The Lineage of Emotions in Medieval Japan:

A Textual Analysis of Yoshitsune's Kibune Episode

by

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ABSTRACT

Stories concerning Minamoto no Yoshitsune, one of Japan's best known and most tragic heroes, are numerous and varied. From his birth to his death, nearly every episode of Yoshitsune's life has been retold in war tales, histories, and plays. One of the major and most influential retellings of the Yoshitsune legend is found in *Gikeiki*, a text from the fifteenth century. This study looks at the early period of the legend and specifically focuses on the Kibune episode, when Yoshitsune lived and trained at Kurama Temple. It provides a new translation of the episode as told in *Gikeiki* and discusses the different portrayals of Yoshitsune within the *Gikeiki* textual lineage and in previous and subsequent works of literature. The thesis also takes a brief look at the development of *Gikeiki* texts; it shows the malleability of the Yoshitsune legend and the *Gikeiki* text and discusses the implications that this malleability has on our understanding of the place of *Gikeiki* and the legend of Yoshitsune within the medieval Japanese cultural consciousness.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The *Gikeiki* 義経記 (c. 15th century) begins its telling of the story of medieval Japan's legendary war hero Minamoto no Yoshitsune 源義経 (1159–1189) with the execution of his father, Yoshitomo 義朝 (1123–1160). In this particular narrative, one of many that appear after the end of the Genpei War, Yoshitomo's two oldest sons are executed in order to prevent an uprising against the Taira clan and its leader, Kiyomori 清盛 (1118–1181), who had become hated by rival clans such as the Minamoto. Kiyomori's affection for one of Yoshitomo's wives, Tokiwa, however, causes him to spare the lives of Yoshitomo's other sons, who are sent to the outer provinces. The younger of these two sons, Yoshitsune, known as Ushiwaka 牛若 in his youth, is sent to a Buddhist temple in Kurama[1] to become a *chigo* 稚児 (or page) while being kept ignorant of his familial origins. A priest sympathetic to the Minamoto, Shōshinbō, discovers Ushiwaka's whereabouts and finds a secluded moment to tell him of his heritage and urge him toward rebellion.

The following study begins with a translation that takes up at this point in the Yoshitsune narrative found in *Gikeiki*. It tells of a pivotal moment for Ushiwaka where he learns of his greatness and potential. This episode is the first

[1] A temple of Mt. Kurama located in Sakyō Ward of modern Kyoto.

occasion the reader is shown the quick temper and fiery passion that characterize later descriptions of Yoshitsune's great victories in battle. It is also one of the more popular scenes from the life of Yoshitsune that has been told in both pre-*Gikeiki* and post-*Gikeiki* literature and performance traditions. The only full translation of *Gikeiki* in English is Helen Craig McCullough's *Yoshitsune: A 15th Century Japanese Chronicle*, published by Stanford University Press in 1966[2]. I have based my translation of the episode *Ushiwaka Kibune mōde no koto* 牛若貴船詣の事, found in the first scroll of *Gikeiki*, on the *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (SNKZ) annotated, print version of the text. Following my translation, I will first discuss the textual lineage of *Gikeiki*, showing how the differences in the texts of each line support the idea of calculated, purposeful changes being made to the text. Second, it will compare the episode of *Gikeiki* translated below with the same episode from a different textual variant—the variant used by McCullough in her translation—illustrating the changes made over time and drawing further conclusions as to what these differences might indicate. And finally, I will look at the portrayal of the Ushiwaka period of the legend across multiple works in order to show how these different portrayals affect the character readers and audiences know as Yoshitsune.

[2] See bibliography

CHAPTER 2

TRANSLATION

Of Ushiwaka Going to Kibune

After his meeting with Shōshinbō, Ushiwaka utterly lost interest in his studies and set his heart solely on rebellion, thinking of it both day and night.

If he was to aim for rebellion, he would certainly not accomplish it without a knowledge of mounted archery and swordplay[3]. He thought that he should first learn swordplay, but Tōkōbō[4] was a gathering place of many people. It would be impossible to do so here. There was a place deep in Kurama called Sōjō-ga-dani[5]. It housed a god of wondrous miracles, called Kibune no myōjin[6], whom people of all kinds had come to worship since times past. Because of this, wise and pious priests also had gone there to perform rites. The ring of the worship bell never slacked in those days; and the sound of the worship drum never ceased while there was an upright head priest. The sound of the ringing bells cleared the eyes of the shrine maidens and there were startling miracles. The latter days of the world came, however, and the Buddha's law and the miracles of

[3] 早業. Literally "quick work", it refers to the speed and nimbleness necessary (and considered quite important) for battle. I have chosen to render it "swordplay" in an effort to succinctly suggest a similar idea to the English reader.
[4] *Bō* 坊 were the residents of monks at Buddhist temples. The head monk of the residence was sometimes called after its name.
[5] 僧正ヶ谷. A valley near the Kurama temple. I use the reading as presented in the SNKZ.
[6] The Kibune Shrine north of the Kurama temple.

the gods faded. The dwellings destroyed, it became a home for nothing but *tengu*[7] and spirits that wailed when the evening sun set in the west. These spirits even tormented those who only came by coincidence, and so there was no one who came to worship anymore.

Nevertheless, Ushiwaka heard rumor of such a place. During the day, he played a sincere student, but when it grew dark, without informing even those monks who pledged to always be with him, he would fasten a gilded sword to his waist around the chest armor, called *shikitae*, that the Bettō[8] gave to him for protection and would go alone to Kibune no myōjin, praying. "I put my trust in you, miraculous god of great mercy, Hachiman Bosatsu[9]," he would say while joining his hands, "Protect the Genji[10]. If my long desire is indeed fulfilled, I will build a beautiful shrine and dedicate two-thousand-five-hundred acres of land to it," he would covenant. When he finished his prayer he would head out directly southwest.

All the trees and grass around him were as if part of the Heike[11]. There were two large trees, however, one he named Kiyomori and one he named Shigemori[12]. Drawing his sword, he cut them to pieces. He then took two wooden

[7] Called goblins by McCullough (see bibliography). They are supernatural creatures with long noses and wings, and that possess magical abilities. See note 41 in McCullough 1966 p. 37.
[8] 別当. A high rank of monk at a Buddhist temple. This refers to the Tōkōbō Ajari.
[9] 八幡菩薩. A Shinto deity especially worshipped by the Minamoto as a war god and also as a bodhisattva.
[10] Another name for the Minamoto meaning "Minamoto clan".
[11] Another name for the Tiara similar to the note above.
[12] 重盛 (1138–1179). Oldest son of Kiyomori.

balls[13] from within his breast pocket, hung them on the branches of a tree, and called one the head of Kiyomori and one the head of Shigemori. He continued in this manner until morning would come, upon which he would return home and lie down in the priests' quarters, pulling his robes over his head. No one knew of his actions.

A priest named Izumi, who was charged with Ushiwaka's care, saw this behavior. Thinking it strange, he did not take his eyes from him. Late one night, Izumi stole after Ushiwaka like a shadow slipping along beside him. He sneaked into the shadows of a grassy area and watched. Seeing Ushiwaka behave in this manner, he quickly returned to Kurama and told all of this to the Tōkōbō Ajari[14]. Upon hearing this, he told the Ajari of Ryōchibō, and that day said to the temple monks "Cut Ushiwaka's hair!"[15]

Having heard this, the Ryōchibō Ajari said, "It truly depends on the circumstances for one young like he is. His beauty surpasses any in this world, not to mention his studies. I think it would be sad indeed to have him in this year's ceremony of rites. Shave his head in spring of next year." "Anyone would certainly feel regret at this, but if his heart is faltering in this manner, by no means can it be good for him or us. His hair must be cut!" the Tōkōbō Ajari responded.

