The Culture of Force and Farce:

Fourteenth-Century Japanese Warfare

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War. The word is familiar to each of us, and yet the action is anything but familiar. Who has ever experienced the novel subversion of the social order, where murder is praised and not punished; where the greatest crime becomes the greatest act of merit. The word denotes an event so liminal and extraordinary that nearly every history, chronicle, and many an epic prior to the twentieth century was devoted to expounding its constituent glories, treacheries, and tragedies. Nevertheless, after the trauma of the Great World Wars, attitudes regarding war underwent a fundamental shift, and instead of singing praises of the brave and recording their names and deeds for posterity, the ultimate glorification became reserved for the nameless -- the Unknown Soldier.

The medieval Japanese warrior would be bewildered by the concept of the unknown soldier. For him, or her, the essence of warfare was recognition, for from it stemmed fame, honor, and rewards; without it there was little point of fighting at all. One said, "If I were to advance, alone, in the midst of the enemy, and die in a place where none could witness my deeds, then my death would be as pointless as a dog's death."[1]

A vast gulf separates fourteenth-century warfare from the camouflaged brutality of the twentieth. In order to be recognized in battle, one had to be noticeable from afar. One particularly flamboyant man named Kawagoe "led thirty-four horses; each was either dyed in one of various hues -- deep purple, crimson, magenta, sky blue -- or embellished with zebra stripes and leopard spots. On each horse rested a white saddle; the armor of each rider matched his horse's coat….[S]ome carried silver swords some 4 or 5 feet long while others draped their horses in tiger skins…."[2]

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[1]*Genpei jōsuiki* (Tokyo: Kokumin bunko kankōkai, 1910), maki 37, 911.

[2] *Taiheiki*, maki 34, "Hatakeyama Nyūdō Dōsei jōraku no koto" (Ōsaka: Izumi shoin, 1994), 1011.

Kawagoe's fame stemmed from the spectacle he presented; others might drape their horses in tiger skins and carry silver swords, but only a warrior of unusual élan and confidence in his prowess, both martial and aesthetic, could contemplate dyeing thirty-four horses in various hues and checkered patterns. Other sources confirm that Kawagoe impressed the crowds, for a group of thieves later broke into his lodgings and stole a horse (of unidentified hue) and a sword (*tachi*) embossed with gold and silver.[3]

Opulent attire, and a corresponding concern for fashion, were not indicative of undue effeminacy or ineptitude in battle. In fact, one might argue precisely the opposite; that only the most ambitious of warriors would appear in such attire, for those who stood out from the crowd were correspondingly expected to perform outstandingly on the field. Indeed, so ingrained was the belief that nobility in attire and deed were one, that cowardly actions forever tarnished the reputation of the flamboyant. When Kawagoe and his splendid allies fled in the wake of defeat, they abandoned their silver swords, and from then on their prowess came to be described solely in the past tense -- they were men "once considered the bravest of all Japan."[4] The quest for greatness entailed commensurate risks of ignominy.

Although few could match the élan of Kawagoe, flamboyance was the rule and not the exception. Warriors of high or even middling rank wore sumptuous armor. The purpose of armor was for recognition as well as bodily defense. Due to the individualistic style of braiding, even men wearing armor of a similar color could be identified from afar.[5] Others strove to differentiate

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[3] Iwahashi Koyata and Saiki Kazuma, eds., *Entairyaku* (Tōin Kinkata). 7 vols. (Tōkyō: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1970-86), vol. 6, 307, of 11.9.1354 (Enbun 4).

[4] *Taiheiki*, maki 34, "Kii Ryumonsan ikusa no koto," 375.

[5] *Kassen emaki -- Bushi no sekai* (Tōkyō: Mainichi shinbunsha, 1990), 21-23, for illustrations of the sleeves (*sode*) of armor woven in eighteen rather typical styles.

themselves by festooning their helmets with crimson fans and artificial plum branches,[6] or, season permitting, the real thing.[7]

This flamboyance reveals a gulf in aesthetic sensibilities between our understandings and those of fourteenth-century Japan. Kawagoe's horses, purple, magenta, and leopard-spotted all, were considered beautiful. The world of the fourteenth century was one where the ever-present earth tones and greens of nature were enlivened by the occasional splash of color. In such a context, the gaudy may well have seemed beautiful. Nevertheless, I hope to impress upon you the diverse and changing nature of Japanese aesthetics -- not all was limited to refined poetic sensibilities, or the restrained, rustic look of pottery used for the tea ceremony.

