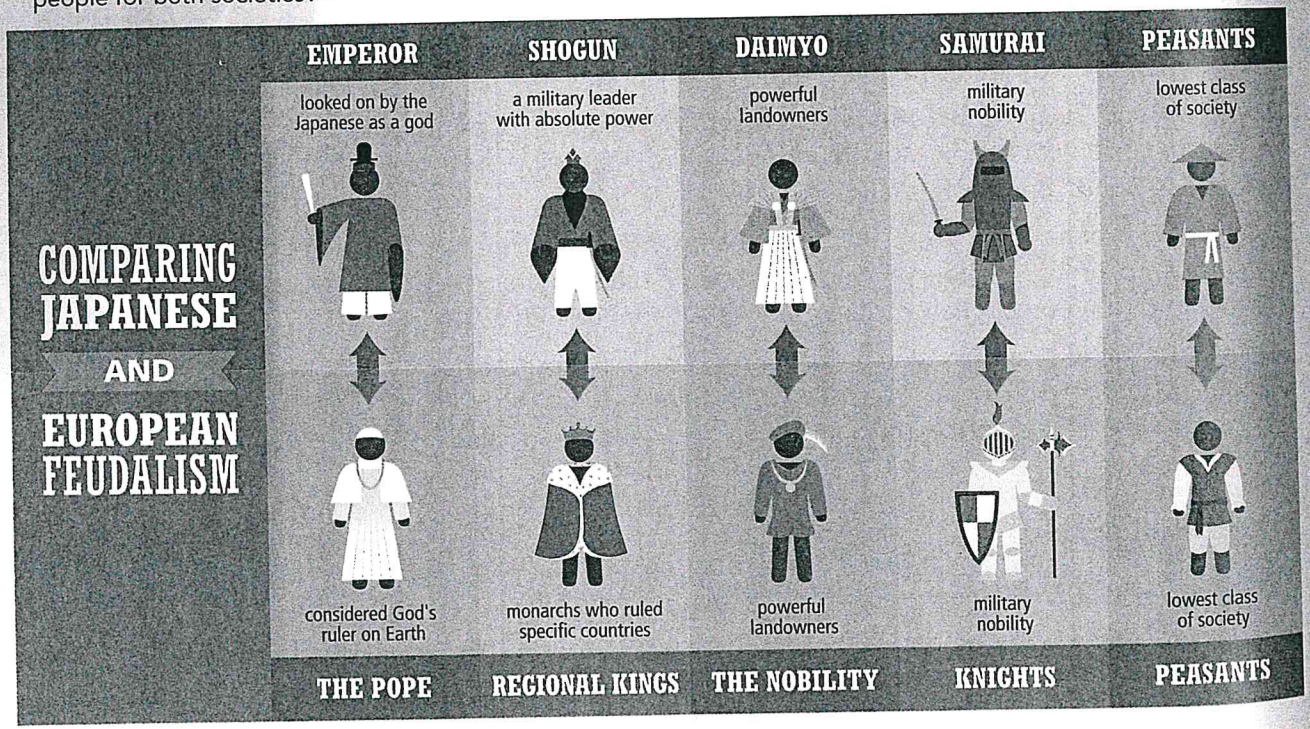
uler, Kublai Khan, sent
d that there would be
ship. The shogun's

hips across the sea. They
rses and weapons. This
with gunpowder weapons.

Yet the samurai fought bravely and held off the invaders' first attack.

The invaders returned to their ships. That night, a fierce storm shattered the ships. Nearly 13,000 men drowned. Kublai Khan sent more

feudalism had similar structures. **Infer** Which group shown on the diagram had the most people for both societies?



Analyze Images This artwork depicts the typhoon that helped the Japanese defeat a Mongol and Chinese invasion. **Identify Supporting Details** Why did the Japanese call this typhoon *kamikaze*?

officials to Japan to demand tribute. This time, the shogun had them beheaded on the beach. In 1281, Kublai Khan tried again, with almost 140,000 soldiers. The samurai held off the invaders for nearly two months.

The Japanese prayed to their gods, the kami, for help. A typhoon, a violent tropical storm, came roaring across the sea. Thousands of Mongol and Chinese soldiers drowned. More were stranded on shore, where Japanese warriors killed them. The Japanese believed that the kami had sent the typhoon to save them. They called it *kamikaze* (kah mee KAH zay), or the "wind of the gods."

