

Jien, Gukansho (Future and the Past)

I

Ancient Age

Emperor Jimmu to FUJIWARA Michinaga

Introduction

With the passing of the years and days I think only about the Principles of things. And while seeking diversion from the sleeplessness of old age, I spend more and more time—as I approach the end of life—observing world affairs. Consequently I have become keenly aware of Principles that have been changing since ancient times. I do not know how it was in the age of Kami, but I hear that after the beginning of the age of man and the enthronement of Emperor Jimmu, Japan is to have only one hundred reigns. Now that we are in the 84th reign not many more are left. Meanwhile, no one has 1. The belief that Japan was destined to have only one hundred reigns (hyaku-ji) seems not to have emerged until late in the Heian era (794–1185) when an increasingly large number of intellectuals were becoming influenced by the doctrine that Buddhist Law would enter, or had entered, the third and last age of deterioration in the year 1052. By the twelfth century, the belief was being expressed frequently. Some writers seem to have thought of “one hundred” as an indefinite number, but apparently Jien accepted the doctrine literally. Later on (Chapter 4), he writes that only 16 reigns are left.

written Succession Tales² for the period after the outbreak of the Hōgen Rebellion of 1156. I hear that there may be some, but I have not seen any. Why? I am convinced that because people prefer to write only about that which is good and everything has been disturbed since the outbreak of the Hōgen Rebellion, they have shied away from events that are all bad and not written Succession Tales for this modern period.

Because I have been thinking that I would like to write about Principles that have caused the world to change and deteriorate in a unilateral way, I have become thoroughly convinced that my interpretations are quite reasonable. But people do not agree with me, simply entertaining ideas and feelings that are in conflict with Principles and doing precisely that which makes the world more confused and less peaceful. So I have begun to write, hoping that this will bring peace to a mind that has been mulling over matters of this kind.

Since an Imperial chronology has been provided, the reader will obtain a deeper understanding of what is written here by referring to it as he reads.³

The Beginning of Deterioration

During the thirteen reigns from Jimmu to Seimu, Emperors were succeeded by their sons. But Emperor Chūai, the fourteenth occupant of the throne, was Emperor Keikō's grandson. Seimu had had no sons, and so Chūai was appointed Crown Prince in the 48th year of the Seimu reign. Two of Keikō's sons were twins. The first-born of the twins was Prince Yamato Takeru no Mikoto who died at the age of thirty and then became a white bird that flew off into the sky.⁴ Emperor Chūai, who was Prince Yamato Takeru no Mikoto's son,

2. Both the *Eiga Monogatari* and the *Okagami* were referred to as Succession Tales (*yosugi ga monogatari*), but neither deals with events after the Hōgen Rebellion of 1156. See Chapter 8.

3. The Imperial chronology (*kōgi mendai ki*) precedes the narrative chapters of the *Gukanshō* in all extant texts but is placed at the end of this translation as Chapters 6 and 7.

4. Only a brief reference is made here to the myth which, according to the *Nihongi*, begins with Prince Yamato Takeru no Mikoto's burial in a tomb located in Ise and his transformation into a white bird that flies off in the direction of Yamato. The Prince's retainers open his coffin but find only his robes. Messengers are then sent to follow the bird, and they find that it had stopped in Yamato. So a second tomb for the Prince is built in that province. Then the white bird takes off for Kawachi and lands in the village of Furuchi, where a third tomb is constructed for the Prince. People then begin talking about "the white bird tombs," and eventually the bird flies high into the sky, leaving only the Prince's clothes and headgear in the tombs. [*Nihon koten bungaku taikei* (hereafter cited as NKBT), 67:310-311.]

made Jingu his Empress. She later became, as the great-granddaughter of Emperor Kaika and the daughter of Oshinaga no Sukune, a reigning Empress. Emperor Chūai had died because he failed to comply with instructions received in a Kami oracle. Then Empress Jingu, carrying in her womb the future Emperor Ōjin and dressing herself as a man, postponed the birth of her child and conquered the three kingdoms of Silla, Kōkuri, and Paekche. When she returned to Kyushu, she took hold of a pagoda tree in a parturition house and gave birth to the future Emperor Ōjin.⁵

Empress Jingu had followed Chūai on the throne and made Ōjin the Crown Prince. She then governed the state and acted as Ōjin's regent for 69 years. After her death, Ōjin succeeded to the throne and reigned 41 years, reaching the age of 110. Chūai had gone to Kyushu for the purpose of conquering Silla and other kingdoms of Korea because the Kami had instructed him to do so. But before he had complied with the Kami's instructions, he suddenly died.

In reflecting about these early reigns, I conclude that the earliest Principle was that succession should be correct (from father to son) and that Emperors should govern faultlessly (without the assistance of ministers) through the 18th reign. But the governing Principle for later reigns was that a grandson should be placed on the throne if there was no Imperial son.

Emperor Chūai, Japan's 14th sovereign, received instructions from the Kami but died suddenly before carrying them out. It is said that he died because there had been many instances in which he did not believe in, or act in accord with, what had been revealed to him in a Kami oracle.

Empress Jingu

Why did a reigning Empress, bearing an Imperial son in her womb, become the commanding officer of an expedition to Korea? And why did she rule the country as a reigning Empress for more than 60 years after giving birth to an Imperial son? I conclude that

5. Though Jien devotes considerable space to Empress Jingu's place in history and to her miraculous deeds, he does not include her on his list of persons born on Japan's line of Imperial descent, a list (Chapter 6) containing only the names of Emperors and Imperial sons. The soul of her son, Emperor Ōjin, was later enshrined as Hachiman, a Kami that was honored—along with the Sun Goddess—as an ancestral Kami of the Imperial House. The power, will, and creative acts of these two ancestral Kami are linked to divine Principles that are basic to Jien's theological view of history.

6. Later on in this chapter, Jien gives special attention to two other Empresses, both of whom were associated with male leaders described as Buddhist incarnations: (1) Empress Suiko, who was enthroned after the Soga

5 Summary and Conclusions

Why I Write in Japanese

It will appear condescending for me to write in Japanese [rather than in Chinese], but I do so in order to make it possible for the reader to comprehend the changing conditions of the world. Generally speaking, both priests and laymen display a serious lack of ability to understand (*chige*) when they look at the world of today, and they are producing nothing that can be called scholarship (*gakumon*). Whether a priest is studying exotic or esoteric teachings, or a layman is familiarizing himself with Chinese histories or classics, his work will be interesting and scholarship will be produced only if he grasps the meaning of what he studies by making use, as he studies, of an ability to understand. But in these final reigns no one understands anything. Everyone is like a "Dog watching the stars [without knowing what it sees]."

Buddhist writings are particularly difficult to comprehend and therefore require greater ability to understand when they are being studied by a Japanese—even if he is using easy-to-read Japanese translations—because the scriptures have been translated from Sanskrit into Chinese. Such Japanese translations are also useless for

those who try to achieve understanding by reading (1) the "thirteen classics" that include, first of all, the *Book on Filial Piety* and the *Book of Rites*, as well as the T'so, Kung-yang, and Ku-liang commentaries on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* of Confucius; or (2) the Chinese historical and literary works that range from the "three histories" and the "eight dynastic histories" to the *Anthology of Literature*, the *Literary Collection*, and *The Collection of Correct Views on Politics*.⁴

As for materials written in Japan, all documents in the house of Minister SOGA Emishi were burned at the time of SOGA Iruka's assassination (in 645). Nevertheless, Prince Toneri and K1 Kiyohito completed the *Chronicles of Japan* (in 720). (One view is that the *Chronicles of Japan* were compiled by Ō no Yasumaro⁵ et al.) That work

1. According to Burton Watson, the term "thirteen classics" seems to have been used first in the thirteenth century [Early Chinese Literature (New York, 1962), p. 148n.]. It would appear, then, that jien was keeping abreast of recent literary developments in China. The common listing of the thirteen is: (1) *ching* (Book of Changes); (2) *shu ching* (Book of History); (3) *shih ching* (Book of Odes); (4) *chou i* (Chou Changes); (5) *i li* (Book of Ritual); (6) *li chi* (Book of Rites); (7) *ch'un chiu* *Tso chuan* (Tso commentary on *Spring and Autumn Annals*); (8) *ch'un chiu* *Kung yang chuan* (Kung yang commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*); (9) *ch'un chiu* *Ku liang chuan* (Ku liang commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*); (10) *lan yü* (Analects); (11) *hsiao ching* (Classic of Filial Piety); (12) *erh ya* (Dictionary); and (13) *Meng Tzu* (Mencius).

2. These were: (1) *Shi chi* (Records of the Historian) by Ssuma Ch'ien (d. about 85 B.C.) and translated in Burton Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian of China: Translated from the Shi Chi of Su-ma Ch'ien*, 2 vols. (New York, 1961); (2) *Han shu* (History of the Former Han Dynasty) by Pan Ku (A.D. 32-92) and translated by H. H. Dubs, *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, 2 vols. (Baltimore, 1938-44); and (3) *Hou Han shu* (History of the Later Han Dynasty) by Fan Yeh (A.D. 398-445).

