THE MONGOL INVASIONS OF JAPAN 1274 AND 1281

STEPHEN TURNBULL ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD HOOK

CAMPAIGN • 217

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First published in 2010 by Osprey Publishing
Midland House, West Way, Botley, Oxford OX2 0PH, UK
44-02 23rd St, Suite 219, Long Island City, NY 11101, USA
E-mail: info@ospreypublishing.com

ISBN: 978 1 84603 456 5

E-book ISBN: 978 1 84908 250 1

Editorial by Ilios Publishing Ltd, Oxford, UK (www.iliospublishing.com)
Page layout by The Black Spot
Index by Margaret Vaudrey
Typeset in Myriad Pro and Sabon
Maps by Bounford.com
3D bird's-eye views by The Black Spot
Battlescene illustrations by Richard Hook
Originated by PPS Grasmere Ltd
Printed in China through Worldprint Ltd.

10 11 12 13 14 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

DEDICATION

To my grandson Daniel Richard Robinson, born 24 February 2009.

EDITOR'S NOTE

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

The account which follows of the invasions of 1274 and 1281 is drawn from sources that are historical, literary and archaeological. It has also involved a great deal of personal travel and fieldwork. In 2005 I retraced the course of the Mongol invasions from Korea via the islands of Tsushima and Iki to the site of the first landfall in Hakata Bay in Fukuoka prefecture, and in 2008 I visited for the first time the island of Takashima, the place where the *kamikaze* struck with its greatest intensity. There I had the privilege of being shown items undergoing conservation that had been painstakingly retrieved from the undersea wrecks of the Mongol fleet. For this I thank Randall Sasaki and his team, whose pioneering work in underwater archaeology has added so much to our knowledge of the Mongol invasions. I also thank Chris Barnes of the British Library, the Japanese Gallery in Islington, the staff of the National Military Museum in Beijing, the National Museum of Japanese History at Sakura, Kyushu National Museum, the Hakozaki Shrine and the Museum of the Mongol Invasions in Hakata for their kind cooperation.

ARTIST'S NOTE

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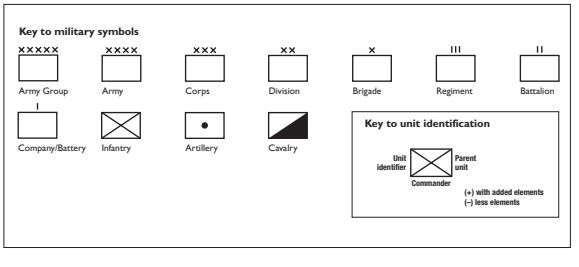


CONTENTS

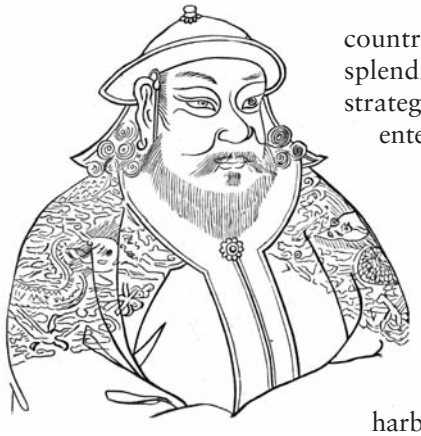
INTRODUCTION

The vast Mongol Empire, established during the early part of the 13th century by Genghis Khan and then enlarged and consolidated by his descendants, is one of the greatest success stories in world military history. This book, however, is concerned with one of its few failures. Impressive though the Mongol conquests may have been when they were carried out from horseback across the sweeping land mass of Central Asia, these achievements were to be challenged robustly on the fringes of their great empire, and among these military reverses no expedition was to be so dramatically curtailed as the attempts by Genghis Khan's grandson Khubilai Khan to conquer Japan. After an initial invasion in 1274 (which may have been intended solely as a brief reconnaissance in force), two massive Mongol armadas united for a serious attempt at conquest in 1281. Prevented from landing by the bravery of the samurai – the knights of Japan – the invaders became sitting targets for a devastating typhoon that destroyed their ambitions as thoroughly as it destroyed their ships. So decisive was this intervention that the belief grew that the storm had been sent by the *kami* (gods) of Japan as an answer to prayer. It was therefore dubbed the *kamikaze* – the 'divine wind'. In the centuries that followed the myth of the *kamikaze* grew to dominate the narrative of the Mongol invasions of Japan. The result was that the exploits of the human warriors whose actions had made its effects possible became overshadowed both by the knockout blow that the storm had provided and by an anachronistic belief that the samurai were displaying an unselfish and nationalistic consciousness in the face of a foreign enemy. This myth was to reach a climax during the final months of World War II, when the Japanese, faced with an invasion of their homeland by a foreign enemy for the first time since the Mongol invasions, turned in desperation to suicide attacks and adopted the name of '*kamikaze*' for the pilots who were to carry them out.

JAPAN AND THE MONGOL EMPIRE

LEFT
The Mongol invaders attack Iki Island in 1274. Here we see Taira Kagetaka, the hero of the defence of Iki, surrounded by Mongol soldiers armed with straight spears. (Genko Shiryokan, Fukuoka)

During the 13th century the main driving force in East Asia was provided by the nomadic tribes of the north who became united under the leadership of Genghis Khan, and over a period of half a century the Mongol Empire redrew the map of the Asiatic continent. It was, however, a process from which the island nation of Japan managed to stay aloof for more than 70 years, maintaining no official diplomatic relations with either China or Korea at this time. Japan may have had close economic and cultural ties with both



Khubilai Khan; in China and Korea, he succeeded in enlarging the empire he inherited from his grandfather Genghis Khan, but failed to do so in Japan.

countries through international trade, but her political stance was one of splendid isolation until the ruler of the Mongol Empire decided that this strategically located little country should either be persuaded or forced to enter international politics.

This move was instigated by Khubilai Khan (1215–94), who became the first emperor of the Yuan (Mongol) dynasty of China in 1271, an achievement that symbolized dramatically the transformation of the Mongols from their origins as nomadic dwellers in felt tents to the sedentary rulers of a civilized state. Thus it was that when, only three years later, Khubilai Khan first attempted to extend his hegemony to Japan, the military campaign he carried out was launched not from the grassy steppes of Central Asia but from the harbours and estuaries of southern Korea. The Mongol invasions of Japan, although masterminded by the heirs of an extensive land-based military power of which the Japanese knew very little and of whose military tactics the samurai had no prior experience, therefore brought into face-to-face conflict certain military forces that were uncomfortably familiar with each other. The expeditions of 1274 and 1281 may therefore be seen as one further stage in the history of the relations between Japan, Korea and China. For centuries that relationship had swung between peace and war, and the Mongol invasion of Japan in 1274 was far from being the first seaborne raid to have been launched across the Straits of Tsushima, the area of sea that divides Japan from the nearest point on the Asiatic land mass. The difference was that most of the previous raids had been carried out in the opposite direction. This was the phenomenon of the *wako*, the Japanese pirates, whose depredations had flung into reverse a long-standing admiration for the Japanese that had been felt across East Asia, and for which the Mongol invasions could even be seen as revenge.

It had all once been so very different. When Buddhism arrived in Japan from China around the year 552 it came gift-wrapped in Chinese culture, and the enthusiasm exhibited over the following centuries by successive Japanese emperors went far beyond any interest in or commitment to a new religion. The glorious Tang dynasty in particular was to provide the inspiration for creating an ordered and well-governed Japan that would be a reflection of the Chinese and Buddhist world order, and no better symbol of this attitude was to be provided than the establishment of Japan's first permanent capital city in 710 at Nara, a place laid out as a miniature version of the Tang capital of Chang'an. During the time of the Sui dynasty who had preceded the Tang, their first envoy to Japan had surmised that the people he met there were the descendants of ancient Chinese who had gone abroad in search of the islands of the immortals, a warm sentiment echoed in the official history of the Sui dynasty where the Japanese are described as 'rather quiet… They seldom engage in banditry… By nature they are honest. They have a refined manner.' It was a positive impression that was to be reinforced by the steady stream of Buddhist monks, students and ambassadors who made their way to the Tang court from Japan. Indeed, the personal bearing of the envoy Fujiwara Kiyokawa in front of the Emperor of China convinced his host that Japan was 'a country of etiquette and gentlemen', an expression to be repeated time and again.

Yet by 1266 that perception had changed. As his grip on China became more secure, Khubilai Khan sent two envoys to Japan with the message that the two countries should 'establish friendly relations'. The implications behind that phrase and the threat of war included within the final paragraph of the

letter will be discussed later. For now we merely note that the ambassadors' journey took them via Korea, where a letter was presented to the Korean king requesting his help in guiding the envoys safely to a land whose 'institutions and administration are praiseworthy'. The ambassadors, however, went no further, having been dissuaded from travelling by raging seas and the strong hint from the Koreans that a voyage to Japan might place their lives in danger from people who were 'obdurate and tough, with no sense of propriety or order'. It was a very different perception.

A few more years were to pass before an envoy from the Great Khan was able to judge for himself how far the Japanese had fallen from the level of exemplary behaviour that had previously been assumed. In 1270 Zhao Liangbi travelled to Japan carrying a message in which Japan was praised in the accepted terms of 'a country renowned for its knowledge of etiquette', but it took no more than 12 months of residence for Zhao's personal observations and conclusions to reverse that official perception. 'I have lived in Japan for a year,' wrote the learned envoy. 'I have observed the people's customs and found that the Japanese are cruel and bloodthirsty. They do not recognize the bond between father and son or the etiquette pertaining to relations between superiors and inferiors.'

Part of the reason for Zhao Liangbi's contempt for his hosts was their haughty refusal to respond to the official letter from the Great Khan offering friendly relations, but a further factor to have brought about this radical difference in perception was the reprehensible behaviour of the Japanese pirates against China's neighbour. Korea had been chosen not only for its geographical convenience but because its ability to resist attacks from the sea was being consistently reduced by the need to combat other attacks that were being delivered overland. In view of what was to happen in 1274 it is particularly ironic to discover that these raids were in fact a series of Mongol invasions of Korea.

The first Mongol incursion into Korea involved no more than the pursuit by the Mongols across the Yalu River of fleeing Khitan troops who had been refused supplies by the Koreans and gone raiding in Korea instead. In 1231 the Mongols returned as invaders in their own right, and after a series of sieges in northern Korea the royal court of the ruling Goryeo dynasty took refuge on the island of Ganghwa. For the first time in the history of the Mongol conquests the Mongols were faced with a barrier of the sea. Lacking any means whereby that could cross this tiny stretch of water – and the strait was only one kilometre wide – their immediate aim of the surrender of the Goryeo monarch was frustrated. It was a strange portent of the problems that would face the Mongol army when the fight was to be taken to Japan.

After several further raids the Mongol army invaded Korea in 1254 for what was to prove the last time. Ganghwa Island still remained untaken, but in 1258 radical developments within Korean politics greatly helped the Mongol cause. Throughout all the previous invasions the resistance from Ganghwa had been controlled not by the Korean king but by a hardline, anti-Mongol faction. When its leader was assassinated in 1258 the king assumed personal control of the government and indicated his intention to negotiate a peace. Hostages were sent to the Mongol court as proof of goodwill, but in an action called the 'Rebellion of the Three Patrols' a group of diehard Korean military officers deposed his successor and determined to keep fighting. Mongol troops were invited in by the Korean royal family to overthrow the rebels, which they did in 1270, and the insurgents fled to Jeju

Japan and the Mongol Empire, 1274–81

Island. In 1273 the Korean crown prince was married to Khubilai Khan's daughter, and with this alliance the resistance from Jeju ceased. Half of Jeju Island was given over to a grazing ground for Mongol horses in a process of pacification that was paralleled throughout mainland Korea. At first the Mongols appeared to be generous overlords, and it seemed that peace had finally come to the peninsula. But only one year was to pass before the Korean king was to be humiliated when he saw his country's soldiers and naval resources commandeered by the Mongols for their most ambitious maritime project of all: the invasion of Japan.

THE MONGOL CONQUEST OF CHINA

Throughout the time when Korea was being subjected to the raids of Mongol horsemen, other Mongol commanders had been involved in a much larger-scale operation to achieve the conquest of China, where past political developments had ensured that war would have to be launched against three ruling powers: the Xixia, the Jin and the Southern Song. The process by which Genghis Khan and his successors took over the whole of China and set

Two contingents of samurai are rowed into action against the invasion fleet in this section from the Mongol Invasion Scrolls. In the leading boat are followers of the *shugo* (constable) of Satsuma province Shimazu Hisachika and his brother Hisanaga. The trailing boat holds the followers of Shoni Tsunesuke, elder brother of the hero Shoni Kagesuke.

up their own Yuan (Mongol) dynasty was the longest campaign of all the military actions involved in creating their spectacular empire. It began with Genghis Khan's operation against the Xixia and was completed only 70 years later by Khubilai Khan. Almost all the other Mongol operations, from Syria to Poland and from Russia to Japan, were carried out to the backdrop of this long struggle for China. Within that period of time the Mongols fought on grasslands, in sub-tropical jungles, in deserts, across temperate farmlands, along rivers and on the sea, just to subdue that one enormous and complex country. The campaign also spanned an enormous conceptual gap from nomadism to imperialism, and was symbolized by the difference between the dwelling of the first Mongol leader, who lived in a portable felt tent, and that of his grandson, who owned the palace now known to the popular imagination as Xanadu.

The year 1232 saw the celebrated siege of Kaifeng by the Mongols under the famous general Subadai. This marked the end of the Jin dynasty. Looking northwards from behind their supposed barrier of the Yangtze River the Southern Song dynasty smirked as they contemplated the destruction of the northern upstarts who had once humiliated them, but, as an ambassador from the Jin reminded them, they now had an even worse neighbour to fear. The Mongols pressed forward the conquest of the Southern Song in a huge operation hindered only temporarily by the death of Mongke Khan in 1259. The effort was resumed by Khubilai Khan and was a colossal military undertaking that faced numerous obstacles. Hostilities began with raids on the Mongols by the Song between 1260 and 1262, and early in 1265 the first major battle erupted. The two armies clashed in Sichuan province, where the Mongols not only won the battle but captured 146 Song ships. Over the past centuries the Song had developed a considerable naval capacity, and shipyards were established in Hangzhou and elsewhere. The first Song emperor had attached great importance to shipbuilding, and often made personal visits to the yards. Defence against pirate raids had provided the initial stimulus for this enthusiasm, but the Song fleet soon proved vital in combating the Jin. Khubilai Khan's confiscation of the Song vessels showed that he appreciated

that the Mongols now needed a navy, and the speed with which this was set in motion by the Mongols, a nation of horsemen unacquainted with the sea, was amazing. With the fall of Korea, another country with a considerable naval tradition, further maritime resources passed into Khubilai Khan's hands, so a major overseas expedition could now be considered.

The next phase in the Mongol strategy resulted in one of the greatest sieges of Chinese history at Xiangyang. Here the Mongols besieged the Southern Song for five years in an operation during which much ingenuity was shown on both sides. When Xiangyang fell Khubilai wasted no time in sending his army against the Southern Song capital of Hangzhou. Bayan, one of the most gifted of all Mongol leaders, crossed the Yangtze in January 1275 and met the Song forces in a series of battles where the Mongol superiority in catapult artillery made a decisive difference. Bayan went on to bombard and take the Song stronghold of Yangzhou, breaking down temples, towers and halls with his fearsome counterweight trebuchets and using various types of exploding bombs. His army occupied one town after another, some surrendering as soon as the army came in sight, and finally Hangzhou fell, but it was a sea battle in 1279 that brought about the final eclipse of the Southern Song. The Mongols blockaded the Song fleet, which attempted to break out. In the fight which followed the Song imperial ship was one of the casualties, so an official took the child emperor in his arms and jumped into the sea, drowning them both. With this act the last remnants of the Song dynasty were eliminated. By this time of course, the first Mongol invasion of Japan had been carried out, so it is necessary to backtrack a little to discover why Japan had become an additional target while such a huge and important campaign was still in motion.

THE LAND OF GOLD

Khubilai Khan's personal reasons for invading Japan in 1274 can never be known for certain, yet to one particular foreign observer of the scene the motivation was crystal clear. 'People on the island of Zipangu' wrote the Venetian merchant and traveller Marco Polo (1254–1324) 'have measureless quantities of gold… The King's palace is roofed with pure gold… and the floors are paved in gold two fingers' thick'.

The fact that Japan produced gold was well known to the rulers of China. Gold was first discovered in Japan in 749, and in that year about 39kg of gold from Tohoku (north-eastern Japan) was presented to Nara to help gild the Great Buddha of the Todaiji Temple. Before long gold mined in Tohoku was being used to pay for the succession of visits to China that did so much to strengthen Japan's reputation abroad. When a delegation 500 strong left for China in 804 the ambassador and his deputy were given about 13kg of gold between them to use for their living expenses. At the time of the Song dynasty Japan exported large quantities of gold to China, and in 1124 a golden temple hall, which has miraculously survived to this day, was constructed at the temple of Chusonji in Hiraizumi. All these factors contributed to the legend of Japan as a land of gold, a story that Marco Polo probably picked up from visiting Muslim merchants. This he relates in the account of his travels, together with the information that, 'When tidings of its richness were brought to the Great Khan – that is the same Khubilai who now reigns – he declared his resolve to conquer the island.'

Other commentators took very different views of Khubilai Khan's motivation, seeing it simply as part of the 'manifest destiny' of the Mongol emperor to control the entire known world, a point made by the king of Korea, who warned Japan that they were dealing with a man who had a 'desire to be known throughout the world as one whose rule is all-embracing'. Some Japanese officials agreed with this statement, such as the Zen priest Togen Eian, who read the signs of the time and concluded in 1270 that the reason the Mongols wanted to conquer Japan was so that they could then use Japanese military skills in their future conquests, beginning with the Southern Song:

> Because Japan's military skills supersede those of all other nations, our bows and arrows [are wielded with] peerless skill, and our armour makes even the gods tremble… the Mongols choose to conquer Japan. Once Japan's warriors are under their control they will be able to conquer China and India. The country of the Mongols would direct strategy, while Japan would fight in the field for victory. With the strength combined, no country could resist.

Yet could it have been the case that the Mongol invasions were instigated not from China but from Korea, where the pirates had made Japan into an enemy? It is an established fact that large numbers of Korean troops, sailors and ships took part in the Mongol expeditions, and it is usually assumed that they were acting under duress: having been defeated by the Mongols themselves the Koreans had little choice but to obey the commands of their new overlords. However, although there may have been some desire for revenge against the damage wrought by the *wako*, in the years immediately prior to the Mongol invasions the Korean government appears to have appreciated that there was a clear distinction between pirates and legitimate Japanese seafarers. Lawful Japanese ships continued to call in on Korea, and in 1263 a wrecked Japanese ship was repaired and sent home. On another occasion 30 Japanese castaways were rescued and escorted back to Japan by Koreans. Japanese pirate raids on Korea had also come to an end in 1265. With Mongol troops moving into southern Korea as the date for the invasion approached, it would have been suicidal for the *wako* to attempt further attacks. It is also on record that as late as 1278 Korean officials tried to dissuade the Mongol rulers from mounting a second invasion of Japan. This is unlikely to have been done out of any great love for its belligerent island neighbour, but it makes it very unlikely that the Koreans ever urged the Mongols into the course of action they took in 1274.

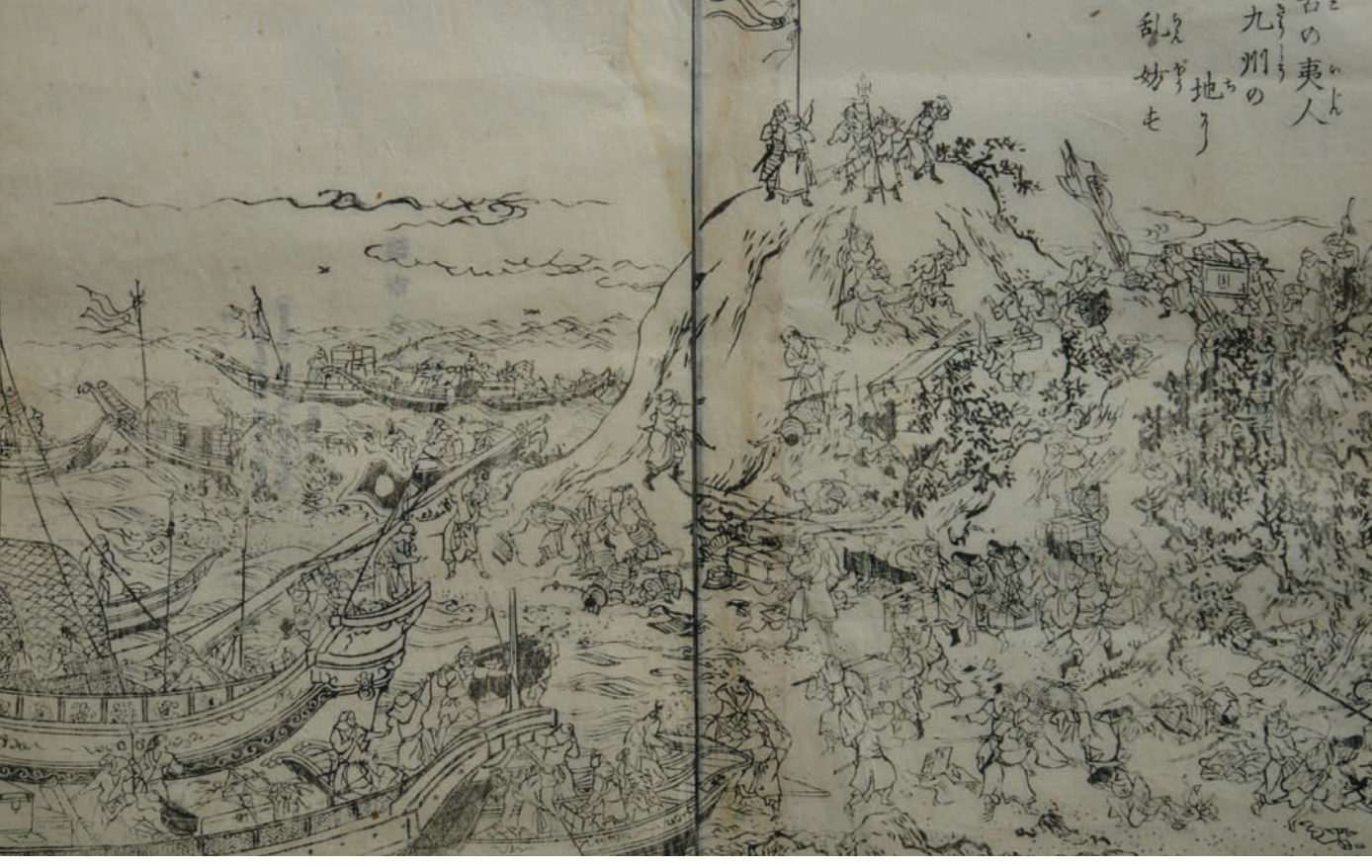
The key to understanding Khubilai Khan's likely motivation lies in appreciating the point that at the time of the first Mongol invasion Japan's cultural and economic contacts with China were almost entirely confined to the fading power of the Southern Song dynasty. Even though no official diplomatic channels existed, trade ships were exchanged and a further avenue of contact was maintained by Zen monks. As we will see later, the Japanese rulers at Kamakura were enthusiasts for Zen, and numbered Chinese Zen practitioners among their closest advisers. It was almost inevitable that any information received in Japan about the Mongols from Southern Song contacts would have been highly prejudiced against their northern neighbours, making a reasoned response by the Japanese to Mongol overtures much less likely, and this is indeed what happened when a series of requests, demands and even threats from the Great Khan went unanswered between 1266 and 1274.

This unusual depiction of Khubilai Khan, the first Yuan emperor of China who set in motion the Mongol invasions of Japan, is to be found in Japan at the Hoonji Temple in Morioka, Iwate prefecture. He is shown as one of 500 *rakan* (disciples of Buddha). Marco Polo is the figure seated on his right-hand side.

This continuing Mongol diplomatic effort against Japan was facilitated by means of considerable pressure on the Korean court, whose officials became the Khan's unwilling messengers. Routing it this way had two advantages for Khubilai Khan. First, it reinforced the control he had over Korea and prevented the Koreans from acting independently or with any real autonomy. Second, should Japan not be brought into the Mongol sphere of influence by these peaceful means, then a submissive Korea could further be used as the base for an invasion. A year after the incident noted above, when the Koreans dissuaded a Chinese envoy from visiting Japan, the Korean king was ordered to convey Khubilai Khan's letter to its intended recipients. In 1268, while the Korean envoys were still in Japan, the Korean king was further ordered to provide soldiers and ships for the Mongols and three months worth of provisions. The *Yuan Shi* records the words of the order as:

> In case, therefore, that we should plan a war against an intransigent country, it would be well for your country to send an army to help make war. It would be well for you to build one thousand fighting craft large enough to carry three or four thousand *shi* of rice.

