Running the Domain: Truth, Rumours, and the Decision-Making of the Shimazu Warrior Family in 16th Century Japan

by

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LIST OF ABBREIVATIONS

DNK *Iewake*	*Dai Nihon komonjo: Iewake monjo*
DNS	*Dai Nihon shiryō*
HJAS	*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*
JJS	*the Journal of Japanese Studies*
SNKT	*Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei*

ABSTRACT

Using the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, a diary kept by the middle-ranking warrior Uwai Kakuken from 1574 to 1586, this dissertation examines some fundamental factors that contributed to the political decision-making process of the Shimazu family in late sixteenth century Japan. In order to achieve this, this dissertation focuses on the Shimazu family's communication system responsible for the gathering and delivery of information and military intelligence, and the management of rumours circulating within the entire Shimazu administration. Through the close reading and analysis of several key events in the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, this dissertation argues that some of the primary factors affecting the decision-making process of the Shimazu family included the personal interests of the individual warriors involved in each instance and the perceived will of the deities as divined through lottery. Rather than acting in adherence to abstract notions of morality, loyalty, or truth, warriors often exploited the shortcomings of the communication system and the ambiguity of factual information in order to further their individual agendas. In the administration's decision-making process, many warriors were interested in boosting their legitimacy, but at the same time, they were also concerned about protecting their siblings and children from harm. The argument pushes back against the language of loyalty appearing in and promoted by law codes and military tales of premodern Japan. Beyond the pursuit of one's immediate interests, warriors also made decisions based heavily on their spiritual beliefs. Spiritual acts like the *kuji* played an important role in influencing the way the Shimazu administration made military decisions in this period. Through

the exploration of the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, the findings of this dissertation show that the samurai often prioritized their individual interests as a way to manage the volatile social and political situation of sixteenth century Japan. To that end, decisions were made with the aim of balancing the many variables and limited resources a warrior had access to at any given time, while also allowing a warrior to maximize his own interests.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

When the head of the Shimazu family, Shimazu Yoshihisa (1533 – 1611), was petitioned by one of his retainers in Tenshō 2 (1574), Yoshihisa denied his retainer's request without hesitation or even asking for more details. The content of the petition itself was actually nothing special. It was a simple request for a land transfer, the kind of request that frequently appeared in front of Yoshihisa, and one that he has granted and denied numerous times in the past. But there was something different this time. Rumours circulating at the time stated that this retainer's father tried to poison and kill the previous ruler of the Shimazu family and the father of Yoshihisa. Did Yoshihisa allow himself to be affected by such unsubstantiated rumours or was he reasonable enough to understand that rumours cannot be equated to truth? Unfortunately for this particular retainer, Yoshihisa decided in the end to reject this petition. But what was the justification for this rejection? What were the factors that influenced Yoshihisa's decision-making process, not just in this particular instance, but in the making of the many other decisions that defined the very existence of his administration?

Using the Shimazu regime during the late sixteenth century as a case study, the current project aims to examine some of the possible reasons and justifications behind the decisions made by the medieval warlords and their warriors, specifically decisions pertaining to military, administrative, or diplomatic affairs. Over the course of four chapters, we will closely scrutinize the contents of the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, a sixteenth century diary kept by Uwai Kakuken (1545 –

1589), a middle-ranking Shimazu retainer. Through our exploration and analysis of some of the key events found in this diary, we will see that the warriors of the Sengoku period were frequently concerned with their goals vis-a-vis the larger political and military situation at play. The attainment of abstract concepts such as honor, morality, or loyalty only mattered in so far as they would affect the carefully constructed façade of each individual warrior. Both the retainers and the warlords seemed to be more concerned with improving their own station within the world instead. Whether it was to protect their own reputation amongst their peers, or to reinforce their authority in the eyes of their retainers, the samurai of the Sengoku period seemed more than willing to act in defiance toward their superior's will and truth itself. This stood in direct opposition to the concerns of honor, loyalty, morality, and order found in premodern Japanese law codes and military tales.[1]

Our investigation of the possible factors affecting warrior decisions during this time fundamentally challenges some stereotyped notions of the samurai and what it means to be "Japanese." Specifically, our analysis illustrates that the medieval samurai were willing to sacrifice the wellbeing of the collective or their lord in favor of securing their individual goals. This runs counter to not only the idea of the samurai as constructed by modern media, but also to the samurai ideal espoused by Japanese thinkers of the early modern period as well. Furthermore, my research also illuminates the insecure nature of the regional warlords' power even within their own administration. While it is easy for us to see these warlords, or daimyo, as the embodiment and personification of the political and military structures under their control,

[1] For a more nuanced discussion on the impact of idealized concepts such as loyalty and order evident in the Sengoku law codes and their long-term impact, see Eason, "The Culture of Disputes in Early Modern Japan, 1550 – 1700," pp. 121 – 72. For how such abstractions are intertwined with the popular understanding of what it meant to be a samurai, see Hurst, "Death, Honor, and Loyality: the Bushidō Ideal," pp. 514 – 9. As for the appeals to morality within Sengoku law codes, see Katsumata and Collcutt, "The Development of Sengoku Law," pp. 101 – 104.

this was not in fact the case. The following chapters will illustrate that the daimyo only had limited access and control over a large part of his administration. The daimyo's control was the result of a careful balancing of various possibilities and uncertainties prevalent in the daily operations of his domain. Though he maintained the ultimate control over any decisions made by his government, the daimyo had little involvement over most decisions that were made on a daily basis. Instead, he delegated a lot of this work to his senior retainer council. This council in turn held the power to both make decisions in the daimyo's name and determined what information required the daimyo's attention.

While this may not seem like a novel discovery, my work is able to trace the fragmented structure of authority transmission within this powerful daimyo house at the height of Sengoku Japan. Furthermore, my in-depth and meticulous analysis of words, passages, and rhythm of communication and rumours appearing in the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* reveals the prevalence of crucial inferences and even silences. The textual and intertextual expressions point to the instability and vulnerability that characterized the warrior organizations built on the constantly shifting interests of individual warriors.

Below, we will first introduce the historical background of our discussion, including the Sengoku period, the Shimazu family and their lineage, the Shimazu's relationship with the aristocracy, and the geography and climate of southern Kyushu. Next, we describe our primary source, Uwai Kakuken's diary, the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, which illuminates the daimyo's mode of governance through personal voices of the diarist and those around him. This will be followed by an outline of the themes and content of the four chapters, which constitute the substances of this dissertation.

I. The Historical Backdrop

I.a. The Historical Moment of Sengoku Japan

The Japanese polity's transition into the medieval era can be defined by the decline of imperial and aristocratic authority centred upon modern Kyoto on the one hand, and the rise of the warrior class on the other. While the initial warrior government, established at the end of the twelfth century, markedly coruled with the imperial government, by the fifteenth century, the balance had definitively tipped toward the military class. The so-called Japan's "samurai age" covers more than seven hundred years from approximately 1185 to 1868. During that time, medieval Japan (to 1600) featured a polity with two centres of authority stemming from both the imperial court and the warrior government, or the *bakufu*, under the control of a shogun.[2]

With the rise of the first *bakufu* in Kamakura, there came the reorganization of warrior socioeconomic organizations into the governmental structure, and along with it came a new role for the warriors. Once considered merely local enforcers, some of the samurai class men, who had fought on the side of Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147 – 1199), the winner in the Genpei War (c. 1180 – 1185), became a crucial part of the new *bakufu*. These were mostly eastern warriors, and received special dispensation from the *bakufu* to manage the polity's estate system as far away as Kyushu. The samurai became the local managers of the various landholdings and estates for the aristocratic elites, in charge of both the daily management of said estates, and most importantly, the collection and delivery of taxes from the various provinces to the capital. Their direct involvement and the control over the revenue of the aristocrats eventually led to the

[2] There was no shogun between 1573, marking the last Ashikaga shogun, and 1603, the year the Tokugawa shogun was appointed. The establishment of the Tokugawa shogun ushered in a new period historians call the "early modern." For a concise summary of the transition from the Sengoku period to the Tokugawa period, see Bulter, "The Sixteenth-Century Reunification," pp. 311 – 20.

erosion of the imperial court's political relevance as the samurai continued to accumulate wealth and power at the aristocracy's expense.

The court did not immediately accept the establishment of the warrior government nor, a century later, the apparent growth of warrior authority. In 1221, Retired Emperor Go-Toba (1180 – 1239) unsuccessfully sought to overthrow the *bakufu.* A century later in 1333, Emperor Go-Daigo (1288 – 1339) assembled non-*bakufu* warriors and disgruntled *bakufu* retainers to thwart the government. A violent struggle ensued and the Kamakura *bakufu* was destroyed. Although the impetus for the attack had been Go-Daigo's grievance regarding the system of enthronement that alternated between two fraternal lines, he blamed this system on the Kamakura *bakufu*'s mediation. While the imperial family at the time possessed the largest portfolio of estates in the archipelago, the subsequent centuries would see gradual but certain deterioration of property rights among imperial and all aristocratic families as warriors encroached into them legally and illegally.

The destruction of the Kamakura *bakufu* was followed by a short, three-year reign of Emperor Go-Daigo. Despite the short-lived success of the court, it merely led to the rise of a new warrior government to replace their overthrown predecessor. This new Muromachi *bakufu* further weakened the court's authority over the provinces. Whereas before, the warriors and aristocrats shared some level of jurisdictional control over the many landholdings, during the Muromachi era (1336 – 1573), warriors seized almost all authority over local administrations and the revenue it generated from the hands of the aristocracy. Prior to the Muromachi period, property-holders, including aristocrats and warriors, held rights over many estates scattered across the archipelago. But this trend gradually died out during the Muromachi period as warriors sought to increase their dominance over local areas. Some warriors traded distant

landholdings for similarly sized ones closer to home. The process of consolidating land rights into one region led to the growth of powerful local warlords, who came to be called the daimyo, or "big name." During and after the Ōnin War (1467 – 1477), daimyo increased their independent authority over the region they controlled. The Ōnin War, initially a succession dispute concerning the shogun's house, erupted into a civil war that engaged nearly all major warriors in the country. The war, which was mostly fought in Kyoto, significantly weakened the authority of the Muromachi *bakufu*, whose headquarters was located in Kyoto. With the diminishing control exerted by both the court and the *bakufu*, daimyo all over the archipelago capitalized on this opportunity and became rulers in their own right. Unsurprisingly, when the civil war finally ended in 1477, the daimyo relinquished none of their newfound freedoms back to the *bakufu*. With the central warrior government losing most of its authority over the provinces, Japan entered the Sengoku, or warring states, period, where local daimyo competed with their rivals for domination and power.

The fragmentation of the Muromachi *bakufu*'s authority lasted until a daimyo, Oda Nobunaga (1534 – 1582), ousted the last Muromachi shogun from Kyoto in 1573 and put an end to the Muromachi period. Nobunaga gradually expanded his military control over the archipelago, but Nobunaga's reign ended in 1582 when one of his retainers betrayed Nobunaga and drove him to his death. Without a clear line of succession, Nobunaga's retainers and allies competed among themselves to seize as much of Nobunaga's empire as possible. This conflict led to the rise of Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1558 – 1598), who became the primary military and political force of Japan from 1583 onwards. [3]

[3] For a succinct summary of the Sengoku period and the subsequent rise and fall of Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, see Kurashige, "The Sixteenth Century: Identifying a New Group of 'Unifiers' and Reevaluating the

The demise of the central warrior government in Kyoto in 1573 did not negate Kyoto of all political relevance. Although the imperial court depended heavily on the patronage and economic sustenance from their military counterpart, the Muromachi *bakufu*, the court nevertheless managed to weather the storm of political turmoil. It did so by making use of its cultural capital. Many aristocrats replaced the *bakufu* with new supporters from among the powerful daimyo located across the archipelago. Many warlords held tremendous political, military, and financial power, but lacked the cultural fluency needed to garner prestige and respect. In return for monetary support, aristocrats and courtiers would transmit closely guarded knowledge on cultural activities such as poetry composition and literary analysis to their samurai patrons, while petitioning the court for imperial titles and ranks in the warlords' stead. In other words, while much of the sixteenth century was a period of degrading political and military influence from Kyoto, it was also a time of intense cultural expansion as Kyoto culture penetrated every corner of the country.

This was the political landscape in which the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* came to be written. The diary covers a period of twelve years from Tenshō 2 (1574) to Tenshō 14 (1586). This was a time of possibly the greatest cumulative violence in premodern Japanese history, yet it was also a time of momentous shift from fragmentation to unification. This was a time when centralized political control emanating from Kyoto had lost all meaning in the daimyo's home provinces as intense political and military tension flared up into open conflict with increasing frequency between regional rivals. The Shimazu, the daimyo whom Uwai Kakuken served, were largely unaffected by the activities of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi for most of the sixteenth century. By

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Myth of 'Reunificaton,'" pp. 171 – 83. See also Hall, *Government and Local Power in Japan, 500 to 1700: a Study Based on Bizen Province,* pp. 271 – 95.

Tenshō 14 (1586) however, the Shimazu could no longer ignore the developments in central Japan, as Tenshō 14 marked the final year of Shimazu independence before their surrender to Hideyoshi. Yet, the Shimazu was one of the last to capitulate to the central unifying powers. This prolonged independence enjoyed by the Shimazu was further reinforced by the distance separating them from central Japan. This renders the Shimazu into a unique example of a successful late Sengoku daimyo free from the influence of central figures like Nobunaga and Hideyoshi. This distinguished the Shimazu from most of their Sengoku counterparts. The systems and infrastructures of the Shimazu represented a successful parallel structure to those prominent in central Japan, the examination of which will serve to enrich our understanding of the key factors necessary for effective administration of a domain during the Sengoku period.

I.b. The Shimazu Family Lineage

The Shimazu family, like many of its peers throughout the medieval era, consisted of many different branches. For the most part, this work will be focused around the administrative and military structures of the primary branch of the Shimazu family which was ruled by Shimazu Yoshihisa and his three brothers, Yoshihiro, Toshihisa, and Iehisa.[4] While other secondary branches of the family controlled various landholdings across the archipelago, the three provinces of southern Kyushu, Satsuma, Ōsumi, and Hyūga, had the longest association with the Shimazu's main branch in general. This can be traced to the very beginnings of the Shimazu family itself.

The primary branch of the Shimazu family traced its origins to the Kamakura period retainer, Koremune Tadahisa (d. 1227), who served under the first shogun, Minamoto no

[4] Please refer to the "Appendix" for a simplified family tree of the Shimazu family.

Yoritomo. Extant documents show that Yoritomo did in fact appoint Koremune Tadahisa to various posts associated with different estates (*shōen*) throughout the archipelago. Most importantly for our purposes here, Tadahisa was assigned the post of resident estate manager (*geshi-shiki*) of the Shimazu estate in Satsuma, or modern day Kagoshima.[5] Following a common practice at the time, the Koremune family changed its name from Koremune to that of the estate under their management, thus adopting the surname of Shimazu.

The Shimazu however, saw themselves as more than just the descendants of some retainer from the Kamakura era. The theory that the Shimazu were the descendants of Koremune Tadahisa is one that is supported by solid documentary evidence, but the Shimazu themselves believed another theory to be true during the late sixteenth century. This theory directly impacted the Shimazu's self-image, which in turn would affect the decision-making process of the Shimazu. After all, each decision the Shimazu made would in some way affect their image in the eyes of both their retainers and their rivals. As the origins of the Shimazu was inseparable from the legitimacy of their rule over southern Kyushu, the Shimazu's maintenance of their image had significant implications for their domain's stability.

The most prominent theory that the Shimazu espoused was as follows: the Shimazu actually descended from the shogun himself, and that their progenitor, Koremune Tadahisa, was an illegitimate child of Yoritomo. While the origins of this theory cannot be confirmed, Shimazu genealogies citing this theory as fact first started to appear sometime during 1394 – 1428.[6]

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[5] For the earliest documents issued by Minamoto no Yoritomo to Koremune Tadahisa, see "Minamoto no Yoritomo kudashibumi," Genryaku 2 (1185). 6.15, *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK *Iewake* 1 (pp. 1 – 2). See also, 1185/06/15 "Minamoto no Yoritomo kudashibumi," Genryaku 2 (1185). 6.15, *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK *Iewake* 2 (p. 2). For the appointment of Kuremune Tadahisa to the resident estate manager of Shimazu estate, see 1185/08/17 "Minamoto no Yoritomo kudashibumi," Genryaku 2 (1185). 8.17, *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK *Iewake* 3 (pp. 2 – 3).
[6] Mizuno, "Shimazu-shi no jiko ninshiki to shisei," p. 162.

Subsequently, the Shimazu genealogies composed based upon such documents continued to portray the Shimazu as direct descendants of Yoritomo up until around the early modern era.[7]

As we might imagine, the existence of these genealogies had tremendous implications for the Shimazu's sense of identity. The continued use of documents characterizing Koremune Tadahisa as the son of Yoritomo hints at the enormous value the Shimazu attached to their connection to the first shogun. This is understandable as it granted them the prestige to exert their military and political influence without the need to seek outside approval as so many daimyo did. At the same time, the claim to being the direct descendants of the first shogun also granted the Shimazu a certain level of arrogance befitting those of a noble lineage.[8]

Beyond this claim to warrior nobility, the Shimazu also sought to acquire the prestige derived from the aristocracy through their use of the surname of Fujiwara in documents. The Fujiwara and their descendants served as imperial regents since the late tenth century and were indisputably the highest ranked aristocrats with the greatest prestige and influence. This association between the Shimazu and the Fujiwara surname was not something new. Like their association with Yoritomo, usage of the Fujiwara name can also be traced back to the time of Koremune Tadahisa. In a *bakufu* order issued in Jōkyū 3 (1221), Koremune Tadahisa was referred to as "left division lieutenant of the outer palace guards, Fujiwara Tadahisa,"[9] suggesting that not only did he claim association with the Fujiwara, but that said association was

[7] Mizuno, "Shimazu-shi no jiko ninshiki to shisei," p. 162.
[8] The Shimazu's claims to a long and noble lineage were by no means unique. For an example of another Sengoku daimyo who traced their family history to the Kamakura period, see Matsuoka and Arnesen, "The Sengoku Daimyo of Western Japan: the Case of the Ōuchi," pp. 64 – 65. An in-depth analysis of the Ōuchi family can be found in Arnesen's monograph, *the Medieval Japanese Daimyo: the Ōuchi Family's Rule of Suō and Nagato.* For an alternative look at the Ōuchi and their fall from power see Conlan, "The Failed Attempt to Move the Emperor to Yamaguchi and the Fall of the Ōuchi," pp. 185 – 203.
[9] "Kantō gechijō," Jōkyū 3 (1221). 7.12, *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK *Iewake* 17 (p. 13). See also Miki, *Satsuma Shimazu-shi,* pp. 93 – 94, and Mizuno, "Shimazu-shi no jiko ninshiki to shisei," p. 154.

recognized in an official capacity. It is important to keep in mind that the use of the Fujiwara family name did not in any way signify a familial link between the Shimazu and the Fujiwara. The only real connection between the two families during the time of Tadahisa was that he was the manager of the Shimazu estate, the main estate rights of which were held by the Konoe family, one of many branch families of the Fujiwara.[10]

This portrait of the Shimazu, that dared to see themselves as nobility, illuminates the arrogant streak in their family identity. This sense of pride directly influenced the way that the Shimazu daimyo handled their political interactions in the sixteenth century. On the twenty-third day of the first month of Tenshō 14 (1586), the Shimazu attempted to formulate a response to the regent Toyotomi Hideyoshi. The Shimazu were offended by Hideyoshi's demands as they saw themselves as inherently more prestigious than the newly minted regent.[11] According to the diary of Uwai Kakuken, their meeting proceeded in the following manner:

> Item: Twenty-third day. I attended court as usual. Today was also spent entirely in conference.
>
> After he was appointed regent last year, a letter arrived from Lord Hashiba [Hideyoshi] last winter along with supporting letters from the Hosokawa Heibu-taisuke (Fujitaka) Novice Genshi and the tea-master (Sen no) Sōeki. The content of the letter is as follows:
>
> In accordance with the imperial will, I write to you with regards to the state of affairs in Kyushu. As I am tasked with bringing all provinces under heaven, from the Kantō area to the ends of Ōshū, to an age of peace by imperial decree, I find the continuing military activities in Kyushu simply unacceptable. With regards to the disagreements surrounding provincial borders, arguments from both sides of the conflict shall be submitted for consideration, after which a final decision will be rendered. Before this can be done however, it is decided that both sides must first cease all military actions immediately. Of course, those who refuse to comply with this order will be severely

[10] Takeuchi Rizō, as quoted in Mizuno, "Shimazu-shi no jiko ninshiki to shisei," p. 154. For a more in-depth look at the holdings of the Konoe family, see Yoshimura, "Konoe-keryō kenkyū josetsu," pp. 47 – 80.
[11] The original letter sent by Toyotomi Hideyoshi was marked as being sent by Hashiba Hideyoshi. Hashiba Hideyoshi changed his family name to Toyotomi after he was given the imperial permission to do so on the ninth day of the ninth month of Tenshō 13 (1585). For the sake of simplicity, I will be referring to him as Toyotomi Hideyoshi throughout this work.

> punished. As such, a response to this order must be submitted as soon as you arrive at a decision – this is of utmost importance for all parties involved.
> The second day of the tenth month (Seal [of Hideyoshi][12], no signature)
> Sent to Lord Shimazu (Yoshihisa), Urgent letter.
>
> If we send a reply to the regent in response to his demands, we will of course need to do so properly, following the correct protocols. That being said, the Hashiba has no respectable ancestry or history in the world. In contrast to them, the Shimazu is of a loyal ancestry, dating back to the time of Yoritomo. As such, it is absurd that we are required to treat Hashiba with the respect of a regent in our response. He was appointed regent for no reason, yet he casually invoked the imperial will in his letter. All of this is truly ridiculous…[13]

The Shimazu's response to Hideyoshi's order clearly illustrates how they saw itself vis-à-vis Hideyoshi. Especially enlightening is the Shimazu's disdain for Hideyoshi and for treating him with the proper protocols as demanded by Hideyoshi's station. Whether or not the displeasure the Shimazu felt toward Hideyoshi was converted into action is irrelevant. The way that the Shimazu saw their own prestige had a demonstrable impact from the very fact that this issue was brought up as a matter worthy of administrative debate.

The unpleasantness of treating Hideyoshi with any degree of respect befitting his station was indicative of the value the Shimazu placed upon their own lineage. This was evident even before Hideyoshi's orders for the cessation of violence arrived. Upon initially hearing news of Hideyoshi's promotion to regent, the Shimazu were obliged to send a congratulatory message to Hideyoshi. The way that the Shimazu expressed this message to him did not show any real sign of approval toward Hideyoshi's appointment to regent. According to Miki Yasushi, despite their willingness to congratulate Hideyoshi, the message the Shimazu sent did not employ any words

[12] The version quoted within the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* does not denote whose seal was within the letter. However, this letter also appears in the *Shimazu-ke monjo*, and in that version, the seal was cleary identified as that of Hideyoshi's. Please see "Hashiba Hideyoshi jikisho," Tenshō 13 (1585). 10. 2, *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK *Iewake* 344 (p. 341).
[13] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 89.

that expressed happiness or joy, but rather simply presented the appropriate gift to Hideyoshi for his promotion.[14] Since it was an accepted custom to send gifts to those being appointed to high positions, this act in itself cannot be considered as an expression of joy or happiness at the state of affairs.[15] In other words, the Shimazu did the bare minimum in accordance with proper etiquette. Their willingness to follow through with proper protocols was not a sign of approval of Hideyoshi being named the regent, but rather an act to maintain their own stature and keep up with appearances.

Important for our understanding of the Shimazu's sentiments towards Hideyoshi is the lack of information the Shimazu had with regards to Hideyoshi's relationship with the Fujiwara. While the Shimazu claimed that the lack of ancestry and history should preclude Hideyoshi from the position of regent, we know for a fact that Hideyoshi was not made a regent on the basis of his Hashiba lineage. In getting himself appointed as regent, Hideyoshi was in fact making use of his adoption into the Konoe family as leverage.[16] As the Konoe traced its lineage back to the Fujiwara, Hideyoshi essentially borrowed the strength of the Fujiwara to attain his own political aspirations. Evidence shows however that the Shimazu was likely unaware of Hideyoshi's adoption by the Konoe until the third month of Tenshō 14 (1586), two months after the meeting where the Shimazu claimed that Hideyoshi was appointed regent without reason. Nevertheless, despite their criticism leveled against Hideyoshi, the Shimazu adopted a method similar to the one taken by Hideyoshi in promoting themselves to court titles throughout the Sengoku period.

[14] Miki, *Satsuma Shimazu-shi,* p. 89.
[15] Miki, *Satsuma Shimazu-shi,* p. 89.
[16] For an in-depth discussion of warrior adoption and the use of various family names, see Spafford, "What's in a Name? House Revival, Adoption, and the Bounds of Family in Late Medieval Japan," pp. 281 – 29.

I.c. The Shimazu and the Konoe

The Shimazu's Fujiwara identity was also intrinsically tied to their relationship with the Konoe. While the Konoe and the Shimazu did not always have an amicable relationship, from the moment Koremune Tadahisa was appointed as manager of the Shimazu estate these two families were bounded to each other in the vertical structure of hierarchy that defined the estate system.[17] As the patron of the estate, the Konoe provided the Shimazu with imperial prestige through the bestowal of court titles, made possible by the Shimazu's approved use of the Fujiwara name.

The Shimazu's relationship with the Konoe formed the foundation upon which Yoshihisa managed to solidify his hold upon the primary branch of the Shimazu family. Control that Yoshihisa had over the Shimazu administration was not nearly as tight as one might assume and this only further reinforced the Shimazu's need for imperial titles. This unstable foundation of Yoshihisa's rule can be seen from the way that he came into power over the Shimazu family during the Sengoku period.

Similar to many families with centuries of history, the Shimazu had fractured into several branch families by the Sengoku period and control over the primary branch was hotly contested. Yoshihisa's hold over the primary branch of the Shimazu family was a relatively recent phenomenon. The rule over the main Shimazu branch was actually seized by Yoshihisa's father and grandfather, Shimazu Takahisa (1514 – 1571) and Shimazu Tadayoshi (1492 – 1568) respectively, when they exiled the previous leader of the primary branch in 1535 after several years of civil war. As a result of this, neither Takahisa nor Tadayoshi was widely recognized by the many Shimazu retainers as the legitimate ruler of the family until 1545. In other words,

[17] Miki, *Satsuma Shimazu-shi,* p. 112.

Yoshihisa's particular branch of the Shimazu family had only been recognized as the legitimate rulers of the Shimazu for roughly forty years by the late sixteenth century. Having inherited the control of the Shimazu family from his father in 1564, Yoshihisa's rule was hardly stable. The relatively frequent rumours of rebellion in addition to outside forces actively working to undermine Yoshihisa's rule constantly tested Yoshihisa's control over the Shimazu family. The legitimacy of Yoshihisa and his immediate family's rule was seen as a significant weakness throughout the reign of both Yoshihisa and his father.[18]

This relatively unstable foundation contributed to the Shimazu's concern over legitimacy and was at least partially the reason for their intimate connections to the Konoe. As part of their efforts to solidify themselves as the rightful rulers of the Shimazu family, Shimazu Takahisa cultivated his relationship with the Konoe regents in order to get both himself and Yoshihisa to be officially appointed to the position of the Governor of Mutsu (*mutsu-no-kami*) and Director of Upkeep (*shūri no daibu*) respectively in 1564. The significance of these imperial titles reached beyond simply garnering political legitimacy through courtly titles. These two particular court ranks had traditionally been held by every ruler of the main Shimazu branch for many generations. The title of "Governor of Mutsu" was the entire reason why the Shimazu branch that traditionally held control over the primary Shimazu family was known as the Ōshū branch, Ōshū being an alternate term for Mutsu. By having these ranks bestowed upon them through imperial

[18] Niina, *Shimazu Takahisa: Sengoku daimyō Shimazu-shi no tanjō,* p. 216. With regards to potential challenges towards Yoshihisa's authority, the most extensive amount of effort devoted to replacing Yoshihisa with a different Shimazu came from the Hideyoshi government after the Shimazu's surrender in 1587. According to Yamaguchi Ken'ichi, after their surrender, Shimazu Yoshihisa maintained a fairly anti-Hideyoshi attitude while his younger brother Yoshihiro (1535 – 1619) had shown much greater support for the Hideyoshi regime. As such, while Yoshihisa actively favored retainers who shared his sentiment, Hideyoshi's regime attempted to promote the influence of Yoshihiro in the Shimazu family. While in the end this did not result in anything tangible, it does serve as one example of the potential challenges to the rule of Yoshihisa within the Shimazu family itself. See Yamaguchi, "Sengoku: Toyotomi-ki Shimazu-shi no bugyōnin-sei," p. 8.

decree, Yoshihisa and his father had seized for themselves recognition from the imperial court, which granted them some of the much needed prestige necessary for their position as the rulers of the Shimazu family.[19]

The Shimazu thus saw themselves as more than common warriors, and instead, the very elite of the samurai class with a strong history dating to the first shogun of Japan. The Shimazu were also constantly reinforcing their ties with the aristocracy to secure more cultural and political leverage. This overall agenda of expanding their prestige and reputation will carry through to influence Yoshihisa's decisions as he ruled the Shimazu throughout the late sixteenth century.

I.d. The Geography and Climate of Southern Kyushu

The southern provinces of Kyushu provided the Shimazu with some important natural resources for war and trade. Two of the most important resources available in the region are horses and sulphur. Satsuma horses had been famous historically, and the Shimazu had capitalized on and improved upon this resource consistently.[20] Despite the importance of horses as a resource however, it was sulphur from Iōjima that became a major trade commodity for the Shimazu.

In fact, sulphur was such a large part of foreign trade that it was mentioned in the *Haedong jegukki,* a guidebook written and submitted by Sin Sukju in 1471 to the Joseon throne.[21] The *Haedong jegukki* is a text created as a guide for those in the government of Joseon Korea (1392 – 1897) to deal with and travel to Japan and the Ryukyu kingdom (modern day

[19] Niina, *Shimazu Takahisa: Sengoku daimyō Shimazu-shi no tanjō*, p. 195.
[20] Kojima, "Satsuma no uma bunka," p. 145, 149.
[21] Tanaka, *Kaitō shokokuki: Chōsenjin no mita chūsei no Nihon to Ryūkyū,* p. 3.

Okinawa). Maps detailing the various provinces and major maritime routes as well as a vocabulary and pronunciation guide for Japanese common phrases transliterated into Hangul suggests that the text served a practical function for its readers.[22]

The presence of sulphur within the Shimazu's jurisdiction would provide them with a significant military advantage upon the introduction of guns into the Japanese archipelago in 1543.[23] Unsurprisingly, the necessity of sulphur for the creation of gunpowder meant that sulphur became a prized commodity across Japan. From a military perspective, relatively easy access to sulphur likely contributed to the Shimazu becoming one of the earliest adopters of guns amongst the daimyo. As early as 1549, the Shimazu already incorporated rifles into their military campaigns.[24] From an economic perspective, sulphur was a valuable trade commodity. In fact, the demand of sulphur stretched beyond Japan and into Ming China during this period.[25] By utilizing their trade relations with Ming China, the Shimazu was able to capitalize on the sulphur in their domain and turn this resource into a valuable asset for domestic economic expansion.[26] This was at least partly responsible for the Shimazu's economic wellbeing until their confrontation with the Ōtomo in the 1580s.[27]

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[22] From Sin Sukju, *Haedong Jegukki*, reproduced in Tanaka, *Kaitō shokokuki: Chōsenjin no mita chūsei no Nihon to Ryūkyū,* pp. 301 – 303. For the vocabulary and pronunciation guide, see Sin Sukju, *Haedong Jegukki*, reproduced in Tanaka, *Kaitō shokokuki: Chōsenjin no mita chūsei no Nihon to Ryūkyū,* pp. 398 – 405.

[23] For a discussion on the impact gunpowder weapon had on the military culture of sixteenth-century Japan, see Morillo, "Guns and Government: A Comparative Study of Europe and Japan," pp. 82 – 102. See also Walthall, "Do Guns Have Gender? Technology and Status in Early Modern Japan," pp. 26 – 31. On the dissemination of guns throughout Kyushu see Lidin, *Tanegashima: the Arrival of Europe in Japan,* pp. 157 – 63.

[24] Lidin, *Tanegashima: the Arrival of Europe in Japan*, p. 161.

[25] Petrucci, "Caught Between Piracy and Trade: The Shimazu of Southern Japan at the Outset of the New Tokugawa Regime, 1599 – 1630," p. 102.

[26] The Shimazu had developed strong trade ties with Ming China since the early sixteenth century. See Lidin, *Tanegashima: the Arrival of Europe in Japan,* p. 162.

[27] Petrucci, "Caught Between Piracy and Trade: The Shimazu of Southern Japan at the Outset of the New Tokugawa Regime, 1599 – 1630," p. 103.

As far as luxury resources were concerned, gold was readily available in the southern Kyushu region as well, though it was a relatively late discovery by medieval standards.[28] The abundance of resources such as gold and sulphur would mean little however if the Shimazu could not efficiently move these goods outwards toward the Shimazu's neighbour. Luckily for the Shimazu, one of the key defining features of the southern Kyushu region is its extensive coastline and its close proximity to Korea, China, and the Ryukyu kingdom. In fact, the traditional stronghold of the Shimazu, the Satsuma province, was closer to Korea, China, and the Ryukyu kingdom than to Kyoto and central Japan.[29] As the Shimazu expanded their control over the southern Kyushu provinces of Satsuma, Ōsumi, and Hyūga, the Shimazu only further expanded their access to the maritime trade routes along the coast.[30]

The significance of the coastline as a defining feature of these provinces dates all the way back to the seventh and eighth centuries and continues to this day.[31] The three provinces of Satsuma, Ōsumi, and Hyūga were combined to make the modern prefectures of Kagoshima and Miyazaki when Japan transitioned into the modern era in the late nineteenth century. The modern official prefectural history of Kagoshima defines the prefecture of Kagoshima through its coastlines. It states that,

> [t]his prefecture, being on the southern part of Kyushu, hugs Kagoshima Bay with the two peninsulas of Ōsumi and Satsuma. Controlling the numerous islands to the

[28] Aoya, *Minami Kyūshū no chimei,* p. 145.
[29] Miki and Mukaiyama, *Satsuma to Izumi kaidō,* p. 1. For a succinct discussion of the maritime activities during this period in East Asia, see Andrade and Hang, "Introduction: The East Asian Maritime Realm in Global History, 1500 – 1700," pp. 1 – 27. See also Shapinsky, "Envoys and Escorts: Representation and Performance among Koxinga's Japanese Pirate Ancestors," pp. 38 – 64. For maritime interactions in Kyushu involving various European nations see Tremml-Werner, "Friend or Foe? Intercultural Diplomacy between Momoyama Japan and the Spanish Philippines in the 1590s," pp. 68 – 74.
[30] Extensive work has been done to examine the significance of Japanese history from the perspective of the coastline and its associated maritime activities during the medieval and early modern period. Please see Shapinsky, "With the Sea as Their Domain: Pirates and Maritime Lordship in Medieval Japan," pp. 221 – 238, and Shapinsky's monograph, *Lords of the Sea: Pirates, Violence, and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan.* See also Amino, *Rethinking Japanese History*, pp. 3 – 64, 79 – 96.
[31] Miki and Mukaiyama, *Satsuma to Izumi kaidō,* p. 1.

> southwest, facing the Pacific to its east and looking out towards the East China Sea to its west, this prefecture forms the southern gate of old Japan. With such a geographical location, it naturally became the key transportation point with China and the various countries of Southeast Asia, and historically, it has always occupied a prominent place with regards to foreign exchange.[32]

The association between Kagoshima, and by extension the provinces of Satsuma and Ōsumi, and the bodies of water surrounding it is immediately apparent. This description highlights the maritime nature of this region and the importance of the coastline as a key component of these provinces' economy. This is the reason why landholdings with direct access to the coast became a prized possession for many Shimazu retainers, and why the Shimazu centred their administration on Kagoshima while maintaining direct control over the port of Bonotsu. Both Kagoshima and Bonotsu were major commercial centres of southern Kyushu, with Bonotsu directly being tied to the commercial activities in Fujian as well as the Ryukyu kingdom.[33]

Despite the robust maritime trade made possible by the coastline of southern Kyushu, the area was not without its geographical issues that demanded the Shimazu's attention. Beyond the coastal regions of the area, southern Kyushu was also defined by the numerous mountains in the region. The vast majority of Satsuma's inland area consists of either mountains or hills.[34] The largest mountain range in Satsuma is Mt. Shibi in the north. This along with the Mt. Yahazudake and its associated peaks along the same mountain range formed a clear boundary that separated the Satsuma province from its northern neighbours.[35] These mountain ranges became a natural

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[32] *Kagoshima kenshi,* vol. 1, p. 1.
[33] Petrucci, "Caught Between piracy and Trade: The Shimazu of Southern Japan at the Outset of the New Tokugawa Regime, 1599 – 1630," p. 103. For a discussion on the early trade relationship between Satsuma province and the Ryukyu kingdom, see Pearson, "Early Medieval trade on Japan's Southern Frontier and its Effect on Okinawan State Development: Grey Stoneware of the East China Sea," pp. 122 – 51.
[34] Nakamura, *Satsuma minshū shihai no kōzō: gendai minshū ishiki no kisō wo saguru*, p. 64.
[35] *Kagoshima kenshi*, vol. 1. pp. 2 – 3; Mount Shibi connects to various other mountain ranges throughout the entirety of Kyushu. The prominence of Mount Shibi can be seen from the fact that the early Japanese government deemed this mountain range important enough to designate it as a deity. See Miki and Mukaiyama, *Satsuma to Izumi kaidō,* p. 5.

barrier between the Shimazu and their rivals to the north. Mt. Shibi and Mt. Yahazudake are not the only mountains in the area however. In fact, the region is filled with less prominent mountain ranges, with the only major plains forming along the western coast of the Satsuma peninsula. The abundance of mountains meant relatively little flatlands, necessary for productive agriculture, were available to the Shimazu. To make matters worst, many of the region's mountains included relatively active volcanoes as well.

There are three major volcanoes within just Satsuma province. The first of these is Mt. Kirishima located on the northeastern border between Satsuma and Ōsumi, which last erupted in 1971.[36] More famous than Mt. Kirishima, and closer to Satsuma proper are the other two volcanoes: Mt. Sakurajima and Mt. Kaimondake, located in Kagoshima Bay and the southern tip of Satsuma respectively. Mt Sakurajima is one of the most dangerous volcanoes in Satsuma, its last eruption dating to 1978.[37] While there were many abnormal activities and actual eruptions sighted on Mt. Kirishima, the most severe of which took place on 1566, activities associated with Mt. Sakurajima were far more devastating.[38] The records of Mt. Sakurajima's eruptions on both 1475 and 1476 describe in detail the impact these two particular incidents had on the surrounding area. In 1475, the eruption resulted in the raining down of volcanic ash for five days, resulting in a death-toll of people and horses beyond calculation. A year later, in 1476, the burning embers and dust from the eruption buried local settlements, resulting in mass deaths for both humans and life-stocks.[39]

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[36] Murayama Iwao, *Nihon no kazan 3: Kyūshū, nansei shotō oyobi fuhen,* p. 90.
[37] Murayama Iwao, *Nihon no kazan 3: Kyūshū, nansei shotō oyobi fuhen,* p. 125.
[38] From *Shimazu kokushi,* Eiroku 9 (1566) 9.09. Quoted in Murayama Iwao, *Nihon no kazan 3: Kyūshū, nansei shotō oyobi fuhen,* p. 77.
[39] Regarding a typical account of an eruption of Mt. Sakurajima, see *Zenpen kyūki zatsuroku,* Bunmei 3 (1471) 9.12. Quoted in Murayama Iwao, *Nihon no kazan 3: Kyūshū, nansei shotō oyobi fuhen*, p. 92; for the 1475 account, see *Shimazu kokushi,* Bunmei 7 (1475) 8.15. Quoted in Murayama Iwao, *Nihon no kazan 3: Kyūshū, nansei shotō oyobi*

As for Mt. Kaimondake, this volcano had a much smaller impact upon the history of Satsuma and its neighbours during the medieval era. The last major eruption of Mt. Kaimondake dates all the way back to 885.[40] While there was a series of earthquakes associated with this volcano in 1967, it now rests mostly as a geographical attraction for travellers with little threat of eruptions.[41] This also means that, in contrast to Mt. Kirishima and Mt. Sakurajima, Mt. Kaimondake had a much smaller impact upon the inhabitants and the history of southern Kyushu.

