

Kou Suzuki

# *The 800-year History of the Kira Clan*

through Cartoons



Kira Clan 800 Year Festival





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## Foreword

As well as an important year marking the 10th anniversary of the integration Hazu, Kira and Isshiki into the expanded city of Nishio, “2021 (Year 3 of the Reiwa Period)” marks exactly 800 years from Jokyu War of 1221 when the Kira Clan, an important family of the Ashikaga families in the Muromachi shogunate took control of present-day Nishio City, and, to mark the occasion, the “Kira Clan 800 Year Festival,” an historical aimed at bringing even greater peace and harmony to the city’s citizenry, will be held.

Through agreement reached with the Executive Committee, this booklet has been produced in cartoon format to advertise the “Kira Clan 800 Year Anniversary” and present the history of the Kira Clan in a way that anyone can read easily and enjoy, a task entrusted to Kou Suzuki, an author who is a native of Nishio City and engaged in activities nationwide. We would like to take this opportunity to express our heartfelt thanks to Mr. Suzuki for willingly taking time out of his busy schedule to undertake this project.

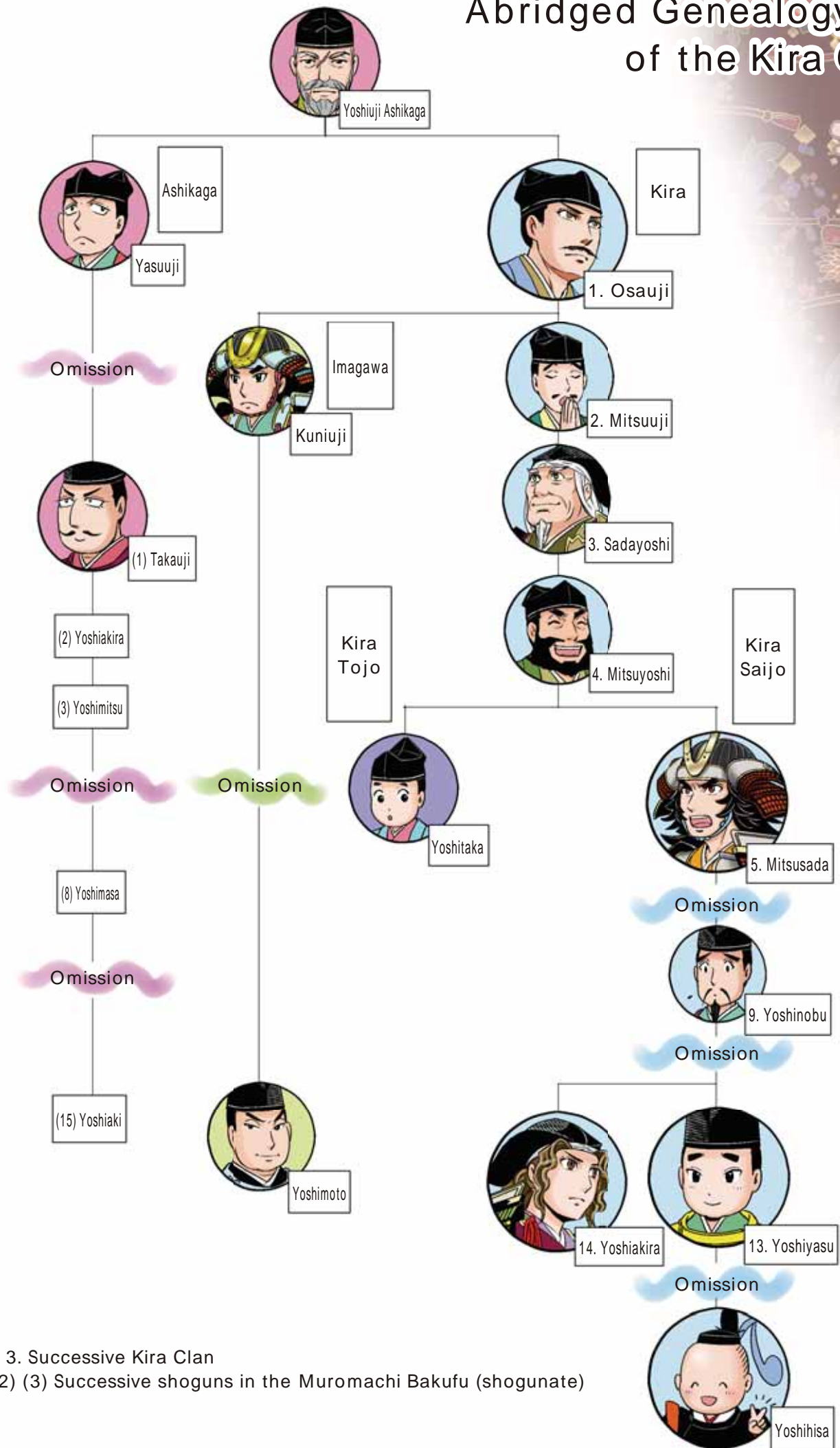
With the focus on Osauji of the first generation of the Kira Clan, Shogun Mitsusada, who lived through the conflicts of the Nambokucho Period (Period of the Northern and Southern Dynasties) and Yoshiakira, the last head of the Kira Clan in the middle ages and his chief retainer, Bangoro Tominaga, the image of the proud Kira Clan is simply depicted. We will be pleased if more people would read this give them a chance to learn about the history of the Kira Clan.

February 2020

Kira Clan 800 Year Festival Executive Committee, Goro Saito.



# Abridged Genealogy of the Kira Clan



1. 2. 3. Successive Kira Clan

(1) (2) (3) Successive shoguns in the Muromachi Bakufu (shogunate)





# The 800-year History of the Kira Clan through Cartoons







Ba, ba, ba, ba

I'm  
Kirara.  
My hobby  
is to play  
videogames.

Go  
Nobunaga!

Elementary school  
student in *Nishio*,  
*Midorikawa Kirara*

I did it!  
Level  
cleared!



Hey!

*Bushos* in  
games are all  
cool!

Sanada  
Yukimura  
(*Nobushige*)

Date  
Masamune

Oda  
Nobunaga





Is it about historical *Bushos* fighting?

I don't want to play outside. Games are more fun.



There are a lot of historical *Bushos* in *Nishio*.

Smiling...



Yes.

... Really?



Hey, *Kirara*.

Stop playing games and play outside.

This is my sister.

She likes history and studies local history at university.



That's 800 years ago! That's cool, right?

This is the graveyard of the *Kira* family. They governed this area in the *Edo* Period.

The *Kira* Family governed in the *Kamakura*, *Muromachi* and *Sengoku* Periods, too. It was for about 330 years.







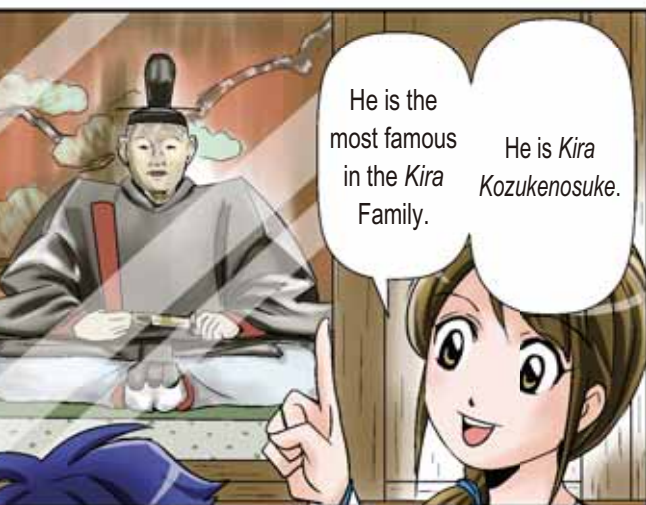
But the *Busho* in this temple is famous.



Mm.... There aren't any famous *Bushos* from the *Sengoku* Period...

Kira?

I don't know such a *Busho* family.



He is the most famous in the Kira Family.

He is Kira Kozukenosuke.



Mm



But that's just a story.

He was killed by the *Kerais* of the *Tonosama*.

He was a bad man in the *Chushingra* story. He bullied a young *Tonosama*.

...I know him.







In my town, we don't have any cool *Bushos* like *Nobunaga*, *Date* or *Sanada*. Why not?

There aren't any characters called *Kira* in games.

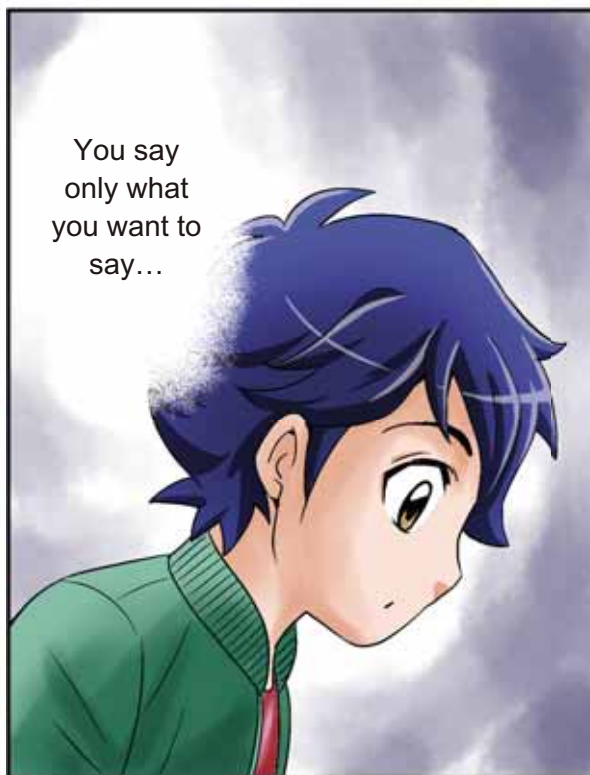
He may be famous, but he's bad.



You are lying! It's not interesting.



... Who said that?



You say only what you want to say...



Well, Let's go to the next historical place.

Hey! Wait!



Floating

Wha ... What...!?



Softly ...

*Oda*, *Date* or *Sanada*....

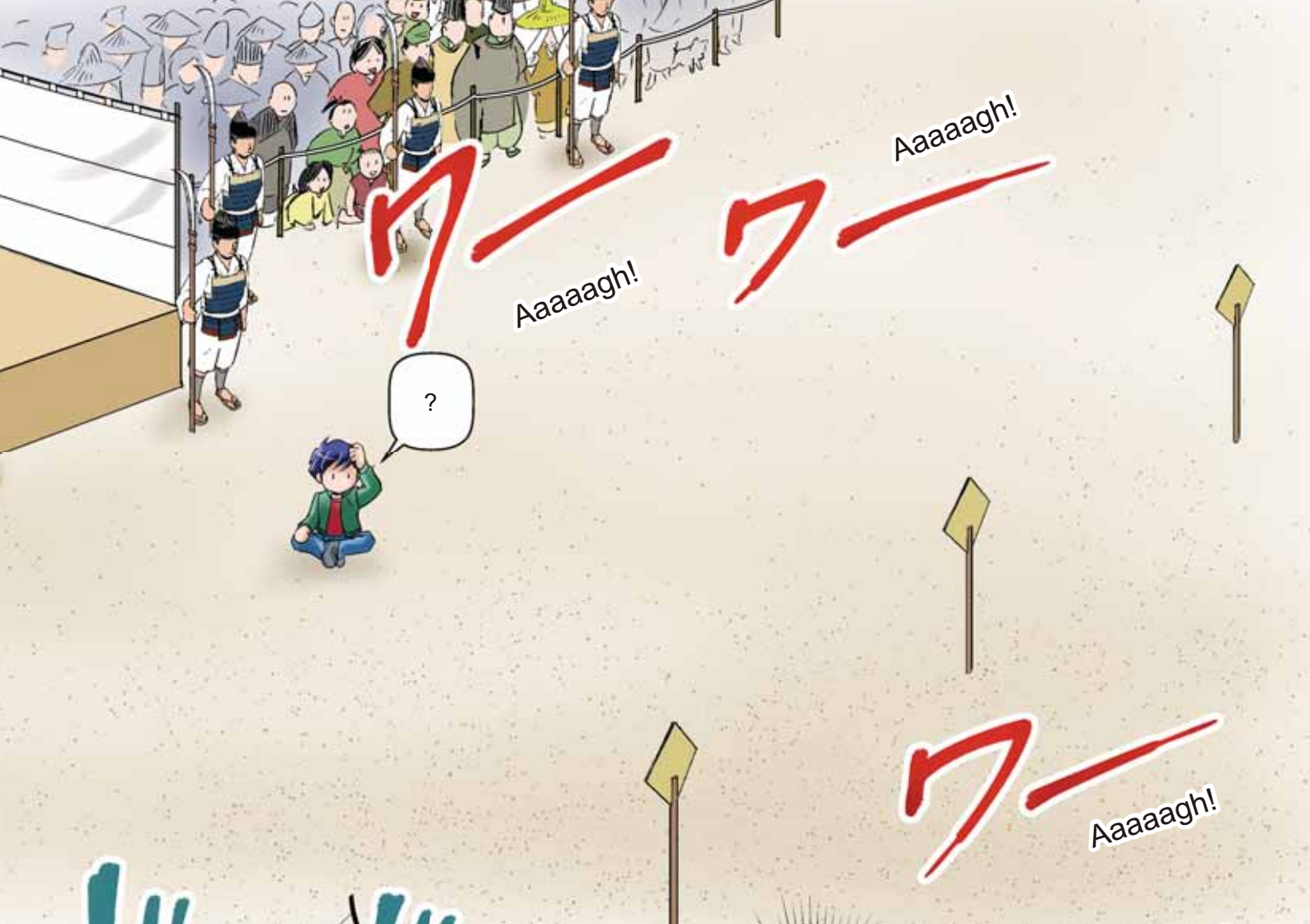
They are not special in *Kira*'s history.

Eh!?

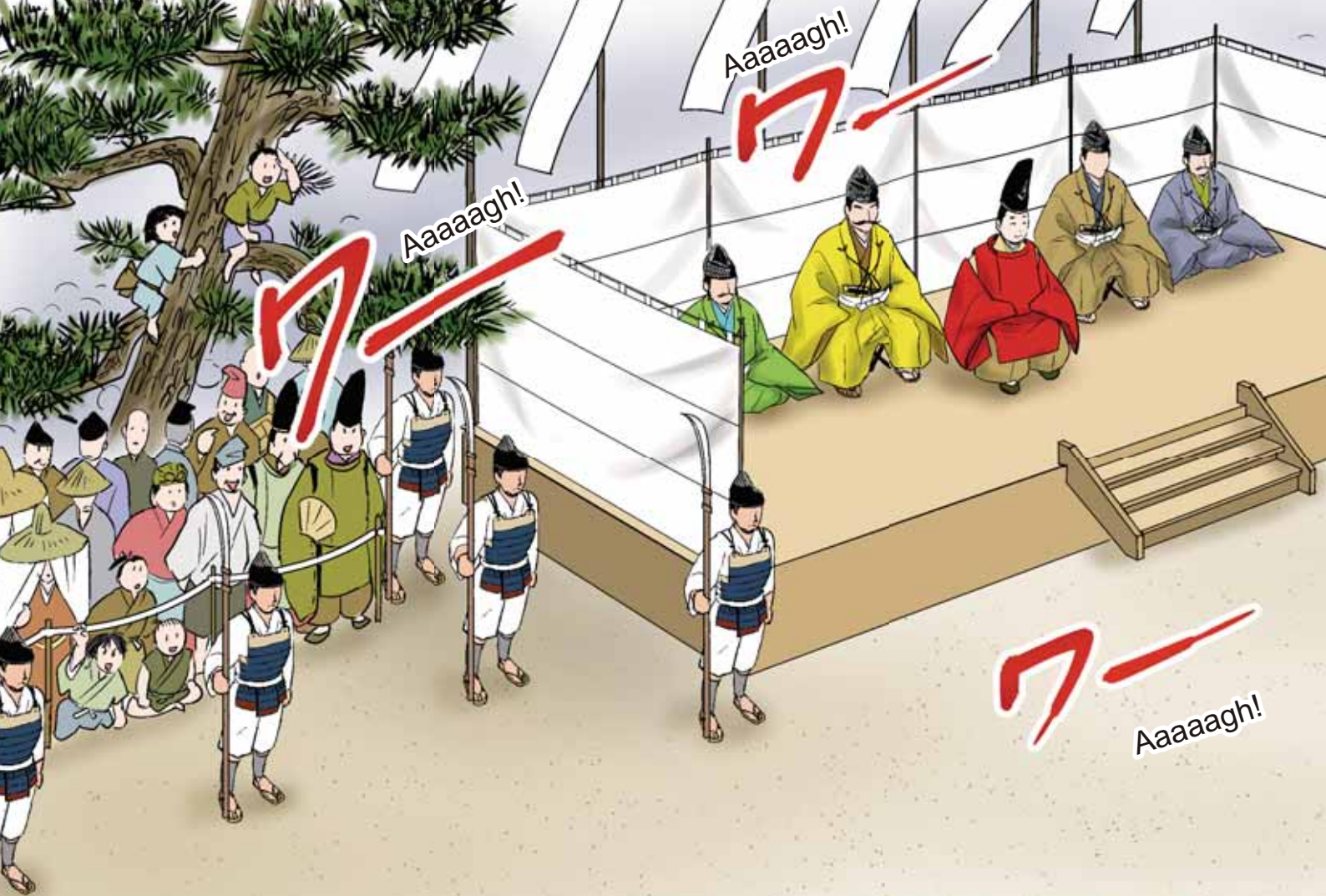








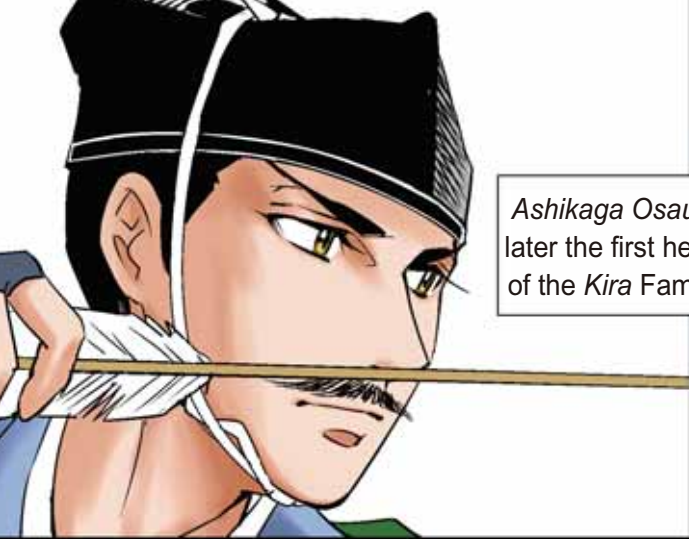












Ashikaga Osauiji,  
later the first head  
of the Kira Family

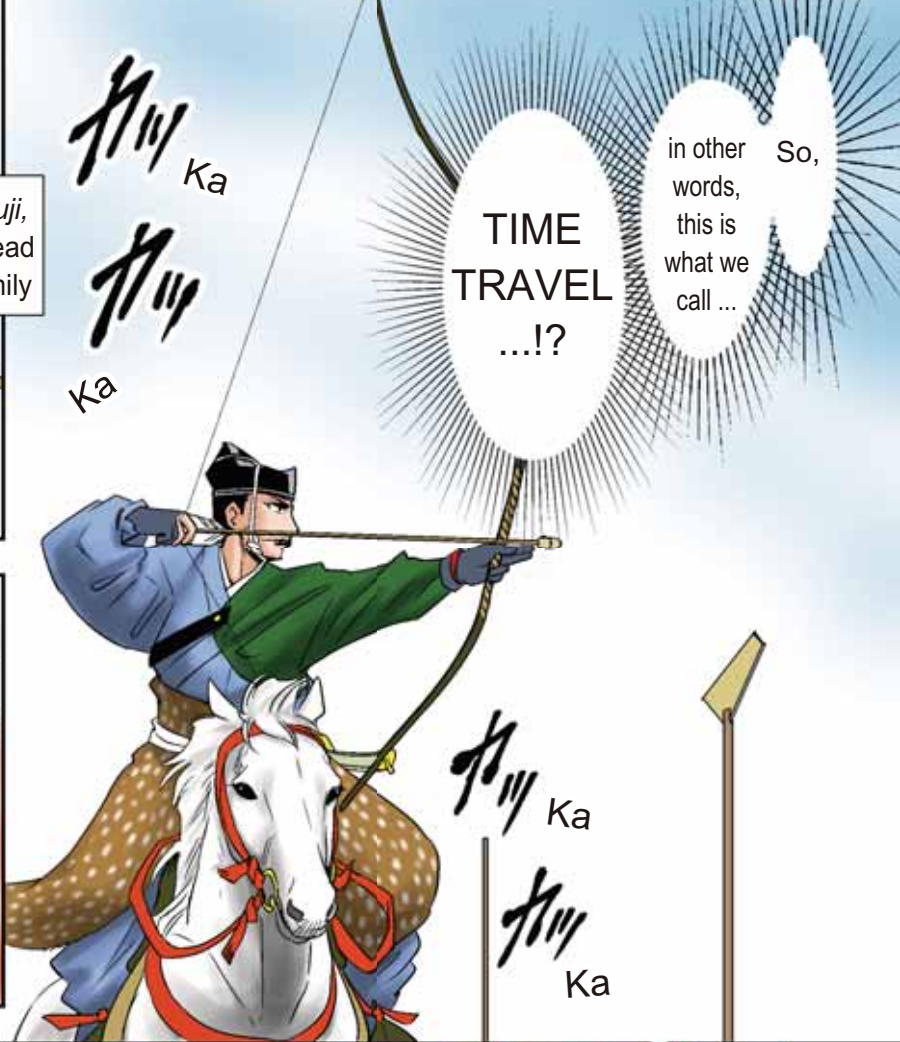


Wow

Floating...

