

The Playing Pieces

The playing pieces represent men, horses and equipment. Most characters are represented by two counters. One counter shows the man at full strength with the reverse side showing him stunned. The second counter shows the character wounded with him dead on the reverse. Mounted men have four counters, the usual two and two counters showing him mounted. On the reverse of the mounted counters we see the horse without a rider or dead. On each face of the counter there are three numbers. The first in black shows the attack strength of the character. This factor is determined by the length and weight of the weapon and the skill of the man using it. For example a naginata has more weight and is more easily able to inflict wounds than a spear. The second number in red is the character's defence strength. This is determined by his weight of armour and also his ability to parry and avoid blows. A fully armoured and mounted samurai has a higher defence strength than an unarmoured and unskilled peasant.

The third number in blue shows the character's movement rate. This is largely determined by weight of armour.

When breaking out the counters note that they are in ten different blocks indicated by colour. Carefully break out the counters and place each one in a separate bag (provided with the game) and label each one. In the scenarios the sides are organised by packs to help you set them out quickly. Once you have labelled each pack try to ensure that it is returned to the same bag.

The counters should be arranged in packs as follows:

Pack 1 (White) Jichu, Kumpei, Ojikuni, Hoshii, Kenzan, Kobi, Korekado, Tadamoto and the wagon and draft horse.

Pack 2 (Brown) Fuhito, Ikina, Takuan, Ansei, Shisei, Aritomo, Hidemasa.

Pack 3 (Brown) Tomomori, Shigehira, Tadanori, Tadatsuna, Kunika, Arimari, Rokudai.

Pack 4 (White) Mochihito, Tajima, Jomyo, Hochi, Kanetsuna, Nakatsuna.

Pack 5 (Blue) Benkei, Sukenaga, Tadazumi, Banzan, Harufusa, Harunaga, Hideaki, Kagesue.

Pack 6 (Yellow) Atsue, Hidehira, Kiyosi, Michikiko, Motofusa, Ryuichi, Saburo, Hiro, Yabu, Zataki, Amakun, Nakamura, Omi.

Pack 7 (White) Fudo, Weicho, Yasatsuna, Goroda, Kasuyori, Mura, Sanjo, Yukio, Domei, Ishido, Jikkyu, Kiyama, Taitaro, Tamazaki, Todo, Asagi, Obata, Onoshi, Makoto.

Pack 8 (Yellow) Masanaga, Munehisa, Igurasi, Kiyomasa, Moronao, Nagamasa, Chikao, Eitken, Saotome, Asai, Nobuzane, Saikaku, Yoshikume, Yoshiwara.

Pack 9 (Blue) Masakado, Kiyomori, Yoshimitsu, Ueno, Yukichi, Masatsura, Shinkuro, Yoshitaka.

Pack 10 (White) Matsuo, Masazumi, Tokimasa, Toshinaga, Yorikasa.

Nippon

The islands of Japan were never wealthy in natural resources. Each parcel of land would be defended to the last. The wealth of the nation was measured in KOKU, the area of land which would provide enough food for one man for a year. Japan consists of the four main islands of Honshu, Kyushu, Shikoku and Hokkaido and many smaller ones. Situated to the East (the direction of the dawn) of China and Korea it was known as the Land of the Rising Sun.

Because of its isolated island nature, Japanese culture is unique, but like all East Asian societies has been influenced by China. Having fought against the original inhabitants, the Ainu for hundreds of years, and constantly split by internal warfare, the Japanese samurai inherited a legacy of warfare and bloodshed.

The Emperor

By our period the Emperor held no real power in the realm. The Imperial Guard which had once provided picked fighting samurai for campaigns, was now used more for ceremony than force. The Emperor was thought to be a god and was secluded from the populace in his palace at Kyoto. Rarely seen, the Emperors retired to a life of poetry, art and court ritual.

At one time clans had attempted to influence the Emperor by marrying into the Royal Family, in particular this had been the strategy of the Fujiwara. Now the spiritual figurehead without any force of his own, the Emperor was used in the power struggles of his subjects.

The Shogun

In the twelfth century Minamoto Yoritomo assumed the new title of SHOGUN or military dictator. The rule of Japan passed into the hands of the powerful clan Shogunates of the Minamoto, Taira, and Hojo. The Emperor would be kept under the controlling eye of the Shogun where he would give his seal of approval to the Shogun's decisions.

In our period the major wars were fought to decide who would be Shogun. The only external threat to the Shogunate came from Genghis Khan's mongols. In 1274 the Japanese fought off the first mongol invasion. In 1281 the mongols tried again with a much larger force. To the despairing Japanese it seemed that they would be overwhelmed. Fortunately for them, stormy weather, as if sent by the gods, The KAMIKAZE or Divine Wind, destroyed the invasion fleet.



