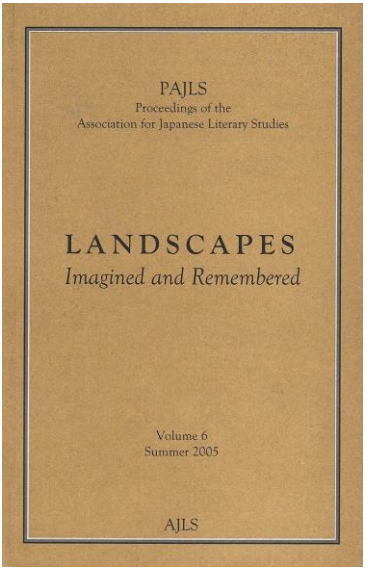
“The Idiom of Landscape: Bandō in the Narrative Topography of the Genpei War Tales”

Vyjayanthi Ratnam Selinger

Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies 6 (2005): 39–49.



PAJLS 6:
Landscapes: Imagined and Remembered.
Ed. Paul S. Atkins, Davinder L. Bhowmik, and Edward Mack.

The Idiom of Landscape:
Bandō in the Narrative Topography of the Genpei War Tales

Vyjayanthi Ratnam Selinger
Bowdoin College

Though he is the implied victor of the Genpei Wars (1180-85) and the successor to the medieval polity, Minamoto no Yoritomo is puzzling for scholars of Genpei War tales because of his curious figuration in narrative: he is neither the architect of his political coup nor its chief protagonist. For a man whose name is synonymous with the establishment of a new political regime, he is given a relatively small role to play in the canonical Kakuichi variant. In this paper, I argue that the figuration of Yoritomo in the Genpei War tales[1] should be read against the fraught political discourse of the fourteenth century, wherein court and shogunate dueled to manipulate the political imagination. Focusing on two variants that came of age between the 1370s and the 1390s (the Kakuichi and the *Genpei jōsuiki* texts), I demonstrate that the Genpei War tales encode two polar visions of Yoritomo. These dramatically different accounts reveal how the Genpei War functioned as a master trope in later historical imaginings, producing both a triumphal account of the inviolability of the court's authority as well as a counter-narrative of the birth of the shogunate. I will unpack these two meta-narratives by providing a close reading of the imagined geography of the early stages of the Genpei War.

My point of departure in this paper is the curious elision of the eastern provinces in the narrative topography of the Kakuichi text. Not only does this canonical text omit any mention of the founding of Kamakura, the new power base that Yoritomo creates, but it also skips over the eastern battles that establish his ascendancy. In my paper, I argue that this pale figuration of Yoritomo and Kamakura in the Kakuichi variant is not an accident, but a clear evocation of its historical meta-narrative. I contrast this iteration against the *Genpei jōsuiki* variant which gives a fuller account of the emergence of Yoritomo as a Minamoto shogun.

This split in the representation of Yoritomo's rise in the Genpei War tales mirrored a particularly thorny question for most medieval thinkers: Was the shogunate an independent power base? Or did the authority of the imperial court subsume the shogunate? The vital question of how to formulate

[1] This corpus of texts is more commonly known as *Heike monogatari*. In this paper, I treat two variant texts of this corpus, the Kakuichibon *Heike monogatari* (the Kakuichi variant of the *Tale of the Heike*) and the *Genpei jōsuiki* (An Account of the Rise and Fall of the Minamoto and Taira Clans). Though their titles and interpretive paradigms differ, they are part of the same textual tradition recounting the Genpei War. To avoid confusion, I call this corpus the Genpei War tales.

historical change was not limited to writers of medieval texts; it is tenaciously alive in the historiographical debates of today. Historians continue to dispute how much autonomy was accorded the shogunate in the Kamakura and Muromachi periods. Though a great deal has been gleaned from the historical record, little is known about how the rise of Yoritomo was imagined in the literary domain, particularly in the Genpei War tales. Conventional wisdom holds that since these tales were written about 150 to 250 years after the war, they celebrate the rise of the victor, Minamoto no Yoritomo. Yet, there is little account of the ways in which the different variants figure his rise, and how these might refract the dominant political concerns of their time.

