Introduction

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The title of this volume is taken from a formulaic description of battle found throughout the Heike monogatari (Tales of the Heike) corpus and elsewhere in Japanese war tales. Warriors fill the field “like clouds or mists” (unka no gotoku 雲霞の如く), so dense that they blur into a confused mass that is conveyed through the unexpected metaphor of clouds or mist, something essentially ephemeral. The seemingly paradoxical conjoining of the forceful solidity of battling troops and the ethereality of clouds or mists seems particularly fitting for the hybrid cultural, political, and linguistic space in which both the Heike and nō developed. Linguistically, unka no gotoku brings together the popular poetic images of clouds (kumo くも/雲) and mist (kasumi かすみ/霞) in a Sino-Japanese word (unka 雲霞) embedded in an expression that relies on both Chinese and Japanese syntax. Such complex expressions became increasingly prevalent in the new kinds of literature and drama emerging during the medieval period, and they represent a salient reflection of the negotiation of the lyrical, phonetic space of waka 和歌 poetry and Heian-period (794–1185) monogatari 物語 and the sorts of official, historical discourse associated with writing in Chinese characters that are emblematic of the medieval age.

The experimental intermingling of lyrical and historiographical modes in linguistic contexts is mirrored on social registers as well. The warrior class, which had been isolated socially and geographically from authority and cultural production throughout the Heian period, began to encroach on political and cultural spaces that had formerly been occupied only by the central aristocracy. While on the one hand, reverence for established forms and a profound nostalgia for the past remained central to the way the new power-holders thought and wrote about their world, on the other, they were confronted by new realities
that shaped the way they framed these impulses and expressed them in literature and drama. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the *Heike monogatari* and the nō drama, two arts deeply involved in articulating the relationship between the new cultural terrain of the present in their reanimations of the past.

No strong consciousness of the warriors as a literary or historical subject occurred before the medieval period. A few early records of warrior exploits had appeared during the late Heian period; it is only with the several conflicts in the 1150s through the 1180s that the warriors become prominent features in literature and historical records. But from the time Minamoto Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147–1199) won the Genpei War (1180–1185) and created a new branch of government to oversee warrior affairs, warriors and the political office of “shogun” would hold a vital official position, even when its seat was contested or unoccupied, until the 1860s.

Although the *Heike* presents both a new narrative subject and a new mode of expression, even a cursory reading of any *Heike* variant reveals profound debts to traditional modes of writing, particularly to historical writing, and more specifically historical tales (*rekishi monogatari* 歴史物語), a hybrid form that emerged in the eleventh century. *Eiga monogatari* 荣華物語 (Tale of Flowering Fortunes, ca. early twelfth century) and *Ōkagami* 大鏡 (The Great Mirror, ca. 1040–1140) are considered the earliest examples of this genre.¹ Both of these works deviate from earlier histories in their intense focus on the life of Fujiwara Michinaga 藤原道長 (966–1027), the most powerful minister Japan had seen. Earlier histories had been annals concentrating instead on court events, with both the subject and the ordering principle being the succession of sovereigns (*tennō* 天皇). Whereas official histories had been written in Chinese, historical tales were written in the *kana* syllabary, which was, in the Heian period, generally associated with belle-lettristic arts. Historical tales further display experimentation with voice and point of view borrowed from such literary traditions as the “tale” or *monogatari* 物語, of which *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji, ca. 1008) was the most prominent example.

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The war tales represent yet a further refraction of historical writing, for their subject is the warrior class—and particularly its most memorable representatives—under whose control the realm fell. Even more than historical tales, war tales are eclectic in form and voice. Many variant texts of any given war tale are written in *kanbun* 漢文 (“Chinese writing,” a hybrid form of Japanese following Chinese syntax and using exclusively Chinese characters), and all include *kanbun* passages (often quotations of official or religious documents). Yet they simultaneously rely on lyrical *kana* traditions as well: all *Heike* variants include poetry, and often describe scenes of intense personal emotion in conventional lyrical styles, including passages articulated in the alternating 5- and 7-syllable lines associated with *waka*.

The influence of *Heike monogatari* in various artistic spheres was profound. In addition to nō drama, other emerging performance and literary genres relied heavily on the characters and events of the *Heike*—in particular, the *kōwakamai* 幸若舞 (“ballad-drama”) and *otogizōshi* 御伽草子 (“companion tales,” or short prose narratives), both of which are mentioned in the essays of this volume. As the translations and essays included here suggest, characters appearing only briefly in the *Heike* acquired detailed biographies when they moved into other genres. Such a milieu created an underlying body of narratives about the Genpei period exhibiting productive tensions that strongly affected the way the war is remembered: multiple renditions of any given episode in literary, dramatic, or mixed versions all contributed to the creation of a multifaceted “text” immanent in any individual work or performance. Genpei War heroes were simultaneously men who died on the battlefield in the *Heike* and the ghosts of those men in the nō—a combination of the tangible and the ephemeral; the massed body of soldiers in the heat of the fray and the mists dissipating from a long-ago battlefield.

More often than not, these characters were peripheral to the war or even fictional, but theirs are nevertheless the names that came to be indelibly etched into the cultural memory of the war: the aged warrior Sanemori, the beautiful dancer Giō, the gifted young flautist Atsumori. Creating these characters and giving them meaning within the context of the war is among the great contributions of the medieval narrative and dramatic arts that are the subject of this volume.
**Tales of the Heike**

*Heike monogatari* is among Japan’s most enduring and influential works of literature. A chronicle of the Genpei War, it narrates the civil conflict that brought Japan’s classical age to a close and ushered in warrior rule. This attenuation of royal authority would place power in the hands of shoguns or their advisors in one form or another until the Meiji Restoration of 1868. Within cultural memory, the war was momentous, a shift in paradigms of governance, social order, and cultural values. Each of these changes is recorded, pondered, and given a variety of explanations in the pages of *Heike monogatari*.