That's  
Ashikaga  
Osauiji.

He's my  
ancestor.



Ka

Ka

TIME  
TRAVEL  
...!?

So,  
in other  
words,  
this is  
what we  
call ...

Ka

Ka



Wack



Yay

Yay

In this period,  
Samurais were  
powerful and  
governed their  
own land.

Government  
by Samurais  
is called  
Bakufu, so this  
government  
is called the  
"Kamakura  
Bakufu".



Wow

You did  
well,  
Osauiji.

Kujo(Fujiwara) Yoritune, the 4th Shogun at Kamakura Bakufu



Dammit!

Hojo Yasutoki, an  
important man of  
the Bakufu.



Kyoto → Kamakura

京都 → 鎌倉

Shogun 将軍

The 4th, Kujo (Fujiwara) Yoritune

The 3rd, Minamoto Sanetomo

The 2nd, Minamoto Yorie

From the 4th Shogun, the Shogun came from noble families from Kyoto.

But Yoritomo's lineage only went as far as the 3rd Shogun. They all died.

He opened the "Kamakura Bakufu".

Minamoto Yoritomo, the first Shogun.

Poof

They were a special family in Samurai society.

Slash! ビン! ヌ!

Genji

Minamoto no Yoritomo

Ashikagashi

Ashikaga Osauji

The Ashikaga Family and Minamoto Yoritomo have the same ancestor. It's an important lineage of Genji

He's the 1st son. Very cool.

Yay

Among Gokenins (Kerais of the Shogun), his family is one of the richest and most powerful families.

Yay

Not only is his family famous, but he is good at Bugei, too! The Shogun likes him very much.

Oh, Mr. Ashikaga Osauji.

Hoorah

Hoorah

But, he doesn't look happy.

What?

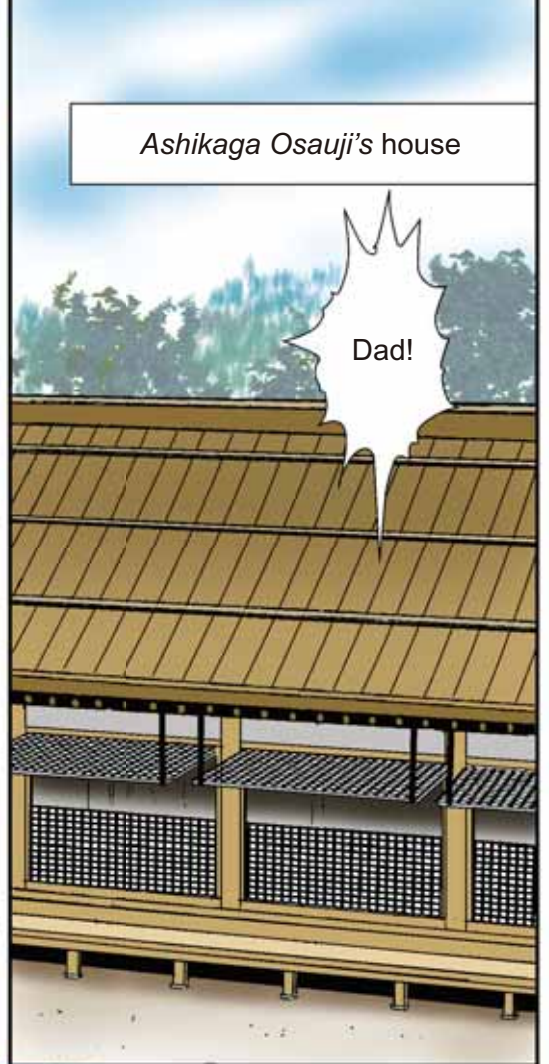
Ahem エヘン

He's an elite.





Why did you choose my younger brother Yasuujii as the next head. Why didn't you choose me?



Ashikaga Osauji's house

Dad!



I wanted to do that, but....

Father Ahikaga Yoshiuji



I worked hard to become the next head of the Ashikaga Family.



Hojo Family

So, she has a higher status than your mother.

The mother of Yasuujii is from the Hojo Family.

Ashikaga Family

Father Yoshiuji

Younger brother Yasuujii

Older brother Osauji

In those days, people of higher status had many wives.

When the mother's family is powerful, her child is more powerful.

Mr. Hojo Yasutoki told us

to make your brother the head of our family.

!



ほうじょう  
北条氏

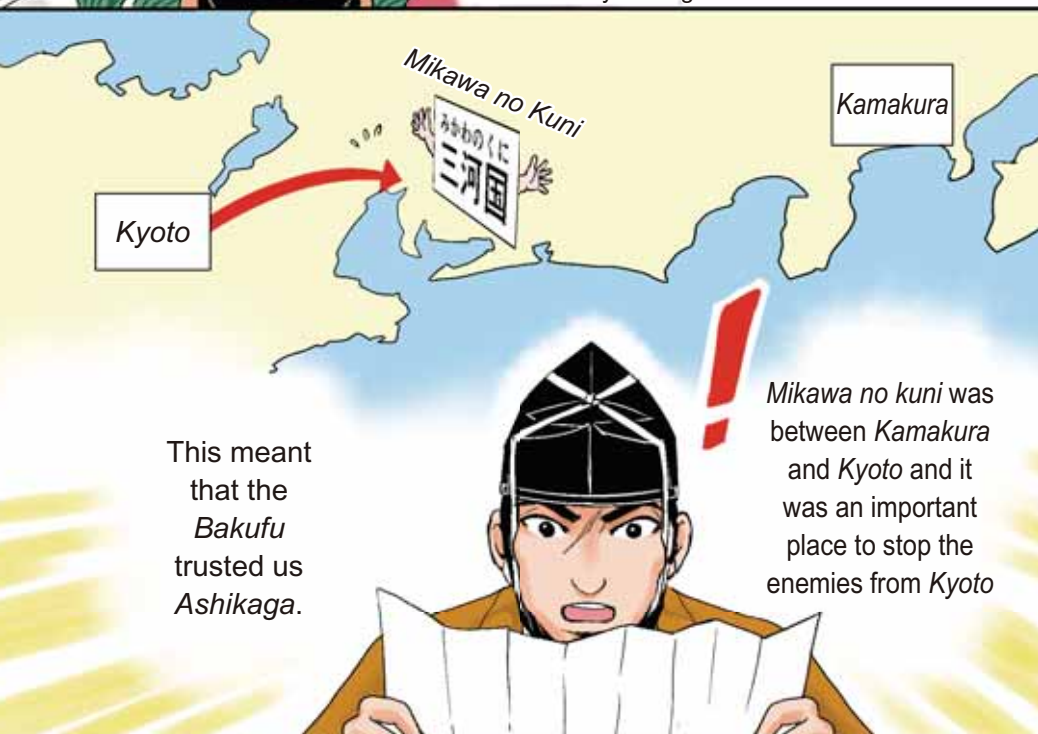
From now, I want you to support the Ashikaga Family of your younger brother.

I'm so sorry, but please accept it.

We must not defy the Hojo Family, because they are the most powerful. If we do so, we can't live.





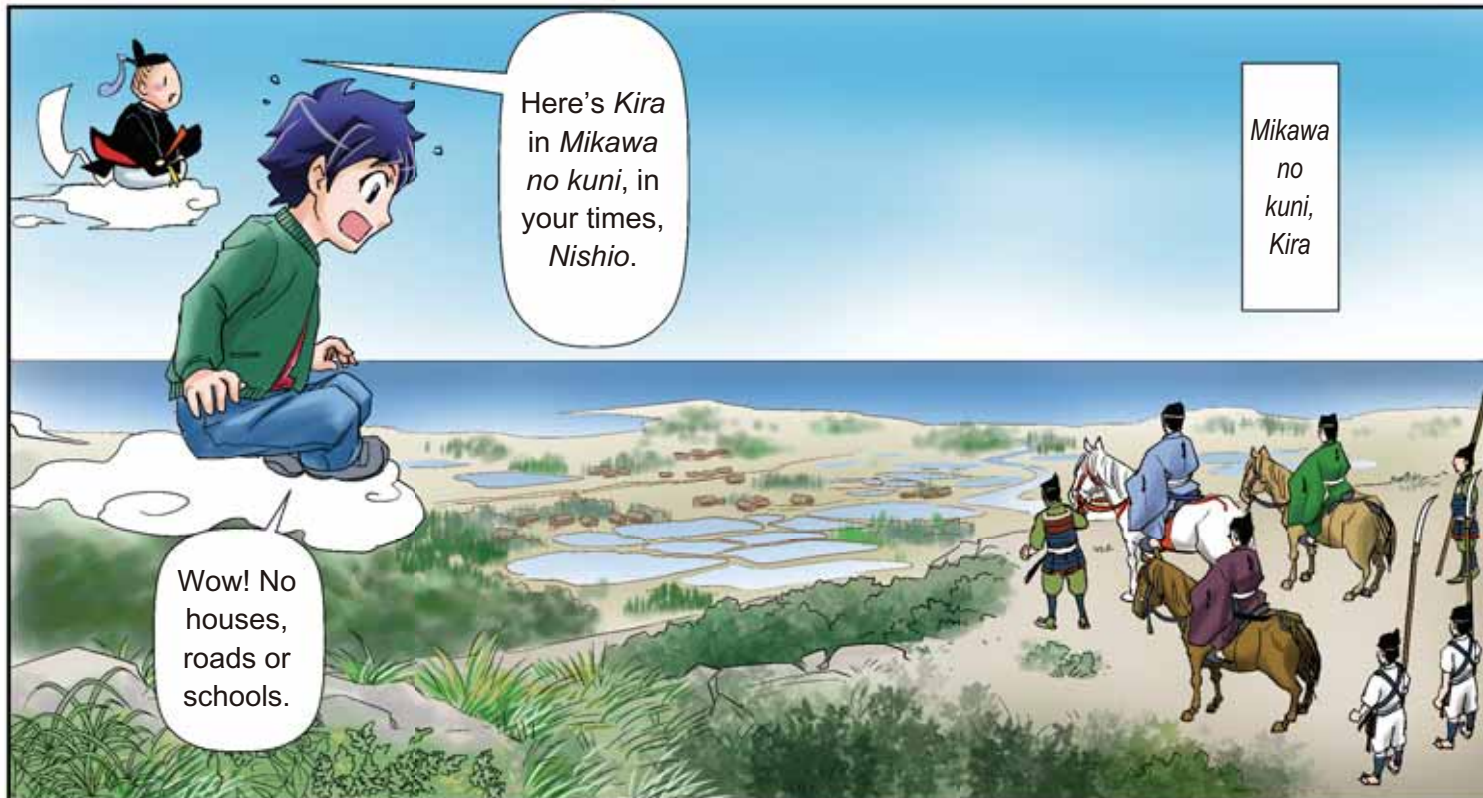




He had to retire in *Mikawa* at the age of only about 30.

and he had to be moved from *Kamakura*.

*Osauji* was involved in troubles with the *Bakufu*.



Here's *Kira* in *Mikawa no kuni*, in your times, *Nishio*.

*Mikawa no kuni, Kira*

Wow! No houses, roads or schools.

There is....so much space!

I will live here.

But *Kamakura* is surrounded by mountains.

Like *Kamakura*, it's near the sea.

This land is very open and has future.





He is the god of study and rich harvest.

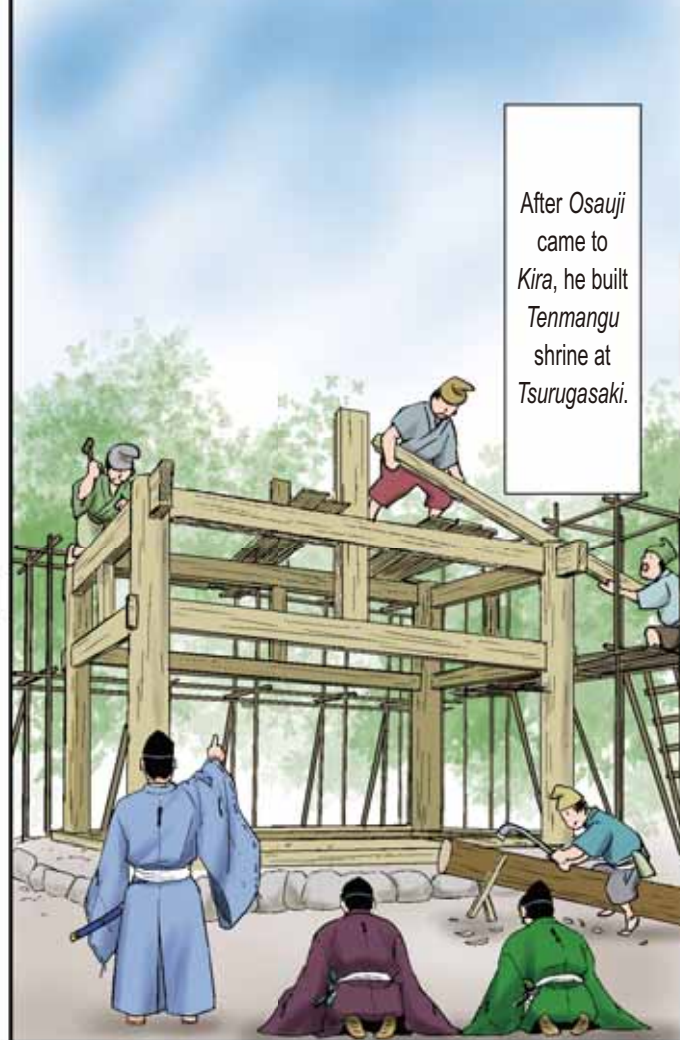
a scholar of the *Heian* Period.

It's the shrine for Sugawarano Michizane,

Tenmangu...?



He was moved far from *Kyoto* and died there.



After Osauji came to *Kira*, he built Tenmangu shrine at *Tsurugasaki*.



and lived as the pride of the *Osauji* family.

My children and grandchildren will keep *Kira*,

I was also moved here far from *Kamakura*.

People remembered his name for hundreds of years, and he became a god.



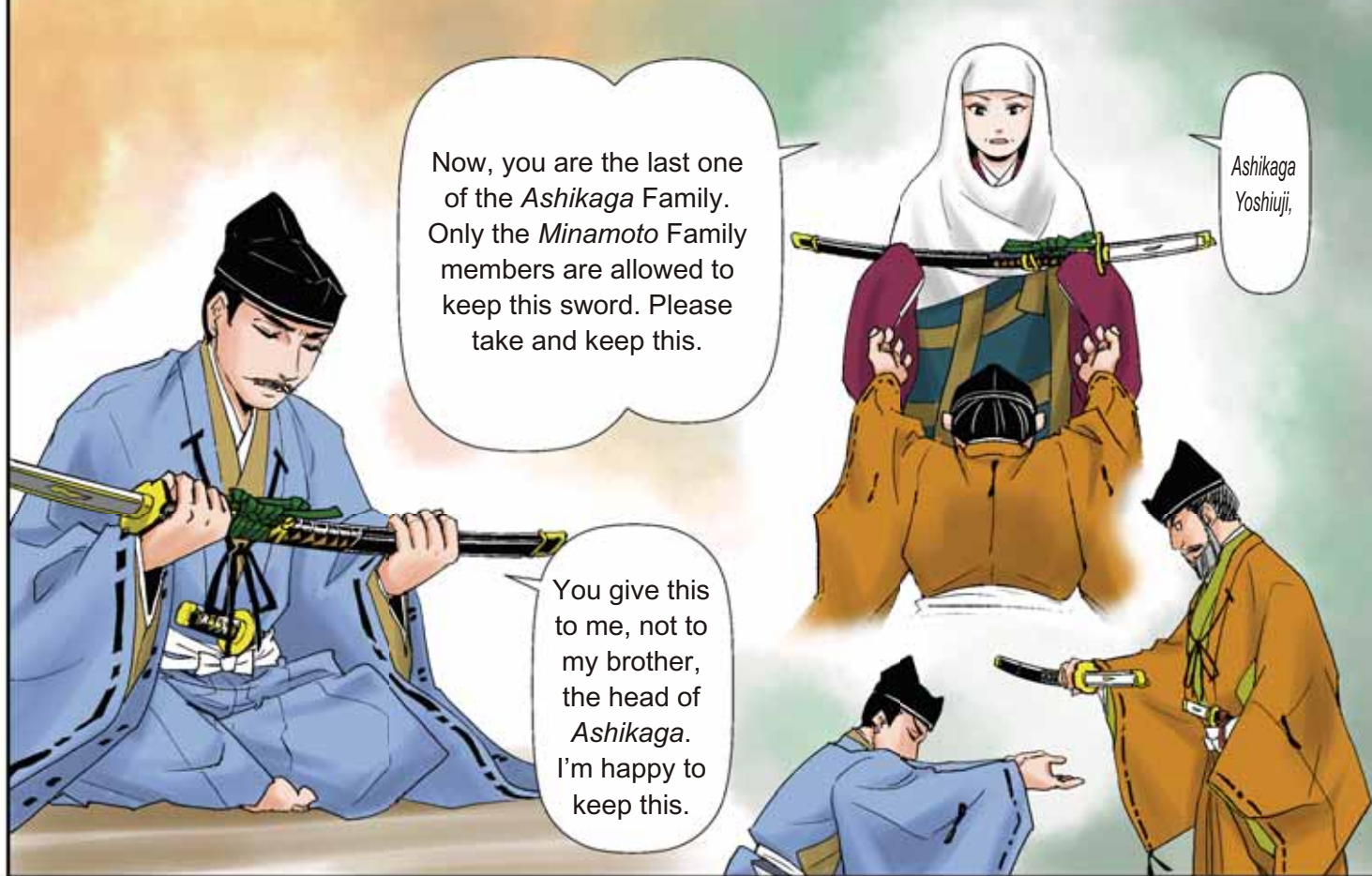
Really?

*Hojo Masako*, the wife of *Minamoto no Yoritomo*, gave this sword to me.

*Osauji*,

*Osauji* was given not only *Kira* land but also a sword called "*Higekiri*".





\*1: Shrine where the god of war is enshrined



\*2: It is said that he became a government official in *Kamakura* before long.







and took the family name "Imagawa"

was given the *Imagawa* land, another part of *Kira*, by his father,

*Kuniuji*, the second son

His grandson, *Norikuni*, was given *Suruga* and *Totoumi* because he worked very hard. The strong *Imagawa* Family started in the *Tokai* area.

\*Both form present-day *Shizuoka* Prefecture.

*Imagawa Kuniuji*

He believed in Buddhism very much and invited the famous monk, *Shoichi Kokushi* from *Kyoto*. He built *Jissoji Temple* as the family temple.

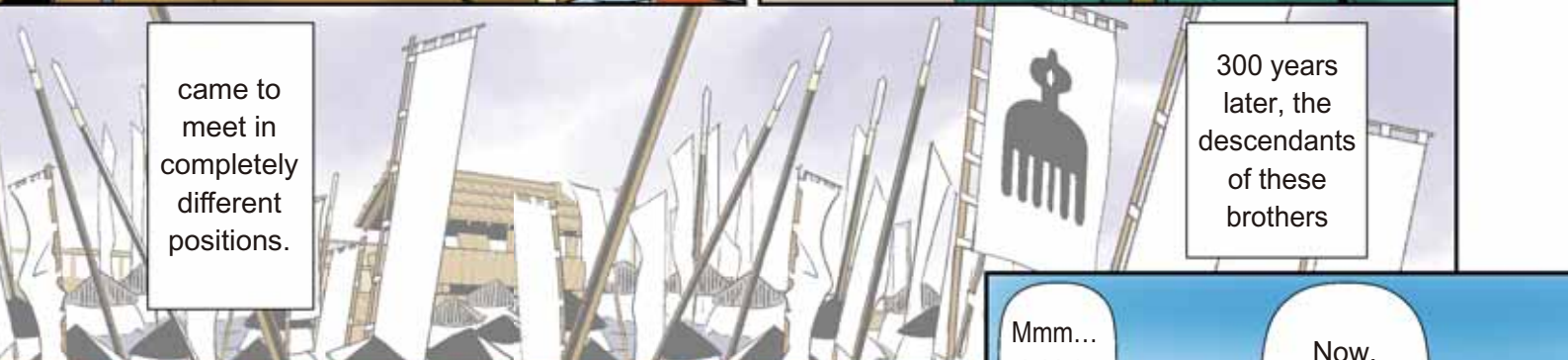
supported the *Shogun* in *Kamakura*, and got important status there.

