

Hearing the bells of Gion Shōja:

Transcultural and intralingual translations of *Heike Monogatari*

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Abstract: Complete translations of the medieval Japanese narrative *Heike monogatari* (The Tale of the Heike) have appeared in at least nine languages: Chinese (1984, 2002), Czech (1993), Dutch (2022), English (1918, 1975, 1988, 2012), French (1979), German (2022, 2023), Korean (2006), Russian (1982), and Spanish (2005). This paper compares and contrasts twenty renderings of the famous *Gion shōja* passage: nineteen translations into foreign languages and one romanized adaptation for Japanese language learners in 1592, a pioneering example of intralingual and transcultural adaptation. Strikingly different approaches have been taken to convey the rhetorical power of the eight sonorous opening phrases, some “domesticating” and some “foreignizing” East Asian references to readers from other cultures. Often translated as prose, the passage has increasingly been formatted like poetry, lineated, some even using rhyme or meter. Diction and register are carefully chosen, from the initial Buddhist references to impermanence and decline to the final similes: “but a dream of a spring night” (Okakura 1904) and “as the dust before the wind” (Sadler 1918). Comparison reveals a wide range of strategies to convey a message that transcends cultures and languages.

要旨:『平家物語』は少なくとも9つの言語で全訳されている——中国語、チェコ語、オランダ語、英語、フランス語、ドイツ語、韓国語、ロシア語、スペイン語である。本稿においては、有名な冒頭文の翻訳20例を比較対照してみた。そのうちのひとつはローマ字表記によるリライトであり、日本語習得者のため1592年に出版された天草版平家物語である。冒頭文が持つ修辭的な力を伝えるために、ある訳は自国文化に「ドメスティケーション（同化）」させ、ある訳は「フォリナイゼーション（異化）」させて異文化感を押し出している。冒頭文の翻訳には、驚くほど異なるアプローチがある。基本的には散文訳が多いが、詩のように改行し、韻を踏み、韻律を用いる訳も増えている。無常と没落についての仏教的修辭から「風の前の塵」といった最後の比喩まで、語法や言語使用域（レジスター）に気を配り、文化や言語を超えたメッセージを伝えるための幅広い技法が見えてくる。

Introduction

The *Gion shōja* passage that opens *Heike monogatari*, “The Tale of the Heike,” is one of the most famous passages in Japanese literature. This paper will discuss some of the many different approaches that translators have taken to convey both its sense and its rhetorical power into a foreign language. Here is one attempt that does so in parallel text layout. It is taken from the chapter on “Beginnings and Endings” in my doctoral thesis of 2003.

祇園精舎の鐘の声、
諸行無常の響あり。
娑羅双樹の花の色、
盛者必衰の理をあらはす。
おごれる人も久しからず。
唯春の夜の夢のごとし。
たけき者も遂にはほろびぬ、
偏に風の前の塵に同じ。
(Ichiko 1:19)

“All things are impermanent” echoes the voice
of the temple bells at Gion Shōja.
“Those who flourish must inevitably fall”
appears in the colour of the śāla blossoms.
Even the proud will not last long:
they are but a dream on a spring night.
The fierce ones, too, will fall in the end:
they are as the dust before the wind.
(Watson, *Narrative Study* 43–44)

Gion Shōja kane no koe, / shogyō mujō no hibiki ari.

Shara sōju no hana no iro, / jōja hissui no kotowari wo arawasu.

Ogoreru hito mo hisashikarazu. / Tada haru no yo no yume no gotoshi.

Takeki mono mo tsui ni wa horobinu, / hitoe ni kaze no mae no chiri ni onaji.

Japanese editions conventionally set out the opening passage as prose, but the original has been quoted here with irregular patterns of lineation in order to highlight the phrase groupings of the original. The English tries to do something similar. Paralleling the Japanese order was easier in the second half, from “Even the proud will not last long” (*Ogoreru hito...*), than in the first half, where the pairs of lines of the translation reverse the original order of the text: lines 2, 1, 4, 3. Two phrases are quoted from sutras. “All things are impermanent” were the words heard by dying monks in the ringing sound of four bells of glass (*hari* 玻璃) in the earliest Buddhist monastery in northern India, Jetavana-vihāra (Jp. *Gion shōja*). “Those who flourish must inevitably fall” (*jōsha hissui*) is the self-evident truth (*kotowari*, not translated here) that manifested itself when the yellow blossoms turned white and fell from the giant twin-trunked *śāla* trees on the four sides of Buddha’s deathbed.

Faced with a much-translated passage like this, it is hard to escape the influence of earlier translations — English renderings by Sadler, Kitagawa and Tsuchida, and

McCullough, as well as by Sieffert in French were well known to me when I tackled the passage more than twenty years ago. This was one reason that I experimented with the parallel-text format. Lineating the *Gion shōja* opening had already been tried before in other languages, as well as at least once before in English. In his complete translation of 2012, Royall Tyler was to use different line lengths and formats with great finesse.

Here is how the opening *Gion shōja* section continues, introducing one of the work's chief figures, Taira no Kiyomori. It situates him in a geographical movement — China to Japan — and in a temporal series of analogous figures from history: famous usurpers and rebels in chronological order, their names identified by dynasty or era.

遠く異朝を
とぶらへば、
秦の趙高、
漢の王莽、
梁の周伊、
唐の禄山、
是等は皆
旧主先皇の政にもしたがはず、
樂みをきはめ、
諫をも思ひいれず、
天下の乱れむ事を
さとらずして、
民間の愁ふる所を
知らざししかば、
久しからずして、
亡じにし者どもなり。

In a distant, foreign realm
we hear of men like
Zhao Gao of Qin,
Wang Mang of Han,
Zhu Yi of Liang
and Lushan of Tang —
rebels all against the rule
of former lords and sovereigns.
Indulging in every pleasure,
they neither heeded warning counsel,
nor saw the signs
of chaos to come
nor knew how much
the common people suffered.
And thus it was not long
before they were undone.

近く本朝を
うかがふに、
承平の将門、
天慶の純友、
康和の義親、
平治の信頼、
此等はおごれる心もたけき事も、
皆とりどりにこそありしかども、

Nearer to us, in our realm
we think of men like
Masakado of Shōhei
Sumitomo of Tengyō,
Yoshichika of Kōwa,
or Nobuyori of Heiji —
in pride of heart and vigour
outstanding examples all.

まぢかくは

And closest still,

六波羅の入道	the Novice of Rokuhara,
前太政大臣	former Chancellor,
平朝臣	and Taira noble,
清盛公と申しし人の有様、	the person called Lord Kiyomori —
伝へ承るこそ、	what we hear told of him
心も詞も及ばれね。	is more that we can think or speak.
(Ichiko 1:29, reformatted)	(Watson, <i>Narrative Study</i> 41)

This passage is followed by a third temporal sequence: the genealogical line of the Taira. This is summarized in the abridged version we will look at next, the version of *Heike monogatari* that was read by Westerners in Japan in the late sixteenth century — long before the foreign language translations discussed in the rest of this paper.