What we refer to as the *Heike monogatari* includes approximately eighty variant texts exhibiting diverse styles, thematic concerns, and even contents. The best known of these today grew out of the oral performance tradition of the *biwa hōshi* 琵琶法師, blind male performers who recited the tale while accompanying themselves on the *biwa*, or Japanese lute. Their art, which has come to be known as *Heike biwa* 平家琵琶 or *Heikyoku* 平曲, was widely practiced during the medieval period, and continued to enjoy warrior patronage through the Tokugawa era (1600–1868). The provenance of the first *biwa hōshi* is not entirely clear—certainly, high-ranking chanters were performing rites for the Genpei War dead from shortly after the conflict’s end, and the musical patterning we associate with *shōmyō* 声 明, a kind of Buddhist liturgical chant, forms the basis for many of the musical formulae used in *Heike biwa*. In addition, itinerant performers with only loose or no connections to the Buddhist establishment also added narratives about the war to their repertoires.

In both cases, a strong element of ritual attended the development of *Heike* stories. Tales of the war celebrated the acts of the war’s victims and served the placatory function of soothing their souls in the afterlife. Custodianship of various duties associated with pacification of the unhappy dead—who might return at any time to cause havoc in the here-and-now—had long been the responsibility of both the Buddhist clergy and outcaste performers like the *biwa hōshi*. From well before the time of the *Heike*, the *biwa* lute played an integral role in such processes—stringed instruments generally were thought to contain the power to communicate between this world and the next—but they also added a dimension of depth and mystery to the stories chanters recited, which simultaneously increased the interest of the reciter’s art as an entertainment.
Of these recited texts, the best known today is the Kakuichi-bon 覚一本, or "Kakuichi text," a work purported to capture in written form the oral art of an esteemed performer known as Kakuichi. According to one of its colophons, the Kakuichi-bon was committed to paper in 1371. Organized into twelve base chapters plus one additional chapter (the Kanjō no maki 灌頂巻, "Water Consecration Scroll"), it consists of nearly two hundred episodes following a sometimes only roughly chronological order. In the main, it devotes strongest attention to lamenting the deaths of various warriors and their womenfolk, particularly those on the losing side. Thematically, the Kakuichi-bon is strongly colored by a Buddhist world-view that society was in a state of steady decline as generations moved further away from the lifetime of the historical Buddha. This view is captured in the concepts known as masse 末世 (the latter age) or mappō 末法 (the latter days of the law), referred to often in the Heike and other contemporary works. One related thematic frame for the Heike is the juxtaposition of Buddhist law (buppō 仏法) and royal law (ōbō 王法): the tale is about restoration of balance between the two. This concept is elucidated as well in a contemporary treatise known as Gukanshō 愚管抄, authored by the Tendai abbot Jien (慈円). The thematic similarities between the Heike and Gukanshō, as well as other indications of strong ties to the Tendai complex of temples on Mount Hiei (which lies at the northeast corner of Kyoto), have led scholars to posit that Tendai monks, and perhaps even Jien himself, had an editorial hand in this variant.

Many Heike variants were never used for recitation. The most annalistic of these read like chronicles, with a higher density of Chinese terminology—some are, in fact, written entirely in kanbun, a derivative form of Chinese used in Japan from earliest times, particularly in official discursive contexts. Whereas recitational variants tended to be organized under episodes, many of these nonrecited variants were arranged chronologically under dated entries, if any demarcation was used at all. The oldest Heike variant, the Engyō-bon 延慶本, named for the era in which it was written (the Engyō era, 1308–1311), is a nonrecited text. Dating from 1309, it differs from the Kakuichi-bon in style and thematic focus. It is organized chronologically, has a more heterodox worldview, and exhibits a stronger narrative interest on the

Genji warriors of the east who won the war.\textsuperscript{3}

One of the richest variant texts is known by a discrete title: \textit{Genpei jōsuiki} 源平盛衰記, or “Record of the Rise and Fall of the Minamoto and Taira.” A particularly long work, it includes expansions of many of the famous episodes from the \textit{Heike} corpus, as well as additional material and alternative versions of stories. This variant cannot be dated with certainty, it is generally thought to have been composed in the fifteenth century, although some scholars place it earlier. Exhibiting a stronger Confucian bent than most other versions, \textit{Genpei jōsuiki} also is the source for many nō plays and other reworkings of \textit{Heike} tales, including a number of the plays translated here.\textsuperscript{4}

A number of other variant texts are mentioned in the essays that follow. The Nagato-bon 長門本 is extant only in seventeenth-century copies but it seems to reflect a somewhat earlier, nonrecited version of the tale. It is named for the region in which it was found: Nagato, the province facing the straits where the final battle of the war was fought, and home to Amidaji 阿弥陀寺, the mortuary temple for the defeated war dead.

The order in which the variants were composed, as well as the directions in which influence circulated among them, are ongoing topics of scholarly debate. As the essays and translations in this volume demonstrate, stories from various texts were clearly known to playwrights and audiences, especially by the late medieval period. The inclusiveness of what it meant to be a “tale of the Heike” points to fundamental characteristics of medieval narrative and drama, broadly speaking: textual integrity was not a concern and the corpus was sufficiently elastic to embrace not only expansions of individual stories but also versions that contradicted each other. The very multiformity of the \textit{Heike} is one of its defining qualities, and one that undoubtedly provided not only actual material but also inspiration to move in creative directions away from it for nō writer-performers as they began to develop their art.

\textsuperscript{3} The Engyō-bon is one important text considered in David T. Bialock, \textit{Eccentric Spaces, Hidden Histories: Narrative, Ritual, and Royal Authority from The Chronicles of Japan to The Tale of the Heike} (Stanford University Press, 2007).

