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Godly Politics: Ise, the Court, and Japanese Religion 1330-1615

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**GODLY POLITICS:
ISE, THE COURT, AND JAPANESE RELIGION 1330-1615**

DAVID LEE ROMNEY

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Abstract

The Ise shrines are known throughout Japan as the residence of the mythical progenitor of the Japanese Imperial line, the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. Ise has held long-lasting importance in legitimating the Japanese imperial line and operating as an important site for state-sponsored rituals. Ise maintains an image of unchanged continuity reaching deep into the foundational myths of the country.

In fact, Ise fell into ruin in the mid-fifteenth century. The physical destruction of the Ise shrines has long been thought to coincide with the collapse of the Japanese state during a period of internal conflict at the end of the fifteenth century. Conversely, this dissertation posits that the Ise region was selectively ignored by the imperial court who supported the Yoshida family, an ambitious sect of Shintō ritualists, in place of the Ise shrines. The interactions between the court and the Ise shrines reveal a shift in the meaning of Ise as a place of political and religious significance, and not the collapse of the state itself.

The Yoshida moved important sites where deities were worshipped and determined the sacred geography of Japan. They relocated Amaterasu's shrine, first to the capital in Kyoto, and then eventually to the city of Yamaguchi in western Japan. In response to this reconfiguration, local pilgrimage facilitators known as *onshi* propagated an image of Ise as a desirable location for travel and ritual observance. It was during the important period of division with the Yoshida family that much of the imagery and meaning of what Ise became was developed and came to play a central role in the forms of cultural, religious, and political legitimacy that exist in Japan to this day.

The shrines were similarly threatened economically and politically by local actors within their home province. This dissertation also examines the Kitabatake family of Ise province to provide insight into the larger picture of economic and political change that took place in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This dissertation aims to provide insight into this dynamic period of contestation and present a new vista of religious and political behavior in Japan.

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I am grateful for the generous financial and academic support I received from Princeton University. The East Asian Studies Department and the East Asian Studies Program made funding available for research trips and workshops that brought me into contact with scholars in my field. The Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies helped fund multiple research trips to Japan during my time at Princeton. The John and Julia Sensenbrenner Fellowship provided generous financial support for one year of my studies. I am grateful to the Fulbright Program and the Japan-U.S. Educational Commission for funding my research in Japan prior to the onset of COVID-19 and the support they rendered to me and my family during a chaotic time across the world. Without the support of these institutions and programs I would not have been able to attend this university or even begin to work on this project.

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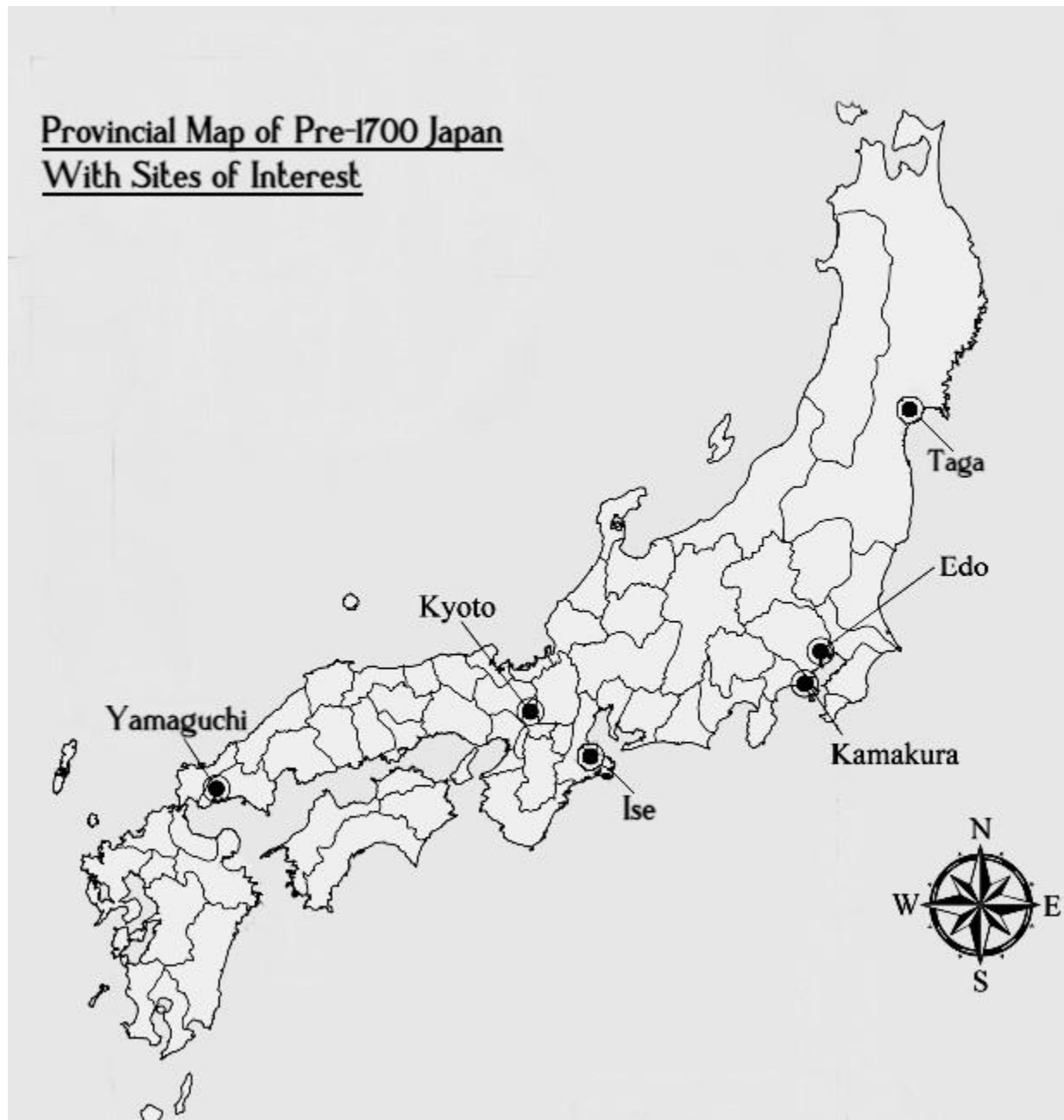
Despite the many of sources of assistance I have received, and my best efforts to excise errors from the text, mistakes of fact or interpretation might possibly remain. Any such mistakes are my responsibility.

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Maps



Map 1.1- Provincial Map of Japan



Introduction

It is difficult not to be overcome by the meticulously preserved peaceful surroundings of the Great Shrines of Ise (*Ise Daijingu*). Walking aside the banks of the Isuzu River, along where the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, the mythological progenitor of Japan's imperial family resided, evokes peaceful imagery that draws people to imagine antiquity, and a harmonious existence with nature. The natural beauty of water, woods, and sunlight and the architecture of the shrines forms a space distinct from the crowded cities of Japan. To the typical visitor, Ise appears as a separate timeless space which connects modern Japan with a long forgotten past.

Ise has remained an important cultic site for centuries. Since the establishment of Japan's first legal codes in the seventh century, Ise province and the Great Shrines of Ise have long served as an important political site and a wellspring of legitimacy for the Japanese state. The Ise of today draws on notions of Japanese antiquity found within the earliest national histories of the eighth century, but the process through which Ise became the timeless site it is today is overlooked. Ise's political and religious significance did not remain unchallenged through the years. The image of pristine natural beauty and continuity extending to the beginning of Japan's recorded past reflects current understandings of Ise as a place, but a more appropriate depiction would include destruction, marginalization, and restoration. Political, cultural, and economic trends led to the enervation of Ise in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This dissertation reveals how the most sacred shrine complex in Japan was religiously, economically, and politically significant, but then was eclipsed by different locales for over a century, only to later to reemerge as the most widely known symbol of the Shintō religion, a uniquely protected site of ritual performance, and the most popular pilgrimage destination for nearly three hundred years.

An understanding of the physical destruction and symbolic removal of the gods from the Ise shrine-complex deepens our understanding of the processes of political fragmentation, subsequent centralization, and the development of Shintō religious institutions in Japan. More broadly, this work contributes to scholarship of the importance and nature of place. Ise's tumultuous fifteenth and sixteenth centuries reveal how the important ritual sites which have been imbued with religious and political meaning for centuries can come to fill a recognizable place within society, but how that unique purpose can be stripped from the locale through the rhetorical power of ritual. The Ise shrines lost their place as the unique home of the Japanese Sun Goddess and state-sponsored shrine devoted to the imperial family for nearly 120 years before once again obtaining a new and heightened position within Japanese religion, culture, and politics.

This interdisciplinary project highlights how changes in politics, cultural practice, and religiopolitical institutions facilitated significant change in Ise. The changes that Ise experienced illuminate widely accepted errors of fact and interpretation regarding the significance of this region. The image, function, and purpose of Ise that persists today and the formation of the Shintō religion as a unique worldview were heavily influenced by the chaotic period of social upheaval at the end of Japan's premodern period (1336-1600).

Ise's Troubled Image of Continuity: The Cessation of the *Shikinen Sengū*

Today the word Shintō, or 'Way of the Gods' refers to one of the two most prevalent religions within Japan. Shintō shrines can be found in every city and village throughout the country. While a unique ideological tradition known as 'Shintō' emerged much later in Japanese

history,¹ the shrine-complexes that predated the proliferation of ‘Shintō’ have played an important role in political legitimization since the establishment of Japan’s first legal codes in the seventh century.² The early Japanese state incorporated prominent cultic sites throughout Japan into their legal codes, and created a ranking system for shrines that placed shrines with connections to the imperial family into positions of greater prestige.³ Beginning in the late seventh century under the rule of Emperor Jitō (645-703), the Great Shrines of Ise acquired the highest rank of all shrines in Japan.⁴

The shrines are located in modern-day Mie Prefecture, where hundreds of thousands of tourists visit each year to offer prayers at the Inner (*naikū*) and Outer (*gekū*) shrines, the two most prominent sites there.⁵ Additionally, over 120 other smaller shrines exist, which are dedicated to a number of lesser *kami*, often translated into English as ‘gods’ or ‘deities.’ The Ise shrines are widely known as the preeminent site of worship for the Sun Goddess Amaterasu, who is seen as the progenitor of the imperial family.

¹ John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A New History of Shinto* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 80-89.

² Helen Hardacre, *Shinto: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 71-108.

³ Joan Piggot, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997) 116-118 and Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650–800* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009), 28-48.

⁴ John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines: Divine Capital* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing 2017), 25-29.

⁵ The official names for the shrines currently are the ‘Great Shrine of the Sovereigns’ (*Kōtaijingū*) for the Inner Shrine and the ‘Great Shrine of the Toyouke Deity’ (*Toyouke Daijingū*) for the Outer shrine. The current understanding places Toyouke in a position of subservience to Amaterasu, but through much of Ise’s past there was contention between the two shrines on which deity was the superior entity. For more see: Mark Teeuwen, *Watarai Shintō: The Intellectual History of the Outer Shrine in Ise* (Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1996), 11-41.

The Ise shrines are also known for their special reconstruction rites called *shikinen sengū*. The Ise shrines have been ritually rebuilt every twenty years in order to preserve the physical embodiments (*shintai*)⁶ of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu held in the Inner Shrine and Toyouke, the deity enshrined in the Outer Shrine. The Inner Shrine's most sacred object, a bronze mirror, is considered to hold the spiritual essence (*shinsei*) of the Sun Goddess on earth and has been used in imperial coronation ceremonies as an important ritual implement for hundreds of years. In the vicennial *shikinen sengū* rites, the mirror and other sacred objects held within the shrines are transferred from aging structures to exact replicas of those structures constructed on nearby plots. The reconstruction costs for the shrines are enormous, the last *sengū*, which took place in 2013, was estimated to cost about 57-billion Japanese yen, or roughly 500-million USD.⁷

According to some accounts these *sengū* rites began even before the beginning of the Japanese state in the seventh and eighth centuries.⁸ While records of the regular performance of *sengū* rites can be traced through much of Japan's early history up until the late fifteenth century,⁹ during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries for 122 years the Inner Shrine of Ise did not undergo a complete *sengū*. The scope of this project focuses on the conditions that created this disturbance in Ise's ritual reconstruction and reveals how the shrines and surrounding communities underwent significant change due to both internal conflict and external political

⁶ *Shintai* is translated into English with several different terms. The characters for 'deities' (*kami/shin*) and 'body' (*karada/tai*) denote not simply a semblance, or representation of the deity, but also include the connotation of part of the essence of the deity being embodied within the object itself. *Shintai* come in many different forms and can be found in many shrines (both large and small) throughout Japan. Many shrines are built to house these objects which serve as the focus of devotion within the shrine, but are (in many cases) almost always obscured from public display.

⁷ John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines*, 2-5.

⁸ Ise-shi shi iinkai ed. *Ise-shi shi* vol. 1 (Ise: Ise-shi, 2011), 29-34.

⁹ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 555-564.

pressure. The period in question helps to reevaluate Ise's image of continual connection to the Sun Goddess and the performance of the *shikinen sengū*, as well as show the centrality of this institution during the process of political consolidation at the end of the sixteenth century.

The Fall and Rise of Ise: Late-Medieval Governance and Military Expansion

While the destruction of the Ise shrines and the cessation of *sengū* rites is perceived as stemming from the implosion of central authority during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the lack of Ise's prominence is more directly tied to the actions of the local Ise provincial governors (*kokushi*), the Kitabatake. The Kitabatake arrived in Ise in 1335 amid a civil war that would continue through 1392. This period, known as the Northern and Southern Courts period (1336-1392), is often marked as formative in the establishment of a dominant warrior authority, the Muromachi shogunate, and the fracturing of the Japanese state because of the perceived deterioration of the legitimacy of the imperial court.¹⁰ The head of the Kitabatake family, Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293-1354), served as the primary ideologue and leading general of the Southern Court as a prominent administrative noble. Ultimately, he and his surviving descendants relied on the superannuated office of provincial governor (*kokushi*) to establish political control over their territories.

The Kitabatake retained control over the southern half of Ise province for most of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries despite resisting the warrior government (*bakufu*) established by the Ashikaga in Kyoto. The Kitabatake shared a common lineage group with the Ashikaga, posed the greatest threat to the survival of the Ashikaga regime, and were the most

¹⁰ John Whitney Hall, 'The Muromachi Bakufu' in *Cambridge History of Japan vol. 3* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 175-230 and James Murdoch, *A History of Japan from the Origins to the Arrival of the Portuguese in 1542 AD* (Kobe: The Chronicle, 1910), 515.

implacable foes of the regime. Both families relied upon the support of the imperial court(s) to legitimize their political aspirations with court title and rank. Their shared lineage group and their dependence upon court title heavily impacted the actions of the Kitabatake and Ashikaga who were pushed towards both conflict and reconciliation due to the institutional framework of the court that placed the two families into the same sphere of political contestation.

Court legitimization proved crucially important to the Kitabatake and other magnates throughout Japan for the entirety of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The case of the Kitabatake shows that a clear distinction between ‘warrior’ and ‘courtier’ institutions obfuscates the processes of fragmentation and political reunification that took place during Japan’s late sixteenth century. As the court weakened in the second half of the sixteenth century, the imperial family sent requests for support to powerful magnates like the Kitabatake in central Japan. The promises of court rank and title enabled powerful magnates to differentiate themselves from rivals who lacked central authorization for their acts and ultimately motivated a return of centralized power to Kyoto and its surrounding provinces.

The Kitabatake’s support for the imperial court and their consolidation of control over Ise province, however, indirectly undermined the economic and political autonomy of the Ise shrines. In earlier centuries, pilgrims were prohibited from traveling to Ise, but after the wars of the fourteenth century, the Ashikaga embarked on pilgrimage processions to the Ise shrines. The need for accommodation for travelers to Ise caused the emergence of local pilgrimage facilitators known as Ise *onshi*. Ise *onshi* resided in the same communities as attendants of the Ise shrines, and established patron ties with members of the imperial court and powerful magnates across Japan. Through the incorporation of *onshi* as local administrators, the Kitabatake gradually gained control over Ise. The Kitabatake acted as the protectors of the Ise shrines, but

concurrently worked in tandem with the *onshi* to appropriate resources that previously had been allotted to the shrines for their maintenance. The resulting conflict between the Ise shrines and the local communities populated by *onshi* families led to the physical destruction of the Ise shrines in the late fifteenth century.

The interactions between the Kitabatake, the *onshi*, and the Ise shrines reveal a complicated web of interconnected political and economic motivations which ultimately resulted in a crisis for the shrines. Some scholars have identified the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as a period of class struggle characterized by the phrase ‘the low overcoming the high’ (*gekokuujō*).¹¹ Others have characterized it as a period of lawlessness where a “culture of violence” became prevalent between local communities and high-ranking members of society.¹² Within this view of the past, the Ise shrines fell into disrepair as the central government fell into disarray and the local communities pressed for economic freedom from the Ise shrines. The case of the Kitabatake and Ise *onshi* reveal how magnates gained power by allying with a new stratum of local facilitators. Vertical social ties between the Kitabatake and the *onshi* allowed both to gain advantages over the Ise shrines and appropriate their income. The *onshi* worked together with the Kitabatake to displace the Ise shrines but they also engaged in military conflict with members of their same social strata when the Kitabatake were unable to militarily suppress violence between

¹¹ For examples and descriptions of the *gekokuujō* literature in English see: Pierre-François Souyri, *The World Turned Upside Down: Medieval Japanese Society*, trans. Käthe Roth (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). In Japanese see: Kunimitsu Shirō ed., *Gekokuujō* (Tōkyō: Shūeisha, 1984). For examples of recent literature which question this interpretation see: David Spafford, *A Sense of Place: The Political Landscape in Late Medieval Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 12-20, and Thomas Conlan, ‘The ‘Ōnin War’ as Fulfillment of Prophecy,’ *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 46.1 (Winter 2020), pp. 31-60 and ‘The Failed Attempt to Move the Emperor to Yamaguchi,’ *Japanese Studies* (2015): 16-17.

¹² Mary Elizabeth Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 11–54.

neighboring communities. Both the hollowing out of the shrine's register of income rights that came from cooperation, and the military conflicts between the shrines and *onshi* contributed to the complete destruction of the Ise shrines at the end of the fifteenth century.

Paving the 'Way of the Gods': The Yoshida Family and the Formation of Shintō

In addition to the conditions created by the Kitabatake and *onshi* in Ise, the collapse of Ise is also inextricably linked to the rise of the authority of the Yoshida, a family of record keepers and ritual prognosticators within the capital. The Yoshida gained a reputation as specialists in the understanding of shrine practices, important court rites, and were famed for their knowledge of ancient matters and court precedent.¹³ Heads of the Yoshida family began to characterize the teachings of their house as 'The Way of the Gods' (*Shintō*) in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Through gradual increases of authority that took place over two centuries, the Yoshida united a wide variety of shrine complexes throughout Japan under their conception of Shintō and became the preeminent authority on *kami* affairs in Japan.

Yoshida institutional and ideological authority did not go uncontested. The Yoshida met stringent opposition from the attendants of the Ise shrines who disagreed with their understanding of Shintō and refused to be subsumed under the central institutions run by the Yoshida. The conflict between the Ise Shrines and the head of the Yoshida, Yoshida Kanetomo (1435-1511), led to the Ise shrines having their official court recognition revoked at the end of the fifteenth century. Yoshida Kanetomo claimed that the physical embodiments (*shintai*) of the

¹³ The Japanese court oversaw a complicated calendar of important ritual observances that were considered necessary in the maintenance of the state. The concept of rituals or rites occurs often in this dissertation. This study understands ritual to mean 'a social practice that draws distinctions, and privileges certain acts over others' as found in the works of Catherine Bell. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 74-75.

gods in Ise flew to his residence in Kyoto, which marginalized the Ise shrines for over a century.¹⁴ The Yoshida subsequently moved the physical embodiments of the Sun Goddess to the city of Yamaguchi in western Japan and oversaw the creation of a new shrine in Yamaguchi that displaced the Ise shrines and the position they had occupied for centuries.

Additionally, Yoshida Kanetomo formalized procedures which were recognized by the court that allowed the Yoshida to deify powerful magnates in Japan. Through the procedural rights the Yoshida accrued during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, they gained the ability to act as the central governing body over *kami* and grant *kami* status to deceased individuals. The Yoshida used their position within the Office of *Kami* Affairs (*Jingikan*) to induct powerful patrons of their version of Shintō into the highest ranks of deities that symbolically protected regions in Japan. Most notably at the behest of Ōuchi Masahiro (1446-1495), his father Norihiro was deified in 1486.¹⁵ Yoshida ritual practices enabled powerful magnates to create cultic sites which worshipped their predecessors and formed complex systems of religiopolitical legitimization. Due to the innovations of the Yoshida and the widespread appeal of their ideology, apotheosis became an important facet of sixteenth and seventeenth century political control.¹⁶

The Yoshida's ability to move the permanent residence of the Sun Goddess and to provide legitimacy to magnates through apotheosis reveal important underpinnings of how their

¹⁴ Helen Hardacre, *Shinto: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 220-221.

¹⁵ Thomas Conlan, 'When Men Become Gods: Apotheosis, Sacred Space, and Political Authority in Japan 1486-1599,' *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* vol 21. (2016): 93-97

¹⁶ Luke Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace: Political Space and Open Secrets in Tokugawa Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 132-155 and Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs 1570-1680* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 46-50.

new notion of Shintō influenced the Japanese political order. Even though Shintō today is considered a unique ‘religion,’¹⁷ it held profound importance in the political world of the sixteenth century. In fact, ‘religion’ and ‘politics’ were nearly indistinguishable during most of Japan’s premodern period. Contemporary terms for political and religious activities were described by the same homonym, ‘Affairs of Rites’ (*matsurigoto*). While many religious and political affairs, including the ritual practices of shrines, had been dominated by Buddhism for hundreds of years,¹⁸ the Yoshida after Kanetomo promoted Shintō as the ‘original’ ideology of the central government and superior to all other forms of religious and political thought. Using the rhetoric of ‘restoration’ the Yoshida sought to restructure the political world through the application of their Shintō practices throughout Japan.

The result of the expansion of Yoshida ideology led to institutional and political innovation being framed in antiquarian terms. The Yoshida of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries valorized Japan’s unique connection with the *kami*, argued for the necessity of the imperial family, and supported a wholesale restoration of the imperial court during the sixteenth century. With the support of the court and powerful magnates throughout Japan, Yoshida Kanetomo and his descendants spread their network of shrines and the rites of Shintō to all the provinces in Japan.

¹⁷ Jason Ānanda Josephson, *The Invention of Religion in Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 6–8 and 25–28

¹⁸ Neil McMullin, ‘Historical and Historiographical Issues in the Study of Pre-Modern Japanese Religions,’ *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 16, no. 1 (March 1989): 30–33 and Jacqueline Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1999), 61–65.

‘Place’ and Ise: A Site of Politics and Religion

This study argues that the unique protections and support that the shrine received through its connection to the imperial family however, shifted significantly over the period in question. Ise is a useful case study in understanding how political and religious sites can change in meaning overtime and become an entirely new ‘place’ while still being located within the same geographic region and inhabited by the same institutions.¹⁹ The Ise shrines survived throughout the tumultuous and destructive 120-year period of Ise’s eclipse, and came to take on an entirely new sense of place that played a greater role within the culturally shared experiences of the Japanese citizenry.

The oldest evidence of Ise’s shrines existence date to a period before the establishment of the early Japanese state, but the shrines grew in both scale and importance only during the early eighth century.²⁰ Initially the shrines were intended to be a largely private and safely guarded location of ritual performances to protect the imperial family from disease and misfortune. During the reign of the Emperor Jitō (645-703) strict restrictions were placed over the shrine districts in Ise. Persons attempting to enter the land allotted to the shrines would be arrested and exiled to islands off the coast of Japan as punishment for infringing upon Ise’s sacred space.

¹⁹ This study uses the definition John Agnew and Tim Cresswell provided as a ‘meaningful location’ consisting of a location, locale, and sense of place. In the case of this study the location remains largely consistent. Ise province and the communities surrounding the Ise shrine complex formulate the physical boundaries of the location. The locale, or ‘the material setting for social relations’ changes drastically over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries as warfare divides Japan, communities grow and change in the region, and pilgrimage begins to bring people from distant parts of the country with greater regularity. For definitions on ‘place’ see: Agnew, John *Place and Politics: The Geographical Meditation of State and Society*, (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1987), 22-30, and Cresswell, Tim, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 13-20.

²⁰ There remains a vociferous debate between Japanese scholars as to the origins of the Ise shrines and the dates which can be attached to some form of ritual practice in the region. For a thorough review of the discussions in English see: John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines: Divine Capital* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing 2017), 22-25.

These actions were also thought to endanger the imperial family.²¹ The court intended Ise to remain inaccessible to the greater populace, but still attributed it an important position within the political sphere as a ritual guarantor of the health and well-being of the imperial family.

The connection between the shrines and the imperial court would expand in the ninth and tenth centuries when Emperor Kanmu (735-806) established new protocols for rites to be conducted at Ise.²² These new protocols codified ritual practices which sought to ensure the health and well-being of the imperial family. The emperors of the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries sent young female members of the imperial family to serve in ritual observances at the Ise shrines as *Saiō* (Offering Princess).²³ The protections originally meant for the emperor and perhaps some of his immediate relatives over time began to take on a greater meaning of universal protection over all of Japan.

During the Heian period the court created a unique identity for the Ise shrines by placing specific restrictions against using Buddhist terminology within the sacred shrine lands in Ise. The court designated the Ise shrines and a few other smaller ritual sites across Japan as a special space meant to be held separate from Buddhist iconography or terminology. The practices of the court were dominated by Buddhist ritual, iconography, and theory.²⁴ The shrine attendants of the

²¹ Ibid., 25-30.

²² Satō Hirō, 'Wrathful Deities and Saving Deities,' in Rambelli and Teeuwen eds, *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm*, (New York: Routledge-Curzon, 2003), 95-114.

²³ Breen and Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines*, 55-58.

²⁴ It is important to note here that this distinction was not necessarily an antagonistic one that sought to divide separate belief systems. Many of the replacement words when using Buddhist terminology in Ise were playful in nature. The spaces were ritually divided, but ideologically still functioned with relative harmony. The space was delineated due to precedent deriving from Ise's creation myths, but Buddhism remained important even in spaces marked as 'separate' from what was understood to be overtly Buddhist. See: Teeuwen, *Watarai Shintō*, 11-25.

Ise shrines studied Buddhist texts and many of them joined Buddhist monasteries after their careers as shrine attendants ended. Shrines throughout Japan maintained close connections with Buddhist temples, and many of the practices of these institutions derived their rituals from Buddhist combinatory approaches.²⁵ Despite this ideological preeminence, Ise remained as a locale meant to be kept ritually separate from the other forms of Buddhist political practice within Japan and from the larger populace. Precedent set by practices which Emperor Kanmu codified in the early-ninth century formulated the boundaries of place for Ise that existed both within the discourse of ritual-based state legitimization and simultaneously as a geographic location.

This meaning that Ise held to members of the imperial court in Japan's seventh to thirteenth centuries shifted dramatically during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries as this relatively private but uniquely important ritual site was eclipsed, and then rebounded to become the most important religious destination for pilgrimage in early modern Japan (1600-1868). The actions of the Yoshida family and the Kitabatake to ensure their own survival diminished the political and ritual importance of the Ise shrines, but in doing so, they enabled a new combination of local actors to redefine what Ise as a place meant to the larger Japanese society. The image of Ise in the sixteenth century did not entirely break from the image of the past, but the new image of Ise melded parts of an imagined past of Ise with new imagery of pilgrimage, enjoyment, and universality for the broader Japanese populace.

The Yoshida family's successes in stripping Ise of the privileged position it occupied, alongside the advancement of local authority secured by the Kitabatake and their supporters in the shrine districts, predicated the creation of a new 'place' which bore the same name as the Ise

²⁵ Satō, 'Wrathful Deities and Saving Deities,' 100-110.

of ancient times. The sixteenth century is often seen as a period of intense destruction and political rupture. Many previously important institutions which fell on hard times during the sixteenth centuries did not experience the same restoration that Ise eventually did. The Ise shrine complex lay in ruins for most of a century. Despite the image of rupture and revolutionary change in politics and warfare, throughout the country many local authorities legitimated their position and power through reliance on antiquated titles granted by the imperial court or offices within the imperial bureaucracy.²⁶ Ise benefitted from this kind of political conservatism which sought to ‘restore’ an idealized imagined past, but the Ise that local actors and central administrators created to replace the old one was layered with entirely new meanings. The story of how Ise collapsed and yet subsequently came to be seen as the one place that every member of the Japanese populace should physically visit once in their lifetime sheds light on the process by which the political, social, and cultural significance a ‘place’ can change and shift over time.

Traces of Ise’s Past: Historical Sources of Ise

Japan’s fifteenth and sixteenth centuries saw a rise endemic warfare and the destruction of many governmental and familial archives. The shrine attendants of the Inner and Outer shrines in Ise and the Yoshida family kept records of their activities with relative consistency for much of the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries which survive.²⁷ By contrast, the records of the

²⁶ In a study the Kantō region of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, David Spafford argues that a type of conservatism inherent within the sources of the time directed actors to appeal towards precedent and led to a ‘persistent medieval’ mindset which continued even as violence spread throughout the Japanese archipelago. See: Spafford, David, *A Sense of Place: The Political Landscape in Late Medieval Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013), 11-29.

²⁷ Portions of the chronicles of the Ise shrine attendants and Yoshida family heads have been transcribed into modern collections of sources but substantial portions have rarely seen attention from English

Kitabatake family, however, were largely lost with their destruction at the end of the sixteenth century. The Kitabatake were destroyed by the powerful daimyō Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) in 1576. Nobunaga's supporters destroyed the personal residence of the Kitabatake family and many of the documents which the family had held for generations of rule in Ise. Despite the absence of these Kitabatake sources, records of their rivals, retainers, and contemporaries do remain which explain their interactions during the period in question. This dissertation relies on the comparatively large number of documents (*komonjo*) and chronicles (*nikki*) of the families who interacted with the Kitabatake and Yoshida families as well as the Ise Shrines.²⁸

A litany of references surrounding Ise and the court reveal the region's significance for Japanese history and politics. This study is indebted to the research of Japanese and English language scholars who have compiled collections of contemporary references to the Kitabatake, the Ise shrines, and the Yoshida family. Whenever possible, I have viewed the original manuscripts or facsimiles, held in the archives of the Jingu Chōkokan Museum in Ise, the Yoshida Archives (*Yoshida bunko*) held at Tenri University's archival library (*Tenri daigaku fuzoku toshokan*), and the archives of Kyoto University. This dissertation seeks to pull together a collection of documents regarding Ise that exist and integrate new documentary evidence which until now has remained largely inaccessible and not expansively interrogated.

language scholars due to inaccessibility. See: Mie-ken shi Iinkai ed., *Mie-ken shi chūsei* vol. 1.1 (Mie: Mie-ken, 1997) and *Kanemi kyōki* 7 vols. (Tōkyō: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1971-2020).

²⁸ Many of these documents can be found in prefectural and city historical compilations from the communities in and around Ise. See: *Mie-ken shi chūsei* 5 vols. (Mie: Mie-ken, 1997), *Ise-shi shi iinkai*, *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2 (Ise: Ise-shi, 2011), *Sawa-shi komonjo* (Tōkyō: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1989), Kobayashi, Kaoru ed., *Satō-ke Monjo: Dōran no jidai o ikiru* (Tsu: Nozaki Insatsu, 2021), Nishiyama Masaru ed., *Kyōto Daigaku Bungakubu Hakubutsukan no Komonjo* vol. 7: *Ise onshi to Kita monjo* (Kyōto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1990)

Chapter Overviews

This dissertation explores religious, institutional, and political change, in Ise and throughout Japan during the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, although at times it extends to earlier, or later centuries. The material has generally been divided chronologically, though the development of the Yoshida family and their institutional authority has been separated as to not distract from the broader narrative of local interactions within Ise province.

The first chapter explains how the Kitabatake family came to gain control over parts of Ise in the fourteenth century and contended with the Ashikaga shogunate for control over the central government. It introduces the importance of lineage groups (*uji*) in the procurement of court rank which enabled the Kitabatake and Ashikaga to assert political authority over their subordinates. The chapter also contains a reevaluation of the distinction between ‘warrior’ and ‘courtier’ institutions during the Northern and Southern Courts Period (1336-1392).

The second chapter explains the rise of large-scale pilgrimage to Ise that began at the end of the fourteenth century. Ise pilgrimage functioned as a means for the Ashikaga shogunate to both bolster its own political prestige, and conduct surveillance upon the Kitabatake lords who held southern Ise throughout the fifteenth century. The chapter also reveals how the Kitabatake assimilated the emergent *onshi* pilgrimage facilitators into their house organization and deprived the Ise shrines of financial support. It ends with a discussion of the local violence that destroyed the Inner and Outer shrines and started the 122-year cessation of the performance of the *shikinen sengū* rites in Ise.

The third chapter focuses on the rise of the Yoshida family from the Urabe lineage group of shrine attendants working within the Office of Kami Affairs (*Jingikan*). It highlights the changes within the *Jingikan* that enabled the Yoshida to slowly gain a position that allowed them

to run the day-to-day affairs of the *Jingikan* and argues that the successes of Yoshida Kanetomo in engendering the support of the imperial court should be viewed from a longer perspective of gradual increases in authority to the Yoshida house. The institutional inroads created by his predecessors enabled Kanetomo to act as the arbiter of *kami* affairs, which enabled him to influence the politics of the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth century Japan. The court's approval of the Yoshida's actions led to the official recognition of the Kōnomine shrines in Yamaguchi as the residence of the Sun Goddess and left the Ise shrines without support for the first half of the sixteenth century.

The fourth chapter recounts the events of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that led to the gradual disintegration of the central government and the process through which central authority was reconstituted through the lens of the restoration of the *shikinen sengū* in Ise. The chapter shows that the impetus to reinstate the *sengū* rites did not materialize until the 1550s. Court authorities instructed local magnates (*daimyō*) to assist in opening the roads to Ise for pilgrims and a return of the Sun Goddess. The goal of the restoration of the Ise shrines provided magnates with the official support of the court which provided impetus for military conflict during the turmoil of latter half of the sixteenth century (1550-1600).

The project concludes by tying together the Yoshida and Ise shrines' contribution to the development of politics, religion, and culture in seventeenth-century Japan. The epilogue discusses how the Tokugawa elevated Ise's position within the political climate of the seventeenth century while simultaneously lifting the Yoshida to position of dominance over the vast majority of shrines throughout Japan. It tracks the efforts of the *onshi* in establishing Ise as a site of universal pilgrimage for all of Japan and shows how the actions of the Yoshida and Ise *onshi* explain how Ise transformed into a culturally significant site of pilgrimage, how Shintō

became a powerful political and ideological tool for central authorities in early modern Japan, and how the image of Ise was impacted by the events of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Chapter One:

Deconstructing the ‘Warrior’ Rise: The Kitabatake House 1331-1392

Overview

For much of the fourteenth century, Ise province was embroiled in protracted civil war. This conflict, fought between adherents of two court factions, led to a rise of two imperial courts with separate emperors claiming sovereign authority. Supporters of the Emperor Go-Daigo (1288-1339), whose capital after 1336 was located in Yoshino,¹ controlled the mountainous regions south of Kyoto and part of its neighboring provinces. The Ashikaga, a warrior family, rose in opposition to the political prerogatives of Go-Daigo after having assisted in toppling the previous regime. Eventually, the Ashikaga gained the support of a rival imperial line located in Kyoto and established a new government, the Ashikaga Shogunate (*bakufu*). These two factions engaged in a battle for control over Japan’s political center in what is known as the ‘Wars of the Northern and Southern Courts.’

During this time, the Kitabatake family were staunch supporters of Go-Daigo. Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293-1354), and his son Akiie (1318-1338) were among the most tenacious and successful commanders of the Southern Court. Two of Chikafusa’s sons, Akinobu and Akiyoshi, served as provincial governors (*kokushi*) of Ise, and Akiyoshi’s son Akiyasu supported the Southern court until its eventual capitulation in 1392. The Kitabatake threatened the new Ashikaga regime, with Chikafusa even managing to capture the Northern Court’s

¹ Go-Daigo moved his court’s capital to the land of Yoshino. Yoshino is located south of the ancient capital of Kyoto and accordingly his forces became known as the ‘Southern Court’ while their counterparts in Kyoto were known as the ‘Northern Court’

reigning emperor and their Crown Prince in 1351. Despite his successes, Southern Court resistance weakened. Eventually in 1392, the third shogun of the Ashikaga *bakufu*, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358-1408), oversaw the reunification of the divided imperial line and the end to sixty years of civil war. The long years of civil war made violence a normal recourse for political redress. This proliferation of violence also served to transform institutions, imperial house structures, and the office and administrative apparatus of the *bakufu* while demonstrably increasing the number and power of regional magnates across Japan.²

This period is often defined as being formative in the emergence of warrior supremacy in Japan's political world. The policies of the Ashikaga gradually led to a transfer of authority over military and economic power to several dozen regional magnates who were appointed to a provincial administrative post within the *bakufu* known as 'protectors' or *shugo*.³ This post became desirable because of the introduction of a new form of taxation called 'half-tax' (*hanzei*), which allowed the *shugo* to levy half of a province's revenue for military provisions. This allowed *shugo* to mobilize and direct armies as well as expand their local control over their territory through military levies. For many lower-ranking administrators of estates and functionaries of the *bakufu*, the rise of the *shugo* threatened their autonomy. Additionally, *shugo* power threatened the livelihood of court families, and prestigious temples and shrines, as their absentee income was diminished by encroachments imposed by the *shugo*'s officers.

² Thomas Conlan, *State of War: The Violent Order of Fourteenth-Century Japan* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2003), 229-231.

³ For an overview of the change of proprietary status of *shugo* over the Muromachi see: Miyagawa Mitsuru. 'From Shoen to Chigyō: Proprietary Lordship and the Structure of Local Power,' in *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, John Hall and Toyoda Takeshi, ed. (Ithaca: East Asia Program, Cornell University, 2001), 84-105.

Nearly all later provincial magnates were drawn from the ranks of *shugo* or their core retainers. The Kitabatake in Ise were, however, an exception to this pattern of rule. The Kitabatake were ardent supporters of Southern Court. They established dominion over most of Ise province over the course of the fourteenth century by defending it from the Ashikaga and their *shugo*. The Kitabatake retained control over much of this province until the end of the sixteenth century. Their rule over the province of Ise ended in 1573, outlasting even the Ashikaga's control over Kyoto.

The Kitabatake governed Ise province in the fourteenth century through an elaborate house structure which made use of an antiquated court posting and established formal ties with powerful houses residing in the capital. The Kitabatake governed Ise without relying on the institutional and legal authority of the *shugo* post. Their authority as servants of the court and defenders of Ise, allowed them to defend their rights from Ashikaga encroachment. They did not originate from what is often described as a warrior family but engaged in war for nearly six decades against the Ashikaga. The Kitabatake adopted innovative strategies for maintaining their house's prominence and expanding their influence in Ise. Beyond their ability to defend themselves, they relied upon the prestige of the imperial court and their elevated social position within one of the most important lineage groups in the capital to legitimate and sustain their regional authority throughout the fourteenth century.

The Rise of the ‘Warrior’ and the Weakening of ‘Courtiers’: New Perspectives

Frequently, histories of Japan have focused on the rise of its warriors,⁴ with the Muromachi era (1336-1573) being understood as a time when regional ‘warrior’ lordships expanded under the aegis of the *shugo* post following the destruction of the Kamakura *bakufu*, Japan’s first warrior government, in 1333.⁵ An investigation of the Kitabatake house suggests that families outside the immediate orbit of the Ashikaga *bakufu*, Japan’s ‘warrior’ government, could exercise and expand their local authority as efficiently as any of the *bakufu*’s leading *shugo*. The example of the Kitabatake reveals that ‘courtier’ and ‘warrior’ groups should not be conceived of as distinct entities, with one group on the rise and the other on the decline. Many historians dismiss nobles as being feckless poets who wilted against the onslaught of up-and-coming ‘warriors’ who, in turn, derived their legitimacy solely from violence and military strength. According to this view, courtiers were of marginal significance, while ‘warriors’ were the drivers of change, responsible for the hollowing out of the imperial court and gradual fracturing of the country into local fiefdoms ruled by regional magnates (*daimyō*).⁶ This common, but simplistic narrative, ignores the complex nature of interactions between local administrators and the central government.

⁴ See, for example, Karl Friday, *Hired Swords: The Rise of Private Warrior Power in Early Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992); William Wayne Farris, *Heavenly Warriors: The Evolution of Japan’s Military, 500 to 1300* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992); Eiko Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁵ Conlan, *State of War*, 83-107.

⁶ For examples see: Kawai Masaharu, ‘Shogun and Shugo: The Provincial Aspects of Muromachi Politics’ in *Japan in the Muromachi Age*, 65-83, John Whitney Hall, ‘The Muromachi Bakufu’ in *Cambridge History of Japan vol. 3* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 175-230 and James Murdoch, *A History of Japan from the Origins to the Arrival of the Portuguese in 1542 AD* (Kobe: The Chronicle, 1910), 515.

This construction of separate ‘warrior’ and ‘courtier’ spheres, however, is largely a historiographical development of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some of the first historians of ‘medieval’ Japan established a rigid divide between the institutions of the court and military functionaries. These historians defined the older systems of political control centered around the emperor and the courtiers of the capital as effete, decadent, and largely ineffective.⁷ Conversely, the same historians lionized ‘warrior’ virtues and political institutions. ‘Warrior’ values epitomized the masculine and physically robust elements of Japan’s past. They drew connections from Japanese ‘warrior’ legal codes to the law codes of medieval Western nations.⁸ By tying the trajectory of Japan’s political history with models that resembled Western nations, these historians sought to bolster the image of Japan and assist in the nation-building process of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These early historians sought to place Japan on a similar standing with Western nations and differentiate themselves from other East Asian nations whom many in the West looked upon with disdain.⁹

While the era of nation-building focused histories may have passed in the historical record, the search for the creation of the ‘warrior’ class permeates much of the literature of Japan’s past even today. The Tokugawa *bakufu* (1600-1868), the successor to the Ashikaga shogunate, held significant political control over Japan for nearly three centuries. The Tokugawa *bakufu* is still seen largely as a ‘warrior’ institution who exercised political authority over the

⁷ Thomas Kierstead identified three early historians (Hara Katsurō, Asakawa Kan’ichi, Nakada Kaoru) as members of the creation of this general understanding. See: Thomas Kierstead, ‘Inventing Medieval Japan’, *The Medieval History Journal* 1, no. 1 (April 1998): 56-57.

