

# The World View of *Genpei Jōsuiki*

MINOBE Shigekatsu

## INTRODUCTION

The “beginning of the world”<sup>1</sup> inaugurated by Minamoto no Yoritomo at the collapse of the Taira family (Heishi) in a nationwide rebellion that followed some twenty years of glory enjoyed by that family during a period of great historical transition at the end of the twelfth century not only saddled the people of the age with various mundane problems, it also gave them much to think about concerning the nature of humanity and the fate of the world. *Heike monogatari* deals with this significant historical event, but not as an attempt to reconstruct something that happened once and then was finished. Rather, it transfers those events to a more ordinary dimension, and as a literary work it attempts to relive them in terms of the tragedy of pathos.

Woven into the creative efforts of the writers of this work we will find a strong set of what could be called “interpretative principles” (*kaishakuteki genri*). These constitute an attempt to seize the concrete, realistic and flowing phenomena of the world from a standpoint that will remain unchanging and solidified, and are different in essence from the “creative principles” which make up a work of literary fiction. It is possible to view the fact that *Heike monogatari* exists in such a great number of textual variants from the perspective of these various interpretative principles: the multiple texts are the result of the addition of new interpretative principles which reflect the fluctuations of the real world and the abandonment of other principles.

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Translated by W. Michael Kelsey.

1. This phrase is used, for example, in the diary of Kujō Kanezane, *Gyokuyō*, where it can be found in the entries for 12/16/1185, and in a prayer written by Jien after the Jōkyū disturbance in 1221 (see Akamatsu 1973, pp. 283–287).

There are numerous interpretative principles at work in *Heike monogatari*, and it is possible to deal with them in a variety of ways. In this paper, however, I will treat the brief glory and the dramatic collapse of the Taira family and the primary interpretation of these events, something which can be seen, for example, in such works as Jien's *Gukanshō*. This is a principle which is clearly based on political, national and historical world views that strongly resemble those of the *sekkanke* (the Fujiwara civil dictator). The political, national and world views of *Gukanshō* could be summarized as follows:<sup>2</sup>

First, the realms of politics and government—that is to say, the proper undertakings of the imperial order—are the prescribed, harmonious undertaking based on the pledges of the gods during the founding period of imperial rule. At the founding of the Japanese nation, the ancestral deity of the imperial family, Amaterasu no Ōmikami, pledged to the founding deity of the Fujiwara family, Amanokoyane no Mikoto, that her descendants would be the rulers of the Japanese nation and his would be the ministers in charge of the political apparatus. The claim is, in short, that imperial and governmental authority were fixed by the gods at the very beginning. It was this cooperation that enabled the imperial law to control the country as a matter of course.

Second, the ethical principle that must be protected by both the rulers and the people is being carried out in the world, and this is the rightful assumption of power by the imperial forces.

Third is the principle of the combination of imperial and Buddhist law. Imperial law is, in short, assisted by Buddhist law, which first made it possible for the rightful undertaking to begin; it is further explained that the fact that Buddhist law is in turn assisted by imperial law has made its dissemination possible.

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2. One feels the need to deal with the topic of the angry spirits which obstructed imperial authority and provided other kinds of influence in *Gukanshō*, and with the role of angry spirits and other evil spirits in *Heike monogatari*, but I have omitted any such discussion from the present paper. *Gukanshō*, it should be noted, contains many claims that reflect the independent position of the Kujō family at about the time of the Jōkyū disturbance, but the position outlined here is one shared by the Fujiwara house.

Fourth is the fact that since the Hogen and Heiji disturbances the force of the imperial law has been weakening, and that this is due to the fact that the politics of the imperial family and the Fujiwara family have fallen into disharmony with the age, and thus the basic principle is no longer being carried out. To restore this basic principle, it is held, the Minamoto family (Genji) arose as a new partner for the imperial side. It is said that the participation of this family in imperial authority was pledged and forecast through a vow of the Genji family deity, Hachiman Daibosatsu, to guard the hundred kings.

This fourth point is a reflection of the reality of the rise of the Genji following the defeat of the Taira, but it is recognized as a change necessary for the continuing preservation of the basic principles.

We can read the *Heike monogatari* interpretation of the glory and collapse of the Taira family basically as follows: The right held by Taira no Kiyomori and his family to intensify their glory was not guaranteed in the initial pledges of the gods during the founding of the nation.

The narrative in *Heike* from the account of the first Heike history to the story of Tadamori's promotion to the high aristocracy at the beginning of the work, and the particulars of this promotion and the opposition of the aristocrats to it (see Kitagawa and Tsuchida I, pp. 5-10), does more than merely show Kiyomori's roots. It also shows that the family does not fall within the initial pledge of the gods. It is understood that such a family assumed the seat of glory on the basis of the efforts of a new set of deities, who ultimately had no connection with the imperial authority but who had recently begun to harvest such authority. The narration holds that the greatest significance here is in the efforts of the deities Kumano Gongen and Itsukushima Myōjin,\* particularly the latter.

