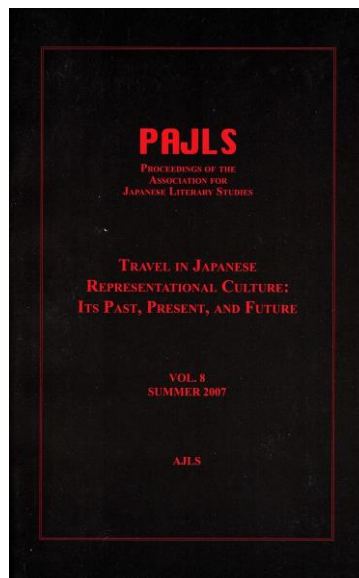


“Spirits of the Drowned: Sea Journeys in Bangai  
Noh from the Genpei War”

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**SPIRITS OF THE DROWNED: SEA JOURNEYS IN *BANGAI*  
NOH FROM THE GENPEI WAR**

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In the first few decades of the sixteenth century, a number of encyclopedic works on noh were compiled from older records and oral traditions.<sup>1</sup> Altogether more than three hundred and fifty plays are listed, together with information about authorship and performance details. Plays mentioned in these works can confidently be dated to the early or mid Muromachi period—and it is worth noting that the number well exceeds the current repertoire of 254, plays that are still in the modern performance tradition, the so-called *genkō yōkyoku* 現行謡曲.<sup>2</sup> By the end of the Muromachi period, as many as 760 plays can be found listed in another work of this kind.<sup>3</sup> Texts survive for a large majority of the additional plays, as well as the great number produced from the late sixteenth century onwards. Estimates as to the total number of surviving plays has been revised upwards from 2500—ten times the number in the current repertoire—to a figure in excess of 3000.<sup>4</sup> By no means all or most of them were ever performed widely, many may in fact been written by or for amateurs who wanted plays on a given subject for *su-utai* 素謡いゝ recitation, singing without costumes or accompaniment of drum and flute.

There is thus a vast corpus of now largely unread plays that have fallen out of the performance tradition, or were never really part of it in the first place. Such plays are known as *bangai yōkyoku* 番外謡曲, “extra-repertory” (or “non-canonical”) noh plays. In looking through these

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<sup>1</sup> *Nōhon sakusha chūmon* 能作者註文 (colophon dated 1524), *Jika denshō* 自家伝抄 (colophons dated 1414, 1489, and 1516), and *Bugei rokurin shidai* 舞芸六輪次第 (ca. 1510s).

<sup>2</sup> The current number of plays in the performance tradition of the five schools is some 254, give or take a few that are either brought back into the repertoire (*fukkyoku* 復曲) or dropped from active performance (*haikyoku* 廃曲). By comparison, as many as 548 are printed in the Meiji-period Hakubunkan edition (Haga and Sasaki 1913–1915), while the premodern encyclopedic *Nōhon sakusha chūmon*, *Jika denshō*, and *Bugei rokurin shidai* list 350, 346, and 207 plays respectively. Watanabe 1995, pp. 202–203.

<sup>3</sup> *Iroha shakusha chūmon* いろは作者註文 (before 1570), available in an annotated edition (Tanaka 1978).

<sup>4</sup> Nishino Haruo gives the figure of 2500 (Nishino and Hada 1997: 282), but now suggests that the total number is at least 3000 (personal correspondence, 2005).

plays, my first object was simply to find plays deal with episodes based on *Heike monogatari* in one of its variants, or on other related works that retell the story of the Genpei War. As might be expected, a large number can be found: there are well over a hundred different pieces based on episodes from the *Heike*. These vary widely in length, style, and quality, and in how faithful or free they are with the source material. For a *Heike* specialist, they are doubly fascinating, first as illustrations of developments in noh itself, and secondly as evidence for the continued reception of Genpei tales in the field of noh theatre beyond the circle of Zeami and his immediate followers.

