

Arts of the Samurai



A Curriculum Packet for Educators

Asian | Education

Project Manager and “Notes to the Reader”:

Stephanie Kao, Manager of School and Teacher Programs, Asian Art Museum

Historical Overview, Image Descriptions, and Glossary:

Laura W. Allen, Ph.D., Independent Scholar

Suggested Lesson Plans and Activities:

Lessons 1–6:

Caren Gutierrez, School Programs Coordinator, Asian Art Museum; and Marilyn MacGregor, Educational Consultant, ArtSmartTalk

Lesson 7–9:

Lucy Arai, Artist and Museum Education Consultant

Further Reading and Video Bibliography:

Mamiko Nakamura, Librarian, International Department, San Francisco Main Public Library; and Lorraine Tuchfeld, Education Resource Coordinator, Asian Art Museum

Designer:

Jason Jose, Senior Graphics Designer, Asian Art Museum

Editor:

Tisha Carper Long, Independent Editor

With the assistance of:

Yoko Woodson, Ph.D., Curator of Japanese Art, Asian Art Museum; Forrest McGill, Ph.D., Chief Curator and Wattis Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art, Asian Art Museum; and Deborah Clearwaters, Director of Education and Public Programs, Asian Art Museum

The Education department would also like to extend our thanks to Kenneth Ikemoto, School Programs Associate; Cristina Lichauco, Assistant Registrar; Aino Tolme, Assistant Registrar/Photographic Services; and Jessica Kuhn, Digitization Project Assistant for their generous contributions to this packet.

Copyright © 2009 by the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco—Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture, San Francisco.

Cover art: Samurai in battle, detail of twelve battle scenes, 1600–1700. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Handscroll, ink and colors on paper. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60D90.

Lead funding for the Asian Art Museum's education programs and activities is provided by the Bank of America Foundation.

Major support provided by the Koret Foundation, Freeman Foundation, Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation, and Atsuhiko and Ina Goodwin Tateuchi Foundation.

Additional support provided by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, Louise Rosenberg & Claude Rosenberg Jr. Family Foundation, Louise M. Davies Foundation, San Francisco Foundation, Mary M. Tanenbaum Fund, Robert and Helen Odell Fund, JPMorgan Chase Foundation, Joseph R. McMicking Foundation, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, Dodge & Cox, and Bingham McCutchen.

Support for AsiaAlive is provided by the Walter & Elise Haas Fund.



Table of Contents

I Notes to the Reader

- A. Introduction
- B. Learning Outcomes
- C. The Age of the Samurai
- D. The Geography of Japan

II Historical Overview

- A. The Growth and Development of a Military Government
- B. Religious Practices of the Samurai: Pure Land and Zen Buddhism
- C. Warfare and Arms
- D. Way of the Warrior
- E. *Bu* and *Bun*: The Arts of War and Peace
- F. War Tales

III Image Descriptions

IV Suggested Classroom Lesson Plans and Activities

- A. How to Use this Curriculum

- B. Samurai as Loyal Warriors
 - Lesson 1: Map Activity: Japan's Warrior Government
 - Lesson 2: The Code of the Samurai in Art and Literature

- C. *Bu* and *Bun*: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living
 - Lesson 3: The History and Traditions of the Samurai
 - Lesson 4: Samurai as Cultivators of the Arts: *Waka* Poetry, *Noh* Theater, and Tea

- D. Samurai as Spiritual Buddhist
 - Lesson 5: The Spiritual Life of the Samurai
 - Lesson 6: Calligraphy and Ink Painting: The Art of Ink and Brush

- E. Create Your Own Samurai Identity
 - Lesson 7: Design Your Crest (*Mon*)
 - Lesson 8: Samurai on the Battlefield
 - Lesson 9: Samurai in Daily Life

V Content Standards

VI Timeline

VII Glossary

VIII Further Reading and Video Bibliography

IX CD of Images



Notes to the Reader

A. INTRODUCTION

The legends of the Japanese warrior-statesmen, referred to as the samurai, are renowned for accounts of military valor and political intrigue—epic conflicts between powerful lords, samurai vassals, and the imperial court—as well as accounts of profound self-sacrifice and loyalty. The term samurai is derived from the word *saburau*, or “one who serves.” The evolution of the samurai from mounted guards to the nobility (during the twelfth century) and their subsequent ascent to military leaders of Japan (until imperial restoration during the nineteenth century) is chronicled in distinctive warrior arts and literary tradition. Their legacy has left enduring impressions on contemporary culture, influencing modern writers (such as Yukio Mishima) and filmmakers working in widely diverse genres (such as Akira Kurosawa, George Lucas, and Sergio Leone). The samurai have been compared to the knights of Europe, and their moral philosophy of *bushido* has been likened to a code of chivalry. These simplifications, however, do not capture the social and cultural context within which the samurai rose to prominence, and then held political authority in Japan for nearly seven hundred years.

The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco invites students to learn about the historical samurai through precious art objects from the museum’s collection. These include authentic military equipment (arms and armor), paintings depicting famed conflicts, ceremonial attire, and objects created for religious and cultural pursuits strongly connected with the samurai class.

B. LEARNING OUTCOMES

In this educator packet students will:

- trace the origin and emergence of the samurai, Japan’s warrior class, from the medieval to early modern period
- examine the concepts of cultural (*bun*) and martial (*bu*) arts, and how they exemplify the warrior ideal
- explore the spread of Buddhism (Pure Land and Zen), cultural traditions (tea ceremony, paintings, ceramics, and dance), and technology (firearms) from nations overseas to the island of Japan; and how these influences were shaped by the Japanese warrior to their needs and tastes
- analyze scenes from *The Tales of the Heike* and *Chushingura*, as depicted in screen paintings and woodblock prints, and discuss how literature and its visual representation relate warrior values and codes of behavior
- investigate artworks from the Asian Art Museum’s collection: armor and weaponry, paintings and traditional costumes, and ceramics and tea utensils; and examine how they reflect beliefs and daily life of the Japanese warrior

C. THE AGE OF THE SAMURAI

The expression “Age of the Samurai” refers to the long period during which Japan was ruled by its warrior class. That age can be said to have begun with the establishment of a national military government at the end of the twelfth century. Prior to this period, local farms were owned by



Samurai in battle, detail of twelve battle scenes, 1600–1700. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Handscroll, ink and colors on paper. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60D90J.

absentee landlords—aristocrats and Buddhist monks—who lived in Kyoto, the imperial capital. To ensure their dominion over properties in remote regions, these owners employed bands of armed men, each band having a leader; these were early models for daimyo and their samurai followers. Gradually these bands evolved into militias composed of vassals (samurai) acting in the service of feudal lords. Eventually one clan conquered all of its rivals and established Japan's first national military government, the Kamakura Shogunate, in 1185. From this date to the imperial restoration (the Meiji Restoration) in 1868, Japan was led by high-ranking samurai, referred to as *daimyo*, who governed regional domains from castles spread throughout the country (*daimyo*, means, roughly, “great landholder”). The daimyo were in turn subject to the authority of a primary lord known as the shogun. While the shogun professed allegiance to the emperor (presiding over the imperial court), in essence the emperor's authority was cultural and ceremonial while the shogun exercised strict political control.

During this time, samurai were expected to adhere to the ethical code of *bushido*, or the “Way of the Warrior.” Bushido—primarily an informal system of values subject to individual interpretation

rather than an explicit set of written rules—advised warriors to live honorably by being mindful of the nearness of death. The samurai prized values such as honesty, courage, respect, self-sacrifice, self-control, compliance with duty, and loyalty. These qualities were highly regarded for promoting martial discipline and military efficiency. Over time, the samurai refined this code to more explicitly encompass their leadership roles and their corresponding civil responsibilities. In its later forms, bushido was thought to bring stability to social organization.

In all contexts, the essence of the samurai code lay in the concepts of *bun* and *bu*, or culture and martial. In their personal behavior, in society, and in politics, warriors were expected to balance their expression of these two ideas. For the individual, martial prowess was not to take the form of unbridled aggression, and civil deference was not to give way to weakness. At the level of society, political force was to be moderated with cultural activities, but force was always available to defend culture. A samurai scholar of the eighteenth century compared *bun* and *bu* to the wings of a bird, writing:

Culture and arms are like the two wings of a bird. Just as it is impossible to fly with one wing missing, if you have culture but no arms, people will slight you without fear, while if you have arms but no culture, people will be alienated by fear. Therefore, when you learn to practice both culture and arms, you demonstrate both intimidation and generosity, so people are friendly but also intimidated, and they will be obedient.

Political rule by the samurai class continued into the second half of the nineteenth century, when a series of reforms known as the Meiji Restoration (beginning in 1868) changed the way Japan was governed. Military domains were converted by newly appointed (later elected) governors into civil prefectures that remained at peace with one another. The Meiji Restoration marked the end of the Age of the Samurai.

D. THE GEOGRAPHY OF JAPAN

Part of a long archipelago off the eastern rim of the Asian continent, the island country of Japan has four main islands: Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku and Kyushu. Numerous smaller islands lie on either ends to form a sweeping arc formation that extends northeast to southwest. Japan's closest neighbors are Korea and China. In Japan's early history, the Korean Peninsula was used by travelers as a land link between Japan and the vast expanse of China. A distinctive feature of the Japanese landscape is its volcanic, mountainous terrain. More than two thirds of the land is adorned with low to steep mountains traversed by swift-flowing rivers. This unique topography contributes to a striking contrast in climate between the western coast, along the Sea of Japan, and the eastern coast, along the Pacific Ocean. The dramatic geographic features of their country have instilled in the Japanese an enduring reverence for nature, and have shaped its political history and artistic culture.





Historical Overview



Samurai in battle, detail of twelve battle scenes, 1600–1700. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Handscroll, ink and colors on paper. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60D90.

He carries himself with unshakable self-confidence, and is virtually unbeatable, a devastating duelist with superbly pure technique and a blinding-fast draw. Jin keeps firm control of himself in every possible aspect from his appearance and appetite to his level monotone voice... [he] possesses a core of deep calm, but he's a creature of fierce pride and intensity who typically kills with a single stroke. At his darkest he radiates bitter, repressed anger, and observes the world with a narrow, resentful stare; at his best, he's all a samurai should be, capable of great gentleness, courtesy, martial skill and dauntless courage.

—description of Jin, in *Samurai Champloo*, an animated TV series¹

Jin is a prime example of the “noble samurai,” a character type that recurs in countless manga (comics and graphic novels) and anime (animated films and TV shows) stories produced in Japan each year. Many of these products of modern popular culture draw inspiration from the lives of samurai, Japan's traditional warriors, whose military leaders ruled Japan from the late 1100s until the late

1800s. As they flow into the West, Japanese manga and animated tales of martial prowess offer young people outside of Japan a powerful source of information about samurai—their military skills, values, even their physical appearance. But how well does this picture of the Japanese warrior match what we know from historical sources? Are descriptions like that of the “duelist” Jin accurate, or are they incomplete? How did the role of the samurai change and develop through history? What kind of religious practices did they favor? Other than swordsmanship, what other military skills or equipment did the samurai employ? And finally, beyond their prowess as fighters, what cultural abilities did they possess? Answers to these questions may be found in the pages that follow.

A. THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY GOVERNMENT²

Origins of the Samurai

Although an emperor has reigned in Japan since ancient times, by the late 1100s powerful military leaders were challenging the power of the imperial court. From the thirteenth century on, Japan was ruled through a dual government structure. While the emperor retained cultural and religious sovereignty over the nation, the military elite during this period assumed political and economic leadership. This system of governance remained in place until the late 1800s.

Samurai (lit. “one who serves”) is the term used to refer to members of Japan’s warrior class. The origins of the samurai can be traced to the eighth and ninth centuries, when large landholdings moved into the hands of the imperial family and related members of the aristocracy (nobles). In the Heian period (794–1185), the Kyoto-based imperial court and nobles depended on the agricultural income from these landholdings, especially large private estates in northern Japan. The need to defend these distant estates from attacks by local chieftains led to the birth of the samurai. The nobles sent from the capital to govern the estates often lacked the skills and authority necessary to maintain security or provide effective administration in such remote districts, so the court appointed deputies from among the local population to assist them. Forerunners of the early samurai, these deputies built local and regional power by creating privately controlled militia known as “warrior bands.”

Starting as little more than family organizations, warrior bands were initially formed for the duration of a specific military campaign and then disbanded to allow the men to return to farming. By the eleventh century the bands were changing to groups of fighting men not necessarily connected through kinship. Power was beginning to aggregate in the hands of a few elite military families, or clans, whose regional dominance was supported by the fighting abilities of retainers and vassals. These were men bound to their lords by vows of loyalty and/or other contractual obligations, such as grants of land or income in exchange for military service.

The First Warrior Government: The Kamakura Shogunate, 1185–1333

By the late eleventh century, the Minamoto (also known as Genji) clan was recognized as the most powerful military clan in the northeastern region of Japan, having defeated several other powerful local groups. In the mid-twelfth century, the Minamoto clashed with the mighty Taira (also known as Heike) clan, which commanded an important western region including the area around Kyoto. A series of clashes, culminating in the Genpei War (1180–1185), ended with the defeat of the Taira.

The victorious Minamoto went on to establish a new, warrior-led government at Kamakura, their eastern stronghold.

In 1185 the great Minamoto leader Minamoto Yoritomo (1147–1199) was appointed *sei-i-tai* shogun (lit. “Great Barbarian-Subduing General”; abbreviated as “shogun”) by the emperor. Yoritomo established a military government, (*bakufu*: lit. “tent government”) appointing warriors to fill important regional posts as constables or military governors and land stewards. Reporting to the shogun were *daimyo* (lit. “great landholders”)—provincial landowners who led bands of warrior vassals and administered the major domains.

The Second Warrior Government: The Ashikaga Shogunate of the Muromachi Period (1338–1573)

The Kamakura shogunate was overthrown in 1333 and succeeded by the Ashikaga shogunate (1338–1573), based in Muromachi, near Kyoto. Under the Ashikaga, samurai were increasingly organized into lord–vassal hierarchies. Claiming loyalty to one lord, they adhered to a value system that promoted the virtues of honor, loyalty, and courage. As in the Kamakura period, the Ashikaga shogun was supported by direct vassals and by powerful but more independent regional *daimyo*, who administered the provinces. These regional leaders were expected to maintain order, administer justice, and ensure the delivery of taxes.

The Ashikaga shoguns were notably active in the cultural realm, amassing a prized collection of imported Chinese artworks, and leading the samurai by example in their patronage of ink painting, calligraphy, the *Noh* theater, *Kabuki*, and the “Way of Tea” (*Chado*). These practices were avidly pursued even during the years of growing disunity culminating in the Onin Civil War (1467–1477). Architectural remnants of this era include the “Golden Pavilion” of Kinkakuji temple, where the third Ashikaga shogun, Yoshimitsu (1358–1409) lived during his retirement years (only after his death was the site converted to a Buddhist temple). Covered in gold foil, the two story villa served as an elegant backdrop for the retired shogun’s cultural and leisure activities.



Kinkakuji (Temple of the Golden Pavillion), retirement villa of shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (r. 1369–1395), Kyoto. Photo by Francesco Giordano, 2006.

Later Muromachi and Warring States (1490–1600) Period: The Three Unifiers

The second half of the Muromachi period, from 1490 to 1573, saw the samurai engaged militarily in a series of wars. Called the Warring States period, these years were characterized by the rising power of regional daimyo devoted to martial skills and readiness for battle, and the waning authority of the Ashikaga shogunate. Into this power vacuum stepped a new type of warrior, powerful and ambitious men who sought to unify the country after years of civil war. Eventually three leaders rose in succession to dominate Japan: Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), and Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543–1616). Their combined efforts led to peace in the country in 1615.

During the 1500s, samurai warfare was revolutionized through the introduction of Western-style matchlock guns, introduced to Japan by Portuguese traders. With this newfound technology, the scale of battle was vastly increased. Political reforms instituted in this period included the severing of ties between samurai and their rural village communities. Soldiers could no longer work part time as farmers, and villagers were forced to disarm, breaking the power of rural groups to organize and rise against central rule.

Despite the warfare of this unstable period, the cultural interests of the samurai continued unabated. All three unifiers were involved in the sponsorship of painting, the “Way of Tea”, and theatrical arts. In addition, many of the personal possessions of the warriors, including their armor and horse-trappings, were elaborately decorated with bold designs, marking the taste and sophistication of their owners on the battlefield and at home. Powerful warlords built a succession of towering castles, which functioned both as defensive fortifications and ostentatious symbols of their military and economic might.



Portrait of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, 1599, by Seisho Shotai. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk. Gift and Purchase from the Harry G.C. Packard Collection Charitable Trust in honor of Dr. Shujiro Shimada; The Avery Brundage Collection, 1991.61.

The Third Warrior Government: the Tokugawa Shogunate of The Edo Period (1615–1868)

In September of 1600, Tokugawa Ieyasu won a decisive victory over rival daimyo factions, including supporters of Hideyoshi's heir, Hideyori. The Tokugawa military government, based in a new capital city at Edo (present-day Tokyo), achieved unparalleled control over the country, lasting more than 260 years, from 1600 to 1868. The regime's unprecedented longevity was achieved through exceptional social control over the population, including the daimyo and their vassals. From 1639 until 1868, the country's borders were closed to foreigners with the exception of a single port, Nagasaki, through which Dutch traders could operate under close supervision. For these and other reasons, the



Constructed in 1583, Osaka Castle once served as the military fortress for Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Photo by Janne Moran, 2006.

era of Tokugawa rule was a time of peace, when the warriors were increasingly called upon to fulfill bureaucratic roles.

Under the Tokugawa shogunate land taxes were based on an assessment of rice productivity. This calculation determined the allotment of daimyo domains and samurai stipends: so many bushels of rice (or the land necessary to produce them) could be granted as a reward for loyalty, or designated as an individual warrior's yearly income. In the Tokugawa system, there were about 260 daimyo domains, each with its own castle, served and protected by samurai vassals. The distribution of land to the daimyo was based on security considerations, and the government held absolute control over all appointments. For example, the shogun might appoint a loyal daimyo to oversee a restless domain. Though entrusted with the administration of their domains, the daimyo thus held no authority independent of the central government. The Tokugawa authority was strengthened by their direct control over an immense area of land surrounding the Edo capital; they also held authority over the other major urban centers. Profitable gold and silver mines also added to their power.

A further means of controlling the daimyo was the system of "alternate attendance," which required daimyo to maintain at least two residences: one in their domain and the other within the capital at Edo. The shogun mandated they spend alternate years residing in Edo. During years spent in the home domain, the daimyo were required to leave their families in the castle town of Edo, in essence as political hostages of the shogun. Costly processions back and forth from Edo, together

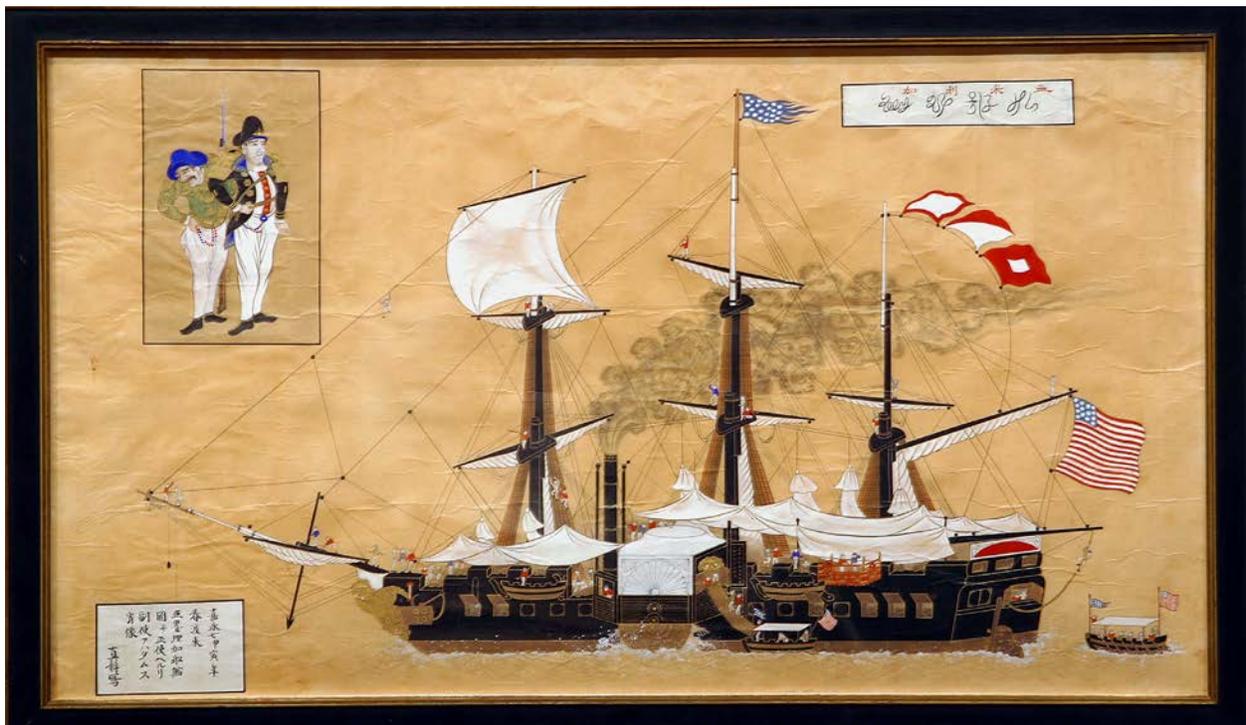


Early 20th century woodblock reproduction of Zoji Temple, from *Famous Places of the Western Capital* (Edo), 1840–1850, by Ando Hiroshige (1797–1858). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Woodblock print. Ink and colors on paper. *Gift of Dorothy D. Gregor, F2004.81.2.*

with the requirement to maintain lavish residences in each location, led to a gradual draining of the daimyo's financial resources. Ironically, in this peacetime economy, many samurai became hopelessly indebted to moneylenders and lower-ranking members of society. Throughout the long peaceful reign of the Tokugawa, warriors were transformed into civil officials, and increasingly able to focus their energies on intellectual and cultural activities.

Restoration of Imperial Authority and the End of the Warriors' Age: Meiji Period (1868–1912)

The imperial court, though technically maintaining the power to appoint the shogun, held little real military authority during the period between 1185 and 1868. In 1853, a squadron of “Black Ships” led by Commodore Matthew Perry sailed off the coast of Japan, threatening military action unless Japan ended its policy of national seclusion. This challenge to Tokugawa authority provided a pretext for influential samurai from several southwestern domains to overthrow the shogunate. In 1868, direct imperial rule was restored for the first time in almost 700 years. Although many prominent daimyo—especially those who helped to overthrow the shogunate—were invited to participate in the new government, the samurai were effectively stripped of power during the first decade of Meiji rule. They were ordered to restore their domains to the emperor, their stipends were reduced through taxation and other measures, and they were compelled to turn in their weapons. A new constitution was enacted in 1889, and the Diet—modern Japan's first legislative body—was founded. In a few short years, Japan was transformed from a feudal warrior state to a parliamentary government.



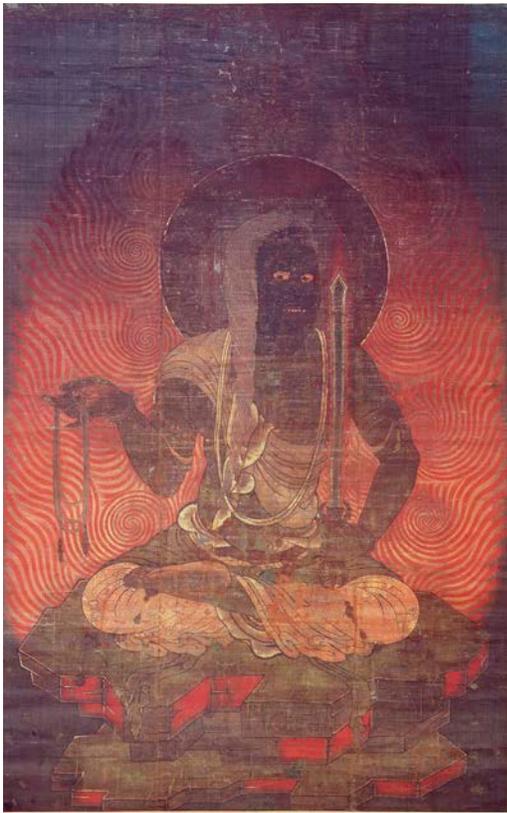
America: Depiction of an American Ship and Portraits of the First Ambassador Perry and the Deputy Ambassador Adams, 1854, by Shinsei. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Ink and colors on paper. *Asian Art Museum, bequest of Marshall Dill, F2001.23.1.*

B. RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF THE SAMURAI: PURE LAND AND ZEN BUDDHISM

Like most Japanese of their time, the samurai followed Buddhist religious teachings as well as the practices of Japan's native religion, Shinto. Buddhism originated in India, birthplace of the historical founder also known as the Buddha Shakyamuni. The main tenets of Buddhism, expounded in the Four Noble Truths preached by the Buddha, teach the origins of human suffering in desire, and offer hope of escape from suffering and the endless cycle of rebirth through pursuit of the Noble Eightfold Path. The latter is a set of guidelines for living based on principles of ethical conduct, the cultivation of wisdom, and mental discipline. In some schools of Buddhism the Buddha Shakyamuni is thought of as one buddha among many, each inhabiting a different era or part of the universe.

By the mid-sixth century, when it reached Japan, Buddhism had spread from India throughout China, Southeast Asia, and Korea. In 552, Buddhism was introduced to Japan by the ruler of a kingdom in southwest Korea. Under patronage from the Japanese emperor and nobility, hundreds of Buddhist temples were constructed in Japan throughout the Nara (645–794) and Heian (794–1185) periods. Although devotional practices varied from sect to sect, devotees typically read and chanted sacred texts, and performed ceremonies and rituals dedicated to the Buddha and other deities, including a class of compassionate intercessors known as bodhisattvas, and other more fearsome or passionate gods like Achala (Japanese: Fudo) (Image 5).

