

A Critique by Any Other Name: Part 2 of Imagawa Ryōshun's *Nan Taiheiki*

Jeremy A. SATHER

I have divided the translation of and commentary on *Nan Taiheiki* into two parts. In part one, I outlined the main concerns that influenced Ryōshun to write the text: the loyalty of the Imagawa to the ruling Ashikaga family, his frustration with *Taiheiki* (*Chronicle of Great Peace*), and his resentment toward Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. The overarching theme of *Nan Taiheiki*, then, is the protection of the Imagawa legacy. In part two, I continue my analysis of this theme through an examination of Ryōshun's description of Hosokawa Kiyouji and his rebellion against the Ashikaga. Ryōshun's father Norikuni proposed a plan to the shogun that would have sacrificed his son in an attempt to kill Kiyouji and nip his rebellion in the bud. I then examine the significance of the Kamakura outpost, its overlord the Kantō *kubō*, and his deputy the *kanrei* for both Kiyouji's rebellion, which took place as a result of the strife surrounding the position of *kanrei*, and later, for Ryōshun's participation in the Ōei Disturbance, which resulted from the discord between Kyoto and Kamakura. What Ryōshun likely perceived as similarities between his participation in the Ōei Disturbance and Kiyouji's rebellion motivated him to include the Kiyouji episodes in *Nan Taiheiki*. Accordingly, *Nan Taiheiki* demonstrates, through Kiyouji, how easy it was to fall from grace, and, through the idealistic origins of the Kamakura outpost, just how far the Ashikaga had fallen under Yoshimitsu's rule.

Keywords: Ashikaga Mitsukane, Ashikaga Ujimitsu, Hosokawa Kiyouji, *Kanrei*, *Kubō*, Imagawa Ryōshun, Nanbokuchō, *Nan Taiheiki*, Sasaki Dōyo, *Taiheiki*

Introduction

In *Japan Review* 29 I provided a translation of the first half of Imagawa Ryōshun's 今川了俊 (1326–1420?) *Nan Taiheiki* 難太平記 (*Criticisms of Taiheiki*), as well as an introduction to the text. Two primary concerns, I argued, motivated Ryōshun: first was his wish for *Taiheiki* 太平記 to be amended to include his family, and second was his frustration toward the then retired shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu 足利義満 (1358–1408). Criticizing *Taiheiki* was not Ryōshun's main purpose, but rather a vehicle through which he might express these concerns. He dedicated much of the work to displaying his objectivity as an historian, the

better to show how favoritism influenced *Taiheiki*'s writing. This was calculated to lend weight to his criticisms of Yoshimitsu.¹

Here I provide the second portion of *Nan Taiheiki*, with an analysis of Ryōshun's opinion on Hosokawa Kiyouji 細川清氏 (?–1362). Ryōshun describes two incidents. The first involves Ryōshun's father Norikuni 今川範国 (1295–1384) putting forth a plan to the second shogun Ashikaga Yoshiakira 足利義詮 (1330–1367) to have Ryōshun kill Kiyouji when the latter was on the verge of revolt. The second incident concerns the matter of Kiyouji's guilt or innocence in having ambitions to overthrow Yoshimitsu. Kiyouji, as *shitsuji* 執事, or shogunal deputy, was in a position of great power, being the interlocutor between the *shugo daimyō* 守護大名 and the shogun.² Others around him, such as Hatakeyama Dōsei 畠山道誓 (?–1362) and Shiba Yoshimasa 斯波義将 (1350–1410), also sought to occupy the office of *shitsuji*; if we add that to the instability in the years following the death in 1358 of the first shogun Ashikaga Takauji 足利尊氏 (1305–1358), then the seriousness of the Kiyouji rebellion takes on added significance. Kiyouji's innocence is the subject of the second episode.

But there was another issue at hand: the antipathy between the shogun in Kyoto and his counterpart in the east, the Kantō *kubō* 公方. Kamakura had been an integral part of the Ashikaga's plan since the beginning of their march to power. For example, when Emperor Go-Daigo 後醍醐天皇 (1288–1339) sent Takauji to assault Kyoto and Takauji's kinsman Nitta Yoshisada 新田義貞 (1301–1338) to Kamakura in 1333, Takauji knew how important it was to have a presence in Kamakura; his followers would not follow Yoshisada unless a family member was present, so he sent his one-year-old son Yoshiakira to accompany Yoshisada.³ Later, in 1336, after Takauji had rebelled against Go-Daigo, he left Yoshiakira, then four, in Kamakura in the care of three important individuals: Kiyouji, whose rebellion is the subject of the following analysis; Uesugi Noriaki 上杉憲顕 (1306–1368), who would become the *kanrei* to the Kantō *kubō*, and whose family would hold that post in perpetuity; and Shiba Ienaga 斯波家長 (1321–1338), the son of Shiba Takatsune 斯波高経 (1305–1367), who, like Kiyouji, fell prey to the scheming of Sasaki Dōyo 佐々木導誉 (1306–1373). Takauji understood quite well that by placing one of his family members in Kamakura he would both bolster the shogunate's authority and provide a buffer against rebellions in the east and north. So it was that in 1349 he appointed his son Motouji 足利基氏 (1340–1367) Kantō *kanrei*.⁴

But like many of the best laid plans, this one went awry. Placing one's family members in positions of power had the advantage of blood ties to prevent betrayal; however, such

1 Sather 2016.

2 I use “shogunal deputy” as a rendering of *kanrei* 管領, *shitsuji*, and *tandai* 探題, all of whose incumbents took their authority from the shogun.