Readers interested in dramatizations of *Heike monogatari* need feel no dissatisfaction with the quantity or quality of plays still within the performance tradition. There are more than thirty plays based on versions of the *Tale of Heike* in the current repertoire of 254. This represents more than ten percent of the total, so that in terms of its reception into noh theatre, *Heike monogatari* surpasses sources like the *Genji* or the *Ise* by a considerable margin. Among these thirty some plays, the majority are *shura mono* 修羅物 or warrior plays, but there are also fine examples of *katsura mono* 鬘物, plays about women like *Giō* and *Senju*, of fourth category plays about characters like *Kagekiyo* or *Shunkan*, and dramatic fifth category plays like *Ikarikazuki* 碓潜 and *Funa Benkei* 舟弁慶.<sup>5</sup>

For examples of sea journeys in noh plays about the Genpei War, one need go no further than these last two mentioned plays. Both feature the “spirits of the drowned” of our title. The ghost of the Heike commander Tomomori 知盛 appears in *Funa Benkei* to threaten the ship carrying Yoshitsune and his men, while in *Ikarikazuki* the same warrior’s spirit recounts how he drowned himself when the battle of Dan-no-ura was lost.<sup>6</sup> Here we shall begin with these two plays, firstly because they

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<sup>5</sup> *Ikarikazuki* is translated as “The Anchor Draping” by J. Philip Gabriel in Brazell 1998, pp. 115–129, and *Funa Benkei* as “Benkei Aboard Ship” in Tyler 1992, pp. 82–95. A list of the currently performed Genpei-war plays by the five types (*gobandate* 五番立) is as follows: (2) *Atsumori*, *Ebira*, *Ikuta Atsumori*, *Kanehira*, *Kiyotsune*, *Michimori*, *Sanemori*, *Shunzei Tadanori*, *Tadanori*, *Tomoakira*, *Tomoe*, *Tsunemasa*, *Yashima*, *Yorimasa*; (3) *Giō*, *Hotoke no hara*, *Ōhara gokō*, *Senju*, *Yuya*; (4) *Daibutsu kuyō*, *Fujito*, *Kagekiyo*, *Kiso*, *Kogō*, *Shōzon*, *Shunkan*; (5) *Funa Benkei*, *Ikarikazuki*, *Nue*. For translations and other information, see [www.meijigakuin.ac.jp/~pmjs/biblio/noh-trans.html](http://www.meijigakuin.ac.jp/~pmjs/biblio/noh-trans.html). No current *Heike*-related play falls in category one (*waki nō* or “God noh”), although *bangai* plays of this type are to be found.

<sup>6</sup> The first half of the same play gives a dramatized retelling of the last moments of Noritsune 教経 by the *maejite*, an old man in the habit of a fisherman. In the older literature, he is understood as Noritsune himself (Sanari 1931, pp. 250–251,

are familiar through performances, published texts, and translations, and secondly because they are excellent illustrations of key “sea journey” themes.

*Funa Benkei* is reliably thought to be written by Kanze Nobumitsu 観世信光 (1435–1516), while *Ikarikazuki* survives in a text of the Komparu 金春 school copied in 1510.<sup>7</sup> They are both mentioned in the encyclopedic works mentioned before, which date from approximately the same period.

Then we shall move on to six *bangai* plays. Like other plays not surviving in the modern repertory, information as to probable authorship or date is scanty.

*Hirosawa hime* 広沢姫 (“The Hirosawa Maiden”)<sup>8</sup>

*Matsuo no ura* 松尾浦 (“The Bay of Matsuo”)<sup>9</sup>

*Nii no ama* 二位尼 (“The Nun of Second Rank”)<sup>10</sup>

*Sentei* 先帝 (“The Former Emperor”)<sup>11</sup>

*Shin’ichi* 真都<sup>12</sup>

*Tsukushi no ura kaze* つくしの浦風 (“The Bay Wind of Tsukushi”).<sup>13</sup>

These pieces are a good deal less familiar as they are never performed today, and are seldom read, as appearing in standard anthologies of noh plays.

Of the six *bangai* plays included in this survey of encounters at sea with Genpei spirits, the only one to be listed in the encyclopedic works is *Sentei*.<sup>14</sup> In the Muromachi compendia of noh lore, it appears either under

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247; Bohner 1956, p. 561). In the second half Noritsune’s cousin Taira no Tomomori 平知盛 (*nochijite*) describes the drowning of the suicide of the Nun of Second Rank (*niidono* 二位殿) with her grandson Antoku. The Nun is represented on stage by the *tsure*, but only in performances of the Kongō school. See entry for play by Nishino Haruo in Nishino and Hata 1999, p. 21 .

<sup>7</sup> 永正七年金春元安転写謄本. Takemoto 1995, p. 59.

<sup>8</sup> Tanaka 1972–88, MY vol. 30, pp. 76–79. For ease in reference to the multivolume *Mikan yōkyokushū* 未刊謡曲集 (“MY”) series, the individual volume numbers will be given.

<sup>9</sup> MY vol. 30, pp. 147–149. The bay lies north east of Awaji.

<sup>10</sup> MY vol. 13, pp. 40–44. The title refers to Taira no Kiyomori’s widow.

