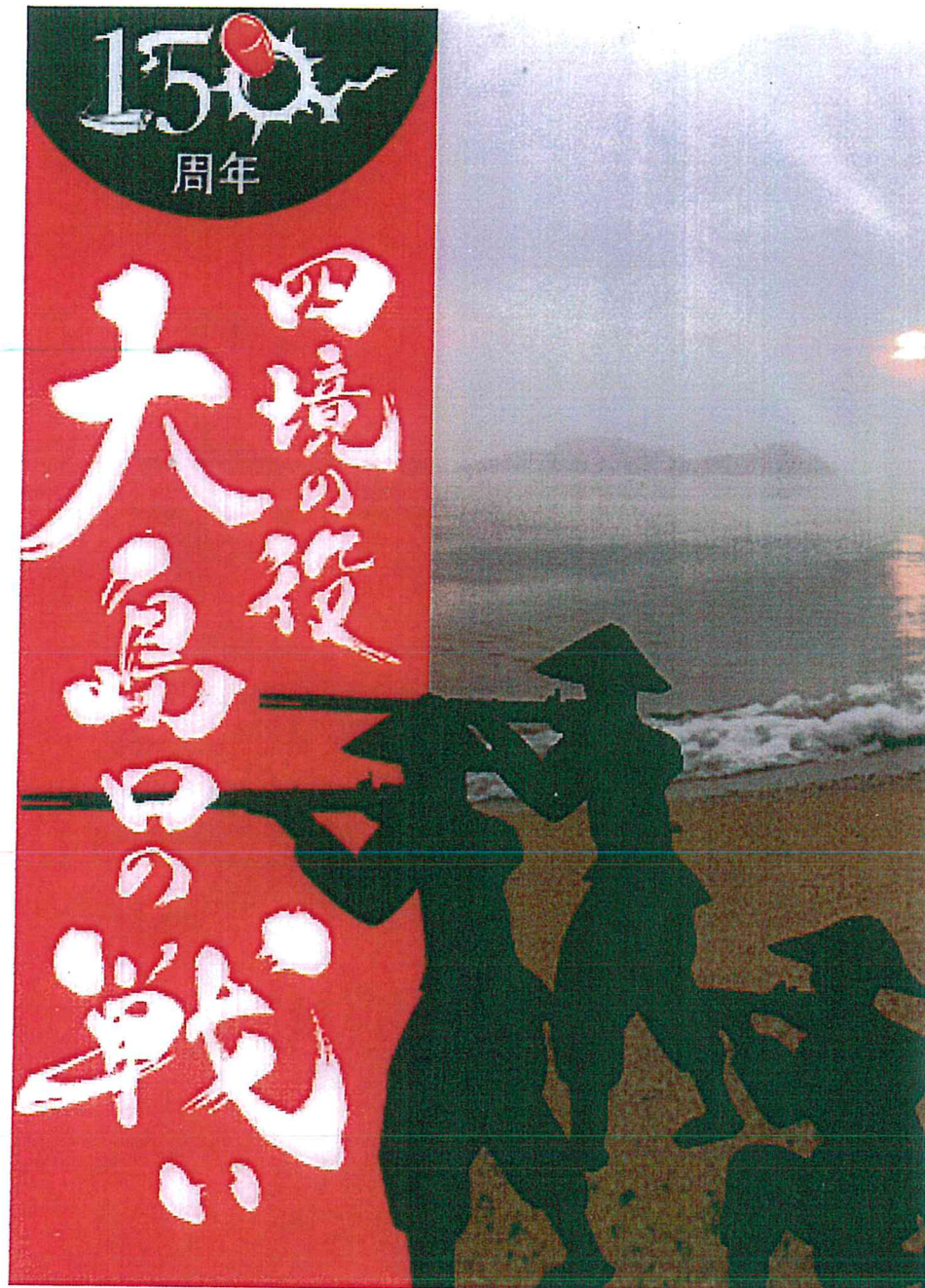
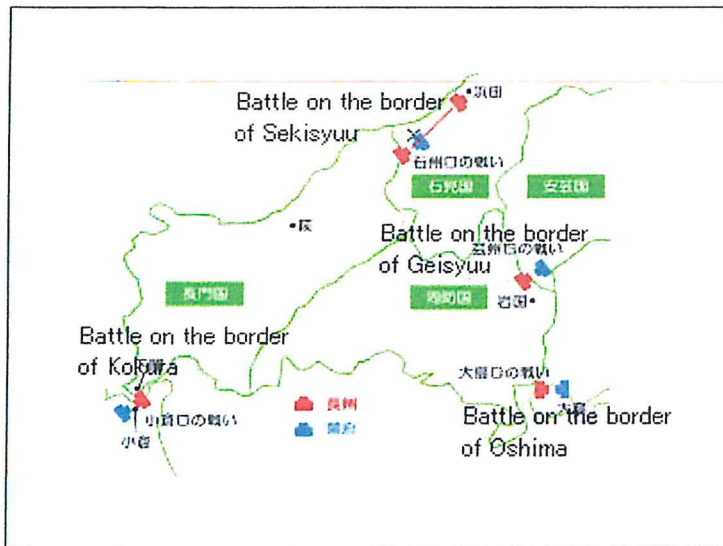


