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Japan under the shoguns (c. 794–1867)

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 LINKS WITH OUR TIMES

Japan and Australia share a very important relationship. After China, Japan is Australia's most important trading partner. Japanese companies sell us many goods, such as motor vehicles and electronics. In return, Australia sells primary industry products, such as minerals and beef. Australia and Japan are also linked through education.

Throughout its long history, Japan has retained much of its traditional culture, including Kabuki theatre as shown here. Our friendly links also include sister city relationships, where Australian and Japanese cities promote cultural understanding. For example, our capital city, Canberra, is paired with the city of Nara in Japan and welcomes important visitors from Nara when they come to Australia. The Second World War was a time when the two countries were enemies. However, they now share common goals and work together in a spirit of friendship and cooperation.

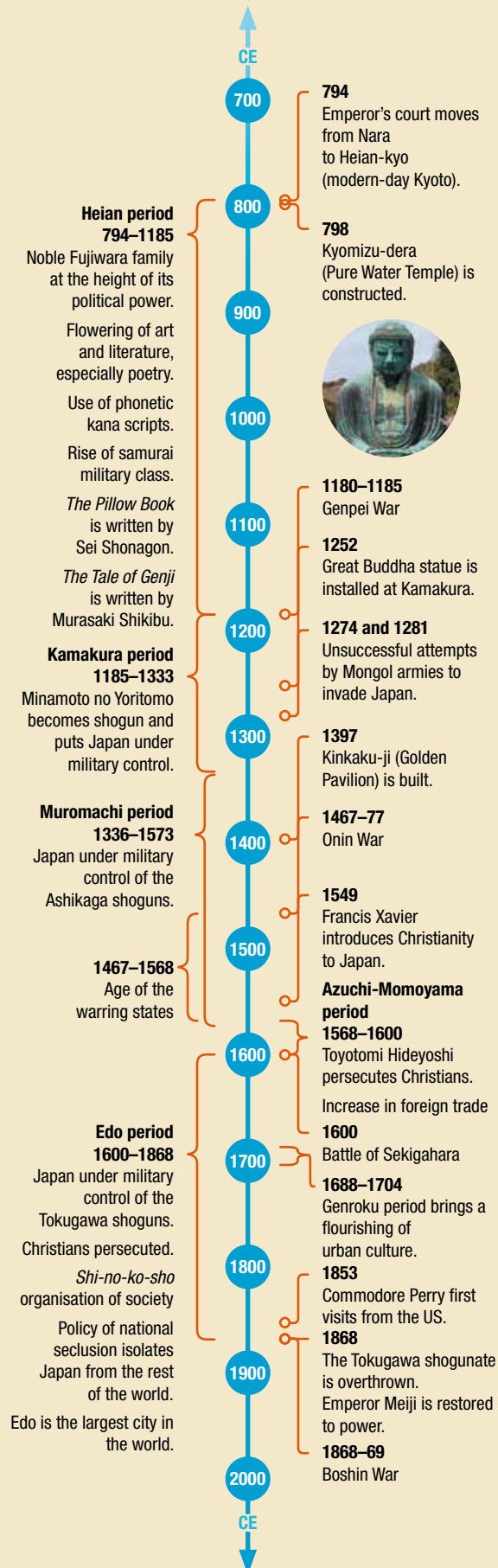
BIG QUESTIONS

As you work through this topic, look for information that will help you to answer these questions:

- 1 How did the rulers of shogunate Japan gain and maintain their political power?
- 2 Why was there a strict division of social classes?
- 3 Why were strict controls on land use necessary for much of the shogunate period?
- 4 To what extent did literature and art reflect the values of Japanese society?
- 5 What political and social changes occurred in Japan after the shogunate period ended?

STARTER QUESTIONS

- 1 Identify three things you know about Japanese art and culture.
- 2 Identify three different things that you associate with Japanese samurai.
- 3 What do you think it would be like to live in a country ruled by military officers?
- 4 What might happen if a country closed itself off completely from the rest of the world?





7.2 Examining the evidence

7.2.1 How do we know about Japan under the shoguns?

Japanese museums, temples and shrines preserve many relics that tell us about Japan's past. The most precious items are listed as National Treasures. These could be buildings, sculptures, paintings, documents, artefacts or even people.

7.2.2 Architecture

A lot can be learned about Japan's past by examining surviving buildings. Their construction techniques, materials and designs give us valuable information about architecture, technology and the way people lived. Some of the oldest buildings are in the cities of Nara, Kamakura and Kyoto. These three cities were centres of government at various times in Japan's history. They were also religious centres that built shrines for Japan's ancient **Shinto** faith, great Buddhist temples and pagodas.

The type of architecture from each different period of Japanese history can tell us much about that period. For example, a period in which a large number of temples were built would tell us that religion was very important to the people at that time. A period in which large castles were built would tell us that wealthy families were very significant during that era. Architecture can also tell us about the technology of the time. Large wooden structures built without nails are an indication of a high level of skill among craftsmen of the time.

SOURCE 1 Todai-ji is the largest wooden structure in the world and was built without the use of nails. There has been a Buddhist temple on this site since the eighth century CE.



Shinto an ancient Japanese religion that believes in nature spirits and ancestor worship

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7.2.3 Arts and crafts

Many examples of Japanese arts and crafts survive today, and these provide a great deal of evidence of life in Japan over the centuries. Paintings often provide detail of the way of life of all classes of people, as well as the clothing they wore and the buildings in which they lived. Many famous events in Japanese history have also been depicted in artworks of the time. Crafts such as **origami**, printmaking and pottery can also give us insights into Japanese life in past centuries.

Japanese artists developed woodblock printing as early as the eighth century CE, but woodblock art really flourished from the sixteenth century onwards. The different styles and schools of woodblock art over the next three hundred years provide a great deal of evidence of the Japanese way of life. Traditional Japanese sculpture evolved from the production of small clay figures in early eras, to the casting of huge bronze statues from the Classical period onwards. Sculptures were often religious in nature, depicting the different gods that were worshipped at different times. Large bronze sculptures of Buddha indicate the importance of the Buddhist religion at different eras in Japanese history.

SOURCE 3 This print by nineteenth-century artist Ando Hiroshige shows peasants in paddy fields planting rice.



origami the art of folding paper into different shapes and designs

SOURCE 2 This statue of Buddha is made of bronze and was constructed in the thirteenth century. It is 13.35 metres high and weighs approximately 94 tonnes.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Japanese language is written with three different sets of characters. These include Chinese characters known as *kanji*, as well as two sets of characters that represent different sounds or syllables. These two sets of characters are known as *hiragana* and *katakana*.

7.2.4 Literature and National Treasures

Many great works of early Japanese literature also survive, and these reveal many aspects of life in the past. Murasaki Shikibu, sometimes known as Lady Murasaki, was the author of the first great Japanese novel, *The Tale of Genji*, written over 10 years between 1000 and 1010 CE. Although this is a work of fiction, it provides us with a great deal of information about the life of the wealthy and influential aristocrats of this time.

In addition to great literary works by Japanese writers, a large number of historical documents have been kept and stored as National Treasures. These include letters written by emperors and important officials, the official records of a number of Buddhist and Shinto temples, and some family histories. One such family collection is that of the Shimazu family, which includes over 15 000 family documents covering over a thousand years from the eighth century to the nineteenth century. These documents can provide historians with great insights into Japanese life over many centuries.

SOURCE 4 Murasaki Shikibu wrote the first great Japanese novel *The Tale of Genji*. This artwork was created in 1767.



SOURCE 5 An ancient Japanese document, in the form of a scroll.



7.2.5 Traditions and festivals

Many traditional festivals and religious ceremonies are still practised in Japan today. Some of these have not changed for many hundreds of years so can provide valuable information about the way of life of Japanese people in past centuries.

Many of the festivals are religious in nature and have their origins in ancient and medieval Buddhist and Shinto ceremonies. Others have artistic and cultural significance, such as the re-enactment of traditional Kabuki theatre performances. These can provide an insight into the artistic and cultural activities of the past.

SOURCE 6 The Hollyhock Festival (Aoi Matsuri) began as a religious festival in the sixth century CE. It was believed to protect people from disease and help bring good rice harvests.



7.2 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 1 Examine **SOURCE 4**. How can we tell that Murasaki Shikibu was a member of the wealthy classes?
- 2 Examine **SOURCE 5**. What might be an advantage of recording written information on scrolls such as this? What might be a disadvantages of using this method?

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 3 **SOURCE 6** provides an example of the respect for the traditional festivals that exists in Japan. How important is it for any society to maintain ancient and traditional rituals as a part of their modern way of life?
- 4 For a significant part of its history, Japan attempted to isolate itself from outside influences. What is the effect of a country cutting itself off from outside contact? Give reasons for your answer. Identify a modern example or an example from history?

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7.3 Ancient and Classical Japan

7.3.1 The Yamato state

About twelve thousand years ago, Japan was joined to the Asian mainland by several land bridges. The nomadic hunters and fishermen who walked across them on expeditions became Japan's first inhabitants. However, at the end of the last ice age, the Earth's climate warmed and rising oceans covered the land bridges. The islands that formed became the Japanese **archipelago** we know today. Later, attracted by the islands' natural beauty and rich resources, sea-faring peoples from various parts of Asia reached Japan by boat. As their settlements spread, the original inhabitants were gradually driven into the far north wildernesses.

The first migrants from South-East Asia settled on the southern island of Kyushu. However, around the fourth century CE, the Yamato **clan** established the first Japanese state in an area around Nara on the island of Honshu. The Yamato rulers set up a central government based on a legal system and Chinese traditions. With support from other clan leaders, descendants of the Yamato became the first recognised emperors of Japan.

Conquering and ruling Japan was always going to be difficult for the emperors. Prior to the establishment of the Yamato state, different areas of the Japanese islands had been settled by different ethnic groups over thousands of years. The Emishi people lived in northern Honshu and the Ainu lived in northern Honshu and Hokkaido. Neither group recognised the authority of the Yamato state and were ultimately conquered by military force. The Japanese imperial state was going to rely on strong military support over the coming centuries to maintain control over all of its territory.

archipelago a group of islands

clan a large group of closely related people

SOURCE 1 A map of modern-day Japan



Source: Map drawn by Spatial Vision.

7.3.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 When and by whom was the first recognised Japanese state established?
- 2 Identify a major problem faced by the Yamato rulers in maintaining a unified Japanese state.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Examine **SOURCE 1** and list the names of Japan's four main islands.
- 4 Which island is the largest, and which is the smallest.
- 5 Why might the geography of the Japanese islands have made it difficult to achieve a unified state with its capital in Nara?

7.3.2 Strengthening the state

This era is often referred to as beginning of the 'Classical' period of Japanese history. It was during this period that the first great works of Japanese literature were written and Buddhism was firmly established in Japan. The Chinese influence was also very strong at this time: Chinese

SOURCE 2 Japanese emperors were believed to be descended from the sun goddess Amaterasu, seen in this nineteenth-century artwork emerging from her cave.



DID YOU KNOW?

The imperial Yamato dynasty claimed descent from Amaterasu, the sun goddess. In Japanese mythology, when the sun goddess hid in a cave the world was plunged into darkness. Eventually she emerged and a number of her ornaments were changed into human form, one of them becoming the ancestor of the Japanese imperial family.

characters were used in Japanese writing, and the architecture of the capital, Nara, was modelled on the Chinese city of Xian.

More areas of Japan gradually came under the control of the emperor, but there were struggles for influence in the imperial court. The Buddhist religion became a popular force and Buddhist priests tried to claim powerful positions. It was during this period that the Todai-ji Buddhist temple was built at Nara. Its Great Buddha Hall contains the largest bronze statue of Buddha in the world, completed in 751 CE (see **SOURCE 3**). Noble families like the Fujiwara also wanted power, so the emperor had many challenges to his authority. Nevertheless, by the eighth century, the capital city of Nara had grown strong and was an urban centre of about 200 000 people. It had a taxation system, many roads and bustling commerce. Outside the capital though, most people still lived in farming villages.

During the seventh century there had been an attempt at land reform, based on a Chinese model of land ownership. Land was to be distributed fairly to peasant farmers and could not be inherited by their children. At the death of the farmer, the land would revert to state ownership and be re-allocated to a new owner. During the eighth century this system was gradually abandoned as emperors granted lands to members of their extended family, or to friends and loyal officials. Gradually these estates increased in size, with the wealthy nobles gaining great wealth and power, and peasant farmers working the land and paying taxes to the wealthy landlord.

SOURCE 3 The 15-metre-high Great Buddha of Nara, completed in 751 CE, indicates the influence of Buddhism in the Japanese Classical period.



7.3.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What evidence is there that Japan borrowed much of its culture from China?
- 2 How did the system of land ownership change during the eighth century CE?
- 3 How did the nobles grow in power at this time?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 How has the artist in **SOURCE 2** tried to show the power and importance of the sun goddess Amaterasu to the people around her?
- 5 Examine **SOURCE 3**. How can you tell that Buddhism had become an important religion in Japan by the eighth century CE?

7.3.3 The Heian period and the growth of the military

In 794 the Emperor Kammu moved the imperial capital from Nara to Heian-kyo, now known as the city of Kyoto. This was the beginning of the Heian period, named after the city that was its capital. The Heian period lasted for almost 400 years and saw the flowering of the Classical period of Japanese history. During this time, the wealthy nobles in the countryside began to significantly increase their power. These nobles were known as **daimyo** and they usually controlled large estates throughout the countryside. Emperors at this time found they were increasingly dependent on the daimyo to maintain their power. In order to help them control their interests, and prevent rival daimyo taking over their lands, wealthy nobles employed large numbers of warriors. These warriors developed into a distinct social class, and became known as **samurai**. The term samurai in Japanese literally meant 'those who serve', and the samurai developed their own very strict code of conduct. They were very proud of their loyalty to their daimyo lords.

The emperors also relied heavily on this warrior class to help them defeat rebellious daimyo clans that challenged imperial power. Often the ability of the emperor to maintain power would depend on the number and skills of the samurai he could command. During his reign, Emperor Kammu bestowed the title of *seii taishogun* ('barbarian-conquering great general') on a leading samurai, Otomo no Otomaro, who was the commander-in-chief of his military forces. The holder of this office had a great deal of power to maintain order throughout the country on behalf of the emperor. This title was later shortened to **shogun** and became the official title of whoever held the position of head of the imperial military forces. The very nature of his position meant that an emperor had to place complete trust in the shogun, so would have to select someone he could rely on to be loyal to himself and his family.

daimyo great feudal lord of Japan during the Classical and shogunate periods

samurai the warrior class in Japan during the Classical and shogunate periods

shogun literally 'barbarian-conquering great general'; the Japanese emperor's chief military adviser and hereditary commander-in-chief, with the duty to protect Japan from foreign invasion

SOURCE 4 One of many ornate gates to the old imperial palace in Kyoto



7.3.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Why was the period from 794 CE onwards known as the Heian period?
- 2 Which groups in Japanese society did the emperors come to rely on to help maintain their power?
- 3 What is the origin of the title 'shogun' and why was the role of the shogun so important?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 **SOURCE 4** is one of many gates in a high wall that surrounded the old imperial palace in Kyoto?
 - a Why was it necessary to surround the palace with a high wall?
 - b What does this gate tell us about the wealth and power of the emperor?

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7.3 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT

- 1 Identify those features of Japan's geography and early history of settlement that have might become barriers to its long-term political unity.
- 2 Why was it likely that Japanese rulers were going to have to rely on strong military force to maintain order?

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 3 How important was the Chinese influence in the development of Japanese culture during the Classical period?
- 4 Japan today still has an emperor who is descended from the same Yamato clan that established the first Japanese state. Using the internet and your library, find out all you can about the current emperor, his role in Japanese society and his current powers.

7.4 The rise of the shoguns

7.4.1 The struggle for power

Nobles from the powerful Fujiwara clan dominated Japanese politics from the seventh century until the end of the Heian period in the twelfth century. They controlled all the most important offices in the royal court and were governors of many provinces in the countryside. Most emperors married Fujiwara women, and senior members of the family became **regents** if an emperor was too young to rule. At some stages, the Fujiwara family, rather than the emperor, ruled Japan.

