

# 13

## Japan Under the Shogun



**FIGURE 13-1** The story of the 47 ronin has been made into many plays, movies, and books in Japan as well as in other countries. Why do you think this is so?

## WORLDVIEW INQUIRY

*How do forms of government and decision-making reflect a society's worldview?*

1701. Japanese nobles went to the court of the shogun to pay tribute.

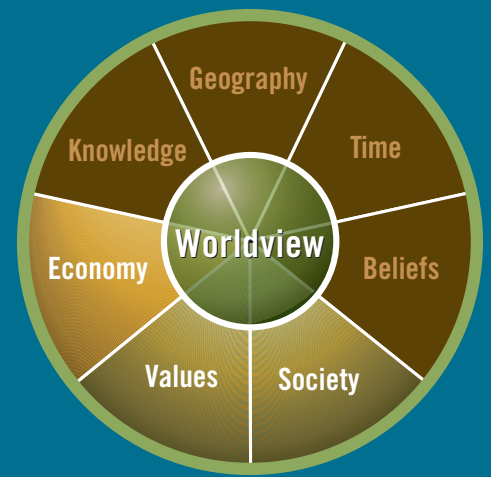
The **shogun**, the military ruler of Japan, sent for Lord Asano and other nobles to meet with a representative of the emperor. A court official, Lord Kira, was assigned to teach Asano the correct way to behave. When Asano didn't give Kira a large enough payment for his help, Kira insulted him repeatedly in front of the other nobles. Asano became angry, pulled his sword and cut Kira's arm.

Asano knew he had committed a forbidden act—he had drawn his sword in the Edo castle and wounded an important official. As a result, on order of the shogun Asano took his own life.

Now that Lord Asano was dead, his 47 samurai became **ronin**, that is, warriors without a master. They had lost their honour and their position in society. Out of loyalty to their master, they swore to avenge his death. They launched a surprise attack and killed Lord Kira in his home. They had fulfilled their duty in avenging their master, but duty now demanded that they also kill themselves.

The 47 ronin are buried side-by-side in Sengakuji Temple in Tokyo. Today, they are remembered as great heroes in Japan.

Honourable behaviour has always been an important value in Japanese society. How are the actions of people in this story affected by ideas of honour? What other values are demonstrated in this story?



## In This Chapter

In the last chapter, you explored how the geography of Japan influenced how the Japanese saw themselves and their place in the world. One way we can begin to understand a culture's sense of identity is through its stories. How did values of Japanese society lead to the events in the story of the 47 ronin? How was Japanese society organized and how did its members relate to one another?

# Power and Control

*How can military power and social structure be used to maintain control in a society?*

The story of the 47 ronin is one of the most beloved Japanese stories. It has been said that “to understand the story of the 47 ronin is to understand Japan.” What do you think this means? What story or stories in Canadian history do you think might help people in other countries to understand Canada?

The story of the ronin took place during the Edo or Tokugawa period of Japanese history, which lasted from 1600 to 1868. Edo, the present-day city of Tokyo, was the capital during this time and the Tokugawa shogun were the rulers.

In the hundred years before the Edo period, Japan was locked in almost constant warfare. Powerful landowners, or nobles, known as **daimyo** competed with one another for territory and power. What did it take to finally end the chaos and bring order to the country? The answer is a strong and clever leader.

## FYI...

The Tokugawa shoguns, because they all have the same surname, are referred to by their given name, for example, Tokugawa Ieyasu is called “Ieyasu.”



**FIGURE 13-3** This contemporary woodblock print shows Tokugawa Ieyasu in traditional Japanese style, with a stiff, angular robe and realistic face. What impression of the shogun do you think the artist is trying to convey?



**FIGURE 13-2** These are the graves of the 47 ronin. Every year on December 14, the anniversary of the attack on Lord Kira, Japanese people honour the memory of the 47 ronin.

## Unifying the Land

Tokugawa Ieyasu (Toe-koo-guh-wuh Ee-ay-yuh-soo) became the most powerful man in Japan after he defeated rival daimyo and generals in a great battle. Three years later in 1603, the emperor made him the shogun. Although the emperor technically ruled the land, the shogun really held all the power.

Ieyasu had won power through military strength, but now he needed to hold onto it. He was determined to create such a strong **shogunate** that no one would dare to challenge him or his descendants. His plan was to create a long-lasting and stable government. The first step was to control the daimyo, some of whom had fought against him before he became shogun. Ieyasu had the daimyo watched closely. He gave loyal lords domains, that is, areas of land, next to the domains of lords whose loyalty he questioned.

