



COMMUN IV

Commonwealth School, Boston
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Crisis:
**Sengoku
Jidai**

**BACKGROUND
GUIDE**

**Wesley Curl '19,
Crisis Head**

**Bridet Corcoran '19,
Chair**

**Amelia Michael '20,
Co-chair**

Attention, delegate!

Steel your blade (but don't actually bring any weapons, please), and prepare for the 2019 Sengoku Period Crisis, here at Commonwealth School in Boston. My name is Wesley (yes, like the *Star Trek* character), and I will be your crisis head, assisted by my underlings, from behind the scenes. The glorious chairs who will oversee this true crisis of fate will be the honourable Bridget Corcoran and the esteemed Amelia Michael. We have endeavored to aid you in preparing for this conference, so if you have any questions, feel free to contact me by launching a *kabura-ya*, also known as a "whistling bulb arrow", or alternatively sending an email to wcurl@commschool.org. On the honour of my family, I shall make the attempt to answer as soon as possible. It is my solemn wish that this conflict you shall explore might ignite your passions as it does mine. It was a period that spanned numerous generations (though, by the cruel hand of time-constraints, we will only visit the last fifty years) and decided the course of modern Japanese history. Decrees from that era still guided Japanese policy hundreds of years later, like their policy of isolation, as a dragon's fury inspires those in its wake to build stronger fortresses. It was a time when the strong ruled the weak, but the clever could bring immense disruption if they chose to. Indeed, the most clever diplomats won as many wars as the strongest generals. I hope you keep that in mind as you navigate this crisis.

Sincerely yours,
Wesley Curl

The Crisis:

The year is 1570, and Japan is in utter turmoil. Centralized government has entirely broken down, leaving power in the hands of dozens of warring local lords, battling for dominance. Each delegate will represent a feudal lord (*daimyo*, pronounced DIME-yoh) and their clan, except for one who will represent the emperor, and one who will represent the shogun. There will be around twenty delegates in a single room crisis. Resolutions and normal actions may be passed by a majority of lords; however, given the lack of imperial authority, the *daimyo* will have to enforce these acts themselves, and lords who don't want to follow these guidelines won't have to (unless, of course, ways are found to make them obey).

Additionally, the lord in control of Kyoto is known as the Shogun and is given extra authority as the de facto head of government, though his authority doesn't go much further than that of the emperor. The goal of every leader in Japan is to take the reins of the nation, either by becoming Shogun, reuniting Japan under the emperor, or some other plan. Control is the goal.

The Shogun

The Shogun was the the military ruler of Japan, and his role was somewhat complicated. In name, he represented the army of the emperor and only serves as the head general. However, because the army enforced laws, the Shogun effectively controlled the imperial government as a whole. The Shogun even issued decrees, which were considered legitimate by the people because they were in theory the will of the emperor. This means that, although the emperor technically controls Japan (and the people view him as their rightful ruler), the emperor's actual power comes from the actions of his Shogun, whom the emperor mostly just asks favors of.

The Emperor

While currently the puppet of the Shogun, the emperor holds massive cultural power. He typically acted as a "neutral" arbiter between *daimyo*, as he was seen as holding a divine mandate. This authority, while powerful, is not alone enough to take on the *daimyo* or the shogun. However, he can certainly stir up trouble among the people, who are generally loyal to him, or the smaller lords, who view him as the rightful sovereign.

The Daimyo:

The local lords who rule the various regions of Japan are known as the *daimyo*. They hold actual power in Japan and have near absolute control of their own lands. They often have their own *daimyo* who serve them as local administrators, skilled diplomats, spies, warriors, and other roles, though these roles can be filled by low ranking courtiers as well. The *daimyo* are the real source of power in Japan and only seek to solidify and grow their own power further.

