XV.

THE GLORY AND THE FALL OF THE HŌJŌ FAMILY.

Though there may be some slight justification of Yoritomo's setting up a dual system of government to control and check the intrigues of courtiers at Kiōto, yet at best it was a usurpation of the power belonging only to the mikado. The creation of a duarchy was the swift and sure result of Japan having no foreign enemies.

So long as the peace or existence of the empire was threatened by the savages on the frontier, or by invading fleets on the sea-coast, there was an impelling cause to bind together the throne and people; but when the barbarians were tranquilized, China and Corea gave no signs of war; and especially when the nobility were divided into the civil and military classes, and the mikado was no longer a man of physical and mental vigor, a division of the governing power naturally arose.

From the opening of the thirteenth century, the course of Japanese history flows in two streams. There were now two capitals, Kiōto and Kamakura, and two centres of authority: one, the lawful but overawed emperor and the imperial court; the other, the military vassal, and a government based on the power of arms. It must never be forgotten, however, that the fountain of authority was in Kiōto, the ultimate seat of power in the ancient constitution. Throughout the centuries the prestige of the mikado's person never declined. The only conditions under which it was possible for this division of political power to exist was the absence of foreigners from the soil of Japan. So soon as Japan entered into political relations with outside nations, which would naturally seek the real source of power, the duarchy was doomed.

When Yoritomo died, all men wondered whether the power would remain at Kamakura, the country rest peaceful, and his successors reign with ability. The Japanese have a proverb conveying a bitter truth, learned from oft-repeated experience, "*Taishō ni tané ga nashi*" (The general has no child, or, There is no seed to a great man). The

spectacle of a great house decaying through the inanity or supineness of sons is constantly repeated in their history. The theme also forms the basis of their standard novels. Yoritomo's sons, not inheriting their father's ability, failed to wield his personal power of administration. From the day of his death, it may be said that the glory of the Minamoto family declined, while that of the Hōjō began.

Yet it seemed strange that the proverb should be verified in this case. Yoritomo had married no ordinary female. His wife, Masago, was a woman of uncommon intellectual ability, who had borne him a son, Yoriiyé. This young man, who was eighteen years old at his father's death, was immediately appointed chief of all the military officers in the empire, and it was expected he would equal his father in military prowess and administrative skill. His mother, Masago, though a shorn nun, who had professed retirement from the world, continued to take a very active part in the government.

The parental authority and influence in Japan, as in China, is often far greater than that of any other. Not even death or the marriage relation weakens, to any great extent, the hold of a father on a child. With affection on the one hand, and cunning on the other, an unscrupulous father may do what he will. We have seen how the Fujiwara and Taira families controlled court, throne, and emperor, by marrying their daughters to infant or boy mikados. We shall now find the Hōjō dispensing the power at Kamakura by means of a crafty woman willing to minister to her father's rather than to her son's aggrandizement.

Hōjō Tokimasa was the father of Masago, wife of Yoritomo. The latter always had great confidence in and respect for the abilities of his father-in-law. At his death, Tokimasa became chief of the council of state. Instead of assisting and training Yoriiyé in government affairs, giving him the benefit of his experience, and thus enabling the son to tread in his father's footsteps, he would not allow Yori iyé to hear cases in person, or to take active share in public business. When the youth plunged into dissipation and idleness, which terminated in a vicious course of life, his mother often reproved him, while Tokimasa, doubtless rejoicing over the fact, pretended to know nothing of the matter. All this time, however, he was filling the offices of government, not with the Minamoto adherents, but with his own kindred and partisans. Nepotism in Japan is a science; but cursed as the Japanese have been, probably none exceeded in this subtle craft the master, Tokimasa; though Yoriiyé, receiving his fa-

ther's office, had been appointed Sei-i Tai Shōgun, with the rank ju-ni-i (second division of the second rank), his grandfather still kept the real power. When twenty-two years of age, while he was suffering from sickness—probably the result of his manner of life—his mother and Tokimasa, who instigated her, attempted to compel him to resign his office, and to give the superintendency of the provincial governors to his infant son, and set over the Kuansei, or Western Japan, his younger brother, aged twelve years. This was the old trick of setting up boys and babies on the nominal seat of power, in order that crafty subordinates might rule.

