

JAPANESE ART OF WAR

*Historical Japanese
Skirmish War Game for
Miniatures
A.D. 800—A.D. 1700*



*Written by Peter Mancini, A Powder Monkey Enterprises Publication
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UNIVERSAL SKIRMISH RULES

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Introduction

The game “Japanese Art of War” is based on a core set of rules called the “Universal Skirmish Rules.” This document contains both USR and JAoW. The first section contains the USR and the second section gives the specific information for the JAoW.

These rules are for skirmish war-gaming with large scale (\cong 28mm) miniature figures. Larger or smaller figures can be used with some work. At least one game was run successfully at 54mm with a minor change in ranges. These rules work with warfare from all ancient periods and may be adapted to other periods. Considering the initial inspiration came from a science fiction board game I think it would be easy to apply these to many odd and unusual gaming universes. I fully encourage you to explore those possibilities and spread your work and tales of your experience. These rules are open and you are given license to push the envelope in any direction you want.

These rules are designed to be customized for particular time periods. Included is the Samurai period. Enough information is given for you to model potentially any type of warfare that you chose, though you will need to create special rules to cover unique historical cases. For example there is nothing in here that specifically models war elephants, but the fundamental concepts should help you figure out a way to do it if you want to. Inventing new types is half the fun.

The basic goals of this system are speed of play and historical flavor. Part of achieving the speed of play goal is requiring that there be absolutely no record keeping. A figure is either alive or out of the game. There are no wounds or markers, no accounting and no math required. Historical modules may add some of these things back, however the basic system does not require them.

I am going to use all male pronouns to describe characters in this game. There is no reason why the characters could not be female. There are cases of female warriors in ancient tradition and history.

Basing

All figures are to be based individually, unless the module allows for multi-figure elements. As a guideline a player gets a mixed unit of a few elements. I’ve based my armies in two styles. One style uses fender washers for bases. Infantry get 1 ¼” washers and Cavalry gets 1 ½” washers. Large round steel bases can be stuck to magnetic sheet and carried in a tool chest safely. Also, figures rarely get knocked over with such large bases. Another style is with square-cut magnetized bases such as those sold via *Renaissance Ink*. Obviously you need to make concessions for large models such as elephants, chariots and whatever else pleases you. Some people use standard 25mm x 25mm square bases for infantry. Use whatever suits your taste or whatever your army is currently based as. I’ve played games with mixed basing styles and have not noticed any particular advantage to either style. The generous zones of control (ZOC) make it a moot point.



Unit Activation

A unit consists of 1 to several figures. Each side divides up their force into units. Each unit gets a corresponding card. The use of standard poker cards is recommended. A side can take a suit (hearts, clubs, spades, diamonds) and each unit would take a particular card in that suit. If for example you had 2 Samurai Units, 3 Retainer Units, 1 Sohei unit and 1 Command unit you could assign the force the suit of hearts and assign each unit to ace of hearts through seven of hearts. The same is done for the other side using a different suit. The cards are shuffled and 2 jokers are shuffled in as well. Each unit is activated one at a time by the given card draw. Each character or element of that unit is then activated one at a time.

Activation by Combat

Being attacked by missile fire or being attacked in melee combat will activate an element. That element will not later re-activate when its unit's card comes up.

The Jokers

The first Joker is a warning. The second joker signifies the end of the turn. All units that were not activated lose their turn. Reshuffle the deck and start the next turn. Optionally you may use the jokers to have some sort of global effect on the game such as activating neutral units, moving sentries or peasants. Be creative.

The point of the Jokers rule is to show that there is friction in combat and not every unit is going to operate at 100% each turn. Friction may be overcome by command and control. Commands can activate units that otherwise would not have been activated.

Disengagement

A unit may, when activated by a card draw, decide to disengage from the enemy. The unit must have a path that will reach an area this turn not within another enemy's ZOC. The path may (and by definition will, pass through enemy ZOCs but the final resting point of all elements must be outside of enemy ZOC's.) The enemy must be present and at least within 8" to the flanks or front. If one element participates, all elements of the unit participate in the disengagement. The unit moves at fast speed using *all* of its move action dice. Elements that have been activated by melee or missile fire are ineligible for disengagement. *** Any enemy elements that start within ZOC of a *disengaging* element may activate after the element has moved. ***

Unit Size

There are no hard and fast rules on unit size. However it is *recommended* that unit size be 5 elements for infantry and 3 elements for mounted. Beginners can easily handle 5 elements. Experienced players can handle up to as many as 10 elements per unit. I suggest using 5 element units for convention games and larger element units for experienced players. A game between 4 players with 50-60 figures per side is quite typical and can resolve itself in 3-4 hours. I have run convention games with 4 players and a total of 80 figures and have had no difficulties. If you have fewer figures create smaller units. Units of 2 or 3 elements work. I started play testing these rules with 1 figure per activation. At Origins 2002 we had 10 players and 24 unit activations per hour!

Action Dice

This game is based on the concept of *Action Dice*. The more skilled, better armed and armored an element is the more action dice it will receive. When an element is activated, choose an **action** and determine how many action dice it will receive that turn. The action dice are then rolled and interpreted. Action dice are determined to be one of three possible types: Offensive Opportunity, Defensive Opportunity and General Action.

Declaration—When your unit activates you must state what action the entire unit will take. If the unit is Elite then you can declare on an element by element basis.

Action Dice Types

Offensive Opportunity (OO): Used to eliminate an opposing element

Defensive Opportunity (DO): Used to shield your element from harm

General Action (GA): Used for movement, searching, performing actions, etc.

Actions

The actions one can take are as follows:

Move: This is the most basic action. It generates only Defensive Opportunities and General Actions.

First, declare if the move is at *Normal* rate or *Fast* rate.

Second, move your figure to where you want it to go within range. Fast allows for greater movement per general action but exposes the element to greater harm by reducing the number of generated defensive opportunities.

Melee: This is the most basic combat action. It generates all of the types of action dice.

First: The element *must have* line of sight to the declared target before rolling the dice.

Second: The element declares *Fast* or *Normal* for movement and moves the figures into contact.

Finally dice are rolled, converted and re-rolled as necessary generating the proper number of General Actions to move the figure and then Offensive Opportunities are placed against the opposing element. Defensive Opportunities are marked on the element as necessary. If the element bests his opponent in melee and still has Offensive Opportunities left he may move into contact with another opponent and use them. You can NEVER have more GA than the AD rating from the move action (5 for infantry or 10 for cavalry for example from The Japanese Art of War module.) If you end up in that situation then the excess GA dice become *No Action* dice and are discarded.

