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The Introduction of Guns to Japan

In 1543 a ship appeared, seemingly out of nowhere, off the coast of Tanegashima, an island about forty-four miles southeast of Kyushu.¹ More than a hundred people were aboard the ship, people of unusual appearance who spoke a language unintelligible to the inhabitants of Tanegashima. Among these sea borne visitors was a Chinese scholar who, by writing characters in the sand, was able to communicate with one of the Tanegashima village chieftains. When the chieftain learned that the ship held passengers who were traders from the land of the “southern barbarians,” he had the ship directed to the island’s main harbor, where the traders were taken to see Lord Tokitaka, the daimyo of Tanegashima.

Two of these alien traders showed the Lord a tube-like object “two or three feet long, straight on the outside with a passage inside, and made of a heavy substance.” Filling the tube with “powder and small lead pellets,” they applied fire to its aperture and produced an “explosion . . . like lightning . . . [and a] report like thunder.” The pellets flew from the tube and squarely struck a small white target erected by the traders.

Let us, for the moment, accept this story as true. If it is true, then the alien traders were Portuguese and the first Europeans, so far as we know, to set foot on Japanese soil. The tube they fired was probably an arquebus, and their display of its functioning before the Lord of Tanegashima marked, it has been supposed, the beginning of the history of guns in Japan. Here is George Sansom’s (1883–1965) account, in his three-volume *History of Japan*, of this introduction of European guns to Japan:

The muskets which they carried caused excitement among the rescuers, and for a long time after this event the Japanese name for such firearms was Tanegashima. The weapons were soon copied in considerable numbers, but it would be a mistake to suppose that the use of firearms at once brought about a great change in methods of warfare in Japan. For although they were used in the major battles of the sixteenth century, they remained in scarce supply for a century or more, and they did not displace traditional weapons—the sword, the bow, and the spear—until an even later date.²

Sansom need not be criticized for stating that the first Portuguese brought muskets rather than arquebuses to Japan. Although it is believed (by those who accept the story as true) that the weapons shown to the Lord of Tanegashima were the smaller arquebuses, which were generally preferred by the Iberian peoples, the issue of “muskets or arquebuses?” is still a matter of debate.

Sansom’s assertion that the use of firearms did not “at once [bring] about a great change in methods of warfare in Japan”³ touches on a central question in the present-day study by historians of the role of guns in sixteenth-century Japan. Stated simply, the question is

whether or not guns caused a revolution in Japanese warfare at this time. Inquiry into this question has been much stimulated, as I will shortly discuss, by one of the great issues in European historiography of the medieval and early modern ages, first articulated in the mid-1950s, of whether the use of handguns on a large scale, beginning about the middle of the sixteenth century, caused a “military revolution” that accelerated the course of Europe’s early modern age.⁴

Sansom’s brief account of the introduction of European guns to Japan at this time, based on the Tanegashima story, is misleading, however, in at least one important respect. It says nothing about earlier Japanese experience with gunpowder and guns. The impression given is that they arrived with great suddenness right in the middle of Japan’s tumultuous age of Sengoku (the Country at War, 1478–1568). In fact, gunpowder was invented by the Chinese as early as the ninth century,⁵ and the Japanese were first exposed to its use during the Mongol Invasions of their country in 1274 and 1281. In a famous Japanese painting of the invasions, *The Mongol Scroll* (*Mōko shūrai ekotoba*), there is a vivid scene of a “bomb-shell” (*teppō*) exploding over the head of a Japanese warrior charging toward the Mongol invaders. Joseph Needham (1900–1995) cites a record, dated 1287, only six years after the second Mongol invasion of Japan, that strongly suggests the use of some kind of “hand-gun” or “portable bombard” in battle.⁶ He further speculates on the possibility that a primitive firearm he calls a “fire-barrel” may have been employed against the Japanese during the invasions themselves.

Moving beyond such speculation, we find that the earliest reasonably reliable references to guns in Japan come from the late fifteenth century. A Buddhist priest recorded in his diary in 1466, on the eve of the Ōnin War (1467–77), that a Ryukyuan official visiting the Ashikaga shogun in Kyoto fired a “*teppō*” in the air, perhaps as part of a ritual or as an act of celebration, that greatly startled the inhabitants of the capital. In 1468, the year after the Ōnin War began, the Eastern Army in that conflict used a “fire spear” that was probably a type of handgun.⁷

Teppō ki, the story of Tanegashima, was written in 1607, more than sixty years after the supposed arrival of the Portuguese traders there, to celebrate this great event in the history of the Tanegashima daimyo family. Although it has long been accepted as a reliable historical source, the book’s value has recently been questioned for at least two reasons⁸: (1) One must suspect the accuracy of any record of an event written sixty-plus years after the event itself; and (2) it seems surprising that Europeans would suddenly appear bearing the first guns to Japan in an age of great commercial activity in East and Southeast Asian waters that probably included considerable trade in gunpowder and non-European firearms.

The chronicle of the Hōjō family of the Kanto, *Hōjō godai ki* (Record of Five Generations of the Hōjō Family), tells us that a gun—*teppō*—from China was presented to Ujitsuna (1487–1541), the Hōjō daimyo, by a monk in 1510. This gun may not, however, have been Chinese, but rather a weapon from Southeast Asia that was originally of Turkish design but had been modified at least several times as it was transmitted eastward from Turkey.⁹ There are other scattered accounts in the records of firearms—perhaps Chinese or Southeast Asian—in Japan before 1543,¹⁰ although none gives a clear idea of what these weapons may have been like.

The mid-sixteenth century witnessed a great upsurge in activity of the so-called Wakō, or Japanese pirates. In fact, many, if not most, of the Wakō by this time were probably Chi-

nese rather than Japanese, and they very likely plied the waters of East and Southeast Asia in Chinese junks. If a Chinese junk landed at Tanegashima in 1543, it could well have been a Wakō ship. As Udagawa Takehisa (b. 1943) points out, the Wakō of this age were probably more traders than pirates. Udagawa goes so far as to suggest that the “Chinese scholar” in *Teppō ki*, whose name is given as Gohō, was a well-known Wakō leader whose real name (in the Japanese pronunciation) was Ōchoku.¹¹

Both piracy and illicit trade were in large part the result of the Ming dynasty’s prohibition on overseas trade. With trade devolving into the hands of those private freebooters willing to defy Ming law, it is not surprising that these people should come into contact with the existing Wakō bands and either employ them or merge with them, thus becoming Wakō themselves. There may not be sufficient documentary material available to provide a full picture of how these processes occurred. But at the very least it seems likely that guns, perhaps of a variety of kinds, were brought to Japan by Wakō or others before 1543.

