



## Fluctuations in Political Power in Japan in the 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> Centuries

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### ABSTRACT

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The political history of Japan in the XIV - XV centuries was a period of turbulence. It was the period of establishment of the Muromachi shogunate, associated with the fall of the Kamakura shogunate and the war between the North and the South. It was also the process of capturing power of the Ashikaga generals, defeated other local feudal forces, overwhelmed the power of the Emperor and proceeded to establish a military government right in the economic-political center of the country. In the article, the author focuses on clarifying the political situation of Japan in the XIV - XV centuries, with the reduction of the Emperor's government, towards being nullified, along with the formation of major feudal groups, most notably the Muromachi shogunate.

### KEYWORDS:

Japan in the 14th - 15th centuries, Muromachi shogunate.

### INTRODUCTION

Up to now, there are quite a few research works referring to Japanese history in the XIV - XV centuries, especially the establishment of the Muromachi shogunate. These include: Sansom (1990, 1994); Hall (1992); Grossberg (1981); Mason & Caiger (2008); Reischauer (1994). In addition to presenting the collapse of the manor regime and the emergence of the territorial economy, The authors also emphasize the weakening of central government power and the rise of local feudal forces.

Hall & Toyoda (1977) presented about the establishment of the Muromachi shogunate and how the government of the shogunate-Emperor was organized from the central to the local level. The authors also argue that: "Among the most neglected and misunderstood chapters in Japanese history has been the Muromachi era which encompassed the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries" (Hall, 1977, p.2). The Muromachi age, for all its cultural brilliance, has been regarded as a time of political weakness and institutional decay.

Suzanne Gay (1985) think that most characteristic feature of which, in the eyes of modern scholars, was its reliance on powerful warrior leaders called shu go for rule of the provinces. Alliances with the shugo in time proved unreliable, however, and the Bakufu was gradually forced to

retreat to its urban base, Kyoto, the economic, cultural, and ancient political capital of Japan. Thus the Muromachi Bakufu became intimately involved with a complex set of elements from which the Kamakura Bakufu had been shielded: the powerful central proprietors, including aristocratic families as well as large Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines that held rights to a vast amount of land; the imperial court, still the major political authority in the Kyoto area; and the city's commercial sector. By contrast, the Kamakura Bakufu, unrivaled militarily in eastern Japan and a safe distance from the traditional authorities in Kyoto, had been able to function independently, at least within its designated sphere.

Toru Yamada (2007) believe that until the third quarter of 14th century Muromachi-Shogunate managed Shomu-rata in organized institutions, such as Hyoujou, Hikitsuke, Gozen-sata, and Jinsei-sata, like Kamakura-Shogunate. But in the last quarter of 14th century these institutions was abolished, and Muromachi-dono(the head position of Muromachi-Shogunate inherited by Ashikaga family) came to deal with appeals about territorial troubles individually. Therefore, the author conclude that this era was turning point for Shomu-sata of Muromachi-Shogunate.

The above studies mainly present the establishment of the Muromachi shogunate and the socio-economic situation of Japan during this period. There has not been a research work that delves into the power of the Emperor in the context of being overwhelmed and neutralized by the power of the shogunate. The author hopes to fill the research gap on this period, as well as the political fluctuations of Japan in the XIV - XV centuries.

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## **METHODOLOGY**

The article uses quantitative and qualitative methods in the research process to analyze the main references, as well as previous studies on Japanese history in the XIV - XV centuries. While the quantitative method is used to compile the statistics of typical political events, the qualitative method is useful for assessing the weakening of the central government as local powers rise. The method of analysis and synthesis is also very effective in explaining the reasons why Japan experienced major political upheavals during this period.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

### ***1. The Emperor's government was weakened and neutralized***

After a long period of relatively stable development, at the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Kamakura government fell into crisis and weakened. Taking that opportunity, Emperor Godaigo (1318 - 1339) joined forces with the nobility, some religious forces and disgruntled martial arts forces in the localities to rebel against the shogunate.

