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STRATEGY AND WARFARE IN ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL JAPAN

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The powerful Japanese state of the 7th and 8th centuries experienced a gradual but persistent devolution of authority. As administrative and coercive power decentralized, strategic considerations, the rationale for the use of armed force, shifted from the defense of the state's boundaries to the assertion of authority within Japan.

The ancient Japanese state established a conscript army, but difficulties in conquering the north caused conscription to be abandoned in 792 in favor of a standing army that could protect this northern territory and secure its vital resources. Civil wars arising in the 12th century led to the establishment of a warrior government (*bakufu*, or shogunate) in the eastern city of Kamakura and the formation of a durable land right, that of *jitō*, which was thought to be outside the purview of the state to confiscate, although these limits on the state were not formalized until after a short but significant war in 1221.

The Kamakura shogunate worked with the court to defend Japan against Mongol invaders, with the court focusing on rituals to protect the state and Kamakura mobilizing a defending army. In the aftermath of the Mongol invasions, resources were distributed to institutions to ensure that Japan would be defended through the indefinite manning of fortifications and the performance of ritual acts of defense. This continued through the fall of the Mongol Yüan Dynasty in 1368.

An attempt by the emperor Go-Daigo to reestablish the court's dominance initiated a 60-year civil war, caused the collapse of the Kamakura shogunate in 1333, and the rise of a second warrior regime, the Ashikaga. Different visions of how the state should function and be legitimated propelled the conflict, with some preferring rigorous administrative control and others relying on Buddhist rites to legitimize their authority.

Warriors fought to preserve their autonomy, but the expenses of war eroded it, and the promulgation of the *hanzei* edict in 1352 caused a devolution of the powers of the state and led to the rise of regional magnates, appointed to the office of *shugo*, who wielded power and mobilized their own armies. Late in the 16th century, the hegemon Toyotomi Hideyoshi reconstituted overarching state authority and limited the ability of political entities within Japan to resort to violence.¹





Ancient Japan and the Conquest of the North

For the ancient Japanese state, strategy was built around the need to occupy and defend territory. The Japanese state in the 7th through 9th centuries was a powerful one, capable of distributing land to every individual in the archipelago and redistributing once in a generation. Military force was used to control and defend territory, such as defensive structures built in the 7th century, when fears of an invasion by the Chinese Tang Dynasty were rife.

After the Tang threat dissipated, Japanese strategy shifted from defense to conquest and control of the far north of the main island of Honshū after the discovery of 13.5 kilograms (900 *ryō*) of alluvial gold in Oga district, Mutsu province, in 749. The discovery of gold necessitated the establishment of two nearby castles in 767: one at Monō, located 12 kilometers to the east of where the gold was most abundant, and a second at Koreharu, 25 kilometers to the north. These forts allowed the state to physically control the regions where alluvial gold could be extracted in earnest.

These efforts were not uncontested, and the indigenous *emishi*, who occupied the mountainous regions of the north, tried to reconquer these regions. In 774, they attacked Monō; in 780, they conquered Koreharu and burned the administrative center of Tagajō, which marked the onset of 38 years of war in the north. In the end, the Japanese court forces, led by a general named Sakanoue no Tamuramaro, triumphed, and then built the fort of Isawa in 811 to control the Kitakami region in the far north. Thus, during the 8th and 9th centuries, strategy consisted of the construction of a network of fortifications designed to control contested territory from which gold could be extracted. Likewise, a standing Six-District Army would ensure stability in the north, although disputes over who controlled this force eventually devolved into minor wars.



Strategic Use of Violence

For ensuing centuries, warfare was not an element of determining policy but a fraught means of securing local authority. Two governors, Minamoto no Yoriyoshi and his son Yoshiie, fought to secure control of the Six-District Army and waged the “Former Nine Years War” (1051–1063) and the “Latter Three Years War” (1083–1087). Although Yoriyoshi and Yoshiie triumphed against their adversaries, who commanded the armies of the north, neither man received rewards for his actions, and both were forced to return to the capital in relative disgrace. The resort to violence in an attempt to amass power proved disqualifying.

