The Japanese Warring States, 1560

CRISIS BACKGROUND GUIDE
Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the Land of the Rising Sun. The date is August 1, 1560, in the third year of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor Ōgimachi, and the second year of the Eiroku Era.

As those taking the role of the most ambitious men in Japanese history, you will be thrown straight into the fire of the chaos of 16th century Japan. Each *daimyō*—the lords who control the vast plains and mountains—seeks to make his name known to Japan, and even the world. Through political intrigue, diplomatic aptitude, and military prowess, guide your clan as you strive for the ultimate goal—the march to Kyoto and the control of the Chrysanthemum Throne. In an era when Japan is swiftly transforming, I encourage you to be bold, valiant, and daring. Fear not the most imaginative of actions, or the most unpredictable of gambles. Instead, embrace them—the future of Japan is at stake.

The crisis committee is a gem in the rough amidst the world of Model United Nations. The strict procedural order of debate is abandoned, ushering in the creativity and innovation that allows each individual delegate to shine brightly. Within this committee, you will draw upon each sphere of state administration, whether political, social, or economic. Soon, the impact your actions have on Japan will become evident. Be sure to cooperate with your fellow *daimyō*, while simultaneously keeping watch for their deceit and trickery. It is a tumultuous period of Japan’s history: each decision you make and each directive you write will have far-reaching repercussions.

I, alongside your Chair, Eduardo Koranyi, and Assistant Director, Mia Tsao, wish you the best in your endeavours and hope you have a splendid experience at VMUN 2020.

Sincerely,

Derek Wu
HCC Director
Position Paper Policy

What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is a brief overview of a country’s stance on the topics being discussed by a particular committee. Though there is no specific format the position paper must follow, it should include a description of your positions your country holds on the issues on the agenda, relevant actions that your country has taken, and potential solutions that your country would support.

At Vancouver Model United Nations, delegates should write a position paper for each of the committee’s topics. Each position paper should not exceed one page, and should all be combined into a single document per delegate.

For the Historical Crisis Committee, position papers are mandatory, especially for a delegate to be considered for an award.

Formatting

Position papers should:

— Include the name of the delegate, his/her country, and the committee
— Be in a standard font (e.g. Times New Roman) with a 12-point font size and 1-inch document margins
— Not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders
— Include citations and a bibliography, in any format, giving due credit to the sources used in research (not included in the 1-page limit)

Due Dates and Submission Procedure

Position papers for this committee must be submitted by midnight on February 7th, 2020. Once your position paper is complete, please save the file as your last name, your first name and send it as an attachment in an email, to your committee’s email address, with the subject heading as your last name, your first name — Position Paper.

Please do not add any other attachments to the email or write anything else in the body.

Both your position papers should be combined into a single PDF or Word document file; position papers submitted in another format will not be accepted.

Each position paper will be manually reviewed and considered for the Best Position Paper award.

The email address for this committee is hcc@vmun.com.
The Japanese Warring States, 1560

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The Japanese Warring States, 1560

Overview

The date is August 1, 1560. Powers are rapidly shifting in Sengoku era Japan. The Imperial Family, revered as descendants of the sun goddess Amaterasu, has been overshadowed by the shogun, a hereditary military dictator. Beginning in the 11th and 12th century, the shogunate established clear hegemony over administrative and military affairs, albeit in the name of the Emperor. Still, cracks are appearing in the rule of the shogun. Increasingly independent and self-sufficient warlords, the daimyo, are rising up across the country, seeking to assert their own influence and power over various regions of Japan. Coupled with the introduction of new military technologies and strategies, Japan has descended into a period of upheaval that will have a profound impact on the nation’s future.

In June 1560, a key battle was fought in Owari Province, in the Tokaido Region. The Battle of Okehazama saw the relatively minor Oda clan win a surprising ambush victory over the well-established Imagawa clan, under Imagawa Yoshimoto. This defeat signalled the end of the dominance of one of Japan’s foremost clans and symbolized the rise of the Oda as a prime power in the country. For the dozens of smaller, less influential clans across Japan, the events at Okehazama revealed that the major clans within the status quo were no longer invulnerable. The boundaries that had once separated the lower and upper classes of feudal Japanese society have vanished, as now even the lowliest of peasants can rise to the most eminent lordships in all the land. For any clan in Japan, securing power over its neighbours is a key step to realizing the ultimate goal of wielding the power behind the Chrysanthemum Throne, the seat of the Imperial Family’s power in Kyoto.

Alongside the perpetual quarreling of the clans, the era’s technological advancements are sweeping through Japan. The first matchlock guns, the tanegashima, arrived in Japan alongside Portuguese traders in the 1540s, and reproductions of these firearms have slowly become commonplace among the military forces of the daimyos. Despite the inefficient nature of using these firearms, the sheer lethality of the tanegashima has grown to be a key advantage in warfare. Clans with pre-established trade relationships with foreign European powers have readily been able to access the newest and most advanced European technologies. From these relationships arose the arrival of Christian missionaries, whose settlement sowed complete disarray amongst Japanese cultural and religious practices. Consequently, the influx of Christian missionaries has drawn divides between the daimyo, with some seeking to maintain a cordial relationship with foreign traders by accepting missionaries, while others oppose the presence of missionaries fiercely.