From the example of Kawagoe, it should be evident that the study of war can reveal how state and society functioned as opposed to how it was portrayed in ideal. One can reconstruct aspects of the past, such as aesthetic ideals, that might otherwise have disappeared entirely from the historical record. For example, the nature of gender roles can be illuminated through the lens of war. It has been known for some time that warrior women performed guard duty in the thirteenth century but most historians have assumed that they did not fight in battle. A close examination of how war was waged reveals that warrior women fought on horseback. References to warring women litter chronicles, diaries, and documents, and indeed, a suit of armor tailored to the female anatomy remains to this day.[8] Some female warriors even validated petitions of reward -- the

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[6] *Taiheiki*, maki 14, "Hakone Takeshita kassen no koto," 394.

[7] *Taiheiki,* maki 31, "Musashino kassen no koto," 920. Those unable to secure adequate flowers settled for crimson fans. *Taiheiki*, maki 29, "Shogun oyako onjōraku no koto," 858.

[8] They elicited commentary only when they constituted over half the fighting members of a military unit. *Entairyaku* (Tōin Kinkata), vol. 4, 305, of 6.2.1353. At times female *gokenin* dispatched male relatives to fight in their stead. Seno Seiichirō, ed., *Nanbokuchō ibun, Kyūshū hen* (Tōkyō: Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1980-1992), vol. 1, documents 494, 667-70. For the suit of female armor, see the armor used by Tsuruhime, now located at Oyamazumi shrine in Ehime

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prerogative of military leaders -- by signing their monogram on them.[9] Nevertheless, neither this nor female participation in battle evoked criticism from other warriors. Courtiers on the other hand tended to dismiss warring women, and it is their viewpoint that has dominated historical discourse. Thus, in the fourteenth century, status distinctions outweighed those of gender. In short, by viewing society through the lens of war, one gains a more nuanced understanding of past realities.

This paper focuses on this strata of land-holding warriors and how they behaved in war. Fourteenth-century Japan can be characterized by three major social orders. The first group were courtiers. The second group consisted of warriors. These men and women numbered a few thousand, and possessed enough lands and authority to mobilize most of the aggregate resources of the nation. Their support or lack thereof could make or break any political regime; only they had the freedom and the resources to choose when and where to fight in battle. And finally, there were the rest, who were obligated to fight for their warrior lords. One sees no sign of class hostility, or *gekokujo*. Instead those of lower order mimicked their superiors and used the opportunity of war to blur the distinction between themselves and warriors in order to climb the ladder of social status.

Recent scholarship has tended to dismiss warfare as being "only a surface phenomenon."[10] Such statements are emblematic of "person-less" history which emphasizes long-term processes, such as transformations in society caused by the dialectic of class struggle, or the impact of demographic fluctuations and technological innovations at the expense of political and military events. To the contrary, I attempt to analyze the degree to which events such as war influenced

province.

[9]Matsuoka Hisatō, ed., *Nanbokuchō ibun, Chūgoku, Shikoku hen*, 6 vols. (Tōkyō: Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1987-1995), vol. 1, document 654. Much of this record appears in Conlan, "The Nature of Warfare in Fourteenth-Century Japan: The Record of Nomoto Tomoyuki." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 25.2 (Summer 1999), 299-330.

[10]Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 27.

these long-term processes. In this paper I intend to provide an anatomy of the phenomenon of war in order to understand how it can illuminate a particular age. Another major aspect of my work, which I shall abbreviate here, is that I believe that warfare could constitute a tidal force that transformed state and society. I believe that warfare was, in other words, instrumental to change rather than being merely expressive of it, and I will allude to some of the changes that warfare caused, although this topic deserves considerably more space than I can devote to it in this short paper.

One might ask: why choose fourteenth-century Japan as the subject of such an inquiry? In spite of what I perceive to be its importance, the fourteenth century has until recently suffered from scholarly neglect. The time when Japan's so-called "ancient" or "classical" age gave away to the "medieval" was thought to have occurred in the 1180s. Recent scholarship has revealed, however, that the court was not overwhelmed in 1185, and that regional warriors were more closely tied to the capital than had been previously realized. The new political entity that was created in the aftermath of the 1180s -- the Kamakura *bakufu* -- supplemented the court instead of supplanting it. Kamakura's judicial decisions and edicts stabilized the realm, and functioned as an insulating cushion to contain violence. The crucial break did not occur in the twelfth century; instead it arose in the fourteenth century. But before delineating how things changed, I should perhaps first sketch why warfare erupted in 1331.

Late in the thirteenth century, an imperial succession dispute arose among two competing imperial lineages, the Daikakuji and Jimyōin lines. Ultimately it was decided that both candidates were to succeed the throne alternately. The throne would pass from the emperor of one lineage to the crown prince of the other. Gradually, nobles, warriors, and poets all gave their allegiance to one of two lineages of imperial contenders, until all of society disassociated into two massive factions, much like a cluster of iron filings lining up around two magnetic poles. These two poles of legitimacy -- the rival imperial lines -- would ultimately coalesce into two separate courts, each of which vied for hegemony from 1331 until 1392.