Kiyomori received the power to overtake the Fujiwara family

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\* The Itsukushima Myōjin is the daughter of a dragon living in the sea near present-day Hiroshima Prefecture; she is worshiped at a shrine there. Kiyomori revived this shrine in the mid-twelfth century and popularized the deity.

TRANSLATOR.

and approach the imperial authority by the assistance of Itsukushima Myōjin, a fact which was in violation of the fixed harmony of imperial authority, and for that reason alone it was necessary for him to protect the basic principles in order to maintain his hold on authority.

Kiyomori, however, made light of both imperial and governmental authority, and ignored the principle of the combination of imperial and Buddhist law as well, abusing both. Thus, within the larger drama of history, the between acts play of the Taira family came to its sudden and tragic close.

The historical interpretation holding that the gods manipulate the strings of the drama of history from behind the scenes is evident in the dream of a young samurai which suggests the sudden end to the between acts play. This dream is frequently taken up in discussions of the dating of *Heike monogatari*, and can be summarized as follows:

At what appeared to be a governmental council of deities in service of Amaterasu no Ōmikami a woman (that is, Itsukushima Myōjin) was driven from her seat, which was the farthest from the center of power. An older god in a seat of more authority (that is, Hachiman Daibosatsu) proclaimed that he would give the sword of power which had been lodged with the Heike to Minamoto Yoritomo. Then a nearby elder god (that is, Kasuga Daimyōjin) said that he wanted the sword to be later presented to his own descendants.<sup>3</sup>

What attracts my attention in this story is that Itsukushima Myōjin, who had previously acquired the sword of authority for the Taira clan, is given only a low seat on the council of gods who determine the fate of the imperial law, and is in such a weak position as to be simply driven from that. This indicates that the writer of *Heike monogatari* understood the qualifications of the Taira to participate in the imperial authority as being basically weak.

Another interesting point is the fact that it was understood that

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3. In the various texts from the Yasaka school, however, Kasuga Daimyōjin does not appear.

what had been entrusted to the Taira was this sword. This sword was traditionally presented to the leader of forces charged with putting down rebellions against the court, and was basically different from imperial authority, being a symbol limited to military authority. That it was understood that such a limited authority had been granted to the Taira by the gods tends to expell this clan, which in reality had burrowed deep into the heart of the imperial and governmental systems, to a formal existence as outsiders. This is essentially the same view that I noted above of those taking the perspective of the Fujiwara ministers.

This interpretative principle of *Heike monogatari* is thus donned in the mythical garb of a pledge made by the gods in the early days of the world, but the idea itself is an interpretation based on humanism, growing from historical reality, and is purely and simply rationalistic at core. I do not know if it should be ascribed to the influence of *Gukanshō*, or thought of as a reflection of ideas common among those supporters of the Fujiwara who existed at the beginning of the Kamakura period.

#### NARICHIKA, KIYOMORI AND FOX WORSHIP

*Genpei jōsuiki*, among the various texts of *Heike monogatari*, represents a sort of ultimate expression of *Heike* as historical novel. *Genpei jōsuiki*'s character as a historical novel is provided by the fact that its interpretative principles are linked closely to its narrative impulses, and work on a greater variety of levels more thoroughly than is the case with the other *Heike* texts.

The title itself, *Genpei jōsuiki*, or "The Rise and Fall of the Minamoto and the Taira," shows that the work takes the interpretative principle, the fatalistic view that the mighty must decline, to a much deeper level than do the other texts of *Heike*. We can understand the fact that all of the *Heike monogatari* texts begin with the prefatory statement about the bell at the Gion Temple and stress the principle that "the mighty must decline" (*jōsha hissui*) as functioning as one interpretative principle informing the work as a whole, but the principle plays a unique role in *Genpei*

*jōsuiki*.

In the Kakuichibon texts,\* these words themselves are used once in the prologue and additionally only one more time, in the description of the decline of Narichika's family, but the general idea encompasses all the various declines treated in *Heike monogatari*, beginning with that of the Taira family. In *Genpei jōsuiki* this is expressed conspicuously in both the language and the structure of the work. In this book, the expression "the mighty must decline" is used a total of ten times, excluding the more famous reference in the prologue:

Once each in the stories of the decline of Narichika's family and his place of exile.

Twice in narrations concerned with Kiyomori's death.

Once in the account of the Taira family leaving the capital.

Once in the response made by Tsunemori after he receives his son's head.

Once in a sermon of Hōnen to Shigehira.

