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The “Ōnin War” as the Fulfillment of Prophecy

Abstract: Prophecies profoundly influenced historical narratives in fifteenth-century Japan. The narrative of *Ōninki* (The chronicle of Ōnin) was constructed so that events would better resonate with a prophecy known as *Yamataishi*, and the chronicle shaped later historical understandings of the epochal Ōnin War. Analysis of this prophecy, coupled with an exploration of the evolution of the chronicle, allows for a new understanding of the war and the role of prophecies in shaping historical narratives of medieval Japan.

In the Japan of centuries past, many believed that disturbances in the heavens and on the earth had been foreseen by prophets who had provided cryptic warnings. The prophetic world looked to the future, rather than the past. Instead of debating the proper precedent to determine behavior that resonated with the past, proponents of prophecy, who were drawn from the ranks of courtiers and the monastic nobility, argued that certain events were portents of a predetermined future, which in the case of Japan constituted a dystopic realm of violence, warfare, and ruin.

Some of these proponents felt compelled to write their own histories, which explained how their times represented the fulfillment of these predictions. *Ōninki* (The chronicle of Ōnin), the primary source for understanding the Ōnin War of 1467 (Bunshō 2) through 1477 (Bunmei 9), is one such text. *Yamataishi*, a written prophecy, provides the conceptual framework for the *Ōninki* narrative. A century after the war, however, this prophecy became less interesting to audiences, which led to its being downplayed and ultimately removed entirely from *Ōninki*. This editing has caused the narrative of the war, and the war itself, to be perceived as incoherent. As we shall see, a meticulous unearthing of *Ōninki*'s creation and reception history, as

I would like to thank Philippe Buc, Federico Marcon, Jackie Stone, and Royall Tyler, as well as two anonymous readers for their insights in revising this article. For ease of research, Japanese dates were not converted to the Gregorian or Julian calendar. They mention the month and date, but era years are given at first mention according to a rough European chronology.

presented in the first sections of this article, leads to an understanding of the Ōnin War and its impact that is radically different from the one historians have offered thus far.

Memories of the Ōnin War linger. This decade-long spasm of violence devastated Kyoto, ruined Japan's central institutions, and spawned seemingly unending wars. Uniquely, even today, the name of Ōnin survives as a shorthand for Kyoto's destruction while other wars and disasters that have periodically devastated it are mostly forgotten. A recent tourist guide, for example, claims: "People jokingly say that if an elderly Kyoto resident mentions 'the last war,' he or she means the Ōnin War of the 15th century, not World War II." One might be inclined to dismiss such statements as urban legend, but in 2016 Hosokawa Morihiro, former prime minister of Japan, commented how only luck saved the treasures of his house from the destruction of Ōnin.¹

These sentiments are not new. Kazan-in Masanaga wrote of disruptions caused by the Ōnin Disturbance (*Ōnin no ran*) in 1512 (Eishō 9), while the Awazu family boasted for generations about the exploits of Awazu Kiyonori, who rescued the emperor's wardrobe in 1469 (Bunmei 1). Not only was Kiyonori praised in 1470 (Bunmei 2), but as late as 1546 (Tenbun 15), his great-grandson Michikiyo was promoted to the lower ranks of the nobility after regaling the court with Kiyonori's actions during the "chaos of Ōnin" (*Ōnin no gekiran*).²

Scholars unsurprisingly see the Ōnin War as a cataclysm whose fires consigned earlier patterns of culture and politics to ash. In 1910, James Murdoch colorfully described how this war achieved a life of its own as the participants discovered "that the war they had raised was a veritable Frankenstein whose vagaries they were powerless to control and who had them both at his mercy." Mary Elizabeth Berry, writing 80 years after Murdoch, argues: "Ōnin signaled a change in Japan's historical experience, but not one that could be apprehended in terms of clear meanings and obvious directions."³

Most scholars see the war as folly. According to George Sansom, "The history of this cruel war of Ōnin gives an impression of utter futility. The purposes for which it was fought were never clearly defined, and certainly

1. Sumiko Kajiyama, *Cool Japan, A Guide to Kyōto, Tōkyō, Tōhoku and Japanese Culture Past and Present* (New York: Museyon Inc, 2013), p. 13, and, for Hosokawa's characterization, see *Kumanichi shinbun*, January 3, 2016, <http://kumanichi.com/tokushu/sou/kiji/20160103001.shtml> (accessed July 28, 2016).

2. Kazan-in Masanaga's 8.23 letter is reproduced in *Morimitsu kōki*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 2018), 9.4.1512 (Eishō 9), pp. 156–57. For the Awazu, see Go-Nara tennō *nyōbō hōsho*, <http://komonjo.princeton.edu/awazu-13/> (accessed June 26, 2019).

3. James Murdoch, *A History of Japan*, Vol. 1 (London: Kegan Paul, Trübner and Company, Ltd., 1910), p. 616, and Mary Elizabeth Berry, *The Culture of Civil War in Kyoto* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 14.

they were not achieved.” The historian Sakurai Eiji, writing four decades after Sansom, likewise admitted that he could neither explain why the war arose nor why it continued for a decade.⁴

The war is understood less in terms of tactics, or political goals, than as a cataclysmic episode that demarcates a new epoch. The Sinologist Naitō Konan relegated all that existed before the war to Japan’s distant past and suggested that the seeds of Japan’s modern present germinated in the ashes of Ōnin. Most Japanese scholars do not see the war as ushering in “modern” Japan, but for well over a century they have posited the Ōnin War as marking the onset of Japan’s Warring States era (*Sengoku jidai*).⁵

The idea that the conflict was the harbinger of a new, albeit confusing, age of war has proven popular and durable and can be found in the narrative histories of Murdoch and, to a lesser degree, George Sansom. John Hall’s institutional history, which took issue in particular with the approach espoused by Sansom, nevertheless shares the conceit that the Ōnin War initiated “the period in Japanese history known as Sengoku [Warring States].”⁶

Berry analyzed the Ōnin War according to poststructuralist hermeneutics. She perceives the author of *Ōninki* as being presciently confused. “Like the chronicler, I lose my struggle to make sense of the too many quarrels of too many characters. Unlike the chronicler, I find the meaning of Ōnin in this absence of coherence.” For Berry, the limitations of *Ōninki* demonstrate the inability of the author, any author for that matter, to make sense of the conflict.⁷

4. George Sansom, *A History of Japan, 1334–1615* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), p. 228, and Sakurai Eiji, *Muromachibito no seishin* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2001), pp. 323–25.

5. Naitō Konan, “Ōnin no ran ni tsuite,” *Zōho Nihon bunkashi kenkyū* (Kyoto: Kōbundō Shobō, 1924), p. 191. He stated: “In order to understand the Japan of today by researching Japanese history, there is almost no need to research the ancient eras; it is sufficient merely to know the period from Ōnin to the present.” For the war as ushering in a Warring States era, see the introduction to Japanese history written by Shigeno Yasuyori (Yasutsugu) and Hoshino Hisashi for the Chicago World’s Fair, *The History of the Empire of Japan: Compiled and Translated for the Imperial Japanese Commission of the World’s Columbian Exposition, Chicago, U.S.A., 1893* (Yokohama: Dai Nippon Toshō Kabushiki Kaisha, 1893), pp. 254, 274. The text is interesting because Hoshino was fired that same year, along with Kume Kunitake, for his characterization of fourteenth-century Japanese history.

6. Murdoch, *A History of Japan*, Vol. 1, p. 617; Sansom, *A History of Japan*, pp. 234–25; and John Whitney Hall, *Government and Local Power in Japan, 500–1700* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), p. 238. Consensus on when the era of Warring States began has shifted to the Meiō Coup of 1493 (Meiō 2), launched by Hosokawa Masamoto against Ashikaga Yoshitane. Yamada Yasuhiro acknowledges the political debt of these events to the Ōnin War in “Ōnin no ran ikō Ashikaga shogun wa muryoku to natta no ka,” *Shinsetsu Ōnin no ran* (Tokyo: Takarajimasha, 2017), pp. 164–66.

7. Berry writes how she “mimics the *Chronicle*” and “grapple[s] with a plot that suggests intelligible causes for the war, the motives of a substantial cast of characters, and the sequence

Paul Varley's pioneering study of the war and partial translation of *Ōninki* highlight the influence of this widely disseminated three-volume text. The first volume criticizes the moral failings of Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1436–90) and the peculation of his wife Hino Tomiko (1440–96) before recounting succession disputes which allowed two implacable foes, Hosokawa Katsumoto (1430–73) and Yamana Sōzen (1404–73), to establish rival armies and wage war at Kami Goryō Shrine through proxies early in 1467 (Bunshō 2). The second volume covers the conflict in Kyoto, which broke out a few months later, culminating in battles waged at Shōkokuji in the eastern wards of the capital during the autumn of 1467 (Ōnin 1). Finally, the third volume recounts the Akamatsu assassination of an Ashikaga shogun in 1441 (Kakitsu 1) and ends with the deaths of Sōzen and Katsumoto in 1473 (Bunmei 5) before providing perfunctory coverage of the final four years of the war.⁸

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century histories of Japan closely track the narrative of *Ōninki*. *The History of the Empire of Japan*, written for the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, describes the war as stemming from the personal ambition of Yoshimasa and the greed of his spouse, Tomiko. It then recounts how two military factions coalesced under the command of Katsumoto and Sōzen, who fought a bloody war which left Kyoto in ruins. *Ashikaga jūgodaishi*, compiled in 1912, likewise is indebted to *Ōninki*, going so far as to end its narrative with an extended quote from that work describing the destruction of Kyoto, before launching into analysis of the “chaos of the Warring States era [*Sengokujidai no jōran*].”⁹

Not all histories follow the chronicle. The 1926 *Muromachi jidaishi* by Watanabe Yosuke reconstructs the Ōnin War based on surviving documents as well as *Ōninki*. In 1922, Miura Hiroyuki introduced sources written by Nara monks, *Kyōgaku shiyō shō* and *Daijōin jisha zōjiki*, and explored the social dimensions of the conflict. Miura's analysis of the Yamashiro *ikki*, a revolt in 1485 (Bunmei 17) in Yamashiro Province, proved to be a durable

of events that made local crises into a national ordeal.” She concludes: “like the *Chronicle*, this retelling uses details to evoke what the storyteller called the breaking of the country and what I shall call the culture of lawlessness.” Berry, *The Culture of Civil War*, pp. 12–13.

8. See Paul Varley, *The Ōnin War: History of Its Origins and Background with a Selective Translation of the Chronicle of Ōnin* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), pp. 210–11, for an overview of this work and explanation of variant texts. For the text of the widely disseminated (*rufubon*) three-volume version, see Hanawa Hōkinoichi, comp., *Gunsho ruijū*, Vol. 20 *Kassen-bu*, 3rd revised edition (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1977), pp. 355–425.

9. Shiteno and Hoshino, *The History of the Empire of Japan*, pp. 234–36, and Kokushi Kenkyūkai Hensan, comp., *Ashikaga jūgodaishi* (Tokyo: Daidōkan, 1912), pp. 226–47, 259. This text appears in *Kokuritsu kokkai toshokan dejitaru korekushon*, <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/946465/126?viewMode> (accessed August 5, 2019). For the extended quote, see pp. 272–73. Analysis of the “Warring States” begins on p. 275.

contribution to later scholarship.¹⁰ Miura argued that this uprising was a manifestation of *gekokujō* or the “lower” merchant class supplanting the “higher” courtiers and warriors.

