

Explaining the “Mystery” of *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*

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In the Heian period vengeful spirits (goryō) were widely feared. This essay examines the identity of characters who appear in the twelfth-century handscroll Ban Dainagon ekotoba 伴大納言絵詞. This scroll is thought to have been composed to mollify the angry spirit of Tomo no Yoshio, a counselor (dainagon) who was believed to have become “a god of pestilence.” Some scholars have concluded from studying the text that one or two of the unidentified figures in the scrolls can be identified as Tomo no Yoshio. A thorough analysis of the pictures accompanying the text, however, reveals that the two unidentified characters are indeed Minamoto no Makoto, the victim of a plot by Tomo no Yoshio, who was then exiled to Izu.

Keywords: *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* — goryō — vengeful spirits — Tomo no Yoshio — Heian handscrolls — Minamoto no Makoto

Translator's Introduction

Ban Dainagon ekotoba (The illustrated story of Counselor Ban), currently held at the Idemitsu Museum, is a crucial work for the study of the development of Japanese narrative, genre, and figural painting. The illustrated story as it comes down to us today is in three handscrolls, each over 800 centimeters long; but, according to a fifteenth-century text, they were all in a single long roll.¹ The first scroll lacks any text, but it is clearly linked to the story “On the burning of the Ōten-mon gate by Major Counselor Ban” in *Uji shūi monogatari*. The latter two rolls have two sections of text each. Justly famous for their revolutionary cinematic quality—with sweeping crowd scenes, an astounding depiction of a conflagration, and wonderfully

¹ Go-Sukō-in (1372–1456) in the entry for the first year of Kayoshi (1441)/4/26 in his fifty-five fascicle *Kammon nikki* 看聞日記 (Diary of things seen and heard) mentions a one volume “painting of Counselor Ban” (伴大納言絵一照). Go-Sukō-in’s comments indicate that by the fifteenth century the painting was already in poor condition.

expressive faces—the *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* paintings represent a clear and striking break with the style of other courtly productions such as the *Genji monogatari emaki* (Illustrated handscroll of the *Tale of Genji*) from the first half of the twelfth century, and *Murasaki Shikibu nikki emaki* (Illustrated handscroll of the diary of Murasaki Shikibu) of the early to mid-Kamakura period. Thus, along with *Shigi-san engi emaki* (The Miraculous Origins of Mt. Shigi) of the late twelfth century, *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* stands as a towering monument to an artistic sensibility that is likely to have developed near the end of the Heian period, prefiguring the dynamism of medieval illustrative scrolls. Although many theories have been offered to explain the rise of this painting tradition—marked by lively linear expression, light use of color, and active, continuous compositions—no single paradigm reigns supreme. However, the theory Matsuo Kenji sets forth in the following article offers a clear, new perspective for understanding both the formal qualities and social background of the scrolls.

The following article takes up the old problem of the identities of the two figures in formal court dress who appear in the first scroll, first gazing towards the burning Ōten-mon gate and, second, kneeling apprehensively on the veranda of a building, inside of which Fujiwara no Yoshifusa pleads to Emperor Seiwa on behalf of the minister of the left. This seemingly unimportant issue was probably first raised in the early 1930s in Fukui Rikichirō's foundational exploration of the authorship of the three-scroll set, but no alternative interpretation was offered until Tanaka Toyozō took up the problem again in 1940. However, the importance of the problem is not limited to the field of art history, and further theories were set forth in the late 1960s and 1970s by scholars in fields such as clothing history, calligraphy, and documentary history. The debate was revived again in the mid-1990s by scholars such as Gomi Fumihiko, who, ironically, supported Fukui's original identification, but for different reasons. Matsuo, examining a third unidentified character as well, also agrees with earlier researchers, such as Sakurai Seika and Komatsu Shigemi, but his method is closest to the one used by Suzuki Keizō. Indeed, Matsuo's apparently esoteric discussion of court dress and their patterns is important not only for the fresh look he takes at costume in the scrolls, but also for the conclusions he draws from his findings.

As Matsuo himself argues, there are several crucial points at stake in the proper identification of the three mystery characters, but here the most important in his view is that the scroll was painted with the idea of mollifying the potentially dangerous spirit of Tomo no Yoshio, the eponymous "Counselor Ban." Belief in malevolent spirits of those who died an untimely death—called *goryō* 御霊 or *onryō* 怨霊 from about the ninth century on—is considered one of the oldest forms of belief in Japan. Originally, the term seems to have referred to all spirits of the dead, but under the influences of ying-yang practices (*onmyō-dō*) and Buddhism, it came to

mean those without descendants to celebrate them, especially those who were wronged some way in life and have returned to cause calamities, famines, and epidemics to punish the living. The belief was firmly established in the Heian period, when *goryō* often became identified with specific people, especially failed statesmen. The most (in)famous of these spirits is, of course, Sugawara Michizane, who was demoted and exiled to Dazaifu in 901, where he died two years later. After a string of calamities, including the burning of the Shishin-den in the imperial palace, he was deified as Tenman Daijizai Tenjin 天満大自在天神 and worshiped at a shrine dedicated to him at Kitano in Kyōto.² However, not all cases of *goryō* were so clearly identified, and from the Heian period on, public ceremonies (*goryō-e* 御霊会) such as the Gion festival were held for the pacification of angry spirits in general, who were thought to cause epidemics and other ills.

