SEKIGAHARA

THE UNIFICATION OF JAPAN



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1. Introduction

Sekigahara is a 2-player game depicting the campaign in the year 1600 that founded the Tokugawa Shogunate. One player assumes the role of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the most powerful daimyo in Japan. The other becomes Ishida Mitsunari, champion of a warlord's child heir. Each leader assembled a coalition of daimyo and fought a 7-week contest for control of Japan. The war was decided at a crossroads called Sekigahara, where disloyalty and defections turned the tide of battle from Ishida to Tokugawa.

A complete game of *Sekigahara* includes:

- 1 22x34 inch map
- 1 and 1/2 sheets of stickers
- 96 rectangular blocks (48 gold and 48 black)
- 20 small cubes, 10 of each color
- 2 gold disks
- 1 square block
- 2 decks of cards (one for each coalition)
- 2 draw bags
- 2 reference cards (identical)
- this rulebook

If you have any questions or comments about the game or its components, you may address these to GMT Games (gmtoffice@gmtgames.com), or you can post a message to the Sekigahara discussion board on ConsimWorld.com or BoardGameGeek.com.

Applying the Stickers

Apply the gold-colored Ishida Mitsunari labels to the gold-colored blocks; and apply the black Tokugawa Ieyasu stickers to the black blocks. All blocks and disks receive only one sticker except the square Turn Track block which receives a black and a gold sticker. There are no stickers for the small cubes.

2. Victory Conditions

2.1 INSTANT VICTORY

The Tokugawa player wins instantly if Ishida Mitsunari (shown on the right) is killed or Toyotomi Hideyori (the gold-colored disk shown in 3.4) is captured. The Ishida player wins instantly if Tokugawa Iesayu (the black Leader block shown in 3.2) is killed. If both sides win instant victory in the same battle, the Ishida player wins.



Ishida Mitsunari

2.2 VICTORY POINTS

Victory points are counted if the end of week 7 is reached with no instant winner. Players score two points for each castle and one point for each Resource Location. The higher total wins the game. A tie in victory points is broken in favor of the Ishida player.

3. Game Pieces

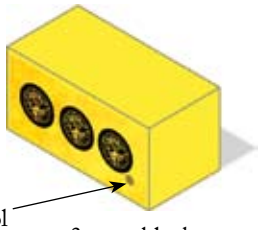
3.1 COLORS

Tokugawa pieces are black, Ishida pieces are gold. Blocks on the board should be aligned so that only the owner can see each block's identity.

3.2 BLOCKS

Each block represents roughly 5,000 warriors. Each block corresponds to a single daimyo (leader), whose mon (symbol) appears on the block. The historical name of that daimyo can be found on the cards that have corresponding symbols. The strength of the block is the number (1–4) of mon printed on it.

Sample Ishida block



Setup symbol

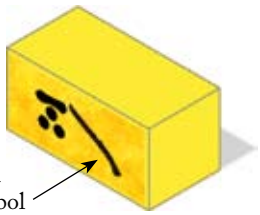
3-mon block
(from the Uesugi clan)

Sample Tokugawa block

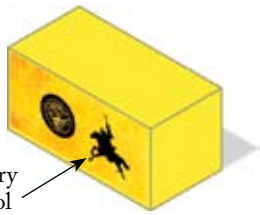


2-mon block
(from the Maeda clan)

Some blocks also have attached gun or cavalry ability, indicated by a gun or cavalry symbol.



Gun symbol



Cavalry symbol

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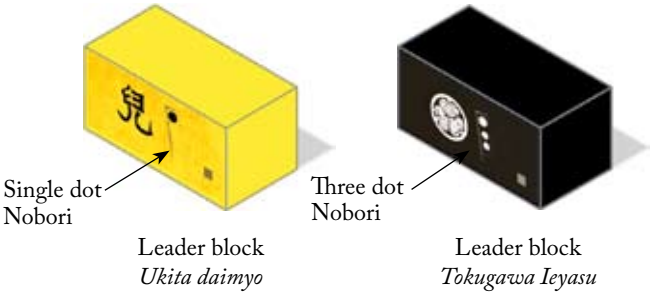
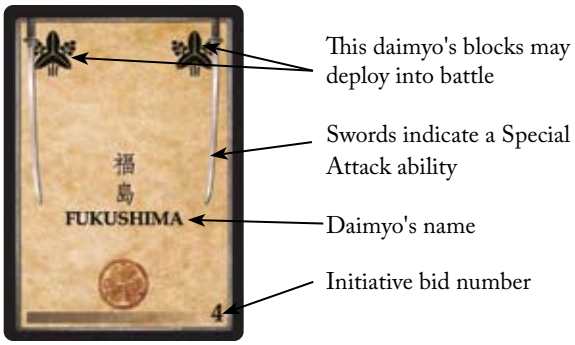
Some blocks represent a daimyo (leader). These are marked with a nobori (banner). Most nobori have a single dot, but the protagonists of the campaign, Ishida Mitsunari and Tokugawa Ieyasu, are marked with nobori of three dots.



3.3 CARDS

Cards represent the allegiance of each player's armies. The greater the number of cards in a player's hand, the greater the support of his troops. Cards are used to bid for Initiative (6.3), to move (7.2), Force March (7.3.3), and deploy units for battle (8.2.2).



Each side has a deck, and will use only that deck for the duration of the game. When the game begins, shuffle both decks and place them face down to form two draw piles.

All discards and card plays are public (played face up) at the time they are played. Discard piles cannot be examined by either player.

When a card draw pile is expended and the player must draw a new card, shuffle the discard pile to make a new draw pile.

3.4 OTHER COMPONENTS

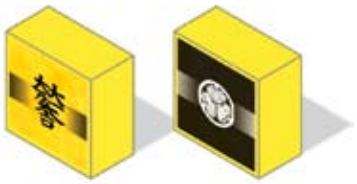
Disks are units that can be destroyed like a block, but cannot move or fight. There are two disks in the game, each attached to a castle.



Toyotomi Hideyori (see 9.1)

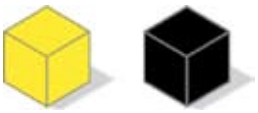
Sanada Masayuki (see 9.2)

Turn Marker: A flat square with the Tokugawa mon on one side and the Ishida mon on the other is used to mark the turn, the move, and the player who moves first this week.

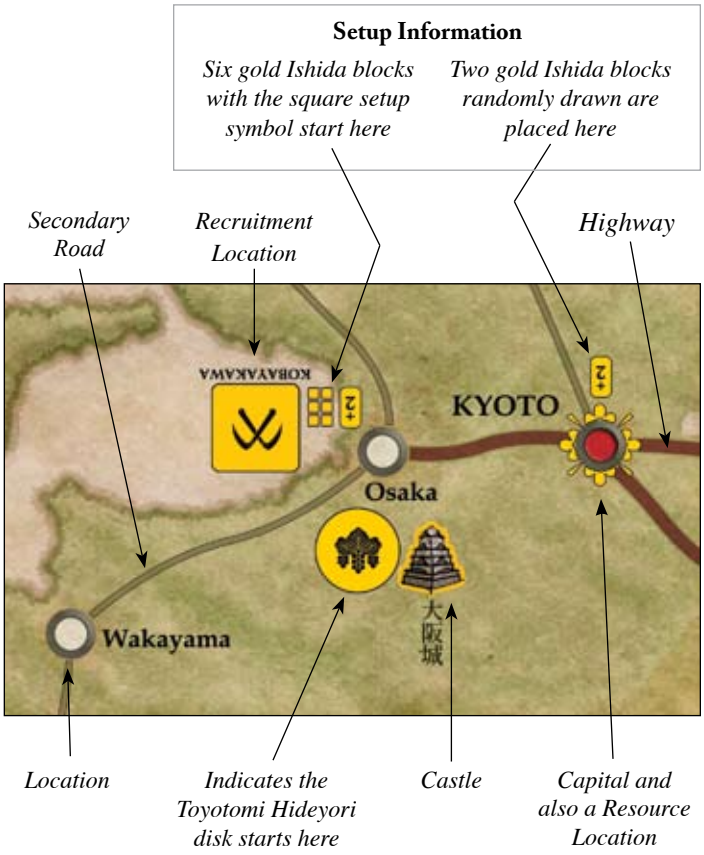


Front side Back side

Cubes: Black and gold cubes are used to represent control of the resource areas on the board. Cubes are also used to track Impact delivered during a combat, on the Impact Track.



Board: The board represents central Honshu, the largest island of Japan, where the majority of the fighting took place. The board contains the map and the locations in play, the Impact Track, the Turn Track, and the Recruitment Boxes.



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4. Locations

4.1 LOCATIONS IN GENERAL

A location is a place on the map (typically a city) connected by roads to other locations. It is represented by a circle, and may include a castle. Any number of blocks may occupy a location. Blocks on the map begin and end every turn in a location.

4.2 RESOURCE LOCATIONS

Resource Locations are wealth-producing zones, popular trade routes, and other important regions. Together they loosely represent the infrastructure of the nation.

Resource Locations are red (regular locations are white). The last player to move a block onto or through a Resource Location controls that location. Use a cube to indicate control. Until a Resource Location is first claimed, it is owned by neither player. Resource Locations provide one victory point at the end of the game (2.2) and bonus recruitments during the Reinforcement Step (6.2).

4.3 CASTLES

Castles are attached to locations on the board. Each castle has a natural alignment with Ishida or Tokugawa, indicated by its color. Castles are controlled by a player if he has blocks at that location and his opponent doesn't. If neither player has blocks present, the castle reverts to its natural alignment. During a siege, the castle is controlled by one player and the location attached to it is controlled by the other. Whoever controls the most castles during the Reinforcement Step receives one additional card (6.2). Castles provide two victory points at the end of the game (2.2).