A new unorthodox threat to Japan’s future has also arisen in the form of a radical Buddhist sect, the ikko-ikki. Emerging across Japan over the 15th and 16th centuries, these fanatical followers of the Jodo Shinshu school of Buddhism took de facto control of Kaga Province in Central Honshu. Kaga became the only province in Japan not ruled by a member of the nobility or the samurai, the warrior class that fell among the upper echelons of the non-noble population. Although the ikko-ikki base of power lies at the fortified temple complex of Ishiyama Hongan-ji in Settsu Province, their reach spans the entirety of Japan. With an uncanny ability to launch uprisings and raise thousands of peasant supporters, the ikko-ikki’s influence has cast an ominous shadow over Japan.
In an era where the political, social, and military establishments of Japan are crumbling, the future of Japan falls to enigmatic lords who now have newfound territories and powers. To truly replicate the unpredictability and volatility of the era, each delegate should do their utmost to accurately represent the interests of each daimyo. Be it through your clever speeches, creative directives, or crafty scheming, aspire to be the puppeteer behind a shogunate and an Emperor that have increasingly become marionettes.

**Timeline**

1333 — The Kamakura shogunate collapses. Emperor Go-Daigo attempts to return the Imperial Family to power in the Kenmu Restoration.

1336 — Ashikaga Takauji captures Kyoto, establishing the Ashikaga shogunate. Emperor Go-Daigo flees, and establishes a rival Imperial Court south of Kyoto, in Yoshino Province.

1392 — The two rival Imperial Courts are reunited and Emperor Go-Kameyama submits to the Ashikaga shogunate by returning to Kyoto.

1467 — A collapsing political system and heightened economic difficulties spark a civil war—the Onin War—between the Hosokawa clan and the Yamana and Ouchi clans.

1477 — The Onin War ends, but both the victorious Hosokawa and their enemies, the Yamana, are severely devastated by the war. Ashikaga Yoshihisa ascends as shogun, beginning the Warring States period, better known as the Sengoku era.

1493 — Hojo Soun, a low-ranking member of a samurai family, conquers Izu Province in the Tokaido region and becomes one of the first major daimyos in Japan.

1543 — Shipwrecked Portuguese traders on the island of Tanegashima, south of Kyushu, introduce the matchlock arquebus gun to the Japanese.

1549 — Shimazu Takahisa sieges the castle of Kajiki, in Osumi Province in Kyushu, with the first recorded use of firearms—the arquebuses—in Japanese warfare.

1553 — The rivalry between the Uesugi and Takeda clans results in the first of the Battles of Kawanakajima in Shinano Province, a series of constant skirmishes for control of the province's border.

1554 — The Imagawa, Takeda, and Go-Howard clans of the Tokaido region form an alliance and pledge to desist from conflict between the three clans.

1555 — At the Battle of Miyajima, Mori Motonari wins a strategic victory over the once-powerful Ouchi clan, securing Motonari’s place as one of the most powerful daimyo in Japan.

June/July 1560 — Imagawa Yoshimoto, daimyo of the Imagawa Clan, marches towards Kyoto, purportedly as an attempt to declare himself shogun. The Imagawa are defeated and Yoshimoto is killed in an ambush by Oda Nobunaga, daimyo of the Oda Clan, at the Battle of Okehazama in Owari Province.

August 1, 1560 — The start of the crisis committee.
Historical Analysis

The establishment of the Ashikaga shogunate stemmed from the decline and collapse of its predecessor, the Kamakura shogunate. Since the end of the 12th century, the Kamakura shogunate was under the de facto control of regents from the Hojo family. In 1318, the newly ascended Emperor Go-Daigo made it evident that he intended to reform the shogunate in his own vision. Alongside his chief advisor, Kitabatake Chikafusa, Go-Daigo attempted to revise the agrarian land ownership system and change taxation policies that the shogunate relied on. These plans brought the new Emperor into contention with the bakufu, the military government headed by the shogun and his Hojo regents. In September 1331, Emperor Go-Daigo was sent into exile by the bakufu. Nevertheless, the Emperor’s supporters—mainly members of the nobility who disliked the Hojo regency—began a period of open defiance of the Hojo.

In July 1333, Emperor Go-Daigo returned to Kyoto. General Ashikaga Takauji, who had been sent by the bakufu to support forces in the capital, grew increasingly disillusioned with the Kamakura, and subsequently defected nominally to the side of Go-Daigo. In 1336, Takauji, having ignored Imperial commands and acted progressively more independent, was targeted by imperial forces who actively attempted to suppress Takauji. Takauji defeated the forces and briefly captured Kyoto in February; shortly after, he was driven out to Kyushu by a coalition of princes and nobles. Over the next few months in Kyushu, Takauji gathered supporters from across Kyushu and

1 James Murdoch, A History of Japan During the Century of Early Foreign Intercourse (1542 – 1651 (Kobe: Office of the Chronicle, 1903
3 Ibid., 38.
Western Japan and secured his power over the region, before embarking once again for Kyoto. In July 1336, Takauji fought the decisive Battle of Minatogawa in Settsu Province, defeating the forces of Kusunoki Masashige that were loyal to Go-Daigo. After a further number of skirmishes for Kyoto, Takauji emerged victorious, and moved to form a new bakufu in Kyoto. Emperor Go-Daigo fled to Mount Hiei, outside of Kyoto. Takauji sued for peace and Go-Daigo returned to Kyoto in November 1336, only to find that Takauji had installed a new emperor, Emperor Komyo, two months earlier. Takauji, now claiming the title and office of Shogun, began his tenure as Shogun with the establishment of a new legal code, the Kemmu *shikimoku*.