Ten thousand troops were mobilized as a result and construction began on the requested 1,000 ships. All these were eventually to be used during the first invasion, but it is interesting to note that Japan was not specifically mentioned as the target at this stage. Khubilai Khan's preoccupation was still with the Southern Song, and at the same time that the military requisition was sent to Korea he also dispatched men to investigate the islands off the south-western tip of Korea, not as a possible route for an invasion of Japan, but as a means of facilitating a blockade of the Southern Song from the sea, the only direction against them that was still open. As for Japan, Khubilai Khan knew of the existence of this island nation that traded with the Southern Song, and if Japan could be persuaded to break off relations this would greatly facilitate the Khan's progress towards ruling the whole of China. Japan may have been a small



This unusual black-and-white woodblock-print book illustration by an unknown artist depicts the Mongol invaders landing on the shore of Kyushu. In the detail may be noted the Mongol commander taking up his position on a hill, while around him his troops easily overcome civilians. A considerable amount of looting is going on and women are being marched away in tears as captives.

country, almost not worth conquering, but in view of its relationship with Khubilai Khan's deadliest enemies, it could not simply be ignored.

The famous letter from Khubilai Khan to Japan urging 'friendly relations' was received, discussed and ultimately dismissed by two separate bodies. The first was to be found in Kyoto in the shape of the court of the emperor of Japan, a monarch who existed more as a religious figurehead than a ruler. Since the time of the Gempei War of 1180–85, Japan had been ruled by a military dictatorship located in Kamakura, a city near modern-day Tokyo, although by 1268 power had long moved out of the hands of the Minamoto family, who had provided Japan's first shogun, and was now under the control of the Hojo. Being unable to enjoy the title of shogun, the Hojo commanded the *bakufu* (a term for the shogunate that took its name from the field curtains used to conceal a commander's headquarters on the battlefield) as the *shikken* or regency. Both bodies rejected the Khan's letter, so the Korean envoys returned home empty handed, the first of several instances of diplomatic frustration that were to occur in the years leading up to the invasion. Early in 1269 a diplomatic mission of 70 Koreans and Mongols arrived on Tsushima and demanded Japan's answer to the Khan's letter. The imperial court wished to respond at this time but were overruled by Kamakura. The envoys returned to China with two kidnapped islanders, who were taken to the Mongol emperor's palace, and as soon as they were sufficiently impressed by its splendour they were returned unharmed as witnesses to the Mongol power along with a new diplomatic mission. On this occasion a Japanese reply was drafted but never delivered, although it is unlikely that it would have made much difference to subsequent events even if it had reached the Great Khan, because the letter contained a lively rejection of the Mongol demands and a proud assertion that Japan lay under divine protection.

Towards the end of 1270 Khubilai Khan dispatched Zhao Liangbi on a final diplomatic mission to Japan. The *Yuan Shi* tells us that he declined the offer of an armed bodyguard of 3,000 men and took along only 24 scribes instead. Zhao's efforts were long and weary. He was first forced to wait in Korea while a Korean mission made its own attempts to persuade the Japanese to comply with Khubilai Khan's demands. On finally arriving in Japan in 1271 Zhao's party were almost attacked, and the brave envoy was kept under arrest in a wooden hut for a day. He eventually arrived at Dazaifu, the regional seat of government for Kyushu. Refused permission to make a personal visit to the 'king of Japan' – an unfortunate turn of phrase that cannot have helped his efforts – Zhao was finally persuaded to hand the Khan's letter over to the Japanese authorities in Dazaifu. When no reply was forthcoming Zhao returned home. Zhao eventually went back to Dazaifu and waited in vain for a response until 1273. He then returned to China for the last time, frustrated and angry, to meet Khubilai Khan, whom he urged not to invade Japan because 'useful people should not be sacrificed to fill the limitless valleys [with their corpses]'. But it was already too late.

Meanwhile, the demand for troops and ships from Korea had led to the armed uprising known as the 'Rebellion of the Three Patrols', whose leaders requested aid from Japan. The delay in any Japanese response provided the opportunity for Khubilai Khan to crush the rebellion in 1271 and assert greater control over the Korean peninsula. The elimination of the rebels from Jeju Island and his marriage into the Korean royal family in 1273 then set the final stage for an invasion of Japan via Korea.

THREATS AND PREPARATION

It must not be thought from the contemptuous dismissal of Khubilai Khan's missive that the Japanese did not take the threat of invasion seriously, although they may have had some justification in thinking along these lines because the tone of the first communication from the Mongol emperor does not appear to be overtly threatening. The letter reads in full as follows:

> The Emperor of the Great Mongols, being commissioned by Heaven, hereby respectfully presents a letter to the King of Japan. From time immemorial rulers of small states, the borders of which closely adjoin, have always endeavoured to maintain friendly relations with each other and have manifested mutual respect and trust. On our part, we, from the time of our forefathers, have received the Mandate of Heaven and have ruled the universe. Innumerable people in far-off lands have learned to fear our power and have longed for our virtuous rule. When we first ascended the throne, the innocent and helpless people of Korea had suffered for long from military struggles. We therefore ordered a cessation of hostilities, restored their land, and returned the captive Koreans, young and old.
>
> In gratitude both ruler and people of Korea now present themselves at our court. Although the legal relation between ourselves and the Koreans is that of sovereign and subjects, yet in feeling we are as father and children. We assume that Your Highness and your subjects have known this. Korea is our eastern tributary state. Japan is located near to Korea and since her founding has time and again established relations with the Middle Kingdom. However, since our accession you have not yet sent an envoy to our court; nor have you

indicated a desire to establish friendly relations with us. We arc afraid this is because Your Kingdom has not yet been well informed of this. Therefore we now send a special envoy bearing our state papers to inform you of our desire. We hope that henceforth you will enter into friendly relations with us, and that both our people and yours will enjoy peace and harmony. Moreover, the sages consider the entire universe one family. Therefore, if we should not establish friendly relations with each other, how could it be in accordance with the doctrine of one family? Who would care to appeal to arms?
I hereby leave the matter to Your Highness's careful consideration.

Both the imperial court and the *bakufu* found much to object to in the Khan's letter. Even though the overall tone may have been mild, references to the 'king of Japan' as compared with the 'emperor of the Great Mongols' was inevitably taken as an insult within the Japanese imperial court. Chinese scholars in their midst may have pointed out that certain phrases in the letter were commonly used when writing to equals rather than from superiors to inferiors, but that was not how it was understood by its status-conscious recipients. Nor was an invitation to 'establish friendly relations' anything but provocative when to the Japanese the phrase was code for 'tributary relationship', the bizarre pantomime whereby China's neighbours swore a nominal vassalship to the Son of Heaven and received in return a recognition of their own domestic rule and the privilege of trade. It was a status Japan had haughtily declined for centuries, and it would have been an insult to their ancestors to go back on that now. Besides, as Japan enjoyed a good informal relationship with the Southern Song, which ensured a steady flow of goods and culture between Japan and China, there was no reason either to appease the Mongol ruler or to betray one's friends.

Finally, although the wording was somewhat ambiguous, the last paragraph implied at the very least the threat of war. Contrary to popular belief, the first Mongol invasion of Japan was far from being a surprise attack. The danger was clearly sensed at this early stage and resulted in the earliest record of prayers being offered in Japan for protection against the Mongols. Such efforts were to continue for many years, and the following edict was composed by Emperor Kameyama's chamberlain in 1271:

In recent days the heavens above have displayed [a great] disturbance. [The sovereign feels] not the slightest at ease. In addition messengers from the Western Domains have told of the Northern Barbarians plot [to conquer Japan]. This fact stems from a profound reason that cannot be discerned. The many are afraid [and wish that] this menace [will] forever cease. You shall please [have prayers offered for] peace. A Ninno-e curse [against the Mongols] shall be created and recorded.

The Ninno-e curse was a Sutra that described how a sovereign could protect his country from all calamities. As we will see later, the efficacy of prayer as a weapon against the invaders was to become an important if controversial issue in future years, and the reaction to Khubilai Khan's letter represents the beginning of a belief in divine intervention that would come to a climax with the *kamikaze* typhoon in 1281. The reference to the Western Domains in the document above is to more earthly omens in the shape of warnings sent to Japan from the Korean court, and these, together with the veiled threat of force within the letter, produced a positive reaction in terms of war preparation.

Emperor Kameyama was the 90th emperor of Japan and reigned as the Mongol crisis reached its height. Prayers were said on his behalf to protect Japan against the invaders. This statue of him stands in Fukuoka as a memorial to the defeat of the Mongols by the *kamikaze*.

In this picture two Mongol warships go into action against Japanese attacks. There is much use of archery on both sides, and the return fire from the Japanese longbows has been fierce. Other Mongol troops have large ornamental shields and straight spears. (From a hand-coloured, woodblock-printed book based on the Mongol Invasion Scrolls)

Samurai were sent to the west and placed under the command of local *shugo* ('constables'). One such call to arms reads as follows:

> We have heard reports that the Mongols are to attack. Hence *gokenin* shall be dispatched to Chinzei [Kyushu]. Immediately travel to your holdings in Higo province and follow the commands of your acting *shugo*. Defend against the foreigners and protect your holdings from bandits. This order is so conveyed.

The above order was addressed to a samurai family of the name of Koshiro, who were originally from Musashi province but who had been awarded lands in Higo province in Kyushu as a result of their service in battle in 1247. A similar command was received by the Shodai family, whose original holdings still lay in Musashi, but whose possession of additional territories in Kyushu obliged them to hasten to the defence of that part of Japan where the Mongol attack was expected. The *gokenin* ('housemen') that were mobilized in this way were ordered to stand guard in a system of monthly rotation, and relieved during this time of any responsibility for guard duty in Kyoto.

The actual numbers raised by these means to fight the Mongols will be discussed in the later section dealing with the opposing armies, but it is perhaps surprising to note that the mobilization order was confined to Kyushu until 1274, when the service of samurai from western Honshu (Japan's main island) was also called for. Was it the case that the *bakufu* did not take the Mongol threat seriously enough? A general land survey had been carried out in 1272 and would have provided the information required for a general mobilization of troops, even if that had not been the main purpose of the exercise, but it may simply have been thought that moving samurai based normally in eastern Japan to Kyushu was not logistically possible. Feeding and quartering them for what may have been a prolonged campaign would have caused problems. Thus it was that when the Mongols landed in 1274 men whose allegiance was local stood on the beach at Hakata as the standard-bearers for the entire nation of Japan. Prayers had been offered. It was now up to the samurai.

CHRONOLOGY

1215	Birth of Khubilai Khan. Fall of Beijing to the Mongols.
1223	First *wako* raids on Korea.
1231	First Mongol invasion of Korea.
1232	Siege of Kaifeng by the Mongols.
1254	Final Mongol invasion of Korea.
1256	Accession of Hojo Tokimune as *shikken* (regent).
1260	Nichiren warns of foreign invasion.
1265	Mongols acquire a fleet.
1268	Koreans ordered to supply ships and men.
1270	Zhao Liangbi reaches Japan. Defeat of Korean rebellion.
1273	Union of Mongol and Korean royal families by marriage.
1274	First Mongol invasion of Japan.
2 November	Invasion fleet leaves Korea.
4 November	Mongols arrive off Tsushima.
5 November	Mongols land at Komoda.
13 November	Mongols leave Tsushima, and reach Iki that evening.
14 November	Defeat of Taira Kagetaka on Iki.
15/16 November	Mongols raid Matsuura peninsula.
18 November	Some Mongols land at Imazu.
19 November	Main Mongol assault in Hakata/Hakozaki area.
19/20 November	Mongols leave Japan by night.
26 December	Fleet arrives back in Korea.
1275	Embassy sent to Japan; ambassadors executed. Fall of Hangzhou.
1276	Planned raid on Korea abandoned.
1277	Japanese learn of defeat of the Southern Song.
1279	Final elimination of Southern Song dynasty.
1280	Khubilai Khan plans new Japanese strategy.
1281	Second Mongol invasion of Japan.
22 May	Eastern Route fleet leaves Korea.
24 May	Tsushima attacked, fleet waits at Tsushima.
9 June	Fleet leaves Tsushima.
14 June	Iki attacked.

23 June	Eastern Route Army divides, enters Hakata Bay.
25 June	One division attacks Nagato province.
30 June	Withdrawal from Nagato.
25-30 June	'Little ship' raids in Hakata Bay.
30 June	Mongols withdraw to Iki.
5 July	Southern Route fleet leaves China.
late July	Southern Route fleet reaches Hirado.
18 July	Death of Shoni Suketoki on Iki.
12 August	Battle of Takashima.
13/14 August	*Kamikaze* destroys Mongol fleet.

1282	Death of Hojo Tokimune. Death of Nichiren.
1301	A supposed invasion fleet is seen off Satsuma province.
1312	Invasion guard duty in Hakata finishes.
1333	Fall of Kamakura and end of the Hojo *shikken*.
1350	*Wako* raids begin again.
1368	Fall of the Yuan dynasty.

OPPOSING COMMANDERS

KHUBILAI KHAN AND THE MONGOL LEADERS

The invasions of Japan were instigated by a unique figure in Mongol history, because with Khubilai Khan we may identify what may be described in very crude terms as the transition of the Mongols from barbarism to civilization. The nomad had become sedentary, and now dwelled in a palace of gold. Yet Khubilai Khan's rise to power had never been inevitable. He had been born in 1215 as a minor member of the royal lineage of Genghis Khan. His military skills were considerable, and he used them not only for the extension of Mongol power but also for his own survival. He took a far-sighted view of the need to build alliances and to make use of the best that conquered societies could offer, and China always loomed largest in this overall strategy. In employing Chinese advisers Khubilai Khan risked the wrath of his brothers and fellow Mongols who believed that he was diluting the values and institutions of the steppes. Yet Khubilai Khan was wise enough to realize that China, his greatest obsession, could not be won solely from horseback, and when won could never be governed except through existing Chinese structures and institutions. The path of destruction that Genghis Khan had followed through Central Asia was replaced by creativity and consolidation, so that China's first Mongol emperor introduced a new legal code, developments in writing, science and the arts to an existing and much-valued civilization.

These Mongol horsemen wearing armour have spears in addition to their archery equipment for their role as heavy cavalrymen. They are being greeted by a Mongol general mounted on an elephant.

ABOVE
Hojo Tokimune was the ruler of Japan at the time of the Mongol invasions. An enthusiast for Zen Buddhism, he applied the precepts of Zen to the martial arts, thereby inspiring the men who did the actual fighting far away in Kyushu. (Genko Shiryokan, Fukuoka)

BELOW
The great Sanmon Gate of the Kenchoji, head of the five great Zen temples of Kamakura. The temple was founded by Hojo Tokiyori, the father of Tokimune, and completed in 1253. It was a centre for Zen practice during the time of the Mongol invasions.

Although an accomplished general in his own right, Khubilai Khan took no personal role in the invasions of Japan, nor are there any prominent names among the Mongol leaders commanding the expedition. The Khan's leading generals were fully engaged in the main struggle against the Song, so that the men who went to Japan are almost anonymous figures. For example, Fan Wenhu was the name of a general of the Southern Song defeated by the Mongols who was then placed in charge of the Song contingent that sailed for Japan in 1281. It was his force that felt the full impact of the *kamikaze*. Other leaders of the Mongol invasion will be introduced as they appear.

HOJO TOKIMUNE

Just as in the case of the instigator of the invasion, the man who was centrally responsible for the defence against it took no part in the actual fighting. Hojo Tokimune (1251–84) reigned as the sixth Hojo *shikken* (regent) of Japan during the entire course of the Mongol crisis. Tokimune was the son of Hojo Tokiyori (1226–63), the fifth *shikken*, whose great contribution to Japan, and to his capital Kamakura in particular, was his encouragement of Zen Buddhism, having been inspired by the priest Dogen, the founder of the Soto Zen sect. Tokiyori commissioned the Zen temple of Kenchoji in Kamakura and sent a priest to China to study building techniques so that Kenchoji would resemble a Chinese Buddhist temple of the Song dynasty. In succeeding years as the Mongol invaders swept across China, many Zen priests sought refuge in Japan and found sanctuary at Kenchoji.

When his health failed in 1256 Tokiyori handed over power to his son Tokimune, who was then only a young boy. Tokimune grew rapidly to maturity, ably assisted by loyal advisers and convinced of the truth and power of Zen. Tokimune invited over from China the renowned Zen priest Mugaku Sogen (Bukko Kokushi), who became his spiritual mentor as the Mongol crisis loomed nearer. Mugaku Sogen had personal experience of the Mongols. While still in China Mongol soldiers had raided his monastery, cutting off

the heads of his fellow monks, but Mugaku remained in silent mediation as the attack went on, unperturbed by the possibility of imminent death. His utter detachment both surprised and impressed the invaders, who left him alone. In Japan Mugaku instilled this same spirit of detached fortitude in Tokimune, and it served him well as the first leader of the samurai class to apply the principles of Zen to the Japanese martial arts. Not long before the Mongol fleet arrived Tokimune called upon his beloved teacher to receive a final instruction. 'And how will you face the challenge?' asked Mugaku. Tokimune replied to the question by delivering a roar of *qi* (spiritual energy) from deep within his being, in which Mugaku may have heard the word *katsu* (victory). 'That is the roar of the lion,' said Mugaku. 'You are a lion indeed. Go forth and never turn back.'

When victory had finally been achieved Tokimune sought to spread Zen still further. He commissioned the temple of Engakuji at Kamakura for the propagation of Zen and also to console the departed spirits of those who had died in the war, both Japanese and Mongol. Mugaku Sogen was installed as its first abbot. Hojo Tokimune became a priest himself in 1282, but sadly died on the very day that he received holy orders.

ABOVE
This statue of Hojo Tokimune stands inside his mausoleum at the Engakuji Temple in Kamakura. There is also a tablet bearing a poem in his honour which reads: 'Noisy waves of foreign forces do not come surging upon this country because of the god-sent storm originating from the sighing winds among the pine trees of Mount Kamakura.'

THE *SHUGO* AND THE *JITO*

Even though Tokimune took part in no actual fighting, his Zen-inspired leadership was transmitted to the samurai on the ground through the example set by the men who for almost a century had carried out the local administration of Japan delegated to them from Kamakura. These were the *shugo* and the *jito*, two complementary posts created by the first shogun to impose his military role over the imperial court, major landowners, religious authorities and anyone else who might seek to question the wisdom of replacing the former imperial-led bureaucracy by a warrior government. As originally envisaged under Minamoto Yoritomo, the *jito* were the administrators of landholdings while the *shugo* had a police function, hence the common translations as 'stewards' for *jito* and 'constables' for *shugo*. The *shugo*, who were later to be regarded as military governors, also kept an eye on the imperial court and acted as the Shogun's deputies. The holders of both titles were to prove crucial in the measures taken to prepare for the Mongol invasions and then to resist them.

BELOW
Shoni Kagesuke (1246–85) was the commander of the Japanese forces at Hakata when the Mongols landed. Dressed in full *yoroi* armour, he is the central figure in this section of the Mongol Invasion Scrolls. His retainers are gathered around him while his horse is brought to him.

Shoni Suketoki, the nephew of Shoni Kagesuke, was to become the young hero of the resistance against the Mongols. In 1274 he had the honour of firing a signalling arrow into the Mongol host to announce to the *kami* (gods) that the battle was about to begin. This symbolic act, however, drew only ridicule from the invaders. This statue of him stands next to the harbour of Ashibe on Iki Island.

The precise military functions of the *shugo* during the Mongol invasions had been delineated a few decades earlier in the Joei Code of 1232. These were to call up *gokenin* for guard duty at the imperial palace and to deal with rebels, murderers and lesser offenders. Because of Kyushu's remoteness the Kyushu *shugo* exercised a certain judicial responsibility as well. During the course of the Kamakura Period the power of the *shugo* grew, because his power to requisition *gokenin* for military service could override and even replace the traditional authority exercised by the samurai clan leaders. In a similar way power was also aggrandized by the *jito*, whose original function had centred on the collection of taxes, but they too were military men and used their local power to keep the peace. During the 15th century when the collapse of central authority allowed local 'strong men' to take over, several of these erstwhile *shugo* and *jito* would become actual rulers of their provinces as the first of the *daimyo* (feudal lords). But this all lay in the future, and the behaviour of the Kyushu *shugo* and *jito* at the time of the Mongol invasions was one of staunch and commendable loyalty, even though the resistance against the Mongol was carried out in a part of Japan that was geographically remote from Kamakura and where the *bakufu*'s influence was at its weakest.

Japan's great southern island of Kyushu, which was to become the target of the Mongol attacks for purely geographical reasons, had long enjoyed a particular importance in the Kamakura world view. During the Gempei Wars

that had brought about the triumph of the Minamoto and the founding of the Kamakura Shogunate, Kyushu had been a power base for their rivals from the Taira family. For many centuries Kyushu had also been Japan's gateway for foreign trade and international relations, which had been conducted since the year 710 through the regional government headquarters known as Dazaifu. Sometimes rendered into English as 'the Dazaifu', this place was located within what is now the modern city of Dazaifu a short way inland from Hakata in Fukuoka prefecture. Dazaifu had for centuries been protected from any threat of foreign invasion by the Korean-style fortresses of Ono and Kii on the hills above it and by an ancient earthwork called the Mizuki (water castle) that was to play a role in the Mongol invasions.

In 1196 a certain Muto Sukeyori was sent by the *bakufu* to Kyushu to govern the island on their behalf. Following the Jokyu War of 1221 (an abortive uprising designed to restore the power of the emperor) the *bakufu* strengthened its position with regard to the imperial court in several ways, one of which was the promotion of Muto Sukeyori to *Dazai no shoni* (junior assistant governor of Dazaifu) in 1227. The title makes it sound like a minor post, but in fact it also gave him the highest authority over foreign contacts at Dazaifu, a matter customarily managed through the imperial court and over which the imperial nominees at Dazaifu had great influence. Among the international crises dealt with by Sukeyori were the *wako* attacks on Korea, and he clearly demonstrated the Japanese government's official condemnation of them by beheading 90 captured pirates in the presence of a Korean envoy.

It was Sukeyori's son Sukeyoshi, also known as Kakuie (1198–1281), who forwarded the Khan's letter to Kamakura. By this time the title *shoni* was now being used by the family as a surname. At the time of the actual invasion Sukeyori's grandson Shoni Tsunesuke was *shugo* of the three northern Kyushu provinces of Hizen, Chikuzen and Chikugo together with the islands of Iki and Tsushima, but took no personal role in the war. This was left to one the great Japanese heroes of the resistance against the Mongols: his younger brother Kagesuke (1246–85). In 1281 Kagesuke's nephew Suketoki (Tsunesuke's son) was to become the hero of the final resistance against the Mongols on Iki Island at the age of 19. Suketoki's early death was to ensure his immortality as an exemplar of the samurai spirit.

The remaining six Kyushu provinces were governed by *shugo* from the Otomo and Shimazu families, all of whom loom large in the roll of honour of the Mongol wars. Shimazu Hisatsune (otherwise known as Hisachika) was *shugo* of Satsuma, Hyuga and Osumi in 1274 and was to maintain guard duty in Hakata from 1281 onwards for many years after the invasion. Otomo Yoriyasu was *shugo* of Bungo, Buzen and Higo province and fought during the Mongol invasions. Yet even they were not the first to experience the fury of the Mongols. This honour fell to So Sukekuni, the *jitodai* (deputy *jito*) of Tsushima Island. Taira Kagetaka, *shugo* of Iki, was to suffer invasion very shortly afterwards. Other leading characters in the drama will be introduced in context.

OPPOSING ARMIES

SOURCES FOR THE INVASION

Written sources for the tumultuous events that were to follow are surprisingly few in number. A long account from the Mongol side appears in the *Yuan Shi*, the official history of the Yuan dynasty. This parallels in several important points a Japanese source called *Hachiman Gudokun*, a work concerned with the efficacy of prayers offered to Hachiman, the deified Emperor Ojin who was the *kami* of war. *Hachiman Gudokun* is believed to date from not long after the invasions as it was intended to be used as a lever to obtain reward from Kamakura. The earliest copy of the text to survive is dated 1483. As the prayers noted include individual ones uttered by samurai on the battlefield as well as one requesting the divine help that was to be provided in the form of the *kamikaze*, it is very valuable for its brief accounts of the military tactics used by both sides.

Hachiman Gudokun is complemented by the text and illustrations of the famous *Moko Shurai Ekotoba* (Mongol Invasion Scrolls), the painted scrolls with accompanying narrative commissioned by an ambitious samurai called Takezaki Suenaga who sought reward for his services. Taken together, the two documents enable us to reconstruct the nature of the fighting at both a macro and a micro level, yet these sources are almost all we have. There are no long narrative epics of the Mongol invasions comparable to *Heike Monogatari* for the Gempei War or *Taiheiki* for the wars of the 14th century. *Nichiren Shonin Chu-gassan* is concerned with the influence of the priest Nichiren and contains some useful information, and there are in addition shorter references in family histories concerned with certain ancestors' exploits during the Mongol wars, and numerous official documents. Many of these latter sources, together with the text and captions of the Mongol Invasion Scrolls, are usefully presented in Thomas Conlan's book *In Little Need of Divine Intervention*.