*Mitsuujii*, the older son

\*The temple to mourn ancestors



*Ashikaga Mitsuujii*



came to meet in completely different positions.

300 years later, the descendants of these brothers



Eh? There's more?

This is just the start.

Well, the history of *Kira* is so long.



... So

Mmm... I think so.

Now, do you understand the origins of *Kira*?



What did you say?

I want to go back to my own time...

Now I understand the history of *Kira*,





Tromp

Tromp

The year 1333, about 690 years ago

Tromp

It's like a historical drama.

Wow, the Samurais are wearing Yoroi and Kabuto.

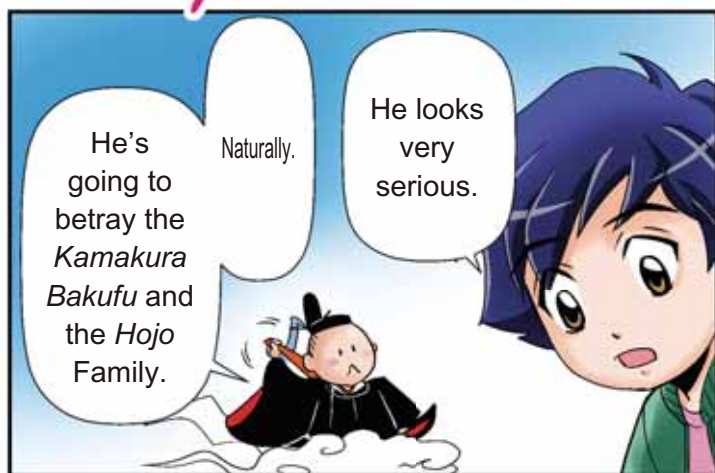


Poof

80 years later from the Osauji Period.

Who's that Samurai with the wonderful Yoroi?

Tromp



He's going to betray the Kamakura Bakufu and the Hojo Family.

Naturally.

He looks very serious.



Tromp

He's the descendant of Yasuuiji, the younger brother of Osauji.

He is the head, Ashikaga Takauji.

Tromp

Tromp

Ashikaga Takauji

Eh!?





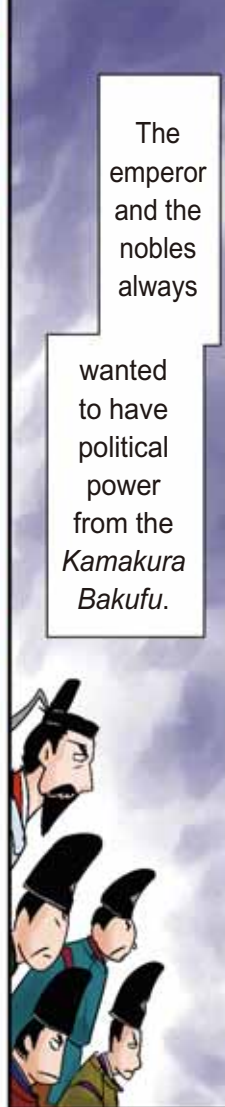
We emperor and nobles will do political things like we did before.

Beat the Bakufu!

When Emperor Godaigo in Kyoto saw the Hojo Family, he said,

Godaigo Tenno

and he put together an army to beat the Bakufu.



The emperor and the nobles always

wanted to have political power from the Kamakura Bakufu.



Ha, Ha, Ha, Ha!

The Hojo Family had important status for many years.

Hojo Takatoki



はやく戦いに  
行け!  
父親が死んだ?  
知るか!ー

Now the Hojo family are too selfish.

I've really had enough.



The Hojo Family were the boss of us Ashikaga Family for a long time...

Now, the Kamakura Bakufu ordered us to beat the emperor, and we're on our way to Kyoto...



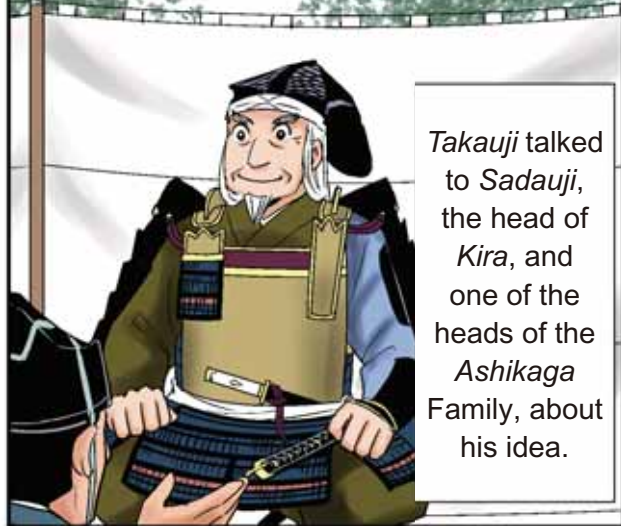
I want to ally myself with Emperor Godaigo and beat the Hojo Family.

Tromp

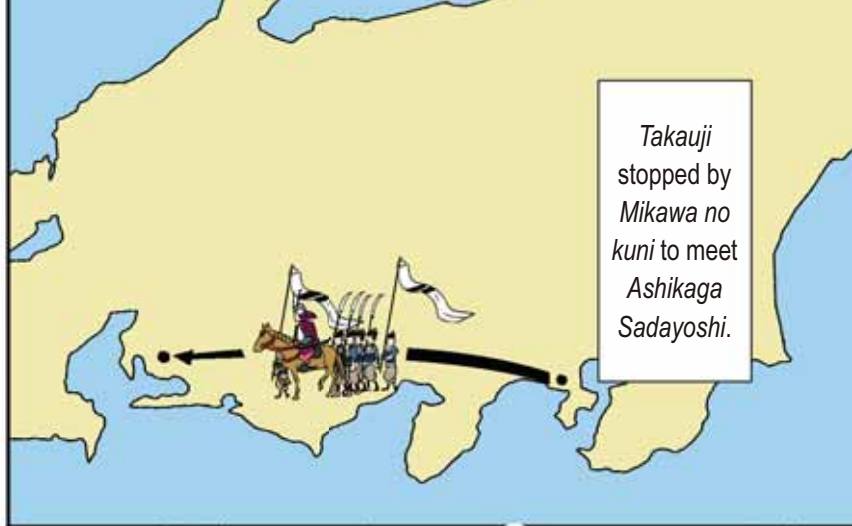
If the Hojo Family are beaten, we Ashikaga Family will be destroyed.

Tromp, tromp





Takauji talked to Sadauji, the head of Kira, and one of the heads of the Ashikaga Family, about his idea.



Takauji stopped by Mikawa no kuni to meet Ashikaga Sadayoshi.



Tell Takauji-dono what I said.

Don't worry. The Ashikaga Family in Mikawa no kuni will support Takauji-dono.

Messenger from Takauji

Y... Yes!



To ally yourself with the Emperor

and to beat the Kamakura Bakufu are good ideas, I think.

Slash

Ashikaga Sadayoshi



This is my son, Mitsuyoshi.

Sadayoshi continued ...



Kira is the older brother's lineage,

so Takauji, the head of the Ashikaga Family respected him.

Ahem



He renewed the decision to beat the Bakufu.

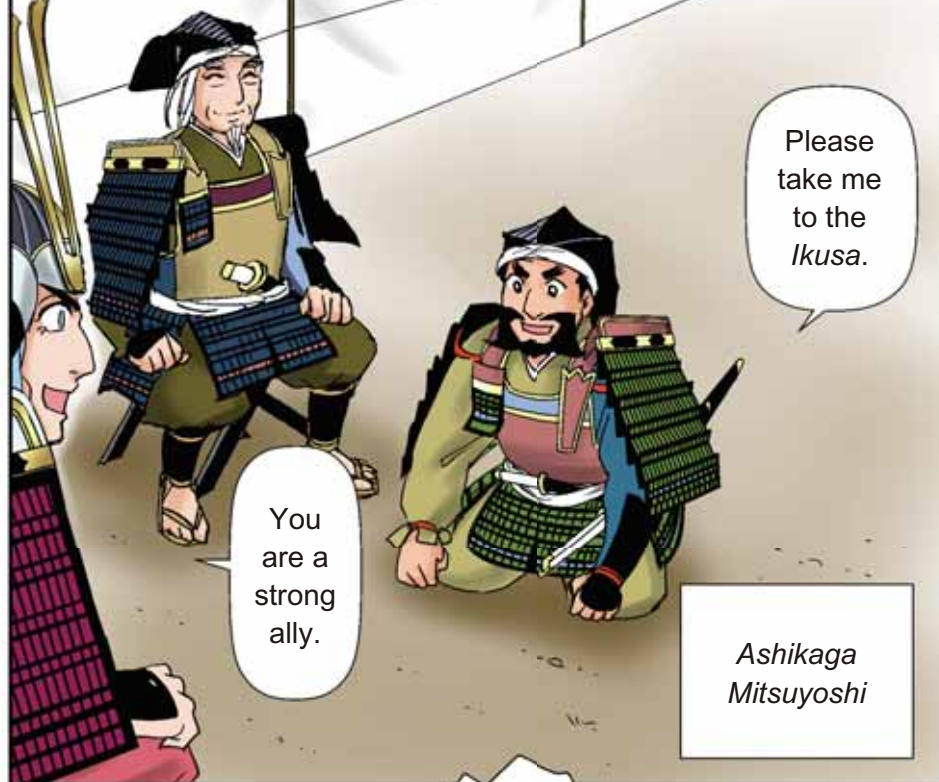
Sadayoshi-dono said such a thing!

The words encouraged Takauji.





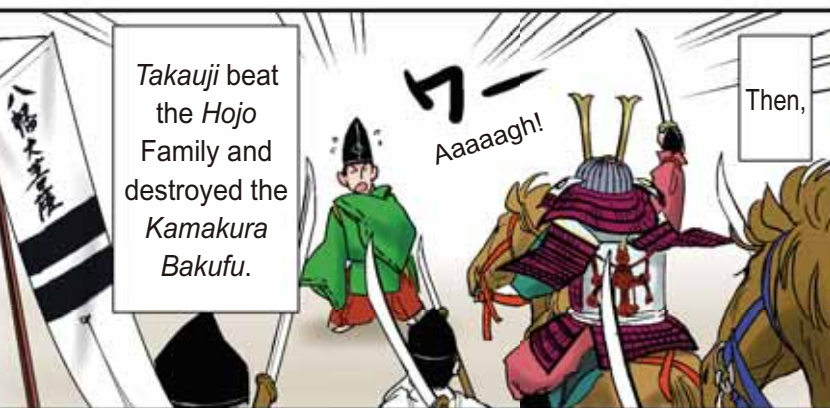
Takauji  
went  
into  
Kyoto.



Please  
take me  
to the  
Ikusa.

You  
are a  
strong  
ally.

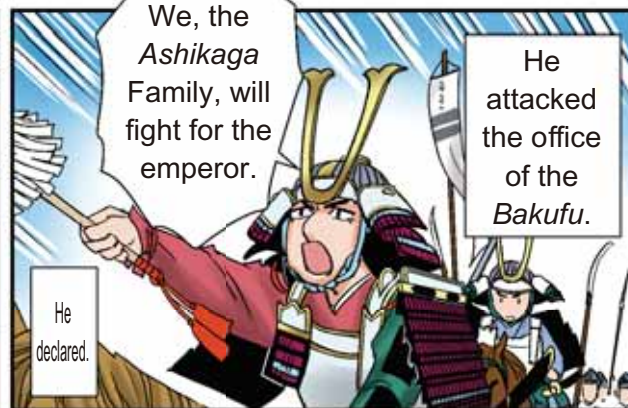
Ashikaga  
Mitsuyoshi



Takauji beat  
the Hojo  
Family and  
destroyed the  
Kamakura  
Bakufu.

Aaaaagh!

Then,



We, the  
Ashikaga  
Family, will  
fight for the  
emperor.

He  
declared.

He  
attacked  
the office  
of the  
Bakufu.



and  
opened the  
"Muromachi  
Bakufu" in  
Kyoto.

Muromachi Bakufu

室町幕府

He became  
Shogun  
with the  
support of  
the Emperor  
Godaigo

The main Ashikaga  
Family became  
the top of Samurai  
society. They  
are the younger  
brother of the Kira  
Ashikaga Family.

Ashikaga  
Takauji  
became the  
Shogun!

We  
are so  
happy!

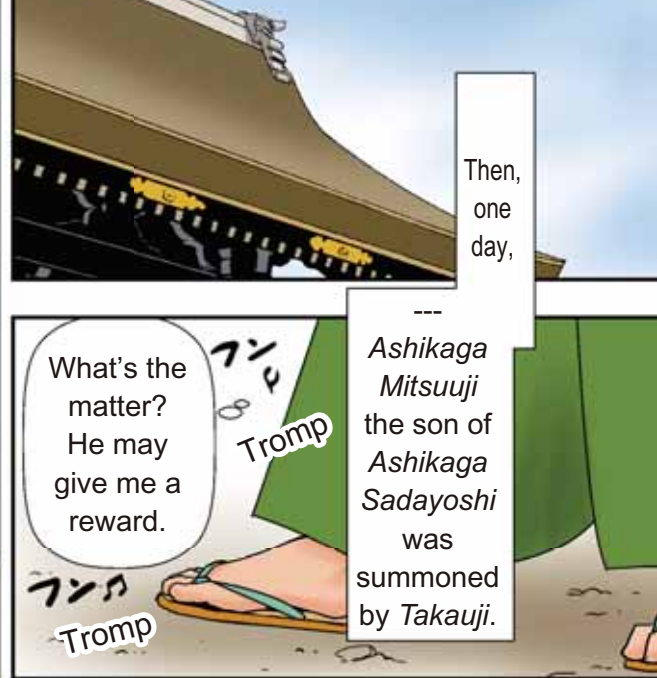




Ashikaga Yoshimitsu

He must give us a reward for everything.

We, the Kira Ashikaga Family fought hard on Takauji's side.



Then, one day,

Ashikaga Mitsuuji the son of Ashikaga Sadayoshi was summoned by Takauji.

What's the matter? He may give me a reward.

Tromp



You tell us to change our family name Ashikaga to another name.

W..why?



But--

W...W... What!?



Please wait!

so call yourself "Kira".

Your home is Kira,

Bang



From now on, only the main lineage of the Ashikaga can use this family name.

Hm

Ashikaga is my Shogun's family name.

Shogun Ashikaga Takauji





I don't believe it.... We Ashikaga Family in Kira fought hard to help Takauji to become Shogun.

Takauji became powerful

and started to wonder if we would betray him.



Ashikaga Mitsusada  
(Son of Mitsuyoshi)

Why did the Shogun Family say such a thing?



As they order, we have to change our family name.

But we will gain nothing even if we defy them.

I was sad to hear that.



Just because Takauji is Shogun, he shouldn't disrespect us.

We Ashikaga Family in Kira should be the real main family. We gave the main position to the younger brother.

Mitsu-sada...



W... What!?

Why will we say "Yes" so easily?.



The Kira Ashikaga Family was special because we are the lineage of the older brother, Osauji.

it was normal for families from the main Ashikaga Family change their names.

Like the Hosokawa, Nikki, and Hatakeyama Family,

あしかが  
足利  
Ashikaga





What  
なにッ

Did the  
son of *Kira*  
betray us?

and it  
split the  
*Bakufu*  
into two.

At that time,  
*Takauji* and  
*Tadayoshi*'s  
relationship  
was not  
good,

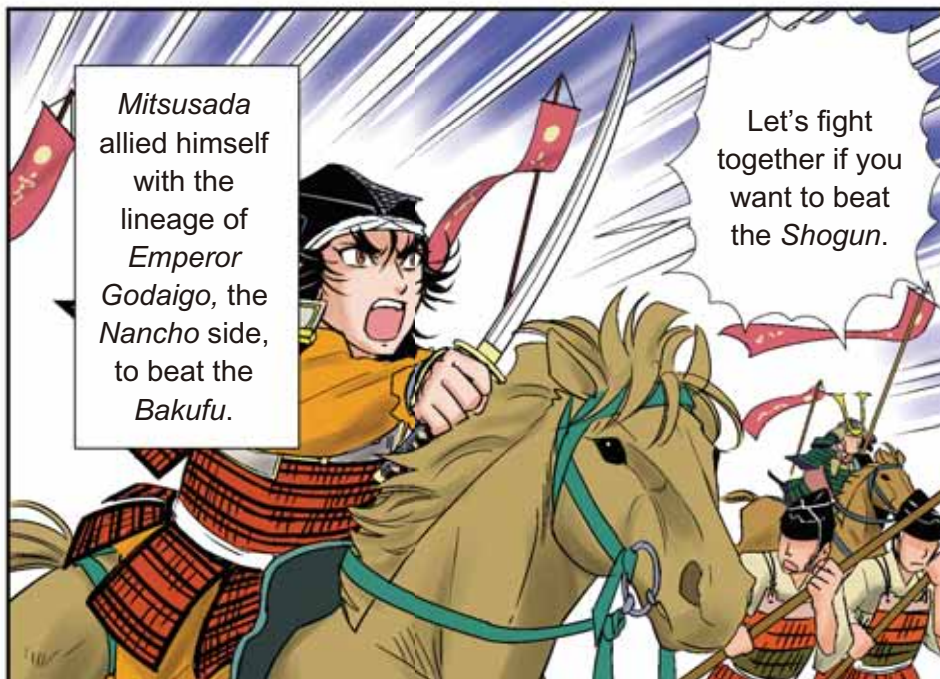
And  
then...

*Tadayoshi*

*Takauji*



Surprisingly,  
*Mitsusada*  
allied  
himself with  
*Tadayoshi*  
and  
betrayed  
*Takauji*.



*Mitsusada*  
allied himself  
with the  
lineage of  
*Emperor*  
*Godaigo*, the  
*Nancho* side,  
to beat the  
*Bakufu*.

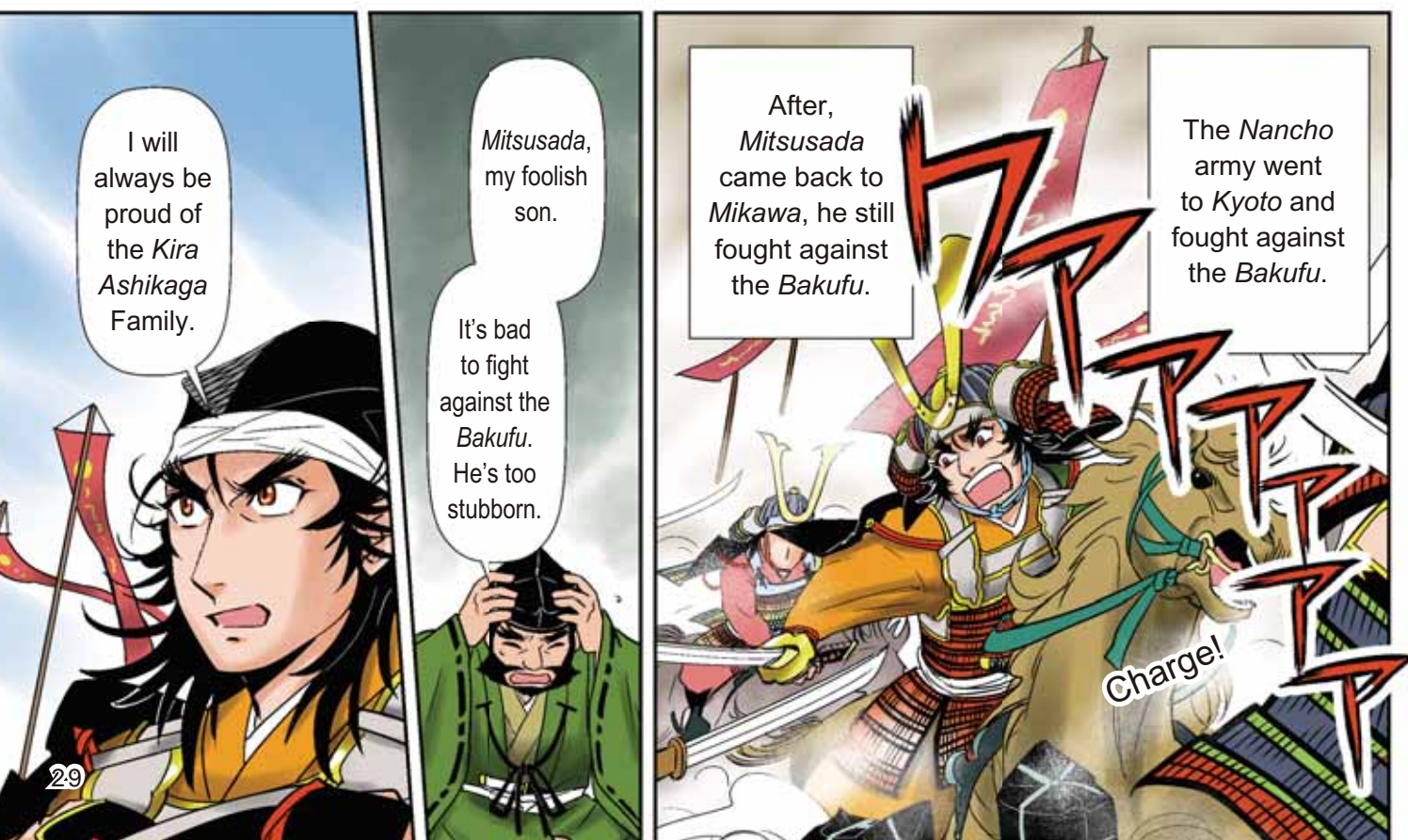
Let's fight  
together if you  
want to beat  
the *Shogun*.