Other effective measures that brought stability to Japan were taken by Ieyasu's successors. These included:

- ◆ **Alternate attendance.** This meant that every second year the daimyo were forced to live in Edo. The other year they would live in their domain. The cost of keeping up two homes and moving every year meant that daimyo would not have the time and money to challenge the shogun. In addition, daimyo were required to leave family members in Edo during their absence. They were called "guests of the shogun," but really they were hostages. If there were any uprisings or even rumours of a plot that involved an absent daimyo, his family members were killed.
- ◆ **Sharing Power.** The *bakuhun* system of two levels of government was established. The shogunate, the equivalent to our federal government, had control over important matters such as foreign trade and relations. The daimyo controlled local affairs in their territory.
- ◆ **Strict Laws.** Laws established by the shogunate controlled many aspects of the daimyo's lives, such as dress and marriage. They also required the daimyo to pay for projects, such as road building in their territories. This restricted their wealth.

### Think IT THROUGH

Why is it hard for a ruler to hold onto power through military strength alone? Think of rulers you have read about in previous units and modern political leaders. How do they hold onto their power? What do you think is the best way for a leader to gain and maintain power?

### SKILL POWER

What problems did the shogun anticipate he would have with the daimyo? How did he solve each of these problems? Create a **Problem/Solution** chart to organize your thinking. Gather information from pages 285 and 286.

Problem	Solution



**FIGURE 13-4** This woodblock print by Utagawa Sadahide created in the mid-19th century shows Yoritomo, a daimyo, and his attendants setting off to go to his domain. What does this image tell you about the power and wealth of the daimyo?

Increasing the Shogun's Power	Decreasing the Daimyo's Power
The shogun enforced an existing law that banned peasants from owning weapons or swords.	Without weapons, the peasants were useless to the local daimyo who might try to raise armies.
A network of secret police was established. Anyone accused of threatening the shogun's power was considered guilty and punished severely.	Needing permission to marry or to alter their castles, the daimyo could not make military alliances against the shogun or build up their defences.
One-quarter of all the agricultural land, mines, ports, and cities in Japan were owned by the shogun.	Loyal daimyo were given villages to govern. It was their responsibility to collect taxes, keep order, and pay for road building and flood control projects in the area.

**FIGURE 13-5** Which means of controlling the daimyo would be most effective in ensuring loyalty? Which would ensure obedience?

**Think IT THROUGH**

How might alternate attendance result in the flow of goods and ideas between Edo and the domains and from one domain to another?

**FYI...**

By the late 1700s, many daimyo became indebted to merchants. According to historian Mikiso Hane, many daimyo gave up their "traditional attitude of superiority" and "appeal[ed] to the wealthy merchants for money with lowered heads."

Despite the measures taken by the shogun, there were many peasant disturbances and urban riots during the Edo period over taxes and food shortages. However, through all these, the Tokugawa shogun maintained control over Japan.

## A Feudal Society

The story of the 47 ronin illustrates three of the levels of Japanese society: the emperor, the nobility, and the samurai. Japan had a feudal system which was based on land; local lords controlled domains and they supported themselves by collecting taxes from peasant farmers.

The rigid social structure was intended to help the shogun to maintain control. Membership in each class was **hereditary**, that is, determined by birth. Although people could not officially move up in the hierarchy, people in lower levels did manage to improve their situation through hard work, talent, or gaining wealth.

## Roles in Society

Strict rules governed the behaviour of each class. There were 216 rules regulating dress for everyone from the emperor to the lowest member of society. For example, an upper-class woman had to wear 12 silk kimonos with an exact combination of colours showing. In contrast, peasants were not allowed to wear clothing made of silk, even if they were silk farmers. There were rules regarding houses and possessions. There were even rules that dictated to whom each person had to bow and how low. Punishments were harsh for anyone who disobeyed.



**FIGURE 13-6** Empress Michiko wore a traditional 12-layered robe to her Enthronement Ceremony in November 1990. This garment severely restricts the wearer's movement. What might this suggest about women's role in upper-class society?

## Social Mobility in Canada Today

When people have the opportunity to change their position in society, this is called “social mobility.” In Japanese feudal society there was officially no social mobility.

Many Canadians think that social mobility is a fact of Canadian society. But how true is this?

Here are some quotations from the *Canadian Encyclopedia* article, “Social Mobility”:

### On One Hand . . .

- . . . people born into wealthy and important families are likely to live their lives as wealthy and important people . . .
- . . . Canadians do not enjoy equal opportunity to advance . . .
- . . . positions in medical schools are disproportionately (in very high numbers) filled by the children of doctors, and even in many skilled trades the right or opportunity to enter is passed from parent to child.
- . . . characteristics such as gender, race, religion and class of origin—also appear to hinder (get in the way of) entry into the elite (privileged class).