3. The eight were: (1) *Chin shu* (History of the Chin Dynasty) (about A.D. 265-420); (2) *Sung shu* (History of the [Liu] Sung Dynasty) (about 420-479); (3) *Ch'i shu* (History of the [Southern] Ch'i Dynasty) (479-502); (4) *Liang shu* (History of the Liang Dynasty) (502-557); (5) *Ch'en shu* (History of the Ch'en Dynasty) (557-589); (6) *Chou shu* (History of the Northern Chou Dynasty) (556-581); (7) *Sui shu* (History of the Sui Dynasty) (581-619); and (8) *Tang shu* (History of the Tang Dynasty) (618-907).

4. These three titles were: (1) the *Wen hsuan*, a famous Chinese anthology compiled by Hsiao Tung (501-531); (2) the *Wen chi* by the great Tang poet, Po Chü-i (772-846); and (3) the *Chen-huan cheng-yao*, instructions issued by Tang Tai Tsung (who reigned from 627 to 649) and compiled by Wu Ching.

5. Ō no Yasumaro is known as the author of the *Kojiki*, Japan's oldest chronicle, presented to Empress Gemmei in A.D. 712. As noted in Chapter 8, the genealogical preoccupation of the *Kojiki* (and of later works like it or influenced by it) was strong in the *Gukunshō*. But jien does not cite the work here, nor is there any evidence that he used it.

was followed by the *Continuation of the Chronicles of Japan* in 50 chapters. The first 20 chapters were compiled by Middle Counselor ITERS. The first 20 chapters were compiled by Middle Counselor ISHIKAWA Nataru, the next 14 by Minister of the Right FUJIWARA Tsuginawa, and the last 16 by Assistant Minister of Civil Affairs SUGANO Mamichi. These three were the core of a group responsible for the project, and they did the work in compliance with an order received from the Emperor. Then we have: (1) the *Later Chronicles of Japan* by FUJIWARA Osugui; (2) the *Continuation of the Later Chronicles of Japan* by FUJIWARA Yoshifusa; (3) the *Journal of Emperor Monmu* by FUJIWARA Mototsune; and (4) the *Journal of the Three Emperors* by Minister of the Left FUJIWARA Tokihira.⁶ In addition, there were [these legal works]: (1) the *Administrative and Penal [Code]* by FUJIWARA Fuhito; (2) the *Konin Era* [810-824] *Amendments and Procedures* by Minister of the Left FUJIWARA Fuyutsugu; (3) the *Jogan Era* [859-877] *Amendments* by Senior Counselor FUJIWARA Ujiminne; and (4) the *Engi Era* [901-923] *Amendments and Procedures* begun by FUJIWARA Tokihira and finished by FUJIWARA Tadahira. And there was a work with a title something like *Encyclopedia for Officials*,⁷ but it seems that no one has a copy. I have heard that one was deposited in the treasure house of the Renge-ō Cloister, but no one has even tried to take the copy out and read it.

We still have all these excellent Buddhist and non-Buddhist writings, including the complete compendium of Buddhist scripture, but no one is studying them. Everyone is like "the siskin that picks up a walnut [and does not know what to do with it]," or is "counting his neighbor's riches [without knowing their worth]." Persons born into houses [known for scholarship] think they are working hard, but they have no awareness of right Principles (*giri*). When considering the descendants of present-day scholars and what will happen from here on, one concludes that no individual will be the least bit able to succeed his father.

In reflecting about this, I suppose that because I have written in this funny way, wise-looking students—feeling that what has been written here is easy to understand—will quote assiduously from the sources and, smiling to themselves, will look wise. But that will be a farce. Indeed, it is because they do not know anything at all that,

6. The four *Chronicles* and two *Journals* listed here are Japan's Six National Histories. Cf. Chapter 8 and the Bibliography.

7. Jien is apparently referring to the *Taiho risuryō* (the civil and penal codes of the Taihō era [701-704]) and the *Yōrō risuryō* (the civil and penal codes of the Yōrō era [717-724]), although there were earlier ones. For a review of early Japanese codifications, see Felicia Cressett Boch, *Engi-Shiki: Procedures of the Engi Era* (Tokyo, 1970), 1.8-11.

8. The *Kansō jirui*, a compilation of precedents for the use of officials that is not now extant. It has been referred to in old catalogues as a 30-kan work submitted to the throne in 803 by SUGANO Mamichi et al.

having come to understand man for myself. I have set to work on this book, thinking that I might leave something of slight value for posterity as a result of my having identified and understood the Principles of things.

Since this book has been written in Japanese, it will sound common. But meaning may be deeply embedded in Japanese words. Writing what I have to say in this unusual way, and wanting the reader to identify and understand Principles and the true intent [of invisible beings]. I have written only about the nonlinear course of history, purposely explaining Principles without the use of unfamiliar words and showing how the Principles of world affairs have been created for each successive period and how those Principles have protected the state and man. If even one person in ten thousand is attracted to what I have written, or if someone thinks that what is written here is really terrible and wants to look at a few of the sources, my main desire will have been fully realized. Because there are both Buddhist and non-Buddhist writings that deal with these matters, such a person should certainly consult them. He should refer to the following non-Buddhist writings: the injunctions left by Emperor Uda (869-931);⁹ the chronicles of the two reigns [of Daigo and Murakami, 897-930 and 946-967];¹⁰ the injunctions left by Lord Kujō Morosuke (908-960);¹¹ and the house diaries of famous, knowledgeable men. As for Buddhist writings, such materials as commentaries by former meritorious priests of both the exoteric and esoteric persuasions will have some value. Only if a person reads these sources as if they were his own, and sees what lies behind them, will he be able to understand their meaning. Certainly a person will not be able to pick up Principles from the sources by dipping into them haphazardly.

I have used a large number of frivolous words—like *haato*, *muzuko*, *hito*, *shakuto*, and *kyoto*—because it is realized that they lie at the core of the Japanese language. Even if I had tried, in my pursuit of meaning, to spell out Japanese words with Chinese characters, the meaning would have been expressed less fully. Japanese words seem

9. *Kampyō yūkai* (injunctions of the Kampyō era [889-898]). These were passed on to Emperor Daigo by Uda in 897.

10. *Nidai gyōki*, a chronicle of the reigns of Emperors Daigo and Murakami. The source had several other titles. The extant portions appear under the title *Engi Tenryaku gyōki shō* (Selections from the Imperial Chronicles of the Engi [901-923] and Tenryaku [947-957] Emperors). This deals with events from 949 to 957 and has been published in *Zokuzaifu Gunsho Ruijū* (Tokyo, 1909), 5.15-125.

11. *Kujō dono no yukai* (Injunctions of Lord Kujō). These are injunctions that Morosuke passed on to his descendants and that have been published in the *Gunsho Ruijū* (Tokyo, 1904), 17.135-138.

to be inferior to Chinese words written in characters, and to be very common, but they are basic to the Japanese language. Therefore when I try to say something, I find that these words, loaded with meaning, permit me to speak clearly about the conditions of a particular period. The view that those words are absurd, appropriate only to the chatter of children and women, is valid if one is using them to compose true Chinese or Japanese poems in an original style. But by writing in Japanese for the purpose of communicating an understanding of Principles to the minds of the unlearned, I have simply followed a truly important method of achieving that objective. One should read these funny words and, through them, try simply and earnestly to understand [the Principles of things].

Purpose of This Chapter

In [previous chapters of] this book I have written only what has come to mind about Principles that change from reign to reign, but I would also like to summarize those Principles and to point up the essence of their meaning. I have [already] written about developments from the time of Emperor Jimmu to the Shōkyū era (1219-21) in accordance with my understanding [of Principles], dealing with their importance.

Rulership in China

As for broad distinctions between different sorts of rule, we find that three Ways have been followed by the ruling houses of China: the Sovereign Way (*huang-tao*); the Imperial Way (*ti-tao*); and the Kingly Way (*wang-tao*). I would like to relate Japanese Emperors and Empresses to these three Ways, but in Japan the standards for compiling chronicles (from the *Chronicles of Japan* on) have been inferior—actually non-existent. Therefore I do not think that such an attempt would turn out well. If a person would like to know how Japanese rule has been related to these three Ways, certainly everything written here—even that expressed in common Japanese words—will have to be considered and thought about.

In China a man by the name of Shang Yang¹² emerged as a minister who conducted the affairs of state [in about the 4th century B.C.]. There is a good story about his way of ascertaining the abilities of men. In the Ch'in period, the Duke of Hsiao¹³ was looking for a good minister; and so a man named Ching Chien found and

12. Shang Yang, more commonly known as Lord Shang, died in 338 B.C. To him are attributed many of the "legalistic" reforms associated with the centralized Ch'in state. See J. J. L. Duyvendak, *The Book of Lord Shang, A Classic of the Chinese School of Law* (Chicago, 1963).