Aimed Shot: This is an aimed shot with a missile weapon. It can generate Offensive and Defensive Opportunities but it cannot generate General Actions. Unlike Melee, all Offensive Opportunities must be used against a single opponent. The number of action dice the element gets depends on the range to the target. The target must be declared and visible before dice are rolled.

Move Speed Choice

Fast: Element moves 4" per General Action. Loses 1 naturally Rolled DO.

Normal: Element moves 2" per General Action.

Terrain	Infantry	Mounted
Open	Normal	Normal
Stream	Rough	Rough
Marsh	Very Rough	Very Rough
Rocks	Rough	Very Rough
Trees	Rough	Very Rough – may not end turn in trees.
Combination	Very Rough	Very Rough or Impassable
Walls, buildings, elevation	See rules	See rules
Normal +0 GA	Rough +1 GA	Very Rough +2 GA

Move & Shoot: Mounted elements can move and shoot at the same time. Like aimed fire, all Offensive Opportunities must be against a single opponent. The number of action dice the element gets depends on the range to the target. The element must declare Fast or Normal for movement. The target must be declared and visible before dice are rolled.

Movement

An element uses General Actions to move. The amount of movement depends on the chosen speed.

Terrain and Movement

Rough Terrain costs 1 extra General Action per General Action used.

Very Rough Terrain Costs 2 extra General Actions per

General Action used.

Impassable terrain cannot be moved through.

Example: A soldier has 5 general actions (GA). He starts in open and wants to move through a wood 4 inches away. The wood is 10 inches wide and he is moving fast (4" per GA). It costs 1 GA to cover the open ground to the woods. With his remaining 4 GA he spends two on moving and 2 for moving through rough placing him 2 inches from the other side.

Once the declaration for speed is made the figure is moved BEFORE the dice are rolled. This is important - it forces you to commit to your decision before knowing the results. If you end up in melee with no OO or out in the open in front of a row of archers with no DO - that was the risk you took.

Conversions

Conversions come in two types, automatic and voluntary. Automatic conversions happen first and come about due to the action being taken. Voluntary conversions are from OO or DO to GA. You may convert as many

Terrain	Infantry	Mounted
Movement		
Sm Aperature	+2GA	N/A
Large Aperature	+1GA	N/A
Combat Through Walls	-1AD	-2AD
No Assistance		
Short	+2GA	N/A
Tall	+3GA	N/A
Assisted		
Short	+1GA	N/A
Tall	+2GA	N/A
Defended	-1AD	N/A
Ladder	-1GA	N/A
Elevations		
Cross Contour	+1GA	+1GA
Steep Contour	+2GA	+2GA
Defended	-1AD	-2AD

OO and DO to GA as you would like (do not exceed MOVE total action dice however) and in many cases, due to movement requirements, this is necessary.

Automatic Conversions from movement:

Fast Move: convert 1 naturally rolled DO to 1 GA (if the die was a one it may be re-rolled)

Some weapons and armor give OO or DO conversions.

Apertures and Walls and their effect on Melee and Movement

Doors and windows cost extra GA to move through. A large (man sized) aperture costs 1 extra GA to pass; a small aperture costs 2 GA to pass. If the Aperture is defended it costs -1 AD if infantry or -2 AD if mounted (assuming the aperture is of a size to accommodate the mounted unit) to pass. For example, if a small window is being defended it costs 2 GA to get in and the element rolls one less action die. Defended apertures can only be entered fully once the defender is defeated. In the element's

turn, the only way he can pass is spending the entire GA needed to enter and then defeating the defender. If he is unsuccessful and survives he ends up outside of the aperture where he started.

Some common sense needs to be applied. Large apertures such as gates that are wide open will only affect mounted using these rules. If you write a scenario be sure to designate the effects of the apertures.

Walls are similar. Short walls cost +2 GA to climb over or +1 GA if there is a friendly figure adjacent that can help. Tall walls cost +3 GA to climb over (if possible) or +2 GA if there are two friendly figures adjacent that can help. Defended walls cost -1 AD if infantry to climb over. Ladders reduce the cost to just +1 GA. If the defender is not defeated then the element ends up back at the bottom of the wall. Mounted units are, of course, ineffective at assaulting or even climbing walls. Your elements' inability to take walls due to 'cold' dice could have you climbing walls.

Some weapons can be used to make attacks into apertures easier and some are not suited for such work. Some apertures are classified as Hard, which prevents some weapons from being effective. Specific rules will be supplied in scenarios as needed.



Elevation Effects on Melee and Movement

It costs +1 GA to move up a normal elevation. If the elevation is steep it costs an + 2 GA. If the elevation is defended it costs a -1 AD for infantry and -2 AD for mounted. For example a normal elevation that is defended costs +1 GA and the element rolls one less Action Die for infantry to assault. If the defender is not defeated during the turn of movement the attacker does not attain the elevation and remains below where he started.

Zones of Control

An element exerts a Zone of control 4" in radius from the center of the element's base. Any attacker entering that Zone of Control must move in a straight line to contact the opponent or move in a straight line away from the opponent. Infantry cannot exert a Zone of Control over Mounted units, but Mounted units can exert it on Infantry and other Mounted units.



Combat

Combat is won or lost based on Offensive and Defensive Opportunities. If an element cannot answer an Offensive Opportunity (or more if the element is very tough) with one of his Defensive Opportunities then that element is removed (or it's fate is checked depending on how the game is being played.)

The active element rolls dice, determines OO,GA, DO and then plays each action. As soon as they place their first OO on an opponent that opponent activates and determines their OO, GA & DO. The Attacker plays all of his Offensive opportunities. If the defender can match them with Defensive Opportunities then he gets to play his Offensive Opportunities but if not then the element is removed from play. One DO counters one OO. It takes 1 unanswered OO to eliminate an element.

Toughness: If an element is deemed to be tough it takes 2 unanswered OO's to eliminate . If the element is deemed to be very tough it takes 3 unanswered OO's to eliminate.

Exception: Infantry vs. Mounted

Mounted units can opt to refuse contact. When the infantry is activated and moved into contact the Mounted Unit has the option to be activated immediately, even before the infantry rolls dice, and use a move-only action. If the Mounted Unit is "turn done" (i.e. has already been activated) it may not use this option. The infantry must still roll their dice and become turn done.

