2010

Taira No Masakado In Premodern Literature Of Japan

Genesie T. Miller

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TAIRA NO MASAKADO
IN THE LITERATURE OF PREMODERN JAPAN

A Thesis Presented
by
GENESIE T. MILLER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

MAY 2010

Asian Languages and Literatures
TAIRA NO MASAKADO
IN THE LITERATURE OF PREMODERN JAPAN

A Thesis Presented

by

Genesie T. Miller

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DEDICATION

To my loving fiancé, who followed me across the country to support me in pursuing my dream, and to my family, who are always there for me.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Professor Doris G. Bargen, the chair of my thesis committee, for helping me find an interesting topic to explore in my M.A. thesis and to research Taira no Masakado and some rather gruesome aspects of warrior culture. I would also like to thank Professor Stephen M. Forrest for teaching me how to read manuscript Japanese and for finding a most amazing *ehon* manuscript about Masakado.
ABSTRACT
TAIRA NO MASAKADO IN PREMODERN LITERATURE OF JAPAN
MAY 2010
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Directed by: Professor Doris G. Bargen

The tenth-century rebel Taira no Masakado occupies a unique place in the literature of Japan. His reception through history is most prominent in the works of Ōkagami, Shōmonki, Konjaku Monogatari, Jinnō Shōtōki, and Ehon Maskado Ichidaiki. The author’s geographic location often determined whether they sympathized with or demonized Masakado. Their occupations also influenced how they wrote about warrior culture, particularly the custom of buntori, or the taking of heads. Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki provides not only textual accounts of the rebellion, but numerous images depicting an Edo-interpretation of Heian-period warrior culture and but also images of the buntori of Masakado and his allies’ heads. Depending on whether authors were Kyōto nobles or officials in the provinces also affected whether or not they address Masakado’s rebellion and Sumitomo’s rebellion as allied-conspiracies or as two separate occurrences. Finally, the aristocratic literature of the capital and the literature in the provinces give different reasons for Masakado’s rebellion which conform to Ted Robert Gurr’s “relative deprivation” theory, but also demonstrate the influence from Buddhist and Shintō episteme.
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INTRODUCTION

Taira Masakado is a fascinating figure in Japanese warrior culture. In introductory-level Japanese culture books, his name is often not mentioned, which can give those who are taking their first steps into Japanese history the impression that the Heian period was entirely true to the Chinese characters (kanji) that make up the era’s name: peace and tranquility. Certainly, most literature of the time has been perceived as engraving this fact into our minds: that the great Heian literary works focused on the elegance and beauty of the era. However, as one ventures more deeply into the study of Japan, Masakado emerges as a figure who disturbed the picture of “peace and tranquility” so stubbornly clinging to perceptions of Heian culture. For a brief time this warrior interrupted the calm of Heian with his violent revolt in the east against the Japanese government. He was an unforgettable character not only in his time but throughout Japanese history, and his story and charisma inspired authors to write about him in literature. Some condemn him as a villain, while others empathize with the tough political position he faced. The portrayal and treatment of Masakado and his actions greatly varied depending on the author and the time period.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this thesis is to examine critically the views of various authors of premodern Japanese literature and determine how they and their audiences viewed Masakado, his rebellion, and early samurai culture. To explore the reception history of Masakado, several different works of literature will be examined. Most are taken from the Heian and Kamakura periods, with the exception of an illustrated Edo-era literary
work. In the classical-era pieces, each authors’ opinion of Masakado varies greatly, which leads to my second complex of investigation aside from reception history. I ask whether the author’s geographic location – often but not always related to social class – determined his view of Masakado. It struck me especially notable that the location where the authors wrote had a profound influence on their perspective. An elite noble living in the heart of Kyōto wrote very differently from a low-rank government official living in the distant provinces. The works primarily addressed are Ōkagami, Shōmonki, Konjaku Monogatari, Jinnō Shōtōki, and Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki.

**Primary Sources**

Ōkagami is a *rekishi monogatari*, or history-tale, written around 1085 to 1125 by an anonymous author. The author was most likely male, and inspired by *kiden*, or Chinese annals-biography.\(^1\) Although the precise date of the text is unknown, the content of this “history” indicates that it was written some time after the reign of Fujiwara Michinaga (966-1028). The author details life at court and discusses briefly the impression Masakado’s rebellion left on the court. Like Chinese-style histories, the author employs a dialogue-explanation style. The main characters are three extremely old courtiers engaging in a sort of casual discussion of their lives, and end up exchanging their observations of past events of the court. While the identity of the author is unknown, it was most likely written by a courtier, since the subject matter is interested primarily in life at the highest, most privileged levels of the aristocracy. Although author’s main concern was recording court life surrounding the reign of Michinaga, he does give glimpses into events that impacted the psyche of those at court. References to Masakado exist in two different passages: one that briefly describes his ambitions and another

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passage explaining how Emperor Suzaku fretted over the affairs of the state during this time. There is no mention of the panic in the capital (other than Suzaku’s), nor the destruction committed in the provinces due to the fighting of the warrior groups. In this research, Helen Craig McCullough’s English translation of Ōkagami is used. The translation of the text amounts to being around 300 pages long, making the work a substantial history of Heian Japan dominated by Michinaga.

Written shortly after Masakado’s rebellion ended in 940, Shōmonki describes in great depth the events before, during, and after the revolt. It is one of the first gunki, or war epics, in the Japanese literary cannon. The entire work is devoted to Masakado, not as a villain, but as man reacting to complicated circumstances. While the author is unknown, it is largely believed Shōmonki was composed in the provinces, either by a Buddhist monk or a government official during his assignment as governor or as another minor official. The content of the work covers the in-fighting of Masakado amongst his relatives before he declares himself the “New Emperor.” In the beginning, Masakado was portrayed as a great warrior defending himself against his unruly and unscrupulous relatives. The author shows in his writing how Masakado evolves into a man obsessed with power who tries to rise above his station. But the author is also careful to place the blame not just on Masakado, but also on other parties involved in the fighting. Judith Rabinovitch translated this text from its original hentai kambun, or “variant Chinese.” Her translation of the text runs about seventy pages, making it shorter overall than Ōkagami, but much longer in its coverage of Masakado.

Konjaku Monogatari was compiled in the late Heian period, perhaps around 1120, by another anonymous author. It is a multi-volume collection of setsuwa, or explanatory
tales, that, in Konjaku’s case, are meant to explicate the ethics of Buddhist teachings. While the first volumes containing Buddhist tales are believed to be written by monks, the occupation of the compiler is largely unknown. Konjaku Monogatari presents a Buddhist-tinged folkloric view of Masakado’s actions, which are described in some detail. These passages are much longer than the commentary in Ōkagami, yet much shorter than Shōmonki. The author is not shy about placing the blame of the rebellion squarely on Masakado himself. Like Shōmonki, the passage about Masakado begins by explaining the fighting between Masakado and his relatives. Unlike Shōmonki, the author of Konjaku maintains that it was Masakado himself who started the fighting. Masakado is the clear villain of the tale, a figure to point to as an example of evil behavior and bad karma. In the end of the tale, it is made abundantly clear that his karma is the reason for his tortures in hell. Konjaku Monogatari’s warrior passages are translated by William Richie Wilson in his article on the importance of the bow and arrow as primary early samurai weaponry in “The Art of the Bow and Arrow.” The Masakado passage is one of the most lengthy, running about four pages. This may seem short, but in the setsuwa (explanatory tale) genre, a story of such a length should be considered quite detailed.

A Muromachi period courtier, Kitabatake Chikafusa wrote Jinnō Shōtōki, a chronicle, or ki, that retells the reign of each emperor of Japan through history and myth. The chronicle was written during the Nanboku-chō, or Northern and Southern Courts period, a time where the Ashikaga Shōguns took over the Kyōto court and ruled, while Emperor Go-Daigo established his own court in Yoshino to try and restore the imperial power and culture of the Heian period. Chikafusa was a supporter of Emperor Go-Daigo, and wrote Jinnō Shōtōki to glorify the rule of Japanese emperors, and legitimize the
Southern Court. When Chikafusa addresses the topic of Masakado’s rebellion, it seems that he adopts a pragmatic view in that he sees Masakado from the standpoint of *ritsuryō* hierarchy and rank. He also wonders how the rebellion may have reflected on the effectiveness of Emperor Suzaku’s rule. Compared to his courtly predecessors in the Heian period, he analyzes the rebellion more objectively than they, explaining the social and political circumstances leading Masakado to revolt against Suzaku and establish his own court.

The final work discussed here is an Edo-period *ehon*, or picture book, the *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki* (*Illustrated Biography of Masakado*); it offers two perspectives of the rebel, one by the author and the other by the artist. The book was published in 1793 by Ryūsuishi, the pen name of Ōta Nanpō (1794-1823). The book is extremely long: it is published in five volumes, each containing about twenty pages. Every page contains both text and image. While the cover of the book bears the title *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*, the introductory page refers to the book as *Ehon Shōmonki*. I have chosen this particular *ehon* not only for its interesting images, but because of how it relates itself to the famous Heian *gunki*. However, upon close observation, the *Ehon* reveals striking differences in both content and image compared to its source text. The work begins at the point where Masakado has started his court, about halfway through the original *Shōmonki*. Additionally, at several points in the story, the images do not exactly follow what the text says, perhaps indicating that the artist and the author had different visions for the text’s message. The images and the later publishing date offer contrasting views of Masakado and warrior culture from the *ehon*’s classical predecessors.
In all the primary texts, there are specific reasons why Masakado is brought up, and many of these reasons are rooted in the politics of the author’s day. For example, the author of *Shōmonki* wrote the *gunki* when the rebellion was still fresh in everyone’s mind. The author was responding to the need to explain the rebellion and ask the ever-important question: why did Masakado rebel? Chikafusa may have used Masakado’s rebellion to refute the Ashikaga Shōguns’ theft of imperial authority in *Jinnō Shōtōki*. Masakado may represent the warrior class rule of the Ashikaga, and the fact that he loses to the forces on the emperor’s side may contain the message that warriors can never rule with the power inherent in imperial authority. While the political circumstances that bring Masakado back to the public eye are fascinating, the political circumstances surrounding these authors require specialized research perhaps reserved for a future project, but certainly beyond the scope of the research presented here.

**Plays and Legends**

Although the primary literature examined in this thesis is comprised of mainly classical and medieval texts, it is important to note that these are not the only works that deal with Masakado. He is brought up frequently in the Edo period in *kabuki* plays. In the *kabuki* play *Masakado*, Maskado himself does not appear, but the characters (Masakado’s daughter, Princess Takiyasha and Ōya no Tarō Mitsukuni, a warrior from the capital) reminisce about Masakado and his rebellion. Here, just as in *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*, Edo culture is imposed on Heian history, through the clothing of the actors and the prominence of the sword. Images depict Takiyasha in Edo-style hairstyle, kimono, and large platform sandals, and Mitsukuni in Edo-style menswear and carrying only a sword.
rather than both a sword and bow.\textsuperscript{2} There is also a certain fascination with the pleasure quarters that is typical of literary works focusing on Edo. Takiyasha, in her attempt to woo Mitsukuni to the Taira cause, disguises herself as a courtesan named Kisaragi. It is highly unrealistic that a daughter of the infamous rebel Masakado would dress as a courtesan, even if to make a loyal follower out of Mitsukuni. Of course, kabuki plays are all about spectacle, not reality, but through the absurdity of this spectacle, it becomes apparent that the playwright’s aim is to cater to his audience (who would have been upscale merchants frequenting the pleasure quarters) rather than to be historically accurate.

Masakado’s legacy also survives in oral tradition. There are numerous legends about how he acquired his power. One legend tells of Masakado’s birth from a giant serpent. His serpent mother licked his entire body, except for one small spot on his temple, which becomes his weak point.\textsuperscript{3} This is not unlike the myth of Achilles and his mother dipping him in the river Styx by his ankle, leaving his ankle as his weak point. Masakado’s enemies, Taira no Sadamori and Fujiwara no Hidesato, learn of his weakness from one of Masakado’s consorts. It was also said that he used supernatural powers to project numerous “copies” of himself on the battlefield, which protected his “true” body from harm. Again, Sadamori and Hidesato are able to learn about the “true” Masakado from one of his consorts and thus bring him down.\textsuperscript{4}

The orally transmitted legends do not stop at Masakado’s death: even Masakado’s severed head is given supernatural powers. Legends tell of how the head cried out for

\textsuperscript{3} Karl Friday, \textit{The First Samurai: The Life and Legend of the Warrior Rebel Taira Masakado} (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2007), 10.
\textsuperscript{4} Friday, \textit{The First Samurai}, 159.
days on end while it was on display, until an irritated townsman informed the head he was dead. Another legend claims the head flew all the way from Kyōto to Kantō, and form its head-mound (*kubizuka*) of its own accord. When Masakado was enshrined in Kanda Myōjin shrine, he became the spirit of the Kantō, who, when properly worshiped, protected the region from harm, or, when slighted, caused natural disasters, such as earthquakes. Although these oral myths are fascinating and warrant further study, my research focuses specifically on the written tradition. Oral legends may be included in a future project.

It is important to remember that even if authors (and artists) based their work on rumors, legends or non-factual impressions of historical events, scholars of literature can gain striking impressions of how these people interpreted the events that unfolded. Many people read these literary works, from Heian court nobles to the merchants (*chōnin*) of Edo. They wanted to learn about Masakado and form opinions of this rebel. A tale is not “just a tale” and a picture book not “just a picture book”: they are representations of how people felt about this character in their country’s history. What came from these books is not necessarily the historical Masakado, but rather the literary Masakado. Authors and artists in different time periods imagined Masakado in different ways, sometimes hundreds of years after the events surrounding Masakado’s rebellion happened (or didn’t happen, as the case may be). The product of their imagination tells scholars how they knew this rebel.

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5 Friday, *The First Samurai*, 3.
6 Friday, *The First Samurai*, 3.
7 Friday, *The First Samurai*, 4.
Chapter Overview

Chapter One of my thesis analyzes the treatment of Masakado in the courtly period in respect to the geographic distance or proximity of the authors to the capital. How the authors of Shōmonki, Ōkagami, Konjaku Monogatari and Jinnō Shōtōki write about Masakado seems to be greatly influenced by their place of residence and, by extension, their occupation. Although many of the authors’ identities are unknown, there is enough evidence to speculate where they are located and how they earned their living. Authors in the capital were most likely courtiers, and often held the “official” view, which demonized Masakado. Some authors were located in the provinces, possibly near Masakado’s domain, and were more familiar with the specific circumstances in the region and thus able to write in a manner sympathetic to Masakado. Authors who wrote in areas between the capital and the Kantō adopted a mixture of the regional and “official” view.

Chapter Two discusses the place honor held in the culture of the early samurai as interpreted by authors of both classical literature and of the much later Edo Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki. The beginnings of honor culture are witnessed in the earlier works, particularly in Shōmonki, but not surprisingly, the importance of warrior honor is much more prevalent in the work from the Edo period, since that time period is characterized by neo-Confucian samurai rule and the elaborate codification of a samurai ethos. It not only portrays this in words, but also in its images, which dominate the work. The main focus in this chapter is the warrior custom of collecting enemy heads as a means of gaining reward, which in turn increased the honor of the warrior who took the heads.

Chapter Three discusses the role that pirate-rebel Fujiwara no Sumitomo (?-941)
played in the Masakado Uprising. Often, these two men appear in literature together, since there is chronological overlap in their rebellions, and they are often found in alliance with one another. It is possible to trace the rumor through literary-history, and see that the literature that follows the Heian “official” view tends to support the rumor more than the variant or Kantō literature. Together, whether allied or not, these two men are held up by Japanese authors as examples of improper ambition, and they serve as a warning to those who try to defy the authority of the court.