While the belief in malevolent spirits of the dead has been the subject of much analysis by scholars of literature and historians of religion, its organic relationship to many *artistic* projects has been little noted. Much has been learned by examining the many sets of *Kitano Tenjin* scrolls from the perspective of belief in angry spirits;³ and, as Matsuo suggests, similar insights may be gained from studying the *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* handscrolls in this light. Indeed, it is likely that this *ekotoba* was commissioned around 1177 by the retired emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127–1192, r. 1155–1158), in the wake of the social and military unrest embodied in the Hōgen (1156) and Heiji disturbances (1159). This upheaval was believed to have produced many angry spirits and it clearly raised fears about much older ones, such as Tomo no Yoshio. Another important angry spirit was that of Kibi no Makibi 吉備真備 (695–775), a statesman who rose quickly in the hierarchy, only to be demoted and sent to Chikuzen in 750. Although he later rose to rank of minister of the right, he retired after a succession dispute following Empress Shōtoku's death in 770. In the Heian period he was numbered among eight famous angry spirits (*hassho goryō* 八所御霊) along with Michizane. A two-scroll set of handscrolls from the late twelfth century entitled *Kibi daijin nittō ekotoba* 吉備大臣入唐絵詞 (The illustrated story of Minister Kibi's trip to China) is also likely to have been made at the behest of Emperor Go-Shirakawa. The paintings depict Kibi's outwitting of the wily Chinese with the help of Abe no Nakamaro 阿部仲麻呂 (698–770), an emissary who was never able to return to Japan and so was thought to have become an angry spirit. It is not impossible that the production of the *Kibi daijin nittō ekotoba* was in part meant to pacify Kibi no Makibi's angry spirit, just as Matsuo says of the *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* scrolls. These examples seem to bear out the implication of Matsuo's

² For a more thorough treatment of the Tenjin cult, see BORGES 1986 and 1995.

³ Fundamental work on the set of scrolls can be found in MURASE 1962, while SHINBO Tōru (1994) has given a rather complete treatment on the work.

arguments—that is, the narrative-oriented painting style that rose to the fore at the end of the Heian period is especially appropriate for faithfully depicting the stories of angry spirits, and the shared formal qualities of the scrolls may have been thought to be especially efficacious in mollifying the disgruntled dead.

The following article opens up new ways of looking at both art and religion in late Heian society. If the mystery characters are both Minamoto no Makoto, and if Matsuo Kenji is correct in his assessment of the identity of “character C,” then we are provided with crucial insight into the dos and taboos of depicting the deceased and quite possibly dangerous figures who populated the consciousness of late twelfth-century Japan. As the author demonstrates, the subtle visual statements made in the fine details of the paintings speak volumes about the identity and spiritual status of the a figure like Tomo no Yoshio, both in and out of the scrolls.

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Goryō Shinkō and the Ban Dainagon ekotoba

BELIEF IN VENGEFUL SPIRITS (*goryō shinkō*) 御霊信仰 involves worship of the spirits of those who have met with untimely deaths. Influenced by this belief, people attempted to defend themselves from the spirits, to prevent epidemics, or to counter strange phenomena that they thought were caused by the grudges or curses of these ghosts. The best known of these vengeful spirits is Sugawara no Michizane 菅原道真 who is worshiped as the god Tenman Daijizai Tenjin 天満大自在天神 at Kitano Tenman-gū 北野天満宮 in Kyoto.¹

In addition to Sugawara Michizane, Tachibana no Hayanari 橘逸勢 (d 842) and Prince Sawara 早良親王 (750–785) are generally known as vengeful spirits.² The late twelfth century also witnessed a peak in this

* During the writing of this article I benefited from the instruction of Gomi Fumihiko, Kuroda Taizō, Takagi Nao, Takada Shizuo, and Izutsu Gafū, and many others. An earlier version of this article appeared in Japanese as MATSUO 1995. The article was translated by Kevin Gray Carr and revised during the editing process. Some notes were added to provide further information to the Western reader. Illustrations appear with the kind permission of the Idemitsu Museum in Tokyo.

¹ Sugawara no Michizane (845–903) was a scholar and statesman of the mid-Heian period whose spirit began to be worshiped as a god of thunder. In the late tenth century he came to be celebrated as a god of learning and culture (cf. BORGES 1986). Kitano Tenman-gū is located in northwest Kyoto and was originally built around 947. There are several sets of handscrolls called *Kitano Tenjin engi emaki* 北野天神縁起絵巻, the most famous of which is the Jōkyū version, which was composed around 1219 (during the Jōkyū era). It is now housed at the Kyoto Kitano Tenman-gū shrine.

² All three men were feared to have become vengeful spirits after exile for crimes of which they were falsely accused. Tachibana no Hayanari was posthumously given a higher

belief. That era, before which Japan had not seen chaotic fighting on a national scale, came on the heels of the Hōgen and Heiji disturbances, which profoundly shocked the aristocracy.³ These disturbances were not considered to have been caused by acts of living humans, but rather were attributed to the vengeful spirits who were beyond human understanding (GOMI 1994a, pp. 74–75).

The late twelfth century was a time when vengeful spirits were especially feared, and the counselor (*dainagon*) Tomo no Yoshio 伴善男 was numbered among them. “The story of a cook who saw the ghost of counselor Tomo,” the eleventh story of the twenty-seventh scroll of *Konjaku monogatari* 今昔物語 (ca. 1120), recounts the tale of Tomo no Yoshio who had become “a god of pestilence.” It is widely believed that the famous set of handscrolls *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* 伴大納言絵詞 (Illustrated story of Counselor Tomo) was composed after the imperial Ōten-mon was among the buildings burnt during the large Kyoto fire of 1177, and that the retired emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127–1192, r. 1155–1158) ordered the work in order to pacify the angry spirit of Tomo no Yoshio.⁴ The twelfth-century *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* is based on the controversy that arose over the incident when the gate was burned on the tenth day of the third month of 866.

Putting aside the question as to whether or not the scroll was made as a result of the burning of the Ōten-mon in 1177, it seems certain that *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* was made in order to mollify Tomo no Yoshio’s angry spirit. According to the story in *Uji shūi monogatari*, in hopes of becoming a minister himself, he set fire to the Ōten-mon and promptly accused the Minister of the Left, Minamoto no Makoto, of committing the deed. However, Tomo no Yoshio’s plan backfired and instead he was exiled to Izu after it was discovered that he himself was the arsonist. The scroll communicated Tomo no Yoshio’s regret, and was thus meant to protect against his vengeful will. The end of the text of *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* reads:

court rank in 850 and 853, after various disturbances in the late ninth century were attributed to him. Imperial Prince Sawara (Sawara Shin’nō) was an imperial prince of the Nara period who died on his way to exile. Later, various sicknesses and disasters befell aristocrats connected with his exile, and Sawara was posthumously named Emperor Sudō in the hope of placating his spirit.