3 Yoshisada, being only a chieftain, held little sway outside his own house and so needed Takauji's support to muster enough troops for the assault on Kamakura—thus Yoshiakira's presence among his army. Naturally, Takauji saw the advantage in sending his son to assist, as everyone would know that despite Yoshisada's nominal leadership it was in truth the Ashikaga's power that made the assault possible. See part 2 in Minegishi 2005.

4 This was the original term for what would later be known as the Kantō *kubō*. When the term *kubō* became widely adopted as a moniker for the shogun in Kyoto, the Ashikaga in Kamakura also became known as the Kantō *kubō*; meanwhile, the office of Kantō *kanrei* was transferred to Motouji's *kanrei*, Uesugi Noriaki. The post was monopolized by the Uesugi thereafter.

arrangements could be dangerous, for a disaffected family member often possessed enough prestige and power in his own right to present an alternative if enough people grew dissatisfied with the current regime. Indeed, this was the thinking that led the second and third *kubō*, Ashikaga Ujimitsu 足利氏満 (1359–1398) and his son Mitsukane 足利満兼 (1378–1409), to rise up against Yoshimitsu, and Ryōshun to join them.⁵

Nan Taiheiki's account of Kiyouji's rebellion and the backdrop against which it erupted—the struggle for power between the shogun and his counterpart in Kamakura—are both integral to understanding *Nan Taiheiki*. Let us first take up the tale of Norikuni's plan to murder Kiyouji, as it segues nicely into the broader arc of the conflict between Kyoto and Kamakura.

Murder, He Wrote: Imagawa Norikuni's Plot to Murder Hosokawa Kiyouji

Part one of *Nan Taiheiki* concludes with two episodes regarding Kiyouji's rebellion, "Concerning Norikuni's Desire to Kill Kiyouji Using Ryōshun" and "Concerning Kiyouji's Ambition and Innocence Thereof." In the former, Ryōshun describes how *Taiheiki* leaves out his father Norikuni's secret plan to have Ryōshun murder Kiyouji, while the latter shows Ryōshun to be skeptical of claims that Kiyouji had any intent to rebel. Both episodes are also pertinent to our understanding of Ryōshun's overall goals in *Nan Taiheiki*, but here I will take up the former.

Kiyouji was like many high-born warlords of his time: brave in battle, stubborn when challenged, and covetous of lands and titles. He was one of the three men entrusted with Yoshiakira's care when Takauji left Kamakura to fight against Nitta Yoshisada in 1336. He was a staunch supporter of Takauji, having fought alongside him against his younger brother Tadayoshi 足利直義 (1306–1352) in the Kannō Disturbance (1350–1352). Later, against Takauji's outcast son Tadafuyu 足利直冬 (1327–1387), he was appointed personal guard to Emperor Go-Kōgon 後光嚴 (1338–1374). He was the *shugo* 守護 of the provinces of Ise, Iga, and Wakasa, and served in the Ashikaga's administration as a member of the judicial council (*hyōjōshū* 評定衆) and, like Ryōshun, as chief of the council of adjudicators (*bikitsuke tōnin* 引付当人). Kiyouji's service was meritorious to the degree that he rose to the highest levels of government, becoming *shitsuji* in 1358. However, advancing beyond one's station was fraught with peril, as Ryōshun rightly observes, and Kiyouji became the target of his peers' resentment.⁶ Kiyouji was not innocent: according to Ryōshun he had few qualms about lying when it suited his purpose.⁷ In short, Kiyouji was a man of many accomplishments, but men of accomplishments rarely rise high in the world without making enemies, and he was no different in this regard.

But how did it get to the point where Kiyouji would be the target of murder? In brief, Kiyouji was the loser in a squabble with the aforementioned Sasaki Dōyo, and due to the latter's machinations Kiyouji fell under Yoshiakira's suspicion and, so it goes, had no choice but to rebel. Dōyo and Kiyouji were at odds over lands and other emoluments, using

5 As I have argued, whether or not Ryōshun actually rebelled or not is up for debate. Thomas Conlan, for instance, leaves the debate up in the air, while Ogawa Takeo argues that Ryōshun played a principle role in the event. What does seem clear, however, is that at the very least Ryōshun raised troops. Sather 2015, pp. 58; Tyler, Conlan, and Uyenaka, 2016, pp. 223–31; Ogawa 2012, p. 193.

6 Hasegawa 2008, p. 40.

7 Hasegawa 2008, p. 33.

incidents such as Yoshiakira's snubbing of Kiyouji's Tanabata poetry contest (*utaawase* 歌合) for a gathering at Dōyo's to illustrate the pettiness of the rivalry.⁸ That rivalry would take a turn for the worse when Kiyouji made a critical error: he took his child to Iwashimizu Hachiman shrine to perform his coming-of-age *genpuku* 元服 ceremony, naming the boy Hachiman Hachirō. Such a move could be interpreted as an attempt to usurp the Ashikaga's authority, a fact that Dōyo seized upon as a perfect pretense to see his rival destroyed.⁹

At the heart of the matter was a *ganjo* 願書, or written prayer.¹⁰ According to *Taiheiki* it asked for Kiyouji's descendants to rule the realm, for Yoshiakira to fall ill and die, and for Ashikaga Motouji to fall from grace.¹¹ There were serious doubts as to whether the *ganjo* was authentic: both Ise Nyūdō, to whom Dōyo presented the prayer, as well as Ryōshun and his father were skeptical of the document's authenticity. Nevertheless, such doubts were enough to arouse the shogun's suspicions. Notwithstanding that Ryōshun corroborates at least the first of the three points in *Nan Taiheiki*, the seal on the prayer "was most certainly Kiyouji's."¹² Furthermore, Yoshiakira did indeed become ill, the malady clearing up following the revelation of the *ganjo*, a timely recovery that would have lent credence to the truth of the curse. Convinced that Kiyouji was at fault, Yoshiakira decided to have him killed. It was sometime before 1361.09.23, when Kiyouji fled to Wakasa Province, that Norikuni secretly presented his plan to Yoshiakira to have Kiyouji murdered and in doing so prevent rebellion.