Weaponry before the Gun

It is difficult to trace the history of weaponry in Japan before the gun because the records are sparse and at times misleading. Thus, for example, we can assume, as Kajiwaru Masaaki (1927–1998) points out, that all warriors or participants in battles in *Heike monogatari* (Tale of the Heike) are mounted warriors using the bow as their primary weapon.¹² As a war tale, the *Heike* cannot be accepted, of course, as a fully reliable primary source. But it is an important source and, if used carefully, can tell us a great deal about late twelfth-century warriors and warfare. In regard to the point that Kajiwaru makes, however, the *Heike* is probably misleading, because many of the participants in the battles of the Genpei War appear to have fought on foot and used other weapons, including polearms (*naginata*) and swords, as well as the bow.¹³ Fighters on foot in battles during earlier centuries can be found, for example, in such narrative scrolls (*emakimono*) as *Zen-kunen kassen ekotoba* (Scroll of the Former Nine Years War) and *Go-sannen kassen ekotoba* (Scroll of the Later Three Years War). Fighters on foot can also be observed, although not in great number, even in the famous *Heiji monogatari ekotoba* (Tale of the Heiji Scroll). Although these scrolls were painted long after the events they depict and therefore cannot be taken as absolute evidence of anything, they at least suggest the possibility—if not likelihood—that men fought on foot as well as on horseback in battles of the ancient age.

There seems to be no question that the bow, whether wielded by men on horseback or foot, was the primary weapon of battle until at least the sixteenth century. The way it was used, however, appears to have changed from the fourteenth century. Whereas until that time mounted archers for the most part fired at each other from fairly close range in the traditional “one-against-one” (*ikiki-uchi*) style of combat, during the fourteenth century archers in battle tended to maintain a greater distance from each other and shoot their arrows from afar. Because they traversed greater distances to reach their targets, arrows caused many more wounds than deaths: that is, the ratio of wounds-to-deaths by arrows increased dramatically. Thomas Conlan, in his study of fourteenth-century warfare, cites the extreme case of one Imagawa Yorikuni, who withstood nineteen arrow wounds before succumbing to the twentieth. In many cases a warrior’s armor was sufficient to stop “tens” of arrows shot from, say, one hundred yards away.¹⁴

The weapon that was second in importance to the bow in the fourteenth century was the sword. One way to estimate the frequency of use and relative efficacy of all weapons in warfare is to tabulate the numbers of wounds and deaths caused by each as recorded in the petitions for rewards (*gunchūjō*) that warriors submitted to their commanders after battles. Tabulating wounds by weapons found in the existing fourteenth-century petitions, Conlan estimates that about three-quarters of wounds were caused by arrows and about one-third or less by swords. (The percentage of wounds inflicted by spears or pikes, *yari*, and rocks [which were usually thrown by defenders during the sieges of fortifications] was negligible)¹⁵

The frequent use of swords during fourteenth-century warfare does not necessarily mean there was a great deal of "hand-to-hand" fighting with armies locked in close combat. In fact, the number of close encounters declined throughout the century in tandem with the trend toward fighting from a distance, as just discussed in regard to the changing use of the bow in battle. The following remarks by Conlan tell us much about swords and how they were used in fourteenth-century warfare:

The prevalence of sword wounds in the fourteenth century does not indicate that warriors fought in tightly massed groups. Rather, swords were better suited for conflicts among widely scattered clusters of men. Some swords reached seven feet in length and were useful in breaking the legs of charging horses. A few long swords (*ōdachi*) were only partially sharpened, with half of the blade near the hilt blunt and rounded like a "clam shell," which indicates that they were used to bludgeon opponents instead of slashing them.¹⁶

One surprising conclusion arrived at by Conlan in his study is that the spear was little used in fourteenth-century warfare, at least as judged by the rarity with which it appears as the weapon responsible for wounds in the petitions for reward. This conclusion flies in the face of the general belief that the fourteenth century saw the first formation of infantry units and the equipping of those units primarily with spears.¹⁷ In this regard, let me quote a few more statements from Conlan:

Fourteenth century battle was fought by widely scattered troops. Most warring consisted of skirmishing. . . . Even in the fiercest battles, only a few mustered the courage to fight hand-to-hand. . . . The onset of indeterminate warfare did not lead to any changes in tactics. Squads of cavalry dominated the battlefield. . . . [T]he prevalence of long swords and the paucity of pike (spear) wounds indicates that no "massed" infantry formations existed in the fourteenth century.¹⁸

Suzuki Masaya (b. 1936), studying late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century warfare, confirms that two related trends identified by Conlan in the fourteenth century continued in the centuries that followed: (1) most warfare was conducted by warriors who did not come together in close combat but fought while separated by a considerable distance from one another and employed such "distance weapons" as arrows, rocks (and other objects that could be "thrown" or launched as projectiles), and, later, guns; and (2) battles produced a much higher percentage of wounds over deaths. Suzuki's data on wounds in battle for the period 1501–60 (just before the time when guns came to be used regularly in battle) reveals that 75.2 % were caused by arrows, stones, and other thrown objects and 22.9 % by spears and swords.¹⁹ This division into roughly three-fourths of wounds caused by "distance weapons"

and one-fourth by “close up weapons” is strikingly similar to Conlan’s arrows and swords ratio. The main difference, of course, is that Suzuki groups stones and other objects with arrows and spears with swords.

Imatani Akira (b. 1942), discussing the rise in importance of the spear as a weapon of war from at least the Ōnin War, suggests, however, that there may have been more close combat and more fatalities in warfare during the Ōnin-Sengoku age than Suzuki acknowledges. He claims that, until the arrival of guns in the mid-sixteenth century, the spear was the principal weapon of the *ashigaru* units that formed the infantry components of armies; and he cites a battle in 1547 between Miyoshi Nagayoshi (1522–1564) and Yusa Naganori during which a clash between spearmen from both armies left 2,000 dead. Although Imatani does not specify what kind of spears were used in this battle, he observes in the same discussion that spears were made longer and longer and that some even reached about eighteen feet in length (Oda Nobunaga [1534–1582] became especially well-known for the eighteen-foot spears carried by some of his *ashigaru*). It is difficult to imagine how an eighteen-foot spear could actually be wielded effectively in battle. But Imatani claims that long spears helped reduce the fear of *ashigaru* and other fighters of being forced into very close combat.²⁰

A Military Revolution?

In a lecture delivered in 1955, Michael Roberts (1908–1997) enunciated what has become probably the most important interpretation of the role of military history in the making of early modern Europe. It is an interpretation that, although modified and in some cases rejected by others, has dominated the thinking of military historians during the intervening half-century.²¹ In brief, Roberts asserted that there occurred in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries a military revolution that accelerated or perhaps even caused the formation of Europe’s early modern, absolutist states. The revolution centered on the use of guns, especially hand-operated guns, on a truly large scale for the first time. Peasants and others of the lower orders, who could readily learn to use guns (as compared to bows and arrows, spears/pikes), were recruited to form ever-larger infantry units that, disciplined and trained in ways unknown in the preceding medieval centuries, became the nuclei of what can be called early modern armies.

In the largest sense, the idea of a military revolution causally links the simultaneous appearance in history of the early modern state and the gun-based army. This linking has been a boon to military historians who, so often pushed to the sidelines by historians who insist on social, economic, and political explanations for the “progress” of history, now find their discipline at the center of historical analysis. The military historian can even argue that the military component was the most important in the phenomenon of state formation in the early modern age.