\textsuperscript{4} Bialock, \textit{Eccentric Spaces, Hidden Histories}, 288.
THE nō THEATER

The nō theater maintains a cultural status in Japanese performing arts today that far overshadows recitation of the Heike. Eloquent introductions to the art, as well as innovative treatments of playwrights, actors, and plays, can be found in a number of English-language works; these are included under separate heading in the general bibliography of this volume. The introductory material in Donald Keene’s Twenty Plays of the Nō Theater and Karen Brazell’s Traditional Japanese Theater: An Anthology of Plays provide succinct and particularly helpful introductions for familiarizing those new to nō with its history and performance practices.

The nō theater emerged at the turn of the fifteenth century, in a context in which numerous new and old performing arts were actively vying for popularity. Sarugaku 猿楽 evolved from sangaku 散楽, which had been transmitted from the continent during the Nara (710–784) period to Japan; it involved a mixture of performing arts—mime, acrobatics, and dance. Dengaku 田楽 consisted of ritual performances associated with harvest celebrations. Ennen 延年 were songs sung following Buddhist rituals. In addition, such novel arts as Heike recitation, imayō 今様 singing, and shirabyōshi 白拍子 dancing also enjoyed popularity during the period leading up to the creation of the nō.

The earliest performances to be referred to as nō were mounted by sarugaku and dengaku troupes, which drew from the various popular arts to create dramatic performances framed as plays but showcasing dance and song. Both dengaku and sarugaku performers in the early Muromachi 室町 period (1333–1573) were organized into troupes, and these were patronized by the major temples and shrines in the capital and surrounding areas. Four troupes of Yamato sarugaku performers were clustered around Nara (south of the capital); six others (the Ōmi troupes) were situated near Lake Biwa, to the northeast of the capital. Troupes of dengaku performers made their home base in the capital and in Nara. All troupes traveled, performing at a variety of locations, but mostly within the home provinces surrounding Kyoto.

Nō as it is practiced today locates its ancestors in a father and son who were leaders of the Yūzaki 結崎 troupe of Yamato performers: Kan’ami 観阿弥 (1333–1384) and Zeami 世阿弥 (1363?–1443?). The Yūzaki was the youngest of the Yamato troupes, but quickly became the most popular, in part because of Kan’ami’s skill as a performer, and in part because of the troupe’s experimentation with various forms, such
as the integration of the popular dance form of kusemai. Kan'ami took his troupe to the capital to perform, and it was in one such performance in 1374 that his troupe caught the eye of the third Ashikaga shogun Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (1358–1408), who, captivated by Zeami's beauty and talent, became an active patron of the troupe.

Yoshimitsu's patronage was foundational for the development of nō, for it was through his tutelage and that of Nijō Yoshimoto 二条良基 (1320–1388), an important poet and advisor to Yoshimitsu, that Zeami became familiar with many of the important literary works and aesthetic concepts that would inform the development of his theories on nō. The elevation of nō from something resembling popular festival entertainment to a serious theatrical form interacting with conventional upper-class canons of taste came about in large part because of these influences. Zeami's works are recognized especially for their focus on character, and most famously the characters of elegant yet suffering women. He wrote extensively about performance, and his treatises provide one of the most important windows on early performance practice.5 The aesthetic ideals associated with Zeami in the main emphasize the dramatic potential of such poignant characters, although as Tom Hare's contribution to this volume demonstrates, particular theoretical concepts about them are often imbricated with a variety of other ideals and modes of thinking about nō.

Today, Zeami is looked to as the founding father of nō, in part because of the complexity and beauty of many of the plays he wrote or reworked, and in part because he authored numerous treatises, such as Go on, discussed in Tom Hare's essay in this volume, about performance. Yet Zeami's style was not the only one affecting the development of the art: the next generation of sarugaku nō playwrights and actors also shaped the repertoire. Zeami's son, Motomasa 元雅 (ca. 1394–1422), and his son-in-law, Zenchiku 禅竹 (1405–1471?), both wrote plays that followed Zeami in creating penetrating portrayals of individual characters, although each approached the task differently; Motomasa's Shigehira provides one example of Motomasa's unique style.6 Other troupes and


6. Zenchiku's work is the subject of Paul S. Atkins, Revealed Identity: The Noh
other Yūzaki leaders took different approaches to the nō: Nobumitsu 信光 (1435–1516) produced more “theatrical” plays, involving larger casts and more action onstage; the vestiges of all of these playwrights and others can be found in nō plays today.

During the Tokugawa period (1603–1868), the shogunate adopted the nō theater for ceremonial purposes, which effectively ensured that the art would be supported by the government, but also that it would ossify: unlike the emergent theatrical forms of kabuki and bunraku, nō did not begin to incorporate elaborate stage props or alter its general form to accommodate popular taste, but rather took an inward turn, slowing in pace and focusing on an artistry associated with preservation of specific styles of voice and movement. This general trend coincided with the division of nō plays into one of five categories, which became the basis for programs: for a given program, one play from each of the categories was performed in a set order: first a god play (kamimono 神物 or waki nō 脇能); then a warrior play (shuramono 修羅物); then a play featuring a beautiful woman (kazuramono 髻物, literally “wig piece”); then a miscellaneous piece (referred to as yobanmemono 四番目物, “fourth category piece”; then a final piece (kiri nō 切り能). These designations are based in part on the character of the protagonist, or shite, of the play. In the first, it is a deity; in the second, a warrior; in the third, a beautiful woman; in the fourth, a person or ghost or other being; in the fifth, a demon or monster. In general, nō plays use few actors. One or two tsure, or companions, may accompany either the shite or the waki, the secondary character and often the shite’s interlocutor. These share the stage with a chorus and several instrumentalists playing drums and flute. As time passed, the major nō schools thinned their repertoires, as reflected in the 250-piece collection of nō performed today.

Although many of the nō most familiar to Western audiences are mugen 夢幻 or “dream” nō, a large body of genzai 現在 or “realistic” nō are also among the plays of the official repertoires. The plays that were excluded from these repertoires outnumber those included by a multiple of ten or more, and in the main, they have received significantly less critical attention. Of these, at least a hundred are based on stories from the Heike, although some only very tangentially. These are generally referred to as bangai 番外 nō, or plays that exist outside (外) the official repertoires (banshiki 番式).