<sup>11</sup> MY vol. 2, pp. 37–42.

<sup>12</sup> MY vol. 11, pp. 103–108. As explained below, Shin’ichi is the name of a *biwa* reciter.

<sup>13</sup> MY vol. 29, pp. 47–49.

<sup>14</sup> *Nōhon sakusha chūmon*, *Iroha sakusha chūmon*, and *Kayō sakusha kō* 歌謡作者考. Nishio et al. 1961, p. 120, 129, 140. For an extended discussion of the piece

the name of *Sentei*, a reference to the “Former Emperor” (*sentei* 先帝) Antoku 安徳 who dies at Dan-no-ura or under the name of *Noritsune* 教経, the personal name of the Governor of Noto (*Noto-no-kami* 能登守), the Heike commander who drowns himself in the last sea battle.<sup>15</sup> According to the listing in *Nōhon sakusha chūmon*, its author is unknown, while according to *Jika denshō*, it was written by Zeami.<sup>16</sup> This is an implausible suggestion, as its editor Tanaka Makoto comments. Nevertheless, *Sentei* can be safely dated to the Muromachi period. It is attested in some sixteen manuscripts.<sup>17</sup>

One of the other *bangai* plays also features Noritsune as [*nochi*]shite. The piece is most often known by the name *Shin'ichi* 真都, the name of the *waki*, who enacts the part of a *biwa hōshi* 琵琶法師 whose Heike recitation conjures up the spirit of the famous general. Unusual in structure and content, *Shin'ichi* is considered by its editor to date either from the late Muromachi period or early Kinsei.<sup>18</sup>

The remaining four plays all deal with women's suicide at sea. *Hirosawa hime* and *Nii-no-ama* are concerned with battle of Dan-no-ura, while the other two, *Matsuo no ura* and *Tsukushi no ura kaze*, recall the earlier battle of Ichi-no-tani. All are thought to date well after the Muromachi period, either for internal, stylistic reasons, or for lack of external, documentary evidence. The title of *Nii no ama* 二位尼 (“The Nun of Second Rank”) does at least appear in compedia of noh play titles (*navose* 名寄). It may be a work of the early Kinsei.<sup>19</sup> For the rest, their editor Tanaka Makoto makes the identical terse comment: “A Kinsei-style dramatization” (近世調の劇作). These later pieces are no masterpieces, to be sure, but they do have value for the study of how the reception of *Heike* stories evolved during the course of the Edo period. For the purposes of the present study, their inclusion allows us to take a

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see Omote Kiyoshi 1986.

<sup>15</sup> *Heike monogatari*, book 11 “The Death of Noritsune” (*Notodono saigo* 能登殿最期).

<sup>16</sup> Takemoto 1995, p. 88. See next footnote.

<sup>17</sup> Tanaka Makoto comments that it is “unlike Zeami” (世阿弥らしくない). Tanaka 1972–88, MY vol. 2, p. 17 (*keidai*). The word *kaidai* is added after page numbers to distinguish references to the explanatory material (*kakkyoku kaidai* 各曲解題), which is paginated separately to the manuscript transcriptions.

<sup>18</sup> Tanaka 1972–88, MY vol. 11, pp. 103–108.

<sup>19</sup> Tanaka 1972–88, MY vol. 13, p. 9 (*kaidai*). Tanaka suggests a date early in the Tokugawa period (*kinsei shoki* 世初期の作か) after some positive comments in its favour. An index published in 1681 lists what is thought to be an alternative title, *Nii-dono* 二位殿 (“The Lady of Second Rank”). In *Heike monogatari* this is used like *Nii no ama* to refer to Taira no Kiyomori's widow, Tokiko 時子.

broader, diachronic view of changes in conventions in *michiyuki* and other passages describing sea seascapes and sea voyages.

Accounts of sea voyages can function on more than one level, as literal journeys from one place to another, or as something involving supernatural or allegorical elements. To a greater or lesser extent this is true of all the voyages described in the plays examined here. Nautical terms, descriptions of the seascape, names of well-known harbors and bays—these all work together to give an account of a real journey by boat.

In *Ikarikazuki*, a monk travel from the capital by boat down to Nagato Province in order to pray for the souls of the Heike who died in the last battle of Dan-no-ura. In his opening speech and *michiyuki*, the monk mentions several landmarks: Nagato itself, both bay and province [長門の浦 長門の国] and the bay of Hayatomo [早鞆の浦].