Once in the sermon of a priest to Munemori, before his head is cut off.

Once in the thoughts of the ex-emperor Goshirakawa during his visit to Ōhara.

Once in the tale of Kenreimon'in's account of her experiences in the six levels of existence, concerning the world of humans.

In *Genpei jōsuiki* the principle that the mighty must decline not only permeates the work as an ether-like transparency, there is a marked tendency for it to be clearly concentrated around the tragedies of the Narichika and Taira families. The book sees the functioning of the law of cause and effect in both of these tragedies, and in strongly emphasizing their similarities it aims for the establishment of a structural similarity, albeit loose, between the two.

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\* The Kakuichibon, put together by a blind Buddhist monk named Kakuichi around 1371, is now the most widely read of the texts of *Heike*, though *Genpei jōsuiki* must be said to have more historical importance. The Kakuichibon is based on chanted texts, and *Genpei jōsuiki* on reading texts. TRANSLATOR.

In the various texts of *Heike monogatari* we have the account of how Narichika, in the competition for the rank of general, has various prayers made in order to attain the position; among those efforts he employs a man who follows Dakiniten,\* an alien Buddhist deity, and worships a fox. When Narichika is defeated in this competition he leads a coup d'état and the results are utter disaster. In the *Kakuichibon* and various other texts we find at the end of this episode the notation that the return for coveting a post one should not have through the worship of a heathen deity was the birth of this tragedy.

Such speculations on the cause and effect between this religious practice and Narichika's tragedy are not to be found in *Genpei jōsuiki*, but the story itself is recorded. There is, further, a story in this book that is recorded in no other text than the *Nagatobon*, about how Kiyomori in his youth worshiped Dakiniten to insure his own personal glory. The story is as follows:

Very poor, Kiyomori had gone to assist at the house of Ienari, Narichika's father. At that time, in his youth, Kiyomori learned from one of Ienari's retainer priests that he who followed the law of Daiitoku Myōō would be able to attain any goal, even to become emperor. Thus Kiyomori began the worship of Daiitoku Myōō, and he continued this for seven years. Later, when he was hunting, a fox he thought he had shot suddenly transformed itself into a beautiful woman, and said that if he would not kill it, it would see to it that he was granted all his desires, so Kiyomori spared the fox's life. From that time, Kiyomori began to worship Dakiniten, even though he knew that whatever benefits he achieved from such alien laws would not be passed on to his descendants. He was able to receive his power and glory from these two sources (*Genpei jōsuiki*, pp. 12-15).

Kiyomori's family and that of Narichika had strong connections because of Kiyomori's relationship with Ienari, the fact that Kiyomori's daughter married Narichika's son Naritsune, and other similar marriage relationships. Because of Kiyomori's illegitimate glory

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\* Dakiniten is also called Yaksa. He is a demon who feeds on the hearts of men, and is associated with foxes in Japan. TRANSLATOR.

and Narichika's illegitimate desires, tragedy first struck Narichika, then ill fate visited Kiyomori.

In short, the facts that both men first worshiped Dakiniten because of an illegitimate desire and then, after a temporary period of glory, met with tragedy, and subsequently came to be emphasized as manifestations of the principle that the mighty must decline, enable us to understand that the story of Narichika has a structure and theme similar to the tale of Kiyomori. Thus the story of Kiyomori's worship of Dakiniten is, in *Genpei jōsuiki*, more than a simple episode; it must be seen as having great significance.

#### KIYOMORI'S BELIEF IN DAKINITEN

I would speculate that the story of Kiyomori's worship of Dakiniten as found in *Genpei jōsuiki* and *Nagatobon Heike monogatari* was not made up out of the blue by the writers of these texts, but rather grew from some kind of base.

There is a woman called the Gion Consort in *Heike monogatari* who is said in some texts to be Kiyomori's mother;<sup>4</sup> the secret of her success in the world is linked to her worship of Dakiniten. This is related in conjunction with the tale of the secret of how the founder of the Ono branch of Shingon esoteric Buddhism, Ninkai, leaped through the promotion ladder in a single bound to the top rung of Sōjō:

Ninkai worshiped Dakiniten for a thousand days (probably because of his desire to be made Sōjō) at Inari Peak. During that time Gion no Shōnin Hōshi sent his daughter to Ninkai every day with food offerings. Because of this virtue, the young lady was taken as a consort by the retired emperor Shirakawa-in, and came to be called the Consort of Gion. Ninkai was then able, through her influence, to leap straight up the ladder to Sōjō (*Keiran jūyōshū*, p. 633b).