Not until the 12th century did armed struggles influence politics, as succession disputes caused the so-called Hōgen and Heiji disturbances of 1156 and 1159. Here, skirmishes in the capital erupted following a succession dispute between two rulers over who could best exercise sovereign authority (*chiten no kimi*). Retrospective accounts, such as the *Gukanshō*, reveal that a force of 37 horse riders was large for the day. In contrast to the conflicts in the north, military success translated into influence. The Hōgen Disturbance ensured that emperor Go-Shirakawa would exercise authority, while the Heiji Disturbance of 1159 would allow one faction of his followers, led by Taira no Kiyomori, to oust another led by Fujiwara no Nobuyori and Minamoto no Yoshitomo.²



Limiting the Power of the State

The so-called “Genpei” wars of 1180–1185 initiated a transformation of Japan’s history, in that violence now served to limit the power of the state. The war was fought in response to the destabilizing power of Japan’s rulers, the Retired Emperors,³ and culminated with the *ad hoc* establishment of the *jitō* office by Minamoto no Yoritomo. The war limited the untrammelled power of the court by prohibiting Japan’s sovereign from dispossessing *jitō*. The court recognized these rights in exchange for Yoritomo’s military support for its weakened authority.

Yoritomo spent much of his later years establishing an administrative and judicial framework to prevent violence from arising. He did, however, attack the commanders of the Six-District Army, the Fujiwara of the north, who had autonomously exercised authority as commanders of the forces stationed there since Minamoto no Yoshiie had been recalled in 1087. Yoritomo mobilized many *jitō*, and his successful campaign allowed him to be promoted to the post of *sei-i-taishōgun*, a legacy of the 9th-century command of Sakanoue no Tamuramaro. This office was only briefly held by Yoritomo after his successful campaign; although important in that it allowed him to command an army, he preferred a more prestigious court post later in life.

The legal foundations of the *jitō* position remained unresolved, however, as did the survival of Yoritomo’s warrior government, centered in Kamakura. His sons died in 1203 and 1219, and this led Go-Toba, Japan’s sovereign, to assert authority over *jitō* appointments and openly declare war on Kamakura in 1221.⁴

Kamakura, led by the family of Yoritomo’s wife, the Hōjō, resisted Go-Toba. They had the advantages of fielding battle-hardened survivors of the wars of the 1180s and realizing the importance of mobilizing quickly. They had prepared for a lightning campaign, as a mere six weeks after Go-Toba had declared war, their forces defeated the disorganized army of Go-Toba and returned triumphantly to the capital of Kyoto. Letters from the time exude confidence and an awareness that, if their armies were to appear, support would coalesce among the wavering *jitō*.⁵

After a short, pitched battle, Go-Toba surrendered and was banished. Kamakura then had the final say in determining imperial succession and established a branch office in Kyoto. *Jitō* rights were strengthened and enshrined in a legal code, the Jōei Formulary.⁶ Thus, the civil war served further to limit the powers of the state.

The Mongol Invasions

Kamakura’s law encouraged a sense of judicial right, in that *jitō* came to believe that their holdings were inalienable. The regime was a judicial government, although it also established *shugo* protectors to apprehend criminals and provide order in the provinces. Kamakura was not prepared, however, for Mongol invasions of Japan in 1274. Here, building on their successful conquest of Korea, Kublai Khan of the Yüan Dynasty attempted to invade Japan. Yüan forces landed on the coast of the westernmost island of Kyushu, and Japan’s scattered defenders could not prevent the invaders from setting fire to Hakata and the Dazaifu, located miles inland. Still, one of their commanders was shot in the face by a Japanese archer, and it does seem that the Mongols took advantages of favorable winds to return to the Asian continent in 1274.

Both the court and Kamakura engaged in defensive efforts. Kamakura built walls along Hakata, the harbor most suited for landing by an invading force, and mobilized its warriors for guard duty there. Kamakura briefly attempted to collect enough ships to invade Korea



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and aid anti-Mongol Korean rebels there, but these preparations came to naught, as the size and small number of Japanese seaworthy craft meant that the projection of naval power was beyond Japan's abilities.

The need to guard against the invaders caused a strategic transformation of institutions of the state, recalibrated for ongoing defense efforts. This caused two reforms. First, lands were bestowed on religious institutions (temples and shrines) so that teams of religious specialists could ritually curse the invaders indefinitely. In addition, one *shugo* (or, protector) was granted lands in central Hakata harbor. Previously, *shugo* had merely been an officer responsible for rounding up criminals and mobilizing warriors for guard duty, but this grant allowed the *shugo* to direct defenses.⁷ This institutionalization of authority and granting lands to an office rather than a person ensured that defense efforts would be ongoing and indefinite, rather than being *ad hoc* in nature.

