

## 12. The Kamakura Shogunate to the Muromachi Shogunate

### 12.1 The two Mongolian invasions

An Empire rose on the Mongolian plain in the early 13th century and rapidly expanded its territory to east Europe. In those times, the Chinese Song Dynasty was pressed by the Jurchen state of Jin and escaped to southern China to be called Southern Song. Soon the Mongols defeated Jin and established the Yuan (Mongol) Dynasty in China in 1271. The Mongols aimed to expand their Asian territory to Burma and Java in the south and Sakhalin in the north. Naturally their plans included Japan. Five times emperor Kublai Khan sent messengers to request tribute. However, the regent HOJO Tokimune refused all of these requests.

After Yuan overran Southern Song, the focus shifted to Japan and Indochina. A Yuan invasion became a grave threat. The Shogunate ordered an eastern fiefdom gokenin (vassal), who also ruled a western fiefdom, to defend the western region of Kyushu. As the Shogunate had expected, Yuan attacked Japan twice, in 1274 and 1281. However, Yuan's invasion failed in both cases. The Indochina invasion also failed.

The result of the two Yuan invasions was to seriously affect the master-servant relationship between the shogun and the gokenin. A heavy burden was imposed on the gokenin for their war expenditures,



*Fig.86 Defense wall against Mongol invasions (Imazu, Fukuoka City on Hakata Bay).The defense wall height is about 2.6 m.*



*Fig.87 Shidai Tsuho coins.Some coins excavated from Kumagawa, Fussa City. The first minting year was 1310, during the reign of Külüg Khan, known as Emperor Wuzong of Yuan.*

Shogunate under the Hojo (called *Tokuso*, meaning the direct descendants of HOJO Yoshitoki). As a result, the gokenin became estranged from the Shogunate.

The Kamakura Shogunate (*Bakufu*) ruled on the basis of the *Soryo-sei* system (fiefdom possessed by the gathered heads of families). However, as the Shogunate tolerated the independence of more illegitimate families to help counter further Yuan invasions, the authority of legitimate families weakened. In these circumstances the power of the Shogunate was soon affected.



Fig. 88 Mongol invasions of Asian countries (Reference: *Weekly Asahi Encyclopedia History of Japan*).

## 12.2 The downfall of the Kamakura Shogunate

The gokenin (warrior's vassals) grew poor as time passed, even though they were the base of the Kamakura Shogunate. Fiefdoms no longer belonged to them due to increasing seizure and sale. They became *musoku-no-gokenin* (vassals without fiefs). To stop this trend, the Shogunate promulgated the first *Tokuseirei* (debt cancellation order) in 1267. Further, the *Einin-no-Tokuseirei* (Einin era debt cancellation order) was promulgated in 1297 so that the gokenin could retrieve their lost assets without compensation from *hi-gokenin* (non-vassals) or *bonge* (people below warrior class). However, these measures were not successful in stopping the rapid ruin of the gokenin.

While on one hand the gokenin lost their lands and were ruined, a new class called *akuto* accumulated former gokenin land and began to oppose the Shogunate. The *akuto* were a new class including local lord, traders and powerful farmers who resisted the Shogunate and the manorial system.

Uprisings by the *akuto* in various regions against the Shogunate developed into civil war. Taking advantage of the civil war conditions, Emperor Godaigo planned the overthrow of the Shogunate in 1324 and

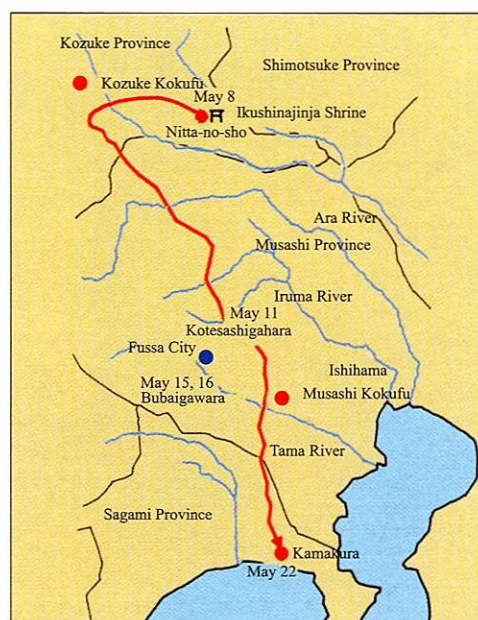


Fig.89 NITTA Yoshisada's advance on Kamakura.



again in 1331, but both plans were leaked to the Shogunate in advance and he was exiled to Oki Island. This Imperial action greatly influenced anti-shogunate groups in various regions, causing numerous uprisings. NITTA Yoshitada, of Kozuke Province in northern Kanto, formed an army in 1333. His army defeated the Shogunate first at Kotesashigahara (Tokorozawa City) and Bubaigawara (Fuchu City), and then went on to attack Kamakura. The 14th regent HOJO Takatoki killed himself, and the 150 year Kamakura Shogunate ended.

