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Alexey Lushchenko

**The *Heike Monogatari Hyōban Hidenshō*
Commentary in the Edo Period:
Discussion, Criticism, and Education**

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Abstract: This article presents several passages from the anonymous 17th c. commentary *Heike monogatari hyōban hidenshō*. This understudied commentary on the medieval *Tale of the Heike* shows the didactic aspect of this work's reception in the Edo period. Based on comparison with similar texts, such as the commentary *Teikanhyō*, the claim is made that didactic works of this kind have group authorship and are related to group discussions (*kaidoku*) by warriors interested in matters of leadership and statecraft. Commentaries such as the *Heike monogatari hyōban hidenshō* were linked with educational settings throughout the Edo period: in the 17th c. they were used for lectures to daimyo lords, and in the 18th–19th cc. they were found in domain schools (*hankō*) since their content made them suitable for educating young warriors.

Keywords: Japan, Edo period, *gunsho*, didactic commentaries, *Heike monogatari*, *Teikanhyō*, group discussion (*kaidoku*), domain schools (*hankō*), education

1. Introduction

The *Commentary with Evaluations and Secret Transmissions about the Tale of the Heike* (*Heike monogatari hyōban hidenshō* 平家物語評判秘伝抄, 1650) is a 24-volume anonymous commentary on the famous *Tale of the Heike* (*Heike monogatari* 平家物語, 13th c. CE). It belongs to the “military texts” (*gunsho* 軍書) category of didactic works for warriors of the Edo period (1603–1868). These texts were a part of so-called “military studies” (*gungaku* 軍学, *hyōgaku/heigaku* 兵学), a scholarly field closely related to

warrior education dealing especially with statecraft, leadership, and ethics. In general, military studies were organized as the world of secret transmission (*hiden* 秘伝) with various schools, masters, disciples, levels of initiation, secret texts and teachings transmitted in person (*kuden* 口伝). Some texts, such as the *Heike monogatari hyōban hidenshō* (henceforth, *Heike hyōban*), were published. The commentary is structured as a collection of didactic essays based on specific passages from the *Heike monogatari*. Its “evaluation” (*hyō* 評) comments discuss characters and their behaviour, while “transmission” (*den* 伝) comments contain fictional inside stories, legends, and other plausible content that reinterprets the original work.

In this article, I examine several passages from the *Heike hyōban*, suggest a connection with group discussions (*kaidoku* 会読), and discuss this commentary’s educational role in the Edo period.

2. Several passages from the *Heike hyōban* commentary

1) Discussing military strategy: fortresses

The entire *Heike hyōban* commentary can be described as a long discussion of military, political, and ethical matters based on the content of the *Heike monogatari*. Some passages actually take the form of conversations between a famous person and one or several people. In accordance with the overall didactic quality of the work, such conversations serve the purpose of instructing readers about a particular topic. For example, the following example featuring the famous general Minamoto no Yoshitsune 源義経 (c. 1159–1189) is a small piece of a typical military studies text dealing with fortresses.

傳曰。或時佐藤兵衛つぎのぶ嗣信。義経に申上げるは。鎌倉の城墩を
 みるに。地形ぎやうよろし宜からず。江のしまの地えひろき時は。よき城地
 たるべしと申ければ。義経仰られけるは。城に大小の地とて二
 つ有。かゝる処は小うちの中の小地とてさのみ善よき地形とは云べから
 ず。いかんとなれば。三方は深海じんかいけん險難にして。敵寄よせがたしとい
 へ共み。又味方も出がたし。一方の地は平地也といへども。是は

又隘路也。故に敵外より其道を切ふさぎ。強兵を纒にすぎり。
 其口をませ。残処の人数をもつて。其國を治とる時は。何十
 万騎有とも。討て出る事叶べからず。故に能城地とはすべから
 ず。但時に寄。かやうの所を城とする事有。是は其國を攻んと
 する者。付城と云にかやうの所をとる事有。又暫難を避て後
 攻の助を待。地となすべし。城の生地と云は秘術の傳有。凡
 下の知処にあらずと云。爰をもつて見る時は。能遠が城。地
 形の理是に応ず。然らば是難を避るに安き便有。只將の不才
 による時は。善地も悪地となり。將才智有時は。全地形の
 煩なし。法曰。知則勝事安し。智不智密なる時は。是を
 守て己を正すと云り。然ば良將の勝事を知事。愚をもつて
 計がたし。是によつて勝事をしらざるは。必良將にあらず。後
 世の人主如何々々

Transmission says: Once Satō Hyōe Tsuginobu¹ said to Yoshitsune: “When one looks at the Kamakura fortress, its terrain is not good. If the land of Enoshima would be wide, it would be a good land for a fortress.” Yoshitsune said: “There are two kinds of fortresses: on large and small areas. Such a place is a small area among small ones, and it cannot be said to be a very good terrain. Why is it so? Its three sides are deep sea and steep slopes, although it is difficult for an enemy to approach, own forces have trouble going out, too. Although one side is level ground, it is also a narrow road. Thus, when an enemy shuts this path from outside, selects a few strong warriors making them guard the entrance, and takes control of the land with the remaining forces, one cannot fight and go out no matter how many thousands of horseback warriors one has. For this reason, it should not be considered a good area for a fortress. However, depending on a situation, such a place can serve as a fortress. One who is going to attack a province takes such a

¹ Satō Tsuginobu 佐藤繼信 (1158–1185), a retainer of Minamoto no Yoshitsune who was killed by an arrow in the Yashima battle saving Yoshitsune’s life.

place to make a fort [for attack]. Also, one should use such a place to avoid trouble for a while and wait for reinforcements for a later attack. There are transmissions about secret techniques concerning the true quality of fortresses. Commoners do not know them.” Considering it like this, the terrain of the Yoshitō’s fortress² corresponds to this one. So, it can be easily used for avoiding trouble. However, in case the general is incompetent, even a good terrain becomes a bad one. When a general is skillful and wise, there is absolutely no worry about terrain. The *Rules* says: “When one knows, winning is easy. When it is not known whether one is wise or not, one is careful about this and rectifies oneself”. So, a good general knows how to win, it is difficult to plan being foolish. Thus, if one does not know how to win, one is certainly not a good general. How about rulers of the later era?³

Fictional legends such as this one instruct Edo-period warriors about castles. Making the famous general Yoshitsune one of the characters is a way to attribute the content to a very authoritative source. Also, it may be the case that the *Heike hyōban*, perhaps meant as an introductory text to military studies, seeks to raise interest in military studies in an entertaining way and to draw readers (or listeners) to continue their studies with a more advanced, systematic, and expensive treatises or teachings acquired from a master in person.