In the bangai play *Nii no ama*, the same journey from the capital to Nagato at the south-west tip of Honshu is given in greater detail. The whole journey would have been by boat, beginning with a river journey. The monk describes the mountains of Kurama, visible to the north of the capital, before passing into Settsu Province at Yamazaki. He may be imagined as turning back, as travelers are traditionally described as doing at this point leaving the capital.<sup>20</sup> Of the journey along the Seto Inland Sea, the places mentioned are those one might expect: Suma and Akashi. He arrives at Dan-no-ura on the border of the province of Nagato.<sup>21</sup>

This journey takes a longer list of actual place names, and weaves them into a *michiyuki* with the conventional items mentioned on journeys of all kinds (*tabigoromo* or “travel robes” and *hi wo kasunetsutsu*, “as days pile up”) with items specifically associated with travel on or near the water, the crying of curlews (*chidori naku* 千鳥鳴) and reed huts (*tomaya* 苫屋).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup> 行けば程なく山崎や。関戸の院は名のみして。 *Nii no ama*, p. 40. In *Heike monogatari*, book 7 “Ichimon no miyako ochi” (SNKB vol. 45, p. 57, trans. McCullough 1988, p. 252), the fleeing Taira look back in the direction of the capital at the same place mentioned in the noh play, Yamazaki Sekido-no-in (“Yamazaki Barrier Cloister”). This was the ancient barrier post on the border of Yamashiro and Settsu provinces.

<sup>21</sup> *Nii no ama*, MY 13, pp. 40–41. In *Tsukushi no ura kaze*, the monk from the capital describes himself as arriving in *Nagato no kuni Akama no sekito to kaya*. The Akama Barrier (*Akima no seki*) is described in *Heike monogatari*, book 11, “Toraiwase Dan-no-ura kassen” as the site of the arrow exchange before the great sea battle: *Buzen no kuni Moji Akama no seki* 豊前国門司・赤間の関 (SNKB vol. 45, p. 285; trans. McCullough 1988, p. 373).

<sup>22</sup> Compare *Hirosawa hime*, p. 76, where a monk travels the reverse direction,

Accounts of journeys on land can draw on a known set of familiar place-names, but tales set at sea must sometimes invent their own topography. In *Sentei* (“Former Emperor”), for example, the spirit points out where the child emperor Antoku drowned (“There, where the fishing boat is”) and where Naritsune (“There, where the seabirds are flocking”).<sup>23</sup>

The significance of the journey must often be read on more than one level, both real and allegorical. In bangai play *Shin'ichi*, when the spirit of the drowned general Noritsune identifies himself, his boat is named the allegorical “Ship of the Law” (*nori no fune* 法の舟) that takes believers to the “other shore” (*higan* 彼岸). While waiting for Noritsune to reappear in his earthly form, the biwa hōshi then recalls the actual place names of Ikuta and Suma bay on the coast where the battle of Ichino-tani took place.<sup>24</sup> Noritsune returns, describing the fierce sounds of battle in terms of the waves crashing against the rocky shore. Now he describes his boat as *gokuraku kyūsei no fune* (極楽の救誓の舟), a reference to Amida’s vow to rescue all sentient beings and transport them to paradise.<sup>25</sup>

In the case of the two plays still in the performance repertoire, the travelers have a supernatural encounter that respectively hinders and enables their real passage over rough waters. In *Funa Benkei*, Tomomori’s spirit wants Yoshitsune to sink in the sea just as he himself had sank.<sup>26</sup> No nautical technique can save the boat. Yoshitsune draws his sword to ward off the spirit, but it is Benkei’s rosary and prayers that rescues them from the threat. In *Ikarikazuki*, the traveling monk has no money to pay for a fare on a fisherman’s boat that will take him across the dangerous straits of Hayatomo. The fisherman urges him to recite from the Lotus Sutra. When the monk does, he is told to come on board at once, he has well earned the fare, for “truly, everyone, without exception, shall embark on the promised Ship of the Law” (*geni ya*

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beginning in Tsukushi (Kyūshū) and traveling to *Suma no ura* to arrive at *Ichino tani*. These are the only place names mentioned.

<sup>23</sup> *Sentei*, p. 38. 扱はあの釣船の見ゆる所にて。君は沈み給ひ候ぞや。[...] 又只今 鷗の群居る所にて。教経も沈み給ひて候。

<sup>24</sup> *Shin'ichi*, p. 106.

<sup>25</sup> *Shin'ichi*, p. 107.

<sup>26</sup> シテ<sup>レ</sup>知盛が沈みし、其有様に 地<sup>ノ</sup>又義経をも、海に沈めと。Nishino 1998, p. 352. For translations of this key passage see Sanari 1930–31, vol. 4, p. 2784 and Tyler 1992, p. 94.