Chapter Four examines, with the help of Ted Robert Gurr’s theory of relative deprivation, what the authors felt Masakado’s motivation for rebellion was. Gurr’s theory takes on an almost-scientific, logical approach to examining rebellion and its causes. Keeping in mind that ancient cultures rarely operated solely on scientific logic, it is also important to examine the authors’ belief in the supernatural, and how those beliefs colored their interpretation of Masakado’s reasons for rebellion. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss how religious epistemes, particularly Buddhist and Shintō, affected the authors’ perception of Masakado’s rebellion.

Through analysis of these literary works, the authors’ impressions of Masakado’s revolt can be traced through time. My thesis chapters are intended to show how various aspects of the authors’ lives affected the manner in which they wrote about the complicated events surrounding Masakado. Aspects like geographic location, class or occupation, familiarity with warrior customs, familiarity with Sumitomo, and religious belief deeply affected their judgment of Masakado and colored the authors’ subjectivity.
CHAPTER 1

MASAKADO IN THE LITERATURE OF THE COURT AND THE PROVINCES

Taira Masakado’s revolt from 935 to 940 was a significant event of the Heian period. Many lives, of warriors and civilians, were devastated or taken in the course of the intense fighting that occurred during this tumultuous time. Masakado’s rebellion took place in the eastern provinces, far away from the capital Heian-kyō in the west. While the fighting never reached the capital itself, that did not stop authors living there from writing about the terrifying Masakado and his warrior band. However, some people were impacted more than others. The manner in which early authors wrote about this event greatly varies depending on their location in relation to the capital. The authors living in the capital experienced this event differently from authors living in the countryside or in a monastery. There appears to be a tendency for literary authors living within the courtly society of Kyōto to downplay the event while authors who are further removed from the court cover the event much more graphically. It makes sense: why would a courtly author, shielded from the hardships of war itself, write about the event the same way as people who saw the fighting and bloodshed with their own eyes?

By analyzing Ōkagami, Konjaku Monogatari, Shōmonki, and Jinnō Shōtōki, it is possible to speculate that authors closer to the capital did not feel the fear of the revolt as much as the authors in the countryside, and this fact demonstrates the clear disconnect the courtiers had from the provinces. The event is briefly covered in many Kyōto authors works, while a book from the provinces holds a deep concern for understanding the cause of the events, knowing the principal characters involved, and the hardships faced by the non-warrior peasants as the conflict unfolded. Reflected through the literature of the late
Heian period, this disconnect had political implications later in Japanese history, as the decline of the Heian culture and way of aristocratic rule eventually gave way to a powerful military state that would be rooted in the military prowess of powerful samurai from the provinces.

**Life of the Peasantry in Medieval Japan**

Before analyzing the writings, it is important to discuss the life of the peasantry in early Japanese society, if only briefly, since there seems to be a tendency in early primary literature to ignore this social class. To a certain extent, the relationship between the nobles in the capital and the farmers in the provinces was always strained: The farmers were required to labor arduously in order to provide the nobles in Kyōto the materials to support their luxurious way of life. For example, in a given year 3,478 bolts of taffeta silk were required to clothe the emperor alone.\(^8\) This silk was not simply purchased at the local market or craft shop; it was a material that the government required the peasants to produce, in addition to the rice and other goods Kyōto required to display luxury and style.

In addition to having to labor all year to produce these goods, the peasantry often had to endure abuses committed by governors appointed by officials in Kyōto. There was little oversight the Kyōto government could offer in the provinces to prevent gubernatorial abuse. For example, the horrendous exploitations committed by Fujiwara no Motonaga as governor of Owari drove the minor officials in that province to write a petition to the Kyōto government listing 31 articles of his mistreatment in 988. This included increasing rice taxes and keeping the surplus for his own wealth, using an

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\(^8\) Mikael Adolphson et. al., *Heian Japan, Centers and Peripheries* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 316.
unnecessarily large amount of corvée labor to increase personal profit, paying excessively low prices for tax goods while demanding more rice, and through his abuses causing excessive hardship and suffering among the people. Fortunately, officials in the capital decided to act on the petition and remove Motonaga from office, but many other provinces probably endured similar hardships with little relief.

**Masakado in Ōkagami**

In Ōkagami, the author’s primary concern seems to have been the court nobility and events of the court leading up to the rise of Fujiwara no Michinaga as regent. Scholars are certain that the author was a courtier since in order to record so many historical facts correctly in this *monogatari*, he had to have had access to historical records written in Chinese, as well as to *Eiga Monogatari*, another history detailing the rise of Michinaga, but from the perspective of relationships and perceptions rather than on historical events. While not always accurate according to modern standards, for its time and in its time, the *monogatari* was considered a history text cloaked in the guise of a tale.

When covering the story about a relative of Michinaga, the author of Ōkagami briefly addressed the revolts of Fujiwara no Sumitomo and Taira no Masakado. Apparently, a subordinate of this relative of Michinaga was related to a man who fought Fujiwara no Sumitomo, a disgruntled noble who became a leader of pirates and terrorized the southern seas of Japan. The Ōkagami author writes that both Masakado and Sumitomo planned the revolt together, Masakado ambitious to become Emperor and

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10 McCullough, trans., *Ōkagami*, 16.
Sumitomo ambitious to become Regent. Later on, the author describes Emperor Suzaku offering prayers that Masakado’s revolt end soon, because the revolt caused him “great anxiety.” The impression these short passages give is that while the Emperor may have been worried, no one else in the capital was concerned about the Emperor’s anxieties, let alone concerned with what was happening to people in the provinces. Even the longer, more dramatic Eiga Monogatari fails to mention any reaction to Masakado’s rebellion. If this rebellion was a concern to anyone in the court, surely the author of Eiga Monogatari would have written about how worried and panicked the capital would be, not to mention the prayers being offered at temples and shrines for protection.

This brief coverage of the historical event indicates that those living in the capital apparently were only minimally concerned with the rebellion in the east. In fact, since the passage addresses primarily the Sumitomo problem, it seems that Sumitomo’s piracy was of more concern than Masakado’s rebellion.

The extreme brevity of the passage makes it difficult to judge the author’s precise feelings about the rebellion. Comparing Ōkagami to a work that goes into great detail of the event therefore offers an opportunity to compare extremes. While this capital-centered literary work gives the distinct impression that courtiers were sheltered from the details of the rebellion, the author of Shōmonki, a work devoted entirely to the uprising, conveys a different impression.

**Masakado in Shōmonki**

*Shōmonki* is one of the first gunki, or war epics, and as for much of Heian literature, the exact date and author are unknown. While there is much speculation about

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11 McCullough, trans., Ōkagami, 178.  
12 McCullough, trans., Ōkagami 221.
when it was written, a substantial amount of evidence suggests that the work was completed very shortly after Masakado’s death. Judith N. Rabinovitch, translator of *Shōmonki*, cites several errors in the text itself, such as date inconsistencies and other mistakes that very well could have been made because the text was being written as the revolt happened. If the author had composed it some years later, he might have been able to check his facts and ensure that errors did not creep into the final manuscript.\(^{13}\) Since the author does not mention any other events occurring at the same time, namely the Sumitomo Uprising, or any other significant events of the same time period, he appears to have written the work during Masakado’s Revolt, not years later. Often, Masakado and Sumitomo appear together in literary works as the major villains of the time. Had the author been in the capital, or had he written the work retrospectively, he would have heard much about Masakado and Sumitomo’s violence and surely would have included both men in *Shōmonki*.

The fact that the author was writing as the events unfolded without historical resources is important, because it lends credence to the author’s proclamation that he was living in the provinces at the time of the rebellion. “The above has been respectfully submitted by a man from the provinces who shall go unnamed.”\(^{14}\) Rabinovitch cites several other scholars who agree with the view that the writer was located in the Bandō provinces, and there is only one scholar who disagrees, saying that the author was merely being humble by not mentioning his name.\(^{15}\)

The place where the author resided during the rebellion tells readers much about the events he reported and about the impressions the fighting left on him. It is possible

\(^{13}\) Judith Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki* (Tokyo: Monumenta Nipponica, 1986), 42.
\(^{14}\) Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki*, 140.
\(^{15}\) Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki*, 140.
that the *Shōmonki* author witnessed some of the fighting first hand. In a sense, he is serving as a field reporter, and a biographer of Masakado and his rebellion. While this is not to say that every single word written should be considered historically verifiable, the author does appear to have considered the whole situation in his writing; he goes beyond mere condemnation and seeks to understand both Masakado’s motivations and the effects the fighting had on the peasant population.

Extremely valuable for understanding the author’s connection to the region are his accounts of the suffering the peasants endured before the uprising. In the first pages of *Shōmonki*, readers are given a grim account of Masakado’s retaliation for his cousins’ attack:

Masakado razed all the houses…from larger residences down to the smaller dwellings…Some people who had been hiding in the houses that had been set on fire lost their direction in the smoke and were unable to escape. Others who had fled their burning dwellings recoiled in fright at the sight of flying arrows and plunged back into the flames, screaming, and weeping…How sad to see men and women become fuel for the flames…\(^{16}\) (Fig. 1)

The author goes on to describe how the incident affected the relatives and friends of those caught up in the fighting. Even if the author was creating an event purely for dramatic purposes, the fact that he wrote in detail about the suffering of commoners shows that he was a person not sheltered from war. Even if he was an aristocrat living temporarily in the area, it is evident that he was profoundly affected by the suffering endured by all people in the fighting and tried to convey those horrors of war to all who would read his account, including those in the capital.

The author not only reported on events, but he also analyzed Masakado. While it is clear at the end that the author believed that Masakado’s actions were evil, he does not

\(^{16}\) Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki*, 75-6.
portray Masakado as a simple villain and Taira no Sadamori and Fujiwara no Hidesato as perfect heroes. When reporting on the capture and subsequent rape of Sadamori’s wife and her hatred of Masakado, the author wonders, “How is it possible to place the blame for our troubles on any one person or feel bitterness toward Heaven? The simple fact of the matter is that ignominy suffered by a person in this life is caused by the actions of a number of people.”¹⁷ The author blames karma and essentially points out the interdependence of our actions. He holds true to this belief throughout the account. When Masakado is killed, the author reflects on the rebellion as a whole and concludes:

All in all, the fact that Masakado lost his honor and his life was really due to the schemes of… Okiyo, and… Harumochi… Masakado had built up a splendid record of service in the capital bureaucracy, and his reputation for loyalty and trustworthiness would have resounded through history. But he later made unruliness and violence his way of life…Enjoying doing evil, he became guilty of crimes…¹⁸ (Fig. 2)

According to the author, no one who took part in the conflict was entirely without guilt. This is important, because it means that the author was looking critically at the situation, demonstrating that a person in the provinces had a broader understanding of the rebellion than a person placed some distance away from the events.

The author also offers his impression on how courtiers in the capital were behaving, or should have been behaving, when Masakado took up arms and started seizing the Bandō region. After Masakado seized the old province of Sagami, the author reports that “Officials were greatly shocked by these events and the court was thrown into a panic…monks…in Nara were called upon to say prayers, and offerings were made to the eight great Shintō gods… other government officials performed ritual ablutions and

¹⁷ Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki*, 124.
¹⁸ Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki*, 132-3.
offered an endless succession of prayers.”19 It is interesting that the author writes of such intense panic breaking out in the capital, yet the author of Ōkagami refers to the event rather nonchalantly, “How could a scheme like that [sic] succeeded in the face of the Court’s authority?”20 Perhaps the author of Ōkagami, writing in hindsight, now sees the event as unimportant. However, if the author was using historical documents to research the rebellion, he would have encountered a vast number of records of the prayers that were commissioned by the Emperor, high ranking nobles, and other important persons of the time as offerings to the kami and buddhas to protect the country. The author of Ōkagami omits these accounts from the discussion of the event and only includes the Emperor’s anxieties. Perhaps by recording the anxieties, the author was trying to give a subtle nod to the event, however this is unlikely: he writes in such a way that readers are more concerned for the Emperor’s mental well-being than for the safety of the capital (Fig. 3).

Perhaps the omission in Ōkagami of the horrors experienced during the revolt is a manifestation the central government’s growing loss of control over the Kantō region: the ruling elite was simply not concerned about what happened to people in some far-off province. In his discussion of the reasons why Buddhist monks began arming themselves, Mikael Adolphson argues in his Teeth and Claws of the Buddha that the tenth century was a time when the capital was losing touch with the provinces, which in turn increased the violence in the country:

If lawless and violent monks were nothing new to Buddhism, even at the time of its introduction to Japan, then it follows that using the accounts above as ‘evidence’ of Buddhism’s decline, as many scholars have done, is pointless. What their studies suggest, in fact,

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19 Rabinovitch, trans., Shōmonki, 122.  
20 Helen Craig McCullough, trans., Ōkagami, 178.
is a general escalation of the difficulties the capital elites faced in controlling the provinces. These problems reached a critical juncture in the early part of the tenth century—described in a recent collaborative work as ‘something of a quiet revolution’—when the imperial court, facing challenges in the countryside, made important adjustments to bolster its supremacy. Regional Challenges to the central court are readily apparent in the records of Fujiwara no Sumitomos’s piracy in the Inland Sea and the Taira no Masakado uprising in the Kantō in the 930s.\textsuperscript{21}

Before coming to such a conclusion, however, it is important not to rely on two extremes to judge a complex period of tumult. After all, another text, \textit{Konjaku Monogatari}, offers a sort of middle ground between Ōkagami’s detachment and Shōmonki’s extreme concern over Masakado’s rebellion.

\textbf{Masakado in \textit{Konjaku Monogatari}}

Whether the author of \textit{Konjaku Monogatari} was in the capital, in a monastery, or in the provinces is unknown, but the compiler of \textit{Konjaku} combines Ōkagami’s official historical view of condemning Masakado\textsuperscript{22} with Shōmonki’s concern for human life, but adds a stronger Buddhist message of karmic retribution. \textit{Konjaku}’s concern for life may be due to influence from Shōmonki directly, since it was published before \textit{Konjaku} and happened to follow the general outline set forth by Shōmonki.\textsuperscript{23} Guilianna Stramigioli takes note of the special transitional nature of \textit{Konjaku}, “Although not possessing the epic quality of Masakadoki [Shōmonki]… \textit{Konjaku} represents the phase immediately preceding the style that was due to develop in \textit{Hōgen Monogatari} and \textit{Heiji Monogatari}.

\textsuperscript{21} Mikael Adolphson, \textit{The Teeth and Claws of the Buddha} (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 27.
\textsuperscript{22} Guilianna Stramigioli, “Preliminary Notes on Masakadoki and the Taira no Masakado Story,” \textit{Monumenta Nipponica} 28, no. 3 (1973): 263.
and reach its perfection in *Heike Monogatari.*"\(^{24}\) While Stramigioli is recognizing the transition from war tale to Buddhist-influenced war epic, the transitional nature of *Konjaku* can also be appreciated in terms of narrative complexity and the sentiments expressed concerning the vicissitudes of human life.

The concern for life in *Konjaku* is present, but the author does not go to the same lengths of detail as the *Shōmonki* author. For example, early in the story, *Konjaku* describes Masakado’s burning of towns and the subsequent loss of life, “He burned down many men’s houses and he took many men’s lives. Because in this way he only added evil deeds to his karma, most of the people of the neighboring lands gave no heed to the cultivation of their rice lands and fields… Thus the people of the provinces were in distress and lamented this state of affairs.”\(^{25}\) The brevity of the passage is due in part to the nature of *setsuwa:* they are supposed to be short tales to keep the listener’s attention. Although keeping its description short, the author clearly shows concern for the farmers in the provinces and the suffering they endured, while at the same time pointing to Masakado as the sole source of the fighting and pointing to his bad karma.