This paper focuses on two prominent variants of the Genpei War tales. The Kakuichi text is perhaps the most well-known variant, and it is the text that is most widely translated into foreign languages. Prior to the canonization of the Kakuichi text in the late nineteenth century, however, it was the *Genpei jōsuiki* variant that was most authoritative. I choose these texts for my study not simply because of their prominence in literary history, but also because they are relatively late variants, maturing between 1371 and the 1390s.[2] That is, these texts build upon earlier variants in order to refine and articulate their own particular visions of the Genpei War. By comparing these two variants, I show that the ideological foment of the fourteenth century gave birth to two vastly different retrospections of the war.

For this paper, I set aside the authorship of the texts, and treat them as symptoms of the political discourse of the Nanbokuchō period, during which they came to fruition. The *Genpei jōsuiki*, I argue, heralds the Genpei War as the arrival of the Minamoto clan on the political stage. It writes into its rendition of the war the myth of the ascendancy of the Genji family, integrating a discourse crafted during the fourteenth century to buttress the legitimacy of the new Ashikaga shogunate. The Kakuichi text, on the other hand, elides this motif and instead celebrates the recovery of imperial authority at the end of the civil disturbance. Reading between this anxious assertion of imperial prestige (the Kakuichi text) and the more bold declaration of Minamoto ascendancy (*Genpei jōsuiki*), I suggest that the ongoing contest for power between court and shogunate in the fourteenth century leads to a fractious renegotiation of how to write the twelfth-century past. In particular, I argue that the *Genpei jōsuiki* evokes the birth of the shogunate within the imaginary of the Bandō (a group of provinces in eastern Japan), marshalling its significance in the cultural memory as a semi-autonomous zone and a hotbed of Minamoto power. In the Kakuichi text, Bandō is conspicuously elided, with the Fuji river functioning as the absolute limit for the text's horizon, beyond which it does not venture.

[2] The Kakuichi text bears a colophon that dates it to 1371. Although it is harder to date the *Genpei jōsuiki* text, most scholars agree that it post-dates the Kakuichi text, and was likely produced a little after the end of the Nanbokuchō period.

Yoritomo as enemy of the court: The anxious logic of imperial authority

Yoritomo first makes his appearance in the Kakuichi text in an episode called "An Array of Court Enemies" (*Chōteki zoroe*). Horse-borne messengers come flying to Kyoto to inform a startled court that Yoritomo had started a civil disturbance in the east. Shocked nobles whisper among themselves, saying, "A national crisis is brewing":

> If we seek to identify the earliest of our court enemies, we learn that there was a spider at Takao village in Nagusa district, Kii province, during the fourth year of Emperor Jinmu's reign. Short of body, long of legs, superhuman in strength, it inflicted many injuries on the local folk. An official force marched against it, read out an imperial edict, and finally killed it after covering it with a vine net. More than twenty traitors have sought to overthrow the court since then. . . .
>
> But no one has been successful. Their corpses have been exposed in mountains and fields; their heads have been hung at prison gates.[3]

A more damning characterization of Yoritomo could not have been conceived – he is compared to seditious warriors of the past. The casting of Yoritomo as a threat in the early stages of the Genpei War is close to the historical truth. Courtiers of the time viewed Yoritomo's uprising in great alarm: "He has seized under his control the two provinces of Izu and Suruga." Six days later, the same courtier added, "The bands of perpetrators number five hundred, while the court's forces are two thousand. They have already met in battle, but the bandits have escaped into the mountains."[4]

The Kakuichi text, however, engineers a significant shift – Yoritomo moves from being the head of a civil disturbance to something far more threatening, someone who challenges the legitimacy of the imperial court. It is this vision of him as *chōteki* (enemy of the court) that has puzzled many scholars. The source of confusion is quite basic, and originates from the concerns of linguists. The term *chōteki* comes into currency relatively late in history, around the 1240s. It is essentially born with Yoritomo – he is one of the earliest people to use this term.[5] *Chōteki* then comes to be widely used within the *Hōgen*, *Heiji*, and *Heike monogatari* texts. The long list of rebels, here denounced by the term *chōteki,* were referred to in their own time as either *kyōto* (evil-doer) or *gyakuto* (seditious men).

---

[3] *The Tale of the Heike*, trans. Helen Craig McCullough (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 174.

[4] See the entry for the third day of the ninth month of 1180 in Kujō Kanezane's diary *Gyokuyō*. Sadaichi Takashi, ed., *Kundoku 'Gyokuyō,'* vol. 4 (Tokyo: Takashina Shoten, 1988), 320.