The Heian period was characterised by struggles for influence among the three most powerful daimyo clans: the Fujiwara, the Minamoto and the Taira. After the long period of dominance by the Fujiwara, in 1068 the Emperor Go-Sanjo reduced their power by appointing members of the rival Minamoto clan to important government offices. Go-Sanjo was the first emperor for more than two hundred years whose mother had not been a member of the Fujiwara clan. He himself married members of the Minamoto clan, so his heirs were loyal to the Minamoto rather than the Fujiwara.

The twelfth century was a very unstable time in Japan. The Minamoto family had become the most powerful daimyo clan in Japan, but their power was challenged by the Taira clan.

In 1180, Emperor Takakura was forced to give up the throne and his two-year-old son, Antoku, became emperor. Antoku's mother was a member of the Taira clan and because he was so young his grandfather ruled as regent. The Minamoto clan were resentful of this grab for power and led a rebellion against the Taira clan, leading to **civil war** that lasted until 1185. A famous historical account of the civil war, *The Tale of the Heike*, was written by a number of authors and is considered one of the great works of Japanese literature. In 1183, the Minamoto clan forced the Taira clan and the young emperor to flee Kyoto, and installed another three-year-old member of the imperial family, Go-Toba as Emperor. The Minamoto clan were ultimately successful in the civil war and Go-Toba remained as emperor until 1198.

regent a person appointed to rule a country if a monarch is too young or ill to do so

civil war a war between two competing groups within one country

SOURCE 1 This thirteenth-century illustration shows the escape of the Taira clan and their supporters from Kyoto during civil war.



7.4.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Name the three powerful clans who were competing for influence during the Heian period.
- 2 Why were Japanese emperors so dependent on regents during the period from 1180 to 1185?
- 3 Which clan was ultimately successful following the period of civil war?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 Examine **SOURCE 1**.
 - a Which groups in Japanese society can you identify in the source?
 - b What does this source tell us about the power of the emperor during the period of the civil war?

7.4.2 The Kamakura shogunate

In 1192 Emperor Go-Toba appointed the head of the Minamoto clan, Minamoto no Yoritomo, as shogun, to lead the Japanese armed forces. Yoritomo set up his government in the city of Kamakura, about 50 kilometres south of modern-day Tokyo, while the Emperor remained in his imperial capital of Kyoto. The establishment of this shogunate was important because it saw real power pass from the emperor to the shogun. It is regarded as the end of the Classical period and the beginning of the shogunate or feudal period of Japanese history. For the next 700 years Japanese emperors were restricted to religious and ceremonial duties, while the shoguns and their samurai warriors effectively ruled Japan. Japanese society was based on a farming economy, with a governing class of warriors and great lords who granted land to their **vassals** in return for their military support and total loyalty.

vassal a person who holds land for a lord, and in return pledges loyalty and service to him

The Kamakura shogunate lasted nearly 150 years and brought political stability to Japan. New laws outlined the rights of the samurai and Buddhism gathered strength. It had previously been the religion of only the ruling class but now spread to the common people. One of Japan's most famous sights, the Golden Pavilion in Kyoto, was built during this period as a Buddhist temple. Art and culture also flourished, especially poetry, music, painting and wood sculpture.

SOURCE 2 Minamoto no Yoritomo, shown in this twelfth-century artwork, became the first shogun to gain the power to rule Japan.



SOURCE 3 The Golden Pavilion in Kyoto



7.4.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 How did the appointment of Yoritomo as shogun dramatically change the power balance in Japan?
- 2 What role did Japanese emperors have after 1192?
- 3 In what ways did stable government by the shogunate benefit Japanese society?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 Examine the portrait of Yoritomo in **SOURCE 2**. Identify two possible characteristics that suggest he had the ability to win the loyalty of the daimyo and samurai, and thus gain supreme power in Japan.
- 5 Buddhism emphasises meditation to achieve peace of mind. Why might the Golden Pavilion (shown in **SOURCE 3**) have been a good place to meditate?

7.4.3 Why did the shogun become so powerful?

How can we explain why the shogun took over from the emperor as the most powerful person in Japan after 1192? We need to examine both the events of the civil war period and the longer term trends in Japanese society to find the causes for this change. The following are some issues worth considering:

- The granting of large estates to daimyo during the eighth century gave enormous wealth and power to these daimyo families. It provided them with the money to be able to pay large numbers of samurai to protect and support them.
- The distance of some of these estates from the capital meant that it could be difficult for the emperor's rule to be enforced without assistance from the daimyo. This gave the daimyo additional power.
- The development of the warrior class of samurai during the Heian period had led to an increased respect for military power. The ability to command and lead military forces became highly valued in Japanese culture.
- Emperor Antoku in 1180 and Emperor Go-Toba in 1183 were only infants when they inherited the throne. In each case they relied on members of powerful daimyo families to act as regent for them. In fact more than half the emperors in the previous hundred years had been children when they became emperor. This gave additional power to the families who acted as regents, and weakened the power of the emperor.
- By the twelfth century, Japanese emperors had become little more than puppets, manipulated by wealthy daimyo clans. This is demonstrated by the events of the civil war of 1180 to 1185, when the Taira and Minamoto clans each had a young boy as their nominated emperor, but the war was really between the clans fighting for power.

In the period leading up to the twelfth century it would seem that the power and authority of the emperor was in gradual decline, while some of the daimyo clans were becoming increasingly more powerful. As the position of shogun was filled by the most powerful of the daimyo nobles, perhaps it was only a matter of time before the power of the shogun would exceed that of the emperor.

SOURCE 4 A commemorative statue of one of the shoguns



SOURCE 5 Fourteenth century Emperor Go-Daigo, holding implements associated with Buddhist worship



7.4.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Identify two ways in which the power of the daimyo increased during the Heian period.
- 2 Why had the position of regent become increasingly important during the twelfth century CE?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Compare **SOURCES 4** and **5**.
 - a What does each source tell us about the different roles of the shogun and the emperor during the period of shogunate rule?
 - b Which, the shogun or the emperor, looks the most likely to be able to rule the country? Give reasons for your answer.

7.4 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- 1 Yoritomo became the effective ruler of Japan as shogun. What personal abilities did he have to have to take on this role?
- 2 Why could the appointment of Yoritomo as shogun be considered a major turning point in Japanese history?

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT

- 3 Identify the reasons why the shoguns were able to ascend to supreme power in Japan in 1192. Divide them up as follows:
 - a those features in Japanese society that would have made military rule a strong possibility (the long-term causes of the rise of the shoguns)
 - b the immediate events before 1192 that resulted in the shift of power from the emperor to the shogun (the short-term or immediate causes).

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7.5 Challenges to shogunate rule

7.5.1 The end of the Kamakura shogunate

The establishment of the Kamakura shogunate in 1192 represents the victory of the daimyo over the power of the emperor. However, long-term stability in Japan was still under threat because the power of the shogun was dependent on the strength of the daimyo clan that held them in that position. The position of shogun sometimes passed peacefully between members of powerful families, but there were also periods when Japan descended into civil war as feuding daimyo clans fought for power and influence.

During the Kamakura period, the position of shogun was shared between the Minamoto, Fujiwara and Hojo families. The shogunate maintained stable government but faced a number of challenges and threats before its final downfall in 1333.

Mongol invasions

China presented the most serious threat to Japan in the Kamakura period. The Mongol emperor of China, Kublai Khan, demanded that Japan respect his authority and become a **tributary** state. When the shogunate refused, Kublai Khan ordered his army to invade Japan. But on two occasions, in 1274 and 1281, the Mongol ships were sunk by **typhoons**. The Japanese came to believe kamikaze or 'divine winds' protected their country. Unfortunately, thousands of samurai who fought the Mongol attackers became angry when the shogun could not afford to pay them. They waited for an opportunity to oppose the shogunate.

The Ashikaga shogunate

A chance to restore the rule of the nobles and the royal court came in 1333 when Emperor Go-Daigo resisted the military government. Samurai from the Ashikaga clan supported him and the Kamakura shogunate collapsed. However, other samurai were outraged at this challenge to their prestige and authority. The Ashikaga clan turned against the emperor and forced him to flee into

tributary a state that gives payment to another state or ruler

typhoon name given to big tropical storms in the Pacific or Indian ocean

the mountains. From 1336, the Ashikaga clan ruled Japan as shoguns for the next 237 years. It was a time of great artistic achievement, especially in theatre, literature, gardening and development of the **tea ceremony**.

tea ceremony an ancient Japanese ritual of serving and drinking tea

SOURCE 1 A Japanese painting showing the destruction of the Mongol invasion fleet by 'divine wind'



7.5.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 In what ways did the defeat of the Mongols actually weaken the power of the Kamakura shoguns?
- 2 How were the Ashikaga clan able to take over the shogunate in 1336?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 **SOURCE 1** shows the destruction of the Mongol invasion fleet in 1281. What appears to be the cause of the Mongol defeat?
- 4 Why might the Japanese believe that the gods had decided to save Japan?

DID YOU KNOW?

The name *kamikaze*, meaning 'divine wind', was used to describe the storms that helped repel Mongol invaders in the thirteenth century. Revived by the Japanese during World War II, the name was given to units of fighter pilots who deliberately crashed their bomb-laden planes onto enemy ships. These suicide pilots were another type of 'divine wind' directed against Japan's enemies..

7.5.2 The age of the warring states

For the first hundred years of their rule, the Ashikaga clan maintained control of the country by developing alliances with other daimyo families. Often they were able to maintain this support because of the personal skills of the family member who held the position of shogun. In 1464, a dispute arose between two brothers of the Ashikaga clan as to who would succeed as shogun and different daimyo clans declared allegiance to each of the brothers. This led to ten years of civil war from 1467 to 1477, severely weakening the authority of the Ashikaga shogunate. The next hundred years saw frequent outbreaks of hostility as different daimyo clans formed alliances and went to battle against each other to try and gain more power and influence. The Ashikaga shoguns became little more than puppets, controlled by different clans at different times throughout this period. During this age of the warring states, vassals overthrew their lords, farmers led armed uprisings and the economy was seriously weakened. Japan needed a strong leader to bring peace and order once again.

SOURCE 2 A battle between rival samurai during the period of the warring states



7.5.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What was the key dispute that led to civil war from 1467 to 1477?
- 2 In what ways did the period of the warring states weaken the power of government in Japan?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Examine **SOURCE 2**.
 - a Describe what is happening in this painting.
 - b How can we tell that the battle involves a challenge to the power of a daimyo?

7.5.3 Order is restored

The long rule of the Ashikaga shoguns had descended into chaos and the situation was only resolved when a succession of three powerful warlords gradually united the country under one authority. The first of these was Oda Nobunaga who used his military power to impose his will on rival daimyo clans. The second was Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who brought an end to the period of the warring states. The third was Tokugawa Ieyasu, who founded the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603. These men are sometimes referred to as the three great unifiers of Japan.

Oda Nobunaga — a cruel military genius

Oda Nobunaga was the son of a daimyo from a small domain on the coast of Honshu. When he was 21, he killed a rival lord and planned to unite Japan under his own leadership. When the Ashikaga shogun Yoshiteru was murdered in 1565, his brother Yoshiaki appealed to Oda for help and Oda had him installed as shogun. Yoshiaki was little more than a puppet, as the real power lay with Oda and his forces. In 1573 Yoshiaki tried to rebel against Oda but was driven out of Kyoto. He became a Buddhist monk. The position of shogun remained effectively vacant for the next 30 years. Through a series of ruthless battles, Oda began to create a **centralised** government. He was especially cruel in crushing Buddhist opponents, burning some alive and destroying monasteries. His victories were helped by the use of **muskets** that had only recently been introduced to Japan from Europe. Oda's rule came to an end in 1582 when he committed **seppuku** after being surrounded by enemy forces.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi — from soldier to leader

Toyotomi Hideyoshi was a soldier in Oda's army and took over leadership after Oda's ritual suicide. He developed a strong central government that expanded control over the islands of Shikoku and Kyushu. Hideyoshi also opposed European Christian missionaries. He expelled them from Japan, prohibited Japanese from becoming Christians and later executed 26 Japanese and foreign Christians. Before Hideyoshi died in 1598, he set up a council of five senior elders whom he trusted to pass power to his son.

centralised control of a country from one central location

musket a muzzle-loading gun with a long barrel

seppuku a form of ritual suicide, carried out by disembowelling oneself (cutting open the abdomen) with a sword

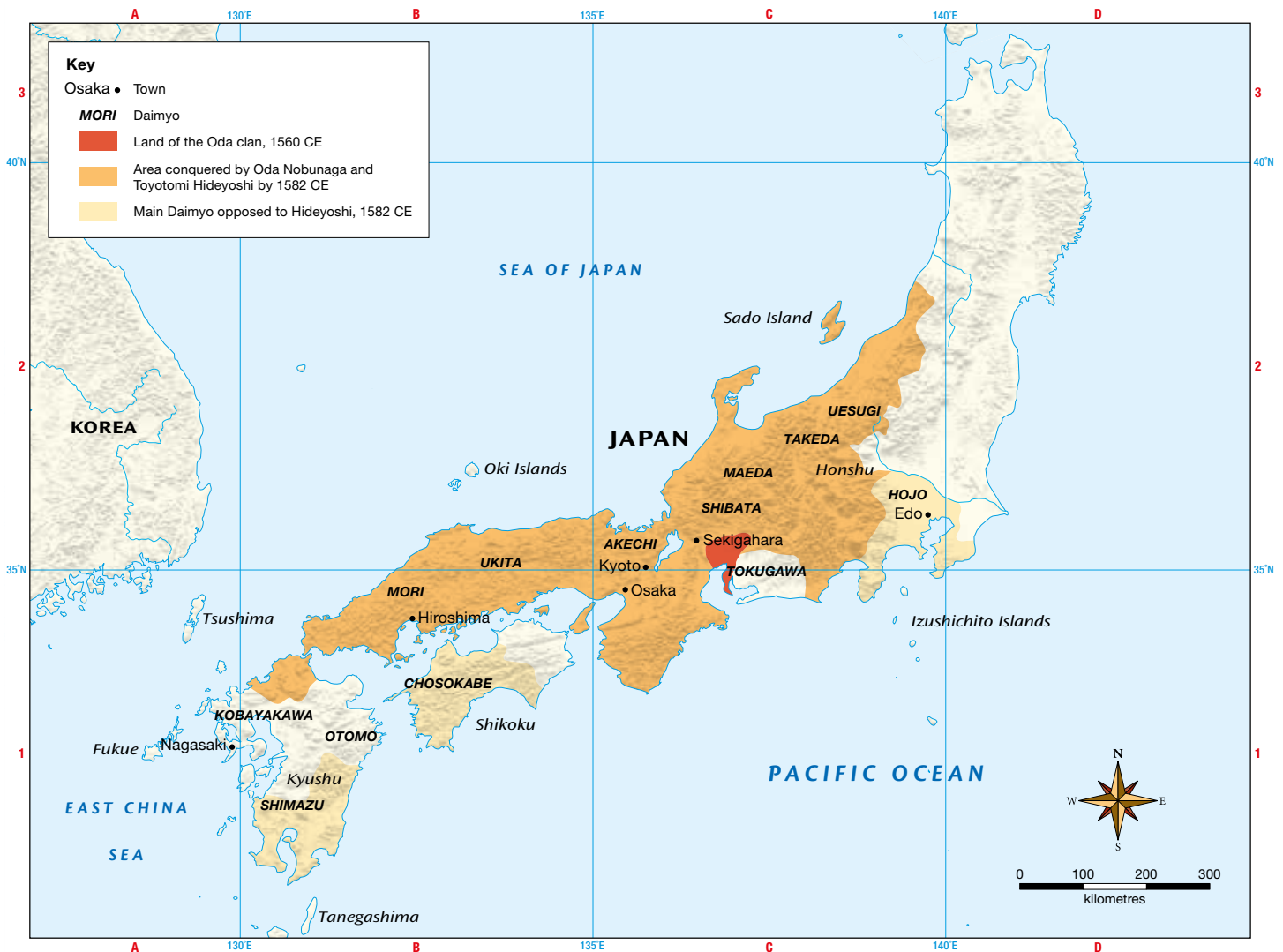
SOURCE 3 The Twenty-six Martyrs Monument was built in 1962 in Nagasaki to commemorate the Christians executed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi in 1597.