Exception: Mounted vs. Spear Armed Infantry

Horses don't like spears and don't like charging them at all. After moving the mounted unit, *but before rolling action dice*, test the morale of the unit. If failed the Mounted Unit does NOT roll action dice. All action dice are lost. Return the mounted unit to where it started from.

Effects of Soft Cover

For each model tree that line-of-sight passes through (any part), for any form of missile attack, apply -1 AD to the attack. It is possible for a target to be impossible to hit due to intervening trees. This rule may or may not apply to other types of terrain. Shrubs and bushes only count if the target is adjacent to them. The same goes for large rocks or other hard cover, however 2 action dice are removed instead. Pavises and mantlets (devices used to shield troops from archery) are good for 1 action die of protection as well. Square building corners are worth 1 action die; round corners provide no cover.

Fate (optional)

For an advanced scenario you can roll to see what happens as a result of wounds: Stun (out 1 turn), Wounded (-1 AD), Concussed (out until revived; requires an active figure to spend one whole turn giving aide), Dead (the player must compose a death Haiku and present it at the end of the game) In large multiplayer games this only makes sense to track with special characters. I almost never use this rule at convention games. Roll a D6 for the fate.

Fate	
1.	Dead
2.	Dead
3.	Dead
4.	Concussed
5.	Wounded
6.	Stun

Conversions and Re-rolls

Some weapons and armor give better range values for generating OO and DO. Some only improve things marginally. Re-rolls and Conversions given for particular actions show this. A weapon might give a conversion of +1 OO and a sword/shield combo might give a +IDO conversion for the melee action, for example. Once dice

are rolled do the following: Apply automatic conversion for movement (Fast - 1DO). Then apply specific conversions for the given action. After that perform the allowed rerolls of General Action Dice. **At the end of all the automatic conversions and rerolling one can ALWAYS convert an OO or DO into a GA AND one can ALWAYS re-roll a 1 or a 6.**

Turn Done

When an element is done with his turn it is possible that someone will want to gang up on him and kill him. Since he has already been activated and is likely exposed, unless he has some DO's left over from his activation, he is at a disadvantage. However each element is rated for the number of Turn Done dice they have. These dice are rolled for every attack against the element. They can generate OO's and DO's only. No conversions are allowed. You may use re-rolls as specified under melee if attacked in melee but not if attacked by missile fire. The number of turn done dice varies; every element has at least one. Depending on special abilities, training, armor and weapons this may increase. 3 turn-done dice are pretty good and anything above 3 is amazing (and perhaps to be avoided.)

Designing Elements

These are guidelines and not definitive rules. Each period in history has it's own set of assumptions and how you design elements may be different than how I envision it. Accept it as a challenge and have fun. As modules are produced you will get a lot of ideas for how to design your own elements. A nice goal would be a point value system that allows players to create their own units, determine upkeep and recruitment costs and be able to plug into a campaign system. In 16 years of war gaming I have never seen an open ended system like that work but, hey, it would be gaming utopia.

I used the following system to design elements. First I classified troops by their Melee and Missile weapon skill. I give them 1-4 Action Dice. Infantry gets 5 Action Dice for movement and Mounted get 8-10. I then give Action Dice ratings to weapons. 1 for a basic weapon, 2 for good weapons. Weapons can then be modified to have extra defensive or offensive bonuses (in the form of rerolls and conversions.). Be conservative on the conversions, they are very powerful. Don't give more than 3 rerolls of any type. Armor gives no Action Dice but determines the range that generates DO and can also give re-rolls. 1 Action Die is for your basic unarmored guy. Two is for armored elements. Three would be for only complete armor from head to toe. Toss in re-rolls and conversions for differentiating different armor types.

If a elements is particularly skilled in the realm of combat you can increase his range for generating OO from 6 (normal) to 5-6 (elite). If they are puissant at arms *beyond all worldly reckoning* then increase it to 4-6 (not recommended). Mounted elements get 2 extra action dice in *melee* and *move and shoot* and have a base move of 10 instead of 5 AD.



Figures and terrain from the author's collection

Example of Play

1

In this example we have two Samurai. On the left, a Samurai of the red clan and on the right, an opposing Samurai of the green clan. Let's assume that both Samurai are equal and that the action dice for them is; Move: 5, Melee: 5 and that they get Offensive Opportunities on 6's and Defensive Opportunities on 1's. They have no re-rolls or conversions.



Red gets activated. Range is determined to be 5 inches. Red wants to Melee Green and declares this. He must also declare if he will be moving fast or normal. It will take 3 General Actions to cover the distance at normal speed or only 2 General Actions at Fast. Red opts for Fast, even though one of his natural DO dice will automatically convert to a GA die.

He moves his figure into contact and rolls 5 action

2

Red rolls and gets 2 DO's, 2 GA's and 1 OO.

One of the DO's will get moved to the GA pile.



3



Two GA's are expended on the movement, 1 DO, GA and OO remain. Since the GA die is a one Red can re-roll it for free in the hopes it will come up either as a DO or a OO.

4



Alas! It came up a two, worthless for combat. Now the Offensive Opportunity die is used against the Green Samurai. This activates the Green Samurai who rolls 5 action dice for melee. He declares normal movement. This is important, for if he survives he will be able to use general actions ~ so it can have an effect.

5

Excellent! Or is it? There are two Offensive Opportunities but where are the Defensive ones? Green is shocked that he doesn't have even a single DO to counter Red's OO. Luckily he can re-roll the sixes. He does so, one at a time, and comes up with more general actions. 5 General Actions can't save him from Red's Katana! He uses them to write a death Haiku!



You're Joking, right?



6



Red saves his Defensive Opportunity. He could have converted it to a General Action and moved 4 inches, but he has wisely opted to maintain it should another Green Samurai come this turn to avenge his brother!

Module 1: The Japanese Art of War

This module's purpose is to bring to life your Samurai armies for skirmish warfare. The time period it covers is from 9th century A.D. up to 17th Century A.D. A remarkable amount of history falls between those dates and it won't be all covered in detail. However it is the hope that through vignettes you will get a flavor of ancient Japanese history and be encouraged to learn more.

A great online discussion group for this period in history can be found at the following web address:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Gekokujo>

Force Composition

A force consists of 1 to 13 units which works well with a single suit from a deck of poker cards. An infantry unit consists of 5 – 7 elements. A mounted unit consists of 3-5. An element is a single entity such as a foot Samurai with Yari or a mounted Sohei with No-Dachi for example. Faster play can be had if the unit consists of homogeneous elements (i.e. don't mix ashigaru and samurai in the same unit), but feel free to mix and match if you have a limited number of figures; work with what you have. You can change the scale of the game and have a 1:1 correspondence of units and elements when the number of figures you have is just a handful – just ignore the morale rules. There is an economy of scale that comes from homogeneity in that a small game with a few figures plays only slightly faster than a larger game with homogenous units.