Gekokujō (written variously as 下極上、下剋上、下克上) has a long history. It originally appeared in a Sui-dynasty text, *Wuxing Dayi* by Xiao Ji (?–614), describing cases in which subjects triumphed over rulers or wives overshadowed their husbands. Only the former meaning was transmitted to Japan. Letters of the monk Nichiren (1222–82), dating from 1277 (Kenji 3) and 1280 (Kōan 3), and the 1333 (Genkō 3) edicts of Prince Moriyoshi (1308–35) reveal that this term described the usurpation of imperial authority.¹¹

The term *gekokujō* came to be used by courtiers to describe individual affronts or outrages, such as when a low-ranking houseman killed Hamuro Nagachika (?–1370) in a gambling dispute and when a commoner purchased a genealogy from a warrior and asserted a higher status.¹² *Taiheiki* and *Genpei jōsuiki*, two important fourteenth-century war tales, denote upstarts disturbing the social order as a sign of *gekokujō*.¹³ Some doggerel

10. Watanabe Yosuke, *Muromachi jidaishi* (Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Shupanbu, 1948). The 1948 edition is Watanabe’s final and most reliable revision of his 1926 work. For recent analysis of the importance of Watanabe’s work, see Suegara Yutaka, “Ōnin Bunmei no ran,” *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi*, Vol. 8 *Chūsei* 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2014), p. 79. See also Miura Hiroyuki, “Do-ikki” and “Sengoku jidai no kōkumin gikai,” in *Nihonshi no kenkyū*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1922), pp. 306–47, 348–60. For Miura’s usage of *gekokujō*, see p. 343. It should be noted that although Miura cites *Kyōgaku shiyōshō* (“Do-ikki,” p. 326), he refers to later passages, dating from 11.26.1465 (Kanshō 6), rather than a prophetic exegesis of 1457 (Chōroku 1). He and many other authors use the term *do-ikki*, but some do not, and for this essay, all examples of the term will be referred to as *ikki*.

11. Michele Marra, *Representations of Power: The Literary Politics of Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), p. 118, recounts the Chinese origins of this term. For an overview of its use in Japan, see Jeffrey P. Mass, “The Mixing of Past and Present,” *Antiquity and Anachronism in Japanese History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), pp. 59–60. The oldest use of the term dates from *Mizukagami* (The water mirror), a late twelfth-century history. See David Spafford, “An Apology of Betrayal: Political and Narrative Strategies in a Late Medieval Memoir,” *Journal of Japanese Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (2009), p. 326. The documents of Nichiren using this term appear in Takeuchi Rizō, comp., *Kamakura ibun* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppan, 1971–97): Vol. 17, doc. 12768, 6.1277 Nichiren *shōjō*, p. 81; and Vol. 19, doc. 14051, 8.14.1280 Nichiren *shōjō*, p. 7. For Moriyoshi using the term to criticize Emperor Go-Daigo’s banishment by his Kamakura underlings, see *ibid.*, Vol. 41, doc. 31996, 2.21.1333 Moriyoshi shinnō *ryōji*, p. 192.

12. Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, comp., *Gogumaiki* (Sanjō Kintada) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1980–92), Vol. 1, 9.26.1370 (Ōan 3), p. 232. See also the war tale *Bunshōki*, in Hanawa, comp., *Gunsho ruijū*, Vol. 20 *Kassen-bu*, pp. 347–54.

13. In Hyōdō Hiroimi, ed., *Taiheiki* (Tokyo: Iwanami Bunko, 2014–16), Vol. 5, maki 36, “Hayami Dōsei botsuraku no koto,” p. 457, *gekokujō* is used to signify social stratification, as Ashikaga Motouji (1340–67) is portrayed as criticizing the actions of upstart provincial warriors. A remonstrance by Taira no Shigemori (1138–79) regarding inferiors triumphing

dating from 1335 (Kenmu 2) possesses a similar connotation.¹⁴ In addition, *Taiheiki* mentions *gekokujō* in a section devoted to a prophecy known as *Miraiki* (The chronicle of the future), while *Genpei jōsuiki* so describes the prognostication of diviners regarding a mouse nesting in a horse's tail.¹⁵

Historians of medieval Japan also used this phrase, with an early reference in English appearing in 1915. Nevertheless, it was not the term *gekokujō* per se as much as Miura's idea that *ikki* revolts were a sign of social upheaval that became influential among scholars. One year after Miura's articles were published, Tanaka Yoshinari emphasized the importance of these *ikki* uprisings in his *Ashikaga jidaishi*. His narrative also remains beholden to *Ōninki*, as it recounts the hostility of the Hosokawa and Yamana and argues that the corrupt Yoshimasa entrusted affairs to Hino Tomiko's "mistress governance" (*chōhei seiji*).¹⁶

Miura's characterization of a social transformation took root. Scholars have frequently used the term *gekokujō* as being "emblematic of . . . new interclass conflict" and a "powerful and resilient" metaphor of "the lower overtaking the higher" to describe Japan in the fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries. Building on Miura's approach, Suzuki Ryōichi argued that *gekokujō* represented the rise of autonomous groups of nontraditional warriors who fomented *ikki* revolts and later fought as lightly armed skirmishers (*ashigaru*) during the Ōnin War.¹⁷

Of course, not all accept the importance of this term *gekokujō* as being central to the age. Hayashiya Tatsusaburō eschews the term explicitly,

over their social superiors appears in Matsuo Ashie et al., eds., *Genpei jōsuiki* (Tokyo: Miyai Shoten, 1991–2015), Vol. 1, maki 6, "Komatsu dono chichi ni kyōkun su," p. 207.

14. *Kenmu nenkanki*, in Hanawa, comp., *Gunsho ruijū*, Vol. 25 *Zatsu-bu*, 3rd revised edition (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1941), 8.2.1335 Nijō kawara rakugaki, pp. 503–4. For more on this text, which uses the characters 下克上 for *gekokujō*, see Andrew Goble, *Kenmu: Go-Daigo's Revolution* (Cambridge MA: Council of East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1996), pp. 204, 326.

15. Hyōdo, ed., *Taiheiki*, Vol. 4, maki 27, "Unkei Miraiki no koto," p. 316, refers to *gekokujō*, while Matsuo, ed., *Genpei jōsuiki*, Vol. 5, maki 26, "Babi nezumi no su no rei no koto," p. 59, explains how a yin-yang specialist saw the existence of a mouse nest in a horse tail as a sign of *gekokujō*.

16. Frank Brinkley, "Review of the Ashikaga," *A History of the Japanese People from the Earliest Times to the End of the Meiji Era* (London: Encyclopaedia Britannica Co., 1915), p. 434, stated that the Ashikaga era was "summed up in the epithet 'ge-koku-jo' or the overthrow of the upper by the lower." See also Tanaka Yoshinari, *Ashikaga jidaishi* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1923), p. 203 for the Hosokawa-Yamana rancor, p. 205 for Hino Tomiko, and p. 210 for Yoshimasa's corruption. For recent explanation of Tomiko based on *Ōninki*, see Donald Keene, *Yoshimasa and the Silver Pavilion: The Creation of the Soul of Japan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), pp. 55–58.

17. For the former characterization of the term, see Mass, "The Mixing of Past and Present," p. 60; for the latter, see Spafford, "An Apology of Betrayal," p. 326. For the links to *ashigaru*, see Suzuki Ryōichi, *Ōnin no ran* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1973), and Nagahara Keiji, *Gekokujō no jidai* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1974).

although he nevertheless argues that *ikki* revolts led to not only social and economic changes, but cultural and artistic shifts as well, culminating in the rise of autonomous city wards. Likewise, George Sansom characterizes *gekokujō* as “a useful cliché” because the fifteenth century witnessed the emergence of new classes of traders and moneylenders, but he disagrees that it is “an expression of democratic ideas” or the marker of “a social revolution.” Writing in 2009, David Spafford argues that: “few now would champion *gekokujō* as an analytically useful concept, yet the metaphor has proved both powerful and resilient” and has distorted and flattened understandings of the past.¹⁸ In fact, the term *gekokujō* was deeply linked to prophecies that were popular in the fifteenth century. This intellectual context needs to be better understood so as to better determine what was meant by the term and whether it constitutes a viable metaphor, or analytical concept, for understanding the age.

The History of the Chronicle and Its Most Accessible Variants

For all the differences in approaches and argumentation, historians of the Ōnin War and the “Warring States” era rely on the same three-volume edition of *Ōninki* as their primary source.¹⁹ The temporal boundaries of the conflict, the identification and characterization of the major protagonists of this war, and the succession disputes leading to the conflict all closely mirror how they are portrayed in *Ōninki*. In spite of its influence, the chronicle did not attract much attention from literary scholars, nor did it merit an annotated edition. As late as 1960, this three-volume version of *Ōninki* was thought to represent the original state of the manuscript, which was purportedly written by an anonymous author “not long after 1473.”²⁰

In 1967, Paul Varley translated much of *Ōninki*. He lamented the dearth of serious studies of this work. As though in reply, in 1968, Nagashima

18. Hayashiya Tatsusaburō, “Machishū no seiritsu,” *Shisō*, No. 312 (June 1950), pp. 374–89, particularly pp. 379–83. Cf. his *Machishū: Kyoto ni okeru “shimin” keiseishi* (Tokyo: Chūkō Bunko, 1964). Hayashiya argued that anticreditor *ikki* revolts gave way to ward-based self-defense units which protected creditors in the city after the 1480s (*Machishū*, pp. 100–114). Sansom, *A History of Japan*, p. 235, and Spafford, “An Apology of Betrayal,” pp. 326–27.

19. Nagashima Fukutarō’s *Ōnin no ran* (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1968), Sasaki Ginya’s *Muromachi bakufu* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 1974), and Suzuki’s *Ōnin no ran* all rely on the three-volume text of *Ōninki* for their narrative. See Wada Hidemichi, *Ōninki Ōnin bekki* (Tokyo: Koten Bunko 1978), p. 204. This also holds true for Kawaoka Tsutomu, *Yamana Sōzen* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2009).

20. Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, ed., *Gunsho kaidai*, Vol. 13 *Kassen-bu* 1 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1960), pp. 19–20. For analysis of the *Ōnin ryakki* and *Ōnin bekki*, see pp. 20–21. See also Matsubayashi Yasuaki, “Ōninki no shikō,” originally published in 1969, which most conveniently appears in *Muromachi gunki no kenkyū* (Osaka: Izumi Shoin, 1995), pp. 103–19. Matsubayashi’s critique of the *Gunsho kaidai* explanation appears on p. 105.

Fukutarō argued that *Ōninki* dated from the latter half of the sixteenth century.²¹ This spurred several remarkable studies of *Ōninki* that changed our understanding of the text, most notably the 1969 analysis of Matsubayashi Yasuaki, which revealed that the three-volume *Gunsho* text was drawn from an earlier two-volume version of *Ōninki* and supplemented with *Ōnin bekki* (The alternate chronicle of Ōnin).²²

Scholars now know that the three-volume version of the chronicle, long thought to have been written in 1473, was first published as a printed work sometime between 1633 and 1645 (Kan'ei 9–21), a century and a half after the war had been waged. This three-volume Kan'ei text is the most accessible edition, and it was transcribed and published in the *Gunsho ruijū* collection of sources.²³ Another edited work, the 20-volume *Jūhen Ōninki*, was compiled by Kobayashi Masatoshi in 1706 and published in 1711. *Jūhen Ōninki* didactically describes the war, events before it, and the century after its waging until the rise of Oda Nobunaga (1534–82). Tellingly, it dismisses the veracity of a prophetic text, *Miraiki*, arguing that it was supplemented with passages from another, *Yamataishi*. Kobayashi believed that the prophecy, rather than predicting the war, was an *ex post facto* rationalization of it.²⁴

Gunsho ruijū reproduces two other narratives of the battle. One, *Ōnin bekki*, was originally (and incorrectly) thought to postdate the three-volume edition of *Ōninki*. *Ōnin bekki* represents an attempt by an anonymous author to rehabilitate the image of the Akamatsu, who labored under the stigma of having assassinated an Ashikaga shogun in 1441.²⁵

21. Varley, *The Ōnin War*, pp. 137–38, for the lack of studies of the chronicle. Nagashima, *Ōnin no ran*, pp. 17–18, suggested that the widely disseminated three-volume Kan'ei text was completed sometime after the Tenbun and Eiroku eras (1532–55, 1558–70).