4.4 RECRUITMENT BOXES

Each player has a Recruitment Box. At the beginning of each week, new blocks are placed in these boxes. During the week, players may Muster (7.2) these forces onto the board. The Ishida player also has a Mōri box, from which Mōri units can enter Osaka (see 9.3).

4.5 CAPITALS

Two Locations, Kyoto and Edo, are capitals. They begin the game affiliated with Ishida and Tokugawa, respectively, and are framed in corresponding color. Capitals are Resource Locations and provide a Leadership Movement Bonus (7.3.4).



The diagram above shows the starting setup. Randomly drawn blocks are depicted with a question mark.

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5. Initial Setup

5.1 PROCEDURE

- Set the turn counter to Week 1.
- Shuffle the two decks separately.
- Each player draws 5 cards from his deck. *(This small starting hand represents the limited organizational capacity of each army in the early stages.)*
- Separate the blocks with setup symbols in the lower right corner, and put the remaining blocks into two draw bags (one for each color).
- Place blocks on the map as described in rule 5.2. All blocks are placed so that only the owner of the block can see its identity. Exception: The 5 blocks in the Mōri Box which remain face up.

5.2 PLACE BLOCKS

5.2.1 Blocks with Specific Locations

Place the blocks which have a setup symbol in the lower right corner on the map in the Locations that have the matching symbol. One block appears on the board for every symbol printed on the map. Note that 5 Ishida blocks have symbols matching the Mōri box, where these blocks begin the game.

5.2.2 Randomly Placed Blocks

After placing the designated blocks, put all the rest into two draw bags, one for each player. Then fill the locations that are indicated for random blocks. These locations are designated on the board with a +1, +2, or +3 symbol. The number indicates the number of blocks that should be drawn at random from a bag and placed there. Before drawing these blocks from the bag, the player must specify for which location on the board they are being drawn.

5.2.3 Reinforcement Blocks

Add the first wave of reinforcements. Each side draws four blocks at random from their bags and places them in their Recruitment Box.

6. Weekly Cycle

The game is played in seven weeks, each of which contains two turns (A and B). Each week of the game includes the following steps, in the order listed below.

6.1 TURN SEQUENCE OUTLINE

A. Reinforcement Step (6.2)
B. Turn Order Step (6.3)
C. Turns A and B (6.4)

6.2 REINFORCEMENT STEP

Each player receives new cards and blocks, as follows:

- Each player discards half (round down) of their hand. *Example: if you have 7 cards you would discard 3.*
- Each player draws **5 cards.** The player who controls the most castles draws a **6th card.**
- Each player draws at random from their bag a number of blocks as written on the Recruitment Track on the board. (Two blocks in weeks 2, 3, and 4; one block in weeks 5, 6, and 7.) The player who controls more Resource Locations draws an additional block. (In the case of a tie for most Resource Locations, both players draw an extra block.)
- Place the blocks drawn in the player's Reinforcement Box.

Skip the Reinforcement step on the first week of the game, as both players already have their starting cards and blocks.

6.3 TURN ORDER STEP

Each player bids for turn order by placing a card from their hand face down on the table, and they are simultaneously revealed. The player whose card has the higher number in its bottom corner is the winner.

The winning player chooses who will move first for both turns in the present week. Place the Turn Marker on the Turn Track, on the "A" space with the color of the first player face up.

Both players must discard the card they played.

6.4 TURNS A AND B

Each Weekly Cycle consists of two turns—A and B. Each turn consists of the First Player conducting Movement and Combat, followed by the Second Player conducting Movement and Combat.

When Turn "A" ends, move the Turn Marker to "B" and play the "B" turn. The player who was first in the "A" turn is also first in the "B" turn.

After the "B" turn, advance the Turn Marker to the next week and begin the Weekly Cycle again. After 7 weeks the game is over.

Turn A:

a. First player Movement Phase
b. First player Combat Phase
c. Second player Movement Phase
d. Second player Combat Phase

Turn B:

e. First player Movement Phase
f. First player Combat Phase
g. Second player Movement Phase
h. Second player Combat Phase

Advance the Turn Marker to the next week space. If already on Week 7, the game is over.

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7. The Movement Phase

7.1 IN GENERAL

During the Movement Phase a player may move none, some, or all of the stacks of blocks they control on the board. A stack is all of the blocks in a single location. The number of stacks that can be moved is determined by the number of cards spent for movement. Mustering and Overruns can also occur in the Movement Phase.

BUYING MOVEMENT WITH CARDS: At the beginning of the Movement Phase, the active player discards either zero, one or two cards from his hand to permit the following degrees of movement:

- **0 cards—No Movement:** No stacks may move. *Any number of cards may be discarded from the hand and replenished.*
- **0 cards—Minimal Movement:** One stack may move or the player may conduct a Mustering action (7.2).
- **1 card—Limited Movement:** Three stacks may move. In lieu of one of the moves the player may conduct a Mustering action.
- **2 cards—Total Movement:** Every friendly stack may move and one Mustering action may be conducted.

The player then proceeds to make the moves allowed by that decision, moving stacks in any desired order.

7.2 MUSTERING

Mustering is the act of placing blocks currently in the Recruitment Box onto the map. A player may Muster at most once per turn. Under Minimal or Limited Movement, Mustering can occur instead of one permitted stack move (i.e., one stack movement must be foregone in order to execute the Mustering). Under Total Movement, Mustering can occur in addition to all stack movement.

Movement Restriction: Mustered blocks may not move in the same turn they are placed.

Where Blocks Arrive: Blocks can be Mustered only to Recruitment locations. Recruitment locations are locations labeled with the mon (symbol) of a friendly daimyo. Recruitment locations are color coded, black or gold.

Two Options: A player has two options on how to Muster as described below:

A. The player may bring any (or all) blocks belonging to the same daimyo from the Recruitment Box to a Recruitment location that has the matching daimyo mon. These blocks must be displayed to your opponent to prove that they match.

B. Alternatively, a player may Muster to any friendly Recruitment Location a single block of any daimyo. In this case, the block need not be displayed.

Mustering Into Combat: Blocks can be Mustered into a combat situation only if the combat was initiated by blocks on the board—an attack cannot come from the Recruitment Box, but it can be supported from there.

7.3 MOVEMENT

7.3.1 Movement in General

The source of a move is a single location. From that location, any or all of one player's blocks (that did not Muster that turn) may be moved, up to the limits as set forth below. Blocks move along roads from one location to another. Blocks which begin the phase together need not travel on the same roads, nor finish their move together. Some blocks may be moved from a Location while others are left behind. A stack may drop off blocks as it moves. Movement must follow these restrictions:

- No block may be part of more than one move per turn.
- A stack must complete its movement before another stack may move.
- A stack may not pick up additional blocks as it moves.
- No road segment may be traversed by more than one stack, or more than once, per Movement Phase.

7.3.2 Movement and Enemy Units

Moving blocks must stop when they encounter enemy units unless enemy units can be Overrun (7.4).

7.3.3 Movement Distance

The Base Movement Rate is one location per move. This can be increased by one location (+1) for each of three cases below. If all three cases apply, a stack of 1-4 blocks (see 7.3.5) can move four locations. That is the maximum a stack could ever move. The three situations that can increase a stack's movement rate are:

- **Highways:** Blocks that make their entire move on a highway may move +1 location.
- **Leadership:** Blocks that begin the move in the presence of leadership (7.3.4) may move +1 location.
- **Force marching.** Blocks that force march may move +1 location. The active player may initiate a force march by discarding one card from their hand. A force march applies to a group of blocks that begin, finish, and move together. Only one force march can be in effect for any given block at a time.

EXAMPLE: A stack that has Leadership, follows a Highway for its entire move, and does a Force March, can move three extra locations.

7.3.4 Leadership

Leadership present at the origin of a move increases the Base Movement Rate of a stack by one location. Leadership can be a leader, a castle, or a capital (or any combination of the three). If a player uses a leader for the increased movement, the leader block must be declared to the opponent. (It is not necessary that any of the blocks in the stack match the mon of the Leader block.) If a castle is used, it must be aligned (matching color) and controlled by the active player. If a capital is used, it must be a capital (Edo or Kyoto) marked with the matching color. +1 is the maximum—even if a stack has more than one source of Leadership.

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7.3.5 Movement and Force Sizes

Large forces move more slowly than small ones. For every multiple of four blocks beyond the first four, a stack's movement capacity is reduced by one. Thus, movement capacity is decreased (–1) at the 5th, 9th, 13th, and 17th block (see chart below).

To each block's movement capacity, apply a size penalty according to the largest group in which it travelled during its move.

7.3.6 Movement Chart

The following chart summarizes movement and movement modifiers:

Base move:	1 location
All Highway:	+1
Leadership Present:	+1
Force March:	+1
1–4 blocks:	0
5-8 blocks:	–1
9–12 blocks:	–2
13–16 blocks:	–3
17+ blocks:	–4 (cannot move)

7.4 OVERRUNS

7.4.1 Overruns in General

Overruns occur when a large force overwhelms a small force. An Overrun can occur during Movement or after a retreat. Overruns can also be caused by retreating blocks (see battles), Mustering blocks, or bringing units from the Mōri Box (9.3). In order to Overrun an enemy force, the Overrunning player must have at least four times as many *blocks* present as the enemy. The strength of each block has no effect.