Epitomizing these ongoing defense efforts, the harbor at Hakata was ringed with low-lying walls and thousands of Japanese warriors. The Mongol invaders were unable to land, and although they could capture the islands of Iki, Tsushima, and Takashima, just off the coast of Kyushu, they could not make significant landfall at Hakata. Japanese warriors harassed them in small boats. The later arrival of reinforcements, the ex-Song navy, captured after the defeat of that dynasty in 1275, did not aid in these efforts because a typhoon hit the fleet shortly after its arrival. The naval commanders inexplicably anchored the boats in the harbor, and most of the fleet sank in 1281.⁸

Competing Visions of State and Legitimacy

The 14th century witnessed two competing political visions. One was that of the warriors who increasingly felt that Kamakura was unjust because it, for the first time in centuries, confiscated lands from warriors for administrative infractions, such as failing to respond to summons.⁹ The other belonged to Emperor Go-Daigo and his allies, who resented that the court could not control the office of *jitō*. These two factions coalesced and succeeded in destroying Kamakura. Immediately after Go-Daigo triumphed, however, he asserted authority over the *jitō* post and negated all Kamakura laws and policies initiated since 1221. This caused the *jitō* to rebel against Go-Daigo; some supported survivors of the Kamakura regime, a hopeless task, while others coalesced around Ashikaga Takauji, a general who had defected from Kamakura, and proved instrumental in destroying the regime. He attacked Go-Daigo, initiating a war between two courts, the Southern Court of Go-Daigo, and his supporters, and the Northern, which was closely allied with the Ashikaga, who founded their own warrior government in 1338.¹⁰

The wars of the 14th century reveal a variety of strategies. With the outbreak of the war, Kamakura dispatched armies to quell rebellions and capture enemies, but with an expanding revolt, and the defection of one of their commanders, Kamakura's forces were overwhelmed and destroyed. Go-Daigo established a unified Kenmu regime, which only governed for two short years until civil war erupted again and was waged intensely through 1338. The years 1333 through 1338 witnessed a high percentage of fatalities as armies were annihilated.¹¹

Thereupon wars of attrition predominated. The campaigns from 1338 through 1350 consisted of grinding sieges of a cluster of supporting castles. From 1339 through 1343, battles in the east, for example, were waged to capture Seki and Taihō, two prominent castles underpinning Southern Court defenses there in the east. Besieging these mutually supporting forts linked by swamps and waterways proved challenging, and sappers tried to



undermine their walls before ultimately wearing down the defenders, albeit at the great cost of lives. Logistics proved a limiting factor in these campaigns as individual warriors had to purchase their armor and provisions.¹² As warriors had to pay for their provisions and suffered, they had a vested interest in a relatively short war; longer conflicts proved ruinous.

The wars of the 14th century proved to be unusually complex, as competing statist and non-statist goals fueled the onset of the conflict. Go-Daigo and his supporters desired to reconstitute Japan with a powerful court with untrammelled authority. To many warriors, Go-Daigo was a despot, and they were willing to fight to defend their rights. These competing goals propelled the ongoing conflict. Ultimately, two distinct political visions came to the fore. After Go-Daigo's death, Kitabatake Chikafusa, the dominant figure in the Southern Court, espoused transparency of rules and regulations and felt that despotic emperors should defer to advisors like himself. Chikafusa felt so strongly about this that he personally led defenses in the east while his son was briefly a contender to be the supreme general in Japan, although he was killed in battle in 1338.¹³

Ashikaga Takauji led resistance to the Southern Court forces of Go-Daigo and Kitabatake Chikafusa. He had the support of the monk Kenshun, a scion of the Hino family. The Hino were rivals to the Kitabatake, and Kenshun himself was an esoteric (Shingon) Buddhist monk who was opposed to Go-Daigo and his supporters, including Kitabatake Chikafusa, because they had tried to make secret Shingon rites widely known. Likewise, Chikafusa espoused nominalism, in that he felt that objects, like the imperial regalia, determined legitimacy, while Kenshun, to the contrary, emphasized the importance of rituals in making a reality. In 1351, Kitabatake Chikafusa captured the Northern Emperors, took their regalia, and by doing so attempted to destroy the Northern Court. Kenshun relied on a discarded mirror box, which he treated as if it were the regalia, to legitimate a new emperor. He also performed kingly rites for the Ashikaga to enhance their authority, and his ritual prowess aided the Ashikaga in their triumph.¹⁴

