



YonderMun'26
HCC: Sengoku Jidai
Study Guide

Co-Under Secretary General – Mehmet Emir Çakmak
Academic Assistant – Arda Arman

1. Letter From the Secretary General

2. Letter From the Under Secretary General

Dear Delegates,

Yöndermun'26 kicks off soon, and I be very thrilled.

I am Mehmet Emir Çakmak. Serving as your USG feels like a real honor.

What stands out to me is how this role lets me tag along on your MUN adventure, helping out every step of the way in this whole academic ride. This study guide lays out the basics for your committee's topics. But honestly, it is just the launchpad. I urge you all to dig deeper - do your own solid research, really get into your nation's stances, views, and goals. That extra effort pays off big time.

Your delegates have more on your plate than just arguing points. Think sharp, negotiate smart, team up for solutions that actually make sense and hit home. Watch how you deliver those ideas too. Clear talk, a diplomatic touch, showing respect - those keep things moving forward without a hitch.

Best regards,

Mehmet Emir Çakmak

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Yöndermun'26

3. Letter from Academic Assistant

Distinguished delegates,

It is my utmost pleasure and honor to hereby welcome you to Yonder MUN 2026. I am Arda Arman and I have been graciously invited to serve as the Academic Assistant of the HCC – Sengoku Jidai committee. I hope that all of you can get into the atmosphere of this crisis committee; negotiate with one another, plan ahead, improve your domain and – my personal favorite – wage beautiful wars. My goal was to make you see beyond the macro-scale effects of events and discover the beauty over the little details of which you will, hopefully, use in your well-thought 1000-page directives.

Don't forget that your main source of information for the committee should be from this guide, hence I urge all of you to dig deep into this Study Guide, learn the concepts and the history so that you can use them throughout the committee.

I will end my letter with a quote from Tokugawa Ieyasu, the unifier of Japan: “Persuade thyself that imperfection and inconvenience are the natural lot of mortals, and there will be no room for discontent neither for despair”.

Sincerely,
Arda Arman

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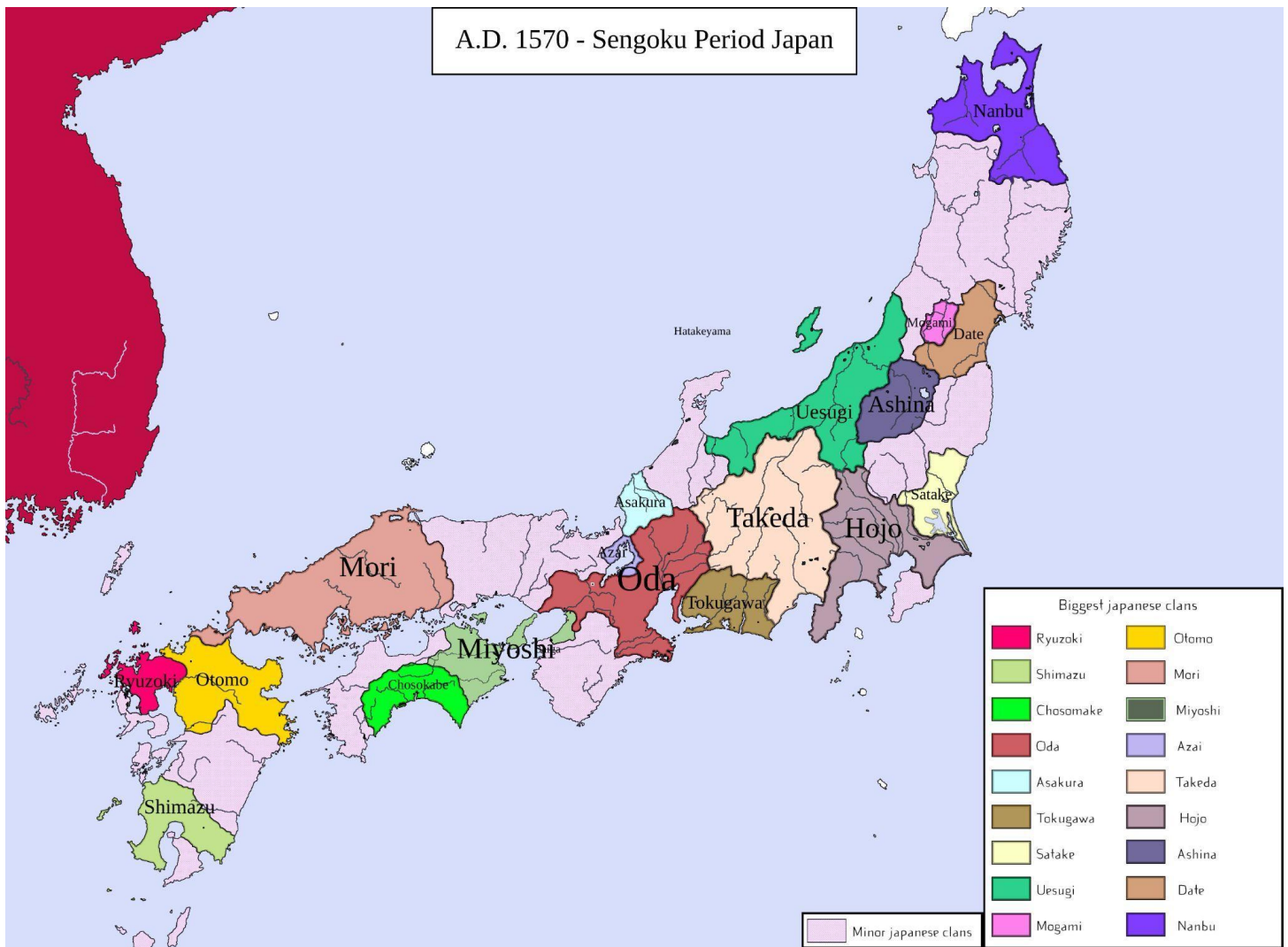


Figure 4.1. Map of Japan after the Battle of Anegawa (1570)

5. Committee Structure

This is a Crisis Committee. A crisis committee is a face-paced committee structure where delegates instead of recommending solutions in a manner common in General Assembly committees but rather directly implement them. The implementation the delegates come up with is enforced via substantive documents they personally write. The different types of documents include bills, amendments, doctrines and the famous directives.

Bills could be thought of law propositions issued by the state while amendments as modifications over accepted bills.

Doctrines are a set up general instructions over certain topics such as economics but more commonly military. It could have sets of precise instructions that would be followed upon a specific circumstance.

Directives on the other hand are direct instructions that encompass a purpose, a viable and realistic implementation method of the purpose, and the aimed outcome. Directives have various types:

- Personal Directive: It generally encompasses all types of directives. Never mind the name 'personal directive' as it could be enforced by the government. It being personal does not mean that its authority is solely restricted depending on the person who wrote it.
- Information Directive: As the name suggests it is written to obtain information about certain topics. The directive should consist of direct and precise questions.
- Top Secret Directive: The main difference of this directive is that as the name suggests the methods within the directive will be classified. If successful, the outcome of the directive would be announced to the whole committee whilst leaving out the issuer. Else if unsuccessful, both the outcome and the issuer would be announced, exposing the issuer. This type of directive should not be shown to the chair board as they have no authority over such directives and can intervene if the directive threatens their assigned characters goals.
- War Directive: As the name suggests this directive is only written for war. It is by far the type of directive that is most beloved by the average crisis enjoyers. The war directive should be increasingly detailed compared to a personal directive and still be in line with the principles of it.
- Joint Directive: A joint directive can be used in cases of multiple issuers, and it could be a personal, top secret or a war directive.
- Committee Directive: It is essentially a joint directive with the issuers as the entire committee.

Upon writing a directive the most common suggestion you will receive is to answer the questions why, who, what, where, when and how. A better suggestion would be to first write a base of your directive while thinking about the said questions and later think about all the

possibilities where your set of instructions could fail and prevent those by including circumstantial procedures.

5.1. Topic & Embarkation

The committee sets foot in Japan during the Sengoku Era. In this era, Japan is divided amongst families who constantly have conflicts with one another. The emperor has lost his effective authority while only preserving his symbolological authority. In this situation each family had formed a Clan. The Clans that controlled most of the castles, temples and cities within a province were considered to have owned the province.

Conflicts occurred among the clans over castles, ambitions to capture more cities in hopes of more tax revenue and to have more influence in Japan. These conflicts sometimes resembled wars but most of the time there were minor battles that were concentrated on a specific province over 10-15 castles such as the Battle of Okehazama.

While historians argue on the specific dates of the period it is commonly accepted as it began with the Onin War in 1467 and came to an end in 1590 with the Odawara Conquest. Since the Lords that took part in the Onin War are all dead after 30 years our committee cannot cover all the Sengoku Era. Instead, for the purposes of this committee, it will embark over the duration of the latter half of the 16th century.

5.2. Agenda & Expectations

The agenda of this committee is Open Agenda, however there are certain expectations. These expectations are;

1. A full-scale civil war amongst clans
2. Constant alliance changes that favor the ambitions of the clans
3. Meddling with internal affairs of other clans
4. The unification of Japan

5.3. Allocations

All delegates have been assigned an allocation correspondent to a real-life figure who lived in Sengoku Era Japan. You may learn about your allocated individual or clan at 6.1.4 .

Delegates are expected to act according to the ambitions and capabilities of their allocation thus every delegate must be well informed of their allocated character.

Throughout the flow of the committee, you may be captured and captivated or be eliminated in which case you would be assigned a new allocation. When receiving a new allocation, you must act according to the ambitions of your new allocation, forget and let go of your previous ambitions and goals. This is crucial to the flow of the committee and those who do not comply will be warned.

6. Sengoku Era Japan

The Sengoku Period (*Sengoku Jidai*, 1467-1568 CE), also known as the Warring States Period, was a turbulent and violent period of Japanese history when rival warlords or *daimyo*

fought bitterly for control of Japan. The period falls within the Muromachi period (*Muromachi Jidai*, 1333-1573 CE) of Japanese medieval history when the Ashikaga shogun capital was in the Muromachi area of Heiankyo (Kyoto). The beginning of the Sengoku period witnessed the Onin War (1467-1477 CE) which destroyed Heiankyo. The fighting that followed over the next century would eventually reduce the warlords to only a few hundred in number as the country was effectively carved up into princedoms. Eventually, one warlord rose above all his rivals: Oda Nobunaga, who set Japan on the road to unification from 1568 CE.

6.1. Hierarchical Organization of the State

Sengoku Japan was essentially an Imperial State that had a traditional Emperor. However, this Emperor did not possess true executive power; rather he was a figurehead respected by the Japanese People and the leaders of the families. He did not have military power, only political power. Instead, Ashikaga Shogun served as the true executive power that led the nation. In the Sengoku Era even the power of the Shogun was blurry, the balance of power was dynamic and unstable. The nation did not have one ruler, instead it was fractured into minor states led by the Daimyos who had influence over several provinces. Usually, the Daimyo's who had the most influence as a result also had the most amount of control over the nation.

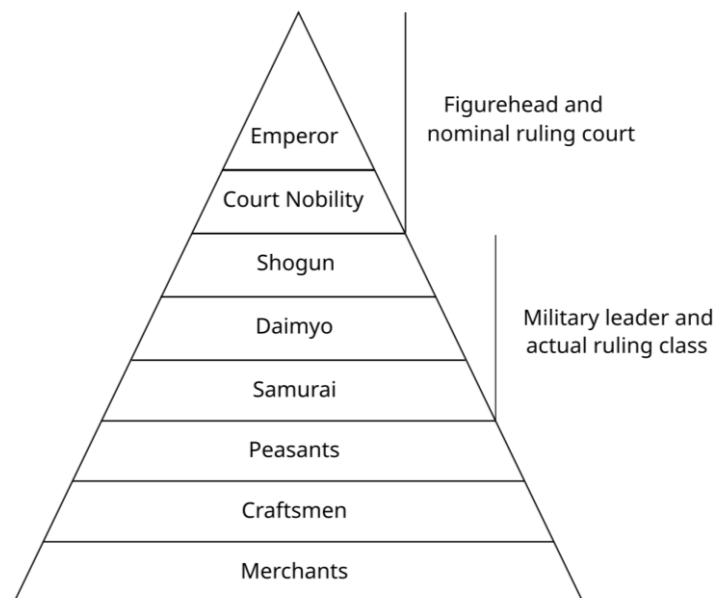


Figure 6.1. Hierarchy Graph

6.1.1. The Imperial Court

The Imperial Court consisted of the emperor who was the *de jure*¹ ruler serving as a figurehead. Daimyos, or in other words clans constantly competed for the gratitude and approval of the emperor as even though he did not have any true executive power his words were still important. The clan who controlled the emperor had a very strong advantage over other clans as it could rally their people with the word of the emperor easily.

The other element of the Court was The Court Nobility - kuge. These were the nobles of Japan like the emperor; they were prestigious and had a large amount of symbolic influence.

¹ *De jure* practices are recognized by laws or other formal norms, regardless of whether they exist.

6.1.2. Shogunate

The Shogun was the *de facto*² ruler of the state appointed by the emperor as the second man who had more authority than all the Court Nobility. He was essentially a military dictator.

The Shogun were the descendants of the Ashikaga Clan between 1336 to 1573. However, by the time of the Sengoku Era after the Onin War they lost their formal glory and now were a fragment of what they were before.

The Ashikaga Shogunate (1338-1573 CE) held control of the central part of Japan, and the bureaucracy at the capital was relatively efficient, but the outer provinces were left semi-independent as local warlords or *daimyo* ruled their own lands how they saw fit. Local officials and estate managers such as the *jito* found it much more difficult to secure the taxes the state was due from landlords who now had no fear of any government reprisals. The *daimyo* (literally 'Great Names') were feudal lords who commanded personal armies of samurai or anyone else willing to take up arms and defend their lord's estates and help expand it.

In the Onin War two of the most influential families within Japan - Hosokawa and the Yamana - started meddling with the righteous successor of the current Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa. In 1565, an ambitious daimyo, Oda Nobunaga assassinated the shogun and installed the brother of the shogun Ashikaga Yoshiaki as a puppet. Yoshiaki would be the 15th and the last Shogun of the Ashikaga Shogunate. Both occurrences show the weakened status of the shogunate.

6.1.3. Daimyo

By the beginning of the Sengoku Era - as mentioned a couple of times before - Japan was divided amongst domains. The domains were ruled by certain families and because of this the domains are also referred to as clans. The leaders of these domains were named Daimyo, and they served as regional supervisors and leaders under the Shogun. However, in the Sengoku Era this direct hierarchy structure was broken, and Daimyos had more autonomy and could function independently even rejecting orders from the Shogun or have more influence than the Shogun himself. As we mentioned in **Section 6.1.2** an ambitious Daimyo, Oda Nobunaga installed a new Shogun that functioned as a puppet and had no major authority. This fight of influence amongst the Daimyos would continue, turning into real conflicts from time to time.

Some *daimyo* were aristocrats with a long heritage of land ownership, others were military governors (*shugo*) who went independent from the weakened shogunate, and there were also new lords who were the sons of tradesmen who had gathered together a small army to simply take the land of others by force. The phenomenon of new rulers overthrowing the established order and of branch families taking the estates of the traditional

² *De facto* practices are those which exist or affect, without explicit recognition by formal norms.

major clans became known as *gekokujo* or 'those below overthrowing those above.' The consequence of all the upheaval was that Japan became a patchwork of feudal estates centered around their individual castles and fortified mansions.

Maps depicted in this study guide and almost every source you can find show a precise distinction and borders of state-like entities. These entities refer to areas that are majorly controlled by one specific Daimyo and his clan. However, this does not mean that these entities had instated complete control or had complete control over those areas as they were very much unlike the modern world borders, we see today; rather it was more like a 'who owned the most castles in a province race'. Hence a Daimyo controlling a specific area did not mean it had complete control of every castle, town or land over that area, it simply meant that it had major power in that area. Even the depicted borders were not as specific and 'black and white' in every case as you commonly see in the maps it was, again, more like who controlled which city, castle or logistics distribution element. The maps are then redrawn to match those controlled entities. However, for simplicity in the flow of the committee it will be assumed that an area depicted as controlled by a clan is solely controlled by that clan.

6.1.3.1. Hierarchical Organization of the Domains/Clans

Under the Daimyo there were several vassals of the state that needed to provide a specific number of soldiers, and equipment – for further details upon the subject, refer to

Mobilization. The organization formed by this system was named Kashindan and while every domain had its own unique one there was a general structure that can be described. Above all were the domain leaders, Daimyo. Below them were the first level vassals of the state that were ruled by blood relatives, trusted hereditary retainers. These vassals

were named 'Ichimon'. Under the ichimon were major vassals which had minor vassals under them as well. The lords of the vassal would be known as the samurai class. The samurai would own land, and the land would have an income measured in koku which was 150kg of rice believed to be enough to feed 1 man for a year. Under the samurai were the general population named 'Ashigaru'. The general population consisted of professional warriors and non-combatant peasants.