4. The various texts intended for reading, however, do not hold that the Consort of Gion was the mother of Kiyomori. *Genpei jōsuiki*, for example, says that Kiyomori's mother was Hyōe no Suke no Tsubone, who had no connection with the Consort of Gion. The *Enkyōbon* and *Nagatobon* texts have his mother as a lady in the service of the Consort of Gion. For further information on the Consort of Gion, see Akamatsu 1980, pp. 147-167.

The Gion Consort was a woman of unknown origin and was made a consort of Shirakawa-in for unusual reasons. Although she was never formally given the title of Nyogō (“Consort”), she was called “Consort” by the people (see *Ima kagami*, p. 99), and was a remarkable woman. There is a story that even during the period in which Shirakawa-in was rigorously following the Buddhist precepts against the taking of life she sent people out hunting every day so as to feed herself fresh meat. She is painted, for a woman of her time period, as an extraordinary lover of meat (*Kojidan*, p. 21). The section in *Heike monogatari* on the “Gion Consort” (Kitagawa and Tsuchida I, pp. 377–385) does not touch at all on this topic. The fact, however, that both mother and son approached the imperial authority through Dakiniten is in the oral background here, and causes us to speculate on connections.

The story of Kiyomori’s worship of Dakiniten is linked, among other things, to his belief in the Itsukushima Benzaiten. The deity venerated at the Itsukushima Shrine in Aki Province was said to be the daughter of the sea dragon king, and somewhere along the line belief in her became merged with belief in the Buddhist deity Benzaiten, with the two being worshiped as one. Benzaiten, in turn, is linked to the deity Uka-gami, who was held to have the form of a snake, and the story that Benzaiten sometimes took the form of a white snake was old in Japan.

There are three apocryphal sutras, written in Japan, outlining the worship of Uka-gami.<sup>5</sup> These are still extant and we can, from them, understand the doctrine involved. The Itsukushima Benzaiten is connected geographically to the Chikubushima Benzaiten in Ōmi Province, and also to the Enoshima Benzaiten in Sagami Province, and the three attained a certain fame by the early Muromachi period as the “Three Benzaiten” (see *Keiran jūyōshū*, pp. 625a–625b). Benzaiten, then, at some unknown period of time, came to be thought identical to Dakiniten. This

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5. These three are the *Ukayatontoku darani*, the *Ukajinshō hakujajigen*, and the *Ukajinnō darani* sutras.

explanation was the result of a confusion of esoteric Buddhism and Shinto in the content of the services for Dakiniten and Uka-gami.

There is a story in both *Genpei jōsuiki* and *Sankō Genpei jōsuiki*—where it is quoted as appearing in another text, *Nantobon Heike monogatari*—of an appearance made by Benzaiten during a pilgrimage of Tsunemasa to Chikubushima. In this variant one can see the reflection of such esoteric Buddhist practices. The other texts all record that this manifestation came in the form of a white dragon, but in the texts noted above, it is recorded that a white fox came jumping down from the altar.

In the 1318 Tendai esoteric commentary *Keiran jūyōshū*, the following anecdote about Ninshō, a Ritsu monk famous during the middle of the Kamakura period, is found in a volume of narratives about Benzaiten:

While Ninshō was practicing religious seclusion in the dragon cave at the Enoshima Benzaiten, three foxes appeared before him. These were buried under the residence for the chief monk of the temple Gokurakuji and two other temples, and the three temples then flourished. After his death, the monk who succeeded Ninshō at Gokurakuji decided to rebuild the residence, and had it taken down. At that time a white snake appeared on the spot. The workmen killed it. Gokurakuji was soon destroyed by fire, and this incident was suspected as its cause (*Keiran jūyōshū*, p. 628a).

The author of *Keiran jūyōshū* makes his own speculation at the end of this story that Ninshō was really conducting services for Uka-gami at Enoshima, and notes that the fact that the fox transformed itself into a white snake is in agreement with a now unknown sutra called *Ukatojimekyō*.

It appears that the theory that Benzaiten and Dakiniten were identical was also held by the practitioners of Yin-Yang fortune-telling (*onmyōdō*), and in the *onmyōdō* book of secret teachings known as *Hokinaiden* we have the following entry:

The day of the snake, younger brother of earth, according to the zodiac, is from the Shinto point of view, a good day. The reason for this is said to be that on that day the three daughters of an Indian fox king flew to Japan, where one appeared at each of the three (Benzaiten) shrines—Itsukushima,

Enoshima, and Chikubushima.<sup>6</sup>

The Dakiniten who was thus held to be the same as Benzaiten was identified strongly as a god of wealth, but there is another face to Dakiniten, as I shall discuss in the following section—that of an alien (*gehō*) deity. Both the story of Kiyomori's worship of Dakiniten and the tale of the white fox of Chikubushima have in their backgrounds the theory that these two deities (Dakiniten and Benzaiten) are the same, and both stories grew out of the traditions of the Taira belief in Itsukushima. In this sense they can be recognized as developing from a common base. There is, however, no correspondence in the narrative development of the two stories. The story about Kiyomori's worship of Dakiniten reverberates against a legend about Dakiniten I shall discuss in the next section and as such becomes an interpretative principle appended to *Genpei jōsuiki* to shed special light on the theme of the inevitability of Kiyomori's collapse. In addition to being a principle to explain the collapse, the Dakiniten element becomes an extremely important factor in the advancement of the plot, and it is unique among the various elements that formulate the narrative world of *Genpei jōsuiki*.