Campaigns between the Ashikaga and the Kitabatake entailed reducing enemy castles, and the longstanding need to occupy strategic areas determined the parameters of the conflict. Epitomizing this struggle, for example, are the documents recounting the actions of Date Kagemune and how he conquered Tokuyama castle, an outpost supporting the Southern Court. After reducing outlying forts, Kagemune attacked Tokuyama castle. He did so by advancing to the east of the structure, occupying the supporting castles of Hagitawa and Go-ōdo, and then surrounding the castle from three sides, which forced the defenders to flee.¹⁵

The example of Date Kagemune reveals, however, that another type of campaign, characterized by the rapid movement of forces, existed simultaneously. In 1350, the nearly triumphant Ashikaga shogunate fractured into two warring entities, both of which also fought against supporters of the Southern Court. The battles between the Ashikaga leaders were intense, scattered, and rapidly fought. Kagemune quickly traveled over twenty miles from Suruga to the Satta pass, where Ashikaga Tadayoshi was defeated and later killed. The war between the Ashikaga was less about occupying territory than defeating major threats; the campaigns were rapid and mostly involved capturing or killing generals; but fatalities among the rank and file were lower than in other periods.¹⁶

Thus, the wars of the 14th century had a statist dimension (Go-Daigo), as well as a resistance to authority (warriors) and the battles themselves were an extension of these political struggles as well as the more ideological conflicts between Hino Kenshun and Kitabatake Chikafusa. Finally, a struggle for supremacy erupted between Ashikaga Takauji and his brother Tadayoshi.



The Hanzei and the Rise of Regional Warrior Authority

One epochal change was the *hanzei*, whereby half of a province's revenues could be used by a *shugo* for military provisions. Ashikaga Takauji used this to attract support and defeat his rivals,¹⁷ but this devaluation of central authority caused the fundamental nature of the military conflict to shift. *Shugo* became incipient magnates, and had ample revenue to prosecute wars, while the very warriors who had fought to preserve their autonomy ended up losing it.

Over the course of the 15th century, *shugo* outstripped non-*shugo* warriors in wealth, military power, and authority. Many warriors joined these *shugo* organizations. Most of Japan's provinces had powerful *shugo*, but not all. In some provinces, *shugo* were incapable of wielding effective power. For example, late in the 14th century, Ōuchi Hiroyo, a powerful *shugo* of multiple provinces (Suō, Nagato), was divested of two others (Aki and Iwami) by the Ashikaga; shortly before this happened, as *shugo*, he made these two provinces ungovernable by granting the warriors living in these provinces broad immunities to *shugo* rule. Hiroyo's descendants were able to govern the home provinces of Suō, Nagato, but neither the Ōuchi nor their rivals could effectively govern Aki and Iwami, and in these provinces, local warriors continued to thrive in the absence of a powerful lord.

Shugo authority was vulnerable at times of succession. Unlike land holdings, which were partible, *shugo* posts were not, save for a few exceptional cases (Ōmi province between the Sasaki and Rokkaku families; Izumo and Ōki, split between the Rokkaku and the Kyōgoku, and Izumi, divided for two branches of the Hosokawa). Because *shugo* inheritance was unitary, times of inheritance often devolved into bloodshed at times of succession, as factions coalesced around rival contenders.

One unusually persistent and violent *shugo* family, the Hatakeyama, resorted to open warfare to settle their inheritance in the 1450s. They fought for years, and during these struggles, one candidate trained a force of infantrymen to use pikes. This caused tactical transformation as formations of foot soldiers would become capable of defeating cavalymen on the open battlefield. These battles were not policy-driven as much as focused on personalities and who could wield the powers inherent in this office.

These succession disputes encouraged factionalism within and among the powerful *shugo* houses, and from the mid-1460s through 1477–1478, a major war erupted in Japan between two coalitions: the Eastern Army, which supported the feckless Ashikaga shogun Yoshimasa, and a Western Army, dominated by the Ōuchi family, to attempt to supplant the Ashikaga during the latter half of the 15th century, and the Yamana. A decisive victory proved elusive. The rise of defensive tactics, pioneered by the Hatakeyama, led to a stalemate; neither the Ōuchi nor the Ashikaga and their allies could safely withdraw, but they could supply their forces indefinitely and so for a decade these armies remained. Ultimately, the Ōuchi accepted Ashikaga authority in exchange for having their own extensive holdings confirmed. Once again, military capabilities, and limitations, determined the parameters of political authority.