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SOURCE 4 Sixteenth century Japan



Source: Spatial Vision

7.5.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 How was Oda Nobunaga able to rise to importance in Japan after 1565?
- 2 Do you believe Oda would have been a popular leader? Give reasons for your answer.
- 3 What actions did Hideyoshi take to restore traditional Japanese religious practices?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 Examine **SOURCE 4**.
 - a Compare the area of land controlled by the Oda clan in 1560, with the area conquered by 1582. How many daimyo clans had Oda and his armies conquered during this period?
 - b Identify one daimyo clan that was opposed to Hideyoshi in 1582.
 - c Why was opposition from the Shimazu clan probably not very significant?

7.5 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- 1 Explain how the power and status of each of the Fujiwara, Minamoto and Taira clans changed during the eleventh and twelfth centuries.
- 2 At various times, the Japanese emperors or shoguns were puppets for other powerful figures. What does the term 'puppet' mean in this context? What advantage would there be for one person to use another person as a 'puppet'?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 **SOURCE 3** shows a monument to the Christian martyrs of 1597. Constructed many years after the event, what does this indicate about the ability of the Japanese Christians to survive persecution? Go to the internet and find out who built the monument and how the finance was raised.
- 4 Examine **SOURCE 4**. To what extent would you describe Japan as either united or divided in 1582?

7.6 The Tokugawa shogunate

7.6.1 Tokugawa Ieyasu — a ruthless leader

Building on the work of Oda and Hideyoshi, Tokugawa Ieyasu continued to unify Japan and to impose his will on the other daimyo clans. He eventually established the Tokugawa shogunate, which proved to be the most powerful of all

Japanese feudal governments. He managed to weaken the power of the other daimyo families so that this shogunate remained in power until 1867.

Tokugawa Ieyasu was born in 1542, the son of an arranged marriage between teenaged members of a powerful daimyo clan and a samurai family. His original name was Matsudaira Takechiyo, and during his life he changed his name a number of times. In 1567 he changed his name to Tokugawa Ieyasu and claimed that he was descended from the Minamoto clan, the founders of the original Kamakura shogunate. By this time he had aligned himself with Oda Nobunaga and his soldiers fought beside Oda's in a number of battles against other daimyo families during the period of the warring states. When Oda died in 1582, a number of provinces that were ruled by his vassals were left without a strong leader and Ieyasu was able to take control of some of these.

In 1584, Ieyasu joined with Oda Nobunaga's son Oda Nobukatsu in a military campaign against Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who was now the most powerful daimyo in Japan. This rivalry eventually ended in a truce, with an agreement to divide up control of a number of provinces between them. This agreement made Ieyasu the second most powerful daimyo in the country. When Hideyoshi set up the Council of Five Elders in 1598, Tokugawa Ieyasu became a member of that council.

SOURCE 1 A statue of Tokugawa Ieyasu, one of many erected in different parts of Japan to commemorate this important leader



7.6.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Why would Tokugawa Ieyasu have aligned himself with Oda Nobunaga?
- 2 What advantage did Ieyasu gain in forming a truce with Hideyoshi?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Identify two features of the statue in **SOURCE 1** that indicate that Tokugawa Ieyasu was seen as a powerful leader by the artist.

7.6.2 Founding a new shogunate

Although Tokugawa Ieyasu was a member of the council of five, he had his own ambitions. Instead of supporting Toyotomi Hideyoshi's son, he forced him into battle. The son then committed suicide in Osaka Castle. Ieyasu won a great military victory in 1600 and three years later declared himself the new shogun. Altogether, there were 15 Tokugawa shoguns between 1603 and 1868, and this powerful samurai family had branches throughout Japan. In 1603, Ieyasu set up his shogunate in the small fishing town of Edo. (This town eventually grew to become the modern Japanese capital city of Tokyo.) He took over a small castle and developed it into a massive Tokugawa residence and military headquarters. As the administrative centre of Japan, Edo housed thousands of samurai and it soon attracted merchants, artisans and other common residents. About one hundred years later, Edo was the biggest city in the world.

Law and order

The Tokugawa shoguns had come to power after a long period of civil war in Japan. They realised that they might have to compete for power with other powerful daimyo clans, so they set about finding ways to reduce the power and influence of these clans. They ordered all daimyo to travel to Edo every second year to pay respect to the shogun. Long processions of samurai accompanying daimyo in **palanquins** became a common sight. When they returned to their domains, daimyo had to leave their families behind in Edo as **hostages**. The expense of feeding armies of samurai on the road, maintaining a residence in Edo and providing gifts to the shogun ensured that daimyo could not become too rich and powerful.

palanquin a sort of couch for transporting passengers, with long poles on each side so that servants could carry it on their shoulders

hostage a person kept for security

SOURCE 2 Daimyo travelling to Edo were carried in palanquins and escorted by long processions of samurai.



7.6.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Outline how Ieyasu was able to gain the position of shogun by 1603.
- 2 What was the major challenge facing Ieyasu in taking on this position?
- 3 Explain one method used by Ieyasu to weaken the power of rival daimyo clans.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 a What does **SOURCE 2** show you about the way common people had to behave when a daimyo procession passed by?
b What do you think might have happened to these common people if they had not behaved in this way

7.6.3 The period of isolation

The Tokugawa were very suspicious of foreigners who tried to change Japan's traditions. Christianity was forbidden as an 'un-Japanese' religion. Japanese citizens were also forbidden to travel overseas. The Tokugawa shoguns isolated Japan from the rest of the world for over 260 years.

One feature of the Tokugawa shogunate was the gradual assertion of control over international trade by the shogun. During this period, only Dutch, Korean and Chinese traders were permitted to trade with Japan, while other nationalities such as the Spanish and Portuguese were banned by the shogun. Trade could only take place through the port of Nagasaki and the goods allowed into and out of the country were strictly regulated. Merchants involved in trade were subject to fees and taxes in exchange for the right to engage in foreign trade. The shogunate owned most of the Japanese ships engaging in overseas trade, or controlled these by issuing permits to favoured merchants to operate such ships.

Why did the shogun control trade?

Today we are used to individuals and businesses engaging in overseas trade within a framework of basic government rules. These rules are designed to ensure that customs duties are applied when necessary, and that illegal goods cannot be imported into the country. The situation was quite different in Japan during the Tokugawa shogunate, with the shogun tightly controlling all aspects of foreign trade. Why did the Tokugawa shoguns choose to maintain such tight controls over trade? The following may provide some clues:

- Tokugawa shoguns were very concerned about the spread of Christianity into their country. They believed this religion was un-Japanese and would undermine traditional Shinto and Buddhist beliefs. Catholic Portuguese and Spanish traders had first brought Christianity to Japan in the mid-sixteenth century, and traders from those two countries had demonstrated a desire to promote and spread their religion. Dutch traders were less concerned about spreading religious beliefs and so were allowed to continue as the only Europeans trading with Japan.
- The shoguns wanted to maintain the existing social order, with strict divisions of the different social classes. They were very suspicious of all foreigners and foreign ideas and so wanted to limit the exposure of Japanese to outside influences. During this period, Japanese were forbidden to travel overseas and anyone who did was banned from returning. Maintaining control over trade was a means of maintaining isolation from foreign influences.
- Other daimyo were generally excluded from engaging in trade. By not permitting daimyo outside the shogun's immediate clan from engaging in foreign trade, a possible source of wealth was denied to those nobles. This would prevent them from becoming too wealthy and being able to challenge the power of the shogun.
- Nagasaki was a city controlled by the Tokugawa clan. By restricting trade to that city, all fees and taxes that came from trade would be directed to the Tokugawa family. This enabled the shogun to maintain his wealth and power over the other daimyo clans.
- Foreign trade proved to be very profitable. The shogunate held the **monopoly** on many of the goods traded and charged fees and taxes to any merchants who were granted the right to engage in the import or export of particular goods.
- Copper and silver mined in Japan had been one of the main exports to other countries. By controlling trade, the shoguns were able to limit the amount of these metals exported. This enabled them to ensure Japan maintained stocks of these valuable metals.

monopoly an organisation or group that has complete control of something

Classical and feudal Japan

Dates	Period	Power held by	Other features
Fourth century CE to 794	Nara	Yamato clan emperors	Establishment of the imperial dynasty; the first central government of Japan
794–1185	Heian	Emperors	Capital city moved to Heian-kyo (Kyoto); first shoguns appointed; growth in power of daimyo and samurai
1185–1333	Kamakura	Kamakura shoguns	Stable government for 150 years; successful defeat of the Mongols
1336–1573	Ashikaga	Ashikaga shoguns	Gradual breakdown of shogunate as daimyo fought for power during the age of the warring states
1573–1603	Warring states	Oda Nobunaga; Toyotomi Hideyoshi; Tokugawa Ieyasu	Breakdown of shogunate rule; centralising of government under the 'three great unifiers'
1603–1867	Edo	Tokugawa shoguns	Capital moved to Edo (Tokyo); stable government under the shogunate; isolation from the rest of the world

SOURCE 3 From the *Closed Country Edict of 1635*

1. Japanese ships are strictly forbidden to leave for foreign countries.
2. No Japanese is permitted to go abroad. If there is anyone who attempts to do so secretly, he must be executed. The ship so involved must be impounded and its owner arrested, and the matter must be reported to the higher authority.
3. If any Japanese returns from overseas after residing there, he must be put to death.
4. If there is any place where the teachings of the [Catholic] priests is practiced, . . . you must order a thorough investigation.
5. Any informer revealing the whereabouts of the followers of the priests must be rewarded accordingly. If anyone reveals the whereabouts of a high ranking priest, he must be given one hundred pieces of silver. For those of lower ranks, depending on the deed, the reward must be set accordingly.
6. If there are any Southern Barbarians who propagate the teachings of the priests, or otherwise commit crimes, they may be incarcerated in the prison.
7. All incoming ships must be carefully searched for the followers of the priests.
8. No single trading city shall be permitted to purchase all the merchandise brought by foreign ships.
9. Samurai are not permitted to purchase any goods originating from foreign ships directly from Chinese merchants in Nagasaki.

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myWorldHistoryAtlas

Deepen and check your understanding of the topic with the following resources and auto-marked questions:
Japan under the shoguns

7.6.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Identify two ways in which the Tokugawa shoguns attempted to control Japan's foreign trade.
- 2 Why were the Dutch the only Europeans permitted to trade with Japan?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Examine **SOURCE 3**.
 - a What was the punishment for Japanese returning after living overseas?
 - b What incentives were offered for Japanese citizens reporting the location of Catholic converts?
 - c What punishment was imposed on anyone promoting the Christian religion?

7.6 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 1 What methods were used in the Tokugawa period to isolate Japan from the rest of the world?
- 2 Were the Tokugawa shoguns attempting to prevent changes from occurring in Japanese society or simply attempting to control those changes?

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT

- 3 What do you think is meant by the famous Japanese saying: 'Nobunaga pounds the national rice cake, Hideyoshi kneads it, and in the end Ieyasu sits down and eats it:'?
- 4 Explain three possible reasons for the decision of the Tokugawa shoguns to take control of trade in and out of Japan.

7.7 Japanese feudal society

DID YOU KNOW?

Japanese castles were built mainly of wood on top of high stone foundations. The wooden framework of the walls was covered with thick layers of clay and plaster. Inside the castle, people had to climb steep wooden stairs to go from one level to the next.

7.7.1 The emperor and the nobles

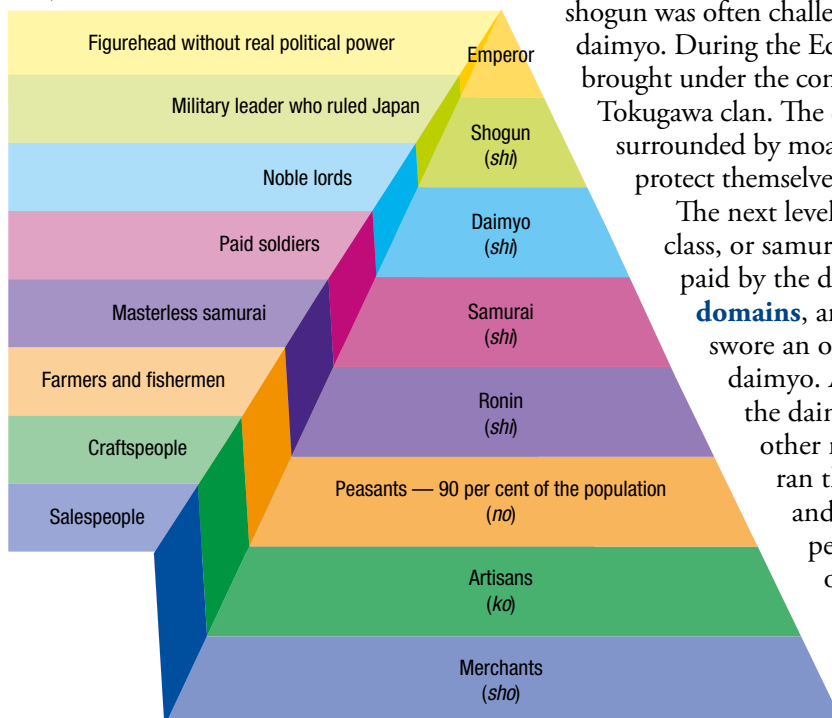
For about a thousand years, from the Heian period until the end of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1867, Japan maintained a feudal society, similar in some ways to the feudal societies of medieval Europe. Society was divided into rigid social classes, each person belonging to a class that reflected their status and the role they fulfilled in society. Once a person was born into a particular class, he or she would remain in that class for life.

The emperor held the highest status, and he and his family were at the top of the class structure. During the shogunate period the emperor had very little actual power, but he was an important religious leader and was worshipped as a descendant of the sun goddess. He lived a rich, artistic life surrounded by families of nobles. Although he was a highly respected figure, the emperor could not control the more distant regions of Japan. To do so he needed the support of the daimyo, the powerful nobles to whom he gave land in return for their support. During the feudal, or shogunate, period the most powerful of the daimyo became the shogun, who was the effective ruler of Japan. As well as leading the army, the shogun took care of all the routine matters involved in governing

the country. Each of the daimyo had his own estates and armies and so was very powerful. In the Kamakura and Ashikaga periods the shogun was often challenged by other powerful daimyo. During the Edo period the daimyo were brought under the control of the shoguns of the Tokugawa clan. The daimyo built huge castles surrounded by moats and high stone walls to protect themselves from their enemies.

The next level of society was the warrior class, or samurai. These soldiers were paid by the daimyo to control their **domains**, and each samurai warrior swore an oath of loyalty to his own daimyo. As well as fighting for the daimyo during conflicts with other nobles, the samurai often ran the estates, collected taxes and kept order among the peasants. During the period of the warring states, the daimyo relied on their samurai to protect them and their interests.

SOURCE 1 Social classes in Japanese society



domain the territory ruled by a daimyo, including the farming and fishing villages within it

SOURCE 2 Himeji Castle belonged to daimyo from the Akamatsu clan.



7.7.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What was the role of the emperor in Japanese feudal society?
- 2 How did the daimyo maintain their power?
- 3 In addition to their military role, what other duties did samurai often perform for the daimyo?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 Examine **SOURCE 1**. Compare this with the diagram of the European feudal system in 1.6 Rulers, religion and the changing map of medieval Europe. In what ways is the Japanese system similar to the European one, and in what ways is it different?
- 5 Explain how the castle shown in **SOURCE 2** could be defended against the enemies of its daimyo owners.