Whatever the truth about exactly when Western-style guns were introduced to Japan, they were certainly available to the Japanese in relatively large numbers by the second half of the sixteenth century—in other words, just about the time when, according to Michael Roberts, these same guns became the catalyst for a military revolution in Europe. The obvious question, then, is whether Japan also had a military revolution caused by guns at about the same time as Europe. Guns were eagerly sought by the Sengoku daimyo, who readily appreciated their value; and they were effectively—sometimes decisively—used in battle by the more

prominent daimyo, including Oda Nobunaga, who led the way to unification of the country in the century's final decades. In short, Japan appears to have had, at roughly the same time, a military revolution similar to Europe's.

Little about the idea of a military revolution has appeared in the English-language literature on sixteenth-century Japan. The major exception is Stephen Morillo's article "Guns and Government: A Comparative Study of Europe and Japan," which appeared in the Spring 1995 issue of the *Journal of World History*. A scholar of European history, Morillo turns to the case of Japan in quest of an answer to the question of which came first in Europe's military revolution, guns or government: that is, did the gun-based army give rise to the early modern state or did the creation of a gun-based army, with its attendant costs, require the prior formation of a strong, early modern state? Morillo believes that Japan provides a kind of laboratory case for study, because European guns were introduced at a precise time: 1543 (a date based, of course, on acceptance of the Tanegashima story). Stated simply, if there was a strong (i.e., early modern) government in Japan before 1543, it acquired its strength without the benefit of guns. If, on the other hand, there was no strong government, then guns were presumably a principal, if not the principal, factor in the creation of the Oda, Toyotomi, and Tokugawa early modern regimes.

Without going further into Morillo's argument, let me summarize by saying that he believes that, in the case of Japan (and probably also Europe), strong government came before guns. Of course, Japan in the mid-1500s had no strong central government. On the contrary, it was fragmented into warring daimyo domains. But Morillo believes that a number of the daimyo domains, such as Nobunaga's in Owari, had strong governments that were able to handle the cost of acquiring guns and training large armies centered on gun-bearing infantry units. With these (early modern?) armies, leading daimyo were able to set out on the road to unification.

At least one Japanese scholar, Suzuki Masaya, emphatically rejects the military revolution theory. Citing more statistics on battle casualties during the sixteenth century, Suzuki argues that guns, which certainly became the most important weapon in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century warfare, in fact merely contributed to the long-term tendency toward distance fighting.²² In other words, they did not cause a revolution but helped sustain an evolutionary process. Suzuki's argument seems to be based on a rather narrow view of how guns may or may not have transformed warfare, and neglects such things as the sheer physical power they introduced to fighting and their role in prompting commanders to undertake greater organization of and institute stricter discipline among their forces. Organization and discipline are, after all, two of the hallmarks of early modern and modern armies; and we see, I would argue, significant organization and discipline in, for example, the gun units of uniformed men firing in unison that appear in a number of the battle screens (*kassen byōbu*) depicting late sixteenth-century warfare.²³

Early Modern Warfare in Japan

1568, the year that Nobunaga entered Kyoto and began unification, is generally recognized by historians as the starting point of Japan's early modern age (1568–1868). The remainder of this paper will deal with Nobunaga's style of early modern warfare during the first decades of this age. Nobunaga was, in fact, a transitional figure in Japanese military history.

In many respects his way of war was a continuation of that of the typical Sengoku daimyo of the preceding century (Nobunaga himself was a Sengoku daimyo who became a unifier). But he was also an innovator who raised warfare to a new level of intensity, destructiveness, and success. In so doing he set the stage for Hideyoshi (1537–1598) and Ieyasu (1543–1616), who became the great captains of Japan's early modern warfare at its peak at the end of the sixteenth century.

There is no simple definition of early modern warfare in Japan, and we should be careful in making comparisons with warfare in early modern Europe. Conditions in Europe were vastly different from those of Japan in their respective early modern ages, even though these ages overlapped chronologically and Europeans were in Japan at the time. The only major contribution of Europeans to Japan's early modern warfare was the gun, and we have already observed that the gun's significance as a weapon of war to the sixteenth-century Japanese is still a matter of dispute among scholars. I will return to this subject later with commentary on Nobunaga as a user of guns in battle during the century's latter half.

One of the most distinctive features of Japan's early modern warfare was the increasingly important role played by forts. Whereas open-field, pitched battles were by far the most common form of organized fighting in earlier centuries, in the sixteenth century forts sprang up everywhere and battling usually involved attacking and trying to take them. Nobunaga, for example, fought relatively few open-field battles. The great majority of his armed encounters involved either attacking enemies in forts or defending against enemy attacks on his forts. Unfortunately, we do not have much detailed information about these forts; but since most of them seem to have fallen quite readily to enemy attack during Nobunaga's time, we can assume that they were not constructed to withstand severe and prolonged assault. There were, of course, exceptions,²⁴ and Nobunaga himself took the lead in inaugurating the great age of castle-building with the erection of his principal fortress at Azuchi on Lake Biwa in the late 1570s. But Nobunaga was assassinated (in 1582) before these massive, stone-based structures assumed a central role in warfare. It was left to Hideyoshi and Ieyasu to develop the strategy, tactics, and technology necessary to deal with castle warfare.

In addition to guns and forts, early modern warfare in Japan was characterized by: the formation of standing armies, including organized and disciplined infantries divided into units by weaponry (e.g., gunners, spearmen, bowmen);²⁵ the creation of leagues or alliances that made possible fighting on a much larger geographical scale than before; year-round campaigning (most of Sengoku warfare was seasonal); and a quantum increase in brutality, including the wanton slaughter of the vanquished. Let us turn now to Nobunaga's style of early modern warfare.

Nobunaga and the Beginning of Military Unification

Knowledge of Nobunaga's military career comes primarily from one source: the *Shinchō-kōki* (Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga) of Ōta Gyūichi (1527–1610?). Gyūichi, who was born in 1527 in Nobunaga's province of Owari, was trained at a Buddhist temple as a youth, a fact that probably accounts for his skill as a writer.²⁶ He joined Nobunaga's army sometime in the mid-1550s as a foot soldier (*ashigaru*) specializing in the use of the bow and arrow. The recipient of praise and a landed fief for his performance in battle, he rose to become a member of one of Nobunaga's elite guards (a unit using bows and arrows). After a long career

as a combat soldier, he entered military administration; and following Nobunaga's death he served several other warrior lords, including Hideyoshi and his son Hideyori (1593–1615), in various capacities.

Recognized by scholars as a rich and reliable primary source, *Shinchō-kō ki* (hereafter, SK) is a detailed account of Nobunaga's career, especially as a military commander, from the time of his coming-of-age in 1546 until his assassination in 1582. Fujimoto Masayuki (b. 1948) has made particularly excellent use of this work in his study of Nobunaga the military commander, *Nobunaga no Sengoku gunji gaku* (Nobunaga's Military Learning in the Sengoku Era).