In September 1331, King Godaigo secretly left the capital carrying the seal of the king and built a fortress on Mount Kasagi to lead the movement against the autocracy of the Kamakura shogunate. With the support of western martial artists and aristocratic families in Kyoto, the king came up with a plan to restore power to the court and restore the emperor's status. But the king's plan was soon revealed. The Bakufu government sent troops to suppress and sent Godaigo to hold out for only a few weeks. King Godaigo was captured and exiled to Oki Island in 1332. The Kamakura shogunate government chose a prince to make him king. This prince also belongs to the main family. This event opened a war for power in which both sides used military might.

In the work Masukagami, there is a description of King Godaigo's journey as follows: "There is nothing left of the remnants of the former exile, here, now only a few huts and far away, only a shelter where fishermen used to burn salt. When he looked at the desolation here, all thoughts of himself were gone in his mind, he remembered the events of the past. Filled with sorrow and humiliation, he tried to imagine what must have happened for the former Emperor to end his life in a place like this, and he understood that his present exile because he was willing to fulfill the aspirations of his ancestors" (Mason, 2008, p. 150).

In fact, King Godaigo returned and was crowned Emperor in 1333, however, unlike the previous King Gotoba, King Godaigo's power was restored not by strength but by the military might of the two lines. The major local feudal families are the Ashikaga and the Nitta families.

In 1333, local martial artists and some court nobles rebelled against the Kamakura government under the leadership of two major feudal families, Ashikaga Takauji (1305 - 1358) and Nitta Yoshisada (1301 - 1338). Under

pressure from the rebels, Regent Hojo Takatoki (1303 - 1333) and 200 high-ranking martial artists of Takatoki's clan had to commit suicide. This event marked the end of the 148-year rule of the Kamakura shogunate.

Returning to the throne, Godaigo hastened to establish a new central government apparatus to restore his economic - political power. The immediate measure is that the Emperor wants to abolish the system of marshals with full power as given to Yoritomo before and remove the Regent (KampaKu) next to the king. The political reforms he carried out between 1333 and 1336 are known as the Kemmu state restoration or "Kemmu revival".

In order to control the localities closely, at the end of 1333, King Godaigo also sent princes and capable officials to guard the remote provinces, as the representative of the king. Prince Norinaga - his 8th son was made governor of the whole North including Mutsu and Dewa. Another prince went to the East in Kamakura as governor of Kotsuke province.

In the government apparatus, King Godaigo established the Mushadokoro government, which had the function of keeping order among the military in Kyoto, protecting the king in the palace and controlling the warriors. At the same time, the king's son - Prince Morinaga (1308 - 1335) was appointed to the same position as the king's representative - the Shogun. Local officials were also held by members of the royal family and aristocrats.

The measures to restore power of the Kyoto court touched the interests of the martial class. Meanwhile, the reward for the martial artists who contributed in the war to overthrow the Kamakura government and bring King Godaigo back to the capital was carried out slowly and inadequately. Former court-supporting martial generals such as Ashikaga Takauji also did not want the power of the military faction to be denied, but still wanted to carry out the policies of consolidating the power of the previous Bakufu government. He brought his troops back to Kamakura, and established his headquarters at Nikaido Castle in the Eifukuji Temple. On the lands that were formerly the residences of the great marshals, Ashikaga built beautiful mansions and castles.

Along with the failure of the Kemmu Conversion was the strength of the Ashikaga army. Thanks to that, Ashikaga's army was able to repel the attack of the imperial army under the command of the Nitta generals in late December 1336. On the momentum of that victory, in early 1336, General Ashikaga pulled his army. From the East (Kamakura) to the capital Kyoto in three directions: the first army across the Seta Bridge, the second through the Uji Bridge and the third along the Yodo Road. On February 22, 1336, the armies gathered to attack the imperial army at Yamazaki. From early in the morning, with a burning pillar of fire as a signal, all the armies united to launch a general counterattack, storming into the city gate. By noon, Ashikaga's army had taken control of Yamazaki Castle. The other armies advanced against Kuga and Toba, herding the

imperial army into the streets. In just one day, they took control of the capital Kyoto. That very night, King Godaigo had to leave the capital and take refuge in Enryakuji Temple in western Sakamoto. It was not until half a month later, when the armies of princes Takanaga and Norinaga pulled back from the provinces to repel Ashikaga's armies, did the Emperor return from Hiyeizan (Sansom, 1994, p. 78).