22. Matsubayashi, “Ōninki no shikō,” p. 110. See also p. 115, where he shows that *Ōnin bekki* mostly influenced the third volume of this *Gunsho* text. Varley comments on *Ōnin bekki* in *The Ōnin War*, p. 210.

23. Imatani Akira, *Nihon hyakka zensho* <http://japanknowledge.com.ezproxy.princeton.edu/lib/display/?lid=1001000034160> (accessed *Japan Library*, December 18, 2016). Although the Kan'ei era began in 1624, the fact that this version was drawn from another two-volume text published in 1633 means this work dates from the final 13 years of the Kan'ei era.

24. *Jūhen Ōninki*, a compilation of *Ōnin zenki* 應仁前記, *Ōnin kōki* 應仁廣記, *Ōnin kōki* 應仁後記, and *Zoku Ōnin kōki* 續應仁後記 was published in Kondō Keizō, comp., *Kaitei Shiseki shūran*, Vol. 3, 3rd printing (Tokyo, 1932), maki 17–20. For analysis, see: Varley, *The Ōnin War*, p. 211; Sakurai Yoshirō, “Muromachi gunki ni okeru rekishi jojutsu,” in *Chūsei Nihon bunka no keisei* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1981), p. 237; Matsubayashi, “Jūhen Ōninki kō,” *Muromachi gunki no kenkyū*, pp. 176–93; and Wakao Murasaki, “Ideological Construction and Books in Early Modern Japan: Political Sense, Cosmology, and World Views,” in Matthias Hayek and Annick Horiuchi, eds., *Listen, Copy, Read: Popular Learning in Early Modern Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 51–52. The dismissive references in *Ōnin kōki* (應仁廣記) to *Miraiki* as being derivative of the widely known *Yamataishi* prophecy appear in Kondō, comp., *Kaitei Shiseki shūran*, Vol. 3, maki 5, pp. 85–87.

25. See the *Ōnin bekki* explanation in *Gunsho kaidai*, Vol. 13, p. 21, and Wada, *Ōninki Ōnin bekki*, pp. 229, for the dating of this text. For the dating of the three-volume version, see Wada, *ibid.*, pp. 233–37. Matsubayashi explains the motives of the author and provides some

Ōnin ryakki (The abbreviated chronicle of Ōnin), also published in the *Gunsho ruijū*, was written late in the tenth month of 1467 (Ōnin 1) when the Battle for Shōkokuji had ended in stalemate.²⁶ Its anonymous author explains how the cataclysm, starting with the Kami Goryō battle of the first month of 1467 (Bunshō 2) and continuing through the battles of the tenth, caused him to strive for enlightenment (*bodaishin*, Sanskrit *bodhi-citta*). *Ōnin ryakki* recounts succession disputes and suggests that *tengu* demons (partly human, winged creatures) were the cause of political disorder. Designed to sow the seeds of enlightenment, this work explained how the rules of cause and effect lead to retribution and encouraged people to believe Buddhism with more fervor. It also saw the events as a manifestation of the future predicted by *Miraiki*.²⁷

The Confucian scholar Arai Hakuseki (1657–1725) relied on a two-volume *Ōninki*, the direct ancestor to the three-volume text, and supplemented it with the *Ōnin bekki* for his history, *Tokushi yoron*, written in the spring of 1712.²⁸ Hakuseki did not directly refer to *Jūhen Ōninki*. He may not have read this work, which was published the year before his manuscript was completed. He did, however, conspicuously ignore *Ōnin ryakki*. This account, with its signs and omens and suggestions of otherworldly causality, found little favor with didactic Confucian scholars who believed that the purpose of a chronicle was to record good and evil human acts as lessons of history.

After Hakuseki, the three volume Kan'ei text, which represents an amalgamation of a two-volume *Ōninki* and the *Ōnin bekki*, became the

insight as to his social position in “Ōninki no shikō,” pp. 115–16, and “*Ōnin bekki* no seiritsu to seikaku,” in *Muromachi gunki no kenkyū*, pp. 120–34. See also Wada, *Ōninki Ōnin bekki*, pp. 225–31, and Varley, *The Ōnin War*, p. 210.

26. See *Gunsho kaidai*, Vol. 13 *Kassen-bu* 1, pp. 20–21, for the antiquity of this text. According to Varley this account “covers roughly the same material as *The Chronicle of Ōnin*, but it is heavily laden with Buddhist moralisms and possesses a vocabulary and style unlike that of the usual war tale.” Varley, *The Ōnin War*, p. 210.

27. *Ōnin ryakki*, in Hanawa, comp., *Gunsho ruijū*, Vol. 20 *Kassen-bu*, pp. 450–54 for the rationale for the text, p. 420 for the reference to the *bodhi-citta*, and p. 455 for a description of the events as a manifestation of *Miraiki*. Reference to *Taiheiki* appears on p. 469. This passage suggests that the disturbances were caused by *tengu*, the clinging, malevolent spirits of Prince Moriyoshi and Kusunoki Masashige (?–1336). For *tengu* as agents of disorder in *Taiheiki*, see Hyōdō, ed., *Taiheiki*, Vol. 1, maki 5 “Sagami nyūdō dengaku o konomu koto,” pp. 240–43, which likewise mentions *Miraiki*; for other examples of *tengu*, see *ibid.*, Vol. 4, maki 26, “Ōtonomiya no bōrei tainai ni yadoru koto,” pp. 167–73, and maki 27, “Unkei *Miraiki* no koto,” pp. 310–24.

28. See Muraoka Tsunesugu, ed., *Tokushi yoron* (Arai Hakuseki) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), pp. 250–56, for his analysis of the war. For a convenient translation, see Joyce Ackroyd, trans., *Lessons from History: Arai Hakuseki's Tokushi yoron* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982), pp. 249, 258–60, and 263. Hakuseki refers to two narratives, *Ōninki* and *Ōnin bekki*, a separate account which heavily influenced the third volume of the later editions of *Ōninki*. Hakuseki relied on the earlier two-volume edition of *Ōninki* when writing the *Tokushi yoron*. See Yanagimoto Yukio, “Sankanbon *Ōninki* ni tsuite,” *Hōsei shigaku*, Vol. 47 (March 1995), pp. 99–102.

favored source for all Tokugawa-era historians. *Nihon gaishi*, a popular history of Japan's warrior governments completed in 1826–27, cited the three *Gunsho ruijū* texts—Kan'ei *Ōninki*, *Ōnin ryakki*, and *Ōnin bekki*—as well as *Jūhen Ōninki* in its concordance.²⁹ Its narrative most closely follows the three-volume Kan'ei version of *Ōninki* by focusing on the moral failings of Yoshimasa before recounting the war as waged between the Hosokawa and Yamana. The battles of Kami Goryō Shrine and Shōkokuji are again prominently mentioned, and this account ends with the deaths of Yamana Sōzen and Hosokawa Katsumoto in 1473 and the dispersal of the armies some four years later.³⁰

The publication and dissemination of the Kan'ei version of *Ōninki* explains why it became the standard source for histories of the Ōnin War. This text and *Ōnin bekki* were the primary sources for the conflict from around the time of Arai Hakuseki through the histories of the nineteenth century and are cited in skillful narratives dating from the late twentieth century.³¹ In contrast to these sources, the relative obscurity of *Ōnin ryakki* reveals that earlier understandings of the war, and notions of causality, ceased to resonate from the seventeenth century onward. To ascertain how the war was understood in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, one needs to explore an older version of *Ōninki*, one that focuses on prophecies and has more in common with *Ōnin ryakki* than has commonly been assumed.

Earlier Textual Variants and the Elimination of the Prophecy

The oldest surviving texts of *Ōninki* are divided by literary scholars between one-volume versions and two-volume versions. Close analysis of historical references in the narrative reveals that the one-volume edition of *Ōninki* was written sometime after 1488 (Chōkyō 2). The author of the text was most likely a member of the monastic nobility or a courtier who had renounced the world. Recent scholarship suggests that *Ōninki* was completed between 1508 (Eishō 5) and 1521 (Dai'ei 1), although the first characterization of the war as a conflict (*heiran*) between the Hosokawa and the Yamana, who divided the realm (*tenka*), dates from 1503 (Bunki 3).³²

29. Rai Seiichi, trans., *Nihon gaishi* (Rai Sanyō) (Tokyo: Iwanami Bunko, 2016), Vol. 1, p. 29, for a list of sources cited. *Nihon gaishi* also cited *Jūhen Ōninki*, and it covers the history of warriors in Japan, from the rise of the Taira and Genji families of warriors in the Heian era (794–1185) through the establishment of the Tokugawa regime in the early seventeenth century.

30. Rai, trans., *Nihon gaishi*, Vol. 2, pp. 91–109. Katsumoto's and Sōzen's deaths are mentioned on p. 107, and the dispersal of the armies in 1477 is the topic of pp. 108–9.

31. See, for example, Ogawa Makoto, *Yamana Sōzen Hosokawa Katsumoto* (Tokyo: Shinjinbutsu Ōraisha, 1994), p. 167.

32. See Wada Shūsaku, comp., *Sengoku ibun Ōuchi shi hen*, Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 2017), doc. 1179, 4.28.1503 Shirazaki Hachimangū *munafudamei*, pp. 80–81, for

All one-volume texts of *Ōninki* begin with the *Yamataishi* prophecy reproduced in its entirety and serving as the narrative template for the text—and thus for understanding of the Ōnin War. The prophecy describes how a comet would mark the onset of a period of turmoil, in which a dog would fight with and triumph over a monkey in a struggle for hegemony. The prophecy of this struggle was fulfilled, or so it was thought, by Hosokawa Katsumoto's short-lived triumph over his rival Yamana Sōzen in 1473. Katsumoto, a deputy shogun (*kanrei*) who was born in the year of the dog, outlived Sōzen, who was born in the year of the monkey, by two months in 1473. The narrative ends by recounting the deaths of both and suggests a Hosokawa victory in a contorted conclusion that ignores the final four years of the war, which continued despite the demise of both antagonists.

The oldest one-volume version of *Ōninki* was probably copied sometime during the late Muromachi era (1338–1573), but none of the extant copies has a datable colophon. Wada Hidemichi suggests that the edition possessed by the Archives and Mausoleum Division of the Imperial Household Ministry (Kunaichō Shoryōbu) most faithfully reproduces the original state of this text, and he transcribed and published this version. Kuroda Akira analyzed and provided a transcription of another text, and yet another one-volume example, owned by Waseda University, can be viewed online. Kuroda argues that the Waseda text was the precursor to the two-volume versions because of errors that appear in both.³³

All the two-volume texts share the same errors and are thus closely related; these texts are direct ancestors to the three-volume Kan'ei version of *Ōninki*, which also contains the same mistakes.³⁴ They can be dated to a 60-year span between 1563 (Eiroku 6), the date of the colophon for

an early reference to the conflict as being between the Hosokawa and Yamana. Wada, *Ōninki Ōnin bekki*, pp. 219–20, points out that the text refers to the post-1488 restoration of three provinces to the Akamatsu family. For the identity of the author, see pp. 218–19. Ienaga Junji, “Gunki *Ōninki* to Ōnin no ran,” *Rekishi yūgaku shiryō o yomu* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppan, 2001), pp. 75–76, persuasively argues that the text was written between 1508 and 1521. Ikeda Keiko, “‘Hana no miyako’ to ‘Yamataishi’ ikkan hon *Ōninki* o megutte,” *Kokubun*, No. 594 (Vol. 53, No. 2, February 1984), p. 30, highlights an added notation with the year 1523 (Dai'ei 3). Ienaga, *ibid.*, p. 75, argues that this postscript is unreliable, but on p. 63 he also reveals a textual hint showing that the chronicle postdates 1494.

