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The Oyamada House and the rise of the Daimyō of the Takeda Clan (Late 15th Century — the beginning of the 1530s)

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Abstract. Drawing on a range of historical sources, including documents, letters, legislative codes, and chronicles, this article examines the relations between Takeda Nobutora, a powerful sengoku daimyō of the Takeda clan, and the Oyamada, the hereditary lords of the Tsuru district in Kai Province, during the Sengoku ("Warring States") period. The study is of undeniable importance for understanding the nature and characteristics of late medieval "vassalage", the structure of the political elite (the military nobility), and the political dynamics of Japan in this era. The research yields the following main conclusions. At the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries, at the beginning of the Sengoku period, the Oyamada appear as virtually autonomous rulers pursuing an independent foreign policy. They intervened in the internecine struggle within the Takeda house on the side of Aburakawa Nobuyoshi, one of the contenders for supremacy. After their defeat, however, they were forced to make peace in 1510 with the victor, Takeda Nobutora. The period from 1510 to 1533 marks a new stage in the relationship between the two houses, during which the Oyamada gradually lost their former independence. By about the early 1530s, Nobutora had suppressed the rebellions of his relatives and the Kai samurai, consolidated Takeda authority over the province, and withstood military confrontation with the Imagawa and Hōjō clans. The Oyamada sided with Nobutora in his struggle against both internal and external threats. It was also in this period that the Tsuru district, which the Oyamada claimed as their own, was integrated into the tax system of the Takeda domain. The Oyamada thus gradually lost their "subjectivity" in foreign policy, and the construction of their residence in Kōfu, the political center of the Takeda domain, became a symbol of their definitive subordination to the Takeda.

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Дом Оямада и возвышение даймё клана Такэда (конец XV в. — начало 1530-х гг.)

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Аннотация. Опираясь на широкий спектр исторических источников, включая документы, письма, законодательные кодексы и хроники, эта статья исследует отношения между Такэда Нобутора, могущественным даймё клана Такэда эпохи Сэнгоку, и Оямада, наследственными правителями района Цуру в провинции Каи, в период Сэнгоку («воюющих провинций»). Исследование имеет неоспоримое значение для понимания природы и особенностей позднесредневекового «вассалитета», структуры политической элиты (военной знати) и политической динамики Японии в эту эпоху. Исследование приводит к следующим основным выводам. На рубеже XV и XVI вв., в начале периода Сэнгоку, Оямада предстают как фактически автономные правители, проводящие независимую внешнюю политику. Они вмешались в междоусобную борьбу внутри дома Такэда на стороне Абуракава Нобуёси, одного из претендентов на верховную власть. Однако после поражения в 1510 году они были вынуждены заключить мир с победителем, Такэда Нобутора. Период с 1510 по 1533 г. знаменует собой новый этап в отношениях между двумя домами, в течение которого Оямада постепенно теряли свою прежнюю независимость. Примерно к началу 1530-х гг. Нобутора подавил восстания своих родственников и самураев Каи, укрепил власть Такэда над провинцией и выдержал военное противостояние с кланами Имагава и Ходзё. Оямада встали на сторону Нобутора в его борьбе как против внутренних, так и против внешних угроз. Именно в этот период район Цуру, который Оямада считали своим, был включен в налоговую систему княжества Такэда. Таким образом, Оямада постепенно утратили свою «субъектность» во внешней политике, а строительство их резиденции в Кофу, политическом центре княжества Такэда, стало символом их окончательного подчинения Такэда.

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Ключевые слова: дом Оямада, дом Такэда, кунисю:, сэнгоку дайме:, Такэда Нобутора, Оямада Ятаро:, Оямада Нобуари, провинция Каи, позднесредневековая Япония

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Introduction

In late medieval Japan, during the Sengoku period (1467–1573), the decline of central authority that accompanied the turmoil of the Ōnin-Bunmei years (1467–1477) made conflicts between military houses more frequent and raised them to a qualitatively new level in many regions. At the same time, coups, mutinies, and military clashes at the local level gave rise to political consolidation and to the de facto independent domains (*bunkoku* 分国) of the *sengoku daimyō*, some of which grew considerably in size (the territories of the Mōri, Takeda, Imagawa, and Hōjō, among others).

Since the 1990s, Japanese historiography has produced a vast amount of scholarly works regarding the formation and structure of *sengoku daimyō* power and on their vassal houses. These vassal bands were clearly heterogeneous: the origins and status of the various categories of retainers differed widely. They included the daimyō's relatives, hereditary vassals, samurai from neighbouring provinces who had recently submitted to him, *rōnin* taken into service from the domains of other warlords, and scions of humble families who built successful careers through their military or administrative talents. A special position among them was held by powerful magnates, the hereditary rulers of relatively large, compact territories within a given province. Nowadays historians are particularly interested in how the *sengoku daimyō* interacted with these powerful vassals, often called *kunishū* 国衆 or *sengoku ryōshū* 戦国領主.

The genesis and functioning of the political system of the domains during the Sengoku period were largely determined by the dynamics of relations between the daimyō and the *kunishū*. The degree and specific forms of the *kunishū*'s dependence on their suzerains, as well as the limits of their independence, varied from domain to domain. Studying these relations undoubtedly allows us to better understand the characteristic features of Japan's socio-political development in the Sengoku period.

