

Samurai Women

Tokugawa society values: very hierarchical and structured

Values and institutions: how do they relate to people/interpersonal relationships?

Gender / class (samurai, merchants) / status

→ rich/poor (merchant); rank/income (samurai); skill (artists, courtesans, samurai)

It's important to remember that though the film "Samurai Rebellion" is fiction, similar types of conflicts *did* happen:

- what happened to Lady Ichi (as a concubine, and as a woman)
- lord-vassal relationships present in the film
- attitudes towards and expectations of women, subservience being a main issue (Ichi was *not* subservient)
- "natural law" and the sanctity of marriage – this is what Isaburo claimed the lord was violating
- differences between how Isaburo and Tatewaki (his best friend) work within/outside of the system; how Isaburo chooses to break it, while Tatewaki sticks to the rigidity of the institution and societal obligations

The play "Gonza" is based on a true story.

In the play, we can see how sometimes personal relationships were based on personal gain; some samurai were very greedy.

Is the story frowning on Osai's behavior (having feelings for Gonza)?

How does Osai do as a model samurai woman?

- she has a perverse logic: she actually becomes Gonza's lover so her husband can be sure of her infidelity instead of worrying about it, or punishing her on insufficient evidence (which is potentially dishonorable)

Why does her family cut her off so quickly?

- ideas of purity, societal hierarchy and ideas of justice are such that loyalty to justice overshadows loyalty to family
- also, the word of a male is worth more than that of a female

[Film: *Harakiri*]