33. Wada, *Ōninki Ōnin bekki*, pp. 215–18. For the dating of the seven oldest copies, and two printed versions, see Kuroda Akira, “Seihan bunkobon *Ōninki* ni tsuite,” *Kaga Shiritsu Toshokan Seihan bunkōzō Ōninki* (Kanazawa: Kaga Shiritsu Toshokan, 1987), p. 290; for how they are interrelated, see pp. 296–97.

34. Wada Hidemichi initially provided a typology of three original texts, but the relationship of these copies was further clarified by Kuroda Akira, who instead grouped the seven oldest texts into three categories. See Wada, *Ōninki Ōnin bekki*, pp. 210–15, and Kuroda, “Seihan bunkobon *Ōninki* ni tsuite,” pp. 290–97. The text of the “two-volume” Waseda version printed in 1633 (Kan'ei 10) appears at http://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/bunko30/bunko30_e0143/index.html (accessed June 26, 2019).

the Ryūmon text, the oldest for any surviving *Ōnin* manuscript, and 1633 (Kan'ei 10), when a copy of this text was printed. In contrast to the Kan'ei text, the two-volume versions do not supplement the narrative with the *Ōnin bekki* account. They allude to the *Yamataishi* prophecy in the prologue, a reference missing from the Kan'ei text.³⁵

The shortcomings of the original version of *Ōninki* as a narrative of the conflict were so pronounced that in later centuries it was expanded from one to three volumes to cover the latter years of the war. The prophecy, however, no longer held much interest and was omitted and forgotten, and its influence in determining literary and historical narratives was largely ignored. Nevertheless, prophetic texts have exerted a profound influence on literary and historical narratives of the war and its age.

Precedent versus Prophecy

In Japan, oracles were received from shrine attendants and voiced, but the durable prophecies that influenced historical writing were part of a textual tradition in which two semimystical figures, Prince Shōtoku (574–622) and the Liang-dynasty monk Baozhi (418–514), were thought to have recorded the events of the future in a cryptic, poetic format, and these passages would be revealed in part, or in their entirety. In contrast to the oracles of shrines, these prophecies were part of a subtly changing textual tradition, which changed over time, and gained particular popularity in the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries. So strongly entrenched was the notion that these figures, most notably Prince Shōtoku, were the source of all prophecies, that would-be prophets claimed to be incarnations of him.³⁶

The fifteenth century witnessed a surge in interest in prophetic texts to explain or justify political phenomena. Prophecy gained favor after the fourteenth-century eclipse of precedent as a means of justifying political legitimacy or explaining contemporary events. Courtiers such as Ichijō Kaneyoshi (1402–81) portrayed the events of the fifteenth century as being without precedent and the Ōnin War as something that could not be understood by analyzing chronicles of the wars of 1333–38 (Kenmu) and 1350–52 (Kannō). Another courtier, Nakanoin Michihide (1428–94), argued that it was pointless to record the investiture of a subretired emperor (*junkō* or

35. For the oldest surviving copy of this text, see Kazuma Kawase, *Eiroku rokumen utsushi Ōninki* (Nara-ken Yoshino-gun Yoshino-chō: Ryūmon Bunko, 1986), *kaisetsu*, pp. 1–4. Unfortunately, this text is incomplete, with only the first volume surviving. See also Sakurai Yoshirō, “Muromachi gunki ni okeru rekishi jojutsu,” *Chūsei Nihon bunka no keisei* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1981), pp. 231–54, for the importance of the *Yamataishi* prophecy as a marker for the earlier versions.

36. *Hekizan Nichiroku*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, 2013) 8.8. Kan-shō 1 (1460), p. 135, for the monk Chimei entering Tennōji and claiming to be an incarnation of Prince Shōtoku.

jusangū). He believed that precedent, which had been carefully recorded by his forebears, no longer had much epistemological meaning.³⁷ A history dating from 1552 (Tenbun 21) recounts how the great lord (*daimyō*) Yamana Sōzen purportedly argued that one could not rely on precedent but instead had to replace it with a concept consistent with the times, which for many proved to be a determined world whereby actions were seen as the fulfillment of prophecies.³⁸

Japan did not witness a rise of charismatic prophets; to the contrary, its courtiers strove to decipher ancient texts and ascertain how certain observable phenomena were manifestations of these textual predictions. They had previously analyzed old chronicles to use historical precedent to justify and explain the present, but with events of the fifteenth century this mode of understanding became discredited. Instead, they searched for old prophecies, so that events in their own time might be explained by predictions made in the past.³⁹

The prevalence of the term for precedent (*senrei*) in court chronicles provides a good barometer for its importance as a concept. The term is ubiquitous in sources dating from the eleventh through early fifteenth centuries, appearing over 500 times in records of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and over 400 times in chronicles of the eleventh. After declining precipitously in the fourteenth century to just over 90, it rebounds in the first half of the fifteenth century to over 400 examples and then virtually disappears after 1451 (Hōtoku 3). From 1451 through 1500 (Meiō 9), precedent was only mentioned four times in searchable chronicles and only 20 times for all of the sixteenth century.⁴⁰ Having all but abandoned precedent in their search for signs and understandings after 1451, chroniclers increasingly re-

37. Stephen Carter, *Regent Redux: A Life of the Statesman Scholar Ichijō Kaneyoshi* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1996), p. 145, and Okuno Takehiro et al., eds., *Jurin'in naifuki* (Nakanoin Michihide) (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1972), 7.26.1481 (Bunmei 13), p. 71.

38. *Chiritsuka monogatari*, Kondō Keizō, comp., *Kaitei shiseki shūran*, Vol. 10 (Tokyo: Kondō Shuppanbu, 1901) maki 38, pp. 110–11. Sōzen may never have spoken such words, but this account shows that skepticism regarding precedent remained through the mid-sixteenth century.

39. For more on the significance of precedent, see Thomas D. Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 19.

40. The term precedent (*senrei*) appears in published chronicles 2,404 times. The first dates from 881 and is the only example from that century, while 134 examples appear in the tenth century, 445 in the eleventh, 564 in the twelfth, 592 in the thirteenth, 94 in the fourteenth, 460 in the fifteenth, 20 in the sixteenth, and 90 examples in the period from 1600 through the Hōreki era (1751–64). In addition, four examples cannot be dated. See the Kokiroku database, <https://www.wap.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/ships/shipscontroller> (accessed September 17, 2018). Of course, some major chronicles do not appear in this database, such as *Entairyaku*, so some underrepresentation occurs, particularly in the fourteenth century, but the trend should be clear.

lied on two apocryphal and apocalyptic texts, *Yamataishi* and *Miraiki*, to make sense of their world.

Competing Prophecies

Yamataishi, a fiendishly difficult text to read, served as the dominant prophetic text of the fifteenth century. It was purportedly written by Baozhi, and some evidence exists that it may have been transmitted to Japan in the eighth century.⁴¹ The prophecy was first mentioned in the 936 (Jōhei 6) *Nihon shoki shiki* and it also appears in *Gōdanshō* of the twelfth century, when its popularity increased dramatically. *Yamataishi* was prominently featured in *Kibi daijin nittō emaki*, a scroll created in the latter half of the twelfth century under the patronage of Emperor Go-Shirakawa (1127–92).⁴²

A second great prophetic text, *Miraiki*, attributed to Prince Shōtoku, also first appears in the sources during Go-Shirakawa's time. *Miraiki* is mentioned in *Gukanshō*, an early thirteenth-century history of Japan. It became widely known over the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and many copies of it remain from those times.⁴³ *Kojidan*, compiled in 1215 (Kenpō 3), refers to a stele being uncovered at the southwest of Prince Shōtoku's tomb on 9.20.1054 (Tenki 2). It recorded Shōtoku's prosaic prediction that it would be uncovered some 430 years after his death, and the chronicler of *Kojidan* remarks with wonder how it was discovered after 436 years.⁴⁴

Shōtoku's prognostication, as portrayed in *Kojidan*, provided clear evidence to contemporaries that he could predict the future. Fujiwara Teika

41. See Komine Kazuaki, *Chūsei Nihon no Yogen-sho: Miraiki o yomu* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2007), p. 111, for the 790 (Enryaku 9) commentary. Komine is skeptical regarding whether *Yamataishi* was written by Baozhi in China or by someone else in Korea or Japan (pp. 107–8). Kakei Kumiko, "Yamataishi no itazura," *Nihonshi kenkyū*, No. 299 (July 1987), pp. 80–83, by contrast, suggests that a Heian-era noble or monk selected legends associated with Baozhi, keeping the most interesting parts. Kakei argues that the prophecy exhibits knowledge of Liang China (pp. 81–82), and likewise, because it would have been expected to rhyme in Chinese (p. 79), she sees the text as most likely being written in Japan. Matsubayashi, "'Ōnin no ranki' to 'Yamataishi,'" *Muromachi gunki no kenkyū*, p. 163, to the contrary suggests that this attribution is not as implausible as it sounds and that it followed poetic practices consistent with the Five Dynasties period. Obviously more research is needed regarding this text.

42. Matsubayashi, "'Ōnin no ranki' to 'Yamataishi,'" p. 162; Kuroda Hideo, *Kibi daijin nittō emaki* (Tokyo: Shōgakkan, 2005), pp. 39–41; and Komine, *Chūsei no Nihon no Yogen-sho*, pp. 90–93.

43. See Komine, *Chūsei no Nihon no Yogen-sho*, pp. 142–49, for the original appearance of the text. See also Wada Hidematsu, "Miraiki ni tsuite," *Kōshitsu gyosen no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1933), pp. 967, 971, for the rarity of this text in the Heian era and its corresponding popularity in the Kamakura age (1185–1333).

44. See *Kojidan*, in Kondō, comp., *Kaitei shiseki shūran*, Vol. 10, maki 5, pp. 111–12.

(1162–1241), writing in the aftermath of the Jōkyū War (1221), referred to the discovery of another stele, thought to be a more dramatic prediction drawn from a passage of *Miraiki*. Teika carefully recorded how this stele, carved in old-style script, described barbarians rising in the east. In subsequent years, more steles were discovered. Teika did not record their content and merely noted, wryly, that new ones appeared nearly every year.⁴⁵ Initially keenly interested in the content of *Miraiki*, Teika became more skeptical with these repeated discoveries. As the efforts involved in carving passages from *Miraiki* in stone, burying them, and later digging them up involved many individuals, it is clear that, irrespective of the veracity of the steles, the prophecy was widely known and attracted attention at least in central Japan.

Other elements of *Miraiki*, such as *gekokujō*, appear in a variety of sources, but in addition one sees references to the notion of the implacable hostility of dogs and monkeys, a phrase linked to *Yamataishi*. These references suggest that the concepts of the prophecies were fairly well established in the consciousness of many in the thirteenth century.⁴⁶

During the fourteenth century, with the onset of civil war, *Miraiki* gained influence as competing factions relied on its predictions to justify their positions. By this time, it appeared in a book format rather than carved steles. In the third month of 1332 (Genkō 2), Yoshida Sadafusa (1274–1338) referred to the discovery of the nineteenth volume of *Miraiki*. The work apparently ballooned to 50 volumes in all and its prophecy suggested that the displacement of the ninety-fifth emperor (Go-Daigo) in an unsuccessful uprising foreshadowed the destruction of eastern barbarians, who were widely thought to represent Japan's warrior government, the Kamakura *bakufu*, located in eastern Japan.⁴⁷

45. See Inamura Eiichi, ed., *Kunchū Meigetsuki* (Fujiwara Teika) (Matsue-shi: Matsue Imai Shoten, 2002), Vol. 4, 4.12.1227 (Antei 1), p. 499, for Teika viewing the uncovered inscription of *Miraiki*, and Vol. 6, 11.22.1233 (Tenpuku 1), p. 171, for his comment on the frequency of these discoveries. For how the frequency of these discoveries suggests that these prophecies were commonly known, see Komine Kazuaki, “Shōtoku taishi *Miraiki* no seiseimō hitotsu no rekishi jujutsu,” *Bungaku*, No. 8.4 (October 1997), p. 100.