7.7.2 Shi-no-ko-sho

In the early shogunate period, Japanese society had only two main groups. The ‘good citizens’ included nobles, farmers and other free people. Slaves, servants and guards were ‘low citizens’. In the late sixteenth century, Japanese society established a class system based on the Confucian idea of four main ranks. The daimyo and samurai belonged to the warrior class or *shi*. They were at the top because they protected the nation from invasion and were supposed to set moral standards for the rest of society.

Beneath the warriors came farmers or *no*. Without food, no-one could survive, so farmers were viewed as essential members of society.

The **artisans** or *ko* came next in rank. Although they used raw materials produced by others, they made items like paper, fine swords and reed mats that people needed. Near the bottom of the social structure came merchants or *sho*. Their social status was low because they did not make anything at all. They lived by trading rice, selling items that other people had produced or by charging interest on money that they loaned.

Even lower than the merchants was a group of outcasts called *eta*. They lived on the fringes of towns and were confined to their own communities under the leadership of a headman. They made a living handling ritually unclean products like animal skins for leather, or worked as labourers carrying out the distasteful work of garbage collection and burial of the dead.

Other people lived outside the rank system altogether. The *hinin* were regarded as non-people and often survived by begging. Wandering priests, actors and mime artists also had a low position in society.

artisan a skilled worker who produces handmade items

SOURCE 3 Merchants had a low social status because they were seen to contribute little to society. This artwork was created by Katsuhika Hokusai (1760–1849).



7.7.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Why did farmers rank higher than artisans or merchants in the *shi-no-ko-sho* arrangement of social classes?
- 2 Who were the two groups that lived outside the *shi-no-ko-sho* arrangement? How did each group survive?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Examine **SOURCE 3**, which depicts a merchant in his shop.
 - a What do you think the merchant is doing in this picture?
 - b Who is his customer?
 - c Identify three important items in the picture and explain what they were used for.
 - d In terms of class, what could be concluded by the postures and body positions of the people in the painting?

7.7 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 1 From an examination of the structure of Japanese feudalism, which human qualities and skills do you think were most highly valued in this society? Which do you think were considered to be the least important?
- 2 Japanese feudal society lasted for over a thousand years from the Heian period until the mid-nineteenth century. Identify two features of the society that allowed it to continue for such a long time.

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- 3 What were the positive aspects of Japanese feudal society? What were its negative aspects? Draw up two lists, one showing what you believe were the positive features of this society and one to show the negative features.

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7.8 The samurai

7.8.1 The daimyo and samurai

Warriors were influential throughout Japanese history but they gained special importance during feudal times. Under feudalism, society was based on military power. Although the daimyo were powerful warlords, their power depended on the fighting skills of the samurai under their control. These warriors swore an oath of loyalty to their daimyo. They controlled his lands for him when he was away in the capital and fought on his behalf when he came into conflict with other daimyo.

During the Classical and shogunate periods in Japan, the emperors found it increasingly difficult to control all of the country. Although the daimyo swore allegiance to the emperor, many of them were actually more powerful than the emperor. They had their own power bases in the provinces and had large numbers of vassals in their service. At first the men who served them were members of their own families but the daimyo soon gathered vassals who were not related to them by blood. These men were known as samurai, which means 'a person who serves a noble'. Later, some of the more powerful vassals challenged the authority of their lords and used military force to seize lands for themselves. They too became daimyo and built alliances by granting land to their followers.

The warrior code

A true samurai had to follow the warrior code of **bushido**. His first duty was to be loyal and obedient to his daimyo lord. A samurai was expected to defend to the death his own family honour and the honour of his daimyo. Under bushido, a samurai was required to learn seven martial arts: archery, the spear, fencing, horse riding, military strategy, use of firearms and techniques of **jujutsu**.

bushido the way of the warrior; the rules that prescribed correct behaviour for all samurai

jujutsu a traditional Japanese system of physical training and unarmed combat

SOURCE 1 A scene from the film *The Last Samurai*, set in the late nineteenth century, when the influence of the samurai was in decline



SOURCE 2 A sword from the Kamakura period with its beautifully crafted mounting, or *koshirae*.



SOURCE 3 Samurai armour varied greatly during the shogunate period.



The Buddhist religion encouraged the samurai to adopt an attitude of ‘carelessness’ with life through full control of body and mind. Samurai practised special meditation, so they would know what to do in battle without being confused by thoughts or feelings.

Rank

Hierarchy and rank were very important in Japanese society. Some daimyo had higher status than others due to their noble ancestry or the value of their land. There were also ranks within samurai, just as there is in an army. It was possible to advance in rank, and a daimyo might reward a loyal samurai with promotion or a grant of land.

7.8.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What was the role of the samurai in feudal Japanese society?
- 2 What was bushido?
- 3 Explain the main methods of fighting employed by the samurai.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 Examine **SOURCES 1** and **3**. What would be the advantages and disadvantages of fighting in armour like this?

7.8.2 Samurai life

Samurai boys were raised to become professional soldiers in a lord’s service. Soon after they were born, they were given a small sword in a special ceremony. From a very early age they were taught archery, horse riding and sword fighting as well as unarmed combat. They learned these skills not only from their fathers and senior samurai but often by attending martial arts schools. They had to learn to read and write as well, for they were expected to be educated people who could assist their lord in the governing of his domain. Their two main responsibilities were often described as ‘the pen and the sword’.

A samurai woman was also required to demonstrate courage and honour. However, instead of military training, the emphasis in a girl’s education was on becoming a faithful wife and mother. Her education prepared her for managing a household as a future samurai wife. When her husband was away at war, she was expected to keep everything in order until he returned.

Ronin

If a daimyo lost his land in battle or had his domain confiscated by the government, his samurai became masterless. They were considered **ronin** or 'wave men' floating on the sea of life. At various times in history, Japanese society had many of these unemployed warriors. Some of them simply ran away to begin a new life. Others joined new commanders or became farmers. But some ronin became bandits or mercenary soldiers who terrorised the countryside.

ronin a wandering samurai who had no lord or master

SOURCE 4 The graves of the 47 ronin



SOURCE 5 The tale of the 47 ronin — a true story

At Japanese New Year, it was the custom for the emperor to send greetings to the court of the shogun, Japan's military ruler. The shogun appointed Lord Asano as one of his representatives to attend the ceremonies. Unaware of the proper behaviour and dress required, Lord Asano asked Lord Kira for advice, but was greatly embarrassed when the information proved to be false. Outraged, Lord Asano drew his sword and attacked Lord Kira in the shogun's palace. This was an extremely serious offence and the shogun ordered Asano to commit suicide. After saying goodbye to his family and faithful samurai, Lord Asano plunged a short sword into his stomach and cut it open in the ritual suicide called seppuku. In the world of the warrior, this was an honourable way to die. Having lost their master, Lord Asano's samurai were now ronin and 47 of them plotted revenge. It took them two years of planning, but finally one snowy night in 1703, they attacked and killed Lord Kira. The shogun was furious because he had personally forbidden revenge. He demanded that all 47 ronin commit seppuku. Having avenged their dead master, the ronin all did as the shogun ordered. By committing seppuku, they paid the highest debt both to their lord and to their ruler.

DID YOU KNOW?

A famous ronin named Musashi fought over sixty duels and was never defeated. He began his samurai training at the age of seven and had his first duel when he was thirteen. As an adult, Musashi wrote *The Book of Five Rings* to explain his unique fighting methods.

7.8.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Outline the differences in the education of samurai boys and girls.
- 2 Why was it important for samurai to learn how to read and write, as well as fight?
- 3 What circumstances could lead to samurai becoming ronin?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 Examine **SOURCE 4**. How can we tell from this photograph that the 47 ronin are still admired and respected in Japan?
- 5 What does the tale of the 47 ronin in **SOURCE 5** tell us about the values and duties of samurai warriors?

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7.8.3 The end of the samurai

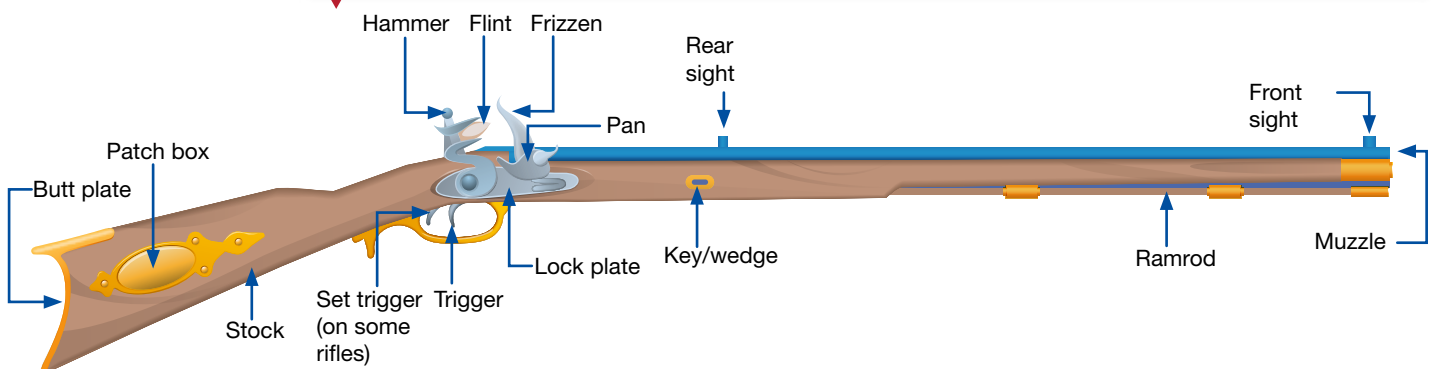
The samurai disappeared from Japan for some of the same reasons that knights disappeared from Europe. After Portuguese traders introduced guns to Japan in the sixteenth century, Japanese metal smiths quickly copied the **flintlock** mechanism. Guns became easier to obtain and samurai eagerly learned how to use them. However, this change meant that traditional samurai skills like sword fighting, horse riding and unarmed combat were no longer as effective. From the beginning of the seventeenth century, Japan experienced over 250 years of peace and so the samurai did not have opportunities to practise their combat skills. Instead, they became mainly government officials. Samurai also fell into debt with the rising merchant class and this weakened their social standing. The samurai class was finally abolished altogether in the late nineteenth century.

How the flintlock gun works

Gunpowder is poured into the muzzle, followed by a lead ball. These are rammed in firmly with the ramrod. A small amount of powder is poured into the pan and the pan lid, or frizzen, is closed over it. The hammer is pulled back and when the trigger is squeezed the flint on the hammer strikes the edge of the frizzen. This creates a spark, which ignites the priming powder in the pan. A small hole in the barrel allows the burning powder in the pan to ignite the powder in the barrel, which explodes — firing the lead ball. The flintlock rifle had a range of 75 to 100 metres. Since the samurai method of fighting involved close hand-to-hand combat, any weapon that allowed fighting from a distance would make the traditional martial arts of the samurai far less effective.

flintlock an old-fashioned type of gun fired by a spark from a flint

SOURCE 6 The introduction of flintlock guns contributed to the decline of the samurai.



7.8.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What impact did the introduction of the flintlock gun have on the traditional skills of the samurai?
- 2 What changes occurred within Japan during the Tokugawa shogunate that led to the eventual decline of the samurai?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Compare **SOURCE 2** with **SOURCE 6**. Why did weapons such as the sword in **SOURCE 2** eventually become ineffective in battle?
- 4 Research the making of a traditional samurai sword and discover why they have been highly regarded by experts.

7.8 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- 1 The samurai were the Japanese equivalent of medieval European knights. Examine the material in topic 3 on the European knight and explain the similarities and differences between these two types of warrior. Which would be more effective at the time? Why?
- 2 Make a list of the values the samurai followed in the code of bushido.
 - a Which of these values do you think are important to modern-day Australian military forces? Give reasons for your answer.
 - b Give some examples of how these values might be seen or used in practical situations today in Australian society.

7.9 The role of women

7.9.1 Women of *The Pillow Book*

Sei Shonagon was the author of *The Pillow Book* and a lady-in-waiting to Empress Teishi in the middle Heian period, c. 1000 CE. Sei's book provides fascinating insights into Japanese life over a thousand years ago, particularly the role of women in Japan under the shoguns.

Sei Shonagon's description of Empress Teishi playing the **biwa**, a stringed instrument like a lute, can tell us much about court life at the time (see **SOURCES 1** and **2**). Empress Teishi died at the age of 25 in 1001 CE after giving birth to her second child.

biwa a four-stringed Japanese musical instrument

SOURCE 1 An extract from *The Pillow Book*

There she sat, in a scarlet robe with quite indescribably lovely gowns and starched robes beneath, in layer upon layer . . . the sharp contrast of her wonderfully white forehead, clearly visible at the side of the shielding instrument.

SOURCE 3 *Poem of Sangi Takamura* by Katsushika Hokusai depicts women diving for abalone.



Katsushika Hokusai, Japan 1760–1849
Poem of Sangi Takamura (Sangi Takamuro) c. 1835–6
Colour woodblock, 24.8 × 36.7 cm
National Gallery of Australia, Canberra
Gift of Orde Poynton Esq, AO, CMG 2000

SOURCE 2 The Japanese *biwa* was first developed in the eighth century. It derives from similar instruments found in Asia and the Middle East.



Other women described in *The Pillow Book* include:

- farming women planting the rice fields and ‘wearing hats that look just like newly-made serving trays’. They are singing a song about a bird, saying ‘it’s your chanting sets us planting!’
- ladies-in-waiting, who spend their time writing poetry, playing music and indulging in witty conversation
- fisher girls with thin ropes tied to their waists diving out of boats to collect shellfish. Sei criticised the men who were singing and moving the boat while the women were gasping for breath (see **SOURCE 3**)

shaman a person who claims to communicate with evil spirits through mystic rituals

DID YOU KNOW?

Until the early twentieth century, Japanese emperors had many concubines and mistresses. Concubines ranked lower than an official wife but were mothers to some of the emperor's children. In the seventeenth century, Emperor Go-Mizunoo was the father of at least 33 children from his empress, concubines and ladies-in-waiting.

tuberculosis a serious and infectious disease that affects the lungs

beri-beri a disease caused by a lack of vitamin B

kana a writing system that represents Japanese syllables

brocade a rich silk fabric with a raised pattern

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- **shaman** chanting and praying to the spirits for a child's health. During the shogunate period, the Japanese believed that bad health was due to evil spirits possessing a person's body
- an old Buddhist nun 'dressed in horribly grimy clothes and looking like a little monkey'. She begs for offerings and shocks the ladies-in-waiting by singing a rude song
- a serving lady pouring water for the empress. Other female servants act as hairdressers, food preparers or nurses to the emperor's children.

7.9.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Noblewomen were only a small fraction of Japan's population during the shogunate period. What occupations did the majority of other women have?
- 2 Why would the *biwa* have been played only by noblewomen?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 How do we know that the description in **SOURCE 1** is of a wealthy noblewoman?
- 4 Which European musical instrument is most like the *biwa* shown in **SOURCE 2**?
- 5 What does the scene in **SOURCE 3** tell us about the social position of the women divers?
- 6 Using the internet, listen to someone playing the *biwa*. Describe the sound made by this instrument.

7.9.2 Family life and fashion

On average, women lived only 27 years and men 32 years. Diseases like **tuberculosis** and **beri-beri** were common, and women faced the extra risk of dying during childbirth. Many children died young due to poor diets, unsanitary living conditions and childhood diseases.

Marriages were usually arranged between families. Husbands often had more than one wife and lived with a wife's family, although this custom later changed when wives moved to their husband's family.

Girls from rich families spent many hours copying famous poetry and practising handwriting. In this way, they learned to read and write the Japanese characters called **kana** at home. Beautiful writing was a mark of good taste and high social class. Boys went on to study the Chinese characters, but such learning was discouraged for girls. The vast majority of people — both male and female — were illiterate.