A 14th century portrait of Emperor Go-Daigo (left) and a 14th-15th century portrait supposedly of Ashikaga Takauji (right), as there are essentially no definitive artistic depictions of Takauji.

In January 1337, Emperor Go-Daigo fled to Yoshino Province, bringing the symbolic Imperial regalia and establishing his own imperial court to rival Takauji’s court in Kyoto. This division of the imperial courts signalled the beginning of the Nanboku-cho Period, or the Northern and Southern Courts Period, with the Ashikaga-backed Northern Court in Kyoto and Go-Daigo’s Southern Court in Yoshino Province. After frequent clashes and the Ashikaga’s continued consolidation of their power in Kyoto, Emperor Go-Kameyama of the Southern Court sued for peace. In December 1392, Go-Kameyama finally returned to Kyoto, transferring the symbolic regalia to Emperor Go-Komatsu of the Northern Court and bringing an end to the divided courts period.

As the Ashikaga lacked major land holdings, Takauji was careful to ensure that only his most trusted allies and vassals were appointed to high positions and governorships. Throughout the 15th century, the ties between these lords—soon to be known as the daimyo—and the shogunate deteriorated as the lords began exercising greater

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4 Ibid., 57.
5 Goshin. Portrait of the Emperor Go-Daigo, 14th century. Colours on paper, 28.8 cm. Tokyo, Museum of the Imperial Collections.
6 Unknown. Portrait said to be of Ashikaga Takauji, 14th - 15th century. Colours on silk, 105.5 cm x 56 cm. Hiroshima, Jodo-ji Temple.
independence and control over the territories they governed. The third Ashikaga shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, worked with the most powerful military families in an effort to suppress these rebellious lords, though sporadic uprisings against the Ashikaga would continue. Yoshimitsu’s tenure also saw the gradual healing of the wounds of the divided courts era; Yoshimitsu re-established trade ties with the Ming Empire of China and ushered a period of cultural and artistic development for Japan, leading many to consider Yoshimitsu’s tenure as the golden period of the Ashikaga shogunate.

The tenure of the eighth Ashikaga shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimasa, brought about key developments that engendered the Onin War. Yoshimasa’s reign, from 1449 to 1476, was marked by a perpetually incompetent administration, as well as lavish spending and widespread corruption. Floods, famines, and disease epidemics further drove Japan into disarray. In 1467, the forces of the Hosokawa family, backed by the Ashikaga, waged the Onin War against the Yamana and Ouchi families in Kyoto, destroying the capital and the surrounding regions upon its conclusion in 1477. As the shogunate lost control over various military governors and lords, individual leaders began passing leadership positions in their territories in a hereditary manner, a shift from the traditional practice of appointment by the shogunate. Subsequently, local villagers throughout the provinces of Japan began uprisings that overthrew existing military governors and lords. The shogunate had already lost centralized power; now, its subordinate autonomous provincial and regional leaders were dealing with the destabilization of their own power. With the authority of the shogunate vanishing, the powerful vassals and lords that annexed large swathes of territory became what are now known as the daimyo of the Warring States Period.

In the mid 15th century, the monk Rennyo Kenju was installed as monshu, or chief abbot, of the Hongan-ji Temple of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism. Rennyo preached his salvationist message throughout the Kansai region, proving extraordinarily popular among Japan’s peasantry. The 700 year-old warrior monk temple of Enryaku-ji, situated on Mount Hiei in the vicinity of Kyoto, grew anxious at the popularity of Rennyo’s proselytizing. As they followed the Tendai school of Buddhism, Mount Hiei believed that Rennyo was a threat to their influence in the Kansai region and feared the immense amount of support that Jodo Shinshu and Rennyo were receiving from the masses. After repeatedly enduring opposition and attacks by the warrior monks of Mount Hiei, Rennyo fled north, arriving in Kaga Province. In 1488, with Rennyo’s help, the local followers of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism, the ikko-ikki, staged a rebellion in Kaga Province in central Japan. The ikko-ikki—with “ikki” meaning “single-minded” or “devoted” and accurately describing the group’s ardent belief in their sect of Jodo Shinshu Buddhism—is composed primarily of monks, priests, peasants, and farmers. The ikko-ikki defeated the daimyo of Kaga Province, Togashi Masachika, with the support of other disillusioned vassals, effectively establishing their political control over the province. As the local groups of ikko-ikki and their followers rejected secular and political authority, this inevitably placed them on a collision course with their neighbouring daimyo, who either suppressed or aligned themselves with ikko-ikki.

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9 Ibid.
In 1543, a Chinese junk was shipwrecked in a storm on the southern coast of Tanegashima, an island south of Kyushu. The junk carried Portuguese traders who eventually introduced the musket to the lord of the island, Tanegashima Tokitaka. As Tanegashima was an iron-producing island, Tokitaka immediately saw the potential behind reproducing these guns and instructed a blacksmith to create a replica of the Portuguese firearm.\textsuperscript{14} With a newly crafted weapon at his disposal, Tokitaka promptly set out to conquer the nearby Yakushima Island; Tokitaka’s use of the reproduced musket is potentially the first-ever use of a firearm in warfare in Japan. The first recorded use of a firearm in Japanese warfare, however, was by the daimyo of the Shimazu clan, Shimazu Takahisa, during the siege of Kajiki Castle in Kyushu in 1549.\textsuperscript{15} Subsequent Portuguese traders in Japan further expanded firearm production in the country, enabling guns to be introduced to the armies of numerous daimyo across Japan. Alongside traders, Europeans also brought missionaries to Japan, most notably the famed Spanish missionary Saint Francis Xavier. Christianity was favoured by a number of daimyo who sought to induce the establishment of strong trade ties with the Portuguese by tolerating the Portuguese religion and Portuguese missionaries.\textsuperscript{16} In fact, some daimyo even converted to Christianity, including the daimyo of the Otomo clan of Kyushu, Otomo Sorin.