*morasaji no, chikai no fune no nori no hito tashō no en wa, arigata ya*  
 (げにや洩らさじの。誓ひの船の法の人生の縁は、ありがたや).<sup>27</sup>

The word-play on *nori* meaning “ride” or “embark” (乗り) and *nori* (法) meaning the “Buddhist Law” (*buppō* 仏法) is a familiar one in medieval texts. A different set of puns is found in *Sentei* at the point in the play where the *maejite* reveals his true identity. He had called himself the “son of fisherfolk who criss-cross the waves” (*nami no ōrai suru ama no ko* 浪に往来の蟹の子) but actually—as we had suspected—he is the spirit of the drowned general Noritsune.

手向けを受る幽霊の。魂魄に帰ってきて 御弔を悦びの。法の力か教経の  
 常なき道に帰るとて。陸へはゆかて浦波の 帰るも見えず失せにけ。<sup>28</sup>

His ghost has reappeared in response to the Buddhist offerings and prayers performed for the repose of his soul by the *waki*, a monk, and the *tsure*, Noritsune’s own wet-nurse, Sanmi no Tsubone, who have traveled from the capital to visit the site of his death in Nagato.<sup>29</sup> The passage quoted includes an expression of joy at their prayers (*ontoburai wo yorokobi*). An affirmation of “the power of Buddhist Law” (*nori no chikara*) leads to a double pun on Noritsune’s name. He now returns on the “path of impermanence”: *tsune naki michi*. Essentially the same word play is found in the bangai play *Shin’ichi* when the spirit of Noritsune identifies himself.<sup>30</sup> As an expression of the idea that things in this world are merely transient, *tsune naki* 常なき is, of course, simply an alternative way of phrasing *mujō* 無常 (“impermanence”), a term familiar from the opening of *Heike monogatari* and many other works. Here it is effectively with the description of how the *shite* vanishes from view: “going not to the land”—not to the shore (*riku e wa yukade*)—but instead disappearing from sight amid the waves of the bay. By disappearing in the waves, the spirit is re-enacting his own death in the waters of Nagato bay. This is explicit by the first words of the *shite* when he reappears.

後シテ 一セイへ身をあだ波の白ゆふに。沈みし跡や。帰るらん

<sup>27</sup> The last phrase, from *tashō no en*, is repeated. Sanari 1930–1: 1, 253, cf. translation in Gabriel 1988, p. 121 The pun on *nori* (Buddhist “Law” / “embark”) is made possible by an inversion of *fune no nori* for the expected *nori no fune*.

<sup>28</sup> *Sentei*, p. 39.

<sup>29</sup> *Sentei*, p. 37: Noto-dono no on-menoto to Sanmi no tsubone 能登殿の御めのと三位の局.

<sup>30</sup> *Shin’ichi*, p. 106. Kano kishi ni yuku nori no fune, Noritsune ka tsune naranu yuki yo gatari mo asamashiya 彼岸に行法の舟。教経か常ならぬ。憂世語も浅ましや。



He returns to the place where he once sank—drowned—in the white-capped waves.

In *shura* ghost plays of this type in the current repertoire, the *maejite* will often leave the stage like this with a hinting reference to his name, to appear after a costume change in the warrior's garb he wore at his death.<sup>31</sup> Here the same convention is followed, only this time, the monk and nurse awake to see two ghostly shapes: the figures of the Former Emperor Antoku and Noritsune, the Governor of Noto.<sup>32</sup>

In terms of its structure and content, *Sentei* would seem to owe much to *Ikarikazuki*. Both plays describe Noritsune's failure to capture the nimble-footed Yoshitsune, and include accounts of Noritsune's own suicide, Tomomori's death, and the death of Kiyomori's widow "Niidono" (二位殿)<sup>33</sup> with her grandson, Antoku. However, closer examination reveals points at which both diverge from each other and from the accounts in versions of *Heike monogatari*. In the recited version of *Heike*, Tomomori and his milk-brother Ienaga weigh themselves down with armor when they jump into the ocean.<sup>34</sup> *Ikarikazuki* describes them as weighing themselves down by anchors, whereas in *Sentei* they leap off the boat holding bows between them (*yumi to yumi to tori kawashi*).<sup>35</sup> Anchors are used by another pair of Dan-no-ura suicides in the Kakuichi *Heike*,<sup>36</sup> but I have not found bows used like this by warriors drowning themselves in other accounts of Dan-no-ura. *Sentei* does not make much of it, and it certainly did not become part of the later reception, like Tomomori's anchor in the kabuki *Senbonzakura*.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Examples include *Tadanori* and *Yashima*.

