

Visiting Spots

Ruins of Nagashino Castle

Today, at the castle ruins, one can see the plaza (Honmaru) that served as the center of the castle, large, curved earthen mounds (earthen ramparts), and part of a deep moat. The castle has been designated as a "National Historic Site" and as one of the "100 Great Castles of Japan," and efforts are being made to carefully preserve its historical value.

Shinshiro City Nagashino Castle Ruins Preservation Center

Visitors can learn in detail about the "blood-dyed camp drum" that is said to have been used in the battle and the activities of "Torii Suneemon" a low-ranking samurai who escaped from the castle as a messenger requesting reinforcements in this battle and was finally crucified him and executed him.

Shinshiro City Shitaragahara Historical Museum

The attraction of the Shinshiro City Shitaragahara Historical Museum is not only the exhibits such as firearms and armor, but also the experience of "actually wearing armor," which allows visitors to more concretely imagine what it was like in those days.



Stone Steps of Horaji Temple



Nagashino Castle Ruins Preservation Center



Exhibits at the Nagashino Castle Ruins Preservation Center



Shitaragahara Historical Museum



Exhibits at the Shitaragahara Historical Museum

Shinshiro City Introduction

Shinshiro City in Aichi Prefecture is a town with rich nature and a history of over 1,300 years, located halfway between Tokyo and Osaka Prefectures. Horaji Temple, located on Horaji Mountain, has a legend about the birth of Tokugawa Ieyasu, and its approach of more than 1,400 stone steps surrounded by cedar groves preserves the original landscape of old Japan.



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Battle of Nagashino

English guide

Outline of the battle

The Battle of Nagashino took place in Nagashino, present-day Shinshiro City, Aichi Prefecture, and is known as the first time in Japanese history that a mass battle was fought with matchlock guns. The name of the battle derives from the name of Nagashino Castle or the place where the battle took place.

This battle took place on the border of a territorial dispute between Takeda Katsuyori (a feudal lord of Kai Province) and Tokugawa Ieyasu (a feudal lord of Mikawa Province). Ieyasu opposed it with his ally Oda Nobunaga (a feudal lord of Owari Province). The combined forces of Tokugawa and Oda prepared as many as 1,000 guns (matchlock) against the attack of Takeda's army, famous for its cavalry, and kept firing on the front line for about eight hours.

This was about 30 years after guns were introduced to Japan, and was an epoch-making battle that tactically used firearms at a time when it was still difficult to secure gunpowder and lead (bullets) in large quantities in Japan. Conventional tactics were mainly close combat by infantrymen using swords and spears.

The battle began when the Takeda's army launched a general attack against the allied forces of Tokugawa and Oda. However, the Takeda forces were thrown into chaos before the installation of fences that blocked the mobility of horses and the shooting that took place from in front of and behind those fences.

As a result, Takeda Katsuyori was severely defeated, and this defeat had a decisive influence on the decline of Kai Province.



Map of Dominions in Central Japan around 1575

Tokugawa Ieyasu

Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542 - 1616) was born the son of a small feudal lord in Mikawa Province (present-day Okazaki City, Aichi Prefecture).

Ieyasu's life was checkered: he was separated from his mother alive at the age of 2 and his father passed away at the age of 7. As a result, he was raised as a hostage under Imagawa Yoshimoto, who was a great feudal lord in a neighboring country. However, when Yoshimoto was killed by Oda Nobunaga in the "Battle of Okehazama" in 1560, Ieyasu began his journey to become independent and on the way to becoming a feudal lord in his hometown of Okazaki at the age of 18.

Later, in collaboration with Oda Nobunaga, he won many battles, including the "Battle of Nagashino," and in 1590 he was entrusted with ruling the Kanto region (around present-day Tokyo), growing into a firmly powerful samurai.

In 1600, Ieyasu won the Battle of Sekigahara as general of the Eastern Army over the Western Army, and the following year he became the Sei Taishogun (barbarian general) and established the shogunate in Edo (present-day Tokyo), becoming the effective ruler of the whole country.