TACTICAL DIFFERENCES

The Mongol invasions of Japan pitted against each other two types of warriors who differed considerably from each other in appearance, armament and tactical method. Both the samurai and the Mongol warriors traditionally prided themselves on their abilities as mounted archers, although the ways

through which they approached the art of horseback archery were very different. Many centuries before the famous samurai sword was being lauded as the 'soul of the samurai', the Japanese warrior was being praised for his skills in *kyuba no michi* (the way of bow and horse), and some of the most glorious episodes in the accounts of the Mongol invasions tell of samurai killing Mongol commanders with arrows from horseback. It is a skill maintained to this day through the martial art of *yabusame* (horseback archery) although the amazing prowess demonstrated at festivals such as those in Nikko and Kamakura may be a little misleading. *Yabusame* is now practised by men wearing light hunting costume riding modern horses, while during the 13th century arrows were delivered by samurai wearing suits of armour and riding much smaller horses.

The samurai who fought against the Mongols in 1274 and 1281 were essentially mounted archers who preferred to seek out an honourable opponent to fight. The unfamiliar tactics of the Mongols required several changes to be made to Japanese warfare, although the individual samurai spirit still managed to assert itself successfully on many occasions.

The Mongols too fired arrows from galloping horses, but in a much looser 'light cavalry' style, although there also existed Mongol 'heavy cavalry' who were armoured and could deliver a devastating charge. However, the conditions pertaining to the Mongol invasions of Japan meant that both sides had to do a considerable amount of fighting on foot, either on dry land or from the deck of a boat, although organized infantry operations were confined to the Mongol side, where Chinese and Korean footsoldiers were controlled by drums and gongs that indicated the performance of simple tactical movements in which they had clearly been drilled. The short arrows delivered from within these ranks came in huge volleys, unlike the preferred Japanese method which was to deliver a single arrow against a chosen and, hopefully, worthy target whose death would earn the warrior considerable individual glory. The tactical formations adopted by the Japanese therefore consisted of a series of small warrior bands led by a prominent samurai with a handful of followers and the support of anonymous footsoldiers armed with *naginata* (curved-bladed polearms). This pattern was to be repeated in the raids the Japanese conducted against the Mongol ships in 1281, when similar small warrior bands united by kinship or long service were taken out in small boats and attacked the Mongols with bows and swords.

Archery also played a key religious role in the way a Japanese battle traditionally began. The first arrow loosed by either side at the start of a samurai battle would have been a signalling arrow shot high into the air over the enemy lines. Each signal arrow had a large, turnip-shaped perforated wooden head which whistled as it flew through the air. The sound was a call to the *kami* to draw their attention to the great deeds of bravery that were about to be performed by rival warriors. This was done when the Mongols landed at Hakata but provoked only raucous laughter among the ranks of the invaders. It was an omen of what was to follow, because supposedly the two armies would then clash in a series of small-group or individual combats between worthy opponents. Again by tradition, these worthy opponents sought out each other by issuing a verbal challenge that involved shouting

For centuries there was only literary evidence for the nature of the Mongols' 'secret weapons' – the exploding bombs thrown by catapult against the Japanese defenders. They are now known to be identical to the Chinese *zhen tian lei*, which were of iron or ceramic material and were filled with gunpowder and shards. Paper-cased bombs were also used against Japan. These examples are among the bombs brought to the surface as a result of the underwater archaeological investigation off the coast of Takashima, and are on display in the museum on Takashima.

one's name as a war cry. Epic chronicles such as *Heike Monogatari* regularly exaggerate this process so that the challenging samurai is made to relate an account of his exploits and the fine pedigree of his family. The challenge would supposedly be answered from within the opposing army, thus providing a recognized mechanism whereby only worthy opponents would meet in combat. Leaving aside the obvious difficulties of being able to conduct verbal negotiations among the din of battle, there are in fact very few examples in the chronicles where very elaborate declarations are recorded. Instead a more likely scenario is that samurai, when entering a battle situation, shouted out their names as war cries in general, rather than specific challenges. But even if that had been the expected way to fight, surely in 1274 no samurai would have been so stupid as to think that the Mongols spoke Japanese. Instead the seeking of worthy opponents, when it did happen, consisted of targeting anyone mounted on horseback, wearing a fine suit of armour and with an accompanying standard-bearer. The clouds of Mongol arrows, some of which were poisoned, that were loosed in return from within the invading squads must have caused further problems, but once the fight developed into hand-to-hand combat there was no opportunity for such haphazard archery.

The most interesting weapons used by the Mongols during the Japanese invasions were the exploding bombs, which were the single most important innovation of the war. They provided the first examples of gunpowder explosions ever heard in Japan and caused considerable surprise to men and horses alike. For many years no one was exactly sure what these bombs were. Earlier scholars suggested cannon, and put them forwards as evidence that the Mongols used gunpowder as a propellant in the later 13th century. This was not the case, because the bombs were in fact delivered by catapult and the explosions heard were the missiles themselves breaking apart. Underwater archaeology over the past 30 years has added greatly to our knowledge of the Mongol invasions in general and the exploding bombs in particular, although physical evidence of the latter has taken years to acquire. Several have now been found, and they are now known to be identical to the weapons known to the Chinese as *zhen tian lei* (thunder crash bombs or, more literally 'heaven shaking thunder'), that killed people by the shattering of their metal cases and destroyed objects by the force of the explosion that is implied by the dramatic name. Their invention is credited to the Jin dynasty, and their first recorded use in war dates from 1221. The fragments produced when the bombs exploded

caused great personal injury, and one Southern Song officer was blinded in an explosion which wounded half a dozen other men. The Mongols had acquired the use of exploding bombs by the time of the beginning of the siege of Xiangyang in 1267, but they also suffered casualties from them, including a certain Mongol officer who led the attack up scaling ladders. A bomb fired from a trebuchet exploded beside him causing a serious wound in his left thigh.

When used during the Mongol invasion of 1274 their novelty produced a further level of terror among the Japanese. One account notes how these 'mighty iron balls' were flung, and 'rolled down the hills like cartwheels, sounded like thunder, and looked like bolts of lightning'. Different types of bombs having a soft case made from successive layers of paper also appear to have been used during the Mongol invasions, a conclusion suggested by the *Hachiman Gudokun* reference to 'paper bombs' in addition to 'iron bombs'.

Nevertheless, in spite of bombs, poisoned arrows and dense ranks of infantry, the accounts that exist of the actual fighting that took place on Tsushima, and afterwards on Iki Island and the mainland of Kyushu, show that the samurai were far from being stunned into inaction by the novelties of Mongol warfare. Language difficulties, of course, precluded the conventional name-shouting for any audience other than the samurai's own comrades, but in terms of making a name for oneself that domestic audience was vital, and we will see how the presence of witnesses to brave deeds was absolutely central to the reward process. An additional proof of duty done was to return with the severed head of one's opponent, and if the goal was simply to take the largest number of heads, the Mongol armies provided numerous targets for the mounted samurai archers. Head-collecting, however, was a tradition often misused throughout samurai history and the Mongol invasions are no exception. During the invasion of 1281 a certain Kikuchi Jiro went a little too far, and roamed among the Mongol dead, decapitating corpses and bringing back a large number of supposed trophies to add to his own tally.

Throughout samurai history the greatest proof of duty done was the presentation of the severed heads of one's enemy to one's commanding officer. In this section of the Mongol Invasion Scrolls, Takezaki Suenaga (on the viewer's left) proudly displays two such trophies in front of the acting *shugo* of Suenaga's native Higo province, Adachi Morimune. In front of them sits a scribe to record the achievement. (From a hand-coloured, woodblock-printed book based on the Mongol Invasion Scrolls)

This blade from a *nagamaki* (a polearm with a long slightly curved blade) was used in battle against the Mongols by the Japanese hero Kono (Kawano) Michiari. Kono then presented it to the Oyamazumi Shrine on the island of Omishima, where it is on display.

SAMURAI ARMS AND ARMOUR

The samurai and the Mongols also provided a considerable contrast in terms of physical appearance. By the 13th century most samurai were wearing armour of a characteristic box-like design known as a *yoroi* on top of a fine robe and trousers. *Yoroi* armour was made from small scales tied together and lacquered, then combined into armour plates by binding them together with silk or leather cords. The result was a flexible defence whose efficiency lay in its ability to absorb the energy of a blow in the lacing sandwiched between the rows of scales before penetration could begin. Each scale was of iron or leather. A suit made entirely from iron was far too heavy to wear, so the iron scales were concentrated on the areas that needed most protection, and otherwise alternated with leather. The separate parts formed the classic samurai armour, which provided good protection for the body for a weight of about 30kg. In fact the main disadvantage of the *yoroi* was not its weight but its rigid and inflexible boxlike structure, which restricted the samurai's movement when he was dismounted or using hand weapons from the saddle. If the samurai stayed as a 'gun platform' on his horse then the *yoroi* was ideal.

The body of the *yoroi* armour, the *do*, consisted of four sections. Two large shoulder plates, the *sode*, were also worn, which were fastened at the rear of the armour by a large ornamental bow called the *agemaki*. The *agemaki* allowed the arms free movement while keeping the body always covered. Two guards were attached to the shoulder straps to prevent the tying cords from being cut, and a sheet of ornamented leather was fastened across the front like a breastplate to stop the bowstring from catching on any projection. The *kabuto* (helmet) bowl was made from iron plates fastened together with large projecting conical rivets. A peak was riveted on to the front and covered with patterned leather. The neck was protected with a heavy five-piece neck guard called a *shikoro*, which hung from the bowl. The top four plates were folded back at the front to form the *fukigayeshi*, which stopped downward cuts aimed at the horizontal lacing of the *shikoro*. Normally an *eboshi* (cap) was worn under the helmet, but if the samurai's hair was very long the tied-up queue of hair was allowed to pass through the hole in the centre of the helmet's crown where the plates met. Some illustrations show samurai wearing a primitive face mask called a *happuri*, which covered the brow and cheeks only. No armour was worn on the right arm, to leave the arm free for drawing the bow, but a simple bag-like sleeve with sewn-on plates was worn on the left arm.

LEFT
A samurai armed with a *naginata* and wearing *yoroi* armour – a typical appearance from the wars against the Mongols.

BELOW
The samurai in this woodblock print is dressed in the costume and armour typical of the time of the Mongol invasions.

No samurai would ever be without a sword, and a sword forged by a celebrated master was one of the most prized gifts that a warrior could receive from an appreciative leader. Yet much of the lore surrounding Japanese swords is of a comparatively late origin. At the time of the first Mongol invasion the primary weapon of choice for the battlefield was still the bow. Matters were to change somewhat over the course of the two invasions, and during the raids by boats against the Mongol fleet in 1281 the samurai sword finally came into its own. By the time of the Mongol invasions the creation, design and function of the Japanese sword was reaching its point of perfection, and the opportunities for hand-to-hand combat rather than arrow exchange at a distance provided the perfect test. The long, curved and razor sharp blades cut deeply into the brigandine-like coats of the Mongol invaders, whose short swords were much inferior. This contrast was to be noted during the 'little ships' raids.

The design of the traditional Japanese bow which the samurai wielded was very similar to that used today in the martial art of *kyudo*. To limit the stress on the bow when drawn the weapon had to be long, and because of its use from horseback it was fired from one third of the way up its length. The bows were of deciduous wood backed with bamboo on the side furthest from the archer, lacquered to weatherproof it. The arrows were of bamboo. The nock was cut just above a node for strength, and three feathers fitted. Techniques of drawing the bow were based on those needed when the bow was fired from the back of a horse. In this traditional way the archer held the bow above his head to clear the horse, and then moved his hands apart as the bow was brought down, to end with the left arm straight and the right hand near the right ear.

LEFT
The inside of an armoured coat of a Mongol warrior, showing overlapping sections of leather that provided a light protection. (Genko Shiryokan, Fukuoka)

RIGHT
Mongol spearmen and archers are shown in action here from the stern sections of two Mongol ships. A standard-bearer hangs on bravely to his flag, while one unfortunate soldier clutches at a Japanese arrow protruding from his head. (From a hand-coloured, woodblock-printed book based on the Mongol Invasion Scrolls)

MONGOL ARMS AND ARMOUR

Descriptions of the physical appearance of Mongol warriors during the 13th century have much in common and stress their short and stocky appearance, accentuated by their heavy coats, boots and hats. By contrast, accounts of their prowess tend to differ only in the degree of exaggeration. For centuries the main sources of information were the descriptions left by visiting ambassadors, travellers and the like, who provided accounts that are often highly detailed but which were not written by military men. As a result it was often assumed that the typical Mongol warrior was very simply and lightly attired, perhaps wearing no more than a sheepskin coat and fur hat over his ordinary clothes. This may have been true for many light Mongol horse archers in the armies, but recent research, including some very valuable archaeological finds, has demonstrated that a Mongol army would have included a large number of heavy cavalrymen in addition to light cavalrymen. Heavy Mongol cavalrymen in armour appear on the *Moko Shurai Ekotoba* (Mongol Invasion Scrolls), the most important pictorial sources for the Mongol invasions of Japan. The basic costume of both types of warrior was essentially the normal daily wear of the Mongol. It consisted of a simple heavy coat fastened by a leather belt at the waist. The sword hung from this belt. A dagger was also carried, and perhaps an axe. In a pocket of the coat would be carried, wrapped in a cloth, some dried meat and dried curds, together with a stone for sharpening his arrowheads. His boots were stout and comfortable, being made from felt and leather. On his head he wore the characteristic hat of felt and fur.

A miniature suit of armour in the style that would have been worn by Mongol heavy cavalrymen.

The armour that the heavy horseman wore over his coat was made in the common Asiatic style of lamellar armour, whereby small scales of iron or leather were pierced with holes and sewn together with leather thongs to make a composite armour plate. A leather cuirass of this type weighed about 9kg. Alternatively a heavy coat could be reinforced using metal plates. The coat was worn under the suit of armour, and the same heavy leather boots were worn on the feet. The helmet, which was made from a number of larger iron pieces, was roughly in the shape of a rounded cone, and had the added protective feature of a neck guard of iron plates. The Mongol heavy cavalry rode horses that also enjoyed the protection of lamellar armour. Beneath their

A Mongol helmet; it takes the form of a conical iron bowl with a neck guard of reinforced cloth on leather studded with iron rivets.

armour and coat the Mongol wore a silk shirt, the fibres of which acted as a cushion for a spent arrowhead that had been slowed by the armour but had nevertheless punctured the skin. As armies had discovered centuries before, an arrow does its worst harm when it is removed from the wound and its barbed head tears the flesh. The silk shirt was not punctured. Instead its fibres twisted around the arrowhead. It could then more easily be removed with safety.

Many chronicles suggest that Mongol archery was often a decisive factor in a battle. Their bows, which were much shorter than the Japanese ones, were composite reflex bows made from yak horn, sinew and bamboo glued together then bound until they set into a single piece. When the bow was strung it was stressed against the natural curve, giving a strong pull. It was loosed from the saddle with great accuracy. Each mounted archer had two or three bows, kept within protective bow cases when on the march. Quivers contained arrows with several different types of arrowhead, and poisoned arrows are known to have been used in 1274.

A round wooden shield provided personal protection. The shield would be most useful during individual combat, when a Mongol archer would have replaced his bow within its case and turned to his sword. The sword had a slight curve like a sabre. Axes and spears were alternative hand weapons, and rounded maces also appear in the written accounts. Mongol heavy cavalrymen also carried spears. The other field equipment of a Mongol warrior included a light axe, a file, a lasso, a coil of rope, an iron cooking pot, two leather bottles and a leather bag closed by a thong to keep clothes and equipment dry.

The Mongol Invasion Scrolls also show numerous footsoldiers, most of whom are Korean, arranged in formations with spears and shields. They wore long, heavy coats and stout, leather boots, with their helmets fastened tightly round their faces like veils. The shields are large and appear to be made from some sort of interwoven wood, probably bamboo. Japanese shields, used only by footsoldiers to create a barrier, were of solid wood.

THE FIRST MONGOL INVASION OF JAPAN, 1274

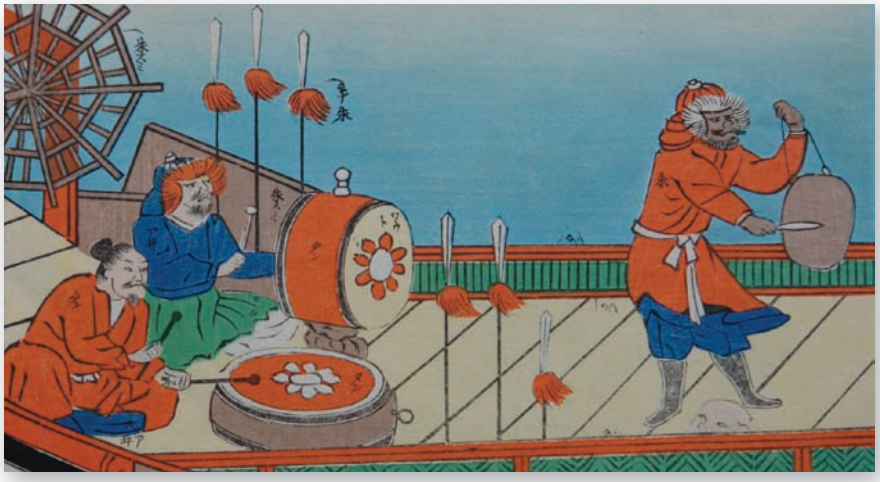
OPPOSING PLANS

Khubilai Khan's strategic intentions behind the launching of the first invasion of Japan in 1274 are as obscure as the overall motivation that lay behind his desire to force Japan to enter the wider world of East Asian politics. The invasion fleet was scheduled to depart in the seventh lunar month of 1274, but was in fact delayed by three months. The Khan's plan was that the invasion fleet would attack Tsushima and Iki on the way, thus safeguarding their lines of communication, and then make landfall on the Kyushu mainland in Hakata Bay. The corresponding Japanese plans, fed by reliable intelligence, were to contest them at every point using local *gokenin*. Yet this seems to have been the limit of any application of knowledge of the enemy, and had it not been for the existence of letters, prayers and ambassadorial reports in the years leading up to 1274 one might well have drawn the conclusion that the first Mongol invasion was a complete surprise. As we will see, the preparations made before the 1281 invasion were to be considerable. In 1274 the Japanese were very lucky that the operation was of such a brief duration.

ORDERS OF BATTLE

Estimates of the numbers who took part in medieval battles in any part of the world are notoriously prone to exaggeration, and the Mongol invasions of Japan are no different. In spite of the existence of orders sending samurai leaders to the east to mobilize their *gokenin*, no records were kept of the actual numbers raised by these means. Attempts have been made to calculate the size of the Japanese armies based on duty reports and other administrative records, and in *The Cambridge History of Japan* the scholar Ishii Susumu begins with the fact that about 120 samurai received rewards for their conduct in 1275. Unfortunately the number of men supplied by these heroes varied between five and 100, and not all these figures are known. If the average war band was 30-men strong then the total fighting the Mongols would have been 3,600. If it was 50-strong then the Japanese defenders may have been about 6,000. Other non-rewarded samurai took part, some with as few as one follower, so perhaps a figure between 4,000 and 6,000 is most likely for 1274.

A very different estimate for the size of the Japanese force comes from the Mongol side, where, as partial justification for their defeat in 1274,



Both the *Yuan Shi* and the *Hachiman Gudokun* refer to the Mongol practice of controlling their troops on the field of battle using drums and gongs. Here we see two different forms of drums and a gong being used on the deck of a Mongol ship during the battle of Hakata Bay in 1281. (From a hand-coloured, woodblock-printed book based on the Mongol Invasion Scrolls)

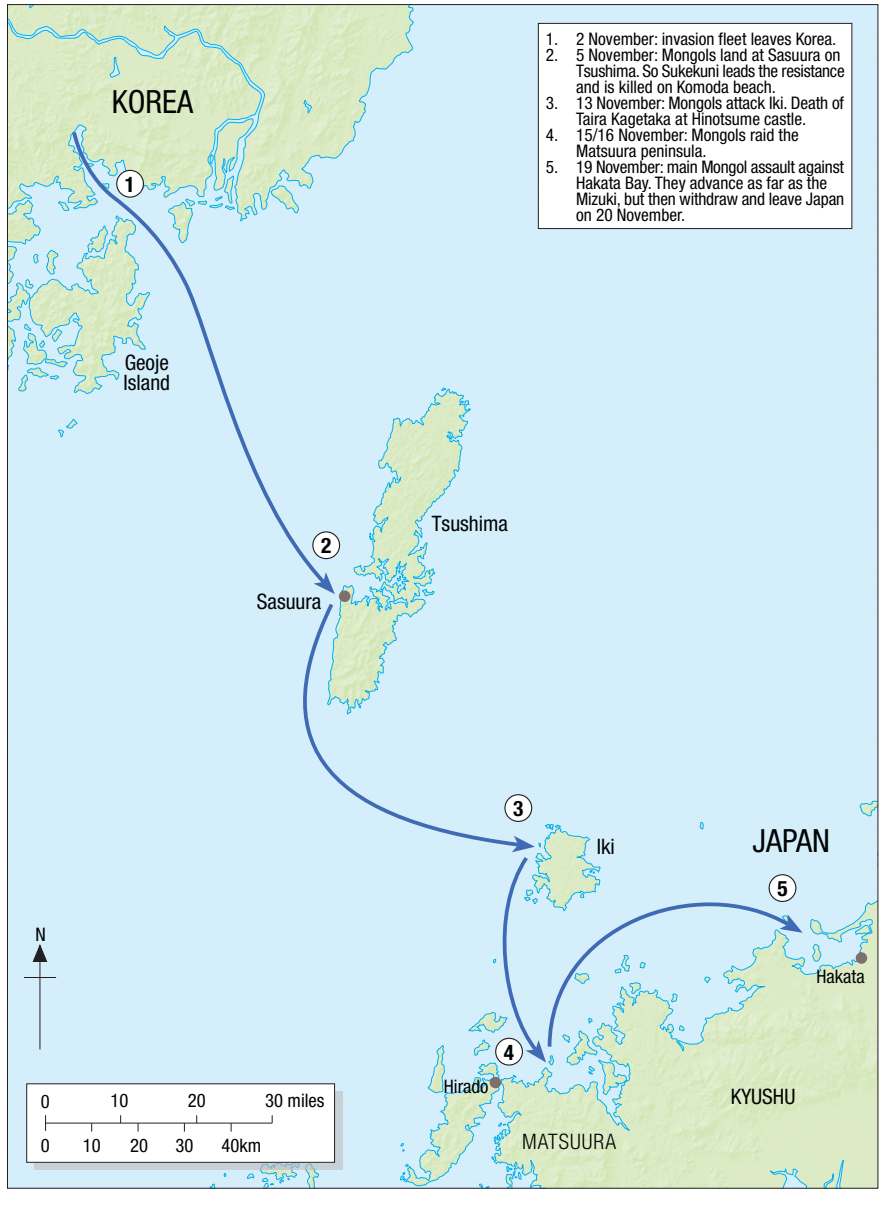
the number of Japanese warriors ranged against the invaders is given in the *Yuan Shi* as the very unlikely figure of 102,000. The Mongols were therefore totally outnumbered, having with them 'in all an expeditionary force 15,000 strong with 900 fighting craft… Korea also was ordered to send a force 1,600 strong.' *Hachiman Gudokun*, by contrast, sees the brave Japanese as being outnumbered by the Mongols by a factor of ten to one. The successful repulse of the first invasion therefore becomes even more glorious.

THE INVASION OF TSUSHIMA

The invasion fleet set sail from Korea on the third day of the tenth lunar month (henceforward to be written as 10m 3d) of the 11th Year of Bunei (2 November 1274), and the first Mongol invasion of Japan began with an attack on the island of Tsushima, which was reached after a short crossing from Korea. Tsushima consists of two main islands divided by a narrow strait, and the Mongol attacks were directed at four places on the western sides of the two islands. Two landings were made on the northern island, one was launched into the strait between the islands, while the major assault was made in the Sasuura area on the southern island where the sea entered a deep gulf and at its mouth was a sheltered sandy beach called Komoda. The *So Shi Kafu* (a history of the So family of Tsushima) tells us that the attack was launched by 8,000 Mongols transported on 900 ships.

During the evening of 4 November the invasion fleet was spotted in the sea off Sasuura, which gave time for the *jitodai* (deputy *jito*) of Tsushima, So Sukekuni (1207–74), to organize a hasty defence. In this he was helped by a very fortunate omen. To the contemporary Japanese, the battlefield was one very important arena where the *kami* became involved with the affairs of men, and no *kami* was more respected by the samurai than Hachiman, the god of war. On the very day that the Mongols were approaching, says the *Hachiman Gudokun*, the shrine of Hachiman on Tsushima mysteriously caught fire. The blaze was quickly extinguished, and saved from being an omen of bad luck when the news reached So Sukekuni that a flock of white doves had been seen settling on the roof of the shrine. The dove was the messenger of Hachiman, so the fact that Hachiman had set fire to his own shrine by this means was immediately interpreted as a warning and not as a disaster.