In the Takeda domain, which by the end of the Sengoku period had become one of the largest and most powerful political entities in Japan, *kunishū* were present even in its core territory, Kai Province. The eminent Takeda 武田 house (the Kai Genji 甲斐源氏) traced its origins to Minamoto no Yoshimitsu (1045–1127), a son of the Heian-period warlord Minamoto no Yoriyoshi. Minamoto no Yoritomo, the founder of the Kamakura shogunate, was a close relative of the Takeda. In the first half of the twelfth century, Yoshimitsu's son and grandson settled in Kai Province [Nishikawa, 2021, pp. 6–7]. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Takeda split into numerous branches, whose members at various times received from the bakufu the posts of military governor (*shugo*) of Aki and Kai provinces.

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Throughout the fifteenth century, the Takeda *shugo*'s authority over Kai was extremely fragile. In the Muromachi period, the Takeda *shugo* were drawn into the turbulent political rivalry between the shoguns and their kinsmen in Kamakura. Far from being absolute rulers of Kai Province, they had to rely on bakufu support and wage a continuous struggle against obstinate and powerful vassals, as well as against the Kai samurai (*kokujin*). With the onset of the Sengoku period after the turmoil of the Ōnin-Bunmei years (1467–1477), and amid the weakening of central authority, the Takeda daimyō could no longer count on the support of the Ashikaga shoguns as before. Besides the constant threat of rebellion by provincial samurai and by lords from the collateral lines of the Takeda house, new challenges emerged: powerful clans almost entirely independent of Kyoto (the Imagawa, the Hōjō, and others) began to consolidate their power in neighboring provinces, and these rulers readily intervened in Kai's internal strife.

The establishment of the Takeda as *sengoku daimyō* can be dated only to the reign of Takeda Nobutora 武田信虎 (1494–1574), the grandson of Takeda Nobumasa. Nobutora succeeded in suppressing repeated rebellions of the Kai samurai, repelling invasions by the armies of neighboring warlords, and unifying Kai under his rule around the early 1530s. His eldest son, Takeda Harunobu 武田晴信 (Shingen 信玄, 1521–1573), expelled him and seized power in 1541, and went on to expand the domain significantly. At the beginning of the reign of Harunobu's successor, Takeda Katsuyori, the domain comprised the provinces of Kai, Shinano (except for its northern part), and Suruga, parts of Tōtōmi and Mikawa, and the eastern part of Kōzuke; the eastern regions of Mino and part of Hida lay within its sphere of influence. In 1582, the Takeda domain was conquered by Oda Nobunaga and divided among his vassals.

In Sengoku-period sources, Kai Province 甲斐 (present-day Yamanashi Prefecture) was divided into three areas: (1) the central Kuninaka region 国中, the Kōfu Valley, crossed by the Fuefuki River; (2) Tsuru District (Tsuru-gun 都留郡), also known as the Gunnai region 郡内, the mountainous eastern part of Yamanashi; and (3) Kawauchi 河内, the area along the southern (lower) reaches of the Fuefuki River[1]. Around the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Takeda, whom the Ashikaga shogunate had appointed military governors (*shugo*) of Kai in the Muromachi period, dominated the Kuninaka. Gunnai was ruled by the Oyamada and Kawauchi by the Anayama (a branch of the Takeda); both houses enjoyed virtually complete de facto autonomy.

Scholars have assessed the dynamics of the relationship between the Oyamada and the Takeda in the Muromachi period differently. Nakazawa Shinkichi argued that from the Nanbokuchō period onward the Oyamada were equal in status to the Takeda, at times feuding with the military governors of Kai and at times cooperating with them. The Oyamada later submitted to the Takeda but, under Takeda Harunobu and Katsuyori, retained the semi-independent status of district lords

[1] Gunnai district (Tsuru gun) is the territory of present-day Kita Tsuru district, and part of Minami Tsuru district, as well as the cities of Tsuru, Ōtsuki, Uenohara, and Fujiyoshida in Yamanashi prefecture. Kawauchi area was broadly included in the borders of Kuninaka. In the narrow sense, it is the basin of the Fujikawa River south of Ayuzawa (modern Kōsai settlement, Nakakoma District, Yamanashi prefecture).

[Nakazawa, 2011b, p. 82]. Oyamada Ryōzō, for his part, stressed that the Oyamada held supreme power in Tsuru District and ruled it much as a *shugo* would [Oyamada, 2011, p. 151].

According to Komine Yumi, the Oyamada's power was limited and delegated by the Takeda [Komine, 1981, p. 56]. Watanabe Ken'ichi emphasized that the two houses' power was fundamentally different in nature and that they were not connected by relations of equality: the Takeda daimyō firmly controlled the important prerogatives [Watanabe, 2011, p. 244]. Horiuchi Tōru argued that the Oyamada sought to assert their own territorial power but that their possessions were eventually incorporated into the military-political system of the Takeda domain, although their power can hardly be regarded as delegated by the Takeda [Horiuchi, 2011, p. 268–269]. Sasamoto Shōji pointed out that the Oyamada's rule over Gunnai, though considerably independent, was still exercised within the framework of the Takeda political system, and that the Oyamada, like the Takeda, sought to establish themselves as *sengoku daimyō* [Sasamoto, 1993, p. 122]. Shibatsuji Shunroku (1941–2022) noted that the Oyamada's rule over Gunnai was embedded in the domain system of the Takeda house, even though the Oyamada were recognized as having a certain independence; in general, the Takeda interfered even in minor matters of the Oyamada's administration of their lands [Shibatsuji, 1991, p. 209–210]. Yata Toshifumi, by contrast, saw the Oyamada and the Anayama as allies of the Takeda. In his view, the political order of Sengoku-period Kai was determined by a system of alliances among three *sengoku ryōshū* 戦国領主: the Takeda, the Oyamada, and the Anayama. The Oyamada and Anayama, he wrote, held prerogatives in foreign policy and displayed clear political independence [Yata, 2004, p. 260–263].