In central Japan, Uesugi Norimasa, daimyo of the Uesugi clan, was defeated in battle by the Go-Hojo clan in 1551. Norimasa fled to Echigo Province, seeking refuge with his retainer, Nagao Kagetora. Kagetora agreed to support Norimasa, but demanded Norimasa adopt Kagetora as his heir, allow Kagetora to take the Uesugi name, and appoint Kagetora to various titles. With little choice, Norimasa agreed, and Kagetora was renamed Uesugi Kagetora, taking the name Uesugi Kenshin in 1552. In 1553, Kenshin began skirmishing with the Takeda clan in the Battles of Kawanakajima. The first skirmishes at Fuse and Hachiman began in the northern province of Shinano, a border province lying between the home territories of the Takeda and the Uesugi.\textsuperscript{17} These skirmishes continued to take place over the remainder of the decade, ceaselessly feeding the rivalry between the Takeda and Uesugi.

In 1554, the three main daimyo of the Tokaido Region—Takeda Shingen, Imagawa Yoshimoto, and Hojo Ujiyasu—gathered to discuss an alliance. These three clans wielded more power than any other clans in the region, yet they had dealt with a constant fear of invasion by each other and mutual distrust. In an attempt to consolidate power in the region, an agreement was reached where a number of marriages between the families were arranged and a peace deal between the clans was subsequently enacted. The alliance allowed the clans to focus on their individual exploits as they no longer had to be wary of their powerful and potentially aggressive neighbours. The Takeda and Go-Hojo, both focused on their battles with the Uesugi Clan, believed that the alliance would allow them to focus their war efforts on the Uesugi, instead of defending against an Imagawa strike. The Imagawa, with their eastern borders secured, were emboldened to embark on new territorial conquests.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16} Deal, Handbook to Life in Medieval & Early Modern Japan, 11.
\textsuperscript{18} Mary Elizabeth Berry, Hideyoshi (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982, 36.
The Imagawa daimyo, Imagawa Yoshimoto, decided to march west, towards Kyoto, home of the Imperial Family and the symbolic seat of power in Japan. With a massive reserve of nearly 25,000 soldiers, Yoshimoto first targeted the relatively small clans on the path to Kyoto, including the Oda Clan in Owari Province. 19 The Oda, at the time a comparatively minor clan, had been subject to constant internal struggles since the death of their former leader, Oda Nobuhide, in 1551. Nobuhide was an able administrator who fought off numerous attempts to undermine his power; his death triggered dissension over the succession of the Oda leadership. Nobuhide’s heir, the 17-year-old Oda Nobunaga, was considered reckless, brash, and unfit to rule the Oda lands. 20 Both Nobunaga’s uncle, Oda Nobutomo, and younger brother, Oda Nobuyuki, challenged Nobunaga for the clan’s leadership. Nobutomo attempted to assassinate Nobunaga, but Nobutomo’s plotting was revealed to Nobunaga by the figurehead governor of Owari. In response, Nobutomo had the governor killed. Nobunaga reacted to the governor’s death by attacking Nobutomo’s castle at Kiyosu, putting Nobutomo to death in 1555. Nobuyuki, on the other hand, had conspired with an Oda retainer, the Hayashi, against Nobunaga, leading Nobunaga to send another retainer to kill Nobuyuki in 1557. Ultimately, Nobunaga retained his successorship and remained the daimyo of the Oda, effectively securing his power in Owari Province.

As Yoshimoto’s armies pillaged Owari, Nobunaga hastily mustered his forces, which numbered less than 3000 men. 21 Despite knowing that he was massively outnumbered by Yoshimoto and having received sustained warnings from his advisers, Nobunaga calmly ordered an offensive counterattack. In June 1560, the Imagawa forces were camped in a gorge, smugly celebrating what they believed was an imminent victory. Nobunaga struck in the midst of a storm, sweeping through the unsuspecting Imagawa forces and killing thousands of men as Imagawa soldiers attempted to flee. 22 Yoshimoto himself was decapitated during the battle, leaving the Imagawa Clan’s attempt at a march to Kyoto—and control of the shogunate—decimated.

22 Ibid., 277.
Current Situation

Clan Relationships
The circumstances surrounding the military conflicts between clans are the result of decades-old alliances and rivalries. These age-old relationships form the basis of conflict in the period, forcing other daimyo to take sides in an effort to increase their own influence, power, and reach.

Conflict in the Tokaido Region centers around the remnants of the sangoku doumei, the so-called “triple alliance” of the Imagawa, Takeda, and Go-Hojo clans, as well as the rising powers of the Oda and Matsudaira clans. The presence of this alliance of three relatively powerful clans likely served as the motivation for Imagawa Yoshimoto to march to Kyoto in 1560. Without the need to fear military invasion by his neighbours, Yoshimoto was free to embark on further territorial conquests. Yoshimoto’s defeat at the Battle of Okehazama at the hands of Oda Nobunaga signalled a shift in the power dynamics of the Tokaido Region; power is gradually slipping out of the hands of establishment clans of the triple alliance and into the hands of newly emergent military leaders. One of these leaders is Matsudaira Motoyasu, the young leader of the Matsudaira clan, one of the strongest puppets of the Imagawa. Motoyasu was not present at the Battle of Okehazama and escaped the bloodbath that saw his superiors slaughtered, thus allowing him to further assert his independence. Both Oda Nobunaga and Motoyasu—young, competent military commanders—aim to take advantage of this shift for their own benefit.