The first Mongol invasion, 1274



So Sukekuni's command consisted of 80 mounted samurai and their followers, whom he led over a mountain pass during the night to take up a position at the beach of Komoda in Sasuura, where they proceeded to wait for the dawn. The Mongols landed on Komoda beach at about 2 o'clock on the morning of 5 November, and both sides were engaged in fierce fighting from about 4 o'clock onwards. As the fighting began two men took a boat and managed to slip through the midst of the Mongol ships to take a message to Dazaifu that the war had started.

An interpreter had been taken along by So Sukekuni in order to gauge the intentions of the incoming fleet, but the Mongol Army had no desire to enter into negotiations and instead loosed arrows as over 1,000 Mongol warriors made their initial landfall on Japanese soil. For the first time the

contrasting tactics of the Mongol and the Japanese came into conflict. Sukekuni immediately returned fire, and many Mongols were killed by the excellent archery of both Sukekuni and the samurai under his command. Saito Sukesada, one of Sukekuni's closest followers, perished at the end of a hard fight when he broke his sword and was knocked down by a stone, probably thrown by catapult from the enemy force. A grove of trees had conveniently disordered the Mongol ranks, and at least one senior Mongol officer had become his victim. But the enthusiastic Sukesada became isolated from his comrades, and after the stone a shower of arrows hit him, three of which pierced his chest.

In spite of all their bravery, because of the numerical superiority of the enemy, Sukekuni's men, lord and retainers alike, were overwhelmed by the sheer strength of the Mongols. Over half of Sukekuni's direct followers had been killed on the beach, and his force was now reduced to 60 comparatively weak warriors. The *So Shi Kafu* records:

LEFT
The Komoda Shrine on the island of Tsushima is built at the place first attacked by the Mongols during the invasion of 1274. Tsushima was quickly overrun.

RIGHT
Looking inland from Komoda beach at Sasuura on the island of Tsushima. This is where So Sukekuni, who led the defence of Tsushima, was killed during the fierce fighting.

BELOW
This *ema* (votive picture) hangs inside the Komoda Shrine at Sasuura on Tsushima. It depicts two samurai with a dead Mongol at their feet. The samurai on foot is wearing a *do-maru* style armour and is carrying a *naginata* in his left hand. His companion (who may be So Sukekuni, the commander of the Tsushima defences) is more elaborately dressed in *yoroi* armour. The Mongol is shown in a heavy coat and conical helmet.

Sukekuni loosed his arrows, killing the robbers, putting paid to ten in all. In addition So Umajiro fired at a general in the vanguard and killed this man too. Sukekuni then galloped ahead, inspiring his band and attacked the Mongol and Chinese forces. The soldiers of the province were encouraged and fought fiercely, cutting deeply into the horde. It lasted until the Hour of the Dragon, when finally they were heavily defeated and Sukekuni fell dead.

Following their complete victory the Mongol Army set fire to the buildings around Sasuura and slaughtered most of the inhabitants.

THE INVASION OF IKI

The Mongols spent a few days securing Tsushima and left the devastated islands at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon of 13 November and moved on to the much smaller island of Iki. Here too the defence was delegated, in Iki's case to Taira Kagetaka, the deputy *jito* who is believed to have been a descendant of the Taira family defeated during the Gempei War. Landfall was made at the north of the island. Kagetaka received intelligence of the Mongols' attack on Tsushima while he was in his base at Hinotsume Castle and immediately sent a request for reinforcements to Dazaifu. In spite of the name, Hinotsume Castle would have borne no resemblance to the mighty stone fortresses of later Japan. It would have been little more than an elaborate wooden stockade with watch towers and fortified gates, but it was sufficiently reliable as a fortress for Kagetaka to take into its protection the wives and families of the samurai who hurried with him to meet the invaders on the beach.

In a similar way to the Tsushima action the Japanese defenders of Iki were driven back by showers of arrows loosed to the accompaniment of the Mongol war drums and gongs. The Iki samurai fought back as well as they could, and as evening fell the Mongols withdrew to rest on their ships. Having suffered large numbers of casualties Taira Kagetaka ordered his surviving men to abandon the beaches and seek refuge inside Kagetaka's castle. Here the Japanese defenders held out, hoping for relief from the mainland.

LEFT
In this painting Taira Kagetaka, the deputy *jito* (steward) of Iki, fights to the last inside his castle of Hinotsume as the Mongols take over Iki Island. He waits patiently behind a painted screen as one Mongol warrior comes close. Dead members of his family lie at his feet. (Genko Shiryokan, Fukuoka)

RIGHT
This is a section from a diorama in the Local History Museum in Gonoura on the island of Iki. It is based on a painting owned by the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo and shows the gruesome suicide of Taira Kagetaka, the defender of Iki, as the Mongols close in on him.

LEFT
The interior of the Shinjo Shrine on Iki Island. The shrine is built on the site of Hinotsume Castle, where Taira Kagetaka's brave defence ended. Above the entrance to the inner part of the shrine is an *ema* (votive picture) depicting Kagetaka's final moments. His grave lies outside the shrine.

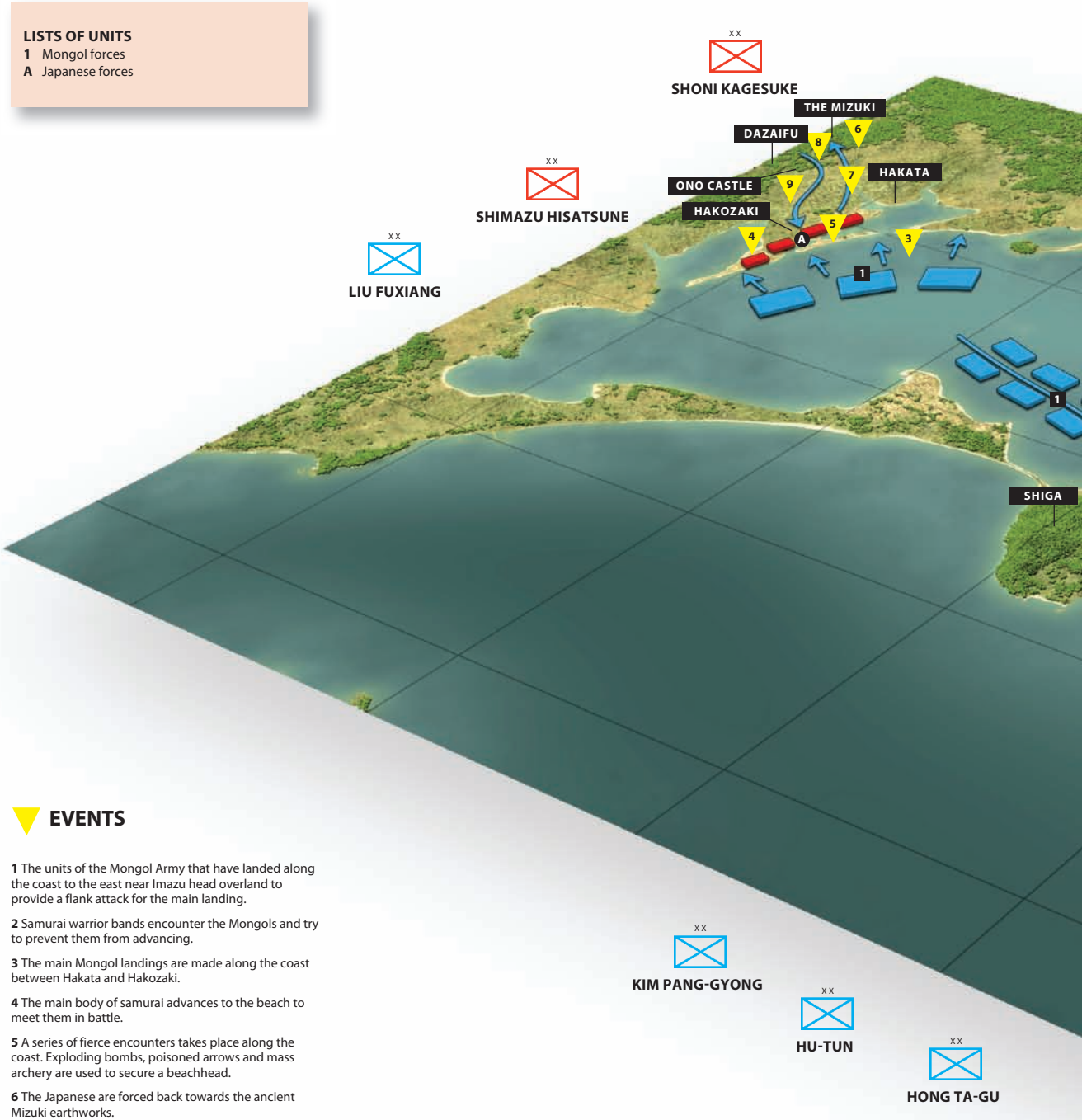
RIGHT
This is one of several burial mounds of Mongols killed during the invasion of the Island of Iki.

By morning the castle was surrounded by a vast Mongol army drawn up under numerous red flags, and even the women of the garrison prepared to join in the defence. One alone was spared when Kagetaka sent his daughter Katsura-hime to Dazaifu accompanied by one of his samurai whose duty it was to convey the news to the defenders of Kyushu. In the *Nichiren Shonin Chu-gassan* we read that the women of the island were gathered together in a separate place and a hole made through the palms of their hands. Ropes were threaded through the holes and they were taken along as captives. A similar account appears in *Hachiman Gudokun*, so the horrible story is probably authentic. When one gate of Hinotsume Castle was broken in by the Mongols and no relief was apparently arriving by sea, Taira Kagetaka prepared to lead his men out in a final charge, but as they approached the gates with their bows drawn they were confronted by a human shield consisting of scores of their fellow countrymen who had been fastened together with ropes through their hands to make a human shield. Abandoning their bows and arrows the samurai drew their swords and plunged into the Mongol host. They were soon overwhelmed and, in the face of certain defeat, Kagetaka withdrew to his castle to commit suicide along with his family. With resistance at an end, Iki was overrun. Some of the captives with their pierced hands were then strung in a line along the bows of the Mongol ships that then proceeded to Kyushu.

LANDFALL AT HAKATA

After crossing the sea during the night of 14–15 November the Mongol fleet was next observed in the vicinity of the Matsuura peninsula and the island of Takashima, where the defence was led by the Matsuura-to, the pirate gangs of the vicinity who had been frequent participants in the *wako* attacks on Korea. Here the Mongols carried out a raid similar to the two operations on Tsushima and Iki, inflicting several hundred casualties.

Envoys from the Matsuura area soon made their way to Dazaifu, where the defence had already been alerted by the news from Tsushima and Iki, and the *gokenin* ordered there by Kamakura prepared to face what was



EVENTS

1 The units of the Mongol Army that have landed along the coast to the east near Imazu head overland to provide a flank attack for the main landing.

2 Samurai warrior bands encounter the Mongols and try to prevent them from advancing.

3 The main Mongol landings are made along the coast between Hakata and Hakozaki.

4 The main body of samurai advances to the beach to meet them in battle.

5 A series of fierce encounters takes place along the coast. Exploding bombs, poisoned arrows and mass archery are used to secure a beachhead.

6 The Japanese are forced back towards the ancient Mizuki earthworks.

7 The Mongols advance in the direction of the regional seat of government at Dazaifu as far as the Mizuki.

8 Shoni Kagesuke shoots dead a Mongol general.

9 The Mongols withdraw, burning the Hachiman shrine at Hakozaki as they pass through.

10 The Mongols re-embark and leave Japan, heading out to sea past Shiga Island.

THE LANDING IN HAKATA BAY, 19–20 DECEMBER 1274

The Mongol invasion of Japan in 1274 landed in Hakata Bay, on 19–20 December. The events of the landing, and the advance as far as the Mizuki, are shown here.

Note: Gridlines are shown at intervals of 5km/3.1miles

LEFT
One of the panels of the bas-relief on the plinth of the statue of Nichiren in Fukuoka. This section shows the Mongol cruelties during the invasion of Iki in 1274. Mongol soldiers search for survivors while others carefully pierce the hands of those they have captured. The captives were strung along the bows of the Mongol ships as they headed for Hakata.

RIGHT
A section of the beach on Hakata Bay where the Mongols landed in 1274. The long defensive wall was built here in 1276 and helped prevent the second invasion from establishing a similar beachhead in 1281.

expected to be the main Mongol assault. They were ready for them, and had anticipated that if a seaborne attack on Dazaifu was to be made the sensible place to land an army would be along the beach within the safe confines of Hakata Bay. Once a beachhead was established it would be a comparatively short journey inland to Japan's regional seat of government at Dazaifu. Enthusiastic defensive preparations were made, as the *Hachiman Gudokun* tells us:

> In the nine provinces, beginning with the Shoni and the Otomo, from the Kikuchi, Harada, Matsuura and Kodama-to upwards to the proprietors of shrines and temple, horsemen gathered, all trying to outdo each other…

Two commanders took control of the defence: Shoni Kagesuke, the younger brother of the *shugo* Shoni Tsunesuke, and the Satsuma *shugo* Shimazu Hisatsune, who took up a position in the vicinity of the Hakozaki Hachiman Shrine. Mongol detachments landed in the western area of the bay around Imazu, Sawaraura and Momojibara. From here they planned to move eastwards along the coast to take Hakata, and then turn inland up the river valley to Dazaifu. All the available accounts suggest that the pace of the fighting was first set by the Mongols, leaving the Japanese defenders confused by their unfamiliar tactics. First, the way in which the Mongol soldiers advanced on foot in large and comparatively dense groups protected by shields, controlled by drums and to the accompaniment of much noise, required a major reconsideration of traditional Japanese fighting techniques. The small warrior bands could not expect to break into the formations and return alive, although some were to do so. Worse still, the tradition of selecting a worthy opponent for one's arrow was to be severely curtailed; and the handful of glorious accounts of such individual sharpshooting that follow must be seen as the exception rather than as the rule.

The fighting that followed during the next 24 hours was fierce, seemingly uncoordinated and very brief. Within little more than a day the Mongols established a bridgehead, advanced threateningly towards Dazaifu, and then completely disappeared. The *Yuan Shi* neatly sums up the whole Mongol operation at Hakata in the following words:

The first Mongol invasion in 1274 made landfall on the Japanese mainland within the sheltered confines of Hakata Bay. This lively modern painting shows mounted samurai cutting their way into the ranks of Mongol footsoldiers and causing havoc. The Mongol armada is massed in the bay, while in the distance houses are burning. (Genko Shiryokan, Fukuoka)

> Occupying the heights, his generals gave command by beating drums and the troops advanced or retreated according to the beat of the drums. When the enemy had moved into the pre-arranged positions, the invaders attacked from all sides. They also used firearms and [thus] slaughtered the enemy forces in countless numbers. Thus the Japanese were put to rout.

This account is very similar to a long passage in *Hachiman Gudokun*, which describes very succinctly the challenges facing the defenders:

> [T]he Mongols disembarked from their ships, mounted their horses, raised their banners and began the attack. The grandson of the Japanese commander-in-chief Shoni Nyudo Sukeyoshi, who was barely 12 or 13 years old, loosed a signalling arrow with a small head [to start the battle], but all the Mongols just burst out laughing. They beat large drums and banged gongs and sometimes fired bombs made from paper and iron. The Japanese horses were so frightened by these stupendous sounds that they could not be controlled. Because they could not handle their horses, none could face the enemy. The short Mongol arrows had their tips smeared with poison. Some [of our men] were overcome by the effects of the poison. Ten thousand men in all were prepared with their arrows and fired them so that they fell like rain. Halberds and long-shafted weapons were carried with no empty space between them…
> The commander-in-chief of their army took up a position on high ground, and when they had to pull back he beat the drum of retreat. When they were to advance he struck the attack gong. Thus did they conduct themselves. But whenever the Mongol soldiers pulled back, iron [bombs] were fired and made

THE FIGHT ON THE BEACH OF HAKATA BAY, 1274 (pp. 42–43)

When the Mongols landed on the shore of Hakata Bay in Kyushu in 1274 the defenders of mainland Japan received their first taster of the furious assault that had overrun the islands of Tsushima and Iki. In this plate we see the large Mongol ships lying anchored offshore **(1)** while detachments of Mongol soldiers are ferried on to the beach in smaller craft **(2)**. The samurai are waiting for them. Some are mounted **(3)**, and as the enemy closes the sharp samurai swords slash into the thick Mongol coats. The humbler footsoldiers **(4)** attempt to select a worthy target for their bows, although, like the samurai, they are being subjected to volleys of arrow fire from the Mongol ranks **(5)**. In the midst of the fight an iron-cased bomb explodes **(6)**, sending shards hurtling into the air and killing several samurai.

This plate illustrates several differences between Japanese and Mongol armaments, armour and tactics. Clouds of arrows, some of them poisoned, are loosed into the Japanese ranks, where the only protection apart from personal armour is provided by the heavy wooden shields used as field defences by the footsoldiers. These men are lightly protected in their simple *haramaki* and *do maru* style armours with only hats for head protection. The samurai wear ornate *yoroi* armour typical of the age, which makes them look very different from the Mongol armies and the Korean soldiers pressed into service, who wear heavy iron helmets, coats and leather boots.

TOP
This well-known section of the Mongol Invasion Scrolls shows Takezaki Suenaga, the man by whom the scrolls were commissioned in order to press his claims for reward. Suenaga is depicted as the leading mounted figure as he rides in front of the stone wall built round Hakata Bay in preparation for the second invasion that happened in 1281. To the left is a footsoldier carrying a *kumade* (barbed rake), a weapon that was to prove very useful in the fighting with the Mongol ships. The flag bearer of Kikuchi Jiro appears behind the footsoldier. Kikuchi Jiro himself is seated on the wall holding a red war fan in his right hand. Suenaga's exploits during the first invasion were much less impressive than his service in 1281.

LEFT
The most famous scene in the Mongol Invasion Scrolls is this one depicting an exploding bomb bursting in front of the wounded horse of Takezaki Suenaga. These bombs, thrown by catapult, were the 'secret weapons' of the Mongol invasions. This monochrome copy of the scrolls is owned by the Hakozaki Shrine in Fukuoka.

> a noise, causing disorder by the surprising sound. [Our soldiers'] minds were perplexed and they were frightened out of their wits, their eyes were blinded and their ears deafened so that they could hardly tell east from west.

Several interesting points arise from these accounts. There is, first, the curious ridicule heaped upon young Shoni Kagetoki as he 'officially' starts the battle. The Mongols, of course, had already experienced Japanese small-group and individually orientated tactics on Tsushima and Iki and had crushed them, so they could afford to be contemptuous of any Japanese formality. Hakata also appears to be the first place that the exploding bombs were used. Both the soft-cased and iron-cased varieties caused amazement to the defenders, although it may be that their noise, combined with the gongs and drums, resulted in more problems for the Japanese men and horses than were caused by actual fragments from the explosions. The compiler of *Hachiman Gudokun* is also evidently struck by the control exercised over the Mongol Army by its general using drums and gongs. Nothing comparable to Mongol infantry tactics had been seen in Japan since the abandonment of Chinese-

LEFT
Dismounted samurai prepare to meet the Mongols from behind the flimsy protection of a wall of large wooden shields. (From a hand-coloured, woodblock-printed book based on the Mongol Invasion Scrolls)

RIGHT
On one of the panels of the bas relief on the plinth of the statue of Nichiren in Fukuoka we see the Japanese commander Shoni Kagesuke shooting dead a high-ranking Mongol general near the Mizuki. It was partly this man's death that prompted the abrupt end to the first invasion.

style footsoldier armies centuries before, and fighting by ordered weapons squads was not to make a reappearance in Japanese warfare for several centuries. The use of poisoned arrows was another innovation worthy of comment, and we may also note that many in the Mongol armies were mounted, as befitted their steppe heritage.

It is at this point that *Hachiman Gudokun* goes on to remind its readers that in 'a Japanese battle' it was the practice to seek out a worthy opponent and fight to the death, but 'in this battle [the Mongols] attacked all together with great vigour'. The individual samurai spirit nonetheless still managed to express itself, as we know from one fascinating source in particular. As noted earlier, there is a paucity of sources available for the Mongol invasions, and the brief accounts available for the invasions of Tsushima and Iki would have been mirrored for the attack on Hakata, had it not been for the existence of a remarkable work of art – the set of scroll paintings called the *Moko Shurai Ekotoba*. The scrolls are among the most important primary sources for the appearance and behaviour of samurai of the 13th century, but were never intended to be a historical document for posterity. They were instead created purely and simply to press the claim for reward from a comparatively minor *gokenin* from Higo province called Takezaki Suenaga.

By using the commentary on the scrolls composed by Suenaga himself and translated by Thomas Conlan, combined with the lively pictures it is possible to recreate the events of the Mongol landing in Hakata Bay at a micro level, because Takezaki Suenaga is not at all interested in telling us about the wider picture. His sole focus of interest is his own achievement for which reward is to be claimed, but in the case of his behaviour during the first invasion his exploits are very modest compared with the claims he makes using them as evidence. As his feats also involve disobeying orders and exposing himself and his men to unnecessary risk it would not have been surprising to have read that the Mongol Invasion Scrolls were compiled by his commanding officer so that Suenaga could have been adequately disciplined.

The Mongol Invasion Scrolls therefore paint a unique picture of an individual samurai warrior at his idiosyncratic best (or worst). Takezaki Suenaga was present at Hakata when the invaders landed, and revealed his impetuous nature as soon as he arrived in the Japanese camp. There he was told by a messenger sent from his commander Shoni Kagesuke that because of the difficult terrain he should wait there until the Mongols had advanced, but Suenaga's samurai spirit and desire for personal glory would not allow him to obey orders, even from his own commanding officer. Instead the scrolls proudly shows him galloping off towards the beach, determined to be the first warrior from Higo province into battle – a common samurai obsession. Yet on his way to meet the Mongols with his five companions Suenaga met Kikuchi Takefusa who told him that the Mongol 'pirates' had already fled. In fact two of Takefusa's footsoldiers were making their way back to the Japanese camp, and each was carrying a Mongol head impaled upon his *naginata* or sword. If the Mongols were in retreat and heads had already been taken there was clearly no time to wait, so Suenaga hurried on in pursuit to find that matters were much as Takefusa had reported.

The particular Mongol detachment that Kikuchi Takefusa had encountered had withdrawn in two separate groups. Suenaga led his men in a hurried pursuit of the smaller group, but they could not gain on the enemy because their horses kept getting stuck in the mudflats on the shore. This gave the Mongols time either to establish a new position at Sohara or to regain an old one (the context is unclear), where they planted their red flags. Suenaga let

The Hachiman Shrine at Hakozaki in Fukuoka is one of the three great shrines to Hachiman, the *kami* of war. It is said to have been built on the spot where Hachiman's (Emperor Ojin's) mother Empress Jingu buried the placenta from his birth. The shrine was burned by the Mongols during the first invasion in 1274. It was subsequently rebuilt, and underneath the eaves is a plaque bearing the words of the emperor, whose prayers brought about the Mongols' defeat: 'The enemy surrendered and were subdued.'

out his battle cry, and was about to charge when one of his retainers urged him to wait until others of their men had arrived. This diplomatic endeavour was not to increase Suenaga's safety but to ensure that a witness would be present for the brave deeds that he was about to perform. Replying that it was 'the way of the bow and arrow to do that which is worthy of reward' Suenaga charged forward and engaged the enemy before securing a witness. His flag bearer became the first casualty. This man had his horse shot beneath him, throwing him to the ground. Then the remaining four of the group were wounded, Suenaga included, who was also thrown from his injured horse. This incident is included pictorially in the Mongol Invasion Scrolls, where Suenaga's horse is shown pierced by an arrow and pouring out blood. Curiously, just in front of Suenaga a Mongol bomb is shown exploding, yet there is no reference to it in Suenaga's narrative. It has been suggested that the depiction of the bomb is a later addition to the scrolls. This is a reasonable conclusion; how could such a self-obsessed warrior have failed to mention that he was on the receiving end of this devastating technology?

Suenaga's party were rescued by a spirited charge led by Shiroishi Michiyasu, a *gokenin* of Hizen province, and Suenaga has the decency to admit that he would have died had it not been for this act. Fortunately the brave Michiyasu survived, and he and Suenaga agreed to act as witness on each other's behalf. Suenaga also indicated his willingness to bear testimony for Mitsumoto Matajiro of Chikugo, who was shot through the neck. And that is where Suenaga's account ends. He was to fight again in 1281, but the Mongol Invasion Scrolls continue with his journey in 1275 to seek reward for the above fiasco.