⁸ Ibid., 61-63.

⁹ Ibid., 65-69.

court through its issuance of ‘Regulations for Noble Families’ (*kuge shohatto*) in 1615.¹⁰

Undeniably, the authority which the Tokugawa *bakufu* held over the court hints at significant changes in the political makeup of Japan’s central government in the centuries before. However, continuing to reify this distinction between ‘warrior’ and ‘courtier’ often anachronistically obfuscates the motivations and strategies that contemporaries enacted to ensure their position within the political hierarchy of the time.

In particular, this distinction distorts our understanding of the motivations of political contemporaries in the Muromachi period. For one, it anachronistically creates divisions which were not meaningful. Warriors and courtiers were not separated in practice or legal distinctions during the fourteenth century. It also obfuscates the significance of status. More so than a distinction between ‘warrior’ and ‘courtier,’ the divide between high-ranking court officials and low-ranking court functionaries played a significant role in the ability of contemporaries to enact policy and ensure the maintenance of the rights of income granted to them from the imperial court.

Beginning in the eighth century and continuing with frequent modifications until the late nineteenth century, the Japanese state implemented a system of rank fashioned after Chinese models of statecraft with an emperor occupying the central position as the physical embodiment and symbol of the state.¹¹ Serving the emperor, a collection of high-ranking ministers populated the Grand Council of State (*Daijōkan*). The Grand Council of State was responsible for many of

¹⁰ Lee Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467-1680: Resilience and Renewal* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 198-224.

¹¹ The earliest remnant legal codes of the eighth century had additional protocols continued to be added, but the code remained the legal basis of Japanese law for centuries. For a discussion on the various elements of this code see: Sakamoto Tarō, ed., *Ritsuryō Seido*, (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1989).

the primary functions of the government and the various rites it performed. Within this ranking system, only members of the third-rank or higher could qualify to hold a position within the Grand Council of State. Members of the third-rank or higher held special privileges to establish administrative offices (*mandokoro*) that could be used to oversee the rights of income to estates.¹²

The court ranking system consisted of nine separate ranks with multiple subdivisions within each rank. Individuals of the fourth-rank and fifth-rank filled a variety of duties within the bureaucracy of the capital and in the provinces as regional governors (*kokushi*) or administrators within the offices of the provinces and districts throughout Japan. Many rendered service (*bugyō*) to higher ranking members of the court upon request in addition to the roles that they filled within the government. Over time, many positions which had held executive rights to government administration were hollowed out of their original duties but remained as important markers of status within the ranking system. Individuals of the sixth-rank and lower received positions of lesser importance, but service requirements within these positions for further rank advancement necessitated their continued existence.¹³

¹² Kuroda Toshio argued that individuals possessing administrative offices could function as a ‘Gate of Power’ (*kenmon*). These *kenmon* could originate only from individuals of the third-rank or higher but were often populated by court functionaries, military personnel, and religious institutions. For an introduction to Kuroda’s work, see: Tomoko Yoshida, ‘Kuroda Toshio (1926-1993) on Jōdo Shinshū: Problems in Modern Historiography,’ *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 33, no. 2 (2006): 379–412. For an appraisal of *kenmon* and their relation to religious institutions, see: Mikael Adolphson, *Gates of Power: Monks, Courtiers, and Warriors in Pre-modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2000).

¹³ The court periodically changed requirements for rank advancement and propagated these changes through addendums to the Ritsuryō codes. For an example of the most well-known listing of modifications in English, see: Felicia Gressitt-Bock, *Engi-shiki; procedures of the Engi Era* (Tōkyō, Sophia University, 1970).

For much of the late Heian period (960-1180), important lineage groups with ties to the imperial family (most notably the ‘Northern Branch’ or Regent line (*Sekkanke*) of the Fujiwara who provided consorts for emperors) monopolized appointments within the Grand Council of State and rank advancements of the third-rank or higher. The prominence of one’s lineage group and family inheritance rights dictated eligibility for the highest levels of government appointments. In many cases, even being a member of a privileged lineage group did not guarantee advancement into the highest ranks of the imperial court.¹⁴ Individuals not born in high-ranking families of these important lineages rarely crossed the divide that separated the third and fourth ranks. Individuals of the third-rank were legally classified as ‘nobles’ (*kuge*). Those beneath that rank did not have a specific designation other than their title and function within the bureaucracy. Whether one’s primary role was as a bureaucrat in the capital or as one serving in a military function, their position within the hierarchy was considered equal to someone whom they held the same rank as. Thus, the primary distinction between these groups was not ‘warrior’ and ‘courtier’ but rather high-ranking court functionary and low-ranking court functionary.

Just as ‘courtier’ and ‘warrior’ identities were intertwined, so too were ‘courtier’ and ‘warrior’ institutions. Servants of provincial governors were known as *zaichō kanjin*, although described as being ‘warriors’ technically they were local officials serving the provincial governor, which itself was a court post. These officials collected taxes and provided for security in the provinces.¹⁵ Many of these local groups developed relationships with court lineage groups

¹⁴ William McCullough, ‘The Establishment of Fujiwara Ascendancy,’ in *Cambridge History of Japan* vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 45-63.

¹⁵ Takeuchi Rizō, ‘The Rise of the Warriors,’ *Cambridge History of Japan* vol. 2, 644-653.

like the Minamoto, Taira, and Fujiwara and acted as the military extension of powerful families in Kyoto. These branches, however, largely functioned on the same principles of governance that ‘courtiers’ utilized for their own houses.

Even with the establishment of the new Kamakura *bakufu*, ‘warrior’ governance functioned in a similar manner to other large power brokers in the capital in that it required an individual possessing the third-rank to act as the nominal official over the *bakufu*’s administrative offices.¹⁶ The earlier *zaichō kanjin* often were granted a new title, that of *jitō*, or land steward, while others were recognized as being ‘housemen’ or *gokenin*.¹⁷ These new offices and statuses were staffed from local provincial officials who held local court offices.

Following the first half-century of the *bakufu*’s existence, the nominal head of the new ‘military’ government, the *sei’i taishōgun*, or ‘barbarian subduing general,’ often came from the noble lines of the Fujiwara or imperial princes and served no military function.¹⁸ The title of shogun did not constitute anything other than an important position within the imperial court that legitimated the existence of the institution which Minamoto no Yoritomo had founded and the Hōjō regents staffed after his death.

¹⁶ The *bakufu*’s legal justification for its existence was predicated on the same type of administrative institution centered around a *mandokoro*. It functioned as one ‘Gate of Power,’ as described by Kuroda, within the legal understanding of the period. See: Jeffrey Mass, *Antiquity and Anachronism in Japanese History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 70-77.

¹⁷ The Kamakura *bakufu* largely invented these two titles as a means of guaranteeing rights to income for administrators within their organization. The Kamakura initially functioned only through the *jitō* (local land administrators/stewards) which were gathered from a collection of provincial strongmen throughout Japan. For an examination of the basic organizational practices of the *bakufu*, see: Jeffrey Mass, *Yoritomo and the Founding of the First Bakufu: The Origins of Dual Government in Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

¹⁸ Okano Tomohiko, *Genji to Nihon kokuō* (Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2003), 130-146.

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the different groups of political actors within the orbit of the capital's political influence are best understood as court functionaries as opposed to 'courtiers' or 'warriors.' Members of the *bakufu* served a role within that institution that derived its political legitimacy from the imperial court. The *bakufu* itself was populated by various court administrators (*bugyōnin*) performing legal and logistical services for the *bakufu*. High-ranking court families from prestigious lineage groups similarly drew their political legitimacy from the imperial court and the families who rendered service (also frequently called *bugyōnin*) to these families had their rights granted ultimately from the same source. Therefore, describing all members of these institutions as 'courtiers' ignores the important distinctions between those of the third-rank or higher and those below. While not classified as 'nobles,' individuals who had received appointments from the *bakufu* or from any other major organ of the imperial court were still an extension of that same court centered-authority.

The imperial court granted rights to individuals and expected these individuals to render service to the institutions from which their rights were granted. Those who resisted were often castigated as being 'brigands,' or 'outlaws.'¹⁹ Yet not even all of these individuals can be described as 'warriors.' Conflicts, when they arose, were not between 'warriors' and 'courtiers' but were conceived as differing levels of court functionaries contesting their concomitant rights and prerogatives.

The case of the Kitabatake family of Ise province reveals that this 'warrior'/'courtier' binary is facile. They did not hold the *shugo* post (with its half-tax prerogatives) or any offices originating from the Ashikaga *bakufu* until the end of the fifteenth century. For nearly 140 years,

¹⁹ *Akutō* was a polemical term ascribed to various groups. For a detailed explanation of the term and its origins, see: Morten Oxenboell, *Akutō and Rural Conflict in Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2018).

they exercised authority through court offices and an asserted legitimacy deriving from their court rank and their ability to mobilize military forces. Their fusion of civilian office and military force created political impetus from which they achieved greater advancements in rank and title.²⁰ The Kitabatake drew their legitimacy from maintaining close ties to the court, enabling them to protect themselves from internal strife and pressure their enemies who attempted to forcefully occupy the lands granted to them by the court.

The Importance of *Genji* Lineage: Court-based Social Advancement

In addition to providing an institutional framework for authority, the court also served as a social institution. The conflict between the Ashikaga and Kitabatake in the fourteenth-century and their eventual reconciliation derive from the fact that they shared kinship ties, making the conflict between them both more severe and yet ultimately reconcilable. Both the Kitabatake and Ashikaga traced their lineages to the imperial family through the Minamoto lineage group, alternatively referred to as the Genji family or clan.²¹ The existence of lineage groups such as the

²⁰ The *kokushi* filled important financial and military functions within the *Ritsuryō* Codes of the eighth century. Throughout much of the Heian period (794-1185) important noble families were granted the title of *kokushi*, but largely the duties had been replaced by provincial administrators (*ryōshu*) or important families (*zaichō kanjin*) in the provinces by the end of the twelfth century. For a discussion on the deterioration of *kokushi* influence see Yoshimura Shigeki, *Kokushi seido* (Tōkyō: Hanawa Shobō, 1962), 123-200.

²¹ In many studies of premodern Japan, the use of the word ‘clan’ is used to describe *uji*, what here is referred to as ‘lineage groups.’ The concept of ‘clan’ suggests a degree of coordination between members of the same kinship group but such cohesion did not exist in Japan. By the twelfth century, these lineage groups had diversified into separate lines of inheritance. A sense of common descent did bind these houses with the head of a lineage, holding some authority, but a strong sense of coordination or cohesion did not exist between these subunits. In opting for the use of ‘lineage group’ I acknowledge the fact that these houses were a part of the same social unit derived from a premodern understanding of ‘lineage’, but also recognizes the history of consistent inner conflict between the houses within each group for supremacy in court title and rank. See: Michael Adolphson and Anne Commons, ed., ‘Terminology and Translations,’ in *Lovable Losers: the Heike in Action and Memory*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2015), xiii-xiv.

Minamoto, Fujiwara, and Taira originates from early practices where the imperial court granted ‘gift names’ to ministers serving in the government.²² These lineage groups, most famously the Minamoto (or Genji) and the Taira (or Heishi/Heike), were based upon imperial descent; sons of lesser consorts of the emperor were granted the name and were excluded from imperial succession. Other lineages, such as the Fujiwara, were also of great antiquity, and although not of imperial descent, they were linked to Nakatomi no Kamatari (614-669), a key figure of the seventh century who was granted a lineage-name that provided access to high court rank for his descendants and supplied wives to the imperial family for centuries.²³

Over the course of the Nara and Heian periods (710-1185), the number of these lineage groups dwindled. The Fujiwara lineage group monopolized many of the central positions within the imperial bureaucracy and created an increasingly stratified system of houses within the lineage which preserved the position of those occupying the highest tier of Fujiwara families.²⁴ Imperial regulations dictated that court documents issued from high-ranking members of the court required the use of lineage names for both the issuer and recipient. Lineage names represented a connection between lower functionaries of the lineages and the houses which possessed higher rank. Every member of the imperial court (excluding the emperor and his immediate family) were designated a lineage name in order to act as a functionary of the court.

²² Often these posts were inherited from generation to generation among members of the same kinship group and so a certain degree of familial connection became the expected norm within the imperial court.

²³ See: Mikael Bauer, *The History of the Fujiwara House: a Study and Annotated Translation of the Tōshi Kaden* (Kent: Renaissance Books, 2020).

²⁴ Hellen Craig McCollough, ‘The Fujiwara role in Japanese court history from Katamari to Michinaga,’ in *Okagami, The Great Mirror: Fujiwara Michinaga (966-1027) and His Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 335-355.

The Minamoto lineage name first came into use under the supervision of Emperor Saga (786-842). Emperor Saga fathered over forty children. As a means of disqualifying some of his children from potential succession and as a way of removing the financial responsibility for their well-being, Emperor Saga bestowed the Minamoto lineage name on five of his sons.²⁵ Emperor Saga marked the Minamoto as special among the various lineages of the capital. Only immediate princes of the emperor or their children could be granted the Minamoto name. The name could only be passed down patrilineally and members of the Minamoto were encouraged to marry women from the imperial family.

Emperor Saga's line of Minamoto princes soon proved unable to produce male heirs and the Saga branch of the Minamoto lost influence during the latter half of the ninth and early tenth centuries. Successive Minamoto branches established by Emperors Jimmyo (810-850), Montoku (827-858), Seiwa (850-881), Yōzei (869-949), Kōkō (830-887), Uda (867-931), and Daigo (885-930) all expanded the size of the Minamoto lineage, but none of these lines formed houses that held consistent high court rank during this period. A rival lineage group, the Fujiwara, established houses with streamlined paths to high court rank through the monopolization of marriage rights to the male members of the imperial family and continued to exclude many of the Minamoto from important positions within the government.

Many Heian period lineage groups held titles which entailed concomitant responsibilities based on important functions that these lineage groups were meant to fulfill within the imperial bureaucracy. The primary responsibility granted to the Minamoto at its inception was the

²⁵ One of these sons was Minamoto no Tōru who is often considered the source for the main character in Murasaki Shikibu's *Genji Monogatari*. See: Inoue Tatsuo, 'Minamoto no Tōru: Heian shoki no fūga no kikōshi,' *Josai Kokusai Daigaku kiyō* no 11.2 (March 2003): 1-20.

maintenance of the Shōgakuin school.²⁶ The Shōgakuin trained members of the imperial family for future service in the imperial court. It also played a significant role in the education of the imperial heir and held high prestige. The highest-ranking member of the Minamoto claimed the title of ‘Head of Genji’ (*genji no chōja*) and correspondingly received the title of Shōgakuin Superintendent (*bettō*).²⁷ The superintendent title remained linked to the Head of Genji until the nineteenth century, long after the school no longer existed. The ceremonial position of Superintendent of Shōgakuin entitled the Head of Genji to influence the education and training of the imperial family even after the physical school which the institution was supposed to oversee no longer existed.

The Head of Genji additionally possessed special privileges within the highest ranks of court society. The post carried with it responsibility for religious observances held at temples and shrines affiliated with the lineage group, tertiary supervision of the lineage's collective holdings and titles, and inclusion in the annual recommendation rites for lineage members for promotion from sixth- to fifth-rank. The annual recommendation rites (*uji no shaku*), held in the first week of the new year, allowed Lineage Heads (*uji no chōja*) of a select few lineage groups to promote one of their members for advancement into the middle-ranks of the court hierarchy.²⁸ Similar to the divide between third- and fourth-ranks, passing from sixth- to fifth-rank could not be done without the assistance of someone within the highest ranks of the central government. Positions

²⁶ Okano Tomohiko, *Genji Chōja: Buke seiken no keifu* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2018), 44-50.

²⁷ Okano Tomohiko additionally argues that the Hachiman shrines of the capital and Tōdaiji in Nara became associated with the Minamoto lineage group in its early history. The Minamoto granted supervision of *Ōushi*, the ‘royal’ family members (female members of the imperial lineage who lacked a lineage-name) as an extension of their rights to the Shōgakuin and Tōdaiji institutions. *Ibid.*, 61-73.

²⁸ Une Toshinori, ‘Uji no shaku to Uji chōja,’ in *Ōchō kokka kokuseishi no kenkyū* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1987), 31-61.

in the fourth- and fifth-ranks often fulfilled service requirements necessary for aspiring functionaries to qualify for further rank advancement later. This method of rank advancement gave the Head of Genji a powerful tool in expanding the influence of their lineage.

The Minamoto lineage group and its Head reclaimed a position of import within the Grand Council of State during the first half of the eleventh century. Minamoto no Morofusa (1008-1077), a grandchild of Emperor Murakami (926-967), gained the favor of the Fujiwara family. Being a grandchild of the emperor Murakami, Morofusa was a member of the Murakami branch of the Minamoto lineage. Morofusa's father, Prince Tomohira (964-1009), died when Morofusa was a small child, so Morofusa's aunt, Princess Takahime (995-1087), adopted the young child into her home to be raised by her husband Fujiwara no Yorimichi (992-1074). As the eldest son of Fujiwara no Michinaga (966-1028), Yorimichi held inheritance rights to the prestigious *Sekkanke* of the Fujiwara lineage who served as regents for the emperors of the Heian court.

In the years following Morofusa's adoption, Yorimichi and Takahime failed to produce a male heir to inherit the family's holdings and rights. They chose to select Morofusa as the heir of the Yorimichi branch of the Regent-family. Morofusa took the Minamoto lineage name at his coming-of-age ceremony but received rank advancements in his early life which corresponded with contemporary Fujiwara nobles.²⁹ Morofusa's inheritance from Yorimichi stayed within his line for much of the next eight centuries and designated his branch of the Minamoto (Murakami) as the most prestigious and high-ranking branch of the lineage. The title of Head of Genji remained within Morofusa's line for the next 300 years.³⁰ As the Murakami branch separated

²⁹ Okano Tomohiko, *Genji Chōja: Buke seiken no keifu* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2018), 75-80.

³⁰ Ibid., 82-85.

into smaller house organizations, the Koga family of Kyoto maintained privileged access to the highest positions within the Grand Council of State and a streamlined path towards rank advancement, enabling them to consistently maintain the highest positions of the court among all of the members of the Genji lineage group and secure their position as the Head of Genji.

The Rise of the Kitabatake: Educators for the Imperial Family

The Kitabatake family emerged from the Murakami branch of the Minamoto in the early thirteenth century, serving the imperial court and reaching as high as Senior Counselors (*dainagon*) on the Grand Council of State. At the turn of the fourteenth century, the Kitabatake family began serving as tutors for the imperial family. Beginning in a time when the imperial family fractured into two branches, the Daikakuji and Jimyōin, after 1272, Kitabatake Chikafusa developed a close relationship with the Daikakuji branch of the imperial family.³¹ The ascension of the Emperor Go-Daigo from the Daikakuji branch in 1318 allowed Kitabatake Chikafusa to gain influence and court advancements. In 1320, Chikafusa received the position of Superintendent (*bettō*) of Jun'aiin, a post traditionally held by the Head of Genji or heir apparent to the Head of Genji title.

In 1323, he received the position of Superintendent of Shōgakuin, signifying his assumption of the title of Head of Genji. For the seven years between 1323 and 1330, Chikafusa held the title of Head of Genji, breaking a monopoly over the position which had been held by the Koga family for a century. Due to the Koga family siding with the rival Jimyōin line during

³¹ For early career see: H. Paul Varley, *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns: Jinnō Shōtōki of Kitabatake Chikafusa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 1-13 and; Thomas Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol: An age of Ritual Determinism in Fourteenth-century Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 53-54.

the ascendancy of Go-Daigo's Daikakuji line, the emperor sought to diminish the influence of the Koga and reward his supporter Chikafusa with court title and rank within the Grand Council of State. Go-Daigo intentionally delayed the Koga's promotions and excluded them from his inner councils, thereby weakening their prestige and influence at court.³²

During Go-Daigo's reign, Chikafusa also served as Head of Genji and the tutor for Go-Daigo's son, Prince Tokiyoshi (?-1330). However, Chikafusa retired from his posts within the court upon the sudden death of the prince in 1330, a tragedy which stunned Chikafusa, who had spent years preparing him to rule after the abdication of his father. Chikafusa withdrew from public life for the next two years.³³ During Chikafusa's absence from court affairs, Go-Daigo and his supporters decided to attempt to destroy the Kamakura *bakufu* and began gathering forces for an invasion of the eastern provinces. The *bakufu* quickly suppressed the efforts of Go-Daigo in 1331. The *bakufu* exiled Go-Daigo to Oki Island and pushed for the selection of the Jimyōin candidate, Emperor Kōgōn (1313-1364) to take his place. Two years later, however, Go-Daigo returned from exile and gathered a force of former *bakufu* allies to destroy the *bakufu* once and for all. Go-Daigo succeeded and was restored as Japan's active emperor in 1333.³⁴

Besides the Kitabatake, many Minamoto houses assisted Go-Daigo in his attack on the Kamakura *bakufu*. The Nitta and Ashikaga families played a significant role among the houses who supported Go-Daigo who both hailed from Minamoto lineage through the branch founded

³² Okano Tomohiko, *Kitabatake Chikafusa: Dainihon ha shinkoku nari* (Kyōto: Mineruva Shobō, 2009), 46-48.

³³ Ibid., 49-50.

³⁴ The events leading to Go-Daigo's expulsion from the capital and the destruction of the Kamakura *bakufu* is referred to as the Genkō Incident. See: Ishii Susumu, 'The Decline of the Kamakura *bakufu*,' in *The Cambridge History of Japan* vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 172-174.

by Emperor Seiwa (850-881).³⁵ At the time, the Seiwa branch paled in comparison to the prestige of the Murakami branch. Traditionally members of the Seiwa had served in the provinces as low-ranking court functionaries. As a way of gaining access to more prestigious positions within the provinces many of the Seiwa Minamoto formed houses which specialized in military service for higher ranking members of the Minamoto lineage. These houses are often seen as one of the main sources of an emergent ‘warrior’ class in Japan, but even these houses cannot easily be identified as simply warriors.

Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199), the founder of the Kamakura *bakufu*, also hailed from the Seiwa branch of the Minamoto.³⁶ He became the first exception to the line of low-ranking Seiwa members when the court granted Yoritomo a position of the third-rank via the position of Right Commander of the Inner Palace Guards (*migi-konoe taishō*) in 1190.³⁷ This post legitimated the creation of administrative offices (*mandokoro*) and formed the legal basis for the institution which developed into the Kamakura *bakufu*. Nevertheless, the Seiwa Minamoto of the early fourteenth century lacked the backing of centuries of precedent that would enable their rise to the highest levels of the court hierarchy. Although Yoritomo only briefly held the title of *sei'i taishōgun*, that office became crucial for the legitimation of the *bakufu* and the justification for its administration. Although important for the Kamakura, the significance of the

³⁵ For a description of Ashikaga house lineage, see: John Whitney Hall, ‘The Muromachi Bakufu,’ in *The Cambridge History of Japan* vol. 3, 175-178.

³⁶ Yoritomo’s connection to Seiwa most likely prohibited him from reaching the highest ranks of the imperial court. Subsequently, only three generations of his family would inherit the title of *sei'i taishōgun*. See: Okano, *Genji to Nihon kokuō*, 91-129.

³⁷ Court protocol dictated that the Right Commander of the Inner Palace Guards must be of the third-rank or higher. Before receiving this position, Yoritomo begun issuing promises of rights to income among his *jitō* supporters. After their public acceptance by the court, his administrative offices (*mandokoro*) claimed the right to administer over the office of *jitō* as they were not a part of any other government institution.

position should not be overemphasized, for anyone holding an office of the third-rank or higher could establish administrative offices and issue documentation to its subordinates.

Most of the shoguns of the Kamakura *bakufu* did not hail from the Seiwa branch of the Minamoto. Accordingly, the Seiwa line lacked inheritance rights to high positions within the imperial court. As collaterals of the Seiwa branch, the Ashikaga and Nitta families depended on their relationships with influential members of the Murakami branch of the Minamoto who occupied the Head of Genji post. If a relationship could not be maintained with the head of one's own lineage, it would require someone of similar or greater status to confer the appropriate title and rank that would allow them to operate independently of the Head. In terms of the 1330s, with the downfall of the Kamakura *bakufu*, if the Ashikaga and Nitta wished to progress towards inclusion into the highest ranks of the court, it would have to be through the benefice of Go-Daigo and Kitabatake Chikafusa, or they would have to find a work-around through the other imperial lineages and Genji houses displaced by the new regime.

Court-based Military Proliferation: Go-Daigo and his Shoguns 1333-1336

The early stages of Go-Daigo's regime hint at a degree of coordination and inclusion with the low-ranking Minamoto supporters who had ousted the Kamakura at the emperor's request. Go-Daigo attempted to replace the previous *bakufu* institution with three comparable geographically based military institutions. Rather than refusing to appoint a new shogun to oversee the previous *bakufu*'s functionaries, Go-Daigo appointed two: his son Prince Moriyoshi (1308-1335) as *sei'i shōgun*, the more prestigious office of 'barbarian subduing general,' and

Ashikaga Takauji as *chinjufu shōgun*, the slightly less prestigious ‘protector general.’³⁸ The appointment of *sei’i shōgun* to Prince Moriyoshi followed similar appointments that had been granted by the imperial court to imperial princes during the Kamakura regime. No precedent linked the Genji line to the post of *sei’i shōgun* during the period. Go-Daigo’s appointment of Takauji to *chinjufu shōgun* shows a willingness to divide the previous *bakufu*’s administrative rights between Takauji and his son, Prince Moriyoshi.³⁹ Both Moriyoshi and Takauji began issuing documents that guaranteed income rights and rewards to former members of the Kamakura *bakufu* who had assisted in their campaigns in 1333.⁴⁰ Later that year, Go-Daigo elevated Takauji to the third-rank and bestowed the Governor (*kokushi*) of Musashi province title upon him to accompany his *chinjufu shōgun* post.⁴¹

Go-Daigo further attempted to fracture the previous *bakufu* powerbase by appointing the Kitabatake to similar positions within the court. In 1332, Go-Daigo had already appointed Chikafusa’s oldest son, Kitabatake Akiie, to the third-rank and granted him the title of Right Commander of the Inner Palace Guards.⁴² This post was the same post granted to Minamoto no Yoritomo, who briefly served as the first *sei’i taishōgun* of the Kamakura *bakufu*, to legitimize his administrative offices at the end of the twelfth century. In 1333, Akiie received the Governor (*kokushi*) of Mutsu province post and accompanied another one of Go-Daigo’s sons, Prince Noriyoshi (1328-1368), with an expeditionary force to fight remnants of the Hōjō supporters in

³⁸ The title of *chinjufu shōgun* stood on comparable rank with the *sei-i shōgun* and enabled him to requisition military support among Kamakura *jitō* during in his campaign in northern Japan (1336-1338).

³⁹ Satō Shinichi, *Nanbokuchō no dōran* (Tōkyō: Chūō Kōrانشa, 1971), 15-35.

⁴⁰ Conlan, *State of War*, 107-140.

⁴¹ *Kugyō bunin*, in *Kokushi taiei* vol. 54 (Tōkyō: Kokushi Taiei Kankōkai, 1923), 550.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 545.

northeastern Japan.⁴³ Chikafusa accompanied Akiie and Prince Noriyoshi as they took residence in Taga Castle in northern Japan and began their campaign against the surviving partisans of the Hōjō in the eleventh month of 1333.⁴⁴

For the first eighteen months of Go-Daigo's reign (1333-1334), the court divided military responsibility between Prince Moriyoshi, the Ashikaga family, and the Kitabatake family. Each held titles from the court which authorized the creation of administrative offices, and each were commissioned to defeat the remnants of the Kamakura *bakufu* who resisted Go-Daigo's rule. Prince Moriyoshi gained most of his support from the provinces near the capital.⁴⁵ Utilizing their positions granted from the imperial court, the Ashikaga began contacting many of the former *bakufu* housemen and *jitō* in eastern Japan. The layering of shogun and governor posts gave Takauji multiple venues to approach local administrators and guarantee their rights. Similarly, the Kitabatake began assembling houses in northern Japan near their residence in Taga and enlisting their help in their campaigns in exchange for income rights to land.⁴⁶

This balance, however, soon toppled as Prince Moriyoshi grew wary of Ashikaga influence over the former supporters of the Kamakura *bakufu*. Takauji petitioned the court for the *sei'i taishōgun* post, attempting to create a link between Yoritomo's legacy and his own. In late 1334, the offended Moriyoshi attempted to gather troops to chastise the Ashikaga.⁴⁷ Go-

⁴³ Ibid., 556.

⁴⁴ Ōshima Nobujirō ed., *Kitabatake Akiie: Ōshū o sekkenshita Nanchō no kizoku shōgun* (Tōkyō: Ebisu Kōshō Shuppan, 2014), 22-32.

⁴⁵ Recent scholarship has described this initial stance by Go-Daigo as an attempt to establish a 'triumvirate' between these three individuals to create balance. See: Okano, *Kitabatake Chikafusa*, 64-66.

⁴⁶ Ōshima, *Kitabatake Akiie*, 32-43.

⁴⁷ Satō, *Nanbokuchō no dōran*, 55-69.

Daigo sided with Takauji in the dispute and exiled Prince Moriyoshi to Kamakura in 1335. The court stripped Moriyoshi of his post and granted that office of *sei'i shōgun* to Takauji in his stead. The court then granted Kitabatake Akiie the vacated *chinjufu shōgun* post, placing Akiie and Takauji as the two primary military commanders over the imperial forces. Takauji moved his residence to Kamakura following his appointment to *sei'i shōgun* and began positioning himself for a conflict with the supporters of Go-Daigo. Takauji's younger brother, Ashikaga Tadayoshi (1306-1352), executed Prince Moriyoshi in 1335 after an uprising by the last remnants of the Hōjō in the Kantō region.

Prince Moriyoshi's death left the two most prominent branches of the Minamoto lineage at the head of the two preeminent military institutions of the time. Takauji continued to gather support. He attempted to check Akiie by making Shiba Ienaga as Commander of the Northern Provinces (*Ōshū taishō*) and commissioning him to muster support from the same region where Akiie held residence.⁴⁸ Go-Daigo, fearing Takauji, launched a campaign against him, and placed Nitta Yoshisada (1301-1338) as commander of an expeditionary force. By the end of the year, however, Ashikaga forces had driven Nitta back to Kyoto and advanced on the capital.⁴⁹

In defense of Go-Daigo, Akiie led his forces down from Mutsu province at the end of the twelfth month of 1335.⁵⁰ He defeated the forces of Shiba Ienaga in Kamakura at the beginning of the first month of 1336. His army followed Takauji's forces, marching towards the capital, arriving in Ōmi province only ten days after departing Kamakura. Over the next month, Akiie's forces fought in Kyoto, forcing the Ashikaga to abandon the capital and flee to the west. For his

⁴⁸ *Dainihon shiryō* vol. 6.2, *Nanpō kiden* 8.30.1335 (Kenmu 2), 587.

⁴⁹ Conlan, *State of War*, 35-48.

⁵⁰ *Dainihon shiryō* vol. 6.2, *Taiheiki* 11.2.1335 (Kenmu 2), 834-835.

service, Go-Daigo granted Akiie the rank of *chinjufu taishōgun* and a position as Senior Counselor (*dainagon*) on the Grand Council of State.⁵¹

Later chronicles, such as the *Taiheiki*, highlight the role of Nitta Yoshisada during this counter-offensive against Takauji, but his role was subservient to Akiie. Interestingly enough, the Ashikaga demanded that Yoshisada be killed when he mobilized regional support but treated Akiie with more respect, attaching honorific suffixes to the use of Akiie's name in contemporary sources.⁵² The Kitabatake were true rivals of the Ashikaga, and respected adversaries as well. Akiie played a major role in bolstering Go-Daigo's support in the east, and Akiie and his father Chikafusa occupied the highest positions within Go-Daigo's court. They also held claims to the Head of Genji post, which signified dominance over all the branches of the Minamoto.

Further evidence of their perceived superiority comes from their treatment of Takauji. Chikafusa, while chronicling the reign of Go-Daigo in his *Jinnō shōtōki*, attempted to refute any comparison between the Ashikaga's lowly origins his own:

When Lord Sanetomo (Takauji's ancestor) made his ceremonial visit (*haiga*) to the Hachiman Shrine, the chieftain of the Ashikaga was simply one among twenty vassals who preceded him on foot. Supposing a descendant of Yoritomo should appear today; there would certainly be no reason to promote him to high office. Even less reason is there to advance the scion of a family that has for so long been simply retainers. I am told there were those who questioned why someone like Takauji, who achieved no great merit, should be so lavishly rewarded.⁵³

⁵¹ Akiie previously held the post of *chinjufu shōgun*. The addition of '*tai*', meaning 'great', signified Akiie's elevation over his previous position which shared responsibility for the military functions of the court with the Ashikaga. *Kugyō bunin*, in *Dainihon shiryō* vol. 6.3, 60-61.

⁵² See: *Shizuoka kenshi shiryō-hen* (Shizuoka: Shizuoka-ken, 1996), *Ashikaga Tadayoshi mikyōjō* no. 192-193, 94.

⁵³ Varley, *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns*, 250.

According to the protocols of the court, the Kitabatake occupied a rank superior to the Ashikaga under Go-Daigo. For the Ashikaga, without the support of the Kitabatake there existed no non-violent means to acquire the position as paramount head of the remnants of the *bakufu*. These conditions undoubtedly drove the Ashikaga towards their eventual resolution to replace Go-Daigo's line with a member of the rival Jimyōin branch of the imperial family. After having been driven out of the capital by Akiie and having been labeled a traitor by Go-Daigo and stripped of political rank and office, Takauji sought the support of the Retired Emperor Kōgon.⁵⁴ As the head of the Jimyōin imperial line, and chief rival to Go-Daigo, Retired Emperor Kōgon provided the only alternative legitimate means of securing Takauji's coveted *sei'i taishōgun* position and control over the shattered *bakufu*. Only through the support of factions within the court that opposed Go-Daigo could the Ashikaga regain their position of influence and ever hope to surpass the Kitabatake.

Establishing a New Role for Genji: Ashikaga and the Northern Court

In the following month, Retired Emperor Kōgon issued a series of edicts supporting the removal of Go-Daigo which Takauji used to gather support in Western Japan.⁵⁵ The forces of Shiba Nagaie again began attacks on the holdings of Kitabatake Akiie in the third month of 1336. Akiie returned to Mutsu with his forces to suppress the pro-Ashikaga partisans.⁵⁶ In the fifth month, Takauji returned to the capital with new forces gathered from the western provinces.

⁵⁴ Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 93-94.

⁵⁵ *Nanbokuchō ibun Kyushu hen* vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1980) doc. 418, 2.17.1336 (Kenmu 3). See: Satō, *Nanbokuchō no dōran*, 131-135.

⁵⁶ *Dainihon shiryō* vol. 6.3, *Sōma Okada monjo*, 310-313.

Takauji defeated the Nitta-led forces that had remained in the region after Akiie's departure. As Ashikaga forces gained control of the capital by the eighth month, Akiie's forces continued to engage in a series of battles against Ashikaga supporters in the north. The Ashikaga moved to place Retired Emperor Kōgon's younger brother, Emperor Kōmyō (1332-1380), as the new emperor while Go-Daigo fled the capital with the imperial regalia in late 1336.⁵⁷

The conflict of the Northern and Southern courts began as result of the contested claims of superiority between the Ashikaga-supported Jimyōin branch of the imperial family and the Kitabatake-supported Daikakuji branch. Both factions relied on court ranks to justify their authority. Both factions' leaders were appointed as shoguns by Go-Daigo and could guarantee rights to former members of the Kamakura *bakufu*. Both drew from a collection of low-ranking court functionaries throughout the country to support their military and political aims and asserted that their imperial benefactor held the right to rule over the central Japanese polity.⁵⁸ Additionally, both supported those claims through intellectual, religious, and military agendas and the Ashikaga and Kitabatake claimed to be the protectors of the imperial family who tied their Genji lineage into their justifications for rule.⁵⁹

In his writings, Chikafusa frequently referred to the importance of the possession of the 'three sacred treasures'⁶⁰—the imperial regalia—which, in his view, determined the legitimacy of the 'true' imperial line. These three treasures were ritual implements that served an important

⁵⁷ Satō, *Nanbokuchō no dōran*, 137-141.

⁵⁸ Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 130-149.

⁵⁹ Okano, *Genji to Nihon kokuō*, 130-146.

⁶⁰ Chikafusa argued that the possession of the imperial regalia (*sanshu no jingi*) gave one the necessary ritual implements to properly induct a new emperor over Japan, and the absence of these articles negated the Northern Court's claims of superiority. See: Okano, *Kitabatake Chikafusa*, 215-229.

role in imperial ascension rites and symbolically tied the current emperor to the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. One of the three treasures, the mirror of Amaterasu, was located within the Inner Shrine of Ise.⁶¹ According to Chikafusa's arguments, possession of the regalia by the rightful ruler of the state and their proper ritual care by the court functionaries to which they were entrusted ultimately imbued sacred power upon the implements themselves.⁶² The Northern Court countered that possession of the objects did not ultimately matter; ritual mimesis enabled the court to symbolically reproduce the implements in a manner which justified their ritual observances.⁶³

Interest in maintaining control of the Ise shrines which housed one of the imperial regalia led Chikafusa to push for the appointment of his second son, Kitabatake Akinobu (1320-1380), as Governor (*kokushi*) of Ise in 1336 as the forces of Go-Daigo retreated from the capital. Chikafusa and his son, along with the forces that remained loyal to Go-Daigo, moved into the Yoshino region which immediately bordered Ise province on the west. In early 1337, Chikafusa and Go-Daigo sent letters to Akiie requesting for him to return from the northern provinces to assist in fighting the Ashikaga who had taken control of the capital.⁶⁴ By the eighth month, Akiie defeated the forces of Shiba Nagaie and, with Prince Noriyoshi, began his march south through Ashikaga territory.

⁶¹ The Imperial Grand Shrine in Ise; often referred to as the *Naikū*, or Inner Shrine.

⁶² Conlan, Thomas. *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 52-77.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 14-18.

⁶⁴ *Dainihon shiryō* vol. 6.3, *Shirakawa monjo*, 934.

Akiie defeated Ashikaga partisans in the Kantō region, even taking Kamakura as he had two years before.⁶⁵ In the first month of 1338, Akiie departed Kamakura in pursuit of Takauji. He stopped at the Mishima Shrine in the first week of the new year, and issued a document wherein he prayed for the “peace of the realm.”⁶⁶ The Mishima Shrine held a special connection to Minamoto no Yoritomo. Yoritomo had prayed for peace in the realm at Mishima before his conflict with the Taira that led to the establishment of the Kamakura *bakufu*. Akiie fashioned himself in the same manner as Yoritomo; he had occupied Kamakura and now prayed at Yoritomo’s shrine to assist him in the suppression of the Ashikaga. More than any other contemporary, Akiie posed the greatest threat in both military capacity and as a legitimate alternative to Takauji’s claims as the head of a new *bakufu*.

Akiie and Noriyoshi arrived in Owari province the following week and prepared to advance on towards Kyoto immediately.⁶⁷ However, his advance was stopped by Ashikaga forces at the Battle of Aogahara. Having his momentum stunted, Akiie moved south to Ise to gain reinforcements and supplies from his father and brother Akinobu. They repelled an Ashikaga counterattack at the beginning of the second month, before solidifying their fortifications in Ise for the next several weeks.⁶⁸

Akiie would not wait long to renew his attack upon the Ashikaga. At the beginning of the third month, Akiie led his forces west from Yoshino in an attempt to secure the southern road to Kyoto. Akiie successfully pushed to Tennōji on the coast of the Inland Sea (near modern-day

⁶⁵ *Dainihon shiryō* vol. 6.4, *Ōkunitama jinja monjo*, 653-654.

⁶⁶ *Shizuoka-ken shi shiryō hen* vol. 6 (Shizuoka: Shizuoka-Ken, 1996), *Kitabatake kishinjō* 1.7.1338, 93.

⁶⁷ *Dainihon shiryō* vol. 6.4, *Jinnō Shōtōki*, 663.

⁶⁸ *Dainihon shiryō* vol. 6.4, *Taiheiki*, 674-677.

Osaka) where he engaged in a series of conflicts with Ashikaga forces until the fifth month of 1338. At the Battle of Ishizu, Akiie was killed during the engagement with Ashikaga troops.⁶⁹ Akiie's death in 1338 was a turning point for the Go-Daigo regime. His campaigns in northern Japan drew resources from the Ashikaga and prolonged the conflict with the Northern line. His position as *chinjufu taishōgun* incorporated military functionaries across northern Japan, and his successes against the Ashikaga in battle posed the most serious threat to Takauji's reputation as a military commander.

Takauji's mother herself would describe how she perceived Akiie's death as a sign of divine favor:

Here, on 5.22 [1338] between Tennōji and Sakai, in Izumi, [Kitabatake] Akiie, the governor of Mutsu was killed and his head, etc. was presented for inspection. Astonishing to tell, Hachiman and Sumiyoshi appeared, visible to the eye, in the midst of the battle [*Ishizu no tatakai*], and also a good half-dozen six ships lay burned out and sunk. Such was the will of the gods, and it gave me great hope for the future.⁷⁰

As Kiyoko's letter reveals, Akiie was perceived as the gravest threat to Ashikaga success. For the first five years of Go-Daigo's rule, Akiie had been the most prominent and successful commander in Japan. Without Akiie the Southern Court could no longer hope for a quick and decisive solution that would place them back in control in the capital.