Norikuni intended to leverage Ryōshun's friendship with Kiyouji as a means of having the two meet in person, at which point Ryōshun would kill him. Ryōshun was not told of the plan in advance, however, and was left speechless (*gongo dōdan* 言語道斷) when he found out. Interestingly, nowhere does Ryōshun suggest he would have countermanded his father's wishes, and in fact seemed impressed by his father's willingness to sacrifice a favored son for the sake of peace.¹³ Indeed, for Ryōshun, such a deed would have been seen as one of unparalleled loyalty to the Ashikaga that should go recorded. And yet he claims that *Taiheiki* says nothing of the incident but simply that "the shogun entered Imagumano."¹⁴ In this he is correct, for no extant version of *Taiheiki* records the plan, and knowledge of it would be lost if not for *Nan Taiheiki*.

One riddle about the plot surrounding the *ganjo* remains unsolved: unlike *Taiheiki*, Ryōshun never claims outright the culprit was Dōyo.¹⁵ In order to understand why Ryōshun would refrain from directly implicating Dōyo, we must take into account Ryōshun's position at the time of *Nan Taiheiki's* writing. A political pariah, Ryōshun's goal was to have *Taiheiki* amended, both to exculpate his participation in the Ōei Disturbance, and also to

8 Hasegawa 1998, pp. 235–37.

9 Hasegawa 1998, p. 238.

10 While there has been some argument as to whether this document was real, that Ryōshun discusses it and that it found its way into *Taiheiki* strongly suggests that it was. For more, see Wada 2015, pp. 265–70.

11 Hasegawa 1998, p. 239.

12 Hasegawa 1998, p. 241; Hasegawa 2008, p. 31.

13 "It was only when I arrived in Kyoto that my father explained the situation, leaving me speechless.... My father believed his action to be a great service, and even though it is no secret that he thought to put an end to a matter of great significance by sacrificing one of his children, it is not recorded in the *Taiheiki*." Hasegawa 2008, pp. 31–32.

14 Hasegawa 2008, p. 31.

15 Ryōshun refers instead to some unknown individual (*aru hito* 或人). See Hasegawa 2008, p. 33.

warn his descendants against disloyalty against the Ashikaga. Moreover, while most versions of *Taiheiki* suggest that Kiyouji's downfall was Dōyo's fault, other versions of the tale exist in which the responsibility for the plot against the Ashikaga is laid at the feet of Kiyouji and Hatakeyama Dōsei. However, *Taiheiki* variants bearing this version of the tale were most likely rewritten to show favoritism to Dōyo.¹⁶ Evidence suggesting that Dōyo's branch of the Sasaki family had some influence on *Taiheiki*'s narrative strengthens this notion.¹⁷ It stands to reason that if Ryōshun was seeking to have *Taiheiki* amended, he might have been hedging his bets, leaving Dōyo and the Sasaki family alone on account of their influence on *Taiheiki*.

And yet, why stir up suspicions at all if not to put feet to the fire? This question becomes all the more pertinent when we consider how strange it is that Ryōshun would defend Kiyouji even though he cheated Ryōshun out of lands.¹⁸ Ryōshun is careful to emphasize this, and to say that even so “he does not believe Kiyouji had rebellious intent.” It makes sense for him to defend a known rebel and thief only when we consider that Ryōshun was not simply trying to amend *Taiheiki*, but to establish his credentials as an historian. Ignoring Dōyo's role in the events while defending Kiyouji allowed Ryōshun to demonstrate his ability to separate his personal concerns from his public ones. And for those clever enough to read between the lines, it would have been obvious that Ryōshun was speaking of Dōyo.

In conclusion, Ryōshun brings up his father's plan to murder Kiyouji both to highlight his objectivity and also to criticize *Taiheiki* for overlooking his father's plan to prevent rebellion by sacrificing his son. Both also served to chip away at *Taiheiki*'s credibility, which he would need to do if he wanted the text to be amended. He would also need to avoid inflaming tensions with the Sasaki house, who had some modicum of control over the text, requiring him to avoid accusing Dōyo directly.

A Tale of Two Cities: The Conflict between Kyoto and Kamakura

Ryōshun's description of the origin of the Kamakura outpost is critical to understanding the power struggle in which he became embroiled. After Go-Daigo's defeat and flight to Yoshino in 1336, the Ashikaga moved the seat of the warrior government from Kamakura to Kyoto. The reasons for this are many, some of which are outlined in the Ashikaga's first legal document, the Kenmu Formulary (*Kenmu shikimoku* 建武式目).¹⁹ Certainly, economic interests were central to the decision, as the capital was a center of commerce and trade.²⁰ However, proximity to the court was also a concern for the fledgling warrior government, as

16 Wada Takuma is a bit more cautious regarding Dōyo's culpability, but I am inclined to go with Koakimoto's explanation that the Sasaki, who are shown to have had an undue influence on later versions of *Taiheiki*, were in some part responsible for having it rewritten to downplay their role in Kiyouji's downfall. Koakimoto 2005, p. 117; Wada 2015, pp. 265–91.