The whole tenor of Takezaki Suenaga's account is that his achievements were personal ones, assisted by no one, not even the *kami*, and in the Mongol Invasion Scrolls Suenaga appears to do more praying when on his way to claim reward than he does when entering into battle. By contrast one young samurai with the surname of Yamada who had command of five men is recorded in *Hachiman Gudokun* as both praying to Hachiman Daibosatsu (the great Bodhisattva Hachiman, a title that sees Hachiman as a Buddhist figure as well as a Shinto *kami*) and also behaving far more sensibly than Takezaki Suenaga. Realizing that it was most unwise to attempt to break into the Mongol ranks, Yamada utters a prayer to his patron with the words, 'Namu Hachiman Daibosatsu; grant my prayer that this arrow may [fly] into the midst of the enemy!', and picks off isolated Mongols from a distance. As the *Hachiman Gudokun* goes on to relate, it was now the turn of the Japanese to 'burst out laughing' while the Mongols stayed silent.

If all the defending samurai had behaved like Takezaki Suenaga rather than Yamada it is hard to see how Shoni Kagesuke could have maintained enough order to successfully resist the invasion, and in fact the Japanese were forced back wherever they fought. By nightfall the Japanese had been driven back several kilometres inland towards Dazaifu. There they prepared to make a stand at the Mizuki (water castle), a long moated earthwork built in 664 when the fear of an invasion from China and Korea had previously been at its height. The Mizuki was designed to stall a military advance after a seaborne landing, and was effectively Japan's first ever free-standing fortified structure. Amazingly, much of it can still be seen today. It was originally 40m wide and 15m high and lay between hills across the plain facing Hakata Bay. Its construction involved a higher inner moat in which water could accumulate and then be channelled through the rampart to top up the outer moat.

In 1274 the Mizuki, never before attacked, looked as if it would provide the last defence before the Mongols took Dazaifu, and the fighting reached its climax here at dusk on 19 November. Its defenders were under the command of Shoni Kagesuke. He was with two companions when he noticed Liu Fuxiang, a senior Mongol commander apparently within range of his bow. The man was a giant measuring seven *shaku* (210cm) in height. Kagesuke, whose flags bore the auspicious design of dove feathers, a symbol of Hachiman, took steady aim and shot him in the face. He then captured his horse.

Possibly because of the loss of this important leader the Mongols never went further than the Mizuki and Dazaifu was saved. Instead a withdrawal began. On the way back to the beach the Mongols burned Japanese dwellings and also set fire to the great Hachiman Shrine at Hakozaki. However, fortunately for the Japanese, the Mongols then chose not to spend the night on shore, but to return to their ships. The *Yuan Shi* reconstructs the following exchange between the Mongol and Korean commanders to explain what happened next. There was first an appeal to precedent from ancient Chinese history:

> Kim Pang-gyong remonstrated with Hu-tun and Hong Ta-gu, saying, 'Our forces are small in number, it is true, but they are already on the enemy's land. They are battle-minded now. Our position is the same as Meng-ming, who burned his ships, or of Huai-yin, who fought with the water at his back. Let us therefore fight it out.' Hu-tun replied, saying, 'They say if one puts up a strong fight with a small force, one ends in being captured by the large force. To drive on fatigued troops into the enemy ground is not safe tactics. It is better to draw back our forces.'

Their colleague General Liu Fuxiang had been seriously wounded in the encounter with Shoni Kagesuke and had already withdrawn his forces to the ships, and the others followed suit. With this tactical withdrawal the first invasion concluded, because the armies never again left their ships for Japanese soil. Instead they set sail back to Korea, and by the following morning most of their ships had left. They appear to have encountered severe storms either while they were still at Hakata or on the way back, which seems the most likely, because it took one full month for them to complete the journey, although the *Yuan Shi* says that 'that night there was a great storm and our fighting craft were dashed against the rocks and destroyed in great numbers'. A contemporary record shows that more than 13,500 did not return, about one-third of their total, including one high-ranking Korean general who was drowned.

This abrupt end to the first invasion has posed several problems of interpretation. Was this a 'little *kamikaze*' similar to the destruction of the fleet on a grand scale that was to occur curtail the second invasion of 1281? It has been pointed out that late November on the modern calendar, when the invasion occurred, is out of the typhoon season, so the storm may just have been very bad weather with contrary winds. Also, was the sudden conclusion to the first invasion no more than a planned ending to a short raid, with the story of the storm grafted on from the account of the second invasion to make it look less humiliating from both the Japanese and Korean points of view? It is interesting to note that the *Hachiman Gudokun*, which otherwise never fails to spot a miracle, does not mention a storm at all, and instead notes simply that the following morning the local people were surprised to find the terrible invaders completely gone except for one ship that had run aground. A Japanese court diary simple uses the expression 'a contrary wind, (i.e. one blowing from the east) as it notes:

> I heard that just when the enemy ships, several tens of thousands in number, appeared on the sea, a contrary wind arose and sent them all back home, leaving some of them on land. It is also said that Otomo Yoriyasu had captured more than 50 enemy soldiers, all of whom were to be kept in captivity and forwarded to Kyoto later. As for the contrary wind, is it not a manifestation of divine protection?

So even a change in wind direction can be attributed to divine favour. Two Shinto shrines were later rewarded for their part in obtaining divine protection, presumably because their prayers brought about the effect. Also, because of the slowness of communications between Kyushu and Kyoto, it was over 15 days before the news of the surprise victory reached the court, during which time prayers were constantly offered for divine intervention.

The first invasion was therefore of very brief duration and would afterwards be regarded by the Japanese as a victory, but it may always have been intended to be no more than just a quick raid that probed the nature of Japan's defences so that they might more easily be overcome in the future. There is considerable circumstantial evidence for this, not the least of which is the fact that the brunt of the fighting was to be borne by the newly submissive Koreans. Also, to carry out a reconnaissance in force by raiding the territory of an enemy whom they later wished to invade was a common Mongol strategy, employed to great effect at the battle of the Kalka River in 1223 prior to the invasion of Russia. The *Yuan Shi* makes no mention of the first invasion being a failure. Instead, in a biography of General Liu Fuheng, the third-ranking commander of the invasion, that is included in the work, he is credited with defeating a Japanese army of 100,000 men and that the withdrawal was a tactical one made when the army ran out of arrows. This may imply that it was concluded that sufficient intelligence had been gathered so the army simply melted away.

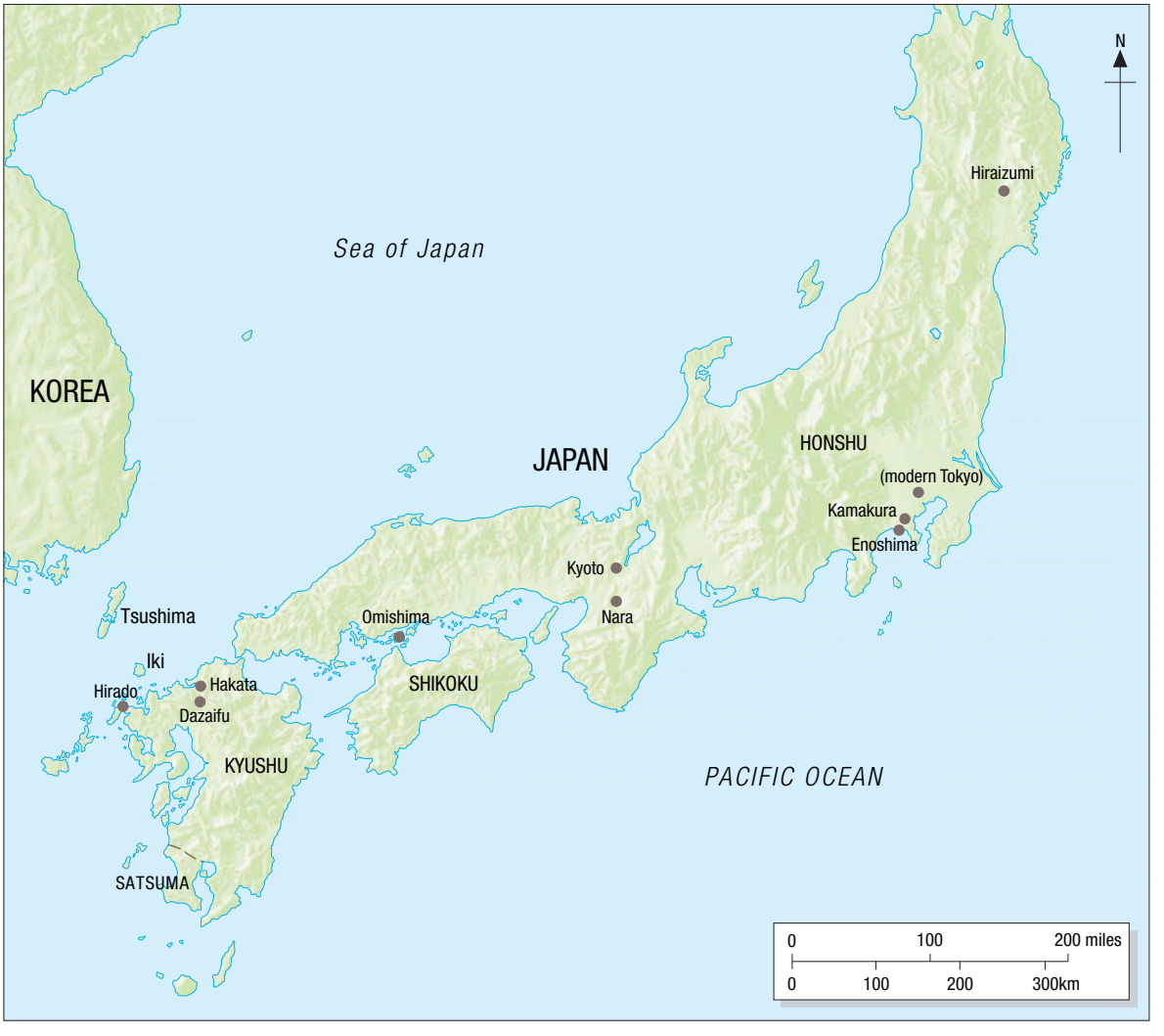
The first Mongol invasion, therefore, lasted only one day, and lost one in three of its invading force. It is impossible to know how many of these were killed by the samurai swords and arrows of the defenders, but if the storm theory is to be discounted, the proportion must have been very high indeed. Because of the bravery and martial skills shown by the samurai this major raid, no matter how brief it may have been planned to be, could justifiably be regarded as a Japanese victory.

BETWEEN THE INVASIONS, 1275–81

Whatever the truth behind the story of an additional *kamikaze* at the conclusion of the first invasion or the reasons for its brief duration, the operation was far from being seen as a defeat by Khubilai Khan. This may simply be because all that it was ever intended to be was achieved. For the returning Korean generals, however, the accent was less on whether the operation had been a success or a victory than for the effects it had had on the nearly exhausted state of Korea. Gaeseong, the Goryeo capital, was the first port of call for the returning invaders, where 200 Japanese captives were presented to the Korean king. The Mongol leaders returned to Beijing early in 1275, closely followed by the Korean general Kim, who carried with him a letter from the Korean king appealing for peace and the opportunity for Korea to recover from war. Heavy taxes, the Rebellion of the Three Patrols, the construction of the Mongol fleet and finally the invasion itself had done huge damage to the Korean economy. Time was needed before a further invasion with Korean involvement could be contemplated.

These are the graves of the three Mongol envoys executed on the orders of the Kamakura *bakufu* in 1275. They were killed on the beach at Enoshima near Kamakura, and their graves are preserved within the grounds of a small Nichiren temple nearby.

Japan, 1274–81



Khubilai Khan's reaction to the events of the first invasion and to the Korean plea is not recorded. He may not even have been fully informed about the extent of the losses that his army had suffered, but he clearly still had designs on Japan, because in the second lunar month of 1275 he sent a new embassy to Japan. These envoys, who must have been very fearful about what lay in store for them, took two months to complete their journey and landed at the western end of Honshu. They went on to Dazaifu, and were then escorted under armed guard to Kamakura. They were never seen again. All that is known for certain about their diplomatic journey is that they were beheaded at Enoshima, on the sea coast near Kamakura, and had their heads exposed in public. No Mongol envoys to Japan had even been subjected to severe treatment, let alone death. The appalling decision to execute them was made by the *bakufu* acting alone, and the letter they brought with them was only forwarded to the imperial court a month after they were dead. It was reliably reported that the missive contained nothing new.

Khubilai Khan did not learn of his ambassadors' deaths until several years later. In the meantime, while waiting for their return with news that the

The most important development in the defence of Japan to happen in the years between the two invasions was the construction of a long defensive wall round the shore of Hakata Bay. Several sections have been excavated and partially reconstructed. The scale is shown by the author standing next to it.

Japanese had been so terrified by the first invasion that they were now willing to pay homage, he continued with preparations for another strike. Troops were sent into Korea, and the Korean king was ordered to begin constructing a fleet once again. Yet this order was soon rescinded. The final push against the Southern Song's capital of Hangzhou was now under way, and with memories of the long siege of Xiangyang Khubilai Khan realized that all his resources had to be committed in what had always been his grand design. Even when Hangzhou capitulated in 1275 the war had four more years to run. Certain senior advisers clearly anticipated this, and urged him to postpone any new Japanese venture. The wisdom of this was not lost on the Great Khan, who must have seen that the subjugation of the Southern Song would throw their vast naval resources into his lap. The southern Chinese also would probably prove more willing to cooperate against Japan if they were also given some period to recuperate.

The brief seven years of peace that ensued proved no less welcome in Japan, although they were not to be spent in idleness. The Japanese were on a state of alert and carried out a considerable programme of military preparation based on the experience of 1274, nor was the religious element forgotten. Prayers to the protective *kami* were increased, and the symbolic Hakozaki Shrine was rebuilt. In order to maintain and develop the martial spirit of the samurai any *gokenin* who had displayed cowardice during the first invasion was severely reprimanded, while valiant warriors, some 120 in all, were rewarded. A coastal guard was mounted, and the recruitment of *gokenin* in areas outside Kyushu was begun. For example, Hojo Muneyori, the younger brother of Tokimune, was appointed *shugo* of Nagata province at the western end of Honshu. Here he began to recruit samurai in 1276 irrespective of their vassal status. This air of tension was heightened from 1277 onwards when the Japanese learned for the first time of the defeat of the Southern Song.

One measure that was never actually carried out was a planned raid by Japan on Korea in 1276 to be led by the Kyushu general Shoni Tsunesuke. The men and ships needed for it were to be supplied from Kyushu, supplemented by contingents from other western provinces. A considerable amount of planning must have gone into it, because records exist requiring Kyushu samurai to report on what soldiers, weapons, crews and vessels they had available, and in some cases a draft order was made.

That same year the construction began of a series of defensive walls around Hakata Bay. The idea was to provide a defensive platform where the Mongols could be held to allow for counterattacks. The face of the wall looking out to sea was of stone and over two metres high, while on the other side it sloped down along an earthen embankment up which horses could be ridden. When completed the walls reached for a total distance of 20km to the east and west of Hakata. In most places the wall was built about 50m from the shoreline. Two months were allowed for the completion of the project, but the construction did not go as quickly as planned. The responsibility for funding the wall and supplying labourers was spread quite widely among landowners.

The remnants of the Southern Song dynasty were finally eliminated in 1279, and it was not long before Khubilai Khan was to be found ordering the submissive inhabitants of the Lower Yangtze area to construct 600 warships. He also consulted a senior Song commander about the role that he and his now defeated army should play. A final diplomatic mission to Japan was sent in that same year to warn Japan that if it did not now submit then a fate similar to 1274 but more terrible in its effects would be inflicted upon them. The envoys arrived at Hakata, and like their predecessors were summarily executed. One month later a former Song official wrote to Japan as follows, 'The Song dynasty has met its downfall at the hands of the Mongols. There is a chance that this danger may come to Japan, and we have therefore taken this risk of informing you.'

THE SECOND MONGOL INVASION OF JAPAN, 1281

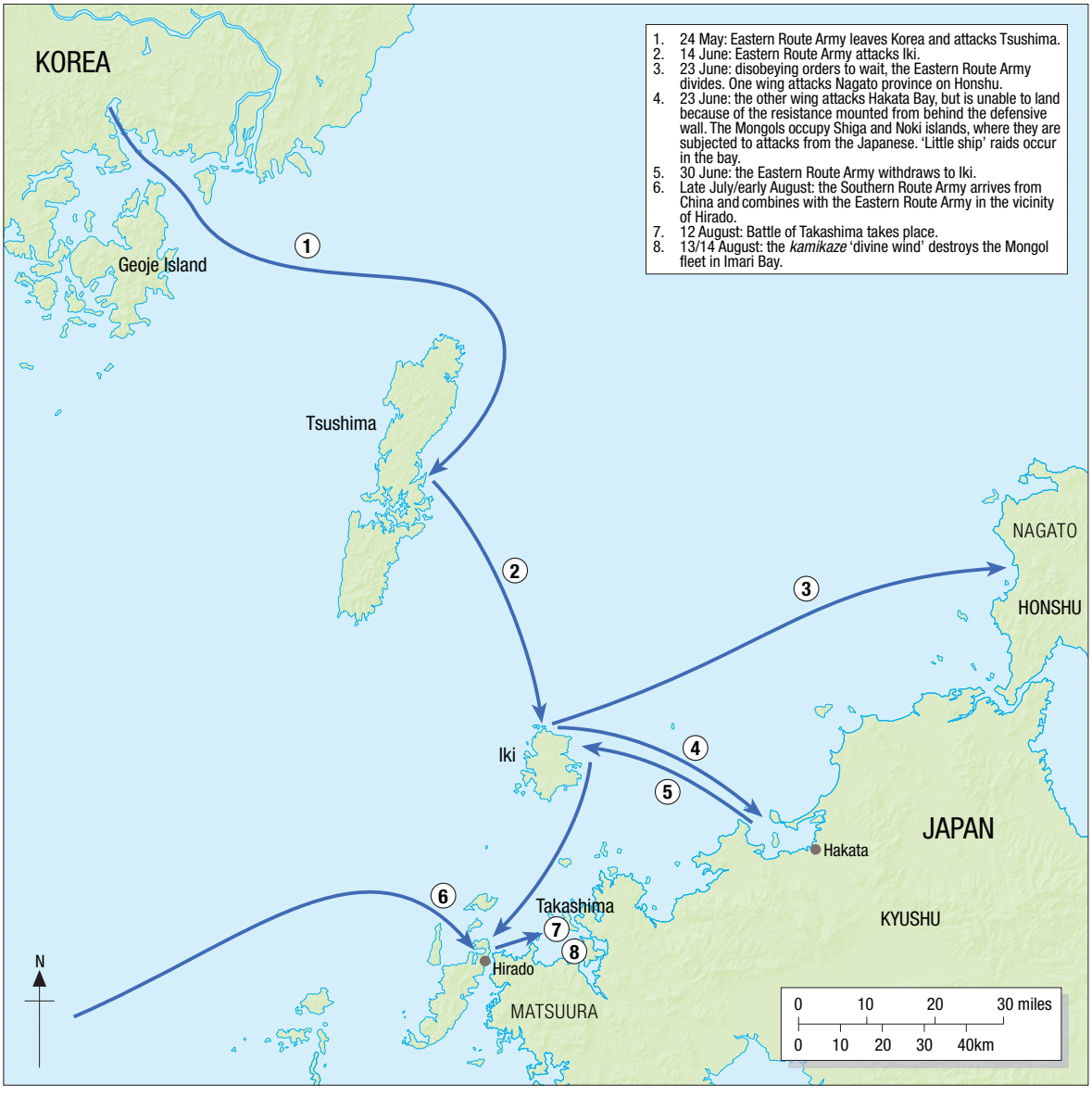
ABOVE
A Mongol general in his headquarters in front of the Shiga Daimyojin Shrine on Shiga Island in Hakata Bay. Shiga, which is joined to the mainland by a narrow spit of land, became a useful base for the Mongol fleet during the second invasion when they were prevented from landing by the defence delivered from behind the long stone wall. (From a hand-coloured, woodblock-printed book based on the Mongol Invasion Scrolls)

RIGHT
A storage jar photographed *in situ* by the underwater archaeological team excavating the remains of a Mongol ship off the coast of Takashima.

OPPOSING PLANS

In the autumn of 1280 Khubilai Khan summoned a top-level conference at one of his summer palaces to discuss the strategy for a further attempt against Japan. The Khan's plans clearly drew on the experience of 1274, which reinforced the need to pacify Tsushima and Iki before attempting a landing at Hakata and also took note of the fierce resistance that had been mounted in all three theatres. The major difference in the planned 1281 assault was to be in the much-increased scale of the operation, and it is clear from the evidence that farming implements were included on board the ships that the Mongols intended a permanent occupation of Japanese land. The military and naval resources of the Southern Song dynasty were now completely under Mongol control, so Khubilai Khan could contemplate a two-pronged attack from Korea and southern China with a huge army. The force was augmented from a wide range of sources, as criminals found their death sentences commuted if they agreed to serve in the army of invasion, and even those in mourning for

The second Mongol invasion, 1281

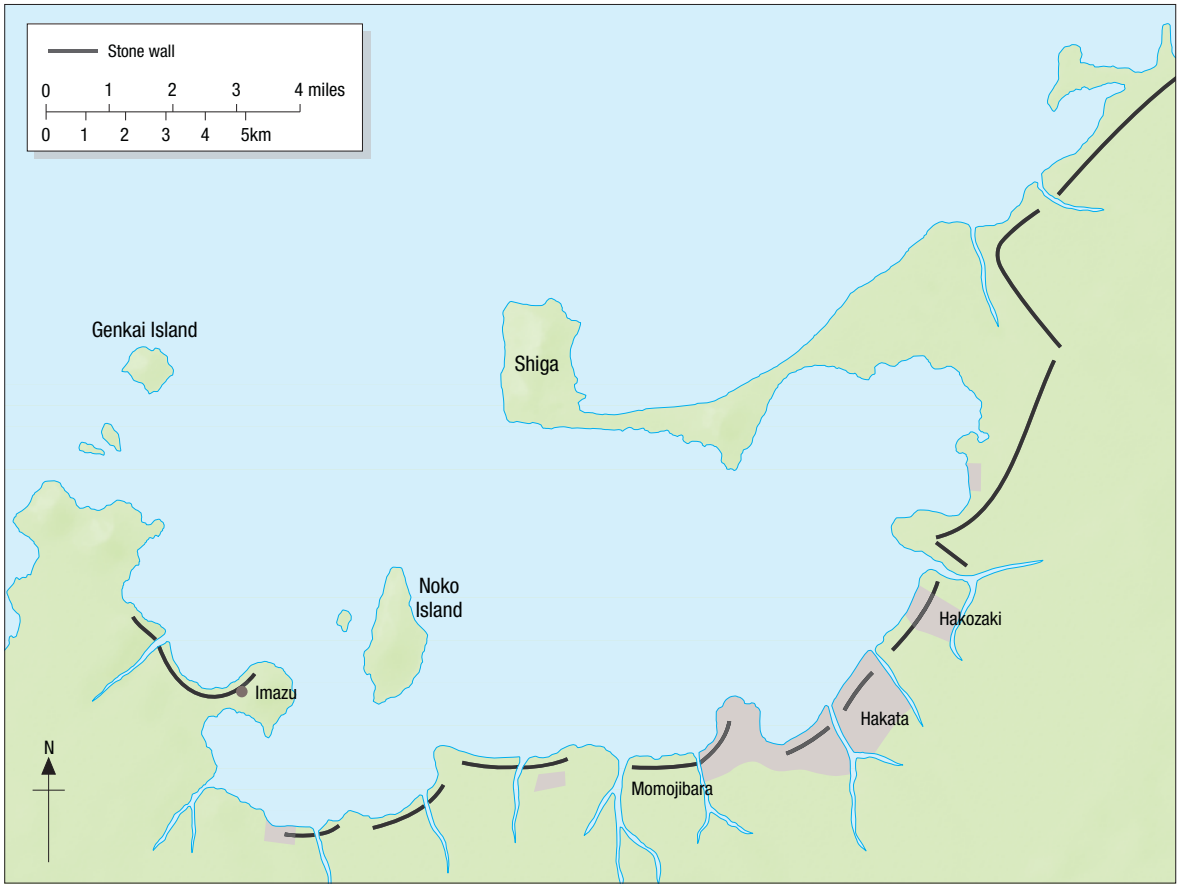


their parents – a serious matter in contemporary China – were to join in the fighting after 50 days. Yet in spite of the new resources now available to the Khan, Korea was again to bear a considerable burden. The Japanese appear to have placed nearly all their reliance on the defensive wall round Hakata Bay. Tsushima and Iki were to be abandoned to their fate.

ORDERS OF BATTLE

Six hundred warships were ordered from southern China, in addition to 900 from Korea. The supposed numbers of troops were 40,000 on the eastern route from Korea and 100,000 Southern Chinese. Both numbers are almost certainly a considerable exaggeration, but the addition of the Southern Song

The defences of Hakata Bay, 1281



forces must have resulted in an army at least three times the size of the multitude of 1274. No figures are available for the size of the Japanese Army, although it is also likely to have been much larger than in 1274.