13. Said to be the 13th ruler of Ch'in. With Wei Yang's help, the Duke of Hsiao instituted reforms and brought six states under his rule.

brought in Shang Yang. At the first interview with the Duke, Shang Yang expounded on the conditions under which the empire would be well governed. The Duke listened but seemed not to agree with what had been said. Shang Yang went to the Duke a second time, and the Duke did not listen and went to sleep. At the third meeting, when Shang Yang went to the Duke saying that he would like—disastrous as it was—to have another interview, the Duke moved closer and closer and accepted Shang Yang's ideas enthusiastically. Thereafter the Duke governed his empire well.

At the first interview Shang Yang had expounded the Imperial Way and admonished the Duke, and at the second one he had expounded the Kingly Way and taught the Duke. On both occasions what Shang Yang said was not acceptable. But at the third interview, when Shang Yang had come with the conviction that none of the three Ways was appropriate for this sovereign, he expounded on the policy of achieving control through the use of military might (*pa-ych*),¹⁴ and the Duke accepted it. A sovereign called Shih Huang Ti of the Ch'in Dynasty (221–209 B.C.) was also said to have ruled in accordance with this military policy.

There is another story about Shang Yang at the time of Prince Chi in the Wei Dynasty.¹⁵ A minister named Fan Shu had taken over the administration of the state affairs. He claimed that Shang Yang was a great man. But a person by the name of Ts'ai Tse emerged and argued: "Shang Yang was great, and yet it is said that he was eventually killed by 'cart ripping.'"¹⁶ Even rulers and ministers should spend their entire lives doing nothing¹⁷ and being at peace." Fan Shu lost the debate and, having been taken in by the Ts'ai Tse argument, yielded responsibilities for state affairs to Ts'ai Tse and went into seclusion. Ts'ai Tse accepted those responsibilities; and he and his sovereign spent the rest of their lives in peace. Were not these charming men? Fan Shu had been a fine man, but what made

14. This Chinese theory that a person had the right to seize control of the state by military force when a ruler is not virtuous was not popular in Japan, since an Emperor was believed to be virtuous because he was an Emperor. Jien refers to the theory here in an apparent attempt to show that China, like Japan, had been subjected to a process of deterioration that culminated in something like a Military Age.

15. The editors of the NKBT text of the *Gukanshō* conclude that Jien made a mistake: that he should have written "Prince Chao of Ch'in," the fourth Ch'in ruler after the Duke of Hsiao and one whose minister had fled from Wei.

16. Punishment inflicted by tying the arms of the culprit to two separate carts and then having the carts driven off in different directions.

17. *Wu-wei* (*wu* in Japanese), a Taoist-Legalist concept of inactivity. For a discussion of *wu-wei* at that time, see Fung Yu-lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (Glencoe, Ill., 1966), pp. 162–164.

him really unusual was the feeling that led him to yield to Principle, resign his positions, and go into seclusion. By this story we will understand fully those qualities that the Chinese assign to the words "sage" (*seijin*) and "wise man" (*keijun*). The affairs of T'ai Tsung of the T'ang Dynasty were disclosed in *The Collection of Correct Views on Politics* written during the Chen-kuan era (627–649 A.D.). Even in Buddhist enlightenment, and in the 42 stages of achieving Buddhahood,¹⁸ we are made to realize fully that there are good and bad stages in the development of enlightenment [as well as in the history of states].

Early Periods of Japanese Imperial Rule

As I continue to think of the present-day world, while considering what has happened from the reign of Jimmu down through the reigns of Daigo and Murakami [which came to a close in 967 A.D.], I find that the situation is beyond the reach of thought or word. But as I look back over those earlier reigns from the perspective of the present, I conclude that the first 13 reigns, from Jimmu through Seimu, were a time when only Imperial Law and the secular aspect of truth (*zokutai*) existed, a period of 846 years when the throne was being passed, without any difficulty whatsoever, from Imperial son to Imperial son. The next 17 reigns, from Chuai to Kimmey, were a time when the deterioration was relieved now and then by improvement. The terrible reigns of Ankō and Buretsu came then, as did the good reigns of Nintoku and Ninken. This second period of 17 reigns lasted 394 years and was therefore shorter than the first one of 13 reigns.

Then, during the reign of Kimmey, Buddhist Law was introduced to Japan. Prince Shōtoku was a child during the Bidatsu reign [which came at the beginning of the third period]. After the Prince was five or six years old, Buddhist sutras and commentaries brought to Japan from the continent were all entrusted to him; and he read them with understanding and lectured before the Emperor. During the reign of Empress Suiko—following the reigns of Bidatsu, Yōmei, and Sushun—Crown Prince Shōtoku was placed in firm control of the state as Regent (*sesshō*). And Imperial Law was maintained by Buddhist Law. If we consider the 20 reigns from Bidatsu to Kwammu—down to the time when the capital was moved to its present site in Heian—as a single stage (*ichidan*),¹⁹ we have one that

18. Several sutras refer to stages in the achievement of enlightenment, but they do not give the same number. The most common number is 52. [NKBT, 86, 520, note 4.]

19. This unit of 20 reigns runs through only a part of period three, as that period is described below. Just why Jien thinks of this as a distinct segment of Japanese history is not clear, although Kwammu's reign is obviously

lasted 236²⁰ years, less than the number of years that had elapsed during the previous 17 reigns.

Nothing Lies Outside the Bounds of Principle

In making this attempt to explain that Principles have been changing, I conclude that all phenomena (*hen*) are definitely affected by "Principle," a word written with two Chinese characters. Nothing lies outside the bounds of Principle. It is of utmost importance to know and identify wrongdoing (*higa*) as Principle. The world of man moves down the path of these Principles of wrongdoing from the beginning to the end of the first half of the present small kalpa, and up the path toward improvement from the beginning to the end of the second half. Furthermore, both large and small states follow this path toward deterioration from the beginning to the end of a small kalpa's first half.

*Different Principles for Successive Stages
of Deterioration in Japanese History*

Although I have written about various developments of the past in order to explain Principles of continuous deterioration, I would like—for the purpose of helping those who still do not understand—to summarize those Principles in a way that will be easy to comprehend:

1. The beginning [of Japanese history] when the invisible was fused with the visible and when [visible] Principles were penetrated by [invisible] Principles.

Was not this the situation from the beginning of the reign of Emperor Jimmu down through the 13th reign [of Seimu]?

2. The period of the Principle by which people of this visible world could not see historical change as the working out of Principles [created in the realm] of the invisible. It was a time when people did not understand that beginnings differ from ends, that heads differ from tails, that good does not continue to be good, and that bad does not end up as [totally] bad.

Was this not the situation from the beginning of the reign of Chuai down to the end of the Kimmey reign [in 571 A.D.]?

3. The period of the Principle by which people of the visible world did not act in accord with the will of invisible beings (*myōshū*), although everyone felt that what he was doing was actually a re-

important. After Kwammu ascended the throne, Japan had no more reigning Emperors, and Emperors were again succeeded by their sons. Moreover, Kwammu was Japan's 50th ruler (half of the allotted one hundred), and this may be why his reign ends the first half of the Imperial chronology in the Shinabara text of the *Gukanshō*.

20. The reign lengths given in the Imperial chronology (Chapter 6) add up to 234.

quirement of a Principle [created by invisible beings]. This was a situation in which something that was thought to be good would certainly be regretted later on. In this period people who thought of something as a requirement of Principle came to realize, later on and upon reflection, [that it was not in accord with the will of invisible beings].

Was not this the situation from the beginning of the Bidatsu reign [in 571] down through the time of Fujiwara Michinaga [who died in 1027] in the Go-Ichijō reign?

4. The period of the Principle by which all people first thought that what they were doing was in accord with a Principle [created by invisible beings], but when a wise man²¹ emerged and said that such things should not be done, they changed their minds and said: "He is right!"

This is a Principle for a situation that people in the Final Age (*yo no sue*) should be keenly aware of.²²

Was not this the situation from Fujiwara Yorimichi down through Toba's administration as Retired Emperor [which ended in 1156]?

5. The period of the Principle by which people would first divide up into two groups²³ and contend bitterly against each other but then, because there was still one Principle [for this period of history], the group which was drawn to that Principle would win out and act accordingly. The Principle for this period was one that people did not originally understand, but it was one which required that when leaders with prestige and virtue (*ikoku*) appeared in accordance with that Principle,²⁴ those leaders would be used.

Was not this the situation on the military side (*bushi no yo*) down through the time of MINAMOTO Yoritomo [who died in 1199]?

6. The period of the Principle by which people could not make distinctions in the fifth-period way, contending against each other and letting the time pass without settling anything. Eventually

21. Apparently a reference to Go-Sanjo (1034–73) who "had come to feel that the hearts of people would not be at peace in these final reigns if ministers continued to do just as they pleased. Regents and Chancellors continued to dominate the state, and Emperors concerned themselves only with that which was elegant" (Chapter 2).