Unlike *Shōmonki, Konjaku* hardly investigates the complexities of the conflict. Masakado is the villain, and Taira no Sadamori is the hero. The author assures readers of Masakado’s evil behavior with a message from Masakado in the afterlife, saying “‘While I was living, I did evil and not one single good deed; it is impossible to bear alone the suffering for this karma I have made’.”\(^{26}\) By constantly referring to the evil of Masakado’s actions, the author is very clear about Masakado’s place as a villain in Japanese history.

\(^{24}\) Stramigioli, “Preliminary Notes on Masakadoki”, 266.
The author also points out the distress in the capital that the affair caused:

Everybody, beginning with the central government, was alarmed, and there was no end to the uproar within the Imperial Palace. The government thought it necessary to call on the power of the Buddha and obtain the help of the Gods, and many prayers…were offered on mountains and in temples everywhere, not to mention all the shrines.27

The concern in the capital is a key point in all three works of literature. If Shōmonki was written first, followed by Konjaku Monogatari and then Ōkagami, these works of literature show that the capital was losing interest in the provinces. In her reading and analysis of Shōmonki, Stramigioli asserts that “this rebellion alarmed and dismayed the power-holders in the central government, that is, the Court aristocracy, which was soon to reach the height of its splendor with Michinaga but already contained within itself the germs of future decadence.”28 It is uncanny that she should mention Michinaga, since the primary interest of the author of Ōkagami is depicting Michinaga’s glorious rise to power,29 considered by scholars of Japanese to be the apex of the courtly culture of Heian Japan.

As Eiko Ikegami notes in her scholarly study, The Taming of the Samurai, Masakado purportedly claimed that “‘This is a time when a man who can win war becomes master of the world.’ It was an eloquent announcement of the beginning of a new era in which bare force and excellence in military skills would change the structure of society.”30 Masakado’s revolt was evidence of the growing power of provincial samurai and the only way that the central government could stop him was to use other

27 Wilson, “the Art of the Bow and Arrow,” 193.
29 McCullough, trans., Ōkagami, 17.
samurai leaders. “The incorporation of the samurai into the public power network did not mean that the ancient state was able to keep the samurai in line—quite the opposite.”31 Although historians do not see a state dominated by warriors until centuries later, Masakado’s revolt does represent one of the earliest instances of potential samurai independence from central authority.

**Masakado in Jinnō Shōtōki**

*Jinnō Shōtōki* is a Muromachi period history chronicle written by the Kyōto noble Kitabatake Chikafusa. Since the piece was written well after the first formation of a samurai state, the author offers a different point of view. *Jinnō Shōtōki* looks a little deeper than Ōkagami or Konjaku Monogatari into discovering the reason behind Masakado’s rebellion. The authors of Ōkagami and Konjaku Monogatari simply felt that Masakado was evil, and that was reason enough. Chikafusa approaches the matter in a more detached, objective way, explaining that Masakado was the great-great-grandson of an Emperor and therefore a man of rank, and that he wanted to be promoted to a position in the imperial police. When he was denied the promotion, he became angry, returned to the provinces, and revolted.32 This passage not only explains why Masakado revolted, but it also approaches the topic from a political and social perspective. Since the Kyōto court operated on the strict *ritsuryō* hierarchy, it makes sense that Chikafusa developed his explanation based on knowledge of this body of laws.

There are other examples of the importance of rank and hierarchy in this passage. First, the rank and title is given of all the soldiers involved in taking Masakado down.33

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31 Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, 68.
Additionally, the author pays close attention to the relation of Emperor Suzaku to his predecessors, and the efficacy of the court.

Although the reign of Emperor Daigo had been most tranquil, somehow these disturbances occurred during the time of his successor. Since Emperor Suzaku was placid in temperament and court administration was in the hands of the regent Tadahira, the affairs of government were not likely to have been mishandled. Obviously the Masakado and Sumitomo rebellions must have been merely fortuitous disasters…Upon abdicating the throne in favor of this prince [his younger brother], Suzaku received the honorary title of retired emperor. He later took the tonsure.  

Another difference between *Jinnō Shōtōki* and court-commissioned literature like *Ōkagami* is that *Jinnō Shōtōki* does not go as far as other literature in claiming that Masakado and Fujiwara no Sumitomo were corroborating their respective uprisings. Chikafusa merely refers to Sumitomo as a “sympathizer of Masakado.” It is interesting how the rumor of Masakado and Sumitomo forming an alliance is perpetuated in some works of literature.

*Jinnō Shōtōki* does have some similarities with *Ōkagami*. Since Chikafusa is a Kyōto nobleman, he does not write about the violence that took place in the provinces, or how much suffering people endured. The only indication that he may have suspected more widespread violence is suggested by this statement: “Masakado first attacked his uncle, Kunika, the senior secretary of Hitachi Province, and drove him to suicide… With the country in turmoil, Fujiwara no Tadafun… was appointed generalissimo.” The only mention of killing is of specific court nobles or of the rebel himself. This is the only passage that gives the impression that it was exclusively the nobles who endured losses

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during the uprising. It is not surprising, given the author’s social status that his concern was for the court and the emperor and not their subjects.

Chikafusa also writes with particularly close attention to the role of warriors involved in putting down the rebellion. He writes that it was the local samurai Taira no Sadamori and Fujiwara no Hidesato who destroyed Masakado, not the general Fujiwara no Tadafun whom the court had dispatched on a punitive expedition. Chikafusa gives a surprising amount of credit to the locals, rather than the court’s appointee. This greatly contrasts with Ōkagami, which gives the credit for the suppression of the rebellion to the court, saying “How could a scheme like that succeed in the face of the court’s authority.” Chikafusa seems to acknowledge that enforcing order takes more than just having authority on the court’s side: the court needed force to back it up.

Chikafusa, unlike aristocratic, Kyōto-based authors of earlier literature, was writing under a particularly stressful political circumstance: he was held up in an eastern fortress in the middle of the Northern and Southern Courts civil war, writing his great chronicle as a means of expressing the legitimacy of the Southern Court’s lineage. As H. Paul Varley notes in his introduction to his translation of Jinnō Shōtōki, due to Chikafusa’s exposure to warriors, experience in dealing with Ashikaga Takauji, and his desire to rally these warriors to the Southern Court’s cause, he devoted a large portion of his work to explaining the role of warriors and their behavior in relation to the emperor.37 His major concern about warriors is their desire for reward:

To him [Chikafusa] the bushi [warriors] were a historically recent and socially inferior class that had no inherent right to expect reward or exceptional recognition from the emperor. On the contrary, the bushi should serve the throne loyally and unselfishly, with no anticipation at all of fame and reward. But the fact of the

matter, Chikafusa pointed out indignantly, is that bushi not only wanted rewards, their appetite for them was insatiable. Quoting what he called a popular saying of the day, he hypothesized that some warrior might even appear who, as a result of merit in a single battle, would demand: “My reward should be all of Japan; half the country will not be enough!”

In many ways, Masakado represented everything Chikafusa hated about bushi in his own time: Masakado expected rank beyond his “socially inferior” station; he demanded recognition from the nobles in Kyōto, and through his rebellion essentially demanded half of Japan. This is similar to Ashikaga Takauji, who demanded great rewards from the emperor and eventually (in Chikafusa’s eyes) overturned the emperor’s rule and demanded all of Japan for himself.

The early literature about Masakado’s uprising tells scholars as much about the world view of its authors as these writings tell us about Masakado himself. There was a large gap between the concerns of the courtiers in Kyōto and the concerns of those in the provinces. The complete disregard for the rebellion and its effects on the peasants in the Bandō region stands out in Ōkagami. By contrast, Shōmonki centers on the loss of human life in the province and the tragic fall of a powerful man whose roots were in the east. Konjaku Monogatari fills the gap between the two extremes, reminding readers of the loss of life to an evil eastern military man. The literary distance between Kyōto and the provinces was a reflection of the actual court’s growing preoccupation with itself, and its lack of concern for the events occurring in the provinces would eventually lead to the emergence of a state governed by samurai.
CHAPTER 2

**BUNTORI: TROPHIES OF HONOR OR TOKENS OF SHAME?**

In samurai culture, the taking and parading of severed enemy heads is an important aspect of warfare. *Buntori*, the collecting of enemy heads, is an ambiguous act. It could contribute to the glory of the samurai who took those heads. However, to the defeated, *buntori* put their honor at stake, if it did not mean the utmost disgrace and shame. After Taira Masakado was killed, his head was severed, taken to Kyōto, and paraded in the streets. In literature about Masakado, the significance of this event greatly depended on the literary source and the author’s point of view. The parading of Masakado’s head was both an act of sacralization and desecration, and in effect ensured that he would live on throughout history in glory or in infamy.

**Origins and Purpose of Buntori**

The precise origin of head gathering as a custom is apparently unknown. Eiko Ikegami, author of *The Taming of the Samurai*, writes that this tradition may have come from the samurai’s hunting origins, where dead animals were offered to mountain gods or war gods. Subsequently, human heads became significant as representations of the warrior’s honor. By claiming the heads of the men they had killed, samurai could earn honor and prestige, prove that they were effective warriors, and gain rank in the *ritsuryō* system. Karl Friday writes in *The First Samurai* that by the seventh century head gathering was a common practice used for measuring battlefield prowess and that points for promotion would be awarded based on the number of heads. This practice introduces an interesting contrast to the court-centered world of Kyōto, where pollution

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was avoided and death considered a major impurity. The fear of impurity from death was so great that from 810 to 1156 there were no executions in the capital.\textsuperscript{40} Ikegami explains the process that all soldiers must undergo before entering the capital:

There was a consequent tendency, in the Heian period, to reserve certain military posts as hereditary positions for members of particular houses of the middle and lower aristocracy. Indeed, when these generals returned from military expeditions, they could not enter the capital city of Kyoto without first undergoing ritual purification.\textsuperscript{41}

Perhaps this fear of pollution is what led to the parade of Masakado’s head not being included in some court-centered literature. Since anyone even near death was considered taboo, there may have been still greater anxiety about discussing the pollution of death, not to mention committing these thoughts to paper for posterity.

Whether the act of decapitation was an act of desecration or sacralization greatly depended on the warrior and the particular action that had brought his head down. For early samurai, the only way to get an impression of whether a person was honored or dishonored is to look for clues in literature. Some of the most startling examples come from \textit{The Tale of the Heike} (\textit{Heike Monogatari}). For example, Kanehira urges Lord Kiso to flee to the Awazu pine grove and kill himself there, since Kiso is tired and unable to put up a glorious last fight. However, the planned glorious death could not be realized because the situation was hopeless militarily. Before he could commit ritual suicide, Kiso was killed as he was galloping into the swamp, where his head could easily be taken by an enemy warrior.\textsuperscript{42} This may be considered a dishonorable death because Kiso was neither able to kill himself as planned nor did he die fighting—due to the soggy

\textsuperscript{40} Ikegami, \textit{The Taming of the Samurai}, 57.
\textsuperscript{41} Ikegami, \textit{The Taming of the Samurai}, 57.
condition of the battleground. At the same time, the dramatic suicide by Kiso’s retainer Kanehira, who leapt from his horse with his sword in his mouth, may have erased his lord’s less-than glorious death by his heroic devotion. An honorable death occurs in the famous passage about Atsumori in Heike Monogatari. Atsumori faces his opponent, Kumagai no Naozane, and even though he eventually is decapitated, he preserves his honor by not fleeing and by in fact urging his enemy to take his head rather than allowing someone of lesser rank to do so: “Then it is unnecessary to give you my name. I am a desirable opponent for you. Ask about me after you take my head. Someone will recognize me, even if I don’t tell you… just take my head and be quick about it.”

The Tale of the Heike has numerous references to Masakado. It is clear that the author believed in the custom of buntori as an exchange of honor. It was not necessarily dishonorable to have one’s head taken, so long as one dies gloriously. Even villainous men who committed unspeakable acts of violence could maintain their honor through a spectacular death. The severed head of an honored warrior would become a sort of currency for the victor. A valuable (honorable) head is given to a warrior’s commander, and in exchange, the warrior is rewarded with rank and honors equivalent to the value of the head. In Heike, the author recounts Masakado’s story to prove a point about rewarding warriors for taking heads and doing battle:

Once in the past, the Taira Commander Sadamori and Tawara Tôda Hidesato went to the eastern provinces with orders to hunt down Masakado, but found it difficult to destroy him. A counsel of senior nobles dispatches another punitive force under Fujiwara no Tadafun, with Kiyowara no Shigefuji as Junior Deputy Commander… Sadamori and Hidesato meanwhile started towards the capital with the head of Masakado, whom they had finally managed to kill… When rewards were designated for Sadamori and Hidesato, the matter of rewards for Tadafun and Shigefuji arose in the senior nobles council. ‘Tadafun and Shigefuji

McCullough, trans., The Tale of the Heike, 317.
marched eastward…but Masakado was killed before they arrived. They
are certainly entitled to rewards,’ But the Regent …decided against it.44

The passage continues, explaining that rewards ultimately should be given to all valiant
warriors, not just the ones who take a commander’s head. But this part of the passage
illustrates the honor granted to the men primarily responsible for taking Masakado’s
head. The defeat of Masakado was thus used generations later by relatives of Sadamori,
namely, Taira Munemori, in a letter to the Emperor: “During all generations since the
defeat of Sōma Kojirō Masakado at the hands of our ancestor, the Taira Commander
Sadamori, we have guarded the sacred fortunes of the imperial house by maintaining
peace in the eight eastern provinces and punishing rebels against the throne.”45 Not only
was there honor for the man who defeated his enemy, but if the enemy was someone as
great as Masakado, there was honor for the victor’s descendants.

In order to understand how various authors felt about Masakado’s death, his
behavior in his last battle must be examined. If he died fighting valiantly, then he died an
honorable death. If he died fleeing or fighting poorly, his death was dishonorable, and the
value of taking his head would be diminished. To determine if Masakado was honored or
dishonored, a critical examination of literary works, beginning with Ōkagami, is
necessary.

**Buntori in Ōkagami**

Ōkagami briefly notes that Masakado’s rebellion was defeated, but fails to
mention the head parade. It also takes note of how the revolt greatly upset Emperor
Suzaku, a political circumstance that accounts for the author’s reluctance to bring up

Masakado in great detail. Helen Craig McCullough, who translated the text, notes that the entry on Suzaku is shorter than any other emperor entry even though there were two major revolts during his reign, and that these revolts were left out of the entry because they did not contribute to the story of the Fujiwara rise to power. Ōkagami seems centered on court life rather than matters occurring outside the palace. Perhaps this introvert attitude demonstrates the fear of pollution being carried over into literature. Once the threat to the court’s authority was eliminated the nobles’ attentions went elsewhere, and the head parade was something left for warrior ritual that did not concern the aristocrats and may have repelled them to the point of silencing such news.

