

18. Downfall of the Hojo family and the end of Medieval Times

18.1 Kanto's situation

The Takeda family of Kai Province was defeated by ODA Nobunaga in 1582 (Tensho10), Nobunaga being killed by AKECHI Mitsuhide at Honnoji Temple in the same year. These events greatly changed Kanto's political situation. The Hojo family seeking to expand their territory confronted the Tokugawa family with the aims on Shinano and Kai Provinces. Later the Hojo family reached a peace settlement and formed an alliance with the Tokugawa family. Thereafter the Hojo family continued their territorial expansion repeatedly battling anti-Hojo powers including UTSUNOMIYA Kunitsuna of Shimotsuke Province in the northern Kanto and SATAKE Yoshishige of the Hitachi Province.

TOYOTOMI Hideyoshi survived Honnoji Temple assault to kill AKECHI Mitsuhide at the Yamazaki Battle so becoming the Oda

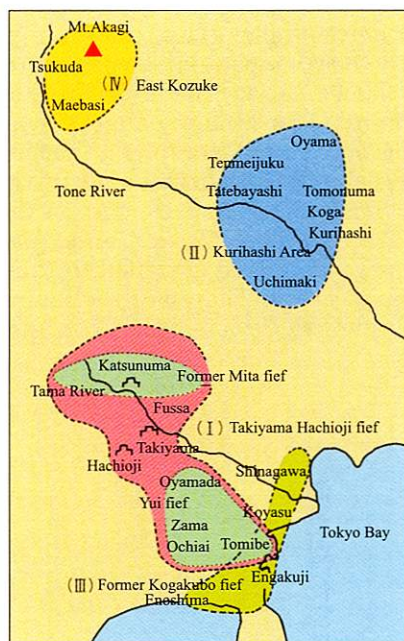


Fig.117 Regions dominated by Ujiteru in the Odawara Hojo fiefdom. Documents issued by Ujiteru are mainly distributed in the areas I, II, III and IV of the drawing. The Odawara Hojo family head invested Ujiteru with full post war management powers over the newly conquered territory. Ujiteru drastically changed the new Odawara Hojo territory.

family vassal leader. He went on to defeat SHIBATA Katsuie at the Battle of Shizugatake in 1583 (Tensho11) becoming successor to ODA Nobunage. Against this background, serious confrontation between Hideyoshi and TOKUGAWA Ieyasu began to surface, until they fought at Komaki and Nagakute in 1584 (Tensho 12). To their benefit they reconciled with each other bringing Ieyasu to the Court to pledge obedience to Hideyoshi. Ieyasu's becoming political controller of the Kanto region promoted change in the Hojo policy towards the Toyotomi family.

18.2 Hachioji Castle's construction by HOJO Ujiteru

In 1569 (Eiroku12), when the political situation had drastically changed, the Takeda family of Kai Province entered the Musashi region across the Usui Pass via Kozuke Province. They advanced to the south and attacked Takiyama and Edo castles. Takiyama Castle fell into crisis. Ujiteru's decision to construct a new castle might have been influenced by the Takeda family's attack on Takiyama Castle.

Hachioji Castle introduced measures against Takeda family type attacks. This castle was constructed for defense ability against ODA Nobunaga and TOYOTOMI Hideyoshi, also designed to serve as his government office. Various considerations have existed concerning the castle's construction. It is now popularly thought that this castle was constructed to function as his castle after 1581 (Tensho 9).

18.3 Hideyoshi's order forbidding war

Hideyoshi ordered TOKUGAWA Ieyasu to take charge of the Kanto administration. Ieyasu's letter to HOJO Ujimasa in 1586 (Tensho 14)



Fig.118 Detachable bridge connected to Hachioji Castle's main building (restored). This detachable bridge spanned the Shiroyama River to access the main building.

included the sentence "*Kanto Sobuji no Gi ni tsuki*" that was the banning war between Sengoku Daimyos. In that period Hideyoshi appointed himself arbitrator of territorial quarrels. Any fief violating his decision faced retaliation of Hideyoshi's army. Complying with this sentence in this letter, Hideyoshi ruled a war between the Hojo and other lords to be a private war and ordered the war stopped.

