

**Zeitschrift:** Asiatische Studien : Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Asiengesellschaft = Études asiatiques : revue de la Société Suisse-Asie  
**Herausgeber:** Schweizerische Asiengesellschaft  
**Band:** 71 (2017)  
**Heft:** 2  
  
**Artikel:** The chronicle of Kamatari  
**Autor:** Bauer, Mikaël Philip J.  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-696898>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 26.06.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**

Mikaël Philip J. Bauer\*

# The Chronicle of Kamatari

A short introduction to and translation of the first part  
of the History of the Fujiwara House

DOI 10.1515/asia-2017-0041

**Abstract:** The Chronicle of Kamatari is the first of the three extant parts of the Tōshi Kaden (The History of the Fujiwara House). Most likely composed around the middle of the eighth century, the Chronicle tells us the story of Nakatomi no Kamatari (614–669), the patriarch of the Fujiwara house. The text is important in three ways. First, it provides details regarding seventh century political developments not included in other sources. Second, borrowing from several Chinese sources and the Nihon Shoki, the text presents a fine example of East Asian intertextuality. Third, the Chronicle greatly contributes to our understanding of the establishment and formulation of sovereignty in the early Japanese state.

**Keywords:** Nakatomi no Kamatari, Fujiwara, sovereignty, ritual

## 1 Introduction

In 1941 the prolific translator Hermann Böhner published in *Monumenta Nipponica* the first (German) translation of the *Tai shokkan den* 大織冠傳, also referred to as the *Kamatari den* 鎌足傳, the “Chronicle of Kamatari.”<sup>1</sup> In short, this biography narrates the life of the patriarch of the Fujiwara family, Nakatomi no Kamatari 中臣鎌足 (614–669) in mythical terms. While the Chronicle details the life, ritual and political acts of Kamatari, the text was

---

<sup>1</sup> In 2002, an English translation of the *Kamatari den* was also included in Bentley 2002. However, as Herman Ooms, I would caution the reader since his translation contains several misidentifications (for example Tenji’s coronation banquet) and abridged sentences. The present translation is significantly different from Bentley’s version. See also Ooms 1999: 280.

---

**Original Title:** *Kamatari den* 鎌足傳

---

**\*Corresponding author: Mikaël Philip J. Bauer**, McGill University, Birks Building 004, 3520 rue University, Montreal, QC H3A 2A7, Canada. E-mail: mikael.bauer@mcgill.ca

most likely composed around 750–760 under his great-grandson Fujiwara no Nakamaro 藤原仲麻呂 (706–764).<sup>2</sup>

The Chronicle is the first of three extant chapters of the “History of the Fujiwara House”, the *Tōshi Kaden* 藤原家傳, the two other ones being the *Jōe den* 貞慧傳 and the *Muchimaro den* 武智麻呂傳. Jōe (?–665) was Kamatari’s son, one of Japan’s earliest Hossō monks, and was sent to Tang China as an envoy before being poisoned upon his return to the Japanese court. Fujiwara no Muchimaro (680–737), Kamatari’s grandson and father of the enigmatic Nakamaro, was a high ranking official who died in the smallpox epidemic of 737. The text mentions that a biography of Fujiwara no Fuhito 藤原不比等 (659–720) was included as well, but unfortunately this part is no longer extant. The oldest manuscript is held by Tōdaiji temple and was part of the monk Sōshō’s assembled documents.

The Chronicle describes Kamatari’s life in great detail and provides more insight into the rebellion of 645 in which Soga no Iruka 蘇我入鹿 (–645) was killed, an event that led to the so-called Taika 大化 Reforms in the same year. Since the *Tōshi Kaden* adds elements that cannot be found in other sources, such as the *Nihon shoki* of which it often borrows, it is a valuable source for our understanding for the early history of the Fujiwara family, their growing significance and their rising status at the emerging Japanese court before the beginning of the Nara period (710–794).

A few decades after Hiraoka Jōkai’s annotated transcription of the oldest manuscript held by Tōdaiji, Okimori Takuya et al. composed the first complete annotated version, *Tōshi kaden, Kamatari Jōei, Muchimaro den, chūshaku to kenkyū* (The History of the Fujiwara House, the Chronicles of Kamatari, Joei and Muchimaro, an annotation and analysis) in 1999, taking into account various extant manuscripts from the Kamakura to the Edo periods. While no modern Japanese translation is included, this edition is of tremendous importance for the researcher who wants to study the intertextuality of the *Tōshi kaden* by referring to and drawing comparisons with both Japanese and Chinese histories. Therefore, it is their version that was used in the translation below.

It is clear from the outset that the *Chronicle of Kamatari* borrows from the *Nihon shoki* in two ways. First, many of the events, such as the actual killing of Iruka, are described by using passages from the *Nihon shoki*; at times they are even simply copied without alteration. However, in most cases these passages are complemented with additional details. Alongside the passages that occur in the *Nihon shoki* as well,

---

<sup>2</sup> Nakamaro’s tutelage, and even partial authorship, is mentioned by several scholars such as Kimoto Yoshinobu or Kishi Misako. In connection with the study of Fujiwara no Nakamaro I would like to draw the reader’s attention to Ross Bender’s recent translations of the *Shoku Nihongi*.

we thus also encounter events and details that cannot be found in any other earlier source. Here, it becomes clear that the Chronicle is significantly different from the earlier official histories: as explained by Duthie, in the *Nihon shoki* it is the sovereign who is the “organizing subject that defines the historical field.”<sup>3</sup> This is fundamentally different in Kamatari’s *Chronicle* where it is the sovereign’s minister who has become the center of attention. Therefore, the *Chronicle*’s sequence of events and deeds do not primarily relate to the sovereign, as would be the case in the *Nihon shoki*, but to the Fujiwara patriarch, his main servant.<sup>4</sup>

Second, as exemplified by Okimori’s research, the *Tōshi kaden* uses vocabulary and cites examples from many Chinese Histories such as the *Han Yu* (History of the Han) or the *Hou Han Yu* (History of the Latter Han), but these Chinese sources made it to the text in two ways: through the *Nihon shoki* and directly from their original sources. In relation with Japanese research (for example by Togashi Susumu or Go Tetsuo) on the connection between Chinese sources, the *Nihon shoki* and the *Tōshi kaden*, Okimori’s work enables one to situate the *Chronicle of Kamatari* in the larger context of East Asian historiography. In other words, the *Chronicle of Kamatari* does not merely provide insight into the origins of the Fujiwara, it also provides a window into East Asian intertextuality, enabling us to situate these early Japanese textual developments in their broader East Asian sphere. Japanese official histories such as the *Nihon shoki*, the *Kojiki* and the later *Shoku Nihongi* never were isolated from the continent and in order to fully understand their significance we have to study these sources in close relation with the earlier Chinese histories. For example, Martin Kern and Joachim Gentz’ recent research on the ritual function of history writing in China could be of great value for those investigating the construction and usage of official histories and clan chronicles in pre-modern Japan.<sup>5</sup>

## 2 Translation

### Upper Part of the House History by the Great Master<sup>6</sup>

The Inner Palace Minister whose official name was Kamatari and who was also called “Chūrō” (仲郎) was a man of the Takechi district of Yamato Province. His

---

<sup>3</sup> Duthie 2014: 129.