For Japanese noblewomen, beauty meant a plump figure, small red lips, a pale complexion and very long hair. Ladies used heavy rice powder to whiten their faces and necks, and blackened their teeth with an iron-based liquid. This process helped to maintain healthy teeth. They also shaved their eyebrows and drew new ones high on their foreheads with a mixture of black ash. They wore richly coloured silk gowns, skirted trousers and Chinese **brocade** jackets. However, women from farming families could not afford such clothes. They wore simple garments of coarse fabric.

SOURCE 4 The fashion of Japanese noblewomen typically involved heavy make-up and elaborate clothing.



7.9.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Why did women in shogunate Japan generally have shorter life spans than women in Australia today?
- 2 What skills and personal qualities did noblewomen in the Heian period aim to possess?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Most of us would recognise the image in **SOURCE 4** as being typically Japanese? Why is this not an accurate representation of the appearance of the majority of Japanese women during the shogunate period?

7.9.3 Geisha culture

The term 'geisha' means literally 'art person', and geishas in Japan have traditionally been performing artists who entertain their clients with a variety of artistic skills. In the west we have often equated the geisha profession with prostitution but this is not generally the case, even though their clients were usually men. The world of the geisha was traditionally a completely feminine world. Young geishas were trained by senior geishas and the geisha house was staffed only by women. Geishas were trained in music, poetry, dance, conducting interesting conversations with clients and serving tea according to the traditional tea ceremony. Unlike married women, who were traditionally dependent on their husbands, the geisha was considered to be an independent businesswoman, who earned her own living with her skills at entertaining her clients. The management of the geisha house and its finances has always been entirely in the hands of women. Geishas traditionally did not marry and many continued to entertain into their seventies and eighties. If a geisha did marry, she was required to leave the geisha house as geishas were expected to be single. The refined culture of the geisha emerged during the Edo period and remains in existence in Japan to this day.

SOURCE 5 A geisha performs the traditional tea ceremony for a client.



SOURCE 6 Geishas were skilled entertainers.



7.9.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What were the skills required to be a successful geisha?
- 2 In what ways was life in the geisha house controlled by women?
- 3 Why do Westerners often make the mistake of confusing geishas with prostitution?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 Examine **SOURCES 5** and **6**. What traditional skills of the geisha are demonstrated in these sources?
- 5 Compare the dress and make-up of the geisha in **SOURCE 6** with the woman in **SOURCE 4**. Why might the life of a geisha have been attractive to a young woman from a poor family?

7.9 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 1 Suggest reasons why we know so much about the lives of rich and powerful nobles in shogunate Japan, but very little about the way ordinary people lived.
- 2 How are ideas about female beauty in Australia today different from the standards admired during the Heian period? What are some of the reasons for this?

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- 3 Murasaki Shikibu was another famous woman during the Heian period. Use the internet and your library to prepare a report about her life and work.
- 4 To what extent was the life of the geisha an unusual feature of a society that was otherwise very male-dominated?

7.10 Arts and culture

7.10.1 Painting

Japanese artists and craftspeople aimed for perfection in all they created. They considered their skills a sacred gift, respected their materials and gave thanks for the successful creation of a beautiful object. For example, sword-makers prayed while they worked and believed a finished sword had its own spirit. Potters, too, often produced items of a semi-religious nature. The Japanese tea ceremony had its beginnings in Chinese Buddhist rituals, so cups and pots used in the ceremony had to be special. **Sake** was important in Shinto festivals, so sake containers also had a religious connection.

In the early feudal period, painters were strongly influenced by Chinese styles. Using ground-up minerals to produce different coloured paint, many Japanese paintings followed Shinto and Buddhist religious themes. Buddhist art often depicted saints, demons or sinners suffering in hell. These pictures served as a warning to live a good life. By the middle Heian period, a distinctive Japanese style of painting developed. Sliding and folding screens in wealthy residences were often richly decorated with scenes from nature or paintings of animals. Many picture scrolls told famous stories such as the *Tale of Genji* or stories of other Japanese heroes. Artists also created elegant portraits of eminent nobles and monks. The Muromachi period (c. 1333–1573) was notable for colourful Shinto religious paintings and **monochrome** ink landscapes painted by Zen Buddhist monks.

sake a Japanese alcoholic drink made from fermented rice; sometimes known as rice wine

monochrome varying tones of a single colour, usually black and grey

SOURCE 1 A painted Japanese folding screen created in the early seventeenth century



JAPANESE

Horse stable (early seventeenth century)

Six panel screen: ink, pigment and gold paint on paper, lacquer on wood, silk, paper, metal

150.2 × 238.0 cm (image and sheet)

National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

Purchased, Allan and Maria Myers Fund for the Acquisition of Asian Art, 2008

7.10.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What methods did Japanese artists use to produce different coloured paints?
- 2 How did religious beliefs influence the work of Japanese painters?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 What would the artwork in **SOURCE 1** have been used for?
- 4 How can we tell the owner of the artwork would have been very wealthy?

7.10.2 Calligraphy and handmade paper

Traditional Japanese writing uses a pointed brush dipped in ink. Many ancient letters, poems and religious texts survive today. They are valued not just for their content but for their beautiful handwriting or **calligraphy**. Wealthy calligraphers could afford fine quality handmade paper (**washi**) coloured with pigments and sometimes flecked with gold or silver leaf. Calligraphy is still taught in Japanese schools, and annual competitions showcase Japan's best calligraphers.

SOURCE 2 Calligraphy is still taught in Japanese schools.



7.10.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 In what ways was traditional Japanese writing a very demanding skill?
- 2 What is the significance of the use of expensive *washi* paper in producing works of calligraphy?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Examine **SOURCE 2**.
 - a From the appearance of the writing, where did Japan's writing system originate?
 - b Using the internet, describe the three different writing systems in use today. Why do they use three?

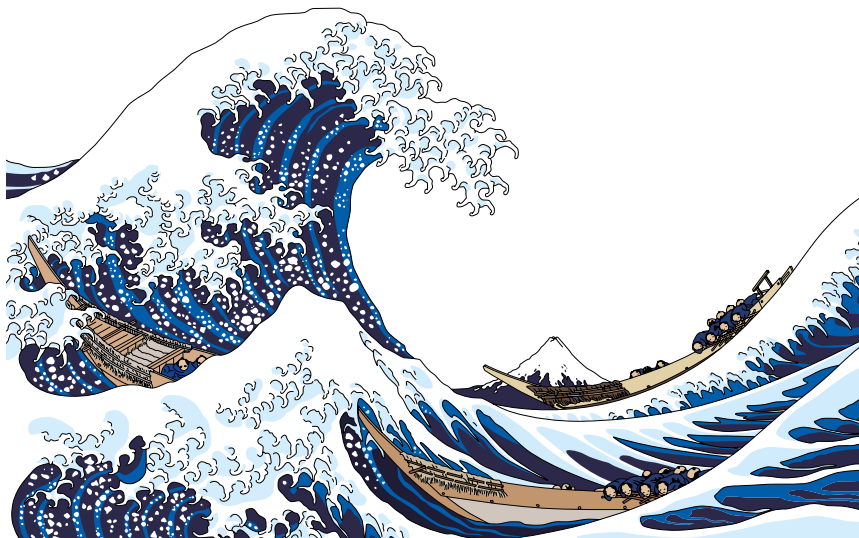
7.10.3 Woodblock printing

Japanese woodblock printing emerged in the eighth century CE as a means of printing books of Buddhist texts. The Heian period saw the development of woodblock printing to produce a variety of images. The process involved drawing an image onto a thin sheet of paper and then gluing it to a block of wood. The wood on either side of the drawn lines would then be chiselled away to leave the outline drawing exposed. This would then be brushed with ink, and sheets of paper pressed against the inked wood to produce an image. Most of the prints produced by this method were a plain black ink outline on a white or pale coloured paper background. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, a process was developed of using different woodblocks for different colours in the one image. One of the greatest practitioners of woodblock printing was Katsushika Hokusai, who lived from around 1760 to 1849. He employed this process for some of his greatest works, which included his series *36 Views of Mount Fuji*. The print *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* is the most famous of this series.

calligraphy the art of beautiful handwriting

washi handmade paper created from the bark or fibre of various shrubs, grasses or trees

SOURCE 3 Hokusai woodblock print – *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*



7.10.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Explain the process used to produce woodblock prints.
- 2 Why would most woodblock prints have been produced in monochrome?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Examine **SOURCE 3**. How many different woodblocks do you think the artist Hokusai would have used to produce this image?

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7.10.4 Lacquer

Lacquer was made from the sap of particular trees, with pigment added to create different colours. The sap formed a glossy coating as it hardened, which artists used to paint many thin layers over wooden articles such as cosmetic boxes or items made from woven bamboo, pottery or metal. During the early shogunate period, red and black were favoured colours; however, brown and amber were also known to be used. Some objects were decorated with patterns of leaves, grass or flowers, while others were engraved, inlaid with pearly shell, or had gold or silver particles sprinkled on them before the lacquer hardened.

SOURCE 4 A lacquered tebako (cosmetics box) dating back to the Heian period, inlaid with pearl shell and with a design of wheels half submerged in a stream



7.10.4 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Describe the method used for producing lacquer work.
- 2 List some of the materials that were inlaid in the lacquer to produce some of the more elaborate designs.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

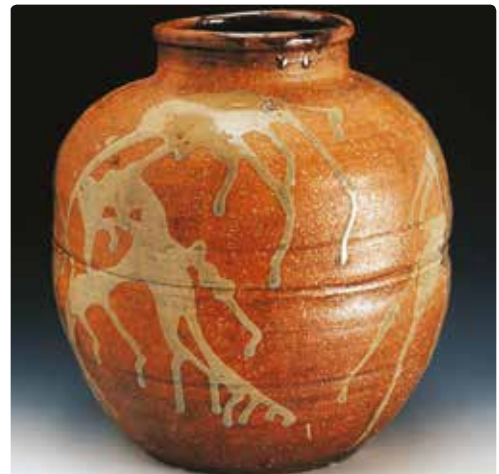
- 3 Examine **SOURCE 4**.
 - a Write a one-paragraph description that would help museum visitors understand what this item looks like and how it was made.
 - b What does this object tell us about the people who made it and used it?

7.10.5 Pottery

Japan's long history of pottery stretches back to the earliest human settlements. Japanese potters created a great range of items, from unglazed vessels for food storage to beautifully **glazed** decorative vases. Kilns in many regions produced ceramics with distinctive styles and designs. By the Muromachi period, even everyday household wares began to be glazed. Some of the finest Japanese ceramics were cups and pots made for the tea ceremony.

Over many centuries, Japanese potters developed special styles and techniques. Toyotomi Hideyoshi was so impressed with hand-moulded tea bowls made by one tile maker that he awarded him a special seal to mark his products. From then on, the potter's family was called 'Raku' after the Chinese character on the seal and the

SOURCE 5 A freshwater jar created in the sixteenth century for use in the tea ceremony



glaze a substance fused onto pottery to give it a glass-like appearance

pottery was called raku ware. Pottery **kilns** in Japan still produce distinctive local ceramics. Craftspeople from many parts of the world visit Japan to learn from Japanese masters and take knowledge back to their home countries.

kiln an oven used at high temperatures to heat and harden ceramic items

7.10.5 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What is raku pottery? What is the origin of the name?
- 2 Why were some of the finest ceramics produced for the traditional tea ceremony?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Examine **SOURCE 5**. What evidence is there that the techniques and colours used in pottery were inspired by the Japanese love of nature?

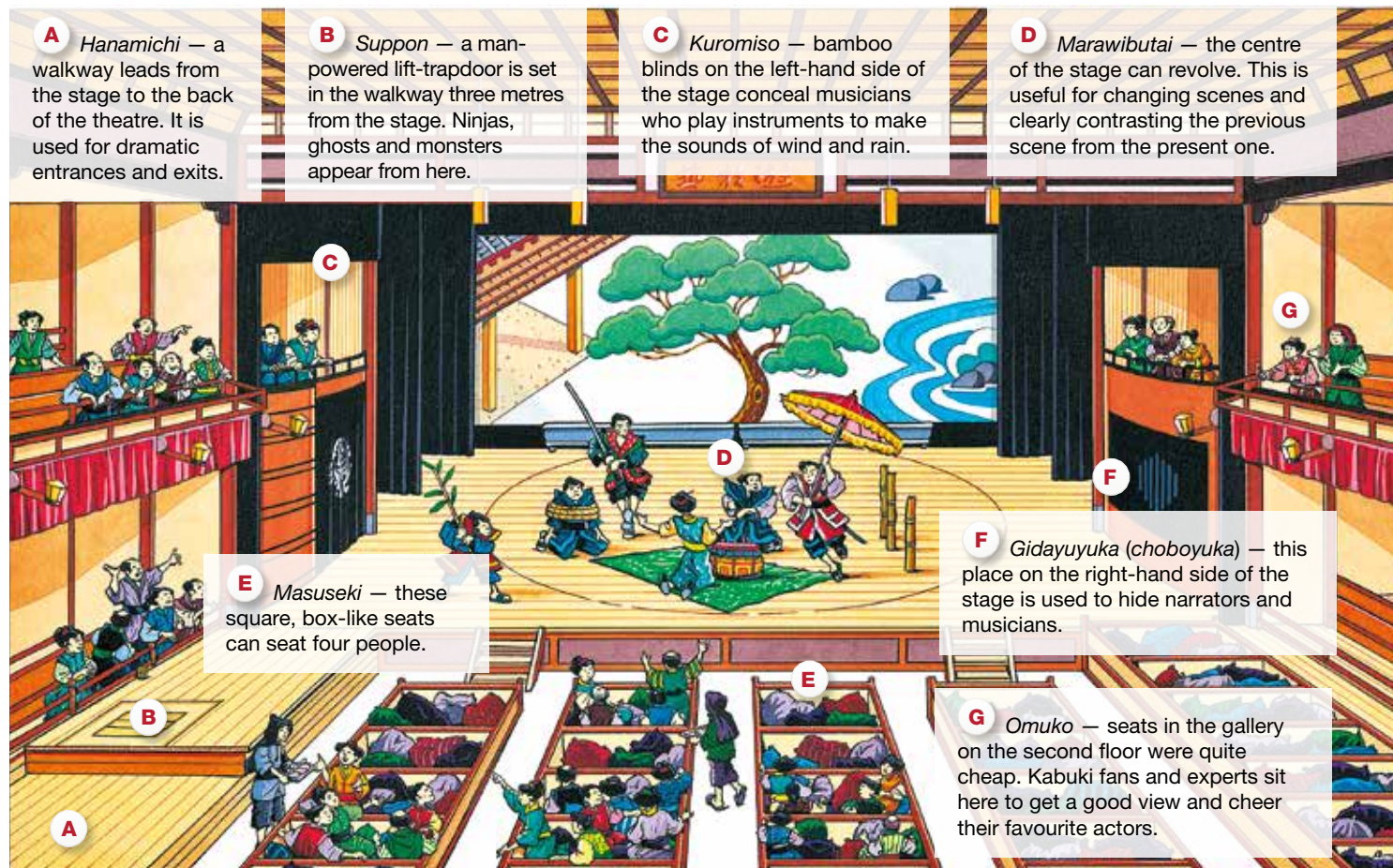
7.10.6 Kabuki theatre

The long and generally peaceful rule of the Tokugawa shogunate contributed to art and culture reaching a new peak in the Genroku period (1688–1704).

With their bustling ports, lively pleasure districts and busy markets, large towns were exciting places to live. Attending plays at the **kabuki** theatre was a popular pastime (see **SOURCE 6**). Kabuki was a highly stylised form of theatre combining drama and dance with very elaborate costumes. The plays usually told stories of ordinary life and attracted all classes of people. About 40 per cent of the people could now read and write, so new literature was also popular.

kabuki a colourful form of theatre combining play-acting, dance and music

SOURCE 6 A modern artist's impression of a kabuki theatre from the Edo period



7.10.6 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Why was the Tokugawa period such a successful one for cultural activities such as kabuki theatre?
- 2 What were major features of kabuki theatre?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 What do you think was the level of audience participation in a kabuki play? First study the labels and then provide evidence from **SOURCE 6**.

