

The samurai were the great warriors of feudal Japan who were respected and feared for their gracefulness in peace and brutality in war. Dignified by the strict code of honor that bound them, the samurai were more than ready to give their own life than suffer a harsh existence of dishonor.

Visit Website Did you know? The wealth of a samurai in feudal Japan was measured in terms of koku; one koku, supposed to be the amount of rice it took to feed one man for a year, was equivalent to around liters. Beginning in the mid-th century, real political power in Japan shifted gradually away from the emperor and his nobles in Kyoto to the heads of the clans on their large estates in the country. The Gempei War pitted two of these great clans—the dominant Taira and the Minamoto—against each other in a struggle for control of the Japanese state. The war ended when one of the most famous samurai heroes in Japanese history, Minamoto Yoshitsune, led his clan to victory against the Taira near the village of Dan-no-ura. The establishment of the Kamakura Shogunate, a hereditary military dictatorship, shifted all real political power in Japan to the samurai. Zen Buddhism, introduced into Japan from China around this time, held a great appeal for many samurai. Also during the Kamakura period, the sword came to have a great significance in samurai culture. The Ashikaga Shogunate, centered in Kyoto, began around 1336. For the next two centuries, Japan was in a near-constant state of conflict between its feuding territorial clans. After the particularly divisive Onin War of 1467–1477, the Ashikaga shoguns ceased to be effective, and feudal Japan lacked a strong central authority; local lords and their samurai stepped in to a greater extent to maintain law and order. Despite the political unrest, this period—known as the Muromachi after the district of that name in Kyoto—saw considerable economic expansion in Japan. It was also a golden age for Japanese art, as the samurai culture came under the growing influence of Zen Buddhism. In addition to such now-famous Japanese art forms as the tea ceremony, rock gardens and flower arranging, theater and painting also flourished during the Muromachi period. This period ushered in a year-long stretch of peace and prosperity in Japan, and for the first time the samurai took on the responsibility of governing through civil means rather than through military force. This relatively conservative faith, with its emphasis on loyalty and duty, eclipsed Buddhism during the Tokugawa period as the dominant religion of the samurai. It was during this period that the principles of bushido emerged as a general code of conduct for Japanese people in general. Though bushido varied under the influences of Buddhist and Confucian thought, its warrior spirit remained constant, including an emphasis on military skills and fearlessness in the face of an enemy. In a peaceful Japan, many samurai were forced to become bureaucrats or take up some type of trade, even as they preserved their conception of themselves as fighting men. In 1613, the right to carry swords was restricted only to samurai, which created an even greater separation between them and the farmer-peasant class. The material well-being of many samurai actually declined during the Tokugawa Shogunate, however. Samurai had traditionally made their living on a fixed stipend from landowners; as these stipends declined, many lower-level samurai were frustrated by their inability to improve their situation. The incursion of Western powers into Japan—and especially the arrival in 1853 of Commodore Matthew C. Perry of the U. Navy, on a mission to get Japan to open its doors to international trade—proved to be the final straw. The controversial decision to open the country to Western commerce and investment helped encourage resistance to the shogunate among conservative forces in Japan, including many samurai, who began calling for a restoration of the power of the emperor. Feudalism was officially abolished in 1868; five years later, the wearing of swords was forbidden to anyone except members of the national armed forces, and all samurai stipends were converted into government bonds, often at significant financial loss. The new Japanese national army quashed several samurai rebellions during the 1860s, while some disgruntled samurai joined secret, ultra-nationalist societies, among them the notorious Black Dragon Society, whose object was to incite trouble in China so that the Japanese army would have an excuse to invade and preserve order. Ironically—given the loss of their privileged status—the Meiji Restoration was actually engineered by members of the samurai class itself. Three of the most influential leaders of the new Japan—Inoue Kaoru, Ito Hirobumi and Yamagata Aritomo—had studied with the famous samurai Yoshida Shouin, who was executed after a failed attempt to

kill a Tokugawa official in 1868. It was a former samurai who put Japan on the road to what it would become, and many would become leaders in all areas of modern Japanese society. Bushido in Modern Japan In the wake of the Meiji Restoration, Shinto was made the state religion of Japan unlike Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity, it was wholly Japanese and bushido was adopted as its ruling moral code. By 1895, Japan had succeeded in building up its military strength—it signed an alliance with Britain in 1894 and defeated the Russians in Manchuria two years later—as well as its economy.

Uesugi Kenshin was a powerful warlord and leader of the Nagao clan during the period of warring clans. He was noted as an exceptional general with sharp military prowess that he used to win many campaigns on the battlefield.

Back to the front of the English page No. A tragic military commander incapable of understanding the game of politics December 29, Yoshitsune Minamoto was undefeated in wars, but he was killed by the army sent by his brother Yoritomo Minamoto. He was the greatest military commander in his time. The war between the Taira family and Minamoto family began when Yoritomo Minamoto decided to fight against Kiyomori Taira. Convinced of the military genius of Yoshitsune, Yoritomo appointed Yoshitsune the military commander. In the battle in Kobe, a city in the Kansai district, the Taira army took up a position facing the Seto Inland Sea with mountains behind. Because the mountains in this area have rather steep slope, it was hardly possible to attack the Taira army from the mountainside. The Taira family never dreamt of being attacked from the mountainside. When the two armies were in the middle of the war, the unit led by Yoshitsune, soldiers and horses alike, descended at full speed the slope and attacked the Taira army from the mountainside. Before he ordered his soldiers to ascend the slope a horse, he asked a local hunter if a deer could descend the slope. Yoshitsune achieved an overwhelming victory over the Taira family, but he failed to recover one of the three sacred imperial treasures that symbolize the sovereignty of the emperor. Yoritomo wished to use the three treasures as the bargaining chip in the negotiations with the emperor because he tried to establish a samurai government for the sake of samurais. Presumably, Yoritomo strongly ordered Yoshitsune to bring them back to him, but Yoshitsune failed to execute the order not knowing how important it was. Yoritomo naturally got angry with Yoshitsune, but Yoshitsune was not able to understand why his brother was so angry. It was his tragedy that he had no competent subordinate with the ability to understand political affairs. Ultimately, Yoshitsune was killed by the army sent by Yoritomo. Ironically enough, however, the tragic death made Yoshitsune even more popular among people. It was believed that Yoshitsune went to Mongolia and became Genghis Khan This plot shows how popular Yoshitsune is among Japanese, though it is totally absurd and nonsense. He was not killed by Kiyomori Taira despite the fact that his father was defeated by Kiyomori Taira. In those days, it was quite natural that he was killed because he was a son of the military commander of the defeated army. Instead of being killed, he was marooned on the Izu area at the age of The Izu area is now famous as a hot spring resort, but it was a very isolated area back in the 12th century. In the Izu area, he mingled with various kinds of people including farmers and fishermen. His life in this area enabled him to know the daily life of commonalities and the dissatisfaction of samurais. As is often the case, no one can predict what may turn to your advantage. Yoritomo had originally no intention of fighting against the Taira family because the Taira family was in the heyday of its power. However, a member of the Minamoto family recklessly tried to defeat the Taira family and lost the battle. Kiyomori Taira angrily asked his subordinates to ruin the Minamoto family. Accordingly, Yoritomo had only two choices: He decided to start a war against Kiyomori Taira. In the initial stage, he lost and ran away to a rural area. However, his decision to fight against the Taira family spread among samurais in the Kanto region, and his soldiers increased in number tremendously in a short period of time. This was purely because samurais were dissatisfied with the current situations. Kiyomori Taira was not able to formulate measures for the stalemate. He knew nothing about the situation in the rural area because he lived in Kyoto. But Yoritomo knew it very well because he lived in a rural area not in Kyoto. Yoritomo sent an advance unit to Kyoto. The advance unit successfully defeated the Taira family, but the unit members looted Kyoto. The looting made people in Kyoto angry with the Minamoto family, saying that even the Taira family never looted. Then, Yoritomo sent a unit to kill the commander of the advanced team. One of the indispensable abilities of a leader is to find an asset of a person and make it function effectively in an organization. In this sense, Yoritomo was a great leader because he detected the natural gift of Yoshitsune Minamoto to be covered later immediately. Although he sent Yoshitsune to Kyoto, Yoritomo never moved from his hometown because he knew very well that he was not a good military commander. Thanks to the natural gift of Yoshitsune Minamoto, the Minamoto army defeated the advanced