Finally, Kuroda Motoki described the Oyamada as *kunishū* 国衆, that is, lords who ruled their lands in a semi-independent manner during the Sengoku period, and likened them to the *fudai daimyō* of the Edo bakufu's political system [Kuroda, 2007, p. 51–52].

Marushima Kazuhiro, the author of pioneering works on the power structure of the Takeda daimyō and a leading scholar of the Oyamada, for his part believed that it was subordination to the Takeda that gave stability to the Oyamada's power over Gunnai District. Once the Takeda had concluded an alliance with the Imagawa and were subsequently reconciled with the Hōjō, the Oyamada domain was spared the threat of external attack, and the documentation issued by the heads of the Oyamada house increased accordingly. In the historian's view, the Oyamada's local political system developed precisely because of their subordination to the Takeda [Marushima, 2011, p. 48–49].

In general, although Japanese historiography has produced many works on the relationship between the Takeda daimyō and the Oyamada, some issues related to this topic remain controversial. This article focuses on the military and political history of relations between the Takeda and the Oyamada during the Sengoku period. It traces the process by which the semi-independent rulers of Tsuru District were transformed into vassals of the Takeda, in the context of the unification of Kai Province under Takeda Nobutora. The Oyamada's system of internal administration

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in Tsuru District, and the Takeda's intervention in it, will be examined in subsequent publications.

The House of Oyamada in the 15th–16th Centuries

The Oyamada of Gunnai in the Sengoku period claimed descent from the Chichibu Taira, and their contemporaries, at least from the end of the fifteenth century, also regarded them as scions of that family [Shibatsuji, 1991, p. 211]. However, the lack of reliable sources makes it impossible to assert that the Oyamada of Tsuru District in Kai Province at the beginning of the fifteenth century were indeed descended from Arishige of the Chichibu Taira, who lived in the early Kamakura period. In other words, it cannot be said with certainty that the Oyamada of the early Kamakura period and the Oyamada of the Muromachi period were one and the same house [Higashiyotsuyanagi, 2011, p. 57; Marushima, 2011, p. 13-14].

In 1416, an internecine struggle broke out in eastern Japan between the Kamakura *kubō* Ashikaga Mochiuji and Uesugi Ujinori (Zenshū). The shogun Ashikaga Yoshimochi supported Mochiuji, and the rebellion was suppressed in 1417. Among the defeated supporters of Zenshū was Takeda Nobumitsu, *shugo* of Aki and Kai, who committed suicide on Mount Tokusa 十賊山 (Yamanashi District, Kai Province; present-day Kōshū). Nobumitsu's eldest son, Takeda Nobushige, became *shugo* of Kai in 1423. Nobumitsu's wife, Nobushige's mother, was the daughter of a certain Oyamada Yasaburō 小山田弥三郎 of the Taira [Ōzōshi, 2002, p. 841]. The *Kamakura Ōzōshi* thus makes clear that at the beginning of the fifteenth century the Oyamada of Kai claimed descent from the Taira. It is noteworthy that the *shugo* of the eminent Takeda warrior house considered it possible to form a marital alliance with them. Evidently, by the early fifteenth century the Oyamada held lands and a certain influence in Tsuru, although they were most likely not yet regarded as rulers of the entire district.

The Oyamada house was destroyed in 1582, during the conquest of the Takeda domain by the allied armies of Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu; Oyamada Nobushige, the last head of the house, and his closest relatives were executed. This is probably why relatively few documents relating to the history of the Oyamada have survived. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Japanese historians, drawing on the memorial registers (*kuyōchō* 供養帳) of the Indōin 引導院, a temple belonging to the monastery complex on Mount Kōya, established the names of the rulers of Tsuru District and the order in which they succeeded one another.

Recent studies have shown that during the Sengoku period Tsuru District was ruled by six lords of the Oyamada house:

1. Oyamada Nobunaga 小山田信長, posthumous name (partial) Kōun 耕雲 (dates unknown) [2];
2. Oyamada Yatarō 小山田弥大郎, posthumous name Gizan 義山 (?–1508, Eishō 5, 5th month, 12th day);
3. Oyamada Etchū no kami Nobuari 小山田越中守信有, posthumous name Ryōen 涼苑 (?–1541, Tenbun 10, 12th month, 2nd day);

[2] Here and further in parentheses, the years of life are indicated.