# The Shogunate-Chosyu Warfare at Oshima-guchi in 1866





**The Second Bakufu-Choshu warfare (also called the Shikyo War) — a civil war between the Shogunate and the Choshu at Oshima-guchi and at another three borders**



The battle between the Shogunate military and the Choshu troops broke out on July 18, 1866. In the early stages of the war, Shogunate forces, having the allied help of Matsuyama domain outnumbered and overwhelmed the Chosyu forces. But the military situation shifted in favor of the Chosyu forces before daybreak on July 24<sup>th</sup>, when a covering fire of Takasugi Shinsaku and his men on

battleship Hei'in-maru suddenly attacked and subdued the Shogunate military ships. Gaining momentum from that victory, the Chosyu forces reinforced their strength and numbers. More than 1,000 soldiers from the domain gathered and landed on Oshima to confront the Shogunate forces. Then, a second sudden attack led by Sera-Shuzou and his men, mostly natives of Oshima, was launched with great success. Thus, they regained the whole of Oshima Island.

Legend has it that the Choshu forces were inferior to the Shogunate forces in terms of the number of soldiers and the quality of military preparations, but that the soldiers in the Choshu forces were far better organized in action than those of the Shogunate side. Some members of the Shogunate forces were said to have committed violent acts upon local civilian people and farmers. Feeling provoked by those brutalities, the local people joined and supported the Choshu forces by supplying provisions and other kinds of aid.

The whole Choshu domain, as well as its local supporters in Oshima, clearly gained confidence and courage from the victory at the battle of Oshima-guchi, because they went on to fight and win other battles after it, including at Geishu-guchi, Sekishu-guchi, and Kokura-guchi. The Choshu domain's decisive victory over the Shogunate military was finalized by a peace treaty between the two armies that was signed at Miyajima on October 10<sup>th</sup>. Thus, the Shogunate Age which ruled over Japan for 265 years (1603-1867) came to an end, giving way to the restoration of Imperial Rule. The Choshu victory at the Shikyo Battle turned out to be the beginning of the end of the Shogunate government. It opened a new era in Japanese history.

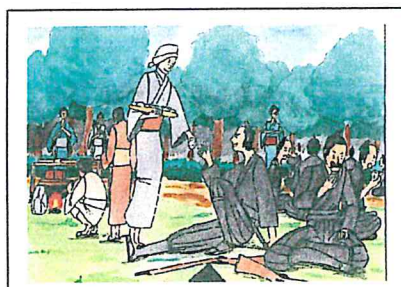
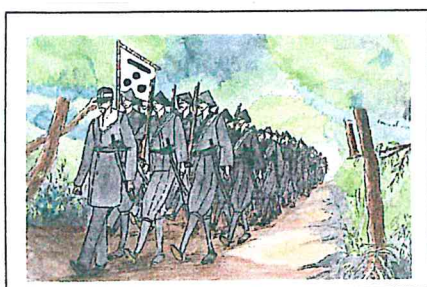
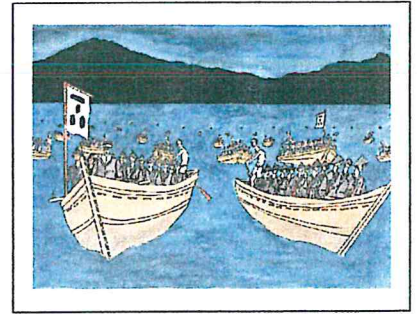
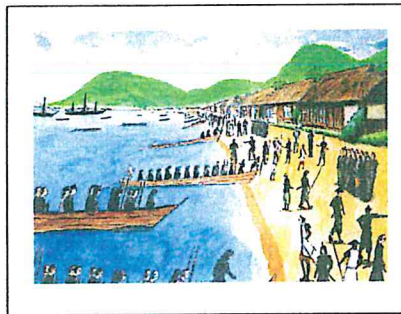
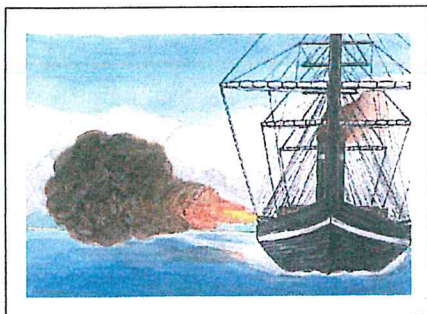
## **Chronology of the last days of the Tokugawa Shogunate**