unit and the Taira family completely. In short, Yoshitsune was not a politician but a military man, while Yoritomo was not a military man but a politician. Yoritomo Minamoto, head of the Minamoto family, defeated the Taira family and became the military commander who established a samurai government for the first time in Japan. In this sense, Kiyomori Taira opened up the road to and laid the foundation for a samurai government. In the Japanese system, only an emperor can rule Japan, and only a member of the emperor family can be an emperor. What Kiyomori Taira did was to rule Japan under the auspices of the incumbent emperor. In the Heian period, aristocrats owned their lands across the country under the sponsorship of an emperor. They lived in Kyoto, then capital of Japan, and never engaged themselves in the reclamation of rural areas. It was samurais who reclaimed rural areas to create paddy fields and develop cities. Living in Kyoto, the aristocrats lent their ownership rights to samurais and received a certain amount of money in exchange for the lending. That is, samurais were never able to own the land that they cultivate by themselves. Samurais worked hard to reclaim rural areas and became powerful in their respective areas, while paying a fixed amount of money to the aristocrats in Kyoto. It is quite natural that the more powerful samurais became, the stronger their dissatisfaction with the present situations grew. The head of these samurais was the father of Yoritomo Minamoto. In later years, the Taira family was ruined by Yoritomo and his brother Yoshitsune to be covered later. This is an irony of history. He should have killed Yoritomo. In a sense, Kiyomori Taira was a politician and not a military commander. Kiyomori Taira was not able to work out effective measures to settle the dissatisfaction of samurais because he lived in Kyoto and knew nothing about the reality of the rural areas. In some ways, he was not a good politician. Anyway, Kiyomori Taira should be memorized as a great leader to bring samurais to the front stage of politics for the first time in the Japanese history. NHK starting on January 8, Unable to become an emperor, he was the most influential figure in the early days of Japan. China was tremendously powerful in his days, and all Asian countries except Japan were subordinated by China. In his letter, Prince Shotoku expressed his desire to develop cooperative relations between China and Japan on an equal footing. His diplomatic sense is rather reckless from the viewpoint of the Sinocentrism. To make the matter worse, then Chinese emperor was tremendously powerful and tyrannical. Naturally, the Chinese emperor got furious about the personal letter from Prince Shotoku. However, the domestic political turmoil prevented the Chinese emperor from taking retaliatory actions. We Japanese have to remember that the resolute and decisive attitude taken by Prince Shotoku set Japan free from the subordinate position imposed by China and enabled Japan to develop without any inhibition. The enactment of the Constitution of Seventeen Articles is another great achievement of Prince Shotoku. He emphasized the importance of harmony in Article 1 and suggested having discussions to solve a big problem in Article 2. These two articles enormously affected the mindset of Japanese in every respect of activities including politics and business. Today, lots of discussions are under way on various political issues in the Diet, and no diet member dares to take a risk. Playing safe for the sake of election seems to be prevailing in the Diet. As is often the case, one has gone, and one is born. His greatest achievement is that he brought an end to the age of civil wars. He is often said to have only completed the ideas created by Nobunaga Oda who is the most innovative and creative warlord in the Japanese history, but it is not too much to say that he successfully built the foundation for the unity of Japanese under the name of peace. The Tokugawa government is associated with the policy of national isolation, but we have to take note that it never used the phrase national isolation. What the Tokugawa government tried to do was to prevent Japanese from being affected by Christianity that was militant in those days. That is why the Netherlands, a country of Protestants, was allowed to do business with Japanese in Nagasaki Prefecture. Anyway, national isolation helped the government last for such a long period of years. And the peace-loving mindset of Japanese can originate in the peaceful period under the Tokugawa regime. The Tokugawa government did not need military force because of the lasting peace for the years. This is because it was so stunned by the arrival of four steam ships led by Matthew Calbraith Perry of the United States in 1853. Reflecting the easy-going policy of being satisfied with peace, the Meiji government hastily built up military strength to catch up with Western countries. The radical reform changed the mindset of Japanese in some ways and resulted in the disaster in 1945, and now Japanese proclaim the importance of peace. He is a great leader, but he failed to work out measures for samurai warriors. In a sense, Ieyasu Tokugawa established his

government entirely thanks to the efforts of his samurai warriors. Nonetheless, he sacrificed them for the sake of peace. However, abandoning samurai warriors was the right policy to promote peace across the country, however ruthless and merciless it was. To make up for the sacrifice of samurai warriors, the Tokugawa government categorized Japanese people into four classes and gave the samurai warriors the highest class of the four. The profession of samurai was followed by agriculture, industry, and commerce in this order. In the age of civil wars, samurai warriors fought for a reward that was usually land. However, as population grew, land for allocation to samurai warriors for reward grew smaller and there were scarcely any more land for allocation around the time when Ieyasu Tokugawa opened his government.

Chapter 3 : Warrior Clans From The Bloody History Of The Japanese Samurai

The leader of Iga clan, Hattori Hanzo was one of the rare samurai who were also ninja warriors. He was a loyal servant to Tokugawa Ieyasu, who saved his master a few times from certain death. His primary weapon was a spear.

Through centuries of warfare and intrigue, the great samurai clans grappled for control of Japan. Here are some of the most important of those noble families. Confusingly, it is the name of two separate and powerful clans who rose to dominance in different periods. The Hojo of Kamakura reached the high point of their power in the 13th century. The head of the clan became regent for the shogun or warlord, who ruled Japan on behalf of the emperor. For over a hundred years, the Hojo regents were the men behind the throne, rulers in all but name. Then in the 14th century they were overthrown as the emperor himself briefly gained control of the country. The Hojo of Odawara were a powerful force in eastern Japan during the wars of the 16th century. The last clan to hold out against the dominance of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, they clung to their independence even as they withdrew to their great fortress of Odawara. It fell after an extended siege at the start of the 17th century signaling the end of a period of independence by the warrior clans.

Minamoto The Minamoto were a clan from eastern Japan, regarded as backward and uncultured by their rivals. Like their main opponents, the Taira, they were descendants of the imperial family. During the 12th century, they and the Taira fought for control of Japan. Two members of the Minamoto clan played an especially important part in history. Minamoto Yoshitsune, their greatest general, led them to victory against the Taira and is one of the most famous samurais in history. His elder brother Yoritomo created the post of the shogun, the military dictators who ruled on behalf of the emperor for centuries afterward. It led to their warriors committing one of the largest mass suicides in samurai history. Due to their dramatic downfall, legends of ghosts and seas of blood haunted the site of the battle for generations.