2) Criticism of the retired emperor Go-Shirakawa 後白河 (1127–1192, r. 1155–1158)

In general, there is no single character evaluated as perfect in the commentary. Even imperial figures become the object of criticism, which is likely inspired by a Confucian attitude to moral qualities of rulers. The rise to power of the Heike leader Taira no Kiyomori 平清盛 (1118–1181) casts

² In the *Heike*, Chapter 11:2 “Katsu-ura and Ōzaka Pass,” Yoshitsune lands on Shikoku island and attacks a defensive position or a fort of a Heike supporter Sakuraba no Suke Yoshitō 桜庭介良遠 (years unknown) also known as Taguchi no Yoshitō 田口良遠. The fort was surrounded by a marsh on three sides and a moat on the fourth side. Genji forces swiftly attacked it across the moat and took the fort making Yoshitō flee.

³ *Heike hyōban*, vol. 21 (comment on the *Heike*, Chapter 11:2 “Katsu-ura and Ōzaka Pass”).

doubt on the ability of the retired emperor to appoint able and virtuous people to high posts:

(...) 然に清盛大政大臣となりぬる事。是れ帝王の御不徳故
じやう 成べし。たとひ帝みかど不徳にまし / \ て。時の媚こびによつて此官を御
ゆるさ 許れ有と云とも。清盛徳くわん有時は。又大官くわんにのぼるべき道にあ
みやうもん らず。されば天下に官位を定る心。いかなる故ぞと云事をし
よく ざれば。人々一世の名聞利欲ほまれの誉とのみおもへり。故に世に
かう 高官高位いの人出来ぬれども。其人一世の快樂くわいらくのみにして。終
つい に天下の為とはならず。是代々あきらかに人の知処ついでにあらずや。
 (...)

[...] Kiyomori, however, became the Grand Minister due to the Emperor's lack of virtue. Even though the Emperor lacked virtue and granted this post by occasional flattery, [in case] when Kiyomori had virtue, it is also not the way by which he should have risen to an important post. Thus, if the meaning of establishing offices and ranks in the state is not known, people only think of [office and rank] as fame and greed of one lifetime. Because of this, although people of high office and rank appear in the world, they only spend lifetime in pleasure and eventually this does not benefit the state. Isn't this known clearly by generations of people? [...]⁴

Unlike the *Heike monogatari* in which imperial figures are usually depicted as suffering from arrogant warrior leaders, the *Heike hyōban* commentary openly points out wrong decisions of emperors that weakened imperial rule and allowed warriors to gain excessive power in the state. As is typical in this commentary, from a specific action or decision the commentator derives a general didactic point. The topic of appointments is one of the recurring themes in this work, and in *gunsho* texts in general, and it constitutes an important part of the analysis of causes of disorder in the state.

A similar idea is discussed in the following comment:

⁴ *Heike hyōban*, vol. 1 (comment on the *Heike*, Chapter 1:5 “One Man’s Glory”).

評曰。 (...) 此時あたつに当さいれいて。此祭例もなく。藤氏の公卿も参ら
 れざる事は。是皆上かみの不徳とく故に。かくは成果はてぬるもの也。其
 源みなもとを尋たづねるに。是一院の御あやまり 謬きげんより出たり。機嫌まかせにのみ任給
 ひ。平氏じに過分くはの賞禄しやうろくを与あたへ。天下けんいの権威うははを奪ゆくれさせ給ふに
 よつて。今かくのごとくに成行もの也。 (...)

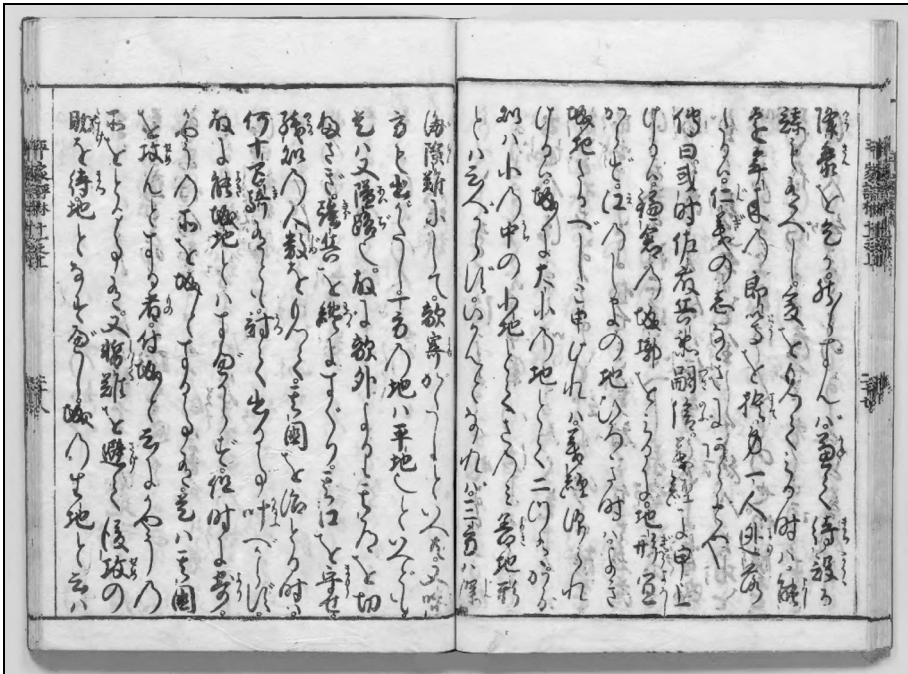
Evaluation says: [...] At this time there was no such ceremony and custom, and the Fujiwara court nobles also did not attend. Everything ended up like this because of the lord's lack of virtue. When one seeks the origin of this, it has come from the errors of the First Retired Emperor [Go-Shirakawa]. The present situation developed like this due to him acting only according to his own mood, giving excessive rewards and fiefs to the Heike, and being deprived of the power over the state. [...]⁵