Even after Akiie's death, however, Kitabatake Chikafusa, the most influential surviving commander of the Southern Court, continued to push against the dominance of the Ashikaga. Chikafusa requested that his son Akinobu receive the title of *chinjufu shōgun* and fill the position

⁶⁹ Ōshima, *Kitabatake Akiie*, 155-161.

⁷⁰ *Uesugi Kiyoko shojō* 5.27.1338, www.komonjo.princeton.edu/shoguns-mother/ Accessed September 20, 2021.

left vacant by Akiie. The title of Governor of Ise was then transferred to Chikafusa's third son, Kitabatake Akiyoshi (1326-1383), when Akinobu and Chikafusa set out for northern Japan to solidify their strength among Akiie's former supporters in Mutsu. This father-son duo fought against the Ashikaga in northern Japan for the next six years.⁷¹ During his stay in the north, Chikafusa wrote his work *Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns (Jinnō Shōtōki)*, which served as a textbook for the second Southern Court Emperor Go-Murakami⁷² and would help shape the political and religious ideology of the imperial court for hundreds of years after his death.⁷³

After his return to Yoshino in 1343, the Southern Court granted Chikafusa the title of *jugō*.⁷⁴ Chikafusa's appointment to this title broke precedent since the title of *jugō* was traditionally only granted to members of the imperial court who had served as imperial regents. Following Emperor Go-Daigo's death in 1339, Chikafusa stood at the head of the Southern Court as the protector and educator of Emperor Go-Murakami and symbolic head of the imperial family. Intellectually, he formulated the ideology professed by the Southern Court and continued to serve as an able commander. In 1351, he then led a bold, swift military strike on Kyoto, allowing him to capture the Northern court's imperial family, an act which bolstered Southern

⁷¹ Okano, *Kitabatake Chikafusa*, 145-190.

⁷² The former Prince Noriyoshi who served alongside Akiie during his tenure in the northern provinces of Japan. Go-Murakami selected his name as emperor in honor of Emperor Murakami from which the Kitabatake drew their descent.

⁷³ Chikafusa's writings in the *Jinnō Shōtōki* would be considered by scholars in the Edo Period (1600-1868). His defense of the Southern Court's right to rule would be supported by many powerful members of the Edo elite and ultimately led to the acceptance of the Southern Court as the official line by the imperial family in 1911. Additionally, Chikafusa's *Shokugen-shō* would be commonly copied and disseminated during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and provided information concerning court ranks and appointments to many of the functionaries of the court.

⁷⁴ Honorary rank granted to one of non-imperial descent, designating that they receive treatment comparable to an emperor.

Court claims of legitimacy.⁷⁵ Political fracturing within the Ashikaga *bakufu* forced Takauji to formally surrender to Chikafusa in that same year.⁷⁶ This rapprochement only lasted until Chikafusa once again attacked Takauji, leading to another 41 years of warfare.

Ise province proved to be a major focal point of wars between supporters of the Northern and Southern Courts. Despite maintaining early control over the entire province, subsequent campaigns by the Northern Court's forces wrested significant portions of northern Ise away from the Kitabatake during the 1350s. Chikafusa's death in 1354 reduced support for the Southern Court as more functionaries throughout Japan flocked towards the Ashikaga *bakufu*. Southern Court forces led by Kitabatake Akinobu in Northern Japan continued to harass Ashikaga partisans until 1362, when they were soundly defeated. Akinobu's failures in 1362 compelled many of his supporters to relocate to Ise in the 1360s.⁷⁷ The withdrawal of Kitabatake forces from northern Japan, however, enabled them to reassert control over a wider area of Ise province in 1371. The Ashikaga placed one of their collateral *shugo* houses, the Toki family, as *shugo* over Ise province. The Kitabatake, realizing their inability to overcome the Ashikaga *shugo*, fortified their mountainous holdings in southern Ise and periodically engaged in hostilities for an additional two decades.

The Reconciliation of Genji: Ashikaga Yoshimitsu and Kitabatake Akiyasu

Though unable to defeat the Ashikaga, the Southern Court successfully resisted the Ashikaga for the next twenty years. The ideological battle between the Kitabatake and Ashikaga

⁷⁵ Okano, *Kitabatake Chikafusa*, 198-215.

⁷⁶ Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 117-130.

⁷⁷ Kobayashi, Kaoru ed., *Satō-ke Monjo: Dōran no jidai o ikiru* (Tsu: Nozaki Insatsu, 2021), 4-9.

families within the Minamoto lineage group slowly turned in favor of the Ashikaga. The power of the *shugo* continued to increase through the fourteenth century as many *shugo* used the existence of the Southern Court to legitimate an expansion of taxes and military levies on their holdings. Following the death of Takauji in 1358, his son, Ashikaga Yoshiakira (1330-1367), struggled to retain control over the *shugo*. The Ashikaga's *shugo* families resisted Yoshiakira's request for support periodically and often refused to fight against Southern Court allies in the provinces.⁷⁸ Yoshiakira's death at the age of thirty-seven caused his son, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358-1408), to be appointed as the *sei'i taishōgun* at the age of eleven.

The young Yoshimitsu engrossed himself in knowledge of the court and its rituals. Unlike the imperial princes and Fujiwara nobles who occupied the Kamakura shogun post, Yoshimitsu showed interest in being personally involved in the rule of the *bakufu*. His ascension to the third-rank allowed him to push for further rank advancements beyond the title of shogun. He funded religious institutions with ties to the imperial court who administered specialized rituals that bolstered his claims to supremacy.⁷⁹ Yoshimitsu enacted several policies that sought to break down the power of the strongest *shugo* and frequently turned his own retainers against one another in his attempts to his own consolidate power. He used his position as the ranking member of the Seiwa Genji branch to impose himself on issues of succession among many of his *shugo* functionaries. In 1378, he received the title of Right Commander of the Inner Palace

⁷⁸ John Whitney Hall, 'The Muromachi Bakufu' in *Cambridge History of Japan* vol. 3, 211-219.

⁷⁹ Conlan, *Sovereign to Symbol*, 171-186.

Guards and the title of Senior Counsellor on the Grand Council of State as previous scions of the Kitabatake family had done.⁸⁰

In 1379, Yoshimitsu began exercising more immediate control over the *shugo*.⁸¹ He supported the continuation of imperial court rites which had gone defunct over the fourteenth century.⁸² By 1383, Yoshimitsu had received appointments as Minister of the Center (*Naidaijin*) and Minister of the Left (*Sadaijin*) within the Grand Council of State. These posts placed him as the highest-ranking member of any house of the Genji lineage in Northern or Southern Courts. In that same year, Yoshimitsu received the superintendent posts for Shōgakuin and Jun'aiin from the imperial court. For the first time in nearly 400 years, a non-Murakami Genji member of the lineage held the title of Head of Genji.⁸³

As Yoshimitsu orchestrated his rise in the capital, the Kitabatake created a house organization revolving around the Governor of Ise post.⁸⁴ Due to extended conflict with the Ashikaga during the fourteenth century, the Kitabatake had established several fortifications in strategic locations throughout southern Ise. The fortifications and the lands surrounding them became holdings that would be granted to branches of the Kitabatake line each generation. The name of the area surrounding the fortification provided the branch family name for the individuals who were granted those holdings. Each head of the branch family could be required

⁸⁰ Ogawa Takeo, *Ashikaga Yoshimitsu: kōbu ni kurin shita Muromachi shogun* (Tōkyō: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2012), 46-70.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 27-34.

⁸² Okano, *Genji Chōja*, 125-130.

⁸³ For more on Yoshimitsu's wide-sweeping consolidation policies see: Matthew Stavros, 'Warriors and the Capital: The Ashikaga and the Classical Idea,' in *Kyoto: An Urban History of Japan's Pre-modern Capital* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 103-132.

⁸⁴ Fujita Tatsuo, ed., *Ise Kokushi Kitabatake-shi no kenkyū*, (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004), 10-15.

to provide ‘service’ (*bugyō*) at the behest the senior-ranking member of the house. The senior-ranking member established his position over each branch by the accumulation of imperial titles and court ranks, placing him in a higher position over the ancillary families.

Kitabatake Akinobu served as the first senior-ranking member of the Kitabatake house following Chikafusa’s death in 1354. Akinobu spent the rest of his life in northern Japan fighting against the Ashikaga. As mentioned above, Akinobu’s younger brother, Akiyoshi, was appointed as the Ise Governor before Akinobu’s departure in 1338.⁸⁵ Akiyoshi took over as senior-ranking member of the Kitabatake house after Akinobu’s departure to the northern provinces in 1361. Akiyoshi petitioned the Southern Court to appoint his children and nephews to positions over each of the fortifications they possessed within Ise province.⁸⁶ At the time of Akiyoshi, the Kitabatake house had control over Sakanai, Kozukuri, Okawachi, and Seki fortifications.⁸⁷ The senior-ranking member of the house had the ability to appoint designated heirs for inheritance for each of the branch families. For the Kitabatake, the head of the main house placed each of his sons as the head of the branch families each generation. In this manner the Sakanai, Okawachi, Kozukuri, and Seki families all remained part of the same Kitabatake house organization even after they took on the names of their respective holdings.

These appointments became customary for subsequent Kitabatake lords for the next two centuries. The Kitabatake remained the highest-ranked among members of the Minamoto lineage

⁸⁵ Akiyoshi was only ten when he received his appointment. Kitabatake Chikafusa issued documents to the family’s supporters until Akiyoshi came of age. Earliest remaining documents show him actively granting rights to the Satō family in 1352 as Governor of Ise. See: Kobayashi Hide, ed., *Satō-ke monjo*, 27-28.

⁸⁶ Fujita ed., *Ise Kokushi Kitabatake-shi no kenkyū*, 9-15.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 24-29.

within the Southern Court and ostensibly served as protectors and educators for the imperial line. Akiyoshi eventually relinquished the title of Governor of Ise to his son, Kitabatake Akiyasu (1361-1414), in 1376.⁸⁸ This ensured that the young Kitabatake heir could continue to pursue court advancement at an early age while improving his ability to acquire high court-rank that would enable him to adjudicate over important decisions within the house organization.⁸⁹

In the capital, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu's frequent incursions into the succession practices of his powerful *shugo* functionaries resulted in animosity between the young Ashikaga lord and his immediate subordinates. This animosity produced a constant need for military support as Yoshimitsu met with an increase in violent resistance during the 1380s and 1390s. After his rise to the position of Head of Genji, Yoshimitsu began viewing the weakened Southern Court as an important potential ally in his contests with the *shugo*. Many of the 'half-tax' edicts that empowered the *shugo* originated from the conflict with the Southern Court. Yoshimitsu must have surmised that by incorporating the Southern armies, he could weaken some of his *shugo*'s financial underpinnings and acquire more allies that would aid in his defense. Emissaries of the Northern Court and functionaries of the *bakufu* contacted the Southern Court in 1390 about a potential reunification of the court.

The Southern Court agreed to a reunification once they secured Yoshimitsu's promise to fulfill three conditions. First, that imperial succession would continue to alternate between scions of the Northern and Southern Courts. Second, that the Imperial Regalia would be handed over to the current Northern Court emperor, but that it would be returned to the Southern Court during their rule. Finally, that the income rights which the Daikakuji (Southern Court) imperial line

⁸⁸ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 310-312.

⁸⁹ Fujita. *Ise Kokushi Kitabatake-shi no kenkyū*, 21-22.

maintained in 1392 would continue to be rendered to them in perpetuity.⁹⁰ While the Northern court would retain their position as emperor and be given the imperial regalia in the short term, the other two clauses favored the Southern Court. Ideologically, the return of the imperial regalia and their use in future enthronement ceremonies created space for the continuance of Chikafusa's philosophy, which had legitimated the previous Southern court emperors.⁹¹ The reunification of the courts on these terms increased the Southern Court's legitimacy and gave them a meaningful position within Yoshimitsu's political world.

The Kitabatake's role within the combined Northern and Southern Court shifted drastically in the months that followed the final successful appeasement of the Southern Court. Sixty years of animosity and resentment between the Northern and Southern courts created difficult choices. From the perspective of the Northern Court, the court advancements and titles held by those in the Southern Court were invalid unless they had been ratified within the short window when Takauji had 'surrendered' to and supported the Kitabatake in 1351.⁹² Wholesale acceptance of Southern Court appointments would have created a series of conflicts over several important titles within the Grand Council of State that legally only permitted a single occupant. Many high-ranking families who had served the Southern Court lost their positions within the unified court overseen by Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. Despite these changes, the head of the

⁹⁰ 'Muromachi dono no Ise sangū,' in *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 334-337.

⁹¹ Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 172. Conlan argues that the surrender of the regalia signified the failure of Chikafusa's 'nominalism.' The Northern Court had followed a path of ritual determinism that then continued during the time of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. Chikafusa's ideas however were supported by the Hino family in the early fifteenth century, and periodically gained supporters throughout the Edo period (1600-1868). The fact that the regalia continue to be considered an important aspect of the legitimacy of the imperial family suggests that Chikafusa's ideas continued to have resonance in the political sphere even after the capitulation of the Southern Court.

⁹² Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 124-129.

Kitabatake house, Kitabatake Akiyasu, maintained his titles and position within the new hierarchy. Akiyasu received documents from Yoshimitsu assuring his rule over his holdings in Ise and reaffirming his titles within the unified court.⁹³

Yoshimitsu did not appoint the Kitabatake to offices within the *bakufu*. The Kitabatake continued to derive their right to rule over Ise province from the title of provincial governor (*kokushi*). There were only a few remaining governors stemming from Go-Daigo's appointments in the 1330s.⁹⁴ Provincial governors could only be appointed by the central organ of the imperial court, the Grand Council of State, an institution that contemporarily functioned under Yoshimitsu supervision. In strictest organizational terms, the Ashikaga *bakufu* theoretically possessed no means of demanding service from the Kitabatake at the time of their reinsertion into the political climate of the capital. The Kitabatake were not a *shugo* nor did they possess any post that the *bakufu* had influence over. Yoshimitsu did not engage with the Kitabatake as the shogun; he engaged with them as a ranking member of the Minamoto lineage group and as a member of the Grand Council of State.

Following the reunification of the courts, Yoshimitsu began treating the Kitabatake as commissioned administrators (*bugyōnin*).⁹⁵ While some scholars have classified *bugyōnin* as an accessory of a larger 'warrior' organization tied to the shogun⁹⁶, the longer history of *bugyōnin* introduced earlier reveals that the court had frequently appointed *bugyōnin* in a broader (and

⁹³ *Dainihon shiryō* vol. 7.1, *Ashikaga Yoshimitsu Anpō* 11.1392 (Meitoku 3), 41.

⁹⁴ Satō, *Nanbokuchō no dōran*, 31-35.

⁹⁵ For a detailed history of the progression of *bugyōnin* during the Muromachi period see: Kuwayama Kōnen, 'The *Bugyōnin* System: A Closer Look' in *Japan in the Muromachi Age*. Hall and Toyoda eds., 51-65.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 58-61

more literal) sense as specialized functionaries ‘who render service’ (*bugyō*) to the court, the emperor, or a high-ranking member of one’s lineage group.

High-ranking court families traditionally would call upon branches of their lineage groups to ‘render service’ (*bugyō*) through the issuance of documents originating from a person of higher status.⁹⁷ The office of the shogun at its inception only had purview over the offices of *jitō* and eventually *shugo*. As the shogunate expanded its political authority, it required a larger group of administrative and judicial officials within the capital to support its legal apparatus. Many of these functionaries served as messengers or legal specialists within the *bakufu*. Early leaders of the *bakufu* extended their authority over Minamoto lineages within the capital by virtue of their court-rank. They served little to no military function but instead served in an administrative role for the *bakufu*. This was of course possible because the office of the shogun derives its legitimacy from court appointment and functioned similarly to many other positions of high-rank. The Ashikaga-appointed *bugyōnin* existed in parallel to other contemporary *bugyōnin*, each with their own respective lines of authority.

The Kitabatake’s need for continued access to court appointments predicated a warming of relations between the Kitabatake and Ashikaga Yoshimitsu. With the combination of Northern and Southern Courts, many of the Northern Court loyalists occupied the preliminary court titles the Kitabatake would need access to in order to maintain their house structure. The Kitabatake family still fell under the purview of the Head of the Genji. As Head of Genji, Yoshimitsu held

⁹⁷ *Hōsho* documents came in different forms depending on the status of the originator. Often individuals of high status would rely on an intermediary to convey information due to social restrictions prevented low-ranking individuals from speaking directly with those of much higher ranks.

unique rights to appointments over family shrines and temples as well as lower ranking positions within the imperial court.⁹⁸

The Head of Genji could not prevent prominent members of the imperial court from obtaining rank, but the appointments he could disperse would enable young members of the lineage to acquire positions that would eventually line them up for further advancement later in life. It is through the position of Head of Genji, and as a ranking member of the Grand Council of State, that Yoshimitsu could guarantee current court ranks and future court ranks for the Kitabatake in a way that no Ashikaga had been able to before. It should come as no surprise that even after passing on the title of shogun to his son in 1394, Yoshimitsu continued to issue *bugyō* requests to the Kitabatake.⁹⁹ During a particularly difficult series of campaigns against the Ōuchi *shugo* family of western Japan in 1399, Yoshimitsu sent a request for military assistance to the Kitabatake, which the Kitabatake responded to with the deployment of 300 troops and provisions.¹⁰⁰

While the Kitabatake depended on Yoshimitsu's favor for their court appointments, Yoshimitsu did not monopolize all means of political leverage in the relationship. The Kitabatake holdings in Ise, Iga, and Yamato provinces had been among the Southern Court's most tightly defended strongholds. The Ashikaga could not conquer Ise or occupy the Kitabatake's holdings. Additionally, the Kitabatake hereditarily maintained a more prominent line within the Genji lineage which could be considered as potential candidates for the Head of Genji. Were the Kitabatake to gain the title of Head of Genji at some point in the future, then the

⁹⁸ Okano Tomohiko, *Genji to Nihon kokuō*, 169-180.

⁹⁹ 'Nanboku gōitsu to Kitabatake-shi,' in *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 322-334.

¹⁰⁰ *Gunsho ruijū* vol. 20, (Tōkyō: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1943) *Ōei-ki*, 11.29.1399 (Ōei 6).

Ashikaga would depend upon the Kitabatake to provide them with similar appointments to the ceremonial positions within the lineage group that would enable Ashikaga advancement in rank.

Even the agreement of reunification hinted that the Kitabatake would once again stand as central members of the imperial court. The Kitabatake remained a powerful voice within the faction of the Southern Court supporters that now integrated themselves into the capital. At the point of reunification, Kitabatake Akiyasu held the upper-second rank and his cousin, Nobuko, was the wife of the emperor of the Southern Court, Go-Kameyama (1350-1424). Nobuko gave birth to the imperial prince who was set to become the next emperor according to the agreement between the Northern and Southern Courts.¹⁰¹ Even after the capitulation of the Southern Court, in terms of both political prestige and as a significant military threat to the capital, the Kitabatake stood in a position of great influence as potentially the only family who could assume control over the *shugo* throughout the country were the Ashikaga to falter in their command over their supporters.

The court offices which the Kitabatake relied upon to maintain superior position vis-à-vis their branch families required years of service in lower posts within the court. The Kitabatake hereditarily obtained the position of Associate Counselor (*sangi*) or Senior Counsellor (*dainagon*) on the Grand Council of State within the Southern Court. These positions were primarily locked only to the most elite members of the court—those of third-rank or higher. Legal jurisprudence stipulated that an individual of lower rank could be accepted into the Associate Counselor post if they had served a term as a provincial governor and were of at least the fourth-rank. This exception permitted an individual to form their own administrative office

¹⁰¹ Fujita ed., *Ise Kokushi Kitabatake-shi no kenkyū*, 1-15.

(*mandokoro*) and assemble administrators (*bugyōnin*) to fill their offices. Additionally, individuals at the head of an official *mandokoro* could issue specialized *sode-han* edicts, which emphasized their name and prestige by placing their signature on the front-half of the document.¹⁰²

The ability of Kitabatake lords to appoint *bugyōnin* to fulfill house duties strengthened the bonds of cooperation between the house and its functionaries. Local administrators functioned as *bugyōnin* under the office of the provincial governor.¹⁰³ Their rights were ensured by the administrative offices of the Kitabatake and existed outside the immediate control of any other government institution. The *bugyōnin* could extract taxes from the populace on behalf of the provincial governor and were due a percentage of their extractions as annual rights to income. Through these mechanisms, the Kitabatake expanded their sources of income and the numbers and responsibilities of their functionaries.

These lower functionaries gained imperial recognition via means of their connection to the Kitabatake. *Bugyō* requests are inherently hierarchical in nature. The format of documents sent by a senior-member of a house follow the structure of a kind of request known as a *hōsho*. The language of the document clearly establishes the positions of both the recipient and the writer. In order to ensure the support of their branch families, the Kitabatake lords sought ceremonial court ranks not only for their own heirs but for members of their branch families as well. These documents offered inclusion into the Minamoto lineage via the Kitabatake. This

¹⁰² The records of the Sawa and Satō have copies of *sode-han mikyōjō* documents confirming their land rights spanning the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. See: *Sawa-shi komonjo* (Tōkyō: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1989), 158 and 169; and Kobayashi ed., *Satō-ke monjo*, 25-26.

¹⁰³ Kobayashi, Kaoru ed., *Satō-ke Monjo: Dōran no jidai o ikiru* (Tsu: Nozaki Insatsu, 2021), 49, 55, and 58-75.

connection brought functionaries from the northern provinces who had served under Akiie and Akinobu to Ise to serve as local administrators for the Ise governors.¹⁰⁴

This system of ensured that the senior members of the Kitabatake household ran the inner workings of the house, even though other members of the family might serve as governors in their youth. Though the senior-member would officially abdicate his title as provincial governor, to validate the decisions made by the young rulers, the retired patriarchs would issue accompanying documents alongside missives sent by the young lord.¹⁰⁵ Many of these Kitabatake lords would retire from their official court positions and cloister themselves within several Buddhist monasteries in and around Ise. Like Chikafusa before, retired Kitabatake patriarchs continued to rule over their house even after active court positions were bestowed onto the next generation.¹⁰⁶ The collection of imperial court ranks functioned as a list of qualifications that bolstered a Kitabatake's right to rule over their house. Individuals who at one point in their careers had held high positions within the court ranking system could require service from subordinate members of the same lineage. Through this system of house organization, the Kitabatake sought to stem internal strife and ensure the retention of their holdings through an administrative office that lay beyond the purview of the *bakufu*.

While the title of shogun held little sway over the actions of the Kitabatake, Yoshimitsu's control over the unified court and the Head of Genji post brought the Kitabatake back into the

¹⁰⁴ Kirita Takashi, 'Satō-ke monjo no denrai to kenkyū,' in *Sato-ke monjo*, 8-10.

¹⁰⁵ This form of regency would last throughout the sixteenth century. See: 'Ise Kokushi Kitabatake-shi' in *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 303-332.

¹⁰⁶ This practice had been in effect by Retired Emperors and noble families for hundreds of years. See: Uejima Susumu. 'Chūsei shūkyō chitsujō no keisei to Shinbutsu shūgō,' *Kokushigaku*, no. 182 (2004): 17-43.

political orbit of the capital. Maintaining positive relationships with Yoshimitsu and the prominent members of the Minamoto lineage group proved vital for the continuance of Kitabatake control of Ise province. Kitabatake inclusion into the new unified court in turn opened the way for Yoshimitsu to exert his influence over Ise province and establish ties with the Ise shrines after six decades of separation.

Conclusion

In the years following the reunification of the Northern and Southern Courts, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu acted solicitously towards his Kitabatake rivals. The ties between Yoshimitsu and the Kitabatake reveal that lineage proved to be a powerful mechanism which motivated both conflict and cooperation in the fourteenth century. Lineage, court rank, and appointments proved to be more influential in determining connections than the perceived distinction between ‘courtier’ and ‘warrior’ or Northern and Southern court allegiance. By the end of the fourteenth century, Yoshimitsu dominated both civil and military realms of influence through appointments within the *bakufu* and the Grand Council of State in the imperial court. His methodology was derived from the examples of Kitabatake Chikafusa and Akiie during the fourteenth century, who fought with the Ashikaga for supremacy on the terms of court-rank and position within their lineage group. Rather than a ‘warrior-courtier’ dichotomy, we see a common desire to acquire positions provided by the court that enabled court-based military institutions to grant rights and privileges to lower-functionaries.

The Kitabatake’s role as Governor of Ise also originated from this same conflict. Over the course of the fourteenth century, the Kitabatake relied upon court ranks as a means expanding their control over the Ise region. Their political and ideological battles with the Ashikaga created

the need for a position which existed outside the offices of the *bakufu*; a post which could be utilized to extract resources and manpower from the provinces. For many contemporaries, the latent powers attached to provincial governorships rarely reached any form of resonance outside of the capital, but for the Kitabatake, the post of provincial governor and high court-rank allowed them to create a role for a provincial governor as a primary administrator over a given geographic area and successfully oversee the affairs of their house.

The role of the Kitabatake governor and their reliance upon the Head of Genji would continue to affect the province of Ise's development in the next century. The reunification of the court placed the Ashikaga and Kitabatake once again within the same orbit of a unified imperial court. While they had now reached a new level of political influence, the ability to maintain supremacy over their rivals dominated much of Ashikaga policy in the fifteenth century. The next chapter will track how the Ashikaga embarked on large-scale pilgrimages to the Ise shrines to solidify their control over the country and how pilgrimage subsequently changed Ise's political, religious, and economic landscape for the next 200 years.

Chapter Two:

Ise *Onshi* and the Enervation of the Ise Shrines 1393-1491

Overview:

Fifteenth-century Japan is often characterized as a period in which authority migrated outward into the provinces and away from the center. The political authority of the Ashikaga *bakufu* (1336–1578) waned and regional alliances began to take a more prominent role in local administration. Powerful *shugo* families, Buddhist monasteries, and neighborhood associations contested for land rights and greater control throughout Japan. Local ‘warriors’ with ties to their locality referred to as *kokujin* fought their superiors and resisted the mandates of the court violently. Some contemporaries saw the disruption of political order as a fulfillment of world-ending prophecy and for later historians, incipient class struggle captured by the term, *gekokujo*, or the ‘low rising against the high’ is seen as a driving force which fundamentally changed the political landscape of premodern Japan.¹

Ise in the fifteenth and sixteenth century would seem to exemplify many of these same motifs as locals and the Kitabatake lords fought for control over shrine-lands and access to resources. The Kitabatake, however, maintained their advantage over the province due to their access to the court, control over new forms of economic development, and the preponderance of military resources. What is often depicted as class struggle more closely resembles a complex relationship between varying levels of ‘low’ and ‘high.’ The relationships of the Kitabatake,

¹ For a short overview of this perspective, see: Brett Walker, *A Concise History of Japan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 66-82.

local communities, and the attendants of the Ise shrines defy a simplified understanding of incipient class struggle.

For the Kitabatake, engaging with and supporting initiatives of influential figures within the capital created opportunities for development in the province. In the years that followed the reunification of the Northern and Southern Courts, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu began setting off on pilgrimage to the Ise shrines. Yoshimitsu's processions transformed the economic and social landscape of Ise province. The logistical demands of this new form of expanded pilgrimage caused the proliferation of local facilitators known as Ise *onshi*. The Kitabatake gradually expanded their control over the *onshi* by both forging alliances with, and (at times) suppressing these local actors. Through cooperation the Kitabatake and *onshi* eventually gathered resources that previously flowed to the Ise shrines for their support. While the pilgrimages of the Ashikaga enriched the province as a whole, the economic base from which the Ise shrines drew their sustenance slipped out from their control and into the hands of the Kitabatake. The 'high' Kitabatake leveraged their relationship with 'low' local communities to deprive resources from the shrines and their attendant families.

Additionally, the Kitabatake maintained close ties to the court, which allowed many of the Kitabatake to maintain relatively high court-rank, which in turn enhanced the role of the family head to legitimate their authority over their Ise holdings and to supervise their branch families. In fact, when Kitabatake leaders were unable to achieve high court rank, such as the case during the years 1408 to 1421, they proved less able to adequately control Ise and prevent uprisings from damaging the Ise shrines. After 1421, however, the Kitabatake more successfully navigated court politics, securing high rank which, along with their local military strength, enabled them to consolidate their authority in southern Ise province. In short, the Kitabatake

house relied upon the prestige of the imperial court and the resources of *onshi* within Ise to pursue a course that ultimately solidified substantial control over Ise province. The case of the Kitabatake in Ise reveals that support of the prerogatives of influential members of the capital continued to enable effective regional governance well into Japan's tumultuous fifteenth century.

Pilgrimage and Surveillance: Ashikaga-Kitabatake Relations

Prior to the unification of the Northern and Southern courts in 1392, the powerful Ashikaga shogun Yoshimitsu (1358-1408) began showing an interest in visiting the Ise shrines. In 1390, Yoshimitsu relied on the Ise shrines to legitimate his struggle against one of the most powerful magnates of Japan, the Yamana family, who controlled eleven provinces in western Japan. As the *shugo* office served as the foundation of local lordship, and these positions could not be readily divided, inheritance disputes could severely weaken *shugo* power. In the case of the Yamana, this dispute, known as the Meitoku Disturbance of 1391, and their defeat at the hands of Yoshimitsu and his supporters, weakened the Yamana's power, as they lost control of nine of their eleven provinces which were redistributed to Yoshimitsu's allies in the years that followed.²

During outbreaks of war, it was longstanding practice that participants would petition temples and shrines and invoke supernatural powers to assist in the destruction of their rivals.³ When the Yamana rebelled in 1391-1392, Yoshimitsu demanded that the priests of the Ise Shrines perform pacification rites against the Yamana. In turn he promised that if they would

² Wada Hidemichi, *Meitoku-ki: Kōhon to kisoteki kenkyū* (Tōkyō: Kasama Shōin, 1990), 5-15.

³ Thomas Conlan, *State of War: The Violent Order of Fourteenth-Century Japan* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2003), 165-178.

perform the rites to help him bring ‘peace to the realm,’ then he would, in a novel act for *bakufu* or court leaders, personally worship at the shrines.⁴

After Yoshimitsu defeated the Yamana, and oversaw the unification of the Northern and Southern courts in 1392, he fulfilled his promise and embarked on a pilgrimage to Ise.⁵ The act was unprecedented, as no earlier shogun had ever visited Ise in person. While some have suggested that this move appears to have been motivated by a strategy of appropriating imperial prerogatives and perhaps eventual usurpation of the imperial line,⁶ this pilgrimage also would have given Yoshimitsu the opportunity to directly meet the Kitabatake in their stronghold, an action impossible during the earlier years of war.

Yoshimitsu’s pilgrimages marked an unprecedented expansion of Ashikaga supervision over Ise and its shrines. Previously, and starting with the Kamakura shoguns Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147-1199) had patronized the Ise shrines, but had not worshipped there themselves. So important was the maintenance of shrines that the Kamakura regime made this regulation the very first of their fifty-one established laws, the Formulary of Adjudications (*goseibai shikimoku*) of 1232.⁷ The Kamakura regime granted new lands to the Ise shrines after Japan’s successful defense against the Mongol invaders of 1274 and 1281. By the end of the fourteenth

⁴ Kirita Takashi, ‘Kutō on-taiji no otsugebumi ni miru Ashikaga Yoshimitsu no jinja kitō,’ *Komonjo kenkyū* no. 97 (2020): 53.

⁵ Ibid., 54.

⁶ Imatani Akira, ‘Not for Lack of Will or Wile: Yoshimitsu’s Failure to Supplant the Imperial Lineage,’ trans. Kozo Yamamura, *Journal of Japanese Studies* 18, no. 1 (1992): 45–78.

⁷ The first article of the Formulary instructs members of the *bakufu* to provide for the maintenance and repair of temples and shrines. Contemporary sources viewed temples and shrines as a necessary aspect of ‘defense’ for which the shogun shared responsibility with the imperial court. Legal functionaries within the *bakufu* specifically name the Ise Shrines as one of the shrines for which the *bakufu* must help in maintaining. See: ‘Kantō shikimoku’ in Ikeuchi Yoshisuke, ed., *Chūsei hōsei shiryō shū* vol. 7 (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1978), 31-32.

century, Ise's prayers were seen as necessary for the defense of Japan and would be called upon throughout the fourteenth century as the Northern and Southern courts contested for control over the archipelago.⁸

Something of Ise's prominence is revealed by the fact that it is mentioned in the *Yuanshi*, the Chinese history of the invasions. In this account, Emperor Kameyama is described as having 'a royal rescript read at the shrine of the Sun Goddess' but notably, not actually worshipping at the shrine, and then the narrative describes how the hapless Mongol invaders 'saw a great serpent appearing on the surface of the water, and the water smelled of sulfur.' The implication in this narrative is that these "bizarre and weird things" were signs that the divine power of Ise, and ultimately doomed the Mongol fleet.⁹

A policy of Kamakura patronage of Ise was continued by the first two Ashikaga shoguns between the years 1336 and 1367.¹⁰ Yoshimitsu was not content to simply patronize the shrine from afar, however, and visited the Ise shrines repeatedly following his victory over the Yamana. Between 1393-1408, Yoshimitsu made 13 processions to the Ise Shrines.¹¹ Yoshimitsu's processions were often accompanied by large personal retinues, and pilgrimage itself served as a pretext to enter Ise province.¹² During his journeys he stayed in residences provided by the Ōnakatomi, a branch of the Fujiwara lineage group with ties to the Office of Kami Affairs

⁸ John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines: Divine Capital* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing 2017), 76-79.

⁹ This is evidenced by the fact that signs of impending doom appeared after it was mentioned how Emperor Kameyama prayed at Ise. See: Tsunoda, 'Japan in the Dynastic Histories' (Pasadena: P.D. Ione Perkins, 1951), 87-88.

¹⁰ Breen and Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines*, 79-89.

¹¹ Jīngū Shichō ed., *Jīngūshi Nenpyō* (Tōkyō: Ebisu Kōshō Shuppan, 2005), 87-89.

¹² Ise-shi shi iinkai ed. *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2 *chūsei* (Ise: Ise-shi, 2011), 334-344.

(*Jingikan*),¹³ and in the personal residence of the Kitabatake upon his arrival in the shrine precincts. The size of his retinue fluctuated throughout the years, but it invariably required considerable accommodations. The Ōnakatomi priests and shrine officials from the Inner and Outer shrines began enlisting the help of locals (*jigenin*) to feed and house pilgrims traveling to the shrines. Local residents of Ise with rooms large enough to accommodate travelers received special priestly ranks from the Ise shrines and administrative duties from the Kitabatake. They would form the base of a growing assortment of specialized pilgrimage facilitators known as Ise *onshi*.

Pilgrims relied on ‘masters of prayer rites’ (*kitoshi*, or simply *onshi/oshi*¹⁴) to aid in their visits. *Onshi* were primarily Ise residents who provided accommodations for travelers, although in a few cases they were shrine officials from the capital.¹⁵ *Onshi* guided pilgrims and performed rituals for protection and purification for their patrons. Prior to the influx of pilgrims that accompanied the Ashikaga, shrine priests from the most two prominent lineages of the Inner and Outer Shrines¹⁶ in Ise conducted many of the duties that the *onshi* performed. The Arakida of the

¹³ The Ōnakatomi previously held a position of authority over the Ise Shrines in the ninth and tenth centuries. The head of the Ōnakatomi family often served as the ‘head of rituals’ (*saishu*) for the Ise Shrines in the Office of Kami affairs. In the ninth century they served as powerful estate holders within Ise province and maintained a family temple near the Inner and Outer Shrines. See: Breen and Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines*, 56-60.

¹⁴ In other parts of Japan, the term ‘*oshi*’ is commonly used, but in Ise they are almost exclusively referred to as ‘*onshi*’. See: Kanzaki Noritake, ‘A Comparative Analysis of the Tourist Industry,’ in *Japanese Civilization in the Modern World* vol. 9 (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1995), 39-49.

¹⁵ Ōnakatomi serviced the Ashikaga as *onshi*. The Ōnakatomi were ritual specialists with ties to the Hōrakuji temple in Ise province and derived their authority to administer rituals from the Office of Kami affairs. Many local *onshi* developed direct relations with the shrines in Ise who granted them provisional priest status to administer rites to patrons of the shrines.

¹⁶ The shrine complex of Ise consists of 123 shrines in the three shrine districts of southern Ise. Currently 91 shrines are affiliated with the Inner Shrine (*Kōtai Jingū/Naikū*) which enshrines the sacred physical representations or ‘*kami*-bodies’ (*shintai*) of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu. The remaining 32 shrines are

Inner Shrine (*naikū*) and the Watarai of the Outer Shrine (*gekū*) maintained connections with members of both the Northern and Southern Courts throughout the fourteenth century.¹⁷ As demand for these services increased over the century, the priests of the Inner and Outer Shrine became physically unable to meet that demand. Priests of the Inner and Outer Shrine facilitated the creation of bonds between locals and court patrons by rendering the *onshi* title and low-ranking priestly rights upon their favored local families.

Relations between *onshi* and their patrons (*danna*) became increasingly institutionalized with each subsequent procession.¹⁸ Many leading families of the *bakufu* like the Hatakeyama, Yamana, and Hosokawa established exclusive contracts with local *onshi* and passed those contracts down to their successors upon death.¹⁹ *Onshi* limits were one-sided. While patrons (*danna*) only possessed one *onshi* relationship, the *onshi* sought to expand their patron lists as widely as possible.²⁰ These contracts formed a new web of relations between locals, pilgrims, shrine attendants and the Kitabatake family.

affiliated with the Outer Shrine (*Toyouke Daijingu*) which enshrines the *kami*-bodies of Toyouke-Ōmikami. The Ise Shrine complex as a whole was dominated by the two lineages of the Inner and Outer Shrines for most of the Muromachi period. The Arakida and Watarai lineage groups were granted special privileges as ritualists at the Ise shrines. Early restrictions related to political taboos tied to discussions of impurity necessitated specialized ritualists within Ise. See: Mark Teeuwen, *Watarai Shintō: An Intellectual History of the Outer Shrine in Ise* (Leiden: Research School CNWS, 1996), 27-29; and Helen Hardacre, *Shinto: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 71-108.

¹⁷ Watarai Ieyuki of the Outer Shrine had been one of Kitabatake Chikafusa's closest supporters; sharing knowledge of his shrine's secret transmissions to Chikafusa and assisting in warfare against the *bakufu* in the 1330s and 1340s. See: Mark Teeuwen, 'Attaining Union with the Gods. The Secret Books of Watarai Shinto,' *Monumenta Nipponica* Vol. 48, No. 2 (Summer, 1993): 225-245; and Breen and Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines*, 101-105.

¹⁸ Kobayashi Kaoru, 'Ise Onshi to Sengoku Daimyō no kankei ni tsuite,' *Shintōshi kenkyū*, 64 no. (April 2016): 103-128.

¹⁹ Chieda Daishi, *Chū-kinsei Ise Jingū chiiki no kahei to shōgyōsoshiki* (Tōkyō: Iwata Shoin, 2011).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 110.

Access to Yoshimitsu through his processions to Ise also enabled Kitabatake Akiyasu to forge personal ties with the Ashikaga lord. Akiyasu's relationship with Yoshimitsu allowed him to acquire lower court titles more easily for his sons. Yoshimitsu held authority over the Grand Council of State and was the acting Head of Genji (*Genji no Chōja*). Akiyasu's two eldest sons, Kitabatake Mitsuyasu and Kitabatake Mitsumasa, each took a character from Yoshimitsu's name and added it to their own as a sign of amicable relations with the Ashikaga lord.²¹ Good relations between the Kitabatake and Yoshimitsu continued throughout Yoshimitsu's life. The Kitabatake fought on behalf of Yoshimitsu when he fought with Ōuchi Yoshihiro (1356-1400), a powerful *shugo*, in 1399.²² Yoshimitsu triumphed but the Kitabatake, who came to his aid, suffered when Mitsuyasu, Akiyasu's eldest son and heir, died during the fighting leaving Mitsumasa, a younger brother of no significant rank, as the new heir apparent to the Kitabatake household.

The situation for the Kitabatake worsened after the death of Yoshimitsu in 1408. Yoshimitsu's heir, Ashikaga Yoshimochi (1386-1428), attempted to reverse many of Yoshimitsu's policies. Yoshimitsu's personal understanding of the intricate webs of influence surrounding court title and ritual within the capital enabled him to command great respect among the various political agents in the capital. In contrast to Yoshimitsu who could readily bend people to his will through personal suason, Yoshimochi relied upon a group of conciliators made of a collection of powerful monks, *shugo*, and courtiers within the capital to enact his policy

²¹ For more on naming practices and gifted names, see: David Spafford, 'What's in a Name? House Revival, Adoption, and the Bounds of Family in Late Medieval Japan,' *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 74 no. 2 (2014): 315-316.

²² *Gunsho ruijū* vol. 20 (Tōkyō: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1943), *Ōei-ki*, 11.29.1399 (Ōei 6).

changes.²³ For Yoshimochi, Emperor Go-Komatsu (1377-1433) proved to be an important ally. Go-Komatsu, with the support of Yoshimochi, ignored the peace treaty of 1392 by refusing to abdicate to a Southern Crown Prince at the appointed time. He held on to his position as emperor until his son, the future Emperor Shōkō (1401-1428), came of age in 1411.