46. For Nichiren referring to “priests and nuns, embracing erroneous views, quarrel with one another like dogs and monkeys,” see *Kamakura ibun*, Vol. 17, doc. 13227 nochi 10.13 [1278/Kōan 1] Nichiren *shojō*, pp. 383–84. For an English translation, see “On the Three Calamities,” in *The Writings of Nichiren Daishonin*, <https://www.nichirenlibrary.org/en/wnd-2/Content/303> (accessed August 21, 2018). Likewise, Nichiren describes Minamoto no Yoritomo (1147–99) and Taira no Kiyomori (1118–81) as being mortal enemies in such terms as well (*Kiyomori nyūdō to Yoritomo to wa Genpei ryōke moto yori kōken* [猢猻] *to enkō* [猿猴] *to no gotoshī*), *Kamakura ibun*, Vol. 15, doc. 11837, 2.1275 (Bun'ei 12) Nichiren *shojō*, pp. 374–83. This passage appears on the penultimate page of this document.

47. See *Kikkuden* (Yoshida Sadafusa), *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai*, comp., *Zoku gunsho ruijū*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1976), pp. 902–3.

Miraiki prophecies proved increasingly popular as political turmoil increased. After Kamakura was destroyed in 1333, Ashikaga Takauji (1305–58), the founder of Japan’s second shogunate, alluded to *Miraiki* prophecies in poems he wrote in 1336 (Kenmu 3) at the Iminomiya Shrine in Nagato Province, this time pointing to his role as one who would gain control of the realm.⁴⁸ Likewise, his rival, Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293–1354) used the same prophecy to predict that the Ashikaga would collapse after seven years of rule, and although this did not occur, Chikafusa nevertheless organized an offensive which fractured the Ashikaga in 1351 (Kannō 2).⁴⁹ Finally, a copy of the fourteenth-century epic, *Taiheiki*, mentions *Miraiki* and suggests that it served as a template for the chaos of the age.⁵⁰

The Historicization of Prophecies

Starting in the late fourteenth century, some courtiers placed *Miraiki* in historical context. Shijō Takasato (1326–1410) recorded centuries of interpretations of this prophetic text in the colophon of his copied text sometime in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, thereby linking his disturbed present to a detailed past, whereby politics and prophetic signs were intertwined. The weight of centuries of analysis and interpretation, enhanced by collective revisions of the texts, caused people to believe in the predictive prowess of prophecies, although in the case of *Miraiki*, its original predictions were perceived as being largely fulfilled over the course of the fourteenth century.

Takasato, who copied the most complete version of *Miraiki*, was aware of predictions mentioned by Fujiwara Teika, Yoshida Sadafusa, Ashikaga Takauji, and Kitabatake Chikafusa. Rather than critiquing them, he accepted the veracity of all and incorporated the predictions into a seamless narrative, explaining how “eastern barbarians” first seized the realm after 1221 (Jōkyū 3) in accordance with the *Miraiki* prophecy read by Teika. During the ninety-sixth emperor’s reign, he claimed, the eastern barbarians would be destroyed.⁵¹ Then, supporting Ashikaga Takauji’s 1336 claim, he suggested that eastern barbarians (the Ashikaga) once again seized power

48. Thomas Conlan, *State of War: The Violent Order of Fourteenth Century Japan* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2003), p. 190.

49. *Fukushima kenshi kodai chūsei shiryō* (Fukushima: Fukushima-ken, 1966), Sagara monjo, doc. 13, 3.28 [1342/Kōkoku 3] Kitabatake Chikafusa *mikyōjō*, p. 417, for Chikafusa’s reference for *Miraiki*, which he calls the “Prince Shōtoku Record” (*Shōtoku taishi gokibun*). See also Conlan, *From Sovereign to Symbol*, pp. 72–73, for Chikafusa and prophecies.

50. For some *Taiheiki* references to *Miraiki*, see Hyōdō Hiromi, ed., *Taiheiki*, Vol. 1, maki 5 “Sagami nyūdō dengaku o konomu koto,” pp. 240–43, and Vol. 4, maki 27, “Unkei *Miraiki* no koto,” pp. 310–25.

51. Takasato accepts Yoshida Sadafusa’s account, but he counts Go-Daigo’s reign slightly differently, listing him as the 96th instead of the 95th emperor, which corresponds to his succession number today.

and this lasted, as Kitabatake Chikafusa had argued, for seven years. The Ashikaga fell into disunion and recovered. Takasato listed the final events corresponding to the prophecy in 1379 (Eiwa 5) and he completed his copy of *Miraiki* in 1387 (Shitoku 4).⁵²

Miraiki remained the preeminent prophecy through the fourteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth, as precedent ceased to resonate as a mode of legitimation. It also provided the narrative structure for a chronicle of the 1466 Bunshō Disturbance⁵³ and was influential among courtiers. The Middle Counselor (Chūnagon) Shijō Takakazu, for example, copied *Miraiki* on 7.5.1467 and included a colophon from his ancestor Takasato. Jinson (1430–1508), the head of the nearby Nara temple of Kōfukuji, also recorded *Miraiki* on 5.17.1467, a period coinciding with the onset of the war in Kyoto.⁵⁴

The prophecies recorded in *Miraiki* underwent subtle shifts through various transcriptions in the fifteenth century. Most notably, older versions do not refer to comets or other astronomical disturbances. Nevertheless, the two *Miraiki* texts copied by Shijō Takakazu and Jinson in 1467 have added references to a shooting star. They also mention the trope of a “hundred kings,” which defined the end of Japan’s imperial line, and the notion that hostilities would break out between a dog and a monkey, all elements appearing in *Yamataishi*. While repeated copying ensured its survival, *Miraiki*’s original prophecies had largely been supplanted by, or amalgamated with, *Yamataishi* prophecies by the mid-fifteenth century.⁵⁵

Yamataishi contains numerous influential tropes. Some concepts, such as the idea of a hundred reigns, suggested the extermination of Japan’s imperial line and only resonated in a Japanese context; others were fairly standard portents of doom, such as comets blazing forth from the heavens. Other elements were mysterious and opaque and might be claimed to denote nearly anything, such as the proposition that the world would be disordered when a dog fought with a monkey, or that the decay of social order was exemplified, mysteriously enough, by the sign of rats eating the innards of oxen.

The appearance of Halley’s comet in 1456 (Kōshō 2) caused *Yamataishi* to become even more influential. Halley’s comet would have been particularly prominent when it passed close to Earth in that cycle. The Italian

52. This was found at Ninnanji in 1923. See Wada, “*Miraiki ni tsuite*,” pp. 959, 964–65. The date of the original copy was the 28th day of the intercalary fifth month of 1387.

53. See Matsubayashi, “‘Ōnin no ranki’ to ‘Yamataishi,’” p. 167, for how a little-known account of the 1466 Bunshō disturbances relied on *Miraiki* to set up its narrative framework. For the text, see Hanawa, comp., *Gunsho ruijū*, Vol. 20 *Kassen-bu*, pp. 347–54. Reference to *Miraiki* appears on p. 347.

54. Takeuchi Rizō, ed., *Daijōin jisha zōjiki* (Jinson) (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, Fukyūban, 2001), Vol. 4, 5.17.1467 (Ōnin 1), p. 189.

55. Wada, “*Miraiki ni tsuite*,” pp. 959, 964–68.

Paolo Toscanelli (1397–1482) said that it was “as large as the eye of an ox” with a tail “fan-shaped like that of a peacock.”⁵⁶ Its appearance, an unmistakable portent, caused erudite individuals to ponder the deeper meaning of *Yamataishi*. After seeing it in 1456, the Shōkokuji monk Zuikei Shūhō (1391–1473) and his compatriot Tōgaku Chōkin discussed over tea how certain *Yamataishi* prophetic conditions had been met. They pondered arcane elements of the prophecies and argued, for example, that the reigns of a hundred kings had come to an end at the time of Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358–1408), the Ashikaga autocrat who adopted ritual prerogatives of the sovereign. Another element of the prophecy, that of how political turmoil could be understood in terms of a dog fighting a monkey, proved difficult to decipher, but Zuikei Shūhō explained that Ashikaga Yoshimitsu represented the dog, while his cousin Ashikaga Ujimitsu (1359–98), the Ashikaga lord of the east (*Kantō kubō*), was (contrary to the assertion of later authors of *Ōninki*) the monkey.⁵⁷

Still more conversations occurred the following year, 1457 (Chōroku 1), and this time a Kōfukuji monk named Kyōgaku described how a group of Nishioka packhorse stockmen defeated the forces of Hosokawa Katsumoto in a pitched battle and perceived this as fulfilling a second element of prophecy, that of rats devouring an ox. He wrote: “Such outrages—extreme *gekokujiō*—surely have no precedent. One can see in the clear text of *Yamataishi* that black rats will eat the entrails of an ox. [The prophecy] is not false!”⁵⁸ Kyōgaku perceived this episode as proof of *Yamataishi*. In describing how the revolt was an example of the lower overcoming the higher, or *gekokujiō*, he explained the present by relying on prophetic texts, describing the future, rather than chronicles of past precedent, to make sense of his age.⁵⁹

56. Ian Ridpath, *A Comet Called Halley* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 22.

57. Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, ed., *Gaun nikkenroku* (Zuikei Shūhō) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1961), 8.24.1456, p. 98. For more analysis, see Komine, *Chūsei Nihon no Yogensho*, pp. 178–79, and Matsubayashi, “‘Ōnin no ranki’ to ‘Yamataishi,’” p. 170. Not all would see the end of a hundred reigns as having occurred in Yoshimitsu’s time, as by the common count of the time, a hundred reigns ended just around time of the Ōnin War. For reference to the concept of a hundred kings, a crucial element of this prophecy, see Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryōhen Sanjo, ed., *Shoken nichiroku* (Kikō Daishiku) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1953), 11.30.1486 (Bunmei 18), pp. 256–57. See also Ōtsu Yūichi, “‘Owari’ no ato no reki-shi jujutsu,” *Gakujutsu kenkyū-Kokugo Kokubungaku hen*, No. 52 (Tokyo: Waseda Daigaku Kyōiku Gakubu, 2003), pp. 22–23, and Matsubayashi, “‘Ōnin no ranki’ to ‘Yamataishi,’” pp. 168–69.

58. *Gekokujiō no itari rōzeki shogyō wa misō no mono ya. Kuronezumi ga ushi no chō o kū beki no yoshi Yamatai no meibun ni miru. Itsuwari ni arazu ya.* Takahashi Ryūzō, ed., *Kyōgaku shiyōshō* (Kyōgaku) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971–2018), Vol. 3, 10.27.1457, pp. 276–77. For more analysis, see Matsubayashi, *Muromachi gunki no kenkyū*, pp. 166, 169–73, and Komine, *Chūsei Nihon no Yogensho*, pp. 180–81.

59. For this turn of phrase, we are indebted to Jeffrey P. Mass, who described this trope of *gekokujiō* as “The Present as Explained by the Past,” in *Antiquity and Anachronism*, p. 59.

Although *gekokujō* had, as we have seen, a long history, by the late fourteenth century, the term came to be associated with Prince Shōtoku's *Miraiki*.⁶⁰ In 1457, however, the monk Kyōgaku linked *Miraiki*'s notion of *gekokujō* to *Yamataishi* for apparently the first time. In another innovation, Kyōgaku imbued the term with a new meaning to describe resistance to warrior rule in general, rather than the warrior usurpation of court authority, or personal outrages. Ultimately, Kyōgaku's use of the term would become a dominant trope for historical narratives of Japan's fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

One might be inclined to dismiss this focus on prophecy as being nothing new, for specialists of yin and yang had long interpreted the significance of signs through divination, and these prophetic texts themselves had been bandied about for centuries. Nevertheless, by the mid-fifteenth century, certain elements of different prophetic traditions were so well known that individual prophecies were altered in transcriptions to incorporate elements of other prophecies. These included shooting stars, the ideas of dogs fighting monkeys, and *gekokujō*. With politics becoming chaotic, and precedent no longer useful to make sense of the world, these durable concepts from prophetic traditions provided the mechanisms for people to frame their times in familiar terms.