One Buddhist concept with special relevance for samurai life is that of impermanence. The opening passage of the great warrior epic *The Tales of the Heike* reflects this principle underlying the pathos of war:



The Buddhist deity Achala Vidhyaraja (Japanese: Fudo Myoo), 1200–1300. Japan. Kamakura period (1185–1333). Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B70D2.

The sound of the Gion Shoja bells echoes the impermanence of all things; the color of the *sala* flowers reveals the truth that the prosperous must decline. The proud do not endure, they are like a dream on a spring night; the mighty fall at last, they are as dust before the wind.³

When the battles recounted in the *Heike* took place (the late twelfth century), there was a new urgency to the quest for adequate responses to life's fleeting nature. Common belief held that the world had entered a period known as the Latter Day of the Buddhist Law, an age when people would be incapable of achieving salvation through adherence to Buddhist doctrine alone. In response to the anxieties of this age, a new Buddhist sect known as Pure Land rose to prominence. The term Pure Land refers to the western paradise of Amitabha, a powerful and compassionate Buddha to whom the sect was devoted. The attraction of Pure Land Buddhism lay in its reliance on a simple, expedient device for salvation: recitation of a short prayer, invoking the name of Amitabha (Image 3). Pure Land monks taught that if devotees called upon Amitabha even once with a sincere heart, they would escape rebirth and instead be welcomed to his wondrous paradise after death.

Throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, preachers traveled throughout Japan, attracting flocks of followers to Pure Land sects. The monks Honen and Ippen, two of the most prominent Pure Land leaders, were themselves of samurai descent, and many warriors were drawn to the faith along with converts from other walks of life. Evidence of samurai enthusiasm for the Pure Land sect comes from many sources, including a set of painted handscrolls dating to 1299. In this work, one illustration shows Ippen at the house of a warrior where he has just delivered a sermon; another shows him leading a group dancing and chanting prayers outside a second warrior's residence.

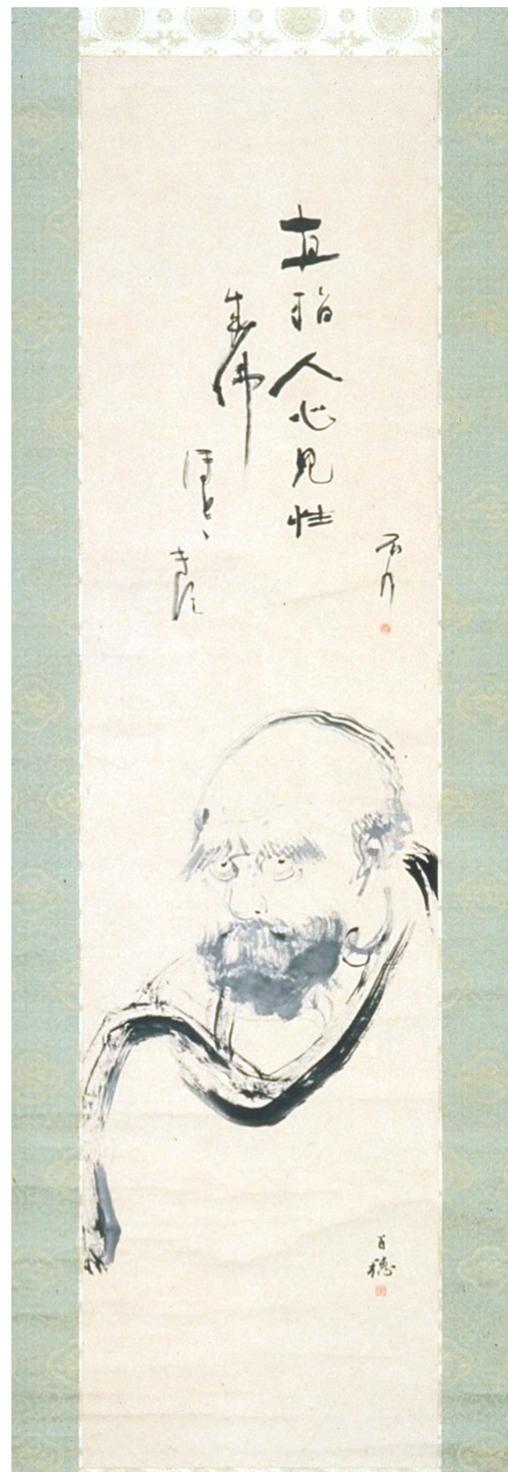
Leading lives of great fragility, never knowing when death might strike, perhaps the warriors needed faith in Buddha Amitabha more than most. According to some accounts, Pure Land monks accompanied samurai into battle in order to guide them in recitation of the name of the Buddha Amitabha (a prayer known as the *nembutsu*) should they succumb to wounds, and to pray for their successful salvation in the event of death.⁴ In a later section of this essay, a passage from the twelfth century *The Tales of the Heike* describes a warrior's final appeal to Amitabha moments before an opponent takes off his head. It appears that his fears are greatly eased by even this brief devotional act.

Another, quite different sect with many samurai adherents was Zen Buddhism. Introduced to Japan from China in the twelfth century, Zen is a form of Buddhism that stresses seated meditation and pondering of *koan*—paradoxical statements or questions—as practices leading to enlightenment. Zen’s rapid acceptance in Japan was another response to the search for religious alternatives in the Latter Day of Buddhist Law. The military leadership, based in Kamakura, was particularly welcoming to Zen, supporting the activities of Chinese and Japanese monks and sponsoring the establishment of several major temples in the east during the thirteenth century. This patronage continued throughout the period of rule by the Ashikaga shoguns, accounting for the great concentration of Zen temples in Kyoto, where their capital was located.

Describing the connection between Zen principles and samurai values, the historian Martin Collcutt writes:

With its emphasis on discipline and self-reliant effort, Zen was temperamentally suited to warriors, who on the battlefield required skill and courage. The ultimate goal of Zen is, of course, spiritual awakening and the attainment of Buddhahood, but the concentration and equanimity fostered by the practice of meditation and the directness of mind and expression called for in koan encounters were of great practical use to even the most unenlightened samurai.⁵

Many samurai practiced meditation, alone and under the tutelage of Zen monks, and the concentration required by this practice became a guiding principle for martial arts and military discipline. But Zen was also important as a conduit for many cultural activities, including the “Way of Tea” and ink painting, that were later associated with warrior life. For example, the fourth Ashikaga shogun commissioned one of the most famous Zen paintings of his age, *Catching a Catfish with a Gourd*, to illustrate a famous koan. The shogun’s deep connection to the Zen community is further demonstrated by the fact that thirty eminent Zen monks wrote inscriptions above the painting to comment on its



Dharma (Daruma), 1877–1933, by Hirafuku Hyakusui (1877–1933) with inscription by Nakamura Fusetsu (1866–1943). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868) to Meiji period (1868–1912). Hanging scroll, ink and colors on paper. Gift of Mrs. Hugh M. Williamson, 1990.4.2.

content. Other leading warriors collected Chinese ceramics and ink paintings, introduced to Japan through the Zen monasteries.

C. WARFARE AND ARMS

By far the most important items owned by the warrior were their personal arms and armor, which provided both protection in battle and a vehicle for personal display. Samurai armor and helmets evolved and improved through time to adapt to changing styles of warfare and to achieve greater efficiency in battle. But apart from their utilitarian functions, suits of armor, helmets, and swords were also objects treasured as symbols of strength, identity, and power. The shogun and daimyo often recognized service and merit by awarding loyal samurai vassals (men bound to their lords by vows of loyalty and/or other contractual obligations) with gifts of armor, helmets, and swords. Suits of armor were used for samurai burials, confiscated as the spoils of war, displayed or worn at ceremonies, and given as votive offerings to Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines.

The oldest surviving representations of Japanese armor and helmets are found among the artifacts excavated from ancient tombs (around 300–500). During this period, clay figurines (*haniwa*) placed atop burial mounds as part of mortuary rituals included soldiers wearing armor (Image 1). The design of this early military equipment was based on prototypes from China and Korea. During the 800s, as the warrior class rose to prominence, a distinctively Japanese style of armor, the *oyoroi* (lit. “great armor”) developed. Armor-makers designed this boxy style of protective gear to be worn by high-ranking warriors, who rode on horseback and used the bow and arrow and sword as weapons. The stiff and heavy body was built up of small rectangular iron or leather plates (*lames*), laced together with brilliantly colored silk cords or leather to form beautiful patterns. A divided, armored skirt, suspended from the body, armored sleeves, and shoulder, thigh, and shin guards complete the protective equipment. Helmets from this period are low bowls made from metal plates riveted together, with a hole on top for the wearer’s hair to pass through. A guard for the back and sides of the head, constructed from rows of laced plates, hangs from the base of most samurai helmets.

Foot soldiers and attendants used a spear as their main weapon, and wore lighter armor (*domaru*) constructed with a continuous, sheath-like torso. As fighting on foot and long campaigns became the norm during the 1300s, the more flexible, lighter armor was adopted by higher-ranking samurai as well. With this was worn a large, high-sided helmet lined with cloth or leather to absorb shock.

The introduction of firearms from the West after 1543 forced armor-makers to innovate. Use of guns made it necessary to develop a new type of armor, capable of sustaining the impact of musket fire. To meet this demand, armor makers experimented with different combinations of overlapping and welding larger and stronger metal pieces for protection. Lacing, which required piercing and thus weakened the metal, was partially displaced by rivets and hinges. This new type of armor, known as *tosei gusoku* (lit. “modern armor”), had many possible variations in style, including the use of a hinged metal breastplate reminiscent of a European cuirass (protective shell that includes a breastplate and backplate) (Image 5). In the same period, the helmets of high-ranking samurai were often embellished with magnificent ornaments. These distinctive devices helped the warrior to stand out among tens of thousands of enemies and allies, ensuring that his actions were visible to all (Image 6).



Dog chasing (detail), approx. 1640. Japan. Early Edo period (1615–1868). Pair of six-panel screens; ink, colors, and gold on paper. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60D1 and B60D2.

D. WAY OF THE WARRIOR

The ideal of a soldier as someone of exceptional bravery, physical prowess, and strategic brilliance appears in literary sources dating back to the Heian period (794–1185). An early example is the following account of the eleventh century warrior Minamoto Yoshiie:

[Yoshiie] was a warrior of peerless valor. He rode and shot arrows like a god. Defying naked blades, he broke through the rebels' encirclements, appearing first on their left and then on their right. With his large-headed arrows, he shot the rebel chieftains in rapid succession. He never wasted an arrow, but mortally wounded all those he attacked. Known throughout the land for his godly martial ways, Yoshiie rode like thunder and flew like the wind. The barbarians scattered and fled before Yoshiie, not one willing to confront him.⁶

To hone skills like Yoshiie's, samurai dedicated themselves to various martial arts and recreations. Chief among them was archery practice, carried out both on foot and mounted on horseback. The activity known as dog-chasing, in which mounted archers shoot heavily padded arrows at dogs within an enclosure, is just one of several martial recreations designed to facilitate aim and speed (Image 16). Training in swordsmanship and spear fighting were also essential martial arts.

Beyond his physical skills, the samurai was expected to embody good character and ethical conduct. *The Way of the Samurai*, by philosopher Yamaga Soko (1622–1685), described the samurai ideal as follows:

The business of the samurai consists in reflecting on his own station in life, in discharging loyal service to his master if he has one, in deepening his fidelity in associations with friends, and, with due consideration of his own position, in devoting himself to duty above all.⁷

A special set of values and laws guided samurai life. They emphasized loyalty to one's overlord, strict obedience to duty, honorable conduct, and the courage to face untimely death. The bond of loyalty between lord and vassal was such that it often required "fidelity even unto death."⁸ Ritual suicide (*seppuku*) was used by samurai as a means of avoiding a dishonorable death, of expressing loyalty, or to atone for a lack of judgment or deviation from duty. Warriors were expected to lead a life of austerity, temperance, and self-discipline, focused constantly on preparation for battle.

Bushido (lit. the "Way of the Warrior") is a term used for the systematic code of warrior ethics formulated during the 1600s, when an era of peace followed a century of war and turmoil. This code took on a stronger moralizing tone, combining Chinese Confucian ethics emphasizing social relationships and self-cultivation with the traditional values of the warrior class.⁹ In addition to the warrior values enumerated above, new disciplines were created which redirected the emphasis from combat readiness to self-cultivation, such as can be achieved through the modern martial arts of judo (unarmed fighting that emphasizes leveraging and throwing), aikido (unarmed fighting that stresses the redirection of the opponent's movement), and kendo (traditional Japanese fencing).

E. BU AND BUN: THE ARTS OF WAR AND PEACE

Surprisingly, perhaps, in addition to superior strategic and military ability, most elite samurai were expected to be versed in the cultural arts. The warrior's ideal balance of military and artistic skill is captured well in this description of the sixteenth century daimyo Hosokawa Yusai (1534–1610):



Noh mask, 1615–1868, by Semimaru. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Painted wood. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60S219.

Renowned for his elegant pursuits, he is a complete man combining arts [*bun*] and arms [*bu*]. A man of nobility, a descendant of the sixth grandson of the emperor Seiwa, he was a ruler endowed with awesome dignity and inspiring decorum... He built a splendid castle, which was majestic, beautiful and high... He discussed Chinese poetic styles and recited by heart the secret teachings of Japanese poetry...¹⁰

Minamoto Yoritomo, Japan's first shogun, urged warriors not to display excessive interest in court culture, yet by the late thirteenth century literary pursuits—poetic composition and reading classic Chinese and Japanese texts—were already integral parts of warrior life. By the seventeenth century, *the Regulations for Military Houses* legally required samurai to pursue such practices:

The arts of peace and war, including archery and horsemanship, should be pursued singlemindedly. From old the rule has been to practice the "arts of peace on the left hand and the arts of war on the right"; both must be mastered.¹¹



Tearoom, Koto-in, Daitokuji temple, Kyoto. Photo by Loren Madsen, 2009.

This emphasis on cultural skills grew from the samurai's need to govern lands acquired through warfare. Simply put, literacy was required to rule: to draft documents, samurai needed to have at least minimum skill in calligraphy and knowledge of literary conventions. Their ability to participate in courtly arts like classical Japanese verse (*waka*), strengthened the samurai's authority, lending dignity and prestige to warriors who frequented aristocratic circles. Like nobles, samurai often attended social gatherings where poems were recited, written, or exchanged. Samurai children were expected to prepare for life by studying Chinese and Japanese literature—as well as Confucian texts—alongside martial skills like archery or horseback riding. Poems were used to utter prayers for victory in battle, and to communicate with warriors from other regions.

Among other pastimes, high-ranking samurai were often avid connoisseurs of painting. Warrior patronage of painters and artisans advanced the visual arts throughout the period of military rule, as shoguns and daimyo vied to fill their mansions and castles with brilliantly colored screens and beautifully decorated objects for daily use. In addition to objects imported from China or pictures inspired by Chinese styles of painting, particular favorites were screens painted with scenes from famous battles, or other warrior pastimes such as falconry, horseracing, and dog chasing.

Noh theater, a traditional form of dance-drama, was another cultural activity enjoyed by the samurai (Image 19). Often drawn from classic literary sources, *Noh* plays emphasize Buddhist themes, and focus on the emotions of a main character tormented by love, anger, or grief. The warlord

Toyotomi Hideyoshi famously both studied and performed in Noh plays himself, even while in the midst of a military campaign. Noh was taken so seriously that during the Edo period (1615–1868), “every daimyo household was required to maintain a full set of robes, masks, and musical instruments for the performance of No[h]....Daimyo vied in sponsoring No[h] actors, building stages, and acquiring robes and masks.”¹²

Finally, many samurai were devoted to the “Way of Tea” (*Chado*, also known as *Chanoyu*, lit. “hot water for tea”). At its simplest, tea is a gathering during which water is heated, tea is prepared and served, and conversation flows between host and guest(s) (Image 20a). Initially warriors practiced elaborate forms of tea, at times involving huge gatherings, tea identifying contests or day-long events in which meals and sake were also served. Hideyoshi and Nobunaga, two of Japan’s most powerful warlords, were both ardent collectors of tea utensils; Nobunaga is even known to have awarded prized tea bowls to his vassals for loyal duty in battle. Under warrior patronage the tea master Sen Rikyu developed the simple, more intimate, and rustic form of tea practice that survives today in modern tea lineages.

F. WAR TALES

One of the most reliable sources of information about warriors in Japan is the body of war tales, stories chronicling the lives of warriors and their battles, written from the 900s to the 1600s. Based on real events, the war tales were embellished over time to create powerful narratives full of good storytelling, sympathetic characters, and poignant and stirring events. Itinerant singers transmitted the war tales orally, spreading stories of warriors’ loyalty, courage, and virtue throughout the country.

The Tales of the Heike is among Japan’s most celebrated war tales. It traces the rise, brief period of glory, and fall of the Taira clan (also known as the Heike clan). Set in the 1100s, *The Tales of the Heike* concerns the intrigue and battles of an era when military clans based outside the capital vied for control of the imperial government. At the heart of the story is the competition between the two most powerful military clans of the time, the Taira and the Minamoto (also known as the Genji clan).

As the story opens, the Taira maintain power over the imperial throne under the leadership of Taira no Kiyomori. Facing shifting alliances, Kiyomori begins to act with unusual ruthlessness, creating many enemies in the process. In the first chapters, the *Heike* narrator demonstrates how Kiyomori’s actions transgress the usual boundaries of honorable conduct. This section ends as Kiyomori, wracked by disease and fever, succumbs to a terrible illness. The second and third sections recount the struggle, intrigue, and finally the civil wars that ensued between the Minamoto and Taira clans after Kiyomori’s death. The tale ends with the total devastation of the Taira and the supremacy of the Minamoto, led by Minamoto Yoritomo.

The *Heike* text is permeated by an aura of melancholy, reflecting the Buddhist belief in the impermanence of worldly phenomena. This melancholy lent a special poignancy to life and engendered both heroism and a sense of tragedy in Japanese culture. The opening line of the story (quoted above, p.18), citing the tolling of a temple bell as a warning of vanity and the transitory nature of all things, sets the tone for the story to follow. The ruthless rise to power and final crushing defeat of the Taira speak not only of impermanence but also of retribution. The sins of Kiyomari are visited not only upon himself but also upon his descendants.



Battle at Awazuhara (detail of Tomoe Gozen), from *The Tales of the Heike*, 1650–1700 (detail). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Pair of six-panel screens, ink, colors, and gold on paper. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60D60+.

The value of the *Heike* lies in its character as historical narrative describing battles and political intrigues, but also in its lessons about samurai daily life, etiquette, and ethical values. The soldiers' bravery in battle and their determination to fight to the death are illustrated by this passage describing the battle at Ichi-no-tani, when the warrior Naozane faces down a powerful enemy:

Naozane pulled out the arrows that were lodged in his own armor, tossed them aside, faced the stronghold with a scowl, and shouted in a mighty voice, "I am Naozane, the man who left Kamakura last winter determined to give his life for Lord Yoritomo and bleach his bones at Ichi-no-tani. Where is Etchu no Jirobyoe [and others]? Fame depends on the adversary. It does not come from meeting just any fellow who happens along. Confront me! Confront me!"

Etchu no Jirobyoe Moritsugi was attired in his favorite garb, a blue-and-white hitatare and a suit of armor laced with red leather. He advanced slowly astride a whitish roan, his eyes fixed on Naozane. Naozane and his son did not retreat a step. Instead, they raised their swords to their foreheads and advanced at a steady walk, staying side by side to avoid being separated. Perhaps Moritsugi considered himself overmatched, for he turned back.¹³

Conspicuous in this passage is the description of Moritsugi's battle attire. Clearly a magnificent appearance was no substitute for courage, but it was important nonetheless as a material mark of warrior status. Battle etiquette is reflected in the Naozane's shouted proclamation of allegiance to Yoritomo, and in the formal presentation of his own famous name to lure his opponent into battle.

Also from the *Heike* comes an ode to a rare female warrior, Tomoe Gozen, who exemplifies the loyalty and discipline expected of both genders within the warrior class. In general, samurai women led hard lives, bound by submission to husband, husband's parents, and sons. Few served in battle, but in the *Heike*, Tomoe demonstrates strength of character, physical bravery, and determination in defense of her lover, Kiso Yoshinaka (Image 12a and 12 b). First, there comes this description:

...Tomoe was also remarkably beautiful, with white skin, long hair, and charming features. She was also a remarkably strong archer, and as a swordswoman she was a warrior worth a thousand, ready to confront a demon or god, mounted or on foot. She handled unbroken horses with superb skill; she rode unscathed down perilous descents. Whenever a battle was imminent, Yoshinaka sent her out as his first captain, equipped with strong armor, an oversized sword, and a mighty bow; and she performed more deeds of valor than any of his other warriors.¹⁴

Later, Tomoe encounters thirty horsemen under the command of the renowned warrior Onda no Moroshige. She acts decisively, and with memorable brutality:

Tomoe galloped into their midst, rode up alongside Moroshige, seized him in a powerful grip, pulled him down against the pommel of her saddle, held him motionless, twisted off his head, and threw it away. Afterward, she discarded armor and helmet and fled toward the eastern provinces.¹⁵

By the time of the *Heike*, it was customary to decapitate one's opponent, as evidence of their defeat in battle. The violence of medieval warfare is fully captured by the war tales, but there are also moments in which the dignity and nobility of the soldiers are described and their underlying spiritual beliefs revealed. For example, in this passage the Taira warrior Tadanori calls upon the Buddha Amitabha for salvation, knowing that he is about to die:

Just then, Tadazumi's page galloped up from the rear, drew his sword, and lopped off Tadanori's right arm at the elbow. Tadanori may have felt that his time had come, for he said, "Give me room for a while. I want to recite ten Buddha-invocations." He gripped Tadazumi and hurled him a bowlength away. Then he began to recite ten invocations in a loud voice, facing westward: "His light illumines all the worlds in the Ten Directions; he saves sentient beings who recite his name, he does not cast them away." Tadazumi came up behind and cut off his head before he had finished.¹⁶

The story of Tadanori's end also touches upon the marriage of culture and military skill that lay at the heart of samurai ideals:

Although Tadazumi felt certain that he had slain an important Commander-in-Chief, he did not know who he was. Observing that the other had tied a strip of paper to his quiver, he opened it and saw a poem, “On Blossoms at a Travel Lodging,” with the signature “Tadanori”:

If, journeying on/I seek shelter at nightfall beneath a tree/ might cherry blossoms become/
my host for this evening?
Thus it was that he discovered his adversary’s identity.¹⁷

In this passage from *Heike*, a more complex view of the samurai, as a man of heightened sensibilities and religious devotion, is wedded to the image of martial valor that dominates modern popular culture. As we have seen, the ideal samurai was as committed to spiritual and cultural practices as he was to military training. Prayer and poems, it would seem, were as natural to him as marksmanship, loyalty, and bravery. Returning to the world of manga and anime, we can wonder: would Jin, one of the heroes of *Samurai Champloo*, leave a poem for his opponent to find? Would he pray for salvation at the moment of his execution? Possibly not, but his real-life predecessors would have proudly done so.

Notes

- 1 Samurai Champloo Fansite, "Samurai Champloo Jin Bio," <http://www.samurai-champloo.com/samurai-champloo-jin-bio>.
- 2 Adapted from Yoko Woodson, "Emergence and Development of the Samurai," in *Lords of the Samurai* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum, 2009), 1–5.
- 3 Helen Craig McCullough, trans., *The Tale of the Heike* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1994), 23.
- 4 Dennis Hirota, trans. *No Abode: The Record of Ippen* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), xlv.
- 5 Martin Collcutt, "Zen Art in a Monastic Context: Zen and the Arts in Medieval Kenchoji," in *Awakenings. Zen Figure Painting in Medieval Japan*, ed. Yukio Lippit and Gregory Levine (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 25.
- 6 *Mutsu waki*, quoted in Paul Varley, *Warriors of Japan as Portrayed in the War Tales* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1994), 38.
- 7 Yamaga Soko, *Yamaga Soko bunshu*, quoted in Ryusaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore de Bary, and Donald Keene, editors. *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 390.
- 8 Varley, *Warriors of Japan*, 21.
- 9 Confucian ethics were developed from the writings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551 BCE – 479 BCE).
- 10 Inscription quoted in Yoshiaki Shimizu, *Japan: the Shaping of Daimyo Culture 1185–1868* (Washington DC: National Gallery, 1988), 78.
- 11 *Buke Shohatto*, quoted in Martin Collcutt, "Daimyo and daimyo culture," in Shimizu, *Japan: the Shaping of Daimyo Culture*, 37.
- 12 Collcutt, "Daimyo," 41.
- 13 McCullough, *Heike*, 307–308.
- 14 McCullough, *Heike*, 291.
- 15 McCullough, *Heike*, 292.
- 16 McCullough, *Heike*, 314.
- 17 McCullough, *Heike*, 314.



Image Descriptions

Image 1

Haniwa in the form of a warrior. Japan; excavated at Fujioka, Gunma Prefecture. Kofun period (300–552). Earthenware. *The Avery Brundage Collection, B60S204.*



What is this object? How was it made?

This object is a *haniwa* (lit. “clay ring”), a type of funerary article made during the Kofun era (300–552). Many kinds of haniwa have been found, including both simple clay cylinders and more elaborate forms, such as human figures, houses, boats, and many kinds of animals. This elaborate example represents a male warrior, about four feet tall, elevated on a high, cylindrical base. Like other haniwa, it was constructed of clay, using the coil method. The small, tubular arms were made separately and attached at the shoulder.

Where was it found?

Throughout the Kofun era, enormous burial mounds called *kofun* (lit. “old tombs”) were constructed for powerful clan chiefs. A variety of funerary objects, including metal blades, stone jewelry, and pottery vessels, were buried within the tomb mounds. Haniwa, however, were placed not inside the tomb, but instead on top of the grave mound, a visible reminder of the deceased’s presence there.

What was the function of this object?

