

Title: The Development of Feudalism in Japan and its Presence in Japan Today

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Recommended Time Frame: 3-4 60-minute periods

Grade Level: Middle School World History

Standards: 7.5 Students analyze the geographic, economic, religious, and social structure of the civilizations of Medieval Japan.

Lesson Objective: Students will understand the development of feudalism and the lasting evidence of feudalism in Japan today.

Lesson Background Information: This lesson is designed for middle school students studying world history. Since this is typically the first time students have examined Japan in depth this lesson first provides an introduction to feudalism in Japan (*The Development of Feudalism in Japan Reading and Problem-Solution Journal*). After building background information, students are then asked to examine various structures in Japan that were essential to the continuance of feudalism during the feudal period (Feudal Japanese castles), and structures that were created to preserve this time in history.

Anticipatory Set: Students will examine various images of feudal castles in Japan. They will be asked to take note of the following:

- What are the castles made of?
- What are some details you notice in the structure of the castle?
- What surrounds the castle?
- Is this similar to or different from other castles you have seen in pictures or movies?
- Why do you think these castles were built this way?

The objective of this anticipatory set is to have students look critically at the design and structure of a feudal castle in Japan as an introduction to Japanese feudalism. Moreover, it is designed to help students push aside what they traditionally think of as a “castle” in order to think of a castle as a strategic weapon of defense during the feudal era in Japan.

Procedure:

Introduction/Anticipatory Set:

- Show students PowerPoint slides of various feudal castles in Japan
- Students will answer the following questions as a “Bell Work” activity or “Warm-up” activity at the beginning of class.
 - What are the castles made of?
 - What are some details you notice in the structure of the castle?
 - What surrounds the castle?
 - Is this similar to or different from other castles you have seen in pictures or movies?
 - Why do you think these castles were built this way?
- Students may complete this individually or in a group setting. Notes can be taken on paper, on individual whiteboards, on post-it notes to be shared, or using an online tool such as Google Classroom.
- Allow time for students to discuss answers to the questions. Sharing their ideas and listening to ideas from other students will provide more background knowledge for students to begin this lesson with.

Focused Reading:

- Students will read *The Development of Feudalism in Japan* together. In order to increase engagement and comprehension the following procedure will be followed:
 - Number each paragraph in the reading
 - First Reading
 - Ask students to scan the reading one time looking at the title, headings, vocabulary words and definitions, and images.
 - Ask students what the reading is about. At this point they will only have a vague idea; however, it is important to ask students to think about the process of skimming they just completed.
 - Second Reading
 - The second reading is can be completed in a variety of ways.
 - Choral Reading (Teacher and students read together)
 - Snake Reading (Students take turns reading sentences or paragraphs as they “snake” through the room)
 - Stop and Go Reading (The teacher or a student reads. At various times the teacher or student stops and the rest of the class choral reads the next word. This helps to keep students engaged even when they are not the main readers)
 - At the end of the reading ask students to turn and talk to their partner about the material. Ask students to share their thoughts or opinions aloud or on the whiteboard.
 - Final Reading
 - Students will use their pens/highlighters to carefully examine the reading. They will do the following:
 - Underline important ideas
 - Circle words they do not know
 - Question marks next to words they do not understand
 - Write a quick “summary” of each paragraph in the margin. This summary does not have to be a complete sentence. It can be a short phrase that helps students remember the main idea of the paragraph.
 - If time permits, ask students to share with a partner *why* they circled, underlined, or put question marks next to words or phrases. This helps develop students’ metacognitive skills. You can have students complete a *Collaborative Annotation Chart* when first learning the skills of annotation.

Reading Comprehension Activity:

- Students will complete the *Feudalism in Japan Problem Solution Chart*.
 - Students should use evidence from the text to support their “solutions” to the problems presented.
 - Any specified vocabulary should be included in their answers.
- This activity can be completed individually, in partners, or in groups.
- Answers can be reviewed/presented in various ways as well. Each group can present one response, students can move around the room and share answers, answers can be written on the board, etc.