This attachment to prophecy, and the concepts arising from it, caused people to believe they lived in a predetermined present. Instead of relying on precedent to justify the present, courtiers and monks, the most likely authors of chronicles of their times, tried to show that their present turmoil represented a culmination of past events. Shijō Takakazu, Jinson, and others who witnessed war erupting in the capital in 1467 copied prophetic texts. For them, the war was not a random, senseless, or incomprehensible event; rather, it was the long-foretold collapse of the state. They believed they lived in uniquely cursed times.

Shooting Stars and the 1465 Onset of the "Ōnin War"

On 9.13.1465 (Kanshō 6), a comet, or meteor, passed so close to the earth's atmosphere that it emitted sound. Known as a sound-emitting "Tengu Star" (*tengusei*), it was taken as a rare and baleful sign. Jinson suggested that this was the first Tengu Star ever to be seen in Japan.⁶¹ This astronomical event proved far more remarkable than Halley's comet, for descriptions

60. The *Bunshōki* both refers to *Miraiki* and uses the term *gekokujō* to describe the purchase of genealogies, while the most general and prominent usage of the term in *Taiheiki* is linked to *Miraiki* prophecies.

61. *Daijōin jisha zōjiki* (Jinson), Vol. 12, 9.13.1465, p. 369. This passage appears in the index (*mokuroku*) but not in Jinson's surviving diary per se. For more on how the designation Tengu Star amounted to political criticism, see Matsubayashi, *Muromachi gunki no kenkyū*, pp. 100–102.

suggest the impact, or near impact, of some celestial body.⁶² A Tōdaiji monk exclaimed that it was “just as described in *Yamataishi*.”⁶³ On the same day, Zuikei Shūhō wrote: “after the fourth drumbeat of the evening, from the southwest a giant comet flew to the northeast. Not only was it bright, but it sounded like a great earthquake. People were bowled over with surprise.”⁶⁴ The 1465 “shooting star” does not appear in European accounts, suggesting that it disintegrated upon its encounter with Earth.⁶⁵

Contemporaries perceived this appearance of a Tengu Star as a portent of war, which coincidentally arose precisely at that time between the forces of Ashikaga Yoshimasa and Ōuchi Norihiro (1420–65), a *daimyō* of the west. Recently, scholars have argued that the fundamental alliances that shaped the Ōnin War only coalesced during the eighth month of 1465.⁶⁶ That an unmistakable and remarkable portent occurred at a time of political instability moved people to favor conflict over compromise. *Miraiki* prophecies had been altered to include a reference to a shooting star, and perhaps the appearance of such a remarkable one in 1465 encouraged people to settle their differences through war.

A passage from *Ōnin ryakki* describes the arrival of a Tengu Star, a sign of misfortune, which was seen for three nights. Literary scholars have noted that *Ōninki*, and variants such as *Ōnin ryakki*, contain language about a Tengu Star that closely resembles that of *Taiheiki*.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, although

62. A recent study suggests that the electromagnetic energy of meteors could be converted into photoacoustic waves which accounts for these sounds. See *Nature, Scientific Reports* 7, Article number: 41251 (2017) doi:10.1038/srep41251 <http://www.nature.com/articles/srep41251> (accessed February 2, 2017).

63. *Tōdaiji hokkedō yōroku* (Shōshu), a text appearing in *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai*, comp., *Zoku zoku gunsho ruijū*, Vol. 5 (Tokyo: Ichishima Kenkichi, 1909), 8.22.1467 (Ōnin 1), p. 396, for explicit mention of *Yamataishi*. For further descriptions of the comet, see 5.26.1467, p. 394.

64. Bussho Kankōkai Hensan, *Inryōken Nichiroku* (Kikei Shinzui), *Dainihon bukkyō zensho*, No. 133–37 (Tokyo: Bussho Kankōkai, 1912–13), Vol. 2 (no. 134), 9.13.1465, pp. 558–59.

65. Unlike Halley’s comet, the 1465 event was only seen in China and Japan. See Clarisse D. Hellman, *The Comet of 1577: Its Place in the History of Astronomy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), p. 75.

66. Wada, *Ōninki Ōnin beki*, pp. 32–33, and Ienaga, “Gunki Ōninki to Ōnin no ran,” p. 69. Ienaga argues (p. 76) that the key rift with the Yamana happened between the eighth and eleventh months of 1465. See also his “Sairon Gunki Ōninki to Ōnin no ran,” *Rekishi yūgaku shiryō o yomu* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppan, 2011), p. 62.

67. See *Ōnin ryakki*, p. 469, for reference to this being visible 9.10–13.1465 and specific mention of *Taiheiki*. Matsubayashi, in 1972, wrote “*Taiheiki* to *Ōninki*—*Taiheiki* no eikyō,” *Muromachi gunki no kenkyū*, pp. 79–89, which points to pronounced textual similarities, including comment on the star itself (p. 85). See also his 1978 “*Ōninki* no tengu ryūsei kiji o megutte,” *Muromachi gunki no kenkyū*, pp. 93–94. For the similarities of language in the two-volume version of *Ōninki* and *Taiheiki*, see Sakurai Yoshirō, “Muromachi gunki ni okeru rekishi jujutsu,” in *Chūsei Nihon bunka no keisei*, pp. 245–46.

people may have cribbed the language of earlier narratives, the comments of the Tōdaiji monk reveal that concepts embedded in the *Yamataishi* prophecy existed in people's consciousness.

War erupted in 1465, right around the time of the appearance of the Tengu Star, because Yoshimasa attempted to reestablish Ashikaga authority in the western provinces. Yoshimasa miscalculated and alienated several potent magnates, who rose against him. Most notably, Yoshimasa confiscated the strategic harbor of Tōsai, which currently constitutes part of the city of Hiroshima, from Ōuchi Norihiro. Norihiro thereupon attacked Ashikaga interests, but he died suddenly of illness on 9.3, a mere ten days before the remarkable Tengu Star was seen.⁶⁸ That his death coincided with an astronomical phenomenon would seem a fitting time to portray the opening of hostilities in narratives of the ensuing war. That it is ignored is telling. Neither Norihiro nor Yoshimasa was portrayed as the main protagonist of the conflict because neither could be plausibly linked to the monkey or the dog of *Yamataishi*.

The war continued after Norihiro's death, when his 18-year-old son Masahiro (1446–95) fought pitched battles against the Ashikaga near Tōsai. Yoshimasa turned this conflict into an imperially sanctioned war when he demanded Masahiro's destruction.⁶⁹ Thereupon, the Ōuchi blockaded the Inland Sea. From late in 1465 through the next seven years "nothing passed from the west" into the capital as the Ōuchi prevented tax and trade ships from plying their way to the capital from the west. Some ships slipped through during 1471 (Bunmei 3), but the blockade remained in force through 1477.⁷⁰

68. For Norihiro's death, see *Yamaguchi kenshi shiryōhen chūsei 1* (Yamaguchi: Yamaguchi-ken, 1996), *Ninagawa Chikamoto nikki*, 9.3 and 10.7.1465, p. 188, and *Saitō Chikamoto nikki*, 9.3.1465, p. 199. See also Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, comp., *Dainihon komonjo*, *Iewake* no. 8 *Mōri ke monjo*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1920), doc. 118, 10.10 [1465] Hosokawa Katsumoto *shojō*, p. 111. Katsumoto characterized Norihiro's death as "the punishment of heaven."

69. For the 10.3.1465 battle, see Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, comp., *Dainihon komonjo*, *Iewake* no. 11 *Kobayakawa ke monjo*, Vol. 2 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1927), 10.22 [1465] Hosokawa Katsumoto *kanjō utsushi*, p. 53. For Yoshimasa's edict of chastisement (*jibatsu*), see *ibid.*, doc. 140, 10.26.1465 Shōgun ke *mikyōjō utsushi*, p. 54, and doc. 141, 11.21 Hosokawa Katsumoto *shojō utsushi*, pp. 54–55; Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, comp., *Dainihon komonjo*, *Iewake* no. 9 *Kikkawa ke monjo*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1925) doc. 48, 10.26.1465 Shōgun ke *mikyōjō*, p. 29; and Nagata Masazumi, comp., *Hagi han batsu etsu roku*, reprint edition (Yamaguchi: Yamaguchi Monjokan, 1989), Vol. 2, maki 43 Dewa Genpachi monjo, doc. 69 10.26.1465 Kanrei Hatakeyama Masanaga *hōsho*, p. 146.

70. *Mibu ke monjo* (Tokyo: Kunaichō Shoryōbu, 1988), Vol. 1, p. 167, doc. 152, which explains how the blockade of the Inland Sea started in 1465, and that for a considerable time the seas were impassible for hostile forces, although from 1471 through 1477 some shipments passed through the Inland Sea.

In fact, other battles were fought after the blockade of 1465 that have been ignored in all narratives of the war. During the second month of 1466 (Bunshō 1), Ōuchi Masahiro attacked other areas in the Hiroshima region.⁷¹ Midway through that year, some Ashikaga officials tried to pardon Masahiro.⁷² This failed, and perspicacious courtiers, adept at reading signs, realized the capital itself would soon be in danger. Fearing a “great disturbance,” Konoe Masaie (1445–1505) moved 50 boxes of his documents to Iwakura for safekeeping on 8.9.1466, which allowed his archive to survive the ensuing turmoil.⁷³

With war festering in the west, Yoshimasa attempted to resolve a succession dispute between Masanaga (1442–93) and Yoshinari (?–1491), two competing heirs of the prominent Hatakeyama *daimyō* family of central Japan.⁷⁴ *Ōninki* records a skirmish waged at the Kami Goryō Shrine between the two on 1.15.1467 in a bid to solve the crisis, but the pro-Ōuchi contender Yoshinari won, and this plan came to naught.

The Hatakeyama dispute is portrayed in *Ōninki* as the opening salvo of the Ōnin War, but it, like the earlier events in western Japan, technically did not occur during the Ōnin era, which was established on the fifth day of the third lunar month of 1467. *Ōninki*'s designation of the Hatakeyama dispute as demarcating the onset of the war is misleading, because one sees a peaceful era change and the court functioning normally in the capital for several months in 1467 after that skirmish. In fact, the genesis and impetus for the war occurred in the west. The next act in the war occurred on 4.27.1467, when Ōuchi Masahiro defeated the Shōni at Hakozaiki, in northern Kyushu, which technically constitutes the first battle of the Ōnin era, although it is ignored in the chronicle.⁷⁵

Four months of uneasy peace lasted in the capital after the Kami Goryō battle, but *Ōninki* and most histories posit the Hatakeyama skirmish as the opening act of a war which had already been raging for nearly two years. Accordingly, studies have tended to focus on the Hatakeyama and their

71. Kobayakawa *ke monjo*, Vol. 2, doc. 382, 2.30 Yamana Mochitoyo *kanjō utsushi*, pp. 224–25.

72. *Daijōin jishsha zōjiki*, Vol. 4, 7.29.1466, pp. 88–89.

73. Takeuchi Rizō, ed., *Gohōkōinki* (Konoe Masaie) (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1978), Vol. 1, 7.24.1466, p. 39, and 8.9.1466, p. 42. Masaie later dispatched maids, other ladies of the house, and children to Iwakura for shelter. *Gohōkōinki*, 6.8 and 8.1.1467, pp. 105, 113.

74. Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo, comp., *Dainihon shiryō*, Series 8, Vol. 1 (hereafter *DNSR* 8:1) (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1913), 1.15.1467 (Bunshō 2), pp. 30–37. The name can also be read as Yoshihiro; see Momose Kesao, “Ōnin Bunmei no ran,” *Iwanami kōza Nihon no rekishi*, Vol. 7. *Chūsei* 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976), p. 196.