Several explanations have been proposed for the function of haniwa. Some scholars believe that they were used to define the perimeter of a sacred enclosure, protecting the deceased and separating his world from the space of the living. Others argue that haniwa were arranged atop the tomb in order to reenact ceremonies relating to the burial, or possibly to the next ruler's succession. Historical sources from a slightly later period, such as the eighth century *Nihon shoki*, suggest that people who saw these figures standing above ancient tombs invested them with magical powers.

Warrior figures like this one provide evidence of a military class active well before the rise of the Taira and Minamoto clans in the twelfth century. The pose of this haniwa—frontal and erect, with one hand grasping the sword in readiness—suggests its role as a protector of the tomb, its inhabitant, and his successor.



Haniwa (detail; B60S204).

What kind of costume is this figure wearing? How does it relate to later military attire?

The soldier wears a hip-length tunic, billowing trousers tied below the knee, a riveted helmet, shoulder guards, high gauntlets, and a sword. The trousers, similar to those worn by contemporary northern horsemen of the Six Dynasties period (220–589) in China, reflect the influence on Japan during this period. The form of the costume loosely resembles later Japanese defensive armor, though it lacks the large, hinged upper-arm shields characteristic of medieval forms such as the “great armor” (*oyoroi*) and the lighter “corselet armor” (*domaru*).

Image 2

Battles at Ichi-no-tani and Yashima, from *The Tales of the Heike*, approx. 1650–1700. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Six-panel screen, ink and colors on gold. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B63D8+.



Battles at Ichi-no-tani and Yashima (detail; B63D8+).

What is this object? How was it used?

Painted folding screens like this one were commonly used as room dividers and decorative backdrops for ceremonial occasions. This example, probably made for a samurai patron, is decorated with scenes from a popular war tale describing the exploits of legendary warriors. The sumptuous gold leaf background seen here served a dual purpose: symbolically, it makes a statement about the samurai's wealth and power, but in practical terms it also provided a reflective surface, helping to illuminate the dark interior spaces of the castle.

What is depicted here?

The subject matter is derived from a chronicle of military history known as *The Tales of the Heike*. Written in the 1200s, *The Tales of the Heike* recounts the war between two samurai clans, the Taira (or Heike) and Minamoto (or

Genji). Imbued with the Buddhist belief in the transience of all worldly phenomena, the *Heike* focuses on the tragic and triumphant episodes leading up to the fall of the Taira clan in 1185.

This screen highlights the Minamoto assault on the Taira, who have already been routed from the capital, Kyoto, and pushed toward the sea at Yashima. The large building shown at center is the temporary Taira headquarters, where Taira soldiers hold the youthful Emperor Antoku and the imperial regalia. The Minamoto plan to attack this Taira stronghold from the rear, but first they must descend a precipitous cliff, called Ichi-no-tani, shown at top center. This famous scene illustrates the superior military strategy of the Minamoto commander, Yoshitsune, as well as the bravery of his men. First sending some rider-less horses down to test the danger of the slope, Yoshitsune leads his forces down:

The tense riders went down with their eyes closed, encouraging the horses in muffled voices. “Ei! Ei!” The feat they were accomplishing seemed beyond mortal capacity, a fit undertaking for demons.¹⁸

A second famous episode appears at the far left side of the screen, where the artist painted a horseman with a billowing red cloak riding toward the sea. Opposite him, in the water is the Minamoto soldier Atsumori, whose white cloak fills the air behind him. Kumagae Naozane, a Taira warrior, is shown waving his fan from the shore, as he calls to Atsumori to return and bravely face the enemy. The story tells us that when Atsumori rides back to shore, Kumagae realizes that his opponent is just the age of his own son, a young man of only sixteen or seventeen. He at first hesitates



Above: Battles at Ichi-no-tani and Yashima (detail; B63D8+).

Below: Battles at Ichi-no-tani and Yashima (detail; B63D8+).



to kill Atsumori, but seeing the Minamoto forces coming toward him, he decides that duty dictates he take the young man's life:

I would like to spare you," he said, restraining his tears, "but there are Minamoto warriors everywhere. You cannot possibly escape. It will be better if I kill you than someone else does it, because I will offer prayers on your behalf.¹⁹

How can you tell who is who?

The forces of the Minamoto (or Genji) fly white banners, while the Taira (or Heike) display red banners. Small rectangular labels affixed to the screen's surface are inscribed with the names of the most famous warriors.

What is the mood of this painting? What does it tell us about samurai values?

The mood is generally positive, emphasizing the warrior's nobility and bravery rather than focusing on the savagery of warfare. There is little gratuitous violence: scenes of decapitation, though a frequent feature described in the chronicle, are here kept to a minimum. In the scene of Kumagae's encounter with the young soldier Atsumori, we are shown the moment when Kumagae calls out from the shore, rather than the moment of Atsumori's death. The screen seems to present an ideal version of the samurai code of conduct, or bushido. By presenting the desirable aspects of warrior behavior in an entertaining form, the artist helped to promote these principles in an era, the Edo period (1615–1886), approximately 500 years after the *The Tales of the Heike* was written, when samurai were not often called upon to use their weapons.

18 Helen Craig McCullough, trans., *The Tales of the Heike* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1988), 311.

19 McCullough, *Heike*, 317.

Image 3

Seated Buddha Amitabha (Japanese: Amida). Japan. Heian period (794–1185). Lacquer and gold on wood. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60S10+.



Who is depicted in this sculpture? What is he doing?

Buddhism is a religion based on the teachings of a historical figure known as the Buddha Shakyamuni, who lived about 2,500 years ago. In some schools of Buddhism the Buddha Shakyamuni is thought of as one buddha among many, each inhabiting a different era or part of the universe. This sculpture shows Amitabha, identified as the Buddha of the Western Paradise. Amitabha is shown seated in deep concentration with half-closed eyes and hands held together at the lap in the gesture of meditation. He wears a simple monk's robe, draped over the shoulders, leaving the flesh of his chest and the lower part of one arm exposed. His hair arrangement, typical for Amitabha, is composed of hundreds of curls, and raised at the top in a cranial bulge that is one of the marks of the Buddha's supernatural powers.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, images of Amitabha were created in large numbers as a result of the popularity of a Buddhist sect known as Pure Land. The teachings of this sect emphasized the horrors of Buddhist hells and celebrated the glories of Amitabha's Western Paradise, also known as the Pure Land. Pure Land adherents believed that if they uttered Amitabha's name sincerely, they would achieve salvation, and be escorted to his glorious paradise after death by a retinue of gods.



Seated Buddha Amitabha (detail; B60S10+).

How was this object made?

The Amitabha is carved of wood and constructed using the “joined-wood” technique. In contrast to earlier wood sculpture carved from a single block, eleventh century sculptors developed this new technique to produce large, lightweight images. Artisans made images like this one by shaping and hollowing separate, smaller blocks of wood, then assembling the parts into one large sculpture.

There were several advantages to this technique: the finished sculpture was less likely to split because the wood core had been removed; the use of small pieces of wood required only a third of the wood needed for single-block construction; and the work could be divided into specialized steps each done by different groups of workers, a process somewhat akin to a factory assembly line. After completion, the figure was coated with lacquer and then gilded.

Why was this figure important to the samurai?

During the Kamakura period (1185–1333), proselytizing, mendicant monks spread the teachings of Pure Land Buddhism throughout Japan. Along with many commoners, warriors turned to faith in Amitabha as an expedient means of ensuring salvation. Although large-scale images like this one would not have been available on the battlefield, prayer strips inscribed with the name of Amitabha were distributed as portable reminders of his power, allaying the fears of many soldiers in combat. Pure Land monks are known to have attended warriors on the battlefield, encouraging prayer and witnessing the proper conduct of their death.

Image 4

Taming the Ox, by Sekkyakushi, active in early 1400s. Japan. Muromachi period (1333–1573). Hanging scroll, ink on paper. *Transfer from the Fine Arts Museum, Gift of Ney Wolfskill Fund, B69D46.*



What does this picture represent?

The unkempt boy in this painting is trying to control a large ox by stepping on its neck. Seizing the beast's horn, he presses the outstretched neck down with his right foot. His right hand, also pressed against the neck, holds a rope tied to the animal's nose. Minimal indications of a sloping ground plane and tree branches suggest a rustic landscape setting.

Why is this subject considered a Zen theme? Why would it have appealed to samurai?

Zen is a form of Buddhism, imported to Japan from China in the twelfth century. Zen emphasizes meditation (*zazen*) and pondering of paradoxical statements or questions (*koan*) as practices leading to enlightenment. In Zen, the metaphor of a wild, rampaging ox is used to denote the unenlightened



Taming the Ox (detail; B69D46).

thought to refer to a monk-painter active at the Tofukuji temple in Kyoto. Tofukuji was one of several Kyoto monasteries where the practice of ink painting flourished during the Muromachi period (1333–1573), and continues to this day. Zen monks practiced the art of ink painting as a spiritual exercise, as well as to provide images for contemplation. The figural themes they painted included both portraits of earlier Zen patriarchs and themes like this one, rooted in Chinese literary tradition but with subtle religious connotations.

mind, which practitioners seek to tame and control through disciplines like meditation. Thus, paintings like this one were used to represent the metaphor of “taming the mind.” Specifically, the theme comes from a set of Chinese verses known as the “Ten Oxherding Songs,” which illustrate the stages toward enlightenment. This picture relates to the fourth stage, catching the ox: “With the energy of his whole being the boy has at last taken hold of the ox. But how wild his will, how ungovernable his power!”²⁰

Many members of the samurai class practiced Zen Buddhism. The instantaneous nature of Zen enlightenment appealed to warriors, as did the discipline required by its practices.

Who was the artist? Where did he work?

The painting bears an artist’s red seal in the lower left corner, reading Sekkyakushi. An assumed name meaning “Red-legged Child,” the name is

20 D.T. Suzuki, *Manual of Zen Buddhism* (NY: Grove Press, 1960), 131.

Image 5

Suit of armor. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Black lacquered iron plates, leather, textile, and silk cord. *Gift of Mr. R.P. Schwerin, B74M7.*



What elements of this armor make it useful for a warrior?

This suit of armor is a type known as “modern equipment” (*tosei gusoku*). A full set of “modern equipment” armor consists of a body protector, helmet, and an iron mask. Less cumbersome than older armor types, this type was developed in the 1500s to maximize the soldier’s ability to move easily in battle and to protect him from musket fire, which had been recently introduced into warfare. This example includes a hinged iron cuirass (protective shell that includes a breastplate and backplate), probably derived from Western prototypes. Divided into two welded metal sections, the cuirass could easily be put on and removed; its solidity also provided superior protection. A divided skirt, suspended from the breastplate, allowed the soldier to twist, turn, or jump on his horse, while affording protection for the hips and thighs. Completing the protective gear are shoulder guards,

arm covers, thigh armor (worn under the skirt), and shin guards. Constructed from thin strips of lacquered iron joined with braided silk lacing, these parts were flexible and relatively lightweight.

Other elements of the design helped create a distinctive appearance for the soldier who wore this armor. The bright blue lacing and the running, sword-wielding figure painted on the breastplate are both eye-catching and showy. The rich materials and colors used here suggest the wealth and status of the wearer.

What materials were used in making this armor?

The breastplate is made of two large, leather-lined iron plates. Other parts are of small lacquered iron plates (lames) laced together with silk cord in parallel rows. Metal splints linked by chain cover sleeves of blue brocade fabric. Colored lacquer and *maki-e* designs executed with gold and silver powders are used for the breastplate decoration.



Suit of armor (detail; B74M7).

Who is depicted on the breastplate?

The breastplate is emblazoned with the figure of Achala (Japanese: Fudo Myoo), a popular Buddhist deity.

Achala's protective character is indicated by his sword and by the bright red flames that emanate from his body. The rope held in his left hand points to his ability to rein in evil (or round up the evildoers frightened by his sword). Here Achala is shown running through waves, a common way of referring to his protective powers. Legend has it that returning from a journey to China, the ship carrying Kukai (a legendary ninth century Buddhist monk) was caught in a storm. After appealing to a statue of Achala for protection, Kukai was rewarded with a vision of the angry god attacking the waves with his sword, calming the storm and saving the ship and its passengers.

Why was this figure popular among samurai?

Samurai identified with Achala as a guardian figure. Sometimes called "the Immovable One," Achala is also identified with a quality of steadfastness, even when in the midst of danger. His attribute of a sword and wrathful expression make him an apt symbol of the warrior spirit.

Image 6

Samurai helmet with a half-face mask, approx. 1615–1650. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Iron, leather, laminated paper, lacquer, and textile. *Gift of Dr. William A. Galeno, B87M22.*



What are the three components of armor found here?

The main element is a helmet (*kabuto*) with a two-lobed projection attached at the back of the bowl and ornamental ridges fanning out from the crest. Suspended at the back and sides is a six-tiered neck guard. Completing the assembly is a red half-mask—complete with wrinkles, teeth, and bristling facial hair—rising above a four-tiered throat guard.

Who might have worn this helmet?

High-ranking samurai from the 1500s to the 1800s wore flamboyant helmets designed and produced according to their specifications.

What is the purpose of such a helmet?

Beyond the obvious need for defense, the creation of such equipment emerged from the samurai's desire to stand out on the battlefield. A helmet's distinctive features, especially the shaped attachments that appear on many examples, identified the wearer and ensured that his actions were visible to all. Visual symbols of leadership, these helmets set apart those who were morally accountable for



Samurai helmet (detail; B87M22).

formed separately and secured with pins, allowing for removal. The high level of craftsmanship and expensive materials used here are indicative of the samurai's wealth and status; ordinary warriors would not be able to afford such protection.

battlefield decisions, according to the samurai code. They could also be used to identify warriors after death, and were part of the military regalia in which they were buried.

Some elements, such as this mask, were surely meant to intimidate opponents: the red face, aggressive expression and facial hair would create a frightening impression. Red was a color thought to ward off evil, and made the warrior resemble one of a host of powerful, red-faced deities familiar in Japanese lore.

How was this type of armor made?

The helmet bowl is made of iron, but the projections at the top appear to have been built up first with leather then with laminated paper coated with layers of dark-brown lacquer (necessary for waterproofing). The back of the helmet was finished with red lacquer, and the front was coated to resemble oxidized iron. The neck guard on this helmet consists of six horizontal iron bands, coated with lacquer and laced together with turquoise-colored silk cords. The throat guard, fastened at the lower edge of the face cover, is similarly constructed. Iron was also used for the mask, though the nose was

Image 7

Military camp jacket (*jinbaori*; front and back shown), 1700–1868. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Brocade, wool, fur, and ivory buttons. Gift by transfer from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1988.38.



How was this jacket used?

The military camp jacket (*jinbaori*) was worn over a suit of “modern equipment” or *tosei gusoku* armor, such as the one shown in Image 5. Though some jackets had sleeves, many were sleeveless vests like this one. The camp jacket offered protection from the elements, but were also personalized fashion statements; their bold patterns, rich materials, and striking color contrasts were designed to leave a memorable impression. Whether worn on the battlefield or during ceremonial occasions, the camp jacket clearly proclaimed the wearer’s status, clan affiliations, and wealth.

What materials were used to make this garment? Why are they unusual or significant?

The red exterior fabric is a type of woolen cloth treated and shrunk for a dense, felted finish. Prized for its warmth and durability, the fabric was a status symbol available only to the rich and powerful. A luxury in a country without sheep, wool fabrics had to be imported from Europe. Lining the jacket is gold brocade, and its epaulets, made of an exotic animal fur, heighten the sumptuous effect.



Military camp jacket (detail; 1988.38).

How does the design of the jacket relate to its function?

Cut away deeply under the arms, the jacket would have fit comfortably over a suit of armor. A long back vent allowed for ease of movement, especially important for a mounted warrior. Horizontally centered at the back is an embroidered family crest (*mon*), an emblem identifying the wearer to other samurai. The crest, in the form of a peony, was used by a number of military families during the Edo period.

Image 8

Stirrups (*abumi*), by Iijima Seizaemon. Japan; Hino, Goshu province. Edo period (1615–1868). Iron with silver inlay and lacquer. Gift by transfer from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, B69M51.



What is the purpose of these objects?

Stirrups like these were used to support the rider's feet while seated on horseback. During warfare, they allowed mounted samurai to stabilize position and control the horse while firing a weapon or brandishing a sword. Curving up and back in the front, they bring the loop for the leather connecting-strap over the instep, providing superior balance.

What materials were used to make these stirrups?

The stirrups are made of iron inlaid with silver linked hexagons, each containing a floral motif. The interior is red lacquer. They bear the signature of a specific artisan, one Iijima Seizaemon of Hino in Goshu (present-day Shiga Prefecture).

Who would have owned these objects?

Only high-ranking samurai could ride horses in the Edo period. Elegantly decorated stirrups were a sign of the owner's privileged position.

IMAGE 9A AND 9B

Image 9a

War fan (*gunsen*), 1800–1850. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Iron, bamboo, paper, colors, and lacquer. *Bequest of Frank D. Stout*, F1998.40.2.5



Image 9b

Signal fan (*gunbai*). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Bronze. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B62M37.



What is the function of these objects? Who might have used them?

In Japan military leaders used various implements, including flags, banners, and fans, to direct the movement of their troops. The objects shown here are a folding military fan (*gunsen*), and a signal fan (*gunbai*) whose shape suggests the cross-section of a gourd. As objects used by military leaders, they are insignia of the owner's rank.

In addition to their use in directing troops, the military fan could also afford protection from arrows, wind, or rocks, as well as shade the samurai's eyes from the sun. Fanning was thought to pacify evil spirits, but it was also of practical value, to cool the warrior during hot and humid summer months. Metal fans could also be used in combat, in parrying attacks or as a blunt weapon. Fans were also used in camp as a handheld tray for the presentation of gifts, and for certain ritual gestures.

How were they carried?

When not in use, the fans were suspended from a ring, typically attached either at the waist or breastplate.



Signal fan (*gunbai*) (detail; B62M37).

What are they made of?

The war fan is made of lacquered paper, glued to ten dark-colored bamboo ribs. Two heavy iron guards enclose and protect the fan (in ordinary fans these guards are made of bamboo or lacquered wood). The lower ends of the ribs and guards are joined with a gilded copper-alloy tube rivet, through which a cord could be passed.

The signal fan resembles a flat paper fan made for civilian use, but instead of paper it is constructed of bronze and other metals. A tasseled carrying cord is attached at one end.

How are they decorated? What does this decoration mean?

The folding fan is decorated with the design of a sun in red. Bold and simple, this design would have been visible from some distance. The bronze fan is decorated at the top with a sun and crescent moon, visible through scudding clouds. The moon and sun represent the negative (*yin*) and positive (*yang*) forces in Daoist cosmology, an important belief system consulted in planning battle strategy in China as well as Japan. Together, the moon and sun indicate the power of the cosmos; on an item such as a war fan they signify the all-encompassing military power of the owner.

Image 10

Short sword (*wakizashi*) and Long sword (*katana*) with blade mountings. Japan. Muromachi period (1333–1573). Forged and tempered steel, sharkskin, black lacquer, gold on bronze. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B64W7 and B64W8.



What were the military and symbolic significance of the long and short sword?

The sword was the most honored and important weapon for samurai. When a samurai was born, a sword was brought into the room; when he died, a sword was laid beside him, and in between those two events a samurai always slept with his sword by his pillow. Constantly at his side, it was a symbol of the warrior's physical strength, discipline, and loyalty. Its razor-sharp edge was a point of pride for warriors, allowing for quick, precise cuts and thrusts in the chaos of battle.

How were they made?

Sword making is a highly refined and respected art in Japan, part of a ritualized process requiring decades of training. To make a sword, the smith heated blocks of steel, hammering, folding, cutting, forging, and re-forging to drive out impurities and create a finely layered blade that was hard but not brittle. The folding-in of softer iron near the end of the process added resiliency, while the final tempering of the blade, which exposed the edge to the greatest heat and fastest cooling, created an exceptionally hard cutting edge. After the sword-smith had completed the blade, a grinder and polisher gave it its gleaming finish, exposing the unique structure of its razor-sharp edge.

How did sword styles change to meet the needs of the warrior?

The use of single-edge iron swords (*tachi*), dates to the sixth century. By the Kamakura era (1185–1333), tachi were being used by mounted warriors, and rivaled the bow and arrow in importance to the samurai. To improve the tachi's capability as a cutting and slashing weapon, its design was gradually altered. The long blades became tapered from the hilt to the tip; they were ridged for greater

strength; and were curved slightly at the base. To better serve the needs of foot soldiers, a shorter sword (*katana*), was developed. Curved at the tip and worn stuck into the belt (cutting edge up), the katana allowed soldiers to move unencumbered, able to draw and cut in one stroke.

In the fifteenth century, mounted samurai also came to prefer the katana, since they often dismounted for hand-to-hand combat. An even shorter companion sword called the *wakizashi* soon joined the katana in the samurai's arsenal. Worn together, the pair was known as *daisho* (big and little).

What is the significance of the sword's decorative fittings?

During the peacetime years of the Edo period (1615–1868), the daisho became a mark of status for the samurai, the only members of society allowed to wear two swords. As the sword became more symbolic than functional, the quality of the blades declined, but enthusiasm for elaborate and expensive sword fittings grew. Sword owners would own many sets of fittings, changing them to suit the occasion or season. Although elegant fittings had been made earlier, the art form reached its peak in the Edo period with richly inlaid and sculpted scenes, and patterns combining precious metals and new alloys.

IMAGE 11A AND 11B

Image 11a

Matchlock pistol (*bajozutsu*). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Iron, wood, lacquer, gold, and silver. *Gift of Dr. and Mrs. William Wedemyer, 2004.39.*



Image 11b

Matchlock gun (*teppo*). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Iron, wood, and ivory. *Gift of Dr. and Mrs. William Wedemyer, 2004.38.*



How were firearms introduced to Japan?

Guns were introduced to Japan by Portuguese adventurers who were shipwrecked near the shore of Tanegashima, a small island south of Kyushu, in 1543. Matchlock pistols and guns modeled on the imported weapons began to be made in Japan and were an important feature of battles during the 1570s and 1580s.

How did they transform warfare in Japan?

Technically the matchlock is a kind of musket, fired by mechanically touching a lighted fuse to a charge of shot and gunpowder. The matchlock's effective range was about two hundred meters,



Matchlock pistol (detail; 2004.39).

and a well-trained soldier would be able to fire four shots per minute at most. But in Japan, where bows and arrows and stone catapults had been the only projectile weapons, firearms revolutionized battle strategy. Long-range fighting came to replace close combat, and infantry superseded cavalry in importance. Oda Nobunaga's 1575 victory over Takeda Katsuyori in the Battle of Nagashino is said to have depended on firearms fired in volleys by infantrymen against a charging cavalry force.

What do the symbols on the matchlock pistol and gun represent?

Samurai could order their family crests (*mon*) inlaid into or painted on the barrel of a new gun. The pistol's barrel bears a family crest of golden stars consisting of a large, central circle surrounded by eight smaller circles. Some twenty-four samurai families used the star crest, a symbol of hope and good luck. The pistol's stock is further embellished with floral scrolls in gold and silver against a black-lacquered background.

The matchlock gun has a long octagonal iron barrel with a narrow diameter. It is decorated on the butt of the stock (where the barrel and firing mechanism attach to the gun) with a rabbit, an auspicious animal believed to be a spirit of the moon, where he abides for a thousand years.

Who might have used these weapons?

Officers and foot soldiers both used matchlock guns. The matchlock pistol was intended for use by mounted samurai, but pistols proved impractical because the rider had to ignite a piece of cord in the lock, or firing chamber, while at the same time controlling his moving horse. Nonetheless, owning a pistol remained popular as a symbol of a samurai's power, rank, and wealth.

IMAGE 12A AND 12B

Image 12a

Battle at Awazuvara, from *The Tales of the Heike*, 1650–1700. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Pair of six-panel screens, ink, colors, and gold on paper. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60D60+.



Image 12b

The First Man Across the Uji River, from *The Tales of the Heike*, 1650–1700. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Pair of six-panel screens, ink, colors, and gold on paper. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60D61+.



What are these objects?

Painted folding screens like this pair were commonly used as room dividers and decorative backdrops for ceremonial occasions. This example, probably made for a samurai patron, is decorated with scenes from a popular war tale describing the exploits of legendary warriors. The sumptuous gold leaf background seen here served a dual purpose: symbolically, it makes a statement about the samurai's wealth and power, but in practical terms it also provided a reflective surface, helping to illuminate the dark interior spaces of the castle.

What is depicted here?

The subjects are derived from a chronicle of military history known as *The Tales of the Heike*. Written in the 1200s, *The Tales of the Heike* recounts the war between two samurai clans, the Taira (or Heike) and Minamoto (or Genji). Imbued with the Buddhist belief in the transience of all living things, the *Heike* focuses on the tragic and triumphant episodes leading up to the fall of the Taira in 1185.

The right screen highlights a famous competition between two Minamoto warriors. During the course of a military campaign, the Minamoto forces came to the banks of the Uji River. Finding the river flooding and the bridge partially dismantled by the enemy their leaders debated how best to cross over. Two warriors, Kagesue and Takatsune, ride up to the river, each having decided to be the first across. As they dash forward, with Kagesue in the lead, Takatsuna shouts out, "This is the biggest river in the west. Your saddle girth looks loose; tighten it up!"²¹ With Kagesue's attention diverted, Takatsuna seizes the lead, riding across the river and ascending the opposite bank, while his rival floats downstream.



The First Man Across the Uji River (detail; B60D61+).

In the painting, five mounted samurai approach the river's edge, with Kagesue leading on a black horse, and Takatsuna calling to him from the back of a chestnut mount. At the upper right corner are the struts of the partially dismantled bridge.

The left screen of the pair illustrates an episode concerning the lone female warrior, Tomoe Gozen, featured in *The Tales of the Heike*. The heroine, Tomoe has donned armor and entered into battle to protect her beloved, Kiso Yoshinaka. On horseback, at left, she has just succeeded in pulling her enemy from his horse, which gallops away to the right, leaving a bow and helmet lying abandoned on the ground. Holding the warrior across her saddle, Tomoe prepares to cut off his head.