Unit activation is via card draw as described in the core rules. Given the chaotic nature of warfare in Japan there can be more than two forces involved in any fight. For example there could be two Samurai Forces opposed and a reinforcement force of Samurai or an intervening monk force. Some of the scenarios will depict these multiway battles.

SUGGESTION: No more than 150 elements be involved in any one battle. First time players should try the game out with no more than 10 elements and no more than 2 units each.

Morale System

The morale system is quite simple—as it should be in a skirmish game. Any unit that starts its activation with less figures than its break number must make a morale check. This applies only when the unit is activated by card draw. If activated by combat it is not necessary to check morale—the unit is too busy!

This chart shows unit size and break number. It applies to all types of units.

Simply roll a D6 and compare it to the morale factor. For Heinen and Bushi this will be their Loyalty, for Sohei this will be devotion. There isn't any difference, conceptually, between the two. The name difference is there for color.

Morale Break Number	
Starting Number of Figures	Break Number
3	2
4	2
5	3
6	3
7	4

What the unit does after failing depends on the class of troop. Refer to the groups below and their individual morale reaction charts. Once the unit has failed morale, every time it is activated check loyalty/Devotion again—if it passes it is no longer broken and will operate as normal. If it fails, roll on its table again.

Heinan

1: **Cowards!** Unit runs for the hills and is removed immediately.

2-5: **Fall back!** The unit must use a move action and move away from the enemy via disengage.

6: **What do we do?** Unit will take no actions this turn. If attacked activated elements will do only a move action.

Bushi

1: **Suicide by Combat!** The unit may not disengage from combat. If it is not in combat it rushes into combat with the nearest foe (even if the elements must use every single action die just to make combat) and continues to do so until the unit is eliminated or the game ends. This morale state cannot be recovered from. "It's a Japanese thing, you wouldn't understand."

2-5: **Fall Back!** The unit falls back via a *fast* move action and forms up back to back.

6: **Treachery!** The unit switches to another force! Include all forces but your own and randomize which force it goes to. This includes other friendly forces in multi-player games.

Sohei

1: **Suicide by Combat!** The unit may not disengage from combat. If it is not in combat it rushes into combat with the nearest foe (even if the elements must use every single action die just to make combat) and continues to do so until the unit is eliminated or the game ends. This morale state cannot be recovered from. "It's a Zen thing, you wouldn't understand."

2-5: **Fall Back!** The unit falls back to and attempts to defend the most religious item on the board. This may be The Emperor, The Abbot, a shrine, a bell or if nothing of that nature presents itself the best and nearest cover!

6: **Fanatics to the Cause!** The unit rallies and activates as normal! *This unit may no longer fail morale during this battle.*

Quick and Dirty Campaign Rules

Building a Force

For a balanced homebrew game try the following. Give each player a number of points to build up their force with. They are restricted to a total of 13 units. Any Heinin units cost 1 point. Any foot Samurai units cost 2 points. Mounted Samurai Units cost 3 points. Command stands cost 3 pt to build plus 1 point per sub-commander. Mounted command stands cost 4 pts to build plus 2 points per sub-commander. Sohei units aren't bought. You donate points to a shrine and hope they send good reinforcements.

A unit is simply a basic unit at minimum strength. Infantry units are always 5 elements and Cavalry units are always 3 elements. A unit can have less than half of its troops with Yumi bows and be armed with another melee weapon such as Katanas or Yari. If a unit has more than half with bows then the unit must have only basic melee weapons. You may bring the total number of bows over half if you use the expanded troops you can buy as upgrades. The expanded elements can be regular melee elements, they can be missile elements or they can be standard bearers. You can only have 1 standard bearer per unit.

Upgrades

After the end of a battle the losing side gets 2 upgrades and the winning side gets 4 upgrades. You may also upgrade units when you purchase them. 1 upgrade will repair a unit's damage up to 5 elements. 1 upgrade can add 1 more element to a full strength unit (melee, missile or standard bearer.) Infantry units max out at 7 elements and cavalry units max out at 5 elements. Samurai can have their OO range upgraded to 5-6 for 1 upgrade. 1 upgrade can turn a Retainer unit into a Samurai unit, but only if it took casualties in battle. 1 upgrade can take a unit armed with basic Katanas and upgrade it to superior Katanas. You can build new units at the costs listed above under "*Building a Force.*"

Special Upgrades

A unit may be upgraded to have the ability to make a 'Famous Shot.' This allows the unit to have **one element** fire an extreme range shot (unlimited, line of site) at twice basic Missile AD value. Once taken, regardless of results, the ability is lost. If you do manage to score the hit feel free to jump up and down in ecstatic celebration. Be sure to mark the element - clearly it brought great luck! May I suggest that a special lighted cabinet is in order for the figure? Try and come up with your own Special Upgrades. Share them with others!

Mixing Melee and Ranged Troops

Mixed melee/ranged units are allowed. Of the 5 basic elements of an infantry unit, for example, at least 3 must be regular, but the last two may have missile weapons. If a 6th or 7th element is added they may also be bow armed. Further the 6th or 7th element may, instead, be a standard bearer. This element has no melee or missile value but generates DO as normal during movement. If the unit fails loyalty then remove this element and ignore the failure. This is a one-time bonus. The unit is removed because it is in the background waving the flag and inspiring the combatants! Optionally you can force the player to shout "Ureshikute naranai!" ("I can't help feeling happy!")

The following page contains the information for the basic unit types, weapons and armor. The units that follow were made from a composition of this information. The Move action AD was set at 5 for infantry and 10 for cavalry. The mounted arm was also given +2AD for Melee.

Unit Type	Melee AD	Missile AD	OO Range	Notes
Samurai	4	3	6	May increase OO to 5-6 via upgrade.
Retainer	3	2	6	May upgrade to Samurai after battle if unit took casualties.
Ashigaru	2	1	6	Fight. Suffer. Die. At least life is simple.
Conscript	2	1	6	Test loyalty whenever unit is engaged in combat or attacked by missile fire.
Peasant	2	0	6	Test loyalty on every activation. May not attack Samurai or Monks.
Monk	2	2	6	They may be scum but they are fanatics.
Sohei	5	4	5-6	The Few, The Proud, The Sohei.