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The regime that brokered this compromise -- the Kamakura *bakufu* -- quite naturally became the focus of animosity of both imperial factions. Ultimately, Go Daigo, a reigning emperor of the Daikaku lineage, came to despise this compromise, and succeeded in overthrowing the Kamakura *bakufu* in 1333. Once this regime was annihilated, the insulating cushion it provided to contain violence was gone, and in two short years the realm was once again embroiled in an even more extensive war.

The reason why peace was not restored to the realm, and indeed could not be restored, was that two profoundly divergent attitudes regarding state and society came to coexist. Go Daigo, the triumphant emperor of 1333, was an absolutist: to him, all power and authority flowed from the center. But there were others who came to believe that political rights and prerogatives were autogenic. Once achieved, they could not be taken away. Once war erupted and the men of the province were able to witness how fragile each political regime in fact was, they were no longer likely to follow the commands of authority.

Warfare began in 1331 and did not really end for nearly three centuries -- instead, it became normative. The punctuated process of war fundamentally influenced the nature of state and society. Authority had to be flexed in order to be preserved, for the need to create and supply an army overloaded existing economic and political arrangements. Often, this authority devolved to the periphery, either to provincial magnates or to warriors who no longer obeyed codified laws and injunctions.

Although warriors were able to carve out a degree of political independence, the costs of war eroded their autonomy. Fiscal powers devolved to the periphery as regional lords (*shugo*) assumed prerogatives that had hitherto been monopolized by the center. In two further respects, centralized authority was fundamentally weakened by this war. First, social status became determined by wealth instead of investiture from above. And second, the state lost its monopoly over coercive violence. After civil war erupted, feuding became incorporated into the political and judicial system. Violence, rather than undermining the expectations that governed daily life, as some

authors have claimed, instead became one of the expectations that governed daily life.[11]

To return from this long digression, why have the wars of the fourteenth century languished in obscurity while those of the twelfth have achieved wide fame? One answer is simple: the warriors of the fourteenth century fought with an idealized memory of the earlier conflict. Many were blind to the "newness" of their age and instead saw it as a rehash of the glories of 1180. By their following too closely the script of the past, the epic of the twelfth century occurred, as it were, twice: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.

The wars of the twelfth century were recounted and idealized in the literary classic, the *Tale of the Heike*. This tale reached its final form in 1371, nearly two hundred years after the events it purported to describe had ended and approximately forty years after the opening salvoes of the battles of the 1330s. The *Heike* became immensely popular. Warriors wiled away their final hours before battle listening to blind lute priests reciting this yarn of brave warriors winning glory or stoically accepting their fate.[12] So persuasive and moving was this tale that warriors modeled their behavior on the semi-fictional heroes of this epic.

The warriors of the fourteenth century set themselves up for disappointment because they modeled their behavior on unattainable, idealized goals by following a script that was a hundred and fifty years old. Of course, there was nothing unusual about modeling one's behavior on the past, for nearly all legitimacy was based upon precedent. Ashikaga Takauji, the founder of the Muromachi *bakufu*, consciously modeled his behavior after the first of the Kamakura shoguns, Minamoto Yoritomo. Not only did he emphasize the fact that both he and Yoritomo achieved political prominence at the same age, but he also participated in ceremonies that consciously

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[11]Berry to the contrary claims that violence "destroy[ed] the expectations that had once organized daily life," in her *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto*, xxi.

[12]For the former, see *Taiheiki,* maki 21, "Enya Hangan zanshi no koto," 664; for the latter, Kaji Hiroe, ed., *Gen'ishū* (Tōkyō: Heibonsha, 1996), 271.

mirrored those Yoritomo had witnessed, and even used the same distinctive steel-blue color of ink to sign his documents.[13] Precedent was not initially laughed at when one attempted to legitimate oneself based on the patterns of the past, but the battlefield proved to be a particularly unforgiving arena for those who too closely attempted to relive a former era.

The notion that the events of the twelfth century repeated themselves as farce pervades the *Taiheiki*, a fourteenth-century epic. Here one sees many examples of parody. For example, in one of the *Tale of Heike*'s most famous episodes, a warrior named Nasu no Yōichi is commanded to shoot at a fan prominently displayed on enemy ships anchored far offshore. Nasu declines the honor three times, but fires in the end, and hits the target true.[14] The enemy yells out, "What a shot!" in admiration of his prowess. In the *Taiheiki*, one sees a mirror image of this scene. A warrior from a naval force is ordered to fire at an enemy target far ashore. The warrior, Sasaki Nobusuke, states that he is not up to the task, just like Nasu no Yōichi before him. Although he refuses thrice, he is commanded to fire. One of his comrades taunts: "Behold our prowess and tremble!" just before Nobusuke unleashes his shot. Thereupon the arrow sputters for twenty feet and plunges into the waves. The enemy yells out (sarcastically), "What a shot!" and doubles over with laugher.[15]