With the help of his allies within the court and the imperial family, Yoshimochi dismantled many of the policies of his father Yoshimitsu.²⁴ Yoshimochi chose to ignore Yoshimitsu's 1392 accord with the Southern Court and allowed Go-Komatsu to appoint a Crown Prince from the Northern line in 1412. This action enraged the Kitabatake whose nominal head of Kitabatake military forces, Kitabatake Mitsumasa prepared to attack Yoshimochi in the capital to enforce the stipulations of the agreement which Yoshimitsu had established with the Southern Court. The aging Kitabatake house chief, Akiyasu, travelled to the residence of Shiba Yoshishige (1371-1418), the Shogunal Chancellor (*kanrei*),²⁵ to discuss the matter with Yoshishige and Hino Shigemitsu, an important representative of the shogun, in the six month of 1412. Akiyasu failed to convince Yoshimochi and Go-Komatsu to abandon this policy and abide by the 1392 treaty. Akiyasu returned to Ise in failure in the eighth month as his son prepared to deploy his forces to attack the capital.²⁶

²³ Megan Gilbert, 'Conciliators and Fixed Points: Dispute resolution in fifteenth-century Japan' (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2022)

²⁴ Matthew Stavros, 'Warring States Kyoto: Erasing the Classical City' in *Kyoto: An Urban History of Japan's Pre-modern Capital* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014), 133-150.

²⁵ The position of *kanrei* is often translated as 'Deputy-shogun.' This position, however, was not meant to have an individual act in the place of the shogun, but fulfill duties granted to the office that oversaw important administrative matters over the *shugo* which were to be enacted whether or not the shogun was capable of enacting them.

²⁶ Nakano Tatsuhiro, 'Muromachi zenki ni okeru Kitabatake-shi no dōko,' *Kokushigaku*, no. 106 (October 1978): 40-43.

Mitsumasa made his move against the Ashikaga in 1414. He attacked the Ise *shugo*, the Toki Yasumasa (?-1418), and a collection of local warrior families (*kokujin*) consisting of the Nagano and Kanbe families of northern Ise who responded to Yoshimochi's calls for assistance. The Kitabatake forces suffered a setback when Mitsumasa's younger brother, Kozukuri Toshiyasu defected to the shogun's forces, handing over his strategic Sakanai fortification late in 1414.²⁷ Mitsumasa advanced with his army to confront his brother and drove Toshiyasu from Sakanai. This distraction, however, stunted Mitsumasa's momentum and allowed the Yoshimochi's forces enough time to mobilize reinforcements. The Toki counterattack in the spring of 1415 pushed Kitabatake forces back to their fortresses around the shrine districts in southern Ise. The Kozukuri fortification near the northern edge of Kitabatake territory was eventually captured by shogunal forces led by the Toki family, and Kozukuri Toshiyasu reclaimed his post as head of the Kozukuri branch family in 1415 with the support of the Ashikaga.

The Kitabatake resisted further attacks from the shogun's armies and eventually fighting reached a standstill by the fall of 1415. The abdicated Emperor Go-Kameyama of the defunct Southern Court, stepped in to negotiate with the shogun Yoshimochi and an agreement was reached at the end of the eighth month.²⁸ Go-Kameyama conceded to the Northern line that the upcoming emperor could be selected from Go-Komatsu's children, but that the subsequent emperor would need to be selected from the Southern line. The agreement put in place by Yoshimitsu was voided and replaced with a new agreement that pushed Southern Court ascendancy back one more generation.

²⁷ Ibid., 45-46.

²⁸ Ibid., 48.

Mitsumasa's rebellion placed him in a difficult position. He had severed ties with the Ashikaga and the Retired Emperor Go-Komatsu. As Ashikaga Yoshimochi received the Shōgakuin Superintendent post in 1413, and in doing so became the new Head of Genji he was able to thwart Mitsumasa from receiving court rank.²⁹ Compounding his difficulties, Mitsumasa's father, Akiyasu died of old age in the summer of 1414,³⁰ leaving him isolated, with no strong ties to the court. Akiyasu's third son, Kozukuri Toshiyasu, used his defection to the shogun's forces during the previous conflict as a showing of service to Yoshimochi. Toshiyasu subsequently gained court ranks of the third and second rank in 1416 and 1417 with the support of Yoshimochi and his allies.³¹ Following Mitsumasa's defeat, Toshiyasu became the highest-ranking member of the Kitabatake house organization, but his betrayal of Mitsumasa created a rift between the branches which would persist for the remainder of each of their lives. The influence and prestige that the Kitabatake had obtained during the years following the reunification of the courts disappeared as Mitsumasa retreated into the mountains overlooking the shrine districts of Ise.

Despite worsening relations between the Kitabatake and Ashikaga, Ashikaga Yoshimochi continued his father's practice of shogunal pilgrimages to Ise. In fact, Yoshimochi increased the frequency of Ashikaga processions during his tenure. Between 1410-1427 Yoshimochi traveled to Ise 22 times.³² The size and scale of these pilgrimages increased with each instance that

²⁹ Okano Tomohiko, *Genji Chōja: Buke seiken no keifu* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2018), 209.

³⁰ *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō* (Mie: Mie-ken, 2008) Kozukuri Toshiyasu *kugyō bunin*, 15-17. Direct references to Akiyasu's death are non-extant. Within the *kuge bunin* lies a reference to Kozukuri Toshiyasu being reinstated to his position following a period of ritual isolation. Ritual isolations from court duties could be required following the death of one's father.

³¹ *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, 16.

³² Jīngū Shichō ed. *Jīngūshi nenpyō*, 89-92.

occurred. Yoshimochi made several pilgrimages in small groups with close relatives, but also had powerful *shugo* such as the Yamana, Hatakeyama, and Shiba families accompany him with hundreds of retainers.³³

Yoshimochi's visits also allowed him to assert authority over the Kitabatake, gain intelligence about their activities, in an effort to contain their activities in Ise. The solution of pushing back Southern Court succession was not a tenable arrangement for Yoshimochi's ally Go-Komatsu. Undoubtedly the selection of the next imperial crown prince would be a source of serious contestation between the two imperial lines. Mitsumasa did not support Yoshimochi or the new emperor and sought to keep them away from his holdings. Tellingly, Kitabatake Mitsumasa refused to participate in any of Yoshimochi's pilgrimages or host him in his personal residence as the Kitabatake had done with Yoshimitsu. Yoshimochi, contrary to the policies of his father, favored the enemies of the Kitabatake by staying in the residences provided by the Ōnakatomi *onshi* and local warrior families in northern Ise like the Kanbe and Nagano who had fought on Yoshimochi's side during the conflict with the Kitabatake.³⁴

The Ashikaga appointed rival *shugo* in and around Ise from the Toki, Hatakeyama, and Isshiki families in an attempt to remove the Kitabatake from control of the province during the first half of the fifteenth century. The *shugo* aided Kitabatake rivals from the Nagano and Kanbe local warrior families (*kokujin*) all throughout Mitsumasa's tenure as governor (*kokushi*). Kitabatake Mitsumasa launched an attack against the Ashikaga again in 1428 because, once again, the Ashikaga broke their agreement to nominate a Southern Court contender to the throne.

³³ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 345-361.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 359.

Mitsumasa coordinated with the head of an eastern (Kantō) outpost of the Ashikaga regime to attempt to overthrow Yoshimochi's successor Ashikaga Yoshinori (1394-1441).

Yoshinori was not a popular selection to the office of shogun for many *shugo* in the eastern provinces. Yoshinori was selected as the shogun after the Shogunal Chancellor picked a lot with his name writing on it at the Iwashimizu Hachiman shrine in Kyoto. Yoshinori had been living as an influential monk of the Tendai sect before he was laicized and made to be the new shogun. Contemporary sources are critical of Yoshinori for relying upon divination to make important policy decisions; leading him to be called (by some modern scholars) the 'lottery shogun' (*kujibiki shōgun*).³⁵ Yoshinori's unpopularity created animosity within the court and *bakufu*, and Yoshinori often responded to criticisms of his rule and threats to his position with violence. Contemporary sources recount how Yoshinori executed 59 nobles, 3 Shintō shrine attendants, and 11 high-ranking Buddhist monks in the first ten years of his rule for what he considered to be dissent or rebellion.³⁶

Mitsumasa attempted to draw on Yoshinori's unpopularity to overthrow the Ashikaga and place a Southern Court prince on the throne. While some have argued that Mitsumasa used the issue of the succession solely as a means of declaring war to reappropriate lands they had lost in the previous revolt, these two objectives are not mutually exclusive.³⁷ The enthronement of an emperor from the all-but defunct Southern Court line would guarantee Mitsumasa a place within

³⁵ See: Imatani Akira. *Kujibiki shogun Ashikaga Yoshinori* (Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2003).

³⁶ Saiki Kazuma, 'Kyōfu no yo,' in *Senran to jinbutsu*, Takayanagi Mitsutoshi ed. (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1989).

³⁷ For arguments concerning the motivations of Mitsumasa's second rebellion see: Kaji Hiroe. *Ise Kitabatake Ichizoku* (Tōkyō: Shin Jinbutsu Ōraisha, 1994), and Okano Tomohiko, *Sengoku kizoku no ikinokori senryaku* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2015), 55-69.

the upper-ranks of the court nobility and allow him to act as the defender of the imperial family as his predecessors had done. Mitsumasa failed in his rebellion, however, just as had been the case in 1414. Mitsumasa pushed the Ashikaga forces north of the Kumozu river in Ise and the Kitabatake held their new position in northern Ise for nearly a year until a combined army led by the combined forces of the *shugo* Yamana Sōzen, Toki Mochimasu, and Akamatsu Mitsusuke marched down to Ise in the fall of 1429.³⁸

Toki Mochimasu, the *shugo* of Ise province, incorporated the Nagano and Kanbe of northern Ise into his forces and fought with Mitsumasa in the twelfth month of 1429. On 12.21.1429, he defeated Mitsumasa, killing the Kitabatake lord, and forcing the Kitabatake survivors to retreat across the Kumozu river.³⁹ The Kitabatake forces rallied, however, and further incursions into southern Ise were repelled until a peace was bartered by Mitsumasa's younger brother, Okawachi Akimasa. In reward for their service, Ashikaga Yoshinori bestowed land rights to holdings in central Ise to the *shugo* Toki Mochimasu and the Nagano and Kanbe families. The Nagano received holdings in Ishi district which straddled the Kumozu River, giving them a foothold in Kitabatake territory, though contemporary documents from the Inner Shrine reveal that the portion of Ishi district south of the Kumozu River appears to have remained under Kitabatake control throughout the fifteenth century.⁴⁰

³⁸ Nakano, 'Muromachi zenki ni okeru Kitabatake-shi no dōko,' 45-47.

³⁹ Ibid., 47.

⁴⁰ Fujita Tatsuo, ed., *Ise Kokushi Kitabatake-shi no kenkyū*, (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004), 15-23.

Ise Onshi and Kitabatake Control of the Ise Shrines

Despite Kitabatake Mitsumasa's hostility towards the Ashikaga, shogunal pilgrimages continued with few breaks for most of the fifteenth century and created relationships between pilgrims traveling to Ise and local residents with ties to the shrines that could housing and accommodations for large parties of pilgrims. The example set by Yoshimitsu was emulated by many powerful *shugo* over the next several decades. The Yamana, Isshiki, Takeda, Hosokawa, and Hatakeyama houses engaged in grand pilgrimages at the behest of Ashikaga Yoshimochi and Ashikaga Yoshinori. In one of the more elaborate processions, Yamana Mochitoyo travelled to Ise with 300 retainers and more than a thousand staff in 1443.⁴¹ Mochitoyo and his men required considerable lodging, which provided more opportunities for the *onshi*.

For the Kitabatake, paradoxically, pilgrimage bolstered their control over Ise as they slowly came to control the newly emergent *onshi*. Funds from pilgrims served as a major source of revenue for the region. New patrons played a significant part in the growth of Ise's village communities. *Onshi* could host multiple patrons and these ties led to many relationships being established between capital officials, local merchants, local magnates, and the attendants of the Ise shrines. One of the most prominent *onshi*, the Ōnakatomi, used their position in the Office of Kami Affairs in the capital to place themselves as the *onshi* of the Ashikaga shoguns. Conversely, attendants from the Inner and Outer shrines appointed high-ranking priests (*gonnēgi*) within their houses to serve as *onshi* to the Shogunal Chancellor (*kanrei*) families, and a second tier of lower priests to cater to *shugo* and members of the imperial court from the capital.⁴²

⁴¹ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 367-370.

⁴² Hagiwara Tatsuo, *Chūsei saishi soshiki no kenkyū* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975).

Local (*jigenin*) *onshi* also catered to *shugo* and members of the court in the capital where contracts could be acquired, and to lesser pilgrims that began flowing into the region. Visitors would stay in the compounds of their *onshi*, who performed ritual cleansing ceremonies (*oharai*), presented offerings at small altars to the deities of Ise within their compounds, and travelled with their patrons to various shrines and Buddhist temples located in and around the shrine districts. Additionally, many *onshi* would travel to the homes of their patrons outside of Ise. They would recite prayers and perform purification rituals in exchange for cash payments. For powerful members of the court and *bakufu* these *onshi* would perform curses against the enemies of their patrons and provide their patrons with amulets of protection.⁴³

While the local *onshi* were linked to their patrons through contractual obligations, they also began to receive appointments as low-ranking attendants and shrine-land administrators for the Inner and Outer Ise Shrines. *Onshi* ostensibly held their rights to perform rituals through delegated authority of the Arakida and Watarai shrine attendants who oversaw the Inner and Outer Ise shrines. In exchange for granting permission to perform low-level rites within the lineages of the Inner and Outer Shrines, the Arakida and Watarai often demanded that local *onshi* function as administrators over imperially designated shrine-lands and required *onshi* to collect taxes from those holdings to provide them to the shrines. The *onshi* in turn were often, granted ‘prayer fees’ (*kitōryō*) of 5-10% as a surcharge for their tax collection and promulgation of rituals for the shrine’s patrons.⁴⁴

⁴³ Naganuma Takeshi. ‘Ise Jingū-ryō shōen no hōkai to oshi no dōkō, *Aichi Daigakuin Kiyō*, no. 26 (2005): 19-20.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 22-23.

When these *onshi* were unable to enforce their ability to collect taxes from the estate, they relied heavily on authorities who could supply coercive force such as the Kitabatake to help gather and send taxes to the shrines.⁴⁵ As Ise governors the Kitabatake claimed authority over tax collection and troop requisition for all of the province. These claims were contested by the Toki, *shugo* controlling the northern districts of Ise, which the Kitabatake had lost during their rebellion against the Ashikaga in 1414, but title of Ise governor (*kokushi*) allowed the Kitabatake to effectively govern the southern districts of Ise, and legitimate *onshi* efforts to collect taxes from newly created local communities.⁴⁶

The *onshi* of the newly developing settlements of Yōda and Uji gained influence over the shrines. Although they prospered because of pilgrims, they also relied on support of the Kitabatake. The communities of Uji and Yōda first appear in the sources of the late fourteenth century.⁴⁷ The villages of Iwabuchi, Saka and Suhara, located near the Outer Ise Shrine, slowly merged into a single larger community that referred to themselves as the ‘three directions’ or neighborhoods (*sanbō*) of Yōda. Many of the residents were referred to in shrine documents as belonging to one of two major categories: ‘locals’ (*jigenin*) and ‘people who perform shrine duties’ (*jinyakunin*). *Jigenin* consisted of individuals who lived near the shrines but lacked some form of official connection with the shrines themselves. *Jinyakunin* resided near the shrines but

⁴⁵ Ibid., 24-25.

⁴⁶ Often *onshi* are depicted as being largely autonomous. While new sources of income did give place for *onshi* to create relations with the Kitabatake and other local magnates, the military strength provided by the Kitabatake and enabled the *onshi* to operate. For arguments hinting at economic reasons for the *onshi* rise see: Nishiyama Masaru, *Dōja to jigenin* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1987). See also, Breen and Teewuen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines*, 105-116; and Talia Andrei, *Ise Sankei Mandala: The Art of Fundraising in Medieval Japan*. *Art Bulletin* March 100 no. 1 (2018): 68-96.

⁴⁷ Mark Schneider, ‘Chūsei toshi Yamada no seiritsu to tenkai: Kūkan kōzō to jūnin kōsei o megutte,’ *Toshi Bunka Kenkyū*, no. 10 (2008): 81-95.

who also served in some function to the shrines. *Jinyakunin* often presided over their rites that villages would perform before supplying the shrines with resources such as salt, sea life, or vegetation that were required for the daily rituals of the Ise shrines.⁴⁸

The chief attendant of the Inner Shrine, Arakida Ujitsune (?-1486), considered both *jigenin* and *jinyakunin* as interlopers, although many had provided services of some kind to the shrines. In 1443, the Ujitsune wrote in his diary that the “crowds of worshippers” who “received purification in compounds run by ‘locals’ (*jigenin*) were a major cause for impurity.”⁴⁹ Then again in 1467, Ujitsune pined that in the past only high-ranking shrine officials could build compounds and stoke fires but “in recent years the customs have degraded as locals (*jigenin*) have established compounds, allowing pilgrims from this province and from elsewhere, to cook and eat there.”⁵⁰

The documents of the Kita family of Yōda illuminate the experience of these *onshi* families. The earliest records suggest that the Kita sold sweetfish (*ayu*) that local fishermen transported to the Outer Shrine for ritual use. The Kita also oversaw the annual ‘river ritual’ (*onkawashinji*) at a small shrine west of Yōda. The Kita appear to have been both ‘locals’ (*jigenin*) and ‘shrine functionaries’ (*jinyakunin*). Eventually the Kita gathered sufficient funds to expand their holdings and set up a large compound on the western outskirts of town. During this time, they also became *onshi*; hosting pilgrims and serving as tax collectors for the Outer

⁴⁸ For one example see: Nishiyama Masaru ed., *Kyōto Daigaku Bungakubu Hakubutsukan no Komonjo* vol. 7: *Ise onshi to Kita monjo* (Kyōto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1990), 20-26.

⁴⁹ *Shiryō sanshū Ujitsune-kyō shinjiki* vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yagi Shoten, 2016), *Ujitsune-kyō shinjiki-ki*, 5.8.1444 (Bunan 1), 126.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 9.16.1467 (Ōnin 1), 92.

Shrine.⁵¹ Like the Kita, other prominent *jigenin* combined the running of pilgrims' compounds with a market-related trade. The Kubokura and Enokikura *onshi* houses, both named after the storehouses (*kura*) from which they conducted their business, also served as local tax collectors for the Kitabatake.⁵²

Yōda initially had two markets, held at times when shrine dues were collected for the annual *kannamesai* and semi-annual *tsukinami* rites.⁵³ Later in the fifteenth century, in response to the loss of revenue from the discontinued national *yakubumi* taxes, which had provided some food and other materials for the Ise shrines' docket of ritual observances, the three yearly markets were joined by more regular ones to secure more local revenue from visiting pilgrims. The *jigenin* ran an eastern market held on the 3rd, 13th and 23rd and a western market held on the 8th, 18th and 28th of each month.⁵⁴

Disputes between the local *onshi* and the shrines simmered as the size and scale of processions conducted by the court increased. In the late 1420s, bands of debtors (*ikki*) often pushed local administrators for the establishment of 'virtuous governance' (*tokusei*) in various

⁵¹ Funasugi Rikinobu. 'Sengokuki ni okeru Ise Jingū Gekū monzenmachi Yōda no keisei,' *Rekishī chirigaku*, 40 no. 3 (2011): 1-29.

⁵² Ibid., 5-6.

⁵³ The *Kannamesai* is a festival rite held in the autumn in Ise where rice and other kinds food offerings are given to Amaterasu in gratitude for the *kami*'s protection. The *Kannamesai* precedes the *Niinamesai* wherein the emperor performs a rite inside the imperial residence. The first *Niinamesai* of an emperor's reign is called the *Daijōsai* and is considered part of the coronation of a new emperor. The *Tsukinamisai* was held in the sixth and twelfth months of the year. The imperial family originally sent Ritual Princesses (*Saiō*) to perform rites on behalf of the emperor before the fourteenth century, but eventually relied on messengers from the *Jingikan* to fill that role after the *Saiō* was discontinued after Go-Daigo's reign (1336). Each of these rites were established in the earliest legal codes of the Japanese state, but changed in relevance and form through time. See: Kurahayashi Shōji, *Tennō no Matsuri to tami no matsuri: Daijōsai shinron* (Tōkyō: Daiichi Hōki, 1983), 117-123, 148-173.

⁵⁴ Nishiyama Masaru, *Dōja to jigenin*, 44-49.

provinces throughout Japan.⁵⁵ These groups often conceptualized ‘virtuous government’ as the cancellation of accumulated debts and the return of confiscated lands from those who had been unable to pay taxes or the debts that they had incurred.⁵⁶ In 1428, the *jigenin* of Yōda’s three ‘neighborhoods’ (*sanbō tsuchi ikki*) took up arms against ‘the shrine people’ (*jinin*) of Ise in response to a major famine which arose in the region after Kitabatake Mitsumasa’s disastrous rebellion against the Ashikaga in 1428-29.⁵⁷

The year 1428 saw the ascension of a new emperor, Go-Hanazono (1419-1471) and the selection of a new shogun, Ashikaga Yoshinori. Elaborate and expensive coronation ceremonies accompanied these appointments. Funds to pay for the ceremonies for both the shogun and emperor were drawn from the provinces, and reports of famine and resource scarcity were common. Specifically, in Ise’s case processions to the Ise shrines stopped for much of the year due to the rebellion of Kitabatake Mitsumasa. Mitsumasa closed the roads leading to the shrines as he prepared his armies for conflict, cutting off food and income for the village communities.

For several years prior to the Kitabatake rebellion, *onshi* of Yōda quarreled with the priests of the Inner and Outer shrines over the fees being requested of them by the shrines to operate their businesses.⁵⁸ The Kitabatake adjudicated these disputes between both the shrines and the *onshi*. With the Kitabatake preoccupied, however, the Yōda *jigenin* grew increasingly frustrated with the shrine attendants of the Outer Shrine. The Watarai held rights as estate

⁵⁵ Ibid., 49.

⁵⁶ Tokusei uprisings became increasingly common during the fifteenth century. See: Suzanne Gay, *The Moneylenders of Late-medieval Kyoto* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 128-148.

⁵⁷ Teeuwen and Breen see these ‘*jinin*’ as referring specifically to the Watarai and Arakida families. *A Social History of the Ise shrines*, 109.

⁵⁸ Nishigaki Seiji, ‘Shinkyō kassen ruiju tsuihō,’ *Gunma daigaku kyōiku gakubu kiyō*, no. 29: 80-82.

(*shōen*) administrators (*tone*). This position traditionally enabled them to set the terms in how, where, and to what degree the yearly donations to the shrines were to be made by the individuals who worked on the estate. When the Outer Shrine pressed the *jigenin* for their yearly dues, the residents of Yōda resisted the shrine attendants' requests.

Eventually the *jigenin* responded to the levies from the shrine attendants by attacking the Outer shrine in 1429. The *jigenin* quickly asserted themselves over the shrine attendants, crashing through the shrine's defenses, and confining nearly 300 shrine attendants in the Outer Shrine's innermost compound. Ultimately, the Watarai relinquished some of their taxation authority over a portion of the town's income.⁵⁹ This was an entirely new experience for many of the shrine attendants. They were shocked that, arrows covered the walls of the Outer Shrine, and blood had been spilt inside the sacred *mizugaki* fence where only shrine attendants of the highest rank were allowed to officiate, thereby defiling the compound.⁶⁰ The Yōda forces in the subsequent weeks stormed into Uji and damaged the property of both the Inner Shrine and its *jigenin*.⁶¹

These actions, however, only granted the Yōda *onshi* a slight reprieve. Only two years after the riot, Okawachi Akimasa under the aegis of his nephew, the Ise governor Kitabatake Noritomo (1423-1471), assumed the authority to grant rights to the income from shrine holdings within the three shrine districts (Watarai, Taki and Iino) to his retainers.⁶² Several tax

⁵⁹ The explanation of the resolution comes from a much later source. See: *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 435.

⁶⁰ Nishigaki, 'Shinkyō kassen ruiju tsuihō,' 82-86

⁶¹ The Ashikaga advisor-monk Manzei (alternatively known as Manzai) of Daigoji temple recounts much of the conflict in his diary entries. See: *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, 50-60.

⁶² Nishigaki, 'Shinkyō kassen ruiju tsuihō,' 86-87.

administrators who were affiliated with the Outer Shrine had been killed in the Yōda riot, leaving the bureaucracy that oversaw tax submissions in disarray. The Kitabatake, acting upon a request from the Inner Shrine to “open the roads” blockaded by the Yōda villages attacked these forces and successfully removed the barricades which the Yōda *jigenin* had placed between the two communities.⁶³ The Kitabatake then subsequently placed their retainers into positions left vacant by the violence of the previous three years.

Kitabatake influence over *onshi* houses grew gradually. In a 1464 document, an Inner shrine priest states, “though Iino and Taki are principle (Inner) shrine districts, in recent years they have been the personal holdings of the (Kitabatake) Governor.”⁶⁴ Once the Kitabatake became responsible for the administration of shrine lands, many of the *onshi* gravitated toward the Kitabatake. The Kitabatake called on *onshi* houses for tax collection and for military troop requisition during their conflicts with the Nagano in the 1430s. *Onshi* houses with ties to the Kitabatake soon found that their ability to negotiate their own dues with the shrines increased with Kitabatake support.⁶⁵ As a reward for their intervention against the Yōda *jigenin* in 1431, the first *negi* of the Inner and Outer shrines relinquished to the Kitabatake-allied *onshi* “a third of the duties and taxes from the affected holdings,” a substantial increase from the normal rate of 5-10%.⁶⁶

⁶³ Kobayashi ed., *Satō-ke monjo*, 51-52. The Satō family was granted rights to lands previously held by *onshi* for their service in suppressing the riots over a decade after the conflict. The documents listed here noticeably do not have Kitabatake Noritomo’s name listed on the front of the document in *sode-han* style. Noritomo did not possess the Ise governor post until 1441, and as of 1443 did not hold a position of the third-rank or as a counselor (*sangi*) to the Grand Council of State.

⁶⁴ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 448.

⁶⁵ Kobayashi Kaoru, ‘Sengoku makki ni okeru Ise onshi no keizoku: Murayama monjo wo chushin ni,’ *Kōgakkan Ronsō*, 47 no. 4 (August 2014): 54-60.

⁶⁶ Breen and Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines*, 113.

With enhanced Kitabatake power, and *onshi* access to resources, the shrines suffered.

Arikita Ujitsune, the shrine attendant of the Inner Shrine, administered vicennial *shikinen sengū* rites in 1431 but he complained that they were, in his view, well below the past standards.

Ujitsune went to great measures to document the things which had not been completed. He stated in his diary, “Beyond the main two halls, not a single fence was put up – and even more than that the treasure halls, the gates, the *torii*, the attendants’ quarters, and the storehouses.”⁶⁷

Commenting on the wretchedness of these affairs, Ujitsune wrote:

Never has there been so low-quality and so many problems in the furnishings, sacred treasures, and fittings . . . Even if the world is in a fallen state, it is unthinkable that our shrine should be so neglected.⁶⁸

Ujitsune’s diary reveals that despite the new economic boons of pilgrimage, shrine attendants increasingly lacked necessary funds to see to the maintenance of the shrines and their ritual calendar as the increasingly wealthy *onshi* did not support the shrines directly.

The *onshi* gained further control of shrine resources by appropriating the traditional income of low-ranking priests known as *norito* masters (*nottoshi*).⁶⁹ Since the tenth century, *norito* masters earned income from the shrines in exchange for facilitating the donation of estates to the shrines from court patrons. They were compensated with ‘mediation dues’ (*kunyūryō*). In the fifteenth century, *onshi* who acted as mediators between the Kitabatake and the shrines, received these mediation dues.⁷⁰ As the Kitabatake encroached on lands previously overseen by

⁶⁷ *Eikyō nenjū nikki* in Jingū shichō ed., *Jingū sengū-ki* vol. 3 (Ise-shi: Jingū Shikinen Zōeichō, 1932), 557-558.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 558.

⁶⁹ Kobayashi, ‘Sengoku makki ni okeru Ise onshi no keizoku,’ 60-63.

⁷⁰ Nishigaki, ‘Shinkyō kassen ruiju tsuihō,’ 86-87.

the Office of Kami Affairs, *onshi* entered relations with the Kitabatake where they would collect taxes from the estates while also simultaneously petitioning the shrines to reward them with ‘mediation dues’ (*kunyūryō*) for their service in protecting the lands from Kitabatake take over. The ties *onshi* maintained with the Kitabatake gave them leverage over the shrines more so than the threat of violence.

The *onshi* continued to receive prayer fees (*kitōryō*) from their patrons throughout the fifteenth century. As the numbers of pilgrims increased, the priests of the shrines became increasingly unable to perform rites for pilgrims from the capital and surrounding provinces. Increasingly, *onshi* performed rituals for their clients in place of those offered by the Ise shrines’ attendants. *Onshi* administered these rites within their own compounds or in the residences of their patrons. They directly gained income from their patrons and from the shrine attendants who made agreements with the *onshi* to collect taxes from shrine lands in exchange for an agreed upon percentage of the duties as their prayer fee.⁷¹

The Kitabatake’s presence, however, strengthened *onshi* in their negotiations with the shrines. As the Kitabatake’s influence in the region increased, *onshi* claimed the right to retain prayer fees even in cases when the taxes could not be paid to the shrines. In years when agricultural yields were particularly poor, *onshi* would keep residual funds as prayer fees. In some cases, *onshi* demanded compensation for their prayer fees despite providing nothing to the shrines. For example, in 1482, an *onshi* who had ties to the Kitabatake confiscated all the yearly tax revenue from the shrine land as unpaid prayer fees. The attendants protested, but the *onshi* insisted that the land tax would only be paid again once the prayer fees that were due to him were paid in full. The priests eventually decided to donate the land to the Kitabatake, most likely

⁷¹ Naganuma, ‘Ise jingū-ryō shōen no hōkai to onshi no dōkō,’ 23-24.

surmising that the cost of repaying the *onshi* on an annual basis for his prayer fees would be too great.⁷²

While some of these *onshi* houses thrived and benefitted from their ties to the Kitabatake, not all chose that path. Conflicts between Uji and Yōda continued for much of the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, the Kitabatake continued to suppress belligerent *onshi* and place friendly *onshi* into positions of significance, thereby enhancing their local control. Both the *onshi* and the Kitabatake amassed wealth and arms despite the intermittent conflicts. The obvious losers in this new arrangement were the attendants of the Ise shrines. The attendants suffered economically because of this alliance between *onshi* and the Kitabatake and were increasingly deprived of revenue for much of the fifteenth century. For the Kitabatake, their control over the shrines and the *onshi* proved beneficial, as their enhanced local power allowed them to slowly revive their influence in Kyoto.

Rebuilding Ties to the Center: the Koga, the Shogun, and the Kitabatake

In the years prior to Mitsumasa's rebellions, Yoshimitsu's pilgrimages represented an important connection between the Ashikaga and the Kitabatake which led to the procurement of court ranks that the Kitabatake needed to maintain their house organization.⁷³ However, following the revolt of 1414, the Kitabatake no longer appear on lists noting the travel destinations of Ashikaga Yoshimochi in 1418 and 1422.⁷⁴ Yoshimochi's processions elected to reside in the holdings of the Rokkaku, Sasaki, Isshiki, and Nagano; all *shugo* or locals (*kokujin*)

⁷² Ibid., 27.

⁷³ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 354.

⁷⁴ Fujita ed., *Ise Kokushi Kitabatake-shi no kenkyū*, 24-27.

that were nominally supervised by the *bakufu*, who had fought against the Kitabatake and occupied important positions along the road to Ise. The Kitabatake would not regain the ability to host the Ashikaga in their home again until 1466.⁷⁵

By relying on *onshi* as their tax agents, and facilitators for pilgrims, the Kitabatake maintained control over most of southern Ise, but their survival hinged upon reacquiring positions of rank within the court that they had lost. Following Mitsumasa's two failed rebellions which sought to place a Southern Emperor on the throne, the Southern line had no clear heir or means of attracting support from either the court nobility or magnates across Japan. Mitsumasa's belligerence had severed the Kitabatake's connections to the imperial court and the status that court ranks provided had all but disappeared. The Kotsukuri branch of the Kitabatake held a better claim to rule through their superior court rank they had received due to their allegiance to the Ashikaga. Ashikaga Yoshinori, confiscated Kitabatake lands from Idaka and Ishi districts in central Ise and granted them to the Toki and Nagano families who fought for Yoshinori's forces in the 1428 rebellion.⁷⁶

Kitabatake leadership in the 1430s shifted away from the anti-Ashikaga policies of Kitabatake Mitsumasa. Kitabatake Noritomo, under the regency of his uncle Okawachi Akimasa, took a markedly different course of action. Noritomo became the nominal head of the Kitabatake family at the age of six in 1428. Through negotiations with Yoshinori, Akimasa ceased hostilities with the Ashikaga and received acknowledgment of his rights to administer over Southern Ise.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ *Zoku shiryō taisei* vol. 10 (Kyōto-shi: Rinsen shoten, 1982), *Chikamoto nikki*. 3.1466 (Bunshō 1).

⁷⁶ *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, *Manzai jugō nikki*. 2.1.1429 (Eikyō 1), 51.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 6.19.1429 (Eikyō 1), 55.

His nephew, Kitabatake Noritomo did not immediately receive the Ise governor post. Akimasa acquired a ceremonial court chamberlain (*ijū*) post for his nephew and began running the affairs of the Kitabatake house. Akimasa was well known in the capital and important members of the court frequently referred to Akimasa as the Ise governor and even called him by the Kitabatake family name.⁷⁸

As the highest-ranking senior member of the house organization, Akimasa governed the house for nearly 13 years between 1428 and 1441.⁷⁹ Akimasa expanded the family's control over the shrine-lands and the surrounding villages that lay directly east of their fortifications. As was discussed earlier, the rebellions of his elder brother had created an environment which permitted violence within the shrine districts, and Akimasa's first actions sought to quell the disturbances created by the locals and integrate *onshi* into the Kitabatake house's ranks of functionaries.

Akimasa also began rebuilding ties to the court after Mitsumasa's death. Akimasa began dispatching monetary emoluments to support the court's ritual practices. Akimasa met with Manzei (1378-1435), a high-ranking monk of the Tōji temple in Kyoto. Tōji served as a clearing house for the prayers of multiple Buddhist sects and the personal advisor for Ashikaga Yoshimochi and Yoshinori.⁸⁰ Akimasa agreed to facilitate the Ise shrines ritual calendar at the request of the shogun and promised to offer swords and horses of ritual significance to the capital on a yearly basis. Akimasa accompanied Manzei and Yoshinori on their pilgrimages to the Inner

⁷⁸ Ibid., *Manzai jugō nikki* 4.27.1430 (Eikyō 2) and *Kanmon nikki*, 11.12.1431 (Eikyō 3), 57, 59.

⁷⁹ Akimasa's brother Kozukuri Toshiyasu ranked higher in the imperial court, but his betrayal during the conflict with the Ashikaga seems to have put him on the outside of family relations. The Kozukuri would remain relatively independent until his death in 1421. The two lines would continue to contest for higher court rank for much of the next century.

⁸⁰ Ibid., *Manzai jugō nikki*, 12.2.1429 (Eikyō 1), 56.

Shrine in 1431.⁸¹ Akimasa seems to have followed the same approach as his father Akiyasu, engaging with the Ashikaga family and the court in amenable ways to secure rank advancements for his house.

Establishing close ties to the *bakufu* and the court provided opportunities for Kitabatake advancement as competing forces within the capital pressed for superiority. Often conflicts arose among Ashikaga collateral families, functionaries within the *bakufu*, the *shugo*, and members of the imperial court. For example, when the Toki Mochimasu, *shugo* of Ise, attempted to invade Southern Ise south beyond the Kumozu river into Kitabatake territory in 1430, they were pushed back, and the Kitabatake seized both the Idaka and Ishi districts which had been granted to the Nagano and Toki families.⁸² Due to their improving relations with the Ashikaga and the strength of their military organization, they gained control over these districts and the income they provided. The Nagano, who had been granted the districts, asked to exchange the rights they had lost for others.⁸³ The Ashikaga seem to have ignored these requests for four years, but in 1434 an incident in the capital provoked a change of this policy.

In 1434, Yoshinori became embroiled in a dispute with the powerful Hino family concerning who would become Yoshinori's legal wife (*seishitsu*). Yoshinori's father, Ashikaga Yoshimitsu, had taken his first and second legal wives from the Hino line as so did his brother and predecessor Yoshimochi. The head of the Hino Family, Hino Yoshisuke, arranged for

⁸¹ Ibid., *Manzai jugō nikki*, 3.6.1431 (Eikyō 3), 60.

⁸² Ibid., *Manzai jugō nikki*, 6.9.1430 (Eikyō 2), 57.

⁸³ Such requests for exchange-lands (*kaechi*) were frequently granted by the shogunate directly to various retainers for battle service. The Nagano had traditionally held *jitō* rights in Anou-district (located immediately north of Ishi district). Ostensibly they served under the *shugo* of Ise province, but also held ties to the *bakufu* through their *jitō* post. See: Okano, *Sengoku kizoku no ikinokori senyaku*, 57-59.

Yoshinori to marry Hino Muneko as his primary wife in 1430. Yoshinori, however, believed Yoshisuke to be a personal enemy and shortly after their marriage Yoshinori confiscated Yoshisuke's holdings and placed him under house arrest for alleged treason.⁸⁴ This action led to a falling out with Hino Muneko and eventually to a divorce near the end of 1431. Yoshinori then took Muneko's younger sister, Shigeko, as a secondary wife in an attempt to ease lingering tensions between the two houses.

In 1434, Shigeko gave birth to Yoshinori's heir, her first son. Many within the capital believed that this would further improve the tense relationship between Yoshinori and Yoshisuke. Imperial Prince Sadafusa states that over sixty high ranking "members of the nobility, military houses, and monks" either sent messengers or traveled to Yoshisuke's home to congratulate Shigeko on the birth of her child. Yoshinori, however, seems to have interpreted these trips to Yoshisuke's house as an act of rebellion against him. Each of the guests, including those who had only sent messengers, were arrested and executed for sedition.⁸⁵ Yoshinori then confiscated lands from the families implicated in this perceived coup.

The most relevant redistribution to this study, however, is the redistribution of the Koga family's rights to the Masumida Shrine in Owari province and the Ishikure shrine lands in Ise province. While many of the lands that had been confiscated by Yoshinori had been redistributed to other noble families, the lands taken from the Koga were instead granted to the Nagano family of northern Ise.⁸⁶ The Koga had served as Head of Genji for the previous four years (1428-

⁸⁴ Ibid., 60-61.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 61.

⁸⁶ *Kujō-ke monjo* vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Kokugakuin Daigaku, 1982) *Muromachi shōgun ke Ashikaga Yoshinori mikyōjō*, 12.26.1448 (Bunan 5), 363.

1432).⁸⁷ Among the Minamoto, Koga Kiyomichi (1393-1453) held the highest rank in the imperial court. Labelling Kiyomichi as a traitor and divesting him of his estates in Ise and Owari allowed Yoshinori to push down a rival and reward the important Nagano family whom he relied upon for defense in Ise province.

The Koga family pressed Yoshinori for the return of their estates four years later. Their documents requesting the return of these estate rights cite the Nagano's 'military service' as the reasoning behind the initial transfer.⁸⁸ As the Nagano do not appear to have been called into service for any military encounter between 1429 and 1434, their reward stems from service against the Kitabatake in 1428. Through this redistribution Yoshinori compensated the Nagano for the Kitabatake's recapture of Idaka district in 1430. The Koga family insisted that the Nagano were illegally occupying their lands as a means of allowing for potential legal appeal at a later date, but with the Nagano firmly within the camp of Yoshinori there did not appear to be any room for immediate redress for the Koga.⁸⁹

The Koga were understandably upset with their loss of these lands, and turned to the Kitabatake as an ally against the Nagano, their new enemy. The Koga began sending members of their family to Ise for pilgrimage during the 1430s, which allowed them to easily communicate with Akimasa.⁹⁰ Here the Koga possessed a unique advantage, in that between the years of 1428 and 1432, it was Kiyomichi, and not the Kitabatake or Ashikaga, who were the highest-ranking members of the Minamoto lineage. From the 1430s, and continuing for the next

⁸⁷ Okano, *Genji chōja*, 202.

⁸⁸ *Kujō-ke monjo* vol 1, *Muromachi shōgun ke Ashikaga Yoshinori mikyōjō*, 12.26.1448 (Bunan 5), 363.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, *Muromachi shōgun ke Ashikaga Yoshimasa mikyōjō*, 11.28.1455 (Kōshō 1), 372-373.

⁹⁰ Okano, *Sengoku kizoku no ikinokori senryaku*, 63.

few decades, the Koga, Ashikaga, and Kitabatake were closely bound as no one family of the Minamoto could supersede the others as the unquestioned Head of Genji.

The Shrines Destroyed: The Ōnin War, Yōda, and Uji

In conjunction with deepening the ties with the Koga family, the Kitabatake under Okawachi Akimasa and Kitabatake Noritomo took a much more accommodating posture towards the Ashikaga. When Ashikaga Yoshinori was assassinated in 1441 by the *shugo* Akamatsu Mitsusuke, the Kitabatake did not move to aid the Akamatsu despite Akimasa's daughter being married to one of the leaders of the Akamatsu. Conversely, they did not attempt to avenge Yoshinori's death either. After the Akamatsu forces were scattered by *bakufu* forces, Akamatsu Yoriyasu fled to Ise to the protection of Okawachi Akimasa. Yoriyasu expected protection from his father-in-law, but Noritomo and Akimasa eventually pressured Yoriyasu to commit suicide and sent his remains to the capital as proof of their support for the shogun.⁹¹

This move ingratiated the Kitabatake with the Ashikaga and the imperial court. Following Yoshinori's 1441 assassination, Koga Kiyomichi was once again appointed to the Superintendent of Shōgakuin post and Head of Genji title.⁹² The Koga once again pressured the *bakufu* for the return of their estates which Yoshinori had allowed the Nagano to control.⁹³ When the representatives of the *bakufu* ordered the Nagano to return the Masumida shrine-lands to the Koga in 1448, the Nagano refused and the Kitabatake fought against the Nagano with the support

⁹¹ Yashiro Kazuo, ed., *Muromachi gunki Akamatsu seisuiki: kenkyū to shiryō* (Tōkyō: Kokusho kankōkai, 1995).