### On the Other Hand . . .

- . . . higher education has helped many children of poorer families to obtain better jobs than they might otherwise have obtained even if top positions are closed to them.
- . . . antidiscrimination laws or efforts at employment equity (equality) are especially valuable for traditionally excluded groups such as women and racial minorities . . . especially in public-sector organizations such as government and universities.

### Think IT THROUGH

1. Discuss the quotations with a group. What conclusions can you come to about social mobility in Canadian society?
2. How can people move up in Canadian society?
3. What do you think it would be like living in a society with no social mobility whatsoever?



**FIGURE 13-7** What does this street festival suggest about social mobility in this Canadian city?

## Researching a Topic

You want to get an update on Japan. How has the organization of the government changed? Is there still an emperor, a shogun, or daimyo?

You might head straight for the computer or the library to start your research, but there are many sources of information for you to consider.

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Your experience	
People	
Books	
Internet sites and databases	
Television/video	
CD-ROMs (e.g., Encarta)	
Newspapers and magazines	
Other	

Remember, the fewer sources you use in your research, the greater the chance that the information you find could be unreliable, outdated, incomplete, or biased. Keep these tips in mind:

- For some topics, people can give you information or points of view you won't find in other sources.
- When using books, remember to check the copyright page for publication date and place, to make sure that the information is not out of date.



**FIGURE 13-8** The emperor, empress, and their family. How is the role of Japan's imperial family today similar to its role in the Edo period?

- Don't forget periodicals—publications which come out at regular periods—such as journals or newsletters.
- Internet databases allow you to search articles from periodicals. You can narrow your search by time period or by reading level. Databases often supply **abstracts**, or summaries, of the articles. You can use these to help you decide if you want to read the whole article.

### Try It!

Research the current Japanese government, including the role of the emperor.

1. Using the research tool at left, brainstorm specific sources of information for each category, and ideas for locating these sources.
2. Gather your information. Note which of the sources you brainstormed were useful.
3. Discuss an aspect of the Japanese government, e.g., the role the imperial family, or the use of the police and military in maintaining control. Relate your findings to aspects of the Japanese worldview.

## The Samurai

Like the knights of the European feudal system, Japanese samurai were the much-respected warrior class. During the Edo period, the samurai lived in castle towns controlled by the shogun or daimyo they served. Only the samurai were allowed to have swords. They carried a large curved sword, sharp enough to slice an enemy in two, and a smaller sword used to cut off the head of the defeated enemy. There were many subdivisions in the samurai ranks. The lowest and least honourable were the ronin, the samurai without masters.

Although they had privilege and status, samurai were forbidden to become involved in trade or business. In peacetime they were posted as officers in rural towns and took various duties, including surveying land, collecting taxes, and keeping order. The samurai code of honour dictated that they live simple and thrifty lives. In reality, they had little choice.



**FIGURE 13-9** Putting on samurai armour was a complicated and time-consuming procedure that involved many stages. Four stages of the procedure are shown here.

## SKILL POWER

When you write a research report, you need to keep track of all the sources you used for reference. These should be included in a bibliography page at the end of your report. Every source in which you found ideas or quotations must be listed. Taking other peoples' ideas without acknowledging them is called plagiarism and is unethical.

- Items in a bibliography are arranged in alphabetical order. Alphabetize by the author's last name. If there is no author, alphabetize by the first main word of the title.

- Here is one example of appropriate bibliographic style:

Schomp, Virginia.  
*Japan in the Days  
of the Samurai*,  
Benchmark Books,  
2002.

## FYI...

By the Edo period, samurai swords were a symbol of the samurai's social privilege. The samurai used them to reinforce the social order, with the right to behead any commoner who offended him. A samurai's sword was considered to be his soul.



## Zoom In > The Way of the Warrior

The samurai stood for many virtues—honour, bravery, unquestioning loyalty, self-discipline, and self-denial. A samurai warrior was expected to be brave when faced with pain or death and be prepared to die fearlessly in battle. These became the ideals for everyone in Japanese society during the Edo period.

The samurai had to be agile and fit to wield his sharp sword. It was also expected that his mind would be trained and sharpened by constant dedication to learning. For example, many samurai studied poetry and philosophy.

The idea of honour is the key to understanding the samurai. The samurai was ready to die for his honour or the honour of his daimyo. The samurai had the privilege of committing *seppuku* (sep-poo-koo), or ritual suicide. *Seppuku* was regarded as an honourable alternative to humiliation or public shame. It also showed others that the samurai had failed or let the group down.