75. Wada Shūsaku, comp., *Sengoku ibun Ōuchi shi hen*, Vol. 1 (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 2016), doc. 7, 4.27.1467 (Ōnin 1) Ōuchi Masahiro *kanjō*, p. 5. See also Yamaguchi *kenshi shiryōhen chūsei* 4 (Yamaguchi: Yamaguchi-ken, 2008), 4.27.1467, Ōuchi Masahiro *kanjō*, pp. 575–76, and *DNSR* 8.1, p. 541.

lands in central Japan and ignore causes for conflict, or actions of individuals, in the west, where battles were waged since late 1465.⁷⁶

Ultimately, Ōuchi Masahiro led an armada estimated to consist of 500 to 2,000 boats to the capital from western Japan. He departed from Yamaguchi on 5.10.1467, some two weeks before open and sustained warfare erupted in Kyoto.⁷⁷ One contemporary account of the campaign, written by a Tōdaiji monk, estimated this force consisted of 700 boats and an army of 250,000 men, an exaggeration undoubtedly, but other accounts refer to his army as a “ferocious force” (*mōsei*).⁷⁸

Masahiro advanced to Kyoto, set up camp at Tōji, and then occupied Funaoka, a strategic locale in northwestern Kyoto, late in the eighth month of 1467.⁷⁹ His opponents were forced to attack his supply lines from the ports of Hyōgo and Sakai.⁸⁰ Hyōgo would continue to be fought over in 1468–69 (Ōnin 2–3), but the harbor would eventually be destroyed.⁸¹ This led to a decline in shipping along the Yodo River and to the later prosperity of Sakai, a relatively poor and shallow harbor but one with good access to overland

76. Epitomizing this approach, the most recent work on the Ōnin War, Goza Yūichi’s *Ōnin no ran* (Tokyo: Chūkō Shinsho, 2016), focuses merely on two sources, Jinson’s *Daijōin jisha zōjiki* and Kyōgaku’s *Kyōgaku shiyōshō*, and mostly covers the Yamato region of central Japan. He admits that the Ōuchi, who resided in the capital for a decade, were outside the scope of his narrative (p. 185).

77. See *DNSR* 8.1, 7.20.1467 (Ōnin 1), p. 334, for how Masahiro set off from Yamaguchi on 5.10.1467. For Jinson first reporting a disturbance in the capital and alluding to a prophecy of turmoil by Prince Shōtoku, a week later, on 5.17, see *Daijōin jisha zōjiki*, Vol. 4, p. 189. Jinson described the actual outbreak of hostilities in Kyoto as occurring on 5.24. See 5.26.1467, pp. 192–93.

78. *Tōdaiji hokkedō yōroku*, 7.13.1467, p. 395, for Masahiro arriving at Muro harbor. For the characterization of him as leading a powerful army, see *DNSR* 8.1, 8.29.1467, p. 380. The characterization as a “ferocious force” appears in *Gohōkōinki*, Vol. 1, 8.24.1467, p. 117.

79. *DNSR* 8.1, 8.29.1467, p. 380. The Eastern Army congregated near Shimogamo Shrine. For more on Masahiro occupying Tōji on 8.23, see *DNSR* 8.1, 8.23.1467, pp. 357–64, and Tomita Masahiro, *Ōnin no ran* (Kyoto: Kyōto Furitsu Sōgō Rekishi Shiryōkan, 1989), p. 2. For Masahiro’s later occupation of Tōji, see *DNSR* 8.2 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1915), 10.19.1468 (Ōnin 2), pp. 166–67.

80. Wada, comp., *Sengoku ibun Ōuchi shi hen*, Vol. 1, doc. 19, 12.27.1467 Ōuchi Masahiro *kanjō*, p. 8, and doc. 21, Ōuchi Dōjun *shojō*, p. 9, for the repeated battles at Settsu Nakajima. Later (1470) discussion of keeping these supply roads open appears in doc. 49, 1.2 [1470] Ōuchi Masahiro *shojō*, p. 18.

81. See Nagashima, *Ōnin no ran*, pp. 148–49, on the destruction of Hyōgo and how it later led to the prosperity of Sakai. For more on Masahiro and the battles in the harbors and their link to Masahiro’s supply lines, see pp. 124, 136–37. For documents describing battles at Hyōgo barrier (*seki*) on 9.12.1468 (Ōnin 2), see *DNSR* 8.2, 9.12.1468, p. 96, and 11.28.1468, p. 889; and *DNSR* 8.3 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1916), 10.16.1469 (Bunmei 1), p. 12. After this date, no battles were fought in the vicinity, which suggests that the port was destroyed. See Shinjō Tsunetzō, *Chūsei suiunshi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Hanawa Shobō, 1994), particularly pp. 726–38, on the decrease in trade along the Yodo River and the supplanting of Hyōgo by Sakai.

roads. These roads could be more readily defended, although battles would be fought along this route for years. Masahiro achieved a crushing victory at Kurahashi Castle on 8.18.1470, which served to stabilize his supply lines from Sakai, and dominated that region through 1471.⁸²

For the sake of brevity, a detailed narrative of the war will not be provided in this essay, but an overview of military documents reveals that much of the war was fought in the west and that the forces of the Ōuchi were critically important. Masahiro's role did not gain the attention it deserved, as any analysis of the battle itself makes readily apparent. Still, his advance was initially too pronounced to ignore, and the early one- and two-volume versions of *Ōninki* recount it under the subheading “Ōuchi no suke jōraku no koto” (Ōuchi Masahiro's advance to the capital).⁸³ The three-volume Kan'ei edition elided this header entirely, with the focus being instead on the battles that occurred during the Ōuchi advance.⁸⁴

Overcoming the Biases of Ōninki

Ōninki has long been the primary source for reconstructing the Ōnin War. Its narrative is the main reason why the war has been so consistently misconceived. Scholars have missed the biases of this account because they have long assumed that the chronicle was written by an eyewitness, when in fact someone wrote this work between 1488 and 1521, when associations were radically different from the alliances of the Ōnin era. At that time, the Ōuchi, who had been an implacable foe of the Ashikaga shoguns from 1465 through 1477, propped up the Ashikaga regime, going so far as to reinstate a shogun in 1508 after he was ousted in a coup. In 1508, the Ōuchi allied with a cadet branch of the Hosokawa lineage and had little interest in emphasizing their rivalry with that family. Adding to the confusion, *Ōninki* focuses on the implacable hostility of two generals, Hosokawa Katsumoto and Yamana Sōzen, who were thought to be antagonists foretold by prophecies. Both commanders died in 1473, and the chronicle does not explain why the war lingered for four more years.

Analysis of documentary sources has helped overcome the subtle and durable biases of *Ōninki*. The best study remains Watanabe Yosuke's *Muro-*

82. *DNSR* 8.3, 8.18.1470, pp. 697–99. Momose, “Ōnin Bunmei no ran,” pp. 201–2, argues that Ōuchi Masahiro dominated the surrounding Settsu region during the years 1469–71.

83. See, for example, Wada, *Ōninki*, p. 86; Kuroda, “Kaga toshokan Seihan bunkobon *Ōninki*,” p. 112. Later versions omit Masahiro's name in favor of Yamana Sōzen's. See http://archive.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kosho/ri05/ri05_12561/ri05_12561.pdf (accessed June 26, 2019), p. 60 of 82.

84. *Ōninki*, in Hanawa, comp., *Gunsho ruijū*, Vol. 20 *Kassen-bu*, pp. 381–84. This later version emphasizes the battles of Itorino and Sanbōin (“Itorino kassen no koto” and “Sanbōin semeotosu koto”) and ignores use of the Ōuchi name in the headings.

machi jidaishi, particularly its final 1948 edition. Tomita Masahiro's *Ōnin no ran* likewise introduces documents from Tōji showing that the temple was protected by the Ōuchi during the war and was not burned down during the conflict.⁸⁵

Japanese scholarship has also revealed that the *Ōninki* narrative of the politics leading up to the war is misleading. Momose Kesao emphasizes that Ashikaga Yoshimasa's attempt to centralize his rule led to the war and the ultimate Ashikaga implosion.⁸⁶ Since publication of Momose's article, the idea that Yoshimasa was a shogun who strove to rule directly and forcefully has become more widely accepted, with the dominant dynamic being not a dispute between the Hosokawa and the Yamana but, to the contrary, tensions between the Hatakeyama and the Hosokawa, a division exacerbated by the actions of Yoshimasa. These studies have resulted in a more insightful political narrative of the events leading up to the Ōnin War, but they are limited by relying solely on the perspective of the Ashikaga *bakufu* and its crucial officials and ignoring affairs in western Japan.⁸⁷

Two informative articles by Ienaga Junji describe the importance of the Yamataishi prophecy in the oldest narratives of *Ōninki*. Ienaga also reveals many of the fabrications of the chronicle, such as the oversized role of Hino Tomiko in causing the conflict. He effectively deconstructs most of the themes of the chronicle, among them the notion that the Hosokawa-Yamana rivalry only happened very late, and also suggests that the battle between the Ōuchi and Ashikaga in 1465 is better conceived as marking the onset of the Ōnin War. Accordingly, more recent accounts of the war have become more sophisticated in their political analysis of the varying allegiances and disputes leading up to the conflict.⁸⁸

Several other works of recent scholarship reveal that the fundamental narrative of the war is being questioned for the first time. In his 2017 account of the Kyōtoku rebellion, Minegishi Sumio argues that it marks the start of a 30-year war, beginning in eastern Japan in 1454 (Kyōtoku 3), although the last disturbances there occurred in 1459 (Chōroku 3).⁸⁹ Ultimately Minegi-

85. Tomita, *Ōnin no ran*.

86. Momose, "Ōnin Bunmei no ran," pp. 178–213.

87. See Ienaga Junji, "Sanma-Ashikaga Yoshimasa shoki ni okeru shōgun kinshin no dōkō," *Nihon rekishi*, No. 616 (September 1999), pp. 20–36, and Suegara, "Ōnin bunmei no ran" pp. 84–87. Suegara also describes the actions of Ise Sadachika as an agent of Yoshimasa (pp. 87–88). One exception offering a broader view is Sakurai's *Muromachibito no seishin*. He recounts the Bunshō disturbances of the mid-1460s (pp. 301–4), explains Norihiro's confrontation with the Ashikaga (pp. 301–2), and mentions Masahiro's arrival and its significance in 8.1467 (pp. 306–8).

88. Ienaga, "Gunki Ōninki to Ōnin no ran," pp. 61–78, and "Sairon Gunki Ōninki to Ōnin no ran," pp. 57–71; Suegara, "Ōnin Bunmei no ran."

89. Minegishi Sumio, *Kyōtoku no ran* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2017).

shi's account is not convincing, because there seems no direct link between this 1454–59 disturbance and the events of the 1460s. The battles of western Japan, to the contrary, are closely tied to the events of Ōnin.

Goza Yūichi's *Ōnin no ran Sengoku jidai o unda tairan* (2016) reconstructs the war with a focus on Nara. Goza relies on two contemporary accounts, *Kyōgaku shiyō shō* and *Daijōin jisha zōjiki*, to provide a new narrative of the battle. His approach has a freshness to it, for Miura's 1922 work is not read often nowadays, precisely because it does not rely on *Ōninki*. Goza's book has been a remarkable bestseller, with 470,000 copies sold and 33 editions printed as of January 2018. Nevertheless, Goza focuses on the Yamato region of central Japan, and he does not explore the Ōuchi or the events of western Japan in his narrative.⁹⁰ His failure to analyze the west stems from both the limitation of these sources and the unconscious blinders provided by *Ōninki*.

Taking an alternative approach in order to better understand the complexity and geographic diffusion of this conflict, I plotted all of the regions where battles, or military action, could be verified. This revealed that war began in 1465 and continued through 1478 (Bunmei 10), with the brunt of the fighting occurring in Kyoto, its environs, and also in western Japan, particularly what now constitutes the Hiroshima region.⁹¹

Having uncovered layers of additions and biases based on *Ōninki*, let us now turn to the end of the war, and later political developments, to more clearly reveal the biases of the chronicle, which obscured the fact that the war was a struggle for hegemony between the Ōuchi and the Ashikaga.