The Daimyos

Like the barons of Europe in the middle ages, the Daimyos of Japan would hold positions of great power. If the Shogun was weak they would do what they wanted, raising taxes and fighting wars as the fancy took them. Samurai fought for their Daimyo either for or against the Shogun or even other Daimyos.

Daimyos that were the heads of clans would direct battles from behind a MAKU or screen erected on or overlooking the battlefield. They would give instructions by signalling with a war fan or baton. Decorating the maku would be the Daimyo's family MON or badge. This mon could also be worn by the Daimyo's retainers on their armour.

The Samurai

Dedicated to BUSHI-DO (The Way of the Warrior) the samurai were the principal fighting force of Japan. Originally servants of the Emperor (samurai means servant) they were eventually used by all of Japan's warlords. Trained from boyhood, samurai were expected to know more than KENDO the way of the sword. However the sword was said to be the soul of the samurai. The swords themselves were masterpieces combining a weapon's two most desired properties, a hard cutting edge and a flexible back so it would not shatter. They were made by selective tempering, with the metal being folded on itself many times over and beaten into shape. The sharpness was occasionally tested on criminals with a graduated series of cuts from a simple stroke across one wrist, to a slash through the hips. Unlike lower classes who were allowed a shortsword WAKIZASHI, samurai also carried a longsword KATANA.

The body armour was a heavy boxlike YOROI ideal for mounted warfare but less comfortable on foot than the simple DO-MARU. Both were made of metal plates, KAZANE, laced together and lacquered against rust. The samurai did not use shields but relied on



shoulder guards, **SODE**, leaving both hands for wielding the sword or swords. The helmet, **KABUTO**, was a bowl of iron with a neckguard attached and often decorated with horns or ornaments of paper or leather. On his feet he would wear **TABI** and straw sandals but his shins would be protected by **SUNEATE** or metal greaves. The **HAI DATE** would protect the thighs, but these would often be left off when fighting on foot. Gloves, **YUGAKE**, were made of leather and the defence for the arms were **KOTE**, made of cloth with chainmail or metal plates for flexibility. Unlike European horses those of the samurai were not armoured, but would be decorated with tassels. As well as using melee weapons the samurai would carry a longbow. The handgrip for this was a third of the way up the stave so that it could be used on horseback.



The Ashigaru

The Ashigaru were a much lower grade of **BUSHI** (warrior) than the samurai. Their name meant "light feet", illustrating their light armour and that they were more likely to run away. Instead of the elaborate armour of the samurai they wore a simple **DO-MARU** of breast and backplate with hip-guards. The helmet was called a **JINGASA** and was cone shaped. It was made of metal and could be used as a cooking pot. Some ashigaru used bows but the majority used pole-arms. These were the **YARI** a spear with a long blade and the **NAGINATA** which was like a halberd, or more accurately, a sword on a stick.



The Ronin

These were masterless samurai who took what employment they could, often resorting to banditry. Their name means "wave men", because like driftwood they were not bound in their allegiance. Their equipment would be similar to that of a true samurai but if times were hard they would sell their equipment, this would result in them being more lightly armoured.



The Monks

Shinto had been the religion of Japan. When the power of Shinto threatened the Emperor, the Royal Family fought to avoid the domination of the abbots by adopting Buddhism. As Imperial influence declined with the importance of Shintoism as the sole religion, Zen Buddhism grew from strength to strength. Zen monks acquired skill in the martial arts and this combined with fanatical zeal made them a force to be reckoned with. The fighting monks were seldom as well armoured and horsed as the Shogunatē's regular samurai but they had popular support.

As well as using the great two-handed temple swords **NO-DACHI**, the monks and their followers often resorted to non standard weapons, iron bars and agricultural implements.

The Ninja

Ninja were not a regular part of a Daimyo's retinue but would be engaged for specific tasks, either as **METSUHE**, (spies) or assassins. Like many covert forces they resorted to disguise, poisons and silent methods of killing. They were of the samurai class and had their weapons skills, and would often commit seppuku rather than be captured. The very nature of their work meant that they rarely wore armour except when disguised as simple bushi. They used daggers and knives for throwing as well as the shuriken throwing star.

They wore black hoods with a slit for the eyes, a black jacket and tight black trousers tucked into gaiters. On their feet they wore black divided socks, **TABI**, and padded sandals so that they could move silently.

The Peasants

As in Europe the Japanese peasant was of very little military value. Untrained, poorly armed and unreliable, they were no match for samurai. Equipped with a variety of impromptu weaponry they would be used as labourers and bearers only being used in combat as a makeweight.