This laughter bound these warriors with a sense of camaraderie. As we shall see, warring

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13For comparisons between Takauji and Yoritomo, see Nakamura Naokatsu, "Ashikaga no Takauji," in *Ronshū Ashikaga Takauji,* ed.Satō Kazuhiko (Tōkyō: Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1991), 252, and *Baishōron*, 139-40. The Ashikaga also modeled festivals for the founding of Tenryūji upon Yoritomo's visit to Tōdaiji. See Haga Norihiko, "Ashikaga Tadayoshi no tachiba 3, Ashikaga Tadayoshi shiron," in *Chūsei seiji to shūkyō* (Tōkyō: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1994: 110-141), 130-1.

14Takagi et al., eds., *Heike monogatari* (Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten, 1964), vol. 2, 318-9.

15*Taiheiki*, maki 16, "Kairiku ni futasei hyōgō no ura ni yoseru koto," 483-5.

men and women were not bound by ties of kinship or nation. Political allegiances were extremely fluid at this time. This laughter helped knit together these impermanent bands, for those who laughed were distinguished from others -- the enemy -- who were despised as buffoons.

This sense of farce operated on several levels. On the one hand, it served to reinforce the performance culture of the age: that actions were supposed to conform to an ideal. Laughter and a blunt realism regarding the limitations of human frailty only highlighted the ideals that permeated warrior culture at this time. The ideals of the twelfth century were deeply ingrained, yet the warriors of the fourteenth century could not live up to them. By repeating the past and laughing at it, they were gradually coming to grips with these ideals and discarding them as well. Once the next sequence of wars broke out they were recognized by all as being new -- owing more to the fourteenth century than previous scholarship has acknowledged.

As a corollary to this, one can discern that the battles of the fourteenth century were fought with waning intensity. This period witnessed two peaks of heightened military activity, which closely corresponded with political events. The first occurred during the initial six years of warfare while the second lasted from 1350 until 1355. During the years of 1332-38, casualty rates reached 33 percent (19 percent killed and 14 percent wounded), with swords accounting for one third of all wounds, which suggests frequent hand-to-hand combat. Nevertheless, few were willing to come to blows and die for a cause, particularly from the Kannō disturbance of 1350 onward, where one sees casualty rates of only 23 percent (6 percent killed and 17 percent wounded), with swords accounting for approximately ten percent of all wounds.[16]

Let me digress briefly to explain how wars were fought. Archers, either mounted or on foot, dominated the battlefield, and caused anywhere from sixty percent to over seventy-five percent of all wounds. Warriors were more likely to fight in scattered formations, as skirmishers, than to

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[16]This topic is addressed in more detail in Conlan, "State of War: The Violent Order of Fourteenth-Century Japan" (Ph. D. diss., Stanford University, 1998).

come to blows with swords. And women were a match for men in this style of warfare. Gigantic seven foot long swords were sometimes used in battle to bludgeon opponents and break the legs of horses who came too close. Only the tips of these blades were sharpened, however, so they should best be thought of as glorified clubs. A perusal of fourteenth-century picture scrolls indicates that some swords were wielded like pikes.

Troops fought in scattered formations, which meant that infantry was never a match for cavalry. One sees no major shift in tactics. Although it is outside the scope of this paper to explore in detail, I should interject that one does not see the advent of massed infantry until the mid-fifteenth century, when pikes were wielded that had tripled in length to some fifteen feet.

The next aspect of warfare that I attempt to characterize as farce consists of the fact that war was fought out of a desire for personal glory, or what we might call more mercenary gain. One sees no overriding sense of sacrifice for a higher cause. This does not mean that warfare was less "real," for men and women were killed -- sometimes in great numbers -- but absent is the urgency of a crusade or a seriousness of a higher goal.

And finally, there is the playfulness inherent in war. To war was to kill others -- in this sense it was all very real -- but at the same time the act of war represented an inversion of existing norms of political and moral order. Murder became an act of merit, while to take arms against another did not necessarily incur punishment. From the late thirteenth century onward, the unilateral recourse to violence -- feuding -- became a common means of asserting judicial rights, but it was condemned by authorities until civil war broke out. At this time, both adversaries locked in a feud signed up into opposing armies. Their pattern of violence and retribution continued unchanged, except that their behavior was now subsumed under the rubric of "public" war. Ultimately, the state not only abandoned its monopoly on violence, but it too began actively mediating feuds. Even men at the pinnacle of authority began participating in or overtly recognizing feuds. Thus, the state as a bastion of order based upon the monopoly of coercive violence began to wither away, only to be replaced by a welter of personal and familial interests.