<sup>4</sup> Duthie 2013: 298–299.

<sup>5</sup> Kern 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Great Master or *Daishi* 大師; this term refers to Fujiwara no Nakamaro. Ross Bender translates this term as “Great Preceptor” in Bender 2016: 19–20.



forebears descended from Ame no Koyane no Mikoto and for generations they had administered the rites for Heaven and Earth, harmonizing the space between men and the gods. Therefore it was ordered their clan was to be called Ōnakatomi.

Kamatari was the eldest son of the official Mikeko and his mother was called Lady Ōtomo.<sup>7</sup> The Great Minister was born in the mansion of the wisteria fields in the first month of the thirty-fourth year of Heavenly Sovereign Toyomi Kekashiki.<sup>8</sup> While still inside Lady Ōtomo's womb, his crying voice was heard from the outside and he was born after twelve months. Lady Ōtomo's mother spoke: "The number of months that you carried the child is different from what ordinary people experience. He will be an extraordinary child and certainly possess divine virtues." In her heart, Lady Ōtomo knew that the pregnancy had been different. Labor had been painless and without even realizing it she had given birth to him.

The Great Minister's character was benevolent and filial, his wisdom sharp and his knowledge of the arcane profound. From a young age he liked studying and he dwelled eruditely in historical writings. He often read Tai Gong's *Six Secret Teachings*, and there wasn't a single verse he could not repeat and recite.<sup>9</sup> His disposition was admirable and elegant and his posture was particularly prominent. If one looked at him from the front it was like he was looking up; if one looked at him from behind it was like he was bowing.<sup>10</sup> Someone stated: "Two valiant strong men follow him wherever he goes." The Great Minister heard these words and secretly he was embarrassed about himself. Those who are wise touch the heart and their fame spreads day by day.

Being a close advisor of the sovereign, Soga no Kuratsukuri 宗我鞍作 had increased his own fortune and his power now permeated the court.<sup>11</sup> When he scolded and issued orders there was no one who didn't bend. However, when he looked at the Great Minister, he was silent and in his heart he thought he was

<sup>7</sup> The identity of his father is also confirmed in the *Sonpi bunmyaku* (SB), where it is stated that Mikeko was the "Great Ancestor of the Fujiwara" (藤原大祖是也) and lists him as son of Katanosa no Ōmuraji (?-?), SB: 22-27.

<sup>8</sup> Toyomi Kekashiki refers to Suiko 推古天皇 (554-628), a name also found in the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon shoki*; *Tōshi kaden* (TK): 124. "Sovereign" here refers to "tennō."

<sup>9</sup> The *Six Secret Teachings* or the Liu Tao 六韜 written by Tai Gong 太公, a military manual. Of note is the revolutionary character of this text since Kamatari will have to strategise and start a rebellion himself in 645.

<sup>10</sup> 前看若偃 後見如伏, TK: 129. The sentence implies he was a humble man.

<sup>11</sup> "Close advisor" refers to *kinshin* 近臣. The "court" is the translation for *mikado* 朝; the *Nihon shoki* (NS) mentions that Kuratsukuri conducted the *kokusei* 国政 or the "policy of the country." NS Kōgyoku 1 (642). 1; TK: 132.

always mysterious. Once, the nobles assembled in the hall of Master of the Dharma Min and read the part of the I Ching pertaining to the Zhou period.<sup>12</sup> The Great Minister arrived afterwards and Kuratsukuri stood up. He greeted the Great Minister and they sat together. When the lectures ended and everyone had returned, Master of the Dharma Min gave the minister a sign to stay. Then he told the Great Minister: “Among those who entered my hall, there is none like Soga no Tairō.<sup>13</sup> However, your spiritual and knowledgeable appearance in reality supersedes this man. I beg you, be careful.”

Right after the onset of Sovereign Okamoto's<sup>14</sup> reign, the sons of noble families received silk caps, enabling them to inherit the role of their lineage. The Great Minister refused, did not accept it and returned to Mishima for other tasks where he cultivated the Essence in nature.<sup>15</sup> People highly respected this. Suddenly, the Heavenly Sovereign Okamoto passed away and his consort ascended the throne.<sup>16</sup> The royal house fell in decline and the policy was not conducted by her. The Great Minister lamented this.

At that time, Prince Karu suffered from an illness to his legs and was absent from the court.<sup>17</sup> The Great Minister had always been favourable towards the prince and therefore he went to his palace to stay by his side. Together they talked till the night ended, forgetting their fatigue. Thus, Prince Karu knew his ingenuity was grand and his knowledge surpassed the others. He specially had his favourite consort serve and feed him morning and evening, and his lodging, drink and food were quite different from what normal people received. The Great Minister, sensing his favouritism, told a close attendant in confidence: “The extraordinary favours that I have received well exceed what I had hoped for.

---

<sup>12</sup> “Master of the Dharma” (*hōshi* 法師; Okimori provides the pronunciation “hofushi”) Min (旻). The text referred to is the Zhouyi 周易, the NS mentions that Kamatari studied Confucianism (周孔之教) under Minabuchi no Shōan 南淵請安. NS Kōgyoku 3 (644).1; TK: 131 and 133. The monk Min is mentioned in the NS as receiving the title of National Lecturer (*hakase*; 博士) in 649, NS Taika 5 (649). 2.

<sup>13</sup> Soga no Tairō or Kuratsukuri.

<sup>14</sup> Okamoto Tennō 岡本天皇 or Jomei Tennō 舒明天皇 (593–641).

<sup>15</sup> The NS also mentions that Kamatari stayed in Mishima (稱疾退居三島), Kōgyoku 3 (644).1; TK: 133. “Cultivated the Essence in nature” (養素丘園) seems to stress Kamatari's involvement in religious and philosophical enquiry. Okimura mentions that this could relate to Buddhist faith, but given prior reference to his study with the monk Min, I suggest this short sentences transcends Buddhism and refers to Chinese Learning. The very same sentence also occurs in several Chinese sources such as the Bei Shi 北史 compiled between 630–650 by Li Yanshou (draft by Li Dashi). Wilkinson 2013: 626–627; TK: 136.

<sup>16</sup> The “consort” (*ōkisasi* 皇后) here is the female sovereign Kōgyoku (594–661), Naka no Ōe's mother. She is referred to in the following as the “later Okamoto no sumeramikoto.”

<sup>17</sup> Prince Karu 輕皇子, the later sovereign Kōtoku 孝德 (596–654).

Who wouldn't allow your master to become the sovereign?"<sup>18</sup> He stated he would not eat and would show his actions. The attendant passed this on to Prince Karu, who was very pleased. However, the prince's possessions were insufficient for such an important matter.<sup>19</sup>

If the Great Minister wanted to select someone, going through the entire royal family, then only Naka no Ōe was ingenious and heroic and able to rise in rebellion.<sup>20</sup> However, there was no occasion for the Great Minister to meet him. By chance, he encountered him at the kemari court, when Naka no Ōe's shoe fell off through contact with the ball. The Great minister took it up and presented it to him respectfully. Likewise, Naka no Ōe received it with respect. From that moment, they were each other's friend and together they were like fish and water.