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[13] 毬打の玉 *gichō no tama*. Wooden balls that were hung with string and hit with a mallet as part of a game.

[14] 阿闍梨 *ācārya.* A teacher or high-ranking monk who trained disciples.

[15] Cutting his hair would fully initiate Ushiwaka as a Buddhist monk, preventing him from joining the rebellion as he would be required to live an ascetic life and, technically, forbidden to kill any living thing.

But Ushiwaka placed his hand on the hilt of his sword saying, “I will impale anyone who tries to cut my hair, no matter who he may be!” It seemed they would in no way be able to draw close to cut his hair.

The Risshi[16] of Kakunichibō said, “Ushiwaka does not focus on his studies because there is no quiet here, this being a seminary of so many people. Kakunichibō is on the outskirts. Have him quietly study where I am for the remainder of the year.” It seems that the Tōkōbō Ajari was sad to see Ushiwaka’s hair cut after all, for he said, “Do as you propose,” and sent Ushiwaka to Kakunichibō. Even Ushiwaka’s name was changed and he was now called Shanaō. His visits to Kibune ceased at this point. Every day he would enter the main hall and pray to Tamonten[17] solely of rebellion.

[16] 律師. A monk who understood the law of the Buddha well and taught it to others. It was a rank of authority lower than the Bettō.

[17] 多聞天 *Vaiśravaṇa*. One of the Four-Quarter Kings. He protects the northern regions.

CHAPTER 3

GIKEIKI

The great conflict of Japanese antiquity, the Genpei War (1180–1185), not only altered Japan's political arena, but its literature as well. It was not many years after the war ended that stories began to circulate about warriors who performed amazing feats and about those who lost their lives in battle. The most notable of all these stories is no doubt *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 (c. 13th century), a massive tale of the rise of the Taira clan, their conflict with the Minamoto, and their destruction at the hands of warriors like Yoshitsune. As Elizabeth Oyler describes in *Swords, Oaths, and Prophetic Visions*, these new records "emerging from this watershed period in Japanese History introduced a new modality for how Japanese remembered their past" and "operating as histories in the broadest sense, they encompassed the traditional roles of both narrating past events and placating the restless spirits of the war's victims."[18] In other words, for medieval Japanese audiences, war tales were not simply stories written to entertain, but rather held a significant place in the Japanese cultural consciousness, providing explanations of the narrated events to both the living and the dead.

[18] Oyler 2006 p. 1

Certainly not the most literarily sophisticated of the war tales[19], and yet holding its own place in this literary mode is *Gikeiki*. Differing from other war tales in its focus on a few individuals and its lack of large conflict, *Gikeiki* is an intimate work that describes the childhood and post-Genpei War life of Minamoto Yoshitsune. Perhaps it is this difference from other war tales and its lack of literary sophistication when compared to works such as the *Kakuichibon* 覚一本 textual variant of *Heike monogatari* that has led *Gikeiki* to be largely ignored as a subject of extended scholarly research, a surprising fact considering its great influence on subsequent war literature.[20] This is especially true for research in English as the only extended study of the work is the 1966 translation with accompanying introduction by McCullough mentioned earlier.

The episode translated above is indicative of *Gikeiki* as a whole. The language is straightforward, but still presents the reader with moments of beauty. The antics of its heroes are humorously melodramatic, and yet they are tinged with a subtle sadness that draws out the sympathy of the reader. *Gikeiki* is fast paced and action packed, jumping from one event to the next in rapid succession when compared to other war tales, which can be heavily didactic and full of the recounting of Chinese and Indian history and locations as precedence for the events described.[21] In addition to the Kibune episode, the first passage of *Gikeiki*

[19] *Nihon koten bungaku jiten* p. 93
[20] *Nihon bungaku kenkyū nyūmon* p. 221
[21] McCullough 1966 p. 66 shares many of these opinions.

illustrates these same characteristics, especially when compared to the first passage of *Heike monogatari*, well known for the beauty of its flowery language and the Buddhist sentiments it evokes. *Gikeiki* begins the following way:

> On examination of Japan's past, we find such courageous men as Tamura, Toshihito, Masakado, Sumitomo, Hōshō, and Raikō; as well as Hankai, Chinpei, and Chōryō of China. Yet though these men were courageous, we have not seen them with our eyes, hearing only their names. There is one who surprised us all, performing his art before our very eyes, the youngest son of Shimotsuke no Samanokami Yoshitomo, Genkurō Yoshitsune—the incomparable, famous general.[22]

This description hearkens back to the past and to China for precedents for such great warriors as Yoshitsune as other war tales do, but it is extremely simple and direct, and even attempts to reach beyond these precedents to claim Yoshitsune as more valuable to the contemporary Japanese as a more recent figure, even though the Muromachi period when *Gikeiki* was compiled was several hundred years after Yoshitsune's death.

Heike monogatari strikes similar chords, but more dramatically and more elegantly:

[22] My translation based on SNKZ

> The sound of the Gion Shōja bells echoes the impermanence of all things; the color of the *śāla* flowers reveals the truth that the prosperous must decline. The proud do not endure, they are like a dream on a spring night; the mighty fall, they are as dust before the wind.
>
> In a distant land, there are examples set by Zhao Gao in Qin, Wang Mang of Han, Zhu Yi of Lian, and Lusahn of Tang, all of them men who prospered after refusing to be governed by their former lords and sovereigns, but who met swift destruction because they disregarded admonitions, failed to recognize approaching turmoil, and ignored the nation's distress. Closer to home, there have been Masakado of Shōhei, Sumitomo of Tengyō, Yoshichika of Kōwa, and Nobuyori of Heiji, every one of them proud and mighty. But closest of all, and utterly beyond the power of mind to comprehend or tongue to relate, is Taira no Ason Kiyomori…[23]

The same fundamental pattern that we find in the first passage of *Gikeiki* is found here as well. However, the delivery is quite different. It begins with an extremely strong, unmistakably Buddhist sentiment and invokes the bells of Gion Shōja, or the Jetavana monastery in India. The reader is then given examples of men who

[23] McCullough 1988 p. 23

demonstrate the indicated Buddhist doctrine in both China and Japan, and then points to the ultimate embodiment of the doctrine—a more recent figure in the Japanese mind. The *Heike* passage is more descriptive, providing more details concerning the example historical figures it mentions, and the language is more superlative. It is also more than the introduction of a character, which is perhaps where it differs most notably from the *Gikeiki* passage, as in its upfront didactic nature Kiyomori is less the focus than the doctrine he exemplifies. This helps to show a clear contrast in the cultural purpose of *Gikeiki* as compared to other war tales.

With this difference in mind, this study will attempt to address the openness of the *Gikeiki* text and the malleability of the Yoshitsune legend in order to show the deliberateness with which it was altered over time, which reflects the complexity of its purpose. Unlike the more focused *Heike*, *Gikeiki* reaches over a broader cultural context and attempts, as Oyler argues, to soothe the troubled spirits of both living and dead, and this from various regions, not only the capital center but also its periphery.

CHAPTER 4

FORMATION OF *GIKEIKI*

Before we begin our look at the textual lineages of the *Gikeiki* text, it will be helpful to understand some points concerning the prevailing theories on the authorship of the text.

Authorship

The authorship of *Gikeiki* is a difficult subject to approach as there are no historical records that point to an author or compiler of any kind. There are, nevertheless, theories about what kind of person would have authored such a tale, and what possible motivations this author might have had. Judging from incoherencies in the development of the story, as well as detailed geographic information of the northern provinces, and a great deal written about the etiquette of mountain priests, Yanagita Kunio postulates that the chief portions of the story are tales from Mutsu Province that were passed among blind minstrel monks.