Although he had to temporarily retreat to the western provinces and the Kyushu region, Ashikaga quickly won the support of the Kyushu nobility. Not long after that, he pulled his army back to Kyoto and won the Battle of Minatogawa (battle on the Minato River) in July 1336. At the end of 1336, Ashikaga forced King Godaigo to abdicate and established the former emperor Komyo (1321 - 1380). But Emperor Godaigo secretly left Kyoto for the Yoshino region with his loyal nobles. Yoshino is a large, sparsely populated mountainous region in southern Yamato Prefecture. This place is quite remote, far from the capital Kyoto, far from major roads, and has a dangerous location, convenient for hiding. To the east of Yoshino is a very high position, from which you can see Ise Bay. Therefore, the king established a new court here, called the Engen era, that is, the Southern Dynasty. Also from here, the Southern government continued to organize forces against the Ashikaga government in the North.

The existence of two governments, two courts: one in the south and the other in the north brought Japan into what is historically known as the Nambokucho (Southern and Northern Dynasties Period). The Northern Dynasty belonged to the imperial branch in Kyoto headed by King Komyo, while the Southern dynasty belonged to the sub-tribe based in Yoshino led by King Godaigo. The South - North dynasties lasted for 56 years (from 1336 to 1392) not only divided the country but also weakened the power of the Emperor's government. Internally, the court had to be divided into two factions: those who supported Emperor Komyo and those who supported Emperor Godaigo. The fragmented power along with the costly and costly wars for more than half a century made the Emperor's system of government, which had been dominated by the Kamakura shogunate before, even more weakened and revealed. ineffective in solving the affairs of the country.

In December 1392, the governments of the Southern and Northern dynasties reached an agreement on the unification of the two branches of the royal family. Accordingly, the king of the Southern Dynasty will transfer the royal seal to the Northern Dynasty king and the throne will be rotated between the chief and the second branch of the royal family. The properties of the Royal family in the provinces belonged to the minor branch, and the assets in the capital belonged to the chief. But in reality, those agreements were just the Ashikaga government's ploy to eliminate the opposition of the Southern Dynasty and unify the country under the leadership of the Northern Dynasty. Immediately after the king of the Southern Dynasty left Yoshino and

returned to the Northern Dynasty, he was forced to give the seal to the Northern Dynasty king unconditionally and later, only those of the Northern lineage to inherit the throne.

The end of the North and South dynasties meant that more than half a century of war was over. But that period of time has changed the political and economic life of the country. Because it was not only a war within the Imperial family but also a war between two major military factions (Ashikaga Takauji and Nitta Yoshisada factions). Although in the end, the Southern Dynasty returned to the Northern Dynasty to form a unified government, but the consequences of the years of fraternal war made the military strength and power of the Emperor as well as the nobles of the dynasty. The Kyoto family was greatly weakened. On the contrary, the power of martial arts general Ashikaga became stronger and that made them build a new social order - in which, the relationship of local submission to the central government changed completely from the hands of the people. The Emperor passed to the General.

### ***2. The founding of the Muromachi Shogunate***

The person who laid the foundation for the establishment of the Muroma shogunate was the general Ashikaga Takauji (1305 - 1358). He came from a large feudal family, of Seiwa Minamoto lineage. This is a family of martial artists with meritorious services to the Kamakura shogunate and trusted by Shogun Yoritomo. In the 30s of the 14th century, the Ashikaka family was the most powerful and respected martial artist family in Eastern Japan. With his military might, shogun Takauji overthrew the Kamakura Shogunate, bringing Emperor Godaigo back to the throne in 1333.

Because of his great role in the restoration of the throne of Emperor Godaigo, General Ashikaga Takauji was appointed Governor of Musashi cum commander-in-chief of several eastern provinces. In addition, he was also granted special privileges and privileges by King Godaigo. Takauji, for example, was allowed to put the word "Taka" at the beginning of his name, a privilege that only the king and crown princes were entitled to.