22. This sentence suggests that Jien thought of the Final Age as beginning with period four. Since period four starts after the death of Fujiwara Michinaga in 1027, and the Japanese believed that the age of Final Law had begun in 1052, we see that Jien's conception of the Final Age reflects contemporary thinking on when the age of Final Law began. Cf. Chapter 10.

23. A reference to the two contending military clans: the Taira and the MINAMOTO.

24. Here Jien is undoubtedly referring to his brother KUJO Kanekane's supporter, MINAMOTO Yoritomo.

NOTE ON TIME PERIODS IN GUKANSHO

| Japanese periods | years BC and AD, & after death of shakya muni buddha (AS) | buddhist age | Type and Principle of Imperial Rule |
|---|---|---------------|--|
| 1. Enthronement of Emperor Jimmu to death of Seimu | 660 BC-192 AD or 290 AS-1140 AS | True Law | Emperors rule alone; unproblematic imperial succession b/c no child emperors allowed |
| 2. Enthronement of Emperor Chuai to death of Emperor Kinmei | 192 AD-572 AD or 1140 AS-1518 AS | Imitation Law | Emperor assisted by Minister; child emperors first allowed |
| 3. Enthronement of Emperor Bidatsu to death of Fujiwara Michinaga | 527 AD-1027 AD or 1518 AS-1974 AS | | Emperor assisted by Chancellor or Regent; Imperial Law maintained by Buddhist Law; pact between Amaterasu and Koyane |
| 4. Appointment of Fujiwara Yorimichi as Regent to death of Retired Emperor Toba | 1017 AD-1156 AD or 1974 AS-2105 AS | | Transition Period with rule by Retired Emperors Shirakawa and Toba |
| 5. Military Age to death of Minamoto Yoritomo | 1156 AD-1199 AD or 2105 AS-2149 AS | Final Law | Transition Period with establishment of Kamakura Bakufu under Shogun |
| 6. Beginning of Go-Shirakawa administration as Retired Emperor to abdication of Emperor Go-Toba | 1158 AD-1198 AD or 2108 AS-2148 AS | | Transition Period--with rule by Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa |
| 7. Beginning of Go-Toba's administration as Retired Emperor to present | 1198 AD on or 2148 AS on | | Emperor now assisted by individual who is both Regent and Shogun; pact among Amaterasu, Koyane, and Hachiman Bodhisattva |

they would move toward a certain position and take action, having been pulled along by bad ideas and feelings and making the mistake of constraining non-way (*mido*) as Principle. This was a period of Principle in which wrongdoing (*hiagoto*) was Principle. It was for a time when all historical change, being affected by wrongdoing as Principle, got worse as one stage of deterioration was followed by one that was even more deteriorated.

Was not this also the situation from the beginning of Go-Shirakawa's administration as Retired Emperor [in 1158] down to the end of the reign of the sovereign [Go-Toba] who is now administering state affairs as a Retired Emperor [and who abdicated in 1198]?²⁵

7. The period of the Principle by which people, when thinking and planning from the first about anything, simply react to the existing situation without looking ahead to the future, for this is a time when no one knows anything at all about Principle. This is the Principle by which people act like a person with tapeworms: when his affliction is causing no pain, he drinks water because he is thirsty and therefore gets sick again and begins to die.

This is the Principle of the present age (*yo*). Is not the present a time when there is nothing that can be called Principle?²⁶

Ever since the beginning of the Japanese state, Principles have been created to replace Principles—and political life has changed—in this way because there has been continuous deterioration in the abilities (*kiryo*) and fortunes (*kakō*) of rulers and ministers. Buddhist Law and Imperial Law, the Ancient Age and the Medieval Age, and the abilities of rulers, ministers, and commoners have certainly been made to decline together in this way, and in conformity with Principles, from the beginning to the end of the first half of the present small kalpa. Therefore a person cannot check this process, no matter what he thinks. And since the process cannot be checked, deterioration continues.

25. It will be noted that periods five and six cover roughly the same years. By resorting to this type of periodization, Jien seems to be consciously relating his conception of a down-and-up course of history to his seven periods. Although the emphasis of this outline is on continuous deterioration, period five was a time of improvement when "leaders of prestige and virtue" appeared, and period six was a time when "wrongdoing was Principle."

26. Although the destiny of future improvement is basic to the *Gukanshō* interpretation, that dimension of his periodization is not touched upon in these statements about period seven, where the stress is upon an advanced stage of deterioration in which "there is nothing that can be called Principle."

Principles That Counteract Deterioration

Nevertheless, [counteracting Principles] are definitely revealed in Buddhist and non-Buddhist literature: the Principle of "destroying evil and creating good" (*metsuza shōzen*); the Principle of "hindering evil and maintaining good" (*shaku jizen*); the Buddhist commandments "Do no evil. Do only good"; and the expedient blessings (*tsūhō hōben*) received from various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. One should join an understanding of these [Principles that can bring about improvement] with an understanding of the above-mentioned Principles [that account for deterioration]. How can one really do this? An ordinary person certainly cannot teach such understanding, but a wise man will know, through an understanding achieved by the exercise of his wisdom, how to do so. Thinking that I may be able to help others to achieve such understanding, I attempt to explain—to the extent that thought and words make this possible—[the interaction between these two types of Principles].

Scope of This Treatment

People who made a record of events in the ancient past were generally understanding men who, after hearing only one thing, knew all. And they wrote very little. If I were to write about those times after reading what these people have written, what I wrote would seem like pure guesswork. And because people of today would have no confidence in such guesswork, I find it difficult to write in detail about those times. I therefore touch very briefly on what seems to have been the situation in the ancient past.

Conditions in the Final Age (*yo no sue*) are complex and difficult to treat exhaustively, but I will take up developments after FUJIWARA Yoshifusa became the first Regent [in 866] during the Seiwa reign, and after FUJIWARA Mototsune (Yoshifusa's adopted son) forced his nephew Emperor Yōzei to step down from the throne [in 884] to make room for Kōkō.

Principles Affecting Environments

First of all, people should be made to understand, well and fundamentally, the replacement of one Principle by another. First, there was a Principle that an Emperor should never be a child under the age of ten, since a country's ruler should administer and pacify the state and be compassionate to the people. Then there had to be another Principle that after an Emperor had been placed on the throne, he should be left there no matter how bad he was—that so long as His Majesty did not voluntarily say that he wanted to step down from the throne, no one would be justified in forcing him to abdicate. Doing so would constitute "rebellion." And yet, has anyone

ever said that FUJIWARA Mototsune was engaged in an unjustifiable rebellion when he forced Yōzei to abdicate [in 884]? No one has said, or even thought of, such a thing! Word has even come down to us that Mototsune was exceedingly meritorious in serving the Emperor. And has anyone really said that it is [now] wrong to place a "child emperor" on the throne when he is only four or five years old? Or that he should be placed on the throne only when he is old enough to handle the affairs of state? Since no person has ever, in ancient or modern times, been made Emperor who should not have been placed on the throne, and since Imperial rule would have been destroyed if the enthronement of children had been abhorred, it is in accord with this [later] Principle that children are now made Emperors. By noting that these two Principles [were for different periods], one should understand that Principles change.

The State and Man

I conclude that what is of central importance to Principles is adopting methods that will be good for the state and man. "State" (*yo*) and "man" (*hito*) are not completely dissociated from each other. "State" encompasses "man." The "state" side of "man" refers to the administration of the country—to the making of distinctions between what is good and what is bad—in terms of "public Principle" (*ōnake dori*). The "man" side of "state," on the other hand, refers not to the administration of the state [in the public sense] but to [private] administration which is concerned with gently exercising compassion for everyone in all houses. "Man" includes everyone from the country's ruler on down to mean commoners (*oyashiki no kami*).

Good and Bad Emperors

It is desirable to have an Emperor whose behavior as an Emperor is good, but Japan is a country that has had the tradition, since the age of Kami, that no person should become Emperor who is not in the Imperial line of descent. It is also the tradition of the country to want an Emperor from that line who will be a good Emperor. But since it has necessarily become difficult for an Emperor to govern the state well by himself, it was established that a Great Imperial Chieftain would be appointed and used as Imperial guardian, and that the state would be governed in consultation with this minister. According to this Principle, if an Emperor is excessively bad, he will be oppressed by the fortunes (*kabō*) of state and man and will be unable to retain possession of the throne. There are various ways by which the destiny (*un*) of a bad Emperor is worked out.

Role of Imperial Guardian Determined by Ancestral Kami

An instruction from the Sun Goddess and the Great Hachiman Bodhisattva created an arrangement—referred to as the "fish-and-

water propriety"—by which it would be deemed improper for an Emperor to be the least bit estranged from his guardian. Whether the empire is governed well or becomes chaotic depends on whether that instruction is respected. Long ago, the Sun Goddess made a divine agreement (*iridaku*) with Ama no Koyane no Mikoto [the ancestral Kami of the FUJIWARA clan] that the latter was to reside in, and guard, the Imperial Palace.²⁷ The descendants of Ama no Koyane no Mikoto grasped the implications of this Principle, which was not to be violated one iota; and consequently "the three meritorious acts of the FUJIWARA clan" were performed: (1) the death penalty was inflicted by FUJIWARA Kamatari on SOGA Iruka [in 645]; (2) Emperor Kōnin was enthroned by Minister FUJIWARA Nagate and Consultant FUJIWARA Momokawa [in 770]; and (3) Emperor Kōkō was enthroned by FUJIWARA Mototsune [in 884]. The first two occurred long ago, but Mototsune's came after the Seiwa reign (858–876).