Shimazu Hisamato likewise conjectures on the authorship of *Gikeiki*, giving six probable characteristics of the compiler. First, there was most likely one main author who worked on the construction of the text; second, the author must have felt an ardent sympathy for Yoshitsune's plight; third, an undeniable intention to preserve and compile the legends and folklore surrounding Yoshitsune must have been present; fourth, the author was not completely

ignorant of the composition of a fictive plot; fifth, rather than Buddhism, the author seems to subscribe to Confucian precepts; and sixth, though maybe not of noble lineage, the author was at least a resident of the capital who despised Easterners and delighted in the graceful elegance of capital dwellers.[24]

At first glance these two theories may seem to be at odds with one another, but they actually blend together quite well. As Shimazu states, though most likely a resident of the capital, the author did not create the narrative, but rather pieced it together from existing legends and folklore about Yoshitsune that had no doubt circulated widely after his death. Yanagita's theory explains this portion of the authorship—of folklore and legends—as being compiled by the aforementioned blind monks, with its origins in the eastern provinces. After the death of his father, Yoshitsune and his brothers were sent to temples in the east to receive Buddhist rites in an effort to mitigate any threat of retaliation from them. This, in concurrence with the textual aspects cited by Yanagita, explains why stories of Yoshitsune's youth would most likely originate as hearsay from province dwellers. His death also occurred in the province of Dewa, another *tōkoku*, or eastern province. The major focus of the *Gikeiki* narrative is the beginning and end of Yoshitsune's life, giving credence to Yanagita's theory. The folklore surrounding Yoshitsune was therefore most probably authored by these priestly minstrels, and it was the "author" surmised by Shimazu who combined these into a single

[24] *Nihon koten bunagaku diajiten* p. 108

narrative, giving them a war-tale style and embellishing them with the elegance and refinement of the capital.

Varieties of Texts

Though the term *Gikeiki* is most often used to refer to the Muromachi tale about Yoshitsune, there are three separate textual lineages that are now extant: the *Rufubon* 流布本 (popular edition), the *Hōgan monogatari* 判官物語 (hereafter *Hōgan*), and the *Yoshitsune monogatari* よしつね物語 lineages. The following is based upon a comprehensive study on the development of the *Gikeiki* text by Satō Atsushi in which he discusses the *Hōgan* lineage in some detail.

Of the three main textual lineages, the *Hōgan* appears to be the oldest, itself being divided into two separate lines.[25] Satō includes two texts in the *Hōgan* lineage that he does not separate into these two lines. These are the *Hananoya bunkobon* 花廼屋文庫本 (*Hananoyabon*) and the *Kuzekebon* 久世家本. The *Hananoyabon* was incinerated in a fire during the Kanto Earthquake of 1923, though the title on the *daisen*[26] as well as other information about the text is preserved through various records. Interestingly, instead of the usual character 判 for 判官 *hōgan*[27], it uses the character 法 to make 法官 *hōgan* for its title *Hōgan*

[25] Satō 1999 p. 11

[26] A strip of paper pasted to a book bearing the title.

[27] In modern Japanese 判官 is the term used for the rank that Yoshitsune held within the Heian court system, while 法官 is simply the term for a judge normally read as *hōkan*. Perhaps this

monogatari.[28] The *Kuzekebon*, which like the *Hananoyabon* was destroyed in a fire during the Kanto Earthquake, bore the title *Hōgan monogatari* on its *daisen* using the same characters. It had eight volumes in eight fascicles, which seems to be the only information about the text, other than the title, that was preserved.

The remaining six known texts of the *Hōgan* lineage are included in its two lines. The first line, from which the *Rufubon* lineage is said to originate, is comprised of four separate texts: the *Tachibanabon* 橘本, the *Keiōgijuku zushokanbon* 慶応義塾図書館本 (*Keiōbon*), the *Tenrizushokanbon* 天理図書館本 (*Tenribon*), and the *Awakoku bunkobon* 阿波国文庫本 (*Awabon*). Of the four texts, only the first three are extant, the *Awabon* having been destroyed in the same fire as the *Hananoyabon* and *Kuzekebon* mentioned above. The *Tachibanabon*, *Keiōbon*, and *Awabon*, all bear (or bore) the title *Hōgan Monogatari* on their *daisen*. The *Tenribon* shows the unique title of *Yoshitsune sōshi*, suggesting a collection about Yoshitsune rather than a story driven narrative, perhaps closer to the original intention of *Gikeiki*. All of these texts are comprised of eight volumes in eight fascicles, though of the extant three texts, the *Keiōbon* has only the second, third, fifth, sixth, and eighth volumes extant.[29]

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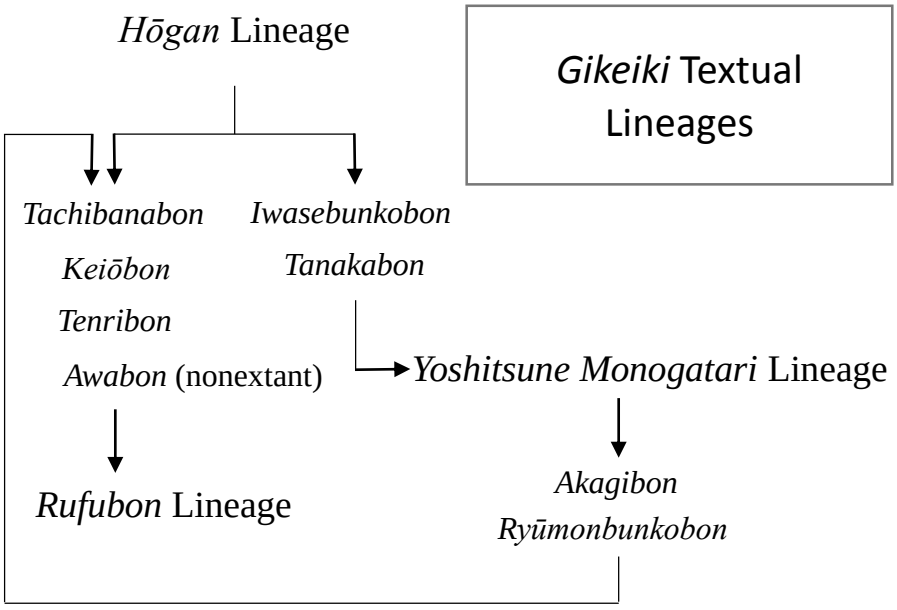
suggests that the character usage was interchangeable until 法官 assumed its modern meaning and that those texts which bear the unusual version of *hōgan*, 法官, are older texts, while those written 判官 are of undetermined age.

[28] Satō 1999 p. 13

[29] Satō 1999 p. 12

The second line of the *Hōgan* lineage contains two texts and is thought to be the origin of the *Yoshitsune monogatari* textual lineage.[30] The two texts of the second line are the *Iwasebunkobon* 岩瀬文庫本 and the *Tanakabon* 田中本. Within the second line, there is a greater amount of variation between texts. The *Iwasebunkobon*—entitled *Hōgan monogatari*, interestingly written はう官物語 using the neutral kana instead of deciding between 判 and 法—is the most varied of all the texts discussed. The *Iwasebunkobon* consists of only two volumes divided into two fascicles, making it six volumes shorter than every other *Gikeiki* text. The first volume is a combination of the first and second volumes of the eight volume texts; and the second volume combines the third volume and only part of the fourth volume of the eight volume texts.[31]



[30] Satō 1999 p. 11
[31] Satō 1999 p. 12

The final text of the second *Hōgan* line is the *Tanakabon*. The *Tanakabon* is extant in its entirety, being eight volumes in eight fascicles, following the typical pattern. One of the unique characteristics of the *Tanakabon* is the title it bears—*Gikeiki* 義経記. Since the second appears to be the older of the two *Hōgan* lines (as will be shown below), the *Tanakabon* is the oldest and most complete of all extant *Gikeiki* texts—the *Kuzekebon* having been destroyed and the *Iwasebunkobon* obviously lacking a large part of the text. This gives the *Tanakabon* textual authority and no doubt justifies the use of the title *Gikeiki* in general reference to the Muromachi period *monogatari* concerning Yoshitsune.