The presence of these volcanoes had significant long-term implications for the agricultural development of the area. Eruption events and the resulting fallout were of course devastating for everyone in the vicinity. Beyond the immediate costs in human lives, the particulates launched into the atmosphere as a result eruption events dramatically reduced sunlight, which in turn directly impacted the growing of crops in the area and beyond.[42] But the volcanic activities of the region had more significant impacts beyond the loss of crops that resulted from eruptions. The high amount of volcanic activity within the area altered the long-term geological makeup of the region. As a result of these volcanoes, the entire area was covered by a white, thick layer of pumiceous rock called *shirasu*. This *shirasu* layer stretches across the entire region and was the result of a massive eruption of the Aira caldera 22,000 years ago. This created one hundred and fifty cubic kilometres worth of *shirasu* that effectively sealed off the

fuhen, p. 92; for the 1476 account, see *Nihon funkashi,* Bunmei 8 (1476) 9.12. Quoted in Murayama Iwao, *Nihon no kazan 3: Kyūshū, nansei shotō oyobi fuhen,* pp. 92 – 93.

[40] Murayama Iwao, *Nihon no kazan 3: Kyūshū, nansei shotō oyobi fuhen*, p. 126.

[41] Regarding the earthquakes, see Murayama Iwao, *Nihon no kazan 3: Kyūshū, nansei shotō oyobi fuhen*, p. 127.

[42] Murayama attributes the crop failures across the entire Japanese archipelago between 1471 and 1476 to the eruptions of Mount Sakurajima, see Murayama Iwao, *Nihon no kazan 3: Kyūshū, nansei shotō oyobi fuhen,* p. 169.

natural layer of topsoil. This eruption caused the Aira caldera to collapse and created Mt Sakurajima as it exists today.[43]

The *shirasu* rocks are composed mostly of volcanic glass and other inorganic materials. In its natural state, the *shirasu* is 80% volcanic glass. Chemically speaking *shirasu* is 70% silicic acid. Neither of these qualities make the *shirasu* layer of southern Kyushu conducive to agriculture.[44] The problem is further compounded by the massive amount of gas that is released by the heated volcanic glass as it cools, which leaves huge empty holes and pockets within the *shirasu* rock layer.[45] This meant that, in addition to the *shirasu* layer being poor for agriculture chemically, it also lacks the ability to retain water and nutrients. Water simply drains through the holes of the *shirasu* layer created by these air pockets. This rendered paddy field agriculture to be almost impossible.[46] This *shirasu* rock layer ranges from tens to hundreds of meters thick as well. For medieval agriculturalists, this was not something they can simply dig through to get to the much more productive soil layers buried underneath.[47] Luckily, *shirasu* rocks are very susceptible to water erosion likely caused by the structural weakness created by the air pockets within the rocks.[48] While this significantly increased the risks of rockslides in the region, it also means that riverbeds were amongst the most common regions to be naturally opened up for agriculture.[49] This provided some relief for the commoners living in southern Kyushu in terms of

[43] Nakamura, *Satsuma minshū shihai no kōzō: gendai minshū ishiki no kisō wo saguru,* p. 64; for the relation between the Aira caldera and Mount Sakurajima, see Murayama Iwao, *Nihon no kazan 3: Kyūshū, nansei shotō oyobi fuhen,* p. 90.
[44] Miki and Mukaiyama, *Satsuma to Izumi kaidō,* p. 4.
[45] Miki and Mukaiyama, *Satsuma to Izumi kaidō,* p. 4.
[46] Nakamura, *Satsuma minshū shihai no kōzō: gendai minshū ishiki no kisō wo saguru,* p. 64.
[47] Nakamura, *Satsuma minshū shihai no kōzō: gendai minshū ishiki no kisō wo saguru,* p. 64.
[48] Miki and Mukaiyama, *Satsuma to Izumi kaidō,* p. 4.
[49] Miki and Mukaiyama, *Satsuma to Izumi kaidō,* p. 4. See also Nakamura, *Satsuma minshū shihai no kōzō: gendai minshū ishiki no kisō wo saguru,* p. 64.

their agricultural production. Nevertheless, the presence of this *shirasu* layer across the region will continue to limit the overall agricultural capabilities of southern Kyushu.

The climate of southern Kyushu presented yet more problems to the agricultural development of the region. Being located in the subtropical zone, the area has ample supply of both sun and rain.[50] With an average annual temperature of 17.6 degrees celsius and 2,200 millimetres of rainfall, Satsuma's climate is considerably warmer and wetter than the average climate across the archipelago.[51] This warm temperature and ample rainfall is not solely due to southern Kyushu being within the subtropical zone, as it is also the result of the Kuroshio Current that passes over the area from the southwest, bringing with it all the warm and moist air from Southeast Asia.[52] Despite this however, agricultural production did not thrive in this region. While the overall average rainfall was higher than the rest of Japan, the vast majority of it comes in concentrated bursts during the summer as part of the annual rain season (*tsuyu*) and typhoons.[53] The frequency of typhoons were particularly devastating to agricultural production as they tend to coincide directly with the first rice harvesting season of the year, dramatically damaging agricultural output.

All of this meant that the Shimazu's domain was cursed with less than ideal agricultural production throughout the medieval period. This lack of agricultural productivity in southern Kyushu during the medieval period can be seen from the Iriki documents as they are presented

[50] Nakamura, *Satsuma minshū shihai no kōzō: gendai minshū ishiki no kisō wo saguru,* pp. 63 - 64.
[51] These figures are, of course, representative of recent times as opposed to the medieval period, and as such, it is perhaps debatable as to how applicable they are in a discussion of medieval Japan. However, they do give us some idea as to Satsuma's climate conditions relative to the rest of the archipelago assuming that whatever events that might have affected the climate of Satsuma would also have significantly impacted the archipelago as a whole, and thus still informative for the current discussion. See Nakamura, *Satsuma minshū shihai no kōzō: gendai minshū ishiki no kisō wo saguru,* p. 63.
[52] *Kagoshima kenshi*, vol. 1. p. 11.
[53] Nakamura, *Satsuma minshū shihai no kōzō: gendai minshū ishiki no kisō wo saguru,* p. 64.

by Asakawa Kan'ichi. This set of documents includes specifically a cadastral report of Satsuma, Ōsumi, and Hyūga from which we can get a sense of the overall agricultural production of Satsuma during the late thirteenth to mid fourteenth century.[54] By comparing the total acres of arable land within the region as noted in these cadastral surveys, conducted in 1276, 1285, and 1336, Asakawa concludes that the region had already reached its maximum agricultural productivity given the available technology at the time by the late twelfth century.[55] There was very little room for growth when it came to the agricultural productivity of southern Kyushu.

A more comparative perspective can be garnered from Sin Sukju's *Haedong jegukki,* the primary source from Joseon Korea previously alluded to. According to Sin Sukju's account, the Shimazu could not solely depend on agriculture to provide them a competitive revenue stream despite their control over all three provinces of southern Kyushu. In Sin Sukju's entry on Satsuma, he notes that there were thirteen major paddy fields which together consists of 4,630 *chō*[56] of land.[57] Relative to the other provinces in southern Kyushu that were under the jurisdiction of the Shimazu family, this amount left much to be desired. With eight major paddy fields covering only 673 *chō* in Ōsumi and five major paddy fields encompassing 7,236 *chō* in Hyuga, the amount of land under cultivation by the Shimazu totals to 12,539 *chō*.[58] As a point of comparison, the Chikuzen province alone had fifteen paddy fields covering 18,328 *chō*, while the Chikugo, Buzen, Hizen, and Higo provinces all individually had at least 13,000 *chō* under

[54] See Asakawa, *The Documents of Iriki*, pp. 111 – 6.
[55] Asakawa, *The Documents of Iriki*, pp. 6 – 7. See also Asakawa, *The Documents of Iriki*, p. 7, fn. 29.
[56] 1 chō equals roughly to 9900 square meters.
[57] From Sin Sukju, *Haedong Jegukki*, reproduced in Tanaka, *Kaitō shokokuki: Chōsenjin no mita chūsei no Nihon to Ryūkyū,* p. 354.
[58] From Sin Sukju, *Haedong Jegukki*, reproduced in Tanaka, *Kaitō shokokuki: Chōsenjin no mita chūsei no Nihon to Ryūkyū,* p. 354.

cultivation.[59] Assuming that the rate of production remains fairly consistent across all these provinces, it is clear that the Shimazu controlled an area that must rely on other means of economic development beyond agriculture if they were to maintain a competitive level of income relative to their neighbours.

Given that the Sengoku era was defined by intense competition among rival daimyo, generating enough food and resources in preparation for warfare would have been a pressing concern for the Shimazu. The unproductive nature of the land decreased the value of landholdings that were entirely land-locked, and in contrast further bolstering the value of coastal landholdings in the region for the Shimazu retainers. In other words, as a response to the lack of agriculture production, the Shimazu and their retainers relied instead on the natural resources of the area and maritime trade as their primary means of economic development.[60] This reliance on maritime trade will continue to affect the diplomatic policies of the Shimazu well into the seventeenth century.

II. Diaries in Japanese History and the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*

II.a. Diaries in Japanese History

The practice of diary writing was a fairly common phenomenon throughout much of Japan's history. Within the confines of the academic field, diary (*nikki*) could broadly be defined as any kind of records including but not limited to memoirs, legal documents, and even witness testimonies.[61] According to this definition, any kind of historical documents could technically be

[59] From Sin Sukju, *Haedong Jegukki*, reproduced in Tanaka, *Kaitō shokokuki: Chōsenjin no mita chūsei no Nihon to Ryūkyū,* pp. 344 – 53.
[60] Batten, *To the Ends of Japan: Premodern Frontiers, Boundaries, and Interactions*, p. 201.
[61] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon*, p. 3.

called a *nikki*, and indeed there were a quite few instances where the term *nikki* was used to describe such records.[62] For the purposes of this project, we adopt a narrower definition of *nikki* typically used by historians of Japan: a record of the daily occurrences continuously updated by the author over a prolonged period of time.[63] A key reason why the term *nikki* was used to describe common records was that many of these records were originally organized in the exact same manner as one would a diary.[64] As the term *nikki* translates literally into "daily record," it is unsurprising that this term would be used interchangeably between actual administrative records and what we would call diary in the Western tradition.

In the strictest sense, a *nikki* is a series of personal experiences kept as a form of note keeping, especially with regards to infrequent events or special occasions.[65] Unlike other forms of historical records, *nikki* had the added advantage of telling a continuous narrative over time and thus grant historians a more thorough understanding of specific events as they developed.[66] Furthermore, the personal nature of *nikki* meant that they were often kept by individuals who were not being commissioned by an outside source. The lack of involvement from authority figures often recorded in the diary also served to limit the possible biases that might exist in the *nikki*'s pages. This provided the diarists the opportunity to write about anything they wanted. From daily or mundane happenings to proper protocols for marriages and funerals, or from cultural events and religion to medical issues and entertainment, the diarists were free to discuss any of these topics in their *nikki* with relatively low risks for offending anyone.[67]

[62] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon*, p. 3.
[63] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon*, p. 3.
[64] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon*, p. 3.
[65] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon*, p. 3.
[66] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon*, pp. 4 – 5.
[67] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon*, p. 5.

In its purest state, *nikki* should theoretically provide an unbiased, subjective view on any given event less prone to exaggerations or lies relative to many other types of historical records.[68] However, it would be incorrect for us to assume that *nikki* and their contents are free from external biases. Even personal diaries served a very specific purpose for the courtiers who were among the first to keep consistent *nikki* as part of their daily routine. The idea of privacy is distinctly absent from the writing of *nikki*. Courtiers kept diaries and passed them on to their children for pedagogical purposes. These diaries provided the younger generations of courtiers with real life examples of how to handle various cases and occurrences in their inherited positions.[69] As this practice of using diaries as pseudo-textbooks proliferated, diaries kept by prominent courtiers were heavily sought after by aristocrats seeking to improve their stations within the court.[70] Monks also kept *nikki* for the same purposes as the courtiers, and over time these *nikki* also became a popular commodity by monks, courtiers, and warriors alike. During the decline of aristocratic power in the Muromachi and Sengoku period, the courtier *nikki* became a part of the cultural currency transferred from the court to the provincial warriors all across the archipelago.[71] The continued propagation of these *nikki* across time and space also led to various changes, edits, and even forgeries to appear.[72] The possibility of such alterations being made to extant versions of *nikki* is something to be aware of when making use of such a resource.

As the practice of *nikki* keeping proliferated among the aristocracy, the medieval warriors followed in their footsteps. As the samurai became more involved in the administration of the Japanese polity throughout the medieval period, they began keeping their own *nikki* for similar

[68] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon*, p. 5. See also Onoe, *Chūsei no nikki no sekai*, p. 44.
[69] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon*, p. 12. See also, Onoe, *Chūsei no nikki no sekai*, pp. 68 – 69.
[70] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon*, p. 12.
[71] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon,* p. 22.
[72] Saiki, "Nikki no kaizan to gisaku to nit suite," p. 160.

purposes. Scholars such as Saiki Kazuma notes that it is highly unlikely that Kamakura *bakufu* retainers kept no daily records of their activities, and the lack of any extant copies of these diaries is likely due to them being lost to time.[73] *Nikki* was thus copied and transmitted throughout the medieval period.[74] Meanwhile, warriors of various ranks also kept personal *nikki* during this time like their aristocratic counterparts.[75] The *Uwai Kakuken nikki* is merely one of many such diaries kept by a provincial warrior of the Sengoku period.

II.b. Uwai Kakuken and the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*

Uwai Kakuken (1545 – 1589) represented the third generation of the Uwai family that served the Shimazu. It was Kakuken's grandfather, Suwa Tameaki, who first surrendered to the Shimazu and betrayed his previous lord in Tenbun 17 (1548). Tameaki secured a position for himself and his descendents in the Shimazu administration through the military support of the Shimazu during this early phase of their expansion in Kyushu. Kakuken's father, Uwai Kunken, also served the Shimazu and was granted *jitō* rights[76] over the Nagayoshi landholding in Satsuma province in Tenbun 22 (1553).

Uwai Kakuken officially came of age around Eiroku 2 (1559), and began his service under the Shimazu at that point of his life. During his tenure under Shimazu Takahisa, Kakuken frequented the battlefield and served in multiple campaigns over the years. By Tenshō 1 (1573),

[73] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon,* p. 20.
[74] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon,* p. 22.
[75] Saiki, *Kokirokugaku gairon,* p. 24.
[76] *Jitō-shiki* is commonly translated into "military stewardship rights" which provided those holding such rights the power to police and manage the designated landholding, and to levy taxes in said landholding. This latter power to collect taxes was especially sought after by the samurai, for while they were supposed to deliver a specified portion of the revenue to those who held higher level rights over the landholding, being in control of collection meant that they alone knew the income every season. This allowed the *jitō* basically to expand his prerogatives. Because of this the *jitō-shiki* was an especially lucrative set of rights that many warriors wanted.

Kakuken transitioned into the position of mediator under Shimazu Yoshihisa, and as a result relocated to Kagoshima while maintaining his *jitō* rights over Nagayoshi. Kakuken continued his service as mediator for Yoshihisa until Tenshō 4 (1576), after which Kakuken was officially promoted to senior retainer. He would remain in Kagoshima until Tenshō 8 (1580), at which point he was granted *jitō* rights over Miyazaki and was transferred over to Miyazaki castle. After his move to Miyazaki, Kakuken acted mostly in a supporting role to Shimazu Iehisa (1547 – 1587), the youngest brother of Yoshihisa, while continuing to act in a military capacity for the Shimazu in general. Kakuken would march alongside the Shimazu against Toyotomi Hideyoshi's invasion of Kyushu in Tenshō 15 (1587), and together with Iehisa, surrendered to Hideyoshi in the third month of the following year. Kakuken died on the twelfth day of the sixth month, Tenshō 17 (1589), due to illness, at the age of forty-five.

Though the exact year in which the extant version of the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* was copied remains unknown, it likely dates at least to the early years of the Meiji period (1868 – 1912), and is currently kept at the Historiographical Institute at the University of Tokyo. When Kakuken wrote his diary, he simply titled his work as *Nikki*, or "diary." The extant version of the diary was archived by the Shimazu family under the title *Ise-no-kami nikki*, or the *Diary of the Governor of Ise*, referencing the court title Kakuken held prior to his death. This work was frequently referenced by historians throughout the early modern and modern periods, but they did not cite Kakuken's diary in a consistent manner. This led to a variety of different titles being used when referring to Kakuken's diary, the most popular of which were *Kakuken nikki* (*Kakuken's Diary*)*, Kakuken nicchō* (*Kakuken's Daily Records*), and *Kakuken nisshi* (*Kakuken's Daily History*). Ultimately, the Historiographical Institute decided to use the most common title,

Uwai Kakuken nikki (*Uwai Kakuken's Diary*), when they officially published this primary source in 1954.

The version of the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* that we examine here starts on the first of the eighth month of Tenshō 2 (1574) and ends on the fifteenth of the tenth month, Tenshō 14 (1586). The significance of these twelve years for the Shimazu could not be overstated. As Tenshō 14 was the last year that the Shimazu would operate as an independent daimyo, Kakuken's diary captured the final years of the Shimazu's struggle as they simultaneously sought to oust their rival, the Ōtomo, from Kyushu, while gambling against the possibility of Hideyoshi's intervention. The tension and the urgency with which the Shimazu acted became increasingly palpable with each entry towards the end of Kakuken's diary. Cumulating in a final entry that simply states that on the fifteenth day of the tenth month of Tenshō 14, Kakuken marched to the frontlines with his troops.

Structurally, the *nikki* itself can be separated into two major sections. The first and by far the larger section of the work is the actual diary itself where Kakuken recorded the daily events happening around him from Tenshō 2 to Tenshō 14. Though the diary itself nominally covers a span of twelve years, entries from around six of those years are no longer extant. Fortunately for us, entries from Kakuken's tenure as a mediator and as a senior retainer both exist in the current version of the *nikki*, allowing us to garner a strong understanding of Kakuken and how different administrative positions within the Shimazu affected the daily duties of a retainer.

The second section of the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* is what separates this specific *nikki* from many of its contemporary counterparts. In addition to the diary proper, an essay titled "Ise-no-kami kokoro-e sho," authored by Uwai Kakuken was kept as part of the *nikki* and passed down the generations inside the Shimazu family. This essay, the title of which translates roughly to "a

Note on the Knowledge of the Governor of Ise," was originally written on Tenshō 9 (1581), and served as a semi-autobiographical account on what Kakuken considered the proper behaviours suited for retainers.[77] The majority of this essay discusses various cultural and literary practices, military exercises, and even games that Kakuken deemed appropriate and necessary for samurai to participate in. In Kakuken's own words, "though a person might surpass all others in one particular thing, if that person is incompetent in other tasks, then I should think such a person to be inferior."[78] Most importantly for our purposes here, the presence of this essay illustrates for us the identity of Kakuken's target audience in general. In the opening lines to the "Ise-no-kami kokoro-e sho," Kakuken explicitly states that he wrote this essay in response to all the questions he received regarding the proper etiquettes, protocols, and tastes fitting for an ideal retainer.[79] In other words, Kakuken composed this essay for pedagogical purposes. In addition to what we know of *nikki* writing in general throughout the medieval period in Japan, the inclusion of this essay allows us to assume that Kakuken wrote his *nikki* for an educational purpose.

While the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* was not the only warrior diary extant from the Sengoku period, it has become a staple primary source for the study of Sengoku culture among medieval Japanese historians.[80] Other extant warrior *nikki* dating to the Sengoku period include but are not limited to ones kept by Matsudaira Ietada, Komai Shigekatsu, Ōwada Shigekiyo, Umezu Masakage, and the daimyo Date Terumune.[81] The *Uwai Kakuken nikki* stands out for historians due to its accessibility amongst the lot. The *Uwai Kakuken nikki* is widely available in print and in general considered easier to read than the others. In addition to this, Uwai Kakuken is

[77] For the autobiographical style of the "Ise-no-kami kokoro-e sho," see Saiki, "*Uwai Kakuken nikki* ni tsuite," p. 392.
[78] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 203.
[79] *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, part 3, p. 203.
[80] Niina, "Sōron: chūsei kōki Shimazu-shi no kenkyū jōkyō," p. 13.
[81] Kubota, "Sengoku bushō no nikki wo yomu: Fukōzu Matsudaira-shi to *Ietada nikki*," pp. 20 – 21.

considered by historians to be a fairly typical middle-ranking retainer of the Sengoku period.[82] Being the Sengoku equivalent of a middle manager, Kakuken's perspective and experiences during this era can be taken to be representative of many other warriors across the archipelago whose voices were lost to time. The unremarkable life of Uwai Kakuken is what renders his diary into a particularly valuable primary source for historians.

With all that being said however, research based on warrior diaries from the Sengoku period is somewhat lacking in contrast to their aristocratic counterparts.[83] Part of this is due to the general lack of research interest for this particular period of Japanese history. While warrior diaries, like the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, are extremely useful resources, they mostly speak to the history and culture of very specific regions of Japan during the Sengoku period. Due to the fragmented political landscape of this period of Japanese history, many primary sources from this era failed to be archived or were simply lost to time and war. As for the sources that remained, they tend to be much less centralized than those from other periods of Japanese history. All of this means research on the Sengoku period tend to have a higher barrier of entry for historians, especially foreign researchers who might not have the same level of access and connections as their Japanese counterparts.

This project thus serves as a starting point for those interested in Sengoku history. As stated above, a lot of information regarding the Sengoku samurai's experience can be extrapolated from Kakuken's diary. While the current work is focused solely upon Uwai Kakuken and the Shimazu family, many of the points made here can be extended to situations

[82] Saiki, "*Uwai Kakuken nikki* ni tsuite," pp. 390 – 1.
[83] This is not to say that such research is entirely absent. For an example of another work focused on a warrior's journal/diary, see Spafford, "An Apology of Betrayal: Political and Narrative Strategies in a Late Medieval Memoir," pp. 321 – 52.

and concerns of other daimyo and samurai families of this time period. Part of the goal of this project therefore is to bring to the forefront the information encapsulated by the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* alongside some research being done by Japanese scholars on this particular work. This project will expand our understanding of how Sengoku daimyo like Shimazu Yoshihisa operated and complicate our perception of the various local warlords of the Sengoku Japan.

III. Chapter Overview

This dissertation examines some of the key considerations behind the political decision-making process of the Shimazu administration and their daimyo, Shimazu Yoshihisa, primarily through their communication pattern. The current project will be broken into four major chapters. The first chapter, "On Communication," introduces the fundamental workings of the Shimazu communication infrastructure and the role played by the mediators who were critical to the operation of this system. In this section, we discuss the weaknesses of the Shimazu's system and how it opened up opportunities for exploitation by cunning retainers. These weaknesses did not escape the scrutiny of the daimyo and his senior retainer council, and in response to this they implemented countermeasures to protect against potential abuses of power. As a way to illustrate how mediators exploited their position as they operated within the communication system, we will look specifically at an interaction between Uwai Kakuken and the Nyūta family, and the possible reasons behind Kakuken's choice to disobey Shimazu Yoshihisa.

In the second chapter, "On Rumours," we will turn our attention toward the nature of medieval rumours, and the way that the Shimazu administration resolved them in a manner that maximized what Yoshihisa stood to gain. Specifically, we will be looking at two cases of rumours found in the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, the latter of which is the case that we started this

work with. Through these two cases, we will see how the somewhat indifferent relationship between the daimyo and the truth behind the rumours allowed Yoshihisa to utilize these rumours in a way beneficial to himself. In both instances, Yoshihisa took advantage of the ambiguity inherent in each situation to render decisions that were advantageous to himself. Yoshihisa did this at the expense of any potential abstract or moral obligations he might have to the larger entity that was the Shimazu administration or to his retainers.

The third chapter, "On Familial Forces," further explores the Shimazu's decision-making process by examining how the involvement of key family members of the Shimazu family affected Yoshihisa's decisions in various situations. Here, we will revisit the Shimazu's interaction with the Nyūta but from the perspective of Shimazu Iehisa. We will also look at two other cases of rumours in this chapter. The first deals with another potentially rebellious faction within the Shimazu administration not dissimilar to one of the cases explored in the previous chapter. What makes this particular instance different however is the way in which Yoshihisa's father, Takahisa, and brother, Yoshihiro, were directly involved with these rumours, resulting in a much more aggressive response from Yoshihisa. The second case explores the impact of Yoshihisa's daughter in altering and ultimately softening the Shimazu administration's response to rumours surrounding her husband through her indirect intervention. In all three instances, the involvement of Yoshihisa's family members significantly impacted the administrative decisions made by the Shimazu, suggesting that the wellbeing of Yoshihisa's family likely played a role in determining how decisions were made.

Finally, the last chapter, "On Spirituality," will be on the impact that the spiritual worldview of the Shimazu had upon their decision-making process. Using the *kuji*, divination conducted through a simple lottery process, as an example, this chapter argues that spirituality

and religion altered the decisions rendered by Yoshihisa and his government. Rather than considering spiritual acts like the *kuji* as a tool controlled and manipulated by the daimyo in order to suppress potential dissent amongst his senior retainers, such acts need to be viewed through the lens of faith and spirituality. The Shimazu were not unique in Sengoku society when it came to their religious worldview. As such, when considering the real impact of spiritual acts like the *kuji* upon the decision-making process, we must take into account the underlying spirituality of the people conducting the divinations. This chapter will illustrate how the Shimazu's faith defined many aspects of their lives and was fundamental to the way their entire administration operated.

CHAPTER 2

On Communication

The successful management of one's domain is predicated on one's access to the correct information. For Shimazu Yoshihisa and other daimyos like him, this meant ready access to formal reports and petitions, as well as rumours and whispers circulating in all levels of his administration. It was through these channels that Yoshihisa and his senior retainer council learned the information they needed in order to make the most informed political decisions. The administration's political process was thus intrinsically bound to their communication and information infrastructure. As such, an understanding of this infrastructure is critical to our exploration of some of the fundamental factors affecting the political decision-making process of the Shimazu administration during the late Sengoku period.

This chapter examines the foundational communication system of the Shimazu administration, in particular the nature of communication exchange that gave shape to the operation of the daimyo's domain in the period often characterized by violent warfare. Crucial to this examination are the considerations of the retainers who exploited the communication system toward their personal advantages. Truth and reliability of information were certainly critical to a daimyo's survival during the Sengoku era especially when it came to crucial military engagements, but such engagements only formed a small part of the daily management of a domain. Truth and accuracy mattered for war, but war was a means to an end. As this chapter will illustrate through the writings and actions of Uwai Kakuken and Shimazu Yoshihisa, there

were many ways through which warriors could seek their own goals, which in turn drove the political decisions they made. An examination of the communication system will show the miniscule control the daimyo had over the truthfulness of the information they received on a daily basis. This lack of control helps to explain why daimyo and retainers alike forfeited complicated political calculations and the enforcement of established rules often in favour of maximizing personal benefits in their decision-making process. After all, by considering only individual survival and personal gain, they could eliminate many of the variables in any given situation. This concern over individual reputation can be seen from how Uwai Kakuken chose to affirm or deny the communication protocols on different occasions. Kakuken's actions exemplified the importance warriors placed on their reputation in making their political decisions. Loyalty, military discipline, politics, and other such considerations were frequently subsumed by their needs to reinforce their personal gains and benefits. Inside this worldview, even the most overt acts of disobedience toward a daimyo's orders were seen as a personal challenge to the daimyo's authority as a ruler, hindering his path to attaining his agenda. As the system itself was designed to reinforce the needs and wants of those in power, when retainers acted against the established norms of said system, they were also acting to deny their superiors the ability to achieving their own agendas. Unsurprisingly, disobedience towards the system was thus seen as a slight against the daimyo himself.

This chapter will be broken down into three sections. The first section investigates the inner workings of the Shimazu communication system, by identifying who worked and operated within the domain's boundaries, and exploring the failsafe measures installed by the Shimazu in order to ensure the accuracy of the information being transferred. Crucial to these operations were men who served as mediators and bore the responsibilities for conducting inter-daimyo

diplomacy. It may seem that they would have a disproportionate amount of power through their control over the flow and content of information and military intelligence. But this potential power was curtailed and was rarely detrimental to the management of the domain. The measures the Shimazu instituted prevented the mediators from exploiting and solidifying their positions through their control over the information flow. During cases of inter-daimyo diplomacy, retainers were frequently assigned the role of temporary mediators almost on an ad hoc basis, dependent upon the personal connections and ties any particular retainer under consideration could bring to the table. The difference between the normal mediators and those in charge of inter-daimyo diplomacy was not the mode of control over the information flow but the scale of that control. However, as the daimyo had control over the final decisions in all matters should they wish to intervene, the balance of power between the daimyo and his retainers, including the mediators, was mostly maintained. For no matter how much control the mediators had over information, they had no sway over the daimyo's actions should the daimyo placed their personal wellbeing above all else.

The second section of this chapter will be focused on the unofficial channels of communication used in the Shimazu administration. Specifically, this section will be focused on communication initiated by people who were not warriors. While the official channels of communication were controlled by the Shimazu retainers, unofficial channels were dominated by people like courtiers, poets, and monks, whose non-martial expertise granted them significant diplomatic access to various daimyo across the archipelago. One of these non-warriors' prominent mediums of communication was poetry. Through these non-warriors' communication with the warriors, poetry slowly permeated into the warriors' daily communicative lexicon. Poetry had a special meaning to warriors as it represented courtly prestige. Having learned the

ways of poetry from courtiers and poets, warriors themselves used it as a tool for the purposes of communication, an exercise to enhance mental discipline of the samurai, and even as reward for warriors deemed worth by the daimyo. Poetry possessed immense utility as a communication tool. For this reason, courtiers and other poetically talented individuals had ready access to daimyo and could wield tremendous influence over them. The power of poetry also explains why poetically talented men, despite their lack of connections to the warrior regime, were highly valued as mediators. Moreover, whatever their medium of communication and their particular social stations, as unofficial mediators, courtiers and poets were in a position to control the accuracy of the information and military intelligence that were being transmitted to the daimyo. In their non-warrior status, they were more easily able to transfer information without needing to answer to any particular daimyo. This dimension of the communication network highlights the perilousness of any communication that the daimyo received. Accuracy and truthfulness could never be assured.

The third and final section of the chapter will discuss a case study from the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* that shows how information could be withheld or controlled by the mediators, and how far retainers could go to affect the political decisions of their daimyo for their personal benefits. In this particular instance, Uwai Kakuken was one of the most valuable mediators serving the Shimazu. Having placed his own reputation on the line in negotiating with a potential defector, he went above and beyond what was acceptable for his station to try and convince Yoshihisa to send Shimazu troops to aid this retainer. While Kakuken's efforts ended up in failure, this case illuminates how mediators' control over information was a possible means by which to influence the making of political decision at a high level, and how personal benefits could drive the actions of retainers and daimyo alike. Mediators themselves were never certain if

the information they were delivering contained accurate and truthful content. But their ultimate concern was not with the truthfulness of the information. Rather, in the age of fragile loyalty, mediators were likely looking out for their own benefit, and the information they conveyed was a potential means by which they can influence their daimyo to their advantage. This was yet another dimension of the age of fraught communication that threatened the security of the daimyo.

I. The Communication System of the Shimazu

Perhaps unsurprisingly, for daimyo like the Shimazu, access to information was reliant upon an established bureaucratic framework. This framework was designed to filter out uncritical information from crucial and urgent matters, and in this way allows the daimyo to concentrate on things most important to him. The following excerpt from Uwai Kakuken's diary entry dating to the seventeenth day of the tenth month, Tenshō 2 (1574) gives us an idea of how this framework functioned.

> Item. Seventeenth day. I attended court as usual. Today, the various *jitō* of Sendai, including Kamata Masamune, Nomura Hidetsuna, Yamada Arinobu, and the representative of Shōōsai (Hishijima Kunizane), the *jitō* of Kumanojō, Matsumoto Gagaku-no-suke gathered here for the inquiry into the dispute at Nitta Shrine.[84]
>
> When asked about this dispute, they replied, "There is not much for us to say on this. However, since we have gathered here, we suggest that perhaps Gonshū-in should be summoned here by himself, and be compelled by Dangisho [Daijō-in Morihisa] to submit a pledge (*shinhan*) of loyalty to the Shimazu. We can then officially recognize the adoption. Will this not convince the others who previously opposed this decision as well?" Shirahama Suo-no-suke and myself received this message, and submitted it to our lord.

[84] The dispute at Nitta Shrine was a long and drawn out affair. This affair was first noted by Kakuken on the seventh day of the eighth month of Tenshō 2 (1574). The details of this dispute are not particularly important for our purposes here. To summarize it briefly, this was a disagreement between shrine officials regarding the adoption of Miyada Mokusuke, with the person making the adoption blaming the other side for constantly hindering the adoption process. For details regarding this dispute, see *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, pp. 4, 12 – 14, 20 – 21.

> Our lord stated, "Since we summoned the various *jitō* specifically for this matter, their proposed solution should be considered appropriate." He continues, "This matter is not something that should concern me, but rather be resolved by the senior retainers."…[85]

From this brief excerpt, we can identify several features of the Shimazu's internal communication framework. First, while the *jitō* served the Shimazu as retainers and answered the Shimazu's summons, they did not actively participate in the daily operations of the daimyo's court. In the above excerpt we see the *jitō* functioned as a temporary consulting body called to court for the purposes of resolving a specific dispute. It is interesting to note that despite having the authority to override these *jitō*, Yoshihisa chose to respect the *jitō* by following through with their suggestions. His reasoning for doing so was not that the advice was particularly insightful, but simply because the *jitō* were summoned here at all and so the proper course of action would be to affirm their proposal, perhaps as a way to respect the efforts of the *jitō*.

Second, we see from this diary entry that the daimyo and his senior retainers (*rōjū*, or *otona*) were two separate and distinct decision-making bodies within the political structure of the domain. According to Fukushima Kaneharu, the senior retainers were the first level of the decision-making hierarchy, and it was only when the decisions rendered by the senior retainers were too difficult to enforce or when the senior retainers' decisions were met with non-compliance that a given issue would be presented to the daimyo.[86] The senior retainers, being the top level administrative officials within the daimyo's polity, thus partially embodied the authority of the daimyo when it came to the daily administrative process.[87] What is particularly interesting here however, is the way in which Yoshihisa operated as a strictly separate and

[85] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 34.
[86] Fukushima Kaneharu. *Sengoku daimyō Shimazu-shi no ryōgoku keisei*, p. 99.
[87] Fukushima, *Sengoku daimyō Shimazu-shi no ryōgoku keisei,* p. 99. See also Niina, *Shimazu Takahisa: Sengoku daimyō Shimazu-shi no tanjō,* p. 52.

superior authority to his senior retainers with regards to the making of political and administrative decisions. In the quoted passage above, we see Yoshihisa explicitly stating that the decision they were asking him to make should not merit his attention. Instead, it should have been dealt with by the senior retainers. That Yoshihisa was consulted in this matter at all presents us with a particular instance where such a framework could and did fail. In the end, despite being designed to prevent trivial matters from reaching the daimyo and unnecessarily occupying his time, we see that particularly tenacious retainers could force the daimyo to give his personal attention to them.

Lastly, we see from the above passage that the different parts of the same administration were not in direct contact with one another. In this particular instance, we see that the advice given by the *jitō* was not received directly by the daimyo, but rather by Shirahama Suo-no-suke and Kakuken, and it was only through them that Yoshihisa received the *jitō*'s advice.[88] While the quoted passage does not make this explicit, the protocols for communication between the senior retainers and Yoshihisa were exactly the same. Another short passage from Kakuken's diary illustrates this clearly:

> Item. Eighteenth day. I attended court as usual. Regarding the resignation of Nomura from yesterday, I presented the matter to the senior retainers by myself. Since the senior retainers decided that this matter will require our lord's approval, I then submitted this to

[88] The position of mediators, or more specifically, *toritsugi* or *sōsha* was by no means unique to the Shimazu, but was a common role in many daimyo's polity, including the Hōjō, the Takeda, the Date, the Toyotomi, and even the Tokugawa, the latter of which carried this system of information transmission through to the Tokugawa period (1603 – 1868). Despite how common mediators were across the various polities during the Sengoku era, more research will be required to determine whether or not mediators functioned in the exact same manner as that of those who served the Shimazu. The current research will deal specifically on the role played by the mediators within the Shimazu polity. For more on the mediators in the Hōjō, see Endō, "Etsusō-dōmei ni miru heiwa no sōzō to iji: Sengoku daimyō no uen-sei to muen-sei," pp. 81 – 109**.** See also Kuroda, *Sengoku daimyō ryōgoku no shihai kōzō*, pp. 17 – 40. For mediators of the Takeda, see Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō*. For the mediators of the Date, see Endō, "Shitsuji no kinō kara mita Sengoku-ki chiiki kenryoku: Ōshū Ōsaki-shi ni okeru shitsuji Ujiie-shi no jirei wo megutte," pp.51 – 70. See also Endō, *Sengoku jidai no minami Ōu shakai: Ōsaki, Date, Mogami-shi*. For more on the Toyotomi mediators, see Yamamoto, *Bakuhan-sei no seiritsu to kinsei no kokusei*. (Tokyo: Azekura Shobō, 1990), pp. 22 – 62. Finally, for more on the Tokugawa system of mediators, see Takagi Shōsaku. *Edo bakufu no seido to dentatsu bunsho.*

> our lord. He said, "I do not understand why he wished to resign. If he is harbouring any concerns in his heart, he should present them plainly at the senior retainers' meetings. If this is not the case, then I shall continue to count on his services."[89]

Here we see that even when the senior retainers deemed an issue to be beyond their jurisdiction, they could only present their decisions to Yoshihisa through a mediator like Kakuken. The separation between the council of senior retainers on the one hand and the daimyo on the other, and the necessity for mediators to operate between to the two, defined the Shimazu's two-tiered system of decision-making. The importance of the mediators in facilitating the communication between the daimyo and his senior retainer council meant that the mediators played a critical role in the daimyo's administration. In fact, the mediators were involved in every step of the communication process as dictated by their role as the official channels for transmitting information and military intelligence. Their ability to do so was predicated on the mediators' lack of input in the actual decision-making process itself. The mediators represented a fluid element of the Shimazu communication: one that had no official bearing on the decision-making, but was nevertheless a critical part of the entire infrastructure. Next, let us turn our attention towards these mediators.

While the quoted passages above illustrate for us only the internal flow of information between the daimyo and his senior retainers, it is important to note that the mediators were intimately involved with the message delivery from outside of daimyo's administration as well. According to Yamaguchi Ken'ichi, both the process of petitioning the daimyo by the *jitō*, and the subsequent proclamations rendered by either the daimyo or the senior retainers were conducted exclusively by the mediators.[90] In other words, the mediators were the sole transmitters of

[89] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 37.
[90] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," pp. 119 – 20.

information in between every level of the daimyo's administration. Whether it was the *jitō,* the *kokujin*, lower level retainers, or even the servants of these retainers, all petitions to the daimyo were delivered by the mediators to the senior retainers, and it was up to the senior retainers to decide which petitions needed the daimyo's attention.[91] The mediators thus embodied the official pipeline of communication. While there existed other methods for servants and retainers to petition the daimyo, for now let us concentrate on examining the mediators' function within the Shimazu administration.

The responsibility for accurately and efficiently transmitting the various messages both to and from the daimyo rested solely upon the shoulders of the mediators. Given the significant impact that mediators had upon the administration, certain mechanisms were installed to prevent them from meddling with information and military intelligence for personal gain or otherwise make use of their position to amass political power. While the effectiveness of these measures was ultimately questionable, they do represent the Shimazu's efforts to control the reliability of their communication apparatus. First and foremost was the simple idea of redundancy. The Shimazu had a tendency to assign more than one mediator to a particular task, proportional to the importance of the message being delivered. If we return to the two examples from the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* cited above, we can get a sense of how this played out in reality. In the former instance, the advice given by the *jitō* in an attempt to end the conflict in Nitta Shrine was delivered by two mediators, Shirahama Suo-no-suke and Uwai Kakuken. In contrast to this, the resignation attempt by Nomura was transmitted only by Kakuken. From the perspective of the

[91] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," p. 122. It is important to note that while these various groups could petition the daimyo through the employment of the *toritsugi*, the act of petitioning itself was by no means a common occurrence. More often than not, when dealing with their own internal or domestic issues, they would simply invoke the authority of their individual family and resolve any issues independently. See also Yamaguchi "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," pp. 121 – 2.

Shimazu administration, these two issues were significantly different in both urgency and risk. In the case of the Nitta Shrine, it was an issue that took place over three months and involved multiple parties with conflicting interests. Furthermore, the people involved in this incident were managers and servants of a shrine complex that the Shimazu did not have direct control over. All this would suggest that a certain amount of caution must be exercised when resolving such a conflict.