The Shortness of Imperial Reigns after the Beginning of the Medieval Age

The shortness of Imperial reigns after Seiwa is indescribable. Not one Emperor reached the age of 50 while occupying the throne. But they all seemed to live long after retirement. Everyone knows about these Emperors from Seiwa to Go-Reizei, but because the shortness of their reigns will not have been brought to the reader's attention all at once, I will list them, even though this is a tiresome thing to do:

1. Seiwa (850–880) died at the early age of 31, having reigned 18 years (858–876).
2. Yōzei (868–949) abdicated in the 8th year of his reign (876–884) and lived until he was 81. But he did not administer the state after abdication.
3. Kōkō (830–887) reigned only three years (884–887). Moreover, because of an incident, he did not occupy the throne until he was 55.
4. Uda (867–931) abdicated in the 30th [*sic*] year of his reign (887–897) and then entered the Buddhist priesthood, living until he was 65.
5. Daigo (885–930) reigned for the long period of 33 years (897–930) and died at the age of 46. His reign alone was excellent.
6. Suzaku (923–952) reigned 16 years (930–946) but died when he was 30.

27. Jien's belief in such an agreement is apparently based on his acceptance of the following sentence in the "age of Kami" section of the *Nihongi*: "The Sun Goddess also addressed this order to Ama no Koyane no Mikoto and Futotama no Mikoto: 'You two august Kami are asked also to serve together at the Imperial Palace and to guard it well.'" [NKBT, 67.153.] The second Kami was the Iwabe ancestral Kami.

7. Murakami (920-967) reigned 21 years (946-967) and lived to the age of 12. This Emperor, one of the two Emperors referred to as "Enji" (*temyaku*), really reigned quite long.

8. Reizei (950-1011) abdicated in the 2nd year of his reign (967-969) and lived to be 62, but his life after abdication was just like Yōzei's.

9. En'yū (959-991) reigned 15 years (969-984) and died at the age of 34.

10. Kazan (968-1008) abdicated in the 2nd year of his reign (984-986) and lived to the age of 41. But he was bad beyond description.

11. Ichijō (980-1011) died in the 25th year of his reign (986-1011) at the age of 32. He reigned only as a child Emperor. Although his reign was long, nothing good was accomplished.

12. Sanjō (976-1017) reigned five years (1011-16). He was Crown Prince for a long time, but nothing good was accomplished while he was Crown Prince or Emperor.

13. Go-Ichijō (1008-36) reigned 20 years (1016-36) but died at the age of 29. He also reigned long as a child Emperor.

14. Go-Suzaku (1009-45) reigned nine years as an adult (1036-45) but died at the age of 37. His reign too was not long.

15. Go-Reizei (1025-68) reigned 23 years (1045-68) and died at the age of 12. He actually reigned rather long, but simply did what FUJIWARA Yoritomi (Lord Uji) wanted.

(One will gain a deep understanding of the situation at that time by noting that one Emperor after another died early. Probably nothing reveals how one Principle has been created to replace another more clearly than how long people (high or low) live. Principles that created for Japan one form of administration after another probably would not have called for the conduct of state affairs by Regents and (chancellors before deterioration had reached the point at which Retired Emperors were to govern the state) if Emperors had continued to live to the age of 60 or 70. If Emperors had still been serving as true sovereigns and had not abdicated until the age of 50 or 60, they would have been ruling just as they did in the Ancient Age. Instead, an Emperor was placed on the throne while young, and at the beginning of his reign as a child Emperor he would have a Regent administer state affairs in his behalf. Although he would gradually grow up, he would never gain enough understanding to consider governing the state directly.

28. En'ji (901-923) referred to the reign of Daigo (897-930); and Tenryaku (947-957) to the reign of Murakami (946-976).

Sun Goddess Decided that FUJIWARA Regents Should Support Imperial Rule

But nothing was amiss in governmental affairs during this Medieval Age, because the abilities of FUJIWARA regents were superb and because they assisted Imperial rule and had the state governed well. Meanwhile, all [sic] Emperors died around the age of 30. The reason why governmental affairs came to be handled in this way was that in the age of Kami the Sun Goddess had said to the ancestral Kami of the FUJIWARA clan: "You will guard the Imperial Palace well." She did so because she realized that Emperors in the Medieval Age would not be like sovereigns in the Ancient Age. Therefore one descendant of the ancestral Kami of the FUJIWARA clan after another was born with appropriate ability, and descendants of the Minister of the Right (*Kuji*) Morosuke (908-960) emerged to assist Imperial rule. [The Principle that Emperors would not be able to rule unassisted and the Principle that the descendants of the ancestral Kami of the FUJIWARA clan were to assist Emperors] were created together.

Sun Goddess Decided that Retired Emperors Should Administer the State

Then the Sun Goddess made another decision: the state is henceforth to be administered by Retired Emperors (*dajō tennō*). Therefore three Retired Emperors handled the affairs of state in succession: Shirakawa (1086-1129), Toba (1129-56), and Go-Shirakawa (1158-79 and 1181-92). Each was destined to administer the state for a long time—Shirakawa until he was over 70, Toba until he was more than 50, and Go-Shirakawa until he had lived beyond the age of 60. Hence it was understood that a Principle had been created, which required a Retired Emperor to administer state affairs. Go-Sanjō (1034-73) should have lived long after assuming the responsibility for conducting state affairs as a Retired Emperor, but he died at the age of 40, just as he was beginning his administration as a Retired Emperor. This was strange, but it seems to have revealed the Principle that the state would now deteriorate rapidly. What Retired Emperor Go-Sanjō intended to do was probably something very fortunate [for Japanese secular history].

Bad Relations between Retired Emperors and Regents

In any case, there should have been absolutely no disagreement—only singleness of mind—between the sovereigns (*him*) who were only administering state affairs as Retired Emperors and the Regent/Chancellors (*setsuraku*). But because men and women who served the Retired Emperors as personal ministers (*kinshin*) rose to positions of influence, they stood between the sovereign and his Regent/Chancellor,

doing much to worsen relations between them. Alas, fine people as high as MINAMOTO Yoshiaki (1044-1114) were included among these personal ministers! The [present] sovereign [Retired Emperor Go-Toba] should know that the presence of these personal ministers is an important feature of deterioration in these final reigns.

Rise of Soldiers in the Military Age

Now soldiers have also emerged and, as Shoguns, have [further] isolated sovereigns and their Regent/Chancellors. After the passing of a period during which soldiers controlled the state, all military leaders were destroyed; and soldiers were simply retainers of anyone who came along. The appointment of the young Lord Yoritune of the regental house as the next Shogun has occurred because the Sun (coldness and Hachiman (*sōjō*) felt that the state should now be governed for a while by returning to the ancient model of unity between the sovereign and his Regent or Chancellor. I intend to write fully about this process by which the will of those ancestral Kami is, and will be, carried out. I will write in some detail about events after the 4th year of the Go-Sanjō reign (1068-72).

Summary of Administrations by Retired Emperors

Things changed and Go-Sanjō (1034-73) planned to step down from the throne and to administer state affairs as a Retired Emperor. But he soon died. His son Shirakawa (1053-1129) did administer state affairs as Retired Emperor until he reached the age of 77. And it was because Shirakawa abdicated to assume the role of a minister that he lived long. After his death, Emperor Toba (1103-56) was destined to administer state affairs as a Retired Emperor until age 54. Then Go-Shirakawa (1127-92), who was the grandfather of five Emperors, ruled as a Retired Emperor until he was 66. (Since it would be useless to write about the length of the reigns of the sons and grandsons of Retired Emperors who were placed on the throne after Retired Emperors took to administering the state, such details will be omitted. Emperors were removed from the throne after they had occupied it a short time, just as if that was being done on purpose.) Then came the administration of the present Retired Emperor Go-Toba (1180-1239), an administration that has existed during 28 calendar years—beginning with the year in which Go-Shirakawa died [in 1192] and running on through [1219], the [first] year of the Shōkūyū era.²⁹

29. This is one of the supports for Ishida's conclusion that the *Gukenshō* was written in 1219. It will be noted, however, that Go-Toba's administration as a Retired Emperor did not begin at the time of Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa's death in 1192, but after Go-Toba's abdication in 1198.