4. Oyamada Yasaburō Dewa no kami Nobuari 小山田弥三郎出羽守信有, posthumous name Keizan 契山 (?–1552, Tenbun 21, 1st month, 23rd day);
5. Oyamada Yasaburō Nobuari 小山田弥三郎信有, posthumous name Chōin 桃隠 (1540, Tenbun 9–1565, Eiroku 8, 8th month, 20th day?);
6. Oyamada Dewa no kami Nobushige 小山田出羽守信茂 (1540, Tenbun 9–1582, Tenshō 10, 3rd month) [Takeda, 2015, p. 225–234][3].
7. In Edo-period sources, however, Oyamada Yasaburō Nobuari (Chōin 桃隠) was mistakenly identified with Oyamada Nobushige. Until relatively recently, Japanese historians therefore knew of only five generations of heads of the Oyamada house, not six, since No. 5, Oyamada Yasaburō Nobuari, was omitted (see, for example, [Isogai, 1977, p. 64]). The headship passed both "vertically", from father to son (Oyamada Nobunaga to Oyamada Yatarō; Oyamada Yatarō to Oyamada Etchū no kami Nobuari; Oyamada Dewa no kami Nobuari to Oyamada Yasaburō Nobuari), and, probably, "horizontally", from brother to brother (Oyamada Etchū no kami Nobuari[4] to Oyamada Dewa no kami Nobuari; Oyamada Yasaburō Nobuari to Oyamada Nobushige) [Takeda, 2015, p. 225, 228–229, 231][5].

Oyamada House and the rise of Takeda Nobutora as *Sengoku Daimyō*

Documents issued by members of the Oyamada house, or addressed to them, that date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries have practically not survived. The exception is a charter bearing the personal signature (*kaō*) of Oyamada Nobunaga, dated the 24th day of the 9th month of Meiō 8 (1499), and addressed to the monastery of Kōgakuji 向嶽寺. The main estates of Kōgakuji lay in the Kuninaka region, which was under the authority of the Takeda *shugo*, but the monastery also held lands in the village of Tahara in Tsuru District. By this decree Nobunaga restored to the monastery those holdings, which it had lost in the recent "turmoil", the feud between Takeda Nobumasa and his son Nobutsuna 信縄 (?–1507). The document mentions that the monastery's former rights were restored after Nobumasa and Nobutsuna had reconciled [Takeda, I, No. 8, p. 6].

Information about the Oyamada appears in entries of various Kai chronicles dating from the sixteenth century. In an entry for Entoku 4 (1492), the compiler of

[3] Oyamada Nobushige used the titles Sahyōe no jō 左兵衛尉, Saemon no daibu 左衛門大夫, and Dewa no kami 出羽守 in his correspondence and documentation at various times.

[4] Isogai Masayoshi conceded that Etchū no kami could be the brother of Oyamada Yatarō [Isogai, 1977, p. 64].

[5] From the above list, it follows that the three Gunnai rulers had the same personal name — Nobuari. Marushima Kazuhiro offered the following logical explanation for this phenomenon: 1) the name Nobuari was adopted to assert the authority of the heir in the eyes of Oyamada's vassals and thereby prevent dangerous strife between different factions; 2) this name marked the headship in the house of Oyamada [Marushima, 2013, p. 133].

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the *Katsuyama ki*[6] 勝山記 noted that "turmoil began" in Kai Province [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 220]. In that year Takeda Nobumasa, *shugo* of Kai, abdicated in favor of his eldest son, Takeda Nobutsuna. Nobutsuna's younger brother, Aburakawa (Takeda) Nobuyoshi 油川信恵 (?–1508), however, also laid claim to the headship of the Takeda house, and Nobumasa, though formally retired, sided with his youngest son. In 1498 father and eldest son were reconciled and the strife ended, with Nobutsuna remaining *shugo* of Kai. After Nobutsuna's death in 1507, he was succeeded by his eldest son, Takeda Nobutora (then known as Nobunao). Aburakawa Nobuyoshi, however, opposed his nephew, hoping to take his place as ruler of Kai. On the fourth day of the fifth month of Eishō 5 (1508), a decisive battle took place in the Kuninaka region of Kai. Forces loyal to Nobutora defeated the supporters of Nobuyoshi, who died along with his three sons and many of his warriors.

On the 5th day of the 12th month of the same year, another battle took place in the Kuninaka area, apparently the final episode of this internecine strife. Troops loyal to Takeda Nobutora prevailed over the army of the Tsuru district, which invaded Kuninaka. Among the fallen enemies of Nobutora, the *Katsuyama ki* mentions Oyamada Yatarō, the son of Oyamada Nobunaga and the second ruler of the Gunnai (Tsuru district) of the Sengoku period, as well as an "innumerable" number of his warriors. The chronicle also states that "lord Kudō" and Oyamada Heizō, probably vassals of Oyamada Yatarō, survived and "appeared" (*goshūsshi* 御出仕) in Nirayama in Izu province, that is, they expressed their willingness to serve Ise Moritoki 伊勢盛時 (Hōjō Sōun, founder of the powerful Hōjō clan, ?–1519) [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 224].

On the fifth day of the twelfth month of the same year, another battle took place in the Kuninaka region, evidently the final episode of this internecine strife. Troops loyal to Takeda Nobutora defeated the army of Tsuru District, which had invaded the Kuninaka. Among Nobutora's enemies who fell, the *Katsuyama ki* names Oyamada Yatarō, the son of Oyamada Nobunaga and the second ruler of Gunnai (Tsuru District) in the Sengoku period, together with an "innumerable" host of his warriors. The chronicle also states that "lord Kudō" and Oyamada Heizō, probably vassals of Yatarō, survived and "presented themselves" (*goshusshi* 御出仕) at Nirayama in Izu Province. In other words, they declared their readiness to serve Ise Moritoki 伊勢盛時 (Hōjō Sōun, founder of the powerful Hōjō house, ?–1519) [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 224].