Ashikaga One of the several families to hold the shogunate, the Ashikaga came to prominence in the 15th century. Disappointed with the rewards he received, Takauji schemed and then made war to take control from the emperor, installing himself as shogun. His family was eventually brought down by the same combination of machinations and warfare that had raised them up. They reached their peak in the early 15th century when their leader Yoshiaki restored a deposed shogun. His son Yoshitaka was more interested in the arts than in war. When one of his retainers rebelled against him, few warriors rallied to his side. He and his son both committed suicide, ending their line.

Mori The Mori were vassals of the Ouchi. They then went on to become a leading clan in their own right. Two samurai on horseback, wearing armor, Met museum. Unlike many other lords, he succeeded in balancing the need to supply trained warriors with the need to keep enough workers in the rice fields to feed the population.

Asakura One of the more northerly of the clans vying for power in the 16th century, the Asakura saw their greatest victories and defeats in the 15th and 16th centuries. Asakura Yoshikage, as leader of the clan, achieved a significant victory in 1570. By beating the Ikko-Ikki, a religious warrior cult, he contained their expansion. Next, he ran up against Oda Nobunaga, a rising power on his way to dominating Japan. Nobunaga defeated the Asakura at the Battle of Anegawa in 1571. In 1574, Yoshikage led a force to assist one of those allies but was intercepted and defeated by Nobunaga. They too played a leading part in the defeat at Anegawa, losing many men. It was their castle that Yoshikage was marching to relieve when he was defeated in 1574. Following the loss, the Asai were easily defeated, and their leader committed suicide.

Tokugawa By allying themselves with Nobunaga, the Tokugawa rode to prominence with him. After the death of Nobunaga and the man who followed him, Tokugawa Ieyasu emerged into the power vacuum. He defeated his opponents, took control of Japan, and set himself up as shogun. The Tokugawas retained the role for the next two and a half centuries. The Tokugawas oversaw a period of unprecedented peace and unity. They divided and dominated the great clans, keeping their families in Edo as hostages to ensure their good behavior. Many clans had risen and fallen over the centuries. The Tokugawa were one of the few to make their power last.

Chapter 4 : Forever Red: The 15 Most Powerful Red Rangers | CBR

The samurai, members of a powerful military caste in feudal Japan, began as provincial warriors before rising to power in the 12th century with the beginning of the country's first military.

They were feared and respected for their gracefulness in life and their brutality in war. The samurai fought for feudal lords, or daimyo, the most powerful rulers and lords of the country, subordinate only to the shogun. The daimyo, or warlords, would hire samurai to guard their land, paying them in land or food. The daimyo era lasted from the 10th century, all the way to the mid 19th century in Japan, when Japan adopted the prefecture system in the Meiji Restoration. Many of these warlords and samurai became feared and respected throughout the land - some even outside of Japan. In the years following feudal Japan, the legendary daimyo and samurai became the subjects of a romanticized culture that praised their brutality, reputation, and stature. The truth, of course, is often much grimmer - some of these people were little more than justified warlords and murderers. Nonetheless, many famous daimyo and samurai have become hugely popular in modern literature and culture. Before Kiyomori, samurai were mainly seen as hired swordsmen for aristocrats. In , Kiyomori and Minamoto no Yoshitomo head of the Minamoto clan suppressed a rebellion and became the two top warrior clans in Kyoto. Their alliance turned them into bitter rivals, and in Kiyomori emerged victorious over Yoshitomo and had Yoshitomo killed. Thus, Kiyomori became head of the most powerful warrior clan in Kyoto. He rose through the government ranks, and in Kiyomori had his daughter marry the Emperor Takakura. They had a child, Prince Tokihito in Kiyomori died of fever in Tokugawa Ieyasu subsequently discovered Naomasa while hunting. Ii Naomasa rose through the Tokugawa clan ranks, and he garnered mass attention after commanding 3, soldiers to victory in the Battle of Nagakute He fought so valiantly that he elicited praise from the opposing general, Toyotomi Hideyoshi. After helping Tokugawa insure victory during the siege of Odawara , he was given Minowa Castle and , koku unit of measurement , the largest amount of land owned by any of the Tokugawa retainers. He never fully recovered from the wound, but he continued to fight and escaped with his life. He was an outstanding tactician and a legendary warrior, all made more iconic by his missing eye. Terumune was subsequently kidnapped, and he ordered his son to wipe out all of his kidnappers, even if it meant killing him in the process. Masamune obliged, killing everyone - including his father. He was loyal to both. Though he was unpredictable, Masamune was a patron of culture and religion, and he even extended a hand to the Pope in Rome. Of the four, Honda Tadakatsu had the most feared reputation. Tadakatsu was a warrior at heart, and as the Tokugawa shogunate evolved from a military to a civilian political institution, he became increasingly estranged from Ieyasu. He is credited with saving the life of Tokugawa Ieyasu and then helping him to become the ruler of united Japan. The Iga province was eventually eliminated by Nobunaga himself in In he made his most valuable contribution, when he helped future Shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu escape to safety in the Mikawa province, with the help of local ninja clans. He is a popular subject of Japanese folklore. Stories about his birth vary considerably-- some say he was the son of a raped mother, others call him the offspring of a temple god, and many give him the attributes of a demon child. Benkei is said to have defeated men in each battle he was involved in. By age 17, he was 6 ft. He trained in the use of the naginata a long, axe-spear combination weapon , and left the Buddhist monastery around this time to join a secret mountain ascetic sect. On his th duel, he was defeated by Minamoto no Yoshitsune, and became his retainer, fighting with him against the Taira clan. During an ambush some years later, Yoshitsune went to commit ritual suicide seppuku , while Benkei fought on a bridge at the front of a main gate to protect his master. It is said that the ambushing soldiers were afraid to cross the bridge to fight the lone, gigantic man. He was one of the most powerful lords of the era, chiefly remembered for his prowess on the battlefield. He is famed for his honorable conduct, military expertise, and long-standing rival with Takeda Shingen. Kenshin believed in the Buddhist god of war - Bishamonten - and, as such, his followers believed him to be the Avatar of Bishamonten, or the God of War. Kenshin became a young year-old ruler of the Echigo province after wresting power away from his uninspired older brother. Over the years, the two lords would commit themselves to five legendary engagements. In , Kenshin and Shingen fought their biggest battle, the fourth

battle of Kawanakajima. There is a tale during this battle, where Kenshin rode up to Takeda Shingen and slashed at him with his sword. Shingen fended off the blows with his iron war-fan, and Kenshin had to retreat. Shingen made a counter-attack, and many men drowned in a nearby river. The results of the battle are uncertain, as both lords lost over 3,000 men. Although rivals for more than 14 years, Uesagi Kenshin and Takeda Shingen exchanged gifts a number of times. When Shingen died in 1584, Kenshin was said to have wept aloud at the loss of such a worthy adversary. Also of note, Uesagi Kenshin famously defeated the most powerful warlord of the era, Oda Nobunaga, twice.

Chapter 5 : The 12 Most Legendary Real-Life Samurai | TheRichest

Samurai (/ ɛ̃ˈ s ɑː m ɛ̃ˈ r a ɛ̃ˈ /) () were the military nobility and officer caste of medieval and early-modern Japan.. In Japanese, they are usually referred to as *bushi* (æ-!â£«,) or *buke* (æ-!â©¶).