Deterioration of Relations between Emperor and Regent

The "fish and water" relationship between a sovereign and his Regent or Chancellor appears to have been really fine down through the reigns of Daigo and Murakami (897-930 and 946-967).³⁰ Even the SUCAWARA Michizane incident [of 901] provides proof that there was no serious disagreement between Emperor Daigo and Fujiwara Tokihira.³¹ Then the empire seems to have been placed firmly in the hands of ministers who were Regents or Chancellors after the Reizei reign (967-969).³² Until the time of FUJIWARA Michinaga (966-1027), Regents or Chancellors were not the least bit inclined to look down on an Emperor, and they pointed out and corrected an Emperor's mistakes in a fine way. But after the reigns of En'yū and Ichijō (969-984 and 986-1011), Emperors misunderstood their ministers and had such thoughts as these: "Doesn't he despise me? He will not govern the state in the way I think he should." I conclude that all such thoughts were mistakes. There was a tendency for FUJIWARA Yoritomi (992-1074) to despise the Emperor and to think of the state as his own personal property after he had taken firm control of state affairs during the Go-Reizei reign (1045-68). Emperor Go-Sanjō noted this and, feeling that ministers really had come to despise the Emperor, thought: "Now when I abdicate, I will simply govern the state directly." Even though Yoritomi and Go-Sanjō felt this way about each other, it seems that they realized this was very bad and corrected their ways; and that because the Emperor and his minister had placed themselves squarely on the correct path, state affairs really settled down.

After Shirakawa took to administering state affairs [in 1086], a Retired Emperor did just as he pleased and considered a Regent or Chancellor unimportant.³³ At the beginning of Shirakawa's administration as Retired Emperor, such persons as MINAMOTO Yoshiaki—and at the end of this administration, FUJIWARA Akiaka and FUJIWARA Akiyori—emerged as very important "personal ministers" for the Retired Emperor. Although these personal ministers looked down on a true Regent or Chancellor and made him fearfully reticent—oppressing him in a pitiful way—some remnants of the ancient spirit were still strong [in some Regents and Chancellors]. This seems to have been so down to the time of Lord Hōshō-ji Tadamichi

30. Through the Ancient Age.

31. Cf. Chapter 1.

32. Here Jien is calling attention to the emergence of a form of Imperial rule appropriate for the Medieval Age: firm control of state affairs by FUJIWARA Regents and Chancellors.

33. Conditions in the following Final Age are now taken up. Cf. note 22, above.

who was Regent or Chancellor during Toba's administration and the first part of Go-Shirakawa's.

Retired Emperor Shirakawa certainly damaged the state with his mistake of treating Tadaminchi's father, Lord Chisoku-in Tadazane, so badly: placing him under house arrest and dealing with his son in ways that would estrange father from son. It seems that differences between the invisible (*myō*) and the visible (*ken*), and between good and bad Kami, were really being manifested externally and internally. But toward the end of Toba's administration, His Majesty appears to have thought about the matter and understood that it had been a mistake to treat a Regent in such a way. So Toba consulted with Tadaminchi, followed Tadaminchi's advice, and had Go-Shirakawa placed on the throne (in 1155). This should have corrected the situation, but since history was moving along toward deterioration in this way, the political conditions could not be corrected. Therefore the destiny of the Japanese state continued to work itself out: a great rebellion broke out (in 1156), and we came definitely to the Military Age (*bushi no yo*).³⁴

Regents and Chancellors in the Military Age

After the beginning of the Military Age, Regents and Chancellors lost their *clat*, since their prestige and power to handle state affairs had now fallen to the level of third- or fourth-class officials. Henceforth there were only two persons who seemed to be like a Number One Man: Lord MATSU Motofusa (1144–1230) and Lord KIJŌ Kanezane (1149–1207). It is really sad that the situation evolved as it did. Lord MATSU was destroyed along with the TAIRA house. And because Lord KIJŌ Kanezane was elevated to the position of Regent by a MINAMOTO Shogun, the ruler of our country really lost sight of the path by which he, yielding to the sacred will (*mikokoro*), trusts and hates a Regent or Chancellor as his own personal property. Under such circumstances we have now come to a situation in which it is absurd to say that a Regent or Chancellor is good or bad. And yet the present Retired Emperor (Go-Toba) did appoint Lord Go-Kyōgoku Yoshitsune to the position of Regent (in 1202). That seems to have been a fortunate development indeed. But after a very short time, Yoshitsune died, as if in a nightmare.

While Lord KONO Motomichi (1160–1233) and Lord KONO Iezane (d. 1242)—father and son—were born into a regental house

34. For Jien, the Military Age does not follow the Final Age—the former starts later but falls within the latter. Therefore when we come to “this Age” in subsequent pages, we cannot be sure whether Jien is referring to the Final Age (which began sometime after the death of Michinaga in 1027) or to the Military Age (which began in 1156). He seems not to have made a clear distinction between the two when discussing events after 1156.

and held the position of Regent or Chancellor, they knew, heard, saw, or learned absolutely nothing about either state administration or house customs. Furthermore, they gained possession of deeds to the land of the regental house but lost, and never recovered, most of them. Because these two KONO lords have not yet been destroyed and are still living, it seems clear that we are in an age when the fish and water relationship between the sovereign and his Regent or Chancellor has really disappeared.

And yet the powerful and correct way by which Lord KIJŌ Kanezane—recently known to both sovereigns and ministers—considered state affairs was willed by the ancestral Kami of the Imperial House and of the FUJIWARA and MINAMOTO clans. Should we not therefore continue to follow that way? The recent selection of not therefore continue to follow that way? The recent selection of Minister of the Left KIJŌ Michie's son Yoritune as the next great military Shogun was certainly made by the Great Hachiman Bodhisattva.³⁵ It is a mysterious development that seems certainly to have been an act of Kami, not the doing of man.

The Ridiculous Views of KONO Motomichi

I hear that Lord KONO Motomichi and other unspeakable fellows are saying: “There is no precedent in our house for sending a son off to Kamakura to be Shogun! Isn't it disgraceful?” And I hear that there are those who think that what Motomichi says is right.³⁶ This is

35. The connection between KIJŌ Kanezane and his grandson KIJŌ Yoritune is expressed somewhat differently in the letter that Jien wrote to the sovereign's (Go-Toba's) thoughts and feelings. They are very bad. His Majesty does not really agree that this Shogun (Yoritune) should have been sent down to Kamakura. And he accepts KONO (Motomichi's) view that this was a truly shameful thing for the Minister of the Left to have done. The sovereign really believes that sending Yoritune was an underhanded act based upon a plot and that it is regrettable and distasteful that soldiers are to be placed under Yoritune's personal control. It would be a fatal mistake for you to think that this is not a serious matter. You probably could commit no more serious act of negligence (than to think otherwise). In the dream of High Priest Chōgin, the Great Hachiman Bodhisattva appeared and said to him: ‘Although I have not planned the administration of state affairs badly, the sovereign has little faith in me.’ Since the will of the ancestral Kami is something that exists deep within the invisible world, there is nothing we can do about our sovereign's lack of trust and comprehension.

36. Jien is more explicit about Go-Toba's views in his letter to SAIONJI Kintune: “There is another very important matter that I would like to speak about. No one knows as well as I do the really important points in the sovereign's (Go-Toba's) thoughts and feelings. They are very bad. His Majesty does not really agree that this Shogun (Yoritune) should have been sent down to Kamakura. And he accepts KONO (Motomichi's) view that this was a truly shameful thing for the Minister of the Left to have done. The sovereign really believes that sending Yoritune was an underhanded act based upon a plot and that it is regrettable and distasteful that soldiers are to be placed under Yoritune's personal control. It would be a fatal mistake for you to think that this is not a serious matter. You probably could commit no more serious act of negligence (than to think otherwise). In the dream of High Priest Chōgin, the Great Hachiman Bodhisattva appeared and said to him: ‘Although I have not planned the administration of state affairs badly, the sovereign has little faith in me.’ Since the will of the ancestral Kami is something that exists deep within the invisible world, there is nothing we can do about our sovereign's lack of trust and comprehension.

simply ridiculous! Something like that might have been said, even if foolish, by a person who had fallen heir to the headship of his house in a fine way. But KONOYE Motomichi was a man who, knowing nothing at all and being childishly foolish, was promoted from Middle Commander (Second Rank) to the nominal position of Chancellor (in 1179) as a result of the rebellion by which the YAIRA Shogun really threw the state into turmoil. Is it in accord with the will of the Great Hachiman Bodhisattva that the question of "house disgrace" is raised by a man who is so stupid that he does not know that he is being purposefully protected by a vengeful soul and allowed to live long in order to destroy his own house? It is a situation beyond the reach of words!

What Should Be Done?

Since it is difficult for persons to see how periods and Principles of things change, I have written this book. But even those who read what I have written will still not get what I am driving at if they do not immerse themselves in thought. What can I do about that?