In contrast to the Nitta situation, the case of Nomura's resignation was, for the Shimazu, an extremely low-risk affair. Despite requiring the personal attention of Yoshihisa, a retainer's resignation was an entirely domestic affair, and whatever the final decision might be, only those directly serving the Shimazu will be affected. Unlike the Nitta case, there was no real conflict to be resolved beyond the wants of an individual retainer, which the daimyo could grant or deny at his own leisure with no need for arguments or evidence to be evaluated. The overall simplicity of this issue and the low-stakes nature of the request meant that a single mediator tasked with this petition would have sufficed.

To further illustrate this correlation between the number of mediators assigned to delivering information and the importance of the message itself, let us turn to another example from Kakuken's diary. On the tenth day of the twelve month of Tenshō 2 (1574), Kakuken wrote,

> Item. Today a dispute between Daiōji and Jōkyō-in regarding the post of head priest of Kedō-in's Daiganji was brought to our attention. This news was received by Ijū-in Uemonhyōe-no-jō [Hisaharu], Uehara Chōshū [Naochika], and myself. Since this matter is not yet resolved, we asked the representatives from Daiōji and Jōkyō-in to first return to their lodgings.[92]

[92] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 69.

Here we have another example of a dispute involving a religious institution, much like our previous example involving Nitta Shrine. But whereas the case of the Nitta Shrine involved only the internal debate in that particular shrine, the case of Daiganji involved various opinions from other associated temples, most prominent of which were Daiōji and Jōkyō-in, the former being a branch temple of Daiganji and the latter an affiliated temple of the same. Given their historical association with Daiganji, whoever becomes the head priest of that temple would have tremendous amount of power and influence upon both Daiōji and Jōkyō-in, thus both of these temples had high stakes on this decision. This rendered the Shimazu's decision to be significantly more important relative to previous examples cited above. It is thus unsurprising that three mediators were assigned to this case as opposed to the two for the Nitta case.

The second mechanism in place preventing mediators from amassing political power through personal connections was the tight control over the physical locations assigned to each mediator. Because they represented the only official means of communication between the daimyo's central administration and the various local warriors scattered about the domain, an effort was made to ensure that the mediators were responsible for locations that were different from their *jitō* posts and landholdings.[93] For example, when Uwai Kakuken served as a mediator for Yoshihisa, he was the *jitō* of Nagayoshi district, tasked as the mediator of Sendai, and forced to relocate to a temporary residence in Kagoshima.[94] This system was, according to Yamaguchi, designed to hinder mediators from acting freely by embedding them into a system of multiple and competing layers of authority.[95] This system would have also stymied any potential attempts

[93] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," p. 129.
[94] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," p. 126.
[95] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," p. 129.

by mediators to accumulate political power through their position. By assigning retainers to areas where they do not have any holdings or claims, connections built by these retainers during their tenure as mediators will be of limited utility once they graduate from being a mediator.

The conflict of interest from assigning retainers to serve as mediators for their own landholdings could have significant consequences for the Shimazu's power structure. This was especially the case when we consider the role of the *jitō*, whose primary duty was to control the local warriors within their jurisdiction and to harness the military power of these warriors during times of war.[96] Mediators could trade prioritization of petitions from his own landholdings for personal favours from the local warriors. The mediators could also just as easily silence any petitions from local warriors if such petitions would undermine his domestic political wellbeing. In either case, assigning mediators to their own jurisdictions would further enhance their ability to cultivate personal relationships with local warriors. The creation of such ties was already common due to the nature of the mediators' work, and to allow retainers to be both *jitō* and mediator of the same area would only increase the risk to the long term stability of the Shimazu administration.[97]

These measures placed upon the system of information and intelligence transference were critical to the proper functioning of the daimyo's domain, especially when we consider the mediators' role beyond the internal operations of a given polity. Indeed, many mediators were personally involved in the diplomatic dealings between various daimyo. While control over inter-daimyo communication was by no means monopolized by the mediators already operating within the administration at any given time, we cannot deny the important role they played in

[96] Kuwahada, "Sengoku daimyō Shimazu-shi no gunji soshiki nit suite: jitō to shuchū," p. 169.
[97] For more on the connection between the nature of the messengers' work and the cultivation of personal relationships, see Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* pp. 111 – 2.

facilitating such communication.[98] We need to keep in mind however, that when dealing with inter-daimyo diplomacy, the role of mediator tends to fall on the shoulders of those who were in the upper echelon of the daimyo's administration as opposed to the newly promoted or those already assigned the task of mediator domestically. This was likely due to the importance and specificity of diplomatic exchanges, as well as the relatively sporadic frequency of inter-daimyo negotiations. As such, mediators for this task tended to be assigned only when the need arose. In turn, these mediators in charge of diplomatic negotiations also had their own microcosm of mediators working for them to relay information to and from the people they were negotiating with, as well as between themselves and the daimyo they served. That the senior retainers of the Shimazu, with the exception of those who inherited their positions, were selected exclusively from previous mediators ensured that whomever was assigned this task would have had the necessary experience to effectively deal with information transfers.[99]

In her examination of the peace process in central Honshu, Endō Yuriko analyzed the important role played by the mediators of both the Hōjō and the Uesugi in their negotiations of 1569. She notes that, due to the state of prolonged warfare between these two families, the formal communication channels operated by the mediators of each respective daimyo had broken down.[100] A new set of mediators was therefore needed for the official channels of communication to resume its original function. While the case of the Hōjō and the Uesugi is not directly related to the Shimazu, it does illustrate two important things. First, the use of mediators

[98] Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 162.
[99] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," p. 131.
[100] Endō, "Etsusō-dōmei ni miru heiwa no sōzō to iji: Sengoku daimyō no uen-sei to muen-sei," p. 86.

for communication was not an anomaly unique to the Shimazu administration. Second, it shows how mediators were selected in general by the warrior class during the Sengoku period at large.

Of particular interest to our investigation are the factors considered by the daimyo when appointing mediators for their inter-daimyo negotiations. The Hōjō selected two representatives for this negotiation, they were Kitajō Takahiro and Yura Narishige (1506 – 1578), the former was a retainer of the Hōjō and the latter a local warrior. Of the two, Narishige being a local warrior operated more independently than Takahiro. Both the nominated Hōjō mediators previously served under the rule of the Uesugi, the daimyo they were tasked to negotiate with. In the case of Takahiro, Endō explains that despite his earlier betrayal of the Uesugi, he was a good candidate because Takahiro's family was still employed by the Uesugi, thus providing him with exclusive access to the Uesugi court.[101] Takahiro's ability to serve the Hōjō in this task therefore stemmed from his own personal network established while serving a different master. Indeed, a warrior's value as a retainer existed apart from his role in the administration that he served, and warriors with extensive personal connections were considered valuable assets for any daimyo regardless of the warriors' past history. As for Yura Narishige, his value as mediator for the Hōjō lies within their relative independence as a local warrior and their ties with the other local warrior groups within Uesugi jurisdiction. This allowed Narishige more flexibility in negotiating with the Uesugi while also providing the Hōjō an alternative pathway into the Uesugi court.[102] Beyond the assigning of these two mediators, the Hōjō also made use of non-warrior groups such as monks and courtiers in order to utilize all possible avenues to ensure a successful

[101] Endō, "Etsusō-dōmei ni miru heiwa no sōzō to iji: Sengoku daimyō no uen-sei to muen-sei," p. 86.
[102] Endō, "Etsusō-dōmei ni miru heiwa no sōzō to iji: Sengoku daimyō no uen-sei to muen-sei," p. 87. See also Iwasawa, "Etsusō ichiwa ni tsuite: 'tesuji' no igi wo megutte,' pp. 68 – 69.

negotiation.[103] The key here is the importance of selecting the right person for the right job. The significant role played by mediators in the diplomatic negotiations between daimyo meant that this selection process was likely made after thorough considerations. After all, mediators represented the authority of their daimyo on the negotiating table and thus controlled the amount of leverage their daimyo had upon his rivals.[104]

The Hōjō's use of non-warrior groups for the purposes of negotiation also illustrates for us how unofficial channels of communication were used by daimyo. Here we see such channels used through the employment of non-warrior groups, such as monks, poets, and courtiers in negotiations. The use of people like poets and courtiers as mediators, especially when dealing with inter-daimyo politics, was by no means a rare occurrence. Similarly monks and other religious officials shared this role as the poets and courtiers and acted as diplomatic agents on many occasions. As many warriors were deeply concerned with Buddhism, many powerful warriors were keen to speak with prominent monks. This gave monks a degree of access that allowed them to act as mediators for negotiations, while also letting these monks maintain some nominal notions of political detachment.[105]

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[103] Endō, "Etsusō-dōmei ni miru heiwa no sōzō to iji: Sengoku daimyō no uen-sei to muen-sei," pp. 94 – 96.
[104] Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō*, pp. 114 – 5.
[105] Endō Yuriko argues that, at least in the case of the Hōjō, the effective use of monks as mediators relied upon their theoretical separation from the secular world. Since the monk in question, Ten'yōin, was not a retainer of the Hōjō, this meant that he existed outside of the immediate retainer unit (*ie sōshiki*). Furthermore, because the vows taken to become a monk necessitated a ritual separation from the secular world, this granted the monk a "detached" (*muen*) existence, one that was fitting for his task as negotiator as it afforded him the ability to navigate himself politically between the various daimyo without being practically involved in their disputes. The validity of this claim is contested however when we consider the realistic political links between monks, temples, and the daimyo in whose domain the monks operated in. Examples from this very chapter highlighted both the ability of and the necessity for a daimyo to intervene during conflicts and disputes that were internal to a given religious institution. Despite the possible philosophical and spiritual understanding that a monk should theoretically be detached from secular affairs, it might be premature to suggest that this meant the various parties dealing with the given monk would be ignorant of his political ties to his patron daimyo, in this case, the Hōjō. It has also been suggested that, at least in the particular case of Ten'yōin, in addition to the *muen* aspects of his existence, it was the personal virtue of Ten'yōin that made him the ideal messenger for the Hōjō. This was used as an explanation for his successful negotiation despite his identity as the younger brother of the Hōjō retainer Ishimaki Yasumasa. Yet this very familial tie to the Hōjō retainer already somewhat undermines the notion of Ten'yōin being completely detached from the Hōjō. For

The use of monks as mediator is one example of the active use of private communication channels as something completely distinct from the official channels sanctioned by the daimyo. This one involving individuals tightly associated with various temples and shrines.[106] Beyond the diplomatic exchanges between warring daimyo, warriors who have lost favour with their lord often relied on monks and other non-warrior mediators to plead their case. This made sense as such individuals were denied access to the sanctioned means of communication due to the loss of their lord's favour.[107] They were thus left with few options if they wished to petition the daimyo for a reinstatement of their station. Having a prominent monk intervene on these retainers' behalf allowed them to bypass the system and appeal their case directly to the daimyo. That monks had a tremendous amount of access and sway in negotiations made them into the ideal candidate for such a task.[108]

Another option for individuals without officially sanctioned access to the daimyo was to appeal to friends and family members who still served the daimyo. We saw a similar pattern at work in the Hōjō's selection of mediators and how they favored retainers who had family members serving their Uesugi rivals. As Yamaguchi points out, disgraced individuals were the most common utilizers of private communication channels. For those in service of the Shimazu, this meant reaching out to family members who were either part of the senior retainer council or

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Endō's original claim, see Endō, "Etsusō-dōmei ni miru heiwa no sōzō to iji: Sengoku daimyō no uen-sei to muen-sei," pp. 94 – 95. For the identity of Ten'yōin and his successful negotiation, see Iwasaki, "Etsusō wayū to Hōjō Ujiyasu shisō Ten'yōin," pp. 53 – 55. For other examples of the Hōjō's communication process, see Yamada Kuniaki's book, *Sengoku no komyunikeishon: jōhō to tsūshin*.

[106] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," p. 124.

[107] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," p. 124.

[108] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," p. 124.

an attendant of Yoshihisa.[109] The family member would then speak directly to the daimyo on behalf of his disgraced relative, thus allowing for the possibility of forgiveness from the daimyo himself.[110]

II. The Courtiers and Poets as Mediators

Beside monks and family members, another group of individuals that can be utilized as mediators for those without access to official channels of information and communication were the courtiers and the poets. Like the monks employed in negotiations and general communications, courtiers and poets were frequently used by powerful daimyo for these purposes as well. They were, like the aforementioned monks, part of a larger network of non-warrior mediators. The courtiers and poets' function as non-warrior mediators was intrinsically tied to the place poetry had within warrior culture and its utility in society at large.[111] This was certainly the case for the Shimazu despite, or perhaps because of, their distance from Kyoto. The amount of utility Yoshihisa and the Shimazu administration derived from poetry was astounding. By understanding the function poetry had on the Shimazu, we can understand why courtiers and poets were such an important part of the information and military intelligence system of the Shimazu.

In the "Ise-no-kami kokoro-e sho," the second part of the *nikki* and a semi-autobiographical essay written by Kakuken, one of the first pieces of advice Kakuken gave to the

[109] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," p. 124.
[110] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," p. 124.
[111] It is important to note that, unlike their warrior counterparts, non-warrior mediator's place and value within warrior society was generally defined by an informal hierarchy of prestige. For courtiers and poets, this meant having either personal or familial connections with other famous poets or being known as experts of a given poetic treatise or collection.

readers was that "a retainer should first value discipline, followed by literary knowledge. If one does so, the path of lord and retainer should naturally conform to one's heart."[112] This notion was not new as similar ideas appeared previously in the works of the famous Imagawa Ryōshun (1326 – 1420), who stated that "those who do not know the literary arts (*bundō*) will in the end have no success in military arts (*budō*)."[113] Ryōshun continued, "with regards to safeguarding the province (*kuni*), without literary learning (*gakumon*) proper administration (*seidō*) cannot be achieved."[114] Kakuken echoed Ryōshun's view with regards to the significance of literary skills for the warrior for a number of reasons. To start, the use of and association with poetry granted warriors prestige due to poetry's association with the emperor and the imperial family. Such prestige granted daimyo significant legitimacy as local overlords, and unsurprisingly, this was something that appealed greatly to Yoshihisa. Beyond this, a thorough understanding of literature allowed for a widening of lexicon for communication both for warriors speaking amongst themselves, as well as for those wishing to speak with the aristocracy. Finally, the practice of literature, especially that of poetry, served as a training ground for warriors in synchronizing their way of thinking in a manner that coincided with their lord's mind. Because the use of literature brought with them so much benefits, the utilization of courtiers and poets as unofficial agents of communication was consciously embraced by the Shimazu administration.

In order to fully understand what literary knowledge, and more specifically poetry, meant for the Shimazu, we have to go back to the very first imperial poetry collection, the *Kokinshū* (*A Collection of Ancient and Modern Japanese Poems*), a cornerstone text for poetic education and one that Yoshihisa received instructions on from the imperial regent, Konoe Sakihisa (1536 –

[112] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 203.
[113] Imagawa Ryōshun, *Gusoku nakaaki seishi-no-jōjō,* as quoted in Itō, "Uwai Kakuken shōkō," p. 614.
[114] Imagawa Ryōshun, as quoted in Itō, "Uwai Kakuken shōkō," p. 614.

1612).[115] The *Kokinshū* encouraged warriors to practice poetry by citing its ability to calm a warrior's heart and mind.[116] While the potency of this claim is questionable, Watanuki Toyoaki notes that poetic composition gave the warriors another method for artistic and humorous expression where appropriate, allowing poetry to act as an emotional and mental tranquilizer of sorts.[117]

Watanuki also added several other points when considering the reasons behind the importance of poetry. He states that a key part of poetry's importance was its intrinsic association with the emperor. Since the art of poetry was directly connected to imperial collections (*chokusenshū*), some of which were compiled by various emperors in the past, the ability to be a part of the poetic composition automatically granted prestige to its participants. Success in this arena also allowed warriors to leave behind a legacy for posterity in an arena tied directly to the imperial court, which was not something most warriors could accomplish solely through war and violence.[118] This undoubtedly attracted many warriors to study literature and poetry if only to try and solidify their own names in imperial history.

On a more practical level, the use of poetry and literature was foundational to the everyday communication for warriors and aristocrats alike. According to Watanuki, the aristocrats' use of poetry as a form of communication allowed poetic knowledge to disseminate down the political hierarchy as warriors and courtiers built close and inseparable working

[115] *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, part 3, p. 205.
[116] See *Kokin wakashū*, p. 4.
[117] Watanuki, *Sengoku bushō no uta.* p. 113.
[118] With regards to the associations between poetry and the imperial court and its importance in allowing the warriors to leave their names to prosperity, see Watanuki, *Sengoku bushō to rengashi: ransei no interijensu*, pp.11 – 13 and Watanuki, *Sengoku bushō no uta,* p. 114 – 5. See also Ogawa, *Bushi wa naze uta wo yomu ka: Kamakura shogun kara Sengoku daimyō made*, p. 244.

relationship with each other.[119] As familiarity with poetry expanded, its function as a form of communication went beyond *bakufu*-court relations and became an intrinsic part of warrior life.

When poetry fully seeped into the warriors' communicative lexicon, the very act of poetry composition became an opportunity for the construction of warrior relationships. On an interpersonal level, the composition of poetry became a means to express feelings and emotions in everyday mundane circumstances. We can see this on the sixth day of the sixth month of 1585, in an entry where Kakuken wrote of his experience staying overnight at the Sosanji Temple;

> We were permitted to go to the second floor of their stables. Since the first floor was quite cool, we have asked to stay there at the stables. However, because the second floor was directly adjacent to the rice fields, we could hear the occasional rustling of rice and leaves as though the autumn winds were near; this was truly absurd!
> Since Sōken was with me at the time, I consoled him with the following:
>
> *Shinoaezu* — Unbearable is
> *kadoda ni kayō* — the rustling sound of leaves
> *akikaze no* — in the autumn wind.
> *soyomeki noboru* — Is it passing through the fields
> *rō no ue kana* — and climbing up this building?
>
> In this manner we comforted each other.
> When the cool winds came again as if to move our pillows further into the room, I said,
>
> *Chikashi to ya* — Is it not intimate?
> *makura ugokasu* — The autumn wind
> *aki no kaze* — that moves the pillow.
>
> I spoke with Sōken in this manner until the night ended.[120]

Poetry here was an easy means for warriors to communicate their shared experience with each other. The poetic form and its composition, at the intellectual and idealized level, had become an acceptable framework for warriors to display emotions.

[119] Watanuki, *Sengoku bushō no uta.* pp. 112 – 3.
[120] *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, part 2, pp. 233 – 4.

On a communal scale, monthly poetry gatherings recorded within Kakuken's diary exemplified yet another way warrior relationships were constructed. Over the entirety of the six years covered by the diary, sixteen monthly poetry meetings were recorded. This number does not include various poetry gatherings at parties, memorial events, and other unscheduled events and meetings that involved poetry, which would push this number to roughly seventy-two. This averages out to around one poetry event or gathering per month without accounting for possible gatherings that were not recorded by Kakuken.[121] This also does not include poetry events of a spiritual nature as they were held for purposes fundamentally different from that of the routine gatherings. With the frequency with which poetry was involved at various events, poetry was likely considered a social activity for entertainment, an extension of its original function as a communication tool. To fully comprehend the importance of poetry as part of the communicative lexicon however, we must also consider the rise of *renga*, or "linking verse," during the medieval era. It was specifically *renga* that accentuated the communal and social nature of poetic composition and shaped poetry parties into a training activity that coordinated the minds of warriors with that of their lords. Of course, not all warriors necessarily liked *renga*, but most of them recognized its popularity and its importance as a communication tool and beyond, thus all warriors participated in composing *renga* on some level.[122]

[121] One should note that even during times of military conflict, poetry meetings continued to be held. Since not everyone needed to serve on the frontlines, many retainers continued to participate in the monthly poetry meeting held at the daimyo's court.

[122] Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543 – 1616) famously disliked *renga*. While the reason behind his dislike of *renga* is unclear, Watanuki suggests that it was the emphasis placed on mutability and adaptability that bother Ieyasu specifically. Despite Ieyasu's disinterest, he recognized his retainers' interests in *renga* and made practical use of *renga* in stabilizing his regime, using *renga* and *renga* gatherings as rewards for their service. For Watanuki's conjecture on Ieyasu's dislike of *renga,* see Watanuki, *Sengoku bushō to rengashi: ransei no interijensu*, p. 176. For Ieyasu's use of *renga* as a political tool, see Iriguchi, "Ieyasu to renga," pp. 46, 49 – 50.

A good way to differentiate between *renga* and *waka*, the older form of Japanese poetry epitomized in imperial collections, is in their fundamental nature as works of literature. In the simplest terms, a *waka* is a poem of a single stanza, composed by an individual, while a *renga* is a long poem consisting of any number of stanzas, themselves roughly half the length of a single *waka*. While it is certainly possible for an individual to compose all the stanzas of a *renga*, it is fundamentally considered a communal form of poetry that emphasized quick-thinking and adaptability.[123] A *renga* gathering often involved multiple participants composing individual stanzas that logically and poetically connect with a previous stanza without prior knowledge of what that stanza may be. This activity thus emphasized a poet's ability to adapt and communicate his or her message effectively through a poetic framework. Unlike *waka* gatherings where each person needed to stay on a particular topic or theme while express some degree of individuality, *renga* gatherings focused the creation of a large work through communal effort and the ability to subsume individuality to contribute to a greater whole. With this in mind, it is not difficult to see why daimyo would value this form of poetry, actively promoting its practice through the hosting of *renga* gatherings.[124] *Renga* gatherings served almost as a pseudo-training program for retainers on the importance of cooperation with each other. More importantly, such gatherings allowed the retainers to know how to suppress their personal goals for the agenda of their daimyo. The effectiveness of this training was questionable however. As we will see later, personal goals remained an important motivating factor for many warriors of this period.

[123] Watanuki, *Sengoku bushō to rengashi: ransei no interijensu*, p. 176. See also Ramirez-Christensen, *Emptiness and Temporality: Buddhism and Medieval Japanese Poetics*, pp. 14, 19.
[124] Parallels between *renga* and the tea ceremony, also highly valued as an art form during this time, were drawn by scholars such as Shimazu Tadao and Tsuno Akihiro, stating that both these activities reflected the societal values at the time while training their participants in proper protocols through ritualization of cultural activities. See Tsuno, "'Ietada Nikki' ni mirareru kaisho no bungei: renga to cha no yu wo chūshin," p. 329.

If we combine what we know about the nature of *renga* composition with the active participants in various *renga* gatherings as recorded in the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, we can get a fairly clear picture on the practical function of poetry within the Shimazu family and administration. On a general level, the frequency with which they had poetry gatherings likely contributed to a strong sense of community, one created for a common goal as shaped by the very composition of *renga* at such gatherings.[125] Upon closer inspection, we also see that *renga* also served to unite the purposes of warriors of various ranks and origins in certain cases as well. Take for example the poetry gathering of the twentieth day of the eleventh month, Tenshō 11 (1583), held at the residence of Fukami Nagatomo (1532 – 1590).[126] We know that this gathering was scheduled only a day or two before its occurrence despite prior contact between Nagatomo and Kakuken during the third month of Tenshō 11.[127] This lack of prior notice suggests that this was likely an unofficial poetry gathering, meaning that the gathering itself was not overseen by the daimyo, which in turn allowed for a more open and free discussion amongst retainers. What planning there was for this gathering can be seen from Kakuken's entry outlining his plans for "tomorrow's poetry gathering" the day before the twentieth, and suggests that despite the spontaneous nature of this particular gathering, this was not entirely a casual meeting either, deserving some level of preparation.[128] The event itself had a number of important attendees as well. Held at Nagatomo's residence, many important retainers of the Shimazu administration attended this gathering. This included both Shimazu Tadanaga (1551 – 1610), cousin of Yoshihisa, and Niiro Tadamoto (1526 – 1610), a prominent senior retainer for three generations

[125] Watanuki, *Sengoku bushō to rengashi: ransei no interijensu*, pp. 51 – 52. See also, Ogawa, *Bushi wa naze uta wo yomu ka: Kamakura shogun kara Sengoku daimyō made,* p. 244.
[126] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 306.
[127] For previous correspondence between Nagatomo and Kakuken see *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, pp. 218, 221 – 5. For Nagatomo's request, see *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 305.
[128] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 306.

of the Shimazu. Their attendance illustrating for us that the event was of some political significance.

This particular poetry gathering exemplifies how such events could unite samurai of different ranks and origins. The four particular participants that I have highlighted above, Shimazu Tadanaga, Niiro Tadamoto, Uwai Kakuken, and the host Fukami Nagatomo, represented warriors of differing ranks and origins. That all four of them attended the same gathering was not a mere coincidence. These four attendees represented a cross-section of the Shimazu's administration. On the one hand, we have Tadanaga, a family member of the daimyo, Tadamoto, a senior retainer of proven loyalty and service, and Kakuken, a mediator of the Shimazu. On the other hand, we have Fukami Nagatomo, who was not a direct retainer of the Shimazu at all, but was in fact a retainer of a rival daimyo, Sagara Tadafusa (1572 – 1585) who was only eleven at the time. We know this as Nagatomo served as a representative of Tadafusa in the Shimazu court on the third month of Tenshō 11.[129] Based on the fact that Yoshihisa was the one confirming Tadafusa's land ownership, we know that the Sagara was formally under the control of the Shimazu.[130] Unlike regular retainers of the Shimazu however, Sagara Tadafusa was still a daimyo, and with that position came a degree of independence. While the two families had a peaceful relationship, there were plenty of reasons for them to distrust one another.[131] To have a Sagara retainer, one that had no frequent contact with the Shimazu court, host a poetry gathering that were attended mostly by Shimazu retainers suggests that this was likely not a gathering held for exchanging pleasantries.

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[129] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 218.
[130] For the land confirmation from Yoshihisa, see "Sagara Tadafusa shojō," Tenshō 10 (1582).3.20, *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK *Iewake* 1667 (p. 129).
[131] Sagara only submitted to Shimazu rule after losing to Yoshihisa in battle. As part of the peace agreement, Tadafusa's father had to attack another enemy of Yoshihisa instead, which led to the former's death. This fact certainly did not help the two sides build a trusting relationship.

While we have no records of the actual poems that were composed that day, we do know a lengthy discussion on things not related to poetry took place late into the night.[132] The specific term that Kakuken used to describe their meeting was *eshaku.* The term *eshaku* was originally a Buddhist term which describes the act of investigating an outwardly contradictory situation in order to arrive at a reality free from such contradictions. Overtime, this term had come to describe the act of "coming to a decision through discussion." Though *eshaku* did not explicitly mean a discussion of important or official business, the distinct lack of alcohol or any other forms of entertainment or food throughout the gathering suggests that it is highly likely that their discussion involved official business. We know this from the many other poetry gatherings recorded in Kakuken's diary: alcohol, games, and snacks were staples of these events. That Kakuken never use the term *eshaku* to describe poetry despite using this exact term four hundred and eighty-one times throughout his diary shows that *eshaku* meant something distinctly different from poetic composition. Poetry was an excuse for all these warriors of different ranks and origins to gather in one place to have an open and unofficial conversation about official business. In a sense, such gatherings served as an opportunity for communication to occur without recourse to the official channels of information and intelligence.

The last point of significance when considering the warrior's relations with poetry is the reputation or image the warrior projects through his own literary knowledge. As we saw previously, poetry had a profound effect on the person reciting or composing them. For warriors, poetry supposedly calmed their hearts and minds, and thus served as a counter-balance to their involvement with the more violent side of medieval life. Since this was a generally accepted fact, the ability to compose poetry suggested to a warrior's peers how refined he was in terms of taste

[132] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 306.

and culture, allowing for the projection of an image worthy of respect.[133] From a practical perspective, this ability to convey to others a cultured and educated façade was crucial as it was widely accepted that one's ability to learn reflected on one's general capability at large. Being able to not only recite knowledge, but to flexibly adapt it to a particular situation was a crucial skill in the Sengoku period as it suggested one's overall adaptability toward situations constantly in flux.[134] The poetic ability of a warrior was therefore seen as a reflection of his or her ability to perform in other political and military arenas.

From what we have seen above, we can conclude that poetry was a crucial part of warrior society during the Sengoku period. Mastery over poetry meant having access to an efficient means of communication even amongst warriors of different loyalties, which in turn provided warriors with opportunities to form connections and build communities. This was unsurprisingly something daimyo exploited for their own political gains as well. This poetic mastery was also a tool of control for the military elite, as the hosting of poetry gatherings became both a method to train their retainers in cooperation and a form of reward for those deemed worthy. With the significance of poetry in mind, we can now begin to look at how and why aristocrats and poets occupied such an important position within the unofficial channels of warrior communication.

Given the immense utility provided by the use poetry, it is reasonable to suggest that the people who were most knowledgeable at poetry must have some degree of political leverage within Sengoku society. This boils down to two primary groups of people, the aristocracy and the professional poets. These two groups were by no means mutually exclusive and many aristocrats were famous poets as well. While both these groups depended upon the warrior class

[133] Owada, *"Jinbō" no kenkyū*, p. 49.
[134] Owada, *"Jinbō" no kenkyū*, p. 52.

for their financial well-being, they had considerable sway over the ways the warriors operated in society by being the carriers of poetic knowledge. Under the guise of teaching poetry, aristocrats and poets gained access to the many different levels of warrior administrations across the archipelago, rendering them into an invaluable part of the unofficial warrior communication networks.

With regards to the aristocracy, who were the inheritors of the classical poetic traditions, they commonly traded their cultural knowledge and prestige for financial support and protection. This form of exchange rendered aristocrats into one of the primary agents of poetry of the time. This exchange between themselves and the warriors also meant that they often kept in touch with one another, with aristocrats traveling down to the various provinces in person being a relatively common occurrence. Such was the case when the imperial regent Konoe Sakihisa who went to Kagoshima and gave a personal poetry lesson to Shimazu Yoshihisa.[135] High profile aristocrats like the Konoe also frequently served as mediators for powerful daimyo like Oda Nobunaga.[136] In such cases, aristocrats who had politically sanctioned reasons for travelling would have been in contact with many warriors and other politically relevant groups. These groups would devote the necessary resources, such as security forces or guides, to ensure that their guests arrive safely and comfortably in return for being graced by the aristocrats' visit.[137] The ability to travel securely allowed the aristocrats to become powerful political figures in their own right, both through the message they were meant to deliver and the cultural knowledge they had internalized inside them.

[135] *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, part 3, pp. 204 – 205.
[136] "Konoe Sakihisa shojō," Tenshō 8 (1580).9.19, *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK *Iewake* 100 (p. 62).
[137] Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* pp. 107 – 108.

Professional poets was another group of people that served as useful mediators for the Sengoku warriors. Like the courtiers, famous poets were treated as valued guests by many prominent daimyo across the archipelago, the poets also peddled their knowledge of the literary arts to various potential warrior patrons like their aristocratic counterparts. This commonality between the aristocracy and the professional poets meant that both groups were able to garner varying degrees of access to some of the most prominent political figures of the Sengoku period. In this way, the poets joined the courtiers as a key part of the larger samurai communication network that spanned the archipelago.[138]

Beyond their function as special mediators tasked with negotiation on behalf of their warrior patrons however, the traveling aristocrats and poets also served an additional and likely unintentional role for the various warriors. Due to how frequent courtiers and poets travelled and interacted with the powerful samurai, these non-warrior mediators became an excellent source of political and military intelligence for their patrons. According to the poetry scholar Watanuki Toyoaki, the ability for the aristocrats and poets to gather and communicate important military intelligence from both the imperial court and the various provinces was one of the defining functions of Sengoku poets.[139] Poets who only excelled at the composition of poetry were not highly regarded by warriors at the time because they were unable to efficiently gather and provide their patron with valuable intelligence. This was especially the case for poets who were not students or descendants of famous poetic figures.[140] This utility that poets and courtiers brought to the samurai communication system made them especially valuable for the various

[138] For a detailed exploration of the larger samurai communication network that stretched across Japan during the Sengoku period, see Yamada Kuniaki's book, *Sengoku no komyunikeishon: jōhō to tsūshin.*
[139] Watanuki, *Sengoku bushō to rengashi: ransei no interijensu,* pp. 51 – 52.
[140] Watanuki, *Sengoku bushō to rengashi: ransei no interijensu,* p. 95.

daimyo. Not only did these carriers of poetic knowledge served as a convenient, albeit unofficial, mediators with a high degree of political access, they also brought with them political and military secrets that the daimyo sought after, perhaps even more so than the political prestige garnered through good poetry. As a result of this, these travelling disseminators of poetic knowledge had a great degree of political leverage and was an invaluable part of the Sengoku warrior communication as a whole.

III. Circumvention and Exploitation of the Communication System

Now that we have a good grasp on how the communication system was supposed to function in so far as it was designed by the Shimazu, the role played by the mediators within this system, and the unofficial channels that existed to complement this system, we can begin to scrutinize more closely how this communication infrastructure was exploited and why. In his work on the mediator system of the Shimazu, Yamaguchi Ken'ichi cites an example from the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* to illustrate an instance where the private communication channels were utilized. Yamaguchi used this particular case to illustrate the importance of proper communications protocols and how Uwai Kakuken as a senior retainer sought to enforce it.[141] As we will see however, we can also interpret Kakuken's actions as a case that shows a lack of consequences for warriors who attempted to circumvent proper communication protocols.

A closer look at Yamaguchi's example will illustrate this point. The diary entry cited by Yamaguchi is from the fifth day of the third month of Tenshō 12 (1584), the relevant part of which is as follows:

[141] For Yamaguchi's discussion of said example, see Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," p. 125.

> Kawano Chikugo-no-kami (Michiyasu) of the Kiyotake warriors (Miyazaki district), having not been in contact with me for a long time, came with gifts of wine. His message was received by Kashiwara shō (Yūkan), which states that, "I have been living in these foothills for the year due to an error with the urgent tax[142] I submitted to the *jitō* (Ijū-in Hisanobu). Since we can be of use in your next battle, would you allow us to march alongside your forces?"
>
> I replied, "Even if my opinions are different from that of the *jitō*, it will be inappropriate for me to allow someone condemned by the *jitō* to join me without consulting my close retainers on their opinions first. At this juncture, you ought to relay your intent to the mediators of Kagoshima, so they can bring it to the attention and discussion of the senior retainers. Whether you can join me or not will depend on their decision."[143]

Yamaguchi argues that this instance shows the prioritizing of the official communication channel and proper protocol by Uwai Kakuken.[144] It is undeniable that Kawano Michiyasu was appealing directly to Kakuken, who was a senior retainer by this point in his career, without recourse to the mediators of Kagoshima.[145] The proper course of actions Michiyasu should follow would be to officially petition the senior retainers of Kagoshima for the permission to join Kakuken's military campaign, but instead he sought to bypass this procedure and spoke directly to Kakuken, making use of their previous relationship. As a senior retainer himself, Kakuken technically had the authority to grant Michiyasu's request at the expense of the central Shimazu administration's authority.

The reasoning behind Kakuken's choice to not exercise this authority was ultimately ambiguous. Kakuken could have acted to reinforce the proper protocol as Yamaguchi suggested, but it was just as likely that Kakuken acted to protect himself from the possible repercussions of granting Michiyasu his wishes. That Kakuken justified his decision by referencing specifically

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[142] In the original text, the term used here is *tenyaku* (天役).
[143] *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, part 2, pp. 22 – 23.
[144] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku-ki Shimazu-shi no kashin-dan hensei: 'Uwai Kakuken nikki' ni miru 'toritsugi' katei," p. 125.
[145] Uwai Kakuken was promoted to senior retainer in Tenshō 4 (1576).

Michiyasu's offense against Ijū-in Hisanobu could suggest that Kakuken was in fact shifting the responsibility away from himself and on to a larger decision-making body. By deferring the decision to the source of the problem, Kakuken achieved two major objectives. On the one hand, this would limit the potential fallout with Hisanobu should Michiyasu later be allowed to join Kakuken, as Kakuken would no longer be responsible for accepting or overturning Hisanobu's punishment for Michiyasu. This thus allowed Kakuken to maintain a peaceful working relationship between himself and Hisanobu. On the other hand, Kakuken could also protect his own reputation amongst his peers and retainers by not overriding Hisanobu's previous judgement. Both of these outcomes would allow Kakuken to reinforce his reputation and authority in the long run. With this in mind, it is difficult to suggest that Kakuken were acting entirely in a purely altruistic manner by reminding Michiyasu the importance of the communication protocols.

Kakuken's diary contains another incident detailing an ex-mediator exploiting the communication system of the Shimazu for questionable reasons. This one instance in particular involves Kakuken himself and one Nyūta Yoshizane (1533 – 1601). The example highlights some of the pitfalls of the Shimazu's communication system. In being the sole person responsible for mediating the communication between the sides, Kakuken managed to take full control of the information exchange, making promises without recourse to and at the expense of the central administration that Kakuken was supposed to represent. Kakuken circumvented the communication infrastructure and ignored the orders of Yoshihisa for the purposes of keeping his promise to Yoshizane.

Nyūta Yoshizane was a local warrior located in Bungo province and served the Ōtomo, the other dominant power within Kyushu and the primary rivals of the Shimazu.[146] Despite their service to the Ōtomo, the Nyūta had a strained relationship with their daimyo, as outlined in the diary entry of Kakuken, on the fourteenth day of the tenth month, 1585;

> …A letter from Niiro Bushū [Tadamoto] from yesterday had arrived. It spoke of the situation of Nyūta (Yoshizane) from southern districts of Bungo (the two districts of Ōno and Naoiri) and his dissatisfaction.
>
> According to the letter, despite his re-submission to the Ōtomo five or six years ago, Yoshizane was not granted the holdings that he had prior to his return. He wrote to inform us of the preparations he is making in Bungo, and that should the news of his dissatisfactions were to be discovered, he is ready to withstand a siege at Yurugi (Naoiri district) along with the six thousand soldiers at his command. This letter was an urgent submission from Sakanashi (Higo, Aso district).
>
> If these events are confirmed to be true, then we [the Shimazu] can begin our campaign into Bungo. First, we should circulate an order to the various retainers regarding the possible actions that might follow should this turn out to be true…[147]

According to Marushima Kazuhiro, who studied this particular episode in his exploration of the role of mediators in the Sengoku period, Yoshizane fell out of the Ōtomo's favour due to Yoshizane's father attempting to assassinate the previous Ōtomo daimyo.[148] As a result of this, even after the Nyūta's reestablishment of their lord-vassal relationship with the Ōtomo, the Nyūta were not granted the same landholdings as before. Yoshizane found this to be unacceptable, which triggered a series of events leading to Kakuken taking on the mantle of mediator between the Shimazu and Nyūta Yoshizane on Kakuken's own terms. In maintaining his self-appointed role of mediator, Kakuken ultimately chose to disobey Yoshihisa in an attempt to keep his promises to the Nyūta.

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[146] Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 166.
[147] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 49 – 50.
[148] Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 166.