READING CHECK **Identify Supporting Details** Why is the *kamikaze* remembered?

Japan's Reunification

The end of the Mongol threat did not bring peace to Japan. With weak shoguns, the clans continued to fight among themselves. Hundreds of years passed before Japan was unified again.

Strong Leaders Emerge During the 1400s and 1500s, Japan was controlled by daimyo who **constantly** fought for land and power. Historians call this violent period the "Era of the Warring States."

Academic Vocabulary
constantly • *adv.*, again and again

Finally, in the 1500s, three ambitious leaders managed to end the constant warfare. The first, Oda Nobunaga, worked all his life to bring Japan "under a single sword." Nobunaga did not fully succeed, but he reduced the power of the warlords.

The second great leader, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, unified Japan in 1590. He achieved peace only because the daimyo pledged loyalty to him. When Hideyoshi died, clans began to quarrel once more.

▲ A Japanese artist created this woodblock of Matthew Perry (center), an American naval officer who arrived in Japan in 1852, and two of his men.

Tokugawa Ieyasu Brings Peace The third leader, Tokugawa Ieyasu (toh koo GAH wah ee YAY ah soo), united the country again in 1600. He took the title of shogun, then founded a new capital at Edo (present-day Tokyo). Ieyasu made laws that finally brought peace to Japan.

He ordered the daimyo to destroy their castles and spend much of the year in Edo, where he could watch them. When they left, they had to leave their families behind. Edo grew to be a huge city.

Ieyasu officially divided society into four classes, ranked from top to bottom: samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants. Only samurai were allowed to own weapons. Farmers produced food. Artisans made the goods people needed, such as cloth, pottery, and weapons. Merchants traded goods.

Ieyasu's measures ended the violence at last. The Tokugawa family ruled a peaceful, unified Japan until 1868.

Life in Peacetime Once Japan was at peace, Japanese life changed. Merchants became wealthy as the country's population began to grow.

The new economic forces caused the daimyo, samurai, and peasants to become less prosperous. Many samurai took government jobs, but others could not support themselves. Meanwhile, famines hurt peasants. Unrest among these groups led, in part, to the end of the Tokugawa shoguns.

Another **factor** was the arrival of Western traders. Since the 1500s, Japanese leaders had tried to limit the influence of Europeans and other outsiders. In 1853, however, American warships arrived and forced Japan to accept trade. In 1868, the last shogun-led government fell.

Academic Vocabulary
factor • *n.*, cause

READING CHECK Identify Supporting Details How did the Tokugawa shoguns bring peace to Japan?

Lesson Check

Practice Vocabulary

1. Who were the **daimyo**?
2. What was the code of **bushido**?
3. What were the duties of the **samurai**?

Critical Thinking and Writing

4. **Identify Cause and Effect** How did the rise of the Fujiwara lead to feudalism?
5. **Infer** Why did Tokugawa Ieyasu force the daimyo to leave their families in Edo?
6. **Writing Workshop: Cite Sources** As you continue to research the effects of technology and innovation on Japan, be sure to properly keep track of the sources you will cite in your final essay.

Topic 12 Lesson 2 Quiz: The Mongol and Ming Empires

Name_____**KEY**_____ Date_____ Hour_____

Read each question carefully. Determine the best answer to the question from the four answer choices provided.

1 What was one reason for Genghis Khan's success as a military leader?
- **A** He ruthlessly destroyed all Mongol clans except his own.
- **B** **He organized the Mongol army into an efficient fighting force.**
- **C** He built good will by treating conquered peoples with mercy.
- **D** He divided his empire into four military districts called khanates.

2 The Golden Horde was a Mongol khanate that conquered and ruled
- **A** China.
- **B** India.
- **C** **Russia.**
- **D** Persia.

3 Why did Yongle move the capital to Beijing?
- **A** to control trade across the Mongol empire
- **B** to strengthen ties with lands outside China
- **C** to strengthen Ming rule over southern China
- **D** **to protect against future Mongol invasions**

4 Why did the Ming dynasty reduce contact with the outside world?
- **A** Chinese silk and porcelain were no longer in high demand.
- **B** Their history with the Mongols made them wary of foreigners.
- **C** They wished to avoid exposure to the plague in Europe.
- **D** **They viewed foreigners as a threat to Chinese culture.**

5 Why did Chinese officials consider European traders to be smugglers?
- **A** Chinese officials were wary of all foreigners.
- **B** European traders brought forbidden items into China.
- **C** European traders entered China without permission.
- **D** **European traders refused to pay tribute.**

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Topic 12 Lesson 3 Quiz: Chinese Thought and Achievements

Name_____**KEY**_____ Date_____ Hour_____

Read each question carefully. Determine the best answer to the question from the four answer choices provided.