7.4.2 Overrun Procedure

Overruns are resolved immediately. (This applies regardless of whether combat has been declared.) Overrun units are destroyed and the victorious player suffers no casualties. If an Overrun occurs during a move, the moving blocks may continue their move. Forces already committed to battle in a location offer their strength to any Overruns against their foes.

EXAMPLE: The defender has one block in a location. The Active Player moves one stack consisting of two blocks into that location. He then moves another stack with two blocks into that location. At that moment the Overrun occurs, the defending block is eliminated and the active stack may continue to move. The first stack contributed to the Overrun, but has already moved and may not move again.

7.4.3 Overruns and Castles

Enemy units who control a castle cannot be Overrun. Furthermore, forces within a castle automatically lend their strength to any Overruns occurring against a besieging force outside.



EXAMPLE OF MOVEMENT

The Ishida player (gold blocks) plays two cards during his Movement Phase to allow all his stacks to move. This allows him one Muster action which he does first. He can muster one block of any designation to any friendly recruitment location, or he can muster all blocks that match a mon to the recruitment location marked with that mon. He cannot do both. The blocks mustered may not take part in movement this turns and are not shown in the example.

His other moves are depicted in the diagram above. For this example, no cards will be played for Force Marching.

***A.** First he activates the location marked "A" in the diagram. Since this space contains a friendly controlled castle, it qualifies for the Leadership Bonus of +1 to movement. He sends all five blocks down the Highway path. It can move two spaces (1 for the base move, 1 for the Highway, 1 for Leadership and –1 for 5-8 blocks). Note that if one block is left behind the stack could move three spaces and reach Kuwana.*

***B.** Next he moves stack B. Since stack A has used the highway between Kyoto and Minakuchi he cannot use that road. (No road segment may be used twice in a single Movement Phase). The move has to end in Kyoto or the stack has to use a different route. He decides to end the move in Kyoto.*

***C.** The single leaderless block at C can move only one space.*

***D.** The stack at D can move two spaces—a base of one plus one for the Leader block.*

***E.** Stack E has the Leadership Bonus but cannot use the Highway Bonus since its entire move is not along the Highway. It can move two spaces.*

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8. Combat

8.1 GENERAL RULE

Combat occurs after all movement. Combat must be declared in every location on the board where opposing pieces appear together. These declarations are made one at a time by the phasing player, with combat resolved immediately following each declaration. Combat will be a battle or a siege, the latter if either of the forces is inside a castle. After combat is resolved in a location, a new location is selected, until all such locations are resolved.

8.2 BATTLES

8.2.1 Battle Procedure

Combat is resolved as a battle if neither force is inside a castle. Deployments (8.2.2) produce Impact (8.3). The side with the higher Impact is winning the battle. All blocks involved in a battle remain concealed until deployed. After the battle is concluded, revealed blocks again become concealed.

The Active Player (the attacker) starts the battle by making the first deployment. Next the defender can respond (see Initiative 8.5). **When the battle stops, the side which has delivered the most Impact will be the winner.** A tie in Impact favors the defender.

8.2.2 Cards and Deployment

Cards are used to deploy blocks into battle. Each card can deploy one block. The card used to deploy a block must have the same mon as the block. Cards and blocks with different mon cannot be played together. Exception: Cards of all daimyo designations may be matched to the sole Ishida block and the sole Ii block. As a reminder, these blocks both feature a card-shaped rectangle in the lower right corner.



Ishida block



Ii block

No card may be played, nor block deployed, twice in the same battle.

8.2.3 Deployment Procedure

The active player plays a card face up, and selects a block from among his undeployed forces whose mon matches the card. The block is indicated by placing it face up next to the main stack of blocks. The card is placed face up on the active player's side of the board. The player counts the Impact of the deployment and adds it to their total Impact on the Impact Track.

8.2.4 Initial Deployment of a Leader Block

A leader block deploys *without playing a card* if no deployments have yet been made *with a card* by that side in the present combat. Leaders who deploy without a card are immune from Loyalty Challenge (see 8.6).

Note: You can keep deploying leaders without a card until you deploy your first block with a card.

8.3 IMPACT

8.3.1 Impact in General

Effectiveness in combat is measured in Impact. Impact is recorded on the Impact Track using small cubes. Each side tracks their cumulative Impact separately.

8.3.2 Base Impact

The base Impact of a deployment is the number of mon on the block. This can be from one to four.

8.3.3 Impact Bonus

Add one point of Impact for each block of the same daimyo already deployed (on the same side) in the present battle.

EXAMPLE: A player would score four Impact if he deployed a 2-mon Tokugawa block into a battle in which he had previously deployed two other Tokugawa blocks (the number of mon on the previously deployed blocks has no effect).

8.4 SPECIAL ATTACKS

8.4.1 Cavalry and Gun Impact

Cards with a sword in the corner enable a Special Attack. When used to deploy a block with a cavalry or gun symbol, an attack of that type is launched. In a cavalry or gun attack, add two points of Impact for the cavalry or gun, and another two points of Impact for each block featuring that type of attack already deployed on the same side in the present battle. If a cavalry or gun block is deployed without a Special Attack card, do not count cavalry or gun points towards its Impact

8.4.2 Double Cards



Double cards feature two identical mon in each corner. Double cards allow the deployment of one or two blocks, both of which must match the mon of the card. The blocks are deployed one after the other. (The second block can thus gain a +1 Impact Bonus for matching the daimyo of the first.) Neither of the blocks so deployed can initiate a Special Attack. A double card used to deploy a block that can match to any card (Ishida and Ii blocks) loses its ability to deploy a second block.

8.5 INITIATIVE

Initiative rests with whichever side is losing the battle (has the lower Impact score). That player has the opportunity to deploy blocks one after the other in order to take the lead. Once he does take the lead, initiative reverts to the other player. Since ties favor the defender, the defender can take the lead by matching the attacker's Impact. Initiative is passed back and forth between the players until one player, who holds the initiative at the time, declares that he will deploy no more blocks. When that happens initiative shifts permanently to the other player, who may deploy as many more

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blocks as he wishes and is able. When that player also declares he is finished, the battle ends.

Once a player declares he is finished deploying, he cannot resume deployments later in the battle. He may still play Loyalty Challenge cards (8.6) against the other player's deployments.

8.6 LOYALTY CHALLENGE CARDS

8.6.1 Procedure



Loyalty Challenge cards are marked with a nobori (banner). They are played out of turn, immediately after a deployment by the opposing player, to challenge the loyalty of the block thus deployed. If the deploying player can show from their hand another card capable of deploying the block just deployed, the block remains loyal. The card shown to refute a Loyalty Challenge returns to the hand of the player that showed it. (The Loyalty Challenge card remains played.) If the deploying player cannot produce such a card, the block turns sides, aligning instead with the player who played the Loyalty Challenge. Move the block to the challenger's side of the battle. Count Impact for the block on the challenger's Impact table. When the battle ends, they revert to the former owner.

8.6.2 Loyalty and Special Attacks

Blocks which switch sides do not execute a Special Attack (8.4) at the moment of their betrayal (even if indicated on the deploying card) but can later contribute to Special Attacks for the side to which they gave their loyalty.

8.6.3 Loyalty and Double Cards

A Loyalty Challenge card may be used to challenge the use of a double card. Only one additional card must be displayed to refute the challenge, even if two blocks deployed. If the challenge is successful, both blocks defect to the challenging side. The Impact bonus (+1 Impact for matching the mon of the first block) enjoyed by the second such block is still counted.

8.7 LOSSES

8.7.1 How to Determine Losses

After a battle both sides take losses according to the Impact delivered against them. Both sides lose one block for every 7 Impact delivered by their opponent (always round Impact down). The losing side in a battle loses one additional block.

EXAMPLE: A player wins the battle and had 5 Impact delivered against him—he would lose no blocks. His opponent, who lost the battle, had 9 Impact delivered against him—he would lose two blocks.

NOTE: Retreating forces are not overrun prior to making their retreat, but an overrun can occur after the retreat (8.5.5).

8.7.2 Selecting Losses

The attacker suffers damage first, then the defender. Players select which of their own blocks to lose. First must be selected any blocks which defected to his opponent, then any other blocks which deployed, then any blocks which did not. The identity of the lost blocks is revealed.

8.7.3 Effects of Losses

Blocks lost in combat are removed from the map and **never return to play.** Keep defeated blocks on the side of the board, visible to both players.

8.8 RETREATS

8.8.1 Retreats in General

The loser must retreat their remaining force to a single adjacent location contiguous by road to the site of the battle (or castle [8.8.4]). There is no limit to the size of a force which can move together in retreat.

8.8.2 When the Attacker Retreats

The attacker must retreat to a location from which some of their forces entered the battle (potentially a castle, but not an Off Map Box) or if that is impossible to any other location. The attacker can never retreat to the Recruitment Box or the Mōri Box (9.3).

8.8.3 When the Defender Retreats

The defender retreats, if possible, to a location containing no enemy units, and from which the enemy did not enter the combat location. If there is no such location, the defender may retreat to any other adjacent location contiguous by road—including a location from which the attacker entered the battle and/or a location containing enemy blocks (8.8.5).

8.8.4 Retreats into a Castle

A castle can harbor retreating units, if the battle took place in a location with a castle. A castle is a valid retreat destination only for that side which controlled the castle prior to combat. If a castle is a valid retreat destination, the retreating player may leave up to two blocks in it. If there are more blocks remaining, these must retreat elsewhere, as a group.

8.8.5 Retreats into Combat

It is possible for a retreat to cause another battle (or Overrun). If so, execute that battle immediately and resolve its consequences. The retreating blocks are the attacker for this new battle. If the retreating force enters an existing battle, the retreating blocks are added to the forces in conflict. It is possible for a retreating force to join a besieged force inside a castle and exceed, until the next time combat is declared, the stacking limit of the castle (see 8.9.6). This would in effect change the siege into a battle.