- 1853 Commodore Perry arrived at Uraga on Jul 8<sup>th</sup>.
- 1854 Peace treaty between Japan and the U.S. was signed on Mar. 31<sup>st</sup>.
- 1857 Shokason-juku (private school) was established by Yoshida Shoin on Dec.20<sup>th</sup>.
- 1858 A treaty of amity and commerce signed by Japan and the U.S. on Jul 29<sup>th</sup>.
- 1858 Mass execution of Ansei no Taigoku (suppression of extremists by the Shogunate in the Ansei era) began.
- 1859 Yoshida Shoin dies in prison on Nov.21<sup>st</sup>.
- 1860 Katsu Kaishu and staff set sail across the Pacific on board Kanrin-maru on Feb.4<sup>th</sup>.
- 1860 Ii Naosuke was assassinated in the Sakuradamongai Incident on Mar.24<sup>th</sup>.
- 1862 Englishmen killed at Namamugi, near Yokohama on Sep. 14<sup>th</sup>.
- 1863 Chosyu's five highly able students stowed away into Europe on Jun 27<sup>th</sup>
- 1863 Takasugi Shinsaku organized Kiheitai (Irregular Militia) on Jul 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- 1863 The Coup of Sep 30<sup>th</sup> succeeded in ousting Choshu Domain from Kyoto. Seven court nobles who opposed the Shogunate fled to Chosyu.
- 1864 Ikedaya incident occurred on Jul.8<sup>th</sup>
- 1864 Kinmon Incident occurred on Aug. 20<sup>th</sup>.
- 1864 The first punishment of Chosyu started on Aug.25<sup>th</sup> .
- 1864 The Shimonoseki War broke out on Sep.5<sup>th</sup> between the Choshu Domain and allied forces of the British Empire, France, Holland, and the USA.
- 1864 Takasugi Shinsaku raised an army at Kozan-ji Temple in Chofu on Jan.13<sup>th</sup> .
- 1865 The battle at Ota, Edou in which reformist faction won over the conservatives on Feb.1<sup>st</sup>
- 1865 Shogunate ordered the second Chosyu punishment on Nov.9<sup>th</sup>
- 1866 Satsuma-Chosyu Alliance came into being on Mar.7<sup>th</sup> through the intermediation of Sakamoto Ryoma.
- 1866 The Shogunate-Chosyu Warfare at Oshima-guchi began on Jul. 18<sup>th</sup>.
- 1866 The battle ship, Hei'in-maru, commanded by Takasugi Shinsaku made a surprise attack off Maejima successfully on the Shogunate army on Jul.24<sup>th</sup>.
- 1866 Matsuyama army began to retreat to Tsuwachi-shima island on June 16<sup>th</sup>.
- 1866 Shogunate army began to retreat towards Hiroshima area on Jul.31<sup>st</sup>.
- 1867 Takasugi Shinsaku died of illness at age 29.
- 1867 Sakamoto Ryoma drew up Senchu hassaku plan (the basic idea on the new regime made up of eight articles) on Jul.13<sup>th</sup>
- 1867 Tokugawa Yoshinobu suggested to the Imperial Court that he would return his political power to the Emperor on Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> and his offer was accepted by the Emperor on the 10<sup>th</sup>.
- 1867 Sakamoto Ryoma was assassinated on November 15<sup>th</sup>. in Kyoto.

