INTRODUCTION

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The Kamakura period is a problematic division of premodern Japanese history. For all other periods the name most commonly used identifies the site of the country's acknowledged national government—Yamato, Nara, Heian, Muromachi, and Edo. The problem with "Kamakura" is that it fails to take into account the divided nature of rule during that era. Thus, to the extent that Kamakura is seen as superseding Kyoto, warriors are seen as supplanting courtiers. These are developments that eventually occurred, but they are inaccurate when made to coincide (as they often are) with the 1180s. What distinguishes the Kamakura age is the coexistence of two authority centers and the gradualness with which the newer system came to absorb the older.

Even here the challenge to historians might not be so great if the bipolarity had been simply territorial. But the sharing of authority was not organized in a way to make jurisdictions simple and explicit: divisions tended to be overlapping within the estate system. Thus, if an increasing number of estates received Kamakura officers throughout the period, these same estates remained proprietorships of civilian or religious landlords. Local men who were neighbors would therefore be answerable to different authorities—a highly unstable situation. But even this complexity can be readily grasped by historians; it is a natural concomitant of the so-called "dual polity." What tends to be overlooked is that conditions were not simply (or necessarily) a reflection of the power balance between the two capitals: the existence of a dual polity did not imply uniform factions whose fates were tied to intergovernmental relations. Thus as the period progressed some landowning institutions were "more successful" than the civilian sector of the polity

of which they were a part. Similarly, some warriors exhibited growth rates that failed to "keep pace" with the advances of the Bakufu at the national level. It is because of this variety that the history of the Kamakura period is more than just a chronicle of Kamakura, and also more than a story of two governments, one advancing and the other declining. The larger historical trends remain intact; but the overall picture needs to be broadened with treatments of individual families and institutions. The resulting composite will reveal a society with more "discontinuous" elements than is generally supposed.

Several of the essays presented here point in this direction. For example, in G. C. Hurst's account of Court-Bakufu relations, the accent is naturally on a tilt toward Kamakura, with "victory" coming in the period after 1250. Yet in L. Harrington's treatment of the *akutō* problem and rising local unrest, the emphasis is on Kamakura's inadequacy—during the very same decades. Or again, in P. Arnesen's study of Suō province, a traditional proprietor—Tōdaiji—is seen maintaining strong leverage even into the fourteenth century. Thus, even as Kamakura was "superseding" Kyoto, an absentee estate holder was able to contain powerful warriors, who were also Kamakura vassals. What all this demonstrates is that our standard view of the period in which warriors and warrior government were advancing on every front is obviously incomplete. At this stage we have only a partial explanation for this uneven progress, relating to Kamakura's growing separation from its original vassal constituency. Yet this estrangement had the ironic effect of obliging warriors to rely increasingly on themselves, which led in turn to new inheritance strategies, more resourceful programs of lawlessness, and innovative association techniques involving neighbors and kinsmen. On the Kyoto side, the decline of the Court provided a signal to *its* natural constituency—the country's estate holders—to depend less on the capital as a way of self-preservation. Such loss of security might entail an internal reorganization designed to reduce factional divisions by broadening the decision-making base. A case in point is Tōdaiji, which, as J. R. Piggott suggests, moved energetically to improve its administrative capacities. In fact, there is an interesting contrast here with the Kamakura Bakufu. As noted by A. Goble, the Kamakura regime was unresponsive to the organizational imperatives

that clearly influenced institutions like Tōdaiji. During the period when the latter was reforming itself internally, the Bakufu was holding firm as a Hōjō-dominated regime.

Disparate trends, then, are a conspicuous and significant feature of Japan's Kamakura age. At the same time, there were also developments of a very different sort—"logical" occurrences, even as we confront them for the first time. An example here is the Imperial Court's ongoing authority to dispense justice, as elucidated by C. J. Kiley. If a guiding principle of Kamakura governance was to maintain a limited jurisdiction, it was Kyoto obviously that would have to make up the difference. With Kiley's essay, we have our first real glimpse of the Court side of Kamakura-era peacekeeping. Additional perspectives are offered by Piggott and Arnesen, who show how governance operated at the next level of authority, that of proprietor. It is refreshing to have studies of the Kamakura period whose perspective on land administration is little changed from that of monographs on the Heian age: it is a reminder that the estate system is equally a phenomenon of both periods. Arnesen's treatment of Suō Province is noteworthy also because of its close fit with J. Hall's classic study of Bizen. In both instances, the angle of vision is necessarily from the center, since Kamakura's influence in the two provinces remained strictly limited. What is interesting is that we are much less surprised by these limited inroads than we were fifteen years ago when Hall's *Government and Local Power* first appeared. To underscore this new awareness the four essays in part one all highlight the resiliency of traditional institutions. We might make the same point differently: that Yoritomo and his men will never again be credited with overrunning and militarizing the entire countryside.