Torii Suneemon

Torii Suneemon (1540-1575) was a low-ranking samurai who escaped Nagashino Castle, which was in danger of falling due to an attack by the Takeda army, and served as a messenger to request reinforcements. He met Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu at Okazaki Castle, and succeeded in conveying the plight of the castle. When he immediately returned to the castle to try to inform his comrades the good news that "reinforcements were coming," he was discovered and captured by the Takeda soldiers surrounding the castle.

Takeda Katsuyori, the general of Takeda's army, promised to spare his life if he lied and reported that reinforcements would not come, and Suneemon was taken to the front of Nagashino Castle. However, Suneemon shouted to his comrades, "Reinforcements will come in a few days." The angry Takeda soldiers now crucified him and executed him.

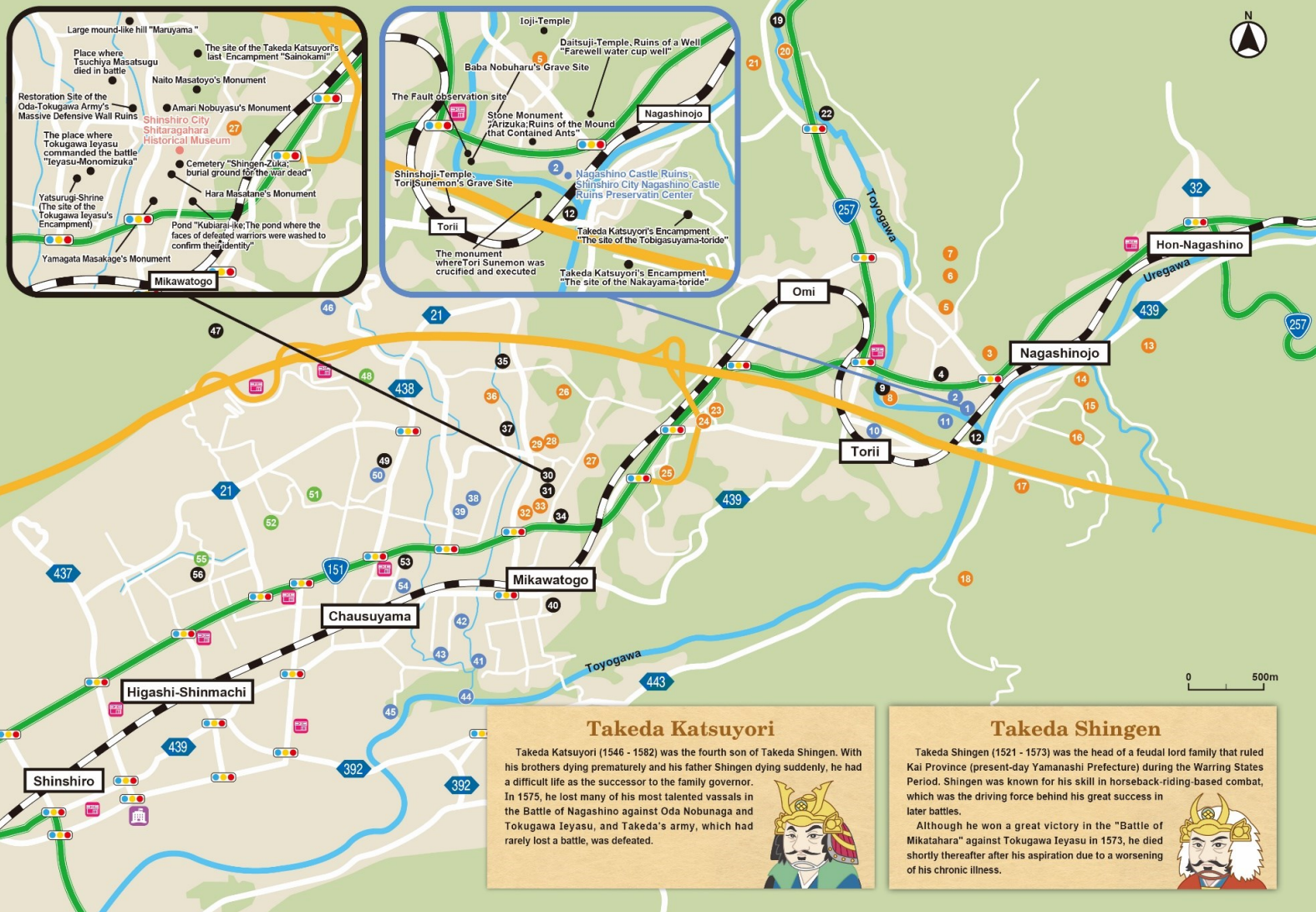
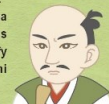
The activities of Suneemon, who sacrificed his own life for the sake of his comrades, were praised as an example of bravery that all warriors should emulate.