When committing *seppuku*, the samurai would plunge a small sword into his abdomen and slice it open. Then, an aide would end the samurai's

agony by beheading him. *Seppuku* was considered even more honourable if the samurai composed a poem at the time of his death.

- In what ways were values and behaviour of the samurai similar to those of the knights and monks of medieval Europe and humanists during the Renaissance? In what ways were they different?
- The warriors of the Alberta plains shared many of the values of the samurai, but there were some important differences, too. What differences do you think result from the lack of metals in Plains First Nations culture? What differences do you think result from the lack of a class structure similar to feudal Europe's, or the strict Japanese social structure?



**FIGURE 13-10** Although this image of a samurai is modern, the armour is very similar to that which would have been worn in Edo Japan. Why do you think the image of the samurai is so appealing even now in Japanese society?

## A Peasant's Life

Peasants' labour was continuous and back-breaking. Here is a comment about peasants by an official in Edo Japan. What does it suggest about how peasants were seen by higher classes?

*The more you squeeze them [the peasants] the more oil you get out of them.*

- Look at the picture to the right. Compare the peasants' clothing to that of the daimyo and samurai class.



**FIGURE 13-11** This late 16th century print by an unknown artist shows peasant farmers working in the fields.

## Peasants

Farmers were considered important in Edo Japan because they produced the food that sustained the society. Laws controlled every aspect of the peasants' life. They were forbidden to smoke tobacco or to drink rice wine, and they needed special permission to travel outside their district. The rules regulating their lives were similar to those imposed on First Nations peoples living on reserves before the 1960s. They were not allowed off the reserve to work and required signed permission from an Indian Agent to leave for any reason.

## Artisans

Japanese artisans or craftspeople usually lived in towns and cities. An artisan's son was restricted not only to the class of his father but also to the particular craft that his father practised.

The objects produced by the artisans of Edo Japan—high-quality paper and porcelains, lacquered or enamel containers, even practical articles such as clocks and pans—were both useful and beautiful. Although artisans were extremely skilled, their status was lower than that of peasants. This was because they were not primary producers; their work required materials produced by others. A weaver, for example, relied on the silk farmer for silk.

## LINK UP

The lives of farmers in Edo Japan were similar to those of peasants in medieval Europe. ■



**FIGURE 13-12** This late 16th century print of a swordsmith was done by an unknown artist. Swordsmiths were the most honoured of all artisans. What does this suggest about the Japanese worldview?

## Think IT THROUGH

Based on what you learned about the history of the Medici family of Renaissance Florence, do you think the government of the shogun was wise in controlling the merchant class?

## Merchants

Merchants bought items from artisans to trade or sell to others. They arranged for the shipping and distribution of food, and stored rice in their warehouses. Because rice was used as currency during most of the Edo period, merchants performed a function similar to that of bankers.

Since they didn't actually produce anything, merchants were officially at the bottom of the social order. They had to live cautiously, as government spies reported merchants who showed off their wealth or dared to criticize the government. The government could punish them by confiscating, or taking over, their businesses.

**FIGURE 13-13** This street scene in early Kyoto shows merchants displaying fans and lacquer wares. It is from a screen called *Famous Places in Kyoto* done in the early 17th century by an unknown artist. Can you guess the class of any of the shoppers or people on the street? Explain your thinking.



**FIGURE 13-14** A mother and her two children. Her son, seated, is in samurai dress.

## Women in Edo Society

In Edo Japan, the class that women were born into determined their responsibilities, as it did for the men. For example, women born to the samurai class were expected to give their children a proper samurai upbringing. Women in rural areas had more freedom than upper class women. As well as working in the home, they worked in the fields with their husbands planting and harvesting crops, gathering wood, and raising silk worms. However, in the overall hierarchy of society, women were always considered lower than men. Women did not have legal existence in the Edo period; they could not own property.

## Women's Duties

A samurai textbook from the Tokugawa period had this to say about the wife's duty to her husband.

*A woman must think of her husband as her lord, and she must serve him reverently.... In her dealings with her husband, her facial expressions and her language should be courteous, humble, and yielding. She should never be peevish or obstinate, never rude or arrogant. When her husband issues instructions, she must never disobey them.... A woman should look on her husband as if he were heaven itself.*

**Scholastic World Japan**

- How does a woman's duty to her husband relate to a samurai's duty to his daimyo? To a daimyo's duty to his shogun?
- How do these instructions compare with your ideas about the relationship between a husband and wife in Canada today?
- Compare Japanese women with women in European feudal society.

