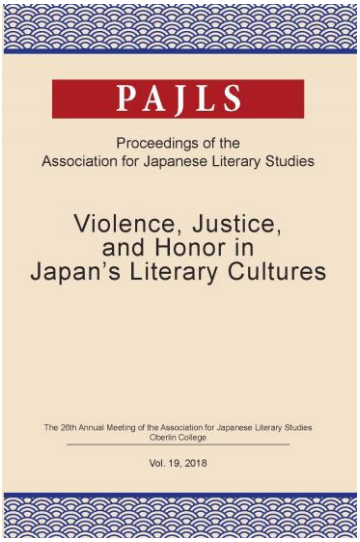
"*Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*: The Experience of the Genpei War and the Work's Reception During WWII"

Naomi Fukumori

Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies 19 (2018): 71–88.



PAJLS 19:
Violence, Justice, and Honor in Japan's Literary Cultures.
Editor: Ann Sherif
Managing Editor: Matthew Fraleigh

KENREIMON'IN UKYŌ NO DAIBU SHŪ: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE GENPEI WAR AND THE WORK'S RECEPTION DURING WWII

Naomi Fukumori[1]
The Ohio State University

The poet and literary critic Ōoka Makoto (1913–2017) asserted that the tragedies of the Genpei War (1180–1185) gave rise in prose to *Heike monogatari* (*The Tale of the Heike*, after 1213), and in poetry led to the creation of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* (ca. 1230s; translated into English by Philip Tudor Harries as *The Poetic Memoirs of Lady Daibu*) (Ōoka 3).[2] Lady Daibu (1157?–?) served as a lady-in-waiting to Taira no Tokushi (1155–1213; known as "Kenreimon'in" after she took the tonsure)—the daughter of Taira no Kiyomori and the consort of Emperor Takakura—and had a love affair with Taira no Sukemori (1158–1185)—Kiyomori's grandson. Like *Heike monogatari*, Lady Daibu's poetic memoir focuses on the changing fortunes of the Taira clan, but, through poetry and varying lengths of narrative context (through *kotobagaki*, or headnotes), uniquely presents this tumultuous time through Lady Daibu's experience of her lover Sukemori's death in the war. Lady Daibu's poetic memoir poignantly records her anxious wait for news of Sukemori, ever-mindful of Sukemori's pleas prior to leaving the capital that she pray for his repose, and her subsequent mourning for him after receiving news of his drowning at Dan no ura.

While it maintained an interested readership throughout its publication history, *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* surged in popularity during World War II through Sasaki Nobutsuna (1872–1963)'s annotation, published in 1939 as part of the Fuzanbō hyakka bunko series. This paper will explore the treatment of traumatic memory in *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* and analyze the reception of this work through the personal experience of violence and loss in WWII in Japan by scholars, writers, and the general readership.

BACKGROUND

The woman known as Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu was the daughter of Fujiwara (Sesonji) no Koreyuki, a sixth-generation descendant of the noted calligrapher Fujiwara no Yukinari, and Yūgiri, the daughter of

[1] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5986-3511
[2] Note that all translations from Japanese to English in this paper are by the author.

famed flautist and court musician Ōmiwa no Motomasa. Both sides of her family thus boasted artistic lineages. Koreyuki carried on the Sesonji school tradition of calligraphy; wrote a treatise on calligraphy (*Yakaku teikin shō*); enjoyed renown as a *sō* (13-stringed zither) player; and penned *Genji shaku,* the first known commentary on *Genji monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*, early 11th century). On the other hand, Yūgiri was trained in music by her father and is reputed to have instructed others, including her husband Koreyuki, in the playing of the *sō*. Lady Daibu's own talents in music are highlighted in her poetic memoir through requests for her playing of the *sō* and in her appreciation of others' performances, and her poetic talents are suggested through inclusion in her oeuvre of numerous occasional poems written at court. Since responses to poetry requests were often presented in writing (rather than just being orally presented), Lady Daibu's Sesonji roots no doubt made her a favored amanuensis at court.

As with most women of her time, Lady Daibu's personal name is unknown. She is remembered by an appellation that references the patron she served and the *meshina* or "court sobriquet" she used when she was this patron's attendant. "Kenreimon'in" was the title given Lady Daibu's patron Empress Tokushi after her tonsure and "Ukyō no Daibu" or "Superintendant of the Right-half of the Capital" would be, according to custom, the position held by Lady Daibu's primary male sponsor at court. The epilogue to *Kenreimon'in Ukyo no Daibu shū* provides information that explains the names by which Lady Daibu and her poetry collection are known. The epilogue picks up thirty years after the event that concludes her poetry collection, namely, Fujiwara no Shunzei's 90th birthday celebration in 1203.[3] The epilogue also explains that Lady Daibu was asked by Shunzei's son Teika to contribute poems for Teika's compilation of the ninth imperial anthology *Shinchokusenwakashū*, commissioned by Emperor Gohorikawa in 1232 and completed in 1235. Lady Daibu expresses appreciation for this request and, particularly, for being asked how she wants to be named in the anthology. She responds to Teika, "As I was known in those days" ("Sono yo no mama ni") (Itoga 168),[4] referring to the time that she had served as Empress Tokushi's attendant. In the

[3] The last datable event included in the poetic memoir is Fujiwara no Sanemune's death in 1212. This event, however, precedes the narration of Shunzei's birthday celebrations in the memoir. The memoir is generally chronological but deviates occasionally.