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7.10 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- 1 In groups of three or four, select one of the following topics for investigation and make an illustrated poster to be used as part of a class presentation.
 - Raku (pottery)
 - Ink landscapes
 - Woodblock printing
 - Buddhist art
 - Washi (paper)

- Japanese screens
- Kabuki theatre

Your poster should explain:

- a the materials used to create the object
- b the practical methods employed by the artist
- c the significance of this art form as an influence on artistic works in other parts of the world today.

7.11 Land use under the Tokugawa shoguns

7.11.1 Patterns of land use

As we have seen, Japan is an archipelago of many different islands. It covers an area of around 378 000 square kilometres, of which over 70 per cent is mountainous and heavily forested, making it unsuitable for agricultural production. As a result, land management has always been an important priority for the rulers of Japan.

Since the earliest days of Japanese civilisation, as much available land as possible has been used for the growing of crops. Rice has been the main crop, and it formed the staple diet of the vast majority of the population. At the beginning of the Tokugawa shogunate, over 90 per cent of Japanese were peasants who worked the land. The land was owned by the daimyo and samurai families but the peasants did the actual work. Farming was based around family units and each peasant family was required to pay an annual 'rice tax' to the wealthy landowner in return for the right to farm the land. Provided this tax was paid, the peasants were relatively free to use the land as they wished, although the tax was so high that they had to put most of their effort into rice growing.

The early part of the Tokugawa shogunate saw a rapid increase in the amount of land being farmed. During this time, large-scale water projects allowed land previously not accessible to be made into new rice paddies. At the beginning of the Edo period, in 1603, it is estimated that just over 1.6 million hectares of land was under cultivation throughout Japan. By 1720 this had grown to almost 3 million hectares (see **SOURCE 1**). This period also saw a rapid increase in population, probably as a result of peace following the period of warring states, as well as from the increase in available food.

SOURCE 1 The growth in Japanese land under cultivation — tenth century CE to nineteenth century. From Professor Shinzaburo Oishi, *Edo Jidai (The Edo Period)*, *Chuko Shinsho* no. 476, 1977.

Estimated land under cultivation	
Year	Hectares
930 CE	862 000
1450 CE	946 000
1600 CE	1 635 000
1720 CE	2 970 000
1874 CE	3 050 000

SOURCE 2 Rice paddy fields terraced on to the side of mountain slopes



7.11.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What was the 'rice tax'?
- 2 What factors may have contributed to the rapid increase in population during the early years of the Tokugawa shogunate?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Compare the period 1600 to 1720 with the period from 1720 to 1874 in **SOURCE 1**. What do you notice about the second period when compared with the first?
- 4 Examine **SOURCE 2**. How was it possible to expand the area of land under cultivation in a mountainous country such as Japan?

7.11.2 Environmental and land use problems

During the seventeenth century, Japan was beginning to experience a serious deforestation problem. Timber had always been used for most buildings throughout the country, from humble farmers and workers' cottages to the largest castles of the daimyo. The most commonly used fuel for heating and cooking was also wood, so the forests were an essential resource. Timber was also used by the daimyo in supplying their samurai armies during the period of warring states. While the population was small, the available forests were able to supply all the timber needed. In 1570, the population had reached about 10 million, but by 1670, the population had tripled to almost 30 million. As well as all the other uses, the early Edo period also saw a building boom, with the rapid growth of the cities, and the building of new castles and temples. The demand for timber was so high that large areas were soon completely deforested. In addition, the expansion in farming land during this period had seen many previously forested areas taken over for cultivation. The supply of timber was rapidly running out, while the lack of forest cover was leading to dramatic soil erosion, landslides and serious flooding in many areas. Without serious action, Japan was facing an environmental disaster.

SOURCE 3 Houses of farmers and rural workers were made almost entirely of wood.



7.11.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Why was the supply of timber in Japan not a serious issue before the period of the Tokugawa shogunate?
- 2 Outline the factors that contributed to the deforestation problem faced by Japan by the end of the seventeenth century.
- 3 Why was deforestation such a critical problem?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 How might the construction of large numbers of houses such as that in **SOURCE 3** have contributed to the deforestation problem?
- 5 Identify a major risk if large numbers of these houses were built close together in a village or town.

7.11.3 Solving the deforestation problem

By 1670, the deforestation situation became so severe that it required urgent action from the shogun. In the remaining forest controlled by wealthy daimyo, strict controls on the use of timber were implemented. No logging could occur without an official permit and anyone who stole timber from the lands controlled by the shogun or other daimyo was severely punished. Sustainable forest management was also undertaken. This involved only harvesting selected mature trees, protecting small seedlings and careful thinning of forests to allow younger trees a chance to grow.

Large-scale development of plantation forests began in areas previously cleared of natural forest. Many daimyo grew plantation forests on their own land and villagers were taught to propagate seedlings from the seeds of the different pine and cedar varieties found in Japan. Peasant farmers were then encouraged to plant seedlings in areas near their farming land to increase the supply of timber. In many areas, timber plantations became a commercial operation, with sustainable logging to provide timber as a cash crop. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Japan became a world leader in forest management.

Changes in building techniques were also important during the Edo period. One reason for the high demand for timber for buildings was the frequency of fires in towns and cities. A fire could spread rapidly among timber houses built close together and the destroyed dwellings would need to be rebuilt. This would put extra pressure on the supply of timber. The use of tiles on the roof instead of thatch and the plastering of the timber-framed walls reduced the risk of fire, helping to reduce the demand for timber to rebuild.

SOURCE 4 A house from the Edo period. The use of tiles on the roof and the plastering of the walls were designed to minimise the risk of fire.



7.11.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 List the ways in which the harvesting of timber was restricted by the shogun and many of the daimyo after 1670.
- 2 Outline two examples of sustainable forest management introduced during this period.
- 3 Identify one benefit of creating new plantation forests in Japan during this period.

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 How were the new building techniques demonstrated in **SOURCE 4** able to contribute to solving the deforestation problem?

7.11 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 1 The population continued to grow in the period 1720 to 1874, but **SOURCE 1** indicates that the area under cultivation remained fairly static. What do you think this tells us about changes in farming methods during this period?

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT

- 2 Would it have been likely that the shogunate would have intervened in forestry practices across Japan if the deforestation problem had not become so severe? Give reasons for your response.
- 3 What does the ready acceptance of different forestry practices by all levels of society in eighteenth century Japan tell us about the distribution of power and influence during the Edo period?

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7.12 Foreign devils

7.12.1 The breakdown of isolation

The Tokugawa shoguns pursued a policy of isolation from the rest of the world, although some very limited contact was allowed through relationships with Chinese and Dutch traders. The contact with the Dutch continued through the Edo period, and provided the Japanese with access to some European scientific knowledge and literature. By the middle of the nineteenth century, with so many nations pursuing trade in the Pacific region, it would prove impossible for Japan to continue to restrict contact with the ‘foreign devils’.

Despite 250 years of Tokugawa shogunate rule and its policy of isolation, such a policy was ultimately doomed to failure. By the nineteenth century, European countries and the United States of America were expanding their empires and influence into the Pacific Ocean. Even a country with the population and wealth of Japan could not keep foreign influences out forever.

Dejima Island and Rangaku

From 1640 onwards the Dutch and Chinese were allowed to maintain a limited presence on the artificial island of Dejima in Nagasaki harbour. The Dutch traders were not allowed to cross onto the mainland, except for an annual trip to Edo to pay homage to the shogun. On these visits the Dutch would bring samples of European technology as gifts for the shogun. In this way, Western inventions such as clocks, telescopes and medical instruments were introduced to Japan. Many Japanese scholars pursued a study of what they called Rangaku (‘Dutch learning’) during the period of isolation, when many Dutch books were translated into Japanese.

Black ships

During the 1830s and 1840s, a number of Western countries attempted to establish contact with the Japanese shogunate government, which rejected such approaches as being hostile to their way of life. In 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry of the United States Navy sailed into Edo harbour with four heavily

SOURCE 1 Extract from Commodore M.C. Perry, *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan*, McDonald & Co., London, 1954, p. 62

The Commander-in-Chief will not go to Nagasaki and will receive no communication through the Dutch or the Chinese . . . if this friendly letter of the President to the Emperor is not received and duly replied to, [the Commander-in-Chief] will consider his country insulted, and will not hold himself accountable for the consequences.

armed warships. He wished to negotiate the opening up of trade with Japan, and threatened to take military action if the Japanese refused. The Japanese feared a return of the ‘black ships’ and built stronger forts around Edo. However, in 1854 Perry returned with twice as many ships to get a reply to the letter. He found the Japanese had drafted a **treaty** agreeing to the US demands.

treaty a formal agreement between two or more nations

Unequal treaties

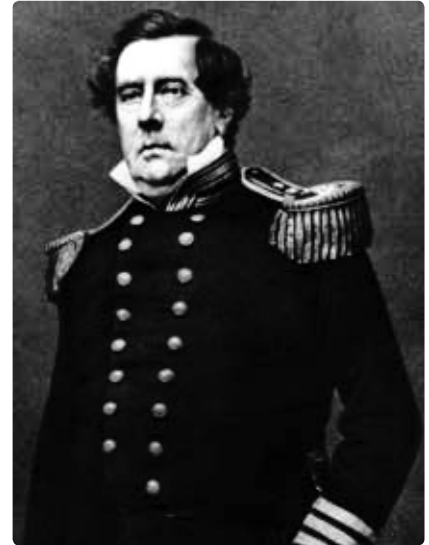
In 1854, the Treaty of Kanagawa between Japan and the US opened two ports to North American trade and guaranteed good treatment of shipwrecked US sailors. Four years later the Japanese were pressured into another treaty. More ports were opened to foreign trade, which allowed North Americans to live and work in Japan. The treaty also set very low **tariffs** on foreign goods imported to Japan. Soon the Russians, French and British forced the Japanese to sign similar treaties.

tariff a tax on goods imported from a foreign country

The Nagasaki Naval Training Centre

Faced with the increasing threat of foreigners, in 1855 the shogunate government established a naval training centre near Dejima Island in Nagasaki harbour. To ensure they had access to the latest in marine technology and naval organisation, the training centre employed instructors from the Dutch Navy. They acquired steam-driven warships and set out to develop a modern Japanese navy.

SOURCE 2 A photograph of Commodore Matthew Perry



SOURCE 3 A nineteenth-century map of the Nagasaki Naval Training Centre, established near Dejima Island in 1855

DID YOU KNOW?

The island of Dejima was created in 1634 by cutting a canal across a narrow isthmus connecting a small peninsula to the mainland. The resulting island was then linked to the mainland by a bridge, which was guarded day and night to prevent any unauthorised crossing.



7.12.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 In what way did Japan maintain limited contact with the outside world during the isolationist Edo period?
- 2 In what ways was the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853 different from the contact made by other Western visitors in the 1830s and 1840s?
- 3 What did the United States gain from the Treaty of Kanagawa?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 4 Read **SOURCE 1**. What did Commodore Perry mean by the words, '[the Commander-in-Chief . . . will not hold himself accountable for the consequences]'?
- 5 Examine **SOURCE 3**.
 - a How was the island of Dejima originally created and what was its purpose?
 - b In what way was the use of the island changed after 1855?
 - c What does this change of use tell us about the Japanese attitude towards foreigners?

7.12.2 Declining power of the shoguns

The emperor had appointed the shogun to protect Japan from barbarians but the shogun had failed in this duty by opening ports for trade. Some samurai clans still supported the shogun but others were very angry that the Tokugawa shogunate had not defended Japan from foreign invasion. They looked to the traditional authority of the emperor as the only strength capable of unifying the country. Over the next ten years, supporters and opponents of the shogunate clashed violently.

Some samurai acted independently to attack and kill the foreign intruders. The powerful Choshu clan even closed an important waterway and bombed foreign ships. However, the Western powers retaliated by later attacking Choshu territory and destroying its guns and forts.

Japanese scholars had a different answer to the problem. They suggested building on the skills already learned from Dutch traders and Portuguese missionaries. Their idea was to adopt Western knowledge in order to protect Japan's culture and traditions and help it survive as an independent country.

Edo surrenders

In the end, the Choshu, Satsuma and Tosa samurai clans and some important court nobles forced the resignation of Shogun Yoshinobu, the last of the Tokugawa shoguns. The clans then seized the imperial palace in Kyoto and declared the 'restoration' of the emperor to full power. The shogunate forces tried to defeat them but fell back to defend Edo. Recognising the strength of the imperial forces, Shogun Yoshinobu surrendered the city peacefully. The new emperor was carried in a heavily guarded royal palanquin from Kyoto to his new home, the shogun's palace, Edo Castle. The city of Edo was renamed Tokyo, meaning 'eastern capital'. It was the beginning of a new age.

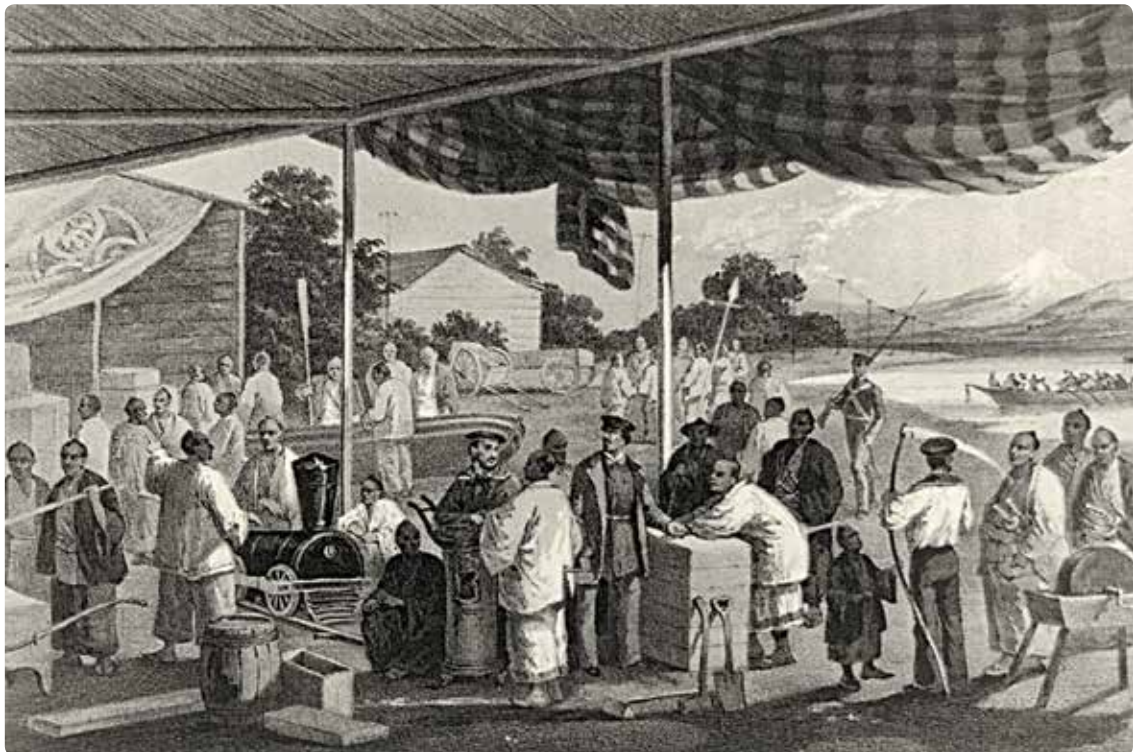
Why did the shogunate decline in power?

After more than 250 years of stability under the Tokugawa shoguns and almost 700 years of shogunate government, why were the shoguns unable to maintain their power and to continue the long period of isolation from the outside world? Examining the following developments may help us to explain this decline in shogunate power:

- The Tokugawa shoguns had never been able to completely isolate Japan from outside influences. The study of Rangaku had increased in popularity as many scholars realised that Europeans were making discoveries in science and technology that could be of benefit to Japan. It was probably inevitable that Japanese scholars would realise that many of the discoveries made in other countries could be of benefit to Japan.
- The Tokugawa policy of limiting the wealth of rival daimyo allowed their clan to maintain power and control, but the shogun could only survive as the head of a strong, functioning feudal system. As the power and wealth of the daimyo declined, they would be less able to provide the support needed to maintain a functioning government structure. When the shogun relied on daimyo support to keep the 'foreign devils' at bay, most of that class no longer had the resources to provide that support.