## FAST FORWARD

### Two Modern Princesses

Before Princess Sayako's wedding, she visited shrines to gods and past emperors in the grounds of the Imperial Palace where she lived. Upon her marriage she was forced to give up her imperial title and become a commoner. In Japan, tradition does not allow her to become emperor. At the time, many people in Japan expressed disapproval of this system. They felt that the imperial system treated royal women unfairly.

Princess Masako is married to Princess Sayako's older brother, the Crown Prince Naruhito. The emperor and empress became very concerned when Princess Masako didn't have a child for five years after getting married. When she finally had her first baby, it was a girl. Pressure continued for her to have a boy who could be heir to the throne. Finally, Princess Masako had to step down from her royal duties because of stress.



**FIGURE 13-15** Princess Sayako of Japan married a commoner, Kuroda Yoshiki, in 2005. Here she listens to her mother, Empress Michiko, before her marriage.

### Think IT THROUGH

1. To what extent do the duties of these modern Japanese princesses reflect Edo values?
2. Today, in many modern societies, women and men have equal status. Why do you think royal institutions are slow to catch up to modern attitudes?



**FIGURE 13-16** A young AINU woman in traditional dress. How do her clothes and tattooed lips emphasize the differences between the AINU and other Japanese people?

## Outside Edo Society

**Outcasts** were people who were shunned or ignored by other classes because of their work. Usually, they had occupations that in some way involved death. Leather tanners, butchers, and those who disposed of animal carcasses were all outcasts. People with leprosy and some entertainers were also considered outcasts. Under the Tokugawa shogun, outcasts had to live apart from the rest of society, and they were not allowed to change their jobs, enter a peasant's home, or be in a city after 8 p.m.

The AINU, Japan's indigenous people, also were separate from the feudal hierarchy. Although they had lived for many thousands of years on the islands of Japan, they were excluded from Japanese society. It wasn't until 1997 that the AINU people were officially recognized by the Japanese government as an Indigenous people. This meant that their distinct culture would be protected and supported. However, some AINU feel that the legislation does not go far enough because

- ◆ it defines their culture too narrowly as language, music, dance, and crafts
- ◆ it does nothing to reverse the years of discrimination and assimilation policies, that is, trying to make the AINU give up their culture and become "Japanese"

## Over to YOU

1. a. Complete the chart below, listing the responsibilities of the different parts of Japanese society in the Edo period and the way that the shogunate used military power to enforce the rules.

	Responsibilities	Enforcement
Emperor		
Daimyo		
Commoners		
Women		
Outcasts and AINU		

- b. In a small group, brainstorm your responsibilities in Canadian society, and how they are enforced. Discuss if you think that military force would be the best way to control a society like Canada's.

2. Compare the status and political power of merchants in Renaissance Europe, Aztec society, and Edo Japan. Which society most closely matches the way you think successful business people are viewed in Canadian society today?
3. It is not only in Japan that Indigenous peoples have been kept separate from the organization of society. In the *Indian Act*, the Canadian government outlined, and in some ways drastically limited, the rights of First Nations peoples. Do research to find out what these limitations were and whether they still exist.

# Honour and Duty

How important are the ideas of “honour” and “duty” in your life? For example, do you think about how the actions of your family members affect the honour of your family as a whole? Do you ever find yourself thinking that other people’s behaviour dishonours you? What are your everyday duties and how seriously do you take them? Do you hear people around you talking about honour or duty very often?

In the story of Lord Asano and the 47 ronin at the beginning of the chapter, you saw that honour was very important in Edo society. Lord Asano felt that Lord Kira had dishonoured him. Obedience to authority was important to the ronin, but their duty to avenge Lord Asano’s dishonouring and death was more important than the law.

*How did social controls shape Japanese identity and citizenship?*

## Think IT THROUGH

In what situations do you think that it is your duty to submit to the rules made by people in authority over you? In what situations do you think that you need to stand up for your rights as an individual? Is it sometimes hard to know the difference?



**FIGURE 13-17** Sometimes the sense of duty of different groups of people can lead to conflict and even violence. This 2001 photograph shows an angry confrontation between protesters and police. In this case, the protesters felt that it was their duty to demonstrate against a free trade conference being held in Québec City. The police had a duty to follow the Prime Minister’s orders to remove the protesters from the area of the conference.

## Toward a Harmonious Society

The Tokugawa shogun did not create the Japanese social structure. However, they used its values and social controls to support their rule. “Social controls” are the rules and customs in a society that regulate people’s behaviour. The purpose of social controls is to maintain order in a society.