[4] For all references to Lady Daibu's memoir, I will be referring to Itoga Kimie's Shinchō nihon koten bungaku shūsei edition, which is based on the vulgate Kyūshū daigaku fuzoku toshokan Hosokawa bunkobon with additions from the Kan'ei 21-nen-kan hanpon for missing sections.

extant *Shinchokusenshū*, two of her poems are included under the attribution "Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu."[5] Although Lady Daibu served Empress Tokushi before Tokushi's taking of the tonsure, Lady Daibu and her contemporaries would have referred to Tokushi as "Kenreimon'in," her title in retirement, by the time of the commission of *Shinchokusenshū* in 1232.

The source of "Ukyō no daibu" in Lady Daibu's appellation is uncertain, but scholars have weighed in favor of Fujiwara no Shunzei as Lady Daibu's court sponsor, based on evidence drawn from Lady Daibu's memoir (Harries 15–17). Lady Daibu cites Shunzei's reference to her as someone who knows his past ("Surely, those who know or who do not know matters of my past or their circumstances are truly not the same"; "Nao mukashi no koto mo, mono no yue mo, shiru to shiranu to wa, makoto ni onajikarazu koso") (Itoga 166). Her significant personal connection to Shunzei and his family is also suggested in the mention of Shunzei's son Teika requesting Lady Daibu's poems to include in the imperial poetry collection *Shinchokusenshū* and its implication that Lady Daibu gave Teika the collection of poems that makes up *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*.[6]

Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū has conventionally been considered a personal poetry collection or *shikashū* (alternatively called *ie no shū*), which are a genre compiled either by the author of the poems herself/himself or by others close to the poet. As suggested by the prologue and epilogue to Lady Daibu's work itself, such collections aimed to gather the best of one's poetic output for circulation and as a source from which to select poems for anthologies. *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* also shares qualities with Heian- and Kamakura-period works that are classified as *nikki* or diaries/memoirs, such as *Murasaki Shikibu nikki* or *Sanuki no suke nikki*, which, like *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*, are based on the authors' experiences as court attendants. Lady Daibu's work presents 359 poems (305 by Lady Daibu, the other 54 by 26 other poets), some with extensive prose contexts, and orders them mostly chronologically but with

---

[5] *Shinchokusenshū* #844 (Love 3) and #1100 (Miscellaneous 1), which are poems #197 and #111, respectively, in *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*. For poems in imperial anthologies, I will cite poem numbers from the *Shinpen kokka taikan.*

[6] Itoga also notes that scholars have suggested that Shunzei had a child with Lady Daibu's mother Yūgiri before Yūgiri married Koreyuki. This is based on a headnote in *Shinchokusenshū* that describes Son'en, Lady Daibu's brother, as the son of Shunzei; Son'en's poem is #1194 (Miscellaneous 2) (Itoga 180). Lady Daibu describes Son'en in her poetic memoir as "my older brother the priest, whom I particularly relied upon" (Itoga 59).

attention to overall thematic developments. All vernacular writings of the Heian and Kamakura periods are poetry and prose hybrids owing to the pre-eminence of *tanka* as a medium of communicative exchange in aristocratic society, and the ratio of poetry to prose largely determines the generic classifications of vernacular works. Philip Tudor Harries's choice in his English translation to designate the work as "poetic memoirs" reflects its straddling of the *shikashū* and *nikki* genres. However, we should note that Lady Daibu specifically mentions that "People who write poetry compile things called 'personal poetry collections' ['ie no shū'], but this is not at all that. I simply wrote down things occasionally as they floated into my memory—things moving, sad, and other things that somehow are unforgettable. And I wrote them down for my eyes alone" (Itoga 9). By disavowing that her work is a personal poetry collection, Lady Daibu nonetheless names the genre that bears the closest resemblance to her work. She makes the distinction that her work is meant for herself only, while those who consider themselves "poets" ("uta yomu hito") compile *ie no shū* to circulate their poetic oeuvre to an audience. Denying desire for an audience for one's writing, we should note, is a common rhetoric of humility employed by writers.

KENREIMON'IN UKYŌ NO DAIBU SHŪ AND ITS RHETORIC OF REMEMBRANCE

Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū exhibits a symmetrical narrative structure and narrative developments that suggest careful editing. Some of the oldest published versions of the work, such as the Kan'ei 21 (1644) edition and the version compiled by Hanawa Hokiichi in his *Gunsho ruijū* (published 1793–1819), are both divided into two volumes, and it is the scholarly consensus that this reflects the "original" manuscript's structure. In addition to the two volumes, the work's contents can be divided up thematically, with volume one and volume two representing contrastive halves of the glory days of Taira dominance and the dark years after the Taira's departure from the capital Heian-kyō.

As the chart[7] on the next page shows, the "prologue" section and the "conclusion" echo each other in Lady Daibu's insistence that this is not a personal poetry collection like those compiled by "poets" and that "this was written down just for my eyes." The first section of the work, Volume

[7] The chart is staggered to emphasize the parts that complement each other in theme. I am following Harries's English translation's division of the work into two volumes and six parts. Indicated dates are taken from the Itoga edition of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*.