In fact, criticism of Go-Shirakawa was quite common in historical texts of the Edo period, such as the *Grove of Critical Comments on the History of Great Japan* (*Dai Nihonshi sansō* 大日本史賛藪, written in 1720, as separate work in 1746), and his mistakes were seen as one of the major causes of trouble in the late Heian period, including the Genpei war.

3) Praise of Yoritomo

Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝 (1147–1199) is one of the central figures in the *Heike hyōban*. His evaluations differ from one case to another, but in the following episode he is praised for being a wise general and ruler who knows how to manage his vassals.

⁵ *Heike hyōban*, vol. 11 (comment on the *Heike*, Chapter 6:1 “The Death of Retired Emperor Takakura”).



A comment praising Yoritomo
from the *Heike monogatari hyōban hidenshō* (volume 21)⁶

評日。 (...) 惣じて軍の道。権謀を用るの心は。仁義の衰疲
 を助 べき 志 第一也といへども。又衆を自在につかふ事を得
 ざる時には叶ず。衆を自在につかはんと欲せば。常に是を愛し
 錬べし。然ども義経の大將を承給ふごときんば。平生錬ざる士
 卒に。今俄に仁義を施すと云とも。其澤よく上下に及がた
 し。故に先権謀をもつて。諸人を従。下の気を吞得て。次
 仁徳日々に施べし。義経虎韜巻を見て。鬼一が兵法を傳
 といへども。いまだ智権の骨を悟ず。故に弱弓強弦を張
 がごとし。されば頼朝智権の骨を用ゐられたる例有。寿永三

⁶ Image from the website of the National Archives of Japan, Digital Archive, <https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/das/image-j/M2015071311021857032>.

年十一月二十一日に御用の事有て。筑後守俊兼をめさる。此者
 常に驕長過して。衣服花美を好。出仕の時には毎度小袖を十
 ほど着し。其袖妻に至るまで。色々を尽せり。頼朝御覧有て。
 先俊兼が刀を御覧有べきよしを仰出され。即刀をもつて。俊
 兼が小袖のつまをおしきらせ給て。頼朝内に入らせ給ひ。仰出
 されける様は。汝富才翰なりといへども。何ぞ儉約をは存ぜざ
 るや。千葉助。土肥次郎などが所領は。汝と同じかるべから
 ず。然に此君とも衣服以下常に僿品を用。全花美を好ざる
 故に。家内富有にして。数多の郎等を扶持し。常に勲功を励
 す。汝財産を費処をしらず。是何の忠義といはんや。自今以
 後此事停止すべしと仰出されければ。俊兼理に赤面して。
 謹て仰を承る。折節有合処の武士は是を見て恐。傳て是を
 聞所の者は。制せされども花美を好ずと云り。是良将の人を
 従の心。己に行じて人にしめす時は。其法立ずと云事なし。
 末世に至て然る心を悟ずして。上には花美好色を事とし。下
 を制せんと欲す。故に其法たゞざるをもつて悟給へ。故に無制
 の法をもつて人を治事。是兵法の骨髓とするもの也。太公曰。
 三皇は言なふして。化四海に流と云り。凡衆を治る事。寡
 を治るがごとくなるものは。分数是也。故に是に至て甚深思議
 すべからず。必傳受する事有べし

Evaluation says: [...] Overall, in the Way of the Military, the mean-
 ing of using schemes is primarily [reaching] the goal of sustaining be-
 nevolence and justice that decline, but [this goal] is not achieved when
 one cannot use troops at will. When one wants to use troops freely, one
 should always show affection and train them. However, in the situation
 like this one when Yoshitsune accepted to be a general, even if one
 suddenly spreads benevolence and justice now to officers and warriors

that do not usually train, its blessing will have difficulty reaching the high and low. So, first one uses schemes, makes some people follow, gains control of the subordinates' spirit, and then one should spread benevolence and justice every day. Yoshitsune saw the scroll with the *Tiger Secret Teaching* and was initiated into the military strategy of Kii-chi,⁷ but he still does not perceive the essence of wise schemes. Thus, it is like stretching a strong string with a weak bow. So, there is an example of Yoritomo using the essence of a wise scheme. In the year Juei 3 (1184), in the eleventh month, on the twenty-first day, there was an official matter and he summoned Toshikane, the lord of Chikugo.⁸ This person was always excessively extravagant, liked luxurious clothes, and every time he went into service he was wearing as much as ten short-sleeved garments devoting attention even to the colours of the sleeves' hems. Yoritomo saw it, and saying first that he had to see Toshikane's sword, he then cut off the hem of Toshikane's garments with the sword. Yoritomo entered inside and said: "Your wealth is learning, but why don't you know about frugality? Chiba governor,⁹ Doi no Jirō,¹⁰ and other lords' landholdings are certainly not the same as yours. However, these lords always wear humble clothes and such, and they don't like luxury at all. For this reason, their houses are rich, they sustain numerous retainers, and always encourage distinguished service [by giving rewards]. You don't know how to spend your fortune. What kind of loyalty is that? From now on, you have to stop it".¹¹ When he said so, Toshikane certainly blushed and humbly accepted the order. Those warriors who were present at that time saw it and were afraid. Those who heard others tell about it, did not like luxury even without [direct] commands, it is said. The [essential] meaning of a good general making others follow is to practice oneself and show others. When he does so,

⁷ Kii-chi Hōgen 鬼一法眼, a late-Heian semi-legendary monk of the Kurama temple, yin-yang master knowledgeable in civil and martial matters. According to a legend in the *Gikeiki* 義経記 (15th c.), Yoshitsune managed to gain access to his secret military texts.