**Buntori in Shōmonki**

Shōmonki is not only a much longer work than Ōkagami but it is also devoted entirely to Masakado; it is therefore only natural that his death is described in more detail. First, Masakado’s last battle sets the stage. Shōmonki notes that “The New Emperor put on his helmet and armor, galloped his charger off to the front, and joined in the fighting himself...never in this world had a general actually joined in battle and died at the front like Masakado.” In samurai culture, being at the front of a cavalry charge and killing the enemy rider at the front of a charge are very prestigious kills, according to Ikegami: “Killing a famous warrior or the first rider in a charge was considered an honorable feat.” Furthermore, Ikegami describes the ritualistic process of head inspection: “After the battle, the victorious commander usually examined the severed heads and listed all the notable individual performances of warriors, including the first rider in the charge and

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46 McCullough, trans., Ōkagami, 221.
48 Rabinovitch, trans., Shōmonki, 131.
49 Ikegami, The Taming of the Samurai, 98.
those who died an honorable death on the battlefield.”\(^{50}\) Additionally, Paul Varley notes in *Warriors of Japan* that warriors in these tales desired to earn fame through being the first in battle: “Fighting mainly as an individual seeking reward for his battlefield successes, the warrior had to be aggressive or find himself without reward and possibly seen as a coward… Probably the most conspicuous way in which a warriors display their aggressiveness in the war tales is in their constant competition to be “first in battle.”\(^{51}\)

Taking the enemy’s head would accrue a samurai much honor-- provided it was that of a valiant fighter. Masakado fit the bill for he clearly distinguished himself by ferociously fighting to the death in battle, “unlike earlier commanders, Masakado did not try to hide, flee, or commit suicide; never before had a Japanese general gone down fighting in his last battle.”\(^{52}\) Having been the ferocious leader of an unprecedented rebellion, Masakado’s head would have been a great token of honor and merit to any samurai who could claim it. Yet the author cannot name the warrior whose arrow killed Masakado; rather “the punishment of heaven was clearly visited upon him…Struck by a stray arrow from one of the gods, Masakado perished alone.”\(^{53}\) By attributing Hidesato and Sadamori’s victory to divine intervention, the author of *Shōmonki* strips any warrior of credit for claiming Masakado’s head.

Despite the tremendous value attributed to Masakado’s head, *Shōmonki*’s author does not identify who cut it off. *Shōmonki* only says that Fujiwara Hidesato ordered a certificate through the Shimotsuke government to be sent along with the head, implying

\(^{50}\) Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, 99.
\(^{51}\) Paul Varley, *Warriors of Japan As Portrayed in the War Tales* (Honolulu: University of Hawaiʻi Press, 1994), 94.
\(^{53}\) Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki*, 131.
that he took credit for killing Masakado. The head was then sent to the capital. Readers are not given any details about the head parade. In lieu of this, readers are given Masakado splendid explanations of his sufferings in hell: Masakado is channeled by an oracle, and laments the suffering he is enduring. He explains that his body lay in a forest of sword-leaf trees, and his liver was roasted, and that “While I was on earth, I accomplished nothing good, and as retribution for this karma, I have fallen into one of the evil paths of reincarnation.” While here the author seemed more concerned with the consequences of Masakado’s actions upon his rebirth in hell, he also gives a message about how Masakado’s honor should be viewed by the living:

With regard to the above, it is said that the intrepidity shown by Masakado during his lifetime did not bring him honor after his death and the retribution for his high-handedness was intense suffering after death. Masakado had lifelong foes, and he fought them tooth and nail. But in the end the strong were victorious and the weak were defeated…If a person incurs shame in this life, there can be no honor after death.

It should be noted that there is some scholarly debate as to whether this passage was part of the original Shōmonki text, or added later by someone copying and editing the tale. If the person who wrote this passage is the same as the author of the rest of the tale, he appears to recant his earlier assertions of Masakado’s bravery and honor he accrued in battle, and resigning Masakado to a dishonorable, shameful death. Why does the author seem to change his view of Masakado in the last few pages? Maybe he self-edited his views to make his text be more acceptable to nobles in Kyōto. The nobility probably did not want to read about Masakado as a tragic hero. Or, perhaps when the manuscript was

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54 Rabinovitch, trans., Shōmonki, 132.
55 Rabinovitch, trans., Shōmonki, 138.
56 Rabinovitch, trans., Shōmonki, 140.
57 Rabinovitch, trans., Shōmonki, 139.
passed around in Kyōto as part of the “borrow-and-copy” custom of Heian “publication” and a noble amended his copy of the text to include this passage, this noble’s copy became the version that survived through history.

*Buntori in Konjaku Monogatari*

*Konjaku Monogatari* similarly takes account of the head being cut off and sent to Kyōto, but does not go into any details about the head parade. Unlike *Shōmonki*, it attributes Masakado’s death to an arrow from Sadamori, who orders another warrior physically to remove the head. 58 *Konjaku* is also concerned with the Buddhist ethics, claiming that Masakado did not do one good deed in his life, and bore his impossible karmic suffering alone. 59 However, this is not to say that there is no message about Masakado’s honor. Ikegami writes that, although having one’s head removed could be a form of dishonor, “the dishonor of having one’s head cut off should not be overly generalized. Being beheaded after brave fighting on the battlefield could still be considered an honorable death.” 60 Although more typical of samurai of later ages, Masakado’s concern for preserving honor was already present. *Shōmonki* and *Konjaku Monogatari* both assert that Masakado lost his honor, but each author portrays this loss very differently, which changes the meaning of the beheading.

*Shōmonki* comments numerous times on Masakado’s honor, saying “All in all, the fact that Masakado lost his honor and his life was really due to the schemes… of Prince Okiyo…and Harumochi. How sad to think of Masakado’s pathetic fall from grace and lamentable end!” 61 Concerning the honorable and loyal deeds he performed before the

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60 Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, 101.
61 Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, 132.
revolt, *Shōmonki* represents Masakado’s life and death as if it were part of a
Shakespearian tragedy. When combined with the passages describing his valiant fight to
the death, it is difficult to believe that the author felt Masakado was dishonored by being
beheaded, especially when the text fails to include a scene of the head parade. The author
seems to be saying that Masakado was tricked by Okiyo and Harumochi and is tragically
suffering in hell because of their schemes. It is not the beheading that dishonors
Masakado, but rather his proper conduct evolving into unfilial and rebellious behavior.

*Konjaku Monogatari* differs from *Shōmonki* by asserting Masakado’s evil nature
from the beginning. More importantly, it describes Masakado’s last battle differently.
Although Masakado still leads the battle, he does not fight as valiantly, and even retreats:
“The New Emperor wanted to stand up to them and fight, but he retreated because his
warriors were far inferior in number… the New Emperor was lying in hiding north of
Sashima thinking to deceive his enemies.”\(^{62}\) Not only was Masakado retreating like a
coward, but he was hiding as well. This was not honorable war conduct for a samurai
general. Since the author wrote of Masakado as being without honor from the first
paragraph, it is unlikely that he meant to show Masakado’s performance in battle as
preserving honor despite the decapitation.

**Buntori in *Jinnō Shōtōki***

Chikafusa’s *Jinnō Shōtōki* differs from the court history of *Ōkagami* by briefly
explaining Masakado’s rebellion and the severing of his head. The actual description of
the *buntori* is brief: “when Taira no Sadamori (Kunika’s son) and Fujiwara no Hidesato

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and others joined forces, destroyed Masakado, and sent his head to the court, Tadafun and his commanders suspended their campaign and returned to Kyoto.”

Although the description of the buntori is much shorter than descriptions found in other works of literature, it is interesting that this brief mention of the severed head was made in a work written by a court noble. Since Jinnō Shōtōki was written during the period of the northern and southern courts, the growing dominance of the samurai was already part of the court’s collective memory, particularly the establishment of the first shōgunate in the Kamakura period. Naturally, this experience would have invariably made the nobles in Kyōto familiar with samurai customs.

Ikegami explains the impact of Kamakura Buddhism in particular, and how it eventually succeeded in overriding Shinto-based fears of impurity caused by death,

…unlike native Shinto, Japanese Buddhism generally did not consider death itself a source of impurity (kegare). A classic work of Yanagida Kunio, a pioneer Japanese folklorist, provides insight on this issue; Yanagida remarked that “avoiding death-impurity taboos was a serious constraint on the daily life of the Japanese people…Buddhism, in particular its popular versions, simply won out in the competition [with Shinto] because of this critical characteristic namely, not avoiding the matter of death.”

Buddhism, therefore, led to a change in beliefs about death and defilement, encouraging people of all classes not to fear impurity caused by death.

**Buntori in Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki**

The Edo-period picture book Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki presents woodblock images depicting the numerous battles during Masakado’s rebellion; some of the most interesting images come towards the end of the tale. First, there is an image of Masakado

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64 Ikegami, *The Taming of the Samurai*, 107.
riding his horse and being shot by an arrow through the head (Fig. 4). Masakado occupies an entire page by himself, making him the focus of the scene. Since Masakado is depicted alone, he may be at the front of the last charge, which would indicate an honorable and valiant way to fight. This seems likely, since previous pages depict him mounted on his horse fighting alongside his troops, showing that he was a courageous warrior on the battlefield (Figs. 5, 6). This being the case, the *ehon* seems to be following the *Shōmonki* version in terms of Masakado’s courage. Masakado is not shown fleeing from battle, as *Konjaku Monogatari* would have it.

After Masakado’s death, his relatives and allies are captured and decapitated, but Masakado’s body or head is not yet depicted among the dead (Fig. 7). The warriors being put to death, Masahira and Masatame, certainly do not look happy, but they are not in fear or displaying cowardice. Unlike Masakado, who is decapitated on his horse while fighting, Masatame is being put to death on foot while attempting to take another soldier’s head, and Masahira is being put to death inside his residence, rather than by dying in battle. One must wonder if these manners of death would have been honorable. On the one hand, evidence from earlier in the tale shows readers that these men were powerful warriors who fought alongside their troops to victory (Fig. 8). On the other hand, did being killed in a non-battle situation make their deaths inglorious? And did this in turn decrease the value and honor of taking their heads? Or was the manner of death dishonorable for Masahira and Masatame, but the capture of the heads prestigious for the men who captured them so easily? This question leads one to hypothesize that the dishonor goes to the warriors for allowing themselves to be caught without a struggle.
There are numerous examples of honorable warrior behavior throughout *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*. Many nameless warriors stare down certain death, be it by running into a charging army, or by facing hundreds of arrows (Fig. 9). This soldier, Tadayo, composed his death poem and then propped himself up on his sword so that his body would not fall over after being pierced repeatedly with arrows. Soldiers are displayed as dying honorably in battle, and if their *buntori* were depicted, their heads would be valuable, and give the victor honor and prestige. Other warriors, such as Masatake, commit ritual suicide (*seppuku*) to preserve their honor (Fig. 9). Masakado himself serves on the front lines alongside his men, facing the same dangers (Fig. 10). The *ehon* is loaded with plenty of examples of warrior honor and conduct.

Later on in the tale, all of Masakado’s allies’ heads are inspected by Taira no Sadamori and Fujiwara no Hidesato (Fig. 11). The heads appear to have been cleaned and their hair combed, a common practice accompanying head inspection.  

Both Sadamori and Hidesato appear to be dressed in full armor out of respect for the ritual. It appears that a retainer is writing notes about the heads, perhaps with the intent of sending them to the capital. With a large collection of heads, there is no doubt that Sadamori and Hidesato would have been rewarded with a promotion. The next *ehon* page shows the head of Masakado himself, his head cleaned, his hair combed, displayed on a platform with an illegible sign next to him, probably identifying the man and his wicked deeds (Fig. 11). Several people are viewing the head: a peasant, a priest, and two samurai. One samurai looks upset and is gesturing with his hand toward the head, showing how hated the man was. Afterwards, Sadamori and the other warriors who fought Masakado are shown

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receiving commendations from the emperor (Fig. 12). They are dressed in full armor once more, and are bowing in a gesture of piety to their lord. In front of the emperor are four empty boxes that may have held the heads of Masakado’s allies. Their heads are not on display on the previous page, and the crates are small enough to hold a head and appear to have a handle on them for easy carrying.

*Tokugawa Bakufu Keiji Zufu* is a pictorial account of punishments used in the Tokugawa period. The illustrations in this work are valuable in analyzing *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*, because inevitably, the illustrator used imagery found in the Edo period rather than the Heian period in his images of Masakado’s head display. For example, on the page explaining the display of heads of criminals, the scaffolding, called a *gokumon* (jailhouse gate) looks the same as the scaffolding used in *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki* (Fig. 13). Either the scaffolding did not change from 940 to 1603, or the author used visual culture from his own time. Given that many of the Heian period works describe heads being displayed from trees, posts, or walls, it is likely that the latter is the case.

Daniel Botsman notes in his study of *Punishment and Power and the Making of Modern Japan* that the *gokumon* did exist in medieval Japan, and while Heian decapitated head displays were literally placed above the gate to the jailhouse, by the time of the Edo-period the head was displayed on the *gokumon* scaffolding in a public execution ground. In the *gokumon* images in *Tokugawa Bakufu Keiji Zufu* and in *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*, the scaffolding displaying the heads also has large signs next to it, indicating that these heads were displayed in a place where people could gather, read the sign, and

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see the gruesome results of the government’s sense of justice. In the Edo-period, these signs were a large part of how the Shōgunate demonstrated its authority:

Textbook accounts of Tokugawa society rarely fail to include the discussion of “tall signs” (kōsatsu) that the Bakufu erected in strategic locations all over the country to communicate basic laws and regulations. In an important sense, punishments...formed an extension of this system of signs for although executions themselves were not generally conducted in front of large crowds, the results...were left on display for all to see. Next to these bodies-as-signs were conventional signposts that used the written word to make known the identity of the executed person, the offense committed, and the punishment that had been carried out. 67

Clearly, in *Tokugawa Bakufu Keiji Zufu* and *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*, a certain amount of Heian-period and Edo-period cultural mixing is present, and possibly deliberate. It may be that the author or illustrator of *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki* is trying to disguise a political message under the guise of a history book. Although book publishing flourished in Edo-period Japan, authors, illustrators, and publishers had to work under strict censorship. Coverage of current events was not allowed, so if an author wanted to publish a criticism, they often had to disguise the people they wanted to criticize as characters from ancient times, leaving clues, like Edo-era hairstyles or clothes in illustrations, to hint at the real message at work. 68 In this case, perhaps there is a political message in the sign-ridden display of Masakado’s head.

Posting the head of an enemy in public view served several functions. First, the most obvious motive is to remind others of the actions the individual committed to make him an enemy of the state. The second reason could be to appease the dead. The primary function of collecting heads was to assess a warrior’s battle performance, as Ikegami argues, for “Only by recognition of his master could the samurai secure and increase his

landed wealth.” Although “Nothing was more certain to win such recognition than the evidence of the enemies’ head, proving the samurai’s competence in combat,” there were many rituals prescribing how these heads should be treated. After the heads were collected, they were cleaned, any cuts or wounds glued back together with paste, faces powdered white, teeth blackened, lipstick applied, and hair combed, usually done by samurai wives and daughters. Catharine Blomberg also notes in her article “‘A Strange White Smile’: A Survey of Tooth Blackening and Other Dental Practices in Japan” that tooth blackening also served another purpose: to increase the value of the head. In the Heian-period, warriors who dealt with nobles in Kyōto adopted the aristocratic practice of tooth blackening and spread it to their warrior brethren in the provinces. Eventually, by the Kamakura period, the practice of tooth blackening was so prominent among warriors that warriors who did not blacken their teeth were ridiculed, and heads captured in battle were of little value unless the teeth were blackened. Then, the heads of high-ranking warriors were put on trays and inspected by an officer. The warrior dressed in full battle armor and weaponry to respect the dead, and after their inspection was complete, returned the heads or put them on display. In 1598, a woman recorded her experience in dealing with blackening the teeth of severed heads:

And then, our soldiers would bring to us in the turret the heads they had taken, and make us label them for reference. They would often ask us to blacken the teeth with powder, the reason being, you see, that in old days ‘tooth-powder heads’ were those of men of rank, and therefore more prized, so the soldier would bring you

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69 Ikegami, The Taming of the Samurai, 102.
70 Ikegami, The Taming of the Samurai, 102. And Friday, Samurai, Warfare and the State, 155.
72 Friday, Samurai, Warfare and the State, 155.
a plain head and ask you to do him the good turn of giving the teeth a rub of powder.\textsuperscript{73}

By thus honoring the fallen enemy in various ways, the warrior who had taken the enemy’s head also increased his honor. With such elaborate procedures and importance placed on the inspection and display of heads, why were such scenes of ritual not described in more detail in late Heian works of literature like \textit{Shōmonki}, \textit{Ōkagami}, and \textit{Konjaku Monogatari}, when the practice was illustrated in such detail in \textit{Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki}?