Yoriiyé heard of this plan, and resolved to avert its execution. He failed, and, as is usual in such cases, was compelled to shave off his hair, as a sign that his interest in political affairs had ceased. He was exiled to a temple in Idzu. There he was strangled, while in his bath, by the hired assassins sent by Tokimasa.

Sanétomo, brother of Yoriiyé, succeeded in office. The boy was but twelve years old, and very unlike his father. He cared nothing for hunting or military exercises. His chief occupation was in playing foot-ball—a very mild game, compared with that played in this country—and composing poetry. His time was spent with fair girls and women, of whom he had as many as he wished. All this was in accordance with the desire and plans of the Hōjō family, who meanwhile wielded all power. Sanétomo lived his luxuriant life in the harem, the bath, and the garden, until twenty-eight years old. Meanwhile, Kugiō, the son of Yoriiyé, who had been made a priest, grew up, and had always looked upon Sanétomo, instead of Tokimasa, as his father's murderer. One night as Sanétomo was returning from worship at the famous shrine of Tsurugaōka—the unusual hour of nine having been chosen by the diviners—Kugiō leaped out from behind a staircase, cut off Sanétomo's head, and made off with it, but was himself beheaded by a soldier sent after him. The main line of the Minamoto family was now extinct. Thus, in the very origin and foundation of the line of shōguns, the same fate befell them as in the case of the emperors—the power wielded by an illustrious ancestor, when transferred to descendants, was lost. A nominal ruler sat on the throne, while a wire-puller behind directed every movement. This is the history of every line of shōguns that ruled from the first, in 1196, until the last, in 1868.

The usurpation of the Hōjō was a double usurpation. Properly, they were vassals of the shōgun, who was himself a vassal of the mi-

kado. It must not be supposed that the emperor at Kiōto calmly looked on, caring for none of these things at Kamakura. The meshes of the Minamoto had been woven completely round the imperial authority. Now the Hōjō, like a new spider, was spinning a more fatal thread, sucking from the emperor, as from a helpless fly, the life-blood of power.

The Hōjō family traced their descent from the mikado Kuammu (782–805) through Sadamori, a Taira noble, from whom Tokimasa was the seventh in descent. Their ancestors had settled at Hōjō, in Idzu, whence they took their name. While the Minamoto rose to power, the Hōjō assisted them, and, by intermarriage, the two clans had become closely attached to each other.

The names of the twelve rulers, usually reckoned as seven generations, were: Tokimasa, Yoshitoki, Yasutoki, Tsunétoki, Tokiyori, Masatoki, Tokimuné, Sadatoki, Morotoki, Hirotoki, Takatoki, and Moritoki. Of these, the third, fourth, and fifth were the ablest, and most devoted to public business. It was on the strength of their merit and fame that their successors were so long able to hold power. Yasutoki established two councils, the one with legislative and executive, and the other with judicial powers. Both were representative of the wishes of the people. He promulgated sixty regulations in respect to the method of judicature. This judicial record is of great value to the historian; and long afterward, in 1534, an edition of Yasutoki's laws, in one volume, with a commentary, was published. In later times it has been in popular use as a copy-book for children. He also took an oath before the assembly to maintain the same with equity, swearing by the gods of Japan, saying, "We stand as judges of the whole country; if we be partial in our judgments, may the Heavenly Gods punish us." In his private life he was self-abnegative and benevolent, a polite and accomplished scholar, loving the society of the learned. Tsunétoki faithfully executed the laws, and carried out the policy of his predecessor. Tokiyori, before he became regent, traveled, usually in disguise, all over the empire, to examine into the details of local administration, and to pick out able men, so as to put them in office when he should need their services. In his choice he made no distinction of rank. Among the upright men he elevated to the judges' bench was the Awodo, who, for conscientious reasons, never wore silk garments, nor a lacquered scabbard to his sword, nor ever held a bribe in his hand. He was the terror of venal officials, injustice and bribery being known to him as if by sorcery; while every detected

culprit was sure to be disgracefully cashiered. Hōjō Akitoki established a library, consisting of Chinese, Confucian, Buddhistic, and native literature, at Kanazawa, in Sagami. Here scholars gathered, and students flocked, to hear their lectures and to study the classics, or the tenets of the faith, nearly all the learned men of this period being priests. While the writer of the *Guai Shi* attacks the Hōjō for their usurpations, he applauds them for their abilities and excellent administration.