The Hojo family felt a serious threat from Hideyoshi. Especially, after Hideyoshi's subjugation of Kyushu in 1587 (Tensho 15), he increased pressure on the Kanto region. On the last day of July that year the Hojo family promulgated the *Hitoaratame-rei* declaration, demanding that common farmers prepare for crisis. All village men, irrespective of class, i.e. farmer or warrior, would be obliged to go to war in a crisis.

18.4 Attack and defense at Hachioji Castle

Hideyoshi steadily promoted projects to unify the nation. He invited Emperor Goyozai to the newly constructed *Jurakudai* Residence in April 1588 (Tensho 16) to promulgate the *Kishomon* (written vows) obliging all Daimyos to assemble to further Hideyoshi's centralization of political power. However, no Hojo family's attended that assembly. After four months, Ujinori, younger brother of Ujimasa, visited Hideyoshi. The lateness of this visit highlighted the difficulty of reaching the Hojo family consensus on obedience to Hideyoshi. Furthermore, while the lord Ujinao and Ujinori insisted on visiting Hideyoshi by the hope to curry favor with Ieyasu, Ujimasa and Ujiteru strongly opposed the Toyotomi family.

Ujinori's visit to Hideyoshi indicated the Hojo family's acceptance of the *Sobuji-rei* order incorporating them into Hideyoshi's system. However, Ujiteru increased his army steadily in his Hachioji fiefdom to



Fig.119 View from Hachioji Castle's main building toward its entrance.Route to the main building via detachable bridge, passage, stairs, and entrance. The outside slope is covered by the stone wall used as rampart.



Fig.120 Excavated old road in Hachioji Castle.Exploratory excavations in the ruins of Hachioji Castle under Hachioji City Board of Education since 1987. This old road was excavated near the Otomon (Yakuimon) Gate.

prepare for war with Hideyoshi. He ordered his vassals, their wives and children to enter Hachioji Castle in December 1587 (Tensho 15) then prepared battle strategies for his territory in early 1588. Hideyoshi declared war against the Hojo family in November 1589 ordering his Daimyos to Odawara.

MAEDA Toshiie and UESUGI Kagekatsu of the Toyotomi side opened an attack against Hachioji Castle at daybreak during March 1590 (Tensho 18). At that time castle lord, Ujiteru, was besieged in Odawara Castle. Ujiteru's chief vassals, OISHI Terumoto, KONDO Tsunahide, YOKOCHI Yoshinobu, KANO Soen, NAKAYAMA Kageyu and local clans and warriors defended Hachioji Castle with many wives and children confined there.

The Hojo family had held sway in the Kanto region for about 100 years since HOJO Soun surrendered unconditionally on July 5 facing complete ruin. Hideyoshi confiscated all Hojo family fiefdoms, the brothers Ujimasa, Ujiteru, who had advocated war, committed ritual suicide (*seppuku*), and the Hojo family head Ujinao was banished to Koyasan. On July 13 Hideyoshi appointed Ieyasu, who already held five fiefdoms, as the new lord of the Kanto region. Ieyasu then administrated six fiefdoms including Musashi and Sagami. Some Hojo family vassals became Ieyasu's vassals or vassals to his vassals while others were demoted to the farmers.



Fig.121 List of warriors who died in the battle of Hachioji Castle(Daihiganji Temple, Akiruno City).Hachioji Castle fell in just one day on June 22, 1590 (Tensho 18). The number of warriors who died in battle is recorded 500 or more.



Fig.122 HOJO Ujiteru's grave (Sokanji Temple, Hachioji City).The grave of Ujiteru who committed ritual suicide in Odawara Castle is located in Sokanji Temple and he is also burried in a temple in Odawara City.