Fortifying Regional Control

Political and administrative skills determined the degree to which a *shugo* lord had to rely on fortification and violence to secure his authority. The Ōuchi, who controlled western Honshū, exercised effective control over the western seas of Japan, and so they did not fear attacks from the west and south. In addition, as they conquered territories, they reassigned the holdings of warriors from different regions so that none would wield enough autonomous power to rebel. They were so skilled in dividing the holdings of their supporters that they did not





fear rebellions in most quarters save for Iwami, which was not easily controllable. They believed that an enemy could attack from that direction, located northeast of Yamaguchi. There, at a 352-meter-high hill, looming over the Sekishū road (*kaidō*), they built the Watarigawa castle, which blocked this northeastern route.¹⁸

By having effective control over a broad region, the Ōuchi did not fortify their settlement of Yamaguchi. On the contrary, they commissioned guards and cleaning crews to keep Yamaguchi safe and clean; so lax were fortifications that they would even complain about how random people were wandering through their garden and peeping into their mansion.¹⁹ So secure were the Ōuchi that they never bothered to fortify their mansion during their heyday.

Ōuchi wealth and success caused them to embark on a bold plan to move Japan's court to their city of Yamaguchi. Opposition to this led most of their major followers to rebel.²⁰ The penultimate Ōuchi lord, Yoshitaka, fled but was killed and Yamaguchi was destroyed. The coup was an expression of political dissent and widespread dissatisfaction with Yoshitaka's policies. Yoshitaka was vulnerable because he did not heavily fortify and did not expect nearly all his major retainers to rise against him at the same time.

Most other *shugo* lacked the ability to control expansive regions, or create settlements, so they preferred overlooking the vital roads of their domains. The Yamana constructed a castle on a hill, Konosumiyama, resided at its base and could retreat into the castle in times of need. The castle itself overlooked the major routes of their domain. They did not rely on stone to fortify the castle but rather constructed earthen dry moats and trenches and established a network of mutually supporting structures on the mountainside. They designed their castle so that only a few thousand could readily defend it against a larger attacking army. The castle stood from the late 14th century through most of the 16th century and was not captured until 1569. This perfect mountain castle fell only when large armies were mobilized that could effectively besiege the castle, and overwhelm its defenses. Hashiba (later Toyotomi) Hideyoshi, one of Oda Nobunaga's generals, notched one of his first major victories when he defeated the Yamana defenders of this castle because he led an army of approximately 20,000.

Political cohesion and administrative skill and innovation allowed for greater military authority, which in turn expanded the realm of political possibilities through conquest. Thus, political and military successes tended to be mutually reinforcing, but in its essence, the goal of politics was the ability to engage in violence. To cite one example, the Hōjō *shugo* surveyed their lands and assessed military service in proportion to their assessed resources at hand. This allowed them to field larger armies by linking tax revenues directly to military mobilization.²¹ Accordingly, single castles, even well-designed and defended ones like the Yamana's Konosumiyama, became vulnerable to the larger armies of the latter half of the 16th century.

Some *shugo*, such as the Uesugi, countered the rise of larger armies by creating encampments and adopting a style of mobile warfare, but eschewing a single stronghold, or for that matter, close control of any region.²² They fought well, adopted new weapons, and managed to survive. An alternate approach was for besieged leaders to build and defend castles that were built on steep hills. Ōuchi Yoshinaga, the last lord of Yamaguchi who came to power after the coup of 1551, decided to fortify the steep (nearby 338-meter-high) mountain of Kōnomine and oversaw the construction of a castle at the top of the nearby mountain. This structure was not completed, and Yoshinaga himself was defeated and died in 1557. The castle could not aid him, but in 1569 the Mōri, the new lords of Yamaguchi, retreated to Kōnomine to hold off an uprising by Ōuchi Teruhiro, who tried to restore Ōuchi rule.