How do these paintings reflect samurai values?

Stories like *The Tales of the Heike* were used to glorify and romanticize the heroic deeds of earlier samurai. The rivalry between Takatsuna and Kagesue highlights military strategy and horsemanship. Tomoe, one of the few female warriors in Japanese legend, is revered as a model of loyalty, courage, and strength for acts like the one depicted here.

21 McCullough, *Heike*, 287.

Image 13

Scene from *The Storehouse of Loyalty* (*Chushingura*), 1806, by Hokusai (1760–1849). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Woodblock print, ink and colors on paper. Gift of Japanese Prints from the Collection of Emmeline Johnson, Donated by Oliver and Elizabeth Johnson, 1994.45.



What is depicted here?

The men climbing the roof of this snow-covered building are disenfranchised samurai (*ronin*) bent on exacting revenge for the death of their lord. Drawn from a popular narrative known as the *Chushingura* (*The Storehouse of Loyalty*), the story was based on historical events that occurred in the early eighteenth century.

The former samurais' grievance originates when their master, Asano Naganori, is ordered to the palace to receive instruction from an official, Kira Yoshinaka. Goaded by Kira into drawing his sword, Asano lightly wounds the official. For the capital offence of drawing his sword at the palace, Asano is ordered to commit ritual suicide (*seppuku*) by disembowelment, while Kira goes free. Upon his death, Asano's lands are confiscated, and the forty-seven samurai who served him are dismissed, becoming ronin (masterless samurai).

In an act of loyalty to avenge their master's death, the men go under cover, spending almost two years carefully plotting their vendetta. They eventually meet to attack Kira's mansion on a snowy, moonlit night. The scene shown here is the moment before they discover Kira, hiding in a shed behind a bundle of firewood. After taking him prisoner, the ronin decapitate Kira and parade his severed head through the streets of the capital. The tale ends with the ronin turning themselves in;

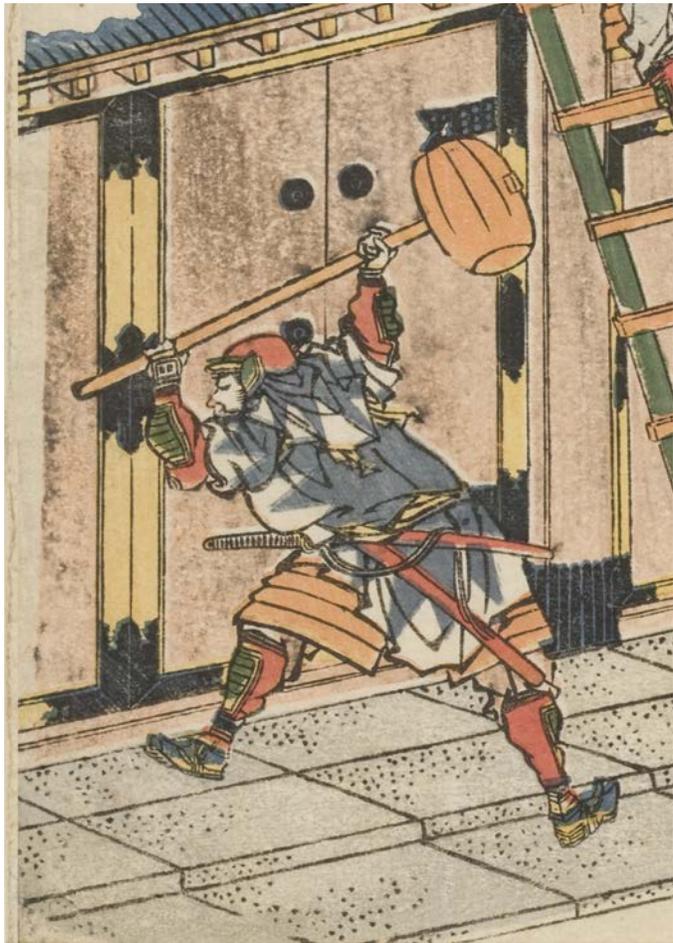
they are sentenced to death by the authorities, but are allowed to take their own lives (seppuku), an honorable death according to the warrior code of Japan.

What technique was used to make this object?

Artists like Hokusai created hand-colored designs for print publishers, who then supervised teams of highly skilled artisans to manufacture woodblock prints for public sale. Separate blocks of cherry wood were carved for the outlines and each color used in the design, then a sheet of paper applied to each inked block in succession to create the print—a match for the original drawing. Most late Edo prints were made in large editions and sold in shops and by street vendors for a small sum of money. This print came from series of eleven sheets, each illustrating a scene from one act of a Kabuki play based on the story of the forty-seven ronin.

Who might have owned this object?

Immensely popular, the *Chushingura* story was fictionalized for puppet and Kabuki dramas by the late 1740's. The publisher probably intended this print for sale to common people familiar with the story from the Kabuki theater, rather than samurai. The existence of such prints attests to widespread enthusiasm for the exploits of the famous samurai, and the dispersion of the samurai code of loyalty throughout the urban population.



Scene from *The Storehouse of Loyalty* (detail; 1994.45).

Image 14

Himeji Castle. Japan; Hyogo Prefecture, 1601–1609. Momoyama period (1573–1615). *Photo by Deborah Clearwaters, 2000.*



What is this structure? How is it suited for defensive purposes?

Himeji Castle is among the finest surviving examples of the defensive structures built in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as samurai strongholds and symbols of power. Typically located atop a hill, the multi-storied castle keep (tower) allowed the warlords of this era a commanding view of the surrounding terrain. Raised on massive stone foundations that repel attack, the castle has thick plaster walls not easily penetrated by enemy musket fire or arrows. Himeji is surrounded by three moats and a labyrinth of paths which lead visitors through a series of dead-ends and gated entryways, allowing the occupants of the castle to trap and defeat intruders.

Yet the castle's purpose goes beyond mere defense. As the historian Martin Collcutt writes, "Each of these castles was at once a fortress, center of local rule, palatial residence, and node of cultural activity."²²

What kind of statement did a building like this make about its occupant?

The towering castle keep of Himeji was visible from a great distance, a tangible symbol of its occupant's power and wealth. Construction of such castles was a massive undertaking, requiring immense funds and the ability to mobilize thousands of laborers. At the same time, many castles were burned to the ground during war, despite their heavy fortifications. The warlord Oda Nobunaga spent several years planning and building a magnificent castle at Azuchi. It was destroyed soon after his assassination in 1582.

During the peaceful years of the Edo period, the population of the capital lived within sight of the shogun's castle. Regional lords (*daimyo*) were required by the military government to maintain castle-residences in their home fiefs. Several different daimyo had control of Himeji Castle following its construction, in its present form, in 1601. It has never been used in battle.

How does the castle reflect cultural aspects of samurai life?

Japanese castles were often lavishly decorated, their public and private spaces lined with brilliantly colored paintings. Screens with opulent gold leaf backgrounds were made to help illuminate otherwise dim castle interiors, as well as to impress visitors. Many castles had spaces set aside for special tearooms, used by samurai practitioners of the "Way of Tea" (*Chado* or *Chanoyu*). They were also equipped with stages for Noh and dance performances, so that the samurai might enjoy these pastimes even when far from the capital.

22 Martin Collcutt, "Daimyo and daimyo culture," in Yoshiaki Shimizu, *The Shaping of Daimyo Culture 1185–1868* (Washington, DC: National Gallery, 1988), 27.

IMAGE 15A AND 15B

Image 15a

Palanquin, 1800–1868. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Lacquer, gold and mother of pearl on wood, and metal. *Gift of Norma C. and Jack D. Tomlinson, B85M7.*



What is this object used for?

In the Edo period (1615–1868), when upper-ranking samurai and their families traveled even a short distance, they were conveyed in sumptuous palanquins like this one. From four to six men —two or three each in front and back—carried a single passenger, seated inside the compartment. Each servant supported the long pole at the top of the palanquin on one shoulder as he walked, while the occupant sat inside reading, writing, or just watching the countryside pass by.

What is it made of?

The palanquin is constructed of wood, with metal fittings for the separate wood crossbeam attached to the roof of the passenger compartment. An elaborate decorative scheme combines carved and gilded wood elements, silver metal fittings, and decoration in black and colored lacquer with gold and silver *maki-e*, a technique in which powdered metals are applied to the surface to form a pictorial design. The entire exterior and interior are decorated with lotus flowers and leaves, the pole with celestial beings flying through clouds.

What does its design and decoration tell us about how it was used?

Widening toward the base, the compartment provides a flat, stable surface for loading and unloading passengers. The hinged doors fold back, and could be left open during the journey—for ventilation and so that the occupant could enjoy the view. Shuttered windows on the front and back are hung with bamboo blinds that could be lowered for further privacy, while still allowing air to circulate inside.

Lotuses and celestial beings, the primary decorative motifs, may indicate that the owner was a devotee of Pure Land Buddhism. According to Pure Land belief, devotees will be transported upon death to Amitabha's Pure Land paradise on a lotus pedestal, surrounded by a retinue of compassionate bodhisattvas and celestial beings. Lotuses also are a Buddhist symbol of purity, as a flower that famously rises from mud with a pristine bloom.

For whom was this object made?

Palanquins were used to transport high-ranking samurai between their home domains and the capital city, Edo, throughout the Edo period (1615–1868). The governmental policy known as “alternate attendance” (*sankin kotai*) required the daimyo to mount lavish processions to transport goods and personnel during these annual migrations to and from Edo.

Image 15b

Traveling chest, 1800–1868. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Lacquer and gold on wood; metal fittings, locks, and handles. *Gift of Norma C. and Jack D. Tomlinson, 1991.127.*



What is this object used for?

This large chest was used for storing garments while traveling. Affixed to the front and back are U-shaped metal handles used to carry the box; a porter would insert a wooden pole through the handle, and balance the box's weight on his bent upper back. Such boxes were part of the personal equipment of high-ranking samurai, who used them to transport their possessions during the annual migrations to and from Edo required by the system of "alternate attendance."

What is it made of?

Solidly constructed of wood, the chest is strengthened by metal fittings at all corners. There are also two metal lock plates and locks, in addition to the U-shaped handles. The exterior is covered with black lacquer and decorated in the *maki-e* technique, in which powdered metals such as gold and silver are applied to the lacquered surface to form pictorial designs.

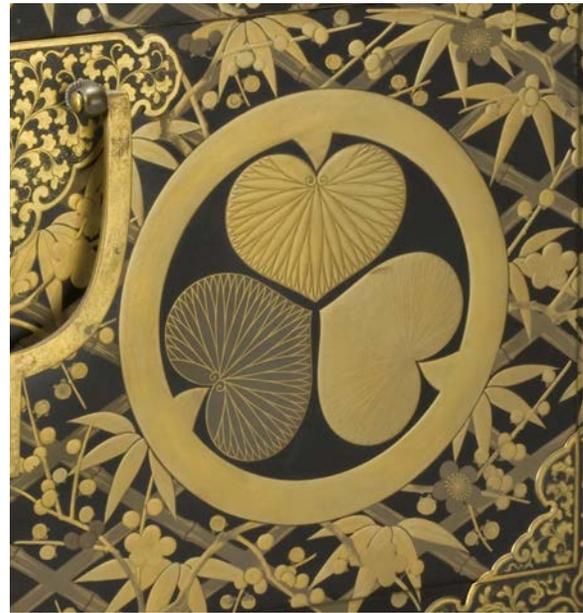
What do the motifs on this object represent?

Surrounded by bamboo leaves and plum blossoms on a latticework pattern are large round crests (*mon*) composed of three hollyhock leaves within a gold ring. Members of the Tokugawa family,

which ruled Japan from 1615 to 1868, had exclusive rights to the hollyhock crest. Bamboo and plum blossoms are traditional seasonal motifs; along with other auspicious emblems like pine trees, they symbolize wealth, happiness, and prosperity.

Why would this object be valued by the samurai?

The bold hollyhock *mon* emblazoned on this chest mark it as the property of a Tokugawa family member. Easily visible by passersby along the route, along with other samurai regalia such as banners, the chest was a symbol of the wealth and sophistication of the ruling clan. It had an important practical function as well: protecting the costly garments necessary for official business during what must have been long, dusty, or wet journeys. The increasingly bureaucratic role of the samurai during the Edo period necessitated the use of such expensive “luggage” during travel.



Traveling chest (detail; 1991.127).

Image 16

Dog chasing (*inuoumono*), approx. 1640. Japan. Early Edo period (1615–1868). Pair of six-panel screens; ink, colors, and gold on paper.
The Avery Brundage Collection, B60D1 and B60D2.



What activity is taking place here?

Dog chasing was one of three archery drills popular during the Edo period (1615–1868). Originally an exercise to improve martial skills, it became a formal sport with defined rules as early as the fourteenth century.

The right-hand screen represents an early stage of the game. Around a circle formed by a heavy rope laid on the ground, archers wait for a dog to be released. The

archers wear a special costume, which includes a hat, sword, and fur chaps. Two additional groups of seventeen archers each are lined up along the fence on either side of the field.

The rules of the game stipulate that when the dog passes over the rope it may be shot with heavily padded arrows, only in the torso, with hits on the head or limbs counting as errors with penalty points. If the dog escapes without being hit, the archers may pursue it into the outer field, as shown in the left-hand screen. The archer's skill and accuracy was judged according to the accuracy of his hits (each had three arrows) and the length of the ensuing chase.



Dog chasing (detail; B60D2).

What is the relationship of this activity to samurai life? Who are the people watching the spectacle?

By its very nature, dog chasing required great equestrian and archery skills, making it the domain of the samurai class. First mentioned in a historical account dating to the early thirteenth century, dog chasing gained importance in the Kamakura period (1185–1333) as a means of honing the skills of the newly dominant warrior class. It remained popular throughout the Muromachi period (1333–1568), but in the late sixteenth century, fewer dog chases were held as samurai became occupied with civil wars instead of martial sports.

When peace returned and the Edo shogunate restored traditional festivals, the Shimazu clan of Satsuma Province organized a dog chasing event in 1646. The popularity of the game quickly revived, and it soon began to attract crowds of townspeople who regarded it as lively entertainment. In addition to samurai, the viewers' stands in these screens are filled with spectators from all walks of life—housewives, children, monks, Shinto priests, nuns, and doctors.

Who would have owned a screen like this?

Given the subject matter and expense of this elaborate pair of gold-ground screens, the owner was likely to have been a wealthy samurai, perhaps a particular fan of the dog chasing event. By the seventeenth century when this screen was made, ritualized displays of martial prowess like dog chasing had come to replace real military experience for many samurai.

Image 17

Archery practice, by Shibayama Hirotoyo (1673–1723). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B65D2.



What is happening in this picture?

Under a cherry tree in full bloom, a mounted archer takes aim at a round paper target held by a running servant. One of several forms of archery practice formalized as early as the Kamakura period (1185–1333), this activity trained warriors to shoot accurately at moving targets while riding at a full gallop. The red fence beneath the cherry tree suggests that the event takes place on the grounds of a Shinto shrine, the usual setting for *yabusame*, a form of religious exercise or sport performed in a shrine precinct by mounted warriors.

Why is the mounted figure not dressed as a warrior?

Instead of armor, the archer wears the soft silk tunic, or hunting robe, over a red silk underrobe and loose-fitting pants. On his head he wears a tall, lacquered cap. These elements identify him as a member of the imperial guard, lower-ranking noblemen of the Heian period (894–1185) whose largely ceremonial function was to protect the emperor and his family. A precursor to medieval samurai, the imperial guard's training in archery and other military skills provided a basis for later practices developed under the leadership of the first shogun Minamoto Yoritomo (1147–1199) and others in the early Kamakura period (1185–1333).

What is the writing at the right side of the picture?

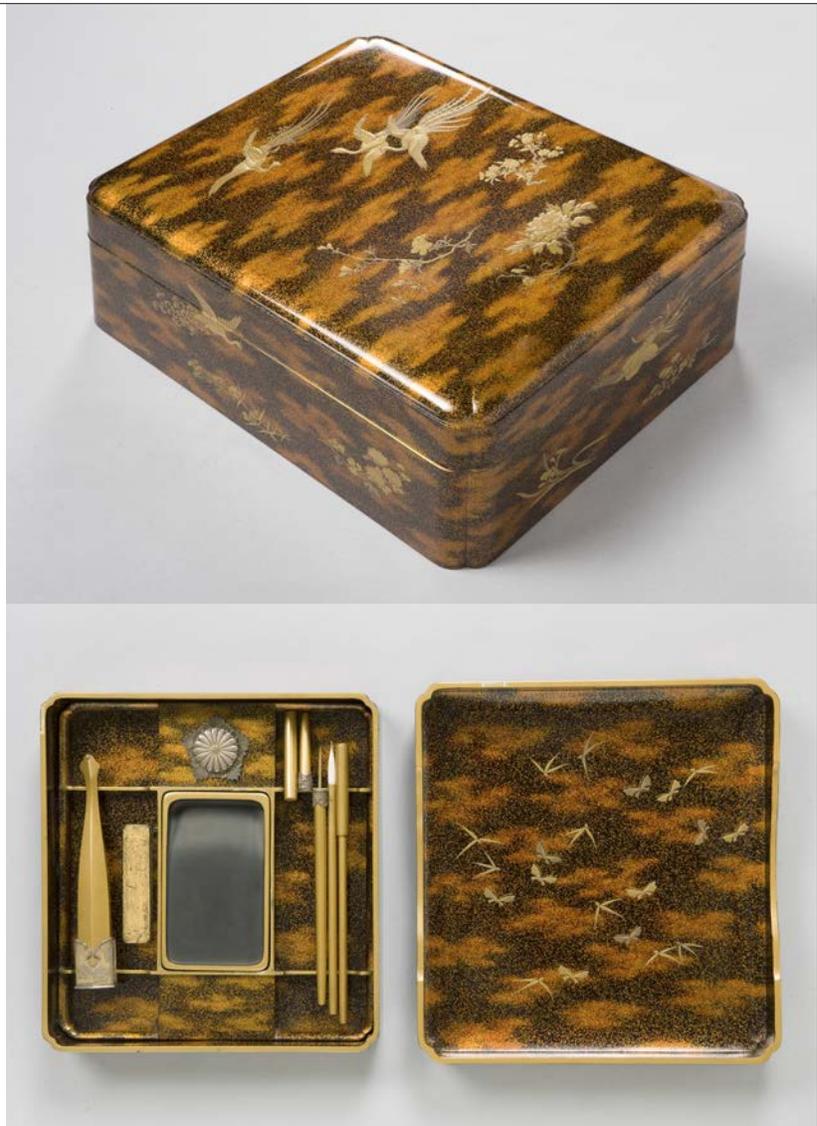
Written at the far right is a four-line verse in the style of classical court poetry, or waka, which celebrates the skill of the mounted archer. By including a poem in this way, the artist points to the balance of *bu* and *bun*—the military and cultural arts—that was expected of every Japanese warrior.



Yabusame demonstration, Camp Fuji Martial Arts Expo 2008, Photo by pict_u_re, 2008.

Image 18

Writing box (*suzuribako*), 1800–1900.
Japan. Edo period (1615–1868) to Meiji
period (1868–1912). Gold, silver, and
lacquer on wood. *The Avery Brundage
Collection*, B75M1b.



What is this object?

This traditional Japanese writing box was made to hold a set of implements for calligraphy. Within the box is a rectangular black ink stone. Above the stone is a silver water dropper, fashioned as a chrysanthemum head. The dropper could be removed and filled with water; a tiny opening at the edge allowed the calligrapher to wet the stone's surface in a controlled manner. To the right of the stone is an ink stick, made of fine soot bound with glue (the stick shown here is unusually elegant, covered with gilt and paper designs). Liquid ink is created by rubbing the stick's tip lightly on the moistened stone, using a circular motion and adding water to dilute the ink as necessary. At the far right side of the box is a lacquered ink stick holder, and on the left side is a set of three writing brushes with covers.

How was it made? What does its decoration signify?

The box is constructed of wood coated with black lacquer. Lacquer is a natural resin obtained from the sap of the East Asian lacquer tree. Refined and applied to wood and other materials, it was used to waterproof or decorate furniture and utensils such as tables, garment and stationery boxes, trays, plates, bowls, chopsticks, and sake servers.

The main technique for decorating lacquered objects involves sprinkling finely ground gold powder over a design drawn in black lacquer, while the lacquer is still wet. This is called *maki-e*, literally “sprinkling gold.” Decorating the box lid are three mythical birds separated by floral sprays. As birds that live forever, the mythical birds are auspicious symbols representing longevity or immortality.

How might samurai use these objects?

Samurai used luxuriously decorated writing boxes like this one for personal correspondence, writing poems, or calligraphy practice. Their use demonstrates the importance of bun, or cultural knowledge, in balancing the warrior’s martial activities.



Writing box (detail; B75M1b).

Image 19

Noh robe with design of butterflies, pampas grass, and clouds, 1800–1868. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Silk with gold. Acquisition made possible in part by John Jago Trelawney in memory of his aunt, Sally Benfield of San Francisco, the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation with additional funding from Mr. and Mrs. Richard C. Mesker, Sr., Hok Pui and Sally Yu Leung and Mr. and Mrs. Robert L. Kreuzberger, 2003.10.



What type of garment is this? When would it have been worn?

This silk robe was part of the costume worn by a male actor during the performance of a *Noh* drama. *Noh* plays have been performed in Japan since the fourteenth century. The plots, often drawn from classic literary sources like *The Tale of Genji* and *The Tales of the Heike*, emphasize Buddhist themes and often focus on the emotions of a main character tormented by love, anger, or grief. Performances take place on a simple, even austere stage. They typically feature a single principal character, sometimes accompanied by two secondary players.

Slow moving and stately, the *Noh* performance combines music, dance, and acting with stylized, precisely choreographed movements used to symbolically convey the character's emotions. Gorgeous costumes like this one helped to express in a visual way the spirit and essence of the play, when worn by the main actor together with a painted wooden mask.

What are the main features of the robe's decoration? What do the decorative motifs found here mean?

Called *karahori*, or "Chinese weave," the fabric of this robe was made using an imported technique of weaving metallic threads into heavy silk. This luxurious technique was used primarily for the costumes of female characters (all the parts in *Noh* are traditionally played by men). The background pattern consists of large, alternating blocks of two colors, created by dyeing the warp threads (length-wise threads on a loom) in bands of blue and red, then matching the weft threads (crosswise threads



Noh robe (detail; 2003.10).

that weave up and over the warp threads) to each color. While weaving, glittering gold thread was worked into the ground to create a repeated pattern of clouds. Floating on the surface in colored silk thread are colorful butterflies of various sizes, flitting among tall pampas grasses.

The decoration of this robe suggests that it may have been made for the role of the butterfly in the Noh drama by the same name. In the play, the butterfly, which has taken the form of a beautiful woman, meets a traveling priest in Kyoto. She expresses regret to the priest that though many flowers welcome her advances, the plum blossoms of early spring have so far eluded her.

The butterfly motif also has other literary connotations, of which samurai viewers might well have been aware. It alludes to a famous chapter from *The Tale of Genji*, titled “Butterflies,” and to the swallowtail butterfly as the medieval crest of the Taira clan, whose battles with the Minamoto are described in *The Tales of the Heike* (Image 2). In general, butterflies were associated with magic and immortality, but could also be considered spirits of the dead.

How does this object relate to samurai culture?

Since the fourteenth century, samurai were the primary patrons of Noh. Wealthy samurai often bestowed sumptuous robes like this one on favored Noh actors as rewards for outstanding performances. The Momoyama era (1573–1615) warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi was one “passionate enthusiast” of Noh who sponsored plays, gave gifts to actors, and even performed the leading role in plays written to record his conquests and activities. The Noh robe is emblematic of the varied cultural phenomena that flourished under samurai patronage.

IMAGE 20A AND 20B

Image 20a

Tea master Sen Soshitsu XV prepares tea at the opening of the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, 2003. Photo by Kazuhiro Tsuruta.



Image 20b

Tea bowl with crane design, approx. 1603. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Glazed stoneware; Hagi ware. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B72P17.



Who is the man in the picture? What is he doing?

Sen Soshitsu is the fifteenth generation head of the Urasenke tradition which provides instruction in the “Way of Tea” (*Chado*; also known as *Chanoyu*, literally “hot water for tea”). He has written that this practice, though often called the “tea ceremony,” is not really a ceremony or ritual at all, but a way of life based on the simple act of serving tea with a pure heart. Beyond its spiritual aspect, the “Way of Tea” allows participants to interact with other people, with nature, and with the environment on a basic, satisfying level.

The photograph shows Sen Soshitsu preparing tea at an event to mark the Asian Art Museum’s re-opening in 2003. He is seated in a special tearoom installed in the museum’s Japanese art gallery, having just ladled hot water from an iron kettle that is heating on a brazier recessed into the floor. He pours the hot water in a steady stream from a bamboo ladle into the tea bowl set before him on the mat. The utensils he uses and his carefully choreographed actions are both aspects of the practice that can be traced directly to the influential sixteenth century tea master Sen Rikyu (1522–1591). Sen Rikyu taught the way of tea to several samurai lords of his day.



Tea bowl (detail; B72P17).

What is the object in the second picture? How was it used?

The tea bowl is one of the most important utensils used in a tea gathering. A small quantity of powdered green tea is first removed from a tea container and placed into the bottom of the bowl. Water is added and the powdered tea and water are then blended together to form a bright green beverage, and the host presents the warm bowl of tea to his guest for drinking. After drinking the tea the guest carefully examines the tea bowl and the guest might comment on the bowl’s design, age, and beauty. For example, the crane decorating this bowl is an auspicious symbol associated with longevity and marital fidelity. Like most tea bowls, this one is made of clay, and has a soft, slightly pitted surface and ridged sides meant to rest comfortably in the drinker’s hands.

What does this object tell us about the role of culture in samurai life?

