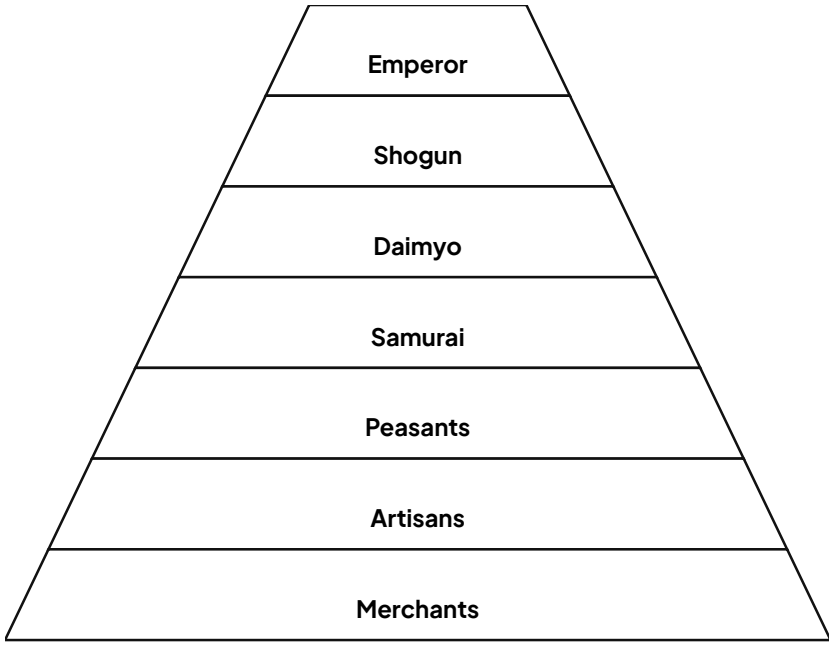
WHO WAS WHO IN FEUDAL JAPAN

This is the Tokugawa ideal order of about 1600 to 1868. Rank is not wealth: merchants were ranked last, but some grew rich.



Emperor: Held the highest rank and was honored by all, at the court in Kyoto. But after about 1185 this ruler had little real power.

Shogun: The "great general," the military ruler who really governed Japan. From 1603 the Tokugawa family held this title and ruled from Edo.

Daimyo: Great lords who ruled their own lands with their own warriors. Under the Tokugawa they had to live in Edo every other year.

Samurai: Warriors who served a lord with loyalty and fought for him, in return for land or rice counted in koku. One with no master was a ronin.

Peasants: Most people. They grew the rice that fed everyone and were honored for it, but they paid heavy taxes in rice.

Artisans: Craft workers who made swords, armor, tools, cloth and pottery, mostly in the towns.

Merchants: Traders who bought and sold goods. Ranked lowest because they made nothing themselves, yet many grew rich.

Outside the four classes

Some people stood outside the four classes: court nobles, priests, nuns and entertainers, and outcast groups who did work seen as unclean, such as leatherworking.