The *Yoshitsune monogatari* lineage is smaller than the richer *Hōgan* lineage and contains only two texts. The first of these is the *Akagibunkobon* 赤木本文庫本 (*Akagibon*) divided into the typical eight volumes in eight fascicles. The second text, the *Ryūmonbunkobon* 竜門文庫本, has only the first volume extant, the total number of volumes unknown. Both of these texts are entitled *Yoshitsune monogatari* written with a kanji and kana mix よしつね物語. What sets these two texts, and the *Yoshitsune monogatari* lineage, apart from that of the *Hōgan* lineage is that in the first, third, and eighth volumes they contain supplementary material from *kôwakamai* 幸若舞[32], a performance art that began in the early Muromachi Period involving recitation and dance.

[32] Satō 1999 p. 13

The *Rufubon* lineage is similar to the texts of the *Hōgan* lineage's first line as that is its origin. It differs in that it contains an extra chapter in the eighth volume, a story most likely based on a *kōwakamai* piece. The *Rufubon* has influenced other publications of *Gikeiki* as it appears to be the originator of the chapter titles that are now common to most texts.[33]

Seniority of Texts

As stated earlier, the *Hōgan* lineage appears to be the oldest of the three lineages presented. Satō establishes this through a detailed comparison of different passages in the first through sixth volumes using the *Tanakabon* from the second line and the *Tachibanabon* from the first line.[34] Below are two of the passages used by Satō. They are included in the *Tanakabon* in their entirety, while the portion enclosed by parenthesis shows the text absent from the *Tachibanabon*. I have translated the passages into English and marked them in an effort to reflect the marking of the Japanese text.

1. ひさをおさへて（けうなるこほうしはらかなしゆきやうしや
   の出）仕したるはなにかおかしきそとしかりけり

[33] Satō 1999 p. 13
[34] Satō 1999 p. 13–17

1. pressing his knees [Benkei] scolded, (“This is a rare bunch of young monks!) What is so funny about (an ascetic about his) duties?”[35]
2. ゑんのうへには（わか大しゆともひさをきしりてそゐたりける大庭には）なかゐのものとも
2. On the veranda, (the young warrior monks were sitting, their knees rubbing together. In the large courtyard,) the inner temple monks[36]

In both of these examples, the loss of the enclosed portion of the sentence causes a serious abridgement of its meaning. The omission in the first sentence is especially serious. The word 出仕 (*shusshi*) is broken apart leaving what appears to be an unintelligible verb, 仕したる. In fact, the Iwanami Shōten anthology, styled after the *Rufubon* which descends from the first *Hōgan* line,[37] simply omits this verb so that Benkei only asks, “What is so funny?”[38] The second sentence is less affected by the ellipsis, but still suffers a loss in meaning for the missing information.

This discrepancy between the two *Hōgan* lines allows us to postulate which of them originated first. Since the first line lacks integral portions of the

[35] My translation is made using SNKZ p. 122
[36] Also made using SNKZ p. 125
[37] NKBT p. 21
[38] NKBT p. 231

sentences, it can only be assumed that they were lost from the original whole sentence. This establishes the second line as the older, as its version of the sentences hold their integrity. This analysis suggests that the first line was formed through omissions in the text that comprises the second.

Satō further compares the *Akagibon* of the *Yoshitsune* lineage to the first and second lines of the *Hōgan* lineage in order to determine its place in the textual development of *Gikeiki*. The first two volumes of the *Akagibon* agree completely with the text of the second *Hōgan* line, while the third through sixth volumes' textual consistency begins to deviate, so that slightly less than half of the text seems to follow the second *Hōgan* line.[39] The two examples given earlier both are taken from the third volume, the first example having the text intact and the second being without the enclosed portion in the *Akagibon* text. This disparity, which occurs within a single text, is quite striking, but suggests something about the place that the *Yoshitsune* lineage holds in the historical development of *Gikeiki* textual history. Satō quite convincingly postulates that because the *Akagibon* is faithful to the second *Hōgan* line, but also shows a loss of key textual elements that coincide with the first *Hōgan* line, it not only descends from the second line as previously stated, but also most likely is a transitionary text between the two *Hōgan* lines.[40] In other words, the *Yoshitsune* lineage was born out of omissions and errors made in copying the text of the second *Hōgan* line;

[39] Satō 1999 p. 17, see chart
[40] Satō 1999 p. 18

the first *Hōgan* line was then created through the propagation of existing errors and the addition of further ones.

The final stage in the textual history of *Gikeiki* is the development of the *Rufubon*, which emerged from the first *Hōgan* line. As stated earlier, the *Rufubon* is the common edition printed with woodblocks in several editions from 1633 through 1724.[41] This edition propagates the omissions of the first *Hōgan* line, adds new ellipses, and also inserts new material from contemporary *kōwakamai*. The *Rufubon*, then, is the edition farthest removed from the original *Gikeiki* text, but perhaps also the most culturally influenced.

From the preceding analysis of the *Gikeiki* textual history, the pattern of development is clear. Over time, what almost appears to be purposeful omissions were made to the text, resulting in a briefer, less complex work. An attempt to abridge *Gikeiki* was made even in the oldest of the textual lineages, which is the *Iwasebunkobon* text. And the culmination of all these efforts resulted in the *Rufubon*, which became the most successful edition in terms of reception.

[41] McCullough 1966, see preface

CHAPTER 5

COMPARISON OF GIKEIKI TEXTS

A closer comparison of two *Gikeiki* texts using the Kibune episode presented earlier may illustrate omissions in the texts more clearly. We can approach the text here from two different sources. The first is taken from the anthology *Shin Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* (SNKZ), whose editors aimed to establish a text that agrees most closely with the *Tanakabon* of the second *Hōgan* line.[42] The second is contained in the *Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (NKBT) and was made to resemble the form of the *Rufubon*.[43] A large number of differences appear in a short selection of text and total nearly one hundred. Some of these differences may be as simple as the addition or subtraction of a particle, or the alteration of an auxiliary verb. There are a good many instances, however, where whole phrases that appear in the *Tanakabon*-styled text are either omitted or severely abbreviated in the *Rufubon*-styled text. Let us consider some examples and their influence upon the style and meaning of the text. In each of the following examples, the SNKZ text will be given first and the NKBT second, with altered portions underlined and omitted portions in bold. Accompanying translations will also be given, with the NKBT translation taken from McCullough's 1966 translation of *Gikeiki*.

[42] SNKZ p. 11
[43] NKBT p.

The very first sentence of the episode "Of Ushiwaka going to Kibune" differs in at least two significant ways between the two texts.

1. それよりして、学問の心をば跡形なく忘れはてて、明け暮れ**は**謀反の事をのみぞ**嗜み**思し召しける。

2. しやうもんに逢ひ給ひて後は、学問の事をば跡形なく忘れはてて、明け暮れ謀反の事をのみぞ思し召しける。

1. After this occurrence[44], Ushiwaka utterly lost interest in his studies and set his heart solely on rebellion, thinking of it both day and night.

