

Name:

Date:

Early/Medieval Japan Worksheet

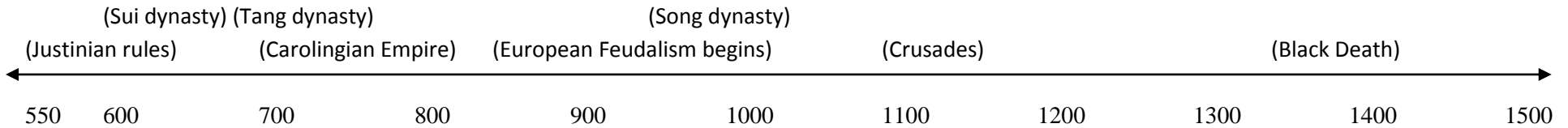
Part I: homework

If you've done the notes on 8.3 and the geography assignment, you're done with this part! Congratulations – this will help you to do the rest of the sheet.

Part II: Timeline and mini-chart

Use your notes and/or the book to do this part. (pp. 263-266)

1. Fill in the timeline below with at least five important items from Japanese history, 550CE-1500CE.



2. Fill in the mini unit chart below with at least one important item from each category for Japan during this time period.

Religion/Culture	Trade/Economics	Geography / Migration	Social Structures	Government Structures	War

Part III: Samurai Mythbusters

Complete the table below using evidence from your textbook (p. 265), from the videos we watch in class, from your own knowledge and the article on the back.

3 ideas about Samurai: use textbook, videos, memory	Are these truths or myths?	What evidence do you have? Use any of the sources.
1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.

Samurai - Not Exactly What We Thought They Were

Excerpted from Bowdoin College Academic Spotlight, November 03, 2003

The myth of the Samurai is just that. The folkloric vision of the Samurai — a loyal warrior, ready to die for his cause, riding into battle with his sword — bunk. In fact, the Samurai, or at least the ideal with which we are so familiar, were born in peace.

The prevailing image of the Samurai is not rooted in how warriors actually fought in 14th-century Japan. Instead, the image was created by the Samurai themselves, during the 17th century, when they felt a need to justify their own existence — so says Bowdoin Assistant Professor of Asian Studies Thomas Conlan.

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For example, in one document, a warrior has described a wound, a gash, that sounds quite serious, but someone else later wrote over it in red "shallow." Someone was checking to see if the soldier had exaggerated his wounds and found that he had.

"I saw these documents and I went, well, it's possible, through wounds to reconstruct pretty precisely the way people fought," Conlan said. "It turned out to be a very rich topic...I realized they're acting very different than we assumed."

For example, Samurai rarely used swords in battle — instead they most often used arrows. So the idea of the sacred Samurai sword isn't exactly accurate. Their weapon of choice was actually the pike, which was essentially a spear. Swords were very expensive, so they weren't used often, which also explains why they survived.

Other surprising findings:

Loyalty has been grossly exaggerated. Warriors were interested in reward and recompense. Conlan found evidence that warriors moved from one side to another depending on the reward they would receive.

Conlan found that warriors, above all, cared about preserving their land, but didn't care specifically about dying for a lord. Conlan has read reports written by warriors about attacking, and then choosing to retreat when they began experiencing casualties.

"They're really looking out for their own interests," he said.

Even the idea of *hari kari* — opting for suicide rather than facing dishonor — wasn't as noble as the Samurai wanted us to believe. In the 14th century, warriors would

sometimes kill themselves, but it was usually when they were about to be captured and executed. They thought it was better to kill themselves than to let their enemies do it. But even though this occurred, according to Conlan its prevalence has been exaggerated.

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In a time of peace, with a stable government, and no more land rights, the Samurai needed to justify their existence. They began promoting that "the way of the Samurai was death," and exaggerating their sense of honor and loyalty. They also encouraged the idea that suicide was an ideal of the warrior, but even in the 17th century, suicides were often pragmatically motivated: If a warrior was executed, his material possessions were not passed on to his heirs. If he killed himself prior to execution, however, his possessions went to his heirs, so some made that choice to protect inheritance rights.

"When you have peace, you can say, the way of the warrior is death. But that's a luxury that you can only say in a time of peace. In a time of war, you can't say that," Conlan said. "I just think their 14th-century compatriots were far more sensible."

When 19th-century Americans encountered the ideal of the Samurai, it made a profound impression on them, and they disseminated the myth. In Japan, itself, the popularity of the Samurai ideal has fluctuated, Conlan said, and now the Samurai ideal is more popular in the United States than in Japan — just look at Star Wars, which created in the Jedi a new version of the Samurai.

Other evidence is the response Conlan gets to his findings: People get upset when they find that the myth they believe in is not reality.