Nobunaga became commander of the Oda upon the death of his father in 1551. For the remainder of the decade he strove—successfully—to bring order to his own house, which had long been sundered by internal dispute. During this time he displayed the ruthlessness that was to mark him as a commander by murdering his younger brother, whom he suspected of treachery. In fact, fratricide was not uncommon during the Sengoku age, which frequently witnessed brothers killing brothers, sons killing fathers, and fathers killing sons.

Rise of the Infantry. One of the most important developments in warfare during the Sengoku age, as observed, was the rise of the infantry in armies. By Nobunaga's time, the infantry had become dominant in battle, taking the place of the cavalry as an army's premier fighting arm. This development was noted even by a contemporary foreign observer, the Jesuit Francis Xavier (1506–1552), who remarked: "They [the Japanese] are excellent archers and fight on foot, although there are horses in the country."²⁷

SK and other written records say little about the actual numbers of troops engaged in battles,²⁸ and even less about whether they fought on foot or on horseback. Thus we must look elsewhere in the attempt to estimate how many men in a typical army in Nobunaga's day were infantry. At least a tentative estimate of infantry size can be made from study of the battle screens that depict sixteenth-century armies and their encounters. One of these is the *Kawanakajima kassen zu byōbu* (Screens Illustrating the Battle of Kawanakajima),²⁹ which comprises two eight-panel screens, the right one showing the army of Takeda Shingen (1521–1573) in battle formation and the left portraying that army in combat at Kawanakajima in Shinano province in 1561 against the army of Uesugi Kenshin (1530–1578).³⁰

The Kawanakajima Screens were probably painted about the middle of the seventeenth century, nearly a century after the events they depict.³¹ Hence, they are not primary sources. But we are not interested in the actual story they tell about the 1561 battle, which has been fictionalized, but rather in the general information they provide about how the battle's participants fought. This information, we may hypothesize, is likely to have been transmitted through the generations without great distortion, since it does not deal directly with the tactics, strategy, and outcome of the battle—that is, with those things that most concerned the descendants of the Takeda and Uesugi families and their Tokugawa-period schools of military study and that came to be described in differing versions by both sets of families and schools.

With this in mind, let us look at the Kawanakajima Screens, beginning with Shingen's army in pre-battle formation on the right screen. The size of the army is merely suggestive. I estimate that a thousand or more men are depicted on the screen, whereas in fact Shingen is thought to have led some 16,000 men into the 1561 battle.³² Our concern, however, is not with the precise numbers but the percentages of men on foot and on horseback. In general,

Shingen's army is arrayed on the screen in linear formation and comprises fifteen or sixteen lines or their equivalent. Of these lines, only one consists primarily of horsemen. There are also horsemen scattered elsewhere in the army, but they are clearly the commanders of infantry units. In short, only a small fraction of the men in the right screen of the Kawanakajima Screens—perhaps four or five percent of the total—are mounted. Shingen's army, as shown, is overwhelmingly an army on foot.

It is possible that many, if not most, of the relatively few warriors on horseback in armies like Shingen's at Kawanakajima in 1561 and Nobunaga's before and after that date dismounted when entering battle. Thus we find Nobunaga himself at the Battle of Okehazama "getting off his horse and contending with his *wakamusha* (young warriors) to take the lead in the battle, spearing enemies and striking them down."³³ The fighting at Okehazama occurred when Imagawa Yoshimoto (1519–1560) invaded Owari in 1560. With only some 5,000 troops, Nobunaga was able to defeat the invading army estimated at 40,000. In the process he killed the Imagawa commander, Yoshimoto, and advanced himself as a leading contender to unify the country.

The left screen of the Kawanakajima pair shows various scenes from the 1561 clash of Takeda and Uesugi, including the famous, but apocryphal, one-on-one encounter between Kenshin and Shingen, with Kenshin wielding a sword from horseback and Shingen, on foot, parrying the sword with his *gunpai* (military fan). This screen is interesting for what it tells us (or, rather, suggests to us, since it was painted a century later) about the weapons used at Kawanakajima in 1561. Although there are units of gunners and archers on the right screen (Shingen's pre-battle formation), I can discern no men with guns and only a few archers in the combat depicted on the left screen. Nearly all of the fighting is being done by troops, largely on foot, armed with spears and swords; and of these two weapons, spears are by far the more prevalent.

Another set of battle screens that indicates the great extent to which armies had become infantry armies by this age is the *Shizugatake kassen zu byōbu* (Screens Illustrating the Battle of Shizugatake).³⁴ Comprising two six-panel screens, this set illustrates the clash between Hideyoshi and Shibata Katsuie (1530–83) in 1583 as these two chieftains vied to become the successor as unifier to Nobunaga, who was assassinated in 1582. The left screen shows the first day of the battle in which forces under the Shibata prevail, seizing two of Hideyoshi's forts.³⁵ On the right screen, depicting the second day, Hideyoshi himself has taken the field as commander of his army and achieves victory by driving the enemy into full-scale retreat.

There are hundreds of combatant figures on the Shizugatake screens, yet only about fifteen are mounted on horses. Both of the field commanders, Hideyoshi and Sakuma Morimasa (1554–1583, a Shibata lieutenant), are on foot. In other words, as depicted in the Shizugatake Screens, the Battle of Shizugatake was almost exclusively a contest between infantries. And, as in the Kawanakajima Screens, most of the fighting was done with spears. There are clusters of gunners and archers firing from the ramparts of the forts, but nearly all of the many troops battling in the open fields are wielding spears.

Nobunaga's Strategy and Battle Tactics. Nobunaga's victory over Imagawa Yoshimoto in 1560 has gone down in Japanese military history as one of the great victories achieved by surprise attack (*kishū kōgeki*). Nobunaga, with his much smaller force, is thought to have fallen suddenly and without warning upon the Imagawa army while it was bivouacking. Aided by a cloudburst that masked his approach, Nobunaga took the Imagawa completely by surprise.

Fujimoto Masayuki insists that there are no credible records to prove that Nobunaga's attack was actually a *kishū kōgeki*, but for centuries it has been regarded as one and, indeed, as the classic example. Thus, in the days before Pearl Harbor in 1941, Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku (1884–1943) and many other Japanese military leaders referred to Okehazama in their letters and diaries as they planned their surprise attack on the United States. For them, Okehazama was a synonym for a sudden, unannounced attack.³⁶

Whether or not Nobunaga defeated the Imagawa with a surprise attack at Okehazama, he did not use that tactic during the remainder of his military career. Wherever possible, he tried to engage the enemy with a force greater than his.³⁷ But he also sought to avoid decisive battles that were likely to be costly in men and materiel. He was a master of the art of Sengoku-style diplomacy and negotiation.³⁸ In attacking forts, for example, he often tried to persuade or force the commander to surrender, frequently by devious means, including the use of undercover agents and turncoats. Thus, in the seventh month of 1573, Nobunaga, with the assistance of his lieutenant Hideyoshi, persuaded two of the three commanders of Yodo fortress in Yamashiro province to pledge loyalty to him and turn against the third. The latter, betrayed by his comrades, attempted to flee but was cut down by a retainer of another of Nobunaga's lieutenants.³⁹ Nobunaga took Fort Ibaraki in Settsu province by similar means in the eleventh month of 1578. In this case one of three commanders, having secretly committed to Nobunaga, suddenly opened the gates of the fort in the middle of a stormy night to allow Nobunaga's troops to enter and force the other two commanders and their followers into disorganized flight.⁴⁰

Treachery and betrayal were commonplace in Nobunaga's time, and spies were everywhere. Whereas Nobunaga himself was expert at using spies and enlisting turncoats, he was also alert to those who might be employed by the enemy. On the eve of the Battle of Okehazama, for example, he refused to talk strategy when his commanders met with him in what was supposed to be a war council. Instead, he prattled on about irrelevant matters. When the commanders were returning to their quarters later, they agreed that Nobunaga was a fool.⁴¹ But Nobunaga had been concerned that one of his commanders might be a spy or turncoat who would report his plans to the enemy (Imagawa Yoshimoto).