The *Katsuyama ki* passage allows several important conclusions. First, in the power struggle between the young Takeda Nobutora and his uncle Aburakawa Nobuyoshi, the Oyamada house supported the latter. Family ties may have played a role: according to some later genealogies, the second wife of Takeda Nobumasa,

[6] *Katsuyama ki* (Records of Katsuyama, also *Myōhōji ki* 妙法寺記 — "Records of Myōhōji"), a medieval historical chronicle (originally untitled, both names were given in the Tokugawa period). Its first part contains records of various events, primarily related to the spread of Buddhism in Japan, beginning in ancient times. The second (main) part is a chronicle covering a period of nearly a century (1466–1563), compiled by monks of the Nichiren school of Jōzaiji Temple (in the area of Fujikawaguchiko, Yamanashi prefecture) and one of its subordinate monasteries. It is a valuable source on the history of Tsuru district and Kai province in the late Middle Ages [Yamanashi, 2001, p. 15–17].

who was the mother of Nobuyoshi and of his brother Iwade Tsunayoshi (Tsunamitsu), came from the Oyamada house (according to Hirayama Yū, she was a sister of Oyamada Nobunaga) [Oyamada, 1988, p. 52; Hirayama, 2019, p. 69][7].

Second, after the defeat and death of Nobuyoshi, his ally Oyamada Yatarō remained strong enough to continue the war and invade the Kuninaka. The Oyamada thus had considerable military resources with which to challenge Takeda Nobutora, *shugo* of Kai Province.

Third, the flight of a vassal and scion of the Oyamada house to Izu Province attests to close ties between the Oyamada and Hōjō Sōun. The Oyamada were evidently on good, possibly allied, terms with Sōun at the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which allowed them to pursue a foreign policy independent of the Takeda. The Oyamada were also connected by marriage with the Imagawa daimyō, who were themselves linked to the Hōjō by kinship and alliance. According to Edo-period genealogical records, Yatarō was married to a daughter of Kazurayama Tsunasada, the ruler of Suntō District in Suruga Province, which points to close ties with the Imagawa house (the Kazurayama were Imagawa vassals). Two sisters of Yatarō's wife were married, respectively, to Seno Kazuhide, a scion of a cadet branch of the Imagawa, and to Hōjō Ujitoki, the second son of Hōjō Sōun, who became heir to the head of the Bitchū Kazurayama house [Oyamada, 2011, p. 139]. If these later genealogical lists are reliable, Yatarō, who sided with Aburakawa Nobuyoshi, was related to both the Imagawa and the Hōjō and could well have counted on their help against Takeda Nobutora.

However, in this conflict the Oyamada took one side in a succession struggle within the Takeda house; they did not challenge Takeda supremacy in Kai as such. In the autumn of Eishō 6 (1509), the army of Takeda Nobutora invaded Tsuru District and burned the post town of Kawaguchi 河口宿 (present-day Fujikawaguchiko). In the twelfth month of the same year, two high-ranking vassals of the Oyamada were killed: Shimo no Kendan 下ノ険断 and Yoshida no Yōshoki 吉田ノ要書記 [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 224]. The source gives not personal names but the titles of offices in the administrative system of Tsuru District created by the Oyamada.

According to the chronicler, peace was concluded in 1510 between the Kuninaka and Tsuru District, that is, between Takeda Nobutora[8] and the head of the Oyamada house [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 224]. Apparently, soon afterward (possibly in the same year), the Takeda and Oyamada became related by marriage: a scion of the Oyamada house married Nobutora's younger sister. This marriage in effect ended the armed clash between the two houses.

The vicissitudes of turmoil and war in Kai at the beginning of the Sengoku period described above show that in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the Oyamada enjoyed considerable independence in foreign affairs and commanded an

[7] The genealogical list in question is the "Genealogy of the Oyamada House of Gunnai, Kai Province" (*Kōshū Gunnai Oyamada-ke keizu* 甲州郡内小山田家系図) from the personal library of the historian Oyamada Ryōzō. It seems that this historical source requires further verification.

[8] Which member of the Oyamada family became the husband of Takeda Nobutora's sister is not completely clear, but the event itself is confirmed by the genealogies of the Edo period.

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army that was significant by the standards of the time. They joined one side in the internal feud of the Takeda house at their own discretion, and likewise chose of their own accord to establish kinship ties, in effect forming alliances, with the daimyō of neighboring lands who could be enemies of the Takeda. At the same time, the Oyamada nominally acknowledged themselves as vassals of the Takeda. For example, the name of Oyamada Nobunaga contains the character 信 (*nobu*), a "hereditary" character in the names of the Takeda *shugo* of Kai.

The reconciliation between Takeda Nobutora and Oyamada Etchū no kami in 1510 marked the beginning of a gradual increase in the Oyamada's dependence on the Takeda house. The rulers of Gunnai were obliged to take part in Nobutora's wars on his side. Thus, the Oyamada supported the *shugo* of Kai when Ōi Nobusato 大井信達 (? – ?), a scion of a junior line of the Takeda house and an influential lord of Nishi District in Kai, rebelled against Nobutora.