\textbf{Why is Buntori Absent in Court Literature?}

Perhaps Ikegami gives the most compelling reason for earlier literature lacking the detailed \textit{buntori} element in her arguments about the development of samurai honor and loyalty. In medieval combat, samurai sought to distinguish themselves and earn reward and honor. This is why depictions of battle in \textit{The Tale of the Heike} have warriors announcing their names, and carry colorful weapons and armor.\textsuperscript{74} Not surprisingly, the aristocratic Atsumori is distinguished by a description of his fancy armor, bronze sword, and a flute graced with the name “little branch.”\textsuperscript{75} Part of this medieval warrior concern for reward, honor and recognition explains why \textit{The Tale of the Heike} may have a “Parade of Heads” section.\textsuperscript{76} One might argue that this sense of individual honor in battle was not quite developed in earlier samurai like Masakado or the literature about men like him. In \textit{Shōmonki}, there is a scene where Masakado charges and shouts his name, but this is rather exceptional: “Whipping his horse and shouting out his name, Masakado gave

\textsuperscript{73} Blomberg, “‘A Strange White Smile,’” 246.
\textsuperscript{74} Ikegami, \textit{The Taming of the Samurai}, 98.
\textsuperscript{75} McCullough, trans., \textit{The Tale of the Heike}, 317.
\textsuperscript{76} McCullough, trans., \textit{The Tale of the Heike}, 325.
chase [to Yoshikane]…” For most of the literature examined in this thesis, the name-announcing ritual and armor description are rare or non-existent. When compared to the dozens of instances of nanori (name-shouting) in the Tale of the Heike, this one exclamation in Shōmonki looks pathetically small. Samurai culture was just barely beginning to develop a warrior code, as Masakado was one of the first to claim that the right to rule belongs to those who fight. If this individual honor was not yet a prominent characteristic of samurai in 940, then it would be logical for a parade of heads not to be depicted with the same importance as in The Tale of the Heike. In fact, in Heike, Mamatarō Tadatsuna invokes Masakado in his nanori by yelling “Let all those in the distance hear me! Let those close at hand see me with their own eyes! I am Mamatarō Tadatsuna, son of Ashikaga no Tarō Toshitsuna and descendant in the tenth generation of Tawara no Tōda Hidesato who won rewards by destroying the traitor Masakado.”

Supporting the argument that warrior culture was not as codified as it was in later centuries, and therefore not recorded in Heian literature is the fact that buntori does occupy a large amount of space in Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki. The ehon shows that a sense of honor and merit was highly developed by the Edo period and that this illustrated book is taking a characteristic of medieval and pre-modern samurai culture and superimposing it on a famous early samurai battle. The illustrator of Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki imposes Edo-characteristics on history when he places emphasis on the sword in samurai weaponry in its images: although swordsmanship was a valued warrior trait since early times, the “way of the sword” is an Edo-period phenomenon. In Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki, the most prominent weapon is the sword rather than the bow. The

77 Rabinovitch, trans., Shōmonki, 82.
78 Ikegami, The Taming of the Samurai, 64.
79 McCullough, trans., The Tale of the Heike, 156.
mounted warriors of the Heian period were more likely to place value on horsecback archery.\textsuperscript{80} It is not impossible that the illustrator could impose Edo-period \textit{buntori} practices over Heian-period \textit{buntori} practices. While the collecting of the heads was an important means of gathering merit for participation in battle from very early in Japanese history, it may not have held quite the same level of importance as it did for the samurai honor culture of the Kamakura, Muromachi, and Edo periods.

\textit{Buntori} was such an important warrior practice that even after the end of the Edo-period and the beginning of the Meiji Era, when the samurai class was supposed to be abolished, the main concern of the Japanese people was what happened to Saigō Takamori’s head during his rebellion against the new Meiji government. Masakado may be the “First Samurai” but Saigō was the “Last Samurai” and it seems appropriate that Saigō’s head should have its own mythos, just as Masakado. Although there are eyewitness accounts of the body and head being put back together and being laid to rest, Japanese artists desired a more “fitting” end. Artists and author’s rendered their own fantastic versions of Saigō’s head being presented to the Meiji Army’s generals.\textsuperscript{81} Unlike the legends of Masakado’s head, which take the supernatural turns as stated in my introduction, the myths behind Saigō’s head are the epitome of a warrior-codified honor culture, which demonstrates how powerful the custom of \textit{buntori} had become.

As far as literature is concerned, the portrayal of Masakado’s defeat and head severing is of limited concern to writers of the late Heian-period. These authors seemed to be more concerned with the end of the rebellion itself than with dishonoring or sacralizing the rebel leader. There may have been less concern with the treatment of the

\textsuperscript{80} Wilson, “The Art of the Bow and Arrow,” 187.
\textsuperscript{81} Mark Ravina, \textit{The Last Samurai: The Life and Battles of Saigō Takamori} (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2004), 212.
head because warfare with honor was not yet as developed as in later centuries. Likewise, authors of later eras were more likely to apply the familiar samurai customs of their time period to their portrayal of Masakado. Through literature, it is difficult to gather exactly how people at large felt about the *buntori* custom. Scholars can examine only what the author writes or what the illustrator draws, and from there develop a hypothesis on the author’s point of view and how it may relate to values of the author’s time period. To Heian writers, Masakado for the most part was disgraced more by his actions in life than the treatment of his head, while for an Edo writer, the treatment of the head was a means of both honoring the deceased while praising the victory of the champion, the latter combination being a feat in itself.
CHAPTER 3
NEW EMPEROR AND PIRATE KING

Taira no Masakado was one of the earliest men to challenge the central government’s authority over Japan. Although he was unsuccessful, he remains an important figure in Japan’s history. However, Masakado certainly was not the only rebel ever to expose the central government problems. His rebel peers were many, and Fujiwara no Sumitomo is the most interesting rebel to compare with Masakado due to the simultaneity of their uprisings and their joint appearances in literature. Several works mention Masakado and Sumitomo together, either as allies or as dual threats to the court’s authority. Many texts treat Sumitomo on a par with Masakado.

**Sumitomo in Ōkagami**

First, a brief explanation of the Pirate King’s life is in order. Fujiwara no Sumitomo (d. 941) was a pirate rebel and Masakado’s contemporary. While Masakado’s insurrection occurred in the east, Sumitomo wreaked havoc on the Inland Sea as a pirate lord. Sumitomo’s story begins in Iyo, a province on Shikoku, where he was born and eventually became a provincial secretary (Fig.14). Apparently he grew dissatisfied with this position and began forming alliances with local sailors. Not only that, he began to engage in plundering and killing. At first the government decided to deal with Sumitomo by putting him in charge of capturing the pirates he was commanding and by offering amnesty to any pirates who surrendered. The amnesty worked at least for a while.

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82 Friday, *The First Samurai*, 111-112.
83 Friday, *The First Samurai*, 112.
However, Sumitomo eventually began to recruit more pirates and resume his buccaneering. Karl Friday writes in *The First Samurai* that Sumitomo actually chose to challenge the court, unlike Masakado, who accidentally stumbled into rebellion.\textsuperscript{84} Not only did Sumitomo continue to gather his forces and pirates at sea, but he had contacts in the capital that he put in charge of setting fires to houses in Kyōto (Fig.15). Since Masakado’s uprising and Sumitomo’s piracy occurred so closely together in time, rumors began to circulate that the two men were conspirators. In *Ōkagami*, there is an entry that corroborates this idea:

…Sumitomo [was] the man who conspired with Masakado to perpetrate wicked deeds. “I’m going to kill the Emperor,” Masakado announced. “I’m going to be the Regent,” Sumitomo chimed in. And they pledged to work together so that one of them could run the government as he pleased while the other enjoyed an Emperor’s life.\textsuperscript{85}

Unlike Masakado’s rebellion, which took place in the far off wild Kantō region, Sumitomo’s acts of violence in the Inland Sea were a direct threat to the aristocracy whose estates were located in western Honshū.\textsuperscript{86} Therefore the aristocrats had an immediate, vested interest in subduing Sumitomo as soon as possible. Although they tried to appease Sumitomo with rank and privilege,\textsuperscript{87} his violence could not be controlled by the court’s methods. Like Masakado, Sumitomo could only be stopped by a court order to provincial warriors to end his excesses: “the revolt of Masakado marked the concrete realization of the system based on the provincial headquarters…the renewed emphasis on

\textsuperscript{84} Friday, *The First Samurai*, 112.
\textsuperscript{85} McCullough, trans., *Ōkagami*, 178.
\textsuperscript{86} Farris, *Heavenly Warriors*, 157.
\textsuperscript{87} Friday, *The First Samurai*, 143-4
the provincial headquarters as the heart of the military system…is also apparent in the rebellion of Sumitomo.”

William Wayne Farris makes this point about the difference in significance between Masakado and Sumitomo in *Heavenly Warriors*: “In contrast, the insurrection of Sumitomo lacked even revolutionary potential.” Although the violence committed by Sumitomo was recorded for posterity in *Sumitomo Tsuitōki* in *Fusō Ryakki*, Sumitomo’s rebellion lacked any sort of plan for a new government or for radical political change. Essentially, he was just a criminal who enjoyed piracy and was not afraid of punishment from the capital.

Early Japanese literature often portrays Sumitomo and Masakado together. In *Ōkagami*, the two men were thought to be allies, while in other works the two are presented in parallel fashion, suggesting that the author wanted to link the two men together in the readers’ minds. *Konjaku Monogatari* is an excellent example of the parallel treatment of Masakado and Sumitomo.

**Sumitomo in *Konjaku Monogatari***

*Konjaku Monogatari* contains a passage about Sumitomo, which occurs just after the passage about Masakado. Unlike *Ōkagami*, *Konjaku Monogatari* does not assert an alliance between the two rebels. However, the fact that the Sumitomo passage immediately comes after the Masakado passage shows that the compiler of the collection wanted to keep these two characters together. The other warrior tales presented in *Konjaku* do not necessarily have any particular order, which allows these particular two

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stories, presented next to one another, to establish a link in the readers’ minds. Like Masakado, Sumitomo is said to have made “violence his vocation”:

Sumitomo collected many fierce warriors in Iyo and organized them into a war-band. Equipped with bows and arrows, they were forever going out to sea in boats, killing men and seizing the cargoes of ships going up toward the capital from the western provinces—in fact, they made this their vocation.⁹⁰

Sumitomo’s story also emphasizes the importance of the bow and arrow, just like the passage about Masakado. When Masakado’s strength fails and his enemies seize the opportunity to kill him, it is said that he bears “the Punishment of Heaven.”⁹¹ The same is true of Sumitomo upon his death, “A battle ensued, but it is impossible to prevail against the government, and since he had incurred the Punishment of Heaven Sumitomo was finally struck down.”⁹² The Punishment of Heaven is common to Masakado and Sumitomo for two reasons. First, Konjaku Monogatari as a whole tends to place emphasis on karmic or faith-based rewards and punishment; after all, evil doers receiving retribution for their crimes are an ongoing theme of the collection. Second, the compiler wants to create a link between the two rebels by drawing parallels relating to their demise. This parallelism is continued in the taking and displaying of their heads.

According to Konjaku Monogatari, Masakado and Sumitomo were both beheaded. Masakado’s head was cut off and sent to the capital with a letter to the officials explaining that Masakado is dead.⁹³ The explanation of Sumitomo’s beheading is lengthier. The head was not only sent to the capital, but put on display for commoners and nobles alike to gawk at. What is most interesting is that a skilled painter was hired to

⁹² Wilson, “The Art of the Bow and Arrow,” 196.
illustrate the scene and give the image to Emperor Suzaku since actual heads could not be brought into the palace.\(^9^4\)

In my previous chapter, I have explained in some detail the process and meaning of *buntori*, or the taking of heads, which was a complicated cultural practice that contained ambivalent statements about honor and dishonor in these stories. Masakado and Sumitomo are both dishonored by the taking of their heads, but also honored through the public display of their heads. Moreover, in Sumitomo’s case, the official rendering of the event for the imperial gaze is accomplished by substituting the actual head with a painting of it. Whether the actual head was perceived as more frightening than the painting will probably remain speculation.

Masakado’s head was not painted for imperial gaze. This different treatment suggests that Sumitomo’s head was somehow “special” or was very important for Suzaku to have such an unusual memento crafted. According to *Ōkagami*, Suzaku was extremely worried about the violent events occurring outside the capital. Since Sumitomo was killed about a year after Masakado, perhaps to the Emperor this painting represented the end to the final chapter of the Jōhei (931-938) and Tengyō (938-947) disturbances.

Another reason for Sumitomo’s head to have received this special treatment may be due to Sumitomo’s direct threat to aristocratic property. Masakado threatened nobility from a great distance and in the course of fighting disrupted the flow of raw materials and crafted goods to the capital. But Sumitomo directly threatened the wealth and safety of the aristocracy by raiding their expensive villas on the Inland Sea and burning their houses in Kyōto. Since he was such an openly hostile menace to the court, perhaps his head was painted so Emperor Suzaku could show the other aristocrats that the man

\(^{9^4}\) Wilson, “The Art of the Bow and Arrow,” 196.
responsible for burning their mansions and raiding their estates had indeed been eliminated.

Respecting the heads of the dead also led to the increased prestige of the warrior who took them. Tachibana no Tōyasu, the warrior in charge of dispatching Sumitomo, was given great rewards for the decapitation, as were those responsible for putting down Masakado’s rebellion.95

At the end of the passage about Sumitomo, the Konjaku author comes to this conclusion:

Taira no Masakado’s rebellion, a great event tremendous in this world, had taken place in the recent Shōhei [Jōhei] era, and now so soon again came the punishment of this Sumitomo, all during the reign of this emperor. It has been related and handed down that people of the time gossiped about such a succession of great events.”96

These sentences are strong evidence that the compilers of Konjaku Monogatari felt that there was a strong link between the two rebellions, which explains why these rebellions are treated in a parallel fashion. None of the other warrior tales in this collection has this sort of direct link to another tale, which proves that authors considered these two rebels a unique pair.

**Sumitomo in Jinnō Shōtōki**

In Jinnō Shōtōki, Chikafusa writes briefly of Sumitomo:

Fujiwara no Sumitomo was a sympathizer of Masakado who rebelled in the western provinces and was killed in 941 by Minor Captain Ono no Yoshifuru, who had been sent against him. With Sumitomo’s death, peace was restored to the land.97

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Chikafusa presents a middle ground between the Masakado and Sumitomo rebellions being separately run or run in tandem, as the earlier Ōkagami suggests. This work discusses Masakado in much greater length and brings him up often when describing the ranks of the men who defeated him. My impression is that Sumitomo’s rebellion was mentioned as an afterthought, while Masakado’s rebellion takes center stage because of his rebellion’s distinct political message: the right to rule belongs to warriors. Chikafusa focuses on Masakado and his rebellion because Masakado as a warrior-ruler serves as an allegory of faulty Ashikaga rule. Although Karl Friday asserts that in some ways the Sumitomo rebellion threatened the court more because Sumitomo committed acts of arson and threatened the estates of nobles near Inland Sea, Sumitomo does not receive the same amount of attention, despite Chikafusa’s aristocratic lineage. Sumitomo, as a “sympathizer” of Masakado, must somehow fit into the symbolism of Chikafusa’s allegory-- perhaps as a courtier who sides with warrior rule?