In the tenth month of winter, in the second year of the later Okamoto no sumeramikoto, Soga no Iruka plotted with several princes, wishing to damage Prince Kamitsumiya's son, Yamashina no Ōe, and others, stating: "Yamashina no Ōe was born in my family."<sup>21</sup> Such a scent of brilliant virtue, the lingering of a holy event! When Okamoto ascended the throne as sovereign, all ministers said there was strife between nephew and uncle.<sup>22</sup> Following the murder of Sakahibe no Omi Marise, our hatred deepened.<sup>23</sup> Now, the Son of Heaven has passed away and his consort rules the court. Our hearts must be unsettled. How could there not be an uprising? I will no longer endure the intimate relation with my nephew

---

18 "Sovereign" here is 帝皇 and read as *mikado* by Okimura, TK: 137. However, Bohner takes these characters in the reverse order (皇帝) and suggests *kōtei*. It is unclear why Bohner suggested this order, since the text used for his translation is the version contained in the *Shinkō gunsho ruiju* 3, part LXIV, 1930 edition, which equally uses the characters 帝皇. The version used by Okimura, in addition to the Edo period manuscript held by Waseda University Library, all have 帝皇. Bohner 1941/1942; SGR 3/64: 689; TK: 137.

19 "Important matter" is the translation for *daiji* 大事 and implicitly refers to the great matters of state.

20 "Ingenious" refers to *yūryaku* 雄略. This term appears in the NS as well and seems borrowed from several Chinese sources where it appears in connection with rebellion for the sake of the state or the sovereign. For example, in the History of the Later Han (Han Hou Shu) it is stated that "Xun Yu heard that Cao possessed the ingenuity (to successfully revolt) and thus stopped Shao who he thought could not realize the great matters of state." (或聞操有雄略而度紹終不能定大業), Togashi 2007: 5. The term can also be found in the name of the sovereign Yūryaku (5th century).

21 Prince Kamitsu miya the "Prince of the Upper Palace" (Kamitsu miya no hitsugi no miko; 上宮太子) is Shōtoku Taishi 聖德太子 (574–622). Okamoto no sumeramikoto refers to Kōgyoku.

22 "Tennō" is used in the text.

23 Sakahibe no Omi Marise 坂合 (or:境) 部臣摩理勢 (?–?) and Yamashiro no Ōe 山背大兄 (?–643) had opposed Soga no Emishi 蘇我蝦夷 (?–645), Iruka's father.

and plot for the benefit of the state.” All princes thereupon consented. However, they feared he would hurt them if they did not follow him, so everyone agreed. Several months and days later, Yamashina no Ōe was assassinated at Ikaruka Temple.<sup>24</sup> Those who learned about it grieved. His father, Great Minister Toyura, spoke indignant: “Kuratsukuri, where can there be an insane man like you?<sup>25</sup> Our lineage will perish. I am lamenting and not victorious.” Kuratsukuri said: “We have already removed the fish’s bones and therefore no repentance is needed hereafter.” It gradually became apparent at the court that the tranquil Han had fallen into disarray and the savagery and arrogance of Dong Zhuo had already appeared in the country.<sup>26</sup>

Thereupon Naka no Ōe addressed the Great Minister: “The policy of the sovereign is carried out by her counsellor, as if Zhou’s tripod cauldron had been transferred to the Li.<sup>27</sup> What do you think of this? Please, state your ingenious plans.” The Great Minister stated in detail the plot to rise in rebellion and rectify the wrong.<sup>28</sup> Naka no Ōe was delighted and spoke: “You are indeed my Zhang Liang.”<sup>29</sup> The Great Minister wished to seek the support of the powerful houses, in secret looked for Kuratsukuri’s weakness and then learned there existed envy between Yamada no Omi and Kuratsukuri. He explained to Naka no Ōe: “If one observes Yamada no Omi’s character, he is firm and enduring, skilled and

<sup>24</sup> The murder is also mentioned in the NS, Kōgyoku 2 (643): 11.

<sup>25</sup> Great Minister Toyura 豊浦大臣 is Soga no Emishi. The NS does not use “Toyura” but “Emishi.” TK: 149; NS Kōgyoku 2 (643): 11.

<sup>26</sup> Dong Zhuo 董卓 (?–192) was a warlord who marched into the fallen capital Luoyang in 189 after the death of Emperor Ling di 靈帝 (156–189), marking the last stable period of the Han dynasty (206 BC–220 AD). He briefly filled a power vacuum from Chang’an from where he controlled the court around 191. After his assassination the Emperor reached Luoyang again by 196 when the official Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220) took control of the court. Beck 1986: 340–350. Bohner interprets “安漢” as a proper name, referring to “安漢公”, an epithet for Wang Mang 王莽 (33 BC–23 AD). However, this does not fit the chronology of the Later Han. Bohner 1942: 229.

<sup>27</sup> The Li 季氏 refers to Jisun 季孫, a powerful clan of the state of Lu 魯国 during the Spring and Autumn period and one of three clans that brought about the collapse of Lu. TK: 152.

<sup>28</sup> “To rise in Rebellion and rectify the wrong” 撥乱反正 is a concept taken from the main commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals, the Chunqiu Gongyang Zhuan 春秋公羊傳, though the expression also occurs in the Shiji 史記 and the Hanyu 漢書.

<sup>29</sup> The characters shibau 子房 here refer to the Han period official Zhang Liang 張良 (?–186 BC) who was a close (Daoist) advisor to Gaozu 高祖 (Original name: Liu Bang), the first Emperor of the Han Dynasty. Of note here is Zhang Liang’s biography in book 55 of Sima Qian’s Shiji. In this text, we encounter a passage in which Zhang Liang puts Huang Shigong’s shoe back on, an episode that might have influenced the Kamatari-den’s scene in which Kamatari returns Naka no Ōe’s shoe. For a translation of this episode see Watson 1993: 135.

daring; his power and expectations are high.<sup>30</sup> If you are able to gain his consent, the rebellion should certainly succeed. Please, first make him close through marriage, and afterwards you should talk to him about the plot we are contemplating.” Naka no Ōe followed this. Following, he asked for the hand of the daughter of the house of Minister Yamada, who consented.

In the third month of spring, when a hundred carriages went out to meet them, his younger brother Muzashi abducted the bride and took off.<sup>31</sup> Yamada no Omi was distressed and afraid, not knowing what had to be done. His younger daughter was at his side, saw her father’s grieving complexion and asked: “Why are you so sad?” Her father explained his reasons. His younger daughter said: “I might not possess Xi Shi’s complexion but I do have the spirit of Mo Mu.<sup>32</sup> Please, choose me and give me to him.” Her father was delighted and eventually presented his younger daughter. Naka no Ōe was upset about Muzashi’s disrespect and wanted to carry out the death penalty. The Great Minister advised him: “A great matter under Heaven has been settled, why be angry about a small matter that occurred in your house?” Naka no Ōe thereupon gave up his intentions.<sup>33</sup>

Afterwards, the Great Minister explained to Yamada no Omi in a composed manner: “Soga no Iruka’s violent opposition is hated by both men and gods. If the same evil continues, then certainly misfortune will wipe out his clan. Please observe the situation cautiously.” Yamada no Omi said: “I am thinking the same. I will respectfully follow your orders.” Thereupon they both agreed upon a strategy and then wished to assemble soldiers. Naka no Ōe said: “I

---

**30** Minister Yamada (Yamada no Omi 山田臣) is Soga no Kurayamada no Isikawa Maro 蘇我倉山田石川麻呂, NS, Kōgyoku 3 (644):1.

**31** The abduction is also mentioned in the NS, Kōgyoku 3 (644): 1; The TK mentions she was abducted by “武藏,” interpreted as “Muzashi” by Okimori. TK: 155. However, the characters used in the NS are different: “身狹” and the pronunciation given is “Musa” (complete title Musa no Omi).