1 Confucianism is a belief system that focuses on
- **A** **morality.**
- **B** harmony with nature.
- **C** enlightenment.
- **D** the afterlife.

2 Which development helped increase literacy in Song China?
- **A** the expansion of the civil service system
- **B** the introduction of Buddhism
- **C** the development of Neo-Confucianism
- **D** **the invention of movable type**

3 Porcelain became a major trade item because it was
- **A** made from rare and valuable materials.
- **B** **durable and beautiful.**
- **C** easily affordable.
- **D** considered sacred.

4 The "three perfections" were considered to be painting, poetry, and
- **A** pottery.
- **B** music.
- **C** **calligraphy.**
- **D** science.

5 Daoism is an ancient Chinese philosophy that values
- **A** the restoration of peace and stability.
- **B** meditation to reach enlightenment.
- **C** family and community.
- **D** **harmony with nature.**

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Topic 12 Lesson 4 Emergence of Japan

Lesson Summary

Early Japanese culture often borrowed from China and Korea. It was also influenced by geography.

How Did Geography Set Japan Apart?

Japan is an **archipelago** (ahr kuh PEL uh goh), or chain of islands, to the east of the continent of Asia. Japan consists of four large islands and thousands of smaller ones. It is so mountainous that very little of the land can be used for farming. As a result, many people settled on flat plains or along the coastline. Japan sits at the border between two sections of Earth's outer crust known as the Ring of Fire. This region of volcanoes and earthquakes circles the Pacific Ocean. Japan is far from its closest neighbors to the west, Korea and China. These lands are part of the Asian **mainland**—the land that makes up the largest part of the continent.

Japan's Early History

Japan's first settlers probably came many thousands of years ago from the mainland. They lived by hunting and fishing. By 250 BCE, another group arrived from the mainland, bringing skills in weaving and working bronze and iron. They introduced the technique of growing rice in irrigated fields. Soon rice became Japan's most important crop. By the 400s CE, the Yamamoto clan had gained control of much of Japan. Yamato emperors claimed descent from their Sun Goddess. As descendants of the Sun Goddess, Japanese emperors were thought to be living gods.

How Did Shotoku Strengthen Japan?

Even after the rise of the Yamato clan, Japan was not fully united. Then Prince Shotoku took power. He ruled on behalf of the empress, his aunt. Shotoku undertook the task of uniting Japan under a strong central government. First, he had to reduce the power of clans that still controlled parts of Japan. To do this he encouraged the spread of Buddhism, which had arrived from Korea. He hoped the new religion would unite the people in one faith. He also supported Confucianism.

Shotoku gave Japan its first guidelines for people, rulers, and government. They were based on Buddhist and Confucian ideas and suggested that power belonged only to a central government. Shotoku sent experts to China to study Chinese government. What they learned helped make Japan's government more like that of China.

Later Reforms

After Shotoku's death, other reformers carried on his efforts to create a strong central government. These reformers enacted the Taika Reform. *Taika* means "great change." New laws said that all land belonged to the emperor and that everyone was the emperor's subject. In addition, a new law code officially made the Yamato clan leader emperor. The new law code also defined crimes and punishments. These applied equally to everyone in Japan.

Borrowing From Neighbors

Before the time of the Yamato emperor, Japan had no written language. After contact with China, the Japanese adapted China's writing system. With the arrival of Buddhist monks from Korea, the Japanese mixed their ancient beliefs of Shinto with Buddhism.

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Topic 12 Lesson 5 Japanese Feudalism

Lesson Summary

Attempts to unify Japan had limited success. Over time, the power of the emperor faded, and rival warriors fought for power.

Power Shifts in Japan

By 860, the Yamato emperor's grip on power in Japan weakened. The emperor had become a **figurehead** or a symbolic leader. The Fujiwara family ran the country instead. The Fujiwara gained power by having women of the family marry princes in the imperial family. Contact with China ended. Japan remained unified, but the emperor was no longer in charge.