Feiqe no monogatari

The whole *Gion shōja* passage was memorably paraphrased in *Feiqe no monogatari*, one of most unusual adaptations of the medieval narrative. Extant in a single copy now in the British Library, *Feiqe no monogatari* was written entirely in romanized form and printed in 1592 on the Jesuit press in Amakusa near Nagasaki together with a translation from Latin to Japanese of the life and fables of Aesop. The title page of *Feiqe no monogatari* states that it is a simplified version to teach the language (**cotoba**) and history (**Historia**) of Japan.¹ (Bold will be used to distinguish between the romanization used in the Jesuit text from the modern Hepburn romanization in italics provided for clarity.) **Fucan Fabian** (不干 Fabian, 1565 - ?) signed the the two-page “Note written for readers” (**Docujuno fitoni taixite xosu / dokuju no hito ni taishite sho su**). Fabian was a Japanese Zen monk turned Christian missionary who reworked the entire work in romanized dialogue form. He explains that his aim was to teach the basics of the Japanese language and what he calls **kono cunino fūzocu** (*kono kuni no fūzoku*), the “customs of this country (Kamei and Sakata 4). As the romanization and the spelling *Feiqe* suggest, the text is of great value to historical linguists. Regrettably, however, it has been little studied either from a literary standpoint or as an early example of cultural transfer.²

Gion shōja is one of the sections with the fewest differences between the main *Heike* variants. In Fabian’s version, however, the opening is in dialogue form and abbreviated radically. Questions are asked by a certain **Vmanojō** (i.e. *Uma-no-jō*, 右馬之允), who has a common court title sometimes translated as “Secretary of the Stables of the Right.” He is answered by Qiichi (i.e. Kiichi), who is called **Qēgueōnobō** in the original romanization of the text, that is to say *kengyō no bō* 検校の坊, a term of address revealing that he is imagined as belonging to the highest rank of *biwa hōshi*, the guild of performers who

recited *Heike monogatari*.³ After a preface in which Fabian explains how he came to choose this work, the dialogue begins. For the sake of clarity, the full text has been cited below in the Japanese transcription of modern editors, with key phrases in one or both forms of romanization provided parenthetically in my translation.⁴

右馬之允. 検校の坊, 平家の由来が聞きたいほどに, あらあら略してお語りあれ. (Kamei and Sakata 5)

UMA-NO-JŌ: “Reverend master [**Qēgueônobō**], I would like to hear about the origins of the Heike [**Feiqe no yurai**]. Could you give the rough summary of the story [**ara ara riaku xite vo catari are**]? ”

喜一. やすいことでごさる: おほかた語りまらせうず. まづ平家物語の書き始めにはおごりをきはめ, 人をも人と思はぬやうなる者はやがて滅びたといふ証跡に, 大唐, 日本においておごりをきはめた人々の果てた様体をつつ申してから, さて六波羅の入道前の太政大臣清盛公と申した人の行儀の不法なことをのせたものでござる. (Kamei and Sakata 5)

KI-ICHI: “That is an easy matter [**yasui coto de gozaru**]. I will give a general account. At the beginning of the ‘Tale of Heike’ [**Feiqemonogatari**] it is first written that those who are very proud [*ogori wo kiwame*] and do not think of others as people [*hito wo mo hito to omowanu yō naru mono*] were quickly destroyed [*yagate horobita*]. To prove this it tells what happened in the end to the men who were very proud [*ogori wo kiwameta hitobito*] in China [**Taitō**] and Japan [**Nippon**]. Then it records the outrageous behaviour [*gyōgi no fuhō*] of the man called Lord Kiyomori [**Qiyomori cō**], the Novice of Rokuhara and former Chancellor.

さてその清盛の先祖は桓武天皇九代の後胤讃岐の守正盛が孫刑部卿忠盛朝臣の嫡男でござる. この忠盛の時までは先祖の人々は平氏を高望の王の時くだされて, 武士となられてのち, 殿上の仙籍をば許させられなんだ. (Kamei and Sakata 5–6)

Now as for the ancestry of this Kiyomori [**Sate sono Qiyomori no xenzo**], he was the eldest son of Punishments Minister, Lord Tadamori, grandson of Sanuki Governor Masamori, descendant in the ninth generation from Emperor Kanmu.⁵ Tadamori’s ancestors were given the family name Taira [*Taira uji*] at

the time of Prince Takamochi. After they became *bushi* [**buxi**], they were not permitted to {put their names on} the Courtiers' Board of the Palace [*Tenjō no senseki*] until the time of Tadamori.

One feature of the 1592 text not indicated above its use of superscript letters f, q, c, and t before proper names as a form of gloss such as '**Q**iyomori, '**S**anuqi no cami, '**N**ippon, and '**R**ocufara to indicate that *Kiyomori* is a person (**fito** i.e. 人), *Sanuki no kami*, Sanuki Governor, a rank (**quan** 官), *Nippon* a country (**cuni** 国) and *Rokuhara* a place (**tokoro** 所), glosses that Fabian explains at the end of his "Notes." The pedagogical aim is clear: the text has been "translated" in easier Japanese with annotations to help non-Japanese readers. It is, in other words, an intralingual translation with the aim of conveying cultural and linguistic knowledge to people from other countries.

Fabian goes further than the older text in criticizing Kiyomori's *gyōgi no fuhō*, "outrageous behaviour" as I have translated it. Ki-ichi's answer mentions none of the names of rebels and traitors in China or Japan who were destroyed. The choice of the word *horobita* is significant, echoing the verb used in the traditional version we read first: *Takeki mono mo tsui ni wa horobinu* ("The fierce ones, too, will fall in the end"). That uses the verb *ogoreru* for those who are proud or arrogant. Here in Fabian's simplified version, the noun form, *ogori*, pride, is used twice to explain the cause of their destruction. The Buddhist elements in the original have disappeared entirely, but the cardinal sin of pride would have been acceptable to students and teachers in the Christian *collegio* in Kyushu.

The early missionaries drew on war tales like *Heike monogatari* and *Taiheiki* as well as other genres to compile dictionaries and grammars of the Japanese language. Significantly, however, they used the linguistic skills they painstakingly acquired not in order to produce translations from Japanese into Latin or any other European language but rather for translations from Latin into Japanese, both of secular works like the life and fables of Aesop as well as many religious texts. Copies of these grammars and dictionaries survived, becoming an important resource in the intervening centuries as Japanese texts began to be studied and translated in Europe, even before the "opening" of Japan. We turn next to a pioneering example of translation published early in the Meiji period.