**32** Xi Shi 西施 was said to have been a beauty who lived during the Spring and Autumn Period; Mo Mu 嫫母 was the fourth wife of the Yellow Emperor 黃帝. TK: 156.

**33** Naka no Ōe took Yamada no Omi’s other daughter (Soga no Ochi no Iratsume 蘇我遠智娘) instead as consort, an alliance that would end in bloodshed in 649. In a conflict based on accusations of treason against the sovereign voiced by Soga no Himuka (another name for Muzashi), Soga no Kurayamada no Isikawa Maro would commit suicide at Yamada dera along with eight of his children in 649. However, after his death his innocence was proven and he was posthumously exonerated. Soga no Ochi no Iratsume died shortly afterwards, probably by taking her own life. Ebersole 1989: 223–227. The NS mentions the following poignant episode, when Yamada no Omi exclaims: “I have now been slandered by Musashi (here: 身刺), and I fear that I shall be unjustly put to death. With so near a prospect of the yellow springs, I would withdraw from life, still cherishing fidelity in my bosom ...” Aston 1973: 233; NS Taika 5 (649): 3.



fear that the plan will not succeed if we wish to announce our intentions. However, if we do not announce it, then one has to consider that the sovereign will be disturbed.<sup>34</sup> How can the Principle of the subject be in accordance with Righteousness? May you and Minister Yamada explain it to me.” The Great Minister replied: “The actions of her subject consist of Loyalty and Piety.<sup>35</sup> The Way of Loyalty and Piety unifies the country and brings prosperity to the clans. To allow for the sovereign’s line to be cut off and allow for its foundations to be shattered and destroyed ... It is not filial and not loyal to not proceed with this revolt.” Naka no Ōe spoke: “Our success or loss depends on you. You should act with effort.” Then, the Great Minister recommended Saeki no Muraji Komaro and Waka Inukai no Muraji Amita, saying: “They are courageous and strong, and their strength will lift the cauldron.<sup>36</sup> What should be done for the greater good of the state can be left to just these two men.” Naka no Ōe followed his advice.

In the sixth month of the summer in the fourth year of the later Okamoto no sumeramikoto, Naka no Ōe pretended that a declaration of the Three Korean Kingdoms had to be proclaimed in front of the sovereign and people believed this to be true.<sup>37</sup> Then, he said to Yamada no Omi: “I will have you read the declaration of the Three Kingdoms. We intend to take advantage of Iruka’s negligence and murder him.” Yamada no Omi agreed. Thus, the plan was agreed upon.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> day, the sovereign proceeded towards the seat of governance.<sup>38</sup> Furubito no Ōe was in attendance.<sup>39</sup> A chamberlain was made to quickly summon Iruka. Iruka stood up, put on his shoes but even after three times was not yet able to put them on. In his mind, Iruka was not paying attention and hesitated, thinking about returning. The Great Minister knew from before that

34 “Sovereign” is here the translation of *sumeramikoto* 帝, referring to the female monarch Kōgyoku 皇極, Naka no Ōe’s mother.

35 Referring to Naka no Ōe’s duties of loyalty (*chū* 忠) as her (the sovereign’s) subject and filiality (*kō* 孝) as her son. TK: 160.

36 Saeki no Muraji Komaro 佐伯連古麻呂 (?–?) and Waka Inukai no Muraji Amita 稚犬養連網田 (?–?) are also mentioned in the NS, Kōgyoku 3 (644): 1. The expression “to lift the cauldron” (*kāngdǐng* 扛鼎) is found in several Chinese sources such as the *Shiji* and indicates extreme strength (to support the state). TK: 158.

37 “... in the fourth year of the later Okamoto no sumeramikoto 後岡本天皇” refers to Kōgyoku 4 (645). The three Korean kingdoms are Koguryo 高句麗, Paekche 百濟 and Silla 新羅.

38 *Tsuchi no e saru* 戊申.

39 Furuhiro no Ōe 古人大兄 was the grandson of Soga no Umako and half-brother of Naka no Ōe (both were sons of Jomei through different mothers). Ebersole 1989: 224–225. The NS confirms he was in attendance. NS Kōgyoku 4 (645): 6. Originally he was Soga no Emishi’s preferred candidate to become sovereign, but instead Jomei’s first consort ascended the throne as Kōgyoku.

Iruka was very suspicious and that he carried a sword from morning till evening. Therefore he had previously taught an entertainer ways to remove it from him. Iruka smiled and untied his sword. He entered, sat down and waited.<sup>40</sup>

Yamada no Omi proceeded to read the declaration of the Three Kingdoms. Thereupon, Naka no Ōe ordered the guards of the gates to close the twelve entrance gates to the palace at the same time. Then, Naka no Ōe himself grasped a long spear and hid it on the side of the hall. The Great Minister was holding a bow and arrow to provide him cover. He had ordered for two swords to be placed in a box for Saeki no Muraji Komaro and Waka Inukai no Muraji Amita and said: “With full force, stab him once and kill him.” They drank water with their meal, swallowed and threw up. The Great Minister raised his voice and attempted to encourage them.

Yamada no Omi became afraid when the declaration was about to end and Komaro and the others had not yet arrived. Sweat ran down his body, his voice startled and his hands were shaking. Kuratsukuri found this strange and asked: “Why are you afraid and why do you shudder?” Yamada no Omi said: “Waiting close to the throne, I did not realize I was sweating.” Seeing that Komaro and the others feared Iruka’s might and did not proceed to encircle him, Naka no Ōe exclaimed: “Ya!” Then he jumped out with Komaro while Iruka didn’t realize it and they injured him on his head and shoulder. Startled, Iruka rose. Komaro turned his hand, wielded his sword and cut his leg. Iruka stood up, approached the sovereign, kowtowed and told her: “Your servant knows of no crime. I request, ask them for an explanation.” The sovereign was shocked and she addressed Naka no Ōe: “I do not know what is happening. Why is this?” Naka no Ōe threw himself on the floor and proclaimed: “Kuratsukuri is completely extinguishing the royal house and he will overthrow the position of the heavenly sovereign. How can we replace the son of Heaven by Kuratsukuri?” The sovereign rose and she entered the palace’s quarters. Komaro and the others then finished off Kuratsukuri. That day it rained. Pouring water overflowed the garden. Kuratsukuri’s corpse was covered with a paper screen.

According to the opinion at the time the traitor was killed in accordance with Heaven. However, Toyura no Ōomi was still there and the dishonest thieves were not yet suppressed.<sup>41</sup> Consequently they entered Hōkō Temple, used it as their defences and prepared for the unexpected. The nobility and the counsellors all followed. A messenger handed over Kuratsukuri’s corpse to Toyura no Ōomi.

