The Muromachi Period (1333–1568) (Part 2)

_Haku temmoku_ – Mino – Muromachi
The sixth Ashikaga shōgun, Yoshinori, was succeeded by his sickly ten year old son, Yoshikatsu, who died a few months later.
Ashikaga Shōguns

1. Ashikaga Takauji (1305–1358) (r. 1338–1358)
2. Ashikaga Yoshiakira (1330–1368) (r. 1359–1368)
3. Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358–1408) (r. 1368–1394)
4. Ashikaga Yoshimochi (1386–1428) (r. 1395–1423)
5. Ashikaga Yoshikazu (1407–1425) (r. 1423–1425)
6. Ashikaga Yoshinori (1394–1441) (r. 1429–1441)
7. Ashikaga Yoshikatsu (1434–1443) (r. 1442–1443)
8. Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1436–1490) (r. 1449–1473)
9. Ashikaga Yoshihisa (1465–1489) (r. 1474–1489)
10. Ashikaga Yoshitane (1466–1523) (r. 1490–1493, 1508–1521)
11. Ashikaga Yoshizumi (1480–1511) (r. 1495–1508)
12. Ashikaga Yoshiharu (1510–1550) (r. 1522–1547)
13. Ashikaga Yoshiteru (1536–1565) (r. 1547–1565)
14. Ashikaga Yoshihide (1540–1568) (r. 1568)
15. Ashikaga Yoshiaki (1537–1597) (r. 1568–1573)
Yoshimasa had little interest in civil affairs.

Ginkakuji—The Silver Pavilion
Kōgetsu-dai – Moon-Viewing Platform
**Mu – Nothingness, Nil, Negation**

The Buddhist concept of *mu* is very important to Japanese art and philosophy. *Mu* is nothing—but it is also everything. That is, the absence of some things emphasizes the presence of others. Like the Taoist concept of *in* and *yo* (positive and negative, dark and light, passive and active), nothingness (*mu*) is the inseparable, flip side of reality. What we don’t see is as important as what we do.
For the elite, life in the capital could be beautiful.
Unfortunately, between 1457 and 1467, devastating typhoons ruined the rice crops repeatedly. Eighty thousand people died from sickness and starvation.
Key Cultural Concept #14

_Gaman_ – Patience, endurance

_Gaman_ literally means “to neglect the self.” Life was not easy in Japan. Rich and poor both had to endures extremes of temperature, plagues, high infant mortality, and constant warfare. Socialization in Japan stresses putting the group’s interests ahead of the individual. Buddhist philosophy also emphasized annihilating personal desires.
By 1464, Yoshimasa was ready to resign. He was thirty years old.
Yamana was Hosokawa’s father-in-law. He had a volatile personality and was prone to jealousy.
By 1466, both men had enlisted forces of approximately eighty thousand men.
Kyōto During the Onin War
The conflict was called the Ōnin War for the era in which it began.
Shōkokuji from Momoyama period screen

Muromachi Cypress Fan
15th Century Lampoon of Warriors
In 1473, Yoshimasa retired to study Zen and pursue his artistic interests. Yoshihisa succeeded him.
One of Yoshimasa’s contemporaries, Ikkyū Sōjun, is remembered as one of the most remarkable characters in Japanese history.

Ikkyū Sōjun (1394–1481)
After his father’s death, Ikkyū took to marching around Sakai with a wooden sword, mocking the Zen establishment. He wrote a poem saying:

*Today’s Zen priests may be compared to wooden swords,*  
*If seen inside a room, (they) seem to be real.*  
*But, outdoors, unsheathed in the sunlight—  
nothing but split bamboo.*  
*Such (priests and wooden swords) are no good for fighting or for anything else.*

*Shichi Butsu Tsukaige (o zen o)*  
by Ikkyū
The wealth of temples with good administrators like Ikkyū and the cultural exchanges that resulted from the missions to China significantly impacted Japanese painting.

*Bodhidharma* by Minchō
1352–1431
Hyōnenzu (Catching a Catfish in a Gourd) by Josetsu, c. 1413
Kanō Masanobu  (1434–1530)
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Sword of Ashikaga Yoshiteru (1536–1565)

The thirteenth Ashikaga shōgun, Yoshiteru, was known as the “sword drawing shōgun” because he kept several swords stuck in the tatami so he would be prepared to fight his enemies with a succession of weapons.
One of the most remarkable incidents of this unsettled era was the rising of the Yamashiro *ikki* in 1485.
Hokke Ikki – Lotus Uprising
Inuyama castle built in 1537

While the war in the capital was virtually over, the provinces experienced continued warfare between competing factions of local samurai.
Kinko and Other Hermits by Sesson Shūkei
In 1542, something which took place far from the capital changed the course of Japanese history dramatically.
The stranded Portuguese returned to China. Portuguese trading ships started entered Kyūshū harbors within a few years.
Francis Xavier (1506–1552) landed in Kagoshima in 1549 and was well received by the lord of Satsuma.
Seeing that he would be unable to make converts without official sanction, he traveled back to Yamaguchi and from there to visit Ōtomo Sōrin, the powerful lord of Bungo.
Japan in the middle of the 16th century was a land torn apart by the rivalries of the warlords.

Oda Nobunaga 1534–1582
Nobunaga’s next great opportunity came when Imagawa Yoshimoto (1519–1560) passed through his domain on his way to the capital with 25,000 soldiers.
Nobunaga’s next move was to forge an alliance with Tokugawa Ieyasu who controlled the province of Mikawa and Takeda Shingen of Kai.

Takeda Shingen (1521–1573)
Nobunaga was in control of Owari and only two provinces, Mino and Ōmi stood between him and the capital in Yamashiro.
In 1558, Nobunaga sent for Ashikaga Yoshiaki who had been hiding out in Echizen after the assassination of his brother.
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Letter written by Emperor Ōgimachi giving instructions for soliciting donations for the repair of Shōbōji in Ōmi
By this time, Nobunaga had moved into Inabayama castle and renamed it “Gifu.”
The Muromachi was a fabulous period for Japanese culture.

Japanese wood *Shishi* (Lion) Mount for the diety *Monju* (*Manjushri*) Muromachi period, 16th century
We have seen that painting flourished and architecture flourished.

*Daruma and Eka* by Sesshū, ca. 1479
The size and wealth of the religious institutions provided a secure source of patronage for a variety of skilled artists.
Continued warfare gave craftsmen plenty of incentive to develop fine armor.
The growing popularity of tea ritual also inspired another kind of metalwork.
Incense Container 15th Century

Cosmetic box with fan design
Kosode with design of pawlonia and bamboo in twill

Muromachi shoes
Significant technological advances were also made in ceramics.
Southern Súng *temmoku* tea bowl called “Shukō Temmoku”

Seto tea bowl named *Gyokujun* “Moist Jewel” Muromachi
15th Century
Shigaraki Seed Jar

Most Japanese ceramics of the Muromachi period were made for purely utilitarian functions.

Roof tiles
Summary of the Muromachi Period (1333–1568)

1. In 1338, Ashikaga Takauji received the title of shōgun founding the Ashikaga bakufu.

2. From 1337 to 1392, two rival imperial courts contested the Throne.

3. Ashikaga Yoshimitsu started trade with China in 1401 resulting in a rich injection of cash into the Japanese economy.

4. Serious peasant rebellions began in 1428.

5. Rival warlords devastated Kyōto during the Ōnin War (1467–1477). Japan was left with no powerful central government.

6. Oda Nobunaga entered the capital in 1568 and installed the last Ashikaga shōgun.