The First Samurai Wars

21H.154, Session 6
Fujiwara Era (Kamatari descendants)

● Fujiwara no Yoshifusa (804-872)
  ○ 850: emperor’s uncle and father-in-law
  ○ 858: regent (sesshō) to 9-years-old Seiwa

● Fujiwara no Mototsune (836-891)
  ○ Yoshifusa’s son
  ○ 876: regent to 8-years-old Yōzei
  ○ Creation of regency for adult emperors (kanpaku)

● Fujiwara no Michinaga (966-1027):
  “...this world is indeed mine.”
Fujiwara Connections
“Retired Emperors”

• 1068: Go-Sanjō becomes emp.
  • 35 yrs old, no Fujiwara mother
  • Resigns in 1072: BUT controls succession

• 1072: Emperor Shirakawa
  • Resigns in 1086: becomes more powerful
  • Beginning of *insei* (“cloistered gov,” “rule by retired emperor”)
Heian Politics

- Significance of private assets
- “Shared Rulership” (JE, p. 130)
  - Imperial/noble, religious, military aristocrats
- A highly competitive and flexible society
Rise of the Samurai

- From *saburau* (“to serve”)

Two Key Periods
- Insei (“cloistered rule”) era
  - 1086 Shirakawa retirement ~1185
- Kamakura Shogunate
  - 1185-1333
Heian Privatization

- Why militarize?
- Governance (enforcing laws, tax)
- Shōen administration
- Kyoto patronage: limits of military power
  - Taira no Masakado’s failed rebellion (935-940)

Until 12th century: effective containment of warriors by Kyoto aristocracy.
Insei (Cloistered Government)

- Shirakawa’s “retirement” as “privatization” of imperial rule:
  - r. 1072-86, *in.* 1086-1129)
- Fateful consequences
- Factional disputes *within* and *outside* the imperial family: emperor vs. retired emperor(s)
- Dependence on armed allies like....
Minamoto and Taira

- Militarization at the top
- Minamoto (源氏Genji!) and Taira (平氏Heishi or 平家Heike): surplus royals
- Bureaucrats, governors, and many warriors
- In general: Minamoto/Fujiwara vs. Taira/retired emperors
The burning of the Sanjō Palace as depicted in the *Picture Scrolls of the Tale of Heiji* (13th century)
Biwa Monks
Towards *Samurai Wars*

- Rise of Taira (Heike)
  - 1156, Hōgen Incident
    - Factional conflict within both the imperial family and Fujiwara clan
    - Emperor Go-Shirakawa (r. 1156-58; *in. 1158-92*) wins with support of Taira no Kiyomori (1118-1181)
  - 1159, Heiji Incident
    - Go-Shirakawa rescued by Kiyomori again
- Taira vs. Minamoto/Fujiwara
Taira no Kiyomori

- Chancellor in 1167
- Daughter=imperial consort
- Grandson (Antoku) on the throne (1180)
- But...growing resentment
  - 1177: Go-Shirakawa plot
  - 1180: call to arms by an imperial prince

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Tale of Heike

- Completed ca. mid. 13 c.
- Rise and fall of Heike (Taira)
Battle of Dan no ura (1185)
Battle of Ichi no tani (1184)

Screen painting [right of a pair of Scenes from the Tale of the Heike], mid 17th century, Kanō School (Minnesota Institute of Art)

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