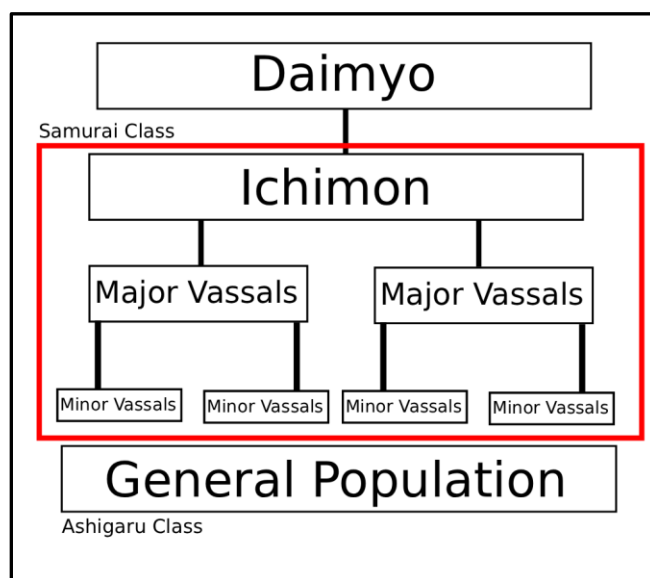


Figure 6.2. *Hierarchy Graph of Domains.*

6.1.4. Authoritative Domains and Lords

6.1.4.1. Tokugawa

The Tokugawa clan is a Japanese samurai clan and dynasty which produced the Tokugawa shoguns who ruled Japan from 1603 to 1868 during the Edo period when Tokugawa Ieyasu secured ultimate control of Japan after the Battle of Sekigahara. It was formerly a powerful daimyō family. They nominally descended from Emperor Seiwa (850–880) and were a branch of the Minamoto clan (Seiwa Genji) through the Matsudaira clan. The early history of the clan remains a mystery. Nominally, the Matsudaira clan is said to be descended from the Nitta clan, a branch of the Minamoto clan, but this is untrue or unlikely.

6.1.4.1.1. Tokugawa Ieyasu

During the Sengoku Era and his lifetime, he was the Daimyo of the Tokugawa clan. His birth name was Matsudaira Takechiyo, an heir to the Matsudaira clan. In his early life the Matsudaira clan was in a conflict against powers that included the Oda clan. Matsudaira clan approached the Imagawa clan with alliance however the daimyo of the Imagawa clan requested the youngest heir, Matsudaira Takechiyo, of the Matsudaira to be given to him as hostage as a form of guarantee. The Oda clan hearing this acted faster and captured young Takechiyo. During his captivation he was raised as a lord.

When he became 14 years old as a part of tradition, he changed his name to Matsudaira Jirōsaburō Motonobu. A year later at the age of 15 he married his first wife, a relative of the Imagawa, and changed his name once again to Matsudaira Kurandonosuke Motoyasu.

In 1558 he fought his first battle with the siege of Terabe (6.4.2 Battle of Okehazama). Upon the following years Motoyasu ended the alliance with the Imagawa clan and formed a new alliance with the Oda clan, now his first son being married to Oda Nobunaga's daughter. Same year in February he changed his name once again to Matsudaira Ieyasu.



Figure 6.3. Tokugawa Clan Flag.

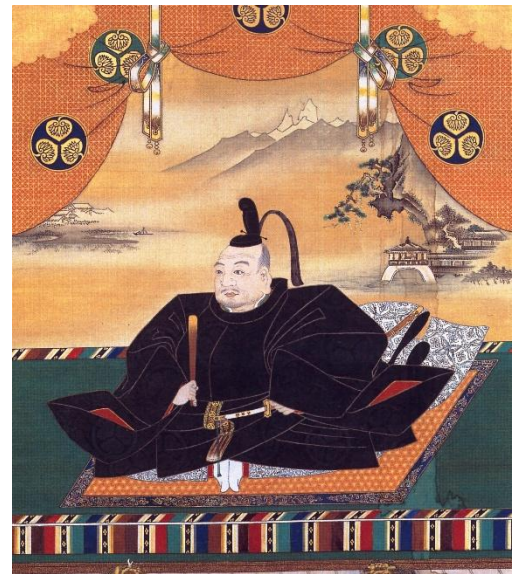


Figure 6.4. Tokugawa Ieyasu.

In 1567, Ieyasu started the family name ‘Tokugawa’ changing his name for one last time to the well-known Tokugawa Ieyasu. He changed his name 5 times in his lifetime.

Upon the following years he fought countless battles and campaigns but most importantly unified Japan with the Battle of Sekigahara and thus is credited as the third of the ‘*Great Unifiers*³’.

6.1.4.1.2. *Sakakibara Yasumasa*

He was a Japanese samurai and a daimyo during the early Edo Period and the late Sengoku Era who served the Tokugawa clan. In the sengoku era he was one of the foremost glorified military commanders and one of the Four Guardian Kings of the Tokugawa - *shitennō* (四天王). One of his most notable achievement would be when he changed the tide of war in the Battle of Anegawa with a flanking maneuver.

6.1.4.2. Oda

The Oda clan is a Japanese samurai family who were daimyo and an important political force in the unification of Japan in the mid-16th century. Though they reached the peak of their power under Oda Nobunaga who played a great role in the unification of Japan and fell soon after, several branches of the family continued as daimyo houses until the Meiji Restoration. After the Meiji Restoration, all four heads of the houses of the clan were appointed viscounts in the new system of hereditary peerage.



Figure 6.5. Oda Clan Flag.

6.1.4.2.1. *Toyotomi Hideyoshi*

During Nobunaga’s reign, he was one of the foremost military commanders of the Oda clan. He led the mighty western campaign against strong clans such as the Mori. After Nobunaga’s death at Honnō-ji he first avenged his death and after a succession crisis assumed the leadership of the Oda lands while instating the Toyotomi name as the ruler clan. He is credited as the second of the ‘*Great Unifiers*³’.

6.1.4.2.2. *Shibata Katsuie*

During Nobunaga’s reign, he was a leading military commander like Hideyoshi. After Nobunaga’s death, he led his army against Hideyoshi throughout the succession crisis alongside Oda Nobutaka – oldest son after the death of Nobunaga and the heir Nobutaka. He lost the war at the end but if he had, he would assume a similar position to one of Hideyoshi.

³ *Great Unifiers: Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa Ieyasu respectively.*

6.1.4.2.3. *Oda Nobunaga*

Nobunaga was one of the most powerful and most influential Daimyos of the sengoku period. He led the Oda clan until his tragic death at the Honnō-ji incident - 1582. One of the leading generals of Nobunaga, Akechi Mitsuhide, betrayed him and attacked the Hinne-ji temple where Nobunaga was residing. As a result, Nobunaga seeing no way out committed seppuku and died an honorable death. For further details refer to *Honnō-ji Incident, Battle of Yamazaki and Hideyoshi Assuming Power*. He is credited as the first of the ‘Great Unifiers’³ of Japan.

6.1.4.2.4. *Oda Nobutada*

Nobutada was the heir of Nobunaga. He died alongside Nobunaga at the Honnō-ji incident.

6.1.4.3. Takeda

The Takeda clan was a Japanese samurai clan active from the late Heian period until the late 16th century. The clan was historically based in Kai Province in present-day Yamanashi Prefecture. The clan achieved its greatest influence under the rule of Takeda Shingen, one of the most famous rulers of the period.

6.1.4.3.1. *Takeda Katsuyori*

Takeda Katsuyori was the daimyo of the Takeda clan in the sengoku era. He was the son of the legendary warlord and commander Takeda Shingen.

6.1.4.3.2. *Anayama Nobukimi*

Nobukimi, also known as Anayama Nobutada, was one of the 24 generals of Takeda Shingen. He was the lord of Yokoyama castle and governed Ejiri castle.

6.1.4.4. Mōri

The Mōri clan was a Japanese samurai clan descended from Ōe no Hiromoto. Ōe no Hiromoto was descended from the Fujiwara clan. The family's most illustrious member, Mōri Motonari, greatly expanded the clan's power in Aki Province. During the Edo period his descendants became daimyō of the Chōshū Domain under the Tokugawa shogunate. After the Meiji Restoration with the abolition of the han system and daimyō, the Mōri clan became part of the new nobility.

6.1.4.4.1. *Mori Terumoto*

The daimyo of the Mori clan. Fought against Oda Nobunaga but eventually succumbed. Later became participated in Hideyoshi's Korean campaign.

6.1.4.4.2. *Koboyakawa Takakage*

As a descendant of the Mori family, he was adopted by the Koboyakawa clan. He would later become an active military commander under the service of the Mori clan.

6.1.4.5. Hōjō

The Later Hōjō clan was one of the most powerful samurai families in Japan in the Sengoku period and held domains primarily in the Kantō region. Their last name was simply Hōjō (北条) but were called "Later Hōjō" to differentiate between the earlier powerful Hōjō clan who had the same name and mon, even though the later Hōjō are not mainline direct descendants who only adopted the name for prestige.

6.1.4.5.1. *Hojo Ujimasa*

He was the head of the Hojo clan. The Hojo clan reached its biggest lengths in terms of land during his reign.

6.1.4.5.2. *Hojo Ujinao*

After the reign of Ujimasa he became the final head of the Hojo clan. He lost his entire domain upon the Siege of Odawara (1590).

6.1.4.6. Uesugi

The Uesugi clan is a Japanese samurai clan which was at its peak one of the most powerful during the Muromachi and Sengoku periods (14th to 17th centuries). At its height, the clan had three main branches: the Ōgigayatsu, Inukake, and Yamanouchi. Its most well-known member is the warlord Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578). During the Edo period, the Uesugi were a tozama or outsider clan, in contrast with the fudai or insider daimyō clans which had been hereditary vassals or allies of the Tokugawa clan. Later, Uesugi Kagekatsu became head of clan after the legendary Uesugi Kenshin.

6.1.4.7. Shimazu

The Shimazu clan were the daimyō of the Satsuma han, which spread over Satsuma, Ōsumi and Hyūga provinces in Japan. The Shimazu were identified as one of the tozama or outsider daimyō families in contrast with the fudai or insider clans which were hereditary vassals or allies of the Tokugawa clan.

6.1.4.8. Ōtomo

The Ōtomo clan was a Japanese samurai family whose power stretched from the Kamakura period through the Sengoku period, spanning over 400 years. The clan's hereditary lands lay in Kyūshū. The first family head, Ōtomo Yoshinao (1172–1223), took the name from the Ōtomo territory in Sagami Province.

6.1.4.9. Chōsokabe

Chōsokabe clan, also known as Chōsokame, was a Japanese samurai kin group. Over time, they were known for serving the Hosokawa clan, then the Miyoshi clan and then the Ichijō clan. The clan claims descent from the ancient immigrant (Toraijin) clan called the Hata clan. The Hata clan, while originating from Korea; specifically, from Paekche according to the Nihon Shoki (720), its lineage differs depending on the source

6.2. Territorial Properties



Figure 6.6. Map of Japan from the Pre Azuchi-Moyoyama Period

In Figure 6.6 the red lines depict roads, each of the castle-like icons depict castle towns while the bigger colored versions of these icons depict the bigger castle towns and the star in the middle represents the capital - Kyoto. As the color gets from green to brown the altitude increases proportionally and gets more mountainous. The blue lines represent rivers.

6.2.1. Logistical Attributes

While transporting goods or troops, commencing battles or building new forts these features must always be taken into consideration. For instance, attacking a castle while being near an allied controlled castle town would be much easier as the nearby town could be used for the constant supply availability. Moving troops along the roads would

be much faster and safer compared to moving troops over deserted land or even worse over mountainous land as that could cause losses in equipment and even manpower.

In the warring states period Daimyos built many castles as mentioned before. The major satellite castles were distributed amongst trusted lords. The satellite castles themselves had sub-satellite castles which had several outpost of their own. The elements of this system were connected via roads and enabled logistic routes to emerge. It could be summarized as a 'Layered Regional Defense'. The main castle where the daimyo resided was named Odawara, the satellite castle was named Yamanaka. The sub-satellite castles were mostly Yamashiro (mountain castle).

The transportation of goods was made possible via carriages and horses. When armies marched, they followed the same roads and had logistics companies of their own carrying supplies.

6.2.2. Terrain Features

From the map depicted over *Figure 6.6*, the extreme mountainous terrain is apparent. This mountainous terrain limited the usage of cavalry, slowed down marches and battles. Over the plains clans would prioritize cavalry over infantry. Thus, it can be concluded that an army fighting in its own hometown that its terrain was considered as the base for the army composition would be advantageous against an enemy army with a different terrain in their hometown that has become inadaptable in , now, a different terrain.

Upon construction of fortification terrain was very important as well. A castle nearby a river could have a steady water supply and have its riverside defended via waterbodies. Additionally, there were different types of fortification for different geographical types such as hill castles, plain castles and mountain castles.

6.3. Financial Structure

In the warring states period, there were couple of general social and economic trends that affected the economic growth and the income.

6.3.1. Village Nucleation

Village Nucleation is the process where multiple smaller villages unify and form a bigger regional hub. Buildings would be built closer together and separate villages would be connected via roads as mentioned before. Over these roads and near the villages would be fortified element like castles and outpost serving as a home to high-ranking officers. As villages grew so did the agricultural capability and commerce. This caused merchants, craftsmen etc. to migrate to villages. Peasants started to act collectively and talking against political superiors. This caused better managerial strategies to emerge.

6.3.2. Agriculture

The economy of the feudal states was entirely based on agriculture. As mentioned before vassal required to supply troops to their overlord based on their income in koku which meant the total income calculated as rice. For one to rise to become a daimyo, they had to produce 10,000 koku meaning 1500 tons of rice. Hence the strength of the various clans would also be estimated as their total rice outcome.

6.3.3. Nanban Trade

The *Nanban* trade (南蛮貿易, *Nanban bōeki*; "Southern barbarian trade") was trade between Europeans and the Japanese that took place in Japan from the arrival of Europeans in 1543 to the first *Sakoku* Seclusion Edicts of isolationism in 1614. The *Nanban* trade as a form of European contact began with Portuguese explorers, missionaries, and merchants in the Sengoku period and established long-distance overseas trade routes with Japan. The resulting technological and cultural exchange included the introduction of matchlock firearms, cannons, galleon-style shipbuilding, and Christianity to Japan, among other cultural aspects. The *Nanban* trade declined in the early Edo period with the rise of the Tokugawa shogunate which feared the influence of Christianity in Japan, particularly the Roman Catholicism of the Portuguese. The Tokugawa issued a series of *Sakoku* policies that increasingly isolated mainland Japan from the outside world and limited European trade to Dutch traders on the artificial island of Dejima, under total scrutiny.

6.3.4. Coinage

Until the mid-13th century rice, silver and silk were used as a medium of exchange. After that coins made of copper started to become popular. In the late 15th century, the value of the coins was measured by their condition. Merchants only accepted high-quality coins and rejected low-quality ones by selecting coins in a process named shroffing. As trade grew demand for coins grew as well exceeding the supply. Foreign meaning Chinese coins entered the Japanese market and since the imperial court declared copper coins as a viable form of currency the supply increased with no state control. Hence market forces determined the value of the coins before the state did.

6.4. Important Events in the Sengoku Era

6.4.1. Ōnin War

The Ōnin War was fought between the families of two samurais who were close to the Ashikaga Shogun of Japan. By 1467, the year that war began, the Ashikaga dynasty had grown so weak that a succession dispute provided the trigger for unrest and the collapse of central authority. The ensuing civil war, fought from 1467 to 1477, largely within the imperial capital of Kyōto, was the precursor of the

so-called Age of Warring States. The Ōnin War dragged on with sporadic attacks as the fighting spread to neighboring provinces. Where the families had fought, looting mobs moved in, leaving the imperial capital almost in ruins. Yamana and Hosokawa both died in 1473, but by then the cause of their dispute was almost forgotten. Many people suffered during the 11-year-long war, and the Yamana clan bled dry. The city of Kyōto itself was devastated, its shrines and temples looted and most of its surviving populace forced to take refuge in nearby cities long after the fighting had ceased.



Figure 6.7. Map of Japan before the Onin War.

Commanders and Leaders	
Hosokawa and Hatakeyama	Yamana and Ōuchi
Hosokawa Katsumoto	Yamana Sōzen
Hatakeyama Masanaga	Ōuchi Masahiro
Shiba Yoshitoshi	Hatakeyama Yoshinari
	Shiba Yoshikado
Strength	
c. 160,000	c. 116,000

Table 6.1. Verdict of the war.

6.4.2. Battle of Okehazama

In 1558 right after Shigeteru - Lord of the Castle Terabe - switched sides from the Imagawa Clan to the Oda Clan whom the Imagawa Clan did not have good relations. Consequently, Ieyasu justified capturing the castle of the treacherous lord which was previously owned by his family and started marching towards the castle to capture it and thus began the Battle of Okehazama.

