

Chapter 88 - Current and Future Strategies ①

21 hours of the 【Pseudo-Peace】 remain.

In order to effectively use the brief time of peace, there are two things I should do.

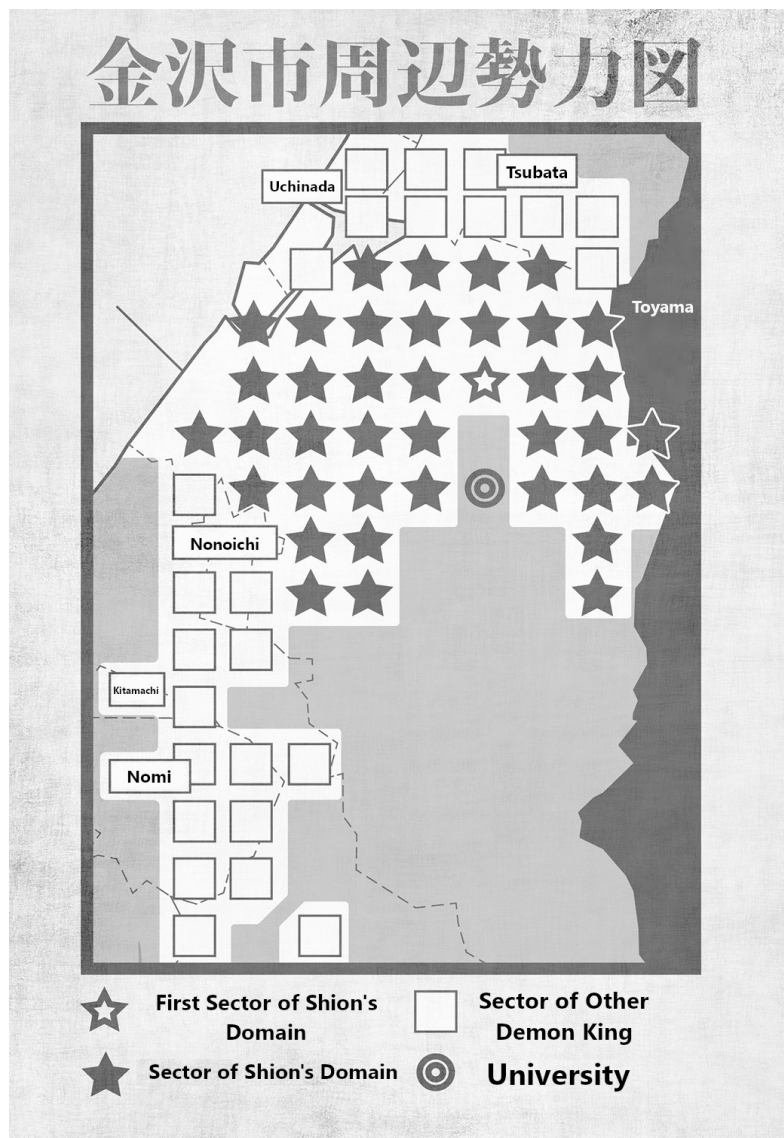
1. Reconstruction while taking the defense of the Domain into account.
2. Planning the future, strategic objectives.

In addition, I will test out the newly acquired special abilities, and check out the combat prowess of my new, hopeful combat asset Izayoi after the 【Pseudo-Peace】 comes to an end. I guess that's about it.

What I should begin immediately is the reconstruction of the Domain.

Currently I'm ruling over 37 sectors. 18 of those are completely surrounded by my own sectors...in other words, they are safe sectors that can't be attacked by enemies.

I lower my eyes on the map where the information of my sectors had been noted down.



Information about powerful humans and Demon Kings has been confirmed in the area of the sectors adjoining Nonoichi. High-level humans of Kanazawa are inhabiting the surroundings of the sectors adjoining to Kanazawa, but there's information that they are migrating towards the capture of Domains in Hakusan. There is news about a Demon King ruling over more than 20 sectors in Komatsu, but it will likely take a good while until they clash with my Domain. I have heard that not few high-level humans exist in the vicinity of the sectors adjoining to the Toyama Prefecture, but given that they are centered around Toyama City, there will probably be only a few brave ones who will invade Domains outside the prefecture by choice as long as I don't meddle with them from my side. Kahoku — the prefecture's north is dotted with Demon Kings ruling over Domains with 3~5 sectors. Apparently an ebbing and flowing offense and defense against the humans is unfolding in that area.