A distinct minority of warriors believed "family interests" were paramount to personal enrichment. Although family members killing each other in an attempt to preserve their house would seem to fly in the face of reason, some families apparently did so. After receiving an invitation to fight for one faction, Migita Sukeie claimed to be ill and dispatched his son. Nevertheless, Sukeie continued fighting for the opposing side![17]

Those warriors who were not locked in mortal conflict could, if they were clever and powerful, switch sides and suffer no ill-effects. The Migita were rewarded by Go Daigo. Another family, the Yūki, fought for the Southern Court and were lavishly rewarded. When they switched allegiance to the Northern Court they had a strong bargaining position and were able to keep all of the lands they had received from the Southern court. If a warrior could pick a winner, and "jump ship" before it was too late, switching sides could prove to be quite beneficial.

It was wise for a warrior to abandon a losing general or a lost cause in order to preserve his family's holdings. A warrior who switched sides was not rebuked or condemned. Customarily, a warrior would lose anywhere from one third to one half of his holdings upon surrender, but this was observed more in the breach than in reality.

Absolute loyalty was not expected of independent, land-holding warriors, although it was for their hereditary retainers. Prior to the outbreak of war in the fourteenth century, warriors were able to achieve some de facto autonomy as a result of economic prosperity. Once warfare erupted in the 1330s, it suddenly became evident that all regimes had to attract the support of these warriors in order to survive. Commanders were forced to dispatch invitations to these men, each of which requested their service in battle. Such invitations implied a lack of obligation.

The burden was on generals to attract warriors. This could be accomplished only through

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[17]Compare the 5.1333 Migita Sukeie moshijō with the 4.20.1333 Migita Sukeie kassen chūmon. Both documents are inexplicably missing from *Kamakura ibun,* and are most conveniently found in the "Migita keizu," *Zoku gunsho ruijū, keizubu 7* (Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1975), 147-48.

generosity in distributing awards, and, most important of all, through victory in battle. Without victory, and enemy lands to confiscate, few would fight. Accordingly, one cannot claim that standing armies existed at this time. Each army was little more than a haphazard conglomeration of individuals who arrived and departed as they saw fit. Over a period of half a year in 1336, for example, only two warriors out of sixty remain attached to Ashikaga Takauji's army that abandoned Kyoto early in 1336 and returned there the following summer. Some showed up just to receive a document lauding their participation. Before the ink was dry, these men proceeded to return to their homes.[18] Armies likewise disintegrated upon defeat.

So what of the so-called samurai loyalty, one might justifiably wonder. Warriors were not obliged to follow any lord in death. Indeed, they really didn't have any lord at all. It is fallacious to speak of treachery, or disloyalty, for loyalty was not expected or demanded of warriors at this time. One of the dynamics of this age that would be played out fully over the next few centuries would be the subjugation, or breakdown of the independence of these warriors, which was closely linked to the spiralling expenses required to wage war. This process was only beginning at this time, although by the late fourteenth century the balance was already shifting to regional magnates, such as the *shugo*, who were able to harness the machinery of tax collection to their war efforts, and mobilize regionally based, semi-standing armies.

Warriors did not fight for a lord; instead their deeds required compensation. Each warrior who chose to fight submitted petitions for reward to their commander after any military engagement. These petitions record the date and location of battle. Each warrior listed all the damages incurred, including wounds and death, which required compensation. They were submitted to a general, or his underlings, who vigorously inspected them. Some even added

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[18]See Conlan, "State of War," 82-83. For those who departed soon after receiving a monogrammed document, see *Nanbokuchō ibun, Kyūshū hen,* vol. 1, document 787.

notations of "deep," "shallow," and "medium" to those wounds recorded.[19] After each document was verified, it was signed by a general and returned. Warriors used these pieces of paper as proof of their military service when submitting claims for remuneration. If they did not receive adequate compensation, they would take their services elsewhere and fight for a rival commander capable of offering better.

These documents are infused with honesty. Some would matter-of-factly explain that "we started suffering casualties and so we fled."[20] Others boasted exorbitantly, but even these claims maintain a charming directness about them. For example, one warrior named Hatano Kageuji wrote: "I wanted to join [my allies] but could not. The situation was so bad, I thought I would die where I stood. I was about to head out to the garden to kill myself a number of times, but somehow I managed to preserve my unworthy life. If one were to carefully consider the extent of my service (*chukin*), then it would be the equivalent of dying in battle."[21] The greatest service one could do in battle was die fighting precisely because there was no obligation to do so. Indeed, most warriors were unwilling to die for anyone. Those brave enough or unlucky enough to do so were lauded as exemplars.