Castle Terabe was quickly captured by Ieyasu, and he quickly moved his armies westward and captured more Oda castles there. Seeing this the Daimyo of the Imagawa Clan, Yoshimoto raised an army and arrived at the battlegrounds to help Ieyasu. He set up camp there, however when night-time fell the Oda forces moved to the position of Yoshimoto and destroyed the Imagawa forces that were caught off guard. It is said that within that bloodshed Yoshimoto was also killed. When the news of the situation arrived at Ieyasu he quickly retreated to another castle and did not advance further on.

Later, we will see that the Oda Clan instating an alliance with the Tokugawa Clan ergo turning old enemies into new allies.

6.4.3. Ishiyama Hongan-ji War

The war is also referred to as Nobunaga's westward campaign. It lasted for 10 years, beginning in 1570 and coming to an end in 1580. Nobunaga waged war against a network of fortifications, temples and communities within the Ikko-ikki faction that is opposed to the samurai class.

In August of 1570, Nobunaga advanced towards Nagashima fortress. He planned to lay siege on the fortress however his preparations were intercepted by a surprise stealthy mid night attack composed of the Ikko-ikki troops. Nobunaga's army retreated and assigned to monitor the fortress, take it if they could.



Figure 6.8. 1570, Hongan-ji map.

In 1574, destroying the Nagashima complex in the east, Nobunaga attempted to starve fortress however failed due to the coastal fortress receiving constant supply over maritime routes. Cutting the maritime supply was impossible due to the naval superiority established by the Mori clan's naval forces who were the enemies of the Oda. However, by early 1575 as the castle was soon to surrender, the shogun sent a letter to the Mori stating to aid the castle in supplies and protect the holy structures. In the end the shogun himself eventually raised some troops himself to aid the besieged.

6.4.3.1. Battle of Tennoji

In April of 1576, Oda's army attacked the Hongan-ji fortress with the foremost military commanders available. The forces were repelled by the 15000 defenders. Eventually the Oda would make a request for reinforcements to Nobunaga who was residing in Kyoto at the time.

Later in May, Nobunaga himself came with his 3000 ashigaru army commencing an attack against 15000 enemy forces. Nobunaga attacked the Mitsuji fortress, pushing back the garrison while suffering a bullet wound to the leg.

6.4.3.2. The fall of Ishiyama Hongan-ji

Later in 1577, the largest army of the Oda clan was mobilized by the collective efforts of 7 provinces. By then 51 outpost had been built around the central fortress, many equipped with arquebus squads. However, even this wasn't enough, which led Nobunaga to revise his tactics. Instead, he decided to clear the area of surrounding enemy positions. He ordered his foremost generals including Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Shibata Katsuie to capture regions that include Hokuriku, Kii province and the Chūgoku region which all are collectively depicted as the Area of Interest over *Figure 6.9*. Nobunaga eventually blocked the maritime supply and captured nearly half of the Area of Interest by 1580 including the fallen Hongan-ji fortress.



Figure 6.9. 1577, map of Chugoku and Hokuriku Region with a bordered Area of Interest.

6.4.4. **Honnō-ji Incident, Battle of Yamazaki and Hideyoshi Assuming Power**

After the victory against the Ikki, Nobunaga had sent his forces all across Japan aggressively with the sole purpose of unifying it under his name. He had sent Hideyoshi to fight against the Mori clan over the Chūgoku region. During the campaign seeing the fierce resistance put by the Mori, Hideyoshi requested reinforcement from Nobunaga. Hence, Nobunaga began his preparations and went to his usual resting place at Kyoto, Honnō-ji with no real security measures with most of his daimyos and army being scattered around multiple fronts. However, since he was deep in his own territory it was seen unlikely that an attack could take place.

At that point Akechi Mitsuhide started advancing towards Kyoto with his 13000 army. This did not raise any suspicions since Nobunaga commonly displayed the might of his army in Kyoto. However, in the middle of the night Mitsuhide suddenly changed course and started marching towards Honnō-ji where Nobunaga was residing. Crossing the Katsura River, the legends said that Mitsuhide yelled “The enemy awaits at Honnō-ji!”. Even when attacking, it is said that the soldiers did not know who they were attacking and some assumed it was Tokugawa Ieyasu.

At first Nobunaga and his men thought it was a fight over the street however soon after hearing the battle cry and started shooting they realized it was a rebellion. When Nobunaga

asked about the person responsible, he was replied with “It appears to be Akechi’s”. Nobunaga replied, “There is no choice”. He picked up his bow and arrow, started shooting at the enemy. When he had no spare arrows left, he fought with his spear. When his elbow was injured by an enemy spear, he retreated back to the temple went into the storage room and committed seppuku, thus died an honorable death while the temple was burning. It is said that Mitsuhide could not find Nobunaga’s corpse consequently never was certain of Nobunaga’s death. Hence, he could not mobilize more soldiers and rally more people to his side without a guaranty of the death of Nobunaga who people were afraid of.

6.4.4.1. The Battle of Yamazaki

Upon hearing the news that Nobunaga was killed, Hideyoshi rushed a treaty with the Mori Clan giving up territory that was controlled by the Oda. Mitsuhide had sent a letter to Mori stating a proposal for an alliance with the aim of crushing Hideyoshi, however this letter was intercepted by Hideyoshi and thus the plot was revealed. Hideyoshi kept the death of Nobunaga a secret as to not exploit the clan’s vulnerability. Once the treaty was secured, Hideyoshi marched to Yamazaki where Mitsuhide controlled 2 castles. Passing through Osaka, Oda Nobutaka and Niwa Nagahide also joined him.

Hearing the strength of the opposition army, Mitsuhide concluded that a battle over the south would be better as it provided choke points with its rivers and mountains that could ease the numerical superiority of the enemy. Meanwhile, Hideyoshi captured Mountain Tennozan just outside the Town Yamazaki, which was believed to be a key to strategic control of the road to Kyoto. Later generals of Hideyoshi sent ninjas to the defensive position of Mitsuhide and set fire to buildings.

On the following morning, Hideyoshi’s forces set up their position over the opposite shore of the river where Mitsuhide had set up his position. A portion of Mitsuhide’s samurai crossed the river seeking to capture Mount Terozan, however were driven off by arquebus fire. Hideyoshi, seeing this, felt confident to launch an attack via his right wing across the river into the frontlines of the enemy. They made some progress and soon after were reinforced with the left wing. The majority of the enemy fled, consequently Hideyoshi chased them until Shoryuji Castle where the garrison collapsed. Mitsuhide himself fled further with few guards, however, was intercepted on his way by some bandits and murdered by them.

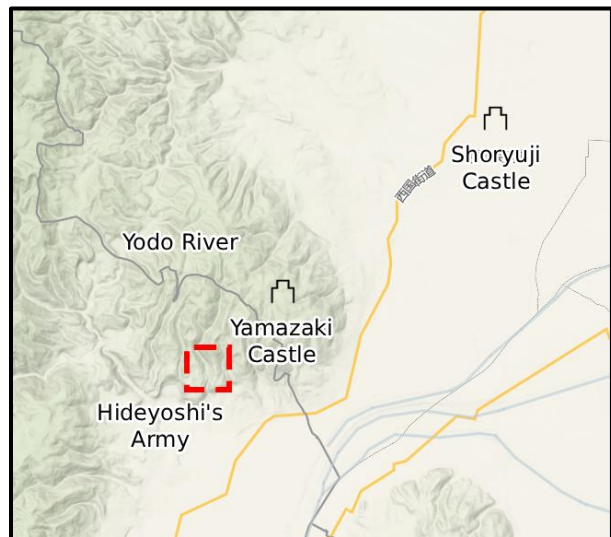


Figure 6.10. Battle of Yamazaki.

6.4.4.2. The Kiyosu Conference

After dealing with Mitsuhide, top men of the Oda clan gathered in Kiyosu and held a conference with the sole goal of declaring who would lead the clan. Meanwhile the clan was divided amongst the major Daimyos of the clan as can be seen depicted on Figure 6.11.

Hideyoshi stated that the leader should be the infant son of the true successor -Hidenobu- Oda Nobutada who died alongside Nobunaga. The youth of Hidenobu made him unable to exercise true authority, consequently becoming the leader would mean the guardians of Hidenobu having great influence over the clan. Although this would mean that with Hideyoshi supporting Hidenobu as the heir grant him great influence his motives are not yet clear. At the time Hidenobu being the heir could be seen as the correct succession according to Japanese traditions. To sum it all up, it remains difficult to determine whether Hideyoshi designated Hidenobu as the righteous heir because he wanted great influence or just cared deeply about succession tradition. On the other hand, however, there was Oda Nobutaka who was the second oldest remaining son of Nobunaga.

Throughout the conference sides were formed, major daimyos such as Nagahide and the oldest living son of Nobunaga, Nobukatsu joined sides with Hideyoshi whilst Katsuie joined sides with Nobutaka.

This disagreement led way to a succession conflict. With the Battle of Shizugatake, Hideyoshi overcame Shibata Katsuie and Oda Nobutaka. A while later Nobukatsu, allied with Tokugawa Ieyasu against Hideyoshi. They would later face each other, mainly in Owari, close to 7 months.



Figure 6.11. Map of the Oda Clan 1582.

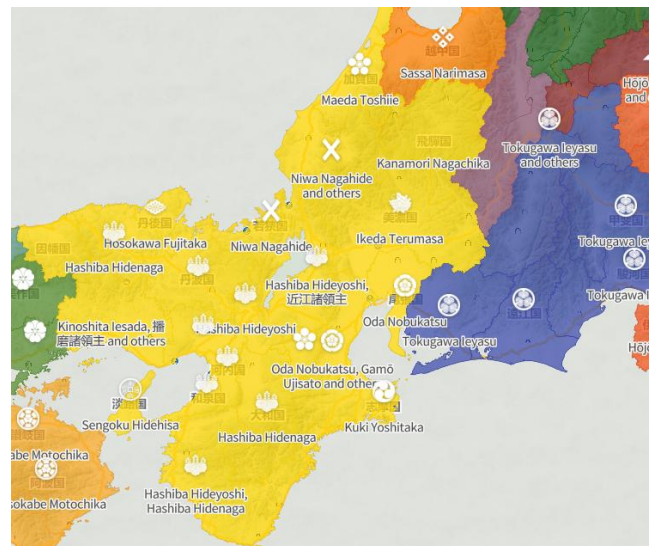


Figure 6.12. Map of Hashiba Clan. The yellow depicts the Toyotomi Clan while blue the Tokugawa. (1585)

After the conflict both sides signed a peace treaty with Hideyoshi gaining all Oda territories. Over the following year Hideyoshi solidified his hegemony over the Oda clan and eventually in 1585 took over the Oda regime as Kampaku while also taking the imperial Toyotomi surname next year June.

Over the next couple decades, the Toyotomi clan would continue expanding and eventually unify Japan under their rule even attempting conquest over Korea.

6.4.5. Battle of Sekigahara, The End of the Sengoku Period and The Beginning of the Edo Period

Toyotomi Hideyoshi, died from natural causes in 1598. His heir was Toyotomi Hideyori, a 5-year-old boy at the time. This caused a power vacuum in Japan. Similar to the Oda succession crisis there were 2 sides; Those loyal to the Toyotomi clan wanted Hideyori to rule whilst Tokugawa Ieyasu disagreed and thus the battle was fought between these sides. After the war Ieyasu became victor and in a couple of years instated the Tokugawa clan as the ruler. With that Sengoku Period was concluded and thus began the Edo Period under Tokugawa's reign.

Not being the committee's topic, this section has been vague compared to previous sections, however for more details you may refer to external sources.



Figure 6.13. *Sekigahara Kassen Byōbu* (『関ヶ原合戦屏風』), Japanese screen depicting the Battle of Sekigahara (関ヶ原の戦い).

7. Sengoku Era Warfare Structure



Figure 7.1. *Siege of Osaka (1614-1615), depicting 5071 people and 21 generals.*

The warring states period or the Sengoku period in Japanese lasted for almost 200 years beginning in 1417 until 1615. During this time frame warfare changed as time progressed. However, the most intriguing and active period in that time frame would be latter half of the 16th century in which most of the wars and more importantly the wars that significantly affected the unification of Japan took place. Hence the described concepts, methods and tactics are by the nature of change not universal rather mainly apply only to a portion of the warring states period.

7.1. Military Organization

In the warring states period, army composition and organization did not have one universal classification however there were some generalized concepts. It is surprising to see that even so far in the past there was a similar type of organizational structure that included equivalent of the modern-day division and battalion alongside a rough distinction of unit types that were arranged in some manner that resembles the modern-day division composition.

7.1.1. Mobilization

The entirety of Daimyo's army wasn't raised by him or recruited by only him. Rather the men would be provided by the vassals of the Daimyo within the *Kashindan* which was thoroughly described in *Hierarchical Organization of the Domains/Clans*.

Each vassal of the state would provide a set number of troops and equipment to the Daimyo in proportion to their income. This was called selective mobilization and was the most common way to mobilize an army in the period. Another method was mass conscription which meant to conscribe regardless of the vassal income. The incomes of the vassals were calculated in Koku, which was 150kg of rice, since it's not the topic of this section it will be further described in 6.3.2. In the warring states period Daimyo, usually required 6 men per 100 koku.

In *Table 7.1* a rough estimate of to be provided men and equipment has been shown. However, this estimate was not universal but rather the average amount. Some clans could request more while others less. However, note that extensive requirements could lead to riots and resistance. For instance, in the Edo period, when wars weren't as common, thus the requirement dropped 1/3.

Koku	Total Men	Armor	Horse	Gun	Bow
100-150	6	1	1	-	-
150-200	12	1	1	-	-
200-300	18	1	1	-	-
300-400	24	1	1	1	1
400-500	30	1	1	1	1
500-600	36	2	2	2	1
600-700	42	2	2	3	1
700-800	48	3	3	3	1
800-900	54	4	4	4	1
1000	60	5	5	5	2

Table 7.1. Table of tax estimates.

7.1.2. Army Composition & Organization

The gathered troops could be roughly examined in 2 categories: Specialized units, horsemen and foot samurai which were assigned to the Daimyou; The personal Kinju who were low-ranking samurais that supported their lords that could also act as heavy infantry.

The warlords in the west preferred gunpowder units while the eastern warlords relied on cavalry and horsemen units. The composition of armies changes a lot from clan to clan.

7.1.2.1. Organization

The gathered troops were organized and re-arranged in Sonae which means “tactical unit”. A sonae could be thought of as the equivalent of a modern-day division. Each Daimyo was expected to hold at least one sonae, however in the late parts of the Sengoku Era stronger warlords like Tokugawa Ieyasu held 30 sonae under his command. Even though it varied a lot, a sonae can be thought as a unit consisting of 300 to 800 men. Multiple sonae formed Te which can be thought as the modern-day equivalent of an Army Group.

Each sonae was an army of its own and was led by a Taishou. If the Daimyo had only one sonae he was expected to lead it. Multiple sonae were led by Saoutaisho which was the commander in chief in which case the sonae led by the Daimyo would be called Honjin. In the other sonaes there was a military inspector called Metsuke which reported the actions of that sonae to the Daimyo.

Inside one sonae were various troops such as ranged units, polearms unit, support unit and cavalry units. These troops were divided into sub-units and called Kumi which were based on weaponry. Kumi can be thought as the equivalent of modern battalion. The Kumi, which were under the command of Kumigashira, was divided into smaller organizations named 'Go' which were commanded by a Kogashira.

Name	Size	Commander
Go	6-10 men	Kogashira
Kumi	15-150 – Multiple Go	Kumi-gashira
Sonae	100-1000+ men – Multiple Kumi	Taishou (General)
Te	1000+ men – Multiple Sonae	Saoutaisho (Commander in chief)

Table 7.2. Military organizational structure.

7.1.2.1.1. Kumi

The various Kumi were:

- *Riflemen (Teppo-gumi)*: They were troops armed with firearms of various types.
- *Archers (Yumi-gumi)*: They were bow troops. At the beginning there were archer units on their own however later they would be deployed as riflemen.
- *Spearman (Yari-gumi)*: They carried spears of 2.5 meters.
- *Pikemen (Nagae-Yari-gumi)*: They were basically pikemen. They were armed with 5-meter spears called pikes.
- *Mounted Squad (Kiba-tai)*: They were samurai cavalry and some footed samurai acting as retainers. Thus, the composition was a combination of cavalry and heavy infantry.
- *Flag Group (Hata-gumi)*: They took part in communication. They did not contribute to direct confrontations.
- *Logistic Group (Konida)*: They took part in logistics. They had horses and gear used in campaigns. They were usually in the headquarters.
- *Command Group*: Although not exactly a kumi, it was a small group where the Taisho(commander of the sonae) led. With the Taishou there would be messengers and personal bodyguards.