In 1336, seeing himself as the man who could hold the highest military power in Japan, Ashikaga Takauji pulled his army from the East towards Kyoto, defeating the Nittas, forcing King Godaigo to leave the capital. After that, Takauji brought the former emperor Komyo-In (1321 - 1380) to the throne. He also took advantage of this opportunity, generously rewarding the boxers to win the support of this class. At the same time, he also affirmed the right to land ownership for the clergy in the temples, ordered the return of land confiscated from the end of 1333 to the former owner, curtailing the rights of the nobility.

After creating a king for the government in the Northern Dynasty, Ashikaga Takauji tended to build his own government similar to the previous Kamakura shogunate. The idea of establishing a new military government had been brewing since 1333, after Takauji overthrew the Kamakura

shogunate, but it was not until he was promoted to Shogun (in 1338) that he really started to build a military government right in Kyoto - the capital of the country.

In 1338, Ashikaga Takauji established his headquarters at the Nijo Takakuta palace in Kyoto. He chose the person to be his deputy, Konomorona. In 1378, his grandson, the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358-1408) had left the military residence to Muromachi Street. And the Ashikaga family's Bafuku residence was also located here until the family's fall. Therefore, the period when the Ashikaga generals held the position of Grand Marshal is also known as the Muromachi period (1338 - 1573).

During its more than two centuries of existence, the Muromachi shogunate had its ups and downs along with the succession of 15 Ashikaga generals as shogun. If early shoguns such as Takauji, Yoshiakira, and Yoshimitsu tried to take power into their own hands and build a strong central government, their successors shoguns failed to do so. The trend of decentralization became more and more evident at the end of the Muromachi period and led to wars between feudal corporations.

Thus, the fall of the Kamakura shogunate and the establishment of the Muromachi shogunate was a major turning point in Japanese political life in the early fourteenth century. This event marked a new turning point of the shogunate regime, the period when the shogunate government completely neutralized the emperor's government and rose to hold the position of the center of economic and political power of the country.

### ***3. The Emperor's government is increasingly being completely neutralized by the government of the Shogunate***

If in the 13th and early 14th centuries, the emperor's government still played a certain role, then at this stage, the civil function of the imperial government gradually disappeared and was replaced by the military government. gradually assume this function. After being appointed shogun by the Emperor, Ashikaga Takauji set up his headquarters in Kyoto - the power center of the civil government. In 1368, the Bafuku government ruled the country in the name of the king. And in 1378, shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu moved the military palace to Muromachi Street, in the capital Kyoto.

If the Kamakura shogunate wanted to establish an independent government, away from the capital Kyoto, the Muromachi shogunate wanted to establish its government in the capital. Not because the Kamakura government was not strong enough to build its capital in the capital, but because the Emperor's government was still very effective in the hearts of the people and in dealing with the affairs of the country. Therefore, the military government of the shogunate, although overwhelming the power of the emperor's government, was still unable to control this government. But from the 30s of the XIV century to the end of the XIV century, the war between the two feudal forces in the name of a fraternal war within the Emperor's family made the Emperor's government increasingly weak. weak and position in the

hearts of the people is no longer the same as before. Even under Emperor Godaigo, "it was frankly said that under the Bafuku government the situation was much better" (Sansom, 1994, p. 74). As a result, the military junta went straight to the imperial capital Kyoto to assume civil functions on behalf of the Imperial government, while strictly controlling all activities of the Imperial family and the nobility.

In the 14th - 16th centuries, although they still received many economic incentives and still maintained high status but the Emperor's government and the nobility were completely neutralized in the lands they ruled, as well as lost all political power when dealing with the affairs of the country. In the imperial capital of Kyoto, after King Godaigo left, all property, land, mansion... belonged to the shogun Ashikaga. As a result, the nobility as well as the Royal Family no longer had economic or political rights over their lands. Even locally, the court lost complete control as the provinces also fell to the shogunate government. It can be said that the civil apparatus of the Emperor was neutralized from top to bottom, from the king at the head of the court to the states at the head of each province.