---

<sup>40</sup> The *Kamatari-den* borrows, or at times paraphrases, this section (From “On the 12th day” to “... waited”) from the NS, with some adjustments in the details of the account. NS Kōgyoku 4 (645): 6.

<sup>41</sup> Toyura no Ōomi 豊浦大臣 refers to Soga no Emishi, Iruka’s father.



Thereupon, Aya no Atahi and others assembled their entire clan, put on armour, and prepared soldiers and set up camp to help the Great Minister.<sup>42</sup> Naka no Ōe had Kose no Omitokoda proclaim: “Our state affairs do not depend on you. Why do you distance yourselves from Heaven and rebel, yourselves achieving the collapse of your family?”<sup>43</sup> Takamuku no Omikunioshi of the rebelling party spoke to Aya no Atahi and the others: “Our Lord Tairō has already been murdered. Our Great Minister in vain awaited his execution. For whom do we fight in vain?”<sup>44</sup> Having spoken he left and fled. The thieves fled and broke up.

On the thirteenth day, Toyura no Ōomi Emishi committed suicide at his mansion and after his foul stench had been washed away, the wolves had finally been discarded.<sup>45</sup> The people were glad and danced, with everyone shouting: “Ten thousand years!” Naka no Ōe praised: “The continuous line has been restored. Truly, it is your strength that saved its fate from destruction.” The minister spoke: “I did so based upon your holy virtue. It is not the achievement of me, your subject.” All conceded that it was not through their own effort.

On the fourteenth day, Heavenly Sovereign Ame Toyotakara Ikashishi Tarashi Hime desired to transfer the throne to Naka no Ōe.<sup>46</sup> Naka no Ōe consulted with the Great Minister and he replied: “Furubito no Ōe is your older brother. Karu no Mantoku no Ō is your uncle from mother’s side.<sup>47</sup> If indeed you now bypass Furubito no Ōe and you ascend the throne of the sovereign, then the people will perceive this as unlike the respectful, humble heart of a younger brother. Thus, would it be possible to decide on your uncle in accordance with the will of the people?” Naka no Ōe followed this and in secret explained this to the sovereign.

<sup>42</sup> Aya no Atahi 漢直 (?–?) is mentioned in the NS as performing duties as a guard for Soga no Emishi, NS Kōgyoku 3 (644):11; TK: 180.

<sup>43</sup> Kose no Omitokoda 巨勢臣德陀 (592–658) reached the high rank of Great Minister of the Left (sadaijin; 左大臣) in Taika 5 (649). 4.20 under Kōtoku Tennō; *Kugyō bunin*: Taika 5 (649); NS Saimei 4 (658): 1.

<sup>44</sup> Takamuku no Omikunioshi 高向臣国押 (?–?) He was involved in an attempt to arrest Yamashiro no Ōe as ordered by Iruka in 643; NS Kōgyoku 2 (643): 11; TK: 182.

<sup>45</sup> Tsuchi no to no tori; 己酉 ; Toyura no Ōomi Emishi; Soga no Emishi’s suicide is also described in the NS in much more detail, NS Kōgyoku 4 (645): 6.

<sup>46</sup> Kanoe inu 庚戌; “Heavenly Sovereign” refers to *sumeramikoto* 天皇. Ame Toyotakara Ikashishi Tarashi Hime 天豐財重日足姫 refers to the former female sovereign Kōgyoku who will become sovereign again as Saimei 齊明 (r. 655–661) after the death of Kōtoku 孝德 (r. 645–654).

<sup>47</sup> The term used for “sovereign” here is *mikado* 帝; Karu no Mantoku no Ō 輕万德王.

The sovereign, in accordance with the plan, abdicated the throne to Prince Karu. He became Ameyorozu Toyohi Sumeramikoto.<sup>48</sup> This truly was the original intention of the Great Minister. The wise said: “We have seen today that you do not break your word.” Ame Toyotakara Ikashihi no Sumeramikoto will be granted the name Sumemi Oya no Mikoto and Naka no Ōe will become the Crown Prince.<sup>49</sup> The period of reign will be changed into “Taika.”

The sovereign stated: “The protection of the safety of the realm depends on your strength. You unified the axis of chariots and scrolls in this revolt. I bestow upon you the large brocade cap and the rank of minister of the interior, receiving two thousand households. The affairs of the military and the country are assigned to your position.” The Great Minister searched through forests and bushes, and the base levels of society. People took up their positions and no fields were left uncultivated. Therefore, the nine offices functioned without obstacles and the five ranks all were in harmony.

In the eighth month of autumn of Hakuho 5 (654), the sovereign declared: “To revere the Way and appoint the wise has been the eternal law of former sovereigns. To praise achievements and reward virtue has been the instruction of the sage. The virtue of the Minister of the Interior Nakatomi no Muraji with the Large Brocade Cap is equal to Take no uchi no Sukune, but his position does not yet correspond to the will of the people.<sup>50</sup> Therefore I bestow upon him the Purple Cap and increase his reward to eight thousand households.”<sup>51</sup>

Suddenly Ameyorozu Toyohi no Sumeramikoto, already tired of governance, ascended to the white clouds.<sup>52</sup> Her highness and mother of the sovereign Sumemi Oya no Mikoto, again entered the jewelled era following general request and entrusted all matters of governance to the crown prince.<sup>53</sup> The crown prince decided each matter after consultation with her and then carried it out. He crossed seas, climbed mountains and tribute to the court was never cut. There

<sup>48</sup> The term for sovereign here is mikado 帝. Ameyorozu Toyohi no Sumeramikoto 天万豊日天皇 refers to Kōtoku.

<sup>49</sup> Sumemi Oya no Mikoto 皇祖母尊, see also NS Kōtoku, sokui zenki. As kindly suggested by Ross Bender, the term can be interpreted as “imperial ancestor.”

<sup>50</sup> Take no uchi no Sukune 建内宿禰 is a mythical “ideal” servant who is said to have descended from the (mythical) sovereign Kōgen (孝元). He appears in the Kojiki. TK: 195; and also served Jingu Kōgō and Ōjin Tennō.

<sup>51</sup> It is not clear when Kamatari received the Purple Cap (*murasaki no kagafuri* 紫冠). Kamatari strictly speaking did not yet have the necessary rank (*daijin* 大臣) to receive the Purple Cap in 654. He did not attain this position until 669.

<sup>52</sup> Kōtoku passed away in Hakuchi 5 (654).<sup>10</sup> ; “governance” is the translation for *matsurigoto* 万機.

<sup>53</sup> These sentences refers to former sovereign Kōgyoku taking the throne again as Saimei.

were more and more villages where the people stamped the earth and hit their bellies like drums. If it wasn't for the Great Minister's holiness and intelligence, how could we have attained this splendor? Therefore, he was promoted to the rank of Large Purple Cap and received the position of "kō."<sup>54</sup> His households were raised with five thousand. Before and after, he now approximately held fifteen thousand households.