Weapon Type	AD	RR/Conv	Notes
Yari	2	—	This is your basic spear. It requires very little training, can be effective in the right hands and is very easy to produce. Ignores -1 AD for defended apertures and elevations. Suffers additional -1 AD when attempting to cross a defended wall.
Katana (Basic)	2	+1 RR	This weapon is your basic Katana sword. It isn't the finest manufactured blade but it will have to serve as best it can in battle.
Katana (Superior)	3	+1 RR	This is the weapon of the true Samurai. Here is a blade worth naming. It comes from a master forge. It is a weapon truly worth fearing!
Naganata	2	+1 RR	This weapon is basically a sword on a stick. It makes a great glaive but is difficult to master. Only Samurai and Sohei may wield this weapon. Ignores -1 AD for defended apertures and elevations. Suffers additional -1 AD when attempting to cross a defended wall.
Yumi	2/1	—	This is the bow of the Samurai. In the hands of the right person it is a deadly instrument of death. The first AD figure is given for range up to 20" and the second is given for range up to 40".
Tetsubo	1	+1 OO	Only the very skilled would attempt to wield this iron bat. The OO conversion is powerful. A rare, almost gimmick weapon that only the Samurai or the Sohei may wield – it makes for an interesting change of pace.
Matchlock	2/1	+1 OO	Introduced by the Portuguese in the 16 th century, the matchlock musket became quite popular and proved it's worth at many great battles. The first AD figure is given for range up to 20" and the second is given for range up to 40".
Basic Melee	1	—	Use this for troops who have a main weapon already.

Armor Type	AD	RR/Conv	Notes
None	1	—	Hey, you in the thong and the sandals!
Light	1	+1 RR	This is for elements with only basic protection such as a war hat or some collected armor bits.
Moderate	2	—	This is for elements that have been supplied with a Do (body armor) and perhaps a helmet.
Full	2	+1 RR	This is for your typical Samurai Armor. Kabuto, Do, Sunate, Sode, etc. If the Samurai have old school Ō-Yōroi box armor then the Move action is only 4 AD but the unit gets a free upgrade.
Heavy	2	+2 RR	This is full armor as above but with Hidate leggings. Move AD is reduced to 4.

Heinin Class Troops

The peasant class came into importance in the 16th century. As the armies grew larger so did the need for peasants to fill the ranks. While the Samurai provided the backbone of the armies, the Heinin provided strength in numbers. Given weapons they could train easily with, this class of troop is useful in garrisoning positions, holding defenses and guarding flanks. When loyalty is failed roll a D6.
 1: Unit runs for the hills and is removed immediately. 2-5 unit must use a move action and move away from the enemy via disengage.
 6: Unit will take no actions this turn. If attacked activated elements will do only a move action. Each activation after the loyalty check fails the unit checks loyalty again to see if the unit rallies or if another roll is to be made to determine what the broken unit does.

Peasant (not armored, random farm implements)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 2-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	3	—
OO	—	6	—
GA	2-6	2-5	—
DO	1	1	—
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	—	—	—
Notes: Vassals of their Lord, they may not take up arms against a Samurai unless lead by Samurai. Make a loyalty test every time the unit is activated.			

Ashigaru (lightly armored, yari)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 3-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	4	3@20" 2@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	2-6	2-5	2-5
DO	1	1	1
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+1	+1
Notes: Ignores -1 AD for defended apertures and elevations. Suffers additional -1 AD when attempting to cross a defended wall.			

Ashigaru (lightly armored, yumi)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 3-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	3	3@20" 2@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	2-6	2-5	2-5
DO	1	1	1
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+1	+1
Notes: When whole units are armed with yumi their melee weapon is generally a short sword.			

Ashigaru (lightly armored, Matchlock)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 3-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	3	3@20" 2@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	2-6	2-5	2-5
DO	1	1	1
Conv.	—	—	+1 OO
Re-Rolls	+1	+1	+1
Notes: Units of matchlock had short swords for melee defense. The musket itself has great penetration but a slow reload. Units may only fire every other turn.			

Ashigaru (moderately armored, yari)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 3-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	4	3@20" 2@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	—	—	—
Notes: Ignores -1 AD for defended apertures and elevations. Suffers additional -1 AD when attempting to cross a defended wall.			

Ashigaru (moderately armored, yumi)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 3-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	3	3@20" 2@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	—	—	—
Notes: When whole units are armed with yumi their melee weapon is generally a short sword.			

Ashigaru (moderately armored, Matchlock)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 3-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	3	3@20" 2@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	+1 OO
Re-Rolls	—	—	—
Notes: Units of matchlock had short swords for melee defense. The musket itself has great penetration but a slow reload. Units may only fire every other turn.			

Bushi Class Troops

The Bushi, the subaru, those who serve. These are the knights of medieval Japan. These are the men who trained their whole lives to die with honor on the battlefield in the cause of their Lord. They were the elite. Samurai may be trained at special schools, or ryu, and have their OO range improved to 5-6. Retainers may be upgraded to Samurai. When loyalty is failed roll a D6. 1: Suicide by combat—the unit may not withdraw from combat. If it is not in combat it rushes into combat with the nearest foe and continues to do so until the unit is eliminated or the game ends. 2-5: The unit falls back via a move action and forms up back to back. 6: Treachery! The unit switches to another force! Include all forces but your own and randomize which force it goes to. This includes other friendly forces.

Retainer (moderate armor, katana)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 4-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	5	4@20" 3@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	—	—	—
Notes:			

Retainer (moderate armor, yari)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 4-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	5	4@20" 3@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	—	—	—
Notes: Ignores -1 AD for defended apertures and elevations. Suffers additional -1 AD when attempting to cross a defended wall.			

Samurai (full armor, katana)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 4-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	6	5@20" 4@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+2	+1
Notes: Katana can be upgraded to superior for an additional melee AD.			

Samurai (full armor, superior katana)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 4-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	7	5@20" 4@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+2	+1
Notes:			

Samurai (full armor, yumi)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 4-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	5	5@20" 4@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+1	+1
Notes: these troops have a short sword available for melee defense.			

Samurai (full armor, Naganata)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 4-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	6	5@20" 4@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+2	+1
Notes: Ignores -1 AD for defended apertures and elevations. Suffers additional -1 AD when attempting to cross a defended wall.			

Samurai (full armor, tetsubo)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 4-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	5	5@20" 4@40"
OO	—	5-6	5-6
GA	3-6	3-4	3-4
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	+1 OO	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+1	+1
Notes: Only experts can be successful with this weapon which is why the OO range is 5-6.			