Volume 1: Years of Taira Dominance (ca. 1169–1183)	**Volume 2: Years of Taira Downfall (1183–1232)**
Prologue: poem #1; "People who write poetry compile things called 'personal poetry collections' (ie no shū), but this is not at all that … This is…written down just for my eyes ('waga me hitotsu ni mimu tote')." (Itoga 9)	
Part 1: poems #2–13; service as Empress Tokushi's attendant (began ca. 1173–4); recollections of the splendor of high-ranking figures like Fujiwara (Saionji) no Sanemune and Taira no Koremori	Part 4: poems #204–270; the flight of the Taira from the capital (7th Month, 1183); Taira no Koremori's and Taira no Shigehira's deaths (1184); Sukemori's death (1185); rituals undertaken for Sukemori's repose; visit to Kenreimon'in (Empress Tokushi) at Ōhara
Part 2: poems #14–53; poems on various set topics (daiei)	Part 5: poems #271–321; Tanabata poems
Part 3: poems 54–203; affair with Taira no Sukemori begins in 1177; retirement from service to Empress Tokushi, against Lady Daibu's wishes (before Emperor Antoku's birth in the 12th Month of 1778); affair with Fujiwara no Takanobu; Taira no Shigemori's death (1179); suicide of Kozaishō following death of Taira no Michimori (1184, mentioned out of sequence but in association with the theme of difficult love); death of mother; death of Emperor Takakura (1181)	Part 6: poems #322–356; re-entry into court as attendant of Emperor Gotoba (1195); memories of past court service and of Sukemori and other eminent Taira; death of Fujiwara no Sanemune (1212); Fujiwara no Shunzei's 90th birthday celebration (1203)
	Conclusion: poem #357; "When people sometimes asked me 'Do you have a collection of your poetry?' I was embarrassed by all that I'd written as I pleased, and so would copy out small portions to show to them. However, this was written down just for my eyes ('waga me hitotsu ni mimu tote')…" (Itoga 167)
	Epilogue: poems #358–359; Fujiwara no Teika's request for poems for his compilation of an imperial anthology and his inquiry about how she would like to be identified in the anthology (1232)

1, Part 1, relates Lady Daibu's days of service in the salon of Empress Tokushi, while the last section of the work, Volume 2, Part 6, recounts her service under Emperor Gotoba, which is experienced through comparison to the days of her earlier court service. Volume 1, Part 2 complements Volume 2, Part 4, both of which are comprised of large series of poems on conventional topics with relatively short narrative contexts. Volume 1, Part 3 and Volume 2, Part 4 are the dramatic center of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*, introducing the difficult love affair with Taira no Sukemori, and then relating the fall of the Taira, Sukemori's death by drowning at Dan no ura, and Lady Daibu's mourning for her lover.

While Lady Daibu's affair with Sukemori and her mourning for his death in the Genpei War form the central diegesis of this poetic memoir, Lady Daibu also relates an affair with the renowned portrait artist Fujiwara no Takanobu (1142–1205) that provides a romantic counterpoint in Volume 1, Part 3. Both are difficult affairs in which Lady Daibu was a mistress to high-ranking men with primary wives, but the men and the nature of the relationships are contrastive. Taira no Sukemori was the second son of Taira no Shigemori, the clan head Kiyomori's eldest son and heir. In *Heike monogatari*, Kiyomori's willful insistence on seeking "revenge" after the humiliation of Sukemori by the retainers of Chancellor Fujiwara no Motofusa provides one of the earliest indications of the Taira family's destructive pride and foreshadows their downfall (Kakuichi variant, Chapter 1.7) (Mizuhara, vol. I, 74–81). Sukemori, besides being an inappropriate romantic partner due to differences in social rank, was also about ten years younger than Lady Daibu. Lady Daibu mentions leaving court service "although it was not what I wanted" ("kokoro narazu mo") sometime before Empress Tokushi gives birth to her first child (the later Emperor Antoku) in 1178, which suggests that perhaps it was her affair with Sukemori, begun around 1177, that led to the end of her court service (although Lady Daibu's mother's illness could also have been the reason for her return to her home). Fujiwara no Takanobu was, in contrast, an older man with a reputation as a philanderer. Notably, Lady Daibu describes him as "a person reputed to be more practiced in the ways of love than others in this world" ("yohito yori mo iro konomu to kiku hito") (Itoga 66). The affair with Sukemori is characterized as passionate and ill-fated; the relationship with Takanobu is more formulaic in its presentation through poetry exchanged on set topics of the seasons. The relationship with Sukemori becomes even more emotionally fraught amid the vicissitudes of the Taira clan, and Lady Daibu's narration of it flows into the second volume, while the affair with Takanobu peters out in Volume

1, Part 3 with Lady Daibu mentioning that she moved away to test his feelings for her (Itoga 78).

Although *Kenreimon'in Ukyo no Daibu shū* is predominantly a poetry collection, the quality of the poems themselves is perhaps not as notable as the ways in which the prose contexts and the unified thematic structure of the work shape an affecting narrative of romantic loss under violent circumstances.[8] Her poetic style differs from the preferred *yūgen* and *yōen* styles of the day, defined by Fujiwara no Shunzei and his son Teika and featured in the eighth imperial anthology *Shinkokinwakashū* (1205). Instead, her style is more direct, declarative, and introspective—a precursor to the styles of the Ryōgoku and Reizei schools who dominated one hundred years after Lady Daibu's time. One salient rhetorical technique employed by Lady Daibu is the repetition of words and sounds to convey urgency and passion. The *tanka* form, with its 31 morae, is very succinct, making the repetition of words within this short form a noticeable and striking effect, redundant if not well-executed.