Email Copy Link Copied In the history of most societies, there are groups or classes of people that are forever romanticized in the annals of time. Cowboys and knights are two kinds of people whose lifestyles have been fodder for countless stories of adventure and thrills, largely because the people who lived those kinds of lives often encountered dangerous and thrilling situations with great regularity. Like knights, samurai were the military nobility class of medieval Japan. For hundreds of years, the samurai occupied one of the most sacred roles in Japanese society. Following Bushido was a way for the samurai to internalize the values of frugality, martial arts mastery, service and loyalty, and death before dishonor. Some samurai, thanks to circumstances of inheritance or chance, were able to become warlords in their own right, with their own sworn samurai retainers. Once the word about samurais left Japan, people all over the world took an interest in the history of the samurai. By all accounts, samurai took that responsibility very seriously – certainly more so than the European knights of old. These are the 10 greatest samurai who ever lived. The Sengoku period was characterized by constant warfare between the major military families, and Hojo Ujitsuna entered a world of constant warfare when he was born in Ujitsuna sparked a longstanding rivalry with the Uesugi clan when he took control of Edo castle in , one of the main seats of power in medieval Japan. He expanded the influence of his family throughout the Kanto region, and by the time of his death in the Hojo clan was one of the dominant families in Japan. Beginning at age 16 his life was spent surviving, and indeed thriving, in multiple battles. Hanzo was a loyal retainer to Tokugawa Ieyasu, saving the life of the man who would go on to found the Shogunate that would rule Japan from Edo for over years, from to His status as a powerful and loyal samurai is legendary in Japan, and his name can be found gracing an entrance of the Imperial Palace. He was noted as an exceptional general with sharp military prowess that he used to win many campaigns on the battlefield. His rivalry with Takeda Shingen, another warlord, is one of the most famous stories of the Sengoku period. The two waged war over 14 years, personally engaging in one-on-one battle several times. Kenshin died in from unknown causes that some historians now believe resembled stomach cancer. Born in , as a young man he established himself as a competent general and, along with his brothers, conquered much of the Kyushu region. His success on the battlefield earned him the eternal loyalty of his samurai retainers sworn swords , who fought fiercely for him on the battlefield. Yoshihisa would be the first to unify the entire Kyushu region before being smashed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and his invading army of , men. He appeared on the scene suddenly and began immediately winning notable victories over well-respected armies, eventually controlling 10 of the 11 Chugoku provinces. Musashi was a ronin – a samurai with no master – who lived during the Sengoku period. According to legend he travelled medieval Japan and won hundreds of duels, and his ideas and thoughts on strategy, tactics, philosophy and politics are still studied today. Hideyoshi succeeded his former liege lord, Oda Nobunaga, and began to implement social and cultural changes that would shape Japan over the next years. He banned sword ownership for all individuals who were not samurai, and began a nationwide hunt to consolidate all swords and weapons to the samurai class. Although it consolidated military power to the samurai class, it was also the biggest step towards peace that had been made during the entire Sengoku period.

Chapter 6 : Japanese clans - Wikipedia

daimyou - Powerful local samurai or powerful feudal lords (powerful leaders from clans were also sometimes called warlords [*daimyou*]). *castle town* - A town built around a castle; with the castle usually being built on top of a hill.

This edict allowed the Japanese aristocracy to adopt the Tang dynasty political structure, bureaucracy, culture, religion, and philosophy. With an understanding of how the population was distributed, Emperor Monmu introduced a law whereby 1 in 3rd adult males were drafted into the national military. These soldiers were required to supply their own weapons, and in return were exempted from duties and taxes. It was called "Gundan-Sei" ja: Those of 6th rank and below were referred to as "samurai" and dealt with day-to-day affairs. Although these "samurai" were civilian public servants, the modern word is believed[by whom? Military men, however, would not be referred to as "samurai" for many more centuries. At this time the 7th to 9th centuries, the Imperial Court officials considered them to be merely a military section under the control of the Imperial Court. While the emperor was still the ruler, powerful clans around Kyoto assumed positions as ministers, and their relatives bought positions as magistrates. To amass wealth and repay their debts, magistrates often imposed heavy taxes, resulting in many farmers becoming landless. These clans formed alliances to protect themselves against more powerful clans, and by the mid-Heian period, they had adopted characteristic Japanese armor and weapons. Originally, the Emperor and non-warrior nobility employed these warrior nobles. In time they amassed enough manpower, resources and political backing, in the form of alliances with one another, to establish the first samurai-dominated government. As the power of these regional clans grew, their chief was typically a distant relative of the Emperor and a lesser member of either the Fujiwara, Minamoto, or Taira clans. Though originally sent to provincial areas for fixed four-year terms as magistrates, the toryo declined to return to the capital when their terms ended, and their sons inherited their positions and continued to lead the clans in putting down rebellions throughout Japan during the middle- and later-Heian period. Because of their rising military and economic power, the warriors ultimately became a new force in the politics of the Imperial court. The victor, Taira no Kiyomori, became an imperial advisor and was the first warrior to attain such a position. He eventually seized control of the central government, establishing the first samurai-dominated government and relegating the Emperor to figurehead status. However, the Taira clan was still very conservative when compared to its eventual successor, the Minamoto, and instead of expanding or strengthening its military might, the clan had its women marry Emperors and exercise control through the Emperor. The Taira and the Minamoto clashed again in, beginning the Genpei War, which ended in. The victorious Minamoto no Yoritomo established the superiority of the samurai over the aristocracy. Instead of ruling from Kyoto, he set up the shogunate in Kamakura, near his base of power. Initially, their responsibility was restricted to arresting rebels and collecting needed army provisions and they were forbidden from interfering with Kokushi officials, but their responsibility gradually expanded. Thus, the samurai-class appeared as the political ruling power in Japan. Ashikaga shogunate Various samurai clans struggled for power during the Kamakura and Ashikaga shogunates. Zen Buddhism spread among the samurai in the 13th century and helped to shape their standards of conduct, particularly overcoming the fear of death and killing, but among the general populace Pure Land Buddhism was favored. Japan mustered a mere 10, samurai to meet this threat. The invading army was harassed by major thunderstorms throughout the invasion, which aided the defenders by inflicting heavy casualties. The Yuan army was eventually recalled and the invasion was called off. The Mongol invaders used small bombs, which was likely the first appearance of bombs and gunpowder in Japan. Samurai and defensive wall at Hakata. Completed in, this wall stretched for 20 kilometers around the border of the bay. It would later serve as a strong defensive point against the Mongols. The Mongols attempted to settle matters in a diplomatic way from to, but every envoy sent to Japan was executed. This set the stage for one of the most famous engagements in Japanese history. In, a Yuan army of, men with 5, ships was mustered for another invasion of Japan. The casualties and damage inflicted by the typhoon, followed by the Japanese defense of the Hakata Bay barrier, resulted in the Mongols again recalling their armies. Himeji Castle, built in the 14th century A rack of antique Japanese samurai matchlock rifles tanegashima, Himeji