³ The Hōgen and Heiji disturbances (1156 and 1159, respectively) were revolts against the authority of the then-dominant Taira clan.

⁴ For more on why this text is thought to have been produced to appease the spirit of Tomo no Yoshio, see MINAMOTO 1939. The Ōten-mon was an imperial gateway between the central gate (Suzaku-mon) at the south end of the Greater Imperial Palace (Daidairi) and the Court of Government and the Great Hall of State (Daigokuden). The three fascicles of the handscroll are done in ink and color on paper that is 31.5 centimeters in height. The work is now kept in the Idemitsu Museum in Tokyo.

[Tomo no Yoshio] set fire to the Oten-mon, placed the blame on Minister Makoto, and said that the minister was guilty. He thought, “Since I am the top counselor, I will surely become minister [in Makoto’s place],” but he was instead shown to be guilty. Oh, how he regretted it! (GOMI 1994a, p. 75)

Tomo no Yoshio’s remorse is explicitly stated especially in the capping phrase “Oh, how he regretted it.”

The fact that the text was probably produced to pacify the spirit of Tomo no Yoshio is a contributing factor in leading some scholars to identify a certain mystery figure in the *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* as Tomo no Yoshio. A close analysis of the pictures, however, reveals that the character is not Tomo no Yoshio, who was believed to have become a malevolent spirit, but the very man that he framed: Minamoto no Makoto.

The Mysterious Characters in Ban Dainagon ekotoba

A great many studies have examined the *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* since the Meiji period (1868–1912), and thus many scholars believe that it has already been discussed thoroughly. It is generally accepted that the scroll was produced at the behest of Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa in the late twelfth century. The consensus at the present time is that the text was written by Fujiwara Norinaga,⁵ and that the pictures are from the hand of the great master of the imperial painting atelier, Tokiwa Genji Mitsunaga.⁶

The problem that I would like to discuss here is the identity of the characters in formal court dress who appear in Figure 1 (“character A”) and Figure 2 (“character B”). This can be thought of as the key issue for understanding *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, and a variety of theories have been set forth concerning it. The major opinions (the people who first offered explanations as well as those who presented supplementary explanations that were rich in evidence) are summarized in Table 1.

The characters are, depending on the scholar, thought to be the

⁵ Fujiwara Norinaga (b. 1109) was a late Heian period noble and poet. He was exiled to Hitachi province in 1156, and allowed to return to the capital in 1162, but thereafter he primarily lived on Mount Kōya in present-day Wakayama Prefecture.

⁶ Tokiwa Mitsunaga (dates unknown) is a famous “Japanese style” (*yamato-e*) artist of the mid-twelfth century, who is thought to have been the main painter for the sixty-fascicle handscroll set, *Nenjū-gyōji emaki* (Illustrated handscroll of yearly events), which was also said to have been made at the behest of Emperor Go-Shirakawa. According to the diary *Gyokuyō*, he collaborated in 1173 with Fujiwara Takanobu (1142–1205) on the screens for Saishōkō-in temple. See UENO 1978 and FUKUI 1933.

Table 1. Scholars’ Theories on the Identity of the Two Mystery Characters in *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*

	CHARACTER A	CHARACTER B
Tanaka Toyozō Suzuki Keizō	middle captain (Fujiwara Mototsune)	middle captain (Fujiwara Mototsune)
Fukui Rikichirō, Gomi Fumihiko	Tomo no Yoshio	Tomo no Yoshio
Sakurai Seika, Komatsu Shigemi	Minamoto no Makoto	Minamoto no Makoto
Ueno Kenji, Yamane Yūzō	Tomo no Yoshio	middle captain (not specific)
Kuroda Taizō	Tomo no Yoshio	Fujiwara Yoshimi

protagonist Tomo no Yoshio; the falsely accused Minamoto no Makoto; Fujiwara Mototsune, who covered up the incident; or Fujiwara Yoshimi, a captain of the guards working for the emperor.⁷

Among these theories, the most prevalent today are that character A is Tomo no Yoshio and character B is the middle captain⁸ awaiting imperial command (Ueno Kenji and Yamane Yūzō), or that both A and B are Tomo no Yoshio (Fukui Rikichirō and Gomi Fumihiko). Recently, the literary historian Gomi Fumihiko, while recognizing the possibility that the characters could be Minamoto no Makoto, set forth the argument that since the later scene depicts the appeal of the case to the emperor, both A and B must be Tomo no Yoshio.

All these explanations are supported by different forms of evidence and each explanation includes reasonable claims. However, I would like to propose that both characters A and B are the Minister of the Left, Minamoto no Makoto. Previous scholars (e.g., Sakurai Seika) have argued for this idea, but many think that their arguments have been refuted. One might wonder, then, what is the use of pursuing

⁷ Fujiwara Mototsune (836–891) was a nobleman of the early Heian period. In the year of the incident, he was promoted to middle counselor ahead of seven other people of higher rank. Fujiwara Yoshimi (813–867) was an early Heian official. According to the notes on the back of the *Okagami* scrolls (c. 1119), Yoshimi plotted with Tomo no Yoshio to implicate Minamoto no Makoto in the arson of the Ōten-mon; however, the exact details of the incident are unknown.

⁸ The term *tō no chūjū*, literally “head of the middle captains,” refers to a position in the inner guards of junior fourth rank, lower grade (that is, a lower position in the Heian aristocracy). It is translated simply as “middle captain” for the sake of brevity.



Figure 1



. Character A



Figure 2. Character B

this argument again. Even so, I shall outline my opinion below.