***Heike monogatari* in translation**

In the summer of 1871 (Meiji 4), a thin volume was privately printed in Geneva by François Turrettini (1845–1908). It consisted of two pages of introduction followed by twenty-four pages of translation into French, with a cover page that gives the title first in Japanese characters followed by romanization—but without translating the title

itself—followed by a subtitle that explains the nature of the work, “Tales of the history of Japan in the twelfth century”:

平家物語 HEIKE MONOGATARI
Récits de l’histoire du Japon au xii^{me} siècle

This was the first known publication of a translation into a Western language of any portion of the war tale, which was frequently printed during the Edo period in woodblock editions with and without illustrations. The version that came into Turretini’s possession was an adaptation published only a few decades before: *Heike monogatari zue* 平家物語図絵 (1821, 1849), *The Tale of the Heike Illustrated*. Comparison of text and translation has shown that Turretini follows both the wording of the adaptation by Takai Ranzan 高井蘭山 (1762–1839) and also its rearrangement of sections and abridgements in the first volume published in 1821 (Watson, “L’écho” 161–164). Notable for its many striking illustrations by a pupil of Hokusai called Teisai Hokuba 蹄齋北馬 (1771–1844), a noted painter as well as an accomplished book illustrator, it is indeed *une belle édition* (“a pretty edition”) as Turretini remarks in the preface (2). Turretini chose three illustrations to be redrawn and included in his edition—adding bichrome coloring to two of them. Many more were chosen by recent translators, first by Royall Tyler in the fourth complete English translation (2012), and then by Björn Adelmeier, in the first German translation (2022). The full text of *Heike monogatari zue* is available in digital archives and modern printings.⁶

Translators that followed Turretini used other woodblock editions from the Edo period. These are generally of the type referred to by Japanese scholars as *rufubon* 流布本, meaning “(widely) distributed” texts, usually called “vulgate” editions in English. The colophons of *rufubon* texts often indicate the date of publication, but nineteenth-century translators tend not to mention which particular edition they translate from. An exception is Carlo Valenziani in *La Mort D’Atu-Mori*, “The Death of Atsumori,” published in 1893 in one of the two series edited by Turretini. He mentions that he translated one of the accounts about Atsumori at the battle of Ichinotani from an 1823 edition of the variant text *Genpei jōsuiki* 源平盛衰記 (formerly read *Genpei seisuiki*), “The Rise and Fall of the Genji and Heike.” Valenziani’s volume contains three other translations of texts relating to the episode into French, one from Fabian’s *Feiqe no monogatari*, one from a *rufubon* text of *Heike monogatari*, and the final example from a puppet play.⁷

Histories and anthologies of Japanese literature flourished at the turn of the century. In discussing *Heike monogatari*, the authors would typically contrast its style with the

much longer *Genpei jōsuiki*, giving excerpts in translation from both, sometimes from different episodes, but often from similar portions of the text. This was done by W. G. Aston (1899), Michel Revon (1900) and Karl Florenz (1906) in English, French, and German respectively. Both Aston and Florenz chose to focus on the long sequence depicting the decisive sea battle of Dannoura, choosing contrasting examples from the two variants. Florenz also translated the opening sentences of *Gion shōja* as cited below, only the second published translation of the passage known to me. French and German translations came earlier than an English translation, as is the case with some other Japanese premodern classics. (As note 16 explains, a free translation into English of the three opening sentences survives in a manuscript written around 1904 by a major figure in East-West cultural relations, Okakura Kakuzō.)

It was not until 1921, a full forty years after Turretini's pioneering translation, that A. L. Sadler completed his English translation of the whole work under the title *The Heike Monogatari*. He published it in two issues of an academic journal, *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, available for subscribers through agents with branches in Yokohama, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo, and London. This is a wider range than Turretini enjoyed — his cover names publishers in Geneva, Paris, and London — yet while specialist readers in Asia and Europe may have had access to these first translations, a more general readership for the medieval classic in translation was not reached for many years.

After Sadler took up a professorship at the University of Sydney, he published *Tales of the Heike* in 1926 in a revised and abridged version, together with a translation of *Hōjōki* ("The Ten Foot Square Hut"). The fact that this volume was published in Sydney by a publisher that focused on the Australian market must surely have limited its audience. Few reviews appeared, a stark contrast with the fanfare that accompanied the publications in London and Boston of Arthur Waley's translation of *Genji monogatari* in the same period. The *Heike* and *Hōjōki* translations ultimately became read more widely, becoming a long seller after being reprinted in 1970 by Greenwood Press and in 1972 by Charles E. Tuttle, a publisher that has ensured that his versions of the two medieval texts have stayed in print ever since.

The fifty-year period from 1975 to the present in 2025 has seen many more complete translations based on the original Japanese in one of the standard scholarly editions of the Kakuichi variant, the version for recitation. First to appear was the second complete English translation by Kitagawa Hiroshi and Bruce Tsuchida (1975), a Japan-based medievalist and a U.S.-based collaborator. The volumes were widely reviewed in academic journals on their appearance. Other complete translations followed with increasing frequency: French (1979), Russian (1982), Chinese (1984, 2002), Czech (1993), Spanish (2005),

Korean (2006), English (1988, 2012) German (2022, 2023), and Dutch (2022). There has also been a translation into Hungarian based on Helen Craig McCullough's translation of 1988, as well as an abridged translation by Burton Watson (2006). Complete translations of *Heike monogatari* are thus available now in ten languages — with two or more translations available for readers of English, Chinese, and German. The remainder of this paper will look at the many ways in which the opening *Gion shōja* section has been translated into foreign languages over the long history of the reception of *Heike monogatari*.

Over the years, I have made a collection of the opening sentences of *Gion shōja* in different translations as well as in audio recordings provided by native speakers to be used in lectures. The passage looks and sounds very different in each language, but all convey some of its power, even if in ways that may seem odd or unusual.

Many foreign-language translations have drawn special attention to the importance of the opening by setting it out in a form that resembles verse, using lineation. The details differ from language to language, as we shall see, but for an overview, see below (Fig. 1). Titles in square brackets indicate the name given to the work by translators who translated only short excerpts.

Encountering a familiar literary work in foreign translation can sometimes be an exercise in “defamiliarization.”⁸ Another way to experience defamiliarization is to see the source text itself in an unfamiliar guise. Here is the beginning of *Heike monogatari* in a close transcription from a manuscript that can be viewed in a digital archive.⁹ Modern forms of *kana* and *kanji* have been used, with の *no* used in place of the two *bentaigana* derived from cursive forms of 能 and 乃 in the manuscript. The text has been set out horizontally rather than vertically, but no punctuation has been added. How does it sound when we try to read it aloud — or voice it silently? Where is it natural to pause?

祇園精舎の鐘の声諸行無常の響あり
 娑羅双樹の花乃色盛者必衰のことはりを
 あらはすおこれる人も久しからず只春の
 夜の夢のことしたけき者も遂にはほろひぬ
 偏の風の前の塵に同じ……

The lineation follows the manuscript. Note that no punctuation or voice marks (*dakuten*) are used whatsoever. For the first two lines, the line breaks come at what seems natural points, helping us to parse the phrases, but the following long sequence of *kana* in the third line adds to our difficulties in “hearing” the text. Here is the passage in an edition based on the same Ryukoku University Library manuscript. The editors have added punctuation marks and voicing. Thanks to this, the relatively short phrases are clearly