Plays of Komparu Zenchiku (Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2006).
The general subject of all the plays translated in this volume is the Genpei War, a conflict with roots reaching back several generations before the conflict itself. The title of *Heike monogatari* refers to the Taira (or Heike 平家, written with the Chinese characters for “Taira” and “house”) clan, a family descended from a son of Sovereign Kanmu 桐武天皇 (r. 781–806). The prince had been reduced to commoner status as a process of dynastic shedding—in order to lessen competition for the throne, secondary sons were given surnames (the royal family has none) and appointed to mid-level bureaucratic positions.

As recounted in most *Heike* variants and the Kakuichi-bon in particular, the roots of the Genpei War lay with the rise of this branch of the Taira, commonly referred to as the Kanmu Heike. The ancestors of this Taira branch had traditionally held provincial governorships, mostly in the western regions of the realm, where they enriched themselves financially in the lucrative trade with the continent. As a result, in 1131, Taira Tadamori 平忠盛 (1096–1153) was able to ingratiate himself to the Retired Sovereign Toba 鳥羽院 (1103–1156) by providing funds to construct a thirty-three bay hall (Sanjūsangendō 三十三間堂), the Tokujōjuin 得長寿院, in fulfillment of Toba’s vow to build a temple. Tadamori was rewarded with courtier privileges at the palace. This placed him in the upper aristocracy; the combination of his wealth and Toba’s favor assured him continued success at court throughout his life, and paved the way for his heir, Kiyomori 清盛 (1118–1181), to ascend to even greater heights. In little more than a generation, the Taira had risen from rustic provincials to important members of the central aristocracy in the capital city, Heian-kyō, a social climb of unheard-of speed.

In 1156 and 1159, two disputes between members of the royal house and the regental clan, the Fujiwara 藤原, erupted into armed conflict, and both sides called upon members of two “warrior houses,” the Taira and the Minamoto 源 (or Genji 源氏, written with the logographs for “Minamoto” and “clan”), to come to their defense. Like the Taira, the Minamoto had originally descended from the royal family; the main line claimed the Sovereign Seiwa 清和天皇 (850–880) as their ancestor and had proven themselves over the generations as great military men.

In 1156, however, the former clan leader, Tameyoshi 為義 (1096–1156), and his heir, Yoshitomo 義朝 (1123–1160), were divided in their opinions concerning which side to support. Tameyoshi and his
remaining sons finally supported the losing faction, while Yoshitomo and his descendents, along with Kiyomori, chose the winners. The ensuing Hōgen uprising resulted in easy victory for Kiyomori and Yoshitomo, but the aftermath had far-reaching consequences. Yoshitomo was forced to execute his father and brothers who had taken the losing side. Tameyoshi’s patrons fared badly as well. The Retired Sovereign Sutoku 崇徳 (1119–1164) was banished and died in exile, and Fujiwara Yorinaga 藤原頼長 (1120–1156) was killed during the fighting. Yoshitomo’s fortunes waned, while Kiyomori began to flourish rapidly.

In 1159, another dispute arose within the central authority structure. Fujiwara Nobuyori 藤原信頼 (d. 1160), jealous of the success of his kinsman Shinzei, urged Yoshitomo to assist him in ousting Shinzei and Kiyomori from their positions of power. The disgruntled Yoshitomo readily agreed, and the allies kidnapped the Retired Sovereign Go-Shirakawa 後白河院 (1127–1192) and the reigning Sovereign Nijō 二条天皇 (1143–1165) while Kiyomori was away from the capital on a pilgrimage. This came to be known as the Heiji uprising. They then burned Shinzei’s home and forced him to commit suicide. When word reached Kiyomori of the coup, he quickly returned to the capital and routed Yoshitomo and Nobuyori. The defeated Minamoto fled to the east, where they had ancestral holdings, but Yoshitomo was betrayed en route by a former ally and killed. All of his adult sons either died in battle or were executed, but his five youngest were sent into exile or entrusted to religious institutions by Kiyomori, who was now firmly in control of the central government.7

Although Tales of the Heike traces the Taira ascent to power from Tadamori’s generation, its primary concern is with the rise and fall of the clan beginning with Kiyomori’s consolidation of power following the Heiji uprising. Over the next twenty years, Kiyomori and his descendents would continue to flourish. Enabled in part by the patronage of Retired Sovereign Go-Shirakawa, Kiyomori’s success eventually placed him in an adversarial position to his former mentor. With his sons holding down most of the prominent political positions, and one of his daughters Tokuko 徳子 [1155–1213], later titled Kenreimon’in 建礼門院, installed as a consort to the reigning Sovereign Takakura 高倉天皇

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7. For a study of narrative representations of the surviving Minamoto, see Elizabeth Oyler, Swords, Oaths, and Prophetic Visions: Authoring Warrior Rule in Medieval Japan (University of Hawai‘i Press, 2006).
(1161–1181), by the 1170s, Kiyomori was in a stronger position than Go-Shirakawa vis-à-vis the throne and the authority emanating from it. In 1178, Tokuko gave birth to a son; two years later Kiyomori forced Takakura to abdicate in favor of this infant, who is known posthumously as the Sovereign Antoku 安徳天皇 (1178–1185).

The opening chapters of *Heike monogatari* describe Kiyomori’s rise and his often unjust wielding of power over members of the central aristocracy. Among the most famous stories illustrating the arbitrariness of his treatment of people is the well-loved episode “Giō.” A lengthy narrative that digresses from the general historical trajectory of the tale, “Giō” describes the fate of a *shirabyōshi* (a type of female performer) named Giō who lost her privileges as Kiyomori’s beloved through her generosity: she encouraged Kiyomori to allow Hotoke, another *shirabyōshi* performer, to perform before him. Kiyomori’s affections quickly shifted to Hotoke, and he immediately dismissed Giō and forced Hotoke to become a member of his household. Both women eventually escaped Kiyomori and their unhappy fates by taking the tonsure and retreating to a hermitage on the outskirts of the capital city.