There was a distinction between troops organized into 2 categories with one being Ashigaru who were professional or semi-professional troops not as trained, experienced or renowned as the other category which was the Samurai – not to confuse with the population distinctions there were units of ashigaru and samurai that could consist of either population class. The various kumi could be either ashigaru or samurai with the exceptions of pikemen who were strictly ashigaru and the mounted squad who were mostly samurai. Additionally, almost all the units carried swords along with them as secondary weapons including the ranged units. Commonly, whilst the ashigaru carried

the shorter wakizashi which was more of a blade, the samurai carried the longer and famous katana.

- *Ashigaru Units*: The troops composing the units would be of the ashigaru class while the higher-ranking officers would be of samurai. Roughly 86%.
- *Samurai Units*: The troops composing the units would be of the samurai class with the troops having retainers of the ashigaru class. These retainers as mentioned before could contribute to the battle and act as heavy infantry. The Samurai units were elite, functional and more importantly more experienced and trained than the Ashigaru units. Roughly 14%.

The composition of the various kumi have been shown in Table 4.2. The numbers are estimates and varied across other domains thus an average has been shown, however the core principle stayed the same.

Name	Description
Ashigaru Kumi	
Spearmen	10 Ashigaru Spearmen, 2 Ko-Gashira, 1 Kumi-Gashira
Pikemen	15 Ashigaru Pikemen, 3 Ko-Gashira, 1 Kumi-Gashira
Archer/Gunner	25 Ashigaru Riflemen/Archer, 5 Ko-Gashira, 1 Kumi-Gashira
Samurai Kumi	
Cavalry	9 Samurai Horsemen, 40 Ashigaru Retainers (20 spears, 10 bows, 10 guns), 1 Kumi-Gashira
Infantry	14 Foot Samurai, 25 Ashigaru Retainers (All spears), 1 Kumi-Gashira
Administrative & Support Kumi	
Command Group	Taisho (General), Taisho's Men (lords of vassals or trusted individuals), Signal Group, Misc. Staff(doctors, priests etc.), Metsuke (agents of the daimyo)
Banner Group	10+ Flag bearers, 1 Hata-Bugyo(commander)
Baggage Group (Logistics)	150 Porters, 15 Pack Horses, 15 Horse Drivers, 1 Konida-Bugyo(commander)

Table 7.3. Military troop classifications.

7.1.2.2. Composition of Sonaes

The kumi were usually re-arranged in this manner: ranged units at the frontline, namely arquebus and archers; behind them as you move to the rear there were lines of ashigaru pikemen; rows of heavy infantry and foot samurai and finally the cavalry unit respectively. The rows were generally thin, commonly 1-3 rows per sub-unit with the reason being the rough mountainous terrain, however in cases where the terrain was plain the formation would be much denser which allowed it to withstand enemy charges. Logistic units were almost always in the rear while the Taishou (commander of the sonae) -with some exceptions- would stay in the center.

In Figures 7.3-7.6, sonaes described in various resources and some used in notable battles has been depicted with each of the shapes representing a kumi of the said type. However, real life sonaes varied according to the strengths of the Daimyo army, the conditions of the terrain and logistics, the composition of the opposition army and the intended usage of the sonae.

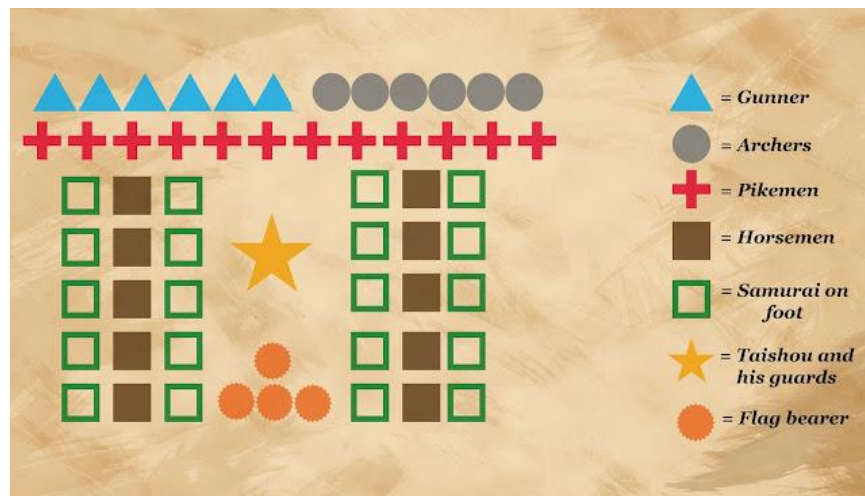


Figure 7.3. A sonae described in the 軍容撰功図解合冊.

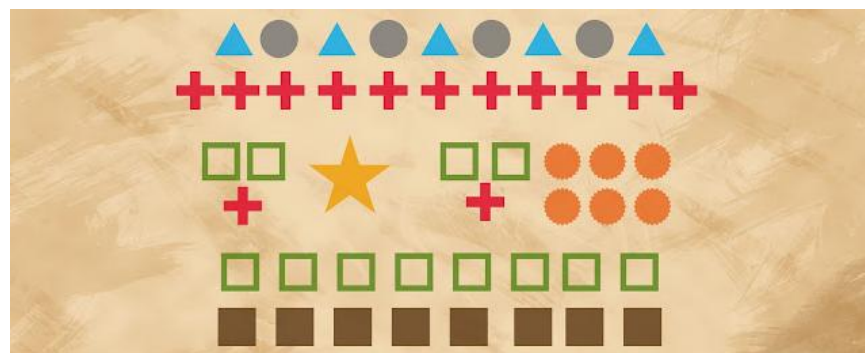


Figure 7.4. Another sonae described in the 軍容撰功図解合冊. It is noted that mounted units could fight dismounted as well.

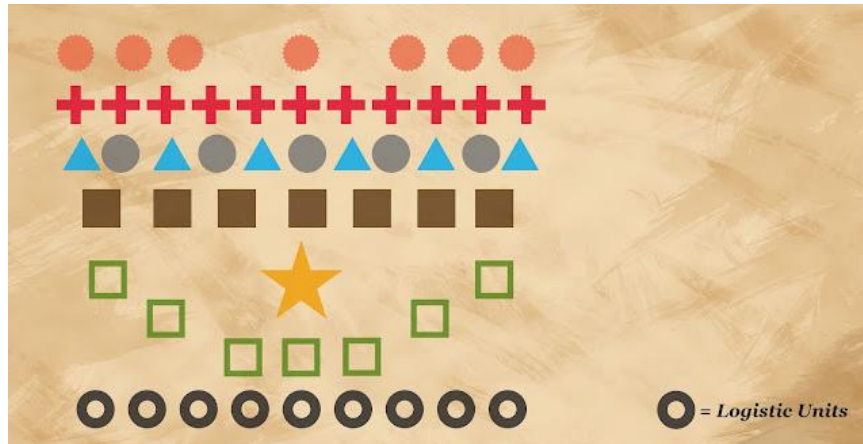


Figure 7.5. Another very popular and common sonae. Logistic units were most of the time located inside the Honjin sonae.

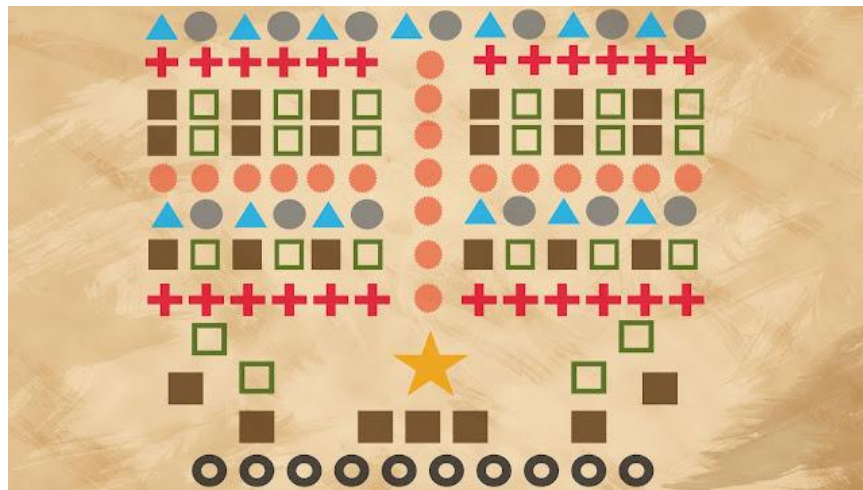


Figure 7.6. The Honjin Sonae of Takeda Shingen at the battle of Kawanakajima.

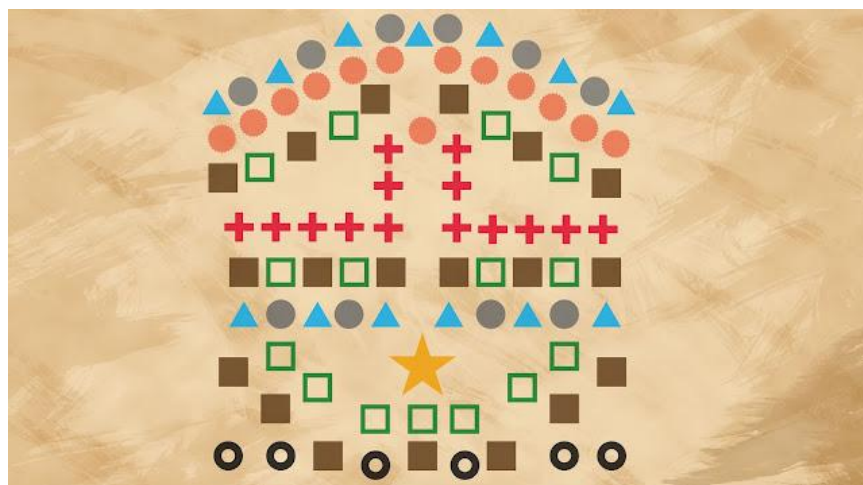


Figure 7.7. The Honjin Sonae of Tokugawa Ieyasu at Sekigahara.

7.1.3. Intelligence & Reconnaissance

The Sengoku period Japan's era of warring states, roughly 1467 to 1615 was the historical context in which the shinobi tradition – also known as ninja - reached its fullest development. The sustained inter-domain military conflict of the period created sustained demand for the intelligence, infiltration, and covert operation capabilities that shinobi provided.

7.1.3.1. Intelligence Operations

The most extensively documented shinobi function across the Sengoku period was intelligence gathering via operations that included the monitoring of the enemy troop movements, assessing castle defenses, identifying factional divisions in enemy councils, and tracking supply situations. The Bansenshūkai⁴ treats this as the core shinobi function, devoting more attention to intelligence tradecraft than to any other topic.

7.1.3.2. Infiltration and castle operations:

Infiltrating fortified positions castles, defended towns, enemy encampments to gather intelligence or conduct sabotage is documented in both primary sources and historical accounts of specific campaigns. The Bansenshūkai's detailed treatment of night entry techniques, concealment methods, and escape routes reflects accumulated practical knowledge from actual operations.

7.1.3.3. Psychological operations:

The primary sources document techniques for undermining enemy morale and creating confusion spreading false information, exploiting factional tensions, and conducting operations designed to create fear or uncertainty in enemy forces. These psychological operation techniques are treated in the Bansenshūkai as integral to shinobi capability, not as peripheral additions.

7.2. Battles

Upon a siege when a relief army arrived or maybe upon marching to armies crossed roads a battle could occur if both sides were willing to commit. In a battle there were formations, tactics and specific doctrines.

7.2.1. Battle Formations

Battle Formations or Jinkei in Japanese refers to the various form of battle formations that were adopted by sonae approaching the field of war. The majority of the to be mentioned formations required a rather bigger army. In the Figures 25-Y several formations are presented, however again these formations would give the average idea of a formation not wrongly as every formation used in that time.

⁴ Bansenshūkai is a 1676 Japanese book containing a collection of knowledge from several sengoku-era clans.

7.2.1.1. Basic Formations

These were the most basic formations, used to move the army or to have a cohesive power without complex maneuvers.



Figure 7.8. The formation is mentioned by the 軍容撰功図解合冊. The suggested formation is for moving few sonae. The author suggested adopting the shape of the characters "入" and "人".



Figure 7.9. This formation was also suggested. This formation was called Nanasonae which means seven sonae. It was a quite popular although an essentially basic formation.

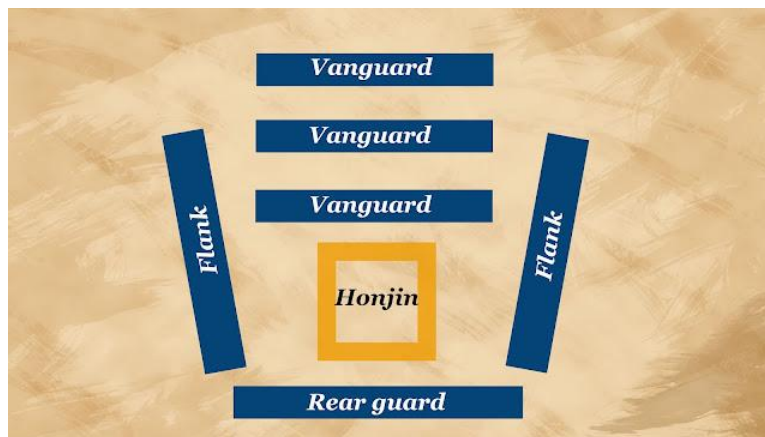


Figure 7.10. It was mentioned in the Zokusen Kiiyomasa Ki (続撰清正記). Upon an event of extreme fatigue accumulated by the frontline troops, the rear guard may replace them.

7.2.1.2. Advanced Formations

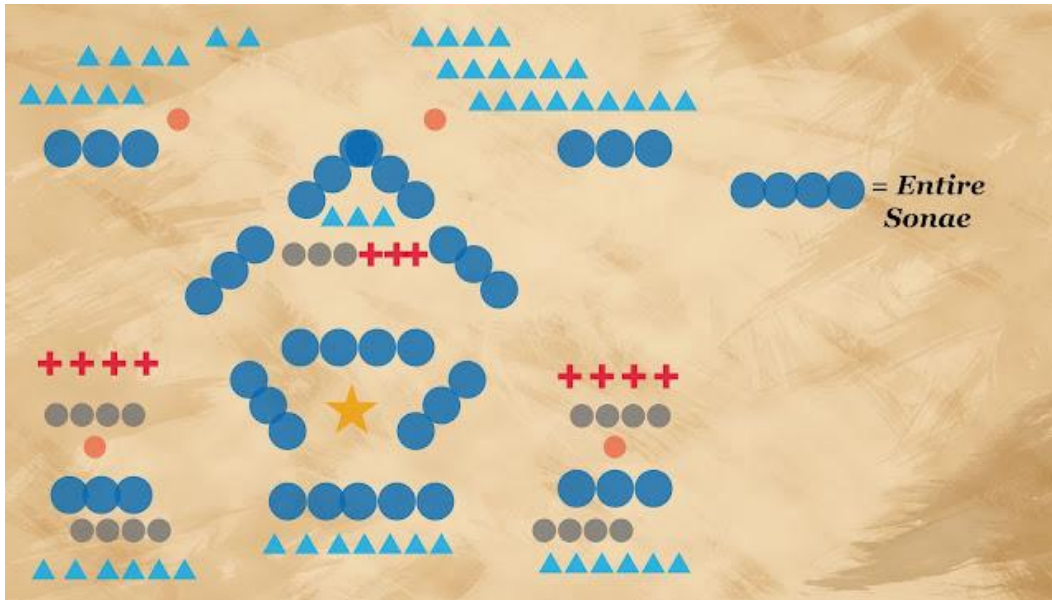


Figure 7.11. Houshi(鋒矢) formation.

The name Houshi can be translated to 'sharp arrow' which suggests the offensive nature of this formation. Ranged troops fire to thin out enemy lines while the light and heavy infantry charge assuming a *flying wedge*⁵ position. Once the enemy ranks were broken the cavalry would charge in to finish off the enemy.

The wedge formation was adopted by Shimazu Yoshiro when he won against an army that outnumbered his 80 men army at Sekigahara. Note the asymmetry in the upper-left corner.

