

# SHINGEN's Japan

After the long years SHINGEN and UESUGI KENSHIN wrested in the dirt at KAWANAKAJIMA, the TAKEDA patriarch joined IYEFYASU TOKUGAWA against IMAGAWA UJIZANE, taking and dividing SURUGA and TOTOMI between them. The HOJO father and son team of UJIYASU and UJIMASA were appalled and entered against SHINGEN and against SHINGEN's expansion, restoring UJIZANE at FUCHU. The old IMAGAWA territories had been TOTOMI and SURUGA, and TOKUGAWA's home province of MIKAWA.

Instead of siding with SHINGEN's appeal against the HOJO, TOKUGAWA enjoined the camp of NOBUNAGA showing the game-craft that would later earn him the SHOGUNATE. SHINGEN then entered IYEFYASU's TOTOMI.

This put TOKUGAWA, whose ranks were filling with the IMAGAWA SAMURAI that had peopled these TOKUGAWA tracts of TOTOMI and MIKAWA, against SHINGEN's push at the provincial line to KYOTO. (The same regions, or DO 道, that birth the arts and sword-styles that are studied by sword collectors and appraisers were the paths that would provide the line of supply for any march on power. These fights of the SENGOKU were about opening and holding that line to KYOTO.)

After the death of staunch, HOJO UJIYASU, SHINGEN made peace with his son, UJIMASA, and had only then KENSHIN, at his rear in the west, to tie up resources from efforts against the TOKUGAWA/NOBUNAGA wall that separated KYOTO.

Winter snows were an expected and reliable damper for KENSHIN, so October would find SHINGEN in MIKAWA at IYEFYASU's HAMAMATSU Castle.

51 year old SHINGEN enticed the twenty-nine year old out by falling from his camp at MIKATA-ga-HARA to II-DANI and thereby leaving empty the only field for TOKUGAWA's only hand: pitched battle against overwhelming odds.

IYEFYASU took the field. He was attacked and defeated, and his forces dispersed. It is here the KAMI intervened IYEFYASU's famous SEPPUKU and brought about his return to the Castle. From HAMAMATSU he mounts a surprise dawn attack that electrifies his forces to a sweeping route.

SHINGEN will wait a year to hear his sweet flute drift in the twilight at NODA Castle.

**TOKUGAWA** will find three periods to his life:

- That of NOBUNAGA, fighting SHINGEN and his son
- That of the TAIKO, seating politics and power
- That of securing the SHOGUNATE

SHINGEN and his men face a wall of opposition: The whole TOKAIDO stands against them



SHINGEN

IYEFYASU contemplates his fate following defeat at HAMAMATSU

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## *A musket ball whistles through the lyric of a drifting flute...*

SHINGEN lost his life trying to unseat the TOKUGAWA block through MIKAWA. After a lull, NOBUNAGA and TOKUGAWA renewed their effort to destroy the great TAKEDA power then being scuttled in the hands of SHINGEN's son, KATSUYORI. Defeats at TAKATENJIN in 1574 and NAGASHINO, 1575, marked the first of their long, bloody trail.

KATSUYORI's younger brother, NISHINA NOBUMORI held KATSUYORI's TAKATO Castle in SHINANO, TEN-SHO 10, 1582.

ODA NOBUNAGA's third son, NOBUTAKA sent a BONZE to negotiate. SHINGEN had built the castle after taking TAKATO in 1549 and it had been KATSUYORI's since 1562. NOBUMORI cut off the priest's nose and ear.

On the 2nd day of the 3rd month, TAKATO fell.

KATSUYORI's SHIMPU-JO Castle had also become indefensible and when he heard his brother had committed SEPPUKU, KATSUYORI decided to strike an offensive the next day at OYAMADA NOBUSHIGE's IWADONO Castle near OTSUKI.

He commanded NOBUSHIGE to make ready, giving him the TAKEDA MITSUTADA and his prize mount, OSHU-KURO. (NOBUSHIGE was later killed by this same MITSUTADA at ZENKO-JI Temple in NAGANO. It would become one of the famous 25 NOBUNAGA MITSUTADA)

Leaving the burning SHIMPU-JO, they stayed the night at DAIZEN Temple. TAKEDA relative, REKEINI joined their party and the REKEINI-KI family chronology provides a vivid description: Having seen many defections the prior day, the party headed over the mountain to IWADONO. The women marched without footwear, streaking the road with blood.