24 Berry, Hideyoshi, 36.
In Western Honshu, the perennial dispute between the Mori and Amago clans has lasted over multiple decades. In 1540, the Amago leader, Amago Haruhisa, invaded the territories of the then-rising power Mori Motonari. The clash came to a head at the Battle of Koriyama, which saw Motonari defeat Haruhisa’s forces despite being significantly outnumbered. As Motonari solidified his power in the western provinces, the Amago constantly plotted against the Mori, perpetuating the two clans’ warring over the province of Iwari in the latter half of the 1550s. A shared desire to be the primary power in the region continues to bring the two clans into conflict.

Kyushu, which has been the hub of foreign trade and technological advancement in Japan for decades, is also home to its own feuding clans—the Otomo and Shimazu. Due to their location in the furthest regions of southern Japan, the Shimazu have maintained their grip on power in Kyushu for roughly three centuries. The Otomo, which rules the northern regions of Kyushu, have also ruled their provinces for the past three centuries and have since established strong connections to foreign traders. Both clans seek to conquer the entirety of Kyushu for themselves.

**Military Technological and Tactical Development**

The militaries of Japan have rapidly shifted in both technological and tactical aspects. Since the introduction of firearms by the Portuguese in the 1540s, the production of muskets—also known as arquebuses—has surged in Japan. The armies of the era continue to be dominated by *ashigaru*, or standard foot soldier infantry, armed primarily with spears. In addition, the usage of mounted archers—once a key component of Japanese militaries—has been replaced by arquebusiers. Moreover, the Takeda Clan, famed for their skilled usage of heavy cavalry, is leading a tactical revolution in Japan that emphasizes the role of horses in enhancing army mobility on the battlefield.

**Foreign Relations and Trade**

During the Kamakura shogunate and the majority of the Ashikaga shogunate, Japan engaged in foreign trade with the dynasties of China. Under shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, the Ashikaga shogunate began the “tally trade” with Ming China. As Ming China remained under the *haijin*, or “sea ban” laws, private maritime trade was widely restricted. Instead, the “tally trade” was conducted under the premise of Japanese delegations delivering tribute to the Ming emperor, while the Ming would, in return, grant gifts to the Japanese delegations. In addition, the Ryukyu Kingdom, a small island nation and Ming tributary, served as a trading hub within Asia. Due to the kingdom’s close ties to the Ming, the Ryukyu were able to conduct trade with both Ming China and the Japanese shogunate, becoming an economic hotspot where both Chinese and Japanese goods were traded. However, as the power of the shogunate collapsed, the Ming grew increasingly unwilling to engage in trade with Japan. Instability in Japan has allowed illegal smuggling and piracy to flourish in East Asia, including a number of pirates—known by the Chinese as “*wokou*”—whom appeared across the oceans. These pirates of varying Chinese, Japanese, and Korean origin disrupted and threatened Chinese mercantile shipping, thus effectively

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25 Turnbull, Samurai Commanders (1 940 -1576, 49-50.
26 Deal, Handbook to Life in Medieval & Early Modern Japan, 164.
27 Ibid., 155.
28 Ibid., 127.
severing trade and diplomatic ties between China and Japan. Nonetheless, a smaller quantity of goods continue to pass between the two nations through the Ryukyu.

Portuguese and other European traders are slowly emerging as the main entities engaging in trade relations with Japanese daimyo, primarily in Kyushu and other southern regions. These traders not only bring modern firearm technology and Western luxuries to Japan, but also countless Christian missionaries. The daimyo are split between whether they should tolerate these missionaries and capitalize on improved relationships with the Europeans, or cast out these missionaries and jeopardize their existing trade relations. The lack of a centralized government in Japan means that each clan is free to pursue their own diplomatic policy with regards to the Europeans, leading trade to be unchecked and unregulated. Furthermore, European weaponry, technology, and shipbuilding capabilities continue to outweigh that of their Japanese and East Asian competitors. This European dominance has particularly damaged the status of the Ryukyu Kingdom as a preferred trading hub; the kingdom now finds that its place as the region’s primary trading hub is largely being overshadowed by the influence of the Europeans.

The Spread of Radical Buddhism
While warrior monks have existed in Japan for centuries, the rise of the ikko-ikki in the 15th century has plagued both the shogunate and daimyo clans of Japan.

Within Mahayana Buddhism, the Pure Land branch grew significantly in Japan from the 12th century late Heian period and in the following centuries. This branch of Buddhism, known as jodo in Japanese, taught faith in its principal Buddha, Amitabha. The ikko-ikki were radical followers of one of the jodo branch’s major schools, Jodo Shinshu, sometimes translated as True Pure Land Buddhism. Wielding control over Kaga Province and using fortified temples across Japan as bases, the ikko-ikki deeply concern several clans in the region. The largest and most important of their temples, Ishiyama Hongan-ji, is a massive complex in Settsu Province. The ikko-ikki have also sought to establish themselves in many other provinces, including in Mikawa, a hotspot for conflict among the powerful clans of the Tokaido Region.