- The samurai class was also unable to provide the necessary defence for the traditional feudal system. The Tokugawa shogunate had seen over 250 years of peace in Japan, so many of the traditional martial arts of the samurai had lapsed and were no longer an active part of samurai life. Large numbers of the samurai class had become bureaucrats within the Tokugawa government. They were no longer in a position to provide the military support that might be needed to repel outside influences.
- Despite the fact that the merchant class held low status within the Japanese feudal structure, involvement with trade and commerce had seen the emergence of many wealthy merchant families by the early nineteenth century. These business people held very little power within the traditional social structure but were often wealthier than some of the daimyo families. The samurai and daimyo classes came to depend on the commercial classes to provide them with the goods and services they required. It was highly unlikely that this emerging merchant class would be satisfied with their lack of power and with the restrictions on trade that prevented them from increasing their wealth.
- The early nineteenth century saw a period of frequent crop failures in different parts of Japan. A particularly devastating four-year famine in the Osaka region led to an uprising of the peasants in that area. One of the leaders of the rebellion set fire to his own house with the aim of it spreading to the house of a government official who lived opposite him. The resulting fire burned for two days and destroyed 3300 houses. The rebels were eventually hunted down and killed. This event and other examples of peasant unrest put severe pressure on the authority of the shogunate and challenged the shogun's ability to provide sound and secure government for all members of society.
- The Treaty of Kanagawa was largely forced on the shogun because of threats from Commodore Perry. The fact that an overseas power could enforce its will over the shogun was a severe blow to the power and authority of that figure. The shogun had always been regarded as the ultimate protector of Japan and its traditions. If the holder of that position could no longer perform that role, serious questions could be raised about the relevance of that position.

SOURCE 4 When Commodore Perry returned to Japan in 1854 he introduced examples of Western technology, including a miniature steam locomotive and the electric telegraph.



SOURCE 5 The signing of the Kanagawa Treaty 1854



7.12.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Explain how Treaty of Kanagawa and similar agreements were seen to have weakened the authority of the shogun.
- 2 How did the period of the Edo shogunate come to an end?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 How did the examples of Western technology shown in **SOURCE 4** influence the views of many Japanese scholars?
- 4 Identify the US and Japanese figures in **SOURCE 5**. Who appears to be the most powerful in this image? Explain your answer.

7.12 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

DETERMINING HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

- 1 What was the significance of the Treaty of Kanagawa as a turning point in Japanese history?
- 2 What might have happened if the shogun had not agreed to this treaty and the other trading treaties that followed?
- 3 Identify two ways in which the small island of Dejima was significant in leading to the eventual modernisation of Japan?
- 4 Research the Opium Wars between China and Britain.
 - a What was the result of this war?
 - b Why might the Japanese rulers have been concerned by these events?

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT

- 5 Identify the long-term causes for the decline in power of the shogunate during the nineteenth century.
- 6 What were the short-term or immediate causes of the removal of shogunate power in 1867?
- 7 Were the Daimyo 'restoring' the power of the emperor or their own? Give reasons for your answer.

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7.13 Emperor Meiji and modern Japan

7.13.1 The Meiji Restoration and the Charter Oath

When Emperor Komei died in 1867, his fifteen-year-old son Prince Mutsuhito became the next emperor of Japan. He took the reign name Meiji and in 1868 began a dangerous journey from Kyoto to Tokyo. The long procession included the new emperor's palanquin, courtiers on horseback and a large group of samurai guards. Despite the victory of his samurai supporters, the young Emperor Meiji was still at risk from shogunate forces.

The transfer of power from the shogunate to the emperor is known as the Meiji Restoration. In theory, the emperor ruled Japan but in practice this was not the case. In the new government, the emperor was just a figurehead. Emperor Meiji and over 760 daimyo signed a document called the Charter Oath, a five-point statement supposedly introducing a new democracy. However, the main decisions were still made by the same samurai groups who had restored the emperor as the head of government in Japan.

SOURCE 1 An illustration of Emperor Meiji as a young man



SOURCE 2 The Charter Oath 1868

By this oath, we set up as our aim the establishment of the national wealth on a broad basis and the framing of a constitution and laws.

1. **Deliberative** assemblies shall be widely established and all matters decided by open discussion.
2. All classes, high and low, shall be united in vigorously carrying out the administration of affairs of state.
3. The common people, no less than the civil and military officials, shall all be allowed to pursue their own calling so that there may be no discontent.
4. Evil customs of the past shall be broken off and everything based upon the just laws of Nature.
5. Knowledge shall be sought throughout the world so as to strengthen the foundation of imperial rule.

deliberative having the power to make decisions

7.13.1 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 What was the Meiji Restoration?
- 2 Which groups in society did Emperor Meiji depend on to regain imperial power?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 How can you tell that Emperor Meiji, as shown in **SOURCE 1**, was influenced by European ideas rather than Japanese tradition?
- 4 In what ways did the Charter Oath introduce the Western concept of democracy and parliamentary-style government to Japan?

7.13.2 The Boshin civil war

From 1868 to 1869, some significant land and naval campaigns took place between the imperial army and forces of the old shogunate. The battles were mainly on and around the islands of Kyushu and Hokkaido. It was a civil war because it involved rival groups from the same country. However, the emperor's forces defeated their enemies and strengthened the control of the central government in Tokyo.

What happened to the samurai?

The Meiji government believed that a samurai military force was too expensive and not appropriate for a modern country. Also many samurai were still loyal to their local feudal lords instead of the Japanese nation as a whole. The Meiji government replaced the samurai with a **conscript** army open to all classes of people. It ended the old four-class system, took over the daimyo domains and abolished the right of samurai to carry swords in public.

conscript a person ordered by the government to do compulsory military duty

SOURCE 3 This painting from 1877 shows the newly established conscript army's victory over rebelling samurai who were fighting to regain their right to carry swords.



7.13.2 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Why do you think many samurai were angry about their changed social status during the Meiji period?
- 2 Why was the creation of a conscript army such a complete break with past practice?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Examine **SOURCE 3**. Identify the differences between the samurai and the conscript soldiers as shown in this painting.

7.13.3 Japan modernises

In its search for modern ideas, the Meiji government established overseas missions to foreign countries. The 1871 Iwakura Mission was the most important of these. Its purpose was to learn from the West in order to guide Japan's modernisation. Over nearly two years, its 48 members visited the United States, Britain, Europe and Asia and gathered information in many areas, especially aspects of industry, technology and military development.

diet the name given to a law-making assembly in some countries

Later reforms

By the end of the nineteenth century, hardly any aspects of traditional Japan remained unchanged. The country was governed by a constitution and a **diet**, where new laws could be debated and passed. Banks, post offices and schools were based on Western models and many new buildings reflected European or US architectural design. More 'loan words' came into the Japanese language from German, French and English.

Japan in the modern world

Some cultural changes occurred because the Japanese people began to accept new customs. However, a majority of the changes came from deliberate reform policies of the Meiji government. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Japan was a modern and powerful country prepared to take its place alongside other leading nations.

SOURCE 4 A Meiji era photograph showing the modernising of Japan



7.13.3 Activities

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

- 1 Why did the Meiji government send the Iwakura Mission to visit other countries?
- 2 Why was Japan able to modernise so rapidly during the latter part of the nineteenth century?

USING HISTORICAL SOURCES AS EVIDENCE

- 3 Carefully examine **SOURCE 4** to identify some of the changes taking place in Japan during the Meiji period. In your workbook, draw two columns with the headings 'Old Japan' and 'New Japan'. In the appropriate columns list and describe all the traditional and modern-day items you can see in the photograph.

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7.13 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

IDENTIFYING CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

- 1 Did the Charter Oath achieve all the things it promised? Read **SOURCE 2** again and, as a class, decide how many of the five points were actually put into practice during the Meiji period.
- 2 Create a timeline that shows the significant events that took place in Japan between 1853 and 1871. What aspects of Japanese life and society do you think changed the most? Give reasons for your opinion.

7.14 SkillBuilder: Analysing cause and effect

online only

What does analysing cause and effect involve?

Analysing cause and effect involves examining events and sequences of events and looking for connections between them.



Go to your learnON course to access:

- An explanation of the skill (Tell me)
- A step-by-step process involved in developing the skill with an example (Show me)
- An activity to allow you to practise the skill (Let me do it)
- Questions to test your application of the skill (Applying skills).

7.15 Review

online only

This final subtopic provides a range of opportunities for you to review and respond through:

- revising and checking your historical knowledge
- demonstrating your ability to apply historical concepts and skills.

Go to your learnON course to access:

- A key chronology of events relevant to the topic
- A summary of the key knowledge presented in the topic
- A 'Big Questions' activity
- A multiple choice topic test
- Short answer or extended writing responses



on Resources

Interactivity

Japan under the shoguns timeline

Create a visual timeline of key events in Japan under the shoguns (c. 794–1867)

int-2950

7.14 SkillBuilder: Analysing cause and effect

7.14.1 Tell me

The importance of analysing cause and effect

An important reason for studying history is that it enables us to understand the world we live in today. Our world has developed as a result of a whole series of different events; some of them recent, some that happened hundreds of years ago. Each of these events has had some impact on events that have followed, and this is what we understand as *cause* and *effect*. In order to fully understand a particular event or series of events, we have to be able to work out what *caused* them. In order to assess the importance of any historical event, we have to be able to recognise the *effects* of that event on later developments. Often this is not obvious, which is why historians sometimes disagree. Analysing cause and effect involves examining sequences of events and looking for connections between them. Did event A directly cause event B or was it merely coincidence that they happened close together in time? Usually we have to form judgements, by looking at the evidence and drawing conclusions from it.

Immediate causes and long-term trends

When two football teams play each other and one wins convincingly on the day, we can look at the match and recognise particular players who played well on the winning side, as well as some who played poorly in the losing side. We can identify particular strategies that worked on the day, and some that failed. Analysing these factors can give us the *immediate causes* of the match being won by one side rather than the other on that particular occasion. These are also recognised as the *short-term triggers* that worked on the day of the match.

We can also look more deeply than the immediate events on the day of the match. If the winning team is near the top of the ladder and consistently wins most of its matches, there will be *underlying causes* for this dominance. If they recruited particularly well in the previous few years, have been well coached, have few injuries and have experienced leaders in their team they are likely to do well against most other clubs. These factors form the *long-term trends* that can make the club a dominant force for a period of time.

Historical causes can be grouped in the same way. If we want to examine a particular event and find its causes, we can look at the events that happened immediately beforehand and look for connections. These are the *immediate causes* or *short-term triggers* that directly cause the event in question. We can also examine the society in which the event occurred and look for trends and longer term conditions that may have allowed the immediate causes to trigger the events in question. These are the *underlying causes*, and they are just as significant.

7.14.2 Show me

How to analyse causes and effects of significant events

To demonstrate a method of determining causes and effects we need a sample question. For the purposes of this exercise, let us examine the following question:

Why did Japan descend into the age of the warring states from the mid-fifteenth century until the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603?

We can tackle this through the following steps.

Step 1

Identify when the period of the warring states actually occurred and compile a list of events that occurred during the period and in the years beforehand.

The period from 1467 to 1603 is the period usually known as the age of the warring states.

Some of the events that might be relevant include:

- In 1467, a civil war broke out between the followers of two brothers who were rivals for the position of shogun.
- This dispute began in 1464 over who should succeed to the position of shogun.
- The supporters of each brother were powerful daimyo clans, each seeking to increase their power.

- Wars and violence between different daimyo clans continued for over 100 years until the country became unified under Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu, who eventually founded the Tokugawa shogunate in 1603.

Step 2

Identify some of the longer term trends that had been present in Japanese society before the outbreak of civil war and during the period.

- The Ashikaga shoguns had been in power since the fall of the Kamakura shoguns.
- The Kamakura shoguns had lost power when the daimyo and samurai rebelled against them.
- The shoguns had held official military power in Japan since 1192, when the emperor became a mere figurehead.
- The daimyo were the wealthy landowners; they held a great deal of power in Japan since the eighth century and been backed up by samurai warriors.
- Although the Ashikaga shoguns were officially in charge as shoguns during the period of the warring states, they were really little more than the puppets of different daimyo clans.

Step 3

Use the information gained to formulate an answer to the question.

The following is a model of what the answer could look like.

The period of the warring states had both immediate causes and longer term causes. The immediate trigger was a dispute between two brothers over who would inherit the position of shogun. In 1467, this led to an outbreak of civil war between the daimyo clans supporting each of the brothers. This was the first of a series of wars and uprisings involving daimyo clans that continued for over 100 years. The wars broke out and continued because different daimyo groups were constantly competing with each other for power and influence.

This leads to the underlying cause of the period of warring states: the large amount of wealth and power of the daimyo led to constant rivalries between the different daimyo clans. Each clan had large numbers of samurai warriors supporting them. While the daimyo retained their power and wealth, there were always going to be rivalries and the likelihood of war between the powerful clans. We know that this was a major underlying cause because the Kamakura shoguns had lost their power when a significant number of daimyo and samurai had rebelled against them in 1333. The power of the daimyo was a continuing problem and an underlying cause of conflict because it was not until Tokugawa Ieyasu came to power and took steps to weaken the power of the daimyo that the fighting came to an end and the power of the shogun was restored.

7.14.3 Let me do it

Using the three steps, answer the following question, discussing both the long-term trends and the short-term causes:

Why did the Tokugawa shoguns take control of Japan's foreign trade?