In 1515 (17/10/Eishō 12) the army of Takeda Nobutora approached the fortress-residence of Nobusato. Despite the numerical advantage, it eventually withdrew, suffering serious losses. According to *Katsuyama ki*, Takeda warriors drove the horses into the swampy rice flood fields in the vicinity of the castle. Nobutora's forces probably moved at night and were poorly oriented. Twenty military commanders and one to two hundred warriors were killed, including Oyamada Yamato-no kami [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 224]. Ōi Nobusato was also supported by the *daimyō* Imagawa Ujichika, but this rebellion was soon pacified.

In 1515 (Eishō 12, 10th month, 17th day), the army of Takeda Nobutora approached the fortress-residence of Ōi Nobusato. Despite its numerical advantage, it eventually withdrew with heavy losses. According to the *Katsuyama ki*, the Takeda warriors drove their horses into the flooded, swampy rice fields near the castle. Nobutora's forces probably advanced at night and were poorly oriented. Twenty commanders and one to two hundred warriors were killed, among them Oyamada Yamato no kami [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 224]. Ōi Nobusato was also supported by the daimyō Imagawa Ujichika, but the rebellion was soon pacified.

The Oyamada were also actively involved in Takeda Nobutora's difficult campaigns against the Imagawa daimyō. According to the *Utsunoyama no ki* 宇津山記, Imagawa troops invaded Kai in 1515 and built a fortress at Katsuyama (present-day Kōfu), which became an outpost from which Imagawa warriors launched attacks on various parts of Kai Province [Utsunoyama no ki, 1930, p. 192; Ōdai ki, 2011, p. 187][9].

In 1517, battles between Oyamada detachments and the Imagawa army were frequent. According to the *Katsuyama ki*, on the twenty-ninth day of the twelfth month of Eishō 13, Kobayashi Kunai no jō, a vassal of the Oyamada, marched

[9] *Ōdai ki* talks about the construction of a fortress in Katsuyama, and the *Utsunoyama no ki* tells about the stationing of a detachment of the Imagawa army in Katsuyama castle. *Utsunoyama no ki* ("Notes at Mount Utsunoyama") are diary and travel entries by the poet Sōchō (1448–1532), containing both his poems and references to various events. Sōchō lived in the Imagawa domain for a long time. *Ōdai ki* 王代記 is a medieval temple chronicle transmitted at Fugenji Monastery 普賢寺 at Ōimata Kubo Hachiman Shrine 大井俣窪八幡 (Yamanashi, Yamanashi prefecture), includes records of events from mythical antiquity ("age of the gods") to the early Tokugawa period, an important source on the history of Kai province.

against the Imagawa. In Tsuru District, local residents were forced to flee the ravages of war to the island of Unoshima in Lake Kawaguchi. At the end of Eishō 13, Imagawa forces captured Yoshida castle [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 226]. On the first day of the first month of Eishō 14 (early 1517), Kobayashi Owari nyūdō, another Oyamada commander, approached Arakura[10]. From the second day of the month his warriors fiercely assaulted Yoshida castle, where the Imagawa forces had entrenched themselves, and on the twelfth day of the same month the Imagawa army was obliged to abandon it [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 226].

Finally, the peace negotiations were crowned with success, and on the 2nd day of the 3rd month of the 14th year of Eishō (1517), Imagawa's troops left Katsuyama castle and returned to Suruga [Ōdai ki, 2001, p. 187; Utsunoyama no ki, 1930, p. 192]. In the 5th month of the 15th year of Eishō (1518), peace was restored between "Suruga" (Imagawa) on the one hand and "Kai province" (Takeda) and "Tsuru district" (Oyamada) on the other [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 226]. Thus, Oyamada Etchū no kami helped Takeda Nobutora repel Imagawa Ujichika's attack on Kai, and Tsuru district became the scene of fierce fighting. In this military campaign, the Oyamada acted as subordinate allies rather than vassals of Takeda. It is noteworthy that in the *Katsuyama ki* record on the conclusion of peace, "Tsuru district" is mentioned separately along with "Kai province" and "Suruga" as one of the contracting parties, and not as part of the Takeda domain. This is probably one of the pieces of evidence of the preservation of Oyamada's considerable external independence in 1518.

Finally, the peace negotiations succeeded, and on the second day of the third month of Eishō 14 (1517) the Imagawa troops left Katsuyama castle and returned to Suruga [Ōdai ki, 2011, p. 187; Utsunoyama no ki, 1930, p. 192]. In the fifth month of Eishō 15 (1518), peace was restored between "Suruga" (the Imagawa), on the one hand, and "Kai Province" (the Takeda) and "Tsuru District" (the Oyamada), on the other [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 226]. Thus, Oyamada Etchū no kami helped Takeda Nobutora repel Imagawa Ujichika's attack on Kai, and Tsuru District became the scene of fierce fighting. In this campaign the Oyamada acted as subordinate allies rather than as vassals of the Takeda. It is noteworthy that the *Katsuyama ki* entry on the conclusion of peace names "Tsuru District" separately, alongside "Kai Province" and "Suruga", as one of the contracting parties, rather than as part of the Takeda domain. This is probably one of the pieces of evidence that the Oyamada retained considerable independence in external affairs as late as 1518.