By the sixteenth century, the “Way of Tea” was wildly popular within samurai society, as one of the cultural practices (*bun*) encouraged as a counterweight to military training (*bu*). Hideyoshi and Nobunaga, two of the great Momoyama era (1573–1615) warlords, were both ardent students of tea and collectors of tea bowls and other utensils. Nobunaga is even known to have awarded prized tea bowls to his vassals for meritorious duty in battle. It was their patronage of the tea master Sen Rikyu that led to his preeminence at the end of the sixteenth century.

Rikyu favored simple, unadorned objects like this bowl as an expression of a kind of refined rusticity. Surprisingly, perhaps, the samurai valued this humble aesthetic even at a time when other art forms, such as painting, clothing, and even armor design showed a taste for flamboyant, bold, and colorful decoration made even more lavish with gold ornamentation.



**Suggested
Classroom Lesson
Plans and Activities**

HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

Addressing the Standards

The lessons in this packet are designed to supplement your history–social science, language arts, and visual arts curriculum. Each lesson reinforces the content standards, and provides the opportunity to use primary source material to better understand the people, cultures, and ideas of the past.

For further information on the content standards addressed in each lesson, please see the Standards Chart on page 117–120, or you may contact the Education department at the Asian Art Museum at schools@asianart.org.

Differentiating Instruction for Your Students

You may adapt each lesson to accommodate the reading level of your students. Suggestions include: reading the image descriptions aloud and completing the study questions as a whole group, dividing your class into small groups and assigning each group one or more study questions to complete, or assigning all study questions as independent work for each student. Extension activities are also included which promote additional in-depth research and writing opportunities.

Format

The lessons in this packet are organized thematically and may be taught individually or as a comprehensive unit. Each lesson is designed to take one to two class periods to complete. Lessons begin with a classroom discussion using objects from the Asian Art Museum’s collection, followed by an activity or study questions which may be used as an assessment tool or to spark further research.

SAMURAI AS LOYAL WARRIORS

Lesson 1: Map Activity: Japan’s Warrior Government

Lesson 2: The Code of the Samurai in Art and Literature

BUN AND BU: BALANCING MILITARY PROWESS AND ARTFUL LIVING

Lesson 3: The History and Traditions of the Samurai

Lesson 4: Samurai as Cultivators of the Arts: *Waka* Poetry, *Noh* Theater, and Tea

SAMURAI AS SPIRITUAL BUDDHIST

Lesson 5: The Spiritual Life of the Samurai

Lesson 6: Calligraphy and Ink Painting: The Art of Ink and Brush

CREATE YOUR OWN SAMURAI IDENTITY

Lesson 7: Design Your Crest (*Mon*)

Lesson 8: Samurai on the Battlefield

Lesson 9: Samurai in Daily Life

Samurai as Loyal Warriors

LESSON 1: MAP ACTIVITY: JAPAN'S WARRIOR GOVERNMENT

Objectives:

Students will complete a map of Japan, identify how its proximity to China and Korea influenced samurai culture, and discuss how its geography informed governing policies.

Materials:

Images and accompanying descriptions:

- Seated Buddha Amitabha (Image 3)
- *Taming the Ox* (Image 4)
- Matchlock pistol (Image 11a)
- Palanquin and Traveling chest (Images 15a and 15b)

Map of Japan

Teacher's Answer Key— Map Activity: Japan's Warrior Government

Student worksheet:

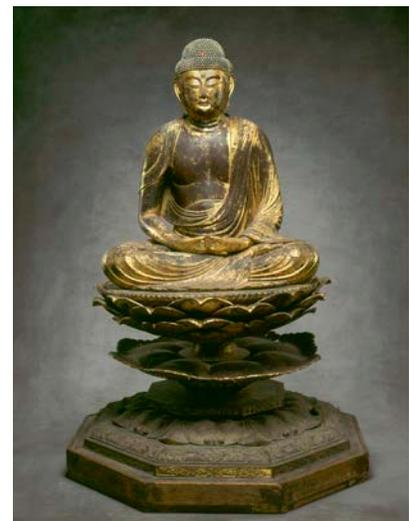
Map Activity: Japan's Warrior Government

Procedure:

1. Show the *Map of Japan*. Ask students to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living on an island.
 - a. (sea trade, could control degree of isolation)
 - Explain that the proximity of Korea and China to Japan influenced Japanese art and culture.
2. Discuss the influence of Korea on Japan such as Buddhism.

Seated Buddha Amitabha (Image 3)

 - What religion was widely practiced by samurai?
 - a. (Buddhism came to Japan through Korea during the middle of the sixth century.)
 - b. (It grew in popularity during the Kamakura period (1185–1333).)
 - c. (This religion may have appealed to warriors because of the belief that everyone could attain immediate salvation. This belief comforted them in battle.)



Seated Buddha Amitabha (Japanese: Amida). Japan. Heian period (794–1185). Lacquer and gold on wood. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60S10+.

- Discuss the influence of China on Japan such as Zen Buddhism, ink painting, tea, crests.

Taming the Ox (Image 4)

- Japan also studied Chinese ideas including philosophy and religion. Zen may have appealed to the warriors because it taught that one could achieve instantaneous enlightenment. One Zen tradition used a form of meditation that focuses on studying paradoxical questions or comments known as koan.
- What is going on in this picture? How might this illustrate a Buddhist lesson?
 - (Metaphor for controlling one's mind to achieve enlightenment.)
- Ink and brush paintings from China, like the image *Taming the Ox*, were collected by the wealthy elite in Japan, and were a respected art form studied and practiced by daimyo and their samurai, as well as by monks. Other objects and ideas that came from China include tea, horses, and the idea of creating a clan crest to denote identity.



Taming the Ox, by Sekkyakushi, active in early 1400s. Japan. Muromachi period (1333–1573). Hanging scroll, ink on paper. Transfer from the Fine Arts Museum, *Gift of Ney Wolfskill Fund*, B69D46.

- Show the *Map of Japan*. Ask students to describe the topography. Explain that because of Japan's mountainous terrain, the emperor, and later, the shoguns relied on a lord–vassal system to maintain centralized control.

- Although the imperial capital remained in Kyoto, the Minamoto clan (Genji) moved their political capital to Kamakura (1192–1333). Hence, this period is usually called the Kamakura period.
- The Ashikaga clan moved the capital to the Muromachi area of Kyoto. This period is often called the Muromachi period (1336–1573).
- The Tokugawa clan moved the capital to Edo (present day Tokyo). This is often called the Edo period (1615–1867).

- Discuss the influence of trade and guns on Japan.

Matchlock pistol (Image 11a)

- Up until the 1500s, Japan was involved with trade and exchange with Europe and the rest of Asia. During the 1500s, the Portuguese introduced the gun. How do you think that the introduction of firearms influenced the shogun and daimyo's ability to maintain control?
 - (Threatened the stability of the power hierarchy, leading Japan to close off its borders except for the port at Nagasaki.)
- If you were the shogun, would you enforce gun control? Why or why not?



Matchlock pistol (*bajozutsu*). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Iron, wood, lacquer, gold, and silver. *Gift of Dr. and Mrs. William Wedemeyer*, 2004.39.

- During the Edo period, the Tokugawa shogun also wanted to prevent rival families from usurping his power. The Tokugawa shogun divided up the land among daimyo who had supported him, and insisted that every other year, the daimyo, his samurai, and their families live in the capital at Edo. The daimyo were required to travel from their region to Edo in a ceremonial procession.
- What do you think it was like to take this trip? There were no trains, cars, or busses. Imagine what it was like to travel such a long distance on foot.

6. Explore the ways a shogun maintained a centralized government.
Palanquin and Traveling chest (Image 15a and 15b)



Palanquin, 1800–1868. Japan. Edo Period (1615–1868). Lacquer, gold and mother of pearl on wood, and metal. *Gift of Norma C. and Jack D. Tomlinson, B85M7.*

- Some women would get to ride in this palanquin instead of walking. Why do you think the Shogun insisted that daimyo, their families, and their retinue travel to the capital in such elaborate processions?
 - a. (One theory is that this expense was another way that the shogun prevented the daimyo from acquiring too much wealth, and subsequently, power.)
- Warrior clans also signified their position when traveling by displaying their clan's crest, a *mon*. The chest both holds the family crest of the Tokugawa family.
 - The mon is a symbol made up of stylized geometric forms based on nature.
 - Samurai were identified by the mon of the daimyo they served.
 - The concept of a mon was also imported from China centuries ago.
 - The mon would be placed on weapons, armor, banners, and clothing.
 - Today, Japanese families register their mon at city hall. With the mon, many families can trace their lineage back into hundreds of years of history.

7. Complete the student worksheet *Map Activity: Japan's Warrior Government*.

Further Research

Why was the material and intellectual culture in Japan so heavily influenced by China and Korea prior to the establishment of the shogunate? What else was appropriated from China and Korea into Japanese culture? What aspects of Japanese culture influenced Korea and China?

Samurai as Loyal Warriors

LESSON 1: MAP ACTIVITY: JAPAN'S WARRIOR GOVERNMENT

Map of Japan



LESSON 1: MAP ACTIVITY: JAPAN'S WARRIOR GOVERNMENT

Teacher's Answer Key



Samurai as Loyal Warriors

Name: _____

Date: _____

LESSON 1: MAP ACTIVITY: JAPAN'S WARRIOR GOVERNMENT

Label the map of Japan:

- China, Korea, and Japan
- Write each of the following imported ideas and goods on their country of origin. Draw arrows from each country to Japan.
- Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, guns, horses, tea, ink painting, mon
- Put a chrysanthemum in circle by the imperial capital, Kyoto.
- Label the political capitals dates for each warrior government: Kamakura (Minamoto), Muromachi area of Kyoto (Ashikaga), and Edo (Tokugawa).
- Draw arrows from Kamakura to Muromachi and Muromachi to Edo, illustrating the movement of the military capitals.



Samurai as Loyal Warriors

LESSON 2: THE CODE OF THE SAMURAI IN ART AND LITERATURE

Objectives:

Students will view representations of literary epics, read related excerpts, and discuss how those scenes exemplify the code of the samurai.

Materials:

Images and accompanying descriptions for each student or group:

Screen Painting Battles at Ichi-no-tani and Yashima, from *The Tales of the Heike* (Image 2)

Battle at Awazuhara and The First Man Across the Uji River, from *The Tales of the Heike* (Image 12a and 12b)

Scene from *The Storehouse of Loyalty* (Image 13)

Student Worksheet:

The Code of the Samurai in Art and Literature

Procedure

1. Provide each student with *The Code of the Samurai in Art and Literature*. Ask students to brainstorm characteristics of samurai behavior.
 - a. (courage, loyalty, honor, military skill)
2. Show Battles at Ichi-no-tani and Yashima from *The Tales of the Heike* (Image 2). Ask the students to describe what they see. Summarize the *Tales of the Heike*. See image descriptions and contextual essay for an overview. Then, ask the following questions:
 - Why might this story have been popular on screens in the home of a daimyo or samurai?
 - a. (gold adds light, screen could divide room)
 - How do you think this screen might have looked and functioned in the context of a room?
 - a. (The screen painting was purposely made to look very beautiful, with rich colors and a gold background. Some samurai lords wished to appear wealthy, so they commissioned paintings that would project status and wealth.)
 - What do we learn about samurai behavior from the story as it is shown in the painting?
 - a. (courage, discipline, loyalty, acts of heroism, appreciation of beauty)
 - What do we NOT see about war in the painting?
 - a. (blood, graphic death)



Battles at Ichi-no-tani and Yashima, from *The Tales of the Heike*, approx. 1650–1700. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Six-panel screen, ink and colors on gold. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B63D8+.

- Have students add supporting evidence of samurai behavior from the artwork and description of *The Tales of the Heike* to their worksheet.
3. Show Battle at Awazuhara and The First Man Across the Uji River, from *The Tales of the Heike* (Image 12a and 12b).
 - Have students observe if other models of samurai behavior are evident in Battle at Awazuhara and The First Man Across the Uji River from *The Tales of the Heike*.
 - Have students read the excerpt about Tomoe Gozen from *The Tales of the Heike* and look closely at the detail in the screen painting Battle at Awazuhara.
 - Discuss how Tomoe's story exemplifies the code of the samurai. Add examples to the student worksheet.
 4. Show the *Scene from The Storehouse of Loyalty* (Image 13).
 - Have students read the excerpt from *Chushingura* and view *Scene from The Storehouse of Loyalty*. Have students complete their worksheets.
 - Discuss the action of the figures in the painting.
 - Discuss the concept of *ronin*, or masterless samurai. Samurai felt great honor and loyalty to their master. The story of *Chushingura* tells about a group of samurai who lost their master and avenged his death. Look at the picture and read the accompanying excerpt from *Chushingura*.



Top (Image 12a):
Battle at Awazuhara, from *The Tales of the Heike*, 1650–1700. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Pair of six-panel screens, ink, colors, and gold on paper. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60D60+.

Bottom (Image 12b):
The First Man Across the Uji River, from *The Tales of the Heike*, 1650–1700. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Pair of six-panel screens, ink, colors, and gold on paper. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60D61+.



Scene from *The Storehouse of Loyalty* (*Chushingura*), 1806. By Hokusai (1760–1849). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Woodblock print, ink and colors on paper. *Gift of Japanese Prints from the Collection of Emmeline Johnson, Donated by Oliver and Elizabeth Johnson, 1994.45.*

- How does the action of the men in this print, which shows such a story, express the deep loyalty that dishonored samurai would have felt?
 - a. (angry faces, raised weapons)
- How do their actions reflect the code of the samurai?
 - a. (acting as a group, showing loyalty and obedience to a leader)

Further Research:

Find examples from other primary sources, such as Miyamoto Musashi's *Book of Five Rings*, that state how samurai should behave. Then, find a filmmaker or artist who has been inspired by samurai. Compare and contrast the literary descriptions with examples of how samurai are represented in popular culture. Consider themes such as group loyalty versus the lone hero. Take a position and write a persuasive essay arguing why your example is successful or unsuccessful at representing samurai with historical accuracy. Possible sources are: films by Quentin Tarantino, Akira Kurosawa, etc; *The Last Samurai*; *Samurai Champloo*; *Ronin*.

Samurai as Loyal Warriors

Name: _____ Date: _____

LESSON 2: STUDENT WORKSHEET: THE CODE OF THE SAMURAI IN ART AND LITERATURE

Samurai were expected to follow a code of behavior, *bushido*, or the “Way of the Warrior.” The samurai prized virtues such as honesty, courage, generosity, respect, self-sacrifice, self-control, compliance with duty, and loyalty. The code of the samurai was thought to bring balance and stability to society. Find examples of these virtues in art and literature.

Art Work	Samurai Behavior	Examples in Art and Literature
Battles at Ichi-no-tani and Yashima, from <i>The Tales of the Heike</i> (Image 2)		
Battle at Awazuhara and The First Man Across the Uji River, from <i>The Tales of the Heike</i> (Image 12a and 12b)		
Scene from <i>The Storehouse of Loyalty</i>		

Samurai as Loyal Warriors

LESSON 2: THE CODE OF THE SAMURAI IN ART AND LITERATURE: *THE TALES OF THE HEIKE*



Battle at Awazuhara, from *The Tales of the Heike*, 1650–1700 (detail). Japan; Edo period (1615–1868). Pair of six-panel screens, ink, colors, and gold on paper. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B60D60+.

Tomoe was especially beautiful, with white skin, long hair, and charming features. She was also a remarkably strong archer, and as a swordswoman she was a warrior worth a thousand, ready to confront a demon or a god, mounted or on foot. She handled unbroken horses with superb skill; she rode unscathed down perilous descents. Whenever a battle was imminent, Yoshinaka sent her out as his first captain, equipped with strong armor, an oversized sword, and a mighty bow; and she preformed more deeds of valor than any of his other warriors. (291)

–Helen McCullough, *The Tale of the Heike*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988, 291.

Samurai as Loyal Warriors

LESSON 2: THE CODE OF THE SAMURAI IN ART AND LITERATURE: *THE TALE OF THE FORTY-SEVEN RONIN (CHUSHINGURA)*



Scene from *The Storehouse of Loyalty* (*Chushingura*), 1806, by Hokusai (1760–1849). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Woodblock print, ink and colors on paper. Gift of Japanese Prints from the Collection of Emmeline Johnson, Donated by Oliver and Elizabeth Johnson, 1994.45.

The attacking parties at front and back gates make final arrangements at the same time, and two fearless men, Yazama and Senzaki, creep up to the front gate to observe conditions inside. They hear a distant sound of clappers, no doubt the night watchman's, and, judging this to be the opportune moment, they lean against the high wall and join ladders they have kept in readiness. Nimble as spiders, they race up the wall, as though headed for the clouds, and soon reach the roof. The sound of the clappers is now near at hand as they lightly leap down on the other side. The watchman, catching sight of them, runs up with a shout of "Who's there?" They grab the man and force him down to the ground, then bind him at wrists and elbows....(p. 173)

–Donald Keene, *Chushingura: The Treasury of Loyal Retainers*,
New York: Columbia University Press, 1971, 173.

Bun and Bu: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living

LESSON 3: THE HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF THE SAMURAI

Objectives:

Students will use images of samurai armor and weaponry to learn related vocabulary. They will describe the functional and aesthetic aspects of armor through focused viewing and reading, and they will draw conclusions about the changing code of the samurai over the course of 800 years.

Materials:

Images and accompanying descriptions for each student or group:

- Helmet with half-face mask (Image 6)
- Short sword and long sword (Image 10)
- Matchlock pistol (Image 11)
- Military camp jacket (Image 7)
- Suit of armor (Image 5)
- War fans (Image 9a and 9b)

Theoretical Hierarchy of the Warrior State

Paper to create fans

Student worksheets:

Key Vocabulary

Samurai Military Gear (adapted from Asian Art Museum label copy, 2009)

Line Drawing of Samurai Armor

Procedure:

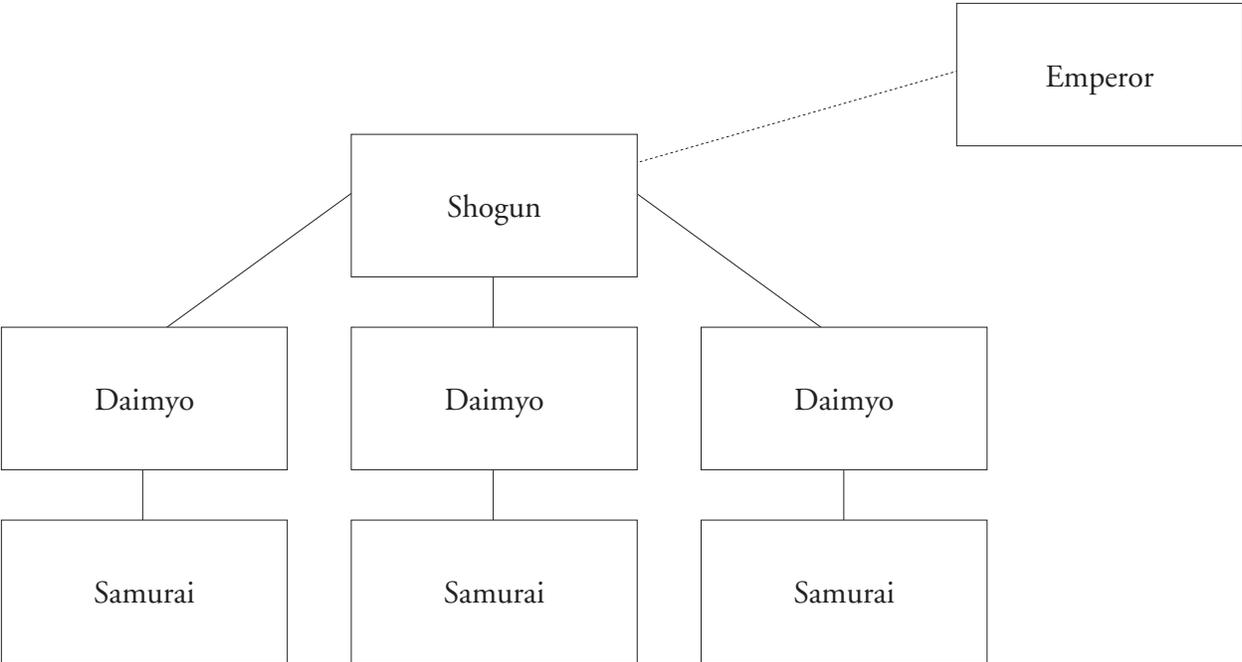
1. Show the worksheet *Theoretical Hierarchy of the Warrior State*. Review the relationships between the shogun, emperor, daimyo, and samurai.
2. Ask students to complete the *Key Vocabulary* and *Samurai Military Gear* worksheets. Review as a class.
3. Show War fans (Image 9a and 9b).
 - Look carefully at the two types of fans and speculate how these might have been used in war.
4. Have students make a fan out of a single sheet of ordinary paper and then try using it in as many ways as they can (cool off, hide facial expressions, point). If you were a warrior and your fan was made of hard metal, how could it be useful? Tell students that the fans are made of hard materials including bronze and iron.
 - How does this information changes their ideas about how these fans might have been used?
 - What role do the decorations on the fans play? Would the red sun design be visible at a distance, helping your warriors to identify you? If so, how could it help you in battle?
 - The fans could also be used as a tray to hold objects such as gifts in ceremonies. The decorations on one of the fans show a sun and moon behind clouds, a reference to a system of reading the sky for good omens for battle. How could the decoration on this fan be helpful to the warriors in a symbolic way?

5. Have students discuss how the aesthetic and functional aspects are melded into the fan.
6. Summarize that daimyo and their samurai valued the military arts equally with the cultural arts. This value is evident in the integration of beauty and design into the function of the Samurai's military gear.

Bun and Bu: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living

LESSON 3: THE HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF THE SAMURAI

Theoretical Hierarchy of the Warrior State



Bun and Bu: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living

LESSON 3: THE HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF THE SAMURAI

Name: _____ Date: _____

Draw a line connecting the key vocabulary word with its corresponding definition.

Bu	leader of the warrior order, delegated by the emperor to rule the country
Palanquin	“Lord of the Samurai” – reports to the shogun, during much of the period ruled over local areas with samurai vassals
Ronin	hierarchical system of social and political organization, divided into ruling, warrior, and farming classes
Shogun	lower level of samurai reporting to daimyo
Bun	central precept of the Samurai code – “Arms” – the destructive force, balanced by Bun
Vassals	central precept of the Samurai code – “Culture” – the constructive force, balanced by Bu
Daimyo	masterless samurai
Warrior Government	rickshaw carried by people

Bun and Bu: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living

LESSON 3: THE HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF THE SAMURAI

Samurai Military Gear: Swords

Although usually made for battle, armor and weapons were mostly used for ceremonial and symbolic purposes. The types of weapons that samurai were permitted to carry depended on their status and role. Look at the following samurai arms and armor and read the description to answer the questions. Use the accompanying image descriptions for further information.

In early periods foot soldiers used lances, while mounted samurai carried bows and arrows, spears, and long swords slung blade down from the belt. In the Edo period (1615–1868), the sword slung from the belt continued to be worn by daimyo and high-ranking samurai. The key symbol of the samurai during this time was a sword worn tucked with the blade facing up into the belt. Only members of the samurai class were allowed to wear this type of sword. It was often paired with a shorter sword, as seen here.



Short Sword (*wakizashi*) and Long Sword (*katana*) with blade mountings. Japan. Muromachi period (1333–1573). Forged and tempered steel, sharkskin, black lacquer, gold on bronze. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B64W7 and B64W8.

Q. The samurai's sword was a work of art as well as a highly effective weapon. How did the design of the sword and the use of it in battle allow a warrior to satisfy the code of the samurai?

Bun and Bu: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living

LESSON 3: THE HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF THE SAMURAI

Samurai Military Gear: Guns



Matchlock pistol (*bajozusui*). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Iron, wood, lacquer, gold, and silver. *Gift of Dr. and Mrs. William Wedemeyer, 2004.39.*

A major change in weaponry took place around 1543 when the Portuguese brought the matchlock gun to Japan. The introduction of firearms resulted in developments in both armor and architecture that could withstand gunfire. The gun proved very difficult to use, especially when trying to shoot from horseback. The matchlock pistol could only shoot four bullets per minute, and samurai would have to lock and load in between each shot. Imagine how difficult it must have been to load a gun and shoot with precision on a galloping horse.

Q. How and when did the gun become part of the weaponry of the warrior?

Q. Why do you think the samurai continued to use swords when guns were available?

Bun and Bu: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living

LESSON 3: THE HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF THE SAMURAI

Samurai Military Gear: Armor



Suit of armor. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Black lacquered iron plates, leather, textile, and silk cord. *Gift of Mr. R.P. Schwerin, B74M7.*

Samurai helmet with a half-face mask, approx. 1615–1650. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Iron, leather, laminated paper, lacquer, and textile. *Gift of Dr. William A. Galeno, B87M22.*

Samurai armor was made in several styles and was constructed chiefly of leather and small iron plates. The plates were layered to form horizontal tiers, to which lacquer was then applied, making the armor strong and waterproof. Sections were laced together with thick, colorful silk cord.