7.14 APPLYING SKILLS

ANALYSING CAUSE AND EFFECT

Based on your analysis of the causes of the Tokugawa shoguns' decision to take control of foreign trade answer the following questions:

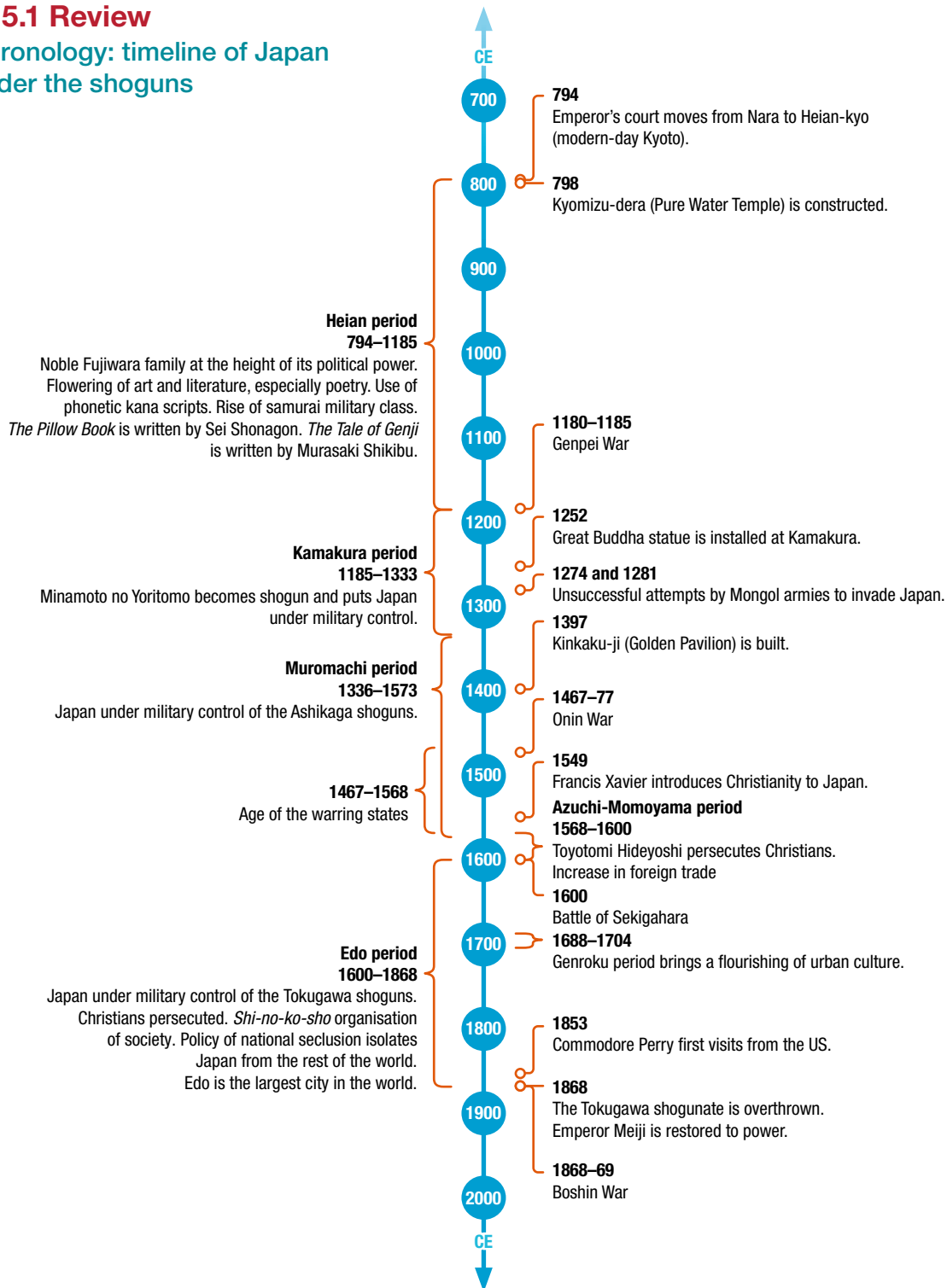
- 1 How important was the issue of religion in the policy of the Tokugawa shoguns to tightly control foreign trade?
- 2 Why did the shoguns have a different attitude to the Dutch than they did toward the Spanish and Portuguese in matters of trade?
- 3 Identify two examples in the *Closed Country Edict* of 1635 that are designed to reinforce the Tokugawa shoguns' control of trade.
- 4 Why would the Tokugawa shoguns have considered it important to deny other daimyo families access to foreign trade?
- 5 Outline two ways in which the Tokugawa shoguns were able to benefit personally from their control of trade.
- 6 How did the shogunate control of trade affect the availability of valuable metals within Japan?

7.15 Review

In this topic we looked at Japanese history from 794 to 1867: from the Heian period, when the first shoguns began to accumulate power, through to the decline of shogunate power in the nineteenth century. We examined how and why the shoguns were able to take power from the emperors, and the difficulties and instability of the Kamakura and Ashikaga periods, leading to the age of the warring states. We have also seen how the Tokugawa shoguns were able to stabilise a united Japan leading to over two and a half centuries of seclusion during the Edo period. Finally, we have examined the fall of the shoguns, the revival of the emperor's authority and the beginnings of Japanese modernisation.

7.15.1 Review

Chronology: timeline of Japan under the shoguns



on Resources

Interactivity Japan under the shoguns timeline

Create a visual timeline of key events in Japan under the shoguns (c. 794–1867)

int-2950

Key knowledge: summary

7.2 Examining the evidence

- Japanese architecture tells us a lot about the way people lived.
- Artworks such as paintings provide evidence of the way people lived in feudal Japan.
- Great works of literature often describe important events and peoples' lifestyles.
- Government documents were kept as National Treasures.
- Many traditional festivals and ceremonies survive today, giving us a view of some important traditions.

7.3 Ancient and classical Japan

- The first Japanese state was established by the Yamato clan around the town of Nara.
- During the Classical period, Buddhism was firmly established and the first great works of literature appeared.
- Land reform was attempted in the seventh century CE but was abandoned as emperors granted land to their supporters.
- In 794 CE, the emperor moved his capital to Heian-kyo (modern Kyoto), beginning the Heian period.
- The Heian period saw growth in the power and importance of the daimyo and the samurai.

7.4 The rise of the shoguns

- Disputes arose in 1180 over the succession to the imperial throne, leading to a civil war known as the Genpei War.
- The Minamoto clan supported the successful claimant to the throne and its leader Yoritomo was appointed shogun in 1192.
- From 1192, power passed from the emperor to the shogun for 700 years.
- The shoguns became so powerful because they were able to command military forces and maintain order.

7.5 Challenges to shogunate rule

- The period of the Kamakura shogunate brought stability to Japan and saw the spread of Buddhism and flourishing of arts and culture.
- In 1274 and 1281, the Mongols attempted to invade from China but the invading ships were wrecked by fierce storms.
- The Kamakura shoguns were unable to pay their samurai warriors, who then supported an attempt to restore the emperor to power.
- The Kamakura shogunate lost power, to be replaced by the Ashikaga clan as shoguns.
- In 1464, a dispute between two members of the Ashikaga clan led to civil war and a hundred years of instability known as the age of the warring states.
- Order and unity was restored through the military conquests of the three great unifiers: Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu.

7.6 The Tokugawa shogunate

- In 1603, Tokugawa Ieyasu became shogun, establishing the Tokugawa shogunate that would last for over 250 years.
- During the period of the Tokugawa shogunate, the shogun closely controlled all international trade.
- The Tokugawa shoguns also set up processes to isolate Japan from the rest of the world, in order to maintain the traditional Japanese way of life.

7.7 Japanese feudal society

- Feudal society divided Japan into rigid social classes, with the emperor and the noble daimyo at the top of the class structure.
- The most powerful of the daimyo was the shogun, who was the effective ruler of Japan.
- Below the daimyo were the samurai, ronin, peasants and artisans, with merchants at the bottom of the *shi-no-ko-sho* structure.
- Outside the class system were the lowest of all: the *eta* and the *hinin*.

7.8 The samurai

- The samurai class was established to serve the daimyo and provide them military support.
- The samurai followed a warrior code known as *bushido*.
- Samurai boys were raised to become warriors and were trained from a young age.
- A samurai girl was trained to be a faithful wife and mother, and was expected to control her household when her husband was away at war.
- Ronin were members of the samurai class that did not have a daimyo master to serve.
- The samurai gradually lost influence when their methods of fighting became obsolete and the peaceful period of the Tokugawa shogunate gave them no opportunities to fight.

7.9 The role of women

- *The Pillow Book*, written during the Heian period, gives us an insight into the lives of women in feudal Japan.
- Women in feudal Japan lived only about 27 years on average and often suffered from diseases and difficulties during childbirth.
- Marriages were arranged between families and the wife would move to live with her husband's family.
- Geishas were trained in art, music, dance and interesting conversation, and they entertained their clients with these skills.

7.10 Arts and culture

- Japanese painting was influenced by Chinese styles and often depicted religious scenes.
- Japanese calligraphy was an art in itself and a highly prized skill.
- Woodblock printing was a popular and highly skilled art form that reached its peak in the eighteenth century with the work of artists such as Katsushika Hokusai.
- Lacquer work produced many fine objects and was achieved by painting many thin layers over objects made from wood, bamboo or pottery.
- Pottery was created both for useful purposes such as food storage and decorative purposes.
- The Tokugawa period saw the blooming of the performing arts, such as kabuki theatre.

7.11 Land use under the Tokugawa shoguns

- The primary use of land throughout the feudal period in Japan was farming, particularly the growing of rice.
- The Tokugawa period saw a rapid expansion in the amount of land under cultivation.
- By the seventeenth century, Japan began to experience a deforestation problem, so a variety of measures were put in place to make forestry more sustainable.

7.12 Foreign devils

- By the nineteenth century, western nations were expanding their empires and wanted to trade with Japan.
- In 1853, Commodore Perry threatened the Japanese government with military action if trade was not opened to the west.
- The Tokugawa shoguns were no longer powerful enough to resist foreign invaders and some clans supported the return of the emperor to supreme power.

7.13 Emperor Meiji and modern Japan

- In 1868, Emperor Meiji went from Kyoto to Tokyo to claim power.
- A number of clans loyal to the Tokugawa shoguns resisted the restoration of power to the emperor but were defeated during the Boshin civil war.
- Emperor Meiji set out to modernise Japan and sent missions to other countries to learn of new technology.
- By the beginning of the twentieth century, Japan had become a modern and powerful nation.

Key knowledge: multiple-choice topic test

1. The first recognised Japanese state was established by the:
 - a. Heian clan.
 - b. Nara clan.
 - c. Fujiwara clan.
 - d. Yamato clan.

2. We know the Japanese borrowed much of their culture from China because:
 - a. they speak the same language.
 - b. they adopted Chinese characters in their writing.
 - c. they modelled all their cities on Chinese cities.
 - d. both societies were ruled by an emperor.
3. The daimyo became very powerful during the Heian period because:
 - a. they were great warriors.
 - b. they were very loyal to the samurai.
 - c. the emperors relied on them to maintain their power.
 - d. they supported land reform.
4. The three powerful clans competing for influence during the Heian period were:
 - a. the Fujiwara, the Minamoto and the Taira.
 - b. the Kamakura, the Taira and the Yoritomo.
 - c. the Minamoto, the Tokugawa and the Fujiwara.
 - d. the Tokugawa, the Kamakura and the Yoritomo.
5. What happened following the appointment of Minamoto no Yoritomo as shogun?
 - a. The emperor was able to exert more authority because he had the support of the shogun.
 - b. The emperor lost all his power as a leader of the country.
 - c. The emperor took on mainly religious and ceremonial duties.
 - d. The emperor was more powerful because of his religious duties.
6. Why were the Japanese were able to defeat the Mongol invaders?
 - a. The samurai were more powerful warriors than the Mongols.
 - b. The Mongol ships were wrecked by fierce storms.
 - c. The daimyo were superior military commanders.
 - d. The Japanese were supported by warriors known as 'kamikaze'.
7. The period of the warring states came about as a result of:
 - a. a dispute between two brothers of the Ashikaga clan.
 - b. the aggressive activities of Oda Nobunaga.
 - c. the three great unifiers working against each other.
 - d. the weakness of the Kamakura shoguns.
8. Hideyoshi set out to restore traditional Japanese religious practices by:
 - a. introducing Buddhism to all parts of the country.
 - b. encouraging the spread of the traditional Shinto religion.
 - c. expelling Christian missionaries from Japan.
 - d. erecting statues such as the Great Buddha of Nara.
9. The major problem faced by Tokugawa Ieyasu when he became shogun in 1603 was:
 - a. too much influence from Christian missionaries.
 - b. finding an appropriate city for his headquarters.
 - c. possible rivalry from other daimyo clans.
 - d. ensuring the Mongols did not attempt to invade again.
10. Ieyasu was able to consolidate his power by:
 - a. continuing the persecution of Christians.
 - b. ordering all daimyo families to travel regularly to Edo.
 - c. building a huge castle at Edo.
 - d. ensuring all the samurai swore loyalty to him.
11. Why were the Dutch the only Europeans permitted to trade with Japan after 1640?
 - a. They had learnt to speak Japanese better than other Europeans.
 - b. They had better quality goods to trade.
 - c. They made Japanese visitors welcome in Holland.
 - d. They had not sent missionaries to Japan.
12. Under the *shi-no-ko-sho* arrangement of social classes:
 - a. merchants were higher in rank than farmers and fishermen.
 - b. artisans were higher rank than samurai.
 - c. artisans were higher in rank than merchants.
 - d. the shogun was ranked highest of all.

13. The samurai were well known for following a code of behaviour known as:
 - a. jujutsu.
 - b. ronin.
 - c. bushido.
 - d. kamikaze.
14. A samurai would become a ronin if:
 - a. he chose to become a bandit.
 - b. his master could no longer employ him.
 - c. he became a farmer.
 - d. he was promoted to become a daimyo.
15. In feudal Japan, what occupation had most women?
 - a. Buddhist nuns
 - b. Geishas
 - c. Ladies in waiting to rich noblewomen
 - d. Peasants working farmlands
16. Which skills would a successful geisha have to develop?
 - a. Managing the geisha house
 - b. Serving food and drink to visitors
 - c. Playing music and serving tea
 - d. Performing kabuki theatre
17. Most Japanese woodblock prints would have been produced in monochrome because:
 - a. the artists only had access to black ink.
 - b. it only required one woodblock to be carved.
 - c. different colours would run and smear the painting.
 - d. it was cheaper than using lots of different colours.
18. The rice tax was which of the following?
 - a. A form of rent paid by peasants to the landowner
 - b. A tax levied on rice merchants by the shogun
 - c. A type of tax paid by restaurant owners
 - d. A tax paid by rice farmers to the samurai
19. The harvesting of timber was made more sustainable after 1670 by:
 - a. building new houses out of brick instead of timber.
 - b. restricting the logging of forests to those who held permits.
 - c. banning peasants from burning wood fires in their homes.
 - d. restricting overseas travel so that no new ships needed to be built.
20. Why was the arrival of Commodore Perry in 1853 different from previous attempts at contact from outsiders?
 - a. He was not considered a threat to the Japanese way of life.
 - b. Some of his men spoke Japanese so they could communicate more easily.
 - c. He did not bring any Christian missionaries with him.
 - d. He threatened to return with more heavily armed ships.
21. The Treaty of Kanagawa gave the United States:
 - a. access to two Japanese ports for trade.
 - b. the right to rescue shipwrecked sailors.
 - c. the right to take over from the Dutch as the main overseas traders.
 - d. a military base for the 'black ships'.
22. In order to regain power, Emperor Meiji relied on support from:
 - a. the US navy.
 - b. a group of palanquins who supported him.
 - c. a number of samurai clans.
 - d. the last of the Tokugawa shoguns.
23. Why was Japan able to modernise rapidly in the latter part of the nineteenth century?
 - a. The samurai no longer wished to retain their traditional role.
 - b. Missions were sent to foreign countries to learn about new technologies.
 - c. The United States sent businessmen to help them.
 - d. The shogun realised that he had to support change for the good of the country.

7.15.2 Respond

Identifying continuity and change

Japanese society remained quite static throughout the feudal period, particularly the almost 700 years from 1192 to 1868. The period from 1868 to the beginning of the twentieth century was one of rapid changes.

1. Examine the period of shogunate power and answer the following.
 - a. Identify four areas of Japanese society that appeared to not change during this period.
 - b. For each of these, explain why you believe there was little or no change during the shogunate period.
 - c. Give three examples of policies and actions on the part of the Tokugawa shoguns that were designed to prevent change occurring, and explain why each might have been able to achieve this aim.
 - d. In the end, why were the shoguns eventually unable to resist change in the second half of the nineteenth century?
2. Looking at the period from 1868 onwards, identify three significant changes that occurred which completely undermined the traditional structure of feudal Japan.
 - a. For each of these, explain why the change was so significant.
 - b. Where do you think the driving force for change came from? Give reasons for your answer.
 - c. Why do you think Japan was able to embrace modernisation so completely after so many years of resisting change?

Analysing cause and effect

3. Create a flowchart that traces the key events from the decline of the Ashikaga shogunate from 1465 onwards to the coming to power of Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1603.
 - a. What were the significant events that caused the period of instability that we refer to as the age of the warring states?
 - b. What were the significant events or individuals that led to the restoration of stability under the Tokugawa shoguns?
 - c. To what extent were rivalries between daimyo clans always likely to lead to instability?
4. Examine the steps taken by Tokugawa Ieyasu to end the period of instability and reinforce his own power.
 - a. Identify two actions taken by him to achieve this.
 - b. Explain why he took these actions.
 - c. Do you think that these actions demonstrate that Ieyasu had a good understanding of the causes of the previous period of instability? Explain your answer.

Responding to the big questions

At the beginning of this topic several big questions were posed. Use the knowledge and understanding you have gained through your study of the subtopics to answer them:

1. How did the rulers of shogunate Japan gain and maintain their political power?
2. Why was there a strict division of social classes?
3. Why were strict controls on land use necessary for much of the shogunate period?
4. To what extent did literature and art reflect the values of Japanese society?
5. What political and social changes occurred in Japan after the shogunate period ended?