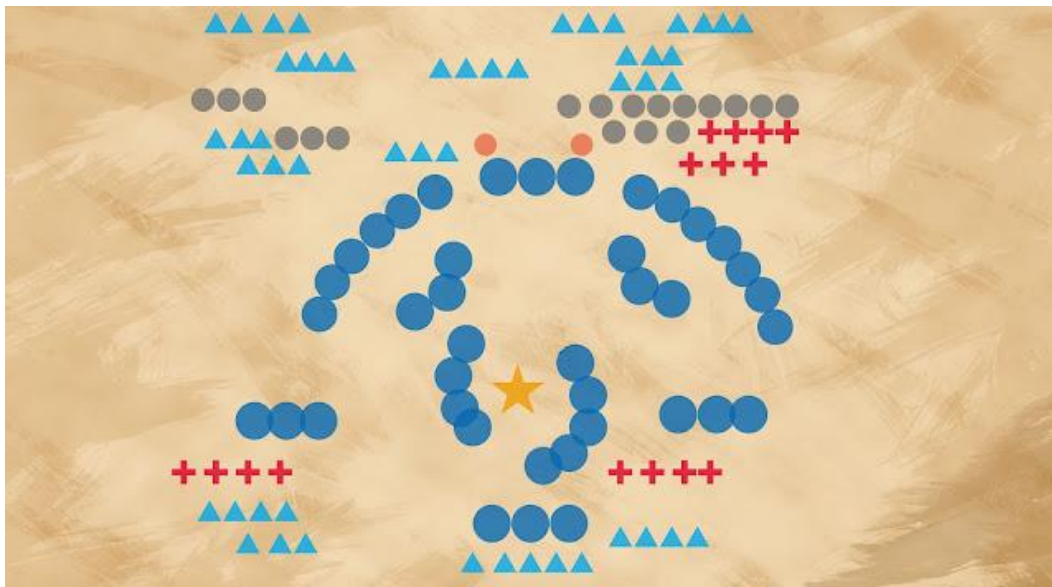


Figure 7.12. Kakuyoku(鶴翼) Formation.

⁵ A V-shape military position.

The formation shown in Figure 7.13, Kakuyoku literally meant ‘cranes wings. The formation was a defensive arrangement with the wings providing a counter-attack mechanic. The vanguard absorbed enemy fire while the sides advanced to envelop the enemy. It was used by Takeda Shingen in the fourth battle of Kawanakajima against Uesugi Kenshin.

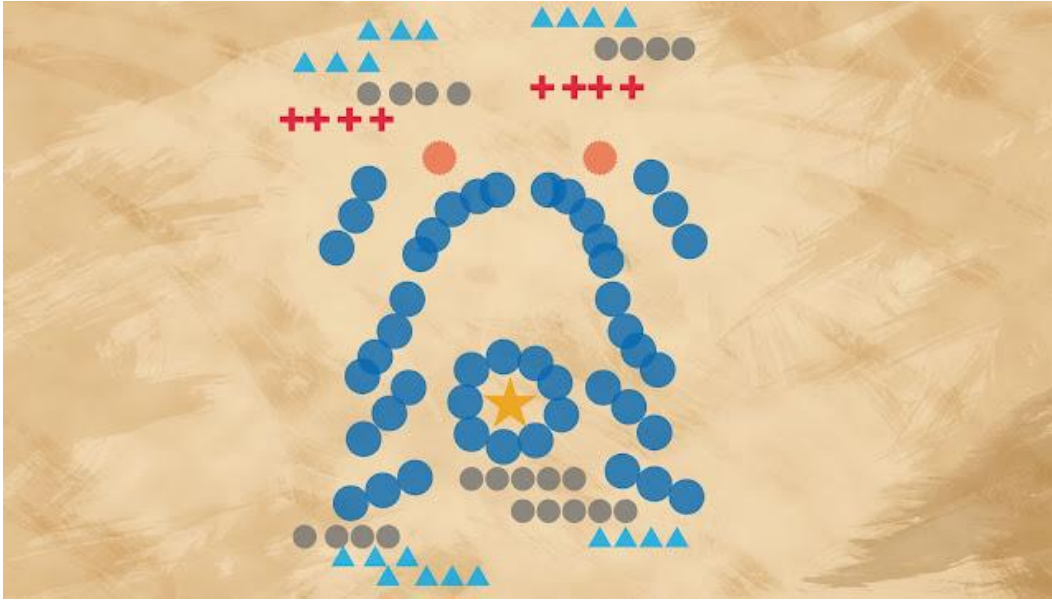


Figure 7.13. *Gyorin* (魚鱗) Formation.

The name translates to ‘fish scale’ and as the name suggests it resembles it. It includes a softer version of the wedge in the Hoshu formation. As the aggressiveness of the wedge is averted the risk of the formation also drops in proportion. It was suggested to be used in outnumbered positions and was used by Houjou Ujinano against Satake Yoshighe in 1585 according to the *Houjou go dai ki*. Note the overlaps between troops in the army and the asymmetry of troops; despite its offensive capabilities it was a great defensive formation too.

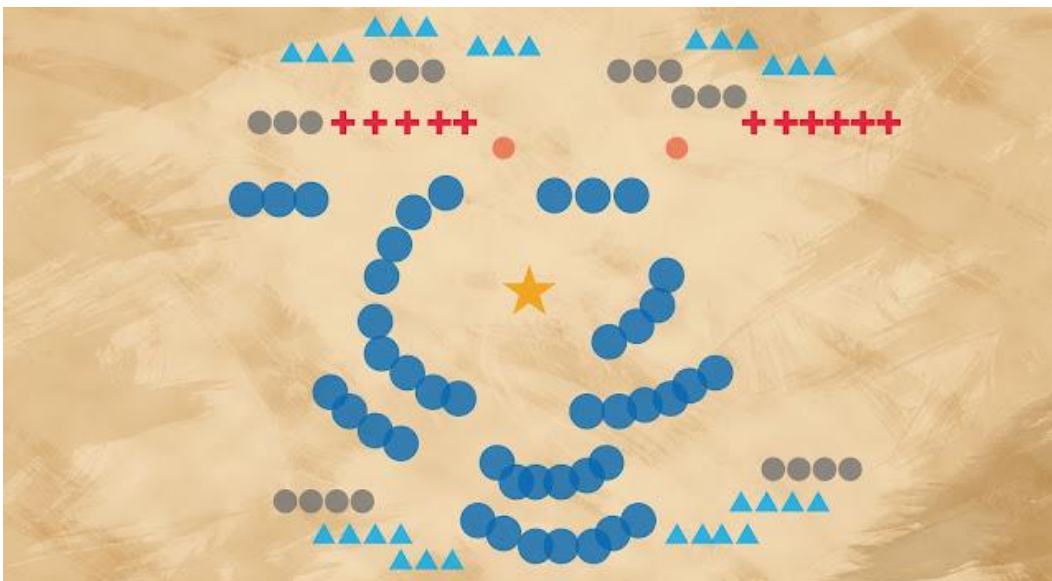


Figure 7.14. *Engetsu* (偃月) Formation.

The formation, as the translation of the name suggest, resembles a crescent moon however unlike its Turkish counterpart it is a highly defensive formation commonly used in last stand. The Taisho (general) is surrounded by its unit. In the chronicles of the Takeda, the *Kouyou Gunkan* (甲陽軍鑑), a general used this formation when facing an enemy Gyorin.

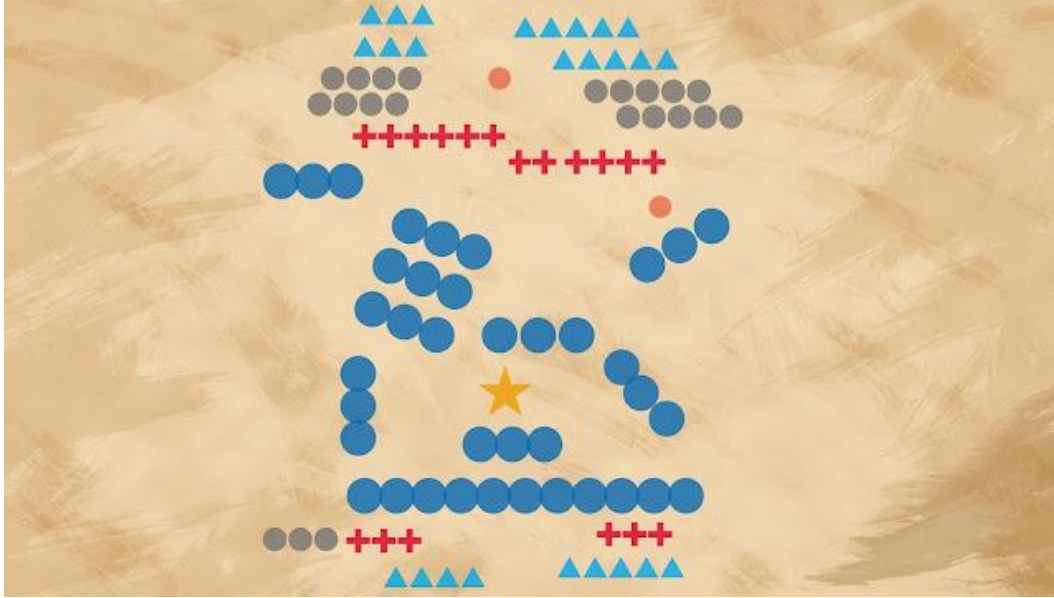


Figure 7.15. Chouda (長蛇) Formation.

The name of the formation roughly translates to long line of people and as the name suggests it is literally a long line of people formation. It is recommended against the enveloping ‘cranes wing’ formation. It is a strong offensive position offering a strong frontal attack useful in relatively plain terrain like a valley with its troops on the flank providing support to the vanguard and to the troops in rear preventing any envelopment.

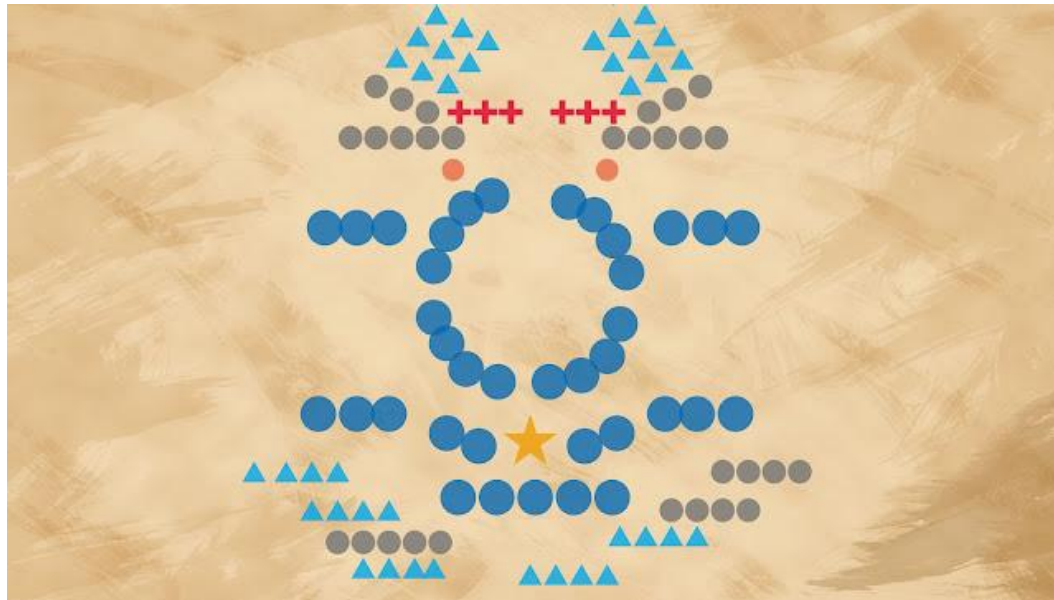


Figure 7.16. Houen (方円) Formation.

The Houen formation is a very strong defensive position, especially preferred by the Takeda. The formation can withstand charges committed in the sharp arrow formation. The units in the front thin out the charging enemy troops while the troops in the center arranged like a keyhole shape absorb the charge. The Houen is also a highly symmetric position in contrast to the previous ones.

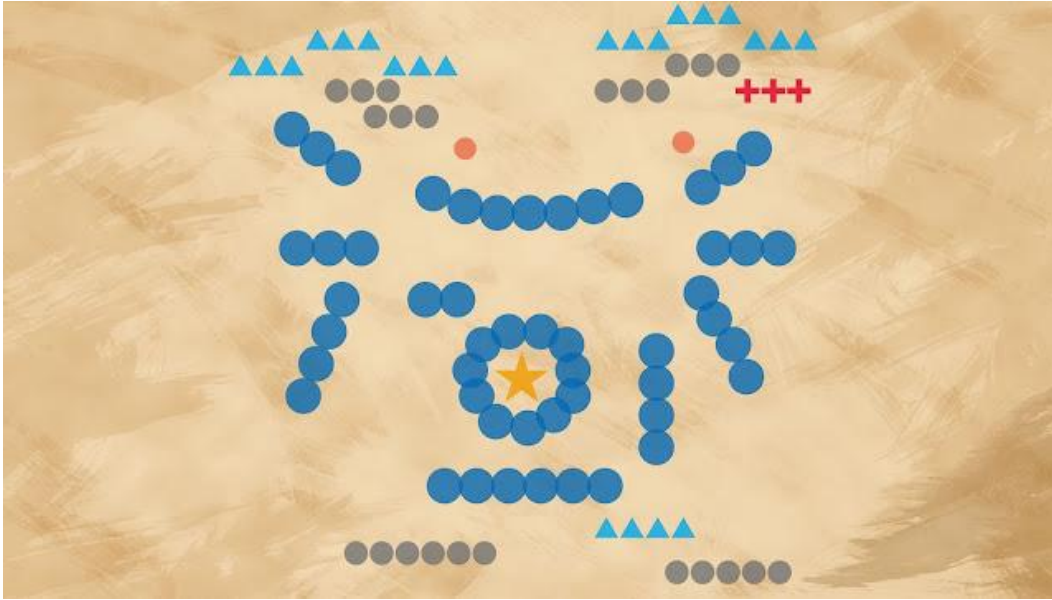


Figure 7.17. Kouyaku (衝鉤) Formation.

This is a highly defensive position as well as it can also withstand a sharp arrow formation attack same as the previous formation. The vanguard is used to hold the enemy while the other branches of the formation operate according to the general's initiative. It was used by Takahashi Shoutetsu at the battle of Nasumimatsu, against an enemy houen. Like the Kakuyoku or the crane wings formation, its front ranks could envelop the enemy position.

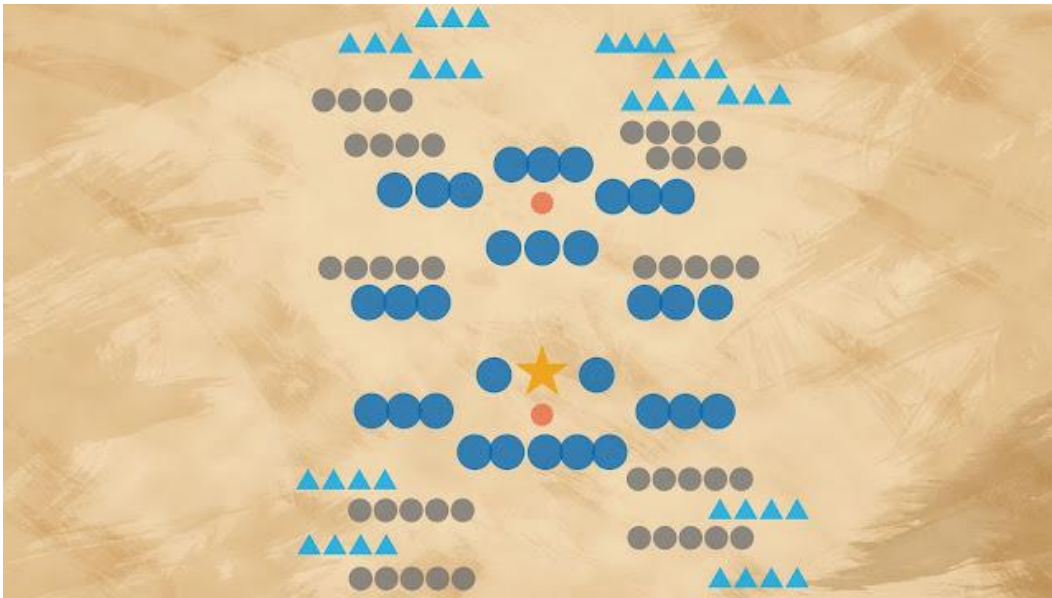


Figure 7.18. Ganko (雁行) Formation.

This is a deep formation and a very flexible one that offers great defense and offense. It is a simple position however it was commonly adopted. The dense formation allowed the formation to withstand enemy charges. Such a case was documented in Anegawa, 1570.

7.2.2. Doctrinal Characteristics

All nations across the years have adopted and developed specific tactics and different army compositions. It is possible to generalize these elements into a 'Doctrine'. A doctrine is a set of beliefs, principles, teachings taught and accepted by a group, such as a religious body, political part or a government. Doctrines can have different types like economics, trade, and social, however the interpretation used in this section is a conventional military doctrine.

Note that doctrines are not obeyed to their fullest extent they are only used as a base for the planning of future operations but do not replace any mandatory instruction for each operation. In Sengoku Japan even the most rudimentary doctrine could vary from one clan to the other so implementing a doctrine blindly was not an option. War is dynamic, it requires an adaptable set of rules, a doctrine is not that.

7.2.2.1. Cavalry Doctrine

In the Sengoku period cavalry lost its previous dominance and left its place to the mass conventional infantry as the infantry were much cheaper and if properly trained proved to be extremely effective. In this period the cavalry who used to fight with bows now had to change to spears as the previous scattered armies were now denser and more cohesive. At the beginning of the Sengoku period the bow was almost completely replaced by spears.