Another key point that I wish to highlight with the above quote is the deterioration of the peace between the Shimazu and the Ōtomo by 1585. That Kakuken's first reaction to this news was to consider the possibility of war against the Ōtomo suggests that the peace currently enjoyed by the Shimazu and the Ōtomo was uneasy at best. Animosity between these two daimyo was nothing new. As early as 1578, the former shogun Ashikaga Yoshiaki (1537 – 1597) attempted to instigate conflict between the Shimazu and the Ōtomo.[149] At the time, Yoshiaki's sanctioning of Shimazu military actions against the Ōtomo resulted in open conflict between these two rivals almost immediately.[150] This state of affair lasted until Oda Nobunaga's intervention in 1580, when he tasked Konoe Sakihisa with the mission of brokering peace between the Shimazu and the Ōtomo.[151] The peace negotiated by Sakihisa in 1580 was respected by the Shimazu for many years to come.[152] When Toyotomi Hideyoshi issued orders for the cessation of violence in Kyushu, the Shimazu used their strict adherence to the peace established in 1580 as grounds for denying Hideyoshi's request. According to the Shimazu, the blame should fall squarely on the shoulders of the Ōtomo, claiming them to be the violators of the peace established by Nobunaga, and suggesting that any military actions on the part of the Shimazu were taken entirely for self-defence.[153]

This declaration of self-defence was not entirely baseless. Despite previous suggestions to the contrary by their retainers, the Shimazu did manage to avoid open conflict amidst rising

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[149] "Isshiki Akihide Makishima Akimitsu rensho soejō," Tenshō 6 (1578).9.11, *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK *Iewake* 97 (p. 59).
[150] "Shimazu Yoshihisa kanjō-an," Tenshō 6 (1578).11.13, *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK *Iewake* 1138 (p. 437).
[151] For Nobunaga's initial instructions to the Shimazu to stop fighting, see "Oda Nobunaga shojō-an," Tenshō 8 (1580).8.12, *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK *Iewake* 98 (pp. 60 – 61). For Nobunaga's assignment of Sakihisa as his messenger and mediator, see "Oda Nobunaga shojō-an," Tenshō 8 (1580).8.12, *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK *Iewake* 99 (pp. 61). For Sakihisa's instructions to Yoshihiro with regards to a truce with the Ōtomo, see "Konoe Sakihisa shojō," Tenshō 8 (1580).9.19, *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK *Iewake* 100 (pp. 62).
[152] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 2, p. 116. See also *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 2, p. 126.
[153] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 89 – 90.

tension between themselves and the Ōtomo.[154] It was in fact the Ōtomo who first initiated conflict as the following entry from Kakuken's diary, on eighth day of the eighth month of 1585, indicates;

> Today, a messenger with the surname Ijū-in arrived here by the order of Chūsho-kō [Shimazu Iehisa]. The messengers spoke of the matter Chūsho-kō has heard from Yamanaka (Nishi-Usuki district, Migimatsu Bizen-no-kami).
>
> Apparently there was an in-depth discussion between Bungo (Ōtomo Yoshimune) and the Aso (Koremitsu) family. It seems that Bungo wants to send armour and headgear to Mitai (Mitai Chikatake), headgear to Nagato-no-kami (Munehiko) of Kai, and also numerous military equipment to someone else to match that person's needs. It seems that Bungo's intention is to make sure that should they arrive on the battlefield, they would remember receiving these gifts.
>
> They [the Ōtomo] were at the height of their schemes at various locations.[155]

From this, we can begin to understand why Kakuken saw the Nyūta's situation on the fourteenth day of the tenth month of the same year as a window of opportunity the Shimazu should capitalize on.[156] This information provided by Iehisa offered the exact evidence the Shimazu needed to justify military actions as self-defence. With this, the Shimazu can continue to maintain their reputation as the respectful followers of the peace established by Nobunaga and Sakihisa from before, while simultaneously taking military actions against the Ōtomo.

With this context in mind, we can understand the fundamental assumptions Kakuken had made when approaching his diplomatic negotiations between himself and the Nyūta. Namely, despite the uneasy peace between the Shimazu and the Ōtomo, Kakuken was aware of the tension bubbling just beneath the surface of this peace. As such, he saw this as the perfect chance to take swift and decisive action toward the Ōtomo without having to worry about the peace of

[154] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 2, pp. 125 – 6.
[155] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 5.
[156] *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, part 3, pp. 49 – 50.

Nobunaga and Sakihisa. As we will see later, this was enough of a reason for Kakuken to seize this opportunity and capitalize on the situation on his own terms.

Despite Kakuken's pivotal role in the exchange between the Shimazu and the Nyūta, Kakuken was not the only person who was in contact with the Nyūta on behalf of the Shimazu. In fact, prior to establishing direct contact with Kakuken on the sixteenth day of the second month of Tenshō 14 (1586), the Nyūta communicated solely with Shimazu Iehisa and Niiro Tadamoto, which represented a two-prong effort by the Shimazu to maintain contact with the Nyūta.[157] This initiation of contact between the Nyūta and Kakuken represented the turning point in Kakuken's decision process for it was only after this that Kakuken actively petitioned for the Shimazu to send military aid to the Nyūta.[158] In a sense, helping the Nyūta became a personal mission for Kakuken to prove his worth as a mediator, and it was for this reason that Kakuken exploited his position as mediator between the Nyūta and the Shimazu. A closer look into the actions taken by Kakuken in his efforts to promote his personal agenda at the expense of both the well-being of the Shimazu and the authority of Yoshihisa will illustrate this clearly.

The Shimazu's façade as peace keepers in Kyushu was not much more than mere posturing. On the twenty-second of the first month of 1586, roughly three weeks prior to Kakuken's direct contact with the Nyūta, Shimazu Yoshihisa had in fact decided to initiate a full scale invasion of Bungo:

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[157] For information on Iehisa's and Tadamoto's involvement with the Nyūta, see Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 167. For more on the initiation of contact between Kakuken and Nyūta, see Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō*, p. 173. See also *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 96 – 97.
[158] For Kakuken's cautionary approach to dealing with Nyūta, see Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 171.

> Item. Twenty-second day. I attended court this morning as usual. Dangisho (Kagoshima, Daijō-in Morihisa) completed a *kuji*[159] [prognostication] at the Gomasho.[160] We sought guidance from the kami [Japan's local deities] in determining whether we should march on Bungo (Ōtomo Yoshimune) from both Higo and Hyūga, or gather all our forces at [Hyūga] and proceed from a single front instead. The result of the *kuji* states that we should attack from two places simultaneously.
>
> The result was reported to our two lords and each of them was pleased. It was decided that that Taishu (Yoshihisa) will march from [Hyūga], while the Muko (Yoshihiro) will march from [Higo]…[161]

With this decision made, it is unsurprising that Kakuken also began his own preparations for the upcoming campaign. Part of this preparation involved getting in touch with the people in Bungo, like the Nyūta, with whom he could coordinate his military efforts. On the sixteenth of the second month of 1586, Kakuken wrote,

> A mediator from Nyūta Munekazu (Yoshizane) with the surname of Hori was sent here… According to him, a certain Shiga Dōeki (Chikanori), son of Michiteru, recently stole the mistress of Yoshimune (Ōtomo) and hid her. This shocked Yoshimune. Yoshimune was furious with Dōeki, and placed him in house arrest at a place called Sugasako. As such, Dōeki has now sided with the Nyūta in their plotting against the Ōtomo…
>
> The mediator brought diagrams with him and explained to me in detail the current situation at Bungo. As this situation merited a response, a letter was drafted to Dōeki and I entrusted it to the mediator.[162]
>
> The letter states that, "Since last year the Nyūta has met and discussed with us various details with the current affairs, and we are impressed with your recent allegiance with the Nyūta. As everyone knows, the peace between Bungo and Satsuma was the result of the interventions of Kyoto (Oda Nobunaga, Konoe Sakihisa). However, since last winter, it is apparent that the Ōtomo sought to break this agreement with us. Furthermore, they continuously cling on to their ambitions on the frontlines (Higashi-Usuki district). As

[159] A *kuji* was a method of fortune-telling where the participants directly ask the *kami* questions using things such as pieces of paper, strings, or blocks of wood marked with symbols and/or writing. The participants would randomly select or draw a lot from the numerous pieces of paper or wood blocks available, and the kami's answer to their question would correspond to the symbols or writing on the drawn lot.

[160] The Gomasho was a part of the Shimazu's residence or court devoted specifically to ritualistic worship. Despite the ritualistic utility of the space, it was not uncommon for the Shimazu to hold court or having meetings in this area. See *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, pp. 4, 7, 14, 28, 94, 187, 222. See also *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 2, pp. 9, 72, 175, 185.

[161] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 88.

[162] Besides the messenger with the surname Hori, there was another messenger from Takachio present as well, who was responsible for guiding Hori to Kakuken because the latter was on his way to Kagoshima when the messengers arrived to speak with him. See *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 96.

> such, there should be no oppositions to us replying with force. It is under this situation that we express our good will to you."[163]

This entry highlights that, beyond simply cultivating his ties with the Nyūta, Kakuken was taking advantage of the developing situation in Bungo and attempted to incorporate other retainers of the Ōtomo into the Shimazu military structure. More than simply illustrating for us the mechanisms behind the formation of warfare however, this particular instance also exposes the relative autonomy a senior retainer had as a diplomatic mediator within the Shimazu communication infrastructure. Not only did the Nyūta agents share military intelligence with Kakuken and not with the daimyo or with Kagoshima, Kakuken also operated independently when it came to the solicitation of aid from Shiga Dōeki. At no point was the will of the senior retainers of Kagoshima nor that of Yoshihisa consulted in this process. Based on his diary entries, there are no indications that Kakuken attempted to notify Kagoshima at all with regards to the actions he took when dealing with the Nyūta or Dōeki prior to his arrival in Kagoshima three days later.[164]

Upon Kakuken's arrival in Kagoshima however, the plans that he set in motion began to unravel. According to Kakuken's diary entry on the nineteenth day of the second month of 1586, developments elsewhere within the Shimazu domain interrupted their planned invasion of Bungo:

> The mediators who delivered our lord's message were Honda Gyōbu-no-shō (Masachika) and Ijichi Hōki-no-kami (Shigehide). The message states, "As it seems everyone here has a bit of time today, I would like to return to a previously decided issue. This is because while it is entirely expected that those from Hichiku[165] will send us hostages, they might be arriving late. If this is true, then our planned invasion of Bungo for the middle of next month will be quite impossible. As for postponing it to the fourth month, we would enter into the raining season. Since there are numerous large rivers in both Higo and Hyūga,

[163] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 97.
[164] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 97.
[165] This is the shortened term referring to the four provinces of Hizen, Higo, Chikuzen, and Chikugo.

> invading in the rain will be difficult. As the world at large[166] will surely hear of this, I wonder if it would be better to postpone our operations to early autumn…"[167]

With this, the senior retainers of the Shimazu proceeded with their debate and came to the conclusion that it was more important to secure the hostages from the various *jitō* of Higo, and since by autumn hostage transfer would surely be completed, it was best for them to delay their invasion of Bungo until then.[168] Although Kakuken did protest this decision, citing the instability within Bungo and his connections with Nyūta as the perfect opportunities to be seized upon by the Shimazu, no one sided with him and the decision to postpone the invasion was finalized.[169]

Despite this abrupt change of plans, Kakuken and the Nyūta managed to maintain their relationship, perhaps with plans to continue their arrangements in the autumn. However, when early autumn finally arrived another episode similar to the one described above occurred again. The Shimazu began their large scale military invasion of Bungo early in the sixth month of 1586, with soldiers beginning to gather at their two major bases of operation for this campaign, Higo and Hyūgo, on the ninth day of the sixth month.[170] Judging solely from the massive investment of resources necessary for a large scale gathering of troops at these two provinces, the Shimazu appeared to be determined in their conquest. Yet on the sixteenth day of the same month, the order for a complete redeployment of their forces against the Tsukushi family instead of the Ōtomo was issued.[171] As a result, the Shimazu campaign against Bungo province was cancelled once again, this time due to the result of yet another consultation with the kami through *kuji*.[172]

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[166] The term used in Kakuken's diary entry is *sejō*. See *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 98.
[167] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 98.
[168] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 98.
[169] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 98. See also Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 174.
[170] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 134 – 5.
[171] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 138 – 9.
[172] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 138.

Regardless of the spiritual reasoning used for this redeployment of military forces, Kakuken himself has found such action difficult to justify.[173] It was at this point that Kakuken decided to take matters into his own hands. During a meeting with Iehisa, Kakuken noted that,

> with regards to the Nyūta, it appears that they have severed their ties with the Ōtomo. This was something that happened after it was decided that we should attack Tsukushi. That we should abandon the Nyūta in their predicament when they were following the plans of myself and those serving Chūsho [Iehisa] is thoroughly absurd. At any rate, in planning for the future, perhaps we should ask for the help of Muko [Yoshihiro] in seeking assistance for the Nyūta.[174]

At this point, part of Kakuken's central motivating factor becomes clear. The treatment of the Nyūta by the Shimazu was unacceptable for Kakuken specifically because they were following the plans of Kakuken and Iehisa. The issue here was clearly seen as personal from Kakuken's perspective. The matter was troublesome enough to Kakuken that he was willing to completely undermine Yoshihisa's military authority in order to pursue his own ends. The very proposal of appealing to Shimazu Yoshihiro (1535 – 1619) in seeking permission to aid the Nyūta not only circumvented the jurisdictional prerogative of the daimyo, but also was in direct violation of the order issued by Yoshihisa to redirect their attention away from Bungo. Marushima suggests that because the official severing of ties between the Nyūta and the Ōtomo took place after Yoshihisa's decision to redeploy their forces towards Tsukushi, Kakuken perhaps thought that such a new development merited a reconsideration of the military plans on Yoshihisa's part.[175] Even if this was the case however, his decision to appeal not to Yoshihisa but to his younger brother Yoshihiro illustrates most clearly Kakuken's intention to subvert Yoshihisa's authority for Kakuken's own plans. For while Yoshihisa was the undisputed leader of the Shimazu,

[173] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 141.
[174] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 141.
[175] Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō*, p. 176.

Yoshihiro held the post of *shugo-dai*. Translating roughly to "deputy military governor," the *shugo-dai* held significant authority when it came to military matters.[176] The gravity of Kakuken's proposal to appeal to Yoshihiro cannot be overstated. Should Kakuken succeeded in his appeal to Yoshihiro, Kakuken's action would have uprooted the military infrastructure of the Shimazu completely by having the deputy military governor take direct action against the orders issued by the daimyo. That the post was held by Yoshihiro likely made matters worse as competition amongst siblings for military and political control was a common occurrence during the Sengoku period.

Fortunately for Kakuken, Yoshihiro had no intention of usurping his brother's authority. When Yoshihiro received Kakuken's request, Yoshihiro showed sympathy towards Kakuken's predicament but nevertheless reported Kakuken to Yoshihisa, who was understandably furious at Kakuken's disobedience.[177] According to Kakuken's diary, Yoshihisa responded to the news as follows:

> When informed of my plea to Muko, my lord found it thoroughly unacceptable, and in the end, as this directly hinders my lord's will, he found it utterly absurd. This is especially so as I went to Kagoshima and was present at the discussion when our lord's mind was made.
>
> Ihaku [Ijichi Hōki-no-kami] and Kichisaku [Yoshida (Seizon) Mimasaka-no-kami] delivered this message to me, and told me in detail what was said. When the two of them reported to our lord previously in the scenario mentioned before, the issue of me being unwell due to swelling was brought up again. A thorough discussion ensued, and the mediators were questioned. This was a bit of a change from before.
>
> Furthermore, in the reply from Kashiwara, it was noted that though I was informed of a separate, celebratory event, I had made no effort to participate, and that this is because I am an outsider [*takokujin*]. This would explain why I did not harbour ambitions and disloyalty until now.[178]

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[176] Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō*, p. 176.
[177] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 149. See also Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 177.
[178] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 149.

Despite this colourful display of anger rarely seen in official documents, punishment never came for Kakuken. Three days after hearing of Yoshihisa's displeasure towards Kakuken, on the seventeenth of the seventh month of 1586, Kakuken received a message from Yoshihisa dismantling Kakuken's claim that he had never acted for selfish reasons (*shikyoku naki*) by citing numerous prior cases where Kakuken had failed to arrive at the warfront in a timely manner.[179] Yoshihisa demanded that Kakuken immediately begin marching his troops towards the frontlines against Tsukushi. In response to this, Kakuken immediately prepared for his departure the next day.[180] And while the matter concerning the Nyūta continued to linger on as discussion surrounding the Shimazu military campaign against the Ōtomo re-entered the conversation in the later months of 1586, Kakuken understandably took a much more passive role in this matter going forward.[181]

This episode illustrates quite clearly that mediators wield significant amount of political leverage in their role as diplomatic agents, and they would use this leverage for their own individual plans. There was a difference in scale between the mediator that operated internally within the Shimazu administration and one that dealt with inter-daimyo diplomacy, but both had significant political power in their control over information. That the diplomatic responsibility fell mostly on senior retainers acting as mediators meant that the same failsafe measures used by the Shimazu to regulate their internal mediators cannot be applied here. This lack of administrative oversight on senior retainers as mediators meant that they were essentially free to wield the authority of the daimyo for their individual goals so long as there were no overt

[179] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 150 – 1.
[180] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 151 – 2.
[181] The Nyūta would appear again in Kakuken's diary several more times after this incidence. While these entries indicate that Kakuken and the Nyūta kept in touch with one another, Kakuken no longer played such an active role in the conversation relative to his prior actions. See *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 166, 183, 193, 198 – 200.

contradictions between what the daimyo wanted and what the senior retainers wanted. We saw this when Uwai Kakuken coaxed Shiga Dōeki into joining the Shimazu war effort without prior consultation with the daimyo. We might interpret Kakuken's interaction with Shiga Dōeki as one that would ultimately benefit the Shimazu had the battle actually happened. In this hypothetical situation, we can argue that the freedom for senior retainers to wield the daimyo's authority in this manner had the potential to benefit the daimyo. As the senior retainers were left to police themselves on the use of such authority however, this same freedom to wield the daimyo's authority could just as easily be used to undermine the prerogatives of the daimyo. In other words, if their sense of morality and loyalty were the only things keeping senior retainers from using their lord's authority for individual gains, than we must consider this aspect of the communication and intelligence infrastructure as a significant flaw. As we saw in the case of Kakuken, morality and loyalty were not the focus of Kakuken's decision-making per se. Instead, from Kakuken's view, the absurdity of the situation stemmed from his failure to be an effective liaison and mediator between the Shimazu and the Nyūta.

That Kakuken operated on his need to benefit or protect his own image is something that Marushima Kazuhiro agrees with in his own research.[182] Marushima argues that, while Kakuken might claim that abandoning the Nyūta to their fate could harm the Shimazu in the future, the primary concern that occupied Kakuken's mind was his own identity as mediator and diplomat.[183] By establishing himself as the primary representative of the Shimazu to the Nyūta, Kakuken had placed his own reputation at risk should he fails to deliver what he promised to the

[182] Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 177.
[183] For Kakuken's claim, see *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 143. See also Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 177.

Nyūta.[184] In weighing the importance of his own reputation versus Yoshihisa's will, it would appear that Kakuken deemed the former was of greater significance.[185] Marushima's claim here resonates with the justification that Kakuken gave to Kawano Michiyasu when the latter asked Kakuken if he could join in Kakuken's military campaign. At the time, Kakuken likely was not willing to risk his reputation by either granting or denying Michiyasu's request, instead choosing to pass the responsibility on to the senior retainer council. Similarly, in the case of the Nyūta, Kakuken once again refused to risk his own reputation even if it meant defying Yoshihisa's orders. The maintenance of his own reputation was a key concern of Kakuken when it came to the political decisions he made in both regards.

This case reveals a lot about the many factors that affected Yoshihisa's decisions as well. Kakuken's offense was that he violated a direct command of Yoshihisa and attempted to call on the deputy to provide him with military aid, therefore undermining the military command structure of the Shimazu administration. Despite the severity of the offense, Yoshihisa's criticism of Kakuken was highly personal. Instead of referencing Kakuken's attempt to undermine his military authority, Yoshihisa cited times when Kakuken may have pretended to be sick when summoned and when Kakuken did not congratulate Yoshihisa on his celebrations. Yoshihisa took Kakuken's actions as a personal offense, and that Kakuken's attempt to circumvent him was not so much an undermining of the military hierarchy, but a personal slight and further evidence that Kakuken did not respect him. What prevented Kakuken from suffering a harsher punishment might be the fact that Kakuken's actions could be read as ones that were taken to benefit Yoshihisa. Indeed, by securing an alliance with the Nyūta, Kakuken's actions might have been

[184] Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō*, pp. 177 – 8.
[185] Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* pp. 177 – 8.

helpful to the Shimazu. But whatever Kakuken's intentions were, from the moment he chose to directly disobey Yoshihisa's orders, Kakuken surrendered any claims he might have had for acting to benefit Yoshihisa. As such, it is difficult argue that Kakuken placed the wellbeing of Yoshihisa before his own agendas.

IV. Conclusion: the Pipelines and Gatekeepers of Information

The value of information and intelligence undoubtedly rose tremendously during the Sengoku era as political and military tensions were heightened to the extreme across the archipelago. This was an understandable situation. After all, political and military intelligence were crucial for the survival for the warriors of the period. What is less understandable however, is the way that information and intelligence were utilized by both the daimyo and his retainers.

We have seen in the earlier sections of the current chapter the process through which information and intelligence circulated within the Shimazu administration and the identity of those responsible for gathering and delivering such information and intelligence. As a way to ensure the effective functioning of the administration, information and intelligence were transmitted by a selected group of mediators. They were the sole carriers of information between the various levels of the administration, and thus held a certain degree of political leverage. As such, they needed to be managed accordingly by the daimyo. To increase the accuracy of the information and intelligence the administration received, the Shimazu made sure to have multiple mediators appointed to a particular tasks in proportion to the importance of said task. The Shimazu also made sure to minimize the mediators' incentive to cheat the system by eliminating as many conflicts of interest as possible. Many middle-ranking warriors of the Shimazu served as mediators at some point in their career. In fact, all senior retainers who

climbed up through the ranks acted as mediators previously. This served two key purposes for the Shimazu administration. On the one hand, by having the upper-most echelon of the administration be wary of how the information system can be manipulated, it naturally helped to prevent any such attempts from being successful. On the other hand, being trained properly for handling information was crucial to senior retainers as they were most likely to be assigned as mediators themselves when dealing with important diplomatic exchanges between daimyo. Assignment to the mediator post was, in a sense, part of their career training.

Outside of this internal system of communication, there were also many unofficial channels of information and intelligence used by the Shimazu, the most important of which was the one utilizing the aristocracy and the poets. Their significance as mediators stemmed from the diplomatic access granted to them because of their ability to compose poetry in conjunction to the imperial prestige specifically associated with the courtiers. Poetry was a highly valued skill for the warriors of the medieval age. As a result of this, aristocrats and poets were frequently invited to various daimyo's courts to teach their craft to local warriors. This ease of access to various warrior courts meant that the aristocracy and poets became great information collectors, serving as pseudo-spies as they delivered critical military intelligence from one domain to the next. This added value that they bring to the table was a key part of why courtiers and poets were such an important part of the communication system of the daimyo. Unfortunately, despite the efforts of the daimyo to gather as much information as possible, control over the accuracy of such information still eluded their grasp.

Without fundamental guiding principles in the operation of the domain for each level of the administration, both daimyo and retainers were left to their own devices when it came to using the information they have. Many warriors chose to use information for their individual

benefits, and Uwai Kakuken was no exception to this. The interactions between Kakuken and the Nyūta illustrates for us that at least some of the factors controlling the political actions taken by Kakuken had to do with his needs to reinforce his reputation as a mediator. For Kakuken, his reputation outweighed his desire to respect the military authority of his lord. Similarly, in responding to Kakuken's offense, Yoshihisa showed that he too saw the entire episode with the Nyūta as a personal act of disrespect against his authority. Both daimyo and retainer only considered their actions through the lens of individual gains and benefits, as opposed to any abstract notions of politics. Infractions toward the Shimazu administration and political infrastructure paled in comparison to the personal insult felt by Yoshihisa because, like Kakuken, Yoshihisa was concerned with his own reputation as a ruler and the legitimacy of his leadership within the Shimazu.

We have outlined here the flaws of the Shimazu communication system, and the ways and reasons for retainers to circumvent this system. What is missing however, is the role and approach taken by the daimyo in dealing with their lack of control over the accuracy of information. In the next chapter, we will look at how the daimyo responded to the uncertainty of the information and intelligence they were receiving. Specifically, through the analysis of rumours, we will see what some of Yoshihisa's key considerations were when it came to his own political decision-making, and how he utilized the ambiguous nature of information to his own advantage.

CHAPTER 3

On Rumours

Based on our modern understanding of rumours, it is difficult perhaps to categorize them as a reliable source of information. As one of the defining features of rumours is their unsubstantiated nature, making decisions based on rumours seem to be a foolhardy endeavour. Yet rumours were not without their political utility. The manipulation of rumours by prominent political figures was a fairly common practice in medieval Japan and was enabled by a general limited access to information by the population at large. This chapter will focus on how Shimazu Yoshihisa used rumours to his advantage in order to reinforce his reputation and legitimacy.

At the most fundamental level, rumours is just one of the many kinds of communication and military intelligence. If all unsubstantiated information was considered to be rumours, then almost all information a daimyo receives on a daily basis would be nothing but rumours. But this was clearly not the case. That Kakuken made note of rumours in his diary and separated them from the daily information he encountered suggest as much. Within a daimyo's administration, a clear distinction was made between rumours and normal information. Since the truthfulness of any information and intelligence a daimyo received can never be fully affirmed, the unsubstantiated nature of rumours cannot be what distinguished them from the other pieces of intelligence the Shimazu received on a daily basis. Instead, the key feature of a rumour for the Sengoku warriors was their mysterious origins. Rumours epitomized the ambiguous nature of information and military intelligence, but that did not mean that such information was useless. In

fact, rumours provided daimyo with unprecedented opportunities to further his own individual agenda by exploiting the ambiguity inherent in such information.

The first section of this chapter explores the medieval Japanese conception of rumours and their value as a source of information within the medieval warrior society. Borrowing from the work of Sakai Kimi, we will see that despite our modern concepts of what rumours are and the unreliable nature of such information, people in medieval Japan had a very different understanding of and relationship with rumours. In fact, rumours were valued by investigators and courts alike throughout the Kamakura and the Muromachi period in solving crimes and infractions against the warrior elites. Rumours were more than just simple hearsay or pieces to a larger picture of the truth; rather they were information with inherent truth value. For those who wished to contest the truth of any given rumours in the Sengoku era, they were tasked with almost the impossible. In premodern Japan, rumour, or *fūbun*,[186] was one of many types of discourse used to communicate ideas and information. While the mysterious origins of *fūbun* was what separated *fūbun* as rumours from all other forms of unsubstantiated information, rumours' relationship to truth and the authority of truth was a much more ill-defined matter. Lacking the dichotomous notion of truth versus falsehood prevalent within Western thinking, the value and authority of "truth" was much more ambiguous in premodern Japanese thinking. Because of the nebulous nature of truth itself, rumours became a risky but critical instrument of rule for the Sengoku daimyo.

The second section of this chapter will be two case studies regarding rumours found in the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*. Through our investigation of these two cases, it will become clear that

[186] While the term *uwasa* was generally used more often within medieval Japan, Kakuken used the term *fūbun* instead within his diary. Both terms translate to "rumours" but the term *fūbun* could also be used as verb, in which case its definition becomes "to hear or to pass on a rumour."

Shimazu Yoshihisa was much more concerned with how he could use rumours to reinforce his own position within his administration as opposed to any ideological or abstract notions. Furthermore, we will also see how the uncertain nature of rumours actually contributed to their value as key pieces of information. For Yoshihisa, the ambiguous value of truth lied in the effects it might have on his own reputation.

The first case of rumours we will explore here is with regards to Iriki-in Shigetoyo and the rumours of his supposed ambition against the Shimazu. This case shows that the very existence of the rumours affected the decisions of the retainers in dealing with the Iriki-in. In resolving these rumours, no efforts were dedicated to finding out the truth behind these rumours. Instead, Yoshihisa encouraged Shigetoyo to prove his innocence to his peers in a way that was consistent with Yoshihisa's personal pursuit of authority and legitimacy. In trying to secure his own agenda, Yoshihisa also repeatedly emphasized his own lack of responsibility in coaxing Shigetoyo to relinquish his landholdings, showing a preoccupation for projecting the image of a righteous and magnanimous ruler.

The second case we will discuss here is one that we have a lot less information on. The value of this case lies in how Yoshihisa responded to it. When asked by a retainer, Hirata Kunai-no-shō, if he could transfer to a new location, Yoshihisa cited the existence of a rumour as the basis for rejecting this retainer's request. This case was a rare instance when Yoshihisa explicitly stated that the only truth he cared about was the existence of the rumours themselves, and not the truth buried beneath said rumours. More importantly, Yoshihisa will not risk his own reputation just to grant such a request. Yoshihisa clearly prioritized his image as a filial son above the actual political and military repercussions of granting or denying a retainer's request. This case thus illustrates how Yoshihisa framed his decision-making processes through the consequences he

might had to suffer because of them, downplaying the impact of his decisions upon the other parties such decisions might affect.

I. The Importance of Rumours

Rumours, by their very nature, are unsubstantiated sources of information. Given the unstable sociopolitical environment of the Sengoku period, one might perhaps assume that such unreliable form of information was of limited utility. This point of view might be even more convincing if we consider how important successes on the battlefield were to the warriors of this time period. After all, if these warriors could not plan their martial endeavours according to accurate military intelligence, they would likely not last very long on the frontlines. Similarly, the inability to navigate the murky and turbulent waters of Sengoku politics would have led many a daimyo astray. Despite the precarious situations the warriors found themselves, rumours nevertheless remained an important part of the communication apparatus for many throughout the medieval period. Before examining the specifics of some of the rumours Uwai Kakuken inscribed in his diary, we need to clarify some significant characteristics of medieval rumours.

The first thing that we must address about rumours is the way that they were perceived by medieval warriors. While we might be tempted to look at rumours by seeking out their origins, this was rarely the impulse shared by warriors in the medieval period. Indeed, it was specifically because of their obscured origins combined with their widespread circulation that lent rumours an air of respectability and a supernatural aura for the medieval audience. According to Sakai Kimi, who wrote extensively on medieval rumours and their utility throughout the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, the far-reaching nature of rumours and the speed with which they seeped

into society were reasoned as something that surpassed human capabilities in medieval Japan.[187] Lacking any plausible explanations for where rumours came from and how they spread, it was believed that rumours were created by spiritual beings such as the kami.[188] Extant records from the period has also cited the activities of *tengu* or *tenko*, mythical creatures commonly translated as "goblins" and "fox spirits" respectively, as the reason for the phenomenal spread and circulation of rumours within short periods of time.[189] Rumours were considered as something that was beyond the control of human agency, and to seek out those responsible for starting and spreading rumours was thus a fruitless endeavour. As the belief that spiritual forces intervened in human affairs was common at the time, it was easy to think of rumours as simply part of this larger pattern of supernatural activities. Due to rumours' association with the supernatural however, they also came to embody the will of the kami during the Kamakura and the Muromachi periods.[190] This in turn meant that to dismiss a rumour as baseless was to challenge the will of the kami, and nothing short of providing proof of divine will could someone actually do this.[191] The difficulty associated with an official dismissal of rumours meant that the content of rumours was rarely challenged. Because of this, rumours were accepted as an instrument of rule until proven otherwise.

Rumours also impacted medieval law enforcement. While rumours by themselves did not constitute sufficient evidence for conviction, they nevertheless played a role in the final decision-making by the various judiciary institutions of the medieval period. Here we once again turn to

[187] Sakai, *Chūsei no uwasa: jōhō dentatsu no shikumi*, p. 16.
[188] Sakai, *Chūsei no uwasa: jōhō dentatsu no shikumi*, p. 16.
[189] Sakai, *Chūsei no uwasa: jōhō dentatsu no shikumi*, pp. 17 – 18.
[190] Sakai, *Chūsei no uwasa: jōhō dentatsu no shikumi*, p. 87.
[191] Specifically, the person will need to produce a *shinryo,* the will of the kami, in order to challenge any given rumour. The *shinryo* could also take the form as an order or decree issued by the tenno who is believed to be of divine ancestry. Sakai, *Chūsei no uwasa: jōhō dentatsu no shikumi*, p. 87.

Sakai's work, specifically her study of the adjudicatory process of Hōryūji in Nara during the first half of the fourteenth century.[192] According to Sakai, Hōryūji viewed and gave value to evidence in two categories. First was proof substantiated by eyewitness accounts of a crime in action or the place where stolen goods were stashed away. The second were graffiti and hearsay, both of which fell in the category of rumours. These merely pointed to specific people as suspects. However, in conviction, the use of rumours and graffiti was six times more frequent than the use of the substantiated proof.[193] In other words, in judicial decision-making, rumours were significant during the medieval period as part of a larger set of evidence needed to convict someone for committing a criminal act.

This is not to say that such notions of rumours, stemming mostly from the Kamakura and the Muromachi periods, remained unchanged by the time of Kakuken's writing, or that these same notions were equally relevant in every corner of Japan. While the supernatural origins of rumours were widely accepted, local authorities did not hesitate to curtail the spread of rumours when such rumours were instigating rebellions or uprisings.[194] They were, in other words, more than willing to work against the supposed will of the kami when it suited their own interests. Similarly, rumours circulating within an insular political administration, such as that of a daimyo's household, were generally more thoroughly investigated.[195] Without undermining the spirituality of rumours, those affected by rumours within a closed system tended to be more eager to find the person who started their circulation.[196] After all, if the rumours were transmitted through the work of the supernatural, surely it would have travelled beyond the walls of a

[192] Sakai, *Chūsei no uwasa: jōhō dentatsu no shikumi*, pp. 46 – 62.
[193] Sakai, *Chūsei no uwasa: jōhō dentatsu no shikumi*, p. 56.
[194] Sakai, *Chūsei no uwasa: jōhō dentatsu no shikumi*, pp. 163 – 4.
[195] Sakai, *Chūsei no uwasa: jōhō dentatsu no shikumi*, p. 210.
[196] Sakai, *Chūsei no uwasa: jōhō dentatsu no shikumi*, p. 210.

particular household. That the rumours remained within the household must mean that it was the work of humans and not spirits.

II. Rumours of Iriki-in Shigetoyo's Ambitions

In examining the effects that rumours had on the political decisions of the Shimazu, the case of the Iriki-in and the rumours surrounding their ambitious plan to betray Yoshihisa illustrates for us how rumours can be used by the daimyo for his personal gains. Specifically, Yoshihisa used the Iriki-in rumours to reinforce his own authority within the Shimazu family and protect his image as a filial son. This case also highlights the fact that there were no attempts to investigate the validity of the rumours, nor were there any attempts to find their origins. This was consistent with the way rumours were treated throughout the medieval era. Instead, the burden of proof to show the innocence of the Iriki-in fell on the shoulders of Iriki-in Shigetoyo (d. 1583), the leader of the Iriki-in family at the time of the incident. Yoshihisa's decision to force Shigetoyo to do everything he can to disprove the rumours, allowed Yoshihisa to achieve two primary objectives. First, Yoshihisa was able to seize control of some of the key Iriki-in landholdings on legitimate grounds, thus reinforcing his political legitimacy as the ruler of the Shimazu. Second, Yoshihsa managed to reinforce his reputation as a daimyo who exercised his power in a measured manner by allowing Shigetoyo to take the initiative in proving his innocence. Let us begin by looking at the circumstances that these rumours appeared in the historical records.

We get a sense of the tension between Iriki-in Shigetoyo and Shimazu Yoshihisa from the opening passages of Kakuken's diary. On the first day of the eighth month of Tenshō 2 (1574), Kakuken wrote,

> Item. This morning it was stated that the sword from Iriki-in (Shigetoyo) should be given to our lord as a gift after the presentation of the gift from Tōgō (Shigehisa). The senior retainers stated in response, "Since Tōgō, Kedō-in, and Iriki all stemmed from the same family, it should be Nejime (Nejime Shigenaga) who presents his sword as a gift next."
>
> The mediator from Iriki (Satsuma district, Iriki-in Shigetoyo), Murao Kurando said, "As I am still inexperience in such matters, I must first return to Danjō-no-chū (Shigetoyo) and ask him for his orders. A decision should be made soon."
>
> The senior retainers reconsidered this and replied, "If one person from that family was prioritized before others, it should not matter when the other branch families present their gifts." Despite this, the mediator retired from court without understanding the senior retainers' position nor providing a response. The go-between for this situation was Honda (Chikaharu) Inaba-no-kami and myself.[197]

As this was the first entry of Kakuken's diary, we were given no context of the underlying tension between the Shimazu and the Iriki-in present at this time.

A brief outline of what was supposed to happen on this specific day can be seen through Kakuken's actions during this event. The first of the eighth month was *hassaku*, a day for lord and vassal to exchange gifts to reaffirm their bonds.[198] On this particular day, the many other retainers of the Shimazu were set to present their daimyo with gifts as part of a ritualistic gift exchange. For example, Kakuken presented Yoshihisa with a single sword and a hundred copper coins. In return for these gifts, Yoshihisa awarded Kakuken with a sword and a bow.[199] There was an underlying political purpose here. With the exchange of gifts, the relationship between a lord and his retainers was supposedly reaffirmed. As this relationship formed the basis of political power and authority during the Sengoku period, we can easily see why participation in this act of gift exchange might be important for retainers and daimyo alike.

[197] Uwai Kakuken, *Uwai Kakuken nikki* part 1, p. 2.
[198] *Hassaku* was a practice that began during the Muromachi period (1336 – 1573).
[199] Uwai Kakuken, *Uwai Kakuken nikki* part 1, p. 2.

In trying to understand the tension between the Shimazu and Murao here, Asakawa Kan'ichi contends that Murao's arrogance was representative of the same attitude held by Iriki-in Shigetoyo who was not satisfied with his new subservient position vis-à-vis the Shimazu.[200] Having surrendered to the Shimazu only five years before, the Iriki-in had not fully acclimated themselves to Shimazu lordship. Asakawa thus implies that Murao, in representing his lord Iriki-in Shigetoyo, was purposefully acting in an arrogant manner, which Asakawa presumes to be a product of Shigetoyo's own pride and unwillingness to recognize his new position.[201] However, a deeper consideration of this particular episode shows Asakawa's argument to be circumstantial at best.

First, to accept Asakawa's claim that Murao's actions were representative of the arrogance displayed by the Iriki-in, we must infer from the text that it was Murao that voiced this complaint in the first place. If we look at the actual text as it appears in the diary however, it is unclear as to who actually suggested that the Iriki-in should be the ones to present their gift after the Tōgō. Later records like the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū* (*The Chronicles of Lord Yoshihisa*) and the *Shimazu kokushi* (*The Provinical History the Shimazu*) suggest that Murao was the one who took issue with the order in which gifts were presented. However, since these accounts were compiled much later and without reference to any specific historical documents, their accuracy remains questionable at best, especially in contrast to the first-hand account presented by Kakuken.[202]

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[200] Asakawa, *The Documents of Iriki*, p. 311.
[201] Asakawa, *The Documents of Iriki,* p. 311.
[202] The *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū* is a generic title given to an eclectic set of documents that were compiled sometime during the Tokugawa Period (1603 – 1868). Most of these documents and accounts were of unknown origins, though the originals were likely to have existed during the time of its composition. The specific section from which this event was recounted is taken from a narrative section of this collection. See Kuroshima, "Shimazu Yoshihisa monjo no kisoteki kenkyū," p. 11. The *Shimazu kokushi* is an official history commissioned by the twenty-fifth generation Shimazu daimyo in 1797, and completed in 1802. This too was a narrative retelling of events, and the

Second, even if we accept that the complaints were voiced by Murao, we must also dismiss his claims of inexperience as a mediator for Asakawa's argument to make sense. Since there are no extant evidence that could provide us with more information on the identity of Murao, we cannot say with any degree of certainty whether or not he was truly inexperienced.[203] Furthermore, a supposed sense of arrogance must also be attributed to Iriki-in Shigetoyo, who had no direct control over the way his mediators would act and represent him in the Shimazu court. Even if Shigetoyo was displeased with his position relative to the Shimazu, he could not remotely control the way Murao acted in his stead. As such, there should be a separation between Murao's disrespect towards the Shimazu and the supposed malicious intentions harboured by Shigetoyo.

Third, Asakawa also cited Murao's failure to present Shigetoyo's gift before his departure as another sign of the arrogance of the Iriki-in.[204] Given that it was *hassaku*, we could interpret Murao's failure to deliver Shigetoyo's gift to the Shimazu as a symbolic dismissal of the bonds between the Iriki-in and the Shimazu. This claim however runs into the same difficulties as the previous claim with regards to the intentions behind Murao's actions. Specifically, we must assume that Murao was lying with regards to his inexperience in order for us to justify this act as an indication of arrogance. We must also assume that there is a consistent

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sources that it cites in its notations included the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū* and the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* For the original text from the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū*, see *Kagoshima-ken shiryō: kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* part 1, p. 342, doc. 749. For the original text from *Shimazu kokushi*, see *Kagoshima-ken shiryō: kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* part 1, p. 324, doc. 715.

[203] Part of the problem stems from the fact that "Kurando" is not a proper name, but instead a job title that translates roughly to "secretary." This, along with the fact that such job titles were more decorative than descriptive, meant that there could have been multiple "Kurando" with the surname of Murao operating at the same time, making the task of accurately identifying him all the more difficult. Within the extant documents and sources that I have been able to examine, while there were others with the Murao surname, they all carried a different title and had no proper name attached to them, thus making it difficult if not impossible to connect Murao Kurando with the others if there were any connections at all.

[204] Asakawa, *The Documents of Iriki,* p. 311.

attitude between the Iriki-in family on the one hand, and their mediators on the other hand. Unfortunately, we simply do not have enough evidence to suggest that this was the case.