To the daimyo, the ikko-ikki fundamentally jeopardize the structure of a heavily stratified Japanese society. Daimyo and their primary vassals formed the top of a hierarchy of authority, with various classes of landowners, warriors, farmers, and peasants organized under the daimyo’s ultimate command. In contrast, the ikko-ikki drew their supporters from among Japan’s peasants, farmers, and lower classes, forming groups of supporters and militia with high levels of unity stemming from their shared religious beliefs. These groups were further united under the efforts of the 15th century monk Rennyo, who sought to incorporate the various local and provincial ikko-ikki groups into a more centralized authority based at Ishiyama Hongan-ji. Rennyo’s

30 Deal, Handbook to Life in Medieval & Early Modern Japan, 127-129.
32 Turnbull, Japanese Warrior Monks AD 949-1603, 16-17.
undertaking eventually allowed the military capabilities of the local ikko-ikki groups to fall under the leadership of whichever monk served as the chief of Ishiyama Hongan-ji.\textsuperscript{34}

A further concern for the daimyo is the manner in which the radical beliefs of the Jodo Shinshu school threatened the authority of the daimyo. The Jodo Shinshu belief system includes two key aspects that infringe on this authority. Firstly, due to their belief that their faith in Amitabha would serve to save themselves, the school’s followers reject political and traditional authority, thus rejecting the power of the daimyo. Secondly, the followers of this school believed that their faith in Amitabha made them invincible, including within warfare.\textsuperscript{35} Besides these staunchly held beliefs, the daimyo are largely powerless to prevent the establishment of temples, the key centres of organization for the ikko-ikki. Ultimately, while some daimyo opt to cooperate with the ikko-ikki, others attempt to fight long and difficult wars against these radical Buddhists and their fortified temples.

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 32.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 31.
Overview of Clan Positions

Each clan controls a certain number of provinces and territories throughout Japan. Among the clans, complex relationships have been built over time and warfare, with various retainers, allies, and bitter rivals existing amongst the feuding clans of Japan. The sections below detail the present situation of each clan as of August 1, 1560, including present military strength and capability.

**Oda Clan**
- **Daimyo**: Oda Nobunaga
- **Territory**: Owari (Tokaido)
- **Rivals**: Saito, Asakura
- **Allies**: n/a
- **Friendly**: Matsudaira, Takeda, Azai

**Military Strength:**
- 4 Divisions (20 000 men)
  - The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.

**Daimyo Description:**
Oda Nobunaga is a brilliant military tactician, with a bold and courageous attitude—so much so, that many believe he is arrogant, careless, and reckless. After winning a surprise victory over the Imagawa clan at the Battle of Okehazama, the Oda Clan has become one of Japan’s most feared rising powers. Nobunaga and his Oda Clan have their sights set on Kyoto, with their ultimate goal being the unification of Japan.

**Matsudaira Clan**
- **Daimyo**: Matsudaira Motoyasu
- **Territory**: Mikawa (Tokaido)
- **Rivals**: n/a
- **Allies**: n/a
- **Friendly**: Oda, Imagawa

**Military Strength:**
- 2 Divisions (10 000 men)
  - The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.

**Daimyo Description:**
The Matsudaira Clan, once controlled closely by the Imagawa Clan, is an unassuming but influential force in the Tokaido region. Matsudaira Motoyasu, the clan’s young 17-year old leader, seeks to maintain the clan’s old ties with the declining Imagawa Clan and pursue a cordial relationship with the clan’s western neighbours, the Oda—all whilst securing and increasing his own influence in the region.

**Uesugi Clan**
- **Daimyo**: Uesugi Kenshin
- **Territory**: Echigo, Kozuke, Etchu (North)
- **Rivals**: Takeda, Go-Hojo

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**Allies:** n/a
**Friendly:** n/a

**Military Strength:**
6 Divisions (30 000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.

**Daimyo Description:**
The Uesugi Clan and its leader, Uesugi Kenshin, are one of the most powerful forces of the era. Kenshin is an able administrator, a crafty politician, and a potent military leader with a long-standing rivalry with the Takeda Clan’s Takeda Shingen, a rivalry that primarily exists because of disputes over Shinano Province. The Uesugi also seek to expand northwards, towards the isolationist clans of North Honshu.

**Takeda Clan**
- **Daimyo:** Takeda Shingen
- **Territory:** Kai (Tokaido), Shinano (Central)
- **Rivals:** Uesugi
- **Allies:** Go-Hojo
- **Friendly:** Oda

**Military Strength:**
6 Divisions (30 000 men)
The cavalry-heavy division is composed of 3000 mounted cavalry, 1000 infantry, and 1000 gunners.

**Daimyo Description:**
Led by Takeda Shingen—a capable military leader and administrator with a colourful personality—the Takeda have a keen interest in keeping their rivals, the Uesugi, away from central Shinano Province. Their close alliance with the neighbouring Go-Hojo Clan allows them to pursue further conquests, namely Shingen’s rumoured desire to defeat the weakened Imagawa Clan in Suruga Province, south of Kai.