In *The Tale of the Heike*, Sumitomo (like Masakado) serves to demonstrate the futility of rebelling against the emperor. In the famous “*Gion Shōja*” section, Masakado and Sumitomo are both counted among men who rose up and “prospered after refusing to be governed by their former lords and sovereigns, but who met swift destruction because they disregarded admonitions, failed to recognize approaching turmoil, and ignored the nation’s distress.” In the beginning of this *gunki monogatari*, the rebels are used to emphasize the inappropriateness, even hubris, of Taira Kiyomori’s actions, while later in the tale they are used to illustrate the rebellious, now doomed, Heike clan at large. There

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98 Friday, *The First Samurai*, 110-112.
are numerous references in the same vein throughout the warrior epic of these two men as negative models of despotic political aspirations.

**Sumitomo in Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki**

While Sumitomo is not mentioned in *Shōmonki*, he is a figure of some importance in the Edo-period illustrated version, *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki* (or *Ehon Shōmonki*). His first appearance in the work is in an image of Masakado and Sumitomo sitting atop Mt. Hiei, looking out over the capital (Fig. 16). They seem to be sharing a meal together and are discussing their plans. The mountain looms large over the city that is depicted small and covered by mist at the bottom of the page. The scene has an ominous feeling that foreshadows the events to come. The next image depicts Sumitomo aboard a ship subjugating some pirates who boarded his vessel. In the background, there is another boat loaded with goods, probably a merchant’s vessel transporting goods bound for the capital (Fig. 17). It appears that at this point in the story, Sumitomo may still be on the side of the capital, having not quite decided to go with Masakado yet.

The violent scene of piracy is followed by a domestic scene that shows Sumitomo in his home, listening to a messenger bearing a letter (Fig. 18). The messengers are the pirates he was beating on the previous page. Impressed by Sumitomo’s leadership skills, perhaps Sumitomo may be forming his first pirate band.

This *ehon* seems to be a hybrid of *Ōkagami* and *Shōmonki*. It combines the alliance theory of *Ōkagami* with the special focus on Masakado in *Shōmonki*. It is obvious that the author of *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki* is taking cues from previous works because the original *Shōmonki*, which the *ehon* claims as its source, does not contain a single entry about Sumitomo. This is because *Shōmonki* was probably completed before
Sumitomo’s rebellion had begun. Moreover, the possibility that Masakado and Sumitomo were allies or conspirators, as put forth in Ōkagami, was dubious. As Karl Friday notes “There is no evidence that Masakado and Sumitomo ever actually met, much less that they coordinated any plans” and attributes the alliance theory to paranoia and fear in the capital. Friday thus cites Ōkagami as the first source of the alliance rumor and Shōmon Jun’yo Tōzai Gunki as a later work that turned the rumor into historical fact by elaborately describing the pledge the two men made on Mt. Hiei:

On the nineteenth day of the eighth month of that year, the pair, Sōma Masakado and Fujiwara Sumitomo, climbed Mt. Hiei. There they gazed down upon [Kyōto] and plotted treason together. “To state our intentions plainly,” they agreed, “Masakado is of imperial descent and should become sovereign; Sumitomo is a Fujiwara and should become Regent.” After that both returned to their own provinces.

Shōmon Jun’yo Tōzai Gunki may be the original source of the Mt. Hiei scene that the author of Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki recreated in illustration. Tōzai Gunki seems to incorporate the Emperor-Regent ambitions explained in Ōkagami and elaborates on the exact circumstances surrounding the rebels’ alleged meeting and pact.

The Mt. Hiei passage is echoed in Chikafusa’s Jinnō Shōtōki: “The example may be noted in ancient times of Taira no Masakado, who climbed Mt.Hiei, surveyed the capital from afar, and schemed rebellion.” While it does not include Sumitomo, the wording bears a strong resemblance to Shōmon Jun’yo Tōzai Gunki. These two works, based on the theory of an alliance, were obviously sources or inspiration for the author of Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki.

100 Friday, The First Samurai, 113.
101 Shōmon Jun’yo Tōzai Gunki, 1, quoted in Friday, The First Samurai, 114. The translation is Friday’s, I assume.
102 Chikafusa, A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns, 262.
Interestingly, *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki* never really resolves the Sumitomo story by showing aspects of his rebellion. Although the artist depicted the deaths of most of Masakado’s relatives, the scene of Sumitomo receiving the letter is the last time the artist depicts Sumitomo. Since the *ehon* is about Masakado, the author may have wanted to keep on topic by focusing only on Masakado. Another reason the author may have abandoned the Sumitomo story is that Sumitomo’s rebellion did not end until well after Masakado was put down. If the author wanted to end the story with Masakado’s death as the climax, he probably did not want to incorporate Sumitomo’s death because it might have taken away from the climactic dramatization of Masakado’s death.

**The Purpose of the Masakado-Sumitomo Alliance in Literature**

The supposed link between Sumitomo and Masakado portrayed in early Japanese literature demonstrates that authors did not necessarily think of the facts behind the situation before writing their tales. The authors either believed the rumors of the Sumitomo-Masakado alliance to be true or they did not, but felt that the alliance of the two men made for an interesting story. The literature in which the alliance is present may be using it to enhance the magnitude of the rebellions. If Sumitomo and Masakado were planning against the capital together, it gives the tale a greater feeling of urgency: the capital is surrounded by warfare on all sides, and the government is in a race against time to prevent the two men from seizing power. The joint rebellions also make the victory of Sadamori and Hidesato (and vicariously, the Kyōto government) seem all the much greater and enhances the legitimacy of the court’s authority. What better way to
demonstrate the rule of the emperor than by having his force defeat not just one, but two ferocious rebel-warriors?
CHAPTER 4

SOURCES OF DISPLEASURE: WHY DID MASAKADO REBEL?

Ted Robert Gurr has written extensively on the nature of rebellion in his book *Why Men Rebel* (1970). He analyzes the causes, organization, and participation in rebellions in order to classify the type of violence being employed. Gurr formed a theory of “relative deprivation” to analyze the origins of aggression, which leads to rebellious violence. Gurr’s theory appears to be applicable to any society or culture because it is based on the analysis of the rebel’s psyche. Although Gurr’s theory seems to hinge on direct analysis of the thoughts of rebels, scholars can, by applying similar principles to literature, speculate on how people at different points in history viewed Taira no Masakado by examining the authors’ views of Masakado’s motivation. To gain this insight, the causes and nature of his rebellion must first be analyzed through Gurr’s theory by finding the source of Masakado’s “relative deprivation,” which varies according to each literary work, and then determining which type of rebellion Masakado led. What emerges from the literature written about Masakado is that he valued prestige, security, and self-assertion, and his rebellion was seen as large or small depending on the author. There are, however, a few problems with the applicability of Gurr’s theory that I will address below.

Relative Deprivation and Value Classes

The most difficult part of analyzing Masakado’s rebellion lies in determining how authors evaluated Masakado’s motivation. In Gurr’s theory of rebellion, “relative deprivation” is a critical concept that deserves to be further explained. Gurr’s definition of “relative deprivation” involves “actors’ perception of discrepancy between their value
expectations and their value capabilities. Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of getting and keeping.”¹⁰³ There are many values a person can feel deprived of in society, and Gurr classifies three categories: welfare, power, and interpersonal values.

Welfare values are the easiest to conceptualize. These are basic-needs goods, such as food and shelter, as well as the freedom to use one’s mental and physical abilities.¹⁰⁴ Under the category of welfare values there are two classes of values: economic and self-actualization. Those individuals with economic values would desire more physical goods, while individuals with values of self-actualization would desire being able to assert their intellect. Values such as the ability to control others and asserting unilateral control over their own pursuits are power values. Power values include participation and security values. Participation values refer to the desire to have a voice in government, whether unilateral or shared, while security values are the desire to have less control placed on personal actions, by either government or by chaotic anarchy. Interpersonal values expressed in the desire for meaningful interactions between other members of society. There are three classes of values. The status value class desires privileges, the communality class desires the ability to have families and communities of support, and the ideational class desires the ability to associate with people who have similar ideas about society and culture.¹⁰⁵ Gurr further explains that all people have an expectation as to how much of these values they deserve. Frustration arises when their value position, or how much they actually attain, is lower than what they feel is their justifiable

¹⁰⁴ Gurr, Why Men Rebel, 25
¹⁰⁵ Gurr, Why Men Rebel, 26
Value expectations are entirely subjective. When there is a feeling of deprivation, it leads to frustration, and if this frustration is felt intensely, it can lead to aggression, which is a source of violent rebellion.\textsuperscript{107}

**Relative Deprivation in Shōmonki**

Which values did Masakado feel the central government in Kyōto was depriving him of that led to his violent rebellion? *Shōmonki* offers scholars two points to analyze. On one hand, there is the anonymous author’s telling of the tale which provides his or her point of view, and then there is a letter from Masakado himself.\textsuperscript{108}

First, the author writes his or her own interpretation of Masakado’s motivations to revolt. This perspective is very interesting because it is told by a party that seemed interested in explaining and perhaps understanding Masakado’s viewpoint on the revolt. The *Shōmonki* author’s rendering stands in sharp contrast to the court-centered literary works to be analyzed below. Prince Okiyo reproaches Masakado for having captured Hitachi province, telling him that taking over one province is just as bad as taking over many, so that he may as well capture all of the Bandō provinces. Masakado responds with pride: “This is precisely what I have in mind” and elaborates that he is descended from an Emperor and that by using force he will rule not only the Bandō region, but the capital as well.\textsuperscript{109} In this passage, he draws on his status as a descendant of royalty and on his military prowess to justify his desire to rule Japan. The author thereby acknowledges

\textsuperscript{106} Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 27
\textsuperscript{107} Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 31
\textsuperscript{108} There is a letter allegedly written by Masakado in *Shōmonki*, and the claim that it was actually written by Masakado considered accurate. Karl Friday in *The First Samurai: The Life and Legend of the Warrior Taira Masakado* says of it that “it is by and large believed to be genuine.” Ibid., p. 120.
\textsuperscript{109} Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki*, 108.
Masakado’s deprivation of prestige and self-actualization, evidence of which can also be found in Masakado’s letter (to be discussed below).

In his chapter on “Social Origins of Deprivation: Sources of Rising Expectations” Gurr writes of non-western peoples becoming exposed to western material culture and their expectations for quality of life rising.\(^{110}\) A similar example can be drawn from Shōmonki’s explanation for Masakado’s ruling the Bandō region. After seizing one province, Masakado essentially assumed the position of ruler, even if his original intent was not to keep that position. He enjoyed his exposure to “the other life,” not unlike the non-western peoples exposed to new a material culture, and his expectations for his own living conditions rose. He was no longer content to occupy the lower ranks of the ritsuryō system, but instead aspired to be on the top. This attitude, combined with the desire for security and prestige, raised his expectations for the quality of his life. In other words, his lifestyle made him feel deprived. The author of Shōmonki understood Masakado’s motivation by reading Masakado’s letter to Fujiwara no Tadahira, which the author of Shōmonki included in his book.

Concerning Masakado’s letter to Fujiwara no Tadahira, Karl Friday comments in his *The First Samurai* that this letter is self-serving and should be read with skepticism.\(^{111}\) In the letter, Masakado explains that he faced hostility from his relatives, particularly from Taira no Sadamori and Fujiwara no Tamenori. When Masakado was offering aid to his follower Fujiwara no Haruaki, Sadamori and Tamenori attacked, but Masakado prevailed. He then writes that he took control over other Bandō provinces, “having struck down one province, the crime was not light and may as well have extended to a hundred

\(^{110}\) Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, 93.

\(^{111}\) Friday, *The First Samurai*, 123.
On the surface, Masakado may be trying to downplay his actions by saying he invaded the provinces simply by pretending “it just happened,” but there is more to Masakado’s psyche than he lets on. By securing the other Bandō provinces and bringing them under his rule, he is demonstrating his desire for security, which is a power value.

In his letter, Masakado repeatedly addresses the central government’s handling of the escalating conflict between him and his relations. Specifically, the capital put out a warrant for Sadamori after he assisted his uncle in attacking Masakado. However, Sadamori flees to the capital and obtains a warrant for Masakado. Masakado writes in his letter that “The nobles ought to have arrested and interrogated him then. That, on the contrary, they issued him a warrant endorsing his charges is the height of hypocrisy!” From Masakado’s perspective, the government was not acting to assure his safety and protect him from his relatives. According to Gurr’s theory of “relative deprivation,” “people may be subjectively deprived with reference to their expectations even though an objective observer might not judge them to be in want.” Masakado’s particular perception of being deprived of security may have been what led him to act.

Masakado writes about other important values in a similar vein. He demonstrates his desire for status, an interpersonal value in Gurr’s theory of “relative deprivation,” when he boasts of being a descendant of Emperor Kanmu and that it is his destiny to control half the country. When he also boasts of his “heavenly-endowed military skill”

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112 Friday, The First Samurai, 122.
113 Friday, The First Samurai, 121.
114 Gurr, Why Men Rebel, 24.
115 Friday, The First Samurai, 122.
he is demonstrating a desire for self-actualization, a welfare value, according to Gurr.\textsuperscript{116} Finally, he claims that the court does not recognize the facts and merely admonishes him.\textsuperscript{117} In his letter, Masakado thus demonstrates deprivation in all three of Gurr’s value classes, which leads to frustration and aggression. However, statements and claims in letters cannot be taken at face value, but must be examined critically. There is much to be gained by viewing how other authors viewed Masakado’s motives to rebel.

**Relative Deprivation in Ōkagami**

The author of Ōkagami treats Masakado’s rebellion only briefly, reporting that Masakado was in league with Fujiwara no Sumitomo, who rebelled in the west; the two rebelled together so Masakado could be Emperor and Sumitomo could be regent.\textsuperscript{118} The author of Ōkagami insists that “they pledged to work together so that one of them could run the government as he pleased while the other enjoyed an Emperor’s life.”\textsuperscript{119} Even in its brief treatment of the event, there are implications that Masakado craved status even though the courtiers felt it highly unjustified. Some may argue that Masakado craved power; however, judging from this passage, the author makes a clear distinction between regent and Emperor, and the difference between who runs the country and who lives a life of privilege. If Masakado sought power, he would rather be the regent and take direct control of the governing himself. However, this by no means meant that the author of Ōkagami felt that Masakado was not a threat. Masakado’s actions are referred to as “dreadful deeds” and his alleged plan was to “kill the Emperor.”\textsuperscript{120} The aspect of Masakado’s actions that should be emphasized here is that the author of Ōkagami did not

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{116} Friday, *The First Samurai*, 122.
\item \textsuperscript{117} Friday, *The First Samurai*, 122.
\item \textsuperscript{118} McCullough, trans., *Ōkagami*, 178.
\item \textsuperscript{119} McCullough, trans., *Ōkagami*, 178.
\item \textsuperscript{120} McCullough, trans., *Ōkagami*, 178
\end{itemize}
recognize Masakado’s desire for the recognition of his lineage or martial prowess. To the court, he was a mere upstart, unjustly craving that which he did not deserve. “How could a scheme like that have succeeded in the face of the court’s authority?"  