Since the end of the North-South war, the Emperor's power has almost disappeared. The Emperor's throne only has a name but is not real, even that position is despised and insulted. An influential general of the shogunate, Konomorona, once said: "What is the use of a king? Why do we keep bowing to a king? If for some reason a king is needed, make a king of wood or metal to worship, but the present flesh and blood king is only worthy of exile" (Sansom, 1994, p. 232). Due to the lack of political power, the Emperor was also insulted by the martial artists. Under the Muromachi shogunate, the warriors were so bold that they dared to burn down the Emperor's palace.

On the side of the Muromachi shogunate, by the end of the fourteenth century, after holding the political power at the central level, all policies or decisions related to the country's socio-economic affairs were made by the Dai Dai government. General proposed and implemented without the approval of the Court. Unlike the previous period (13th century - early 14th century), all decisions of the General must have the consent of the Emperor or in the name of the Emperor to take effect, now, the General does not need to approve it. The Emperor who gave an edict on behalf of the Emperor. Shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu - the grandson of Shogun Ashikaga Takauji, ruled the country like a true king. "He did everything to discredit the great nobles in his court, including insulting them. He treated them like servants in his home, often forcing his ministers to attend ceremonies and walk like his entourage. Both threatening and bribing, he controlled the officials" (Sansom, 1994, p. 234).

When the Emperor - the head of the civil government was disabled, even the apparatus under him could not function effectively. And so, the government of the Muromachi shogunate built a new government apparatus on the basis of that of the Kamakura shogunate to be able to fully

assume the civilian functions, gradually replacing the government apparatus of the Kamakura shogunate. Emperor.

The head of the military apparatus is still the shogun (the Ashikaga family), but to strengthen the management of the country, the Muromachi shogunate has placed an administrator (Kanrei) next to the shogunate, consisting of 3 people representing the country. The 3 most trusted and powerful martial arts corporations are: Hosokawa, Shiba and Hatakeyama. Kanrei's mission is to help the shogun solve common problems, and is responsible for managing other martial arts families.

Basically, the Muromachi shogunate kept the bodies and councils of the Kamakura government such as Samurai dokoro, Monchuijo, Man dokoro. But the power of these agencies was not as strong as in the Kamakura period, because even the Grand Marshals and high-ranking officials tended to simplify the apparatus. If in the past the Monchuijo agency was the supreme judicial body, in charge of adjudicating martial arts disputes, in this period, it had to divide power among the Samurai dokoro. Therefore, Samurai dokoro not only has an executive function, but also performs a judicial function. This agency had to protect the shogunate government, maintain order in the capital, and manage the entire Yamashiro province. The head of Samurai dokoro is Shoshi (private department). This position is usually chosen from four families: Yamana; Isshiki, Akamatsu and Kyogoku. These four martial families were trusted by the shogunate and were the place to choose the most loyal shugos as well as the guard squad for the shogun.

In addition to maintaining important offices dating from the Kamakura period, in the administrative system, the shogunate also added new officials in charge of different tasks such as: Hikitsuke - shu, Bugyo to help the shogunate deal with many things. work and local supervision.

Not only in the central government, but also in the localities and the lands under the control of the Court and the nobility, the imperial government could not perform its functions as before. If in the previous period (the 13th century - the beginning of the 14th century), the emperor's government managed the provinces by sending Kuni no mikotomochi (state companies) to govern. Below the province are the districts and are in charge of the Koori no miyatsuko (county companies). But after the Muromachi shogunate sent officials to govern the provinces, the local administrative system of the emperor's government was completely neutralized.

In the 13th century, when the new Kamakura military government was established, the shogunate could only send shugo to 9 provinces, while the other 37 provinces were still under the control of the royal family, aristocracy, and martial arts corporations that could force (Nguyen, 2007, p. 133). By the mid-14th century, the Muromachi shogunate had complete control over Kyoto, the lands surrounding the capital, and western Japan. The Muromachi government sent its trusted martial artists to govern those lands. For example:

in the Kanto plain, the shogunate set up the governorship of the Kanto region (Kanto Kanrei) to govern the 10 provinces of the Kanto plain. And in the West, the governor of Kyushu tandai was also entrusted with the management of 11 provinces in the western region. In each region, the shogunate government also allowed the Governor to build a government apparatus with the same powers as the central government. This apparatus also has important organs such as: Hikitsukeshi (for legislative affairs) and Samurai dokoro (for executive affairs). And it was this apparatus that completely neutralized the state apparatus that the Emperor had established centuries earlier.