At IWADONO, they found surprise turncoat, NOBUSHIGE, barricaded with rifles, refusing them entrance. At this, the remnants of the great and once all powerful TAKEDA clan, 46 warriors and 23 women, turned for TEMMOKUZAN.

ODA's general, TAKIGAWA KAZUMASU, with an army several thousand strong, and headed by ex-TAKEDA retainer, hyper-zealous TSUJI YABEL, over-took them at TANOnoSATO.

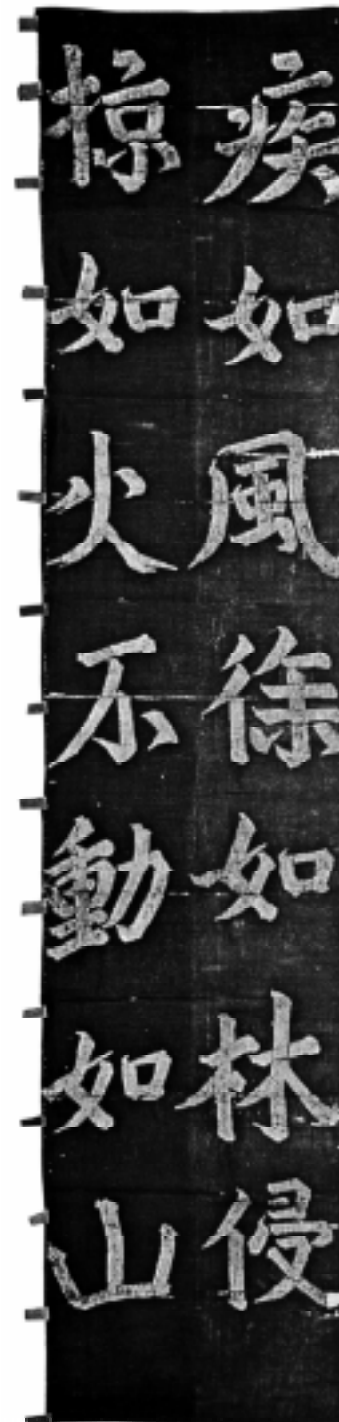
KATSUYORI, carrying his fathers' HAITO and family treasure, the KAI no KUNI GO YOSHIHIRO, was attacked from all directions. He killed 11.

His son, TARO NOBUKATSU, in UnoHANA YOROI, had the other family treasure, the TAKEDA SA-MONJI TACHI (now at the TAKEDA Museum).

Without arms or armor, the women killed themselves with TANTO...

The men, including KOMIYAYAMA MASATOMO, TSUCHIYA SOZO and AKIYAMA KII, fought one of the strongest recorded battles in Japanese history, - but at last, all fell to overwhelming numbers. - It is said KATSUYORI took his own life with the GO.

ss note: TAKEDA SHINGEN studied the ancient and still famous Chinese War Chronicle, "Suen-Ze," from which he took and bannered the slogan, FU-RIN-KA-ZAN for his TAKEDA war flag. Their secret weapon, it was the heart of TAKEDA battle tactics. "The Cavalry should move swiftly, like the Wind, The Spearmen (infantry) should move in formation (orderly), like a Forest (in place). Raiding and looting should be like wild-fire. The Commander remains unmovable, like the Mountain. (ss thanks to J. Lin for his character-reading & input)



SHINGEN's blue silk FU-RIN-KA-ZAN flag

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# KAI no KUNI GO

NOBUNAGA gave SHINGEN's KAI no KUNI GO YOSHIHIRO to TAKIGAWA KAZUMASU to tribute his win at TEMMOKUZAN.

After these long struggles, it was appropriate when TAKIGAWA gave the KAI no KUNI GO sword to IYEFASU TOKUGAWA.

Perhaps his most prized personal and career acquisition, IYEFASU corrected the TEMMOKUZAN damage by making the NAKAGO, SURIAGE and held it as his special, coveted trophy, a true symbol of his struggles and successes. The vanquished soul of his beloved enemy, SHINGEN, and all that remained of his lost house resided, finally, with him.