[5] Saeki Shin'ichi, "Shōgun to chōteki," in '*Heike monogatari' sakugen* (Tokyo: Wakakusa Shobō, 1996), 351. An earlier use can be found in the *Kojidan*, but it carries an utterly different nuance.

Several centuries later, the writer Takizawa Bakin (1767-1848) would famously observe that the term *chōteki* could be born only at the moment that the shogun had displaced the emperor.[6] There is some merit to Takizawa's observation. The declaration of an enemy of the court is also simultaneously an admission that the rebel has parity with the court, and power enough to challenge it. This explains the rarity of this term in Chinese sources and in Japanese court documents.[7] Saeki Shin'ichi, who reads Bakin in light of the Genpei War tales, suggests that the terms *shōgun* and *chōteki* are linked in medieval discourse. The term *shōgun* underwent a shift in late Heian Japan: at first a temporary court title authorizing military activity against rebellious elements, it later envisaged the shogun as a vanquisher of the court's enemies. This shift was also simultaneously a reformulation of whom the shogunal missions were combating – from *iteki* (barbarian peoples) to challengers of imperial authority.[8]

It is this latter nuance – the absoluteness of the enemy – that is highlighted in the *Heike* "An Array of Court Enemies" episode. I read Bakin in a different light than Saeki does; I see the unilateral force of the term *chōteki* pointing to a fundamental insecurity about the authority of the emperor. In my reading, "An Array of Court Enemies" is a confident declaration of authority that could only be born at a historical moment when the court's power was starting to wane. It is an ambivalent declaration of power in that the assertion of authority is undercut by the need to make it.

Yet, Yoritomo does not stay an enemy for long. In the subsequent episode, readers are introduced to the holy man Mongaku, who urges Yoritomo to start a rebellion. Mongaku travels to Kyoto to obtain release for Yoritomo from the retired emperor at Fukuhara, and it is this edict that ignites the events in the east. By figuring the rise of Yoritomo as a consequence of Mongaku's instigation, the Kakuichi text strips Yoritomo of any private ambition to start the Genpei War. Additionally, the textual invention of a Fukuhara edict, of which no mention is found in historical sources, renders Yoritomo a loyal servant of the court, unwilling to act without the imprimatur of his sovereign.[9] That these two fictions – the meeting with Mongaku and the Fukuhara edict – conspire to create an image of a loyal Yoritomo is well

---

[6] Ibid., 350-51. Original text in Takizawa Bakin, vol. 3 of *Nansō Satomi hakkenden*, ed. Koike Tōgorō (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1937), 415.

[7] Takahashi Masaaki, "Chōteki to iu go no seiritsu," in *Ideorogii no bunka sōchi*, ed. Fukui Katsuyoshi and Shintani Takanori, *Jinrui ni totte tatakai to wa* (Tokyo: Tōyō Shorin, 2002).

[8] Saeki Shin'ichi, "'Chōteki' izen: gunki monogatari ni okeru sei'i to muhon," *Kokugo to kokubungaku* 74:11 (1997). Also in Saeki, "Shōgun to chōteki." The basic shift Saeki observes is from an earlier model of a *seii taishōgun* (barbarian-quelling general) to a *chōteki o utsu shōgun* (rebel-quelling general).

[9] Courtiers' diaries make no mention of this edict. Even the *Azuma kagami,* the official tract of the shogunate, links Yoritomo's uprising to an earlier order by Prince Mochihito. Yanagida Yōichirō, "'Heike monogatari' ni okeru hōfuku: funsō no teiryū kara mita Yoritomo no heiwa," in *Gunki monogatari no mado*, ed. Kansai Gunki Monogatari Kenkyūkai (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 2002), 112.

documented in scholarship. What is less well noted is the anxious evocation of imperial prestige that underwrites this telling of Yoritomo's rise. I have already noted that Yoritomo enters the scene as an avowed enemy of the court. He is then transformed through the Fukuhara edict into its servant. This encoding of Yoritomo is paramount to sustaining the meta-narrative of the Kakuichi text: the Genpei War did not so much give birth to Yoritomo as it returned authority to the court.