17 Not all versions of *Taiheiki* are created equal. It is this fact that makes it such a difficult text to unravel. For instance, the *Tenshōbon* variant seems to prioritize the Sasaki family and its deeds, even while it posits Dōyo as the one responsible for Kiyouji's destruction. The process by which variants were amended has been the subject of much debate among Japanese scholars. What we can say is that warriors were heavily interested in how they appeared in *Taiheiki*. Perhaps Dōyo and his descendants simply did not care that *Taiheiki* portrayed him as the one responsible for Kiyouji's downfall. He was a court rebel, after all. Kami 1985, pp. 45–46.

18 Hasegawa 2008, p. 33.

19 For more on this document, see Grossberg 1981.

20 Harrington 1985, pp. 68–69.

it afforded them necessary symbolic capital for their continued battle with Go-Daigo, who sought to direct his own sacerdotal authority against the Ashikaga. All in all, Kyoto was a smart choice for a new government wishing to rule without the burden of being compared to its predecessor and needing the flexibility to break with its precedents, even while it sought to live up to its example.

Kamakura's importance was never in question, however. Rebellious kinsmen and followers were common, perhaps nowhere more so than in the east, and since its establishment, Kamakura had acted as a sort of buffer between the warriors there and the central government in Kyoto. Tadayoshi and Yoshiakira were stationed there until Takauji's fourth son Motouji was established as head of the outpost in 1349 under the title of Kantō *kanrei*. This title would later be transferred to the Uesugi family when Motouji's son Ujimitsu began to be styled the Kantō *kubō* after the practice of referring to the shogun in Kyoto via that moniker. Whatever its name, the office was one of great influence and power, and while Motouji resisted the temptation to take up arms against Kyoto, his son and grandson were not so restrained. Following his death in 1367, Kyoto and Kamakura would be at odds, the eastern scions of the Ashikaga believing they had just as much claim to power as their western brethren.

The importance of the office of *shitsuji/kanrei* cannot be overstated. It was the most sought after office in government, and when Kiyouji was appointed *shitsuji* in 1358, he became the target of his peers' machinations. The three powerful families that battled to fill it—the Hosokawa, Hatakeyama, and Shiba, collectively referred to as the *san kanrei* 三管領—were involved in nearly all the major conflicts throughout the latter half of the fourteenth century. While Yoriyuki's ascension in 1368 did indeed mark a less overtly volatile period, it in no way diminished the frequency of political intrigue, in large part because of this office. Indeed, Yoriyuki himself became the victim of intrigue, and in 1379 was forced to abdicate his position in what is known as the Kōryaku Incident (*Kōryaku no seihen* 康暦の政変).²¹

The conflicts over the office of *kanrei* would have ramifications, both direct and indirect, on Ryōshun's life. Indeed, his own flirtation with rebellion in the Ōei Disturbance was directly related to fighting between the shogun and Kyoto and his counterpart in Kamakura, both of whom had their own *kanrei*. Moreover, after Yoriyuki's death in 1392, Shiba Yoshimasa saw to it that the Shibukawa, a family that had once held the position of Kyushu *tandai* 九州探題 (shogunal deputy for Kyushu), would reclaim the office at Ryōshun's expense.²² That Ryōshun saw fit to bring this up at the end of *Nan Taiheiki* is a testament to how much it weighed on his mind, and how shameful he thought such intrigues to be.

21 Following Yoriyuki's victory over his cousin Kiyouji and subsequent ascension to the office of *kanrei* in 1368, *shugo daimyō* such as Sasaki Dōyō, Shiba Takatsune and his son Yoshimasa, as well as the Yamana and Toki families, arrayed themselves against Yoriyuki. Certain failures in his policy or military maneuvering gave them opportunities to chip away at his authority, and after his younger brother Yoriharu failed to subdue a Southern court general in 1378, the voices speaking out against him grew louder. Just as Kō no Moronao and his brother Moroyasu surrounded Takauji and forced the shogun to acquiesce to their wishes to see Tadayoshi ousted from government on 1349.08.13, Dōyō's son Takahide and Shiba Yoshimasa surrounded Yoshimitsu's palace and demanded Yoriyuki's dismissal. Yoshimasa subsequently became *kanrei*. For more on Moronao surrounding Takauji's mansion, see Satō 1990, pp. 61–62; for Yoriyuki's ouster, Satō 1990, pp. 137–38.

22 Kawazoe 1964, p. 212.

Indirectly, the politicking surrounding the office of *kanrei* was such that Yoshimitsu could not help but be suspicious of anyone who had sufficient power and authority to challenge him. Ryōshun, it should be said, was one such individual. There is a tendency to see Yoshimitsu as a sort of villain, particularly in accounts by *shugo daimyō* such as Ryōshun who served him; however, we must also appreciate the difficulty of his position—that of lord of men whose *modus operandi* was to arrogate as much power and authority as possible, usually at each other's expense. It was natural, then, for him to be suspicious of Kiyouji and Ryōshun, who were of collateral families of the Ashikaga and possessed of their own wealth and resources. In short, both fell victim not only to political machinations that directly impacted their lives, but also to the characteristics of the milieu in which they lived.