Timeline:

1467: Onin War begins

1476/1477: Onin War officially ends

1480: Hojo Soun supports Imagawa

1493: Hojo capture Izu

1494: Hojo capture Odawara

1506: Ikko-ikki active in Kaga

1512: Hojo capture Kamakura

1518: Siege of Arai

1524: Hojo capture Edo

1536: Takeda Shingen's first battle at Un no kuchi

1537: First battle of Konodai

1540: Siege of Aki-Koriyama

1542: Siege of Toda

1543: Arrival of Europeans in Japan, and introduction of arquebuses

1545: Night battle of Kawagoe

1548: Battle of Uedahara

1549: Arquebuses used at Kajiki

1553: First battle of Kawanakajima

1554: Siege of Muraki

1555: Battle of Miyajima

Second battle of Kawanakajima

1557: Third battle of Kawanakajima

First siege of Moji

1560: Battle of Okehazama

1561: Fourth battle of Kawanakajima

Odawara besieged by Uesugi

1564: Second battle of Konodai

Battle of Azukizaka against Ikko-ikki

1567: Capture of Inabayama (Gifu)

1568: Oda Nobunaga takes Kyoto

1569: Siege of Odawara

Battle of Mimasetoge

1570: Battle at the Anegawa
Battle of Imayama
Death of Hojo Ujiyasu

History:

Samurai Warfare:

The armies of different *daimyo*, although varied in strength, generally had comparable makeups. The elite troops of these armies were the *samurai*. The rest of the army consisted of foot soldiers recruited from the estates of *daimyo*. The lawlessness that had become characteristic of the Sengoku period ultimately led to more casual recruits of men simply looking for loot. The more successful *daimyo* figured out how to effectively train and incorporate these recruits into their army.

The development of large scale infantry tactics was one of the most significant parts of Sengoku period warfare. Common foot soldiers were organized into larger units and became more professional. They also adopted the arquebus, a firearm introduced by Europeans, and longer pikes to counter cavalry. These innovations were also incorporated by samurai, who abandoned their traditional bows in favor of firearms, spears, and katanas. This resulted in a balance of power where infantry was preferred over cavalry.

Tactics evolved in all different areas of warfare over the course of the Sengoku period. Siege warfare, for example, became more important, as did well fortified castles. The introduction of stone as a building material, as well as more advanced building designs, accelerated this process. Communications systems were also advanced. Techniques such as the fire beacons developed by Takeda Shingen, messenger systems, colored flags, and audible signals were developed in this time period.

The Onin War:

The Onin War (1467-1476) began one of the most shockingly violent and unprecedented periods in Japanese history. Labeled the Age of Warring States, or the Sengoku period, this era—starting with the Onin War and continuing into 1570—was marked by continued rivalry between warlords and ultimately resulted in the splintering of Japan. The principle families responsible for the war were the Yamana and Hosokawa in Kyoto, who, after feuding over a long-lasting power struggle between the houses, ultimately clashed over succession to power between different shogunates in 1467. While initially involving only these two states, the war quickly spread away from Kyoto as other regions felt compelled to choose sides. The conflict would eventually incorporate nearly all of Japan and fracture the current power structure. By 1477, when a truce was finally reached, the country had suffered mass destruction and power struggles still raged.

After the War:

Following the Onin War, power remained largely decentralized, and the *daimyo* of this period were independent and isolated. *Daimyo* of this period were either remaining warlord families that had existed before the war (like the Shimazu and Takeda families), military leaders that rose up during the war (like Takeda Shingen), or samurai, often farmers, who were able to quickly amass power during the upheaval of the war. One of the more significant examples of the latter was the Hojo family, one of the more prominent clans. Hojo Soun, the founder of the Hojo, grew to prominence from a modest upbringing. Acquiring several cities in his lifetime (particularly Izu, Odawara, Kamakura, and Arai), he began a legacy that would last for several generations. Soun's son, Ujitsuna, continued the conquests of his father, overpowering Edo castle and starting a 17 year war between the Hojo and the Uesugi. The third generation of Hojo, Ujiyasu, notably conquered Kawagoe, despite several forces allied against him and went on to continue growing the Hojo's influence before dying in 1570.

Throughout Japan, several other notable battles were taking place. In central Japan, the territories of Uesugi Kenshin and Takeda Shingen rivaled each other in five battles spanning a decade, all at the same location of Kawanakajima. In western Japan, Sue Harukata, a follower of Ouchi Yoshitaka (an aristocrat from a prominent family) revolted and was battled by Mori Motonari, a loyal follower of Ouchi. In Southern Japan, wars broke out as the Otomo *daimyo* of Kyushu unsuccessfully attempted to take the territory of Ryuzoji Takanobu.