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Teruhiro had occupied Yamaguchi for only ten days, but he could not take the castle and had to flee. Kōnomine, unlike the earlier castles, had some stone walls. Stone had only been previously used in ancient Japan, when Korean construction techniques were utilized to help defend Japan in the 660s. Epitomizing Korean connections, the castle of Mizuki was built in 664, and its construction techniques closely resemble those of the Korean castle of Sami, guarding the capital of the Baekje state from 538 until its collapse in 660. Although Mizuki and Sami relied solely on hardened earth, the castle of Kaneda, built on the island of Tsushima in 667, relied on 2.8 kilometers of stone walls. Tsushima was a vulnerable site, being located close to Korea, but when the threat of foreign invasion abated, these stone structures were abandoned quickly.

For centuries, earthworks had been more than adequate for defensive fortifications, as they ably defended against arrows and fire, and stoneworks provided no discernable advantage. This changed in the aftermath of the Mongol invasions. The Mongol invaders possessed catapults and could fire stone projectiles and hollow, gunpowder-filled shells as well. These projectiles required more durable defenses, and accordingly, earthen structures were supplemented with stone and guarded by warriors drawn from nine provinces from the island of Kyushu.

The next time that stone walls came into use was in the early 16th century when the Ōuchi founded a temple called Ryōunji. The Ōuchi carefully accumulated granite boulders, which came from a nearby river located near the construction site of the temple. The method of construction, whereby stones were carefully lined up and supplemented with pieces of schist, was time-consuming and required great technical skill. These walls were more a sign of Ōuchi power than other defensive measures because the temple, although it sat astride an important route, was not a fort. Nevertheless, stones shored up weak spots in the earthen defenses of mountain castles such as Shōrakuji, a castle built on a 338-meter-high hill, that the Rokkaku had manned since the 14th century. This haphazard addition of stones did not make up for Rokkaku deficiencies in administration and control, and the relatively isolated Shōrakuji castle was sacked in 1568, right around the same time that the Yamana's Konosumiyama castle, which had no stonework, fell in 1569.

Because of the success of the steep Kōnomine castle in warding off an attack in 1569, the Yamana, whose authority had collapsed in Tajima in 1569 with the fall of the Konosumiyama castle, founded the Arikoyama castle in 1574. The castle held out until the Yamana were defeated by the forces of Oda Nobunaga, who passed it to his adversaries. The walls were made of stone hewn the top of the mountain. The structure was formidable but difficult to supply. These defensive castles of Arikoyama, or Kōnomine, remained strategically important, but their influence was fleeting because they could not withstand long sieges by large armies.

New Structures and Patterns of Authority

The increasing size of armies and the sudden fragility of previously formidable castles led to changes in castle-building techniques. The most notable example of this new style was Imori castle, the headquarters of the ruthless warlord Miyoshi Nagayoshi from 1560 through 1564. These walls, discovered in 2018, represent the oldest example of extensive stone fortifications used continuously for castle walls. Yet although more expansive than some mountain castles, it still was, save for its use of stone, not so dissimilar from the castles of centuries before.²³ Nagayoshi and his successors were ousted by Oda Nobunaga, who in turn



constructed impressive new castles, first in Kyoto, and then at Azuchi. The latter castle had impressive stone walls, far grander than Nagayoshi's. Although the stone helped defend against cannons, the center of his walls had a great stairwell. The structure was as much a monument to power as a defensive structure. This new model of authority would become the symbol of warrior power for centuries. Reflecting the declining strategic (if not political) importance of castles, Azuchi was easily burned during a coup in 1582.

Oda Nobunaga wielded authority at a time when armies were rapidly expanding in size. Nobunaga mastered the art of battles of deception. He most notably destroyed rivals, like the Takeda, by feinting and misleading an opponent to believe that one wing of his army would switch sides midway through the battle. Because of that, they were lured into a pitched battle, suffered high casualties, and ultimate defeat. The military victory enabled him to consolidate his authority, but the primacy of warfare in determining political authority proved limiting, as Nobunaga's general Akechi Mitsuhide attacked and killed him in 1582.

Violence served as the basis for authority, but Nobunaga's successor, the general who became known as Toyotomi Hideyoshi, succeeded in transforming Japan. He first confirmed the holdings of many warriors and then commanded them to serve in his armies. Taking advantage of the larger size of armies Hideyoshi, in turn, commanded truly massive forces. He then proved able to quell all opposition within Japan, and furthermore, in the 1590s, he twice oversaw invasions of Korea.