Rival Clans Battle for Power

Other clans resented the Fujiwara's power. Some clans began to raise their own private armies. Rival warrior clans worked together just long enough to drive the Fujiwara from power. Then, they turned against each other. In 1185, the Minamoto clan emerged as the victor from this period of fighting. The ruler of the Minamoto clan took the title **shogun** (SHOH gun), supreme military commander. Shoguns held true power in Japan for hundreds of years.

Feudalism in Japan

Life under the shoguns was lawless and violent. Local landing-owning warlords took over the responsibility of protecting people. A new social order called **feudalism** emerged. Warlords granted people land or other rewards in exchange for labor or military service. Each warlord's army was made up of highly trained soldiers known as **samurai** (SAM uh ry). Samurai warriors followed a strict code of conduct, called bushido (BOO shee doh). Loyalty to one's warlord was more important than family, religion, or even the emperor.

Mongols Threaten Japan

During the time that the Mongols ruled China, Kublai Khan sent officials to Japan to demand tribute. When the shogun's government sent the official away, the Khan decided to invade. The samurai held off the invaders' first attack. Then, a fierce storm arose destroying the ships and drowning thousands of Mongol warriors. The Khan launched a second invasion with even more Mongol warriors. Japanese warriors held off the Mongols for nearly two months before a typhoon battered the Mongol ships. Many Mongols were killed.

Japan's Reunification

The end of the Mongol threat did not bring peace to Japan. The clans continued to fight among themselves. During the 1500s, three leaders combined to end the constant warfare and unite Japan. The first leader reduced the power of the warlords. The second achieved peace when the warlords pledged loyalty to him. The third leader, Tokugawa Ieyasu (tok koo GAH wah ee YAY ah soo), united Japan once again. He took the title shogun.

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Once Japan was at peace, Japanese life changed. Merchants became more important and wealthy. Meanwhile, the warlords, samurai, and farmers became less important. Many samurai took government jobs, but others could not support themselves. Unrest finally led in part to the end of the Tokugawa shoguns. European traders and Americans warships arrived in Japan in 1853, and the last shogun-led government fell in 1868.

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Topic 12 Lesson 4 Quiz: Emergence of Japan

Name_____ Date_____ Hour_____

Read each question carefully. Determine the best answer to the question from the four answer choices provided.

1 Which of the following best describes the physical geography of Japan?
- **A** It is a peninsula.
- **B** It is an isthmus.
- **C** It is an archipelago.
- **D** It is an island.

2 The Ring of Fire, which helped shape Japanese culture, is a name given to
- **A** a royal family linked to the Sun Goddess.
- **B** a trade network connecting Japan and China.
- **C** a region of volcanoes and earthquakes.
- **D** a group of warlike clans who competed for power.

3 How did early contact with China affect Japan?
- **A** The Japanese government became a model for China.
- **B** Japan became a Chinese territory.
- **C** The Japanese adopted the Chinese writing system.
- **D** The original inhabitants of Japan migrated to China.

4 Which method did the Yamato most rely on to build their empire?
- **A** establishing ties, such as through marriage
- **B** forcing other clans off their land
- **C** writing a new constitution for Japan
- **D** conquering Japan's nearest neighbors on the mainland

5 What was the Constitution of Seventeen Articles?
- **A** an agreement with China
- **B** a set of guiding principles
- **C** a new law code
- **D** an agreement unifying the clans of Japan

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Topic 12 Lesson 5 Quiz: Japanese Feudalism

Name_____ Date_____ Hour_____

Read each question carefully. Determine the best answer to the question from the four answer choices provided.

1 Under feudalism, who was directly responsible for protecting the people?
- **A** the shogun
- **B** the emperor
- **C** the daimyo
- **D** the kami

2 The Fujiwara rose to power by
- **A** making a fortune through trade.
- **B** waging war on other clans.
- **C** having their daughters marry emperors.
- **D** defeating the Mongol invaders.

3 Whom did the samurai owe their loyalty?
- **A** the peasants
- **B** the daimyo
- **C** the emperor
- **D** Shinto priests

4 The term *shogun* means
- **A** emperor.
- **B** land owner.
- **C** merchant.
- **D** supreme military commander.

5 What was one main difference between Japanese and European feudalism?
- **A** Japanese feudalism emerged out of a period of violence; European feudalism did not.
- **B** Japanese feudalism was influenced by religions other than Christianity.
- **C** European feudalism involved the exchange of land for services; Japanese feudalism did not.
- **D** Japanese samurai and European knights did not follow similar codes of conduct.

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