We have noted that much of Nobunaga's fighting involved attacking and defending forts. Forts were ubiquitous in sixteenth-century Japan, varying in quality from those that could hold out against prolonged sieges and were the forerunners of the great castles constructed in the last decades of the century to flimsy, hastily built defensive positions. Takeda Shingen's father, Nobutora (1493–1573), destroyed no less than thirty-six of the flimsy type of forts in one day while campaigning in Shinano province in 1540.⁴² Among the stronger forts was the Odani fortress of the Asai in Ōmi province, which was not only substantially built but also benefited from its location atop a mountain.⁴³ Even after Nobunaga, with Tokugawa Ieyasu's help, had defeated the combined forces of the Asai and Asakura at the Battle of Anegawa in 1570 and had chased the Asai back to Odani, he was obliged to halt his pursuit because the fortress "would be difficult to take in a single assault."⁴⁴

The above reference to forts that could hold out against prolonged sieges requires further comment. During the Sengoku period most battles were brief, lasting a day or less. Campaigns—for example, a daimyo's foray with his army into the domain of a neighbor (such as Imagawa Yoshimoto's invasion of Owari in 1560 that ended in the Battle of Okehazama)—were also usually brief. The main reason for the brevity of campaigns was that armies, largely

recruited from the peasantry, could not afford to stay away too long, especially during the planting and harvesting seasons. This was also the principal reason why there were so few prolonged sieges in Sengoku. A daimyo could not risk a siege of any significant duration for fear that his soldiers would start deserting and return to their villages and farms.⁴⁵

All this began to change during Nobunaga's drive toward unification. Many of his campaigns continued for months at a time, and it was not unusual for him to dispatch lieutenants, such as Hideyoshi and Shibata Katsuie, to seek and engage the enemy in one region while he campaigned in another. In other words, the intensity and scale of warfare increased considerably, largely because armies were becoming more and more assemblies of regular or fulltime officers and men.⁴⁶ In the case of the officers, they were steadily drawn into castle towns (*jōkamachi*), where they were permanently on call to their daimyos. With these early modern armies, commanders found the siege to be a more viable military strategy. Thus Hideyoshi, campaigning to extend Nobunaga's authority into western Honshu from the late 1577s until Nobunaga's death in 1582, conducted several lengthy sieges, including one in Harima province against Fort Miki, which held out against him for more than a year. This was the first stage in Hideyoshi's rise to fame as master of the siege in Japan's short age of castle warfare.⁴⁷

In his campaigning, Nobunaga captured or destroyed many of the forts he attacked (as described in SK) quite efficiently, often needing only one day or less per fort. In some cases he took forts in clusters. One of his most effective tools in softening up forts for attack was fire. Time and again we read in SK of his army "burning down villages here and there" as they approached a fort. In preparing to attack Fort Konda in Kawachi province in 1574.4, for example, Nobunaga sent men out "to set fire to valley after valley." While engaged in this arsonous activity, they also cut down and discarded all the crops they came across.⁴⁸ Once the fields and villages around a fort had been denuded and/or put to the torch, it became, in the parlance of SK, a "naked fort" (*hadakajiro*).⁴⁹ This was both economic and psychological warfare. It was economic warfare because it eliminated the nearest sources of food to which a fort's defenders had access when they were not directly under attack or siege;⁵⁰ and it was psychological warfare because in many, if not most, cases the defenders of forts were recruited primarily from nearby villages, the very villages, containing their homes, that were being destroyed.

As in the Sengoku age, there continued to be considerable instability in both warrior and soldier relations (referring to the officers [samurai] as warriors and recruited peasants as soldiers) during the time of Nobunaga and unification. Vassal warriors frequently abandoned or rebelled against their lords. Soldiers also often absconded and sometimes betrayed their commanders. We see such betrayal, for example, in the case of Fort Uetsuki in Harima province, which Hideyoshi encircled and laid siege to in 1577.11. After seven days of siege, the men of the fort turned against their commander, took his head, and pleaded for mercy. But Nobunaga, as Hideyoshi's superior, refused mercy; instead, he had them all crucified.⁵¹ On other occasions, however, Nobunaga not only allowed those who surrendered forts to go free but also incorporated them into his army. Often the *quid pro quo* for allowing a fort's occupants to go free was the suicide of their commander.

So omnipresent were forts in most of Nobunaga's battles, as depicted in SK, that warfare of the time can almost be described as a game of "fort monopoly" in which opposing forces took and lost forts. In preparing to attack an enemy fort, a commander like Nobunaga often

constructed a “facing fort” (*mukai-jō*) from which to send forth his men; or he built one or more “annex forts” (*tsuke-jiro*), which I interpret (from the way they are described in SK) to be forts designed to contend for physical control of the land on which the enemy’s fort was situated. In one of his many forays against the great Ishiyama Honganji Temple, which held out against him for a decade (1570–80), Nobunaga in 1576.5 ordered the construction of no less than ten annex forts throughout the Osaka region.⁵² Often he assigned leading lieutenants to hold annex forts as well as enemy forts once they were taken.