The story of Giō and Hotoke, although probably a later addition to *Heike monogatari* and certainly peripheral to the main narrative, nevertheless captured the hearts and imaginations of medieval artists and audiences, who deepened and expanded the kernel story found in the *Heike*. Three nō plays taking up the “Giō” episode are included in this volume: *Giō* (translated by Susan Matisoff), *Hotoke no hara* (translated by David Bialock), and *Rō-Giō* (translated by Michael Watson). Chapters by Roberta Strippoli and Michael Watson explore these and other interpretations of the women’s stories and their intersections with other narratives from the *Heike* corpus.

Although the ascension of his grandson to the throne theoretically reflected Kiyomori’s firm hold on central power, by 1180, that hold was in fact beginning to slip. Having wielded authority recklessly, Kiyomori incurred the resentment of the established aristocracy, as the numerous clashes and unreasonable banishments described in Chapters Two and Three of the Kakuichi-bon indicate. The most famous of these resulted from the “Shishi-no-tani affair,” a plot to overthrow Kiyomori quietly backed by Go-Shirakawa. Kiyomori learned of the conspirators’ plans and banished or executed many of them. The most famous were three men exiled to Kikai-ga-shima, at the westernmost edge of the realm: Fujiwara Naritsune 藤原成経, Taira Yasuyori 平康頼, and the Bishop Shunkan 俊寛. Although the first two were pardoned in the general
amnesty issued during Tokuko’s pregnancy, Shunkan eventually died in exile. Like Giō, his story was taken up again in the no theater and elsewhere. Thomas Rimer’s chapter in this volume addresses, among other things, a modern play about Shunkan, attesting to the enduring interest in the fate of the exile.

Kiyomori’s behavior following the Shishi-no-tani affair only inspired further resentment of the Taira fortunes. In 1179, his eldest son Shigemori 重盛 died, an opportunity grasped by Go-Shirakawa to terminate the clan’s claims to property rights (and therefore income) Shigemori had held. Kiyomori retaliated by placing Go-Shirakawa under house arrest in the Toba mansion south of the capital. With Go-Shirakawa thus neutralized, Kiyomori was next able to force Takakura’s abdication in favor of the infant Antoku.

The first real volleys of what would become known to posterity as the Genpei War came in 1180, when the aging Minamoto Yorimasa 源頼政 (1106–1180) joined forces with Mochihito 以仁 (1151–1180), a disenfranchised royal prince, to challenge Antoku’s ascension; this rebellion is the primary subject of the Kakuichi-bon’s Chapter Four. Yorimasa was a member of the Seiwa Genji, but of what had become a collateral branch. Having sided with Kiyomori during the Heiji uprising, he had survived that event, but, like Yoshitomo before him, believed he had not been adequately recompensed for his efforts against his kinsman and his demonstrated loyalty to the throne.

The conspirators’ plot was discovered early, prompting Yorimasa to flee with Mochihito to Miidera, a temple complex east of the capital. The Miidera monks happily harbored the party and sent requests for support to Enryakuji, the head temple of their own sect (Tendai) and also to Kōfukuji, the head temple of the Hossō sect. Enryakuji, located on Mount Hiei at the northeastern corner of Heian-kyō, did not reply, unwilling to create a rift with Kiyomori. Kōfukuji promised support, but the temple was located in the former capital of Nara, forty kilometers south of Heian-kyō, a distance that proved too great.

Kiyomori began amassing troops for an attack on Miidera. Realizing the impossibility of mounting a defense there, Yorimasa and the prince decided to try to make their way to Nara and the Kōfukuji monks; they were joined by the able-bodied monks of Miidera. Kiyomori’s forces met them at the Uji River south of the capital, and a fierce battle ensued. The prince was killed as he tried to escape, and, outnumbered, Yorimasa committed suicide. Kiyomori then ordered his troops to burn Miidera as punishment, an event that brings Chapter Four to a close.
Chapter Five marks an important turning point in the Kakuichi-bon. Yorimasa’s revolt had been put down fairly easily, but Kiyomori sensed the tenuousness of his own hold on authority, and soon after the uprising he ordered that the court be moved from Heian-kyō to Fukuhara, a settlement along the inland sea in what is now Kobe. Fukuhara lay within the province of Settsu, over which the Taira had long held power; its physical distance from Heian-kyō, combined with the mountainous terrain to its north and east and the sea to the south, made it a logistically prudent position for a power-holder wary of further military attacks. In the narrative, however, the move to Fukuhara signals the beginning of the end for Kiyomori. Following so many banishments early in the narrative, this removal of the government from its rightful place empties the center of its meaning, disrupting the functioning of the central aristocracy and government officials.

The transfer of the capital was wildly unpopular, and many viewed it as an act of hubris and a break with precedent doomed to have serious karmic consequences. Inauspicious dreams and visions began to haunt the Taira. These were followed soon after by news from the east country that the eldest of Yoshitomo’s sons, Yoritomo, had raised troops in Izu, his place of banishment, and was challenging Taira partisans in the area. The Taira in Fukuhara dispatched troops immediately under the command of Taira Koremori (1160–1184), son of Shigemori, and Taira Tadanori (1144–1184), Kiyomori’s brother. The Taira met Yoritomo’s forces at the Fuji River in Suruga province. Encamped on opposite banks of the river late in the afternoon, the two forces prepared to meet each other the following day. During the night, a flock of birds took wing, startling the already nervous Taira troops, who then retreated in a panic, believing the sound to be a night attack by the seasoned eastern warriors on the opposite bank. They returned to Fukuhara in disgrace. Yoritomo claimed Suruga and Tōtōmi provinces and entrusted them to two retainers. He then retreated to Kamakura, a hamlet in Sagami province that would remain his headquarters throughout the war and beyond, to consolidate his forces.