- 1868 The Imperial Court proclaimed the Restoration of Imperial Rule and the establishment of a new government on Jan. 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- 1868 The Boshin War (1868 – 1869) began on Jan.27<sup>th</sup>.
- 1868 The basic policies of the new government were stipulated on Apr.6<sup>th</sup> in "The Five-Articles of the Imperial Covenant" (Gokajo no Goseimon).
- 1868 The era name was changed to Meiji on Oct.23<sup>rd</sup>.

### Highlights of the battle of Oshima-guchi in 1866

- Jul 18<sup>th</sup> Shogunate battle ships bombarded Kaminoseki, Agenosho and Yuu
- Jul 19<sup>th</sup> Shogunate forces bombarded and landed on Yuu. Matsuyama forces shelled Agenosho.
- Jul 22<sup>nd</sup> Shogunate forces landed on Kuka. Matsuyama forces landed on Agenosho.
- Jul 23<sup>rd</sup> Chosyu forces rallied to Toozaki.
- Jul 24<sup>th</sup> Hei'in-maru made a night attack on Shogunate fleet standing off Maejima.
- Jul 25<sup>th</sup> Chosyu forces sailed from Toozaki to Kasasajima.
- Jul 26<sup>th</sup> Chosyu forces landed on Oshima splitting up into four squads and advanced against Shogunate forces stationing on the island.
- Jul 27<sup>th</sup> Chosyu forces fought decisive battles against Matsuyama warriors and ousted them out of the island.
- Jul 28<sup>th</sup> Chosyu forces made an all-out attack on Shogunate forces stationed in Kuka with great success, driving them out of the island.
- Jul 30<sup>th</sup> Shogunate forces made another attack in Kuka, looting private houses and setting fire to them. They withdrew on 31<sup>st</sup>, leaving much damage to the community.



## Comparison of military capability

Chosyu forces: Hei'in-maru (battleship)//1,400 warriors

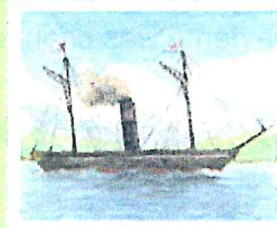
Shogunate forces: Fujiyama-maru & other 7 battleships //2,800 warriors

Hei'in-maru: Made of iron

About 40 meters long

About 94 ton

Steamship with paddle wheels

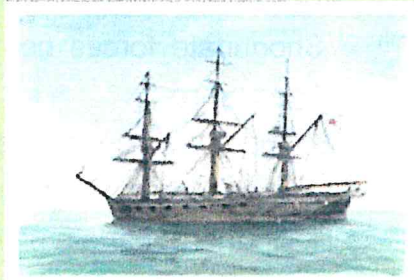


Fujiyama-maru: Made of wood

About 68 meters long

About 1000 ton

Steamship with paddle wheels



### Firearms they used in the battle:

**Minié rifle**



**matchlock**



**Gewehr**



Minié rifles having a range of about 300 meters were mostly used by the Chosyu troops.

Matchlocks having 100-meter-maximum-shooting-distance were mainly used by the Shogunate troops. Gewehr guns having a range of 100 meters were used by both forces.

Having learned that pikes and swords were no longer effective against troops armed with guns and cannons, the Japanese armies started smuggling those weapons from Europeans.

Traditional swords and spears were instantly replaced with those modern firearms towards the end of the Shogunate era.

### Comparison of damage & casualties

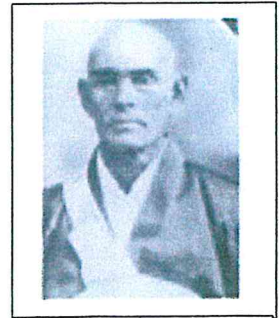
Chosyu: 38 wounded & 12 fatalities + 1,629 houses lost by fire

Shogunate: 38 wounded & 20 fatalities

## Prominent Figures of the Sikyo Warfare

### Ozu Tetsunen: (1834—1902)

A Buddhist monk who took command of his followers and fought bravely at the front of the battle. He later held an important post in Hongan-ji Temple and devoted himself for the reformation of the sect.



### Sera Shuzo: (1835—1868)

An army superintendent of the second Kiheitai (Irregular Militia) who commanded his men ably, contributing significantly to the successful retaking of Oshima. He developed close relationship with Takasugi Shinsaku and other able persons.



### Narasaki Goojuro: (1838—1866)

A samurai who worked as a staff officer of the Choshu Kiheitai . He was killed in action at age 29, before he saw the dawn of the new era to come. He was well versed in literary as well as military art.