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8.9 SIEGE COMBAT

8.9.1 Sieges In General

When combat occurs in a location with a castle, it is possible that one side will choose to remain inside the castle. If so, the combat becomes a siege. For a force to remain inside the castle, it must own the castle, and it must be two blocks or fewer. (Disks do not count toward this limit.) The side that owns the castle is the side that had unit(s) in the location first (before combat broke out).

8.9.2 Declaring Blocks Inside or Outside

Blocks can be inside or outside of the castle. The number of blocks that can fit inside a castle is limited to two. When combat is designated, *and not before,* the side that owns the castle may choose whether to be inside or outside of the castle. If outside—a battle occurs; if inside—a siege. A force consisting of more than two blocks must *always* choose to be outside. No blocks can remain inside if some blocks are left outside. A force may elect to fight outside the castle even if in a previous phase it elected to remain inside.

If the active player owns the castle and chooses to remain inside, then no battle or Siege Combat occurs in this location this phase.

8.9.3 Disks

Disks are always considered inside the castle, regardless of the disposition of the blocks. Disks do not count against the two block castle limit. Disks are units that can be destroyed like a block, but cannot move or fight. Only the results of a siege can affect the disk, never a battle.

8.9.4 Siege Combat Procedure

The attacking player holds the Initiative throughout the siege and there is no limit on the number of blocks the attacking player may deploy. The defending player plays no cards during a siege nor does he deploy any blocks. Follow this procedure for each Siege Combat:

A. The attacker deploys (8.2.3) as many blocks as he wishes.

B. When the attacker is finished, damage is inflicted on the defending force. No damage is inflicted on the attacking force in a siege. One defending block or disk is lost for every 7 points of Impact (the attacker may deliver less than 7 points of Impact in a siege, but the defender will not be harmed.)

C. The defender chooses which block(s) or disk to lose. The identity of those is made public.

D. If all blocks and disks inside the castle are destroyed, the castle falls and now belongs to the attacking force.

E. If all the defender's blocks and disk are not removed, then both sides' blocks co-exist in the location. When this happens, the side that owns the castle is considered besieged (8.9.6). The side that does not own the castle must declare combat at that location during every Combat Phase the co-existence continues.

F. The defending player then draws one card for every block (but not disc) lost (8.10).

8.9.5 Siege Combat Restrictions

Siege Combat has the following restrictions:

- No gun or cavalry Special Attacks may be counted.
- Loyalty Challenge cards cannot be played by either side.

8.9.6 Besieged Blocks

Besieged blocks may not be moved out of the location containing the castle. Blocks that are part of a besieging force may freely move away from the site of the siege during their Movement Phase.

If other blocks enter the location containing friendly besieged blocks then all blocks are counted in the battle. Any battle that occurs in any location automatically includes all blocks in that location, regardless of the presence of a castle.

8.10 CARD REPLENISHMENT

Card replenishment occurs immediately after a battle, siege or Overrun is resolved (after losses and retreats but before any follow-on battles generated by those retreats). After each battle or siege both sides discard all cards they played during the combat and draw back an equal number from their draw pile. Both sides also draw after a battle, an additional card for every two blocks lost (round fractions down). After a siege, the defending player draws one card for every block lost. A card is not drawn for losing a disk.

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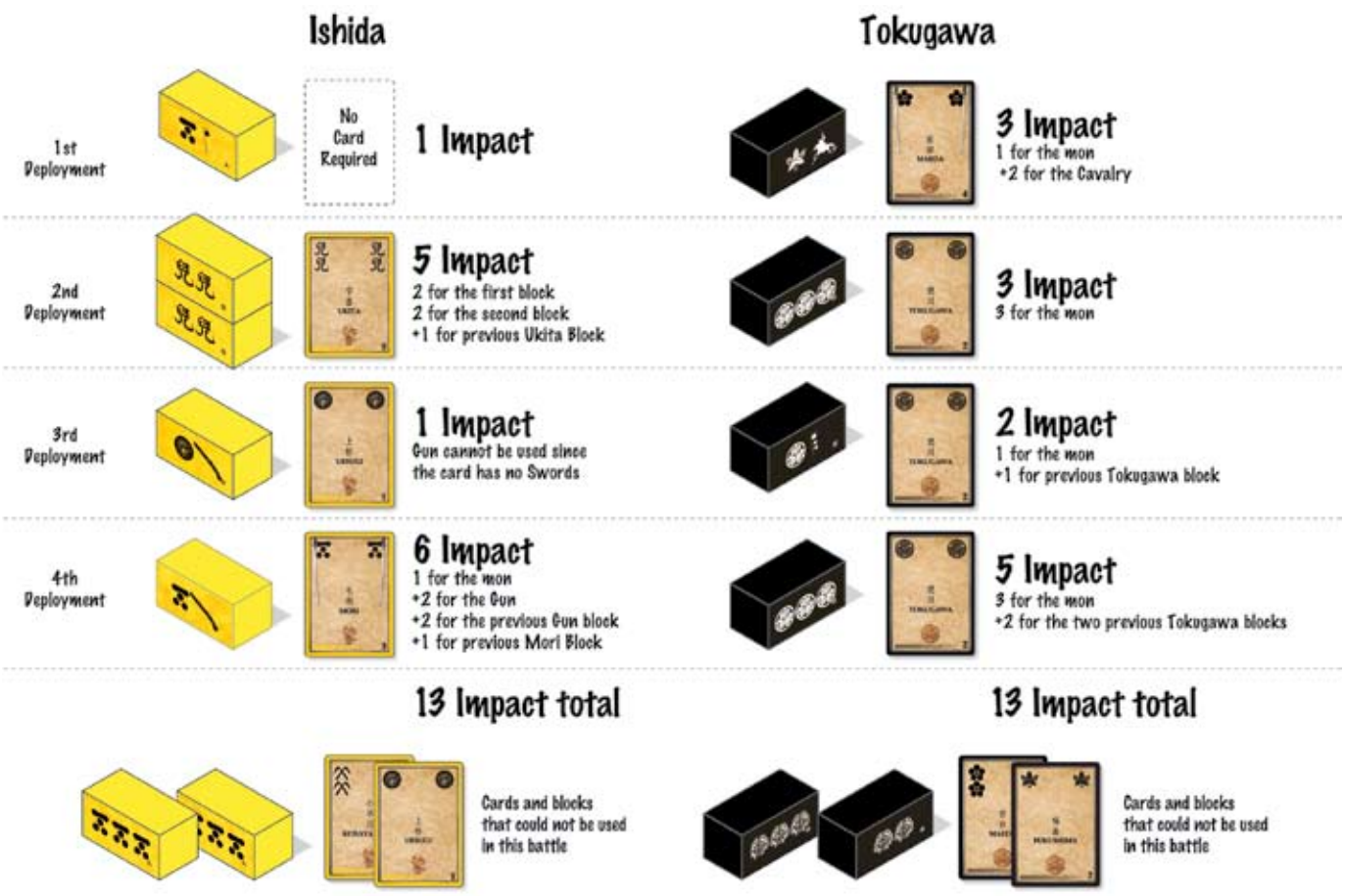

EXAMPLE OF COMBAT

In this example seven Ishida blocks attack six Tokugawa blocks. At this point neither player knows the identity of the other's blocks—blocks are only revealed when deployed.

Since Ishida is the attacker he must deploy the first block. His first deployment is the Mōri Leader block, which can be deployed without the need to play a card (rule 8.2.4). The single mon on the block gives him an Impact of 1.

Since Ishida now leads in Impact the initiative changes to Tokugawa who may deploy a block. He plays his Maeda cavalry block with a Maeda Special Attack card (indicated with Swords on the card) giving him an Impact of 3 (1 for the mon and +2 for the cavalry).

Initiative now changes to Ishida. The total Impact count is currently 1 to 3 which the players should record on the Impact Track.

Ishida plays a double Ukita card that allows two of his Ukita blocks to deploy. The first block earns 2 Impact and the second block earns 3 impact (2 for the mons and +1 for a previous Ukita block deployed). Ishida's total Impact is now 6.

Tokogawa counters by deploying a 3-mon Tokugawa block with a Tokugawa card. His Impact is now 6 which ties Ishida's Impact. Since defenders win ties, 6 is enough to put him in the lead. The initiative now changes to Ishida.

Ishida deploys an Uesugi block with an Uesugi card for 1 Impact. The gun on the block cannot be used since the card has no Swords (which indicate a Special Attack).

Tokugawa plays a 1-mon Tokugawa block with a Tokugawa card. He earns an additional point for the previous Tokugawa block deployed. The Impact score is now 7 to 8.

Ishida now deploys his Mōri gun block with a Mōri Special Attack card. The Impact of this card is 6 (1 for the mon, +2 for gun, +2 for the previous gun block, and +1 for the previous Mōri block deployed). The score is now 13 to 8.

Tokugawa deploys a 3-mon Tokugawa block with a Tokugawa card. The Impact is 5 (3 for the mon and +2 for previous Tokugawa blocks deployed). The current score is 13 to 13 in Tokugawa's favor (ties favor the defender).

Ishida has two blocks and two cards remaining but the mons do not match so they cannot be used. Ishida declares that he is finished with deployments.

Tokugawa similarly declines to deploy, because he has no more legal deployments. Since neither player can deploy any more blocks the battle is over with a Tokugawa victory. Each side loses one block for Impact and the losing side (Ishida) loses another block for the defeat. Ishida must retreat from the location.