What can help us in explaining the tension between the Iriki-in and the Shimazu however is the presence of the rumours during *hassaku.* The first time Kakuken explicitly mentioned the rumours surrounding Iriki-in Shigetoyo was on the eighth day of the eighth month of Tenshō 2 (1574);

> With regards to the reply from Iriki-in in response to what was stated last month, it was received by Honda (Chikasada) Shimotsuke-no-kami, Ijichi (Shigehide) Kage,[205] and myself. Yamaguchi (Shigeaki) Chikuzen-no-kami and Tōgō (Shigemae?) Mimasaka-no-kami represented Iriki-in and delivered this reply to us at the Gomasho. It states that, "When I was in service at court last month and rumours surrounding my ambition was mentioned, my lord dismissed such matter with a single utterance, thus securing my possessions – for that I am truly grateful. I understand that, as my lord suggested, since it is unreasonable to expect others to serve alongside someone harboring such ambitions, I should do something to openly prove my innocence. I therefore submit my landholdings to my lord. As to which holdings specifically are to be transferred, I await the decisions of the senior retainers."
>
> I relayed this message to Murata (Tsunesada) and Hirata (Masamune), who told me to report this to my lord. As it appeared that my lord was not in a good mood, I did not report this matter to him.[206]

From this passage, it is clear that the rumours surrounding Iriki-in Shigetoyo was already in circulation by the time of *hassaku*, and may have played a part in the tension between Murao and the senior retainers of the Shimazu.

Notably, this solution proposed by Shigetoyo arrived at Kagoshima after *hassaku*. As such it is not unreasonable to suggest that rumours of the Iriki-in's ambition likey strained the relationship between the Shimazu and the Iriki-in. The presence of these rumours likely affected

[205] *Kage* used here is a shortened form of *kageyu*, which roughly translates to the post of "the Investigator of Records." It was, like many other court titles used by warriors at the time, a prestigious title that had little practical relevance to their work in reality.
[206] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, pp. 4 – 5.

the way the Shimazu administration treated Shigetoyo and his mediator. By taking into account the presences of these rumours, we can begin to make sense of how communication between the Shimazu and the Iriki-in broke down during the event of the first of the eighth month.

It is important to keep in mind that the first of the eighth month was an occasion for the reaffirmation of the lord-vassal relationship. The presence of these rumours challenges the validity of Asakawa's explanation for Murao's actions.[207] As the rumours were already in circulation, it made little sense for Shigetoyo to act in such an arrogant manner on *hassaku*, only for him to retract this position and submit his landholdings to Yoshihisa as an act of loyalty a week later. Seen from this perspective, it is hard to argue that Murao's actions were purely done out of arrogance that either he or his lord felt. Whatever logic Murao was operating with, arrogance was unlikely to be the primary factor here.

Similarly, we cannot assume that the decisions rendered by the senior retainers after two separate rounds of deliberations were a simple reaction toward the supposed arrogance of the Iriki-in. Given the somewhat turbulent history between the Shimazu and the Iriki-in, there were plenty of reasons for the senior retainers to be biased against the Iriki-in. If we are to assume that Shigetoyo was arrogant because he was not accustomed to Shimazu lordship, we must also assume that the Shimazu were eager to put the Iriki-in in their place as subordinates. Viewed from this perspective, we can begin to see how the very declaration of Murao's arrogance would fit within a larger plan to reinforce the legitimacy of the Shimazu as the overlords of the Iriki-in. The rumours of Shigetoyo's ambitions and the ambiguity of the situation at the time of *hassaku* gave the Shimazu retainers enough reasons to portray Murao and Shigetoyo as arrogant and unruly. These rumours could also contribute to the senior retainers' decision to deny Murao's

[207] For Asakawa's explanation, see Asakawa, *The Documents of Iriki*, p. 311.

request. Whatever the actual reasons, the senior retainers' decision communicated loudly and clearly that the reinforcement of the lord-vassal relationship between the Shimazu and the Iriki-in would only be done on the Shimazu's terms.

The above entry also gives us valuable insight as to how daimyo like Yoshihisa managed to render himself as a benevolent ruler while manipulating his retainers into giving him what he wants. Key to Yoshihisa's plans was his own dismissal of these rumour's validity with regards to Shigetoyo's treachery. By reassuring Shigetoyo that Yoshihisa himself did not believe in such rumours, Yoshihisa reframed himself into an impartial actor throughout this entire incident. In this context, rumours of Shigetoyo's disloyalty was a problem only in so far as it disrupted the relationship among his fellow retainers. Any actions taken by Shigetoyo to prove his innocence will thus be seen as voluntary acts of a retainer done for the benefit of the collective, instead of a set of punitive measures enforced by the daimyo. Furthermore, by explicitly stating his trust in Shigetoyo at the onset, Yoshihisa prevented any potential appeals for an investigation into both the origin and the validity of the rumours. The task set for Shigetoyo was not to show the falsities of the rumours but to display his supposed loyalty to the Shimazu for all his peers to see.

Another important element with regards to rumours and political decisions that can be gleaned from the above passage is the method through which innocence and loyalty could be proven by retainers during the Sengoku period. As was suggested in the previous section, since rumours were considered as a vehicle for transmitting divine will on a spiritual level, disproving it would be close to impossible. As such, a much more effective and efficient way of dispelling notions of disloyalty was to simply relinquish one's resources that were vital to a potential rebellion. This would render the truth irrelevant as it deprived the suspect of the ability to act completely.

While Shigetoyo was being placed under tremendous pressure to prove himself due to these rumours, Yoshihisa had plenty to gain by their circulation. Yoshihisa's declaration of trust from the very beginning was nothing but a façade that had little political impact on the larger Shimazu administration. After all, Yoshihisa had the power to dismiss all doubts within the ranks of his own retainers through official proclamations. If the comfort of his retainers in serving alongside someone suspected of being overly ambitious was truly a concern, Yoshihisa had the power to dispel such discomfort at his fingertips. That he chose not to issue any proclamations about it and instead demanded Shigetoyo to prove his loyalty to his peers through actions that only benefitted Yoshihisa suggests that he was not motivated by the wellbeing of his retainers per se. This allowed Yoshihisa to de-escalate the situation by reassuring Shigetoyo that he was not in immediate danger, set an example to other retainers operating within the Shimazu administration, make implicit demands of Shigetoyo, and if such rumours were in fact true, undermine the political and military power of the Iriki-in. Yoshihisa's actions allowed him to achieve all of these objectives while maintaining the image of being a just and magnanimous ruler. By relinquishing his own holdings, Shigetoyo would thus satisfy all of Yoshihisa's motivations for acting in this manner in the first place.

This brief entry of the Kakuken's diary illustrates how rumours supposedly dismissed by the daimyo could still impact the daimyo's administration as retainers work to prove their loyalty. We can also see that the validity of the rumours meant very little in the larger scheme of things, especially when the parties involved were more concerned with how they can take advantage of the situation than finding out the truth behind the rumours. Both Yoshihisa and Shigetoyo were focused on finding a mutually beneficial resolution instead of actually addressing the rumours. On the one hand, the resubmission of Shigetoyo's landholdings allowed

him to dispel any potential suspicions Yoshihisa might have held towards the Iriki-in. On the other hand, Yoshihisa managed to minimize a potential domestic disturbance by forcing Shigetoyo to voluntarily submit his landholding while also maintaining a positive public image of Yoshihisa as the daimyo of the Shimazu. Both parties got what they wanted, but it was Yoshihisa who had gained more in this exchange.

Now that we have looked at how rumours had a direct effect on the way the Iriki-in and the Shimazu interacted with each other we can continue our examination of these rumours and how they were utilized by Yoshihisa. As noted above, Shigetoyo had previously petitioned Yoshihisa and suggested that he should return his landholdings to Yoshihisa as proof of the Iriki-in's innocence. From the way that Yoshihisa chose to respond to this proposal, we can see both the possible motivations of Yoshihisa in his actions, and how Yoshihisa potentially utilized these rumours as a political weapon.

After the petition by Shigetoyo for returning his landholdings to Yoshihisa on the eighth day of the eighth month of Tenshō 2 (1574) was received by the senior retainers, the matter was eventually relayed to Yoshihisa. Upon hearing of this, Yoshihisa decided that with regards to these landholdings, he will leave it to the senior retainers to decide what to do with them. However, before letting his retainers do their job, Yoshihisa noted that "if we specified how much of his landholdings he should submit, then it would appear as though I mentioned these rumours for the sake of getting his landholdings. Maybe we should give him ten *chō* of land in return for every ten *chō* he submits, so that similar amounts of lands were exchanged."[208] Yoshihisa is clearly concerned with how others might see him as a selfish and retributive ruler who stirred up rumours for his own gains. While we do not have definitive evidence to prove

[208] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 6.

this, it is strange that he explicitly stated that he did not want to be blamed for the rumours when no one else ever made an issue of it. That no other statements like this were ever made by Yoshihisa before or after this episode within Kakuken's diary also renders Yoshihisa's statement somewhat suspicious.

A later account of Shigetoyo's rumours found in the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū* also highlights Yoshihisa's concern over his own reputation, but frames it in a manner that renders him into an enlightened and forgiving ruler.

> Iriki-in Danjō-no-chū's plan to plot against us was already revealed, and even children and servants knew about his schemes. Though he is to be punished without being warned, this cannot be seen as a despotic act. Regarding this, three mediators were sent to Danjō-no-chū last month and told him, "Though you wish to hide your treachery it is too late. Yoshihisa has decided that, if you do not change your ways, he will send troops and cause great turmoil in your land, but this is not what he wants. If you correct the errors of your way and prove your loyalty, then all will be forgiven right away."[209]

According to this particular rendition of the message sent, while there were no overt calls for Shigetoyo to give up his holdings, the threat of violence was real and would likely be enough of a motivation for Shigetoyo to voluntarily give up his landholdings. The emphasis here is for Yoshihisa to not appear despotic, and that despite being able to attack and punish Shigetoyo Yoshihisa *chose* to give him a chance to prove his loyalty instead.

Whether or not it was explicitly stated, the implied threat of violence was likely ever-present throughout the entire situation created by these rumours. Given the gravity of these rumours, we should expect that military actions against Shigetoyo had always been a possibility. Beyond the threat of retaliation however, the account in the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū* merits further examination as it presents a very different Yoshihisa from the one we read about in Kakuken's diary. While both the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū* and Kakuken's diary showed Yoshihisa as someone

[209] *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 751, (p. 342).

concerned with his reputation, the motivations depicted are very different. In the case of the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū*, Yoshihisa was altruistic and magnanimous, providing Shigetoyo a chance at redemption while showing restraint when it came to the use of force. Kakuken's writing however shows a ruler fearful of being judged by others. In the case of the latter, Yoshihisa was not spurred to act because he wanted to give a second chance to Shigetoyo. Instead, Yoshihisa's actions were motivated by the need to protect his own image. The former acted for the good of his retainers while the latter acted for himself.

In order for us to tease out some of the factors affecting Yoshihisa's decisions we need to once again address the reliability of the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū*. As this is a record complied many years after the actual events recorded in it, specific details in the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū* might not entirely be accurate. A look at how *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū* characterizes Shigetoyo's response from the eighth day of the eighth month of Tenshō 2 (1574) can clearly illustrate the biases inherent in this particular work;

> Danjō-no-chū suddenly changed his evil intents, and on the eighth day of the eighth month of Tenshō 2, sent his retainer Yamaguchi Chikuzen and Tōgō Mimasaka to petition his humble opinion: "As I am predisposed to carelessness, that I have held the ambitions of one without any possessions in the past has led to rumours of treachery, suddenly endangering both me and my household. Still my lord gave me the opportunity to change my ways to one of kindness, allowing me to devote this kindness to establishing my house. How can I turn my back to such courteous benevolence? I thus immediately kneel before our lord's flag. If I cannot accumulate loyalty and merit then I cannot show my fidelity as a retainer. As such, I present to my lord my landholdings."…[210]

The tone of Shigetoyo's message here is dramatically different from that which was recorded in the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, While in both instances, Shigetoyo showed gratitude toward Yoshihisa's understanding and support for the Iriki-in, the version found in the *Yoshihisa-kō go-*

[210] *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 751, (p. 342).

fuchū seems hyperbolic to say the least. While both accounts noted that Shigetoyo thanked Yoshihisa for dismissing the rumours surrounding the Iriki-in and thus protected Shigetoyo's landholdings and possessions, the gratitude shown by Shigetoyo in the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū* is greatly exaggerated. In the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū* account, Shigetoyo not only gave praise to Yoshihisa's magnanimity, but also explicitly called Yoshihisa an ideal lord through references to his "benevolence" [211] while depreciating himself as a careless retainer who willingly kneeled to Yoshihisa's rule. Shigetoyo's claims of trying to prove his own loyalty to his colleagues were replaced with a narrative that shows Shigetoyo being compelled to give up on his ambitions by his *a priori* need to serve the benevolent Yoshihisa.

A simple explanation of these differences can be attributed to two primary factors. First, since these are not first-hand accounts, it is entirely possible that the exchange between Shigetoyo and Yoshihisa was simply not recorded accurately by compilers of the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū*. Second and perhaps more likely, given that this particular set of documents were compiled and created during the Tokugawa period, the compilers might have taken the liberties to render the historical narrative within a Neo-Confucian moral framework. Notions of Neo-Confucian ideals of kingship can be seen throughout this particular account of the event, namely through the focus on Yoshihisa as a "benevolent" ruler, his unwillingness to use force to resolve the matter, and how his benevolence can compel others to serve him. Yet even within this context, we cannot deny the threat of violence implicit in Yoshihisa's "benevolent" message. After all an unwillingness to utilize a military solution implies both the ability to and the restraint from pursuing such violent methods.

[211] The particular word used in the *Yoshihisa-kō go-fuchū* is 仁 (jp: *jin*, ch: *ren*), which is a term frequently used in Confucian texts that roughly translates to benevolence, and is the foundation of proper and legitimate kingship within that philosophical tradition.

Despite their differences, these accounts illustrate clearly that the presence of the rumours gave Yoshihisa an opportunity to garner political advantage over his own retainers and further consolidate his power. He did this through absorbing and redistributing landholdings of Shigetoyo, and in the process ensures that Shigetoyo's possession of these landholdings was granted through the blessing of Yoshihisa. Such a use of rumours for the reaffirmation of a daimyo's legitimacy seemed to be a common enough occurrence that Yoshihisa felt the need to pre-emptively defend himself from the negative fallout of such actions. This same concern was stated again the next day, the eleventh of the eighth month, when the messengers of Iriki-in came with another proposal;

> Item. Eleventh day. I attended court as usual. This morning the mediators from Iriki-in, Tōgō Mimasaka and Yamaguchi Chikuzen came to deliver a message. They were received in the Gomasho by Hon-Noshū (Honda Chikasada), I-Kanmoshi (Ijichi Shigehide), and myself. Their message read, "[…] While it was decided that the exact holdings to be submitted will be determined by the senior retainers, I once again come to you with a suggestion. As I am currently in possession of four other *myō*[212] besides Kiyoshiki (Satsuma district), namely Yamada, Amadatsu, Tasaki, and Yoshida (all within the same district), I wish to submit these four *myō* of land to my lord."
>
> This message was presented to Yoshihisa who responded, "If I was to accept all of these holdings, it would appear as though I wanted them in the first place. As such for each holdings submitted one of similar size should be given in return. With regards to Yoshida, since it was Hakuyō (Shimazu Takahisa) who granted this holding to the Iriki-in so that they can have some land next to the sea, it will be difficult for me to change the ownership of this holding."…[213]

Here again we see Yoshihisa concerned with his own reputation as a ruler. This passage also hints at the possibility that other retainers might see the land acquisition as a punitive and selfish act, and how this possibility formed a portion of Yoshihisa's larger concern over his own image. We can see this through his hesitation towards removing Yoshida from Shigetoyo's possession.

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[212] A *myō* is a unit used to count landholdings in the current context.
[213] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 7.

Importantly, Yoshihisa felt that such a decision would run directly counter to his father's will. As Yoshihisa's father, Takahisa, has passed away in Genki 2 (1571), Yoshihisa was clearly not worried about being reprimanded by Takahisa for undermining him. Yohihisa's decision makes sense if we consider how the Iriki-in came into possession of the landholdings listed above. Through such an examination, it will be clear that Yoshihisa's acquisition of Yamada, Amadatsu, and Tasaki was done specifically to reinforce Yoshihisa and his family's legitimacy as the overlords of the Iriki-in because these three holdings were not given to the Iriki-in by Yoshihisa or his immediate predecessors. Kiyoshiki and Yoshida however, were granted to the Iriki-in by Yoshihisa's father and thus were left untouched in this transaction.

The significance of allowing Iriki-in Shigetoyo to maintain control over Yoshida cannot be overstated here. As we have discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, due to the poor agricultural capability of southern Kyushu, landholdings with access to the sea was extremely valuable. The overall lack of agricultural production meant that access to maritime trade allowed samurai to have a much more robust revenue stream. If Yoshihisa was truly fearful of a potential Iriki-in rebellion, then crippling the Iriki-in's economy by denying them access to the sea would be the most logical step to take. Yoshihisa's refusal to take this step further suggests that Yoshihisa was likely more concerned with his own reputation than the military threat posed by the possibility of an Iriki-in rebellion in general.

With regards to Yoshihisa's need to reinforce his own legitimacy in the Shimazu administration, we have noted previously that Yoshihisa's branch of the Shimazu family was not the primary line of the Shimazu prior to the ascendancy of Yoshihisa's grandfather. After their rise to power within the Shimazu family, one of the primary methods of establishing their legitimacy was to follow precedents and to ensure continuity in administration. This approach is

exemplified by Shimazu Takahisa's decision to staff his newly established administration with equal numbers of retainers from the overthrown regime and from his personal retinue.[214] The desire for continuation and stability explains why Yoshihisa declined the submission of Yoshida from Shigetoyo as appropriate to the current situation, for the very acceptance of Yoshida would not only undermine the stability granted by Yoshihisa's father, but also colour Yoshihisa as an unfilial son. By respecting the decision made by Takahisa, Yoshihisa thus reinforces his branch family's legitimacy and paints himself as respectful of precedents as established by his father.

If the continuation of the decisions made by his predecessors was the concern, then Yoshihisa did not need to show the same degree of restraint when it came to the other holdings Shigetoyo forfeited. According to Shigetoyo's suggestion, he wanted to submit Yamada, Amadatsu, Tasaki, and Yoshida to Yoshihisa while maintaining control over Kiyoshiki. Unlike the other four *myō*, Kiyoshiki was not up of consideration here and it was a decision that Yoshihisa respected. Kiyoshiki was never mentioned again as a possible holding for transfer. Unsurprisingly, the Iriki-in's possession of Kiyoshiki was confirmed by Yoshihisa's father on the first month of Genki 1 (1570), shortly after the Iriki-in's surrender to the Shimazu at the end of the previous year.[215] That neither Shigetoyo nor Yoshihisa ever suggested Kiyoshiki as a landholding that should be consider was likely not a coincidence. This could also mean that there was a mutual understanding as to what was happening here. Both parties involved knew Yoshihisa was never concerned with landholdings his father had previously confirmed, and that,

[214] Yamaguchi, "Sengoku: Toyotomi-ki Shimazu-shi no bugyōnin-sei," p. 4.
[215] With regards to the confirmation the Kiyoshiki by Shimazu Takahisa, see *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 532, (p. 230). See also *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 534, (p. 231); *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 535, (p. 231); *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 536, (p. 232); *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 537, (p. 232). For the surrender of the Iriki-in, see *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 508, (p. 222). See also *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 510, (p. 224).

in reality, the rumours were never about Shigetoyo's ambitions at all but rather his semi-ambiguous relationship with Yoshihisa's particular branch of the Shimazu family.

The situation surrounding Yamada, Amadatsu, and Tasaki is quite different from Yoshida and Kiyoshiki. These three holdings were already controlled by the Shibuya family, the main family that the Iriki-in family splintered from, and was passed on internally to the Iriki-in at least as early as Eiden 1 (1490).[216] Only the Iriki-in's control over Yamada *myō* was ever reaffirmed by the Shimazu, but unlike Kiyoshiki or Yoshida, Yamada *myō* was reaffirmed by Shimazu Tachihisa in Kanshō 3 (1462), who was a daimyo from a branch of the Shimazu different from that of Yoshihisa and his father.[217] As for Amadatsu and Tasaki, there are no extant records that show either of these holdings were officially confirmed by the Shimazu at all.[218] This commonality between these three holdings is important in understanding the possible motivations behind Yoshihisa's action with regards to the rumours of Shigetoyo's ambition. The Iriki-in's possession of Yamada, Amadatsu, and Tasaki can be seen as illegitimate from Yoshihisa's perspective, thus the resubmission of these holdings by Shigetoyo was not only justifiable but preferable in Yoshihisa's eyes. Even if Yoshihisa decided to let Shigetoyo keep all of the suggested holdings, the crucial point here is that Shigetoyo would now only be in possession of these holdings not by inheritance or the authority of rival Shimazu branches, but by

[216] "Shibuya Shigetoyo yuzuri-jō," Eitoku 2 (1490).8.21, *the Documents of Iriki* 138 (pp. 66 – 67).
[217] "Shimazu Tatsuhisa chigyō ateokonai-jō," Kanshō 2 (1462). 3.24, t*he Documents of Iriki*, 136a (p. 65).
[218] The status of Amadatsu *myō* is slightly more ambiguous than Yamada and Tasaki in that the records contradict one another regarding whether or not Amadatsu was one of the many lands submitted to Shimazu Takahisa when the various branch families of the Shibuya pledged their service to the Shimazu in Genki 1 (1570). If Amadatsu was in fact submitted to the Shimazu, one could imagine that it was returned to the Iriki-in with Takahisa's blessing, but it would only be one of several possibilities that can explain why Iriki-in still controlled Amadatsu even if it was in fact submitted. However, even these records show that only Kiyoshiki and Tōgō were granted to the Iriki-in and Tōgō families respectively, suggesting that whatever means the Iriki-in used to maintain control over Amadatsu, it was unlikely to be one officially sanctioned by the Shimazu. For records showing the submission of Amadatsu, see *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 534, (p. 231), and *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 535, (p. 231). For records that omits the submission of Amadatsu, see *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 536, (p. 232) and *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 537, (p. 232).

the grace of Yoshihisa. In this manner, Yoshihisa reaffirms the political dominance of his own branch of the Shimazu at the expense of his real or imagined rivals. While it is impossible to say with complete certainty whether or not this was Yoshihsa's plan initially, this was certainly an outcome that benefited Yoshihisa. Regardless of his intentions, Yoshihisa capitalized on the opportunity generated by these rumours in a way that reinforced his legitimacy while also maintained his reputation as a ruler and a son.[219]

Unfortunately, extant records do not show the ultimate resolution of these rumours surrounding the Iriki-in. While evidence suggests that the land holdings of Yamada, Amadatsu, and Tasaki *myō* were given to Yoshihisa, what Shigetoyo received in return remains unclear. No extant documents detailing this land exchange itself exist. The closest confirmation of the transaction comes from an entry from Uwai Kakuken's diary detailing a petition from Shimazu Iehisa, in which he asked to be placed in control of Yamada, Amadatsu, and Tasaki in exchange for his own holding of Kumanojō.[220]

One of the key things to take away from this entire affair surrounding the rumours of Shigetoyo was Yoshihisa's concern over how he will be perceived and judged by others. It is clear that Shigetoyo's relinquishment of land was common knowledge within the Shimazu administration itself.[221] As it was impossible for this land exchange to take place without people knowing, Yoshihisa's concern for how people would judge him was not completely unreasonable. Yoshihisa's concern was also echoed by his younger brother Iehisa. While trying

[219] In his examination of the internal land distribution of Satsuma, Kitashima Manji also hinted at Yoshihisa's desire of taking Yamada, Amadatsu and Tasaki as a way to reinforcing his own administrative authority at the expense of the Iriki-in. This further reinforces the idea that Yoshihisa might have wanted the Iriki-in landholdings, and the presence of the rumours merely provided Yoshihisa with the necessary pretense to take what he wanted. See Kitashima, "Kado taisei no kōzō to ryōshu-sei," p. 84.
[220] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 10.
[221] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 10.

to convince Yoshihisa to give him these holdings, Iehisa said to the senior retainers that "with regards to this matter with Iriki-in, as Chūsho [Iehisa] was one of the people involved in talking about these rumours, it will be troublesome if people think he did so because he coveted Iriki-in's holdings in the first place."[222] Both this statement by Iehisa, and the general concern shown by Yoshihisa suggest that both the Shimazu brothers were at least aware of the conflict of interest at play here. Both brothers wanted to capitalize on the situation, and both of them tried to resolve this conflict of interest by controlling the narrative. Rather than giving up this chance, both Yoshihisa and Iehisa instead attempted to spin the narrative in a way that makes themselves the reluctant recipients of an unwanted fortune, thus allowing them to get what they wanted without having to risk their own reputations.

As I have suggested here, what were at stake throughout the exchange between the Shimazu and the Iriki-in were issues surrounding reputation and legitimacy. Careful utilization of the rumours surrounding Shigetoyo's ambitions allowed Yoshihisa to maintain his façade of magnanimity, re-legitimize his own position as the lord of the Shimazu vis-à-vis the Iriki-in, and weaken the Iriki-in just in case these rumours were true. By repeatedly emphasizing the risks to Yoshihisa's reputation through the Shimazu's absorption of Shigetoyo's holdings, both the senior retainers and Yoshihisa seem to be overcompensating for their motivations behind their actions. By granting Shigetoyo new landholdings that Yoshihisa personally affirmed in exchange for landholdings the Iriki-in had inherited or were granted by other Shimazu branches, the lordship Yoshihisa held over Shigetoyo was solidified. The rumours surrounding Shigetoyo was simply a political tool. These rumours presented Yoshihisa with a chance to reinforce his

[222] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 10.

reputation and legitimacy. The truth behind the rumours was ultimately irrelevant throughout the interactions between these two families.

Further evidence for Yoshihisa's indifference towards truth or facts buried beneath rumours in the face of his own interests can be seen in the way he handled Hirata Kunai-no-shō's request for a landholding exchange. Still completely concerned with his own reputation as a ruler, Yoshihisa continued to wield rumours as a political weapon. Unlike his dealings with Shigetoyo however, in the case of the Hirata, Yoshihisa used rumours as an excuse to deny Hirata Kunai-no-shō's request, stating explicitly how the presence of rumours would negatively impact his reputation if he were to grant Hirata Kunai-no-shō's wishes.

III. Rumours of Hirata Kunai-no-shō: A Tale of Poison?

The case of Hirata Kunai-no-shō and his petition for a transfer to the landholding of Ushine is particularly enlightening for our discussion of Yoshihisa's possible motivations behind his political decisions. In his response to this petition, Yoshihisa explicitly stated that he did not care for the truth. Specifically, using the rumours surrounding Hirata Kunai-no-shō and his father, Yoshihisa argued that the simple existence of such rumours was enough justification for him to deny Hirata Kunai-no-shō's petition due to the adverse effects such rumours would have on Yoshihisa's own reputation.

Despite not having the actual petition from Hirata to Yoshihisa, we do know roughly the content of the petition through Kakuken's diary. On the fourteenth day of the eighth month, Tenshō 2 (1574), Kakuken wrote,

> On the deliberation of Hirata Kunai-no-shō's request to be transferred to Ushine (Kimotsuki district), it is said that his father, Awa-no-suke, attempted to poison Hakuyō

> [Shimazu Takahisa] in the past. No one knows if this was true or not,[223] but the world at large has heard of these rumours. As such, if I [Yoshihisa] am to give the slightest allowance to Hirata Kunai-no-shō's request, would the people not think that I have forgotten about my own father? Since rumours like these would be most troublesome, his transfer cannot be granted.[224]

In this rare instance, we see Yoshihisa's explicit disregard for factual validity. Unlike the more complicated political discourse he employed when dealing with Shigetoyo, Yoshihisa's denial of Hirata Kunai-no-shō's request was extremely direct. Yoshihisa would not grant assistance to Hirata Kunai-no-shō because people might think Yoshihisa was an unfilial son, one who helps those who conspired to kill his father. Only the rumours that might arise from Yoshihisa's assistance figured into the considerations of Yoshihisa for his concern was with how his reputation would be affected in the end.

We might argue that perhaps Yoshihisa was simply using the rumours as a convenient excuse to deny Hirata Kunai-no-shō's request for reasons beyond his own reputation, similar to the way Yoshihisa capitalized on the rumours surrounding Shigetoyo for political purposes. This however appears to not be the case. When pressed by a member of the senior retainer council, Hirata Masamune, Yoshihisa did not in fact give any other reasons as to why he denied Hirata Kunai-no-shō. Insteasd, Yoshihisa stated that,

> I commend you [Hirata Masamune] on the depth of your consideration and sympathy. However, such matters [like the transfer suggested by Hirata Kunai-no-shō] should be discussed between parent and child or husband and wife. Being simply a member of the same [Hirata] family should not be enough for you to extend your sympathy into this matter.[225]

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[223] In the original text, the sentence read, "*jitsu fujitsu ha gozonji naku*" (実不実者無御存知). This is one of the few rare instances where Yoshihisa explicitly used the terms for "truth" and "untruth" to describe his stance. See *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 8.
[224] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 8.
[225] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 11.

As Masamune was a member of the senior retainer council, the highest level of decision makers within the Shimazu administration, he was privy to the larger political agenda of the administration as a whole. Any secret motivations behind Yoshihisa's reasoning for his denial would undoubtedly be known to Masamune, and the failure of Yoshihisa to bring up such motivations at all suggests that there were none. That Masamune pressed Yoshihisa on this issue at all hints at the possibility that Masamune found Yoshihisa's response surprising and perhaps unorthodox. Unlike with Shigetoyo, there were no recourse to political euphemisms such as "loyalty" or "benevolence" in Yoshihisa's response. What was given instead was an unfiltered admission by Yoshihisa, stating that he cared more for his reputation as a ruler and a son than any other administrative or military implications his decisions might have. By dismissing Masamune's challenge due to the lack of proper protocol, Yoshihisa did not actually address the problem, but rather emphasized the idea that as the daimyo, Yoshihisa did not need to explain himself.

One curious aspect of the relationship between Yoshihisa and Hirata Kunai-no-shō is the fact that Yoshihisa continued to allow Hirata Kunai-no-shō to serve the Shimazu despite the rumours. Considering Yoshihisa's concern over his appearance as a filial son, one might be surprised to find the lord-vassal relationship intact between the two of them. Unfortunately, the lack of information on the precise identity of Hirata Kunai-no-shō and his father means that it is next to impossible to provide a satisfying explanation for this. One possibility was that whatever happened between Takahisa and Hirata Awa-no-suke, the issue was resolved by Takahisa, thus allowing the Hirata to continue their service under the Shimazu. If this was the case, Yoshihisa's continued patronage of Hirata Kunai-no-shō would be a filial act, respecting the decisions of Takahisa. This would also be consistent with Yoshihisa's decision to allow Iriki-in Shigetoyo to

maintain his possessions of Kiyoshiki and Yoshida as well. The support of Hirata Kunai-no-shō as a Shimazu retainer thus represented the maintenance of a pre-established status quo and an act of respect toward Takahisa. Whether or not to grant Hirata Kunai-no-shō's request however seemed to be an entirely different issue. For such a decision breaks with the status quo in a manner that directly benefits Hirata Kunai-no-shō. Yoshihisa's granting of such a request would be conceived as unfilial as it would not be the maintenance of a state-of-affair previously established. Instead, it would simply be helping the descendants of those who supposedly attempted to poison Yoshihisa's father. From this perspective, we begin to see how a daimyo imminently concerned with his own reputation could support the livelihoods of supposed old enemies while arguing that granting their requests would be unfilial. The facts behind the rumours only mattered if it did not reflect negatively on those who held political power.

IV. Conclusion: Weaponized Words

The interactions between Yoshihisa and the rumours that circulated within his administration represent a point where the two important factors of Yoshihisa's decision-making process intersected. One the one hand, as we have seen from the cases here, the careful management of rumours allowed Yoshihisa to pursue his own agenda without challenge while also shielding himself from any potential criticism from his retainers. On the other hand, because of the nature of rumours and how they were thought of at the time, this adherence to and acceptance of rumours as significant could be understood as a spiritual reaction on the part of Yoshihisa. While it is difficult to gauge the amount of faith Yoshihisa had for the kami, that his actions could be understood in this manner further protected him from any detractors.

In the case of Shigetoyo, the repeated assertions made by Yoshihisa regarding the relinquishing of Shigetoyo's landholdings and that this was not something Yoshihisa intended hint at Yoshihisa's potential guilt. Of particular interest to us here however is the fundamental sentiment that motivated Yoshihisa's actions. Namely, Yoshihisa did everything he could to protect his image as a just ruler who firmly trusted Shigetoyo. The fact that Yoshihisa expected Shigetoyo to reciprocate such trust by proving his own innocence to his peers was swept aside for a different narrative, one that showed Yoshihisa's benevolence and magnanimity instead. We see this concern for his own reputation again in the case of Hirata Kunai-no-shō and his request for a transfer. Unlike the case with Shigetoyo however, Yoshihisa dropped his façade completely in response to Hirata's request. Here Yoshihisa stated explicitly that because granting Hirata's request will make the world think ill of him as a son, therefore he will not grant such a request. Yoshihisa was concerned with abstract ideals such as loyalty or innocence only in so far as how such ideals would reflect on his own image as a ruler. What we have here is an unfiltered statement of how Yoshihisa's concern over his image motivated him to make political decisions.

In thinking about some of the motivating factors behind the political decision-making process, it is important to keep in mind that the very existence of these rumours became part of the motivations of both the daimyo and the retainers. We see this in both of the cases we have looked at in this chapter. During the events at *hassaku* of Tenshō 2 (1574), it is reasonable to assume that the existence of the rumours surrounding Shigetoyo affected the treatment his mediator received at the Shimazu court. While these events would later be characterized as one that showed the arrogance of the Iriki-in, such accounts were drafted by the Shimazu many years later and thus remain dubious. This effect rumours had on the political decision-making is again apparent within the case of Hirata Kunai-no-shō as well when rumours surrounding the

poisoning of Takahisa clearly motivated Yoshihisa to reject Hirata's request. The truth behind these rumours was either assumed or irrelevant. Rumours by themselves were enough of a motivating factor to directly impact the political decisions of the daimyo and his retainers.

Beyond all of this, through the weaponizing of rumours that circulated within the Shimazu administration, Yoshihisa managed to push forward with his own agenda. We see this primarily with the case of Iriki-in Shigetoyo. It was not a coincidence that all the landholdings accepted by Yoshihisa were holdings that were not approved by Yoshihisa or his direct predecessors. This is especially true when we consider the reasons for Yoshihisa's preclusion of Kiyoshiki and Yoshida as part of the landholding exchange. Yoshihisa used these rumours to force Shigetoyo into a position where he would have to renew his pledge of loyalty to the Shimazu through Yoshihisa's authority. In this light, the events at *hassaku* can also be understood as a deliberate course of action designed to deny the renewal of the lord-vassal bonds between Yoshihisa and Shigetoyo, thus leaving the latter with no other choice but to voluntarily give up his landholdings.

All in all, while the daimyo might not have control over the truthfulness and the accuracy of the information he received from both the official and unofficial channels of communication, he managed to circumvent this systemic flaw by dismissing the necessity for truth altogether. The value of any information lies in how the daimyo could wield them to his advantage, up to and including the ambiguous nature of said information. In their minds, this lack of clarity with information was a feature that generated value, and not a problem to be solved. As such there were no qualms in utilizing dubious or fake information in the pursuit of their individual interests.

CHAPTER 4

On Familial Forces

We have so far established that one of the key factors of consideration that dominated the decision-making process of Yoshihisa and the Shimazu senior retainers was the need to reinforce their own positions within the larger administrative system. In considering how Yoshihisa sought to protect his own interests and what he cared about, we must expand the scope of our examination beyond Yoshihisa's own person and look at how Yoshihisa treated his family. This is what the current chapter will explore. Specifically, this chapter will investigate how the involvement of direct family members affected the political decision-making process of the daimyo. Through the investigation of three specific cases in this chapter, we will see that the wellbeing of his brothers, parents, and children was a crucial part of Yoshihisa's concerns. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Yoshihisa displayed a degree of leniency and empathy when it came to members of his own family unfounded within Yoshihisa's treatment of the other retainers of the Shimazu administration. As such, the involvement of various Shimazu family members had a direct impact upon Yoshihisa's political decision-making process as he navigated to protect and show favour towards his own family. Further, Yoshihisa's concern for the members of the Shimazu family also fits snuggly within his broader concerns with the legitimacy of his particular branch of the Shimazu as internal struggles between brothers would undoubtedly weaken Yoshihisa's claim to the head of the Shimazu family.

In this chapter, we will look at three particular instances that highlight Yoshihisa's family and how their involvement impacted Yoshihisa's decisions. In order to fully appreciate how Yoshihisa's family members affected him, these three particular instances are selected specifically as they all dealt with similar cases we have seen in previous chapters, but with the added twist of being incidents that directly involved the immediate family members of Yoshihisa.

Through the examination of these three cases, we will see the impact Yoshihisa's protective attitude toward his family had upon his decision-making process. The actions taken by Yoshihisa as they are illustrated in this chapter could be seen as consistent with Yoshihisa's overall goal of protecting his own image: a filial son, a protective brother, and a loving father. This in turn gave Yoshihisa political leverage as well. By showing favouritism towards his family, it could reduce the likelihood that Yoshihisa's authority as the leader of the Shimazu be challenged by his brothers who technically had an equal claim to the leadership position. Similarly, by being lenient towards his son-in-law, Yoshihisa discouraged any potential ambitions this son-in-law might have. In this manner, Yoshihisa's concerns for his family intertwined with his goal of reinforcing his reputation and his wish to protect his own position as the daimyo of the Shimazu.

I. The Youngest of the Shimazu and False Information

For this first case, we will return to the interactions between the Shimazu and the Nyūta in Tenshō 13 (1585). Here we will focus on Shimazu Iehisa, the youngest brother of Yoshihisa, and his work as a mediator between the Shimazu and Nyūta. Like Uwai Kakuken, Iehisa was also a strong advocate for the Nyūta as he urged his older brother to send military support to the

Nyūta on several occasions. Of particular interest for us is that, unlike Kakuken who was chastised for trying to elicit help from the *shugo-dai*, Iehisa suffered no consequences for his actions. This was by no means due to the relative severity of the offense committed by Iehisa in contrast to Kakuken. Iehisa fabricated false military intelligence and submitted them to Yoshihisa in an attempt to coax his older brother into action. If not for the caution taken by Kakuken, Yoshihisa would have fallen for Iehisa's lies and be entangled in a military offensive that Yoshihisa did not want to be a part of. The lack of consequences faced by Iehisa suggests that Yoshihisa was not motivated to act in an impartial manner when it comes to punishing his brothers as subordinates.

Amongst the four Shimazu siblings, Iehisa stood at a somewhat unique position. Shimazu Iehisa was the youngest of the Shimazu brothers. Furthermore, while each of the Shimazu siblings were separated by two years of age, Iehisa did not fall into this pattern. Unlike his three older brothers, Shimazu Iehisa was fourteen years younger than Shimazu Yoshihisa, the oldest of the four, and ten years younger than Shimazu Toshihisa (1537 – 1592) who would be the closet to Iehisa's age.

This difference in age seemed to have affected the relationship between Iehisa and Yoshihisa, as it is not uncommon to see Yoshihisa taking a much more informal tone with Iehisa, speaking in a manner closer to what we might expect of siblings. In his dealings with Iehisa we can also see how Yoshihisa emphasized the familial nature of this interaction. By seeing Iehisa more as his brother than as his retainer, Yoshihisa inadvertently allowed himself to treat Iehisa with a greater degree of leniency and understanding in contrast to the way he treated other Shimazu retainers. We see this in Kakuken's diary entry for the eighteenth day of the eighth month of Tenshō 2 (1574) regarding the land submitted by Iriki-in Shigetoyo, Kakuken wrote:

> Item. Eighteenth day. I attended court as usual. I alone relayed to our lord the petition that Chūsho [Iehisa] submitted to the senior retainers.
>
> Our lord states, "With regards to exchanging away Nishida-myō, I cannot even begin to understand his reasoning. I do not understand because he said there were constant problems with his holding of Kumanojō. Despite this, he never bothered to inquire into these problems, and instead he asks for an exchange when there are difficulties? What kind of reasoning is that?
>
> "Furthermore, he wants the Yamada holding for this exchange. This is a holding with a castle, and as such needs to be handled differently than any other regular holdings. How can he ask me for a castle? Especially now, when Kingo (Shimazu Toshihisa) is already watching and complaining about [Iehisa's] landholdings. If I give him what he wants, I will never hear the end of it."[226]

From this passage, we can ascertain several things about the Shimazu siblings and how they decided on their course of action. First, Iehisa, being the youngest by a significant margin, was treated with excessive leniency and favour by Yoshihisa. This favouritism can be gleaned from Shimazu Toshihisa's complaints regarding Iehisa's landholdings. While it is difficult to say whether Toshihisa's objections were a response to his own jealousy, what is clear is that Iehisa was seen as being treated with a degree of favouritism different from the others within the ranks of the Shimazu retainers.