Oda Nobunaga

Oda Nobunaga (1534 - 1582) was from a small fiefdom in Owari Province (present-day western Aichi Prefecture) and was one of the Three Great Masters, along with Tokugawa Ieyasu and warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who unified Japan during the warring states of the Warring States Period.

The area he controlled ranged from present-day Shiga Prefecture to Osaka and Nara Prefectures, and he used his influence over the Emperor's court (Imperial Court) to unify the country. However, he was killed by his vassal Akechi Mitsuhide in the "Honnoji Incident" of 1582, ending his life.



Takeda Katsuyori

Takeda Katsuyori (1546 - 1582) was the fourth son of Takeda Shingen. With his brothers dying prematurely and his father Shingen dying suddenly, he had a difficult life as the successor to the family governor. In 1575, he lost many of his most talented vassals in the Battle of Nagashino against Oda Nobunaga and Tokugawa Ieyasu, and Takeda's army, which had rarely lost a battle, was defeated.



Takeda Shingen

Takeda Shingen (1521 - 1573) was the head of a feudal lord family that ruled Kai Province (present-day Yamanashi Prefecture) during the Warring States Period. Shingen was known for his skill in horseback-riding-based combat, which was the driving force behind his great success in later battles.

Although he won a great victory in the "Battle of Mikatohara" against Tokugawa Ieyasu in 1573, he died shortly thereafter from his aspiration due to a worsening of his chronic illness.



- 1 Nagashino Castle Ruins, Shinshiro City Nagashino Castle Ruins Preservation Center
- 2 The place where Torii Suneemon conveyed the success of the request for reinforcements
- 3 Daitsuji-Temple, Ruins of a Well "Farewell water cup well"
- 4 Stone Monument "Arizuka; Ruins of the Mound that Contained Ants"
- 5 Egara Tenjin-Shrine, Takeda Katsuyori's Encampment "The site of the Tenjinyama Military Position"
- 6 Ioji-Temple
- 7 The site of the Takeda Katsuyori's first Encampment "Ioji-yama Castle Ruins"
- 8 Baba Nobuharu's Grave Site
- 9 The Fault observation site
- 10 Shinshoji-Temple, Torii Suneemon's Grave Site
- 11 The monument where Torii Suneemon was crucified and executed
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- 14 Saigusa brother's Grave Site

- 15 Takeda Katsuyori's Encampment "The site of the Ubagahutokoro-toride"
- 16 Takeda Katsuyori's Encampment "The site of the Tobigasuyama-toride"
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- 18 Takeda Katsuyori's Encampment "The site of the Hisamayama-toride"
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- 25 Ruins of a Well "Farewell water cup well in Shimizugairi"
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- 28 Naoto Masatoyo's Monument

- 29 Amari Nobuyasu's Monument
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- 32 Yamagata Masakage's Monument
- 33 Hara Masatane's Monument
- 34 Pond "Kubirai-ike; The pond where the faces of defeated warriors were washed to confirm their identity"
- 35 Large mound-like hill "Maruyama"
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- 38 The place where Tokugawa Ieyasu commanded the battle "Ieyasu-Monomizuka"
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- 47 The site of the smoke signal station "Notaba"
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- 51 Nobe-Shrine (The site of the Oda Nobutada's Encampment)
- 52 The site of the Kitabatake Nobukatsu's Encampment

- 53 Zozuji-Temple
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