The grounds for earlier arguments for characters A and B both being Minamoto no Makoto are (1) the court dress that A and B wear are exactly the same color and pattern, and (2) the color and pattern of those outfits are exactly the same as those of the character in Figure 3, whom the text identifies as Minamoto no Makoto. For these two reasons, it is thought that A and B are both Minamoto no Makoto.

If one accepts details of costume as convincing evidence for determining the identity of characters in a painting such as a narrative handscroll, the argument for the characters being Minamoto no Makoto is by far the most simple and natural explanation. However, this assertion is denied by the critique of FUJITA (1971), who shows that there are many situations in which different characters appear in exactly the same outfits because of regulations, customs, or fashion. Additionally, giving the example of two different noblemen who wear exactly the same outfits in the handscroll *Shigisan engi emaki* 信貴山縁起絵巻 (Illustrated handscroll of the miraculous origins of Mount Shigi, ca. 1175), Fujita says that the fact that they wear the same clothes merely shows that they are both noblemen.⁹ Thus, the explanation that the characters are both Minamoto no Makoto—based only on the similarity of the clothing—is shown to be relatively weak. Nevertheless, I would argue that it is necessary to reconsider the assertion that clothing is a convincing basis for determining the identity of a character.

Comparing the outfits of characters A and B, both of whom are in formal court dress (*sokutai* 束帯), it is clear that they are exactly the same from top to bottom. That said, I would point out an extremely important fact that has been overlooked in previous discussions: character A is not wearing shoes, but only socks (*shitōzu* 襪). If one compares the form of character B with A, especially paying attention to the feet, it is clear that character A standing on the ground is just the same as the shoeless character B. The most influential argument holds that character A is an image of Tomo no Yoshio returning home after making his false accusation, or leaving to make the charge. Yet whether he is going or returning, the question as to why he is not wearing shoes is significant.

The basic elements of Heian period formal court dress (*sokutai*) include the headdress (*kanmuri*), an outer robe (*hō*), a narrow-sleeved garment worn between the outer robe and long inner robe (*hanpi*), a long inner robe (*shitagasane*), an unlined singlet (*hitoe*), the short

⁹ See also GOMI 1994b. *Shigisan engi emaki* is a three-scroll set of handscrolls which was probably made in the last quarter of the twelfth century; see SHIMIZU 1985.



Figure 3. Minamoto no Makoto



Figure 4. *Asagutsu* Footgear



Figure 5. *Fukabaki* Footgear

robe that went between the long inner robe and the singlet (*akome*), outer trousers (*ue no hakama*), flared inner trousers (*ōkuchi*), socks (*shitōzu*), a lacquered belt (*sekitai*), shoes (*kutsu*), a wand or scepter (*shaku*), a leather hip bag (*gyotai*), and when a aristocrat wore a sword, the skirt-front sling (*hirao*) from which the sword was hung (see KITAMURA 1973, p. 52). Outside, it was proper to wear shoes. Therefore, if one asserts that character A is Tomo no Yoshio, then he should appear wearing footgear as in figures 4 or 5. There must have been a reason for depicting a shoeless figure.¹⁰

Incidentally, one can see even from this handscroll that the people of the time often went barefoot, not wearing shoes or even straw sandals. On the other hand, one should pay attention to other scenes where characters who would naturally wear shoes are depicted without footwear. Let us examine specifically the scene in which an elderly house servant at Tomo no Yoshio's mansion comes out of the gate to greet the messenger who has arrived at the house to announce the arrest of Tomo no Yoshio (Figure 6). The house servant is not wearing shoes, but this can be explained by the fact that he is in a state of shock over the arrest of his master. I believe that is the correct explanation; it is reasonable to conclude that character A, who is not wearing shoes, confusedly came outside and is looking up at the burning Ōten-mon. If this is so, the latter figure cannot be Tomo no Yoshio,

¹⁰ The Ōten-mon was burned down in the third lunar month of 866, so at the time of the incident (still in the winter months) it would have still been cold in the capital.



Figure 6. A messenger arrives to arrest Tomo no Yoshio

either coming or going to make his false accusation. Rather, one can only think that it is Minamoto no Makoto who has been falsely accused of arson and who has hurriedly come out to behold the Ōten-mon. Therefore, I believe that character A is Minamoto no Makoto.

As for character B, I believe it is also Minamoto no Makoto. The dominant arguments state either that it is the middle captain serving the emperor or that it is Tomo no Yoshio.

The argument that the figure is the middle captain holds that this character awaits the command to pardon Minamoto no Makoto after Fujiwara Yoshifusa's direct appeal to the emperor.¹¹ One piece of evidence for the argument is the passage in *Uji shūi monogatari* (ca. 1213–1219) which tells the story of the incident and has the line “When the middle captain quickly rode away on a horse [as the bearer of the imperial pardon]....” Also, another clue is that since the figure's face appears young, the character depicted is neither Minamoto no Makoto nor Tomo no Yoshio, who were both around fifty years old at the time. This argument is also supported by insights from the history of costume and its decoration, which are mentioned below (see SUZUKI 1976).

However, one point that may give one pause is that the middle captain is not mentioned in the text of the handscroll itself: “After he was given leave, [someone (not specified in the text)] burst into [Minamoto no Makoto's house] riding a horse.” Therefore, although the middle captain can be seen as an important character, it is difficult to believe that a character who does not appear in the text of the scroll would be illustrated. Moreover, because the painter (or Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa who ordered the handscroll) did not make the handscroll in order to recount the historical incident of the burning of the Ōten-mon, I prefer to think that the figure's young face was an artistic device of the painter (see GOMI 1994a, p. 70). For example, Minamoto no Makoto is supposed to be fifty-nine years old at the time of the incident, but a scene in the middle scroll at his mansion depicts his wife as very young and his children as infants. One should not think of the woman as a young concubine, but rather as Makoto's real wife. I believe that depicting his main wife as a young woman (who should be old at the time of the story) is an artistic technique for dramatizing the misfortune and sadness of the family of the falsely-accused Minamoto no Makoto. Therefore, it is necessary to rethink the explanation of character B as the middle captain.