Here is one example, a poem written by Lady Daibu as "a writing practice" (*tenarai*) to relieve her feelings of agitation over her affair with Sukemori (poem #132, Inaga 66):[9]

Do not scatter it,	*chirasuna* yo
for it would be painful	*chirasaba* ikaga
should it be scattered,	tsurakaramu
the secret leaves of words	*Shinobu* no yama ni
on Mount Shinobu, the mountain of secrets.	*shinobu* koto no ha

Using the imagery of leaves on Mount Shinobu, an *utamakura* in the Michinoku region, Lady Daibu's poem expresses alarm over the possibility of others seeing her letters to Sukemori and discovering their affair. As my italics indicate, the poem repeats the verb "chirasu" / "to scatter" and the verb "shinobu" / "to hide" or "to persevere" to emphasize

[8] Philip Tudor Harries, for instance, declares her a "minor poet" (Harries 65). James Wagner describes her as, "a mediocre poet in an age of poetic giants" (Wagner 7).

[9] *Tenarai* was often undertaken to relieve pent up feelings, as seen in *Genji monogatari*'s "Tenarai" chapter, where Ukifune composes poetry "in writing practice" to express her turmoil over her romantic triangle with Kaoru and Niou. Explicit intertextual reference to the *Genji* is notable in Lady Daibu's memoir. Examples include the likening of Taira no Koremori's performance of the "Seigaiha" ("Dance of the Blue Waves") to the Shining Genji's (Itoga 105–106) and the parallel drawn between Lady Daibu's burning of the letters from Taira no Sukemori to Genji's incineration of Murasaki's (Itoga 113–114).

her fears and shame, and emphasizes the sussurations of "ch" and "sh" sounds.

The anxiety and sorrow Lady Daibu feels upon hearing reports of the suicide by drowning of Taira no Koremori—her lover Sukemori's older brother—and her concerns over Sukemori's reaction are conveyed powerfully in the following poem's reiterations of the verb "omou" (to think, to long for, to sorrow, to rue) (poem #218, Itoga 108):

When I think	*omou* koto o
about what you must be thinking,	*omoiyaru* ni zo
my thoughts are rent asunder,	*omoi* kudaku
for I am extremely saddened	*omoi* ni soete
in my sympathies with your thoughts.	itodo kanashiki

The repetition creates an impression of extreme sympathy by Lady Daibu as she ponders painfully over what Sukemori must be feeling.

In her poetic memoir, Lady Daibu offers a eulogy to days and people gone by that were tragically affected by the Genpei War. While Parts 2 and 5—the sections that are predominantly poetry—include only very brief, contextualizing headnotes (often just describing the topic of the poem), those in the other sections provide poignant narrative contexts for relating the fate of the Taira as it intersects with Lady Daibu's memories of her life. Sukemori's death and Lady Daibu's longing memories of him dominate the narrative, but Lady Daibu also remembers the deaths and shifts in fortunes of other figures.[10] Having personally known many of the high-ranking Taira family members through her court service as Empress Tokushi's attendant, Lady Daibu provides portraits of them that differ significantly from their characterizations in *Heike monogatari*. Lady Daibu's memoir notably features Empress Tokushi, Shigemori (Sukemori's father, identified as the Komatsu Grand Minister or Komatsu no otodo), Koremori (Sukemori's older brother), and Shigehira (Sukemori's uncle; Kiyomori's younger brother). Empress Tokushi, Koremori, and Shigehira appear in both volumes one (years of Taira glory) and two (years of Taira decline), thereby emphasizing the Taira's changing fortunes through their portrayals. Lady Daibu explicitly remembers the glorious past as she reveals tragic outcomes.

[10] In addition to the Taira family members examined in this paper, Lady Daibu's memoir also describes the fates of Fujiwara no Sanemune and Fujiwara no Takafusa in both volumes 1 and 2, emphasizing the shift in fortunes.

While Lady Daibu's memoir captures her close ties with the Taira family, it is Lady Daibu's portrayal and remembrance of Sukemori that are most personal and profound. She introduces Sukemori as "one in particular who approached me, among the many men who mingled with us in the morning and evening like other female attendants" (Itoga 33). In observing the goings-on at court, she had determined that she would not become involved in romantic affairs; however, she gives in to fate ("chigiri"). By Lady Daibu's account, it was a difficult relationship, with Sukemori acting distant even while the Taira were still in the capital. It is the exigency of the Taira flight from the capital and Sukemori's uncertain fate that fan Lady Daibu's longings.

One of the most striking aspects of Lady Daibu's portrayal of Sukemori is her use of the word "omokage" or "image" / "resemblance" / "traces" in describing her memories of him. "Omokage" is a remembered image, a trace of something, or something that resembles another; it is, thus, something that is similar but not the same, or a part and not the whole. While everything she writes is recorded memory and based on the traces of what she remembers, she specifically tags Sukemori's portrayals as recollections of his "omokage." Of 14 usages of the word "omokage" identified in Ikari Masashi's concordance of Lady Daibu's poetic memoir, eight are used in Lady Daibu's remembrances of Sukemori (Ikari 436). The six other usages include a poem in Volume 1, Part 2 on the set topic of "love for an old woman" that is based on *Ise monogatari*'s (*Tales of Ise*) famous "Tsukumogami" episode (poem #47, Itoga 27); Lady Daibu's fond remembrances of Empress Tokushi's visage after leaving court service (Itoga 61); Lady Daibu's lament in remembering her mother's image when she presents her dead mother's robes to the priest who oversaw her mother's memorial service (Itoga 94); Lady Daibu's memory of Koremori's performance of the "Dance of the Blue Waves" (both in the prose section and in a poem) (poem #214, Itoga 105–6); and Lady Daibu's shock in seeing no trace of Empress Tokushi's former self when she visits her former patron at Ōhara (Itoga 121). Faint memories of aura and appearance surface when someone has not been seen for a while, or through a break in a relationship.

