Political Nuances of the Feudal Period
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Introduction
- Much of Japanese culture throughout the history of Japan was based on the mythology in Kojiki. Shintoism, the belief system in Japan, also comes from Kojiki.
- According to Kojiki, the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu Omikami, is the queen of the Kami, and the first emperor was descended from her.
- Women and men were generally considered to be of equal status before the inclusion of Buddhism.
- Women were assigned to the inner quarters after the rise of Confucianism in Japan.

Political Roles in Japan
1) Emperor: during the feudal period, the emperors were figure heads with very little power.
2) Shogun: the highest ranking noble in feudal society; held the most power.
3) Daimyo: powerful warlords; controlled provinces completely; in charge of all military and economic matters; could occasionally be promoted to Shogun.
4) Samurai: warrior class who worked for the Daimyo; had a warrior code similar to chivalry, called bushido.
5) Farmers: highest ranking peasants; those who owned land were higher ranked than those who didn’t.
6) Artisans: worked using wood and metal; could become well-known for their ability to make katanas.
7) Merchants: lowest ranked, since they were thought to make money off of other’s work.

Social Pyramid of Japan
- Japanese Feudalism was based on the ideas of Chinese philosophers Kong Qui and Confucius.
- It functioned as mortal duty of daimyo and samurai to protect the peasants and the villagers in their region.
- Therefore, the duty of peasants was to honor the warriors and pay taxes to them.

Male
- Emperor, Shogun, Daimyo consisted of men and were considered to be males' positions.
- By having men in such important government roles, Japan adapted to a patriarchal form of society.
- Men were expected to be the main source of income for their families.
- They had more opportunities to learn literary works, martial arts, and etc.
- They followed the code of Bushido.

Female
- With the rise of Confucianism in Japanese society, women were seen as impure distractions.
- This led to the confinement of women to the inner quarters.
- Because of this, women became more educated.
- While women had no political role, they had more time for literature and art.
- Women became the forefront of a literary and artistic renaissance.
- Women were supposed to get married and take care of their families.

Shintoism & Amaterasu
- Amaterasu is the queen of the Kami.
- She is also the Sun Goddess, without whom there is no sunlight.
- The Kami are gods, goddesses, spirits, and ancestors who reside in natural objects.
- Shinto has a strong concept of public and private worship. Many people gather to worship in shrines.

Conclusions
- The following data shows that combination of Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism played a major role in distinguishing the political structure and gender norms of Feudal Japan.
- At first, men and women were considered to be generally equal, until the religious beliefs changed the norms.
- Those religions had Japanese society adapt to the “gender binary” system.
- As a result, the distinctions between the genders were developed, encouraging Japan to adopt Feudalism, where patriarchy was a dominant force.

Works Cited
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