The line of shōguns who nominally ruled from 1199 to 1333 were merely their creatures; and that period of one hundred and forty years, including seven generations, may be called the period of the Hōjō. The political history of these years is but that of a monotonous recurrence of the exaltation of boys and babies of noble blood, to whom was given the semblance of power, who were sprinkled with titles, and deposed as soon as they were old enough to be troublesome. None of the Hōjō ever seized the office of Shōgun, but in reality they wielded all and more of the power attaching to the office, under the title of *shikken*. It was an august game of state-craft, in which little children with colossal names were set up like nine-pins, and bowled down as suited the playful fancies of subordinates who declined name and titles, and kept the reality of power. The counters were neglected, while the prize was won.

After the line of Yoritomo became extinct, Yoritomo's widow, Masago, requested of the imperial court at Kiōto that Yoritsune, a Fujiwara baby two years old, should be made shōgun. The Fujiwara nobles were glad to have even a child of their blood elevated to a position in which, when grown, he might have power. The baby came to Kamakura. He cast the shadow of authority twenty-five years, when he was made to resign, in 1244, in favor of his own baby boy, Yoshitsugu, six years old. This boy-shōgun when fourteen years old, in 1252, was deposed by Hōjō Tokiyori, and sent back to Kiōto. Tired of the Fujiwara scions, the latter then obtained as shōgun a more august victim, the boy Munétaka, a son of the emperor Go-Saga, who after fourteen years fell ill, in 1266, with that very common Japanese disease—official illness. He was probably compelled to feign disease. His infant son, three years of age, was then set up, and, when twenty-three years of age (1289), was bowled down by Hōjō Sadatoki, who sent him in disgrace, heels upward, in a palanquin to Kiōto. Hisaakira, the third son of the emperor Go-Fukakusa, was set up as shōgun in 1289. The Hōjō bowled down this fresh dum-

In 1327, Moriyoshi, son of the Emperor Go-Daigo, began to mature plans for the recovery of imperial power. By means of the ubiquitous spies, and through treachery, his schemes were revealed, and he was only saved from punishment from Hōjō by being ordered by his father to retire into a Buddhist monastery. This was ostensibly to show that he had given up all interest in worldly affairs. In reality, however, he assisted his father in planning the destruction of Hōjō. He lived at Ōtō, and was called, by the people, Ōtō no miya. The Emperor Go-Daigo, though himself put on the throne by the king-makers at Kamakura, chafed under the galling dictatorship of those who were by right his vassals. He resolved to risk life, and all that was dear to him, to overthrow the dual system, and establish the original splendor and prestige of the mikadoate. He knew the reverence of the people for the throne would sustain him, could he but raise sufficient military force to reduce the Hōjō.

He secured the aid of the Buddhist priests and, in, 1330, fortified Kasagi, in Yamato. Kusunoki Masashigé about the same time arose in Kawachi, making it the aim of his life to restore the mikadoate. The next year Hōjō sent an army against Kasagi, attacked and burned it. The emperor was taken prisoner, and banished to Oki. Kusunoki, though twice besieged, escaped, and lived to win immortal fame.

Connected with this mikado's sad fate is one incident of great dramatic interest, which has been enshrined in Japanese art, besides finding worthy record in history. While Go-Daigo was on his way to banishment, borne in a palanquin, under guard of the soldiers of Hōjō, Kojima Takanori attempted to rescue his sovereign. This young nobleman was the third son of the lord of Bingo, who occupied his hereditary possessions in Bizen. Setting out with a band of retainers to intercept the convoy and to release the imperial prisoner, at the hill of Funasaka he waited patiently for the train to approach, finding, when too late, that he had occupied the wrong pass. Hastening to the rear range of hills, they learned that the objects of their search had already gone by. Kojima's followers, being now disheartened, returned, leaving him alone. He, however, cautious, followed on, and for several days attempted in vain to approach the palanquin and whisper a word of hope in the ear of the imperial exile. The vigilance of the Hōjō vassals rendering all succor hopeless, Kojima hit upon a plan that baffled his enemies and lighted hope in the bosom of the captive. Secretly entering the garden of the inn at which the

party was resting at night, Kojima scraped off the bark of a cherry-tree, and wrote in ink, on the inner white membrane, this poetic stanza,

"*Ten Kōsen wo horobosŭ nakaré*
Toki ni Hanrei naki ni shimo aradzu."