The usage of cavalry varied a lot depending on clans aligned with the terrain of their lands. For instance, the usage of cavalry in Kyushu and in Japan generally was very low compared to a clan like Hojo which had quarter of its army as cavalry. This was due to the mountainous features of the Japanese terrain and the plains of the Hojo lands.

According to the clan, the circumstances of the battle and the terrain the cavalry could be of different types:

- Mount Infantry: The mounted infantry, despite the name suggests, did not fight mounted. Rather, they used horses to travel and dismount upon arrival and fight with polearms, swords or bows and firearms.
- Medium Cavalry: When the terrain was suitable for horseback fighting the samurai performed as medium cavalry. They would scout, damage the enemy lines using guerrilla tactics, raid and pursue disorganized retreating enemy troops. They commonly used spears although the usage of firearms was used by some clans such as Date and Kato. They wore heavy armor and thus could not be considered as light cavalry.

- **Heavy Cavalry:** The usage of heavy cavalry was seen mainly in the east like the Takeda. These cavalries would charge back to the enemy lines and face the enemy cavalry rather than to raid or damage enemy lines directly. Sometimes they would use firearms but mainly they used spears with both hands while using both legs to tightly wrap themselves onto the horse as seen in bowman cavalry. The cavalry troops had personal retainers that carried their weaponry acted as support units. They also joined the fight whenever possible especially in the mounted infantry scenario. These foot samurai or the personal retainers were also used as heavy infantry or archers.

The Cavalry had specific tactics that varied according to the usage of the cavalry, however they were mainly used after the battle started either to have a decisive victory or save the situation.

- *Norikiri* - 乗り切り:

This is a charge in a wedge formation committed by several groups of 5-10 horsemen against already damaged and disorganized enemy units into a small area to maximize the shock. The main goal was to create confusion. It was mainly used for the heavy cavalry, however as the target forces were made of fatigued units' medium cavalry could also perform this tactic.

- *Norikuzushi* - 乗り崩し:

This is a combined charge of infantry and cavalry. The cavalry charged first to shock and disorganize the target group which were commonly ranged bowmen separate from the main army, following the charge the infantry would charge and continue fighting. Usually after this combination of charges yet another Norikiri charge would follow.

- *Norikomi* - 乗り込み:

Although many versions of this tactic exist mainly it was a hit and run tactic targeting forming forces. The goal was to again create shock and delay the formation of the enemy. In this case ranged weapons such as firearms were useful.

Other than these tactics if the sonae ended up breaking the enemy the cavalry was ordered to dismount and fight as infantry or if the opposition cavalry charged try to counter charge them.

7.2.2.2. Infantry Doctrine

In this section the class 'Infantry' will refer to previously described ashigaru pikemen, ashigaru bowmen, ashigaru gunners and the samurai on foot who were used as both ranged units and spearmen. The Infantry class will be inspected in 2 different divisions: melee units and range units.

7.2.2.2.1. *Melee Units*

The Melee units were essentially ashigaru pikemen who carried 5-meter spears called the Nagae-yari (長柄槍) and were armored. Their hegemony lasted until the 16th century when guns started being used in warfare. They were effective against cavalry, footed soldiers and even the low-level soldiers or peasants could prove to be very effective. This situation opened the door to large-scale conflicts where any man could wield a spear and become a soldier. The pikemen were mostly arranged in a cohesive formation.

However, the pikemen also had its disadvantages. They would become ineffective when too close. Also, since a significant portion of the pikemen were made of -like said before- under trained or inexperienced men this caused them to have low morale, not being able to move efficiently with the unwieldy pikes and ultimately causing them to be immobile. When this situation is combined with cohesion it makes the troops rigid. Rigidity caused the pikemen to have vulnerable flanks open to cavalry charges and an easy target to the ranged troops. To counter these issues foot samurai would be used as support groups scattered amongst the pikemen. These samurai were of unmounted cavalry, retainers of those cavalries and some samurai who fought footed which was very common in western Japan due to the mountainous terrain. These foot samurais would counter the cavalry charges, the disadvantages of close-range fighting and cover the flanks.

The foot samurai were also mobilized as heavy infantry to inflict shock into the opposition. The samurai used polearms and other weapons. When one similar pike formation overcame the other the foot samurai of the winning side would charge forward in hopes of diminishing the now disorganized pikemen. The samurai of the other side tried to counter this charge and give time to the ashigaru to reorganize and gain strength.

The melee units had specific tactics like the cavalry. There are 2 tactics that can be described in this context.

- *Yarigarami* (槍絡み):

Yarigarami translates into spear's entanglement and as the name suggests this was when 2 pikes squadrons met each other at the battlefield. The ashigaru tried to break the enemy lines and allow the samurai to charge and finish off the disorganized enemy. It was a decisive tactic that could result in a catastrophe.

- *Yaribusuma* (槍衾):

This tactic was used to prevent a frontal cavalry charge. It was essentially a spear wall and translated into a line of spears held at the ready. There would be 3 rows of pikemen with the first-row kneeling and aiming low. The second and the third row standing whilst aiming medium and high respectively. Upon a charge the foremost row would be ordered to thrust into the bellies of the

horses. If the charge was successfully stopped the second and the third rows would inflict damage and unset the horsemen. This highly defensive tactic required utmost discipline and practice.

7.2.2.2.2. *Ranged Units*

The ranged units inflicted the greatest number of wounds on the enemy opposition and thus had a major role in warfare whilst also supporting the melee units. The bigger portion of the ranged units were of archers until the 1580s when they were replaced - although not completely- by riflemen who mostly used arquebusier. The arquebusier inflicted significantly more damage to more troops than its competition bows. However, bows still had some usage on rainy days where the arquebusiers could not function and on gunpowder shortages and were still used by bowmen.

Bowmen were incorporated into the firemen units which operated sniping operations targeting generals and the protection of the firemen when they were reloading whilst the firemen did the *volleys*⁶. Although most of these ranged units were ashigaru there were some samurai units that consisted of only such weaponry, however it was much rarer as the samurai operated within the melee units aiding the pikemen.

Most of the time these units were skirmishers⁷ and were separated from the main army at least at the beginning. They targeted the opposition infantry and ranged units. They were armed with standing shields that gave them protection against incoming projectiles. However, because of their separation they were vulnerable against cavalry charges. When cavalry and infantry advanced, they progressively retreated to the allied lines while still shooting the enemy. Although gunners or riflemen mostly used arquebusiers, they also used large caliber guns and hand cannons as well as some form of artillery.

Both the riflemen and the bowmen had different sets of tactics. Here are the tactics for the bowmen:

- *Sashiyagakari* (指矢懸かり):
It could be said that the tactic is roughly the modern-day equivalent of suppressive fire. It relied on a rather higher rate of fire specifically targeting the opposition gunners. The tactic reduced enemy mobility and decreased opposition firing capabilities.
- *Ryōgakari* (両懸かり)
This one had 2 variations with one being the previously mentioned suppressive fire that protected the gunners on their reload and another version

⁶ Volleys: A group of bullets, arrows or weapons fired at the same time.

⁷ Skirmishers are light infantry or light cavalry soldiers deployed as a vanguard, flank guard or rearguard to screen a tactical position or a larger body of friendly troops from enemy advances.

was a combined attack of arrows and bullets in volleys against the enemy lines and when the lines were damaged the melee units would rush in.

As promised the set of tactics for the riflemen/gunners:

- *Sandanuchi* (三段撃ち):

The tactic has been very famous since the Battle of Nagashino. It was used by Oda Nobunaga and became very common in the 1590s. It consisted of 3 rows, while the first shot the second row got ready and third row was reloading. The tactic consisted of very fast volleys and was very efficient however it required very well drilled riflemen.

- *Kurumauchi* (車撃ち):

It is like the more common '3 lines firing tactic'. The units would be organized in lines. The first line would shoot at the enemy immediately moving to the rearmost line whilst the second line would move to the foremost line. This way the troops could securely reload while the fire continued. The technique required shooting while moving which only skilled, trained and experienced riflemen could perform. The tactic resembled a spinning wheel.

7.2.3. Open Field Battles

When 2 armies march and crossroads with one another in an open terrain it is referred to as an 'Open Field Battle'. In an open field battle the outcome would most likely be decisive with one side having significantly more casualties and losses than the other. In this type of battle both sides would arrange their troops in a battle formation as mentioned in Section 7.2.1.

After the formation was chosen, commanders would come up with a general operation plan and tactics. These tactics could be improvised or borrowed straight from the textbook "Open Field Battle 101". However, some tactics emerged and became popular amongst commanders. In this section some of those tactics will be discussed, however yet again please note that tactics weren't used as they are written, they were more commonly used with minor adjustments or only as a basis for the planning.

7.2.3.1. Nanadan no Hataraki - 七段の働

This tactic is a very common and ideal way to deploy and commence the operations. It suggests that when the distance between the 2 armies is 2 cho (218 meters) the gunners should fire, the archers and foot soldiers should advance alongside the flag bearers whilst the cavalry waits in the rear.

After the first barrage the army will move towards the enemy and when the distance is 1 cho (109 meters) there should be a combined fire of archers and gunners. When the distance becomes 30 ken (54 meters) archers should start to fire their arrows rapidly at a higher rate.

When the distance becomes less than 30 ken the ranged troops should move to the sides, opening way for a charge to be committed by the pikemen followed by the foot samurai. The ranged troops would provide support fire to this charge. The flag bearers move forward to and the cavalry advance after everybody while splitting to left and right ready to charge. In **Figure 7.20**. Phase 2. The hollow triangles depict foot soldiers, while the "plus" the cavalry units. On the side lines, the ranged units that have step aside to let the infantry charge.

After advancing 5-11 ken(9-18 meters), the charging foot soldiers should rearrange in a wedge formation. This is the vanguard ready to collide with the enemy. The enemy is also expected to arrange in a similar position. The distance becomes closer to 7 and 8 ken(12-14 meters). The foot soldiers would arrange with the pikemen in the front and the foot samurai in the back creating a 'push of pike's scenario as depicted in **Figure 7.21**. The hollow squares and triangles depict foot samurai and pikemen respectively.

Once the 2 infantries collide the cavalry is supposed to charge and attack the flank of the opposition or protect the flank of the allied troops and once the enemy is retreating pursuing and eliminating what remains of the enemy. This tactic is the ideal and the best way to use

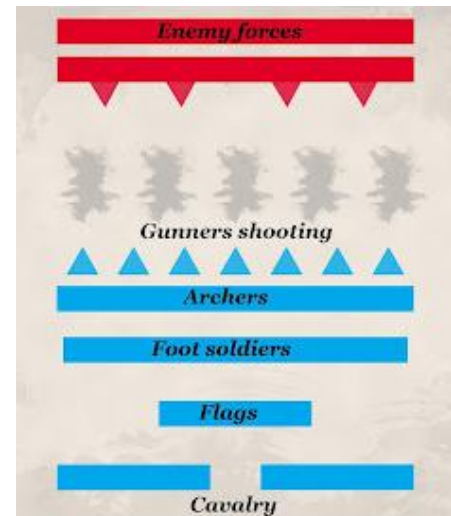


Figure 7.19. The gunners are already shooting.

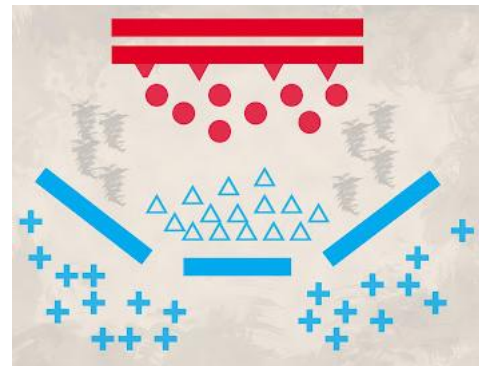


Figure 7.20. Phase 2.

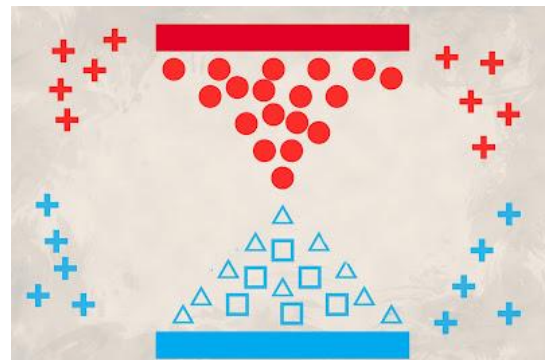


Figure 7.21. The hollow squares and triangles depict foot samurai and pikemen respectively.

troops gathered in a sonae however its simplicity and the blind assumption of 2 armies charging towards each other make it inflexible.

7.2.3.2. Kitsutsuki no Sempō - 啄木鳥の戦法

The tactic better known as the ‘woodpecker tactic’ suggests splitting the main army into 2 smaller armies. One of the armies would be used to provoke the opposition army via ranged attacks and make them commit a force attack while unprepared. During that the second army would go to the rear of the enemy army and aid the first army or if the first army was enough to defeat the enemy army and prevent the retreat of the enemy army. The first army that provoked the enemy would be composed of gunners, archers in the rear and pikemen in the front that would cover them. The second army would be composed of cavalry that would be mobile and swift as they would have to travel to the rear of the opposition. This tactic was very risky as if the opposition would sense it, they could attack when the army split up but not in the correct position. This would cause them to be small prey to a much bigger army. However, if successful it would be very rewarding since the opposition could not escape and would be either captured or dead. It was essentially a pincer attack a.k.a. double envelopment.

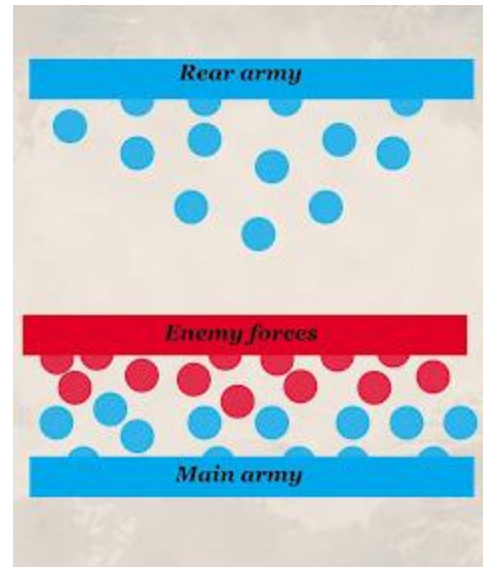


Figure 7.22. A depiction of the woodpecker tactic.

There is also another version of this tactic which does not incorporate 2 smaller armies but preserves the core idea which was to provoke the enemy and force them to an unorganized attack that would likely result in a defeat.

7.2.3.3. Sutegamari - 捨てがまり

The tactic is one of the most – if not the most-sacrificial and heroic of them all. It required small groups to sacrifice themselves to save the remaining army. Upon defeat when the main army started to withdraw small groups named ‘Zazen jin’ that were composed of highly trained samurai would charge at the pursuing enemy causing them to slow down, lose momentum allowing the main army the crucial time they so desperately need to retreat safely. The samurai would be armed with arquebusiers and spears. They would kneel to stay hidden and shoot at an instant creating a shock and would target enemy lords and commanders. The Zazen jin would not survive but the lords would. Although it sounds very simple it was extremely effective. It was used by Shimazu and with huge effort 80 of the 300 deployed men survived. It required highly trained and willing-to-die soldiers which a lot of clans ceased to have.

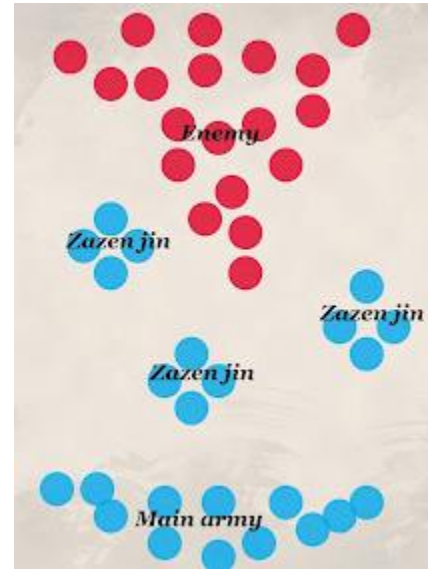


Figure 7.23. Enemy is pursuing the main army while zazen jin is deployed to disturb the pursuit.

7.2.3.4. Kuhiki - 繰引き

This tactic is also a tactical retreat. It would split the army in to 3-4 groups. While the honjin (the main group) escaped the other groups would form a line. The other groups would be of all the ranged units available and in contrast to the Sutegamari it would not only slow down the enemy and would also withstand the attack. It was used to minimize casualties and protect the commanders and the lords.