⁸ Fujiwara no Toshikane 藤原俊兼 (years unknown), an official of the early Kamakura period, Yoritomo's secretary, lord of the Chikugo province.

⁹ Chiba Tsunetane 千葉常胤 (1118–1201), a general of the late Heian and early Kamakura periods.

¹⁰ Doi Sanehira 土肥実平 (?–1191), a general of the late Heian and early Kamakura periods.

¹¹ The original source of this story is the *Mirror of the East* (*Azuma kagami* 吾妻鏡), entry for Genryaku 1 (1184)/11/21.

his laws are always maintained. In the Latter Age, this meaning is not perceived, those on top indulge in luxury and lust, and wish to command those below. For this reason, their laws are not maintained. Understand it! Thus, ruling others by laws without [direct] commands is considered the essence of military studies. Taigong said: “The Three Emperors did not speak, but the changes flowed in the Four Seas”.¹² Overall, controlling [numerous] troops is like controlling a few people, it is [called] “dividing numbers.” So, at this point, one should not think profoundly [about it]. One should definitely be initiated [into this matter].¹³

The central episode with Yoritomo is a retelling borrowed from the historical record *Mirror of the East* (*Azuma kagami* 吾妻鏡, late 13th — early 14th cc.). In a spectacular fashion Yoritomo cuts off with a sword the hem of a dress of one of his vassals Toshikane reproving him for excessive luxury and sending an effective indirect message to all his followers that they must be frugal. The commentator approves of this method to make subordinates follow laws without direct orders and even calls it “the essence of military studies.” In general, one of the central ideas of the commentary is the concept of the ruler being a model for subordinates: only when the ruler leads by example will vassals make effort to follow his rules. Rulers of the “Latter Age,” which includes the Edo period, are criticized for living in luxury and yet issuing laws about frugality to subordinates.

4) Criticism of Yoritomo

In the *Heike hyōban* Yoritomo is not evaluated consistently as an ideal general and ruler. For example, the following passage criticizes Yoritomo for misusing power for private benefit after defeating the Heike.

頼朝。日本のさうつゐふし惣追補使を給て。段別にべつ兵糧米らうまいを宛あてをこなふ行へき
由そうもん奏聞せられし事

評曰。頼朝平家をほろぼし給ふ事。其功他に異也。然といへども是朝敵てうを退治たいちせんが為也。朝敵てうを退治たいせしむる事は。君を

¹² A quote from the *Three Strategies*, “Middle Strategy.” See SAWYER 1993: 300.

¹³ *Heike hyōban*, vol. 21 (comment on the *Heike*, Chapter 11:1 “Bow Oars”).

やすん 安じ奉らんが為也。然に頼朝君恩をぬすんで私曲に用。是
 前代未聞の無道也。されども天運時を勸るに此君天下を保
 給ふにおいては自今以後。兵乱たゆべからず。故に武家天下の
 惣追補使をとつて。天下を治べき事を察して。万民の為に是を
 奏する時は。是。外不義に似たりといふとも。内に誠を存る故
 成べし。是さへ始は人のうたがふへき所也。されども良將は。
 己が身を謙り。儲王撰家の長子を申下し奉つて。天下の將軍
 をそなへ奉り。其身は下位有て。天下の權威をとつて。正政を
 行給はゞ。是則万代の忠臣名将と云べき者ならん。然に頼朝是
 を私になし給ふ事。大きな非義也

Yoritomo applied [to the retired emperor Go-Shirakawa] for appointment of constables across Japan with authority to levy military provisions from land area.

Evaluation says: Yoritomo's merit in destroying the Heike is greater than anybody else's. However, this is because he suppressed enemies of the court. Having court enemies destroyed is meant to relieve the lord. Yoritomo, however, stole the lord's favour and used it for own benefit. This is outrageous and unprecedented. Nevertheless, when one considers the will of Heaven at the time, if this lord [Go-Shirakawa] continued to keep [control of] the empire, the military disorder would not cease. So, when a military house perceives that the empire should be governed by taking constable offices [under control], and reports to the emperor about this for the sake of all the people, this appears to be an injustice on the surface, but at a deeper level it certainly has validity. Even this, at first, is certainly suspicious to others. A good general, however, behaves humbly, appeals to imperial princes and heirs of regent families, assumes the [post of] the empire's shogun, and if he, having a low rank, takes power in the empire and rules correctly, then he will be called a loyal retainer and a famous general of all times. Yoritomo, however, did it for private benefit, and this is a great injustice.¹⁴

¹⁴ *Heike hyōban*, vol. 23 (comment on the *Heike*, Chapter 12:6 "The Yoshida Grand Counselor").

In addition, Yoritomo is criticized for persecuting and destroying the Heike and their retainers.