(O Heaven! destroy not Kōsen,
While Hanrei still lives.)

The allusion, couched in delicate phrase, is to Kōsen, an ancient king in China, who was dethroned and made prisoner, but was afterward restored to honor and power by the faithfulness and valor of his retainer, Hanrei.

Kojima Writing on the Cherry-tree. (Vignette upon the greenback national-bank notes.)

The next morning, the attention of the soldiers was excited by the fresh handwriting on the tree. As none of them were able to read, they showed it to the Emperor Go-Daigo, who read the writing, and its significance, in a moment. Concealing his joy, he went to banishment, keeping hope alive during his loneliness. He knew that he was not forgotten by his faithful vassals. Kojima afterward fought to restore the mikado, and perished on the battle-field. The illustration given above is borrowed from a picture by a native artist, which now adorns the national-bank notes issued under the reign of the present mikado.

This darkest hour of the mikado's fortune preceded the dawn. Already a hero was emerging from obscurity who was destined to be the destroyer of Kamakura and the Hōjō. This was Nitta Yoshisada.

The third son of Minamoto Yoshi-iyé, born A.D. 1057, had two sons. The elder son succeeded his father to the fief of Nitta, in the province of Kōdzuké. The second inherited from his adopted father, Tawara, the fief of Ashikaga, in Shimotsuké. Both these sons founded families which took their name from their place of hereditary possession. At this period, four hundred years later, their illustrious descendants became conspicuous. Nitta Yoshisada, a captain in the army of Hōjō, had been sent to besiege Kusunoki, one of the mikado's faithful vassals; but, refusing to fight against the imperial forces, Nitta deserted with his command. He sent his retainer to Ōtō no miya, son of the emperor, then hiding in the mountains, who gave him a commission in the name of his exiled father. Nitta immediately returned to his native place, collected all his retainers, and before the shrine of the village raised the standard of revolt against Hōjō. His banner was a long white pennant, crossed near the top by two black bars, beneath which was a circle bisected with a black zone. Adopting the plan of attack proposed by his brother, and marching down into Sagami, he appeared at Inamura Saki, on the outskirts of Kamakura, in thirteen days after raising his banner as the mikado's vassal.

At this point, where the road from Kamakura to Enoshima strikes the beach, a splendid panorama breaks upon the vision of the beholder. In front is the ocean, with its rolling waves and refreshing salt breeze. To the south, in imposing proportions, and clothed in the blue of distance, is the island of Ōshima; and farther on are the mountains of the peninsula of Idzu. To the right emerges, fair and lovely, in perpetual green, the island of Enoshima. Landward is the peak of Oyama, with its satellites; but, above all, in full magnificence of proportion, stands Fuji, the lordly mountain. Here Nitta performed an act that has become immortal in song and poem, and the artist's colors.

On the eve before the attack, Nitta, assembling his host at the edge of the strand, and removing his helmet, thus addressed his warriors: "Our heavenly son (mikado) has been deposed by his traitorous subject, and is now in distant exile in the Western Sea. I, Yoshisada, being unable to look upon this act unmoved, have raised an army to punish the thieves yonder. I humbly pray thee, O God of

the Sea, to look into my loyal heart; command the tide to ebb and open a path." Thus saying, he bowed reverently, and then, as Rai says, with his head bare (though the artist has overlooked the statement), and in the sight of heaven cast his sword into the waves as a prayer-offering to the gods that the waves might recede, in token of their righteous favor. The golden hilt gleamed for a moment in the air, and the sword sunk from sight. The next morning the tide had ebbed, the strand was dry, and the army, headed by the chief whom the soldiers now looked upon as the chosen favorite of Heaven, marched

Nitta Yoshisada casting the Sword into the Sea. (Vignette from the national-bank notes.)

resistlessly on. Kamakura was attacked from three sides. The fighting was severe and bloody, but victory everywhere deserted the banners of the traitors, and rested upon the pennons of the loyal. Nitta, after performing great feats of valor in person, finally set the city on fire, and in a few hours Kamakura was a waste of ashes.