It seems, in this connection, that we have come to a time when the state should be protected, and the sovereign guarded, by uniting the Regent/Chancellor house of FUJIWARA with the military house of MINAMOTO, thereby combining learning with military might. Certainly the time has come to really understand the way to return to what is correct by thinking about the ancient past, reflecting on the present, subjecting oneself to the correct will [of the Kami], and rejecting evil. In understanding this way, the first thing to do is to probe deeply into the question of whether this appointment of the next Shogun from the Regent/Chancellor house was in accord with the plan of the Great Hachiman Bodhisattva or was the doing of heavenly or earthly demons (*tengu* or *chigu*).

Power and Nature of Vengeful Souls

Since ancient times, there has been the Principle that vengeful souls (*onryo*) ruin the state and destroy man. The first thing to do about this is to pray to Buddhas and Kami.

It is said that Consultant FUJIWARA Momokawa did the fine thing of enthroning Kōnin [in 770] and, amidst a debate over who should be Kōnin's successor, had Kwammu installed as Crown Prince. But he went too far. He had a pit dug out for a jail and had Princess

His Majesty's thoughts are not brought to the surface, and therefore they have not yet become critical. But they are getting stronger. Therefore a serious incident will probably occur soon. But since the Great Hachiman Bodhisattva has spoken in this way, if the sovereign's lack of understanding is to be manifested in some great incident, he will certainly meet his destiny before that incident takes place." [Zenshū, 883.]

Ikami incarcerated therein. Because of that, as the story goes, the Princess took the form of a dragon and eventually kicked Momokawa to death.

We also are told that Regent FUJIWARA Koretada (924-972) of Ichijō became possessed by the vengeful soul of a Middle Counselor named FUJIWARA Asahira, while Asahira was still alive, and that the vengeful soul killed persons as close to Koretada as his son, junior Counselor Noritaka. (Asahira was the son of Sadakata, Minister of the Right.) At a time when he was Consultant and ranked above Koretada, and when the two were competing for a promotion, Asahira said some slanderous things about Koretada. Later on, Asahira, hoping for promotion to Senior Counselor, went to see Koretada, who had meanwhile become Regent. In those ancient times it was not easy to gain access to a Regent, and so Asahira was kept standing in the garden rather long. When Asahira was finally admitted, Koretada listened to him argue the Principle by which he should be promoted to Senior Counselor, and then said: "A few years ago when we were both hoping to be promoted to Middle Counselor, I was insulted by you. Now your promotion depends on what I think and feel. The affairs of this world really are hard to foresee!" Then Koretada suddenly returned to his quarters, causing Asahira to become so angry that he threw his scepter into his carriage with such force that he broke it in two. In telling about this, Ōe Masafusa (1041-1111), Acting Governor General at Dazaifu, also said that Asahira's soul became vengeful while Asahira was still alive. Asahira's house stands at the intersection of Sanjō and East Tōin. It is said that the descendants of Regent Koretada will not go near the place.

The vengeful soul of Senior Counselor FUJIWARA Motokata (the maternal grandfather of Prince Hirohira who was Emperor Murakami's eldest son) likewise took possession of and tormented Emperor Reizei (959-1011).³⁷ And it is said that FUJIWARA Michinaga (966-1027) was possessed by the vengeful soul of Minister FUJIWARA Akimitsu, because Akimitsu was the father-in-law of Prince Aitsuaki [who was named Crown Prince but not enthroned].³⁸ Nevertheless, Regents did not suffer from excessive destruction by such soul possession, since Buddha Law was prospering and many Buddhist priests were wise and well-trained in austerities. By sincerely trusting honored priests, people received the blessings of the Three Treasures of Buddhism. We hear that there was such trust by Lord Kujō FUJIWARA Morosuke in Grand Preceptor Jie, by FUJIWARA Michinaga in Kyōen (Abbot of the Sammai Hall) and Kyōmō

37. Cf. Chapter 2.

38. Also discussed in Chapter 2.

minister," he will have no trouble getting what he wants. It is unthinkable that the practice has gone so far.

What Should Be Done?

Since we have really entered the age of Final Law (*mappō*)⁴³—a bad age in the final reigns when soldiers have risen to positions of power in the state—my only wishes are: (1) that Retired Emperor [Go-Toba], remembering a little of Principles, will rouse himself and ask why these things have happened and then consider this question: "Why should we fall into the hands of these evil spirits andvengeful souls so easily?"; and (2) that the men and women serving the Retired Emperor as "personal ministers" will rouse themselves a little.

Another problem is that soldiers, who have lost their Shogun and have nothing to fear, are collecting—as land stewards (*jitō*)⁴⁴—all the taxes of Japan. Every "personal minister" serving near the Retired Emperor is pleased when he or she is titillated by the gift of a portion of the land steward's take. Because soldiers have military power and glare at anyone who displeases them—saying: "Hey, you!"—no one raises a hand against them. Nowadays it seems that soldiers really think they can do just as they please.

A great rebellion will be caused by this accumulation of mistakes; and the state, man, and we ourselves will be destroyed. But the horrendous three disasters (*sansai*)⁴⁵ have not yet struck. We still seem to have some remnants of Buddhist-Law activity, and the ancestral Kami of the Imperial House and of the major clans still seem to have some spark. I wish that His Majesty would discern just a little of the true intent [of the ancestral Kami], slightly weaken the forces of the non-way (*michō*) and the non-visible (*miken*), call in the two or three (maybe four or five) priests and laymen who still have some understanding, and place them in the service of the empire. The important point is this: there are now no true sages or wise men who

43. This is the only place where Final Law (*mappō*) appears in the *Gukanshō*. But the way it is used here, and the general tenor of the work's historical interpretation, indicate that this Buddhist idea of a final stage of deterioration in Buddhist Law (beginning in A.D. 1052) influenced Jen's ideas of continuous deterioration in the secular affairs of state. Such influence is clearly reflected in his use of the terms Final Age (*yo no sue*) and final reigns (*masadan*).

44. These were military officials sent to local districts by the bakufu. For a recent study of related institutional developments at the beginning of the Kamakura era, see Jeffrey P. Mass, *Warrior Government in Early Medieval Japan: A Study of the Kamakura Bakufu, Shugo, and Jitō* (New Haven, 1974).

45. Sometimes the term refers to flood, fire, and typhoon, but at other times to famine, epidemic, and war.

understand everything. For those who would become leaders, beginning with the ruler of the country and including leaders of even the smallest groups, the important requirement for maintaining peace is that they, having made distinctions between the good and bad of man, be of one mind with the good men they have called in and employed. But because crows are being brought in to do the work of cormorants—just as if this was being done on purpose—the state is being ruined.

Dealing with the Military

Principles are easy [for an understanding man to see and follow]. I wish His Majesty would order ministers who understand such Principles to assemble persons with military power and speak to them as follows:

It seems clear, to begin with, that we have come to the Final Age when soldiers (*bushi*) should be used just as at present. Therefore the present position of soldiers is not to be questioned. Even if His Majesty thinks soldiers are bad, he realizes that persons superior to them will not emerge. Under conditions of this Final Age, we have come gradually to a time when only bad persons emerge. Counter-rebellions organized to destroy such bad fellows will fail. Aside from what will be done by Heaven Way (*tendō*) in the invisible realm, the Retired Emperor will have no doubts about, or hate, you soldiers in this visible world.

The problem of land stewards is very serious! In dealing with it, the Retired Emperor will consult calmly and carefully with soldiers and then make his plans. The Imperial House will not be threatened by those who set fires⁴⁶ in order to force the court to drop demands that land stewards be dismissed. The Imperial House will not be frightened by such threats. Certainly we have now arrived at an age when all soldiers should simply know the correct way (*shōdō*).

The present Crown Prince Chūkyō and Shogun Yoritune are only two-year-old boys.⁴⁷ Clearly they were created by the ancestral Kami of the Imperial House and the MINAMOTO clan (*sōjō no Kami*). The Crown Prince's mother Kujō Rishi was an orphan and had no one to pray [for her son's appointment as Crown Prince]. We do not know whether [the Crown Prince's appointment] was a response to the request power (*ganritsū*) of the Crown Prince's maternal grandfather, Kujō Yoshitsune, but it certainly

46. *Mukachi* (inviting fires) were lit when inviting souls back home at the time of an All Souls Festival (*obon*). But in this case they were lit by persons exerting pressure on the authorities, suggesting that if their demands were not met, souls of the dead might return and cause trouble.

47. In 1219, both boys were two years old (by Japanese count). This sentence therefore provides additional support for the conclusion that the main body of the *Gukanshō* was written in 1219.

gim and Regent, the sovereign will be acting contrary to the will of the Sun Goddess and Hachiman. But by accepting it, he will become enlightened.

The Sun Goddess and Hachiman have decided that for the sake of the sovereign the (next) Regent of the FUJIWARA clan will have absolutely no inclination to rebel. Moreover, the next Regent will have been instructed to provide the sovereign with strong protection against doing something bad. And because the sovereign will be protected from straying from the Imperial way (*ōdō*), he will be prevented from harming himself—and from being left in an unclear position—when and if he is inclined to think as Retired Emperor Yōzei did. And of course such a sovereign will not be acting in accord with the sacred will of the Sun Goddess and Hachiman if he is jealous of a good Regent. This Principle [of a FUJIWARA son becoming the next Shogun and Regent] should not be opposed even a little. This is something definitely established [by the ancestral Kami].