**Relative Deprivation in *Konjaku Monogatari***

Another literary work of the same time period, *Konjaku Monogatari*, also discussed the nature of Masakado’s deeds. *Konjaku Monogatari* is more detailed than *Ōkagami* in its treatment of the revolt. Like *Ōkagami*, it treats Masakado as the sole antagonist in the revolt, referring to his bad karma and his eventual punishment in the afterlife, as communicated through an oracle. What Masakado says of his motivations in *Konjaku* is that he is descended from Emperor Kanmu and that he will take over the capital after securing the eastern provinces for himself. Later, he claims that “The way of the bow and arrow is enough for me. In these times one is sovereign because one overcomes. Why should I hold back?” These two instances give some insight into how the author of *Konjaku* perceived Masakado’s justification for revolt: Masakado abused his martial prowess in the attempt to realize his goals and used his distant relationship to Emperor Kanmu to gain status, two of Gurr’s value categories. If there was any justification for Masakado’s revolt, the author of *Konjaku* is quick to dismiss it in order to point instead to Masakado’s evil karmic nature.

**Relative Deprivation in *Jinnō Shōtōki***

In *Jinnō Shōtōki*, Chikafusa offers a different explanation for Masakado’s displeasure. He claims that Masakado revolted because he was rejected for promotion:

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121 McCullough, trans., *Ōkagami*, 178.
During Suzaku’s reign there lived a man named Taira no Masakado, a grandson… of Takamochi. (Takamochi was… grandson of Prince Kazurahara…) Masakado, who was in the service of the Fujiwara regent house, desired appointment to the office of the imperial police. When he was refused, he became greatly angered and returned to the eastern provinces, where he rose in revolt.\textsuperscript{125}

It is clear from this passage that Masakado had a two-fold source of displeasure: rejection for promotion (self-actualization) that denied him what he believed to be his birthright (prestige). Therefore, during the revolt, he gave himself a promotion and acknowledged his (perceived) birthright by making himself a “Taira Prince” and creating his own palace and court.\textsuperscript{126} It is clear that the author believes that Masakado was a man who desired an unfair share of promotion and rank.

**Relative Deprivation in *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki***

In later literary works, Masakado’s motivations are demonized. In the Edo period work *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*, the author devotes his first five pages to the courtiers in Kyōto. It is difficult to determine Masakado’s motives for revolt, since the author writes about Masakado after he created his court. This is my translation of the passage first describing Masakado in the *ehon*:

So, there was the man, called the Sluice Gate Guard Sōma Masakado, the young son of Shōgun Masayoshi who was the son of Prince Kuzurahara,\textsuperscript{127} the grandson of Emperor Kammu.\textsuperscript{128} This man, with the avarice of a ravenous wolf,\textsuperscript{129} without regard to propriety, audaciously thought to topple the Heian court and raise himself to imperial status. Thus, in the province of Shimōsa, in the district of Iwai he set up his version of the capital, and the pass at Sōma served as the capital’s Yamazaki pass.\textsuperscript{130} And then he built a

\textsuperscript{125} Chikafusa, *A Chronicle of Gods and Sovereigns*, 182.
\textsuperscript{127} Lived 786-853.
\textsuperscript{128} Lived 737-806, reigned 781-806.
\textsuperscript{129} “Raurei” meaning “to have the greed of a wolf.” Dictionaries cite its first use in *Shōmonki*.
\textsuperscript{130} “Yamazaki” is the name of a pass that lead into the then-capital Kyōto. The Sōma pass would serve as the pass of Masakado’s capital.
palace, declared himself Jihei Shinno, and appointed position for all of the court officials. Masakado’s brother, the Meguriya lord Masayori was appointed the governor of Shimotsuke. The fourth son Masahira was appointed the deputy-governor of Kōzuke. Masatame to the governor of Shimōsa, Masatake to the governor of Izu, Taji no Tsuneakira to the Guard of Imperial Stables. The governorship of Hitachi went to Fujiwara no Harumochi. The Deputy Governorship of Kazuza went to the Musashi governor Okiyo, and Awa governorship given to Bun’ya Yoshitachi, and the governorship of Sagami was appointed. All of the civil positions of the eight counselors and seven advisors of the provincial government offices were filled. The only position unfilled was the Calendar Expert. The unlearned barbarians did not know how to wear their court clothes, and wore their caps sideways. They completely trampled over courtly precedents. The circumstance was a very embarrassing thing.\footnote{Ryūsuishi, Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki, 絵本将門一代. (Edo 江戸: Tsuruya 鶴屋, 1793) 5. http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/ri05/ri05_15641/index.html. My translation.}

The author refers to Masakado’s court as a complete sham. He calls the would-be courtiers “barbarians” since they allegedly cannot even play their roles properly, and did not appoint a calendar expert, which was a critical position to any true court. He acknowledges Masakado’s heritage, but only to identify him, not to lend credibility to the revolt.

However, in the ehon genre, the pictures are just as important as the words, and in this story the images do not quite conform to what the author is saying. For example, although the author writes that Masakado’s court is disorderly, the picture shows a small but very legitimate-looking court: caps in their proper place, robes orderly. Even Masakado, having proclaimed himself “New Emperor,” is portrayed as sitting in the hall

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{“Jihei shinno”: “Jihei” is written with the kanji “self-peace” perhaps creating an imperial name for Masakado. “Shinno” can be ‘new’ for “new emperor” as Masakado is commonly said to have called himself, or it could be simply “prince.”}
\footnote{The appointments are also listed in here: Judith Rabinovitch, trans., Shōmonki (Tokyo: Monumenta Nipponica, 1986), 119-120.}
\end{footnotesize}
with his face out of view, which was a typical way to depict an Emperor\(^{134}\) (Fig. 19). The artist does not draw any unflattering pictures of Masakado, unless one considers as unflattering the historical display of Masakado’s decapitated head. In the majority of the images the woodblock-print artist may have wanted to convey a far from condemning opinion of the rebellion.

**Rebellion as Turmoil, Conspiracy, or Internal War**

Gurr believes that violent rebellious conflict can be classified into three categories: turmoil, conspiracy, or internal war. In a nutshell, turmoil is classified as minimally organized, localized violence with substantial participation; conspiracies are highly planned small-scale violence with minimal popular participation; internal wars are highly organized large scale violence with widespread participation by the masses. The character of Masakado’s rebellion tends to change depending on the author and literary work commenting on it. *Shōmonki* and *Konjaku* both make the rebellion seem like an internal war: it was organized by Masakado (at would-be Hitachi Governor Prince Okiyo’s suggestion), with massive armies fighting over the entire eastern region. In *Konjaku*, the government was quaking with terror and ordered prayers at every temple and shrine at all hours begging the *kami* and buddhas for help and protection.\(^{135}\) *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki* depicts numerous battles with vast armies. However, *Ōkagami* makes the revolt seem much smaller. The courtiers only address Masakado with reference to Sumitomo, since they believed that the two were conspiring.\(^{136}\) They do not mention anything about the size of the armies or give any impression that they felt the terror of being in a war. If *Shōmonki* and *Konjaku* were compiled by people detached

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\(^{134}\) Ryūsuishi, *Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*, 5.
\(^{136}\) McCullough, trans., *Ōkagami*, 178.
from the court, either in the provinces or in the temples outside of the capital, it would make sense for these works to impart the fear and terror of the violent rebellion. *Konjaku* goes to great lengths to address the violence commoners had to endure: “He burned down many men’s houses and he took many men’s lives”\(^{137}\) and “before his instructions were received the women were violated by warriors.”\(^{138}\) *Ehon Masakado* was created centuries later and is inspired by *Shōmonki*’s account. The court of Ōkagami may have been more sheltered from these effects of the fighting. In any of these literary works, the portrayal of Masakado is a product of the author’s time, and influenced by popular (or in the aristocrat’s case, the dominant) opinion.

**Problematic Application of Gurr’s Theory to Ancient Culture**

In my analysis of this particular rebellion, I have applied Gurr’s theory to literature published by observers after Masakado’s death. Much of Gurr’s theory focuses on being able to analyze the psyche of a rebel, which makes applying his theory to some rebellions easier than others. For example, during the American Revolution, the members of the Continental Congress wrote extensively on their reasons for rebellion which were read and considered by the literate populace. The Declaration of Independence is a rebel’s explicit condemnation of the wrongs committed by a tyrant, and the explanation for political sovereignty for the American colonists. Gurr’s theory can also be applied with ease to recent rebellions, which are more likely to be well-documented. Unfortunately, aside from a short letter, Masakado left no extensive writings that explicitly stated his dissatisfactions with the court and his reasons for taking power. Gurr’s theory does not seem to take into account the fact that there are rebels who did not

\(^{137}\) Wilson, “The Art of the Bow and Arrow,” 190.

write extensive declarations on their cause. Therefore, the only sources that can be used to infer the rebel’s intent are works that people wrote after the event. Consequently, in a society like Heian Japan where only the members of the government were literate, most of the writings about the rebel will be condemnations. Therefore, when using Gurr’s theory to analyze why rebels revolted, scholars are not looking at why the rebels rebelled so much as why a specific writer thinks the rebel revolted. The problem with Gurr’s theory is not that it is culturally specific and of limited applicability, but that it relies on the assumption that reliable, unbiased information about all rebels exists.

Another problem with applying Gurr’s theory to Japanese literature is that the theory does not take into account certain epistemological and religious differences held specifically by early Japanese authors. It is important to consider the impact that the imported religion of Buddhism had on indigenous Shintō beliefs. As William LaFleur states in his *The Karma of Words*, Buddhist beliefs and cosmology defined everything and were the primary way for the early Japanese to understand the phenomena in the world around them:

> When medieval Japan is described in terms of its intellectual shape and suppositions, it can be seen to form what today is often called an episteme. It was a period during which there was a general consensus concerning what kinds of problems needed discussion, what kinds of texts and traditional practices constituted authority worthy of citation… I would suggest that we can best account for the vast array of materials of the period by defining medieval Japan as that epoch during which the basic intellectual problems, the most authoritative texts and resources, and the central symbols were all Buddhist.¹³⁹

Medieval Japan’s reliance on Buddhist teachings for intellectual and emotional guidance is comparable to medieval Europe’s reliance on Catholicism and other forms of

Christianity. For example, in Buddhist cosmology, the sun rises in the east and then sets in the west where Amida’s Paradise is located, while according to the Bible the sun rises and sets because it rotates around the earth, while today, using science, everyone knows that the earth rotates around the sun. It should also be noted that just as medieval Europe was not dominated solely by Catholicism or Christianity, so medieval Japan was influenced by belief systems other than Buddhism.

The indigenous religion Shintō, an animistic belief system, existed for a long time before the introduction of Buddhism and continued to flourish alongside Buddhism. One reason for the harmony between the two religions was the Buddhist principle of *honji suijaku*, meaning that the buddhas appeared to the Japanese people in the form of native *kami* (gods). According to the *honji suijaku* principle, the buddhas would take on provisional forms, such as those of the *kami*, to help the Japanese people learn Buddhist principles and would lead people to the path to enlightenment. Each *kami* corresponds to a particular Buddha or bodhisattva, as seen in religious art (Fig.20). To continue the analogy with Europe, *honji suijaku* was similar to Christian religions that appropriated certain aspects of indigenous European religions. For example, there is substantial evidence that suggests that the Christian festival of Easter was originally a feast in worship of the Germanic Goddess of spring and fertility, Ēostre. By appropriating a familiar pagan holiday, Christians were able to convert pagans to their religion. Buddhism, likewise, used *honji suijaku* to exist alongside Shintō.

Although the *honji-suijaku* principle encouraged the coexistence of religions, that does not mean that certain religions, in this case Buddhism, did not assert itself as being closer to the truth. LaFleur notes that “Even within the most tolerant of intellectual and
religious frameworks, there is often the assumption that one form, maybe because it is seen as the basis for the others, has a higher place as an articulation of truth. Such was the case in medieval Japan, where the Buddhists held sway over the era [from the early Heian period onward] because they were in a position to define the issues and the answers to those issues.”

Medieval Japanese authors writing about early Japan and rebels like Masakado may have taken such shifts in religious thought into account, at least to some extent. Gurr’s theory takes a scientific, modern approach to understanding rebellion and therefore does not easily take these epistemological differences into account. This difference is critical for exploring Shōmonki and Konjaku Monogatari, since they both carry a distinct religious tone.

Religious Episteme in Shōmonki

Shōmonki was most likely written earlier than Konjaku, and during this time period, Buddhist teachings were only just being to be understood by the Japanese. In the late 700s to early 800s, Nihon Ryōiki, another collection of setsuwa, was written in the hopes of explaining the popular Buddhist teachings. It is not unreasonable to assume that since Shōmonki was written in the late 900s, it is possible that Buddhist teachings were understood a little better by then, although not as well as they were by the time of Konjaku Monogatari. For the author of Shōmonki, Buddhist thought, combined with Chinese philosophy, is the basis for understanding Masakado’s motivation to rebel.

In the beginning when Masakado is first brought into battle through the schemes of Minamoto no Tasuku, he has the favor of the wind and fortune despite his being

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140 LaFleur, The Karma of Words, 12.
141 LaFleur, The Karma of Words, 30.
ambushed.\textsuperscript{142} The text reads, “Fortunately, the direction of the wind was in Masakado’s favor.”\textsuperscript{143} The author personifies the wind by having it side with Masakado, giving him the edge he needed to thwart Tasuku’s plan. Masakado’s victory does not come through sheer military prowess, however; his success required divine favor. It is difficult to say whether this divine favor came from \textit{kami} or buddhas. One may say that it could be the result of karmic intervention: according to this account, Tasuku was acting as an aggressor and attacking Masakado without warning, while it appears that Masakado was forced into a defensive position. Since the text is vague, it is difficult to determine if it was good karma on Masakado’s part or bad karma on Tasuku’s part that led to Masakado’s victory in this particular battle.

The \textit{Shōmonki} author reports several concrete examples of divine intervention. First, after the initial fighting between Masakado, Tasuku, Minamoto no Mamoru, and Taira no Yoshimasa, Masakado was called to Kyōto to defend his actions against the other men, who had reported him. In Kyōto, Masakado was asked to give his account of the fighting going on in the east. The author informs us that Masakado was given divine aid in this situation, “In truth, Masakado was not adept at handling legal matters, but the gods and buddhas showed mercy toward him and he managed to present a well-reasoned case. Moreover, the emperor treated Masakado with compassion, and the officials, too, showed him special favor.” Masakado gains acclaim for his martial abilities and only incurs minor punishment for the offenses he committed.\textsuperscript{144} While he is still in the capital, the era name is changed and a new emperor crowned, therefore even the small punishment Masakado earned is forgiven as part of the tradition of the new emperor

\textsuperscript{142} Rabinovitch, trans., \textit{Shōmonki}, 74-75.  
\textsuperscript{143} Rabinovitch, trans., \textit{Shōmonki}, 75.  
\textsuperscript{144} Rabinovitch, trans., \textit{Shōmonki}, 84.
granting a general amnesty. The author is specific in mentioning both gods and buddhas as the reason for Masakado not being punished severely, which shows the Buddhist and Shintō epistemological basis for much of the author’s analysis of the events surrounding Masakado. The author tells readers that Masakado’s violence is primarily used defensively (so far), and therefore is protected by divine favor. Masakado’s actions are justified by the gods and buddhas, which explains why Masakado was not stopped by the court at this point in the story.