#### KING HANSOKU AND DAKINITEN BELIEF

The commentary *Keiran jūyōshū* records that it is written in the sutra *Mizoukyō* that those who worship foxes will become monarchs. It is thus also said that this is the reason the emperor carries out an esoteric Buddhist rite, in which he worships Dakiniten, at the time of his ascension. The author also adds his own idea to the end of this article, that the reason that King Hansoku in the Ninnō Sutra, who becomes king through his worship of a deity called Tsuka-gami, is able to do so because of a relationship

6. In *Hokinaiden* (p. 399), postulated to have been written at the end of the Kamakura period by Abe no Harutoki (see Nishida 1966, pp. 262–264). In preparing this summary I have also consulted a commentary on *Hokinaiden* called *Hokishō*, written in 1629. The parenthetical material is from *Hokishō*.

between Tsuka-gami and Dakiniten.

The Ninnō Sutra had already, by the early sixth century in China, come to be suspected as apocryphal. It says that the Buddha, in order to protect their kingdoms and to provide a teaching that would bring peace to the nations, explicated the profound law of *Hannya haramitsu* (designed to lead believers to Nirvana), to the monarchs of sixteen major nations. The Ninnō Sutra is also referred to as the “national guardian sutra,” and, as we can surmise from that name, there were services connected with it whose purpose was to guard the country from disaster and to invite wealth. Its central section is its fifth chapter, where the story of King Hansoku is related:

Long ago, in an Indian kingdom, there was a prince named Hansoku. Wishing to ascend to the throne he consulted with the teacher of an alien way, who advised him to present the heads of a thousand kings to the god Tsuka-gami, and he willingly began carrying out that rite. He had already captured 999 kings, and was searching for the final one, when he finally seized the King Fumyō. Fumyō pleaded for a further day of freedom, saying that he wished to fulfill a previous vow to make a food offering to a Buddhist monk and to hear a Buddhist service before he died. Hansoku permitted this, and sent Fumyō back to his native land. King Fumyō there invited a hundred monks and sponsored a great service, and, finally, hearing an explication of the principle that the mighty must decline, he became enlightened. The next day Fumyō returned as promised to Hansoku, and taught the words he had learned to the 999 kings, having them chant the phrase. Hansoku heard these kings chanting, and thus being instructed by Fumyō he chanted them himself and became enlightened. Then he released the thousand kings, passed his claim to the throne to his younger brother, and became a monk.<sup>7</sup>

This story, then, holds that hearing an explication of the phrase “the mighty must decline” was a power sufficient to reform Hansoku, who had hoped to seize the throne by resorting to alien teachings, and to cause him to become a Buddhist monk. I think

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7. *Ninnōgyō*, pp. 829a–830c. A variant of the story can also be found in *Gengukyō*, pp. 423c–427a.

this tale is linked closely to the thematic aspect of *Genpei jōsuiki* as expressed through its interpretative principles, but I will postpone discussion of these links until the following section, and here will discuss Tsuka-gami belief.

The summary above was based on the old interpretation of the Ninnō Sutra, but according to the new interpretation, the deity Tsuka-gami is “Daikokuten, the deity who lives among the grave mounds.” In a footnote to a 756 edition of the Ninnō Sutra we have the following tale, quoted from yet another sutra:

The deity Daikoku Tenshin lived in a forest in a kingdom of India, in a place where corpses were abandoned, and was a demon who commanded a large number of evil spirits. He had several treasures, such as a potent which could enable one to fly, or medicine to enable one to become invisible, and to those who would bring him an agreed-upon amount of raw human flesh and blood he would bestow some of these potents. If, however, those who came to make this trade did not sufficiently protect themselves magically beforehand, the evil spirits in the service of Daikokuten would become invisible and steal some of the human flesh; Daikokuten would then demand from the traders some of their own flesh to make up for the shortage. As long as the amount was below that which had been agreed upon before, the trade could not be made. Thus the traders would have to make up the difference from their own flesh, but some of this would then be stolen, and after this process had been repeated a number of times, the traders would eventually find that all their flesh and blood had been taken. If, however, they sufficiently protected themselves by magic charms, the trade could be made successfully, and by the power of the potents they received the traders would be able to fulfill any of their desires. Also, when they wished to worship this deity, people could do so by presenting human flesh and blood. If they did this, they could claim the deity as their war god, and through his powerful protection would triumph in a variety of battles (see *Ninnōgyō-so*, pp. 490a–490b).