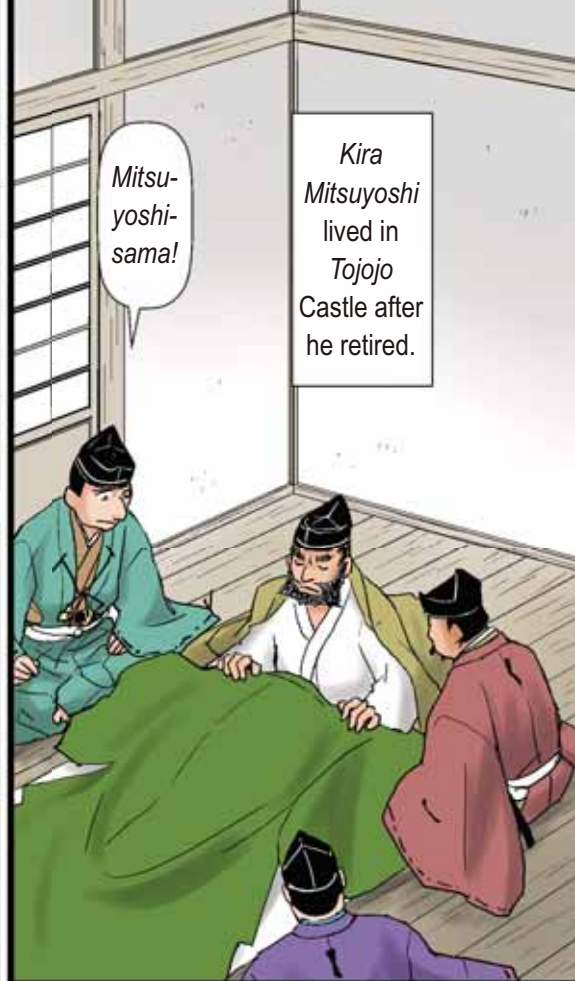
Soon,  
*Tadayoshi*  
died.

Our  
family's  
enemy  
is the  
*Shogun*  
Family!













I don't understand the *Kerais* in *Kira*.

*Yoshitaka* is also an enemy, same as the *Ashikaga Shogun*.



to *Ashikaga Takauji*.

Could you acknowledge *Yoshitaka* as the real head at *Kira*?

The *Kerais* in *Tojojo Castle* asked



*Mitsusada* apologized to the *Bakufu*.

I'm sorry...

When *Takauji* died,



Yay, Yay

But it's too hard to fight against 2 sides.

Yay, Yay

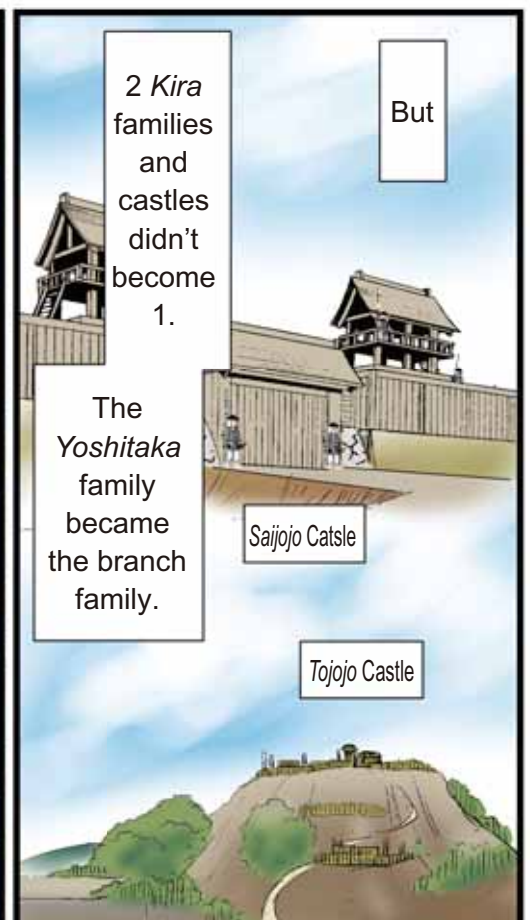


*Saijo*

The older brother's lineage, the main family, was called the "*Saijo Kira Family*".

The younger brother's lineage was called the "*Tojo Kira Family*".

*Tojo*



2 *Kira* families and castles didn't become 1.

But

The *Yoshitaka* family became the branch family.

*Saijojo Castle*

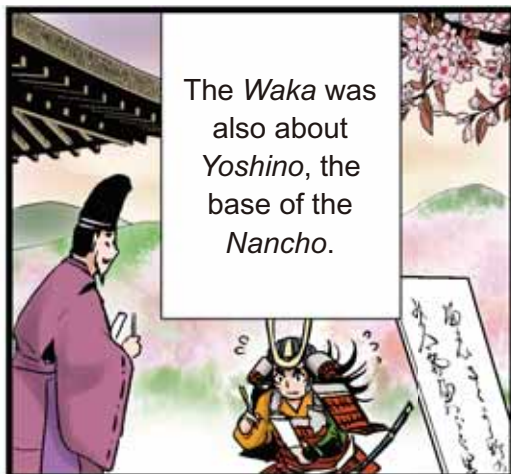
*Tojojo Castle*





he put his own *Waka* in *Shakasanzonzo*.

When he brought *Shakasanzonzo* to the *Bodaiji*,



The *Waka* was also about *Yoshino*, the base of the *Nancho*.



I want everyone to know the head of *Kira* is me.

To donate to *Bodaiji* and pray for ancestors is the role of the heir.

*Mitsusada* donated *Shakasanzonzo* to *Jissoji*, the *Bodaiji*, the family temple of *Kira*.



My passion was true.

But I fought to protect *Kira's* pride.

That's why I went to *Yoshino* far from *Kira*, my home.

I hope that someone understands my spirit when they read this *Waka*.

Even if my father and *Kerais* don't understand me,

やよいきてよし野の山に花かすみ  
人気やはらぐ里の春風

I've come at last to the *Mount Yoshino* with its hazy curtain of flowers where I am little known among the spring breezes of the village.



After a long life of fighting,

we couldn't beat the *Ashikaga Shogun Family*,

and our family split into 2.

People will say that my life was sad.





people came to know that Kira's lineage was the Shogun brothers.

We shouldn't disrespect Kira.

Kira's fight was so proud,



But Mitsusada's fight was not meaningless.

I feel sorry for him.



Ashikaga Gosanke

足利御三家

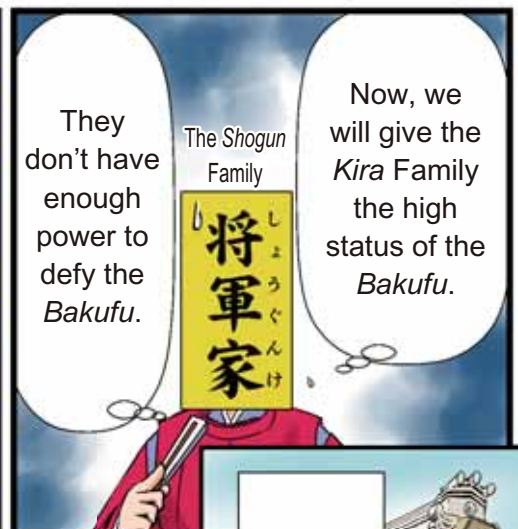
The Kira Family was the top of the Ashikaga Gosanke.

Ishi-bashi

Shibu-kawa

Kira

So, the Kira Family was treated as the 2nd status in the Shogun Family.



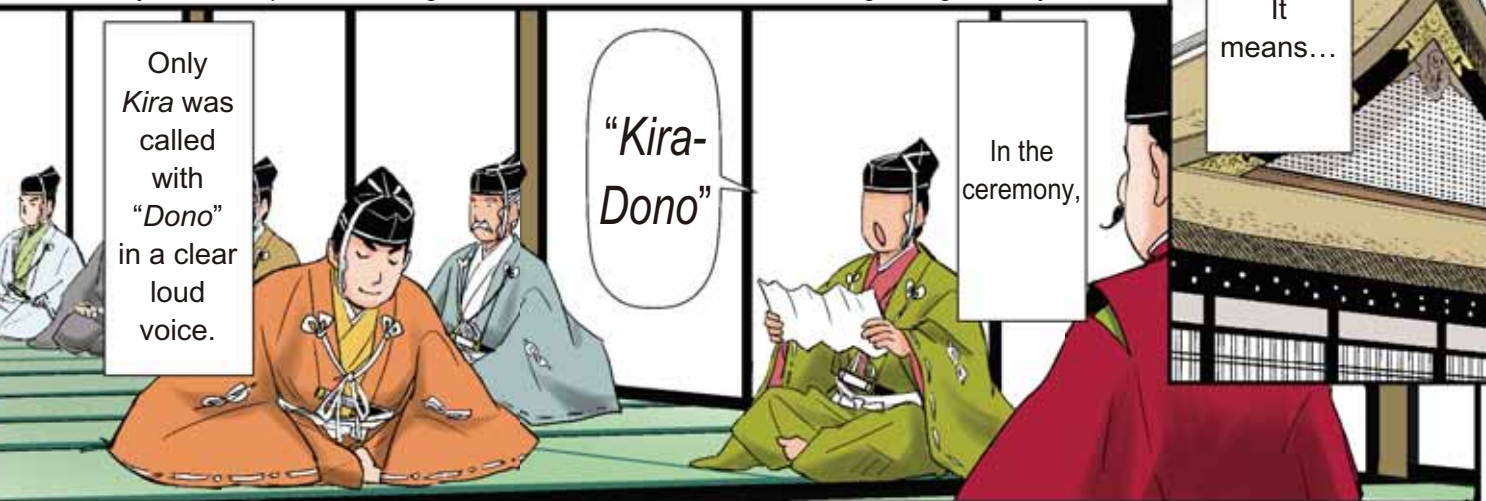
They don't have enough power to defy the Bakufu.

The Shogun Family

将軍家

Now, we will give the Kira Family the high status of the Bakufu.

\*Family allowed to produce a Shogun if there is no successor to the Ashikaga Shogun family



Only Kira was called with "Dono" in a clear loud voice.

"Kira-Dono"

In the ceremony,

It means...



"Isshiki"

"Yamana"

Lower status Bushos are called without "dono".



were called with "dono" but in a small voice.

"Shiba-dono"

"Hosokawa-dono"

Even the Bushos of Kanrei, higher status,









for only family to be the measure.

I think it's unfair



Of course, it's unfair.

But that was natural for a long time.



so only "family" was the measure.

Long ago, there were no companies and universities,

That's the Kira Family. The head of Gosanke.

Look great.



In these periods.

Yes

Slumping ...



But in your period, too.

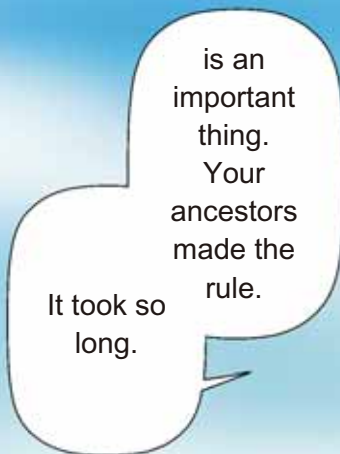
That daughter graduated from ○○ university. So great!

That husband works at a top class company. We can trust him easily.

Yawn ...

That's common, right?

It's better to be with high brands.



is an important thing. Your ancestors made the rule.

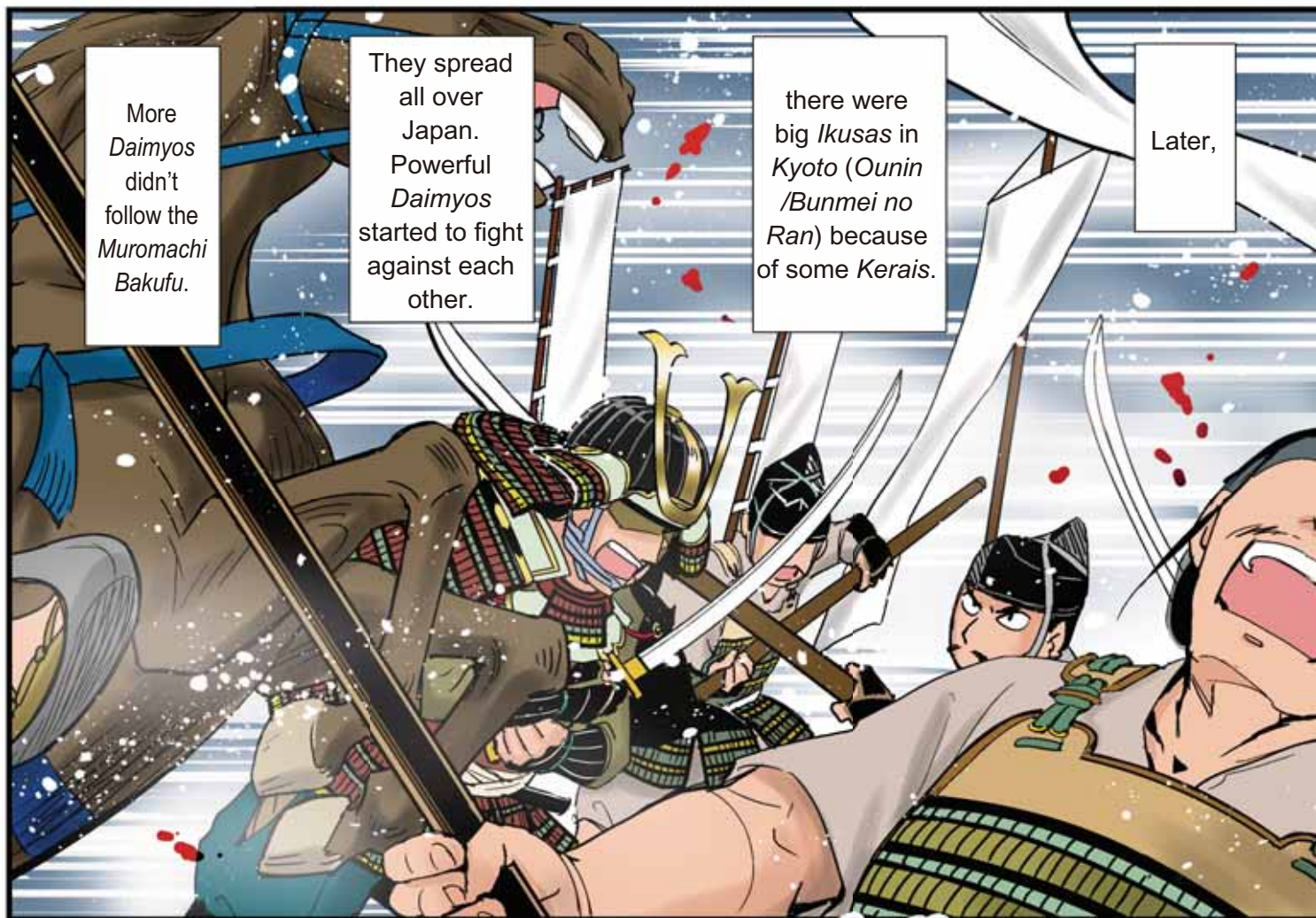
It took so long.



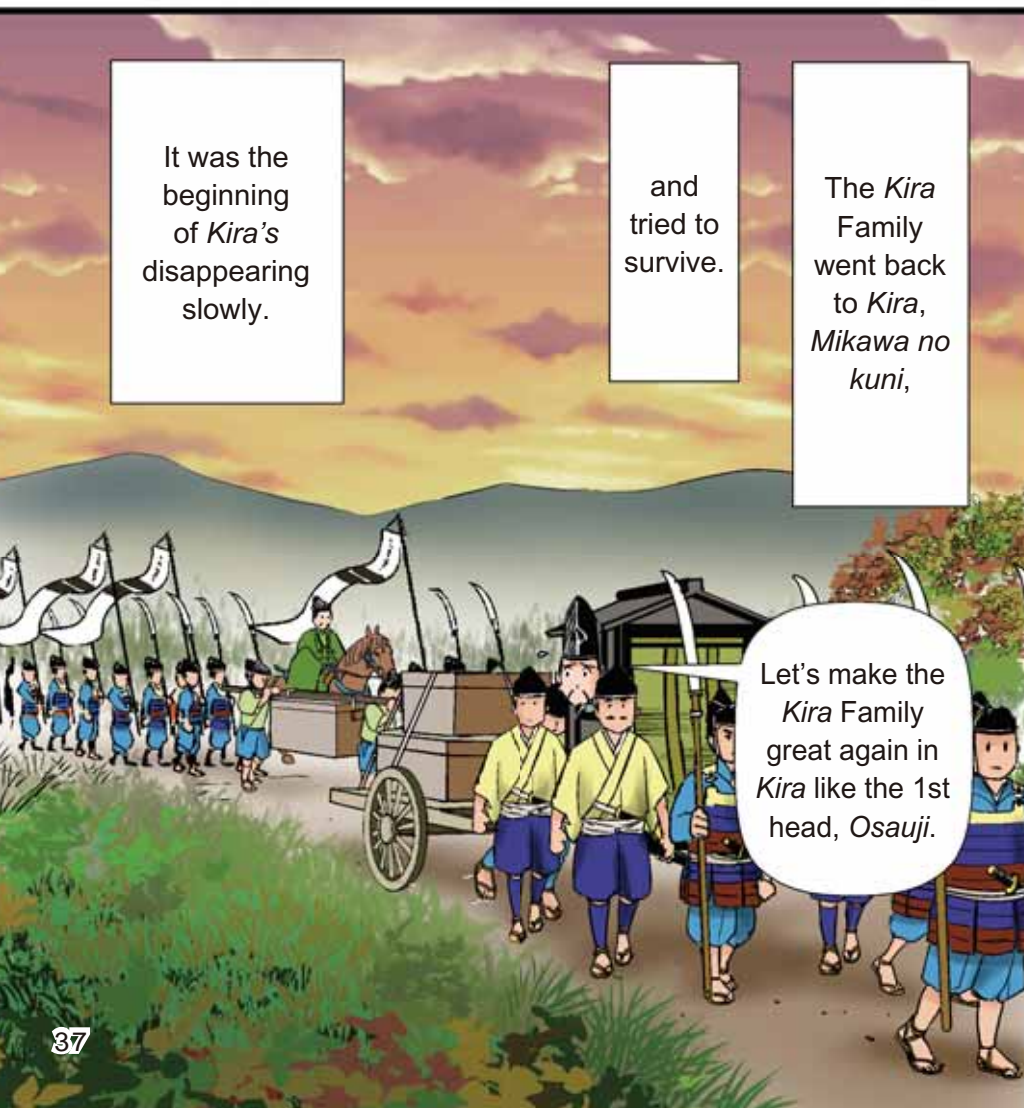
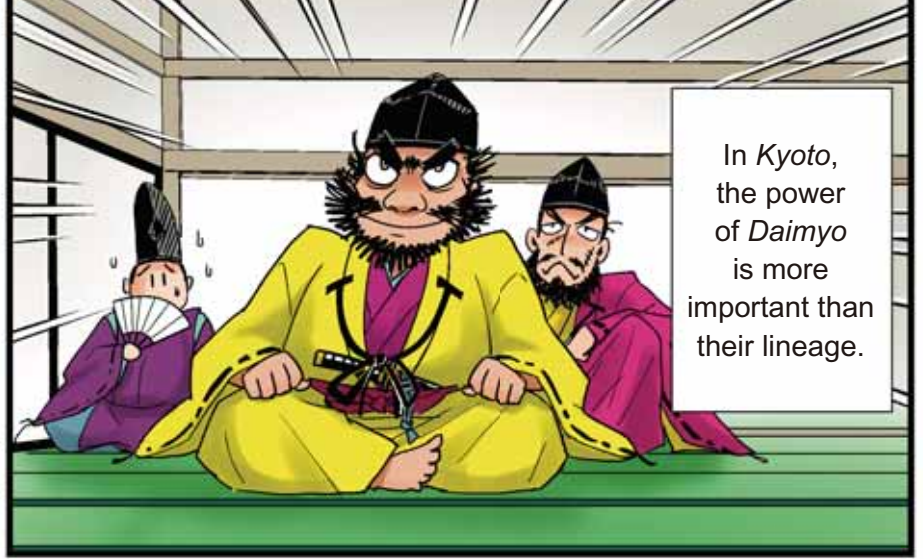
the rule like "if you study hard, you can gain high status."