The official order to attack Japan came during the first lunar month of 1281. The Eastern Route assault from Korea would be carried out in a similar fashion to the invasion of 1274. The 'south of the Yangzi force' would sail directly from southern China across 768km (480 miles) of ocean to meet up with the Eastern Route Army in the vicinity of Iki before combining for a massive seaborne landing on the Japanese mainland. The Mongol general Arakhan was named as the supreme commander of the invasion. He was to travel with the Southern Route fleet, which was under the direct command of Fan Wenhu.

THE EASTERN ROUTE ARMY

The Eastern Route Army set sail from Korea on 22 May 1281 as planned and took much longer to reach Tsushima than its predecessors had done in 1274. This was probably due to the greatly enlarged size of the fleet. Tsushima was attacked on 9 June and Iki on 14 June. On Tsushima So Moriaki, the son of Sukesada, was to follow in his late and illustrious father's footsteps when he fought the Mongols in 1281. Three hundred islanders in

ABOVE
The Mongol mound on Shiga Island was created as a memorial mausoleum to the Mongol soldiers killed there during the invasions.

BELOW
In the bows of the boat to the rear sits Kusano Jiro, who led one of the most dramatic of the 'little ship' raids on the Mongol fleet in 1281. In front of him two related samurai called Amakusa Taneyasu and Tanemura also go into action. Operations such as these were instrumental in forcing the Mongols to stay on board their ships, where they became easy prey for the *kamikaze*.

all were killed. Some sheltered in the mountains, but soldiers, hearing the cries of children, hunted them down. Apart from this brief reference in *Hachiman Gudokun* there are no accounts of the attack except for what survives in local tradition and is commemorated by memorials. In the *Yuan Shi* we read a short account that combines these initial attacks on Iki and Tsushima with the subsequent fighting that was to take place later on Iki when the Mongols withdrew from Hakata:

> On the day of fire and the dragon they attacked the islands of Tsushima and Iki in Japan and killed more than three hundred islanders. Some islanders found shelter in the mountains, but soldiers, hearing the cries of children, sought them out and killed them. The Japanese commander Shoni Suketoki and Ryuzoji Suetoki led forces many tens of thousand strong and fought with our generals on the coast of Iki. The expeditionary forces discharged their firearms. The Japanese were routed and Commander Suketoki was killed.

At Iki the Eastern Route Army was supposed to wait for the Southern Route Army, which was expected to arrive on 2 July, but for some unknown reason the commanders of the Eastern Route Army decided not to comply with orders but to invade mainland Japan on their own. This was an extraordinary decision. The experience of 1274 and the intelligence surely known in China that the Japanese had constructed a defensive wall along the planned landing zone should have reinforced the point that an invasion of Japan was only likely to succeed by means of the application of overwhelming force. There was also no need to hurry because the Southern Route Army had not been delayed at that stage, but on 23 June, a full week before the agreed rendezvous date, the Eastern Route Army not only attacked Hakata Bay, where, as we will see later, they found it very difficult to land, but also divided their forces. Three hundred ships were sent eastwards along the Japanese coast to attack the province of Nagato across the Straits of Shimonoseki at the tip of Honshu. This incident, carried out on 25 June and of which few details are known, did little damage to the Japanese position except to provoke rumours in Kyoto that if the Mongols had been seen on Honshu then Kyushu must have already fallen to the enemy. Fortunately, before any

In the most dramatic section of the scrolls that he had painted to illustrate his own exploits, Takezaki Suenaga is shown in the bows of a Mongol ship decapitating a victim. Suenaga was so desperate to get into action that he left his helmet behind and created a makeshift head protector from a pair of shin guards. This has fallen off his head as he fights.

panic set in, the samurai defending Nagato had driven the Mongols off. The invaders returned to Iki, where they were joined by their compatriots who had similarly been driven away from their precipitous attack on Hakata Bay. There they waited for the Southern Route Army.

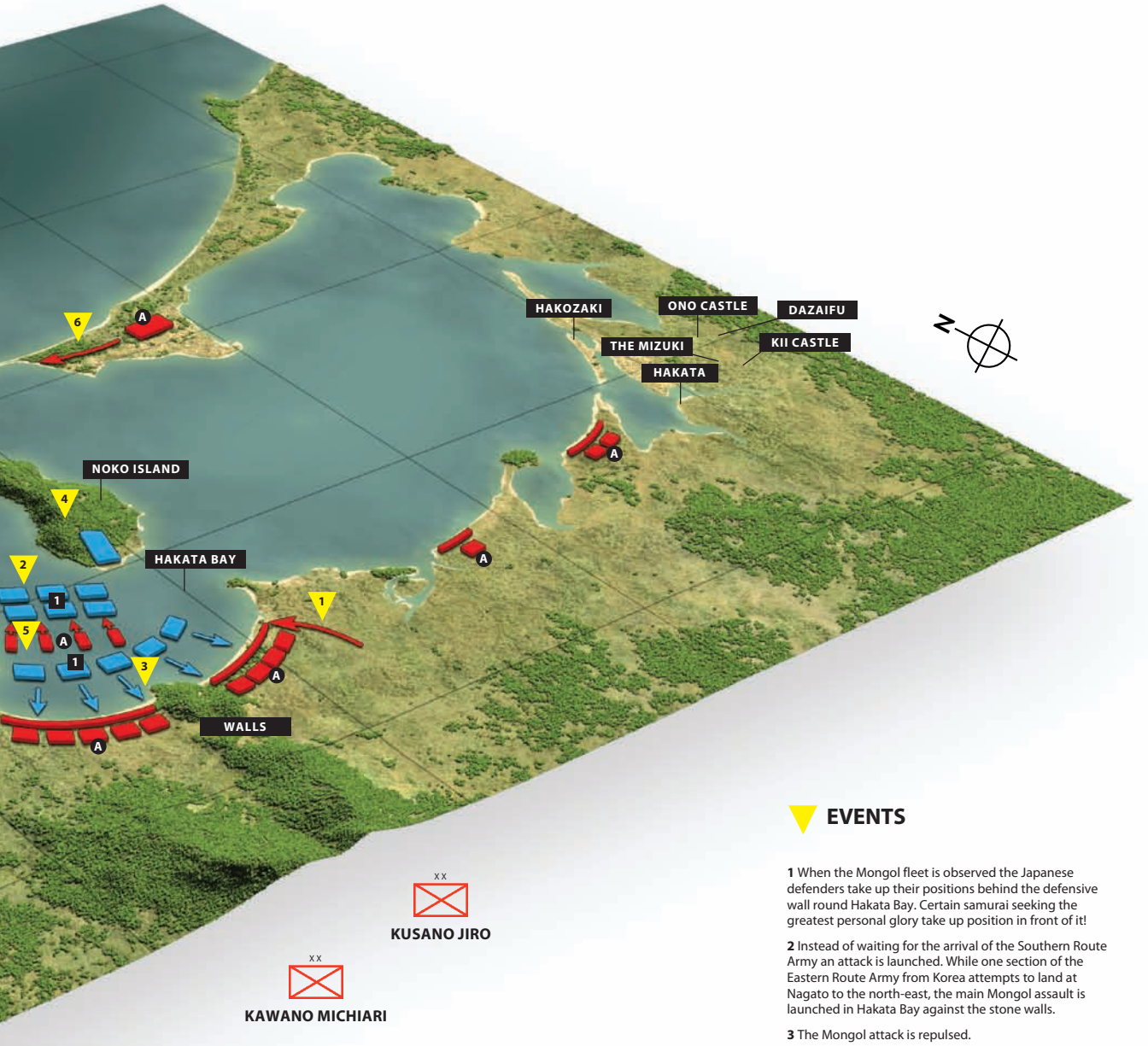
THE BATTLE OF HAKATA BAY

While Nagato was being attacked by one detachment of the Eastern Mongol invasion force, the rest of the Eastern Route Army were carrying out a similarly fruitless operation against Hakata Bay, where the Japanese were certainly not taken by surprise. According to a letter sent from Kamakura to Otomo Yoriyasu an attack at this location had been anticipated as early as the fourth lunar month of 1280. The letter-writer also felt the need to remind the samurai that cooperation was necessary if the imminent invasion was once more to be repelled. The resulting defence of Hakata Bay was a resounding success and was to provide some of the most glorious samurai episodes in the history of the second invasion.

The defensive wall along the shore proved to be a wise investment. Some Mongol craft came ashore, but volleys of arrows were launched against them from the wall both from archers on foot and from mounted samurai who rode their horses up the rear slope. The number of casualties among the invaders may not have been great, but they were forcefully prevented from establishing a position. Being unable to land, the Mongols instead took possession of the two islands of Shiga and Noko in the bay. From here and from their anchored ships they prepared to launch raids against Hakata, but instead the Japanese took the fight to them. Shiga Island was connected to the mainland via a sandbar, which the samurai used to gain access. Otherwise attacks were launched from small boats, often at night. In some cases the masts, which were built on a pivot in the middle of the decks so that they could be stored away, were let down in a forward direction to provide a makeshift bridge over which to clamber onto a Mongol ship. In other raids grappling irons were used to seize hold of the ship's sides, and records also exist of samurai swimming out to the Mongol ships.

LISTS OF UNITS
1 Mongol forces
A Japanese forces

Note: Gridlines are shown at intervals of 5km/3.1miles



EVENTS

1 When the Mongol fleet is observed the Japanese defenders take up their positions behind the defensive wall round Hakata Bay. Certain samurai seeking the greatest personal glory take up position in front of it!

2 Instead of waiting for the arrival of the Southern Route Army an attack is launched. While one section of the Eastern Route Army from Korea attempts to land at Nagato to the north-east, the main Mongol assault is launched in Hakata Bay against the stone walls.

3 The Mongol attack is repulsed.

4 Frustrated by their reversal, the Mongols occupy Shiga and Noko islands with a view to renewing their attack from these temporary bases. Other units rest on their ships.

5 Japanese raiding parties in small boats attack the Mongol fleet lying at anchor. Many heads are taken.

6 Other samurai attack the Mongol encampments on Shiga Island across the sandbar that connects it to the mainland.

7 The Mongols withdraw to Iki to await the arrival of the Southern Route Army, with whom they will combine for a major attempt at invasion.

THE BATTLE OF HAKATA BAY, 23–30 JUNE 1281

The Mongol invasion of 1281 once again focused its attack on Hakata Bay. This illustration shows the attack on Hakata, the occupation of the islands and the 'little ship' raids.

TOP
An anchor stone from a Mongol anchor is preserved as a memorial in the grounds of the Hakozaki Shrine in Fukuoka.

BOTTOM
Setoura, on the east coast of Iki Island, was the site of fierce fighting on two occasions during the second Mongol invasion in 1281.

Unfortunately there are only a handful of accounts of these raids led by named samurai. The first is credited to Kusano Jiro and appears in *Hachiman Gudokun*. He led a night attack and attacked an isolated Mongol ship amidst a hail of missiles from what the *Hachiman Gudokun* calls *ishiyumi* (literally 'stone bows'). These are probably Chinese siege crossbows modified to fire stone projectiles on a low trajectory rather than crossbow bolts. The mast of Kusano Jiro's ship was used for boarding and a fierce hand-to-hand fight ensued. Jiro's men managed to set fire to the ship and took 21 heads.

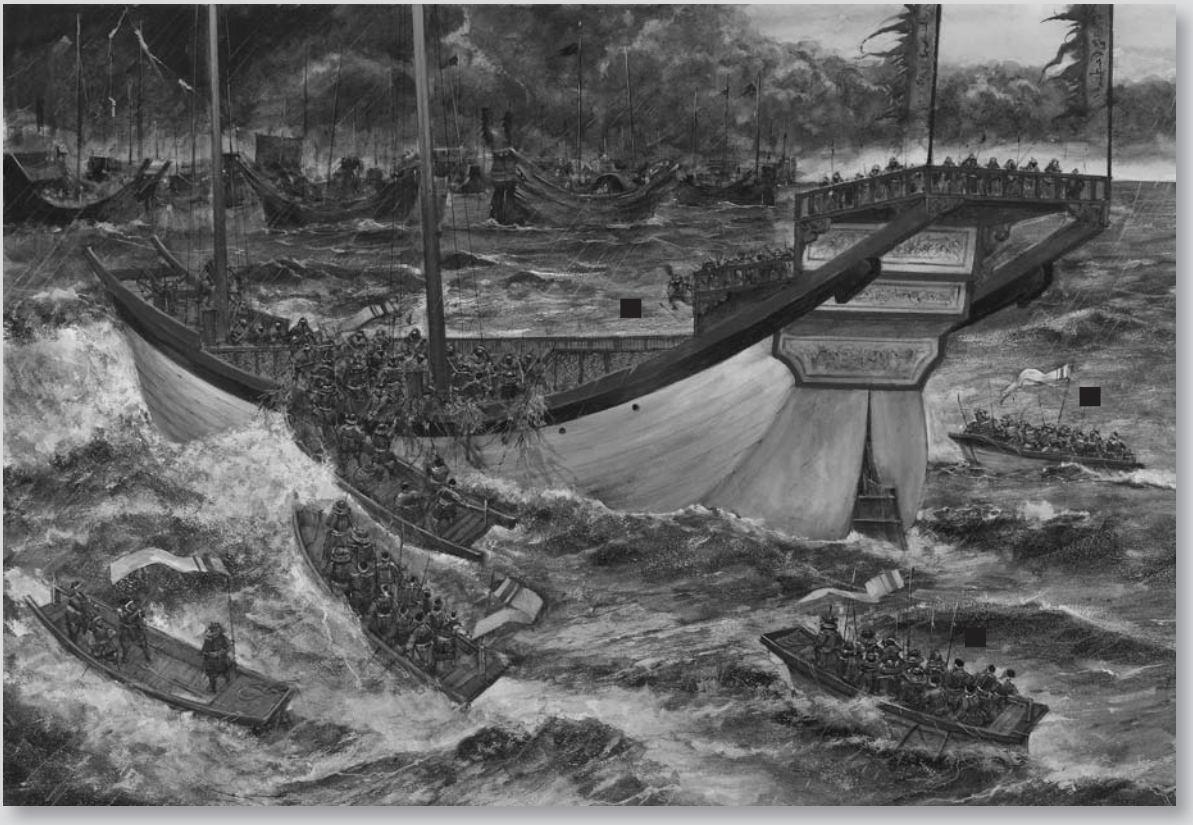
On the following day Kawano Michiari, a naval commander from the Inland Sea (whose name was once believed to be pronounced *Kono* until Thomas Conlan identified the correct reading from the Mongol Invasion Scrolls) made his own contribution to the resistance. Michiari's grandfather Michinobu had served the Kamakura *bakufu* during the Jokyu War of 1221. On taking up his position on Hakata beach he very ostentatiously set up his headquarters in front of the defensive wall rather than behind it, just to show how brave he was, because Michiari was very concerned with the need to

Young Shoni Suketoki shelters his face using his lifted helmet as he runs forward against a hail of Mongol arrows. This is a detail from a painting inside the Iki Shrine where he is deified.

display his valour during the second invasion. In 1274 he had set off with 500 men to combat the Mongols, only to find that their brief raid was over by the time he arrived. Much chagrined at this, he had prayed to the *kami* of the Oyamazumi Shrine on Omishima that he might have a further opportunity to fight the Mongols. In a very personal version of the *goma* ritual of Shingon Buddhism, whereby prayers are written on slips of wood and then symbolically burned, he wrote his prayer on paper, burned it and then solemnly swallowed the ashes.

In 1281 Kawano Michiari took part in the fight for Shiga Island, and Kusano Jiro's heroism of the previous day was his spur to a further burst of action on the sea. While still on guard on the shore at Hakata he experienced an omen of good fortune when a heron plucked an arrow from his unit's arrow store and then flew off and dropped it among the Mongol fleet. This was inevitably taken as a presage of victory, so in spite of rough seas Michiari led a daytime raid with two boats, accompanied by his uncle Michitoki and five followers. Thinking the Japanese were coming to surrender the Mongols allowed them to come close, at which the mast was let down and the Mongol ship was boarded. Michiari's uncle Michitoki was killed instantly by an arrow, while Michiari was wounded first in the shoulder and then in the left arm, again from missiles delivered by *ishiyumi*. On boarding the ship Michiari's swordplay led to the death of a huge Mongol warrior and the capture of a high-ranking general. Kusano Michiari's action made him a hero. He was to be richly rewarded, and several years later he was to found the Chofukuji temple in Iyo province for the repose of the souls of those of his men who were killed during the invasions.

With such heroics by these 'little ship' raids happening all around him it is not surprising that we come across the name of Takezaki Suenaga once again, who provides the third name to be associated with the battle in Hakata Bay. Having been rewarded for doing very little during the first invasion Suenaga was to be found on the shore of Hakata in 1281, ready to make a name for himself. Yet once again his aggressive personal stance did not endear him to his comrades.



THE 'LITTLE SHIP' RAIDS AGAINST THE MONGOL FLEET IN HAKATA BAY, 1281 (pp. 64–65)

Some of the most glorious accounts of the defence of Japan against the second Mongol invasion in 1281 concern the raids launched in small boats while the Mongol fleet lay at anchor, unable to establish a beachhead against the defensive stone wall. This recreation is based on the exploit of Kawano (Kono) Michiari, whose men rowed out in their small boats **(1)** to a Mongol ship **(2)** and fought their way on board. Bows and arrows were of little use in this hand-to-hand fighting, so samurai went into action with swords and *naginata* **(3)**.

The plate shows the extreme contrast between the size of the Mongol ships and the small Japanese boats, the difference being based on the underwater archaeology carried out in the seas off Takashima. One problem the Japanese had was how to secure their vessels alongside the Mongol ships to allow the samurai to board. Grappling hooks and ropes might be used, but a more dramatic way was to let down the pivoted mast on the Japanese boat and use it as a bridge to the Mongol deck.

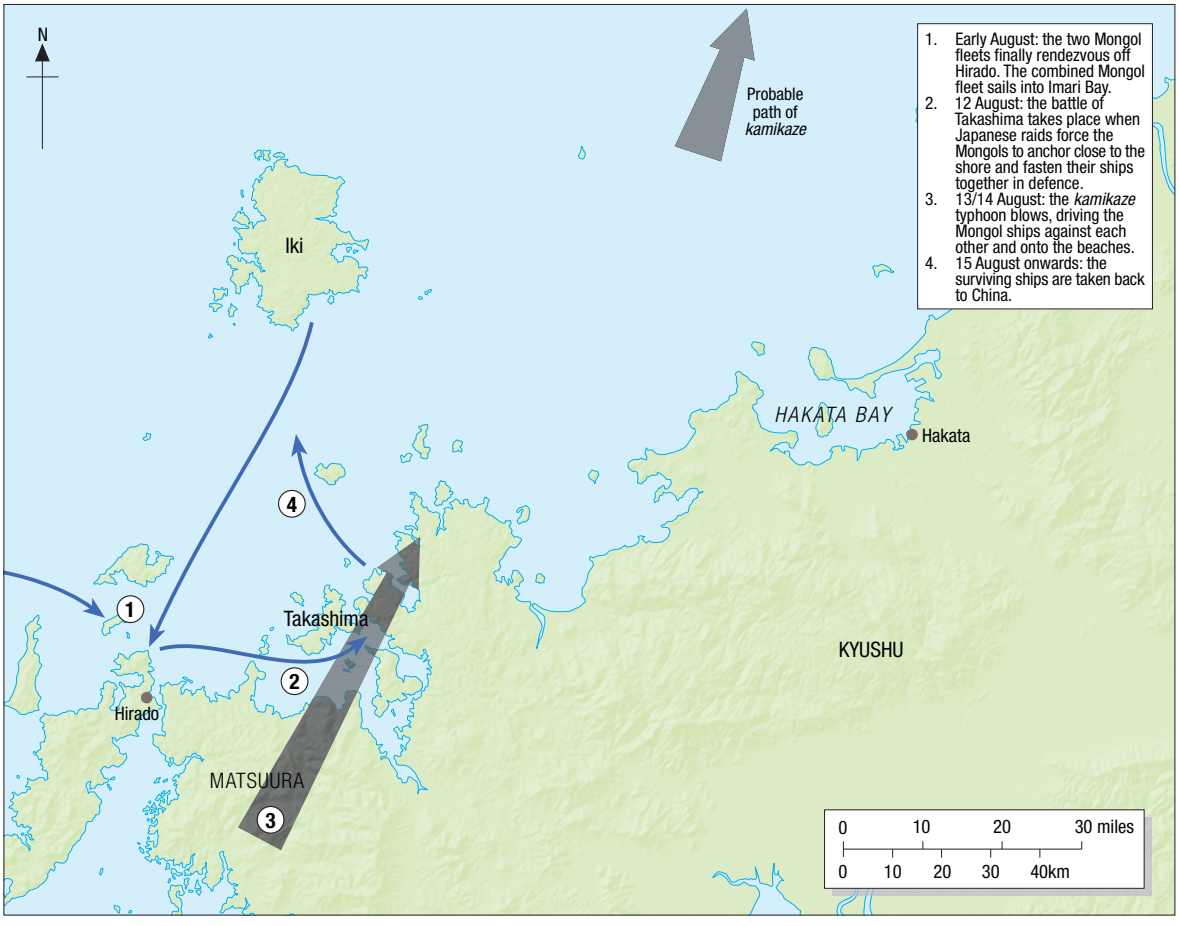
LEFT
The deified spirit of Shoni Suketoki is enshrined at the Iki Shrine in Ashibe on the island of Iki.

RIGHT
One of the two Mongol burial mounds on the island of Iki.

Suenaga quickly discovered that the Mongols had not succeeded in landing on the beaches, so that the only way in which heads were to be taken and rewards were to be garnered was by taking the fight to the Mongol ships or against the tiny beachhead on Shiga Island. This, of course, was already being done by hundreds of eager samurai by the time Suenaga arrived to join them and gain his own 15 minutes of fame, and it is extremely comical to read Suenaga's own account of his difficulty in obtaining a place on one of the boats that set off to attack the Mongol ships. Unlike Kusano Jiro and Kawano Michiari, Takezaki Suenaga had not come prepared. Most of the makeshift assault craft were already filled by the samurai who had placed themselves under the jurisdiction of officers, and none was willing to give up his place to someone of Suenaga's assertive personality, arrogant individualism and questionable reputation. Time and again Suenaga tried to negotiate for a place while successive boats that were already heavily laden set off without him, and he had almost given up hope when he spotted a boat bearing the flag of Adachi Yasumori. Suenaga commandeered a messenger boat to row him out to Adachi's boat, where he proclaimed that he had been sent by the *shugo* and had been ordered to get on to the next available boat. No one on board believed this falsehood. The occupants tried to prevent him from boarding so Suenaga jumped on to Adachi's boat, at which several men on board tried to throw him back. It was only when he was officially ordered to leave that Suenaga reluctantly returned to the messenger boat.

Suenaga then spotted another likely vessel and made his oarsman draw alongside. Desperate for transport, Suenaga first claimed that he was on a secret mission from the *shugo*, hence his solitary role, and then that he was in fact the deputy *shugo*. The boat in question was already full, but the commander, who was eager to get into battle and did not want to be delayed through arguing with Suenaga, allowed him to clamber on board. There was, however, no room for his retainers to accompany him, but with the remark he had used during the first invasion that 'the way of the bow and arrow is to do what is worthy of reward', he cheerfully abandoned them. A few moments later he realized that he had also abandoned his helmet, so he picked up a pair of discarded shin guards and tied them round his head to afford temporary protection. On the way out towards the Mongol fleet Suenaga shared his vast experience of fighting in conversation with the boat's commander, suggesting that the Mongols would prefer being captured to being killed, so that they could eventually return home. The samurai should therefore hook them using *kumade* (bear-paw polearms), and then when they were immobilized a sword blade should be slid through the joins of their armour.

The fleet rendezvous, the battle of Takashima and the *kamikaze*, 1281



Just then he saw a young samurai who had removed his helmet. Suenaga haughtily ordered him to hand it over, but the man refused, saying that his wife and children would be sorry for ever if he was killed having gone into battle without a helmet. Suenaga persisted, but the man then told him that he had made an oath that only he or his commander would wear that particular helmet, so Suenaga abandoned the struggle and threw away some of his arrows to lighten the weight upon him.

The Mongol Invasion Scrolls continue Suenaga's narrative by means of a vivid picture. While the boatman holds his vessel steady a footsoldier steadies it against the Mongol ship by digging the claws on the end of his *kumade* into the gunwales. Three brothers from the Oyano family are clambering on board at the stern and taking on the Mongol spearman with their swords. Takezaki Suenaga, however, is already in the bows, where he is cutting the head off a Mongol. A nice point of detail is provided by the sight of his makeshift shin-guard helmet falling from his head onto the deck.