Texts and translations of *Gion shōja*

Language	Translator(s)	Date	Title	lineated
French	François Turretini	1871	<i>Heike monogatari</i>	
English	Okakura Kakuzō	1904?	[quoted in “Ko Atsumori”]	
German	Karl Florenz	1906	[<i>Das Heike Monogatari</i>]	
English	A. L. Sadler	1918 1921	<i>The Heike Monogatari</i>	
French	Goto and Prunier	1928	[<i>Le Heiké Monogatari (Histoire de la famille Heiké)</i>]	
English	A. L. Sadler	1928	<i>Tales of the Heike</i>	
German	Wilhelm Gundert	1929	[<i>Heike Monogatari</i>]	●
English	Kitagawa Hiroshi Bruce Tsuchida	1975	<i>The Tale of the Heike</i>	
French	René Sieffert	1978	<i>Le dit des Heiké</i>	
Russian	Irina L’vova Ирина Львова	1982	Повесть о доме Тайра <i>Povest’ o dome Taira</i>	●
Chinese	Zhou Zuoren 周作人 Shen Fei 申非	1984	平家物語	●
Czech	Karel Fiala	1993	<i>Příběh rodu Taira</i>	
Chinese	Wang Xinxī 王新禧	2002	平家物語	●
Spanish	Rubi Tani Moratalla Rubio López de La Llave	2005	<i>Heike monogatari</i>	
Korean	O ChanUk 오찬욱 (吳贊旭)	2006	<i>Heike iyagi</i> 헤이케이야기	
English	Burton Watson	2006	<i>The Tales of the Heike</i>	
Italian	Adriana Boscaro	2010	[<i>Lo Heike monogatari</i>]	●
English	Royall Tyler	2012	<i>The Tale of the Heike</i>	●
Italian	Roberta Strippoli	2012	[<i>Lo Heike monogatari</i>]	
German	Björn Adelmeier	2022	<i>Heike monogatari. Die Erzählung von den Heike</i>	●
Hungarian	Bärnkopf Zoltan (from English translation by McCullough)	2022	<i>Heike monogatari – avagy a Heike tündöklése és bukása</i>	●
Dutch	Jos Vos	2022	<i>De val van de Taira</i>	●
German	Michael Stein	2023	<i>Heike monogatari. Der Sturz des Hauses Taira</i>	●

Figure 1: Overview of translations with and without lineation for *Gion shōja*

distinguishable, but it is important to remember that this amount of punctuation is not a feature of many earlier texts.

祇園精舎の鐘の声、諸行無常の響あり。娑羅双樹の花の色、盛者必衰のことはりをあらはす。おこれる人も久しからず。只春の夜の夢のとし。たけき者も遂にはほろひぬ、偏に風の前の塵に同じ。(Takagi et al. 1:83)

The text of the Ryukoku manuscript records what is known as Kakuichi variant, now the basis of most standard editions, but one that was not available to translators in the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Instead, they relied either on the *rufubon* or “vulgate” version of Edo woodblock texts or the modern editions based on them, like the one shown below, from a 1915 edition by Utsumi Kōzō that was used by Sadler in translating the opening passage.¹⁰ Leaving aside the variation in *kanji/kana* use, there is only one notable difference: the reversal of *hito* and *mono*, but this does not affect the translation. To make the overall structure clearer and to facilitate comparison with the romanization, each sentence has been placed on a separate line. Notice how the punctuation helps us to see the phrases and to voice them, either subvocally or aloud:

祇園精舎の鐘の声、諸行無常の響あり。
娑羅双樹の花の色、盛者必衰の理をあらはす。
驕れるもの久しからず、たゞ春の夜の夢の如し。
猛き人も遂には亡びぬ。ひとへに風の前の塵に同じ。(Utsumi 1, emphasis added)
Gion Shōja kane no koe, shogyō mujō no hibiki ari.
Shara sōju no hana no iro, jōja hissui no kotowari wo arawasu.
Ogoreru mono hisashikarazu. Tada haru no yo no yume no gotoshi.
Takeki hito mo tsui ni wa horobinu, hitoe ni kaze no mae no chiri ni onaji.

Sadler does not format the four sentences into verse-like lines. Instead, he calls attention to this key passage by setting it off in italics.

The sound of the bell of Gionshoja echoes the impermanence of all things. The hue of the flowers of the teak tree declares that they who flourish must be brought low. Yea, the proud ones are but for a moment, like an evening dream in springtime. The mighty are destroyed at the last, they are but as the dust before the wind.
(Sadler, *Heike* 1)

The solemnity of the opening is well conveyed by the echoes of the Authorized Version of the Bible (1604), notable in the use of the exclamation “Yea” and the use of “but for” and “but as” in the second of the parallel constructions. The translation by Florenz (1901) is in a similar formal register, striking a solemn tone.

Der Ton der Glocke des Gion-Tempels verkündigt immer die Unbeständigkeit der Dinge, und die Farbe der Blüten der Shara-Bäume (ein in buddhistischen Schriften erwähnter indischer Baum) zeigt uns den schnellen Verfall alles Blühenden. Wer sich prahlerisch ruhmt, wird bald zugrunde gehen: er ist wie ein kurzer Traum in der Frühlingsnacht. Und wer tapfer ist, wird auch bald dahinsinken: er ist wie Staub vor dem Winde. (299, emphasis added)

The passage begins with references to events that occurred when Shakamuni, the historical Buddha, entered Nirvana, something that Sadler like most translators explains in a lengthy footnote. In a note in parenthesis, Florenz comments only that *śāra* trees (*Shara-Bäume*) are often mentioned in Buddhist writings. He is correct to use the plural form for trees: a pair of trees is often depicted in *Nebanzu* 涅槃図, illustrations of the Buddha's passing.

Even without annotation, a careful reader of these translations will surely grasp the idea of “the impermanence of all things” (“die Unbeständigkeit aller Dinge”). Florenz prepares his readers for this passage by paraphrasing the concept as “die Lehre vom Unbestand alles Irdischen” (“the teaching of the inconstancy of everything earthly”) on the previous page (298). Change, decline and fall (*Verfall*) affect all, even the “proud” and the “mighty”—or as Florenz puts it, “those who boastfully praise themselves” and “whoever is bold.” When Sadler published his revised abridgment in 1928, he made one significant change to the wording, substituting “Gionshoja” with “Jetavana,” the Sanskrit name of the temple in India, one that François Turrettini mistakenly identified (Sadler, *Tales* 22, cf. Turrettini 1, ft. 1).

Turrettini never lived in or even visited Japan. Thanks to the help of acquaintances with greater linguistic knowledge in Japanese and Chinese, he was able to make a very credible translation of the opening passage. Here is the variant text he used, Takai Ranzan's adaptation in *Heike monogatari zue*, together with his translation. Numbers have been added to facilitate comparison, with emphasis added for phrases that differ in the adapted version, which changes the “spring night” into a “summer night”—shorter after all—and uses a different final simile about the warriors falling, like a lamp blown out by the wind (*bito*e ni kaze no mae no tomoshibi ni nitari).

[1] 祇園精舎の鐘の声、諸行無常の響あり、[2] 沙羅双樹の花の色、盛者必衰の理を顯す。[3] 奢る者は久しからず、只夏の夜の夢の如く、[4] 猛き人も遂に滅びぬ、偏に風の前の燈に似たり。(ed. Tsubouchi, 1:30)

[1] Si le son de la cloche du temple de Gi-on est l'écho des vicissitudes humaines, [2] l'éclat passager des fleurs des deux arbres Sara montre que toute prospérité a son déclin. [3] Les orgueilleux ne subsistent pas longtemps, leur vie est comme le songe d'une nuit d'été. (4) Les guerriers aussi finissent par tomber, ils ressemblent à une lampe exposée au vent. (Turrettini 3, emphasis added)

Turrettini refers to the two paired trees, a detail that Sadler omits. “The echo of human vicissitudes” is a fine rendering for *shogyō mujō no hibiki* 諸行無常の響, the rapid declines in fortune that the passage goes on to describe.