So, in your time, Kirara,

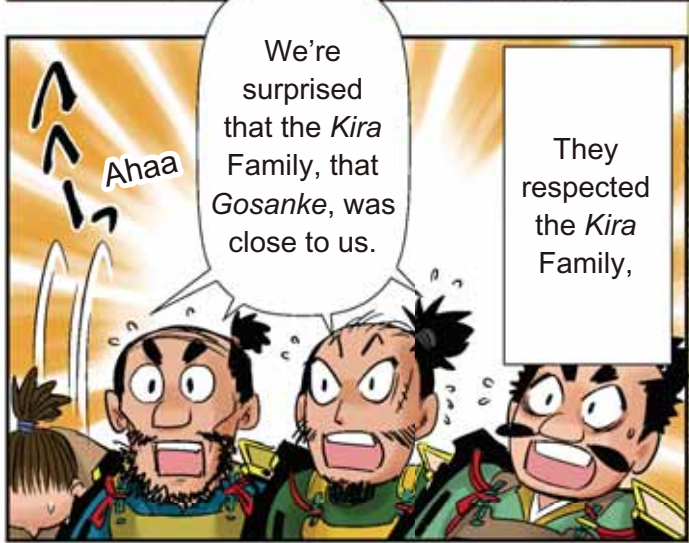
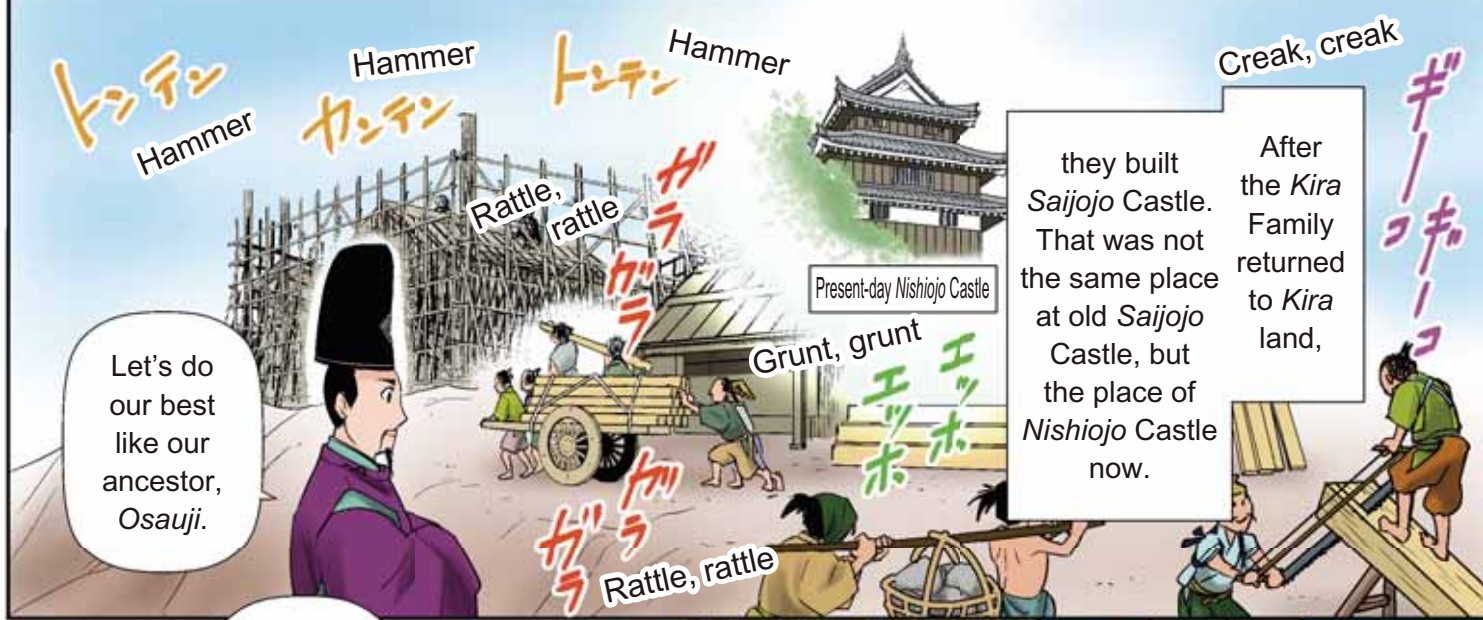
















The head's younger brother *Kira Yoshiyasu*, became the new head.

*Kira Yoshiyasu*



The young head of the *Kira Family* died in *Ikusa*.

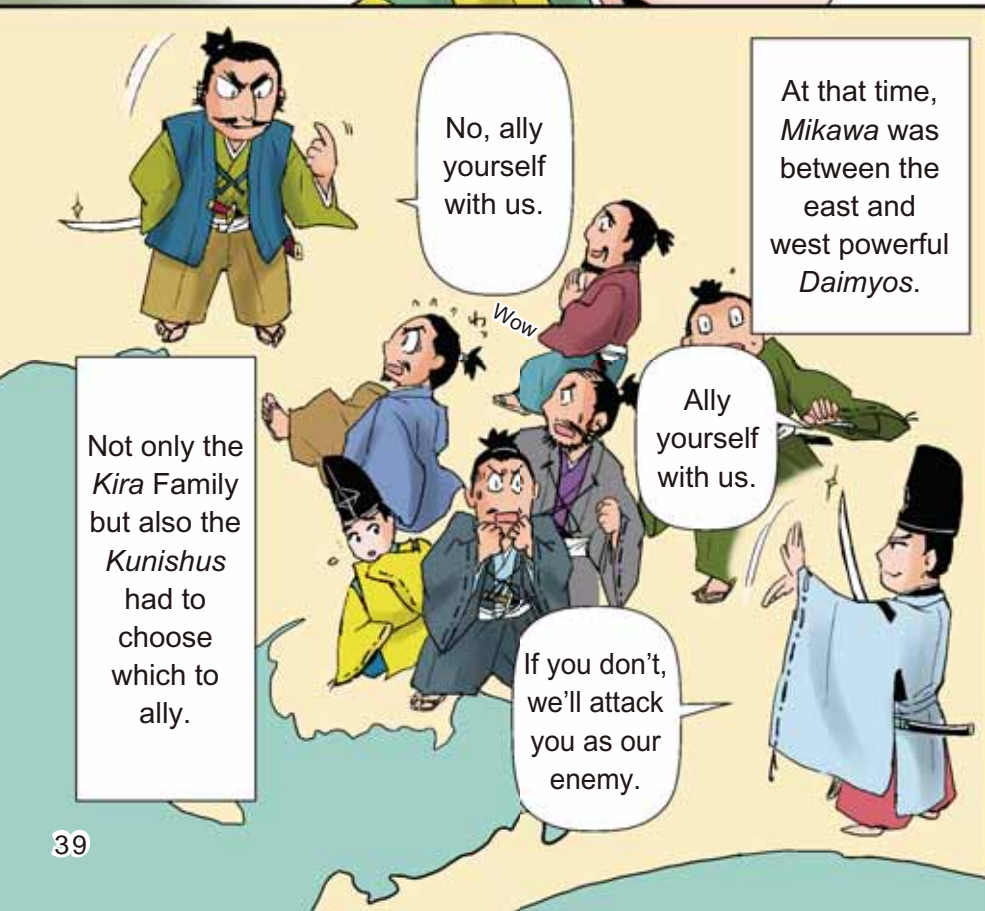
Even worse,



Quiet! We, *Kerais*, can do everything.

Is he OK?

He's only a child.



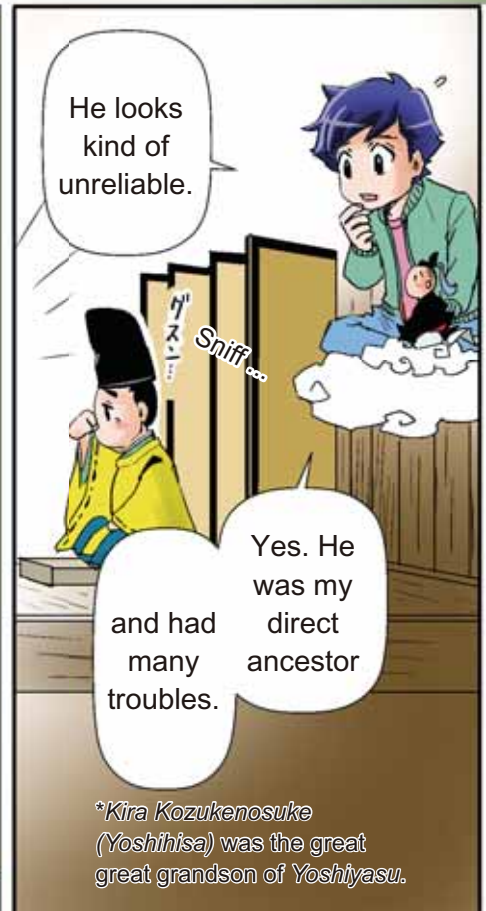
No, ally yourself with us.

At that time, *Mikawa* was between the east and west powerful *Daimyos*.

Wow  
Ally yourself with us.

If you don't, we'll attack you as our enemy.

Not only the *Kira Family* but also the *Kunishus* had to choose which to ally.



He looks kind of unreliable.

Sniff...

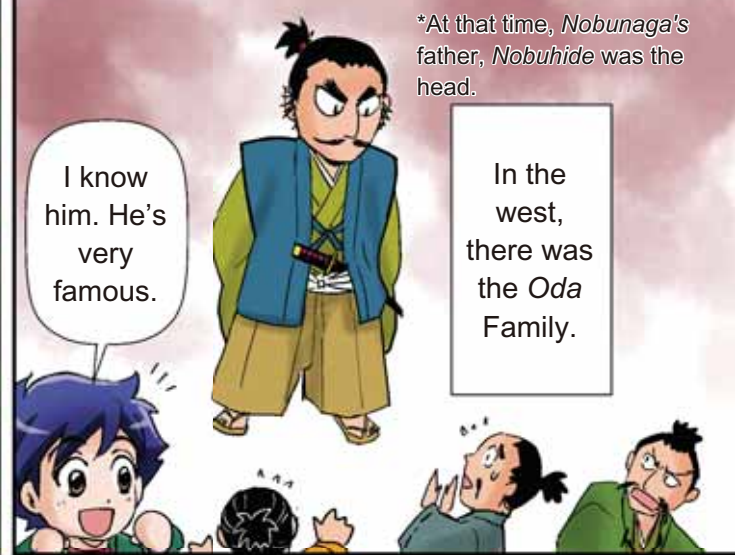
and had many troubles.

Yes. He was my direct ancestor

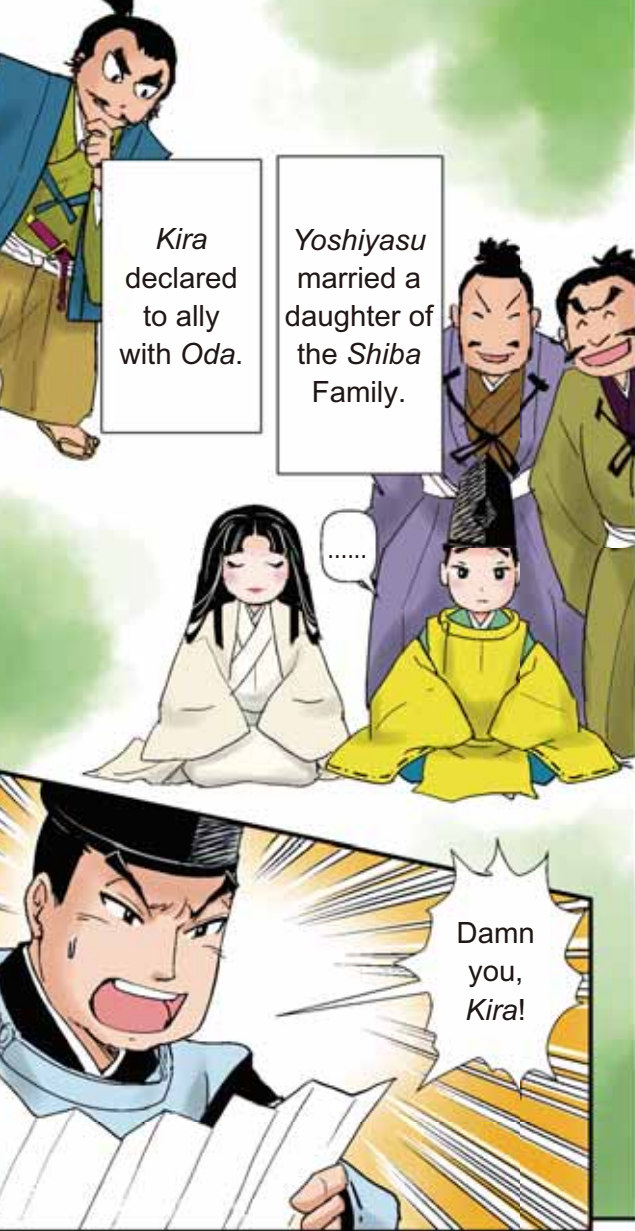
*\*Kira Kozukenosuke (Yoshihisa) was the great great grandson of Yoshiyasu.*



\*At that time, Nobunaga's father, Nobuhide was the head.







Kira declared to ally with Oda.

Yoshiyasu married a daughter of the Shiba Family.

.....

Damn you, Kira!



Oda becomes more powerful. We shouldn't defy them.

Kerai of Kira

We should ally with Oda.



No! You should listen to us. Marry a daughter of Oda's Kerai to form an alliance.

But..., Imagawa is so kind to say such a thing.



Nishiojo Castle was destroyed soon.

Imagawa got angry and attacked Kira.

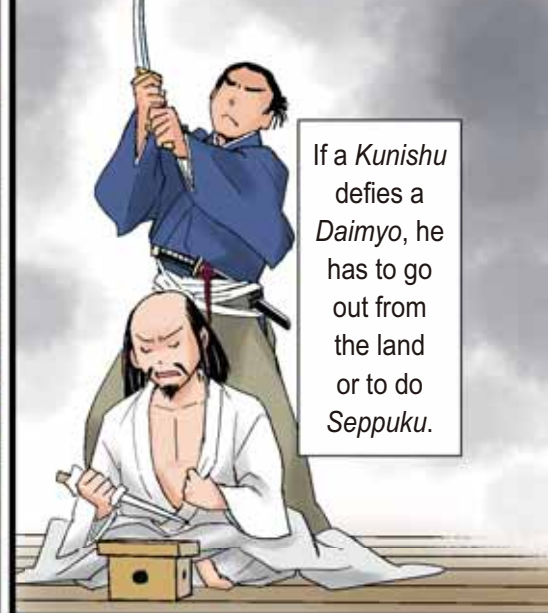
Waaaaa!



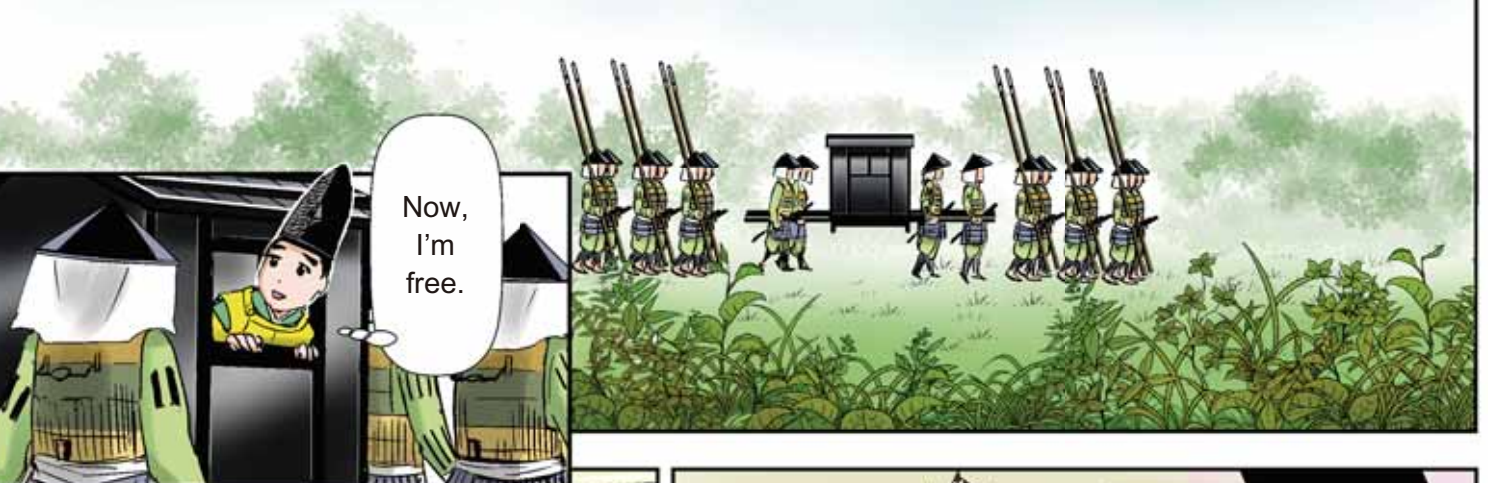
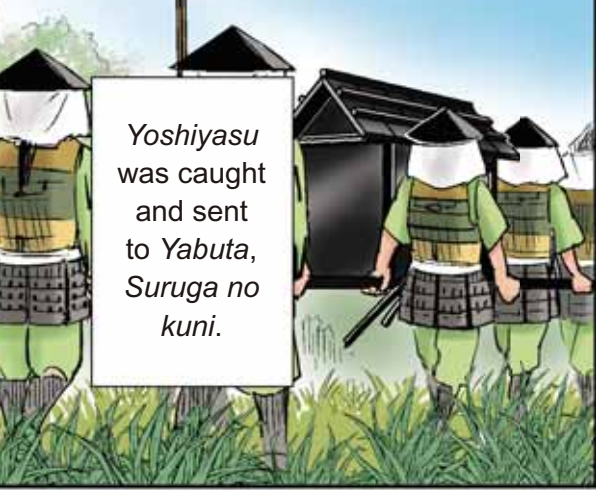
I will not forgive you!

Thud, thud  
thud, thud, thud













This is called  
"Okehazama  
no tatakaï".

Yoshimoto  
died in  
the Ikusa  
against Oda  
Nobunaga.

Surpri-  
singly



Get ready,  
Imagawa.



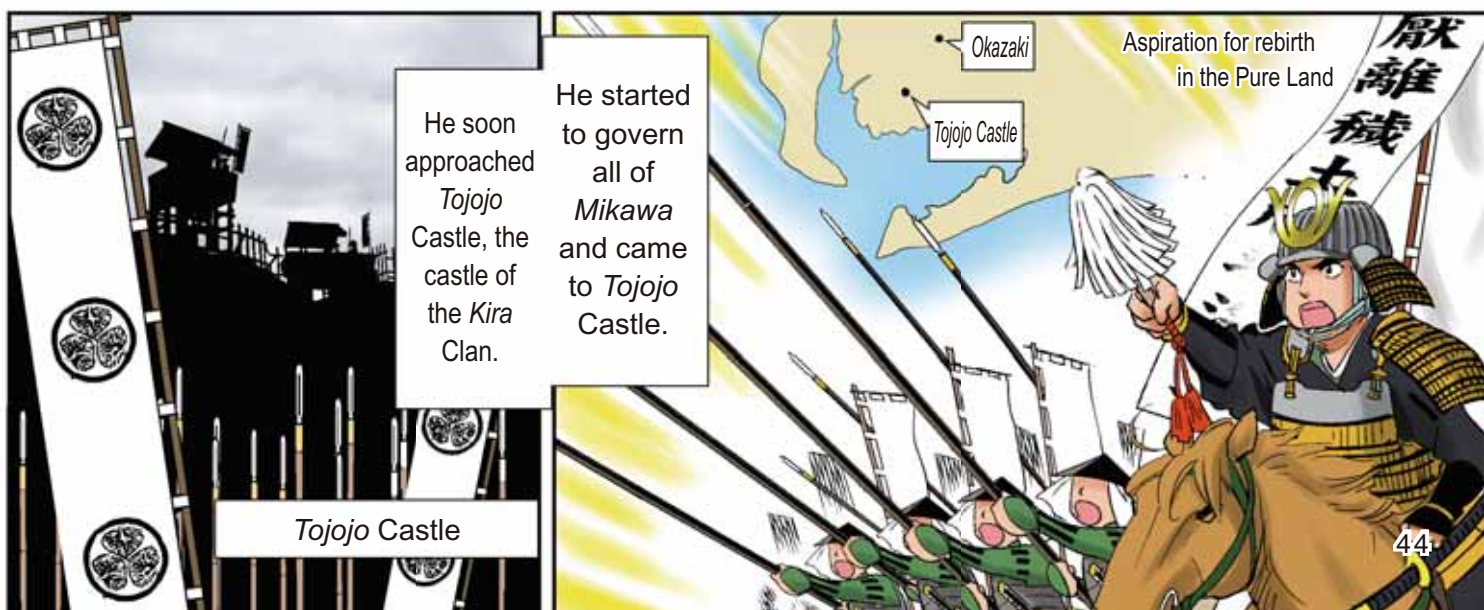
Aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land



Matsudaira  
Motoyasu (later  
to become  
Tokugawa  
Ieyasu), the  
Kunishu of  
Okazaki became  
powerful quickly.