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9. Special Rules

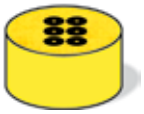
9.1 TOYOTOMI HIDEYORI



Toyotomi Hideyori was the son of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the warlord whose death led to the Sekigahara campaign. He was 7 years old when the war took place.

The Toyotomi Hideyori disk is placed at Osaka castle. If it is destroyed, the regent is captured and the game ends in a Tokugawa victory. As such, it is the last unit lost in any siege of Osaka castle.

9.2 SANADA MASAYUKI

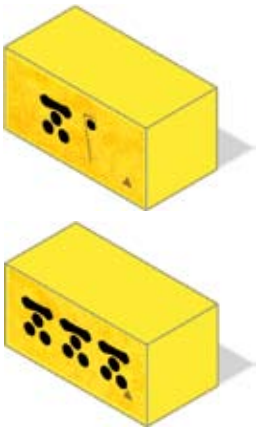


Sanada Masayuki defended Ueda castle with tenacity and creativity, delaying a force of 38,000 under Tokugawa Hidetada (Ieyasu's son). As a result of the prolonged siege, the younger Tokugawa missed the climactic battle of Sekigahara by several days.

A disk (labeled with the Sanada mon) is placed in the circle next to Ueda castle before the game begins. It represents the cunning of Sanada Masayuki. Any loss inflicted on Ueda castle in a siege may destroy this chip instead of a block.

9.3 MORI TERUMOTO

Mōri Terumoto was the most powerful daimyo of Ishida's coalition. Ishida feared being overshadowed and left Mōri in Osaka with a high title but no active role. Some Mōri forces remained in Osaka with their leader, others traveled into battle with his son. Those that traveled felt their dignity insulted by Ishida's treatment of their daimyo. Mōri forces declined to participate in the climactic battle that ended in their coalition's defeat. Had Mōri Terumoto been made the active commander of coalition forces, he would have threatened Ishida's primacy severely, but the fighting force deployed would have been far more potent.



x4

Mōri Terumoto (the Mōri leader) and four Mōri blocks—all marked with a triangle—begin the game face-up in the Mōri Box. The Ishida player can bring these blocks into the game by sacrificing cards. For each card sacrificed (discarded) during any Ishida Movement Phase, one Mōri block is moved from the Mōri box to Osaka. The last block brought on is always the Mōri leader.

No blocks are ever added to the Mōri Box, only removed.

These blocks cannot move on the same turn they arrive in Osaka.

If Osaka is attacked by Tokugawa forces, at the moment combat is declared, all blocks in the Mōri Box appear in Osaka and join the battle.

9.4 II NAOMASA RED DEVILS



Ii Naomasa and his warriors, known as the Red Devils, were some of Tokugawa's fiercest defenders. They were first to storm the field at Sekigahara, though the honor was designated for Fukushima Masanori.

The Ii clan has a single block, with four mon. It is the only 4-mon block in the game. It begins the game with Fukushima's forces in Kiyosu. There are no Ii cards. The Ii block deploys in battle with any card (except a Loyalty Challenge).

9.5 ISHIDA MITSUNARI



The Tokugawa player wins instantly if the Ishida Mitsunari block is eliminated (2.1). In combat, this block may be deployed with any Ishida card (8.2.2) except a Loyalty Challenge card.

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Historical Notes

Appearing like dew,
vanishing like dew—
such is my life.
Even Naniwa's splendor
is a dream within a dream.

Death poem of Toyotomi Hideyoshi

The story of Sekigahara begins with the death of Toyotomi Hideyoshi. In perhaps the greatest career in Japanese history, he had risen through a feudal system from the bottom of society to its very peak. Born a soldier's son, he made himself taikō, supreme warlord and ruler of all Japan.

In 1598, at the age of 62, he was overtaken by illness. His heir was a boy of 5 years, hastily declared an adult and anointed the new taikō. Before Toyotomi died he gathered the most powerful men in Japan into two committees, balancing the power of each against all others. Oaths were sworn to uphold the boy's claim, and to leave undisturbed the balance of power upon which he depended. With these bare means, the best that could be constructed on short notice, did Toyotomi hope to secure the youth's passage to maturity.

In fact it took only two years for the tensions in this system to break into open war. By the summer of 1600, two armies were rallied and hurled towards each other, and the victorious Tokugawa Ieyasu became Japan's new master.

It had taken decades of warfare for Toyotomi and his predecessor Oda Nobunaga to subjugate Japan's belligerent fiefdoms. Their prize was usurped in a campaign that lasted only seven weeks. Tokugawa's shogunate would rule Japan in peace for 15 generations, 268 years.

Ten years before the battle of Sekigahara, Japan's present and future lords stood together on a hilltop along the eastern coast. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, at the zenith of his power and abilities, met with Tokugawa Ieyasu, who had become his lieutenant. Once comrades under Oda Nobunaga, then enemies in battle, they were now allies, united in victory over the Hōjō clan. Here on the hilltop, Toyotomi offered to Tokugawa a fateful proposition. In exchange for the 5 central provinces that Tokugawa's family had known for generations, he offered 8 provinces eastward in Kanto, further from the capital, uncultivated, and surrounded by unfamiliar enemies. It was a daunting proposition, but Ieyasu accepted on the spot.

The day Tokugawa arrived in his new capital of Edo is still celebrated in that city, modern Tokyo. In 1590 it was a backwater, a haggard castle rising from a swamp. But Ieyasu was more than a warlord, he was an administrator of genius. From this damp village in the Kanto he built an economic empire in the course of a single decade. Ten years later, his annual income (2.5 million koku, man-years of rice) was more than double that of any other daimyo.

Toyotomi had meant to consign Tokugawa to years of fruitless difficulties, while alienating him from the politics of the capital in Kyoto. Instead, by giving Ieyasu a large and fertile fief he allowed the emergence of a natural successor, a first among equals, in the ranks of leading daimyo. After Hideyoshi died, eyes shifted to one man; behind the system of fealty, Japan had a dominant power waiting to emerge.

* * *

Toyotomi Hideyoshi was one of the most remarkable men in the history of Japan. He rose through the ranks in the service of the greatest warrior of his day, Oda Nobunaga. Ugly and low-born, he was called 'monkey' by his detractors. But his talent was extraordi-

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nary. He came to be Oda's most trusted retainer, pairing a series of brilliant military successes with careful reassurances of complete loyalty. One story still told today recalls Toyotomi warming Oda's sandals by keeping them against his chest. Toyotomi was always careful to ask Oda's direction in military matters, regardless how unnecessary. And Oda delighted in Toyotomi's prowess. Once, seeing Toyotomi's magnificent army, he remarked "His monkey face has not changed, but who would dare call him monkey now? Astonishing, indeed, is the way men's positions alter."

Toyotomi was a man of fine taste, but he could also explode into rage at a slight. His elegant death poem, above, is one of the best in the tradition. But bold indeed was the man who invited him to tea in a cherry garden only to strip every blossom off the trees. Ready to kill for such an insult, Toyotomi burst into the building and saw a single cup of water in which was balanced one utterly perfect blossom. Fury turned to gratification.

Rage like this could have geopolitical consequences. After fighting a campaign in Korea, Toyotomi received a Chinese emissary expecting to be named emperor of all lands. When instead he was acknowledged ruler of only Japan, he exploded and launched a second war. It was also this anger, or perhaps a general deterioration of faculties, that inspired the killing of his own family. When his preferred heir reached the age of two, Hideyoshi ordered the death of his previous (adopted) heir, plus 29 of his family members. By so doing he left his dynasty in the hands of a single 2-year-old boy, completely vulnerable to disease or intrigues.

It was Toyotomi's love of tea that launched his friendship with Ishida Mitsunari. Mitsunari became Inspector-General in Hideyoshi's army, but he was not a military man; he was a tea master. Hideyoshi knew from personal reflection that someone tasteful enough to perform a superlative tea ceremony had talents that could be turned to other tasks. To him, rank and birth meant nothing; only talent mattered. In Ishida he found talent, and he promoted it. Ishida did indeed have other abilities. He became a skillful administrator, and in time, a relentless intriguer.

Ishida is the man who would later lead an army to defend the Toyotomi heir. In the Korean campaign, Ishida made friends and enemies that would shape alliances at Sekigahara. He once attended a tea ceremony with daimyo Ōtani Yoshitsugu. Ōtani, who was ill, left a drop of pus in the cup before passing it onwards. Other participants were revolted as the cup reached their hands and they were obliged to drink. To spare the man his agony, Ishida claimed the cup out of order, drank everything in it, and apologized to all for being so 'thirsty'. Ōtani was astonished and grateful, and years later would fight at Ishida's side at Sekigahara. The opposite outcome obtained when Ishida visited Kuroda Yoshitaka in Korea. Kuroda was engaged in a game of go, and made Ishida wait. Incensed, Ishida reported to Toyotomi that Kuroda cared more for go than war. Kuroda was stung and never forgave the slight; in 1600 he would be Ishida's enemy.

Toyotomi was a man of such talent and character that he could inspire loyalty through bold gesture. Many times in his career he converted a deadly rival into a vassal through an act of disarming courage or honesty. When asking his enemy Date Masamune to submit, he revealed to Masamune the tactics he would employ were they to fight, all while standing defenseless, having placed his sword in his enemy's hands. Date was amazed, and surrendered his lands.

Bolder still, Toyotomi once travelled deep into Uesugi territory undefended, to meet in person with his enemy Uesugi Kagekatsu. Astonished by his courage, the Uesugi chose to become allies rather than enemies.