⁹² Okano, *Genji chōja*, 202.

⁹³ *Koga-ke monjo* vol. 1, *Muromachi shōgun ke Ashikaga Yoshimasa mikyōjō*, 11.28.1455 (Kōshō 1), 372-373.

of the court.⁹⁴ As a sign of his good ties with the court and Ashikaga, Noritomo steadily advanced in court ranks. In 1451 he was promoted to the fourth rank and became an Advisor to the Grand Council of State (*sangi*) thereby enabling him to establish his own administrative office capable of granting land rights (*mandokoro*).⁹⁵ In 1452, he advanced to the third rank, and again in 1453 to lofty position of junior-second rank. Through his rank and offices Noritomo integrated many of the *onshi* shrine-lands into the Kitabatake house organization as house officials (*bugyōnin*) during his tenure as Ise governor.⁹⁶

By 1456, Noritomo gained the title of Acting Middle Counselor (*gon-chūnagon*) and in 1458 the court bestowed to him the exalted status of a member of the upper-second rank. Epitomizing their amicable ties, the next shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1436-1490) visited the Kitabatake during his 1466 visit to Ise, and in doing so broke from nearly fifty years of precedent, where the Ashikaga deliberately refrained from staying in Kitabatake residences. Noritomo's ties to the imperial court allowed him to become critical player in Ise and the capital. The Kitabatake once again held the highest ranks within their house organization and had obtained access to both the *bakufu* through Yoshimasa, and the Head of Genji post through Koga Kiyomichi.

While the Kitabatake experienced increased influence during the second half of the fifteenth century, the Inner and Outer Shrines saw a corresponding decrease in political, economic, and religious significance. Ostensibly, the Kitabatake as provincial governor held the

⁹⁴ *Shiryō henshū Ujitsune-kyō shinjiki* vol. 1, *Ujitsune-kyō shinjiki*, 2.21.1448 (Bunan 4), 141.

⁹⁵ For the compilation of Noritomo's court appointments see: *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, *Kitabatake Noritomo kugyō bunin*, 7-8.

⁹⁶ Kobayashi Kaoru, 'Ise onshi ni kansuru shinshutsu shiryōgun no kisoteki kenkyū,' *Shintōshūkyō*, no. 261 (Jan 2021): 139-141.

responsibility of the maintenance of the shrines' lands, and their actions showed a preference in placing *onshi* into positions of influence over shrine attendants. Over time it became obvious that the shrines' upkeep was not tied to the income that *onshi* had received from their patrons. The Kitabatake, by mediating between the *onshi* and the shrines, extracted a greater portion of tax revenues from the lands in Ise province, which drove the attendants of the Inner and Outer shrines further and further into poverty. Conflict within Ise shifted from local (*jigenin*) disputes with the shrine attendants, towards increasing conflicts between separate local (*jigenin*) communities.

Onshi of both communities (Yōda and Uji) fought over control of the road to Ise. Yōda rested along the road which traveled parallel along the coast of Ise Bay. It was located north of both the Outer and Inner shrines, and maintained a geographic advantage over Uji. All pilgrims and goods traveling on foot needed to travel through Yōda to reach Uji. In 1448, Yōda residents blocked all travel to Uji by manning the checkpoints north of the Outer Shrine. At that time, Uji residents killed two Yōda guides leading their patrons to the Inner Shrine. The Uji residents then claimed that it was illegal for Yōda *onshi* to enter the Inner Shrine precincts. Yōda's leaders closed the road south and eventually only relented under heavy pressure from the Kitabatake and *bakufu* emissaries.⁹⁷

Lingering tension between the *onshi* increased when the Kitabatake became entangled in the Ōnin War in 1467 as two factions of the *bakufu* warred over multiple succession disputes

⁹⁷ The violence once again appears when the Kitabatake were engaged in a conflict with the Nagano that had started only four months earlier. See: *Shiryō henshū Ujitsune-kyō shinjiki* vol. 1, *Ujitsune-kyō shinjiki-ki*, 6.1448 (Bunan 4), 144-147.

among the Ashikaga and major *shugo* houses.⁹⁸ Due to Noritomo's familiarity with both of the shogunal claimants, Hosokawa Katsumoto prohibited Noritomo from approaching the capital in 1467.⁹⁹ In the next year, one potential shogunal successor, Ashikaga Yoshimi (1439-1491), fled to Ise with the help of the Kitabatake and resided in the province until the end of 1468.¹⁰⁰ Noritomo sheltered Yoshimi and then attacked the Nagano and allowed Ashikaga Yoshimi to depart once again. Noritomo continued fighting in northern Ise through 1471.¹⁰¹

Shortly before Noritomo's death in 1471, Ashikaga Yoshimasa, desperate to bolster his support in the east, as his forces were losing the war with the western *shugo*, appointed the Kitabatake lord as the *shugo* of Ise province. This appointment marked the first time that the Kitabatake had held both the titles of provincial governor and *shugo* simultaneously. After his death, Noritomo's titles passed to his son Kitabatake Masasato (1449-1508). Masasato continued fighting against the Isshiki and Nagano for much of the next six years, but they were eventually pushed back to the Kumozu River and their original holdings in Idaka and Ishi districts.

The ten-year struggle of Ōnin that entangled many of the most powerful magnates of the country led to a cessation of regular pilgrimage to Ise from the capital. Arakida Ujitsune, the chief priest (*negi*) of the Inner Shrine during this period (1467-77), lamented that rituals were simplified, postponed, or cancelled due to the turmoil. Even before Ōnin, Ujitsune bemoaned the quality of goods provided to the shrine by the Ashikaga and Kitabatake, but for him things

⁹⁸ For a general view of the Ōnin War in the English language see: H. Paul Varley, *The Ōnin War: History of its Origins and Background with a Selective Translation of the Chronicle of Ōnin* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1967).

⁹⁹ *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, *Daijōin jisha zōjiki*, 6.13.1467 (Ōnin 1), 92.

¹⁰⁰ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 444-446.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 446-450.

turned demonstrably worse. The *sengū* rites that had afforded the Ise shrines their place of special importance within Japan's political landscape ceased after the Ōnin War and requests for funds for *sengū* rites would be denied by the court for the next 120 years.

The Kitabatake maintained influence, as they continued to serve as governor and *shugo* of Ise. The Kitabatake leader Masasato was badly defeated by the Nagano in 1478,¹⁰² but through gifts to the shogun, the support of the Koga family, and an alliance with the Kōfukuji monks of Yamato province, Masasato was able abdicate his estate holdings and acquire rank advancements for his son Tomokata (1468-1518) in 1480.¹⁰³ Having been thwarted by their enemies to the north, Tomokata focused internally within the shrine districts to oversee disputes between the *onshi*.

Kitabatake Tomokata attempted to mediate disputes between the Yōda and Uji communities that arose in the late 1480s. The Uji community had frequently requested aid from the Kitabatake against Yōda.¹⁰⁴ Tomokata most notably aided them in 1485 when Yōda forces set up a new guard post on the road to Uji, and in response the Uji militia attacked Yōda, but the two sides fought to a standstill. Hostilities erupted again the following year when Yōda guards confiscated rice destined for the Inner Shrine. Responding to missives from both the Inner Shrine and the Uji community, the Kitabatake aided the Uji militants as they attacked and successfully burned all three neighborhoods of Yōda to the ground.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, *Daijōin jisha zōjiki* 11.22.1479 (Bunmei 11), 114-115.

¹⁰³ Okano, *Sengoku kizoku no ikinokori senryaku*, 67-70.

¹⁰⁴ The Inner Shrine and its community of Uji frequently asked for Masasato and Tomokata to deliver their yearly 'shrine-tax' (*shinzei*) in exchange for Ise prayers for Kitabatake success in battle against the Nagano and Yōda forces. See: *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 475-478.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 478-484.

Some of the most prominent *onshi* of Yōda fled to the Outer Shrine and hid themselves under the floor of the main hall. They threatened the attackers by suggesting they would be cursed for causing the shrine to be polluted by shedding blood on sacred grounds. Eventually, the Yōda forces set fire to the main hall, killing many of their number in the process.¹⁰⁶ The victors tore down the Yōda guard-posts and reopened the roads to the Inner Shrine. The Outer Shrine sought redress from Kitabatake Tomokata for the destruction of their buildings and treasure houses. Tomokata responded by overseeing the construction of the building of a temporary hall in 1488 to house the embodiments (*shintai*) of the Outer Shrine deity. Outer Shrine priests transferred the deities to the temporary hall of the Outer Ise shrine, but this simple structure could not accommodate any other treasures or decorations that the shrine maintained.¹⁰⁷ Tomokata later built a checkpoint on the road to Ise, north of the Yōda community, and restricted the flow of pilgrims to the shrine districts. The Kitabatake policies and concerns regarding the *onshi* reflect an interest in controlling the economic support system surrounding pilgrimage but pay little care to the needs of the shrines or their rebuilding efforts.

The conflicts between Uji and Yōda continued in 1489, while the Kitabatake were entangled in a dispute with one of their branch families, the *onshi* of Yōda opportunistically attacked Uji and burned most of the town. The main hall of the Inner Shrine survived this encounter, but many of the other buildings were destroyed and several people were killed on the steps leading up to the inner compound. Later in 1490 a new temporary hall was similarly destroyed in yet another disturbance. When the Inner shrine priest requested assistance from the

¹⁰⁶ The account of the entire disturbance can be found in *Gekū kōrakan kyūki* in *Zoku gunsho ruiju* vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1930), 630-644. For an abbreviated description in English, see: Teewuen and Breen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines*, 115-116.

¹⁰⁷ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 499-500.

Kitabatake, Tomokata refused to provide additional funds for rebuilding. The priests moved their most prized sacred artifact, the mirror of Amaterasu, into a storehouse owned by a local *onshi*.¹⁰⁸

The court and the *bakufu* under the leadership of the weakened Ashikaga Yoshimasa largely ignored the Ise shrines during the violence of the 1480s and 1490s. Konoe Masaie (1444-1505), the Grand Minister (*daijō daijin*) of the Grand Council of State, recounts an interesting interaction between the court and the Ise shrines. In 1491, Masaie recorded how the court questioned Ise shrine attendants about the potential disruption that would be caused to court rituals due of the loss of the physical embodiments (*shintai*) of the deities in Ise. An influential Shintō practitioner and contemporary of Masaie, Yoshida Kanetomo (1435-1511), argued that the conflicts within Ise between Uji and Yōda caused Amaterasu herself to flee from the shrine districts in Ise. The attendants of the Ise shrines argued against Kanetomo, stating that even if the shrines themselves were destroyed, the court should still send processions to Ise with offerings because they insisted that Ise housed the traces (*reiseki*) of the deities honored there.¹⁰⁹ They implicitly agreed with Kanetomo that the gods may have left as a result of the violence in Ise, but argued that the fact that traces remained merited continued ritual observances and patronage.

The term ‘legacy’ or ‘trace’ (*ato/seki*) reveals that even among Inner and Outer Ise shrine attendants, they believed that the deities of their shrines were no longer present. To the attendants of the Inner Shrine, it appears that they understood that not only had they lost control over the lands which had been granted to them, but also the spiritual and political relevance that was once theirs. Their argument for relevancy based on their position as a ‘spirit-trace or legacy’ did not seem to have a significant impact on the imperial court, however, for over the course of

¹⁰⁸ Teeuwen and Breen, *A Social History of the Ise shrines*, 118.

¹⁰⁹ *Zoku shiryō taisei* vol. 6 (Kyōto: Rinsen Shoten, 1944), *Gohōkōin ki*. 6.17.1491 (Entoku 3), 394.

the next twenty years the court would fund the construction of other Ise shrines in Kyoto and Yamaguchi, but no funds were forthcoming for the ‘legacy of the spirits’ in Ise until the end of the sixteenth century.

Conclusion

Over the course of the fifteenth century, central political support for the Ise shrines withered. The central Shintō institution that had traditionally advocated for Ise, the Office of Kami Affairs, ceased to function after the 1470s. Likewise, the weakened Ashikaga could not engage in significant pilgrimages or offer patronage for Ise. When the rites of Ise no longer formed a significant pillar in the larger array of central political legitimacy, the shrines themselves became entirely dependent on local actors for their survival. The shrines were forced to depend on the support of the local *onshi* who cared little for the expenses tied to ritually reconstructing the shrines, and on the Kitabatake who sought to maintain economic and military control of the shrine district communities.

The Kitabatake became the nominal proprietors and guardians of the shrine-lands, but they did not actively protect the shrines or their ritual observances. Kitabatake focus shifted towards protecting and maintaining their *onshi* retainers. *Onshi* continued to practice ceremonies for their patrons, including the Kitabatake, within their compounds but their struggles resulted in protracted violence and the ultimate destruction of both the Inner and Outer Ise shrines.

The destruction of the shrines caused a crisis in Ise, as even shrine attendants admitted that the gods had departed from the region, and that only their traces remained. The Kitabatake oversaw the weakening of the Inner and Outer shrines, and this institutional collapse aided in their territorial control. Contrary to the image of a depleted and weakened state of affairs, the

economic and political power of the Kitabatake and the local residents of Ise grew even though the gods had abandoned the region. The court which had long supported the Ise shrines now abandoned them, and turned their attentions towards creating a new home away from Ise for the displaced Sun Goddess.

Chapter Three:

The Flight of the Sun Goddess: Yoshida Shintō and the Ise Shrines 1370-1521

Overview:

The fiscal and political situation for the shrines worsened over the course of the fifteenth century as the shrine attendants and their allies within the court institutions which had governed shrine affairs ceased to properly advocate for the support of the Ise shrines. Most of the institutions established to oversee the proper maintenance of shrines in the Nara and Heian periods (794-1185) had atrophied.¹ Many of the most prominent shrines, such as Ise, ignored the directives of the Office of Kami Affairs (*Jingikan*) and its functionaries within the central government. During the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, however, a group of ritual prognosticators of the Urabe lineage within the *Jingikan* gained influence within the court and gained authority over shrine affairs as the primary representatives of the imperial family and shogunate.

Working from within preexisting government institutions, the Yoshida family of the Urabe line began creating a network of shrines for which they acted as overseers on behalf of the imperial court. The rise of the Yoshida posed a challenge to shrines such as Ise, which had been largely autonomous and unconstrained by the *Jingikan*. Ultimately, the Yoshida established themselves as the primary arbiter of all *kami* related rites and knowledge for the imperial court. Using their proximity to the imperial court, they overshadowed the shrine attendants of Ise, and deprived their shrines in Ise of economic resources for nearly a century.

¹ For a thorough explanation of the changes in the Heian period see: Helen Hardacre, *Shinto: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 109-149.

This chapter recounts the rise of the Yoshida family, how they elevated their position within the court, and their transformative reconceptualization of Shintō as a system of thought that posited that Japan's *kami* superseded Buddhist manifestations of the divine. Their efforts led to the proselytization of a new understanding of the 'Way of the *kami*' (Shintō) which would become influential for centuries. The Yoshida redefinition of Shintō resonated widely and enhanced the political importance of *kami*. While this also created interest in Ise as a site of ritual pilgrimage, the proliferation of Shintō was not an unalloyed benefit for Ise. The Yoshida established such centralized control of shrines with ties to the imperial court, that Ise itself lost its position as the preeminent shrine for the worship of the Sun Goddess in Japan. With the support of the Ashikaga, powerful *shugo*, and the imperial family, the Yoshida marginalized the Inner and Outer shrines and moved the official place of residence of the Sun Goddess away from her ancestral home in Ise. Their successes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries allowed the Yoshida to profoundly influence court policies and patterns of political legitimation for the next two centuries.

Yoshida Roots: The Urabe Lineage and the Office of Kami Affairs

In order to understand the significance of the Yoshida family, some explanation of their origins and their role within the central government is necessary. The Yoshida were descended from the Urabe lineage group. The name Urabe comes from the characters 'ura', or 'uranai', which means divination, and 'be', denoting an ancient group of specialists who held ties to the imperial court. Japan's earliest written sources reveal that diviners were relied upon for a wide

variety of prognoses within the early Japanese state.² Diviners made predictions and offered projections regarding battles, ship voyages, travel conditions, ritual observances, and proper agricultural techniques.³

Two of the oldest techniques of divination were scapulimancy and plastromancy, where questions were carved into the shoulder blades of deer, or the shells of turtles, and a prognosis was made by analyzing cracks that appeared after these bones were burned. Rulers entrusted their safety to the predictions of these divination practices.⁴ By the fifth and sixth centuries, the most prominent prognosticators belonged to one of two lineage groups, the Nakatomi and Urabe.⁵ The Urabe specialized in plastromancy while the Nakatomi specialized in the technique of scapulimancy carving. These two lineages were linked as similar practitioners of prognostication and claimed descent from the deity (*kami*), Ame-no-koyane-no-mikoto, who was depicted in the early court histories as progenitor of such esoteric knowledge.⁶ Both lineages held positions of import within the early imperial court and made up the earliest specialized shrine attendants in Japan on record.

The formalization of these procedures and the role of these diviner lineages shifted with the establishment of a centralized government with its concomitant bureaucratic institutions in the seventh century. The Office of Kami Affairs (*Jingikan*) was established incrementally as part

² Alan Grapard, 'The Shinto of Yoshida Kanetomo,' *Monumenta Nipponica* 47, no.1, (Spring 1992): 27-30.

³ Inoue Tatsuo ed., *Kodai ōken to shūkyōteki bemin* (Tokyo: Kashiwa shobō, 1980)

⁴ Yokota Kenichi, *Nihon kodai shinwa to shizoku denshō* (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1982), 221-250.

⁵ Nagatomi Hisae, 'Urabe no seiritsu ni tsuite,' in *Shintōshi ronsō: Takigawa Masajirō sensei beiju kinen ronbunshū* (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1984), 86-116.

⁶ Grapard, 'The Shinto of Yoshida Kanetomo,' 32-33.

of the new codes and laws established under the direction of emperors Tenchi (626-672), Tenmu (?-686), and Jitō (645-703). The term *Jingikan* derives from the terms ‘Administrative Council’ and a shortened form of the phrase *tenjin chigi*, ‘deities of heaven and earth.’ The ‘heavenly deities’ (*tenjin*) refer to the mythological beings who occupied the ‘high plain of the heavens,’ from whom the imperial line, the diviner lineages, and other prominent families originated from, while ‘earthly deities’ (*chigi*) referred to all other *kami*. The term *jingi*, did not only point to the deities themselves, but to the larger system of practices performed on their behalf that were seen as providing guidance and protection to the court.⁷

The new imperial system was built on a collection of penal codes (*ritsu*) and administrative law (*ryō*) overseeing each aspect of governance. The *Jingikan* was one of only two presiding councils created by the new codes, with the other being the Grand Council of State (*Daijōkan*), which was technically inferior to the institutions of the *Jingikan*.⁸ In reality, the *Jingikan* responded directly to orders transmitted by the Grand Council, which controlled the allotment of funds and *de facto* served as the superior institution.⁹ The *Jingikan*, however, played an important role in state administration. The sovereigns of this new state claimed legitimacy through a proclaimed connection with the highest *kami* of the heavens. Each regional deity, their shrines, and accompanying lineage groups was subsumed under the ritual specializations of the

⁷ Mitsuhashi Tadashi, *Nihon kodai jingi seido no seisei to tenkai* (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 2010), 52-59.

⁸ Ibid., 85-90.

⁹ Additionally, all official correspondence from the *Jingikan* had to be passed through the Grand Council of State’s central administrative body, the *Benkan* before action could be taken. Suggesting that symbolically the *Jingikan* may have occupied a higher position, but in practice the Grand Council of State still operated as the primary enacting body which determined policy in the Ritsuryō state.

attendants of the *Jingikan*. The *Jingikan* was the preeminent extension of the divine authority claimed by the sovereigns of the Japanese state and a crucial organ of state control.¹⁰

The *Jingikan* oversaw rites of state and regulated central and provincial ritual practices according to prescriptions codified in what was known as the *Kami Law* (*Jingiryō*). This *Kami Law* specified the proper ritual calendar of the state and created a hierarchy of cultic sites and rituals that were seen as pivotal in preserving peace and prosperity of the realm. Initially, the *Kami Law* established twenty annual rites designed to preserve prosperity of the state. The *Jingikan* oversaw four primary functions. First, it provided a register of ritualists to assist with palace ceremonies. Second, members of the shrine attendant lineages within the *Jingikan* performed divination to determine the possible causes of disorder. Third, these lineages staffed the Hall of the Eight *Kami* (*hasshinden*), a site within the palace where eight kami who protected the imperial house were worshipped. Finally, the *Jingikan* oversaw the logistical arrangements of the transportation of tribute offerings (*heihaku*) to imperial shrines for the most important annual rituals of the sacerdotal calendar.¹¹

The ritualists within the *Jingikan* were assigned rights to income and social position linked with their postings within the office. One of the primary advocates for the establishment of the Ritsuryō system and the *Jingikan*, Nakatomi no Kamatari (614-669) ensured that his descendants would occupy an important position as primary ritualists for the state.¹² The

¹⁰ Aritomi Junya, 'Jingikan no tokushitsu: chihō jinja gyōsei kara no kentō,' *Hisutoria* 187 (November 2003): 83–106

¹¹ Hardacre, *Shinto*, 33-36.

¹² Nakatomi no Kamatari is also considered to be the progenitor of the Fujiwara lineage group who would hold significant power in the Grand Council of State throughout much of the premodern period. For more on Nakatomi no Kamatari and his influence on Japanese religion see: Allan Grapard, *Protocol of the Gods: A Study of the Kasuga Cult in Japanese History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

Nakatomi initially monopolized the primary supervisory position, called the Elder of the Jingikan (*jingihaku*).¹³ The Elder relied upon a staff of eighty-two individuals to perform the appointed duties of the *Jingikan*. The Urabe comprised nearly one-fourth of those officials (twenty in fact), and performed divination to determine the best practices for agriculture and other important questions posed by the Grand Council of State.¹⁴ For centuries a member of the Urabe lineage played a central role in Japanese foreign relations as a member of the Urabe lineage was expected to accompany and provide divinations for all embassies bound for China.¹⁵

The Urabe continued to serve as officials in the *Jingikan* for the eighth and ninth centuries. During this time the Urabe lineage deepened ties with the Nakatomi, whose most illustrious members were now styled as the Fujiwara who provided consorts for the imperial family and dominated central politics. The Yoshida began to lecture on Japan's early histories and created glosses explaining passages in these texts. In 859, the imperial court sponsored the creation of the Yoshida Shrine to reward the Urabe for their varied court service.¹⁶ The prestige of the Yoshida shrine rose over the next two centuries. By the eleventh century, the shrine was

¹³ *Jingihaku* is often translated as 'head', but this term refers to a senior male member of the house. The *Jingihaku* had specific responsibilities in court ritual and in the daily observances of the *Hasshinden* but his authority was limited. An alternative interpretation of 'elder' perhaps grasps that nuance of a title of deference, while still aware of the relatively limited nature of the position. The title carried with it an accompanying court rank of the fourth rank, which relatively low when compared to the supervisory positions within the Grand Council of State. See: Sakamoto Katsunari, 'Jingikan no seiritsu ni tsuite no ichi kōsatsu,' *Shintōgaku*, no. 98 (1978): 40–44

¹⁴ Nagatomi, 'Urabe no seiritsu ni tsuite,' 95-105.

¹⁵ Grapard, 'The Shinto of Yoshida Kanetomo,' 33.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 33-34.

listed in as one of twenty-two specially dedicated shrine-temple multiplexes that were sponsored by the court and seen as crucially important to the protection and well-being of the state.¹⁷

The Nakatomi and their Fujiwara offshoot eventually lost their monopoly over the position of Elder of the *Jingikan*. Growing concern over the inability of the Elder to collect funds to support the *Jingikan* eventually led to the appointment of Minamoto no Nobuzane (dates unknown) as Elder in 1045. Nobuzane had previously been an imperial prince but received the Minamoto lineage name which both removed him from being considered for succession to the throne, and also allowed him to receive appointments to state offices. Nobuzane, nevertheless, was restored to a position within the imperial family following his appointment to the title of Elder. His descendants, who adopted the name Shirakawa, based on the site of their domicile, later received the hereditary right to the position of Elder of the *Jingikan*.¹⁸ Following the lead of Nobuzane, members of the Shirakawa family, although of the Minamoto lineage, would be designated as members of the imperial family upon receiving appointment to the position of Elder and were afforded the special protection and station that members of the imperial family held.

During the late Heian period, the *Jingikan* played only a minor part in performance of the ceremonial rites enacted by the imperial court and influential Buddhist monasteries that were seen as necessary to the preservation of the realm. Although shrine attendants and monks nominally belonged to what modern observers have classified as different religious traditions, in fact, in terms of practice, few barriers existed between *Jingi* and Buddhist institutions. Many

¹⁷ Allan Grapard, 'Institution, Ritual, and Ideology: The Twenty-Two Shrine-Temple Complexes of Heian Japan,' *History of Religions* 27, no. 3 (1988): 246-269.

¹⁸ Yamaguchi Tsuyoshi, 'Maicho Gohai to Sekke, Shirakawa-ke, Yoshida-ke,' *Shintōshi kenkyū* 58, no. 1 (April 2010): 28-39.

shrine attendants took the Buddhist tonsure after retiring from the *Jingikan*. *Kami* were increasingly thought to be manifestations of Buddhas, and large shrine complexes often were accompanied by powerful Buddhist monasteries on their immediate premises. Except in very few cases, no great separation existed between temples and *kami* affairs.¹⁹ As the primacy of Buddhism became more pronounced over the Heian period, the position of Elder, increasingly held fewer and fewer responsibilities at court.²⁰

Day-to-day management of the *Jingikan* gradually shifted from the Shirakawa family to the active ritualists who still supplied the ritual observances required by the *Kami* Law. Most noticeably, in the thirteenth century the Urabe lineage was granted a new position within the *Jingikan*, the *miyaji*.²¹ Urabe Kanebumi (dates unknown) and Urabe Kanetaka (dates unknown) brought attention to the state-sponsored Chronicles of Japan (*Nihon Shoki*) of the eighth century. As a reward for their work, they were granted the responsibility for the rites which guaranteed the physical well-being of members of the imperial family as the Presiding Tortoise Shell Diviners (*kiboku chōjō*) for the Grand Council of State.²²

The Urabe, taking advantage of small advances that accrued over time, came to occupy important positions within the *Jingikan* by the end of the thirteenth century. Their scholarship came into great demand at the court and accorded them deference from the noble families of the

¹⁹ The works of Kuroda Toshio helped change the image of Shintō as an independent form of religious thought divorced from Buddhism. For an English translation of the general underpinnings of his argument see: Kuroda Toshio, trans. James Dobbins and Suzanne Gay, 'Shinto in the History of Japanese Religion,' *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 7, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 1-21.

²⁰ Yamaguchi, 'Maicho go-hai to Sekke, Shirakawa-ke, Yoshida-ke,' 28-39.

²¹ Mitsuhashi Tadashi, 'Chūseiteki shinshoku seido no keisei,' *Shintō koten kenkyū: Kaihō* 1 (Oct. 1979): 38-42.

²² Maeda Hiromi, 'Imperial Authority and Local Shrines: The Yoshida House and the Creation of a Countrywide Shinto Institution in Early Modern Japan' (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2003), 28-31.

capital. Their ritual duties guaranteed them rights to income and permanent holdings in and around Kyoto. In practice, the Urabe had risen from relatively low-level administrators to becoming the second highest ranked officials within the *Jingikan* and inserted themselves into positions which granted supervisory rights over the day-to-day implementation of ritual. The Urabe would leverage these strengths to pursue greater power and influence from the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries.

Plowing the ‘Way of the Kami’: Fourteenth-Century Urabe Influence

Political turmoil afforded the Urabe with opportunities for further advancement. A political rift, and the division of the imperial family into two distinct factions, the Jimyōin and the Daikakuji, after the 1272 death of Go-Saga, led to greater demands for Urabe divination and scholarship from emperors of both lines. Rather than construct entirely new visions of legitimacy, however, the imperial court often supported explanations for contemporary problems that tied legal precedent and examples from an idealized past into solution-making process.²³ This impulse encouraged thinkers with ties to the Urabe lineage to promote their views on the proper role of the kami and their purpose within the larger systems of contemporary governance.

The monk Jihen (dates unknown), a member of the Urabe lineage group who had taken on the tonsure at a young age, began writing his interpretations of *jingi* texts in the early fourteenth century. Jihen studied Tendai Buddhism on Mt. Hiei as a child and was fascinated by

²³ Many imperial houses held diaries which acted as important precedent markers for proper conduct within their own families. Additionally, the Ritsuryō codes and latter amendments continued to hold significant influence on all the decisions of the state well throughout the premodern period.

the relationship between *kami* and buddhas.²⁴ Jihen left Mt. Hiei over his concerns regarding what he believed to be an incorrect understanding of the proper position of Buddhist institutions within the central government. Jihen believed that Buddhist institutions unduly usurped the position as arbiters for the divine. Jihen travelled to Ise and studied with members of the Watarai lineage of the Outer Shrine who shared an acute interest in the combinatory nature of the *kami* and Buddhist cosmology.²⁵ Jihen devoted his latter-years to writing about his criticisms of Buddhist institutions treatment of *kami* within their ritual performances.

To Jihen, Japan and its *kami* predated the influence of Buddhism. He saw Buddhism as a gloss obscuring the fundamental reality of Japanese *kami*.²⁶ Jihen lectured Emperor Go-Daigo (1288-1339) about the *kami* of Japan in the 1330s.²⁷ Jihen asserted that the direct rule by the *kami*'s descendants (the imperial family) was the proper way to restore peace within Japan and that the law of the court (*ōbō*) superseded Buddhist law (*buppō*) due to the nature of all existence being permeated with what he described as 'kami-essence' (*shinsei*). He composed the *Toyoashihara Waki*, for the imperial house in 1334, shortly after Go-Daigo had succeeded in deposing the Kamakura *bakufu* and began implementing his restructuring of the Japanese state. Jihen's teachings also influenced Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293-1354). Chikafusa drew heavily from Jihen in his writings of *Chronicles of Gods and Sovereigns*, a history of Japan emphasizing the importance of the regalia for legitimacy and serving as a textbook of sorts for Emperor Go-

²⁴ Hayashi Tōyō, 'Jihen no sekaikan: Shinpōron wo tegakari ni,' *Gakushuin Daigaku Jinbunkagaku ronshū* 15 (2006): 1-5.

²⁵ While no immediate documentation links Jihen to Watarai Ieyuki, it is highly possible that Jihen discussed his beliefs with the influential head of the Watarai lineage. See: *Ibid.*, 5-15.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 17-19.

²⁷ Grapard, 'The Shinto of Yoshida Kanetomo,' 36.

Murakami. Chikafusa in his writings argued for the primacy of *kami* and described Japan as a ‘land of the kami’ (*shinkoku*), much as Jihen had done.

While Jihen found favor with Go-Daigo and Kitabatake Chikafusa, his brother, Urabe Kanetoyo (dates unknown) allied with the Ashikaga and the Northern Court. Kanetoyo served the family shrine in Kyoto throughout the conflict between the Northern and Southern Courts (1336-1392). He wrote *Oral Transmissions of the Secret Rituals of the Imperial House* (*Miyaji kuji hiden*) which described the hidden meaning of the rites performed at the shrines which the Urabe lineage maintained.²⁸ Kanetoyo and his son, Kanehiro (1348-1402) founded the Kaguraoka Archive (*Kaguraoka bunko*), an expansive collection of classics and chronicles. In 1375, Kanehiro received a court promotion, moved to the Muromachi district within Kyoto, close to where the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimitsu resided, and took, for the first time, the surname Yoshida. Eight years later, the retired Emperor Go-Kameyama (1347–1424) invited Kanehiro the opportunity to lecture the imperial family on the *Nihon Shoki*, one of Japan’s oldest state-sponsored histories.²⁹ Although turmoil existed between supporters of the Southern and Northern courts, both sides accepted the erudition and divinations of the Yoshida through the efforts of Jihen and Kanehiro.

Beginning in the late fourteenth century, the Shirakawa family and the Grand Council of State entrusted the Yoshida with important functions of the *Jingikan*. Prior to this period the *Jingikan* would receive and reply to requests from the shrines throughout Japan for the promotion of their gods to a more exalted rank, as the relative status of various *kami* had been carefully calibrated for centuries. Shrines throughout Japan would often petition the *Jingikan* for

²⁸ Ibid., 38-39.

²⁹ Maeda Hiromi, ‘Imperial Authority and Local Shrines,’ 28-31.

increases in rank and status-based rights to income in exchange for their ritual performances on behalf of the state. The expansion of warfare throughout the country during the Northern and Southern Courts period led to both sides petitioning shrines for their ritual maledictions against their rivals and protections for their own forces.³⁰ Due to the prolonged conflict, the court was inundated with requests near the end of the fourteenth century, and increasingly passed these communications on to the Urabe lineage for decisions. Kanetoyo and Kanehiro oversaw the daily workings of the *Jingikan* throughout the 1370s and 1380s as the Shirakawa family performed rites for the protection of the imperial house conducted in the Hall of the Eight *Kami*.³¹ This change placed the newly minted Yoshida family in the role of gatekeeper between the shrines of the provinces and the central institution of the *Jingikan*.

The Grand Council of State also relied upon Kanehiro to adjudicate and determine the rank of gods. The normal process for rank advancement of shrines and kami included a three-step process: (1) the emperor would receive a communication from a divine source; (2) the emperor would commission the Grand Council of State to notify the shrine related to the proclamation; (3) the shrine then would change the name, or title, or practice addressed in the proclamation from the emperor. This process changed, however, to be directed through the offices of the Yoshida family. The Yoshida weighed the cases presented to them and gave recommendations for approval or denial which then were granted by the Grand Council of State.

Political connections motivated this meteoric rise in relevancy for the Yoshida. The Yoshida gained the support of the ascendant Ashikaga Yoshimitsu at the end of the fourteenth century. Kanehiro's residence in the Muromachi district placed him in the immediate proximity

³⁰ Conlan, *State of War*, 165-185.

³¹ Miyaji Naokazu, *Shintōshi* vol. 3 (Tokyo: Sōyōsha, 1985), 279-280.

of the imperial family and the Ashikaga *bakufu*. Yoshimitsu began building his palaces (*Hana no gosho*) in Muromachi in 1378, only a short distance away from the Yoshida shrines. In the years that followed, Yoshida Kanehiro became a close and trusted supporter of Yoshimitsu.

A collection of documents, long held to be forgeries but recently proven to be genuine, reveal that Yoshimitsu relied on the Yoshida as an intermediary for transmitting orders to shrines throughout Japan.³² The Yoshida relayed requests for curses to prominent shrines to be used against Yoshimitsu's adversaries in the 1380s and 1390s. The Yoshida even communicated as a superior to powerful shrines that had considerable autonomy from the *Jingikan*, most notably the Ise shrines. Their actions and direct communication with the shrine attendants of Ise overturned hundreds of years of precedent, wherein the Ise shrines communicated with the Ōnakatomi family who held a specially designated role within the *Jingikan* that oversaw the rites of the Ise shrines. With Yoshimitsu's support, Yoshida Kanehiro was raised to the third rank and a member of the upper nobility in 1390. With this promotion, Kanehiro was hailed as a master of *jingi* learning and was given rank which superseded the Elder of the *Jingikan*.³³

Yoshimitsu elevated the Yoshida to reassert authority over a collection of twenty-one shrines,³⁴ which had been a focal point of the sixty-year civil war, as these shrines were thought to represent the sacred boundaries of the Japanese state. Supporters of the Southern Court had argued that control of important shrines and temples around Japan protected the state. The

³² For the reasoning for the change in treatment of these documents. See Kirita Takashi, 'Kyōto on-taiji go-tsugebumi ni miru Ashikaga Yoshimitsu no jingi kitō,' *Komonjo kenkyū* 90 (December 2020): 43-62.

³³ *Ibid.*, 50-55.

³⁴ The number of these shrines differed in different periods. For more on the relevance of these shrines see: Grapard, 'Institution, Ritual, and Ideology: The Twenty-Two Shrine-Temple Complexes of Heian Japan,' 246-269. For understanding in their role in the wars of the fourteenth century see: Thomas Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol: An age of Ritual Determinism in Fourteenth-century Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9, 28, 66-68.

powerful Daigoji monk, Kenshun (1299-1357), a close advisor to the Ashikaga and protector of the Northern Court and the newly founded Ashikaga *bakufu*, travelled to Ise beginning in the late 1340s in an attempt to gain support from the shrines for the cause of the Northern Court, and have pro-Ashikaga rites performed there, but the allegiances of the shrine attendants in Ise remained divided until the time of Yoshimitsu.³⁵ Through the Yoshida and Yoshimitsu's own overwhelming political and military resources, Yoshimitsu managed to assert authority over these shrines. Yoshimitsu vowed to visit some of the most prominent shrines in gratitude for their willingness to support him in his conflicts against his enemies.³⁶

Yoshimitsu promised the shrine attendants of Ise that he would come as "soon as conditions allowed."³⁷ When a war with a powerful *shugo* family from Western Japan, the Ōuchi, continued beyond his expectations, Yoshimitsu sent Yoshida Kanehiro as his personal representative (*daikan*), to pray for 'peace in the realm' and maledictions upon the Ōuchi, in what could be seen as Yoshimitsu's first attempt at pilgrimage to Ise.³⁸ For Yoshimitsu, the incorporation of the Ise shrines, the most prestigious of cultic sites, fundamentally undermined the legitimacy of his Southern Court opponents and *shugo* who sought to free themselves from Yoshimitsu's control. The Yoshida functioned as an intermediary between the shrines of the provinces and through their relationship with Yoshimitsu established their position as an arbiter of court knowledge in the early fifteenth century.

³⁵ Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 107-108.

³⁶ Kirita Takashi, 'Kyōto on-taiji go-tsugebumi ni miru Ashikaga Yoshimitsu no jingi kitō,' 49-51.

³⁷ Ibid., 51-53.

³⁸ Ibid., 54-58.

Expanding the ‘Way of Jinqi’: Yoshida Kanetomo and the *Jingikan*

The first half of the fifteenth century saw little change in the position of the Yoshida family. Yoshida Kanehiro was succeeded by his son Yoshida Kanena (?-1460) who, like his father, advanced to the third rank within the imperial court. Kanena continued to serve as an intermediary for the Ashikaga family even after the death of Yoshimitsu. The Yoshida house maintained their position as transmitter of official communications for the *Jingikan* and received court recognition of their superior station throughout their lives. Kanena’s son, Yoshida Kanetomo (1435-1511), however, would transform the role of the Yoshida family within the *Jingikan* and the court.

Kanetomo became the head of the Yoshida house in 1460 after his father’s death. In 1467, however, the onset of the Ōnin War, fought between the forces of Ashikaga Yoshimasa and the powerful *shugo* magnates of the west brought ruin upon Kyoto. Kanetomo’s residence at Muromachi was destroyed as too was the Yoshida shrine. The Hall of the Eight *Kami* of the *Jingikan* was also destroyed along with many Buddhist temples. For Kanetomo, the biggest concern was the destruction of so many shrines, which were thought to house Japan’s deities. According to his understanding of the importance of these physical residences, Japan now had hundreds of *kami* traveling throughout the country spreading misfortune due to the lack of a permanent residence and proper ritual observations. What to do with these displaced, homeless gods, became a key concern for Kanetomo. He solved this problem when he rebuilt his residence and constructed a small ‘site of ritual’ (*saijōsho*) nearby to house these displaced deities.³⁹

³⁹ Demura Katsuaki, *Yoshida Shintō no kisoteki kenkyū* (Kyoto: Rinkawa shoten, 1997), 584–594

Beginning in the 1470s, in the midst of the Ōnin War, Kanetomo began teaching a doctrine he called ‘One-and-Only Shintō’ (*yuuitsu shintō*). He asserted that One-and-Only Shintō was a secret transmission passed down from his mythological ancestor Ame-no-Koyane thousands of years before the compilation of the national histories in the eighth century. The Yoshida, and the Urabe before them, had long been respected for their scholarship on earlier histories, and their possession of one of the largest archives in the capital. Kanetomo’s claim that his family’s records were his ancestral documents from the *Jingikan* carried great weight. Even though many texts were destroyed during the Ōnin War, Kanetomo, with a portion of his precious surviving archive, asserted his authority as an expert of ancient matters.

Shortly after the 1467 onset of war, the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1436-1490) commissioned Kanetomo to survey conditions at shrines located in Kyoto, the site of much of the fighting. Kanetomo compiled and edited records of the deities worshipped, distinctive rites, and the names of any shrine attendant lineages that were associated with the shrines.⁴⁰ In doing so, he acted much as his grandfather Kanehiro had done before when he surveyed shrines and deities throughout Japan.⁴¹ The institutional inroads laid down by his grandfather enabled Kanetomo to begin exercising the same privileges which had been afforded to Kanehiro. During the Ōnin War, the Yoshida family retained their position of experts on the proper rewards for shrines that

⁴⁰ Hagiwara Tatsuo, *Chūsei saishi soshiki no kenkyū* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975), 391.