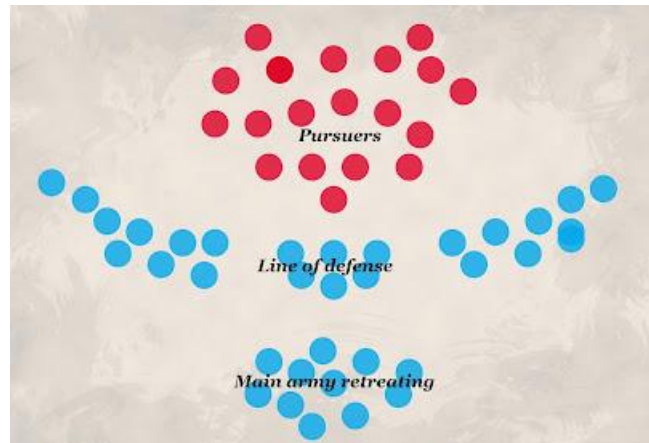


Figure 7.24. The line of defense is allowing the main army to retreat.

7.2.3.5. Ugachi nuke - 穿ち抜け

It would include the army assuming a wedge formation similar to one seen in Hoshi. With this formation they would charge at the rather weaker areas of the enemy lines break them and escape

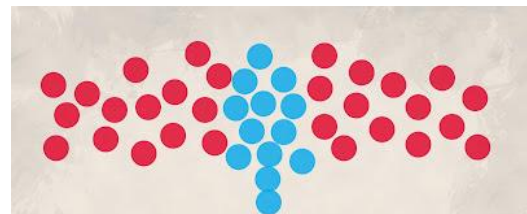


Figure 7.25. The enemy lines are broken.

through them. It was more commonly used whilst target to a *pincer attack*⁸.

7.3. Siegecraft

In the Sengoku Era, domains constantly competed over territory. To insert more influence, Daimyos of these domains built many defensive fortifications over Japan. There are 1385 documented fortifications that existed in the Sengoku Era while the exact number is unknown, but it can be comfortably said that there were several thousand. Many of these castles were smaller undeveloped castles that slowed intruders rather than completely stopped them. To advance through territory, to assert control over a strategic point or to successfully capture an area force *had* to capture as many as fortifications as they could along the way as the garrisons within those fortifications could cause harm or even cut off the supply routes feeding the army. Hence, commanders had to act efficiently and fast while capturing castles as there could be hundreds of castles within a single campaign. In contrast defenders of these castles had to be efficient as well to counter this. Over the years some strategies were favored to be more efficient over the others.

7.3.1. Fortifications and Siege Defense

At the beginning of the Sengoku era most castles were mountain castles, Yamashiro's. As the name suggests these castles were directly built on mountains combining the terrain features of the area with the structure. Most Yamashiro's combined wooden palisades with earth.

7.3.1.1. Yamashiro

To construct a Yamashiro; first the top of the mountain was flattened, and any tree bush was cleaned. Then slopes were transformed into simple fortifications. Sometimes areas between the slopes were filled with water and connected with dynamic bridges that could be dismantled at any time. The final fortification cooperated with palisades, gates and towers.

The castles were prone to erosion and would not last for years. The dirt slopes could only support light-weight constructions such as wooden palisades. However, Yamashiro's could be upgraded later by strengthening the slopes with rocks and stones and replacing the wooden palisades with plastered constructions. A very good example of this is the Arato Castle which is shown in Figure 7..



Figure 7.26. Arato Castle Remains.

⁸ A military tactic where forces strike both sides, or flanks, of an enemy formation at the same time.

European scholars and travelers arriving at Japan, viewing the castles found a lot of similarities between the conventional European forts and the Japanese mountain castles. The resemblance was uncanny however the one big difference was that European artillery did not play a role in castle sieges and thus castles weren't built to withstand artillery bombardment. There were some catapults used within sieges, however unlike European siege artillery these did not target the integrity of the structure rather they were used to eliminate or damage the opposition army not the castle itself. The Japanese understood artillery, but it took until the first quarter of the 17th century to be integrated into the arsenal of Japanese siege warfare. With the Siege of Ozaka in 1614, for the first time artillery bombardment was used before the eventual infantry assault. Instead of bombardment, commanders used direct infantry assault in sieges. To counter the infantry assault, the castles relied on defense in depth. The European castle defenses principle was to hold the besiegers at a point not having them advance any further whilst the Japanese fought their besiegers within the castle itself, by drawing the opposition into the castle.

7.3.1.2. Defense in Depth

Castles of the Sengoku Era came in many forms and shapes, but its core principle stayed the same. Every castle was built to withstand an infantry assault by drawing them in the castle itself. This way the numerical advantage that was posed by the besiegers was overcome as they were forced to fit through tight spaces, obstacles and many defensive contraptions. The defense was applied at multiple levels not at a singular point that resembled *guerilla warfare*⁹.

Castles themselves had multiple levels named *kuruwa* with its European counterpart being courtyards. These yards were separated with one another via walls that could be plastered walls or normal wooden palisades. At the heart of the castle there was a keep and in a siege the goal was to destroy the keep or capture the keep that was in the main compound called 'Honmaru'. The compounds were labeled as second compound, third compound and so on.

In Figure 7., Odawara Castle is shown with number 1 indicating the Honmaru (main compound), 2 the ninomaru (second compound) and 3 to 9 the other surrounding *kuruwa* (courtyards).



Figure 7.27. Odawara Castle in Kanagawa Prefecture

⁹ *Guerrilla warfare* is a type of unconventional warfare in which small groups of irregular militaries use ambushes, sabotage, petty warfare or hit-and-run tactics in a conflict to fight against regular forces.

Besiegers or regular visitors had to go through each of the areas one by one respectively as the castle was built this way.

It wasn't until the late 16th century when because armies grew bigger and larger, small mountain castles ceased to suffice armies that consisted thousands, even tens of thousands of men. Hence Daimyos started building castles in plains named Hirajiro which translates to plain castle and Hirayamajiro which translates to hilltop castle. The structure and core principle of these structures stayed rather similar to Yamashiro's.

7.3.1.3. Structure of the Ideal Castle

As mentioned before the castles were divided into several sections named kuruwa by a combination of walls and defensive contraptions. However, the layout in which these sections were arranged differed along with the terrain of the area and some other features. There was a total of 3 distinctive styles: Ringed (Rinhaku-Shiki), Compound (Renhaku-Shiki) and Stepped (Teikaku-Shiki).

Ringed style had its sections emerging from the center of the outmost section with the other sections directly inside it. (*Figure 7.*)

Compound style had its sections laid on top of each other respective to their size. The bigger one was at the bottom while the smaller one was at the top. (*Figure 7.*)

Stepped style had its sections like the ringed style but emerging from a corner of the outmost section. (*Figure 7.*)

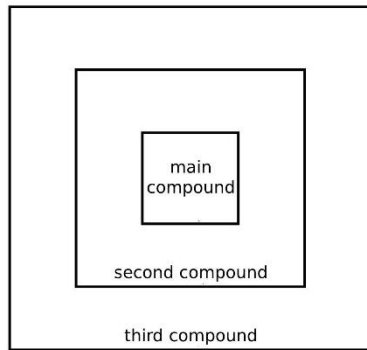


Figure 7.28. Ringed Style.

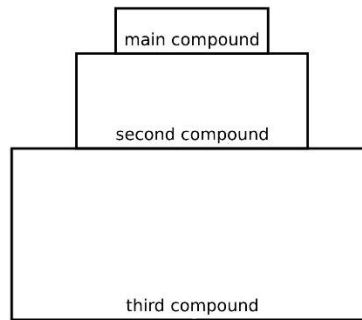


Figure 7.29. Compound Style.

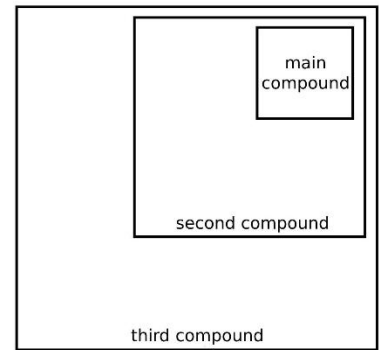


Figure 7.30. Stepped Style.

As time passed an ideal style emerged; a Stepped Style castle built in the form of a Hirayamajiro (hilltop castle). This type of castle was the most common one against its counterparts in late 16th century.

The Ideal Castle had a tall structure in its main compound called "The Tenshu". This structure was around 7 stories tall. It had many purposes as it functioned as; a storage area that could supply the residents of the structure with an elevated lookout and most importantly as a symbol of power for the Daimyo who owned it as it could be seen from miles away. The Tenshu was the final stronghold for its residents in a potential siege.

Each compounds' borders had plastered wattle and daub walls approximately 3.5-4 meters tall; and had rectangular holes for bows, triangular holes for firearms as shown in Figure 7.. Sometimes just behind these walls were trees shielding the defenders of incoming projectiles. Additionally, these trees could be used for burning fuel or materials for construction, in the event of a siege

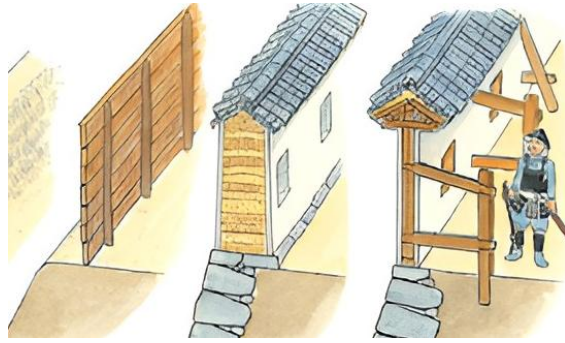


Figure 7.31. Japanese Castle Walls.

At strategic points such as the corners there were towers that strengthened the defense, connected directly to the walls. The final outer defense included water moats. Both are shown in Figure 7.. The moats slowed down the besiegers whilst the defenders of the castle defended with bows and firearms by the usage of said holes. Over these moats were gorges that could be dismantled upon an attack. However, not dismantling it would cause the enemy to squeeze into a narrow passage making their numerical superiority much more insignificant.



Figure 7.32. Outer Tower, Nijo Castle.

The best example of such a castle would be the Himeji castle which had its final form in early 17th century. The castle is one of the biggest castles in Japan. As you can see the castle gradually elevates to the main compound where the Tenshu is located.



Figure 7.33. Himeji Castle Painting.

7.3.2. Siege Offense and Asserting Control

Sieges cost a lot to both sides. As mentioned before, the defenders had an enormous advantage over an intruder army, fracturing them into smaller fractions rendering the numerical superiority of the intruders useless. Hence, commanders avoided sieges whenever possible as it was very costly – even *if* successful. If it was unavoidable, commanders first began with negotiations. Sometimes the belligerents of the fortifications surrendered with no resistance while others chose to fight to the death and inflict as much as damage as possible to the besiegers. Previous achievements of an army heavily influenced the surrendering of the defenders, an army notorious for their discipline, power could make defenders surrender significantly more often. Or the capturing of a nearby major castle could cause the defenders to retreat to a more well defended position. Nevertheless, the attributes of the army affected the probability of capturing a fortified position with no resistance.

When it was apparent that the defenders could not stand a chance against the attackers they overran them. It is noted that once Takeda Nobutara destroyed 36 castles in one day, although many of these castles weren't as developed. If negotiations failed, a direct assault was not possible the attackers followed several strategies. However, instead of long-lasting sieges commanders preferred swift decisive assaults.

7.3.2.1. Siege Line

Forces built a siege line around the castle to counter a potential unexpected arrival of a relief army that would provide support to the defenders. Forces built defensive contraptions such as horse defense fences, trenches, palisades and some other traps to lure a possible relief army or the eager army within the castle to these strategic points and use the advantage of their position to defeat the opposition. Although they say the best defense is offense, sometimes the best offense *is* defense.

Horse defense fences, as the name suggests, were used to prevent cavalry forces from breaching a defensive position. It would stand at 3 to 4 meters tall, made of thick wooden logs gathered nearby built by the foot soldiers. It would protect ranged units. Tactical gaps were intentionally left in the fence that allowed counterattacks. The fences were commonly utilized in a multiple layer structure. The fences were utilized in the famous in the “Battle of Nagashino” which will be explained in depth further on.



Figure 7.34. Battlefield of Sekigahara.

Palisades were the backbone of Sengoku era warfare, converting open fields into tactical warfare areas. Depending on the urgency of the Palisades it could be made of bamboo or log stockade. Bamboo is a lightweight, incredibly strong material that would be preferred mostly for temporary palisades because of the ease of both cutting and assembling it. Because of these attributes they would be commonly used in open field warfare. Log Stockades would be used for semi-permanent palisades typically on mountain fortresses or long-term siege lines.



Figure 7.35. Palisade.

Trenches were basically dug up dirt that would provide the defenders an advantageous position where most of their bodies would not be seen. The trenches could be dug up easily. Both the defenders and the besiegers used trenches. Trenches at their smallest were 90 cm deep with an earth mound on the top around 60 cm making it 1.5 meters deep in total. The trenches got gradually deeper as they got closer to the castle. For the defenders, trenches that they built slowed down the besiegers. For the besieger trenches they built offered them a reliable position to retreat or consolidate.

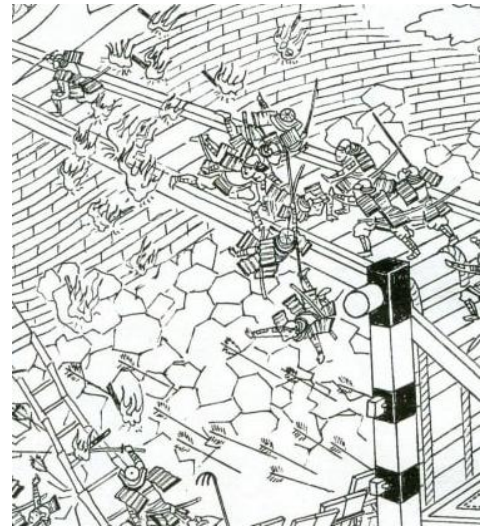


Figure 7.36. Trench Warfare.

All the contraptions would be used in a combination of complimenting each other's weaknesses. These contraptions could easily turn the tide of the war if built correctly.

7.3.2.1. Bribery & Arson

Besiegers bribed or threatened one of the defenders and sabotaged the castle from the inside or bribed the commanding officer directly and recruited him to their side. A very good example would be the Siege of Fushimi Castle. The siege was a crucial battle leading up to the Battle of Sekigahara which ended the Sengoku Period. The castle was defended by Tokugawa Ieyasu's army. Knowing his inevitable defeat, the commander of the castle sacrificed himself in an operation that diverted the attention of a commander – Ishida Mitsunari defending a castle from Ieyasu. The commander moved a portion of his army to the Fushimi castle while Ieyasu captured the castle that was being defended.

Ishida's army began their assault on the castle owned by Ieyasu on 27 August but made little process for days. At one point a tower was set on fire but was put out by a

garrison who lost his life during the process. Eventually, a message was sent tied to an arrow to the castle. The message said that the besieging army had taken the wife and children of one of the defenders inside and would crucify them unless he betrayed his comrades. Hence, on 8 September, one of the towers was set aflame from within the castle causing Ishida's men to break through.

7.3.2.2. Engineering

Besiegers used other strategies that sabotaged the position of the defenders. These strategies included manipulating the physical position they have via construction and damaging the defender position.

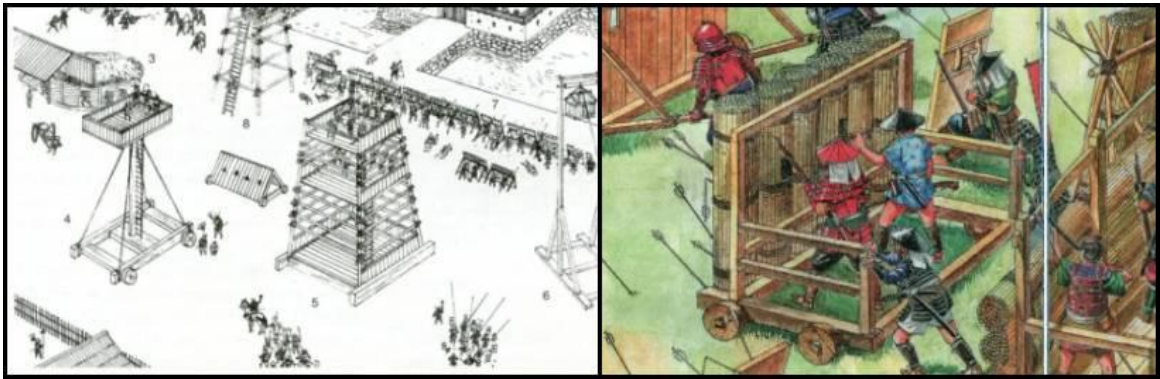


Figure 7.37. Siegecraft Contraptions.

They would build tall towers that provided high ground for arches and marksmen some of these towers had wheels that made them mobile. They also built artificial hills to suffice the need for high ground. Additionally, they would build mobile shields and walls. These contraptions provided them with cover as they gradually advanced towards the position.