まさ そくたうばつ
時政平家の子息討罰有し事

評曰。是頼朝ともの不徳とくなる制罰せいばつ也。兵法曰罪つみは一人ひとりに在。なんぞ衆類しゆるいのなす所ところならんや。仁徳じんとく天下てんかをおほひなば。誰か敵たれする者ものあらんや。尤平家頼朝ともを助置たすけをき。今却かへつて頼朝ともにほろぼされたりといへども。是まつた全く頼朝よりともの威功いこうにあらず。平家の驕長おこりじ。法くわをみだり天下てんかを苦むくるし。故ゆゑに天下てんかの上下じやうげ平家へいけを背そむく。是まづ即平家へいけをほろぼしたるにあらずや。孟子曰。六国りくごくを亡ほろぼすは是こゝ六国りくごく也と云々。頼朝せい聖道しゆしを修給しゆふにおいては。天下てんかに免札めんを出し。吾平家われを亡まつたす事まつた全私まつたの意趣いしゆにあらず。一ひとつには朝敵てう。二ふたには天下しよしの諸士しよし人民みんくるしむるによつて。世よを安やすんぜんが為ために是こゝを滅ほろぼす。天下てんか既すで正制せいに帰きするにおいては。縦平氏たどひの子孫そんと云とも。何ぞみだりに是こゝを罰ばつすへけんや。若ごと其身徳とくを長ながじ。大道だうを修しゆする人ひとにおいては。何ぞ此人こゝに天下てんかをおしむべき。況平氏いはんやの郎等らうとうにおいて。何ぞ誅戮ちゆりくを加くはん。義えんにより縁おにちう応ちうじて住居きよせしむべきもの也。若もし逆心ぎやくしんをさしはさみ。不義ふぎを慕したひ。正義せいぎに敵てきする輩とも是こゝにあるにおいては。速すみに忠進しゆんせしむべし賞しやうは功こうによつて宛行あてをこなるべしと。制禁せいきんを出ださるゝにおいては。いかんぞこれ良将いほと云いざるべけんや。然しかといへども。頼朝たん其人けんにあらず。其政まつりこと短たんなるものは。其代たも亦短たん也。太公曰。賢人けんの政まつりことは。人ひとを降くだすに體たいをもつてす。聖人せいのまつりごとは人ひとを降くだすに心こゝろをもつてす。體たいに降くだる則すなはち始はじめを謀はかるべし。心こゝろに降くだる則すなはち終おはりを保たもつべしと云々

Tokimasa destroyed and punished Heike descendants

Evaluation says: This is an immoral punishment by Yoritomo. The *Military Strategy* says: “The guilt lies with one man.”¹⁵ How can [a crime] be something done by a multitude of people? If benevolence and virtue cover the empire, who will oppose this? Although the Heike, who had spared Yoritomo, are now destroyed by Yoritomo, it is not Yoritomo’s achievement at all. Since the Heike’s arrogance grew, they put laws in disorder and troubled the empire, the high and low in the empire turned away from the Heike, and this is what destroys the Heike, isn’t it? The *Mencius* says: “What destroys the Six States are the Six States themselves.”¹⁶ Yoritomo, cultivating the Way of the Sages, should have placed a pardon notice saying: “My destruction of the Heike is not my private revenge at all. Since, first of all, they are court enemies, and second, they trouble gentlemen and all the people of the empire, I destroy them to calm the society. As the empire already returns to correct laws, although being Heike descendants, why should they be punished arbitrarily? If they are virtuous and practice the Great Way, why should they not be in the empire? Even more so in case of Heike retainers. Why should they be executed? They should be allowed to settle according to their righteousness and affiliation [to the Heike]. If there are fellows who harbour treachery, like injustice, and oppose righteousness, they should be quickly brought to loyalty. Reward will be given according to merit.” If [Yoritomo] had issued [such] a ban [on execution], how could one not call him a good general? However, Yoritomo is not such a person. His rule is short and his life is short, too. Taigong says: “A wise person’s rule makes others submit with their bodies. A sage’s rule makes others submit with their minds. When their bodies submit, one can plan the beginning. When their minds submit, one can keep the end”.¹⁷

The harshness of Yoritomo’s revenge is linked with brevity of his rule and life. Criticizing the persecution of the Heike the commentator may also hint

¹⁵ A quote from the *Six Secret Teachings*, “Tiger Secret Teaching,” section “Occupying Enemy Territory”. See SAWYER 1993: 87.

¹⁶ This quote is not from the *Mencius*, but from the “Fu on the Epang Palace” (Ch. *Epang gong fu* 阿房宮賦) by the Tang poet Du Mu 杜牧 (803–852 CE).

¹⁷ *Heike hyōban*, vol. 23 (comment on the *Heike*, Chapter 12:6 “The Yoshida Grand Counselor”). Final quote is from the *Three Strategies*, “Inferior Strategy.” See SAWYER 1993: 303.

indirectly at measures taken by the Tokugawa in the first half of the 17th c. to suppress or weaken daimyo and their retainers who opposed the Tokugawa. This kind of criticism is not surprising at all since a large portion of *gunsho* works, perhaps including the *Heike hyōban*, was written by *rōnin* scholars many of whom served discontented *tozama* 外様 daimyo. At the same time, the commentator suggests that former retainers of the losing side should be integrated into the new hierarchy as long as they do not cause trouble.

3. Context for the *Heike hyōban* — group discussion (*kaidoku*)

Gunsho texts, and evaluative commentaries (*hyōban*) in particular, were not always created by a single author, but often involved a group of people, and they were not only silently read by individuals, but also used in group settings, such as lectures and discussions involving a daimyo lord and his retainers. One famous example of using a medieval history or “war tale” for lectures is *Taiheiki yomi* (太平記読み) based on the *Taiheiki* (14th c.) and its early-Edo commentary *Taiheiki hyōban hiden rijinshō*.¹⁸ It is possible that the *Heike hyōban* grew out of group discussions about the *Heike monogatari* and was intended for lectures and discussions. The practice of group readings and discussions known as *kaidoku* (会読) is a significant phenomenon in Edo-period education and I suggest that *hyōban* commentaries are linked with it.

Kaidoku is a format of group study consisting of debate and exchange of opinions about a passage from a text. Unlike lectures, *kaidoku* was a joint activity of equal participants. This educational method was widely used in domain schools (*hankō* 藩校) for warriors and also in private schools in the late 18th and 19th cc. The origins of *kaidoku*, however, are most often tied with the philosopher Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728) in the early 18th c. The intellectual historian Maeda Tsutomu suggests that the philosopher Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁斎 (1627–1705) practiced *kaidoku* earlier in the 1660s, although similar approaches can be traced back to even earlier Heian-era ceremonial debates held after the festival in honour of Confucius, or debates held in Buddhist temples.¹⁹ I propose a hypothesis that *kaidoku* in domain

¹⁸ WAKAO 1999.

¹⁹ MAEDA 2012: 69.