The remembrances of Sukemori through his "omokage" occur both while Sukemori is still in the capital and after his flight from the capital and his eventual death, thereby serving as a motif to connect Lady Daibu's memories of him throughout her memoir.[11] The repeated imagery gives

[11] The references before the Taira flight from the capital can be found on Itoga 57 (prose; remembering Sukemori's appearance when he visited on a snowy day), 60

the impression that Sukemori is a persistent, lingering image for Lady Daibu, most accessible and treasured through her memories, rather than when physically present with her. The intervening years between his death and the time of writing her memoirs has made him a haunting image, more affecting for his indelible hold on her as just traces of remembrances. In Volume 1, Book 3, Lady Daibu longs for him during frequent periods of his neglect. In his absence, which she feels most painfully at dusk, Sukemori haunts Lady Daibu as a spectre. On one occasion, she seeks consolation through composing poems, one of which mentions Sukemori's persistent "omokage" (poem #119, Itoga 60):

> When the person's heart was not as I would have wished it, I thought, "If only I could make everything like the past, before he knew me and I him":[12]
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Even more than usual, it seems, | tsune yori mo |
> | his image appears before my eyes | omokage ni tatsu |
> | this evening, | yūbe kana |
> | just as I determine | ima ya kagiri to |
> | that today marks the end. | omoinaru ni mo |

On yet another evening on which Sukemori fails to visit her, Lady Daibu wishes to return to the past when she and Sukemori did not know each other. As she seeks to make firm her resolve to forget him, Lady Daibu is visited by images of him.

(poem #119; conjuring his "omokage" at dusk, after not hearing from him for some time), 83 (poem #170; again conjuring his image during a time of his neglect, as she looks upon the moon), and 84 (poem #172; seeing his image at dusk, as she dusts her pillow). The references to Sukemori's "omokage" after the Taira flight are on the following pages in Itoga: 110 (prose; hearing about his death, she resolves to forget him, but his image haunts her), 112 (poem #224; while accepting that others have suffered similar losses, she feels her pain is incomparable), 117 (prose; visits Sukemori's estate in the Kitayama region and sees his image), 155 (poem #328; during her service to Emperor Gotoba, hears about an imperial order by Retired Emperor Goshirakawa that Sukemori ["the person from an unending dream"] wrote; she composes a poem ruing that his image and name have not disappeared).

[12] This is an allusion to Saigyō's poem, "How could I resent/the person who has grown distant?/There was once a time/when he didn't know me/and I not know him." ("utokunaru/hito o nani tote/uramuramu/shirarezu shiranu/ori mo arishi ni"). *Shinkokinshū* #1297 (Love 4).

Along with many of his Taira kin, Sukemori commits suicide by throwing himself into the waters of Dan no ura in 1185, in a naval battle that marked a decisive victory for the Minamoto clan. After receiving news of his death, Lady Daibu falls into a depression, but acknowledges that experiencing the transience of love is not uncommon. However, as she reflects on Sukemori's demise, she emphasizes the unusual, cruel nature of her loss:

> Furthermore, I was depressed by the way this world continued unchanged, but as the dawns and nights came and went, I did regain my senses and was filled with an ever-increasing sense of sadness as I thought of this and that. The ephemeral and affecting ties of fate stir not only me. Surely, there are many, known and unknown, who have experienced this nightmare, but I felt that my situation was without precedent. In the past and now, there are partings that come about through determined lifetimes, but I only wondered if there ever had been such a miserable parting. Although I only tried to forget somehow the memories that clung to me, I could not. Feeling sad, I composed:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Having experienced | tameshi naki |
> | this parting that's without precedent, | kakaru wakare ni |
> | I remain in this world; | nao tomaru |
> | how wretched | omokage bakari |
> | that his image alone yet clings to me. | mi ni sou zo uki |

Lady Daibu's loss is "tameshi naki" or "without precedent," and she wonders how she has been able to continue living. She is tormented by Sukemori's insistent *omokage*/image (poem #224, Itoga 111–2).

The eulogizing of days and people gone by defines memoirs, but Lady Daibu's writings are shot through with the pain of a parting "without precedent," that is, a parting and death wrought by the Genpei War. Her memoir serves to seek not only Sukemori's Buddhist repose, but to eulogize the "omokage" of someone who haunts her.

RECEPTION OF *KENREIMON'IN UKYO NO DAIBU SHŪ*

The treatment of Lady Daibu's relationship with Sukemori as star-crossed lovers who are separated under extreme circumstances resonated deeply with readers during WWII, who also experienced traumatic partings, constant fears of death, and loss of loved ones. But the work appears to have found steady readership since its presentation to Fujiwara

no Teika and its subsequent circulation, despite not being one of the major classics. As mentioned earlier, *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* was the source from which Fujiwara no Teika drew two poems for the ninth imperial anthology *Shinchokusenshū*, which was completed in 1235. Lady Daibu's poems appear 22 times in imperial poetry anthologies, beginning with two poems in the *Shinchokusenshū*, nine in *Gyokuyōwakashū* (14th imperial anthology, 1312), six in *Fūgawakashū* (17th anthology, 1349), one in *Shinsenzaiwakashū* (18th anthology, 1359), one in *Shinshūiwakashū* (19th anthology, 1364), one in *Shingoshūiwakashū* (20th anthology, 1384), and two in *Shinshokukokinwakashū* (21st and last imperial anthology, 1439). All of Lady Daibu's poems in imperial *waka* anthologies are included in *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*, suggesting that this personal poetry collection served as the source from which all these imperial anthologies, from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries, drew her poems.

Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū has been read and appreciated as an alternative, female, and personal account of Taira fortunes and the Genpei Wars to the male-centered, historical fiction account of *Heike monogatari*. In that substantial work, she appears as only an unspecified "one gentlewoman" ("aru nyōbō") in Book 6.1 of the Kakuichi variant *Heike*, a passage that narrates the death of Emperor Takakura in 1181. This *Heike* passage includes a poem by Lady Daibu found also in her memoirs in Volume 1, Part 1.[13] We cannot trace the exact source that the *Heike* performers/authors drew from, but we can assume the poem was sent in condolence to Empress Tokushi and circulated thereafter. However, the Yasaka variant, a performance text of *Heike* that likely predates the popular Kakuichi variant (1371) of the performative texts, does show a direct influence from *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* in its inclusion of a poetic exchange written by Lady Daibu to console "a man" after Lady Kozaishō was won over by Taira no Michimori (Sukemori's second cousin).[14] In Lady Daibu's memoir, the heartbroken man is unnamed, but

[13] The poem is #202, "kumo no ue ni/yukusue tōku/mishi tsuki no/hikari kienu to/kiku zo kanashiki" (The moon that I saw/above the clouds,/shining afar,/ such sadness to hear/that its light has dimmed) (Mizuhara, *Heike monogatari*, vol. 2, 108; Itoga 95).

[14] Both *Heike* and Lady Daibu's memoir highlight Lady Kozaishō's tragic fate, including descriptions of her suicide by drowning while pregnant with Michimori's child, after hearing of Michimori's death at the Battle of Ichinotani. See Chapter 9.19 of *Heike monogatari* (Mizuhara, vol. 3, 117–28); in Lady Daibu's memoir, see Itoga 80.

the Yasaka variant, no doubt influenced by a reading of Lady Daibu's memoir, identifies him as Taira no Sukemori.

In the medieval period, the priest Kenkō's *Tsurezuregusa* (*Essays in Idleness*, mid-14th century) also cites *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*. In its passage #169, Lady Daibu's memoir provides precedent for "shiki 式" or "proper observance."[15]

In the Edo period, Lady Daibu's text is mentioned in Kitamura Kigin's *Ominaeshi monogatari* (A tale of maiden flowers, 1661), a work that discusses the poetic achievements of Japanese women from earliest times. It includes one of Lady Daibu's poems, written when she re-entered court service under Emperor Gotoba, of which Kigin remarks, "This is a moving, profound poem."[16] Additionally, he notes, "When Lord Teika was selecting poems for *Shinchokusenshū*, he decided to include a poem by Ukyō no Daibu. She should have been identified as 'Gotoba-in Ukyō no Daibu,' but saying that this did not capture her past self, she asked that Teika record her as 'Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu.' This is a noble [*yasashiku*] and outstanding [*yagotonaki*] sentiment" (Kitamura 211–212).[17] Lady Daibu's memoir is also quoted in the Edo-period woman writer Arakida Reijo's *Tsuki no yukue* (*Path of the moon*, 1771), a work that relates the fate of the Taira family (Itoga 208).

In the early twentieth century, the most notable early commentary on Lady Daibu and her poetry was Shinmura Izuru's (1876–1967) article "Seiya sanbi no josei kajin" ("The female poet who praised the starry sky"), published in 1923 (first published source unknown, but included in Shinmura's *Nanban sarasa*, 1924). Shinmura argues that Lady Daibu's *waka* on starry skies are unique in a poetic tradition that focused on the moon as the key celestial body in the night sky. Shinmura emphasizes the

---

[15] The line quoted is "the appearance of things in the world did not change" ("yo no keshiki mo, kawaritaru koto naki ni"), referring to how things appeared at court when Lady Daibu returns to serve as Emperor Gotoba's attendant. Kenkō quotes this line as "yo no shiki mo kawaritaru koto wa naki ni," rendering the "keshiki" in extant *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* manuscripts as "shiki." See Itoga 150–1, with annotation explaining the differences found in Kenkō's quotation. Kenkō's *Tsurezuregusa* touches upon precedents from earlier periods in several passages, so this reference to the rituals of the time of Emperor Gotoba is in keeping with the thematic interests of Kenkō's text.

[16] The poem is #322, "ima wa tada/shiite wasururu/ inishie o/omoi ide yo to/sumeru tsukikage" ("The past that/I now force myself/to forget,/the clear light of the moon/urges me to remember") (Itoga 152).

[17] The passage on Lady Daibu appears in the Kanji 4 manuscript but not the Kaikaku bunkozō kurobyōshi shahon; both manuscripts are included in the Koten bunko volume from which I am citing.

affective quality of Lady Daibu's memoirs, writing, "Her prose is mainly the flow of true emotion and is lacking in skill, but its special quality is the purity that gushes from her personal experiences" (Shinmura 255).

As this brief overview of the reception of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* from its first circulation around 1232 through presentation to Fujiwara no Teika to its reading by Shinmura Izuru in 1923 shows, there was a steady, devoted readership of Lady Daibu's memoir across 700 years. However, it was amid Japan's involvement in WWII that *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* found a broader audience who filtered through the work their own experience of war violence and loss.