2. After his encounter with Shōmon [Shōshinbō], Ushiwaka thought of nothing but rebellion day and night. He forgot his studies as completely as though they had never existed.[45]

The first major difference is the replacement of the referential それよりして with a single-phrase summary of its antecedent episode, the one occurring previously where Ushiwaka meets with the priest Shōshinbō who informs him of his true heritage. The original pronominal transition demonstrates something

[44] I have altered this translation here from that given earlier so that it reflects more literally the Japanese for the sake of comparison.
[45] McCullough 1966 p. 74. I give a second translation of the NKBT text: “After his meeting with Shōmon [i.e. Shōshinbō], Ushiwaka utterly lost interest in his studies and thought of nothing but rebellion both day and night.”

significant about authorial intent concerning the format and reading experience of *Gikeiki*, namely that this episode was meant to be read in concurrence with the previous episode, or at least not to be related in isolation. Later abridgements and alterations of the text must have replaced this transition, which would become nonsensical if the episode were told on its own, in an attempt to give the story some context through the addition of the brief summarizing transitional phrase that now graces the *Rufubon*-styled texts.

While the next alteration and omission are both minor and have relatively little impact on the meaning of the sentence, the omission of the verb 嗜む (*tashinamu*), or "to secretly keep in one's heart",[46] does have an effect. The deletion of descriptive verbs and phrases occurs regularly throughout the selected passage, as will be shown with further examples, and though they may not significantly alter the story or the general meaning of each sentence, the force of the language and the mood the narrative creates does seem to shift into a colorless drone. In the sentence above, the loss of the verb that communicates the emotion and deep desire that Ushiwaka is now giving to the cause of avenging the wrongs done to his family—the truth of which he only recently learned—greatly reduces the impact of the sentence and strips Ushiwaka of some of the fiery passion associated with him in earlier portrayals.

[46] See *Kogojiten*

The next several sentences that follow this opening line have similar occurrences of deletion and alteration. The *Rufubon* text, for example, removes 馳せ引き (*hasehiki*), or mounted archery, as one of the skills that Ushiwaka plans to learn in preparation for his rebellion. This omission is actually quite practical, as no more mention of this training appears in the episode and its mention would seem to be unnecessary. It does, however, suggest a deliberate effort to streamline and edit the text.

Another interesting change occurs soon after this. The *Tanakabon*-styled text contains a small phrase, which could be described as free indirect discourse. Ushiwaka knows that he must learn to fight and ride like a proper warrior if he is to attempt a rebellion against the Taira clan. He knows, however, that such a thing cannot be accomplished within the temple hall in which he resides, and so the text reads:

1. いかにも叶ふまじ。鞍馬の奥に僧正が谷といふ所あり

2. いかに叶ひがたきとて鞍馬の奥に僧正が谷といふ所あり

1. It would be impossible to do so here. There was a place deep in Kurama called Sōjō-ga-dani.

2. His present quarters…were clearly unsuitable for military exercises. Far back on Kurama Mountain there was a ravine called Sōjō-ga-tani[*sic*]…[47]

McCullough's translation of the Iwanami text shows how it suggests narration of the thoughts of Ushiwaka. The speech-like nature of the *Tanakabon* leads one to feel as if they are listening in on Ushiwaka's own thoughts and thus may be interpreted as free indirect discourse. Such dialogue finds its peak in Heian-period courtly literature. One of the prevailing theories concerning the unknown author of *Gikeiki* is that said author was trying to add a courtly quality to the legends of Yoshitsune that he or she had collected. And yet, as the text evolved and was edited, this courtliness, which seems to have been embodied by this form of narration, was removed. Would not an editor rather deepen the literary and narrative sophistication of a work? Not if that editor was instead trying to create something other than a *monogatari* or any text that was meant to be quoted from directly. The deletion of the free indirect discourse instead moves the text towards the style of a *setsuwa*—a story told on the streets by commoners about the exploits of their heroes and not by courtiers—bringing it back to its origins and perhaps opening it up for variation.

[47] McCullough 1966 p.74. Literally, "It would be very difficult to do so, but there is a place called Sōjō-ga-dani deep in Kurama."

What follows is a passionate description of the Kibune shrine that tells of how it once was glorious, but fell into the despair associated with the latter days of the world or *mappō* 末法, a time when the teachings of the Buddha would fail. This attempt to manufacture a moment of *aware*, a Heian-period aesthetic that equates to "sad beauty," is a key piece to the puzzle that shows *Gikeiki* striving for the sophistication of courtly literature. The purpose the passage plays in the plot is simply to show that Ushiwaka chooses an abandoned place where he can practice on the sly for his rebellion. What then justifies this passionate, superfluous description? It would seem to draw the reader away from Ushiwaka and the constant talk of warriors and battle and present one with a flash of sacred power tinged with sadness. As a whole, *Gikeiki* is much less focused on the decline of the Buddha's teaching in the latter days than other works such as *Heike monogatari*, but the interweaving of such moments into the text are an attempt to draw the narrative in that direction. These moments were likely particularly poignant because the court was reaching its cultural and political nadir and warfare dominated contemporary discourse. This instance of *aware* also cleverly offsets the violent anger of Ushiwaka. This quiet moment of reflection on a failing world is torn asunder by the brutality with which Ushiwaka destroys his imagined foes in the following paragraph, reinforcing the depth of his rage and hatred for the Heike. The *Rufubon*-styled text, however, alters and omits portions of this stirring passage, disturbing its flow. Not only does this dismantle the carefully

constructed *aware*, making it seem a sad substitute, but it also diminishes the counterpoint to Ushiwaka's impassioned training, further inhibiting the force of his character.

In the third paragraph we see some editorial work that represents a common occurrence in this section of *Gikeiki*, and it can be assumed that such alterations would continue throughout the text. The paragraph introduces how Ushiwaka deceives his fellows and goes in the garb and spirit of a warrior to pray for the support of the Shinto deity Hachiman.

1. 昼は、学問に忠をいたす体にもてなし

2. 昼は、学問をし給ふ体にもてなし

1. During the day, he played a sincere student

2. …he made a pretense of working at his studies as usual during the daytime…[48]

The text as it reads in Sentence 1 says something like "he put on the appearance of giving his whole heart to his studies", emphasizing that, until he had learned of his lineage within the Minamoto clan, this is what he had done. This also suggests the level of cunning that Ushiwaka possesses since he is able to fool even those who were closest to him. The later version of the text we find in

[48] McCullough 1966 p. 75

Sentence 2 has replaced the 忠をいたす (*chū wo itasu*) with the much simpler し給ふ (*shi-tamu*), the simple verb す (*su*), or to do, with an honorific form attached. This more literally translates to "he put on the appearance of doing his studies", which though it may capture the same idea as the version in Sentence 1, much of the significance is gone. Most importantly, however, the version in Sentence 2 loses some of the characterization of Ushiwaka. Unlike the *monogatari* of the Heian period, war tales such as *Heike* rely less on dialogue than on actions to provide characterization. The attributes associated with each character are associated with how the narrator describes their thoughts and actions rather than through extended dialogue or myriad poems. If editors restrict the diction of the narrator, then the depth of the characterization is removed with it, leading to a diminishment of the literary attributes of the text. As before, we see a whitewashing of Ushiwaka's personal desires, or to some his flaws, and the great Yoshitsune beginning to lose his passion, his zeal, his cunning, and shifting towards a figure that is easily dragged along by a sequence of events.

Another significant change in the text can be found in the sequence when the priest Izumi sneaks after Ushiwaka to discover what he is doing.