<sup>32</sup> *Sentei*, p. 38: ふしがやなまどろむ枕の上よりも。先帝の御姿。同じく能登殿の御姿。まのあたりに見えさせ給ふぞや。

<sup>33</sup> The conventional way of referring to Tokiko, as explained above.

<sup>34</sup> *Heike monogatari* (Kakuichi version), book 11, "Naishidokoro miyako-iri" (SNKB vol. 45, p. 300). This account of events is followed in the Nagato 長門 version, book 18 (ed. Asahara and Nanami, vol. 2, p. 1435), and given as an alternative version (一説) in *Genpei jōsuiki*, book 43. In the latter version, this is preceded by an account of how Tomomori hears how Munemori and his son failed to sink, and were dragged out of the sea by the Genji. Tomomori and Norimori take off their armor and kill themselves (*jigai*). Ienaga and seven others do the same (ed. Mizuhara, vol. 6, p. 40–41).

<sup>35</sup> *Sentei*, p. 41: 弓とゆみとを取かはしつれて海にぞ入給ふ。

<sup>36</sup> The "anchor draping" motif in *Ikarikazuki* probably derives from the Kakuichi-bon account of the deaths of the brothers Norimori 教盛 and Tsunemori 経盛. *Heike monogatari*, book 11 "Noto dono saigo" (SNKB vol. 45, pp. 296–97).

<sup>37</sup> Based ultimately on *Funa Benkei*, and describing the appearance of Tomomori off Daimotsu Bay.

What I find more significant is the way the play develops other watery motifs. We have looked already at three passages that mention waves (“the fisherfolk who criss-cross the waves,” “the waves of the bay,” and *adanami* or “white-capped waves”). There are eight more occurrences of the word *nami* in this play of five pages in length. Now waves are likely to appear often in any account set at sea like this one. But even conventional expressions have a cumulative force. The play begins with a fine wave image—although one that to me is somewhat opaque in its meaning.

次第 ワキ・ツレ女 へ先立浪の哀れの世に。先立浪の哀れの世に。  
なき跡いざや尋ん

My tentative translation: “The waves before us, in this world of pity.... Let us seek out the death place.” The opening words *sakitatsu* can also mean predecease, especially when a younger person dies before an older, like Naritsune before his wet-nurse. But perhaps it just means “stand before.”

By the common figure of synecdoche, “the waves” mean “the ocean” in expressions like *nami no shita* or *nami no soko ni*, “at the bottom of the waves.” “Beneath the waves” occurs twice, in describing how Noritsune sinks to the sea bottom,<sup>38</sup> and in one of the famous phrases of *Heike monogatari*, the old nun’s words of comfort to the child emperor Antoku when he asks her “where are taking me, Grandmother.” In the Kakuichi version she describes the “place of rejoicing, the paradise of the Pure Land” (極楽浄土とて、めでたき処). Before she drowns them both, she tells him: “There’s another capital down there beneath the waves” (浪のしたにも都のさぶらふぞ).<sup>39</sup> In *Sentei*, the order is the same, but with a significant difference. The play combines phrases from Kakuichi version and the *Genpei jōsuiki* 源平盛衰記. The Nun of Second Rank tells him: “there is a splendid place called the Pure Land beneath the waves”—a phrase found only in the recited version.<sup>40</sup> Then she

<sup>38</sup> *Sentei*, p. 41: 波のそこに入給ふ。

<sup>39</sup> *Heike monogatari*, book 11 “Sentei minage” (SNKB vol. 45, p. 295), with the translation in Watson 2006, p. 142, 143. Compare the similar but not identical account of her words as retold by Kenreimon’in in *Heike monogatari*, *Kanjōnomaki* “Rokudō no sata” (SNKB, vol. 45, 405; trans. Watson 2006, p. 164).

<sup>40</sup> *Sentei*, p. 41. 極楽と申て。目出度所が あの波の下に候。For the Kakuichi phrasing, see preceding note. The Nagato version has 弥陀の浄土へそ、我が君 with 波のした belonging to following description (地の文) of drowning. Asahara

places his hands together in prayer and recites a poem that ends “there is a capital at the bottom of the waves.”<sup>41</sup> With this, she plunges to the bottom of the deep sea [*chihiro no soko*]. The poem is found in all the main *yomihonkei* versions of the *Heike*.