Suenaga acquitted himself well. He implies in the written narrative that follows the picture that he had been forced to change boats before the encounter when the cowardly boatmen started pushing the boat back in order to flee. They had obviously come under arrow fire because he mentions a wound, which made Suenaga even more determined so that he threw away his bow and seized a *naginata*. He survived the boarding unscathed, and was

back in action that very afternoon. He notes proudly that he and his men were the first names from Higo province to be recorded in the official report. He then joined the samurai sent to dislodge the Mongols from Shiga Island. This his band achieved for the loss of two wounded men and two horses killed. The ultimate result of their endeavours was that the Mongols were driven back to Iki Island, where, if their commanders had obeyed orders, they should still have been waiting unscathed for the Southern Route Army.

The Mongols withdrew to Iki on 16 July, and fighting took place in the Setoura area where they had landed on the way to Hakata, which probably accounts for the confusion over the actual date when Iki's greatest hero, the young Suketoki, was killed. In 1274 Suketoki had been granted the great honour of officially starting the fight against the Mongols by loosing a signalling arrow, a gesture that resulted in Mongol ridicule. By 1281 Suketoki was grown to manhood and was eager to join in the fray. Shoni Kagesuke, his father Sukeyoshi and his nephew Suketoki chased the invaders back to Iki from Hakata and the fierce fight with the retreating Mongols then took place at Setoura. Suketoki fought bravely to the last, and is commemorated on Iki as the greatest symbol of the resistance against the Mongols in 1281. Like Taira Kagetaka in 1274, Suketoki has a shrine dedicated to him. In his case it is the Iki Shrine, and a fine equestrian statue of himstands in front of one of Iki's main harbours.

THE BATTLE OF TAKASHIMA

By the beginning of the seventh lunar month the great armada of the pacified Southern Song from south of the Yangtze, which we are told consisted of 100,000 men on 3,500 ships, began arriving in Japanese waters across a wide area. Contact was made with the fleet that had sailed from Korea and returned to Iki, and the complex business of rearranging the two combined fleets could begin. By the end of the month sufficient order had been created to allow them to move towards the mainland, with the new target being the

In 1281 two Mongol fleets combined and advanced against the island of Takashima. Here a huge sea battle, of which few details are known, took place. This is the grave of Tsushima Kotaro, one of the island's heroes, on Takashima.

TOP
The sea to the south of Takashima, where the *kamikaze* caught and destroyed the Mongol fleet as it waited to attack in 1281.

BOTTOM
The arrival of the typhoon dubbed the *kamikaze* (divine wind) off the coast of Takashima completed the destruction of the second invasion fleet. This statue of Shoni Kagesuke, suitably framed with cherry blossoms, overlooks the harbour of Ao in the north of the island.

island of Takashima, far to the west of the stone wall-defended area of Hakata, separated from the mainland in the Matsuura area by Imari Bay. On 12 August the Japanese first came out to attack them in the vicinity of Takashima. Here there was a fierce sea battle that lasted all night. It is likely that this was a repeat of the 'little ships' raids on a much larger scale, but strangely there are no accounts of it in the main Japanese sources, and we know of its occurrence largely from an inscription on the tomb of a Chinese man called Chang Cheng. The Mongol response to the raids was to fasten their ships together in a tight cordon using chains, laying planks between them to provide a defensive platform, a tactic that was to backfire when the *kamikaze* eventually struck.

There is a lively tradition on Takashima Island itself concerned with battles against the Mongols in 1281, although these accounts may be mixed up with the 'mopping up' operations the samurai carried out when the invaders were washed ashore after the *kamikaze* disaster. Some are commemorated by memorials. At Hirakida on the south-western tip of Takashima is a monument to the family who lived in an isolated farmhouse, whose existence was revealed to the Mongols by the noise from the chickens they kept. Seven out of the eight

A samurai called Jirohyoe was another hero of the battle of Takashima; his grave has been preserved on the island.

family members were killed. One concealed himself and survived. Two other local heroes called Tsushima Kotaro and Tsushima Hyojiro fought at the battle and are buried where they fell, although we know nothing about their achievements. Yet in spite of all the anonymous bravery on land or sea, when dawn broke the Japanese retreated. A decisive attack on Hakata and the successful invasion of Japan now looked inevitable, and the *Yuan Shi* records and exaggerates the helplessness caused to the Japanese:

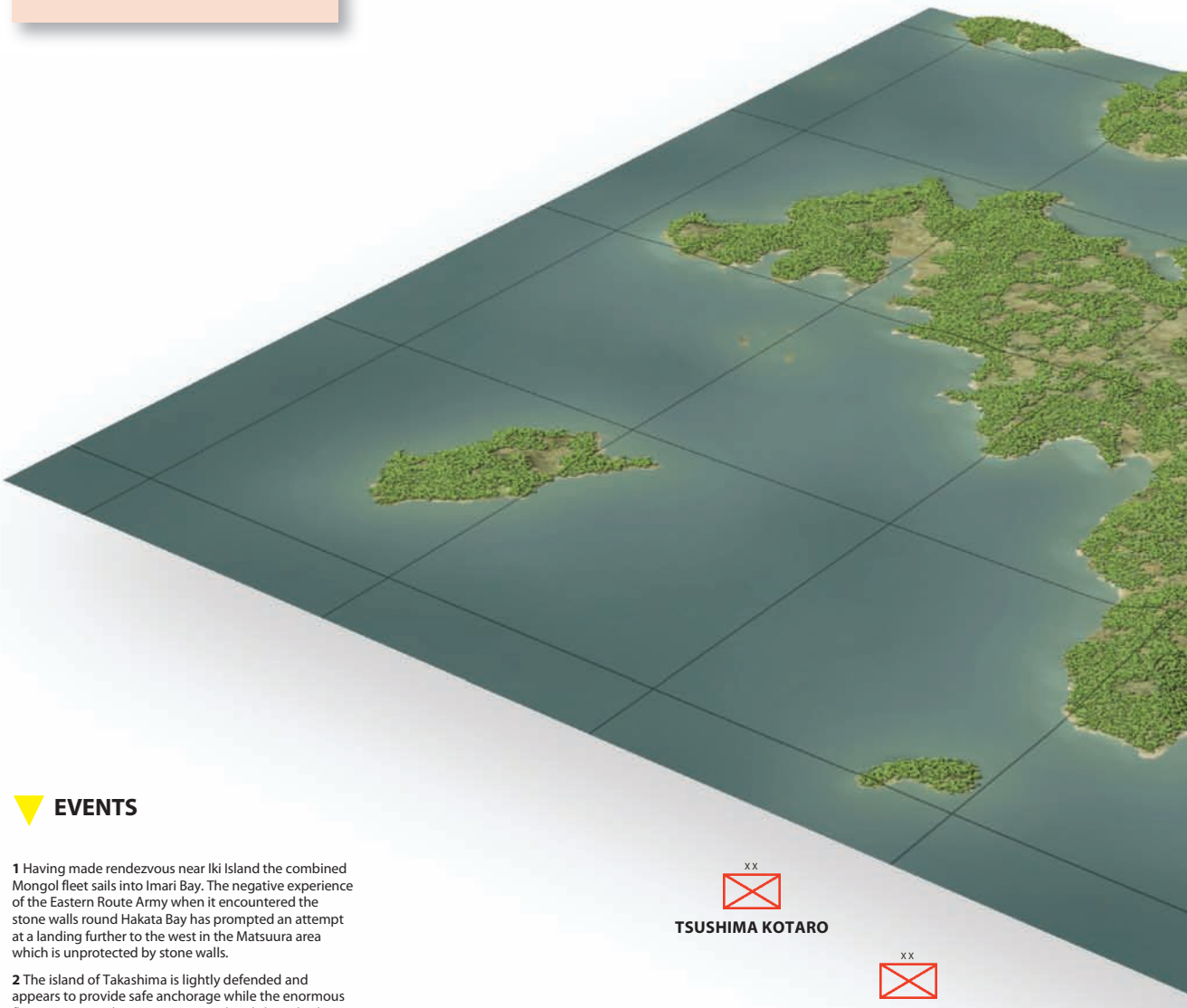
> Japanese war craft, being small in size, were no match [for these ships]. Those which came up to attack were all beaten off. The whole country therefore was trembling with fear. In the markets there was no rice for sale. The Japanese ruler went in person to visit the Hachiman Shrine to make supplication. He also had a royal rescript read at the shrine of the Sun Goddess, imploring that the country be saved in exchange for his own life.

THE *KAMIKAZE*

Whatever bravery may have been shown by the samurai, the enduring image of the Mongol invasions is of hundreds of wrecked ships littering Imari Bay as a result of the typhoon called the *kamikaze*. An account of it appears in the *Travels* of Marco Polo, thus making it the first event in Japanese history ever to be read about in Europe:

> Now it happened one day that such a gale was blowing from the north that the troops declared that, if they did not get away, all their ships would be wrecked. So they all embarked and left the island and put out to sea. And let me tell you that when they had sailed about four miles, the gale began to freshen and there was such a crowd of ships that many of them were smashed by colliding with one another.

LISTS OF UNITS
1 Mongol forces
A Japanese forces



EVENTS

1 Having made rendezvous near Iki Island the combined Mongol fleet sails into Imari Bay. The negative experience of the Eastern Route Army when it encountered the stone walls round Hakata Bay has prompted an attempt at a landing further to the west in the Matsuura area which is unprotected by stone walls.

2 The island of Takashima is lightly defended and appears to provide safe anchorage while the enormous fleet is organized. However, Mongol raids launched on the coast of Takashima are driven off, so the Mongols drop anchor out in the bay.

3 The battle of Takashima takes place. Japanese raids using small boats, similar to those carried out in Hakata Bay, force the Mongols to fasten their ships together to make a defence.

4 The *kamikaze* typhoon begins.

5 The typhoon drives the Mongol ships against each other, or forces them on to rocks or on to the coast.

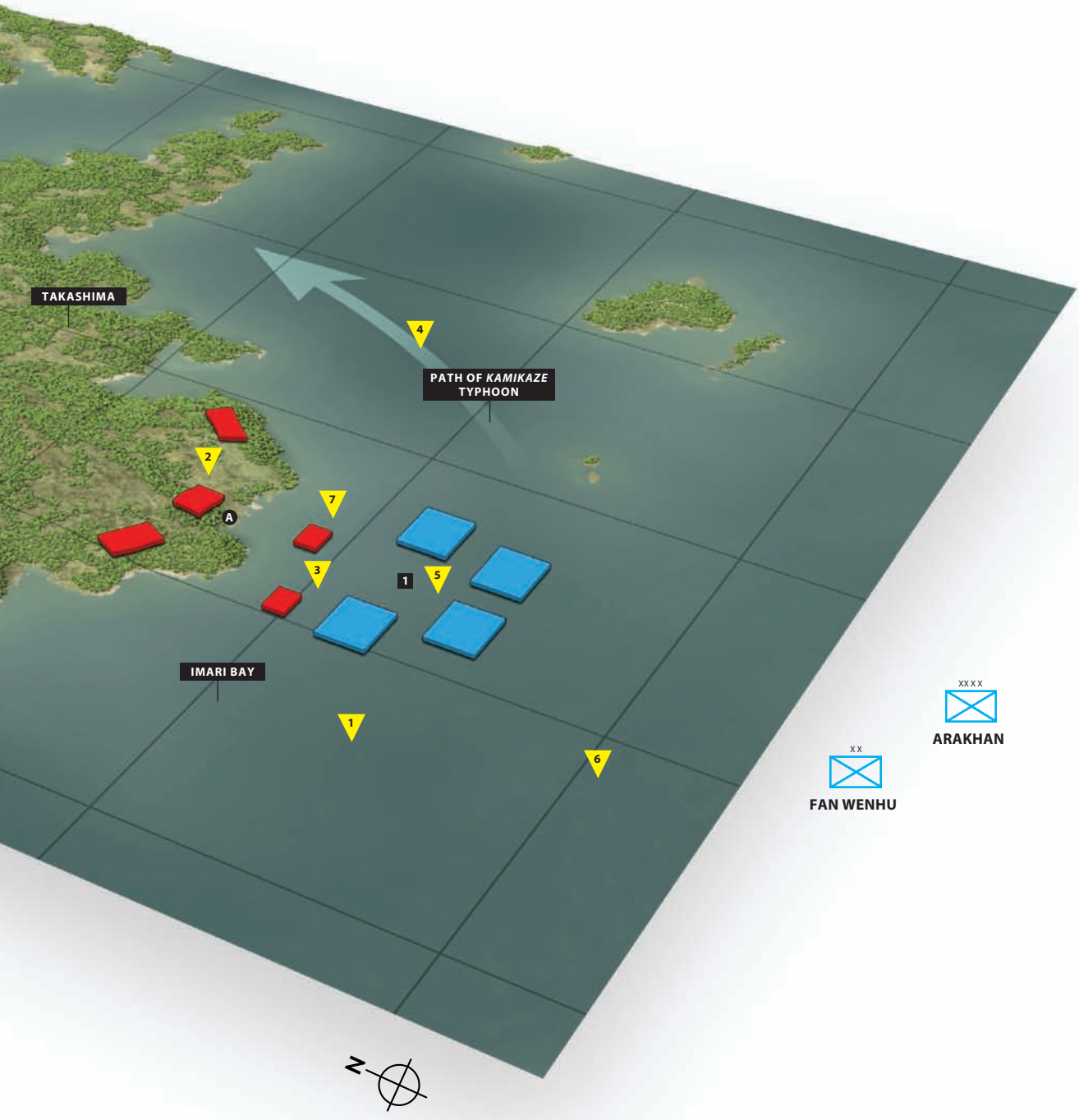
6 As the typhoon subsides, the surviving ships from the Mongol fleet head out to sea.

7 The Japanese carry out mopping-up operations against the survivors left floating on driftwood or who have swum to shore.

TAKASHIMA, 1281

The battle of Takashima and the *kamikaze*, early to mid-August 1281.

Note: Gridlines are shown at intervals of 2km/2186yds



As the Mongol invasion of 1281 moved towards its seemingly inevitable triumph, the emperor sent an envoy to the Great Shrine of Ise to pray to his imperial ancestress Amaterasu the Goddess of the Sun. (Genko Shiryokan, Fukuoka)

Unlike the contrary winds or storms of the first invasion, this one is a historical fact acknowledged by victor and victim alike. By all accounts the morale of the Mongol ships' crews and the troops they conveyed was already at a very low ebb owing to the long period of inactivity interspersed by furious bursts of attack from the Japanese 'little ships'. Pestilence had begun spreading among crews and soldiers alike, and every day of delay took the time closer to the typhoon season. The *kamikaze* was also heralded in the following mystical way, according to the *Yuan Shi*:

> When they saw the shadows of hills floating on the waves, they became suspicious that a rock might lie hidden at the entrance, and so they would not go near. Then they saw a great serpent appearing on the surface of the water, and the water smelled of sulphur. There were many other bizarre and weird things, so that the morale of the troops was upset.

This remarkable *ema* (votive picture) is preserved in the Rokusho Shrine in Shingu Town to the north-east of Fukuoka City. It is of unknown age or artist, and depicts the destruction of the Mongol fleet by the *kamikaze*. Hojo Tokimune and Hachiman appear in the clouds at the top right.

Then the kamikaze blew. While the fleet lay at anchor between Takashima and the mainland of Kyushu at Matsuura a terrific typhoon rose. Ships near the shore collided with each other, dragged to one side by the protective ropes. Men were washed overboard and drowned, and no one could rescue the immediate survivors. Some vessels went down; others were dashed against rocks or beached. Those out in the deep waters of the bay cut their anchor ropes and tried to ride out the storm. There is some dispute over the actual loss of life, but it was clearly on an enormous scale, although the destruction to the ships rather than the loss of manpower may have been a more important factor in causing the invasion to be finally abandoned. A Korean source is quite precise about Korean losses. It says that of 26,989 Koreans who had set out with the Eastern Route Army, 7,592 did not return. This is a casualty rate including dead, captives and missing of about 30 per cent. Chinese and Mongol sources are less precise, but indicate a casualty rate of between 60 and 90 per cent. What is more telling about the debacle is the behaviour of the expedition's leaders, who decided to gather together what was left of the invasion fleet and head back to China and Korea. They left behind thousands, perhaps even tens of thousands of soldiers and sailors who were found drifting on pieces of wood or who had been washed ashore on the Matsuura peninsula or on Takashima itself. The Japanese defenders immediately began going round and slaughtering the survivors, although we are told that they deliberately spared the Song Chinese whom they felt had been coerced into joining the attack on Japan. A valuable account has been left by one of these Chinese survivors:

Coloured woodblock prints depicting the Mongol invasions are very rare. This triptych by Yoshitora shows the *kamikaze* striking the Mongol fleet. A number of *kami*, dressed as heavenly generals, encourage the storm on its way from their vantage point above the clouds. (Supplied by courtesy of the Japanese Gallery, Camden Passage, Islington, London)

First day: A typhoon wrecked our ships.

Fifth day: General Fan Wenhu and others picked the best ships available and sailed away, leaving behind more than 100,000 officers and soldiers under the mountain [on Takashima]. After spending three days without food and without a commander we agreed to select Captain Chang as our commander and called him Governor Chang. Under his command we planned to cut trees and build ships for the purpose of returning home.

Seventh day: The Japanese attacked us and almost annihilated us. The remaining tens of thousands were captured and led away.

Ninth day: Arriving at Hakata, the Japanese killed all the Mongols, Koreans and the people of Han [northern Chinese]. They spared the lives of the newly submitted saying that they were the people of Tang and made them slaves instead. I, Chang, was one of them.

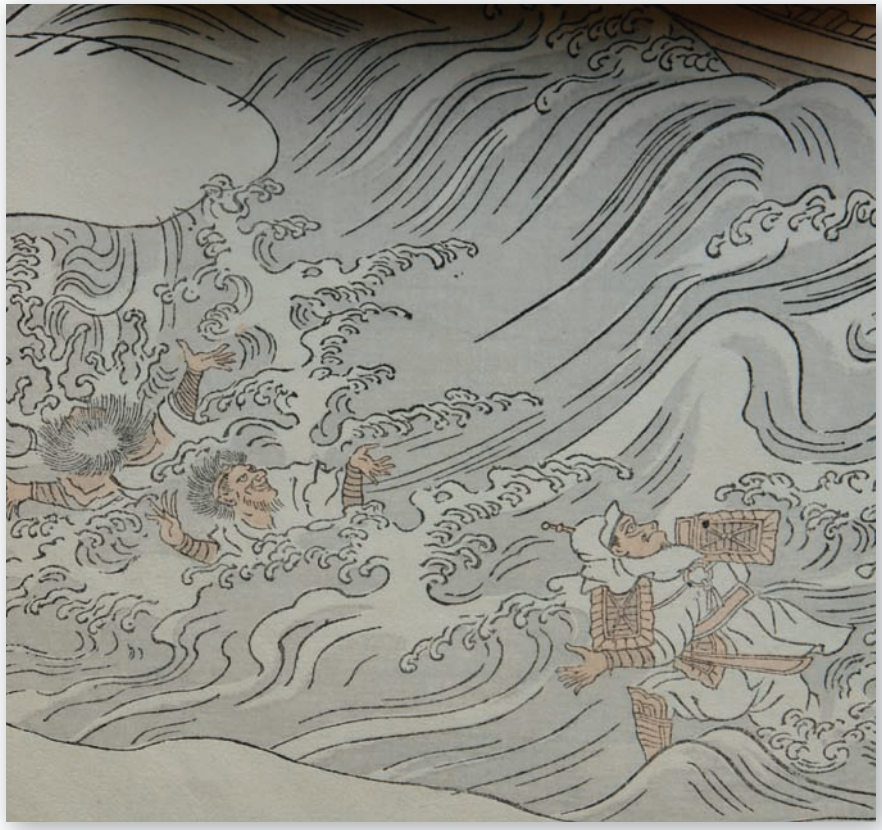
The huge discrepancy between the Korean casualty list and the much larger numbers for the Chinese divisions has generated much discussion over the centuries. The Eastern Route Army may have been more experienced in battle because of 1274 and may have been more favourably located when the typhoon struck. Japanese sources are in broad agreement with the tenor of these reports, but differ greatly about the number of men captured. Figures in the Japanese accounts speak of 2,000 or several thousand.

The literary evidence concerning the *kamikaze* therefore tells us very little about how the event happened, and it is here that recent discoveries in underwater archaeology have added to our understanding of why the second invasion failed so dramatically. Artefacts associated with the Mongol invasions had been found over many years in the waters off the southern coast of Takashima. In the main these were fragments of Chinese pottery snagged in fishermen's nets, and during the 18th century a bronze statue of Buddha was brought to the surface. Yet it was not until 1981, 700 years after the invasion, that a serious underwater investigation was carried out. This

A dramatic painting showing the *kamikaze* at its height, destroying the ships and drowning the invaders. (Genko Shiryokan, Fukuoka)

expedition revealed stone anchors, pottery and an intact sword. In 1982 stone catapult balls and more weapons were brought to the surface, but of more importance than the finds themselves was the publicity they generated. This prompted local people to bring for archaeological inspection items that they had found over the years of which the worth was unsuspected. These included a bronze seal dug from a beach by a local farmer, which turned out to have been issued to a Mongol army commander in 1277.

In 1994 divers discovered three wood-and-stone anchors. The largest anchor was still set with its rope cable stretched towards the shore, providing a tantalizing clue that a wreck lay nearby. The diving team slowly traced the finds back into deeper water and in 2001 the years of fieldwork paid off with the discovery of a ship's remains. A collection of planks, a mast step – the large timber section into which the mast was set – and other artefacts showed that one victim of the fleet at least had been traced. Associated with the ship were also a large number of catapult bombs. The gunpowder they once contained had long since gone, but iron shards still lay in some of them. Later digs produced pottery that was clearly linked to the Southern Song dynasty, but the most moving of all were items that turned out to be the remains of a Chinese soldier. Fragments of his skull still survived in his helmet. Crossbow bolts lay beside him along with a pottery bowl that bore a personal name.



A small detail from one version of the Mongol Invasion Scrolls, which shows drowning Mongols as the *kamikaze* sinks their ship.

The archaeological evidence of the human loss of life resulting from the *kamikaze* therefore strongly supported the historical accounts, but what of the ships? Much wood had been found, but almost all the items were just fragments scattered across the seabed. This alone suggested a disaster, but four anchors, buried deep in the mud and with their anchor stones still intact indicated that the wrecked vessels were of a very large size. A precious handful of larger timbers, however, could be fitted together to reconstruct a bulkhead, which led archaeologists to conclude that the ship was about 13m wide and 43m from bow to stern. The huge anchor, indicative of the vessel's size, was a massive wood and stone construction weighing more than a ton. Its red oak stock, now broken, was originally 7m long. Analysis of the wood and the granite used in the anchor shows that they originated in China's Fujian province, site of a major trading port and a marshalling point for the fleet that attacked Japan in 1281. Using the broken ropes an analysis of the position the ships would have adopted was also possible. This indicated that they had indeed been tied together close to the shore of Takashima and were caught by the fierce storm that drove them onto the beach. Only ships out in deeper waters would have survived, and then only if they had cut their anchor cables and tried to ride the storm.

The intense nature of the *kamikaze* was therefore confirmed, but further analysis of the finds also indicated that other factors were at work in the destruction of the Mongol fleet. The ships under investigation appeared to have broken apart very quickly and sunk rapidly to the seabed, thus preserving their contents. A study of the timber fragments revealed that many of the planks had numerous nail holes indicative of hasty repair. A written tag

confirmed that one ship at least had been officially inspected after a refit, and even the important mast step betrayed shoddy workmanship. It is well established that the southern force was late in arriving for the final rendezvous. It may now be strongly suggested that the section of the fleet impressed from the newly conquered Southern Song was hastily assembled, poorly maintained and almost certainly commanded with less than total enthusiasm. Scorch marks on other timbers showed that some ships had caught fire, possibly from Japanese fireships during the poorly recorded battle of Takashima. The *kamikaze* was a knockout blow against an invader that was already in some trouble.

Here, perhaps, is one clue towards understanding the failure of Khubilai Khan's massive endeavour. As noted earlier, it was on the fringes of their great empire that the Mongol power was at its weakest, and at this particular edge of their sphere of influence lay a barrier of water. The Mongols had shown themselves to be stalled by water. Tiny Ganghwa Island had resisted occupation, and when this major overseas expedition was contemplated Khubilai Khan had to rely totally on the expertise of newly conquered nations.

That, of course, was not how it looked to the Japanese, where two alternative explanations for the victory were embraced. To the samurai it had been brought about by their own heroism and self-sacrifice, and men like Takezaki Suenaga were soon to apply themselves as assiduously to the means of obtaining rewards as they had once taken on their roles against the Mongols. Several days were to pass before the news of the victory reached Kamakura, where measures were still being enacted in the face of the crisis that had developed since the defeat at Takashima. Hojo Tokimune's nephew was sent to take control of the defence of Harima province. As Harima is at the eastern end of the Inland Sea it is clear that the government feared that Kyushu would fall and that a second line of defence would have to be mounted nearer to the capital.