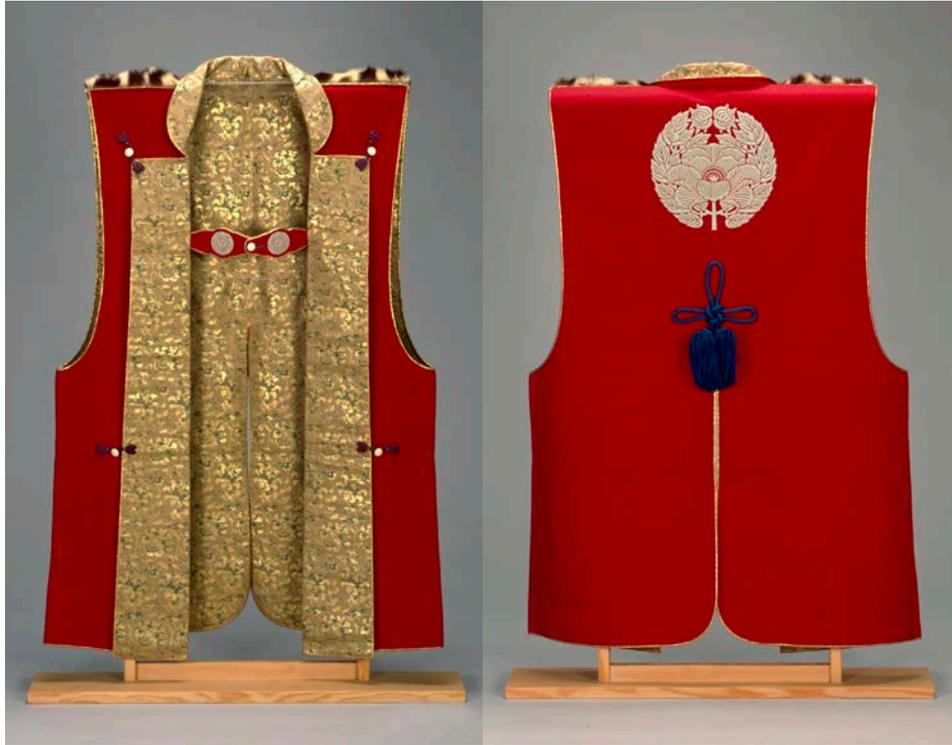
Samurai armor evolved along with military tactics and weapons. Early types were suitable for fighting on horseback but too heavy for foot soldiers. By the late 1600s, lightweight suits of armor covering the whole body were the fashion, however, daimyo continued to wear earlier types of armor as symbols of status during ceremonies.

Q. How would you feel if you were wearing the helmet with the mask and armor during battle?
Give examples of how the armor and helmet integrate beauty and design with function.

Bun and Bu: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living

LESSON 3: THE HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF THE SAMURAI

Samurai Military Gear: Camp Jacket



Military camp jacket (*jinbaori*; front and back shown), 1700–1868. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Brocade, wool, fur, and ivory buttons. *Gift by transfer from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1988.3.*

The military jacket was worn over a suit of armor. It offered protection from the elements, but was also a fashion statement. Its bold patterns, rich materials, and striking color contrasts were designed to leave a memorable impression on enemies. The military jacket spoke volumes about the wearer's rank, identity and wealth.

Q. This jacket is from the Edo period (1615–1868) when the role of the samurai was often ceremonial rather than military. How does this jacket reflect this peaceful time in the history of the samurai?



War fan (*Gunsen*), 1800–1850. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Iron, bamboo, paper, colors, and lacquer. *Bequest of Frank D. Stout*, F1998.40.2.5.



War fan (*Gunbai*). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Bronze. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B62M37.

Bun and Bu: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living

LESSON 3: THE HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF THE SAMURAI

Samurai Military Gear (Some Possible Responses)

1. Swords: The samurai's sword was a work of art as well as a highly effective weapon. How did the design of the sword and the use of it in battle allow a warrior to satisfy the code of the samurai?
 - a. (beautiful materials, carefully crafted – close personal combat requiring courage and heroic behavior)

2. Guns: How and when did the gun become part of the weaponry of the warrior? (from the Portuguese in 1543) What would have been different for a warrior in battle with a sword against a warrior with a gun?
 - a. (a sword requires close combat)
 - Why do you think they continued to use swords?
 - a. (guns took long to load and it was difficult to hit a target on a moving horse)

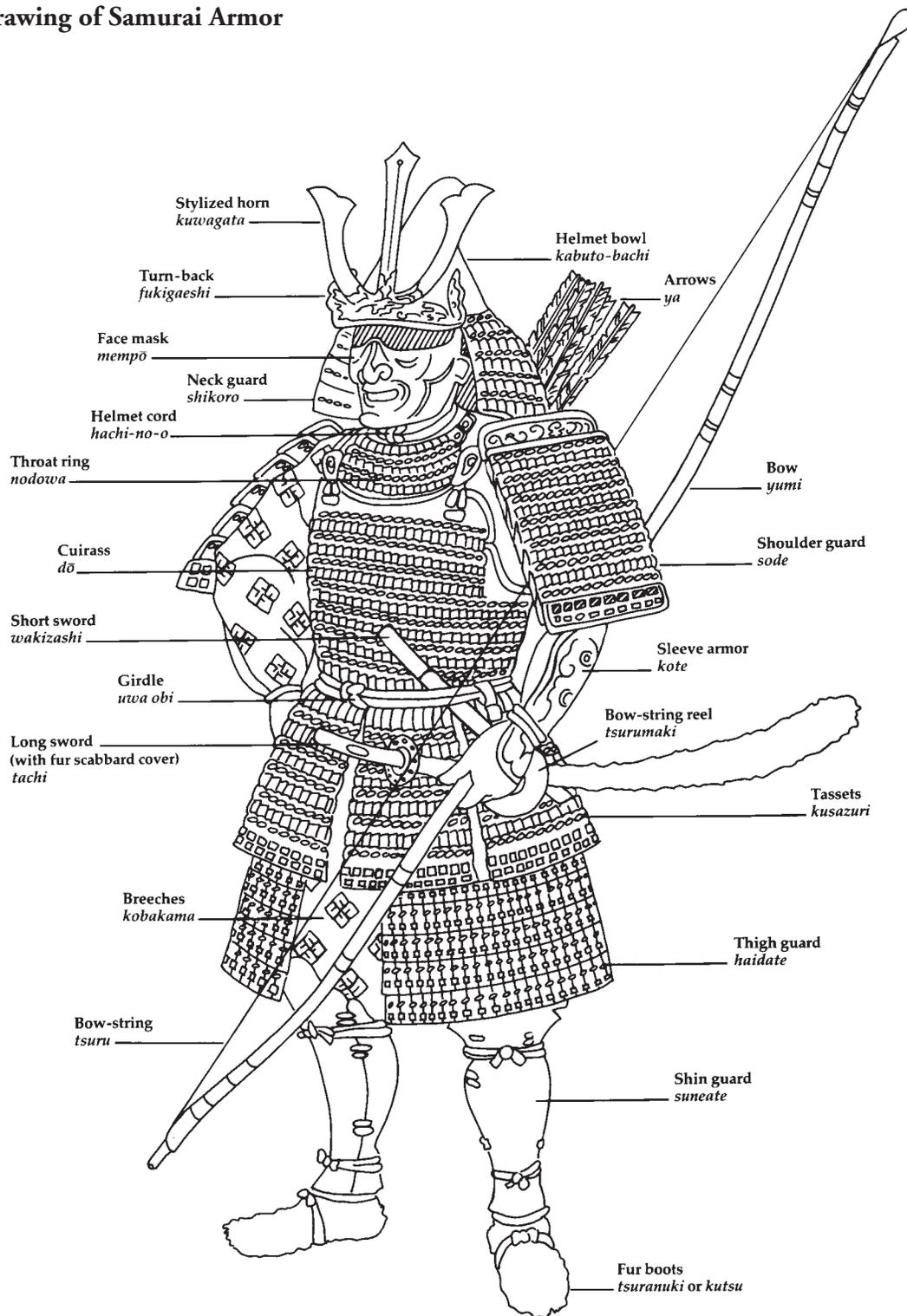
3. Armor: How would you feel if you were wearing the helmet with the mask during battle? How would the shape and design of this mask make you stand out in battle among many other warriors?
 - a. (portrait-like features, high projection at the back, fierce red color, added hair moustache)

4. Camp Jacket: As with the mask, not every soldier could wear a jacket made and of such valuable materials as this one. This jacket is from the Edo period (1615–1868) when the role of the samurai was often ceremonial rather than military. How does this jacket, made to be worn over armor, reflect this peaceful time in the history of the samurai?
 - a. (more fashion than protection, rich, luxurious materials, showy, decorative for decoration's own sake)

Bun and Bu: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living

LESSON 3: THE HISTORY AND TRADITIONS OF THE SAMURAI

Line Drawing of Samurai Armor



Bun and Bu: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living

LESSON 4: SAMURAI AS CULTIVATORS OF THE ARTS: WAKA POETRY, NOH THEATER, AND TEA



Writing box (*suzuribako*). Japan, 1800–1900. Edo period (1615–1868). Gold, silver, and lacquer on wood. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B75M1b.

Objectives:

Students will learn the significance of balancing the military and cultural arts and write their own *waka* poem.

Materials:

Images and accompanying descriptions:

- Archery practice scroll (Image 17)
- Dog chasing (*inuoumono*) screen (Image 16)
- Tea bowl (Image 20b)
- Noh robe (Image 19)
- Writing utensils (Image 18)

Student Worksheet:

Create a Waka Poem

Procedure:

1. Read the following quote from the seventeenth century text, *Buke Shohatto (Regulations for Military Houses)* “The arts of peace and war, including archery and horsemanship, should be pursued single mindedly. From old the rule has been to practice the arts of peace on the left hand and the arts of war on the right; both must be mastered.” What does this quote tell you about the code of the samurai? Review the concepts of *bu* and *bun*.

2. Describe how the cultural arts practiced by the samurai were often based on the same concepts as the military arts: self-discipline, loyalty, honor, self-cultivation, spirituality, and humility. Daimyo and their samurai practiced and were patrons of poetry, ceramics, *Noh* theater, ink painting, and the “Way of Tea” (*Chado*).
3. Show the images of the screen of the archery drill known as “dog chasing.” Have the class look carefully at the image and talk about what they see. Read “What activity is taking place?” from the image description.
 - a. (You may want to mention that the arrows were heavily padded and weren’t intended to harm the dogs.)
4. The screen painting shows a scene based on an earlier time, when the activity shown was a way to develop important military skills. Why would this subject still be important during the peaceful Edo period when there wasn’t as much need for warriors to fight battles?
 - a. (honors traditions of the samurai, requires a show of skill and discipline without the risks of war)
 - The screen is elegant, with a gold background that indicates it was made for a wealthy patron, probably a high-ranking samurai. Notice the people in the stands?
 - a. (common people, form of popular entertainment)
5. Show the image of the scroll *Archery practice*. Ask students to describe what they see and speculate about the skill it would take to shoot an arrow at the target from a spirited, moving horse. Ask how this training could help them on the battlefield. Then, ask them to explain how this scroll is an example of *bu* and *bun*. There is a *waka* poem written at the right side, and a red fence that indicates that the scene takes place near a Shinto shrine. How do all the elements of the scene (the skill of the horseman, the poem, the courage of the man holding the target) demonstrate values of the samurai code?
 - a. (courage, loyalty, spiritual faith, refinement in the arts, discipline)
6. Read this description of *bu* and *bun* by a samurai scholar of the 1700s:

Culture and arms are like the two wings of a bird. Just as it is impossible to fly with one wing missing, if you have culture but no arms, people will slight you without fear, while if you have arms but no culture, people will be alienated by fear. Therefore, when you learn and practice both culture and arms, you demonstrate both intimidation and generosity, so people are friendly but also intimidated, and they will be obedient.

- Review how the cultural and military arts interfaced, reinforced the warrior code, and permeated the daily lives of daimyo and their samurai.
- Give students the worksheet *Create a Waka Poem*. Have students write their own *waka* poem, and create a *haiga*, or illustration inspired by their *waka*.

Further Research:

Have students research other examples of the peaceful arts patronized by the daimyo and samurai.

The Way of Tea (*Chado*)

Show the video, *The Tearoom at the Asian Art Museum*, from You Tube or the image of Tea Master Sen Soshitsu XV (Image 20a). After students watch the video, discuss how the “Way of Tea” illustrates the bun or peaceful arts? Then, have students research the “Way of Tea.” Have students compare and contrast the three tea schools: Urasenke, Omotesenke, and Mushanokoujisenke. See the *Chanoyu* packet from the Asian Art Museum for more information and activity suggestions on the “Way of Tea.”

Noh and Kyogen Theatre

The performing arts were both enjoyed and performed by daimyo and their samurai. Have students research the history of Noh and Kyogen Theatre. Search for examples on You Tube and compare and contrast the style of each type of performance.

Martial Arts

Ask if any of your students practice a martial art. If so, ask them to describe how it is an art form. Explain that during the Edo period, a time of peace, martial arts such as kendo, aikido, and judo became popular. They provided an opportunity for samurai to practice offensive and defensive moves that might be utilized on the battlefield, as an art form.

Bun and Bu: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living

LESSON 4: SAMURAI AS CULTIVATORS OF THE ARTS: WAKA POETRY, NOH THEATER, AND TEA

Student Worksheet: Create a *Waka* Poem

Name: _____

Date: _____



Archery practice, by Shibayama Hirotoyo (1673–1723). Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk. *The Avery Brundage Collection*, B65D2.

Japan's daimyo, or military rulers, studied poetry anthologies, composed poems and recited them to one another, and formed clubs to critique each other's work. *Waka* is a traditional Japanese form of poetry that was practiced by daimyo and learned samurai.

Waka poetry usually follows the 5-7-5-7-7 syllable format, and doesn't have to rhyme. This image includes four lines of waka poetry.

The art of incorporating poetry and image is called *haiga*. Haiga has a quick, light touch and depicts either an image in the poem, or an image not seen, but somehow related. They can also be a spontaneous brushstroke or two expressing the spirit of the poetry.

Bun and Bu: Balancing Military Prowess and Artful Living

LESSON 4: SAMURAI AS CULTIVATORS OF THE ARTS: WAKA POETRY, NOH THEATER, AND TEA

Student Worksheet: Create a *Waka* Poem

Write a waka poem. After you complete your waka, add your haiga in the box below.

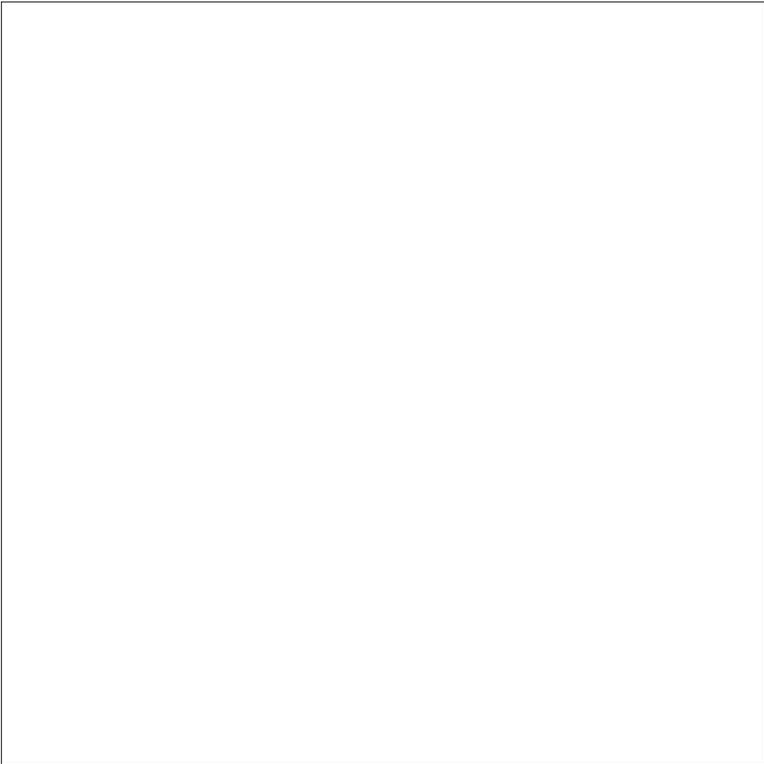
5

7

5

7

7



Samurai as Spiritual Buddhist

LESSON 5: THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE SAMURAI

Objectives:

Students will discuss the ways in which spiritual belief supported and enhanced the military function and cultural values of the samurai. They will experience this practice through an ink painting activity.

Materials:

Images and accompanying descriptions:

- Seated Buddha Amitabha (Image 3)
- *Taming the Ox* (Image 4)

Study Questions

Ink Painting

Procedure:

1. Show the Seated Buddha Amitabha (Image 3) and ask the students to describe what they see. Have students sit quietly, close their eyes, and imitate the Buddha's position and hand gesture (*mudra*) for two minutes. Ask them to discuss meditation. What happened? Was it difficult to sit still and quiet for that long? What was your mind doing? How might meditation help one prepare for battle?
 - The Buddha Amitabha, shown in the image, offered the promise of a "Western Paradise," which could be reached if someone was sincere in their belief when they died. How was this requirement consistent with the behavior expected of samurai? (loyalty and honor) Why do you think the Pure Land Buddhism, in which the Buddha Amitabha is worshipped, appealed to samurai warriors? (salvation if they died in battle)
2. Show the Zen Buddhist painting of *Taming the Ox* (Image 4). The text that goes with the image says: "*With the energy of his whole being the boy has at last taken hold of the ox: But how wild his will, how ungovernable his power!*" One of the core values of the samurai was discipline; discipline is as essential to a warrior going into battle as it is to a Buddhist who sits silently for a long time practicing meditation.
 - Ask the class to describe what they see in the painting. Knowing how important discipline and courage were to samurai warriors, explain the lesson that the painting is teaching. Start by answering the following questions: Who or what does the boy represent? Who or what does the ox represent? (an untamed mind)
3. Try a quick activity of *zazen*, or Zen sitting meditation. Focus on your belly as you breathe in and out. Sit still and count slowly from 1 to 10. If a thought interrupts your focus on counting, start over. Discuss how difficult it is to just focus for 10 seconds.
4. Keep your mind freed and focused as you create a Zen ink painting in Lesson 6.

Samurai as Spiritual Buddhist

LESSON 6: CALLIGRAPHY AND INK PAINTING: THE ART OF INK AND BRUSH

Objective:

Practice painting circles in the same manner as a Zen priest or samurai would to meditate.

Materials:

Calligraphy brushes, calligraphy paper, colored and patterned paper, glue, paper towels, ribbon, clean stones for weighing down the paper while painting, *sumi* ink, and two dowels (1/2" – 1" longer than the width of the painting).

Procedure:

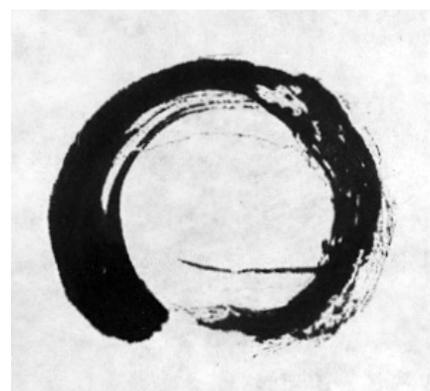
1. Explain: The art of ink and brush is used in painting and calligraphy. Ink is made from compressed charcoal of burned wood and brushes are made of bristles from the fur of many different animals or the fibers from plants or twigs, mounted on the end of a bamboo stick. The ink is applied to handmade paper in strokes that vary from heavy and wet to light and dry. Ink painting is done for pleasure or spiritual enlightenment.

In Zen Buddhism, the circle is a symbol of infinity that is both empty and full. Painting a circle, or *enso*, is a meditation practice. Though it looks simple, to make a truly round stroke of ink with a brush where the end smoothly connects with the beginning takes practice.

2. Hold your calligraphy paper down with stones. Fill your brush with *sumi* ink.
3. Begin your circle from the lower left side of the paper, moving your stroke clockwise until it meets with the beginning. Let dry.
4. Mounting your painting: Trim 2 narrow strips of patterned paper about 3/4 inches wide and 1/4 inches longer than the width of your painting.
5. Apply glue to the strips and use them to mount your painting onto colored paper.
6. Color the dowels black.
7. Glue each dowel along the edge of your paper.
8. Tie a narrow ribbon to the ends of the dowel at the top of your painting so it is ready to hang.



Taming the Ox, by Sekkyakushi, active in early 1400s. Japan. Muromachi period (1333–1573). Hanging scroll, ink on paper. *Transfer from the Fine Arts Museum, Gift of Ney Wolfskill Fund*, B69D46.



Create Your Own Samurai Identity

LESSON 7: DESIGN YOUR CREST (*MON*)



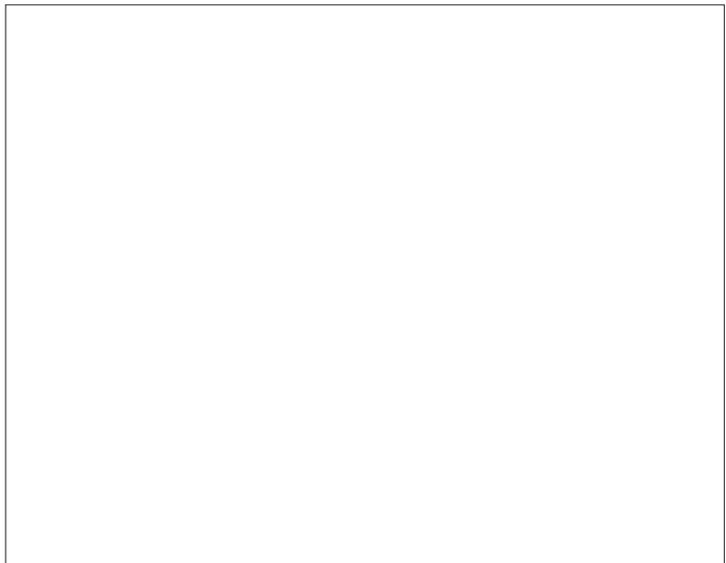
Warrior's helmet with a crest of "water plantain" (*omodaka*). approx. 1750–1868. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Lacquered rawhide, iron, gold paint, and textile. *Gift of Dr. Stephen A. Sherwin and Merrill Randol Sherwin, 2009.7.*

Samurai were identified by the crest (*mon*) of the lord (*daimyo*) they served. These crests would appear on arms and armor, banners, and clothing. Crests were often inspired by nature and placed within a geometric shape like a square or circle. For example, the helmet (top left), which is decorated with a water plantain crest, was used by many samurai. On the other hand, the high-ranking Tokugawa shogun did not permit any other clan to use the hollyhock crest as seen on the traveling chest (bottom left).

Sketch the water plantain and hollyhock crests in the box below.



Traveling chest, 1800–1868. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Lacquer and gold on wood; metal fittings, locks, and handles. *Gift of Norma C. And Jack D. Tomlinson, 1991.127.*

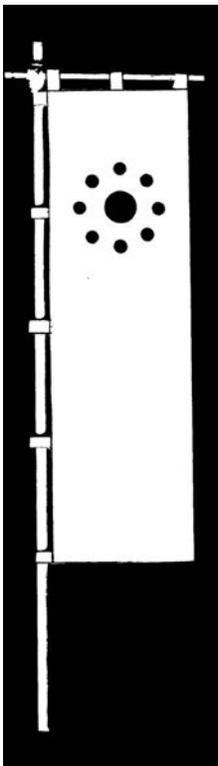


Procedure:

1. On another sheet of paper, design a crest that represents you or your family.
2. Describe your crest. What was the inspiration for your design?
3. You will use this crest to decorate your arms, armor, and clothing as you create your own samurai identity.



Military Banner (Nobori) with Nine Planet Family Crest. Used by Hosokawa Shigekata (1720–1785). Japan; Edo Period (1615–1868) 18th century. Paste-resist dyed silk. H. 387 cm x W. 143.0 cm. © Eisei-Bunko Museum, Japan.



Create Your Own Samurai Identity

LESSON 8: SAMURAI ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Design Your Military Banner

Samurai group identity was displayed in public processions and battles using a banner. Create your own banner and decorate it with your crest.

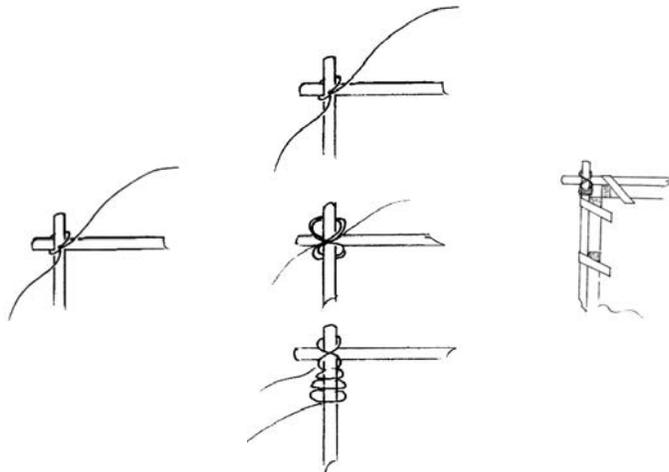
Materials:

18" white thread, 8" bamboo skewer (cut off the point), bamboo toothpick (cut off the point), black, red, gold, and silver pens, cup of sand or clay as a flag stand, glue stick, pencil and eraser, scissors, and white, red, or blue paper.