These warriors carefully preserved their documents because warrior status was originally determined by edicts of investiture. The outbreak of war generated a lot of paper, as orders, counter orders, and commands swirled throughout the countryside. Each document, regardless of its content, functioned as an investiture of status. Thus, with the outbreak of war, one sees the

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[19]Examples of these documents appear in "Migita keizu," 147-48, and Takeuchi Rizō, comp., *Kamakura ibun.* 51 volumes (Tōkyō: Tōkyōdō shuppan, 1971-91), vol. 41, documents 32043-4, 32050, 32055, 32080.

[20]*Nanbokuchō ibun, Kyūshū hen,* vol. 1, document 408.

[21]*Nanbokuchō ibun, Chūgoku shikoku hen*, vol. one, document 259.

sudden and spontaneous expansion of the warrior order. This documentary fetish has proved to be a boon for historians, because warriors carefully preserved nearly every piece of paper pertaining to the waging of war. Nevertheless, as the war ground on, and the expenses incurred in its waging mounted, some warriors came to lack the means of fighting in battle; instead they sold their documents. Social status ultimately became based on wealth and not investiture, and this transformation arose as a result of war.

In order for awards to accrue to one's self, it was essential that others see and recognize one's brave acts. For example, in 1331, a certain Kamakura warrior named Hitomi On'na crept into the midst of enemy forces and cried out his name in a loud voice only to be instantly killed.[22] Clearly, he did not believe discretion to be the better part of valor. Instead, Hitomi wanted to win glory by being the first warrior killed fighting for Kamakura. He left a name for posterity, and his surviving relatives would undoubtedly have received considerable rewards if the regime he had fought for had not been subsequently annihilated.

Why, might you ask, did warriors thirst for recognition? Easy recognition meant that one would not be mistaken for an enemy. Warriors went to battle with family crests emblazoned on their armor. Family crests proved to be a problematic type of identification, for families frequently fought against each other. When men wearing identical badges went to battle on opposing sides, the consequences were disastrous. For example, two hostile branches of the Yūki family met in battle. Many were killed accidentally by allies, until one group came up with the bright idea of attaching the right sleeve of their armor to their helmets.[23]

Each army likewise adopted the distressingly similar symbols of their commanding generals. One such mark consisted of a black ring on a white field intersected by two narrow black lines with

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[22]*Taiheiki,* maki 6, "Akasakajō kassen no koto," 148-56.

[23]*Baishōron*, 88-89.

the center white; the other was a black circle on a white background intersected by a thick black line. Warriors allied to either army attached this crest to their armor. This resemblance had its advantages, however, for when the going got tough the tough simply painted over their seals.[24]

Not only were visible crests required to distinguish enemy from ally, but one also had to stand out from the crowd in order to avoid a "dog's death" and receive rewards for one's actions. Rewards were most commonly bestowed as a result of a tangible, physical act.

Figure 1. The Nitta and Ashikaga Seals

Heads were also important proofs of battle service. Those who were successful tended to abandon the battlefield, already in possession of the ultimate proof of valor.[25] The need for heads proved problematic for generals, for troops would leave the fray. Orders were issued, stating that men were to refrain from cutting off heads and instead rely upon witnesses for proof of their kill.[26] In these circumstances, warriors discarded heads once their valor had been witnessed.[27]

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[24]*Taiheiki,* maki 15, "Shujō kankō no koto," 450.

[25]A triumphant warrior grasping a head constitutes a standard motif of the successful warrior. See *Ibaragi no emaki* (Ibaragi kenritsu rekishikan, 1989), color plate 2, "Shōtōku taishi emaki," and *Go-sannen kassen ekotoba,* 50.

[26]*Nanbokuchō ibun, Chūgoku shikoku hen,* document 773. This has also been mentioned in Satō Shin'ichi, *Nanbokuchō no dōran* (Tōkyō: Chūō kōronsha, 1974), 197.

[27]For examples of "cut and tossed" heads, see *Nanbokuchō ibun, Kyūshū hen,* documents 674, 1211-2; *Taiheiki*, maki 31, "Yawata ikusa no koto," 935; and *Ino Hachimangū monjo* (Tōkyō: Zoku gunsho ruijū kanseikai, 1983), document 148, Iga Morimitsu gunchūjō, of 5.1337. For other examples of heads being taken, see *Nanbokuchō ibun, Kyūshū hen*, documents

Nevertheless, the custom of head hunting proved tenacious. This regulation was widely ignored, even by commanders. For example, when one enemy general was killed, two men were rewarded equally. The first killed the general; the second cut off his head.[28]

Even though the taking of heads seems a barbaric act, a kind of etiquette evolved. The taking of heads was initially indiscriminate. The warriors of the thirteenth century had no qualms about decapitating any civilian, or corpse, or seriously wounded soldier that they found after battle. For example, during the Mongol invasion of 1281, Kikuchi Jirō decapitated a large number of dead Mongols, and thereby "made a name for himself [to last for] generations."[29] This was so much the case that for a wounded man to survive one night abandoned on the battlefield without losing his head was described as being "miraculous."[30] By the early fourteenth century, however, such "head hunting" earned ridicule -- that most powerful tool of coercion -- and by the sixteenth century, the decapitation of the dead became a criminal act liable for punishment.[31] Thus, etiquette, or a kind of civilizing process, arose regarding even the most barbaric of deeds. Furthermore, heads were considered to have an otherworldly power, and could be used to curse people. At

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732 and 1238.