⁴¹ Previous scholars have assumed that Kanetomo merely forged the documents suggesting that Kanehiro had been granted the ability to raise ranks of shrines and deities, but recent research by Kirita Takashi and Inoue Tomokatsu show that the documents are legitimate. See: Kirita Takashi, ‘Muromachi-dono chinjusha no seiritsu to tenkai: Ashikaga shogun ke no jingi saijutsu to Yoshida-ke,’ *Nenpyō chūseiishi kenkyū*, no. 46 (2021): 61-88; Kirita Takashi, ‘Tenri daigaku fuzoku Tenri toshokan shozō- Kyōto on-taiji go-tsugebumi,’ *Shintōshi kenkyū* 69, no. 1 (May 2015): 102-117, ‘Kyōto on-taiji go-tsugebumi ni miru Ashikaga Yoshimitsu no jingi kitō,’ 43-49 and Inoue Tomokatsu, ‘Jingikan ryōchōjō-kō: Muromachi-ki no Yoshida-ke to jingikan.’ *Shūkyō kenkyū* 78, no. 1 (2004): 71–94.

served the imperial court.⁴² The court expected the Yoshida to fulfill these duties and relied on them for their knowledge of court ritual and practice. Kanetomo, however, needed funds to rebuild his residence and establish an expanded version of his ‘site of rituals’ (*saijōsho*). Kanetomo received emoluments from shrines seeking his support, which gradually became a significant source of income for the Yoshida house.⁴³

In this context, the public affirmations of Kanetomo’s institutional authority and the support he received from the shogun and the imperial court were an extension of already accepted practice. Kanetomo had conducted prayers for Ashikaga’s and imperial family’s well-being during his time as head of the Yoshida shrine for seven years before the Ōnin War.⁴⁴ He held the same connections to the Ashikaga that his father and grandfather had. In response to the service he provided, after the destruction of the Hall of the Eight *Kami* in 1468, Ashikaga Yoshimasa treated Kanetomo’s *Saijōsho* as if it were the *Jingikan*.⁴⁵ Kanetomo petitioned for public funds for the *Saijōsho* to “rebuild it as it had been” and to ensure that the ritual calendar would be followed once again after the conflict abated.

In addition, Kanetomo began transmitting his family’s ‘secret’ lineage teachings to outsiders, including various court and shrine officials in exchange for financial support.⁴⁶ A

⁴² Miyaji, *Shintōshi* vol. 3, 367.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 279-280.

⁴⁴ Okada Shōji, ‘Yoshida Kanetomo to Yoshida Shintō: Saijōsho,’ *Kokuritsu rekishi minzoku hakubutsukan kenkyū hōkoku* vol. 157 (2010): 195-209.

⁴⁵ Inoue, ‘Jingikan ryōchōjō-kō: Muromachi-ki no Yoshida-ke to jingikan,’ 86.

⁴⁶ The ‘secrecy’ referred to here is perhaps more accurately described as being ‘official.’ Kanetomo’s teachings were spread widely, but ‘secret’ initiations which guaranteed the recipient an ‘official’ stamp of approval were highly sought after in fifteenth-century Japan. For more on this see: Maki Morinaga, *Secrecy in Japanese Arts: ‘Secret Transmission’ as a Mode of Knowledge* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 45-72.

politically influential member of the imperial court, Ichijō Kaneyoshi (1402-1481), who served as Grand Minister of State and Imperial Regent (*kampaku*), received lectures from Kanetomo on One-and-Only Shintō.⁴⁷ Kanetomo's ideology gained popularity among the members of the court in the 1470s and 1480s. Unlike other *jingi* lineages like the Watarai and Arakida of the Outer and Inner Ise shrines were more guarded and rarely granted transmissions to members outside of their lineage group, Kanetomo disseminated his ritual knowledge among members of the court widely.

Kanetomo eventually received imperial recognition and funding for his *Saijōsho* in 1473. Emperor Go-Tsuchimikado extolled this structure as “the most exalted ceremonial hall for the worship of the *kami* of heaven and earth in all Japan.”⁴⁸ He was granted the title of *jingi kanryō chōjō*, or the ‘Presiding Director of *Jingi*.’⁴⁹ The title was an invention of Kanetomo's, but drew allusions from court ritual and offices of antiquity. *Jingi* refers to the rites and teachings of the *kami* of heaven and earth, and to the *Jingikan*. *Kanryō* describes an administrator who enacts important functions for a government body. The final couplet, *chōjō*, is an old one drawn from the ancient laws, and designates positions where individuals were expected to actively administrative their affairs in Kyoto for much of the year. Kanetomo's new position raised his status from a day-to-day administrator over the *Jingikan* to one comparable to more exalted office of the Elder of *Jingikan*.

⁴⁷ Hardacre, *Shinto*, 213.

⁴⁸ Translation from *Ibid.*, 214.

⁴⁹ It is possible that this document was issued several years after 1473, when the *Saijōsho* was fully rebuilt in 1478 or 1479 at which point Kanetomo had begun using this title much more frequently. This title has previously been translated as ‘Superior of Shintō/Jingi’. See: *Ibid.*, 214 and Inoue, ‘Jingikan ryōchōjō-kō: Muromachi-ki no Yoshida-ke to jingikan,’ 78-79.

This elevation of Kanetomo's position did not alienate Shirakawa Yoshiuji (1456-1504), the contemporary Elder of the *Jingikan*. Yoshiuji sent a prominent member of the Shirakawa family, Shirakawa Tadatomi to become Kanetomo's disciple.⁵⁰ Kanetomo and the Shirakawa collaborated to request for funds from the imperial court for the rebuilding of the Hall of the Eight *Kami* and the offices of the *Jingikan*.⁵¹ Kanetomo and the Shirakawa likely would not have supported each other if Kanetomo had intended to establish his own institution outside of the *Jingikan* as some scholars have assumed.⁵² Kanetomo's close ties with the court and the Shirakawa suggest that he sought to work within the preexisting structures, or at the very least was not willing to upset potential rivals with strong ties to the imperial family. The creation of the 'Presiding Director' post did not threaten the Shirakawa or their hereditary sources of income in any way. Rather, this innovation within the *Jingikan* formalized the power which the Yoshida had been exercising on behalf of the court for much of the past century. This adaptation both revitalized the *Jingikan*, and enabled Kanetomo to expand his vision for the institution on an unprecedented scale.

Unifying the Way: Yoshida Kanetomo's One-and-Only Shintō

Kanetomo expanded his influence within the capital with this new national appointment. In both 1478 and 1484, Hino Tomiko (1440–1496), the powerful wife of Ashikaga Yoshimasa,

⁵⁰ Miyaji, *Shintōshi* vol. 3, 365.

⁵¹ Inoue, 'Jingikan ryōchōjō-kō: Muromachi-ki no Yoshida-ke to jingikan,' 86-89.

⁵² Nishida Nagao, 'Yoshida Shintō no seiritsu--dai ni kō,' in *Nihon Shintōshi kenkyū* vol. 5 (Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 1979), 80-82.

donated significant funds for the maintenance of the *Saijōsho*.⁵³ Despite growing popularity at court and among the imperial family, Kanetomo did not restrict his network building efforts only to the most high-ranked members of Japanese society. Kanetomo reached out to powerful *shugo* to expand his sources of financial and political support. In the late 1470s, when political conditions shifted in favor of a faction of *shugo* originating from western Japan, Kanetomo attached himself to the most preeminent *shugo* of the period Ōuchi Masahiro (1446-1495).⁵⁴

While Masahiro initially had fought against Ashikaga Yoshimasa during the Ōnin War, he became a significant patron for the Yoshida and the imperial court. The Yoshida, in return, deified Masahiro's father Norihiro (1420-1465) in 1486, granting the title of 'Great August Deity of Tsukiyama' (*tsukiyama daimyōjin*) to the deceased Ōuchi lord. The title *Daimyōjin* refers to a 'light-emitting' being which corresponds with the highest rank of deity which the central government could bestow.

The central government had long bestowed *kami* status onto individuals who had been wronged by the state and were thought to have become evil spirits (*onryō*) who brought plague and destruction and could only be appeased through posthumous court promotions, or apotheosis.⁵⁵ This process usually took decades before a minor *kami* status was assigned to these individuals. Norihiro, however, was recently deceased and was not considered to be an evil spirit. This was the first recorded occasion of such an apotheosis for a recently deceased

⁵³ Ibid., 78-85.

⁵⁴ Kanetomo had also cursed Masahiro on behalf of the shogunate only a few years past during the Ōnin War. See Kirita, 'Tenri daigaku fuzoku Tenri toshokan shozō- Kyōto on-taiji go-tsugebumi,' 113-117, and Thomas Conlan, 'When Men Become Gods: Apotheosis, Sacred Space, and Political Authority in Japan 1486-1599' in *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* vol 21. (2016): 93-97.

⁵⁵ The most famous instance of this sort of transformation comes from the ninth-century official and poet Sugawara no Michizane. See: Takatori Masao, *Sugawara no Michizane: Onryo no kami kara gakumon geinō no kami e* (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1978).

individual in Japan. Kanetomo had only recently elevated the founder of the Fujiwara lineage group and the primary advocate for the Jingikan, Nakatomi no Kamatari, in 1464-65 as a light-emitting deity.⁵⁶ It appears that Kanetomo used this newly granted ability to deify individuals to formulate relations with the Ōuchi and other *shugo* throughout Japan.

During this same period, a common anxiety arose that the gods of Japan would wander throughout the country bringing malady due to their lack of a permanent resting places where rites and oblations could be offered up to these displaced *kami*. The Ōnin War had destroyed many of the shrines which housed the physical manifestations of the *kami* in and around Kyoto. The ruin of so many important cultic sites led to a crisis in divine affairs. With so many shrines destroyed, there were reports of gods flying about (*tobi shinmei*), looking for suitable resting places throughout Japan.⁵⁷ With imperial authorization secured and the support of powerful magnates like the Ōuchi, Kanetomo began to proclaim that the *Saijōsho* was the primary shrine in the Japan and the origin of all *kami*-essence (*shinsei*) for all other shrines located in the provinces. Kanetomo welcomed wandering *kami* into his new site of ritual practice to ensure that they would once again provide their support to the central government and whatever regime who show their devotion to the *kami*.

Kanetomo displayed this new assertion in the architecture of his newly built *Saijōsho*. The *Saijōsho* consisted of three main structures: the Yoshida Shrine, an octagonally-shaped 'Shrine of the Great Origin' (*Daigengū*), and the Sōgen Hall, where the three esoteric rites of

⁵⁶ Kuroda Satoru, *Fujiwara Kamatari, jikū o kakeru: Henshin to saisei no Nihonshi* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2011), 210-214 and Yamada Takashi, 'Chūsei kōki chiiki kenryoku ni yoru bushi no shinkakka- Ōuchi Norihiro no shinkakka to 'Daimyōjin' go no kakutoku,' *Nenpyō chūsei-shi kenkyū* 33 (2008): 61-84.

⁵⁷ Hagiwara Tatsuo, *Chūsei saishi soshiki no kenkyū*, 645-656.

Yoshida Shinto were performed. The eight sides of the Shrine of Great Origin were meant to resemble the Hall of the Eight *Kami* of the *Jingikan* and was considered a point in which all the *kami* of the realm could be worshiped. Kanetomo's use of esoteric rites resembled Shingon Buddhist practices which he had learned as a young man and were meant to make universalist claims that could unify *kami* practices throughout the archipelago.⁵⁸ Kanetomo intended for the *Saijōsho* to possess the 'kami-radiance' (*shinmei*) of all the *kami* throughout Japan.

Kanetomo continued to expand his vision for his *Saijōsho* in the 1480s. Within the Shrine of Great Origin's compound Kanetomo constructed two small shrine buildings representing the Outer and Inner shrines at Ise.⁵⁹ Kanetomo's assertion that the 'essence' of Japan's greatest deities all originated from his shrine within Kyoto angered the shrine attendant lineages in Ise. The Arakida and Watarai had fiercely resisted the creation of Ise clone shrines in the past, pointing to regulations within the *Kami* Law that specified Ise province as the unique location and resting place of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu.⁶⁰ Kanetomo's symbolic reconstructions of the Ise shrines within his compound pressed on the unique nature of Ise's position. Ise had maintained its position as the highest ranked shrine within all of Japan for much of the past 600 years. Kanetomo's new constructions demonstrated publicly that his new *Saijōsho* superseded all other shrines throughout Japan. Unlike his position within the *Jingikan*, where Kanetomo was able to create a parallel title for himself, the *Saijōsho* stood in immediate opposition to the positions held by the Inner and Outer Shrines of Ise.

⁵⁸ Richard Payne, 'A Pragmatics of Ritual: The Yoshida Goma and the Interface of Shintō and Shingon,' *Religions* 12, no. 10 (2021): 884-899.

⁵⁹ Maeda, 'Imperial Authority and Local Shrines,' 55-56.

⁶⁰ Breen and Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines*, 37-45.

Ise pilgrimage during the fifteenth century among the political elite contributed to an increased interest in the well-being of the residence of the Sun Goddess.⁶¹ Prominent families within the court and among the *shugo* began funding smaller shrines throughout Japan dedicated to the worship of Amaterasu. One such shrine was maintained by the Hirano branch of the Urabe lineage within Kyoto. The Awata Shrine began honoring the Sun Goddess in the 1450s.⁶² The Hirano family was a branch family of the Yoshida and began asserting that the ‘radiance’ of a *kami* could be used to ‘light’ another object and imbue it with similar divine qualities that then could travel from location to location without diminishing the original source. This understanding of the ability of a *kami* to transfer its radiance across distances (*tobi shinmei*)⁶³ detracted from the uniqueness of the Ise shrines and was met with opposition from the Arakida and Watarai and created a lingering tension between the attendants of the Ise shrines and the Yoshida family.

Kanetomo spent the first half of the 1480s developing his theological credentials by writing a series of texts explaining his worldview. Between 1482 and 1486, Kanetomo authored what would be his most formative works, *The Essentials of the Name and Law of the One and Only Shinto* (*Yuiitsu shintō myōbō yōshū*) and *An Outline of Shinto* (*Shintō taii*). Kanetomo’s works argued for the legitimacy of the imperial court and the emperor as the manifestation of the *kami* on earth. Kanetomo identified three classical texts as the basis for his theory: *Kojiki*, *Nihon shoki*, and the *Sendai kuji hongī*. He believed that the ‘original’ nature of the Japanese polity was

⁶¹ Hagiwara Tatsuo, ‘Chūsei makki no jinja to kyōson kannushi-sō,’ in *Gendai Shintō kenkyū shūsei*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Jinja Honchō, Jinja Shimpōsha, 1998), 317–343

⁶² *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 495-499.

⁶³ For more on the topic of *tobi shinmei* see: *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 492-499.

the answer to the disarray and destruction that the capital had recently experienced. Kanetomo claimed that the imperial histories, which his family was known as experts on, offered insight on how to invoke the protection and guidance of the *kami* and ensure the prosperity of the realm.⁶⁴

Kanetomo's writings often pointed to identifiable rites, practices, and ideas in the past, but altered each in his contemporary interpretations. The fourteenth-century writings of Jihen, proved influential. Kanetomo, like Jihen, asserted that Japan was a 'divine land' (*shinkoku*) protected by the *kami*, and that the *kami* existed before any other being including the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Most Buddhist-Shintō combinatory formulas postulated that *kami* were lesser manifestations of bodhisattvas and buddhas. Buddhist deities in compassion lowered their radiance to assist human beings in Japan reach greater states of rebirth.⁶⁵ Kanetomo, however, inverted this hierarchy, believing that bodhisattvas and buddhas were mere representations of the radiance of the *kami*.⁶⁶ To him, the ideologies that came from China and India were merely recycled and diminished versions of the '*kami*-essence' that had originally begun within the boundaries of Japan.

Kanetomo asserted that his interpretation was true to the practices of great antiquity. Kanetomo received recognition for his teaching and continued to advance in rank and prestige. Kanetomo's ideas were widely accepted in the capital; with the emperor, members of the Grand Council of State, and the *bakufu* all being inducted into the Yoshida's secret transmissions in

⁶⁴ See: Hardacre, *Shinto*, 215-219, and Grapard, 'The Shinto of Yoshida Kanetomo,' 40-47.

⁶⁵ This ideology is often called *honji suijaku* thought. For an expansive discussion on the origins and changes over time, see: Rambelli and Teewuen ed., *Buddhas and Kami in Japan: Honji Suijaku as a Combinatory Paradigm* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003).

⁶⁶ Kubota Osamu, *Chūsei Shintō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Shintōshi gakkai, 1959), 139–159.

1480s.⁶⁷ Kanetomo called his doctrines ‘The One-and-Only Shinto’ (*Yuiitsu Shintō*) and intended to unify the shrines of the provinces under his control. Kanetomo saw the various shrines and their secret transmissions as lesser understandings of the way of the *kami* (Shintō). This included the Ise shrines and the teachings of the Arakida and Watarai lineages.

Kanetomo’s notion of luminescence and divine mobility gave him a decisive advantage over Ise. Since the time of Kitabatake Chikafusa’s nominalist arguments in the fourteenth century, the notion had existed that Ise was the unique and permanent site where the sacred mirror from the imperial regalia was housed. Kanetomo argued that a portion of the ‘radiance’ from any *kami* could be spread to another object through proper ritual practice and the acceptance of that deity, which could be manifested through divination or analysis of supernatural events. This ideology, in part, resembles the arguments for ritual mimesis among the Shingon sect of Buddhism who made similar claims for the validity of the Northern Court’s regalia during the fourteenth century.⁶⁸ In cases where the physical embodiments of the *kami* (*shintai*) could be altered and lost, a suitable replacement of those objects could continue to exist in a form that would not be considered any less potent than the original.

This ideological argument between the Yoshida and Ise came to a dramatic climax at the end of the 1480s. Following the period of violence in Ise between Uji and Yōda in 1486-1489, a rumor spread around the capital that the physical semblances of the Outer Shrine’s deities (*shintai*) had been lost.⁶⁹ The imperial court and *bakufu* sent requests through Kanetomo’s

⁶⁷ Bernhard Scheid, *Der Eine und Einzige Weg der Gotter* (Wien: Verlag Der Österreichischen Akademie Der Wissenschaften, 2001), 151-161.

⁶⁸ Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, 136-139.

⁶⁹ *Bunmei Ichiran-ki* in *Shintōshūkyō* 217, (2011): 62-66.

offices for verification of the safety of the imperial regalia to the Ise shrines. The Ise shrines had replied by refusing to accept Kanetomo's representatives to inspect their shrine and assured the court that there was no "change in the condition" of the *shintai*.⁷⁰

This refusal, however, cast serious doubts within many of the minds within the court. Shortly after this exchange, Kanetomo wrote a letter to the imperial family describing a series of auspicious occasions he had witnessed. He claimed that dark clouds appeared over the Shrine of Great Origin, and he was berated with rain, wind, and thunder. Kanetomo observed a spiritual object (*reibutsu*) on the ground. He took it inside and placed it on the altar in the Shrine of Great Origin. Almost a month later, he found another object, this time bright, round mirror like object, which he claimed had come down out of the sky. He enshrined them all in the *Saijōsho* and reported to the emperor that the Ise *kami* and the shrines' treasures had flown to the *Saijōsho* to be enshrined there.⁷¹ In the twelfth month the emperor issued a proclamation ratifying Kanetomo's claim.⁷²

Kanetomo's narrative is unclear whether the exact same objects which previously resided in Ise were brought to his shrine, or whether the Sun Goddess had brought suitable replacements for those objects which then he enshrined. The ratification by Emperor Go-Tsuchimikado, however, made clear that the official *shintai* of the Sun Goddess and Toyouke of the Outer Shrine were now located within the *Saijōsho* in Kyoto. The question of the primacy of nominalism or of ritual mimesis ultimately could be superseded by Kanetomo's narrative. The

⁷⁰ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 492-494.

⁷¹ For differing opinions on these accounts see: Hardacre, *Shinto*, 220-221. Breen and Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines*, 118-119.

⁷² Maeda, 'Imperial Authority and Local Shrines,' 45.

shintai he possessed were the legitimate *shintai*, because Amaterasu had brought them. By refusing to accept Kanetomo's inspection the shrine attendants in Ise could not prove that their *shintai* were the unique and original artifacts that had been preserved in Ise for centuries.

It was long thought that the *kami* could act in a way that protected their physical representations. Kitabatake Chikafusa, writing in the fourteenth century, argued that the imperial regalia had been saved by divine protection at various points in the past.⁷³ Kanetomo's arguments had the convincing power of contemporary precedent to support them. Kanetomo's position found support from both the nominalists who focused on objects and the supporters of ritual mimesis within the imperial court. When Ise had rejected inspectors from the capital to check on the status of the *shintai* they had inadvertently created room for Kanetomo to construct an alternative narrative which significantly diminished the usefulness of the Ise Shrines. As the most prestigious and nearly autonomous shrine in all of Japan, Ise had long resisted Kanetomo's new conception of Shintō. The deprivation from Ise of the objects which necessitated their continual support laid the groundwork for an even greater rise in prestige for the Yoshida and their *Saijōsho*.

This turn of events unsurprisingly angered the shrine attendants of the Inner and Outer Shrines.⁷⁴ The Arakida and Watarai families labelled Kanetomo an 'enemy of the *kami*' (*kami no tenteki*) and continued to petition the court for financial support during the 1490s and 1500s.⁷⁵

⁷³ H. Paul Varley, *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns: Jinnō Shōtōki of Kitabatake Chikafusa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 217-218.

⁷⁴ The shrine attendants sent a petition to court asking to have Kanetomo's confirmation rescinded, but no such document was forthcoming from the court. The Inner and Outer Shrines responded by declaring Kanetomo and 'Enemy to the Kami' (*kami no tenteki*) and banning any member of the Yoshida family from entrance into the Ise Shrine districts. See: Miyaji, *Shintōshi* vol. 3, 274.

⁷⁵ Mie-ken shi iinkai, *Mie-ken shi tsūshi hen chūsei* vol. 2 (Mie-ken: Mie-ken, 2020), 883-886.

Despite their appeals, Kanetomo's *Saijōsho* remained authorized to act as the primary site of worship for Amaterasu by the imperial family. The Ise shrines hardline stance against Kanetomo severed the financial ties to the court which had supported Ise for much of the shrines' past.

Unfortunately for the shrines, Kanetomo lived to be 76 years old and remained active in his duties as Presiding Director of Shintō for nearly 25 years following his claims of possession of the *shintai* of Ise. Kanetomo continued to serve as the primary administrator of all the shrines in the provinces on behalf of the imperial court until the end of his life. In 1495, Kanetomo proclaimed that his lineage was the guardian of the 'Way of the Kami' and should be regarded as equal in station to the Shirakawa family who served as the symbolic head of the *Jingikan*. This new assertion was again validated by Go-Tsuchimikado's (1442-1500) court.⁷⁶ The court accepted many of the teachings of Kanetomo, and with it the assertion that the Yoshida acted in the name of the *kami* and governed them on behalf of the court. Ise's resistance to Kanetomo's claims showed that this understanding had not permeated throughout all of Japan, but the institutional backing required for further centralization was fully cemented by the actions of Kanetomo. Any shrine that sought legitimacy provided by the imperial court without the approval of the Presiding Director of Shintō faced an uphill battle in a time of extreme resource scarcity for all the shrines across Japan.

A New Ise: Yoshida Shintō and the Kōnomine Daijingu

Kanetomo continued to integrate himself into the changing political landscape at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. Their deification of Ōuchi Norihiro created an important link between the Yoshida and the Ōuchi, the de facto victors of the Ōnin

⁷⁶ Yamaori Tetsuo, ed., *Nihon shūkyōshi nenpyō* (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 2004), 315-320.

War. The shogun, Ashikaga Yoshimasa implicitly acknowledged the superior position of the Ōuchi when offered prayers to the Ōuchi deities to mark end of the conflict in 1477.⁷⁷ The Ōuchi had traditionally worshipped the North Star Deity (*Myōken*) whose physical representation they had brought with them to the capital during the Ōnin War. Following the creation of his Shrine of Great Origin, Kanetomo instated a ritual called the ‘Ceremony of the Founders’ (*sōgen gyōbō*) which offered prayers and oblations to the North Star deity as the origin of this ritual practice which helped ensure the well-being of the state.⁷⁸

The deification of Norihiro in 1486 and the veneration of the North Star Deity in the capital made Yamaguchi a site of religious and political significance in the early sixteenth century. The Ōuchi remained active in the politics of Kyoto from afar. In 1493, the Shogunal Chancellor (*kanrei*) Hosokawa Masamoto (1466-1507) led a coup against Yoshimasa’s successor Yoshitane (1466-1523). Yoshitane escaped arrest and fled to the Ōuchi’s home in Yamaguchi, where he requested the aid of Ōuchi Masahiro to reclaim his position. Yoshitane pressured Masahiro to march to Kyoto and restore him as the shogun, but Masahiro relied on the opinion of Yoshida Kanetomo. In correspondence between Masahiro and Kanetomo it was decided that the signs that both individuals observed manifested that Masahiro should not return Yoshitane to power at that time.⁷⁹

Ōuchi Masahiro died in 1495, and his son Yoshioki (1477-1528) continued to protect the deposed shogun. The new shogun in Kyoto, Ashikaga Yoshizumi (1481-1511), who had been installed by Hosokawa Masamoto, sent missives demanding the destruction of Ōuchi to their

⁷⁷ Conlan, ‘When Men Become Gods,’ 95.

⁷⁸ Payne, ‘A Pragmatics of Ritual,’ 892.

⁷⁹ *Kujō-ke rekise kiroku* vol. 2 (Tokyo: Kunaichō Shoryobu, 1990), 150-153.

neighbors in western Japan.⁸⁰ The neighbors of the Ōuchi made no move to support Yoshizumi and when Yoshizumi asked Kanetomo to perform divinations to know when best to attack his enemies, the Presiding Director refused to perform the rites.⁸¹ The following year the court revealed its own support of the Ōuchi by adopting the era name ‘Cultured Turtle’ (*Bunki*) which referenced the North Star deity’s sacred animal, the turtle.

Ōuchi Yoshioki gathered his supporters and marched to occupy Kyoto after Hosokawa Masamoto’s assassination in 1507. The fracturing of the Hosokawa family over which adopted son of the murdered chancellor should succeed him allowed Yoshioki to move his forces into residence in the western districts of Kyoto unharmed and prepare for conflict with the Hosokawa forces. Yoshizumi was deposed as shogun and replaced officially by Yoshitane in 1508. The eventual battle with Hosokawa forces at Funaoka in 1511 ended in a resounding victory for the Ōuchi and their allies from one branch of the Hosokawa family led by Hosokawa Takakuni (1484-1531).⁸² The Ōuchi maintained a residence within Kyoto for the next seven years where they acted as the protectors of the imperial court and *bakufu*.

In 1511, Yoshida Kanetomo died. Despite Kanetomo’s death, the Yoshida family remained closely tied to the Ōuchi. The Ise shrines repeatedly submitted requests to the court for support in rebuilding their shrines throughout the Ōuchi occupation, but none of the requests were granted.⁸³ Ōuchi Yoshioki eventually decided to leave Kyoto with the intent to create a new

⁸⁰ Conlan, ‘When Men Become Gods,’ 99.

⁸¹ Grapard, ‘The Shintō of Yoshida Kanetomo,’ 44.

⁸² Conlan, ‘When Men Become Gods,’ 100.

⁸³ *Mie-ken shi tsūshi-hen chūsei*, vol. 2, 880-891.

political and religious capital of Japan located in Yamaguchi in 1518.⁸⁴ After returning home to Yamaguchi, Yoshioki immediately began preparing the construction of a new residence for the Amaterasu and Toyouke in Yamaguchi.⁸⁵ Replicas of Ise's Inner and Outer Shrine were completed by 1521 in a mountainous area referred to as Kōnomine in Yamaguchi. The new structures were named 'The Great Kōnomine Shrines' (*Kōnomine Daijingū*). The moniker '*daijingū*' was reserved only for shrines with direct connections to the imperial family and was taken directly from the official name of the Inner Shrine which had housed Amaterasu's physical embodiments prior to the creation of the Kōnomine shrines. The same construction methods used in Ise were duplicated, including the *katsuogi* logs that sit atop the shrine and denote the rank which the shrine occupies within the Jingikan. In both name and through symbolic representation, these new shrines were meant to replace the older shrines in Ise.

This development was supported by the imperial court who provided support for the establishment of these new shrines. The Yoshida sent the *shintai* of the Sun Goddess from their 'Shrine of Great Origin' in Kyoto to the newly constructed Inner Shrine of Kōnomine after its completion in 1521.⁸⁶ The Yoshida and the court sent *yin-yang* divination specialists to Yamaguchi to help in the geographic plotting of a new capital.⁸⁷ The political momentum of the period drove economic support for the worship of the Sun Goddess away from Ise province. The ability to transfer Amaterasu wherever they desired her to go strengthened the Yoshida family

⁸⁴ Conlan, 'When Men Become Gods,' 100.

⁸⁵ For an extensive accounting of the building process see: *Yamaguchi-ken shi shiryō-hen chūsei* vol. 2 (Yamaguchi: Yamaguchi-ken, 2001), *Kōnomine Daijingū on-chinza denki*, 907-913.

⁸⁶ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 659-660.

⁸⁷ *Yamaguchi kenshi shiryōhen chūsei* vol. 3, *Ōuchi Yoshioki keihaku utsushi*, 327-328.

and showed them to be the ultimate arbiter of all shrine affairs in Japan during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The creation of the Great Kōnomine Shrines marked a watershed moment for the Ise shrines. Not only had the requests to rebuild the original Ise shrines been denied by the imperial court for years, but now a ‘New Ise’ had been constructed by the enemies of the Ise shrines. This ‘New Ise’ sought to recreate the supernatural protection that Ise had once provided to Japan and remove the need for ever returning to the ‘spirit traces’ at Ise.

Conclusion

At the beginning of the sixteenth century the Yoshida became arbiters who asserted authority over shrines throughout Japan. While Yoshida Kanetomo was a skilled communicator and creative political strategist, the process by which the Yoshida family came into prominence preceded Kanetomo’s actions centuries before his birth. The Urabe lineage took advantage of their expertise in the early court histories and legal codes to gradually appropriate greater responsibilities from within the preexisting institutions of the state. The Yoshida of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries combined creative theology and a focus on ritual practice to create a political and religious worldview which elevated the position of shrines within late medieval Japan. Their accumulated authority enabled them to spread their ideology among many of the most prominent members of the capital and provinces.

The rise of the Yoshida threatened the Ise shrines whose shrine attendants elected to remain outside of the sphere of influence of the ascendant Yoshida. Yoshida rituals and the shrines created in Kanetomo’s *Saijōsho* pushed Ise into the theological periphery. The Ise shrines found hostile parties both in their local communities who deprived them of income from pilgrims and among their new administrators in the capital who reported directly to the Yoshida. The

vicennial rites of renewal (*shikinen sengū*) conducted in Ise for hundreds of years had been discontinued as Amaterasu and Toyouke fled the disorder and corresponding ‘pollution’ present in Ise province. In place of the shrine’s reconstruction in their original locale, the imperial court elected to reconstruct the shrines in western Japan among the holdings of the Ōuchi family in Yamaguchi.

While the lineages of Ise continued to claim that Amaterasu and her physical semblances had never left Ise, nearly all political and religious significance of the site was ignored by the government for over a century. The construction of a ‘New Ise’ epitomized the old Ise’s fall from grace, but this reconstruction of sacred space and the expansion of the *Jingikan* under the direction of the Yoshida shows that interest in an ideology centered in Japan’s mythological past and the special relationship between *kami* and the political order increased significantly through the efforts of Kanetomo. Despite increasing tumult, the imperial court, powerful *shugo* magnates, and the *bakufu* expended significant resources to maintain these ritual calendars. The Yoshida and their Ōuchi patrons show that the impetus for tapping into the legitimating influence of the *kami* would continue well into the contentious sixteenth century. It would be in the lingering echoes of the legitimacy that the Ise shrines once held that they would need to find their way back into the proverbial sunlight of Japanese religion and politics.

Chapter Four:

The Restoration of Ise and the Politics of Sixteenth-Century Japan 1521-1585

Overview:

The sixteenth century is often described as Japan's Warring States period, where a "culture of violence" prevailed and previous social and political norms dissolved in an ever-increasing climate of competition and conquest.¹ While eastern Japan experienced profound unrest, western Japan remained politically stable. Greater unrest gradually escalated from the time of the Meiō coup of 1493 through 1508, but stability was restored in 1508, when a faction of the Hosokawa led by Hosokawa Takakuni, and the forces of Ōuchi Yoshioki restored authority in the capital, leading to relative stability through the 1520s. Rising tensions and turmoil in the center, particularly after Yoshioki departed in 1518, should not disguise the fact that the court governed effectively until the Hosokawa were removed from Kyoto in 1550 and the Ōuchi collapsed in 1551.²

Narratives of the Warring States period often rely on the notion that the political institutions of the center collapsed beyond repair after the Ōnin War (1467-1477) and the prerogatives of local magnates known as daimyō came to dominate the political and military

¹ For examples of the narratives of mass militarization and weakening central authority in English, see: John A. Ferejohn and Frances McCall Rosenbluth, *War and State Building in Medieval Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 1-20, and John Hall, Nagahara Keiji, and Yamamura Kōzo eds., *Japan Before Tokuwaga* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 7-27 and Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*, 10-54

² Thomas Conlan, 'Japan 1200-1550' in *Cambridge History of War*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 523-553.

conflicts that characterized the period. The case of Ise in the sixteenth century helps reevaluate these assumptions.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the shrines at Ise had their position weakened on two fronts. First, the Kitabatake, in an alliance with *onshi*, redirected state taxes and funds away from the shrines and offered only a pittance of support in return. The shrines also suffered because the Yoshida had established control over nearly all shrine affairs for the imperial court, and indeed, engineered the official movement of the Ise gods of Amaterasu and Toyouke to both their shrines in Kyoto, and the Kōnomine shrine in Yamaguchi. Throughout the sixteenth century, the prestige of the Yoshida drew requests from shrines in the outer provinces in Japan who increasingly sought after the affirmation of the Yoshida to support their rights to income and special protections from local magnates.

Even in the face of increasing local militarization and the fragmenting of shogunal authority in the provinces, court authority and cultural capital continued to wield considerable influence over regional magnates throughout all of Japan for the entire sixteenth century. Despite the destruction of large areas of Kyoto and surrounding provinces, court rituals continued to be performed and remained an important part of the political landscape throughout the first half of the sixteenth century. Ritual performances at Ise and other shrines in the capital were replaced by state-sponsored ritual sites created by the Yoshida in the *Saijōsho* of Kyoto and the Great Shrines of Kōnomine in Yamaguchi. Only after the destruction of the Ōuchi of Yamaguchi between the years 1551 and 1557 and the displacement of the Ashikaga shoguns in Kyoto in the years of 1550 and 1551, that the central institutions of the shogunate and their designated officers failed

to maintain authoritative control over daimyō throughout Japan.³ The collapse of these families and their authoritative control, however, does not equate a complete collapse of court authority in Japan.

Even after the collapse of the Ashikaga, Ōuchi, and Hosokawa families the imperial court found allies willing to support their attempts at some form of political restoration. Ise became a focal point of the court's aspirations to return central authority back to central Japan following the period of Ōuchi dominance in the first half of the sixteenth century. The court under Emperor Go-Nara (1495-1557) oversaw a political push to return central authority to the capital during the 1550s. The imperial house, led by Go-Nara, commissioned nuns of a Rinzai Buddhist temple established in Ise at the end of the fifteenth century called Keikōin, to entice daimyō to assist in restoring the Sun Goddess back to her original residence in Ise's Inner Shrine. The symbolic return of the Sun Goddess to central Japan signified a shift in political power, and local magnates rushed to support the will of the beleaguered court. After years of political contestation and military engagements, the court, with the help of local magnates and the nuns of the Keikōin, successfully enacted a complete restoration of the Inner and Outer Shrines by 1585, marking the end of over 120 years of Amaterasu existing only as a 'trace' in Ise.

Ise's revival in the sixteenth century proved transformative, for it marked the return of political power to central Japan, the reestablishment of the rites of the imperial court, and state support for the resumption of the shrine's *shikinen sengū* vicennial rites of reconstruction. The return of the Sun Goddess to Ise, however, did not undercut the advances which the Yoshida had made during the past century. The Yoshida's network of patron magnates and local shrines

³ Thomas Conlan, 'The Failed Attempt to Move the Emperor to Yamaguchi,' *Japanese Studies* (2015): 15-17.

throughout Japan formulated a new religious landscape wherein Ise would need to find a space. The reinsertion of Ise into the political world of the late sixteenth century encouraged the spread of Shintō institutions in Japan and necessitated structural changes both for the practices of Shintō rites and the institutions which engaged in the propagation of Shintō in the following century. The resumption of the *sengū* rites did not only mark the end of a period of escalating violence at the end of the sixteenth century, but also set the stage for major developments in Japanese religion, culture, and politics in the following three centuries.

The Weakening Center: Kyoto and the Kitabatake

As was mentioned earlier, the Kitabatake consolidated their local authority during the time of the Ōnin War in Kyoto. As Ashikaga Yoshimasa needed to shore up the support of his supporters in an unprecedented act, he granted the Kitabatake the coveted post of *shugo* of Ise, which they held concurrently with the post of provincial governor (*kokushi*). Through appointment to these two positions, the Kitabatake governed as both court governors and warrior protectors. These dual appointments allowed the Kitabatake to successfully navigate the competing demands of both the imperial family and shogun in a period of relative weakness for both while still expanding their local control over Ise over the first half of the sixteenth century.

The Kitabatake continued to control the shrine districts in Ise. During the Meiō coup of 1493, the Shogunal Chancellor (*kanrei*) Hosokawa Masamoto (1466-1507) ousted the new and controversial shogun Ashikaga Yoshitane. Masamoto ruled an increasingly unstable regime until he was killed by his subordinate in 1507. Masamoto feared an uprising by the Kitabatake and conferred the *shugo* post on to the Kitabatake lord, Tomokata (1468-1518) to assure that the Kitabatake would not move against him or support his enemies in the capital. After Masamoto

was killed, his adopted sons, Sumiyuki (1489-1507), Sumimoto (1489-1520), and Takakuni (1484-1531) vied for control of the house. Hosokawa Sumimoto eventually defeated his elder brother with the support of the *shugo* of Ōmi and Settsu provinces. Takakuni, however, continued to resist and the Hosokawa's internal disunity, opened a window for the return of the previous shogun Ashikaga Yoshitane.⁴

In 1508, the powerful magnate Ōuchi Yoshioki led an armada to Kyoto to restore Ashikaga Yoshitane to power as the shogun. There he fought against the forces of Hosokawa Sumimoto and Masamoto's puppet shogun, Ashikaga Yoshizumi (1481-1511).⁵ Yoshioki's was supported by Hosokawa Takakuni, who continued to press for control of the Hosokawa family. Takakuni and Yoshioki arrived in Kyoto in 1508 and reinstalled Ashikaga Yoshitane that same year. After winning a major victory at Funaoka, Yoshioki governed Kyoto with Takakuni on behalf of Yoshitane for the next decade.

The reconfiguration of power in Kyoto led to new ties with the Kitabatake. The Kitabatake had been allied with Hosokawa Masamoto for much of the past two decades. Masamoto had supported local warrior families like the Nagano and Kanbe in Ise and encouraged peace between the Kitabatake and these local bands from 1493-1507.⁶ Tensions remained between the Kitabatake and the Nagano who retained control of Suzuka district, located directly to the north of Kitabatake holdings. The high-ranking Koga family of the Minamoto lineage still maintained that the Nagano were illegally withholding income from their

⁴ *Gunsho ruijū* vol. 20 (Tōkyō: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1943), *Hosokawa ryōke ki*, 584-585.

⁵ Sumimoto had taken the first character in his name (*sumi/zumi*) from Ashikaga Yoshizumi and the second character (*moto*) from his adopted father Hosokawa Masamoto.

⁶ Mie-ken shi iinkai, *Mie-ken shi tsūshi hen chūsei* vol. 2 (Mie-ken: Mie-ken, 2020), 830-835.

estates located in Suzuka.⁷ The Kitabatake's ties to the Koga once again pulled them into conflict with the Nagano, but animosities did not arise until after Masamoto's death and the retirement of Kitabatake Tomokata in 1511.

From 1489 to 1519, Koga Toyomichi (1459-1536) held the posts of Head of Genji and Superintendent of Shōgakuin.⁸ Toyomichi served as Minister of the Right (*Udaijin*) and Grand Minister (*Daijō daijin*) during the politically divided period of contention (1493-1508) between Ashikaga Yoshitane and Ashikaga Yoshizumi. Toyomichi's disapproval of Hosokawa Masamoto's 1493 coup earned him the ire of Masamoto who confiscated a Koga estate in Yamashiro province.⁹ After Masamoto's death, Koga Toyomichi once again was appointed Head of Genji and leveraged his authority to encourage the Kitabatake to fight against the Nagano on their behalf.

After 1508, Toyomichi worked together with the new shogun to help restore some of his family's holdings.¹⁰ He also communicated with the Kitabatake, who fought with the Nagano in northern Ise in order to restore Koga land rights. Koga support gave Kitabatake Harutomo, the next Kitabatake heir, court title and status from a young age. Harutomo was made a chamberlain (*jijū*) at the age of six, before being made provincial governor (*kokushi*) only two years later.¹¹ In 1517, he was promoted to the fifth rank in preparation for his posting as Captain of the Inner Palace Guards (*konoe-chushō*). When Koga Toyomichi relinquished the title of Head of Genji to

⁷ Okano Tomohiko, *Sengoku kizoku no ikinokori senryaku* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2015), 75-80.

⁸ Okano Tomohiko, *Genji Chōja: Buke seiken no keifu* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2018), 202.

⁹ Okano, *Sengoku kizoku no ikinokori senryaku*, 82-87.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹¹ *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō* (Mie: Mie-ken, 2008), 10-11.

Ashikaga Yoshitane in 1519 and retired to a Buddhist monastery, the shift in leadership accompanied a corresponding lack of court appointments for members of the Kitabatake family.¹² This pause on Kitabatake advancement most likely arose because the Kitabatake had close ties with both the Koga and the Shogunal Chancellor Takakuni who had married his daughter to Kitabatake Harutomo shortly after his arrival in the capital.¹³

As Ōuchi Yoshioki withdrew from the capital to Yamaguchi in 1518, Yoshitane's position vis-à-vis Hosokawa Takakuni shifted considerably. Two years later, Yoshitane, who attempted to oust Takakuni, was in fact ousted by Takakuni's forces. Takakuni arranged for the appointment of Ashikaga Yoshiharu (1511-1550), the son of Yoshitane's old rival, Ashikaga Yoshizumi, as shogun in that same year.¹⁴ The Kitabatake supported this change, and shortly after the appointment, the young Kitabatake Harutomo received the '*haru*' character from Yoshiharu into his name.¹⁵ After two years of failed attempts to return to Kyoto, Ashikaga Yoshitane died in Awa Province in 1523. After Yoshitane's death, the title of Head of Genji once again transferred to the Koga family. Koga Michitoki (1487-1543), the son of Koga Toyomichi held the title for the next thirteen years. The Ashikaga would never again regain the title, removing their ability to provide rank advancements for members of the Genji lineage for the rest of the sixteenth century.