Oda Nobunaga:

Oda Nobunaga, despite a modest start, would ultimately become one of the most powerful *daimyo* of his time. Initially a local ruler, Oda Nobunaga's province of Owari was dwarfed in power by his neighboring state, the Imagawa. In 1560, Imagawa began invading Owari in an effort to expand his borders, but in a surprise attack, was killed by Oda Nobunaga's army in the battle of Okehazama—a noteworthy victory given the small size of his army. Eight years later, having gained allies and military power, Oda Nobunaga began an attack on Kyoto, taking it in 1568. His strongest opponent was warrior monks who he battled for control following his taking of Kyoto in wars that lasted for years and incorporated several prominent neighboring states.

Factions:

In the year 1570, there are few factions. Most *daimyo* have decided to go it alone, however, the two rough alliances are those in favor of Oda Nobunaga (the current shogun) and those against him. In favor of Nobunaga are himself, the emperor, the Tokugawa family, and (typically) the shogun. Against him are the Azai, the Takeda, the Uesugi, and Miyoshi, though there was no formal alliance between them. In fact,

they were just as prone to fighting among themselves as they were to attack Nobunaga. Neither side is particularly organized, and it is highly encouraged for delegates to feel free to create their own factions in the pursuit of power.

Meanwhile, the Ikko Ikki were growing in power and sought to oppose the rising clans. These warriors were a group of Buddhist monks of the Jodo Shinshu sect opposing the rule of the *daimyo* over Japan, and expressed this through violent rebellion. As they were composed of mobs of people, the strength and weapons of the warriors were inconsistent. Buddhism was the dominant religion in Sengoku Period Japan, so the Ikko Ikki were perhaps more threatening from a public relations standpoint than a military one, and as such they angered the two most powerful men in Japan at the time: Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu. They also held a variety of castles across the islands of Japan, and controlled a sizeable standing army.

The outside world

Korea

Korea has grown up irritated by their neighbor Japan. Their ships adapted in response to the Japanese *wako* pirates from the island of Kyushu, developing massive guns, some of the most advanced in the world, to counter Japanese boarding parties. In addition, the vast majority of Korean fortresses are on the coast, to protect trade from these same pirates. Japan's instability has left it apparently harmless to Korea, and Korea is allied to the Ming to the west. As a result, they have grown peaceful on land, and their armies are disorganized.

China

China is big. China is powerful. In fact, their relationship is clear in the origins for the Chinese name for Japan: *wa* (倭), **which many scholars argue** means "dwarf." They have tried twice in the past to conquer Japan, and only failed due to two typhoons and the East China Sea between them. In any case, China has influenced Japanese culture and history, and has in the past acted as a unifying force for the nation to rally against. Tread cautiously with China. Their main local ally is Korea.

Roles:

There will be one representative from each of the major clans to start, and of course the emperor and the shogun himself. In the rare event of a death, delegates are assigned new roles, which are not included

here. A defeat in war is not always death, and defeated or conquered delegates are encouraged to pledge their services to another, willing lord—maybe even their conqueror.

List of Roles:

Uesugi Kenshin (OO-eh-SOO-GEE KEN-sheen) of Uesugi clan.

Army: Massive.

Navy: Average

Uesugi Kenshin was known as “The God of War” for good reason. His army was one of the largest at the time, and his presence on the battlefield commanded great respect. His rivalry with Takeda Shingen was legendary. The two both wanted control over the holdings of the other, as having that much land, they believed, would essentially ensure victory over the entire island of Japan. In fact, in one legendary battle, Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin actually duelled, face to face, in the middle of their armies. The match was considered a draw. However, this should not be seen as a hostile rivalry. In one notable example, the Later Hojo clan cut off the Takeda clan from its salt supply, threatening their ability to feed their people. In response, Uesugi Kenshin paid for and delivered the salt Takeda clan needed. Uesugi Kenshin was on much worse terms with Oda Nobunaga. Kenshin would stop at nothing to defeat Nobunaga, who he viewed as an existential threat to the survival of the Uesugi clan.

Date Masamune (DAW-tay MOSS-ah-MOON-ay) of Date clan.

Army: Small, but strong. Wore black armor and golden headgear.

Navy: Average.