It's necessary to reconstruct my Domain based on those pieces of information.

The ones I should be most vigilant of are the humans in the southern direction — in Kanazawa. At the present they are keeping a distance from my Domain, which has been assigned the highest Hazard rank, because of the trauma of Rina's hero party's annihilation, but once it's judged that a liberation is slightly possible, they might advance on me at full force. It's probably a good plan to make it obvious that it's a bad idea by planting plenty of traps starting with the first floor and deploying high-ranking subordinates in the sectors adjacent to Kanazawa.

On the other hand, I will set up the sectors adjoining Nonoichi — in the western direction, where the danger level is low, as 『Farms』 catered towards beginners. Organizing them as sectors for my subordinates to level up might be a beneficial move.

The sectors adjoining Nanto of the western Toyama — in the eastern direction can be expected to be invaded by some Demon Kings and humans above medium rank. I think it will be a good idea to construct them as 『Farms』 catered towards medium ranks...while offering somewhat good gains so that my high-ranking subordinates centered around Izayoi can earn experience points.

I don't mind considering the sectors adjacent to Kahoku — in the northern direction to be the same as the ones in the east, I think. Let's increase the amount of traps here since the threat level is rather high.

There are 19 sectors that must be defended. Placing all of them under my supervision and giving out instructions to each and every single one can be called difficult. I had planned to make Alyssa my subordinate and have her manage those sectors as field commander, but...there's no point in dwelling on the past.

Afterwards I suppose I will upgrade the safe sectors to residential areas.

Operating my smartphone, I proceed with the reconstruction of the Domain while following the plan I had decided on.



12 hours of the 【Pseudo-Peace】 remain.

Having finished the reconstruction, I'm going to plan my future, strategic objectives.

"Kanon! Rina!" (Shion)

I had formed a plan in my mind to a certain extent, but it might be necessary to also listen to the opinions of others just in case. I call the two subordinates who can offer flexible opinions.

"Yees." (Kanon)

"What's up?" (Rina)

Kanon and Rina run up to me. I unfold the map between the two.

"From now on I'm going to explain the future, strategic objectives." (Shion)

"Oh! I'm really itching to put my skills as a strategist to use." (Kanon)

"Okay." (Rina)

The two lower their eyes on the map in front of them with keen interest.

"First, I will propose three plans from my side." (Shion)

I raise three fingers. A brainstorming would take too much time. That is why I had prepared alternatives in advance, which should allow for the talks to advance smoothly.

"First, expanding my influence in the northern direction. The final goal of this plan is to gain total control of the Noto Peninsula.

Second, expanding my influence in the southern direction. The final goal of this plan is to gain total control of the entire Kanazawa region.

Third, expanding in the western direction. The final goal of this plan is to gain total control of Nonoichi as well as the Nomi District."



I mark the map with ① at the northern side, ② at the southern side, and ③ at the western side.

"I see. I support the plan to expand your power towards the north." (Kanon)

"——!?! Northern side... I-I support the plan to expand your power towards the west." (Rina)

Kanon points at Kahoku on the map with a triumphant look. Rina points at Nonoichi even though her expression becomes clouded.

"I see. Those are reasonable opinions. Plan 2 — the suppression of Kanezawa is a self-satisfying plan with a stress on putting on airs. Since the return is low compared to the risks, it's fine to

dismiss it."

I cross out the ② on the map.

"First, Kanon, tell us the reason why you chose ①" (Shion)

"Yees. You see, according to what I understand after seeing the situation of this Domain, the sectors facing the sea won't be invaded." (Kanon)

Kanon begins to explain her thinking while pointing at the sectors facing the ocean.

"In that case, someday gaining control of the Noto Peninsula — the northern side will connect to securing many safe domains. As your strategist I propose that it will be the very best to subdue Kahoku, Nanao, Suzu and the prefecture's north as domains if you consider the future." (Kanon)

Kanon is likely quite confident in her own opinion. At least her words are overflowing with confidence.