[28]Hasegawa Tadashi, ed., *Taiheiki 2,* maki 19, "Kokushi Ise no kuni o hete Yoshino dono e mairu koto" (Tōkyō: Shōgakkan, 1996), 528. Nevertheless, Tashiro Akitsune, followed his injunctions and "cut and tossed" an enemy, which was witnessed by Kuge saburō and Miyake gorō. See *Takaishi shishi* (Takaishi shi, 1986), document 123, 3.26.1338 Tashiro Akitsune gunchūjō.

[29]"Hachiman gudō kun," in *Gunsho ruijū 1* (Tōkyō, 1894), 468.

[30]*Taiheiki*, maki 32, "Kōnan ikusa no koto," 971.

[31]For the laughter see *Taiheiki,* maki 8, "Sangatsu jūninichi Miyako ikusa no koto," 195; for the first criticisms of a man who "picked up heads thrown away by his colleagues," see *Meitokuki* (Tōkyō: Iwanami shoten, 1941), "Toki Michisada no koto," 106.

times, the taking of heads was referred to as "a blood festival." For example, captured prisoners might be decapitated as "offerings to the gods of war,"[32] and their severed heads could also be used to curse an enemy through a grisly form of black magic.[33]

This aspect of warfare may be difficult to understand, but in all affairs the divine was close and encompassing. The divine also functioned as a mechanism for explaining causality. The social and political influence of "religion" was pervasive precisely because "religion" did not exist as a separate, identifiable sphere. Omens; dreams; a particular confluence of stars were all carefully analyzed and recorded with scientific precision, for it was believed that such phenomena constituted important clues. From them one could rationalize the cause of a certain disturbance or disorder, and attempt to rectify or mitigate its baleful effects. These prayers were often instigated by authority, which was responsible for ordering both this world and the other world.

Religious institutions played a vital role, for they served as conduits to the gods. Their prayers could influence and alter the chain of causality; hence religion could not exist separate from any sphere, including politics and war. Priests, like warriors, submitted petitions demanding reward. Some physically fought in battle while others performed maledictions. No great distinction was made between wielding weapons or muttering curses. One priest named Rai'in, for example, complained as follows: "Why haven't I received any rewards? Those who fought and were killed or wounded were rewarded for risking their physical lives (*gaibun chūsetsu no shō nari*).

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[32]*Taiheiki,* maki 6, "Akasakajō kassen no koto,"156. A commander also spurred his troops by saying: "Kill the enemy and give an offering to the gods of battle (*ano teki are utte mazu gunjin ni matsure*). *Taiheiki*, maki 32, "Kōnan kassen no koto," 968. In *Genpei jōsuiki*, maki 37, Minamoto Yoshitsune is purported to have ordered his troops to "cut off the heads of [captured] Heike troops and offer them to the gods of war." See 922.

[33]The head of one who had died an unnatural death could be mixed with water and ash. If it did not bleed when cut, then one's enemy would die without a visible wound. "Heihō ryōsuisho," in Isaoka Hisao, ed. *Shoryū heihō 1 Nihon heihō zenshū 6* (Jinbutsu ōraisha, 1967), 73.

Nevertheless, they destroyed the enemy due to the efficacy and power of my prayers...." [34]

In this case, Rai'in's wish was granted and he was rewarded.[35] Those in authority valued these priests and feared their other-worldly powers. Indeed, the initial step for rebellion was to have rituals of destruction performed. Religion thus cannot be separated from violence; nor can prayers be conceived as being invariably and inherently non-violent. Nevertheless, the proper role of religion became increasingly contested as time progressed, and some Zen monks in particular began criticizing the maledictions performed by the esoteric Tendai and Shingon sects.

Through this brief anatomy of fourteenth-century warfare, I hope it is clear that one can comprehend the nature of a particular society through how it waged war. Perhaps the so-called tides of history are best viewed through the swirling eddies and crests and foam of the discrete phenomenon of war. Or, perhaps the metaphor is all wrong. Warfare, rather than being an eddy of the sea of change was perhaps the tide -- or the very sea itself. Little was external to the war, and little was untouched by its powerful forces. The autonomy of warriors and their refusal blindly to obey the dictates of political authority thrived in the environment of civil war, where two courts competed for support. Violence too became incorporated into the fabric of daily life, as rights and statuses were defended, or asserted, by hard steel instead of notarized pieces of paper. Nevertheless, the tides of warfare altered what they created, for the excessive cost of waging war eroded this very autonomy of warriors.

