

Feature Exhibition

Battles of the Great Warring States Heroes

This exhibition illuminates the figures of the warriors who risked their lives on the battlefields of the Warring States period and the circumstances of the battles themselves from two different points of view. The first is the personal letters of the Warring States commanders. Unlike dramatized novels and historical tales, these letters, which were in essence live status reports of the day, clearly convey the actual situation of the warriors and the progress of battles.

The second is the various items and implements that were owned by these Warring States generals. These include swords and armor, of course, but will also feature the tea utensils that were so beloved by them. Thus, we will turn a spotlight not only onto the arts of war for which these men were renowned, but will also look at their cultured side to demystify the nature of their character.

In addition, we will also introduce aspects of the military conflicts of the day through paintings of battle scenes.

Hōsa Library Exhibition Rooms 1 & 2
From July 21 (Sat) to September 2 (Sun), 2018

Section 1
Oda Nobunaga and his Rivals

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In Japan's Warring States period, during the time of Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582), the first unifier of Japan, famed military commanders such as Imagawa Yoshimoto, Asakura Yoshikage, Azai Nagamasa, Takeda Shingen, Uesugi Kenshin, Hōjō Ujimasa, and others were in a state of constant warfare, at times competing and at times forming alliances with each other either in the interest of expanding their territories or for the sake of defending their domains. Nobunaga himself is known to have led a life of constant betrayals and double-crossings, and it was in fact those very generals who were on good terms with him at first who were the ones who gradually raised the banner of revolt against him and contributed to the history of unrest. First, we will unravel the history of the Warring States with a focus on Nobunaga.

Section 2
Hideyoshi and the Heroes

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When Nobunaga was forced to commit suicide on June 2, 1582 (Tenshō 10), as the result of the Honnōji Incident launched by Akechi Mitsuhide, it was Hashiba (Toyotomi) Hideyoshi who defeated Mitsuhide at the Battle of Yamazaki (Ōyamazaki-chō, Kyoto) on June 13 and distinguished himself as Nobunaga's successor. For Hideyoshi to succeed Nobunaga in both name as well as in practice, a confrontation with Nobunaga's second son Nobukatsu was unavoidable and Hideyoshi's army soon clashed with Nobukatsu's troops as well as those of Tokugawa Ieyasu, who had allied with him at Komaki and Nagakute. The Battle of Komaki and Nagakute made clear that Hideyoshi had become the indisputable heir to Nobunaga, and Hideyoshi extended his influence still further to Shikoku, Kyūshu, Kantō, and Ōshū, one after the other.The path toward Hideyoshi's subjugation of the whole of Japan was a dramatic tale of those numerous warrior generals who pledged their allegiance to him alongside those who opposed him and met their downfall.

Section 3
Unification by Tokugawa Ieyasu

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On August 18, 1598 (Keichō 3), Hideyoshi met his end and finally Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542–1616) made his move toward grasping real power. The confrontation between Tokugawa Ieyasu, who was in actuality controlling the Toyotomi administration after Hideyoshi's death, and Ishida Mitsunari and other magistrates who were displeased with that fact intensified, culminating in 1600 (Keichō 5) in the Battle of Sekigahara (Sekigahara-chō, Gifu prefecture). *Daimyō* from all over Japan were split between the eastern forces supporting Ieyasu and the western forces against him, resulting in a major battle. After a fierce struggle, Ieyasu defeated the western forces, but there were still many *daimyō* who favored the Toyotomi among the eastern forces and Hideyoshi's son, Hideyori, was still in good health. Recognizing the Toyotomi as the greatest threat to Tokugawa power, Ieyasu steered a course toward the Battle of Osaka with the intention of destroying the Toyotomi for good.