"I haven't acknowledged you as a strategist, but...I guess there are no flaws in your opinion, Kanon." (Shion)

"——Wha-!? Wouldn't it be fine to just praise me normally?" (Kanon)

"Rina, tell us the reason why you chose ③" (Shion)

I ignore Kanon with her puffing cheeks, and address Rina.

"L-Let's see. My thoughts are the same as Kanon's. Expand through domains facing the sea. It hasn't been confirmed that powerful humans or Demon Kings exist in Nonoichi or the Noto Peninsula. If you take the degree of difficulty into account, advancing from the west is——" (Rina)

"Objection!" (Kanon)

Kanon loudly voices her objection in the middle of the explanation of Rina who looked uneasy. I permit Kanon, who looks self-satisfied while pointing a finger at Rina, to speak.

"Fu fu fu. Rina-san, you're naive! Reading the development of two or three moves ahead is exactly what a true strat——" (Kanon)

"Kanon, cut out the saucy speech and get to the point." (Shion)

"Yees. Look...there are two pitfalls in Rina's opinion, or to be more precise, plan ③ suggested by Shion-san. First, if you provoke Nonoichi and the Noto Peninsula, you will provoke the humans trying to raid the Domains of Nanao. Second, the Noto Peninsula is adjacent to Komatsu. A powerful Demon King resides in Komatsu. Depending on the situation, it will produce the danger of being attacked from three sides: Kahoku, Toyama and Komatsu." (Kanon)

Kanon explains triumphantly while raising a finger for each.

"I'm irritated by Kanon's attitude, but it's a sound argument, I think." (Shion)

"As I said, that comment is too muc—— Kyaa!?" (Kanon)

As I throw a sidelong glance at Kanon, who kicks up a fuss while rolling up her skirt, I check Rina's state.

I can't approve of Kanon's way of speaking and that attitude at all, but my thoughts are the same as Kanon's. In my mind I had pinpointed plan ① from the start, and this discussion was what you'd call verifying one's answer.

However, what worries me is Rina's expression.

"Rina, I also agree with Kanon's line of thinking, but...is there something bothering you?" (Shion)

"T-That is..." (Rina)

I question Rina.

"Mmh? What is it? The reason why you prefer invading Nonoichi is...possibly because you're hesitating to invade the prefecture's north...is that the reason?" (Shion)

At the moment when I mentioned invading the prefecture's north, Rina's expression became gloomy.

"N-No. That's not it. If you think the same as Kanon, you won't hear anything from me. I'm your subordinate... I will follow your orders." (Rina)

Rina answers while looking downwards at first, but at the end she looks into my eyes while putting strength in her voice.

"I see. Then we will go with the goal of suppressing the prefecture's north — the Noto Peninsula from now on." (Shion)

"Yeees." (Kanon)

"Understood." (Rina)

I declare the future strategic plan with a tone of confirming it with the two.

"Now then, that means the future plans have been decided, but...there's one more thing I'd like to ask from you two." (Shion)

"Yes?" (Kanon)

"What is it?" (Rina)

I give a crucial instruction to Kanon and Rina, who are both puzzled, that might influence my power from now on.

Chapter 89 - Two Demon Kings

"I'd like you to search for a Demon King meeting certain requirements." (Shion)

I specify the content of my request to the two.

"What are the requirements?" (Kanon)

"A Demon King specialized in defense. If possible, a Demon King rumored to be impregnable albeit having a low number of domains. Nothing would be better than the Demon King's own abilities to be high, but you can also look for Demon Kings skillful at managing their subordinates and planting clever traps." (Shion)

I state the requirements I'm looking for. I felt a limit with managing all 19 sectors, which will be invaded by enemies, by myself. Moreover, as a result of having experienced the battle against Alyssa, me setting out to invade Domains for the sake of raising my level had entered my horizon as well. It would be fine to leave that part to my subordinates, but the created subordinates lack flexibility. I wanted to entrust defending to personnel with high flexibility — former Demon Kings.