Second, this passage suggests that Iehisa, like his older brother, was primarily concerned with his own agenda. In this particular instance, it was Iehisa's own peace of mind with regards to the problems he faced at Kumanojō that was likely his primary concern. In this sense, Iehisa's request exemplifies the logical result of favouring personal goals at the expense of all other concerns. From the above passage, it is clear that the only reason Iehisa wished to exchange his landholdings for new ones was due to domestic problems in Kumanojō. Since Iehisa only wanted to alleviate himself of the problems he was facing, the quickest and easiest solution to the

[226] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, pp. 11 – 12.

domestic problems in Kumanojō was to simply ask for a different landholding, and leave the problems of Kumanojō to the next person appointed to it.

Finally, this passage also highlights the familial nature of Yoshihisa's political decision-making process. We see this through Yoshihisa's reasoning. Yoshihisa argued that the reason why he cannot grant Iehisa his request was due to the possibility of Toshihisa's incessant complaints. Yoshihisa's citing of Toshihisa's complaints as his primary motivator underscores the unofficial nature of this entire interaction between the two brothers. By framing Iehisa's demands within the context of brothers not getting along with each other, Yoshihisa turned this request into a family affair. In this framework, Iehisa was not an unreasonable retainer, but a younger brother too lazy to deal with his own problems. Similarly, Toshihisa was not a retainer who was upset at the favouritism within the court and a potential threat to the Shimazu family, but another sibling whose complaints bothered Yoshihisa. With this window into the relationship between Yoshihisa and his brothers, let us continue our investigation into Iehisa's interactions with the Nyūta and the consequences of his action relative to those suffered by Kakuken for committing similar but lesser offences.

As stated before, Iehisa was one of the two primary points of contact with the Nyūta before the Nyūta established formal ties with Uwai Kakuken in Tenshō 14 (1586). It was Iehisa who first told Kakuken that the Nyūta was ready to officially sever their ties with the Ōtomo, and pushed for the overall support of the Nyūta from the Shimazu.[227] Yet, Iehisa's push for the Shimazu to act in this regard also resulted in nothing. Unlike Kakuken who decided to eventually give up his active support of the Nyūta however, Iehisa decided to create false military

[227] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 62 – 63. See also Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 167.

intelligence in order to force Yoshihisa's hand in granting his wishes. In other words, Iehisa conjured false information in order to goad his brother into action.

The situation of Iehisa's false information was recorded by Kakuken in his diary. According to Kakuken, Iehisa had initially pushed for providing military support for the Nyūta on the twentieth day of the eleventh month of Tenshō 13 (1585) by suggesting that the Nyūta were ready to betray the Ōtomo on the twenty-fourth day of the same month.[228] However, due to the *kuji* conducted on the following day, it was requested that if the Nyūta wished to betray the Ōtomo they should do so on the thirtieth instead.[229] Despite this request, Yoshihisa's mediator met with Kakuken two days later and stated that

> …with regards to the matter of the Nyūta and their separation from Bungo, he received the will of our lord from Ōsumi, delivered by Hishijima kunai-no-shō (Kunisada).
>
> Our lord stated, "The situation is completely different from what we thought. According to Tanaka Chikuzen-no-kami of Sadowara who had come to serve at the shrine (Aira district), the Nyūta had already severed ties with Bungo on the sixteenth. The southern districts (Bungo Ōno and Naoiri districts) were completely destroyed and everything is covered in smoke.
>
> "When we were about to attack Nisshū in a previous year (Tenshō 4, eighth month?), I was also praying at the main shrine (main Hachiman Shrine), and from there we launched our campaign. That the exact same situation is happening again must be a sign that we should begin our march on Bungo now."[230]

Kakuken thought this development was suspicious and he took it upon himself to verify this new information. We can get a glimpse of the result of his work in his diary entry on the twenty-eighth day for the same month:

> Although everything was already decided, perhaps due to my petitioning of contrary information, everything was put on hold when my mediator was presented to our lord.

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[228] *Uwai Kakuken nikki.* part 3, pp. 62 – 63. See also Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 167.
[229] *Uwai Kakuken nikki.* part 3, pp. 62 – 63. See also Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 167.
[230] *Uwai Kakuken nikki.* part 3, p. 65.

> This was fortuitous. My petition stated, "In case there is a mistake with what Tachiku [Tanaka Chikuzen-no-kami] said, we should send someone from Miyazaki to Takachio [for confirmation] as this would only take a couple of days." Surely our lord also saw this theory as valid and thus listened to my foolish ideas and considered my proposal.
>
> Since my concerns were shared by our lord, the matter was further discussed in Kagoshima. As several other doubts were brought to light from the border regions as well, it was decided that it would be unreasonable to suddenly march our forces out toward Bungo.
>
> Chūsho-kō (Shimazu Iehisa) too was asked to come and explain this situation. This is due to the fact that it was Tachiku who met with the Nyūta, and it was that information which was submitted. This is preposterous beyond measure…[231]

Based on this entry, it would appear that Kakuken managed to convince both Yoshihisa and the senior retainers that the information presented by Tanaka Chikuzen-no-kami was questionable to begin with. As a result, it was decided that rashly moving their forces into Bungo was not a good idea, leading to the postponing of the invasion.

Despite the outcome of this situation, Iehisa faced little repercussions. If Kakuken was guilty of trying to circumvent the orders of Yoshihisa by appealing for the intervention of the *shugo-dai,* then Iehisa was guilty of attempting to instigate a war between the Shimazu and the Ōtomo using falsified military intelligence. The senior retainers' request for Iehisa to come to Kagoshima to explain the situation in person can be interpreted as an attempt to place some responsibility on Iehisa's shoulders. This makes sense as Tanaka Chikuzen-no-kami was a retainer of Iehisa.[232] In other words, it is highly unlikely that Tanaka Chikuzen-no-kami acted independently in providing false intelligence to Yoshihisa without Iehisa's knowledge.[233] Iehisa

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[231] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 66 – 67. For summary of events, see Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* pp. 168 – 9.
[232] For the relationship between Iehisa and Tanaka, see Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 169.
[233] Marushima, *Sengoku daimyō Takeda-shi no kenryoku kōzō,* p. 170.

had to be somewhat held accountable by the senior retainers because of this, but Yoshihisa himself chose to remain silent on this matter.

Iehisa's decision to go to such lengths to solicit help for the Nyūta can be explained through the circumstance he found himself in with regards to this entire situation. Iehisa's predicament mirrored the situation Kakuken faced when he dealt with the Nyūta as discussed previously. Like Kakuken, Iehisa seemed to place significant value on upholding his reputation as the mediator between the Nyūta and the Shimazu. His concern over his reputation caused Iehisa to agree with Kakuken when Kakuken suggested that they should ask the *shugo-dai* for military support. As with his request for a new landholding, Iehisa's decision here epitomized the Sengoku warrior's decision-making process and the inherent concern with their need to solidify their own position and reputation. In this particular instance, Iehisa was willing to risk the lives of the Shimazu warriors and the fortune of the Shimazu family in general for the sake of his own reputation, as a military campaign initiated on false pretences could have disastrous results for the Shimazu.

The offense committed by Iehisa was more severe than that committed by Kakuken, but the same cannot be said about the consequences faced by each of them. Iehisa faced no real consequences to his actions. Yoshihisa's reaction to Iehisa's crimes can be summed up in his message to Kakuken on the first day of the twelfth month of Tenshō 13 (1584);

> With regards to the matter of the Nyūta, I greatly appreciate the various things your two mediators had told us. At any rate, in trying to arrive at a solution now, it would be unwise to haphazardly launch an attack. Please bring this message in person to Chūsho [Iehisa] as well.[234]

[234] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 68.

Rather than showing any outward signs of anger towards Iehisa's attempts to instigate a war, Yoshihisa simply urged Iehisa to take a more cautious approach when handling the matter concerning the Nyūta. Iehisa however, continued to ignore Yoshihisa's advice for caution, and redoubled his efforts in pushing for a Shimazu intervention on behalf of the Nyūta. Iehisa even plead to Kakuken for his support on this front.[235] That Iehisa continued this course of action in such a blatant manner illustrates quite clearly that his goals did not align with that of the Shimazu as a whole, nor did they align with what Yoshihisa wanted. Beyond the possible reasons and justifications Iehisa might have had however, what I wish to highlight here is the leniency that Yoshihisa was showing in allowing Iehisa to continue chasing his individual agenda. This inconsistent application of punishment against members of the Shimazu household when violating the daimyo's will makes sense when we remember that Yoshihisa likely saw and treated Iehisa as his younger brother instead of a retainer.

This case thus illustrates both the arbitrary application of rules and the blatant favouritism shown towards members of the Shimazu family. When the daimyo's youngest brother commits an offense, he faced no punishment for his action. Such minimizing of internal conflicts within the daimyo's household projects an image of solidarity and mutual support. This in turn served to solidify Yoshihisa's grip on the Shimazu as a whole. By treating his own brother with such leniency, Yoshihisa is now considered a loving brother and a filial son who keeps his family together during times of unrest. This is not to suggest that the wellbeing of Iehisa did not play a part in Yoshihisa's decision at all. Rather, in defending Iehisa, Yoshihisa also managed to protect his overall reputation as well. Whether he was conscious of this or not, Yoshihisa's concern for

[235] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 73.

securing his own position in the Shimazu could not be separated from the overall wellbeing of his family.

II. The Treacherous Hishikari

In the case of the Shimazu's interaction with the Nyūta, we have seen that Yoshihisa had chosen to be extra lenient when it came to punishing Iehisa's offenses. We might be tempted to explain this special treatment afforded to Iehisa as an anomaly with the Shimazu caused by the large age gap between Yoshihisa and Iehisa. This was not exactly the case however. While the age difference between these two brothers was likely a consistent factor with regards to how they treated each other, Yoshihisa's protection and favouritism extended to all of his immediate family. This included Shimazu Yoshihiro, the second oldest of the Shimazu sibling. In this particular instance, the protectiveness of Yoshihisa had for his siblings contributed to the harsh attitude Yoshihisa took towards the Hishikari family.

The first of the two cases of rumours we will examine in this chapter involves Hishikari Shigehiro and the rumours of his ambitions to rebel against the Shimazu. Despite the similarities between these rumours and those that surrounded Iriki-in Shigetoyo examined in chapter two, the tone Yoshihisa adopted here in summarizing these rumours was harsher and more explicit. This was due to the combination of the past offenses committed by the Hishikari and the way Yoshihisa framed these offences in his mind. Not only did the repeated acts of treachery against the Shimazu suggest a disregard for their authority and legitimacy, the Hishikari's actions were framed by Yoshihisa as actions specifically targeting his father and brother. This sense of personal offense felt by Yoshihisa was underscored by an assassination attempt targeting Yoshihisa's brother and the Hishikari's involvement in this plot. While the assassination failed,

this only bolstered Yoshihisa's need to be protective towards his brothers, which is consistent with the attitude he had shown towards Iehisa.

The discussion surrounding the Hishikari took place on the fifth of the tenth month in Tenshō 2 (1574) between the Hishikari mediators that were visiting Kagoshima and the mediators of Yoshihisa, one of them being Uwai Kakuken himself. The mediators of the Hishikari came to receive Yoshihisa's instructions with regards to the rumours of Hishikari Shigehiro's ambitions.[236] The entire diary entry is too long to be included here, but Yoshihisa's objective was ultimately the same as when he was dealing with the Iriki-in. Yoshihisa wanted to force the Hishikari into giving up their landholdings in exchange for new ones. The expression of these wants however, was much more explicit in this particular instance. Whereas Yoshihisa expressed concerns with people thinking he might have wanted the Iriki-in holdings for himself before, Yoshihisa showed no such concerns here. The message he delivered to the Hishikari ended with "whether or not these rumours are true, that they exist at all surely is not good for the Hishikari family. As such, Shigehiro must consider what landholdings should be up for exchange."[237] In his demands for the landholdings of the Hishikari, Yoshihisa illustrates for us that his goals here were consistent with the case of the Iriki-in. With similar goals in mind, Yoshihisa once again showed his indifference towards the truth behind these rumours by using the the threat of violence and the ambiguity of the facts for his own benefits.

Further differences between the rumours of the Hishikari and the ones of the Iriki-in can be seen in how Yoshihisa concluded that both these families needed to submit their landholdings for exchange. Rather than declaring his trust as he did with Iriki-in Shigetoyo, Yoshihisa

[236] *Uwai Kakuken nikki* part 1, pp. 28 – 29.
[237] *Uwai Kakuken nikki* part 1, p. 29.

demanded a landholding exchange by recalling past offenses committed by the Hishikari against the Shimazu. While all of these were acts of treachery against the Shimazu family as a whole, Yoshihisa re-contextualized these conflicts into personal offences targeting either his father or his brother. The personal nature of these crimes, at least from Yoshihisa's perspective, undoubtedly factored into why the Hishikari rumours were treated in such a harsh manner relative to the Iriki-in rumours. The explicit threats Yoshihisa made toward Hishikari could not be fully explained by the antagonistic family history either. After all, both the Iriki-in and the Hishikari were hostile towards the Shimazu in the past. As such, it is difficult to dismiss the personal nature of the Hishikari's offenses as being at least part of the reason Yoshihisa was so blunt with his demands.

Hishikari's personal offenses began prior to Yoshihisa becoming the Shimazu daimyo. In recounting the Hishikari's past crimes, the first of the offenses Yoshihisa cited took place on Kōji 3 (1557). According to Yoshihisa's recollection,

> Previously, during the reign of Takahisa and his chastisement of Gamō (Norikiyo), when we took to the battlefield against the Gamō, what did Hishikari (Shigetoyo)[238] do? He chose to set up camp against us. Of course, as we moved in accordance to the laws of Heaven [*tendō*], the Hishikari formations were soon broken. With several of the Hishikari's retainers killed, the Gamō surrendered to us.[239]

This antagonism between the Shimazu and the Hishikari during this initial conflict served as a background to Yoshihisa's issues with the Hishikari in general. Critical to understanding why Yoshihisa's took this incident so personally is the subsequent forgiveness granted to the

[238] The exact relationship between Hishikari Shigetoyo and Shigehiro is unclear. From what can be gathered from later retellings, there was a Hishikari Sama-no-gon-no-kami who attempted to rescue Gamō Norikiyo during this particular conflict, and whose failure led to his eventual suicide. This is likely the same person that Uwai Kakuken was referring to in his diary entry. See *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 73, (p. 44) and *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 75, (pp. 44 – 45).

[239] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 28.

Hishikari by Takahisa despite the Hishikari's military actions during the Gamō campaign.[240] Through this retelling, Yoshihisa framed the subservient position of the Hishikari into one established on a personal level, with the Hishikari promising to "correct their past mistakes through service"[241] to Takahisa. All subsequent antagonistic actions were thus acts of betrayal not only towards the Shimazu administration in the abstract, but towards Yoshihisa's father specifically. By centering the subjugation of the Hishikari on the person granting forgiveness, Yoshihisa's recollection of these events foregrounded the personal nature of the conflict between these two families, and renders the current rumours surrounding Hishikari Shigehiro as a direct insult to Takahisa's magnanimity.

To underscore the kindness of his father, Yoshihisa continued to elaborate upon the good will Takahisa showed toward the Hishikari despite their former antagonism toward each other. On Eiroku 1 (1559) a major inheritance dispute broke out within the Kitahara family, resulting in one of their members, Kitahara Ise-no-kami (Kanemasa), seizing control of Yokawa castle in the Aira district and solidifying their position there in rebellion.[242] After retaking Yokawa castle, Takahisa granted this castle to the Hishikari because of the latter's repeated showing of good faith.[243]

Yoshihisa's retelling of these events seemed to only highlight the insidious nature of the Hishikari's betrayal following this generous gift. Yoshihisa continued his summary of the Hishikari's past crimes, stating:

> When we made our move against the Mitsu-no-yama area (Nishimorokata district, controlled by Itō Yoshisuke at the time; Eiroku 9 [1567]), the Hishikari sent a secret

[240] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 28.
[241] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 28.
[242] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 28.
[243] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 28.

> missive to the low ranking warriors[244] of the Itō to interfere with our plans. Knowing that Hyōgo-no-kami (Shimazu Yoshihiro) will be leading several hundred soldiers through a place called Uemura (Higo, Kuma district), the Hishikari told the Itō to place their soldiers there to ambush our forces. While the ambush ended in failure, it is undeniable that the Hishikari made an attempt on Hyōgo-no-kami's life.[245]

The personal nature of the crimes committed by Hishikari is quite obvious from the way that Yoshihisa framed the narrative here. While the sending of the secret missive was clearly something that went against the Shimazu's agenda, the focus here is on the assassination attempt towards Yoshihisa's younger brother, Shimazu Yoshihiro. That the attempt was brought up by Yoshihisa suggests to us the degree in which he was personally offended by the Hishikari's actions. We can see Yoshihisa framing the Hishikari's assassination attempt as a personal attack for two reasons. First, the assassination attempt was not successful, and therefore technically no harm was physically done to Yoshihiro. Second, Yoshihiro himself was no stranger to risking his own life on military campaigns. His very participation in the Mitsu-no-yama campaign meant that many people will be trying to kill him on a daily basis. Similarly, when the Hishikari first took up arms against Takahisa, they also wished to defeat or kill Takahisa.

What made the Hishikari's attempt here on Yoshihiro's life different from all other instances was the personal nature of the betrayal. On the one hand, this was an abuse of the trust granted to them by Takahisa. Despite granting the Hishikari ownership over Yokawa castle, they repaid Takahisa's kindness by trying to kill Yoshihiro. On the other hand, unlike casualties in war resulting from mutual violence from both sides, this assassination attempt was an unprovoked attack that targeted a specific member of the daimyo's immediate family. Given that there were no discernable reasons for the Hishikari to target Yoshihiro, the assassination attempt

[244] The term used here is *ashigaru.*
[245] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, pp. 28 – 29.

was seen as a concentrated act of violence directed towards a single person. In other words, this was an attack not on the polity but on the family and the individuals in it.

It is also telling that this particular assassination attempt was singled out from the other consequences of the Hishikari's interference during the Mitsu-no-yama campaign. Yoshihisa continued with his recollection of the events that followed;

> This rendered our plans for Masaki impossible, and after hearing various opinions from our retainers, we turned our attention towards Magoshi (Isa district) instead (Eiroku 10 [1568]). The Hishikari were ordered to stay at Honjō. For some reason, they left their own holdings by request of Kedō-in (Shigetane), joined forces with those at Kuma (Higo, Kuma district; Sagara Yoshiteru) and stood in opposition to us again.[246]

The larger military reprecussions of the Hishikari's actions were relinquished to the background of Yoshihisa's narrative once again and served as an afterthought to the assassination attempt. The impact of the Hishikari's actions acted merely as a prelude to the larger military betrayal at Kuma. Just as it was with the Hishikari's previous treachery, the Shimazu was again triumphant in their conquest. Subsequently, Takahisa forgave the Hishikari for their betrayal, resulting in the current rule of the Hishikari family by Hishikari Shigehiro.[247]

This long summary of the history between the Shimazu and the Hishikari served as the justification for Yoshihisa's demand for the landholdings of Hishikari Shigehiro. While the checkered past of the Hishikari likely affected how Yoshihisa evaluated the rumours surrounding them, we cannot deny the importance of family implicit within the way that Yoshihisa framed the entire narrative. Each of the offense committed by the Hishikari were tied directly to Yoshihisa's immediate family members as opposed to the Shimazu as a whole. In both large military campaigns described by Yoshihisa, the fortunes of the Shimazu seemed predetermined

[246] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 29.
[247] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 29.

as he associated the Shimazu's victories with the law or path of Heaven (*tendō*).[248] The usage of this idea of *tendō* convey a sense of righteousness and inevitability that was beyond mortal explanation. In other words, by associating the Shimazu's past victories with *tendō*, Yoshihisa implies that the Hishikari's actions were meaningless in the grand scheme of things.

By framing the Hishikari's actions in this light, Yoshihisa downplayed the impact they had on the Shimazu's successes. This did not mean that the Hishikari's treachery had no effect however, as Yoshihisa merely shifted the impact of their betrayal on to a personal level by tying each act to the members of his immediate family. Yoshihisa highlighted the grace of Takahisa by emphasizing the forgiveness shown to the Hishikari on two separate occasions. In both instances of forgiveness in Kōji 3 (1554) and in Eiroku 12 (1570), they were conducted by Takahisa personally in Yoshihisa's retelling. In the case of the former, Hishikari Tengansai personally visited Takahisa to pledge the Hishikari's service to the Shimazu in return for forgiveness. Tengansai was the grandfather of Hishikari Shigehiro and had in fact, according to the "Traitor" chapter of the *Honpan jinbutsu-shi* (*Records on the Personnel of this Domain*), previously surrendered to Takahisa in Tenbun 8 (1539).[249] Yoshihisa's failure to mention this prior interaction between the two families was likely not coincidental. By ignoring the Hishikari's previous surrender to the Shimazu and focusing instead on Tengansai's plead for forgiveness from Takahisa, Yoshihisa framed the relationship between the Hishikari and the Shimazu into one built upon personal trust as opposed to political or military subjugation.

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[248] *Uwai Kakuken nikki* part 1, p. 28 – 29.

[249] The *Honpan jinbutsu-shi* is document complied sometime from the mid seventeenth century to the mid nineteenth century. The oldest extant copy of this document dates to the 1840s, and was drafted by someone with the surname of Fukuzaki. The document itself is thirteen volumes long and comprises of biographical entries of various Shimazu retainers active from the mid fifteenth to the mid seventeenth century. For information on the *Honpan jinbutsu-shi*, see *Honpan jinbutsu-shi,* p. 2. For Hishikari Tengansai's surrender to Takahisa, see *Honpan jinbutsu-shi*, pp. 245 – 6.

The personal nature of Takahisa's grace was re-emphasized in the second granting of forgiveness in Eiroku 12 (1570). According to Yoshihisa, after this betrayal Takahisa said, "What reason is there to destroy these local warriors?"[250] It was supposedly with that one statement that all the charges against the crimes of the Hishikari were subsequently forgiven, leading to the current state of affairs that Yoshihisa was faced with.[251] Based on what we know of the Shimazu administration and the way decisions were made, Takahisa's decision was likely debated and discussed by the senior retainer council before it was rendered official. By crediting Takahisa with the forgiveness shown to the Hishikari, Yoshihisa once again rendered an administrative decision into a personal one. According to this narrative, the Hishikari's very existence was due to the magnanimity of Takahisa. The course of actions taken by the Hishikari thus showed how intentionally ungrateful they were in the face of such kindness. Within this framework, the rumours of the Hishikari's subsequent betrayal could be seen as an affront to the very memory of Takahisa.

The involvement of both Yoshihiro and Takahisa within this particular set of events surrounding the Hishikari directly provoked Yoshihisa and impacted the way he managed the prospect of yet another Hishikari betrayal. Through the framing of Yoshihisa's summary of the antagonistic history between the two families, we can see that both the attempt on Yoshihiro's life and the repeated abuses of Takahisa's trust deeply disturbed Yoshihisa. Unlike the case of the Iriki-in from the previous chapter, Yoshihisa paid little attention to his own image. The comparison between Yoshihisa's reactions to these two sets of rumours is particularly apt due to the similarities between the Iriki-in and the Hishikari. As I have hinted at above, both the Iriki-in

[250] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 29.
[251] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 29.

and the Hishikari were antagonistic towards the Shimazu before. Both families resisted the Shimazu for many year and at one point joined their forces together to fight the Shimazu.[252] Neither Iriki-in Shigetoyo nor Hishikari Shigehiro personally spearheaded anti-Shimazu activities. Both of them were however, immediate descendants of those who fought against Shimazu dominance. Both Shigetoyo and Shigehiro became the leader of their respective family after the failure of predecessors. The key feature separating the Iriki-in from the Hishikari boils down to the personal nature of the latter's offenses. As such, it is extremely unlike that the harsh treatment by Yoshihisa directed towards the Hishikari was not connected to this particular aspect of the Hishikari's past. That this harshness was absent from Yoshihisa's approach to similar rumours that surrounded the Iriki-in suggests that the direct involvement of Yoshihiro and Takahisa likely impacted Yoshihisa's decisions to some degree with regards to the Hishikari.

Yoshihisa's reponse to the Hishikari rumours can be understood through some of the primary factors affecting his decision-making, such as the maintenance of his reputation and the reinforcing of his legitimacy. In a way, the repeated abuses against Takahisa's generosity and trust by the Hishikari fundamentally undermined the authority of Yoshihisa's branch of the Shimazu. This was especially the case when we consider the fact that Takahisa was the first of their branch to rule the Shimazu. Yoshihisa's treatment of the Hishikari and his retelling of the history between their families was a conscious choice that reflected Yoshihisa's displeasure towards the Hishikari. Given that a key difference between the Hishikari and the Iriki-in was the personal nature of the former's offenses, we can extrapolate from this that the involvement of Yoshihisa's family likely had a direct impact upon Yoshihisa's decision-making process beyond this particular case.

[252] *Honpan jinbutsu-shi*, p. 246.

III. Yoshitora's Ambition and Ohira's Message

The final example we will explore in this chapter involves yet another supposedly ambitious retainer seeking to betray Yoshihisa. In particular, the rumours were about Shimazu Yoshitora. This presented Yoshihisa with a particularly pertinent threat as Yoshitora was a direct descendent of a rival Shimazu branch. Despite this however, Yoshihisa took to protecting Yoshitora in the end. This was due to the intervention of Ohira, the eldest daughter of Yoshihisa and the wife of Yoshitora. The existence of this familial connection between Yoshihisa and Yoshitora meant that an overtly forceful approach was out of the question. This was especially true when punitive measures against Yoshitora would negatively impact Ohira as well. Unsurprisingly, the wellbeing of Yoshihisa's own children played a part in Yoshihisa's decision-making process. Through our discussion of the Shimazu's interaction with the Nyūta and the Hishikari, we have seen how the involvement of the immediate family members of Yoshihisa affected the way he made his decisions. Whether it was favouritism towards his family or the directed hostility towards those who targeted his family, it is clear from both these instances that family involvement shaped Yoshihisa's decision-making process. As a continuation of the previous examples, this next case will explore how his own daughter affected Yoshihisa's decision-making process.

The rumours surrounding the ambitions of Shimazu Yoshitora (1536 – 1585) were brought to the forefront of the entire administration's attention when Ohira personally wrote to Yoshihisa. Her letter significantly altered the way that these rumours were handled. As a result of this, no landholdings were demanded of Yoshitora. This was in sharp contrast to how Yoshihisa chose to deal with both the Iriki-in and the Hishikari as we have seen previously.

Before diving into the details regarding the rumours of Yoshitora, we should begin by quickly addressing the identity of Shimazu Yoshitora. As I have stated previously, the current control over the primary branch of the Shimazu by Yoshihisa and his father, Takahisa, was a relatively new development within the broader Shimazu family history. Prior to Shimazu Takahisa's ascension to the leadership position, his primary competitor was the leader of a rival Shimazu branch, Shimazu Sanehisa (d. 1553). Key to our current discussion is the fact that Yoshitora was the son of Sanehisa and the head of this rival branch of the Shimazu family after Sanehisa's death.[253] This rendered Yoshitora a challenger to Yoshihisa's leadership position within the primary branch of the Shimazu. Furthermore, Yoshitora also had family connections with the Hishikari and the Kedō-in, both historic enemies of Yoshihisa's rule.[254] This meant that potentially rebellious elements within the Shimazu, like the Hishikari, would likely stand with Yoshitora should he ever decide to challenge Yoshihisa's rule. In other words, Yoshitora was a threat that needed to be managed.

Despite the antagonistic history between Yoshihisa and Yoshitora, they managed to co-exist quite peacefully within the Shimazu administration. Like both Iriki-in Shigetoyo and Hishikari Shigehiro, Yoshitora also never showed any signs of open hostility towards Yoshihisa. But unlike Shigetoyo and Shigehiro however, Yoshitora secured his place within the Shimazu government through his marriage to Ohira.[255] This indirectly tied Yoshitora's personal wellbeing to that of Yoshihisa and his family. The bond of marriage between Yoshitora and Ohira distinguishes this particular case from the others we have explored thus far. It is not a

[253] For Yoshitora's place within his branch of the Shimazu genealogy, see DNS 11:17, "Go-shizoku keizu monjo san," (pp. 377 – 8).
[254] DNS 11:17, "Go-shizoku keizu monjo san," (p. 377).
[255] *Honpan jinbutsu-shi*, p. 187.

coincidence that Yoshitora received the most generous treatment, despite his position as the head of a rival Shimazu branch. Because Yoshitora was married to Yoshihisa's daughter, Yoshihisa must protect Yoshitora for the sake of Ohira. And while the tension between Yoshihisa and Yoshitora remained high during the initial circulation of the rumours, the direct intervention of Ohira was enough to soften Yoshihisa's approach, allowing for a peaceful resolution for all parties involved.

The first sign of trouble surrounding Yoshitora was recorded in Kakuken's diary on the fourth day of the eighth month of Tenshō 2 (1574). Kakuken wrote,

> Today we had a meeting at the temporary residence of Ki'iri (Suehisa). We [the mediators] were asked whether or not the Tōgō had submitted a petition regarding the rumours about an attack they launched from Sendai (Satsuma district, holding of Tōgō Shigehisa) to Mizuhiki (same district, holding of Shimazu Yoshitora). As I did not know anything about this matter, they suggested that we should perhaps ask Shirahama Suo-no-suke (Shigemasa), but he also knew nothing about this.[256]

This was the first indication of the brewing conflict between Yoshitora and his long term rival Tōgō Shigehisa. The above entry suggests that it was the Tōgō who initiated aggression against Yoshitora. Further evidence of Shigehisa's violent actions came on the ninth of the same month, when Kakuken received word that Shigehisa led two to three hundred of his soldiers into Chūgō and ousted the *jitō,* Torimaru Shigetoshi, killing three commoners and one religious personnel.[257] Despite Shigehisa's military aggressions however, the Shimazu administration as a whole did nothing to stop or even reprimand him. Instead, the senior retainers inquired into whether or not the Tōgō submitted a petition for his actions. That the senior retainers chose to not condemn the Tōgō's unsanctioned use of military force suggests their tacit approval of such actions. Both the

[256] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 3.
[257] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 6.

Tōgō's actions and the Shimazu administration's reaction can be explained by the rumours at the time regarding Yoshitora.

We can get a sense of what the rumours surrounding Yoshitora actually accused him of through a private letter sent by Yoshitora to the senior retainer Ki'iri Suehisa (d. 1588) on the fourth day of the third month of Tenshō 2 (1574). In this letter, Yoshitora pleaded his innocence with regards to these rumours. Yoshitora wrote,

> Because it is common for everyone to voice their complaints, when we defeated the Shibuya I pleaded with my lord to be placed on guard duty only, but was instead granted the landholdings of Taki and Mizuhiki. As for Tōgō and Chūgō being left unoccupied, because this was the decision made by our lord, I believe it to be the correct thing to do and I responded to my lord's wishes. I thus took up my guard duty at Taki and Mizuhiki since then.
>
> Further, with regards to Yamano, this was a tremendously laborious landholding. The decision to grant this landholding to me was made by our lord when we were in Ōguchi. While I asked repeatedly for my lord to reconsider, since he continuously wished that I take charge there, I maintain control over Yamano even now. I am indebted to my lord for all of this. However, whether it was my ignoring of our lord's words and flooding my forces into Tōgō, or that I somehow think that Chūgō should be under my control, these and other rumours can be traced to the orders given to me as stated here.
>
> The situation being as above, in answering our lord's call, I surely should not be considered an enemy![258]

According to Yoshitora's understanding, the rumours in circulation insinuated that Yoshitora wanted control over both the Tōgō and the Chūgō landholdings. These rumours further stated that despite Yoshihisa's will, Yoshitora moved his army into Tōgō to seize control of that area, after which he set his sights on Chūgō as his next target. In this letter, Yoshitora denied these charges, and claimed that all the holdings in his possession were given to him by Yoshihisa. Yoshitora attempted to further prove his loyalty by stating that,

> As for all the various rumours that are frequently circulated beyond those above, naturally if I harboured even the smallest amount of such evil, I will immediately and without

[258] *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 734, (p. 337).

> reason come to an end by the punishment of the various kami and Buddhist deities that occupies the three provinces, as stated in my oath which I have previously submitted.[259]

From this it is clear that Yoshitora was well aware that rumours regarding the Tōgō and Chūgō landholdings were not the only ones that were being circulated about him. The lack of specificities regarding other potential rumours however hints at the preemptive nature of Yoshitora's efforts here. In other words, as he was defending his name with regards to the holdings of Tōgō and Chūgō, Yoshitora anticipated further attacks to be made against his reputation.

Taking the content of these rumours into consideration, we can begin to understand why Tōgō Shigehisa was able to launch an attack against Yoshitora without repercussions from the Shimazu. The targeting of Yoshitora by Shigehisa was not an accident. Shigehisa was not taking an initiative in punishing Yoshitora out of some abstract sense of duty to their daimyo. Instead, Shigehisa was likely being an opportunist when it came to his attacks on Yoshitora, using the rumours as a convenient excuse to seek vengeance against Yoshitora, as he was one of the primary commanders responsible for ending the Tōgō's independence from the Shimazu in 1570.[260] The conflict in 1570 resulted in Shigehisa losing possession of the Chūgō landholding along with Taki and Mizuhiki, both of which were granted to Yoshitora as a result of this. These rumours of Yoshitora coveting Chūgō for himself thus gave Tōgō Shigehisa just the excuse he needed to reclaim his lost landholdings from Yoshitora.

The lack of a response from Yoshihisa could be understood as a form of approval toward Shigehisa's aggression. As Kakuken's diary entries show, the senior retainers were clearly aware of these attacks, but did nothing to stop Shigehisa's efforts. It is difficult to see the lack of any

[259] *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 734, (p. 337).
[260] DNS 11:17, "Seihan resshi kanjō-roku," (p. 382).

kind of discussion, much less any punitive or mitigating actions, on the part of the Shimazu administration as anything except for an unofficial sanctioning of a military response toward the rumours surrounding Yoshitora. In addition to this, we know that Yoshitora had sent a letter to plead his case to the senior retainers. That at no point during this entire incident did Ki'iri Suehisa mention anything regarding Yoshitora's side of the story suggests that the administration as a whole was likely indifferent to the entire situation in general. This was without a doubt the most severe response against rumours we have seen thus far. Through the willful ignorance of the tension between Shigehisa and Yoshitora, Yoshihisa and his administration punished Yoshitora through violence while maintaining a level of detachment from the actual punitive actions. By not officially granting Shigehisa permission to go to war, Yoshihisa can distance himself from this affair, protecting his reputation as a merciful lord while indirectly punishing his retainers.

This apathetic approach taken by Yoshihisa and the Shimazu administration regarding the rumours of Yoshitora's ambitions took a sharp turn however during the beginning of the ninth month of Tenshō 2 (1574), when Ohira contacted Yoshihisa. Kakuken recorded the events of the first day of the month as such:

> Item. First of the ninth month. I attended work as usual. As there was a horse wrangling event at Sezaki and Izumi (Izumi district, Shimazu Yoshitora), a foal was submitted to us despite the poor results of the event.
>
> His wife (Yoshitora's spouse, Yoshihisa's daughter) sent a message to our lord, "As you have previously sent someone to express good wishes to us, we should have sent a gift in return. Though that was quite a while ago, I hope you enjoyed my gift." The mediator delivering this message was Matsuoka Minbuzaemon-no-jō.
>
> Before long, my lord responded; "the Sezaki foal is truly of the highest quality! I shall treasure this gift the best I can so that you can come see it the next time you visit!" My lord continued, "A few days ago, several menials brought your gift to me. I am impressed by how well you have kept up with proper etiquette! I am especially glad to hear that you

> are both doing well." After this, the mediator was free to go, but as the senior retainers had need of him, he was asked to stay the night.[261]

The tone that Yoshihisa had towards his daughter illustrates quite a different side of the daimyo. Most importantly for our current purposes however is the way that Yoshihisa stated his happiness for his daughter and Yoshitora's good health. Though slightly less explicit in the original text, it is clear that Yoshihisa was not simply addressing Ohira alone when he expressed his happiness regarding Ohira and Yoshitora's good health.[262] The inclusion of Yoshitora within Yoshihisa's good wishes was implicit. Through this simple expression of good will, we see Yoshihisa conflating the wellbeing of Yoshitora with that of Ohira. Whether or not this was a genuine act on Yoshihisa's part does not matter. The very act of referencing both Yoshitora and Ohira as a single unit illustrates that the married couple shared their abstract and literal fortune in reality. This short exchange between father and daughter was a timely reminder to Yoshihisa that the continued ignorance of the rumours surrounding Yoshitora will directly affect the fortune of his own child.

Here we should address the nature of Ohira's marriage to Yoshitora and the political implications entailed by it. There is little doubt that the marriage between Yoshitora and Ohira was all part of the threat management necessary to keep Yoshitora and his branch of the Shimazu in check. The fact that it was Takahisa, the man responsible for ousting Yoshitora's father from the Shimazu family, who ordered this marriage underscores this point.[263] From this perspective, we can perhaps interpret Ohira's intervention in the rumours surrounding Yoshitora as her fulfilling the purpose of their marriage as designed by Takahisa. Yet the predetermined utility of

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[261] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 16 – 17.
[262] The original text read "*koto ni idzuremo go-kengo no yoshi sōrō. Kore mata go-shūchaku no yoshi sōrō.*" (殊ニいつれも御堅固之由候、是又御祝着之由候). See *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p.17.
[263] DNS 11:17, "Go-shizoku keizu monjo san," (p. 381).

this marriage alliance between the competing branches of the Shimazu family cannot explain the sudden shift in attitude within the Shimazu administration. If the marriage was designed to discourage Yoshitora from rebelling and therefore reduce the threat of violence, then it would imply that Yoshihisa himself likely did not wish to seek conflict with Yoshitora. The Shimazu's initial inaction suggests however that they were perfectly happy to see Yoshitora suffer attacks from the Tōgō. That the Shimazu leaped into action immediately after Ohira's letter hints at the possibility that it was her relationship with Yoshihisa that prompted the administration to act instead of the previously established marriage alliance between the two branches of the family.

Indeed, the impact that Ohira had on the Shimazu administration as a whole can be seen immediately. On the following day, the senior retainers met to discuss these rumours after doing nothing about them for at least a whole month;

> The senior retainers said, "Recently there are numerous rumours in circulation, many of which involved Yoshitora. For his part, he had continuously petitioned our lord to show his concerns, including *nagabumi*[264] and other letters. Regarding this, a decision was made. Perhaps we should deliver a message to Yoshitora through the mediator he sent yesterday. Or perhaps, should we need to amend our decisions, we can send a couple of mediators to meet with the warriors in Taki and Mizuhiki (both in Satsuma district, Yoshitora's holdings) and tell them of our decisions then."
>
> Upon understanding this, the mediator said, "We will make sure to send someone here to receive further instructions later." With that, he returned to Yoshitora. I was the mediator who delivered the message.[265]

A couple of things stood out from the above diary entry. First, while we do not have the letters and petitions from Yoshitora, we know that Yoshihisa and the Shimazu administration had received Yoshitora's petitions several months prior to Tōgō Shigehisa's attacks in the eighth month of Tenshō 2 (1574). Second, a decision was in fact ready to be delivered before Ohira

[264] *Nagabumi* is a particular type of document that translates roughly to "long letter."
[265] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 17.

ever made contact with Yoshihisa. To come up with a viable solution, the administration would had have to meet and discuss the situation, factor into their consideration the Tōgō's actions, come to a decision as a whole, and have the decision approved by Yoshihisa. Adding to this, it would also involve the multiple layers of mediators and message delivery that were necessarily for communication and decision-making within the Shimazu administration. All of this suggests that the Shimazu administration's decision here was not likely made in a single sitting. Given that this one and only meeting happened the day immediately after Yoshihisa received Ohira's letter, it is likely that they already made a decision before this meeting, but chose to do nothing with it. Ohira's intervention essentially spurred the administration into action.

The two particular points shown above highlight the apathetic nature of the Shimazu's initial stance on this matter and the impact Ohira had on the entire political decision-making process as a whole. The fact that even after receiving numerous letters and petitions from Yoshitora, Yoshihisa still chose to do nothing when Tōgō Shigehisa launched his attacks underscores that indifference and mistrust Yoshihisa likely had toward Yoshitora. After all, Yoshitora was the head of a rival Shimazu branch. Adding to this is the possibility that the administration had already come to a decision with regards to the rumours themselves prior to all this. The inaction of the Shimazu was thus likely intentional when it came to dealing with the Yoshitora situation. By withholding their decision on this matter, the Shimazu purposefully allowed Shigehisa to attack Yoshitora without getting involved. In other words, just as Tōgō Shigehisa took advantage of the situation to get his revenge on Yoshitora, the Shimazu took advantage of Shigehisa's aggression to punish a retainer, leading them to withhold their decision on the matter until necessary.