**Miyoshi Clan**
- **Daimyo:** Miyoshi Nagayoshi
- **Territory:** Settsu, Izumi, Kawachi (Kansai), Awa, Awaji Island, Shodo Island (Shikoku)
- **Rivals:** Rokkaku
- **Allies:** Matsunaga (Retainer)
- **Friendly:** n/a

**Military Strength:**
5 Divisions (25 000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.

**Daimyo Description:**
As the most powerful clan of the Kansai region, the Miyoshi holds immense influence over Kyoto and the politics of the surrounding region. Their leader, Miyoshi Nagayoshi, is infamous for wielding control over the shogun, Ashikaga Yoshiteru, after he once drove the shogun and his family out of Kyoto. While their main stronghold lies in Kansai, the Miyoshi seek to expand and consolidate their control of Shikoku.
Imagawa Clan
Daimyo: Imagawa Ujizane
Territory: Totomi, Suruga (Tokaido)
Rivals: Oda, Takeda
Allies: n/a
Friendly: Matsudaira
Military Strength:
3 Divisions (15,000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.
Daimyo Description:
Once considered one of the most powerful clans in the Tokaido region, the Imagawa have seen their power decline after their defeat at the hands of Oda Nobunaga during the Battle of Okehazama. Their 22-year-old daimyo, Imagawa Ujizane, is not an especially adept leader—in both his militaristic and political pursuits—and suffers from the towering influence of his grandmother, Jukei-ni, in Imagawa political affairs.

Amago Clan
Daimyo: Amago Haruhisa
Territory: Izumo, Hoki, Mimasaka, Bizen, Inaba, Bitchu (West)
Rivals: Mori
Allies: n/a
Friendly: n/a
Military Strength:
3 Divisions (15,000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.
Daimyo Description:
Amago Haruhisa is often considered a daredevil, undisciplined but a ruthless and resilient military leader. As one of the two major clans of West Honshu, the Amago seek to establish their hegemony over Western Honshu and maintain independence from the central powers of Kyoto. Standing in the Amago’s way is the neighbouring Mori Clan, who also desires supremacy in West Honshu.

Mori Clan
Daimyo: Mori Motonari
Territory: Nagato, Suwo, Aki, Bingo, Iwami (West)
Rivals: Amago
Allies: n/a
Friendly: Ikko-Ikki
Military Strength:
4 Divisions (20,000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.
Daimyo Description:
Considered one of the original daimyo of Japan, Mori Motonari is stern and strict, but a skilled military leader with a crafty and cunning edge. His close, amicable relationships with ikko-ikki forces are enviable, if not controversial. After his victories over the Ouchi, Motonari aspires to control the entirety of West Honshu, but looks to defeat the Amago who stand in his way.

Shimazu Clan
Daimyo: Shimazu Takahisa
Territory: Satsuma, Osumi (Kyushu)
Rivals: Otomo, Ryukyu Kingdom
Allies: n/a
Friendly: n/a
Military Strength:
3 Divisions (20 000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.
Daimyo Description:
One of the major clans of Kyushu, the Shimazu Clan is led by Shimazu Takahisa, a gifted and clever military leader. Takahisa has ambitions of glory, particularly of extending his family’s hold over Kyushu and the Ryukyus without interference from Kyoto or the clans of Honshu. Similar to the Otomo Clan, the Shimazu Clan is keen on forging strong relationships with foreign traders.

Otomo Clan
Daimyo: Otomo Sorin
Territory: Chikugo, Chikuzen, Bungo, Buzen (Kyushu)
Rivals: Amago
Allies: n/a
Friendly: n/a
Military Strength:
3 Divisions (15 000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.
Daimyo Description:
Otomo Sorin is Christian, having converted to Roman Catholicism—possibly in a political effort to appease the Portuguese—much to the chagrin of both his wife and his retainers. Thus, Sorin and the Otomo have an amicable trade relationship with many Portuguese traders. While the Otomo dream is to rule all of Kyushu, the clan suffers from poor central administration and struggles with internal strife.

Go-Hojo Clan
Daimyo: Hojo Ujiyasu
Territory: Izu, Sagami, Musashi, Shimosa, Kazusa (Tokaido)
Rivals: Uesugi
Allies: Takeda
Friendly: n/a
Military Strength:
3 Divisions (15 000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.

Daimyo Description:
While they do not command the same influence as the former Hojo Clan of the Kamakura shogunate, the Go-Hojo (Later Hojo) are strong allies of the Takeda Clan. Their leader, Hojo Ujiyasu, is a competent administrator and an adept military leader. Ujiyasu pursues a primarily defensive military strategy, but is not unwilling to devote military forces to northward and eastward expansion.

Chosokabe Clan
Daimyo: Chosokabe Motochika
Territory: Tosa (Shikoku)
Rivals: n/a
Allies: n/a
Friendly: n/a
Military Strength:
2 Divisions (10 000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.

Daimyo Description:
Unlike countless daimyo of Japan, Chosokabe Motochika has a gentle, quiet temperament. Nevertheless, Motochika remains a respected figure across the region and is a decent military strategist and political leader. Motochika and his clan hold ambitions of taking all of Shikoku for themselves, carving their own territory on an island where the powerful Miyoshi clan has a strong foothold.

Rokkaku Clan
Daimyo: Rokkaku Yoshikata
Territory: South Omi (Central)
Rivals: Azai (Retainer)
Allies: n/a
Friendly: n/a
Military Strength:
2 Divisions (10 000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.

Daimyo Description:
The Rokkaku are one one of many players in the struggle for power in the Kyoto region. Their leader, Rokkaku Yoshitaka, has become a Buddhist monk, though in reality he still rules jointly alongside his son Yoshiharu. The neighbouring Azai Clan is a retainer of the Rokkaku, but the two clans’ relationship is fraught with mistrust and fear of betrayal, with an all-out war likely to break out between the two in the near future.