"Umm...is it fine if I search the net?" (Kanon)

"Do that, Kanon. By the way, they must be nearby." (Shion)

"Yeees," replies Kanon.

"Is it okay for me to gather information online as well?" (Rina)

Rina answers while bewildered.

"No, Rina, you will check on site based on the information gathered by Kanon and me. Of course I'd like you to gather on your own smapho during your free time." (Shion)

"Okay." (Rina)

Having heard my instructions, Kanon and Rina started to gather information with their smartphones. I did the same with my own smartphone in order to find excellent Demon Kings.



Six hours of the 【Pseudo-Peace】 remain.

"Shion-san, how about the Demon King of this Domain?" (Kanon)

"What kind of Demon King are they?" (Shion)

I turn my eyes at Kanon who has approached while smiling.

"Umm, that is...it's a Demon King in Nonoichi, but their Domain has a Hazard rank B. Their estimated level is 7. The Domain has two sectors and it's a Slime Demon King. Going by the fact that they have crimson slimes as subordinates, Creation must be at B. The Demon King's Domain is hated by the humans for its many sticky pitfalls." (Kanon)

I lower my eyes on the screen of the smartphone Kanon holds out to me.

"A wandering orc...dropped a Mithril Sword? That means Alchemy is also B, huh?" (Shion)

"That's how it is. Won't the Demon King excel at defense if they are specialized on Creation and Alchemy?" (Kanon)

"Yeah...rejected." (Shion)

"Eh!? W-Why...?" (Kanon)

"Creation and Alchemy specialization means the stats for Body and Mana are low, right?" (Shion)

"I suppose?" (Kanon)

"If the Demon King were to surrender, they won't be able to create and alchemize anymore, no? Won't they be trash then?" (Shion)

"——Wha-!? I think that opinion is awful!" (Kanon)

I want to praise them for having specialized in Creation and Alchemy. However, once a Demon King becomes my subordinate, their Creation and Alchemy will vanish. If possible, a high stat of Body and Mana would be preferable as a combat asset.

Having said that, at the moment they have specialized in Mana or Body, they can be considered to suck at the management of subordinates and traps...

I'm gathering information by freely surfing the Internet, but it's not simple to find a suitable Demon King.

Alyssa — the nastiness of her traps, her own power, her tenaciousness in the second half...I guess Demon Kings of her class are rare... Since her character was shit, she would likely have given me a fair share of troubles, if I had turned her into my comrade...

While I continued to collect information about the surrounding Demon Kings...I kept noting down information about notable Demon Kings.

"Shion. I don't know whether they will satisfy your wishes, but...I found a very interesting Demon King, I think." (Rina)

Rina called out to me for the first time.

"What kind of Demon King are they?" (Shion)

"Because I'm different from Kanon, I can't guess their Creation and Alchemy rank, but...according to the information posted on the net, it looks like two Demon Kings exist in that Domain?" (Rina)

"Huh? Two Demon Kings? Tell me the details." (Shion)

I enter the URL Rina told me and browse a forum said to be frequently used by humans. Two Demon Kings. If you consider it simply, it is information about a Demon King who has added a former Demon King, who surrendered like Kanon, as subordinate, I suppose. However, would humans who encountered Kanon...misinterpret her as Demon King? The Demon King discovered by Rina ruled a Domain with seven sectors in Uchinada (Kanezawa's north). As a result of sharing the URL with Kanon, I found out that the Demon King in question is a Demon species. Their estimated level is 8. The estimated stats are Creation B, and Alchemy C. And, one of them is an elderly Demon King believed to have specialized in Mana, and the other is a girl Demon King believed to have specialized in Body. Jet black wings are growing on the elderly Demon King's back. A small horn seems to be growing on the forehead of the girl Demon King.

"Kanon, which of them do you think to be the Demon King?" (Shion)

"It's just a guess, but the Mana specialized old man...his outward traits match with a Demon species, too." (Kanon)

"That means the girl is a former Ogre Demon King who surrendered?" (Shion)

"Yeah...that's the question. Going by her outward features, I think that she's very likely an ogre, but...this information bothers me." (Kanon)

I lower my look at the forum post Kanon pointed at.