## Think IT THROUGH

Why is it important for a government to maintain order? By what means do modern governments maintain order?



**FIGURE 13-18** Confucius lived between approximately 551 and 479 B.C.E.

The teachings of **Confucianism** played an important role in the Japanese acceptance of class distinctions. Confucius was a Chinese scholar whose teachings for moral, that is right, living were brought over to Japan by Buddhist monks. Confucianism taught that everyone had a proper place in society. If everyone accepted their duties and obligations, there would be peace and order. If not, there would be chaos and suffering.

Many of Confucius’s sayings encouraged people to be modest and work and study hard. He stressed the need for rituals of proper behaviour and compassion. One of his famous sayings was; “What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others.”

Confucius taught that there were five basic relationships. They are shown on this chart with the most important relationship at the top. The responsibilities of each party in the relationship are at the bottom.

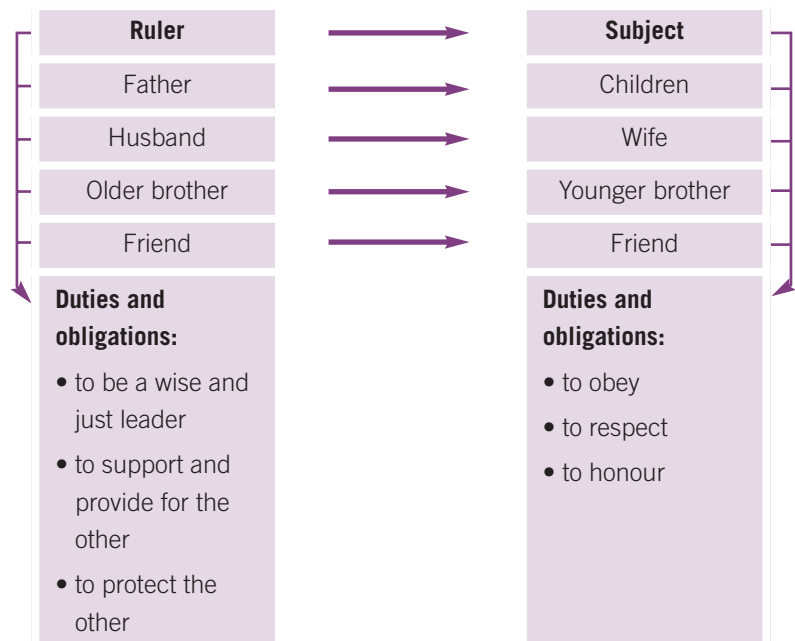
### LINK UP

Confucius also said, “I am not one who was born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it there.” What aspect of Renaissance humanism that you explored in Chapter 3 does this saying reflect? ■

### Think IT THROUGH

Take one of the first four pairings in the chart, and write down specific examples for the various duties and obligations. Do the same for the Friend/Friend relationship.

- In partners, discuss why the friendship relationship might be considered important, even though it is the only one in which both individuals are equal.



In Edo Japan, samurai schools and schools for commoners stressed Confucian ideals of duty, especially what is called **filial piety**, or faithfulness and devotion to parents.

## Social Uniformity

If you went on a trip to Japan, you would probably meet classes of elementary and high school students at every site you visited. One thing you would notice is that they would all be wearing uniforms. Some might be wearing traditional military-style uniforms. Characters in Japanese anime and comics often wear these uniforms. Increasingly, however, many schools are adopting new uniforms—a white shirt, necktie, blazer with school crest, and dress pants or tartan skirts—that are more similar to the private school uniforms worn in North America.

### School Uniforms — Two Perspectives

In 1996 former US President Clinton endorsed uniforms:

*If it means that the school rooms will be more orderly and more disciplined, and that our young people will learn to evaluate themselves by what they are on the inside, instead of what they're wearing on the outside, then our public schools should be able to require their students to wear uniforms.*

Unesco education adviser Susan Nkinyangi comments on school uniforms in Africa:

*The idea behind the uniform was that it unifies students so rich and poor look alike. But in reality, they cost parents often what they cannot afford.*

### Think IT THROUGH

1. Are uniforms a good way to create equality among students? Explain your thinking.
2. Create a questionnaire and interview a range of people about the issue of uniforms for students. Present your findings to the class in an oral presentation. How did your findings affect your own ideas on this subject?
3. How do people in your school use clothing styles to express their identity as part of a particular group?



**FIGURE 13-19** These are middle school students in Kyoto, Japan. Given what you have learned about the Japanese, how do you think these students feel about wearing uniforms?