Another major topic whose outlines are familiar to us though without the needed detail is the "rise of the Hōjō." Several of our papers fill in important dimensions of this story. The essay by H. P. Varley traces the political ascendancy of the Hōjō and makes comprehensible for the first time a tale of success that has always seemed somehow foreordained by the collapse of the Minamoto main line. Varley's account permits us to experience a progression of small successes that unfolds in a forward direction, rather than from hindsight inevitability. The essay by M. Collcutt reveals a further dimension of the Hōjō, in this case related to their mature

rulership. Once that house had secured its control over the Bakufu, the pursuit of power was joined by other, more "gentle" concerns. One of these was the patronage of Zen, which sprang from a conviction that had religious and cultural overtones as well as the "expected" political and economic ones. It is often argued that the exercise of major governance in Japan would sooner or later have an important civilizing effect. Obviously, not even the unpolished Hōjō were immune from this kind of experience.

The papers by Mass and Goble are revisionist in purpose and both have taken on long-spinning windmills. Using the language and concepts of feudalism, Mass has re-examined the familiar institutions of *shōgun* and *gokenin* (lord and vassal) and suggested that neither evolved as described by traditional accounts. The idea for a hereditary shogunal chieftainship was not a product of Yoritomo's lifetime, and the idea for an elite vassalage did not issue from the Gempei War. Even these minimal symbols of an emerging feudalism were not, according to Mass, spontaneous products of the early Minamoto movement. In Goble's paper the author clashes with the standard three-stage periodization scheme for the Kamakura period as a whole. In his analysis no middle era of conciliar government (1225–47) separated Yoritomo's "authoritarianism" from its later Hōjō counterpart. This notion deserves careful consideration, the more so since no one in Japan has ever thought to question Satō Shin'ichi's classic three-fold division of the period.

The Goble and Mass papers, and several others as well, highlight an important new feature of Japanese medieval studies in the West: a beginning tendency to reassess, even challenge at times, the conclusions of Japanese historians. This does not mean merely looking at events and institutions through "foreign eyes," but rather reviewing them via the same source materials that led to those conclusions in the first place. Naturally, Western abilities in this area have not progressed very far, but there are the first signs of a genuine dissatisfaction with the citing of a secondary source and then interpreting simply from that. If Western scholarship is to win the respect of historians in Japan, it will be necessary to master the same sources that they use, and also to show greater confidence in our own capacities for originality.

What makes this task doubly difficult is that medievalists writing in English must aim for a "general" audience. We cannot afford to

write simply for each other, and even less for specialists in Japan. Instead, our monographs must be comprehensible to the Japanese studies profession as a whole, though in this we do have one advantage. Owing to prior neglect, we may concentrate on themes that are demonstrably "mainstream." In fact, it is almost as if a Europeanist were to stumble upon the Magna Carta and then be the first to study it. This is a built-in protection against overspecialization, but it also makes us seem generalists to our Japanese colleagues.

A good example of a contribution that introduces an important new topic is Harrington's study of banditry (*akutō*) in the late thirteenth century. This essay is noteworthy as the only one in this volume to concern itself with social history and nonelite organizations. It almost goes without saying that Western medievalists have been slow to give attention to strictly local phenomena. Virtually no monographs have appeared in which higher phenomena are explained in terms of "pressures from below." By contrast, this is an approach intensively mined by Japanese scholars, and one from which we should draw clear stimuli. It is typical that in Mass's essay on feudalism in early Kamakura, he defers discussion of "serfdom" for another time!

Just how important this "underside" of medieval society is deemed by Japanese historians emerges vividly in the chapter contributed by Takeuchi Rizō. The most interesting sections of this essay are arguably those dealing with the scholarship of Ishimoda Shō, the eminent postwar historian, and of Amino Yoshihiko, now in his prime. Ishimoda, in what Takeuchi credits as the most influential work of history published since the war, traces the class conflicts that propelled Japan into the medieval age. In this view, the Kamakura Bakufu is seen as no product of historic rivalries between the Taira and Minamoto, and even less as the product of authorizations granted from on high, that is, by the Imperial Court. Instead, the motive force of history was socioeconomic pressure—exerted by locals against central estate holders and locals against those even closer to the soil than themselves. In the case of Amino, his search for fundamental causes led him in another direction: to the nonagricultural, mobile segments of society. This emphasis on rootless and displaced persons embraces an idea that needs to be developed. But it is a reminder, if one were needed,

that Japanese scholarship too is hardly standing still. Indeed, this is the principal message of Professor Takeuchi's paper, which traces nearly a century of Kamakura studies in his own country. It is a fascinating trip that we are taken on and serves as a fitting conclusion to the essays contributed by our own Western specialists. I should like to feel that we are not merely along for the ride, but are now part of that forward progress that gives life to any field.