After Imagawa in  
Mikawa no kuni  
died,

Matsudaira  
Motoyasu



He soon  
approached  
Tojojo  
Castle, the  
castle of  
the Kira  
Clan.

He started  
to govern  
all of  
Mikawa  
and came  
to Tojojo  
Castle.

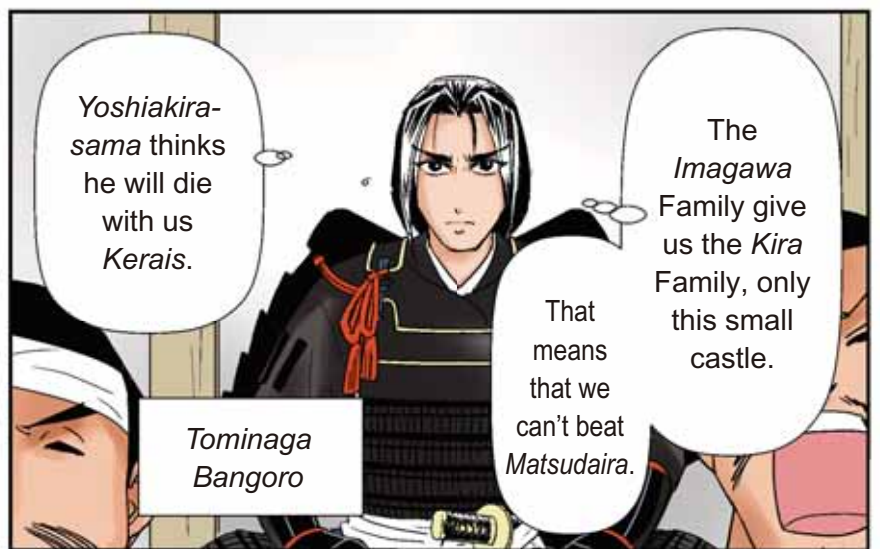
Aspiration for rebirth  
in the Pure Land

Okazaki

Tojojo Castle

Tojojo Castle









I can't ask for only my life, while you die.

But as a head,



If we hurt *Matsudaira*, we will save face as the head of *Ashikaga Gosanke*, the *Kira Family*.

*Yoshiakira-sama*, you will also be taken good care of.

If we just give in, people will think that we are the same as *Kunishus*.

*Bangoro-dono ...*



We may have a chance to become strong, too.

Now, the *Matsudaira* is very strong, but it may become weak.

.....

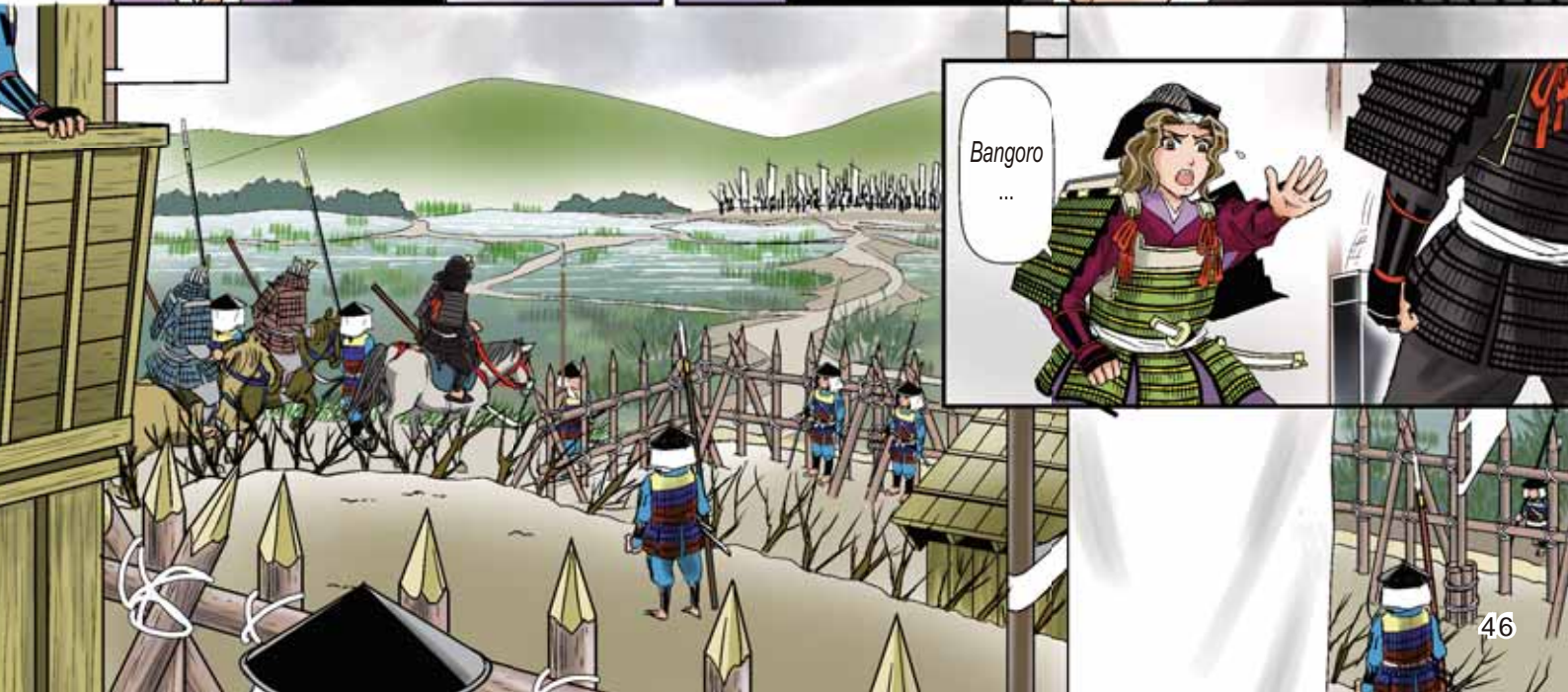


and protect the pride of *Kira*.

I want you to live more,

you must not die so easily, if you want other people to understand you.

*Yoshiakira-sama,*



*Bangoro ...*





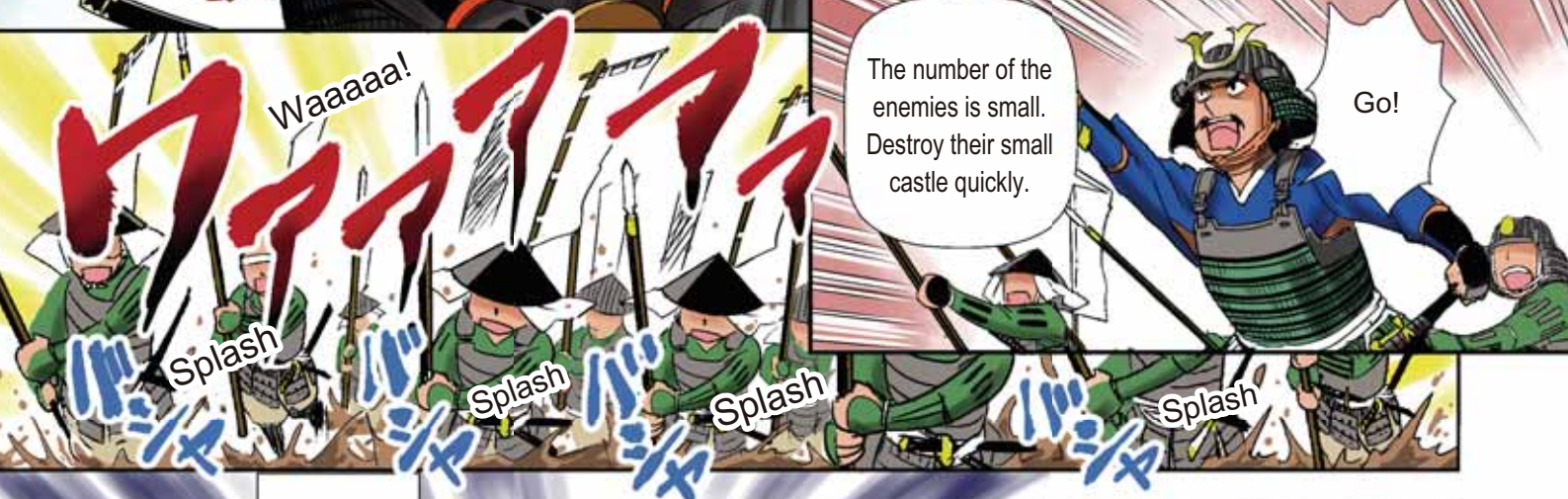
and fight  
until we  
die.

in *Mikawa*,  
we will  
never give  
in

But  
remember  
us with your  
eyes and  
ears,

*Matsudaira  
Motoyasu...*  
He's so young  
but a great head.

He may  
govern all  
*Mikawa*  
*no kuni*, or  
govern more  
and become  
more  
powerful.



Waaaaa!

Splash

Splash

Splash

The number of the  
enemies is small.  
Destroy their small  
castle quickly.

Go!

Splash



and fought  
against 800  
samurais of  
*Matsudaira*.



To attack  
they  
have  
to go  
through  
a narrow  
path.

*Tojojo*  
Castle was  
surrounded  
by a  
muddy rice  
field.

*Bangoro*  
and his  
30 *Kerais*  
stood on  
the path,

Aaaaagh!



He was only 25 years old.

Bangoro died.

He was tired out after he cut 50 enemies down.

Whoosh



Now, the Ikusa is over...

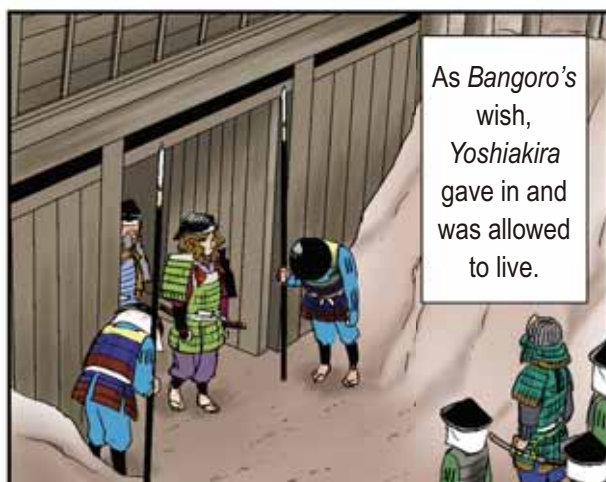
they thought.



when both sides heard that Bangoro died,



Because of Bangoro's hard fight,



As Bangoro's wish, Yoshiakira gave in and was allowed to live.



.....

Aspiration for rebirth in the Pure Land





Charge

Later,



I will continue to protect the pride of Kira.

Bangoro, as you said,



As he promised Bangoro, he lived on and fought to the last of his life.

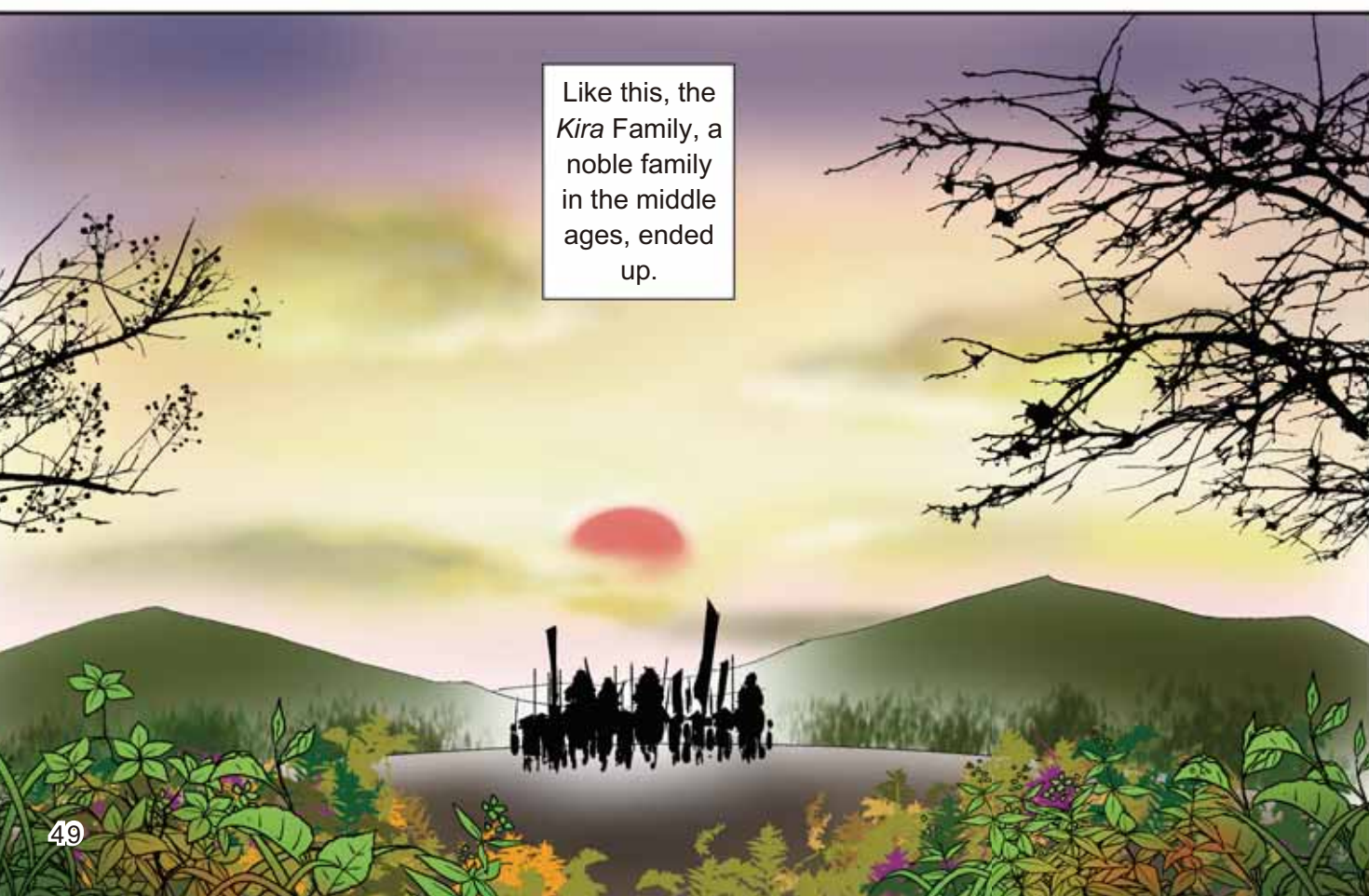
It is said that he was killed in Osaka.



But he couldn't win and ran away from Mikawa no kuni.



when he saw that the power of Matsudaira Ieyasu became weak, Yoshiakira fought again.

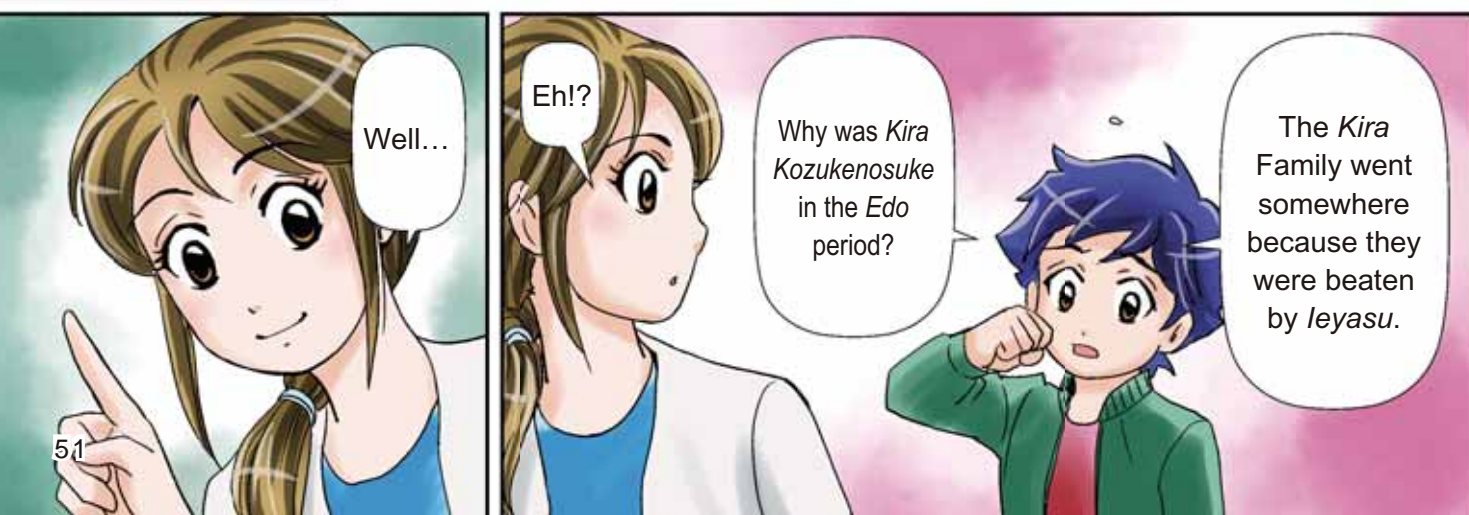


Like this, the Kira Family, a noble family in the middle ages, ended up.

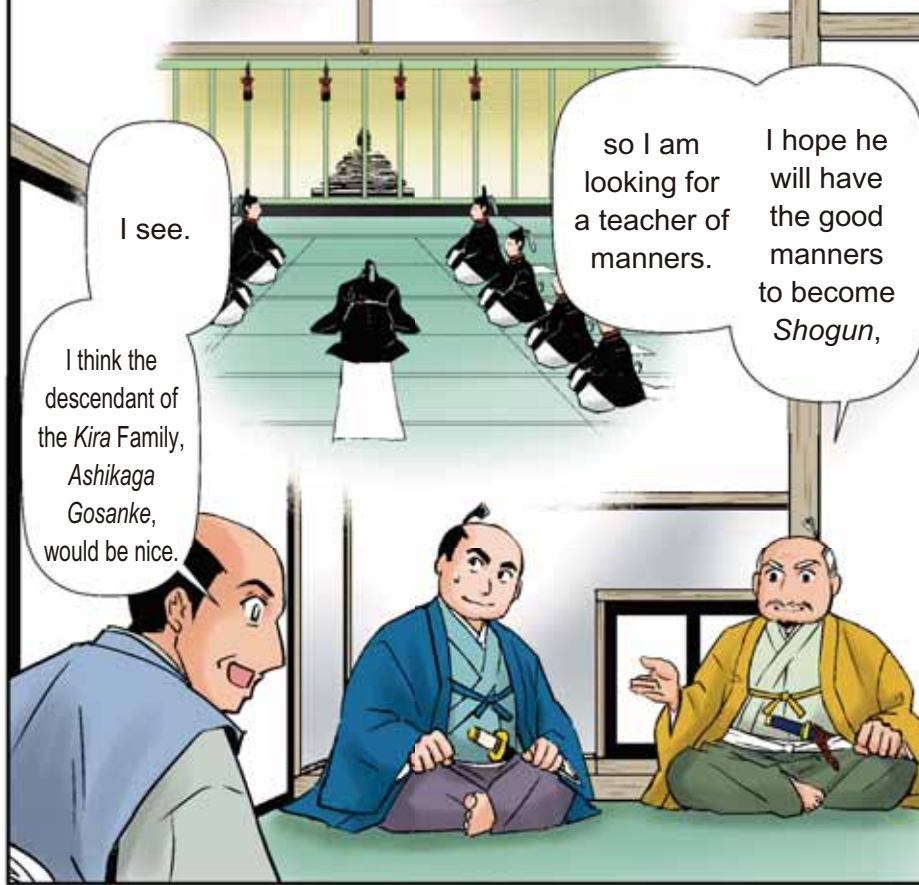










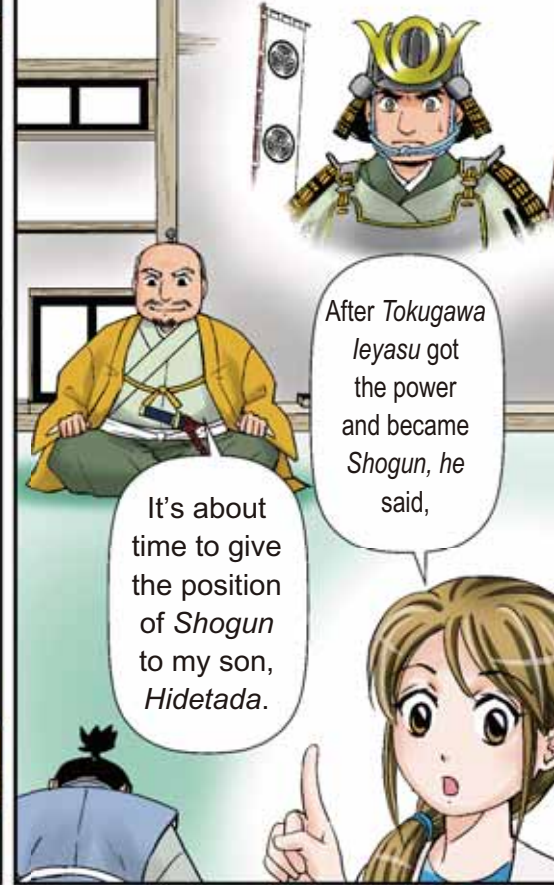


I see.