In the tenth month of the winter of the 12<sup>th</sup> year, the sovereign proceeded to the Naniwa palace.<sup>55</sup> Thereupon, in accordance with what was requested by Fukushima, she proceeded to Tsukushi, dispatched auxiliary troops, and started to make preparations for military provisions.<sup>56</sup> In the first month of spring in the 13<sup>th</sup> year, the fleet moved west. First, they headed to Umitsumichi. In the third month, the fleet arrived at Na no Ōtsu, and the sovereign stayed at the Iwase Kari Palace. She changed this name and called it Nagatsu. In the fifth month in summer, the sovereign moved, and she stayed at the Asakura no Tachibana no Hiraniwa Palace, where she oversaw the policy over the foreign areas.

When the seventh month of autumn arrived, the condition of the sovereign deteriorated. The Great Minister harbored fear in his heart, prayed to the gods and relying on the Three Regalia he passionately sought the longevity of her life. He was blessed by the statue of the Buddha, who reached out his arm and as in a dream Kannon herself appeared floating in the air; the manifestation of holiness was apparent. Therefore, the monk Dōken said: "In the past, members of the guard requested to die when the axis of the wheel turned the moment the sovereign died and righteous sons tore open the earth to bury themselves.<sup>57</sup> Clouds of birds concealed the sun and the ministers prayed with their whole body.<sup>58</sup> The gods of the rivers were cursed, and counsellors sought to be sacrificed. Although your beautiful name will not wither and your honor and sincerity will become more and more fragrant, the present is now different. How can we state that this day is similar to the days of yore?"

---

<sup>54</sup> Historically, it is unclear when he was promoted. The conferral of the rank "kō" (公) is not included in the NS, TK: 200.

<sup>55</sup> Female sovereign Saimei.

<sup>56</sup> Fukushima's complete name was Kishitsu Fukushima 鬼室福信 (?–663). He was originally from Kudara and was beheaded in 663 by "King" (王) Buyeo Pung 扶余豊璋 (the NS refers to him as 王豊璋); NS, Tenji 2 (663): 6.

<sup>57</sup> Dōken 道頭 was a monk from Koguryō 高句麗 and the author of the *Nihon Seiki* 日本世記. A fragment of this source quoted in the NS suggests that he was close to Kamatari. TK: 207; NS Tenji 8 (669):10.

<sup>58</sup> This sentence refers to the *Shiji* and the Chunqiu Zuo Zhuan 春秋左傳, TK: 207–208. "Ministers" is the translation for *ling yin* 令尹.

Her life had already reached its limits, and the monarch passed away in the Asakura no Kari Palace. The Crown Prince put on mourning garb and took over the polity.<sup>59</sup> That month, General Su and the Turkut Prince Chih-pi-chia-li arrived at Koguryō's stronghold through both land and sea routes.<sup>60</sup> The Crown Prince moved to the Nagatsu palace where he stayed and continued to oversee the policy over the armies overseas.

At that time he spoke to his personal attendants: "I have heard that 'The Great Tang had Wei Zheng, Koguryō had Kae Kim, Paekche had Song Chung, and Silla had Su Sun.'<sup>61</sup> Each one protected their state and their fame reached ten thousand li. These were all great men in their country, and their wisdom and strategy surpassed ordinary men. Compared to our Minister of the Interior, these people would reach below his middle. How could they compete with him?" In the 11<sup>th</sup> month of winter, the Crown Prince mourned and from Asakura Palace, the remains of the deceased sovereign were moved and interred in Asuka Kahara.<sup>62</sup>

In the 14<sup>th</sup> year, the Crown Prince became regent. Having gone through hardship from a young age, the friendship between him and the Great Minister only became more profound. Despite being lord and vassal in principle, they were teacher and friend in conduct. When they went out they shared a carriage or rode horse side by side. Inside, their cushions touched and their knees were close. Their policy combined simplicity and quietness, and in their cultural refinement there was benevolence and wisdom. Eventually, their virtue spread in the country and their influence spread overseas. Thus, the three kingdoms served him and the ten thousand clans were at peace.

Therefore, the king of Koguryō sent a letter to the Minister of the Interior: "I believe that the Great Minister's wind of benevolence blows from afar, and his immense virtue stretches widely. You declare the sovereign will instruct the people for a thousand years, and his fragrant scent will spread ten thousand li. You became the pillar of the state and constructed floating bridges among its people. You are looked upon by the entire country and you are wanted by the common people. People hear you from afar and clap their hands out of joy. Their happiness spreads and truly deepens."

---

<sup>59</sup> The Crown Prince is the future sovereign Tenji.

<sup>60</sup> General Su 蘇將軍; Turkut Prince Chih-pi-chia-li 突厥王子契鉢加力.

<sup>61</sup> Wei Zheng 魏徵; 580–643; Kae Kim 蓋金 appears in a fragment of the *Nihon Seiki* in the NS Tenji 3 (664):10; Song Chung 善仲; Su Sun 鳩淳.

<sup>62</sup> "Sovereign" here refers to *sumeramikoto* 天皇.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> month of spring of the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the regency, the capital was moved to nearby Afumi.<sup>63</sup> In the 1<sup>st</sup> month of the 7<sup>th</sup> year, the sovereign ascended the throne.<sup>64</sup> He became Amemikoto Hirakasu Wake no sumeramikoto.<sup>65</sup> There were no bad omens at court and the surroundings looked fine. The people experienced no famines and the households had more than enough provisions. The entire populace called it a period of great peace.

The sovereign invited his ministers and held a banquet in his beach pavilion. The wine was pleasant and pleasure reached its climax. Then, the younger brother of the sovereign took a long spear and pierced through a wooden board.<sup>66</sup> The sovereign was baffled, became enraged and was about to punish and kill him. The Great Minister strongly warned him, and the sovereign consequently stopped. When he first met the Great Minister, the younger brother feared him because of his high position, but from then on he particularly valued him like a parent. Later, at the time of the Jinshin rebellion, when he headed to Atsuma from Yoshino he sighed and said: “If the Minister had still been alive, would we be in this trouble?”<sup>67</sup> This is what people thought.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> month of autumn of the 7<sup>th</sup> year, Silla sent tribute. The Great Minister thereupon offered the high official of Silla a ship as gift through the official Kim Tong Won.<sup>68</sup> Someone objected and the Great Minister replied: “All under Heaven must be Tenji’s land. The guests within its boundaries must be the sovereign’s servants.” Before this, the sovereign had ordered the Great Minister to compose court etiquette and issue legal codes.<sup>69</sup> Based on the nature of Heaven and men he composed the court’s code of conduct. The Minister and the wise men of the time determined the disadvantages and advantages of the old scriptures and drafted the legal articles in an abbreviated manner. He revered the way of respectful affection, and similarly he blocked the path towards wickedness. The principle consisted of discretion in judging and

---

63 Later know as Ōmi. Also mentioned in the NS, along with the opposition against the move of the capital, NS Tenji 6 (667). 3: 是時、天下百姓不願遷都; TK: 220.

64 NS Tenji 7 (668): 1.

65 天命開別天皇, i. e. Tenji tennō 天智天皇.

66 The “younger brother of the sovereign” 大皇弟 is Ōama no ōji 大海人皇子, the later sovereign Tenmu.

67 A war of succession between Ōama and Tenji’s son Ōtomo that took place 672–673. Tenji had first designated Ōama as his successor, but later changed his mind and favoured Ōtomo, who assumed the duties of the sovereign in 672. Ōama defeated him and became the next sovereign; Ōtomo took his own life.

