

# East asian civilization: japan

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East Asian civilization: Japan In the mid 19th century, Japan was characterized as being feudal. There were also some primitive tribal elements in the Japanese society. The Tokugawa state was divided into four main social classes. The military class came first, common peasant farmers followed below them, and the craftsmen and artisans came below the peasant. At the bottom of the social class was the commercial class. Individuals who lived through trading rather than physical labor in the farms were degraded in the society; even the artisans did not effectively fit into the simple peasant society (Bellah 87).

There were feudal domains such as the Daimyo domains, which had their administrative structures, armies and fiscal systems, and retained crucial aspects of autonomy. The domains were dependent on Shogunal favor. In addition, there is some duality between central shogun (Bakufu) and regional Daimyo (Han) polities (Bellah 87).

Social and political stability came to be influenced by the absolute dictatorship of the Shoguns. It is during this period that important economic and social changes occurred. Some of the changes included improved farming methods and the growing of cash crops stimulated agricultural productivity. On the political front, Osaka and Edo became centers of expanded inter-regional trade; urban life became more sophisticated and education was gained by almost half of the male population. In such feudal based political systems, crises often arise; failure to deal with these crises led to threats from the west and by domestic discontent. The last leader of the Tokugawa resigned in 1867 but after the Meiji restoration, the Tokugawa family was allowed to hold some land in Suruga. The rise of Meiji was due to the weakened power due to debts and internal divisions (Bellah 87).

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### Works Cited

Bellah Robert. Tokugawa religion: the cultural roots of modern Japan. Simon and Schuster. (1985).