1. ある夜の夜半に身にそふ影のごとくしてぞ行きける。ある草むらの陰に忍び見ければ

2. ある夜御跡を慕ひて隠れて草むらの陰に忍び見ければ

1. Late one night, Izumi stole after Ushiwaka like a shadow slipping along beside him. He sneaked into the shadows of a grassy area and secretly watched

2. One night he followed Ushiwaka and observed his goings-on from the shelter of a clump of bushes[49]

Here again we see the dulling of literary deftness as the work ages and is edited. Lines like that found in Sentence 1 are what bring a work of literature to life, the vivid imagery it provides. Ushiwaka takes the utmost care each time he leaves his residence to be sure no one is aware of his secret training and imaginary display of revenge. Izumi must use the utmost care to avoid being seen by Ushiwaka and losing the chance to discover his secret. And so, as if he were the very shadow of Ushiwaka, he slips along so stealthily that Ushiwaka is unaware of his presence. He is a patch of darkness that fades into the black of night, no louder than the rushing of the wind.

All of this is lost in Sentence 2. The directness and succinctness of McCullough's translation captures well its feeling, although perhaps more literally it would read, "One night he sneaked after him, hiding, and secretly watched from the shadows of a grassy area". This more literal translation shows that the idea that Izumi must use stealth while pursuing Ushiwaka still remains, but that all the imagery surrounding it has been taken away. While these are the actions of Izumi,

[49] McCullough 1966 p. 75

he is an insignificant character that only appears in this one instance. The imagery presented in Sentence 1 is therefore not meant to enhance Izumi's character, but Ushiwaka's. As described above, this imagery lends to the idea that Ushiwaka, even now, is cunning and intelligent. The skills of a warrior are naturally his, and it takes great effort on the part of his servant just to avoid being seen by him.

The preceding changes to the *Gikeiki* text over time suggest that there is more involved here than simple copy errors or smudged ink, but rather that the many of the changes made to *Gikeiki* text were deliberate. As mentioned earlier, the later textual variants not only propagate previous errors and omissions, but actually add large quantities of new material, as seen with the additions of *kōwakamai* into the *Rufubon* variant. The omissions also do more than simply show an open text however. They affirm Elizabeth Oyler's hypothesis, to be discussed hereafter, concerning the changing of Yoshitsune's character over time. While Oyler points out this trend within the broader scope of texts, here we see something similar taking place within an individual text. This process hints at the nature of *Gikeiki* and how it was viewed by its readership.

CHAPTER 6

YOSHITSUNE IN MULTIPLE WORKS

Yoshitsune is an important figure in the Genpei War as one of the generals, if not the main general, who was responsible for the defeat of the Taira. As a result he appears in many works that were composed during and after this time period.

Matsuo Ashie, in his study on the origin of *gunkimono* (war tales), comments on the uncertainty of the formation of all such works: "For the majority of war tale literature, the date of composition and authorship are unverifiable, but…not only for the work itself, if we consider that there is a broad time period for the composition of each of the textual variants as well, it becomes an extremely inscrutable work."[50] Matsuo uses this statement as an introduction to his analysis of depictions of Yoshitsune in the textual variants of the three war tales *Heiji monogatari*, *Heike monogatari*, and *Gikeiki*. This is an interesting perspective, as Matsuo seems to say that rather than attempt the impossible task of ascertaining the date of the *Gikeiki* text and its variants, one should approach the origins of the text from a pragmatic perspective, using the text alone as the basis for analysis. Matsuo bases his discussion on the premise that the only certain material we have about *gunkimono* is what we can derive from their texts. Keeping this in mind, he makes several interesting observations about how these

[50] Matsuo 2008 p. 306; my translation.

tales interact with each other and how they communicate about the Yoshitsune character.

Matsuo begins with *Heiji Monogatari*, quoting from the oldest variant of the text. He suggests here that the tale "tells of the good fortune of the two children of the Minamoto clan and laments the change in their fate."[51] Finding this sort of lamentation in war tales is essential if we are to accept Oyler's statement quoted earlier, that these works occupied a fundamental role in medieval Japanese society to explain certain cultural realities and appease the dead. This same lamentation is found in the general narrative of *Gikeiki*, but also specifically in the Kibune episode with its despair over the decrepit state of the world—a foreshadowing of and metaphor for Yoshitsune's falling out of his brother's favor, which led to his marginalization and eventually to his suicide.

Matsuo next discusses the relationship between *Heiji monogatari* and *Heike monogatari*, pointing to something that helps to further understand this same idea. It is unclear, from looking at the oldest variants of these two texts, which of them was written first. Perhaps it is best to argue that they were created at nearly the same time and that the various stories that surface in each variant are an effort to keep the two texts separate. This makes the chronology of the war tales misleading: it should be irrelevant whether the Hōgen Disturbance preceded the Heiji Rebellion or Heiji preceded the Genpei War, when one is trying to date

[51] Matsuo 2008 p. 307; my translation.

their creation,[52] an interesting point when one considers the great lengths to which *Gikeiki* goes in order to avoid repeating the portions of Yoshitsune's life that the *Heiji* and the *Heike* mostly focus on—namely his rise and fall as a powerful military commander. Matsuo also points out that of all the *Heike* variants, including the *kataribon* or recited versions, focus on Yoshitsune the least. He gives the *Kakuichibon* variant's inclusion of a short summary of Yoshitsune's childhood as one example of this phenomenon and notes the important idea that "this was likely thought to be sufficient for Yoshitsune's past according to *kataribon* that focus on the downfall of the Heike."[53] Again then the texts manipulate stories and histories to accomplish their purposes. Even the *yomibon*, or read versions, which are meant to be more historical, pick and choose which aspects of the life of Yoshitsune they include. This all leads to *Gikeiki*, which is an amalgamation of stories not included or not fully realized in these other two texts. Just as *Heike* "combined and compiled different content"[54] from that which was contained in *Heiji*, so *Gikeiki* must have done to expand and deepen the cultural understanding of Muromachi Japanese audiences. *Gikeiki*, also a *katari* (recited) text, was designed for performance.[55] This is an important fact if one is to understand the purpose of the work, because such performances were aimed at a wider audience than the more historical *yomibon*. They also attempted to reach

[52] Matsuo 2008 p. 308
[53] Matsuo 2008 p. 309; my translation
[54] Matsuo 2008 p. 310; my translation
[55] See SNKZ *Gikeiki* p. 502 for a discussion on the *katari* aspects of *Gikeiki*.

deeper into the cultural pockets of society and stabilize its cultural irregularities. In such works, the "actor/character shelters the positive elements of society…from the negative factors…that challenge social stability."[56] Creating such cultural scapegoats is a process that "aims at either the avoidance of disorder or the restoration of order"[57] to the community. Yoshitsune becomes such a scapegoat, realized most fully in *Gikeiki*, and is absolved of all his faults for the sake of medieval Japanese society.

Through her own comparison of the textual variants of numerous war tales, including *Gikeiki*, Elizabeth Oyler shows how the image of Yoshitsune changed over time to reflect him as a positive figure, opposing earlier depictions of him as haughty and hasty. A major part of Oyler's discussion centers on the relationship between Yoshitsune and Yoritomo. Although Yoshitsune won many decisive battles against the Taira on behalf of Yoritomo, his older brother eventually had him hunted down and executed, fearing that Yoshitsune would seize control of the Minamoto clan. Oyler shows that while earlier works such as *Heike monogatari* seem to allude to Yoshitsune's brashness and a possible plot to overthrow his brother as justification for Yoritomo's paranoia, later works begin to scrub clean the relationship of these two brothers. Oyler states that "although in narratives focused on Yoshitsune…his bravery is lauded, we are also given indications that

[56] Marra 1993 p. 77
[57] Marra 1993 p. 77

his boldness was seen as impudent and perhaps even insubordinate." [58] Historically, this haughtiness is most likely responsible for the rift that formed between Yoshitsune and his brother Yoritomo, who was the ruler of the Minamoto clan. However, the conflict that ensued between the brothers, resulting in Yoshitsune's death, challenged the supposedly just rule of Yoritomo and his successors. Oyler theorizes that the narratives of *Gikeiki* were "born of the pressing and ongoing need to rebuild the past out of events that [did] not meet cultural expectations" and were "repeated and reworked to allay these anxieties."[59] Thus, not only did *Gikeiki* address the spirit of Yoshitsune and appease it through his glorification, it also appeased the living of the Muromachi period by legitimizing their current cultural conditions.