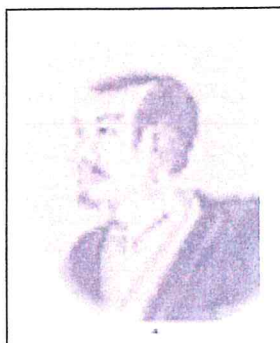
### Takasugi Shinsaku: (1839—1867)

A samurai who organized the Choshu Kiheitai at Shimonoseki. He made a great contribution to the victory over the Shogunate army.



### Gessho: (1817—1858)

A Buddhist monk who believed in and advocated the doctrine of restoring the emperor to power. He educated many of his followers at his private school. He was an outstanding educator and a great poet.







## Historical sites:

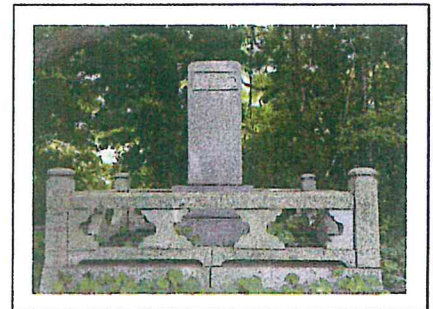
### 1. Tokushoji-Temple (located in Higashi Migama):



The head priest of the temple, Tamura Tando, always enhanced the morale of the Irregular Militia, keeping its members in good spirits. The temple houses his letters and documents on the war.

### 2. Sera Shuzo Shoukon monument (located in Mukuno):

The stone monument honors Sera's outstanding feat in the war. He was well versed in both literature and military arts.



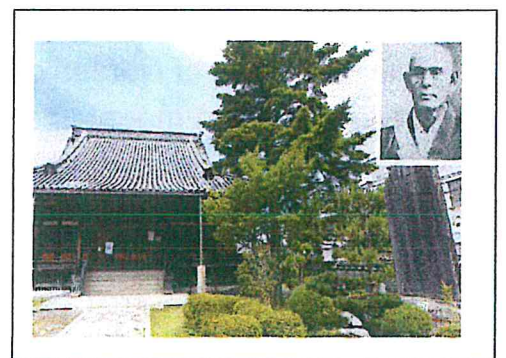
### 3. Meijiishin Hyakunen Kinen park (located in Kuka):



This small park was constructed to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the Meiji-restoration. The park holds four monuments to the memory of persons who rendered great services to the war and to the community.

### 4. Kakuhoji Temple (located in Kuka):

The birth place of Ozu Tetsunen, who kept the company of amazing persons like Katsura Kogorou and Katsu Kaisyu, both of whom were key figures in introducing Japan to the modern age. The temple houses lots of documents recording Ozu's friendship with historic figures in the closing days of the Tokugawa government.



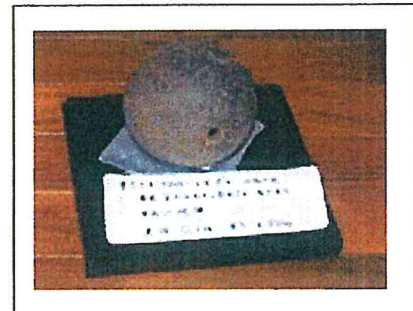
**5. The residence of Ito Soubei (located in Kuka):**



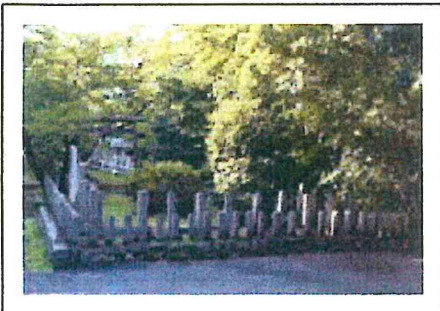
Ito was a squire of the village and his home was frequented by illustrious leaders like Gessho and Ozu Tetsunen.

**6. A cannonball that went through the wall of Murata's residence (located in Kuka):**

The cannonball was fired from a Shogunate battleship and went through a big beam of the house and landed on the backyard, unexploded.



**7. Hattayama Ishin Graveyard (located in Kuka):**



Eighteen tombstones stand in memory of those who died in action, and another five tombstones of those who devoted themselves to the betterment of the society.