The theory that the god of the grave mounds was Daikokuten was also transmitted in Japan,<sup>8</sup> but, as was the case with the selec-

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8. See *Ninnōgyō gokokushō* (“Commentary on the national protection aspects of the Ninnō Sutra”), written in 1018 by Kakuchō, p. 320. See also *Asabashō* (written in 1275), p. 2263, and *Keiran jūyōshū*, pp. 638c–639a.

tion from *Keiran jūyōshū* quoted above, there was also a theory that this deity was Dakiniten. Dakiniten was said to be able to know of people's deaths six months before the event, and was said to eat the livers of those who had died. The following story was used to explain the origin of this belief:

Dakini originally was said to eat the livers of the living, but in order to put an end to this practice Dainichi Nyorai transformed himself into Daikokuten and beat Dakini. When Dakini then complained that he would not have any food to keep him alive, Daikokuten taught him the art of knowing six months before a person's death that the person would die, so that he would be able to have first claim on the livers of the dead.<sup>9</sup>

Within the overall system of esoteric Buddhism, Dakiniten is said to belong to the realm of King Yama of the dead, but there is also a theory, based on the story quoted above, that he is a part of the entourage of Daikokuten. This theory also existed, to a certain extent, within esoteric Buddhism, if we allow for the substitution of Dakiniten for Daikokuten as the "true form" of the god Tsuka-gami in the tale of King Hansoku.

There is a Japanese work called *Tamamo no Mae* which quotes the story of King Hansoku, and assigns a major role to the god of the grave mounds, seen here as a fox. This is a very significant story in any consideration of the unique interpretative principles at work in *Genpei jōsuiki*, so even though it is well known, I will summarize it briefly:

During the reign of Emperor Toba, a beautiful woman appeared mysteriously at his palace. She was a brilliant woman, who had the wisdom and the education to allow her to reply to any question asked her by anyone in the court, including the emperor, and she was an unparalleled beauty who gave off a wondrous fragrance and emitted a light from her body. The people called her Lady Tamamo no Mae. The emperor felt some fear of her, but he was overcome by her beauty and took her as a consort. The emperor then fell to a serious illness, the cause of which was not well known, and none of the medical treatment he underwent was effective. He thus ordered the fortuneteller Abe no Yasunari to make a divina-

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9. Both *Asabashō*, p. 2263, and *Kakuzenshō* (written between 1173–1217), p. 2213, quote this.

tion, from which it was learned that the cause of the emperor's illness was the woman Tamamo no Mae. The fortuneteller said that if the woman were killed, the illness would be cured, and he explained her origins as follows:

She was an eight-hundred-year-old, two-tailed fox, from the Nasuno Plain in Shimotsuke Province, and in a previous existence she had been the fox, the Tsuka-gami, worshiped by King Hansoku in the Ninnō Sutra. She had, as that fox, inveigled King Hansoku into bringing the heads of a thousand kings, but had been deprived of her desire through the power of Buddhism, and thus had become an enemy of Buddhism. Through her cycle of existence she would always be born as a fox. She would then appear as a queen or a servant lady or a courtier at the courts of countries where Buddhism flourished, approach the king, and, taking his life, endeavor to have herself installed as the king of the land; such was her pledge of revenge. She thus became the empress of the Chinese emperor Yu Wang of the Chou dynasty, and after causing his decline she came to Japan, where she was born as the fox of the Nasuno Plain. She transformed herself into Tamamo no Mae and planned to destroy the Buddhist law, kill the emperor and become ruler of Japan herself. This was the story as told by Abe no Yasunari.

Thus a special *onmyōdō* ceremony was held, and she was made to perform the role of shamaness. At the point where the magical text had been about half completed, she disappeared. Thus the court commanded two Eastern warriors, Kazusa no Suke Hirotsune and Miwa no Suke Yoshiaki, to kill the fox. The two of them trained tracking dogs, polished up their fox-hunting skills, and, with the idea that even demons should follow the imperial law, prayed for the help of the deities and set off for the Nasuno Plain, where they conquered the fox. They deposited the rare treasures that appeared from various parts of the fox's body in appropriate temples and houses, and they sent the white needle to Yoritomo, who was then sent into exile to the province of Izu.<sup>10</sup>

It seems clear that the idea that Dakiniten is an enemy of both imperial and Buddhist law as it is found in the Ninnō Sutra is present in the intellectual background to this story. The story, then, causes one to think of the suggestive meaning held by the tale of Kiyomori's worship of Dakiniten found in *Genpei jōsuiki*.

