How did fighting men, high and low, cope with the reality of uncertainty, and especially with unpredictable human relations, in Sengoku Japan? By defining war to encompass matters beyond the battlefield as a more dynamic “war system,” we can see how the human anatomy’s most vital liquid, blood, became implicated in reorganizing the social and military landscape of the late medieval archipelago. The evolving practice of applying one’s keppan, or “blood seal,” near or on one’s signature at the end of a document promoted a sense of order for the warriors, as did the increasingly gendered meaning that blood was acquiring.

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