What other men would have fought for, Toyotomi was given on account of the strength of his character. To describe the heroic impression Toyotomi made on his peers, historian Walter Dening makes apt reference to a story about Hercules:

"O, Iole, how did you know that Hercules was a god?" "Because," answered Iole, "I was content the moment my eyes fell upon him. When I beheld Theseus I desired that I might see him offer battle, or at least guide his horses in the chariot-race. But Hercules did not wait for a contest; he conquered whether he stood, walked, or sat, or whatever thing he did."

Having once trapped the rival Mōri clan in a siege, news came to Toyotomi that his lord and mentor, Oda Nobunaga, had been murdered by one of his own supporters. Toyotomi wanted to rush to the scene, but a departure would leave him vulnerable to attack. Toyotomi presented himself to the Mōri and explained the situation. His courage spoke volumes, as did his indifference. Against so bold a commander, the Mōri preferred to decline combat as his troops left the scene.

That moment was the greatest turning point in his career. Returning to the site of treachery, he found and defeated the disloyal forces. He had avenged the betrayal, and his recent successes made him the preeminent warrior in Japan. It was he around whom the Oda power structure now consolidated—even Oda's son was happy to follow Toyotomi. He had completed his rise; he was taikō.

Tokugawa Ieyasu, though of noble birth, rose from broken circumstances. He was separated from his mother at age 2, kidnapped at age 6, and taken as a hostage at age 9. Perhaps as a result of these

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events, emotion played little part in his character. He made his decisions on rational grounds, regardless the emotional toll. When they were implicated in a treasonous plot, he ordered the death of his own wife and first-born son.

Like Toyotomi he found it necessary to diminish himself before the rulers of the day in order not to rouse their suspicions. He took great pains not to reveal his talents or his ambitions, but some noticed all the same. An old enemy, Takeda Shingen, noted "Ieyasu cherishes great hopes for the future... He won't eat anything out of season." Unlike Toyotomi, who made a virtue of his vulnerability, Ieyasu did indeed act with the overcaution of one who 'cherishes great hopes'. When he travelled out of his fiefdom he made elaborate escape plans should treachery occur.

Beneath the deprecation and caution was an extraordinary mind. His generalship was superlative. Once when fighting the Takeda he found himself threatened with disaster. Having lost a battle, he retreated with only a few troops to a nearby castle, his enemies in pursuit. On arrival, he ordered the gates flung wide, bright torches burnt outside the entrance, and a loud drum banged throughout the night. When the Takeda forces arrived, they surmised Ieyasu was planning an attack—rather than a desperate defense—and declined to give battle.

Tokugawa served most of his life under the leadership of his two great predecessors, Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Only when these warlords died, having unified the nation but failed to provide an heir, did Tokugawa reap the fruits of their labors. An old story explains it thus: Oda Nobunaga makes rice cakes, Toyotomi Hideyoshi cooks them, and Tokugawa Ieyasu eats them.

How much of Tokugawa's success, then, was owing to good fortune? Certainly he benefitted from circumstance. Several of his rivals died at convenient moments: not merely Oda Nobunaga and Toyotomi Hideyoshi but also Takeda Shingen and Maeda Toshiie. But if his path was fortunate, was there another who could have walked it? Tokugawa needed generalship and diplomacy to expand his fiefdom; uncommon self control, in order not to come into conflict with his lords; and extraordinary management ability, that he could develop his Kanto domain into the engine of war and commerce that it became. Tokugawa played his hand so carefully, and showed such skill in its execution, that it would be unfair not to award the majority of the credit for his accomplishments to his own efforts.

* * *

After Toyotomi's death, Japan emerged in stages from the rigid stasis he had willed for it. Japanese troops were still in Korea, fighting and losing the second of two successive wars. For a time, Toyotomi's death was concealed by the state. Once the troops returned and the truth emerged, it was Tokugawa who offered the first test to the new regime's stability. He assigned a few of his family to political marriages, something forbidden by the system Toyotomi had given them. Fractures formed in the committees and sides were taken. Then the actions of Toyotomi loyalist Ishida Mitsunari brought the simmer to a boil.



First Ishida attempted to sow suspicion between the most powerful daimyo, suggesting to Tokugawa that Maeda Toshiie would kill him when given the chance. Soon after there was an attempt on Tokugawa's life. The attempt failed, Ishida was implicated, and a group of Tokugawa supporters conspired to kill Ishida in return. Cornered, Ishida fled to the mercy of his greatest enemy, Tokugawa himself. Astonishingly, Tokugawa let him free and escorted him to safety. The reasons for this action have been much guessed at over the years, and several theories have been entertained. First, that Tokugawa was naïve and thought Ishida a friend. This is highly unlikely. Second, that he was prone to forgive. One of his favorite sayings was Lao Tsu's "Requite malice with kindness". He had dodged assassination once before, and had returned the captured killer to his master, saying that anyone bold enough to creep into his bedroom and perforate his bedding with a sword was undoubtedly a "valuable man". Third, and most likely, however, Tokugawa protected Ishida because he saw in the latter an instigator capable of unbalancing Toyotomi's careful system. Political disequilibrium would give Tokugawa his best chance to rule, and yet he could not be seen to create it himself, lest others ally against him. As one advisor put it, it was through men like Ishida that soon Ieyasu might come to rule all of Japan.

Ishida's close escape did not stop his campaign of intrigues. Instead, he crafted a more ambitious plot to ignite war against Tokugawa with the help of daimyo Uesugi Kagekatsu. The Uesugi lived in the north of Japan, near to Tokugawa's fief, so disobedience by the former would be the latter's to correct. Ishida arranged with Uesugi that a disturbance would be created, and as Ieyasu went to address it, an army of his enemies would be organized behind him. Tokugawa would be surrounded and outnumbered.

The plot was launched in 1600, when Uesugi set about building a new castle and engaging in conspicuous fortification. Tokugawa asked that he come to the capital to explain his actions, and received in reply an insulting rebuff. Citified samurai collect tea implements, wrote Uesugi, while country samurai collect weapons. The gauntlet was thrown, and Tokugawa had no choice but to respond.

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Tokugawa gathered a force and departed Osaka castle. He headed east and north on the Tōkaidō, one of Japan's two highways. He moved slowly, taking forty days to reach Edo, and listening all the time to reports from friends in Osaka. What he heard was the rapid unraveling of Toyotomi's political equilibrium. A nation of warriors, Japan demanded conflict and command. Toyotomi's system, of peace and divided power, was in fact a vacuum, and that vacuum would now be filled. Almost instinctively, the nation resolved to fight. There would be a war, and whether in Toyotomi's name or Tokugawa's, Japan would have clear leadership.

It was a war born of a trap, and it sprang like a trap, catching even the protagonists by surprise with the rapidity of events. What Ishida had hoped would be an anti-Tokugawa action quickly became a crucible for determining Japan's entire structure of governance. Would Japan be led by its strongest daimyo, Tokugawa Ieyasu, or by a caretaker safeguarding the Toyotomi succession? Two causes opposed each other, and two armies formed to champion them. Tokugawa's became known as the army of the East, Ishida Mitsunari's the army of the West.

Tokugawa launched a frenzied campaign of correspondence, inviting daimyo to join him in the upcoming war. He wrote 180 letters, to 108 lords throughout Japan. He asked for their allegiance, and 99 of them offered it. It is an irony that it would fall to Ieyasu, unemotional and incapable of small talk, to win a war through letter-writing. In his messages he said he would depart Edo on October 1st, but when that date arrived he could not yet move because he was still uncertain who was with him. He remained until the 7th, when he decided urgency was more essential than certainty.

Ishida Mitsunari gathered the western forces from his position in the capital region. He and his supporters were able to personally address most of the daimyo they wished to recruit. Mōri Terumoto, one of Japan's most powerful men, was narrowly persuaded to join the western army. Another leading warlord, Kobayakawa Hideaki, was on his way to join Tokugawa forces when he was waylaid and talked into a change of allegiance.

As the war began, Ishida's strategy was twofold. First, he sought to consolidate the castles in the capital region under his control. A number of sieges were launched, which when successful resulted in solid control of the area. The sieges were slow, however. It took eleven days to capture Fushimi castle in Kyoto. Tanabe castle took even longer on account of the presence of a famous poet and his valuable library—plus the indifference of the sieging troops, who often 'forgot' to load their cannon with shot. The latter operation took so long that the units involved were not available to fight at Sekigahara.

Ishida's second priority was to secure the western end of Japan's two highways. He made an alliance with Oda Hidenobu, grandson of the warlord Oda Nobunaga, who controlled Gifu castle. All the roads west of Gifu, on both highways, were controlled by western forces.

At the same time, Ishida had to negotiate with Mōri Terumoto, the strongest daimyo of his faction. Mōri's income was second only to the Tokugawa in all Japan, and his stature was such that he owed loyalty not to Ishida but to the Toyotomi. As such he took actions independently, uncoordinated with Ishida's designs. He moved to Osaka castle with 30,000 men and declared himself the guardian of the Toyotomi family, heedless of Ishida's need for those troops in the field. Ishida might have coaxed Mōri into the conflict, had he been willing to sacrifice some of his own stature. The failure of these leaders to coordinate was to have enormous consequences in the Sekigahara campaign.

Ishida gathered his army at Ogaki castle, just west of Gifu. Having consolidated the capital region of Japan, he knew now that Tokugawa would have to come to him.

As Tokugawa moved to Edo in the early days of the conflict, his strategy was still extremely fluid. He intended at first to pursue the northern campaign against the Uesugi, and moved his headquarters north of Edo, to Oyama, in preparation. Then he changed his mind and returned to Edo. He resolved upon a new strategy. Rather than fight small battles around Japan, he would force a single decisive battle that would resolve all other conflicts in one blow.