Samurai Military Banner Template (Figure 1)

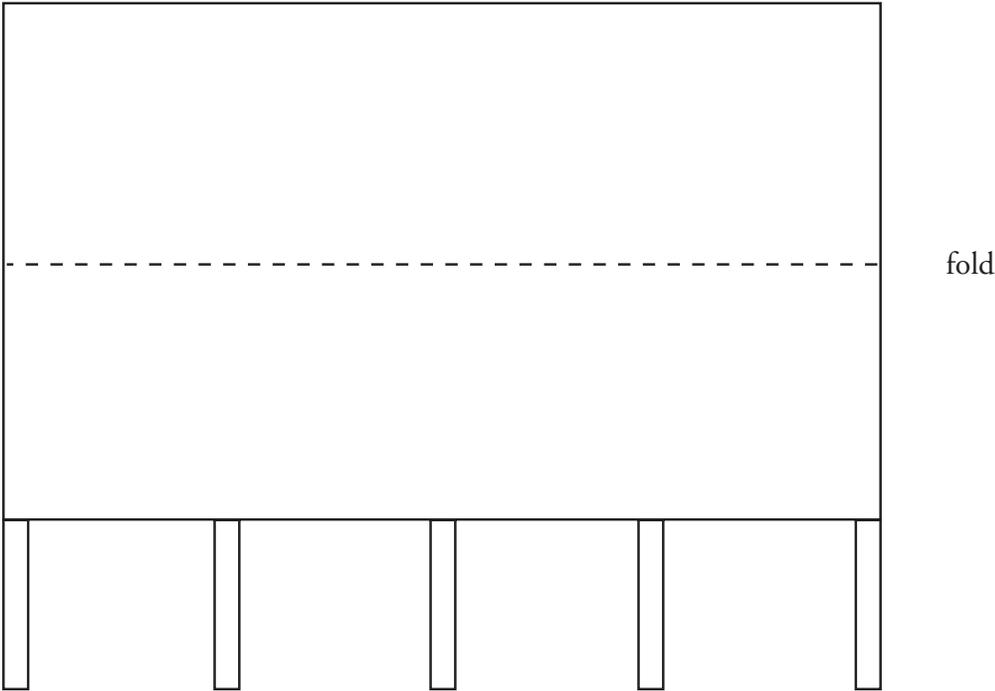
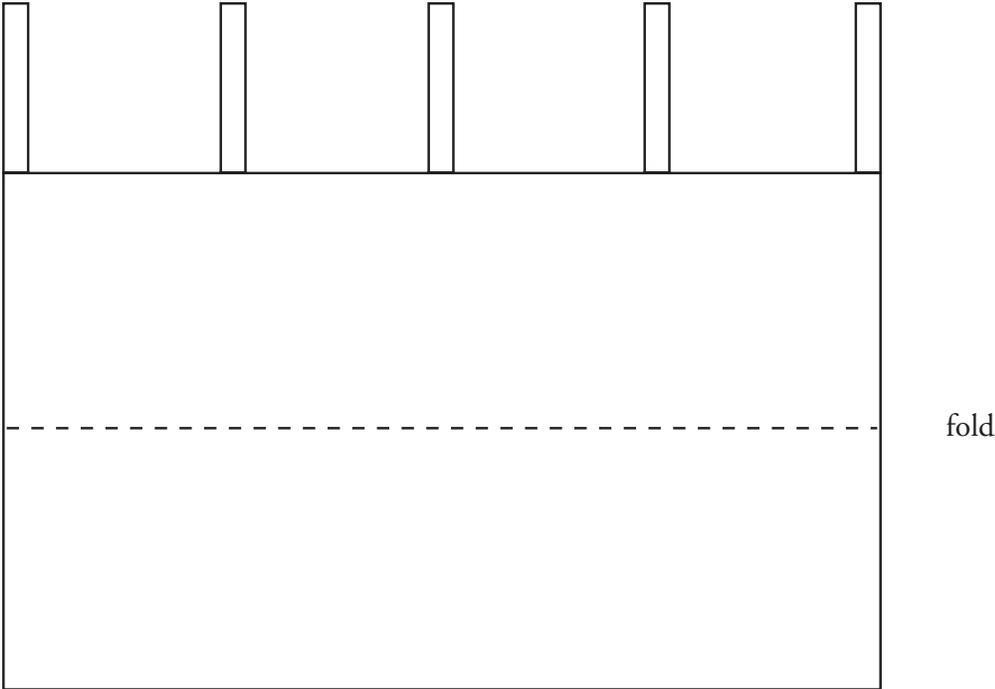
Procedure:

1. Photocopy the samurai military banner template (figure 1) onto a white, red, or dark blue paper.
2. Using the thread, tie the bamboo sticks together at a 90 degree angle using a figure-eight knot.
3. Use the glue stick to secure the thread and sticks. Dry.
4. Outline and color your design on both sides of your flag. Remember to include your crest using black, red, gold, or silver ink.
5. Cut out your flag. Be sure to leave the tabs.
6. Apply glue to each tab and fold it over the respective parts of your bamboo sticks.
7. Align the edges of your flag and glue both sides together.
8. When dry, display your flag by standing it in clay or a cup of sand.



Create Your Own Samurai Identity

SAMURAI MILITARY BANNER TEMPLATE (FIGURE 1)



Create Your Own Samurai Identity

LESSON 8: SAMURAI ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Design Your Sword Guard (Tsuba)

Sword making is a refined and highly scientific art that is revered in Japan. A sword guard (*tsuba*) is a metal guard on a samurai sword between the handgrip and the blade. It protects the hand from sliding onto the sharp edge of the blade. Sword guards vary in shape and design and were carved or molded. Use the templates or create your own shape and design a sword guard.



Quatrefoil (four-lobed) sword guard with design of dragon, peony, and ball, 1700–1868. Japan; Edo period (1615–1868). Copper alloy with various metal inlays. *Transfer from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, B87W11.*



Round sword guard with open work designs of hollyhock leaves and stems. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Iron. *Transfer from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, B87W15.*



Sword guard, 1800–1900. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868) or Meiji period (1868–1912). Iron. *Transfer from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, B87W20.*



Materials:

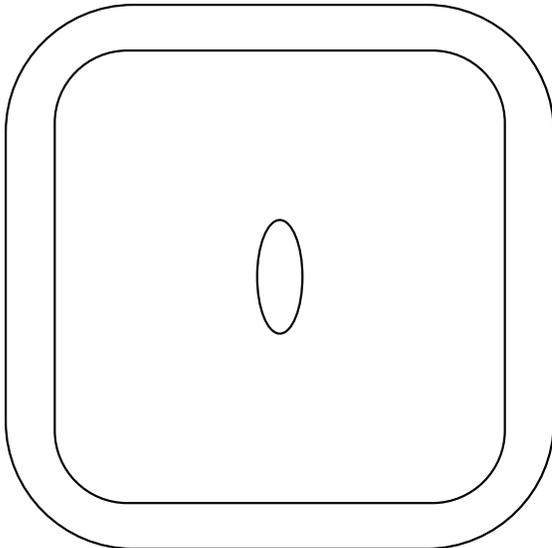
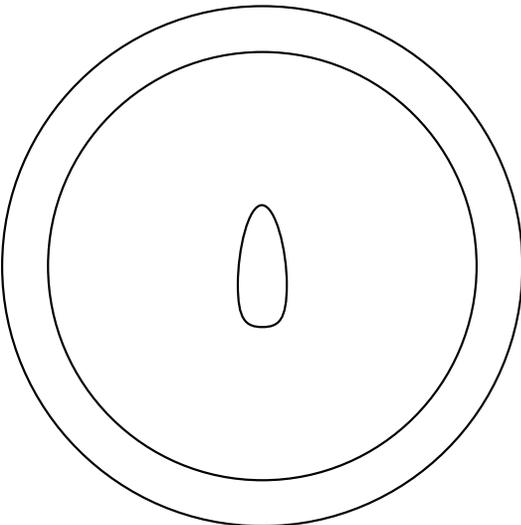
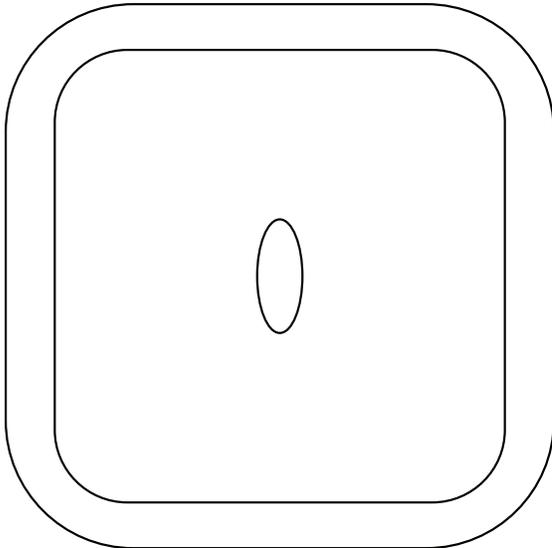
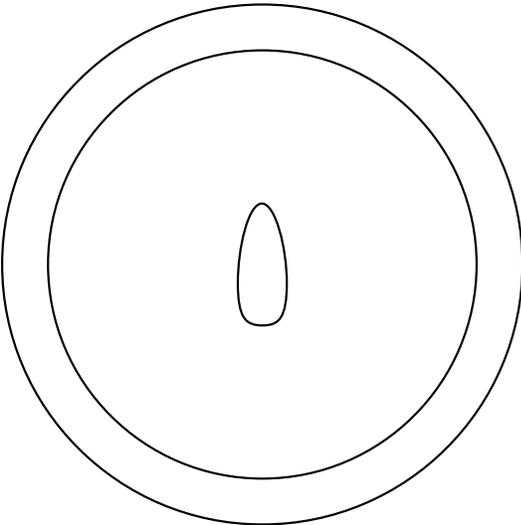
Template copied on cardstock or tag board, glue, metal foil, permanent marker, and scissors.

Sword Guard Templates (Figure 2)

Procedure:

1. Choose a shape from the sword guard templates (Figure 2).
2. Cut out the front and back pieces from the template.
3. Trace the template onto metal foil. Cut out both shapes.
4. Decorate your foil using permanent marker. Dry.
5. Assemble both sides of your sword guard with glue. Press firmly.
6. Use the point of scissors to punch a hole in the center.
7. Smooth any sharp edges. Be careful as the foil may be sharp.

Sword Guard Templates (Figure 2)





Suit of armor. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Black lacquered iron plates, leather, textile, and silk cord. *Gift of Mr. R.P. Schwerin, B74M7.*



Create Your Own Samurai Identity

LESSON 8: SAMURAI ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Design Your Samurai Armor

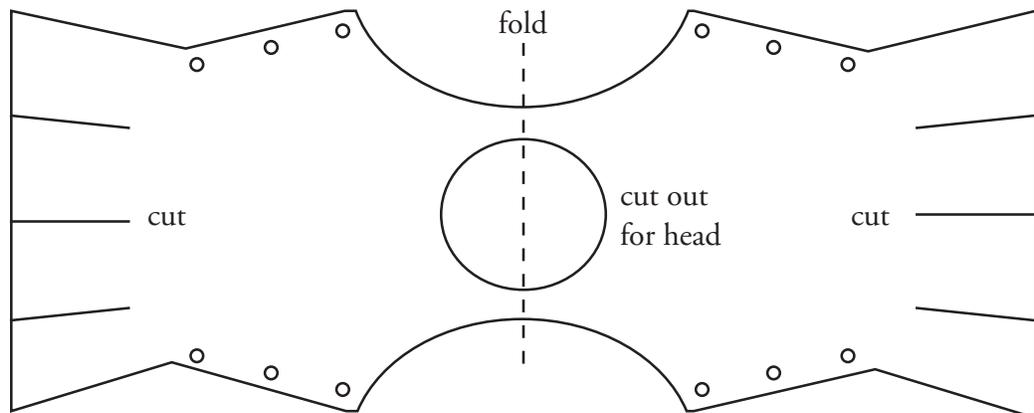
Samurai wore intricately constructed armor that had laced cording that secured protective panels to the breastplate. The cording functions to allow the armor to move with the body. The repeated layers of lacing create patterns and textures that give it beauty. Create your own breastplate armor. Remember that a samurai is identified by his crest, so you will want to incorporate your design into your armor.

Materials:

Erasers, gold acrylic paint, gold tone brads, heavy paper in a dark color, paper hole punch, pencils, rulers, and scissors.

Procedure:

1. Measure the width of your shoulders: _____(A)
2. Measure the distance of your torso from neck to thigh: _____ x 2 = _____(B)
3. Cut a piece of heavy paper the width (A) and doubled length (B) of your body.
4. Fold your paper in half.
5. Measure the distance from your neck to your waistline. At this distance on the folded paper, draw a line across the width of the paper on both sides.
6. Outline the design of your armor onto the folded paper and cut it out. Cut wide arcs for your arms and neck, as in the diagram.
7. To allow for movement, cut the bottom into short panels, up to the waistline, so it flares.
8. Cut holes along both sides and use ribbon or brads to lace your armor together around the waist.
9. Design the breastplate using markers and gold paint. Include your crest.





Samurai helmet with a half-face mask, approx. 1615–1650. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Iron, leather, laminated paper, lacquer, and textile. *Gift of Dr. William A. Galeno, B87M22.*

Create Your Own Samurai Identity

LESSON 8: SAMURAI ON THE BATTLEFIELD

Design Your Samurai Helmet

Samurai wore helmets into battle that appeared menacing and beautiful at the same time. They covered their heads from eyes to the tops of their shoulders, with ornaments and symbols of the lord they served. Look at the helmet and half-face mask (left) and notice how it is embellished with a feathered moustache and expressive red face.

Use the diagram to create a helmet out of folded paper, called origami. Decorate it with added embellishments and markings to simulate the patterns of lacing and other details.

Materials:

Heavy red thread (embroidery floss, spool); red, gold, and other colored paper and foil;

scissors, sequins & small feathers; glue stick; large eye needle; Black Kraft paper; pencils and assorted markers.

Creating an Origami Helmet (Figure 3)

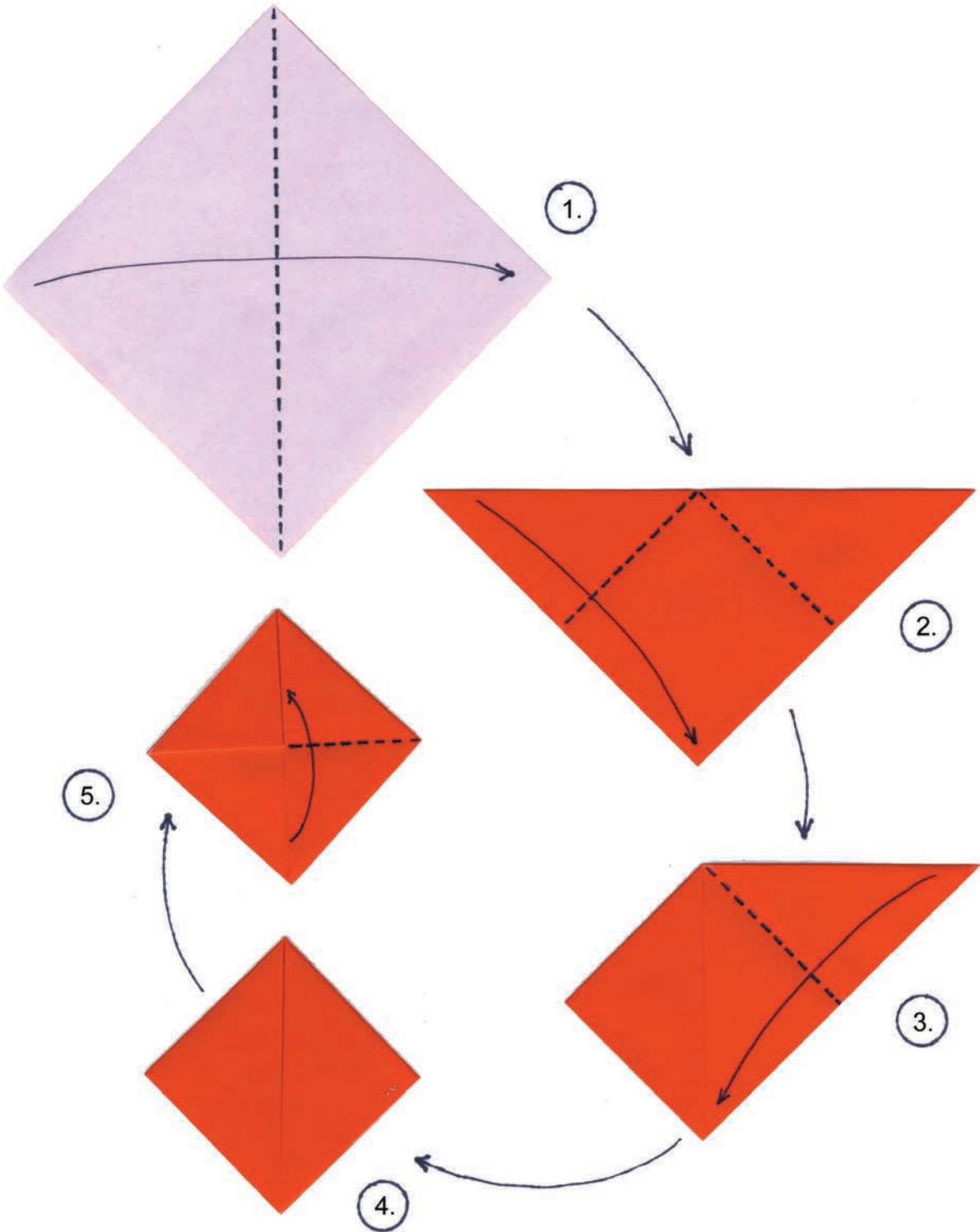
Creating an Origami Helmet (Figure 4)

Procedure:

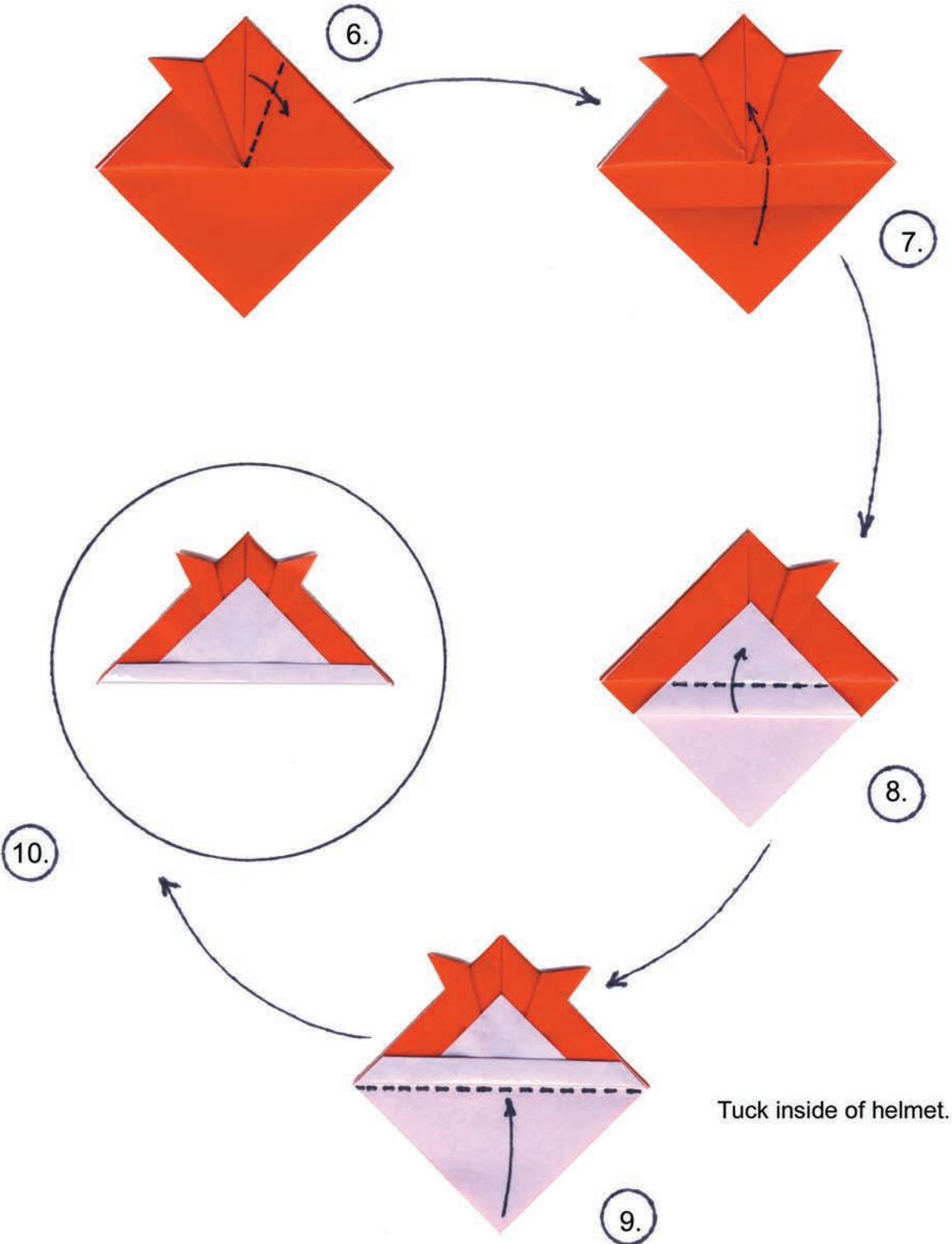
1. Use the diagram, *Creating an Origami Helmet* (figures 3 and 4), to fold your helmet.
2. Attach the chin ties using a large eyed needle with ribbon or thin cord and sew each side through the helmet.
3. Knot the end of the ribbon to secure.
4. Decorate your helmet. Be sure to include your crest.



Creating an Origami Helmet (Figure 3)



Creating an Origami Helmet (Figure 4)





Long-sleeved kimono with pine, wisteria, autumn plants, and architectural elements, 1810–1850. Japan. Edo period (1615–1868). Embroidery on silk crepe. *Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Roger S. Spang, B81M1.*



Create Your Own Samurai Identity

LESSON 9: SAMURAI IN DAILY LIFE

Design a Kimono and Samurai Vest

A kimono is the traditional garment of Japan. It is a long robe that wraps left over right around the body. Both men and women wear kimono. The color, pattern, and sleeve length differ for men and women, and for age. A young girl would wear a kimono with bright colors, bold patterns and long sleeves that hang down, while her mother would wear a kimono with muted colors, small patterns, and short sleeves. A samurai would have worn a dark, striped kimono with short sleeves. Over the kimono he might also wear a broad shouldered vest and pants.

Design two kimono, one for a young girl and one for a young boy. Design a vest with pants for a samurai.

Materials:

Black felt or construction paper hair, cardstock, colored pencils or markers, glue stick, pencils, people shaped craft sticks, ribbons, rulers and scissors.

Kimono Template (Figure 5)

Samurai Vest Template (Figure 6)

Procedure:

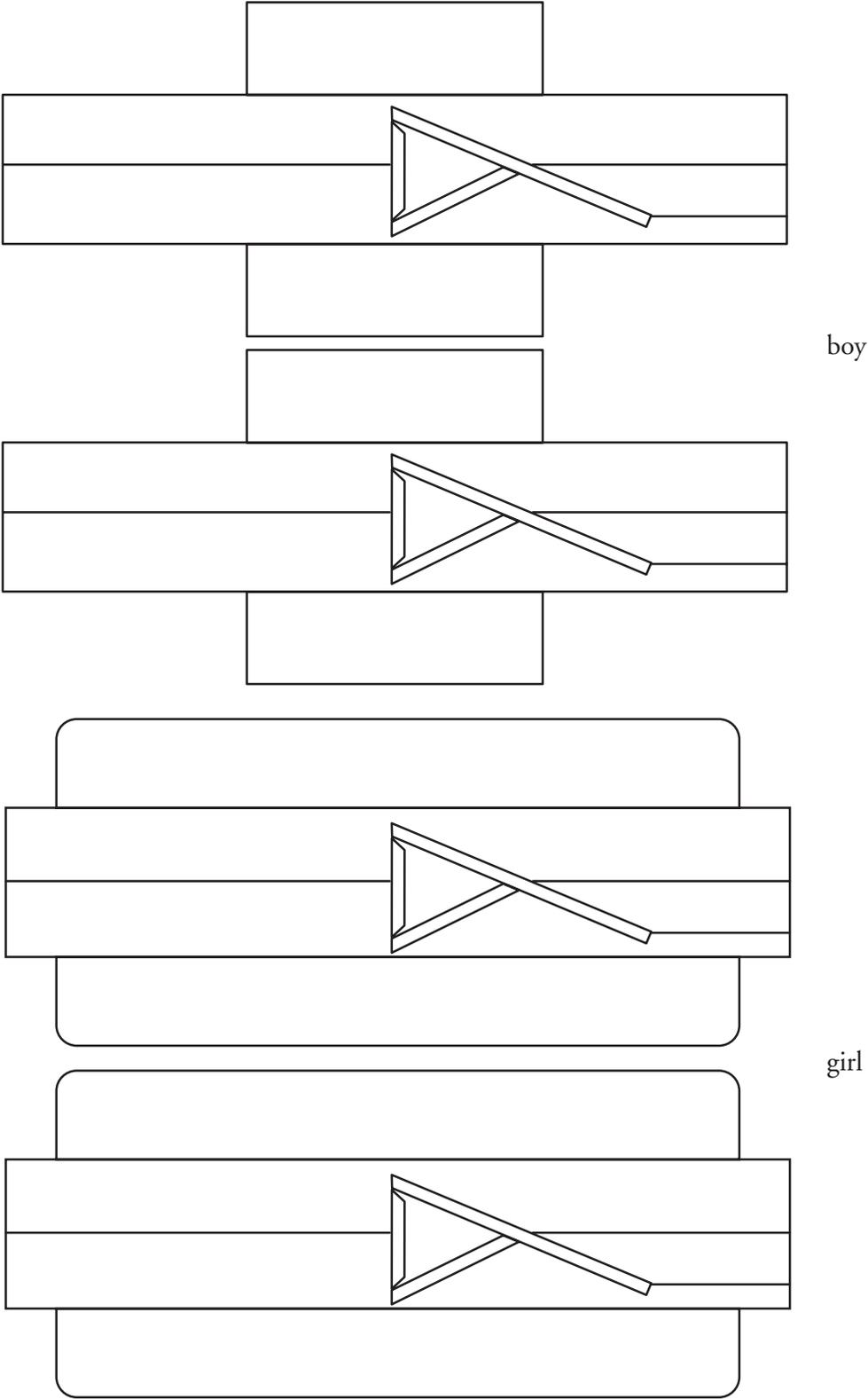
Kimono

1. Copy the kimono template (figure 5) onto white paper. Decorate your kimono.
2. Cut out your kimono.
3. Fold each garment over a popsicle stick and glue the sides together.
4. Cut out the hair.