We noted above Nobunaga’s refusal of mercy to the defenders of a fort who surrendered to him and his decision, instead, to crucify them. Nobunaga has the reputation as perhaps the most cruel and brutal warrior in Japanese history. This reputation rests in large part on his destruction in 1571 of the great temple complex of Enryakuji on Mt. Hiei, which refused either to support him or to remain neutral as he battled against his enemies in the central provinces, especially the Asakura and Asai. Here is a partial description by the Jesuit Luís Fróis of Nobunaga’s destruction of Enryakuji and murder of all its monks and priests as well as townspeople from villages at the base of Mt. Hiei who had sought refuge on the mountain:

The bonzes began to resist [Nobunaga’s army] with their weapons and wounded about 150 soldiers. But they were unable to withstand such a furious assault and were all put to the sword, together with the men, women and children of Sakamoto, which is near the foot of the mountain. . . . Then Nobunaga ordered a large number of musketeers to go out into the hills and woods as if on a hunt; should they find any bonzes hiding there, they were not to spare the life of a single one of them. And this they duly did.⁵³

Ghostly as the slaughter on Mt. Hiei was, it may have been exceeded in both numbers and cruelty by Nobunaga’s destruction of several forts defended by Pure Land adherents at Nagashima in Ise province in 1574. When the occupants of one of the forts, their food exhausted after two months of siege, pleaded for mercy, Nobunaga refused and said he intended to see them starve to death (many already had). Meanwhile, he burned another of the forts to the ground, incinerating everyone within. The forts contained people of both sexes and all ages. In total, Nobunaga is said to have slaughtered as many as 20,000 members of the Nagashima confederacy at this time.⁵⁴

Countless other cases of brutality and atrocity by Nobunaga can be found in the pages of SK. In 1571.9, for example, he attacked Shimura Fort in Ōmi province from four directions with great force, smashed his way into the fort and took 670 heads.⁵⁵ And after capturing Fort Ibaraki in Settsu province by deception in 1578, as already discussed, Nobunaga and his army entered nearby Hyōgo province and “slaughtered people without regard to whether they were priests or laypeople, men or women. They put everything to the torch, including temple buildings, and Buddhist statues and sutras. Smoke promptly rose up above the clouds. They then continued on to Ichinotani in Harima province, burning and burning.”⁵⁶

The Battle of Nagashino. If there was a military revolution in sixteenth-century Japan resulting from the use of handguns on a large scale, some would say that it began at the Battle of Nagashino in Mikawa province in 1575.5 between a combined force of Oda and Tokugawa against Takeda. This great battle has been visualized with great dramatic flair by Kurosawa Akira (1910–1998) in the movie *Kagemusha* (The Shadow Warrior), which por-

trays Nagashino as a decisive victory of Oda-Tokugawa guns (the new) over Takeda cavalry (the old). In staging *Kagemusha*, Kurosawa did not simply engage in fanciful exaggeration. He adhered quite closely to what had long been accepted by scholars and others as the standard version (*teisetsu*) of how the battle was conducted.

According to this standard version, Nobunaga in his victory at Nagashino almost single-handedly effected the military revolution. Erecting wooden palisades (*saku*) to stop or at least slow down the Takeda cavalry's charging horses, he deployed some 3,000 gunners armed with arquebuses or muskets and divided them into three ranks of 1,000 each. When the Takeda attacked, the ranks of gunners fired in order. Thus, as one rank fired, the second made final preparations to fire (the guns were muzzle-loading weapons that required time to reload), and the third, having just fired, began to re-load. The historical significance of this form of volley fire as given in the standard version of the Battle of Nagashino has been recognized even by military historians of Europe. Thus, for example, we find these remarks by Geoffrey Parker (b. 1943) in *The Military Revolution*:

[At the Battle of Nagashino the] warlord Oda Nobunaga deployed 3000 musketeers in ranks in this action, having trained them to fire in volleys so as to maintain a constant barrage. The opposing [Takeda] cavalry . . . was annihilated.

[The] crucial defect of the muzzle-loading musket: the length of time required to recharge it. . . . [The] only way to overcome this disadvantage was to draw up musketeers in ranks, firing in sequence, so that the front file could reload while the others behind fired. This solution was not even suggested in Europe until 1594, and it did not pass into general use there until the 1630s. Yet Oda Nobunaga had experimented with musketry salvoes in the 1560s, and he achieved his first major victory with the technique in 1575, twenty years before the European innovation.⁵⁷

Here is George Sansom's description of the Battle of Nagashino, which he hails as having marked "a new era in the history of warfare in Japan":

Takeda opened the attack with the old-style order of battle: four waves of mounted warriors charged one after another against the defences erected by Nobunaga. They were all destroyed before they reached his front line. Nobunaga had set up wooden palisades in a zig-zag pattern, of a height which the horses could not overleap. Takeda's cavaliers were brought up short against this obstacle and were shot down from behind it by some 3000 foot soldiers armed with muskets.⁵⁸

The Battle of Nagashino was the culmination of a lengthy campaign by the Takeda into the domains of the Tokugawa and Oda, possibly with the ultimate aim of marching on to Kyoto and seizing the initiative to unify the country from Nobunaga. Beginning in 1571, the redoubtable Takeda Shingen led his army into the provinces of Tōtōmi (Tokugawa), Mikawa (Tokugawa), and Mino (Oda). Most of the fighting between Shingen and his enemies in these provinces centered—as so much of the warfare of this age did—on forts, although there was one major open-field battle at Mikatagahara in Tōtōmi in the twelfth month of 1573 in which Shingen soundly defeated Ieyasu's army, which had been supplemented by a unit sent from Nobunaga. One scholar has declared Mikatagahara to be the worst defeat ever suffered

by Ieyasu.⁵⁹

Riding the wave of his victory at Mikatagahara, Shingen in the early months of 1573 advanced westward from Tōtōmi into Mikawa and even dispatched a separate force to probe into Nobunaga's province of Mino. Seeking to rally support from allies, including Asakura Yoshikage (1533–1573) and the shogun, Ashikaga Yoshiaki (1537–1597), who, estranged from Nobunaga, had long sought to create an anti-Oda coalition, Shingen was clearly planning a major assault against Nobunaga. But in the fourth month he suddenly fell ill and died in the field even as he tried to return to his home in Kai province.

Shingen was succeeded as Takeda leader by his son Katsuyori (1546–1582), who has been described as a “wild boar commander”—that is, a commander whose extreme aggressiveness and single-minded determination to press the offensive in battle was likely to lead to disaster, as in fact it did at Nagashino. In 1574 Katsuyori renewed his father's campaign, advancing into and attacking positions in Tōtōmi, Mikawa, and Mino provinces. In the fifth month he scored an important victory when he laid siege to and, within three weeks, captured Ieyasu's Takatenjin Fort in Tōtōmi. As Owada Tetsuo (b. 1944) has suggested, the capture of this fort must have been particularly satisfying to Katsuyori, because his father, under whose giant shadow Katsuyori had long languished, had failed to take Takatenjin three years earlier.⁶⁰

Successful in Tōtōmi, Katsuyori crossed into Mikawa in 1575. His goal was to retake Nagashino Fort, which Ieyasu had seized from the Takeda in 1573. On 1575.5.13 and 14 Katsuyori surrounded the fort, which was situated at the confluence of two rivers. The fort's occupants defended themselves stoutly even as they dispatched a plea to Ieyasu for help. Ieyasu, fearful that he could not deal with Katsuyori alone, called upon Nobunaga for additional support, and on the eighteenth of the month a combined Oda-Tokugawa army took up positions at Shidaragahara (Shidara Field) some thirty kilometers west of Nagashino. Nobunaga's strategy was to harass the Takeda troops besieging Nagashino Fort and, at the same time, induce Katsuyori and his main army to attack the Oda-Tokugawa positions at Shidara Field.