Many scholars and writers who lived through the tumult of WWII mention the popularity of Sasaki Nobutsuna's edition of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*, which was published in 1939 as the 78th installment of the Fuzanbō hyakka bunko series and was the first complete annotated edition of the work, widely available at the time Japan entered the war in December of 1941. In his writings on Lady Daibu's memoir, Sasaki lamented that people did not know this work and emphasized its value, describing it as a "reduced-scale rendering" (*shukuzu*) of *Heike monogatari*.[18] Not only did the publishing company Fuzanbō make Sasaki's edition of the work highly accessible, but it was published as a conveniently portable 125-page, 17 cm by 10 cm size paperback.[19]

Sasaki was one of the most eminent scholars of Nara- and Heian-period literature during WWII, and the imperial government enlisted him to undertake projects to rouse patriotism during the war. One such example is his selection to serve as one of the compilers of *Aikoku hyakunin isshu* (One hundred patriotic poems by one hundred poets), which was published on November 20, 1942, and included poets from the 8th century

[18] Sasaki reiterates this characterization of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* a number of times, first in a 1908 essay on Lady Daibu in his *Kagaku ronsō*, in the preface to the Fuzanbō edition of Lady Daibu's memoir, and then again in a 1940 article for *Asahi shinbun*, which is discussed below. It should be noted that the Fuzanbō edition's preface is a reprinting of the *Kagaku ronsō* essay.

[19] This is "B40" or "shinshoban" size, seen today in paperback series such as the Iwanami shinsho. The portability of Fuzanbō's edition of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* is noted in Itō Yoshio's (1925–) 1988 short story, "Kuzureru kumo no shita de." Itō himself fought in the war, and in his short story, his protagonist takes the Fuzanbō edition of Lady Daibu's memoir with him to the battlefront, deliberately choosing it over the *Man'yōshū* (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*) and *Ise monogatari*. I am indebted to Sakakibara Chizuru's two articles, both listed in my bibliography, that focus on education and the reception of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* during WWII for the identification of Itō's short story's reference to Lady Daibu's memoir.

Kakinomoto no Hitomaro to the Meiji period Tachibana no Akemi (1812–1868).[20] During the war, Sasaki continued to promote Lady Daibu and her work in the January 10, 1940, morning edition of the newspaper *Asahi shinbun*, in the column "Kōki nisen roppyaku nen nihon josei shi" (2600 years of imperial reign: History of Japanese women"). In 1948, after the war, he published a second commentary on *Kenreimon'in Ukyo no Daibu shū* in a work called *Chūko sanjo kajin shū* (Anthology of three female poets of the Heian period), which includes Lady Daibu's poetic memoir and the personal poetry collections of Princess Shikishi and the Daughter of Shunzei. Notably, Sasaki contrasts these female poets with the Heian-period female writers Murasaki Shikibu, Izumi Shikibu, and Sei Shōnagon, characterizing Lady Daibu, Princess Shikishi, and Shunzei's Daughter as "autumn leaves" and the earlier mid-Heian period cohort as "spring flowers" (Sasaki, *Chūko* 3). We can see in Sasaki's championing of the autumnal affect of the poetry of Lady Daibu and the other late Heian/early Kamakura female poets a penchant for literature that perhaps matched the sober mood of the nation in the time during and after the war.

The poet and novelist Satō Haruo (1892–1964) published a modern Japanese translation of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* in 1942. It appeared in the August 1 issue of the magazine *Nihon josei*, a magazine targeting a female readership. The translation is entitled *Hitori sumire monogatari* or "The tale of the solitary violet," referring to an image in one of Lady Daibu's poems. A brief biography of Lady Daibu and a description of her poetic memoir precede the translation. Satō writes, "With its three hundred and some poems and their accompanying long headnotes, this unearthly, beautiful record of memories is her private, romantic history and provides a harmonious accompaniment to *Heike monogatari*" (Satō 36). He explains that he wants to provide this translation to modern readers through sentences and forms that are contemporary. As with Sasaki Nobutsuna, Satō Haruo clearly was motivated by a desire to make *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* known to readers during WWII.

Sasaki's and Satō's efforts to popularize Lady Daibu's poetic memoir during the war seem to have had the desired effect, for numerous writers who came of age during WWII have written of how their reading of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* deeply affected them. For instance, the novelist and critic Nakamura Shin'ichirō (1918–1997) published a

[20] Others on the compilation committee included Tsuchiya Bunmei, Shaku Chōkū (aka Orikuchi Shinobu), Saitō Mokichi, Ōta Mizuho, Onoe Saishū, Kubota Utsuho, Yoshiue Shōryō, Kawada Jun, Saitō Ryū, Matsumura Eiichi, and Kitahara Hakushū.

commentary in 1972 of Lady Daibu's poetic memoirs for *Nihon shijin sen* (Selection of Japanese poets), a series aimed at introducing poets to a more general audience. In his afterword Nakamura writes, "I had my first contact with this poetry collection during that unfortunate war. Young people at that time all competed in their avid reading of this book. Now that I think about it, the young men thought of themselves as Sukemori and the young women were seeing their own futures in the fate of Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu" (Nakamura 276). In 1975, the novelist Ōhara Tomie (1912–2000) published a novelization of Lady Daibu's poetic memoir, and wrote in its afterword, "Sukemori's fate overlapped with those student soldiers who had left for the warfront expecting to die, and I understand that many of them loved her poetry collection. Ukyō's feelings must have also overlapped with many women who lost their loved ones in the war… I myself have imprinted the death of a loved one on my chest, and this is the motif that motivated the writing of this work" (Ōhara 467).[21] Ōhara includes two *tanka* poems by women who lost loved ones in the war that were published in *Asahi shinbun*'s "Asahi kadan" (The Asahi poetic circle), underscoring the tragic reality of war loss in her generation. Here is one poem quoted by Ōhara:

In love with love--	koi ni koite
the day that I can	kokoro ashura to
become a demon in my heart,	nareru hi wa
I'll throw away	
his photograph and mementos,	iei[22] mo ihin mo
I think.	sute nan to omou
--Hori Utako, Sendai	

In the sentiments expressed in this poem, it is not difficult to appreciate how *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*'s narrative of love and of personal loss to the violence of war resonated with the experiences of women in WWII.