Chapter Five concludes with the court’s return to Heian-kyō from Fukuhara. Essentially an act of capitulation by Kiyomori, it also allowed him to begin an offensive against Genji partisans in Ōmi province, just east of the capital. The Taira were successful in suppressing the opposition. Simultaneously, however, Kiyomori planned an attack on Kōfukuji and Miidera as punishment for their support of Mochihito’s rebellion. When they learned of Kiyomori’s plans, the monks of Kōfukuji
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prepared to fight, chasing off and finally decapitating emissaries sent from the capital. Infuriated, Kiyomori sent forces under the command of his son Shigehira and nephew Michimori to punish the Nara monks.

After a day battling at Narazaka and Hannyaji, Shigehira's forces were nearing victory. As the sun set, he ordered fires to be lit. This was a fateful decision: his men lit a commoner's house on fire, and the flames, blown by a violent wind, quickly spread to the venerable temples of Nara: Kōfukuji, where many women, children, and elderly monks had fled seeking refuge, and Tōdaiji. The loss of life and damage to sacred properties were enormous, earning Shigehira the enmity of the Nara religious establishment and the censure of all. He came to be considered perhaps the most culpable Taira for this crime, and at the end of the war, he was sent to Nara for execution.

The burning of the Nara temples at the end of Chapter Five parallels the burning of Miidera at the conclusion of Chapter Four and presages the fall of Kiyomori's flowering fortunes. Chapter Six marks a definitive ending of an age: first, Retired Sovereign Takakura and then Kiyomori die in rapid succession. Takakura's death is attributed to his sorrow over the state of affairs brought about by Kiyomori's ambitions, and three episodes following his death eulogize him. The first celebrates him as a wise and compassionate ruler, and the next two recount love affairs with women of great beauty and sensitivity whom Kiyomori drove from the palace to insure his daughter's success as a consort. The tenor of these episodes is nostalgic and melancholic.

By contrast, Kiyomori's death is dramatic and epic in scale. Consumed by a fever so high that it causes water to evaporate when it touches his skin, Kiyomori died with a curse on his lips: “Build no halls or pagodas after I die; dedicate no pious works. Dispatch the punitive force immediately, decapitate Yoritomo, and hang the head in front of my grave. That will be all the dedication I require.”8 Three eulogistic episodes follow, all of which situate Kiyomori, both in this life and a former one, as a man of unusual talent, destined for greatness. Such episodes serve the important function of placation, and they represent a pattern seen elsewhere in the corpus as well: an important figure dies a death that may leave him with rancor or regret, and a eulogy, ranging from a few lines to the three episodes following the deaths of Kiyomori

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and Takakura, commemorates his deeds in the hopes of assuaging his soul in the afterlife.

Sandwiched between these two deaths is another sign that an age has ended, here enacted through a geographic metaphor that builds on the decentering of the realm we saw in the early banishments and the transfer of the capital: word arrives that Kiso Yoshinaka 木曾義仲 (1154–1184), a cousin of Yoritomo, has begun to raise troops in the north. The chapter concludes with Yoshinaka’s easy defeat at Yokotagawara of a putative force sent to control him. Whereas the center earlier seemed to disperse to the provinces, the provinces now have begun to encroach on the center.

Chapter Seven is dedicated to Yoshinaka’s successful push southward, which resulted in the Taira’s abandonment of the capital as it became clear that Yoshinaka would soon occupy it. After being trounced at Yokotagawara, the Taira next sent a larger force under Koremori and two of Kiyomori’s nephews, Michimori 通盛 (d. 1183) and Tsunemasa 経正 (d. 1184). The Taira force was successful at Hiuchi against Yoshinaka’s allies. It then proceeded against Yoshinaka, who rushed to confront it at Tonamiyama.

The battle at Tonamiyama, Yoshinaka’s first major engagement with the Taira, was a resounding success for the Genji. Before the battle began, Yoshinaka planned an ambush: he would trick the Taira into resting in the mountains, where he would attack them at night. In preparation for the battle, he composed a petition to the bodhisattva Hachiman, tutelary deity of the Minamoto clan; the composition of the petition is the subject of Kiso, translated in this volume by Ivan Grail. Yoshinaka’s plan was successful, and his troops managed to push the Taira forces into Kurikara valley, a scene that forms the heart of the extracanonical Kurikara otoshi, translated by Michael Watson. Elizabeth Oyler’s chapter discusses these two plays and their relation to the Heike versions of the Kurikara narrative.

Yoshinaka next hurried to Shinohara, where he roundly defeated the Taira troops. Among the Taira dead was one of the Heike’s most beloved heroes, Sanemori 実盛, an aged warrior who joined the Taira’s punitive force in order to redeem his honor: a seasoned fighter, he nevertheless participated in the willy-nilly retreat at Fuji River after the Taira had been frightened by a flock of birds. At Shinohara, he dyed his hair black in order to hide his age so as not to be pitied—and left alive—by the Minamoto forces. He met his end honorably, staying behind after his comrades had fled. When his head was presented to Yoshinaka after
the battle, it was rinsed and Sanemori’s identity revealed, causing the general and all his men to weep. Mae Smethurst translates two plays based on this episode, the canonical *Sanemori* and an extracanonical play entitled *Genzai Sanemori*. Akiko Takeuchi’s chapter addresses the complex relationships between narrativity and dramatic performance in *Sanemori* and the *Heike* original.

As Yoshinaka prepared to enter the capital, the Taira began to flee, inaugurating the moving exilic narrative that drives the rest of the work. Chapter Seven concludes with several episodes about individual Taira men taking leave of those left behind: family, teachers, and patrons. Among the most moving parting is Taira no Tadanori’s leave-taking of the famous poet and critic Fujiwara no Shunzei 藤原俊成 (1114–1204), with whom he entrusted some poems he had composed. Tadanori’s tragedy is one shared by many of his kin in this segment of the *Heike*: essentially accomplished men of letters and the arts, they are forced to take up arms in what is already clearly a lost cause.