Fighting Uesugi was left to Date Masamune and other local daimyo. Another Tokugawa ally, Maeda Toshinaga, might have been included in the campaign had he not been engaged already against regional enemies. Tokugawa turned all of his forces to the west.

The westward battle plan had three stages. First, a force would be deployed to take Gifu castle and establish a forward base of operations. Second, two armies would march from Edo to that gathering point, one along each highway. Finally, the large army so assembled would march westward for a climactic confrontation.

The assault of Gifu would enable Tokugawa control of the twin highways of central Japan, the Tōkaidō and the Nakasendō, which he would then use to rapidly deploy his forces westwards. Tokugawa sent an army of 16,000 from Edo along the Tōkaidō, under daimyo Fukushima Masanori. Fearing that force might be insufficient, he sent another 18,000 to follow them. All reached Gifu, where the plan almost fractured because the two commanders could not resolve the honor of leading the attack. The night before they were to begin the assault, they nearly fought a duel before a solution was agreed: each would lead a separate attack on opposite sides of the structure.

At the same time, the campaign against Uesugi Kagekatsu proceeded. Eventually, Date and the Tokugawa allies were able to overcome the Uesugi, in a battle that occurred after Sekigahara but before word had reached the north.

With the highways under his control, Tokugawa Ieyasu moved to deploy the rest of his army. In contrast to his slow departure from Osaka, he returned with alacrity in order to surprise his enemies. He sent 38,000 men under his son Hidetada along the Nakasendō, and took 33,000 with himself along the Tōkaidō, meaning to unify the forces at Gifu castle.

During the march Tokugawa continued to receive letters pledging allegiances, in some cases from daimyo who, unsatisfied with their

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first decision, were choosing sides for the second time. He noted the fluidity of loyalty, worried for the reliability of his men, and resolved to test the allegiance of his enemies.

Tokugawa's Tōkaidō force completed the march successfully and arrived at Gifu castle on October 19. The Nakasendō force was delayed. Weather was partly to blame, but more importantly, Hidetada took up a siege at castle Ueda against the instructions of his father. The siege drew on under the cunning defense of local daimyo Sanada Masayuki, until Hidetada eventually abandoned it. By then he was hopelessly late, and when the battle of Sekigahara broke out he and his 38,000 men were still 200 kilometers away.

When they first spied the eastern army, Ishida's western forces were camped at Ogaki castle, west of Gifu. Tokugawa set his camp 5 kilometers to their northeast. Ishida's western force numbered 82,000, Tokugawa's eastern army 89,000. Though of roughly equal size, the two forces were in very different psychological states.

The western army was closer to home and more rested. Supply lines were cleaner, reinforcements closer. They camped not far from Ishida's home castle at Sawayama. But the early arrival of eastern troops had unnerved them. Clearly, their plan to distract Tokugawa in the north had failed. Further, the eastern army was larger than expected—Ishida had underestimated the degree of support there would be for Tokugawa. Finally, since this territory was home to the western forces, Ishida had more to lose by fighting here. He had to be concerned about defending Osaka, Kyoto, and Sawayama from invasion. While Tokugawa might be at liberty to give or refuse battle, Ishida felt his options narrowing.

Tokugawa put his proximity and confidence to immediate use by attempting to arrange defections among the western forces. Ii Naomasa and Honda Tadakatsu, some of Tokugawa's most loyal leaders, were dispatched to speak with the retainers of several western daimyo. To Kobayakawa Hideaki they offered a domain of two provinces, if he were to switch sides and fight for Tokugawa. The price was agreed, and the seeds of treachery planted.

The betrayal of Kobayakawa had its roots in an old grudge against Ishida. The former, after leading Japanese forces in Korea in what some considered a reckless manner, was stripped of much of his territory by Toyotomi. He suspected truth in the rumor that Ishida had recommended the action. Though the land was later returned, Kobayakawa's resentment persisted.

After reaching proximity with the enemy, eastern leadership considered several strategic options. Ii Naomasa proposed an attack on Ogaki castle, creating at once that definitive battle for which the army had been gathered. Honda Tadakatsu preferred a march to Osaka, which if unopposed would end the war just as decisively. Tokugawa's final decision was to mask Ogaki castle with a small detachment of troops while marching west towards Sawayama and then Osaka. If successful, the western forces would be cut off from the ground they sought to defend.

The western army was also unsure of strategy. Notified that Tokugawa planned to bypass his position, Ishida scrambled for a proactive plan. A night attack was proposed, only to be rejected



because Ishida felt it suitable only for a weak or desperate army. Instead, he settled on a night march, to select and occupy ground for a battle in the morning. For the site of that battle, he chose the crossroads of Sekigahara.

Drenching rain pelted the western troops as in darkness they departed their camp. They marched westward to a fork in the road offering different routes to Kyoto and Sawayama. To defend both, a stand would have to be made at Sekigahara. Hills ringed the road, and between them there would be room for battle. Ishida's men took the high ground all around the site and waited for dawn.

Tokugawa's night was nearly as restless. At 2:00, despite the storm, he mounted his horse to reconnoiter the ground ahead. When he was satisfied with the approach, he woke the army and brought them on behind him to the site of battle. He arranged his men along the road, the hills having been occupied, with a substantial force to the rear to prevent encirclement and facilitate escape. Both commanders, in fact, were careful to ensure an escape route – Ishida stationed himself at the back near the road that led to Sawayama.

Both sides pressed for combat despite having substantial temporary weaknesses. Ishida had twice tried to summon the 30,000 Mōri troops at Osaka castle, and they had not yet come. The siege of Tanabe castle had just finished, and another 15,000 troops were on their way to join the main force. Tokugawa's son Hidetada was late with 38,000 men a few days march to the northeast on the Nakasendō. Still, each felt they had more to fear from delay than action. Ishida worried about the integrity of his coalition and knew that to retreat further would be to sacrifice his home of Sawayama. Tokugawa held the advantage of surprise against an enemy with more local resources.

Each army was made up mostly of ground troops, armed with spears and swords. Each had some cavalry and some arquebusiers. The arquebus had been revolutionizing Japanese warfare in the half-century since its introduction, in the process making archery obsolete.

The morning of October 21, 1600 was muddy from a night of rain, and hazy with mist. The army of the East launched the battle when

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Ii Naomasa's troops, called the "Red Devils" for the fearsome red lacquered armor they wore, charged the field. Fukushima Masanori, who had been promised the honor of first attack, plunged forward immediately as well, assaulting the strong central position of the stalwart loyalist Ukita Hideie.

Ishida ordered a counterattack, and to his dismay found that some of his units refused to move. The Shimazu merely held their positions, not fighting until they were attacked. On the flank, Kikkawa Hiroie refused a signal to attack, and the 15,000 Mōri troops behind him were satisfied to wait. Repeated orders were also sent to Kobayakawa Hideaki demanding an attack, but he stood on the southern hillside as battle raged in the valley.

Tokugawa, too, was asking Kobayakawa to move. Finally, shots were fired in his direction, in demand of a decision. With that signal, Kobayakawa engaged, charging down the hillside to attack his former allies. The southern end of Ishida's line was enveloped. All across the field, western forces were being beaten back, despite the valor of a few loyalists.

The eastern army began the consolidation of its victory. Tokugawa Ieyasu erected a court on the battlefield in which to receive commanders and the heads of his enemies. To loyal friends like Fukushima, Ii and Honda, he declared his everlasting gratitude. He praised the turncoat Kobayakawa and allowed him to lead an attack of Sawayama castle (now largely a formality). He reserved his greatest scorn for those who had refused battle, specifically the Mōri.

Ishida escaped into the mountains, to be caught a few days later and executed. Ukita, a young daimyo who had fought tenaciously, was forgiven his involvement but forced to live in exile and abstain from politics. Toyotomi Hideyori was entrusted to Tokugawa's care, and survived another 15 years before being killed for disloyalty.

The Mōri were stripped of most of their land and wealth, leaving them bitter and vengeful for centuries to come. Their children slept with feet pointed east, in insult to the victors of Sekigahara. It became a tradition, in Chosho where the Mōri lived, to open each new year with a ceremonial exchange in which prominent leaders would ask of the daimyo "Has the time come to begin the subjugation of the [Tokugawa]?" to which he would reply "No, the time had not yet come." (More than 250 years later the time finally had come, and the rebellion that overturned the shogunate was led in part by Chosho.)

The Sekigahara campaign was fought rapidly. In seven weeks of hostilities, the fate of Japan was settled. The whole episode, including Tokugawa's march northwards and letter-writing campaign, took just over three months. In that time, every daimyo had to select a side, raise troops, deploy and fight. Little wonder, then, that the campaign was so unpredictable, loyalty so fluid, plans and objectives so often revised. It was an improvised war.

In this brief and unstructured engagement, loyalty was as important as troop strength. Victory went not to the largest army, but to that which best supported its commander.

Tokugawa returned victorious to Osaka castle exactly 100 days after he had left to punish the Uesugi. His dynasty would last 268 years. It is remarkable that equilibrium so durable could have arisen from an episode so unstructured and chaotic. But it was not by chance —after he subdued his enemies, Tokugawa took every measure to subdue the nation.

After Sekigahara, Tokugawa spent the last 15 years of his life laying the foundations for the Tokugawa shogunate. (The title of *shogun*, inaccessible to Toyotomi for reasons of low birth, was accorded to Tokugawa.) He transferred the title to his son years before he died in order to ensure a good succession. He invented a new social hierarchy and lived to oversee it. To every station in society he gave responsibilities and obligations. To the samurai, he gave the duty of martial ceremony, in lieu of martial acts. He set the nation busy complying with new objectives, and thus weaned them from violent impulse.