68 The presence of Kim Tong Won 金東嚴 is also mentioned in the NS Tenji 7 (668): 9; TK: 125.

69 The legal codes mentioned here underscore not just Kamatari’s importance, but provide a direct link with Fujiwara no Fuhito who drafted the *Yōrō ritsuryō* 養老律令 that were on their turn implemented by Fujiwara no Nakamaro.



sentencing, the virtue consisted of love for living beings. From the Three Classics of the Zhou to the Nine Chapters of the Han, nothing was changed.<sup>70</sup>

In the 10<sup>th</sup> month of winter in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year after the ascension of the sovereign, the Great Minister weakened, became ill and finally his illness turned very serious. The sovereign proceeded to his private residence and inquired about his illness. He pleaded for his life to Shangdi and searched for signs of improvement. The following day, the pledging and requesting had no result and his illness became heavier. Thereupon the sovereign stated: “If you are thinking about something, then I should hear it.” The Great Minister replied: “Your servant cannot be prompt now, what should I actually say? However, regarding my funeral, I request simplicity to be used. In life, I did not have merit for the country in war, why should my death result in labor for the people?” Then, lying down, he did not speak again. The sovereign’s throat choked and distressed he could not control himself. Thereupon he returned to the palace.

The sovereign sent his younger brother, the crown prince of the eastern palace, to his house to state<sup>71</sup>: “When one reflects upon previous ages from a distance, then through time and generations there were not just one or two servants of a sovereign who conducted the policy. However, if one considers the accomplishments of their efforts, they did not do as well as you did. It is not merely we who have affection for you. Sovereigns of later generations will truly bless your descendants. Not forgetting and not dismissing, answering your good deeds widely and deeply. Having heard your sickness has become heavier, our hearts hurt more and more. We confer upon you the rank you should hold.” Then, he received the Brocade Cap, was promoted to the position of Dajōdaijin and his line became the “Fujiwara Asomi.”<sup>72</sup>

On the 16<sup>th</sup> day Kamatari passed away at the residence at Afumi. At that time, he was fifty-six years old.<sup>73</sup> The sovereign wept and was very distressed.

---

70 至於周之三典、漢之九篇 refers to the Zhou’s three legal codes being the Qing dian 輕典, Zhong dian 中典 and Zhong dian 重典, consisting of penal codes for a new country 新国, a country at peace 平国 and a country facing rebellion 乱国. As pointed out by Okimori, this statement might have been inspired by the Zhou Li 周礼; TK: 227. The “nine chapters of the Han” might refer to a set of legal codes based on the three codes originally established by the patriarch of the Han Dynasty.

71 The “younger brother, crown prince of the eastern palace” 東宮大皇弟 refers to Prince Ōama no ōji. See also NS Tenji 8 (669): 10.

72 The conferral of the the name “Fujiwara” and his rank are also mentioned in the NS Tenji 8 (669). 10. The honorary title “Asomi” 朝臣 was part of the *kabane* 姓 rank system possibly formed in the 5th century but adapted by Temmu in 684. See Piggott 1997: 314. “Dajōdaijin” or “Prime Minister” as translated by Hall and Mass 1988: 54.

73 The date is confirmed in the NS, adding a quote from the *Nihon Seiki* in which his age is mentioned (“fifty-six Spring and Autumns”), NS Tenji 8 (669): 10.

Court was suspended for nine days. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, he sent Soga no Toneri no Omi to state:

The Inner Palace Minister Asomi passed away unexpectedly.<sup>74</sup> Why does the blue Heaven take away our good men? How painful! How Sad! Leaving us behind, he now is far away. Unfathomable! Regretful! He is now estranged from us, separated for eternity. What to say and not to say at your demise? This is no metaphor, this is reality. Day and night we led each other by hand, you acted as a friend and were appointed my messenger. Our hearts were at peace. There is no doubt about what you said and what you did. You decided on the sovereign's small and great matters.<sup>75</sup> The eight directions are peaceful and tranquil and the thousand peoples are without distress. These words are too miserable and narrow and do not do you justice. Oh! What should we do? You presented explanations in the palace for the people's own benefit. You argued about the policy in the tents of the military, and we certainly agreed. Truly, this only happens once in a thousand years. King Wen appointed Shang Fu and the founder of the Han had Chang Liang as his minister. Isn't this just like the two of us?<sup>76</sup> We held hands from morning till evening, affectionate and never bored. We left and entered the same cart, and when we went out, etiquette was followed. Not yet having crossed the great river, the boat and the wheel have already sunk. The basis and the beams of the large house that is the state have broken. With whom shall we direct the country, with whom shall we govern the people? Each time I reflect upon this, my sadness cuts even deeper. However, I have heard that even the great enlightened ones cannot avoid this. Therefore my pain and grief are somewhat consoled, enabling me to feel peace and tranquility. If the dead have spirits, then I believe you can see the prior sovereign and his consort.<sup>77</sup> Please tell them: "O prior sovereigns. On tranquil days you enjoy the scenery at the Afumi and Hira no Ura Palace, just like in the days of yore."<sup>78</sup> Each time we see this, our eyes hurt and our hearts are in pain. Not one step we forget, not a single word we discard. When we look up we see the virtue of your wisdom, when we look down, our longing for your affection deepens. In addition, since you have left the household and returned to the Buddha, surely you need the ritual implements of the Dharma. Therefore, we offer you a pure golden incense stand. With this stand, you, as if praying, will arrive at Tusita Heaven after having followed Kannon Bosatsu and day after

74 Soga no Toneri no Omi 宗我舍人臣; the 16th or *kinoe-ne* 甲子.

75 "Sovereign" for "国家."

76 This refers to the founding of the Zhou dynasty ca. 1059 by King Wen 文王, though modern scholarship has the Zhou start from Wen's successor Wu. Wilkinson 688. Shang Fu 尚父 is Jiang Shang 姜尚, a military strategist employed by King Wen. Bohner translates this literally as "Father Shang" ("Vater Shang"), Bohner 1942: 242; The "founder of the Han" 漢祖 was Liu Bang 劉邦; (?–195BC) who originally held the title of "King of Han" 漢王 from 206 BC, Wilkinson 2013: 704. For Zhang Liang 張良; (?–187BC) see note 23.

77 In this case the prior "sovereign" (here: *mikado* 帝) is Jomei and his consort was Kōgyoku (Saimei).

78 Afumi 淡海 and Hira no Ura Palace 平浦宮 were located on the western bank of Lake Biwa. The presence of this sovereign and his consort at this site is confirmed in the NS Saimei 5 (659): 3; TK: 245.



day, night after night, you will listen to the marvellous preaching of Maitreya. Morning after morning and evening after evening you will turn the Dharma Wheel of Thusness.”

The highest court aristocrats, the counsellors and the hundred bureaucrats all proceeded to the hall of spirits and mourned, followed by the funerary cart and its guards, covered with drapes of feathers, and musicians playing drums and flutes. On the day of the funeral, the procession passed by the palace. The sovereign wore mourning garb and walked along. He ordered that the mourning chants cease, turned towards the funerary cart, cried bitterly and wept. From ancient times, such an abundant gratitude of a sovereign and such a high affection from his officials has not yet taken place as today. Based on his own words, the means for his burial were carried out in a humble manner, expressing his final wish.