However, the gods and buddhas are not always on Masakado’s side. After Masakado returns to his home province of Shimōsa, his enemies begin to converge on him. Suddenly the author informs readers that Masakado angered the gods and could not do anything right. He does not specify what exactly Masakado did to anger the gods, but it was reason enough for Masakado to lose that day’s battle. The author uses deities, be they Buddhist or Shintō, to explain how Masakado could have lost a battle. Although the author gives no explanation for the gods’ anger, readers of the time may well have understood that Masakado had incurred bad karma from a previous life that came back to haunt him at that moment.

Towards the middle of the story, Masakado’s good karma begins wane. First, a shamaness delivers a message on behalf of the “Bodhisattva Hachiman,” conferring on him the title of emperor. Brian D. Ruppert notes in *Jewel in the Ashes* that the Japanese had a belief in the special shamanistic powers of women. In his discussion of the importance of the jewel (*tama*) in Buddhism, he also connects the jewel to native traditions in Japan: “Concurrent with these accounts [of jewels in Buddhist tales] is a

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145 Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki*, 87.
146 Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki*, 112.
native tradition [Shintō] that virtually paralleled these representations from a perspective that was manifestly not Buddhist….Scholars have long noted that the term ‘jewel’ in these narratives [about jewel-women] often refers to the soul or life-energy and connects these female figures with the shamanistic powers associated with women in Japan.  

Rabinovitch notes that Hachiman was a member of the Shintō pantheon, in importance second only to Amaterasu. In Buddhism, Hachiman was also believed to be a local manifestation of Amida. The fact that he is referred to as “bodhisattva” and by his Shintō name strongly suggests that honji-suijaku is at play in this gunki (Figs. 21, 22).

Although it would appear that Masakado has been given divine favor, this message was not delivered directly from heaven. He receives several warnings from brothers and advisors against usurping the throne and defying the will of heaven. Despite these warnings, Masakado pushes these advisors aside, declaring that the right of might is the deciding factor in ruling, not heaven. Not only is this a slight to heaven itself, but according to Buddhist tradition, the warrior path of violence dooms one to rebirth in a lower realm in the Six Realms (rokudō).

It is clear that at this point in the story Masakado oversteps his karmic favor and crosses the line when he declares himself the new Emperor. The true emperor prays to the buddhas for Masakado’s demise, and immediately, divine power is manifested:

The five bodhisattvas sent out their attendants to the eastern provinces, while the eight deities shot their divine arrows at the enemy. Frowning with displeasure, the heavenly deities condemned the rebel Masakado for aspiring to such high station, and the earthly deities harshly rebuked the evil king, bitterly

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148 Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki*, 111.
149 Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki*, 117-119.
150 Rabinovitch, trans., *Shōmonki*, 117-119.
resenting his untoward ambition. The New Emperor did not have a long-range plan for achieving his goal and showed the narrow-mindedness of a frog at the bottom of a well.\textsuperscript{151}

This immediate response to the emperor’s prayers demonstrates that the author felt that Masakado lost the backing of heaven, and that he accrued too much negative karma in his violent actions and attacking neighboring provinces.

The \textit{Shōmonki} author reflects on the events of the rebellion, praising Masakado for his great reputation for loyalty and honor, while condemning the actions that hurt his reputation. The author attributes Masakado’s behavior to his karma of previous lives:

\begin{quote}
It is commonly said that Masakado resided in the Toyota district of Shimōsa province on the Tōkaidō Circuit owing to karma from a former existence. He was busily occupied solely with taking human life and never once thought of doing a single good deed. But a lifetime has its limit, and Masakado too finally met his end.”\textsuperscript{152}
\end{quote}

This passage in particular is evidence of the impact Buddhism had on medieval Japan. To the medieval Japanese, karma played a large role in defining a person’s life and is the source and cause of actions in the past, present, and future. It is difficult to fit karma in Gurr’s categories of relative deprivation, but then his theory is not designed or prepared to consider this or other features of traditional religions.

\textbf{Religious Episteme in \textit{Konjaku Monogatari}}

\textit{Konjaku Monogatari} carries an even stronger Buddhist message than \textit{Shōmonki}, whose message is slightly diluted with Confucian and folkloric moralizing. By the time \textit{Konjaku} was compiled, the Buddhist concept of karma and rebirth were largely

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\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{151} Rabinovitch, trans., \textit{Shōmonki}, 123.
\item \textsuperscript{152} Rabinovitch, trans., \textit{Shōmonki}, 139.
\end{itemize}
considered “true, universally applicable, and intelligible.”\textsuperscript{153} From the outset, it is clear that Masakado was born with ill karma and chose to continue this negative karma through evil action.

Firstly, Masakado is describes as “making battle his way of life.”\textsuperscript{154} His enemy, Taira no Yoshikane, is contrasted sharply with Masakado, Yoshikane being described as “preoccupied with religion and devoted to worship of the Buddhist Law, [he] did not particularly want to fight.”\textsuperscript{155} From the outset, Masakado is an evil man bent on killing and “adding only evil deeds to his karma,”\textsuperscript{156} while his opponents all uphold the Buddhist Law and are loyal to the government.

Interestingly enough, the author also explains that Masakado was conferred the title of emperor by Hachiman, who has both Shintō and Buddhist connections, but this time the message came from a man in a trance, rather than from a shamaness.\textsuperscript{157} He is then warned by his brothers and advisors that the throne is conferred by heaven, not by force, but Masakado ignores them, just was recorded in \textit{Shōmonki}. It is interesting that neither tale addresses the legitimacy of this oracle directly and only implies its falsehood through Masakado’s failure and death. Karma played a crucial role in \textit{Konjaku Monogatari} for understanding the origins of Masakado’s rebellion. One must wonder how the karmic message of this story would have changed if Masakado had been successful in his rebellion.

\textsuperscript{153} LaFleur, \textit{The Karma of Words}, 30-1.
\textsuperscript{154} Wilson, “The Art of the Bow and Arrow,” 190.
\textsuperscript{155} Wilson, “The Art of the Bow and Arrow,” 190.
\textsuperscript{156} Wilson, “The Art of the Bow and Arrow,” 190-1.
\textsuperscript{157} Wilson, “The Art of the Bow and Arrow,” 191.
Religious Episteme in Ōkagami and Masukagami

In historical courtly works, such as Ōkagami, the passages are so brief that there is very little to interpret as evidence of Buddhist understanding. Ōkagami and The Clear Mirror (Masukagami, a Kamakura-period chronicle written in the same style as Ōkagami) only address Masakado’s rebellion in terms of its futility against imperial authority. It could be argued that in these chronicles, Masakado failed because he tried to undermine the lineage of the sun goddess, who gave the emperors of Japan authority to rule in the first place. To support the idea that the emperor is protected by divine authority the author of The Clear Mirror cites the failed rebellion of Retired Emperor Sutoku against Emperor Go-Shirakawa in the Hōgen Disturbance of 1156. To the author, this event is evidence that even if the rebel was an emperor, the deities only protect the ruling emperor.\(^\text{158}\)

In The Clear Mirror, the author does write in terms of Buddhist understanding, though not explicitly about Masakado. In the beginning of the passage mentioning Masakado, the author mourns the lamentable state of the country: “We are told that the Buddha spoke of 18,000 sovereigns who actually killed their own fathers for the throne. Furthermore, there have been countless struggles for hegemony in Japan and China ever since the world entered the age of degeneracy.”\(^\text{159}\) Clearly, “the age of degeneracy” is a reference to mappō, a period on the Buddhist calendar in which the world was entering an age when the Buddha’s teachings could no longer be understood and people could not attain enlightenment. This period was said to begin in 1052 CE. Masakado’s rebellion ended around 940, over one hundred years before mappō was said to begin. Whether or

\(^{158}\) The Clear Mirror 54.
\(^{159}\) The Clear Mirror, 54.
not the looming Latter Days of the Buddhist Law can be seen as a likely cause for the rebellion depends on the level of awareness and fear of the mappō. Since the author is writing after 1052, it is clear that he is imposing the dominant eschatological idea that the world is degenerating due to the end of Buddhist law on an event that occurred in the past. The author reminds readers that “We must look beyond this world for an explanation of what happened—a truth incomprehensible to those too ignorant to understand karmic law.”

Religious Episteme in Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki

The Edo-period Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki does not address the situation leading up to his rebellion. However, there was an epistemological shift in the Edo period from Buddhism to Neo-Confucianism. LaFleur confirms this shift:

Whereas the governing intellectual force during the past 1,000 years may be characterized as being primarily Buddhist, Japan during the Tokugawa era concentrated with sudden and conspicuous intensity on Confucian studies…In addition to Neo-Confucianism and the Neo-Shinto texts of the Tokugawa period, there was also the science of co-called Dutch /Learning and ever growing acquaintance with the classics, methods, and criteria derived from Western sources.

Due to this shift in thinking, the origins of Masakado’s rebellion would more likely emphasize his rejection of piety for his lord and emperor, and point to punishment from Shintō gods rather than from negative karma. For example, part of Sadamori’s success in battle can be explained through his devotion to the kami, as when he is illustrated in prostration in front of a torii (Fig. 23). However, this is not to say that Buddhism is dead in the ehon. Early in the ehon, there is an image of a Buddhist priest in front of a fire, offering prayers and performing a ritual (Fig.24). Apparently, the priests are making an

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160 The Clear Mirror, 54.
161 LaFleur, The Karma of Words, 13-14.
image of Masakado appear and fall into the fire, suggesting the importance of the priesthood in Masakado’s defeat. Additionally, the image could also be referencing the Benevolent King Sutra, which was read by the clergy in times of chaos to protect the country. *The Tale of the Heike* explains that this ritual actually began because of Masakado’s rebellion. These two images tell readers that the forces fighting for the real emperor had divine favor on their side.

**How Should Gurr’s Theory Be Used For Ancient Literature?**

Although there are problems with applying Gurr’s theory to Japanese literature, it can still be used to gain insight into rebel motives, so long as the reader keeps in mind that the insights gained are filtered by the lens of the author and should not be taken as fact. This is not necessarily a problem for a thesis that wishes to deal with the various receptions and perspectives of a major figure in early Japanese history.

Scholars of literature can apply Gurr’s theory to gain insight into how an author perceived historical figures and analyze their psychological state. By reading what people of various time periods and of different classes wrote about Masakado, not only do scholars learn much about Masakado, but about how he was received throughout the course of history. When historical, psychological, and literary perspectives are viewed together, a fuller view can be constructed, approximating a greater understanding of key figures in history.

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162 McCullough, trans., *The Tale of the Heike*, 221.
CONCLUSION

Early Japanese literature provides many opportunities to examine Masakado’s rebellion, and by proxy, different aspects of the authors’ culture. By analyzing the literary genre the authors used, it is possible to know with more or less certainty where they came from and who their intended audience was. For Shōmonki, the author was probably living in the provinces, writing to the courtiers in Kyōto to explain why Masakado rebelled and what exactly happened. For Ōkagami, the author was certainly a courtier preoccupied with life in the capital with little interest in rebellious upstarts who would be doomed to fail in the face of Kyōto authority. For Konjaku Monogatari, the author was probably a monk interested in explaining the horrible karmic consequences of Masakado’s behavior and making that a message for all. For Jinnō Shōtoki, the author was a courtier retrospectively reporting on a warrior rebel of the past, who served as evidence of mappō, which was, in the variant of mujō, the dominant theme of The Tale of the Heike. In the new age of Heike, Masakado’s behavior served as an example of not only defiance, but also of warrior power. In the Edo period, Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki was created for the masses to show not only samurai culture, but also the consequences of defying authority.

Each author wrote about different aspects of the Masakado story. Whether or not to include Sumitomo in the tale is one decision these authors had to make. Some excluded him and focused solely on Masakado, while others included Sumitomo either to enhance the tale or to demonstrate the consequences of performing evil deeds. Some writers chose to address the buntori of Masakado and show the glories of warrior culture, while others found the act of decapitation and displaying heads just too gruesome to mention. The authors also had to choose if and how they might analyze Masakado’s
rebellion, not only offering analysis based in the material world, but sometimes suggesting reasons for political violence that ventured into the metaphorical realm of religious experience. Including visual evidence with the literary works grants an opportunity to see this rebel through the eyes of a different type of story-teller: one who uses images to communicate ideas. Through the images presented in the *ehon*, we can see that the illustrator may not have held the same beliefs as the author, and we can also appreciate the visual glimpses of Heian and Edo warrior culture.
Figure 1: Fujiwara Sumitomo and his warriors razing Takanawa Castle. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
Figure 2: Masakado and his men killing unarmed warriors as they escape their burning quarters. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
Figure 3: Regent Fujiwara Tadahira, depicted with his face obscured, receiving news about Masakado’s revolt. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
Figure 4: Masakado receiving a fatal blow from Sadamori’s arrow. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
Figure 5: Masakado leading his men and defending his position against Hidesato and his men. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
Figure 6: Masakado commanding his soldiers in battle on the front lines and shooting an enemy general, Kuniga (Kunika), in the chest with an arrow. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
Figure 7: (From right to left) Masahira, a relative of Masakado, being decapitated indoors. Masatame, also a relative of Masakado, is being stabbed as he attempts to drag a warrior to his demise. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
Figure 8: Masahira bravely fighting alongside his men in battle. (Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki)
Figure 9: (Right to left) A soldier, named Tadayo, props his body on his sword and faces down a volley of enemy arrows, while Masakado’s brother, Masatake, commits ritual suicide through disembowelment. (Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki)
Figure 10: Masakado out with his warriors, surveying the next castle. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
Figure 11: (Right to left) Sadamori, dressed in full armor for the occasion of inspecting the heads. A retainer records the heads, and the heads and record will be sent to the capital as proof of Sadamori’s success in putting down the disturbance. In Kyōto, Masakado’s head is put on display on a gokumon, and a sign describes his crimes. (Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki)
Figure 12: Sadamori, Hidesato, and others are rewarded in the capital for their success in regaining control over the Kantō. (Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki)
Figure 13: Heads are on display on a gokumon, with a sign nearby naming the criminals and describing their crimes. 
(Tokugawa Bakufu Keiji Zufu)
Figure 14: A kabuki-style image of Sumitomo. (Tsukudo Shrine, Tokyo)

Figure 15: Tachibana no Tōyasu, the warrior responsible for Sumitomo’s capture. (Tsukudo Shrine, Tokyo)
Figure 16: Masakado and Sumitomo on Mt. Hiei, planning their take-over of the capital. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
Figure 17: Sumitomo beating up pirates in their attempt to rob his ship. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
Figure 18: Sumitomo listening to a messenger from the pirates in his house in Iyo province, perhaps becoming their leader. *(Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki)*
Figure 19: Masakado’s court in Shimōsa. Masakado’s face is hidden from view as the true emperor would be depicted, and the would-be nobles are dressed according to their position. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
Figure 20: The Kasuga Mandala illustrating the *honji-suijaku* principle. The bottom row depicts the Shintō *kami*, while the middle row illustrates their buddha or bodhisattva counterpart. The buddhas being illustrated above the *kami* may be the artists message that the buddhas are literally and metaphorically above or superior the *kami*. (University of Vienna)
Figure 22: Hachiman dressed as a Buddhist monk sitting on a lotus flower. (Kokugakuin University)

Figure 21: Hachiman in indigenous clothing as a *kami*. (Encyclopaedia Britannica)
Figure 23: Sadamori in prayer at a Shintō shrine, represented by the *torii* gate. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
Figure 24: A Buddhist priest performing a ritual in front of a fire. This particular image is repeated in Meiji reprints of this *ehon*, demonstrating the particular importance of this religious scene. (*Ehon Masakado Ichidaiki*)
BIBLIOGRAPHY