Most modern editions of *Heike monogatari* contain nearly two hundred sections — or *shōdan* 章段 as they are known in Japanese scholarship. Turrettini translates just five sections but fourteen were included in *Episodes du Heiké Monogatari* translated by S. Goto and M. Prunier, colleagues teaching at a university in Tokyo, and published in Paris in 1931. Only one complete episode, “Giō” (book 1, section 6), is included in both publications, but a short excerpt from the *Gion shōja* opening is quoted in their “Introduction.” The key opening phrases, underlined below, are closely paraphrased. A translation of the remainder of the passage follows. Word choices like *vicissitudes* are possibly borrowed from Turrettini, but generally the two translators have attempted to come up with different phrasings, referring more literally in *la voix de la cloche* to the expression *kane no koe*, the “voice of the bell.” The passage refers to a spring night, not a summer night as Turrettini does, but ends with the simile also found in Takai Ranzan’s adaptation: “like a flame exposed to the wind.”

A travers tout l'ouvrage les enseignements religieux sont si abondants, qu'on y a vu une sorte de traité de propagande bouddhique. Il est vrai que toutes les vicissitudes de la vie des héros y servent à prouver l'inconstance de la fortune et la folie de tout attachement aux choses d'ici-bas. De chapitre en chapitre, on entend vibrer la voix de la cloche du temple de Guion répétant : « Tout est instable en ce monde. L'éclat de la fleur du teck proclame que les plus florissants vont infailliblement à la ruine. Les orgueilleux ne subsistent pas longtemps et leur vie n'est que le songe d'une nuit printanière. Les vaillants guerriers eux-mêmes succombent, pareils à une flamme exposée au vent. » (Goto and Prunier, 18, emphasis added)

[Throughout the whole work, religious teachings are so abundant that one can see in it as a sort of treatise in Buddhist propaganda. It is true that all the vicissitudes of the lives of the heroes serve to prove the inconstancy of fortune and the folly of all attachments to things here below [in this world]. From chapter to chapter, one hears the voice of the bell of the Gion temple vibrate, repeating “Everything is unstable in this world. The brilliance of the flower of the teak tree proclaims that those who flourish the most will go without fail to their ruin. The proud do not last long and their life is nothing but a dream of a spring night. The brave warriors themselves succumb, like a flame exposed to the wind.]

The first complete version in French was René Sieffert’s translation of 1978, more than one hundred years after the pioneer efforts of Turrettini. Sieffert begins:

Du monastère de Gion le son de la cloche, de l’impermanence de toutes choses est la résonance. Des arbres *shara* la couleur de fleur démontre que tout ce qui prospère nécessairement déchoit. (31)

There is what appears to be a deliberate use of internal rhyme here, in *impermanence* and *résonance* and then in *couleur* and *fleur*. Both Turrettini and Sieffert call attention to the parallelism in structure of *Gion shōja no kane no koe* and *Shara sōju no hana no iro*. Turrettini does so by linking phrases (1) and (2) syntactically in an if-structure, while Sieffert does so by reversing the usual word order, writing “Of the monastery of Gion, the sound of the bell” rather than “the sound of the bell of the monastery of Gion” and similarly in the next sentence. This kind of inversion is more typical in poetry or translations from the Latin and Greek classics. This is a form of “domestication”—the term in translation theory for use of rhetorical or stylistic features familiar to readers of the target language,

Having looked at three French translations, we can turn briefly to those into two other Romance languages that are relatively close in terms of cognate vocabulary and word order: Italian and Spanish. To facilitate comparison, each sentence is presented separately after the corresponding romanized text. Those marked [A] are from an Italian translation by Adriana Boscaro that appears in lineated form at the beginning of an introduction to *Heike monogatari* in a survey of classical Japanese literature. The phrases marked [B] are from an Italian translation by Roberta Strippoli, who combines the second and third sentences with *e* (“and”); while those marked [C] are taken from the complete Spanish translation by Rubi Tani Moratalla and Rubio López de La Llave.

Here are the first two sentences with the translation of the key four-character terms in bold:

*Gion Shōja kane no koe, **shogyō mujō** no hibiki ari.*

[A1] Il rintocco delle campane del tempio di Gion riecheggia **la caducità di tutte le cose.**

[B1] Nel suono delle campane del tempio di Gion echeggia **l'impermanenza delle cose del mondo.**

[C1] En el sonido de la campana del monasterio de Gion resuena **la caducidad de todas las cosas.**

*Shara sōju no hana no iro, **jōja hissui** no kotowari wo arawasu.*

[A2] Il colore dei fiori di *sāla* dimostra la realtà **che chi eccelle è destinato a cadere.**

[B2] Il colore dei fiori di *sāla* ci insegna che **chi prospera corre verso il proprio declino**

[C2] En el color siempre cambiante del arbusto de shara se recuerda la ley terrenal de **que toda gloria encuentra su fin.**

(Boscaro in Bienati and Boscaro 119; Strippoli 127; Tani and López 91).

The similes about spring night dreams and dust before the wind in the following two sentences of the original can relatively easily be translated.¹¹ What is hard to reproduce well in these languages as in English is the parallism of the four-character terms in the opening two lines. The Buddhist concept of *shogyō mujō* can be succinctly conveyed but in most languages examined, *jōja hissui* requires a longer paraphrase. Here is how English translators have dealt with these terms:

諸行無常 <i>shogyō mujō</i>	盛者必衰 <i>jōja hissui</i>	Translation
the impermanence of all things	they who flourish must be brought low	Sadler 1
the impermanence of all	the downfall of the splendid	Miner et al. 163
all is vanity and evanescence	all who flourish are destined to decay	Kitagawa/Tsuchida 5
the impermanence of all things	the prosperous must decline	McCullough 23
all things are impermanent	what flourishes must fade	Burton Watson 9
the passing of all things	the great man's certain fall	Tyler 3

Figure 2: English translations of two key phrases

Burton Watson's translation here is remarkable in using precisely four English words for both four-character phrases, with the word “fade” alliterating with “flourishes” and also suggesting the change in color of the blossoms of the *sāla* tree. As his footnote explains, the blossoms turned white when the Buddha was on his deathbed (9). This is a more elegant solution than the one adopted by Kitagawa and Tsuchida, who incorporate the information into the translation itself by the addition of the words underlined here: “The faded flowers of the sāla trees by the Buddha's deathbed” (5). A similar technique is used in the Korean translation by O ChanUk of the same passage, as shown in the second line of figure 3.

기원정사 무상당(無常堂)의 진혼의 종소리는 제행무상(諸行無常)의
이치를 일깨워주고, 석존(釋尊)의 입적(入寂)을 지켜보던 사라(沙羅)나
무 꽃들은 성자필쇠(盛者必衰)의 섭리를 드러내 보여주었다고 하지 않
았던가.

Fig. 3. The opening of the Korean translation *Giwon jeongsa* (Jp. *Gion shōja*) (O ChanUk 1:15)

The second line of the translation includes a phrase meaning “on Shakamuni’s entrance into Nirvana” with the Chinese characters 釋尊 and 入寂 added to clarify the readings in *hangul*.¹² The translator uses the approach for some other Sinitic terms that appear in the Japanese original. In the first and third lines, the two four-character expressions appear without change, following the *hangul* readings.