If Yoritomo is so readily co-opted into the court's project, why is he labeled an imperial enemy at the outset of the conflict? An answer to this question may be sought in the mangled temporality of these passages. The Kakuichi text delivers the news of Yoritomo's audacity in the east first, and then recounts the issuance of the Fukuhara edict, even though the Fukuhara edict is issued, by the text's own dating schema, two months prior to the battles in the east.[10] The inversion of temporality is not accidental, but paramount to sustaining the myth of the court's power to both declare its enemies and to summon servants. As it pertains to Yoritomo, this temporal inversion diffuses the threat he poses: he is downsized from a man who raises arms to challenge the court to one who acts in its service.

Such a telling of the court's inviolability also requires that the text turn a blind eye to the early battles that Yoritomo's forces fight in the east.[11] The battles at Yui, Kinugasa, Kotsubo, and Ishibashiyama are conspicuously skipped, and the Kakuichi text begins its telling of the Genpei War with the battle of Fuji river. The selection of this location as the imagined start of the Genpei War is imbued with significance. The encounter at Fuji river is a powerful trope for the downfall of the Taira, for they shamelessly flee from their campsite at night, mistaking the flapping wings of a flock of birds for the approach of the Genji army. What is elided from the Kakuichi text is the geopolitical significance of the battle of Fuji river as a boundary between the east and west. In other texts, such as the *Genpei jōsuiki*, the skirmish at Fuji river is not the first battle but the last battle fought in the east, the culmination of a sustained effort to oust Taira forces and claim this area as the heartland of Genji power. By erasing the traces of these earlier battles, the Kakuichi text elides the paramount geopolitical denotation of the Fuji river – the tremendous support of eastern warriors that Yoritomo earns through these battles, the sealing of the east as untouchable territory, and the creation of the

[10] In the "Chōteki zoroe" episode, a fast courier brings news of Yoritomo's battles in the ninth month of 1180. Yet the retired emperor's edict that Mongaku obtains bears a date two months earlier.

[11] Scholars generally acknowledge that Yoritomo's early military maneuvers in the east were self-authorized seizures of estate managerships and vice governorships. It was only in 1183 that he officially submitted to the court as its deputy in the east. See Jeffrey P. Mass, *Yoritomo and the Founding of the First Bakufu: The Orgins of Dual Government in Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

geographical imaginary of Bandō as a toponym associated with Minamoto control of the east. That is, the Kakuichi text opts to present Yoritomo as an agent of the court, rather than as the architect of a new warrior order in the east. Again, by starting the narrative here, the Kakuichi text prefigures the eventual victory of Minamoto forces over the Taira army, and the return of peace to the realm.

It is therefore no accident that the Fuji river roughly corresponds to the boundary that defined the area of Bandō. Bandō was originally a term that marked the area east of Usui and Ashigara slope. Between the eighth and the twelfth centuries, the state waged wars with the Ezo people of the northeast.[12] Thus, in the eighth century, the Bandō was simply a military base for troops headed north, as well as a resettlement camp for those who submitted to the court in these northern battles. Subsequent history would considerably alter this political geography, for Bandō itself would become the war front, instead of simply being the base camp. These "prisoners of war" of the northern battles resisted their displacement into the Bandō, raising countless rebellions. In response to this, the court started sending its own sons, princes removed from the imperial family and given aristocratic names such as Taira and Minamoto. Still, the Bandō continued to be restless. As these warrior aristocrats began to establish roots in the provinces by marrying their daughters off to local powerlords, they also began fighting among themselves and jockeying for power. The most powerful conflagration of these simmering disputes was the 939 rebellion of Taira no Masakado, who called Bandō his own sovereign land and named himself its new emperor.

Thus, it is important to note that the geographical term Bandō evoked two very threatening things to the court of later periods. On one hand, it signified the court's inability to bring the east under consistent control, for rebellions rocked this area continuously. On the other, it bespoke the rise of powerful warrior lineages called the Minamoto and the Taira, who started out as military lieutenants of the court but went on to establish roots in the provinces, allowing them to amass power and patronage networks. Thus, by the medieval period, the term Bandō and the images of sedition as well as military independence that it summoned were threatening and were to be used with caution.

It is therefore significant that the terms most often used in the Kakuichi text to describe the east are Tōgoku and Kantō. Kantō as a term had fewer associations with a seditious past, and was therefore the idiom of choice for the writers of the *Azuma kagami,* the official history of the Kamakura shogunate. It is used three hundred times in this text, in comparison to the five

[12] Ishii Ryōsuke, "Tōgoku to Saikoku: jōdai oyobi jōsei ni okeru," in *Taika no kaishin to Kamakura bakufu no seiritsu*, ed. Ishii Ryōsuke, *Hōseishi ronshū,* vol. 1 (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1972). Discussed in Amino Yoshihiko, *Higashi to nishi no kataru Nihon no rekishi* (Tokyo: Soshiete, 1982).

occurrences of the name Bandō. By the Kamakura period, Bandō was a term that needed to be used with discretion.