## Edo Values in Modern Japan

Some of the values of Edo society still play an important role in modern Japanese life. A favourite Japanese proverb is “the nail that sticks out gets hammered down.” Japan continues to be a society where self-discipline and loyalty to the group are highly valued.

For much of the 20th century, the Confucian duties and obligations between a lord and his samurai were reflected in the relationship between Japanese companies and their employees. The samurai evolved into the modern “salary man” or businessman who carried a briefcase instead of a sword. The company expected a lifetime of loyal service from employees. In return, it guaranteed them lifetime security.

Although various sectors in Japanese society such as business, the state, and the media, still promote these traditional ideals, life in Japan has begun to change. Family life has suffered as a result of the dedication of Japanese men to their jobs—women have full responsibility for managing the household and raising children, and children get to spend little time with their fathers. As a result, men are questioning the long hours of

overtime that they are expected to put in at their job and challenging the idea of lifetime security by transferring to other companies. Also, more Japanese women are making the choice to remain single, a practice which was severely frowned on in the past. Japanese people are slowly beginning to place a higher value on their individual needs.

### Think IT THROUGH

1. How does advertising in the media portray the ideal person in Canadian society? What images are used to persuade you to conform to this ideal?
2. When is conformity a positive thing? When is it not? Think about examples in your own life.
3. In some Indigenous and First Nations cultures, including the Aztec culture that you read about in Chapter 8, the welfare of the group or nation was of more importance than the welfare of an individual. Think of an example in your own life when you had to make a choice between your own needs and the needs of a group. What factors did you base your decision on?



**FIGURE 13-20** The Japanese are great fans of Anne of Green Gables. The Green Gables house on Prince Edward Island is a popular place for Japanese couples to get married. Why do you think that many Japanese people might be intrigued by this character who is a symbol of individuality?



**FIGURE 13-21** In the armed forces, individuals are placed in groups, and in many situations the whole group is responsible for the behaviour of each member. Of what groups are you a member? In what ways do members of these groups help one another and share responsibility and/or blame?

## Group Responsibility and Shame

As masters of the farmers, artisans, and merchants, the samurai used their power to keep order in Japanese society. They organized the lower classes into groups of five families called *goingumi* (go-noon-goo-mee). Members of these groups were supposed to help each other. Also, each person was considered responsible for the behaviour of the others in the group. Everyone in the group could be punished if one person was disobedient, did not show respect to a superior, or did not work hard enough.

### Think IT THROUGH

How might being a member of a small group benefit people in a society? How might it affect people's behaviour if they knew that everyone in their group would be punished for their wrong behaviour?

## Over to YOU

1. **a.** It is said that harmony is the goal of every group and every society. Without it, law and order crumble and citizens eventually suffer as a result. How did social controls instituted by the shogun attempt to bring harmony and order to Edo Japan? Create a web diagram with "Harmony and Order" in the centre circle to show your thinking.
- b.** What rules exist in your school and in your classroom to ensure harmony? Which rules would you change? Why?
2. Today, Japanese culture still stresses living in harmony, which requires an emphasis on conformity. Conduct a debate on this question: Does conforming affect a person's identity?
3. Review the Building Your Skills on page 288. Research the philosophy of Confucius to develop a list of five sayings.
  - a.** Explain the meaning of each saying.
  - b.** Discuss whether each saying reflects the values and beliefs of Japanese culture during the Edo Period.
  - c.** Which sayings reflect your own worldview? Create an illustration for one of these sayings.

# First Contact With the West

What threats had the Japanese government faced from contact with a different culture?

## Think IT THROUGH

Based on what you know about Japanese society, why do you think they might think of outsiders as “barbarians”? Although people don’t use such words today, do you think similar attitudes contribute to modern racial intolerance?

## FYI...

The Japanese were fascinated by Portuguese firearms. They were familiar with gunpower from their contact with the Chinese, but they had never seen weapons like the light Portuguese guns. Japanese swordsmiths began to make copies of these new weapons.

In this chapter, you have seen how the shogunate used military and social controls to shape Edo society. The Japanese were developing a strong sense of their identity as a people. Now take a step back in time to 1534, 50 years before Tokugawa Ieyasu united Japan. It was the European Age of Exploration and, like other peoples around the world, the Japanese came into contact with a culture very different from any they had seen before. How do you think they might have responded?

## The “Southern Barbarians”

In Chapter 5, you read about Portuguese explorers who set up trading ports in areas around the Indian Ocean. During this time, in 1543, a Portuguese ship was wrecked off the shore of a small Japanese island. The Portuguese sailors said that they had come to exchange “what they had for what they did not have”; in other words, they were traders. Because they approached Japan from a southerly direction, the Portuguese became known as the “southern barbarians.” They were soon followed by Spanish, Dutch, and British traders and by Christian missionaries.