Meanwhile, the peace with the Imagawa proved unstable. In 1521 (Eishō 18, 2nd month, 27th or 28th day), Imagawa troops invaded the Kawauchi region of Kai from Suruga [Ōdai ki, 2001, p. 187; Enzan, 2001, p. 113][11]. Shortly before that, on the eighteenth day of the second month of the same year, Takeda Nobutora visited the house of Kobayashi Kunai no jō, one of the Oyamada's principal vassals, and the next day went to Nakatsumori, the residence of Oyamada Etchū no kami [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 228]. It is logical to assume that the purpose of these visits was to

[10] Present Fujiyoshida.

[11] *Enzan Kōgaku Zen'an Shōnendaiki* 塩山向嶽禅庵小年代記 ("Small Chronicle of the Zen Abode of Enzan Kōgaku") is a chronicle compiled in the Kōgakuji Monastery (Kōshū, Yamanashi prefecture) of the Rinzai Zen school, covering the period from 1376 to 1769.

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strengthen relations with the Oyamada and, possibly, to discuss joint military plans against the Imagawa. Nobutora's personal visits to the residences of the Oyamada and Kobayashi suggest that Oyamada Etchū no kami was at that time rather an ally of the Takeda than a subordinate: the *shugo* of Kai could not count on his unconditional and automatic support, even if Etchū no kami formally recognized Nobutora's suzerainty. Nobutora had to negotiate to secure the help of the Oyamada house. In the same year, 1521, Nobutora won two major victories over the Imagawa army, at Iidagawara (Kōfu) and at Jōjōgawara [Kōyō nikki, 2001, p. 87; Ōdai ki, 2001, p. 187; Enzan, 2001, p. 113][12].

In 1528, Takeda Nobutora issued a *tokuseirei* 徳政令 (debt-relief decree), which eased the debt burden of the inhabitants of Kai: (1) loans contracted within three years before the date of the proclamation were annulled; (2) for debts of later date, the debtor was permitted to repay only the principal, without accrued interest [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 230]. The chronicler reports that in Daiei 8, the year the decree was promulgated, heavy rains fell on the sixteenth day of the fifth month, and on the seventeenth day a flood damaged the crops in both the irrigated rice fields and the dry fields [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 229]. The *tokuseirei* was evidently intended to mitigate the effects not only of these recent natural disasters but also of the internal turmoil and incessant wars with neighboring daimyō that had shaken Kai in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. According to the *Katsuyama ki*, Nobutora's edict, which the chronicle calls *gojōi* 御上意 (literally "supreme will"), applied to the whole of Kai, including the possessions of the Oyamada house. Its adoption further strengthened the Takeda house's dominance over Kai.

Nevertheless, the Oyamada house evidently still retained considerable independence in both external and internal affairs. In 1529 an event occurred that became one of the turning points in the relationship between the Takeda and the Oyamada. According to the *Katsuyama ki*, the roads from the Kuninaka were blocked that year, which means that Tsuru District was placed under a blockade imposed by Takeda Nobutora. The chronicle does not report the reasons for such harsh measures. On the twentieth day of the 6th month of Kyōroku 2 (1529), the mother of Oyamada Etchū no kami Nobuari went to Tōtōmi Province and met with her sister [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 230]. The sister was the wife of Sena Kazuhide, a high-ranking Imagawa vassal and a scion of a cadet branch of that house. The mother of the ruler of Tsuru District had evidently turned to her sister with a request for mediation to resolve the conflict between the Oyamada and the Takeda.

According to the *Katsuyama ki*, on the eighteenth day of the tenth month the mother of Dewa no kami returned to Kai. The chronicle describes how she was received in Tsuru. On the banks of the Fuji River, on her way to Nakatsumori, her son's residence, she was met by one hundred of the Oyamada's "close" retainers (*kinjūshū* 近習衆, probably identical to the *umamawari*, the "guards" of the *sengoku daimyō*), who wore swords with gilded scabbards at their belts. On the way to

[12] *Kōyō nikki* 甲陽日記 — "Kai's Diary", also known as *Kōhakusai ki* 高白斎記 ("Records of Kōhakusai"). The chronicle was probably written by Komai Kōhakusai (?–?), a vassal of the Takeda house who drafted the *Kōshū hatto-no shidai* law code. The *Kōhakusai ki* records the events from 1498 to 1553, it is one of the most important sources on the history of the Takeda family.

Nakatsumori she stopped in turn at the estates of the Oyamada's principal vassals: Kobayashi Izumi no kami, Kobayashi Owari no kami, and "lord Shinkurō of Kurami" [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 230]. The diplomatic mission of the mother of the head of the Oyamada house was probably a success. The chronicler reports that on the fifteenth day of the eleventh month of the same year the roads were reopened, and that on the same day a *munebetsusen* 棟別銭 tax was imposed on Tsuru District [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 230].

This incident was likely connected with Takeda Nobutora's intention to impose a "house" tax (*munebetsusen* 棟別銭) on Tsuru District. In 1522, seeking funds for the war effort, Nobutora had levied the *munebetsusen* on the Kuninaka region under his control, including the lands of temples and shrines [Enzan, 2001, p. 113]. It may be assumed that in 1529 he demanded that Oyamada Dewa no kami introduce the tax in Gunnai and, when the latter refused, blockaded the roads into the district.