In any event, Ryōshun explains Takauji and Tadayoshi's thinking regarding the establishment of the office of Kantō *kanrei* as wanting the Kamakura outpost and its chieftain to be stabilizing forces in the east, which would weld the warriors there to the shogun in Kyoto through ties of Ashikaga blood.²³ It was risky, however, as the temptation was real for a powerful leader commanding the military might of the East and North to secede from Kyoto's control. Indeed, this was not the first time the idea of creating an independent kingdom in the east had occurred; Taira no Masakado 平将門 (903–940) was an early precedent. The Ashikaga were clearly aware of the risk, for they tried to hammer home the point to young Motouji that the rulers of the Kantō should be “hereditary protectors of the shogun.” It was well that they did so, for Ryōshun explains that “though many often spoke their grudges against Yoshiakira to Motouji and urged him to rebel, he faithfully carried out the wishes of his father. . . . Motouji suppressed this desire out of fear that the realm would fall into turmoil.”²⁴

Still, such commitments rarely lasted beyond a generation or two, the personal ties that originally bound agreements fraying with the passage of time. We must remember that there were few other options available to the would-be hegemon aside from entrusting a family member with the authority to rule in one's stead. It was either that or appoint someone with no blood ties whatsoever, a risky move at best given the well-established duplicity of *shugo daimyō*. Furthermore, it was a simple matter to retain control of Kantō following Go-Daigo's defeat, as the relationship between Takauji and Tadayoshi was copacetic, with the latter providing an authoritative presence there. As the Ashikaga's prominence became obvious, they could leave it in the hands of another such as Motouji without fear.²⁵ It was only after the deaths of Takauji and Motouji that things took a turn for the worse.

The conflict between Kyoto and Kamakura continued well into the waning years of the Sengoku period (1477–1573). The desire of Kamakura's Ashikaga overlords to remain independent would devolve into a conflict between the Kantō *kubō* and his *kanrei*, eventually leading to the Kyōtoku Disturbance 享徳の乱 of 1454, where the fifth Kantō *kubō* Ashikaga Shigeuji 足利成氏 (1438–1497) fled to Kōga in Shimōsa Province after assassinating his own *kanrei*, Uesugi Noritada 上杉範忠 (1408–1461?), an Ashikaga loyalist appointed by the eighth shogun Yoshimasa 足利義政 (1436–1490). Shigeuji would become known as the Kōga *kubō*, while the Ashikaga's replacement, Masatomo 足利政知 (1435–1491), came to

23 Hasegawa 2008, p. 39.

24 Hasegawa 2008, p. 39.

25 Watanabe 1995, p. 131.

be known as the Horigoe *kubō* when the war with Shigeuji and the internecine struggles of the Uesugi clan prevented him from even arriving in Kamakura, obliging him instead to take up residence in Horigoe in Izu Province! Such was the ironic and bloody fate of the east, first set down by the Ashikaga brothers' well-meaning decision to place Motouji in Kamakura in what would end up an empty hope of forging a lasting peace.

Conclusion

In part 2 of *Nan Taiheiki* I have chosen two sections that contribute to my conclusion that Ryōshun saw the work as both a corrective and a criticism. The tale of Kiyouji's rebellion, Imagawa Norikuni's plot to have him murdered, and the importance of the Kamakura outpost are noteworthy not simply because they are integral aspects of both Ryōshun's life and his stance in *Nan Taiheiki*, but also because, more broadly, they highlight the precariousness of life in the fourteenth century. Hosokawa Kiyouji, the Yamana and Toki families, and even Ryōshun's friend Hosokawa Yoriyuki, one of the major political forces of the latter half of the fourteenth century, were laid low on account of the whims of the shogun and the machinations of their peers. As is evident from *Nan Taiheiki*, skill, will, and not a little bit of luck were necessary to navigate the Scylla and Charybdis that was the political environment in which Ryōshun and his peers lived, an environment in which even the most powerful might be here one day, gone the next.

Translator's Note

As in part one, I have relied primarily on the original *Nan Taiheiki* contained in the *Gunsho ruijū*, which contains no section titles or breaks of any kind, and Hasegawa Tadashi's reprint and translation of Arai Hakuseki's 新井白石 (1657–1725) *Jōkyō sannenban* version of *Nan Taiheiki*, which contains not only the section titles but also Arai's annotations. I have used the latter only where the original exhibits ambiguities.²⁶ My own divisions within the text—parts one, two, and three—are based on an understanding of the text indebted to Hakuseki and the interpretations of Hasegawa and Wada Takuma.²⁷ Any and all errors are my own.

Other resources include an online facsimile of the *Gunsho ruijū Nan Taiheiki* by Hanafusa Tomokazu that provided a useful comparison where there are slight discrepancies between the two texts, usually regarding place names.²⁸ Thomas D. Conlan has also recently published an English translation of *Nan Taiheiki*.²⁹ My translation had been finished for some time and both were in press simultaneously, so I have not relied on it as a comparative tool.

Regarding names, it was common in medieval Japan to refer to individuals by their court titles, Buddhist appellations, or the location of their domiciles. Ryōshun, for instance, is sometimes called Sadayo in the text, but I have chosen to use the former, as it is the name

26 Extant versions of *Nan Taiheiki* include the *Sonkeikaku bunkobon* 尊經閣文庫本, the *Tanimura bunkobon* 谷村文庫本, and the *Tawa bunkobon* 多和文庫本.

27 Wada 2015.

28 Hasegawa 2006; Hasegawa 2008; Hanafusa 2009. Alternatively, *Nan Taiheiki* is located in book 938 of *Gunsho ruijū*, in the "Battles" section (*kassenbu* 合戦部).

29 Tyler, Conlan, and Uyenaka 2016, pp. 223–60.

by which he is most commonly known. I refer to all individuals by their actual names as opposed to their titles, footnoting the latter. Additionally, for powerful individuals such as Ashikaga Takauji and his brother Tadayoshi, I have opted to apply the title “Lord” to their names to preserve the respect with which Ryōshun addresses them in the text.