みもすそがは  
 へ今ぞしる 御裳濯川の流れには 波の底にも 都ありとは<sup>42</sup>  
 “Now I understand. At the waves’ bottom there lies a capital too  
 for all the currents that flow from Mimosusogawa.”

The Mimosuso River, also known as Isuzuugawa 五十鈴川, runs next to the Great Shrine of Ise. The word *nagare*, here translated “currents that flow,” thus refers also to the imperial line of descent from Amaterasu.

For a fantastic journey beneath the waves, we must look once to the final Initiates’ Chapter [*Kanjō no maki*] of the Kakuichi version of *Heike monogatari*. Long after the battle, Kenreimon’in describes how she dreams of seeing her drowned son again in a palace more splendid than the one in the capital, together with ministers and courtiers of the Taira House. Her mother, the Nun of Second Rank, tells her that it is the palace of the dragon king (*ryūgyūjō* 竜宮城).<sup>43</sup>

The play *Sentei* does not follow Antoku beneath the waves, but remains above, with surviving onlookers, adding an imaginative touch that I have not been able to trace in other accounts. Warriors on both sides react to the sight of the drowning with horror.

是を最期の御製にて。千尋の底に入給へば。敵も味方も。一度わつと  
 悲しみの。声かときけば浪風の 音にて夢や覚ぬらん 音にて夢や覚  
 ぬらん

This poem was her last. Seeing them go to the bottom of the ocean, friend and foe alike joined in a single cry of grief. Or was it just the waves and winds? The sound that wakes us from our dream, the sound that wakes us from our dream.

The later *noh* plays describe the final journey of their protagonists, as well as others who drown themselves when the Genpei battles are lost. In *Tsukushi no ura*, the *shite* is an unnamed woman. The *waki* is praying

and Nanami 1998, vol. 2, p. 1428.

<sup>41</sup> *Sentei*, p. 41. 波の底にも 都ありとは.

<sup>42</sup> *Sentei*, p. 41. Cf. *Genpei jōsuiki*, book 43, ed. Mizuhara 1988–91, vol. 6, p. 33.

<sup>43</sup> *Heike monogatari* 2, 522 (M 436) [*Kanjō no maki*, *Rokudō no sata*]. The person who informs Kenreimon’in is Tomomori in *Genpei jōsuiki*, book 48, ed. Mizuhara 1988–91, vol. 6, pp. 217–218.

on the shore in Nagato, “at the place where many of the Heike clan perished long ago, at the time of the Genpei conflict.”<sup>44</sup> The woman appears from the direction of the sea (*oki no kata yori*), saying no more about herself than that she comes “from the Heike clan who drowned in this sea.”<sup>45</sup> Asked by the monk to confess how she died, she speaks instead for all those who died by their own will. When they realized that the Heike fortune had run out and they knew it was all over (*hitobito wa ima wa kō yo tote*), they all drowned themselves.<sup>46</sup> (The two terms used are *jusui* 入水 and *nami ni shizumi* “sink in the waves.”)

There are two plays that describe the end of Ichi no tani from the perspective of a woman who witnesses the aftermath of the battle from one of the Taira boats moored off the Suma beaches. The first is *Matsuo no ura*, which has a promising start: a monk on summer retreat on the island of Awaji meets the ghost of Kozaishō 小宰相, who drowned herself after her husband Michimori’s death. The second half, after she appears in her “true” form, is somewhat perfunctory, a problem with many *bangai* plays. The story of Kozaishō is far better told in the long final section of *Heike*, book 9, and in the currently performed noh play *Michimori*. More interesting in this sense is the play *Hirosawa hime* 広沢姫. The Hirosawa Lady of the title is not mentioned in any variant of *Heike monogatari* known to me. In the noh play, she identifies herself as the daughter of the Taira lord Norimori 教盛, but she appears to be an invented figure.<sup>47</sup> In the final lines of the play, she describes how everyone, realizing that the battle was lost, climbed on board the ships floating on the sea. “They threw themselves from the ships, fated to die, falling to hell (*naraku ni ochite*), none rising again to the surface.”<sup>48</sup> Like the unnamed lady of the last play, her function is not so much to record the death of an individual victim of the war, but to remember the many nameless men and women who died.

<sup>44</sup> *Tsukushi no ura*, p. 48. むかしげんべいのかせんの時。平家の一もんおほくはてたまひし所にて候。

<sup>45</sup> *Tsukushi no ura*, p. 48. 我このうみにしづみにし。平氏の一門来りたり。

<sup>46</sup> *Tsukushi no ura*, p. 49. 人々いまはかうよとて。みなみな入すい（水）ありし事。

<sup>47</sup> There are examples elsewhere in *bangai* plays on Genpei material, e.g. *Mizushima Tarō* 水島太郎 (MY 30), based freely on episodes from *Heike monogatari*, book 8.