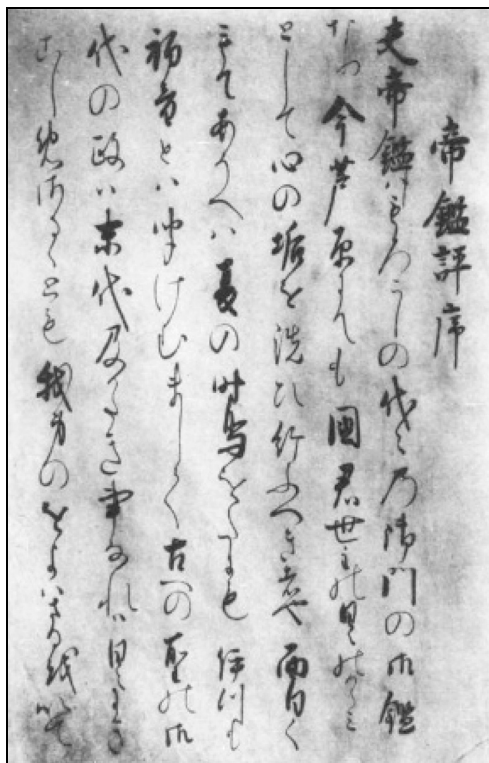
schools for warriors is, in part, a continuation of the early-Edo practice of discussing the *Taiheiki*, the *Heike monogatari*, and similar texts, producing *hyōban* commentarial works on them, and using these commentaries for educational purposes such as discussions on governance.

Before the Edo period, warrior lords invited military advisors (*gunshi* 軍師) and this practice continued in the Edo period with daimyo lords hiring learned warriors who wrote historical and military texts (*gunsho*) and gave lectures. Throughout the Edo period, warrior education involved discussion of statecraft, history, and ethics. This practice, seen as useful for contemporary governance, was based not only on medieval Japanese works such as the *Taiheiki* and *Heike monogatari*, but also on many ancient or recent texts related to East Asian and Japanese history. For example, let us briefly consider the *Evaluative Commentary on the Imperial Mirror* (*Teikanhyō* 帝鑑評, mid-17th c.).²⁰ Unlike the obscure background of the *Heike hyōban*, this commentary's context and even names of commentators are known. Since this commentary's content and style are close to those of the *Heike hyōban*, this work clarifies the circumstances in which such works were created in the 17th c. The *Teikanhyō* was created by a discussion group led by the prominent daimyo Ikeda Mitsumasa 池田光政 (1609–1682). In the period from 1630s to 1650s (exact years are unknown), Ikeda Mitsumasa and a group of four bakufu vassals jointly created this *hyōban*-style commentary on the Chinese didactic text *Illustrated Imperial Mirror* (Ch. *Dijian tushuo*, J. *Teikan zuzetsu* 帝鑑図説, published in 1572, and in Japan in 1606) compiled by the Ming scholar Zhang Juzheng 張居正 (1525–1582) with positive and negative examples drawn from the imperial history of China. Ikeda Mitsumasa wrote the preface of the *Teikanhyō* and the other four members contributed their comments (*hyō* 評) on specific sections of the original text (they completed only 35 out of 117 sections). All the parts were later compiled into a single manuscript kept for private use by Ikeda Mitsumasa who perhaps intended to publish it later.

The *Teikanhyō* commentary is significant as a text produced by a discussion circle headed by an acting daimyo in the mid-17th c. It is important that the commentary also functioned as a tool to discuss governance, both past and present. In addition to themes such as virtuous rule based on benevolence and frugality, many comments express discontent with the present situation. Japanese scholar Iriguchi Atsushi notes that bold criticism was

²⁰ *Teikanhyō* 1937.

expressed by a bakufu vassal who later assumed the post of a senior councillor (*rōjū* 老中), one of the highest posts in the bakufu hierarchy.²¹ Officials of the bakufu (including some daimyo) held discussions among themselves disagreeing with some of the current policies. Although the bakufu was concerned with internal tensions and discontent, some criticism was welcome within the bakufu as a way to improve the situation. For example, Ikeda Mitsumasa himself was open to complaints from subordinates and it is known that he also admonished the shogun and top bakufu officials on several occasions.



Preface of the *Teikanhyō* commentary by Ikeda Mitsumasa²²

²¹ IRIGUCHI 2013: 244.

²² Image from the National Diet Library, Digital Collection website. <https://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/1114904>.

In the preface, Ikeda Mitsumasa writes about the purpose of the *Teikanhyō* commentary:

夫帝鑑はもろこしの代々の御門の御鑑なり今蘆原にても国君世主の日々のかゝみとして心の垢を洗ひ給ふへき者也[...]

凡上古の神聖世にあらはれ給ひし本地を思ひみるも世界は唯是慈悲の一脈のみ也[...]

人として賢をこひねかふ志なきは不生日在かことし君として堯舜の昔を学ひ給はさるは君の天にそむき給へる也不生年在かことし[...]

The *Imperial Mirror* is a mirror of many generations of Chinese emperors. Now, in Japan as well, as a daily mirror of rulers it can wash away dirt in the hearts. [...]

In general, when one thinks about the original nature of divine sages of High Antiquity appearing in the world, [one sees that] the world is nothing but a sequence of benevolence. [...]

Being a human and not having ambition [that consists in] wishing for wisdom is like not living for days. Being a ruler and not studying the past of Yao and Shun is to go against Heaven. It is like not living for years. [...]²³

Ikeda Mitsumasa explains the importance of the *Teikan zusetsu* describing it as a text that can “wash away dirt in the hearts” of rulers in Japan, including himself. He emphasizes the need for rulers to have aspiration for wisdom and benevolence modeled on the rule of ancient sages. The preface does not clarify why the group of commentators led by Ikeda Mitsumasa decided to record their opinions about the *Illustrated Imperial Mirror* in the form of the *Teikanhyō*, but it seems that by means of this commentary Ikeda Mitsumasa wished to improve himself and possibly the governance of other daimyo lords, too.