Another peculiar point with regards to the meeting on the second of the ninth month as it was recorded within Kakuken's diary is the indecisiveness with which the final decision was made. That the proper protocols for what to do if they were to change their minds about Yoshitora was discussed at all was certainly abnormal. This very discussion suggests that not only did they expect that they will need to change their previous decision, but that such changes were not normal enough for proper protocols to be thoroughly established in the first place. This discussion thus highlights the uniqueness of this entire situation even further. That all of this happened in a meeting on the day immediately following Yoshihisa's communication with Ohira illustrates the influence Ohira had upon the entire decision-making process. In fact, Ohira continued to exert an influence on this affair in the following weeks.

Later in the month, when the matter surrounding the ambitions of Yoshitora was brought up again, Yoshihisa took a very different approach not only in contrast to the way he previously dealt with this particular case, but also relative to the other rumours we have seen. On the twenty-sixth of the ninth month, Kakuken wrote,

> Item. Today, Honda Jakushū (Chikatoyo), Ijichi Kageyu, and I were sent to meet with the mediators Ise-no-kami, Ibusuki Suo-no-suke, and Chishiki Danjōchū from Izumi. Their message states, "Recently there are many rumours in circulation. Specifically, during the beginning of last month, we were visited by Ki'iri Kuyasai. He told us that these rumours started in the presence of Chūsho (Shimazu Iehisa), as such it is imperative that Yoshitora goes to Kushikino to explain himself. Otherwise, he risk losing everything he has."
>
> As this was told to us by Kuyasai and Ki'iri Sesshū (Suehisa), we have asked Hon-Jakushū to ask Chūsho directly about this matter. As our lord [Yoshihisa] had stated, it seems that Chūsho knew nothing about this at all. This was told directly to the mediators of Izumi.[266]

This was the first instance where we see efforts being devoted to finding the culprit circulating rumours within the Shimazu administration. Rather than exploiting the ambiguity of these

[266] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 21

rumours to further his own agenda, Yoshihisa instead took an effort to investigate these rumours' origins. The connection between these rumours and the immediate family members of Yoshihisa undoubtedly played a part in this decision. In this particular case, the search for the rumours' origin became a necessity as it will directly affect the fortune of both Iehisa and Ohira.

The investigation into the content and origins of the rumours of Yoshitora's ambitions intensified further when Yoshihisa heard of these concerns from Izumi. Responding to the issues raised by the Izumi mediators, Yoshihisa said,

> Was this information [about the rumours being started by Iehisa] conveyed by Kuyasai misunderstood by the mediators? Was Seishū's decision to return north of [the Satsuma] mountains the result of orders given by Yoshitora? The answers to these are crucial at least for us in planning our next move in dealing with this matter.
>
> Next, with regards to the frequent rumours of such nature, is it true that Yoshitora was planning to rebel? Or were these just baseless rumours? We have not heard anything on this issue, but were these rumours started by people serving in Izumi? Or perhaps they were started by those within Yoshitora's own branch? Who are the people responsible and what are their surnames? What are their motives? We want a full account from Izumi.[267]

Yoshihisa's urge to shield his own brother from taking blame for these rumours is immediately apparent. Rather than exploring the links between Iehisa and Yoshitora's rumours, Yoshihisa instead responded to the Izumi mediators' inquiry by demanding Yoshitora to investigate his own retainers and come up with a list of names of those that might be guilty. The pressure placed on Yoshitora to find the culprits among his own retainers represents the continuation of the indifference that Yoshihisa had for the possible truth obscured by the rumours. In trying to protect his own brother and daughter, Yoshihisa gave Yoshitora an opportunity to withdraw from the entire situation gracefully. By allowing Yoshitora to carry out an internal investigation independent from the Shimazu administration in Kagoshima, Yoshihisa was demanding

[267] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 22.

someone, anyone, to take responsibility for the rumours. This new order from Yoshihisa therefore gave Yoshitora a way to exit from the entire situation while protecting Iehisa from any potential suspicions.

Almost immediately after Yoshihisa demanded a list of names for those responsible for these rumours, the Shimazu administration also addressed the other issue surrounding Shimazu Yoshitora. Specifically, with regards to the border conflicts between the Tōgō holding and the Taki holding, and the apparent seizure of the hemp harvest by Yoshitora's men from the Tōgō holding which was controlled by Tōgō Shigehisa.[268] For this, the full decision on what to do was withheld until the senior retainer council could hear Shigehisa's side of the story.[269] This urgency with which the Shimazu dealt with matters related to Yoshitora was a far cry from their previous, nonchalant approach to the entire affair. In explaining this shift in attitude, the timing of Ohira's intervention should not be overlooked.

With regards to the rumours of his ambition, Yoshitora will not bring up the issue again with Yoshihisa until late in the eleventh month of Tenshō 2 (1574). The matter ultimately ended with a whimper. The resolution achieved what Yoshihisa sought as it endangered neither Iehisa nor Ohira in the end. On the twentieth of the eleventh month, mediators from Izumi told Yoshihisa that,

> Regarding the rumours that we spoke about before, when previously Ise-no-kami (Shimazu Tadaharu?) and two or three others came here they received orders from the senior retainers. Specifically, they were tasked to find out from Kuyasai (Ki'iri) if he really heard that these rumours originated from Chūsho [Iehisa], and through Ki'iri (Suehisa) told Yoshitora as such. Perhaps there was truly a mistake, and these rumours came from elsewhere.

[268] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, pp. 22 – 23.
[269] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 23.

> Next, as for the actual origins of these rumours, finding out where they came from is of utmost importance. As it stands, we have not made any progress towards this quite yet.[270]

In response to this lack of result, Yoshihisa said,

> With regards to the rumours in circulation, since it was told to Setsu-no-suke (Ki'iri Suehisa) by Kuyasai, we gave orders to Seishū (Shimazu Tadaharu?) previously about this matter. Perhaps it was possible that Kuyasai misspoke? Since this was, at any rate, not a matter that was spoken of in Kagoshima, we gave such an order to Seishū. At the time, Sesshū [Ki'iri Suehisa] was feeling unwell and was staying at Ki'iri (Ibusuki district). You should send an inquiry there instead.[271]

This was the last entry in Kakuken's diary that related to the rumours of Yoshitora's ambition. The key here is the shifting of focus from before. Whereas previously, the primary issue was with regards to the validity of the rumours about Yoshitora and the potential of a rebellion, now the issue was focused on the identity of the person making the mistake of blaming Iehisa and the origins of such mistakes. The content of the rumours was assumed to be baseless. Likewise, the blame placed on Iehisa was also assumed to be false. The only truth that Yoshihisa was concerned with was the fact that these rumours existed and they could threaten his family. As such, once this threat was eliminated, further inquiries into the facts of the rumours were likely meaningless to Yoshihisa. In other words, now that both Iehisa and Ohira will no longer be affected by this entire issue, Yoshihisa no longer cared enough about the results of these investigations to further involve himself or Kagoshima in general.

IV. Conclusion: the Shimazu Family and Yoshihisa

In this chapter, we have look at three different cases where the involvement of Yoshihisa's immediate family members affected his political decision-making process. In each

[270] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, pp. 50 – 51.
[271] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 51.

of these cases, we see Yoshihisa showing either favoritism towards his own family by shielding them from consequences or accentuate his wrath towards those who specifically targeted his family members. While the biases towards one's family is not anything unique to or necessarily unexpected in medieval Japan, they were critical in the mind of Yoshihisa, directly affecting his decision-making process.

In the first case, we saw how Iehisa was treated differently than Kakuken in their dealings with the Nyūta. On the one hand, Iehisa, who was fabricating intelligence and sending them to Kagoshima in order to instigate a full scale invasion of Bungo, faced no real reprisal from Yoshihisa and the senior retainer council for his actions. On the other hand, Kakuken, who sought the help of the *shugo-dai* in gathering support for the Nyūta, was denounced in court for his actions and chastised as an outsider who did not have the welfare of the Shimazu in mind. Both Iehisa and Kakuken took similar actions for similar purposes, but only Kakuken faced any consequences for his actions. While it would not make sense to claim Iehisa to be an outsider since he was the daimyo's brother, we could at least expect some minimal punishment to be dealt to Iehisa for falsifying information. Instead, despite all the trouble he caused, Iehisa got away with a simple message from Yoshihisa informing Iehisa of the change of plans.

As for the second case, the Hishikari found themselves facing explicit threats and demands from Yoshihisa when rumours of their ambitious intents reached the ears of their daimyo. This approach stood in stark contrast to similar rumours surrounding the Iriki-in as we have seen in the last chapter. Both the Iriki-in and the Hishikari had a contentious relationship with the Shimazu in the past, with the two joining forces at one point to stand against Yoshihisa's father. Yet the Hishikari was singled out by Yoshihisa when rumours of their ambitions arose. Whereas the Iriki-in's punishment was negotiated between them and the

Shimazu, thus framing the actions of the Iriki-in as a voluntary demonstration of their loyalty, the punishment for the Hishikari was explicit and predetermined. The key difference between these two former enemies of the Shimazu was the personal nature of the Hishikari's offense, underscored by the way Yoshihisa framed the events that took place between the Shimazu and the Hishikari. In Yoshihisa's mind, the Hishikari's actions were personal betrayals of his father's trust. The assassination attempt against Yoshihiro by the Hishikari only heightened this feeling of personal offense felt by Yoshihisa. This was the key defining feature that separated the Hishikari from the Iriki-in. From the way that Yoshihisa used it as a justification for forcing the Hishikari to give up their landholdings, it is clear that this was a significant factor that affected Yoshihisa in his decision-making process.

Finally, when it came to the rumours surrounding Yoshitora, Yoshihisa shifted his entire approach from one of indifference to one of protection after receiving a letter from Ohira. After ignoring the entire situation and implicitly sanctioning the Tōgō's unapproved military actions towards Yoshitora, the day after receiving a letter of Ohira, the administration immediately shifted gears and directly addressed these rumours. Without delay, the Shimazu administration sent their decisions to Yoshitora on the following day, and made preparations to change these very same decisions should the need arises. Furthermore, when news reached Yoshihisa that perhaps Iehisa was involved in starting these rumours, an inquiry was launched into the origins of these rumours. Through this process, Yoshihisa was able to create a situation where both his daughter and his brother were protected. Once he knew both of them were shielded from the consequences of these initial rumours, Yoshihisa shifted the burden of the investigation to Yoshitora and the Ki'iri. In other words, once it longer directly concerned Yoshihisa or his family, the origins of the rumours meant little to Yoshihisa.

These three cases highlight the fact that for Yoshihisa, the wellbeing of his family members was very much part a core part of his considerations when it came to making various decisions. That Yoshihisa would be concerned for his family needs little explanation. What is perhaps more abnormal is Yoshihisa's concern for his brothers, since siblings were the primary challengers to many daimyo's authority during the Sengoku period. In this regard, Yoshihisa showed quite a bit of confidence. Iehisa, for all the trouble he seemed to be causing for Yoshihisa, had a strong relationship with his older brothers. While Yoshihiro, despite his close age to Yoshihisa and position as *shugo-dai*, never once attempted to challenge Yoshihisa's authority. When Kakuken asked Yoshihiro to step in and use his authority as *shugo-dai* to support the Nyūta, Yoshihiro not only declined Kakuken's request but reported the entire matter to his older brother immediately. Indeed, even when Yoshihisa was forced into retirement after the Shimazu's surrender to Hideyoshi in 1587, Yoshihiro never involved himself in the political affairs of the Shimazu despite the installation of Yoshihiro's son as the "official" leader of the Shimazu by Hideyoshi. Instead, Yoshihiro and his son both chose to continue their military duties, leaving all political decisions and administrative affairs to Yoshihisa.[272] While the reasons for the strong bonds shared by the Shimazu brothers are difficult to pin down, the protectiveness with which Yoshihisa treated family undoubtedly played a part in this. By actually thinking about his brothers' wellbeing in his decision-making, Yoshihisa likely garnered significant respect from them, which would reduce the likelihood of his brothers wanting to rebel. In the end, whether he was aware of it or not, by choosing to protect his own family, Yoshihisa managed to further solidify his position as the undisputed ruler of the Shimazu.

[272] For an in-depth discussion on the Shimazu succession after their surrender to Hideyoshi, see Nishimoto, "Shimazu Yoshihiro no honsō-ke katoku sōzoku ni tsuite," pp. 305 – 12.

CHAPTER 5

On Spirituality

So far, in our current exploration of the motivating factors behind the decision-making process of Shimazu Yoshihisa and his retainers, we have focused on their tendency to protect and reinforce their own position within the administration. They were often concerned with finding ways to benefit themselves or those they deemed important to them. A prime example of the warriors' need to protect those around them can be seen from how Yoshihisa was shielding his family from harm through the decisions he had made in the previous chapter. Beyond worrying about the physical wellbeing and position within the administration of either themselves or those around them, Yoshihisa and his retainers were also deeply concerned with the spiritual implications of their actions. An important window into this possible motivational factor of Yoshihisa and his administration can be found through the act of *kuji.*

The *kuji* is a process of divination that involves a predetermined list of options set by those conducting the act itself. From these limited options, a result was randomly generated through a lottery process, similar to drawing a random lot. The divination was conducted to consult the kami when the administration was faced with difficult or particularly important decisions. As such, results of the *kuji* were seen as divine messages and were taken very seriously for those involved. This divination process was not unique to the warrior class nor to medieval Japan. *Kuji* continues to exist to this day in shrines across Japan in the form of *omikuji*. For a low price of a hundred yen, shrine visitors today can draw their own *kuji* lot for themselves

to see how successful they will be in their future endeavours. Despite the slight shift in its function in the modern period, at the most fundamental level, the *kuji* continued to act as an avenue for people to deduce the kami's will in facing their daily challenges.

In this final chapter, we will examine the impact spirituality had on Yoshihisa's decision-making process, before diving deeper into the *kuji* as a specific example of how faith impacted Yoshihisa. This chapter argues that spiritual considerations played a significant part in affecting the daily decisions of the Shimazu administration. To do this, the chapter will be separated into three distinct sections.

The first of the three sections will be devoted to addressing some of the established views on the function of the *kuji* within the Shimazu administration. This section will be dealing primarily with the arguments forwarded by Fukushima Kaneharu and Nagamatsu Atsushi. Focusing on the possible functions of the *kuji*, Fukushima argues that the *kuji* was a way that allowed the daimyo to grant spiritual authority to his own decisions through the manipulation of the results beforehand. Fukushima thus suggests that the *kuji* was a tool used to quell any dissents within the senior retainer council. Nagamatsu's exploration of the *kuji* focuses instead on the ties between the *kuji* and the specific retainers that conducted these divinations. By highlighting the connection between the *kuji* and the practice of *shugendō*, Nagamatsu suggests that the *kuji* were used mainly as a spiritual means to consolidate military intelligence and surveillance data, and injecting such information into the decision-making process. While I agree with both Fukushima and Nagamatsu in that the *kuji* was a tool utilized by the daimyo, I would argue that we cannot dismiss the spiritual significance of the *kuji* in examining the motivating factors behind the Shimazu's decision-making process. In this first section I will summarize the

arguments of Fukushima and Nagamatsu in detail, and provide some preliminary counter-arguments to their positions on this matter.

In the second section of this chapter, I will provide several different examples from the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* that illustrate the fundamental importance of spirituality and religion for the Shimazu's general worldview. These examples will highlight how important spiritual practices were to the Shimazu. From their interpretations of certain events as auspicious omens to their monthly poetry gatherings, it is clear that attaining divine favour through worship was an important aspect of the Shimazu's daily life. It is ultimately impossible for us to understand the various concerns of the Shimazu without addressing the significance of their spiritual practices and beliefs. The importance placed on spirituality by the Shimazu further points to the fact that the interpretations of the *kuji* proposed by Fukushima and Nagamatsu are ultimately inconsistent with the fundamental worldview of the Shimazu administration. Given the Shiamzu's faith and dedication to worship, it is highly improbable that Yoshihisa would manipulate the results of a *kuji* in order to quell dissent within the ranks of the senior retainers. This is especially true when Yoshihisa already had all the administrative authority to silence retainers who disagreed with him and his administration without the need to usurp the divine authority of the kami.

In the final section, we will return to the issue of the *kuji,* and look specifically at four distinct examples of the *kuji* as recorded by Kakuken. Through these examples, it will become clear that the *kuji* was fundamentally ill-suited for the daimyo to communicate secret objectives as suggested by Fukushima and Nagamatsu. To start, the results of the *kuji* were vague by design. The inherent ambiguity of *kuji* results made sense as a form of divination for it allowed for creative and adaptive interpretations of the results, but it makes much less sense as a tool to quell dissent as Fukushima suggested. These examples will also highlight how serious the *kuji*

was to the Shimazu. *Kuji* results could not be denied and must be followed through to the end even if it was politically or militarily nonsensical for the Shimazu to do so. Changes to the *kuji* could only be made when the Shimazu was able to attain permission from the kami through yet more *kuji.* All of this points to the spiritual significance of the *kuji* and the Shimazu's genuine belief in the religious nature of divination. Rather than rationalizing the *kuji*, we need to embrace the Shimazu's understanding of the *kuji* in order to fully grasp what their concerns were with regards to their daily decisions.

I. Divination as an Excuse?

The interpretation of the *kuji* as an administrative and communicative tool rests on the identity of the retainers who conducted the *kuji* for Yoshihisa. According to both Fukushima and Nagamatsu, these retainers were key in allowing Yoshihisa control over the *kuji* and their results. What these two scholars neglected to consider however is the very nature of these divinations as a religious act. Because of this, the interpretations offered by Fukushima and Nagamatsu provide us with a complex but ultimately incomplete understanding of the function of the *kuji* and its impact on the overall Shimazu administration.

One of the reasons for viewing the *kuji* as a tool explicitly used for decision-making and political maneuvering has to do with the fact that the same people who were in charge of conducting these divinations were also retainers directly in service to Yoshihisa. Within the Shimazu administration, those in charge of conducting the *kuji* for Yoshihisa were practitioners of *shugendō*.[273] This was what provided these particular retainers with the necessary spiritual

[273] *Shugendō* is a type of esoteric religious practice that incorporated elements of shamanism, Buddhism, and elements that will later be codified into Shintoism. Some practitioners of *shugendō* become *yamabushi*, mountain

authority to conduct such rituals in the first place.[274] This has a couple of important consequences in how we interpret the role of *kuji* in the broader political decision-making process. First, these particular retainers combine in themselves both the authority endowed to them by the administration and the spiritual power granted to them as *shugendō* practitioners. In other words, when it came to conducting spiritual acts such as the *kuji* for the purposes of making administrative decisions, these retainers held an almost unparalleled degree of authority relative to their peers.

Second, being *shugendō* practitioners, these retainers had exclusive access to the larger communication network that spanned the entire archipelago. This is directly related to the nature of *shugendō* practice and the many mountain ascetics, or *yamabushi*, in their ranks. Retainers practicing *shugendō* were frequently in contact with the *yamabushi* who also served as envoy monks for the purposes of communication between daimyo.[275] This connection between the *yamabushi* and the retainers who practiced *shugendō* allowed these retainers to easily obtain information on the military movements of neighbouring daimyo through careful surveillance. Furthermore, these retainers also had access to secretive pilgrimage routes used exclusively by the *yamabushi*, allowing mediators working for these retainers to securely deliver messages quickly and without hindrance from potential rivals.[276] Retainers of the Shimazu who practiced *shugendō* thus became an invaluable part of the administration, providing access to information that they could not otherwise obtain.

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ascetics. In general, *shugendō* was associated with the more "magical" aspects of esoteric Buddhism in both Tendai and Shingon sects during the medieval period.

[274] Nagamatsu, "Shimazu Yoshihisa to shugendō: kassen to sakuhō," p. 231.

[275] Nagamatsu, "Shimazu Yoshihisa to shugendō: kassen to sakuhō," p. 238.

[276] Nagamatsu, "Shimazu Yoshihisa to shugendō: kassen to sakuhō," p. 238.

It is not difficult to see why scholars would suggest that the *kuji* served much more than spiritual purposes. The retainers who had exclusive access to the secret information network of the *yamabushi* were also the ones in charge of conducting these important divinations. As such it is unsurprising that scholars would suspect the possibility that these retainers operated to control the larger decision-making process from behind the scenes. Fukushima Kaneharu is one such scholar.

In Fukushima's analysis of the power dynamics between the Shimazu daimyo and his senior retainers, Fukushima argues that the *kuji* was a tool of political control employed by the daimyo in order to tame the chaos resulting from the clashing opinions of the senior retainers.[277] According to Fukushima, a key part of the reason why the Shimazu was able to do this was by designating specific shrines as sanctioned sites for conducting the *kuji*. All of the shrines which were permitted to do so were ones that the Shimazu were either personally affiliated with or whose holdings the Shimazu directly confirmed.[278] Fukushima suggests that this connection between the shrines and the Shimazu, in addition to employing of *shugendō* practitioners to deliver the will of the daimyo to these shrines through secret passages, allowed the Shimazu to control the outcome of the *kuji*.[279] The *kuji* was therefore, Fukushima argues, a system through which the daimyo suppressed any possible dissent within the senior retainer council through the divine approval of the kami.[280]

Another prominent strand of interpretation with regards to the *kuji* can be seen in the work of Nagamatsu Atsushi. Nagamatsu argued that the results of these *kuji* need to be analyzed

[277] Fukushima, "Sengoku daimyō Shimazu-shi to rōjū," p. 201.
[278] Fukushima, "Sengoku daimyō Shimazu-shi to rōjū," p. 198.
[279] Fukushima, "Sengoku daimyō Shimazu-shi to rōjū," pp. 200 – 201.
[280] Fukushima, "Sengoku daimyō Shimazu-shi to rōjū," p. 201.

through the lens of information gathering and surveillance.[281] Nagamatsu suggests that the *kuji* was a process that crystallized all the information gathered through the *shugendō* networks, converting them into official sanctions that carried the necessary spiritual weight to override previous decisions.[282] Nagamatsu went so far as to call *kuji* a method for determining political policies through the participation of *shugendō* practitioners.[283] The understanding of *kuji* as represented here fundamentally downplays the spiritual nature of the divination itself. As such, Nagamatsu's interpretation of the *kuji* remains incomplete at best.

The interpretations of the *kuji* propagated by both Fukushima and Nagamatsu are by no means unreasonable. The only real significant difference between these scholars' understanding lies in the intention and control exerted by the Shimazu. While Fukushima argues for the manipulation of the *kuji* outcome so that the Shimazu could justify their own decisions in the face of dissent, Nagamatsu instead suggests that the *kuji* were merely the product of synthesizing political decisions with additional information attained through the *shugendō* networks. Indeed, if we consider some of the factors behind the decision-making process of the Shimazu in general, we can easily imagine a scenario where Yoshihisa's need to control his retainers would prompt him to try and control the results of a *kuji*. There are however two major problems with this line of interpretation. First, based on our understanding of the administrative processes of the Shimazu, we know that the daimyo could easily manipulate decisions made by his administration should he saw fit to do so. For example, in our previous look at Kakuken's interactions with the Nyūta, we have seen Yoshihisa implicitly pressure the senior retainers to change their minds

[281] Nagamatsu, "Shimazu Yoshihisa to shugendō: kassen to sakuhō," pp. 239 – 40.
[282] Nagamatsu, "Shimazu Yoshihisa to shugendō: kassen to sakuhō," pp. 239 – 40. See also Nagamatsu, "Shimazu Yoshihisa to shugendō: kassen to sakuhō," p. 258.
[283] Nagamatsu, "Shimazu Yoshihisa to shugendō: kassen to sakuhō," p. 258.

when it came to his decision to "reschedule" their invasion of Bungo in the second month of Tenshō 14 (1586).[284] Given sufficient political and military justifications, there was no need to invoke the will of the divine in this process. In other words, if Yoshihisa wanted to override the decisions made by the senior retainer councils, he can simply do so through subtle political maneuvering without usurping and manipulating the words of the supernatural.

Second, and more importantly, the interpretations offered by both Fukushima and Nagamatsu do not address the spiritual aspects of the *kuji*. Fukushima's argument in particular was framed with the specific aim of explaining the irrationality inherent in the use of *kuji* within the Shimazu decision-making process.[285] By viewing the *kuji* as a problem that needs to be explained and rationalized, Fukushima is assuming that the Shimazu shared the same focus we have upon secularism and rationality within our own views of government and the military. This is a fundamentally incomplete understanding of the *kuji* and the function it provided for the Sengoku daimyo as it ignores a crucial aspect of the divination. Furthermore, some of the particular issues addressed by Fukushima and Nagamatsu could be answered from the perspective of spirituality as well.

In particular, the idea that both Fukushima and Nagamatsu sought to explain is directly linked to the importance placed upon the *kuji* results. The conducting of a *kuji* was not something taken lightly, as once a *kuji* was completed, it became almost impossible for the samurai to act in opposition to it.[286] This by itself speaks to the spiritual power of the *kuji*, as a fortune granted by the kami was understandably something that the daimyo cannot easily deny without some level of political and spiritual backlash. It is only when we try to rationalize this act of divination that

[284] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 98.
[285] Fukushima, "Sengoku daimyō Shimazu-shi to rōjū," p. 198.
[286] Nagamatsu, "Shimazu Yoshihisa to shugendō: kassen to sakuhō," pp. 234 – 5.

the conducting of *kuji* became something that needs an explanation at all. This is not to deny the political power of the *kuji* or any potential utilitarian motivations behind the divination itself, but these aspects of the *kuji* should complement our understanding of the *kuji* from a spiritual perspective and not override it.

For example, while Fukushima suggests that the designation of specific shrines for the *kuji* and the employment of *shugendō* practitioners as evidence for the Shimazu's control over the result of the *kuji*, this is by no means the only way we can understand why the Shimazu made this decision in the first place. Indeed, the selection of specific shrines for the *kuji* can simply be due to issues of trust. We know that the results of a *kuji* were taken very seriously. As such, it was likely that the Shimazu would want to ensure the divination to be successfully and correctly conducted. Having it be done at a trusted shrine was one way to do this. Similarly, the use of *shugendō* practitioners for this ritual makes sense if we consider the spiritual authority they embodied. These retainers' knowledge of secret passages used by mountain ascetics allowed for a safer and faster transference of the *kuji* results from the shrine to the daimyo, further ensuring the accuracy of said results.

Lastly, regarding the idea that the *kuji* was used to suppress dissent within the senior retainer council, we cannot deny that the overwhelming spiritual authority held by the *kuji* could silence any opposition. That being the case, it is unsurprising that *kuji* results often unwittingly served this purpose as it was naturally during times of indecision that the will of the kami would be consulted. Thus the suppression of dissent was not so much an indication of the function of the *kuji*, but rather the natural result of appealing to a higher power for an absolute decision. Extant documents simply do not support a non-spiritual understanding of *kuji* along these lines.

In order to show that spirituality was a major motivating factor behind the political decision-making process of the Shimazu administration, we shall look at the overall levels of faith and spirituality displayed by the Shimazu as recorded by Kakuken in his diary. Through these displays of faith found in the daily operation of the Shimazu administration, we will see that an investigation into the *kuji*'s influence on the decision-making process of the Shimazu must address issues of spirituality. Spirituality was a key part of medieval life and needs to be seen as a key part of military calculations and factored into the warriors' needs to protect their own administrative position.

II. Faith and Spirituality in the Shimazu Administration

In this section, we will see how important spiritual practices and worship were to the Shimazu through several examples. This sense of religiosity and spirituality that formed the foundation of the Shimazu administration are apparent even from several of the cases we have examined in the previous chapters. In both the cases dealing with Iehisa on the one hand and Yoshitora on the other, we have seen how the underlying spirituality of the Shimazu could affect the making of political decisions. In addition to this, we can also see the faith of the Shimazu expressed through their poetry gatherings throughout the years, so much so that the Shimazu scheduled their administrative calendar around their monthly gatherings. All of these instances serve to highlight how important the Shimazu saw their own spiritual practices. The impact these beliefs had on the way that the Shimazu operated suggests that it was very unlikely that the Shimazu were simply using faith as a political tool. As such, it was quite improbable that the Shimazu would undermine their own faith by manipulating a spiritual practice like the *kuji*.

If we recall the way that Iehisa manipulated false intelligence to coax Yoshihisa into moving the Shimazu forces towards Bungo in Tenshō 13 (1585), we see the important role played by spirituality in Iehisa's schemes. One of the primary reasons why Yoshihisa believed Iehisa's information was noted by Kakuken on the twentieth day of the eleventh month of Tenshō 13 (1585). According to Kakuken, Yoshihisa stated that, "[w]hen we were about to attack Nisshū in a previous year (Tenshō 4, eighth month?), I was also praying at the main shrine (main Hachiman Shrine), and from there we launched our campaign. That the exact same situation is happening again must be a sign that we should begin our march on Bungo now."[287] From this passage, it is clear that Yoshihisa saw the timing of Iehisa's news regarding the Nyūta's betrayal of the Ōtomo as a sign from the divine rather than a simple coincidence. Of course, that Yoshihisa received such news during his visit to the Hachiman Shrine[288] only served to reinforce his trust in Iehisa's news. Iehisa, for his part, likely knew how Yoshihisa would interpret his false military intelligence. In other words, Iehisa took advantage of his brother's underlying faith in the kami in order to manipulate Yoshihisa. That Yoshihisa's interpretation of this news as an omen, and that an omen was enough to compel him to act suggest that Yoshihisa's faith had a tangible impact on his decision-making in general. Within the context of our current examination, this incident highlights the spirituality that formed the foundations of the Shimazu administration and how Yoshihisa could be swayed to act by religious reasons.

Similarly, when it came to Yoshitora and his rumours, one of the primary ways he attempted to prove his innocence to the senior retainer Ki'iri Suehisa was by reminding him of the oath Yoshitora sworn on the pain of divine retribution. In his letter, Yoshitora specifically

[287] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 65.
[288] Hachiman is a kami directly associated with warriors and warfare.

noted that, "if I harboured even the smallest amount of such evil, I will immediately and without reason come to an end by the punishment of the various kami and Buddhist deities that occupies the three provinces, as stated in my oath which I have previously submitted."[289] Such faith based oaths of loyalty were not uncommon. From our modern perspective, it is easy to claim that swearing an oath to a higher power does not mean much in the practical sense, but there is no evidence to suggest that such oaths were sworn merely as a formality with no spiritual substance. Furthermore, even if these oaths were purely procedural, it does outline for us the underlying believe system of the Shimazu. Indeed, that Yoshitora specified the kami and Buddhist deities of the three provinces suggests that the wording of this oath was particular to the Shimazu, as it referred specifically to the three provinces which stood for Satsuma, Ōsumi, and Hyūga, these being provinces traditionally governed by the main Shimazu branch. This is yet another indication of the fundamental importance of spirituality and religion for the Shimazu administration and Yoshihisa.

We also see examples of the importance of faith and spirituality in the lives of mid-level warriors like Uwai Kakuken. For example, in his diary entry from the twenty-eighth day of the eighth month of Tenshō 11 (1583), Kakuken wrote,

> Last night I dreamt of this poem.
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | *Tonikaku ni* | Somehow |
> | *tanomu kokoro ni* | in my pleading heart |
> | *makasu nari* | I was entrusted this: |
> | *yukue mo shiranu* | the unknown destination |
> | *nami no ume ga ka* | of the waves' plum fragrance. |
>
> Since we are about to set sail towards the Arima forces, perhaps this poem is saying that either in the name of Tenjin, or maybe even Christianity, the Arima will be completely

[289] *Kyūkizatsuroku kōhen* 734, (p. 337).

> destroyed. Meanwhile our forces will be protected by Tenjin. This, I think, is an auspicious message.[290]

Much like when Yoshihisa heard the false information about the Nyūta from Iehisa, Kakuken interpreted his dream as an auspicious omen. In this specific instance, the importance of spirituality extended even beyond the familiar kami and Buddhist deities of Japan. The very consideration by Kakuken that perhaps it was the Christian deity who was guiding the Shimazu to their victory shows the fundamental and universal importance of spiritual beliefs for the Shimazu warriors during this period. If this was the general worldview that the Shimazu held, it is highly improbable that a *kuji* designed specifically to decipher the will of the kami would be something the administration thought appropriate to manipulate. The fear of divine retribution was very real for the warriors within the Shimazu administration.

Further examples of the strength of the Shimazu's faith can be found within their worship of Tenjin, hinted at by the above passage from Kakuken's diary. The kami known as Tenjin during the Sengoku period is supposedly the spirit of Sugawara no Michizane (845 – 903), a high ranking courtier during the Heian period whose success threatened the Fujiwara regents at the time. As a result, Michizane was exiled to Kyushu where he died shortly thereafter. The story of Michizane did not end with his death. After Michizane's death, the people responsible for his exile were supposedly cursed with a series of unfortunate events, ones that greatly affected the functioning of the imperial court. Believing these events to be the doing of Michizane's angry spirit, the court proceeded to clear Michizane's name and raise his court rank posthumously, but to no avail. It was only when the court promoted Michizane to the status of a kami that these events finally ceased, and Michizane became known as Tenjin.

[290] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 271.

Despite being commonly known as the kami of learning and literary pursuits by the Sengoku period, the association between Tenjin and literature was a much later creation, dating to the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333).[291] In fact, the role Tenjin played in the religious landscape of premodern Japan was highly amorphous. Murayama Shūichi notes that it is quite possible that the Tenjin that was known as the kami of learning was in fact an amalgamation of the belief in Michizane's spirit and the deities of the early agricultural pantheon such as Raijin and Suijin, the kami of thunder and water respectively.[292] The nebulous nature of Tenjin's divine domain continued to persist throughout much of the premodern period, with some believing him to be able to bring good weather, while others saw him as the protector of the imperial family.[293]

We can perhaps find some indications as to why the Shimazu were so devoted to the worship of Tenjin from the diety's history during the Muromachi period. Murayama Shūichi suggests that Tenjin might be considered as a guardian kami of the Ashikaga family, the shogun of the Muromachi *bakufu*.[294] By 1416, Tenjin as a kami was thought to be able to relieve the worldly troubles of the people and as a result if this, the worship of Tenjin intensified. From this developmental trajectory of Tenjin's divine powers, we can see how at the height of the Sengoku period the Shimazu would consider Tenjin as a pseudo-military kami. After all, if Tenjin was powerful enough to protect the Muromachi shogun, surely it would be beneficial for the Shimazu to worship Tenjin as well. This conception of Tenjin as a military kami can be seen through the passage above, where Kakuken interpreted his dream as a good omen coming from Tenjin due to

[291] Naganuma, "Tenman Tenjin no shinkō no hensen," p. 188.
[292] Murayama Shūichi, *Tenjin goryō shinkō,* p. 2.
[293] Murayama Shūichi, *Tenjin goryō shinkō,* p. 198.
[294] Murayama Shūichi, *Tenjin goryō shinkō,* p. 202.

the diety's association with plum fragrance, signifying success for their upcoming military campaign.

The significance of Tenjin worship cannot be overstated for the Shimazu. This can be seen most apparently in the Shimazu's poetry gatherings. While the use of poetry for spiritual or religious purposes was fairly widespread, the Shimazu family and Kakuken were somewhat unique in this particular arena. It appears that the Shimazu chose to express their faith through the hosting of their poetry gatherings. We know that there existed an association between the hosting of poetry gatherings and the worship of Tenjin due to this kami's association with learning and literary pursuits. This point was made explicit by Kakuken as well when he wrote about a gathering of a hundred rounds *renga* for their monthly prayers to Tenjin on the twenty-fifth day of the leap eighth month, Tenshō 13 (1585).[295] Beyond the somewhat random poetry gatherings hosted throughout the year however, what separated the Shimazu from their peers was the former's scheduling of monthly poetry gatherings. Of the sixteen monthly poetry gatherings recorded by Kakuken, ten of them were held on the twenty-fifth of a given month.[296]

The twenty-fifth day was the day of prayer to Tenjin. This practice first began in the fourteenth century.[297] During the Bunmei era (1469 – 1486), the dedication of poetry to Tenjin on the twenty-fifth of the second and sixth month of each year became standard practice within the imperial court itself.[298] While Kakuken himself is known to be someone who equally worshipped all the various kami and Buddhist deities, the fact that he and the Shimazu family sought to schedule their monthly poetry gatherings on the twenty-fifth day of each month should

[295] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 27 – 28.
[296] Tamayama, "Uwai Kakuken no shinkō: toku ni bannen wo chūshin toshite," p. 376.
[297] Murayama Shūichi, *Tenjin goryō shinkō*, p. 202.
[298] Murayama Shūichi, *Tenjin goryō shinkō*, pp. 202 – 204.

not be seen as coincidental.[299] This is especially true when we consider the fact that, even when their monthly poetry gatherings were not held on the twenty-fifth, they still devoted time to praying and reciting sutra to Tenjin on the twenty-fifth day of the month.[300]

The Shimazu also seemed especially faithful in contrast to their contemporaries with regards to the worship of Tenjin. This is clear when we compare the scheduling of monthly poetic gatherings for the Shimazu with that of the Tokugawa through the accounts recorded in the diary of Matsudaira Ietada (1555 – 1600). This particular diary covers the period of 1577 to 1594. Unlike the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* however, entries in the *Ietada nikki* (*The Diary of Ietada*) are mostly brief accounts of specific events that took place without going into much details.

The important thing to note for our current purposes however is the fact that the *Ietada nikki* also contains numerous records of monthly poetry gatherings. Within the span of the seventeen years recorded by Ietada, there were a total of sixty-three monthly poetry gatherings on record, of which only nine were held on the twenty-fifth of any given month.[301] This stands in stark contrast to the percentage of monthly poetry gatherings held on the twenty-fifth of a given month in Kakuken's diary. When tallied, 62.5% of all monthly poetry gatherings recorded in Kakuken's diary was held on the twenty-fifth day of the month versus the 14.3% as recorded in Ietada's diary. While one might argue that the much smaller sample size found within the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* somewhat weakens this comparison, this statistical difference does illustrate for us a couple of things. First, the scheduling of monthly poetry gatherings in general was a flexible

[299] For Kakuken's faith in the various kami and Buddhist deities, see Tamayama, "Uwai Kakuken no shinkō: toku ni bannen wo chūshin toshite," p. 387.
[300] Kakuken writes explicitly of prayers and sutra readings for *Tenjin* worship. See *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, pp. 197, 206, 253, 281; *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 2, pp. 44, 87, 101, 114, 132, 142, 170, 211, 230, 248; *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 41, 65, 111, 120, 127, 191.
[301] Tsuno, "'Ietada Nikki' ni mirareru kaisho no bungei: renga to cha no yu wo chūshin," pp. 288 – 91.

affair and that there were no rules that specifically stated that the monthly poetry gatherings need to be held on the twenty-fifth. All of this can be gleaned from Ietada's diary.

Second, because poetry gatherings was a flexible affair, the Shimazu's decision to schedule them on the twenty-fifth of the month was clearly a deliberate choice. This was after all the same day of the month dedicated to the worship of Tenjin. And since the composing of poetry could be conceived as an act of devotion towards Tenjin, it is not difficult to see the Shimazu's scheduling of these poetry gatherings as an act of faith.

The Shimazu's dedication to the act of worship can be further seen from their eagerness to seize further opportunities to compose poetry for Tenjin. On eleventh day of the twelfth month, Tenshō 12 (1584), Kakuken wrote,

> A *senku*[302] was traditionally held every year on the sixteenth day of the first month, but in recent years, this was changed to be held on the twenty-fifth of the second month instead. As we were occupied with military campaigns in the past five to six years, we have stopped these gatherings. After some discussion, it was decided that a *senku* will be held on the twenty-fifth of first month next year.[303]

What is significant here is that, as with the case of the monthly poetry gatherings, an effort was made to schedule yet another poetry event to be held on the twenty-fifth. Unlike their monthly gatherings which tend to be quite flexible in terms of scheduling, we can see from this entry that there was a set precedent for when the *senku* was held. When they were previously forced to reschedule their *senku*, they chose to move it to the twenty-fifth of the following month. Given the significance of this particular date, we can safely assume that this choice was a deliberate one. Perhaps more importantly however, when given the chance to revert back to the pre-established norm of when to hold their *senku* gathering, the Shimazu decided to not follow

[302] Translates literally into "a thousand stanza," but tends to denote a poetry gathering where ten separate *renga* or other linked verses are composed, each of which containing a hundred stanzas.
[303] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 2, p. 153.

precedents. Instead, the Shimazu chose to find some sort of middle ground by choosing to hold their next *senku* on the first month of the year as before, but changing the date from the sixteenth to the twenty-fifth. The insistence on holding poetry events on the twenty-fifth day whenever possible underscores the spiritual and religious significance that defined the worldview of the Shimazu both in general, and specifically with regards to Tenjin.