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10. The original and a variant text of this story can be found in Nishizawa and Ishiguro 1977. The story is also contained in *Hokishō*. I consider the example from *Hokishō* to be especially significant because I believe that the story *Tamamo no Mae* was strongly associated with the activities of the *onmyōdō* fortunetellers.

The story of the Chinese Chou dynasty emperor Yu Wang referred to in the tale summarized above is itself based on yet another tale, that of the favorite concubine of Yu Wang, a woman named Pan-ssu. It is found in the section on the Chou dynasty of the *Shi ching* ("Book of history"), but there the true form of Pan-ssu is not said to be a fox. There is, however, a similar story in another Chinese source, and in that tale the heroine is a fox. This tale seems to have merged with the story of the famous concubine Ta Chi (see *Heike monogatari zenchūshaku*, p. 315), and the product of this merger is the tale of Pan-ssu, alluded to in the story of Tamamo no Mae.

In the "Hōka no sata" ("fire signals") chapter of *Heike monogatari* we have another story of Pan-ssu, in which her true form is said to be that of a fox (see Kitagawa and Tsuchida I, pp. 113–117). The following tale is appended to the story of Pan-ssu in *Genpei jōsuiki*, in order to explain her lineage:

During the reign of Emperor Li Wang of the Chou dynasty, two white dragons appeared in the grounds of the palace. The emperor thought they must have appeared to pray for the safety of the kingdom, and had them taken away without killing them. When they left, there was foam in the palace grounds. There was a beautiful jewel in this foam. Both Li Wang and each of the next two emperors after him kept this closely guarded in a box, and thus the country was peaceful and the people prospered. During his reign, Yu Wang became the first emperor to open the box and look in. There was no jewel, but a blue turtle inside. The emperor loved this turtle and cared for it, but a seven-year-old girl who was to become his queen loved the turtle, had sex with it, and became pregnant. A child's song foretelling that the country would perish due to a bow of mulberry and an arrow of the chaste tree became popular at that time. Eventually a man appeared in the capital selling mulberry bows and chaste tree arrows, and was seized and thrown into jail. The pregnant girl was driven from court and, while she was wandering, came past the prison. The prisoner shared his own ration of food with her and cared for her. She eventually gave birth to a girl child. When this daughter grew up her reputation as a beauty was high, and the emperor summoned her as his queen. This was Pan-ssu. She had the man released in her gratitude. The man was actually the king of a neighboring country, and in order to do away with Yu Wang, had worshiped Dakiniten. He was

selling the mulberry bow and the chaste tree arrow as a symbol of Dakiniten. Everything had been his trick (*Genpei jōsuiki*, pp. 150–152).

This story, too, grows from the belief that Dakiniten and Benzaiten are one and the same, and explicates the ancient tale of Pan-ssu as a being grounded in an effort to bring the law of the land into decline through the worship of Dakiniten. It has no immediate surface links to the story of Kiyomori's Dakiniten worship, but it has, I believe, been given a connection on a much deeper level. This story, along with the tale of Tamamo no Mae, is similar to the Kiyomori story not only in content, but also in the fact that it is a karmic history of various attempts to bring the law to decline through several lifetimes, and also because it contains the motif of attempting to destroy the law of the land through Dakiniten worship. Such a connection can be postulated to be in the oral background of both tales.

The story of Kiyomori's worship of Dakiniten resembles the story of Tamamo no Mae and also the story of King Hansoku in that they are all variations of a story whose plot features an attempt and subsequent failure to seize the imperial authority through worship of Dakiniten. As such, it seems to have functioned as a kind of appendix to *Genpei jōsuiki*.

#### DAKINITEN AND THE FALL OF THE HEIKE

The story of Kiyomori's worship of Dakiniten combines with the central interpretative principles noted in the first section to become an attempt to explain the reason for the temporary glory and decline of the Heike family. On the other hand, the aspect of vice inherent in this alien form of worship, lewd and tabooed as it is, can be thought to provide a unique plot to *Genpei jōsuiki*.

We should see this plot as opening up right at the beginning of the book and closing near the end, with the explicit account of the incest between Munemori and his younger sister, Kenreimon'in. Munemori was captured during the battle of Dan no Ura, and when he and other prisoners are paraded through the streets of the capital, a leperous monk is used to tell this story (*Genpei jōsuiki*,

p. 1097), which is also related by Kenreimon'in at Ōhara, when she faces Go Shirakawa-in and tells him of her experiences in the six levels of existence; the tale of incest is related as an experience on the level of the animals (*Genpei jōsuiki*, p. 1205).