Counter-narrating Yoritomo's rise: Foregrounding the east

It is significant, then, that the *Genpei jōsuiki* situates its story within the cultural imaginary of the Bandō. Bandō is the adjective that modifies the land, its people, and its stalwart warriors. It is the term for Minamoto terrain, which the Taira fear to trespass when they are stationed at Fuji river. Kantō, when it is used, figures largely in the compound *Kantō gekō* (descent to the east) suggesting that it is an idiom of travel away from the center. In other words, it is a term for the east from the perspective of the capital, and thus not a descriptive term for the eastern region.[13] In sharp contrast to the Kakuichi text, the *Genpei jōsuiki* gives relief to battles in Izu and Sagami provinces that precede the shameful retreat of the Taira at Fuji river, slowly bringing into the focus an image of an autonomous and impenetrable east. The telling of the birth of this new center of power culminates with the march of Yoritomo into Kamakura, and his award of land to his vassals – two acts that unambiguously announce the setting-up of a new structure of authority.[14] The Kakuichi text makes no mention of any of this.

The birth of the east takes place within a unique temporal fold that contests the centered narratives of Kyoto. The *Genpei jōsuiki* also begins its telling of the uprising in the east with the breathless messenger sent by Ōba Kagechika. Interestingly, however, the *Genpei jōsuiki* carries the section of the horse-borne courier not once, but twice. By embedding the rise of Yoritomo in the space between this pause in diegetic time, the *Genpei jōsuiki* foregrounds the fact that the counter-narrative is an interjection, an interruption in the flow of another, more "given" account. Since the narrating perspective shifts from the capital (where Ōba's messenger delivers his news), to the east (where all of Yoritomo's early battles take place), and back to the capital, the *Genpei jōsuiki* sets apart the narrative of Yoritomo's rise as an explicit contestation of a solely Kyoto-based perspective.

As in the Kakuichi text, a startled court reacts to the news with shock and consternation. Yoritomo is similarly cast as an enemy of the court, but the *Genpei jōsuiki* provides a frame for the episode that blunts the force of the accusation. The section opens with Kiyomori's words, and it becomes clear that Yoritomo is more a personal, political enemy of Kiyomori than a public enemy of the state. Kiyomori says uneasily, "But how can Yoritomo forget his debt of gratitude to me? Would he be alive today if I had not permitted him to

[13] There is always the thorny question of what specific geographic area the term Kantō subtended. According to one scholar, after the twelfth century, "Kantō" denoted all the land east of Ausaka slope. Kōchi Shōsuke, *Yoritomo no jidai: 1180-nendai nairanshi*. (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1990), 240.
[14] Mizuhara Hajime, *Shintei 'Genpei seisuiki*,' 6 vols., vol. 3 (Tokyo: Shin Jinbutsu Ōraisha, 1988), 164.

live and had chosen to ignore the pleas of Lady Ike? Now he takes up arms against the house of Taira, unmindful of his debt of obligation to us."[15]

Following the "Court enemies" section, readers are introduced, as in the Kakuichi text, to the holy sage Mongaku. Whereas the Kakuichi text frames Yoritomo's uprising simply as a response to the Retired Emperor's call, the *Genpei jōsuiki* accords greater ambition to the young Yoritomo. In the former, Mongaku calls upon Yoritomo to defeat the Taira, while in the latter, he deems Yoritomo the future ruler of the realm (*kuni no nushi*):

> After a bit, Mongaku said, "I have traveled all around the country, and many have come before me claiming to be descended from the grandchild emperor of the sixth son of Emperor Seiwa. But none of them have the skill to become a great general and control the realm and the four surrounding seas. In some cases, they are so daunting that they cannot win over the hearts of others. In others, they are quietly courageous but radiate no authority. It is dangerous when one is mild and does not have authority. Yet, one earns enemies when one is too intrepid. As the one who has authority and yet is even-tempered, *you will become the ruler of the realm*. When I look at you now, I see that your heart is kind, but you also possess a face with authority. This is the kind of face that men will be drawn to side with. . . .[16]

For now, I would like to set aside Mongaku's allusion to other possible contenders to power, for they are veiled references to Yoritomo's brothers, whom Yoritomo edges out on his route to power. Instead, I would like to focus on Mongaku's assertion that Yoritomo would become the ruler of the realm. This is far bolder than calling him shogun, for a shogunal office was associated with controlling lawlessness –the highest law enforcement office in the land, to be sure, but nothing like being the "ruler of the realm."