Castle. The thunderstorms of and the typhoon of helped the samurai defenders of Japan repel the Mongol invaders despite being vastly outnumbered. These winds became known as kami-no-Kaze, which literally translates as "wind of the gods". This is often given a simplified translation as "divine wind". The kami-no-Kaze lent credence to the Japanese belief that their lands were indeed divine and under supernatural protection. During this period, the tradition of Japanese swordsmithing developed using laminated or piled steel, a technique dating back over 2,000 years in the Mediterranean and Europe of combining layers of soft and hard steel to produce a blade with a very hard but brittle edge, capable of being highly sharpened, supported by a softer, tougher, more flexible spine. The Japanese swordsmiths refined this technique by using multiple layers of steel of varying composition, together with differential heat treatment, or tempering, of the finished blade, achieved by protecting part of it with a layer of clay while quenching as explained in the article on Japanese swordsmithing. The craft was perfected in the 14th century by the great swordsmith Masamune. The Japanese sword katana became renowned around the world for its sharpness and resistance to breaking. Many swords made using these techniques were exported across the East China Sea, a few making their way as far as India. Issues of inheritance caused family strife as primogeniture became common, in contrast to the division of succession designated by law before the 14th century. Invasions of neighboring samurai territories became common to avoid infighting, and bickering among samurai was a constant problem for the Kamakura and Ashikaga shogunates. Sengoku period The Sengoku jidai "warring states period" was marked by the loosening of samurai culture, with people born into other social strata sometimes making a name for themselves as warriors and thus becoming de facto samurai. Japanese war tactics and technologies improved rapidly in the 15th and 16th centuries. Use of large numbers of infantry called ashigaru "light-foot", due to their light armor, formed of humble warriors or ordinary people with naga yari a long lance or naginata, was introduced and combined with cavalry in maneuvers. The number of people mobilized in warfare ranged from thousands to hundreds of thousands. Groups of mercenaries with mass-produced arquebuses began playing a critical role. By the end of the Sengoku period, several hundred thousand firearms existed in Japan and massive armies numbering over 100,000, clashed in battles. Azuchi-Momoyama period Oda, Toyotomi and Tokugawa Oda Nobunaga was the well-known lord of the Nagoya area once called Owari Province and an exceptional example of a samurai of the Sengoku period. Consecutive victories enabled him to realize the termination of the Ashikaga Bakufu and the disarmament of the military powers of the Buddhist monks, which had inflamed futile struggles among the populace for centuries. Attacking from the "sanctuary" of Buddhist temples, they were constant headaches to any warlord and even the Emperor who tried to control their actions. He died in 1582 when one of his generals, Akechi Mitsuhide, turned upon him with his army. Importantly, Toyotomi Hideyoshi see below and Tokugawa Ieyasu, who founded the Tokugawa shogunate, were loyal followers of Nobunaga. Hideyoshi defeated Mitsuhide within a month, and was regarded as the rightful successor of Nobunaga by avenging the treachery of Mitsuhide. In the end, only Ieyasu tastes it. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who became a grand minister in 1597, himself the son of a poor peasant family, created a law that the samurai caste became codified as permanent and hereditary, and that non-samurai were forbidden to carry weapons, thereby ending the social mobility of Japan up until that point, which lasted until the dissolution of the Edo shogunate by the Meiji revolutionaries. It can be said that an "all against all" situation continued for a century. The authorized samurai families after the 17th century were those that chose to follow Nobunaga, Hideyoshi and Ieyasu. Taking advantage of arquebus mastery and extensive wartime experience from the Sengoku period, Japanese samurai armies made major gains in most of Korea. Shimazu Yoshihiro led some 7,000 samurai and, despite being heavily outnumbered, defeated a host of allied Ming and Korean forces at the Battle of Sacheon in 1592, near the conclusion of the campaigns. In spite of the superiority of Japanese land forces, ultimately the two expeditions failed, though they did devastate the Korean peninsula. The causes of the failure included Korean naval superiority which, led by Admiral Yi Sun-sin, harassed Japanese supply lines continuously throughout the wars, resulting in supply shortages on land, the commitment of sizeable Ming forces to Korea, Korean guerrilla actions, wavering Japanese commitment to the campaigns as the wars dragged on, and the underestimation of resistance by Japanese commanders. In the first campaign of 1592, Korean defenses on land were caught unprepared, under-trained, and under-armed; they were rapidly overrun, with

only a limited number of successfully resistant engagements against the more experienced and battle-hardened Japanese forces. During the second campaign, in , however, Korean and Ming forces proved far more resilient and, with the support of continued Korean naval superiority, managed to limit Japanese gains to parts of southeastern Korea. Hasekura Tsunenaga , a famous samurai who converted to Catholicism in Madrid in Social mobility was high, as the ancient regime collapsed and emerging samurai needed to maintain a large military and administrative organizations in their areas of influence. Most of the samurai families that survived to the 19th century originated in this era, declaring themselves to be the blood of one of the four ancient noble clans: Minamoto , Taira , Fujiwara and Tachibana. In most cases, however, it is hard to prove these claims. Tokugawa shogunate Samurai were the ruling class during the Tokugawa shogunate. During the Tokugawa shogunate , samurai increasingly became courtiers, bureaucrats, and administrators rather than warriors. With no warfare since the early 17th century, samurai gradually lost their military function during the Tokugawa era also called the Edo period. They were strongly emphasized by the teachings of Confucius â€” BC and Mencius â€” BC , which were required reading for the educated samurai class. The leading figures who introduced confucianism in Japan in the early Tokugawa period were Fujiwara Seika â€” , Hayashi Razan â€” and Matsunaga Sekigo â€” The conduct of samurai served as role model behavior for the other social classes. With time on their hands, samurai spent more time in pursuit of other interests such as becoming scholars. Edo, or Five albumen prints joined to form a panorama. Navy steamships in Perry used his superior firepower to force Japan to open its borders to trade. Prior to that only a few harbor towns, under strict control from the shogunate, were allowed to participate in Western trade, and even then, it was based largely on the idea of playing the Franciscans and Dominicans off against one another in exchange for the crucial arquebus technology, which in turn was a major contributor to the downfall of the classical samurai. From , the samurai army and the navy were modernized. A naval training school was established in Nagasaki in Naval students were sent to study in Western naval schools for several years, starting a tradition of foreign-educated future leaders, such as Admiral Enomoto. French naval engineers were hired to build naval arsenals, such as Yokosuka and Nagasaki. Photo of a samurai with katana , c. The samurai finally came to an end after hundreds of years of enjoyment of their status, their powers, and their ability to shape the government of Japan. However, the rule of the state by the military class was not yet over. In defining how a modern Japan should be, members of the Meiji government decided to follow the footsteps of the United Kingdom and Germany , basing the country on the concept of noblesse oblige. The Imperial Japanese Armies were conscripted, but many samurai volunteered as soldiers, and many advanced to be trained as officers. Much of the Imperial Army officer class was of samurai origin, and were highly motivated, disciplined, and exceptionally trained. The last samurai conflict was arguably in , during the Satsuma Rebellion in the Battle of Shiroshima. This conflict had its genesis in the previous uprising to defeat the Tokugawa shogunate, leading to the Meiji Restoration.

Chapter 7 : Great Leaders in Japan

By integrating the character traits of a Samurai Warrior, this two-day, adventure-based leadership development program will have you focused on realizing your BIG, Positive Outcomes.