¹² For dates on the transfer of the Head of Genji title see: Okano, *Genji Chōja*, 202-203.

¹³ Morita Kyōji, *Sengokuki rekidai Hosokawa-shi no kenkyū*, (Ōsaka: Izumi Shoin, 1994), 65-69.

¹⁴ Ibid., 69-71.

¹⁵ Fujita Tatsuo, ed., *Ise Kokushi Kitabatake-shi no kenkyū*, (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004), 31-37. Previously Harutomo was known as Tomokuni, taking his second character (*kuni*) from his father-in-law Takakuni.

The court once again bestowed ranks and titles upon Kitabatake Harutomo during the years of Koga Michitoki's tenure as Head of Genji (1523-1536). In 1525, Harutomo was elevated to the fourth-rank and made a Counsellor to the Grand Council of State (*sangi*).¹⁶ This allowed him to establish his own administrative offices (*mandokoro*) and act as a member of the upper-nobility, as had many of his predecessors. Harutomo displayed the trappings of his nobility by issuing specialized documents (*sodehan mikyōjō*) guaranteeing rights to his subordinates which emphasized his position as a member of the upper nobility in a document from the twelfth month 1530.¹⁷ The prestige that such a position held continued to be incorporated into the Kitabatake's system of land control even as the power of the imperial court waned.

The loss of the title of Head of Genji for the Ashikaga similarly undermined the already enervated shogun's ability to successfully control the central institutions of the government. While the Ashikaga would retain the title of shogun for nearly all of the sixteenth century, the Koga family retained the title of Head of Genji.¹⁸ The loss of this title revealed the diminished political capacities of the Ashikaga shogunate. The Ashikaga could no longer utilize the ability to lift potential allies up through the social stratum of the imperial court. This had functioned as one of their mechanisms to promote and intervene on issues of inheritance which allowed them to favor their subordinates and undercut potential rivals and their supporters.

¹⁶ *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, *Kitabatake Harutomo Kugyō bunin*, 10-11.

¹⁷ *Sawa-shi komonjo*, *Kitabatake Tomokuni sodehan mikyōjō* 12.11.1530 (Kyōroku 3), 164-165.

¹⁸ The Koga held this title until the beginning of the seventeenth century when they would lose it to the Tokugawa family of the Edo Period (1615-1868).

The Ashikaga *bakufu* from its inception had relied upon its ability to reward individuals who provided service to them in their efforts to maintain a delicate balance of control over their *shugo*, who had long exercised considerable local authority and autonomy.¹⁹ As *shugo* already possessed ‘half-tax’ (*hanzei*) rights of income, the Ashikaga could no longer offer these men a comparable reward. The inability to provide these status-hungry men with court ranks and titles as the Head of Genji further weakened the Ashikaga and shifted the most important status-granting rights solely into the hands of the imperial court.²⁰

The Ashikaga’s diminishing authority led to an upswing in violence in central Japan. The withdrawal of the Ōuchi to western Japan elevated Hosokawa Takakuni into the position of primary defender of the court. Hosokawa Takakuni occupied the position of Shogunal Chancellor and ran the day-to-day administration of the *bakufu*, but former supporters of Masamoto from within the Hosokawa family and among their subordinates remained antagonistic towards Takakuni. Uprisings in central and eastern Japan displaced many Hosokawa subordinates with regular frequency in the following years.²¹ Northern Ise experienced similar

¹⁹ See: Kawai Masaharu, ‘Shogun and Shugo: The Provincial Aspects of Muromachi Politics’ in *Japan in the Muromachi Age* (Ithaca: East Asia Program Cornell University, 1977), 65-85.

²⁰ Local magnates increasingly looked towards individuals they considered competent as Ashikaga authority diminished. Individuals referred to as ‘*daimyō*’ (great names) gathered support from local retainers to assert autonomy from the political center. Many of these *daimyō* originated from the ranks of the *shugo*, but also many subordinates of the various *shugo* displaced their absentee leaders in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. For more on this process see: Ike Susumu, ‘Competence over Loyalty: Lords and Retainers in Medieval Japan’ in *War and State Building in Medieval Japan*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 53-71 and John Whitney Hall, *Government and Local Power Japan 500-1700: a Study Based on the Bizen Province* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), 272-285.

²¹ One of the most famous uprisings of the sixteenth century, the Kaga Ikkō-Ikki, originated from a succession dispute between the Togashi family (subordinates of the Hosokawa) and expanded into a province-wide rebellion that rejected central government oversight until the end of the sixteenth century. See: Carol Richmond Tsang, *War and Faith: Ikkō ikki in late Muromachi Japan*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007).

unrest in the regions under nominal control of local warrior groups like the Nagano and Kanbe who had previously served under the *shugo* before the Ōnin War but now acted autonomously.²² Division within the ranks of the Hosokawa and among the various communities they oversaw undermined Takakuni's power and authority.²³

Takakuni lost further support when he executed a local warrior (*kokujin*) in Tanba province over accusations of rebellion in 1526. Takakuni's severe response to what was perceived as a minor infraction diminished his popularity among many of his followers and weakened his hold on power. The Miyoshi, an aggressive *shugo* deputy (*shugo-dai*) family appointed by Hosokawa Masamoto in the 1490s, took advantage of Takakuni's weakness to strike.²⁴ An allied force led by Miyoshi Motonaga (1501-1532) and Hosokawa Sumimoto's son, Harumoto (1514-1563) attacked the capital and defeated Takakuni's forces at the battle of Katsurakawara in 1527, forcing Takakuni and Ashikaga Yoshiharu to flee to Ise.²⁵

The Kitabatake had remained aloof from most capital conflicts, but they gave the defeated Hosokawa Takakuni and Ashikaga Yoshiharu sanctuary. The fact that Hosokawa Takakuni was Kitabatake Harutomo's father-in-law must have influenced this decision.

²² The most notable uprising in Ise was located in the town of Nagashima. Nagashima's *Ikkō ikki* plagued the Nagano and Kanbe families throughout the sixteenth century. Need for external support eventually compelled the Kanbe to adopt Kitabatake Harutomo's brother, Tomomori (dates unknown), as the successor to the family in the 1530s. See: *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 500-505 and *Mie-ken shi tsūshihen chūsei*, 819-820.

²³ Kyoto itself became increasingly dangerous to members of the nobility. Local town organizations and religious gatherings gained significant autonomy as the Ashikaga and Hosokawa waned in the sixteenth century. See: Mary Elizabeth Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 10-17.

²⁴ For more on Takakuni's relations with his local supporters see: Mori Kyōji, 'Hosokawa Takakuni to kinai kokujin zō,' *Hisutoria*, no. 79 (June 1978): 22-41.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 24-27.

Harutomo favored Takakuni, allowing him to stay in the Kitabatake primary residence in Taki and giving him time to rebuild his army for the fight against the Miyoshi, although, tellingly, Harutomo did not offer Takakuni any direct military support.

In 1531, Takakuni lead an army out of Ise through the Kii peninsula.²⁶ The initial progress was promising and Takakuni's forces pushed Miyoshi forces to the southeast of Kyoto in Settsu province. Despite early successes, Miyoshi Motonaga defeated Takakuni. The battle was subsequently called the 'Fall of the Great One' (*Ōmono kuzure*) and signified the end of Takakuni's authority.²⁷ Takakuni ultimately committed suicide after his defeat, but his rival Motonaga was also defeated and forced to kill himself in 1532, leading to a power vacuum in Kyoto. The Shogunal Chancellor position remained vacant until Hosokawa Harumoto was appointed to the post in 1536, but he too would be deposed by the Miyoshi nine years later.²⁸

After Takakuni's death, central shogunal authority remained in name only, with competing shoguns contending for an emptied-out title, and no strong Shogunal Chancellor capable of regulating the *shugo* and their subordinates. Takakuni's defeat marked the most noticeable end to the vestiges of power and influence lingering within the *bakufu*. Without a strong central figure at the head of the *bakufu*, the titles of Shogunal Chancellor and even *shugo* lost their legitimating power, as the institution (which had provided some degree of legitimacy to *shugo* throughout the country) lost its ability to regulate regional magnates and their functionaries.

²⁶ Morita, *Sengokuki rekidai Hosokawa-shi no kenkyū*, 73-75.

²⁷ For a full telling of the campaign see: *Gunsho ruijū* vol. 20 (Tōkyō: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1943), *Hosokawa ryōke ki*, 585-589.

²⁸ Thomas Conlan, 'Japan 1200-1550' in *Cambridge History of War* vol. 2, 551.

The Disintegration of *Bakufu* Authority: The Court and Ise

As Ashikaga shogunal authority collapsed, the Kitabatake ignored them in favor of engaging directly with the imperial court. Between the years 1527-1555, court diaries recount 66 separate occasions when a member of the Kitabatake family arrived in Kyoto bearing gifts.²⁹ The ledgers (*Oyudono no ue no nikki*) of the imperial ladies-in-waiting, who resided in the imperial compound, note sizable donations of tea, dried fish, swans, books, and other materials on an almost semi-annual basis for much of the period.³⁰ During one of their visits each year from 1531-1537 the Kitabatake brought 100-300 bags (*fukuro*) of tea from Ise for the use of the imperial family.³¹ Ise became a major source of sixteenth century tea, a product which was gaining popularity in the capital at the time.³² Nevertheless, Kitabatake connections to tea production are not clearly known.

With the enervation of the Ashikaga, the Kitabatake communicated with members of the court through informal missives. Direct epistolary communication outside of predetermined hierarchical constraints became a more common form of interaction between many different

²⁹ A collection of these references to these donations and their various destinations can be found in: *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō* (Mie: Mie-ken, 2008), 209-239.

³⁰ For an explanation on the role and function of these court women see: Lee Butler, *Emperor and Aristocracy in Japan, 1467-1680: Resilience and Renewal*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2002), 50-56.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 217-225.

³² The imperial court and the *bakufu* had begun popularizing tea ceremonies as early as the fourteenth century. Ise province became renown for the quality its tea. For an extensive survey on the cultural practices surrounding tea see: Morgan Pitelka ed., *Japanese Tea Culture: Art, History, and Practice*, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003). For information on the treatment of tea as a commodity and gift, see: William Wayne Farris, *A Bowl for a Coin: A Commodity History of Japanese Tea*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019)

members of society in the sixteenth century.³³ At the same time, the Kitabatake, compensating for the destruction of early benefactors, took it upon themselves to provide aid for the upkeep of the imperial house and its constituent rites.³⁴

The waning authority and economic potential of the *bakufu* forced the Ise *onshi* to diversify their clientele throughout the sixteenth century in an attempt to replace the income lost from the cessation of Ashikaga pilgrimages at the end of the fifteenth century. As the Kitabatake solidified control of the shrine districts and violence within Ise diminished, *onshi* affiliated with both the communities of Yōda and Uji began traveling around the country in greater numbers. These *onshi* disseminated knowledge about Ise through the distribution of amulets (*mamori*), the performance of purification rituals (*oharai*), and through storytelling of the ancient myths surrounding Ise province.³⁵

Buddhist monks, nuns, and special mountain religious practitioners known as *yamabushi* aided the Ise *onshi* in proselyting and fundraising.³⁶ ‘Fundraising Ascetics’ (*kanjin hijiri*) associated with a newly found nunnery (*amadera*) in Yōda called Keikōin, travelled throughout

³³ Village and town organizations also began much more direct interaction with members of the upper nobility, powerful religious institutions, and regional magnates. See: Hitomi Tonomura, *Community and Commerce in Late Medieval Japan: The Corporate Villages of Tokuchin-ho*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992)

³⁴ Ōuchi Yoshitaka similarly made donations to the imperial house throughout the 1530s and 1540s. Yoshitaka paid 2000-*kanmon* for the imperial enthronement rites in 1536 alone. The *daimyō* of Owari province, Oda Nobuhide (1510-1551) paid 4000-*kanmon* for palace repairs in 1543 for which he was awarded the Governor of Mikawa (*Mikawa no kami*) post. See: Okuno Takahiro, *Kōshitsu gokeizaishi no kenkyū* vol. 2 (Tōkyō: Chūō Kōronsha, 1942), 7-25.

³⁵ Kanzaki Noritake, ‘A Comparative Analysis of the Tourist Industry’ in *Japanese Civilization in the Modern World* vol. 9 (Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1995), 44-49.

³⁶ Buddhist monks had long participated in the accumulation of funds to support prominent temples and shrines throughout Japan. For an early example of how these facilitators assisted in these projects see: Janet Goodwin, ‘The Buddhist Monarch: Go-Shirakawa and the Rebuilding of Tōdaiji,’ *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 17, no. 2–3 (1990): 219–242.

Japan and among the affluent citizens of the capital to request funds to restore important landmarks in Ise in the early sixteenth century. Ise's roads and bridges were frequently damaged from flooding, landslides, and tsunami.³⁷ In the 1520s, these *kanjin hijiri* attempted to collect funds to restore the famous Uji Bridge (*Ujibashi*) which collapsed in the first part of the sixteenth century, but were unsuccessful.³⁸ Unfortunately for these early fundraisers, the Great Shrine of Kōnomine in Yamaguchi continued to ritually function as the locus for the Ise gods in a court based ritual context, and also attracted pilgrims throughout the sixteenth century.

In an attempt to improve their finances, Buddhist monks and nuns in Ise commissioned Ise pilgrimage mandalas (*Ise sankei mandara*) which were visual representations of the Ise region and its important landmarks. The practice of using mandalas to enhance one's meditative or ritual practices arrived from mainland Asia centuries before the sixteenth century and thrived among the Tendai and Shingon sects of Buddhism in Japan.³⁹ Ise pilgrimage mandalas differed from many of these more ritually focused mandalas in that they were visual representations of the physical landscape of Ise itself. The images still contained esoteric meaning which individuals familiar with the paintings would employ to create narratives that were meant to evoke interest in the sacred geography of Ise. The popularization of pilgrimage to Ise, which was mirrored at other sites like Kumano, led to the creation of mandala which displayed the location of extant structures and other important sites to provide context and visual cues for fundraising monks to explain the ritual significance and the history of the shrines for which they sought

³⁷ Between 1434-1566 the records of the Inner and Outer shrines record 43 occasions of flooding with some form of damage to the communities around the shrines. See: *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 512-513.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 545-547.

³⁹ See: Elizabeth ten Grotenhuis. *Japanese Mandalas: Representations of Sacred Geography*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).

financial support.⁴⁰ These mandalas were used in performances conducted by traveling monks where the monks would unravel the meaning behind the images (*etoki*) and served as a powerful form of advertisement among differing members of society.⁴¹

These images merge ideas of historical and religious significance with the pleasures that travel could offer a pilgrim to Japan. In one sense, these mandalas helped prospective patrons to imagine themselves as visitors of Ise before having ever left their home districts. The mandala referred to landmarks which were thought to have existed in Ise because they were mentioned in ancient historical chronicles, which gained popularity in the sixteenth century.⁴² Within an Ise pilgrimage mandala, a potential pilgrim could see an evocative depiction of the cave wherein the Sun Goddess had purportedly hidden herself from the world before being enticed to return by the *kami* through song, dance, and feasting. Ise pilgrimage mandala served to advertise the sights and sites of Ise, which contributed to the increasing appeal of visiting the sacred place of Ise for many throughout Japan.

The efforts of these fundraising monks and the Ise *onshi*, however did not equate to an immediate renewal of the Ise shrines. The funds which monks and *onshi* secured enriched the guides themselves, but did not contribute to support for the derelict shrines' structures. No one

⁴⁰ The Kumano shrines to the southwest of Ise hosted large pilgrimage processions from the imperial family beginning in the tenth century. Kumano *onshi* (referred to in Kumano as *oshi*) and Buddhist fundraisers commissioned the creation of mandala to assist in their fundraising efforts. Ise mandalas copied many of the same motifs within the Kumano depictions suggesting that similar artist houses in the capital produced these representations. See: Max Moerman, *Localizing Paradise: Kumano Pilgrimage and the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005) and Talia Andrei, 'Ise Sankei Mandala: The Art of Fundraising in Medieval Japan,' *Art Bulletin March* 100, no. 1 (2018): 68-96.

⁴¹ See: Ikumi Kaminishi, *Explaining Pictures: Buddhist Propaganda and Etoki Storytelling in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

⁴² Odaira Mika, 'Chūsei no Amano Iwato to Uhō dōji shinkō--Jingū Chōkokanbon Ise sankei mandara' in *Chūsei kaiga no matorikusu II* (Tōkyō: Seikansha, 2014), 276-294.

proved willing to fund the restorative *sengū* rites in Ise throughout the first half of the sixteenth century.⁴³

Political impetus to return the Sun Goddess to Ise simply did not exist when an alternative site continued to function in Yamaguchi. In 1533 the Emperor Go-Nara acknowledged Yoshida Kanetomo's grandson, Yoshida Kanemigi (1516-1573), as Presiding Director of Shintō.⁴⁴ Kanemigi traveled to Yamaguchi to supervise the preparations for the first *shikinen sengū* of the Great Shrine in Kōnomine and advise Ōuchi Yoshitaka (1507-1551), the lord of Yamaguchi and many provinces in the west, on the proper ritual observances of Shintō in his capital city.⁴⁵ The *sengū* rites were mostly funded by Ōuchi Yoshitaka, but Kanemigi's presence and the presence of the official *shintai* of Amaterasu denote imperial acknowledgement of these rites. As of 1541, the imperial court and even the emperor himself behaved as if the Great Shrine of Kōnomine was still the residence of the mythological ancestor of the imperial family.

During his trips to Yamaguchi, Kanemigi regularized rites for the Ōuchi's Tsukiyama deity (*daimyōjin*) and commissioned the Yoshida to perform rites honoring the Northern Star deity at shrines in Yamaguchi and Kyoto. Kanemigi partnered with Yoshitaka in incorporating powerful shrines located in each of the four directions surrounding Yamaguchi into Yoshitaka's

⁴³ The Inner and Outer Shrines petitioned the court no less than 12 times between 1501 and 1550 for funds to support partial renovations (*kari sengū*) which were denied. The Kitabatake made small processions to shrines on a nearly annual basis and provided financial support for minor renovations. The Imagawa family of Suruga province additionally donated money for minor renovations in 1520 and 1541. Despite the increasing number of supporters throughout Japan, a complete reconstruction of the shrines remained impossible until the second half of the sixteenth century. See: Jingū Shichō ed., *Jingūshi Nenpyō* (Tōkyō: Ebisu Kōshō Shuppan, 2005), 117-125.

⁴⁴ Kaburagi Norihiko, 'Yoshida ke no dōtō danzetsu ni tsuite,' in *Shintōshūkyō*, no. 220-221 (January 2011): 29-34.

⁴⁵ Conlan, 'When Men Become Gods,' 101-102.

sphere of influence as a precursor to create a new capital for Japan located in Yamaguchi.⁴⁶

Yamaguchi expanded into a community of at least 10,00 residents by the year 1550, and attracted visitors from China, Korea, and Christian missionaries from Europe.⁴⁷ Yoshitaka and his predecessors established control over trade with the continent, and unified much of western Japan under his supervision.⁴⁸

Kanemigi was not alone in his support for the western capital. Many Kyoto courtiers migrated to Yamaguchi as conditions in the capital continued to worsen at the end of the 1540s.⁴⁹ Miyoshi Nagayoshi (1522-1564) attacked Hosokawa Harumoto and expelled both the Hosokawa and the shogun Ashikaga Yoshiharu from the capital in 1548.⁵⁰ Many nobles within Kyoto distrusted the Miyoshi and feared the Miyoshi's violent tendencies towards their rivals. Nagayoshi confiscated imperial lands, plundered ancient burial grounds (*kofun*), and deprived the court of resources to perform their ritual calendar.⁵¹ Unlike other military-based families who had gained influence in the capital in the past, the Miyoshi did not seek to support their takeover through appropriation of court rank or title. Finding no means of potential cooperation, forces

⁴⁶ These shrines included the Ōi shrine located in Hagi to the north, the Ikutsushima shrine located to the south, the Ichinomiya shrine in Aki to the east, and the Hakozaki shrine in Nagato province to the west. Shrines and temples often established protective barriers around important geographic areas like the capital in Kyoto.

⁴⁷ M. Joseph Costelloe, *The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992), 384.

⁴⁸ Matsuoka Hisato and Peter Arnesen, 'The Sengoku Daimyō of Western Japan: The Case of the Ōuchi,' in *Japan Before Tokugawa*, 64-100.

⁴⁹ Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*, 64-67.

⁵⁰ Imatani Akira, ed., *Miyoshi Nagayoshi* (Kyōto: Miyaobi shoten, 2013), 25-45.

⁵¹ Imatani Akira, *Sengoku jidai no kizoku: Tokitsugu kyōki ga egaku Kyōto* (Tōkyō: Kōdansha, 2002), 240-245.

within the imperial court attempted to assassinate Nagayoshi only five days after his arrival in Kyoto.⁵²

In response to the increasing threat of Miyoshi Nagayoshi, the Emperor Go-Nara appointed Ōuchi Yoshitaka as the acting governor (*gon no kami*) of Kyoto's Yamashiro province.⁵³ This appointment made Yoshitaka responsible for the safety of the court in the home provinces. Yoshitaka, rather than marching on the capital, decided instead to move Go-Nara from Kyoto to Yamaguchi and formally establish Yamaguchi as the new capital of Japan. Yoshitaka gathered many of the ritual experts of the court nobility and began preparation for the commencement of court rites to take place in Yamaguchi.⁵⁴ Yoshitaka's ambitious move, however, met with tragic failure as subordinates of the Ōuchi family heard of this development and staged a coup to prevent the migration of the emperor into Yamaguchi in the summer of 1551 which resulted in Yoshitaka's death, as well as that of his heir in the ninth month. Following Yoshitaka's demise at the hand of his subordinates, many courtiers of ranks ranging

⁵² Nagae Shōichi, *Miyoshi Nagayoshi* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa kobunkan, 1968), 119-120.

⁵³ This title was of the same origin and rank as the Kitabatake Ise *kokushi* post, except that it acknowledged one degree of separation from the physical locale by the addition of the prefix 'acting' (*gon*) to the title. By the mid-part of the sixteenth century, a shortened version of the title marked simply by the character for 'protector' (which originated from the rank of the highest administrators within provincial governments described in the Ritsuryō codes) came into regular use by the imperial court. While some scholars have seen this term only as a ceremonial title, *Daimyō* during the second half of the sixteenth century increasingly came to covet these titles that recognized imperial support and a legitimate claim engage in conflict over holdings within the accompanying provinces. The Kitabatake maintained control over their province through this title even when the *shugo* title lost any semblance of authority during the second half of the sixteenth century. See: Imatani Akira, *Sengoku daimyō to tennō: Muromachi bakufu no kaitai to ōken no gyakushū* (Tōkyō: Fukutake shoten, 1992) and Asao Naohiro and Marius B. Jansen 'Shogun and Tennō' in *Japan Before Tokugawa Political Consolidation and Economic Growth, 1500-1650* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) 248-271.

⁵⁴ Conlan, 'The Failed Attempt to Move the Emperor to Yamaguchi,' 12-13.

from Grand Ministers of State to specialists in music, the calendar, or the performance of *sechie* rites perished. With turmoil in the west, court finances suffered.

The Great Shrines of Kōnomine in Yamaguchi survived the destruction of much of Yamaguchi, but their treatment by the court shifted after Yoshitaka's death. The political and economic strength of the Ōuchi had established Kōnomine as the official residence of Amaterasu, but the Ōuchi coup of 1551, and the resulting destruction of Yamaguchi which continued through 1557, once again threatened to displace the Sun Goddess. Western Japan descended into the same kind of violence which had disrupted central Japan for the first half of the century.

More so than the Ōnin War of the fifteenth century, or the death of Hosokawa Masamoto in 1507, the events of 1550-51 enervated the court and caused it to descend into disfunction. In the space of little more than one calendar year, the shogun and his chancellor were expelled from the capital, only to be replaced by Miyoshi Nagayoshi, who cared little for the court and the imperial family. It is only when both the Ashikaga *bakufu* descended into impotence and the Ōuchi coup removed support for the court, that a movement within the court would push towards the return of Amaterasu to the east. In the following decade the court began linking together many of the most powerful magnates in the country in an effort to restore political stability through the reconstruction of the Ise shrines.

Warring for Ise: A Political Narrative of the *Shikinen Sengū*

The decades after 1550 were marked by warfare throughout Japan. The restoration of Ise became a goal of many of the daimyō who struggled to assert their legitimacy. The enervated imperial court and shogunal contenders showed interest in reestablishing shrines in Ise and

mobilized magnates near Ise into reestablishing the shrine. Ise thus became a strategic site and a focus of political and military contention. Ise's centrality regarding the political and military conflicts of the 1550s and 1560s is often overlooked, but offers an informative perspective on the justifications for warfare and motivations for political consolidation in the Warring States Period.

Immediately before the turmoil of 1550-51 Kitabatake Harutomo expanded his control of Ise province in an attempt to restore Koga control over the Ishikure shrine lands. Kitabatake Harutomo remained in control over the Kitabatake, although he had overseen the appointment of his eldest son Tomonori (1528-1576), as the provincial governor (*kokushi*) in 1535. Harutomo's son, Tomonori strongly supported the maintenance of absentee court rights and authority after taking control of military affairs of the house in 1546. Tomonori, rose in rank quickly, becoming a member of the nobility by achieving the fifth-rank in 1537 at the age of 11.⁵⁵ Tomonori's meteoric rise up the ranks of the imperial court system undoubtedly was aided by the support of the Koga Harumichi (1519-1575), who controlled the Head of Genji post from 1536 to 1553. In turn, Harutomo and Tomonori supported Koga interests and tried to restore Koga rights to the Ishikure shrine lands, which had been occupied by the Nagano. The Kitabatake attacked the Nagano in successive campaigns in 1545 and 1547.⁵⁶ Their forces, aided by an alliance with the Kanbe *kokujin* family, drove the Nagano out of more than half of their holdings in Ise by the end of 1547.

The Kitabatake began sending a portion of the taxes drawn from the Ishikure shrine-lands to the Koga in return for continued access to court title and rank as members of the Genji lineage

⁵⁵ *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, *Kitabatake Tomonori kugyō bunin*, 11-12.

⁵⁶ *Mie-ken shi tsūshi hen chūsei*, 820.

group.⁵⁷ Their battles with the recalcitrant Nagano stemmed from their attempt to uphold Koga rights. Despite the oft repeated image of the court as being directionless in the sixteenth century, the Koga family, through their social ties, proved able to influence powerful magnates like the Kitabatake to support their local control in the provinces.

Deference for administrative boundaries and court-based legitimacy remained relatively consistent throughout much of Japan's sixteenth century. It is only after the collapse of the Ōuchi polity in the west, and the enervation of the court following the death of so many courtiers in Yamaguchi that rights to land and income became enforced by regional magnates primarily through military conquest or as what some would call "command authority."⁵⁸

Late in 1550 Kitabatake Tomonori ignored provincial boundaries, dispatching forces into neighboring Iga province to continue his offensive against the Nagano. He did not, however, confine his activities solely to lands which the Kitabatake held legitimate claim over, which was unprecedented.⁵⁹ In 1553, Tomonori forced the Kanbe and Seki *kokujin* families of Northern Ise, former allies of the Nagano, to follow the Kitabatake. With the support of the *kokujin* in Northern Ise and Owari provinces the Nagano were defeated at long last in 1555.⁶⁰ This new pattern of expansion set at naught the earlier considerations for the Hosokawa which prevented all-out warfare between neighboring powers in Ise, but was supported and encouraged by the imperial court.

⁵⁷ Okano, *Sengoku kizoku no ikinokori senryaku*, 88-90.

⁵⁸ John Hall, *Government and Local Power in Japan 500-1700*, 272-275.

⁵⁹ *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, *Kitabatake Kuninaga Nendai wakasho jō* 12.1550 (Tenbun 19), 237.

⁶⁰ *Mie-ken shi tsūshi hen chūsei*, 821-822.

Military success brought with it promotions and court prestige. Tomonori became the Counsellor to the Grand Council of State (*sangi*) in 1553 and achieved the third-rank, putting him in the ranks of the high nobility, in 1554.⁶¹ Thereupon Tomonori attracted growing support in Ise and proved better able to pacify the region. As Kitabatake Tomonori gained control over northern Ise and no longer had to contend with the Nagano, Kitabatake forces could help prevent violent disputes erupting between the Uji and Yōda communities. Conflict between Uji and Yōda stopped entirely in the latter half of the sixteenth century. This allowed for the *onshi* to dedicate themselves to fundraising efforts throughout the provinces instead of warring with, or defending against, their rivals.

Kitabatake control helped create conditions within Ise that encouraged a complete restoration of the rites held at the Ise shrines. Nuns from the Buddhist monastery, Keikōin, which was established in Yōda sometime during the late 1540s gained the support of the imperial court and administrators invested with the enactment of the first *shikinen sengū* rites in over a century.⁶² The Keikōin monastery had originally been located in Kii province near the Kumano pilgrimage routes, but under the stewardship of Seijun (dates unknown) the third head of Keikōin, the monastery was moved to Ise. Seijun succeeded in collecting funds for the rebuilding the Uji Bridge in 1547, which in turn earned her an official commendation from Emperor Go-Nara.⁶³

⁶¹ *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, *Kitabatake Tomonori kugyō bunin*, 11-12.

⁶² *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 550-552.

⁶³ Ōnishi Genichi, 'Uji Ōhashi' in *Daijingu shiyō* (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1960), 307-313. The bridge had been washed away in the 1540s. See also *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, *Go-Nara tennō rinji* 5.1.1547 (Tenbun 16), 560.

Go-Nara and his successors promoted a policy of rebuilding the Ise shrine after Yamaguchi had been marginalized by the turmoil of the 1550s. Go-Nara supplied Seijun with an official document enabling her to gather funds for the *sengū* directly from his own office.⁶⁴ With the support of the emperor, shogun, and the attendants of the Outer Shrine, Seijun traveled to visit many of the most powerful magnates (*daimyō*) in and the vicinity of Ise. In 1552, she contacted the Imagawa of Mikawa, Tōtomi, and Suruga provinces, the Rokkaku, of Ōmi province, the Saitō of Mino province, the Oda of Owari province, the Takeda of Kai province, the Hōjō of Izu, Sagami, and Musashi provinces, and the Asakura of Echizen province.⁶⁵ In 1553, Seijun communicated with Yamashina Tokitsugu (1507-1579), a member of the Grand Council of State with responsibility over court finances, regarding the reconstruction of the Ise shrines.⁶⁶

In support of Seijun's efforts the Ashikaga shogun Yoshiteru sent communiques to *daimyō* in and around Ise in 1553 to "open the roads and waterways" for pilgrims and visitors.⁶⁷ The powerful magnate Imagawa Yoshimoto (1519-1560), deployed a fleet to Shima province to the south of Ise, who were troubling travelers to Ise from the eastern provinces in 1554.⁶⁸ In the third month of the following year, Kitabatake Tomonori commanded the *onshi* of Yōda to

⁶⁴ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, *Go-Nara tennō rinji* 8.20.1551 (Tenbun 20), 561.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 562.

⁶⁶ *Togitsuku kyōki* vol. 3, (Tōkyō: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1915), 3.14.1553 (Tenbun 22), 21-22

⁶⁷ Iwata Kenshi, 'Imagawa Yoshimoto no Eiroku san-nen nishijō sakusen to jingū shikinen sengū,' *Kōgakkan shigaku*, no. 22 (May 2008): 37-38. Inner Shrine sources also make mention of the opening of the roads. See: *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, *Jingū nendai ki*, 239.

⁶⁸ Iwata, 'Imagawa Yoshimoto no Eiroku san-nen nishijō sakusen to jingū shikinen sengū,' 38-39. The Kitabatake sources also mention Imagawa deployments into Shima province this same year; see: *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, *Nendai wakasho jō* 1554 (Tenbun 23), 239.

appoint Seijun as the primary administrator of the reconstruction of the Outer Shrine.⁶⁹ Under the direction of Seijun, *onshi* of the Yōda community began preparations for the first rite of the *shikinen sengū*, the Yamaguchi festival (*yamaguchi-sai*), wherein lumber of sufficient quality and size was transported to Ise. The Mino province daimyō, Saitō Dōsan (1494-1556), provided the lumber for the Yamaguchi festival to the Outer Shrine through Seijun who had visited him only two years earlier.⁷⁰

Tomonori called upon the Satō, Kanbe, and Seki families of northern Ise to attack Nagano holdings on the Iga-Ise border in Anōu district in 1555 so as to open the roads to Ise.⁷¹ Following Imagawa Yoshimoto's failed campaign, Tomonori tried to conquer Shima province, in the following year but he could only conquer that province's northern reaches.⁷² While fighting on two fronts, Tomonori decisively defeated Nagano Tanefuji (1504-1562), the head of the Nagano, based in Iga. Tomonori forced Tanefuji to accept Tomonori's son, Tomofuji (1552-1576) as the heir to the Nagano family in 1558. Tomonori extended Kitabatake influence over nearly all of Ise for the first time since the family had moved to the province in 1336, but also asserted military dominance over portions of Iga, Yamato, and Shima provinces despite a lack of official authority in each of those provinces. The larger aim of the imperial court to restore Ise provided the political impetus for the Kitabatake and their neighbors to aggressively remove local forces which did not comply with the greater vision of Ise's restoration.

⁶⁹ Ibid., *Eirokuki bugyō hōsho* 3.26.1555 (Kōji 1), 239.

⁷⁰ Despite the similarities in name, the Yamaguchi festival was not related to the city of Yamaguchi or the Great Shrine in Kōnomine. The Yamaguchi festival was the first of a series of rites which gathered the lumber necessary for the *sengū* rights. See: *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 562-564.

⁷¹ Kobayashi, Kaoru ed., *Satō-ke Monjo: Dōran no jidai o ikiru* (Tsu: Nozaki Insatsu, 2021), *Kitabatake-shi bugyōnin hōsho* 7.4.1555 (Kōji 1), 66.

⁷² *Mie-ken shi tsūshi hen chūsei*, 832.

The lingering opposition in Shima province and along the roads to Ise drew the attention of the most powerful daimyō of eastern Japan. Imagawa Yoshimoto served as the daimyō of the *shugo* Imagawa family and a powerful lord of three major provinces (Suruga, Tōtomi, and Mikawa).⁷³ Yoshimoto was one of the first daimyō to respond to the request to open travelways to Ise late in 1553.⁷⁴ Yoshimoto received a court appointment as the governor (*kokushi*) of Mikawa, after his campaign to restore Ise's waterways in 1554. For the next two years Yoshimoto contended with local forces in Mikawa to assert authority over the lands that stood on the road to Ise.⁷⁵

Even the remnants of the *bakufu* attempted to find support for the initiative of restoring Ise. Ashikaga Yoshiteru had fled the capital in 1558, but from exile he tried to coordinate support for the *shikinen sengū* rites. The Outer Shrine sent requests to Yoshiteru in 1557 and 1558 to open the roads of Owari province and northern Ise which had been disrupted by an uprising (*ikki*) located in the town of Nagashima.⁷⁶ Yoshiteru then relied particularly on the efforts and command authority of Yoshitomo. Yoshimoto began amassing his troops along the border of Mino province in 1559. In a missive sent to the Outer Shrine from Yoshimoto's subordinate, Sekiguchi Ujisumi (dates unknown), Yoshimoto expressed his desire to suppress opponents of

⁷³ For a comprehensive study of the career of Yoshimoto see: Arimitsu Yūgaku, *Imagawa Yoshimoto*, (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2008).

⁷⁴ *Shizuoka-ken shi shiryō hen* vol. 7, doc. 2773. *Imagawa Yoshimoto gammon no utsushi* 11.26.1553 (Tenbun 22).

⁷⁵ Arimitsu, *Imagawa Yoshimoto*, 92-106.

⁷⁶ Jīngū Shichō ed., *Jīngūshi nenpyō*, 122.

the *sengū* within the provinces along the path to Ise which were outside of the three provinces under his immediate control.⁷⁷

Imagawa Yoshimoto's westbound foray in the fifth month of 1560 met with calamity. The forces a local warlord Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) executed a surprise attack on Yoshimoto's encampment after Yoshitomo had achieved what he had thought to be a victory at Okehazama. Yoshitomo's death caused the Imagawa rule to ultimately crumble and, at the same time lifted the fortunes of the brash commander Oda Nobunaga.⁷⁸ As the Imagawa scrambled to reassemble themselves, Nobunaga swept in to subjugate many of the Imagawa subordinates in Owari, Mino, and Mikawa provinces.⁷⁹

Yoshimoto's failure to subdue the opposition forces along the road to Ise, however, did not change the plans for the eventual administration of the *sengū* rites. Seijun continued her fundraising efforts in 1560, even expanding her networks to the Amako and Mōri families of western Japan.⁸⁰ Seijun supplied 500-*kanmon* of donations from the western daimyō to the shrine attendant of the Outer Shrine, Watarai Tadahiko in 1560 for the completion of the one of the Outer Shrines important treasure halls (*saihōden*) and other *sengū* expenses.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Yoshimoto traveled along the Tōkaidō through Owari and Mino provinces only two months after this letter. For a full explanation see: Iwata, 'Imagawa Yoshimoto no Eiroku san-nen nishijō sakusen to jingū shikinen sengū,' 39-41.

⁷⁸ For recent studies of Nobunaga's rise following Okehazama see Kazusa Hirai, *Oda Seiken no tōjō to Sengoku shakai*, (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2020) and Suzuki Masataka and Niki Hiroshi eds., *Tenkabito Nobunaga no kiso kōzō*, (Tōkyō: Koshi Shoin, 2021).

⁷⁹ Hirai, *Oda Seiken no tōjō to Sengoku shakai*, 10-15.

⁸⁰ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 563-564.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 564.

In spite of the collapse of the Imagawa, in 1563, the Outer Shrine began making its final preparations for its first *sengū* in over a century. Kitabatake Tomonori mobilized troops for an invasion of Shima province in the second month of 1563, seven months before those ceremonies would take place.⁸² Fearing that war would close the roads in southern Ise entirely, Seijun visited Tomonori in the fifth month and requested a delay in their campaign until after the *sengū*.⁸³ In response, Tomonori postponed their campaign to suppress the local forces in Shima until the twelfth month.⁸⁴ Seijun successfully petitioned the Tomonori to open all road barriers to Ise for a thirty-day period following the successful completion of the Outer Shrine's *shikinen sengū*.⁸⁵

Seijun ensured that a rebuilding of the shrines would occur. Working in tandem with the court and the enervated *bakufu*, Seijun coordinated with daimyō into opening the roads to Ise. Seijun's efforts gained an added urgency because after the fall of the Ōuchi, it was unknown whether rites of the Kōnomine shrine could function as a suitable replacement for Ise. While the Ōuchi had successfully maintained Kōnomine there was no compelling need to rebuild Ise. The Outer Shrine's *sengū* represents the first major push for the revitalization of Ise and the turn from the Great Shrine in Kōnomine, but the deity enshrined by the *sengū* was not the Sun Goddess, but rather Toyouke of the Outer Shrine. The process of restoring the Great Shrines of Ise and tying them perpetually to the imperial family had only been partially completed by 1563. The

⁸² *Mie-ken shi tsūshi hen chūsei*, 823-824.

⁸³ *Mie-ken shi shiryō sōsho*, vol. 4 *Kitabatake-shi kankei shiryō*, *Eiroku-ki no ge*, 5.28.1563 (Eiroku 6), 252.

⁸⁴ *Sawa-shi komonjo*, *Kitabatake Tomonori shojō* 12.15.1563 (Eiroku 6), 100-101.

⁸⁵ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 564.

final push for a complete restoration of Ise's Inner Shrine depended on continued support from the central institutions of the beleaguered Japanese state.

The Fall of the Kitabatake: Ise Under Japan's 'Unifiers'

The political pull of the imperial court continued to propel conflict between the daimyō of central Japan in repeated attempts to restore Ise and the capital from the fallen conditions created by the Miyoshi and their allies. In 1564, Miyoshi Nagayoshi who had occupied Kyoto since 1551 died. Emperor Ōgimachi (1517-1593) and the shogun Yoshiteru began sending communiques to daimyō to remove the Miyoshi from control of the city.⁸⁶ Nagayoshi's successors became aware of the plot to displace them and subsequently attacked and killed Yoshiteru in the fifth month of 1565.

Of the daimyō that the court reached out to, Oda Nobunaga stepped forward to assist the capital. Nobunaga responded to the emperor with a gift of 3000-*kanmon* to the imperial house in 1566 which was divided among several court functionaries.⁸⁷ In 1567, Nobunaga destroyed the rival Saitō family from western Mino province, thereby opening a potential path towards the capital. In the same year, he sent his daughter to marry the daimyō Azai Nagamasa (1545-1573) in order to secure military support on a western-bound campaign towards the capital.⁸⁸ In 1568, the younger brother of the deceased Ashikaga Yoshiteru, Ashikaga Yoshiaki (1537-1597),

⁸⁶ Okuno Takahiro, *Oda Nobunaga monjo no kenkyū* vol. 1 (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1970), 93-94.

⁸⁷ in *Zoku gunsho ruijū: Oyudono no ue nikki* vol. 6 (Tōkyō: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1975), *Oyudono no ue nikki* 4.11.1566 (Eiroku 9), 397.