Nan Taiheiki or Criticisms of Taiheiki

Part Three

Concerning the Rebellion of the Kamakura *Kanrei* Ujimitsu

Lord Ujimitsu lamented that “Because Lord Yoshimitsu’s government was biased toward certain people, some powerful individual might in the end appear and steal the realm from the Ashikaga; would it not be better [to have it taken by someone in the family] than some unrelated individual?” “Rebellion for the sake of the people” is a widely-accepted notion, so had the shogun changed his mind entirely—even had he not focused wholly on good government—why would such thoughts have occurred to Lord Ujimitsu if Lord Yoshimitsu had but ceased his recent evils and unprincipled deeds and worked toward dispelling the grievances of the people? Lately everyone seems to speak of some grudge against Lord Yoshimitsu, yet his destiny is strong and his authority is absolute. Thus, if his administration were even slightly correct, who indeed would join their hearts with Lord Ujimitsu?

Out of fear, Lord Yoshimitsu even now commonly performs prayers, and it is rumored that maledictions for the subjugation of the Kantō are being performed. It seems to me that if he would do away with prayers and sorcery and concentrate even a little on how to govern properly, he would immediately come to know the way of heaven and the hearts of the gods and Buddhas.

Is this not true even for warfare? Thinking of this in terms of the triad of Heaven, Earth, and Man, the advantage of Heaven resides in dates and timing, auspicious directions, and the nature of an individual by birth. Is not the advantage of Heaven simply using what is beneficial? The advantage of Earth is nothing more than placing impregnable mountains, seas, and other defensible areas in front of you, and fortifying oneself in a good stronghold. The advantage of Man is reason.³⁰ In accordance with the saying, “If the hearts of all people are in harmony with reason, then the advantages of Heaven and Earth will become unnecessary,” if all the people of Japan give thanks for the blessings of their lord with one heart, then would even one villain be born? Then Lord Yoshimitsu’s prayers would be answered naturally. In the event that his mind is filled with evil and immorality, if he is of the mind to dispel them through prayer, it will not matter what secret rites he performs: his prayers will go unanswered.

Concerning the Details of Ryōshun’s Forced Resignation from the Office of *Tandai* and Subsequent Retirement

When Ōuchi Yoshihiro attacked Izumi, I harbored no ambitions, nor did I communicate with or receive any letter from the Kantō. It was likely Ōuchi himself who said [that I had]. A communiqué had been sent to me just as it had to others, and [upon receiving it] I ought to have immediately protested my innocence to Lord Yoshimitsu. Though I was in no way insincere, someone must have told him that I was late to Kyoto because my children and retainers in Tōtōmi were sympathetic to the Kantō. I heard whispers that he suspected me of treachery, and that I was to be sent off to Kyushu by pirate ship. I feared it was nothing

30 Ryōshun uses the word *ri* or *kotowari* 理, which means logic or reason. This is similar to *dōri* 道理, or reason, as defined by Ikegami 1997, pp. 86–90.

but a pretext to get rid of me,³¹ and that malefactors in Kyushu likely plotted [against me] and spoke to Lord Yoshimitsu, referring to precedents, to rescind the communiqués and directives I had received and send me home.³²

I received three or four communiqués urging me only to “do my duty,” but even so, Lord Yoshimitsu’s doubts continued to grow, so I thought it better to retire to my province and for the time being entrust the fate of my children to him. And if until the end he still would not spare me, then Lord Ujimitsu might have preserved the fortunes of the Ashikaga in perpetuity and brought stability to the people (*banmin ando* 万民安堵).

Previously, when Lord Tadayoshi and Lord Takauji’s relationship soured, the people of the realm could not choose between them and followed either as they pleased. People at that time believed that it would be difficult to dispense with Lord Tadayoshi, for he was not corrupt in the least; nor was Lord Takauji, as military shogun, given to private concerns, and so he too was impossible to dispense with. Lord Tadayoshi was a man of deep compassion and so willingly transferred the realm and chieftainship to his brother after the Battle of Hakone Mountain during the Nakasendai Disturbance. Lord Takauji never forgot this, and, wanting to affect a smooth transfer of power to his son Yoshiakira, did not condemn Lord Tadayoshi for killing Moronao and Moroyasu at the Battle of Ide in Settsu Province, nor did he condemn him when Uesugi Noriaki fled Izu Mountain after the Battle of Yuiyama. The brothers were completely reconciled.³³

The brothers may have had some secret agreement, without which it would have been difficult to maintain peace, for they could not be swayed no matter what Lord Yoshiakira said. Even if the administration of government were mismanaged in the least, the shogun would be able to protect all of Japan were he but to unify the lords of the Kantō. Moreover, there was a secret pact with Lord Tadayoshi that they would choose someone from among Lord Yoshiakira’s brothers as Lord of Kamakura. They ceded the Kantō to Lord Motouji, who was told repeatedly that his children and grandchildren should be hereditary protectors of the shogun.

Later, after the Ashikaga brothers had passed away, though many often spoke of their grudges against Lord Yoshiakira to Lord Motouji and urged him to rebel, he faithfully carried out the wishes of his father. Lord Yoshiakira may have feared Kamakura would seek independence as Lord Tadayoshi had wished, but Lord Motouji suppressed this desire out of fear that the realm would fall into turmoil. I hear that he made various oaths to the kami and passed away before Lord Yoshiakira, but the truth of the matter remains unknown.