Share2 Shares 2K The samurai were the great warriors of Feudal Japan who were respected and feared for their gracefulness in peace and brutality in war. Dignified by the strict code of honor that bound them, the samurai were more than ready to give their own life than suffer a harsh existence of dishonor. People still marvel centuries after the height of their reign at the innovations in warfare and politics that were born from the minds and hearts of a class of warriors like none other. She is believed to have fought and survived through the Genpei War, the first major war between samurai clans and a place of origin for many popular attributes that would become associated with the samurai warrior over the years. It was here at the battle of Awazu where Tomoe even took the head of a rival samurai, an incredible honor for any samurai who defeated an opposing warrior in combat. After the battle, Tomoe was said to have retired from being a warrior, instead taking up an occupation as a nun, though it is also said that she became the wife of a samurai named Wada Yoshimori who she supposedly pledged her devotion after being defeated by him in battle. That tradition never faded as the samurai grew, and for all the great swordsmen who garner mention throughout the history of the samurai, there are just as many archers whose skills were worth mentioning. One of such men was Minamoto Tametomo whose legend may very well precede the skills that forged it. Tametomo is said to have had a left arm that was up to six inches longer than his right, which could generate far stronger shots due to the increased distance of which he could draw the bowstring. Tametomo committed seppuku in as the Taira captured him and severed the tendons in his left arm, leaving him useless for battle. In the end, he decided to take his own life by way of seppuku, one of the first samurai on record to do so. Starting as a small-time leader with only five hundred men to his credit, Masashige rose through the ranks serving as a general loyal to the emperor Go-Daigo during the Nanbokuchō Wars. Leading up to the battle with Takauji, Kusunoki pleaded with his emperor to refrain from a direct battle with him, opting instead for the guerrilla-based tactics that had served them well to that point. Upon the removal of the Tokugawa shogunate during the Meiji Restoration in the mid-19th century Kusunoki Masashige became a national symbol of loyalty, and his image was again used in World War II in propaganda posters to keep soldiers loyal to the emperor. The ronin were samurai who paid no allegiance to a master for one reason or another, and as such they found their work as mercenaries. Some worked for the benefit of the people as they were hired to protect small villages or for rich men who could do little to defend themselves. Others traveled to other countries or worked as pirates. Incessant conflicts between warring clans brought samurai masters to an early grave, thus breeding thousands of ronin who wandered the countryside as independent warriors who were often seen as inferior by their fellow samurai. Of these many wandering swordsmen, none were more popular than Miyamoto Musashi. Few samurai have been celebrated in modern culture more throughout the course of history than Musashi, who has seen countless works of film and literature devoted to his gaudy resume as a swordsman and duelist that has often been embellished to the point of absurdity, sometimes by Musashi himself. Still, for all of the uncertainties that remain about his legend, the fact that Musashi was a magnificent combatant still remains indisputable. At thirteen, Musashi experienced his first duel against which he won with little difficulty. In 1612, Musashi fought in his most famous duel against his most daunting opponent, master swordsman Sasaki Kojiro. Kojiro was exceptional in his precision and speed with the nodachi, a curved sword much like the katana but several feet longer. In an effort to unsettle his opponent, Musashi arrived over three hours late for the duel, and after heckling Kojiro and coaxing the first attack out of him, Musashi killed him almost effortlessly with a single blow from a wooden sword he had apparently crafted from one of his oars. Just before his death in 1645, Musashi authored the *Go Rin No Sho* or *The Book of Five Rings*, a book describing various techniques of the sword that is still widely studied by both martial artists and businessmen. As a subordinate of Tokugawa, Tadakatsu was a veteran of over a hundred battles, and never once was he bested by an opposing general in combat. On top of that, Tadakatsu never suffered a significant wound in all of his years of service, hence his appropriating of the

nickname above. Few samurai, however, fit the bill better than Date Masamune who struck fear into all of those who crossed his path due to his violent nature and reckless approach in times of war. Masamune was born as the eldest son to the renowned Date clan who served honorably in the Genpei Wars. As such, it was expected that Masamune would succeed his father as the head of the clan, but after losing the sight in his right eye to a case of smallpox as a child, he was deemed unfit to take control of the clan by his mother. After suffering several defeats as an inexperienced general early in his career, Masamune gained his footing as a leader and soon became one of the most feared men in all of Japan. When his father said that there was nothing he could do to control his wild son, the Hatakeyama family kidnapped Terumune, and were subsequently trailed by an enraged army led by Masamune who was ordered by his father to wipe out all of his kidnappers, even if it meant killing him in the process. Masamune did as he was told, and Terumune, along with all of the other kidnappers were killed. When Masamune finally confronted an enraged Hideyoshi, he did so fearlessly with the expectation that he would be executed on the spot for his defiance. Fortunately for Masamune, Hideyoshi decided to spare him. Despite the cloud of suspicion that always hung over the head of Masamune regarding his true intentions and the fear he invoked due to his seemingly heartless nature in times of war, Masamune held a successful reign over his territory under the supervision of shogun Tokugawa. Masamune was known for opening the doors to his province to foreigners and to Christian missionaries, and with an undying hunger for foreign technology, he initiated a voyage to Rome to begin relations with the Pope, and along the way his ship, the Date Maru, become a part of the first Japanese voyage to sail around the world. What Tokugawa was, however, was a pragmatic man who dealt only in common sense and took calculated risks to put himself in the best position to climb to the top of the pack. He played the field of feudal Japan like pieces on a board game, and when it came to capitalizing on the strengths and weaknesses of his contemporaries, there was no-one better at doing so than Ieyasu. At age six, Ieyasu nearly found himself to be a casualty of this conflict as he was kidnapped by the same Oda clan whom he would eventually ally himself with as an act of hostility toward his father and his allegiance to the Imagawa clan, however, a year later the young Ieyasu was rescued by the Imagawa clan and returned home. Ieyasu fought his first battle for the Imagawa clan at age sixteen, and at twenty, following the appointing of the cunning Oda Nobunaga as the head of the Oda clan, Ieyasu showed flashes of his wisdom that would later become famous as he switched his allegiance over to the powerful Oda clan. The next few years strengthened the core of his power by surrounding himself with strong generals and allies whom he rewarded with sections of the land they conquered together. Already at the ripe old age of sixty, Tokugawa lasted as the shogun for only a handful of years, abdicating himself of his powers only three years after being crowned shogun. As a retired shogun, Ieyasu still had one loose-end to tie up: Living in Osaka Castle, Tokugawa stationed a siege of the area led by his son Hidetada, and after refusing an order to vacate in , Ieyasu ordered an army of , troops to attack all of those in the castle, in an assault that killed Hideyori, his entire family, and all of his supporters. Ironically, the Tokugawa shogunate that was born from the most violent period in Japanese history brought in a new age of peace that lasted for years and effectively brought an end to the samurai who relied on the contentious times of war to stay relevant. With the constant wars that crippled or completely destroyed entire clans who vied for power, the Takeda clan, led by Takeda Shingen, was one of the few constants that stood out on a landscape dominated by the likes of Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu. Takeda was a veteran of over forty campaigns, including the five battles of Kawanakajima, and during the fourth battle, one that is seen as the bloodiest that the samurai had ever seen, Takeda was met by his rival Uesugi Kenshin in a one-on-one battle where he fought off a mounted attack with little more than a lessen, or battle fan. It is widely believed that with his superior military power, Shingen was the only daimyo who had a chance to stand up against the superpower Oda Nobunaga in his quest to take over Japan, however, he chose to focus his efforts on more local problems that pertained to the provinces under his control. Shingen is also credited with being one of the first warlords to widely integrate firearms into his regimen of soldiers as he believed that these new marvels of war technology would eventually render bows and arrows obsolete. Coincidentally, it is speculated that Shingen himself was killed by a gunshot wound. Hideyoshi would only continue to prosper from here as he blossomed as a strong leader that built upon the resolute demeanor that Nobunaga had himself possessed.