It has come to my attention that the sovereign is making shortsighted plans [to oppose the *bakufu*] because he does not understand either the Principle of deterioration alternating with improvement from the beginning to the end of the present small kalpa, nor the Principle—granted by the ancestral Kami of the Imperial House and of the FUJIWARA and MINAMOTO clans—for this Final Age, a Principle that has come down to us from the ancient past. The Principles of things, and the history of our country, will surely be stabilized if the sovereign acts according to these Principles.

The Power of Buddhist Principles

With respect even to the "ten aspects of Buddhism,"⁵² it is said that the first and the last are the same. Indeed, the ancient past comes around to meet the present. Even though conditions of both the past and the present change, they return to the same course. FUJIWARA Kamatari (Tai Shokan) assassinated SOGA Iruka [in 645], and world affairs were then made to evolve in accordance with the constructive Buddhist Principle of "hindering evil and maintaining good."⁵³ Today, too, world affairs certainly will be made to improve in this same way. It really will be wonderful to have the sovereign [Go-Toba] united with his minister [Michie].

52. The ten aspects (*jūmon no jū nyōze*) were: (1) form (*ō*); (2) nature (*sei*); (3) substance (*tai*); (4) power (*riki*); (5) action (*sa*); (6) Inner Cause (*in*); (7) External Cause (*en*); (8) result (*ka*); (9) the result of interaction between *en* and *ka* (*ka*); and (10) the beginning and end are the same (*homatsu kyūjō*).

53. *Shōshū jizō* is one of the Buddhist Principles which Jien said had the power to temporarily check the process of kalpic decline. Since the assassination of SOGA Iruka was listed as one of "the three meritorious acts of the FUJIWARA clan," Jien is consistent in relating Iruka's assassination to a Buddhist Principle that could bring about improvement.

An Unspeakable Mistake

Having gained a general understanding of the present political situation, I have come to the conclusion that it is an unspeakable, state-destroying mistake for the Retired Emperor to superficially use Kujō Michie as his Regent while secretly thinking of him as a damnable nuisance, and also for the Retired Emperor's personal ministers to know that when they slander the Regent they are acting in accordance with His Majesty's feelings. The same sort of mistake is being made in relations between the heads of small private houses and their particular guardians. Good governance exists in a house where the master and his guardian of appropriate status really see eye to eye. Can we therefore say that it is at all in accord with Principle—in either the visible or invisible worlds, at the head or tail of things, at the beginning, middle, or end of events, or in the past, present, or the future—for FUJIWARA Kamatari's descendants (who possess both the power of learning and military might) to have disturbed relations with the country's ruler (*koku-ō*) and for the two of them to be estranged from each other? Alas! Alas! Some time ago I came to fully understand that we are somehow to yield to this Principle [of harmonious relations between the sovereign and that Kamatari descendant who will have the power of learning and military might], a Principle that was definitely created for the Final Age. No matter what we may say, we must act in accordance with its requirements.

During this Final Age we have been moved inexorably toward the Principle that state affairs are not to be peaceful. And since it is the destiny of the times that we come to a point at which evil demons, and bad Kami are purposely and definitely making things worse, even the beneficial power (*kyōku*) of the Three Treasures of Buddhism, and of the good Kami, is ineffective. Therefore the rise of each incident precipitates further deterioration, and we come in this way to what is called the Final Age. Under conditions of the Final Age the present Retired Emperor has come to feel more and more strongly that there should be no strong, bothersome Regent. This is a really serious mistake. It seems that His Majesty would be displeased with the appearance of a Regent or Chancellor who, as a strong man enjoying both the power of learning and military might, could not be moved one bit [from doing what he thought he should do]. So now the state is being ruined. The Retired Emperor should become deeply aware of this Principle [of unity between a sovereign and such a Regent or Chancellor] and desist, once and for all, from making mistakes.

There definitely is another Principle: a sovereign selects his minister and a minister selects his sovereign. It would be a fine thing if this Principle could be fully understood by considering the following: the relationship of these two selections to each other; how this Principle and this country of Japan have existed since ancient times;

and how there have been notable examples [of ministers selecting their sovereign as well as sovereigns selecting their ministers] in accordance with this Principle.

Arrangements Made by Ancestral Kami

The Sun Goddess enshrined at Ise Shrine and the Great Illuminating Kami enshrined at Kasuga certainly consulted together and decided (*gijō*) [how Imperial rule was to be supported] in the distant past. And the Great Hachiman Bōshisauva and the Great Illuminating Kami of Kasuga consulted together and decided [how Imperial rule is to be supported] in the present.⁵⁴ Thus the state was and is to be maintained. It is clear that the decision for the present, made after the state had been buttressed this way and that, has been made for these final reigns and requires that the sovereign have a guardian who has the power of both learning and military might.

Succession in China and Japan

In China it has been important, when considering the question of dynastic succession, to select a person who is superior in terms of one thing only: his ability (*kiyō*). It has therefore been established that a man becomes Emperor in China because he has fought and defeated the ruling house of the previous dynasty]. But in this country of Japan, there never has been—from the beginning—an Emperor who has not been in the Imperial line of descent (*ain*). The heads of noble houses below the Imperial House have also been selected according to the principle of head descent. Because we have held strictly to that way of dealing with the question of succession, there had been—down to the present—no deviation from that custom, no matter what kind of situation has arisen. And during the remaining sixteen of the allotted one hundred reigns, there certainly will never be the slightest departure from it. The present sovereign [Go-Toba] probably will not be able to maintain his position as sovereign if he now hates, or is jealous of, the man [Yorisune] that the ancestral Kami of the Imperial House, and of the FUJIWARA and MINAMOTO clans (*sōjyō shasoku*),⁵⁵ brought forth as a Regent who would have the combined strength of learning and military might.

54. In this passage the Great Illuminating Kami (the ancestral Kami of the FUJIWARA clan) is a party to both agreements (the one for the past and the one for the present), but a few pages back the Sun Goddess tied the two agreements together. In any case, the Imperial House is involved in both, for Hachiman was not only the ancestral Kami of the MINAMOTO clan but one of the two ancestral Kami of the Imperial House.

55. *Sōjyō* referred, in those days, to the two ancestral Kami of the Imperial House: the Sun Goddess enshrined at Ise and Hachiman enshrined at the Iwashimizu Hachiman. The meaning of *shasoku* is less clear. Sometimes

Two Ways of Selecting a New Sovereign

In Japan there are two ways by which a minister selects a new sovereign (*kim*). The first way was followed by TAIRA Kiyomori who, having taken a dislike to Retired Emperor Go-Shirakawa, sought to set himself up as a sovereign who would administer state affairs, first by placing Go-Shirakawa's son [Takakura] and then Go-Shirakawa's grandson [Antoku] on the throne [in 1168 and 1180]. MINAMOTO Yoshinaka also followed this course when, having won a military victory, he had the sovereign [Go-Shirakawa] placed under house arrest [in 1183]. Although one cannot say that Yoshinaka actually selected a new sovereign by doing what he did, this soldier had it in his heart to select a different sovereign, one who would administer state affairs [in the place of Go-Shirakawa]. So this is one way to select a new sovereign, a way that disrupts the state. But there is a second way, one that pacifies the state. The disruptive way is the way of rebellion and will not be successful.

Now the second way to select a new sovereign (*kim*), the way by which the state is pacified, was followed by: (1) FUJIWARA Mototsune when he forced the abdication of Emperor Yōzei and enthroned Kōkō [in 884]; (2) Minister FUJIWARA Nagate and Consultant FUJIWARA Momokawa when they had Kōnin enthroned [in 770]; and (3) those ministers that searched out and enthroned Keitai, following the death of Emperor Buretsu [in about 510]. This second way was established by the Principle that "because these sovereigns were bad, they had to be removed for the good of both the sovereign and the state."⁵⁶ A Principle had been definitely established that their successors would emerge and bring good fortune to this country of Japan, during the remainder of this first half of the present small kalpa, and so ministers selected Imperial successors in response to acts of Kami grace performed in the realm of the invisible. And because of what was done, descendants of those successors have been enthroned without mishap. And thus the state (*yo*) has been maintained until the present day. Clearly, these are the two ways to select a new sovereign.

it seems to refer to all other ancestral Kami, but, as used in the *Gukanshō*, it frequently (if not exclusively) stands for ancestral Kami of the FUJIWARA and MINAMOTO clans.

56. When discussing the reigns of Buretsu and Yōzei in Chapter 1, Jien tells us how bad these two Emperors had been; but we detect some ambivalence about Empress Shōtoku. Here he implies that the Empress was one of the three bad sovereigns, but in Chapter 1 she is identified as a person who achieved Buddhahood, leaving the impression that she was removed from the throne mainly because of Dōkyō's improper political ambitions, not because she was a bad sovereign.