Endings

In many ways, the year 1473 constituted a year of exhaustion, as the two purported protagonists of the war, Yamana Sōzen and Hosokawa Katsumoto, died on 3.18 and 5.11, respectively. The original version of *Ōninki* ends its narrative at the time of Yamana Sōzen's death and suggests, most improbably, that the war was a Hosokawa victory, for with the triumph, however brief, of the dog (Katsumoto) over the monkey (Sōzen), the *Yamataishi* prophecy was fulfilled.⁹²

This narrative is misleading. The Yamana switched sides and allied with the Hosokawa after Sōzen's death, but the war continued with Ōuchi

90. Goza Yūichi, *Ōnin no ran Sengoku jidai o unda tairan* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 2016). See p. 185 for why he ignored the role of Ōuchi Masahiro and the west.

91. See "The Ōnin War: Visualizing 12 Years of War in Japan, 1465–78," <http://commons.princeton.edu/onin/> (accessed July 15, 2019).

92. Wada, *Ōninki Ōnin bekki*, p. 115. See also *DNSR* 8.6 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1920), pp. 427–42 for Sōzen's 3.18 death and pp. 562–621 for Katsumoto's death on 5.11.1473.

Masahiro and Hatakeyama Yoshinari continuing to fight. Masahiro attacked enemy forces on 8.25.1473, and on the following day, Ōuchi allies discussed war plans at Masahiro's residence, amply demonstrating his central role in the war.⁹³ Although few battles were fought in the capital after 1473, warfare continued in the west, and in particular the Tōsai region, which had been contested since 1465.

Peace was restored as a result of direct negotiations between Yoshimasa, who reached out to Masahiro directly on 9.14.1476 (Bunmei 8). Masahiro responded positively to Yoshimasa on 9.26 and dispatched gifts of cash and swords to several Ashikaga officials. Ultimately, Yoshimasa restored to Masahiro all the lands he had confiscated from Ōuchi Norihiro in 1465. He also reinstated Masahiro as the *shugo*, or protector, of the four provinces of Suō, Nagato, Buzen, and Chikuzen, and his rights over the ports of Niima in Iwami Province, and Tōsai in Aki, site of the original 1465 battles, were confirmed.⁹⁴

Even after receiving Yoshimasa's confirmation of their lands, Masahiro and Hatakeyama Yoshinari still led an attack against the Eastern Army at Kizu, which cleared the way for them to travel to Sakai, demonstrating that the war only ended when they wanted it to do. Ten days after the Kizu forces had been annihilated, Yoshimasa again expressed his wish for peace and asked Masahiro to do what he could to end the war. Masahiro professed a desire for peace in the realm, and these sentiments were strengthened with exchanges of swords, cash, and suits of armor accompanying the correspondence.⁹⁵

The day after this exchange, Masahiro set fire to his camp and departed, although when he abandoned Kyoto, he left behind, of all things, a water buffalo⁹⁶—whose entrails had not been eaten by rats, as was suggested by the prophecy—and also handed over a ship that had returned from China

93. *DNSR* 8.6, 8.25–26.1473, p. 721. For a recent characterization of Masahiro as being the central figure for the Western Army, see Ogawa Takeo, *Ashikaga Yoshimitsu* (Tokyo: Chūkō Shinsho, 2012), p. 181.

94. Wada, comp., *Sengoku ibun Ōuchi shi hen*, Vol. 1, doc. 244, 9.14 [1476] Ashikaga Yoshimasa *gonaiشو an*, p. 79, for a document originally appearing in the *Ninagawa ke monjo*. See also *ibid.*, doc. 246, 9.14 [1476] Ashikaga Yoshimasa *gonaiشو utsushi*, p. 80. See also docs. 249–52, 9.26 Ōuchi Masahiro *shojō utsushi*, p. 81, docs. 253–55, 9.26 Ise Sadamune *shojō utsushi*, pp. 81–82, doc. 256, 9.26 Ninagawa Chikamoto *shojō utsushi*, p. 82, doc. 274, 10.3.1477 Ashikaga Yoshimasa *gohan mikyōjō utsushi*, p. 87, and *DNSR* 8.9 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1923), 10.3.1477, p. 771.

95. See *DNSR* 8.9, 10.7.1477 (Bunmei 9), pp. 777–81, for the battles; Wada, comp., *Sengoku ibun Ōuchi shi hen*, Vol. 1, docs. 275–76, 10.17 Ashikaga Yoshimasa *gonaiشو utsushi*, p. 87; and Yamada Takashi, “Shiryō shōkai Kunaichō shoryōbu zō Sagara Taketō shosatsu maki no shōkai to honiyaku,” *Yamaguchi kenshi kenkyū*, No. 18 (3.2010), p. 82.

96. See the *Kaneaki kyōki*, 11.11.1477, in *Kanō shiryō Sengoku I* (Kanazawa-shi: Ishikawa, 1998) pp. 288–89.

that belonged to Yoshimasa. James Murdoch characterized this event as follows: “Ōuchi Masahiro arranged terms of accommodation for himself; and on the night of December 17, 1477, the sky around Kyoto was ruddy with the glare of the blazing cantonments the Yamana men were abandoning. On the morrow it was found that they had vanished; and the long and disastrous struggle around Kyoto was at an end.” Masahiro’s apparent retreat marked his triumph and demonstrated his military and political supremacy over the Ashikaga. Nevertheless, this victory is only mentioned in a handful of narratives, such as those by James Murdoch, who states: “In fact the only great chiefs who emerged from the struggle with, if not bettered, at least unimpaired fortunes were the Akamatsu, the Hosokawa and the Ōuchi.”⁹⁷

The war had ended well for Masahiro, for he was able to restore all that had been confiscated in 1465. He returned to the west and built a castle overlooking Tōsai in 1478, the very harbor that had been confiscated by Yoshimasa in 1465. Likewise, ritually the Ashikaga prayed for peace in the realm in Ōuchi temples, although Ashikaga Yoshimasa found some solace in that he could claim the war had ended with Masahiro’s “surrender” as he remained in the capital, unchallenged.⁹⁸ The war began and ended at Tōsai, rather than Kyoto, as it was where Norihiro and Masahiro first fought the Ashikaga in 1465, and they ended the war by occupying and fortifying this territory in 1478.

Legacies: The Ōnin War as a Prophecy Fulfilled

The erasure of the Ōuchi in accounts of the Ōnin War occurred during a very different political moment. Ōuchi Masahiro’s son Yoshioki (1477–1528) decided to prop up the weakened Ashikaga rather than to undermine them. After the shogun Ashikaga Yoshitane (1466–1523) was deposed in a coup by Hosokawa Masamoto (1466–1507), he fled to Yamaguchi and secured the support of Yoshioki. In 1508, Yoshioki in turn advanced on the capital and restored Yoshitane to power. Yoshioki remained there for a decade from 1508 through 1518 (Eishō 15). In 1511 (Eishō 8), Yoshioki destroyed many Hosokawa rivals at the battle of Funaoka, but Hosokawa Takakuni (1484–1531), the head of a branch line of the Hosokawa, supported Yoshioki and Yoshitane. These three governed Kyoto for the next decade.

During these years of Hosokawa, Ōuchi, and Ashikaga cooperation, *Ōninki* was written. The original text made Hino Tomiko, the main wife

97. Murdoch, *A History of Japan*, Vol. 1, pp. 617–18.

98. *DNSR* 8.10 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1924), 6.20.1478, pp. 516–17. See also *Kujō ke monjo* 6 (Tokyo: Kunaichō Shoryōbu, 1976), *Kujō Mitsugon’in Chikai kansu kian*, pp. 218–34, particularly pp. 226–29 for prayers for the realm being performed at Yamaguchi. Conversely for reference to Masahiro as having “surrendered,” see Ikura Harutake, ed., *Nagaoki Sukuneki* (Tokyo: Gunshō Ruijū Kanseikai, 1998), 11.12.1477, p. 47.

of Yoshimasa, a villainess and ignored Ōuchi Masahiro's role as the great adversary of Yoshimasa. *Ōninki* was completed in a period during which the surviving Hosokawa were allied with the Ōuchi, and so there was little interest in highlighting these animosities. The waging of the war would only merit attention for what happened in Kyoto during the years 1467 through 1473; the battles of 1465, 1466, and 1474–78 (Bunmei 6–8), which were mostly fought in the west, were also ignored because of changing political alliances.

Ōninki maintained its focus on the destruction of the capital, because more coverage of the events in the west would point to an Ōuchi flowering after Ōnin. Epitomizing their rising fortunes, Norihiro, who perished in 1465, was formally deified in 1486 (Bunmei 18). The narrative of destruction and decline better fit the Ashikaga and their fortunes than those of the Ōuchi and Yamaguchi.⁹⁹

Ultimately, later editors of *Ōninki* deemphasized *Yamataishi*, merely alluding to it in the introduction, and sometime between 1633 and 1645 (the Kan'ei era), even this reference was removed entirely. Thereupon, the chronicle, which had been a clear exposition of a prophecy being fulfilled, came to appear fragmentary, incoherent, and incomplete, as the rationale for focusing on the Hosokawa and the Yamana, and their deaths in 1473, lost its narrative context. This does not mean the war was senseless to contemporaries; rather, thanks to the prophecy, it made all too much sense to them.

Even though the prophecy was removed from the three-volume edition of *Ōninki*, the legacies of the chronicle, such as a focus on Kyoto and the portrayal of the Hosokawa and Yamana as the main antagonists of the struggle, remained. Without the narrative core of the work, the conflict was portrayed as a meaningless struggle between the two factions, which occurred because the feckless Yoshimasa paid no attention to politics and allowed multiple inheritance disputes to fester. The notion that the war was a struggle for hegemony between Yoshimasa and Masahiro which started in earnest in 1465 was all but forgotten.

Beyond the tale itself, however, the prophecies of *Yamataishi* and *Miraiki* retained their influence. As we have seen, in 1922, Miura Hiroyuki emphasized the importance of the Yamashiro *ikki* as a manifestation of *gekokujō*,

99. For more on Norihiro's process of deification, see Conlan, "When Men Become Gods: Apotheosis, Sacred Space, and Political Authority in Japan 1486–1599," *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae*, 2016, pp. 89–106. Writing in 1501, Ōuchi Yoshioki himself emphasized the unremitting turmoil in the capital (*teito sakuran*) since 1469. Wada, comp., *Sengoku ibun Ōuchi shi hen*, Vol. 2, doc. 1118, urū 6.13.1501 (Bunki 1) Ōuchi Yoshioki *kanjō utsushi*, p. 57. The Ōuchi of the sixteenth century remained interested in Prince Shōtoku's *Miraiki*, and a copy of this text can be found with their genealogy and other ritual texts copied by Yoshida Kanemigi. See Shōtoku Taishi Kibun, *Jinpō shoji kongen gyōji danzu*, Yoshida 65–361, unpublished manuscript, Tenri Library.

a term taken from the chronicle of the monk Kyōgaku.¹⁰⁰ Miura effectively translated *gekokujō* into a historical metaphor to describe the most important developments in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Thereupon, the term *gekokujō* came to be perceived as representing a new sense of class conflict that underpinned the turmoil of that age. Thus, more than the text of *Ōninki*, the prophecies on which it was based continue to shape understandings of the past. Although *Yamataishi* was removed from *Ōninki*, its prophecies gnaw at historical and literary narratives to this very day.

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100. Miura Hiroyuki, “Do-ikki” and “Sengoku jidai no kokumin gikai,” pp. 306–60. For Miura’s usage of *gekokujō*, see p. 343. Although Miura cites the *Kyōgaku shiyōshō* in his “Do-ikki,” p. 326, he refers to later passages, dating from 11.26.1465 (Kanshō 6), rather than the prophetic exegesis of 1457.