Having lost his right eye, Date Masamune, a well-regarded tactician, was known as the “One-Eyed Dragon” in the Sengoku period. He held a vengeance against the Ashina clan after one of his retainers defected over to them, and he disliked the Hojo and Satake clans. While somewhat afraid of the Tokugawa and Oda clans, he was not unwilling to ally with them. He was a big patron of the arts, and made an effort to reach out to the Pope in Rome.

Ashina Moritaka (ah-SHEE-naw MORE-ee-TALK-uh) of Ashina clan.

Army: Small.

Navy: Average.

Ashina Moritaka was the 18th ruler of the Ashina clan, and was adopted into it after the previous ruler died without an heir. At the time, he controlled the Kurokawa (COO-row-CAW-wah) castle, which was the military center of the Aizu (EYE-zoo) region for almost 500 years. He was very unpopular among his retainers. The Ashina clan was part of the larger Taira clan, like the Oda clan, and was sometimes-allies-with/sometimes-rivals-with the Satake clan. They disliked Date clan.

Satake Yoshishige (SAW-taw-kay yo-SHE-SHE-gay) of Satake clan.

Army: Strong.

Navy: Small.

Satake Yoshishige was known for being a particularly aggressive leader, earning him the nickname “Oni Yoshishige” (which roughly translates to Ogre Yoshishige). He consolidated his clan’s control over the Ota castle after fending off the Oda and Ashina clans. The Satake clan disliked the Later Hojo clan and the Date clan and had an on-again off-again kind of relationship with the Ashina clan. He was bit afraid of the Tokugawa clan. His clan controlled about 9000 matchlock rifles, giving them one of the largest gunpowder armies in Japan.

Hojo Ujinao (HOE-joe oo-JEE-NAH-oh) of Later Hojo clan (not to be confused with the unrelated Hojo clan which existed until 1333).

Army: Average.

Navy: Small.

Hojo Ujinao was the fifth head of the Later Hojo clan and the son-in-law of Tokugawa Ieyasu. He rivalled the Takeda clan, and aided in campaigns against them before he rose to power. Ujinao was very confident, and refused to submit to anyone, although there were some suspicions at the time that his was being puppeted by his father. He sometimes-allied-with/sometimes-rivalled-against the Oda clan and the Tokugawa clan. He tended to favor defensive strategies. Although his army was relatively large, he disliked allying himself with other clans, so his forces could sometimes be around one-fourth of the enemies’ forces.

Takeda Shingen (taw-KAY-dah SHEEN-genn) of Takeda clan.

Army: Strong.

Navy: Small.

Despite being a Buddhist priest, Takeda Shingen was an ambitious and formidable strategist, known as the “Tiger of Kai”. Around the age of 20, he overthrew his father, gaining full control and favor of the Takeda clan. He found an enduring rival in Uesugi Kenshin of the Uesugi clan, who worried about the

might of the Takeda clan after the heads of two smaller clans, the Murakami and the Ogasawara, fled the area and presented themselves to him. Takeda aimed to defeat the Oda clan and the Tokugawa clan, but was not against allying himself with them for his other goals. He also found a rival in the Later Hojo clan.

Asakura Yoshikage (AW-sah-COO-raw yohsh-KAW-gay) of Asakura clan.

Army: Smaller than average.

Navy: Average.

A leader of weak personal health, Asakura Yoshikage succeeded his father to become head of the Asakura clan in 1548. He controlled the Ichijodani Castle, in the modern-day Fukui Prefecture. He was strongly allied with the Azai clan and often sent them reinforcements and vice-versa, even if he personally couldn't attend the battles. He resented Oda Nobunaga because both had once served the Shiba clan (which the Asakura clan had in part taken down), and so he found himself hostile to the Oda clan. War could easily break out.

Oda Nobunaga (OH-daw NO-boo-NAW-gaw) of Oda clan.

Army: Large, and equipped with arquebuses.

Navy: Large.