I think the descendant of the Kira Family, Ashikaga Gosanke, would be nice.

so I am looking for a teacher of manners.

I hope he will have the good manners to become Shogun,



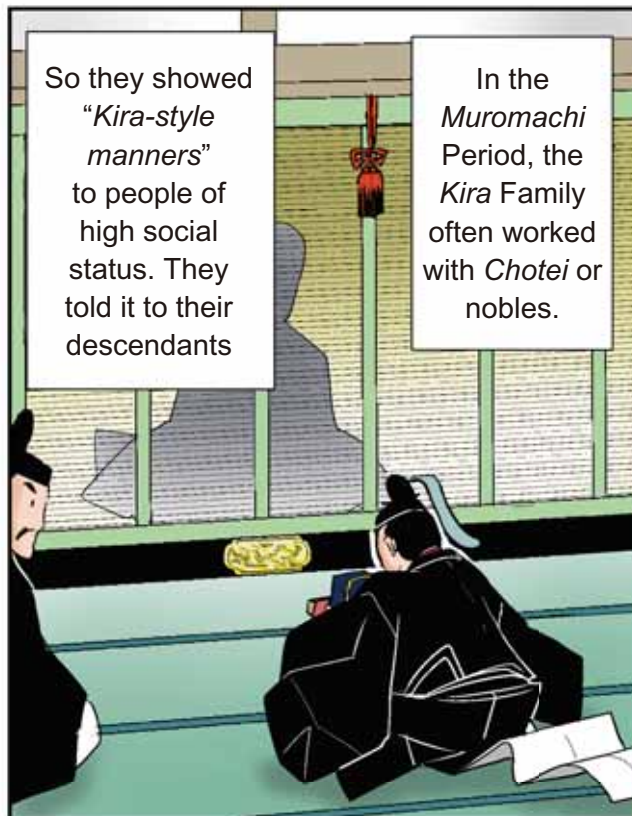
After Tokugawa Ieyasu got the power and became Shogun, he said,

It's about time to give the position of Shogun to my son, Hidetada.



Surprisingly, he was welcomed as the teacher of the next Shogun.

After that time, the grandson of Yoshiyasu lived a simple life as Ieyasu's Hatamoto.



So they showed "Kira-style manners" to people of high social status. They told it to their descendants

In the Muromachi Period, the Kira Family often worked with Chotei or nobles.



I remember them all.

I see... the proud Kira-dono.

Kira-dono would be perfect.

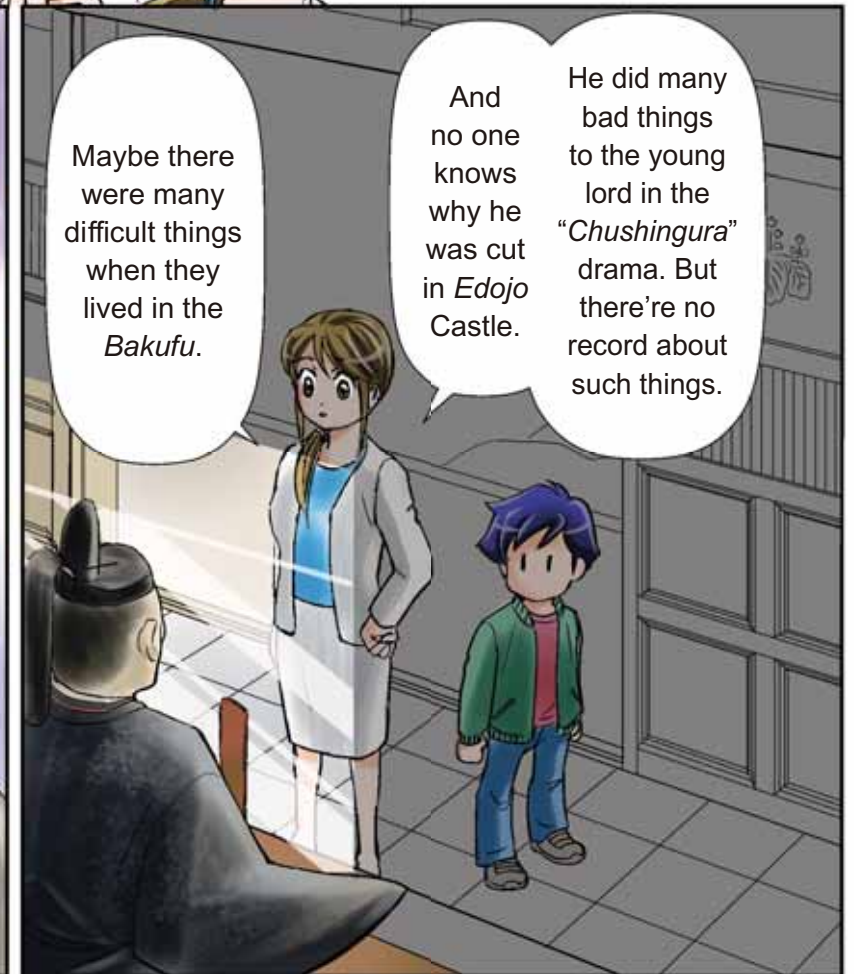
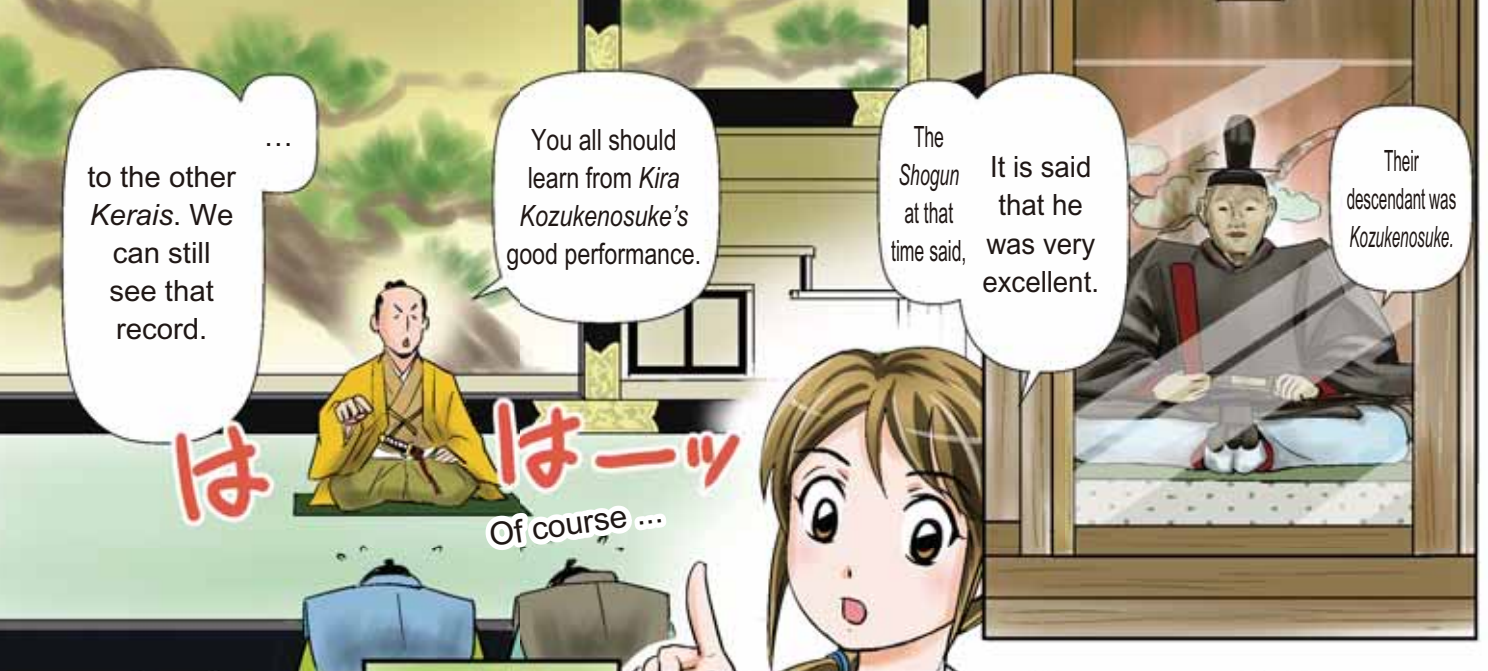


and it was needed in times of peace again.

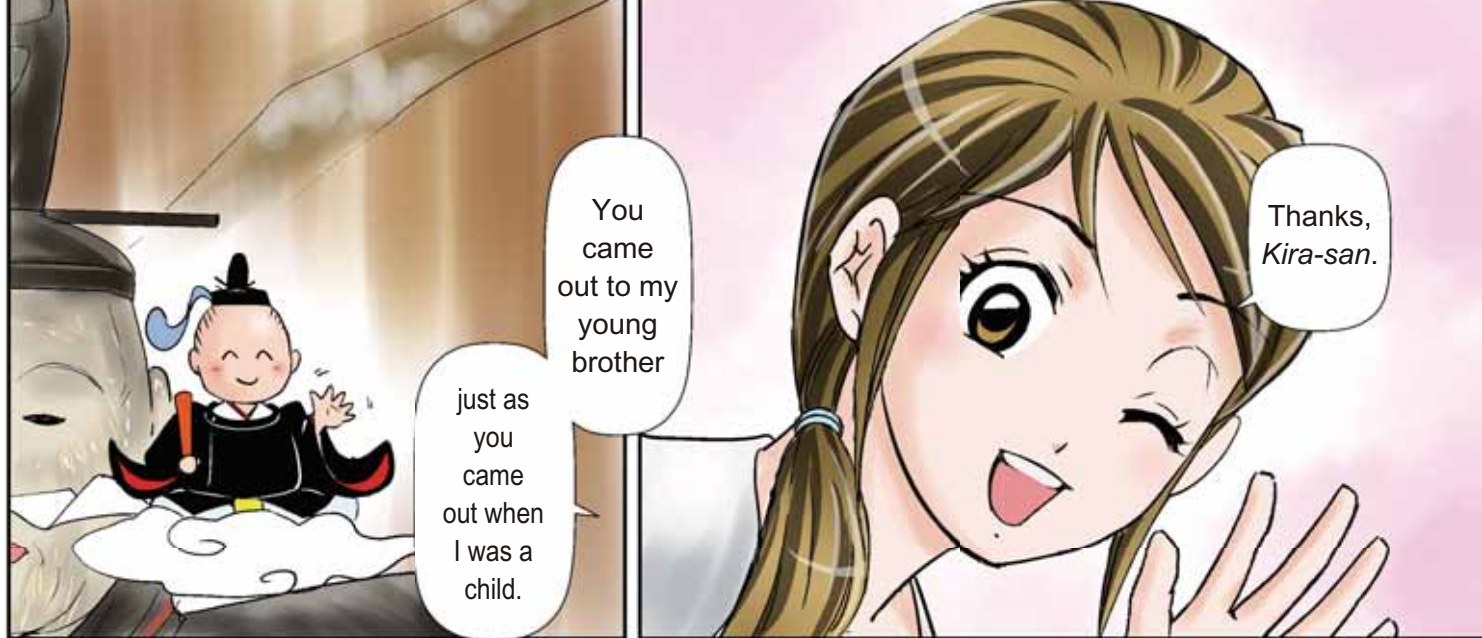
They learned manners in times of peace,

The Kira Family got the higher status, "Kira" in the Bakufu, and worked for a long time.





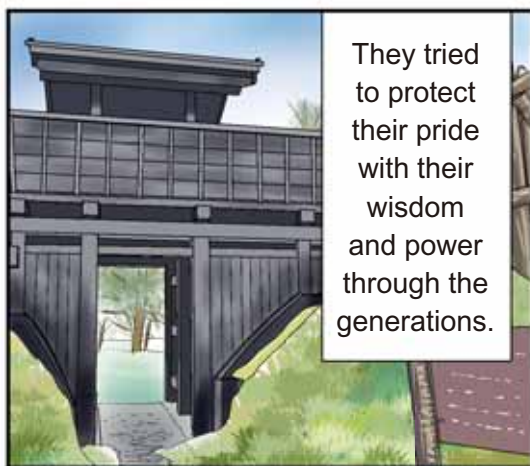




You came out to my young brother

just as you came out when I was a child.

Thanks, Kira-san.



They tried to protect their pride with their wisdom and power through the generations.



There was a very proud family in Japan. They had its home in Kira in Mikawa.

Old castle park

Their spirits still exist over the years.

But in the paths, mountains, and tiny stones,

We can see a little of their history.





## Introduction to Places connected to the Kira Clan

This chapter introduces historical ruins in the city connected to the Kira Clan and characters appearing in this booklet.



Northeast turret of the keep of Nishio Castle

### Nishio Castle Ruins, City-designated historical site (In Nishio City Historical Park, Kinjocho, Nishio City)

Said to have been built by Yoshiuji Ashikaga, who advanced into the present-day Nishio City district after successfully winning the Jokyu War (1221), this edifice was first called Nishio Castle. His descendants later called themselves “Kira” and made this castle their base. During the Edo Period, the castle became the residence of generations of hereditary Daimyo, or feudal lords, finally becoming a flourishing castle town yielding 60 thousand koku of rice (koku is a traditional unit of volume equal to approximately 180.4 liters) under the Ogyu Matsudaira Clan. Parts of the castle keep, himemaru building and east building are city-designated historical sites.



Mitsurugi Hachimangu Shrine

### Mitsurugi Hachimangu Shrine (In Nishio City Historical Park, Kinjocho, Nishio City)

This is a shrine enshrined in the Nishio Castle keep. Originally located in Matsuyama (Yamashitacho, Nishio City), it is said that the shrine was ceremoniously transferred and enshrined in its present location in Nishio Castle when the castle was built. The name of the shrine, Mitsurugi Hachimangu, meaning shrine of the sword, is said to derive from a famous sword called “Higekiri” inherited by the Minamoto family enshrined there as the object of worship. Although six guardian temples were located in the surrounds, they were dispersed to the castle town when the castle was expanded by Yoshimasa Tanaka in 1590.



Tsurugasaki Tenmangu Shrine

### Tsurugasaki Tenmangu Shrine (Tsurugasakicho, Nishio City)

According to the “Imagawa Genealogy,” after the Jokyu War (1221), Yoshiuji Ashikaga, who had become governor of Mikawa Province and Lord of Kira Manor, gave Kira Manor to Osauji his son, who had been unable to succeed to the position of head of the Ashikaga Clan despite being the elder brother. Having become the first generation of the Kira Clan, as overseer of the Kira Manor, Osauji is said to have built Tsurugasaki Tenmangu Shrine in 1251. Osauji probably compared Lord Michizane Sugawara, enshrined as the deity at Tenmangu Shrine, to himself.



Image of the Shakyamuni Triad at Jissoji Temple

### Jissoji Temple (Image of the Shakyamuni Triad) (Kamimachi, Nishio City)

Built in 1271 by Mitsuuji, second generation of the Kira Clan, Jissoji is the oldest Temple of the Rinzaï Sect in Mikawa and the Bodaiji, or family temple, of the Kira Clan. With a complete seven-structured temple compound and many minor temples on the grounds, Jissoji thrived as the center of the Mikawa Rinzaï Sect in ancient times. The founder of the temple, Shoichi (Enni) Kokushi, is said to have introduced tea to the area as a form of Zen culture. The Shakado Hall (prefecturally-designated cultural property) in front of the approach to the temple features an image of the Shakyamuni Triad (prefecturally-designated cultural property) erected in 1362 by Mitsusada, fifth generation of the Kira Clan. Usually closed to the public, the Shakado Hall is opened for the “Hana Matsuri,” or Flower Festival held on the second Sunday of April every year.





The main hall of Kozenji Temple

### Kozenji Temple (Manzencho, Nishio City)

Kozenji is a temple of the Soto Sect of Buddhism and, of the six guardian temples of the Mitsurugi Hachimangu Shrine when it was located in the grounds of Nishio Castle, two were originally the Jinguji Shrine Shakado Hall and the Kongo-Oin Temple Dainichido Hall. Originally called Kirayama Manzenji, the posthumous Buddhist name is Mitsusadain, and it is said that the wife of Mitsusada, fifth generation of the Kira Clan, was involved in its foundation. The Buddhist temple bell at Kozenji (city-designated cultural property) is engraved with the inscription, "This is the bell in front of the meditation hall of Jissoji Temple in Mikawa Province," indicating that this is the old bell of Jissoji Temple, the Bodaiji, or family temple of the Kira Clan. Kozenji flourished as the central temple of the Nishio Castle town.



Birthplace of the Imagawa Clan

### Birthplace of the Imagawa Clan, City-designated historical site (Imagawacho, Nishio City)

A stone monument stands on the south side of Nishio Junior High School in memory of Ryoshun Imagawa, who was active during the Nambokucho Period, or Period of the Northern and Southern Courts. Osauji Ashikaga, founder of the Kira and Imagawa Clan, accepted the Kira Manor to compensate for not being able to succeed to the position of head of the Ashikaga family. In time, Kuniuji, the second son of Osauji, was given the Imagawa territory in the Kira Manor, and thus came to be called by the name Imagawa. Before long, the Imagawa Clan became provincial military governors turned Daimyo, or feudal lords, and warlords, but the death in battle of Yoshimoto Imagawa during the Battle of Okehazama (1560) marked the beginning of the gradual decline of the Imagawa Clan.



Tojo Castle ruins

### Tojo Castle ruins (Madaramae, Kiracho, Nishio City)

After the Jokyu War (1221), it is said that Yoshiuji Ashikaga, who had become governor of Mikawa and lord of Kira Manor, built Saijo Castle in Saijo on the west side of Kira Manor and Tojo Castle in Tojo on the east side separated by the Yahagigawa river (Yumitorigawa river) that ran through Kira Manor in those days, setting up his oldest son, Osauji, in Saijo and his third son, Yoshitsugu, in Tojo, thus dividing management of Kira Manor. The ruins of Tojo Castle, the residence of the Tojo Kira Clan and later the Tojo Matsudaira Clan, include parts of the enclosure and earthen walls, giving us a clear image of a medieval castle.



Graveyard of the Tojo Kira Clan at Kagakuji Temple

### Kagakuji Temple (Graveyard of the Tojo Kira Clan) (Okayama, Kiracho, Nishio City)

A Myoshinji sect temple of the Rinzaï sect, Kagakuji is the Bodaiji, or family temple, of the Tojo Kira Clan. According to temple history, Mitsuyoshi of the fourth-generation Kira Clan invited Ippo Myoitsu (Bukkai Zen master), the fourth-generation priest of the Jissoji Temple, to build Kagakuji Temple. In addition, the graveyard of the Tojo Kira Clan at the top of the stairs at the back of the temple grounds contains the graves of figures such as Yoshitaka Kira, first generation, his father, Mitsuyoshi and Mochihiro Kira. The Buddhist name of Yoshitaka of the first-generation Tojo Kira Clan is Reigenji Dono and on the east side of the approach in front of the Kagakuji Temple gate can be found the remains of the small Zen temple Reigenji, believed to have been established with the involvement of Yoshitaka Kira, which was closed in 1868, the first year of the Meiji Period.





Burial mound of the severed head of Yoshimoto Imagawa

#### Burial mound of the severed head of Yoshimoto Imagawa (Tokoji Temple) (Komanbacho, Nishio City)

The Imagawa Clan is a branch of the Kira family, in which it was included as the result of two insurrections against the Imagawa Clan in 1549 and 1555. A stone tower reputed to be the burial mound of the severed head of Imagawa Yoshimoto is located halfway up the mountain to the east of Tokoji Temple. It is said that, because his uncle was the chief priest at the time, Yoshimoto, who died in the Battle of Okehazama (1560), was entombed here together with those under his command who also fell in battle. A Jodo-shu Seizan Fukakusa Sect temple, Tokoji features a standing monument to Yoshimoto which was erected in the Edo Period.