Several short passages given below are meant to illustrate the style of this commentary and the topics discussed. Kuze Yamatonokami (Hiroyuki) 久世大和守 (1609–1679) wrote the first part of the commentary. He was a bakufu vassal who later became a senior councillor (*rōjū*) and even a daimyo in 1669. In one of the comments he writes:

²³ *Teikanhyō* 1937: 1–3.

[...] 聖人の天下を治めたまふ御心さし名にあらず利にあらず
 仁愛をもつて本としたまふその仁愛を天下に行へきはしめは臣
 下に聖人賢人を求めるにあり [...] 天下の民をやすくせん事をはか
 りたまふに賢人をあけたまふよりさきなるはなし末代の国君世
 主かゝ見たまふへきところなり

The ambition of a sage to rule the empire rests not on fame or gain, but on benevolence. Acting benevolently toward the empire begins with seeking sages and wise people as vassals. [...] When one plans to make life easier for people of the empire, the primary matter is to employ wise people. This point should be taken as a model by rulers of later generations.²⁴

This passage mentions the key points of sage rule: benevolence and employment of wise people rather than personal fame and gain. This view of governance is repeatedly presented in *gunsho* works, including the *Heike hyōban*. The last sentence is direct advice to later rulers, although the ruler addressed in this case is likely Ikeda Mitsumasa.

The following comment by the same person, Kuze Yamatonokami, takes up the topic of disorder and restoration of order:

[...] 乱は変にして治は常なり人病疾は変なり無病は常なり病
 あれば薬あり乱あれば道あり病者は薬師にあふて無病の常にか
 へり乱国の君は道を学ひて太平の常にかへしたまふへし乱国と
 は兵乱にあらず人心まとひ風俗乱たる国なり [...]]
 国君世主先達て恥をおもひたまふへきことにや

[...] Disorder [in a state] is irregular and order is normal. Human illness is irregular and lack of illness is normal. In case of illness there is medicine. In case of disorder there is the Way. An ill person meets with a physician and returns to the normal state without illness. A lord of a disordered state should learn the Way and return [the state] into a normal state of peace. A state in disorder does not mean military disturbance, it means a state in which human minds are in confusion and manners are in chaos. [...] A ruler, first of all, should perhaps feel shame [for lacking virtue and not fixing disorder].²⁵

²⁴ *Teikanhyō* 1937: 3–4.

²⁵ *Teikanhyō* 1937: 10.

Responsibility for disorder, defined as the confusion of human minds and manners, is placed on the ruler who should feel “shame” for not preventing chaos. This and other views are strongly influenced by Confucian ideals.

The following comment is by Kuze Sanshirō (Hiromasa) 久世三四郎 (1598–1660), elder brother of Kuze Yamatonokami. He was a bakufu vassal and a warrior who fought in the Osaka siege in 1615.²⁶ This experienced warrior (40–60 years old) was also interested in expressing his views using this format of group discussion. One of his comments is as follows:

良將は衆と心を同じ用を同じて独すゝます独退かさらしむ
[...]

かくのこことくなる国を伐法は孫呉か術にもなき事也是聖賢の君天下を威す処なり其上文武は天の陰陽にして治国の大事なれば弓馬を習はしむる事勿論の事也軍国は文を以本とし武を以用とす治国は武を以備として文を行もの也[...]

A good general has the same mind with warriors and has the same task. He does not advance alone and does not retreat alone. [...] There is no way to attack such a state [with ruler and subjects unified] even among the techniques of Sunzi and Wuzi.²⁷ This is how a wise lord rules over the empire. Moreover, since the civil and the martial are the yin and yang of Heaven and important matters of statecraft, one certainly makes people learn archery and horsemanship. A state at war considers the civil its basis and uses the martial. A state in order thinks of the martial as preparedness and practices the civil. [...] ²⁸

Kuze Sanshirō emphasizes the unity of a ruler and his subjects and the necessity of keeping balance between the civil (*bun*) and the martial (*bu*).

These brief samples show the style and content of the *Teikanhyō*. This work and its context suggest that commentaries of this kind 1) could be created by daimyo and bakufu vassals, 2) could have multiple authors, and 3) discussed statecraft and various ethical and political topics to advise rulers. The production process of the *Teikanhyō* and identities of commentators provide useful hints about the creation of similar texts, such as the *Heike hyōban*. Both the *Teikanhyō* and the *Heike hyōban*, among other works, sug-

²⁶ KURACHI 1937: 37.

²⁷ This is a reference to two of the *Seven Military Classics*, the *Sunzi's Art of War* 孫子 and the *Wuzi* 呉子.

²⁸ *Teikanhyō* 1937: 16–17.

gest that *kaidoku* discussion of texts has roots in the early-Edo practice of discussing historical texts and producing *hyōban* commentaries on governance and ethics to admonish rulers of different levels. *Gunsho* authors, ranging from unemployed *rōnin* to high-level bakufu vassals, applied this commentarial approach to discuss various texts and produce commentaries on statecraft and ethics. The content of these commentaries may seem idealistic, but participants who produced them apparently attached importance to discussions and the process of joint creation of such works. Commentaries of this type were valued in the Edo period as didactic guides and tools of admonition and political advice. These commentaries, considered serious and practical scholarly works, are a valuable window to Edo-period reception of historical texts.

4. The *Heike hyōban* in the Edo period and education in domain schools (*hankō*)

Didactic *gunsho* texts, including *hyōban* commentaries produced by warrior scholars in the 17th c., were created to advise rulers, officials, and warriors, and their content remained a part of warrior education throughout the Edo period.