### 12.3 The emergence of warlord ASHIKAGA Takauji

After the fall of the Kamakura Shogunate (Bakufu), Emperor Godaigo returned to Kyoto and carried out a reform later called the "Kenmu-no-Chuko" (the Kenmu Restoration). However, land to be awarded to distinguished warriors was in short supply, and dissatisfaction was expressed incessantly. The emperor also planned construction of an imperial palace (*daidairi*) for display and to help maintain his imperial power. However, increases in construction-related taxes gradually cost him his popular support. Against this background, warlord ASHIKAGA Takauji captured the hearts of those disappointed with the new regime. The new regime then awarded Musashi, Sagami and Izu provinces to Takauji, and Mikawa Province to his brother Tadayoshi. Furthermore, Tadayoshi was appointed as the Sagami Province governor (*Sagami-no-kami*), bringing all the warriors of the Kanto region under ASHIKAGA Takauji's control.



Fig.90 Taiheiki Ishihama Battle monument (Ishihama Toshin Ruins). In 1352 NITTA Yoshioki (a son of Yoshisada) from the Southern Court attacked ASHIKAGA Takauji on the Musashino Plain. The stone monument in Ushihama, Fussa City, indicates that Ushihama was called "Ishihama" and that this is where Takauji escaped after defeat in the battle at Kanaibara (Koganei City). The "Taiheiki" is a 40 volume history completed in 1370s.

In 1335, two years after the fall of the Kamakura Shogunate, HOJO Tokiyuki, a son of the late HOJO Takatoki, raised an army in Shinano Province (Nagano Prefecture) to attack Kamakura and restore the Kamakura Shogunate. Later this insurrection became known as "Nakasendai-no-ran." When HOJO Tokiyuki's army advanced on Musashi Province, it fought ASHIKAGA Tadayoshi's army at Onakagehara (Hidaka City), Kotesashigahara (Tokorozawa City), Fuchu (Fuchu City), and Idenosawa (Machida City). ASHIKAGA Takauji, who was staying in Kyoto, went to the front without obtaining Emperor Godaigo's permission, and his army joined Tadayoshi's army to defeat HOJO Tokiyuki's army and suppress the rebellion.

Soon ASHIKAGA Takauji raised a revolt against the Kenmu Government of Emperor Godaigo, ostensibly to defeat NITTA Yoshisada. Yoshisada had received an order from Emperor Godaigo to subjugate Takauji, but Takauji defeated him at Hakone. Then Takauji quickly advanced on Kyoto and helped Emperor Komyo of the Jimyoin-to line to become emperor (Komyo was the second son of Emperor Gofushimi). So the Muromachi Shogunate (Ashikaga Shogunate) was established in Kyoto in 1336, with Takauji as the first shogun. Emperor Godaigo escaped south to Yoshino, and the civil war between the Northern Court and Southern Court began (the Nanbokuchō Period, 1336-1392).

## 12.4 Kanto under the Kamakura-fu

ASHIKAGA Takauji tried to place himself successor to the Kamakura Shogunate (Bakufu), and he gradually confronted Emperor Godaigo and the court nobles (*kuge*). In 1335 he established Kamakura-fu dominance of the Kanto region by gaining a firm foothold in Musashi, Sagami and Izu provinces.

The Kamakura-fu became the regional government of the Kanto area.

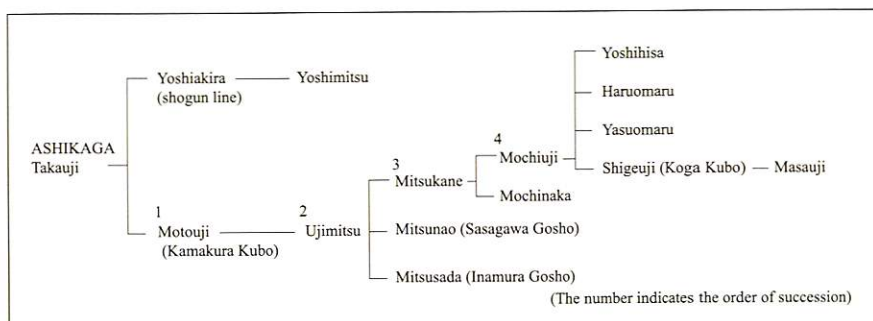


Fig.91 Summary of the Ashikaga family and Kamakura Kubo genealogy.

The head of the Kamakura-fu was the Kamakura *Kubo*. At first Takauji stationed his son Yoshiakira (Senjuo) at Kamakura to govern the region, but in 1349 Yoshiakira's younger brother Motouji took over as Kamakura Kubo. Then the Kamakura-fu consolidated its control. During the time of the Yoshiakira and Motouji, Kamakura-fu controlled eleven provinces: Izu, Kai, Shinano, Sagami, Musashi, Kozuke, Shimotsuke, Kazusa, Shimousa, Awa and Hitachi. However, Shinano Province fell under the control of the Muromachi Shogunate later, while Mutsu and Dewa provinces in the far north came under the control of the Kamakura-fu as the political situation changed.

The early Kamakura-fu functioned only militarily, but it soon developed an administrative role modeled on the Shogunate. The Kamakura-fu acquired wide powers including political authority and land dominance with the advance of its administrative system. The Kamakura Kubo strengthened the master-servant relationship among Kanto warriors through its authority. Subsequent quarrels arose with the Muromachi Shogunate (Bakufu).

The Kanto *Kanrei* (a government official) assisted the Kubo. This position came under the UESUGI family's exclusive patronage after UESUGI Noriaki's son, Noriharu, was appointed in 1364.