Mounted Samurai (full armor, katana)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 4-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	10	8	5@20" 4@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+2	+1
Notes: Katana can be upgraded to superior for an additional melee AD.			

Mounted Samurai (full armor, yari)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 4-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	10	8	5@20" 4@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+1	+1
Notes: Ignores -1 AD for defended apertures and elevations. This assumes the element can fit through the aperture.			

Mounted Samurai (full armor, naganata)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 4-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	10	8	5@20" 4@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+2	+1
Notes: Katana can be upgraded to superior for an additional melee AD.			

Mounted Samurai (full armor, yumi)			
TDD: 1	Loyalty: 4-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	10	7	5@20" 4@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+1	+1
Notes:			

Sohei Class Troops

The fighting monks sought enlightenment through perfection of battlefield skills. Their fortress monasteries were as impressive as their devotion. However, it is impossible to field an army of elite, for there are too few. So the monks were forced to fill their ranks with men at arms. These men were often wanderers, derelicts and so forth who sought salvation in the temples. We shall call the elite the Sohei and the man at arms simply monk. When devotion is failed roll a D6. 1: Suicide by combat. See the Bushi section for details. 2-5: Fall back to protect shrine or into cover. 6: Fanatics to the cause! The unit rallies and activates as normal!

Monk (moderately armored, yari)			
TDD: 1	Devotion: 5-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	4	4@20" 3@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	—	—	—
Notes: Ignores -1 AD for defended apertures and elevations. Suffers additional -1 AD when attempting to cross a defended wall.			

Monk (moderately armored, hammer or ax)			
TDD: 1	Devotion: 5-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	4	4@20" 3@40"
OO	—	6	6
GA	3-6	3-5	3-5
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	—	—	—
Notes:			

Sohei (full armor, naganata)			
TDD: 1	Devotion: 5-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	5	8	6@20" 5@40"
OO	—	5-6	6
GA	3-6	3-4	3-4
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+2	+1
Notes: Ignores -1 AD for defended apertures and elevations. Suffers additional -1 AD when attempting to cross a defended wall.			

Mounted Sohei (full armor, superior katana)			
TDD: 1	Devotion: 5-		
Action	Move	Melee	Aimed
AD	10	10	6@20" 5@40"
OO	—	5-6	5-6
GA	3-6	3-4	3-4
DO	1-2	1-2	1-2
Conv.	—	—	—
Re-Rolls	+1	+2	+1
Notes:			

History of Early Japan and the Samurai

This is a pocket history of the early Japanese struggles to figure out who would have power over all of Nippon. It covers some exceptionally interesting aspects of Court Life. It introduces you to some very Japanese behaviors and I think you will find that this section of history is exceptionally colorful. We take you now to an ancient land, filled with Emperors, Upstarts, Princes, Dictators and vast wars. More will follow. Details about stories in here will be expanded upon and more history will be added over the years. Enjoy!

In ancient times the Japanese capital of Heavenly Peace (Heian-Kyo) was a place of much strife. In 671 Emperor Tenchi died and there followed a terrible succession dispute between two heirs. Tenchi's brother cloistered himself and had taken a monk's habit only 1 month before Tenchi passed on. The Jade Throne thus passed to Tenchi's nephew. Tenchi's brother did not remain cloistered for long and launched a successful attack that was spearheaded by a new innovation at the time: mounted archers. Later in history, the mounted archer would be synonymous with the Samurai.

In the 10th century there formed Warrior Houses. They had a central family at their core and lineage to the Imperial House. They were formed when their ancestors were sent to the frontier to open up land, farm rice and pacify the Emishi (technically barbarians, but used here as anyone not recognizing the supremacy of the Yamato clan.) This formed a system of loyalty and reward.

Often times the way forward for the Samurai was to accept tasks and gain the rewards of being successful. Samurai would compete heavily among each other to earn one or more High Offices of State. With these offices came rice bearing land and power. In 935 Taira Masakado revolted when he was turned down for the Office of Kebiishi (First Officer in Charge of Heian-Kyo's Police Affairs).

In the 12th Century the two clans that were the model for all the other Samurai to emulate were the Taira and the Minamoto. Both were extremely different in their approach. The Taira were centered in the West and did their best to integrate themselves into the affairs of The Court. Their family temple was Itsukushima Shrine on the island of Miyajima. They were cultured and fashionable.

The Minamoto were centered in the untamed East. They got their trim by fighting long wars with the Emishi. Their family shrine was Tsurugaoka Hachiman in Kamakura. They were rough mountain men and the behavior lived up to this image.

The Gempei War was a revolt. In 1180 the Minamoto planned to start a rebellion against the Taira who they felt had undue weight in the court. It was the first time that clan would fight clan openly in a protracted war over which the Emperor was not strong enough to control. As the Minamoto forces were in motion, but before they were properly in place, Minamoto Yorimasa was discovered trying to raise the rebel flag. His retreat with his troops took him south to the River Uji. He was hoping to meet up with the monks from Kofuku-ji temple at Nara. This river has a bridge over it. This bridge, as well as the one at Seta, has proven throughout the history of the Samurai to be instrumental in controlling the capital city of Kyoto as it forms a natural barrier and defensive point. Yorimasa had support from the monks from Miidera but even so the battle was lost and Yorimasa committed

suicide.

The monks of the various temples are often good fighters but unreliable allies. They were motivated by different variables than the Samurai. However, often it was important to secure their alliance before you attempted any military adventurism for they could prove to be a wild card.

In 1182 the battle of Tonamiyama was fought. Minamoto Yoshinaka defeated his Taira enemies in a most unusual way. He attached torches to the horns of cows and stampeded them into battle and forced a retreat of the Taira into a dead-end valley. He entered the capital a victor but showed terrible discipline as he allowed his troops to loot the city. Needless to say, the Minamoto Elders's were not pleased and, while he had won a great victory, the negative side effects of his handling of the capital were most extreme. The family dispatched Minamoto Yoshitsune to sanction Yoshinaka with extreme prejudice.

The Taira gained an advantage by taking charge of the person of the Child Emperor Antoku (who was also the grandson of Taira Kiyomori). The Emperors had learned that in order to have real power they needed to abdicate to a young heir and rule from behind the throne. Having possession of the Emperor allowed the Taira to claim they were acting in his name. Having support of the Emperor, even in this extreme case, guaranteed support from other Samurai. A special note should be made here about the Imperial Regalia. These consist of jewels, a mirror and a sword. They are said to have passed down from the Gods and are a large part of the Japanese mythology. There is no difference between possession of The Regalia and the legitimacy of the Emperor. This will play a bigger role later in the history.