Contributor Taisei @ in the middle of recruiting a girlfriend

The dungeon close to Uchinada's town hall is crazy shit! The Demon King is dangerous! When we thought she vanished all of a sudden, she fucking popped up behind us! Three of my party members were killed! If she comes out, watch your back for real!!

Contributor Inami

I also encountered her. I looked behind me, but...that girl appeared from within the shadow of my friend. What's that girl!?! Give me back my Hiroyuki!!

I read through the information shown by Kanon and tilt my head to the side in confusion. If I remember correctly, something like disappearing and appearing from shadows...is a special ability equal to cheating, but...

"You see...an ogre species owning this ability is like a Daylight Vampire in your case, Shion-san, and Dullahan in my case." (Kanon)

"What?" (Shion)

Hearing Kanon's words, two questions pop up in my head.

"Why do you know information about the ogre species evolution path?" (Shion)

"U-Umm, I don't know the precise details... A part of the information of the evolutions paths for Ogre, Demon, Elf, and Dwarf species——" (Kanon)

"Well, whatever..." (Shion)

Even if I were to hear about parts of the evolution paths of those four species, I wouldn't be able to get any practical use out of it.

The problem going beyond that is...why does that girl possess a special trait of a species a Demon King can evolve into for the first time after reaching level 10?

"Kanon, can a Demon King who surrendered evolve once they accumulate levels?" (Shion)

"Yes. In my case I can evolve once I become level 50." (Kanon)

"By the way, what are your levels?" (Shion)

"It's 28." (Kanon)

"41, I think." (Rina)

Kanon having a low level as she never participates in battle I understand. However, Rina always fought battles at the forefront. The number of Demon Kings, who had died at her hands, exceeds two digits. And, among the Demon Kings living in the Ishikawa Prefecture, there's none who rules more domains than me.

In other words, Rina should be someone that can be called a top ranker in the Ishikawa prefecture. Hence, it's difficult to think that the girl's level exceeds 50. Having said that, I can't believe that a Demon King exceeding level 10 surrendered to a Demon King with an estimated level of 8.

"Kanon, can Demon species Demon kings create monsters capable of disappearing and reappearing from within the shadows of others?" (Shion)

"As far as I know, it's impossible. In the first place, according to the eyewitness reports, that monster is a 『Shadow Ogre』 of the ogre species. A Demon species can't create an Ogre species." (Kanon)

Kanon dons a greatly perplexed expression.

"Speaking of Creation...hasn't a great variety of monsters besides demon types been confirmed in this Domain?" (Rina)

The words of Rina, who reports while looking at the forum, deepen the mystery even further.

"A great variety of monsters?"

"Uh huh. The information about the encountered monsters has been reported in the forum. Sharing information is a duty of Liberators, but...as far as I see in this forum, the appearance of ogres,

pixies, dwarves, elves, werewolves...and even ghouls has been confirmed besides that of demon types, you know?" (Rina)

"Huh? Kanon, is the Demon species a race excelling at Creation?" (Shion)

Hearing Rina's report, I unintentionally open my mouth widely.

"N-No! The Demon species should be a race excelling at mana and not specialized at Creation." (Kanon)

"That means, they turned the monsters of the Domains they usurped so far into subordinates?" (Shion)

"Yes...the probability for that is high." (Kanon)

Two Demon Kings, a great variety of monsters, huh...? The more I examine it, the more interesting becomes that Domain.

Even if we exchange theories here, the answer likely won't crop up. Since it had piqued my interest strongly, I thoroughly gathered the information about the Domain of Uchinada said to house two Demon Kings.

The more I checked up on them, the stronger the interest in the Demon King ruling the Domain in Uchinada welled up within me.

——!

Okay...this settles it!

"Rina, Kanon, we will first expand our influence in the direction of Uchinada. The objective is to make the two Demon Kings ruling the domains of Uchinada submit!" (Shion)

"Yees!" (Kanon)

"Okay!" (Rina)

I will make the Demon King of Uchinada submit as a short-term strategic objective. I will gain total control of the prefecture's north as a medium-term strategic objective. And then I will usurp the entire Ishikawa Prefecture in one go!

I contemplated how to achieve my newly determined strategy.