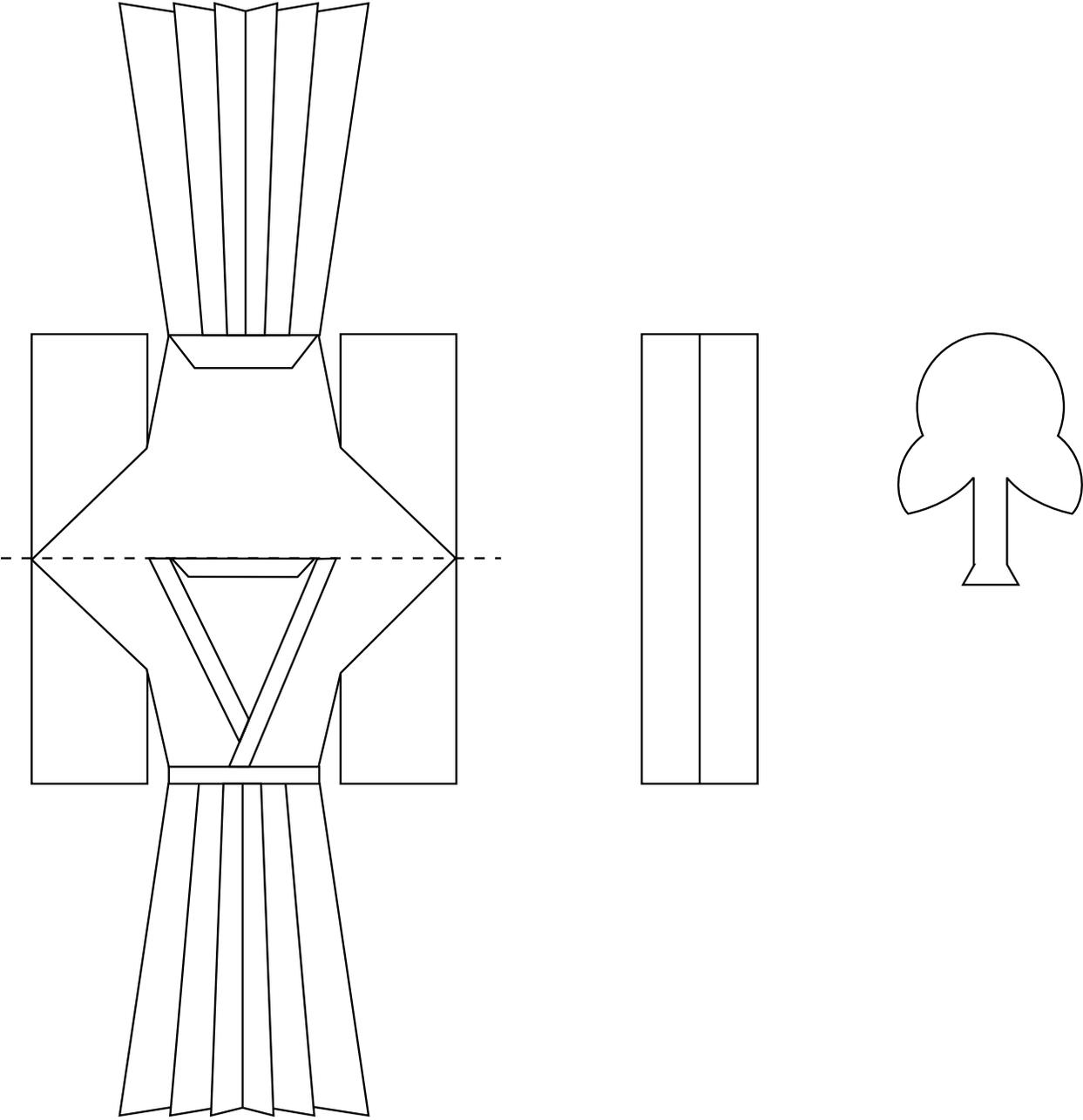
Samurai Vest

1. Copy the samurai vest template (figure 6) onto white paper. Decorate your collar and vest template.
2. Wrap the collar over each side of the craft stick (shoulder) and glue in place.
3. Fold the vest, cut out the neck hole, and insert the craft stick with the collar through the vest. Glue in place.
4. Cut out paper with top-knot and apply to the top of the craft stick (head). Fold the two front sections over and position the points to the sides of the face. Glue.
5. Wrap the top-knot with thread and tie a knot.
6. Draw eyes, mouth, and nose to complete.

Kimono Template (Figure 5)



Samurai Vest Template (Figure 6)





Content Standards

Arts of the Samurai Asian Art Museum Educator Resource Packet

We hope that this educator packet provides a foundation for teaching the arts, history, and culture of the samurai. The accompanying lesson plans have been designed to address certain California Content Standards for History–Social Science, and English–Language Arts, and Visual and Performing Arts. Teachers may choose to adapt these lessons to best fit their students’ needs: grade levels, learning styles and abilities, and personal interests. For a full list of the California Content Standards see: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/bs/st/ss/>

		SAMURAI AS LOYAL WARRIORS		BUN AND BU: BALANCING MILITARY PROWESS AND ARTIFUL LIVING		SAMURAI AS SPIRITUAL BUDDHIST			CREATE YOUR OWN SAMURAI IDENTITY			
California State Content Standards	Lesson One Map Acitivity: Japan's Warrior Government	Lesson Two The Code of the Samurai in Art and Literature	Lesson Three History and Traditions of the Samurai	Lesson Four Samurai as Cultivators of the Arts	Lesson Five The Spiritual Life of the Samurai	Lesson Six Calligraphy and Ink Painting	Lesson Seven Design Your Crest (Mor)	Lesson Eight Samurai on the Battlefield	Lesson Nine Samurai in Daily Life			
ENGLISH–LANGUAGE ARTS												
Grade Five												
Further research: Teachers can customize student writing assignments, based on this lesson and accompanying worksheets, for specific grade levels.	Listening and Speaking 1.1	Reading Word Analysis 1.0, 1.3, 1.5; Reading Comprehension 2.0, 2.3, 2.4	Listening and Speaking 1.1	Literary Response 3.0, 3.1; Listening and Speaking 1.0, 1.1; Writing Applications 2.4	Listening and Speaking 1.1	Listening and Speaking 1.1	Listening and Speaking 1.1	Listening and Speaking 1.1	Listening and Speaking 1.1			
Grade Six												
Further research: Teachers can customize student writing assignments, based on this lesson and accompanying worksheets, for specific grade levels.	Reading Word Analysis 1.0, 1.1, 1.5; Reading Comprehension 2.0, 2.3, 2.4, 2.7; Literary Response 3.4, 3.6, 3.7	Reading Word Analysis 1.0, 1.3; Reading Comprehension 2.2; Literary Response 3.0, 3.3, 3.6; Writing Application 2.0, 2.5	Reading Word Analysis 1.0, 1.3; Reading Comprehension 2.2; Literary Response 3.0, 3.3, 3.6; Writing Application 2.0, 2.5	Reading Word Analysis 1.0, 1.1, 1.2, 1.4; Reading Comprehension 2.2; Literary Response 3.0, 3.4, 3.7; Writing Strategies 1.0, 1.1; Listening and Speaking 1.6	Reading Word Analysis 1.0, 1.3; Reading Comprehension 2.7; Written & Oral English 1.1							
Grade Seven												
Further research: Teachers can customize student writing assignments, based on this lesson and accompanying worksheets, for specific grade levels.	Writing Application 2.0, 2.2, 2.5	Reading Word Analysis 2.0, 2.5; Literary Response 3.0, 3.1, 3.4	Reading Word Analysis 1.0, 1.3; Written & Oral English 1.4; Writing Strategies 1.2	Literary Response 3.0, 3.1								
Further research: Teachers can customize student writing assignments, based on this lesson and accompanying worksheets, for specific grade levels.	Writing Strategies 1.0, 1.4; Writing Applications 2.0, 2.2, 2.5	Writing Strategies 1.0, 1.4; Writing Applications 2.0, 2.2, 2.5										

California State Content Standards	Lesson One Map Activity: Japan's Warrior Government	Lesson Two The Code of the Samurai in Art and Literature	Lesson Three History and Traditions of the Samurai	Lesson Four Samurai as Cultivators of the Arts	Lesson Five The Spiritual Life of the Samurai	Lesson Six Calligraphy and Ink Painting	Lesson Seven Design Your Crest (<i>Mori</i>)	Lesson Eight Samurai on the Battlefield	Lesson Nine Samurai in Daily Life
Grade Eight									
		Reading Comprehension 2.0, 2.3; Literary Response 3.0, 3.4, 3.5, 3.7	Reading Word Analysis 1.0, 1.3; Reading Word Analysis 1.0, 1.3	Literary Response 3.0, 3.1					
Further research: Teachers can customize student writing assignments, based on this lesson and accompanying worksheets, for specific grade levels.		Writing Applications 2.0, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4							
Grade Nine/Ten									
Further research: Teachers can customize student writing assignments, based on this lesson and accompanying worksheets, for specific grade levels.		Reading Comprehension 2.3, 2.5; Literary Response 3.0, 3.2, 3.5, 3.7, 3.12; Writing 1.3; Writing Applications 2.2, 2.3, 2.4							
Grade Eleven/Twelve									
Further research: Teachers can customize student writing assignments, based on this lesson and accompanying worksheets, for specific grade levels.		Literary Response 3.1, 3.6; Writing Applications 2.2							
HISTORY-SOCIAL SCIENCES									
Grade Six									
					6.5.5	6.5.5			
Grade Seven									
History and Social Sciences Analysis Skills	Chronological and Spatial Thinking 1, 3; Historical Interpretation 3	Research and Evidence, Point of View 1, 2, 4	Historical Interpretation 2, 3	Research and Evidence, Point of View 1, 5	7.5, 7.5.3, 7.5.4	7.5.3, 7.5.6		7.5.3, 7.5.4, 7.5.6	
Content Standards	7.5, 7.5.1, 7.5.3, 7.5.4, 7.5.6	7.5, 7.5.3, 7.5.6	7.5, 7.5.3, 7.5.6	7.5, 7.5.3, 7.5.4, 7.5.6	7.5, 7.5.3, 7.5.4	7.5.3, 7.5.6			

California State Content Standards	Lesson One Map Activity: Japan's Warrior Government	Lesson Two The Code of the Samurai in Art and Literature	Lesson Three History and Traditions of the Samurai	Lesson Four Samurai as Cultivators of the Arts	Lesson Five The Spiritual Life of the Samurai	Lesson Six Calligraphy and Ink Painting	Lesson Seven Design Your Crest (<i>Mon</i>)	Lesson Eight Samurai on the Battlefield	Lesson Nine Samurai in Daily Life
VISUAL ARTS									
Grade Two									
							1.0 Artistic Perception; 2.0 Creative Expression		
							1.1, 1.3, 2.1		
Grade Three									
Visual and Performing Arts Strands					3.0 Historical and Cultural Context				
Content Standards					3.0, 3.3				
Grade Four									
Visual and Performing Arts Strands							1.0 Artistic Perception		
Content Standards					1.0 Artistic Perception; 2.0 Creative Expression		1.2		
1.0, 1.2, 2.0, 2.6									
Grade Five									
Visual and Performing Arts Strands		5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	4.0 Aesthetic Valuing		4.0 Aesthetic Valuing; 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	
Content Standards		5.2	5.2	5.2	4.2		4.2, 5.2	4.2	
Grade Six									
Visual and Performing Arts Strands		3.0 Historical and Cultural Context; 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	1.0 Artistic Perception; 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context; 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	1.0 Artistic Perception; 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context; 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	1.0 Artistic Perception; 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing; 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications		1.0 Artistic Perception; 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	1.0 Artistic Perception; 2.0 Creative Expression; 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context; 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	
Content Standards		3.0, 3.2, 5.3	1.0, 1.2, 3.2, 5.3	1.3, 3.2, 5.1, 5.3	1.3, 1.4, 4.2, 5.3		1.2, 5.3	1.3, 2.4, 3.2, 5.3	
Grade Seven									
Visual and Performing Arts Strands		3.0 Historical and Cultural Context; 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	3.0 Historical and Cultural Context; 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	3.0 Historical and Cultural Context; 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	3.0 Historical and Cultural Context; 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing		4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	1.0 Artistic Perception; 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context; 4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	
Content Standards		3.0, 3.1, 4.0, 4.2	3.0, 3.1, 4.0, 4.2	3.0, 3.1, 4.2	3.1, 4.2		4.2	1.2, 3.1, 4.2	

California State Content Standards	Lesson One Map Activity: Japan's Warrior Government	Lesson Two The Code of the Samurai in Art and Literature	Lesson Three History and Traditions of the Samurai	Lesson Four Samurai as Cultivators of the Arts	Lesson Five The Spiritual Life of the Samurai	Lesson Six Calligraphy and Ink Painting	Lesson Seven Design Your Crest (<i>Mori</i>)	Lesson Eight Samurai on the Battlefield	Lesson Nine Samurai in Daily Life
Grade Eight									
	4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	4.0 Aesthetic Valuing	4.0 Aesthetic Valuing
	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3
Grade Nine–Twelve									
Proficient *Teachers can integrate the images and image descriptions into each lesson plan—observation, questioning, and group discussion.									
Visual and Performing Arts Strands	5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	4.0 Aesthetic Valuing; 5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications	5.0 Connections, Relationships, Applications
Content Standards	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	4.1; 5.2	5.2
Advanced *Teachers can integrate the images and image descriptions into each lesson plan—observation, questioning, and group discussion.									
Visual and Performing Arts Strands	3.0 Historical and Cultural Context	3.0 Historical and Cultural Context	3.0 Historical and Cultural Context	3.0 Historical and Cultural Context	3.0 Historical and Cultural Context	3.0 Historical and Cultural Context	3.0 Historical and Cultural Context	2.0 Creative Expression; 3.0 Historical and Cultural Context	3.0 Historical and Cultural Context
Content Standards	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	2.1; 3.0	3.3
THEATRE									
Grade Seven									
Visual and Performing Arts Strands				4.0 Aesthetic Valuing					
Content Standards				4.2					



Timeline

Timeline

Comparative Timeline of Japan Asuka to Meiji Period

Historical Periods	Japan		Rest of the World	
Asuka Period 552–645	538	Buddhism introduced to Japan from Korea		
			ca. 600	Chinese invent woodblock printing
			622	Muhammad's flight to Medina (Hijra)
Nara Period 645–794	710	First permanent capital established at Nara		
Heian Period 794–1185	794	Court transfers capital to Kyoto (Heian)		
	806	Buddhist priest Kukai returns to Japan after visit from China; preaches Shingon school of Buddhism		
			918	Wang Kon (King Taejo) establishes Goryeo dynasty (918–1392) in Korea
	ca. 1002–19	Lady Murasaki Shikibu writes the world's first novel <i>The Tale of Genji</i>		
			1096–99	First Crusade
			1147–49	Second Crusade
			ca. 1150	Temple of Angkor Wat built in Cambodia
	1180–85	Genpei War: Battle between Minamoto (Genji) and Taira (Heike) clans; Minamoto victorious		
Kamakura Period 1185–1333			1189–92	Third Crusade
	1191	Monk Eisai introduces Rinzaï school of Zen Buddhism from China to Japan; introduces tea to Japan		
	1192	Minamoto Yoritomo receives title of shogun; establishes warrior government at Kamakura		
			1204	Fourth Crusade
			1206	Ghengis Khan proclaims Mongo empire
	1218	Earliest versions of <i>The Tales of the Heike</i>		
	1221	Jokyu Disturbance		
			1257–85	Mongol invasion of Korea and Vietnam
			1271–95	Marco Polo travels
	1274	Mongols attempt first invasion of Japan		
	1281	Mongols make second attempt to invade Japan		

Historical Periods		Japan	Rest of the World	
Nambokucho Period 1333–1392	1334	Emperor Godaigo attempts to overthrow shogunate and restore imperial rule		
	1336	Ashikaga Takauji defeats Godaigo at Northern Court at Kyoto and establishes Southern court at Yoshino		
	1336–92	Nambokucho: War between Northern and Southern courts, both claiming imperial legitimacy		
	1338	Ashigaka assumes title of shogun and founds shogunate at Muromachi		
			1348	Bubonic plague or “Black Death” arrives in England
			1368	Hongwu establishes the Ming dynasty
Muromachi Period 1392–1573			1405–33	Muslim Chinese navy captain, Zheng He (1371–1433), carries out sea expeditions to Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the eastern coast of Africa
			1400s	Kingdom of the Aztecs
			ca. 1450	Movable type for printing invented by Johann Gutenberg
	1467	Start of Onin Wars; marks the beginning of the Warring States		
			1469–1539	Guru Nanak founds the Sikh religion in India
			1478	Spanish Inquisition established
	1543	Portuguese merchants shipwrecked on Tanegashima and introduce firearms to Japan		
	1459	St. Francis Xavier arrives in Kyushu and introduces Christianity to Japan		
			1492	Christopher Columbus voyages to the New World
			1492	King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella expel Muslims and Jews from Spain
			1493–1519	Holy Roman Empire
			1520–66	Reign of Suleyman I (The Magnificent)
		1521	Ferdinand Magellan arrives in the Philippines and claims the area for Spain	
	1562	Tokugawa Ieyasu establishes alliance with Oda Nobunaga		
	1568	Oda Nobunaga enters Kyoto and takes action to militarily unify Japan		
Momoyama 1573–1615	1585	Oda Nobunaga assassinated; Toyotomi Hideyoshi, his general, succeeds him		
	1592	Hideyoshi's first invasion of Korea		
	1597	Hideyoshi's second invasion of Korea		
	1600	Tokugawa Ieyasu gains control over the country at Battle of Sekigahara		
	1603	Tokugawa Ieyasu founds Tokugawa shogunate at Edo (Tokyo)		
	1612	Christianity banned throughout Japan		

Historical Periods		Japan	Rest of the World	
Edo Period 1615–1868			1628–57	Reign of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan; founder of Taj Mahal
	1635	Foreign trade ships restricted to Nagasaki; “alternate attendance” system institutionalized		
			1700–80	The Enlightenment flourishes in Western Europe
			1787	United States Constitution written
			1814	Steam locomotive used to power early railroad travel in England
			1849	California Gold Rush
	1853	Commodore Perry arrives with “Black Ships”		
	1854	Perry returns to Japan; Treaties of Amity with America, England, and Russia		
			1861–65	American Civil War
			1862	Emancipation of U.S. slaves
Meiji Period 1868–1912	1868	Meiji Restoration		



Glossary

GLOSSARY

Bu and bun, terms used to refer to the combination of military (*bu*) skills and cultivation of peaceful arts (*bun*) that were expected of most samurai. Excellence at archery and swordsmanship are examples of *bu*, while composing poetry, watching *Noh* plays, or learning the "Way of Tea" (*Chado*) are all examples of *bun*.

Buddhism, with Shinto, one of the two major religions of pre-modern Japan. Practices derived from the teachings of the historical founder, Siddhartha Gautama (also known as the Buddha or Shakyamuni), focus on principles of ethical conduct, the cultivation of wisdom, and mental discipline, with the goal of extinguishing desire and gaining enlightenment or salvation from the cycle of rebirth.

Buddhism, Pure Land, a sect devoted to Amitabha, Buddha of the Western Paradise (also known as 'the Pure Land'). Pure Land adherents revered Amitabha, believing that a simple expedient device, recitation of his name, could lead to rebirth in his wondrous paradise after death.

Buddhism, Zen, a form of Buddhism that stresses seated meditation and pondering of koan—paradoxical statements or questions—as practices leading to enlightenment.

Bushido, literally the "Way of the Samurai," the systematic code of warrior ethics formulated during the seventeenth century.

Chado, literally, the "Way of Tea." Commonly referred to in English as the "tea ceremony," however, tea practitioners favor the term "tea gathering." Chado evolved in the sixteenth century into a ritualized performance of prescribed gestures and verbal exchanges, conducted by the host and his guest(s) during the preparation, serving, and drinking of tea.

Chanoyu, literally "hot water for tea," another name for Chado (see above).

Daimyo, literally "holders of the great named lands," a military rank immediately below shogun. Used to designate the most powerful landowners and feudal lords, also the heads of major military clans.

Domaru, a form of armor with a continuous, sheath-like cuirass. Initially worn by foot soldiers and attendants, in the fourteenth century the domaru was adopted by higher-ranking samurai who prized its flexibility and lightness relative to traditional *oyoroi* armor.

Emperor, the hereditary ruler of Japan, traditionally said to be a direct descendant of the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu no Omikami. While an emperor has reigned in Japan throughout recorded history, the military elite (*samurai*) held direct political and economic control of the government between the late 1100s and 1868.

Gunbai and gansen, war fans, used by samurai to direct the movement of their troops.

Heike, or The Tales of the Heike, a war tale tracing the struggle for control of Japan between two powerful military clans, the Taira (also known as Heike) and Minamoto (also known as Genji) clans. Recounts a series of battles culminating in the Minamoto victory in 1185.

Jinbaori, a military camp jacket, worn over a suit of *tosei gusoku* armor.

Kabuto, a samurai helmet.

Kago, palanquins used to convey wealthy samurai on long and short journeys, either within the city or as a part of daimyo processions between their home domains and the capital.

Katana, the classic “samurai sword,” with a curved steel blade, created through repeated folding, cutting, hammering, re-forging, and polishing, resulting in an exceptionally hard, razor-sharp edge. Worn as a pair with the shorter *wakizashi*.

Koan, paradoxical statements or questions in Zen Buddhism as a spur to enlightenment or spiritual awakening.

Mappo, the Latter Day of the Buddhist Law, a degenerate age when people would be incapable of achieving salvation through adherence to Buddhist doctrine alone.

Matchlock gun, a type of musket introduced to Japan by the Portuguese in 1543.

Mon, family crests, of circular form, used as identifying marks on battlefield flags and many other goods owned or commissioned by high-ranking samurai.

Noble, a member of the aristocratic class and imperial court official, during the Heian period (794–1185).

Noh, a traditional form of dance-drama patronized by members of the warrior class.

Oyoroi, literally “great armor,” the boxy and loose-fitting protective gear developed for mounted warriors in the late Heian (794–1185) and Kamakura (1185–1333) periods. Oyoroi is typically constructed of leather and iron plates (lames), laced together in tiers.

Retainer, an individual who serves a lord, bound by loyalty and/or contractual obligation.

Ronin, disenfranchised samurai who have lost the patronage of their lord following his death or fall from power, or as a consequence of their own misdeeds.

Samurai, literally “one who serves,” members of the military or warrior class, active in Japan between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries.

Sankin kotai, system of alternate attendance requiring each daimyo to spend alternate years residing in the capital, Edo. During years spent in the home domain, the daimyo had to leave their families as hostages in Edo.

Seppuku, ritual suicide, used to avoid a dishonorable death, as a means of expressing loyalty, or to atone for a lack of judgment or other error in the conduct of one’s duty.

Shogun, the highest military rank and title for the head of the military government, known in English as the “shogunate.” Nominally appointed by the emperor, the shogun often passed their title in hereditary fashion to successive family members, as in the case of the 250-year Tokugawa shogunate.

Tales of the Heike, *The*, see *Heike*, above.

Tosei gusoku, literally “modern equipment,” a term used to refer to a wide variety of armor styles incorporating welded metal pieces, and the use of rivets and hinges in place of some lacing. Developed in the sixteenth century in response to the need for armor not easily penetrated by musket fire.

War Tales, stories chronicling the lives of warriors and their battles, written between the tenth and seventeenth centuries.

Waka, the classical verse of Japan.

Wakizashi, short sword, companion to the *katana*.

Vassal, an individual who pledges loyalty and military service to a lord in exchange for the use of land or other income.



Further Reading

FURTHER READING

Elementary:

Dean, Arlan. 2005. *Samurai: Warlords of Japan*. New York: Children's Press.

Leavitt, Caroline. 2007. *Samurai*. Mankato: Capstone Press.

Macdonald, Fiona. 2005. *How to be a Samurai Warrior*. Washington D.C.: National Geographic.

Macdonald, Fiona. 1995. *A Samurai Castle*. New York: P. Bedrick Books.

Schomp, Virginia. 2002. *Japan in the Days of the Samurai*. New York: Benchmark Books.

Middle and High School:

Fujisawa, Shuhei and trans. Gavin Frew. 2006. *Bamboo Sword & Other Samurai Tales*. Tokyo: Kodansha International.

Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan. 1983. v.9. New York: Kodansha.

Kure, Mitsuo. 2002. *Samurai: An Illustrated History*. Boston: Tuttle Pub.

Miyamori, Asataro. 2006. *Katsuno's Revenge and Other Tales of the Samurai*. New York: Dover Pub.

Ratti, Oscar. 1973. *Secrets of the Samurai: A Survey of the Martial Arts of Feudal Japan*. Rutland: C.E. Tuttle Co.

Sato, Hiroaki. 1995. *Legends of the Samurai*. Woodstock: Overlook Press.

Shiba, Ryotara. 2004. *Last Shogun: The Life of Tokugawa Yoshinobu*. Tokyo: Kodansha International.

Turnbull, Stephen R. 2008. *The Samurai Swordsman: Master of War*. North Clarendon: Tuttle Pub.

Teachers:

Asian Art Museum Education Department. 1996. *Educator Packet—Bushido: The Code of the Samurai in Japanese Art and Literature*. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum.

Asian Art Museum Education Department. 2000. *Educator Packet—The Arts of Edo*. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum.

Cleary, Thomas, Yoko Woodson, and Hosokawa Morihiro. 2009. *Lords of the Samurai: Legacy of a Daimyo Family*. San Francisco: Asian Art Museum.

Collcutt, Martin, ed. Yukio Lippit and Gregory Levine. 2007. "Zen Art" in a Monastic Context: Zen and the Arts in Medieval Kenchoji," in *Awakenings. Zen Figure Painting in Medieval Japan*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

de Bary, Wm. Theodore, and Donald Keene, editors. 1958. *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 1. New York: Columbia University Press.

McCullough, Helen Craig, trans. 1994. *The Tale of the Heike*. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Varley, H. Paul. 1994. *Warriors of Japan as Portrayed in the War Tales*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Samurai Video Bibliography

Daimyo. National Gallery of Art, 2000. VHS.

Japan: Memoirs of a Secret Empire. Directed by Lyn Goldfarb and Deborah Ann Snoo. PBS Home Video, 2003. DVD. Available from PBS. (http://www.pbs.org/empires/japan/program_4.html).

Secrets of the Samurai Sword. NOVA. WGBH Educational Foundation, 2007. DVD. Available from PBS. (<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/samurai/>).



Map of Japan

Map of Japan





CD of Images