The particular poignancy of Tadanori’s exile is that, despite his poetic skills, his status as a Taira would prevent his poem from being attributed to him: the episode ends with the comment that when Shunzei included it in a later royal anthology, he labeled it “Anonymous.” Tadanori’s grief over his loss of name, as well as his subsequent death in battle, form the foundation for the nō *Shunzei Tadanori*, translated by Stephen Miller and Patrick Donnelly. Michael Watson contributes a chapter contextualizing the play within the *Heike* and nō corpuses.

With the child sovereign Antoku and the three royal regalia in tow, the Taira retreated to Fukuhara, and then further, to Ikuta-no-mori on the Suma coast, burning the Fukuhara complex when they deserted it. As allies began to betray them, the first Taira suicide of the war occurred: Kiyotsune, a son of Shigemori, jumped into the sea. Although his story is recorded only briefly in the Kakuichi-bon, it is expanded into a love story in the *Genpei jōsuiki*, and this becomes the basis for the nō play *Kiyotsune*, translated by Carolyn Morley in this volume. As she notes in her introduction, the nō transforms a story of a despondent spurned lover into a play about conjugal fidelity and love.

Chapter Eight describes Yoshinaka’s disastrous occupation of the capital. In the midst of a famine, his men pillaged at will, outraging commoners and aristocrats alike. Retired Sovereign Go-Shirakawa, who managed to escape the Taira’s grasp, ordered attempts to control Yoshinaka, but with little success. Yoshinaka’s political ineptitude is then demonstrated in a series of episodes that at once portray him as a buffoon
and parody the royal authority that he challenges; in fright, Go-Shirakawa called upon Yoritomo to punish his cousin. Yoritomo commanded two of his brothers, Yoshitsune 義経 (1159–1189) and Noriyori 範頼 (1156–1193) to attack the capital, and Chapter Eight ends with the ominous comment that:

Thus the Heike held the western provinces, Yoritomo the eastern provinces, and Yoshinaka the capital. It was just as when the usurper Wang Mang ruled for eighteen years between Former Han and Later Han [in China]. With all the checkpoints closed, those in the provinces could deliver neither official tax goods nor private rents, and people of all degrees in the capital resembled fish in shallow water. Such were the parlous circumstances under which the old year ended and the third year of Juei began.99

Minamoto Yoshitsune, the great field general of the Genpei War, becomes a central figure of the narrative in Chapter Nine. The opening episodes describe his men’s routing of Yoshinaka from the capital. After a furious final battle, Yoshinaka’s troops were reduced to just his most loyal retainers, with whom he reteated to Awazugahara, along Lake Biwa, where he met his end. Yoshitsune then took control of the capital in Yoritomo’s name and soon mounted an offensive against the Taira. By attacking their stronghold at Ikuta in a daring descent down the cliffs behind it, he forced them to take to their boats and flee; this is known as the battle of Ichi-no-tani (1184.2.7). During this retreat, one of the most famous episodes from the Heike occurs. As he spurred his horse toward the boats, Atsumori 敦盛, a young nephew of Kiyomori, was called back by the Minamoto partisan Kumagai Naozane 熊谷直実 (1141–1208), a seasoned warrior who easily grappled Atsumori—too noble to refuse the challenge—to the ground. Removing Atsumori’s helmet, Kumagai was moved by the lad’s youth and beauty, which reminded him of his love for his own son, a boy of about the same age. Although wanting to spare Atsumori, he saw his comrades quickly approaching and realized there was no chance for Atsumori to escape. He took the boy’s head and then turned his back on the secular world to spend the rest of his life, as the

Heike tells it, praying for Atsumori’s repose in the afterlife. The tragedy of Atsumori’s fate is underlined by the flute Naozane found tucked in the lad’s armor: like Tadanori, Atsumori was clearly a man of sensibility and artistic skill, too refined and too young to die in battle.

The “Death of Atsumori” is among the Heike’s most popular stories, and it spawned many plays and narratives not only about the event itself but also the fate of the unborn son Atsumori left behind. One version of the boy’s life is recounted in the extracanonical nō play Ikuta Atsumori, translated in this volume by Lim Beng Choo. Keller Kimbrough’s chapter draws connections between the tale recounted in Ikuta Atsumori and other narratives, particularly from the Buddhist tradition, that appear to have influenced it. Kimbrough also contributes a translation of Ko Atsumori emaki, a Muromachi-period narrative likewise recounting the fate of Atsumori’s young son, included for comparison.

Many Taira were killed or captured at Ichi-no-tani, the most important being Shigehira, who had burned the Nara temples. Chapter Ten concerns the aftermath of the battle, and particularly Shigehira’s fate. He was taken first to the capital, where Go-Shirakawa attempted to ransom him in exchange for the royal regalia, but the Taira refused this offer. He then was transported to Kamakura, after meeting with his religious mentor, Hōnen Shōnin (1133–1212). In Kamakura, a lovely and sensitive woman named Senju-no-mae entertained him; so moved was she by their encounter that, after his execution, she took the tonsure to pray for his soul. Chapter Ten concludes with several episodes narrating the tonsuring and suicide of Shigemori’s eldest son, Koremori, who, comprehending the hopelessness of the Taira’s position, left the battlefield and went to Mount Kōya, where an old friend administered the precepts and then guided him as he prepared to drown himself, which he did on the twenty-eighth day of the Third Month of 1184. Learning of his death, his beloved wife took the tonsure to pray for his soul.