On the other hand, the argument that the character is Tomo no

¹¹ Fujiwara Yoshifusa (804–872) was the grandfather of Emperor Seiwa (r. 858–876), and was a respected former minister at the time of the incident.



Figure 7. Fujiwara Yoshifusa making an appeal to Emperor Seiwa

Yoshio holds that figures 1 and 2 are depicted using the common illustrative technique in which the same character is drawn in several places, but representing different times (*dōzu iji*). According to this explanation, Figure 1 is Tomo no Yoshio on his way to make his false accusation, and Figure 2 shows him carrying out his plans. According to GOMI (1994a), Figure 7 depicts Fujiwara Yoshifusa making a direct appeal to the Emperor Seiwa, as well as Tomo no Yoshio making his charge through the emperor's attendant (*kurōdo*) (that being the usual manner to lodge a complaint). Also, painted in contrast to the scene of Minamoto no Makoto appealing to heaven, this scene expresses Tomo no Yoshio's regret at there being one person who did not accept his accusation (i.e., Yoshifusa).

Nevertheless, if one considers this to be the *dōzu iji* technique, based on character A being Minamoto no Makoto one should consider B to be him as well. That is, Makoto is falsely accused and confusedly looks up at the Ōten-mon; he then begs Fujiwara Yoshifusa to appeal his case directly to the emperor. Character B can thus be explained as Makoto waiting on the veranda during the meeting and worriedly listening to Yoshifusa's appeal.

Because of the reasons listed above, I believe that characters A and B are both Minamoto no Makoto. Incidentally, the argument that A and B are both the middle captain, which is corroborated by findings of costume histories, became the common opinion for a while. Thus, let us re-examine costume history, especially the formal dress of this period.

Formal Court Dress in the Late Heian Period

Sokutai (translated here as "formal court dress") was codified in the late tenth century; and for a long time it was the representative male court dress in which the colors were correlated according to the rank of the wearer. It was also called *hare* 晴 *shōzoku* 装束 (lit., "daytime/ceremonial clothing") or *hi* 日 *no shōzoku* ("day clothing"). *Sokutai* was originally based on the court dress that was prescribed in the sumptuary regulations of the Yōrō Code.¹² It was made into the national style in the Heian period, when the sleeves were enlarged. The name *sokutai*, literally meaning "bundle belt," is said to have come from the leather hip belt that was tied around the clothing that was usually worn when serving at court. Because neither Tomo no Yoshio or Minamoto

¹² The Yōrō Code was established in 718 based on continental models. It set forth the system of ranks that were in effect until the end of the nineteenth century.

no Makoto are depicted as serving at court in the pictures, there is no historical reason for these mid-ninth century noblemen to be wearing *sokutai* as they are; it is essential to note that the painter’s depiction of them wearing *sokutai* was based on practices of the late twelfth century.

If one compares the *sokutai* of characters A and B with Minamoto no Makoto’s *sokutai*, the colors and patterns of the outer robes (*hō*) are all the same. To understand the significance of this, let us next examine the findings of the history of clothing and ornament, especially as they relate to the color and pattern of outer robes.

Before the late tenth century, noblemen of the third rank and above wore clothing that was deep purple and lavender purple, while those of the fourth rank wore scarlet [*hi*]. Around the late tenth century, however, both began to wear black outer robes. In Sei Shōnagon’s *Pillow Book* and Murasaki Shikibu’s *Tale of Genji* (both of the early eleventh century), the robes were called “black outer clothing” (*kuroki ue no kinu*). Fifth rank wore scarlet, and sixth wore green (later deep blue [*hanada*]).

As for the patterns of the clothing, TANIDA and KOIKE state:

[On] textiles... the ones who could use figured cloth with patterns woven into it were primarily the high nobility (*kugyō*); the attendant nobility (*tenjōbito*) of fourth and fifth ranks were limited under imperial command by sanctions of prohibited colors. Accordingly, those people who were permitted to use prohibited colors in the background of their outer robes were able to wear figured cloth with designs of “Chinese grasses” (*karakusa*) or quince patterns (*kamon*),¹³ but other than that they used no patterns. (1989, p. 73)

Thus, according to the findings of costume historians, the wearing of a patterned black outer robe merely shows that the characters A and B and Minamoto no Makoto are aristocrats of the fourth rank or higher. Both the middle captain of the fourth rank, counselor Tomo no Yoshio of the third rank upper grade, and minister of the left, Minamoto no Makoto of the second rank upper grade, come within that range. Therefore, one cannot determine the identity of characters A and B on the basis of these particular findings of costume history.

The *sokutai* in *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* are based on the practices of

¹³ *Karakusa*, literally “Chinese [T’ang] grasses,” refers to a pattern of long twisting tendrils and vines (sometimes with flowers) that was associated with China. The *ka* (literally “hole”) of *kamon* refers to a quince (*mokka*, *boke*). Historical sources are unclear, but the design was thought to be a four-lobed floral design with a circle at the center. The design was used on the clothing of T’ang officials in China, and it was often seen during the Heian period. Here, *kamon* is simply translated as “quince design” or “quince pattern.”

the *late* twelfth century. Especially if one believes that the production of the scroll was ordered by the Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa at the time of the burning of the Ōten-mon in Kyoto in 1177, one can say that the formal court dress draws on the customs of the latter part of this century.

A historical resource concerning the manners and styles of the outer robe of the formal court dress of that time is *Kazarishō* 飾抄 (Commentaries on decoration). *Kazarishō* is a book of customs which was written by Miyamoto Michikata (1189–1238), and records incidents from the tenth month of 1235 (Katei 1) to the fourth month of 1236 (Katei 2).¹⁴ In this way, *Kazarishō* is a historical document for learning about late twelfth century manners and customs.