The sociologist Ronald P. Dore, in his monograph on education in the Edo period, describes the military aspect of the traditional curriculum in domain schools (*hankō* 藩校) of the 18th and 19th cc. as follows:

They mixed practical advice on the development of troops, the building of fortifications, moving camp, mobilizing supplies [...] with a great deal of moral advice on the importance of using force only in just wars, or of character training as the sole means to military success, and not a little mystical discussion of the nature of military luck. [...] The teachers of *heigaku*, however, were somewhat outside the ambience of Confucianism proper [...] These studies, however, were only for the upper samurai. For the vast majority military studies meant acquiring certain physical skills.²⁹

The *Heike hyōban* commentary, among other numerous *gunsho* texts, was kept in libraries of several domain schools across Japan, such as those in the Hikone, Kishū (Kii), and Sendai domains. Moreover, the commentary was

²⁹ DORE 1965: 148–149.

kept in the library of the Shōheizaka Academy (Shōheizaka gakumonjo 昌平坂学問所, 1790–1870), the central bakufu educational institution in Edo and the influential model for other domain schools.

To understand how *gunsho* commentaries fit the curriculum of domain schools, it is useful to investigate educational practices of these institutions. Curriculum of domain schools was centered on mostly Confucian “Chinese studies” (*kangaku* 漢学) with a focus on Chinese and Japanese history. Other traditional core subjects were military studies, etiquette, and calligraphy, to which new subjects were added at the end of the Edo period: National Learning (the study of ancient Japan and Japanese classics), Western studies, medicine, and mathematics.

Typically there were five modes of study in domain schools: 1) the initial stage, usually starting at the age of eight, involving reading and memorization of texts by repetition after the teacher, so-called rote reading (*sodoku* 素読); 2) the later stage when a teacher lectured on a text (*kōgi* 講義, *kōshaku* 講釈); 3) group members take turns to explain parts of a text (*rinkō* 輪講) and participate in group discussion and exchange of opinions about a text (*kaidoku* 会読); 4) self-study and reading on one’s own (*dokken* 独見, *dokudoku* 独読); and 5) questions and reasoning based on texts studied on one’s own (*shitsumon* 質問). These were initially developed for the Chinese studies (study of Confucian classics and other texts), but came to be used in disciplines such as history, medicine, Japanese studies (*wagaku* 和学), and Western studies.³⁰ Thus, educational process had three stages that progressed from studying under a teacher’s guidance (*sodoku* and lectures) to group study and debate (*rinkō* and *kaidoku*) and then to independent study and research. All these stages constituted the education of members of the warrior class in domain schools and private schools.³¹ Famous *terakoya* 寺子屋 schools for commoners covered a much more limited content and focused on *sodoku* and lectures without reaching the *kaidoku* level.

³⁰ INAGAKI 2002: 20.

³¹ It can be added that “[...] scholarship remained, indeed, a vital part of the work of most of the domain schools. Most had groups of advanced pupils, some well into their 20s or even older; many of them boarded at the school, often working as teaching assistants. They would spend most of their time in private study, and the remainder in regular study in groups that worked their way steadily through difficult classical texts — historical texts, philosophical texts, sometimes astronomical or mathematical texts — taking turns to expound them to each other”. *Kodansha encyclopedia of Japan* 1983: 174. In this quote, “study in groups” certainly refers to *rinkō* and *kaidoku*.

In domain schools, the purpose of studying Chinese classics was moral cultivation with a special focus on the attitude of a ruler or official who was to follow the principles of virtuous rule. Therefore, the subject was seen as highly practical since it was tied to the overall goal of raising good officials and loyal retainers. As for history, its study was meant to enable students “to discern signs of [stable] rule and disorder, rise and fall [of states]”.³² As can be seen, the goals set by domain schools quite closely match those of *gunsho* writers. *Gunsho* texts like the *Heike hyōban* commentary were kept in libraries of domain schools because their content and format fit the schools’ curricula. I suggest that these commentaries could be used as reading materials for disciplines of history and military studies. It is quite possible that they were materials that helped students prepare for *kaidoku* debates.

Gunsho commentaries mixing evaluations of political and military stratagems, discussions of famous historical figures, and analyses of human nature provided entertaining educational material that could improve one’s abilities to debate and assess opinions. Similar to Chinese classics and histories, these texts focus on moral cultivation, governance, and analysis of reasons for the rise and fall of states. Thus, *gunsho* commentaries matched well with other types of educational materials and the overall purpose of educating virtuous and able officials. This practical didactic usefulness of *gunsho* may explain their continuous popularity among warriors throughout the Edo period.

5. Conclusion

In this article I suggest that, unlike modern books mostly used for individual silent reading, some *gunsho* texts of the Edo period, including the *Heike hyōban*, were produced by a group and were linked with group discussions (*kaidoku*). Much of the background of the *Heike hyōban* remains unknown, but judging from its content and similar texts of the same period, it was likely produced by a circle of warriors who were interested in matters of

³² INAGAKI 2002: 12. The quote is from SATŌ 1832, the *Program of Elementary School-work* (*Shogaku kagyō shidai* 初学課業次第): “Oyoso shi o yomu no kokoroe wa, chiran kōbō no ato o wakimauru ni ari”. (凡史ヲ読ムノ心得ハ治乱興亡ノ跡ヲワキマフルニ在リ). Its author was Satō Issai 佐藤一斎 (1772–1859), a son of the chief retainer (*karō* 家老) of the Iwamura domain in the Mino province, Neo-Confucian scholar. As the official Confucian teacher of the bakufu, he served at the Shōheizaka Academy and influenced educational policies of the bakufu.

leadership and statecraft. *Gunsho* texts could function as tools of criticism and advice. Throughout the Edo period, commentaries of this kind had educational functions: they were meant for lectures to daimyo lords and later they were used in domain schools. Their educational content was meant to enlighten daimyo rulers and local warriors, to reinforce their martial identity, and to preserve warrior qualities seen as endangered by bureaucratization and comfort of the mostly peaceful Edo period. Further research on group discussions (*kaidoku*) and the use of didactic commentaries in educational settings is required for clarifying the role and functions of the *Heike hyōban* and similar texts in the Edo period.

Abbreviations

Heike: *Heike monogatari* (13th c.)

Heike hyōban: *Heike monogatari hyōban hidenshō* (1650)

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