The blockade was effective in two respects. On the one hand, it was an economic measure: the inhabitants of the mountainous Gunnai region could not fully supply themselves with food and other goods. On the other hand, it was surely no coincidence that the blockade began in the sixth month, when a stream of pilgrims made their way every year to Mount Fuji. On the approaches to the mountain in Tsuru District there were checkpoints controlled by the Oyamada, and the tolls collected there for passage to Fuji were an important source of revenue for the Oyamada treasury, which the closing of the roads from the Kuninaka cut off. The decline in the number of pilgrims also harmed the shrines of Gunnai (the Sengen shrines 浅間神社), where the deity of Fuji was worshipped, and "diminished" the sacred power of the *kami*, which was thought to "depend" on the faith and reverence of the people. All this forced the Oyamada to make concessions and to burden their lands with the *munebetsusen*. Most likely the funds collected were used for military purposes, although how they were distributed is entirely unclear.

Thus, the forced consent of Oyamada Etchū no kami Nobuari to the taxation of Tsuru District was an important milestone in the transformation of the Oyamada from de facto independent allies into vassals of the Takeda, and in the integration of Tsuru into the administrative system of the Takeda domain.

In 1533, Takeda Nobutora's residence in Kōfu burned down. In the same year Oyamada Etchū no kami built a mansion of seventy *tsubo* in Kōfu, the political center of the Takeda domain (*bunkoku*) [Katsuyama ki, 2001, p. 232]. This undoubtedly attests to the further integration of the Oyamada into the vassal system of the Takeda house. As is well known, in the Muromachi period the provincial military governors (*shugo*) maintained estates in Kyoto, the seat of the Ashikaga shoguns, their overlords. In the Tokugawa period, likewise, the daimyō who ruled the *han* 藩 domains invariably built residences in Edo. In both cases, keeping a mansion in the political center of the shogunate was a visible sign of subordination and vassalage.

It is unclear why Takeda Nobutora and his entourage chose not to exterminate the Oyamada but to content themselves with their subjugation in 1510. Perhaps they took into account the long-standing ties between the two houses, including ties of kinship, and the fact that the Oyamada, though embroiled in feuds within the Takeda house, had never challenged its supremacy in Kai. Moreover, the final elim-

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ination of the Oyamada would have required a renewed commitment of forces at a time of political instability within Kai and in the face of formidable external adversaries, such as the Hōjō and the Imagawa. Later, as they expanded the boundaries of their domain, the Takeda lords alternated between physically eliminating recalcitrant lords in other lands and incorporating them, after "pacification", into their vassal band.

In sum, from about the end of the fifteenth century to the early 1530s the relationship between the Oyamada and the Takeda underwent a significant transformation. At the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Oyamada, while formally recognizing the suzerainty of the Takeda, were in practice able to conduct military and foreign policy independently of the *shugo* of Kai. After the military defeat and death of Oyamada Yatarō in 1508, peace was concluded between the Takeda and the Oyamada in 1510. Oyamada Etchū no kami Nobuari then consistently supported Takeda Nobutora, both during the internal turmoil in Kai and in the wars against the Imagawa and the Hōjō.

The Oyamada house was evidently weakened by Yatarō's death and the defeat of his army, and in 1509 it could not repel the invasion of Nobutora's army. The peace of 1510 therefore amounted in effect to the subjugation of the Oyamada, who apparently found it impossible to resist Nobutora's superior forces. At the same time, amid the political consolidation of the localities and the rise of the Imagawa and Hōjō domains, the Oyamada, who evidently did not aspire to the status of provincial rulers, had little choice but to ally themselves with one of the contending powers, and they "chose" the Takeda. An awareness of the harsh realities and fear for the survival of the house seem to have predetermined their long-term loyalty. No rebellion or betrayal of the Takeda by the Oyamada is recorded between the peace of 1510 and 1582, when Oyamada Nobushige refused to admit Takeda Katsuyori to Tsuru District, although he had recently promised him refuge at Iwadono castle.

The hereditary lords of Tsuru most likely saw considerable benefit in remaining loyal to the Takeda daimyō. Nobutora and his son Harunobu (and, for a time, Katsuyori) won victories, achieved external expansion, and provided Kai, Tsuru included, with a measure of security against enemy invasion. In return for obedience, the Oyamada received what amounted to a guarantee for their ancestral lands amid the incessant wars of the Sengoku period. Thus the Oyamada's loyalty to the Takeda was at once forced (for the sake of survival) and voluntary (for the sake of gain), and it was reinforced by long-standing ties between the two houses, reaching back at least to the early fifteenth century (recall Takeda Nobumitsu and his wife from the Oyamada house).

The period from 1510 to the late 1520s and early 1530s can be called transitional. As early as 1518 the Oyamada made peace with "Suruga" (the Imagawa) separately from the Takeda, and Nobutora, together with relatives and prominent vassals, visited the residences of the Oyamada (in 1521 and 1532), visits that the compiler of the *Katsuyama ki* thought worth recording. Thus, from about 1510 to the early 1530s the Oyamada did not lose all freedom of action in military and foreign affairs. The construction of their residence in Kōfu, however, marked the steady trend toward their becoming "senior hereditary vassals" (*fudai*) of the Takeda house.

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