Thus, from the middle of the fourteenth century onwards, the civil government of the Emperor was gradually neutralized by the military government of the shogunate and existed only in name. The Emperor himself was also a puppet king because all decisions of the central government related to the country's socio-economic issues were made by the shogunate government. Because of his lack of power, the Emperor's orders were sometimes invalidated and he could be deposed at any time if he intended to oppose the shogunate.

The nullification of power by the Emperor's government led to major changes in Japanese politics during this period. This process represents the rise to embrace the dominant position of the military government, from the starting point as a government that coexists with the civilian government, then gradually disables the functions of the government. this right and gain decision-making power in all matters of the country.

#### ***4. Formation of large feudal corporations and the weakening of centralized politics***

In the middle of the fourteenth century, the Muromachi shogunate was established and built a strong centralized apparatus. Under Shogun Yoshimitsu (1358-1408), the political situation was quite stable and the relationship between the Emperor and Shogun was also good. Therefore, the local feudal forces were always suppressed, and the shugos under Yoshimitsu all submitted to him and became his effective hand. As a result, the power of the central government is always consolidated and maintained.

In the early 15th century, the central government in Japan, typically the shogunate government, became increasingly ineffective in managing the administrative and economic apparatus. Especially after Yoshimitsu's death, the Shoguns who succeeded him did not have the same outstanding talent as him. Moreover, most of them are too young and lack leadership experience, so they are very confused in running the state apparatus. Therefore, the power of the Shogun also changed, following the trend of decentralization and simplification. Besides the position of shogun, there are also the positions of deputy shogun, concurrently consulting and operating a number of government agencies such as deputy shogun in Kyoto, deputy shogun in Kamakura. However, this role is also not the same between the positions of Deputy Generals due to the influence of circumstances. If the deputy shogun in Kyoto had the

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function of administering a number of agencies within the Central government and carrying out the shogun's orders, the vice shogun stationed in Kamakura had an absolute role in governing the Kanto plains. like a governor. This was because the vice shogun in the Kanto region often had to deal with local military forces, always ready to rebel. Under the Vice Shogun are representative agencies with very broad powers, which function as an administrative unit, called a "government", such as: Kamakura government (Kamakura - fu), Kanto government (Kanto - fu). The shugo officers were also appointed with several deputy positions, known as shugodai, to reduce the power of the military commander at the top of a province.

If viewed from an objective point of view, the weakening of the military junta is not entirely the fault of the young Shoguns later on, but rather the result of a long, troubled country, the leader No matter how talented the leader is, he can't stop the situation. After the war between the North and the South (1336 - 1392), the rising status of localities became more and more popular. Local officials have established their own system of government, becoming feudal corporations that are both rich and have a strong military power.

In the localities, it was almost impossible for the shogunate government to intervene in economic and political affairs, because the shugo class had too much manipulation. At first, the shugo was just someone who was sent by the Kamakura government to the provinces to maintain security and order and manage the martial arts team, ie the shugo had only military power. But by the end of the 13th century, when Japan had to face two resistance wars against the Yuan - Mongols, the shogunate government ordered to place an entire province under the command of shugo. When becoming the military leader of a province, the shugo began to interfere in the economic and political affairs of the province such as: litigation over land or asserting themselves civil authority such as adjudicating and measuring fields. soil. Especially during the Southern - Northern dynasties war, the shugo became the most important person in maintaining and protecting the manor. Therefore, they took advantage of their power to appropriate land for their own use and gave land to martial artists under their close authority. In addition, the Muromachi shogunate implemented the Hanzai (selling tax) policy, which further facilitated the shugos to appropriate land and turn it into their possession. From the late 15th century to the early 16th century, the shugo became shugo daimyo (guardian of the great name) - child kings in their respective lands with their own system of government, their own finances, their own army... increasingly contrasted with the central government.