**FIGURE 13-22** This folding screen by an unknown artist was done in the 17th century. It shows a Portuguese ship unloading goods. The Japanese had never seen people like the Portuguese sailors, nor had they seen vessels like the ships they sailed. In this painting, what elements does the artist emphasize as looking strange? What is shown in a more traditional way?

At first, the Portuguese and the Japanese had favourable impressions of each other. However, they did have many differences, both cultural and religious. Portuguese society, which had been influenced by Renaissance values and ideals, favoured competition, the individual, and a more flexible social structure.

### New Kind of Belief

Francis Xavier, a Jesuit, arrived in Japan in 1549 to start missions to convert the upper classes, the daimyo and the samurai, to Christianity. Many Portuguese and Spanish Jesuits came after Xavier. The Portuguese also sent Franciscan priests, who worked with the poor and lower classes.

As you have seen, the religious beliefs of the Japanese people were a combination of Shinto worship of *kami*, the Confucian code of correct behaviour, and the Buddhist value of self-discipline. There were some basic similarities between the beliefs of the Christian clergy and Japanese values. Both had **ethical codes**, that is, rules about right and wrong behaviour; for example, both believed that murder and stealing are wrong. However, the Christian idea of one god was new for the Japanese.

### FYI...

European objects and styles became fads in Japan. The upper classes wanted the velvet and satin capes, golden medallions, candlesticks, hourglasses, and fur robes they saw the Portuguese using.



**FIGURE 13-23** This six-fold screen was done in the early 17th century by Naizen Kano. It shows the Franciscans in grey and the Jesuits in black.

**FIGURE 13-24 Christian Areas and Communities of Japan Around 1640.** What can you tell about the spread of Christianity in Japan from this map? As you will see on page 306, the shogun began to persecute Christians in 1614.



### Think IT THROUGH

How do you think a daimyo would feel about these Christian beliefs? How might it be different from the way a Japanese commoner would respond to these ideas?

The story of the 47 ronin showed that the Japanese were expected to be totally loyal to their daimyo, emperor, and the shogun. The Christian missionaries, on the other hand, taught that a person’s spiritual loyalty should be to God in heaven. The royal rulers that European Christians obeyed represented and served that higher heavenly authority. It became clear to the shogunate that what Christianity stood for was very different from the beliefs that were considered an essential part of the Japanese identity.

### Over to YOU

1. a. Using a chart like the one below, fill in the ways that these elements of Western culture might threaten the control the shogun had over the Japanese people.

<b>Fads and Fashions</b>	
<b>New Military Technology</b>	
<b>A More Open Culture</b>	
<b>The Christian Religion</b>	

b. Decide which level of Japanese society would have most to gain from adopting the new culture, and which would have most to lose. Write a dialogue between characters representing the perspective of each of these groups.

2. Imagine you are a Portuguese trader interested in trading with a Japanese merchant. Write a letter home describing your impressions of Japanese society and its beliefs and values.

# Explore the Big Ideas

When Tokugawa Ieyasu became shogun of Japan, he supported a strong feudal state with a rigid hierarchy of social classes and strict rules of behaviour.

- a.** Complete the web below. Use the next level of circles to show how these values and beliefs relate to Edo society.



- b.** Working in a small group, compare your individual webs and prepare a short presentation for the class of your combined ideas.
- c.** Using the same template, fill in the web to show your impressions of Canadian culture. Which of the values are the same as in Edo Japan? Which are different? Working in pairs, use the concepts in the webs to create and present a poem for two voices.

- 2.** During the Edo period, Asano and his 47 samurai were considered heroes.

- a.** Create a collage to illustrate the characteristics of a hero in Japanese society at that time.
- b.** On the back of your collage, write characteristics that are heroic in today's society and explain why.

- 3.** In order to sell products, advertisers often use techniques that encourage conformity.

- appeal to the masses: say that "everybody is doing it"
- testimonials: a celebrity or a trusted authority promotes the product
- transfer: show an attractive or successful person; people will think that if they use the product, they will also be attractive or successful
- plain folk: show everyday people to suggest that the product is commonly used by "ordinary people."

- a.** In a small group, select five advertisements from magazines, newspapers, radio or TV commercials, or Internet ads. Discuss what kind of persuasive technique is used in each ad. Which ones encourage conformity? Which ones encourage individuality?
- b.** Present your five samples and the results of your discussion to the class.