The following passage appears in the first volume of *Kazarishō*:

Chestnut colored outer robes:

Fourth rank and above wear a chestnut color (*tsurubami*), fifth rank has burgundy outer robes,¹⁵ the sixth rank uses green, and those such as assistant imperial police officials (*tei*), secretaries (*geki*), recorders (*shi*) [of the senior seventh rank, upper grade] wear red colors.¹⁶ In recent times, fourth and fifth rank are not distinguished, and it is said that they do not know the old customs. [Moreover,] it is not normal for the recorders to wear beautiful gauze and figured silk. The late monk of Fugen-ji temple [Konoe Motomichi, 1160–1233] said in conversation with some nobles, “I have neither seen nor heard of wearing these things.”...

Many patterns are Chinese grasses, but there are those designs with and without rings. It is said that our house [the Miyamoto] uses no rings. At this time the regent (*sesshō*) [Kujō Michiie, 1193–1252] wears Chinese grasses in a quince design (*ka no naka ni karakusa*). As for the style of the Konoe family, when they were counselors, they wore a billowing cloud design in a quince pattern [within which were Chinese grasses].¹⁷ After they rose to the position chief advisor to the emperor (*kanpaku*) it is said that they wore no quince designs, only large billowing clouds. When the current minister of the right [Saionji Saneuji, 1194–1269], was a counselor he wore the usual [style]. But after he became minister, he wore an outer

¹⁴ See *Gunsho kaidai* 3, 407, for the text.

¹⁵ *Suō* is sappanwood or Indian redwood. It has a deep red-brown color.

¹⁶ These refer to positions in the Great Council of State (Daijō-kan).

¹⁷ “Billowing cloud design” translates *kumo takewaku mon*. This is a pattern of curly cloud-like forms separated by vertically-oriented wavy lines. It is meant to look like rising clouds.

robe (*hō*) with a “sparse” pattern (*enmon*). After the late priest of Shōkoku-ji [Ōimikado Yorizane, 1155–1225] became a minister, he wore an outer robe with sparse large tortoise shell (*kikkō*) patterns.¹⁸ The former Minister of the Right, Morotsune [Fujiwara Morotsune, 1176–1192], also wore the same.

The section before this passage (not included here) records the customs concerning the outer robe worn by the emperor; and in this section facts about the outer robe of the formal dress worn by those of fourth rank or higher are recorded as being chestnut-colored or black. One should take note of the section in the above passage which concerns patterns. In this source, the following was recorded:

1. At the time of the writing of the text (1230s), there was much concern about whether or not designs contained Chinese grasses and wheels.
2. The Minamoto household wore patterns of Chinese grasses without wheels.
3. The regent’s family (the Kujō clan) wore designs of Chinese grasses in a quince design. When the Konoes served as counselors, they wore billowing clouds in a quince pattern, but when one served as the chief imperial advisor, he would don large billowing cloud designs without quinces.
4. When the Minister of the Right Saionji Saneuji was counselor, the design seemed to have become fixed (perhaps as a Chinese grass motif); but when he became Minister, he wore a “sparse” design on his outer robe.
5. When the then late Ōimikado Yorizane and the former minister of the right Fujiwara Morotsune became ministers, they wore outer robes with a large tortoise shell “sparse” design.

In the Kamakura period and after, “Chinese grasses without rings” and “horse bit Chinese grasses” became common for chestnut-colored outer robes.¹⁹ There were rules that the emperor used paulownia, bamboo, phoenix, and *kirin* (a sort of unicorn); the regent’s family employed T-shapes, Chinese grasses, paired apricot leaf (*gyōyō tasuki*)

¹⁸ *Enmon* is a term that describes a variety of patterns in which the individual elements are relatively widely separated. *Kikkō* (tortoise shell) is a stylized hexagonal design that was most popular from the late Heian period on.

¹⁹ “Horse bit Chinese grasses” is a translation of *kutsuwa karakusa*. *Kutsuwa* means “[a horse’s] bit,” and the design indicated is probably one with the barbell-shaped bits entwined with the *karakusa* vines. It may also refer to a shape similar to a Greek cross in a circle. Nobles in the Heian period used the design only on their outer robes.

designs, “gentian” (*rindō*) designs;²⁰ the chief advisor to the emperor (*kanpaku*) had billowing clouds; the imperial advisor’s father (*taikō*) had cranes and clouds, and so forth. Furthermore, the families of the counselors used their own unique patterns that were passed down within each family (TANIDA and KOIKE 1989, p. 92). However, from the *Kazarishō* passage one can see that this custom of changing the pattern on the assumption of ministerial rank was already beginning to be observed in the late Heian period.

The points in the quoted passage of *Kazarishō* that are noteworthy are the first, fourth, and fifth. That is, before the high nobility took on the responsibilities of a minister they often wore Chinese grass designs, with or without rings. They wore their regular pattern (probably a Chinese grass pattern) until they became counselors; but when they became ministers, the custom was to change the outer robe to a different pattern of large tortoise shell “sparse” design. Although the quote from the *Kazarishō*, concerning Ōimikado Yorizane becoming a minister in 1191, is an early example of the practice, the custom of changing from the previously employed pattern to a different pattern of outer robes on the occasion of becoming a minister seems to have begun at the end of the twelfth century.

To summarize the above analysis of the designs on the formal court dress (*sokutai*), it is clear that at the end of the twelfth century it was customary to wear the pattern of Chinese grasses (either with or without the wheel designs) before becoming a minister, and upon the occasion of becoming a minister the custom was to wear an outer robe of a different design.

If one examines the patterns of the clothing of the three characters wearing formal court dress in *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*—characters A and B, and Minamoto no Makoto—one finds that they are wearing a water oat plant (*mokatsumi*, also *makomo*) design on their outer robes. “Water oat” refers to the flowers of *katsumi* plants blooming in the water and the beautiful design arranged in the trailing or billowing style (*tatewaku fū*; SUZUKI 1960, p. 146). In this regard, besides the three characters in question, one cannot unequivocally determine whether or not the patterns represent the changed robes of one who has become a minister since there are no other figures in formal court dress who wear black outer robes in *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*. (Although the outer robe of

²⁰ The gentian (*rindō*, lit. “dragon liver”) is a perennial plant which grows naturally in the mountains to a height of thirty to sixty centimeters. Its bitter, brownish-red root is boiled for medicinal purposes and its bell-shaped flower, which blooms in the autumn, is appreciated for its bright azurite color (*nuri iro*). The leaves are thin and long like bamboo grass and the pattern mentioned shows the leaves intertwined. The gentian was also called *eyami gusa*.

the guardsman who questions the valet appears black, it is actually light indigo [*hanada iro*].)