In the *Genpei jōsuiki*, Yoritomo echoes this confidence in his future political role by showing an almost arrogant acknowledgment of the power that would accrue to him. As in the Kakuichi text, Mongaku travels to Kyoto to obtain an edict from the retired emperor for Yoritomo, but an extraordinary exchange takes place before the edict changes hands. Mongaku demands that Yoritomo give him land for his religious collection campaign before he hands over the document. Yoritomo laughs at him, but only briefly, for the monk persists:

> Yoritomo asked, "When my own position is so tenuous, how can I give you anything?"
>
> "Follow my plans and give me the lands," said Mongaku.

[15] Ibid., 2:337.
[16] Ibid., 3:32. Emphasis added.

> Yoritomo replied, "Should I win the battles, and hold the land of Japan in my hands, then you may make such requests."
>
> Mongaku said, "Once you have seized it in your hands, it will be hard for you to give it away. What you don't yet have, you can give away pretty easily. It would be too much to ask for whole provinces, so give me about ten estates [*shōen*]." He pulled out an inkstone and selected some thirteen landholdings starting with Takakamono sub-district, and including the Shinjō, Honjō, Sasabe, Utsu, and Nahono estates in Tanba province and Gokano estate in Harima province.
>
> Yoritomo's nose twitched as he tried to suppress a smile of smug confidence, but he signed over a deed and pressed his seal.
>
> Mongaku smiled with satisfaction. "You, sir, are more generous than I expected. You have started to resemble what my face-reading foretold. You will certainly become the ruler of the realm with this boldness you display. Without further ado, here is the Retired Emperor's edict."[17]

The fact that the monk tests Yoritomo's appetite for power is completely consistent with his provocative persona. Mongaku's pluck and insolence are recurring themes in the narrative. The significance of this passage lies in Yoritomo's response, in which he stands tall as a future ruler. Yoritomo displays great territorial ambition, easily assuming that the battles would confer upon him many territories, some of which he would share with his loyalists. Here, the *Genpei jōsuiki* foreshadows the power to manipulate land and distribute it to his followers that would accrue to Yoritomo upon the founding of the shogunate. Compared to the Kakuichi text, where Yoritomo rises to serve the sovereign, the *Genpei jōsuiki* presages the arrival of a new center of power.

In the *Genpei jōsuiki*, the Fukuhara edict is transformed from the missive of the sovereign to a means through which Yoritomo can realize overlordship over land in Japan. When the edict is circulated in the Bandō provinces, regional warriors join Yoritomo's cause not out of deference to the emperor, but because they welcome the resurgence of Minamoto authority in the east.

A confident Hōjō Tokimasa declares, "Ever since Lord Minamoto Yoshiie subdued Sadatō and Munetō of the northern provinces, every man in the eastern provinces swears loyalty to the young lord Yoritomo and has done so for successive generations." And the seasoned warrior Miura Yoshiaki joyfully says, "How fortunate I am at this age of seventy to see the flowering of the Minamoto clan again."[18]

From the work of historians, we know that the notion of a unitary body called the Minamoto was nothing but a myth in the 1180s. When the war

[17] Ibid., 3:39.
[18] Ibid., 3:62.

against the Taira began, several collateral Minamoto lines rose up to fight. There was little reason to believe that Yoritomo would emerge triumphant over all the competing collateral lines jockeying for the chieftainship of the Minamoto clan. But, as the declarations of Hōjō Tokimasa and Miura Yoshiaki demonstrate, the *Genpei jōsuiki* chooses to write the rise of Yoritomo as the resurgence of Minamoto authority in the east, recalling an earlier Minamoto general, Yoshiie, whose military exploits were legendary.