One might expect that Chinese translators would be able to incorporate both of the four-character phrases verbatim, but Zhuo and Shen substitutes the five-character expression 世事本無常 (*shì shì běn wú cháng*) for 諸行無常 (Jp. *shogyō mujō*), see Figure 2. It is possible that they did so in order to fill out the line with the required number of syllables—the whole passage of eight lines takes the form of a seven-character poem, a traditional form of classical Chinese verse.¹³ Wang Xinxin also formats the passage into eight lines rather than as continuous prose, but the line length is irregular, ranging from five to eight characters. Zhuo and Shen adds a small but significant term to the third line, ending 失色 *shī sè* (“lose color”), explaining the change in the hue of the blossoms. Many East Asian visual representations of the Buddha entering Nirvana (*nehanzu* 涅槃圖) show the white blossoms on the tree by his deathbed, but even readers familiar with Buddhism require a footnote or an addition to the translation itself for this passage to be meaningful. Some translators provide both.

Japanese (Ichiko 1:19)	Chinese (Zhuo and Shen 1)	Chinese (Wang 3)
祇園精舎の鐘の聲	祇園精舎鐘聲響	祇園精舎之鐘聲
諸行無常の響あり	訴說世事本無常	響諸行無常之妙理
沙羅双樹の花の色	姿羅双樹花失色	姿羅双樹之花色
盛者必衰の理をあらはす	盛者必衰若滄桑	顯盛者必衰之真諦

Figure 4. Japanese text and two Chinese translations. Emphasis added.

Some foreign-language translators have chosen to lineate this opening, to set it out as if it were verse. Some translators go further, using rhythm, or prosodic formats typical of their own language and culture. The Russian translation by Irina L'vova uses the rhyme scheme aa/bb/cc/dd for the first eight lines that end with the phrase meaning “like dust before the wind.”¹⁴ Here are the first and last pairs, with the rhyming words underlined. The word *zakona* (meaning “law” and translating *kotowari*) in the second line rhymes with an inflected form of the proper noun Gion in the first. In the last two lines, the rhyme words *strakha* (“fear”) and *prakha* (“ashes”) describe how those who “are without fear” (*takeki mono*) disappear like dust before the wind.

В отзвуке колоколов, оглашавших пределы Гиона
 Бренность деяний земных обрела непреложность закона.
 [...]

 Сколько могучих владык, беспощадных, не ведавших страха,
 Ныне ушло без следа — горстка ветром влекомого праха!

Early translations of Japanese poetry by Basil Hall Chamberlain and others also “domesticate” by using typical English patterns of meter or rhyme, turning the five *ku* of a waka poem into a four-line stanza. This contrasts with the foreignizing approach taken in the following experiment in using lineated formatting to suggest the prosodic form of the Japanese, with longer phrases followed by shorter phrases:

At the Jetavana Temple / The bell gives voice
 To the impermanence of all / As it reverberates.
 That the pairs of teak trees, / In the hue of their flowers,
 Show the downfall of the splendid / Is a matter of reason. (Miner, Odagiri,
 Morrell 163)

This translation appears in an entry on *Heike monogatari* in a reference work on classical

Japanese literature. The romanization of the whole passage is also provided, with the syllable count after each line: beginning with *Gion shōja no / kane no koe* (7/5) and ending with *hitoe ni kaze no / mae no chiri ni onaji* (7/9). Double-checking their counts, we find that only the first two of the eight lines are in 7/5 form, rather undermining their case for using an English pattern of long phrases followed by short. Following that pattern has also led the translators to rely on inversion of normal word order to such an extent that the meaning is not conveyed well. It could be argued, as with the earlier example of Sieffert's inversions, that whether we find this acceptable or not is partly a matter of taste. However, it is important to recognize that any syllabic structure latent in the text is in any case almost entirely obscured when a passage like this is sung in *heikyoku* style.

An example of extreme domestication is found the translation of *Gion shōja* by Wilhelm Gundert in a history of Japanese literature published in 1929. He makes very deliberate use of what is known as the *Nibelungenstrophe*, the metrical structure of the medieval German epic *Nibelungenlied* (The Song of the the Nibelungen) that was set to a simple melody. Here are the first two lines of the medieval German epic followed by Gundert's translation of the opening of *Gion shōja* using the same rhymical structure. The stressed syllabus are marked in bold. Lines fall into two halves, separated by a caesura, with a strong rhythm of unstressed (x) and stressed (X) syllables in a basic pattern of: xXxXxXx / (x)XxXxX. (As with Old English poetry, flexibility is allowed in the number of unstressed syllables.) Here is the opening of the *Nibelungenlied* followed by Gundert's translation of the first sentence, with the stressed syllables marked in bold.

Uns ist in alten maeren / wunders vil geseit

von helden lobebæren / von grôzer arebeit (Schulze 7)

(In old stories we are told of many wonders, of praiseworthy heroes, of great suffering.)

Der Jetavanaklause / Verhallender Glockenton (祇園精舎の鐘の声)

Er singt das Lied von allen / Geschehens Unbestand. (諸行無常の響あり)

(The echoing sound of the bell of the Jetavana monastery.

It sings the song of of the inconstancy of all that happens.) (Gundert 79)

Conclusion

It is remarkable how many excellent new translations of *Heike monogatari* have appeared in recent years. Even if a literary classic has been well translated into English — a language that students in many countries can read — there is still a strong need for a reliable

translations in other languages. With this in mind, let compare how two of the most recent translators, Jos Vos in Dutch (2022) and Michael Stein in German (2023) handle the opening passage. Both lineate the entire passage up to “like dust before the wind.” Here are the beginnings and the endings of the passage in the two translations. Without using any fixed rhythmical pattern or rhyme, both translators have striven to convey the meaning accurately in a form that is pleasing to the ear.

De klokken van het Jetavana-klooster
zingen van de vergankelijkheid aller dingen.

...

Machtigen gaan uiteindelijk ten onder;
ze zijn als stof dat opwaait in de wind. (Vos 17)

(The bells of the Jetavana monastery sing of the transience of all things. [...])

The mighty ones eventually go under, they are like dust blown up in the wind.)

Ertönt die Tempelglocke von Gion,
so lehrt uns ihr Klang
Die Vergänglichkeit sämtlicher Dinge.

...

Die stärksten Helden werden am Ende doch fallen,
verwehen wie Staub vor dem Windhauch. (Stein 7)

(When the temple bell of Gion rings, its sound teaches us the transience of all things. [...])

Even the strongest heroes will fall in the end, blowing away like dust before the wind.)¹⁵

The bells of Gion shōja have a different sound in every language, and yet it is possible in translation to convey the universal message of the passage in a moving and powerful way.¹⁶

ANNOTATED LIST OF WORKS CITED

Note: Items preceded by an asterisk contain translations from *Heike monogatari* or one of its variants. Further details are given in square brackets after the entry. In cases of works that contain only a few selections from *Heike monogatari*, these are identified with reference when appropriate to the corresponding book (*kan*) and section (*shōdan*)

number in the Kakuichi-bon variant (abbreviated Kb). To help locate shorter excerpts, page numbers have been provided for cross-reference with Royall Tyler's translation.]