**8. Birthplace of Narasaki Goojuro (located in Kuka):**

The birthplace of Narasaki Goojuro is located in a valley between mountains. His great contribution to the Chosyu military and the community is engraved on the monument that stands in downtown Kuka.



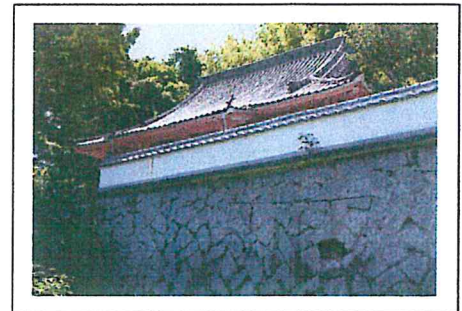
### 9. Obiishi Kan'on in Fumon-ji temple (located in Hikuma):



The headquarters of the defensive unit was stationed at the temple, but the building was lost to fire when both forces fought each other in the vicinity. In the precincts are two markers: a statue of Kan'on, the goddess of safe and easy delivery, and a gravestone to remember the descendants of Murakami Navy.

### 10. Jousai-ji Temple (located in Yuu):

There remain traces of cannonballs that hit the stone walls of the temple.



### 11. Kainen-ji Temple (located in Agenosho):



Matsuyama clan's troops defeated the defensive unit led by Murakami Kamenosuke and camped themselves in and around the temple. The battle caused to burn down 628 out of 1,410 private houses in Agenosho.

### 12. Mitsuishi Kosenjou (located in the vicinity of the summit of Mt. Dake):

The battlefield where both troops engaged in a fierce battle. It is said that the conflict went on favorably on the side of Chosyu forces, because they skillfully fought their opponents by positioning themselves on a higher ground.



### 13. Gokokudan-jin monument (located in Nishi-Agenosho):



The Gokoku group, made up of Buddhist priests, fought successfully to repel the Matsuyama forces. They camped themselves in the house of Oueya. The stone monument was erected to remember the site where Oueya once stood.

### 14. The monument of Shikyo Warfare at Oshima-guchi (located in Genmei-Zan):

One of the fiercest battles was fought in and around the summit of Mt. Genmei.



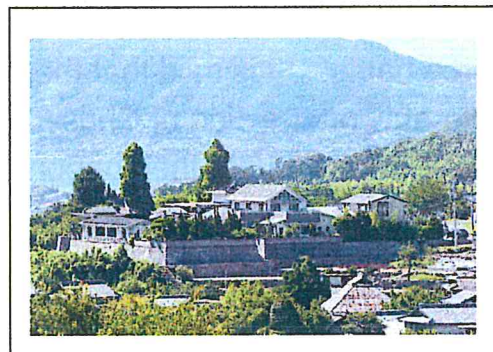
### 15. The tombstone of Ohtani Shoujo at Shorin-ji temple (located in Heta):



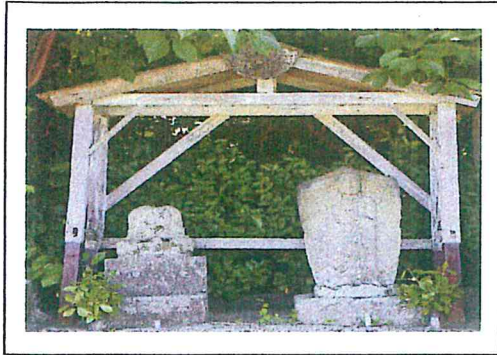
The tombstone was built to commemorate Ohtani Shoujo's remarkable action when confronted by Shogunate forces in Kuka. He was killed in action at the age of 25.

### 16. Sairen-ji Temple (located in Higashi-Yashiro):

The headquarters of the second Kiheitai (irregular militia) was placed in the temple. In the precincts, there stands a stone monument to mark their come-from-behind victory over the Shogunate forces.



### 17. Kubikiri Jizou (located in Komatsu-Kaisaku):



The stone statue of Jizou sits on the river-beach along the Yashiro River. It was the site where some Shogunate captives were beheaded.

### 18. Myozenji Temple (located in Komatsu):

Mikuni Kanrei, the head priest of the temple, worked hard in supplying food and equipment for the second Kiheitai forces.



## Questions & Answers about Shikyo Warfare, the battle between the Shogunate & Chosyu domain.

**Q: What was the original scheme for the Shogunate to attack the Chosyu domain?**

**Ans:** It was the Chosyu domain that led the anti-Shogunate movement in order to restore the Emperor to power. The domain spearheaded the fight to overthrow the Shogunate.