When the joyful news became known to the courtiers of Kyoto the victory was seen as nothing more than the evidence of divine intervention. One man wrote in his diary that he could not stop crying when he realized that such recognition had been shown to the concern expressed by the emperor. Another wrote:

> Divine eyes are crystal clear. What in the world could be more joyful than this? This is not a common occurrence. Although we live in the Age of Decadence, this is, nonetheless, awe-inspiring. We must exert ourselves in our piety to the gods and buddhas.

AFTERMATH

REWARDS, RELIGION AND RETRIBUTION

Decisive though the *kamikaze* was, it would have been minimal in its effectiveness if the determination and fighting qualities of the samurai had not forced the entire fleet to lie at anchor with all their armies on board and unable to establish a beachhead. The defeat of the Mongols was a victory conducted against a strange and ruthless enemy who attacked in large formations and flung exploding bombs at the samurai, and when the dust had settled all these factors had to be taken into account when rewards were to be allotted, a process that caused a strange and unique rift between the samurai and the sacred.

One outstanding example of an aggrieved samurai was Takezaki Suenaga. At the conclusion of the first invasion Suenaga felt that he had been denied the rewards that he thought were properly his, so he took his complaints directly to the Hojo capital of Kamakura. His efforts to obtain a reward were every bit as insistent as his efforts against the Mongols, and of much longer duration. The journey to Kamakura from his home province of Higo took five months each way, and the interview lasted the better part of a whole day. The problem that Suenaga and his comrades faced lay in the two unique aspects of the Mongol campaign. The first was that, unlike any previous encounter since the rise of the samurai, there were no conquered enemy lands to share among the victor's faithful followers. The second problem was that in the distribution of largesse the samurai had to stand in line along with certain religious institutions who pressed claims for reward every bit as insistently as those who had fought in battle.

One of the roles of Japanese Buddhism had always been the protection of the country through the involvement of invisible gods with the existing social order, and the basis for the claims lodged by shrines and temples was that their prayers had brought about the victory. The matter was not just concerned with the blowing of the *kamikaze*, which was commonly regarded as the answer to the prayers made at Ise to the Sun-Goddess by the representative of her earthly descendant. On other occasions during the fighting, prayers had been made and had been appropriately answered. That the *bakufu* believed this is shown by the fact that at least two shrines, and possibly more, received rewards before any samurai did so, and a letter of 1284 accompanying a donation to the Usa Hachiman Shrine acknowledges the service rendered and asks the priest to keep praying, because 'it is rumoured that enemies may come to attack us again'.

The battle of Takashima as shown on a hanging scroll in the Museum on Takashima. A clash between the mounted samurai and the Mongols is the theme.

It may appear to the modern ear that priests and monks made up stories which seem incredible to us today, giving the intervention of their *kami* full credit for the destruction of the Mongol armada in order to claim rewards. But this is to misunderstand the religious mindset of the times. Takezaki Suenaga fought, but he also prayed, because a belief in the 'this-worldly' efficacy of prayer permeated the whole of the samurai's environment, and the battlefield was seen as a place where the *kami* and buddhas interacted with men. Nevertheless, the resolution of the Mongol threat caused a temporary rift in this ancient acceptance. For the only time in Japanese history a dispute over reward placed the worlds of the samurai and the sacred into two separate and competing spheres in a way that would have been incomprehensible to earlier samurai, whose personal victories were attributed to personal gods. In certain cases there were also rival religious claims that set *kami* against *kami*. So, in one extreme example, the credit for the raising of the *kamikaze* was claimed

THE MORNING AFTER THE KAMIKAZE, 1281 (pp. 82–83)

The *coup de grâce* against the Mongol fleet was delivered by the great typhoon that was immediately dubbed the *kamikaze* (divine wind). During the night it smashed the waiting Mongol fleet as it lay in Imari Bay. In this illustration we see boatloads of samurai **(1)** heading out into the bay on the following morning to witness the destruction that had saved them. Here and there samurai put arrows into Mongol survivors **(2)**, or drag them from driftwood rafts using rakes **(3)** or grappling hooks **(4)**.

The ships used by the Japanese are a more substantial design than the smaller boats used in the raid on the Mongol ships shown in the previous plate. Recent research has shown that the sinking Mongol ships shown here may well have been unseaworthy, having been hastily repaired for the invasion. Thousands of Mongol soldiers were drowned or left floating on pieces of their shattered ships as shown here. Others were cast on to the shore of Takashima or the Matsuura Peninsula where they were hunted down by the Japanese, although many Southern Song Chinese soldiers impressed into service were spared.

Nichiren earned the hatred of the Kamakura *bakufu* for denouncing what he believed were their wicked ways in turning away from the essential truths of Buddhism and embracing Zen. However, he came to be regarded as a visionary by his supporters when he prophesied the Mongol invasions. This huge statue of him stands in Fukuoka City.

by the Iwashimizu Shrine because of Buddhist prayers that were offered on behalf of Hachiman, rather than that of Amaterasu. Seven hundred Buddhist monks had been involved in a seven-day long service for the repulse of the Mongols, and Hachiman spoke through a medium to tell them that he had been so strengthened by prayer that he was about to blow the fleet away. A messenger later confirmed that this had occurred while the prayer service was in progress, and everyone was awestruck at the news. Petitions to the *bakufu* included reports of *kami* appearing in the form of dragons, birds or monkeys, were urged as persistently as in the case of Takezaki Suenaga and with considerably more patience. As late as 1309 the chief priest of the Takeo shrine was to be found complaining that he had still received no reward, even though in 1274 the *kami* had shot arrows against the Mongol host, and in 1281 witnesses had seen three purple banners on top of his shrine flying towards the Mongol ships just before the *kamikaze* struck them.

By way of contrast we may note the quiet success achieved by certain samurai from southern Kyushu who obtained rewards that were spiritual as well as financial. Samurai from the provinces of Satsuma, Osumi and Hyuga fought the Mongols in the first invasion under the command of Shimazu Sukenaga, while Shimazu Hisatsune maintained guard duty in Hakata without a break until the Mongols returned in 1281. The warriors of Satsuma were involved in the raids on the Mongol fleet, and when Hisatsune died in 1284 his son continued to provide guard duty in case the Mongols returned, a vigilance that was not relaxed for a further 30 years. Three brothers from the Iriki-In family who served the Shimazu fought against the Mongols in 1281. Two, Muneshige and Shigenao, died from arrow wounds sustained during the sea battles of 1281. Arishige survived the war. He died sometime prior to 1288, when his surviving relatives received a generous grant of land in recognition of his services. Yet here again was the problem of the lack of conquered land to distribute. Land in northern Kyushu that was available for redistribution was grouped in sets of graded magnitude, and then allocated by lot to the recipient according to the quality of reward that his service had merited. Iriki-In Arishige, however, was to be honoured by more than reward. On his way to Hakata in 1281 Arishige, believing that it may be his last battle, shot two arrows in an easterly direction, and commanded that a Buddhist temple and a Shinto shrine should be erected in the places where the arrows fell. This was done. At the temple prayers would be offered as part of the accepted funerary practices of Buddhism, while at the shrine the spirits of Arishige and Muneshige were enshrined and deified as the *kami* Wakamiya Myojin.

A further dimension to the religious aspect of the invasions was provided by the priest Nichiren, because among the new Buddhist sects that developed during the 13th century Japan had acquired one that was to have a curious bearing on the Mongol defeat. Nichiren was born in 1222 in Awa province in eastern Japan. Unlike so many of his contemporaries, Nichiren did not become the pupil of a particular teacher. Instead he found his inspiration among scripture, and soon became the greatest devotee of the Lotus Sutra. To Nichiren this contained the essence and reality of all Buddhist teaching. He vehemently rejected the esoteric Buddhism that he felt had corrupted the original truths contained in the Lotus Sutra, where *Namu Myoho Renge-kyo!* (Hail to the Lotus of the Divine Law!) was the pledge of salvation, a phrase that could be easily and dramatically beaten in time with a drum.

Nichiren believed that the disorder of the times was the inevitable consequence of a land that had abandoned the True Law and given itself over to false teachings. In 1260 he wrote *Rissho Ankoku Ron* (*On Establishing the Correct Teaching and Pacifying the Nation*), a religious polemic that he presented to the former regent of Japan, Hojo Tokiyori (Tokimune's father). Tokiyori did not accept Nichiren's suggestion that natural calamities were the result of bad governance. This point came very near to political heresy, and in 1261 Nichiren was banished from Kamakura. He returned from a brief exile more belligerent than ever, and sustained a broken arm in a tussle with opponents. Nichiren gradually became more deeply entrenched in his views, demanding exclusive devotion to the Lotus Sutra. He called Kobo Daishi, the founder of Shingon Buddhism, 'the greatest liar in Japan', while Zen, the favourite religion of the Hojo family, was to him the doctrine of demons. Most importantly of all, in his 1260 tract Nichiren had warned that unless Japan mended her ways she would be visited by the spectre of foreign invasion, and

This modern painting hangs on the wall in the hall where is displayed one of Emperor Hirohito's marine biology research boats at the Oyamazumi Shrine on Omishima. It shows a strangely undramatic version of one of the 'little ship' raids on the Mongol fleet.

the arrival of the Mongol envoys with Khubilai Khan's demands for tribute transformed Nichiren's image into that of a visionary. It was the period of greatest numerical growth among Nichiren's followers, but their harsh and uncompromising stand against all other believers made Nichiren into a prophet without honour in his own country. Harsh persecution followed and Nichiren was condemned to death, although the sentence was finally commuted to exile. On his way to execution the procession passed a shrine to Hachiman, where Nichiren stopped and mockingly challenged the great *kami* to save him.

Nichiren kept his attitude of rigid exclusivity until his death in 1282, by which time the Mongols had come and gone. Yet unlike so many other religious figures who had been involved in some ways with the tumultuous events of the Mongol invasions Nichiren neither demanded nor expected any reward. His most tangible link with the Mongols exists today in the city of Hakata, where a memorial to the defeat of the invaders bears on its side scenes from the Mongol attacks and from his own life. Towering above them is a huge statue of the prophet, as fierce and uncompromising in bronze as he ever was in life.

JAPAN'S REVENGE

Not everyone in Yuan China heard the news of the Mongol defeat with dismay. Zheng Sixiao (1241–1318) was a scholar obsessed with the idea of restoring the Song dynasty and wrote poetry celebrating the humiliation of the Mongol usurpers. Yet his glee at the defeat was tempered by a genuine fear of the island nation that had brought it about. 'The Japanese,' he wrote, 'are fierce and do not fear death… Ten Japanese soldiers will fight, even if it is against an enemy force of one hundred. They will forfeit their lives in battle even if they are unable to win.' Zheng credited this attitude to his understanding that Japanese

deserters were invariably executed by their commanding officers. He was also morbidly fascinated by the Japanese swords, which were 'extremely sharp', a fact to be discovered anew by Korea when a second phase of *wako* raiding by Japan began in 1350, and for the next 25 years the records show an average of five a year. The depredations inflicted by the *wako* on Korea were every bit as serious as the Mongol incursions of a century earlier, and contributed to the eventual collapse of the ruling Goryeo dynasty.

The Yuan dynasty of China collapsed about the same time, and the establishment of the Ming dynasty by Zhu Yuanzhang, the Hongwu emperor, in 1368 provided the opportunity for a new rule to re-establish China's pre-eminent position among its neighbours. The time-honoured device whereby this would be achieved involved the contrived fiction by which those neighbours paid homage to the Chinese emperor and received in return a re-investment as rulers of their own countries. It was exactly the same technique that Khubilai Khan had tried on Japan, and the defeat of the Mongol invasions made it very unlikely that the Japanese position would change. The Ming letter nevertheless contained very frank statements about the behaviour of Japanese pirates, who 'repeatedly plunder areas along the coast, separating men forever from their wives and children and destroying property and lives'. Should Japan not declare itself a vassal state of the Ming and send tribute, then it should at the very least employ military force to ensure that its own people stayed within its borders. Failure to do this would provoke an invasion from China. The envoys were defied as thoroughly as their Yuan predecessors had been, so that by 1370 the Hongwu emperor felt obliged to warn the Japanese again that the pirates must be suppressed because 'subjugating forces have drawn their swords and await his command'.

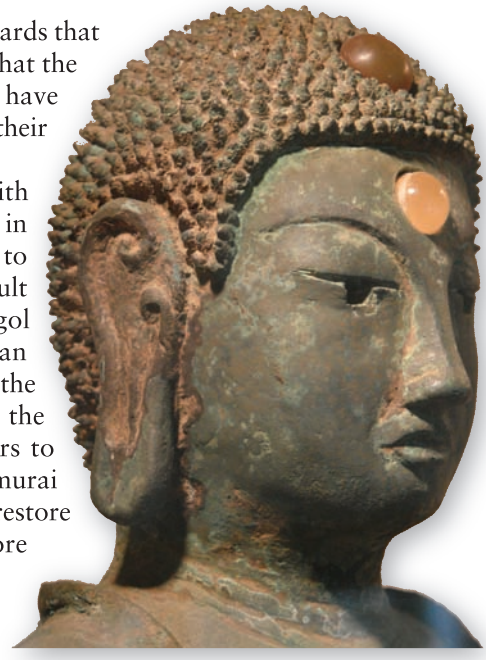
The threats were never carried out, and at no time throughout the long history of the Ming dynasty would there be any need for the *kamikaze* to blow again and destroy an invasion from China. Nevertheless, the Japanese perception of danger from overseas continued for many years, and in 1301 it was believed that an invasion fleet had been seen off the coast of Satsuma province. The samurai of the Hakata area providing coastal defences were taken off alert only in 1312. Almost seven centuries more had to pass before Japanese territory was to be violated once again, and then a very different form of *kamikaze* would blow.

THE FALL OF KAMAKURA

To the popular view the Mongol invasions represent a unique period in Japanese history when the people of Japan from the emperor downwards were united in a common purpose to defeat a foreign foe. This is a further expression of the myth of the Mongol invasions with the added coloration of divine help received in the form of the *kamikaze*. In fact the national crisis, which was both very serious and also unprecedented since the seventh century, completely failed to unite Japan in a common endeavour. Thirteenth-century Japan was a land divided between the authority of the imperial court on one hand and the Hojo usurpers of the shogunate on the other. The Mongol invasions found the imperial court engaged in a succession dispute that would continue throughout the time of national peril. Nor were the Hojo regents free from unseemly thoughts of power struggles while, as the existence of the Mongol Invasion Scrolls makes abundantly clear, the *gokenin* of

Kyushu fought against the invaders with one eye on the rewards that would be theirs. It was perhaps only on Tsushima and Iki that the samurai fought without thought of gain, and even that may have been prompted by the need to fight for sheer survival while their tiny islands were being overwhelmed.

The regent Hojo Tokimune nevertheless emerges with great credit from the time of crisis, and his premature death in 1284 was a great loss to Japan. His successors were forced to witness and suffer a steady decline of their powers as a result of the stress placed upon their institution by the Mongol invasions. The Mongols had attacked an area of Japan geographically remote from Kamakura where the rule of the Hojo was the weakest, and the fierce loyalty shown on the beaches of Hakata was to be sorely stretched in the years to come. The Hojo nemesis eventually came in 1333 when samurai acting in the name of Emperor Go-Daigo, who sought to restore the imperial power to the position it had enjoyed before the Gempei Wars, destroyed Kamakura. The last members of the Hojo *shikken* performed a mass act of *seppuku* (hara-kiri) in a cave behind a Buddhist institution that bore the ironic name of the 'temple of victory'.



The head of a statue of Buddha found in the sea off Takashima during the 18th century. It is believed to be associated with the Mongol invasion fleet of 1281, and is now on display on Takashima.

Long before the Hojo *shikken* went into its terminal decline the imperial power too had experienced a considerable loss of influence during the time of the Mongol crisis. The decision to ignore the first Mongol mission had been made at the imperial court, but all successive missions were rejected by the *bakufu*. The reply to Zhao Liangbi was drafted at the imperial court but intercepted by the *bakufu*. Most telling of all, it was the *bakufu* that condemned to death the Mongol envoys of 1275 and then sent their letter on to the imperial court a full month after their execution. In 1279 a further letter was received by the imperial court but the decision about what course of action to take was summarily delegated to Kamakura. The role of the imperial court throughout the time of the Mongol invasions therefore passed from being that of the decision-making body to being an institution that was merely consulted. The letters from Khubilai Khan may have been addressed to the 'king of Japan', but apart from simply registering shock at such a vulgarity, neither of the warring factions in Japan was under any illusion about who this 'king of Japan' really was.

THE MYTH OF THE MONGOL INVASIONS

The great extent of the Mongol Empire meant that the Teutonic Knights of Germany and the samurai of Japan, each of whom was ignorant of the other's existence, had now fought a common enemy. Europe would have to wait another four centuries before 'discovering' Japan, but it is remarkable to note that within a few years of the Mongol invasions of Japan, Marco Polo's account of their occurrence and the dramatic means by which the second invasion was curtailed could be read about in some detail by European citizens who knew nothing of the reality of the islands of 'Zipangu' against which the attack had been carried out. The Mongol invasions of Japan therefore entered European consciousness with a curious status somewhere between myth and travellers' tale.

The Zen temple of Engakuji at Kamakura was founded in 1282 by Hojo Tokimune to console the souls of the warriors slain during the Mongol invasions.

In Japan the mythological nature of the Mongol invasions grew in importance as the years went by. One noticeable development from the literature in the centuries that followed was the increased use of the expression for Japan as the *shinkoku*, the 'land of the gods', a land uniquely protected. Hand in hand with this development grew an increased polarization between the Japanese warrior and the demonized foreigner. Earlier legends of Japan's triumph over foreign enemies could now be re-examined through the lens of the Mongol experience. The legend of Empress Jingu's invasion of Korea during the 5th century, which may be based on an actual invasion of Japan by Korea, became very popular after the Mongol invasions because her victory was also attributed to divine intervention. The defeat of the foreign invader also produced a fear of the foreigner that reached its peak with Hideyoshi's invasion of Korea in 1592, an expedition that re-traced the course of the Mongol invasion in the opposite direction, and may even have been seen by some of its participants as revenge for the earlier incursion. As late as 1853, the year before Japan was to open its doors after three centuries of seclusion, prayers were offered for the subjugation of foreigners when their ships were seen in Japanese waters. These prayers were based on curses used against the Mongol invaders. Finally, in 1945, when Japan was again at imminent risk of foreign invasion, the last-ditch stand mounted by suicide pilots was carried out in both the spirit and in the name of the *kamikaze*. The defence of their homeland was this firmly associated with the repulse of the Mongol invasions, an experience that they believed to have been Japan's finest hour.

THE BATTLEFIELDS TODAY

Because the defeat of the Mongol invasions is such a proud episode in Japanese history it is not surprising to find numerous memorials and museums devoted to it. The city of Hakata (Fukuoka) is the main centre for its commemoration. The Hakozaki Shrine, burned during the first invasion is an interesting place to visit, although the only relic it possesses is the stone weight from an anchor said to have come from a Mongol ship. Not far away is a park where stand two statues. One is of Emperor Kameyama. The other is of the monk Nichiren, around the plinth of which are bronze bas-reliefs depicting the life of Nichiren and with two panels showing events of the Mongol invasions. The two scenes are the Mongol atrocities on Iki, including piercing the palms of women, and the archery of Shoni Kagesuke at the Mizuki. Beside the statue lies the Museum of the Mongol Invasions. Again there are no exhibits that can be directly linked to the invasions, but there is a famous collection of heroic paintings, a reproduction of the Mongol Invasion Scrolls and various examples of Mongol arms and armour. Excavated and restored sections of the Mongol wall may be found at four locations throughout the city, and at the Rokujo Shrine in Shingu near Fukuoka is an *ema* that shows the gods in heaven sending the *kamikaze* while brave samurai fight on the beach.

The Takashima Mongol Village is located at the northern tip of the island and provides a convenient base for sightseeing on the island where the Mongols were finally defeated in 1281. A village of *ger* has been recreated.

An anchor from a Mongol ship is used as a memorial to the fierce fighting that took place in the sea below this cliff at Setoura on the Island of Iki.

Not to be outdone, the island of Iki also contains a local history museum and several Mongol memorial sites around its attractive coastline. Inside the museum is a diorama depicting the suicide of Taira Kagetaka in 1274, done as a copy of the painting owned by the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo. Kagetaka is also remembered at the site of his death, which is the Shinjo Shrine, built where his headquarters of Hinotsume Castle once stood. Kagetaka's grave stands in the courtyard, while inside the shrine is an *ema* depicting his last moments. The door is kept locked but the interior may be viewed through the windows.

Shoni Suketoki, the youthful hero of the 1281 invasion, is depicted on a fine bronze statue next to Ashibe port. The modern Iki Shrine is also dedicated to Shoni Suketoki, and there are two *ema* inside of the young hero in action. Two or three burial mounds may also be located on a tour of the island. On the coast overlooking Setoura, the site of the final encounter with the Mongols on Iki in 1281, a park has been created and is called the Shoni Park in memory of the Shoni family. An anchor stone from a Mongol ship similar to the one kept at the Hakozaki Shrine in Hakata provides a monument.

Tsushima, which first felt the brunt of the Mongol invasions, has also preserved several sites of the initial encounters. In the Sasuura area the Komoda Shrine stands on the site of the Mongol landing at Komoda beach, where are enshrined the spirits of So Sukekuni and his men. The beach is still preserved as it was, but with the addition of a concrete sea wall in front of the deep gulf that leads inland through the rice fields. In the shrine is to be found an *ema* that depicts the Mongol attack and the resistance of brave So Sukekuni. It is a very straightforward matter to travel by ship from Korea to Japan via Tsushima and Iki, thus following the course of the Mongol invasions. Ferries leave from Busan harbour in South Korea, and call either at the north or south of Tsushima depending upon the day of the week.

The island of Takashima is difficult to get to at present, a situation that will be changed considerably by the completion of the bridge to the mainland that is currently under construction. Two ferries currently serve Takashima: a short one from the Genkai area to the east and a longer one down to Matsuura. The latter is the most interesting as it traverses the sea area where the *kamikaze* sank the Mongol fleet. A visit to Takashima is very rewarding. There are numerous statues, monuments, graves and memorials relating to Takashima's crucial role during the 1281 invasion; but the most fascinating place of all is the purpose-built museum that displays the artefacts collected from the underwater archaeological surveys. There is a statue of Shoni Kagesuke on a hill above Ao Port. To complete the experience one can also spend the night in Takashima's Mongol Village, where one sleeps in a *ger* and enjoys a Mongol barbecue.

FURTHER READING

The translations from *Hachiman Gudokun* are my own, and are based on the text in *Jisha Engi*, compiled by Sakurai Tokutaro et al. (Tokyo, 1975). The *Yuan Shi* account appears in *Japan in the Chinese Dynastic Histories* edited by Ryusaku Tsunoda (Pasadena, 1951). Two excellent accounts of the Mongol invasions by different authors appear in the third volume, entitled *Medieval Japan,* of *The Cambridge History of Japan*, edited by Kozo Yamamura (Cambridge, 1990). They are 'The Decline of the Kamakura Bakufu' by Ishii Susumu and 'Japan and East Asia' by Kawazoe Shoji. Thomas Conlan's *In Little Need of Divine Intervention* (New York, 2001) poses the question of whether the Mongols could have been defeated by Japanese bravery alone with no need for the *kamikaze*. His valuable book contains a translation of the Mongol Invasion Scrolls and many other valuable primary sources in translation. He also sets out both scrolls in outline form so that Suenaga's narrative may be traced. Nakaba Yamada's *Ghenko: The Mongol Invasions of Japan* (London, 1916) is now something of a museum piece as it is written in an exuberant 'ripping yarn' style. The article that first publicized the underwater archaeological finds is 'The Lost Fleet of Kublai Khan' by Torao Mozai in *National Geographic* (November 1982). Copies can often be picked up in second-hand bookshops. More recently, *Khubilai Khan's Lost Fleet: In Search of a Legendary Armada* by James P. Delgado (Vancouver, 2008) tells the full story of this fascinating exercise in underwater archaeology. *The Mongol Invasions and the Kamakura Bakufu* (Columbia University, New York, 1967) is the title of a PhD thesis by Kyotsu Hori that contains much good and reliable information.

GLOSSARY

Bakufu	the government by the shogun
Bodhisattva	a heavenly being who denies himself Buddhahood until all mankind is saved
Daimyo	feudal lord
Gokenin	houseman – a samurai retainer
Ishiyumi	siege crossbows firing stones
Jito	steward, military administrator
kabuto	helmet
Kami	the gods of Japan
Kamikaze	divine wind – the name given to the typhoon that destroyed the Mongol fleet in 1281
Kumade	a polearm with a rake-like head
Kyuba no michi	the way of horse and bow – the art of the samurai
Naginata	a polearm with a curved blade
Samurai	a Japanese knight
Shikken	the regency of the Hojo family
Shogun	the military dictator of Japan
Shugo	constable, a military governor
Wako	Japanese pirate
Yoroi	Japanese armour

INDEX

Figures in **bold** refer to illustrations