The leperous monk goes so far as to say that the Emperor Antoku was the son of Kenreimon'in and Munemori. The lewd and taboo-breaking actions of Kiyomori's children have thus gone so far as to soil the very imperial dignity. If we interpret such accounts as relating the nadir of the Heishi's destruction of imperial law, then we must see the tale as providing the finishing touch to the story of Kiyomori's worship of Dakiniten. This type of plot is buried in *Genpei jōsuiki*, and manifested in accounts of King Hansoku and Pan-ssu, and also in the account of Tamamo no Mae.

Neither the story of Tamamo no Mae nor the story of King Hansoku, however, makes any appearance in *Genpei jōsuiki*. For this reason it is difficult to link the tale of Tamamo no Mae to *Genpei jōsuiki*, but the story of King Hansoku is somewhat different. In this case we know that the story was common knowledge, as is known by the circulation of the Ninnō Sutra, where it is found in the central chapter, on the protection of imperial authority,<sup>11</sup> so we can, it seems to me, speculate that it is a part of the background information available to the readers of *Genpei jōsuiki*.

The words, "the mighty must decline," contained in the prologue to *Heike monogatari*, are a part of a passage which in its entirety evokes the image of Buddha's death. Further, they are used so as to form a unit with the phrase, "all undertakings are transitory" (*shogyō mujō*; *Nehankyō*, p. 450a), which is also in the Nehan Sutra. Thus it would seem reasonable to assume that the phrase "the mighty must decline" is also based on the Nehan

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11. There is a notation, for example, in *Asabashō* that the second head monk of the temple Gokuraku-ji in Kamakura, Kyōbō Zen'e, said that the central portion of the Ninnō Sutra was in its chapter of the protection of the country. See *Asabashō*, p. 1148.

Sutra, for the same phrase is found there, though in a different chapter from the phrase “all undertakings are transitory” (see *Nehankyō*, p. 373a). The phrase would, then, have a fairly broad meaning, as a variation of one of the rules governing the phenomenological world, that that which has life must necessarily decay.

The phrase takes yet another meaning, however, from the fact that the words are followed by other phrases: “Success is but for a short time,” and “even the brave die in the end.” These are in turn followed by examples of people who rebelled against or seized the imperial authority in both China and Japan (See Kitagawa and Tsuchida I, p. 5).

The connection with passages such as these which follow them emphasizes a more limited meaning of the words, “the mighty,” associating them with rebels against or people who have seized the imperial authority. This use of “the mighty must decline” can be thought of as being based on the phrase as it is found in the Ninnō Sutra’s chapter on the protection of the nation (*Ninnōgyō* p. 830b).

As I suggested above, though, the theme “the mighty must decline” has, in *Genpei jōsuiki*, taken on a special significance in the form of legitimizing the collapse of the families of the Heishi and Narichika. Thus, whether or not the *Genpei jōsuiki* writer took these words from the Ninnō Sutra, the problem immediately arises as to whether or not Kiyomori’s worship of Dakiniten, which has been appended especially to *Genpei jōsuiki*, extends to the work’s thematic level. As I noted in the third and fourth sections of this paper, *Genpei jōsuiki* seems to have risen from a conglomeration of esoteric Buddhism, Shinto, and Yin-Yang beliefs and practices. I believe that at the heart of its interpretative principles we can find an inextricable presence of the story of King Hansoku as found in the Ninnō Sutra.

This is one of the most characteristic of the interpretative principles that give definition to *Genpei jōsuiki* as a historical novel. It opens up a new vista to us in this text, in the tale of the Heike as naked, overcome by their violent human desires and emotions.

GLOSSARY

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|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Amanokoyane no Mikoto 天兒屋根命 | Kasuga Daimyōjin 春日大明神 |
| Amaterasu no Ōmikami 天照大御神  | Kumano Gongen 熊野権現     |
| Benzaiten 弁才天               | Minamoto 源             |
| Daiitoku Myōō 大威徳明王         | Mizoukyō 未曾有経          |
| Daikokuten 大黒天              | Nagatobon 長門本          |
| Dakiniten 茶枳尼天              | Nantobon 南都本           |
| gehō 外法                     | onmyōdō 陰陽道            |
| Genji 源氏                    | sekkanke 撰閤家           |
| Hachiman Daibosatsu 八幡大菩薩   | shogyō mujō 諸行無常       |
| Heishi 平氏                   | Taira 平                |
| Itsukushima Myōjin 厳島明神     | Tsuka-gami 塚神          |
| jōsha hissui 盛者必衰           | Uka-gami 宇賀神           |
| kaishakuteki genri 解釈の原理    | Ukatojimekyō 宇賀刀自女経    |
| Kakuichibon 覚一本             | Yasakabon 八坂本          |

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