A frighteningly ambitious man, Oda Nobunaga sought to unify all of Japan under his rule and proved he had the capability by defeating Imagawa Yoshimoto, a powerful nearby feudal lord, in 1560. Aiming to fight the power of the Buddhists in Japan, Nobunaga destroyed monasteries and fought the Ikko Ikki sect, while providing protection to Christians, even though he himself was never a man of God. Oda Nobunaga was also economically adept and gained the favor of the farmers and merchants of his domain. He was allied with the powerful Tokugawa clan and once served under the Shiba clan, along with the Asakura clan. While being such a powerful leader certainly had its advantages, the position meant that Oda Nobunaga had a bigger target on his back than any other man in Japan at the time. For a time, the Oda clan had been rivalling the Azai clan, but Oda Nobunaga married off his sister to secure an alliance. Proving his might, in 1568 Oda Nobunaga put Ashikaga Yoshiaki power as the shogun, with the blessing of the emperor. The Oda clan was not the new shogunate's first pick for alliance, however, as he had previously asked for help from the Uesugi clan, a cadet branch of the Takeda clan, and the Asakura clan.

Tokugawa Ieyasu (pronounced "TOW-coo-GAW-wah ee-yay-AH-sue") of Tokugawa clan.

Army: Small, but growing strongly.

Navy: Small, but growing strongly.

Ieyasu was born into a family of warriors and sent as a hostage to the Imagawa family as a boy. Hostages in this period were treated as honored guests and were educated by their host family. This acted as an

insurance policy in case the host family was attacked by the family of the child being held hostage. In the care of the Imagawa family, Tokugawa Ieyasu was raised to be a leader. Unfortunately for him, his clan was in a bad place by the time he took charge: under his father's rule the Tokugawa clan had wasted its finances and lost much of its military power due to constantly shifting alliances. Nevertheless, Tokugawa was able to ally himself with Oda Nobunaga (even though Oda had killed his father) and worked on expanding his territory and improving his clan's infrastructure. The Tokugawa clan often rivalled with the Asakura clan and the Azai clan and had a complicated relationship with the Later Hojo clan and the Takeda clan.

Azai Nagamasa (pronounced "AS-ai NAH-gah-MAH-sah") of Azai clan. (NOTE: Different sources will use either "Azai" or "Asai").

Army: Smaller than average.

Navy: Average.

The Azai were longtime allies of the Asakura and lately had become allies with the Oda as well. Conflicts between the two rocked the smaller region and divided its leadership. Nagamasa wanted to remain neutral and negotiate a peaceful settlement between the Oda and the Asakura, but this seemed unlikely. He recognized Nobunaga's desperation for power and the longtime loyalty of the Asakura. He also recognized the massive military advantages of the Oda clan. These two would have to be weighed carefully.

Miyoshi Yoshitsugu (pronounced "MEE-YO-SHEE YO-shit-SOO-goo") of Miyoshi clan.

Army: Average.

Navy: Average.

As the Sengoku period progressed, the Miyoshi clan lost power and land. However, it endured longer than most, and still held sway within the court of the Shogun. Yoshitsugu was not born a Miyoshi but was adopted upon the death of the previous leader due to his military expertise. Several wars with the Oda clan trying to defend Kyoto have weakened the clan's influence; however, Yoshitsugu has reorganized the forces of his clan and is prepared for war. He is suspicious of the intentions of the Chosokabe and is willing to look for allies in the Mori or even one of the northern clans like the Uesugi or Takeda.

Mori Terumoto (pronounced "MO-ree TEH-roo-MO-to") of Mori clan.

Army: Average.

Navy: Massive and modern.

At the advice of his late grandfather, the legendary Mori Motonari, Mori Terumoto maintained peace within the Mori clan. His goals had been twofold: maintain the prosperity of his large kingdom and secure its future. As of late, however, the two came into conflict. As Oda Nobunaga inched westward, he got closer and closer to the borders of Mori clan with an army large enough to take them on directly. Given the many insults Terumoto and his grandfather happily heaped on Nobunaga while he was still far away, this is terrifying. Perhaps an alliance could be made with the Otomo or the Chosokabe? Maybe even one of Nobunaga's neighbors could be convinced into allying with the Mori.

Chosokabe Motochika (pronounced “CHO-so-KAH-beh MO-to-CHI-ka”) of Chosokabe clan.

Army: Average.

Navy: Average.

An ambitious and cunning leader, Motochika was ruthless. His singular goal was the unification of his home island of Shikoku at any cost, even executing loyal nobles if their lives stood in the way of his conquest. However, he was satisfied with just Shikoku and cares little about who is Shogun as long as he is left undisturbed. He had no natural allies and viewed the Miyoshi as his rivals. The Mori to his north and the Otomo to his west both were threats in his mind.