Connection to Japan Today:

- Students will be assigned a historical site in Japan related to feudalism
- Students will research the site, its role in the development, preservation, or _____ or feudalism in Japan. They will also describe the importance of this location today.
- Students will complete a research project based on their findings. See attached form for directions.

Modifications

- This lesson can be modified in a variety of ways
 - *The Development of Feudalism in Japan Reading* can be modified to fit the reading levels of your students.
 - *The Development of Japan Problem-Solution Chart* can include sentence starters to help students with an IEP and ELL students.
 - Visuals are encouraged to go along with the reading. It helps students comprehend and connect with the material.
 - The research project can be modified to fit the needs of individual students.

Conclusions:

- At the end of the lesson students will have an understanding of the development of feudalism in Japan, how this institution was preserved for years, and the lasting evidence of feudalism in Japan today.

Sources/Websites:

- Reading modified from Holt *Medieval to Early Modern Times*

Extensions:

- Students can compare and contrast feudalism in Japan and feudalism in Europe. They can complete a similar activity describing the lasting evidence of feudalism in Europe today.

Name: _____

Collaborative Annotation Chart

Symbol	Comment/Question/Response	Sample Language Support
?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions I have • Wonderings I have • Confusing parts for me 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The statement “...” is confusing because... • I am unclear about the following sentence(s) • I don’t understand what s/he means when s/he states...
_____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Author’s main points • Key ideas expressed • Significant ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One significant idea in this text is... • The author is trying to convey... • One argument that author makes is that...
○ circle important words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Terms • Vocabulary Words • Important Words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I learned that _____ means...(further explanation) • It is important to know the word _____ because... • The word _____ helped me understand that _____

Symbol/ Paragraph	Comment/Question/Response	Partner’s Comment/Question/Response

Name: _____ Period: _____

The Development of Feudalism in Japan Problem Solution Journal

Problem	Solution
<p>The nobles outside of Heian were unhappy with the way the government was being run.</p> <p>Your answer must include the following vocabulary word:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minamoto Clan	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Minamoto didn't want to get rid of the emperor.</p> <p>Your answer must include the following vocabulary words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Figurehead• Shogun	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>Life under the shogun was lawless and violent.</p> <p>Your answer must include the following vocabulary words:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feudalism• Daimyo• Samurai	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Problem	Solution
<p>Samurai were expensive to support.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>A samurai needed to improve his self-discipline.</p> <p>Your answer must include the following vocabulary word:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bushido Code	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>A samurai loses honor.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

The Development of Feudalism in Japan

Introduction

By the late 1100s, Heian was the great center of Japanese art and literature. But in the rest of Japan, life was very different. Powerful nobles fought each other over land. Rebels fought against imperial officials. This fighting destroyed land, which made it difficult for peasants to grow food. Some poor people became bandits or thieves. Meanwhile, Japan's rulers were so focused on courtly life, they didn't notice the many problems growing in their country.

Shoguns Rule Japan

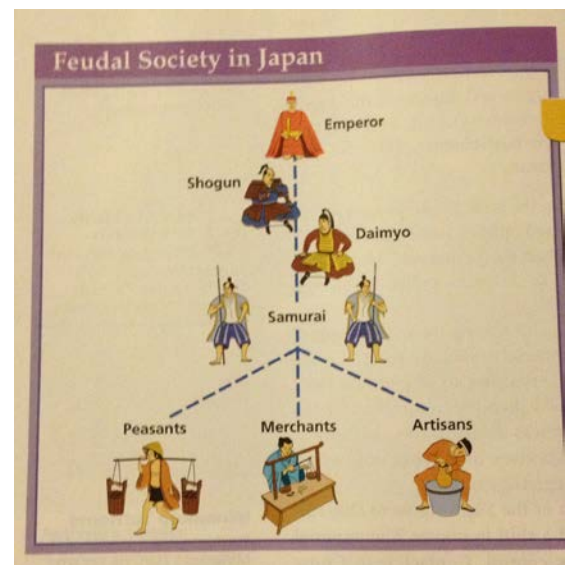
Many of the nobles outside Heian were unhappy with the way Japan's government was being run. Frustrated, these nobles wanted a change of leadership. Eventually a few very strong noble clans decided to try to take power for themselves.