In the first scroll of *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, however, a bureaucrat is depicted looking outwards from in front of the Kaishō-mon gate, which was upwind of the burning Ōten-mon.²¹ He is wearing an outer robe, the same as that used in formal court dress, and one can see from the style of his headpiece and clothing that he is of the fourth rank or above. Thus, one can determine the significance of the use of the water oat pattern in this handscroll by comparing the three figures in black formal court dress to this one. Instead of the outer trousers (*ue no hakama*) of the formal court dress, the figure peering out from the Kaishō-mon is wearing silk trousers on which the hem is gathered with a cord (*shikan*), thus dispensing with a *sekitai* belt, the short underjacket (*hanpi*), and the train (*shitagasane*). It is bound with a clothed belt worn around the waist. The figure’s headpiece and outer robe show that he is of aristocratic rank, but compared to the formal court dress, his is an abbreviated costume with a form appropriate to relatively relaxed activities. This costume resembles the men’s semi-formal court costume (*ikan* 衣冠, less formal than *sokutai*) of a noble that were termed “night duty clothes”; yet the outfit was not used for nocturnal activities alone, but also for serving on days when an aristocrat had no official affairs (TANIDA and KOIKE 1989, p. 72).

If one examines the outer robes of these four bureaucrats who are thought to be wearing outfits of fourth rank or above in the *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, as one can see in figures 8 and 9, their robes all bear patterns of “Chinese grasses without rings” (SUZUKI 1960, p. 40). As was pointed out in the *Kazarishō*, these designs gained popularity around the first half of the twelfth century. Moreover, the outer robe of the character (in front of the Kaishō-mon) in scarlet formal court dress representing the fifth rank also has a design of Chinese grasses without rings (SUZUKI 1960, p. 40). Therefore, in the *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, the water oat design can be regarded as being appropriate to the ministerial rank in contrast to the normal design used by those of lower ranks.

Minamoto no Makoto was minister of the left, while Tomo no Yoshio was a major counselor. Therefore, the respective patterns on the formal court dress of Minamoto no Makoto and of Tomo no Yoshio can be assumed to have been different. It would seem most likely, then, that the identity of characters A and B is, in each case, that of Minamoto no Makoto, the Minister of the Left.

²¹ The Kaishō-mon was located directly north of the Ōten-mon within the Imperial Hall Compound (Chōdō-in, also Hasshō-in).

GOMI Fumihiko (1994b) asserts that the colors and patterns (five petal flowers) on the outfits of the two mystery characters wearing formal court dress in the handscroll *Shigisan engi emaki* are the same, but he believes that the similarity shows that the two people are nobles of the rank of counselor or below. However, according to the above and from the perspective of the history of clothing and accessories, the mystery characters A and B in *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* must be Minamoto no Makoto.

The example in *Kazarishō* of Ōimikado Yorizane, who became a minister in 1191, however, is given as an early example of new practices related to formal court dress; this may be because at that time it was immediately refuted as a rare case. Surely there is that possibility, but it is also quite possible that in the case of *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*, the painter employed a new fashion in his painting.

We should examine not only books of customs, but also concrete examples concerning the outfits of ministers and counselors of the late twelfth century. In *Heihan-ki*, (the diary of Taira Nobunori, chamberlain of Fujiwara Tadamichi),²² the entry for the eighth day of the tenth month of 1157 contains the following passage:

Today, the emperor [Go-Shirakawa] moved to the newly constructed imperial palace. At the hour of the ram [1-3 p.m.], I [Nobunori] went to the mansion on East Third Avenue....²³ Concerning the clothes [worn by] his Highness [Tadamichi]..., his formal court dress was the same as always; the formal court dress of the minister of the right [Motozane] was the same as always; the outfit of the middle counselor, middle captain [Motofusa] was like the formal court dress of the minister of the right, but [the middle counselor] had trousers with a "floating" (*ukimon*) design and had *oikake* decorations on his head piece.²⁴

These diary entries record the costumes of the three Fujiwara family members on their visit to the newly-built imperial palace.²⁵ According

²² Taira Nobunori (1112-1187) was a late Heian noble official. His diary is a useful source on court manners and ceremonies. Fujiwara Tadamichi (1097-1164) was a high-ranking aristocrat who was active in literary circles of the time.

²³ Nobunori is probably going to Tadamichi's mansion in order to help him move to the new palace where the emperor resides.

²⁴ *Ukimon* (floating design) is a technique of weaving by which the design is brought out by warp or weft threads "floating" on top. *Oikake* are decorations attached to the side of an aristocrat's head piece (*kammuri*). They were made out of horse hair that was bound at one end and fanned out at the other. *Oikake* were associated with officials involved with military and police functions.

²⁵ These three represent two generations of powerful Fujiwara regents: Tadamichi (1097-1164), his heir Motozane (1143-1166), and his second son Motofusa (1145-1231).



Figures 8 and 9. Bureaucrats in *ikan* (“Chinese grasses without rings” pattern).

to the account, the middle counselor Motofusa's outfit of formal court dress and outer robe was basically the same as that of the minister of the left Motozane; however, Motofusa's trousers had a "floating" pattern, and, as a military official (middle captain), he had *oikake* decorations on the side of his head piece. Therefore, it is evident that even in the case of the noble brothers Motozane and Motofusa, the patterns on their trousers were different. Thus, in the middle of the twelfth century, even if two aristocrats were brothers, at the different ranks of minister and counselor, the outer robe and trousers of their formal court dress would not be exactly the same. The dress of people unrelated by blood are likely to have been even more different.