As for recent events, when I went to Tōtōmi I decided only to look to someone from among the Ashikaga who I believed would pursue correct government, since this was Takauji’s wish.³⁴ But around the time when it became clear to me that Kyoto would send a force to subdue me, I heard that Uesugi [Norisada] strongly urged Lord Mitsukane to make peace with Lord Yoshimitsu. I knew then and there that Lord Mitsukane did not think to

31 *Kokoro no oni* 心の鬼, literally “demons of the heart.” This phrase was used to indicate apprehension or worry, indicating that such emotions were likely the result of the intrusion of some outside influence. Hasegawa 2008, p. 42, note 57.

32 Neither Hanafusa nor Hasegawa attempt to clarify what “precedents” (*onkojitsu* 御故実) Ryōshun refers to here.

33 A reconciliation that would not last long, for Tadayoshi would be slain, most likely poisoned, while in Kamakura, marking the end of the Kannō Disturbance.

34 “Recent events” refers to Ujimitsu and Mitsukane’s rebellion in the Kantō.

revolt for the sake of the realm, and so, respectful of Kyoto's judgment, I retired of my own volition to Fujisawa and stayed there, thinking that my children should be of assistance to Lord Yoshimitsu and Lord Mitsukane. But even after the reconciliation, Lord Yoshimitsu and Norisada must have thought that I, being in Fujisawa, continued to urge Lord Mitsukane to rebel. Once they were reconciled, both Kyoto and the Kantō decided that there was to be no distinction between a daimyo's hereditary lands or delegated lands, so I was free to retire to whichever I preferred.³⁵ I told Norisada repeatedly that I preferred my province, and so returned once again [to Suruga]. However, I heard that Lord Mitsukane told Lord Yoshimitsu that my fate was at his discretion, and that he, Mitsukane, was prepared to deal with me if necessary. Though I thought it inconvenient, I was grateful for the dispensation and traveled to the capital because Lord Yoshimitsu had often indicated that he would spare my life because of my past service if I would but present myself to him in person.³⁶

When I consider the entirety of the situation, I exerted myself in vain because I foolishly thought of past connections and duty. How I lament having wasted the honor and wealth I accrued over long years. The truth about my sojourn to Kyushu is simply that I did not know my place. Though I was not necessarily as favored by or as close as others to Lord Yoshimitsu, I put my own concerns aside entirely and, having been ordered above all to pacify the West, entrusted myself to that decision, all because I thought only to do my duty for the Ashikaga. Not in their wildest dreams did my followers think that I would lead them to their deaths, lose my honor, or now even my hereditary lands. Men ought to perform loyal service according to their rank, for others will become resentful of those who perform service beyond their station.

Concerning Ōuchi Yoshihiro's Rebellion and His Attempt at Allying with Ryōshun

When Ōtomo Chikayo returned to his province, Ōuchi Yoshihiro came to me in secret and said: "From beginning to end the Ōtomo have through your support had their lands confirmed and received many benefits, a rare example of benevolence.³⁷ However, recently, when Lord Yoshimitsu summoned you to the capital and you made that arduous journey, Ōtomo returned home without uttering a word of thanks to you. It is truly lamentable, not to mention rude and boorish. Even so, I beseech you to meet with him. He is still lodging at the port in Hyōgō. If I were to accompany you there and your relationship can be repaired, will he not be increasingly loyal?"

I replied: "I bear him no ill will, and my trip to the capital on account of Lord Yoshimitsu's censure was only because he slew Ōtomo Ujisato.³⁸ Ōtomo asked me for my honest opinion about traveling to the capital. As I had already set out, I sent a message saying that he too should come. When I arrived, Lord Yoshimitsu questioned me immediately, asking why Ōtomo considered me an enemy. I replied that I had no idea. I

35 Hereditary lands were called *bunkoku*, allotments over which the lord had personal control, while delegated lands, over which the lord had been given administrative authority, were called *chigyōkoku* 知行国.

36 That is, Ryōshun's service as Kyushu *tandai*.

37 Ōtomo Chikayo was Yoshihiro's son-in-law and *shugo* of Bungo Province. Hasegawa 2008, p. 50, note 77.

38 The reason for Chikayo's slaying of Ujisato is unclear, but according to Hasegawa, Chikayo sent Ujisato against Ryōshun as a sort of challenge to his authority as *tandai*. Additionally, Ujisato's elder Ujinori collaborated with Ōuchi Yoshihiro, so perhaps there was some connection between Ujisato's death and Yoshihiro's attempts to smooth things over between him and Chikayo. Hasegawa 2008, p. 51.

heard nothing from Chikayo even once he arrived in the capital. In spite of that, I still have not spoken ill of him to Lord Yoshimitsu. If you are saying that [Ōtomo] resents his errors and wants to meet with me, I have no intention of refusing. However, I have been ordered to depart immediately. Moreover, Lord Yoshimitsu gave me orders at length about Ōtomo—I fear I would lose his confidence if I suggested a meeting with Ōtomo myself. At any rate, since you are acting as my intermediary, perhaps I should just meet with him; or perhaps I should discreetly obtain Lord Yoshimitsu’s permission first?”