Besiegers also used mining as a part of their offensive appetizer catalogue. In the terrain beneath castle walls would be dug up which would result in the walls and buildings collapsing. In the siege of Itami Castle a tunnel was dug up until the innermost bailey surpassed the walls. In Europe to counter this it is documented that defensive counter mining was done however there is no record of this in Sengoku Era Japan.

Another use of mining flooding castles. The Takamatsu Castle was surrounded by moats and waterways. Seeing the area was in the middle of swamp and a nearby river the general in charge of the siege – Hideyoshi hired 100 workers from the nearby village and flooded the castle causing them to surrender.

7.3.2.3. Starvation & Blockade

When enough influence was asserted, forces would surround the strong castle and cut off its incoming supply. Nothing would get in the castle or get out of it; this was called a 'blockade'. In the meantime, the forces within the castle could operate a risky

counterattack at any time but the failure of the attack would likely mean death. The chance of this counterattack working would decrease gradually as the besieging force increased its grasp over the area.

The blockade of the castle would cause the residents to starve. It would also cause plagues as if one of the residents were to get sick it would immediately spread throughout the castle. When enough time had passed, which could last up to a year, the residents of the castle would become starved, sick and as a result posed no danger to the besieging army. At that position the forces would most likely surrender as a desperate attack would fail. A more ruthless and objectively effective way was to cut off the water supply of the castle as starvation would last for months. In the Siege of Choko-ji the water supply of the castle was cut off. Desperate, the commander of the castle ordered a counterattack knowing well that the operation would most likely fail resulting in the death of his troops. However, the Hail Mary succeeded against all odds and the castle prevailed.

7.3.3. Siegecraft in Practice

The first obstacle the forces meet is the moat. While the besiegers tried to swim across the moat via boats the defenders responded with fire arrows, and the fire of the marksmen. The besiegers launch suppressive fire via fire arrows, arquebusiers and small grenades that hit the defenders from the little holes over the walls.

Once the besiegers crossed the moat they reached the first obstacle, which was a plastered wall. The walls weren't too tall, the besiegers did not even need a ladder to climb it, but the walls had holes. Using these holes the defenders poked them with spears or dropped stones from above. It also had some windows that could be closed with a hatch. Below windows were weapons known as wolf teeth. The weapon was a massive wooden log with iron nails. The weapon would be repeatedly dropped to the wall severely damaging if not eliminating intruders. In this stage defenders inflicted as much damage as possible rather than completely preventing enemy intrusion. The moment the first intruder breached the defenses all the defenders retreated to the second wall – the second section, avoiding any direct confrontation.

In this second phase the attackers tried to cross to the second section as soon as possible while being under heavy fire by the defenders. The walls of the second bailey were much steeper, from the above the defenders would fight with spears and thrust them from the small holes within the windows while still avoiding direct confrontation. The defenders retreated again when the first man climbed the wall.

The closer the intruders came the fiercer the defense grew. The second and the baileys further on had narrow paths and obstacles forcing the attackers to split rendering their numerical superiority useless. Defenders engaged in guerrilla warfare damaging the attackers via lightning strikes. The reinforcements for the attackers would arrive to find nothing but the dead bodies of their comrades to be ambushed by the defenders.

If the attackers managed to reach the final bailey where the main keep – Tenshu – was located, they rarely needed to capture the keep. Commonly it was set on fire and before that either the commander ordered one desperate last attack to preserve honor or surrendered

7.3.3.1. Battle of Nagashino

In the Battle of Nagashino, June 1575 the Takeda clan surrounded the Nagashino Castle which had 500 defenders with a 15000 men army led by the Daimyo of the Takeda Clan, Takeda Katsuyori. The castle was owned by the Tokugawa Clan. At that time the Daimyo of the Tokugawa Clan, Tokugawa Ieyasu could only mobilize 8000 men. Swiftly concluding that the Tokugawa could not defeat Takeda alone he quickly asked support from a long-time allied clan, the Oda Clan. At the time the Oda Clan was one of the strongest - if not



Figure 7.38. Battle of Nagashino.

strongest- clans within Japan. However, the Daimyo of the Oda Clan, Oda Nobunaga was busy with his westward campaign for several years against Miyoshi and Hongan-ji Clan. Nobunaga led his army to a siege over a castle built by the Hongan-ji Clan that was defended by the Miyoshi Clan. His forces got defeated in the siege and he rested his troops for a while until Miyoshi offered to surrender. The treaty was rather favorable to the Miyoshi Clan as the Oda gave up a portion of territories that they already controlled but it was still a victory, nonetheless. Then Oda led an army of 30000 to Mikawa where Nagashino Castle was located with his heir, Oda Nobutada. He left Gifu on 21st of June and joined Ieyasu at Okayazaki on 22nd of June. They arrived at Shitaragahara on the 26th of June without going any further to the relief of the castle; he halted his march and set up camp there. The Oda-Tokugawa alliance set up defensive positions with horse defense fences and earthworks in preparation for an offensive by the Takeda forces.

Meanwhile at the Nagashino Castle, it is rumored that one night a messenger, Ture Suneemon, slipped out the castle unnoticed going past the besieging Takeda forces in hopes of requesting support from Ieyasu in Okazaki. Upon his arrival he was informed that Ieyasu was marching towards Nagashino Castle. He started going back to the castle to inform the forces in the castle of the good news however he was captured by the Takeda Forces this time. The Takeda soldiers told him that they would spare his life if he told the forces in the castle that no reinforcements would come. He agreed and they went up to the castle. He

started shouting: ‘Reinforcements are on their way, Ieyasu is coming’ as he knew the inevitable end that awaited him. In the end he got crucified by the Takeda forces.

When Takeda's high command learnt about the arrival of Oda's army, older experienced commanders advised Katsuyori, the Daimyo, to retreat to Kai however the younger commanders decided that they would continue to fight. As Katsuyori saw Nobunaga's forces setting up defensive contraptions he wrongly concluded the true strength of the opposition army. Since no one knew the true intentions of Nobunaga he deemed that Nobunaga's forces would not seriously help Ieyasu as he had before and that he could defeat Ieyasu. Hence Katsuyori decided to go on with the decisive battle.

On 28th of June Katsuyori started marching eastward, to the position of the Oda-Tokugawa alliance. Seeing this, Nobunaga also advanced and both sides met at the Rengo River. The Takeda army, facing a strong opposition with an even stronger defensive position, endured immense casualties. The raging cavalry heavily damaged by the spearmen got finished by the firemen. Fractured, the cavalry retreated over the river however continued enduring casualties caused by the firemen. Meanwhile, 4000 men led by a Tokugawa vassal set out in the middle of the night to Mount Tobigasu.

On the early morning of 29 June, the men launched a surprise offensive against the Takeda forces that were protecting the rear of the Fort. The forces defeated the Takeda forces and entered the castle, driving off the remaining Takeda Forces. This left the Takeda main army cut off from retreat. Having no choice, the Takeda forces began to desperately attack the Oda and Tokugawa camps in front of it. They repeatedly charged but repeatedly blocked by the firemen and horse defense fences. As time went on, the victory became clearer. Eventually the Takeda forces started retreating but, on the way, continued taking on casualties by the firemen.



Figure 7.39. Detailed look on the Siege of Nagashino.

7.3.3.2. Example Operation

On Figure 7., an example hypothetical situation has been presented. The Imagawa Clan has surrounded the Nagoya Castle owned by the Oda clan with 6 divisions of infantry totaling around 12000 men while the castle is only protected by garrisons of 500 men. There are 3 other Oda castles nearby that have 300 garrisons each. In this situation directly commencing an offensive towards the castle could be risky due to the nearby castles that could provide immediate support and supply. In the future these castles could be used by a potential relief army that could defeat the damaged Imagawa forces by the reckless siege operation.

Instead, Imagawa could capture the nearby shrine with little effort and connect it to the supply network with roads; as shown in Figure 7.. Next, they could build some forts around the castle and connect them to the supply network. This way not only that the supply needs of the forces would be sustained significantly more efficiently, upon potential intervention from the opposition forces could be averted by a retreat to the nearby forts, or by a more efficient retreat over the newly built roads to the Kasedare Castle. Now in this case forces would begin the siege. Forces could also build additional defensive contraptions.

For instance, in Figure 7., Palisades were located near the fort in which direction they would face the castle, horse defense fences have been built south of the castle to face the castle with some palisades. After that they could begin a siege. If a stronger relief army arrived, they could quickly retreat to the defensive positions.



Figure 7.40. Phase 1 of the operation.

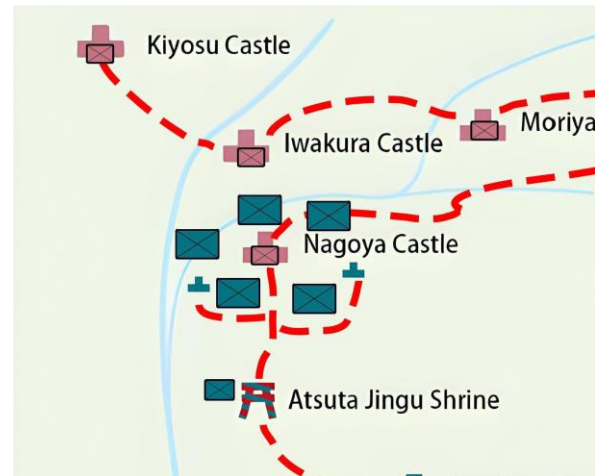


Figure 7.41. Phase 2 of the operation.

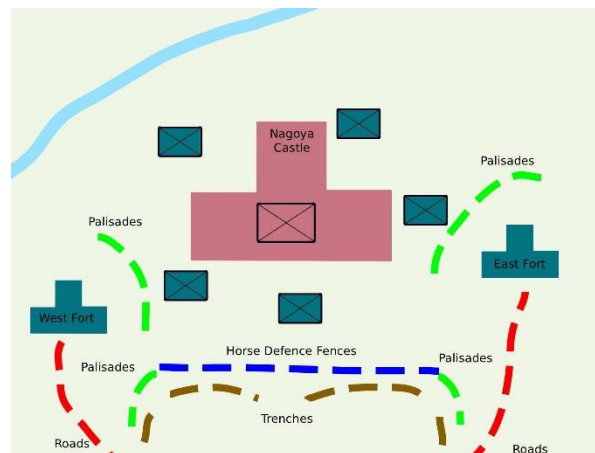


Figure 7.42. Phase 3 of the operation.

In Figure 7., 4 divisions, a relief army, totaling up to 15000 men have arrived. 4 weakened divisions taking part in the siege have managed to retreat; however, 1 division located at the north-east has been lost along the way. The weakened divisions have lost 1500 men in the siege and on their retreat and now have only 10500 men left. But the relief army recklessly starts an offensive against the opposition that is now located in a much more advantageous position.

Because of their reckless attack as shown in Figure 7., the relief army has suffered too many casualties totaling around 7000 while the opposition has only suffered 2000 because of their advantageous position. The east operation has been a success with the relief army capturing the East Fort however the rest of the operations have been proved to be a complete failure. Now the opposition launches a counterattack on the weakened army.

Due to their extreme fatigue and the lack of proper logistic establishments the relief army gets intercepted on their retreat and loses an additional 2000 men on their way out and cannot protect the castle anymore. Finally, the castle has been captured. The final verdict of casualties is shown on Table 7.4; Imagawa forces have lost a total of 3500 men and have captured the castle whilst the opposition, The Oda forces have lost a whopping 9000 men whilst losing a very important strategic castle. Now the Imagawa have cemented their position in the north and can potentially conquer north of the river much more easily also because of the severely weakened opposition army and the damaged army morale.

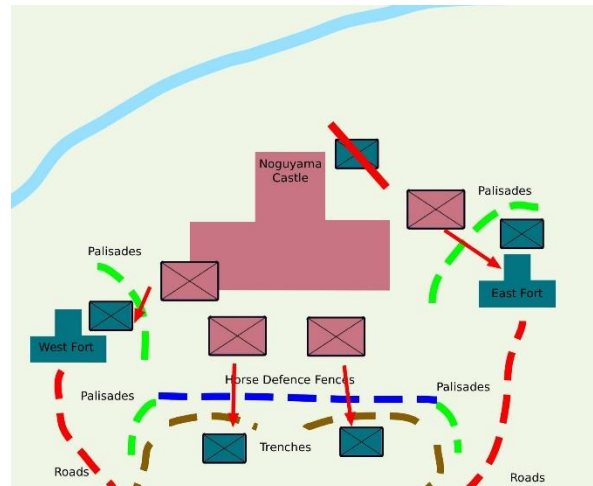


Figure 7.43. Phase 4 of the operation.

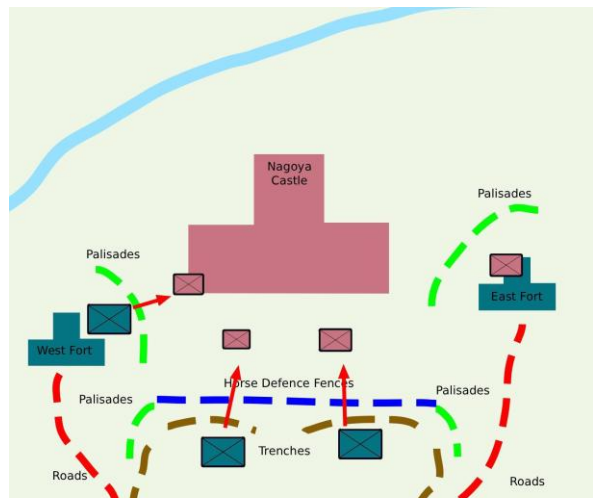


Figure 7.44. Phase 5 of the operation.

Clan Name	Casualty Count
Oda Clan	9000
Imagawa Clan	3500

Table 7.4. Final verdict for the casualties.

7.4. Long-lasting Campaigns and Conquests

In the Sengoku Era Daimyo's started campaigns to assert control over vast amounts of land. One of the greatest if not the greatest is Oda Nobunaga's western campaign. In this campaign Nobunaga extended the borders of his domain up until the Mori Domain subjugating several other domains and effectively ending the succession of the ruler clans.

In the 'Oda Western Campaign' Nobunaga progressively conquered the west well knowing that not everyone would comply and he was right. A resistance broke out, well behind the current frontline and thanks to the previously secured logistics of the area his forces traveled to the area with ease and suppressed it. After the area was secure his forces later came back to the frontline, again, securely thanks to the logistics. Had Nobunaga not been careful and 'barbarically' charged towards the ends of western Japan his supplies would be cut off because of the resistance and now the starving army of his, crushed by the enemy forces.

To overcome such problems, commanders used several strategies such as 'Progressive Conquest' which the example was based on. However, there are numerous other generalized strategies that commanders utilized for victory.

7.4.1. Progressive Conquest

When conquering; armies captured an area progressively moving from one area to another without leaving out too many blanks. Basically, it meant to conquer as you go, they would move steadily. This 'progressiveness' would be emphasized by the utilization of captured strategic points such as forts, cities and roads or if absent the establishment of such strategic points from scratch. By utilizing captured strategic points, the enemy would be cut off sincerely needed supply and instead it would be provided to the allied troops. Establishing them from scratch would increase the influence of the Daimyo over the occupied areas along with providing the same advantages as utilization.

7.4.2. Attrition and Strategic Retreats

Forces would also do tactical retreats to a more advantageous position even if they weren't losing. This way they could lure the opposition forces to where they wanted them. However, this was risky as forces would be more vulnerable on retreat.

7.4.3. Multistage Campaigns

In a long campaign, forces could not attack constantly and needed to rest. For instance, if a force was constantly on the offensive marching from one victory to another even if always successful nevertheless, they would be extremely fatigued thus gradually less efficient. If a commander is stuck at a castle, ceasing to capture it for months, launching attacks repeatedly his army would be severely weakened. Or maybe winter struck and his army wasn't as efficient as before because of some disturbances in the supply lines. In these cases, commanders would rest their armies until the disturbance is fixed or the army's strength has

regrown, delay their operations for a couple of months and try again. This is crucial to long-lasting campaigns and is still being used to this day in the modern era same as the medieval era. Within the rest period new reinforcement could arrive, freshening the weakened soldiers and significantly improving the condition of the forces.

7.4.4. Decisive Victory

At some point in a war amongst clans a decisive open field battle would take place. The battle would result in one of the sides losing entirely their army or the bigger portion of it meaning either way losing the ability to fight further battles. That's why lords didn't commit to decisive battles until they were unavoidable or certain of victory. In such a scenario the victor side would capture cities and forts one by one with little to no resistance because of the lack of opposition.

In some cases, the lord of the clan could pass away during battle without his army being completely diminished. In such scenario if he had declared his heir, he could take charge of the armies and continue. But it was unlikely that the heir or other potential heirs survived the attack that caused the lord to die since the important figures were close to each other in a command group. If potential heirs along with the lord passed away the army could potentially surrender, switch sides or disorganize. Regardless the death of the lord would cause mayhem amongst troops putting them in a very disadvantageous position.

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