In the early morning hours of 5.21, an Oda force stealthily approached Nagashino Fort from the south under cover of darkness, broke through the Takeda fortifications surrounding the fort and, joined by the fort's defenders, drove the Takeda besiegers to flight. With his encirclement of Nagashino Fort thus broken, Katsuyori, commanding the main Takeda army to the north of the fort, advanced toward Shidara Field to confront Nobunaga and Ieyasu—precisely in accordance with Nobunaga's strategy.

Shidara Field is a north-south valley bordered on either side by mountainous ridges and bisected by the Rengo River. Nobunaga and Ieyasu had carefully established their fortifications, including palisades to deter charging horses, on the western ridge, and Katsuyori and his army took up their positions on the eastern ridge. By some estimates, Nobunaga had 30,000 troops and Ieyasu 8,000 (a combined total of 38,000) and Takeda Katsuyori had 15,000. But Owada Tetsuo believes that the actual totals were about half of these numbers.⁶¹

An impartial military analyst, studying in advance the configuration of the land and the positions of the two armies at Shidara Field, would probably have concluded that attack was unwise for either side. It is all the more astonishing that the one who chose to attack was Katsuyori, outnumbered more than two to one. Perhaps Katsuyori was unaware of the great

disparity in numbers between his army and the enemy's, or was encouraged to attack because of the belief that the enemy's ranks would soon be swelled to even greater size by reinforcements. But Katsuyori also appears to have regarded Nobunaga and Ieyasu with disdain for taking up a defensive position with no intention of attacking; he would show them how a real warrior fought.⁶² There are many examples in history of foolhardy, wasteful attacks such as Katsuyori's at the Battle of Nagashino (so-called even though the main fighting took place some thirty kilometers to the west of Nagashino).

SK records that the combined Oda-Tokugawa army had 1,000 guns (not 3,000 as claimed in the standard version of the battle). The Takeda army attacked in five separate waves and the "majority" (*kahansū*) of attackers in each wave were cut down exclusively by gunfire. There is no mention in SK of the use of any weapons other than guns by the Oda-Tokugawa army. There is also no mention of the gunners "[firing] in volleys so as to maintain a constant barrage," as Geoffrey Parker puts it in his description of the Battle of Nagashino quoted earlier. SK speaks of the Takeda as skillful horsemen and refers to their use of horses in the battle.⁶³ But we cannot assume that all or even most of the Takeda attackers were mounted. In view of the composition of contemporary armies in terms of cavalry and infantry, as already discussed, it seems likely that most of them were on foot.⁶⁴

If SK is the most reliable source of primary information about Nobunaga's battles, including the Battle of Nagashino, why does the battle's standard version differ so markedly from it—that is, why does the standard version include the practice of volley fire and portray the battle as an essentially black-and-white, climactic showdown between guns (the new style of warfare) and horses (the old style)? The standard version derives from a seventeenth-century work by Oze Hoan (1564–1640) named *Shinchō ki*, which is actually a substantially fictionalized, romanticized version of SK.⁶⁵ Easy to read and exciting, *Shinchō ki* became the equivalent, for its time, of a best seller; and, as Fujimoto Masayuki points out, later writers, describing Nobunaga's battles, used it, rather than SK, as their source. In the modern age, Oze Hoan's version of the Battle of Nagashino was canonized by the General Staff of the Japanese Army in its publication in 1910 of *Nihon senshi* (The History of Warfare in Japan). Only recently have scholars begun to make extensive use of SK and thus to give a more accurate picture of Nagashino and Nobunaga's other battles.

There is no question that Nobunaga was a major innovator in Japan's age of early modern warfare. He (along with others) made important use of the power of gunfire on a large scale; he was one of the leaders in dividing an army into specialized units of gunners, bowmen, and spearmen; and he vastly increased the scope and duration of warfare. But we cannot, on the basis of existing records, go so far as to credit him with being the first, in either Japan or Europe, to develop synchronized volley fire with a large unit of gunners. And although his victory at Nagashino was a great victory indeed (it marked the beginning of the end for the famous Takeda family), it is misleading to characterize it as an epochal conflict—a turning point in Japanese warfare—when guns prevailed over horses. That is a romantic idea derived from Oze Hoan's *Shinchō ki*. The Oda-Tokugawa army certainly won with guns, but not because the Takeda eschewed these weapons and were determined to stick with cavalry to the bitter end, as *Shinchō ki* suggests. The Takeda used guns from the time of Shingen, but, like many Sengoku daimyo families, were unable to obtain them in great quantity; and, as suggested, many of the Takeda at Nagashino probably fought on foot, as was the general

custom in this age.

I conclude that guns definitely altered the course of warfare in sixteenth-century Japan during a period of several decades, effecting either a "military revolution" or a "military evolution," depending upon how one defines these terms. A prerequisite to the study of this revolution/evolution is abandonment of the incorrect standard version of the Battle of Nagashino, which has long been given such prominence in both amateur and professional analyses of warfare in Japan's early modern age.

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NOTES

- 1 This account of the introduction of European guns to Japan is taken from "Teppō ki" (Chronicle of the Gun), a portion of which is translated into English in Tsunoda et al. 1958, pp. 317–21.
- 2 Sansom 1961, pp. 263–64.
- 3 Sansom does state in a footnote (p. 264), however, that the use of guns "greatly speeded up the tendency to make less use of mounted men and more use of infantry, so that within a generation or so the use of mounted men had been virtually abandoned."
- 4 The "military revolution" debate among historians of medieval and early modern Europe began with a lecture delivered by Michael Roberts in 1955. See Roberts 1995.
- 5 Needham et al. 1986, p. 1.
- 6 Ibid., p. 294.
- 7 Suzuki 1997, p. 30.
- 8 Ibid., p. 13.
- 9 Knuuti n.d., p. 4. Needham suggests the possibility that "Turkish guns" first made their way to China from the country's northwest via the Uighurs. See Needham et al. 1986, p. 440.
- 10 Suzuki 1997, pp. 26–27.
- 11 Udagawa 1990, pp. 10–11.
- 12 Kajiwara 1967.
- 13 Kawai 1996, pp. 65–67.
- 14 Conlan 2003, p. 59.
- 15 Ibid., p. 58.
- 16 Ibid., p. 60.
- 17 E.g., Satō 1965, pp. 198–200.
- 18 Conlan 1998, pp. 76–77.
- 19 Suzuki 1997, pp. 178–79.
- 20 Imatani 1992, p. 264.
- 21 See Rogers 1995b.
- 22 Suzuki 1997, pp. 180–81.
- 23 Clifford Rogers, writing about Europe's supposed military revolution, comments: "These tactical changes [i.e., the use of guns] required more highly trained and disciplined soldiers; this led to the general adoption of drill, uniforms, and standing armies organized into smaller, more standardized units." "The Military Revolution in History and Historiography" in Rogers 1995a, p. 2.
- 24 The leading exception was Ishiyama Honganji, the fortress of Pure Land Buddhism at the eastern end of the Inland Sea that held out against Nobunaga for ten years (1570–80).
- 25 Fujimoto Masayuki points out that Nobunaga was one of the commanders who took the lead in dividing his army into units according to weaponry. Fujimoto 1993, p. 148. Gunners, in particular, needed the support of separate bow and spear units to protect them during the relatively slow process of reloading their weapons.
- 26 Ibid., pp. 15–16.
- 27 Cooper 1965, p. 41.
- 28 And the numbers they give are not necessarily reliable.