<sup>48</sup> *Hirosawa hime*, pp. 78–79. さるにてもわれこの一のかせん、いまはかうよと見えしほどに。みなみなふねにとりのりて。かいしゃう（海上）にうかむ。ふねのうちよりも身をなげ。むなしくなりし身の。ゐ（い）んぐわ（因果）はすなはちならく（奈落）におちて。うかむよもなき身なりしに。Her last words thank the monk for saving her.

Let me end with one more example of death by drowning likened to falling into *Naraku* or hell. This comes in the play *Nii no ama*, where the protagonist cites a poem sometimes attributed to Emperor Murakami:

いふならく。奈落の底に入ぬれば。刹利も首陀も。かはらざりけり  
 “As people say, when one sinks to the bottom of hell, there is no difference between highest and low of rank.”<sup>49</sup>

In *Genpei jōsuiki*, the same poem is used to comment on the fate of the exiled emperor Sutoku. Here in the noh play, it is put into the mouth of the grandmother of the child emperor Antoku. Despite being a court lady of “unprecedented” position, she is “drawn by sin beneath the waves of wrath to a place at the bottom rank.”<sup>50</sup>

The *bangai* noh discussed in this paper are, like the curate’s egg, excellent in parts.<sup>51</sup> If this is mainly true because they draw heavily on expressions from earlier works, then this fact in itself is no great fault. Many premodern works do the same. In their descriptions of sea journeys they draw on many of the conventions of *michiyuki* in noh plays and narrative prose literature. They make liberal use of familiar word-plays, allowing journeys by boat to suggest Buddhist meanings in addition to the literal sense. Accounts of how the drowned “sank beneath the waves” takes on a greater resonance by the references to what lies below, whether the Palace of the Dragon God, paradise, or hell.

<sup>49</sup> *Nii no ama*, p. 43, the references are to highest and lowest of the Indian castes: *kṣatriya* (Jp. *sechiri* 刹利), and *sūdra* (Jp. *shuda* or *shudara* 首陀羅). In *Genpei jōsuiki*, book 8, the quotation is found in a waka by Emperor Murakami (*Engi no seishu* 延喜の聖主), and part of a reflection on the miserable death of the exiled emperor Sutoku. Mizuhara 1988-91, vol. 1, p. 355. The phrase appears elsewhere, for example in the nō play *Nishigi* 錦木 (Sanari 1931, vol. 5, p. 2353; trans. French 1970, p. 92) and in a poetic passage in Zeami’s text *Kintōsho* 金島書 (ed. Konishi 2004, p. 386; trans. Matisoff, 1977, p. 452). See also the poem by Prince Takaoka 高岳親王 (d. 881) in *Shasekishū* 沙石集, book 8 (NKBT vol. 85, p. 361; trans. Morrell 1985, p. 229).

<sup>50</sup> *Nii no ama*, p. 43. 我天子の外祖母として。例なかりし官女なれど。罪にひかれて嘆患の浪の。下が下なる位と成(つ)て。

<sup>51</sup> A cartoon entitled titled “True Humility” by George du Maurier and published in Punch magazine in November 9th, 1895, shows a curate having breakfast at his bishop’s house. The bishop comments, “I’m afraid you’ve got a bad egg, Mr Jones.” The curate, not wanting to give offence to his superior, answers, “Oh, no, my Lord, I assure you that parts of it are excellent!”

[[http://www.fictionalcities.co.uk/Curates\\_egg.gif](http://www.fictionalcities.co.uk/Curates_egg.gif)]

In the plays, we see how classic conventions of noh plays were used and developed by later generations. They also demonstrate the power and endurance of the legends that grew up around tales of the Genpei war.

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Abstract: Descriptions of crossing rivers, lakes, and seas are a regular feature of many noh plays inside and outside of the repertory. In most cases, a character’s journey across water is described in the introductory michiyuki, and the main events of the play take place after he or she has crossed to the other side (a riverbank, island, or land beyond the sea). This paper focuses on exceptions among plays retelling incidents from the Genpei War (1180–85) in which a key part of the action is played out at sea, with the appearance of the spirits of the drowned. Six “extra-repertory” plays of this type dramatize stories of suicide by drowning after the battles of Ichi-no-tani and Dan-no-ura.