Lastly, one problem remains. From the perspective of the history of customs, SUZUKI Keizō (1976) has investigated the text and the pictures on this scroll and suggested that characters A and B are both the fourth-ranked head of the middle captains (*tō no chūjō*). However, Suzuki did not consider the fact that the different patterns on the outer robes corresponded to different court ranks. Suzuki's conclusion that the fourth ranked head of the middle captains was able to wear the same outer robe as a minister is even harder to agree with than the explanation of the mystery characters being Tomo no Yoshio. Therefore, Suzuki's argument is also problematic given the above discussion.

Furthermore, SUZUKI (1976, p. 35) points out the following passage concerning the outer trousers with a pattern of hail in a quince design on a white ground that are worn by the "mystery characters":²⁶

When they wear a woven train, the high nobility should use outer trousers with a "floating" pattern; but upper officials and counselors [*saishō*] and middle captains in the prime of their life wear [hail patterns].²⁷

According to this, if the characters are the head of the middle captains, what he is wearing would have been out of the ordinary; and if they are minister of the left, Minamoto no Makoto, he would be wearing the normal outfit. Therefore, the passage that Suzuki's explanation points out bolsters the idea that characters A and B are the minister of the left, Minamoto no Makoto.

²⁶ *Ka arare mon* literally means "hole-hail design." *Arare* ("hail") has no particular referent, but it usually described small decorative motifs (usually small, five-petal flowers) that are scattered like hail on a textile. From the mid-Heian period, when the nobles of third rank and above wore formal court dress, they wore outer trousers that were lined in red, but which had white on the inside with an embroidered "hail" design.

²⁷ The passage is from the tenth day of the second month of 1161 in *Sankai-ki*, the diary of the late Heian-early Kamakura period noble Fujiwara Tadachika (1131-1195).

Conclusion

On the basis of the clues provided by records of the historical customs concerning the formal court dress that are listed above (especially concerning the shoes and the designs of the outer robe), one can accept that the “mystery person” is Minamoto no Makoto. Yet asserting that, one should question whether that assertion contradicts the overall sense of the story.

If one argues for Minamoto no Makoto, one can say that character A is a depiction of Minamoto no Makoto who, being falsely accused, confusedly went down to the street without putting on his shoes when the Ōten-mon caught on fire. Character B, however, can be explained as showing Minamoto no Makoto waiting worriedly when Minamoto no Yoshifusa makes his direct appeal to Emperor Seiwa. Although there is the argument (put forth by WAKASUGI 1991) that this interpretation is uninteresting from the standpoint of the drama, in addition to being able to clarify the questions concerning the formal court dress, the explanation of the characters being Minamoto no Makoto is the most straightforward interpretation that accords with the story.

If one thinks that the “mystery character” is Minamoto no Makoto, then from one perspective it is strange that although the scroll is called “Illustrated story of Counselor Tomo,” Tomo no Yoshio does not show his face. It seems that one is only able to see one portion of his sleeve and trousers that trail out of the back of his wicker cart (*ajiro kuruma*)²⁸ when he is exiled to Izu in the last scene of *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*. The question then is, did the painter of *Ban Dainagon ekotoba* intentionally refrain from depicting the figure of Tomo no Yoshio? There is that possibility, but here I would like to suggest an alternative interpretation: the character in Figure 10 who wears informal courtier clothes (*nōshi*)—let us call him “character C”—is Tomo no Yoshio. The proof is that Tomo no Yoshio’s sleeve and trousers that can be seen from the wicker cart are basically the same as those of the outfit of character C.

The explanations that try to compare Tomo no Yoshio with character A are all based on the judgment that Tomo no Yoshio must be the character in the first scroll making his false accusation. I agree with that assertion; yet if one asserts that character A is not Tomo no Yoshio, then it is necessary to search elsewhere for him. Thus, there is the possibility that Tomo no Yoshio is the man who rides a horse and

²⁸ *Ajiro kuruma* is a type of ox cart that has covered bamboo or reed wicker on the top and sides. It was used by the fourth and fifth ranks and above when they went on informal errands or long trips.



Figure 10. Character C

wears the informal courtier clothes of a courtier of the third rank or higher.

One can also argue from the perspective of the artistic devices employed by the painter(s) of the scroll. That is, at the very beginning of the first scroll, Tomo no Yoshio witnesses the burning of the Ōtenmon, and he is depicted right in front of the imperial police bureau (*kebiishi*), which faces toward the palace. This composition is suggestive of Tomo no Yoshio leading the imperial police. However, at the extreme opposite end of the entire composition in the last part of the last scroll, Tomo no Yoshio is depicted loaded in a wicker cart after being arrested by the same imperial police. Does not such a contrast clearly communicate Tomo no Yoshio’s regret?

There are still many points that should be explained in this scroll. For example, was there or was there not text between sheets thirteen and fourteen of the first scroll? Lately, it is said (by YAMANE 1994 and others) that there *was* text, and that character A is Tomo no Yoshio. Indeed, there is even the possibility that there was originally a painting in the gap; but the mist that divides up the painting seems to surround characters A and B, Fujiwara Yoshifusa, and the emperor (that is, it is a space that shows a conclusion). Also, one might doubt that there was ever text there at all. Even if there were originally a picture and text, however, it does not detract from the solution to the problem set forth in this article as to why character A is not wearing shoes.

My analysis has focused almost exclusively on clarifying the identity of the mystery characters of *Ban Dainagon ekotoba*. My conclusion that two of the unidentified characters are Minamoto no Makoto is of some significance for understanding *goryō shinkō* as it raises questions as to how individuals who became vengeful spirits were or were not represented after they died.

ABBREVIATION

Gunsho kaidai: *Zoku Gunsho kaidai* 続群書解題 part 3, *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kansei-kai* 続群書類従完成会, ed., *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū* 続群書類従, *Keifu-bu* 系譜部, vols. 1–3. Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1962–1963.

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