That contrast is reflected in the fact that shugo daimyo have full ownership of their land and do not have to pay any taxes to the central government as well as do labor obligations to the state. All orders of the Shogun in Kyoto ceased to apply to localities because the shugo daimyo had become an

independent political force, empowered to issue orders to the people living in their domain. The serfs in the domain were subject to the lord, not the Emperor.

It was because of the rise of the shugo class and the growth of localities that later when the Tokugawa shogunate was established, Shogun Ieyasu forced the lords to sign a pledge of absolute allegiance to the shogunate and issued The martial law (Buke shohatto), forced lords to follow strict regulations on status and duties to the central government, including the prohibition of lords from building castles. In 1635, the shogunate government legalized the sankin kotai regime, considering it the duty of all daimyo. Under this system, the lords had to have a residence in Edo, and had to live for a time in the capital. After that, they were allowed to return to their territories but had to leave their wives and children hostage. Thus, the policies of the Tokugawa shogunate proved that in the previous period (XIV - XVI centuries), the power of the lords was very strong, possibly even against the shogunate government, so it was imperative to have laws to bind and control lords.

### COMMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS

One of the reasons why the shugo became feudal forces opposed to the central government was the erosion of their loyalty. If the Kamakura government's strength was built on the loyalty of the martial arts class and the local officials were all "gokenin" (family members) of the shogunate, then under Muromachi the top officials were Localities - shugos do not have to be servants of the Shogun's family line. Not bound by blood ties, the loyalty of shugos was easily shaken by the social upheavals of this period.

Establishing a separate government and increasingly contrasting with the central government, the shugo daimyo became powerful local feudal forces. The Onin War (1467 - 1477) can be considered the most obvious manifestation of that growth. With their economic and military strength, the shugo daimyo gathered forces and pulled back to the capital to win the position of Shogun - the highest position of the Muromachi Government.

Among the influential feudal groups of this period, emerged two samurai families that had a great influence on the shogunate, Hosokawa and Yamana. Hosokawa held power in 24 provinces with 160,000 troops, while Yamana held power in 20 provinces with 110,000 troops (Nguyen, 2007, p. 160). Both plotted to gain the position of Shogun and they became two opposing feudal corporations. In May 1467, troops of the Hosokawa clan attacked Isshiki castle - the residence of the generals of the Yamana faction. Immediately afterwards, the General called for a ceasefire between the two sides, but to no avail. From there, the war spread to the point where nothing could stop it. Only 5 months later, the magnificent capital Kyoto was reduced to ruins. Also from here, the Onin war was no longer just a conflict between two feudal factions but became a fierce conflict in the General's family. The military leaders in the localities were also drawn

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to these two factions and then dragged each other to the capital to fight for 10 years in a row. The central government headed by the Emperor and the General was no longer strong enough to quell the rebellion and was no longer powerful over those feudal forces. Not only that, this government is also directly threatened in the capital. The Onin riots ended only when the two leading military chiefs of the two factions Yamana and Hosokawa were killed in battle and the uprising of new local military factions affected the power of the local military leaders. In December 1477, the military leaders withdrew from Kyoto to their territories to protect their interests.

After the Onin Rebellion, centralized politics was in danger of disintegrating and was replaced by a decentralized political system, headed by shugo daimyo. The court collected almost no taxes from the major provinces under the central government. In other provinces, the court was completely powerless before local officials. Taking advantage of that turmoil, many powerful families, possessing vast territories, rose to dominate an entire region, built armies, set their own laws, and waged war with each other. Other domains to expand their lands, placing the inhabitants of that land under their control. In the northern provinces, there are military leaders who are heads of clans such as: Yuki, Manbu, Date. In the Eastern provinces, there are clans such as: Hojo, Satomi sand. In the Northwest provinces, the Imagawa family is the most powerful feudal force. Besides causing war to expand their territory, they also built strong castles, turned themselves into a son king, and challenged the central government. That is why when Portuguese Jesuits arrived in Japan, they described local lords as kings.

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