Chronology of the Warring States Period

year	age			Incident / Description
	ODA NOBUNAGA	TOYOTOMI HIDEYOSHI	TOKUGAWA IEYASU	
1467-1477				The Ōnin-Bunmei Wars (Start of the warring states period)
1534	1			NOBUNAGA was born at Shobata Castle (Aichi Pref.)
1537	4	1		HIDEYOSHI was born in Nakamura, Owari (Aichi Pref.)
1542	9	6	1	IEYASU was born in Okazaki Castle (Aichi Pref.).
1543	10	7	2	Matchlock guns were introduced to Tanegashima island (Kagoshima Pref.).
1549	16	13	8	IEYASU was taken as a hostage by the Imagawa clan.
1553-1564	20-31	17-28	12-23	Battle of Kawanakajima (Nagano Pref.) between Uesugi clan of Echigo (Niigata Pref.) and Takeda clan of Kai (Yamanashi Pref.)
1560	27	24	19	Battle of Okehazama (Aichi Pref.): NOBUNAGA defeated Imagawa Yoshimoto of Suruga (Shizuoka Pref.).
1562	29	26	21	IEYASU made alliance with NOBUNAGA.
1567	34	31	26	NOBUNAGA defeated Saito Tatsuoki in Mino (Gifu Pref.), and placed his residence at Gifu Castle.
1568	35	32	27	NOBUNAGA entered to Kyoto together with Ashikaga Yoshiaki, who was then designated as the Muromachi Shogun.
1570	37	34	29	Battle of Anegawa (Shiga Pref.): NOBUNAGA, in alliance with IEYASU, defeated Asakura clan in Echizen (Fukui Pref.) and Azai clan in northern Ōmi (Shiga Pref.).
1570-1580	37-47	34-44	29-39	NOBUNAGA fought with Honganji Buddhist school of Ishiyama (Osaka Pref.).
1571	38	35	30	NOBUNAGA burned and destroyed Hieizan Enryakuji Temple (Kyoto Pref.).
1572	39	36	31	Battle of Mikatagahara (Shizuoka Pref.): IEYASU was defeated by Takeda Shingen of Kai (Yamanashi Pref.).
1573	40	37	32	NOBUNAGA expelled Shogun Ashikaga Yoshiaki; Muromachi shogunate government collapsed.
1574	41	38	33	NOBUNAGA suppressed Buddhist Uprising in Ise-Nagashima (Mie Pref.).
1575	42	39	34	Battle of Nagashino (Aichi Pref.): NOBUNAGA defeated Takeda Katsuyori of Kai (Yamanashi Pref.).
1576-79	43-46	40-43	35-38	NOBUNAGA constructed Azuchi Castle.
1577-	44	41	36	NOBUNAGA sent troops to fight against Mōri clan in the western region.
1582	49	46	41	NOBUNAGA died on June 2, at the Hon'nōji Incident (Kyoto Pref.), a rebel caused by Akechi Mitsuhide.
1582		46	41	HIDEYOSHI was engaged in wars with Mōri clan in the western region, but ceased fire at the reports of the Hon'nōji incident and the death of NOBUNAGA.
				HIDEYOSHI immediately defeated Akechi Mitsuhide at the battle of Yamazaki (Kyoto Pref.), and held the Oda clan's succession meeting in Kiyosu (Aichi Pref.), nominating NOBUNAGA's grandson San-pōshi as the heir.
1583		47	42	HIDEYOSHI defeated Shibata Katsuie at the battle of Shizugatake (Shiga Pref.), and rose up as the strongest leader of the Oda clan.
				HIDEYOSHI constructed the Osaka castle.
1584		48	43	HIDEYOSHI showed his strength at the battle of Komaki-Nagakute (Aichi Pref.), and became the de facto successor to NOBUNAGA.
1584-86		48-50	43-45	IEYASU became subordinate to HIDEYOSHI after the battle of Komaki-Nagakute.
1585		49	44	HIDEYOSHI conquered Kii (Wakayama Pref.), and forced Chōsokabe clan in Shikoku to surrender.
				HIDEYOSHI became Kanpaku (the highest official rank in the court).
1587		51	46	HIDEYOSHI forced Shimazu clan in Kyūshū to surrender.
1590		54	49	HIDEYOSHI conquered Hōjō clan in Odawara (Kanagawa Pref.), and forced Date Masamune in the north-eastern region to surrender, completing the national unification.
				IEYASU moved to Edo (Tokyo) at the order of HIDEYOSHI.
1592		56	51	HIDEYOSHI sent troops to Joseon (Korean Peninsula).
1597		61	56	HIDEYOSHI sent the 2nd troops to Joseon.
1598		62	57	HIDEYOSHI died in Fushimi Castle (Kyoto Pref.).
1600			59	Battle of Sekigahara (Gifu Pref.): IEYASU defeated the western troops led by Ishida Mitsunari.
				IEYASU grasped the de facto strongest power after the Battle of Sekigahara.
1603			62	IEYASU was appointed as the Shogun and opened up the central government (*Bakufu*) in Edo.
1605			64	IEYASU gave the title of Shogun to his son Hidetada, and nominally retired to Sunpu (Shizuoka Pref.) while retaining military and diplomatic powers.
1614-1615			73-74	Winter & Summer Sieges of Osaka: IEYASU destroyed the Toyotomi Clan and laid the stable ground for the Tokugawa reign.
1616			75	IEYASU died in Sunpu Castle (Shizuoka Pref.).

∗ English text is translated by Maiko Behr and the curatorial staff of the Tokugawa Art Museum.

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