Saito Clan
Daimyo: Saito Yoshitatsu
**Saito Clan**

**Daimyo:** Saito Yoshitatsu

**Territory:** Mino (Central)

**Rivals:** Oda

**Allies:** n/a

**Friendly:** n/a

**Military Strength:**

2 Divisions (10 000 men)

The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.

**Daimyo Description:**

The Saito Clan is based in Mino Province in Central Honshu. Though he suffers from leprosy, the Saito daimyo, Saito Yoshitatsu, is an effective military commander. After defeating his father, Saito Dosan, in a power struggle within the clan, Yoshitatsu triggered the ire of Oda Nobunaga, daimyo of the Oda Clan, son-in-law and nominal ally of Dosan.

**Asakura Clan**

**Daimyo:** Asakura Yoshikage

**Territory:** Echizen (Central)

**Rivals:** Oda, Ikko-Ikki

**Allies:** n/a

**Friendly:** n/a

**Military Strength:**

2 Divisions (10 000 men)

The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.

**Daimyo Description:**

A leader with a weak personality and equally weak military capabilities, Asakura Yoshikage has feuds with several other entities in Japan. The Asakura seek to increase their political influence both in their immediate region and in Kyoto. Hindering their militaristic aspirations is an antagonistic relationship with Oda Nobunaga and the Oda Clan, and an on-and-off conflict with the ikko-ikki forces of the neighbouring Kaga Province.

**Date Clan**

**Daimyo:** Date Harumune

**Territory:** Mutsu (North)

**Rivals:** n/a

**Allies:** n/a

**Friendly:** n/a

**Military Strength:**

2 Divisions (10 000 men)

The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.

**Daimyo Description:**

One of the northern clans, the Date Clan are largely isolationist, seeking only to expand within their existing provinces and valiantly fighting any attempts by other clans to infringe upon their territory. The relative internal
instability of the clan stems from a multi-year succession struggle between the current daimyo, Date Harumune, and his father, Date Tanemune, the former daimyo.

Ryukyu Kingdom
King: Sho Gen
Territory: Ryukyu Islands
Rivals: Shimazu
Allies: n/a
Friendly: n/a
Military Strength:
2 Divisions (10,000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.
Daimyo Description:
A tributary of Ming China, Ryukyu is a master trading kingdom with routes across Asia. Nonetheless, the Ryukyu dream of returning to the times prior to the arrival of European traders—the Kingdom’s prosperous days. The Ryukyuan King, Sho Gen, is a mute and is considered a weak leader. Though often considered out of Kyoto’s reach, the Ryukyu Islands lie within striking distance of the Shimazu, who seek to invade the islands for themselves.

Matsunaga Clan
Daimyo: Matsunaga Hisahide
Territory: Yamato (Kansa)
Rivals: n/a
Allies: Miyoshi (superior)
Friendly: n/a
Military Strength:
1 Division (5000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.
Daimyo Description:
Though he is a scheming, savvy, and cunning tactician, Matsunaga Hisahide, daimyo of the Matsunaga Clan, remains relatively loyal to his superiors, the Miyoshi Clan. A childhood friend of their leader, Miyoshi Nagayoshi, Hisahide stands alongside the Miyoshi in battle as a retainer. Ever the schemer, Hisahide is, however, willing to conspire with any side, so long as he believes it is for his own benefit.

Azai Clan
Daimyo: Azai Hisamasa
Territory: North Omi (Central)
Rivals: Rokkaku (superior)
Allies: n/a
Friendly: n/a
Military Strength:
1 Division (5000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.

**Daimyo Description:**
An average to below-average politician and military leader—at least in comparison to his father, Azai Nagamasa—Azai Hisamasa serves as a retainer of the Rokkaku Clan, the Azai Clan’s neighbours to the south. However, the Azai’s retainer status to the Rokkaku is immensely unpopular among members of the ruling family, and the clan’s deteriorating relationship with their masters means a rebellion may be lurking.

**Ikko-Ikki and Kaga-Ikki**

**Monshu:** Kennyo Kosa

**Territory:** Kaga (Central), Ishiyama Hongan-ji (Kansai)

**Rivals:** Asakura

**Allies:** n/a

**Friendly:** Mori

**Military Strength:**
2 Divisions (10 000 men)
The standard single division is composed of 3000 infantry, 1000 mounted cavalry, and 1000 gunners.

**Monshu Description:**
The ikko-ikki are a loose coalition of radical followers of the Jodo Shinshu school of Buddhism. Their primary fortress, the Ishiyama Hongan-ji temple in Settsu Province, serves as the nucleus of ikko-ikki power in Japan, including their administration over the distant Kaga Province. Their leader, known as a Monshu, is currently Kennyo Kosa, a 17-year-old monk. Kosa and the ikko-ikki have the ability to raise thousands of forces from their followers across Japan, but are focusing their efforts on fortifying the temple fortress at Ishiyama Hongan-ji and preserving their power in Kaga Province. Regardless, the ikko-ikki will valiantly fight any clan that they believe infringes upon their lands, religion, or way of life.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What is the future role of the shogunate and the Imperial Family in Japan? Should the governance system in Japan revolve around these ancient institutions?

2. Should power and governance in Japan revolve around a centralized source of power, or be based around regionalism and regional autonomy?

3. How should clans pursue relationships with foreign traders and Christian missionaries?

4. Does the impacts of technological advancement and opportunity offered by foreign traders outweigh the impacts of religious missionaries brought to Japan?

5. Should clans and daimyo address the influence of the radical Buddhist groups, the ikko-ikki?

6. What place does the ikko-ikki take within Japan, and what impact does that have on your clan?
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