Amago Yoshihisa (pronounced “AH-MAH-GO YO-SHI-HI-sa”) of Amago clan.

Army: Small.

Navy: Small.

Yoshihisa recently ascended to the throne and has inherited a feud with the Mori clan. While his family's territory has shrunk continuously, their former vassal, the Mori clan, has grown quickly. Somehow, Yoshihisa will have to find support, allies, and an army if he wants to survive against the Mori. There is little in terms of natural resources to distinguish the Amago clan, but its military history and prestige have earned it a place in the emperor's court in the past.

Nanbu Nobunao (pronounced “nan-BOO no-BOO-now”) of Nanbu clan.

Army: Average.

Navy: Small.

The Nanbu clan is in trouble. Its leadership is divided by local leaders holding real power within the clan. They seek power and prestige and are willing to even question their *daimyo* to do it. It is up to Nobunao to secure their loyalty and bring unity and order to the clan. Luckily, he is protected by a large area of chaotic local lords to his south, which have kept the Nanbu isolated up until now. It will not be very long

until the Uesugi clan or the Date break through; however, and the Nanbu will need stability by then or face destruction as both are his natural enemies.

Otomo Sorin (pronounced “OH-TOH-MOE SOR-in”) of Otomo clan.

Army: Average.

Navy: Large.

A Christian convert, Sorin is a product the western trade that the Otomo specialized in. He even made contact with the Pope in Rome. Their imported firearms give them an enormous military advantage over their neighbors, and the foreign trading fleets have given them great wealth. However, turbulence existed within their territory from contact with the outsiders. The Otomo viewed the Mori, Ryuzoji, and Shimaju with contempt, and planned to conquer them all, especially by appealing for help from the shogun, hoping that their support would make the war quick and decisive. He is desperate to take the city of Kitakyushu from the Mori clan.

Ryuzoji Takanobu (pronounced “REE-yoo-ZOH-gee TA-KA-noh-boo”) of Ryuzoji clan.

Army: Small.

Navy: Large.

While his realm is small, Ryuzoji Takanobu is blessed with a great resource: traders. The large merchant fleets that pass through his harbors give him access to weapons and information from China and Korea. Otherwise, he is afraid of the power of the Mori, the Otomo, and the Shimazu.

Shimazu Yoshihiro (pronounced “SHEE-MAH-zoo yo-SHEE-HEE-ro”) of Shimazu clan.

Army: Average.

Navy: Small.

Yoshihiro was an exceptional general in the field; however, succession troubles within his realm gave him serious pains. In fact, his reign was in a state of turmoil at the start of 1570. It will take effort, planning, and cunning to stabilize the Shimazu Clan. The Shimazu were known for their loyalty to the emperor and their willingness to help him, though Yoshihiro has yet to show if he lives up to this legacy. He is neutral to issues outside the island of Kyushu, and views his neighbors, the Ryuzoji and Otomo, with distrust.

Emperor Ogimachi (pronounced “ohg-EE-MA-chee”) of no clan.

Army: None

Navy: None

Despite not having an actual military or power in the country, the emperor of Japan was still an influential figure to the samurai who were really in control. It's a bit similar to the royal family in England today. By 1570, Ogamachi had already been emperor for 13 years and had acknowledged Oda Nobunaga's selection for Shogunate. In practice, he often acted as a mediator for the Oda clan, even if he didn't always comply with what they told him to do.

Ashikaga Yoshiaki (pronounced "AH-SHEE-KA-GAH yo-SHEE-AH-kee") of Ashikaga clan

Army: Tiny (mainly his personal guard)

Navy: None

Ashikaga Yoshiaki is the current shogun of Japan. He was placed on the throne in 1568 by Oda Nobunaga, and operated as Nobunaga's vassal. However, Yoshiaki wanted more power, and so he constantly looked for ways to become independent and to take over all of Japan himself. As Shogun, he had an enormous amount of authority at his disposal. He was technically in charge of all the armies of Japan, but in practice would ask other leaders to do missions for him. He also had the right to issue arrests anywhere in Japan, though he would need loyal agents or vassals to perform them. These arrests were legitimate, and the *daimyo* were allowed to do little more than protest, lest they be seen as disobeying the emperor's servant.

Sources:

-Extra Credits: Sengoku Jidai. Link:

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