Then, on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the year of *kōgo* (670), Kamatari's cremation took place at his mansion at Yamashina.<sup>79</sup> By imperial order the princes, the higher nobility and soldiers gathered at the burial site. Lower Large Brocade Ki no Ushi no Omi was ordered to state the final words and fulfil the obligation of funerary offerings.<sup>80</sup> At that time, it was as if the clouds in the sky formed a purple radiance. The sounds of strings and flutes above could be heard. A large gathering heard and saw this and lamented; this had not happened before. It was the Great Minister's character to honor the Three Jewels. He revered them and spread them in the four directions. Each year in the 10<sup>th</sup> month, he erected a platform to expound the Dharma, to revere the Great Way of the Vimalakīrti Sutra, and expound the marvelous principle of non-duality.<sup>81</sup> In addition, the possessions of his household were divided and deposited at Gangōji, to enhance the study of the Five Teachings. Thus the lineage of eminent priests was not cut off and the Way of the Holy One prospered. Why would these not be signs?

There was a man from Paekche named Sataku Seimei with the rank of Lesser Purple Cap who was unrivalled in talent and thinking, and during his life the

<sup>79</sup> Several sources related to early Kōfukuji connect Yamashina 山階 with Kamatari. In addition, passages of the *Kōfukuji ryūki* designate a private temple at this site as Kōfukuji's predecessor, referred to as *Yamashina dera*. The cremation is not mentioned in the NS.

<sup>80</sup> *Ki no Ushi no Ōmi* 紀大人臣; ?-?, in the NS he is mentioned to have been included among the *gyō shi taifu* 御史大夫; also: *dainagon*, 大納言 in 671, NS Tenji 10 (671): 1; TK: 252.

<sup>81</sup> This most likely refers to the early Vimalakīrti Assembly (*Yuima-e* 維摩会). However, while later sources such as the *Kōfukuji Engi* also ascribe the origins of this elaborate ritual to Kamatari, its actual origins and early format remain unclear. In 801 Kōfukuji was designated as its permanent site. KRN: 122. See also Groner 2002: 129–130; Bauer 2011: 12.

foremost in composition.<sup>82</sup> He was pained that the Great Minister's reputation was not passed on, that his wisdom and virtue would hollow out and perish. Therefore he composed an epithet. Now, it is included in a different work. Great Minister Kamatari had two sons, Jōe and Fuhito. Fuhito is included in another chronicle.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources (cited with abbreviated titles)

- KRN = *Kōfukuji ryaku nendai ki* 興福寺略年代記. In: Hanawa Hokinoichi 塙保己一 et al. (ed.) (1930): *Zoku Gunsho Ruijū* 続群書類従, vol. 29/2. Tōkyō: Zoku gunsho ruijū Kankōkai: 107–205.
- Kugyō bunin* 公卿補任. Kuroita, Katsumi 黒板勝美 (ed.) (1964–67): *Kugyō Bunin* 公卿補任 1–5. *Kokushi Taikei* 國史大系 53–58. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.
- NS = *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀. Kuroita, Katsumi 黒板勝美 (ed.) (1998): *Kokushi Taikei* 國史大系 1. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.
- Shoku Nihongi* 續日本紀. Kuroita, Katsumi 黒板勝美 (ed.) (1998): *Kokushi Taikei* 國史大系 2. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.
- Shinkō gunsho ruiju* 新校群書類従. Hanawa Hokinoichi 塙保己一 et al. (ed.) (1928–1937): *Shinkō Gunsho Ruiju* 新校群書類従. Tōkyō: Nagai Shoseki.
- SB = *Sonpi bunmyaku* 尊卑分脉. Kuroita Katsumi 黒板勝美 (ed.) (1966): *Kokushi Taikei* 國史大系 59. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.
- TK = *Tōshi kaden* 藤氏家伝. Okimori Takuya 沖森卓也, Satō Makoto 佐藤信, Yajima Izumi 矢嶋泉 (ed.) (1999): *Tōshi Kaden, Kamatari, Jōe, Muchimaro Den, Chūshaku to Kenkyū* 藤氏家伝・鎌足・貞慧・武智麻呂伝：注釈と研究. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.

### Secondary Sources

- Aston, William George (1973): *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (1st Tuttle ed., 2nd printing ed., Tut books. H). Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle.
- Bauer, Mikaël (2011): *The Power of Ritual: An Integrated History of Medieval Kofukuji*. PhD diss., Harvard University.
- Beck, B. J. Mansvelt (1986): “The Fall of Han”. In: *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 1, Cambridge University Press, 317–376.

---

<sup>82</sup> Sataku Seimei 沙叱昭明 (?–?) is also mentioned in the NS, but there is a discrepancy regarding his rank. The NS states he received the “Great Silk Cap, Lesser Rank” (大錦下) in 671, a rank lower than the one mentioned in the Kaden, seven years earlier. TK: 257.

- Bender, Ross (2015): *The Edicts of the Last Empress, 749–770: A Translation from Shoku Nihongi*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Bender, Ross (2016): *Nara Japan, 758–763: A Translation from Shoku Nihongi*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.
- Bentley, John R. (2002): *Historiographical Trends in Early Japan*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press.
- Bohner, Hermann (1941): “Kamatari-Den, Taishoku Kwanden Kaden, D.I. Haustraditionen des Hauses Fujiwara”. *Monumenta Nipponica* 4: 207–245.
- Bohner, Hermann (1942): “Muchimaro-Den. Kaden, D.I. Haustraditionen des Hauses Fujiwara”. *Monumenta Nipponica* 5: 412–436.
- Ebersole, Gary L. (1989): *Ritual Poetry and the Politics of Death in Early Japan*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Groner, Paul (2002): *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press.
- Hall, John Whitney, Mass, Jeffrey P. (eds.) (1988): *Medieval Japan: Essays in Institutional History*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Kern, Martin (ed.) (2005): *Text and Ritual in Early China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Kimoto, Yoshinobu 木元好信 (1993): *Fujiwara No Nakamaro Seiken No Kisoteki Kōsatsu* 藤原仲麻呂政権の基礎的考察. Tōkyō: Takashina Shoten.
- Kishi, Toshio 岸俊男 (1987): *Fujiwara No Nakamaro* 藤原仲麻呂. Tōkyō: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan.
- Ooms, Herman (1999): *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650–800*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press.
- Piggott, Joan R. (1997): *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Togashi, Susumu 富樫 進 (2007): “Kanjin No Keifu: Toshi Kaden Ni Okeru Gunshinkan to Sono Tokushitsu. 諫臣の系譜：『藤氏家伝』における君臣観とその特質”. *Nihon Bungaku* 56.9: 1–11.
- Torquil, Duthie (2013): “The Jinshin Rebellion and the Politics of Historical Narrative in Early Japan”. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 133.2: 295–320.
- Torquil, Duthie (2014): *Man’yōshū and the Imperial Imagination in Early Japan*. Leiden: Brill.
- Watson, Burton (trans.) (1993): *Sima Qian, Records of the Grand Historian Vol. I*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Wilkinson, Endymion (2013): *Chinese History: A New Manual*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center.