Hideyoshi nevertheless transformed Japan by trying to limit violence. He did so by creating a warrior order. Those who chose to have warrior status, the samurai, had the right to possess swords, and get income for lands, but not "own" them, while others, who stayed on these lands, became peasants who could not in principle be armed. Violence was prohibited as a recourse, and hence the autonomy that warriors possessed finally ended. Hideyoshi made monopolization of power the goal of his politics.²⁴ In addition, castles became the center of warrior authority and the core of newfound cities, reflecting their political rather than strategic significance. Thereupon warfare ceased to be a method of judicial recourse or politics, and strategy once again became focused on the fundamental defense of the Japanese state.

Notes

- 1 For an overview of the age, see Thomas D. Conlan, *Samurai and the Warrior Culture of Japan, 471–1877* (Indianapolis, 2022), xii–xxix and Conlan, "Warfare in Japan, 1200–1550," in *The Cambridge History of War, Volume 2: War and the Medieval World*, eds. A. Curry and D.A. Graff, vol. 2 (Cambridge, 2020), 523–53. Noted studies of the early military organization include Karl Friday, *Hired Swords* (Stanford, 1992), and William Wayne Farris, *Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan's Military 500–1300* (Cambridge, 1992).
- 2 Thomas Conlan, *Samurai and the Warrior Culture of Japan, 471–1877*, 26–7. 3 Jeffrey Paul Mass, *Yoritomo and the Founding of the First Bakufu* (Stanford, 1999).
- 4 Thomas Conlan, "Warfare in Japan, 1200–1550," 525–8.
- 5 Conlan, *Warrior Culture of Japan*, 36–8.
- 6 For a translation of this code, see Conlan, *Warrior Culture of Japan*, 42–60.
- 7 Thomas Conlan, "From Ad Hoc to Ongoing: The Mongol Invasions and the Institutionalization of Authority of Japan," presented at Mongols on the Margins, University of California, Los Angeles (February 22, 2013), <http://www.international.ucla.edu/apc/centralasia/article/130661>.
- 8 See Thomas Conlan, *In Little Need of Divine Intervention: Takezaki Suenaga's Scrolls of the Mongol Invasions of Japan* (Ithaca, 2001), and *Warrior Culture of Japan*, 81–92.



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- 9 Thomas Conlan, *State of War: The Violent Order of Fourteenth Century Japan* (Ann Arbor, 2003), 198–210; and for sources, *Warrior Culture of Japan*, 104–8.
- 10 Conlan, *State of War*, 7–11; for primary sources, *Warrior Culture of Japan*, 100–117 and 121–8.
- 11 Conlan, *State of War*, 53–69.
- 12 Conlan, *State of War*, 99–104. For an illuminating cache of letters illuminating these difficulties, see *Warrior Culture of Japan*, 154–68.
- 13 Thomas D. Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol: An Age of Ritual Determinism in Fourteenth Century Japan* (New York, 2011), 57–9 and 69–72.
- 14 Conlan, *Sovereign to Symbol*, 14–31ff.
- 15 For the documents, see *The Suruga Date Collection*, Kyoto and Princeton Universities, <https://komonjo.princeton.edu/suruga-date/themes.html>, and for an animation of the campaign, <https://komonjo.princeton.edu/suruga-date/map.html>.
- 16 Conlan, *State of War*, 57.
- 17 Conlan, *State of War*, 85, 106, and 227–8.
- 18 I visited this region with Wada Shūsaku, October 20, 2022; see also <http://blog.livedoor.jp/tssune3/archives/52211717.html> for an informative blog (in Japanese).
- 19 Conlan, *Warrior Culture of Japan*, 197.
- 20 For the attempt to move the capital and the fall of the Ōuchi, see Thomas Conlan, “The Failed Attempt to Move the Emperor to Yamaguchi and the Fall of the Ōuchi,” *Japanese Studies* 35.2 (September 2015): 1–19; and “Ōuchi Yoshitaka no sento keikaku” (Ōuchi Yoshitaka’s Plan to Move the Capital) *Yamaguchi ken chihōshi kenkyū* 123 (June 2020): 14–28.
- 21 Thomas Conlan, *Samurai: Weapons and Fighting Techniques* (London, 2022), 131–3. See also Michael Birt, “Warring States: A study of the Go-Hōjō Daimyō and domain, 1491–1590” (Ph.D. thesis, Princeton University, 1983); and “Samurai in Passage: The Transformation of the Sixteenth Century Kantō,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 11:2 (1985): 369–99.
- 22 David Spafford, *A Sense of Place: The Political Landscape in Late Medieval Japan* (Cambridge, 2013), 169–213.
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