Tokugawa did what Toyotomi could not: domesticate a nation of warriors. Under Toyotomi, for sake of war, conquest of Japan was followed by invasion of Korea. Tokugawa instead made warriors into governors and citizens. Tokugawa rule was known as the *bakufu*, which means 'government from a tent', or governance by soldiers. In the strict class hierarchy of the Tokugawa period, samurai abandoned bloodshed and became members of the governing class.

In this transformation we see the magnitude of Tokugawa's accomplishment. Just as he had throughout his life controlled his own emotions, now he controlled those of a nation. A great administrator, he created the institutions that turned an entire people from war to peace, ending an era of chaos and launching an era of tranquility. The Buddha said "One who conquers himself is greater than another who conquers a thousand times a thousand on the battlefield." Tokugawa Ieyasu did not himself subdue the various territories of Japan, as did his predecessors. He was fortunate to inherit the fruits of their struggles for unification. But only Tokugawa conquered the people, because of the three great warlords, only he had first conquered himself.



Japanese arquebuses

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Design Notes

Sekigahara is an unusual game. The peculiarities of the design are the product of two priorities: that it depict the conflict *in its mechanisms* rather than merely in its particularities, and that it adheres to certain design objectives that I consider important.

I prefer a game that rewards skillful play and diminishes the effect of chance. One of my earliest and easiest decisions was to exclude dice from the design. A die roll generates a two-sided surprise: both parties are unable to predict the result of a die roll, and thus cannot plan for it. I prefer one-sided uncertainty (hidden units and cards) to encourage planning and bluffing.

For playability, I wanted the game to finish in 2-3 hours. This naturally set a limit on the amount of complexity I could introduce into the rules. Fortunately, as I will explain below, I prioritized realism over complexity, and found I could accommodate quite a lot of the former despite a cap on the latter.

There exist in wargaming a series of game types: card-driven, block, counter. For each of these categories the seasoned gamer will immediately recall a series of games, some classics and some best forgotten, which fit the mold. There have even developed conventions within conventions, such that we can expect a card-driven wargame to offer a tradeoff between action points and events, and a block game to feature step-losses and lots of dice. What this conventionality gains in familiarity it loses in realism. Can the same mechanism accurately convey different conflicts centuries apart? Some would say it can, so long as you adjust the incidental elements in the game: unit values, events, map, 'chrome' rules to add color. I began with the assumption that this would not suffice. Rather than convey the spirit of the conflict through incidentals, I attempted to convey it through the design mechanisms themselves.

One could also debate what constitutes the spirit of the conflict, and what it means to be accurate in design. Wargames usually achieve accuracy through weight. We forgive a game complexity if it provides greater realism. But what kind of realism is best? It may seem realistic to list precisely the fighting value of every unit, or draw from a deck of historical events, but the commanders in the war were never privy to such knowledge. Make the game too 'accurate' in these regards and you degrade the accuracy of the experience. Fidelity must be declared to realism of 'details' or realism of experience; this design has favored the latter.

I sought to convey the experience of being a commander in the war of Sekigahara through the mechanisms of the game. Since the war was characterized by uncertainty—the fog of war so close leaders could choke on it—so should be the mechanisms (hidden blocks and cards). Since the war was won and lost over loyalty, a major mechanism (the cards) was introduced to depict loyalty. Mechanisms were determined not by wargaming convention, but by the peculiarities of the Sekigahara conflict.

The war of Sekigahara was unusual in several ways. First, the extreme importance of loyalty and personal legitimacy. Second, the haste and uncertainty under which it was organized and prosecuted. Third, the absolute centrality of people, and thus the importance of their personalities and their safety. Finally, the way honor and the pursuit of honor dominated behavior throughout the conflict.

No factor was more important in determining the outcome of the war than loyalty. Neither commander could be certain of his supporters, nor entirely confident in numerical superiority. Battles were won instead by loyalty and legitimacy. Some troops fought heroically (like Ii and Ukita), some were passive (Mōri), some treacherous (Kobayakawa). The final battle, indeed the entire war, was decided by defections and disloyalty. To model loyalty I introduced the deck of cards, representing the support of the troops. The bigger the hand size, the more legitimacy. The possibility was introduced of a unit brought to battle and then refusing to take part (a typical occurrence in this war). In order to model treachery, I added 'Loyalty Challenge' cards, which have the additional benefit of making each battle a tactical exercise of bluff and deceit. Tokugawa has one more of these cards than Ishida, and the difference may be telling.

Sekigahara was an improvised war. It was a civil war based on people and not geography, in which over 100 daimyo separately made allegiance decisions. Fighting lasted just seven weeks, with another seven of preparation. The struggle began and finished with forces scattered across Japan, fighting local enemies and capturing local targets. Despite this chaos, Sekigahara was a strategic conflict. It emerged out of a well-planned trap, and ended in a well-planned strategic attack. Chaos swept around the feet of our protagonists, but it did not overwhelm them. I have modeled this uncertainty with a semi-randomized unit setup that forces each player to open the game with improvisation, even as other factors (compounding special attacks, card carryovers across turns, bonuses for castle and supply control) urgently encourage them to form a strategy. To depict the tension between opportunism and centralization the board is littered with easy targets but players begin with precious little organizational capacity (just 5 cards). A few factors are known to each player; the rest is a blur of uncertainty. Blocks are hidden, cards are secret and rapidly recycled, reinforcements drawn at random. Extreme as this may seem, if I have erred it is on the side of over-certainty. No mechanism in the game can reproduce the dismay of the western army on the arrival of Tokugawa at Gifu castle, far sooner, and with far more troops, than expected. I happily sacrifice perceived detail to recapture the authentic feeling of improvisation and uncertainty felt by the leaders in this war.

There are three figures whose death or capture would have transformed the conflict. Tokugawa and Ishida, of course, and also Toyotomi Hideyori. Personality drove the war in a more subtle way as well. Tokugawa's stronger personality allowed better coordination of his daimyo. Ishida's conspiratorial talents helped him set the initial trap with Uesugi Kagekatsu, but his tense relationship with Mōri Terumoto may have cost him the war. Given the importance of people and personality, it was essential that players represent protagonists and not causes. (Thus the game ends on protagonist death or capture.) The Ishida-Mōri relationship, in which personal interest took precedence over loyalty to their cause, required an additional mechanism to depict the tradeoff Ishida faced between strength and primacy.

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Honor was the most nonintuitive of the themes that defined the conflict. Honor drove daimyo to besiege castles that were of little strategic importance. Honor caused breakdowns in coordination amongst allies. Honor is why Torii Mototada's doomed defense of Fushimi Castle is still celebrated in the present day. Honor nearly disrupted the assault on Gifu castle, when two Tokugawa daimyo proposed to fight each other (for the right of first attack) before they faced the enemy. Honor led one earlier Tokugawa enemy to burn incense in his helmet before a battle so that his head would make a better trophy. (Tokugawa was so impressed he recommended the practice to his own followers.) How to model a factor that could create—even celebrate—martial failure in the name of a higher cause? I settled on two mechanisms, both regarding the dispersion of cards. First, bonus cards are allocated according to losses in battle, not victory, with extra cards given to those dying in defense of a castle. Second, the owner of more castles draws an additional card at the beginning of each week.

The units that fought in the war were characterized above all by their clan. A secondary characteristic was the use of guns or horses. Cavalry did not travel faster than ground units because they were accompanied by non-mounted retainers. The secondary purpose of the special units in the game was to reward central organization. Armies that took time to organize became more powerful, as depicted by the compounding special attack bonuses.

Many clans fought in the war and for game purposes I had to select just a few. In Ishida's case it was simple—Mōri, Ukita, Uesugi, and Kobayakawa were the strongest and most important daimyo in the western coalition. Tokugawa had a wider range of mid-sized supporters, and I chose them based on regional representation and centrality to the plot. Other worthy names were consolidated under my selections: Fukushima was supported by Ikeda Terumasa, Date by Mogami Yoshiaki. Maeda is included for geographical balance and because it was one of Japan's strongest houses, though its impact in the Sekigahara campaign was primarily regional.

Japan was dotted in castles and I include only a few of them in the game. Gifu, Ueda, and Osaka are essential to tell the story; the others were selected representationally, generally in places where sieges occurred. Resource areas are meant to depict control of territory, and so I have scattered them across the map. I have also tried to convey the importance of the Tōkaidō and Nakasendō highways. In a campaign characterized by dispersed forces and targets, the use of good roads to centralize and coordinate was essential. Not every little road could be included on the map, of course, and because there are always more, I have written the retreat rules to prevent easy encirclements.

The ability to build riskier or safer armies and to groom your hand of cards in order to motivate them is one of my favorite elements of the design. The most powerful army in the game is one of uniform type—many blocks from the same clan, or many special attacks of the same variety. This is also the most difficult army to field, as it takes careful card preparation and a well-timed attack. The double attack cards are essential for this purpose, and are more valuable than they first appear. I also enjoy the tension in sequential deployments of blocks during a battle. Some are at risk of defection (those for which no more cards are available) and some are not. Players can be cautious or reckless in their battlefield decisions. There is a thrill in deploying a potential defector successfully and an even greater one when you turn an enemy unit to your side.

Elegance was always a priority. One reason for the unusual block shape is that they can be stacked and thus every army viewed at once, without flipping or rearranging the pieces. Where the characteristics of the conflict did not dictate complexity, I made every effort to reduce it in the game. In the words of Einstein, a game should be as simple as possible, and no simpler.

—Matt Calkins

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