- 29 The screens can be found in *Kawanakajima kassen zu*, *Nagashino kassen zu* in Kuwata et al. 1988, vol. 1.
- 30 Modern historians agree that Shingen and Kenshin met five times at Kawanakajima, 1553, 1555, 1557, 1561, and 1564; but only two of these meetings—1555 and 1561—resulted in major battles. See the discussion in Varley 1999, pp. 62–63.
- 31 Ibid., p. 92.
- 32 Owada 1995, p. 63.
- 33 SK 1965, p. 56.
- 34 *Shizugatake kassen zu*, *Komaki Nagakute kassen zu* in Kuwata et al. 1988, vol. 2.
- 35 In Nobunaga's day, most screens and sets of screens "read" from right to left. This set is unusual because the scene on the left screen precedes in time that on the right screen.
- 36 Fujimoto 1993, pp. 73–74.
- 37 Owada 1995, p. 35.
- 38 See the discussion of this in Fujimoto 1993, pp. 115–17.
- 39 SK 1965, p. 143.
- 40 Ibid., p. 237.
- 41 Ibid., pp. 53–54.
- 42 Sugiyama 1965, p. 101.
- 43 Most early and mid-Sengoku forts were mountain-top fortifications (*yamajiro*). In the beginning, chieftains lived at the bases of mountains and only entered their forts to defend against attacks. Later, mountain-top forts were enlarged to include residential quarters and were often built on leveled-off strips of land leading down from the mountains' summits. Among the defensive installations of these forts were moats (*hori*, usually dry moats), packed-dirt ramparts (*dorui*), wooden palisades (*saku*), and watchtowers (*yagura*) from which archers and, later, gunners could shoot. In Nobunaga's day forts were increasingly erected on lower, flattop mountains (*hirayamajiro*). Some of the stone-based castles built from the 1570s on, such as Nobunaga's at Azuchi on Lake Biwa, were *hirayamajiro*: others were situated on flat land (*hirajiro*).
- 44 SK 1965, pp. 107–8.
- 45 Owada 1978, pp. 60–61.
- 46 This was part of the acceleration of the process of *heinō bunri*, "separation of warriors and peasants."
- 47 This age can be dated from about the late 1570s until 1590, when Hideyoshi completed unification of the country in the siege of the Hōjō family's Odawara Castle in the Kanto. There were two major sieges after this period: Ieyasu's two-stage siege of Osaka Castle in 1614–15 and the Tokugawa siege of Hara Castle during the Shimabara Rebellion, 1637–38.
- 48 SK 1965, p. 166.
- 49 See, for example, the reference to "burning villages and quickly creating a naked fort" in Mino province in 1567.⁸ in Ibid., p. 80.
- 50 An extreme example of economic warfare appears to have occurred in 1577.¹⁰ when, according to SK 1965, a force under Shibata Katsue rampaged through Kaga province "cutting down and discarding crops throughout the province." SK 1965, p. 211.
- 51 Ibid., p. 214.
- 52 Ibid., p. 195.
- 53 Cooper 1965, p. 99.
- 54 This description of the destruction of the Nagashima forts is taken from my article "Warfare in Japan 1467–1600" (Varley 1999), pp. 71–72. It, in turn, is based on SK 1965, pp. 159–63.
- 55 Ibid., p. 119.

56 Ibid., p. 238.

57 Parker 1988, p. 140. Whatever the significance of Nagashino in Nobunaga's road to unification, it was not his *first* major victory.

58 Sansom 1961, p. 287.

59 Atsuta 1991, p. 83.

60 Owada 1995, p. 99.

61 Ibid., p. 101.

62 Fujimoto 1993, p. 222.

63 SK 1965, p. 170.

64 Suzuki Masaya estimates that less than ten percent of the Takeda army was mounted. Suzuki 1998, p. 116.

65 *Shinchō ki* 1972, vol. 2. The Battle of Nagashino is described on pp. 83–90.

GLOSSARY

Anegawa 姉川

Asai 浅井

Asakura 朝倉

Asakura Yoshikage 朝倉義景

ashigaru 足輕

Ashikaga 足利

Ashikaga Yoshiaki 足利義昭

Atsumori 敦盛

emakimono 絵巻物

Enryakuji 延暦寺

Fujimoto Masayuki 藤本正行

Genpei 源平

Gohō 五峰 (Ōchoku 王直)

Go-sannen kassen ekotoba 後三年合戦絵詞

gunchūjō 軍忠状

gunpai (gunbai) 軍配

hadakajiro 裸城

Heiji monogatari ekotoba 平治物語絵詞

Heike monogatari 平家物語

Hideyori 秀頼

Hideyoshi 秀吉

Hōjō godai ki 北条五代記

Ibaraki 茨木

ikki-uchi 一騎討ち

Imagawa Yorikuni 今川頼国

Imagawa Yoshimoto 今川義元

Imatani Akira 今谷明

Ishiyama Honganji 石山本願寺

jōkamachi 城下町

Kagemusha 影武者

kahansū 過半数

Kajiwara Masaaki 梶原正昭

kassen byōbu 合戦屏風

Kawanakajima kassen zu byōbu 川中島合戦

図屏風

kishū kōgeki 奇襲攻撃

Konda 今田

Kurosawa Akira 黒澤明

kōwakamai 幸若舞

Mikatahara 三方ヶ原

Miki 三木

Miyoshi Nagayoshi 三好長慶

mukai-jō 向城

Mōko shūrai ekotoba 蒙古襲来絵詞

Nagashino 長篠

naginata 長刀、薙刀

Nihon senshi 日本戦史

Nobunaga no Sengoku gunji gaku 信長の戦

国軍事学

ōdachi 大裁ち

Oda Nobunaga 織田信長

Odani 小谷

Okehazama 桶狭間

Ōnin 応仁

Ōta Gyūichi 太田牛一

Owada Tetsuo 小和田哲男

Oze Hoan 小瀬甫庵

Rengo 連合

saku 柵

Sengoku 戦国

Shibata Katsuie 柴田勝家

Shidaragahara 設楽ヶ原

Shimura 志村

Shinchō-kō ki 信長公記

Shizugatake kassen zu byōbu 賤ヶ岳合戦

図屏風

Suzuki Masaya 鈴木真哉

Takeda Katsuyori 武田勝頼

Takeda Shingen 武田信玄

Tanegashima 種子島

teppō 鉄砲

Teppō ki 鉄炮記

Tokitaka 時堯

tsuke-jiro 付城

Udagawa Takehisa 宇田川武久

Uesugi Kenshin 上杉謙信

Uetsuki 植月

wakamusha 若武者

Wakō 倭寇

Yamamoto Isoroku 山本五十六

yari 槍

Yodo 淀

Zen-kunen kassen ekotoba 前九年合戦絵詞