⁸⁸ Okuno Takahiro, 'Oda seiken no kihon rosen,' *Kokushigaku* 100 (1976): 29-35.

arrived at Nobunaga's stronghold at Gifu and petitioned the Oda lord to assist in placing him as the next Ashikaga shogun.⁸⁹

Nobunaga set out for Kyoto in a two-pronged attack. A northern force led by Nobunaga traveled through Ōmi province and fought the Rokkaku daimyō forces near their stronghold of Kannonji. A separate force traveled through northern Ise, demanding passage to the capital through the barriers along the Tōkaidō road. The Kanbe and Nagano family heads, who were the brother and nephew of Kitabatake Tomonori respectively, refused to allow Oda forces to pass.⁹⁰ Oda forces attacked the Kanbe and Nagano castles in northern Ise, forcing them to capitulate by the fifth month of 1569. Nobunaga demanded that his son, Nobutaka (1558-1583), be made the heir of the Kanbe family, to draw away the Kanbe holdings into his personal domain.

Nobunaga's forces arrived in the capital late in 1568, and Ashikaga Yoshiaki became shogun that same year. Nobunaga and Yoshiaki were reportedly considered great friends after their successful campaign into the capital.⁹¹ The Kitabatake also held amicable relations with both the new shogun and the imperial court, but were angered by Nobunaga's allies removing their relatives from positions of authority in northern Ise. Tomonori attacked the Oda forces to reassert Kitabatake control over Northern Ise in late 1569.⁹²

⁸⁹ For a full explanation of the relationship between Yoshiteru, Yoshiaki and Nobunaga see: Kuroshima Satoru, *Tenkabito to futari no shōgun: Nobunaga to Ashikaga Yoshiteru, Yoshiaki*, (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 2020).

⁹⁰ *Mie-ken shi tsūshi hen chūsei*, 824-825.

⁹¹ Nobunaga remained an ardent supporter of the imperial court throughout his tenure, but contemporary sources mark his relationship with Yoshiaki as particularly amicable prior to the events of 1570. See: Tachibana Kyōko ed., *Nobunaga seiken to chōtei* (Tōkyō: Iwata Shoin, 2000), 7-15.

⁹² *Mie-ken shi tsūshi hen chūsei*, 825-826.

Nobunaga responded with a counterattack from Kyoto in the eighth month of 1570. Contemporary sources reveal that Nobunaga mobilized substantial forces from Mikawa, Tōtomi, Owari, Mino, Ōmi, and Northern Ise provinces.⁹³ Oda forces left the capital in high spirits, expecting a quick capitulation of the Kitabatake. However, the Kitabatake exacted heavy losses on the Oda forces by successfully defending their fortification at Ōkawachi in central Ise. After a siege of two months, Ashikaga Yoshiaki negotiated a peace between Kitabatake Tomonori and Nobunaga. Nobunaga's son, Chasen-maru, later known as Oda Nobukatsu (1558-1630), was handed over to the Kitabatake as a hostage in exchange for Tomonori's withdrawal from northern Ise.⁹⁴

Chasen-maru was given to Tomonori's eldest son, Kitabatake Tomofusa (1547-1580) to raise as his adopted son in the Ōkawachi castle. Nobunaga worshipped at the Inner and Outer shrines after departing Kyoto before returning to Mino province in 1470.⁹⁵ Nobunaga then issued a command that all checkpoints on the road to Ise should be perpetually opened. His edict states as follows:

The toll barriers built along the roads to Ise Province caused a great deal of trouble to travelers coming and going to the province in the past, and Lord Nobunaga therefore abolished them in perpetuity, issuing strict orders that henceforth no tolls be collected there.⁹⁶

⁹³ *Mie-ken shi chūsei* vol. 3.1, *Asayama nichijō shōjō* 8.19.1570, 516.

⁹⁴ It has often been thought that Chasenmaru immediately became the Kitabatake heir and therefore this agreement symbolized the capitulation of the Kitabatake to Nobunaga, but contemporary sources indicate that Nobunaga's forces suffered over 4,500 casualties and so it is not accurate to characterize this action as symbolizing their defeat. See: *Mie-ken shi tsūshi hen chūsei*, 826 and Kuno Masashi ed., *Ashikaga Yoshiaki to Oda Nobunaga: kairai seiken no kyojō*, (Tōkyō: Ebisu Kōshō Shuppan, 2017).

⁹⁵ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 574-575.

⁹⁶ J.S.A. Elisonas and J.P. Lamers trans. *The Chronicle of Lord Nobunaga* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 137.

Nobunaga's insistence that the roads to Ise remain open reveals that he supported the court goal of opening the roads to Ise. Emperor Ōgimachi and Oda Nobunaga began pressing for the revitalization of Ise as a part of a larger political project of restoration in Kyoto, building on the actions of Go-Nara and Imagawa Yoshimoto.

Nobunaga's authority over northern Ise and central Japan in 1570 was insecure. He returned to the capital in 1570, but immediately began military campaigns against the Asakura and Azai families of Echizen and Ōmi provinces. Nobunaga would remain embroiled in conflict with enemies on both sides of his domain for the next three years. In 1572, the Kitabatake sent private letters to the daimyō of Kai province, Takeda Shingen (1521-1573), offering aid if Shingen would lead an attack against Nobunaga in the capital.⁹⁷ Nobunaga's prospects for survival appeared to be so bleak that his son, Chasen-maru, took the name Kitabatake Tomotoyo at his coming-of-age ceremony (*gempukku*) in 1572 in honor of his adopted father and grandfather, Tomofusa and Tomonori. Despite Tomotoyo's obeisance towards the Kitabatake lords, Tomonori made no move to appoint the young Tomotoyo as the next governor (*kokushi*) of Ise until after Nobunaga had driven the shogun Yoshiaki from Kyoto and established himself as the primary protector of the court in 1573.

The rift between Nobunaga and Ashikaga Yoshiaki came to a head in 1573 when Nobunaga ejected Yoshiaki from Kyoto. Yoshiaki subsequently tried to coordinate a counteroffensive against Nobunaga, but Yoshiaki's supporters failed to supplant the Oda lord. As Nobunaga's rivals in and around the capital fell, the Kitabatake were forced to appoint Tomotoyo as the governor (*kokushi*) in 1575.⁹⁸ Tomotoyo changed his name to Kitabatake

⁹⁷ Kojima Hiroshi, 'Ise Ōminato to Oda Seiken,' *Nihon Rekishi* 372 (1979): 1-20.

⁹⁸ *Mie-ken shi tsūshi hen chūsei*, 828-829.

Nobuoki, taking a character from his biological father's name as a symbol of affinity to the Oda. In the following year, Nobunaga ordered Nobuoki to attack the private residences of Tomonori and his son Tomofusa. The retired lord Tomonori continued to issue documents as the head of the Kitabatake house as his predecessors had done before him even after relinquishing the governor (*kokushi*) post to Nobuoki. Nobunaga sought to remove Tomonori's influence and place Ise province under his immediate supervision by killing the Kitabatake lord. Nobuoki and a collection of his subordinates assassinated Tomonori and his family in Ise during the twelfth month of 1576.⁹⁹ Nobuoki spared the life of his adopted father, Tomofusa, who was moved to Kyoto to remain under permanent house arrest until he died of suspicious circumstances in 1580.¹⁰⁰

With the removal of his enemies in Ise and the appointment of his son as Ise Governor (*kokushi*), Nobunaga began the process of reinstating regular *sengū* rites for both the Inner and Outer shrines. The shrine attendants of the Inner and Outer Shrines with the assistance of Seijun's successor, Shuyō (dates unknown) sent emissaries to Nobunaga in 1581 asking for funds for a complete *shikinen sengū* for both of their shrines.¹⁰¹ Nobunaga responded with a donation of 3000-*kanmon* to be divided evenly between the two shrines for their use in acquiring lumber and other materials to conduct a full *sengū*.¹⁰² Nobunaga's aspirations, however, were

⁹⁹ Ibid., 829.

¹⁰⁰ For a later description of the events surrounding the end of the Kitabatake written by a descendant of the Kanbe family, see: *Zoku gunsho ruijū* vol. 21, *Seishū gunki*, 1-27.

¹⁰¹ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 576-577.

¹⁰² Ibid., 577.

suddenly cut short in the six month of 1582, when his general Akechi Mitsuhide (?-1582) assassinated Nobunaga in a surprise attack at Honnōji in Kyoto.

Nobunaga's death delayed the *sengū* for both the Inner and Outer shrines. The Emperor Ōgimachi nevertheless commissioned Shuyō from Keikōin to acquire funds from “individuals worthy of respect” throughout the provinces for the *sengū* rites in 1582.¹⁰³ Kitabatake Nobuoki, who then changed his name to Oda Nobukatsu, donated the yearly income of four districts in Ise to the support of the *sengū* rites.¹⁰⁴ Nobukatsu's contributions paled in comparison to those offered by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598), one of Nobunaga's generals, however, who became his de facto heir, donated over 5000-*kanmon* to the *sengū* rites in that same year.¹⁰⁵ At last, the shrines received sufficient funding to support a full *shikinen sengū* in Ise.

Ise Inner Shrine documents reveal a general displeasure with the way the *sengū* was being conducted in 1565. Inadequate funding to cover the cost of the buildings, their furnishings, treasures, and the ritual observances led to a litany of complaints.¹⁰⁶ The Record of the 1585 *Sengū* (*tenshō jūsan-nen sengūki*) reveals that many of the construction decisions were determined expediently by the funds on hand, rather than by precedent.¹⁰⁷ The presiding attendant of the Inner Shrine goes on to say, “In times like this, one cannot discuss about right

¹⁰³ Ibid., 579.

¹⁰⁴ Breen and Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines*, 129.

¹⁰⁵ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 580-583.

¹⁰⁶ Hamajima Kazunari, *Ise jingū wo tsukutta takumitachi* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2013), 140-141.

¹⁰⁷ Jingū Shichō ed., *Sengūki* vol. 4 (Ise-shi: Jingū Shikinen Zōeichō, 1932), *Tenshō jūsan nen sengūki*, 554-557.

and wrong... in one way or the other, this rendition of the *sengū* is over; and now we can toss it all into the fire—into the fire.”¹⁰⁸

Unfortunately for the shrine attendants, the *sengū* of 1585 became the precedent for future *sengū* throughout the Edo period (1615-1868). More than fidelity to the ancient protocols of Ise’s past, contemporaries were concerned with the symbolic legitimacy granted to them by the restoration of the Ise shrines. The 1585 *sengū* and the official recognition of Ise as preeminent residence of the Sun Goddess, symbolized Ise’s new role at the center of court ritual and politics. In a successive line starting from Imagawa Yoshimoto to Oda Nobunaga, and eventually to Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-1598), each protector of the court, who held hegemonic ambitions, became embroiled into Ise politics, and the lingering goal of restoring the residence of the Sun Goddess back to her shrines in central Japan. That the court was responsible for this continued attention shows that, even in the Warring States period, the court’s ability to grant legitimacy and the institutional framework that compelled cooperation continued to direct the actions of even the most powerful daimyō throughout Japan.

Conclusion

The Ise shrines’ renewal in 1585 restored the province as a pivotal place in Japan’s political and religious world. Hideyoshi enacted sweeping changes during his rule (1583-1598),¹⁰⁹ but he largely shielded the Ise shrines from change that would disturb their economic well-being. Hideyoshi exempted the shrine districts from his cadastral surveys and appointed an

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 558.

¹⁰⁹ For an excellent study of the changes during Hideyoshi’s tenure see: Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 99-145.

administrator (*bugyōnin*) Uwabe Sadanaga (1521-?) under his immediate supervision from among the families of the Yōda *onshi* to direct the preparations for future *sengū*.¹¹⁰ Hideyoshi removed acting governor-level administrators from Ise and granted all the income from the three shrine districts to go to the benefit of the upkeep of the shrines and their surrounding communities. He additionally appointed an absentee Governor of Ise (*Ise no kami*) Kimura Sadashige (dates unknown), to ensure that no regional *daimyō* would infringe upon the income of the shrine lands like the Kitabatake and Oda had done.¹¹¹

The restoration of the Ise shrines served to legitimate the authority of Hideyoshi in Kyoto. Despite continuing military struggles in both eastern and western Japan, he firmly reestablished his authority in central Japan and promoted the enactment of the *shikinen sengū* rites on behalf of the imperial court. Hideyoshi positioned himself as the benefactor of the imperial family and the guarantor of the safety of their ancestral deity. In the sixteenth century, where borders between religious symbolism and political power lacked meaningful differentiation, the full return of the Sun Goddess and Toyouke to Ise marked a hard-fought turning point in the reestablishment of central political authority in Japan.

Hideyoshi fashioned himself as a patron of the court like many of his predecessors including the Kitabatake of Ise province before him, but he also wielded greater military force than any of his contemporaries. Hideyoshi's military capacity enabled him to readily defeat his rivals on the battlefield, but his support for Ise and the imperial court gave him legitimation and a means to incorporate other magnates in Japan into his regime. In this sense, he remained

¹¹⁰ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 2, 684-685.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 687.

dependent upon the legitimation offered by the institutions of the court and the status granted to him by the imperial family.

The efforts of the imperial family, the daimyō, and the fundraising nuns of Keikōin in the sixteenth century laid the groundwork for Ise to emerge from its extended period of limited political relevance and become the most popular site of pilgrimage for the next three hundred years. The case of Ise shows that the surprising resiliency of the institutions of the imperial court did not simply happen by chance, or the whims of provincial magnates (*daimyō*). The individuals who inhabited these institutions helped direct events to ensure their own survival and facilitate their continued relevance throughout Japanese history.

Epilogue

The Creation of Continuities: Seventeenth-Century Shintō and Ise

Overview:

The restoration of the *sengū* rites marked the return of the Sun Goddess to central Japan, but this eastward shift in political centrality was only one facet in the development of Ise's place within Japanese religion and politics. The tumultuous years preceding the eventual restoration of political control by Hideyoshi caused significant change within the institutions of the Ise shrines and the Yoshida. Despite difficulties for both institutions, the temporary displacement of traditional institutional authority in Kyoto positively influenced the expansion of Shintō ideologies throughout all of Japan. The Yoshida family's teaching and ritual practices, now called Yoshida Shintō, spread in both western and eastern directions during the latter half of the sixteenth century and Ise *onshi* similarly spread their services throughout Japan with greater ease as the central government designated Ise as a site of national significance.

The Ise shrines and the Yoshida developed into the two primary institutions which dominated the social and religious underpinnings of Shintō in the Tokugawa period (1615-1868). Both Ise and the Yoshida found purchase in the new systems of political control being constructed under the Toyotomi and Tokugawa regimes. Contemporary scholars of the early modern period all contended with the ideas inherent in the Yoshida's teachings of the 'Way of the Gods' (*Shintō*).¹ The integration of the Ise shrines and the Yoshida into the political

¹ Bernhard Scheid, 'Shinto as a Religion for the Warrior Class: The Case of Yoshikawa Koretaru,' *Japanese Journal Religious Studies* 29, no. 3/4 (2002): 301-310.

structures of the early modern period and the proliferation of their ideas, allowed *Shintō* to thrive and spark an intellectual tradition which generations of political actors utilized to support their claims to legitimacy throughout Japan's from the seventeenth century onward. Understanding the role of the Ise shrines and the Yoshida institution is integral in identifying the political and ideological links between the transformative sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and shedding light on how 'The Way of the Gods' became a concept present in nearly every household throughout Japan.

Nationalizing the Kami: Apotheosis, Tenkai, and Ise Pilgrimage

While Hideyoshi supported the Ise shrines' renewal in 1585, he also sponsored the restoration of the Yoshida within Kyoto. Following the Miyoshi's takeover of the capital in the 1550s, the head of the Yoshida house, Yoshida Kanemigi (1516-1573) traveled widely throughout Japan. Kanemigi had been one of the Ōuchi Yoshitaka's strongest supporters. Kanemigi had returned to the capital after 1547 and following Ōuchi Yoshitaka's death, he reacted to the gradual collapse of the Ōuchi by expanding his social networks to other magnates across Japan. He traveled to Echizen province in the 1550s to gain the support of the daimyō Asakura Yoshikage (1533-1573), who oversaw a prosperous settlement at Ichijōdani.² He certified practices in smaller shrines throughout Echizen, Noto, and Etchū provinces during his visits to the region to incorporate them into his family's traditions which allowed them to gain

² Hagiwara Tatsuo, *Chūsei saishi soshiki no kenkyū* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975), 680–684.

support of the local magnates and ensured their survival over other contemporary shrines and temples.³

Kanemigi and his son Kanemi (1535-1610) sought out the patronage of magnates far and wide from 1547 through 1580. In 1556, Kanemigi wrote a missive to Emperor Go-Nara in support of the provincial upstart, Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) who requested a provincial governor title from the imperial court.⁴ In 1559, Kanemigi received 3000 pieces of gold in exchange for prayers (*kitō*) on behalf of the Hōjō Ujiyasu (1515-1571), the daimyō of eastern Japan.⁵ Kanemi visited Takeda Shingen (1521-1573) of Kai province in his battle encampments in the 1560s,⁶ and inscribed protective prayers upon the battle standards of the Ikkō-ikki of Kaga province in 1566.⁷ By expanding their influence to as many powerful magnates as they could, the Yoshida planned on being able to survive no matter what force would emerge as the most dominant power during the 1570s.

The consolidation of authority of Japan under Toyotomi Hideyoshi in the 1580s empowered the Yoshida family. Hideyoshi relied on the Yoshida to centralize control over the shrines throughout Japan. In 1585 Hideyoshi recognized Kanemi as Presiding Director of Shintō. In the same year, Kanemi approached the Emperor Go-Yōzei (1571-1617) to request funds to reconstruct the Hall of Eight Deities (*hasshinden*) within the *Saijōsho* compound. Go-Yōzei

³ Kaburagi Norihiko, 'Yoshida ke no dōtō danzetsu ni tsuite,' *Shintōshūkyō*, no. 220-221 (January 2011): 30-32.

⁴ Maeda Hiromi, 'Imperial Authority and Local Shrines: The Yoshida House and the Creation of a Countrywide Shinto Institution in Early Modern Japan' (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2003), 50.

⁵ Hagiwara, *Chūsei saishi soshiki no kenkyū*, 683-684.

⁶ Miyaji Naokazu, *Shintōshi* vol. 3 (Tokyo: Sōyōsha, 1985), 379.

⁷ Helen Hardacre, *Shinto: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 230.

granted this request which removed any semblance of authority from the *Jingikan* and placed all ceremonial rites of the court under the direction of the Yoshida.⁸

Hideyoshi's foreign policies show strong connections to Yoshida ideology in the following decade. The first traces of anti-Christian edicts in Japan originate from a 1587 expulsion edict directed to the Christian missionaries which begins by referring to Japan as the 'Land of the Gods' (*shinkoku*) and criticizing Jesuits for disrespecting the 'Way of the Gods' (*shintō*).⁹ Additionally, in his correspondence with island kingdoms in the South Pacific, Hideyoshi relied on the teachings of Yoshida Kanetomo when explaining about the religious differences between Japan the rest of the world:

Ours is the land of the *kami*, and *kami* is mind (*kokoro*), the one-mind (*isshin*) is all encompassing. No phenomena exist outside of it. Without *kami*, there would be no spirits or no Way. They transcend good times of growth and bad times of decline; they are *yin* and *yang* at the same time and cannot be fathomed. They are thus the root and source of all phenomena. They are in India under the name of Buddhism; they are in China under the name of Confucianism; they are in Japan where they are called Shintō. To know Shintō is to know Buddhism and Confucianism.¹⁰

It is apparent from Hideyoshi's document that Yoshida Shintō ideology significantly influenced his political worldview. Hideyoshi even relied on the lectures he received from the Yoshida to formulate one justification for his invasions into Korea in the 1590s.¹¹ For Hideyoshi, the

⁸ Maeda, 'Imperial Authority and Local Shrines,' 51

⁹ Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 225-228.

¹⁰ Translation from Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 46.

¹¹ The *Nihon shoki* recounts a mythical tale of Emperor Jingū traveling to Korea to liberate the allies of the Japanese on the Korean mainland from their neighbors. The tale was dubious as no such invasion took place during the time before the seventh century, but Hideyoshi attached himself to the idea of conquest personified by Emperor Jingū. It was not the primary reason for Hideyoshi's decision to invade Korea, but became a justification to which he persisted in throughout the conflict. For more on Hideyoshi's justifications see: Berry, *Hideyoshi*, 207-216, and Nam-Il Hur, 'The International Context of Toyotomi

Yoshida were an important ally in his attempts to consolidate authority under his new position at the top of the imperial court.

Even before his death in 1598, Hideyoshi planned to be deified as a *kami* by means of the Yoshida apotheosis rites which had deified Ōuchi Norihiro a century before. Kanemi was granted a plot of land that yielded an annual income of 10,000 *koku* in exchange for officiating over Hideyoshi's funeral and apotheosis rites.¹² Hideyoshi became a 'light-emitting deity' (*daimyōjin*) and enshrined in the Toyokuni shrine in Kyoto and in various sites throughout central and western Japan. The Toyokuni Shrine in Kyoto was paired with an elaborate Buddhist monastery called Hōkōji which was overseen by Kanemi's younger brother, Bonshun (1553-1632). Hideyoshi's apotheosis followed in the tradition established by the Yoshida which had deified the Tsukiyama *daimyōjin* of Yamaguchi, and the Shinryū *daimyōjin*, the name of the deified Yoshida Kanetomo.¹³

Hideyoshi's death opened an opportunity for his greatest rival, Tokugawa Ieyasu, who had been appointed as one of five regents for Hideyoshi's son Hideyori (1593-1615). Ieyasu mobilized support to remove Hideyori's other advisors and in 1600, defeated the Toyotomi forces at Sekigahara. While the Tokugawa established a position of dominance in the short term, political support for the Toyotomi remained strong in the capital following the battle. In the years that followed, Ieyasu pursued means by which he could cement his control over the court and have his house surpass the prestige of the Toyotomi. In this effort, Ieyasu pressed the court for

Hideyoshi's Invasion of Korea in 1592: a Clash Between Chinese Culturalism and Japanese Militarism,' *Korea observer* vol 28, no. 4 (1997): 687–707.

¹² Hardacre, *Shinto*, 231.

¹³ W. J. Boot, 'The Death of a Shogun: Deification in Early Modern Japan,' in *Shinto in History*, John Breen and Mark Teeuwen eds. (London: Curzon Press, 2000), 144–150.

the title of Head of Genji and Superintendent of Shōgakuin.¹⁴ Ieyasu had previously claimed membership into the Fujiwara line for most of his early career, but changed his lineage group to Minamoto to be able to acquire the titles that had enabled the Ashikaga and others to organize their own houses and subordinates. Eventually, he received the titles immediately before the pronouncement of Ieyasu as the new shogun of a *bakufu* centered around his home in Edo (modern-day Tokyo) in 1603.¹⁵

Following earlier precedent set by the Oda and Toyotomi, Ieyasu funded the Ise *shikinen sengū* rites in 1605. Ieyasu personally dispatched a document where he affixed a specialized vermilion seal (*shuinjo*) to the head of the Keikōin in 1607 stating that “the reconstruction of the shrines will be left to precedent.”¹⁶ Ieyasu followed his missive with a donation of 30,000 *oku* to Keikōin to be used for the *shikinen sengū* rites in 1609.¹⁷ Ieyasu appears to have attempted a reconciliation between the Ise shrines and the Yoshida by sending Kanemi to Ise to serve as the imperial envoy during the *sengū* rites as the Yoshida had done during the time of Yoshimitsu at the end of the fourteenth century.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ieyasu acquired a record of his lineage as a member of the Genji line through Nitta Yoshisada sometime before 1601 from the Yoshida. Previously he had been granted membership within the Fujiwara lineage also via Yoshida mediation. Ieyasu changed his lineage group three times during his tenure to acquire access to titles which he believed best served his interests. For a full accounting of these changes, see: Okano Tomohiko, *Genji Chōja: Buke seiken no keifu* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2018), 185-200.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 101-110.

¹⁶ Ise-shi shi iinkai ed. *Ise-shi shi* vol. 3 (Ise: Ise-shi, 2011), 827.

¹⁷ Ujiyamada-shi shi iinkai ed., *Ujiyamada-shi shi*, vol. 2 (Ujiyamada: Kokusho kankōkai, 1929), 1011.

¹⁸ Inoue Tomokatsu, ‘Jingikan ryōchōjō-kō: Muromachi-ki no Yoshida-ke to jingikan,’ *Shūkyō kenkyū* 78, no. 1 (2004): 91.

Ieyasu initially supported the Yoshida despite their role in the supervision of the shrines that deified Hideyoshi and was favored by the supporters of his son Hideyori in Kyoto. Ieyasu often met with Bonshun and Kanemi throughout the first decade of the seventeenth century.¹⁹ Bonshun lectured Ieyasu regarding Shintō in 1609, but Ieyasu refused to accept a public initiation into Yoshida practices in 1610, perhaps due to Kanemi's poor health which led to his death before the end of the year.²⁰ The Tokugawa lord began favoring the monk Tenkai (1536-1643) of the Tendai sect in regards to his policy decisions at roughly the same time that they pushed aside the support of the Yoshida.²¹

Under dubious pretexts Ieyasu attacked, defeated, and killed Toyotomi Hideyori and his supporters in 1615. Ieyasu himself died the following year and in the debate concerning Ieyasu's potential deification, the monk Tenkai argued for an alternative means of apotheosis that did not depend on the ritual practices of the Yoshida. The Yoshida had participated in the apotheosis rites of Ōuchi Norihiro, Yoshida Kanetomo, Nakatomi no Kamatari, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Maeda Toshiie.²² At the time of Ieyasu's death, *daimyōjin* had proliferated throughout Japan. Not all these *daimyōjin*, however, were highly respected by the new Tokugawa regime. Hideyoshi and Toshiie were both rivals to Ieyasu at different points in their past. Tenkai argued for a

¹⁹ Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology*, 57-58.

²⁰ Hardacre, *Shintō*, 232-233.

²¹ The Tendai sect had frequently contended with the Yoshida-friendly Shingon sect of Buddhism for prestige and support from the court for most of the premodern period. Tenkai was also an adherent of the Sannō school of Shintō thought which merged Buddhist and Shintō teachings and differed greatly from Kanetomo's One-and-Only Shintō. See: Sugawara Shinkai ed., *Sannō Shintō no kenkyū* (Tōkyō: Shunjūsha, 1992).

²² For more on the apotheosis rites of Maeda Toshiie, see: Luke Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace: Political Space and Open Secrets in Tokugawa Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 143-144.

different moniker, one which combined Buddhist cosmology with Shintō ideology inherent in the Sannō school of Tendai Buddhism from which he hailed. Ieyasu's son Tokugawa Hidetada (1581-1632) agreed with Tenkai and paid for the deification of Ieyasu as the 'Great Avatar of the Light of the East' (*Tōshō daigongen*).²³ The 'Light of the East' referenced Amaterasu directly, as the sun originates from the east, as well as the Cosmic Buddha Mahāvairocana who was seen as the protector of Japan and 'original ground' (*honji*) from which Amaterasu originates.²⁴ The Tokugawa centered their cult on the Sun Goddess in order to create a distinct and more prestigious position for their house above that of the Toyotomi and other *daimyōjin* magnates that had preceded them.

This choice to portray Ieyasu as an avatar of Amaterasu and the protectors of the imperial family, in one sense then obligated the Tokugawa to continued support of the Ise shrines. Tokugawa oversight then subsequently hindered the Yoshida's ability to influence the shrines directly. Kongōshōji, Rinzai Zen monastery in Ise just south of the Inner Shrine, received a vermillion-seal document, the highest Tokugawa confirmation, guaranteeing their rights to income immediately after the death of Ieyasu.²⁵ The monks of Kongōshōji enshrined the *Tōshō Daigongen* within their temple complex and served as the official Tokugawa temple complex in Ise throughout the early modern period. Kongōshōji served as the protector temple for the Ise shrines, symbolically showing Ieyasu to be the protector of the Sun Goddess's permanent residence and the final spot on the most popular pilgrimage route through Ise.

²³ Udaaka Yoshiaki, *Nankōbō Tenkai no kenkyū* (Tōkyō: Seishi Shuppan, 2012), 30-36.

²⁴ Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology*, 58-61.

²⁵ *Ise-shi shi* vol. 3, 288-290.

Hidetada and his son, Tokugawa Iemitsu (1604-1651) established an expansive monastic complex in eastern Japan where Ieyasu's remains would be permanently kept. Known as Nikkō ('light of the sun') it became the center of the Ieyasu cult under the supervision of Tenkai in the first half of the seventeenth century. Iemitsu identified himself closely with Ieyasu and claimed that Ieyasu visited him frequently in his dreams.²⁶ Iemitsu took the character for 'light' (*mitsu*) into his adult-name and carried with him a personal amulet that read:

The Great Amaterasu of Ise, The Hachiman Boddhisattva, The Great Avatar of the Eastern Light and the shogun... Three Shrines, one in mind and body.²⁷

Iemitsu personally identified the three most important shrines of Japan as the Ise Shrines, the Iwashimizu Hachiman Shrine of the Genji lineage, and the Tōshōgū shrine of Ieyasu in Nikkō. These three locations served as important cultic sites of political legitimacy for the Tokugawa regime and received Tokugawa support throughout the period of their rule (1615-1868).

Iemitsu and Hidetada also pursued the path of court advancement much like Ieyasu. Iemitsu took the title of Head of Genji in 1623 and held it until 1651. The Tokugawa would continue to monopolize the position until 1867, using it as a means of rewarding members of the Genji lineage, which encompassed many of the daimyō throughout Japan. The dual titles of shogun and Head of Genji marked the Tokugawa as the authoritative leaders of the newly established samurai order. The Tokugawa would provide tutors and spouses for the imperial family much as the Kitabatake had done for their emperors during the Northern and Southern Courts period.

²⁶ Nomura Gen, *Nihon kinsei kokka no kakuritsu to tennō*, (Tōkyō: Seibundō, 2006), 24-30.

²⁷ John Breen and Mark Teeuwen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines: Divine Capital* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing 2017), 130.

As protector of the imperial family,²⁸ Iemitsu took a special interest in the administration of Ise's shrine districts. Iemitsu appointed a special administrator (*bugyōnin*) to oversee the Yōda and Uji communities and supply the Ise shrines with support from the Tokugawa in 1633. The Yamada Administrator (*Yamada bugyōnin*)²⁹ oversaw disputes between the Inner and Outer shrines and the councils of both Uji and Yōda. The Yamada Administrator reported directly to the Tokugawa family through the Master of Ceremonies (*kōke*) which was traditionally dominated by the Kira family within the *bakufu*.³⁰ The Master of Ceremonies often traveled to both Nikkō and Ise to provide funds for their maintenance directly from the Tokugawa family.³¹

While the Tokugawa generally discouraged travel of citizens without proper authorization, the government allowed members of all social spheres to travel to Ise on pilgrimage throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During the early modern period, the number of pilgrims arriving in Ise averaged around 200,000-400,000 each year but there were exceptional years (1705, 1771, 1830) where millions of Japanese pilgrims would pour into the region.³² Yōda, now called Yamada, grew to a population of over 40,000 and Uji to over

²⁸ Iemitsu was the maternal uncle to the Emperor Meishō (1624-1696, r.1630-1643) who was the granddaughter of Tokugawa Hidetada. Meishō's selection as emperor came directly due to her relationship with Hidetada as the Tokugawa attempted to assert greater control over the imperial court at the first half of the seventeenth century.

²⁹ The characters for Yōda are more frequently read as 'Yamada'. Beginning in the seventeenth century, the more common reading for the characters became dominant in its usage and led to a renaming of the community as 'Yamada' as opposed to the older pronunciation of 'Yōda.'

³⁰ The same Kira family which played a central role in the Akō incident (1702) immortalized in the tales of the 47 Ronin throughout the latter half of the early modern period.

³¹ Ibid., 131-133.

³² *Ise-shi shi* vol. 3, 135-136.

8,000.³³ Over 600 *onshi* houses populated Yamada alone, and their agents filled the provinces in search of pilgrims. Ise became a point of cultural and religious significance wherein every member of Japanese society was expected to travel to Ise once in their lifetime.

Ise pilgrimage had a considerable impact on economics in Japan. The first form of paper currency used in Japan originated from Ise's *onshi* houses who acted as guarantors of credit between parts of the country that used different forms of currency.³⁴ Village communities throughout Japan organized themselves into 'collective' (*kō*) units that maintained patron relations with *onshi* in Ise.³⁵ Many of these 'collectives' would pool resources to support a number of individuals from their community to travel to Ise on a yearly cycle. The communities would rotate which members were sent to ensure that each member of the community would eventually have their opportunity to travel to Ise during their life. These 'collectives' however, also evolved into proto-insurance agencies for local communities which would provide aid during disaster or poor crop yields.³⁶

A Centralized 'Way of the Kami': Yoshida Shintō Authority

During this same period the Yoshida also expanded their networks by reaching out to powerful subordinates of the Tokugawa throughout Japan. The Yoshida trained scholars like Yoshikawa Koretaru (1616-1694) and Yamazaki Ansai (1619-1682) in the teachings of their

³³ Ibid., 116-117

³⁴ Fujii Noriko, 'Bakufu ni yoru Yamada hagaki no seizō kanri,' *Kinyū Kenkyū* 31, no. 2 (April 2012): 53-120

³⁵ Teeuwen and Breen, *A Social History of the Ise Shrines*, 153-155.

³⁶ For an expansive study on *Kō* and similar organizations in Japan and their impact on economic development, see: Tetsuo Najita, *Ordinary Economies in Japan: A Historical Perspective, 1750-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

school who became influential members of the Tokugawa court and allies of many *daimyō*.³⁷

The Yoshikawa branch of the Yoshida family's One-and-Only Shintō performed deification rights for Hoshina Masayuki (1611-1673) the lord of the Aizu domain, and began popularizing their apotheosis rites throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³⁸ The lords of the Okayama and Mitō domains called in the Yoshida to assist them in consolidating the number of shrines in their domain through Yoshida certification practices in the 1640s and 1650s.³⁹

With the support of their allies, the Yoshida received permission from the Tokugawa that established their *Saijōsho* as the inheritor of the ancient *Jingikan* and granted them rights to supervision over much of Japan. In 1665, the shogunate issued 'Regulations Governing Shinto Shrines, Shrine Attendants, and Shrine Functionaries' (*shosha negi kannushi hatto*). The Tokugawa standardized shrine practices in five articles:

1-Shrine attendants and other functionaries of all shrines nationwide shall devote themselves to studying 'the Way of the Kami' (*jingidō*) and pursue greater understanding of the objects of worship at their respective shrines. They shall refrain from performing commonplace rituals and ceremonies. Those who are derelict in their duties shall be dismissed from their posts.

2-Priests who have received court rank by means of their respective imperial mediators (ex. the Ise shrines) shall continue to conform to past procedure.

3-Shrine personnel without court rank shall wear white robes. Other apparel may only be worn after obtaining a permit from the Yoshida family.

4-Land owned by a shrine must never be bought or sold. Addendum: Shrine land must not be used as collateral.

5-When a shrine is damaged, it should always be repaired as necessary. Addendum: Orders to clean a shrine shall be issued without delay.

³⁷ Bernhard Scheid, 'Shinto as a Religion for the Warrior Class: The Case of Yoshikawa Koretaru,' 301.

³⁸ Roberts, *Performing the Great Peace*, 143-150.

³⁹ Taniguchi Sumio, 'Okayama hansei kakuritsuki ni okeru jisha seisaku,' in *Chihō shakai to shūkyō no shiteki kenkyū* (Kyoto: Yanagihara shoten, 1963), 157-170.

The preceding articles shall be strictly observed. Anyone found in violation of these articles shall receive a ruling in accordance to the gravity of the offense.
Seventh month of 1665, Year of the Serpent.⁴⁰

These regulations establish that shrines throughout Japan should adhere to some conception of ‘the way of the *kami*’ which had been espoused by the Yoshida and now diverted into several sects led by scholars throughout Japan. The regulations prescribe that any shrine not affiliated with the imperial court should work through the Yoshida to secure proper certification if they wished to engage in ritual performances that require any apparel beyond simplistic white robes. In addition to supporting a centralized Shintō directed by the Yoshida, these regulations also set shrines as distinct institutionally from Buddhist organizations.

The seeds fifteenth-century ideology of Yoshida Kanetomo, which separated Shintō into its own unique school of thought, came to fruition through the support of the Tokugawa regime. After 1665, shrines throughout Japan now were legally compelled to be affiliated with the Yoshida, or receive official court recognition through shrines like Ise in order to maintain their position within Tokugawa Japan. Despite the difficulties in transition from the Toyotomi to the Tokugawa between 1600 and 1615, by the end of the seventeenth century, the Yoshida family and the Ise shrines stood as the two primary Shintō institutions in Japan that oversaw and directed the practice of *kami* worship for the next two centuries.

Conclusion: The Centrality of Ise and the Yoshida

Ultimately the story of Ise hints at how institutions can change in both form and function and yet still remain powerful sources of legitimacy even in the most difficult of circumstances.

⁴⁰ Okada Shōji, *Nihon Shintōshi* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2010), 192-193.

The Kitabatake emerged on to the scene in Ise in a moment of conflict and created for themselves a space centered on antiquated forms of political legitimacy. Despite their ‘behind-the-times’ approach to local governance they were able to survive and maintain their holdings longer than their chief rivals in the Ashikaga *bakufu*. Their governor (*kokushi*) post, however, barely resembled anything that had preceded it in the past.

The Kitabatake maintained their authority by relying on offices, ranks, and the social status provided by the court. In contrast to the practices of the court in earlier times, the Kitabatake were not reassigned to a different province after a short term of office, nor did they organize their house on the same guidelines for governors set out in the seventh century. The institutions of the imperial court proved more adaptable and useful than they are often given credit for. Court ties allowed the Kitabatake to amass and retain local power over the Ise shrine districts. The Kitabatake subjugated and integrated the local communities in Ise through a merging of both ‘warrior’ practices and court titles. Ultimately their attitude towards acquiring court titles and seeking advancement through the acknowledgement of the imperial family was mimicked by other powerful magnates in their immediate vicinity like Imagawa Yoshimoto, Oda Nobunaga, and Toyotomi Hideyoshi.

The Yoshida family similarly created a new position within the central government that hailed back to antiquity, but truly was a noticeable break from precedent. They utilized their expertise in ancient affairs to maneuver themselves into a trusted position within the imperial court. Despite being draped in rhetoric of ‘restoration’ and ‘origins,’ the Yoshida’s approach to apotheosis, their position within the *Jingikan*, the role of the *kami* in relation to Buddhism, and the purpose of the imperial court were all significant transformations of past practice. To suggest that they were revolutionary in some manner, however, misses the point that they were

intentionally and self-referentially backward-looking forms of rhetoric which resonated in Japanese society even at its most tumultuous period of violent disruption.

In the political climate of the sixteenth century, as political authority fragmented, a nostalgic reminder of an idealized remained influential. Yoshida's ideals, coupled with court backing, enabled them gain widespread support throughout Japan. The rhetorical capabilities of the Yoshida, and the legitimacy granted to them by a court which shared the same conservative worldview, enabled them to develop their networks throughout Japan even as their daimyō supporters rose and fell with the times. The court remained a vital institution and focus of authority throughout the sixteenth century even as violence spread throughout Japan. Its draw, along with the actions of the Yoshida and local actors in Ise, linked their fortunes to powerful magnates with the restorative impulses towards the imperial court. The acts of the Yoshida and the Ise shrines were instrumental in the continuation of the court and the propulsion of Shintō into the highest levels of political significance in Japan.

The restoration of the *shikinen sengū* rites in Ise in 1585 marked a major success in the project precedent-driven political policy-making of the imperial court. Ise had been deprived of the Sun Goddess through the actions of the Yoshida, the Kitabatake, local *onshi*, and powerful magnates in western Japan who sought to move the capital not because the court lost its political cache, but because the court directly participated in the developments that pushed Amaterasu and Toyouke to Yamaguchi. The collapse of central authority and the nation-wide increase in violence of the 1550s, however, compelled many 'courtier' and 'warrior' officials to restore that which only remained in 'traces' by the mid-sixteenth century.

The new 'place' that was still called Ise differed drastically from the Ise of the past. Ashikaga Yoshimitsu had brought a knowledge of Ise to a widening population, and the tales of

Japan's mythological past grew in popularity due to the spread of Shintō throughout Japan. The local *onshi* who facilitated the dissemination of knowledge of Ise made the region into a completely different space. Pilgrimage to Ise permeated Japanese culture as millions of Japanese flocked to the region during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The *onshi* and the pilgrims they brought to Ise ultimately changed the meaning and function of the Ise shrines. No longer were they simply the private and strictly guarded holdings of the imperial family—to the contrary, Ise developed into a cultural curiosity which motivated mass pilgrimage for the next three centuries. In place of the strict restrictions that once had separated Ise as a sacred ritual space of the court, now every member of Japanese society was encouraged to travel to Ise and longed for the opportunity to walk about the sacred shrine districts.

Ultimately, the example of Ise shows the enduring nature of Japan's ancient institutions. The institutions of the imperial court show remarkable malleability. The court both shaped change and were shaped by the people who worked as functionaries at all levels of society. The tumultuous period at the end of the sixteenth century redefined the court and gave them new function within the political world of what has been characterized as Japan's early modern period. Many of the cultural practices ascribed to "traditional Japan" stemmed from the staying power of these institutions. Even today, hundreds of thousands of Japanese tourists make simple "pilgrimages" to Ise each year. Shintō shrines throughout Japan have detailed procedures for the certification of priests and proper ritual practices for a broad variety of social and political events that were established during Yoshida supremacy. Shintō rites are a mainstay within Japanese culture and extend from the highest responsibilities of the imperial house to the smallest impactful milestones of individual lives. The place that Ise is today and the practices that take place there and throughout all of Japan are the remnants of the institutions established by the

Yoshida, the Ise *onshi*, and the nuns of Keikōin. It is the hope that this study of Ise and its political and institutional reconfigurations over time will provide insight that help untangle the interconnected nature of religion, culture, politics, and place in Japan.

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