In 1184 the Taira were defeated at Ichi-no-Tani (near present day Kobe). The force there managed to escape but they were pursued into sea. Their fleet took them to the Shikoku island of Yashima where another battle was fought a few months later. Minamoto morale was waning in this fierce contest. The Taira seemed poised to win the battle. During a lull between the exhausted contestants the Taira tied a war fan up on the mast of one of their ships. It was put there as a taunt and a challenge to the Minamoto. It was a clever plan. The Taira had hoped to get the Minamoto to expend precious arrows attempting to shoot it down. For the Minamoto, it was time for a hero. A young retainer stepped forward by the name of Nasu Munetaka. Taking careful aim, he slowly prepared to make the shot of a lifetime. The fan fluttered in the breeze. Munetaka eyed his target grimly and let fly the bolt. The fan shattered and its pieces fluttered into the sea! Minamoto morale was lifted to a great height as Munetaka's famous shot placed him in the history books and here you are reading about him almost 1000 years later.

The Battle of Yashima proved to be indecisive as well. The Taira got away with the Emperor and the Minamoto picked up and pursued them. In 1185 they were finally cornered for the decisive battle.

The Battle of Dan-no-Ura was ostensibly a sea battle. However the Japanese never developed the art of sea warfare during this period. Instead of what you may imagine a normal sea battle to look like, consider this more a melee battle between Samurai on rafts. It occurred in the Straights of Shimonoseki (in the gap between Honshu and Kyushu). The Minamoto gained a decisive defeat of the Taira, which set off a chain reaction of suicides

among the survivors of the fallen. Lost in the battle were both the sacred ancient sword and the Child Emperor who drowned. It is said that the Heike crabs pulled from the sea in that area these days have the faces of the Samurai in relief on their shells and contain the spirit of dead Samurai. A new sword was later commissioned and it is this sword that has continued to pass down from generation to generation even to the present day.

Go-Toba ascends to become Emperor in 1184. There could have been a dispute between who was the real Emperor, Antoku or Go-Toba – however Yoritomo was unimpressed with the Taira claim as he had the majority of the Regalia and increasing power in the court. Once the Taira had left Kyoto they lost their support in the court and in the West. Go-Toba was immediately cornered by religious ceremony, which he was obliged to perform. Since he was a child there was little else he could do. Behind him was Go-Shirakawa, a relative in the Imperial line, ruling where Go-Toba could not.

The Daimyo of the Minamoto was Yoritomo. He broke with the tradition of marrying his daughters into the Imperial Family and pursuing the normal institutions of the Imperial Government. Instead he established a new form of hereditary government based on the dictatorship of the Shogun. The Emperor had already established a temporary title for the “Barbarian Subduing Commander in Chief” as “Seii-tai Shogun.” Yoritomo made it permanent and hereditary for Minamotos only. It was surrendered back to the Emperor officially on 4 January 1188. The Minamotos knew better than to set up the new government in Kyoto where The Court could have undue influence. They established the new government in Kamakura (their home) and it became known as the Bakufu government (Bakufu is derived from Maku which is the special field tent for battlefield commanders). It was this military based feudal government that defined the power of the Samurai for centuries to come. The government was official in 1192 after Go-Shirakawa’s death and started the period known as the Kamakura Period (1192 - 1333).

The Minamoto’s hold on power was short lived. In 1198 Yoritomo was killed in a riding accident. A series of short lived successions and assassinations over the next twenty years gave Yoritomo’s widow and her family, the Hojo’s, a way of securing power by naming a young Minamoto heir and presiding over him with a Regent (called a Shikken).

The death of Yoritomo was to have even more fallout. Yoritomo was not pleased with the current Emperor for he was brash and daring and acted like an Emperor of Old. He was the type to take charge and he was clearly dangerous even at the age of 18. In 1198 Go-Toba abdicated the throne to his infant son without seeking the permission of the Kamakura government. Yoritomo was to deal with this upstart but died before anything could be done. Go-Toba befriended the Minamoto Shoguns that were to follow. However, when they were murdered he realized danger that the Hojo represented as they did everything they could to secure the power of the government.

In 1221 the Emperor attempted to regain power. The Hojo Shikken needed good candidates for Shogun so they could rule. The Imperial Family, seeing this as a weakness, attempted to take advantage of it. The Hojo needed the permission of the Emperor to accept their candidate for Shogun. They made many suggestions, even going so far as to suggest one of Go-Toba’s son’s take the throne. Go-Toba refused them all and even openly courted Samurai to stand with him against the Hojo! Go-Toba sought to restore Imperial Power.

The Emperor sought the support of the various monk institutions. In 1219 there was a land dispute between the monks of Enryaku-ji and Miidera. Seeking to leave a grievance before the throne the monks marched on Kyoto. The palace guards scattered them, but instead of dealing harshly with the monks, Go-Toba offered a solution if they agreed to his call to arms against the Shogun.

To start the attempt to secure Imperial power back, Go-Toba issued a proclamation on 6 June 1221 declaring the Hojo Shikken Yoshitoki to be an outlaw and that the whole eastern half of Japan was declared in a state of rebellion. Yoshitoki was fortunate that he had very fast couriers and he got the news before it could be used to knock him off balance. Since the best defense is a strong offense, the Bakufu attacked in 3 prongs. 1 prong traveled along the seacoast on the Tokaido Road. A second penetrated the mountains along the Nakasendo Road. Finally the third prong was tasked to make a wide sweep around lake Biwa. Within a month the road to Kyoto was opened for the Kamakura. Go-Toba surrendered the next day.

Corruption was not new to Japan. However one form of it did get out of hand. There were Pirates that operated off of the island, the mainland and Kyushu who raided China. The problem got so severe that The Great Khan of China, Kublai Khan, sent messages to Japan asking that they do all in their power to stop this. The favors and corruption were too widespread however and Japan was not able to curb the scourge of piracy. China reacted with military might.

The Mongols invade not once but twice. By 1281 the Kami-Kazi wind helped defeat the Mongols' 2nd invasion. The history of this would require too much space for this document so look for it to be dealt with in it's own module. The thing to know is that the Mongol Invasions disrupt the normal pattern of Loyalty and Reward and upset the balance for the Kamakura government. When the Shogun makes an edict for Samurai to put down a rebellion within Japan often times there is land to give away as a reward. However, when all of Japan is fighting an outside force there is no land to redistribute. Adding to the demands of the Samurai, the Temples and Shrines also all claimed responsibility for the Kami-Kazi!