Meanwhile, there was a lull in the fighting lasting for nearly a year. The Minamoto under Noriyori were unsuccessful in engaging the Taira, and Yoshitsune had been ordered to stay in the capital, in part due to Yoritomo’s suspicions about his youngest brother’s ambitions. Finally, however, Yoshitsune was permitted to head west to fight the Taira in the First Month of 1185, and his troops defeated the Taira first at Yashima, then at Shido Bay. The fighting at Yashima is the setting for another particularly popular episode from the Heike, “Nasu no Yoichi.” Challenged to shoot a fan extended on a pole held by a lady on one of the
Taira boats, Yoshitsune called upon the young archer Yoichi to perform the task. Relying on the divine help of Hachiman, Yoichi loosed an arrow, which hit the mark; both Taira and Minamoto forces lauded this act. The Nasu no Yoichi story is the source for the kyōgen play *Nasu*, translated in this volume by Carolyn Morley, whose chapter about the *Heike* in kyōgen also describes a variety of ways in which the *Heike* stories, *Heike* recitation, and *biwa hōshi* are represented in the kyōgen repertoire.

The final battle of the war was fought on the twenty-fourth day of the Third Month of 1185, after Yoshitsune and his men effected a perilous crossing of the straits at Suō, where they joined Noriyori and attacked the Taira in the straits in front of Dan-no-ura. Although the Taira fought heroically, they were outmatched, and as defeat became imminent, many of them committed suicide. The child sovereign Antoku, clutching one of the royal regalia—the sword—was carried into the sea in the arms of his grandmother, Kiyomori's widow. Nearly all the Taira, both men and women, died in this battle, save Tokuko, Antoku's mother, and the Taira commander-in-chief, Kiyomori's eldest living son, Munemori. The prisoners were taken to the capital, and then the important ones were sent on to Kamakura. Tokuko became a nun, and spent the rest of her life performing the heartbreaking task of praying for the souls of her child and most of her kinsmen. Munemori was executed as he traveled back from Kamakura, and Shigehira was sent to Nara to be executed by the monks there.

The ambiguous ending of the war is captured in a number of plays about executions at its conclusion. Paul Atkins translates the haunting *Shigehira*, a play about the sufferings of Shigehira in the afterlife as he endlessly re-lives the burning of Nara. Atkins's accompanying chapter emphasizes the relentlessly pessimistic portrayal of Shigehira's suffering in this particularly bleak play by Motomasa. The play points to one important dynamic motivating the reanimation of such characters beyond the *Heike*: they are at once dead and lingering, distant and near.

*Morihisa* describes an act of divine intervention that prevents the beheading of this relatively minor character, who appears in the Nagatobon but not the Kakuichi-bon, and whose story bears strong resemblances to that of *Rō-Giō*. The play is translated by Shelley Quinn, who also contributes a chapter highlighting the play's allusive connections to other works. Naoko Gunji's chapter discusses the performance of *Morihisa* in the context of fund-raising efforts for temple rebuilding following a fire.

Tom Hare's chapter on Zeami's theoretical work *Go on* and the articulation of some of its concepts in “Rokudai no utai” (The Song about
Rokudai) takes up the story of yet another last-minute reprieve, in this case, that of the Taira heir, Rokudai. Hare’s discussion of the work as an exemplification of theoretical principles laid out in Go on demonstrates the importance of generic structural concerns in recasting this well-known narrative from the Heike in the nō corpus. A counterpoint to this excavation of Zeami’s theoretical writings is provided by Susan Blakeley Klein’s reading of the political dimensions of the play Haku Rakuten, which draws on the Genpei War stories and heroes as it describes a confrontation between the Japanese god of poetry and the famous Tang poet Bai Juyi. Her analysis is followed by a translation of the play.

As Thomas Rimer’s chapter on modern plays based on the Heike (and indebted to the nō as well) suggests, this was as true for the twentieth century as for the fifteenth. Heike characters and situations provided points of entry for examining the meanings of war, personal relations, and loss well beyond the scope of medieval Japan. The ongoing generative power of the Heike narrative to address changing situations suggests the timelessness of the issues they raise and the emotional responses they evoke. How these were first developed in the nō and how they are connected to related cultural phenomena are the central concerns of the translations and essays in this volume.

**Note on Organization, Conventions, and Style**

The appendix includes a finding list for Heike-related nō plays. For the translation of terms, we follow Royall Tyler’s *Japanese Nō Dramas* (Penguin, 1992).

A comprehensive bibliography is provided in the Works Cited. In addition, relatively full citations are included in the footnotes of each piece in the hopes that this will allow readers greater ease in finding reference material. Characters for Japanese names and important terms are also provided at their first appearance in each piece. Standard abbreviations for commonly cited series are used in both the Works Cited and the footnotes. A list of full titles for these series is included at the beginning of the Works Cited.

All titles of literary works are italicized but the names of individual Heike monogatari variants are not. Instead, they are identified by the
suffix -bon (-text), for example: Kakuichi-bon or Kakuichi-bon *Heike monogatari*; Engyō-bon or Engyō-bon *Heike monogatari*, etc. We have opted for Engyō-bon instead of Enkyō-bon or Enkei-bon (all written 延慶本) to reflect current scholarly consensus on the correct pronunciation of the era name in which it was written. The *Genpei jōsuiki* is italicized, for although it is considered a *Heike* variant, it has a discrete title. Episodes (*dan* 段) within the *Heike* are placed in quotation marks (“Giō”); where they are identified by number, such as 1.6, the numbers refer to chapter (*maki* 巻) number and episode number, respectively. All such numbering refers to the Kakuichi-bon text ordering, unless otherwise noted. When abbreviated, dates are listed as Western year. lunar month.day (1184.2.7 is the seventh day of the Second Month of 1184). Intercalary months are prefaced by “i”: i2 is “the Intercalary Second Month.”

As a rule, we have striven for consistency in translation of terminology wherever possible, but individual authors translate some fundamental terms differently—notable examples include “chapter,” “book,” or “scroll” for *maki* and “episode” or “section” for *dan*. In all cases, we have tried to provide the original Japanese for clarity.