This prominence given to Yoshiie is a fourteenth-century concern that is projected back into the twelfth-century past. The Ashikaga shogunate, which came to power in the fourteenth century, had to reach all the way back to Yoshiie to claim legitimacy to the shogunal title. The *Genpei jōsuiki* gives particular emphasis to this etching of Yoritomo as the heir of Yoshiie. In a section unique to the *Genpei jōsuiki*, Yoritomo and his seven retainers run into a seller of *eboshi* caps during their flight from pursuing Taira forces. When they receive their headgear, seven of the *eboshi* are folded to the right, whereas Yoritomo's *eboshi* alone is folded to the left. The men are stunned by this strange occurrence. Yoritomo says, "It is indeed strange. Ever since my Genji ancestor Lord Hachiman made it a practice to wear his *eboshi* to the left, it has been the practice of shoguns in our clan to wear such *eboshi*."[19] A few lines later, the *Genpei jōsuiki* helpfully sums up this section as follows: "It must be that the Hachiman bodhisattva himself took the shape of the *eboshi* seller to place this on Yoritomo's head."

The invocation of Hachiman Yoshiie as the progenitor of the Genji clan is pure anachronism.[20] Representations of Yoshiie prior to the twelfth century, such that we can glean from texts like *Kojidan* and *Konjaku monogatari shū*, focus on his martial prowess. That is to say, Yoshiie is no more and no less than a man who excels in the art of war. In the thirteenth century, however, a new picture of Yoshiie emerges as he assumes symbolic importance as the progenitor of the Seiwa Genji clan. This elevation of Yoshiie reached its apogee in the fourteenth century, when the Ashikaga began to legitimate their fragile hold on power. As the historian Satō Shin'ichi has argued, in order to stake the claim that they were direct descendants of the Seiwa Genji clan, and superior to rival Genji lines like the Nitta, the Ashikaga had to reach further back than Yoritomo, all the way back to Yoshiie.[21] Yoshiie explodes into fourteenth-century texts such as the *Nan 'Taiheiki'* (1402), in which the ancestor himself is heard predicting and justifying the future uprising of Ashikaga Takauji. A robe allegedly handed down from the time of Yoshiie makes prominent appearances in texts like *Baishōron* and *Taiheiki*. This

[19] Ibid., 3:121.
[20] Aya Habara, "Yoshiie kara Yoshitomo, soshite Takauji e: Genji keifu no ninshiki to 'Genpei jōsuiki,'" *Koten isan* 53 (2003), 1-11.
[21] Satō Shin'ichi, "Muromachi bakufu ron," in *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi: chūsei 3*, ed. Ienaga Saburō (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1963).

retrospective imagining of Yoshiie as the progenitor of the Genji clan can be glimpsed in all clarity in the *Gosannen kassen emaki*, which is commissioned and produced during the Nanbokuchō period.

Conclusion

As the canonical variant, the Kakuichi text often becomes the stand-in for all theorization about the *Heike monogatari.* Yet, prior to the nineteenth century, the *Genpei jōsuiki* was the better-known variant, informing other literary imaginings like Zeami's noh plays. My comparison of these two variants is motivated by two concerns: first, through the contrast, I hope to bring to light the elisions that create the Kakuichi text and to relativize the hold it has on how we construe the Genpei War tales; second, I would like to open these texts up to a reading that considers the historical milieu of their circulation, if not their production. Both the Kakuichi and *Genpei jōsuiki* texts are products of the Nanbokuchō period, the trying six-decade interval between 1336 and 1392, when power was split between a renegade southern court and a shogunate-backed northern court. The political discourse of this period was rife with questions about the authority of both court and shogunate, spurring an intense reconsideration about the significance of the birth of the shogunate in tracts like the *Jinnō shōtōki* (1339) and *Baishōron* (1349). This paper therefore suggests how the Genpei War tales may have refracted these concerns.

While intertextual proof connecting the Genpei War tales to these polemical tracts is hard to come by, I have tried to show that the *Genpei jōsuiki* incorporates a prominent element of Nanbokuchō discourse: the valorification of Yoshiie as the progenitor of the Seiwa Genji lineage. In the *Genpei jōsuiki*, this imagination of Yoshiie is connected to Yoritomo's assumption of symbolic dominion over the east, recapturing the territory that had once been the domain of his ancestor Yoshiie. That the Kakuichi text elides the battle narratives in the east and the image of a Genji shogun fashioned after Yoshiie says much about how it chooses to represent the Genpei War within the fraught political space of the Nanbokuchō period.