The Fujinaminawate Battlefield and Bangoro Jizo (right)

#### 孺 Fujinaminawate Battlefield (Bangoro Jizo) (Seto, Terajima, Kiracho, Nishio City)

In September of 1561, the year following the Battle of Okehazama, Motoyasu Matsudaira (later to become Ieyasu Tokugawa), who promoted the unification of Mikawa, launched an all-out attack on Tojo Castle, where Yoshiakira of the fourteenth generation of the Kira Clan was in hiding. Because of the muddy rice paddies in the Fujinaminawate area west of the castle, the main battleground, passage was possible only on footpaths between the rice fields. It is said that, to enable his master, Yoshiakira, to escape, the 25-year-old Tadamoto Tominaga (posthumously known as Bangoro), a famous commander of the Kira Clan, sallied forth from the castle, and the entire clan was wiped out. A Jizo, or guardian deity still called the Bangoro Jizo was erected at the spot where Bangoro fell in battle and is still watched over by the local people.



Kira family graveyard at Kezoji Temple

#### 孺 Kezoji Temple (Okayama, Kiracho, Nishio City)

Founded by Yoshisada Kira and later restored in 1600 by Yoshiyasu Kira, thirteenth generation of the Kira Clan, Kezoji is a Myoshinji Sect temple of the Rinzai sect and the Bodaiji, or family temple, of the Kira Clan. The graves of Yoshiyasu through to Yoshichika, the last head of the Kira family can be seen aligned in the graveyard. The wooden image of Yoshihisa Kira, a prefecturally-designated cultural property enshrined in the Mieido Hall is said to show him at the age of fifty and to have been colored by him personally. Although usually closed to the public, the hall is opened to on the 14th of December every year, the anniversary of Lord Kira, showing the image together with the Byakue Kannon, or white-robed deity of compassion, donated to by Yoshihisa and enconced in the scripture repository on the west side of the temple grounds.



Scripture repository at Kezoji Temple



Wooden image of Yoshihisa Kira







Nishio Castle ruins  
 Mitsurugi Hachimangu Shrine  
 Tsurugasaki Tenmangu Shrine  
 Jissoji Temple  
 Kozenji Temple  
 Birthplace of the Imagawa Clan  
 Tojo Castle ruins  
 Kagakuji Temple  
 Burial mound of Yoshimoto Imagawa  
 (Tokoji Temple)  
 𤮑 Fujinaminawate Battlefield  
 (Bangoro Jizo)  
 𤮑 Kezoji Temple

**Legend**

- National highway
- Main local road
- Bullet Train
- JR Line
- Private railway
- Sea route
- Traffic Light
- City Hall
- Temple
- Shrine
- Elementary/Junior High/High School
- Post Office
- Hospital
- Castle ruins
- Roadside station
- Main sightseeing spot/Main facility
- Main intersection





# ◆ Abridged Chronological Table of the Kira Clan

| Era/Year                     | Event   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Kamakura                     |   |
| 1221                         | Jokyu War Yoshiuji Ashikaga becomes the governor of Mikawa Province and Lord of Kira Manor and Yoshiuji builds Saijo and Tojo castles (?)                               |
| 1228                         | At around this time, Osauji of the first-generation of the Ashikaga (Kira) Clan is serving the Kamakura Bakufu.   |
| 1251                         | Osauji builds Tsurugasaki Tenmangu (?)  |
| 1271                         | Mitsuuji, second-generation of the Ashikaga (Kira) Clan, builds Jissoji Temple.   |
| 1275                         | At around this time, Mitsuuji becomes governor of Echizen Province.   |
| 1285                         | Shimotsuki Incident Sadauji, Mitsuuji's legitimate child, is defeated.  |
| 1331                         | Mitsuuji founds Ganjoji Temple (?)  |
| 1333                         | Sadayoshi third generation of the Ashikaga (Kira) Clan advises Takauji Ashikaga to attack the Kamakura Bakufu.<br>The Kamakura Bakufu falls.                            |
| Northern and Southern Courts |   |
| 1336                         | Establishment of the Kenmu Code (political statement showing the governing philosophy of the Bakufu) Establishment of the Muromachi Bakufu                              |
| 1338                         | Takauji Ashikaga becomes Sei-i Taishogun (Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Force Against the Barbarians)   |
| 1341                         | Up to around this point in time, Sadayoshi owned Hamamatsu Manor.   |
| 1343                         | Death of Sadayoshi By about this time, the surname had been changed from Ashikaga to Kira.  |
| 1345                         | Fifth-generation Mitsusada Kira is added to the attendant soldiers at the Tenryuji Temple memorial service.   |
| 1350                         | Kanno Incident Mitsuyoshi of the fourth-generation Kira Clan joins Takauji Ashikaga Ko no Moronao, and Mitsusada joins Tadayoshi Ashikaga (younger brother of Takauji). |
| 1356                         | Death of Mitsuyoshi Separation of the Tojo Kira Clan (?)  |
| 1360                         | At about this time, Mitsusada swore his allegiance to the Bakufu (Northern Court)   |
| 1362                         | Mitsusada erects a image of the Shakyamuni Triad at Jissoji Temple.   |
| 1384                         | Death of Mitsusada  |
| 1391                         | Toshiuji of the sixth-generation Kira Clan becomes chief of the Muromachi Bakufu high court.  |
| 1392                         | Toshiuji is added to the attendant soldiers at the Shokokuji Temple memorial service.   |
| Muromachi                    |   |
| 1409                         | Yoshinao of the seventh-generation Kira Clan becomes protector of the Mikawa Kezoji Temple.   |
| 1419                         | Yoshinao builds Kakuru Hachimangu Shrine in Hamamatsu Manor.  |
| 1440                         | At around this time, the Kira Clan becomes head of the Ashikaga families (the Three Families).  |
| 1465                         | Eighth-generation Yoshizane of the Kira Clan holds a grand dog-hunting event in Kyoto.  |
| Warring States               |   |
| 1467                         | Onin-Bunmei War   |
| 1481                         | Death of Yoshizane Ninth-generation Yoshinobu of the Kira Clan inherits the position of head of the family.   |
| 1493                         | Coup of Meio  |
| 1507                         | Yoshitada (Yoshitane) Ashikaga, who was overthrown in the Coup of Meio, is reinstated as shogun. The Kira mansion is relocated to the temporary imperial palace.        |
| 1511                         | Shogun Yoshitada (Yoshitane) leaves Kyoto. Accordingly, tenth-generation Yoshimoto of the Kira Clan sets fire to the temporary imperial palace of the Kira mansion.     |
| 1516                         | Yoshinobu hands over the position of head of the family to eleventh-generation Yoshitaka of the Kira Clan. Yoshimoto's father Yoshitaka dies before this.               |
| 1517                         | The Kira Clan loses dominion of Hamamatsu Manor.  |



| Era/Year        | Event  |
|-----------------|--|
| 1520            | Yoshitaka weds the daughter (older sister of Yoshimoto) of Ujichika Imagawa between 1520 and 1530.   |
| 1540            | Twelfth-generation Yoshisato Kira falls in battle at Nishio Castle (?)   |
| 1549            | Kira Manor is attacked by the Imagawa Clan and thirteenth-generation Yoshiyasu Kira is forced to surrender with a letter attached to an arrow.   |
| 1555            | Nishio Castle falls under attack by the Imagawa Clan. Yoshiyasu is imprisoned until 1557 by the Yabuta Clan of Suruga Province.  |
| 1560            | Jissoji Temple is burned down by the Oda army in the fires of war.<br>Battle of Okehazama Death of Yoshimoto Imagawa   |
| 1561            | Battle of Fujinaminawate Fourth-generation Yoshiakira of the Kira Clan is defeated at Tojo Castle by Motoyasu Matsudaira (later to become Ieyasu Tokugawa).  |
| 1563            | Battle of Azukizaka  |
| 1564            | Ieyasu Matsudaira (Ieyasu Tokugawa) again defeats Yoshiakira. Death of Yoshiyasu with the downfall of the Kira Clan.   |
| 1569            |  |
| 1573            | The Muromachi Bakufu falls.  |
| Azuchi Momoyama |  |
| 1590            | Ieyasu Tokugawa is forcibly relocated to Kanto. Mikawa retainers move to Kanto.  |
| 1600            | Battle of Sekigahara<br>Yoshisada Kira of first generation of the Kira Clan in early modern times restores Kezoji Temple.  |
| Edo             |  |
| 1603            | Ieyasu Tokugawa becomes Sei-i Taishogun (Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Force Against the Barbarians). Establishment of the Edo Bakufu  |
| 1610            | Around this time, second-generation Yoshimitsu Kira becomes active as a Koke (official who administered the ceremonies and rituals of the Edo Bakufu).   |
| 1627            | Death of Yoshisada   |
| 1641            | Birth of fourth-generation Yoshihisa Kira  |
| 1643            | Death of Yoshimitsu  |
| 1663            | Birth of Saburo, Yoshihisa's oldest son (later to become Tsunanori Uesugi)   |
| 1664            | Sudden death of Tsunakatsu Uesugi (Older brother of Tomiko, wife of Yoshihisa), third-generation feudal lord of the Yonezawa Clan Saburo, Yoshihisa's oldest son, is adopted by the Uesugi family. |
| 1668            | Death of Kira third-generation Yoshifuyu   |
| 1677            | Yoshihisa visits Kira Manor for the first time.  |
| 1678            | Birth of Yoshihisa's second son, Saburo  |
| 1685            | Death of Yoshihisa's second son, Saburo  |
| 1686            | Yoshihisa builds the Koganezutsumi (Golden embankment) (?)<br>Birth of fifth-generation Yoshichika Kira (second son of Tsunanori Uesugi)   |
| 1688            | Yoshihisa develops Tomiyoshi Shinden.  |
| 1701            | Naganori Asano, the feudal lord of the Ako Clan, attempts to cut down Yoshinaka in the Corridor of Pines in Edo Castle.  |
| 1702            | Yoshihisa is attacked and killed by the Ako ronin.   |
| 1703            | Yoshichika is exiled to Suwa in Shinshu.   |
| 1706            | Death of Yoshichika End of the lineage of the eldest son of the Mikawa Kira Clan   |

\*Question marks in parentheses indicate matters that cannot be confirmed from local folklore and other historical records from the times concerned.



## Special Japanese to English

| in this comic | in English         | in this comic | in English  | in this comic | in English                |
|---------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| Busyo         | military commander | Ikusa         | battle      | Shakasansonzo | Shakyamuni                |
| Tonosama      | lord               | Yoroi         | armour      | Daimyo        | feudal lord               |
| Kerai         | retainer           | Kabuto        | helmet      | Seppuku       | ritual suicide / harakiri |
| Samurai       | soldier            | Nancho        | South Court | Chotei        | imperial court            |
| Bugei         | martial arts       | Hokucho       | North Court | Dogo          | local clan                |

## New Expressions

| page | English         | Japanese   | page | English                 | Japanese  |
|------|-----------------|------------|------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 5    | level           | レベル        | 18   | space                   | 空き地       |
| 6    | historical      | 歴史(上)の     | 18   | surround                | 囲む        |
| 6    | fight           | 戦う         | 19   | scholar                 | 学者        |
| 6    | graveyard       | 墓          | 19   | harvest                 | 収穫        |
| 6    | govern          | 治める        | 19   | grandchildren           | 孫         |
| 7    | bully           | いじめる       | 19   | pride                   | 誇り        |
| 8    | lie             | うそをつく      | 19   | sword                   | (太)刀      |
| 8    | character       | キャラクター     | 20   | allow                   | 許す        |
| 10   | olden           | 昔の         | 20   | acknowledge             | 認める       |
| 12   | rude            | 無礼な        | 20   | heir                    | 後継者       |
| 12   | wooden image    | 木像         | 21   | Buddism                 | 仏教        |
| 12   | ghost           | 幽霊         | 21   | invite                  | 招く        |
| 12   | yet             | まだ、もう(p38) | 21   | monk                    | 僧         |
| 13   | ancestor        | 祖先         | 21   | area                    | 地         |
| 13   | powerful        | 力のある       | 21   | descendant              | 子孫        |
| 13   | government      | 政府         | 21   | completely              | 全く        |
| 14   | lineage         | 血筋         | 21   | position                | 立場        |
| 14   | noble           | 貴族         | 21   | origin                  | 起源        |
| 14   | elite           | エリート       | 22   | wear                    | 着る        |
| 15   | status          | 身分、位       | 22   | drama                   | ドラマ       |
| 16   | defy            | 逆らう        | 22   | serious                 | 深刻な       |
| 16   | accept          | 受け入れる      | 22   | betray                  | 裏切る       |
| 16   | support         | 支える        | 23   | gradually               | 段々と       |
| 17   | all for nothing | むだな        | 23   | fool around             | ぶらぶらして過ごす |
| 17   | order           | 命じる        | 23   | emperor                 | 天皇        |
| 17   | attack          | 攻撃する       | 23   | political               | 政治の       |
| 17   | lead            | 導く         | 23   | put together an army    | 兵を挙げる     |
| 17   | victory         | 勝利         | 23   | selfish                 | 自分勝手な     |
| 17   | reward          | ほうび        | 23   | I've really had enough. | もうたくさんだ。  |
| 17   | enemy           | 敵          | 23   | destroy                 | 壊す        |
| 17   | trust           | 信頼する       | 23   | ally                    | 味方する      |
| 17   | defence         | 防御         | 24   | encourage               | 励ます       |
| 18   | involve         | 巻き込む       | 24   | renew                   | 新たに       |
| 18   | retire          | 引退する       | 24   | decision                | 決意        |
| 18   | road            | 道路         | 24   | respect                 | 尊敬する      |



| page | English       | Japanese  | page | English            | Japanese |
|------|---------------|-----------|------|--------------------|----------|
| 25   | declare       | 宣言する      | 35   | measure            | ものさし     |
| 26   | summon        | 呼び出す      | 35   | unfair             | 不公平な     |
| 27   | wonder if     | ～かしらと疑う   | 36   | authority          | 権威       |
| 27   | gain          | 得る        | 36   | exist              | 存在する     |
| 27   | even if       | 例え～でも     | 36   | while              | ～の間      |
| 27   | easily        | 簡単に       | 36   | spread             | 広がる      |
| 27   | disrespect    | 軽視する      | 37   | chaos              | 混乱       |
| 28   | relationship  | 関係        | 37   | survive            | 生き残る     |
| 28   | split         | 分かれる      | 37   | disappearing       | 消えること    |
| 28   | surprisingly  | 驚くことに     | 38   | peace              | 平和       |
| 29   | imperial      | 天皇の       | 38   | close              | ～の近くに    |
| 29   | army          | 軍         | 39   | unreliable         | 頼りない     |
| 29   | foolish       | おろかな      | 40   | achieve            | 成し遂げる    |
| 29   | stubborn      | 強情な       | 40   | neutral            | 中立の      |
| 29   | be proud of   | ～を誇りに思う   | 41   | form an alliance   | 同盟を結ぶ    |
| 30   | stubbornness  | 強情さ       | 41   | Damn you.          | おのれ。     |
| 30   | forgive       | 許す        | 42   | exceptionally      | 例外的に     |
| 30   | no longer     | もはや～でない   | 42   | hostage            | 人質       |
| 31   | branch family | 分家        | 42   | though             | ～だけれども   |
| 32   | donate        | 寄附する、寄進する | 44   | quickly            | 急激に      |
| 32   | pray          | 祈る        | 45   | give in            | 降伏する     |
| 32   | role          | 役割        | 45   | lose face          | メンツを失う   |
| 32   | base          | 本拠地       | 46   | save face          | メンツを保つ   |
| 32   | protect       | 守る        | 47   | until              | ～まで      |
| 32   | pride         | 誇り        | 47   | muddy              | 泥の       |
| 32   | passion       | 情熱        | 47   | narrow             | 狭い       |
| 32   | spirit        | 魂         | 47   | path               | 小道       |
| 33   | meaningless   | 無意味       | 49   | live on            | 生き抜く     |
| 33   | treat         | 扱う        | 49   | in the middle ages | 中世の      |
| 33   | ceremony      | 儀式        | 50   | pass it on         | 受け継ぐ     |
| 33   | clear         | はっきりと     | 52   | manner             | 礼儀、作法    |
| 33   | loud          | 大きな声で     | 52   | style              | スタイル     |
| 34   | silk          | 絹の        | 53   | excellent          | 優秀な      |
| 34   | fabric        | 織物        | 53   | record             | 記録       |
| 34   | complain      | 不平を言う     | 54   | wisdom             | 知恵       |
| 34   | wellknown     | よく知られた    | 54   | generation         | 世代       |
| 35   | graduate      | 卒業する      | 54   | tiny               | 小さな      |
| 35   | brand         | ブランド      |      |                    |          |



# Afterword

I created this cartoon to give elementary and junior high school students living in Nishio City an understanding of the Kira Clan who lived in this area long ago. My reason for wanting to tell people about the local history of this area goes back to a bitter experience I suffered myself.

Wanting to become a cartoonist, I worked as an assistant cartoonist in Tokyo after graduating from university. There were other assistants in my workplace who, like myself, had come from various areas around the country.

During breaks from our work, we used to enjoy talking about things like well-known products and local history of our hometowns. But I was the only one who couldn't join in. This was because, although I had lived in my hometown for more than twenty years, I knew nothing about Nishio, the place where I was born. This was natural because I had thought Nishio was just a rural area with nothing distinctive to offer.

I thought this was really pitiable and embarrassing.

But then, Mikawa, where I was born and grew up, drew my attention, and I started to study its history, which I found especially interesting. During my studies, I was amazed to learn that Mikawa had an astonishing history with all kinds of figures who had led stirring lives and that sometimes, this also bore deep ties to the entire history of Japan. So, when I returned to my hometown of Nishio, the mountains, rivers, temples, roads that I was used to seeing from my childhood and that had not changed in any way at all looked completely different to me and I found even a single place name stirred emotions in me, so that what I had thought of as "just a rural area with nothing distinctive to offer" seemed to shine and be alive, making me truly happy that I had been born here. Knowledge is a frightening thing.

Wanting to share this experience with as many others as possible, I decided to create a cartoon depicting the lives of the unknown samurai warriors of my hometown.

Thankfully, more and more people came to enjoy my cartoons and now, after twenty years have passed, I have made this my work.

I hope that, after reading this cartoon, you'll try visiting places like temples, shrines and historic sites that have connections with the Kira Clan. Try visiting places where figures like Osauji Ashikaga, Mitsusada Kira, Yoshiakira Kira and Bangoro Tominaga once used to walk, laugh, cry or lose their temper.

I'm sure you'll find that you feel a little closer to events and figures from ancient times. And you may feel a sense of wonder that you are standing on the very spot where such events unfolded so many centuries ago.

Learning about the history of your own hometown also gives you an understanding of the elements that make you what you are.

I believe that people born and raised in this area have surely inherited the "spirit" of these historical characters who lived with such great pride and refused to give in to fate and that spirit continues to live.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Tetsuo Ito and all the members of the Kira Clan 800-year Festival Executive Committee for their cooperation in producing this booklet.

February 2020

Kou Suzuki



## 【About the Author】

### Kou Suzuki

Born in Nishio City, Aichi Prefecture Cartoonist Made his debut as a cartoonist in the “ Weekly Shonen Champion ” magazine in 1992 (Year 4 of the Heisei Period) while still a student at university. In 2009 (Year 21 of the Heisei Period) “ Kojinfu ” featuring Naomasa Ii as the hero won honorable mention for first prize in the first Production I.G × MAG Competition (Chief Judge: Mamoru Oshii). Main works: “ Larmes de The ” (Published by MAG Garden/Awarded prize for COOLJAPAN work at Osaka International Manga Grand Prix, “ KADOKAWA Manga Learning Series, Japanese History Volume 13 (Published by KADOKAWA/editorial supervision/Hirofumi Yamamoto) (P.N. thereafter: Minamo Kaeru), “ Manga Life of Oda Nobunaga/ Kirin Castle ” (Produced by Komaki City, original work/Tetsuo Iritani), “ Battle of Komaki and Nagakute seen by Rinimo ” (Produced by Nagakute City, editorial supervision/Tetsuo Owada), “ Three generations of Sanada in Cartoons ” (Published by Ebisukosyo Publication, editorial supervision/Masaru Hirayama), “ Biographies of Sengoku Tokugawa shogun ” (Published by Ebisukosyo Publication, editorial supervision/Tetsuo Owada), “ Cartoon Ryosen Sanzo ” (Editorial supervision/Association in Honor of Ryosen Sanzo), “ Naomasa Ii and his Family in Cartoons ” (Published by Ebisukosyo Publication, editorial supervision/Tetsuo Owada), “ New Research into Nobunaga Oda in Cartoons ” (Published by Ebisukosyo Publication, editorial supervision/Hiroyuki Shiba), “ Biographies of Military Commander Nobunaga ” (as above) Lives in Yokohama City.

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