

The Pirates of Ise

Until the latter half of the sixteenth century, the Ise-Shima area was controlled by numerous warlords, none of whom were able to consolidate power and dominate their rivals. There was also an influential group of 13 pirate families who banded together to control the valuable shipping lanes off the coast. Although very little is known of their activities, local historians believe the group operated under a strict code of conduct. Violation of the code eventually led to a breakdown of the group's solidarity, and there was a near-constant struggle for power. Families would often seek alliances with warlords from neighboring provinces in hopes of establishing authority over their fellows.