Two of these powerful clans went to war with each other in the 1150s. For almost 30 years, the two clans fought. Their fighting was terrible, destroying land and property and tearing families apart. In the end, the Minamoto clan won. Because he had a very powerful army, and because the emperor was still busy in Heian, the leader of the Minamoto clan was the most powerful man in Japan. He decided to take over ruling the country.

He didn't, however, want to get rid of the emperor. He kept the emperor as a **figurehead**, *a person who appears to rule even though real power rests with someone else*. As a samurai, the Minamoto leader was supposed to be loyal to the emperor, but he decided to rule in the emperor's place. In 1192 he took the title **shogun**, *a general who ruled Japan in the emperor's name*. The title of shogun was supposed to be temporary. However, Minamoto made it permanent. When he died, he passed his title and power on to one of his children. For about the next 700 years, shoguns would rule Japan.

The Rise of Samurai

Life under the shogun was often lawless and violent. The job of protecting people became the responsibility of the **daimyo**, *or local, land-owning lords*. The daimyo decided that they needed to protect their lands against violence. They hired **samurai**, *or trained professional warriors*, to defend them and their property. The result was a new social order known as **feudalism**. *This is a social system in which lords grant people land or other rewards in exchange for military service*. The



samurai hired by the daimyo wore light armor and fought with swords and bows. Most samurai came from noble families and inherited their positions from their fathers.

The word *samurai* comes from the Japanese word for “to serve.” Every samurai, from the weakest soldiers to the most powerful warrior, was supposed to serve his lord. Because all lords in Japan were supposed to serve the emperor, all samurai were required to be loyal to him.

An army of samurai was expensive to support. Few lords could afford to buy armor and weapons for their warriors. As a result, lords paid their samurai with land or food. Only the most powerful samurai got land for their service. Most of these powerful samurai didn't live on the land they received, but they did profit from it. Every year, the peasant farmers who worked on the land gave the samurai money or food. Samurai who received no land were given food – usually rice – as payment.

Samurai Live Honorably

All samurai had to follow a strict code of rules that taught them how to behave. *The samurai code of rules was known as **Bushido***. This means “the way of the warrior.” Both men and women from samurai families had to follow Bushido rules.

Samurai were expected to live simple, disciplined lives. They believed that self-discipline made them better warriors. To improve their discipline, many samurai participated in peaceful rituals that required great concentration. Some created intricate flower arrangements or grew miniature bonsai trees. Others held elaborate tea ceremonies. Many samurai also adopted Zen Buddhism, which stressed self-discipline and meditation.

More than anything else, Bushido required a samurai to be loyal to his lord. Each samurai had to obey his master's order without hesitation, even if it caused the samurai or his family to suffer. Obeying his lord was important to the samurai's sense of honor. Honor was the most important thing in a samurai's life. If he did anything to lose honor, a samurai was expected to commit suicide rather than living with the shame. Such shame might be caused by disobeying an order, losing a fight, or failing to protect his lord.



Feudalism in Japan Project

Evidence of the feudal period can be found in the form of feudal castles, temples, and other historical sites throughout Japan today. Please follow the directions below to complete a research project on the evidence of the Japanese feudal period in Japan today.

Step 1:

- Choose any of the following castles, temples, or historical sites in Japan today.
 - Matsuyama Castle
 - Himeji Castle
 - Matsumoto Castle
 - Kumamoto Castle
 - Kyoto Imperial Palace
 - Taiyuin Temple

Step 2:

- Research the site you chose. Focus on the following questions:
 - What role did this site play in the development, preservation, or memory of feudalism in Japan?
 - Describe the architecture. Why is the building built the way it was? What is it made out of?
 - What surrounded the building during the time period in which it was built? What surrounds the building now?
 - What economic role does this site play in Japanese society today? Does it draw tourists to the area? Does it cost to enter?
 - What is its importance in Japanese society today?

Step 3:

- Choose a way to present your information
 - Google Slides Presentation
 - Poster board
 - Video Presentation
 - Prezi
 - Any other type of presentation app or format

Step 4:

- Present your findings in a small group. All students will rotate around the room and present to people at various tables.