*Aston, William George. *A History of Japanese Literature*. London: William Heinemann, 1899. [Translations from unidentified *rufubon* editions, pp.134–143. Two excerpts from the battle of Dannoura from *Genpei jōsuiki*, book 43 (cf. Kb 11.7–8) and *Heike monogatari*, book 11 (Kb 11:9, Tyler 610–611), and a short passage describing the battle of Ukawa from *Heike monogatari*, book 1 (Kb 1:13, Tyler 46–47).]

*Bärnkopf Zoltan. *Heike monogatari – avagy a Heike tündöklése és bukása*. Budapest: Flaccus Kiadó, 2022. [Complete translation into Hungarian from McCullough, *Tale*.]

*Boscaro, Adriana, and Luisa Bienati. *La narrativa giapponese classica*. Venice: Marsilio Editori, 2010. [Lineated translation of *Gion shōja* by Boscano in chapter no.9 (“Lo *Heike monogatari*”), p. 119.]

*Fiala, Karel, trans. *Příběh rodu Taira*. Prague: Mladá fronta, 1994. [Complete Czech translation.]

*Florenz, Karl. *Geschichte der japanische Litteratur*. Die Litteraturen des Ostens, vol. 10. Second Edition. Leipzig: C.F. Amelangs Verlag, 1906. [Comparisons of two accounts of the battle of Dannoura: *Genpei jōsuiki*, book 38, and *Heike monogatari*, book 11 (Kb 11.9, cf. Tyler 609–611), pp.304–308. The chapter contains many shorter translations from other episodes together with passages from other war tales, pp. 291–317.]

*Goto, Suéo, and M. Prunier, trans. *Épisodes du Heiké Monogatari*. *Journal Asiatique*, vol. 213 (1928), pp. 253–289. [Six episodes included: “Giō” (Kb 1:1), “Aoi-no-mae” (6:3), “Kogo” (6:4), “Death of Kiyomori” (6:7), “Tadanori flees the capital” (7:15), “The Death of Tadanori” (9:14).]

Goto, Suéo, and M. Prunier, trans. *Épisodes du Heiké Monogatari*. Paris: Librairie Ernest Leroux, 1931. [Fourteen episodes included, beginning with “Giō” and ending with “Rokudai” (cf. Kb 1:1, 3:2, 3:8, 5:2, 6:3, 6:4, 6:7; 7:15, 9:14; 8:3; 9:4, 9:19, 10:2, 12:8).]

Ichiko Teiji ed. *Heike monogatari*. 2 vols. SNKBZ 45–46. Shōgakukan, 1994.

Kamei Takayoshi and Sakata Yukiko, eds. *Heike monogatari: Habiyan-shō kirishitan-ban*. 2nd edition. Kyoto: Yoshikawa kōbun, 1980.

*Kitagawa, Hiroshi, and Bruce T. Tsuchida, trans., *The Tale of the Heike*, 2 vols. Tokyo University Press, 1975.

*L'vova, Irina [Львова, Ирина], trans. *Povest' o dome Taira* [Повесть о доме Тайра]. With poetry translated by Aleksandr Dolin. Moscow: Khodzhestvennaia, 1982.

[Complete Russian translation.]

*McCullough, Helen Craig, trans. *The Tale of the Heike*. Stanford University Press, 1988.

*Miner, Earl, , Hiroko Odagiri, and Robert E. Morrell, eds. *The Princeton Companion Classical Japanese Literature*. Princeton University Press, 1985. [Gion shōja, p. 163.]

*O ChanUk 오찬욱, trans., *Heike iyagi* 헤이케이야기. 2 vols. Seoul: Moonji Publications, 2006. [Complete Korean translation.]

*Revon, Michel, ed. *Anthologie de la Littérature Japonaise des Origines au XX^e siècle*. Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1900. [Translation of two episodes from *rufubon* texts, pp.237–244: the death of Antoku from *Heike monogatari* (cf. Kb 11 : 9) and “Why Sanemori died his hair” from the opening of book 30 of *Genpei jōsuiki* (cf. Kb 7.8 “Sanemori).]

*Moratalla, Rubi Tani, and Rubio López de La Llave, trans. *Heike Monogatari*. Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 2005. [Complete Spanish translation.]

*Sadler, A. L. “The Heike Monogatari.” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan* 46.2 (1918), pp. 1–278; 49.1 (1921), pp. 1–354. [Complete English translation.]

*Sadler, A. L. *The Ten Foot Square Hut and Tales of the Heike: Being two thirteenth-century Japanese classics, the “Hojoki” and selections from “The Heike Monogatari.”* Sydney: Angus & Robertson Limited, 1928.

Schulze, Ursula, ed. *Das Nibelungenlied. Mittelhochdeutsch/Neuhochdeutsch. Nach der Handschrift B*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2010.

*Sieffert, René, trans., *Le Dit de Hôgen; Le Dit de Heiji*. Le cycle épique des Taira et des Minamoto. Publications Orientalistes de France, 1988. [Complete French translation.]

*Stein, Michael, trans. *Heike monogatari. Der Sturz des Hauses Taira*. Munich: Manesse, 2023. [Complete German translation.]

*Strippoli, Roberta. “Rinunciare al mondo, farsi monaca: lo shukke femminile nello Heike monogatari.” *Spiritualità ed etica nella letteratura del Giappone premoderno*, edited by Andrea Maurizi. Novara: De Angostini Scuola, 2012, pp. 127–140. [Italian translation of the *Gion shōja* opening.]

Takagi Ichinosuke, Ozawa Masao, Atsumi Kaoru. and Kindaichi Haruhiko, eds. *Heike monogatari*. 2 vols. NKBT 32-33, Iwanami Shoten, 1959-60.

Tsubouchi Shōyō, ed. *Heike monogatari zue*, 2 vols. Eiri Bunko Kankōkai, 1917.

*Turrettini, François, trans. *Heike monogatari: recits de l’histoire du Japon au XII^{me} siècle*. Geneva: H. Georg, Libraire-Éditeur, 1871. [Translation from the text of *Heike monogatari zue* (1829) with episodes about Kiyomori and his father Tadamori, cf. Kb 1 : 1, 1 : 3, 6 : 10 (“The Gion Consort”), 1 : 5, 1 : 6 (“Giō”), cf. Tyler 3–5, 9–10, 325–328, 10–12, 13–28.]

*Tyler, Royall, trans. *The Tale of the Heike*. Viking, 2012. [Complete English translation.]

Utsumi Kōzō, ed. *Heike monogatari hyōshaku*. Meiji shoin, 1915.

*Valenziani, Carlo [Charles]. *La Mort D'Atu-Mori: Épisode de la Bataille d'Iti-no-Tani dans la Drame et dans les Chroniques*. Genève: H. Georg, Libraire-Éditeur, 1891–1893. [Translates four accounts of the death of Atsumori (Kb 9:15): (1) an edition of 1823 of *Genpei jōsuiki*, (2) an unidentified Edo-period printing of the *rufubon* or “vulgate” *Heike monogatari*, (3) *Feiqe no monogatari*, an abridged adaptation into colloquial Japanese printed in in romanization in 1592 on the Jesuit press in Amakusa, (4) *Kumi-uchi no dan* 組討段, a scene from the puppet play *Ichi-no-tani futaba gunki* 一谷嫩軍記 (“Chronicle of the Battle of Ichi-no-tani”).]

*Vos, Jos, trans. *De val van de Taira*. Amsterdam: Athenaeum, 2022. [Complete Dutch translation.]