In 1284, the Shogun who saved Japan during the time of the Invasions, Tokomuni, dies. His successor is not nearly his equal. He is constantly approached about necessary rewards for actions during the Mongol Invasions. Again the Imperial family sees this weakness as an opportunity. In the years to come they will take advantage of this situation.

In the year 1318 the new Emperor was Go-Daigo. At 30 years of age he was ambitious and proud. To him the Shogun and the Shikken were weak and plagued with problems. He sought nothing else other than total control of Japan and to get that he had to eliminate them. He made many preparations.

In 1328 the Emperor's son, who had been a monk was promoted to Abbot of Mount Hiei. The Prince's name was Morinaga and was known as The Prince of the Great Pagoda. He was an able man in both cunning and warrior prowess. His father had abolished the tradition of the so-called "Cloistered Emperor" and was ruling directly from the throne. What made him powerful was that his reforms were quite often well received. In comparison the Bakufu Government was poorly run and organized. They were sluggish to respond and

even when they did send an army against the Emperor they bungled it. They failed to achieve surprise or speed of execution.

During his reign the Emperor made sure he gave many generous donations to the temples at Nara and succeeded in winning their support. With his son in control of Mount Hiei he had a lock on the feisty monks.

In September of 1331 the Bakufu decided that the Emperor's growing power was beginning to be a threat to their position and his challenge had better be met or they were going to lose control. They decided it was time to move against him.

The Emperor had plenty of time to react, because as mentioned earlier the Bakufu couldn't organize a parade let alone a military operation. The Emperor had the choice of staying in the city and facing the Bakufu troops off from The Court or he could move to a strategically easier place to defend. He chose defense and went to Todai-ji Temple of Nara, taking with him all of the symbols of Sovereignty. As was mentioned before - possession of the Regalia and Legitimacy of the Emperor are inseparable concepts. However, upon arrival, his military commanders determined that Todai-ji, while impressive, didn't provide ample fortification should the Bakufu get serious and make an assault. Kasagi Mountain was where they finally made their stand. There a powerful mountain fort was built and the Emperor made it his seat of power.

The Bakufu first opted to attack Mount Hiei, forcing Prince Morinaga to retreat. They then moved to assault Kasagi Mountain. After settling into the siege they tried to reason with Go-Daigo to enter a monastery and end this situation. Go-Daigo told them firmly, no.

Doing so put the Bakufu into a hard position. Either they were forced to complete their assault and possibly harm the Emperor (not acceptable) or they needed to resort to some other means.

Using all the cleverness they had at hand they decided that since the Emperor was removed from the court they could possibly get away with raising someone else to the Throne as Emperor. They needed someone who had a hereditary link to the Yamato line and of course they needed the regalia. On the one hand, this was an unprecedented assault on the Office of the Emperor. Declaring him illegitimate and replacing him might generate a lot of heat from their rivals. On the other hand, not associating the death of the Emperor to the Hojo name was entirely more important.

Meanwhile in Kawachi province a noble samurai by name of Kusunoki Massashige held out for the Emperor against the Hojo. He built a fortified camp called Akasaka on Mount Kongo. Prince Morinaga joined him there and together they shored up the defense. The Emperor moved to join him there too, by passing the Bakufu army but before he could make it the Bakufu capture him. Not able to harm him, they exile him to Oki Island. By November of 1331 Camp Akasaka fell, though the Bakufu was fooled into thinking there had been a mass suicide there and Massashige and Morinaga were able to retreat without being pursued.

This gave Massashige an opportunity to re-entrench himself in a new fortress - Chihaya. Chihaya was impregnable on two sides and nearly so on the other two. It's position and its engineering were as perfect as could be hoped for.

Massashige's campaign of resistance further weakened support for the Bakufu. He recaptured Camp Akasaka and rebuilt it even higher in the mountains. He renamed it Kami-Akasaka. This caused the Western countryside to rise up, for Massashige gave them a great example to live by; the Bakufu could be fought. In 1332 the Emperor returned, hidden under seaweed in a fishing boat. Again the Bakufu were shown to be incompetent.

The Bakufu tried again to send troops against Massashige. They also sent an army against Yoshino (where the Prince was.) A third army was kept in reserve in Kyoto. The assaults against Kami-Akasaka were so bloody that the Bakufu rescinded the orders to capture Massashige and the Prince and instead call for their death. The Prince retreats to Koya-san, a Shingon Monestary, while the Pro-Emperor forces marshal at Chihaya.

The Bakufu armies were played in the most artful fashion. They were drawn into attacks they had no hope of gaining victory from. They were picked at here, reduced there and otherwise harassed from all corners in a war of attrition.

If holding out was the means, what then was the end? If it was to humiliate the Hojo, to show Japan they could be beaten and bullied then it worked and many others considered the possibilities.

It was this war of resistance against the Bakufu that allowed the Emperor to return. He returned to cheering and reverence. His popularity as an underdog figure so frightened the Bakufu that they sent their two ablest generals. This was their undoing.

Nagoshi Takaie and Ashikaga Takauji struck forth. Their mission was to crush the Emperors rebellion against the Shogun and his Shikken. The pro-Emperor forces did all they could to prevent this. A successful ambush killed Nagoshi outright. Back to Kyoto his army retreats. Takauji's forces soon absorb them. This lead to an interesting quandary for Takauji. He was of Minamoto blood. That put him in line to rule from the throne of the Shogun. He could gain this ordination from a captive or grateful Emperor and the Ashikagas would soon not have to worry about being second-class citizens under the Hojo Regency. Go-Daigo was to be the key to his future.

Takauji turned against Kyoto and attacked the Bakufu's HQ at Rokuhara. Rapidly the city fell into their hands. The Hojo were finished. Even the Emperor was able to get the Hojo Emperor to abdicate without incident. News of the restoration of the Emperor and the capture of Kokuhara caused many Samurai to pledge their allegiance to the Imperial Seat.

A samurai called Nitta Yoshisada descended from the mountains and into Kamakura. He divided up his army in sections and fought the Bakufu on their own ground. He drove them back until finally, with Kamakura burning around them they committed suicide.

Kamakura's role as a focus of power in Japan came to an end. Go Daigo was fully successful and power shifted back to Kyoto thus starting the Muromachi Period.

