

Japan's Feudal System

Purpose: By looking at the history of Japan, students will understand the feudal system in Japan. Students will understand that the Middle Ages acted as a bridge between ancient worlds and today's Western Civilization.

Essential Question: How does the early practice of feudalism lead to major shifts in government?

Rationale: Students need to describe Japan's feudal society and the influence of China on its culture. This is an indicator they need to know in order to pass the Ohio Graduating Test.

Materials: 1. Excerpts from History Alive! WH-7-4, Activity 3.2.

2. Medieval Times to Today. Pearson Education, Inc., Prentice hall, 2003. Pp. 89-93.

Activities: 1. Students will first read from their textbook, Medieval Time to Today, pp. 89-93, which will give background into feudal Japan.

2. 3 slides will be shown and discussed as notes are given to the students in outline form. Outlined included.

Assessment: Students will create a Haiku based on information they learned about feudalism, and an illustration that goes with the topic of their haiku. The haiku must be a three-lined poem consisting of 17 syllables: five in the first line, seven in second, and five in the third. They will present their haiku to the rest of the class. A rubric for grading is included.

Grade Adaptation: This lesson will be presented to a 7th grade social studies classroom. Haikus can be presented to younger grades as a way to present the culture of Japan to them. High school students can choose to do several haikus or pen and ink drawings of feudal times, or write and act out a scene from the feudal times.

Feudalism in Japan

- I. Japan's Early Historic Period: The Imperial Court (A.D. 400-783)
 - A. A Divine Emperor: The Spiritual Leader of Japan
 1. Prior to A.D. 400, uji (clans) ruled separate areas of Japan
 2. One of these clans, the Yamato, produced Japan's first emperor.
 3. Emperor considered descendant of Sun Goddess and most important person in Shinto.
 4. Emperor respected for religious power not political power.
 5. Various uji fought to be the emperor's chancellors (chief advisors)
 - B. Chinese Influences on the Japanese Court
 1. Modeled capital city of Nara after China's Changan
 2. Japanese emperors sought both spiritual and political powers.
 3. Prince Shotoku adopted aspects of Chinese govt., Confucian calendar, and legal ideas.
 4. Chinese character script adopted by Japanese court officials.
 5. Memorization of Chinese poetry popular.
 6. Collected Chinese works of art.
 7. Curving, tile roofs became popular in the homes of aristocrats.
 - C. Taika Reforms (A.D. 646)
 1. Introduced by Japanese emperor, Tenchi.
 2. Designed to make Japan's govt. like that of China's Tang dynasty.
 3. Vast land reforms placed all rice-producing land in hands of emperor.

- II. Refined Court Life During the Heian Period (A.D. 794-1185)
 - A. Nobles Gain Power over the Imperial Family
 1. Earned trust of emperor and thereby gained control of chancellorship.
 2. Married daughters to crown princes, ensuring that those who ascended to throne were grandsons.
 3. Received most of govts. High-ranking posts.
 4. Convinced emperor to give shoen (tax-free estates) as gifts to loyal nobles.
 5. Dominated emperor so that his role became almost completely ceremonial.
 - B. The Rise of the Provincial Nobles
 1. Isolated Kyoto Court life led to their rise.
 2. Provincial nobles were rugged, independent, and led private armies.
 3. Became more powerful as court nobles isolated themselves.
 4. Constantly battled with one another over control of provinces.

- III. The Rise of Feudalism and the Mongol Invasion (A.D. 1185-1333)
 - A. A Threat from Outside
 - 1. Mongol Invasions
 - a. Leader, Kublai Khan, wanted to subjugate Korea and Japan.
 - b. Sent 450 ships and 15,000 troops to Japan, but they were destroyed by typhoon.
 - c. Seven years later, sent another 150,000 troops, but they were destroyed too.
 - 2. Aftermath of Mongol Invasions
 - a. Sense of national unity developed; Japanese felt their culture was superior.
 - b. Japan reaped no spoils from war, only debts.
 - c. Unpaid samurai terrorized peasants to get money.
 - d. Kamakura shogunate driven from power by dissatisfied samurai.
 - B. Inside Japan
 - 1. Battle for Govt. Control
 - a. Taira and Minamoto clans fought for control.
 - b. Yoritomo Minamoto drove Taira from power.
 - 2. Rise of Feudalism
 - a. Under Yoritomo's rule, samurai warriors dominate Japanese society.
 - b. Samurai warriors took control of Japan's govt.
 - c. Created a Bakufu (military govt.)
 - d. Emperor acted only as religious leader of Japan.
 - C. Bakufu
 - 1. Shogun-military and political leader of Japan
 - 2. Daimyo-high-ranking samurai lords who provided shogun with warriors in exchange for land.
 - 3. Samurai-lower-ranking warriors who served their daimyo in exchange for small manors
 - 4. Peasants-lowest class, worked for their lord.

Rubric for Haiku

Assume the role of a Japanese poet during the feudal years of Japan. You are to write a Haiku based on information you have learned in class about that time period.

Contains 3 lines: 1 2 3 4 5

Five syllables in the first line: 1 2 3 4 5

Seven in the second line: 1 2 3 4 5

Five in the third line: 1 2 3 4 5

Written in present tense: 1 2 3 4 5

Uses imagery: 1 2 3 4 5

Illustrations reflect poem: 1 2 3 4 5

Neatness: 1 2 3 4 5

_____/40 points