*Wang Xinxin 王新禧, trans. *Pingjia wuyu* 平家物語. Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 2011.

*Watson, Burton, trans. *The Tales of the Heike*. Edited by Haruo Shirane. Columbia University Press, 2006. [English translation of forty-three of the 193 sections.]

Watson, Michael Geoffrey. *A Narrative Study of the Kakuichi-bon Heike Monogatari*. 2003. DPhil thesis. Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford.

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———. “Kirishitanban to sho: Amakusaban *Heike monogatari to Esopo no haburasu*” キリシタン版と書 天草版『平家物語』と『エソポのハブラス』. *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū*. Special edition: Azuchi Momoyama Renaissance. October, 2006, pp. 62–72.

———. “*Heike monogatari* gaikokugoyaku no genkai to kanōsei” 「平家物語」外国語訳の限界と可能性. *Gunki to katarimono*, vol. 45 (March 2009), pp. 3–17.

———. “‘L’écho des vicissitudes humaines’: *The Tale of the Heike* through its Translation History.” *La figlia occidentale di Edo: Scritti in memoria di Giuliana Stramigioli*, edited by Andrea Maurizi and Teresa Ciapparoni La Rocca. Rome: FrancoAngeli, 2012, pp. 151–171.

*Zhou Zuoren 周作人 and Shen Fei 申非, trans. *Pingjia wuyu* 平家物語. People’s Literature Publishing House, 1984.

Notes

- 1 *Feiqe no monogatari* is often referred to in Japanese scholarship as the *Amakusa-ban Heike monogatari* 天草版平家物語. For an introduction to the book with photographs

of the cover page and the opening passage, see <https://blogs.bl.uk/asian-and-african/2019/05/jesuit-mission-press-feiqe-monogatari-now-online.html>. The full title appears as “NIFONNO COTOBA TO Historia uo narai xiran to FOSSVRV VITO NO TAME-NI XEVA NI YAVAREGUETA-RV FEIQE NO MONOGATARI” (“The Tale of the Heike made simple for the benefit of those who wish to learn and study the language and history of Japan”). See frontispiece of the fascimile edited by Fukushima Kunimichi (n.p.), also reproduced by Kamei and Sakata, who transcribe the passage as: 日本のことばとHistoriaを習ひ知らんと欲する人のために世話にやわらげたる平家の物語 (n.p.).

- 2 I have discussed these issues more extensively in previous publications with respect both to *Feiqe no monogatari* and the Aesop translation, *Esopo no haburasu*. Watson, “A Slave’s Wit”; “Kirisutoban to sho.”
- 3 The *-ichi* in Kiichi’s name indicates that he is a (presumably fictional) member of the Ichikata 一坊 school of *Heike* recitation, the lineage of reciters that includes Akashi no Kakuichi. Their names are subsequently abbreviated “VM.” and “QI.” from page 6 onwards in the pagination of the original edition.
- 4 Fabian’s romanization has been transcribed from the facsimile (Fukushima 2–3).
- 5 Fabian seems to have left out a generation here. Kiyomori is in the ninth generation from Kanmu’s son Kazurahara.
- 6 The complete text can be viewed in the digital library of Waseda University: https://www.wul.waseda.ac.jp/kotenseki/html/he13/he13_02693/index.html. Modern printings of the work include one by Tsubouchi Shōyō.
- 7 See also Watson, “L’écho” 166–170.
- 8 The term defamiliarization is a translation of the Russian term *ostranenie* (“making strange”) coined by the theorist Viktor Shklovsky.
- 9 The Ryūkoku University Library has digitized four *Heike* manuscripts in its collection. The most significant is of the so-called Kakuichi variant and was the base text for the Nihon koten bungaku taikai edition (NKBT vols. 32–33, Takagi et al. 1959–1960) used by many translators. A photographic reproduction showing opening section can be seen in the digital database (<https://da.library.ryukoku.ac.jp/view/000020/1>). Note that the text begins on the right page following a line reading *Heike monogatari kan daiichi* (The Tale of the Heike, first volume).
- 10 The annotated edition by Utsumi Kōzō 内海弘蔵 is the one most likely to have been used by Sadler for *Gion shōja* as the other edition mentioned in his Preface lacks this section.
- 11 Here is the remainder of the passage in the translations into Italian and Spanish. The main difficulty here is in how to express the two highlighted terms.

Ogoreru hito mo hisashikarazu. Tada baru no yo no yume no gotoshi.

[A3] **I violenti** non dureranno, simili al sogno di una notte di primavera.

[B3] **e chi trabocca d’orgoglio** non dura a lungo: il suo destino è come un sogno di una notte di primavera

[C3] Como el sueño de una noche de primavera, así de fugaz es **el poder del orgulloso**.

Takeki mono mo tsui ni wa horobinu, hitoe ni kaze no mae no chiri ni onaji

[A4] Anche **i prodi** saranno infine travolti, come polvere di fronte al vento.

[B4] Anche **i grandi** alla fine periscono, perché effimeri come polvere al vento.

[C4] Como el polvo que dispersa el viento, así **los fuertes** desaparecen de la faz de la tierra.

(Boscaro in Bienati and Boscaro 119; Strippoli 127; Tani and López 91)

- 12 I am grateful to Kim Soyeon for providing me with *hangul* romanization and a close translation into Japanese of this passage in Korean.
- 13 I owe this suggestion to Ai Jun, who provided me with *pin'yin* readings and notes on the two translations. In citing the title and text of these two editions, Japanese *tōyō kanji* forms are used in place of simplified Chinese characters.
- 14 I was aided by Olga Vityazeva (Rybakova) and Katie Edge who provided audio recordings of the Russian text and assisted me in understanding key features of the translation.
- 15 For comparison, here is the same two sentences in the earlier complete translation into German: “Das Läuten der Tempelglocke von Jetavana verkündet die Unbeständigkeit aller Erscheinungen dieser Welt. [...] Nicht lange währen die Hochmütigen, es gleicht dem Traum einer Frühlingsnacht, und auch die Kühnen vergehen letztendlich wie der Staub vor dem Wind” (Adelmeier 11). Note that the word for bell is singular in all three German translators, leaving the reader with the impression of a large bronze temple bell, rather than (as most scholars now agree) to the small glass (or glass and silver) bells in Jetavana in India. The bells are plural in the translation by Jos, as they are in the two Italian translations (*campane*), and in the English translations by McCullough and Tyler.
- 16 When this paper was in the proof stage, I discovered a free translation in a prose composition by Okakura Kakuzō (Tenshin, 1863–1913): “The bell of Gion (Jetvana Garden) tolls the message that All is Evanescent. The flowers of Shara (The Shala tree under which the Buddha died) show that Life is Death. The noble is not to be long, the pleasure that prides itself on glory and success is but a dream of a spring night.” Note the use of explanatory notes in parentheses. These sentences begin his short work “Ko Atsumori (The little Atsumori) a Biwa song” that survives in a manuscript dated tentatively to 1904 (Tenshin Memorial Museum of Art, Ibaraki) as well as in a typescript titled *The Legend of Yoshitsune* that includes it with other pieces (Isabella Steward Gardner Museum, Boston) and in an privately published edition by Francis Gardner Curtis (1868–1915). Further discussion and analysis must await another occasion.