**Q: Why did the Shogunate forces engineer an initial attack on Oshima?**

**Ans:** The Shogunate strategy was to gain military advantage by taking the battle into the interior and central region of Chosyu, and the best way to achieve that goal was to attack and capture Oshima first.

**Q: What made the Jyodo-sinsyu take part in the warfare, despite their religious belief that they were to build a pure and peaceful land?**

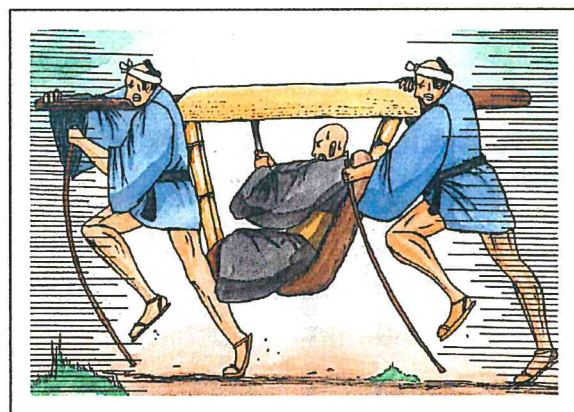
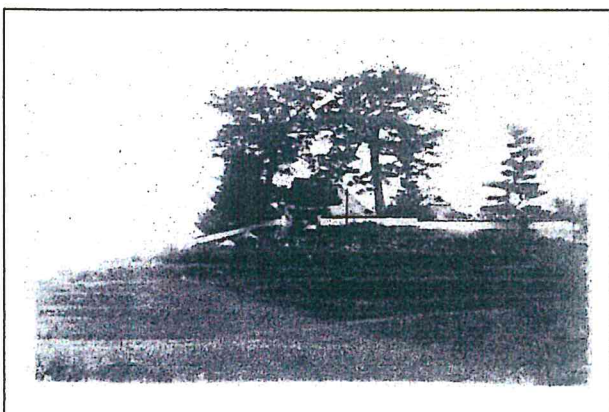
**Ans:** Most Buddhist sects, including Jyodo-sinsyu, followed the thought of Gessho who advocated that Buddhism would perish if their mother country gave in to foreign powers. In fact, they were against opening the country to foreign influence. But the newly established government was forced to open the country to the outside world which fortuitously led the country on the road to modernization.

**Q: How did the Chosyu domain raise the fund and resources to pay for the war?**

**Ans:** The Chosyu domain had been suffering from serious financial trouble especially after their failure at the battle of Sekigahara in 1600. To deal with the crisis, the Chosyu domain launched an economic reform by promoting industrial activities like producing salt, paper, cotton, and wax. In Oshima they produced mainly salt and cotton: salt in areas close to the sea and cotton in the arable fields.

**Q: What were the decisive factors that brought about the Chosyu's come-from-behind victory over the Shogunate forces which enjoyed apparent superiority in the numbers of warriors and battleships?**

**Ans:** The Chosyu forces were able to get the cooperation of the ingenious townsfolk and farmers to their side. They were well versed in the local terrain, using guerrilla-like tactics in the fields and mountains. Another important, possibly decisive, factor of the victory was that the Chosyu forces were equipped with more powerful rifles, which they bought secretly from Europeans. Takasugi Shinsaku effectively used the rifles in his sudden attack on the Hei'in-maru to turn the tide in favor of Chosyu forces.



**Editor's Note:** Taking the opportunity of the 150 anniversary of the Meiji Restoration, we planned and decided to bring out a brochure to tell the story of why the civil war between the Shogunate and the Chosyu domain broke out, and how the domain, including civilians and farmers in Oshima, successfully fought against the Shogunate troops, thereby, unwittingly, introducing a new era in Japanese history. We thank all the people who volunteered and made sincere and generous efforts in collecting documents, photos and letters, and other related things that helped us produce this brochure. We appreciate those who willingly shared their precious heirlooms and historical objects. We would be very pleased if this brochure adds in some way to your knowledge and understanding of local history, and leads to a greater appreciation of how an event that occurred here 150 years ago inaugurated the road to modern Japan. Lastly, we'd like to especially thank Masamura Hidemi (Kuka High School graduate), who gladly helped us render the Japanese edition of the brochure into an English version.

Edited by: Kuka branch of Suo-Oshima Culture Promotion Society

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