Ōuchi replied: “That won’t do at all. Please go to Ōtomo yourself. According to your wishes I have twice submitted oaths to the effect that I would not support him. It should be no trouble [for you] to privately obtain forgiveness after the fact.”³⁹ To which I replied, “Well, that would mean I am to go against Yoshimitsu’s wishes.” Whereupon, Yoshihiro drew close to me and said: “It is well known that while the weak have done nothing wrong, Yoshimitsu mistrusts them and they lose face, while the strong are left alone despite going against his wishes. Even though you believe yourself safe because you are loyal and of the shogun’s line, if there comes a time when you are not in a position to defend yourself, may not something unexpectedly occur that will result in dishonor? For my part, I have received more provinces and estates than is fitting for my rank, so I must think of not losing them. If the three of us were to become allies there should be no censure—let alone punishment—regardless of what Yoshimitsu thinks. Recently having served in Kyoto and surveying the situation, [I can say] there is no need to be concerned about other daimyo or your family. If we can unite Kyushu and the provinces of the Chūgoku region, peace will extend to our children and grandchildren. After all, Ōtomo is a daimyo of Kyushu; if we were to unite beneath you, you would have no reason to fear. If you agree, I shall immediately write out an oath that binds us as allies for all time. This is why I wanted to repair the relationship with Ōtomo.”

I continued: “Your relationship with my younger brother Nakaaki is well-known.⁴⁰ Any mutual assistance between us goes without saying. Furthermore, sealing a formal alliance with you would cast undue suspicion on us, and turning against Lord Yoshimitsu [simply because of our past connection] is simply not something I can do.⁴¹ Nor can I have you risk the extirpation of your house on my account. However, why should you lose your provinces and estates if together we continue to serve Lord Yoshimitsu with greater devotion? In particular, you have recently received your orders concerning him, so any private settlement between us would be fruitless. If you would help Ōtomo, tell him that he should exercise caution and refrain from selfishness for the sake of the realm.”⁴²

Unfortunately, the recent events and those of Kyushu were entirely Ōuchi’s doing, as well as the reason behind my being dismissed [from the position of *tandai*]. Speaking

39 This indicates thinking that prioritizes past service as a way of mitigating present mistakes. One who had committed a transgression in the present, but who had been loyal in the past, could expect leniency. Of course, one’s relation to one’s lord, in this case Ryōshun’s to Yoshimitsu, was an important factor, as well as one’s status and actual power.

40 Ryōshun’s younger brother Nakaaki was related by marriage to Yoshihiro.

41 Literally “Firing an arrow at His Lordship is not something I can allow myself [to do] (*Kami o imōsu koto, gushin ni oite wa aru bekarazu* 上を射申すこと、愚身に於いては有べからず).”

42 Ryōshun uses the word *shikyoku* 私曲, which means an action that is dishonest or unjust. In the context of the times, the first ideogram, also read *shi* or *watakushi* 私, had the connotation “private.” Ergo, here he is indicating an action that is personal, not public, in nature, and therefore of lesser importance. To concern oneself overly with private matters would have been seen as unprincipled.

further on the matter, Lord Yoshimitsu's intentions were entirely contrary to the folk of Kyushu's expectations, so they suspected me of treachery and dishonesty, and shunned me. Even so, I thought that I could put Lord Yoshimitsu at ease over the matter of Kyushu if I could just go to the capital and clear everything up, but in the end he gave me no opportunity to defend myself. I imagine this was because those in Kyushu criticized me as unjust. Nevertheless, the truth always becomes known, and so everyone should know by now that Lord Yoshimitsu's judgment was incorrect. Indeed, when it became clear that Ōuchi had marched on Izumi, Lord Yoshimitsu straightaway said to me: "Ōuchi has done just as you said. How shameful." This is well known.

When one thinks about it, it might have been better had I acted without principle, morality, or justice when it suited me, for I have lost everything by being old-fashioned. Unfilial children; disloyal younger brothers; treacherous and unfaithful retainers; unprincipled and insolent followers, city folk, and farmers, each and every one prefers selfishness according to the occasion. This world is the same in all things. I write this that my descendants should all strive to be stalwart and humble. Show this to no one while I live.

Oh children, grandchildren! Though you think yourself clever,
You are yet inferior to your parents' foolishness.

With humility,
The second month of the ninth year of Ōei,

Tokuō⁴³

Postscript

Lord Motouji in Kamakura has the same name as my grandfather. It is said that taking the name of one without exceptional fame from among the members of a family is auspicious. Undoubtedly some among the Nitta have taken the name of Ashikaga ancestors for their own. This is why my father originally gave my eldest son the name Yoshinori.⁴⁴ However, recently while in Kyushu I renamed him Sadatomi. This was most unfilial of me.

This year I have become ill unexpectedly, so my brush has begun to wander. Any mistakes or missing characters are due to old age. I can only beg the reader's forgiveness for any errors.

Folks say that my departure from Kyushu was because I fell into the plots of two individuals—that of Ōuchi Yoshihiro, who desired the office of Kyushu *tandai*, or to that of Shiba Yoshimasa, who plotted to make Shibukawa Mitsuyori Kyushu *tandai*. How very clever, people said, that when peace came the position was given to a meritless relative [Shiba Yoshimasa] when Ryōshun was the one who went to great pains to subdue powerful enemies. Thinking about the matter of Bitchū Province, I am ashamed of Shibukawa's actions.⁴⁵ I shall speak no more of it.

⁴³ Ryōshun's retired name. He was seventy-eight at the time of writing in 1402.

⁴⁴ Sadatomi was Ryōshun's eldest son. Yoshinori is the name of Nitta Yoshihige's son Yoshinori, who was the ancestor of the Yamana.

⁴⁵ Mitsuyori was made to give up the *shugo* rights (*shiki* 職) of Bitchū Province in order to qualify for the position of Kyushu *tandai*. Shiba Yoshimasa then succeeded in having Mitsuyori, who was cousin to Yoshimitsu by marriage, as viceroy. Kawazoe 1964, pp. 212–13.

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