This long foray into the scheduling of the monthly poetry gatherings serves to highlight just how important religious rituals and spirituality was for the Shimazu in general. Further evidence suggesting this can be found in the Shimazu military as well. For example, both the prayers to the *Ikusa-gami*, translating literally to "the god of war," conducted prior to battle, along with the *kuwazome,* the ritualistic breaking of ground at the start of construction, being conducted when setting up military camps, suggest the fundamental religious nature of the Shimazu military as well.[304] Furthermore, troop formations were also frequently changed based on their compatibility with the seasons and the auspiciousness of any given day.[305] In conjunction to this, the practice of using "cursed" needles and arrows in combat was also something the Shimazu adopted.[306] All of this further highlights for us the spiritual underpinnings of the Shimazu administration and military.[307]

From the above examples, we can see that the Shimazu administration and Yoshihisa in particular did not take the divine lightly. We have seen the Shimazu warriors sworn oaths based

[304] Nagamatsu, "Shimazu Yoshihisa to shugendō: kassen to sakuhō," p. 249. For example of these rituals, see *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 298. For example of prayers to *Ikusa-gami* for military planning, see also *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 22.
[305] Nagamatsu, "Shimazu Yoshihisa to shugendō: kassen to sakuhō," p. 249.
[306] Nagamatsu, "Shimazu Yoshihisa to shugendō: kassen to sakuhō," pp. 254 – 6.
[307] This connection between the military and the spiritual practices of rituals and prayers was by no means unique to the Shimazu. In fact, their local rivals, the Ōtomo were also known to practice their own spiritual rites associated with war. See Mayo, "Mobilizing Deities: Deus, Gods, Buddhas, and the Warrior Band in Sixteenth-Century Japan," pp. 119 – 39.

upon the threat of divine retribution and interpret their dreams as revelations from a higher power. We have also seen Yoshihisa deceived by false information because he understood the timing of such information as a divine omen. We saw that the act of worship dictate the Shimazu's administrative calendar and the way they ritualized many aspects of warfare. It is difficult then to see the daimyo of such an administration being comfortable in manipulating the results of a *kuji* when so much of the Shimazu's lives were fundamentally defined by their worship of the divine. This is especially the case when there are no substantive evidence showing the manipulation of the *kuji* to be true. With the foundational importance of spirituality and religious worship of the Shimazu established, we will move on to look specifically at the instances of *kuji* recorded in the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*. Specifically, we will see whether there were any indications that the *kuji* was simply used as a tool and how the results of the *kuji* actually motivated Yoshihisa and the Shimazu administration in their decision-making process.

III. The *Kuji* Divination in the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*

In order to see how spirituality and faith contributed to the Shimazu's decision-making process, we will look at four specific examples of *kuji* in this section. These examples will illustrate how decisions were in fact made in accordance to the results of these *kuji* due to the underpinning religiosity of these results. The first example I wish to investigate in detail dates to the tenth month of Tenshō 11 (1583) and involved the Shimazu's attack on Katashida. In this particular case, the Shimazu conducted the *kuji* in order to determine the proper course of action to take in their attack. This example shows how *kuji* were set up and how the results were extremely vague which in turn allowed it to be interpreted by the Shimazu without the resorting to manipulation. If the *kuji* was merely an excuse for the daimyo to spiritually legitimize his own

decisions through a network of *shugendō* practitioners and the information they garnered through surveillance, then the final decisions rendered should be much more concrete. The lack of ambiguity would limit the flexibility in interpreting the results. After all, if the *kuji* was just a façade of the daimyo's decisions, it would not makes sense for it to be so vague. The ambiguity of the *kuji* suggests that it would be an inappropriate option for delivering a daimyo's verdict.

In preparation for their attack on Katashida, the Shimazu passed the decision to conduct a *kuji* to determine their overall military strategy on the second of the tenth month of Tenshō 11 (1583).[308] The actual *kuji* was conducted two weeks later on the seventeenth of the tenth month.[309] Uwai Kakuken recorded in detail all the possible results of the *kuji*:

> this morning, prayers were held at Kōriyama Temple (Isa district), and the *kuji* for what to do when we arrive at Katashida is determined. The results will be decided as such: if the result is 'one' we will set up camp, if the result is 'two' we will begin our attack, and if it is determined that we should further consider our course of actions, the *kuji* result would be blank. The *kuji* result was a blank.[310]

We can see that all possible results were extremely vague. Considering all the possible outcomes to the *kuji* listed by Kakuken, it is difficult to see how the *kuji* would be a reliable political tool for Yoshihisa to deliver any kind of secret decision. Furthermore, if the *kuji* was such a political tool, the blank result would be ultimately inconclusive and unhelpful. If Yoshihisa wanted to halt their military campaign, he could easily hold off on conducting the *kuji* completely as they never determined an actual date for the *kuji*, stating only that "the *kuji* for Katashida on whether we should surround the area or attack immediately should be conducted soon."[311] The vagueness of their timing for the *kuji* meant that there was no real deadline by which they must conduct the

[308] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 287.
[309] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 294.
[310] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 294.
[311] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 287.

divination. If the *kuji* was in fact something that existed only to legitimize Yoshihisa's decision, he could have delayed the *kuji* until he made up his mind instead of making a non-decision as suggested by the blank result. This would suggest then that the *kuji* was most certainly conducted to consult the will of the kami, as opposed to it being a tool of Yoshihisa used to spiritually legitimize himself.

The blank result of the *kuji* afforded the Shimazu the flexibility to basically do whatever they wanted when it came to their attack on Katashida. This by itself would render the *kuji* an unlikely candidate as something used for a secret political purpose. Ultimately, the Shimazu decided on the twenty-second that "regarding Katashida, because the *kuji* to surround the area was not granted to us, it was decided that we will attack Katashida in the next few days."[312] Since they waited a few days, they have technically fulfilled the kami's advice of waiting and reconsidering their course of actions, and were thus free to act in whichever way they thought best. The amount of room that the Shimazu had in interpreting and executing the kami's will as expressed by the *kuji* undermines significantly the notion that the *kuji* were simply Yoshihisa's instructions in disguise. In other words, the vagueness inherent within the *kuji* already provided the daimyo with enough freedom to force his own interpretation on to the results if he wished. The possibility for such sublte acts of manipulation lessen the daimyo's need for explicit control through the staging of a fake divination just to get his way.

The second example that I wish to examine here represents one of the rarer instances where the Shimazu deliberated on whether or not to conduct a *kuji* on a matter not directly related to their military planning. The use of the *kuji* for non-military purposes by itself somewhat weakens the arguments made by Fukushima and Nagamatsu. As we can imagine, in

[312] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 1, p. 295.

such non-military scenarios, the utility provided by the networks of the *shugendō* practitioners emphasized by both Fukushima and Nagamatsu was much less relevant. Another important insight that can be derived from the following example is the idea that when a decision could be made without recourse to the kami's will divined through *kuji*, it was perhaps better for them not to consult the kami at all. This idea speaks to the sanctity of the *kuji* itself, suggesting that the results of the *kuji* affected the making of political decisions not because they were founded on some secretive network of information or subjected to behind-the-scene manipulation by the daimyo, but simply because the results of the *kuji* were the words of the kami.

This second example involves the Shimazu's decision on what landholdings should be granted to Arima Harunobu (1567 – 1612) in the aftermath of the Shimazu's rescue of the Arima in the fourth month of Tenshō 12 (1584). On the twenty-third of the month, Yoshihisa passed on this message to Uwai Kakuken and the other senior retainers: "with regards to this matter, there are a wide range of opinions. Should we give all the landholdings back to Arima [Harunobu] or should we only give two or three landholdings to him. As we have no memorandum of this, while Kawada [Yoshiaki] is here, he shall conduct a *kuji* to provide an answer to this issue."[313] This *kuji* was fundamentally different from the kind that was conducted in the previous case regarding Katashida. While the *kuji* for Katashida could determine the Shimazu's approach in their military campaign, the *kuji* Yoshihisa wanted for the Arima's landholdings would determine the Arima's financial and political future. Both these scenarios had a military impact, but the impact was much more abstract in the case of the latter. Similarly, the value of surveillance and the *shugendō* information network was much less significant in the case of the Arima as well. The decision to conduct a *kuji* for the situation surrounding the Arima thus

[313] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 2, p. 43.

supports the idea that the *kuji* genuinely had spiritual and religious value for the Shimazu, and that the outcome of the *kuji* had a real impact on the political decision-making process.

Even more illuminating than Yoshihisa's decision to conduct a *kuji* however is the subsequent discussion amongst Kakuken and his colleagues. On the same day this message arrived from Yoshihisa, Kakuken recorded in his diary the relative merits of consulting the kami on such matters. He wrote on the twenty-third,

> With regards to the management of the various castles, prior to the two mediators' arrival and their message informing us of Ina-shin's [Inatomi Shinsuke] delivery of the decision to hold a *kuji* and Yoshihisa's decision on this matter, we had our own opinions on this issue. Even if a *kuji* is carried out, would it not be difficult to even grant them jurisdiction over two or three landholdings?
>
> Based on what we have heard, there is a lack of available landholdings in general. Is it not the case that whether it was the *jitō-shiki* or the actual possession of a particular landholding, we have no holdings left to assign? It is difficult for retainers petitioning to be relocated to serve a useful role [in this situation]. The state of affair is probably difficult even for those officially ordered to take over [various landholdings].
>
> The conducting of a *kuji* is an important matter. After thoroughly reconsidering the situation, we wonder if we should conduct a *kuji* at all.[314]

This short evaluation by Kakuken and his colleagues regarding whether or not a *kuji* should be conducted illuminates for us the space the *kuji* occupied in the minds of the Shimazu retainers. According to this passage, the crux of the issue surrounded the ability of the Shimazu to actually carry out the result of the *kuji*, whatever that might be. Because they were already faced with a lack of sufficient landholdings to bestow upon their retainers, even if the *kuji* determined that only two or three holdings should be granted to the Arima, the Shimazu might not be able to follow through on the will of the kami. This implies that, for the retainers, the results of the *kuji* cannot be ignored or modified. In other words, in consulting the kami through *kuji*, the Shimazu

[314] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 2, p. 44.

needed to make sure that they were able to execute on all the possible outcomes. This challenges the idea of the *kuji* simply being a way to grant spiritual legitimacy to a daimyo's decision, as a daimyo's decision could easily be changed and modified in accordance to the situation he was facing. While *kuji* results could be "creatively interpreted," they could not be ignored, making it a highly inefficient tool for daimyo who wish to use it purely for the silencing of dissent within the ranks as it lacked flexibility in execution.

Of course, the immutability of the *kuji* results by itself does not prove the spirituality of the divination. There could be other reasons why ignoring the results of a *kuji* was impossible. However, since the daimyo had the authority to alter decisions made by himself or his administration, Kakuken's worry in the above passage would be unfounded if the *kuji* was simply Yoshihisa's tool. Further, if the *kuji* was used in such a manner, surely Kakuken and other senior retainers would know of this fact, thus rendering their above concerns moot.

For the *kuji* to be an effective means for delivering secret decisions by the daimyo, as suggested by Fukushima, the daimyo will need to hide the *kuji*'s secret function from his retainers. The idea that the daimyo could effectively hide the "true" purposes of a *kuji* is unconvincing. This is especially so when we consider the fact that the *kuji* were not spiritual acts conducted in secret, without the senior retainers' prior knowledge. In this particular instance, Yoshihisa asked Kawada Yoshiaki, a military advisor to the Shimazu, to conduct the *kuji*.[315] This meant that the knowledge of the *kuji* was likely not limited to just the senior retainers either, and that many within the Shimazu ranks probably knew of the *kuji* and its function. Given what we know of the communication structure of the Shimazu and the many layers of mediators involved,

[315] For Kawada Yoshiaki's biographic information, see *Honpan jinbutsu-shi*, p. 85. Yoshiaki in particular was likely a Shingon-sect *shugendō* practitioner. See Nagamatsu, "Shimazu Yoshihisa to shugendō: kassen to sakuhō," pp. 245 – 6.

the possibility of keeping the real functions and motivations behind the *kuji* a secret was highly improbable. As such, if the *kuji* was used insincerely in a spiritual sense, then it would likely be an open secret, which in turn would significantly weaken its ability to function in this manner, rendering the entire matter contradictory to say the least.

For the next example, let us once again return to the case of the Nyūta and the failure of Kakuken and Iehisa to steer the Shimazu military into helping the Nyūta. We know that Kakuken's plan to assist the Nyūta ended because of a sudden decision by Yoshihisa to redeploy their forces against the Tsukushi family instead. The decision came down the chain of command on the sixteenth of the sixth month, Tenshō 14 (1586), and was made in accordance to the results of a recent *kuji*. Kakuken wrote,

> While we have decided to launch our military campaign from both Higo and Hyūga after our meeting when I last visited Kagoshima, we have heard repeatedly from Iino that we should instead seek the will of the kami at Imamiya, and should continue to do so going forward…
>
> On top of this, recently Zenzai-bō (Omodaka Yoritoshi) returned from his journey to Chūgoku (Aki province, Mōri Terumoto). After hearing what he had to say, it was decided that Zenzai-bō and Yamakoshi would go to Kirishima (Aira district) as mediators and conduct a *kuji*. This *kuji* was conducted to see if we should set out towards Tsukushi, and it was determined that we should do just that.[316]

This was enough for Yoshihisa to change his military plans completely. Official orders were issued to the various retainers participating on this campaign against the Ōtomo in order to stem the confusion within the ranks caused by this change.[317] This confusion was part of the reason why Yoshihisa's decision was likely not one guided by some secretive intelligence gathered through surveillance. If we also consider the amount of wasted resources this sudden change of

[316] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 138.
[317] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 139.

plans entailed, it becomes more and more likely that what changed Yoshihisa's mind was his respect of the words of the kami divined through the *kuji*.

One possible interpretation of the *kuji* that I have not discussed thus far was the amount of leeway it afforded the daimyo during times of indecision. More specifically, the sudden change of plans seen above could be read as Yoshihisa unreasonably changing his mind for personal reasons, and thus used the *kuji* to justify his actions. This would fall in line with the arguments made by Fukushima and Nagamatsu. Furthermore, this decision to redirect their military efforts came after one of their retainers, Zenzai-bō, returned from Aki, which was already subjugated by Toyotomi Hideyoshi by this point. Though we cannot say for certain, this, along with the fact that Yoshihisa already received a letter from Hideyoshi specifically asking the Shimazu to seize all violence in Kyushu, suggest that it is possible that Yoshihisa had the potential full-scale invasion by Hideyoshi in mind when he decided to withdraw from attacking the Ōtomo.[318] After all, the Ōtomo was the most prominent military presence in Kyushu besides the Shimazu, and an open declaration of war against them would only highlight the Shimazu's non-compliance to Hideyoshi's demands.

The actions taken by the Shimazu military prior to Yoshihisa's decision to redirect their forces towards Tsukushi however tells a different story. Looking at the events of the days leading up to Yoshihisa changing his mind on the sixteenth, we see him repeatedly emphasizing the need to carry out their attack against the Ōtomo. On the seventh of the same month, Kakuken wrote,

> As Kamata Gyōbuzaemon-no-jō (Masahiro) came down to the provinces with word from Hashiba (Hideyoshi) and his plans to distribute control for the various provinces to his retainers, and many other difficult issues, we all agreed we should just proceed with our suppression of Bunshū as was previously determined by the will of the kami. Our lord (Yoshihisa) too issued the order as before: we should begin our march from both Higo and Hyūga as it was determined last spring. It is decided that Lord Taishu (Yoshihisa)

[318] For Toyotomi Hideyoshi's letter to the Shimazu, see *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 89.

> will begin his advance from Hyūga, and Lord Muko [Yoshihiro] will begin his advance from Hishū.[319]

This passage alone suggests that Yoshihisa was not particularly threatened by Hideyoshi's demands, as Yoshihisa's response to them was simply to carry on with his plans as determined by the kami previously. Yoshihisa followed up on this decision by issuing an official order to all his retainers to begin their march on the ninth.[320] Furthermore, following the bad weather and flooding that plagued the Shimazu between the eleventh and the thirteenth, Yoshihisa once again ordered his retainers to resume their attack on the fourteenth.[321] The course of action taken by Yoshihisa does not portray a person who was racked with indecision prior to changing his mind. Instead, even a flood did not deter Yoshihisa's will to follow the words of the kami. This suggests that whatever changed Yoshihisa mind was likely more important than simple indecision or even natural disasters. The presence of a new *kuji* updating the Shimazu on the will of the kami however, would be one of the few things that could change Yoshihisa's mind.

The final example I wish to investigate further continues exploring the developing situation surrounding the Ōtomo. Namely, we will be looking at the actual indecision faced by the Shimazu upon receiving news of the looming invasion of Hideyoshi three months after Yoshihisa decided to not attack the Ōtomo. Unlike the previous situation faced by the Shimazu during the sixth month, Yoshihisa was faced with a true dilemma on the first of the ninth month when he received rumours of major military movements towards Kyushu. According to Kakuken, "they have crossed the seas from Chūgoku (Kuroda Yoshitaka, Mōri Terumoto, etc). Also, Bungo (Ōtomo Yoshimune) are moving towards Asu (Higo, Asu distric), while various

[319] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 133.
[320] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 134 – 6.
[321] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, pp. 136 – 7.

warships left Shikoku (Sengoku Hidehisa, Chōsokabe Motochika, etc) and are heading towards Hyūga. These rumours put us in a tough spot."[322] The Shimazu were caught in a bind as they were already in the midst of their military campaign against the Tsukushi by this time.[323] In this way the Shimazu found themselves at a crossroad where their adherence to the divine was confronted with the military reality they were faced with. Their response to this dilemma will provide us with more evidence suggesting that it was the fundamentally spiritual nature of the *kuji* that motivated the decision-making process of Yoshihisa and the Shimazu administration at large.

It is telling that the first solution they considered in response to a possible invasion by Hideyoshi was to revisit the results of the *kuji* they previously conducted with regards to the invasion of Bungo. After their discussion, the senior retainers suggested this to Yoshihisa;

> In response to this situation, we should invade Bungo from Higo and Hyūga. If we sent our warships discreetly towards Bungo, we think we can succeed quite simply. Though we will be on the defensive, our forces here (Asu front) can pass through the southern districts (Bungo, Ōno district and Naoiri district), and our forces from Hyūga can move towards Ume (same, Minamiamabe district) and Mie (same, Ōno district), and cross the mountains there. If we do this, we should have nothing to worry about despite Bungo receiving support from Kyoto (Hashiba forces).[324]

The immediate plan that came to the minds of the senior retainers was the one that was previously formulated in accordance to an earlier *kuji*. This detail was not missed by Yoshihisa, who responded by saying, "with regards to the Bungo front, as this is in accordance to the *kuji*, we should be able to do this quite easily."[325] The existence of this *kuji* was recognized by Yoshihisa and provided enough justification for him to carry out this plan of attack.

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[322] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part3, p. 180.
[323] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 179.
[324] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 180.
[325] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 180.

The reference to this particular *kuji* as the foundation of the Shimazu's military strategy disproves the theories forwarded by Fukushima and Nagamatsu. If Fukushima's argument is correct, that the *kuji* served as a tool whose results were manipulated by the daimyo who sought spiritual authority for his actions, then it would not make any sense for both the senior retainers and Yoshihisa to strategize base upon an old *kuji* conducted on the twenty-second of the first month of Tenshō 14 (1586).[326] With eight months having elapsed since the *kuji* was conducted, if the result of this *kuji* was a calculated decision made by Yoshihisa, making this same decision without further consideration for the potential invasion of Hideyoshi would be nonsensical. Similarly, if the *kuji* results were the crystallization of new military intelligence gathered through surveillance and the *shugendō* network, then making plans based on an eight-month old *kuji* seems like a foolish idea. After all, the lurking threat of Hideyoshi was what prompted the Shimazu to reconsider their plans toward Bungo in the first place. For the Shimazu to not update their military intelligence through another *kuji* before deciding on their course of action seem to undermine the very purpose of their reconsideration.

Following these events, it was Yoshihiro, Yoshihisa's younger brother and *shugo-dai,* who expressed doubt with Yoshihisa's decision. On the following day Yoshihiro responded to Yoshihisa's decision by urging Yoshihisa to conduct a new *kuji* and act in accordance to the results.[327] Yoshihisa however did not give Yoshihiro a definitive answer. On the sixth day, Kakuken wrote in his diary that, "our lord has not made up his mind. Should a *kuji* be conducted? We have doubts as to whether we should conduct the *kuji* so many times about Bungo, but if we do not follow through on our current affairs with the Tsukushi, we will invite

[326] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 88.
[327] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 181.

misfortune upon ourselves. As such we think it is best that another *kuji* be conducted."[328] Two particular things stand out in this passage. Both the reluctance towards conducting multiple *kuji* on the same issue, and the idea of inviting misfortune (*akuji*) should they not complete the mission given to them by a previous *kuji* point toward the religious importance of the *kuji.* From these two points we can see how the Shimazu at large saw this spiritual act as something of significance. This religious aspect of the *kuji* was fundamental to the Shimazu when they were considering whether or not it was appropriate for them to change their plans to better suit the military challenges they faced. It is also clear that the fear of divine retribution played a part in the Shimazu's political decision-making process. Spirituality, in other words, was a fundamental factor of consideraton behind the decision-making process for the Shimazu and Yoshihisa.

IV. Conclusion: the Truth of the Kami or Political Manipulations

In our exploration of some of the fundamental factors Yoshihisa and his administration considered in their decision-making process, it has become apparent that these warriors were likely concerned with securing their own benefits or protecting those important to them above their honor or their loyalty towards the administration in the abstract. In this chapter however, we have seen examples of another pillar of consideration for the warriors of the Shimazu. Specifically, Yoshihisa and his retainers were deeply concerned with the spiritual and religious implications of their daily choices.

With regards to the Shimazu, academic attention seemed to be focus on rationalizing the *kuji* as an extension of Yoshihisa's political power rather than examining the *kuji* as the divination that it was designed to be. In particular, we have looked at the way Fukushima and

[328] *Uwai Kakuken nikki,* part 3, p. 183.

Nagamatsu analysed the function of the *kuji* as a political tool. On the one hand, Fukushima suggests that the *kuji* was used to quell any potential dissent amongst the Shimazu retainers by providing divine sanction to a daimyo's decision. The focus here is on the pre-designated shrines that were allowed to conduct *kuji* and how the access to the secretive *shugendō* network theoretically allowed the daimyo to communicate his wishes to these shrine in order to manipulate the *kuji*. While we cannot dispute the fact that the *kuji* had an administrative dimension, the downplaying of the spiritual aspects of the divination keeps us from gaining a complete understanding of the effects spiritual acts like the *kuji* had on the decision-making process of the Shimazu.

On the other hand, Nagamatsu emphasized the role played by the people in charge of the *kuji* and their association with the practice of *shugendō*. These particular retainers, Nagamatsu argues, allowed the Shimazu to access the secret information network of the *shugendō* practitioners and to use this network for surveillance. The *kuji* was thus a crystallization of the information gathered through this network into political decisions and supplied the daimyo with the spiritual authority necessary to finalize his new and updated decisions.

Indeed, we have seen numerous examples from the *Uwai Kakuken nikki* that illuminate for us the importance of religion and spiritual practices to the Shimazu in general. For example, Iehisa, in his attempt to manipulate his brother into saving the Nyūta in the Bungo province, played into Yoshihisa's beliefs in auspicious omens and almost succeeded as a result. Further evidence can be seen from Yoshitora and the way he emphasized his oath of loyalty to Yoshihisa by citing the possibility of divine retribution that he will face should he betray Yoshihisa. The Shimazu's spiritual beliefs were foundational in making sense of both these instances.

We also saw how composing poetry and scheduling poetry events doubled as a form of worship for the Shimazu. While any act of poetic composition could technically be seen as an act dedicated to Tenjin, the Shimazu took it to an extreme in contrast to other warrior houses. By comparing the records in Kakuken's diary with the journal of Matsudaira Ietada, it is apparent that the Shimazu went out of their way to schedule their poetry related events on the twenty-fifth day of the month, the designated day of worship for Tenjin.

On top of all of this, spirituality was also part of the military routine of the Shimazu. From adhering to military formations that were compatible to the seasons and the auspiciousness of any given day, to the prayers to the god of war and the spiritual act of breaking ground in setting up camp, and even the attempts to curse their opponents with special arrows, it is impossible to separate the Shimazu's military practices from their spiritual beliefs. All of this illustrates the impact and significance of spiritual practices had on the making of various administrative decisions for the Shimazu.

Having established the fundamental importance of spirituality and worship for the Shimazu, we moved on to explore the *kuji* in particular and address the arguments forwarded by Fukushima and Nagamatsu. To this end, we looked at four examples of *kuji*. In the first example, the *kuji* was conducted for the Shimazu's attack on Katashida. Here, we saw how all the possible results of a given *kuji* were framed in a very vague manner. In this instance, there were only three possible results in total: surrounding the area, attacking immediately, and further consideration needed. None of these options provided enough details to realistically contain any secret commands from the daimyo beyond the most elementary of orders. The simplicity of these results also provided the Shimazu administration with a tremendous amount of freedom when it comes to interpreting the *kuji*. In seeking the wisdom of the kami through the *kuji*, the Shimazu

received the third option and were told to reconsider their plans. This only resulted in the Shimazu delaying their attack for a few days, after which they simply continued their military efforts as though nothing changed. Seeing the *kuji* as a tool for Yoshihisa's secret decisions here simply does not make sense.

The deterministic nature of the *kuji* results was something that we explored from various different angles through the next few examples. On the one hand, when it came to the distribution of landholdings for the Arima, questions were raised as to whether or not consulting the kami through the *kuji* was a good idea at all when the Shimazu themselves were struggling with finding enough landholdings to be distributed in the first place. On the other hand, in terms of military movement and planning, no matter how determined and deeply invested the Shimazu were, their plans were ultimately driven by the will of the kami as divined through the *kuji*. We saw this happen twice. First, in their decisions to redirect their military forces towards the Tsukushi, the Shimazu disregarded the investment they had already made towards invading Bungo. Second, in their subsequent attempts to once again invade Bungo, the Shimazu did so while still being embroiled in military conflict with the Tsukushi. Furthermore, by not defeating the Tsukushi first, the Shimazu became fearful of divine retribution for not adhering to the previous *kuji*. Despite all this, the Shimazu acted in accordance with the newest *kuji* result whenever possible. It would appear that once the *kuji* had determined a course of action, the Shimazu must follow through with it until it was completed unless they attain permission from the kami to do otherwise.

Nothing about this suggests that the *kuji* was simply an administrative tool in a manner similar to the way that Fukushima and Nagamatsu argue. Given the stock the Shimazu placed on the *kuji* and the importance of spirituality in their everyday life, it is difficult for us to imagine a

scenario where Yoshihisa would think that it was okay for him to fabricate a *kuji* in order to justify his own commands. Divine punishment was a real fear for the Shimazu as seen from the examples above. The risk inherent in falsifying the words of the kami thus likely would not have been worth it considering that the daimyo had other methods through which he can quell dissent and force the senior retainers to agree with his own decisions. Furthermore, even if Yoshihisa sought to manipulate the results of a *kuji* for his personal purposes, this would only work if he could keep it a secret from his retainers. After all, if the purpose was to silence dissent amongst senior retainers through the authority of the kami, then having these retainers know that the *kuji* was fake would certainly undermine this intended purpose. Given what we know of the communication system of the Shimazu and the many layers of mediators and retainers involved in its operation, the idea that the daimyo could have secret access to and complete control over an information network is simply unrealistic. This is especially the case when the *kuji* was only conducted by individuals with *shugendō* ties as Nagamatsu points out. The existence of the *kuji* therefore necessitates the participation of individuals outside of the daimyo and his immediate family. Within this context, it would be impossible for the daimyo to render the *kuji* into a secret affair conducted away from prying eyes.

The *kuji* was thus an important part of the considerations behind the political decision-making process of the Shimazu and Yoshihisa. From the samurai's perspective, the *kuji* results were a form of truth granted to them by the divine, not false information maniputated to force them into action. But the *kuji* is only an indicator of the larger significance of spirituality and religion in administering the Shimazu domain. We need to recognize the influence of the fundamental belief systems of the Shimazu in framing the way the daimyo and his court made decisions. In order to attain a deeper understanding of the reasons behind the daimyo's decision

and the way he operated, we must fight the urge to rationalize their belief system, and instead embrace the worldview that the daimyo and his administration embodied at the time.

CHAPTER 6

Being a Daimyo in the Sengoku Period

Through the examination of the Shimazu's communication systems, instrumental in controlling the flow of information and military intelligence, the preceding chapters have investigated the decision-making process of the Shimazu administration, from its middle-ranking warriors to its daimyo Shimazu Yoshihisa. Yet this micro-analysis of minute interactions in one daimyo's domain offers us much more than a look at the political processes at the local and personal level. They serve as a lens for an inquiry into a major historical question: what did the Sengoku period mean for the samurai living at that time? For daimyo like Yoshihisa, what did it mean to be a ruler in age of continual warfare, territorial rivalry, instability in officer corps, and insurmountable environmental conditions? Having examined one man's voice for a decade through the *Uwai Kakuken nikki*, we are able to provide some answers to these questions.

A consistent theme that appears throughout the decision-making process of the warriors of the Shimazu administration is the weight they give to their personal interests. No matter their status or profession as a mediator, a ruler, or a filial son, the individual warrior's goals often outweighed abstract notions of duty, morality, or loyalty they might have for the administrative system. Any concern the samurai had for these notions only mattered in so far as these notions could affect the samurai's image or reputation. In spite of this, it would be wrong to see the warriors of Sengoku Japan as selfish. Given the constant instability of Sengoku society, the samurai of sixteenth century Japan were simply reacting to the one constant concern they had:

their own wellbeing.[329] For many mediators like Uwai Kakuken and Shimazu Iehisa, their reputation was everything. Their failure to provide the promised help to the Nyūta significantly undermined their legitimacy as mediators and thus threaten their *raison d'être* within the Shimazu administration. In a world of innumerable risks and continuous military upheavals, a warrior can only survive by making sure he remains a relevant and useful resource to his daimyo, even if it meant temporarily testing his daimyo's patience through conscious acts of disobedience.

Indeed, Sengoku Japan was not a place where notions of honor, morality, or loyalty could exist as ideals to be realized. While we might be tempted to recognize individual acts that occurred during the Sengoku period as exemplifying one or more of these abstract notions, it is unlikely that the samurai were acting to achieve such ideals but rather to create a façade consistent with such ideas. This was a reaction towards the way that samurai ideals were formulated during this time both in popular imagination and in the dominal law codes.[330] For example, when Kakuken asked Yoshihiro for military assistance behind Yoshihisa's back, Yoshihiro denied Kakuken's request. This rejection should not be interpreted as an act of loyalty towards Yoshihisa. Similarly, when the Shimazu implemented failsafe measures to prevent mediators from manipulating the communication infrastructure to exploit their positions, it was not likely to protect the abstract sanctity of the administration, but to prevent the mediators from gaining power at the expense of the daimyo and the senior retainers.

[329] For a focused analysis of the transition the samurai underwent from the Sengoku period to the seventeenth century, see Birt, "Samurai in Passage: The Transformation of the Sixteenth-Century Kanto," pp. 369 – 99.
[330] For the importance of "honor" and such ideals for the samurai transitioning from Sengoku to the seventeenth century, see Ikegami, "Shame and the Samurai: Institutions, Trusthworthiness, and Autonomy in the Elite Honor Culture," pp. 1360 – 1.

There were two major exceptions to this pattern. First, warriors with enough authority and military power would strive to consider the wellbeing of those important to them. We saw this most prominently in Yoshihisa's efforts to protect his son-in-law, Shimazu Yoshitora, at the behest of Yoshihisa's daughter Ohira. The overwhelming amount of political authority wielded by Yoshihisa meant that he could afford to think about his daughter's wellbeing when faced with rumours of Yoshitora's rebellion. Ohira could not afford to do the same however. While Ohira is not the perfect counter-example to Yoshihisa in this instance due to her gender prohibiting her from being a samurai, she nevertheless acted in a manner consistent with the other warriors of the Shimazu. Ultimately, Ohira's intervention benefited Yoshitora and herself at the expense of Yoshihisa's security.

The ability for a samurai to consider the larger implications of his actions was therefore proportional to his authority and military power. This makes sense when we consider the general chaos of sixteenth century Japan. A samurai in Sengoku Japan needed to constantly juggle a set of ever-changing variables while balancing an extremely limited amount of resources. For a middle-ranking warrior like Uwai Kakuken, this meant maintaining his place in the administration amidst shifting alliances and rivalries, and at the same time supplying those around him with the right information and intelligence when needed. Kakuken's position as a middle-ranking warrior limited the resources he had to protect himself with, and therefore Kakuken could not afford to think too far beyond his individual interests.

For a daimyo like Yoshihisa however, the situation was quite different. Yoshihisa needed to be much more careful than his retainers because the Shimazu administration could only function through the delegation of Yoshihisa's authority as a daimyo. In other words, while Yoshihisa had the highest authority among the Shimazu, he must give out this authority to his

retainers on a daily basis. In this sense, political authority became a resource in and of itself. Yoshihisa's need to secure his place within the administration was therefore bound to the management of his retainers. In this context, rumours of overly ambitious retainers became a real threat to Yoshihisa's legitimacy. Rumours can be seen as an early indication of mismanagement by Yoshihisa as they implied the presence of dissatisfied retainers under his administration. For a sixteenth century daimyo, a dissatisfied retainer is a potential military threat if not handled properly. Luckily for Yoshihisa, he had the means to deal with these situations.

Having a lot more resources than the average warrior, Yoshihisa could afford to extend his concerns to the interests of those around him. This included bolstering the interests of potentially rebellious retainers by redirecting Yoshihisa's own resources towards them. We have seen Yoshihisa do this when he dealt with the Iriki-in rumours. By juggling the landholdings Yoshihisa had control over, he was able to reinforce his own legitimacy in the eyes of his retainers while also disarming any potential threat the Iriki-in might pose to the Shimazu in the future. That Yoshihisa was able to do this and allowed the Iriki-in to maintain control over the coastal regions speak to the amount of flexibility Yoshihisa had due to his vast resources. After all, maritime trade was a major source of income for the samurai, and granting the Iriki-in access to the coast meant allowing them access to this crucial revenue stream.

The other critical factor the Shimazu daimyo considered in his decision-making process was that of his own spiritual worldview. We have seen many examples in Kakuken's diary where major military decisions were made on the basis of the *kuji*. As the warriors of the Sengoku period did not have ready access to facts and information untainted by the agents labouring to gather that information, the divine power of the kami provided the samurai of the Sengoku period a refuge from this constant uncertainty. While secular information can be manipulated,

the words of the kami spoke truth beyond the meddling of the mundane world. It gave the Shimazu a sense of certainty and stability within a world where chaos and individual agendas dominated the hearts and minds of many people. The kami's will thus also served as a counterbalance against dubious information, providing the daimyo with facts he can safely trust in making his decisions.

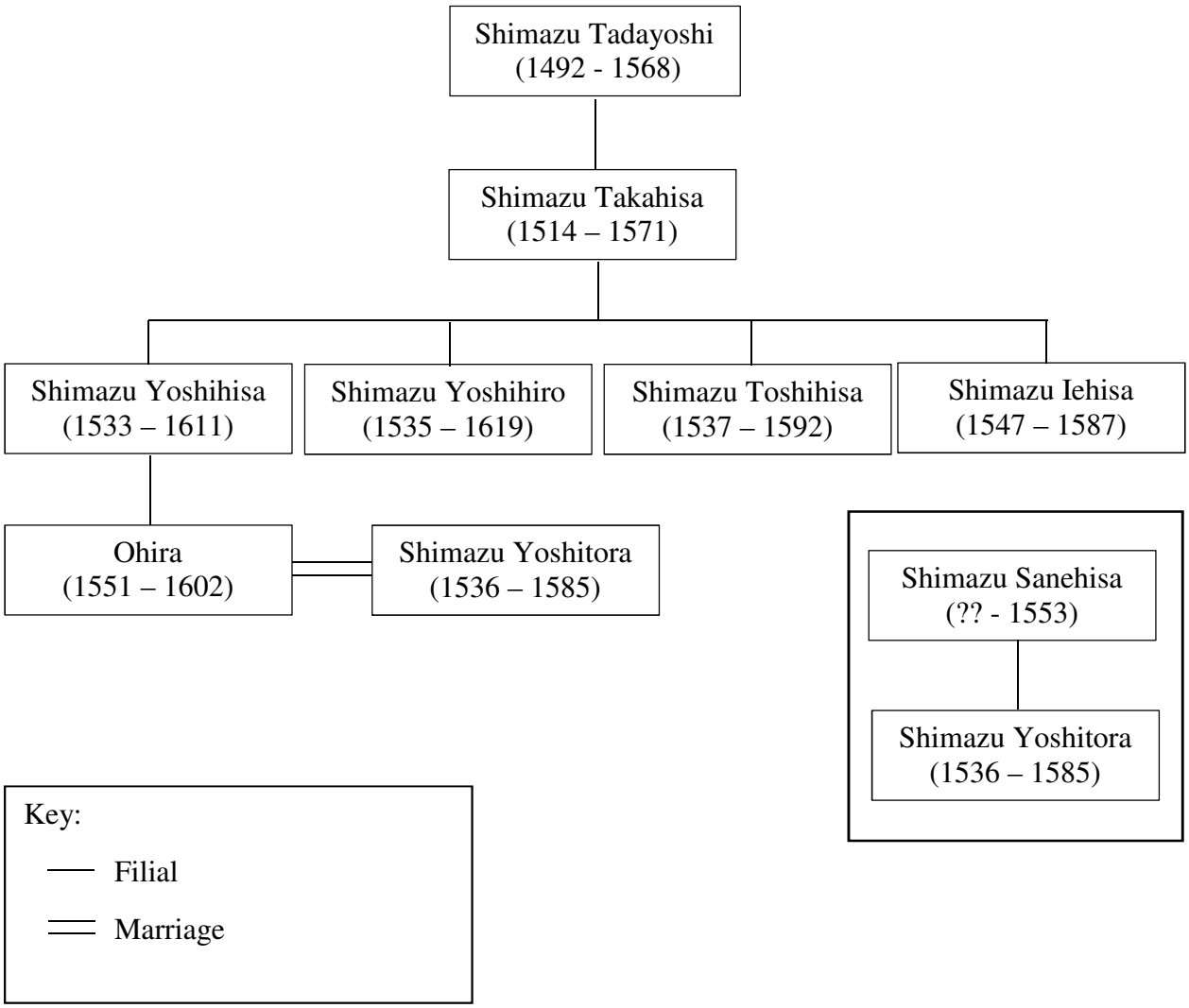
Beyond the consistent struggles to balance the constancy of change and limited resources of the Sengoku period, warriors were also encouraged by the administrative system itself to protect their own interests. After all, the Shimazu administration was a system designed only to serve those in power. Each level of the hierarchy utilized and managed those below as either a form of resource or a potential threat. From its use of mediators and the failsafe measures implemented by the daimyo, to the way that the central administration handled and invested in individual rumours, the government at large served to reinforce the authority, legitimacy, or reputation of the higher levels of the administration at the expense of the lower levels. In response to this, since the structure of power was designed to reinforce itself at every available opportunity, the retainers were implicitly encouraged to shore up their own position and reputation through whatever resource they had. As the system itself did not provide them with any sort of protection against abuses of power by their peers or even their lord, they were left to their own devices when it came to securing their positions within the administration.

Ultimately, to be a daimyo in the Sengoku period is therefore to manage one's position and authority in an unstable society plagued by warfare, rivalries, and betrayals. This means prioritizing one's survival at the expense of other people's wellbeing while also being careful not to antagonize potential enemies. A successful daimyo made use of the difficult environmental conditions he finds himself in, distributing valuable landholdings among retainers of

questionable loyalty, and managing natural disasters without hindering the military operations of his administration. He must also be effective in the ways he delegated his authority to his retainers while implementing countermeasures against retainers who might take advantage of their positions. Above all else, a successful daimyo revered the kami and the Buddhist deities, and followed their will whenever possible. He did not concern himself with the lives and wellbeing of the commoners, but only with his own survival and power. Uwai Kakuken has shown us these perhaps not unexpected features of the country-at-war through his detailed recording of everyday affairs.

APPENDIX

The Shimazu Family Tree



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