War's great constant is its transformative power: it led to new associations and new attitudes regarding ideals, aesthetics, and social relations. Fourteenth-century warfare transcended all contemporary boundaries and subverted political, intellectual, and social norms. And from its bloodshed -- and laughter -- there arose a new order; a new way of thought; and a new sense that actions need no longer be linked to, and legitimated by, the deeds of an increasingly forgotten past.

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[34]*Shinpan Saitama kenshi, shiryō hen 5 chūsei 1* (Saitama, 1982), document 566.

[35]*Ibid.,* document 516.

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Thomas Conlan, "The Culture of Force and Farce: Fourteenth-Century Japanese Warfare," Edwin O. Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies Occasional Papers in Japanese Studies, 1-21.

Summary: Thomas Conlan provides insight into how state and society functioned, as opposed to how they were portrayed in ideal, By illuminating Japan through the lens of war in the 14th century Take Home Message: Unknown soldier the essence of their warfare --> Kawagoe and his 34 horses. Significance to Class: This image of the samurai (seeking reward, betraying, flamboyant) contradicts commonly-held modern beliefs (Japanese warfare lacked a developed cavalry charge, due to the small breed of local horses being Ill suited for charging until Takeda Shingen imported large horses. He then made his clan have a dominant cavalry charge, but while powerful, it was not the decisi. Continue Reading.Â Religious orders as a military force - from approximately the 10th century until the 16th century in Japan various Buddhist monasteries maintained powerful standing fighting forces, the largest of which might be considered armies (the defenders of Ishiyama Hongoji had 15,000? defenders). Until they were destroyed by Oda Nobunaga and his vassals, they were a force to be reckoned with.Â It is possible that by the middle of the 16th century there were more guns in Japan than in Europe. The Japanese Fourteenth Army (ç¬¬14è», Dai-jyÅ«yon gun) was an army of the Imperial Japanese Army during World War II. On July 28, 1944 it was reinforced and upgraded to a field army called the Japanese Fourteenth Area Army (ç¬¬14æ–¹é¢è», Dai-jyÅ«yon hÅmen gun), to counter the imminent Allied invasion of the Philippines by combined American and Filipino troops.Â As the war situation continued to deteriorate for Japan, and Allied forces prepared to invade the Philippines, and the 14th Army restructured its independent infantry brigades and reserves to form the new IJA 100th Division, IJA 102nd Division, IJA 103rd Division, and IJA 105th Divisions.[citation needed]. In March, 1944, the 14th Army officially reverted to the control of the Southern Expeditionary Army Group.

This is a timeline of Japanese history, comprising important legal, territorial and cultural changes and political events in Japan and its predecessor states. To read about the background to these events, see History of Japan. Very little is known about the 5th century in Japan. The period was definitely marked by volatile inter-state warfare, complex alliances, submissions and betrayals. Some of the more constant Yamato polity partners were Baekje and Gaya confederacy, while enemies included Goguryeo... Download Citation | On Feb 1, 2000, Thomas Conlan published The Culture of Force and Farce: Fourteenth-Century Japanese Warfare | Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate. Student councils (Jichikai) were formed on university campuses in 1946, soon after the surrender of the Japanese government that had suppressed both labour unions and student activities. Some of the councils were democratic in spirit, while others adopted the Marxist philosophy that had been prohibited since long before the war. The new student movements had the support of the General [Show full abstract] Headquarters of the Allied Forces (GHQ), though they were led by the Japanese Communist Party. Read more. Article. The characteristic feature of Japanese warfare, prior to the introduction of firearms in 1543, was the use of swords and spears in hand-to-hand fighting. Armies were made up of small, independent bands of soldiers who fought more as individuals than as units of a tactical formation, and naval units consisted of fishing vessels that were commandeered for transporting armies within bow-range or sword-reach of the enemy. G. Schlegel also found that the Chinese knew and employed firearms in the thirteenth century; "On the invention and use of firearms and gunpowder in China, prior to the arrival of the Europeans," T'oung pao, 2d ser., 3 (1902), 10. State of War: The Violent Order of Fourteenth-Century Japan. Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies University of Michigan, 2003. Samurai, warfare and the state in early medieval Japan. London: Routledge, 2004. "Cultural Life of the Warrior Elite in the Fourteenth Century." In The Origins of Japan's Medieval World: Courtiers, Clerics, Warriors, and Peasants in the Fourteenth Century, edited by Jeffrey P. Mass. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997, 192-208. Wilson, William Scott.