Ōoka Makoto, the poet and critic, wrote a review of Ōhara's novel in the "Bungei jihyō" column of the evening edition of *Asahi shinbun*. In addition to noting Lady Daibu's memoir as a poetic counterpoint to the prose narrative of *Heike monogatari*, Ōoka writes, "I know that during WWII, young men who were interested in the classics all fervently read

[21] Ōhara specifically uses the word "motif."
[22] "Iei" is specifically a photograph of a deceased person, while "ihin" are the belongings of a deceased person that serve as mementos.

Fuzanbō bunko's edition of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*. There were those like that around me" (Ōoka 3). Ōoka himself would have been just entering his teens during the war—somewhat younger than the readership targeted by Sasaki Nobutsuna and Satō Haruo. Nonetheless, he, too, associates reading Lady Daibu's memoirs with the experience of the Japanese in WWII.[23]

The scholar Sakakibara Chizuru, in her study of the reception of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*, notes that *Mita bungaku*, a literary journal published by Waseda University, published in 1943 a special issue devoted to "Student Enlistment" ("Gakuto shutsujin tokushūgō"). This special issue included a poll asking renowned figures of various fields which literary work was most suitable for carrying on to the battlefield ("Senjin ni ikanaru sho o keikō subeki ka"). Of the 76 respondents, 20 chose the Nara-period poetry collection *Man'yōshū* (*Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*, ca. 759), while the second most frequently chosen work was *Kojiki* (*Account of Ancient Matters*, 712), being nominated by nine respondents (Sakakibara, "Senjō no koi," no page number). While there are numerous anecdotal accounts of students taking the *Man'yōshu* with them to the battlefront, *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* also found a particularly empathetic readership during and immediately after WWII by those on the battlefronts, as well as those who waited for their return home.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arakida Reijo. *Tsuki no yukue*. In *Kaitei shiseki shūran,* vol. 2, chapter 8, *tsūki rui*. Tokyo: Kondō shuppan, 1903, pp. 1–91.

Harries, Philip Tudor. *The Poetic Memoirs of Lady Daibu*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980.

Hon'iden Shigemi. *Kōchū Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*. Tokyo: Musashino shoin, 1950.

Ikari Masashi. *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū: Kōhon oyobi sakuin*. Tokyo: Kasama shoin, 1969.

Itō Yoshio. "Kuzureru kumo no shita de." *Minshu bungaku*, April 1988: 10–41.

Itoga Kimie, ed. *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū. Shinchō Nihon koten bungaku shūsei*, vol. 28. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1979.

[23] Hon'iden Shigemi and Murai Jun in their annotations of *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* both also note the parallels between Lady Daibu's experience and the experience of women who lost their loved ones in WWII. See Hon'iden 2; Murai 2.

Kitamura Kigin. *Ominaeshi monogatari, honkoku hen*. Satō Ritsu, ed. Koten bunko #282. Tokyo: Koten bunko, 1970.

Mizuhara Hajime, ed. *Heike monogatari*. 3 volumes. *Shinchō nihon koten bungaku* shūsei, vols. 25–27. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1980.

Murai Jun. *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū hyōkai*. Tokyo: Yūseido, 1988.

Nakamura Shin'ichirō. *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu*. *Nihon shijin sen* 14. Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1972.

Ōhara Tomie. *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibū*. Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1975.

Ōoka Makoto. "Bungei jihyō, jō." *Asahi shinbun*, evening edition, May 26, 1975, p. 3.

Sasaki Nobutsuna. *Chūko sanjo kajin shū*. Tokyo: Asahi shinbunsha, 1948.

..... "Fukayama gakure no hana: Heian makki ni sakideta kajin, Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu no shōgai." A column for "Kōki nisen roppyaku nen nihon josei shi." *Asahi shinbun*, morning edition, January 10, 1940, p. 5.

..... *Kagaku ronsō*. Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1908.

..... *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*. Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1939.

Sakakibara Chizuru. "'Jūgo' Josei kyōiku ni miru koten: Showa jūnen dai, *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū* wa ika ni yomareta ka," *Nihon bungaku* 65.12 (December 2016): 26–35.

..... "Senjō no 'koi': Senjika, wakamono ga aishita *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu shū*," Anpō hōsei hantai tokubetsu kikō, Vol. 3, July 14, 2015, http://iwj.co.jp/wj/open/archives/252930

Satō Haruo. *Hitori sumire monogatari*. In *Teihon Satō Haruo zenshū*, supplemental volume 1. Tokyo: Rinsen shoten, 2001. 36–48.

Shinmura Izuru. "Seiya sanbi no josei kajin." *Nanban sarasa*. Originally published in 1923. Reprint, Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1995. 250–259.

Wagner, James. "The *Kenreimon'in Ukyō no Daibu Shū*: An Introduction and Partial Translation." *Monumenta Nipponica* 31.1 (Spring 1976): 1–27.