After IYEFASU aided the ODA house against "The Usurper" TOYOTOMI HIDEYOSHI at NAGAKUTE, stalemated HIDEYOSHI, the soon TAIKO of Japan, demanded the KAI no KUNI GO as stinging personal penance and high gift. HIDEYOSHI gave in return the FUDO KUNIYUKI sword and his sister, ASAHINO KATA, in marriage.

This exchange brokered the destiny of Japan for, from this swap, the path of these ex-NOBUNAGA generals was forever struck. HIDEYOSHI would build his Golden Pavilion and take Korea and China. TOKUGAWA would have the rice cake of the KANTO and force his wily hand to the SHOGUNATE - Emperors would pay homage to his grave.



ODA NOBUNAGA



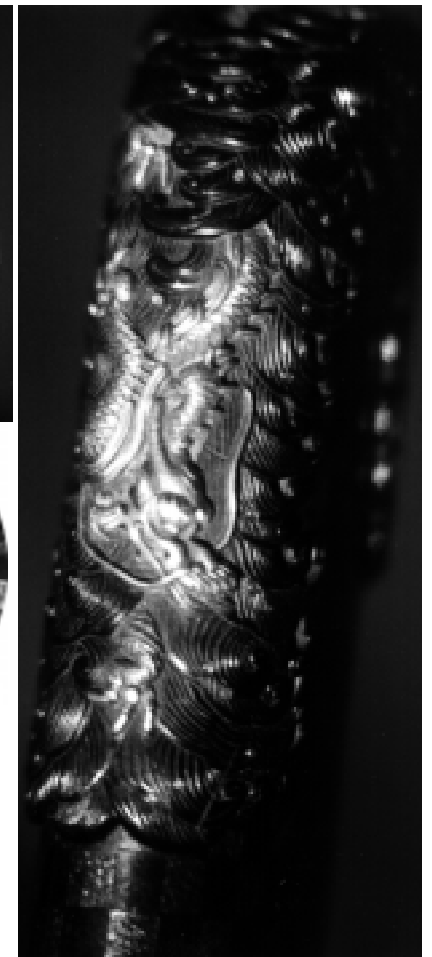
TOYOTOMI HIDEYOSHI



TOKUGAWA IYEFASU

"...easily, the most historically significant Japanese sword. The tug-rope between the TAIKO and IYEFASU..."

HIDEYOSHI kept the KAI GO and bestowed it, only on his death bed, to MORI TERUMOTO, the great MOTONARI's grandson, to help stake his covenant and allegiance as one of the five TAIRO or Great Regents guarding the minority of HIDEYOSHI's five year old son, TOYOTOMI HIDEYORI. This publicly humiliating jab to IYEFASU was at once, tension builder and powerful political play for, giving it to another, all knew of TOKUGAWA's correctly placed love for this piece. If it were any living man's, it was truly that of IYEFASU. His very position in life had been forged with SHINGEN. IYEFASU's vassal had fired that fatal shot in that fateful twilight  
...so long before



After SEKIGAHARA, IYEFASU retrieved his KAI no KUNI GO YOSHIHIRO for the TOKUGAWA Family, also allowing disgraced TERUMOTO another public wound for a shamed retirement.

It stayed with the TOKUGAWA as GYOBUTSU Family Treasure suffering the FURISODE fire of MEI-REKI 3, 1657. Of course included in the KYOHO MEIBUTSU, 1719 List of Treasures commissioned by 8th SHOGUN, TOKUGAWA YOSHIMUNE.

"KAI no KUNI GO, length 2 SHAKU 1 SUN 3 BU, No price, GYOBUTSU"

Among the "Lost swords" of the MEIBUTSU, the KAI-GO was then successfully re-quenched. Today, its JI-NIE pools like water, a flawless rebirth.

Considered in Japan as missing following WWII, the famous "Lost GO", the KAI no KUNI GO was finally found, according to varying published chronology, in the Boston Museum by NBTHK member, OGAWA MORIHIRO. Colonel Dean Hartley and Fred Martin were also among the discoverers.