Furthermore, the tale deals with the genesis of the first shogunate, making its legitimacy a key concern of the Japanese cultural consciousness, which one can argue only ceased after military rule ended with the Meiji Restoration. Oyler, then, sees later portrayals of Yoshitsune, such as that found in *Gikeiki*, to be a result of the cultural consciousness of Japan attempting to justify its history. In these later works, Yoshitsune's originally confrontational and unstable nature is polished to a refined courtier-like aesthetic, and the bond of trust between him and Yoritomo can only be broken by the slanderous words of one of Yoritomo's senior retainers. Oyler notes that "The thematic framework [of *Gikeiki*] is familiar,

[58] Oyler 2006 p. 90
[59] Oyler 2006 p. 114

and its mobilization here seems particularly closely linked to protecting what the *Enkyōbon* [a variant of *Heike monogatari*] and *Jōsuiki* [another earlier tale of the Genpei War] suggest was actually a precarious alliance between Yoshitsune and Yoritomo."[60] The creation of *Gikeiki* was a necessity in order to exonerate Yoshitsune and his brother from any fault concerning their quarrel. Later works did this as well, but *Gikeiki* was the first, and perhaps the only, work to present a full picture of Yoshitsune that allowed for a full fleshing out of his character, enabling the painting of a new hero. Oyler postulates that the "sanitization" of the conflict between the brothers is in response to cultural need. It helped to establish the unity and justness of military rulers, as well as the harmony of the Minamoto clan. The brothers would have had an ideal relationship if not for the negative interference from an outsider.[61] *Gikeiki* is the full embodiment of this relationship and the unchanging loyalty of Yoshitsune. In the Kibune episode, he does not plead with Hachiman for his own victory or greatness, but for that of his clan. The idea that Yoshitsune cares for the Minamoto above all else is implanted early in the mind of the reader. In *Gikeiki*, Yoshitsune is the perfect warrior and a paragon of loyalty, thus dashing to pieces the image of the scheming hothead of early portrayals.

[60] Oyler 2006 p. 107
[61] Oyler 2006 p. 108

Tengu and Prophecy

With these intertextual commentaries as a background, let us now look at some specific examples of the Yoshitsune character in several different works. The portion to be examined from each of these works deals with the same subject as our *Gikeiki* excerpt—the Ushiwaka (or Shanaō) period of the Yoshitsune story. As noted by Oyler, two distinct images of the character are present throughout the many portrayals of Yoshitsune. The first is closer to the character we see in the *Tanakabon*-style text that is the source of the above translation of the Sōjō-ga-dani story. This Ushiwaka is quick, cunning, and impetuous, ready to take fate into his own hands and make a name for himself restoring the Minamoto to power and avenging his father against the Taira. The other Ushiwaka is closer to the character portrayed in the *Rufubon* variants but to a greater degree. He moves because he is pushed to do so by those around him, those with more ambition and foresight than he has and by prophecy. He masters the skills of a warrior not through his own intelligence and prowess, but by supernatural intervention.

This supernatural intervention, which justifies Yoshitsune's greatness in certain variations, is conspicuously lacking from *Gikeiki*. In fact, the prophetic and supernatural aspects that strongly color other war tales are absent from *Gikeiki* as a whole. The reason for this may be that *Gikeiki* projects a stronger Confucian ontology than a Buddhist one, and so even as the *Rufubon* Ushiwaka loses his passion and becomes an object to be acted on rather than a subject who

acts; the supernatural remains absent. A familiar aspect of Ushiwaka's training that is present in other renditions of these events, however, is the assistance of *tengu*.

While *Gikeiki* goes through great trouble to elucidate the ruined, *tengu*-infested nature of the Kibune shrine where Ushiwaka practices, it avoids mentioning any actual supernatural visitation. In a discussion of the *Taiheiki*, Bialock notes that "the presence of the birdlike tengu…bring to the fore…close ties with (1) an anomic cultural assemblage, characterized by animal (including bird) traits and speed, and (2) rumor of a prophetic sort."[62] This rings true in light of Matsuo's statement concerning one of the messages contained in *Heiji*—that the stories of Yoshitsune and his brother Yoritomo are about good fortune and changes in fate, suggesting that their own will or abilities play no part in their success and achievements. Bialock also states that in the *Taiheiki*, "tengu and tengu-like yamabushi ("mountain priests"), famous for their extraordinary speed, appear on a number of occasions as mediators of prophetic rumor predicting rebellion and other news."[63] Ushiwaka going to the *tengu*-infested Kibune in *Gikeiki* then is foreshadowing his pivotal role in the Minamoto rebellion. But the refusal by *Gikeiki* to actually manifest *tengu* keeps Ushiwaka's fate in his own hands instead of assigning it to prophecy and supernatural powers. A look at some examples of where *tengu* appear will help to illustrate this idea further.

[62] Bialock 2007 p. 276
[63] Bialock 2007 p. 276

Tengu in a Pre-*Gikeiki* Text

One story that deals with the Ushiwaka period of the Yoshitsune legend more fully, *Heiji* monogatari, is quite adamant about the appearance of *tengu* and Ushiwaka's supernatural instruction.

The NKBT presentation of *Heiji Monogatari* based on the *Kunaichōshoryōbubon* 宮内庁書陵部本 variant reads:

1. 僧正が谷にて、天狗と夜々兵法をならふと伝々。されば早足・飛越、人間のわざとは覚えず。[64]

1. It is said that he learned the art of war with tengu in Sōjō-ga-dani. Therefore, his speed and abilities[65] seemed not to be the work of humankind. [66]

This is the typical idea expressed by those texts that attribute Ushiwaka's abilities to *tengu* training. The feats who would achieve and the great victories he would win are due to the unnatural speed and abilities that he received from his supernatural training. The *Gakushūindaigaku toshokanzōhon* 学習院大学図書館

[64] I have changed Chinese characters to the modern orthography for convenience.
[65] These two terms encompass a similar idea to what I rendered "swordplay" in the Kibune episode.
[66] NKBT *Heiji monogatari* p. 462 ; my translation

蔵本 variant of *Heiji* is not so direct but strongly implies the same connection and draws the same conclusion.

2. 僧正が谷にて、天狗・化の住と云もおそろしげもなく、
   夜な夜な貴布禰へ詣でけり。「其振舞、凡夫には
   あらず」

2. He [Ushiwaka] went to Kibune in Sōjō-ga-dani night after night, unafraid that it was said to be a place where tengu and spirits live. His actions were not that of a normal man [67]

Again, while this version does not explicitly state that Ushiwaka was trained by the *tengu*, the link to them is stronger than that found in *Gikeiki*. More importantly, as noted above, he is described as being more than (or other than) human. This is an essential part of the version of the Ushiwaka story that includes *tengu*. It is used as a device to separate Yoshitsune from reality and place him in the supernatural world of fate and prophecy. He becomes a simple pawn in the hands of destiny, the same power that changed the rule of Japan from the aristocracy to the warrior class. This contrasts with the lively Ushiwaka in the Kibune episode presented above and shows an early effort to polish the character.