Ironically, Osaka Castle would be the site where his son Hideyori was killed by Tokugawa, effectively ending the line of Toyotomi. Along with Osaka Castle, Hideyoshi also put into effect many groundbreaking laws that sought to end rebellion against his regime and bring an organization to Japan that the country had been lacking. Both the Separation Edict and the sword hunt brought an end to rebellion under his leadership as the lowly peasants no longer had a means to arm themselves, and soon after that, he banned samurai from living with the common populace and from taking part in common occupations such as farming or trading to further bring a dividing line between the class of samurai and that of the peasants. Only a year before his death, Hideyoshi made one of his final statements as a leader as he sought to suppress Christianity in Japan by ordering the execution of twenty-six Christians that he used to deter Japanese citizens who looked to convert to Christianity. Following a long and costly war that saw the preeminent daimyo in Japan – Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin – greatly weakened, many clans broke out in war with the hopes of filling the void of power left by them, though none of them held sufficient power to risk marching upon the capital to take the throne. In 1568, when Yoshimoto Imagawa of the Suruga province finally attempted to take the capital of Kyoto, all that stood in his path was a simple conquering of the Owari province and the small time daimyo who ruled it, Oda Nobunaga. Imagawa marched with an army of twenty-five thousand men that outnumbered the small forces of Nobunaga eight to one. Before he could even realize what was happening, Imagawa was killed, and Nobunaga had completed the unlikeliest victory in Japanese history. Apart from being a magnificent general, Nobunaga was a gracious leader who carried his intellect over to the field of business and politics. He reconstructed an economy based exclusively on agriculture to one that operated as a free market and focused more on the manufacturing of goods and services, and he expanded international trade during his reign to include countries in Southeast Asia as well as Europe. To streamline his growing economy, Nobunaga commissioned the construction of roads between towns under his control which incidentally helped not only with trading but also in transporting his massive armies across his land. With Nobunaga surrounded and trapped within his temple that had been set aflame, he retreated away from the fighting where his few troops were being slaughtered and committed seppuku.

Heart of a Samurai Leadership Program Graduation will begin on day 2 at pm. Powerful, Positive Thoughts To Start Your Day. by Mike Jones. \$

While everyone escaped in fear, Mifune stood proud against him, willing to protect his comrades. During the conferences with the Kage he is generally the one who keeps the meetings productive and on track, usually by using his lack of association with shinobi and their past conflicts to act as a neutral mediator. In the anime, Mifune is also shown to be comically forgetful. Appearance Mifune in his samurai uniform. He has black eyes with distinct wrinkles underneath them, a grey goatee and moustache. During the Kage Summit and the meetings before the war, he wore a simple purple kimono-like outfit and sandals, but when the Fourth Shinobi World War began, he started wearing samurai armour, much more traditional in appearance when compared to the ones worn by his subordinates: He also wears a belt, to which is attached a pouch and his sword: Kurosawa in his waist. Underneath his armour he wears a simple dark suit along with gloves and sandals. He also wore a light green suit of armour during this time period with a breastplate that covered only the upper right side of his chest and bandages over his forearms. Abilities As a master samurai, Mifune is undoubtedly powerful in battle. As the general of the samurai, Mifune has command of the rest of them and, by extension, is a highly capable leader. He is widely renowned as a master of *Iai* – a style of swordsmanship which involves the user rapidly unsheathing his blade to slash the enemies, and then re-sheathing it after completing the attack. Like his subordinates, he is also capable of channelling chakra mainly lightning release chakra through his sword to increase its cutting power or send a wave of chakra with a swift swing of his sword as a powerful long-range attack. When the Kage arrived in the country, Mifune welcomed them alongside his attendants Okisuke and Urakaku. When the meeting began, Mifune acted as a moderator, making sure that all of the Kage allowed the others a chance to speak and remain civil. When the suggestion of an alliance between the Five Great Shinobi Countries was raised, Mifune asked that, as a neutral party, his input be respected by the Kage. Mifune and Sasuke clash. When the other Kage protested, Mifune pointed out why they are unfit for the job: Mifune mobilised the samurai to apprehend Sasuke. Sasuke eluded the samurai, along with the Raikage, the Kazekage and their bodyguards and eventually made it to the Summit hall; Mifune was the first to confront him. He managed to surprise Sasuke with his sword attack, but it was nevertheless deflected. Mifune complimented Sasuke on his sword skills. As the Kage united against Sasuke and he was almost killed, Tobi appeared and saved him. He also offered to have the Land of Iron and the samurai join the alliance. Countdown The heads of the Alliance meet. To make preparations for the approaching conflict with Akatsuki, Mifune goes to Kumogakure to meet with the other heads of the Alliance. He agrees with sending the Nine-Tails and Eight-Tails into hiding to prevent inward fighting from weakening the alliance and, when their location is later exposed to Akatsuki through the actions of Kisame, suggests sending a small elite force as backup, because too large a force will be discovered by the enemy. The Tsuchikage is sent to reinforce the defences. As this will be the last time all six leaders of the alliance will be together, he shares his belief that their unity will bring them victory. Fourth Shinobi World War: Mifune is placed in charge of the Fifth Division. Mifune is later seen recuperating after the first day of war along with the rest of his division. During the next day, he faced off against Chiyo and Kimimaro alongside his fellow samurai. As many of his men are skewed by Kimimaro, Chiyo began forcing other samurai to attack their allies with her puppetry. Climax Mifune attacks the Ten-Tails with his Flash. Cutting down several limbs of the tree in one go, he noted that the samurai would also show their resolve on the battlefield. New Era Shikamaru Shinden: In Other Media Mifune is a playable character in the following video games:

Chapter 9 : The Age of the Samurai: | Asia for Educators | Columbia University

You find yourself in the Edo period and the daughter of the leader of one of the most powerful alliances in Kyoto. Your boyfriend is a powerful samurai leader within the alliance, who would risk his life to save yours in an instance.