Just before the final destruction of the city, a noble named Andō, vassal of the house of Hōjō, on seeing the ruin around him, the soldiers slaughtered, and the palaces burned, remarking that for a hundred years no instance of a retainer dying for his lord had been known, resolved to commit *hara-kiri*. The wife of Nitta was his niece. Just as he was about to plunge his dirk into his body, a serv-

ant handed him a letter from her, begging him to surrender. The old man indignantly exclaimed: "My niece is the daughter of a samurai house. Why did she make so shameless a request? And Nitta, her husband, is a samurai. Why did he allow her to do so?" He then took the letter, wrapped it round his sword, which he plunged into his body, and died. A great number of vassals of Hōjō did likewise.

While Nitta was fighting at Kamakura, and thus overthrowing the Hōjō power in the East, Ashikaga Takauji had drawn sword in Kiōto, and with Kusunoki re-established the imperial rule in the West. The number of the doomed clan who were slain in battle, or who committed *hara-kiri*, as defeated soldiers, in accordance with the code of honor already established, is set down at six thousand eight hundred.

All over the empire the people rose up against their oppressors and massacred them. The Hōjō domination, which had been paramount for nearly one hundred and fifty years, was utterly broken.

From A.D. 1219 until 1333, the mikados at Kiōto were:

Juntoku	1211–1221
Chiukiō (reigned four months)	1222
Go-Horikawa	1222–1232
Shijō	1233–1242
Go-Saga	1243–1246
Go-Fukakusa	1247–1259
Kaméyama	1260–1274
Go-Uda	1275–1287
Fushimi	1288–1298
Go-Fushimi	1299–1301
Go-Nijō	1302–1307
Hanazono	1308–1318
Go-Daigo	1319–1338

From the establishment of Kamakura as military capital, the shōguns were:

MINAMOTO.

Yoritomo	1185–1199
Yori-iyé	1201–1203
Sanétomo	1203–1219

FUJIWARA.

Yoritsuné	1220–1243
Yoritsugu	1244–1251

EMPEROR'S SONS.

Munétaka	1252–1265
Koréyasu	1266–1289
Hisaakira	1289–1307
Morikuni	1308–1333

The Hōjō have never been forgiven for their arbitrary treatment of the mikados. The author of the *Nihon Guai Shi* terms them "serpents, fiends, beasts," etc. To this day, historian, dramatist, novelist, and story-teller delight to load them with vilest obloquy. Even the peasants keep alive the memory of the past. One of the most voracious and destructive insects is still called the "Hōjō bug." A great annual ceremony of extermination of these pests keeps alive the hated recollection of their human namesakes. The memory of the wrongs suffered by the imperial family goaded on the soldiers in the revolution of 1868, who wreaked their vengeance on the Tokugawas, as successors of the Hōjō. In fighting to abolish forever the hated usurpation of six hundred years, and to restore the mikado to his ancient rightful and supreme authority, they remembered well the deeds of the Hōjō, which the *Nihon Guai Shi* so eloquently told. In 1873, envoys sent out from the imperial court in Tōkiō, proceeded to the island of Sado, and solemnly removing the remains of the banished emperor, who had died of a broken heart, buried them, with due pomp, in the sacred soil of Yamato, where sleep so many of the dead mikados.

I have given a picture of the Hōjō rule and rulers, which is but the reflection of the Japanese popular sentiment, and the opinion of native scholars. There is, however, another side to the story. It must be conceded that the Hōjō were able rulers, and kept order and peace in the empire for over a century. They encouraged literature, and the cultivation of the arts and sciences. During their period, the resources of the country were developed, and some branches of useful handicraft and fine arts were brought to a perfection never since surpassed. To this time belong the famous image-carver, sculptor, and architect, Unkei, and the lacquer-artists, who are the "old masters" in this branch of art. The military spirit of the people was kept alive, tactics were improved, and the methods of governmental administration simplified. During this period of splendid temples, monasteries, pagodas, colossal images, and other monuments of holy zeal, Hōjō Sadatoki erected a monument over the grave of Kiyomori at Hiōgo. Hōjō Tokimuné raised and kept in readiness a permanent war-fund, so that the military expenses might not interfere with the revenue reserved for ordinary government expenses. To his invincible courage, patriotic pride, and indomitable energy are due the vindication of the national honor and the repulse of the Tartar invasion.