[67] SNKT *Heiji monogatari* p. 277; also my translation

A Post *Gikeiki* Example

After *Gikeiki* made its debut and began to circulate, a large number of nō libretti, kabuki, and *kōwakamai* used it as source material. Interestingly enough, despite *Gikeiki* not including the *tengu* training, all later versions of the story do. The nō play *Kurama tengu* deals specifically with Ushiwaka's otherworldly training. It not only includes the *tengu*, but alters the circumstances in which Ushiwaka is able to receive his training.

Kurama tengu begins with a party of monks viewing cherry blossoms in Sōjō-ga-dani. A *yamabushi* (mentioned as a portent of prophecy by Bialock) appears and all the monks leave in derision except one, Ushiwaka. He is praised by the *yamabushi* who reveals himself to actually be the great *tengu* 大天狗 of Mt. Kurama. This change in circumstances alone is significant, as Ushiwaka does not even seek out the training on his own, but essentially lands in a situation that presents the opportunity to him. The Yoshitsune character, at this point in the progression of the story, has moved beyond the fiery passion we find in earlier texts and has become a symbol of the workings of fate and destiny in the history of Japan. He was destined to bring about the end of the aristocratic rule and thus was shepherded along by supernatural prophecy. This Ushiwaka shows no inherent skill or cunning other than his ability to say what is most appropriate to put in him in the favor of the great *tengu*. In fact, his dialogue borders on shameless self-pity, though it evokes the sympathy of the *yamabushi*. For

example, lamenting his placement in temple filled with children sympathetic to the Taira, he says:

1. みづからも同山には候へども、万面目もなき事どもにて、
   月にも花にも捨てられて候

1. Even though I reside in the same temple [as these other children], I am ashamed in all things and am even forsaken by the moon and flowers[68]

This is a truly pathetic plea for sympathy by Ushiwaka, and he receives it from the *yamabushi* in the form of inhuman speed and skills that help him to reach great heights. Though *Kurama tengu* may not be much older than *Gikeiki*[69], its portrayal of Yoshitsune is indicative of post-*Gikeiki* representations in the Muromachi period and on through the Tokugawa period.

The fact that, post-*Gikeiki*, stories of Yoshitsune thrived in performance media is also significant. Through these performances, Yoshitsune more fully became a means of consoling the cultural consciousness. In nō plays such as *Kurama tengu*, and even those that portray Yoshitsune's later life, the Yoshitsune character is played by a child actor—a symbol of purity and innocence. The Kibune episode of *Gikeiki*, although narrating a time of Yoshitsune's youth, does

[68] *Kurama tengu* p. 512; my translation.
[69] The first mention of it appears in 1465. See *Kurama tengu* p. 506.

not portray Ushiwaka in a particularly childlike manner. This contrast shows again that different paradigm that the original *Gikeiki* was attempting to create.

CHAPTER 7

THE LEGEND OF YOSHITSUNE

Over the course of this study we have seen how each variant text of *Gikeiki*, the ultimate source for the Yoshitsune legend, differed from the others, and how they evolved the portrayal of the Yoshitsune character over time through a heavy editing hand. We have also seen, through the close comparison of two variant *Gikeiki* texts, how subtle the changes are that were made. Even within the same work, there is a shift in the way that the character is portrayed, a slight change in his investment in his own tale. Finally, a look at the Ushiwaka period of the Yoshitsune story in different war tales and a nō play have shown how the character was made into a fulfiller of prophecy and destiny, losing his powerful will.

All of these portrayals of Yoshitsune have come together to make a truly legendary figure. There are times that he is a passionate, angry warrior ready to kill anyone who stands in the way of him completing his objectives, as is the case with the Kibune episode in *Gikeiki*. Other times he becomes more docile and willing to be led along by the hand of fate as he does in *Kurama tengu*. These different facets to the character, though seemingly contradictory, are essential to the role Yoshitsune played in the Muromachi Japanese cultural consciousness. Yoshitsune being both willful and weak, both subject and object, give the character the malleability it needed to become the ultimate folk hero. Truly,

Yoshitsune becomes the archetypal hero as he embodies each type of legendary hero.[70] Yoshitsune could not have become such an archetype without the anchoring effect that *Gikeiki* has upon the character.

The nature of the historical Yoshitsune made him easily swept away into legend and many war tales, nō and kabuki plays, and *kōwakamai* are eager to do so. The *Tanakabon* variant of *Gikeiki*, that closest to the original, counteracts this rapid cultural current by anchoring the character in reality. As farfetched as some of *Gikeiki* may seem to the modern reader, the lack of supernatural incidents in the work help to bring the story and the Yoshitsune character closer to real life. This initial anchoring was quite powerful, as even as the work shifted more to portraying Yoshitsune as an object flowing with the current of fate, it never strayed as far as some previous or subsequent works.

And so we are left with a figure who was human but had inhuman abilities, who performed amazing feats, won every contest he faced, and passed every test, but ultimately could not undo his fate to be labeled a traitor and forced to commit ritual suicide. We have a figure with a righteous quest to avenge his father. We have a hero who is cunning, yet kind, but whose great love for his brother Yoritomo still cannot save him from the slander of others.

Gikeiki is the keystone that holds this complex character together. The cultural consciousness of Muromachi Japanese shifted this keystone so that it

[70] See Klapp 1949 p. 19-23

would support a character that fills a much needed role—that perfect, saintly martyr who could not escape his unfortunate fate. How comforting such a figure must have been in a time fraught with war, danger, and sadness.

All of this shows clearly the role that *Gikeiki* played, or the purpose it held. It is often dealt with harshly by literary scholars because it lacks the literary sophistication of some other war tales and of Heian literature which it occasionally attempts to emulate. The trouble with this view is that *Gikeiki* does not strive for perfection of language and performance, or even storytelling as many of these other works seem to do. Instead, as we have seen, it strives to create a cultural hegemony and unified sympathy for the dead and the living, for whom Yoshitsune becomes a scapegoat for the frustration and uncertainty that existed in contemporary society. The Kibune episode is a perfect example of this as Yoshitsune undertakes a nō theater-like performance where he fights imaginary enemies. The angst-filled youth symbolically lets out his frustrations with life and those who have kept his true lineage from him, and most importantly with the Taira who represent the rulers of the country.

Medieval Japan was a time fraught with war and uncertainty, especially for the common people whose lives were trodden under the feet of high-ranking warriors and landowners. Unlike the literature of the Heian period that spoke to the refined taste of courtiers, *Gikeiki* addresses Japan at large and provides a widely relatable figure that speaks to those under oppression. Rather than adopt a

heavily didactic voice, such as *Heike monogatari*, that lectures and demonstrates, it opens up a malleable dialogue where the receiver of the text is at greater liberty to address it from his or her own perspective and then mold it to fill cultural irregularities. Thus we see a significant reworking of the Yoshitsune character and story, even within the confines of *Gikeiki* itself. The development of each textual lineage and line of *Gikeiki* brings it closer to those irregularities and strengthens Yoshitsune's role as a cultural scapegoat who meets the specific needs of the cultural consciousness. As Yoshitsune begins his journey, the portion portrayed in the Kibune episode, the audience is able to put their own cultural frustrations upon him and have him act out those anxieties in ways that they never could—a process that protects both those in power and those beneath them, maintaining hegemony within the society. As Yoshitsune's story progresses from this spirited beginning and on through to his dramatic suicide, he bears this cultural baggage and eventually carries it off with him as he departs from the world.

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