Iron helmet and armor with gilt bronze decoration, Kofun era , 5th century. This edict allowed the Japanese aristocracy to adopt the Tang Dynasty political structure, bureaucracy, culture, religion, and philosophy. With an understanding of how the population was distributed, Emperor Mommu introduced a law whereby 1 in 3 adult males was drafted into the national military. These soldiers were required to supply their own weapons, and in return were exempted from duties and taxes. Those of 6th rank and below were referred to as "samurai" and dealt with day-to-day affairs. Although these "samurai" were civilian public servants, the name is believed[by whom? Military men, however, would not be referred to as "samurai" for many more centuries. At this time the 7th to 9th century the Imperial Court officials considered them merely a military section under the control of the Imperial Court. Ultimately, Emperor Kammu disbanded his army. To amass wealth and repay their debts, magistrates often imposed heavy taxes, resulting in many farmers becoming landless. Initially, their responsibility was restricted to arresting rebels and collecting needed army provisions, and they were forbidden from interfering with Kokushi Governors, but their responsibility gradually expanded and thus the samurai-class appeared as the political ruling power in Japan. Minamoto no Yoritomo opened the Kamakura Bakufu Shogunate in Originally the emperor and nobility employed these warriors. In time, they amassed enough manpower, resources and political backing in the form of alliances with one another, to establish the first samurai-dominated government. As the power of these regional clans grew, their chief was typically a distant relative of the emperor and a lesser member of either the Fujiwara , Minamoto , or Taira clans. Though originally sent to provincial areas for a fixed four-year term as a magistrate, the toryo declined to return to the capital when their terms ended, and their sons inherited their positions and continued to lead the clans in putting down rebellions throughout Japan during the middle- and later-Heian period. Because of their rising military and economic power, the warriors ultimately became a new force in the politics of the court. The winner, Taira no Kiyomori , became an imperial advisor, and was the first warrior to attain such a position. He eventually seized control of the central government, establishing the first samurai-dominated government and relegating the emperor to figurehead status. However, the Taira clan was still very conservative when compared to its eventual successor, the Minamoto, and instead of expanding or strengthening its military might, the clan had its women marry emperors and exercise control through the emperor. The Taira and the Minamoto clashed again in , beginning the Gempei War , which ended in Samurai fought at the naval battle of Dan-no-ura , at the Shimonoseki Strait which separates Honshu and Kyushu in The victorious Minamoto no Yoritomo established the superiority of the samurai over the aristocracy. Instead of ruling from Kyoto, he set up the Shogunate in Kamakura, near his base of power. When the samurai began to adopt aristocratic pastimes like calligraphy, poetry and music, some court aristocrats in turn began to adopt samurai customs. Despite machinations and brief periods of rule by emperors, real power was then in the hands of the Shogun and the samurai. Zen Buddhism spread among the samurai in the 13th century and helped to shape their standards of conduct, particularly overcoming fear of death and killing, but among the general populace, Pure Land Buddhism was favored. Japan mustered a mere 10, samurai to meet this threat. The invading army was harassed by major thunderstorms throughout the invasion , which aided the defenders by inflicting heavy casualties. The Yuan army was eventually recalled and the invasion was called off. The Mongol invaders used small bombs , which was likely the first appearance of bombs and gunpowder in Japan. The Japanese defenders recognized the possibility of a renewed invasion, and began construction of a great stone barrier around Hakata Bay in Completed in , this wall stretched for 20 kilometers around the border of the bay. This would later serve as a strong defensive point against the Mongols. The Mongols attempted to settle matters in a diplomatic way from to , but every envoy sent to Japan was executed. This set the stage for one of the most famous engagements in Japanese history. In , a Yuan army of , men with 5, ships was mustered for another invasion of Japan. The casualties and damage inflicted by the typhoon, followed by the

Japanese defense of the Hakata Bay barrier, resulted in the Mongols again recalling their armies. Samurai and defensive wall at Hakata. These winds became known as kami-no-kaze, which literally translates as "wind of the gods. In the 14th century, a blacksmith called Masamune developed a two-layer structure of soft and hard steel for use in swords. This structure gave much improved cutting power and endurance, and the production technique led to Japanese swords katana being recognized as some of the most potent hand weapons of pre-industrial East Asia. Many swords made using this technique were exported across the East China Sea, a few making their way as far as India. To avoid infighting, invasions of neighboring samurai territories became common and bickering among samurai was a constant problem for the Kamakura and Ashikaga Shogunates. Sengoku period Edit The Sengoku jidai "warring-states period" was marked by the loosening of samurai culture with people born into other social strata sometimes making names for themselves as warriors and thus becoming de facto samurai. In this turbulent period, bushido ethics became important factors in controlling and maintaining public order. Japanese war tactics and technologies improved rapidly in the 15th and 16th century. Use of large numbers of infantry called ashigaru "light-foot," due to their light armor , formed of humble warriors or ordinary people with nagayari a long lance or naginata , was introduced and combined with cavalry in maneuvers. The number of people mobilized in warfare ranged from thousands to hundreds of thousands. Nanban Western -style samurai cuirass , 16th century The arquebus , a matchlock gun, was introduced by the Portuguese via a Chinese pirate ship in and the Japanese succeeded in assimilating it within a decade. Groups of mercenaries with mass-produced arquebuses began playing a critical role. By the end of the Sengoku Period, several hundred thousand firearms existed in Japan and massive armies numbering over , clashed in battles. Taking advantage of its mastery of the arquebus, Japanese samurai made major gains in most of Korea. Kato Kiyomasa advanced to Orankai present northeastern region of China and crossed the Korean border, but withdrew when it was clear he had outpaced the rest of the Japanese invasion force. Shimazu Yoshihiro led 7, Samurai and defeated the tens of thousands of soldiers of Ming and Korean allied Forces at the Battle of Sacheon in Social mobility was high, as the ancient regime collapsed and emerging samurai needed to maintain large military and administrative organizations in their areas of influence. Most of the samurai families that survived to the 19th century originated in this era, declaring themselves to be the blood of one of the four ancient noble clans: Minamoto , Taira , Fujiwara and Tachibana. In most cases, however, it is hard to prove these claims. Oda Nobunaga was the well-known lord of the Nagoya area once called Owari Province and an exceptional example of a samurai of the Sengoku Period. He came within a few years of, and laid down the path for his successors to follow, the reunification of Japan under a new Bakufu Shogunate. Oda Nobunaga made innovations in the fields of organization and war tactics, heavily used arquebuses, developed commerce and industry and treasured innovation. Consecutive victories enabled him to realize the termination of the Ashikaga Bakufu and the disarmament of the military powers of the Buddhist monks, which had inflamed futile struggles among the populace for centuries. Attacking from the "sanctuary" of Buddhist temples, they were constant headaches to any warlord and even the emperor who tried to control their actions. He died in when one of his generals, Akechi Mitsuhide , turned upon him with his army. Hideyoshi defeated Mitsuhide within a month, and was regarded as the rightful successor of Nobunaga by avenging the treachery of Mitsuhide. At last, only Ieyasu tastes it. Toyotomi Hideyoshi , who became a grand minister in , himself the son of a poor peasant family, created a law that the samurai caste became codified as permanent and hereditary, and that non-samurai were forbidden to carry weapons, thereby ending the social mobility of Japan up until that point, which lasted until the dissolution of the Edo Shogunate by the Meiji revolutionaries. It can be said that an "all against all" situation continued for a century. The authorized samurai families after the 17th century were those that chose to follow Nobunaga, Hideyoshi and Ieyasu. Large battles occurred during the change between regimes, and a number of defeated samurai were destroyed, went ronin or were absorbed into the general populace. With no warfare since the early 17th century, samurai gradually lost their military function during the Tokugawa era also called the Edo period. By the end of the Tokugawa era, samurai were aristocratic bureaucrats for the daimyo, with their daisho , the paired long and short swords of the samurai cf. Theoretical obligations between a samurai and his lord usually a daimyo increased from the Genpei era to the Edo era. They were strongly emphasized by the teachings of Confucius and Mencius ca BC ,

which were required reading for the educated samurai class. Bushido was formalized by several influential leaders and families before the Edo Period. Bushido was an ideal, and it remained fairly uniform from the 13th century to the 19th century — the ideals of Bushido transcended social class, time and geographic location of the warrior class. Bushido was formalized by samurai such as Imagawa Ryoshun as early as the 13th century. The conduct of samurai served as role model behavior for the other social classes. With time on their hands, samurai spent more time in pursuit of other interests such as becoming scholars.